

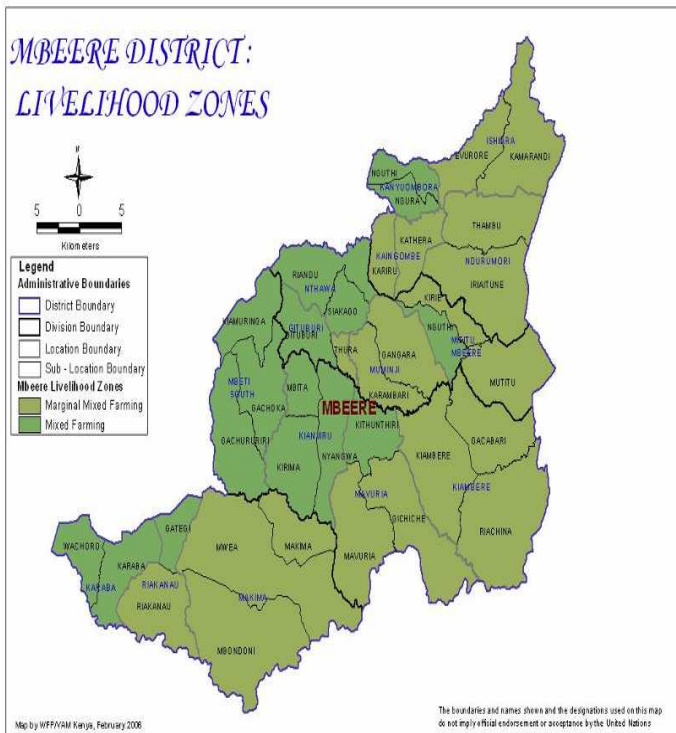


**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN, JULY 2008

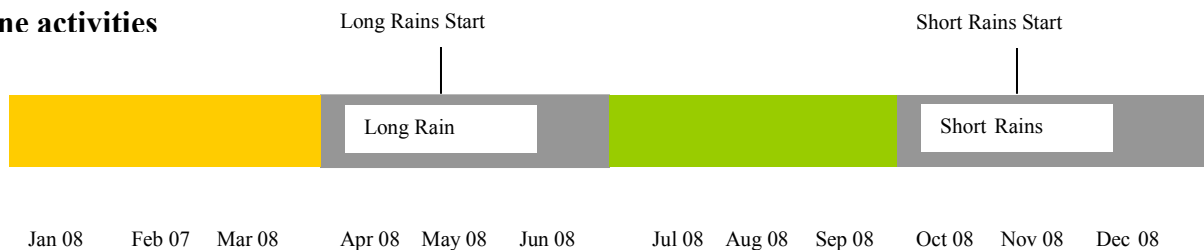
Mbeere District

Warning stages



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Mixed farming – food crops	Alert	Worsening
Mixed farming – coffee/dairy	Alert	Worsening
Marginal mixed farming	Alert	Worsening
	Alert	Worsening

Timeline activities



Situation overview

- There was no precipitation in the district for the second consecutive month.
- Relatively cold and dry weather prevailed across the district, hence no agricultural activities took place.
- Crops in the field continued to experience moisture stress.
- Rain and crop failure resulted in high cereal prices in all major local markets.
- Fair sorghum and pigeon peas yields were realised, but the crops had not been planted widely.
- Prices of cereals and legumes remained high, especially in areas that recorded poor yields. These include Riakanau, Karaba, Mavuria, Gichiche, Kiambere, Mutuobare, Mutitu, Ndurumori and Ishiara.
- Availability and accessibility of pasture and browse remained fair across the district, resulting in fairly good livestock body condition.
- The mortality rate of cattle and goats dropped, while that of sheep remained stable.
- Birth rates decreased among all animal species.
- Livestock prices remained favourable for all species due to low supply.
- Water availability and accessibility fluctuated rapidly in permanent and seasonal water sources, increasing pressure and congestion at water points. This is expected to fluctuate further as the dry spell prevails.
- The nutrition status of children under five years of deteriorated, with Gachoka Division recording the highest number of children with MUAC < 135 mm.
- No major ailments were reported in the district.

Recommendations to DSG and KFSSG

- Rehabilitation of critical water points to ensure optimum water availability and accessibility.
- Promotion of drought-resistant crops such as sorghum, millet, pigeon peas
- Need for pest control.
- Food for work targeting 15 per cent of the population in marginal mixed farming livelihood zone including Riakanau, Karaba, Makima, Mavuria, Gichiche, Kiambere, Mutuobare, Mutitu, Ndurumori and Ishiara.
- PPR surveillance.

Current Interventions

- Rehabilitation of Critical boreholes within the entire District
- Completion of fencing of Karura water pan.
- Value addition.
- Extension of Kienire water pipeline
- Regular school feeding programme.

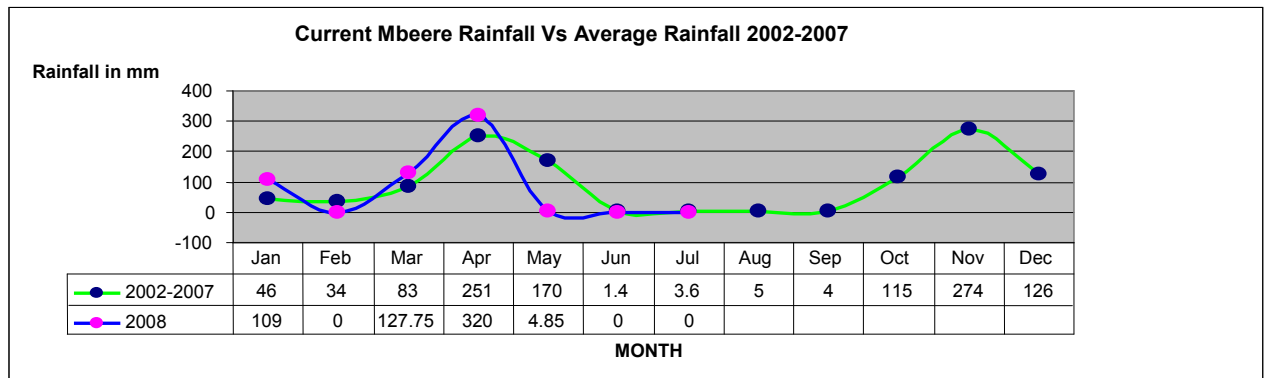
Recommendations to DSG and KFSSG

- Relief food targeting 15 per cent of the population in marginal mixed farming livelihood zone.
- Expansion of school feeding programme to 29 primary schools.
- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes in the district.

- Surveillance of PPR and other livestock diseases within the district.
- Provision of relief seeds such as green grams, sorghum, millet, maize and beans.
- Intensified campaigns promoting traditional food crops such as pigeon peas.

1. Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall



- No precipitation was recorded throughout the month.
- Cold and dry weather prevailed across the district.
- The trend was below normal for the time of year.

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- Quality of pasture and browse remained fair but is expected to deteriorate as the dry spell persists.
- The weather resulted in extreme dryness, with the marginal mixed livelihood zones being worst hit.
- Availability of pasture and browse remained fair within the district. The situation is normal for the time of the year.
- Quantity of pasture and browse is expected to diminish as dry spell persists.

1.3 Water sources and availability

- Availability and accessibility of water fluctuated following the persistent dry spell.
- Main water sources for domestic and human consumption included natural rivers, bore holes, traditional river wells, pans and springs.
- Congestion and pressure increased at water points, with the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone experiencing the highest shortage.
- Distances from grazing areas to main water sources increased from 3 km in June to 3.2 km. The prevailing distances are not normal for the time of year.
- Water volumes in seasonal rivers, catchments pools, earth dams and water pans declined drastically due to lack of precipitation. Distances covered in search of water are expected to escalate further as the dry spell prevails.
- The current situation is not normal for the time of year.

1.3.1 Household access to water

- Average distance from households to main water sources rose from 2.9 km in June to 3.1 km. The prevailing distances were normal for the time of year.
- Distances to water sources are expected to rise as the dry spell persists.
- Water volumes in seasonal rivers, catchments pools, earth dams and water pans are expected to decline due to congestion at water points, exerting pressure on the sources.

1.4 Implication on food security

- Availability of pasture and browse resulted in good livestock body conditions, fair livestock sales, favorable prices and fair milk production, therefore increasing food security.
- However, declining availability and accessibility of water increased time and energy spent in of search water, impacting negatively on food security.

2.0 Rural indicators (food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- Livestock body condition remained fair for all species.
- The improved livestock conditions could be attributed to availability of forage and water.
- The situation is, however, expected to deteriorate especially within the marginal mixed livelihood zones due to diminishing availability and quality of pasture and browse.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- Goat mortality declined from 0.5 per cent to 0.4, while sheep and cattle remained stable at 1.2 per cent and 0 per cent respectively.
- Evurore division recorded the highest sheep and goats mortality of 1.2 per cent and 0.4 respectively.
- The sheep and goats mortality rates are normal at this time of the year.

2.1.3 Milk production

- Average milk production dropped by 27.4 per cent compared to the previous month.
- The declining milk production could be attributed to diminishing quality and quantity of pasture and browse, scarcity of water and decreasing livestock birth rates.
- The number of households accessing milk declined significantly. Gachoka division had the highest milk output, while Siakago division recorded the lowest.
- Output variation was influenced by livestock population density, distribution per household and varying degrees of pasture and browse availability.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

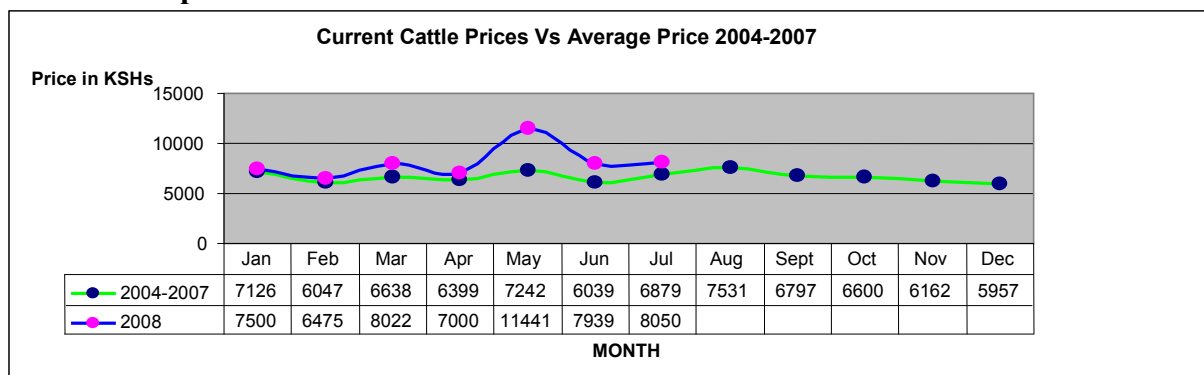
- The unusual dry spell that started in May and persisted through July affected crops that were planted late due to moisture stress. The mixed farming marginal zone was the most affected.
- Crop conditions differed between livelihood zones depending on rainfall distribution and crop species.
- Maize, which was planted early, is ready for harvesting though very low yields are expected.
- Millet and sorghum are also ready for harvesting but crops planted late performed very poorly in all areas.
- Beans performed poorly, with Mwea division attaining only 10 per cent success.

2.2.4 Implication on food security

- The fairly good livestock body conditions and health impacted positively on food security, while poor crop performance had negative implications.

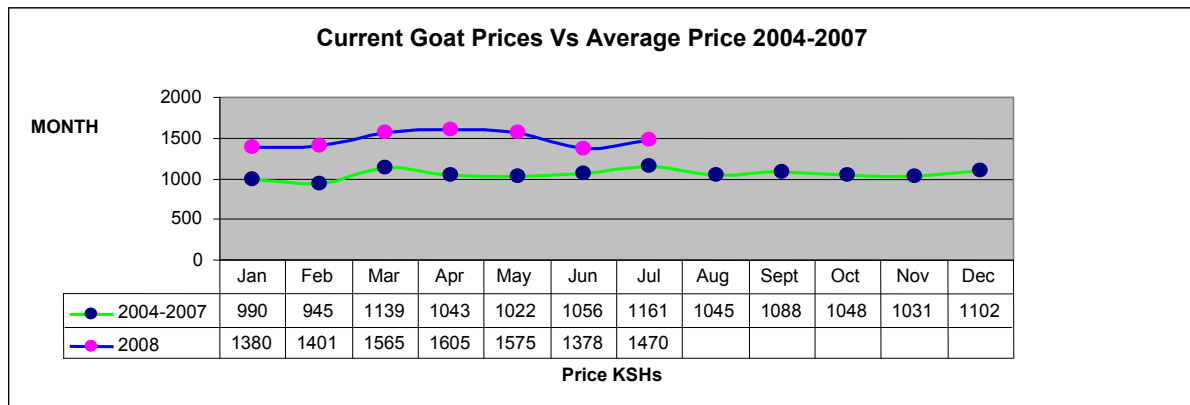
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices



- Cattle prices dropped but the trend is normal at this time of the year.
- The increase in cattle prices could be attributed to the declining supply, which dropped from 1.7 per cent in June to 0.8.
- Mwea division had the highest sales rate of 1 per cent, while Siakago division had the least of 0 per cent. The highest price was recorded in Mwea Division at Ksh 8,100, while the lowest price was in Evurore at Ksh 8,000.

3.3.2 Goat prices



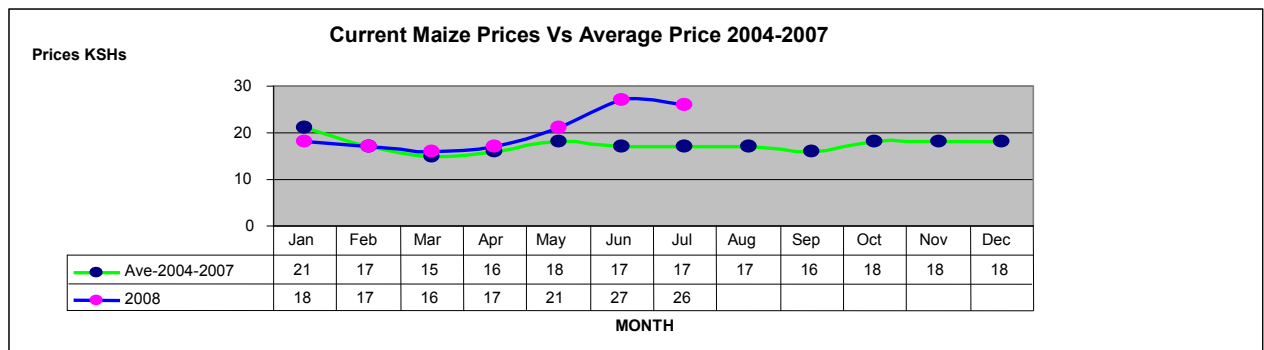
- Goat prices appreciated from Ksh 1,378 in June to Ksh 1,470 in July. The prices were above normal at this time of the year.
- The appreciating prices could be attributed to the good body conditions and declining supply.
- Sales depreciated from 2.1 per cent in June to 2.0 per cent. Evurore recorded the highest price at Ksh 1,580, while Mwea had the lowest at Ksh 1,292.

3.3.3 Milk consumption

- Average milk consumed per household decreased from 52 bottles (750 ml) in June to 34 bottles.
- The decline was attributed to decreasing milk production due to the diminishing quantity and quality of pasture and browse.
- However, milk consumption varied, with Evurore registering the highest level, while Siakago had the lowest.

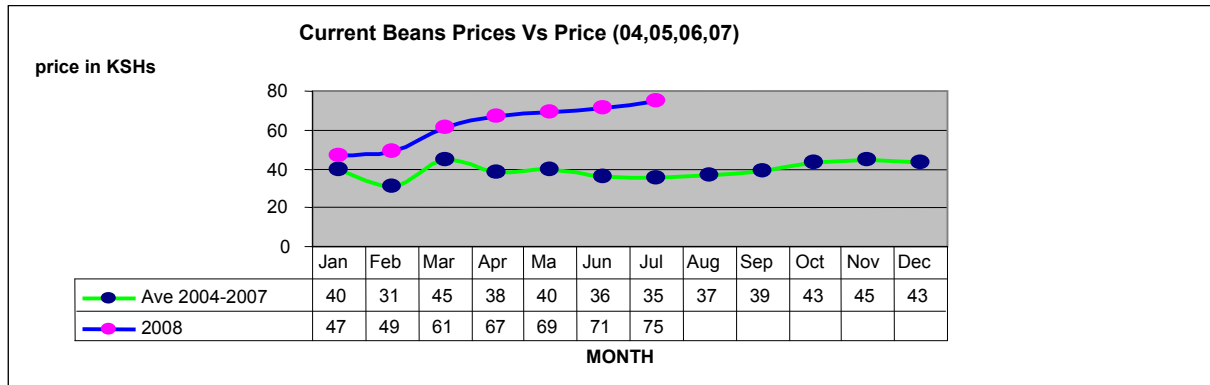
3.4 Crop prices

3.4.1 Maize



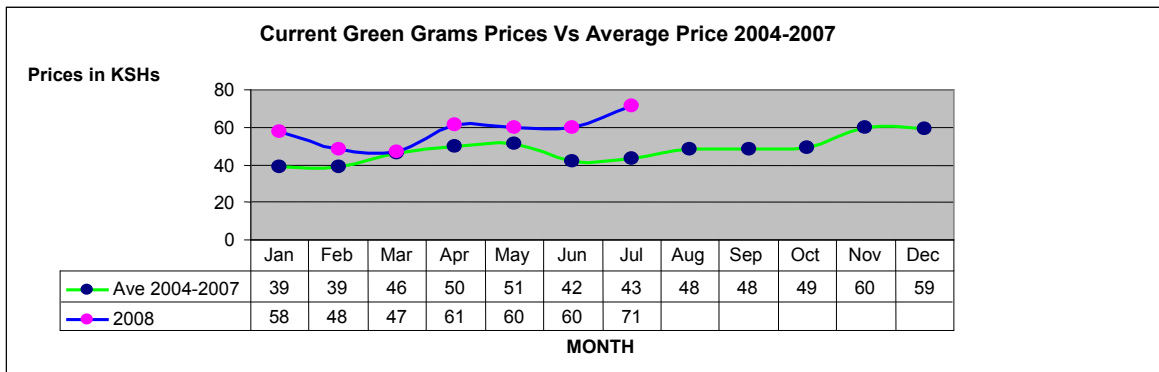
- Maize prices fell from Ksh 27 per Kilogram in June to Ksh 26.
- The decrease could be attributed to supply from neighboring districts and the little harvest realised in the district.
- Gachoka division recorded the highest price at Ksh 29 per kg, while Mwea had the lowest at Ksh 23.

3.4.2 Beans prices



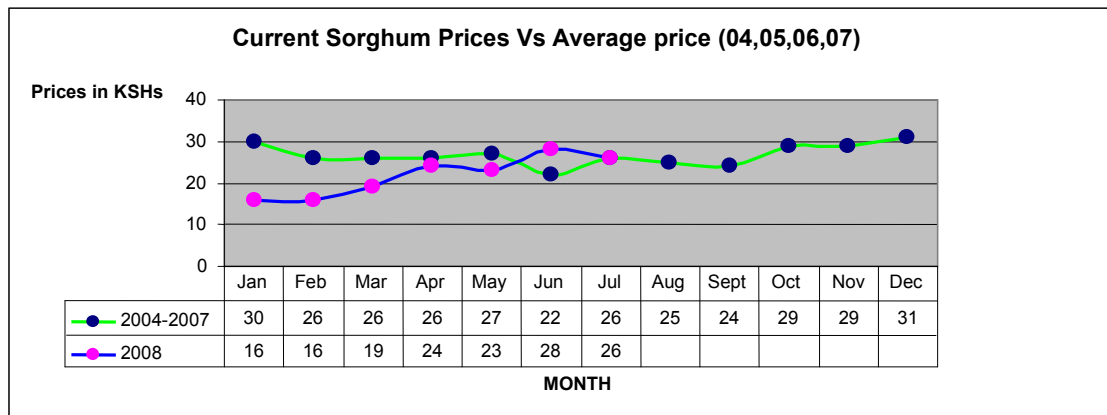
- Beans prices dropped from Ksh 71 per kg in June to Ksh 75. The prices were above normal at this period of the year.
- High beans prices could be attributed to poor crop performance during the current season.
- Evurore recorded the highest price at Ksh 85 per kg, while Siakago recorded the lowest at Ksh 70.
- Price variations could be attributed to output disparities and availability of beans and other legumes within different livelihood zones.

3.4.3 Green grams prices



- Green gram prices rose to Ksh 71per kilogram. The high prices could be attributed to poor crop performance and excessive external and internal market demand.
- Evurore recorded highest price at Ksh 110 per Kilogram, while Mwea had the lowest at Ksh 48.13.
- The price variance could be attributed to level of output within different livelihood zones.

3.4.4 Sorghum price



- Sorghum prices declined from Ksh 28 per kilogram in June to Ksh 26.
- The decline could be attributed to harvest of the crop within pockets of Siakago and Evurore divisions.
- Gachoka recorded highest sorghum prices at Ksh 36.25 per kilogram, while Siakago had the lowest at Ksh 20.
- The prices are expected to decline as ongoing harvests increase supply.

3.5 Income

3.5.1 Crop income

- Income from crop sales rose slightly from 12.45 per cent in June to 13 per cent since this was the main source of income for most households.
- The increase of income from crop sales could be attributed to the rampant sell of Miraa within pockets of Siakago Division and Gachoka Division where the plants are grown in larger scales.

3.5.2 Livestock income

- Contribution from livestock sales declined slightly from 12.8 per cent in June to 12.5 per cent.
- Dependence on income from livestock sales is expected to rise since households have exhausted alternative sources.

3.5.3 Other income

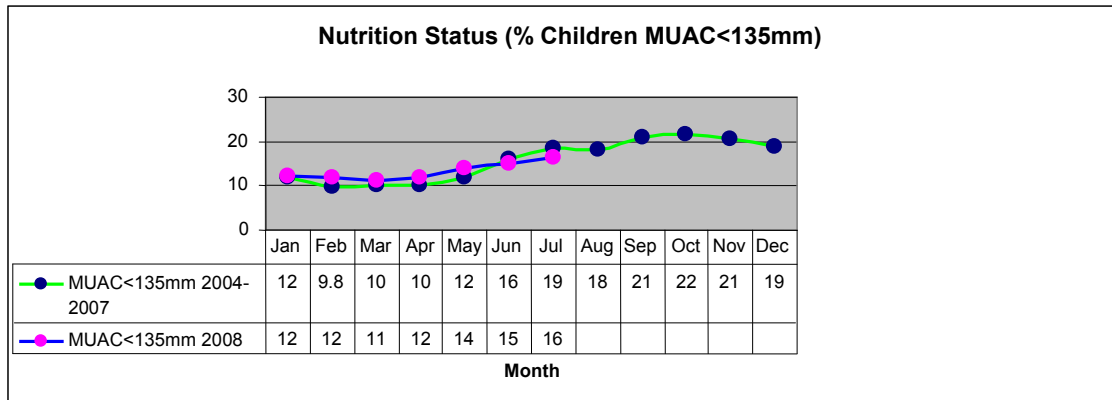
- Income from casual labor increased from 41 per cent in June to 46 per cent.
- Due to the poor performance of crops and the rising food prices, most households sought casual jobs as a coping mechanism.
- The Mwea rice fields and the miraa (khat) farms provided the bulk of casual jobs.

3.6 Implication on food security

- Fair livestock prices and availability of casual jobs indicate impacted positively on food security.
- However, the high food prices indicated declining food affordability and accessibility, hence increased food insecurity.

4.0 Welfare (utilization of food)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The percentage of children at risk of malnutrition rose compared to June.
- Gachoka division recorded the highest rate at 25.4 per cent.
- The increase was attributed to inadequate and poor feeding, and the declining milk consumption at household level.
- The situation needs monitoring.

5.0 Current intervention measures and coping strategies

5.1 Non-food interventions

- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes within the district
- Completion of fencing of Karura water pan.
- Extension of Kienire water pipeline.

5.2 Food-aid

- Regular school feeding programme.

6.0 Recommendations

- Relief food targeting 15 per cent of the population in marginal mixed farming livelihood zone.
- Expansion of school feeding programme to 29 primary schools.
- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes in the district.
- Surveillance of PPR and other livestock diseases within the district.
- Provision of relief seeds such as green grams, sorghum, millet, maize and beans.
- Intensified campaigns promoting traditional food crops such as pigeon peas.

7.0 Alert phase

- Environmental, rural and welfare indicators deteriorated following inconsistent and unreliable rainfall.
- The situation is at alert stage in mixed farming and marginal mixed farming livelihood zones.