



**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

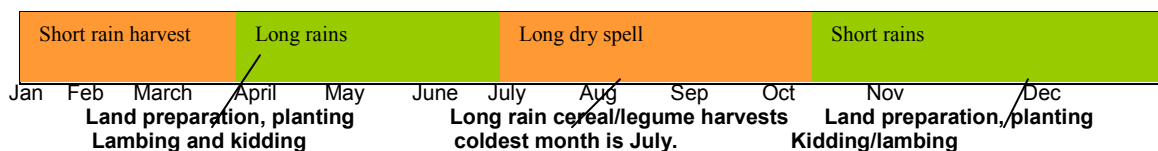
Mwingi District

Warning stages



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Agro pastoral zone	Alert	Worsening
Mixed farming zone	Alert	Worsening
District	Mwingi	Worsening

Time line activities

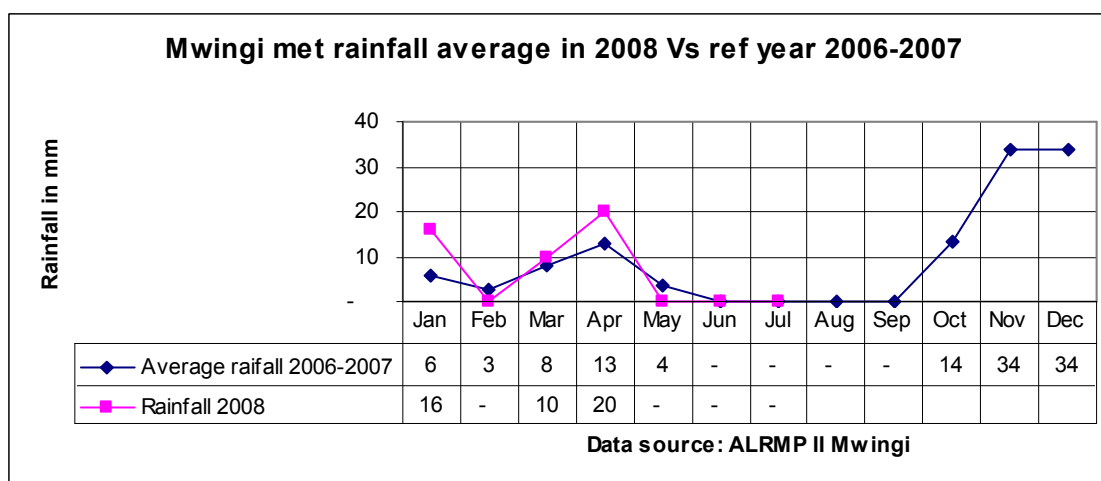


Situation overview

- No rains were recorded and the month under review was mostly characterised by cloudy, windy and cold conditions.
- Quantity and quality of browse and pasture was poor compared to the previous month.
- Access to water was fair, with average walking distance to sources for households standing at 7-10km and 15-20 km for livestock.
- Livestock body condition was fair, hence stable prices.
- There was massive crop failure, resulting in high prices of cereals and other food commodities.
- Malnutrition cases were low, except in Migwani, where the rate stood at 17 per cent.
- Casual labour was the main source of income for most households.
- No major livestock disease outbreak was reported.
- Cases of ringworms were rampant in children.
- Most households relied on food purchases, which had negative implications on food security in the district.

1.0 Environmental indicators

1.1 Rainfall



- No rains were reported during the month.
- The weather was mainly cold and cloudy, with windy conditions at night.

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- The quality and quantity of natural vegetation and pasture was poor compared to last month.
- Most vegetation dried up, with livestock and termites feeding on fallen leaves.

- Some households released livestock to feed on failed crops on their farms.

1.3 Water sources and availability

- Availability and access to water was fair but the quantities were lower compared to the previous month.
- There was overcrowding at water points by both humans and livestock.
- The average walking distance to water points for domestic use was 7-10 km, while distance for livestock stood at 10-15 km compared to long term average of 6km.
- Water trucking took place in selected institutions on demand. The institutions had dilapidated storage facilities, which needed repair.

1.4 Emerging issues

1.4.1 Food scarcity

- Many households ran out of food, leading to increased cases of malnutrition and petty crime in parts of the district.

1.4.2 Implication on food security

- The situation deteriorated over the last one month.
- Most households did not harvest anything due to rain failure, causing food shortage at household level.
- Increased cases of malnutrition and petty crime are likely in parts of the district.
- Declining pasture and water availability could lead to deterioration of livestock body condition in the coming weeks, affecting livestock productivity negatively.

2.0 Rural indicators (food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- The body conditions of goats were fair, while those of cattle and donkeys were poor to fair.
- The situation is likely to deteriorate in the coming weeks due to drought.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- Few suspected CCPP cases were reported in Nuu, Tseikuru, and Ngomeni divisions.

2.1.3 Milk production

- Milk production declined significantly compared to last month due to declining availability of pasture and water.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- There were no major activities going on in farms.
- What remained of failed crops was fed to animals.

2.2.2 Pests and diseases

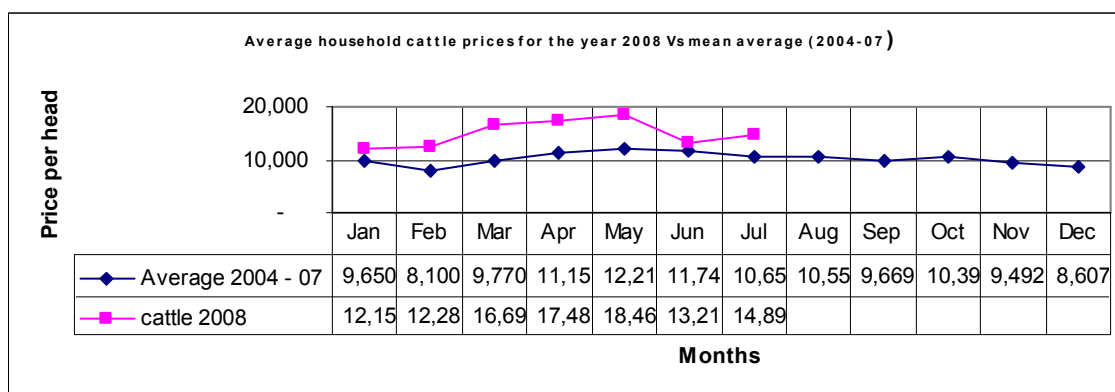
- No pests or diseases were reported since there was no crop on farms.

2.2.3 Implications on food security

- Due to rain failure, majority of households did not harvest any crop, leading to food shortages at household level.
- Animal body condition is likely to deteriorate, impacting negatively on household livestock prices.
- Milk production declined significantly over the last two months.

3.0 Access to food

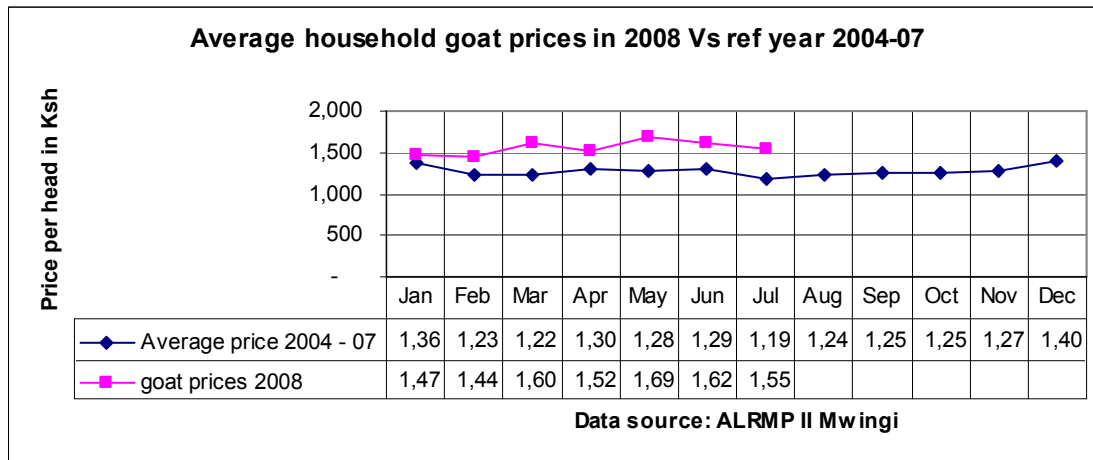
3.1 Cattle prices



- Cattle prices rose from Ksh 13,210 in June to Ksh 14,893. The highest prices were recorded in Nguni division at Ksh 17,500 and the lowest in Mui division at Ksh 9,166.

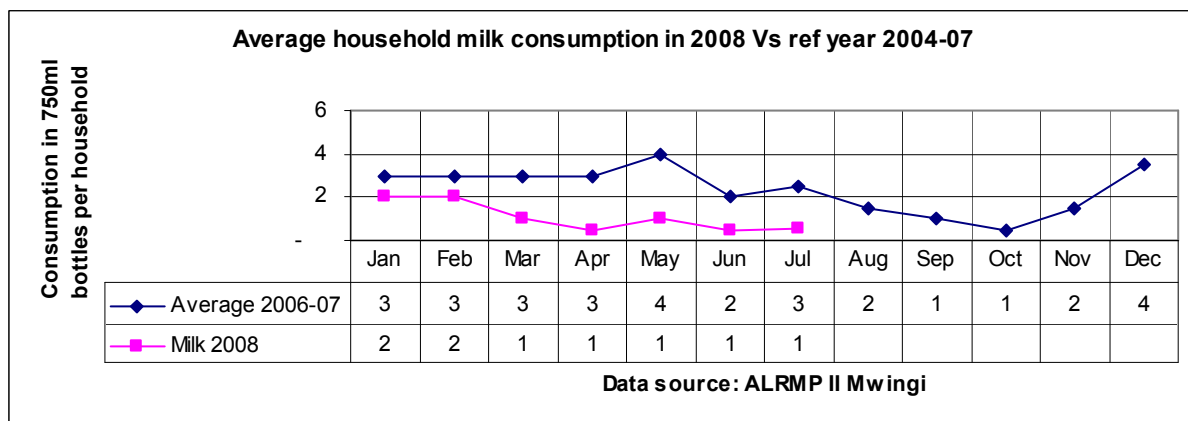
- The slight increase could be attributed to low market supply as farmers waited for prices to improve.
- Body condition might deteriorate as the drought continues, leading to reduced prices.

3.2 Goat prices



- Household goat prices dropped from Ksh 1,624 last month to Ksh 1,551. The highest price was recorded in Nuu division at Ksh 1,900 while the lowest price was in Central division at Ksh 1,070.
- The drop could be due to declining pasture and water availability, leading to poor body conditions.
- The situation poses a threat to food security as households are likely to lose income due to poor prices.

3.3 Milk consumption

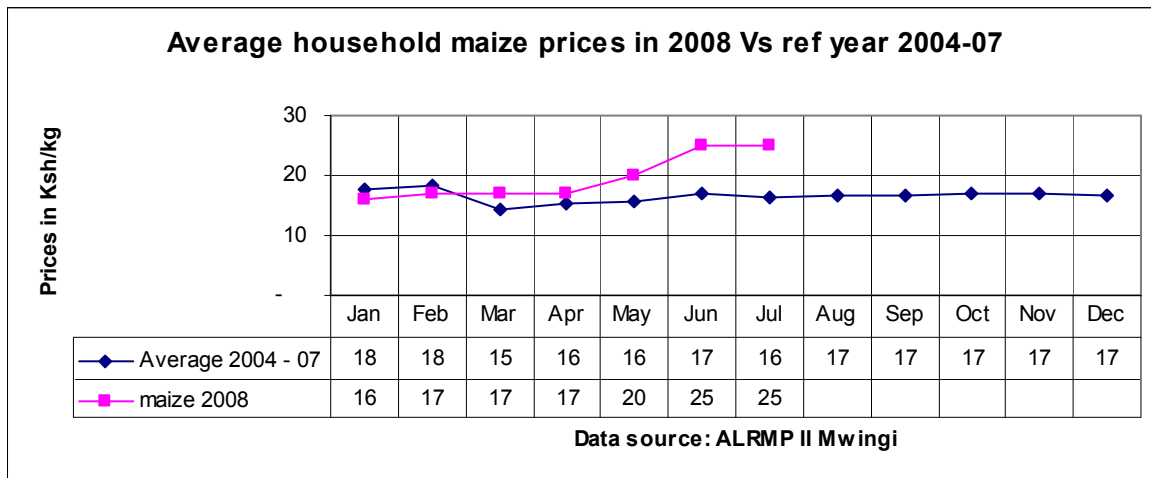


- Household milk consumption remained at one bottle per household.

- However, the number of households consuming milk dropped by 14 per cent compared to last month.
- This could be as a result of declining milk production due to drought.
- This is likely to affect nutritional status of household members negatively.

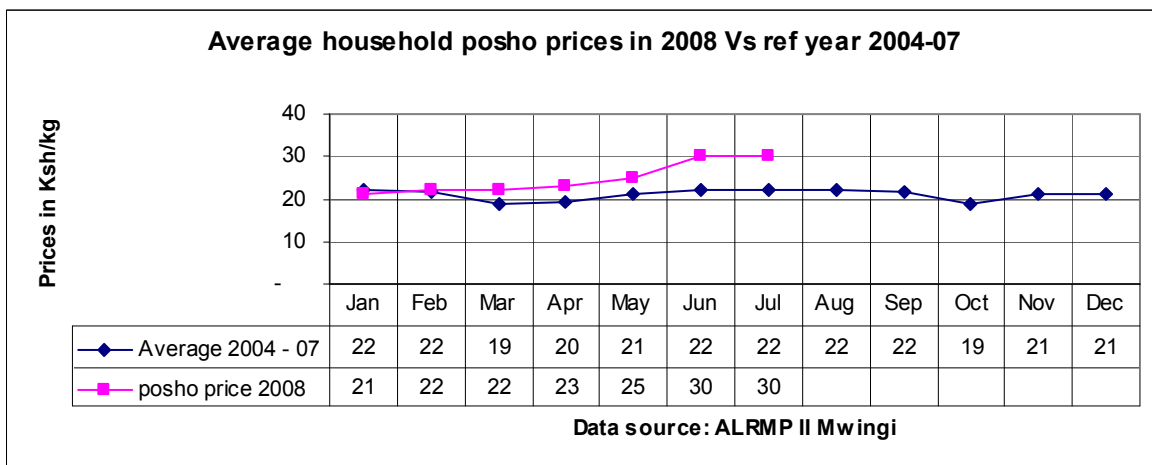
3.4 Crop prices

3.4.1 Maize



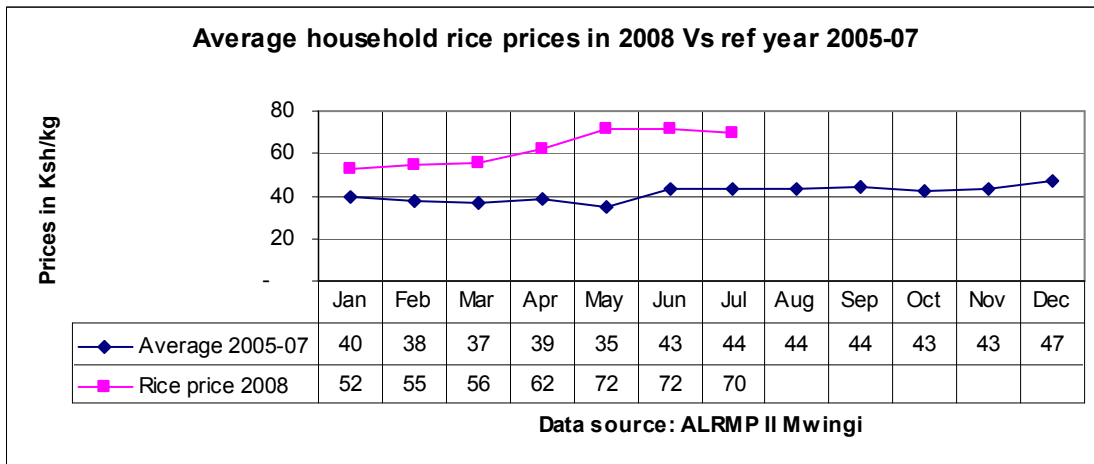
- Maize prices remained the same as June at Ksh 25 per kg.
- The prices remained high as most households purchased maize from markets.
- However, rural poor households cannot afford maize at the current prices.

3.4.2 Posho prices



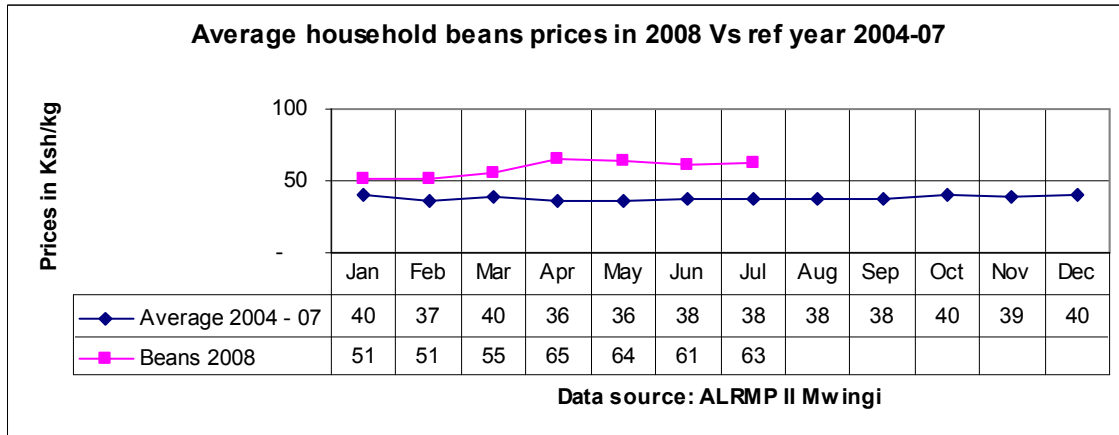
- Posho prices remained the same as June at Ksh 30 per kg.
- The stable prices could be attributed to the high cost of maize and fuel for milling.
- Households cannot access posho at the current price levels.

3.4.3 Rice prices



- Rice prices dropped slightly from Ksh 72 per kg last month to Ksh 70.
- However, the prices are still high compared to the mean average.
- Majority of households stopped purchasing rice due to the prohibitive prices.

3.4.4 Beans prices



- Prices of beans increased slightly from Ksh 61 per kg last month to Ksh 63 per kg.
- The situation could be due to market reliance on external supplies.
- Many households are no longer purchasing beans.

Income

3.4.5 Crop income

- The proportion of households selling crops was less than 5 per cent, indicating that most did not have any food stocks.

3.4.6 Livestock income

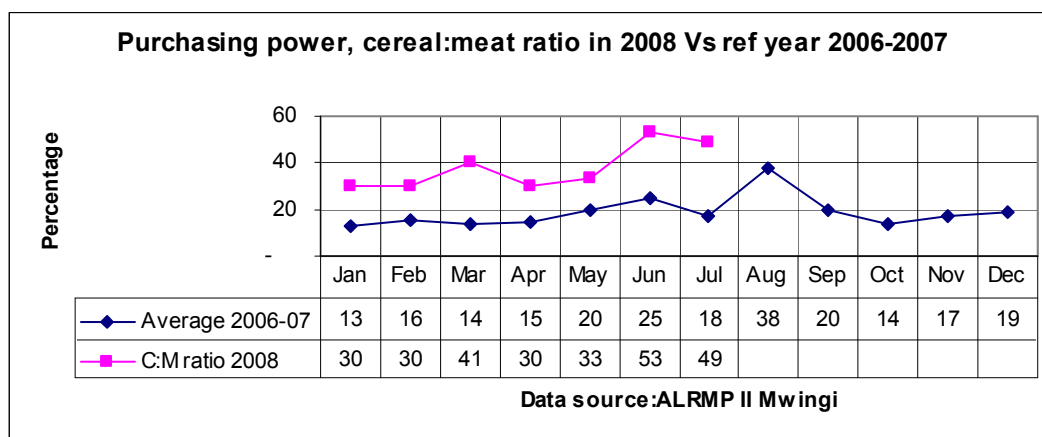
- The proportion of households selling livestock decreased from 15 per cent last month to 8 due to low prices.

3.4.7 Other sources of income

- Casual labour was the highest source of income, with 38 per cent of households being involved.
- Petty trading and remittances also played a major role in sustaining households.
- Sale of honey also generated income for households. Prices ranged from Ksh 150 to Ksh 200 per kg (semi refined).

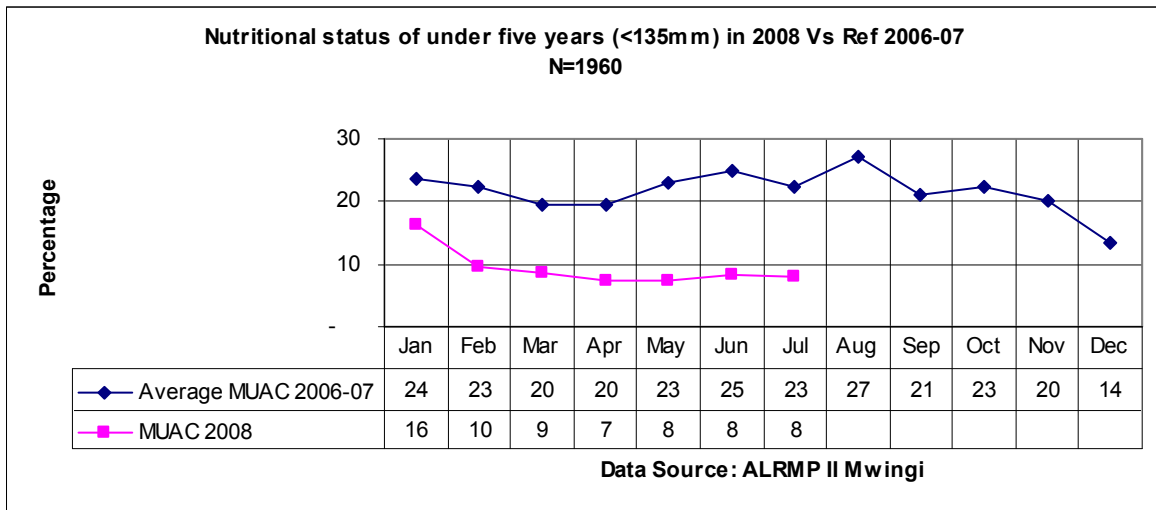
4.0 Cereal :Meat price ratio

- The terms of trade on cereal-to-meat ratio dropped from 53 per cent last month to 49.
- This could be due to rise in prices of livestock products compared to cereal over the same period.



5 Welfare (Utilization of food)

5.1 Nutrition status of children (expressed in terms of MUAC)



- However, cases rose in Central division at 10 per cent, Migwani division at 17, Mui division at 11 and Nguni division at 9.
- Thaana Nzau sub-location recorded a MUAC of 32 per cent.
- This could be due to food scarcity in most households.

5.2 Human health

- No human disease outbreak was reported in the district.
- Cases of ringworms were reported in children in the district.
- Suspected Polio cases are being investigated in Kitise location, Mui division.

5.3 Current interventions

5.1 Non-food intervention

- Security surveillance is ongoing along the Tana River boundary to prevent conflict associated with competition over grazing resources.

5.2 Food-aid

- Distribution of Food for asset ongoing in the six divisions of Nuu, Tseikuru, Ngomeni, Kyuso, Nguni and Mumoni.
- 158 metric tones of food set for distribution between July and September this year.

6.0 Recommendations

- Vulnerable groups in the district should be monitored closely so that they can be assisted with food aid. These groups include children less than five years and schools outside the school feeding programme.
- Surveillance of livestock diseases, especially CCPP and PPR, should be intensified in the district.
- Special feeding programme targeting children less than five years in Thaana Nzau area should be established.
- Water storage facilities in schools should be rehabilitated.
- Provision of clean water to schools and de-worming of school-going children.
- Promotion of drought-resistant crops should be intensified to boost food security.