

Situation Overview

- Relatively cold and dry weather conditions prevailed across the entire District. Absence of precipitation persisted for the second consecutive month. With the absence of any precipitation within the month, little agricultural activities took place and the planted crops continued to experience moisture stress. The absence of rainfall and crop failure has consequently reduced the expected crop yields leading to high prices of cereals in all the major local markets in most parts of the District.
- Fair crop yields are certain on sorghum and pigeon peas in both livelihood zones, although these crops were not expansively planted. Food purchase prices of cereals and legumes remained high within the District. Pockets where poor food crops yields are evident entail the following locations: Riakanau, Karaba, Mavuria, Gichiche, Kiambere, Mutuobare, Mutitu, Ndurumori and Ishiara.
- Pasture and browse availability and accessibility remained fair across the entire District. Livestock body condition remained fairly good across the entire District. Livestock mortality rate decreased for cattle and goats and increased for sheep's while birth rates decreased on all animal species across the District. Livestock prices remained favorable on all animal species, accompanied by stable selling rates.
- Water availability and accessibility rapidly fluctuated. Water reserves declined on both permanent and seasonal water reservoirs, consequently increasing pressure and congestion on various strategic water points. Water availability and accessibility is expected to fluctuate as the dry spell perpetuate.
- The nutrition status of children under 5 years of age deteriorated in comparison with last month. Gachoka Division recorded the highest number of children whose MUAC is < 135 mm. In human health, there no major ailments which were reported within the District.

Recommendations to District Authorities/DSG and national KFSSG

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

Current interventions

Non-food interventions

- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes within the entire District.
- Completion of fencing of Karura water pan.
- Value addition.
- Vaccination of all livestock within the District against Anthrax, Black quarter and Lumpy skin disease.
- Extension of kienire water pipeline.

Food aid

- Regular school feeding programme.

DSG Meetings and recommendations

The DSG met on 3/7/2008 at the District headquarters, Mbeere.

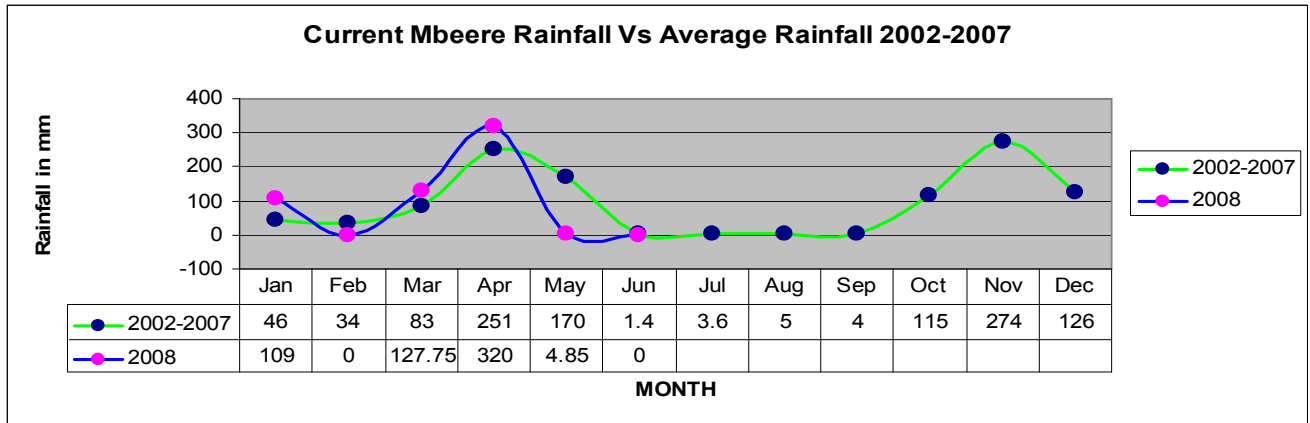
The following recommendations were realized:

- Food relief targeting 15% of the population in marginal mixed farming livelihood zone.
- Expanding school feeding programme to 29 primary schools.
- Rehabilitation of the Kianthenge borehole.

- Surveillance of PPR.
- Provision of relief seeds i.e. green grams, sorghum, millet, maize and beans.
- Intensified campaigns on tradition food crops e.g. pigeon peas

1. Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall



1.1.1 Amount of rainfall

- The District was devoid of precipitation for the entire month of June. Absolute absence of moisture reveal below normal trend during this period of the year.

1.2 Condition of Natural Vegetation and Pasture

1.2.1 Quality

- Pastures and browse quality remained fair within the entire District. The situation is normal at this period of the year. Pasture and browse quality is expected to deteriorate as the dry spell persist causing excessive dryness.

1.2.2 Quantity

- Pasture and browse availability remained fair within the entire District. The prevailing situation is normal at this period of the year. Pastures and browse quantity are expected to diminish as dry spell perpetuate.

1.3 Water sources and availability

1.3.1 Water sources

- Water availability and accessibility rapidly fluctuated following the current persistent dry spell. The current situation is not normal at this period of the year. Water reserves on various water catchments have declined. Currently community prominently depends on natural rivers, bore holes, traditional river wells, pans and springs for both domestic and human consumption.
- Congestion and pressure has rapidly resumed on various focal water points. Water availability and accessibility remained fair in all livelihood zones.

1.3.2 Livestock access to water

- Distances from grazing areas to main water sources increased from 2.8 Km in the month of May to 3 Km in the month of June. The prevailing distances are not normal at this period of the year. Water reserves on various water reservoirs e.g. seasonal rivers, catchments pools, earth dams and water pans remained fair.
- Distances covered in search of water are expected to escalate further as the dry spell prevails.

1.3.3 Household access to water

- Current average distance from households to main water sources have also significantly increased from 2.8 Km in the month of May to 2.9 Km in the month of June. The prevailing distances are normal at this period of the year.
- Water volumes on various water reservoirs e.g. catchments pools, earth dams and water pans, remained fair. Distances covered in search of water are expected to dilate as normal dry spell persists.

1.4 Implications on food security

- Fair availability of pasture and browse resulted to acceptable livestock selling rate, fair milk production, good livestock body conditions and favorable livestock prices, therefore increasing food security.
- However depleting water availability and accessibility has increased time and energy subjected to search water. This contributes negatively to food insecurity.

2. Rural indicators (Food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- Livestock body condition remained fairly good on all animal species. The prevailing body condition is normal at this period of the year. The physical condition could be attributed to the fair availability of forage and water for livestock consumption.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- Livestock health condition remained good on cattle and goats. Goat mortality declined from 1% to 0.5% while sheep mortality rate slightly increased from 1.2% to 1.3% and remained at 0% on cattle. Evurore Division recorded the highest sheep and goat mortality of 1.3% and 0.6% respectively. The prevailing sheep and goat mortality rates are normal in the district at this time of the year.

2.1.3 Milk production

- Average milk production increased by 0.8% in comparison with the previous month. Increased milk production could be attributed to the fairly good quality and quantity of pasture and browse within the entire District. Number of the households accessing milk increased significantly.
- Gachoka Division had the highest milk output while Siakago Division had the least. Output variation is influenced by livestock population density, distribution per household and varying degree of pasture and browse availability.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- The current crop production season commenced on time finding majority of farmers prepared. Planting activities were not intensive in the month of March since farmers were not certain about the reliability of long rains. However planting activities intensified in April when consistent and intense rainfall resumed.
- Germination of seedlings was fair and incidences of replanting were minimal. Contrary to the expectations unusual dry spell occurred in May and persisted in the month of June affecting the late planted crops due to moisture stress. The mixed farming marginal zone is the most affected.
- Good crop yields are certain on sorghum and pigeon peas in both livelihood zones, although these crops were not expansively planted.
- Minor cases of pest attack were observed.
- Comparatively crop conditions differ from one livelihood zone to the other depending on rainfall amount, distribution and crop species. Maize is at the cob formation to maturity stages with the early planted crops performing fairly except in the lower marginal mixed farming zones. Millet &

Sorghum are at the drying/harvesting stages with the late planted crops performing very poorly in all areas.

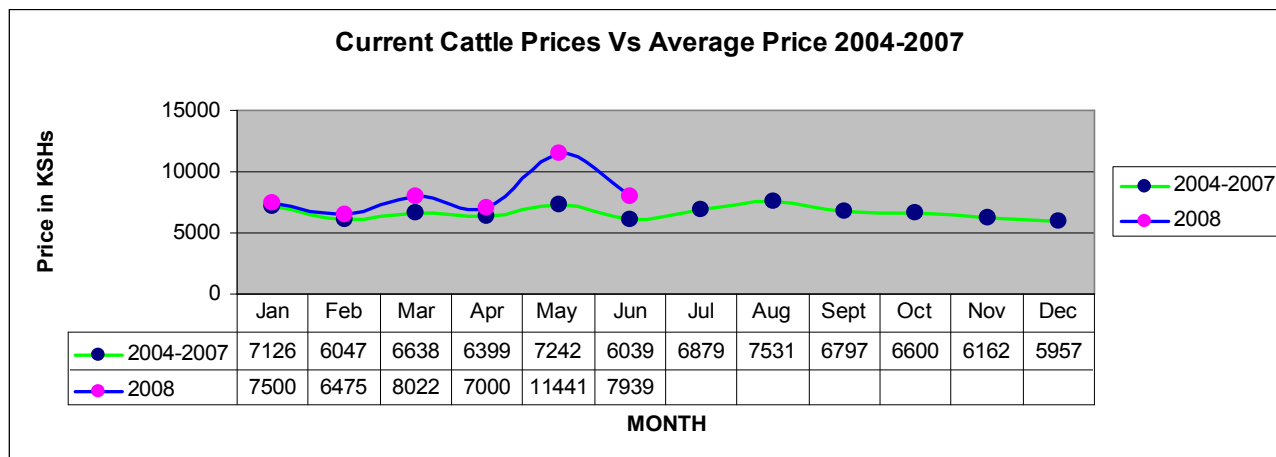
- Beans performed very poorly (25 % success) with Mwea Division attaining only 10 % success. - Other pulses are fair (35 % success) except in Mwea Division (20 % success).

2.2.2 Implication on food security

- The fairly good livestock body conditions and health translate to improved food security, while the poor crop conditions indicate food insecurity.

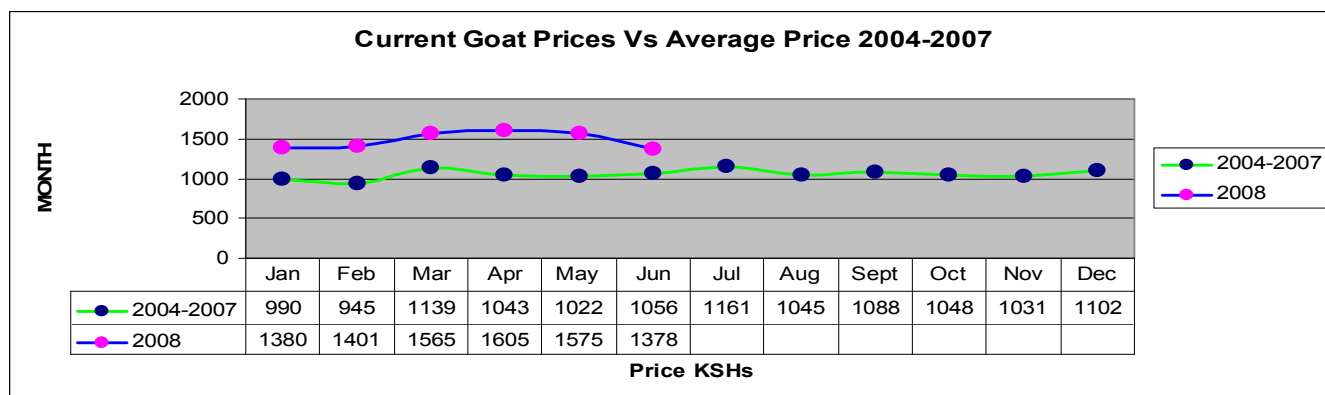
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices



- Cattle prices were on the decline within the entire District. The prices are normal at this period of the year. The decrease in cattle prices could be attributed to the deteriorating body condition of cattle. Selling rates declined from 2.9% in the month of May to 1.7% in the month of June. Siakago Division had the highest sales rate of 2.1% while Gachoka Division had the least of 0%. The highest price was recorded in Evurore Division of Kshs 9,667 while the lowest price was recorded in Siakago Division of Kshs 6,900.

3.1.2 Goat prices



- Goat prices depreciated from Kshs 1,575 in May to Kshs 1,378 in June. The prevailing prices are above normal at this time of the year. The depreciating prices could be attributed to the high number of goats in the market for sell since the households are not relying on income from crop sales and casual labor to meet household expenditure.

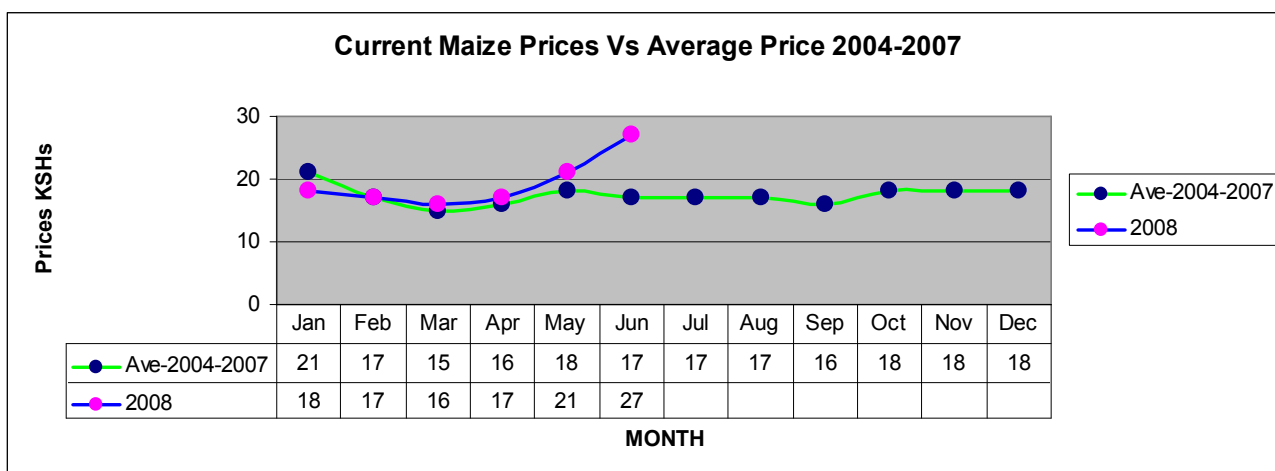
- Selling rates depreciated from 4.4% to 2.1% in the month of June. Gachoka Division had the highest price per goat at Kshs 1,450.5 while EvuroreDivision had the lowest goat prices at an average of Kshs 1,275.

3.1.3 Milk consumption

- Average milk consumed per household increased from 49 bottles of 750ml the month of May to 52 bottles of 750 ml in the month of June. This is attributed to the increased milk production. However milk consumption varies from one Division to the other, Gachoka Division had the highest milk consumption level while Mwea Division had the lowest.

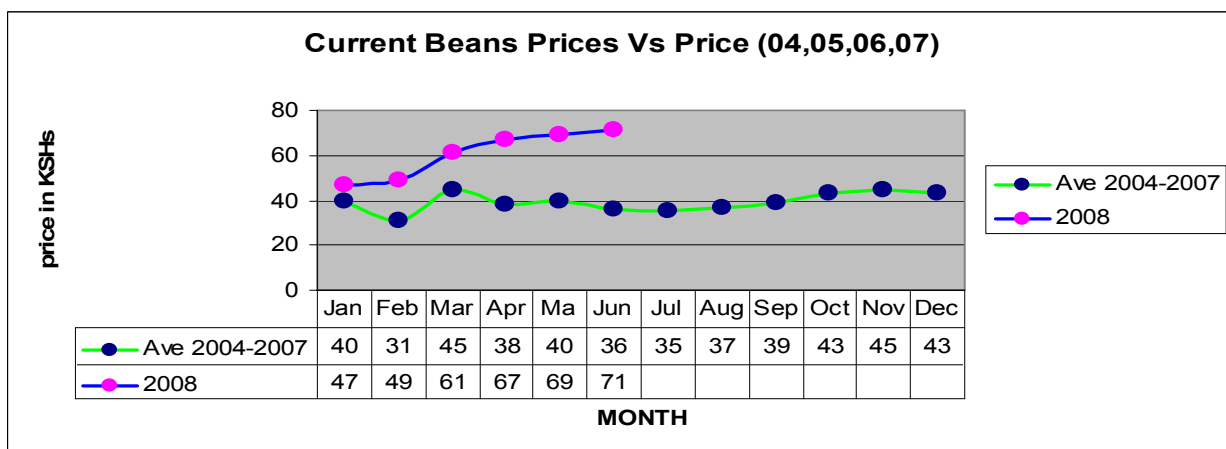
3.2 Crop prices

3.2.1 Maize prices



- Maize prices increased from Kshs 21 per Kilogram in the month of May to Kshs 27 per Kilogram for the month of June. The prices are above normal at this period of the year. The increase in maize prices could be attributed to poor crop performance in the previous season. Siakago Division had the highest maize prices at Kshs 29.10 per Kilogram while Mwea Division had the lowest at Kshs 26.25 per Kilogram.

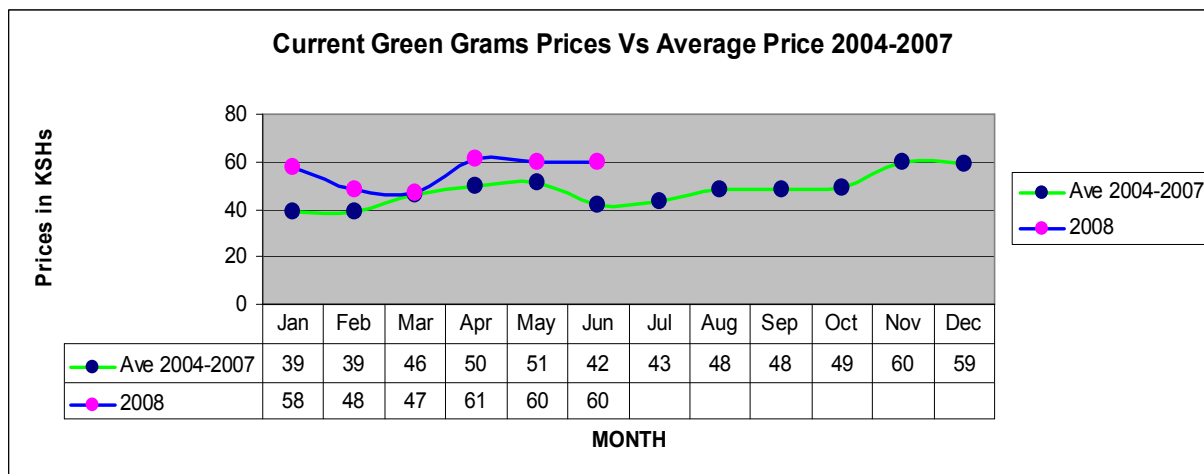
3.2.2 Beans prices



- Beans prices increased from Kshs 69 per Kilogram in the month of May to Kshs 71 per Kilogram in the month of June. The prices are above normal at this period of the year. High beans prices could be

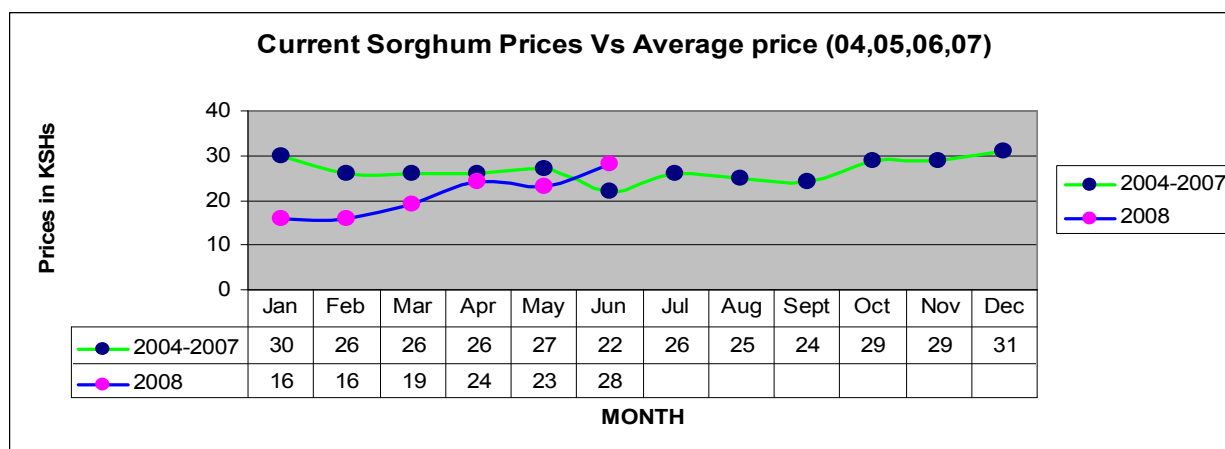
attributed to poor crop performance in the previous season. Gachoka Division had the highest beans price at Kshs 72.50 per Kilogram while Siakago Division recorded the lowest at Kshs 68.13 per Kilogram. Price variance could be attributed to disparities on output and availability of beans and that of other legumes and pulses within different livelihood zones.

3.2.3 Green grams prices



- Green gram prices remained conspicuously high at a price of Kshs 60 per Kilogram. The prices are above normal at this period of the year. High green gram prices could be attributed to poor crop performance in the previous season and excessive external and internal market demand. Gachoka Division had the highest green gram price at Kshs 65.80 per Kilogram while Evurore Division recorded the lowest at Kshs 50 per Kilogram. Price variance could be attributed to level of output within different livelihood zones.

3.2.4 Sorghum prices



- Sorghum prices appreciated from Kshs 23.40 per Kilogram in the month of May to Kshs 28 per Kilogram in the month of June. The prices are above normal at this period of the year. The sorghum prices could be attributed to the depleting reserves of sorghum stock from previous season's harvest. Siakago Division had the highest sorghum prices of Kshs 35 per Kilogram while Mwea Division had the lowest of Kshs 16.25 per Kilogram. The current prices are expected to increase due to crop failure by the other crops.

3.3 Income

3.3.1 Crop income

- Income from crop sales declined from 14.33% in the month of May to 12.45% the month of June as the source of total household revenue. Income from crop sales has declined due to crop failure in the previous season and depleting disposable household reserves.

3.3.2 Livestock income

- Contribution from livestock sales increased slightly from 12.7% in the month of May to 12.8% the month of June. Dependency on income from livestock sales is speculated to rise as household are exhausting alternative source of household incomes e.g. crop sale.

3.3.3 Other income (trade, wages, etc.)

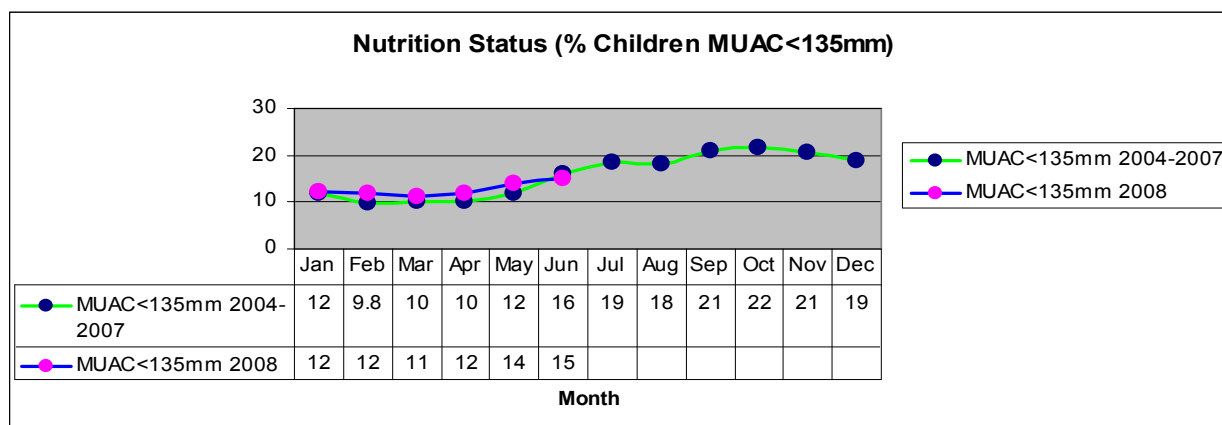
- Casual labor as the major source of aggregate household income in Mbeere District declined from 43% in the month of May to 41% in the month of June. This is because there were no Agriculture activities taking place within the month to provide most of the casual labor opportunities.

3.4 Implications on food security

- Fair livestock prices indicate improving food security. The decreasing opportunities for casual labourers and high food purchase prices reflect declining food affordability and accessibility, leading to increased food insecurity.

4. Welfare (Utilization of food)

4.1 Nutrition status



- Currently the percentage of children whose MUAC IS<135mm is HIGHER than that of May 2008. The situation seems to be WORSE than that of May 2008. There is a significant change from the District average of last month and so the situation seems to have DETERIORATED in June 2008. Gachoka Division had significant INCREASES in the percentage of children MUAC<135mm from 22.8% in the month of May to 23.9% in the month of June. The situation needs further investigation if the situation continues to worsen.
- The current nutrition status amongst children under 5 years of age is normal at this period of the year

5. Current intervention measures and coping strategies

5.1 Non-food interventions

- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes within the entire District.
- Completion of fencing of Karura water pan.
- Value addition.
- Extension of kienire water pipeline.

- Vaccination of all livestock within the District against Anthrax, Black quarter and Lumpy skin disease.

5.2 Food aid

- Regular school feeding programme.

6. Recommendations

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