



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

DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN FOR JUNE, 2008

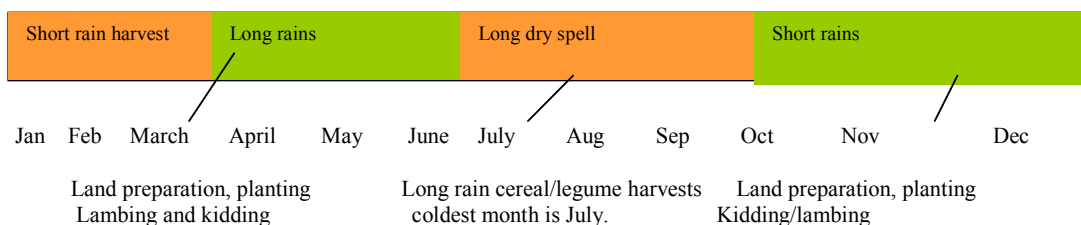
MWINGI DISTRICT

WARNING STAGES



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Agro Pastoral Zone	Alert	Worsening
Mixed Farming Zone	Alert	Worsening
District	Mwingi	Worsening

TIME LINE



Situation Overview

Agro-Pastoral Livelihood zone. (Tseikuru, Ngomeni, Kyuso, Mumoni, Nuu and Nguni)

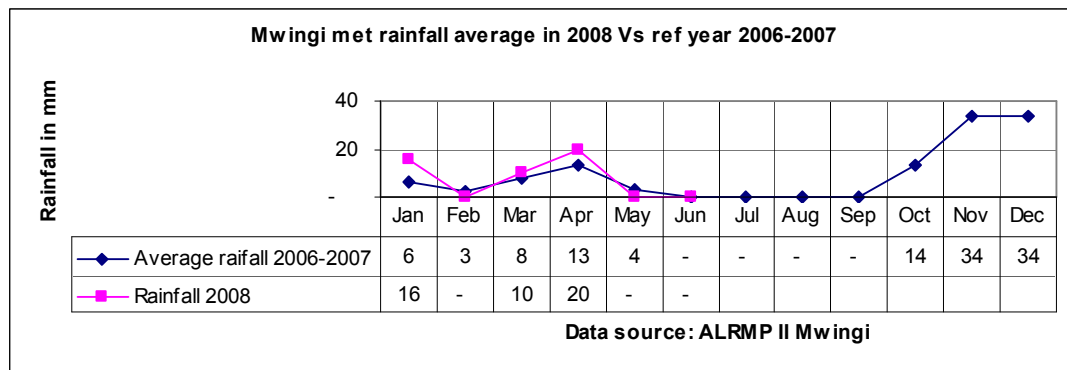
- The weather was been cloudy, windy and cold during the month. No rain was reported and most crops have already dried up. Livestock body condition is fairly stable but household prices are on a downward trend. Quantity and quality of natural vegetation is poorer compared to last month. Water access and availability is below normal at this time of the year with quantities decreasing fast. Malnutrition cases are low. Clashes between pastoralists and local communities were reported within Ngomeni division resulting into at least 2 deaths and several injuries. Prices of cereals and other foodstuffs are escalating whereas households are relying on food purchases for survival. Casual labour is common but poorly paid. No livestock disease outbreak reported

Mixed farming zone (Central, Migwani, Mui, parts of Kyuso Divisions)

- The weather was cloudy, windy and cold during the month. No rains were reported. Livestock body condition is fair but household livestock prices are declining. Quality and quantity of natural vegetation is poorer compared to last month. Water access and availability is normal at this time of the year. Malnutrition cases are generally low. Prices of cereals and other foodstuff are escalating and most households are relying on food purchases. No livestock disease outbreak reported.

1 Environmental indicators

1.1 Rainfall



1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

Quality:

- The quality of natural vegetation and pastures has declined over the last one month. Most vegetation has started drying up especially in Nguni, Tseikuru, Kyuso, Ngomeni and Mumoni Divisions. Most vegetation has turned brownish in color.

Quantity:

- The quantity of natural vegetation and pastures has declined over the last one month. The grasses have almost disappeared. The shrubs and trees have shed off their leaves which are then fed on by termites. The shedding is earlier than normal due to failed rainfall.

1.3 Water sources and availability

- Water access and availability remained stable for the last one month but the quantities have reduced. There are indicators of water stress across the district. Overcrowding along water points by both humans and livestock is now more common.
- The average walking distance to water points is about 6 Km. Average waiting time is on the increase with some households spending more than one hour.
- There are a few water sources that are not in use due to a number of reasons such as high salinity, broken pumps among others. Cost of water, especially for the new JICA projects (Ksh 3/20 Litre jerry can) is also prohibitive for the majority of households especially those with large herds of animals.

1.4 Emerging issues

1.4.1 Inter-communal conflict

- Skirmishes were reported in Ngomeni and Nguni Divisions along Tana River boarder involving Pastoralists and the local people. The pastoralists have encroached into the grazing areas along the Tana River District border in the district and fed their animals on pastures and crops of the local people. Two deaths were reported with several people getting injured. The situation was calmed down after security was beefed up by security teams from the affected districts. The security committees were supported by ALRMP II.

1.4.2 Implications on food security

- The drought situation has continued to degenerate over the last one month. There is almost total crop failure in the District due to rain failure. Although the April rains may appear to be above average, the distribution was very poor such that the total wet days did not exceed 7 days in any Division. Food security at household level has been seriously compromised since no harvest was realized.
- As the drought situation worsens, competition for grazing and water resources among different communities is likely to cause more conflicts as was witnessed in Ngomeni Division. This can lead to loss of lives and property and therefore affecting food security negatively.
- Reduction in pasture and water availability is likely to cause a reduction in livestock body condition and productivity thereby affecting household food security negatively.
- The grazing reserves are now being used by the pastoralists and the residents of Mwingi will have nowhere to graze during the peak of drought.
- As the drought situation worsens, competition for grazing and water resources among different communities is likely to cause more conflicts as was witnessed in Ngomeni Division. This can lead to unnecessary loss of lives and property and therefore affecting food security negatively.
- Reduction in pasture and water availability is likely to cause a deterioration in livestock body condition and productivity thereby affecting household food security negatively.

2. Rural indicators (Food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- Livestock body condition is fairly stable across the divisions although this is likely to deteriorate as the drought situation worsens.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- There was no major outbreak of livestock diseases although cases of goat deaths were reported in Tseikuru and Ngomeni Divisions due to suspected CCPP.

2.1.3 Milk production

- There has been an 8% decrease in milk production compared to last month. This could be due to deteriorating pasture and water availability in the District.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- Few farms in Migwani Division are harvesting pigeon peas in their farms otherwise there is practically crop failure in every other division. Many crops have dried up and others like maize can only be used as fodder for the livestock.

2.2.2 Pests and diseases

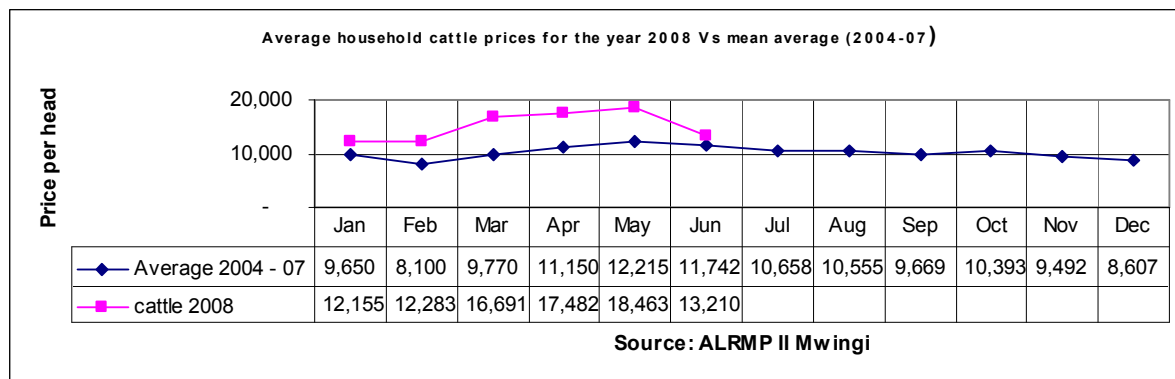
- The few crops that survived were invaded by pests. Aphids have attacked pigeon peas. Birds also attacked the few cereal crops that were grain filling.

2.2.3 Implications on food security

- All households have reported crop failure and therefore they are not going to get any harvest this season. This is going to cause serious food shortage bearing in mind that last season's harvest was poor.
- The livestock sector is likely to be hit hard as the drought situation worsens. Already, livestock prices have started to be affected negatively as households try to dispose the extra herds due to fear of drought.

3. Access to food

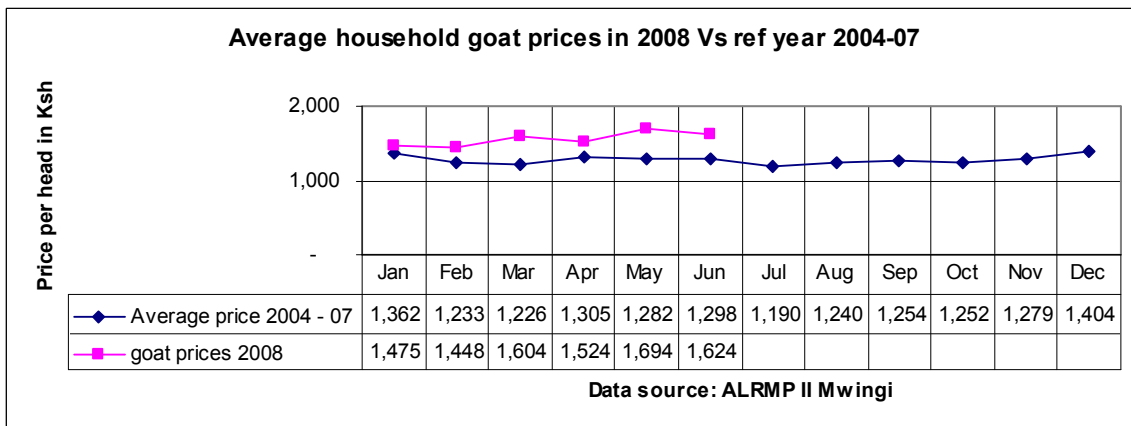
3.1 Cattle prices



- The average household cattle prices sharply reduced from Ksh 18,463 last month to Ksh 13,210 currently. The highest prices were recorded in Ngomeni Division at Ksh 16,000 per head while the lowest prices were recorded in Mumoni Division at Ksh 7,000.
- The drop in prices could be an indication of deteriorating drought status. Due to drought uncertainty, panic stricken farmers are attempting to dispose the extra herds in the market in order to purchase food stuffs and other basic commodities. Others could be doing so in order to minimize risks associated with drought insecurity. There could also be panic sales in divisions bordering Tana River District due to conflict between pastoralists and the local communities. This might have resulted in over supply of animals in the market and therefore depressing market prices.

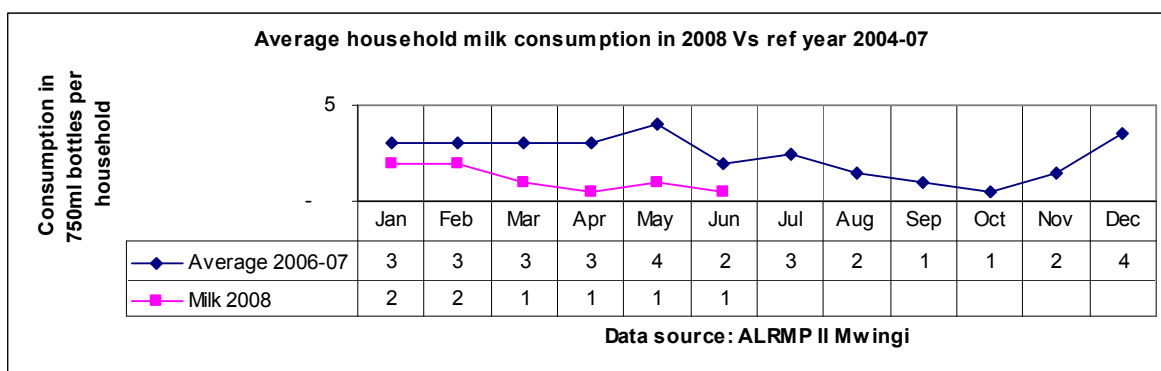
- This has a serious impact on food security because farmers are earning much less from livestock sales and therefore losing out on an income that could have been used to sustain households.

3.2 Goat prices



- There was a slight decrease of average household goat prices from Ksh 1,694 last month to Ksh 1,624 currently. The highest prices were recorded in Ngomeni division at Ksh 2,812 per head while the lowest prices were recorded in Tseikuru at Ksh 1,423. The stable prices could be due to a fair body condition exhibited by the goats. Demand for Mwingi goats in Metropolitan markets is high thus contributing to stable prices. The markets are yet to be saturated with the goats. However, if the trend continues to drop, it might not augur well for households since goats play an important role in sustenance during hardship periods.

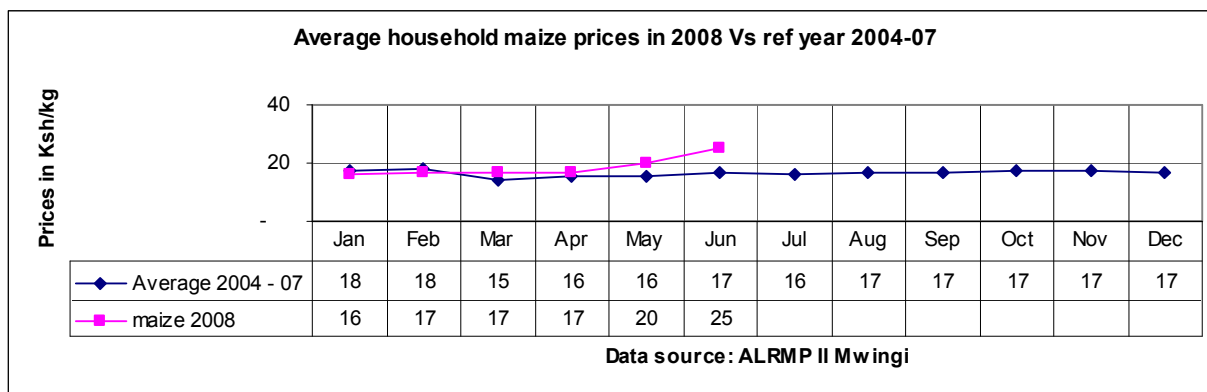
3.3 Milk Consumption



- The average household milk consumption has dropped to less than a bottle per household and the number of households reported to be consuming milk dropped by 20% compared to last month. This could be due to worsening drought situation.
- The above scenario is likely to affect nutritional status of household members negatively.

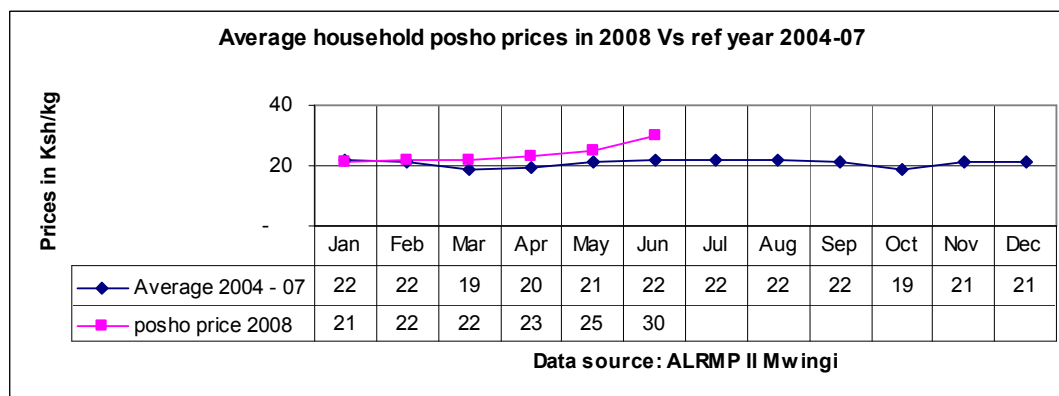
3.4 Crop prices

3.4.1 Maize prices



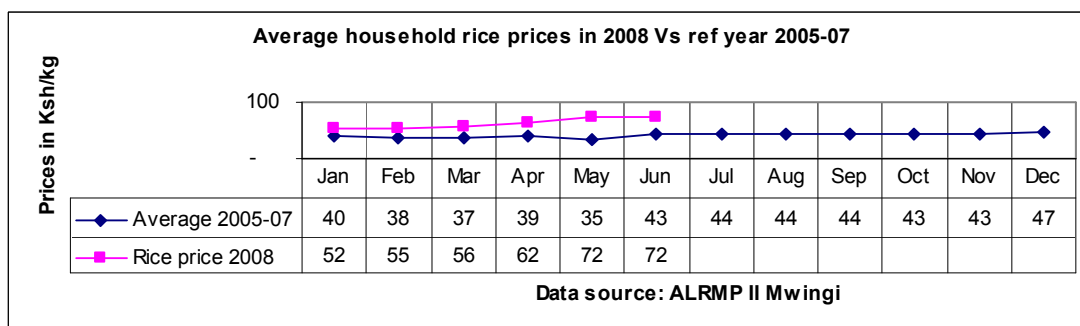
- The average household maize prices shot up from Ksh 20/Kg last month to Ksh 25/Kg currently. This could be due to the fact that many households are purchasing maize from the market and therefore pushing up the prices. Market supplies are also low and therefore contributing to high prices.
- The implication on household food security is serious since many households are unlikely to afford maize at the current price level.

3.4.2 Posho prices



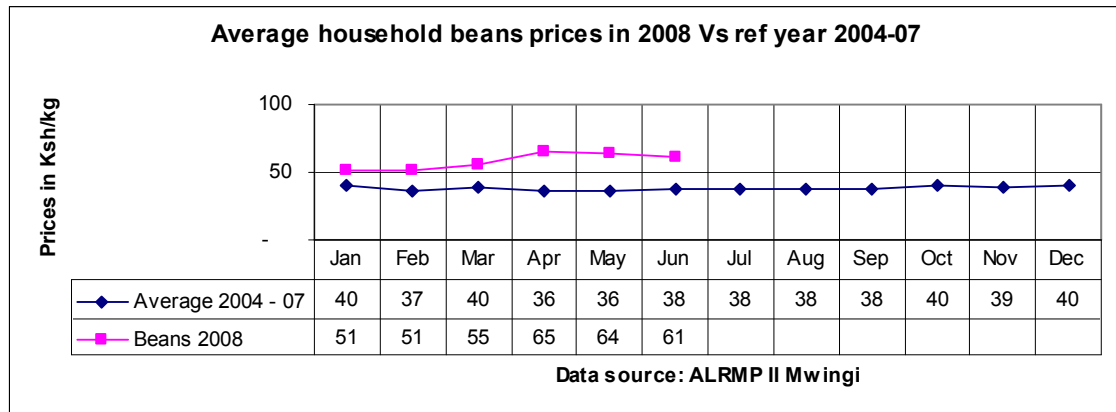
- The average household posho prices shot up from Ksh 25/Kg last month to Ksh30/Kg currently. This could be attributed to high maize and fuel prices. High fuel prices are contributing to high cost of production on milling.
- Households are unlikely to afford this commodity at the current price levels.

3.4.3 Rice prices



- The average household rice prices have remained the same compared to last month. This could be due to the fact that many households have stopped purchasing rice and therefore causing upward price movement to cease.

3.4.4 Beans prices



- The average household beans prices reduced slightly from Ksh 64/Kg last month to Ksh 61 currently. The prices are still much higher compared to the mean and therefore Majority of households are unable to afford the commodity. The commodity is still scarce at the market.

3.5 Income

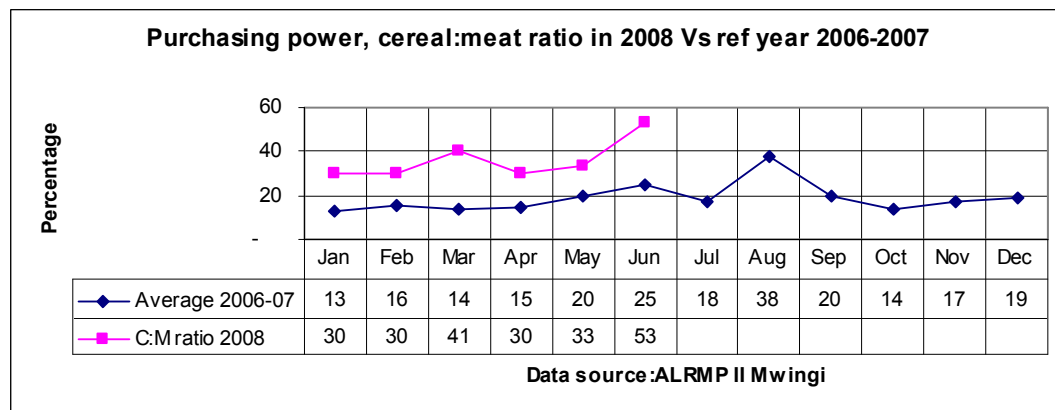
3.5.1 Crop income

- The number of households selling crops has reduced significantly from 5% last month to 3% currently. This is an indication that there are virtually no food stocks at household levels.

3.5.2 Livestock income

- The number of households selling livestock has increased from 13% last month to 15% currently. This might be due to necessity for food whereby households are disposing livestock in order to acquire food stuffs especially cereals.

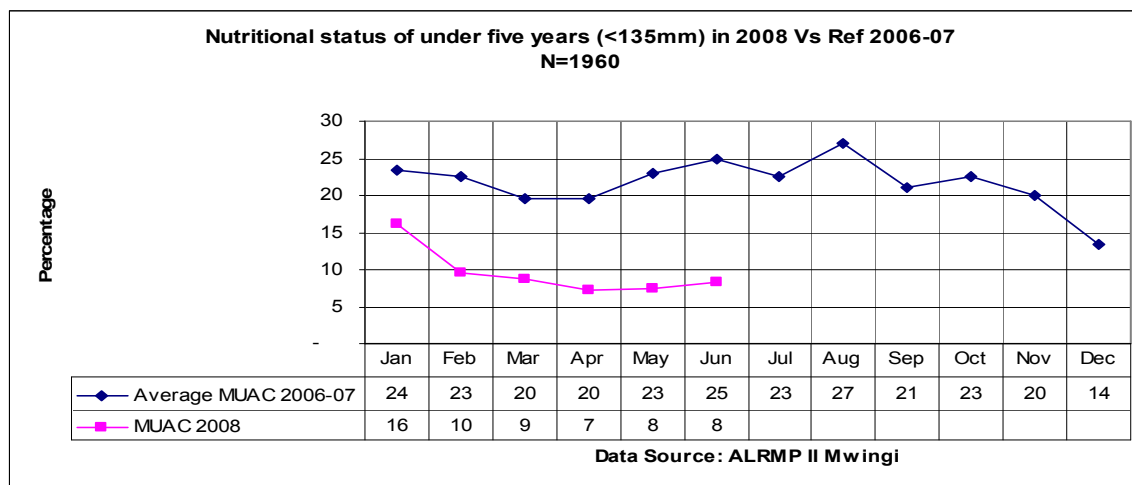
3.5.3 Other sources of income Cereal :Meat Price Ratio



- The terms of trade on cereal to meat ratio increased from 33% last month to 53% currently. This is likely to be as a result of increasing cereal prices while livestock prices are declining.
- The small livestock farmer is disadvantaged because he is gaining fewer cereals with the same amount of livestock products compared to last month. For instance, at the current market prices, one has to dispose at least 2 goats in order to get one bag of maize (90Kg bag).

4 Welfare (Utilization of food)

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



- The percentage of malnourished children has remained the same compared to last month i.e. 8%. However, the highest rates were observed in Migwani Division at 24% and specifically in Thaana Nzau at 42% where conditions are deteriorating. This could be due to dwindling food stocks at household levels.

4.2 Human Health

- No outbreak of disease has been reported. Few diarrhea cases have been reported in Migwani and Nuu whose cause is yet to be known.

5. Current intervention measures and coping strategies

5.1 Non-food intervention

- The District security has been promoting dialogue and reconciliation between communities living along the Tana River border in order to enhance co existence. Security surveillance is ongoing to avert a recurrence of conflict between the pastoralists and the local communities. Arid lands played a key role by facilitating in provision of fuel and transport for the communities to dialogue together.

5.2 Food aid

- Food distribution in Mumoni, Kyuso, Tseikuru, Nguni and Nuu is ongoing under the food for asset work programme.
- The new Mwingi District has received food aid from the Government comprising of 1,500 bags of maize(90Kg), 500 bags of beans(50Kg) and 300 cartons of vegetable oil(18 Litre capacity). The relief is to be distributed to the most vulnerable people in the District.
- Kyuso District also received similar amounts as the Government tried to bridge the gap as the food situation is getting worse.

6. Recommendations

- The District is experiencing food stress and there is a need for strong intervention in the next one month to protect the most vulnerable people in the District.
- Security surveillance along the Tana river boundary should be enhanced to avert another recurrence of clashes between pastoralists and the local communities. This will prevent unnecessary loss of lives and property.
- There is need to streamline livestock marketing channels in order to protect livestock producers from exploitation by the middle men who are taking advantage of the drought situation to rip off the farmers.
- The district livestock marketing council should be strengthened to enable it lobby and advocate for better prices of Mwingi livestock and livestock products in the regional market through capacity building
- Malfunctioning water pumps in the district should be repaired in order to maximize water availability.
- Special feeding programme for under five children in Thaana Nzau region should be started in order to arrest the rising cases of malnutrition.
- There is a need to consider provision of planting seeds to farmers for the next season since they have already consumed the seed stocks that had been reserved for planting.