

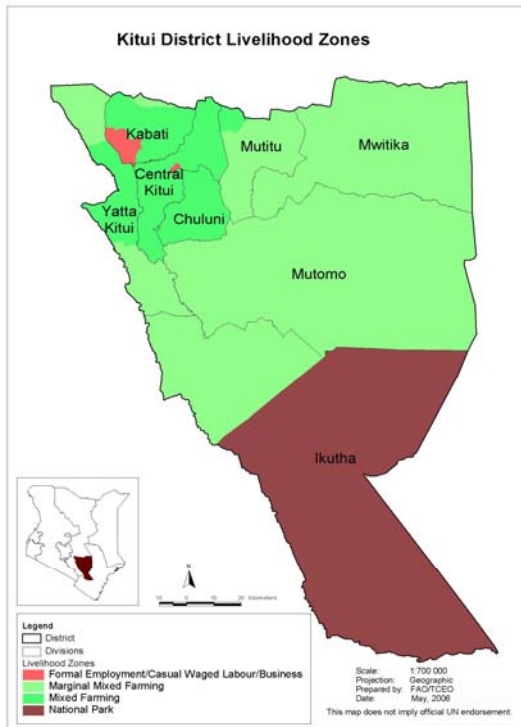


OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
 MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
 ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II

DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN FOR MAY, 2008

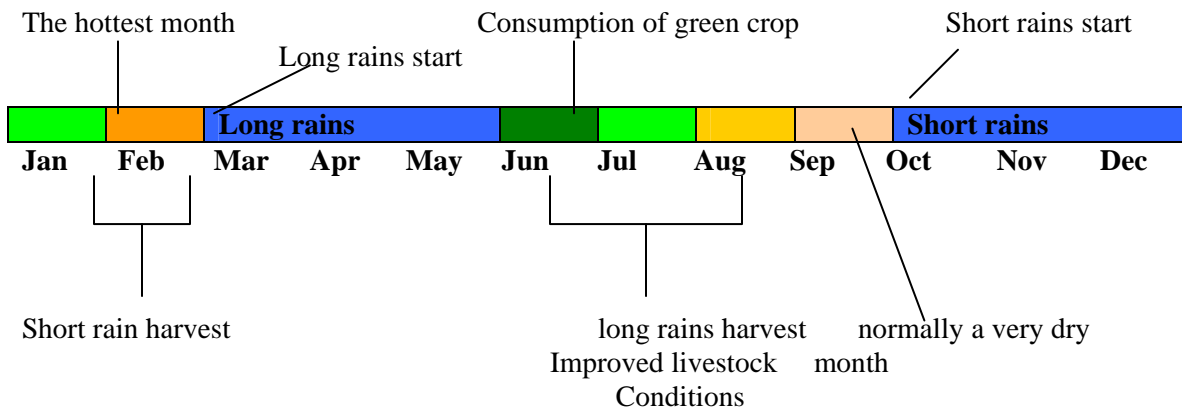
KITUI DISTRICT

WARNING STAGES



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Mixed farming	Alert	Improving
Marginal mixed farming	Alert	Stable
Formal Employment	Normal	Stable

TIME LINE



Situation overview.

- The District experienced dry and hot weather with intermittent cold days towards the end of the month of May.
- The natural vegetation and pastures remained stable as compared to the previous month. In the mixed farming livelihood zone, grass is drying and trees have started turning yellow due to the prevailing dry and hot weather conditions.
- Majority of the households in the district were drawing water from the traditional river wells. Other sources included pans & dams, shallow wells and rock catchments
- The walking distances to the water sources averaged 4 Kilometres and most communities were spending an average of 1.8 hours to and from the water sources. This distance and time is expected to increase as most of the open water facilities are fast drying up.
- Largely, the body conditions of livestock remained good apart from the few in the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone that have been hit by foot and mouth, lumpy skin disease and CCPP but the vaccination is on going supported by ALRMP and the Veterinary department.
- The sale rate of cattle rose from 1% previously to 3.2 % while that of goats remained stable at 2%
- Various crops are at various stages of development. Notably, maize crop in the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone has withered due to moisture stress while in the mixed farming livelihood zone in the areas where the crop has survived it is at tusseling and cobbing stages. Farmers expect poor grain filling due to moisture stress. Pigeon peas is relatively doing well in the mixed farming livelihood zone, the short season variety is being consumed green while the long season variety is at flowering and podding stages
- Communities in Mutomo District (marginal mixed farming livelihood zone) were affected by Aflatoxin contamination in their locally stored cereals.
- The price of both cattle and goats slightly went-up a trend that is attributed to the existing livestock good bodies despite the reported disease outbreaks.
- Milk consumption in the district increased compared to the previous month.
- The District experienced a sharp rise in the price of maize and beans. This trend is attributed to the decline in domestic supplies, poor performance of the current crop in the field and the escalating price of fuel in the country.
- The nutrition levels for children under the age of five years remained stable.

Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- To extend livestock vaccination to Mutitu and Mwitika Divisions which are equally vulnerable to notifiable disease attacks.
- Service all contingency boreholes in preparation for a severe drought in July.
- To sensitize farmers about aflatoxin infestation.
- To sensitize farmers to conserve fodder.
- To boost irrigation along the rivers to provide vegetables and earn income.
- Advocate for National cereals and produce board to start selling cereals directly to the communities in an effort to cushion them from exploitation by unscrupulous business men.
- To service water bowser in order to efficiently truck water institutions of learning.
- To reactivate peace committees and organize conflict resolution meetings to avert flare-ups over water and forage resources.

Current Interventions

Food Interventions

- Expansion of the EMOP coverage areas, community targeting and distribution of food.
- Distribution of food to the vulnerable groups in Yatta by ADRA.
- Continued regular school feeding program.
- Aflatoxin contaminated food seizure and replacement by Mutomo DSG.

Non- Food Interventions

Water

- Survey and construction of sand dams by GOAL Ireland, ALRMP, SASOL, DASS.
- Rehabilitation of Mutitu spring by AMREF.
- Construction of semea drifts by ALRMP.
- Drilling of Mwitika borehole by Ministry of water.
- Water trucking to institutions of learning by the Ministry of Water and Catholic Diocese of Kitui.

Works

- Construction of Inyuu drift by the department of public works.
- Maintenance of Mulango- Kavisuni road by DASS and Ministry of public works.

Livestock

- Continued mass vaccination of livestock against FMD & LSD in Mutomo & Kitui district.
- Promotion of fish farming (introduction of a new livelihood).
- Distribution of dairy goats and training on dairy goat management.

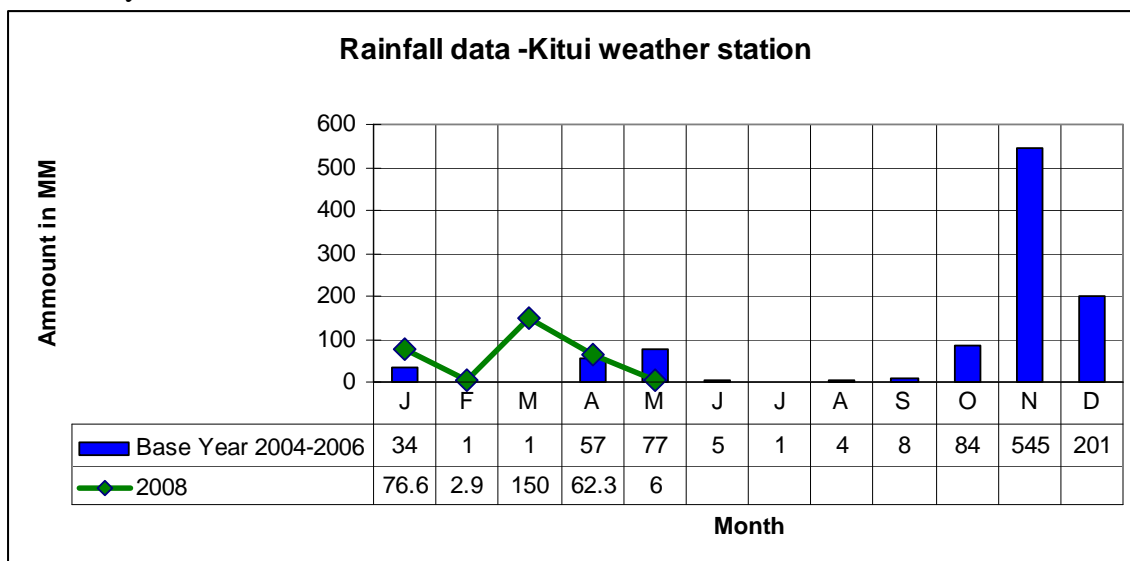
Agriculture

- Extension in crop production supported by NALEP.
- Promotion of irrigation by DASS, ADRA, ALRMP.

1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall

- The district experienced dry and hot weather conditions with intermittent cold days towards the end.



1.2 Natural Vegetation and Pastures

- The pasture and vegetation situation remained stable as compared to the previous month, due to the prevailing hot and dry weather, grass has started to dry while the leaves of most plants have started turning yellow.

1.3 Water Sources and Availability

- The main source of water in the district was traditional river wells. In the mixed farming livelihood zone, communities living along the main road were getting water from the Masinga pipeline intermittently. Whereas in the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone, a big percentage of the households were still fetching water from pans and dams.
- The return distances to the water points averaged four (4) kilometers for both livestock and domestic use. The communities indicated that they were spending an average of 1.8 hrs to and fro the water points. Other sources of water included, rock catchments, shallow wells, springs, and natural rivers. Statistically the number of households using a particular source relatively remained stable.

The table below shows the water sources in use and the % number of households accessing them during the month of April as compared to March

Source	Traditional river wells	Pans/Dams	Shallow wells	Rock catchments	Natural ponds	Natural rivers
March.2008	52%	20%	7%	2%	0%	0
April 2008	48%	27%	9%	7%	9%	0
May 2008	49%	25%	6%	6%	2%	2%

1.4 Implications on Food Security

- The prevailing hot and dry weather condition is withering the crops in the field.
- The available pasture and natural vegetation provided adequate forage to livestock and is expected to last the next two months.
- The distances to water points in the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone are high and the water levels in the traditional river wells have gone down

2.0 Rural economy indicators (Food availability)

2.1 Livestock body conditions

- The livestock body conditions remained good safe for the few that have been affected by foot & mouth and lumpy skin disease mainly in the marginal mixed farming zone. Vaccination to check the spread of the disease is on- going and curative measures to the already infected herds are in top gear.

2.1.1 Livestock Diseases

- In Mutomo District incidences of foot and mouth disease, lumpy skin disease (LSD) were reported as well as CCPP.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and crop situation

- Most of the crops in the field have dried –up and those surviving are showing signs of moisture stress. The situation is more severe in the marginal mixed farming zone where the rains performed dismally. The main crops in the field are Maize, Pigeon peas, beans and cowpeas which are at various stages of physiological growth & development.
- **Maize-** in the mixed farming livelihood zone, in the black cotton soils in Katutu and Katheani Locations in Mutonguni Division the early planted maize is at

tusseling and cobbing stage. The late planted crop is 45 centimeters high and moisture stressed. In the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone, most of the crop has withered except for a few pockets in Endau and Makongo Locations of Mwitika Division and Zombe Location of Mutitu Division.

- **Pigeon peas**- this crop is vegetative doing well in the farms within the mixed farming livelihood zone. The short season variety is ready and households have begun consuming it green. The long season variety is at flowering stage and farmers are spraying it against pests. In the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone in the few farms where the crop survived, it is moisture stressed and most of it aborted.
- **Cowpeas**- though poorly planted in the mixed farming livelihood zone the crop is at podding stage and doing well while in the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone most of the crop has withered.
- **Beans**- in the mixed farming livelihood zone the crop is being harvested but it performed poorly(the expected yields range from 2-6% of the seasons normal)
- **Fruit crops** – in the Central Divisions (Central, Matinyani & Chuluni) where most of the fruit farming is carried out, the main fruit crops which are currently ready are oranges, avocado and bananas & paw paws.
- **Baobab & Tamarinds**- these wild fruits are ripe and are plenty in Mutha, Ikutha & Mwitika Divisions in the marginal Mixed farming livelihood zone.

2.2.2 Crop pests and diseases

- Aflatoxin contamination in stored maize crop was reported in Mutomo and Kitui Districts.

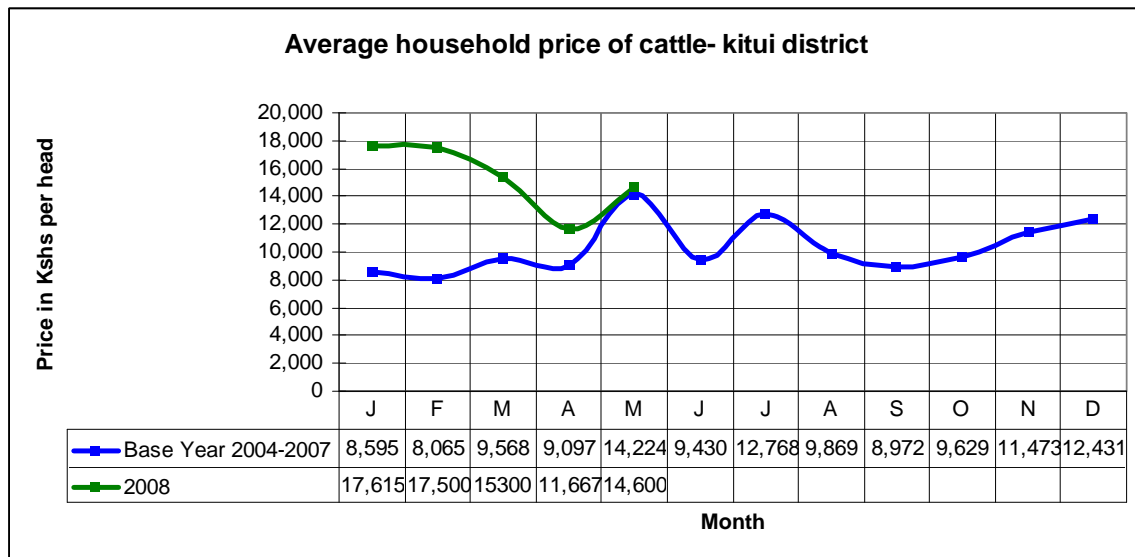
2.3 Implications on food Security

- Maize is the main staple crop in the district and its poor performance casts a gloomy future food security prospect in the district. However, the food security situation in the mixed farming livelihood zone has slightly been boosted by the availability of pigeon peas and an expected minimal maize crop harvest.
- The spread of the notifiable disease in Mutomo District pose a threat to the local community's livelihood because it is going to reduce the animals' resistivity to further attacks and also reduce availability of milk.
- The recent reported cases of Aflatoxin contamination in maize reported in Mutomo District is an indication that the little the farmers are holding could be contaminated or at risk of contamination thus further complicating the food security situation in the District.
- To counter the spread of the above reported livestock diseases farmers will have to further spent a fraction of their resources in vaccination which money would have been spend in buying food.

3.0 Access to food

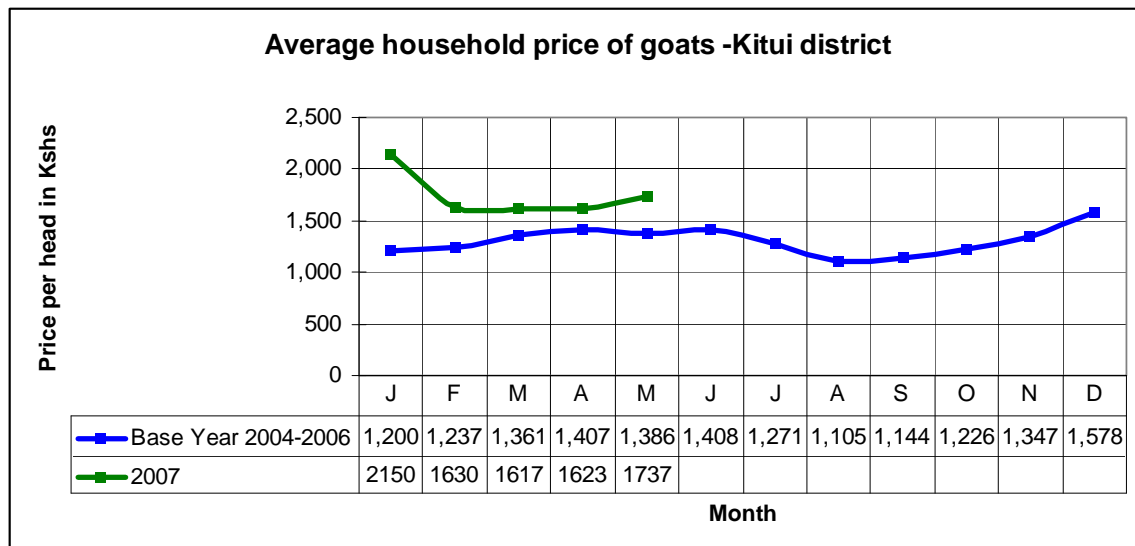
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices



- The price of cattle slightly went up. This improvement is attributed to the prevailing good body conditions. In addition, communities in the mixed farming livelihood zone have some crop in the field and are not under pressure to dispose their livestock. The prices ranged from Kshs.12,700 in Mutonguni Division to kshs.17,600 in Ikutha Division. Compared to the long term average the trend is normal.

3.1.2 Goats



- The price of goats continued to rise. Besides the prevailing good body conditions, farmers are attributing the rise in price to the increased cost of living. The prices of the main household items have significantly gone up a trend that has necessitated a rise in the price of goats to cater for the decline in purchasing power. The highest prices were recorded in Mutomo Division Kshs. 2,417 whereas the lowest were reported in Mwitika Kshs.1, 350. Compared to the long term average the trend is not normal.

3.1.3 Livestock sales

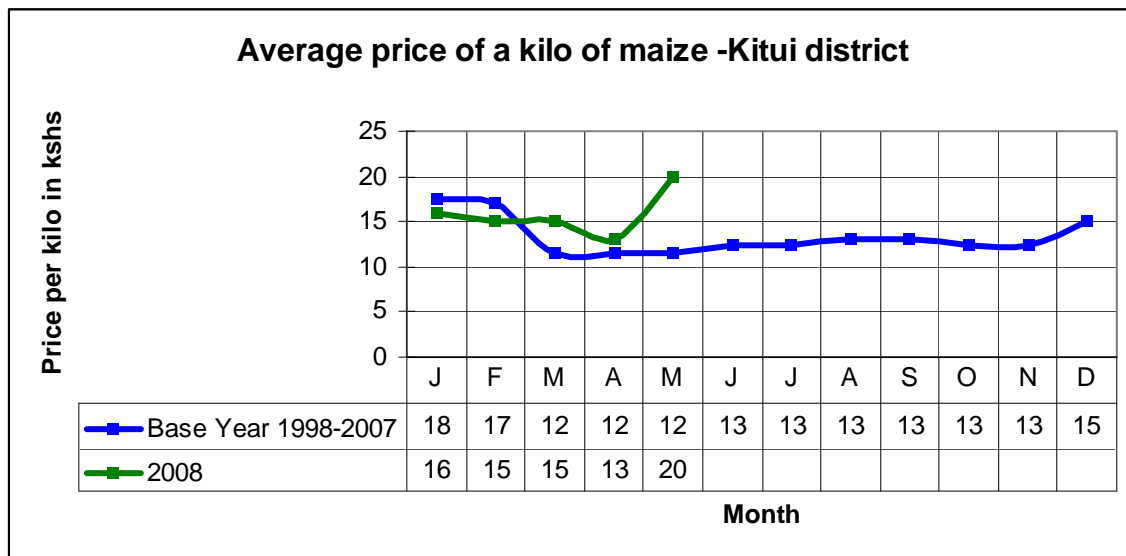
- The rate of selling of cattle rose from 1% in the previous month to 3.2 % currently while that of goats remained stable at 2%.

3.1.3 Milk consumption

- There was improved milk consumption in the district. Following the poor performance of the long rains crop milk has become the nearest and cheap source of proteins. Consumption rose from an average of 33 (750 mm) bottles per sampled households last month to the current 37 (750 mm) bottles.

3.2 Crop Prices

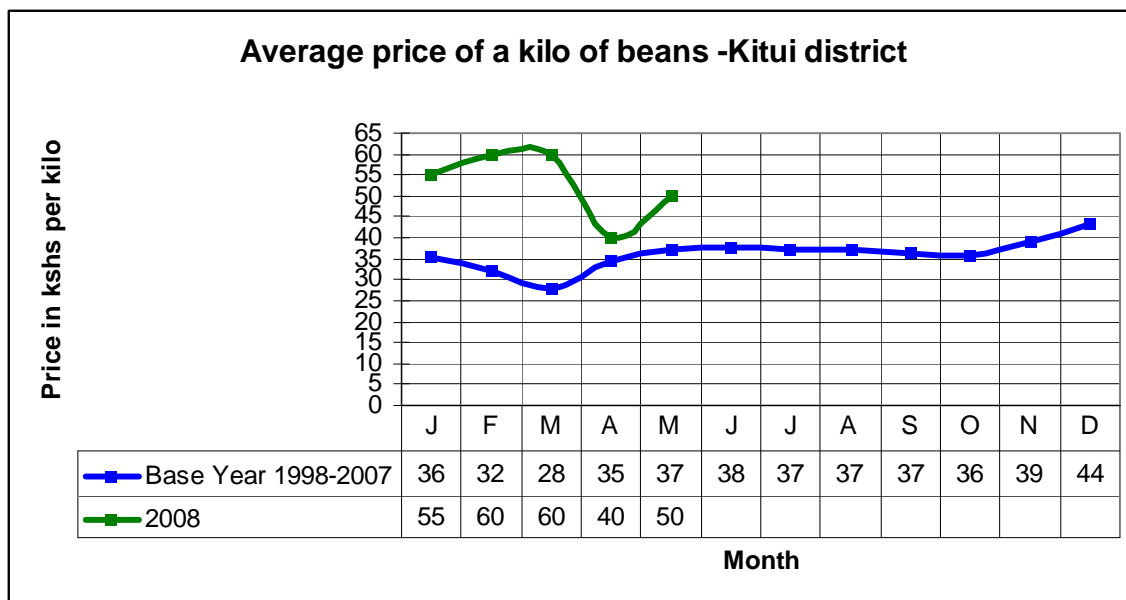
3.2.1 Maize



- The average price of a kilo of maize sharply went up. This rise is attributed to diminished local supplies and dismal performance of the crop in the field. Most stockiest are relying on supplies from outside the district and are complaining about the high cost of transportation following the rise in the price of fuel which they have loaded to the consumer. The trend is not normal.

3.2.2 Beans

- During the month the District experienced a rise in the price of beans. Again as mentioned above, the District is experiencing a shortage of the above food item following poor performance of the short rains. On the contrary, the demand for the same commodity is on the rise owing to depletion of stocks at the household levels. The District is importing this commodity from other parts of the country namely western province and parts of Coast Province. In the mixed farming livelihood zone farmers are substituting consumption of beans with green pigeon peas which are available in the farms. The trend is not normal and is expected to persist.



3.3 Incomes

3.3.1 Crop income

- The income from sale of crops compared to other sources declined from 4% in the previous month to 3% currently. This drop is attributed to decline in food stocks at the household levels and signs of poor performance the crop currently in the farms.

3.3.2 Livestock income

- The percentage of income derived from sale of livestock rose to 8% from 6% in the month of April.

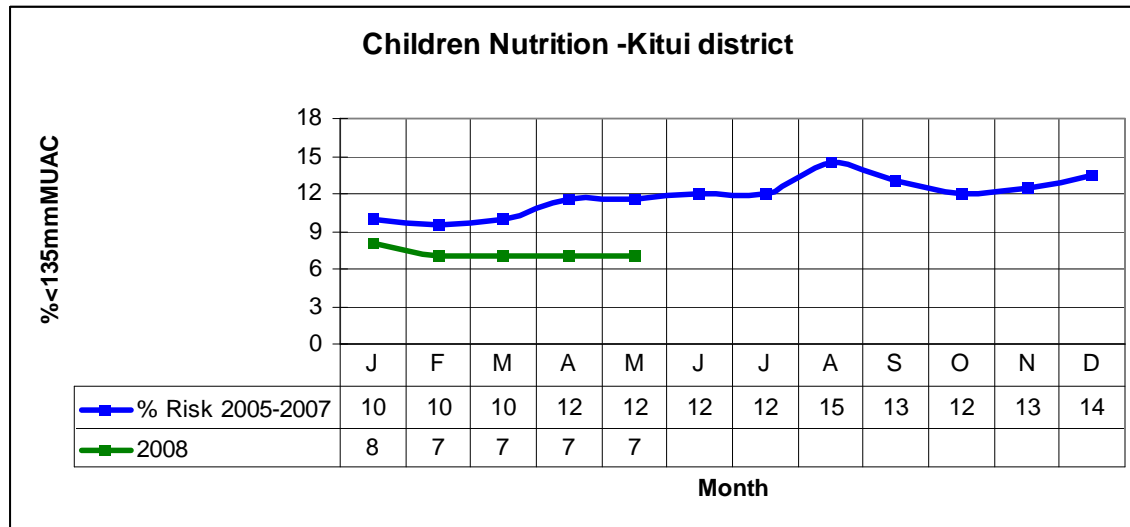
3.3.3 Other sources

- Casual labor remained the main source of income for the community. The percentage of proceeds from casual labor rose to 40% from 36% reported in April. This rise is attributed to availability of job opportunities in the farms during the weeding & harvesting periods. Others sources include, remittances 23%, salary 10%, petty trade 10% and sale of charcoal 6%.

3.4 Implications on food security

- The rise in price of livestock point at increased incomes from the sale proceeds and therefore increased access to other household items.
- Increased milk consumption translates to improved health situation through provision of essential nutrients
- However, it is important to note that the rate of rise in the prices of the staple food crops: maize and beans far outstrip the percentage rise in the price of livestock thus leading to poor terms of trade. Apart from the percentage increase in the prices of the main food crops the absolute prices are quite high and unaffordable to majority.

4. Welfare indicators (Utilization of food)



- The nutrition status for children under the age of five years remained within the previous months ranges. The highest levels of malnutrition were reported in Yatta and Ikutha Divisions at 11% and 9% respectively. These particular divisions experienced a poor performance of the short rains and thus are experiencing food shortages.

4.1 Human health

- No major human disease outbreak was reported during the reporting period.

5. Current interventions and coping strategies

Food Interventions

- Expansion of the EMOP coverage areas, community targeting and distribution of food.
- Distribution of food to the vulnerable groups in Yatta by ADRA.
- Continued regular school feeding program.
- Aflatoxin contaminated food seizure and replacement in Mutomo –DSG.

Non- Food Interventions

Water

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Livestock

- Continued mass vaccination of livestock against FMD & LSD in Mutomo District.
- Promotion of fish farming (introduction of a new livelihood).
- Distribution of dairy goats and training on dairy goat management.

Agriculture

- Extension in crop and livestock production supported by NALEP.
- Promotion of legume production and marketing (lucrative legume project) by CRS through catholic diocese of Kitui.
- Community training on value addition of baobab and tamarids in Ikutha.