

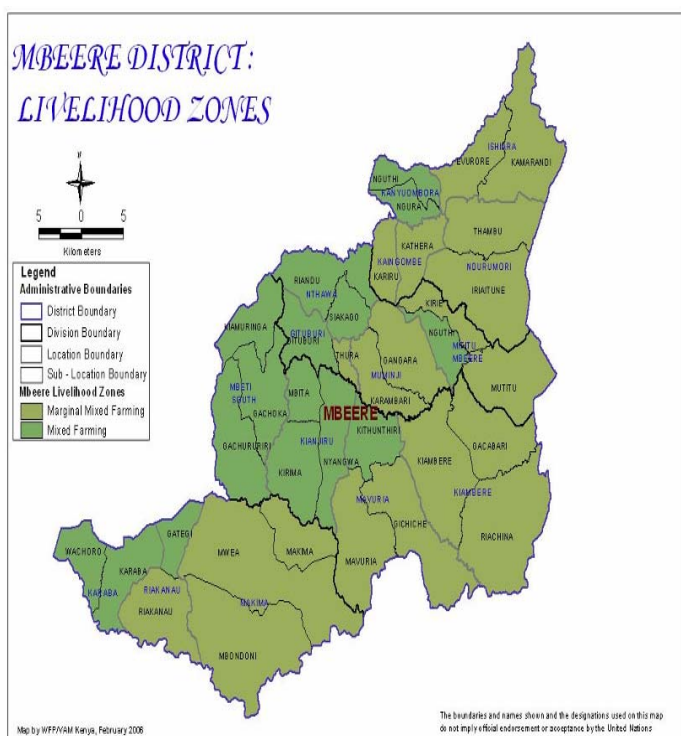


**MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT OF NOTHERN KENYA
AND OTHER ARID AREAS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN FOR MAY 2008

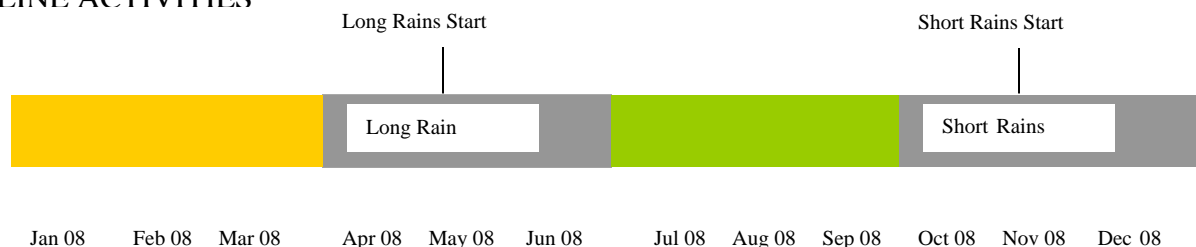
MBEERE DISTRICT

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

TIME LINE ACTIVITIES



Situation Overview

- Relatively warm and dry weather conditions prevailed across the entire District. The District was devoid of any consistent and reliable rainfall within the month of May. With the absence of any precipitation within the month, little agricultural activities took place and the crops experienced moisture stress. The absence of rainfall and crop failure has led to high prices of cereals in all the major local markets.
- Pasture and browse availability and accessibility remained good across the entire District. Livestock body condition remained good across the entire District. Incidences of livestock mortality were observed on goat and sheep. Cattle prices appreciated while goat prices slightly depreciated, accompanied by increasing selling rates.
- Water availability and accessibility deteriorated. Both permanent and seasonal reservoirs have declined tremendously, consequently increasing Pressure and congestion on various strategic water points. Water availability and accessibility is expected to deteriorate further as the current warm and dry conditions persist.
- 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 were 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.
- Intensive surveillance to establish emerging goat and sheep mortality in Gachoka Division.
- Intensive surveillance to establish emerging poultry mortality in Mbita, Karaba, Riakanau and Kithunthiri.
- Promotion crop disease and pest control.
- Rapid long rains assessment.
- 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

• **Current Interventions**

- 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
- 2) Food Aid
 - Regular school feeding programme.

❖ **DSG Meetings and Recommendations.**

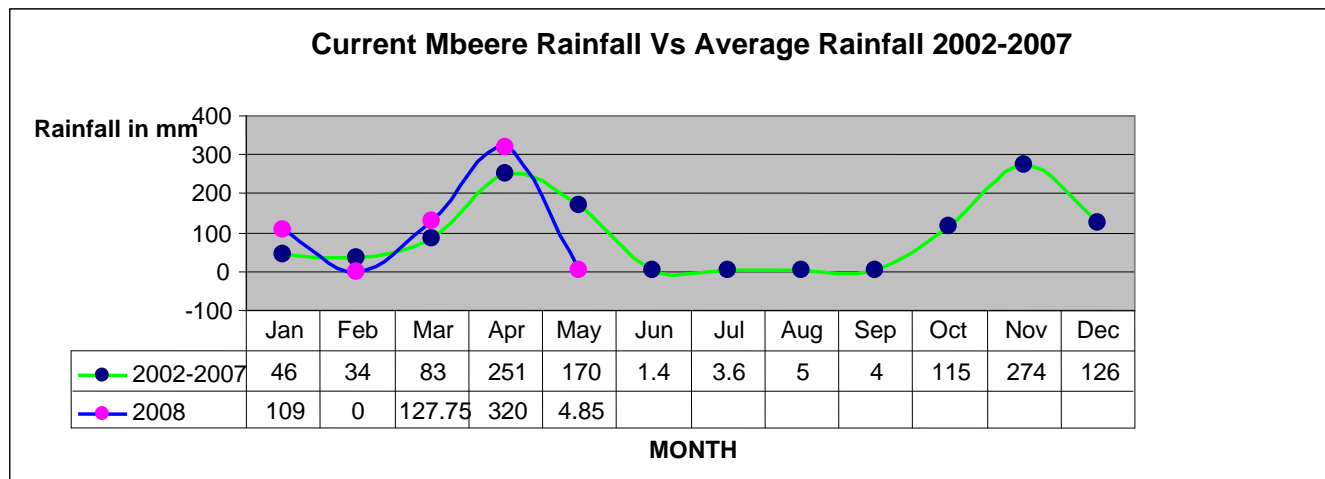
The DSG met on 18/2/2008 at the District headquarters, Mbeere.

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 Kogari water pipeline.
- Rapid long rains assessment.

1. Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall



- **Amount of rainfall**

The District was devoid of any consistent and reliable precipitation receiving 4.85mm of rains on average. All livelihood zones were devoid of rainfall and the amount received reveals a below normal trend during this period of the year.

- **Temporal distribution**

On average the District received 1day of rainfall with Mwea Division recording the highest number of rainfall days of 2days. Gachoka and Siakago Division had 1 day of rainfall while Evurore Division did not receive any rainfall.

- **Spatial distribution**

The distribution was not uniform within the entire district. Siakago Divisions received highest rainfall of 12 mm; Mwea Division had 6.4mm, Gachoka had 1 mm while Evurore Divisions recorded the lowest with 0mm

1.2 Condition of Natural Vegetation and Pasture

- **Quality**

Pastures and browse quality was good within the entire district. The situation is normal at this period of the year. Pasture and browse quality is expected to deteriorate if the current warm and dry conditions persist.

- **Quantity**

Pasture and browse availability remained good within the entire district. The prevailing situation is normal at this period of the year. Pastures and browse quantity is expected to deteriorate if the current warm and dry conditions persist

1.3 Water sources and Availability

- **Water sources**

Water availability and accessibility gradually fluctuated following a dry spell experienced within the month. The current situation does not depict a normal situation at this period of the year. Water reserves on various water catchments declined. Currently community prominently depends on natural rivers, traditional river wells, natural ponds, pans and springs for both domestic and human consumption. Congestion and pressure are moderately resuming on various focal water points. Water availability and accessibility remained fair in the livelihood zones with the following areas being worst hit: Mutitu Muminji, Ndurumori, Kamarandi, Riakanau, Makima, Karaba, Mbita, Kiambeere, Mutuobare, Mavuria, Gichiche and Kianjiru.

- **Livestock access to water**

Distances from grazing areas to main water sources increased significantly from 1.1km in the month of April to 2.9km in the month of May. The prevailing distances are not normal at this period of the year.

The situation could be attributed to the current warm and dry weather conditions within the district. Water reserves on various water reservoirs e.g. seasonal rivers, catchments pools, earth dams and water pans tremendously decreased. Distances covered in search of water are expected to increase further if the current warm and dry conditions persist.

- **Household access to water**

Current average distance from households to main water sources increased significantly from 1.2km in the month of April to 2.8km in the month of May. The prevailing distances are not normal at this period of the year. Water volumes on various water reservoirs e.g. catchments pools, earth dams and water pans, drastically decreased. Distances covered in search of water are expected to increase further if the current warm and dry conditions persist.

1.4 Implications on food security

Favorable availability of pasture and browse stimulated sound livestock birth rate, 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 good on all animal species. The prevailing body condition is normal at this period of the year. Sound physical condition could be attributed to adequate availability of forage, water for livestock consumption and sound livestock health conditions.
- Livestock body condition is good in all livelihood zones, depicting a normal situation.

2.1.2 Livestock Diseases

- Livestock health condition remained good on cattle but slightly destabilized on goat. Goat mortality increased from 0.7% to 1%, in addition sheep mortality rate also reduced from 2% to 1.2% and remained at 0% on cattle. Evurore Division recorded the highest sheep and goat mortality of 1.2% and 1.4% 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 12.2% in comparison with the previous month. Increased milk production could be attributed to 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 on the reliability of the 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 the month of May affecting the late planted crops due to moisture stress. The mixed farming marginal zone is the most affected experiencing total crop failure.
- Maize is at milking stage and grain filling stage while legumes are at podding and ripening stages. Weeding and pest control were the dominant agriculture activities. Cases of army worm attack were observed in Mwea and Gachoka Divisions.
- Comparatively crop conditions differ from one livelihood zone to the other depending on rainfall amount and distribution.

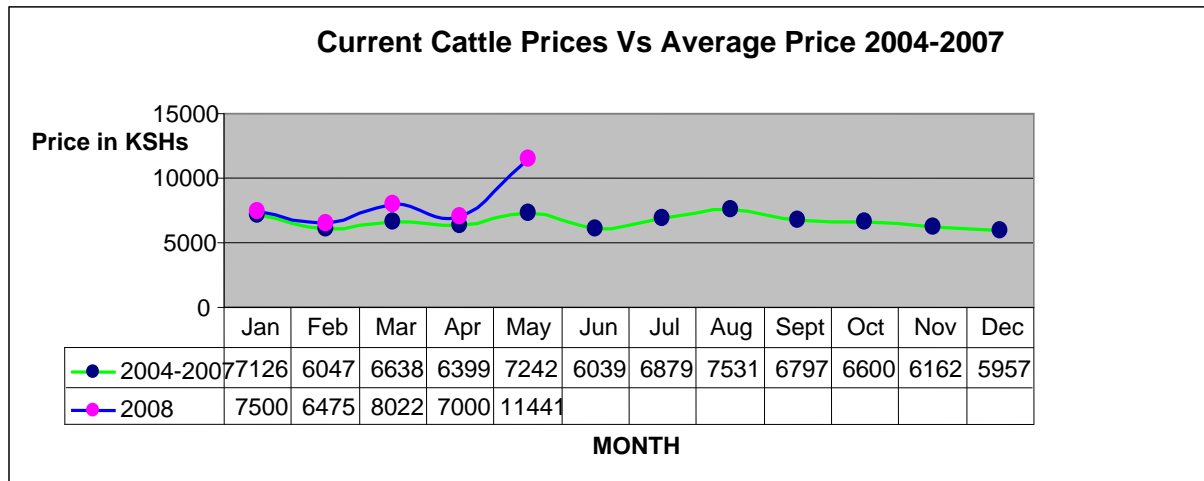
- **2.2.4 Implication on Food Security**

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

3. Access to Food

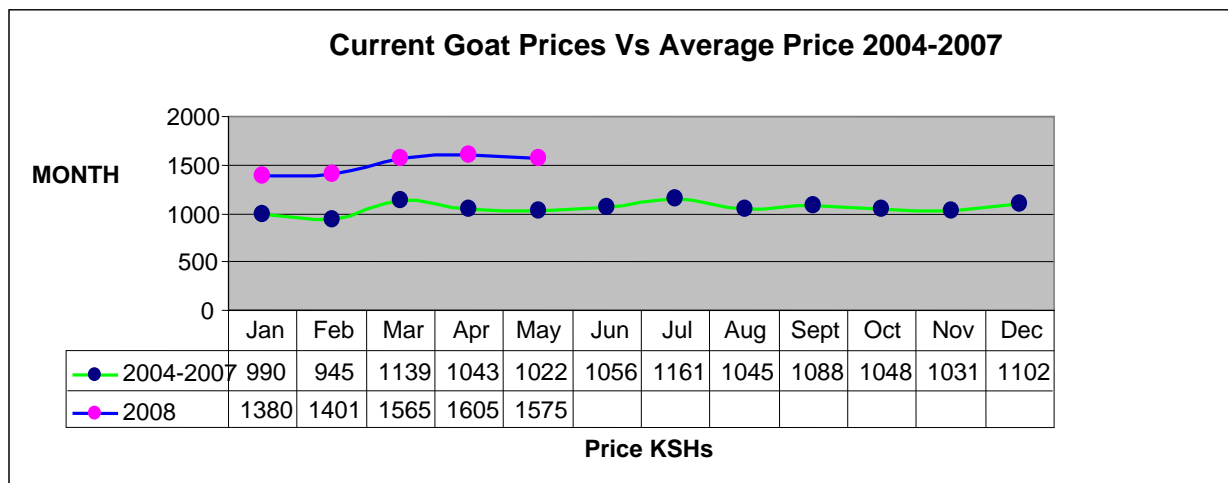
3.1 Livestock Marketing

3.1.1 Cattle Prices:



- Cattle prices were on the increase within the entire district. The prices are above normal at this period of the year. The increase in cattle prices could be attributed to good cattle physical conditions. Selling rates increased from 0.5% in the month of April to 2.9% in the month of May. Gachoka Division had the highest sales rate of 4.1% while Mwea Division had the least of 0%. The highest price was recorded in Siakago Division of Kshs 14,000 while the lowest price was recorded in Mwea Division of Kshs 8,000

3.3.2 Goat Prices:



- Goat prices depreciated from Kshs 1,605 in April to Kshs 1575 in May. The prevailing prices are above normal at this time of the year. The depreciating prices could be attributed to increased selling rate of both goats and sheep. Selling rates appreciated from 1.3% to 4.4% in the month of May. Evurore Division had the highest price per goat at Kshs 1,961.5 while Siakago Division had the lowest goat prices at an average of Kshs 1,350

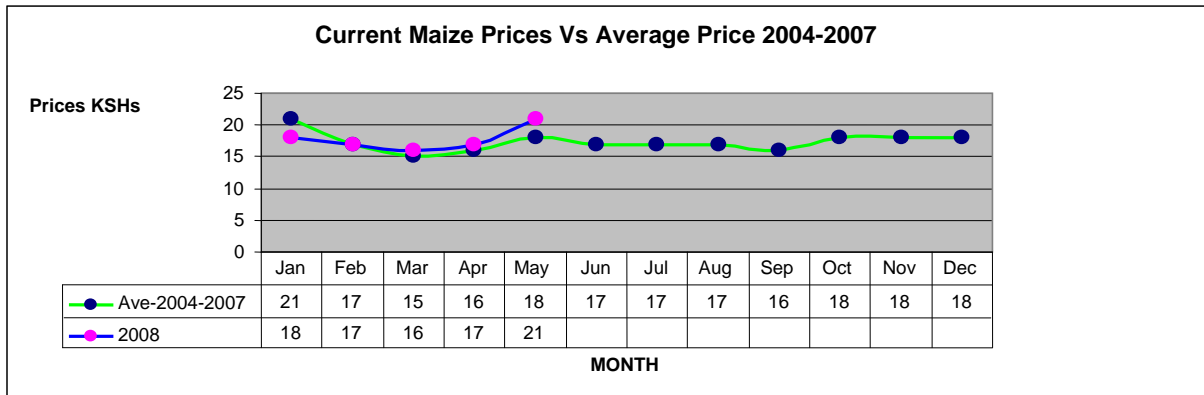
3.3.3 Milk Consumption

Average milk consumed per household increased from 41 bottles of 750ml the month of April to 49 bottles of 750 ml in the month of May. 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 Siakago Division had the lowest.

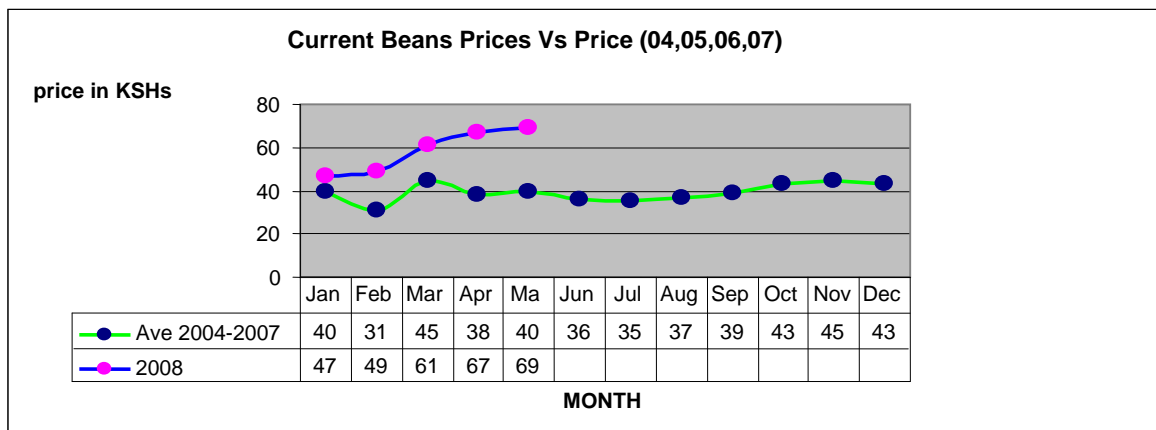
3.4 Crop Prices

3.4.1 Maize

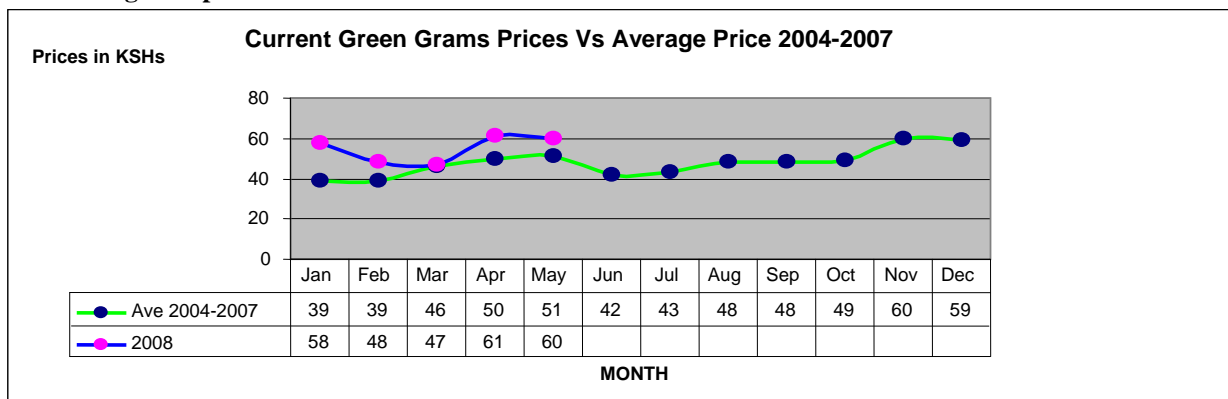


- Maize prices increased from Kshs 17 per Kilogram in the month of April to Kshs 21 per Kilogram for the month of May. The prices are above normal at this period of the year. The increase in maize prices could be attributed to poor crop performance in the previous season. Siakago Division had the highest maize prices at Ksh22.50 per Kilogram while Mwea Division had the lowest at Kshs 20 per Kilogram

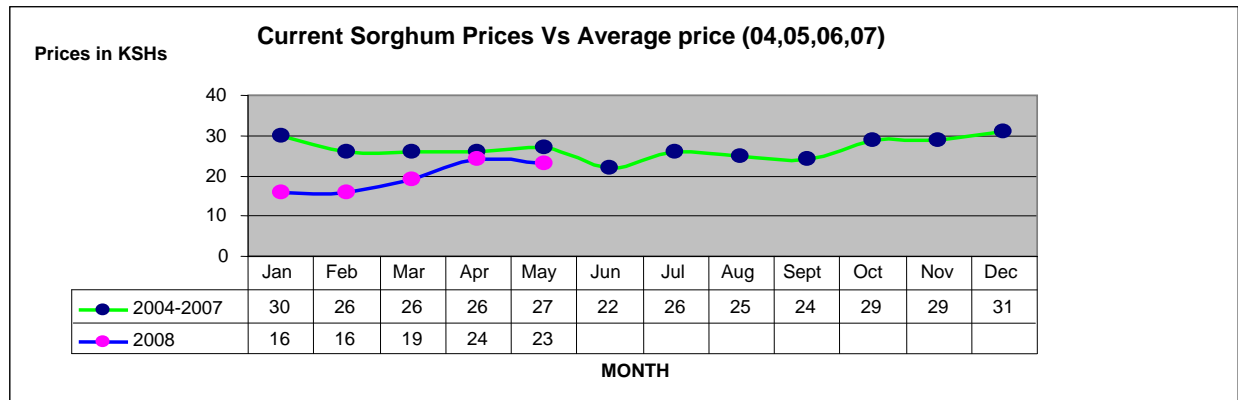
3.4.2 Beans Prices



- Beans prices increased from Kshs 67 per Kilogram in the month of April to Kshs 69 per Kilogram in the month of May. 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. Mwea Division had the highest beans price at Kshs 75 per Kilogram while Siakago Division recorded the lowest at Kshs 65 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.
- **Green grams price:**



- Green gram prices declined slightly from Kshs 61 per Kilogram last month to Kshs 60 per Kilogram in the month of April. 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. Mwea Division had the highest green gram price at Kshs 86.50 per Kilogram while Evurore Division recorded the lowest at Kshs 46.50. Per Kilogram Price variance could be attributed to level of output within different livelihood zones.
- **Sorghum Price**



Sorghum prices declined slightly from Kshs 24 per Kilogram to Kshs 23.40. Per Kilogram. The prices are normal at this period of the year. The sorghum prices could be attributed to the good harvest from the previous season and the anticipated good harvest in the present season. Gachoka and Siakago Division had the highest sorghum prices of Kshs 25 per Kilogram while Mwea Division had the lowest of Kshs 21 per Kilogram. The current prices are expected to increase due to crop failure

3.5 Income

3.5.1 Crop Income

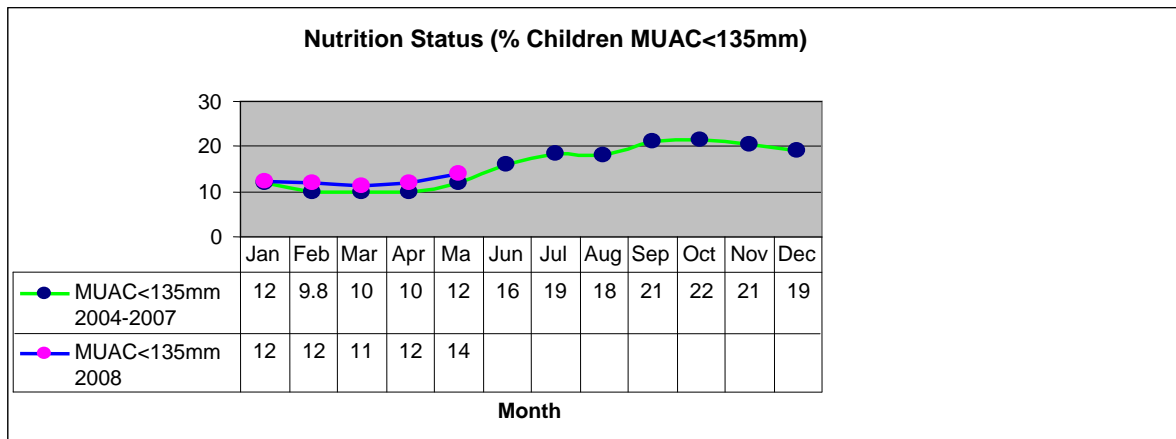
- Income from crop sales declined from 19% from the month of April to the month of May as the source of total household revenue. Income from crop sales has declined due to crop failure in the previous season and depleting disposable household reserves.
- **Livestock Income**
- Contribution from livestock sales increased from 5% in the month of April to 12.7% the month of May. Dependency on income from livestock sales is speculated to rise as household exhaust alternative source of household incomes e.g. crop sale.
- **Other Income (trade, wages, etc.)**
- Casual labor as the major source of aggregate household income in Mbeere District declined from 44% in the month of April to 43% in the month of May. This is because there were no Agriculture activities taking place within the month to provide most of the casual labor opportunities.

3.6 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 <135mm is **HIGHER** than that of April 2008. The situation seems to be **WORSE** than that of April 2008. There is a significant change from the District average of last month and so the situation seems to have **DETERIORATED** in May 2008. Gachoka Division had significant **INCREASES** in the percentage of children MUAC<135mm from 22% in the month of April to 22.8% in the month of May. The situation may need further investigation if the situation continues to worsen. The current nutrition status amongst children under 5years 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

5.2 Food Aid

- Regular school feeding programme.

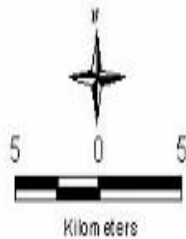
6. Recommendations

- Rehabilitation of critical water points, to ensure optimum water availability and accessibility.
- Intensive surveillance to establish emerging goat and sheep mortality in Gachoka Division.
- Intensive surveillance to establish emerging poultry mortality in Mbita, Karaba, Riakanau and Kithunthiri
- Promotion crop disease and pest control.
- Rapid long rains assessment.
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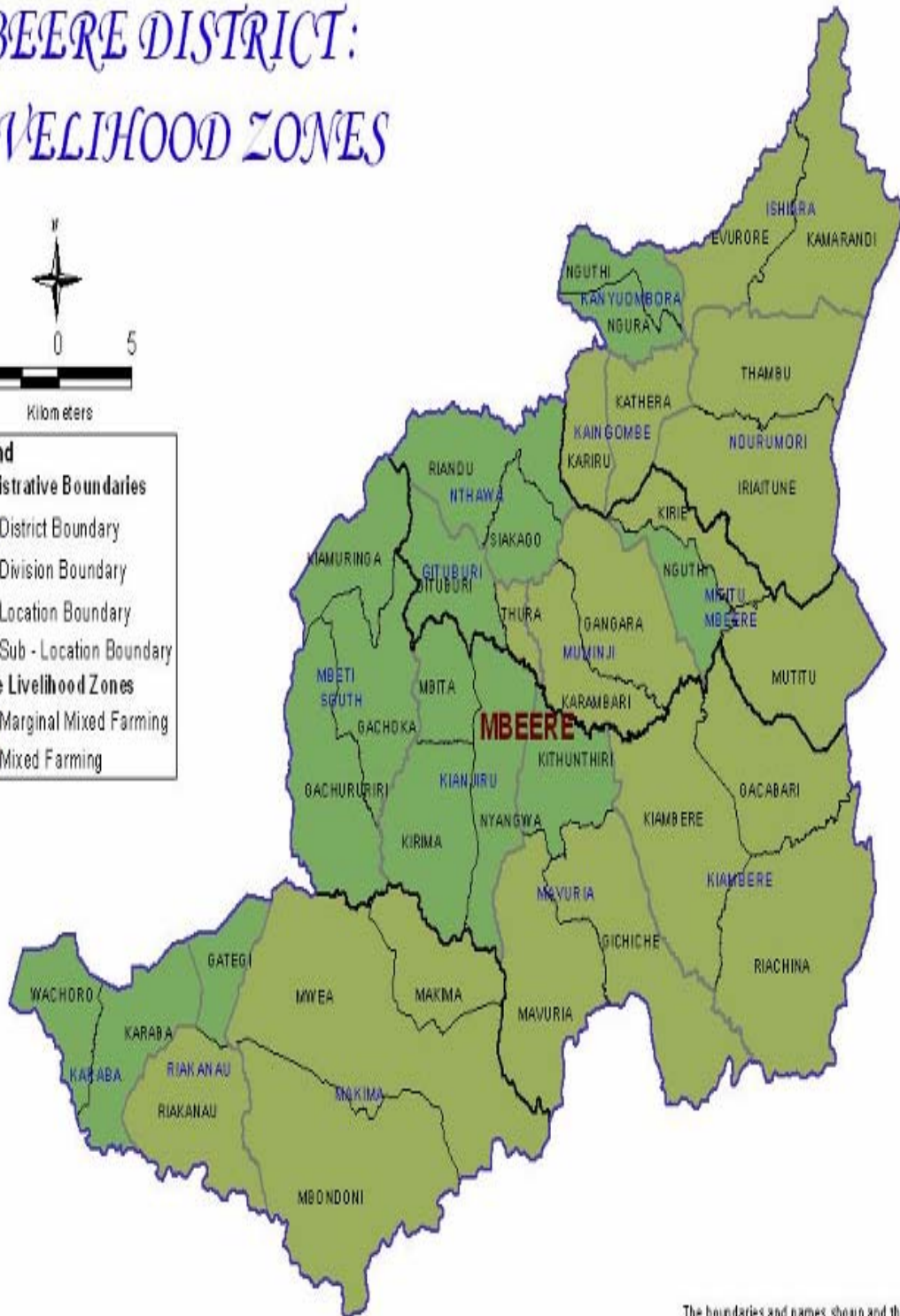
7. Alert Phase

Following the inconsistent and unreliable rainfall, there is significant deterioration on Environmental indicators, rural indicators and welfare indicators. The situation can be described as Alert in both mixed farming and marginal mixed farming livelihood zones.

MBEERE DISTRICT: LIVELIHOOD ZONES



Legend	
Administrative Boundaries	
	District Boundary
	Division Boundary
	Location Boundary
	Sub - Location Boundary
Mbeere Livelihood Zones	
	Marginal Mixed Farming
	Mixed Farming



Map by WFP/YAM Kenya, February 2006

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations