

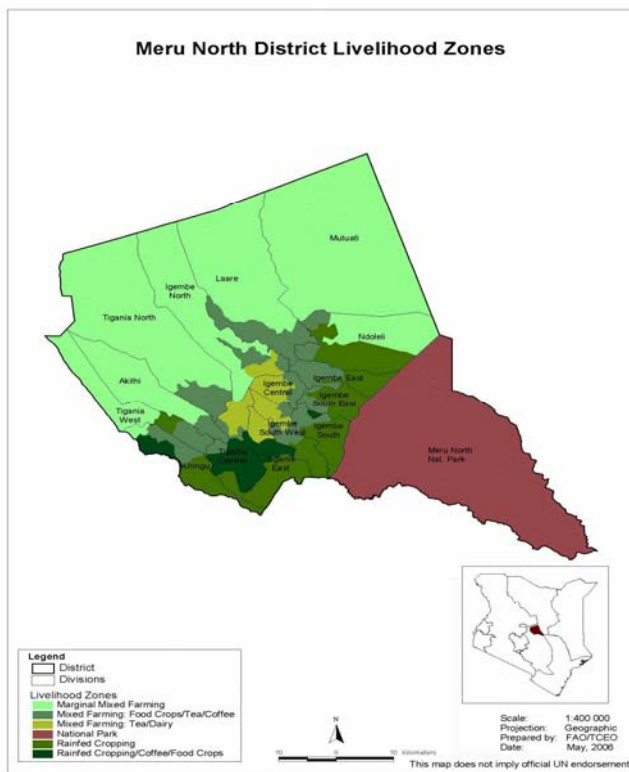


**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN FOR MAY, 2008

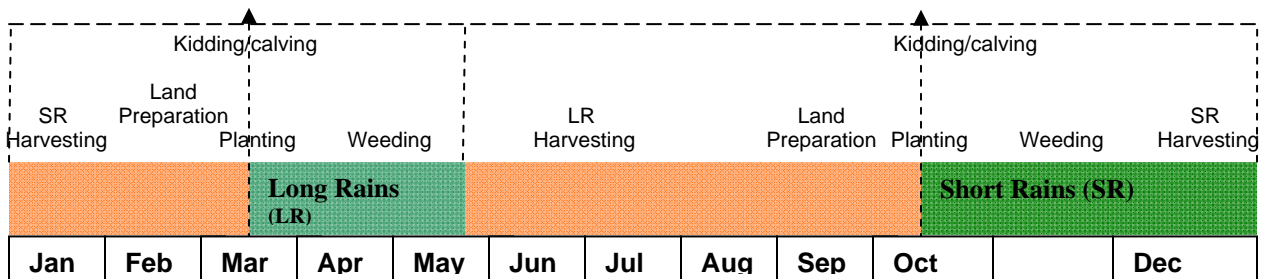
MERU NORTH DISTRICT

WARNING STAGES



Livelihood Zone	Stage	Trend
Mixed farming (Food)	Normal	Deteriorating
Livestock Farming	Alert	Deteriorating`
Agro Pastoral	Alert	Deteriorating
DISTRICT	ALERT	DETERIORATING

TIME LINE



Situation Overview

- An average of 14 rain days was reported in the District with an average of 27.1mm.
- The rains began late into the season and stopped prematurely.
- Temporal distribution was poor since all parts of the district reported rains during the third and fourth week of April.
- Spatial distribution was fair as most areas reported rains. However, the amount of precipitation received in the Agro-pastoral LZ was the least compared to all other LZ. This LZ comprises of Mutuati, Laare, Akithi, Tigania North, Tigania West, Igembe North, and Igembe South East Divisions. High elevation areas received more rain days of heavy down pour.
- There has been a slight improvement in the quality and quantity of pasture over the last four weeks compared to the previous month
- Natural rivers have been the main sources of water for both humans and livestock while springs and other sources have been important sources to households.
- River discharge has slightly improved. However, quality of the water has declined due to siltation both from the source areas and that brought about by livestock at watering points.
- Average distance from grazing areas to watering points stands at 5.8 Km this month compared to 7.5 Km the previous month.
- Distances from households to water points have also declined to 3 Km this month compared to 4.4 Km the previous month. Further, time taken has reduced to 2.3 Hrs from 3.2 Hrs recorded the previous month.
- Water stress experienced the previous month has reduced although it is expected to worsen the coming months
- Cattle rustling has been reported in Mutuati, Laare and Igembe North Divisions
- Farmers are now carrying out the second weeding.
- Beans are at pod filling stage
- Food crops, particularly maize and beans, in the Agro-pastoral LZ are withering due to the prevailing lack of precipitation in these areas. As such, a below normal harvest of beans is expected while no maize harvest is expected.
- An invasion of army worms has been reported in Kamweline, Malaene, Kunati and Kandebene areas.
- The average price of cattle during the month was Kshs 8,600.00 This reflects a sharp increase of Kshs 1,734.00 compared to Kshs 6,866.00 recorded the previous month as few households in the district are willing to sell livestock. This is because with the rains, they expect body conditions to improve and thus fetch better prices much later. Further, most cattle being sold in the district is from the neighboring Isiolo district and this has distorted the prices of local cattle. There has been a sharp decline in the prices of sheep with the averages standing at Kshs 1,000.00 compared to Kshs 2,000.00 the previous month
- The average price of goats has slightly increased to Kshs 1,950.00 compared to Kshs 1,547.00 the previous month. This could be as a result of the general rise in commodity prices experienced country wide.
- Compared to the previous month, consumption of milk has declined to an average of 13.7 bottles (750ml) from 15.7 bottles recorded the previous month. This is from an average of 30 households with an average population of 199 persons. Milk production and sale has declined in most areas.

- The average price of 1 Kg of maize has remained constant this month standing at Kshs 13.90. This is in comparison to Kshs 13.70 recorded the previous month.
- The average price of one kilogram of beans during the month has been constant compared to the previous month. Current prices stand at Kshs 48.90 compared to Kshs 48.50 the last month. A shortage of beans is still evident and a below normal harvest is also expected soon.
- There has been a sharp increase in the average prices of pigeon peas this month with prices standing at Kshs 50.00 compared to Kshs 40.00 recorded the previous month. Stocks held at household levels have significantly declined as the harvest season of pigeon peas nears.
- The price of posho has remained the same compared to the previous month. Prices stand at Kshs 16.70 compared to the previous month.
- Casual labour was the main source of income during the last four weeks.
- Although incomes from the sale of crops have also been significant during the last four weeks; there has been a reduction in the percentages of households relying on incomes from crop sales. From a total of 330 households sampled, 30.3% of them relied on sales from crops compared to 37.1% of them the previous month.
- There has been a decline in the number of livestock sold during the last four weeks compared to the previous month.
- Nutritional status of the sampled children whose MUAC is below 135mm is 9.1% reflecting a 2.4% possible decline in malnutrition levels in the district
- There has been a 2.1% possible decline in the levels of malnutrition in the Agro-pastoral zone from 11.8% the previous month to 9.7% this month.
- Igembe South East has recorded 25.5% compared to 32% recorded the previous month. Although this reflects a significant decline, the readings are still too high. This division does not have a single health centre where parents can be advised on nutritional issues for the under 5's.
- Igembe North has recorded the same readings of 25.7% as the previous month. These figures are equally high

Previous DSG Recommendations to KFSSG

- With the high levels of malnutrition recorded in some Divisions in the District, department of Public Health requires support to carry out a nutrition survey and assess the magnitude of malnutrition in the whole district.

DCU Recommendations to DSG

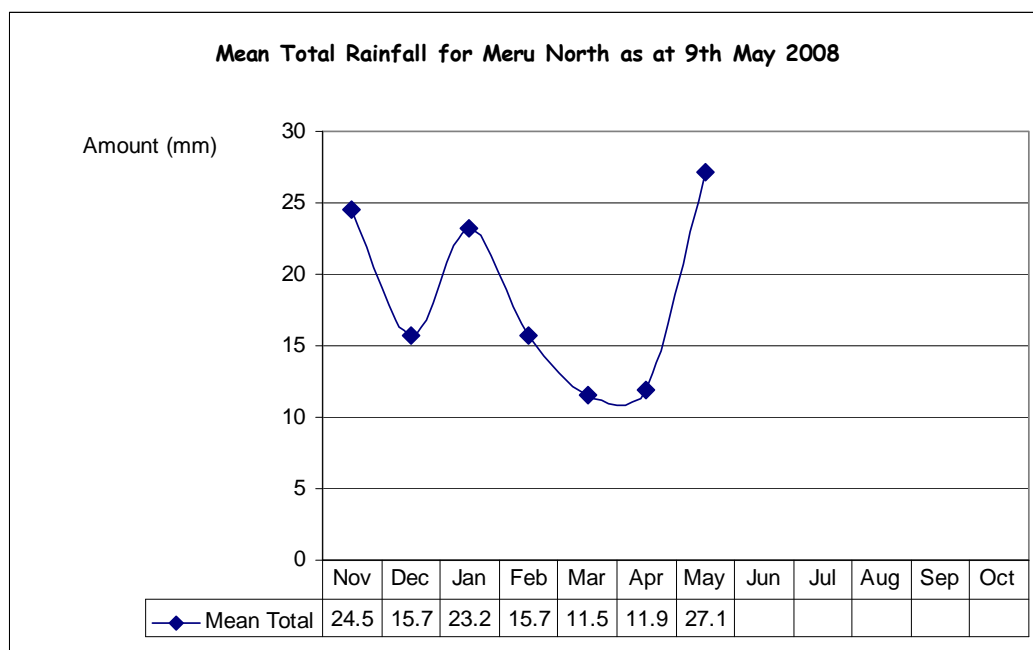
- The Ministry of Agriculture should step up in the battle against army worms that have invaded parts of the District.
- Lead Ministries (Min. of Agriculture) and all other departments should sensitize the communities on coping strategies as food shortage and high commodity prices have been noted. Inadequate precipitation experienced will also lead to poor harvests.
- The Provincial administration should assist in curbing the cattle rustling menace that has been reported in Mutuati Ndoleli and Kamweline.
- The Ministry of Health and the District Nutritional Officers from both districts should carry out a nutritional survey to monitor and crosscheck the MUAC readings from both districts since serious malnutrition levels have been recorded consistently.

DSG Recommendations to KFSSG

- Relief food assistance will be needed in the next one month due to the current decrease of stock levels and the poor harvests expected. This is due to poor precipitation received this season forecasting very low or no yields at all.

1. Stability

1.1 Rainfall



Station	Marega	Kibiro	Thaicu	Mea	Michimikuru Tea Factory*	Kiegoi* Tea Factory
No. of Rain days reported	15	6	16	12	20	17
Total Amount received(mm)	359.3	97.2	520.7	303.6	588.3	600
Mean Rainfall Totals (mm)	24	16.2	32.5	25.3	29.4	35.3

- *Michimikuru and Kiegoi tea factories are outside the sentinel sites but are on the high elevation areas of the District. Rains in localities where these two are located contribute significantly to river discharge in the dry lower parts of the District.
- An average of 14 rain days was reported in the District with an average of 27.1mm.
- Temporal distribution was poor since all parts of the District reported rains during the third and fourth week of April.

- Spatial distribution was fair as most areas reported rains. However, the amount of precipitation received in the Agro-pastoral LZ was the least compared to all other LZ. This LZ comprises of Mutuati, Laare, Akithi, Tigania North, Tigania West, Igembe North, and Igembe South East Divisions. High elevation areas received more rain days of heavy down pour.
- Only slight showers have been reported in few areas of the district during the first and second week of May.
- This is not a normal situation at this time of the year.

1.2 Natural Vegetation & Pasture Condition

- Compared to the previous month, there has been a slight improvement in the quality and quantity of pasture.
- This improvement is as a result of the precipitation received in most areas of the District during the third and fourth weeks of April.
- Compared to all other LZ, pasture quality and quantity in the Agro-pastoral LZ has shown the least improvements. These areas have received the least amounts of precipitation. In this LZ, the affected areas include Igembe North, Laare, Tigania North, and Akithi Divisions.

1.3 Water Sources & Availability

- Natural rivers have been the main sources of water for both humans and livestock.
- With the rains experienced particularly in the high elevation areas, river discharge has improved compared to the previous month.
- However, quality of the water has declined due to siltation both from the source areas and that brought about by livestock at watering points.
- Springs and other sources have also been important sources of water particularly to households.
- Average distance from grazing areas to watering points stands at 5.8 Km this month compared to 7.5 Km the previous month.
- This decline is as a result of the improving water sources and slight improvements in pasture quantity.
- Distances from households to water points have also declined to 3 Km this month compared to 4.4 Km the previous month. Further, time taken has reduced to 2.3 Hrs from 3.2 Hrs recorded the previous month.
- Water stress experienced the previous month has reduced although it is expected to worsen the coming months.

1.4 Emerging Issues

- Cattle rustling has been reported in Mutuati, Laare and Igembe North Divisions.

1.5 Implications on food security

- There has been a slight improvement in pasture quality and quantity.
- Water sources have also improved and distances to these points have reduced.
- Milk production is however declining since cattle rustling has forced herders to graze in areas close to their households.
- Compared to last month, food security is declining.

2.0 Food availability

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- Although there has been a slight improvement in pasture quantity and quality, the general body conditions of livestock have slightly declined compared to the previous month.
- This is partly because herders are grazing closer home due to the increase of cattle rustling activities prevailing. Further, the Agro-pastoral LZ which is the main grazing area of the district did not receive substantial amounts of precipitation in comparison to other LZ.
- This is not a normal situation since the quantity and quality of pasture is much lower than in a normal year.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- No major livestock disease has been reported over the last four weeks

2.2 Crop Production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- Most farmers are now carrying out the second weeding.
- Beans are at the pod filling stage.
- With a two week period of moderately strong winds with no precipitation, bean and maize crops are withering in the divisions that occupy the Agro-pastoral zone.
- In the Agro-pastoral LZ, a low bean harvest is expected while no maize harvest is expected this season in all livelihood zones.
- This is not a normal situation at this time of the year as rains fell briefly during the third and fourth week of April then a dry period followed.

2.2.2 Pests & diseases

- An invasion of army worms has been reported in Kamweline, Malaene, and Kunati areas.

2.2.3 Implications on Food Security

- Livestock body conditions have declined in most areas as compared to the previous month.
- Though beans are at pod filling stage, a below normal harvest is expected in most areas
- No maize harvest is expected this season.
- Army worm invasion in certain parts of the district has led to a significant crop loss
- Food security situation is thus declining.

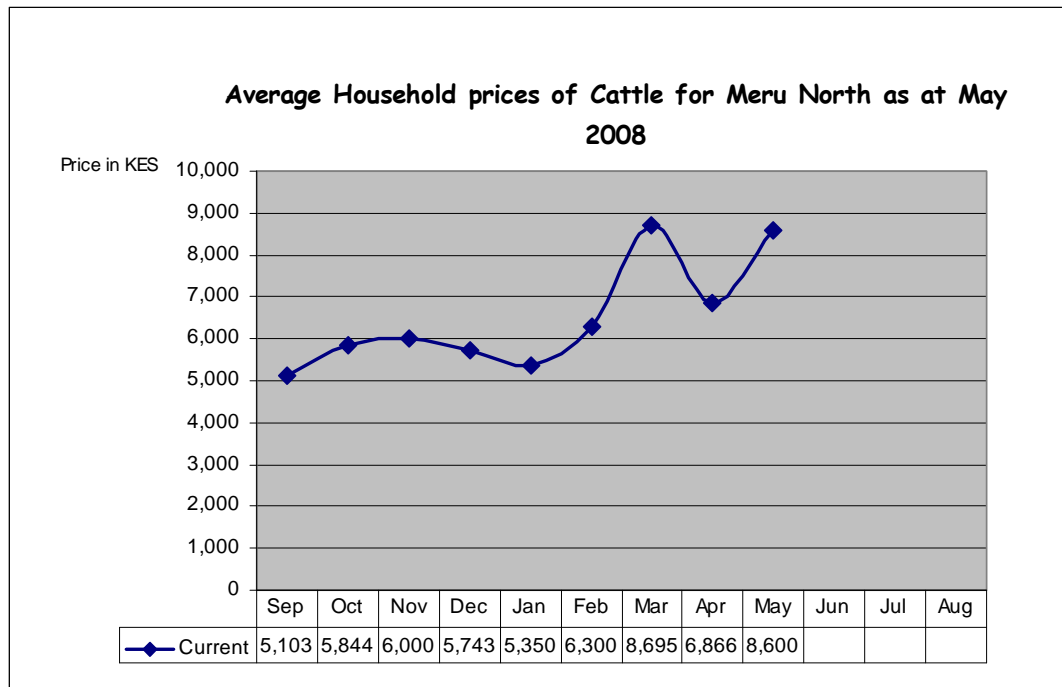
3. Access

3.1 Livestock Marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices

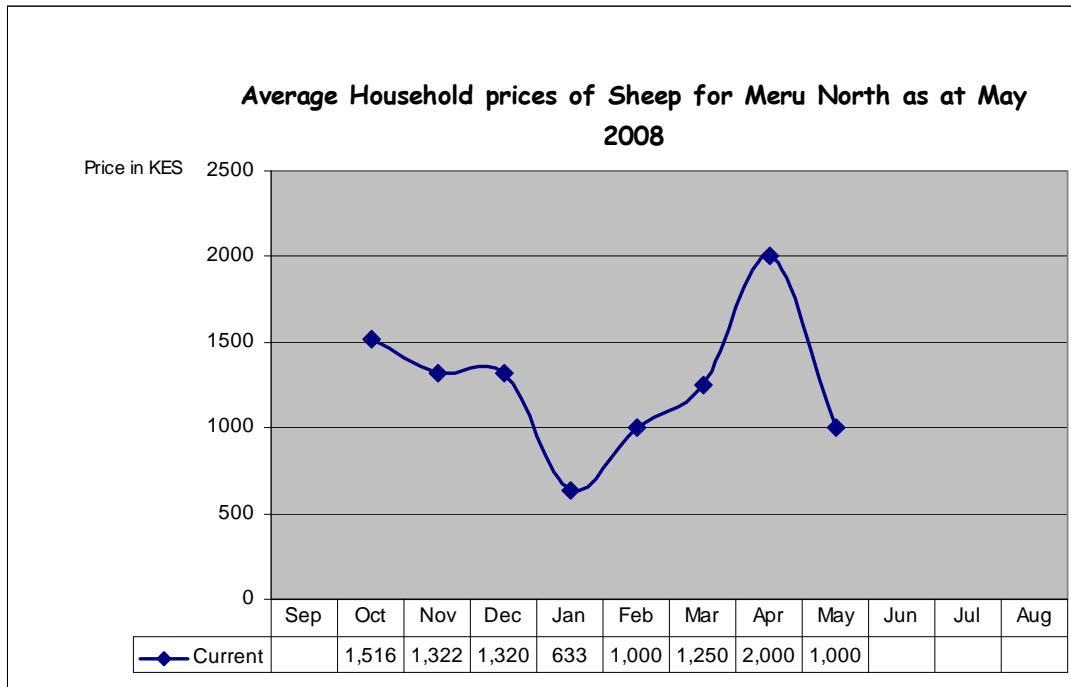
- The average price of cattle during the month was Kshs 8,600.00 This reflects a sharp increase of Kshs 1,734.00 compared to Kshs 6,866.00 recorded the previous month.
- Few households in the district are willing to sell livestock since with the rains, they expect body conditions to improve and thus fetch better prices much later.
- Further, most cattle being sold in the district is from the neighboring Isiolo District and this has distorted the prices of local cattle.

- Prices in the Agro-pastoral LZ have also increased from Kshs 7,666.00 the previous month to Kshs 9,000.00. There has also been a sharp increase in prices in the Mixed Farming LZ from Kshs 5,000.00 the previous month to Kshs 8,000.00.



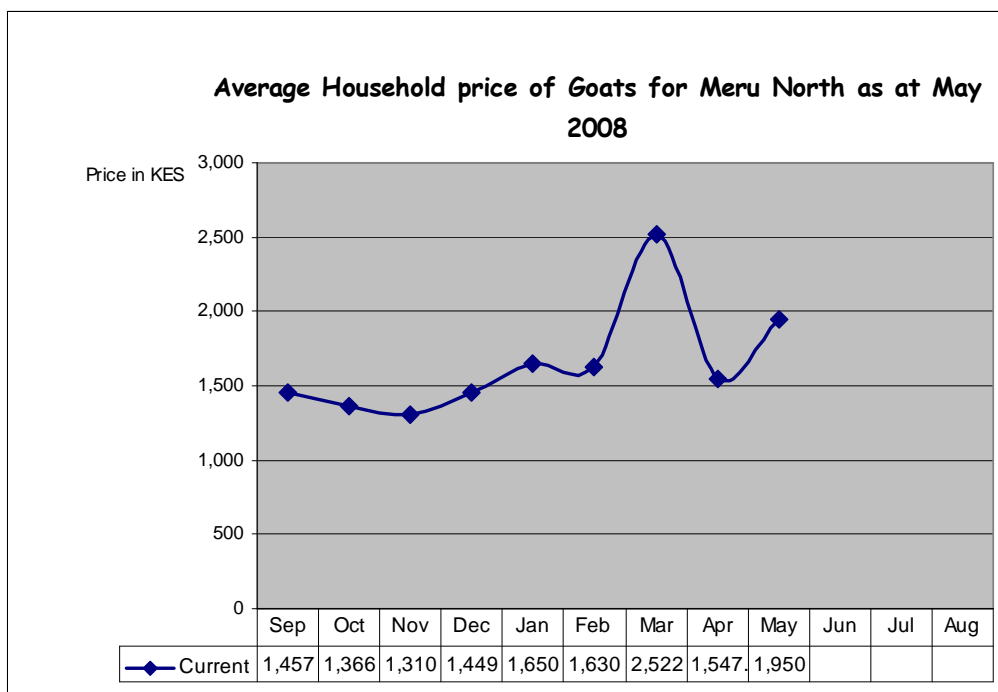
1.0.1 Sheep prices

- There has been a sharp decline in the prices of sheep with the averages standing at Kshs 1,000.00 compared to Ksh 2,000.00 the previous month.
- Sheep from the neighbouring Isiolo District are fetching better prices than the local sheep. This has driven prices of the local sheep downwards.
- There are no inter-livelihood zone differences noted this month.



3.1.3 Goat prices

- The average price of goats has slightly increased to Kshs 1,950.00 compared to Kshs 1,547.00 the previous month.
- Though the prices have increased, goats from Isiolo District are still dominant in the markets and fetch better prices than the local ones.
- There are no significant inter-livelihood zone differences noted as prices range from Kshs 2,000.00 in the Livestock Farming LZ to Kshs 1,750.00 in the Mixed Farming LZ.



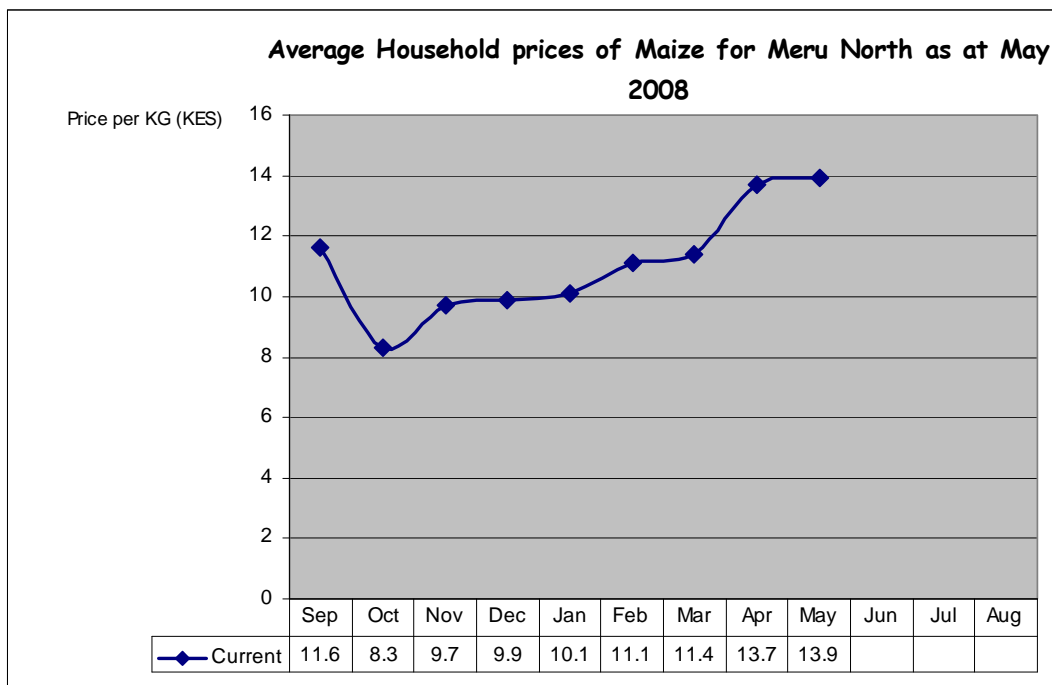
3.2 Milk Consumption

- Compared to the previous month, consumption of milk has declined to an average of 13.7 bottles (750ml) from 15.7 bottles recorded the previous month. This is from an average of 30 households with an average population of 199 persons.
- This is against a backdrop of declining milk production and sale in most areas.
- The decline in consumption has also been reflected in the Agro-pastoral LZ which has recorded an average of 124 bottles against 135 bottles recorded the previous month. The Livestock farming LZ has also recorded the least consumption with an average of 9 bottles compared to 30 bottles the previous month. This LZ has also recorded the least production figures this month.

3.3 Crop Prices

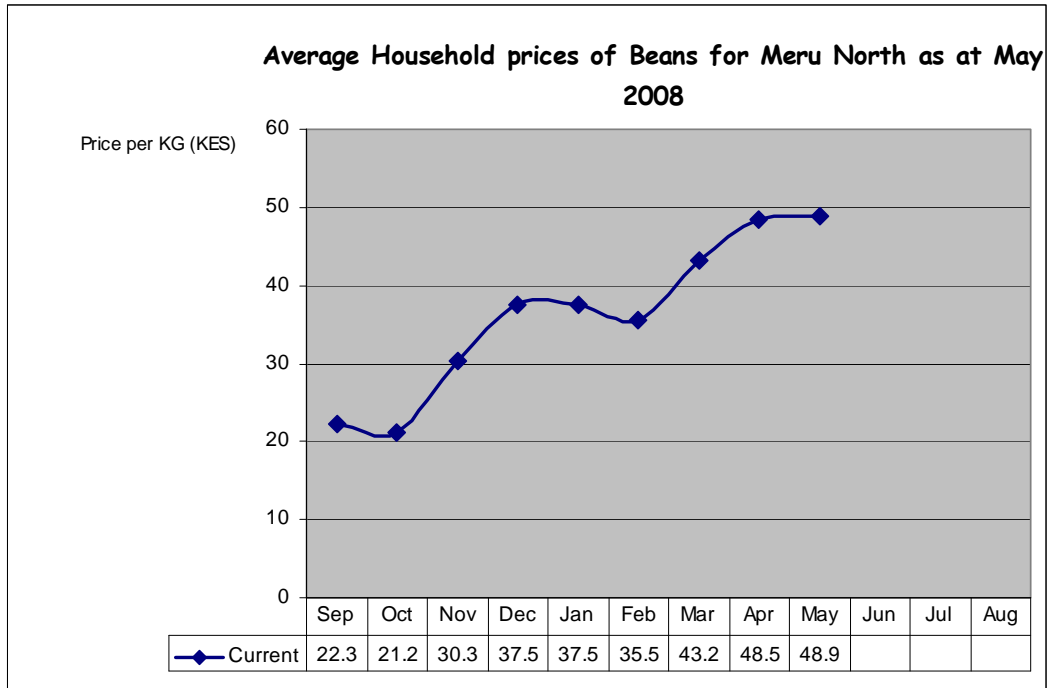
3.3.1 Maize Prices

- The average price of 1 Kg of maize has remained constant this month standing at Kshs 13.90. This is in comparison to Kshs 13.70 recorded the previous month.
- However, prices at the market stand at Kshs 16.00 compared to Kshs 13.70 the previous month. This indicates an upward trend meaning that the stock available are depleting.
- The Agro-pastoral LZ has recorded higher prices of Kshs 14.30 while the Livestock Farming LZ recorded the least prices of Kshs 9.70 per Kilogram.
- The prices are normal at this time of the year.



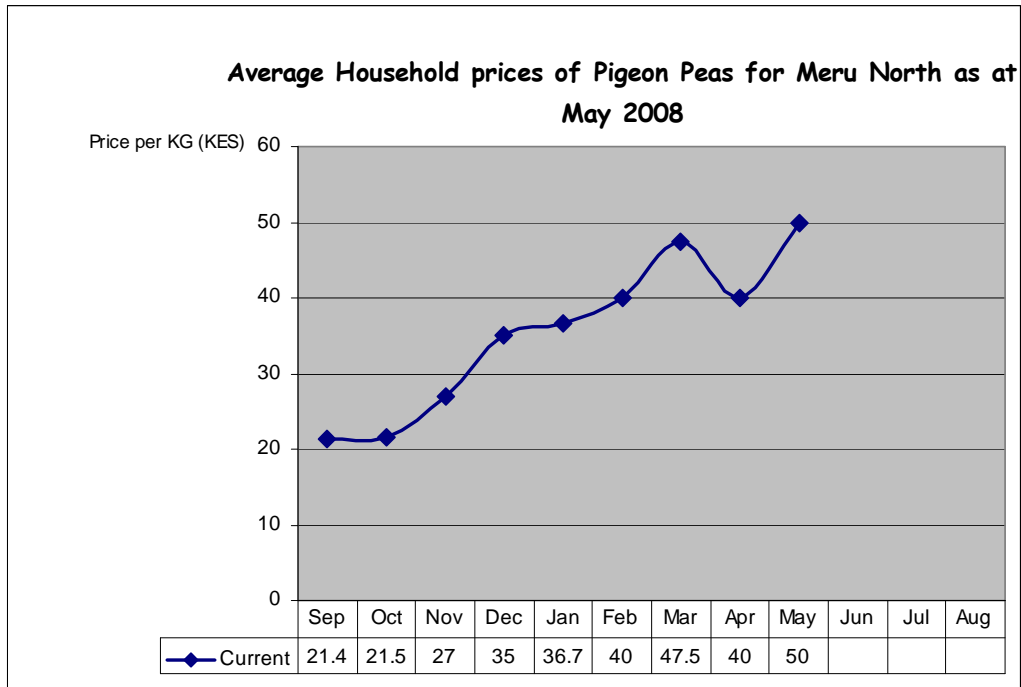
3.3.2 Beans

- The average price of one kilogram of beans during the month has been constant compared to the previous month. Current prices stand at Kshs 48.90 compared to Kshs 48.50 the last month.
- A shortage of beans is still evident and a below normal harvest is also expected soon.
- These high prices are expected to persist until the next harvest.
- There is no inter-livelihood zone differences noted this month.



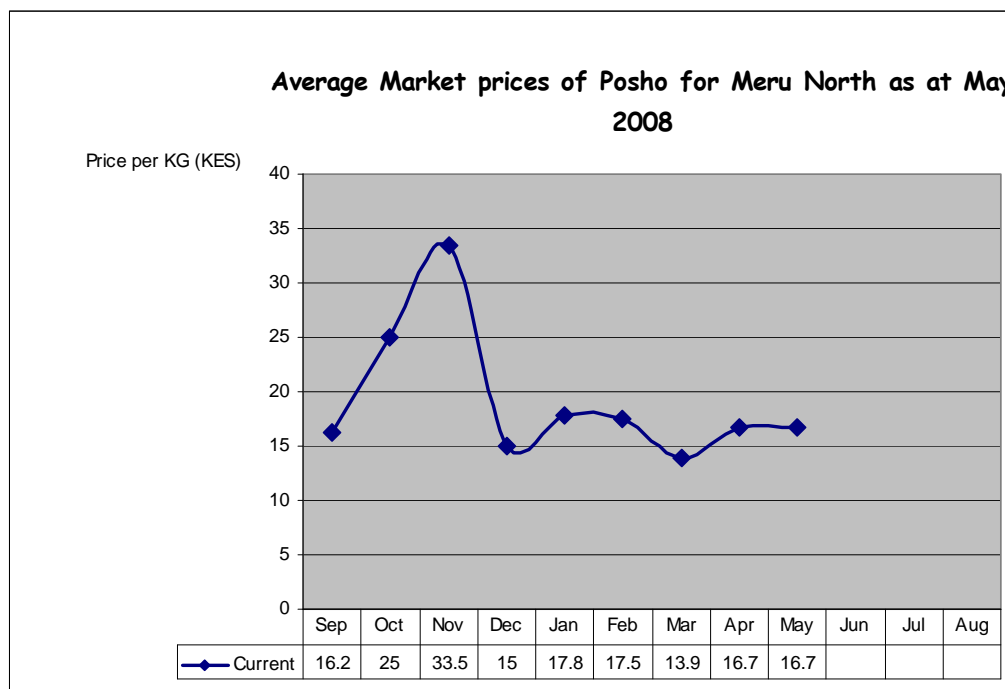
3.3.3 Pigeon Peas

- There has been a sharp increase in the average prices of pigeon peas this month with prices standing at Kshs 50.00 compared to Kshs 40.00 recorded the previous month.
- Stocks held at household levels have significantly declined as the harvest season of pigeon peas nears.
- There are no inter-livelihood differences noted over the last four weeks.



3.3.4 Posho Prices

- The price of posho has remained the same compared to the previous month. Prices stand at Kshs 16.70 compared to the previous month.
- These prices reflect the milling prices and not the milled posho. This is because most households prefer to take maize grain to a miller than buying the already milled posho.



3.4 Income

3.4.1 Crops

- Although incomes from the sale of crops have been significant during the last four weeks; there has been a reduction in the percentages of households relying on incomes from crop sales.
- From a total of 330 households sampled, 30.3% of them relied on sales from crops compared to 37.1% of them the previous month.
- This decline has resulted from declining stocks in the households

3.4.2 Livestock Income

- There has been a decline in the number of livestock sold during the last four weeks compared to the previous month.
- Poultry has been the main source of income from livestock accounting for 46% of all income from the sale of livestock. This is because poultry is much easier to sell and has a ready market.
- Sheep sales were the least sources of incomes recording just 3.8% of all incomes from livestock. This was the same the previous month.
- Similar to the previous month, the Agro-pastoral LZ has recorded the highest incomes from the sale of livestock while the livestock farming zone has recorded the least.

3.4.3 Other Income

- Casual labour was the main source of income during the last four weeks.

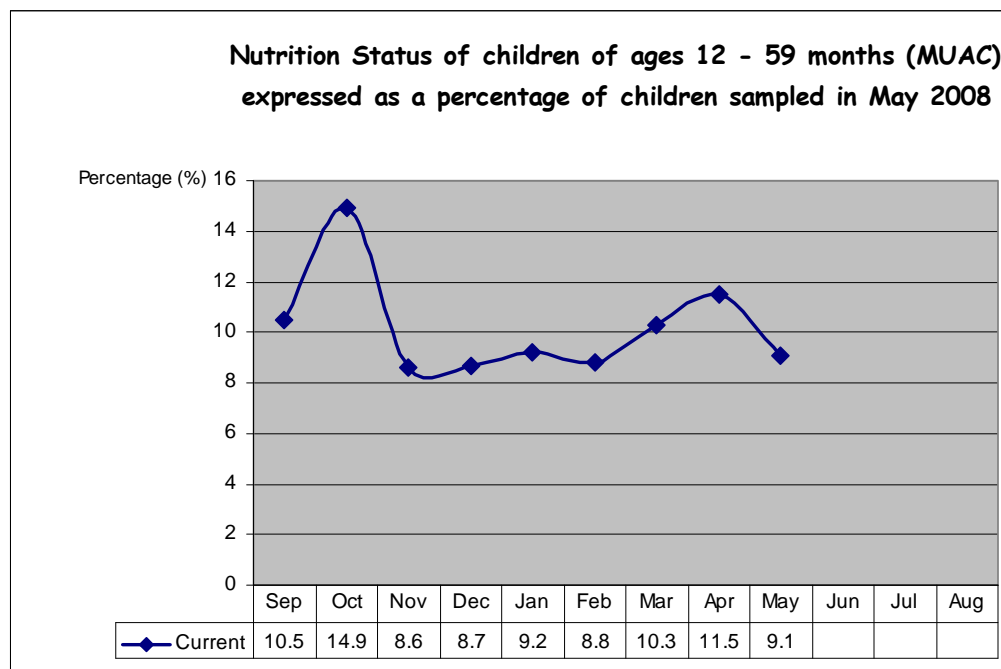
- From 330 households sampled, 39.3% of them relied on casual labour as the main source of income compared to 36.2% the previous month.
- With weeding in progress, there is a high demand for casual labour. Further, schools are open so households have to hire labourers since children are in school.
- Petty trade still recorded a significant source of income just as the previous month. Petty trade in the district is mainly contributed to by the picking and sale of khat (miraa).
- Significant incomes from the sale of wood products have also been reported.

3.4.4 Implications on Food Security

- Prices of cattle have risen sharply over the last four weeks.
- Prices of cereals are also increasing while incomes from the sale of crops have declined.
- This means that households have little stocks available for sale.
- Livestock sales have also declined, thus food security is low and declining

4. Utilization

4.1 Nutrition Status



- During the last four weeks, an average of 9.1% of the children in the district has MUAC<135mm, this reflects a decline of 2.4% in the levels of malnutrition compared to the previous month.
- Milk production and consumption has remarkably decreased as livestock are now feeding mainly on dry fodder, while the Agro-pastoral LZ has remained constant at 11.8% compared to the previous month, the livestock farming has recorded a sharp rise of 9.7% compared to the previous month.
- There has been a 2.1% possible decline in the levels of malnutrition in the Agro-pastoral zone from 11.8% the previous month to 9.7% this month. Igembe South East has recorded 25.5% compared to 32% recorded the previous month. Although this reflects a significant decline, the readings are still too high. This division does not have a single

health centre where parents can be advised on nutritional issues for the under 5's. Igembe North has recorded the same readings of 25.7% as the previous month. These figures are equally high.

4.2 Health

- Increased cases of Malaria have been reported in most parts of the district during the last four weeks.

4.3 Flagged areas

- Igembe South East and Igembe North Divisions require close monitoring to counter check the possibility of high levels of malnutrition as recorded this month.

5. Current intervention measures

5.1 Non-food interventions

- There were no non-food interventions reported this month

5.2 Food aid interventions

- No 'food aid interventions' was reported this month.

6. DCU recommendations to DSG

- The ministry of Agriculture should step up in the battle against army worms that have invaded parts of the District.
- Lead Ministries (Min. of Agriculture) and all other departments should sensitize the communities on coping strategies as food shortage and high commodity prices have been noted. Inadequate precipitation experienced will also lead to poor harvests.
- The Provincial Administration should assist in curbing the cattle rustling menace that has been reported in Mutuati Ndoledi and Kamweline.
- The Ministry of Health and the District Nutritional Officers from both districts should carry out a nutritional survey to monitor and crosscheck the MUAC readings from both Districts' since serious malnutrition levels have been recorded consistently.