

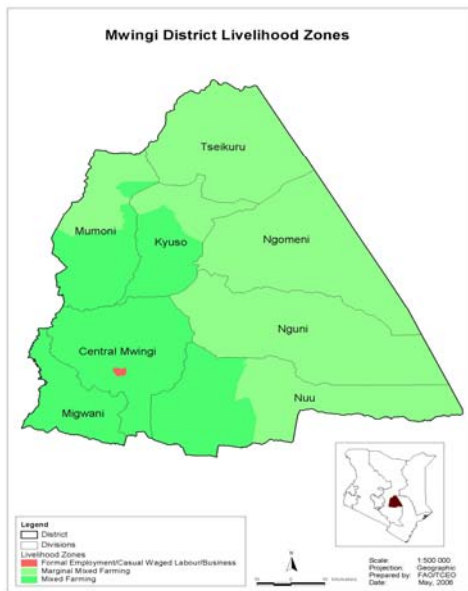


OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
 MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS  
 ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II

**DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN FOR MAY, 2008**

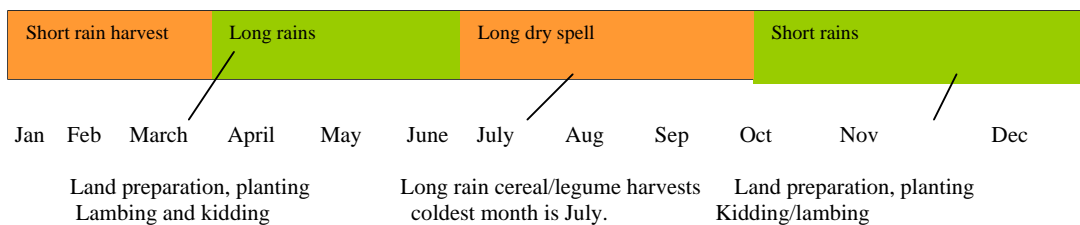
**MWINGI DISTRICT**

**WARNING STAGES**



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

**TIME LINE**

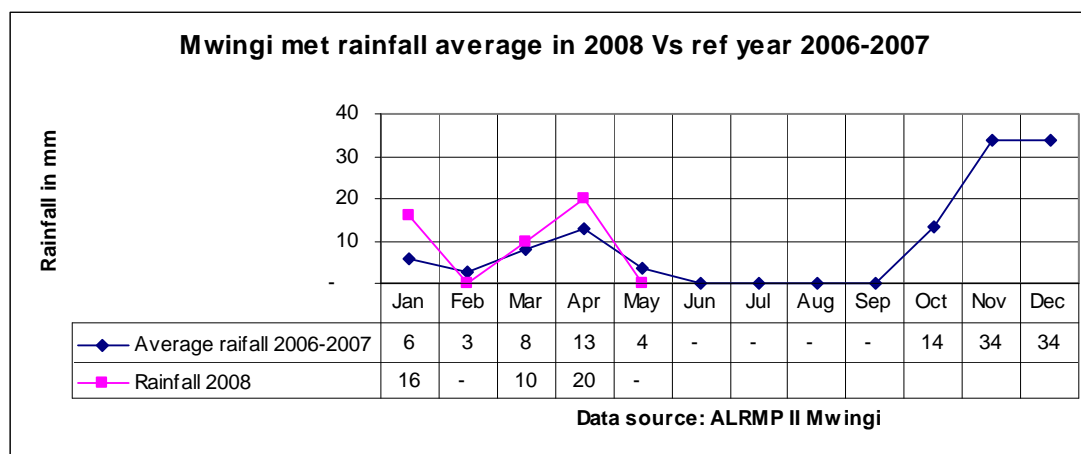


## Situation Overview

- In the Agro-Pastoral Livelihood Zone (Tseikuru, Ngomeni, Kyuso, Mumoni, Nuu and Nguni), the weather has been cold and cloudy in the morning hours but warm and hot in the afternoon. No rain was reported in May and most plants are wilting before flowering. Livestock body condition is fairly stable. Quality and quantity of natural vegetation is fairer than last month. Vaccination of livestock against CCPP, LSD and rabies is being concluded in Tseikuru and Nuu Divisions.
- Water access and availability is fair. Malnutrition cases are low. Stray buffalos were sighted in Kyuso and Nguni Divisions and at least two people were injured in Kyuso. Prices of cereals and other foodstuff are escalating. Pastoralists have encroached into grazing zones along Tana River boarder especially in Susoma in Nuu Division and this has caused high tension. Most farmers have depleted their food stocks at household level and are relying on purchases.
- In the Mixed Farming Zone (Central, Migwani, Mui, parts of Kyuso Divisions) The weather was cold and cloudy during the morning hours and warm and hot in the afternoons. Similar to the agro pastoral areas, no rains were reported in May. Livestock body condition is fair. Quantity and quality of natural vegetation is fair.
- Water access and availability is fair. Malnutrition cases are generally low. Prices of cereals and other foodstuff are escalating and most households are relying on food purchases from the local markets. Livestock prices are relatively stable in the whole district.

## 1 Environmental indicators

### 1.1 Rainfall



- During the last 2 weeks of April, the average rainfall recorded was 24mm but the distribution was very poor. In Ngomeni Division, a total of 165.2mm of rain was realized in 3 days alone while Kyuso Division had a total of 192.6mm of rain in 7 days.
- No rains have been reported in the month of May and all indications shows that the long rains have subsided.

### 1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- The quality of natural vegetation remained fair and stable.
- The quantity of natural vegetation has improved compared to last month's; this was due to the April rains. The browse has done better than the grasses.

### 1.3 Water sources and availability

- Water access and availability remained stable in comparison to last month. Distance to water points remained less than 10 Km. Households are getting their water from the traditional water sources such as dams, pans, sand scooped wells and shallow wells.

## **1.4 Emerging issues**

### **1.4.1 Human -wildlife conflict**

- Cases of buffalos straying into human settlements in Kyuso and Nguni Divisions have been reported. In Kyuso Division, they have caused crop destruction and at least two people have been reported to have been injured by the buffalos. This has caused panic and fear among the residents. The situation is being addressed by the Kenya Wildlife Services.

### **1.4.2 Inter-communal conflict**

- Pastoralists have encroached into the grazing areas in the District along the Tana River boarder causing a lot of tension in the affected regions. This is along Nuu, Nguni, Ngomeni, and Tseikuru Divisions, which happen to be the leading livestock producers in the District.

### **1.4.3 Implications on food security**

- The rains realized were erratic and poorly distributed in terms of space and time. This has seriously affected cropping activities in the District. The acreage under crop was reduced due to fear of rain failure. Those households that had planted early have had their crops performing poorly. Bearing in mind that households got poor harvest from the previous season, the combined effect is seriously affecting food security at household level. Most households expect no harvest as most crops have started wilting before start of flowering.

## **2. Rural indicators (Food availability)**

### **2.1 Livestock production**

#### **2.1.1 Livestock body condition**

- Livestock body condition is good across the Divisions, due to the improved pasture and water availability.

#### **2.1.2 Livestock diseases**

- No major livestock disease was reported. Cases of poultry deaths have been reported in Nguni and Mui Divisions due to suspected Newcastle disease. Vaccination campaign against LSD, and rabies is almost complete in the District.

#### **2.1.3 Milk production**

- There has been a 14% increase of milk production compared to last month. This could be attributed to improved pasture and water availability over the same period.

### **2.2 Crop production**

#### **2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities**

- The condition of most crops is poor due to inadequate rains and crops have started wilting. Legumes are at flowering stage but their performance is quite poor due to lack of rains.

#### **2.2.2 Pests and diseases**

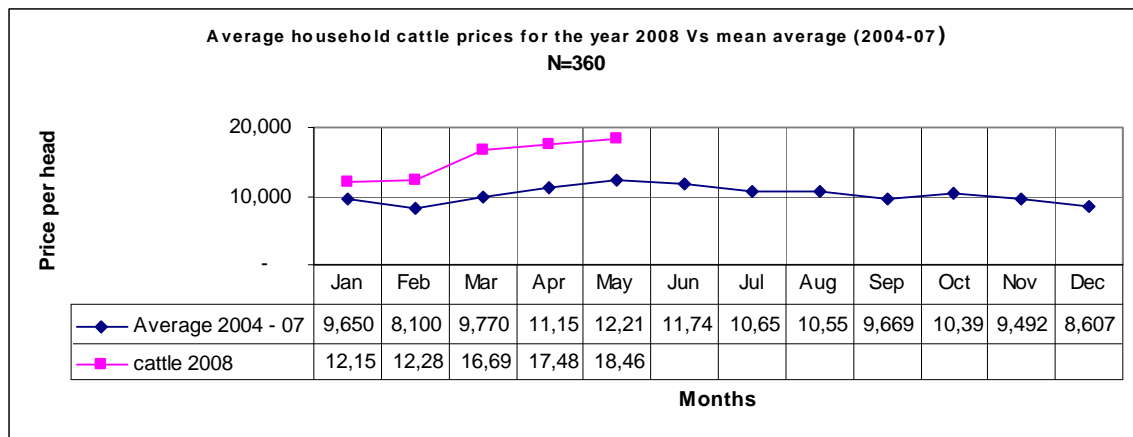
- Weevils are reported to be attacking legume crops in the farms further deteriorating the food situation in the District.
- Cases of aphids attacking crops have reported from numerous farms.
- Birds have started attacking millet and sorghum crops within Central Division.

### 2.2.3 Implications on food security

- The livestock sector is fairly stable due to pasture and water availability. However, most households do not keep large herds of livestock and therefore they may not sustain them for long in case of crop failure. The District comprises of agro pastoral livelihood zones and they require both livestock and agricultural sectors for sustenance. It is anticipated that the food insecurity may start biting hard in the next one month or so due to the prevailing weather conditions.

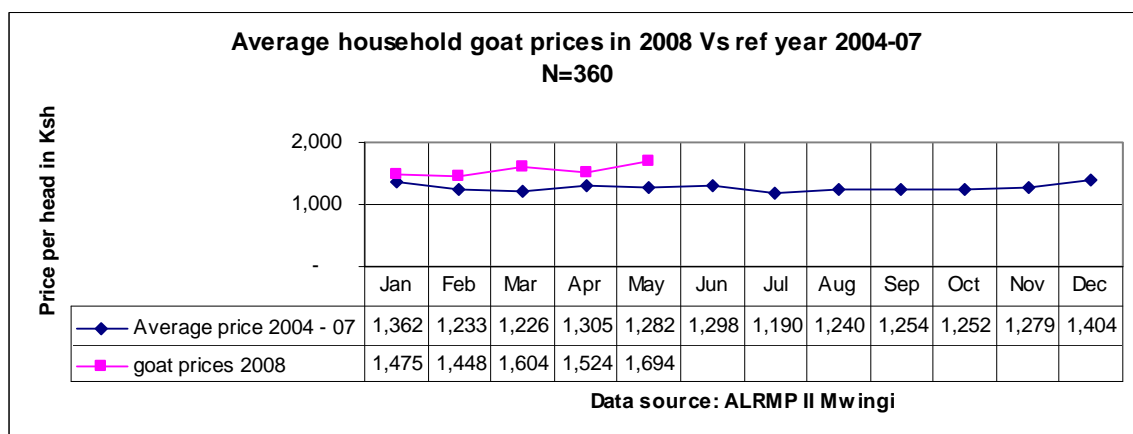
## 3. Access to food

### 3.1 Cattle prices



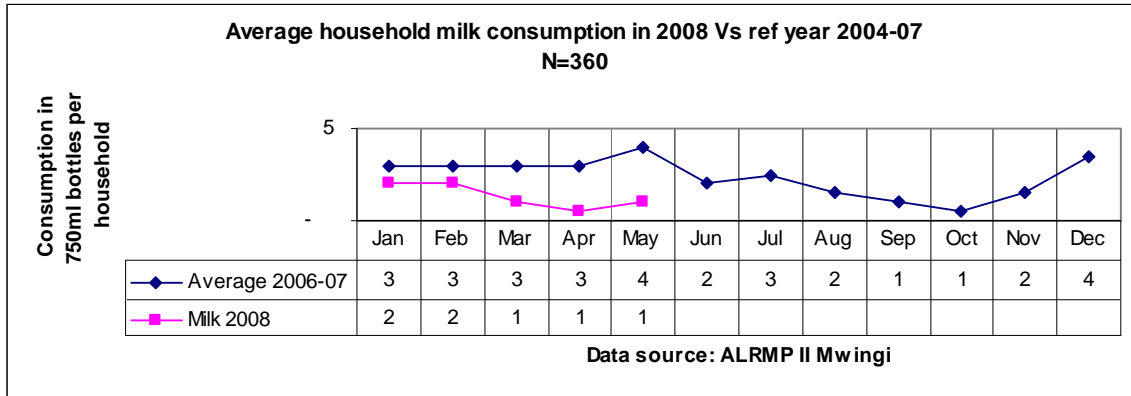
- The average household cattle prices shot up from Ksh 17, 482 last month to Ksh 18,463. The highest prices were recorded in Ngomeni at Ksh 30,000 per head while the lowest prices were recorded in Mui Division at Ksh 10,700 per head. Compared to the mean average, the prices are much higher. The high prices could be due to improved body condition of cattle. It could also be due to high demand of meat in urban areas. Households that keep cattle could benefit from the high prices if the animals were to be sold now.

### 3.2.1 Goat prices



- There was a slight increase of average household goat prices from Ksh 1,524 per head last month to Ksh 1,694 per head. The highest prices were observed in Mumoni Division at Ksh 2,000 while the lowest prices were observed in Tseikuru division at Ksh 1,464. The price increase could be due to improved animal body condition. It could also be due to high demand of meat in urban areas and Kenya Meat Commission. The high prices could benefit households that intend to dispose the goats to the market.

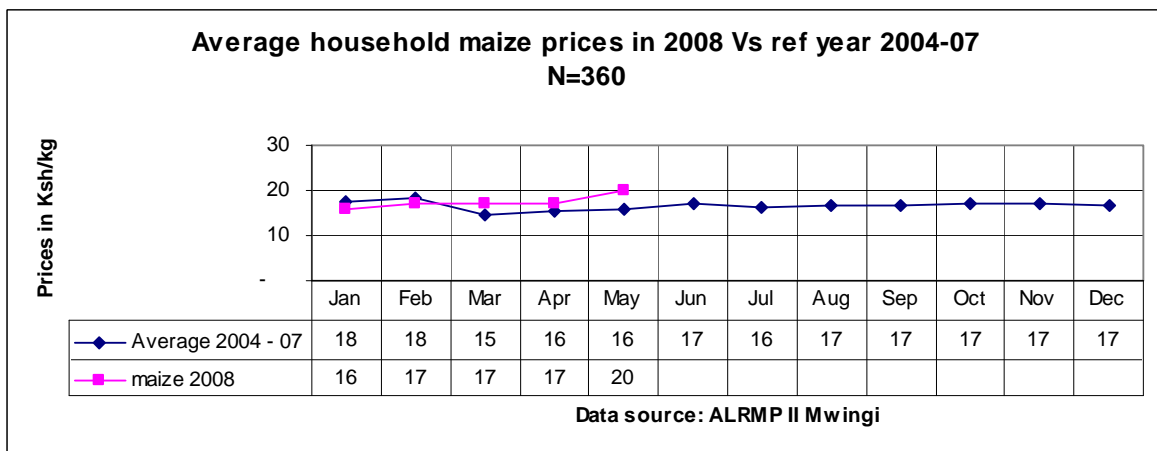
### 3.3 Milk consumption



- Overall average household milk consumption remained the same compared to last month i.e. one bottle/household. However, there was a 22% increase in the number of households that had reported to be consuming milk compared to last Month. This should be able to mitigate against malnutrition cases observed in children in some parts of the District.

### 3.4 Crop Prices

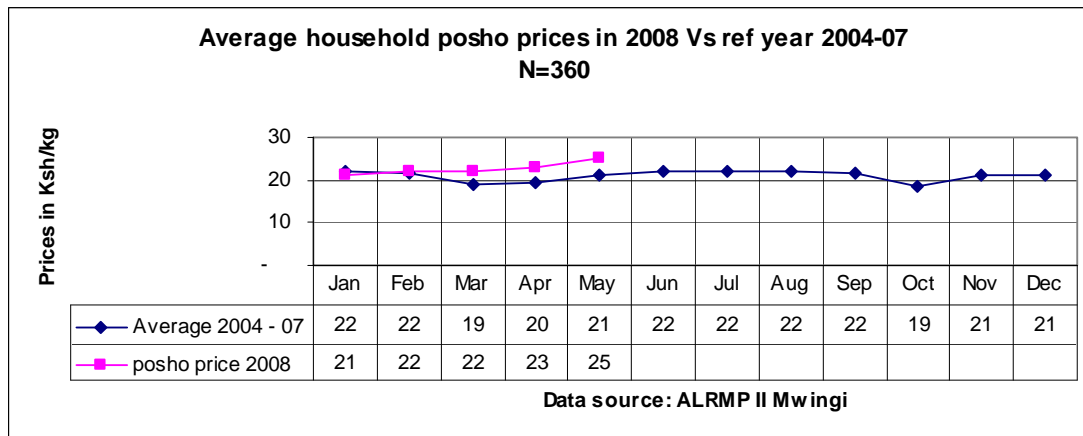
#### 3.4.1 Maize prices



- The average household maize prices have shot up from Ksh 17/Kg last month to Ksh 20/Kg currently. This could be due to dwindling stocks in the market. Most households have exhausted their maize stocks from the previous season and therefore resorting to purchases in the market. This has resulted in higher prices due to high demand.

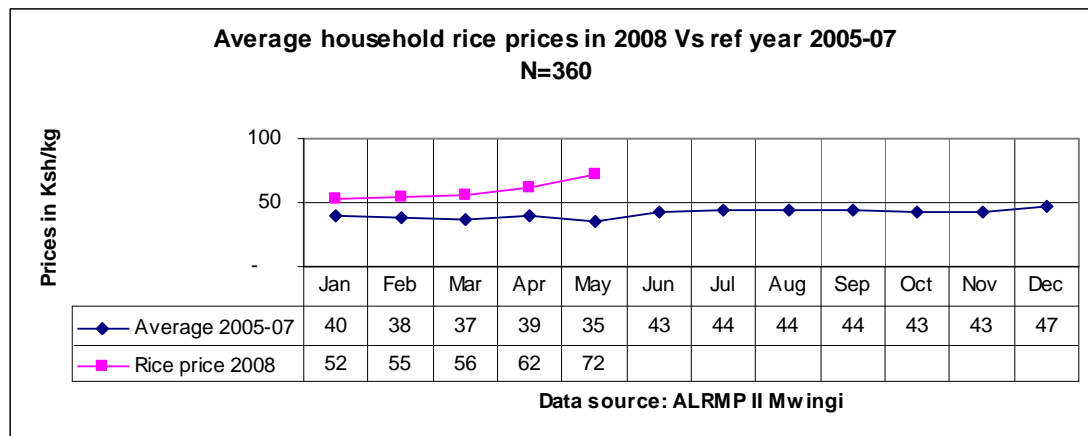
- The implication on food security is bad because households are finding it difficult to afford maize.

### 3.4.2 Posho prices



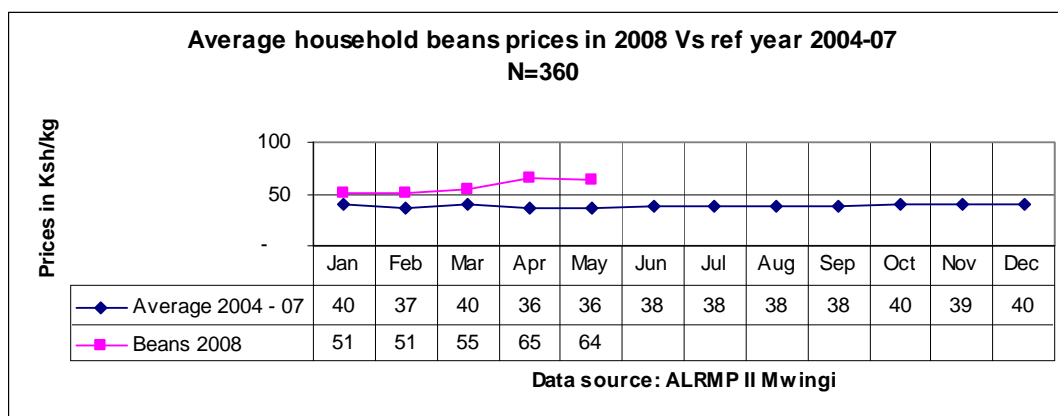
- The average household posho prices shot up from Ksh 23/Kg last month to Ksh 25/Kg currently. This could be due to escalating fuel prices which are contributing to the high production cost of milling the grains.
- The impact on food security is bad because households are finding it difficult to afford posho flour.

### 3.4.3 Rice prices



- The average household rice prices shot up from Ksh 62/Kg last month to Ksh 72/Kg currently. This could be due to decreasing rice stocks in the market due to low supplies. The District branch of the National cereals board has run out of the commodity and therefore making the situation to be worse.
- The impact on food security is bad because few households can afford the commodity at the current price levels.

### 3.4.4 Beans prices



- The average household beans prices decreased slightly from Ksh 65/Kg last month to Ksh 64/Kg currently. However, the prices are still much higher compared to the mean average. The commodity is scarce at the market and therefore most households can not afford it.

### 3.5 Income

#### 3.5.1 Crop income

- The number of households selling crops has remained the same compared to last month i.e. 5%. This could be due to declining food reserves at household levels.

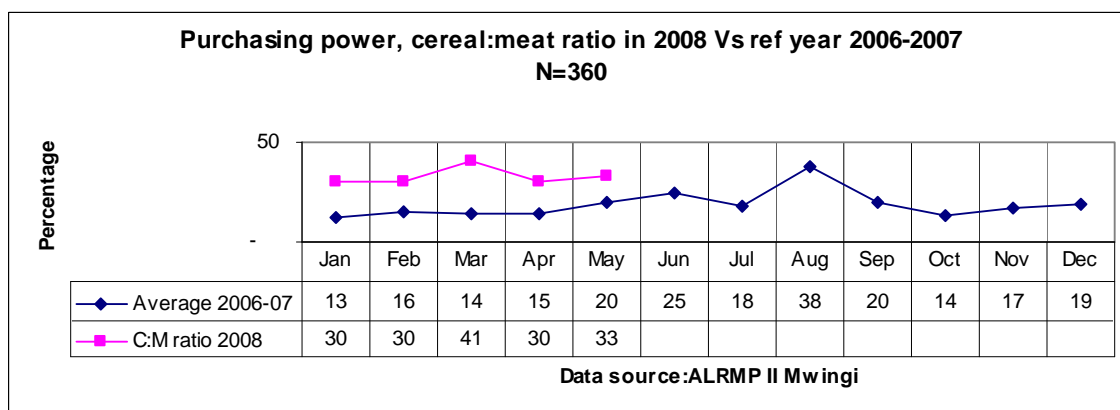
#### 3.5.2 Livestock income

- The number of households selling livestock has increased from 6% last month to 13% currently. This could be due to improved animal body condition. It could also be due to pressure to dispose mature bulls which are no longer needed for cultivation works. Another factor could be due to increased livestock prices.

#### 3.5.3 Other sources of income

- Casual labour remained the main source of income although the proportion of households engaged in this activity declined from 39% to 34% currently.
- Honey harvesting activities are being undertaken by households that have kept bee hives. Currently, the environment is favorable for this activity.

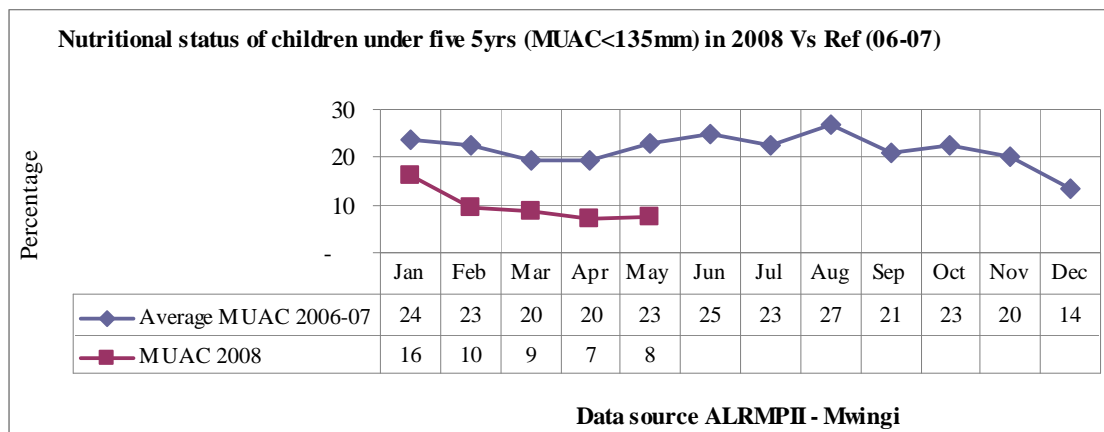
### 4. Cereal :Meat price ratio



- The terms of trade on cereal to meat ratio increased slightly from 30% last month to 33% currently. This could be due to increasing livestock prices.
- The implication on food security is that for the livestock farmer/trader, the ratio may favour them as opposed to cereal farmers because they are able to afford more cereals with the same amount of livestock product.

## 5. Welfare (Utilization of food)

### 5.1 Nutrition status of children



- The percentage of malnourished children increased slightly from 7% last month to 8%. The highest percentage was reported in Thaana Nzau Sub-Location at 35% while Mumoni Division had no cases. The increase could be due to dwindling food stocks within the households especially cereals.

## 6. Current intervention measures and coping strategies

### 6.1 Non-food

- Vaccination campaign against CCPP, rabies, anthrax and lumpy skin disease is ongoing in the whole District.
- The District security committee has visited Susome in Nuu Division to assess the security situation along Tana River border in order to avert conflict between pastoralists and farmers over grazing and water resources.
- Farming implement tools have been distributed in Nuu, Nguni, Ngomeni, Kyuso, Mumoni and Tseikuru Divisions.

### Food Aid

- Mumoni, Kyuso, Tseikuru, Nuu, Ngomeni and Nguni Divisions have received a total of 157.791 metric tones of food in April. The food comprised of corn meal, pulses and oil. A total of 3,094 households benefited.

## 7. Recommendations

- The prospect of getting any harvest in the current season is very poor due to erratic rains that were received. The DSG has recommended strong intervention with food aid in order to avert starvation among the most vulnerable groups in the District.
- Inter district security committees should be activated in order to facilitate dialogue between the pastoralists who have invaded the District residents. This is important so as to avoid skirmishes between the two groups over grazing and water resources.

- Increased surveillance of wild animals along the District boundaries should be enhanced in order to avoid human-wildlife conflict as is the case with the buffalos in Kyuso Division.
- There is a need for intervention in Thaana Nzau sample area to address the issue of malnutrition which currently stands at 35%.