

Situation Overview

- In the month under review both Taita and Taveta districts received light showers. The average amount of rainfall decreased to 318.6 mm compared 937.4 mm recorded in the month of April. The highest amount of rainfall was recorded in the hill masses of Taita district while the lowest in the lowlands of the two districts. The rains in the past three weeks did not progress on well and if this situation prevail for another one month the two districts especially Taveta will be in serious food shortage due to crop failure. Mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone is the most affected given that they lacked rainfall for two seasons. Most farmers in Abori, Eldoro and Kimorigho in Taveta district that had been displaced by floods have returned to their homes even though some parts are still swampy.
- Condition of natural vegetation and pasture is good due to the long rains received in the two districts. The quantity has increased and is adequate to cater for livestock and wildlife for two months. In the national park livelihood zone dense heavy thickets of forest cover and grass continue to dominate even in areas that are extremely dry. Compared with the same month in a normal year the quality and quantity of natural vegetation and pasture is good. The rains recharged both traditional and seasonal rivers and water level is still appropriate for livestock use. The average grazing distance from the sampled sentinel sites remained the same at 2.9 km compared to the month of April.
- The major insecurity/conflict reported is the human wildlife conflict. Marauding elephants from the park have been feasting and trampling on acres of food crops in Mwakitau, Mwatate division while the primates destroy cassava crops. However one deviant elephant that had destroyed many acres of food crops and was about to trample on a milk man while ferrying his goods was shot dead by KWS officers in patrol. In the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone, Wongonyi in Mwambirwa division and Mashangi in Wundanyi division cases of commercial logging and illegal harvesting of sandal wood (*ossyris lanceolata*) by both locals and outsiders is still being reported.
- In general if there is no rainfall in two weeks time 80% of total plantation of maize and beans in the two districts will dry up. Farmers who planted late are already languishing since their maize crops have dried up at the tussling stage while those who dry planted most crops have withered and the rains have stopped. Also prices of farm inputs and essential food items are very high. The high prices of maize flour have made it impossible for children to be served with porridge which is very essential for growth. Prices of legumes especially beans at the local markets are very high and most households cannot afford resulting to deficiency in protein nutrients in their diet. In the mixed farming: food crop/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone, Mwakitau in Mwatate division farmers are extremely devastated due to wanton destruction of food crops by the elephants in these area given that they have not harvested for two seasons.
- Absence of rain for two more weeks will result to a total crop failure in the two districts hence enhancing food insecurity due to food shortage. Taveta district remain the most affected given that it was hard hit with floods and severe army worm invasion accompanied by high prices of cereals and essential food items at the market level. These will worsen food security situation in Taveta district. Entirely, Taveta district need particular attention especially the rain fed areas. In both districts wildlife menace remains a major threat to food security for instance Mwakitau in Mwatate division, Kasigau in Voi division, Tausa division, Wongonyi in Mwambirwa in Taita district and Challa , Jipe, Njukini divisions in Taveta districts need particular attention because of food shortage due to wanton food crop destruction by wildlife. However milk and meat production has increased due to plenty of browse for livestock to enjoy and water availability within convenient distances in the two districts therefore enhancing food security.
- The current farming activities in various livelihood zones are as follows. In the mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone farming is at a stand still due to the poor state of food crops in the fields. Farmers are in a state of confusion waiting for the rains to water their plants. However in the casual waged labour: sisal farms livelihood zone casual waged labourers are weeding others are busy harvesting the sisal crop. In the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone some farmers are harvesting green grams, cow peas and beans while others will harvest maize in two weeks time. In the mixed farming: irrigated cropping/livestock/food crops some farmers are busy weeding maize while others are busy harvesting sugarcane, bananas, tomatoes and onions.
- In the month under review no major human migration occurrence was reported in the two districts though a few household members in Njukini, Taveta district are moving to Loitoktok in search of casual labour to be paid in terms of cereals and legumes instead of money. In the month of May no abnormal livestock in-migration was reported although herders from Garissa continue to lease vast lands in the ranches to graze

their animals in Mwatate and Voi divisions. Compared to the previous month the rate of livestock migration is decreasing favorably due to good weather conditions.

- Areas that need particular attention in regard to food security are Jipe division, Challa division and parts of Njukini division in Taveta district, Kajire, Marapu, Rahasi, Bungule, Marungu, parts of Rukanga in Voi division, Mwakitau, Kamtonga, Chunga Unga and Mukuki in Mwatate division, Mbulia, Ndome and parts of Mbololo in Tausa division and Wongonyi in Mwambirwa division, Taita district.
- The average malnutrition status of children under five in percentage MUAC < 135 mm has declined to 3.0% in May from 3.8% in April. Out of 1,450 children under-five sampled in 15 sample sites areas only 52 children were found with MUAC < 135. This low level of % MUAC still indicates a noble sign as the percentage of children rated "AT RISK" of malnutrition is below 10% which has been set as alarming by WHO.

Recommendations to District Authorities/National KFSSG

- Food for Assets projects should be encouraged to target short term agriculture, irrigation, livestock and water projects in order to increase resilience and enhance food security in the district.
- Encourage excavation of more water pans in mixed farming: food crops/livestock and national park livelihood zones.
- Provide strategic rain gauges which will help to monitor rainfall in terms of spatial distribution for the purpose of engaging appropriate remedies to enable farmers avoid adverse effects brought about by bad weather.
- Encourage irrigation farming and up-scale electric fences in both districts to safe guard food crops destruction from marauding wild animals.
- Construction of rain water harvesting structures in the lowlands and promotion of soil conservation and soil fertility management. Demonstration on proper land operations and recommended farm implements.
- Expansion of area under irrigation through desilting of canals and opening of new ones in Taveta district and Tausa and Mwatate in Taita district.
- The KWS wardens should increase surveillance to contain the wildlife to stop wanton destruction of food crops and at the same time reduce poaching.
- Extension services to be enhanced in order to reach as many farmers as possible.
- Permanent solution to be formulated to curb the annual floods that hit Taveta district for many years.
- Provincial Administration and the County council to control or regulate sand harvesting along Voi river.

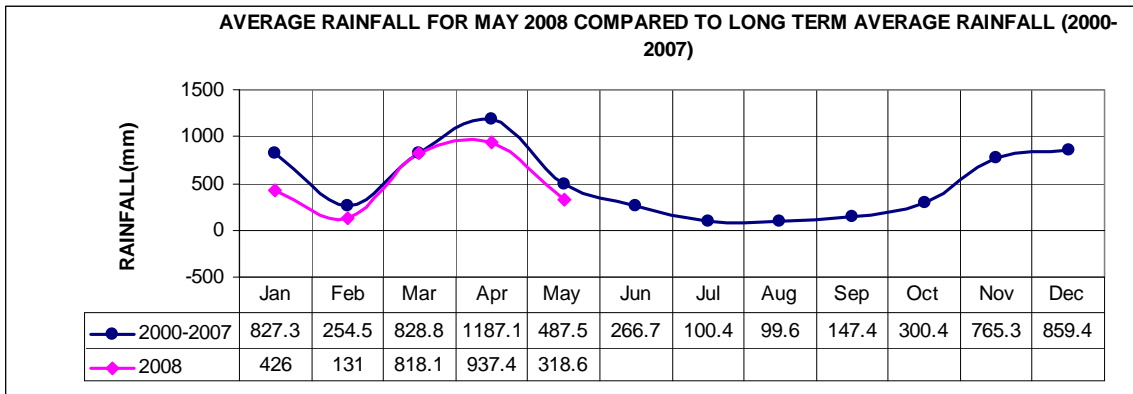
Current Interventions

Phase III of EMOP is progressing on well in the two districts with World Vision being the lead agency. These projects are being implemented in conjunction with ALRMP II, World Food Programme, other government departments and communities. Other on-going interventions are;

- Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Sector projects
Construct a retaining wall intake and pipes for Kironge-Mwakaleri water project in Mwambirwa division-ALRMP II, MOW & I and community, excavation of Gae Wa Mnyoto water pan in Kasigau, Voi division-ALRMP II, MOW & I and community, Construct Mararu dyke plus drainage rehabilitation and Jipe domestic water project in Taveta district. Construction of 5,000 m³ Ndilidau water pan Bomeni (Mahoo sub location). Msorongo-overseer water project where 13.5 km trench will be made to lay PVC water pipes in Mwakitau, Mwatate division. Rehabilitation of Lambo-Marondo-Ngutini irrigation canal desilting in Eldoro, Taveta district. Trenching and laying extension GI pipes for Mbololo and Daku Mbulia water supply - ALRMP II, Coast Water and Services Board and community. 80 km solar electric fence is being constructed from Jipe - Njukini.
- Livestock Sector projects
DVO Taita and Taveta are currently undertaking Vaccination on Foot and mouth, LSD, CDPP and Anthrax in both Taita and Taveta districts. Ministry of livestock development- veterinary services provided vaccines and ALRMP II will facilitate the activity.
- Environment and Natural Resources sector projects
Catchment conservation measures on the hill masses where 20,000 tree seedlings have been planted in Bura forest Mwatate division -ALRMP II, KFS and community.
- Health sector projects
DMOH Taita is currently carrying out a nutrition and food security survey in Taita district facilitated by ALRMP II.

1. Stability

1.1 Rainfall



In the month under review both Taita and Taveta districts received light showers. The average amount of rainfall decreased to 318.6 mm compared 937.4 mm recorded in the month of April. The highest amount of rainfall was recorded in the hill masses of Taita district while the lowest in the lowlands of the two districts. The rains in the past three weeks did not progress on well and if this situation prevail for another one month the two districts especially Taveta will be in serious food shortage due to crop failure. Mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone is the most affected given that they lacked rainfall for two seasons. Most farmers in Abori, Eldoro and Kimorigho in Taveta district that had been displaced by floods have returned to their homes even though some parts are still swampy. Compared to the long term average for 2000-2007 the trend is normal but decreasing at high rate.

1.2 Condition of Natural Vegetation and Pasture

Condition of natural vegetation and pasture is good due to the long rains received in the two districts. The quantity has increased and is adequate to cater for livestock and wildlife for two months. In the national park livelihood zone dense heavy thickets of forest cover and grass continue to dominate even in areas that are extremely dry. Compared with the same month in a normal year the quality and quantity of natural vegetation and pasture is good. The rains recharged both traditional and seasonal rivers and water level is still appropriate for livestock use. The average grazing distance from the sampled sentinel sites remained the same at 2.9 km compared to the month of April.

1.3 Water sources and Availability

In the month under review water sources remained the same household members and livestock using water from roof catchments, tap water, springs, natural rivers, water pans, dams and boreholes. Water situation has improved though compared to the previous month the average distance and time from the sampled sentinel sites to and from the water sources increased to 2.1 km and 1 Hr from 1.8 km and 0.9 Hrs. However, most household members continue using tap water.

1.4 Emerging issues

In general if there is no rainfall in two weeks time 80% of total plantation of maize and beans in the two districts will dry up. Farmers who planted late are already languishing since their maize crops have dried up at the tussling stage while those who dry planted most crops have withered and the rains have stopped. Also prices of farm inputs and essential food items are very high. The high prices of maize flour have made it impossible for children to be served with porridge which is very essential for growth. Prices of legumes especially beans at the local markets are very high and most households cannot afford resulting to deficiency in protein nutrients in their diet. In the mixed farming: food crop/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone, Mwakitau in Mwatate division farmers are extremely devastated due to wanton destruction of food crops by the elephants in these area given that they have not harvested for two seasons.

1.4.1. Insecurity/Conflict/Human Displacement

The major insecurity/conflict reported is the human wildlife conflict. Marauding elephants from the park have been feasting and trampling on acres of food crops in Mwakitau, Mwatate division while the primates destroy cassava crops. However one deviant elephant that had destroyed many acres of food crops and was about to trample on a milk man while ferrying his goods was shot dead by KWS officers in patrol. In the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone, Wongonyi in Mwambirwa division and Mashangi in Wundanyi division cases of commercial logging and illegal harvesting of sandal wood (*ossyris lanceolata*) by both locals and outsiders is still being reported.

1.4.2. Migration

In the month under review no major human migration occurrence was reported in the two districts though a few household members in Njukini, Taveta district are moving to Loitokitok in search of casual labour to be paid in terms of cereals and legumes instead of money. In the month of May no abnormal livestock in-migration was reported although herders from Garissa continue to lease vast lands in the ranches to graze their animals in Mwatate and Voi divisions. Compared to the previous month the rate of livestock migration is decreasing favorably due to good weather conditions.

1.4.3. Other Factors Likely to Affect Livelihoods

In Taita district, Msau/Rahai sub location and lower parts of Sagalla most young men have engaged in massive and commercial sand harvesting along the Voi river instead of farming. On the other hand the river banks have been destroyed resulting to low water level and reduction in flow of water to other areas that require water for farming activities. This will adversely affect household members in the long run resulting to a negative effect on food security.

1.4.4. Implication on Food Security

Absence of rain for two more weeks will result to a total crop failure in the two districts hence enhancing food insecurity due to food shortage. Taveta district remain the most affected given that it was hard hit with floods and severe army worm invasion accompanied by high prices of cereals and essential food items at the market level. These will worsen food security situation in Taveta district. Entirely, Taveta district need particular attention in regard to food security especially the rain fed areas. In both districts wildlife menace remains a major threat to food security for instance Mwakitau in Mwatate division, Kasigau in Voi division, Tausa division, Wongonyi in Mwambirwa in Taita district and Challa, Jipe, Njukini divisions in Taveta districts need particular attention because of food shortage due to wanton food crop destruction by wildlife. However milk and meat production has increased due to plenty of browse for livestock to enjoy and water availability within convenient distances in the two districts therefore enhancing food security.

2. Food Availability (Rural indicators)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1. Livestock Body Condition

In both districts livestock body condition has steadily improved especially for cattle. This development is attributed to availability of natural vegetation and pasture, access to water within their grazing areas due to recharge of traditional and seasonal rivers and lack major livestock diseases. Compared with a normal year the current livestock body condition is normal at this time of the year.

2.1.2. Milk Production

In the month under review total milk yield from sampled households was recorded at 9,990 litres compared to 12,045 litres recorded in April. Although livestock body condition improved tremendously especially for cattle due to improved condition of natural vegetation and pasture and lack major livestock diseases, milk production in the month under review decreased following the end of the mating season. Mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone remained the leading producer of milk recording 75%, mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone 19% and casual waged labour: sisal farms 6%.

2.2 Crop Production

2.2.1. Timeliness and Condition of Various Crop Production Activities

The current farming activities in various livelihood zones are as follows. In the mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone farming is at a stand still due to the poor state of food crops in the fields. Farmers are in a state of confusion waiting for the rains to water their plants. However in the casual waged labour: sisal farms livelihood zone casual waged labourers are weeding others are busy harvesting the sisal crop. In the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone some farmers are harvesting green grams, cow peas and beans while others will harvest maize in two weeks time. In the mixed farming: irrigated cropping/livestock/food crops some farmers are busy weeding maize while others are busy harvesting sugarcane, bananas, tomatoes and onions. This is normal at this time of the year.

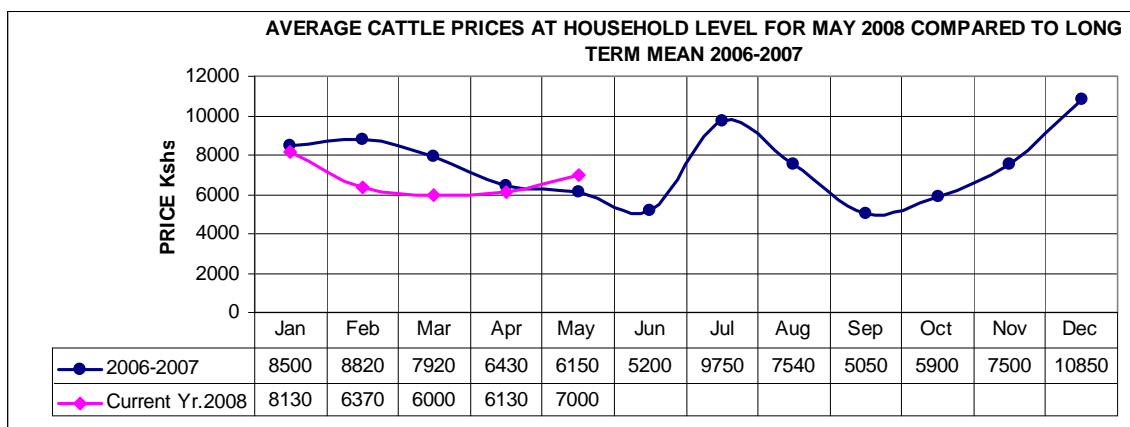
2.2.2. Pests and Diseases

In the month of April army worms were controlled at the district level and in the month under review no major pest affecting current crop has been reported in the two districts.

3. Access to Food

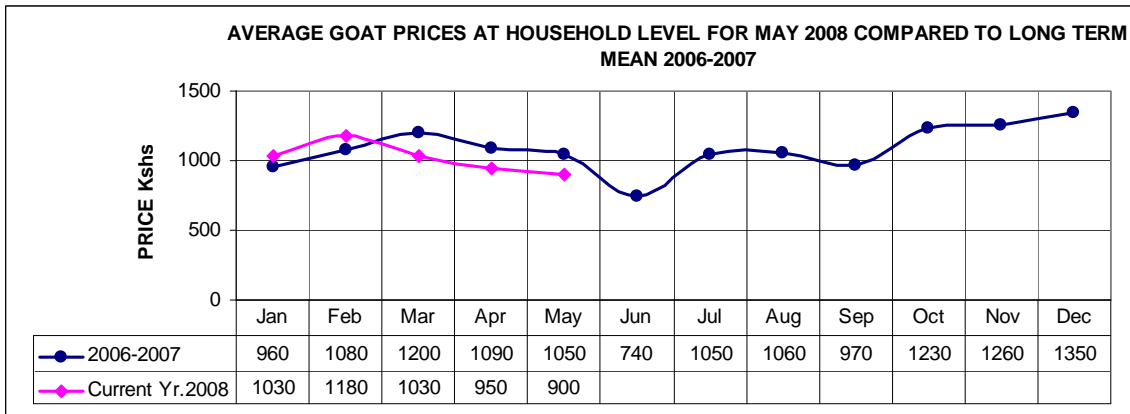
3.1 Livestock Marketing

3.1.1. Cattle Prices



In the month under review the average cattle price at household level increased to 7,000/= from 6,130/= recorded in the previous month. This rise in price is attributed to the availability of natural vegetation and pasture and access to water within their grazing areas resulting to improved cattle body condition resulting to increased demand for cattle. High prices were experienced in the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone (10,000/=) due to good livestock body condition. Low prices prevailed in the casual waged labour: sisal farms (5,000/=) and mixed farming: food crops/livestock (6,000/=) livelihood zones. Compared to the long term mean the trend is increasing upwards and the price is high.

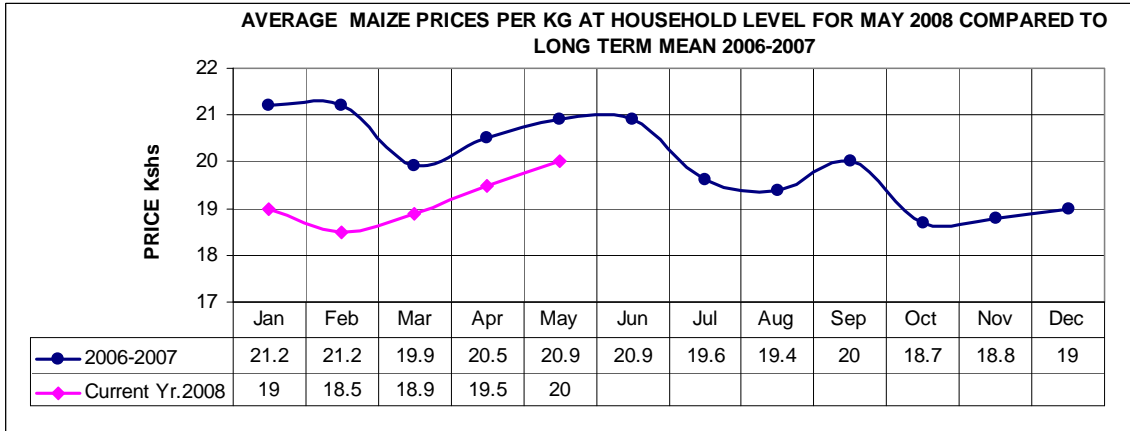
3.1.2. Goats Prices



The average goat price at household level decreased to 900/= from 950/= recorded in the previous month. This steadily drop in average price of goat can be attributed to herders offering increased number of goats for sale compared to cattle hence markets flooded with too many goats and also continued decrease in demand for goat meat in both districts. Prices remained higher in the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone (1,000/=) than in both the casual waged labour: sisal farms (900/=) and mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zones (800/=). Compared to the long term mean the trend is normal but the price is low.

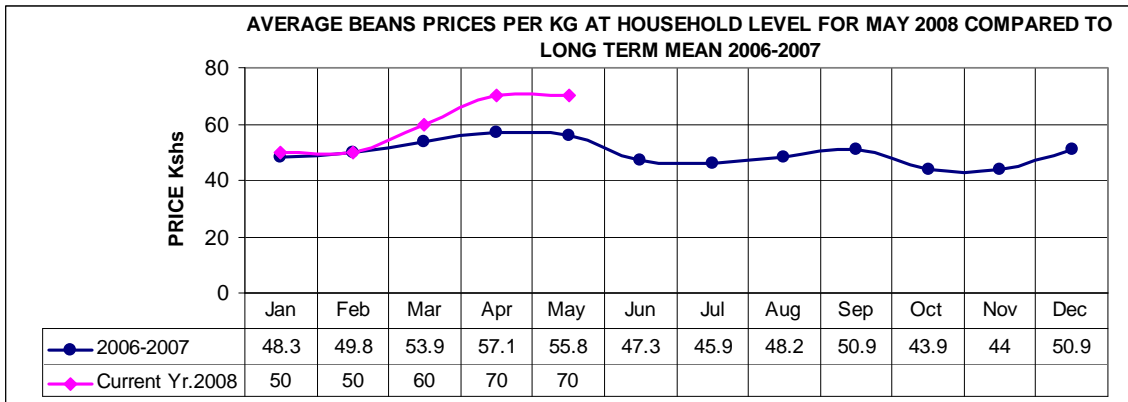
3.2 Crop Prices

3.2.1. Maize



The average maize price per kg at household level has increased to 20.0/= from a price 19.5/= recorded in April. The gradual increase in price can be attributed to depleted maize stock and shortage in supply of maize after crop failure resulting to poor harvest especially in the lowlands. Low prices were recorded in the mixed farming: food crops//livestock livelihood zone (13/= per kg) while higher prices were realized in the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone (27/= per kg) and mixed farming: irrigated cropping/livestock/food crops (20/= per kg) livelihood zone due to farmers being able to control their prices given that these livelihood zones farmers depend on variety of farm products to earn them income. Compared to the long term mean the trend is normal and average maize price per kg at household level is slightly low.

3.2.2. Beans



In the month under review the average beans price per kg at household level remained the same at 70/= compared to the previous month. The consistent high price in both districts can be attributed to the depletion of bean stocks at household and market level therefore increasing demand while supply is not adequate. Huge stocks of pulses are being imported from Tanzania and others purchased from neighbouring districts at high prices. In the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone average beans prices at household level were high (90/= per kg) due to increased stocks of pulses after harvests. Prices were lower in both mixed farming: food crops/livestock (70/= per kg) and mixed farming: irrigated cropping/livestock/food crops (50/= per kg) livelihood zones. Compared to the long term mean the trend is normal but the average beans price per kg is high.

3.3 Income

3.3.1. Livestock Income

Livestock income is steadily increasing due to improvement of livestock body condition. Deriving livestock income using average livestock prices at household level from 360 sampled households, 2 cattle realized 14,000/=, 33 goats 29,700/= and 52 chickens 7,280/= accumulating to a livestock income of 50,980/=. This indicates a 27% decrease in the total livestock income compared to the previous month which realized a total of 70,010/=. This decline is attributed to fall in sales of cattle as most herders are hoarding them in order to sell them when cattle prices rise and decrease in price of goat due to markets flooded with too many goats.

3.3.2. Other income sources

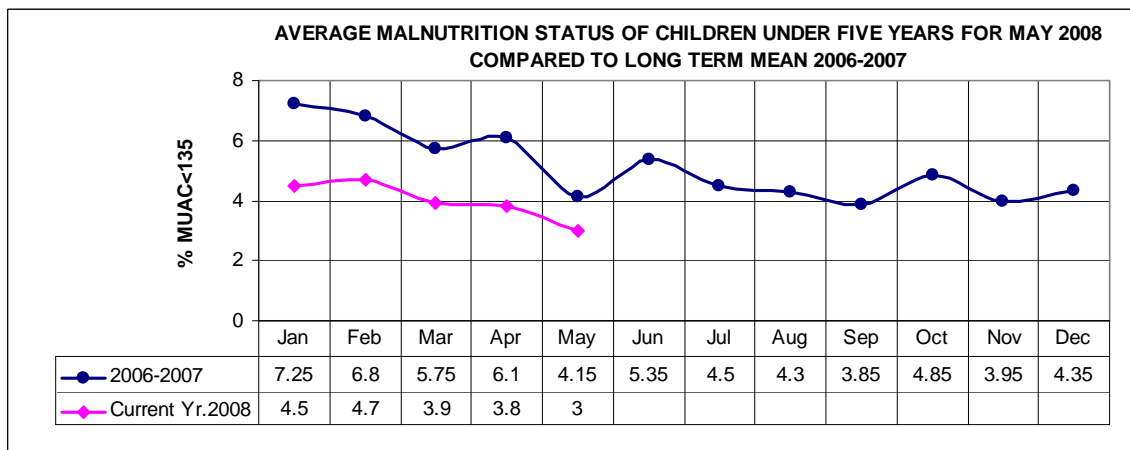
In the month under review, casual labour, petty trade, formal employment, remittances, sand selling, brick selling charcoal selling, miraa selling, fishing and small scale mining. However, income obtained from these sources is normal at this time of the year.

3.3.3. Implications on Food Security

An increase in livestock income improves the standard of living of household members. Household members can afford essential items, health facilities, education and be able to afford a balanced diet therefore enhancing food security in this livelihood zone. On the other hand prices of legumes at market level remained high rendering household members to operate on a shoe string budget in order for them to obtain protein nutrients in their diet. In the rain fed and lowlands of the two districts this situation is expected to prevail until farmers harvest their own legumes given that these farmers during the previous season experienced total crop failure. Areas that need particular attention in regard to food security are Jipe division, Challa division and parts of Njukini division in Taveta district, Kajire, Marapu, Rahasi, Bungule, Marungu, parts of Rukanga in Voi division, Mwakitau, Kamtonga, Chunga Unga and Mukuki in Mwatate division, Mbulia, Ndome and parts of Mbololo in Tausa division and Wongonyi in Mwambirwa division, Taita district.

4. Utilization of Food (Welfare)

4.1 Nutrition Status



The average malnutrition status of children under five in percentage MUAC < 135 mm has declined to 3.0% in May from 3.8% in April. Out of 1,450 children under-five sampled in 15 sample sites areas only 52 children were found with MUAC < 135. This low level of % MUAC still indicates a noble sign as the percentage of children rated “AT RISK” of malnutrition is below 10% which has been set as alarming by WHO. This sharp decline can be attributed to readily availability of milk at household level for both mother and child. Government through the DMOH together with UNICEF at the district level have been able to control diseases like malaria, measles and parasitic infections for the under five. Compared with the long term mean at this time of the year the level of malnutrition is low and decreasing at a low rate. Other important nutrition related observations are that the cause of malnutrition for children under five in the two districts is mostly attributed to bad feeding practices and early weaning of babies where most mothers do not exclusively breastfeed their babies for the first six months of life.

4.2 Flagged Areas

Areas that have high malnutrition levels and need particular attention are lower parts of Sagalla in Voi division, Mashangi and Mwaroko in Wundanyi division and Mahandakini in Taveta district.

5. Current Intervention Measures and Coping Strategies

5.1 Non-Food Aid

Phase III of EMOP is progressing on well in the two districts with World Vision being the lead agency. These projects are being implemented in conjunction with ALRMP II, World Food Programme, other government departments and communities. Other on-going interventions are;

- Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Sector projects

Construct a retaining wall intake and pipes for Kironge-Mwakaleri water project in Mwambirwa division-ALRMP II, MOW and community, excavation of Gae Wa Mnyoto water pan in Kasigau Voi division, ALRMP II, MOW and community, Construct Mararu dyke plus drainage rehabilitation and Jipe domestic water project in Taveta district. Construction of 5,000 m³ Ndilidau water pan Bomeni (Mahoo sub location). Msorongu-overseer water project where 13.5 km trench will be made to lay PVC water pipes in Mwakitau, Mwatate division. Rehabilitation of Lambo-Marondo-Ngutini irrigation canal desilting in Eldoro, Taveta district. Trenching and laying extension GI pipes for Mbololo and Daku Mbulia water supply - ALRMP II, Coast Water and Services Board and community. 80 km solar electric fence is being constructed from Jipe - Njukini.

- Livestock Sector projects

DVO Taita and Taveta are currently undertaking Vaccination on Foot and mouth, LSD, CDPP and Anthrax in both Taita and Taveta districts. Ministry of livestock development- veterinary services provided vaccines and ALRMP II will facilitate the activity.

- Environment and Natural Resources sector projects

Catchment conservation measures on the hill masses where 20,000 tree seedlings have been planted in Bura forest Mwatate division -ALRMP II, KFS and community.

- Health sector projects

DMOH Taita is currently carrying out a nutrition and food security survey in Taita district facilitated by ALRMP II.

5.2 Other Coping Strategies

The major coping strategy in the mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone especially lower parts of Taita district is charcoal burning, sand harvesting and brick making while in the mixed farming: irrigated cropping/livestock/dairy livelihood zone is fishing. Those who live near the national park livelihood zone engage in poaching of dik diks, antelopes and elephants. Compared to the previous month coping strategies sand harvesting and brick making were reported to be on an increase.

6. Recommendations

- Food for Assets projects should be encouraged to target short term agriculture, irrigation, livestock and water projects in order to increase resilience and enhance food security in the district.
- Encourage excavation of more water pans in mixed farming: food crops/livestock and national park livelihood zones.
- Provide strategic rain gauges which will help to monitor rainfall in terms of spatial distribution for the purpose of engaging appropriate remedies to enable farmers avoid adverse effects brought about by bad weather.
- Encourage irrigation farming and up-scale electric fences in both districts to safe guard food crops destruction from marauding wild animals.
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- The KWS wardens should increase surveillance to contain the wildlife to stop wanton destruction of food crops and at the same time reduce poaching.
- Extension services to be enhanced in order to reach as many farmers as possible.
- Permanent solution to be formulated to curb the annual floods that hit Taveta district for many years.
- Provincial Administration and the County council to control or regulate sand harvesting along Voi river.