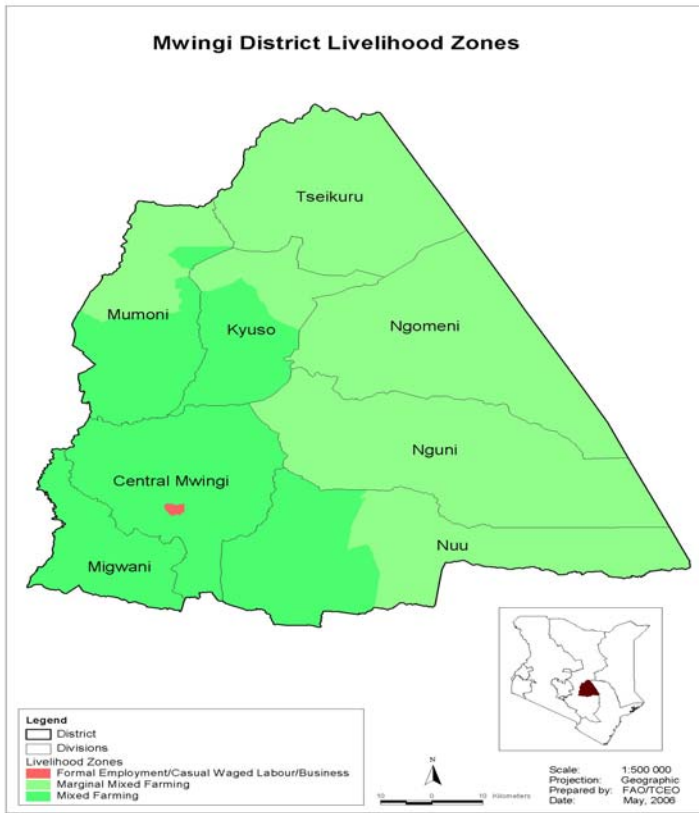




OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II

DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN, NOVEMBER 2008

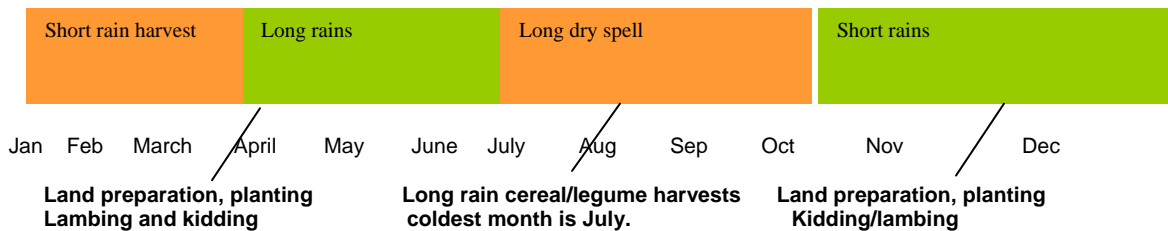
Mwingi District



Warning stages

Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Agro pastoral zone	Alert	Worsening
Mixed farming zone	Alert	Worsening
District	Alert	Worsening

TIMELINE ACTIVITIES



Situation overview

- The district experienced mainly hot, cloudy and humid weather conditions. There were widespread rains during the first week of the month but stopped in the second week. The average rainfall recorded was 24mm.
- Quantity and quality of natural vegetation was fair, while water access and availability was also fair.
- Cereal prices escalated and households relied on casual labour, petty trade and remittances as sources of income to meet daily needs.
- Crops were experiencing moisture stress in most parts of the district, with possibility of maize and beans getting permanently stunted.
- In some areas farmers were still waiting for rains to do replanting.
- Livestock body condition was fair.
- Vaccination against PPR was ongoing.
- Few cases of diarrhea were reported in Nuu division.
- The nutrition status of children below five years improved slightly during the month under review. The percentage of children rated as being at the risk of malnutrition (based on the MUAC<135mm measurement) reduced to 14% from a high of 16% last month.

Non-food interventions

- The Veterinary department was concluding vaccination campaign against PPR in an attempt to mop up areas that were not covered in the previous exercise.

Food aid

- Food for asset programme was ongoing targeting Tseikuru, Nguni, Nuu, Ngomeni, Mumoni and Kyuso divisions.
- ALRMP II distributed the second batch of unimix flour to malnourished children in the affected areas to mitigate the effects of malnutrition.
- The district received some relief food for general distribution.

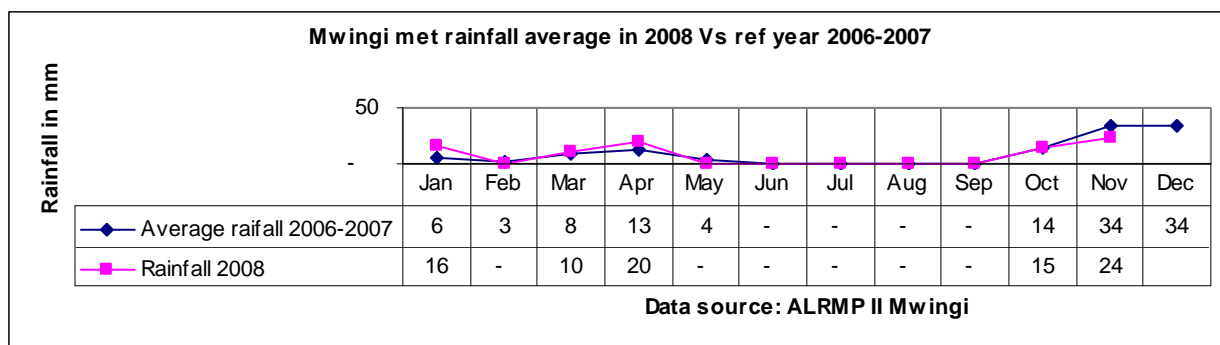
Recommendations to DSG and KFSSG

- Dairy goat farming should be encouraged to supplement milk production and boost nutrition status of children.
- Communities should be sensitised on proper feeding habits to arrest malnutrition cases. More community meetings should be arranged for this purpose.

- Protection of water sources should be encouraged to avoid contamination of the waters that have been harvested so far.
- Local poultry production should be promoted. These animals are within reach to all members of the families.

1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall



- Rains were reported in different parts of the district up to the second week of November. The average rainfall reported was 24mm for the month of November.
- However, no rains were reported as from the third week of November.
- There were disparities in terms of distribution with some divisions recording more rainfall than others.
- Nuu division had the highest amount with a record of 406 mm being realized in 6 days. Mumoni division had 183mm within 5 days. Tseikuru division had 168mm in 5 days.
- Nguni division had the lowest with a total of 87mm being received in 5 days. Central and Kyuso divisions had 9 and 10 wet days respectively with a total of 102mm and 181mm of rains respectively.
- During the first two weeks, the weather was cloudy, hot and humid. As from the third week it has been less cloudy but hot and humid.

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- The quality and quantity of natural vegetation improved compared to last month. The vegetation was greener than it was last month.
- Grass reappeared while rejuvenation of browse was evident but still at tender age.

1.3 Water sources and availability

- Water sources and availability was fair compared to last month.
- The rains experienced in the first two weeks of the month stabilised the situation.
- Most of the earth dams in the district stored some water but it was not enough and not expected to last long.

1.4 Emerging issues

1.4.1 Short rains season

- The short rains season started well at the beginning of the month but have subsided during the second week of the month. The crops have started experiencing water stress in most of the divisions and therefore putting the district on a high alert.

1.4.2 Implications on food security

- The short rains season was expected to impact positively on the livestock sector due to improved pasture and water availability.
- However, crops in the farm still require additional rains as soon as possible in order to get to flowering stage.

2.0 Rural economy indicators (food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- Livestock body condition was fair compared to last month.
- This was due to improved pasture and water availability over the last few weeks.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- There was no outbreak of livestock disease but cases of diarrhea in cattle and goats were reported in some areas but on a low scale.
- This could be due to high moisture content in pasture.

2.1.3 Milk production

- Milk production improved compared to last month.
- This could be associated with improved pasture and water availability.
- Better improvement was evident in Tseikuru and Mumoni divisions while Nguni division was yet to recover.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- Households that planted early were weeding.
- However, some households replanted and the crops were still young.
- Most crops started showing water stress due to lack of rains.
- Most of the crops were below knee height level in most parts of the district and had not yet reached flowering stage.

2.2.2 Pests and diseases

- No serious pests or crop diseases were reported.

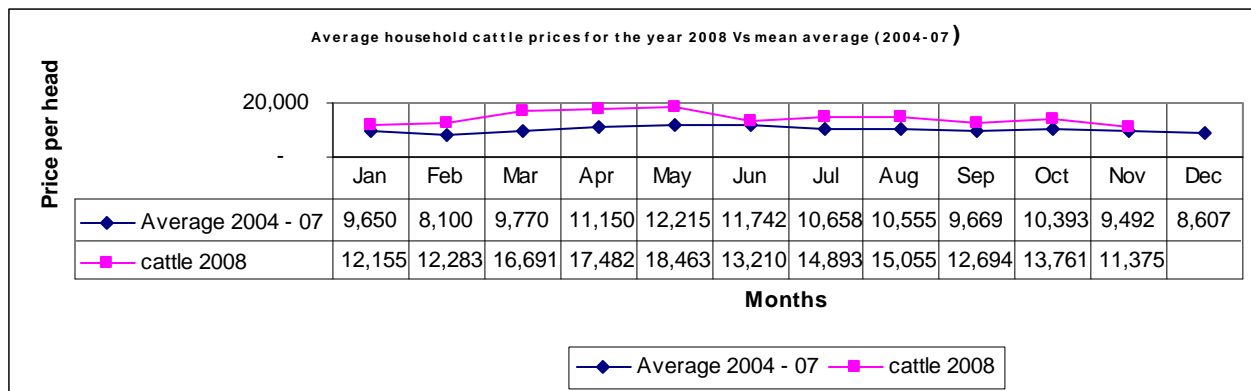
2.2.3 Implications on food security.

- The crops were at a critical stage when they need water to sustain them to maturity.
- There was anxiety after rains subsided, leaving a looming threat of crop failure.

3.0 Access to food

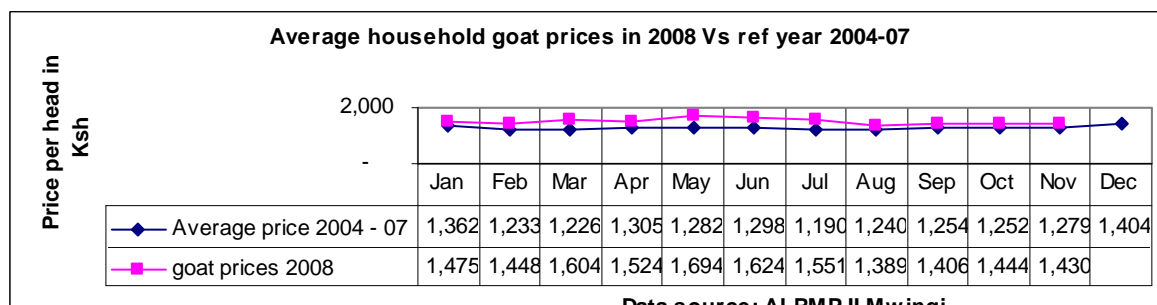
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices



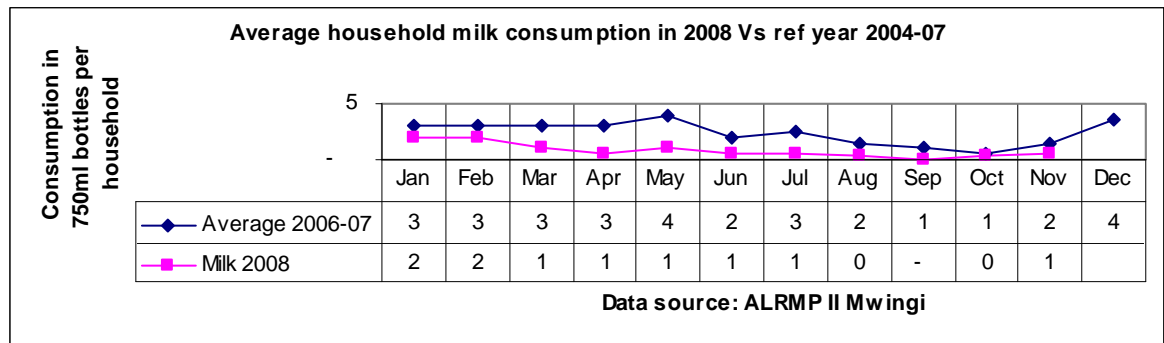
- The average cattle price dropped from Ksh13,761 in October to Ksh11,375.
- The highest prices were recorded in Ngomeni at Ksh20,000, while the lowest prices were recorded in Kyuso division at Ksh 8,000.
- The demand for ploughing bulls was low as most households were through with ploughing.

3.1.2 Goat prices



- The average goat prices declined slightly from Ksh1,444 last month to Ksh1,430.
- The highest prices were recorded in Nuu division at Ksh2,000 while the lowest prices were in Ngomeni division at Ksh750.
- The stable prices could be due to stable body condition.

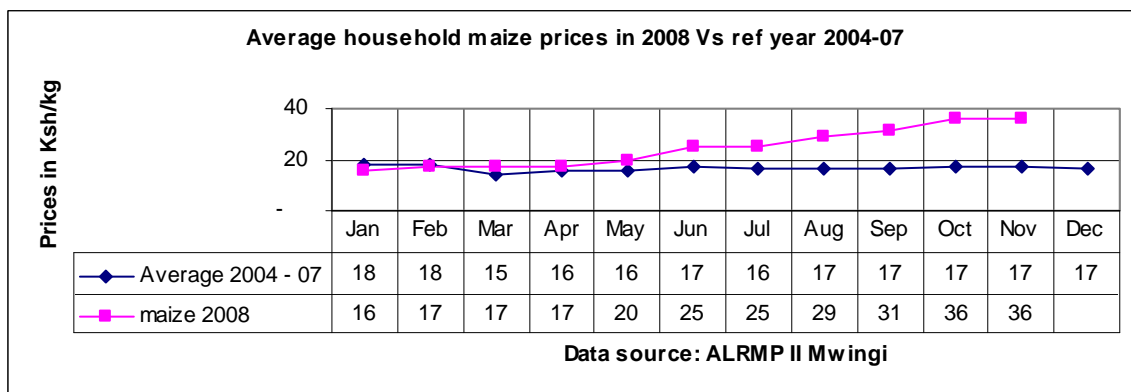
3.2 Milk consumption



- The average household milk consumption improved from less than a bottle last month to one bottle per household.
- This could be attributed to improved pasture and water availability caused by the short rains season.

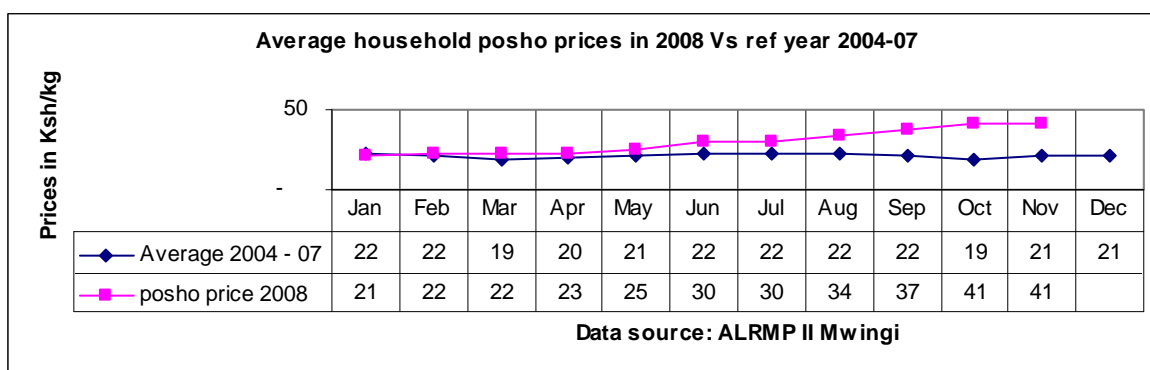
3.3 Crop prices

3.3.1 Maize prices



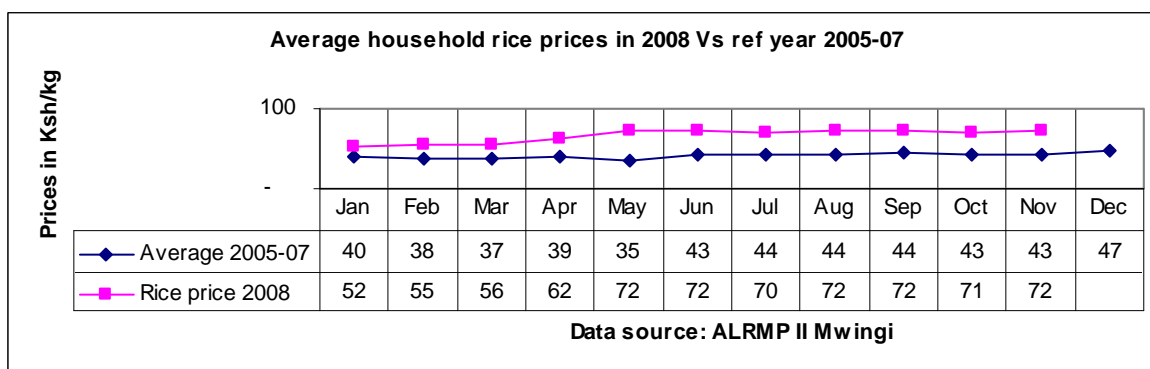
- The average maize prices remained stable at Ksh 36 per kilo.
- The prices were however double compared to the long term mean.
- This could be due to shortage of maize in the local market, leaving the district relying on supplies from outside the district.
- The high prices made the commodity unaffordable for many households yet it is the staple food for many.

3.3.2 Posho prices



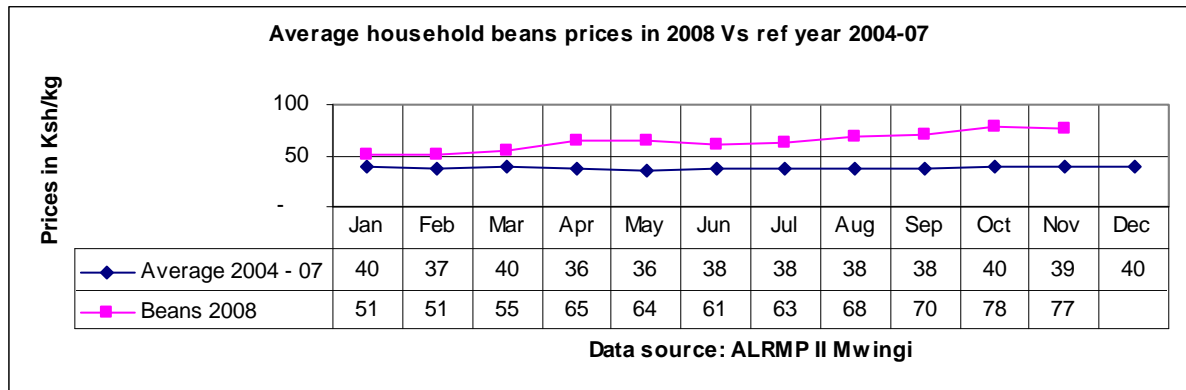
- Posho prices remained stable at Ksh 41 per kilo same as last month.
- However, the prices were still high, rendering the commodity unaffordable to many households.
- The prices remained so probably due to maize prices remaining constant over the same period.

3.3.3 Rice prices



- Rice prices increased slightly from Ksh 71 per kilo last month to Ksh72.
- These prices rendered the commodity unaffordable for majority of households.

3.3.4 Beans prices



- Average beans prices dropped slightly from Ksh78 per kilo last month to Ksh 77.
- The high prices were compounded by the need for planting seeds for the season.
- Beans remained scarce and were no longer affordable for many households.

3.4 Income

3.4.1 Crop income

- No crops were available for sale in households and most food items were obtained through purchases.

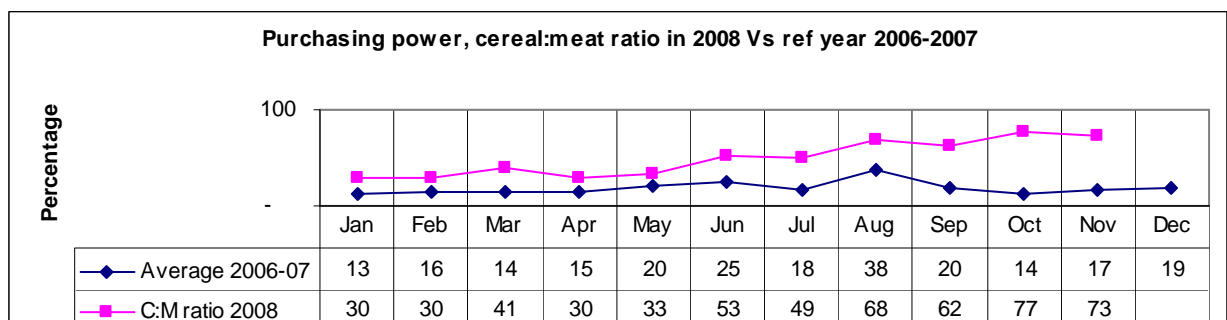
3.4.2 Livestock income

- The proportion of households selling livestock was about 7%.
- This was more so in Nguni division, where a significant number of households were reported to have sold livestock (about 43%).

3.4.3 Other sources of income

- Casual labour remained the main source of income as most households needed cash for purchasing of foodstuffs.
- Petty trade and remittances also played a significant role in sustaining households.

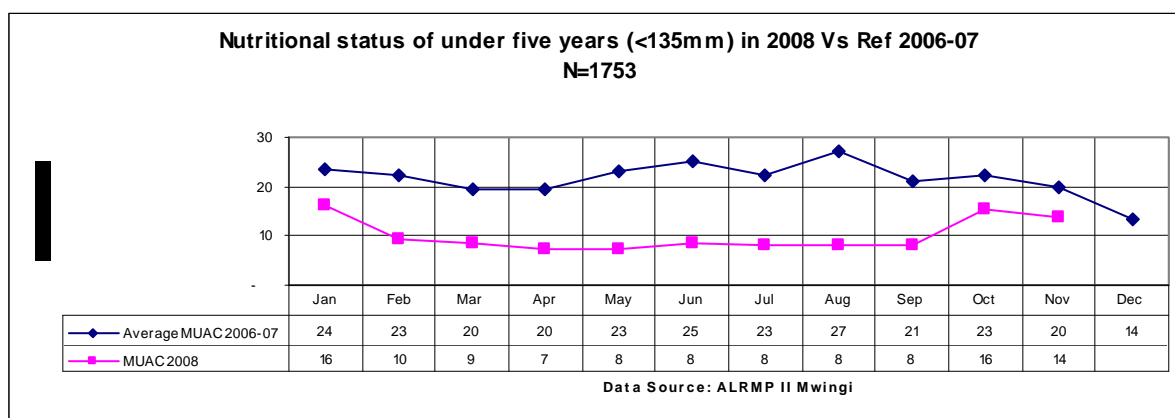
3.5 Cereal :Meat Price Ratio



- The terms of trade worsened for most households from 77% last month to 73% .
- This could be due to slight drop in livestock prices as opposed to cereal prices, which remained constant over the last one month.
- A farmer needed to spend more livestock products to obtain the same amount of cereals compared to last month.

4.0 Welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The nutrition status of children below five years improved slightly during the month under review.
- The percentage of children rated as being at the risk of malnutrition (based on the MUAC<135mm measurement) reduced to 14% from a high of 16% last month.
- The improvement could be due to intervention of ALRMP II through provision of Unimix flour and availability of green vegetables in selected areas.
- Households that had planted earlier benefiting from green leaves from cowpeas.
- Cases of malnutrition have been rampant in the district due to unavailability of essential foodstuffs in many households since they relied mainly only purchases.

4.2 Human health

- No serious outbreaks of human diseases were reported in the district.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Non-food interventions

- The Veterinary department was concluding vaccination campaign against PPR in an attempt to mop up areas that were not covered in the previous exercise.

5.2 Food interventions

- Food for asset programme was ongoing targeting Tseikuru, Nguni, Nuu, Ngomeni, Mumoni and Kyuso divisions.
- ALRMP II distributed the second batch of unimix flour to malnourished children in the affected areas to mitigate the effects of malnutrition.
- The district received some relief food for general distribution.

6.0 Recommendations

- Dairy goat farming should be encouraged to supplement milk production and boost nutrition status of children.
- Communities should be sensitised on proper feeding habits to arrest malnutrition cases. More community meetings should be arranged for this purpose.
- Protection of water sources should be encouraged to avoid contamination of the waters that have been harvested so far.
- Local poultry production should be promoted. These animals are within reach to all members of the families.