

Situation overview

- The district continued to experience decreased precipitation in the reporting month, with 26 mm of rainfall recorded for an average 7 rainy days compared to 29 mm for 6 rainy days in August.
- The ranching and marginal mixed-farming livelihoods continued to experience deteriorating food security situation with Bamba, Vitengeni, Ganze and Kaloleni registering the worst conditions.
- Most watering points in the ranching zone dried up, with many more in the marginal mixed-farming on the verge of drying up.
- More than 60 primary schools and 6 dispensaries experienced water shortage.
- Distances to watering points for livestock continued to increase with shrinking watering points, averaging at 8.7 km. Households had to walk 5-10 km to access water. The trend is expected to worsen if the dry spell continues.
- Livestock body condition remained good in the cash cropping and dairy livelihood zones. Fair to good conditions were evident in the food cropping zone. However, livestock in the marginal mixed-farming and the ranching livelihood zones got emaciated as forage became scarce and water more inaccessible.
- Small-scale harvesting of cowpeas, green grams, kales, paw paws and coconuts was on-going.
- The number of children at risk for malnutrition (based on MUAC<135mm measurement) remained comparatively the same at 5.4 per cent compared to 5.6 last month.
- There was little change in cereal-legume prices during the month compared to the previous one. However, the prices were still well above the long term averages.
- The warning stage for the district was normal but with an unstable trend. In the ranching and marginal mixed farming livelihood zones, the warning stage remained alert, with a worsening trend.

Current interventions

Food aid

- World Vision, the lead agency in EMOP activities for the FFA interventions, distributed a total of 248.05 mt of maize, 2.34 mt of rice, 25.25 mt of maize meal, 48.85 mt of pulses and 14.55 mt of vegetable oil.
- The District Commissioner's office distributed 1,000 bags of maize, 600 bags of rice, 200 bags of green grams and 200 cartons of vegetable oil.

District/Division	Cereals (Mt)			Pulses (Mt)	Vegetable Oil (Mt)	Total (Mt)
	Maize	Rice	Maize meal			
Kaloleni	132.75			23.45	7.10	163.21
Vitengeni	14.8	2.34	12.55	5.25	1.565	36.505
Bamba	88.65	-	0.85	15.9	4.718	110.118
Ganze	11.85	-	11.85	4.25	1.257	29.207
Totals	248.05	2.34	25.25	48.85	14.55	339.04

Non-food interventions

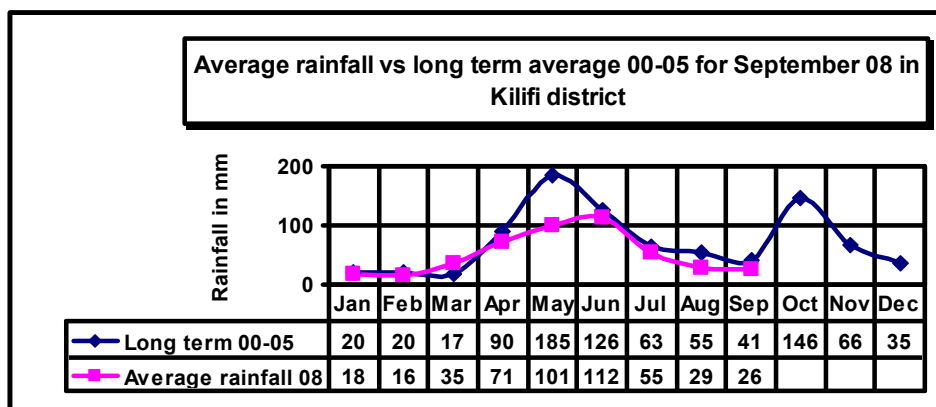
- Hygiene education of mothers with young children to reduce mortality rates by MoH in collaboration with Plan International.
- Water-trucking facilitated by ALRMP using the Drought Contingency Fund in over 90 schools in the food-stressed areas of Vitengeni, Bamba, Ganze divisions and part of Kaloleni district.
- Livestock vaccination to check spread of CCPP, LSD and FMD in the District.
- Immunization of children below five years. To curtail eminent drop outs from schools and closure of dispensaries.

Recommendations

- Continued monitoring of water and food availability in the Ranching and Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zones.
- Expansion of the water trucking to affected areas in the Ranching and Marginal mixed farming, targeting mainly schools and other local institutions.
- Continued monitoring of primary school retentions and nutritional status of children below five years
- Mass immunisation and supplementary feeding in affected livelihood zones.
- Expanded of livestock vaccination program to cover areas outside the current targeted zones.

1. Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall



- 26 mm of rainfall was recorded for an average of 7 rainy days during the month.
- This was lower than 29 mm recorded last month.
- The decrease in the amount of rainfall was expected compared with the long term average 00-05.
- Limited showers were evident in some parts of the district, which is normal at the time of the year.
- The Cash Cropping and Dairy livelihood zone recorded the highest amount of rainfall at 22 mm for an average 5 rainy days, while the Ranching zone posted the least at 17 mm for an average of 6 rainy days.

1.2. Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

1.2.1 Quality and quantity

- The quality and quantity of pasture and natural vegetation remained fair similar to last month although this was fast worsening.
- This was especially so in the Ranching and Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone, where the rainfall was minimal resulting in poor pasture regeneration.

1.2.2 Distance to grazing areas

- Distances to grazing areas registered an insignificant change as they increased by a paltry 100m from the previous month's 8.6 km to 8.7 km.
- More significant changes were likely to be registered in the coming months as the long dry spell set in.

1.3 Water sources and availability

1.3.1 Water sources

- Pans and dams were the main sources of water for the two districts, accounting for at least 50 per cent. This was due to the drying up of most other sources of water.
- Traditional river wells and shallow wells accounted for 8.33 per cent of community water needs among the sampled households.

1.3.2 Household access to water

- Access to water by households became more difficult as the distance increased from 3 km in August to 4.5 km.
- This was attributed to the decreased number of water sources following the long dry spell after the end of the long rains.
- These average distances are likely to increase further before the short rainy season sets in.

1.3.3 Livestock access to water

- Livestock access to water was still a challenge during the month, with most livestock walking long distances to access water.
- The Ranching livelihood zones were most affected especially Ndigiria location, which had very little water for livestock.
- The Marginal Mixed Farming was also not spared as water shortage hit hard, forcing herders to move their livestock in search of water.

1.4 Implication on food security

- Lower than normal rainfall was recorded during the month, resulting in stunted growth of pasture and natural vegetation.
- This made distances to grazing areas longer. The number of water sources was on the decline, making it difficult for households and livestock to access water.
- This has had a negative impact on food security in the two districts, especially in the Ranching livelihood zone where a lot of time was spent in search of water.

2.0 Rural economy indicators (Availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1. Livestock body condition

- Livestock body condition in the two districts was average but with a declining trend.
- The decline was attributed to diminishing pasture as only a few grazing areas remained.
- This has necessitated them to walk long distances in the scorching sun leading to heat stress and poor body condition especially in the Ranching livelihood zone.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- CCPP outbreak was reported in Vitengeni and Kikambala divisions, necessitating a massive vaccination campaign in the affected areas.
- Owing to the prevailing drought, FMD and LSD vaccination was extended to cover on the stock routes as a precaution.

2.1.3 Milk production

- Milk production declined due to increasing drought-related stress, including lack of water and inadequate pasture.
- A bottle (750ml) of milk traded at Ksh 23.8 up from Ksh 17.3, a 37.5 per cent increase in price.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1. Timeliness and status of crops

- Land preparation for the short rains planting season was on-going mainly in the Ranching and Marginal mixed farming zones.
- Apart from land under cassava and cow peas, no other major farming activities were on-going.

2.2.2 Crop harvests

- Upcoming harvests were expected to range between 25-50 per cent of the annual district yield.
- The crops being harvested included maize, cowpeas, sorghum, green grams, tomatoes, kales, amaranth, paw paws and coconuts.

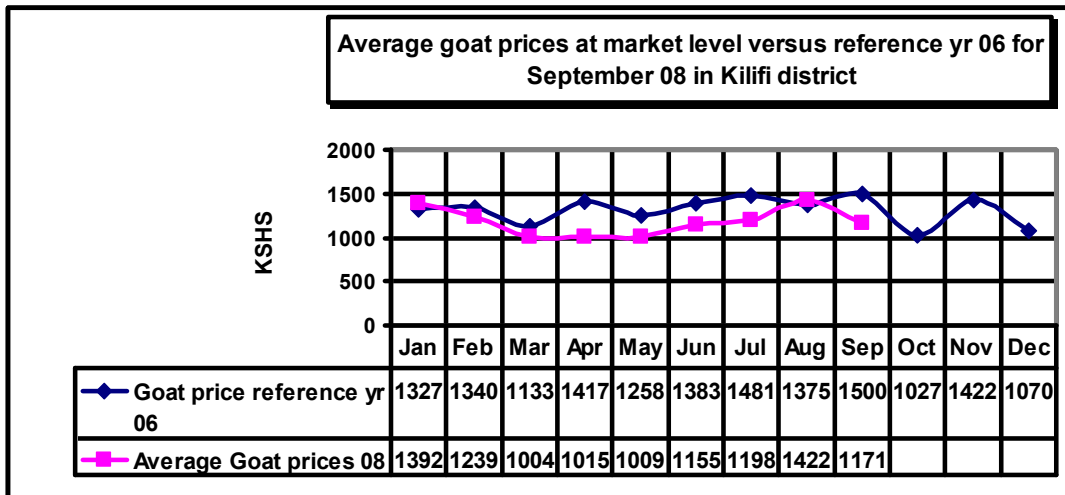
2.3 Implication on food security

- Declining livestock body condition, declining milk yields livestock diseases such as CCPP impacted negatively on the pastoral household food security.
- Households in the Food Cropping zone are expected to remain vulnerable given a decline in the overall yields.

3.0 Access to food

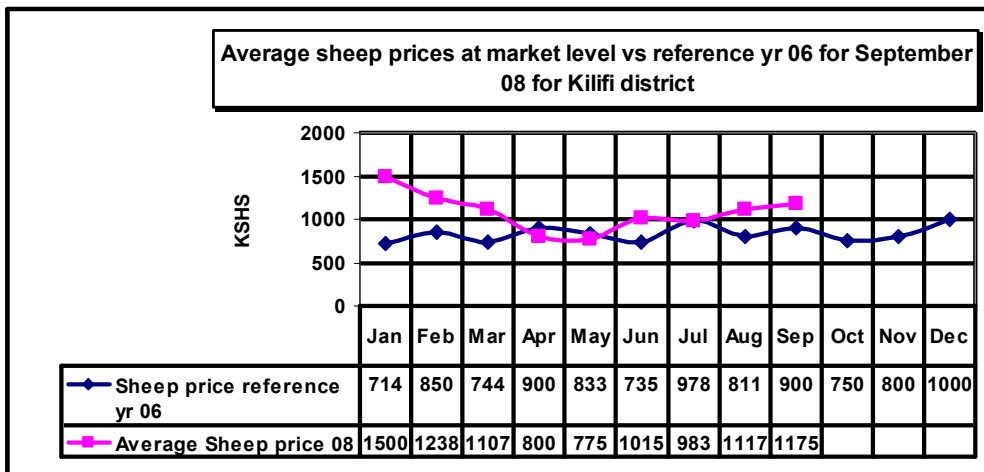
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Goat prices



- Average goat price dropped to Ksh1,171, down from Ksh 1,422 last month.
- The 17.6 per cent decrease was due to the declining food security at household level, leading to increased disposal of small stock and low demand.
- The Food Cropping livelihood zone recorded the highest price at Ksh1,450, while the Ranching zone recorded the least at Ksh 824.
- Prices in the Ranching zone were still uncompetitive due to the increased sale of livestock to purchase food.

3.1.2 Sheep prices



- The average price of sheep was Ksh1,175, a 5.2 per cent increase from last month's Ksh 1,117.
- However, sales were limited to the Food Cropping and Ranching livelihood zones which posted Ksh1,500 and Ksh 850 respectively.
- At Ksh1,175, the price was higher than the 2006 reference year and was attributed to the Ramadhan festivities.

3.2 Livestock sales

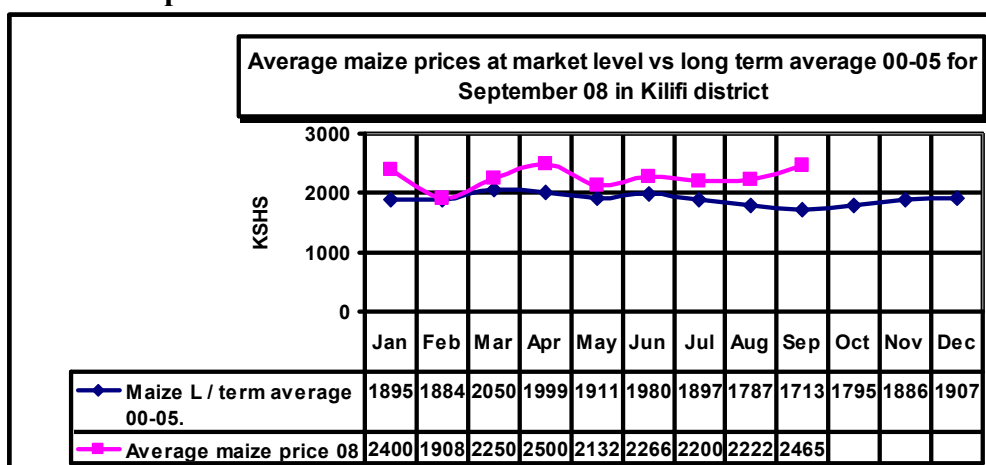
- Livestock sales increased compared to the previous month.
- Goats were the most traded livestock followed by sheep. This was an indication of increased food stress at household level and small stock had to be disposed off to meet daily food needs.

3.3 Milk consumption

- Consumption of milk at household level decreased compared to last month, with only 37.5 per cent of the total milk produced consumed by the sampled households.
- Milk prices went up from Ksh 17.3 last month to Ksh 23.8.
- This could be attributed to limited availability and the subsequent increase in price.

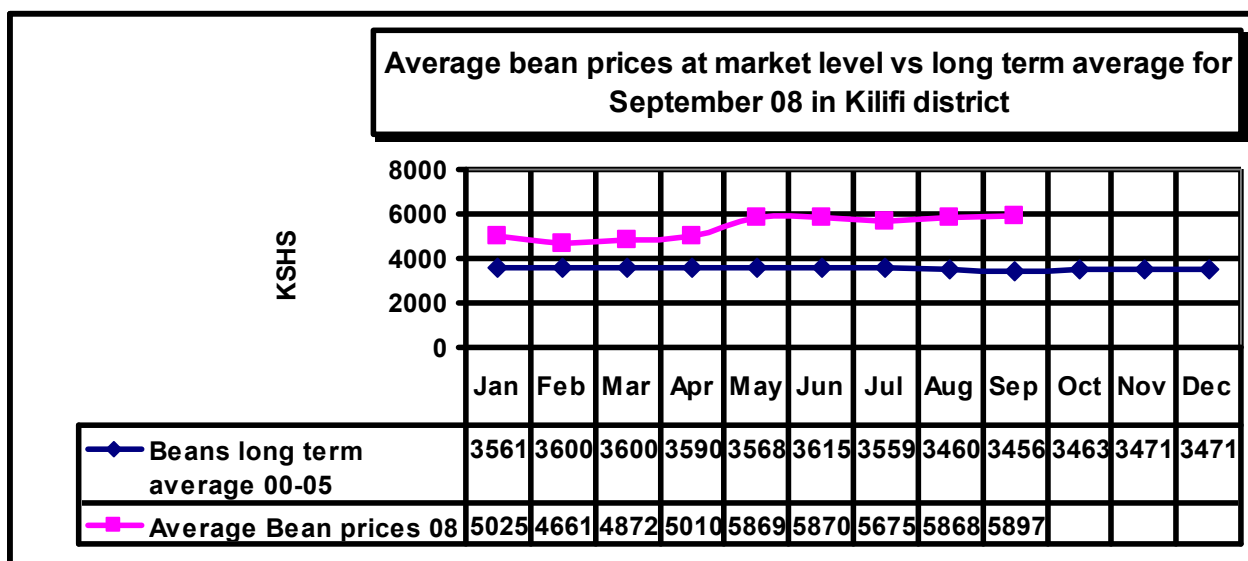
3.4 Crop prices

3.4.1 Maize prices



- A 90-kg bag of maize retailed at Ksh 2,465 up from Ksh 2,222 last month.
- The high prices were attributed to diminishing household food stocks.
- The Cash Cropping and Dairy livelihood zone posted the lowest price at Ksh 2,100 while the Food Cropping zone recorded the highest price at Ksh 3,000.
- Most areas in the Food Cropping livelihood zone suffered from a massive crop failure, resulting in scarce food commodities, hence the high prices. The Cash Cropping and Dairy livelihood zones obtained a good harvest and therefore still had some food stocks.
- The prices were higher than the long term average of Ksh1,713, which meant that most households had to pay 43.9 per cent more for maize than they normally did.
- Ongoing crop harvests did not reverse market prices because of increased transportation costs.

3.4.2 Beans prices



- There was a negligible change in the price of beans during the month. A 90 kg bag retailed at Ksh 5,897, up by a meager Ksh 29 from Ksh 5,868 in August.
- The Ranching livelihood zone recorded the highest price at Ksh 6,637.5 while the Cash Cropping and Dairy registered Ksh 4,200.
- The average price of beans in the month was much higher than the long term average, an indication that households had to dig deeper into their pockets to buy beans.

3.5. Income

The following are the percentages for the various sources of income in the two districts:

No.	Source of income	%
1.	Casual labour	40.4
2.	Sale of charcoal	21.2
3.	Petty trade	16.0
4.	Remittances	9.89
5.	Formal employment	8.13
6.	Sale of wood products	2.61
7.	Sale of livestock	1.74
	TOTAL	100

3.5.1 Casual labour

- 40.4 per cent of the sampled households relied on casual labour as their main source of income. This was a minor increase from last month's 39.9.
- Casual labour was the most reliable source of income in the Cash Cropping and Dairy livelihood zone and the least reliable in the Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone.

- The average daily wage rate remained the same at Ksh 111.8 similar to last month. The highest wage rate was posted in the Cash Cropping and Dairy livelihood zone at Ksh 156, while the lowest was in the Ranching one at Ksh 58.

3.5.2 Sale of charcoal

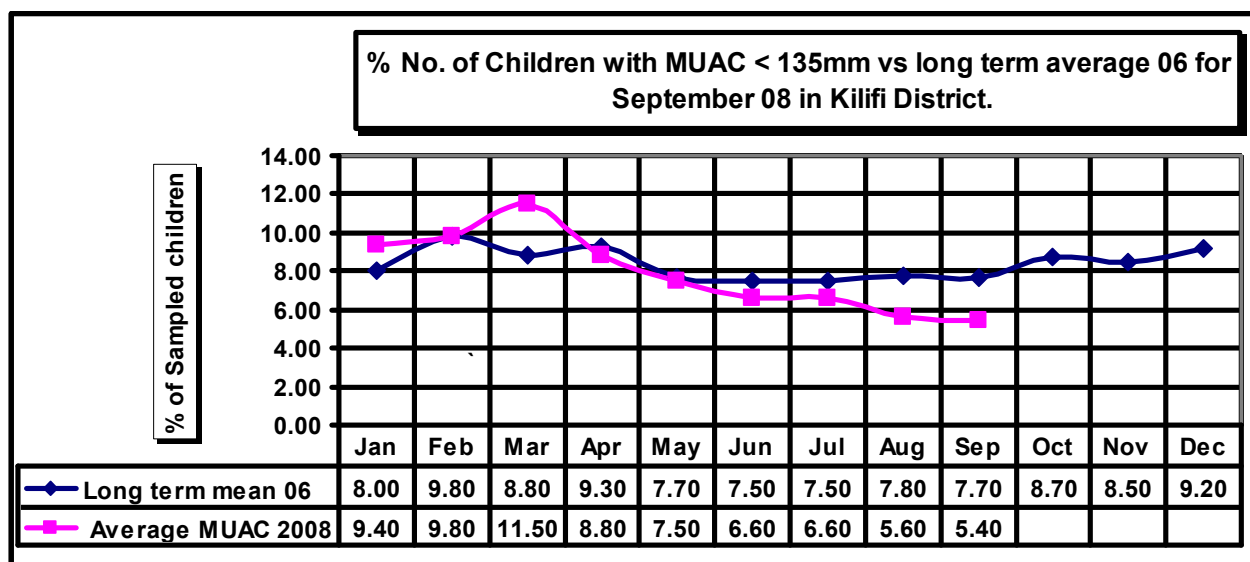
- The sale of charcoal was the second main source of income for 21.2% of the households sampled, up by a marginal 1.0% compared to the previous month's 22.2%.
- It remained the most reliable source of income in the Ranching livelihood zone but was the least reliable in the Cash Cropping and Dairy one. Having not had much to show for their harvests last season, the Ranching zone faced acute food shortage which most opted to selling charcoal. The former livelihood zone has various means of livelihood support as opposed to the later.

3.6 Implications on food security

- Increased livestock sales at distressed prices impacted negatively on food security in the district.
- The situation was compounded further by high food commodity prices, an indication that households had to spend more money than normal to access food.
- The Ranching and Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zones were the most affected since the daily casual wage rates were relatively low.

4. Utilisation of food (welfare)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The number of children at risk for malnutrition (based on MUAC<135mm measurement) remained comparatively the same at 5.4 per cent compared to 5.6 last month.

- The improved status was attributed to ongoing harvests, hence children had access to alternative sources of food.
- The highest rate was recorded in the food cropping livelihood zone at 8.8 per cent, while the least was in the marginal mixed farming at 2.5 per cent.
- The positive trend was expected and the rate was below the long term mean.

4.2 Health

- No major human diseases were reported.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Non-food interventions

- Hygiene education of mothers with young children to reduce mortality rates by MoH in collaboration with Plan International.
- Water-trucking facilitated by ALRMP using the Drought Contingency Fund in over 90 schools in the food-stressed areas of Vitengeni, Bamba, Ganze divisions and part of Kaloleni district.

5.2 Food aid

- In its role as lead agency in EMOP activities for the FFA interventions, World Vision distributed a total of 248.05 mt of maize, 2.34 mt of rice, 25.25 mt of maize meal, 48.85 mt of pulses and 14.55 mt of vegetable oil.
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5.3 Other coping strategies

The coping strategies during the month included sale of charcoal, early marriages, consumption of wild fruits, sale of firewood, missing food consumption for an entire day, skipping meals and purchasing food on credit.

6.0 Recommendations

- Continued monitoring of water and food availability in the Ranching and Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zones.
- Expansion of the water trucking to affected areas in the Ranching and Marginal mixed farming, targeting mainly schools and other local institutions.
- Continued monitoring of primary school retentions and nutritional status of children below five years
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