

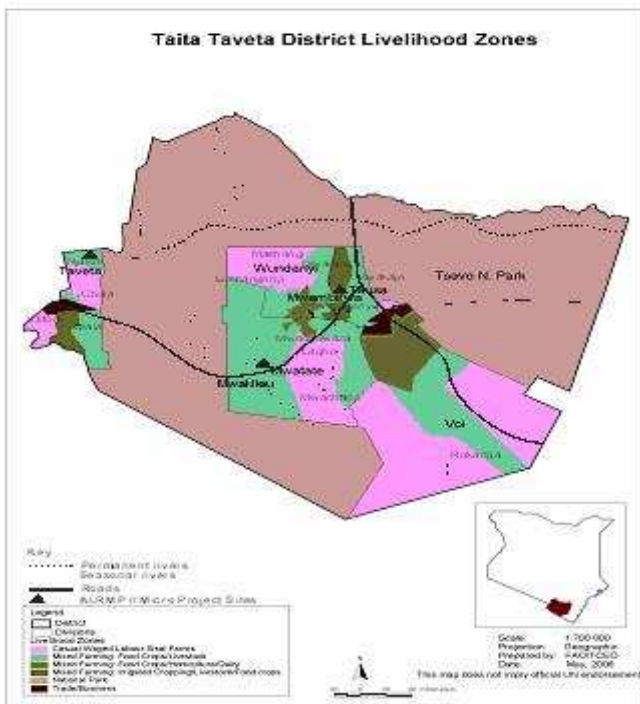


**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN, SEPTEMBER 2008

Taita/Taveta Districts

Warning Stages



Livelihood zone	Warning Stage	Trend
Casual Waged Labour: Sisal Farms	Normal	Stable
Mixed Farming: Food Crops/Livestock	Alert	Deteriorating
Mixed Farming: Food Crops/Horticulture/Dairy	Normal	Stable
Mixed Farming: Irrigated Cropping/Livestock/Food Crops	Normal	Stable
National Park	Normal	Stable

TIMELINE ACTIVITIES

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Maize	Harvesting	Planting	Weeding				Harvesting	Planting	Weeding			
Beans	Harvesting		Planting Weeding			Harvesting				Planting Weeding		
Vegetables						Sowing Transplanting	Top dressing		Harvesting			
Cattle	Milking											
Goats	Weaning		Mating/Kidding					Weaning		Mating/Kidding		
Rainfall			Long rains							Short rains		

Situation Overview

- The average amount of rainfall recorded during the month was 94.6 mm compared to 93.7 mm in August. Slight showers were recorded in both districts, marking the onset of short rains.
- Parts of Taita District, especially the hill masses, continued to record very low temperatures. Compared to the long-term average for 2000-2007, the trend was normal but rainfall lower.
- Though pasture and forage was available in the lowlands, quality and quantity of natural vegetation and pasture deteriorated at a higher rate compared to August due to inadequate rainfall. Compared with the same month in a normal year, the situation worsened.
- Seasonal rivers dried up and the situation was expected to deteriorate further if no rainfall is received soon.
- The average grazing distance from the sampled sentinel sites increased to 10.1 km compared to 4.9 km in August.
- Livestock body condition was still good in both districts due to availability of standing hay and lack of major livestock diseases. However cattle in a few areas in Mahandakini in Taveta showed notable weight loss due to long trekking distances in search of pasture in neighbouring Tanzania.
- The major cases of insecurity/conflict reported were human/wildlife conflicts. Elephants destroyed food crops in areas under irrigation, damaging water conservation structures and irrigation infrastructure that was not fenced off with solar electric wire.
- Hippos, wild pigs, baboons and monkeys also posed serious challenges to farmers in the two districts. Though no cases of fatal attacks were reported, communities requested Kenya Wildlife Service to increase surveillance in Mwakitau and Tausa, where such cases had been reported previously. Other areas affected by human/wildlife conflict are Mwachabo, Kishushe, Paranga, Kajire, Talio, Rahai and Kasigau in Taita District and Mata, Challa, Njukini in Taveta District.
- The lowlands of Taita and rain-fed areas of Taveta showed food stress indicators and residents appealed to Government and NGOs for more assistance either through food for work or general food distribution.
- Areas facing acute food shortage and require immediate attention are Mwakitau, Kasigau, lower Sagalla, Tausa division, Wongonyi, Paranga, Sangenyi, Nyache, Mwaroko and Mbale in Taita district. Others are Nakuruto, Kasokoni, Chokaa, Kidong'u, Challa Kati, Uthiani, Kijijini, Vikwatani, Chumvini A & B, Langata, Ulawani, Njoro, Mtakuja, Kazamoyo, Kachero, Mata village, Nasaini, Lessessia, Kasarani, parts of Mjini, Langata, Chewa, Mahoo, Salaita, parts of Vikwatani, Mwakine, Madarasani, Lotima A&B and Riata Ndogo/Kubwa in Taveta district.
- Majority of the households had very little food stocks and relied mainly on purchases.
- Prices of cereals and legumes almost doubled, making them unaffordable for most households.
- Milk was available at household level, especially for children.
- Most farmers had prepared their farms for planting, while some had already planted. A few farmers in the mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone had planted

maize, while others had prepared their farms. In the casual waged labour: sisal farms livelihood zone, casual waged labourers were busy weeding, while others were harvesting sisal. Some farmers in the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone were harvesting vegetables, while farmers in the mixed farming: irrigated cropping/livestock/food crops were busy harvesting beans, tomatoes, kales, onions, bananas and sugarcane. This was normal at the time of the year.

- The nutrition status of children below five improved compared to August. Percentage of children under five at the risk of malnutrition (using the MUAC<135 mm measurement) dropped from 4.3 per cent in August to 3.2 during the month under review. Out of 1,279 children under-five sampled in 15 sample sites, only 48 were found with MUAC< 135mm. The low level could be attributed to availability of milk at household level for both mothers and children and decline in malaria cases following interventions by the Ministry of Health in the two districts
- High prices of cereals and legumes impacted negatively on food security and households could not afford a balanced diet.
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Recommendations to district authorities and KFSSG

- Food for assets programmes to target rain-fed lowlands of both districts to enhance food security.
- Communities neighboring gazetted and non-gazetted forests to take precautions against fires during the dry spell and assist in cases of outbreaks even as they contact the Forest department.
- Rehabilitate and excavate water pans in the rain-fed lowlands of the two districts.
- Increase small-scale irrigation and water harvesting structures in the lowlands to enhance crop production.
- Electric fencing of the national park next to farming areas to safeguard food crops from destruction by animals.
- Expansion of area under irrigation through de-silting of canals and opening of new ones in Taveta and Tausa and Mwatate in Taita.
- Promotion of drought-tolerant crops such as cassava, sorghum, sweet potatoes, cowpeas, green grams and millet.
- Capacity building on modern farming technologies and assurance of adequate certified seeds.
- Provincial Administration and the county council to control or regulate sand harvesting along Voi River.
- Strengthening of routine services through the introduction of ‘malezi bora’ weeks to ensure quality services are offered to children under five, pregnant and lactating mothers to eliminate cases of Kwashiorkor and Marasmus in the two districts.

Current interventions

- The DSG endorsed World Vision to continue being the lead agency in the two districts. These projects will continue to be implemented in conjunction with ALRMP II, World Food Programme, Government departments and communities.

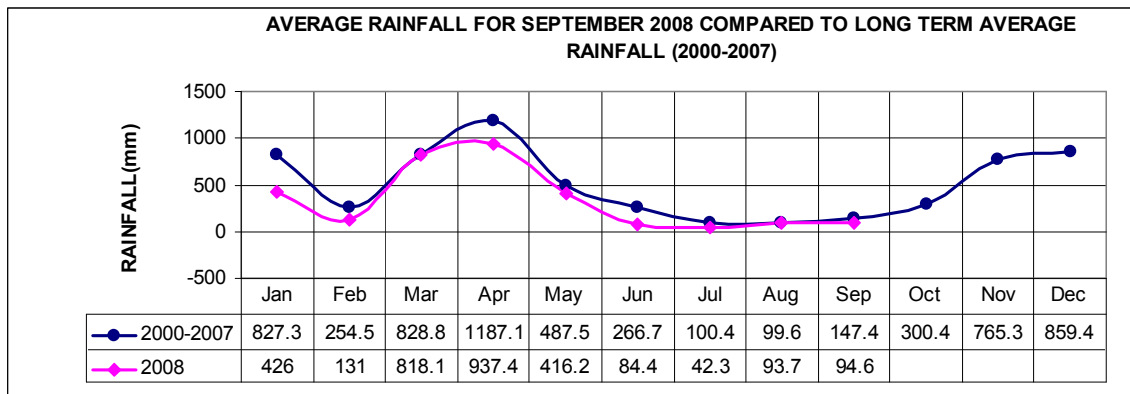
- Lambo-Marodo-Ngutini irrigation canal is being de-silted to increase volume of water and curb flash floods in Kimorigho, Taveta district.
- Construction of a Milk Cooling Plant at Wumingu and construction of Mwasima Nuru water project by County Council of Taita Taveta.
- Catchment conservation measures on the hill masses, where 20,000 tree seedlings have been purchased and will be planted during the short rains in Bura forest Mwatate division.

Food aid

- Taveta district received 2,500 bags (90kg) of maize, 500 bags (50kg) of green grams, 899 bags (50 kgs) of rice and 200 cartons of cooking oil (6 x 3 litres) as relief food from the Office of the President, Ministry of State for Special Programmes department of Relief and Rehabilitation.
- DSG-Taveta district recommended that food distribution should target the neediest and areas not covered by FFA programme.

1. Environmental Indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall



- The average rainfall recorded was 94.6 mm compared to 93.7 mm in August. Only light showers were experienced in both districts, marking the onset of short rains.
- Most farmers had prepared their farms for planting, while some had already planted.
- Although the cold season ended, parts of Taita, especially the hill masses continued to record very low temperatures. Compared to the long term average for 2000-2007 the trend was normal but rainfall low.

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- Though pasture and forage was available in the lowlands of the two districts in the month under review, it is worth noting that quality and quantity of natural vegetation and pasture is deteriorating at a high rate compared to the previous month due to inadequate rainfall. The situation worsened compared with the same month in a normal year.
- Seasonal rivers dried up and the situation will deteriorate further if rains do not fall soon.

- The average grazing distance from the sampled sentinel sites increased to 10.1 km from 4.9 km in August.

1.3 Water sources and availability

- Main water sources were springs, natural rivers, boreholes and tap water.
- Water availability deteriorated especially in the Taita district lowlands and there was overcrowding of livestock at water points, increasing risk of livestock disease outbreaks.
- A serious case of overcrowding was observed at Madulu and Kitobo springs in Taveta district.
- The average distance to and from the water sources remained at 4.8 km.

1.4 Emerging issues

1.4.1. Insecurity/conflict/human displacement

- The major cases of insecurity/conflict reported were human/wildlife conflicts. Elephants destroyed food crops in areas under irrigation, damaging water conservation structures and irrigation infrastructure that was not fenced off with solar electric wire.
- Hippos, wild pigs, baboons and monkeys also posed serious challenges to farmers in the two districts. Though no cases of fatal attacks were reported, communities requested Kenya Wildlife Service to increase surveillance in Mwakitau and Tausa, where such cases had been reported previously.
- Other areas affected by human/wildlife conflict are Mwachabo, Kishushe, Paranga, Kajire, Talio, Rahai and Kasigau in Taita District and Mata, Challa, Njukini in Taveta District.

1.4.2. Migration

- Unusual livestock in-migration continued to be reported in Mwatate and Voi divisions of Taita district. Concern was raised over large herds of camels, cattle and goats from Garissa, Tana River and Ijara seen grazing in ranches and community.
- In Taveta, herders from Salaita and Mahandakini, mainly Maasai, moved their livestock across the border to Tanzania in search of pasture, while others grazed in the national park.

1.4.3. Implication on food security

- The lowlands of Taita and rain-fed areas of Taveta showed food stress indicators and residents appealed to Government and NGOs for more assistance either through food for work or general food distribution.
- Areas facing acute food shortage and require immediate attention are Mwakitau, Kasigau, lower Sagalla, Tausa division, Wongonyi, Paranga, Sangenyi, Nyache, Mwaroko and Mbale in Taita district. Others are Nakuruto, Kasokoni, Chokaa, Kidong'u, Challa Kati, Uthiani, Kijijini, Vikwatani, Chumvini A & B, Langata, Ulawani, Njoro, Mtakuja, Kazamoyo, Kachero, Mata village, Nasaini, Lessessia, Kasarani, parts of Mjini, Langata, Chewa, Mahoo, Salaita, parts of Vikwatani, Mwakine, Madarasani, Lotima A&B and Riata Ndogo/Kubwa in Taveta district.
- Majority of the households had very little food stocks and relied mainly on purchases.

2. Food availability (rural indicators)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1. Livestock body condition

- Livestock body condition was good in both districts, apart from a few areas in Mahandakini in Taveta district, where cattle showed notable weight loss due to long trekking distances in search of pasture in the neighbouring Tanzania.
- The good livestock body condition was attributed to availability of standing hay and lack of major livestock diseases.
- The situation was normal for the time of year.

2.1.2. Milk production

- Total milk yield recorded in sampled households was 9,475 litres compared to 10,335 litres in August. The decrease in milk production could be attributed to deteriorating condition of natural vegetation and pasture in mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone.
- Casual waged labour: sisal farms and mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zones recorded the lowest amount of milk production due to long livestock trekking distances in search of water and pasture.
- Mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone remained the leading producer of milk at 75 per cent, while production in the mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone stood at 22 per cent and casual waged labour: sisal farms at 3 per cent.

2.2 Crop production

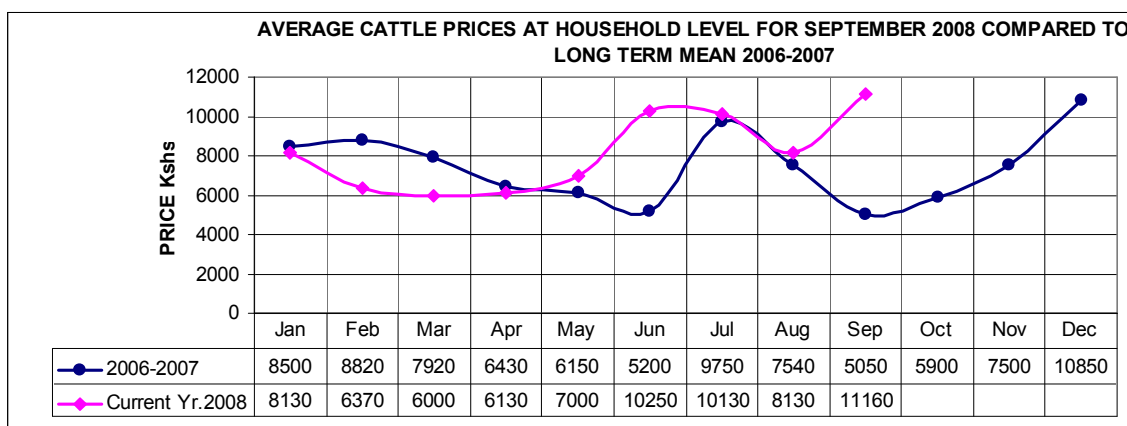
2.2.1. Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- A few farmers in the mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone had planted maize, while others had prepared their farms.
- In the casual waged labour: sisal farms livelihood zone, casual waged labourers were busy weeding, while others were harvesting sisal.
- Some farmers in the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone were harvesting vegetables, while farmers in the mixed farming: irrigated cropping/livestock/food crops were busy harvesting beans, tomatoes, kales, onions, bananas and sugarcane.
- This was normal at the time of the year.

3. Access to food

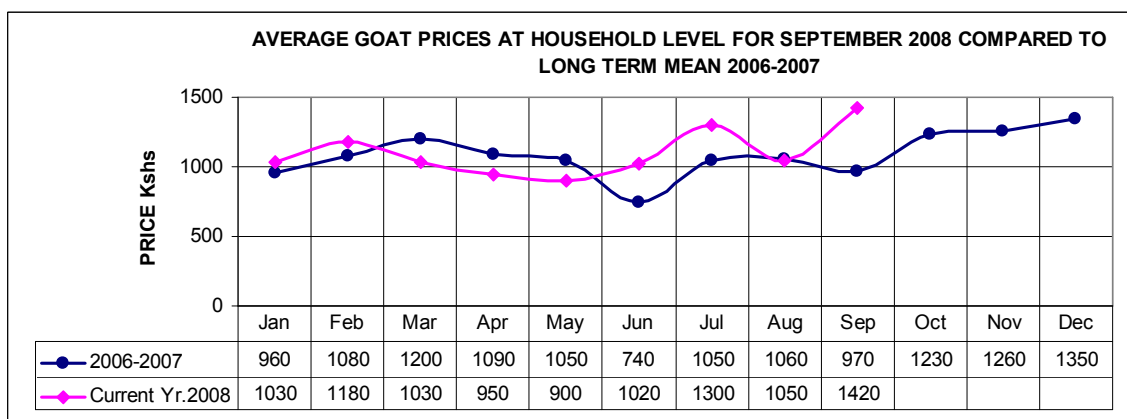
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1. Cattle prices



- Average cattle prices rose to Ksh 11,160 from Ksh 8,130 in August. The increase was attributable to market forces of demand and supply.
- Lack of slaughter stock in Taveta district due to lack of organised markets led to a 10 per cent increase in meat prices.
- The highest prices were recorded in the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone (Ksh 12,500/=) due to good livestock body condition.
- Lowest prices prevailed in the casual waged labour: sisal farms (Ksh 8,000/=) and mixed farming: food crops/livestock (Ksh 9,000/=) livelihood zones.
- Compared to the long term mean, the trend was normal but the price high.

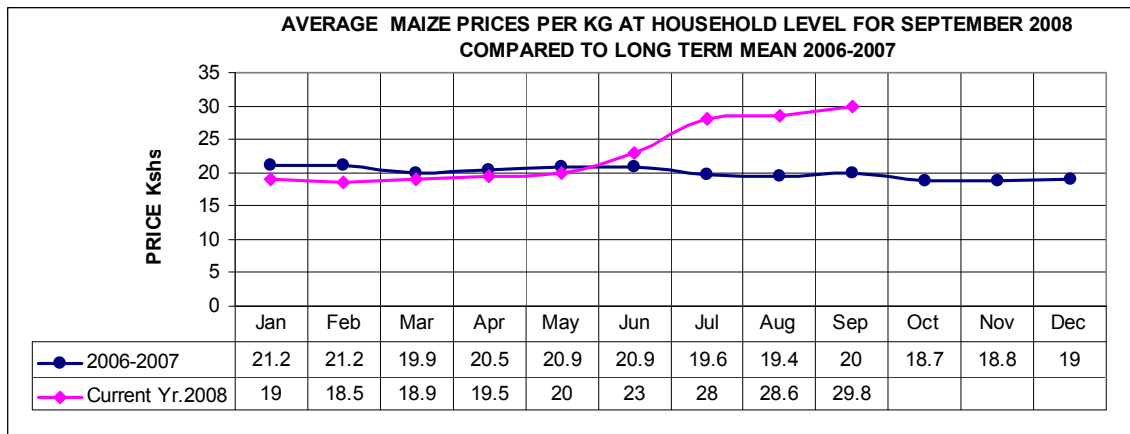
3.1.2. Goats prices



- Average goat prices rose to Ksh 1,420 from Ksh 1,050 recorded the previous month.
- The price increase was attributable to decrease in supply of goats in the market. Herders believe that goats easily survive drought, therefore prefer keeping goats to cattle for future sales.
- Prices remained highest in the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone at Ksh 1,500. Prices in the casual waged labour: sisal farms stood at Ksh 1,100, while the mixed farming: food crops/livestock zones recorded Ksh 1,000.
- The trend was normal but the price higher compared to the long term mean.

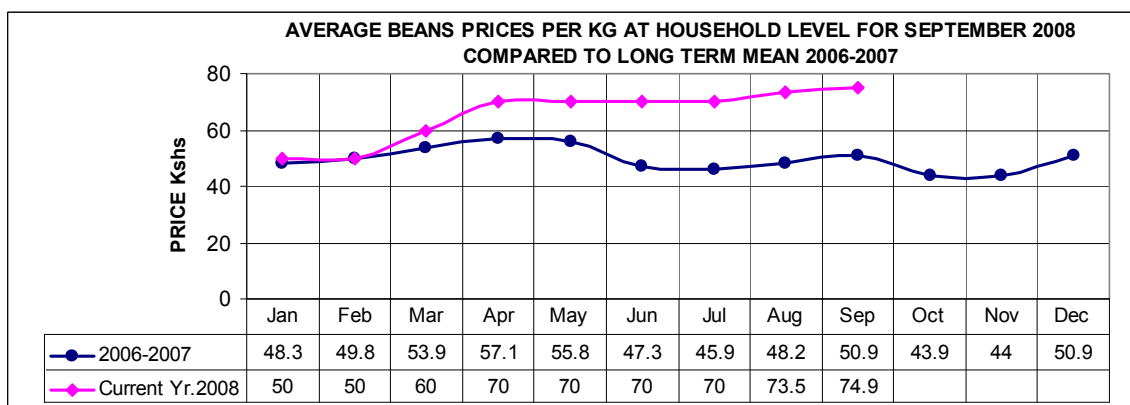
3.2 Crop prices

3.2.1. Maize prices



- Average maize prices rose slightly to Ksh 29.8 per kilo from Ksh 28.6 in August.
- The slight price increase was attributable to depleted maize stocks.
- Low prices were recorded in the mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone at Ksh 28 per kg, while higher prices were recorded in the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood zone at Ksh 38 per kg.
- Prices in the mixed farming: irrigated cropping/livestock/food crops zone stood at Ksh 30 per kg. Compared to the long term mean, average maize prices at household level were high and the trend was rising.

3.2.2 Beans prices



- The average beans prices increased to Ksh 74.9 per kilo from Ksh 73.5 recorded in August.
- The consistent high price in both districts could be attributed to depletion of bean stocks at household level, increasing demand, which resulted in a price increase.
- Highest prices were recorded in the mixed farming: food crops/horticulture/dairy livelihood at Ksh 90 per kg, which was attributed to decreased stocks of pulses.

- Prices were lower in both mixed farming: food crops/livestock at Ksh 80 per kg and mixed farming: irrigated cropping/livestock/food crops at Ksh 70 per kg.
- The trend was normal compared to the long term mean.

3.3 Income

3.3.1. Livestock Income

- Income from livestock sales obtained from 360 sampled households during the month under review increased compared to the previous month. The sale of 8 cattle at Ksh11,160, 22 goats at Ksh 420 and 72 chickens at Ksh 250 fetched Ksh 138,520 compared to Ksh94,190 realised in August.
- The increase could be attributed to increased demand for goat meat and relatively high prices for both cattle and goats.
- The mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone recorded the highest sales since most farmers had depleted their maize stocks and needed income to meet food needs.

3.3.2. Other income sources

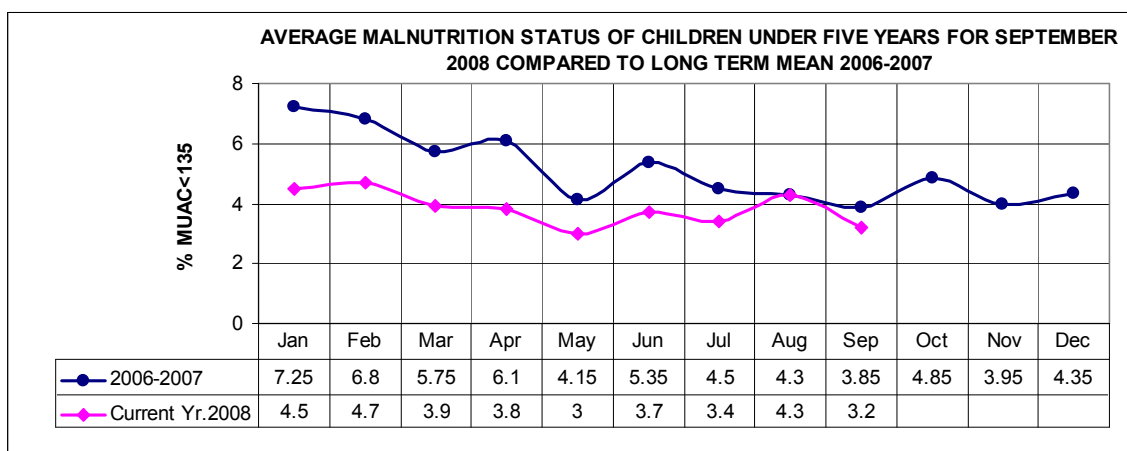
- Other sources of income during the month under review remained casual labour, petty trade, formal employment, remittances, sand and brick selling, charcoal selling, miraa selling, fishing and small-scale mining.
- Income obtained from these sources remained the same and this was normal for the time of the year.

3.3.3. Implications on food security

- Majority of the households had very little food stocks and mainly relied on market purchases.
- Though food was readily available in the market, the prices of cereals and legumes almost doubled, making them unaffordable for most households.
- The high prices of cereals and legumes impacted negatively on food security since most households could not afford a balanced diet.
- However, milk was available at household level, especially for children.

4. Utilization of food (Welfare)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The nutrition status of children below five improved compared to August.
- Percentage of children under five rated as being at the risk of malnutrition (using the MUAC<135 mm measurement) dropped from 4.3 per cent in August to 3.2 during the month under review.
- Out of 1,279 children under-five sampled in 15 sample sites, only 48 were found with MUAC< 135mm.
- The improvement could be attributed to availability of milk at household level for both mothers and children and decline in malaria cases following interventions by the Ministry of Health in the two districts.

5. Current Interventions

- The DSG endorsed World Vision to continue being the lead agency in the two districts. These projects will continue to be implemented in conjunction with ALRMP II, World Food Programme, Government departments and communities.
- Lambo-Marodo-Ngutini irrigation canal is being de-silted to increase volume of water and curb flash floods in Kimorigho, Taveta district.
- Construction of a Milk Cooling Plant at Wumingu and construction of Mwasima Nuru water project by County Council of Taita Taveta.
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- DSG-Taveta district recommended that food distribution should target the neediest and areas not covered by FFA programme.

5.3 Other coping strategies

- The most common coping strategy during the month was occasional skipping of meals.
- Other methods included borrowing and sharing food from neighbours and friends.
- Sale of charcoal, firewood, sand, bricks, hunting of wild game and grazing in parks was common in the mixed farming: food crops/livestock livelihood zone, while fishing was the main activity in the mixed farming: irrigated cropping/livestock/dairy livelihood zone.
- The coping strategies did not change compared to the previous month.

6. Recommendations

- Food for assets programmes to target rain-fed lowlands of both districts to enhance food security.
- Communities neighboring gazetted and non-gazetted forests to take precautions against fires during the dry spell and assist in cases of outbreaks even as they contact the Forest department.
- Rehabilitate and excavate water pans in the rain-fed lowlands of the two districts.
- Increase small-scale irrigation and water harvesting structures in the lowlands to enhance crop production.
- Electric fencing of the national park next to farming areas to safeguard food crops from destruction by animals.
- Expansion of area under irrigation through de-silting of canals and opening of new ones in Taveta and Tausa and Mwatate in Taita.
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