

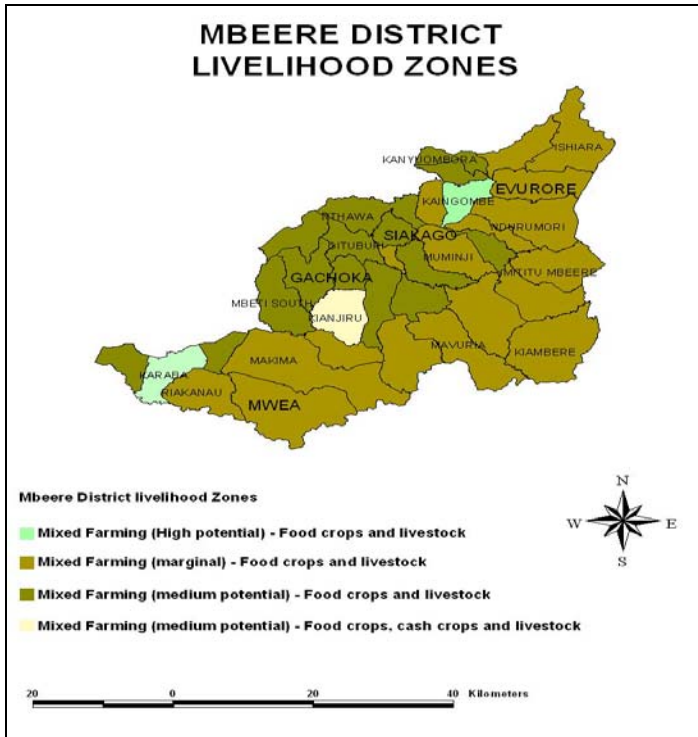


**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, AUGUST 2009

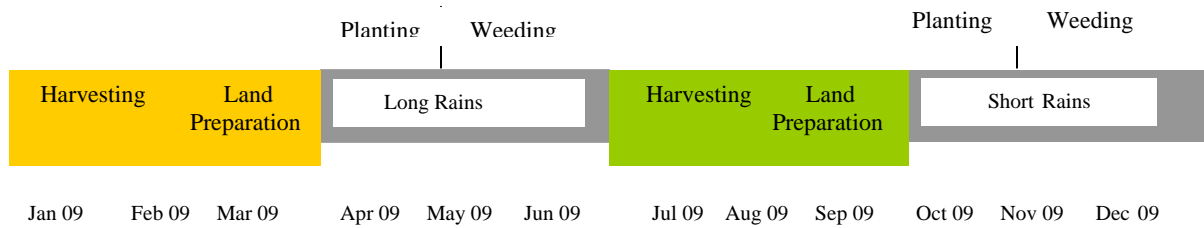
Mbeere District

Warning Stage



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Mixed farming – food crops	Alert	Worsening
Mixed farming – coffee/dairy	Alert	Worsening
Marginal mixed farming	Alarm	Worsening
	Alarm	Worsening
District	Alarm	Worsening

Seasonal calendar



Situation overview

- Hot and dry weather conditions prevailed across the district during the month and no rainfall was recorded.
- Pasture and browse availability and accessibility was poor across the district and livestock body conditions were fair to poor. Livestock prices remained below normal for cattle and goats.
- Water availability and accessibility was poor and both permanent and seasonal water reservoirs depleted their water, increasing pressure and congestion on the few available watering points.
- Land preparation was the predominant agricultural activity across the entire district. Food purchase prices remained high.
- The nutrition status of children under 5 years deteriorated slightly in comparison to July, with the percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition rising to 26.3 from 26.1 in July.
- No major human ailments were reported in the district.

Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Deworming/ drenching of livestock to improve resilience and livestock disease surveillance within the mixed marginal livelihood zones to be undertaken by the District Veterinary office.
- Surveillance of the malnutrition levels within the District especially Divisions with Alarm/emergency levels of MUAC by the ALRMP II and Ministry of Public Health. UNIMIX/Supplementary feeding Vitamin A supplement and for under 5 year old children in the worst affected divisions by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group and Ministry of Public Health.
- Rehabilitation and monitoring of the strategic boreholes and watering points within the worst hit areas i.e. Mutuovare, Makima, Karaba, Riakanau, Ndurumori, Gichiche, Mavuria, Kiambere, Ndurumori and Ishiara locations by ALRMP II and Ministry of Water.
- Water trucking to primary and secondary schools within the worst hit area by the Ministry of water and Arid lands Resource Management Project II.
- Sensitization of water treatment and the provision of aqua tabs for domestic water treatment by the Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Water.
- Livestock off-take and de-stocking campaigns within the worst hit areas by the Ministry of Livestock.

Current interventions

Non-food interventions

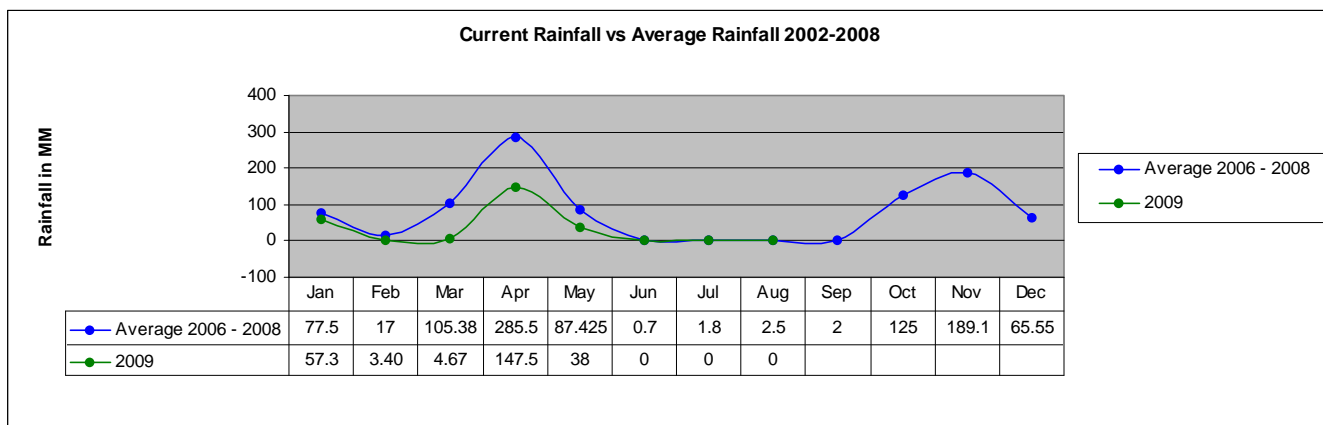
- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes within the entire District by ALRMP II and Ministry of Water.
- Excavation of Matilamu sand dam by ALRMP II.
- Construction of Bindii sand dam by ALRMP II.
- Extension of the Kogari pipeline by ALRMP II.
- Disease surveillance and response by the Ministry of Public Health
- Disease surveillance and response by the District Veterinary Office
- Aflatoxin surveillance by the Ministry of Public Health

Food aid

- Distribution of relief food from the world Food Programme by the lead agency Catholic Diocese of Embu targeting 55,942 beneficiaries within the whole District.
- Distribution of relief food by CCS Mayori (Anglican Church) targeting 800 beneficiaries within Ngoce, Makima and Machanga.
- Homegrown school feeding programme targeting 110 schools within the District.

1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall



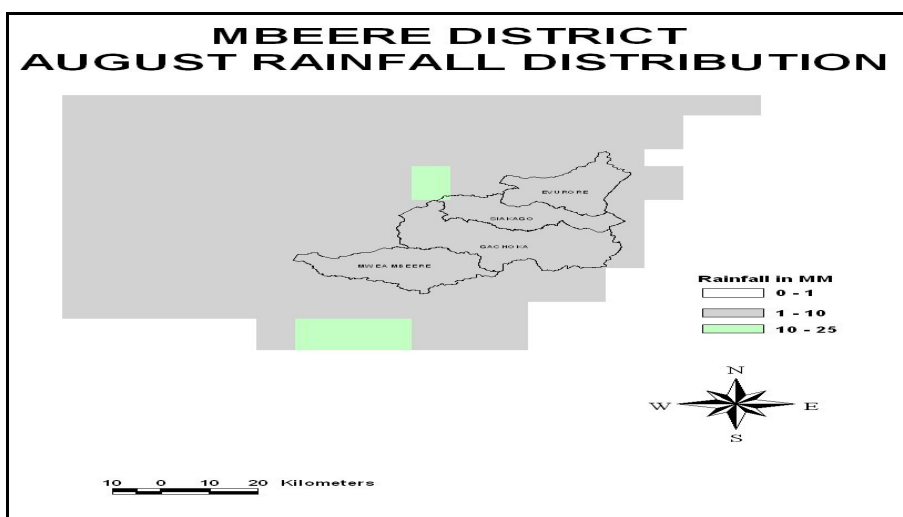
Source: Divisional Agricultural Offices

Amount of rainfall

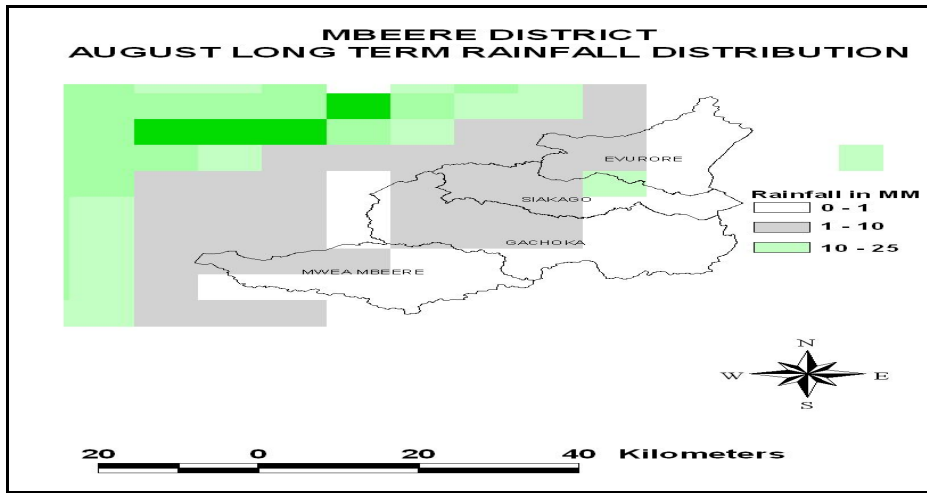
The District did not receive any rainfall in the month of July. This reveals a below normal trend during this period of the year.

Division	Rainfall Station	JULY	
		mm	Wet days
Siakago	Siakago market	0	NIL
Evurore	Ishiarra market	0	NIL
Gachoka	Gachoka market	0	NIL
Mwea	Karaba market	0	NIL

Source: Divisional Agricultural Offices

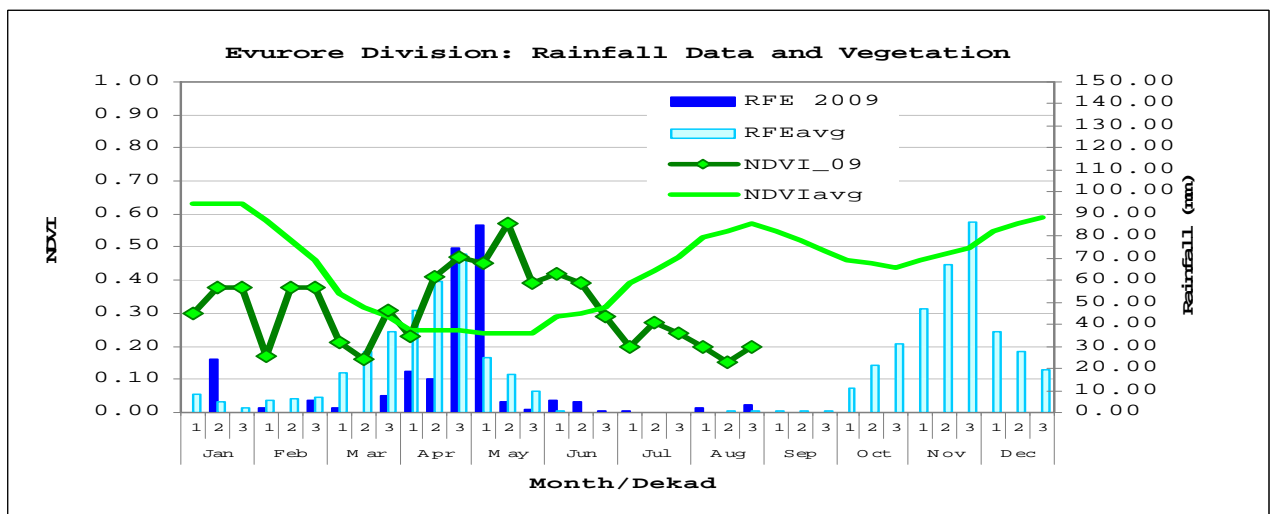
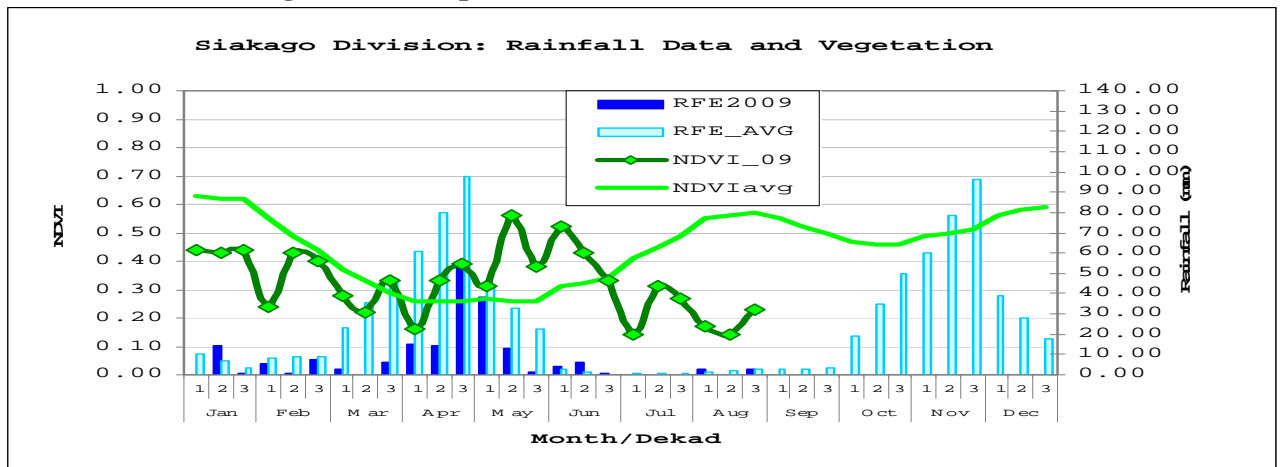


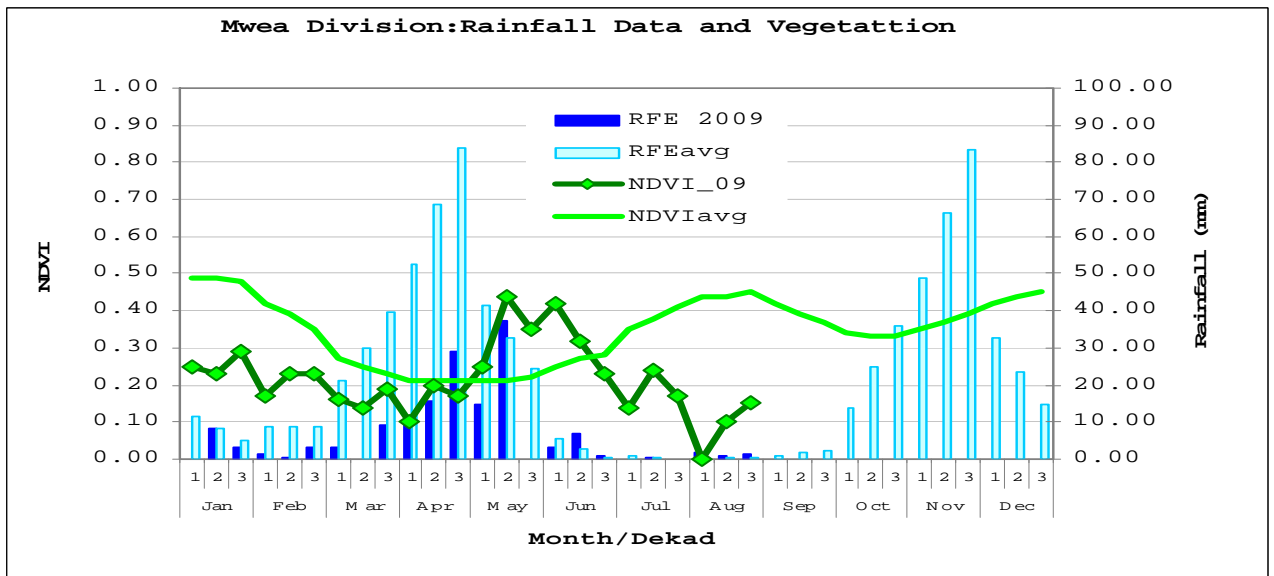
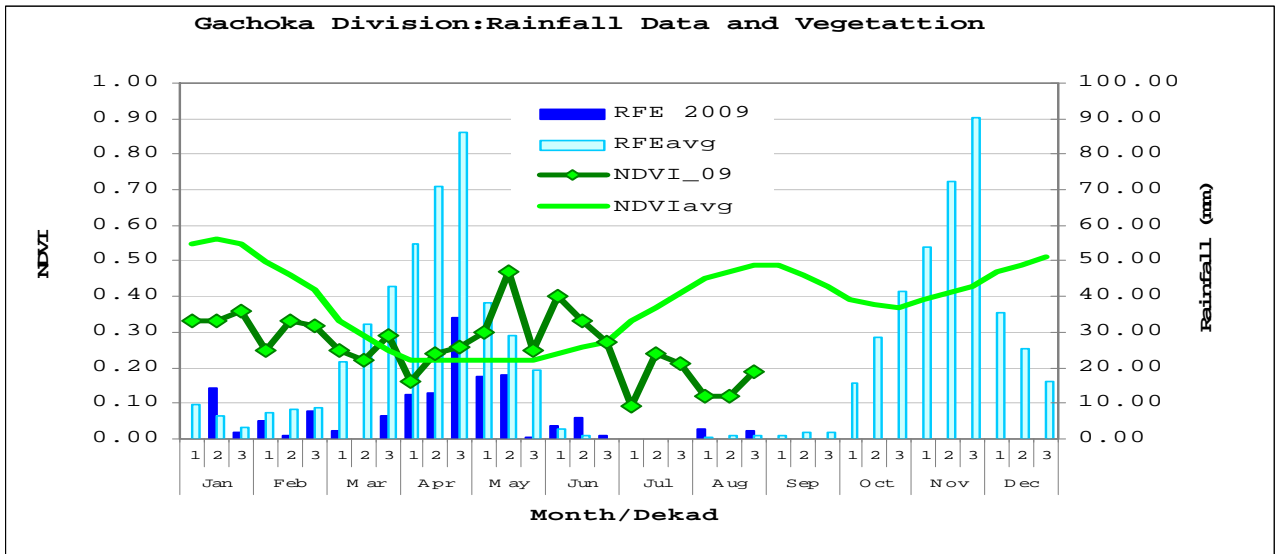
Source: ALRMP II/ FEWSNET



Source: ALRMP II/ FEWSNET

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture





Source: ALRMP II/ FEWSNET

- Pastures and browse quality was poor across the district. The situation was not normal at this period of the year. As shown by the NDVI and rainfall tables above, the pasture and browse quality was below the normal levels due to lack of rainfall in the district. Some of the most affected areas include: Mutuovare, Makima, Karaba, Riakanau, Ndurumori, Gichiche, Mavuria, Kiambere, Ndurumori and Ishiara locations.
- Pasture and browse availability was poor within the District.
- The prevailing situation was not normal at this period of the year. The Ndvi data shows the current situation of vegetation in relation to the amount of rainfall received within the month. The quantity of pasture and browse within the District is poor as shown on the NDVI graphs for the four Divisions above. This was attributed to the prolonged dry spell in the District. Pasture and browse quantity is expected to diminish even further due to lack of rainfall.

1.3 Water sources and availability

1.3.1 Water sources

Water availability and accessibility was poor within the district. The situation was not normal at this period of the year. Communities depended on natural rivers, boreholes, traditional river wells, pans and springs for both domestic and human consumption. Most of these water sources dried up due to continued consumption. The situation is expected to deteriorate even further due to the absence of rainfall to recharge these sources.

1.3.2 Livestock access to water

Distances from grazing areas to main water sources increased from 5.3 km in the month of July to 5.6 km in the month of August. The prevailing distances were not normal at this period of the year. Water levels on various watering points e.g. seasonal rivers, catchments pools, earth dams and water pans have dried up increasing pressure and congestion on the few available watering points. It is anticipated that the distances to watering points will increase even further due to lack of rainfall to recharge these water sources.

1.3.3 Household access to water

Average distances from households to the main water sources also increased from 4.4 km in the month of July to an average of 4.8km. The prevailing distances were not normal at this period of the year. Water dried up in most of the water reservoirs i.e. catchments pools, earth dams and water pans increasing distances covered in search of water for domestic use. Distances covered in search of water are expected to increase even further.

1.4 Implications on food security

Declined water levels in various water reservoirs and the poor quantity and quality of pasture and browse indicated food insecurity.

2.0 Rural economy indicators (Food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- Livestock body conditions were fair to poor on all animal species within the district. The prevailing body conditions are not normal at this period of the year. The prevailing physical conditions could be attributed to the poor availability of forage and water for livestock consumption. The cattle body conditions within the mixed marginal zones i.e. Ndurumori, Ishiara, Kiambere, Mutuovare, Karaba, Gichiche, Mavuria and Makima were noted to be poor due to the poor availability of forage and water within these zones, leading to migration of these animals to the upper mixed farming zones.
- There was also migration of animals from the neighboring Districts i.e. Mwingi and Kitui into the District in search of pasture and water which is increasing congestion and pressure within the watering points. The livestock body conditions are expected to deteriorate even further due to lack of adequate forage and water.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- Livestock health condition remained good on all animal species. There were no reported cases of mortalities on all animal species.

Milk Production

Average milk production per household declined from an average of 4.5 bottles of 750ml in the month of July to an average of 3.7 bottles of 750ml in the month of August. The decline in milk production could be attributed to the low quantity and quality of pasture and browse within the

District and decreased birth rates for livestock. Gachoka Division had the highest milk output. Output variation is influenced by livestock population density, distribution per household and varying degree of pasture and browse availability.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

There were little agricultural activities taking place in the farms, with some farmers embarking on land preparing. Little harvest was experienced within the mixed farming zones, while there was no harvest within the marginal mixed farming zones, i.e. Mutuovare, Makima, Karaba, Ndurumori, Gichiche, Mavuria, Kiambere, Ndurumori and Ishiara locations.

2.2.2 Pests and diseases

There were no major incidences of pest and diseases attack which were reported.

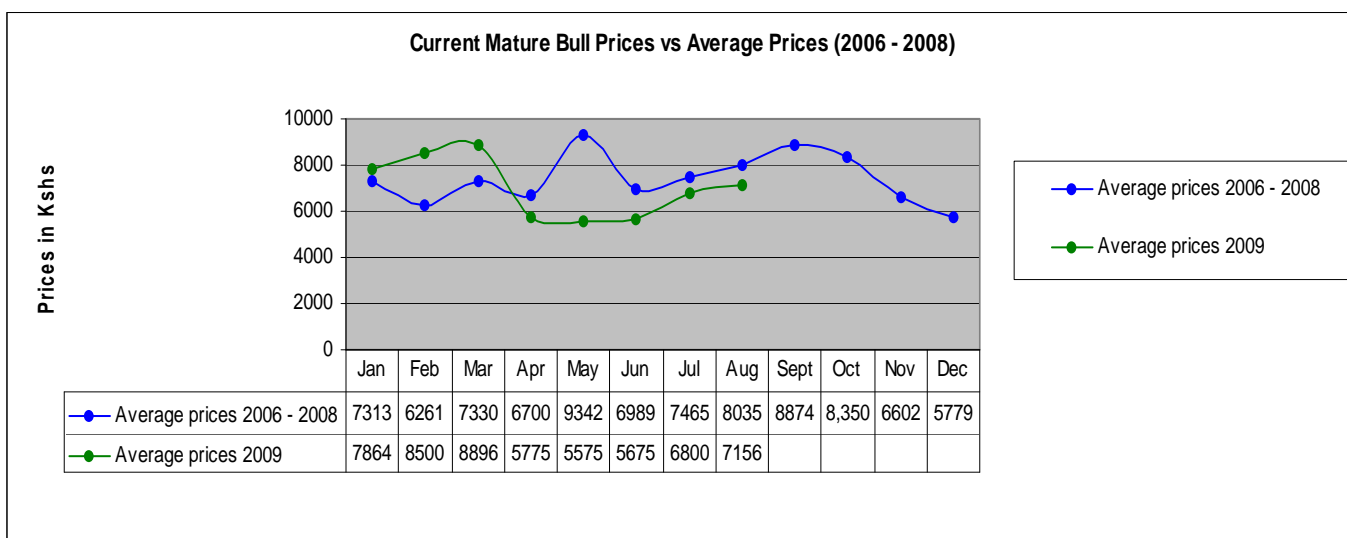
2.2.3 Implications on food security

Lack of rainfall, low crop yield and declining milk production within the District translates to food insecurity.

3.0 Access to food

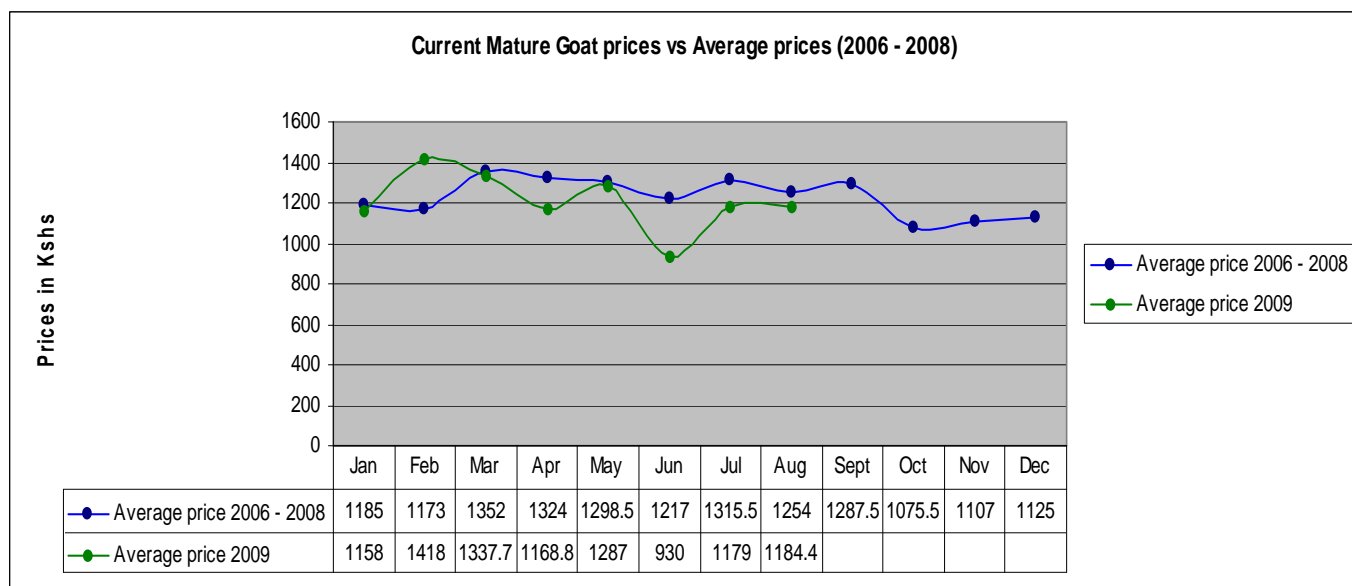
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices



- Cattle prices increased slightly but they were still below normal at this period of the year. The average price was Ksh7156 compared to Ksh6800 and long term price of Ksh 8035. The low prices could be attributed to the poor animal body conditions due to the lack of forage and water, forcing most of the farmers to dispose their animals to avert mortalities.
- The sales rate increased from 1.2% in the month of July to 2.1 % in the month of August. Evurore Division recorded the highest selling rate of 5% .Gachoka division recorded the highest selling price of Kshs 7,500.

3.3.2 Goat prices



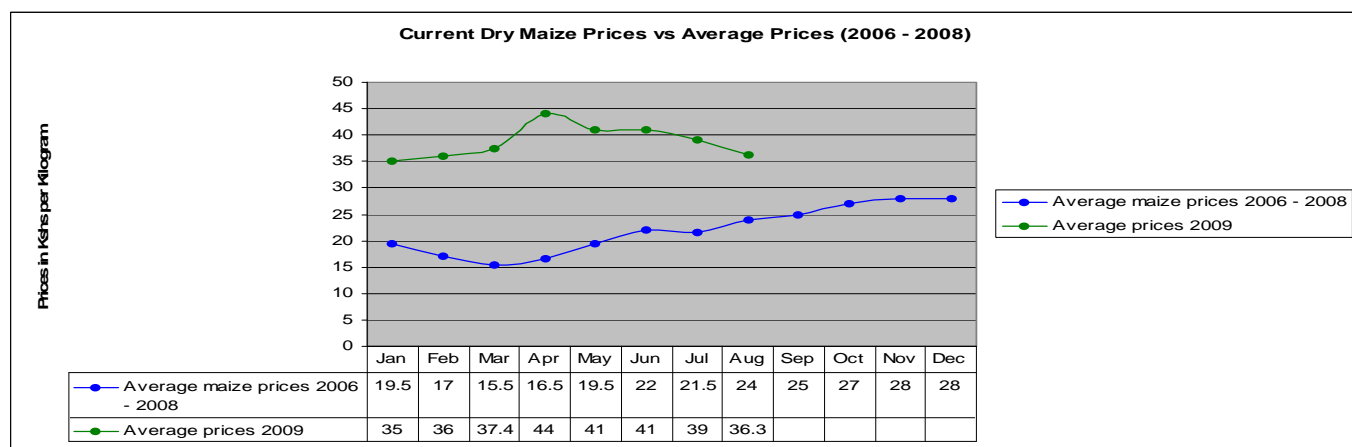
- Goat prices increased from Ksh1,179 in July to Ksh1,184. The prices are below normal at the time of the year. The low prices could be attributed to the increased selling rates as farmers dispose their animals to avert mortalities due to the lack of forage and water within the entire District.
- The sales rate increased from 1.2% in July to 3.7%. Evurore Division had the highest sales rate of 5.6% and the highest selling price of Ksh1,312 while Mwea had the lowest of Ksh900.

3.3.3 Milk Consumption

Average milk consumed per household declined from 4.5 bottles of 750 ml in the month of July to 3.7 bottles of 750ml. The district average milk price per litre was Ksh42. The decrease in milk consumption was attributed to the declining livestock birth rates and the poor availability of forage and water within the district.

3.4 Crop prices

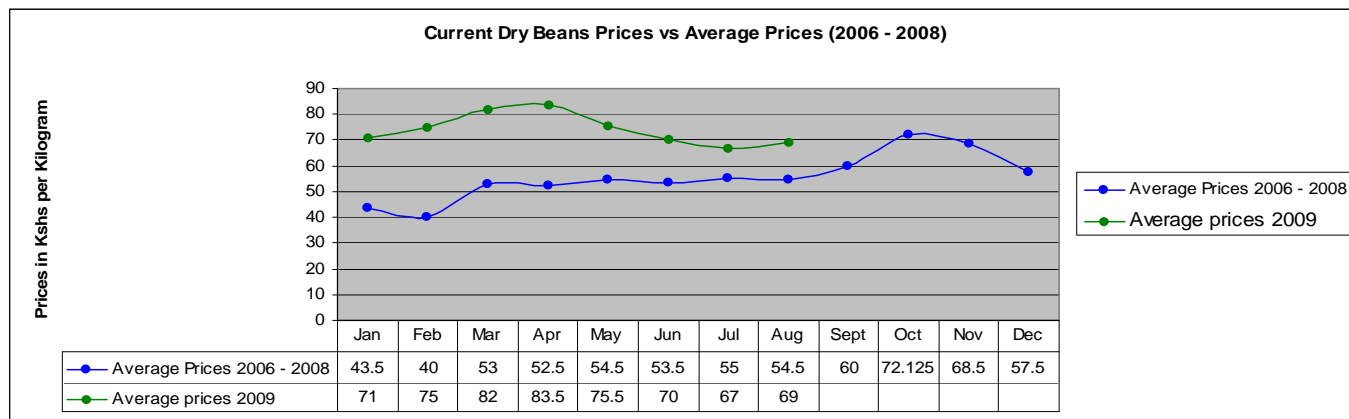
3.4.1 Maize prices



Maize prices declined slightly from Ksh39 per kilogram in July to Ksh36.25. The prices are above normal at this period of the year. The decline was attributed to the influx of maize harvested from

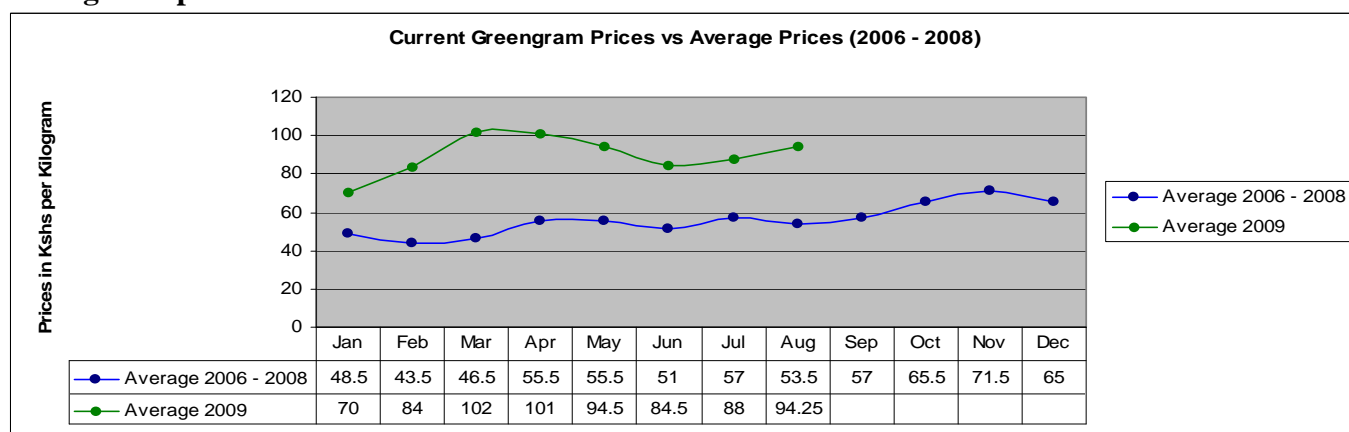
the neighboring districts of Embu and Kirinyaga. Mwea Division had the highest maize prices at Ksh40 per kilo while Evurore Divisions had the lowest at Kshs 34.

3.4.2 Beans prices



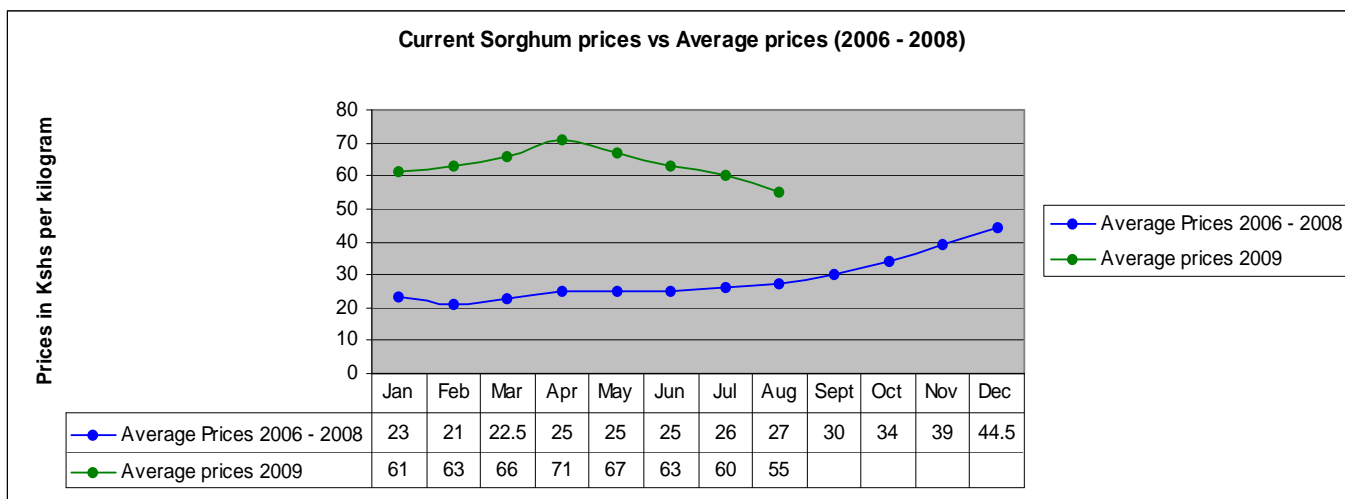
- Beans prices increased slightly from Ksh67 per kilo in July to Ksh69. The prices were above normal at this period of the year. The increase in the prices was attributed to the high demand for both household consumption and planting seeds with the little harvest that was experienced within some pockets of the district being exhausted.
- Mwea and Gachoka Division had the highest beans price at Ksh75 per kilogram while Evurore Division recorded the lowest at Ksh55.

3.4.3 Green grams price



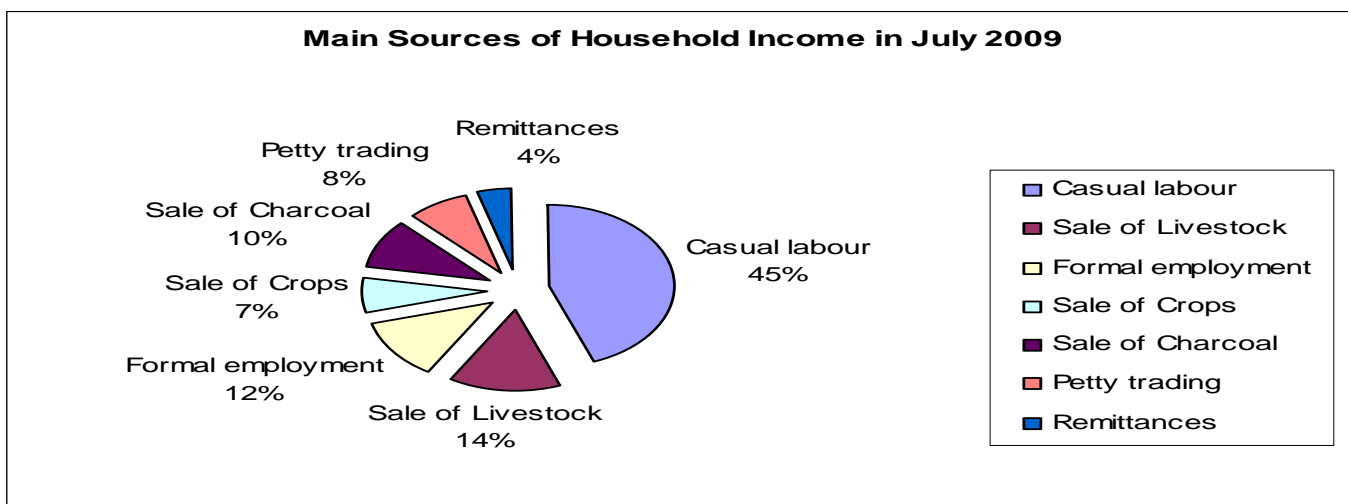
- Green gram prices increased slightly from Ksh88 per kilogram in July to Ksh 94.25. The prices were above normal at the time of the year. The increase in prices was attributed to poor performance of the crop within the district.
- Gachoka Division had the highest price at Ksh117 while Mwea Division recorded the lowest at Ksh75 per Kilogram.

3.4.4 Sorghum Price



- Sorghum prices declined from Ksh60 per kilogram in July to Ksh55. The prices were above normal at the time of the year. The declining sorghum prices could be attributed to the little harvest within some pockets of the districts.
- Siakago Division had the highest sorghum prices of Ksh72.5 while Mwea Division had the lowest of Ksh 40 per Kilogram.

3.5 Income



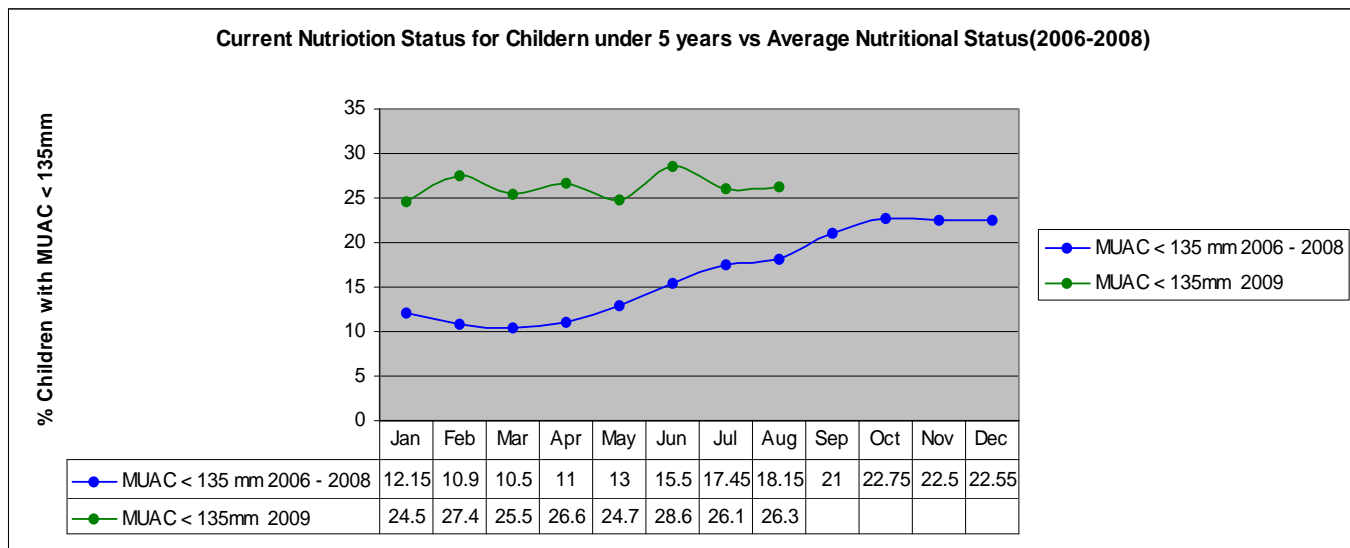
- Income from crop sales declined from 10% in July to 7% as the source of total household revenue. The decline in crop sales was attributed to the exhausting of the little harvest that has been experienced within some pockets of the district.
- Contribution from livestock sales remained at 14%. This was attributed to the price improvement within the local livestock markets within the district.
- Casual labor as the major source of aggregate household income in Mbeere District increased from 44% in July to 45% in the month of August. This was attributed to the commencement of land preparation as the predominant agricultural activity within the district.

3.6 Implications on food security

High food purchase prices indicate a food insecure situation. Improving livestock price and availability of opportunities for casual laborers indicate a food secure situation.

4.0 Human welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The nutrition status of children under 5 years deteriorated slightly in comparison to July, with the percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition rising to 26.3 from 26.1 in July.
- A total of 1,860 children in 10 sentinel sites were sampled. The decline could be attributed to the lack of clean drinking water and proper feeding. The status was lower than the long term mean, where 18.15% of children were rated at risk of malnutrition.
- Evurore Division had the highest rate at 30%, Gachoka Division 28.4%, Mwea Division at 21% and Siakago Division at 25.6%.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Non-food interventions

- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes within the entire District by ALRMP II and Ministry of Water.
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- Disease surveillance and response by the Ministry of Public Health
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6.0 Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

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