

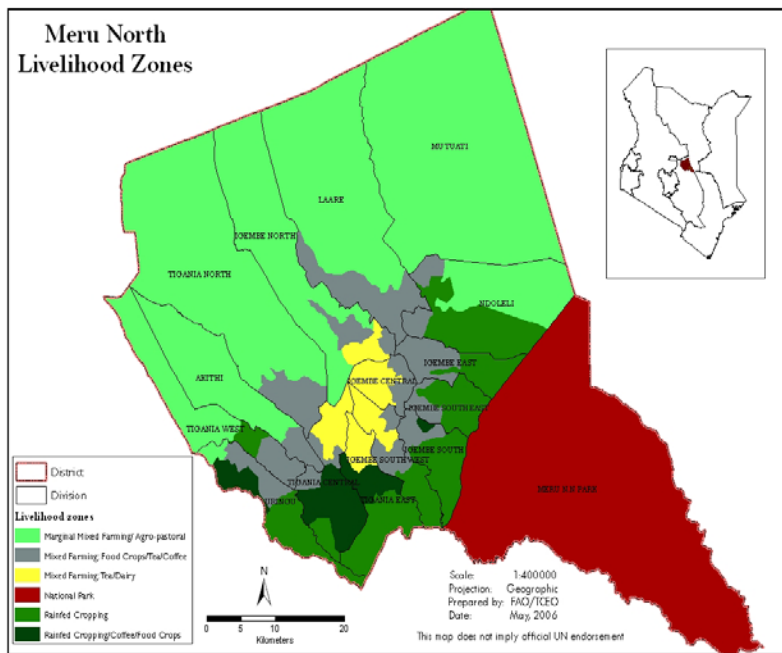


**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, AUGUST 2009

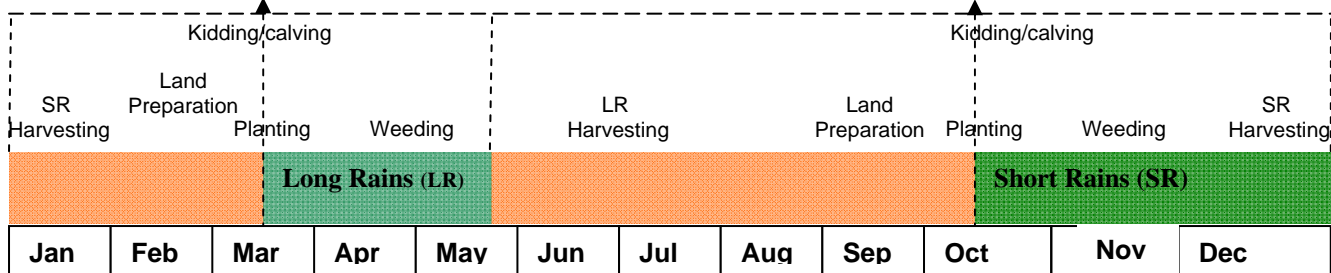
Meru North District

Warning Stages



Livelihood Zone	Stage	Trend
Mixed farming (FOOD)	Alert	Worsening
Livestock Farming	Alarm	Worsening
Agro Pastoral	Alarm	Worsening
District	Alarm	Worsening

SEASONAL CALENDAR



Situation overview

- No rains were reported in the district during the month.
- Pasture quality and quantity declined further during the month, with more pronounced decline in the Northern Grazing Area.
- Distances to grazing areas declined slightly to an average of 9.5 km compared to 11.7 km the previous month as livestock was concentrated around watering points.
- Livestock body condition deteriorated further in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone compared to the previous month. Livestock numbers were still high in the district.
- Conflicts were reported between herders and farmers over invasion of farms by livestock in the upper zones of the district.
- Cattle rustling were reported in most parts of the Northern Grazing Area.
- Natural rivers were the main sources of water, although volumes declined compared to the previous month. Water vendors were important sources to a significant number of households in the Agro-pastoral livelihood.
- Average distances to watering points for households increased to 6.7 km compared to 5.4 km the previous month. Longer distances were reported in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone.
- Cattle prices increased to Ksh6,802 compared to Ksh5,608 the previous month while those of sheep increased slightly to Ksh1,150 from Ksh818 the previous month.
- Goat prices remained fair at Ksh1,506 from Ksh1,433 the previous month.
- Maize prices declined slightly to Ksh35.90 from Ksh39 in July. Similarly beans prices remained the same at Ksh65.20. Prices of pigeon peas declined to Ksh 65 from Ksh90 the previous month.
- The nutrition status of children below five years remained fairly high during the month, with an average of 21.1 per cent being at risk of malnutrition compared to 19.2 per cent the previous month

Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Double relief rations to the district and increase frequency to at least once a month.
- Emergency fodder relief for livestock.
- Provide a water bowser for the project office.
- Provision of relief seeds and farm inputs for the short rains season by September 2009.
- Bring in Kenya Meat Commission to assist in livestock off-take.
- Provision of a lorry for the district to distribute relief supplies.
- Enhance supplementary feeding of children under five years.

1.0 Environmental indicators (stability)

1.1 Rainfall

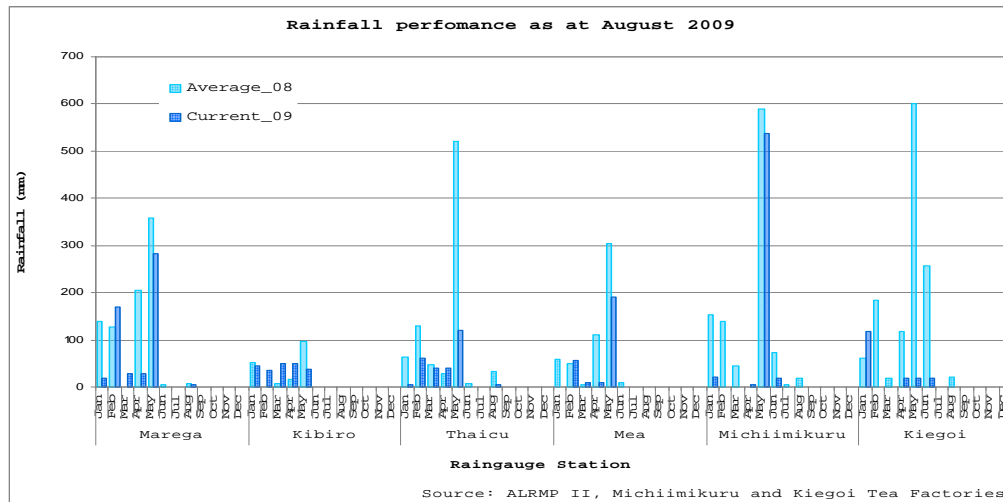


Fig: Daily rainfall totals during the month of August

**Michiimikuru and Kiegoi tea factories are outside the sentinel sites but are on the high elevation areas of the district. Rains in localities where these two are located contribute significantly to river discharge in the dry lower parts of the district.*

No rainfall was reported in all parts of the district over the last four weeks. Temporal and spatial distribution characterised the last rain season in all livelihood zones.

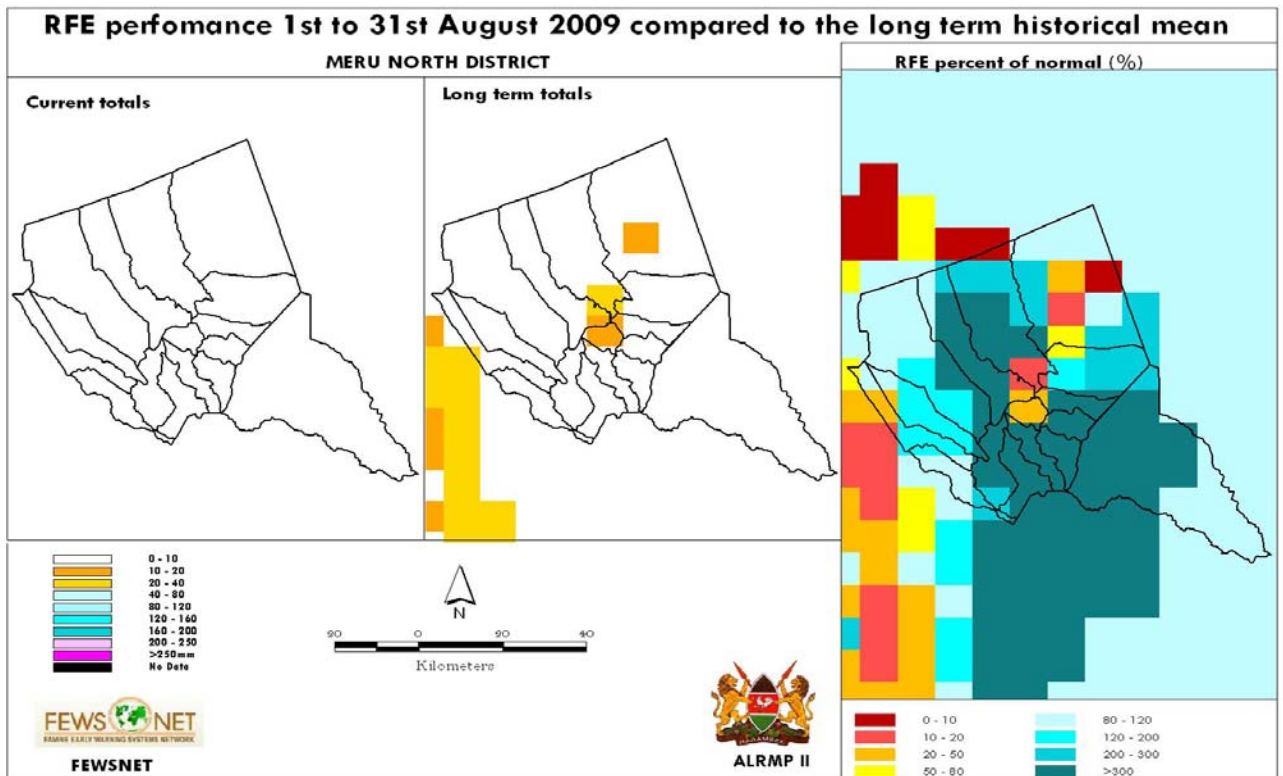


Fig: Rainfall performance during the month compared with the long term average

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- Pasture quality and quantity maintained a significant decline during the month, resulting in persistent lack of rainfall in most parts of the district.
- Similar to the previous month, the Northern Grazing Area was most affected. Conditions were made serious by the large numbers of livestock mostly from outside the district grazing there.

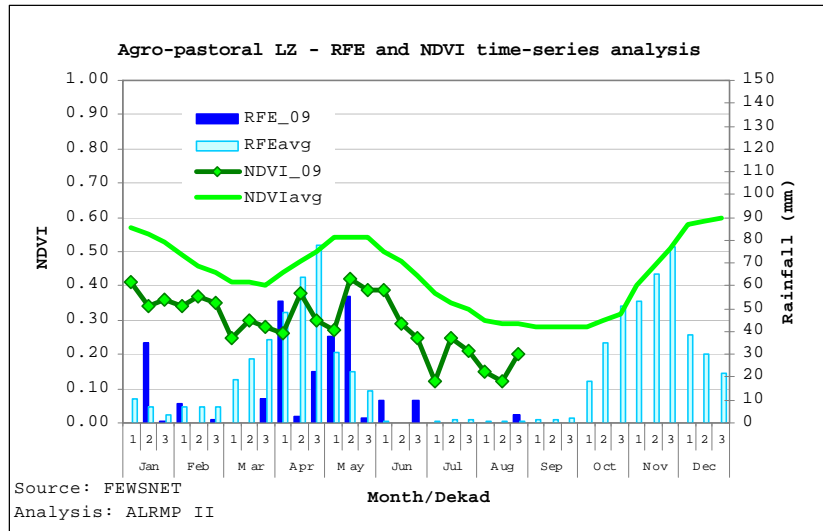
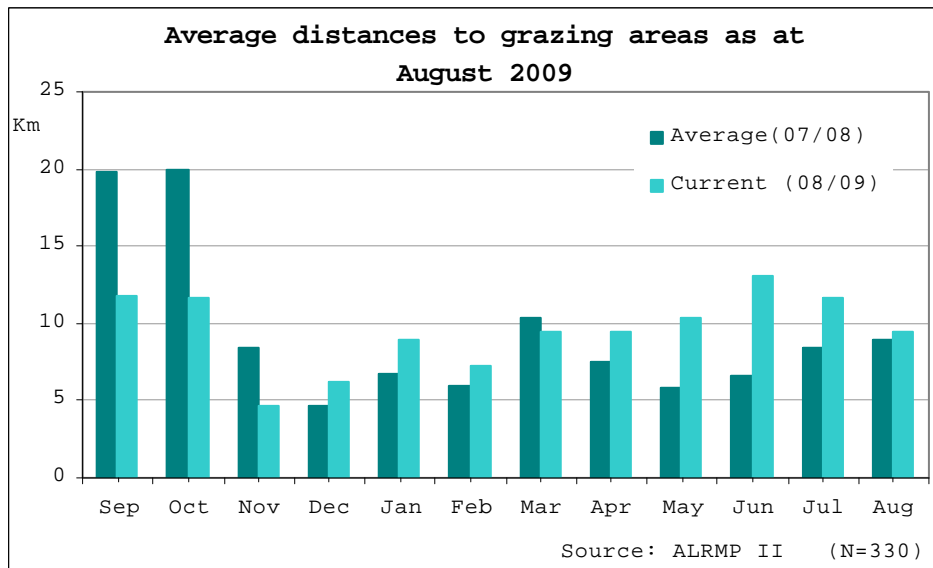


Fig: NDVI analysis of the Agro-pastoral (marginal mixed farming) livelihood zone

1.2.1 Distances to grazing areas



- Average distances to grazing areas declined to 9.5 km compared to 11.7km the previous month.
- Herders concentrated their livestock in grazing areas close to watering points, particularly rivers.
- Pasture was unavailable in the Northern Grazing Area, forcing herders to move to farmlands in the central and southern parts of the district.
- Major livestock concentration points were at Kinaduba springs (Ndolei division), Kisimani (Igembe Southeast) and along routes leading to these areas. These are farmlands and herders have not ventured into these grounds before.

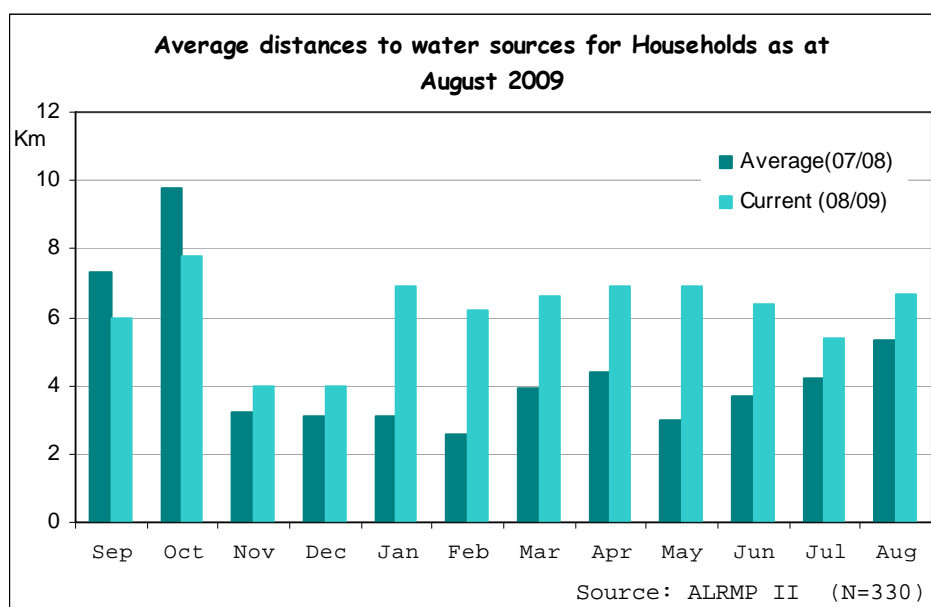
- Livestock numbers were also high due to influx on livestock from neighboring Isiolo and Samburu districts.
- Kamweline sample site still recorded the longest distances of 31 km compared to 23.3km the previous month. Kalimbene recorded 14 km while Kibiru recorded 13km.

1.3 Water sources and availability

1.3.1 Water sources

- Rivers continued to be the main sources of water for both livestock and households. However, serious declines in volumes were noted mainly due to lack of precipitation and illegal abstractions.
- As a result, important rivers flowing into the Agro-pastoral livelihoods such as Liliaba and Likiundu could not reach this zone, worsening water stress in the zone.
- The major watering points were at Ngare Naite and Kinaduba springs, Kandebene and Inono boreholes and along rivers flowing to the southern parts of the district from the Nyambene ranges.
- This was not normal at the time of the year and the situation is expected to worsen further till the November rains.

1.3.2 Household access to water



- Average distances to watering points for households increased to 6.7 km compared to 5.4 km the previous month. This increase resulted from declining water sources in the district and the drying up rivers forced households to move further upstream.
- Water vendors were also important sources of water for households in the agro-pastoral livelihood.
- Water quality declined significantly during the month due to decreasing volumes and sharing of water points with livestock.

1.4 Emerging issues

- Though livestock movements into the district declined, the high numbers of livestock foreign to the district are likely to introduce new diseases.
- Cattle rustling in the Northern Grazing Area intensified during the month.
- Conflicts were also reported between herders and farmers in Kindani, Maburwa, and Kalimbene.
- Household migration into upper areas of the district continued during the month and this may affect crop production

1.5 Implications on food security

- Pasture was unavailable in most parts of the district and the water situation outlook was poor in most areas, particularly the Northern Grazing Area.
- Cattle rustling intensified, forcing households to move to upper areas of the district which were much safer. Conflicts between farmers and herders are likely to undermine crop production this season.
- As a result, food security worsened compared to the previous month.

2.0 Rural economy indicators (Food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- Compared to the previous month, livestock body conditions deteriorated further. Livestock from the Northern Grazing Area that moved to the central and southern parts of the district had slightly better conditions than those that remained behind. The deteriorating conditions were lack of pastures, opportunistic infections and long distances to watering points. If the current conditions persist, body conditions are likely to worsen further.
- Milk production also declined during the month.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- No major livestock diseases were reported during the month.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- Land preparation was going on in all parts of the district, which is normal at this time of the year.
- Beans and maize harvests realised this season were below normal, with most parts of the Ago-pastoral livelihood realizing no harvests at all. Slightly below normal harvests of pigeon peas and dolichos lablab were realised in the Mixed Farming livelihood zone, with farmers citing seed shortage.

2.2.2 Pest and diseases

- There were no cases of crop pests and diseases reported.

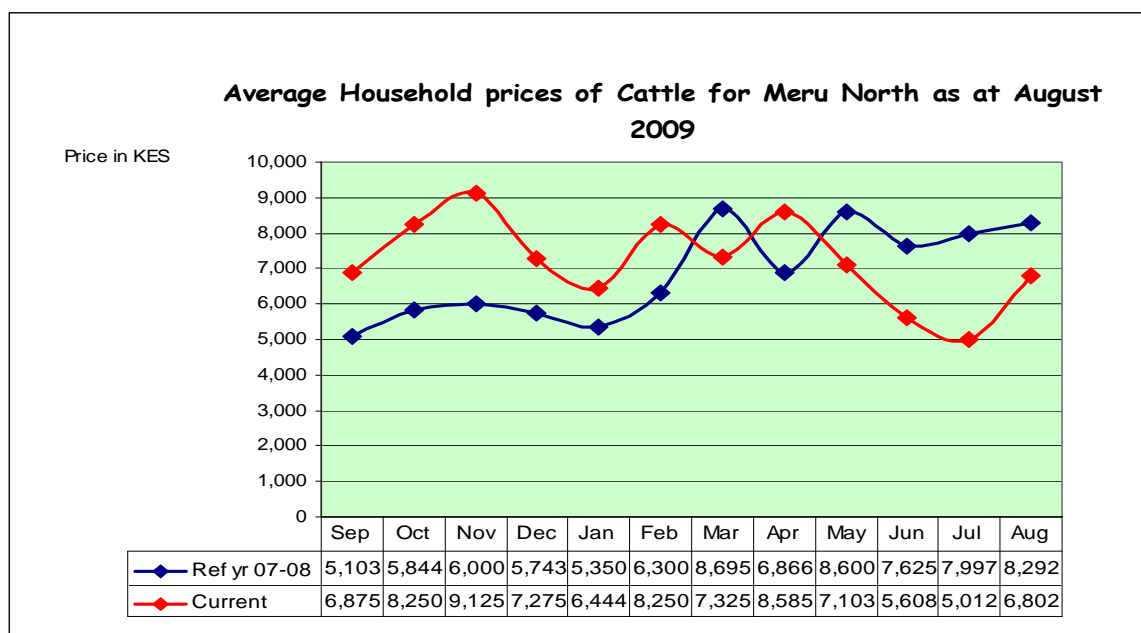
2.3 Implications on food security

- Livestock body conditions deteriorated compared to the previous month, resulting in decreased milk production.
- Below normal harvests of maize and beans were realised and this is likely to lead to serious seed shortage for the next season.
- Overall food security in the district declined during the month.

3.0 Access to food

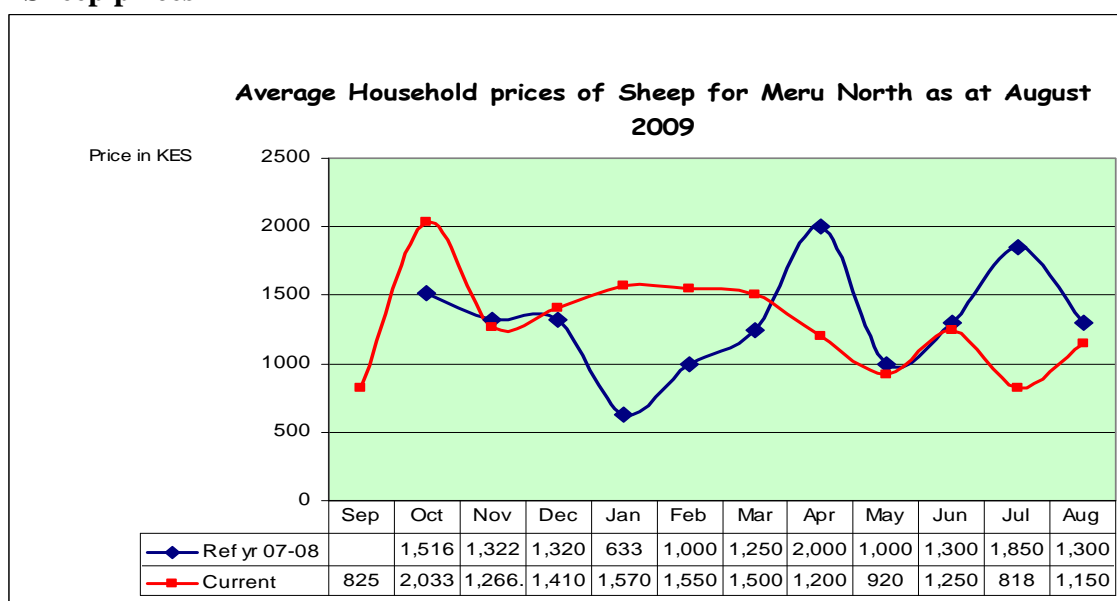
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices



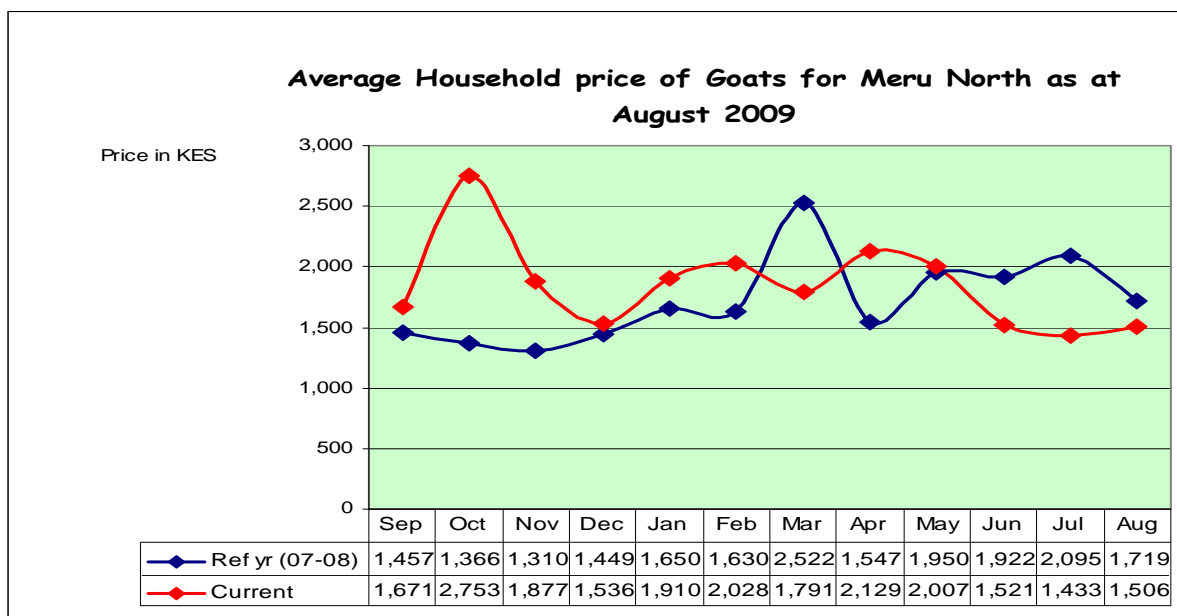
- A slight increase in cattle prices was noted during the month, with average prices standing at Ksh6,802 compared to Ksh 5,012 the previous month.
- These average prices were influenced by sales recorded in the Livestock livelihood zone where cattle still had good body conditions. Prices of those in the Agro-pastoral zone were as low as Ksh4,375 at Kalimbene sentinel site due to poor body conditions.
- With pastures expected to decline further in all livelihoods, prices are also expected to decline, leaving herders desperate to sell.

3.1.2 Sheep prices



- A marginal increase in sheep prices was noted this month, with average prices settling at Ksh1,150 compared to Ksh818 last month.
- The prices were normal at this time of the month and are expected to remain within the range, though they are not the preferred source of proteins in the district.
- No inter-livelihood zone differences were noted during the month.

3.1.3 Goat prices



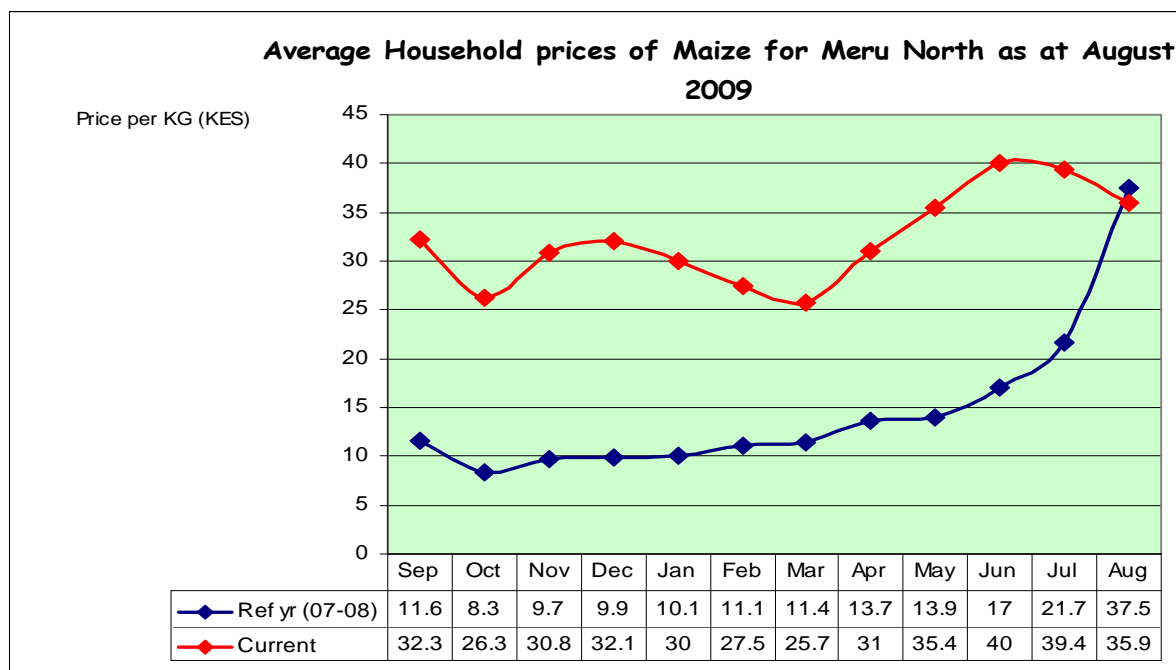
- Similar to the previous month, goat prices remained fairly constant at Ksh 1,506. These prices were below normal at the time of the month and this was mainly due to their poor body conditions.
- Further, an oversupply of goats in markets witnessed last month still persisted this month as goats from neighboring districts were also offered for sale. Least prices were noted at Kalimbene sentinel site in the Agro-pastoral livelihood at Ksh1,000.

3.2 Milk consumption

- Milk consumption declined further this month mainly due to declined production. An average of 7.5 bottles (750ml) were consumed in an average sample of 30 households compared to 12.4 bottles the previous month. Consumption is expected to decline further since production forecasts are also gloomy.

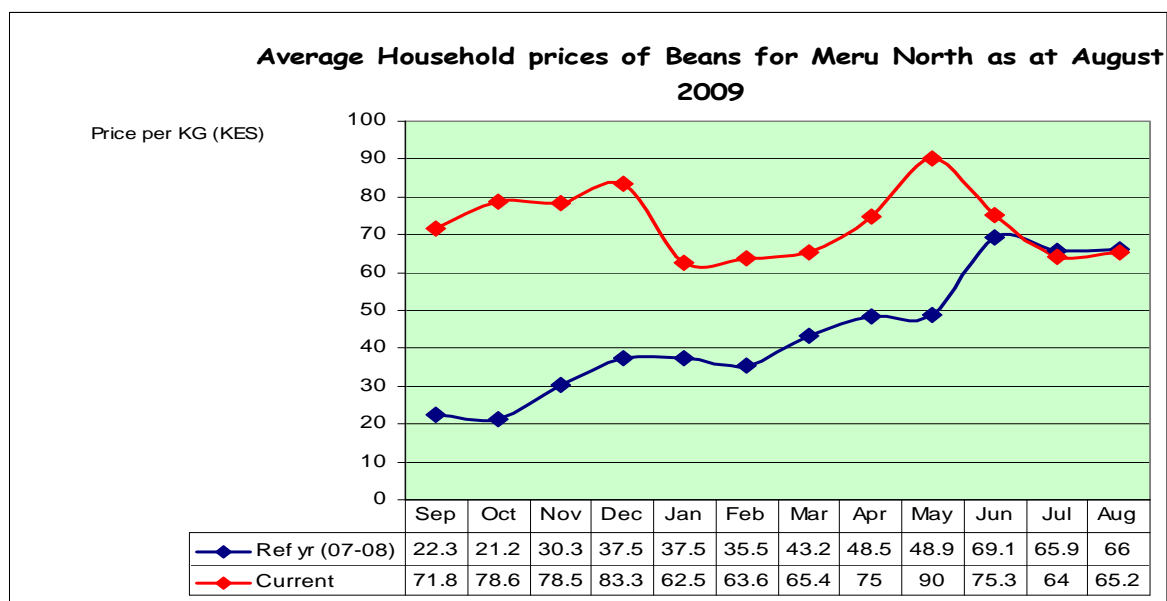
3.3 Crop prices

3.3.1 Maize prices



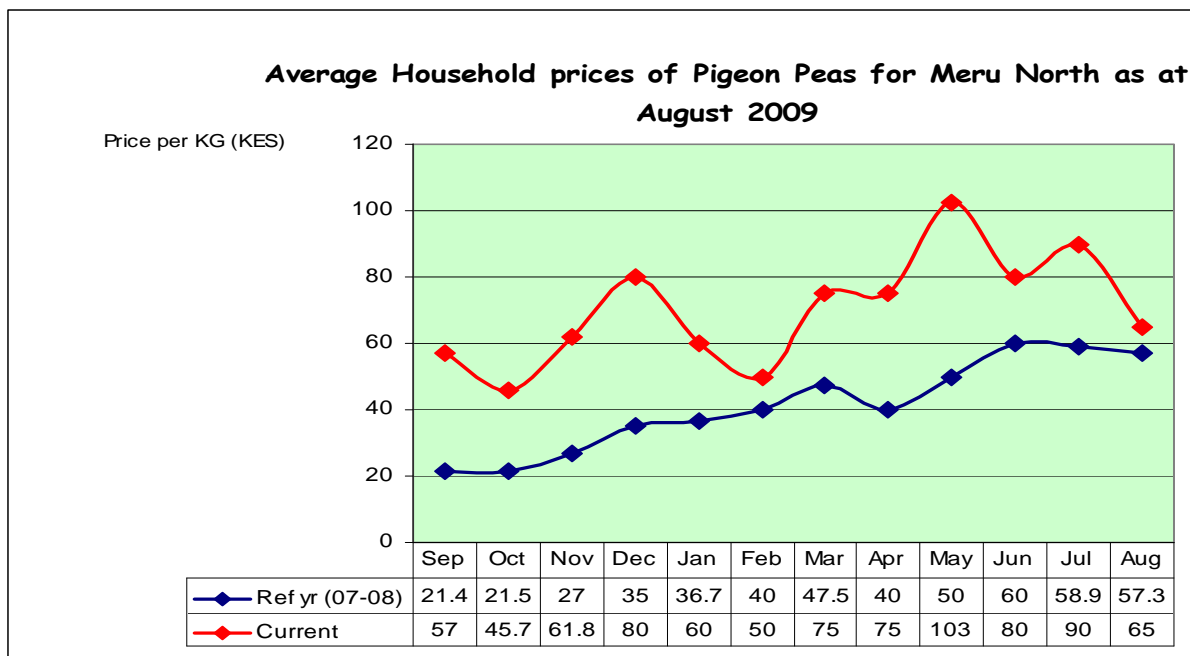
- A slight decline in average maize prices was noted, with average prices standing at Ksh35.9 per kilo compared to Ksh39.40 the previous month.
- This decline was temporary and was brought about by the just-concluded harvests. Prices are expected to rise again once the planting season commences. Increase in prices is also expected to persist until the next harvest in March 2010.

3.3.2 Beans prices



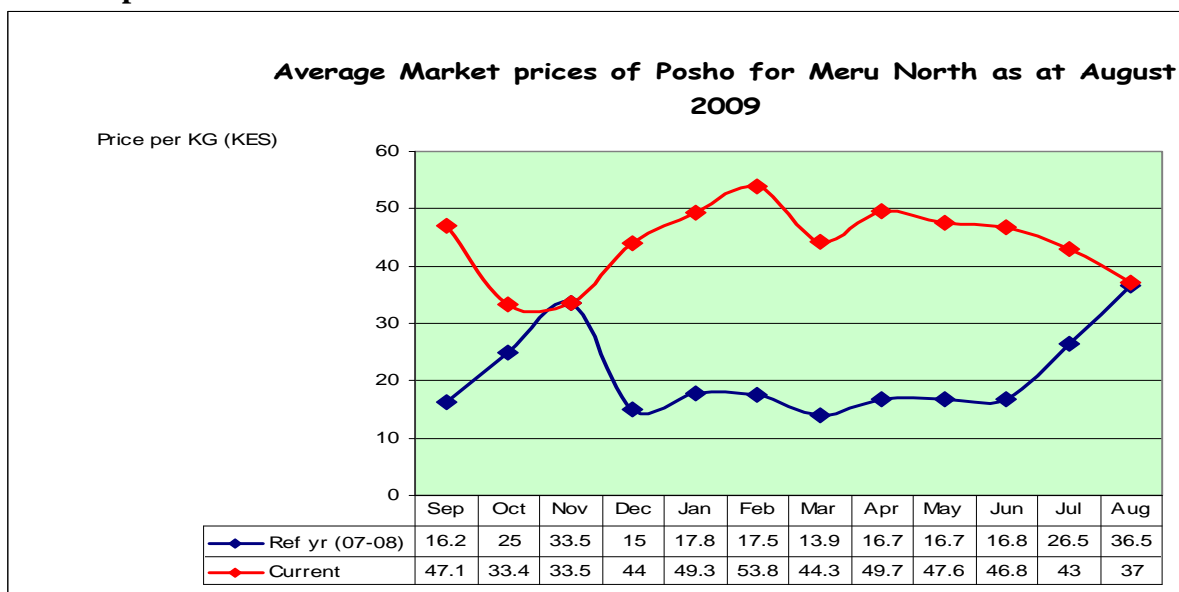
- No changes were noted in average prices of beans this month. The average price stood at Ksh65.20 per kilo, similar to the previous month.
- The district is facing beans shortage from poor harvests realised. These prices are expected to increase once the planting season commences.

3.3.3 Pigeon peas prices



- Average pigeon peas prices decreased to Kshs. 65 per kilo this month from Kshs. 90 the previous month
- This decline was influenced by harvests realised in the Mixed Farming livelihood zone. However, the prices are still higher than normal and are not expected to prevail for long due to low quantities realised and the coming planting period

3.3.4 Posho prices



- Posho prices declined to Ksh37 per kilo this month compared to Ksh43 the previous month.
- This decline was attributed to the just-concluded maize harvest. However, it is not expected to persist since harvests realised were below normal and a demand for seeds is upcoming.

3.5 Income

3.5.1 Crop income

- There was a slight increase in the numbers of households relying on crop sales for incomes.
- 8 per cent of 330 households reported having relied on crop incomes compared to 6 percent the previous month. This increase was due to the just concluded maize harvest.
- Least sales were reported in the Agro-pastoral livelihood, similar to the previous month, as very little harvests were realised.

3.5.2 Livestock income

- Incomes from sale of livestock declined this month, with only 17 households out of 330 households sampled reported significant sales compared to 21 the previous month,
- Though livestock available for sale increased during the month, demand was low mainly due to cash constraints and poor body conditions

3.5.2 Other income

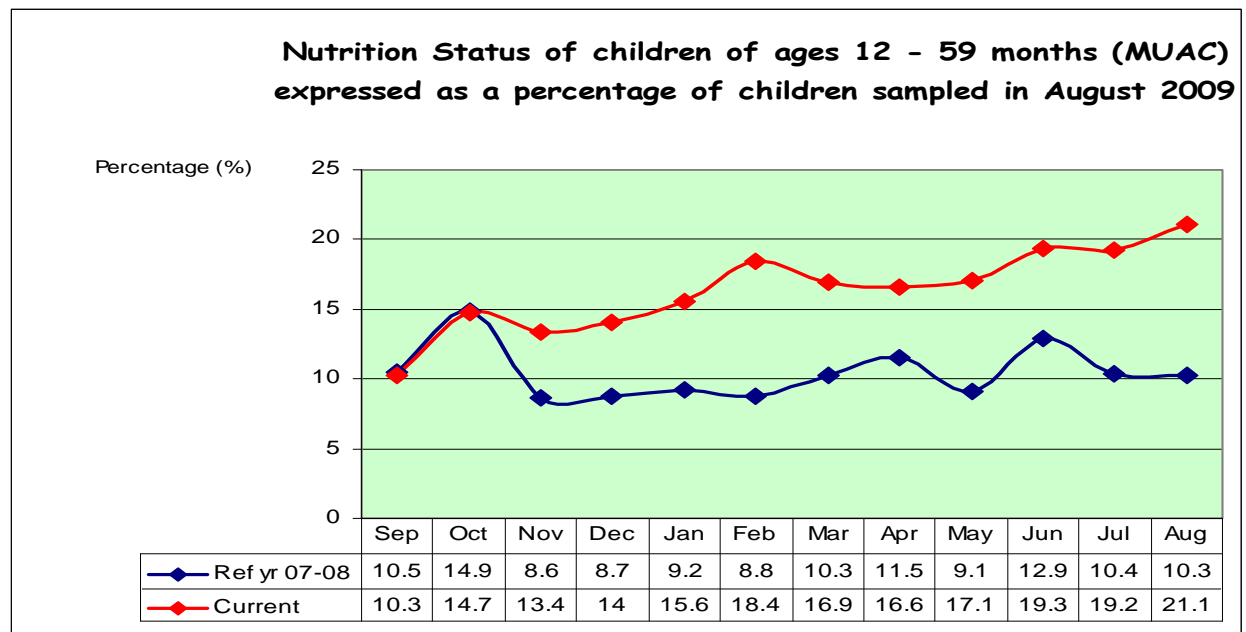
- Similar to the previous month, casual labour was the main source of income to most households. 31 per cent of 330 households interviewed reported having relied on casual labour this month similar to the previous month. Most were involved in land preparation and harvesting of maize.
- Significant incomes were also reported from petty trade and sale of khat similar to the previous month. Sale of charcoal also registered significant incomes

3.6 Implications on food security

- Slight appreciation in livestock prices noted were not able to cushion farmers from high food prices despite slight declines noted
- The noted reliance on petty trade and sale of khat and low incomes from sale of crops means households have little food to spare. Thus their income bases have shrunk.
- As such, the food security situation in the district is declining further than the previous month.

4.0 Human welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The number of children under five years at risk of malnutrition (based on MUAC<135mm measurement) increased to 21.1 per cent compared to 19.2 per cent the previous month. This was mainly attributed to the fact that essential foods such as vegetables and milk were not readily available in most parts of the district.
- Further, availability of clean drinking water was compromised by declined water sources, quantity, and sharing of the same watering points with livestock. Igembe North and Mutuati divisions (Both are in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone) recorded highest rates at 47 and 48 per cent respectively, the highest recorded so far.

4.2 Human health

- No major human disease outbreak was reported during the month under review.

4.3 Flagged areas

- Igembe North, Mutuati, and Tigania Central divisions require close monitoring due to the possible high levels of malnutrition reported.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Non-food interventions

- No non-food interventions were noted this month.

5.2 Food aid

- Food supplementation of malnourished children under the age of five years continuing in all divisions

Relief food distribution (Igembe North)

Division	Maize	Beans
Ndoleli	333	67
Mutuati	381	76
Laare	286	57
Total	1,000	200

Relief distribution (Tigania West)

	Maize	Beans	Corn oil
Akithi	360	70	17
Mituntu	300	60	16
T/West	240	50	12
Uringu	100	20	5
Total	1,000	200	50

Relief distribution (Tigania East)

	Maize	Beans	Corn oil
Muthara	330	67	17
Karama	330	67	17
T/East	240	56	10
T/central	100	10	6
Total	1,000	200	50

6.0 Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Veterinary department to intensify disease surveillance activities.
- Provincial administration to address conflicts between farmers and herders.
- Ministry of Health to address on the needs and requirements for supplementary food for children under five years.