

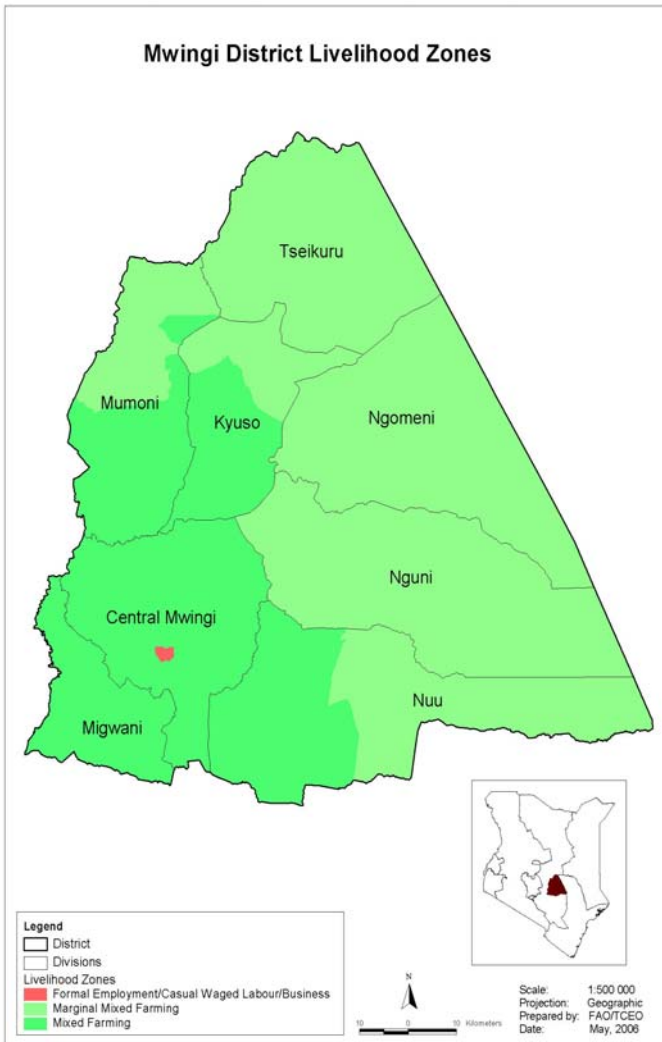


**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, AUGUST 2009

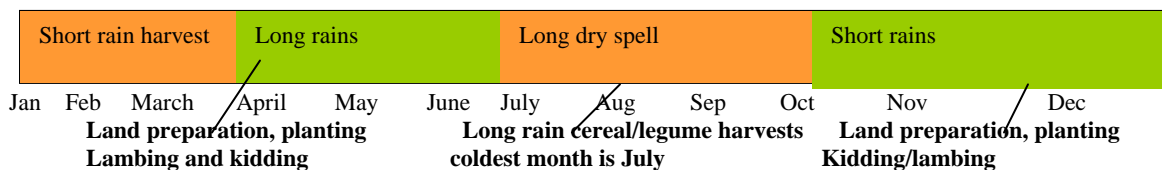
Mwingi District

Warning Stage



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Agro pastoral zone	Emergency	No change
Mixed farming zone	Emergency	No change
District	Emergency	No change

Seasonal calendar



Situation overview

- The district did not receive any rains during the month. The weather was mainly cold, cloudy and very dusty.
- Condition of natural vegetation in terms of quality and quantity was very poor. Livestock body condition was very poor, especially for the large stocks. Cases of cattle deaths due to drought were confirmed in the livestock keeping zones.
- Water access and availability continued to deteriorate and there was heavy congestion at the few serving boreholes. Average walking distance and waiting time to water points increased.
- Cattle prices dropped very low compared to the normal trend.
- Milk production was adversely affected, leading to an all time low. This affected milk consumption at household level negatively.
- The percentage of children at risk of malnutrition dropped slightly from 16% last month to 15%.

Current interventions

- Water tankering has been going on in few selected areas and institutions that are most needy and being paid for by the institutions.
- Distribution of relief food under the protracted relief and emergency operation (PRRO) is going on. The programme is targeting at least 60% of the district population.
- The district has received several trucks from the National Youth Service which will be used for emergency food distribution for the next three months. About 1000 bags of maize, legumes and oils were distributed through the Mwingi DC's Office.
- Supplementary feeding is taking place in some selected public health facilities.

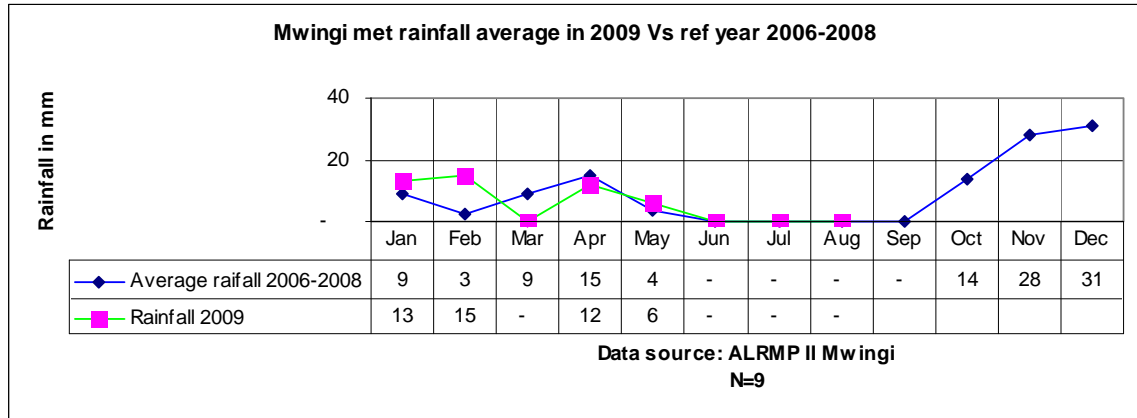
Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Distribution of emergency relief food should be given top priority to avert starvation and death in the district. The Provincial Administration and ALRMP should coordinate this exercise to ensure that all needy families have been identified and assisted.
- Water trucking activities should be expanded to cover more needy areas. Additional trucks should be sourced to facilitate this activity. The Ministry of Water and ALRMP should take a leading role in this exercise. Water tanks for schools and hospitals to be procured for storage of this water.
- The existing water harvesting facilities like dams should be rehabilitated in preparation for the next rains which are being predicted to be of Elnino type. This will maximize water harvesting and storage.
- As we approach the short rains season, farmers should be assisted with planting seeds early enough. This will enable them to plant early and maximize the rains.
- Due to the deteriorating livestock body condition, provision of livestock relief such as hay should be extended to cover more areas so as to minimize losses.

- Livestock off take programme for cattle by Kenya Meat Commission and other stakeholders should be introduced and be targeted effectively.
- Supplementary feeding for children is crucial at this moment in order to arrest malnutrition cases. Health facilities and ECDs should be targeted under this programme.

1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall

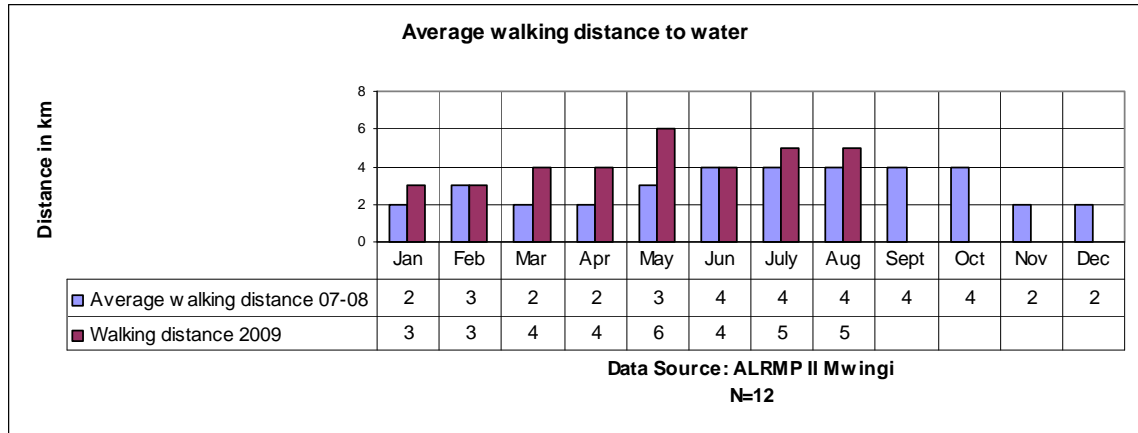


- There were no rains reported during the last one month. It is almost four months now since the last time the district received some rains. This has led to deterioration of the drought situation.
- The weather was characterised by cold and cloudy mornings followed by warm afternoons. A lot of wind blew during both day and night, resulting in the air being very dusty.

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- The quality of natural vegetation was very poor. Only shrubs have been left on the ground and they are devoid of leaves. Livestock were mostly being fed on barks of plants, certain plant seeds and tubers.
- The quantity of natural vegetation was very poor, leading to widespread migration of livestock herders within the district. Most of the herders moved towards Tana River belt and game reserves. Purchase of hay was common for those who could afford it.

1.3 Water sources and availability



- Water sources and availability was poor worse compared to last month. There was no water within the traditional water sources and people had to move for long distances in search of it. In some places like Nuu, Kyuso, Tseikuru and Ngomeni divisions, people trekked for at least 9km one way to water points.
- Plant tubers served as alternative sources of water for livestock in many parts of the divisions. However, the tubers became scarce due to their huge demand by livestock keepers.

1.4 Emerging issues

1.4.1 Worsening drought

- The drought situation has not changed since last month. The district experienced severe shortage of food, water and pastures. The only source of food was through purchases from the local markets although the prices were very high.
- More cases of livestock death were reported from different parts of the district. Livestock productivity was at its lowest.

1.4.2 Implications on food security

- Food security situation was affected severely due to the collapse of both crop and livestock sectors. The two sectors play a critical role in sustaining households in the district.
- Schools should be given special attention as they open for the third term otherwise student enrolment might be affected if the necessary actions are not taken.

2.0 Rural economy indicators (food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- The livestock body condition continued deteriorating during the month and the large stocks were the most affected. The number of death cases reported was a testimony of this fact. During the month of July, confirmed cases of cattle deaths resulting from drought were as follows. Ngomeni division-43, Kyuso division-53, Mumoni division- 21.
- Even the donkeys were affected and their body condition was quite poor.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- Cases of constipation in livestock were reported in places such as Thaana in Migwani division. Due to lack of water, these animals were not able to digest dry matter, leading to death. Suspected cases of CBPP were reported in Ngomeni and Thaana areas.

2.1.3 Milk production

- Milk production declined drastically by 40% compared to last month due to the prolonged drought. Kyuso and Nguni divisions were the most affected.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- Most of the land was bare but already cultivated in preparation for the next rains season.

2.2.2 Pests and diseases

- There were no pests due to absence of crops on farms.

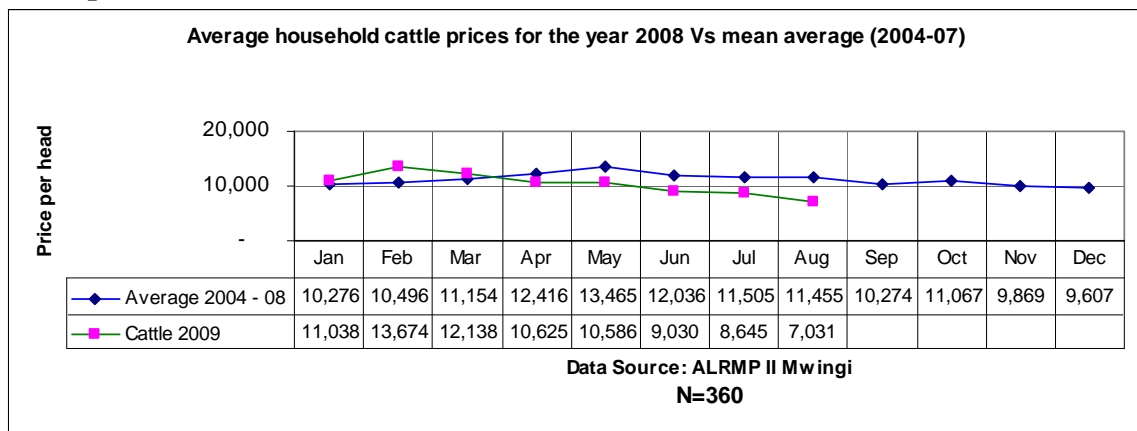
2.2.3 Implications on food security

- Food security situation was severely compromised due to the prolonged drought. Most of the households would require to be supported foodwise for the next 3 to 4 months when the first harvest is expected if the short rains are successful.
- Nutrition status of children is likely to deteriorate due to lack of food. This will affect negatively their immunity and therefore exposing them to many diseases.
- School-going children will be affected adversely and therefore affecting learning in schools.

3.0 Access to food

3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices

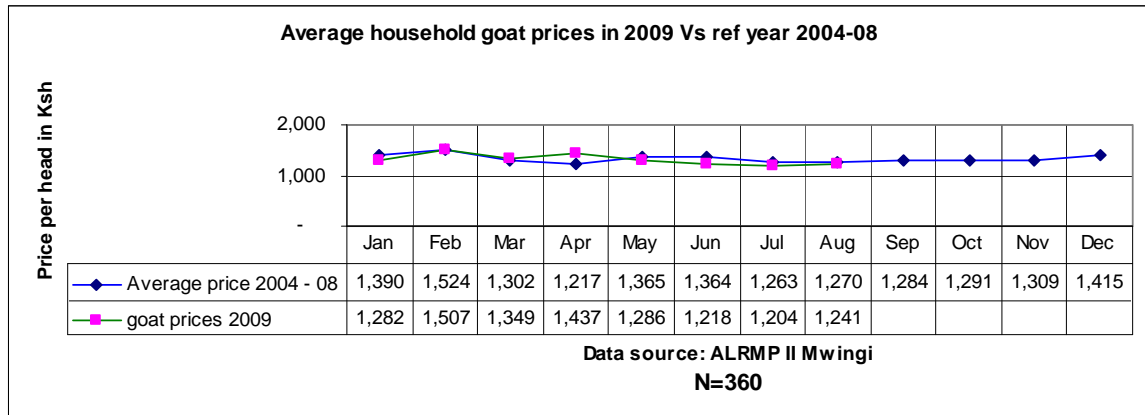


- The average household cattle prices dropped from Ksh8,645 last month to Ksh 7,031. These were the lowest prices observed so far compared to the long term

prices. The highest prices were in Kyuso at Ksh7,800 while the lowest prices were in Mui at Ksh6,133.

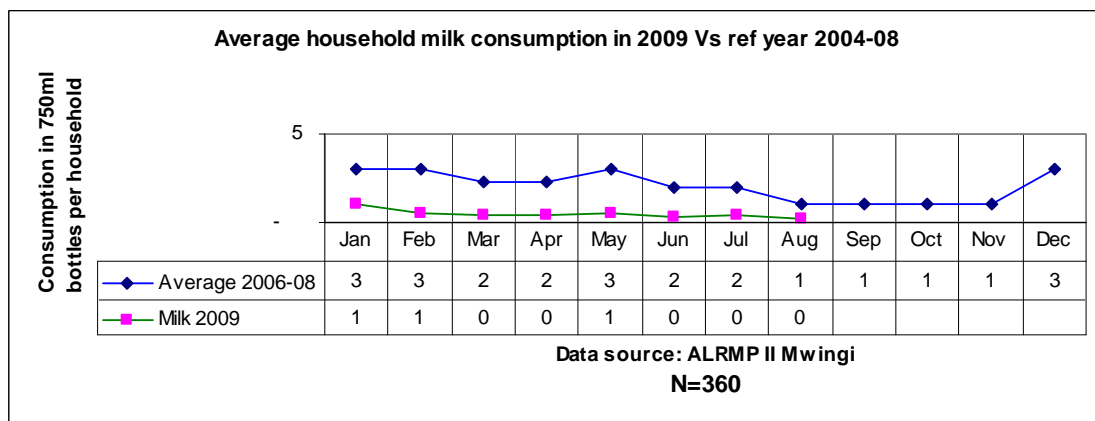
- The prolonged drought is having a catastrophic effect on livestock body condition which cannot fetch good prices. Desperate farmers tried to dispose the extra herds through sales, leading to oversupply in the local markets and brokers took advantage of the situation to exploit them.

3.2 Goat prices



- There was a slight change in the average household goat prices from Ksh1,204 last month to Ksh1,241. The highest price was in Migwani division at Ksh1,632 while the lowest price was in Mumoni division at Ksh775.
- The goats had relatively fair body conditions compared to the large stock and this contributed to their price stability. The goats fed on the dry matter like tree barks and surviving better.

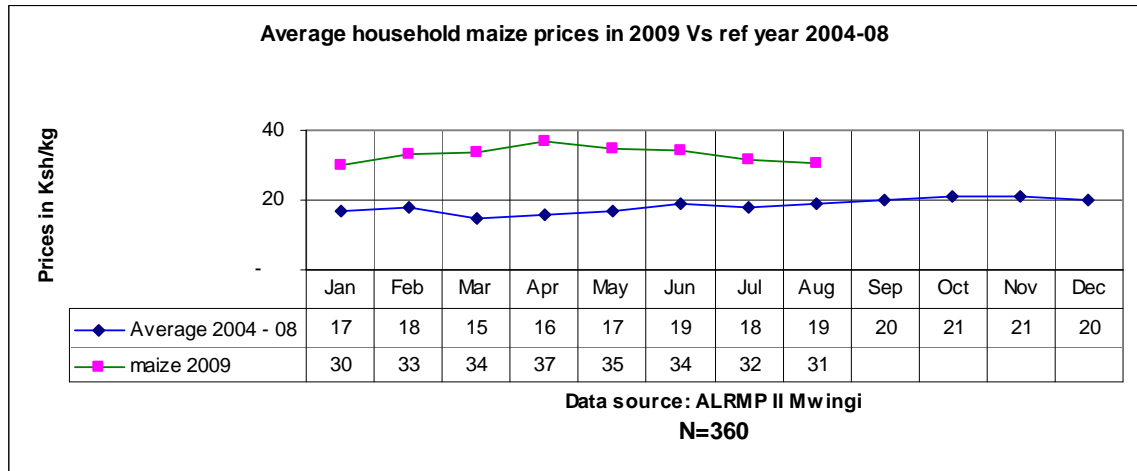
3.3 Milk consumption



- The average household milk consumption was less than a bottle per household. There was a significant drop in milk production which in turn reduced the amount of milk available for household consumption.
- The prevailing drought considerably reduced pasture and water availability, leading to poor livestock body condition which cannot support milk production.

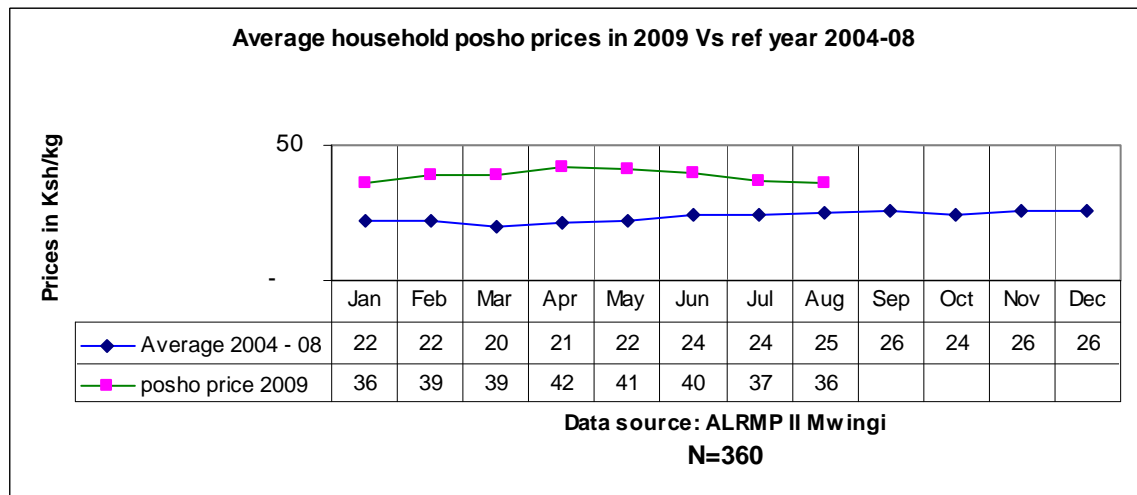
3.4 Crop prices

3.4.1 Maize prices



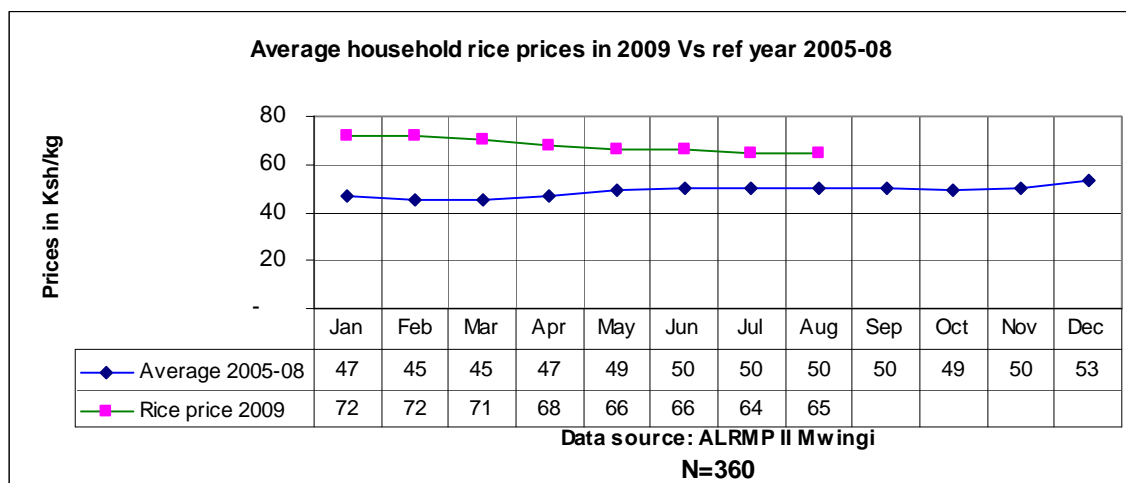
- The average household maize prices dropped by a shilling from Ksh32 per kilo last month to Ksh31. The prices were higher compared to the long term averages.
- The commodity was available at the local markets and was being supplied by merchants from outside the district. However, it was not being accessed by the majority of households as it was unaffordable.

3.4.2 Posho prices



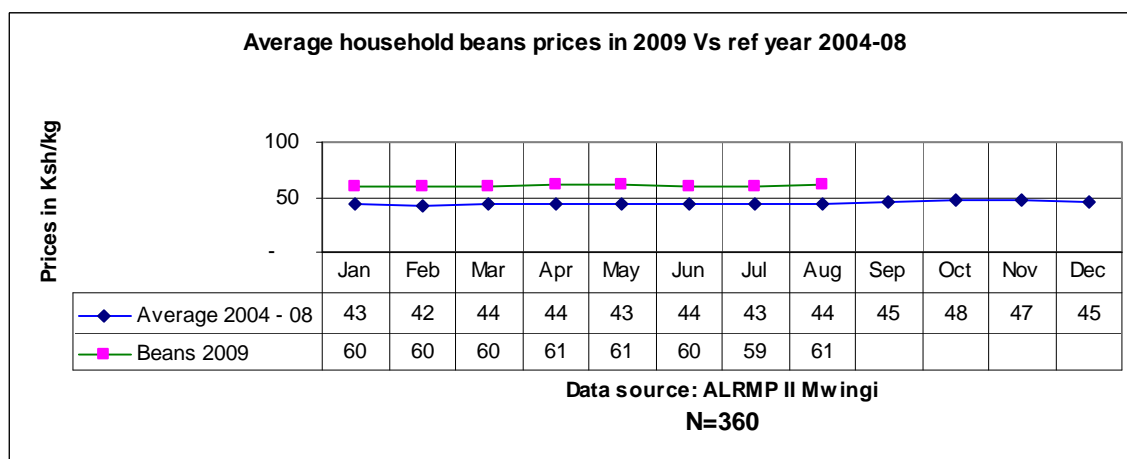
- The average household posho prices declined slightly from Ksh37 per kilo last month to Ksh36. This could be attributed to reduction in maize prices during the last one month. The price was still high compared to the long term average and therefore presenting affordability concerns.

3.4.3 Rice prices



- The average household rice prices rose slightly from Ksh64 per kilo last month to Ksh65. Compared to the long term average, the prices were still prohibitive to the majority of households.
- The commodity was available in most of the local markets.

3.4.4 Beans prices



- The average household beans prices rose slightly from Ksh59 per kilo last month to Ksh61. The commodity is exclusively sourced from outside the district. Lack of locally produced legumes contributed to the high prices of beans.

3.5 Income

3.5.1 Crop income

- There was no crop income due to crop failure.

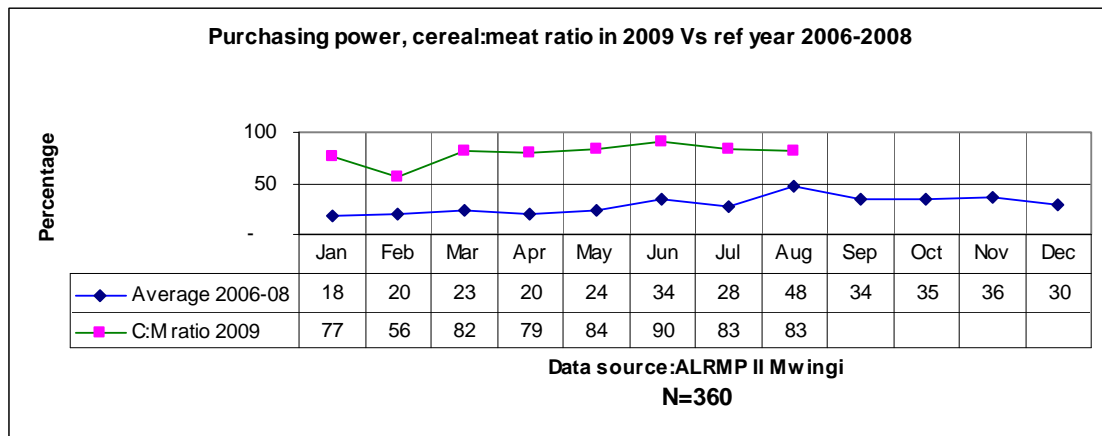
3.5.2 Livestock income

- About 13% of the households were involved in sale of livestock. Kyuso and Tseikuru divisions had the highest number of households that were engaged in livestock selling.
- Sales from goats and poultry were quite significant in terms of volumes sold. This could be due to their relatively stable prices.

3.4.5 Other sources of income

- Casual labour was the main source of income with about 35% of the households being involved. Quite a significant number of households did get remittances from their kins with at least 23% being involved. There are mushrooming road side kiosks especially in central and Tseikuru divisions.

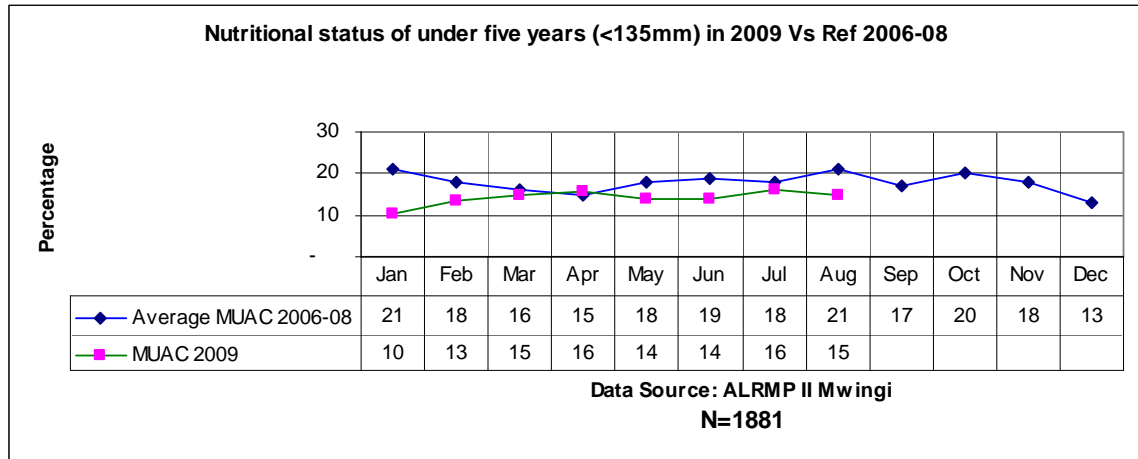
3.5 Cereal: Meat price ratio



- The terms of trade on cereals to meat ratio remained the same at 83% compared to last month. Compared to the long term average, the ratio was quite high and unusual. This was due to the prevailing low livestock prices and high cereal prices.
- Households had to sell more of their livestock products to get the same amount of cereals. For instance, one needed to sell at least three goats to obtain one sack of 90kg bag of maize at the moment whereas one goat was sufficient during normal times.

4.0 Human welfare indicators (utilization of food)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The percentage of children at risk of malnutrition dropped slightly from 16% last month to 15%. The hot spots that ought to be monitored closely are Tseikuru division (26%), Central division (14%), Ngomeni division (23%), Nguni division (19%) and lower parts of Migwani division (13%).
- The dietary diversity for most of the households was very poor, consisting of mainly boiled dry maize from relief food.
- Skipping of meals was very common. In parts of Tseikuru, there are families that skip meals for more than one day.

4.2 Human health

- There was no outbreak of any notifiable human disease in the district.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Non-food interventions

- Water tankering has been going on in few selected areas and institutions that are most needy and being paid for by the institutions.

5.2 Food aid

- Distribution of relief food under the protracted relief and emergency operation (PRRO) is going on. The programme is targeting at least 60% of the district population.
- The district has received several trucks from the National Youth Service which will be used for emergency food distribution for the next three months. About 1000 bags of maize, legumes and oils were distributed through the Mwingi DC's Office.
- Supplementary feeding in some selected public health facilities.

5.3 Coping strategies

- Skipping of meals became a common occurrence in many households. Some households did without meals for more than one day.

- Many people were involved in casual labour in order to obtain cash for purchasing of food from the local markets.
- Digging up of plant tubers/roots was common in places like Nuu, Nguni and Ngomeni divisions.
- Selling of hay was a common activity. Most of it is being obtained from hill tops and Kora game reserve and sold to livestock farmers.

6.0 Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Distribution of emergency relief food should be given top priority to avert starvation and death in the district. The Provincial Administration and ALRMP should coordinate this exercise to ensure that all needy families have been identified and assisted.
- Water trucking activities should be expanded to cover more needy areas. Additional trucks should be sourced to facilitate this activity. The Ministry of Water and ALRMP should take a leading role in this exercise. Water tanks for schools and hospitals to be procured for storage of this water.
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