

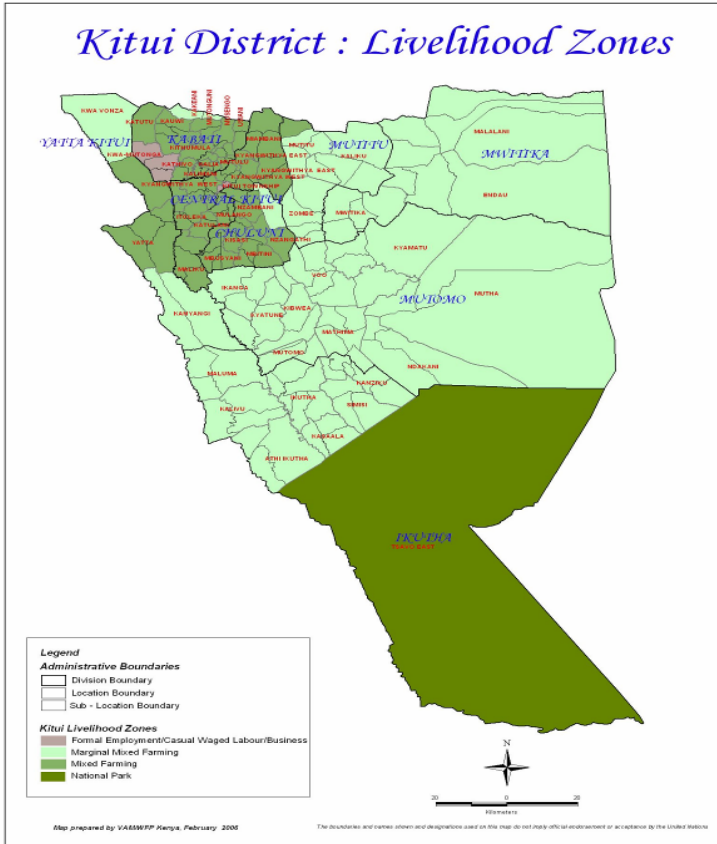


**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**  
**MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS**  
**ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

**DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, JULY 2009**

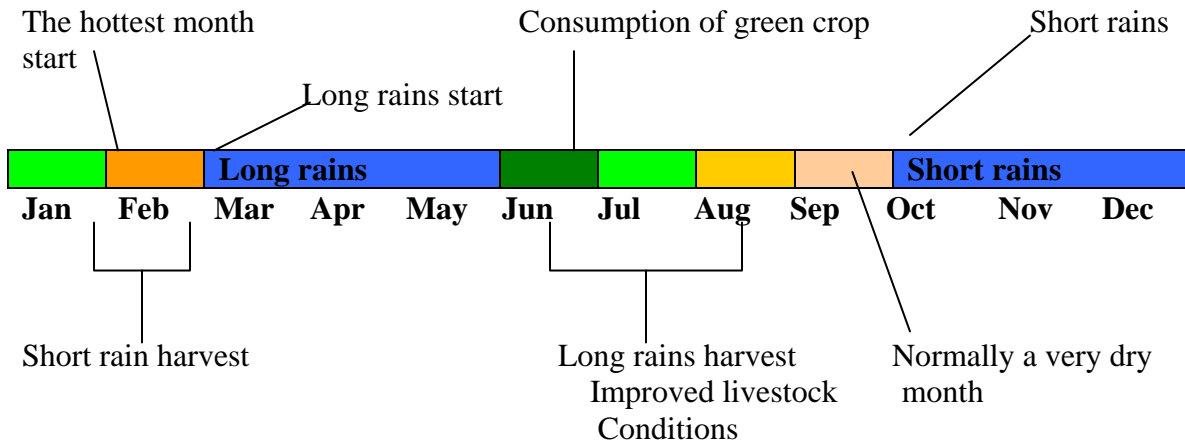
**Kitui District**

**Warning Stages**



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Mixed farming	Alarm	Worsening
Marginal mixed farming	Alarm	Worsening
District	Alarm	Worsening

**Seasonal Calendar**



### **Situation overview**

- The month was mainly chilly and no rains were reported.
- The condition of pasture and natural vegetation worsened. Pastures got depleted and the browse situation ranged from fair to poor.
- Water crisis in the district persisted. Institutions of learning were relying on water trucking and the district capacity was unable to meet the demand, leading to early closures.
- Yield level in the boreholes was low and communities in Mutha Division were spending two days queuing for water. The price of water rose from Ksh2 per 20 litre jerrican to Ksh5.
- The body condition of cattle worsened and livestock deaths were reported in Mutonguni, Matinyani, Mutitu and Mwitika Divisions.
- The price of cattle dropped, while that of goats remained within the previous month's ranges.
- The price of beans and maize declined
- The nutrition status of children below the age of five years declined during the month, with the percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition rising to 13 from 9 in June.

### **Recommendations to DSG and KFSM**

- Enhance disease surveillance.
- The government to allocate more funds for the off-take programme.
- The veterinary department to conduct mass treatment and vaccination of livestock.
- Procure and distribute relief seeds for reseedling of pastures during the rainy season.
- Intensify malnutrition surveillance.
- Increase the number of institutions covered under the out-patient therapeutic and supplementary feeding programme.
- Continued fuel supplementation to contingency water supplies.
- Servicing of contingency boreholes.
- Servicing of borehole monitoring vehicles.
- Expansion of the school feeding programme.

### **Current interventions**

#### **Food aid**

- PRRO covering 10 divisions.
- Home-grown school feeding programme.

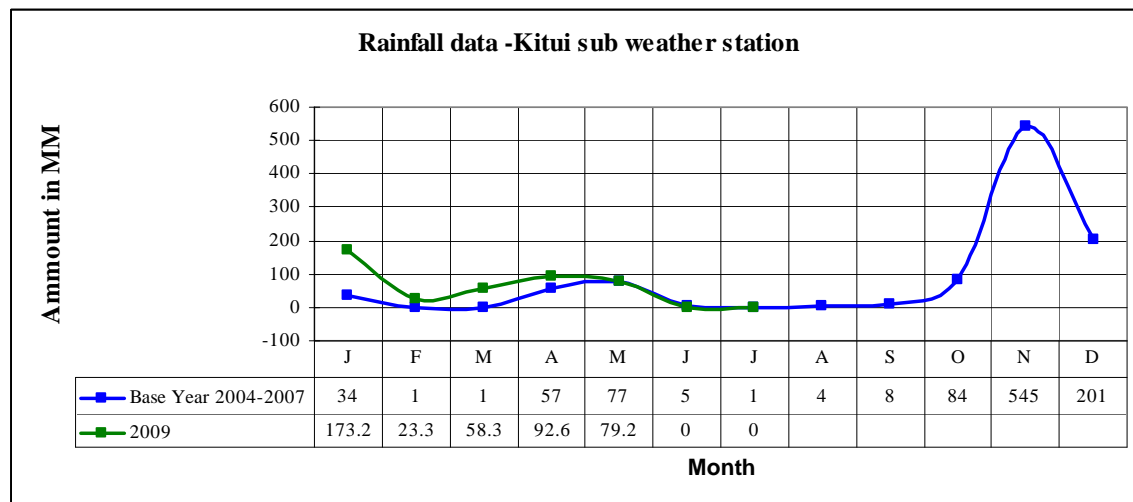
#### **Non-food interventions**

- Enhanced water trucking in both Kitui and Mutomo districts.
- Equipping and pipeline extension of Mbooni Water Project by the Ministry of Water.
- Improvement of Tiva- Mutomo Water Supply by the Ministry of Water.
- Distribution of contingency water tanks to institutions and community water points.
- De-stocking campaigns.
- Livestock disease surveillance.

- Market surveys.
- Demonstration to farmers on water harvesting technologies for crop production.
- Capacity building for farmers on proposal writing.
- Training irrigation groups on farming as a business.
- Immunization and Vitamin A supplementation.
- Out-patient therapeutic and supplementary feeding in 36 health facilities.

## 1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

### 1.1 Rainfall



The month of July remained mainly dry and windy in the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone.

### 1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- Generally, the situation of natural vegetation and pastures worsened. In the mixed farming livelihood zone, pastures got depleted and browse significantly declined.
- Trees and shrubs shed their leaves, which were being fed-on by livestock. In the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone, pasture was available along the rivers Nzeeu, Tiva and Athi and the browse situation was fair to poor.

### 1.3 Water sources and availability

- The water situation in the district worsened. The dry sand river wells deepened, the water yield in boreholes significantly dropped (Kalambani- Mutha Water Supply the yield dropped from 24 cubic metres per hour to 7). Most of the open surface water facilities dried up.
- In the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone, the main sources of water were boreholes and traditional river wells.
- In the mixed farming livelihood zone, the main sources of water were traditional river wells, boreholes and shallow wells. In this livelihood zone schools closed early because of acute water shortage following the disconnection of the Masinga-Kitui pipeline which was the main water supply.
- The distances to the water points varied from one location to the other. The average distance to water points was 5.8kms. However, in Mwitika and Mutha divisions communities are walking as far as 15kilometres one way in search of water from boreholes, whose water recharge rates declined and salinity levels rose.

The table below shows the percentage source of water use by communities

Source	Traditional river wells	Pans/Dams	Shallow wells	Rock catchments	Boreholes	Natural rivers
Year 2008	44.6%	2%	18%	1%	12.3%	9.3%
July 2009	57%	0%	8%	0%	27%	5%

#### 1.4 Implications on food security

- The worsening situation of natural vegetation and pasture led to decline in body conditions and death of livestock.
- The increased distances to watering points and grazing areas contributed significantly to the weakening of body condition of cattle. Most of the energy was consumed in walking.
- Children were forced to skip school to search for water.
- Boarding secondary schools were forced to close early due to water shortage.
- The cost of water doubled and communities walked long distances in search of free water in the traditional river wells to the detriment of other reproductive activities

#### 2.0 Rural economy indicators (Food availability)

##### 2.1 Livestock body conditions

- The livestock body conditions of cattle in the district declined. In the mixed farming livelihood zones, the body condition of cattle was poor and deaths from drought were reported in Mutonguni and Matinyani Divisions.
- In the marginal mixed farming livelihood zone, the body condition of cattle ranged from fair to poor. Deaths from drought were reported in Mutitu and Mwitika divisions.
- The body condition of shoats ranged from good to fair except in isolated locations in Mutonguni and Matinyani Divisions where the body condition was poor.

##### 2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- No major livestock disease outbreak was reported during the month.
- Unconfirmed cases of *CCPP* and *New Castle Disease* (NCD) in poultry were reported in Central and Mutomo Divisions.

#### 2.2 Crop production

##### 2.2.1 Timeliness and status of various crop production activities

Harvesting of pigeon peas was ongoing in Central and Chuluni Divisions.

Fruit crops, including oranges, bananas, paw paws and avocado and water melons were at various stages of growth in Central, Chuluni and Matinyani Divisions.

##### 2.2.2 Crop pests and diseases

No major crop pest or disease outbreaks were recorded during the reporting period.

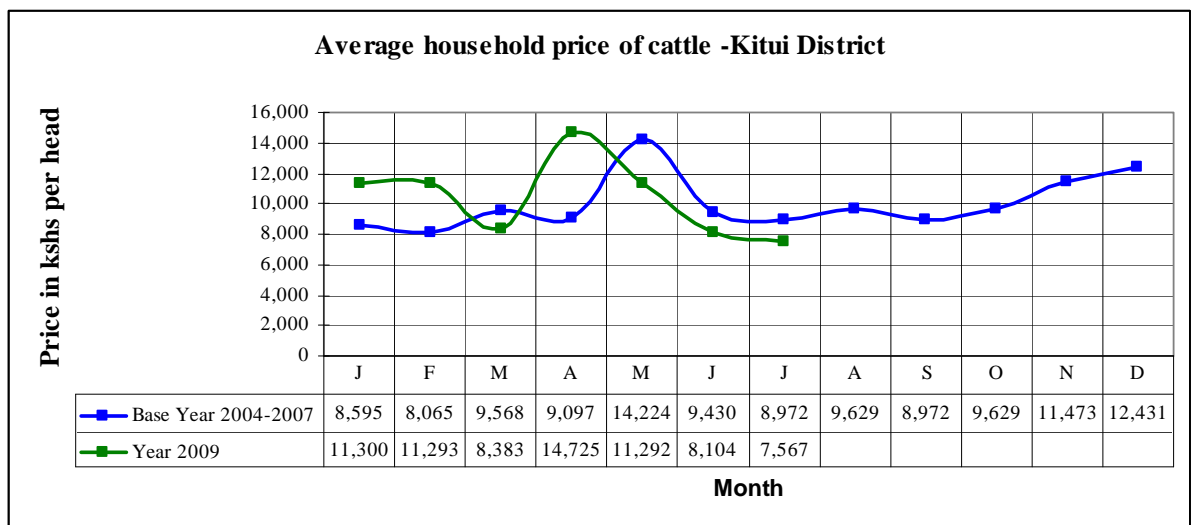
### 2.3 Impact on food security

- Farmers incurred losses due to death of livestock and were on the verge of losing more if an emergency livestock off-take in not undertaken immediately.
- The weak body condition of cattle was an indication that draught power for the next planting season will be inadequate and the acreage to be put under crop will be drastically reduced.
- Farm families will be faced with seed shortage for the planting season since they have no reserves.
- The availability of pigeon peas in the above divisions offered farmers reprieve from purchase of pulses.
- The absence of livestock disease outbreaks ensured free flow of livestock trade.

### 3.0 Access to food

#### 3.1 Livestock prices

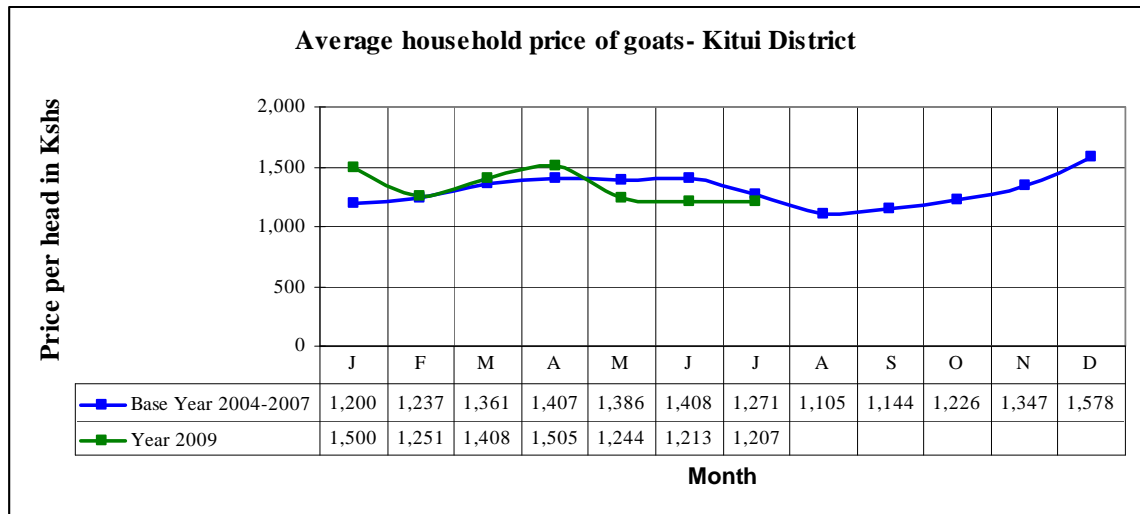
##### 3.1.1 Cattle prices



n=300

- The price of cattle declined during the month.
- This drop was attributed to the worsening body condition of mature animals in the district.
- Farmers in Mutonguni, Malalani and sections of Yatta division disposed their livestock at low prices since they depleted pasture and there were no grazing reserves.
- The highest prices were reported in Central Division at Ksh10,000 whereas Mutomo division reported the lowest prices at Ksh5,000.
- However, in Yatta ( Yatta B2 ranch), Mutonguni, and Matinyani ( Mithiikwani and Kwa Mutonga locations) divisions the prices were as low as Ksh 1,000 per head.

### 3.1.2 Goat prices

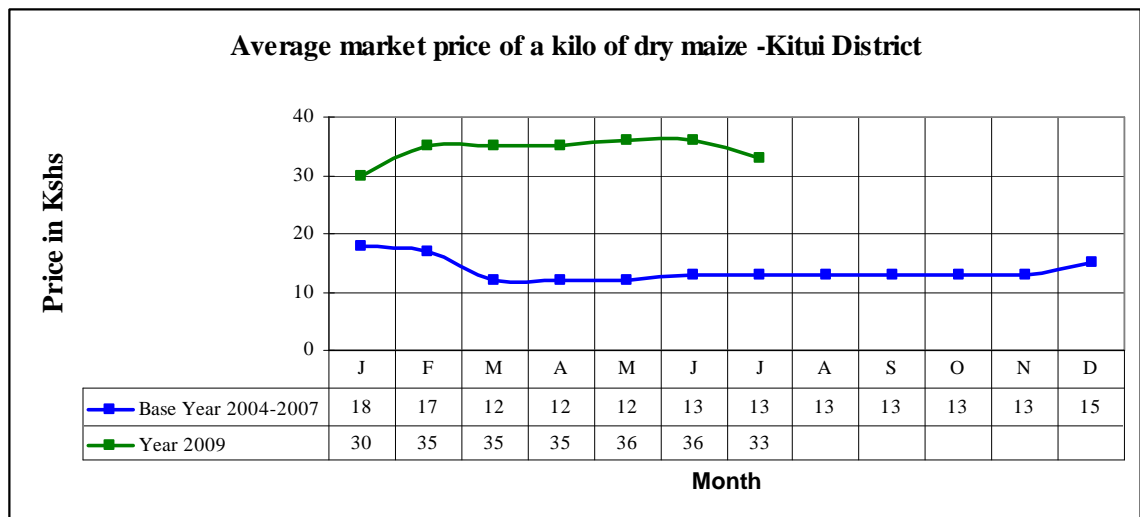


**n=300**

- The price of goats remained within the previous months ranges.
- The average price was Ksh 1,207 compared to Ksh 1,213 in June.
- This stability was attributed to the prevailing fair body conditions as compared to other livestock species.
- The highest prices were reported in Central Division Ksh1,600 while the lowest was reported in Mwitika at Ksh883.
- Signs of emaciation of goats started emerging in Mutonguni Division and the prices were expected to start declining by the end of August.

### 3.2 Crop prices

#### 3.2.1 Maize prices

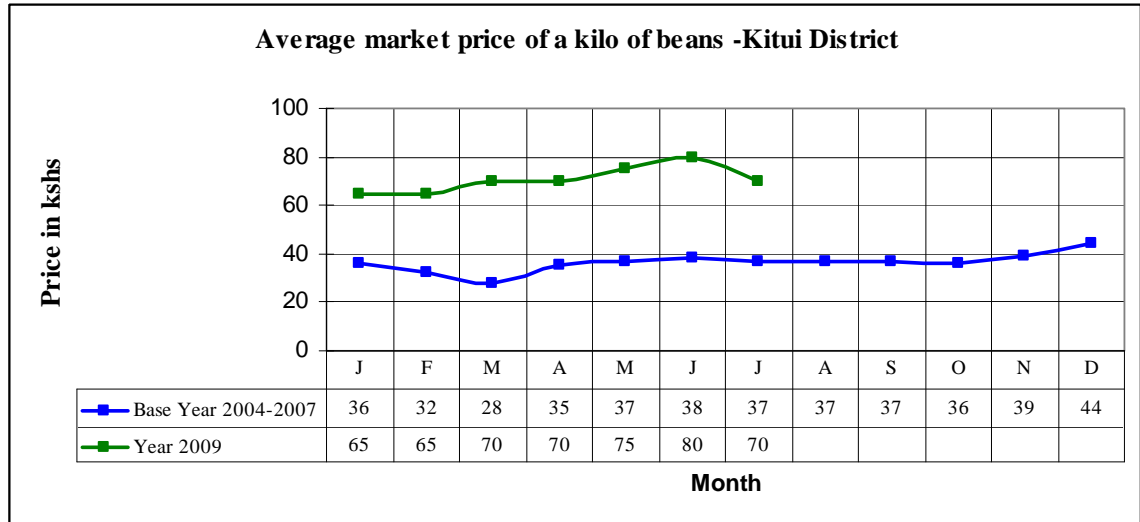


**n=300**

- The price of maize dropped during the month to Ksh33 per kilo from ksh36 in June.
- This trend was attributed to increased supplies by traders from Mombasa.

- In the remote locations of Malalani & Kaliku the price was higher at Ksh36 while in the towns along the main highways the prices ranged between Ksh32 and 35 per kilo.
- The trend was not normal.

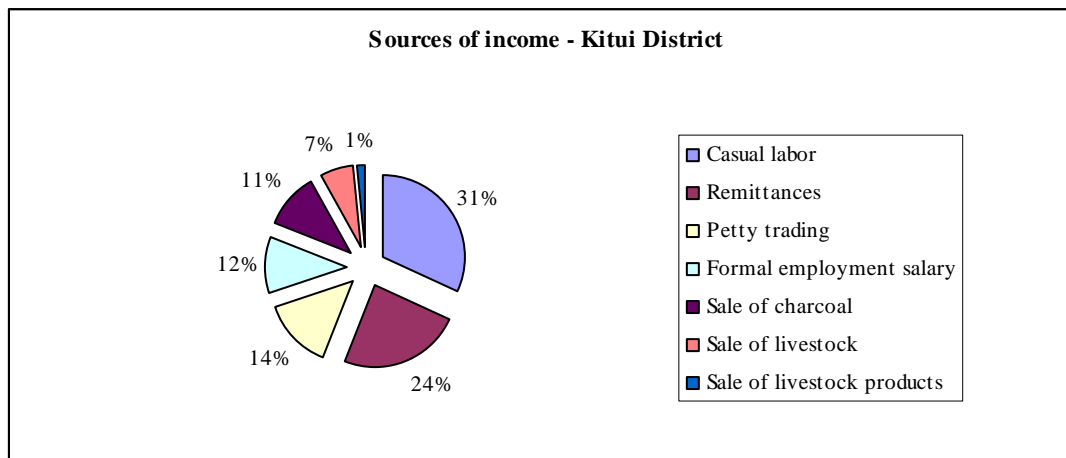
### 3.2.2 Beans prices



n=300

- The price of beans declined to Ksh70 per kilo from Ksh80 in June.
- This drop was attributed to the introduction of a new variety of beans in the district (mixture of various varieties of beans) which became popular with the communities.
- This variety retailed at between Ksh55 and 65 depending on the location of the market. The other pure varieties like Mwitmania retailed at Ksh80 across the district.

### 3.3 Income sources



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- During this month the main source of income was casual labor followed by remittances.

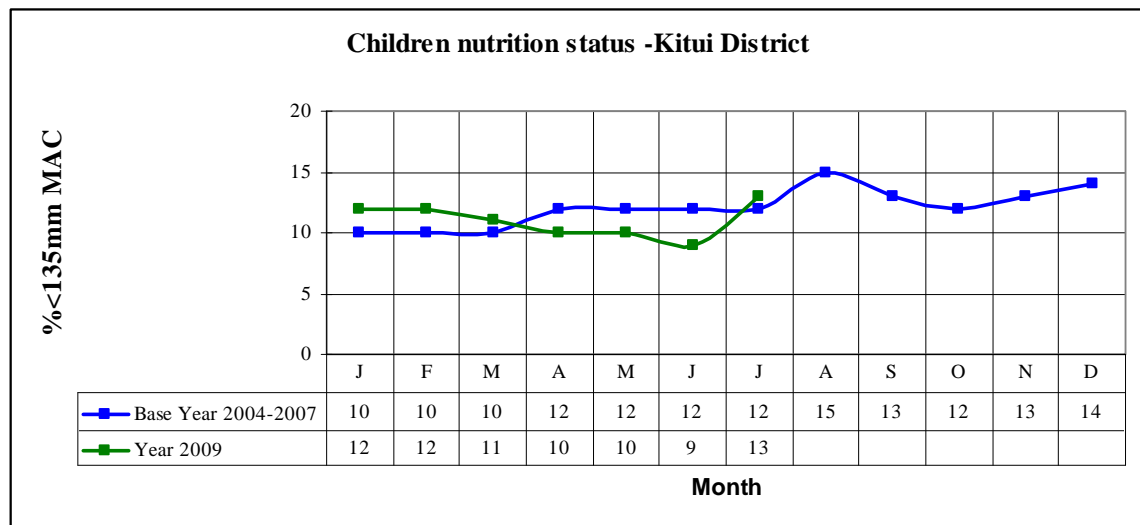
- Following a total crop failure during the long rains no households were relying on sale of crops.
- In addition livestock sector as a source of livelihood continued to perform dismally with sale of livestock products contributing 1% towards the communities' incomes.

### 3.4 Implications on food security

- The decline in the price of maize and beans increased access to these commodities by communities. However, this gain was eroded by the decline in the price of cattle.

## 4.0 Human welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

### 4.1 Nutrition status



n=1008

- The nutrition status of children below the age of five years declined during the month.
- The percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition rose to 13 from 9 in June.
- The decline was attributed to the prevailing drought situation. More communities became vulnerable by the day.
- The highest rates were recorded in Mutha division at 26% followed by Yatta 19% and the lowest was Mutomo at 4%.

## 5.0 Current interventions

### 5.1 Food aid

- PRRO covering 10 divisions.
- Home-grown school feeding programme.

### 5.2 Non-food interventions

- Enhanced water trucking in both Kitui and Mutomo districts.
- Equipping and pipeline extension of Mbooni Water Project by the Ministry of Water.
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- Distribution of contingency water tanks to institutions and community water points.
- De-stocking campaigns.
- Livestock disease surveillance.
- Market surveys.
- Demonstration to farmers on water harvesting technologies for crop production.
- Capacity building for farmers on proposal writing.
- Training irrigation groups on farming as a business.
- Immunization and Vitamin A supplementation.
- Out-patient therapeutic and supplementary feeding in 36 health facilities.

### **5.3 Coping strategies**

- Reduction in the size of meals.
- Reduction in the number of meals per day.
- Purchase of food on credit.
- Petty trade.
- Skipping meals for the whole day.
- Engaging in degrading jobs.

### **7.0 Recommendations to DSG and KFSM**

- Enhance disease surveillance.
- The government to allocate more funds for the off-take programme.
- The veterinary department to conduct mass treatment and vaccination of livestock since they are weak.
- Make arrangements to procure relief seeds for reseedling of pastures during the rainy season.
- Intensify malnutrition surveillance.
- De-worming of children in schools.
- Continued fuel supplementation to contingency water supplies.
- Servicing of contingency boreholes.
- Servicing of borehole monitoring vehicles.
- Expansion of the school feeding programme.