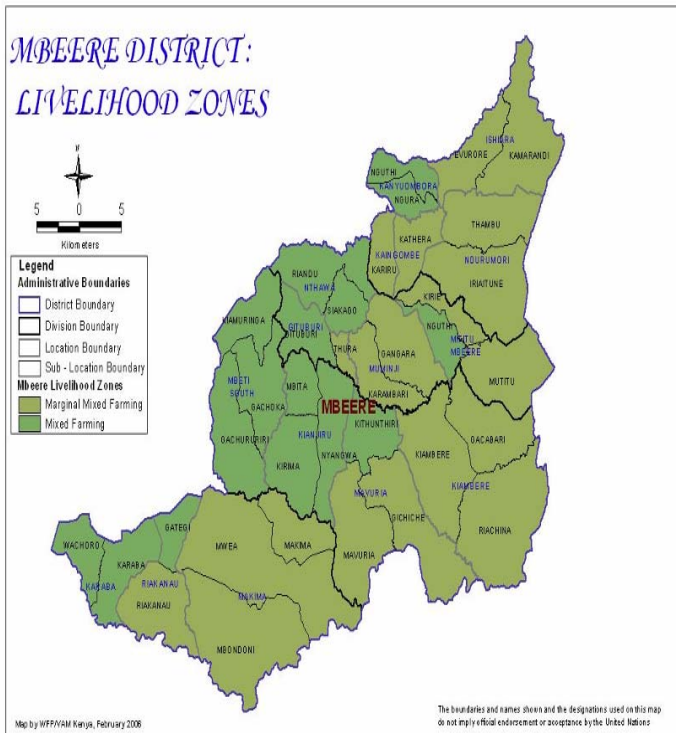




**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, JUNE 2009

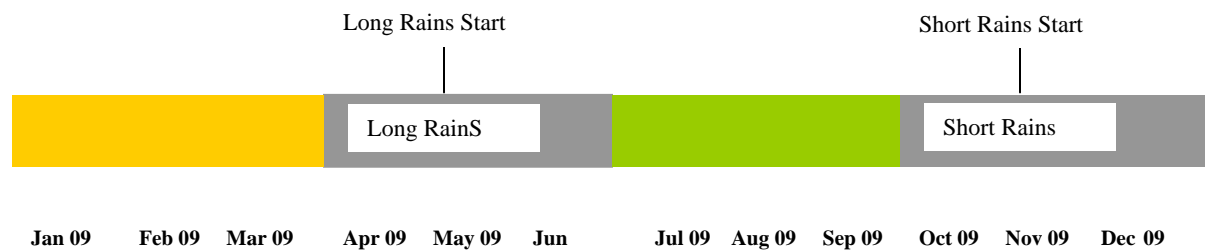
Mbeere District



Warning stages

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

Seasonal calendar



Situation overview

- Hot and dry weather conditions prevailed across the entire district, with no rainfall being recorded. There were no major agricultural activities taking place across the district.
- Prices of cereals, legumes and pulses remained relatively high.
- Pasture and browse availability and accessibility was fair to poor across the district.
- Livestock body conditions were fair to poor across the district, while health condition remained good on all animal species with decreasing birth rates for cattle and goats. Livestock prices remained relatively low for cattle and goats.
- Water availability and accessibility was fair. Both permanent and seasonal water reservoirs had significant water levels, with increasing pressure and congestion on the various strategic water points. Water availability and accessibility was expected to deteriorate further due to lack of precipitation and the continued hot weather.
- The nutrition status of children under 5 years deteriorated slightly compared to May. Mwea Division recorded the highest number of children with MUAC < 135 mm.
- In human health there were no major ailments which were reported within the district.
- Due to lack of precipitation within the month, there is significant deterioration of the environmental indicators, rural indicators and welfare indicators. The situation can be described as alert and worsening in both livelihood zones i.e. mixed farming livelihood zones and marginal mixed farming livelihood zone.

Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Deworming/ drenching of livestock to improve resilience.
- Livestock disease surveillance within the mixed marginal livelihood zones.
- Resumption and extension of the school feeding programme to cover all District primary schools and day secondary schools.
- Surveillance of the malnutrition levels within the District especially Divisions with Alarm/emergency levels.
- 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
- Sensitisation on water treatment and provision of aqua tabs for domestic water treatment.

Current interventions

Non-food interventions

- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes within the district.
- Excavation of Matilamu sand dam.
- Construction of Bindii sand dam.
- Fencing of Tene spring.
- Extension of the Kogari pipeline.
- Value addition.
- Fodder bulking conservation and utilisation.

Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

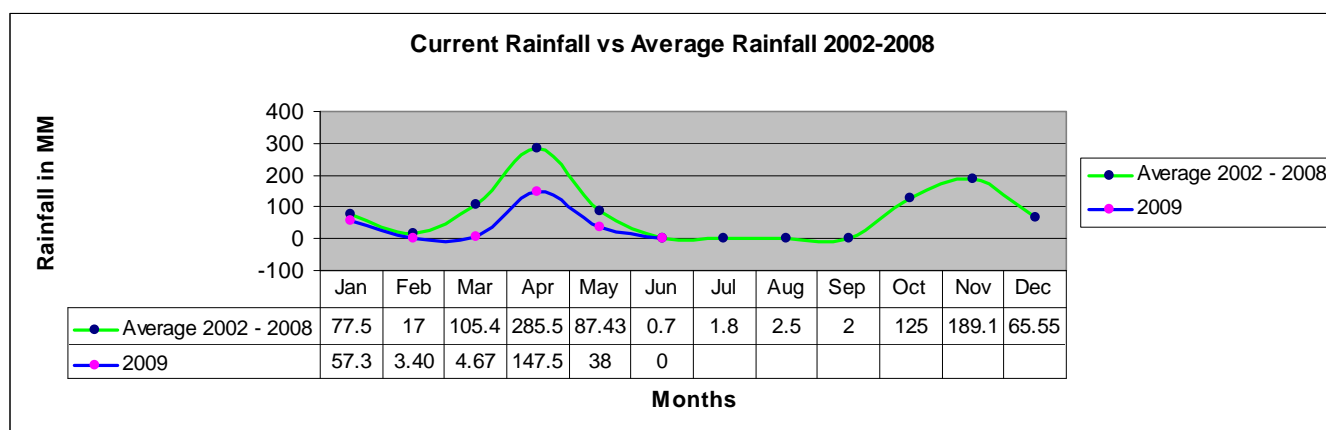
The DSG met on 16/06/2009 at the District headquarters in Mbeere and the following recommendations were realised.

- Unimix/Supplementary feeding Vitamin A supplement and for under 5 year old children in the worst affected divisions.

- Rapid nutrition surveys in malnutrition hotspots within the district.
- Sensitisation of water treatment and the provision of aqua tabs for domestic water treatment.
- Disease and Aflatoxin surveillance within the worst hit areas.
- Speed up implementation of the home grown school feeding programme.
- Livestock off- take and de-stocking campaigns within the worst hit areas.
- De-worming/drenching of the animals to improve resilience and Disease surveillance within the worst hit areas.
- Provision of pasture seeds and relief hay and supplementation.
- Water trucking to primary and secondary schools within the worst hit area. The service should also be extended to livestock watering points within the same areas.
- Rehabilitation and monitoring of the strategic boreholes and watering points within the worst hit areas.

1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

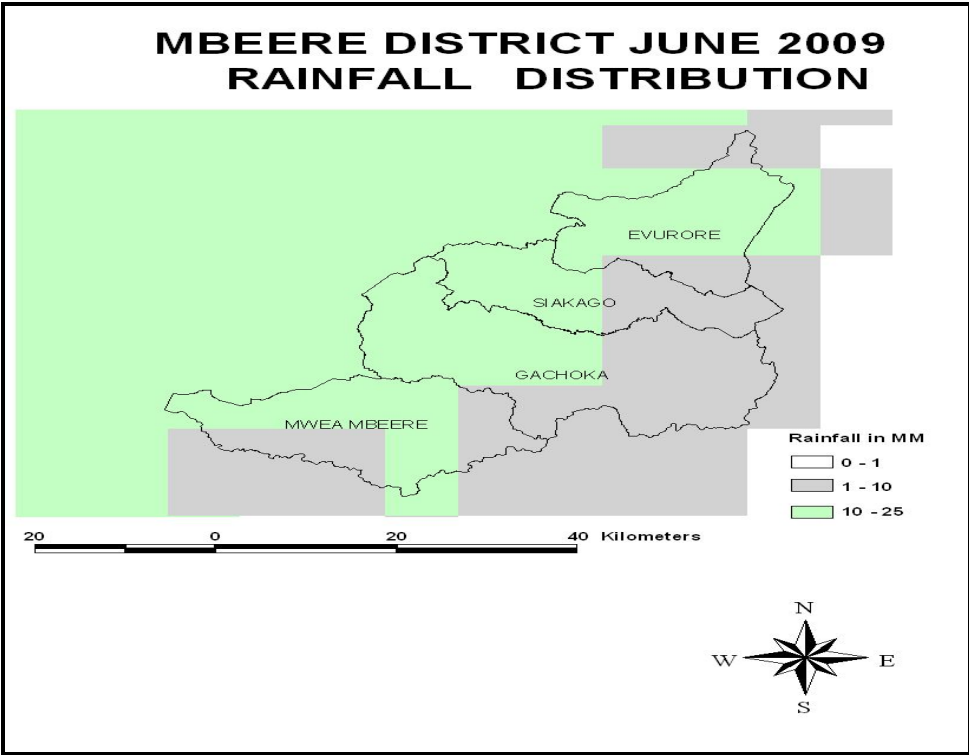
1.1 Rainfall



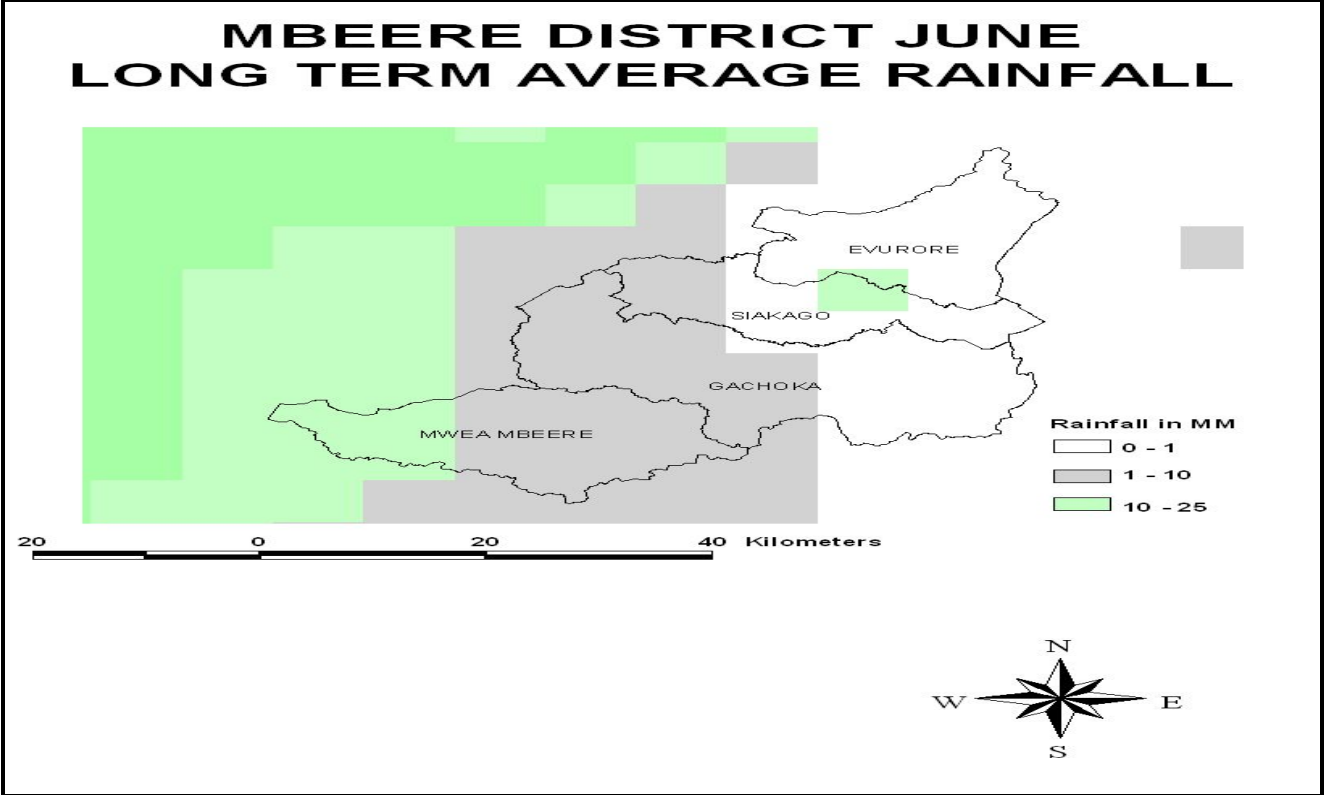
Source: Divisional Agricultural Offices

Amount of rainfall

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



(Source: Fewsnet)

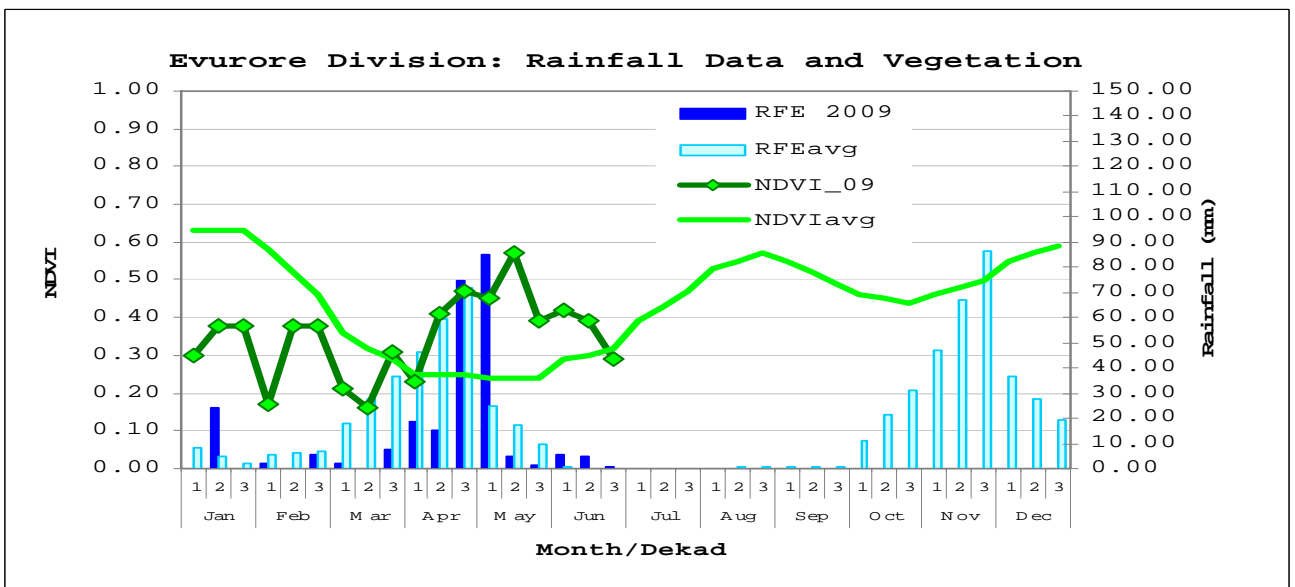
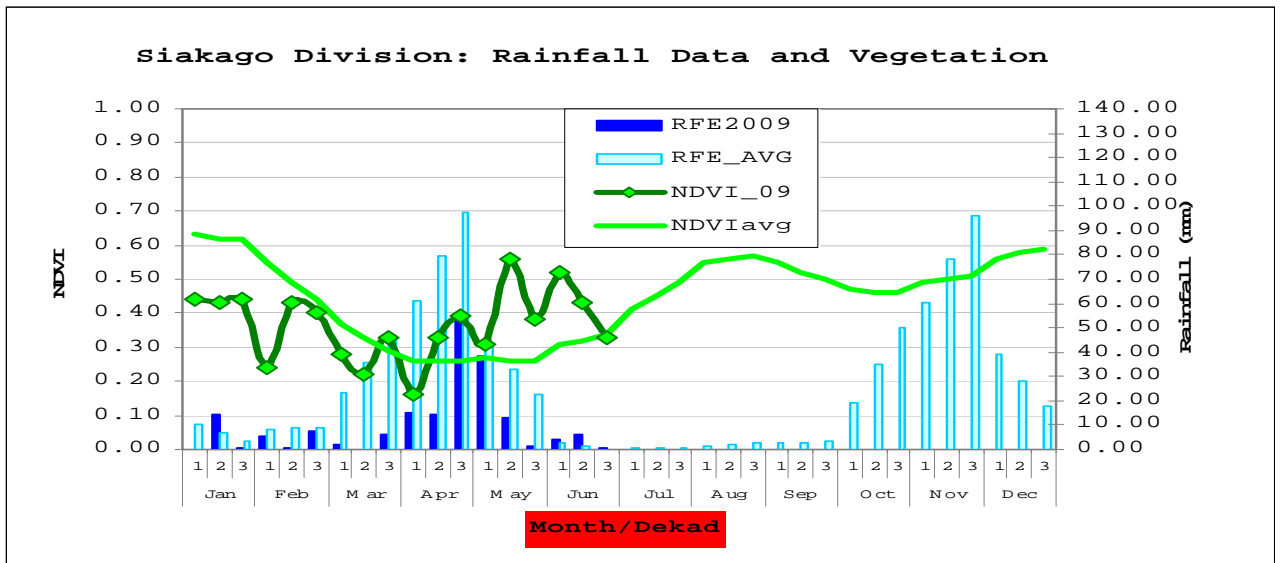


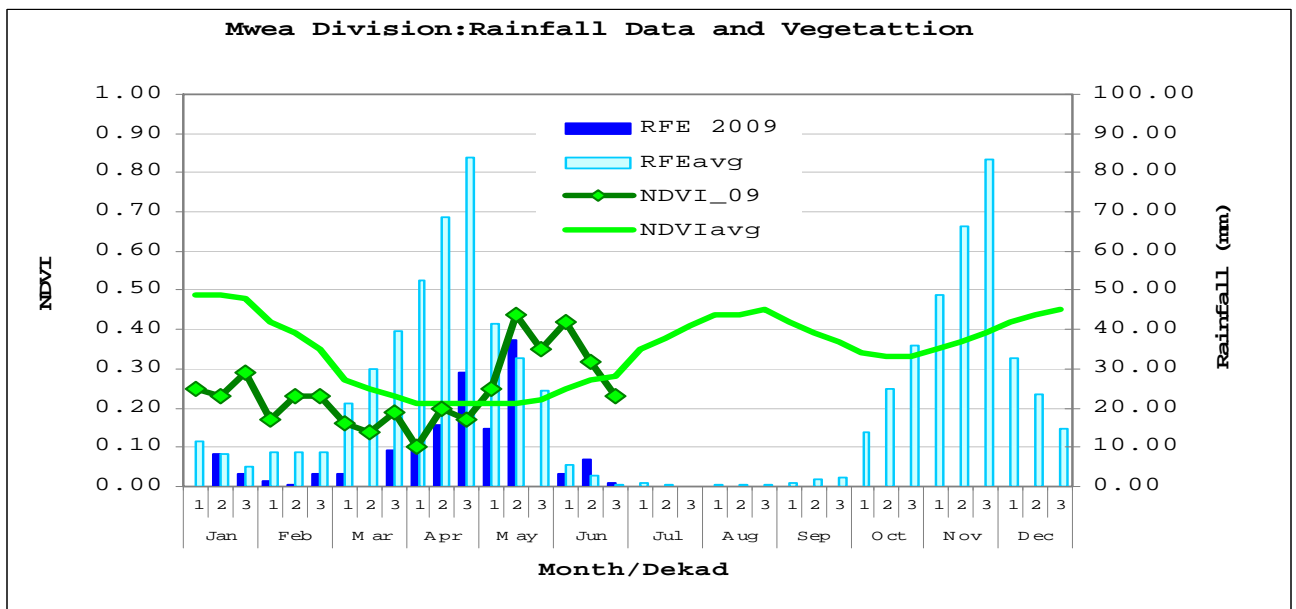
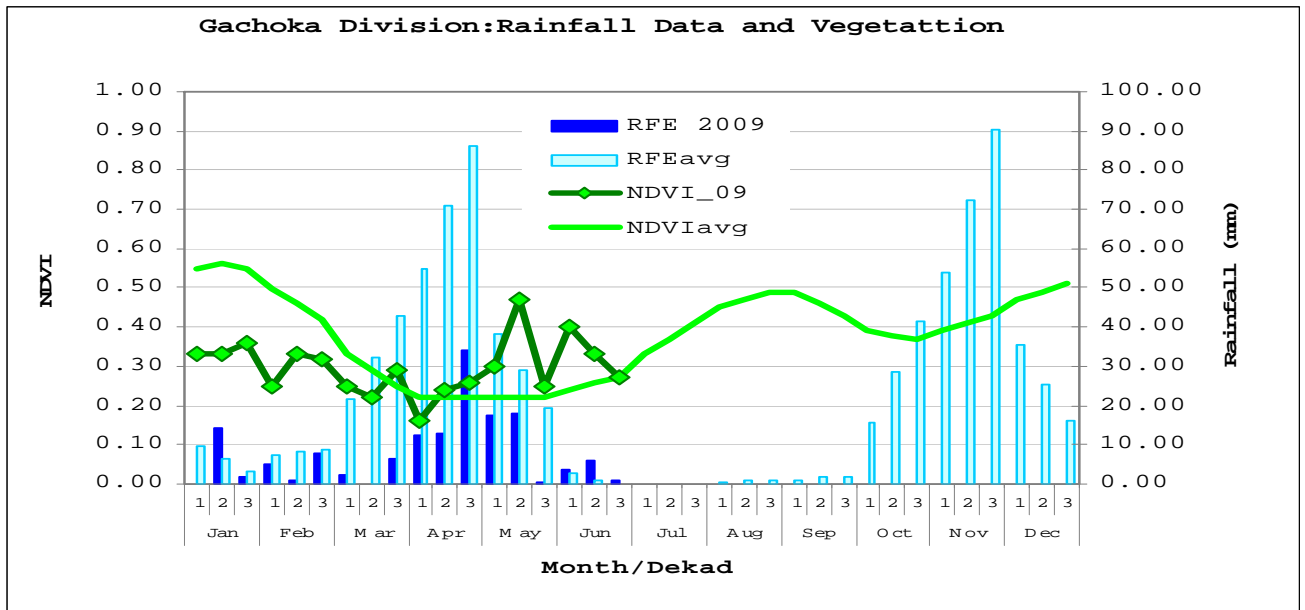
Source: Fewsnet

Temporal distribution

The rainfall commenced as from 24/03/2009 with the month of June not receiving any rainfall which was below normal at the time of the year.

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture





Source: Fewsnat

1.2.1 Quality

- Pastures and browse quality was fair to across the district.
- The situation was not normal at the time of the year.
- Pasture and browse quality deteriorated due to lack of precipitation and the hot weather being experienced, especially within the mixed marginal farming zones i.e. Mutuovare, Makima, Karaba, Riakanau, Ndurumori, Gichiche, Mavuria, Kiambere, Ndurumori and Ishiara locations.

1.2.2 Quantity

- Pasture and browse availability was fair to poor within the District. The prevailing situation was not normal at this period of the year although this is varied from one Division to the other as shown from the above graphs.

- The Ndvi data shows the current situation of vegetation in relation to the amount of received rainfall within the month indicate that the quantity of pasture and browse within the District is on a declining trend.
- This was attributed to the lack of rainfall within the month of June.
- Pasture and browse quantity was expected to diminish further due to lack of precipitation and the prevailing hot weather condition.

1.3 Water sources and availability

1.3.1 Water sources

- Water availability and accessibility was fair within the entire District. The situation was not normal at this period of the year.
- The community prominently depends on natural rivers, boreholes, traditional river wells, pans and springs for both domestic and human consumption.
- The situation is however expected to deteriorate further due to the absence of precipitation and the prevailing hot weather condition.

1.3.1 Livestock access to water

- Distances from grazing areas to main water sources increased drastically from 3.6 km in the month of May to 5 km in the month of June.
- The prevailing distances are 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 decreased drastically increasing the pressure and congestion on these watering points.
- It's anticipated that the distances to watering points will increase even further due to the prevailing hot weather conditions and lack of precipitation.

1.3.2 Household access to water

- Average distances from households to the main water sources also increased drastically slightly from 3.1 km in the month of May to an average of 5.1 km in the month of June.
- The prevailing distances are not normal at this period of the year. Water levels on various water reservoirs e.g. catchments pools, earth dams and water pans have greatly declined while some have dried up thus the increase in 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

Declining water levels in various water reservoirs and the declining quantity and quality of pasture and browse indicate 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 physical conditions could be attributed to the fair to 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 this zones leading to migration of these animals to the upper mixed farming zones.

- The 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.

2.1.3 Milk production

- Average milk production per household in the month of June declined drastically from an average of 11 bottles of 750ml in the month of May to an average of 5 bottles of 750ml in the month of June.
- The decline in milk production could be attributed to the decreased birth rates of livestock and the poor availability of both quantity and quality of pasture and browse within the District.
- 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

- The season's onset was late compared to other years when the long rains began by mid of the month of March; the long rains commenced early in the month of April with some parts of the District not receiving any rainfall until mid of April.
- The long rains ceased early than usual with most parts of the District recording very little rainfall in the month of May and no rainfall in the month of June.
- There were no major agricultural activities taking place in the farms. In the mixed farming zones, beans are at harvesting and threshing stage while maize is at tussling stage although the crops are greatly affected by moisture stress due to lack of any reliable rainfall and have wilted with some totally drying up.
- Within the marginal mixed farming zones, i.e. Mutuovare, Makima, Karaba, Riakanau, Ndurumori, Gichiche, Mavuria, Kiambere, Ndurumori and Ishiara locations, the crops have wilted and dried up due to moisture stress.

2.2.2 Pests and diseases

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

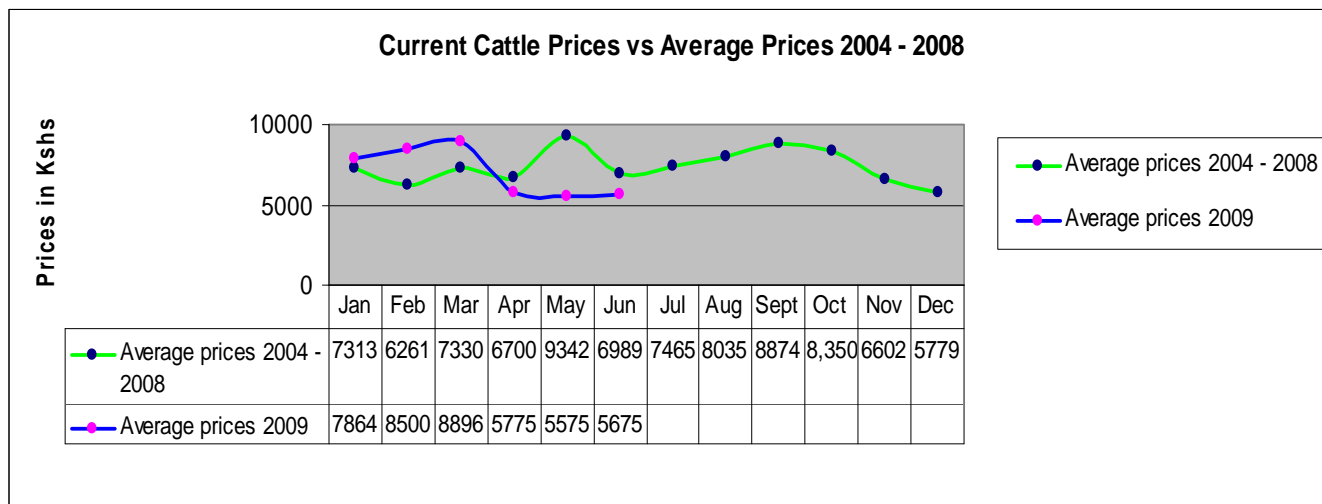
2.2.3 Implications on food security

Lack of rainfall, wilting and drying crops and declining milk production within the District translates to food insecurity.

3.0 Access to food

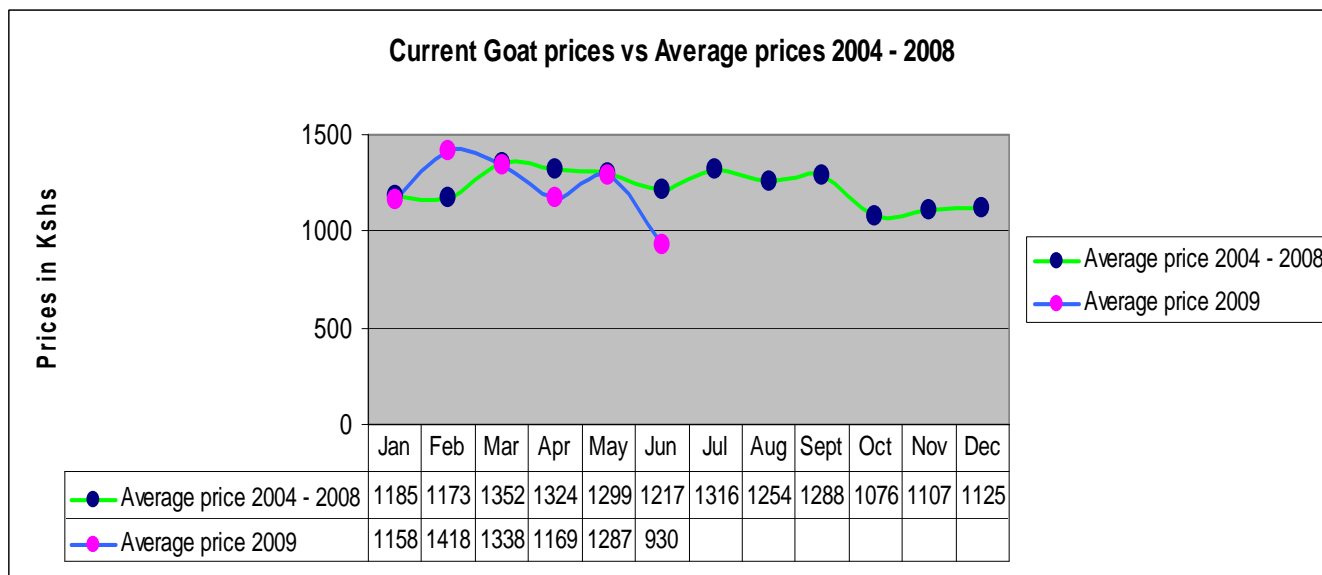
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices



- Cattle prices increased slightly within the District in the month of June. The prices are below normal at this period of the year.
- The low cattle prices could be attributed to the increasing selling rate within the District as farmers dispose of their animals as a coping mechanism and also to avoid mortalities of the animals due to lack of forage and water.
- The selling rate stood at 3.2% in the month of June up from 2.9% in the month of May with Evurore Division recorded the highest selling rate of 5.9%.
- The highest price was recorded in Gachoka Division of Ksh 6,500 while the lowest was in Evurore Division of Ksh4,850.

3.1.2 Goat prices



- Goat prices declined from Ksh1,287 in the month of May to Ksh930 in the month of June.
- The prevailing prices were below normal at the time of the year.
- The declining price could be attributed to the large volumes being disposed by the farmers at the local livestock markets as a coping mechanism.

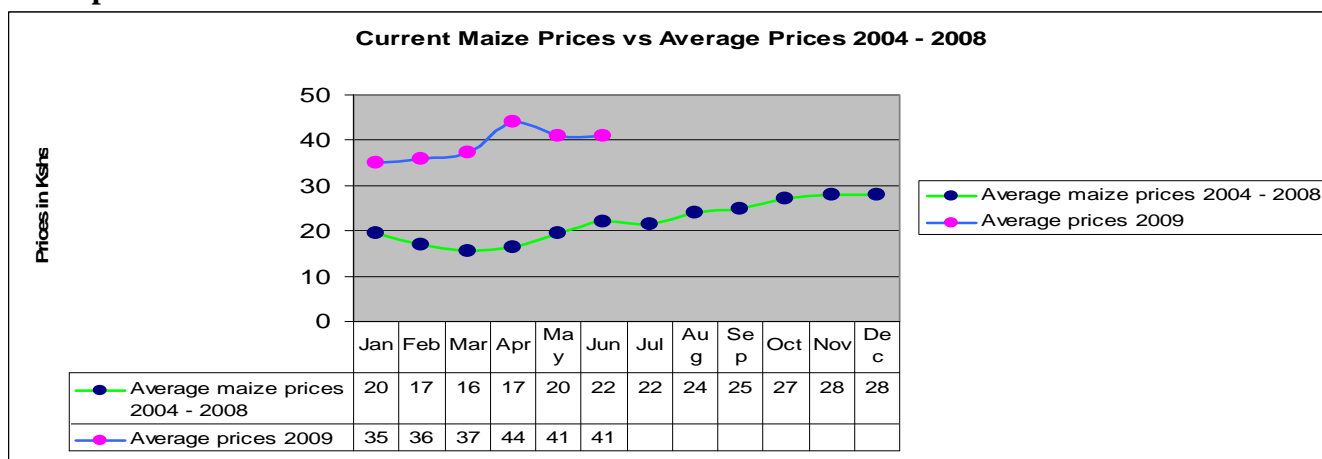
- The sales rate was to 3.8% in the month of June. Gachoka Division had the highest price per goat at Ksh 1,027 while Mwea Division had the lowest goat prices at an average of Ksh775.

3.2 Milk consumption

- Average milk consumed per household declined from 11 bottles of 750 ml in the month of May to 5 bottles of 750ml in the month of June.
- The decrease in milk consumption is attributed to the declining livestock birth rates and the poor availability of forage and water within the District.
- The milk consumption varies from one Division to the other; Gachoka and Siakago Division having the highest milk consumption level.

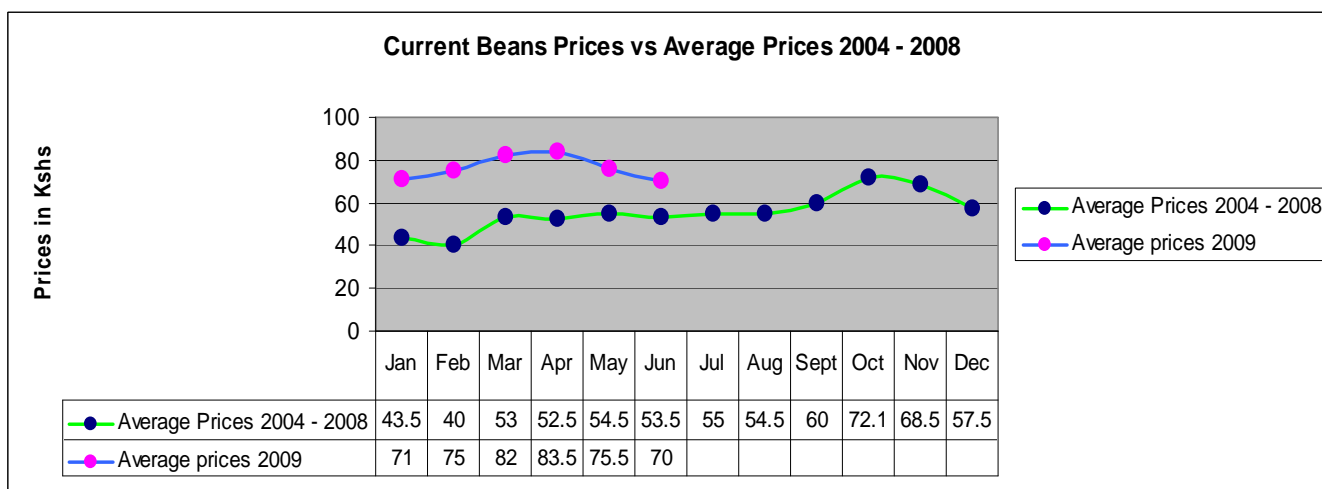
3.3 Crop prices

3.3.1 Maize prices



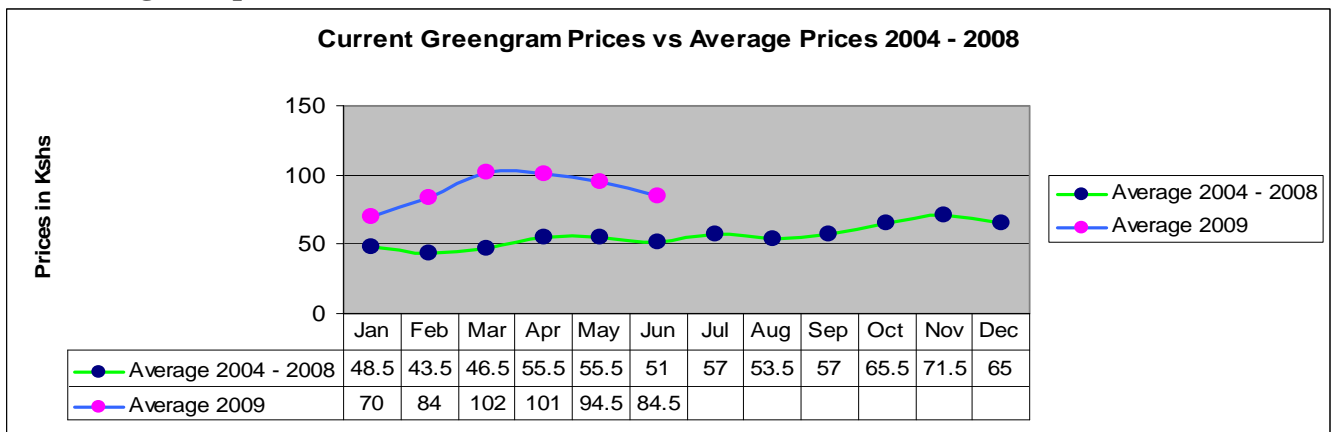
- Maize prices remained at Ksh41 per kilogram in the month of June.
- The prices were above normal at this period of the year.
- The level price was attributed to the inflow of the crop received as relief food.
- Gachoka Division had the highest maize prices at Ksh42.5 per kilogram while Mwea, Siakago and Evurore Divisions had the lowest at Ksh40 per kilogram.

3.3.2 Beans prices



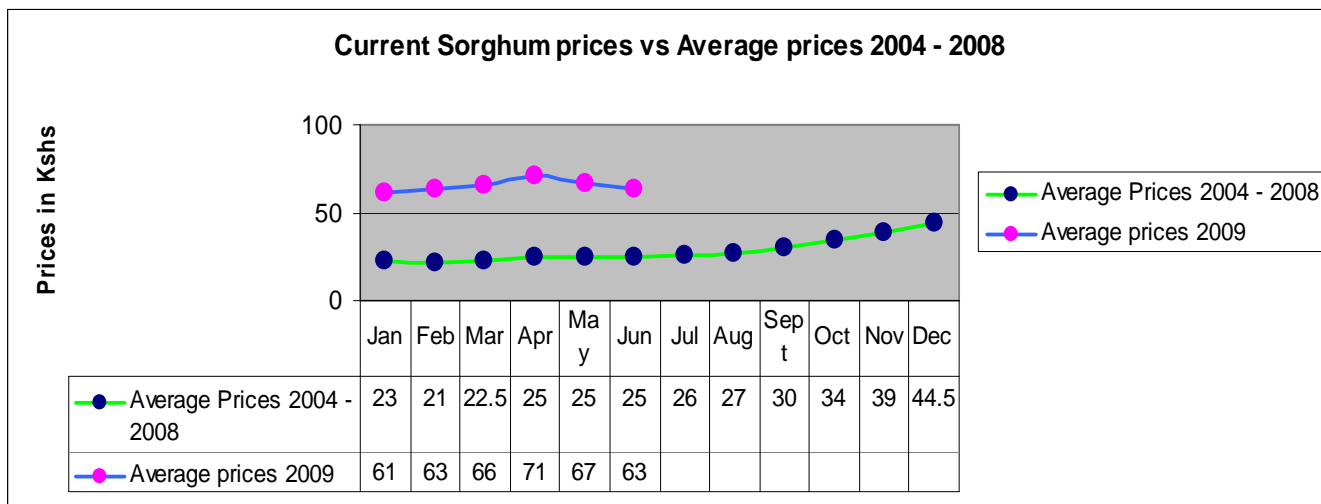
- Beans prices declined slightly from Ksh75.5 per kilogram in the month of May to Ksh70 per kilogram in the month of June.
- The prices were above normal at the time of the year.
- The decrease in the prices was attributed to the availability of green beans harvested in some pockets within the District.
- Mwea Division had the highest beans price at Ksh 80 per kilogram while Evurore Division recorded the lowest at Ksh55 per kilogram.

3.3.3 Green grams prices



- Green gram prices declined from Ksh 94.5 per kilogram in the month of May to Ksh84.5 per kilogram in the month of June.
- The prices were above normal at the time of the year.
- The decrease in the prices is attributed to the inflow of the crop from outside the District and the little harvest experienced in some pockets of the District.
- Siakago Division had the highest price at Ksh100 per kilogram while Mwea and Evurore Division recorded the lowest at Ksh75 per kilogram.

3.3.4 Sorghum prices



- Sorghum prices declined from Ksh67 per kilogram in May to Ksh63.
- 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 district. Siakago Division had the highest sorghum prices of Ksh75 per kilogram while Evurore Division had the lowest of Ksh55 per kilogram.

3.4 Income

3.4.1 Crop income

- Income from crop sales declined from 11% in the month of May to 8.3% in the month of June as the source of total household revenue.
- The decline in crop sales as a source of total household revenue is attributed to the poor performance of the crops due to lack of adequate rainfall within the District.

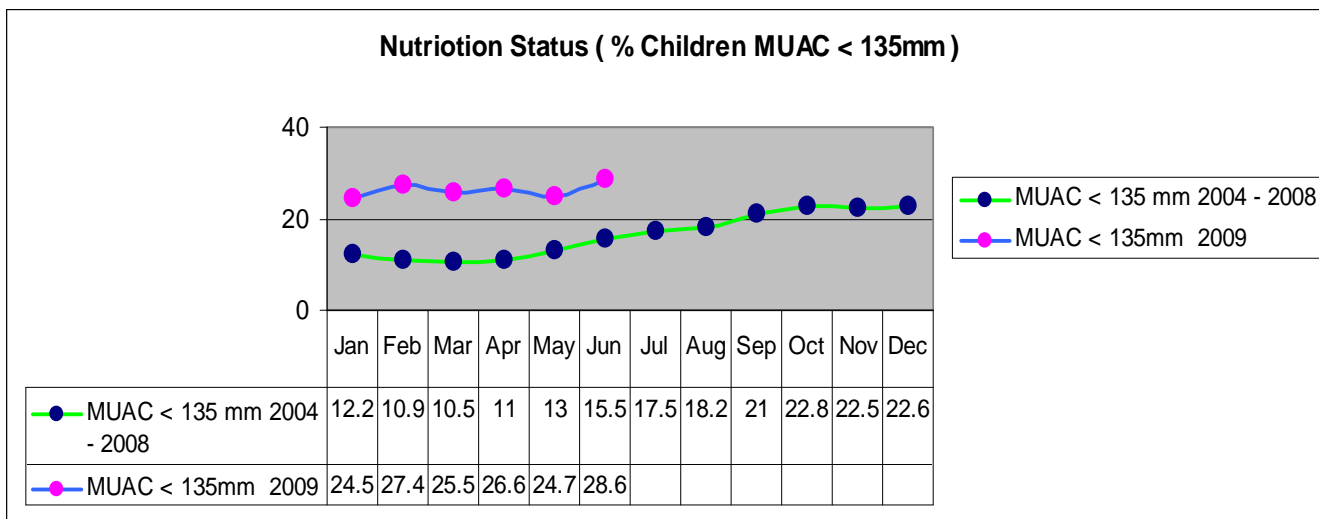
3.4.1 Livestock income

- Contribution from livestock sales increased from 13 % in the month of May to 15 % in the month of June.
- The increase was attributed to the disposal of animals by farmers as a coping mechanism and also to avoid mortalities of the animals due to lack of forage and water.
- Casual labor as the major source of aggregate household income in Mbeere District remained at 52% in the month of June. This is attributed to “Kazi kwa vijana” initiative within the District which is offering the bulk of the casual job.

3.5 Implications on food security

- High food purchase prices and declining livestock prices indicate an increase in food insecurity. Availability of opportunities for casual laborers indicate a food secure situation.

4.0 Human welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)



- The nutrition status of children under 5 years deteriorated slightly compared to May.
- The percentage of children at risk of malnutrition rose to 28.6 compared to 24.7 in May.
- Mwea Division recorded the highest number of children with MUAC < 135 mm at 35.5%, Gachoka Division 29.5%, Evurore Division at 27.3% and Siakago at 22.3%.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Non-food interventions

- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes within the entire district.
- Excavation of Matilamu sand dam.
- Construction of Bindii sand dam.
- Fencing of Tene spring.
- Extension of the Kogari pipeline.
- Value addition.
- Fodder bulking conservation and utilisation.

6.0 Recommendations

- Deworming/ drenching of livestock to improve resilience.
- Livestock disease surveillance within the mixed marginal livelihood zones.
- Resumption and extension of the school feeding programme to cover all District primary schools and day secondary schools.
- Surveillance of the malnutrition levels within the District especially Divisions with Alarm/emergency levels.
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