

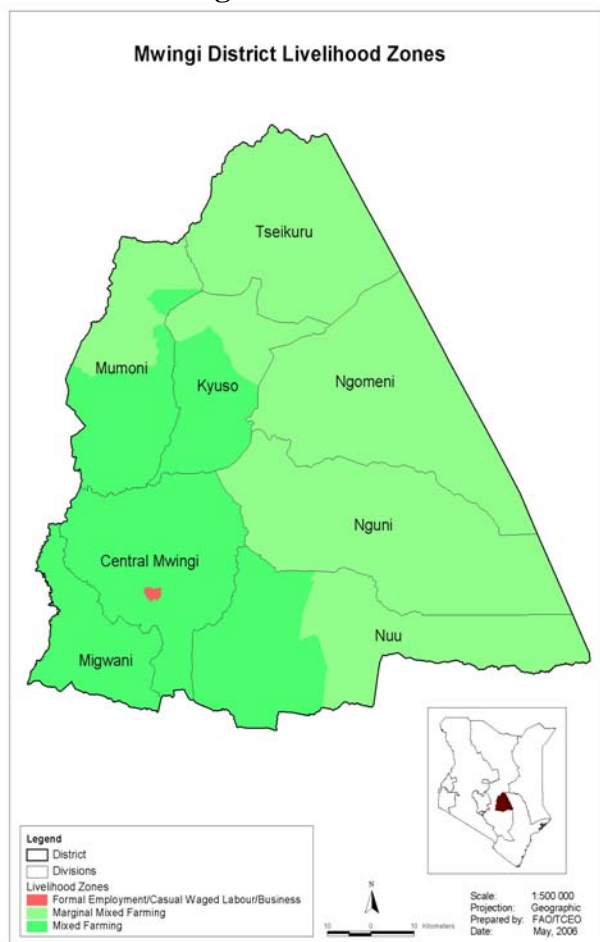


**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS  
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

**DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, JUNE 2009**

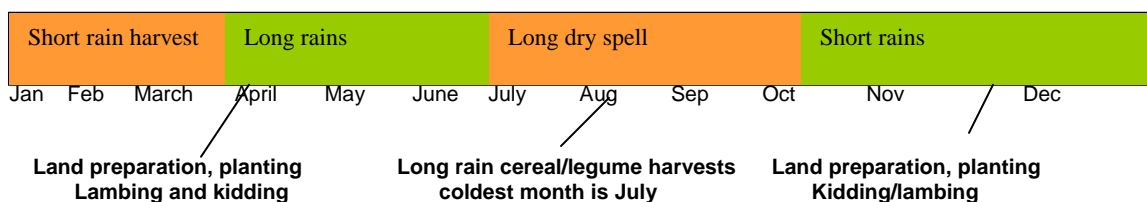
**Mwingi District**

**Warning Stage**



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Agro pastoral zone	Alarm	Worsening
Mixed farming zone	Alarm	Worsening
District	Alarm	Worsening

**Seasonal Calendar**



### **Situation overview**

- The district did not receive any rains during the month of June. The weather was cold and cloudy in the mornings followed by hot afternoons.
- Water access and availability worsened as communities had to trek long distances of 5-10km in search of water. Congestion at water points was common.
- Condition of natural vegetation and pasture was very poor in terms of quality and quantity.
- Livestock body condition was poor, especially for the large stock. Livestock prices deteriorated.
- Milk production dropped significantly.
- Total crop failure was evident across the district.
- Cereal prices were very high compared to the normal trend.
- The nutrition status of children below five years was stable during the month.
- The percentage of children rated at risk of malnutrition was 14% same as last month. The most affected divisions were Central, Tseikuru, Nguni and lower parts of Migwani.
- Casual labour was the main source of income.

### **Current interventions**

- Relief food distribution was ongoing under the protracted relief and emergency operation (PRRO) programme. All the nine old divisions were being targeted. About 215,000 people, constituting 15% of the total population benefited.
- The Kenya Red Cross brought in 30 metric tonnes of unimix flour targeting children on primary schools.
- In Kyuso district, 1800 bales of hay and one ton of assorted supplements were provided to livestock farmers through the Ministry of Livestock development.
- Ministry of Water was carrying out water trucking to selected institutions.

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

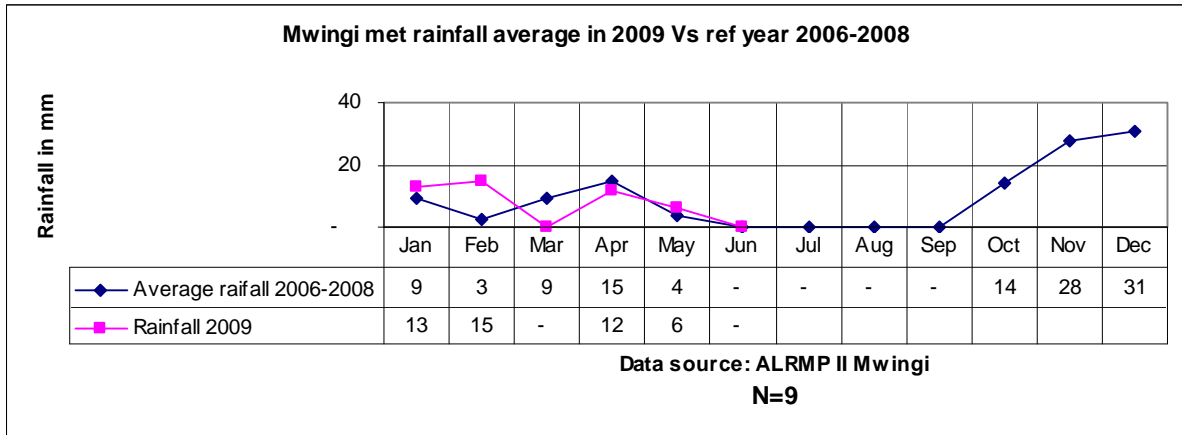
- General food relief should be considered as an option as nearly all the households were equally affected by the drought. The Ministry of Education, Office of the President and the lead agency should lead on this action.
- Provision of unimix and other supplementary food should be enhanced. All health facilities should be targeted. Early child development centers (ECD's) should be targeted in this programme. Ministry of Health and Education should take the lead.
- School-feeding programmes should be intensified in order to retain students in schools. Ministry of Education should take the lead for this action.
- Livestock hay relief should be expanded to cover more farmers for there is big shortage of pastures in the district.
- Enhance training on pastures and fodder conservation for community based groups.
- A favorable livestock off-take programme should be introduced in the district so as to minimize livestock death resulting from drought. The savings realised from

these sales can be used for restocking in future once the drought is over. Livestock department has to spearhead this action.

- Water trucking activities targeting health facilities, educational institutions and the most vulnerable communities should be continued by the Ministry of Water and other stakeholders.

## 1.0 Environmental indicators

### 1.1 Rainfall



- No rains were reported in the district in the last one month.
- The weather was characterised by cold, cloudy mornings followed by hot afternoons. The nights experienced windy conditions.

### 1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- **Quality:** The quality of natural vegetation was very poor compared to last month. The little shrubs that are remaining have turned brownish with no leaves. There were no grasses.
- **Quantity:** The quantity of natural vegetation deteriorated further due to drought. Many herders shifted with their livestock in search of pastures. In Tseikuru division, herders moved deeper into Mwingi game reserve and Kora Game Park along Tana River belt. There was a lot of purchasing of pastures/hay, especially in Migwani and Nuu divisions.

### 1.3 Water sources and availability

- Water sources and availability deteriorated considerably over the last one month. Most of the traditional water sources such as shallow wells, rock catchments and earth dams dried up, leading to heavy congestion at the few remaining sources.
- In places like Ngomeni and Nguni divisions, some people moved from their homes and settled near major streams to access water from sand scooped wells.
- Some communities in Nuu extracted water from plant tubers and roots for survival.
- The average walking distance was 5-10 km but in some places it was more than 10km e.g. Wingemi in Nuu division and Kasiluni in Ngomeni division.

## **1.4 Emerging issues**

### **1.4.1 Worsening drought**

- The drought situation worsened, leading to serious food, water and pasture shortages. Already, cases of livestock deaths due to drought were being reported.
- Children were reportedly dropped out of schools due to hunger.
- Due to lack of food in rural households, there were increased cases of out migration to urban centres in search of casual labour.

## **1.5 Implication on food security**

- Food security situation is very bad across many households. This has made many households to be vulnerable to effects of drought.

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

### **2.1 Livestock production**

#### **2.1.1 Livestock body condition**

- Livestock body condition was poor for both species of livestock but cattle were the most affected.
- The goats had fair condition but due to scarcity of water, they started losing weight.

#### **2.1.2 Livestock diseases**

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

#### **2.1.3 Milk production**

- Milk production declined by almost 25% compared to last month. This was due to the continued scarcity of water and pasture availability.

## **2.2 Crop production**

### **2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities**

- Most of the crops that were planted dried up while in many places no germination took place.

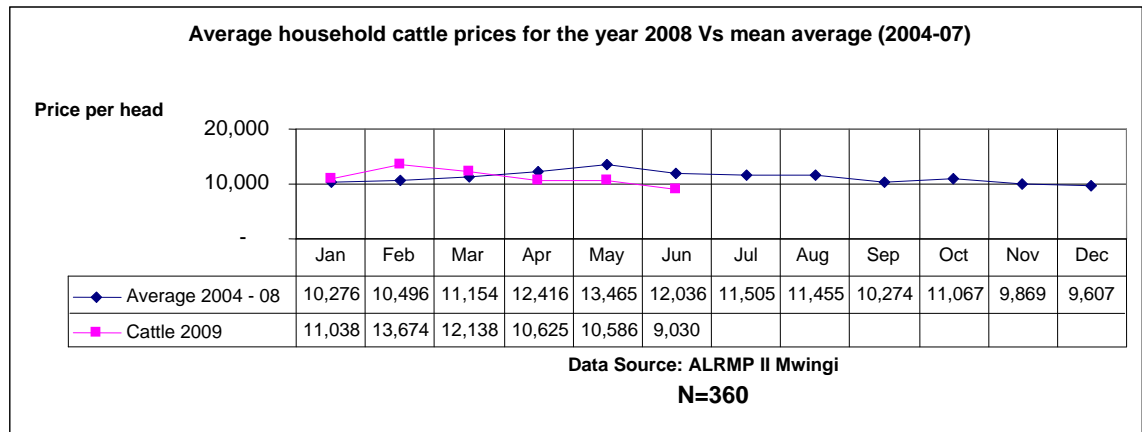
### **2.2.2 Pests and diseases**

- It was not an issue since there were no crops left standing in the farms.

### **2.2.3 Implications on food security**

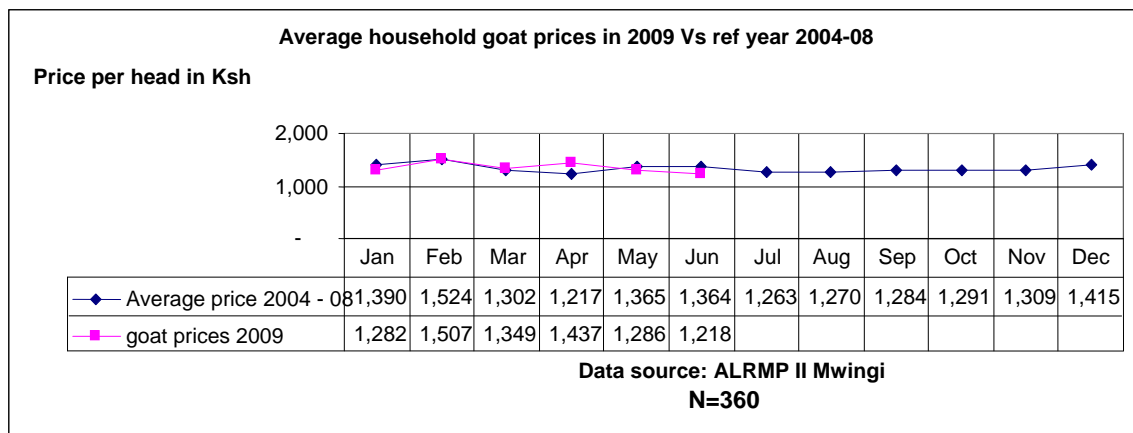
- Declining body condition of livestock affected negatively livestock productivity. It affected both milk production and livestock prices.
- The absence of crops on farms has exposed many households to the effects of drought.
- Crop harvests and livestock products normally compliment the dietary requirements of the households. The two sectors of crop and livestock are almost collapsing due to continued drought. The drought was among the worst so far observed.

**3.0 Access to food**  
**3.1 Livestock marketing**  
**3.1 Cattle prices**



- The average household cattle prices dropped from Ksh10,586 last month to Ksh9,030.
- Compared to the mean average, this was not normal. The highest prices were observed in Ngomeni division while the lowest was in Migwani division at Ksh 6,500.
- The drop in prices was attributed to poor body condition. Pastures and water became scarce due to drought.
- Households disposed extra herds, especially the mature ones for fear of losing them through drought.
- This affected the disposable household incomes as they are being exploited by brokers.

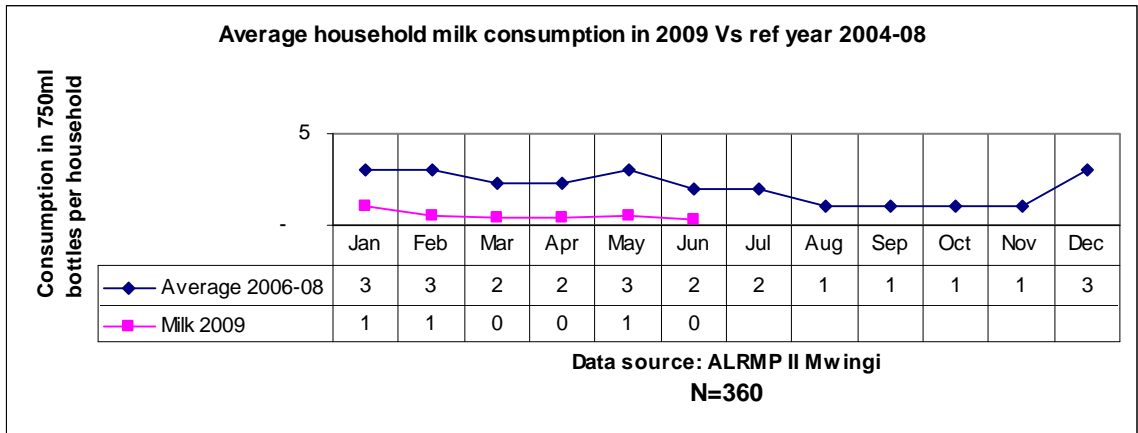
**3.1.2 Goat prices**



- The average household goat prices declined slightly from Ksh1,286 last month to Ksh1,218.

- The highest price was in Nuu division at Ksh 1,500 while the lowest was Ksh 878 in Mui division.
- Even though the goats have a fair body condition, the drought has started taking effect on them thus affecting their prices.
- It was not normal for prices to be this low at the time of the year.

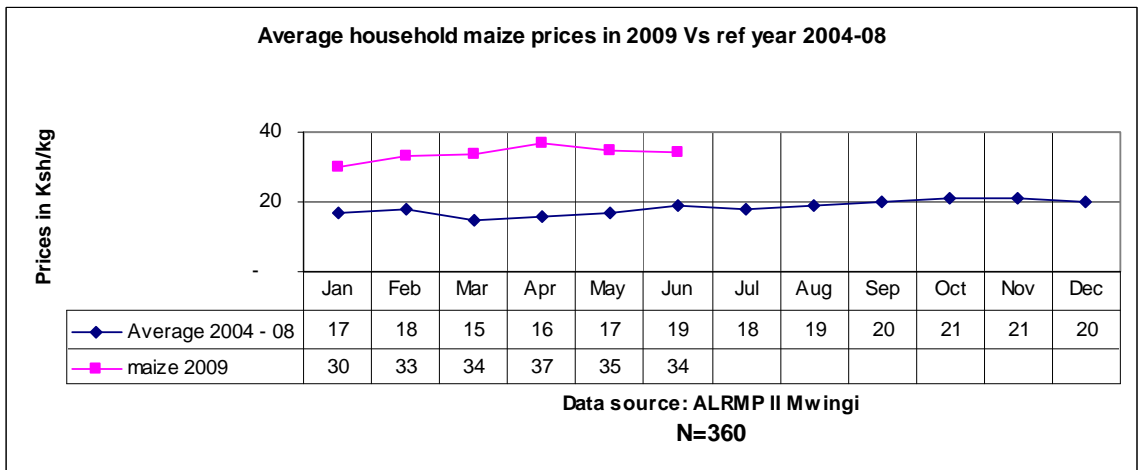
### 3.2 Milk consumption



- The average household milk consumption dropped to less than a bottle compared to last month. The current milk consumption levels are not normal at this time of the year.
- The drop in milk consumption has been attributed to reduced milk production due to scarcity of pastures and water. Lactating animals are the most affected by the drought resulting in poor body condition.
- This is likely to worsen the nutritional status of household members and particularly the children since milk plays an important role in supplementing dietary requirements of households.

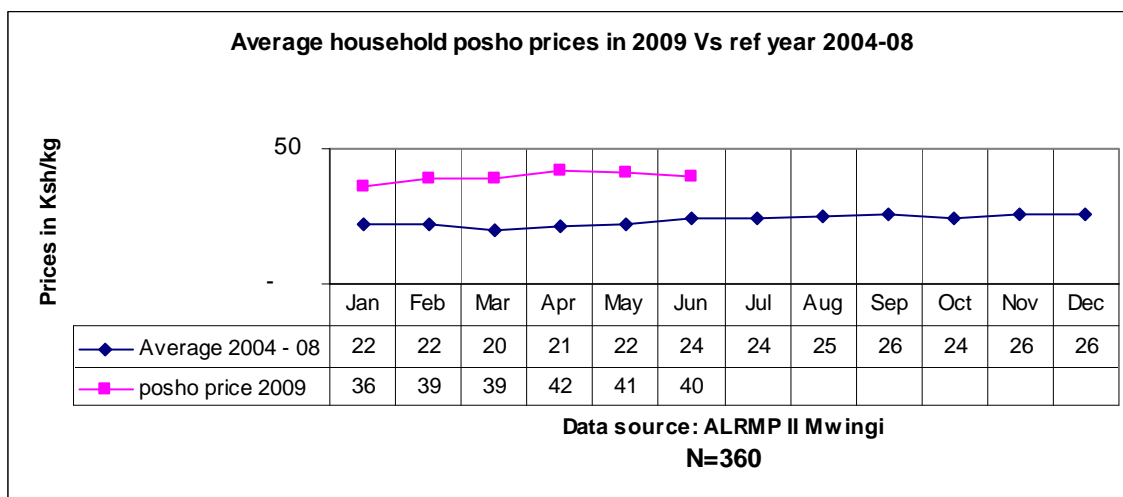
### 3.3 Crop prices

#### 3.3.1 Maize prices



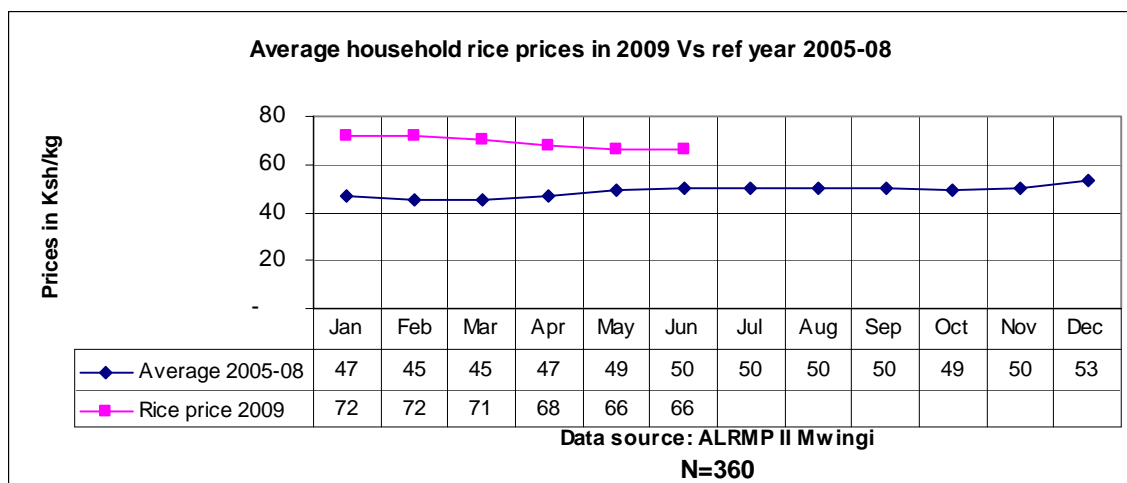
- The average household maize prices dropped slightly from Ksh35 per kilo last month to Ksh 34.
- Compared to the mean average, the prices were high and therefore beyond the reach of many households. The maize was available in the markets.
- The quality of the maize in the market was fair, although some had a lot of impurities. Some of the maize is mouldy, increasing the possibilities of aflatoxin poisoning.
- There was still good maize in the market, although the prices were higher than that of bad maize.

### 3.3.2 Posho prices



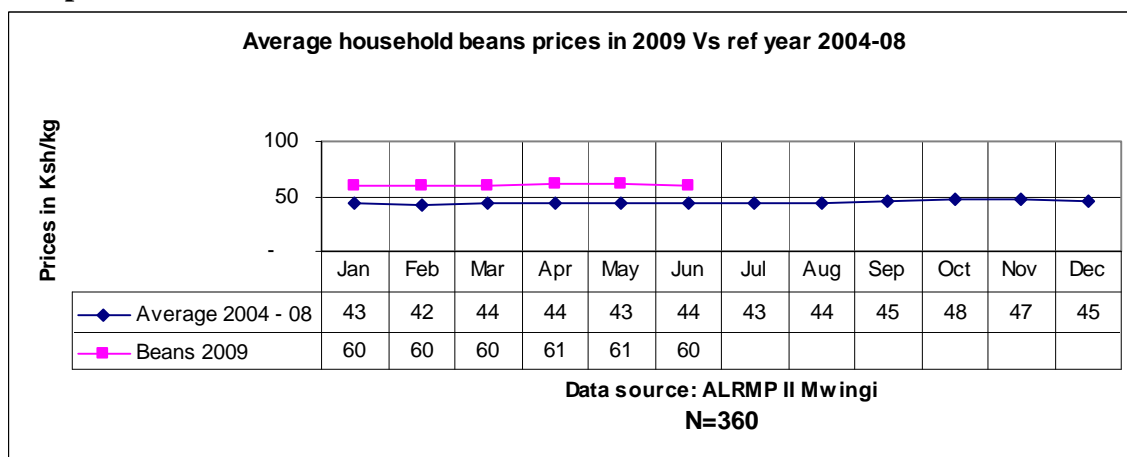
- The average household posho prices dropped slightly from Ksh 41 per kilo last month to Ksh 40 per kilo.
- The price drop was due to a drop in maize prices.
- The prices were too high compared to the mean average. This was beyond the reach of many households.

### 3.3.3 Rice prices



- The average household rice prices remained stable at Ksh 66 per kilo during the month under review.
- However, the prices were high compared to the mean average. Very few households were consuming rice.

### 3.3.4 Beans prices



- The average household beans prices dropped from Ksh 61/kg last month to Ksh 60/kg currently. Compared to the mean average, this was not normal.
- Due to lack of crop harvests, the prices remained relatively high, affecting food access.

## 3.4 Income

### 3.4.1 Crop income

- Crop income was not available for there are no crops on the farms.

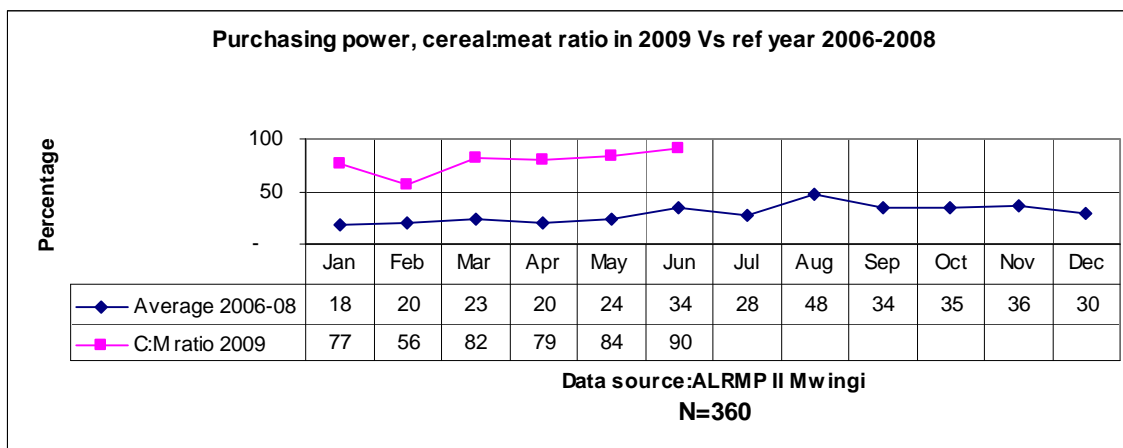
### 3.4.2 Livestock income

- About 7% of the households were involved in livestock sales. Excess herds were being sold to minimise losses resulting from drought.

### 3.4.3 Other sources of income

- Casual labour was the main source of income.
- Remittances played an important role in sustaining households.
- Mushrooming of food kiosks along the road was very common.
- Charcoal burning was still taking place although it was banned by the Government to protect the environment.
- Selling of pastures is now common. It is being sourced from the mountain tops and game parks and ferried to the markets.

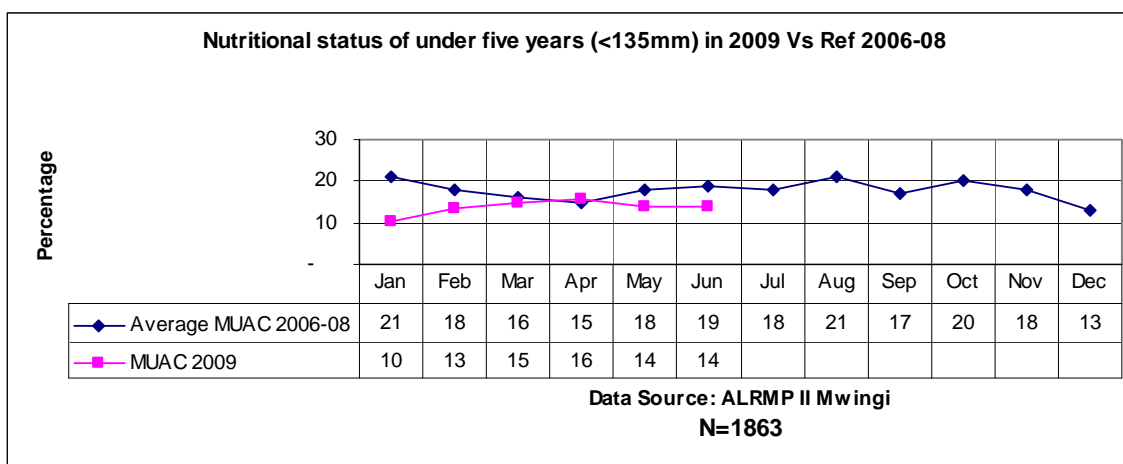
### 3.4.4 Cereal: Meat price ratio



- The terms of trade on cereals to meat ratio rose from 84% last month to 90% at the moment. This was caused by a reduction in livestock prices compared to cereals over the last one month. This was not normal for we expect ratio to be relatively low if we had a good harvest of cereals this season.
- This implies that households will have to spend more of their livestock products in acquiring the same amount of cereals compared to last month.

## 4.0 Human welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

### 4.1 Nutrition status



- The nutrition status of children below five years was stable during the month.
- The percentage of children rated at risk of malnutrition was 14% same as last month. The most affected divisions were Central, Tseikuru, Nguni and lower parts of Migwani.
- The stable rates were sustained by interventions by different players in provision of unimix to communities and health facilities.
- However, most of the unimix was used up and there was a danger of the situation getting out of hand.

#### **4.2 Human health**

- There was no outbreak of notifiable human diseases, although cases of ringworms in children were common.

### **5.0 Current interventions**

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

- Ministry of Water carried out water trucking to selected institutions.
- In Kyuso district, 1,800 bales of hay and one ton of assorted supplements were provided to livestock farmers through the Ministry of Livestock Development.

#### **5.2 Food aid**

- Relief food distribution was ongoing under the protracted relief and emergency operation (PRRO) programme. All the nine old divisions were being targeted.
- The Kenya Red Cross brought in 30 metric tonnes of unimix flour, which is targeting children on primary schools.

#### **5.3 Coping strategies**

- One main meal per day was the common practice. Other households skipped meals the whole day.
- Extraction of water from plant tubers and roots in parts of Nuu division.
- Charcoal burning was common although it was burned.
- Casual labour was the main source of income.

### **6.0 Recommendations**

- General food relief should be considered as an option as nearly all the households were equally affected by the drought. The Ministry of Education, Office of the President and the lead agency should lead on this action.
- Provision of unimix and other supplementary food should be enhanced. All health facilities should be targeted. Early child development centers (ECD's) should be targeted in this programme. Ministry of Health and Education should take the lead.
- School-feeding programmes should be intensified in order to retain students in schools. Ministry of Education should take the lead for this action.
- Livestock hay relief should be expanded to cover more farmers for there is big shortage of pastures in the district.

- Enhance training on pastures and fodder conservation for community based groups.
- A favorable livestock off-take programme should be introduced in the district so as to minimize livestock death resulting from drought. The savings realised from these sales can be used for restocking in future once the drought is over. Livestock department has to spearhead this action.
- Water trucking activities targeting health facilities, educational institutions and the most vulnerable communities should be continued by the Ministry of Water and other stakeholders.