

Situation overview

- Relatively warm and wet weather conditions prevailed across the district although the rainfall was poorly distributed. The district received an average of 69 mm of rainfall in the month with an average of 7 days of rainfall, a below normal trend during this period of the year.
- Pasture and browse availability and accessibility improved across the entire district. Livestock body conditions were fair but are expected to improve with the improved pasture and browse availability within the district.
- Water availability and accessibility was good as both permanent and seasonal water reservoirs recharged their water levels, thus reducing the pressure and congestion on the watering points.
- Weeding and replanting were the predominant agricultural activities across the district. Food purchase prices remained high.
- The nutrition status of children under 5 years of age deteriorated slightly in comparison to the month of October, with no major ailments being reported within the district. The percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition dropped to 22.4 from 25 in October.
- Due to the commencement of the short rains, there is improvement of the Environmental indicators, rural indicators and Welfare indicators. The drought situation in the district can be described as 'Alert' and improving.

Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Promotion of drought-resistant crops e.g. sorghum, millet and pigeon peas in an effort to maximize the expected crop yield in the current short rains season.
- PPR and other livestock disease surveillance.
- Post-harvest crop management campaign within the district.

Current interventions

Non-food interventions

- Excavation of Matilamu sand dam by ALRMP II.
- Fodder bulking construction and utilisation.
- Kamukameri spring protection.
- Extension of the Kogari pipeline by ALRMP II.
- Disease surveillance and response by the Ministry of Public Health.
- Vaccination of livestock against foot and mouth, Black quarter and Rift valley fever. The vaccination campaign is targeting 20,000 cattle and 30,000 sheep and goats within the District.
- De-worming campaign for all livestock within the district.

Food aid

- Relief seed distribution.
- Distribution of relief food from the world Food Programme by the lead agency Catholic Diocese of Embu targeting 76,000 beneficiaries within the whole district.
- Distribution of relief food by CCS Mayori (Anglican Church) targeting 800 beneficiaries within Ngoce, Makima and Machanga.
- Homegrown school feeding programme targeting 110 schools within the district.

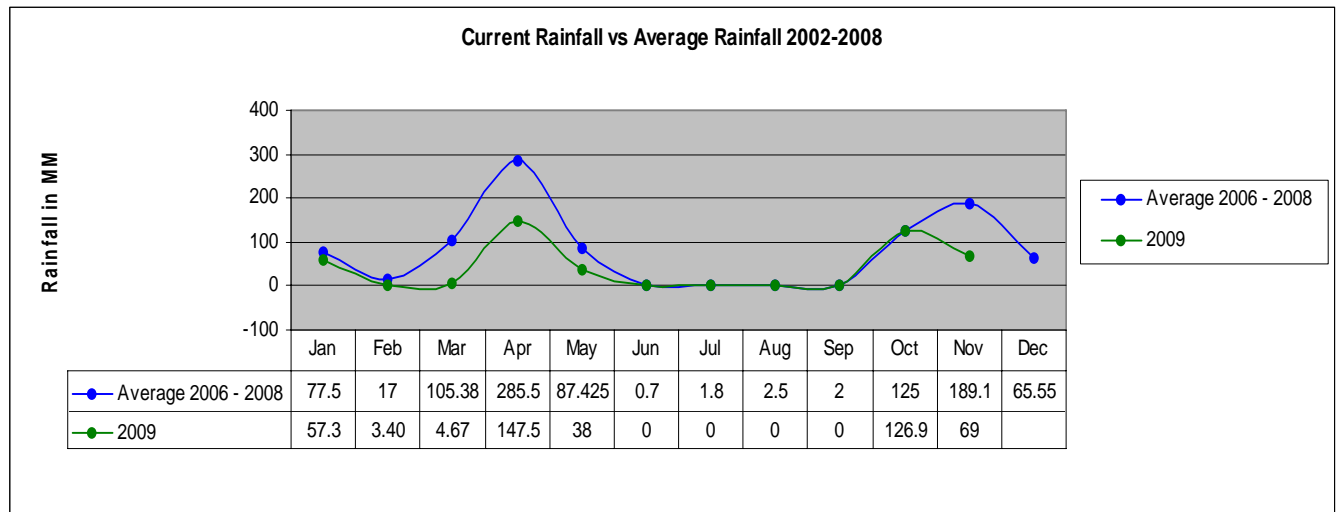
Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

The District Steering Group met on 26/10/2009 at the District headquarters, Mbeere, and the following recommendations were realised.

- The DSG selected Ishiara, Ngiiri, Mutuovare and Makima markets as sites for the purchase of livestock ear-marked for livestock off-take process which targeted a total of 200 mature cattle.
- The relief food distribution Lead agency was authorised by the DSG to slaughter 10% of the procured mature cattle under the livestock off take exercise and distribute to the community. The slaughtering exercise was to be overseen by the District Veterinary officer.

1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall



Source: Divisional Agricultural Offices

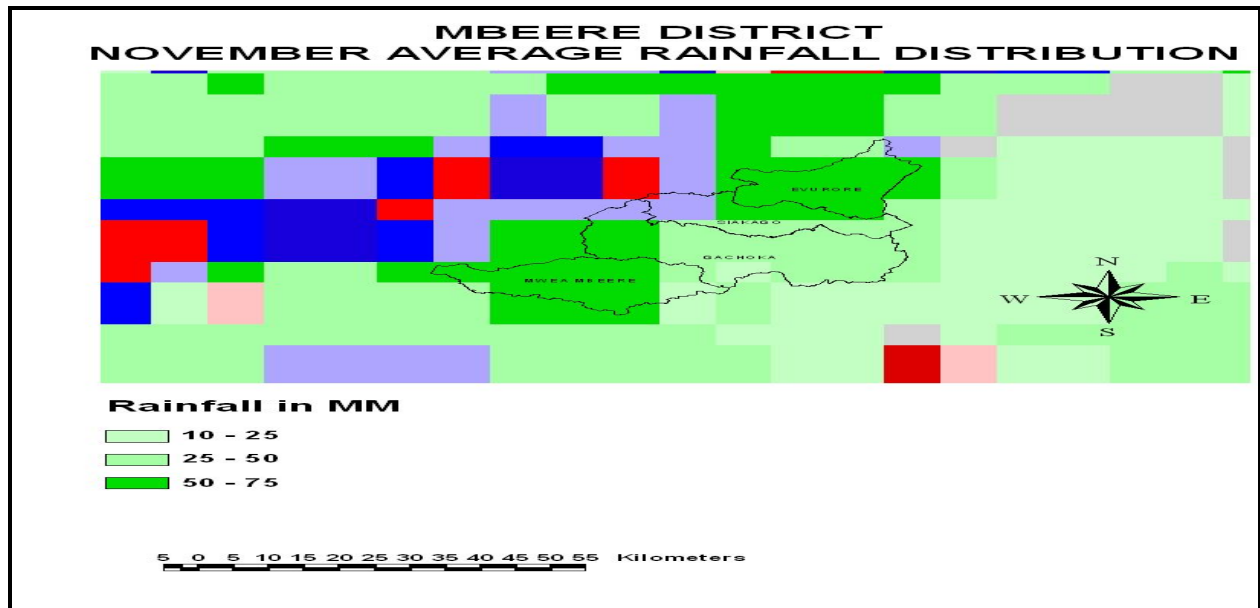
The district received an average of 69 mm of rainfall in the month of November. This reveals a below normal trend during this period of the year. On average, the district received 7 days of rainfall.

Division	Rainfall Station	November	
		mm	Wet days
Siakago	Siakago market	130.6	9

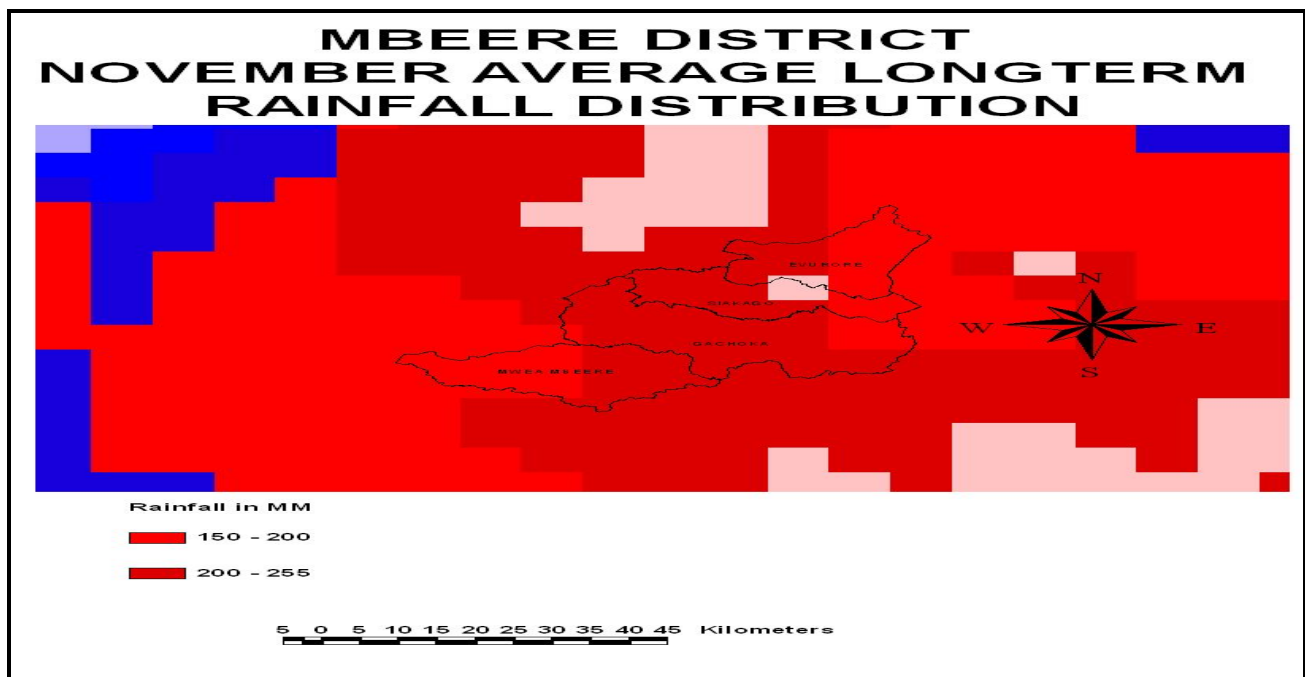
Temporal and Spatial rainfall distribution within the district

Evurore	Ishiara market	61.5	7
Gachoka	Gachoka market	42.25	5
Mwea	Karaba market	42.1	6
DISTRICT AVERAGE		69	7

Source: Divisional Agricultural Offices

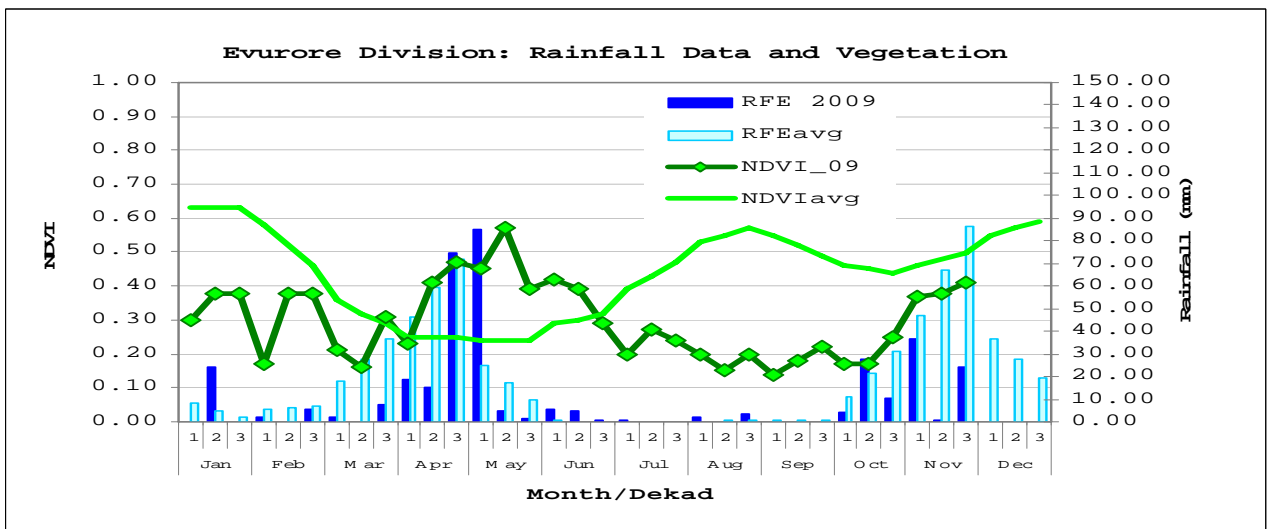
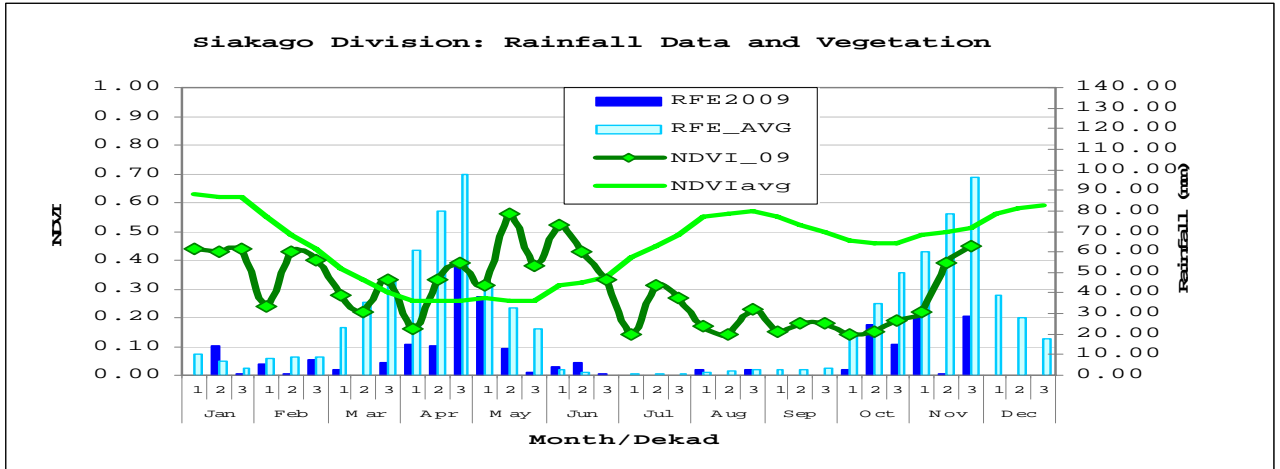


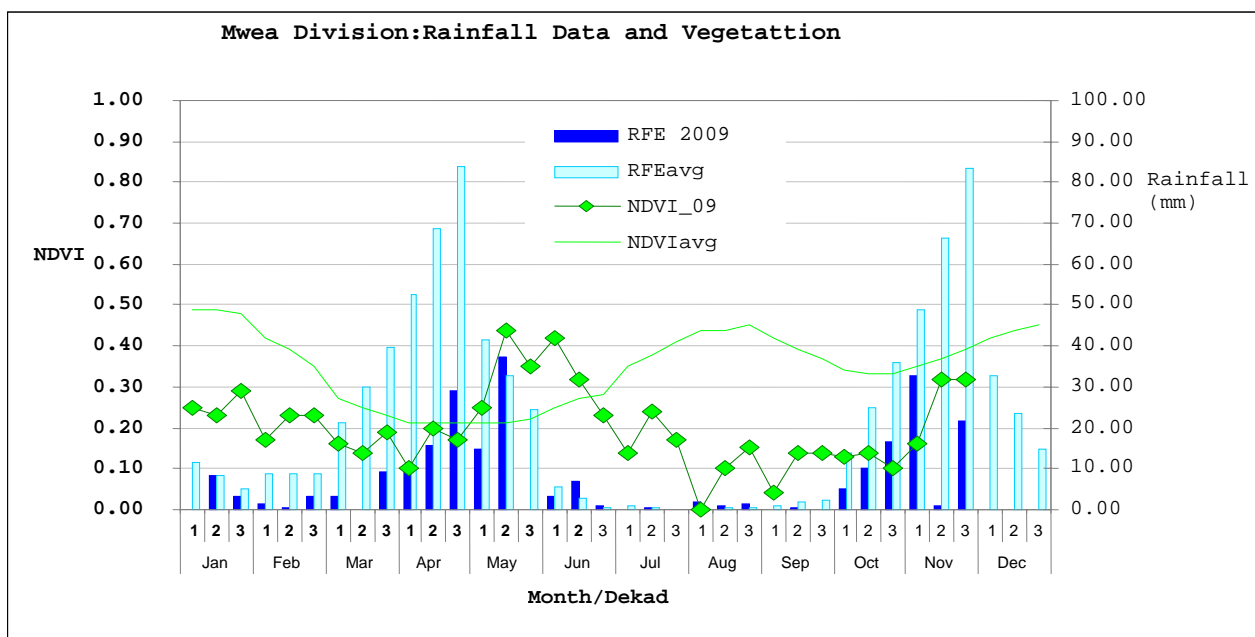
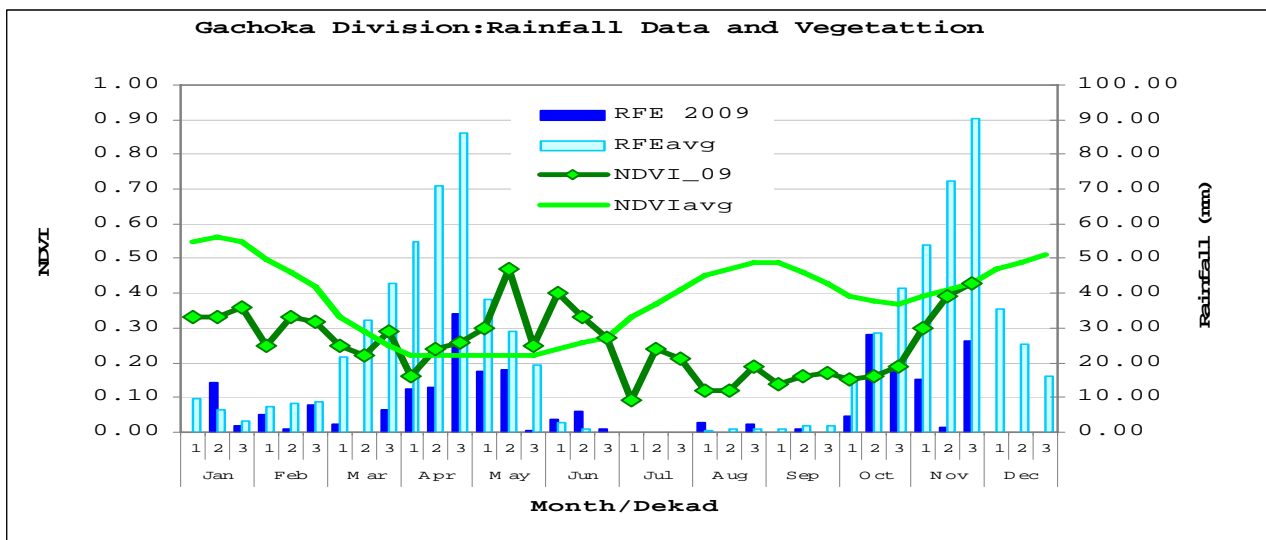
Source: ALRMP II/ FEWSNET



Source: ALRMP II/ FEWSNET

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture





Source: ALRMP II/ FEWSNET

- Pasture and browse quality was fair and improving across the district. The situation was not normal at this time of the year. As shown by the NDVI and rainfall tables above, the pasture and browse quality was below the normal levels but the situation is improving due to the persistence of the short rains.
- Pasture and browse availability was fair and improving within the district. The prevailing situation is not normal at this period of the year. The Ndvi data shows the current situation of vegetation in relation to the amount of rainfall received within the month.
- The quantity of pasture and browse within the district is below normal but improving as shown on the NDVI graphs for the four divisions. The improvement in pasture quantity was attributed to the persistence of the short rains. Pasture and browse quantity is expected to improve even further as the short rains persist.

1.3 Water sources and availability

1.3.1 Water sources

Water availability and accessibility was good within the entire district. The current situation is normal at this period of the year. Communities were depending on roof water catchments, natural rivers, boreholes, traditional river wells, pans and springs for both domestic and human consumption. The water sources are expected to achieve optimum recharge levels as the rainfall persists.

1.3.2 Livestock access to water

Distances from grazing areas to main water sources declined from 4.3 km in the month of October to 3.2 km in the month of November. 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 recharged reducing the pressure and congestion. It is anticipated that the distances to watering points will decrease even further with the persistence of the short rains.

1.3.3 Household access to water

Average distances from households to the main water sources remained at an average of 2.5km in the month of November. The prevailing distances are not normal at this period of the year. Water reservoirs i.e. catchments pools, earth dams and water pans have recharged their water levels thus reducing the distances covered in search of water for domestic use. Distances covered in search of water are expected to decrease even further with persistence of the short rains.

1.4 Implications on food security

Recharged water levels in various water reservoirs and the good quantity and quality of pasture and browse indicate food security.

2.0 Rural economy indicators (Food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

Livestock body conditions were fair for all animal species within the district. The prevailing body conditions were not normal at this time of the year. The improving livestock physical conditions could be attributed to the availability of forage and water for livestock consumption within the month. The livestock body conditions are expected to improve due to availability of adequate forage and water due to the persistence of the short rains.

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 increased from of 4.3 bottles of 750ml in October to 6 bottles (750ml) in November. The increased milk production could be attributed to the increasing availability of water and forage within the district. 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 current crop production season commenced on time , finding majority of the farmers prepared. Planting activities commenced as early as the beginning of October. The short rains commenced as anticipated and there was evidence of a hundred percentage germination of the planted crops.

- The crops were at different stages of germination. Maize was at knee height while pulses were at the flowering stage. Rainfall distribution within the month was poor, resulted in the crops being affected by moisture stress. The worst affected crops were beans, which wilted in most parts of the district and farmers engaged in replanting of the crop. The drought-tolerant crops i.e. sorghum and millet were performing better, with no traces of moisture stress and an optimum yield is expected.

2.2.2 Pests and diseases

There were no major incidences of pest and disease attacks reported.

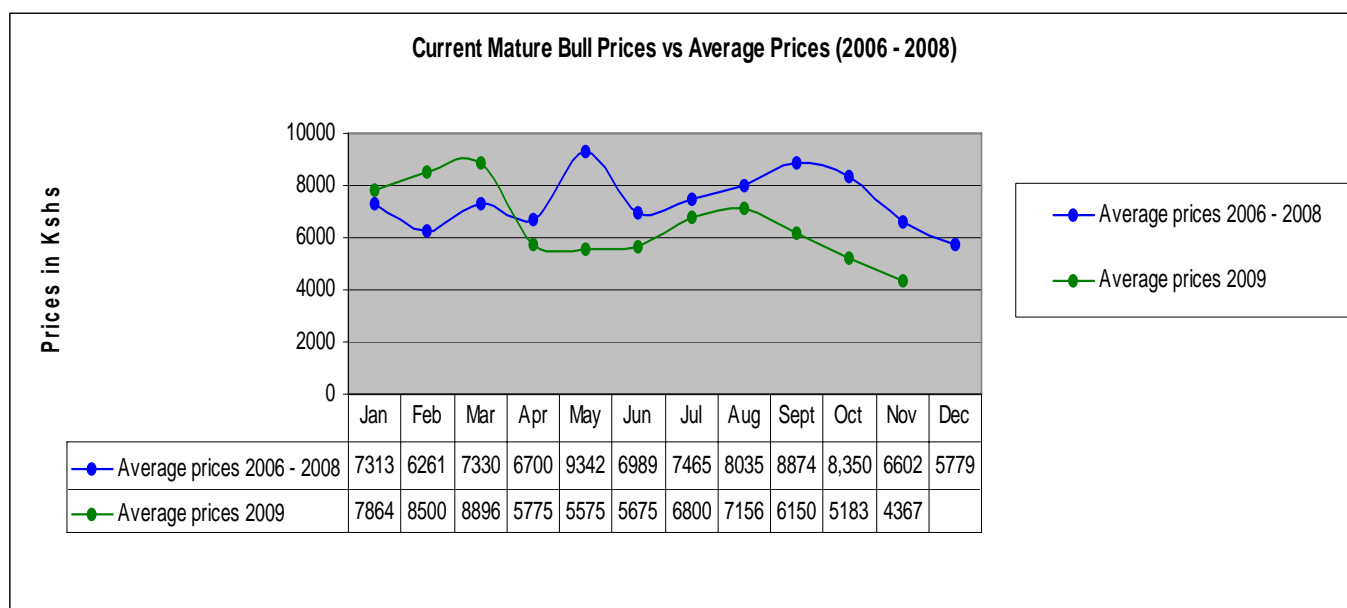
2.2.3 Implications on food security

Availability of water and the increasing milk production within the District translates to food security.

3.0 Access to food

3.1 Livestock marketing

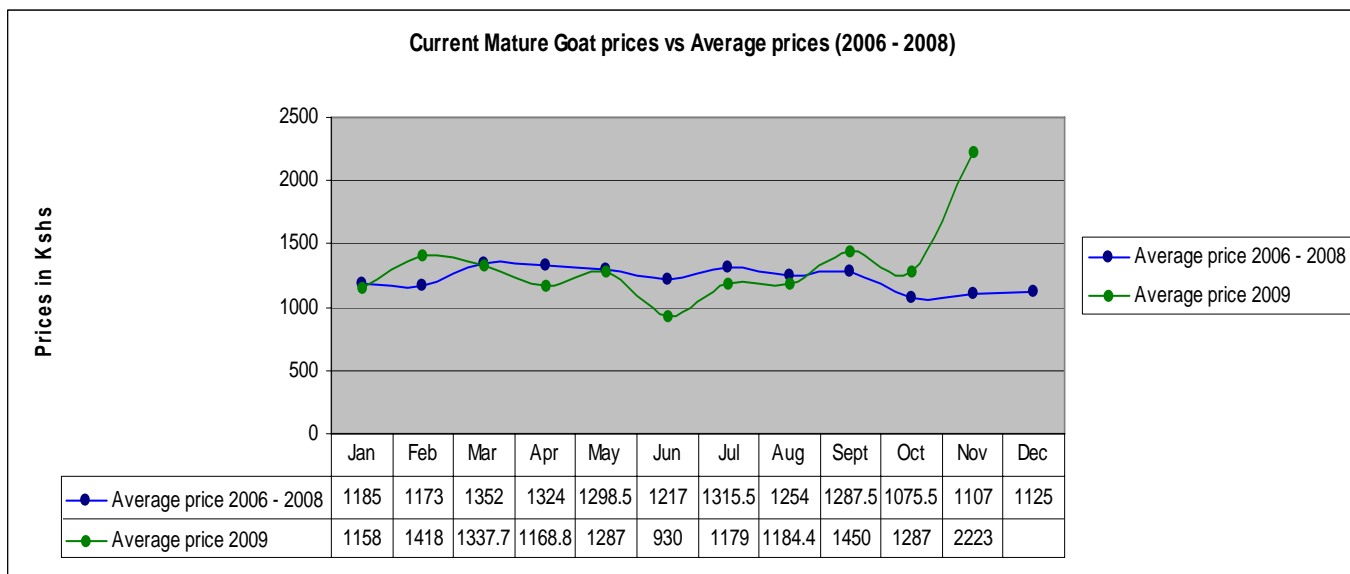
3.1.1 Cattle prices



Cattle prices declined from Ksh5,183 in October to Ksh4,367. The price was below normal at this period of the year. The low prices could be attributed to the increasing selling rates within the district. The sales rates increased from 2.2% % in October to 2.3% in November.

Siakago Division recorded the highest sales rate of 3.7% while Evurore division recorded the lowest rate of 0.9%. Evurore Division had the highest price at Ksh6,000 while Mwea Division had the lowest price at Ksh1,500.

3.1.2 Goat prices



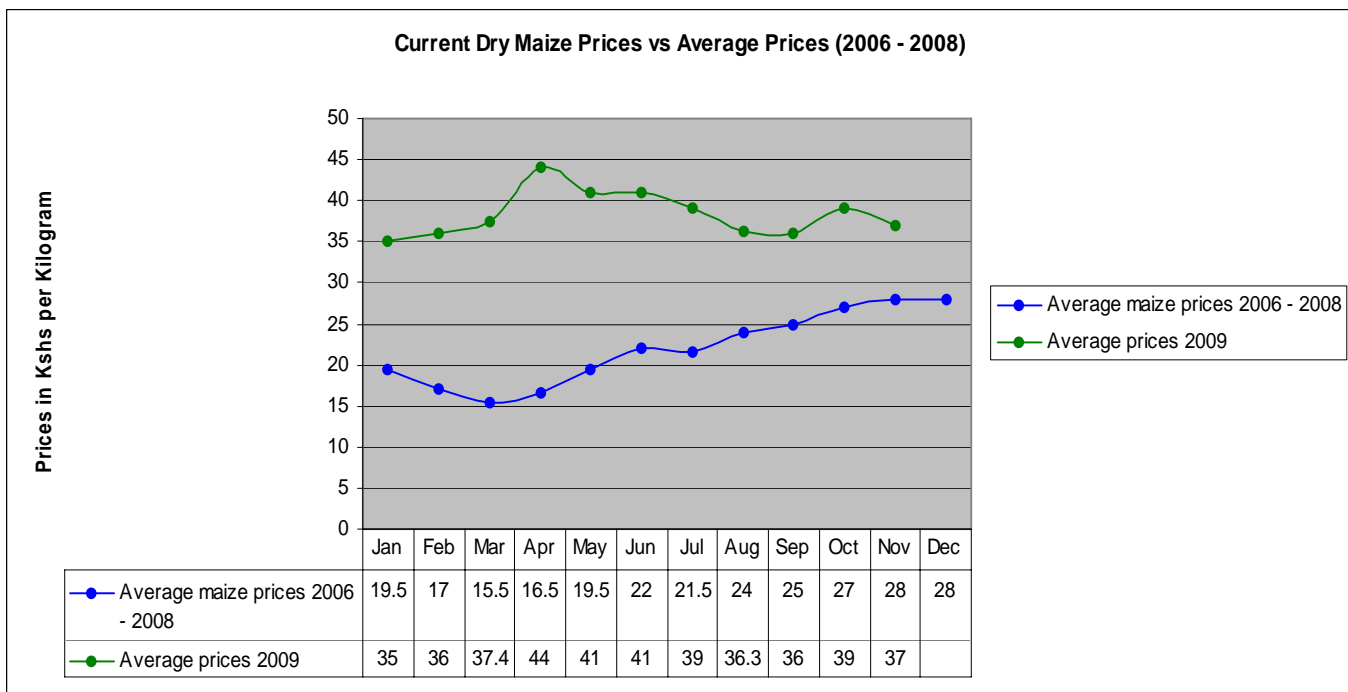
- Goat prices increased drastically from Ksh1,287 in October to Ksh2,223 in November. The prices were above normal at the time of the year. The increase in prices could be attributed to the reduced sales rates within the district. The sales rate declined from 5.8% in October to 1.6%.
- Mwea Division had the highest rate at 2% while Gachoka Division had the lowest at 1.3%. Evurore Division had the highest price at Ksh4,525 while Siakago had the lowest at Ksh1,367.

3.1.3 Milk consumption

- Average milk consumed per household increased from 4.3 bottles of 750ml from the month of October to 5.3 bottles of 750ml to the month of November. The Districts average milk price per litre was Kshs 40.
- The increase in milk consumption is attributed to the increasing availability of water and forage for livestock consumption within the District.

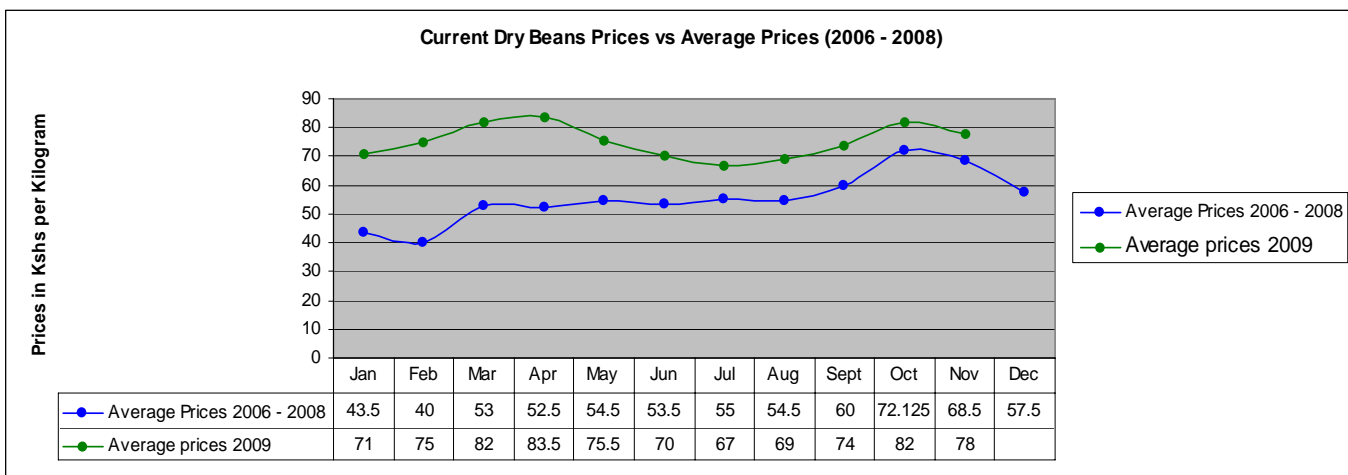
3.2 Crop prices

3.2.1 Maize prices



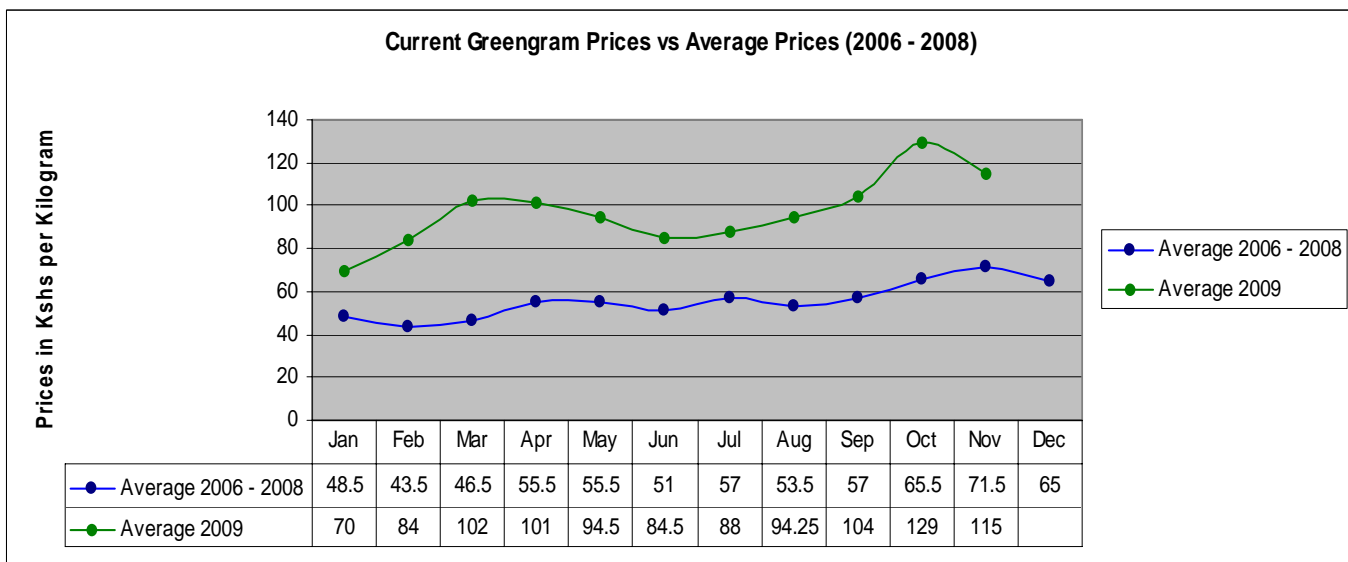
- Maize prices declined slightly from Ksh39 per kilogram in October to Ksh37. The prices are above normal at this period of the year. The decline was attributed to the inflow of the crop from neighbouring Embu and Kirinyaga districts and the distribution of maize as relief food.
- Mwea Division had the highest maize prices at Ksh40 per kilogram while Evurore Division had the lowest at Ksh32.50 per kilogram.

3.2.2 Beans prices



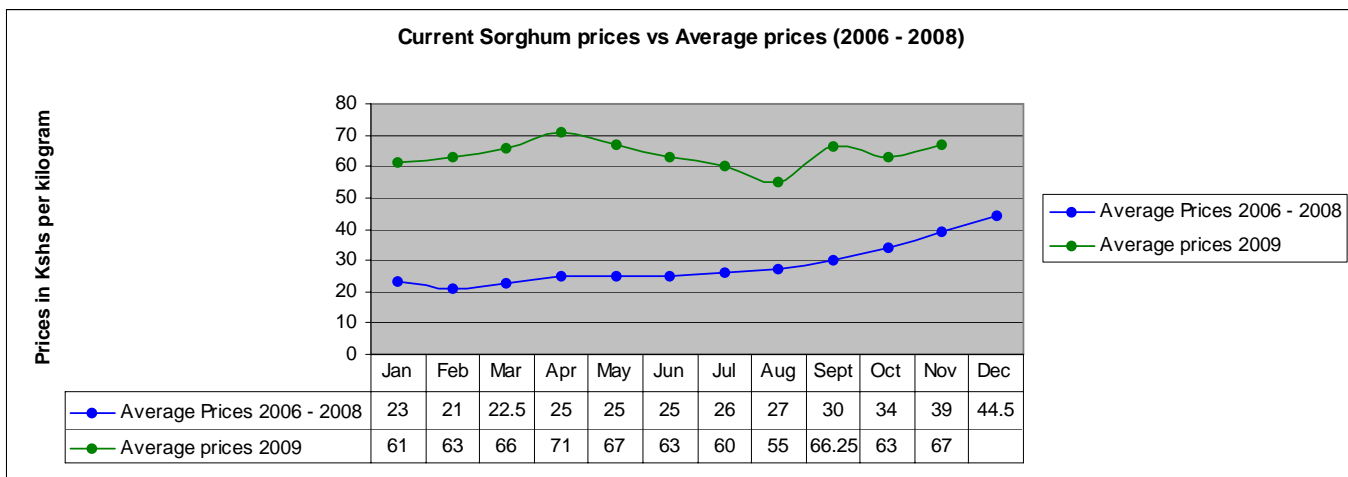
- Beans prices declined from Ksh82 per kilogram in October to Ksh78 per kilogram. The prices were above normal at this period of the year. The decline was attributed to the inflow of the crop from neighbouring Embu and Kirinyaga districts.
- Gachoka Division had the highest beans price at Ksh94 per kilogram while Evurore Division recorded the lowest at Ksh65 per kilogram.

3.2.3 Green grams prices



- Green gram prices declined from Ksh129 per kilogram in October to Ksh115 per kilogram in the month of November. The prices were above normal at this period of the year. The high prices were attributed to the high demand of planting seeds and domestic consumption within the district. Mwea Division had the highest price at Ksh125 per kilogram while Evurore Division recorded the lowest at Ksh 95 per Kilogram.

3.2.4 Sorghum prices

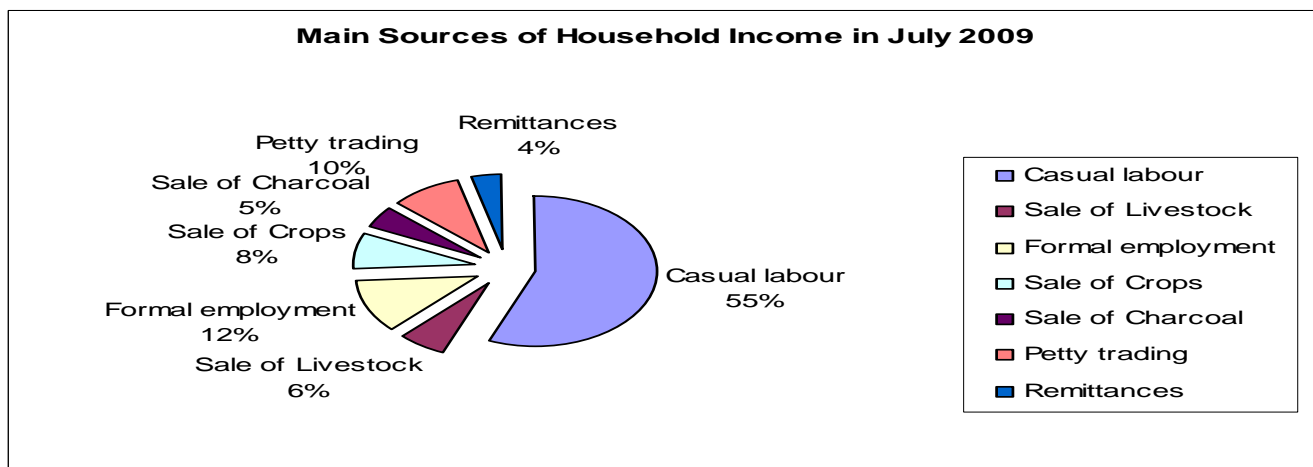


- Sorghum prices increased slightly from Ksh 63 per Kilogram in the month of October to Ksh 67 per Kilogram in the month of November. The prices are above normal at this period of the year. The increase in sorghum prices could be attributed to the high demand for both domestic consumption and planting seeds. Evurore Division had the highest sorghum prices of Ksh77 per Kilogram while Gachoka Division had the lowest of Ksh 55 per kilogram.

3.3 Income

3.3.1 Crop income

Income from crop sales as the source of total household revenue remained level at 8%. The low income from crop sales was attributed to the exhausted harvest that was experienced within some pockets of the district in the last crop season.



3.3.2 Livestock income

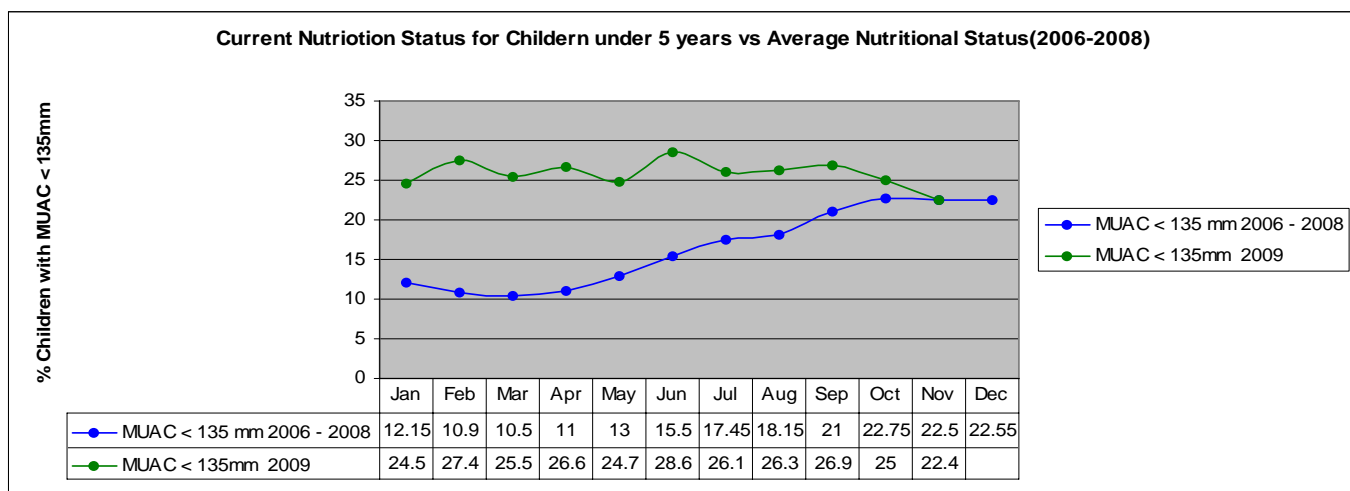
Contribution from livestock sales declined from 9% in October to 6%. This was attributed to the declining sales rate within the district. Casual labour as the major source of aggregate household income in Mbeere district increased from 48% in October to 55%. This was attributed to weeding and replanting as the predominant agricultural activity within the district.

3.6 Implications on food security

High food purchase prices and low livestock prices indicate a food insecure situation. Availability of opportunities for casual laborers indicate a food secure situation.

4.0 Human welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The nutrition status of children below five years improved during the month, with the percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition dropping to 22.4% from 25 in October. A total of 2,100 children in 10 sentinel sites within the district were sampled. The improvement was attributed to the availability of relief food and the school feeding programme.
- Gachoka Division had the highest rate at 33.7%, Evurore Division 26.7%, Mwea Division 15.6% and Siakago Division 13.8%.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Non-food interventions

- Excavation of Matilamu sand dam by ALRMP II.
- Fodder bulking construction and utilisation.
- Kamukameri spring protection.
- Extension of the Kogari pipeline by ALRMP II.
- Disease surveillance and response by the Ministry of Public Health.
- Vaccination of livestock against foot and mouth, Black quarter and Rift valley fever. The vaccination campaign is targeting 20,000 cattle and 30,000 sheep and goats within the District.
- De-worming campaign for all livestock within the district.

5.2 Food aid

- Relief seed distribution.
- Distribution of relief food from the world Food Programme by the lead agency Catholic Diocese of Embu targeting 76,000 beneficiaries within the whole district.
- Distribution of relief food by CCS Mayori (Anglican Church) targeting 800 beneficiaries within Ngoce, Makima and Machanga.
- Homegrown school feeding programme targeting 110 schools within the district.

6.0 Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

The District Steering Group met on 26/10/2009 at the District headquarters, Mbeere, and the following recommendations were realised.

- The DSG selected Ishiara, Ngiiri, Mutuovare and Makima markets as sites for the purchase of livestock ear-marked for livestock off-take process which targeted a total of 200 mature cattle.

- The relief food distribution Lead agency was authorised by the DSG to slaughter 10% of the procured mature cattle under the livestock off take exercise and distribute to the community. The slaughtering exercise was to be overseen by the District Veterinary officer.