



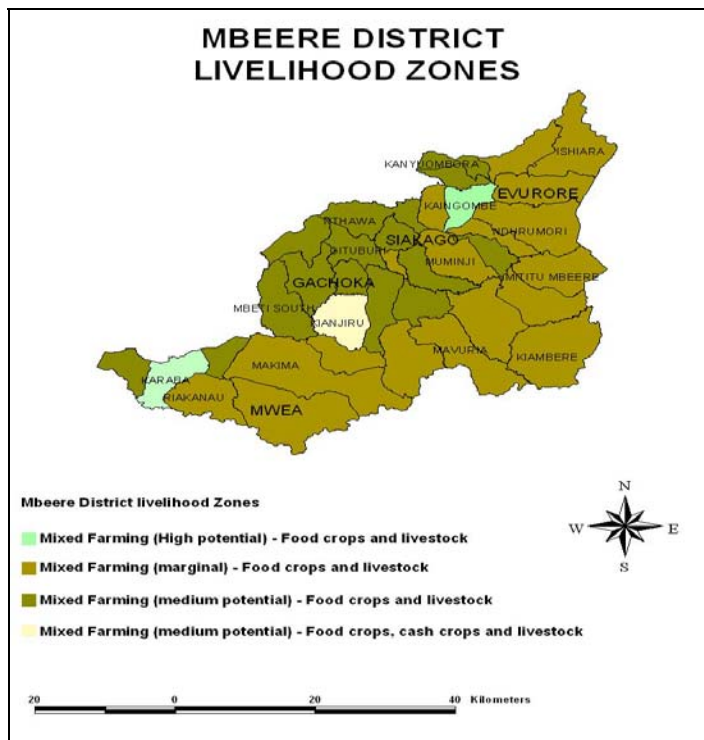
**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

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

**DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, OCTOBER 2009**

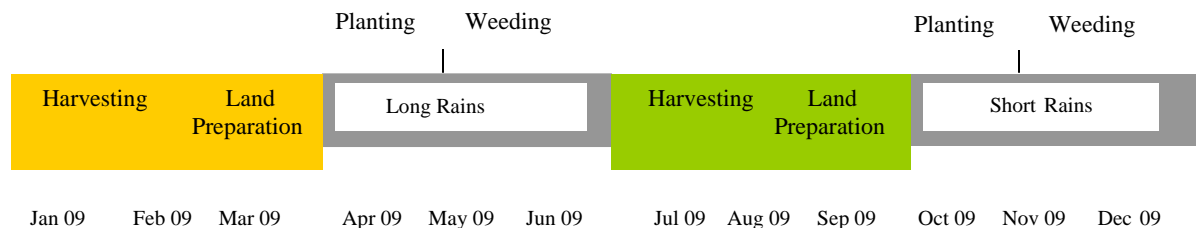
**Mbeere District**

**Warning Stage**



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

**Seasonal Calendar**



## **Situation overview**

- The district received an average of 126.9 mm of rainfall for about 8 days during the month. The rainfall commenced on 15/10/2009 and compared to the previous years, the onset was early.
- Relatively warm and wet weather conditions prevailed across the district during the month under review.
- Pasture and browse availability and accessibility improved considerably across the district.
- Water availability and accessibility was good as both permanent and seasonal water reservoirs recharged thus reducing the pressure and congestion at watering points.
- Livestock body conditions remained fair to poor but are expected to improve with the improvement of pasture and browse availability within the district.
- Land preparation was the predominant agricultural activity across the district.
- Food purchase prices remained high during the month.
- The nutrition status of children under 5 years deteriorated slightly compared to the month of August, with no major ailments being reported within the district.
- Due to the commencement of the short rains, there was improvement of the environmental indicators, rural indicators and welfare indicators. The situation can be described as Alarm improving.

## **Recommendations to DSG and national KFSSG**

- Promotion of drought-tolerant crops e.g. sorghum, millet and pigeon peas in an effort to maximize the expected crop yield in the ongoing short rains season.
- PPR and other livestock disease surveillance.
- 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.

## **Current interventions**

### **Non-food interventions**

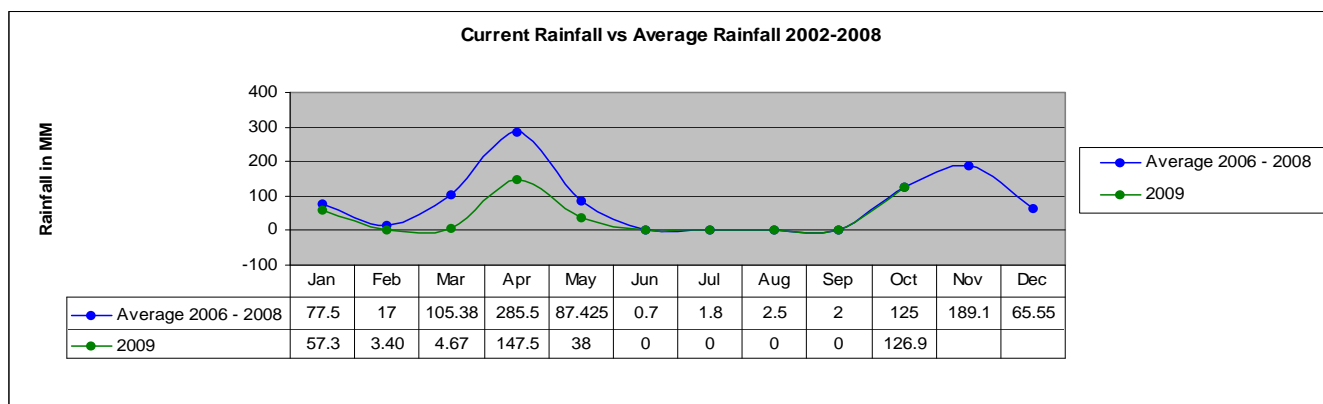
- Excavation of Matilamu sand dam by ALRMP II.
- Fodder bulking construction and utilisation.
- Kamukameri spring protection.
- Extension of the Kogari pipeline by ALRMP II.
- Disease surveillance and response by the Ministry of Public Health.
- Vaccination of livestock against foot and mouth, black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

## 1. Environmental indicators (Stability)

### 1.1 Rainfall



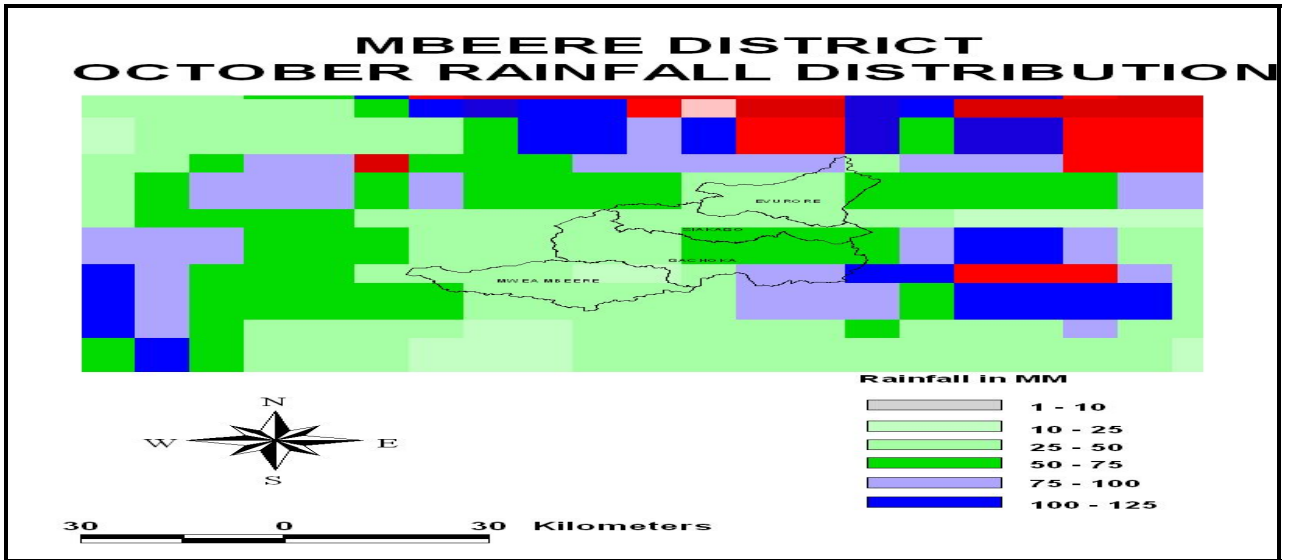
*(Source: Divisional Agricultural Offices)*

The district received an average of 126.9 mm of rainfall in the month of October. This reveals normal trend during this period of the year.

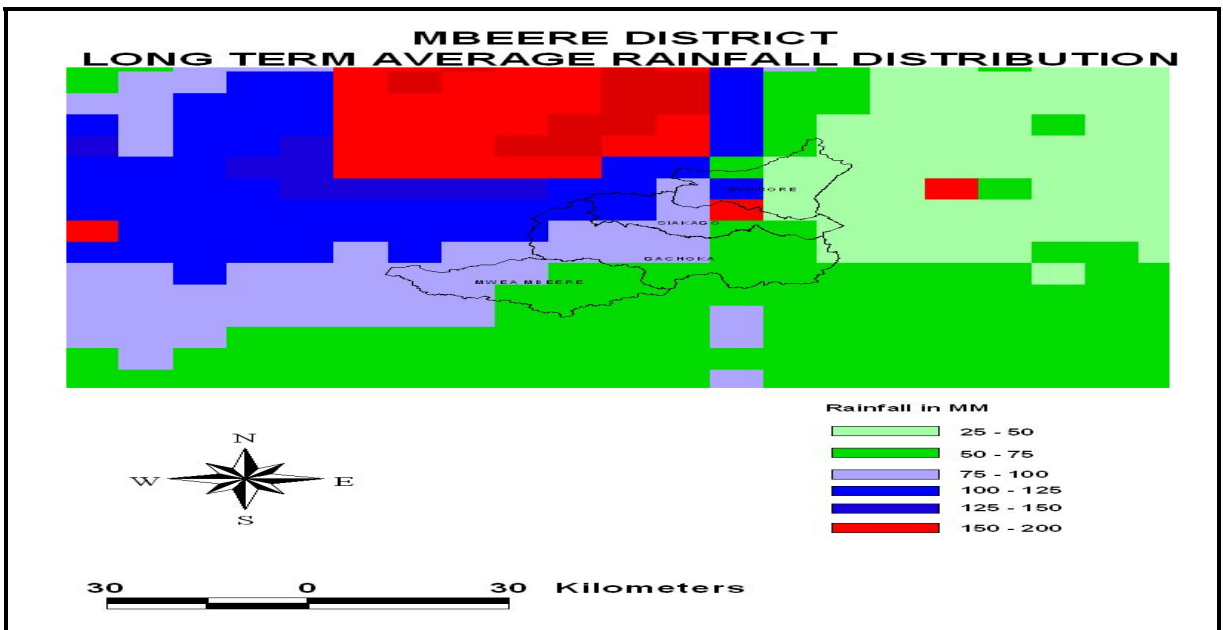
The rainfall commenced as from the 15/10/2009 and compared to the previous years, the onset was early. On average, the District received 8 days of rainfall.

#### Temporal and spatial rainfall distribution within the district

Division	Rainfall station	October	
		mm	Wet days
Siakago	Siakago market	143.3	9
Evurore	Ishiera market	134.4	7
Gachoka	Gachoka market	119	5
Mwea	Karaba market	110.9	11
<b>District Average</b>		<b>126.9</b>	<b>8</b>

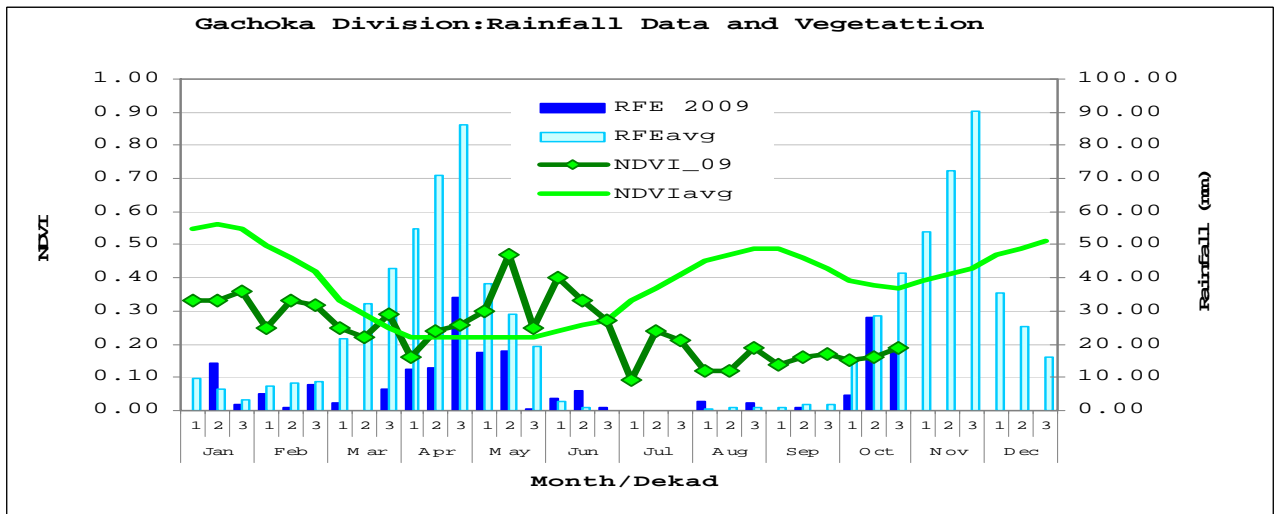
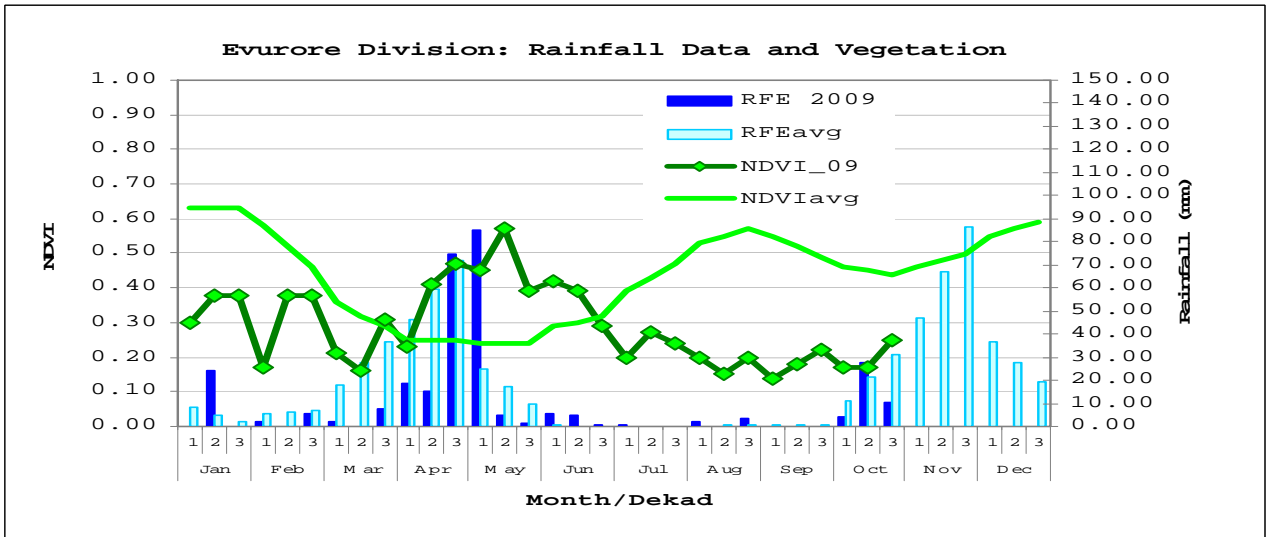
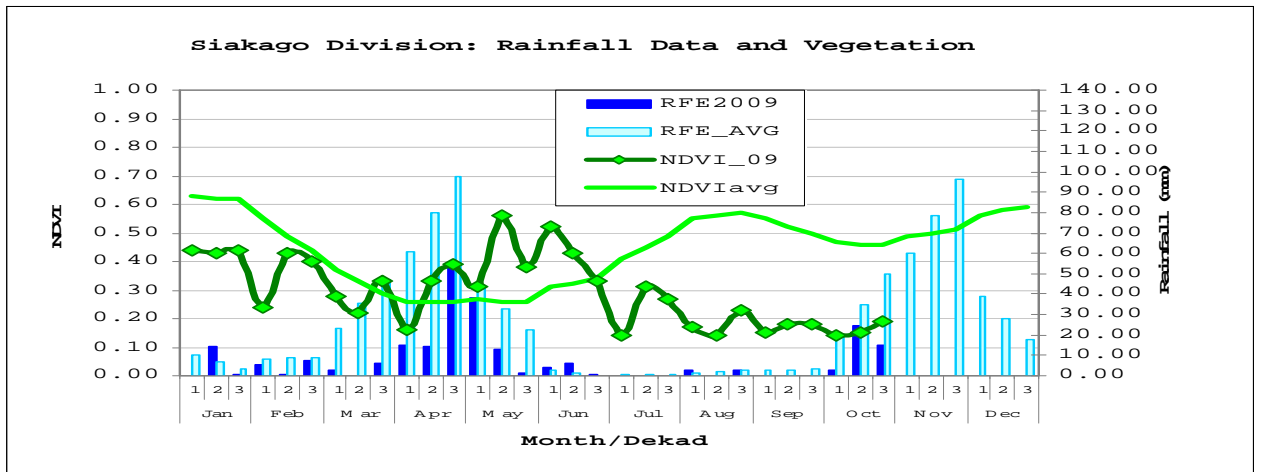


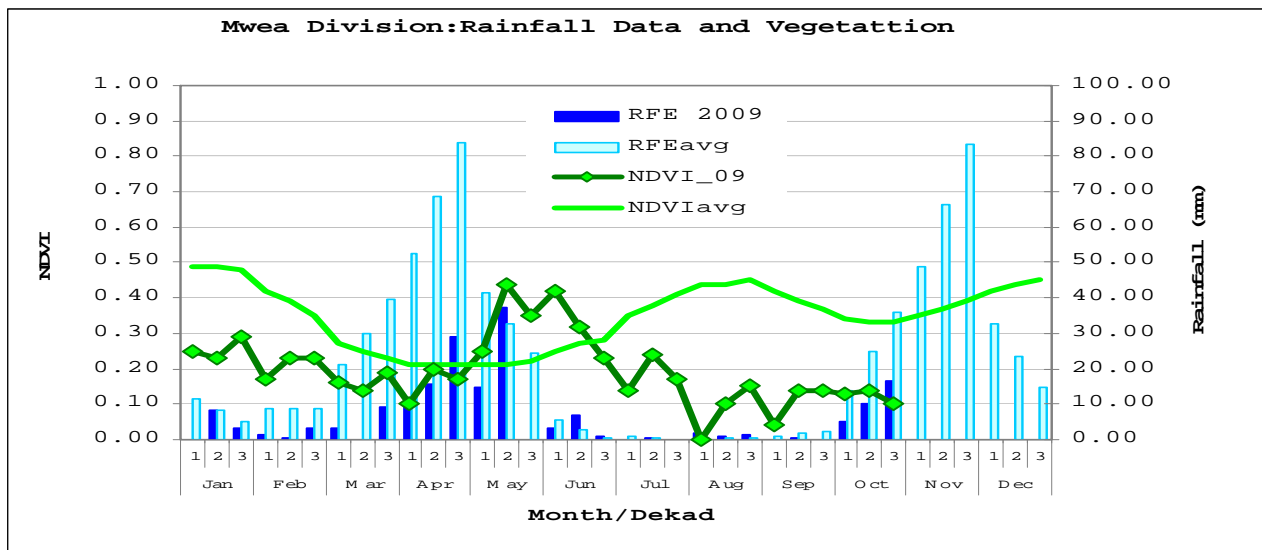
(Source: ALRMP II/ FEWSNET)



(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 the time of the year. As shown by the NDVI and rainfall tables above, the pasture and browse quality was below normal levels but the situation is improving due to the commencement of the short rains.
- Pasture and browse availability was fair and improving within the district. The prevailing situation was not normal at the time 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 was below normal but improving as shown on the NDVI graphs for the four divisions. The improvement in pasture quantity was attributed to the commencement 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

- Water availability and accessibility was good within the district. The situation was normal at the time 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.
- Most of the water sources re-charged with the commencement of the short rains. The water sources are expected to achieve optimum recharge levels as the rainfall persists.

#### 1.3.1 Livestock access to water

- Distances from grazing areas to main water sources declined from 6.3 km in September to 4.3 km in October. The prevailing distances were not normal at the time of the year.
- Water levels in various watering points' e.g. seasonal rivers, catchments pools, earth dams and water pans recharged, reducing the pressure and congestion. It is anticipated that the distances to watering points will decrease even further due to commencement and persistence of the short rains.

#### 1.3.2 Household access to water

- Average distances from households to the main water sources declined from 5.1km in September to an average of 2.5km in October. The prevailing distances were not normal at the time of the year.
- Water reservoirs i.e. catchments pools, earth dams and water pans recharged their water levels, reducing the distances covered in search of water for domestic use. Distances covered in search of

water are expected to decrease even further due to the commencement and 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 indicators (Food availability)**

#### **2.1 Livestock production**

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

- Livestock body conditions were fair to poor for all animal species within the district. The prevailing body conditions were not normal at this period of the year. The prevailing physical conditions could be attributed to the poor availability of forage and water for livestock in the last month but this is expected to change as the availability of pasture and browse improved due to the commencement of the short rains in October.

##### **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 3.7 bottles of 750ml from the month of September to 4.3 bottles of 750ml the month of October. The increased milk production could be attributed to the increasing availability of water and forage within the district due to the commencement of the short rains.
- Output variation was 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 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 with no cases of re-planting.

#### **2.2.2 Pests and diseases**

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

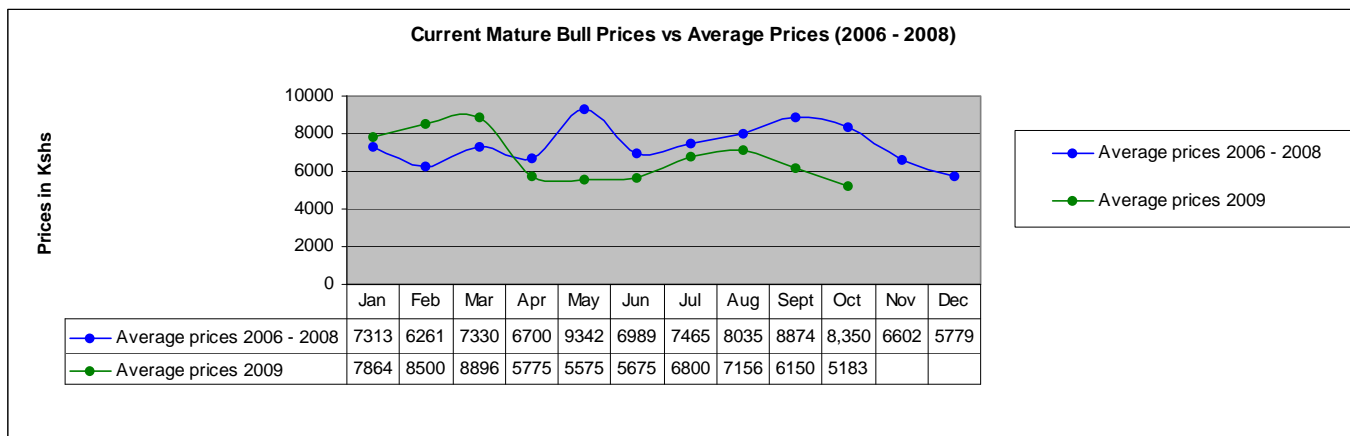
#### **2.2.3 Implications on food security**

Lack of water, low crop yields and declining milk production within the district translated into food insecurity.

### 3.0 Access to food

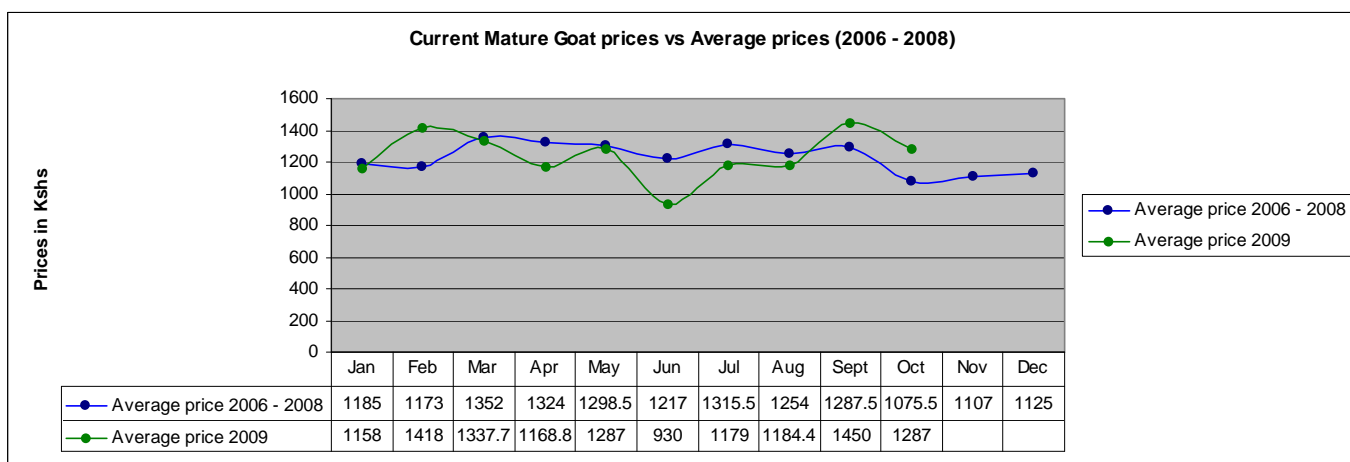
#### 3.1 Livestock marketing

##### 3.1.1 Cattle prices



- Cattle prices declined from Ksh6,150 in September to Ksh5,183. The price was below normal at the time of the year. The low prices could be attributed to the increased sales rates in the district.
- The sales rates increased from 0.8 % in September to 2.2% in October. Siakago division recorded the highest rate at 3.5% while Gachoka division recorded the lowest rate at 0.5%. Mwea Division had the highest price of Ksh7,000 while Evurore Division had the lowest price of Ksh4,733.

##### 3.1.2 Goat prices



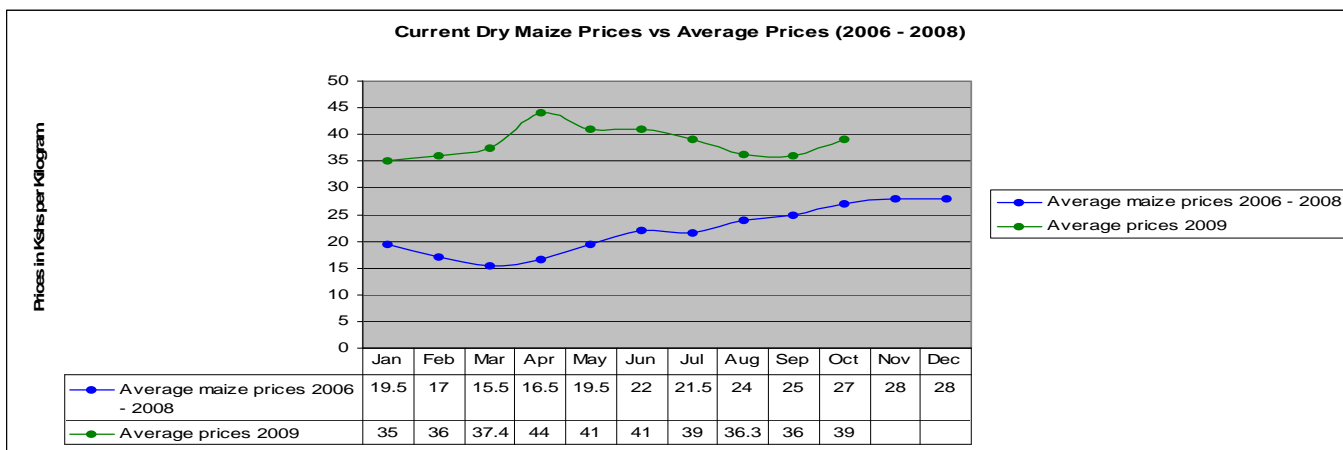
- Goat prices declined from Ksh1,450 in September to Ksh1,287. The prices were above normal at the time of the year. The decline in prices could be attributed to the increased sales rates.
- The sales rate increased from 4.6% in September to 5.8% in October. Evurore Division had the highest rate at 9.2% while Mwea Division had the lowest rate at 3.3%. Siakago Division had the highest price of Ksh1,386 while Evurore had the lowest at Ksh1,137.

##### 3.1.3 Milk consumption

Average milk consumed per household increased from 3.7 bottles (750ml) in September to 4.3 bottles in October. The district average milk price per litre was Ksh42. The increase in milk consumption was attributed to the increasing availability of water and forage within the district due to the commencement of the short rains.

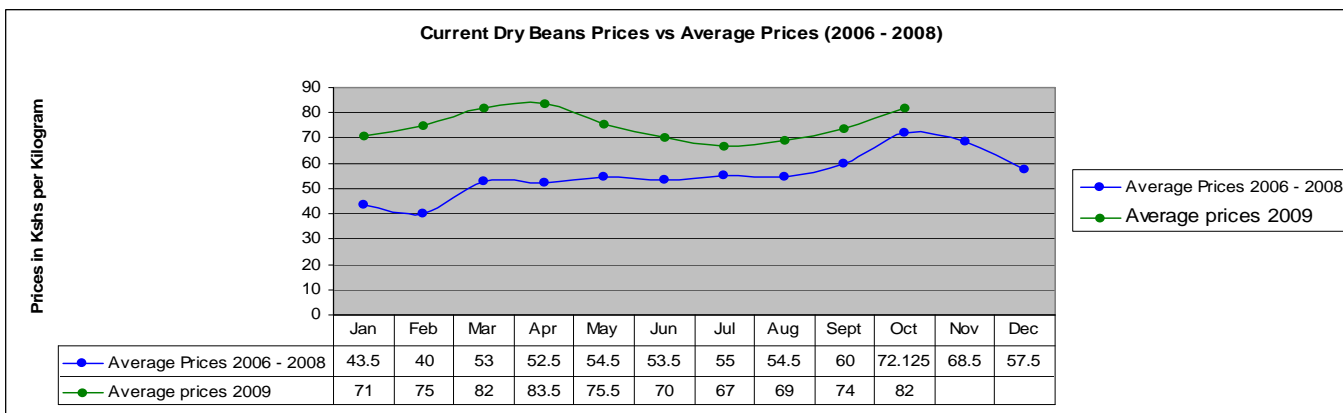
## 3.2 Crop prices

### 3.2.1 Maize prices



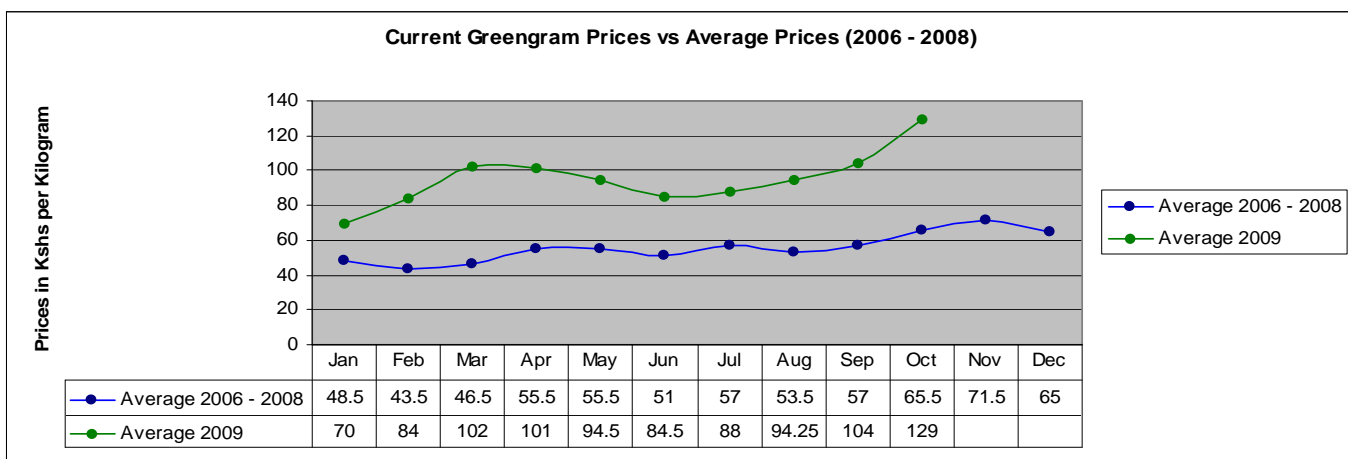
- Maize prices increased from Ksh36 per kilo in September to Ksh39 per kilogram in October. The prices were above normal at the time of the year. The increase in the price was attributed to the high demand of planting seeds and domestic consumption.
- Gachoka Division had the highest maize prices at Kshs 51 per kilogram while Siakago Divisions had the lowest at Ksh32.50 per kilogram.

### 3.2.2 Beans prices



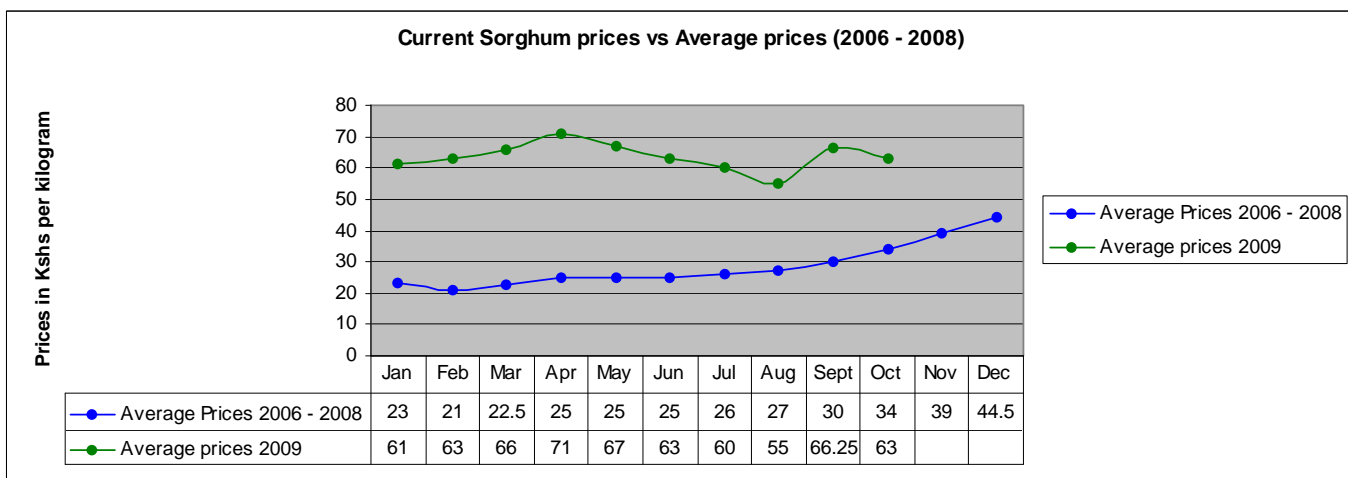
- Beans prices increased from Ksh74 per kilogram in September to Ksh82 in October. The prices were above normal at the time of the year. The increase in the prices was attributed to the high demand for both household consumption and planting seeds.
- Gachoka Division had the highest beans price at Ksh101 per kilogram while Evurore Division recorded the lowest at Ksh68 per kilogram.

### 3.2.3 Green grams prices



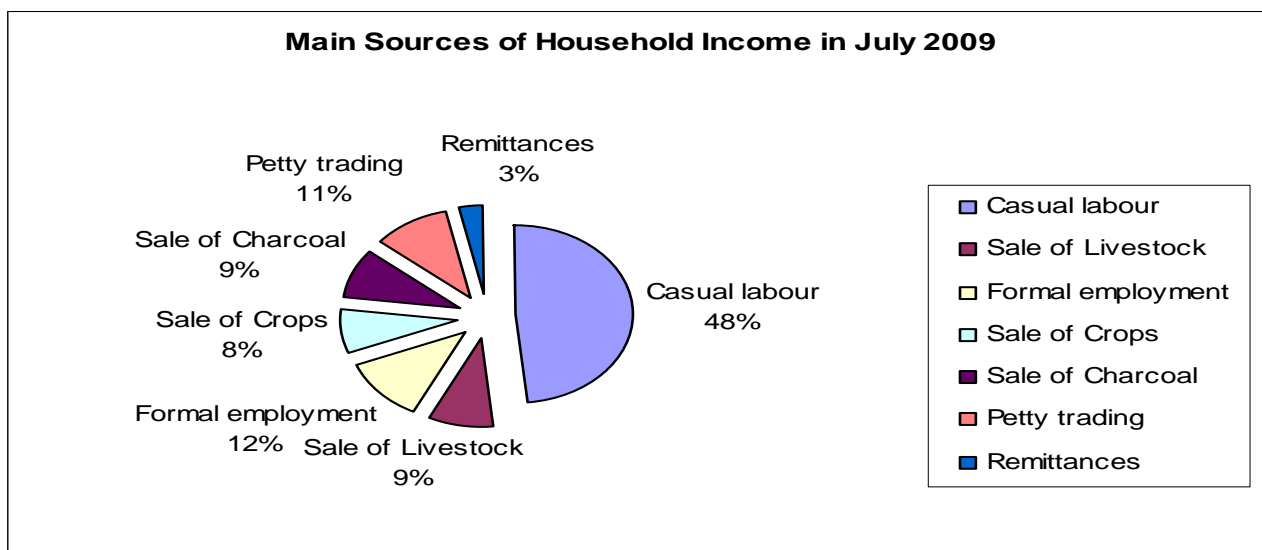
- Green gram prices increased from Ksh104 per kilogram in September to Ksh129 in October. The prices were above normal at the time of the year. The increase in the prices was attributed to the high demand of planting seeds within the district. Gachoka Division had the highest price at Ksh 138 per kilogram while Siakago Division recorded the lowest at Ksh118 per kilogram.

### 3.2.4 Sorghum prices



- Sorghum prices declined slightly from Ksh66.25 per kilogram in September to Ksh 63 in October. The prices were above normal at the time of the year. The sorghum prices could be attributed to the high demand for both domestic consumption and planting seeds. Siakago Division had the highest sorghum prices at Ksh72.5 per kilogram while Gachoka Division had the lowest at Ksh52.5.

### 3.5 Income



#### 3.5.1 Crop income

- Income from crop sales increased slightly from 7% in September to 8% in October as the source of total household revenue. The low income from crop sales as a source of total household revenue was attributed to the exhausted harvest experienced within some pockets of the district.

#### 3.5.2 Livestock income

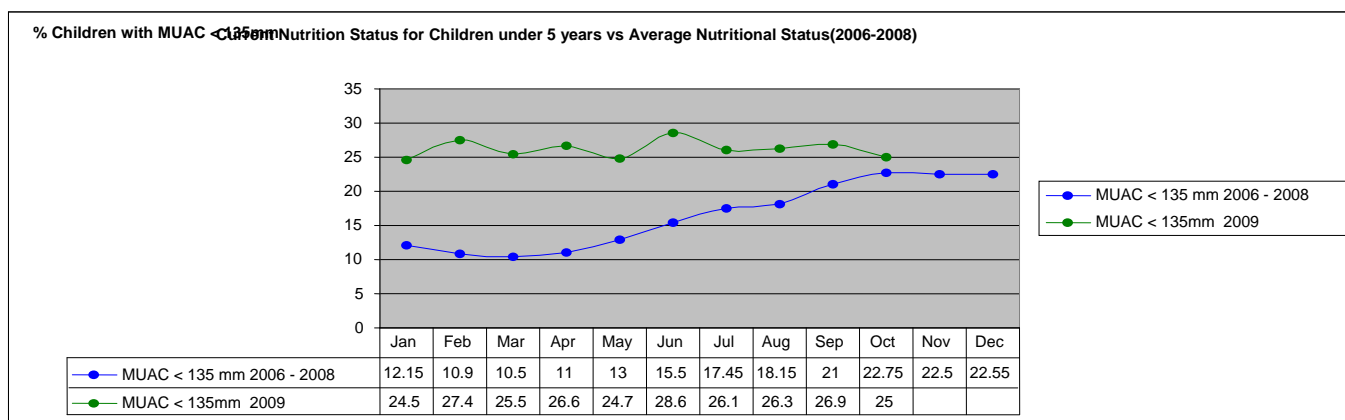
- Contribution from livestock sales declined from 16% in September to 9% in October. This was attributed to the price decline within the local livestock markets in the district.
- Casual labour as the major source of aggregate household income in the district increased from 46% in September to 48% in October. This was attributed to the commencement of planting as the predominant agricultural activity within the District.

### 3.6 Implications on food security

- High food purchase prices and low livestock prices indicated a food insecure situation. Availability of opportunities for casual labourers boosted food security.

## 4.0 Human welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

### 4.1 Nutrition status



- The nutrition status of children below five years improved during the month under review, with the percentage of those rated at risk dropping to 25 from 26.9 in September.
- A total of 1,860 children in 10 sentinel sites within the district were sampled. The improved situation could be attributed to the availability of relief food and the school feeding programme.
- Evurore Division had the highest rate at 28.9%, Gachoka Division 25.7%, Mwea Division 20% and Siakago Division 25.6%.

## **5.0 Current interventions**

### **5.1 Non-food intervention**

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- Fodder bulking construction and utilisation.
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## **6.0 Recommendations**

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- PPR and other livestock disease surveillance.