



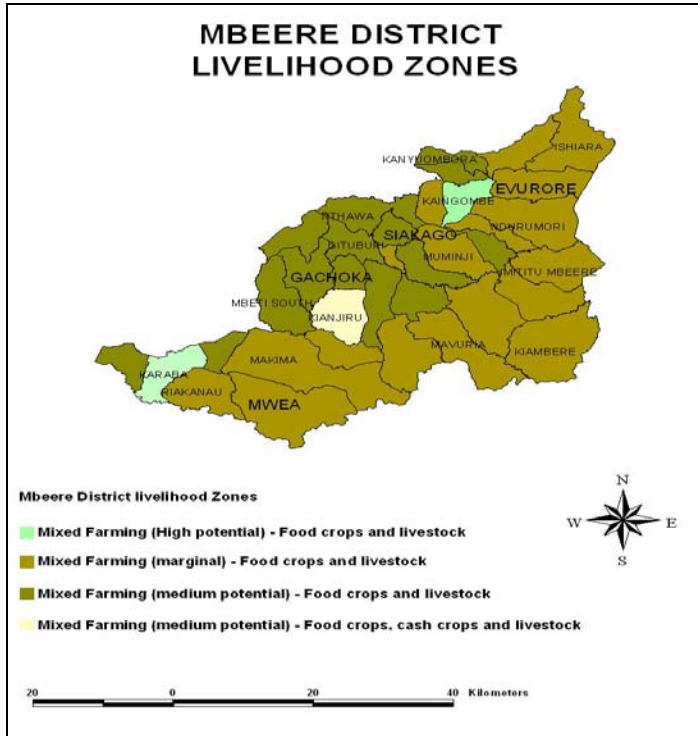
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

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

DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, SEPTEMBER 2009

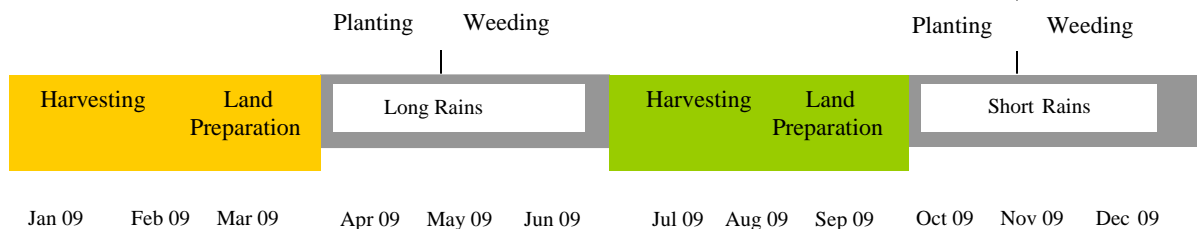
Mbeere District

Warning Stage



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

Seasonal Calendar



Situation overview

- Hot and dry weather conditions prevailed across the entire district.
- Land preparation intensified as the predominant agricultural activity across the district. Food purchase prices remained high.
- Pasture and browse availability and accessibility was poor across the district and livestock body conditions were fair to poor and the prices remained below normal for cattle.
- Water availability and accessibility was poor as both permanent and seasonal water reservoirs depleted their water, with the few available watering points experiencing increased pressure and congestion.
- The nutrition status of children below five years declined further during the month, with the percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition rising to 26.9 from 26.1 in August. The rate was higher than the long term mean of 21% for the years 2006-2008. The situation seems to have deteriorated slightly in the month, which was attributed to the lack of clean drinking water and proper feeding.
- Due to lack of rainfall within the month, there was deterioration of the environmental indicators, rural indicators and welfare indicators. The situation can be described as Alarm and worsening.

Recommendations DSG and KFSM

- 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 400 mature cattle.
- The relief food distribution lead agency was authorised by the DSG to slaughter 40 mature cattle (10%) procured under the livestock off-take exercise and distribute to the community. The slaughtering exercise was to be overseen by the District Veterinary officer.
- The relief food distribution lead agency was mandated by the DSG to undertake beneficiaries re-targeting. The exercise was to identify 76,000 beneficiaries within the district, with Siakago Division being allocated 11,900 beneficiaries, Evurore Division 15,000 beneficiaries, Gachoka Division 27,400 and Mwea Division 21,700 beneficiaries.
- Surveillance of the malnutrition levels within the district, especially Divisions with Alarm/emergency levels of MUAC by the ALRMP II and Ministry of Public Health.
- 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 by ALRMP II and Ministry of Water.

Current interventions

Non-food interventions

- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes within the entire District by ALRMP II and Ministry of Water.
- 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.
- Disease surveillance and response by the District Veterinary Office.

Food aid

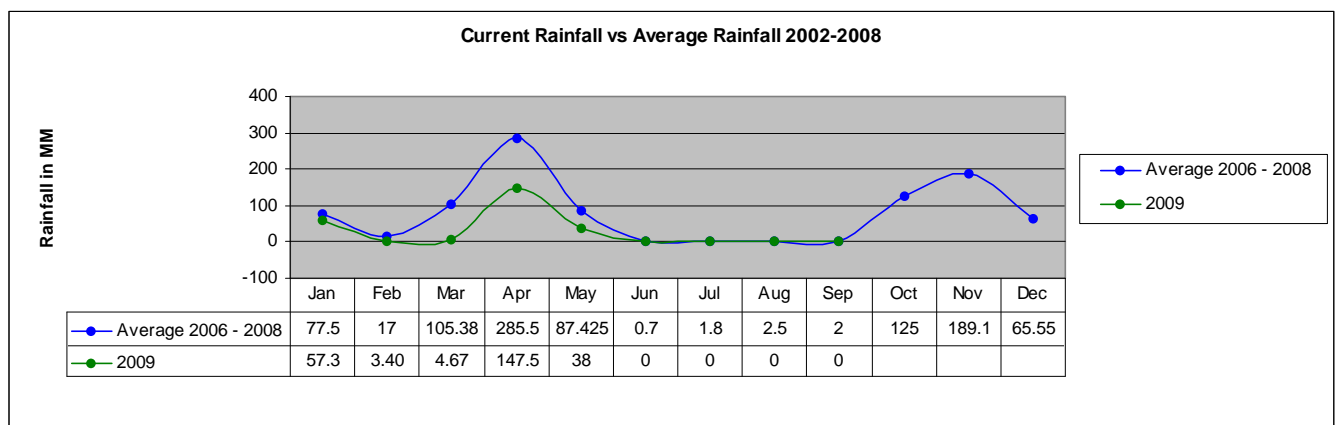
- Relief seed distribution.

- Distribution of relief food from the world Food Programme by the lead agency Catholic Diocese of Embu targeting 55,942 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.

1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall

Division	Rainfall Station	SEPTEMBER	
		mm	Wet days
Siakago	Siakago market	0	NIL
Evurore	Ishiara market	0	NIL

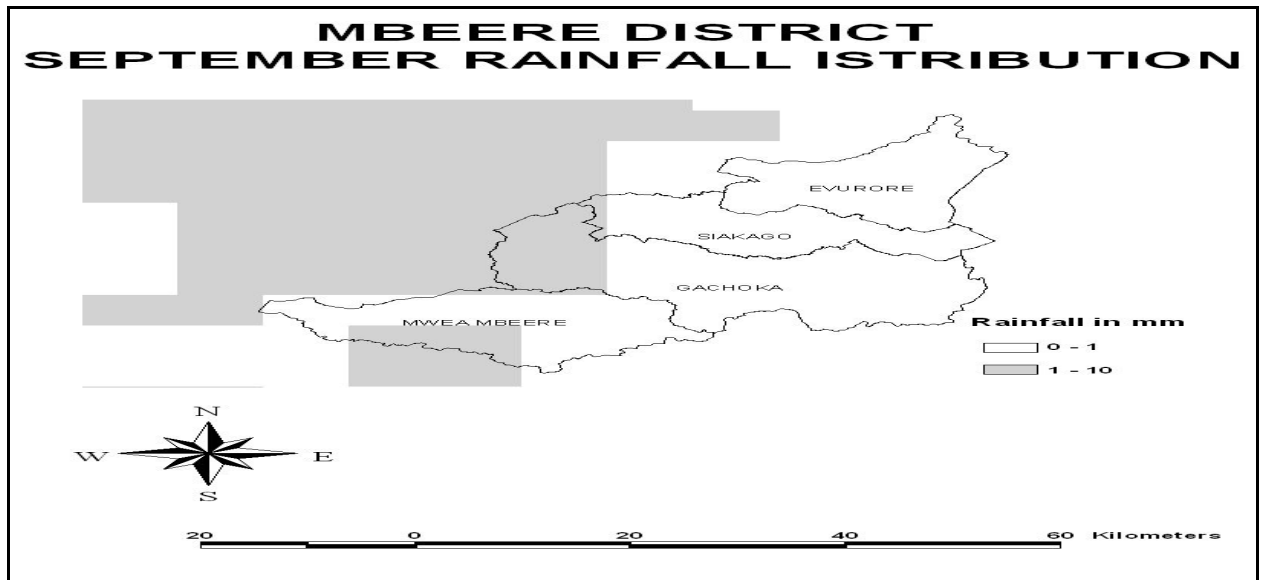


(Source: Divisional Agricultural Offices)

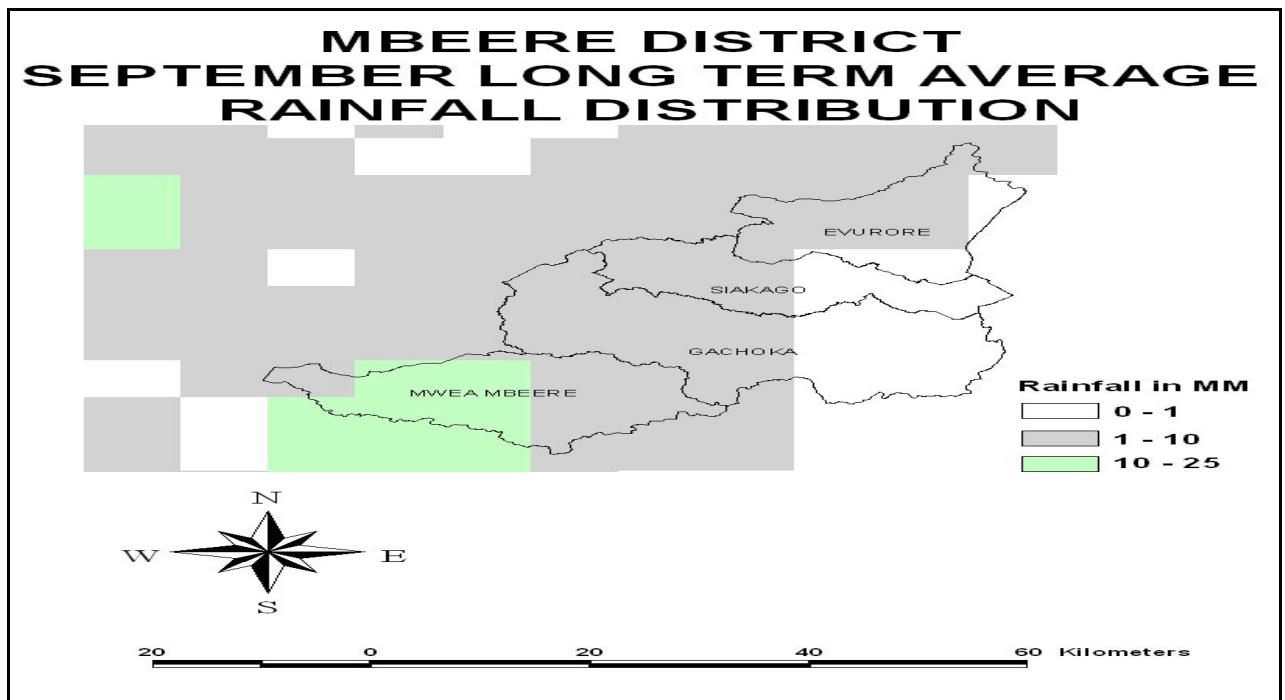
The District did not receive any rainfall in the month of September. This reveals a below normal trend during this period of the year.

Gachoka	Gachoka market	0	NIL
Mwea	Karaba market	0	NIL

(Source: Divisional Agricultural Offices)

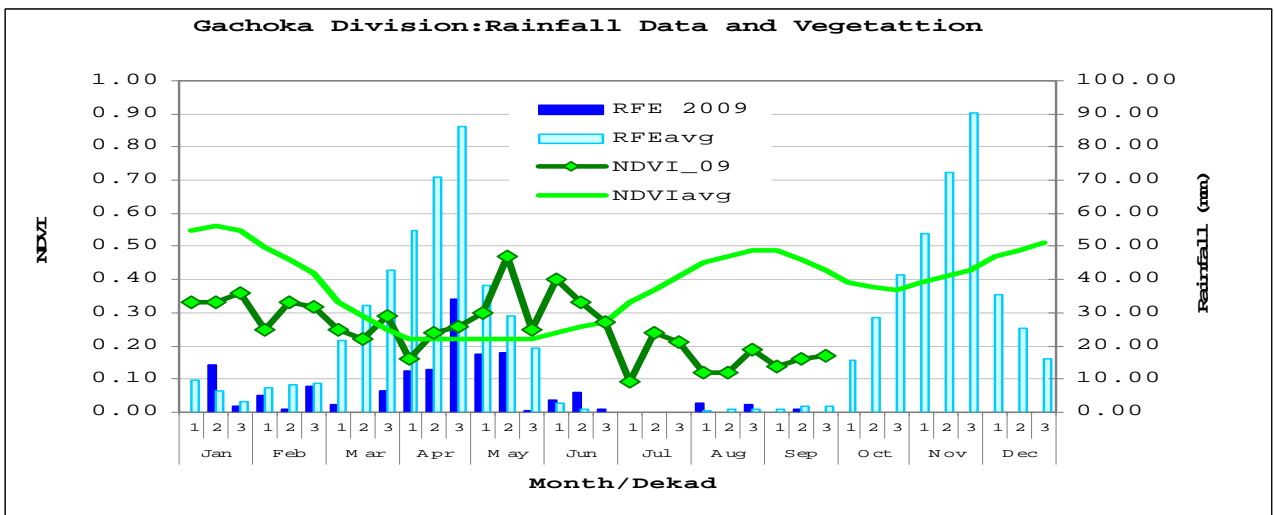
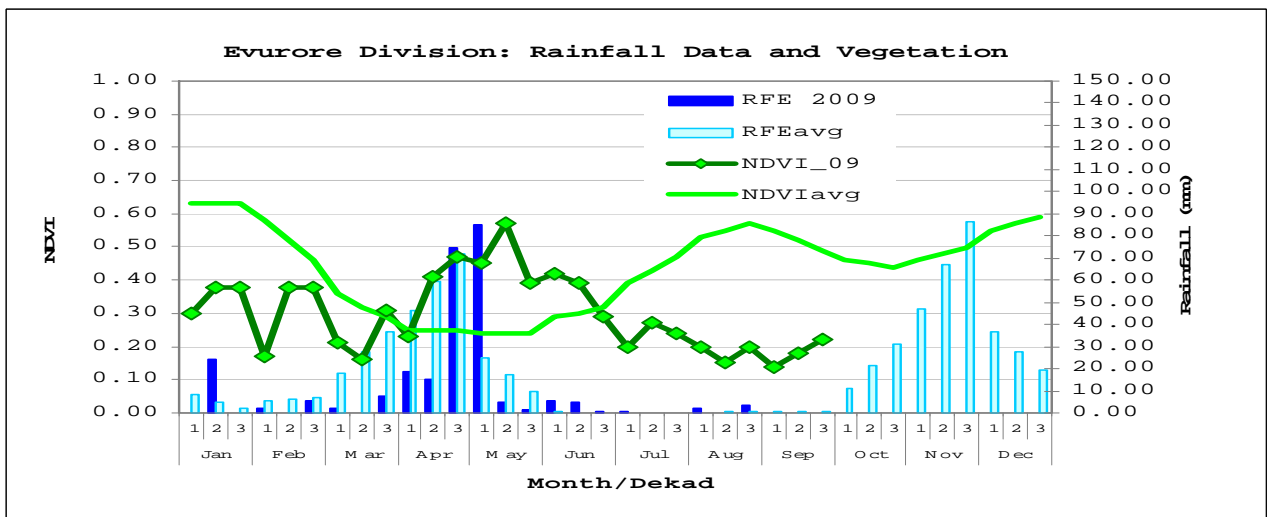
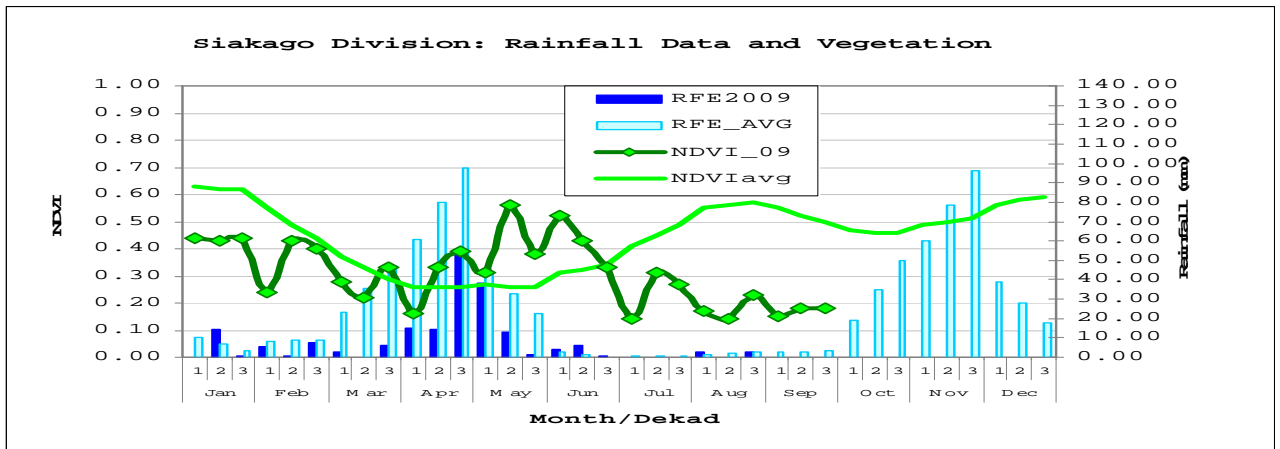


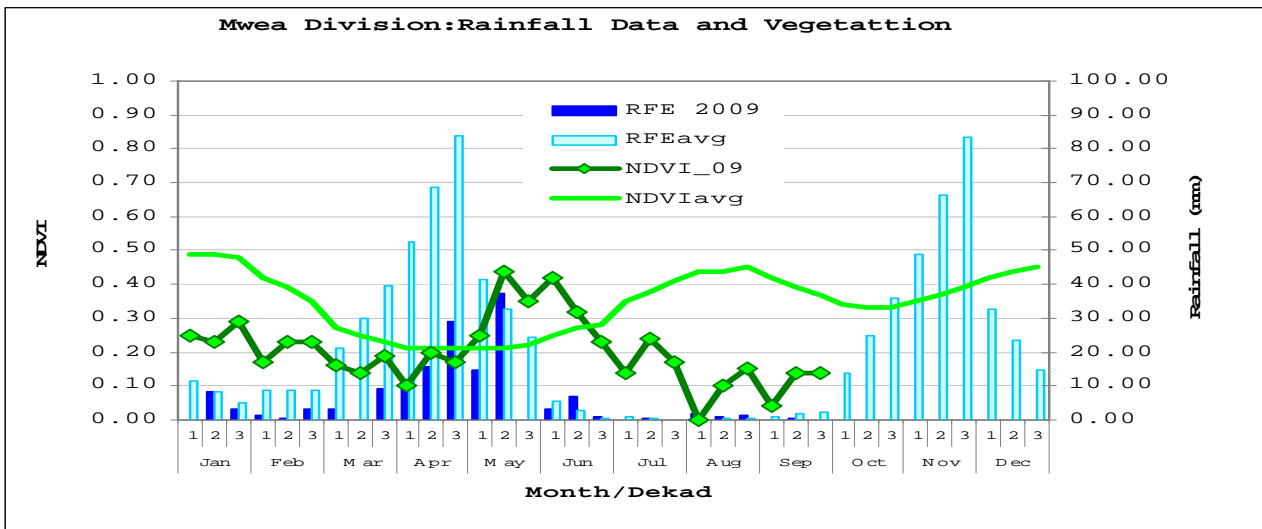
(Source: ALRMP II/ FEWSNET)



(Source: ALRMP II/ FEWSNET)

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture





(Source: ALRMP II/ FEWSNET)

- Pastures and browse quality was poor across the district. The situation was not normal at this period of the year. As shown by the NDVI and rainfall tables above, the pasture and browse quality was below the normal levels due to lack of rainfall in the district. Most affected areas were Mutuovare, Makima, Karaba, Riakanau, Ndurumori, Gichiche, Mavuria, Kiambere, Ndurumori and Ishiara locations.
- The quantity of pasture and browse within the district was below normal as shown on the NDVI graphs for the four divisions. This was attributed to the prolonged dry spell in the District. Pasture and browse quantity is expected to diminish even further due to lack of rainfall.

1.3 Water sources and availability

1.3.1 Water sources

- Water availability and accessibility was poor within the district. The situation was not normal at the time of the year. Communities depended on natural rivers, boreholes, traditional river wells, pans and springs for both domestic and human consumption. Most of the water sources dried up due to continued consumption, with areas like Kiambere, Mutuovare, Gichiche, Mavuria and Ndurumori being most affected by acute water shortage. The situation is expected to deteriorate even further due to the absence of rainfall to recharge these sources.

1.3.2 Livestock access to water

- Distances from grazing areas to main water sources increased from 5.6 km in the month of August to 6.3 km in the month of September. 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 dried up increasing pressure and congestion on the few available watering points. It is anticipated that the distances to watering points will increase even further due to lack of rainfall to recharge these water sources.

1.3.3 Household access to water

- Average distances from households to the main water sources also increased from 4.8km in the month of August to an average of 5.1km in the month of September. The prevailing distances were not normal at the time of the year.

- Water dried up in most of the water reservoirs i.e. catchments pools, earth dams and water pans increasing 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

Declined water levels in various water reservoirs and the poor quantity and quality of pasture and browse indicated 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 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 consumption.
- Poor cattle body conditions were evident within the mixed marginal zones i.e. Ndurumori, Ishiara, Kiambere, Mutuovare, Karaba, Gichiche, Mavuria and Makima due to the poor availability of forage and water within these zones, leading to migration of animals to the upper mixed farming zones. There was also migration of animals from the neighboring Districts i.e. Mwingi and Kitui into the District in search of pasture and water which is increasing congestion and pressure within the watering points. The livestock 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.

2.1.2 Milk production

- Average milk production per household remained at an average of 3.7 bottles of 750ml from the month of August to the month of September. The low milk production could be attributed to the low quantity and quality of pasture and browse within the District and decreased birth rates for livestock. Gachoka Division had the highest milk output. 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

- Land preparation was the major agricultural activities taking place in the farms within the District. Little harvest was experienced within the mixed farming zones, while there was no harvest within the marginal mixed farming zones, i.e. Mutuovare, Makima, Karaba, Ndurumori, Gichiche, Mavuria, Kiambere, Ndurumori and Ishiara locations.

2.2.2 Pests and diseases

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

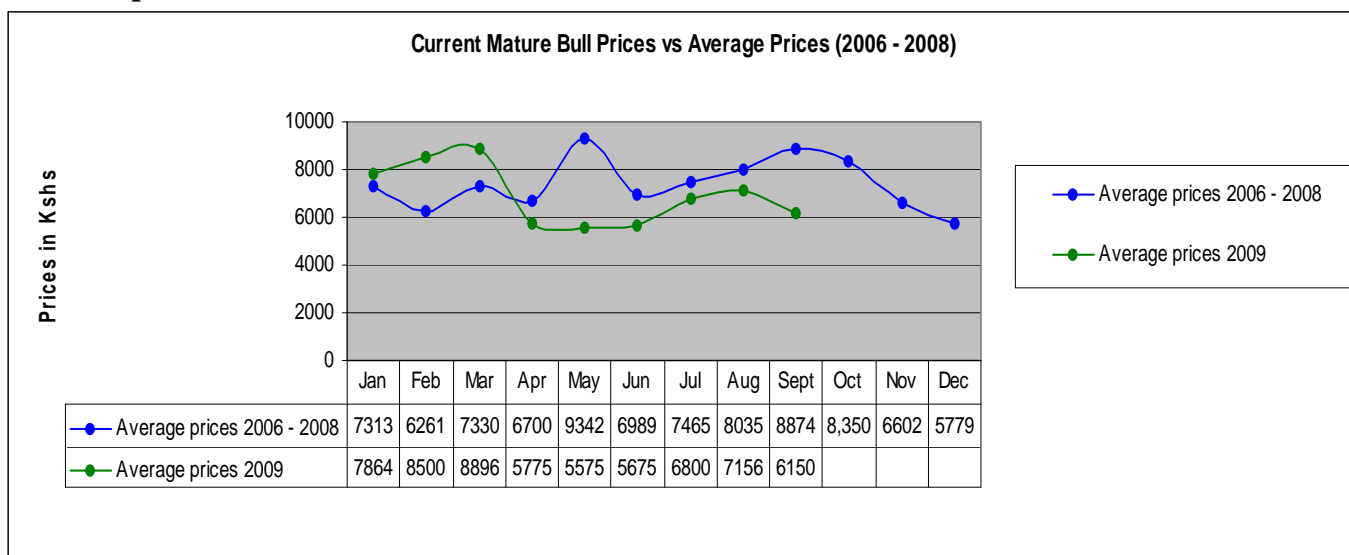
2.2.3 Implications on food Security

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

3.0 Access to food

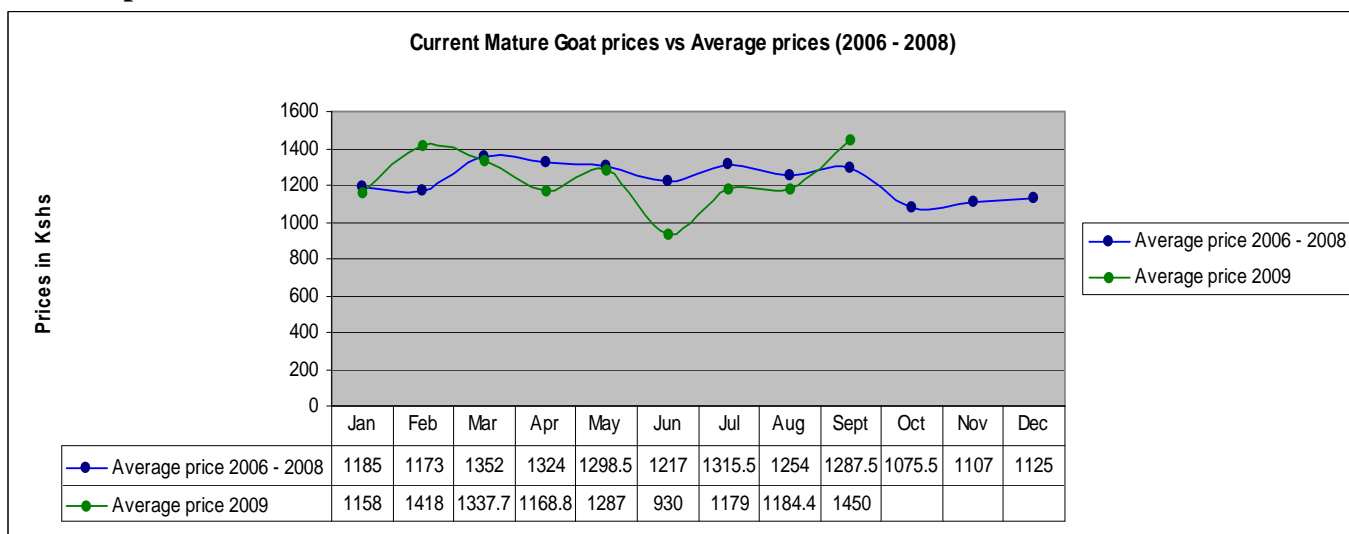
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices



- Cattle prices declined within the district. The prices were below normal at this period of the year. The low prices could be attributed to the poor animal body conditions due to the lack of forage and water.
- The sales rate declined from 2.1% in the month of August to 0.8 % in the month of September. Siakago Division recorded the highest selling rate of 1.1% . Evurore division recorded the highest selling price of Ksh6,800.

3.3.2 Goat prices



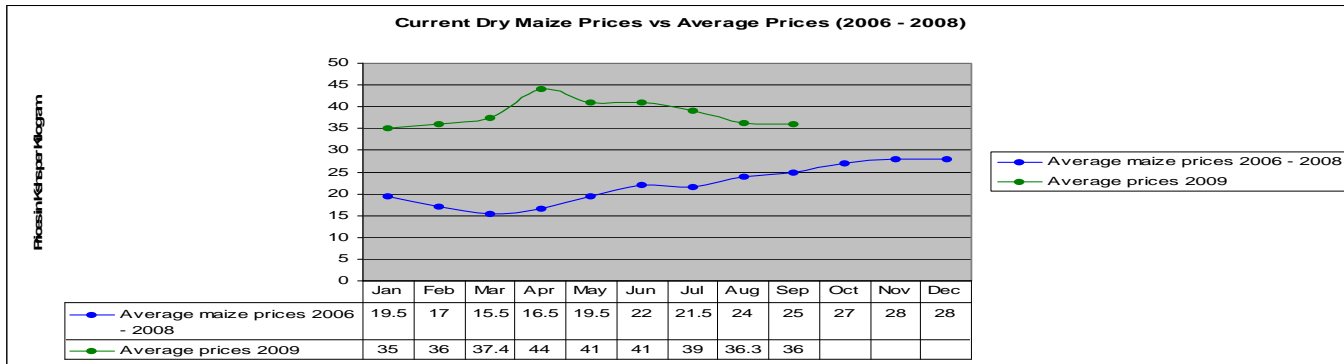
- Goat prices increased from Ksh1,184 in the month of August to Ksh 1,450 in the month of September. The food prices were above normal at this time of the year.
- The high prices could be attributed to the good physical body conditions of the goats. The sales rate increased from 3.7% in the month of August to 4.6% in the month of September.
- Gachoka Division had the highest rate of 8.6% and the highest price of Ksh 2,041 while Mwea had the lowest at Ksh 1,091.

3.3.3 Milk consumption

Average milk consumed per household remained at 3.7 bottles of 750ml from the month of August to the month of September. The Districts average milk price per litre was Ksh42. The decrease in milk consumption was attributed to the declining livestock birth rates and the poor availability of forage and water within the district.

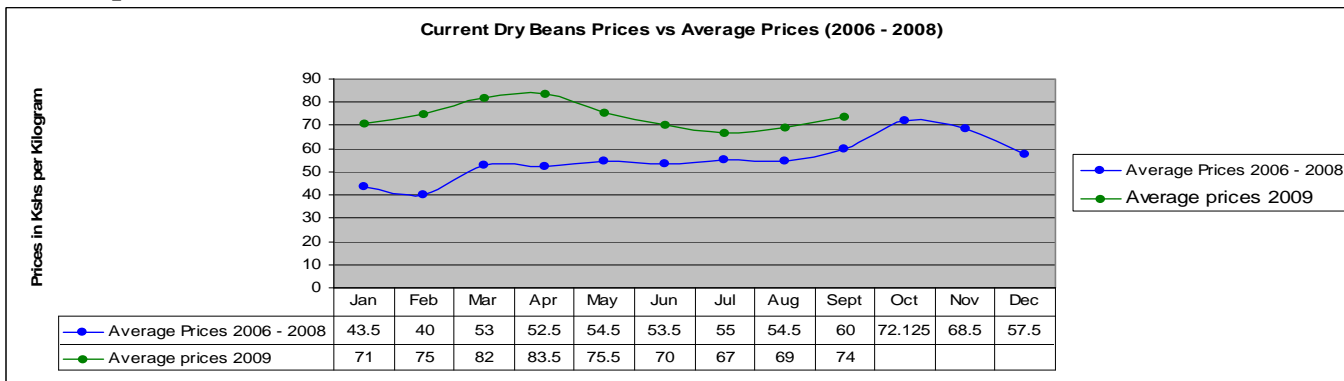
3.4 Crop prices

3.4.1 Maize prices



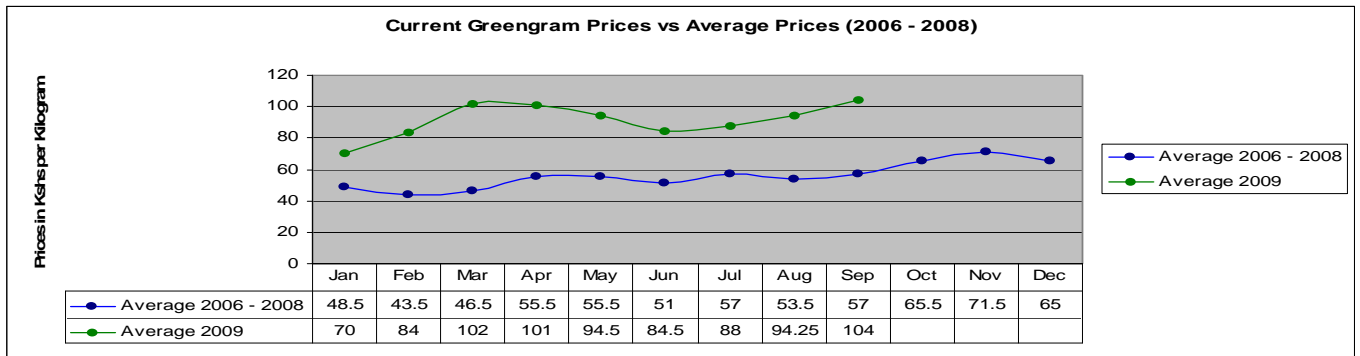
- Maize prices declined slightly from Ksh36.25 per Kilogram in August to Ksh36 per kilogram in the month of September. The prices were above normal at this period of the year.
- The decline in the price is attributed to the inflow of maize harvested from the neighboring Districts of Embu and Kirinyaga. Mwea Division had the highest maize prices at Ksh45 per Kilogram while Evurore and Siakago Divisions had the lowest at Ksh32.50 per Kilogram.

3.4.2 Beans prices



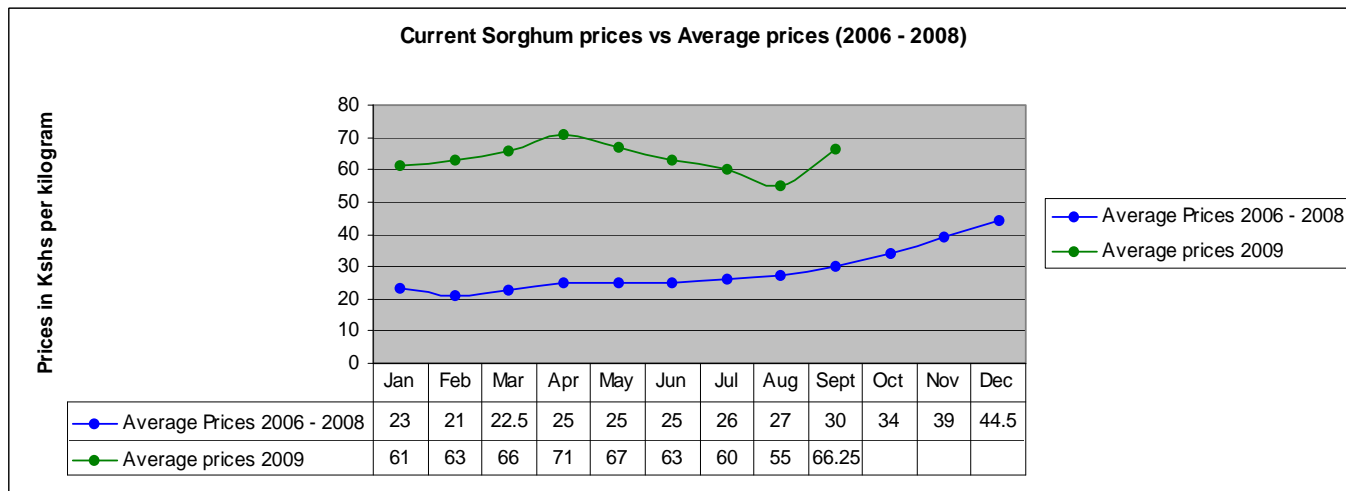
- Beans prices increased slightly from Ksh69 per Kilogram to Ksh74 per Kilogram in the month of September. The prices were above normal at this period of the year. The increase in the prices was attributed to the high demand for both household consumption and planting seeds. Mwea Division had the highest beans price at Ksh80 per Kilogram while Evurore Division recorded the lowest at Ksh66 per Kilogram.

3.4.3 Green grams prices



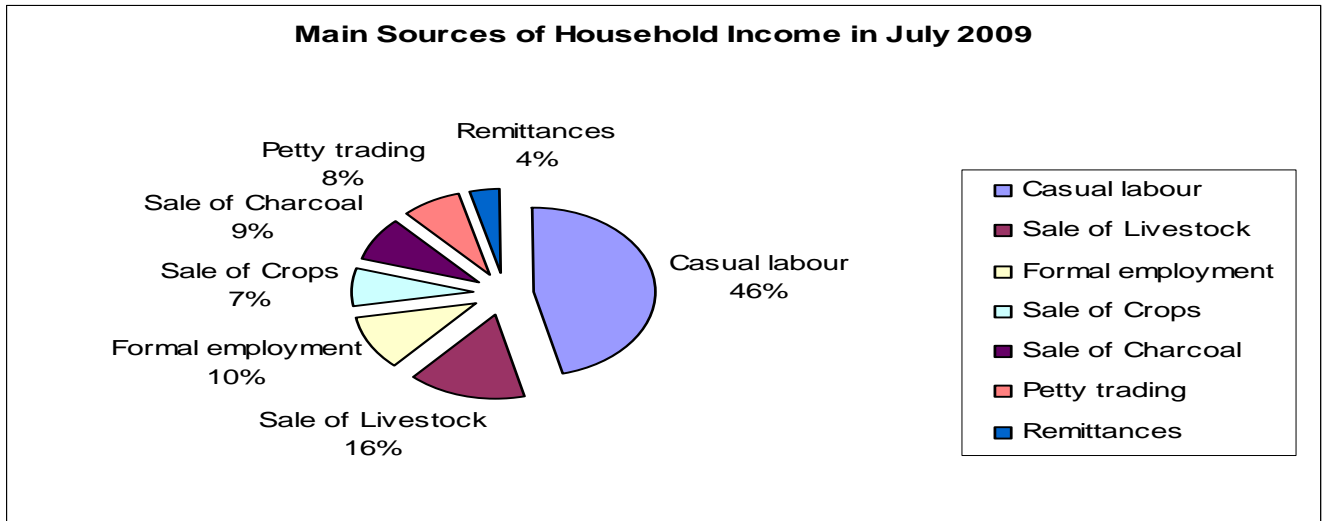
- Green gram prices increased slightly from Ksh94.25 per kilogram in August to Ksh104.
- The prices were above normal at this period of the year. The increase in the prices was attributed to the high demand of planting seeds and the poor performance of the crop within the District. Gachoka Division had the highest price at Ksh125 per Kilogram while Evurore Division recorded the lowest at Ksh82.5 per Kilogram.

3.4.4 Sorghum prices



- Sorghum prices increased from Ksh55 per Kilogram in August to Ksh 66.25 per Kilogram. The prices were above normal at this period 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 of Ksh75 per kilogram while Mwea Division had the lowest of Ksh60 per Kilogram.

3.5 Income



3.5.1 Crop income

Income from crop sales remained 7% from the month of August to the month of September as the source of total household revenue. The low income from crop sales as a source of total household revenue is attributed to the exhausted harvest that was experienced within some pockets of the District.

3.5.2 Livestock income

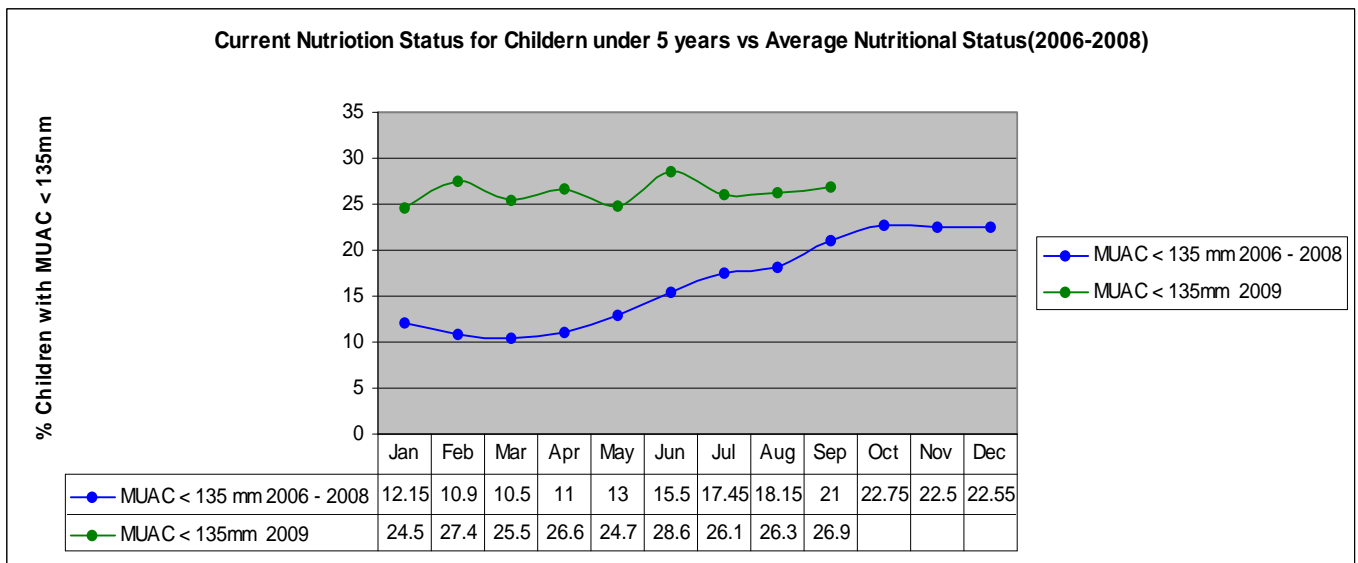
- Contribution from livestock sales increased from 14% in August to 16%. This was attributed to the price improvement within the local livestock markets within the district.
- Casual labor as the major source of aggregate household income in Mbeere District increased from 45% in August to 46% in the month of September. This was attributed to the commencement of land preparation as the predominant agricultural activity within the district.

3.6 Implications on food security

- High food purchase prices indicate a food insecure situation. Improving goat prices and availability of opportunities for casual labour indicated a food secure situation.

4.0 Human welfare indicators (Utilisation of Food)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The nutrition status of children below five years declined further during the month, with the percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition rising to 26.9 from 26.1 in August. The rate was higher than the long term mean of 21% for the years 2006-2008.
- The situation seems to have deteriorated slightly in the month, which was attributed to the lack of clean drinking water and proper feeding.
- Evurore Division had the highest rate at 31.4%, Gachoka Division 27.1%, Mwea Division 25.1% and Siakago Division 24%.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Non-food interventions

- Rehabilitation of critical boreholes within the entire District by ALRMP II and Ministry of Water.
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6.0 Recommendations DSG and KFSM

- 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 400 mature cattle.
- The relief food distribution lead agency was authorised by the DSG to slaughter 40 mature cattle (10%) procured under the livestock off-take exercise and distribute to the community. The slaughtering exercise was to be overseen by the District Veterinary officer.
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