



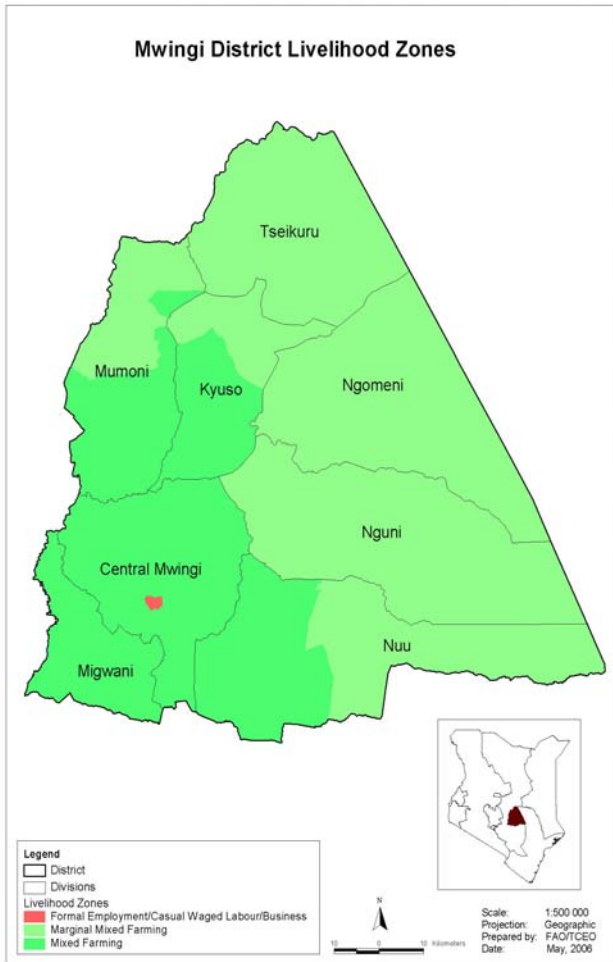
**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

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

**DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, SEPTEMBER 2009**

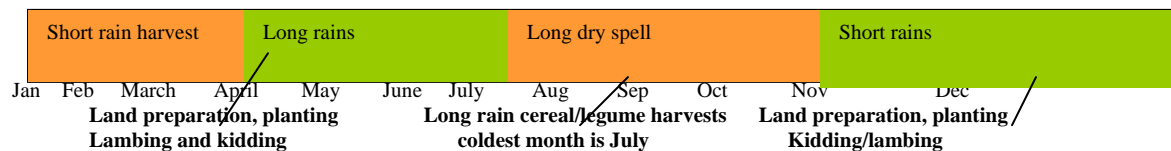
**Mwingi District**

**Warning Stage**



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Agro pastoral zone	Emergency	No change
Mixed farming zone	Emergency	No change
District	Emergency	No change

**Seasonal Calendar**



### **Situation overview**

- The district did not receive any rains during the month. The weather was mainly hot with strong winds throughout the day.
- Water access and availability remained poor. There was heavy congestion at the few serving water points such as boreholes.
- Quality and quantity of natural vegetation was extremely poor, leading to death of livestock especially cattle. Body condition was very poor. Cattle prices were at their lowest.
- Milk production and consumption deteriorated further due to the ongoing drought.
- Malnutrition cases in Tseikuru, Ngomeni and parts of Migwani divisions are approaching alarming levels.

### **Current interventions**

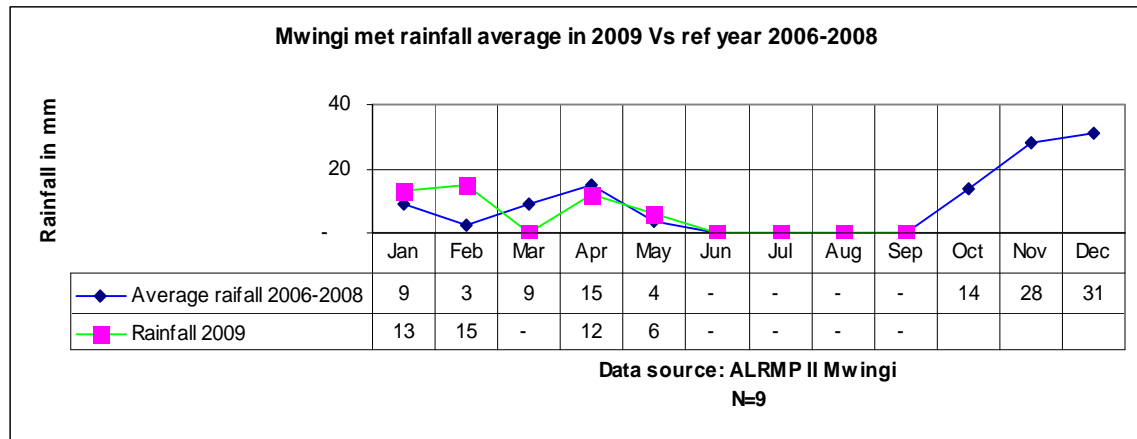
- Water trucking activities were ongoing in selected educational institutions, public health facilities and communities. The activities were being undertaken by the Ministry of Water.
- ALRMP II is undertaking rehabilitation of selected boreholes and shallow wells under the emergency drought intervention kitty in collaboration with department of water.
- The Ministry of Livestock did undertake livestock off take program whereby a total of 1,221 herds of cattle were purchased. This assisted farmers whose animals would have otherwise died. This was however low compared to the demand for the same which would have been 3500 animals per district.
- The department of Agriculture received 256 metric tonnes of assorted seeds and they are being distributed to vetted vulnerable farmers within the larger Mwingi district. The seeds are to be planted in the coming short rains season.

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

- Water trucking activities should continue until the next rains season. Meanwhile, existing water storage facilities should be rehabilitated so as to accommodate more water during the next rains season.
- The Livestock department should estimate the extent of livestock death in the district arising from drought and come with suggestions that will assist in restocking.
- The department of Agriculture must carry out early and timely seed distribution to vulnerable households in order to maximize the short rains.
- The health department and other stakeholders should focus in Ngomeni, Tseikuru and lower parts of Migwani (Thaana) divisions where malnutrition indicators are quite alarming.
- Security surveillance along the borders of Tana river district and larger Mwingi district should be enhanced so as to minimize cases of conflicts. Peace committees should be very active at the moment by enhancing dialogue among various communities.
- The home grown school feeding programme should be monitored properly so as to achieve the intended goals and objectives.

## 1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

### 1.1 Rainfall

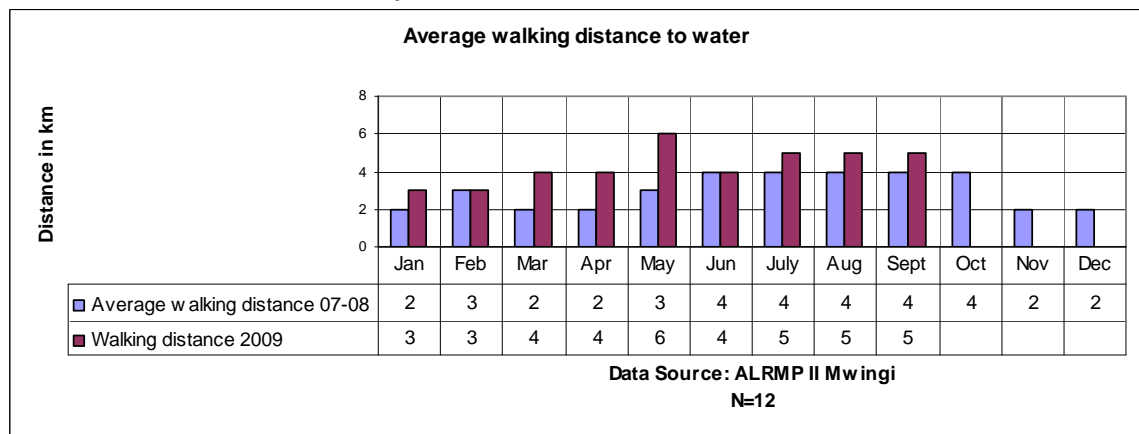


- There were no rains reported in the month of September and the weather was very hot accompanied by strong winds throughout the day. The air is very dusty.

### 1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- **Quality:** The quality of natural vegetation remained very poor. There was no grass to talk about while the shrubs dried up completely.
- **Quantity:** The quantity of natural vegetation was very low. The shrubs and trees were devoid of leaves and what was left were just standing stems. Farmers who got some money supplemented their livestock by purchasing hay from local and outside markets.

### 1.3 Water sources and availability



- Water sources and availability remained poor. Almost all traditional water sources were dry. The average walking distances to water points continued to be the same. In some places like Nuu, Ngomeni and Tseikuru old divisions, the average walking distance was more than 10 km one way.

- The waiting time at some of these water points was quite long due to congestion as both humans and livestock got water from the same source. In Mui division a man was buried alive as he deepened his well in a desperate attempt to access water.
- People relied on few functioning boreholes, water trucking and Ngomeni rock catchment dam for Ngomeni residents. Supplementation of water for livestock was done by feeding them on certain plant tubers which are getting exhausted.

## **1.4 Emerging issues**

### **1.4.1 Worsening drought**

- The district has continued to experience emergency drought status. All the drought indicators are at their worst levels. There is severe shortage of food, water and pastures. Residents are relying on purchased food and relief food aid.
- There has been some tension between the Kamba and Somali communities along their common borders in the new Tseikuru district, resulting in some animals being stolen and one person getting killed.

### **1.4.2 Implications on food security**

- Food security situation was at its worst. The livestock assets continued to be depleted through sales and drought-related deaths.
- The ability of households to adequately prepare their farms for the coming rains was hampered by the fact that most of the oxen that are relied on for cultivation are too weak and others have already died. The household members also do not have enough strength to undertake effective land preparation due to malnutrition.

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

### **2.1 Livestock production**

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

- Livestock body condition for the large stock was poorest. The most affected were cattle which were dying in large numbers. As for the goats, their condition was fair for they were able to feed on dry matter for survival.

#### **2.1.2 Livestock diseases**

- Cases of notifiable livestock disease outbreaks were reported in the district.

#### **2.1.3 Milk production**

- Production of milk continued to deteriorate further. Compared to last month, there was a further drop by about 20%. This was milk obtained mostly from the goats only.
- Their ability to produce milk was affected by lack of pasture and water. As for cattle there wasn't any milk production to talk about since they are the most affected by the drought.

### **2.2 Crop production**

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

- Most of the land was bare. Farmers were busy preparing their lands in anticipation of the coming rains but seed availability remains a challenge.

### 2.2.2 Pests and diseases

- There are no pests due to absence of crops on farms.

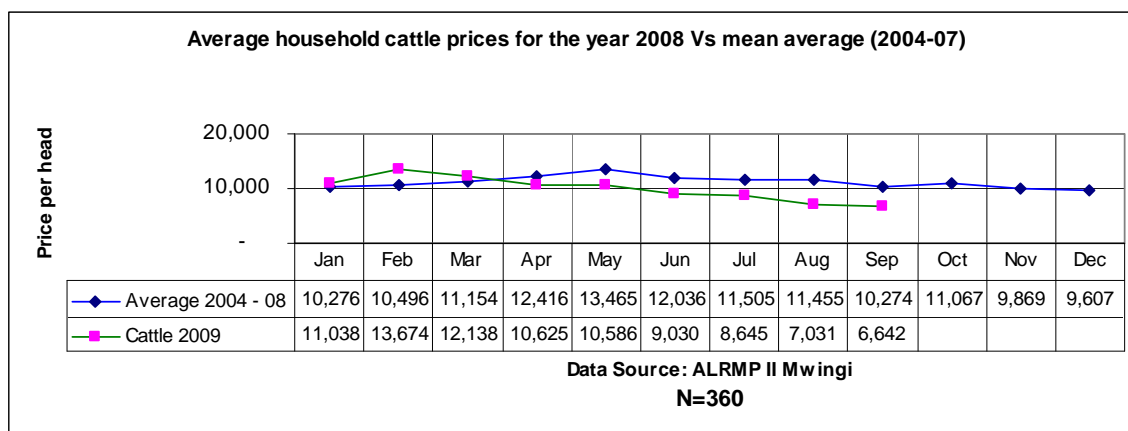
### 2.2.3 Implications on food security

- The deteriorating livestock body condition for cattle really affected their market prices leading to reduced incomes for households. It also implies that farmers were not cultivating their lands effectively due to lack of oxen which have already died or are too weak to work.
- Reduced milk production adversely affected the nutritional status of household members as well as denying households income that is normally derived from milk sales.

## 3.0 Access to food

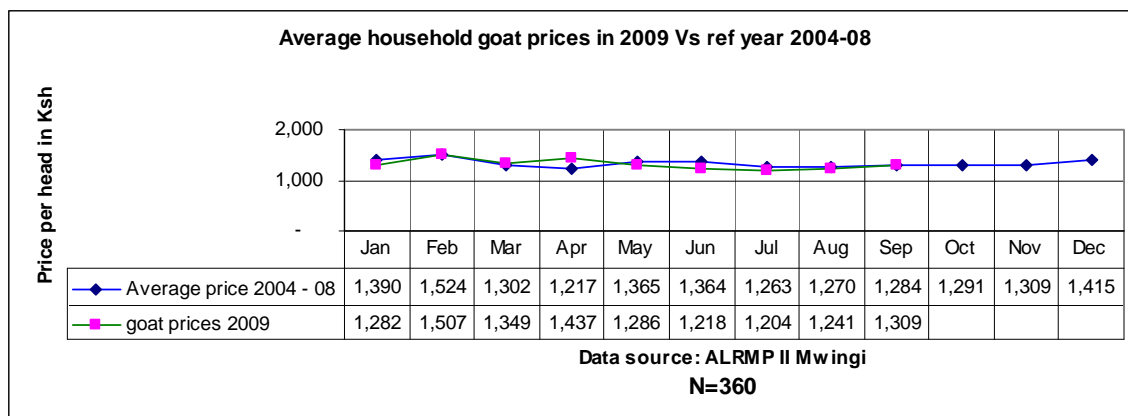
### 3.1 Livestock marketing

#### 3.1.1 Cattle prices



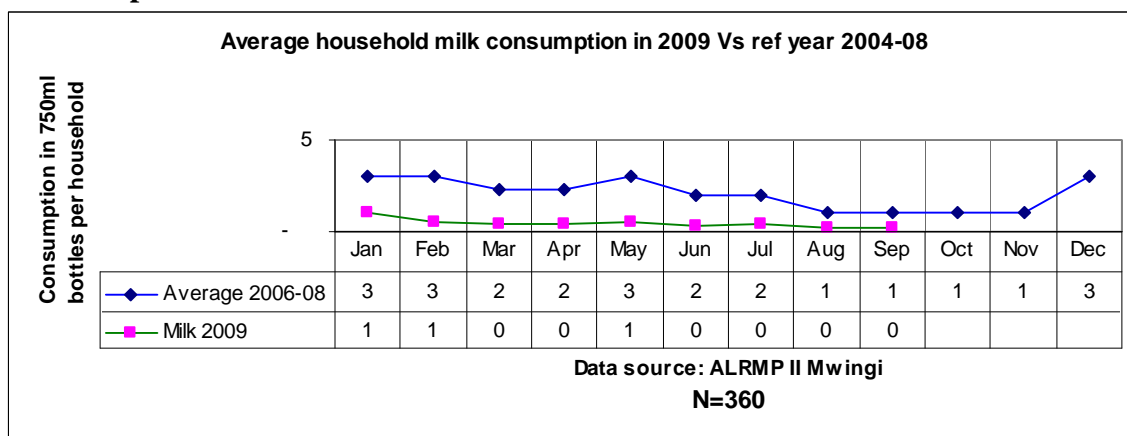
- The average household cattle prices nosedived further from Ksh7,031 last month to Ksh 6,642 per head. These were very low prices compared to the mean average. The highest prices were recorded in the old Mumoni division at Ksh 8,000 while the lowest prices were observed in Central division at Ksh 5,600. In parts of Kyuso division, prices were as low as Ksh 2800 per head.
- The prolonged drought has seriously affected cattle prices due to their poor body condition. Some of the animals are so emaciated that they can barely make it to the markets.

#### 3.1.2 Goat prices



- The average household goat prices improved slightly from Ksh 1,241 last month to Ksh 1,309 currently. The highest prices were observed in the old Migwani division at Ksh 1,674 while the lowest prices were in Nuu division at Ksh 1,040.
- The relatively stable prices can be attributed to a fairly stable body condition for the goats since they are able to cope with drought better by feeding on pieces of dry matter.

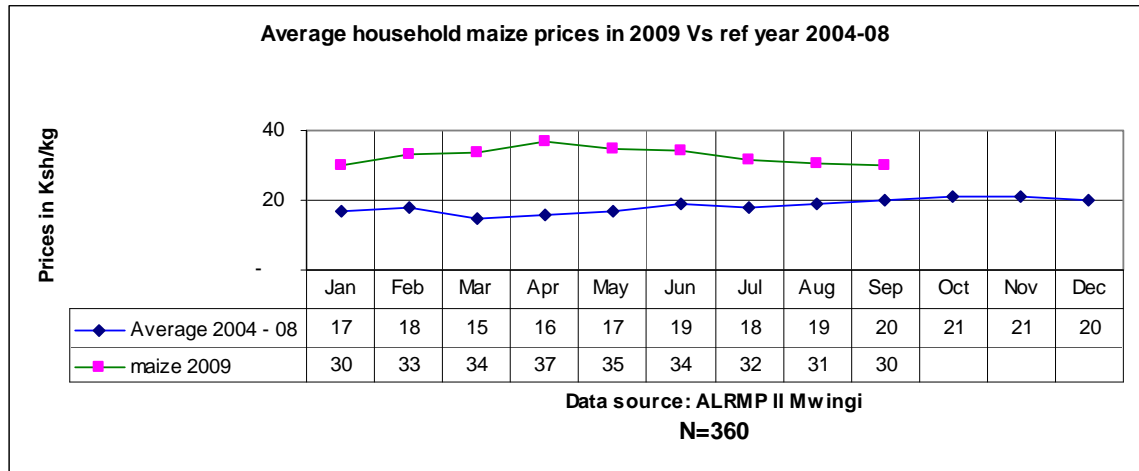
### 3.3 Milk consumption



- The average household milk consumption continued to be less than a bottle per household. This was due to unavailability of milk as a result of extremely low milk production.
- The drought situation hampered milk production adversely. Only a few households were able to get it from goats and in very low quantities. This is likely to affect further nutrition status of children negatively.

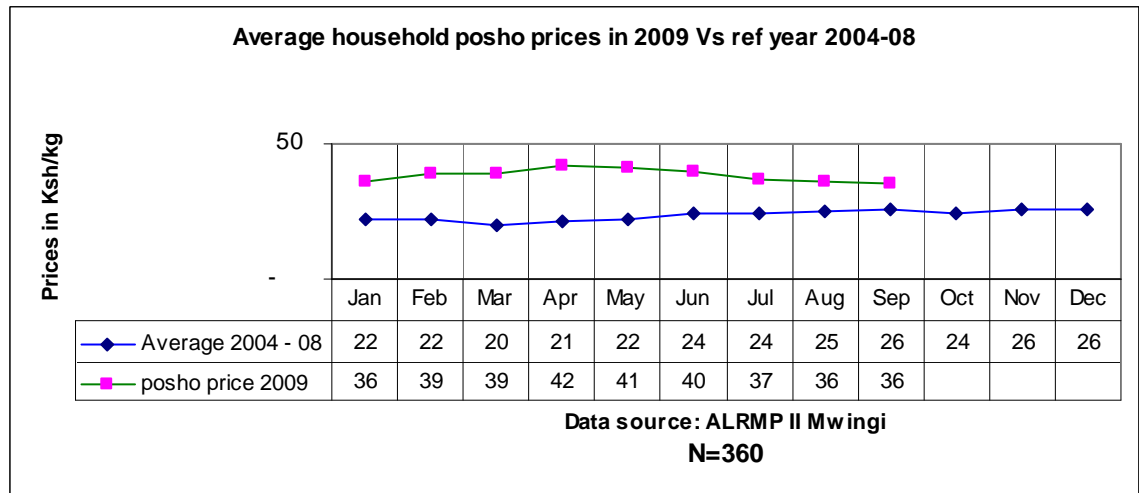
### 3.4 Crop prices

#### 3.4.1 Maize prices



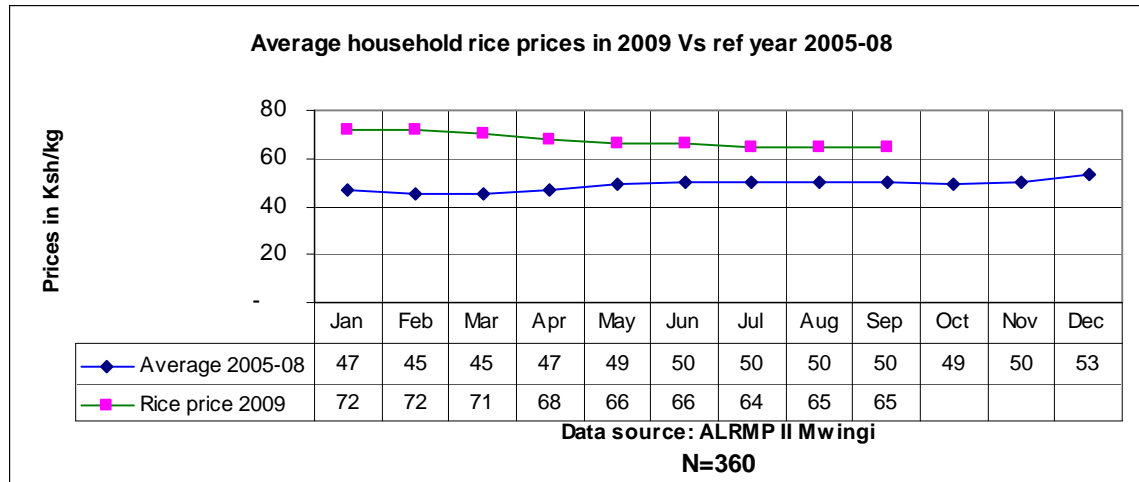
- The average household maize prices declined slightly from Ksh 31/kg last month to Ksh 30/kg. The prices were high compared to the normal trend.
- This was due to lack of locally produced maize and instead households relied exclusively on maize produced outside the district. It was readily available in the local markets though affordability was an issue.

#### 3.4.2 Posho prices



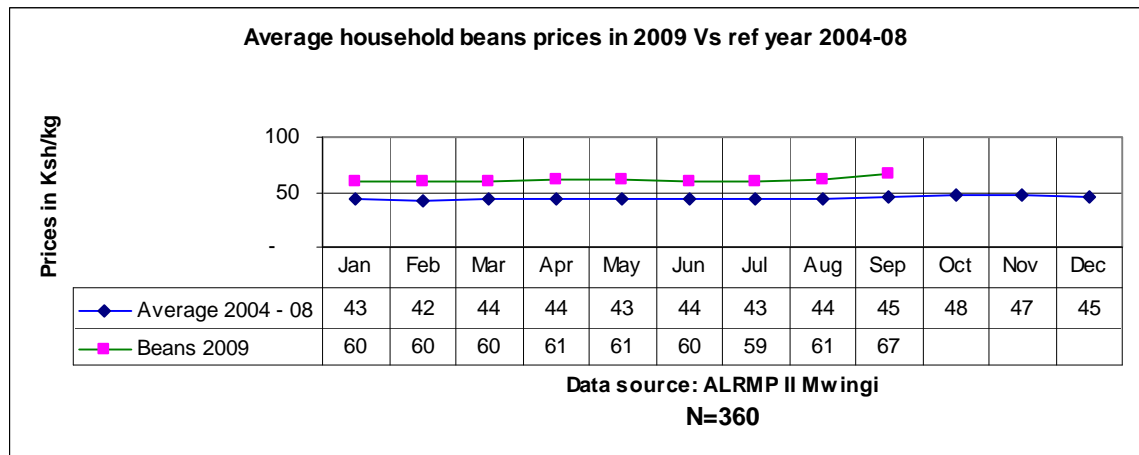
- The average household posho prices remained the same at Ksh36 per kilo compared to last month. This could be due to fairly stable maize prices over the same period.
- However, compared to the mean average, the prices are quite high and therefore posing affordability challenges to many households.

#### 3.4.3 Rice prices



- The average household rice prices remained the same at Ksh 65/kg compared to last month even though it is still high compared to the normal trend. It was readily available in the local markets although its demand was quite low.

### 3.4.4 Beans prices



- The average household beans prices rose from Ksh 61/kg last month to Ksh 67/kg. The price was quite high compared to the normal trend.
- The increase in prices could be due to anticipation of high demand for planting beans seeds.

## 3.5 Income

### 3.5.1 Crop income

- There were no crop sales since no harvests were realised.

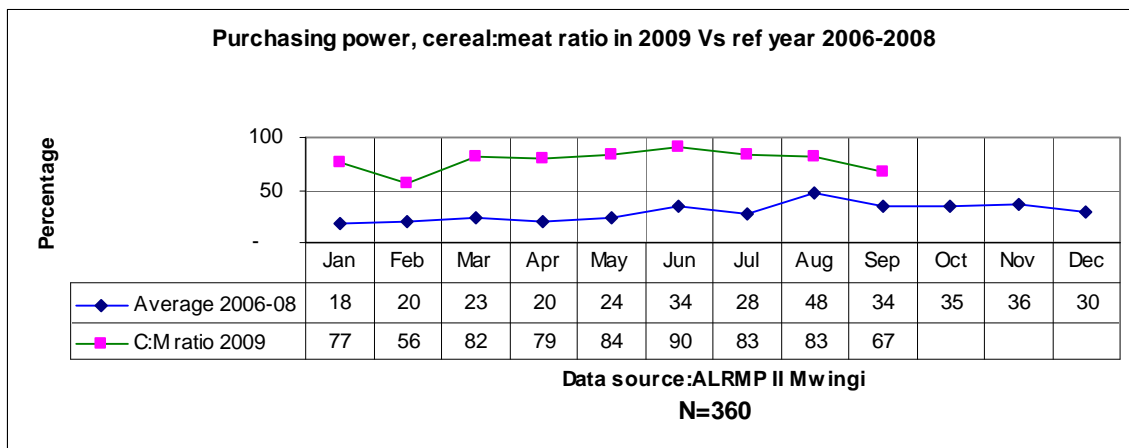
### 3.5.2 Livestock income

- About 16% of the households were involved in sale of livestock. The old Kyuso and Tseikuru divisions had the highest number of households involved in sale of livestock.
- In terms of sales numbers, goats and poultry were the leading livestock in volumes sold.

### 3.5.3 Other sources of income

- Casual labour was the main source of income with at least 33% of households being involved. Remittances is also playing crucial role on household incomes with 23% of households being involved. Even though charcoal burning is banned, it seems to be quite active within Central division with about 17% of households being involved.

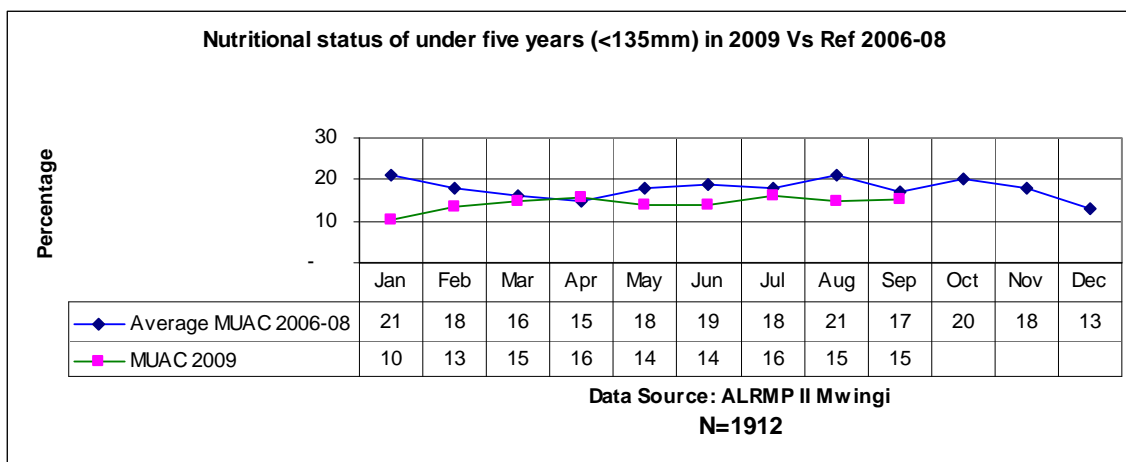
### 3.6 Cereal: Meat price ratio



- The terms of trade on cereals to meat ratio reduced from 83% last month to 67% . This could be attributed to a slight improvement of goat prices relative to cereal prices. The goats were able to retain relatively stable prices due to their fair body condition since they are able to cope better in drought.
- Compared to last month, a household would spend less of their livestock product (goats/sheep) to get the same amount of cereals. However, compared to the long term average, households are spending far much more of their livestock products to get an equivalent amount of cereals.

## 4.0 Human welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

### 4.1 Nutrition status



- The percentage of children at risk of malnutrition remained the same at 15%. However, regions that need immediate intervention include the old Tseikuru division (29%), Ngomeni division (26%) and lower parts of Migwani (Thaana 31%).
- The dietary diversity of majority of households is very poor as it consists of mainly purchased/relief cereals. Absence of proteins and green vegetables could be one of the factors contributing to high malnutrition in the district.

#### 4.2 Human health

- There was no outbreak of any notifiable human diseases in the district.

#### 5.0 Current interventions

##### 5.1 Non-food interventions

- Water trucking activities are ongoing in selected educational institutions, public health facilities and communities. The activities are being undertaken by the Ministry of Water.
- ALRMP II is undertaking rehabilitation of selected boreholes and shallow wells under the emergency drought intervention kitty in collaboration with Water department.
- The Ministry of Livestock undertook livestock off-take program whereby a total of 1,221 herds of cattle were purchased. This has assisted farmers whose animals would have otherwise died.
- The department of Agriculture received 256 tonnes of seeds for assorted crops and they are being distributed to vetted vulnerable farmers within the larger Mwingi district. The seeds are to be planted in the coming short rains season.
- ALRMP has facilitated a peace building mission in the new Tseikuru district between the Kamba and Somali communities to enhance peaceful coexistence.

##### 5.2 Food aid

- Distribution of relief food under the protracted relief and emergency operation programme is underway targeting 261,000 people in the larger Mwingi district. Currently they are on a 50% ration level.

- WFP is undertaking supplementary feeding in 36 health facilities in the district.
- The Red Cross has distributed 30 metric tonnes of unimix to 36 primary schools within new Mwingi district.
- School feeding program is ongoing. The home grown school feeding programme is being piloted in selected schools in the district.

### **5.3 Coping strategies**

- Many households were forced to skip meals. Meal rations for households were quite reduced.
- Selling of hay was quite common and casual labour was the main source of cash for purchasing food.

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

- Water trucking activities should continue until the next rains season. Meanwhile, existing water storage facilities should be rehabilitated so as to accommodate more water during the next rains season.
- The Livestock department should estimate the extent of livestock death in the district arising from drought and come with suggestions that will assist in restocking.
- The department of Agriculture must carry out early and timely seed distribution to vulnerable households in order to maximize the short rains.
- The health department and other stakeholders should focus in Ngomeni, Tseikuru and lower parts of Migwani (Thaana) divisions where malnutrition indicators are quite alarming.
- Security surveillance along the borders of Tana river district and larger Mwingi district should be enhanced so as to minimize cases of conflicts. Peace committees should be very active at the moment by enhancing dialogue among various communities.
- The home grown school feeding programme should be monitored properly so as to achieve the intended goals and objectives.