



**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, JANUARY 2010**

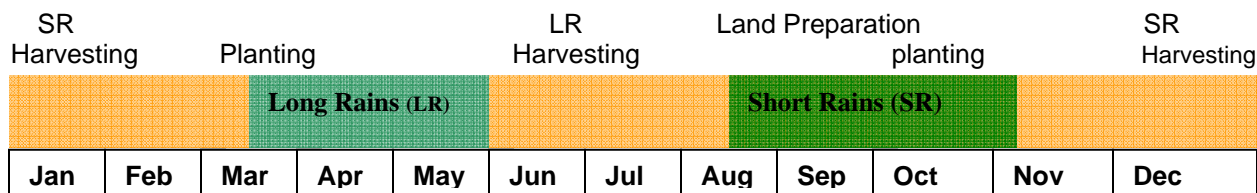
**West, Central and North  
Pokot District**

**Warning Stages**



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Agro pastoral	Alert	No Change
Mixed farming	Normal	No Change
Pastoralist	Alert	No Change
District	Alert	No Change

**Seasonal Calendar**



**Situation overview**

- Rainfall was received early in the month of January, which was a continuation of the off season rainfall received in December. Rainfall received in most of the livelihoods across the district was between 20mm – 80mm. This was high compared to the expected 10-40mm per on average. Despite these high rainfall amounts, the temporal distribution was three days in early January and the rest of the month remained dry.
- Quality and quantity of pasture and browse was good in all the livelihoods after these rains, but this situation is likely to start worsening. There was an improvement in the distances traveled to grazing areas from 5.4km to 4.7km.
- Traditional river wells were major water sources, indicating that rivers were not flowing to all the communities who depend on them.
- The livestock body condition was good to fair and average cattle prices increased from Ksh7,752 to Ksh8,954. Average price for goats increased from Ksh1,104 to Ksh1,188 in the month. These increases for both goat and cattle prices were as a result of the pasture regeneration that followed the January-December rainfall.
- Land preparation for the next planting season started in the mixed farming areas but is yet to start in the agro-pastoral areas.
- Price for maize at the household increased from Ksh34 to Ksh40, as scarcity of the commodity continued. Only three sentinel sites reported sale of maize at the household level. The market price recorded for maize was as high as Ksh50 per kilo in Sasak. However, there was no change in price of beans and this remained at Ksh74 per kilo as recorded last month.
- The nutrition status of children below five years improved during the month, with the percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition (Mid Upper Arm Circumference below 135mm) improved from 14.8% in December to 12.5%.

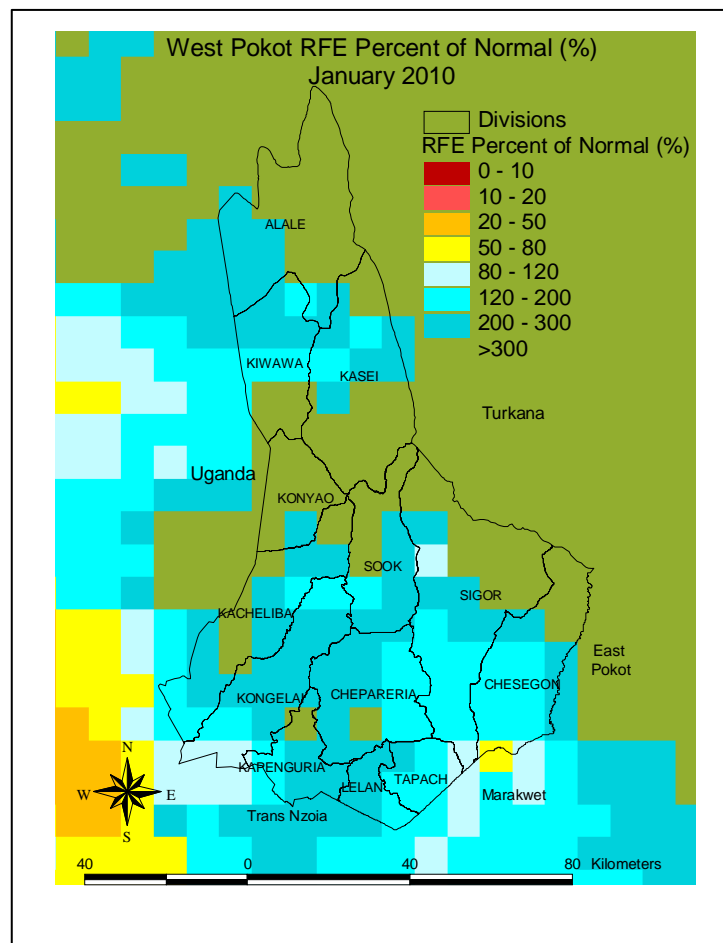
#### **Recommendations to DSG and KFSM**

- Supplementary feed should be provided in areas with high malnutrition rates.
- Health education is required to address some of the compounding factors leading to high malnutrition risk in the district.

## 1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

### 1.1 Rainfall

- Rainfall was recorded at the beginning of the month, which was a continuation of the off season rains experienced towards the end of December. Despite the high rainfall amount the temporal distribution in January was for an average of three days.
- The rainfall was significant to pastoralists since the previously declining pasture and fodder conditions improved or sustained. It was, however, of little significance to the mixed farmers and agro pastoralists since there are currently no crops in season.
- Most of the areas, especially the pastoral livelihoods, received rainfall above 300% of the normal. This was between 40mm – 80mm of rainfall. In the long term average these areas receive little or no rainfall in January. The mixed farming and agro pastoral areas received rainfall between 120% -200% of the normal
- Despite the rainfall at the beginning of the month, the progress was poor and the rest of January remained very dry. This made the improving pasture condition not to improve further. The previous risk of people experiencing mudslides and outbreak of water borne diseases was not serious at this time of the year.



*Fig 1. A representation of percentage of the normal Rainfall Estimate (RFE) computed from cumulative Satellite Imagery for January 2010 compared to the month's long term average (Image source NOAA/USGS/FEWS/USAID)*

### 1.1.2 Current season performance

- Rainfall received in most of the livelihoods across the district was between 20mm – 80mm. This was high compared to the expected 10-40mm per on average.
- The spatial distribution was good and it was spread across all the livelihoods. In the month of January there was no rainfall that is usually expected, especially in the northern part of the district.
- However, the rains received were essential and this improved the drought situation that had prevailed in November. (Fig.2 Below)

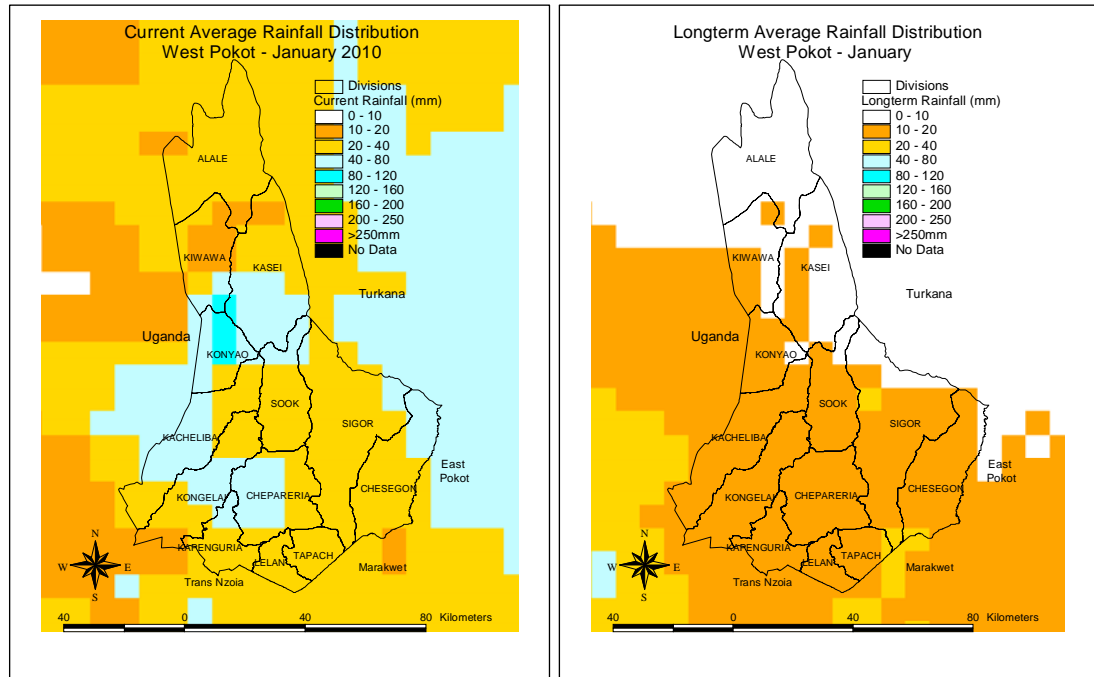
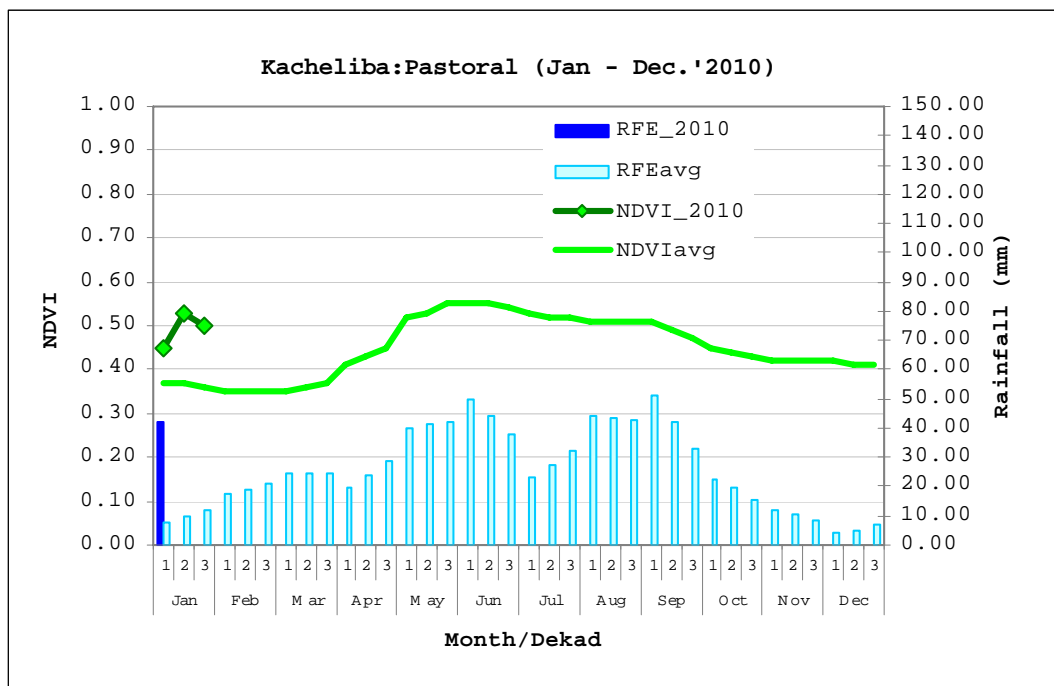


Fig 2. Comparison of the current rainfall distribution against long term estimates (Image Source: NOAA/USGS/FEWS/USAID)

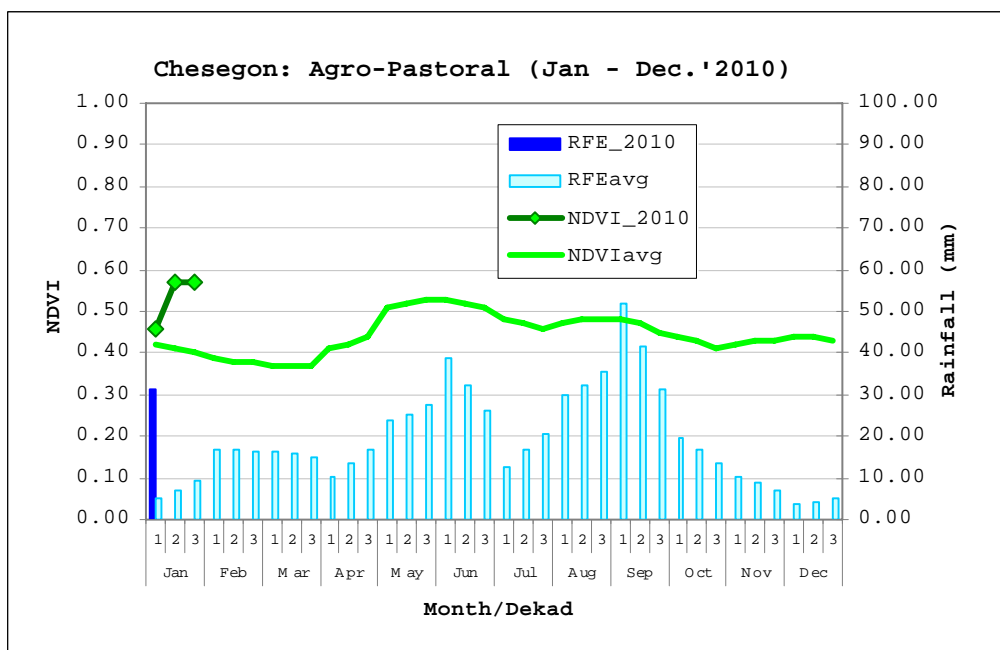
### 1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- Pasture conditions remained good in the month of January, especially at the beginning. However, there conditions started worsening towards the end of the month as a result of the rainfall which reduced drastically after the off season December rains.
- Most animals remained on the border side of Kenya and Uganda, hence pasture did not get depleted as fast as would have been expected.



**Fig 3. Graph Showing RFE and NDVI time series analysis for the Pastoral Livelihood (Kacheliba)**

- Like in the pastoral livelihoods, pasture conditions in the agro-pastoral areas improved with the December – January rainfall. No rainfall was received in the mid up to the end of January, an indication that this condition may start worsening if the dry spell that has resumed continues.



**Fig 4. Graph Showing RFE and NDVI time series analysis for the Agro-Pastoral Livelihood**

- In the mixed farming livelihood zones, unlike in the pastoral and agro pastoral areas some rainfall was recorded up to mid January, though it was still below the long term average. The conditions of pasture and browse were sustained and remain good.

However, this is a situation that is depended on how the rains will progress in the current month

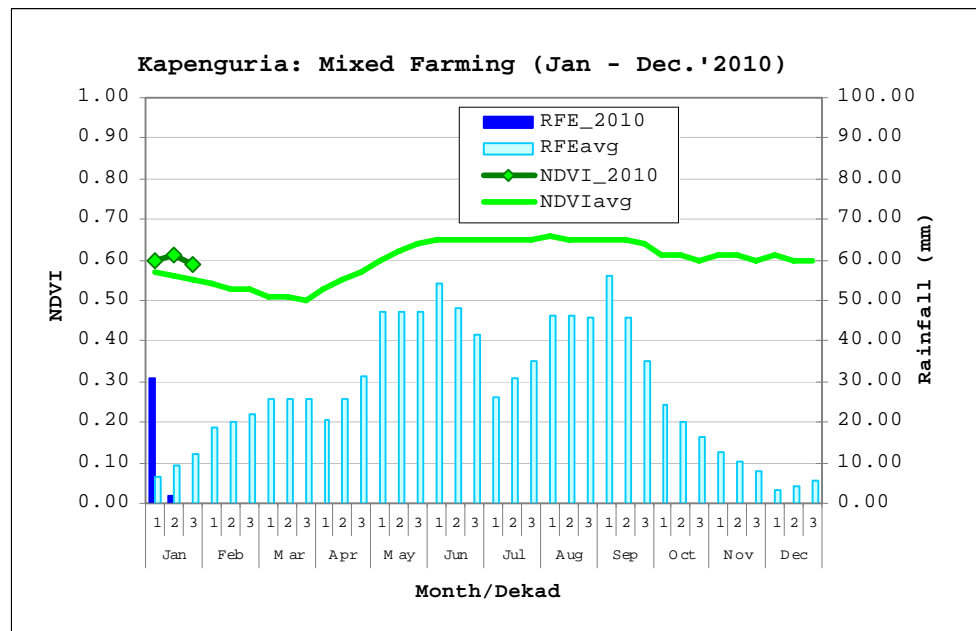


Fig 5. Graph Showing RFE and NDVI time series analysis for the Mixed Farming Livelihood (Kapenguria)

### 1.2.1 Distances to grazing areas

- The distances to grazing areas improved from 5.4km in December to 4.7km. This improvement came about as animals had moved from the dry season grazing areas, especially on the lower parts of the district including Turkwell and Amolem. Most of the animals are along the border or near the households.
- This situation is, however, likely to worsen towards the end of February if more rainfall will not have been received to regenerate the pasture further.

### 1.3 Water sources and availability

- Traditional river wells remained the major water sources followed by natural rivers and boreholes. This was an indication that most rivers are not flowing to make them the major water sources.
- With most of January having been dry, this situation is likely to change towards the end of February, where even most traditional river wells are likely to dry. This will leave boreholes as the major water source. There is, therefore, need to rehabilitate strategic boreholes at this time of the year. The situation was normal for the season

#### 1.3.1 Household access to water

- The distances traveled by households in search for water did not change significantly compared to the month of January. The average distance was 2.7km compared to 2.8km recorded last month.
- This situation was maintained by the early January rainfall which sustained the current water sources, hence there was no increase in distances. This situation was normal and expected to improve.

## 2.0 Rural economy indicators (Food availability)

### 2.1 Livestock production

#### 2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- The livestock body condition was good to fair. This was as a result of the December off-season rainfall which either improved or sustained the pasture and fodder conditions across the livelihoods. This was, however, not expected to last long since the greater part of January remained dry reversing this trend.
- There is likelihood of worsening body conditions, especially for animals within the household which don't migrate.

#### 2.1.2 Livestock diseases

There are no major new cases of Livestock disease outbreak in the district. There is however need for alertness and surveillance for animals on the border areas moving in and out of the district

## 2.2 Crop production

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

- There were no crops in the farms, both in the agro pastoral and mixed farming livelihoods. The ongoing activity in the farms was land preparation and the challenge for most farmers was inaccessibility of certified seeds and fertilizers for planting. This was due to the low purchase power of the communities especially after the last season crop failed

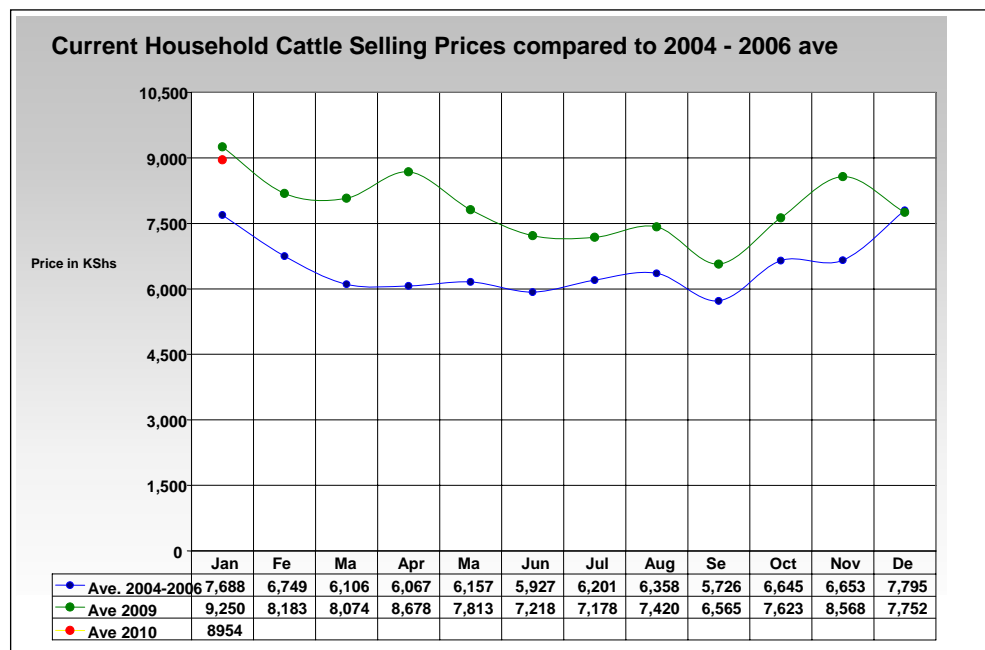
### 2.2.2 Pest and diseases

There were no cases of crop pests and diseases reported out of the normal since there were no crops in the field. The previous harvest was poor, leaving very few people with food stocks in their homes, hence cases of post harvest pest are not common as well.

## 3.0 Access to food

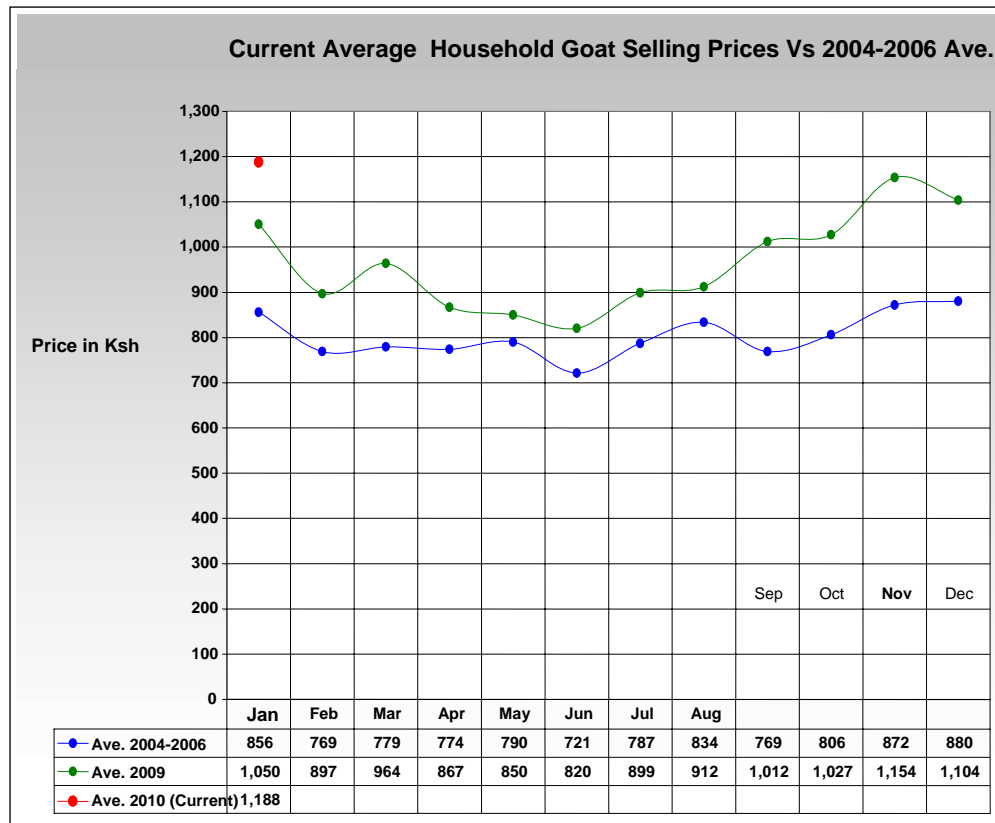
### 3.1 Livestock marketing

#### 3.1.1 Cattle prices



- Cattle prices increased from Ksh7,752 recorded in December to Ksh8,954. This increase was attributed to the rainfall received, hence animals had a good body condition that was fetching better market prices.
- This situation is, however, likely to worsen as the rain receded and pasture and browse conditions were deteriorating quickly. The lowest price of Ksh5,700 was recorded in Nyangaita compared to Ksh5,000 recorded in the same area in December.

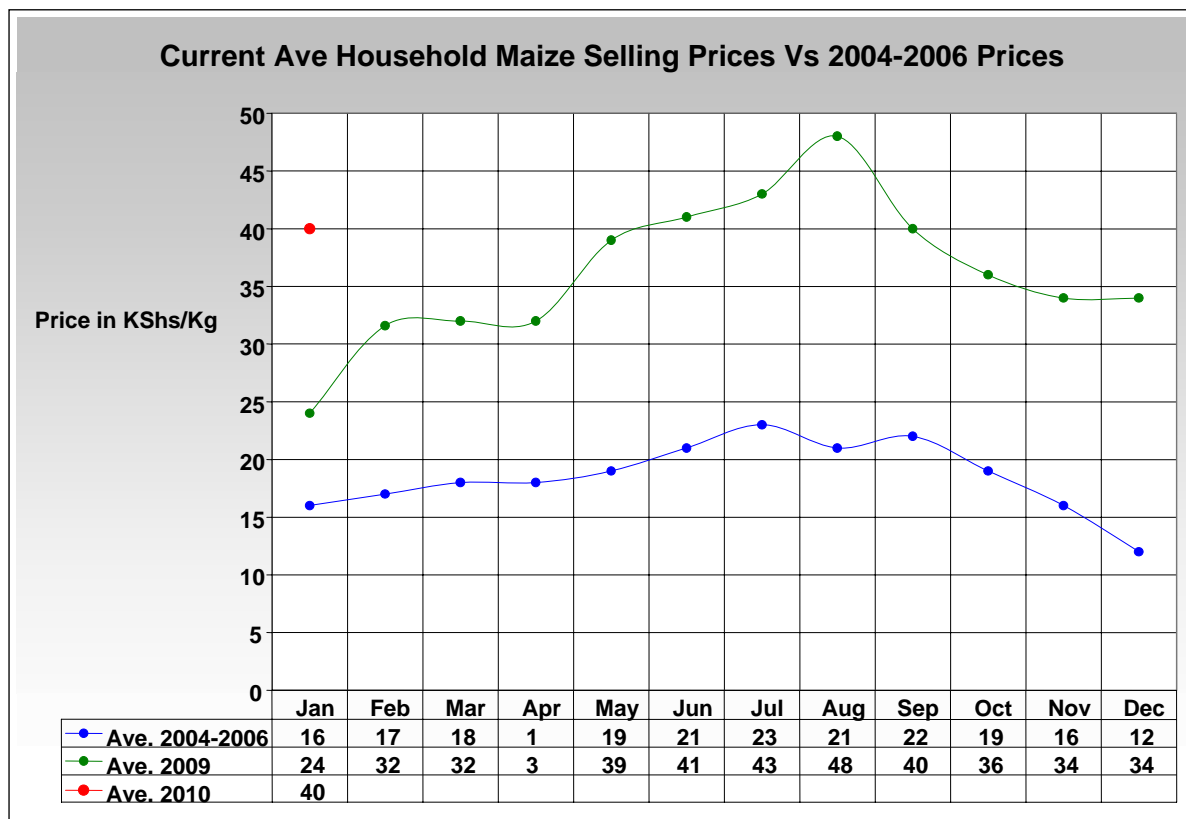
### 3.1.2 Goat prices



- There was a slight increase in price for goats from Ksh1,104 to Ksh1,188 in January. This increase was as a result of the rainfall in December and early January that improved browse in all the pastoral areas. The lowest price of Ksh1028 was recorded in Nyangaita, which was high compared to the lowest price of Ksh747 recorded in Kangoletiang in December. The price in Kangoletiang in the month was Ksh1,085.
- The goat price improvement was as predicted from last month since browse regeneration had started. It is expected that this situation may worsen, but not as rapidly as that of cattle, since the availability of browse for goats is more sustained unlike pastures for cattle. This situation was normal at this time of the year

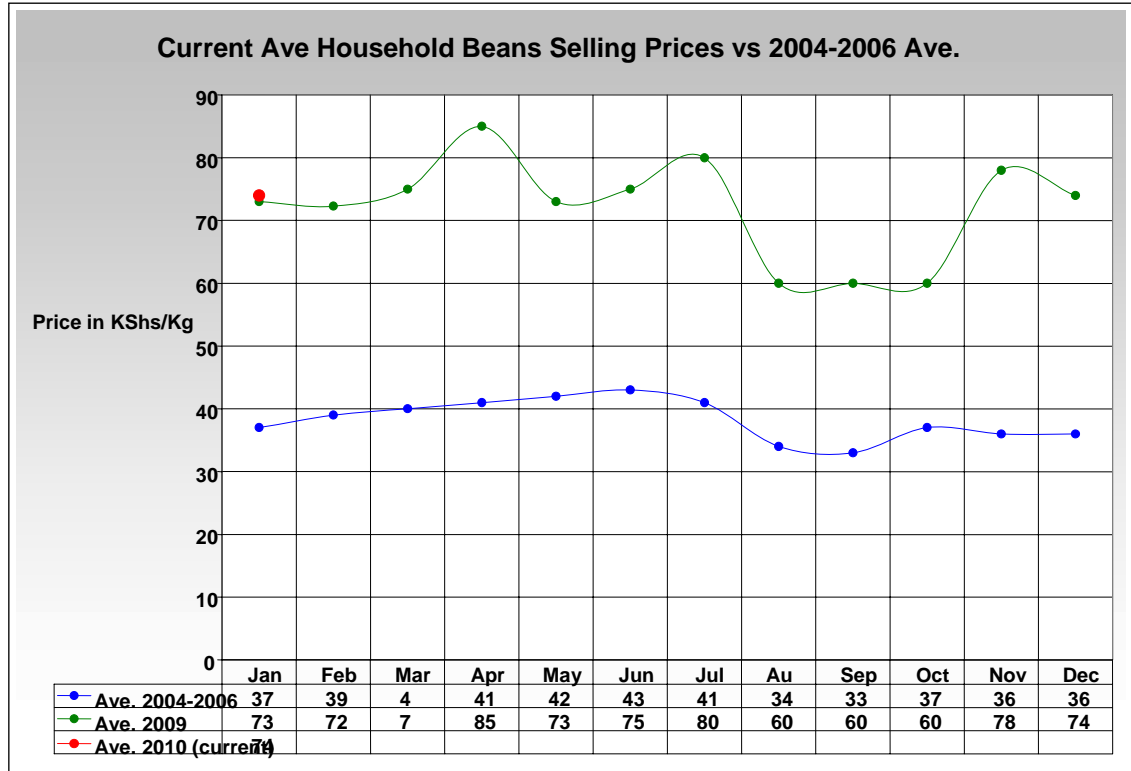
## 3.2 Crop prices

### 3.2.1 Maize (households) prices



- Maize prices remained high and continue to be on an upward trend. The average price recorded in the month was Ksh40 compared to average price of Ksh34 recorded in December. Most of the maize was sold in the markets and very few households reported any sales.
- Only three sentinel sites; Kaibos, Kapsait (both Mixed Farming) and Pserum (agro Pastoral) which reported sale of maize at the household level.
- The maize in the markets was from outside the district, as stocks in the local households got depleted. This situation is expected to remain bad for a longer period since there is no maize harvest expected soon. The situation was not normal and is not expected to improve soon, since harvesting has been concluded.
- Sasak market in Alale recorded the highest price at Ksh50 per kilogram while Kaiboss recorded the lowest price at Ksh25 per kg.

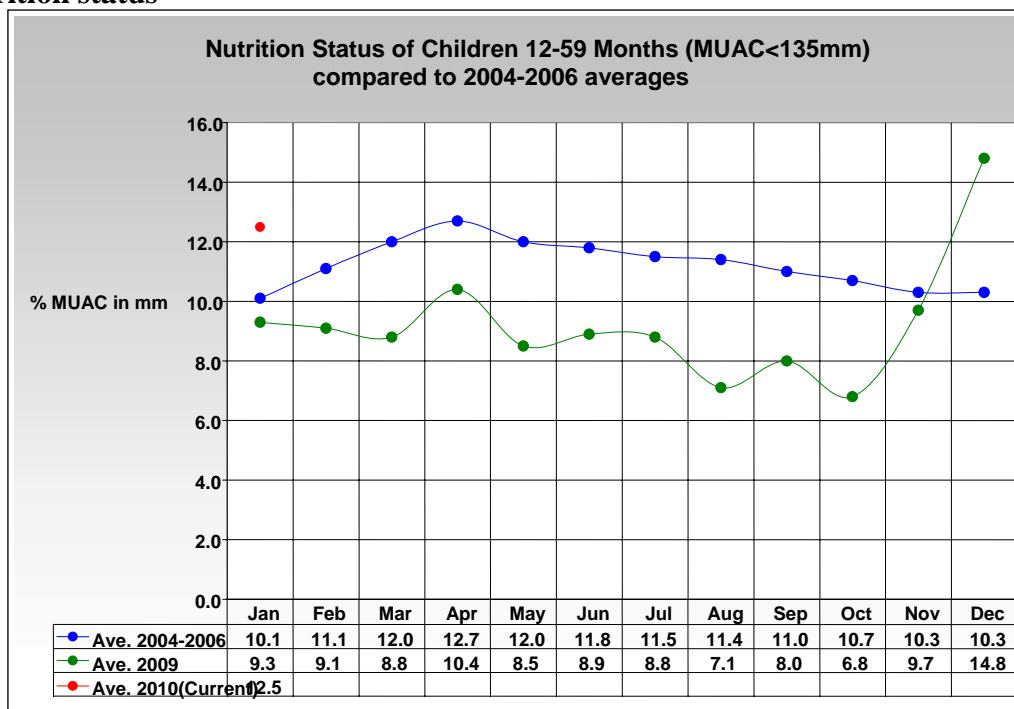
### 3.2.2 Beans prices



- There was no change in price of beans and this remained at Ksh74 per kilo recorded last month. This price was, however, high an indication that this situation has not improved.
- During the last two seasons there has been a poor harvest of beans and this has worsened the situation. There is also shortage of the commodity even in the markets.
- Households were using substitutes such as vegetables, which are locally available, in preference for beans. Only two sentinel sites (Pserum and Ptokou) reported sale of beans at the household level.
- The markets that recorded the highest prices include Kapsait, Nyangaita, Orwa and Poole with prices ranging between Ksh80 to Ksh85. These prices are not normal at this time of the year.

## 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 (Mid Upper Arm Circumference below 135mm) improved from 14.8% in December to 12.5%. The improvement can be attributed to the increase in milk production and consumption at the household level, that followed after the December – January rains which led to pasture improvement.
- Konyao and Nyangaita, which had recorded 27.8% and 16.7% in December recorded 20.7% and 20% in January respectively.
- The Arid Lands Office in collaboration with the District Nutrition Officer are conducting screening in these areas to establish the cause of high malnutrition.