



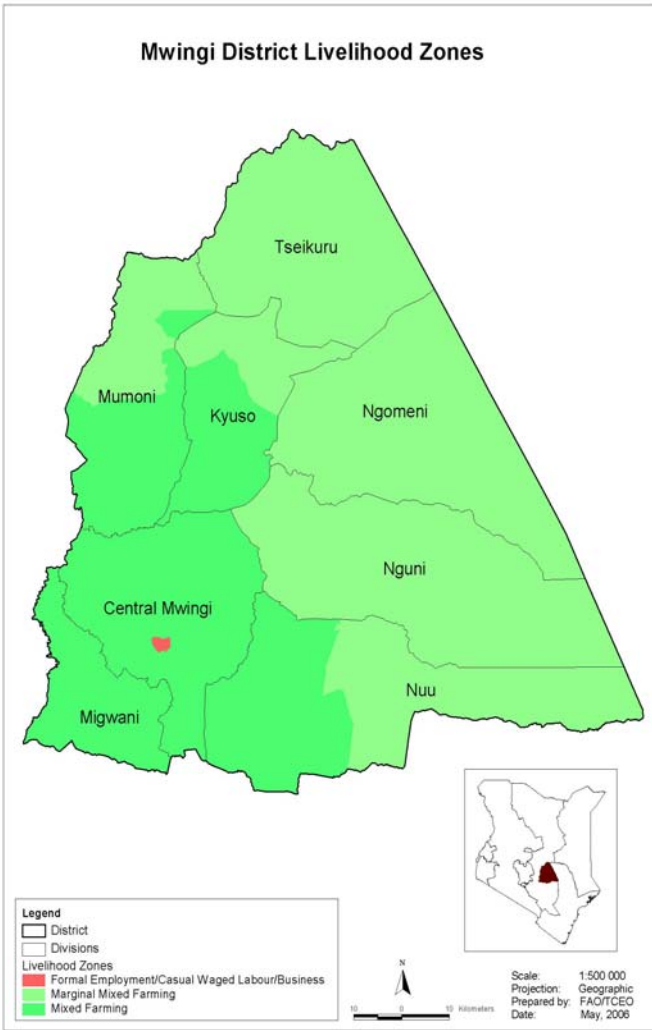
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

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

DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN, DECEMBER 2009

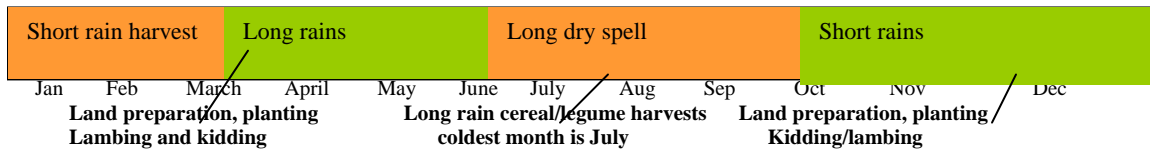
Mwingi District

Warning Stage



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Agro pastoral zone	Recovery	Improving
Mixed farming zone	Recovery	Improving
District	Recovery	Improving

Seasonal calendar



Situation overview

- There were some rains recorded during the first week of December although the intensity was less compared to the previous month. Ngomeni division recorded 231mm of rains in ten days, Nuu division had 68mm in 4 days followed by Tseikuru with 62mm in 2 days. Central division had the least with 11mm in 8 days.
- Water access and availability was fair and quantity and quality of natural vegetation improved significantly.
- Crop performance was fair but requires sustained rains to get good harvest.
- Livestock body condition improved for all livestock species.
- Livestock prices recorded a slight improvement compared to last month.
- The percentage of children at risk of malnutrition remained the same at 15% compared to last month. Tseikuru region had highest level at 35%, with Mui having the least at 3%.

Ongoing interventions

- Through the use of peace committees, the Provincial Administration and Arid Lands office were able to intervene and reconciled communities living along Tana River belt. The influx of migrants from Isiolo district had caused tension with the local communities.
- Promotion of alternative sources of income such as poultry keeping and growing of mango fruit is being done by the relevant line ministries with the support of Arid Lands office.
- Food distribution under the FFA/PRRO programme has resumed after being interrupted for 3 months due to delays in supplies.

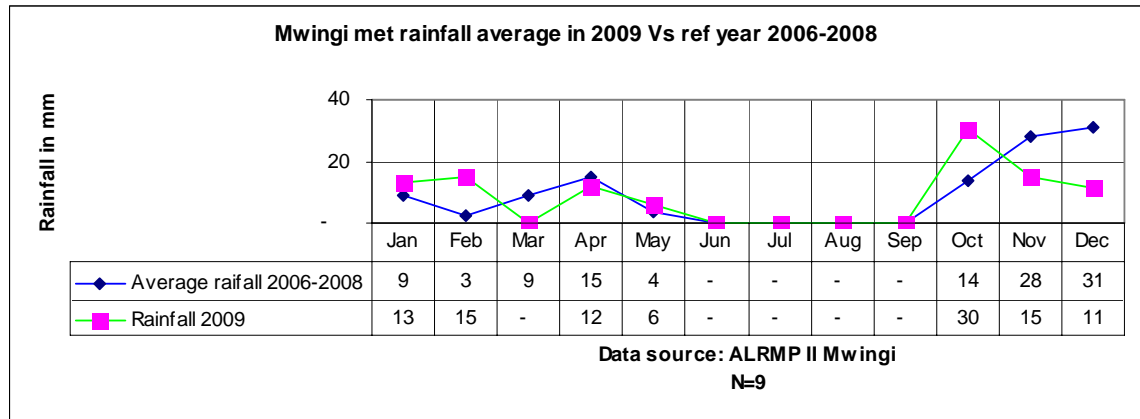
Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Water structures should be reassessed to determine their safety. Incidents of children having drowned in one of the structures was reported in Migwani. Remedial action has to be taken to rehabilitate those that are having structural defects.
- Communal weeding should be incorporated into the Food for Asset programme since there are very few draft animals that are normally relied upon for this exercise.
- The Department of Agriculture should promote the use of effective pesticides to tackle the menace that is being posed by pests.
- With the onset of rains, incidents of worm infestation and disease outbreak are likely to occur in livestock. The Veterinary department should come up with effective strategies to minimize its impact.
- Now that there are plenty of pastures around, some of which is being wasted, there is need for the livestock department to sensitize farmers on various techniques on management and conservation of forage which can be used later during drought periods. This will minimize unnecessary loss of livestock.
- There is need to undertake general food supplementation for children especially in Tseikuru and Nguni divisions where malnutrition cases are quite high.

- Provision of anti malaria drugs and mosquito nets should be enhanced to curb incidents of malaria infection.

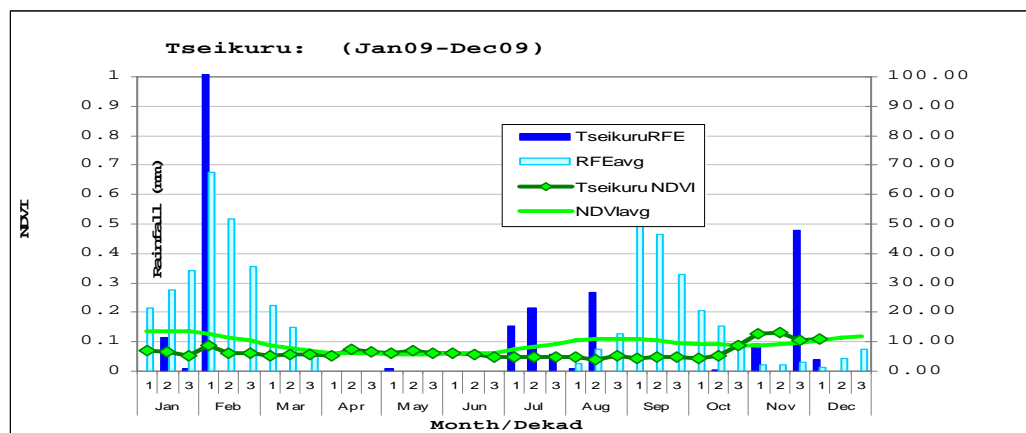
1.0 Environmental indicators

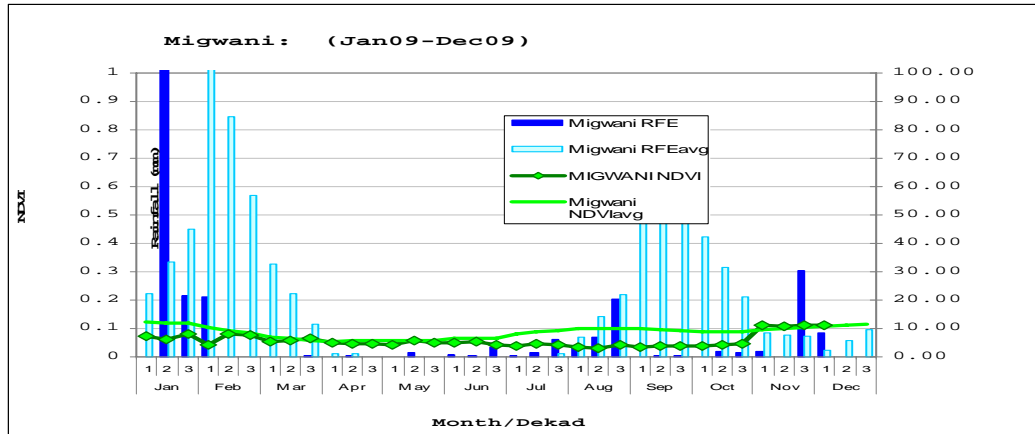
1.1 Rainfall



- The district recorded some rains during the first week of December. However, the spatial and temporal distribution varied across the district. Ngomeni division recorded 231mm of rains in ten days, Nuu division had 68mm in 4 days followed by Tseikuru with 62mm in 2 days. Central division had the least with 11mm in 8 days.
- The amounts have been quite low compared to last month although they had a positive impact on crops and pastures. As from 10th of December; we have not received any significant rains.
- The weather was humid and warm accompanied by hot nights.

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

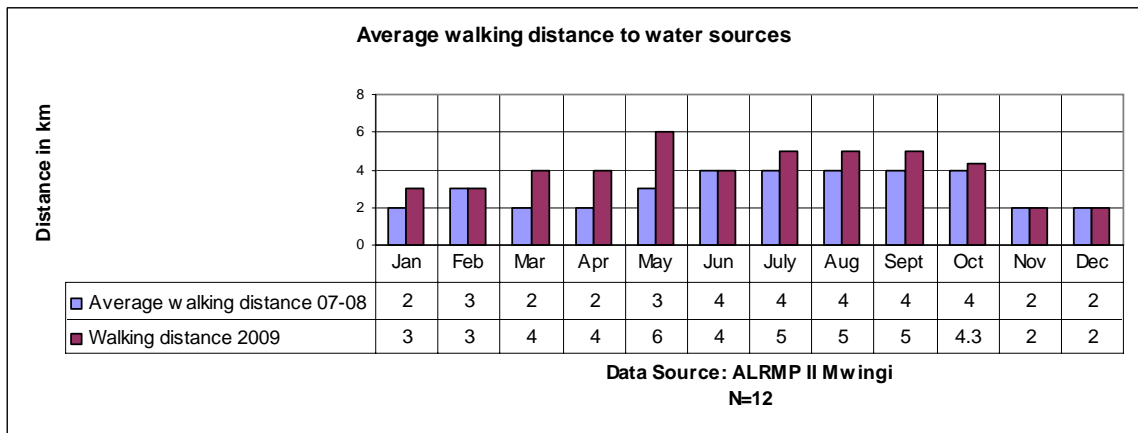




Normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) AND Rainfall estimates (RFE)

- The diagrams show that the district did get some rains during the third decad of November and the first decad of December. It is clear that the rains decreased significantly in December compared to last Month in both agro pastoral and mixed farming livelihood zones.
- Both livelihood zones are showing an NDVI index of 0.1. The quantities and qualities of natural vegetation have significantly improved over the last one month. Most of the landscape is covered with fresh green vegetation.

1.3 Water sources and availability



Water source access and availability is fair for now. The average walking distance has remained 2km. Most of the traditional water source points are being used. This has enabled household members to spend more of their time in other productive economic activities like farming.

1.4 Emerging issues

1.4.1 Conflict

The inter-communal clashes in Isiolo district resulted in displacement of Pastoralists who migrated into the Mwingi district creating some tension with the local communities. Areas affected were along the Tana River boundary belt but the Provincial Administration and Arid Lands Office intervened by establishing dialogue and the situation has calmed down.

1.4.2 Implications on food security

The livestock sector is improving slowly due to improved pastures and water availability. The biggest challenge is that most households lost a lot of animals in the previous drought and will require to do a lot of restocking but do not have resources to do it. Although the December rains were quite minimal, they have really assisted the crops to survive especially the ones that were planted early.

2.0 Rural economy indicators (food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

The animal body condition was fair for the large stock as they are slowly recovering from the effects of drought while the small stock has good body condition.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

There was no outbreak of major livestock disease in the district.

2.1.3 Milk production

Milk production improved compared to last month by at least 32%. This could be attributed to improved pastures and water. There was improved kidding over the last one month especially within Agro-pastoral livelihood zone and this could have attributed to the improved milk production.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

Crops were at different levels of maturity depending on when they were planted. Those planted early had reached flowering and tussling stage while others had just germinated. Most of the beans planted dried up when the rains delayed. Cowpeas had flowered and their green leaves were being consumed in many households.

2.2.2 Pests and diseases

Cases of caterpillars and weevils eating plant leaves have been reported in several areas like Tseikuru.

2.2.3 Implications on food security

- Improved animal body condition is expected to affect milk production and livestock market prices positively. This should be able to improve livestock sales incomes at household level. Improved milk production is expected to translate

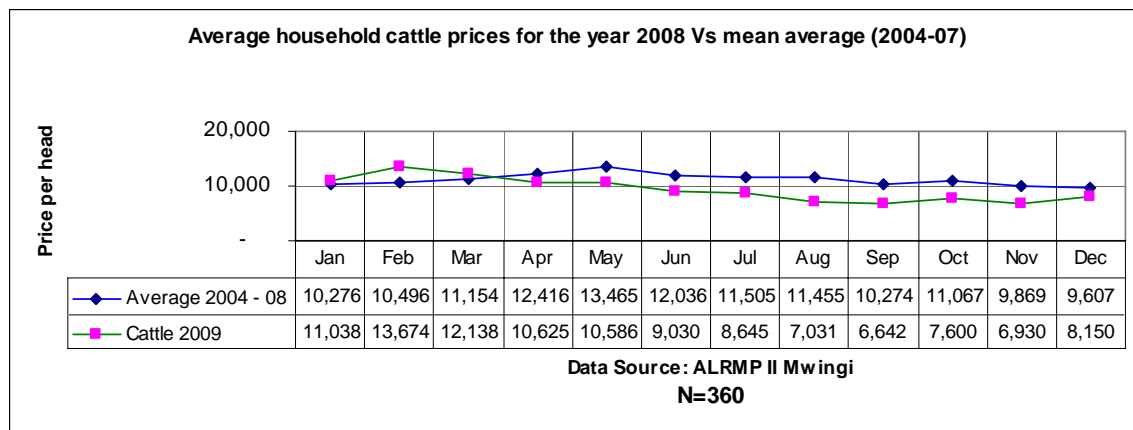
into improved household milk consumption resulting in improved nutritional status of household members.

- Some households are assured of harvesting something from their farms especially those who planted earlier. In other farms, the crops are still at vulnerable stage and require sustained rains in the next 3-4 weeks.

3.0 Access to food

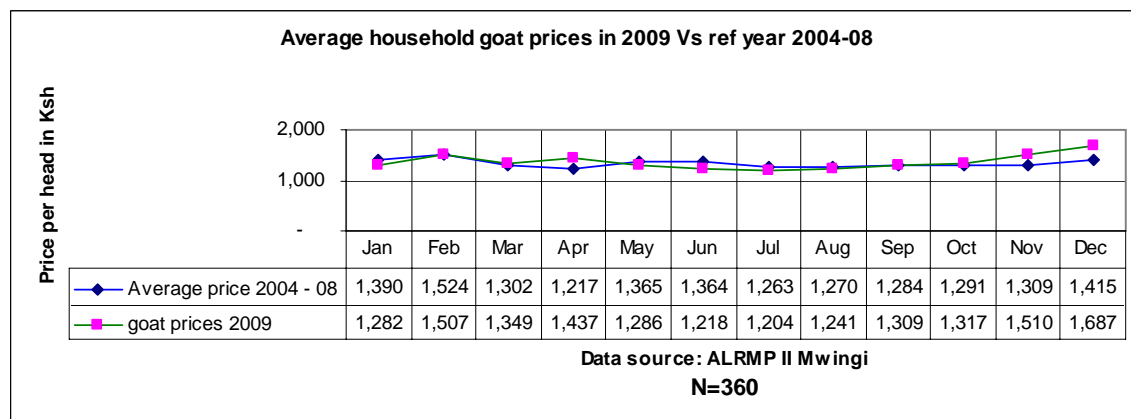
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices



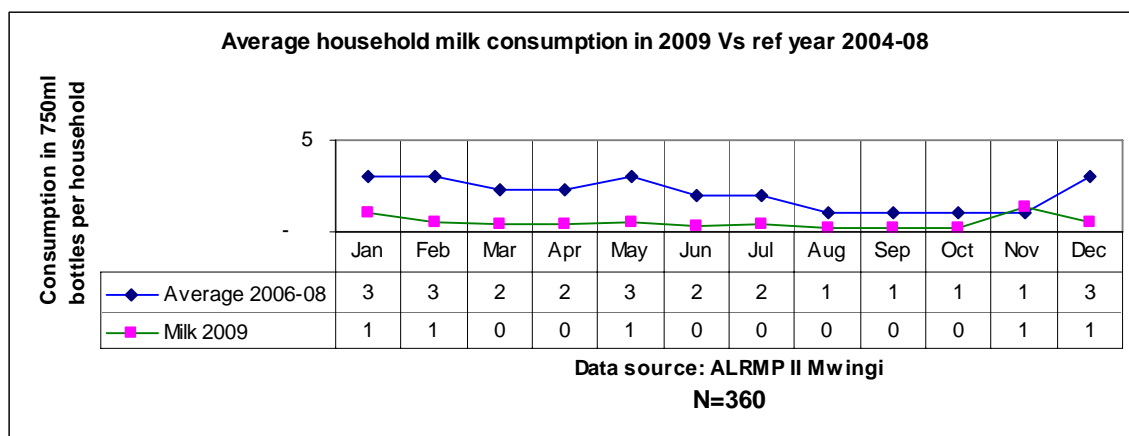
The average household cattle prices improved from Ksh6,930 per head last month to Ksh8,150 currently although they were lower compared to the long term mean. The highest price was recorded in Migwani at Ksh12,000/head while the lowest was in Tseikuru at Ksh5,500/head. The prices are gradually improving due to improving body condition of cattle.

3.1.2 Goat prices



There was a slight improvement of household goat prices from Ksh 1,510 last month to Ksh1,687. The highest price was in Migwani at Ksh 2,065/head while the lowest price was in Tseikuru at Ksh 1,473/head. The improvement was associated with good body condition of goats due to improved pasture and water availability.

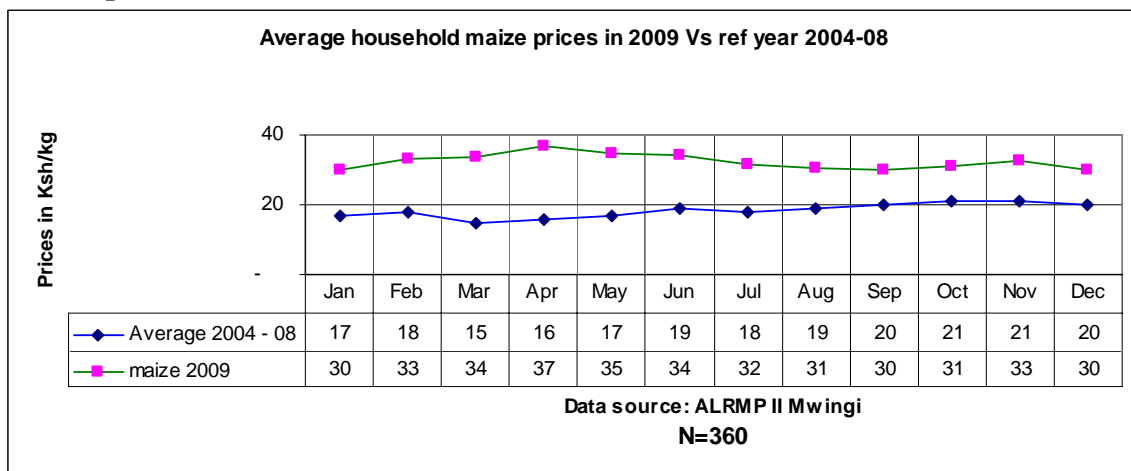
3.2 Milk consumption



The average household milk consumption has remained the same at one bottle (750mm bottle) per household although the number of households reported to be consuming milk increased slightly. Optimal milk production and consumption is being affected by low number of livestock as most of them had died during the last drought.

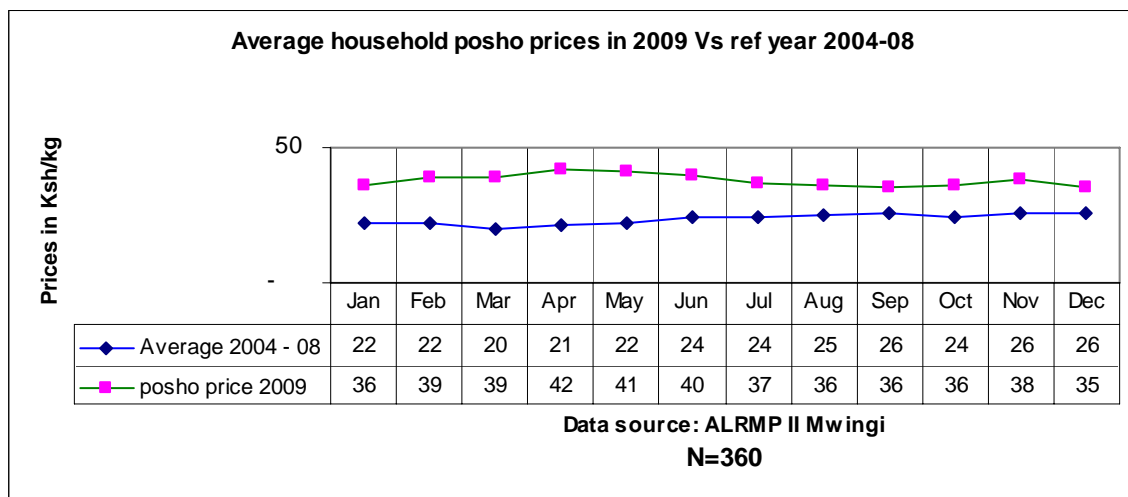
3.3 Crop prices

3.3.1 Maize prices



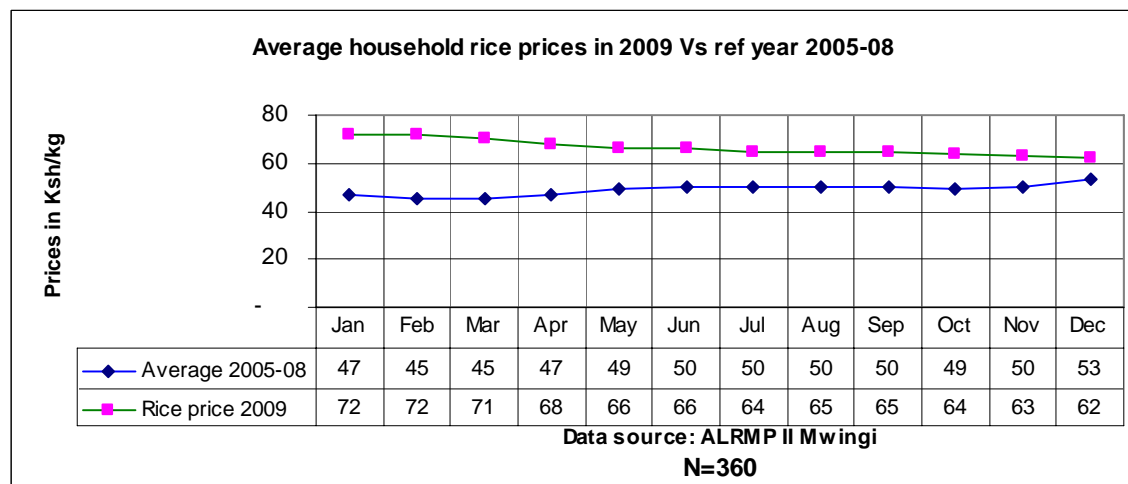
The average household maize prices declined from Ksh33 per kilo last month to Ksh30. The price range was Ksh28 to Ksh35 with parts of Tseikuru recording 28 while Mui recorded 35. The drop could be as a result of improved market supplies.

3.3.2 Posho prices



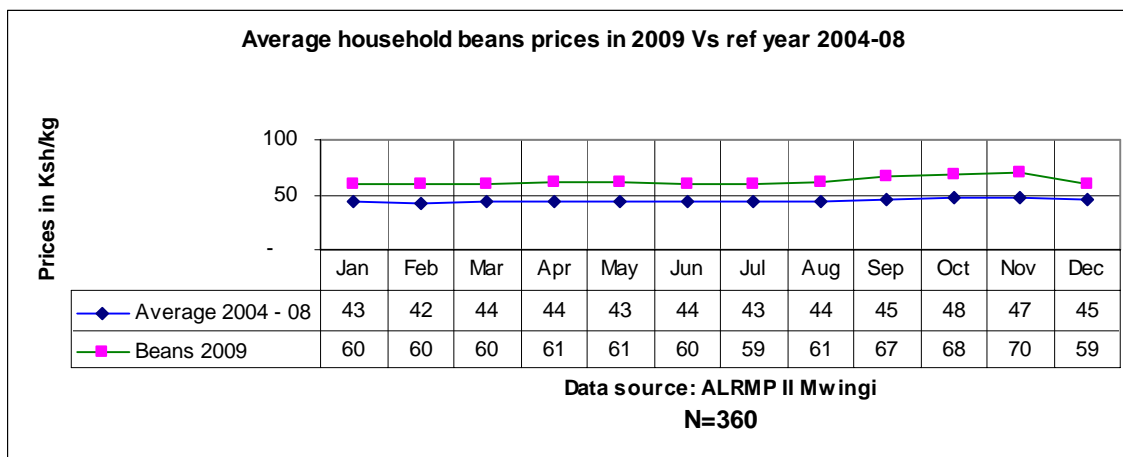
The average household posho prices declined from Ksh38 last month to Ksh 35g at the moment. This could be as a result of reduction of maize prices over the same period.

3.3.3 Rice prices



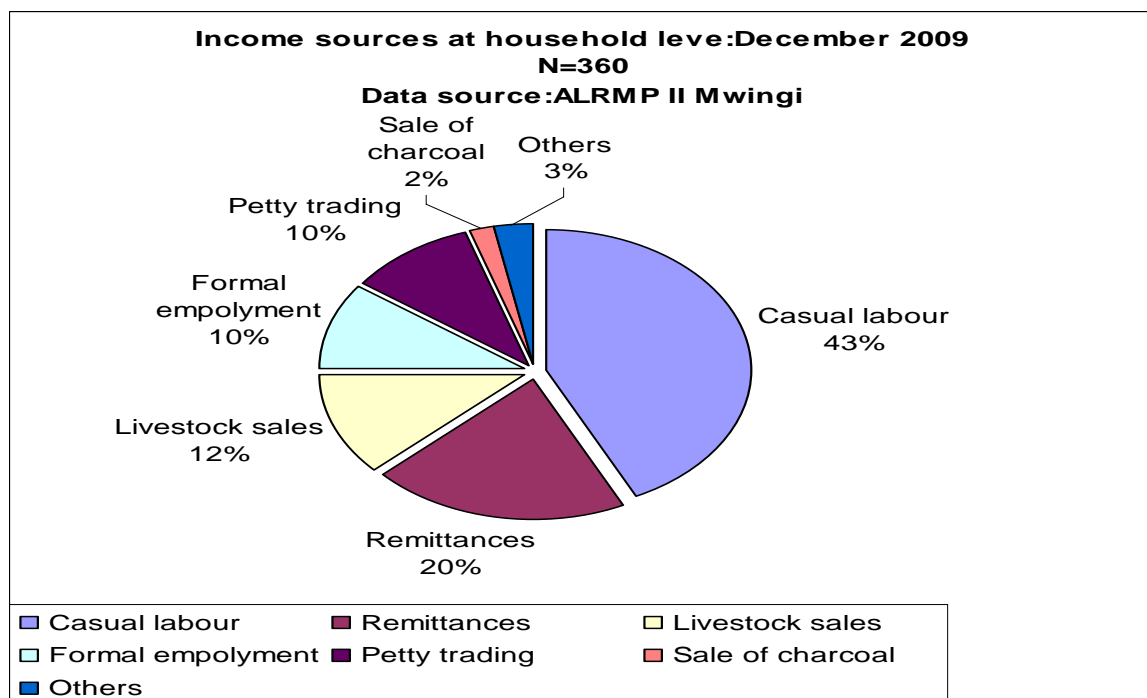
The average household rice prices declined slightly from Ksh 63/kg last month to Ksh 62/kg currently. The demand for rice is quite low and is considered as a luxury in most households.

3.3.4 Beans prices



The average household beans prices reduced from Ksh70 per kilo last month to Ksh59. This could have been caused by low demand for planting seeds of beans as the planting season is almost over.

3.4 Income



3.4.1 Crop income

There was no income from crops as households are yet to report any harvest.

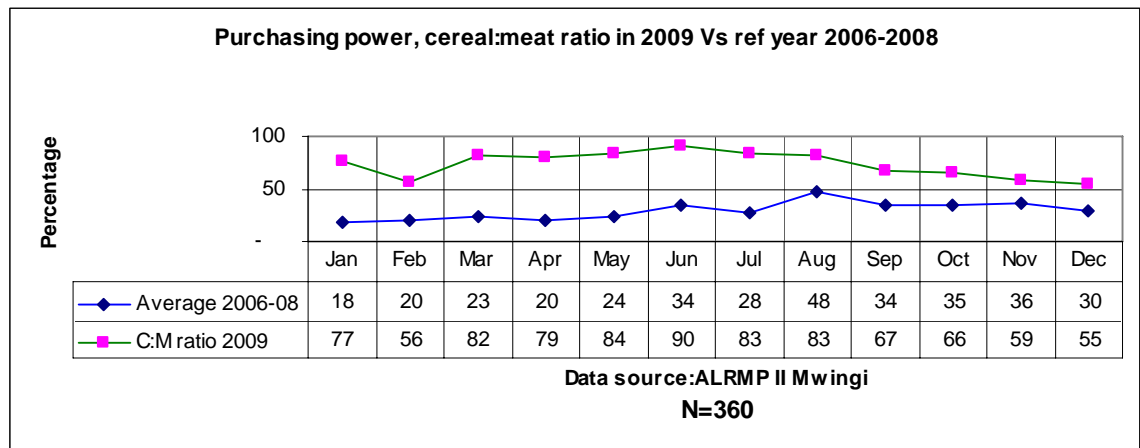
3.4.2 Livestock income

Livestock sales constituted about 12% of the number of households involved. Compared to last month, there was an increment of about 2% in the number of households reporting livestock sales. Most of the sales occurred in Kyuso and Tseikuru regions.

3.4.3 Other sources of income

Casual labour constituted the main source of income at 43%. Remittances are another main source of income with at least 20% of the households being involved.

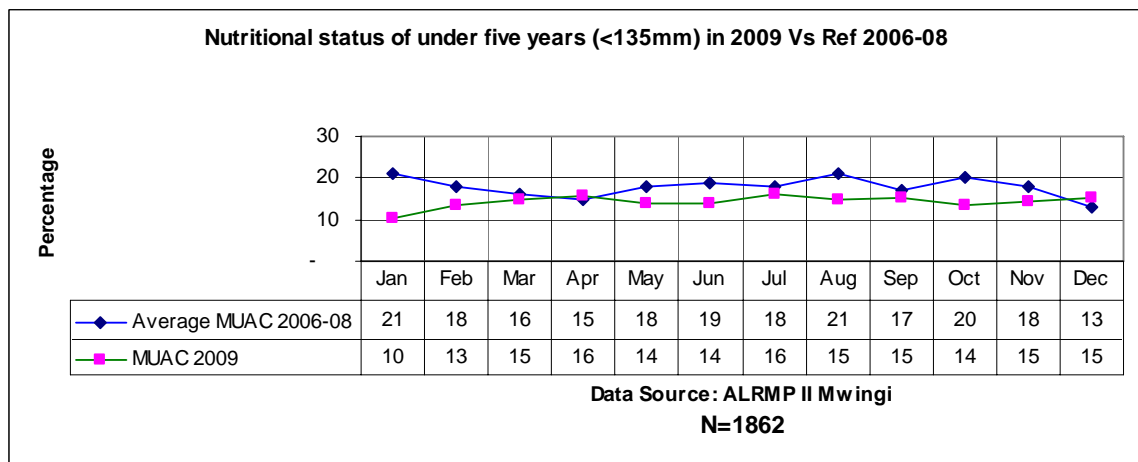
3.5 Cereal: Meat price ratio



The terms of trade for households reduced slightly from 59% last month to 55%. This has been caused by a drop in cereal prices and an increment in livestock prices over the same period. Compared to last month, a household was able to spend less livestock products to obtain the same amount of cereals.

4.0 Human welfare indicators (utilization of food)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The percentage of children at risk of malnutrition remained the same at 15% compared to last month. Tseikuru region had highest level at 35%, with Mui having the least at 3%.
- Until households realize any meaningful crop harvest, incidents of high malnutrition will continue to be recorded in the district. There is food shortage across the district and many households have been relying on relief food whose supplies have been erratic for the last three months.

4.2 Human health

Cases of malaria were reported in several places, although the situation is under control. The prevailing weather is very favorable for the breeding of mosquitoes leading to malaria infections.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Non-food intervention

- Through the use of peace committees, the Provincial Administration and Arid Lands office were able to intervene and reconciled communities living along Tana River belt. The influx of migrants from Isiolo district had caused tension with the local communities.
- Promotion of alternative sources of income such as poultry keeping and growing of mango fruit is being done by the relevant line ministries with the support of Arid Lands office.

5.2 Food aid

Food distribution under the FFA/PRRO programme has resumed after being interrupted for 3 months due to delays in supplies. A total of 732 metric tones of relief food comprising of cereals, pulses, vegetable oil, salt and unimix have been received and are being distributed to beneficiaries.

5.3 Coping strategies

The coping strategy index was 1.5. Casual labour and remittances were the major sources of cash for purchasing food.

6.0 Recommendations to DSG and KFSM

- Water structures should be reassessed to determine their safety. Incidents of children having drowned in one of the structures was reported in Migwani. Remedial action has to be taken to rehabilitate those that are having structural defects.
- Communal weeding should be incorporated into the Food for Asset programme since there are very few draft animals that are normally relied upon for this exercise.
- The Department of Agriculture should promote the use of effective pesticides to tackle the menace that is being posed by pests.
- With the onset of rains, incidents of worm infestation and disease outbreak are likely to occur in livestock. The Veterinary department should come up with effective strategies to minimize its impact.

- Now that there is plenty of pastures around some of which is being wasted, there is need for the livestock department to sensitize farmers on various techniques on management and conservation of forage which can be used later during drought periods. This will minimize unnecessary loss of livestock.
- There is serious need to undertake general food supplementation for children, especially in Tseikuru and Nguni divisions where malnutrition cases are quite high.
- Provision of anti malaria drugs and mosquito nets should be enhanced to curb incidents of malaria infection.