Famine Early Warning Systems Network

East Africa

Kenya

Key Message Update

Long rains harvest and livestock production drive food security improvements

July 2020

Key Messages:
In July, food security has improved, particularly in rural areas, as the ongoing long rains harvest and above-average livestock production increases household food availability and income from livestock and crop sales. Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes exist in the central and western high potential zones. However, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes persist across much of the country due to reduced on and off-farm income and above-average priced food and non-food items such as transport and medical care, with some households likely in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Area level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes persist in the Tana Riverine and Mandera Riverine livelihood zones driven by the impact of flooding and insecurity along the Kenya-Somalia border.

As of July 27, there were 17,603 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 280 deaths, implying a case-rate fatality of 1.6 percent. In July, the government lifted the movement restrictions in and out of Nairobi, Mombasa, and Mandera counties and resumed domestic flights. The lifting of the movement restrictions and the resumption of passenger transport is expected to improve income-earning opportunities for households both directly and indirectly involved in this sector. However, poor households in major urban areas continue to face a reduced or total loss of income due to reduced economic activity. Continued low access to income is reducing poor households’ capacity to purchase sufficient food and many are experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes.

An alert for Rift Valley fever (RVF) was issued by FAO and IGAD in July, following the wettest East African long rains season on record since 1981, which is creating a suitable environment for the proliferation of RVF vectors. No current incidences of RVF have been recorded but Turkana, Marsabit, Samburu, Baringo, Laikipia, Meru, and Kajiado counties have been classified as high-risk areas, while Tana River, Narok, Garissa and Wajir counties are classified as moderate risk areas. Surveillance measures continue in RVF-prone areas across the country in anticipation of outbreaks that may negatively impact human and livestock health, disrupt livestock production and markets, and lower household income.

In the marginal agricultural areas, improvement to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) is expected in the short-term in July and August despite the likely below-average long rains crop harvest. In pastoral areas, available forage and water resources are sustaining 2-3 liters of milk per household per day. In June, good livestock body conditions and limited market supply have kept goat prices 10-28 percent above the five-year average however in Garissa and Samburu goat prices are 49 percent above average. Below-average poor household income due to low livestock holdings and below-average on-farm casual labor opportunities along with higher costs of non-food items and transportation due to COVID-19 related impacts are expected to drive a return to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes in marginal agricultural and pastoral areas.

In June, maize grain prices in the marginal areas and the pastoral markets of Marsabit, Isiolo, and Samburu were average to 19 percent below the five-year average driven by the availability of the early long rains harvests and supplies from external markets. In the remaining pastoral markets maize grain prices were 6-22 percent above the five-year average, and in urban reference markets 10-39 percent above the five-year average, due to an added premium and a slowed supply chain from source markets. Bean prices were within average in Taita Taveta and Nyeri but were 6-15 percent above average across the rest of the marginal markets, and 48-68 percent above average in urban markets. Prices are influenced by depleted household stocks, the anticipated below-average long rains harvest, and continued COVID-19 related delays in the supply chain.

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