

1. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

1.1 RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

- The month was generally dry across all livelihood zones. This is normal for this time of the year. Dry conditions are expected to prevail till the onset of OND rains in October.

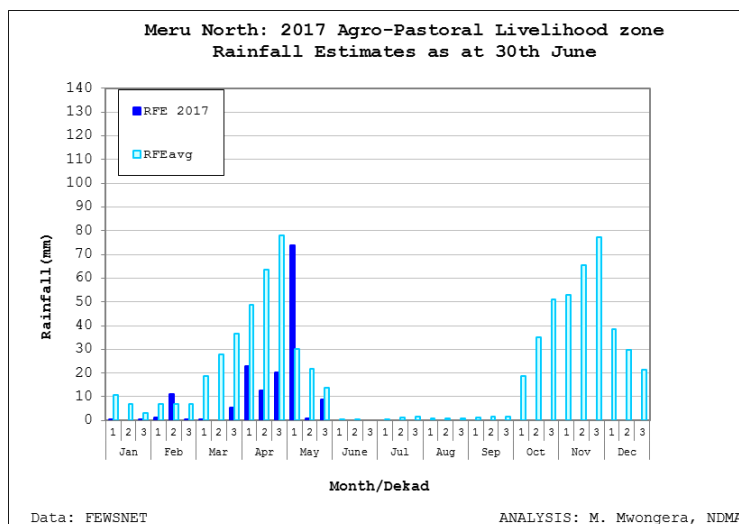


Figure 1a: Rainfall totals received in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone (Source: FEWSNET)

- In sum, most areas ranged within the normal ranges for the month at 80 – 120 percent of normal.

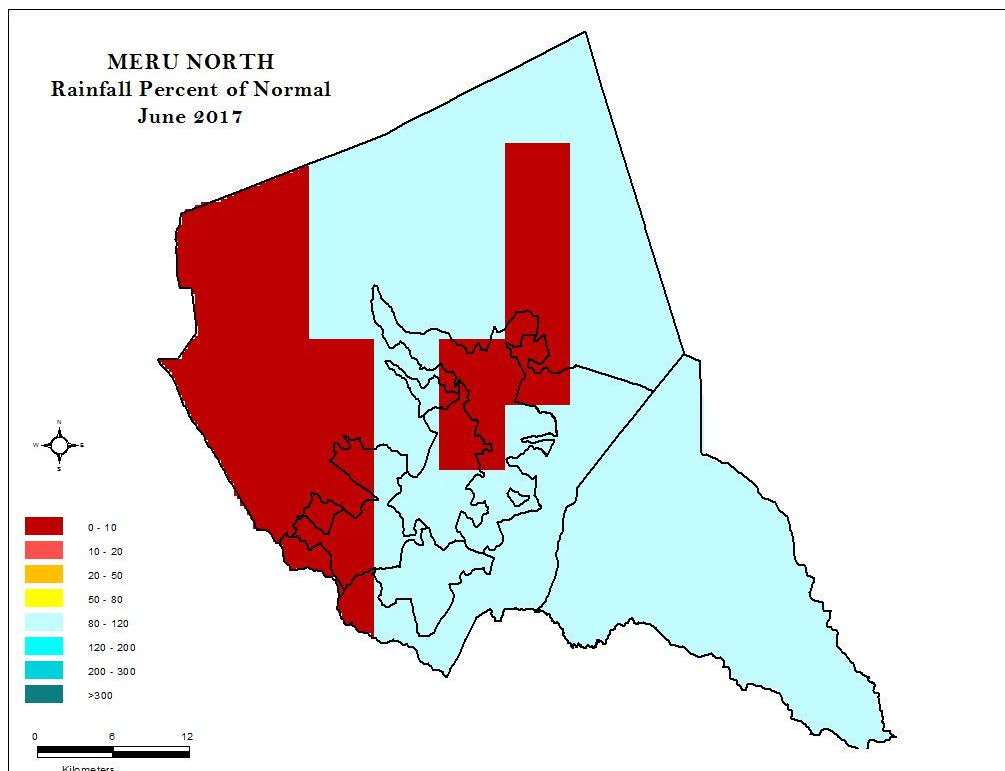


Figure 1b: Rainfall Percent of normal for the month of June, 2017

2. IMPACTS ON VEGETATION AND WATER

2.1 VEGETATION CONDITION

2.1.1 Vegetation Condition Index (VCI)

- Vegetation conditions were poor this month across all livelihood zones similar to the previous month. Current vegetation greenness as measured using the Vegetation Condition Index was below the normal ranges for the month. Tigania East, Buuri, and Igembe North Sub-Counties recorded the least values as indicated below:

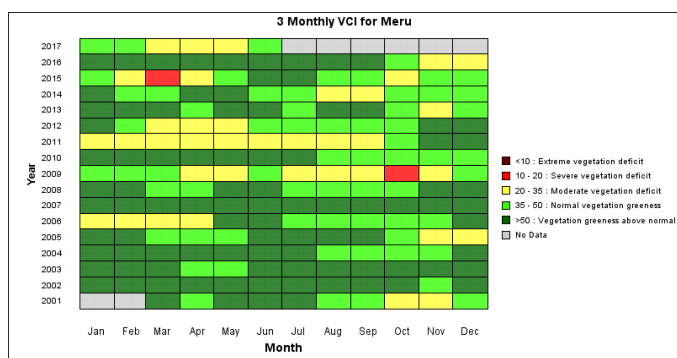


Figure 2a: VCI matrix for Meru County, 2001 – 2017

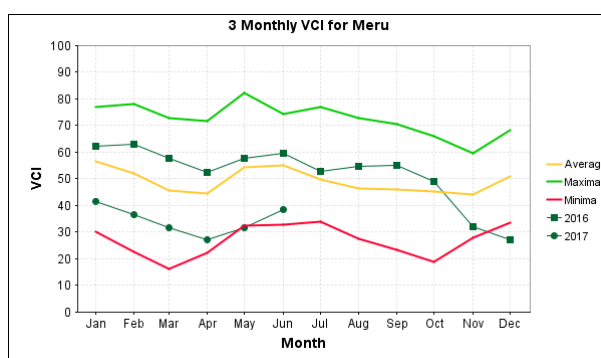


Figure 2b: VCI graph for Meru County, June 2017

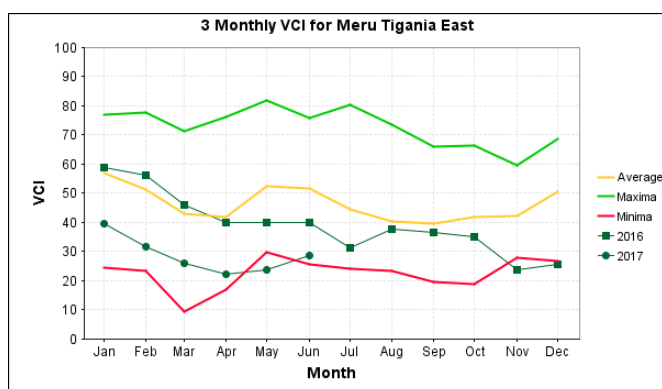


Figure 3a: VCI graph for Tigania East as at June 2017

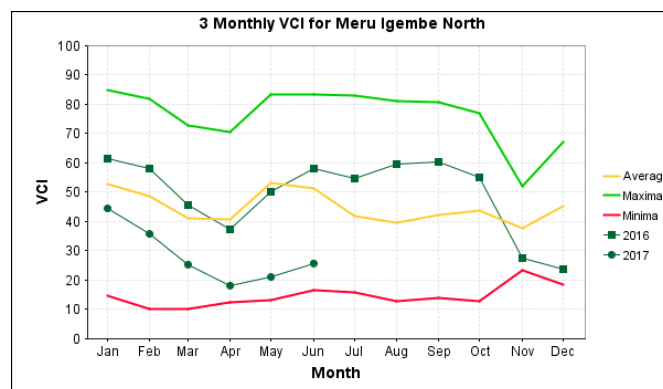


Figure 3b: VCI graph for Igembe North as at June 2017

2.1.2 Pasture

- Pasture conditions deteriorated further this month compared to the previous month. 67 percent of interviewed communities reported pastures being of poor conditions mostly in the grazing areas of the Agro-pastoral livelihood zones compared to 50 percent the previous month. Pasture depletion was also noted in several parts of this zone.
- 33 percent reported pastures to be of good conditions (mostly in the Rain-fed cropping livelihood zone which had received better rains this season) compared to 25 percent the previous month.
- Current pasture conditions are not normal for this time of the year and are expected to deteriorate further next month.

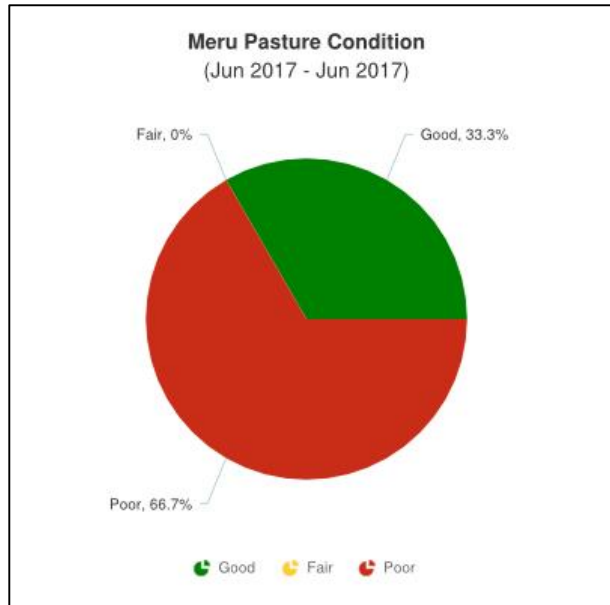


Figure 4: Meru County Pasture conditions. June, 2017

2.1.3 Browse

- Browse conditions deteriorated further this month with 75 percent of interviewed communities reporting browse being of poor conditions compared to 50 percent the previous month. Only 8 percent and 17 percent reported browse being of fair and good conditions respectively.
- Browse conditions in the ago-pastoral livelihood zone were worse off than all other livelihood zones.
- Current conditions are not normal for this time of the year and are expected to deteriorate further beginning next month.

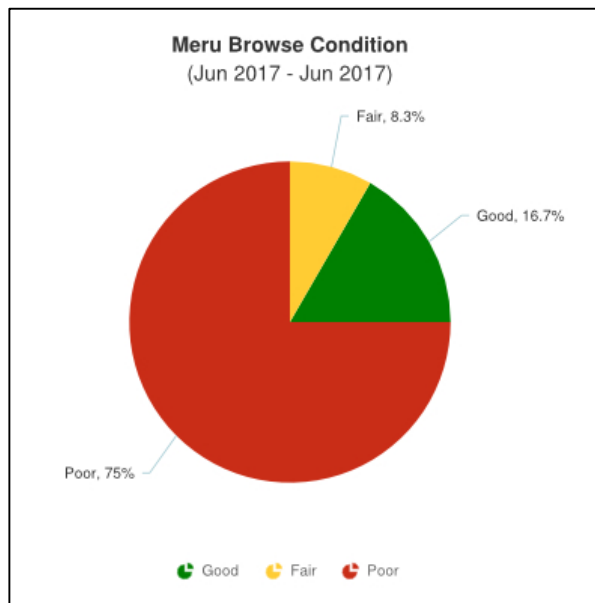


Figure 5: Meru County Browse conditions, June 2017

2.2 WATER RESOURCE

2.2.1 Sources

- Rivers, boreholes and community-based piped water projects were the major sources of water this month similar to the previous month. Rivers and Piped water systems were mostly available in the Rain-fed cropping livelihood zone. Boreholes and water vendors were important sources in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone.
- The increase in proportion of households relying on boreholes and water vendors in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone from 28 percent the previous month to 43 percent of the same sample size this month is an indicator of diminished alternative sources. This is not normal for this time of the year and the situation is most likely to degenerate further next month

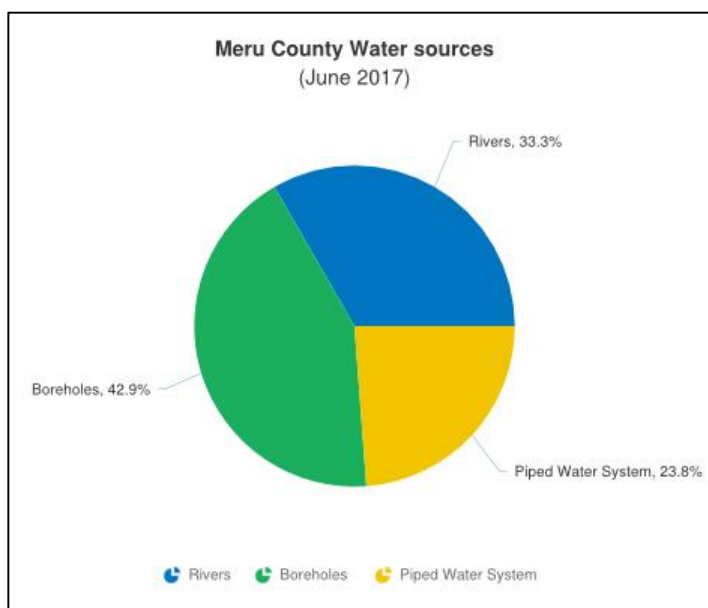


Figure 6: Meru County sources of water. June 2017

2.2.2 Household access and Utilization

- Distances to watering points for households increased to an average of 18 km compared to 14 km the previous month. These distances are not normal for this time of the year and have resulted from diminishing water sources closer to homesteads.
- Agro-pastoral livelihood zone which is currently relying on boreholes recorded longest distances due to the huge distances between the functioning boreholes.
- Distances are likely to increase further beginning next month as water sources decline further.

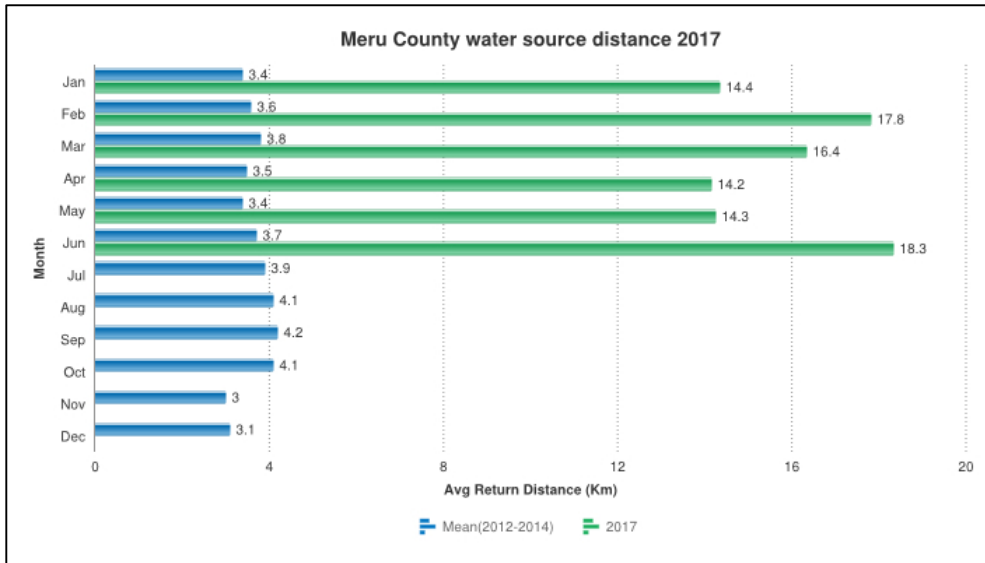


Figure 7: Meru County Household distances to water sources. June, 2017

2.2.3 Livestock access

- Distances to watering points for livestock remained high this month similar to the previous month. Current distances averaged at 11.5 km compared to 12.5 km last month and a long term average of 4.2 km for the month.
- These distances are not normal for this time of the year and are indicative of diminished water sources in the grazing areas.
- Distances are likely to increase further next month.

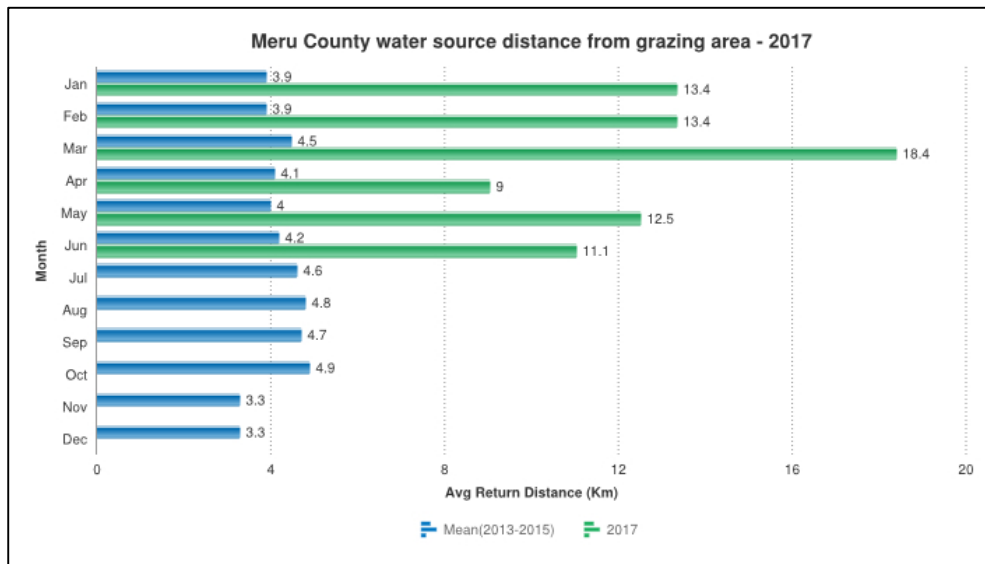


Figure 8: Meru County Livestock watering distances from grazing areas. June, 2017

3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS

3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

3.1.1 Livestock Body Condition

- Livestock body conditions have deteriorated further this month due to poor pastures, long trekking distances and reduced watering frequencies. Majority range from fair to poor especially in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone.
- Current body conditions are not normal and with the depleted pastures, livestock are likely to deteriorate further next month.

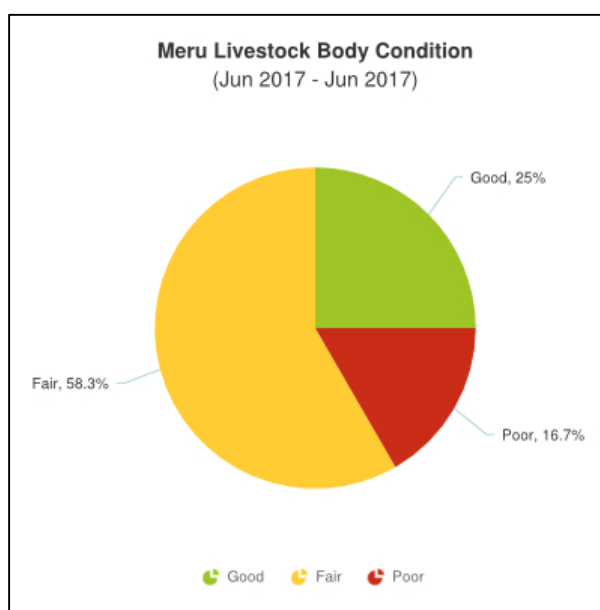


Figure 9: Meru County livestock body conditions. June, 2017

3.1.2 Livestock Diseases

- Suspected cases of Foot and Mouth disease have been reported in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone during the month

3.1.3 Milk Production

- Milk production declined to an average of 10.5 litres this month compared to 18.5 litres last month. This decline is as a result of poor livestock body conditions and unavailability of adequate pastures and water.
- Production is likely to decrease further over the coming months.

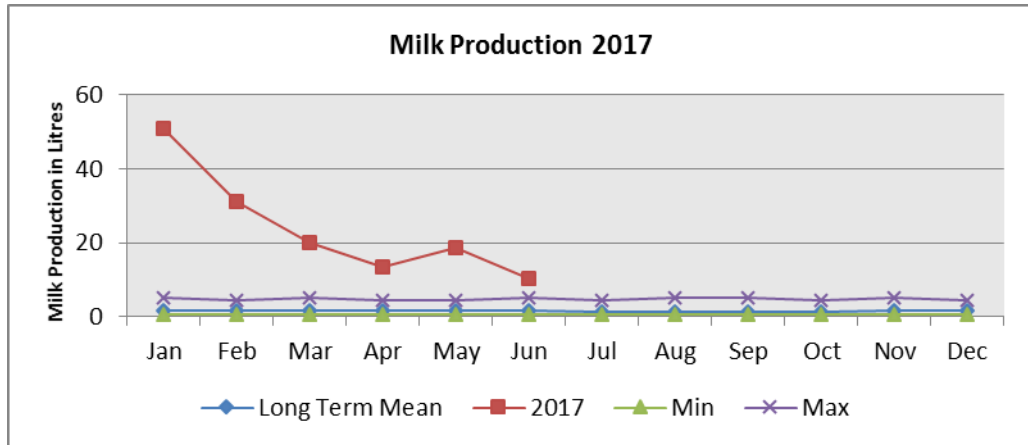


Figure 10: Meru County Milk production. June, 2017

3.2 RAIN-FED CROP PRODUCTION

3.2.1 Stage and Condition of food Crops

- Crops have performed poorly this season especially in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone and parts of the Rain-fed cropping livelihood zone. Maize crop in this zones are at tussling stages for the late crop while the early crop dried prematurely. Minimal harvests are expected in these areas. Bean crop in these areas also dried prematurely and as such very low harvests are expected.
- Below normal harvests of both crops are expected in the Mixed Farming livelihood zone as this zone received slightly better rains than the other livelihood zones.
- Overall, low harvests are expected in the County which is not normal.

4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

4.1.1 Cattle Prices

- Cattle prices decreased to an average of Kshs 17,300 this month compared to Kshs 18,200 the previous month mainly due to poor body conditions and increased supply in the markets as herders try to offload excess stock.
- Current prices are similar to the long term average prices for the month although as body conditions deteriorate further, prices are also likely to decrease.

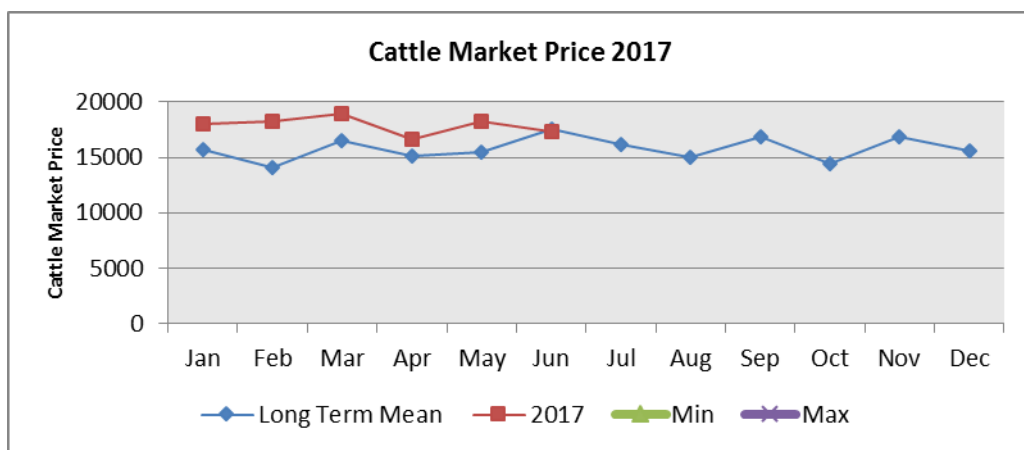


Figure 11: Meru County average cattle market prices. June, 2017

4.1.2 Goat Prices

- Goat prices appreciated slightly to an average of Kshs 5,000 this month compared to Kshs 3,300 last month possible because they still had good body conditions and a slight decrease in supply to the markets.
- Current prices are above the long term average for the month although declines are expected beginning next month as herders reduce stocks to manageable levels.

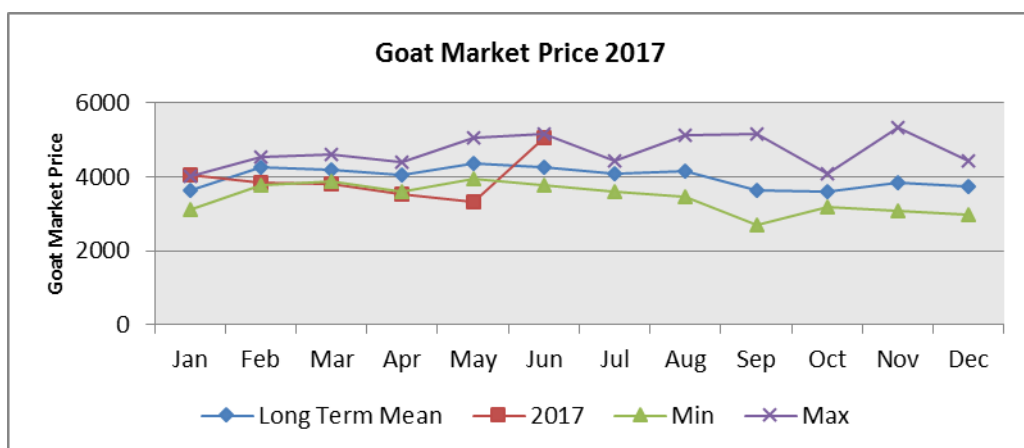


Figure 11: Meru County average goat market prices. June, 2017

4.2 CROP PRICES

4.2.1 Maize

- Maize prices remained unchanged compared to last month at an average of Ksh 55 per kilo. Current prices are not normal for this month and are higher than the long term average for the month indicating a depleted stocks both at household level and in the markets.
- Prices are expected to remain high for the better part of the year

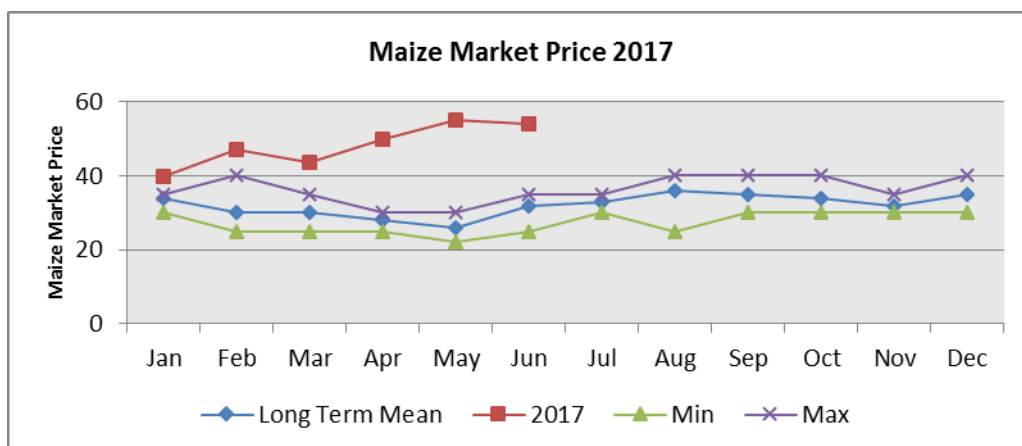


Figure 12: Meru County average maize market prices. June, 2017

4.2.3 Beans

- Bean prices declined slightly this month due to the ongoing harvests in the mixed farming and Rain-fed cropping livelihood zones. Prices averaged at Kshs 75 compared to Kshs 81 the previous month.
- Prices are expected to increase in the next two months as stocks decrease.

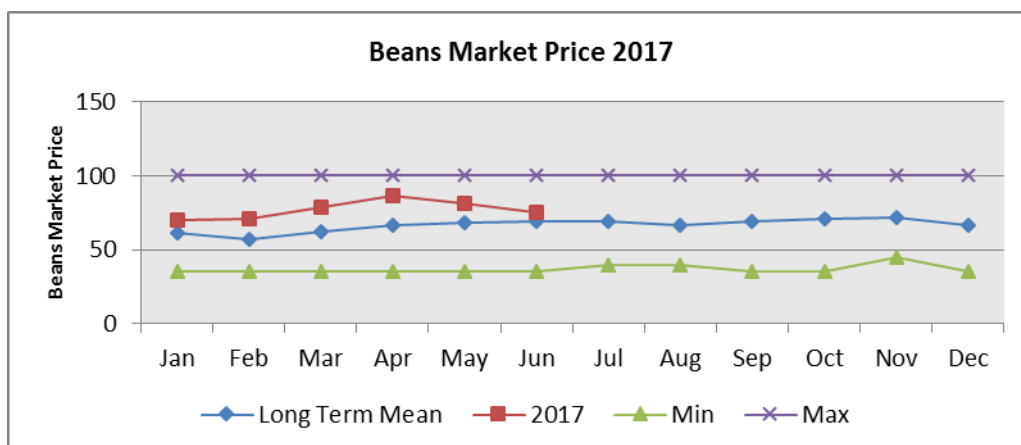


Figure 13: Meru County average bean market prices. June, 2017

4.3 Casual Labour Price Ratio/Terms of Trade

- Terms of trade improved slightly this month as goat prices remained high. A household could afford 93 kgs of maize from the sale of one goat compared to 60 kgs the previous month. However with an expected increase in maize prices, terms of trade are likely to deteriorate the following month.

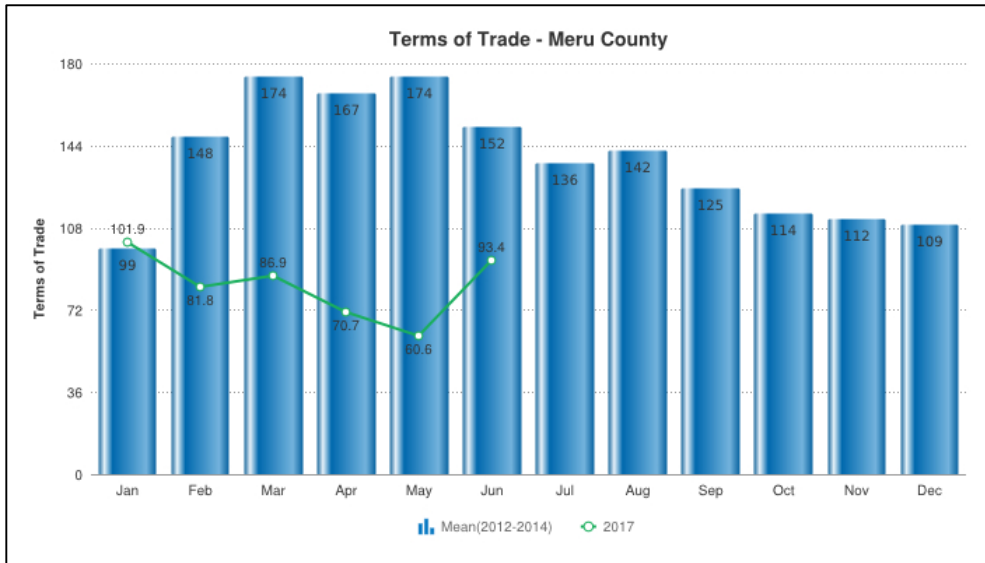


Figure 14: Meru County terms of trade. June, 2017

5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

5.1 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- Food consumption scores remained the same as the previous month, and indicator that nothing much has changed. From a sample of 110 households, 25 of them had acceptable food consumption scores similar to last month. Similarly, 25 households were at borderline while 60 had poor household consumption scores similar to last month.

5.2 HEALTH AND NUTRITION STATUS

5.2.1 Nutrition Status

- 27 percent of sampled children were at risk of malnutrition similar to the previous month. This is higher than the long term average for the month an indication that food stocks at household levels have depleted.
- Current possible levels of malnutrition are not normal for this time of the year.

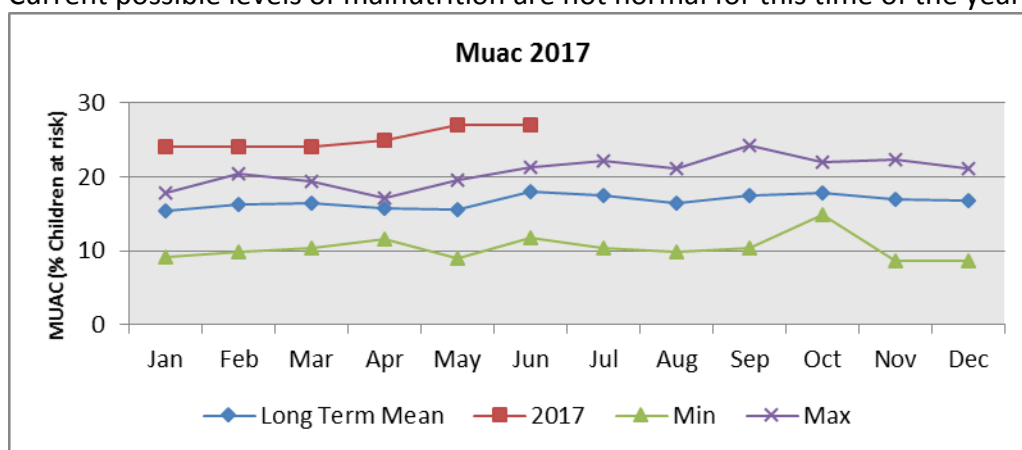


Figure 16: Meru County malnutrition levels. June, 2017

5.2.2 Health

- There were no major diseases among the sampled children this month.

CURRENT INTERVENTION MEASURES (ACTION)

6.1 NON-FOOD INTERVENTIONS

- Trial runs of the Sweet Potato Value Addition plant by Meru Friends SACCO with support from, National Drought Management Authority, Meru County Government and the European Union through Kenya Rural Development Project were carried out during the month. Full operations are expected to begin within two months.

6.2 FOOD AID

- No food aid distribution was reported during the month.

7. EMERGING ISSUES

7.1 Insecurity/Conflict/Human Displacement

- Cattle rustling in the grazing areas of Igembe North and Igembe Central was reported during the month similar to the previous month.
- Internal livestock migrations were noted during the month. Majority of livestock in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone have migrated to Imenti forest and into the Rain-fed cropping livelihood zone around the Meru National park. This migration is not normal. In migration of livestock, mostly camels and goats, from neighbouring Isiolo County have been reported in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is an urgent need to activate the drought contingency planned activities to minimise and shield communities from the possible effects of the ongoing drought.

REFERENCE TABLES

Table 1: Drought Phase Classification

Normal	Alert	Alarm	Emergency
All environmental Agricultural and pastoral indicators are within the seasonal ranges	Meteorological drought indicators move outside seasonal ranges	Environmental and at least two production indicators are outside Long term seasonal ranges	All Environmental, Metrological and Production indicators are outside normal ranges.
Recovery: The drought phase must have reached at least Alarm stage. Recovery starts after the end of drought as signalled by the environmental indicators returning to seasonal norms; local economies starting to recover			

Table 2: Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)

Color	SPI Values	Metrological Drought Category
	> +1.5 or more	Wet Conditions
	0 to +1.5	No drought
	-0.1 to -0.99	Mild drought
	-1 to -1.99	Severe drought
	<-2 and less	Extreme drought

Table 3: Vegetation Condition Index Values (VCI)

Color	VCI values 3-monthly average	Agricultural Drought Category
	≥50	Wet
	35 to 50	No agricultural drought
	21 to 34	Moderate agricultural drought
	10 to 20	Severe agricultural drought
	<10	Extreme agricultural drought

Table 4: Livestock Body Condition

Level	Classification	Characteristics (this describes majority of the herd and not individual isolated Stock)
1	Normal	Very Fat Tail buried and in fat
		Fat, Blocky. Bone over back not visible
		Very Good Smooth with fat over back and tail head
		Good smooth appearance
2	Moderate	Moderate. neither fat nor thin
3	Stressed	Borderline fore-ribs not visible. 12th & 13th ribs visible
4	Critical	Thin fore ribs visible
5	Emaciated	Very thin no fat, bones visible
		Emaciated, little muscle left

Definition of Early Warning Phases

The EW phases are defined as follow:

NORMAL: The normal phase occurs when **biophysical drought indicators (VCI and SPI) show no unusual fluctuations** hence remain within the expected ranges for the time of the year in a given livelihood zone, division or county

ALERT: The alert phase is when either the **vegetation condition index or the standard precipitation index (biophysical indicators) show unusual fluctuations below expected seasonal ranges** within the whole county/sub-county or livelihood zones.

ALARM: The alarm phase occurs when both **biophysical and at least three production indicators fluctuate outside expected seasonal ranges** affecting the local economy. The production indicators to be considered are livestock body condition, crop condition, milk production, livestock migration and livestock mortality rate.

If **access indicators** (impact on market, access to food and water) move outside the normal range, the status remains at “alarm” but with a worsening trend. Proposed access indicators include ToT, price of cereals, availability of cereals and legumes, and milk consumption. The trend will be further worsening when also welfare indicators (MUAC and CSI) start moving outside the normal ranges.

EMERGENCY: In the emergency phase, **all indicators are outside of normal ranges**, local production systems have collapsed within the dominant economy. The emergency phase affects asset status and purchasing power to extent that seriously threatens food security. As a result, coping strategy index, malnutrition (MUAC) and livestock mortality rates move above emergency thresholds

RECOVERY: Environmental indicators returning to seasonal norms. The drought phase must have reached at least Alarm stage. Recovery starts after the end of drought as signalled by the environmental indicators returning to seasonal norms while production indicators are still outside the normal seasonal range but local economies start to recover. The status changes to normal once the bio physical and production indicators are back to normal range.