

National Drought Management Authority
WEST POKOT COUNTY
DROUGHT EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR JANUARY 2019



A Vision 2030 Flagship Project



JANUARY EW PHASE



Drought Situation & EW Phase Classification

Biophysical Indicators

- The County received trace precipitation with poor intensity across livelihood zones during the first and second dekads of January. The temporal and spatial distribution was poor. Generally, the month experienced windy and dry periods.
- The vegetation condition remained normal, with a worsening trend across most parts as demonstrated by the drop in the Vegetation Condition Index. Most Sub-counties recorded normal vegetation greenness despite the decline. Forage condition is poor in January.

Socio Economic Indicators (Impact Indicators)

- The Terms of Trade is dismal, with milk production and consumption at household level declining significantly.
- The livestock body condition is fair with a deteriorating trend across the County. Distance to water sources increased significantly.
- Majority of households fell within the Acceptable Food Consumption Score, whereas the Coping Strategy Index increased within the month.
- Malnutrition status is increasing, as the proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition increased but still within the normal range.

Early Warning (EW) Phase Classification

LIVELIHOOD ZONE	EW PHASE	TREND
AGRO PASTORAL	NORMAL	WORSENING
PASTORAL	ALERT	WORSENING
COUNTY	NORMAL	WORSENING

Biophysical Indicators	Value	Normal range
VCI-3month (County)	38	>35
VCI-3month (Pokot North)	32	>35
Forage Condition	Poor	Good

Production Indicators	Value	Normal range
Livestock Body Condition	Normal	Normal
Milk Production	1.3 Litres	>1.4 Litres
Livestock Migration Pattern	Usual	Normal
Livestock deaths (attributed to drought)	No deaths	No deaths

Access Indicators	Value	Normal range
Terms of Trade (ToT)	112	>76
Milk Consumption	1.2 Litres	>1.4 Litres
Return distance to water sources (household)	4.1 km	0.0-2.6km
Cost of water at source (Ksh. /20 litres)	Kshs 5	<Kshs 5

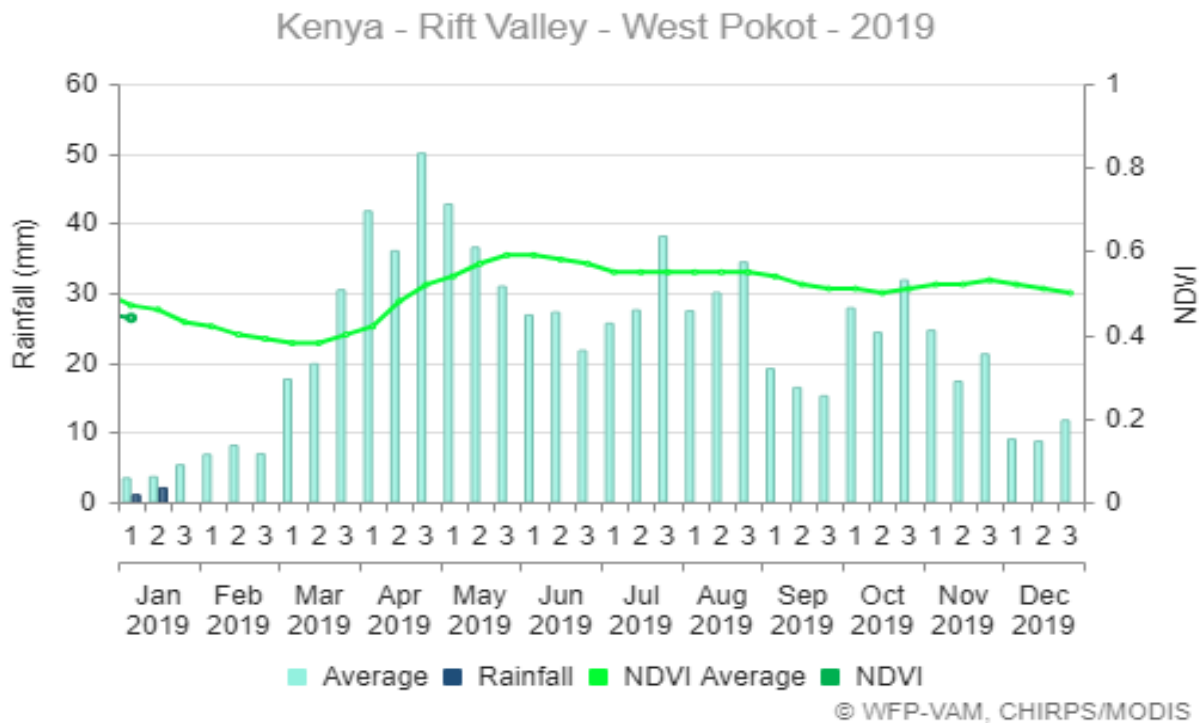
Utilization Indicators	Value	Normal range
Nutrition status, MUAC (% at risk of malnutrition)	5.1	0.0-9.6
Coping Strategy Index (CSI)	2.2	0.0-14.5
Food Consumption Score	40	>35

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short rains harvests ▪ Short dry spell ▪ Increased HH Food Stock ▪ Land preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planting/Weeding ▪ Long rains ▪ High Calving Rate ▪ Milk Yields Increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long rains harvests ▪ A long dry spell ▪ Land preparation ▪ Increased HH Food Stock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short rains ▪ Planting/weeding ▪ (Irish potatoes, Cabbages and Onions) 								
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

1.0 CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

1.1 RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

- In January, the County received trace rainfall amounts across the livelihood zones. The ongoing dry spell is likely to worsen due to prevailing dry winds and scorching sunshine. The (October-November-December (OND) seasonal rainfall underperformed.
- The rainfall situation is below normal for such time of the year.



Source: VAM-World Food Programme

- The dekadal rainfall dropped sharply, from 20 mm to 1 mm and 21 mm to 2 mm in the first and second dekads respectively, where both first and second dekadal amounts were below normal.

1.2 AMOUNT OF RAINFALL AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

- The spatial and temporal rainfall distribution was poor across the livelihoods. The intensity was similarly poor in both highland and lowland areas of the County.
- The County has been fairly dry in January.

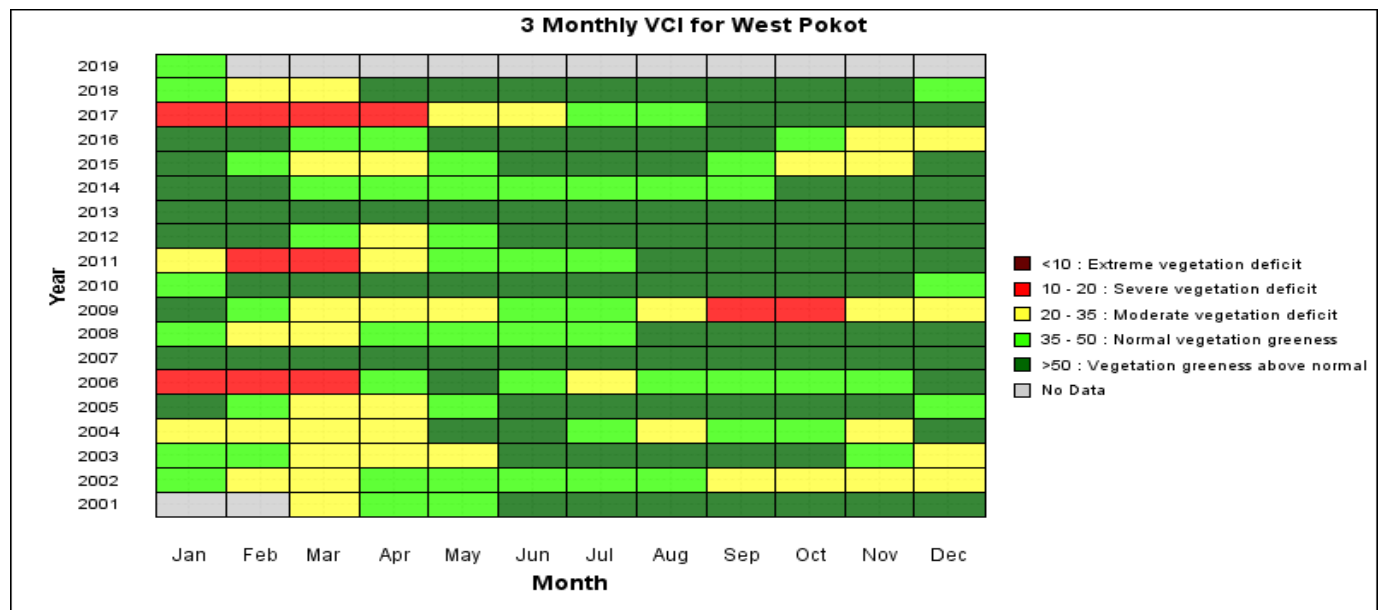
1.3 OTHER EVENTS

- No notable occurrence of events such as floods, land/mud slides, lightning strikes and hailstorms in November.

2.0 IMPACTS ON VEGETATION AND WATER

2.1 VEGETATION CONDITION

2.1.1 Vegetation Condition Index (VCI)



Source: Boku University

- The VCI (VCI-3 month) which shows the vegetation status of the County is 38 in January 2019, indicating a drop from 44 reported in December 2018. Notwithstanding the decrease, the current VCI is still above normal (35) vegetation greenness condition.
- The VCI trend is declining across livelihoods. All sub-counties recorded normal vegetation greenness band apart from Pokot North sub-county which recorded moderate vegetation deficit. The decrease is from 35 to 32, 47 to 39, 57 to 50 and 49 to 40 in Pokot North, Pokot West, Pokot South and Pokot Central Sub-counties respectively. The decreasing trend in the VCI is owed to insufficient rejuvenation of vegetation cover attributed to the ongoing dry spell.

2.1.2 Pasture

- During the month, the proportion of sampled community which stated that the pasture was poor is 100 percent, an increase from 60 percent reported in December.
- The pasture condition is poor across livelihood zones. The communities reported that the condition was below normal for the month. The trend is worsening in comparison to the previous month due to prevailing dry conditions in January.
- The pasture situation is anticipated to worsen with the ongoing dry spell.
- There is no significant variation in terms of pasture quality and quantity in livelihood zones,

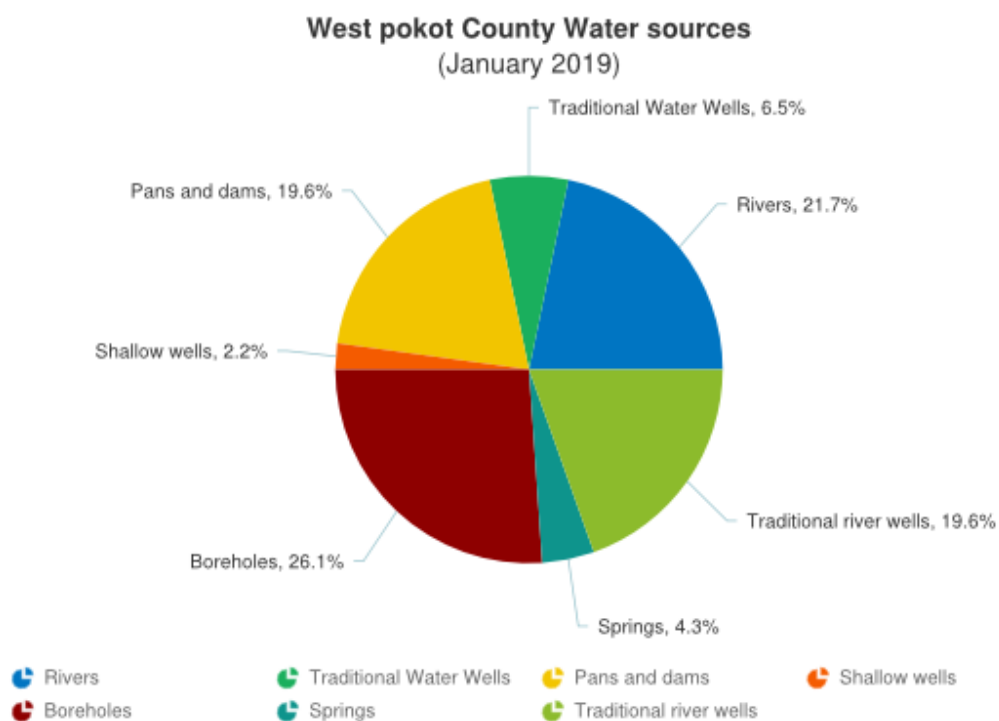
2.1.3 Browse

- In January, the proportion of the sampled community which stated that the browse condition was poor is 30 percent; an increase from 15 percent recorded in December.
- The browse condition is still fair across the livelihood zones. The browse situation is normal for such period of the year. The quality of the browse condition is relatively poor in comparison to that of December due to trace precipitation amounts within the month.
- The quantity of browse is fair across livelihood zones and there was no significant variation between the pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones.
- Access to browse along the Pokot-Marakwet/Turkana borders is still being hindered by fears of insecurity along conflict hotspots.

2.2 WATER RESOURCE

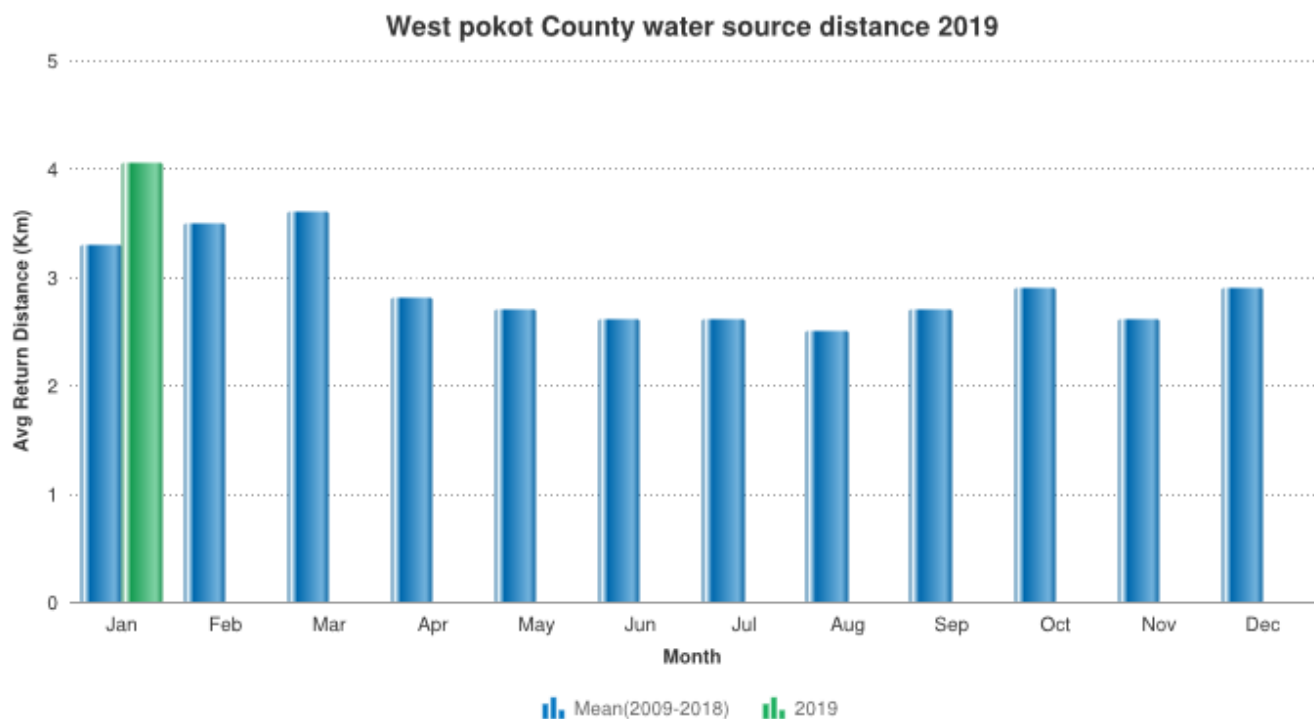
2.2.1 Sources

- The proportion of sampled population using main water sources for both households and livestock is 26 for boreholes, 22 for rivers, and 20 for both traditional river wells and pans/dams. Other water sources in use include wells and springs at 7 and 4 percent respectively.
- The water recharge levels decreased compared to the previous month, owed to poor rains.
- The water levels for both boreholes and rivers decreased due to lack of recharge.
- The current main sources in use are the normal sources where households draw water during such time of the year.



2.2.2 Household Access and Utilization

- In January, the return distance to water source from the household is 4.1 km, an increase from 3 km recorded in December. The current distance is 21 percent above the Long Term Average (LTA) distance.
- In comparison, the pastoral livelihood zone recorded slightly longer trekking distance to water source than the agro-pastoral livelihood zone. Both pastoral and agro-pastoral zones experienced poor precipitation. The increase in distance is credited to the poor surface water sources recharge during the month.

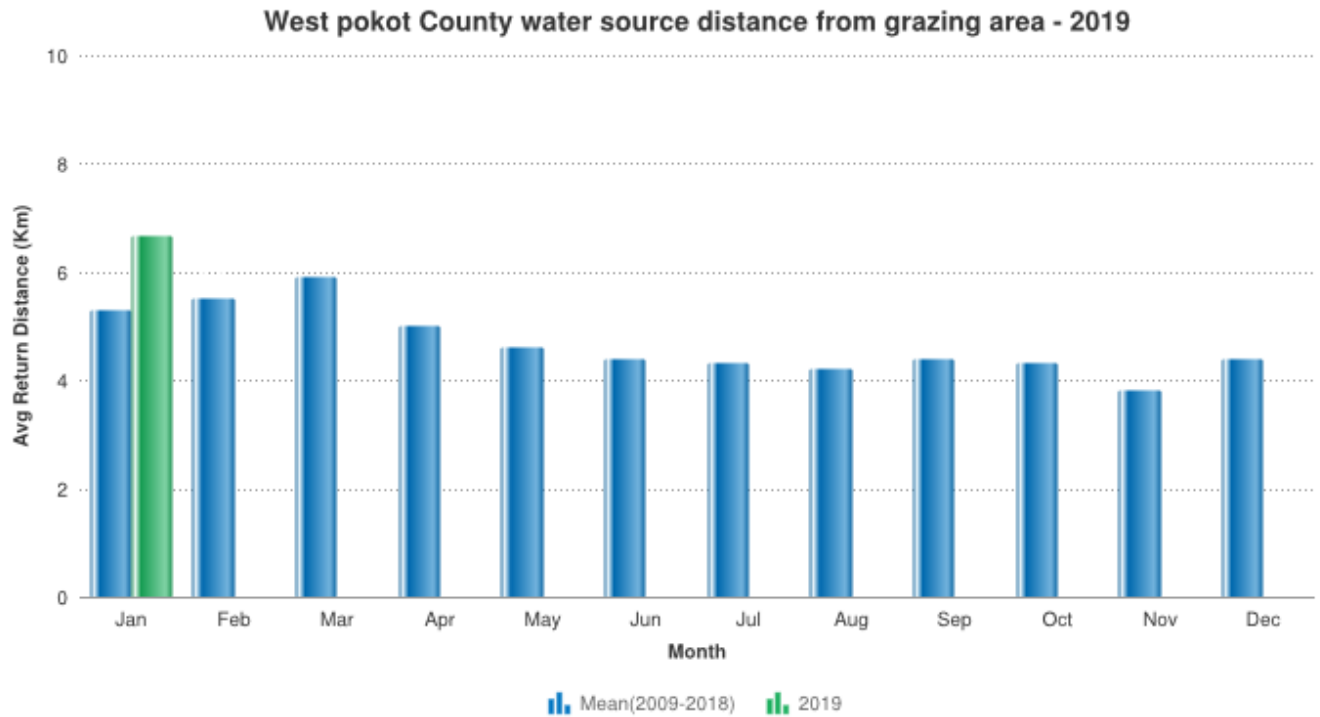


- During the month, pastoral livelihood zones recorded increased waiting time at water source.
- The average household water consumption per person per day is at 8-10 litres in the pastoral zone while that in the agro-pastoral zone is at 9-11 litres.
- The cost of accessing water at the source remained free in the rural areas unlike in urban centres where a 20 litre Jerrican cost remained within normal ranges for the period.

2.2.3 Livestock Access

- The livestock return trekking distance from grazing areas to water sources is at 6.7 km during the month, depicting an increase from 4.3 km recorded in December. In comparison to the normal trekking distance of 5.3 km, the current trekking distance is above the normal range by 26 percent.

- The trekking time from grazing areas to water sources is longer in the pastoral livelihood zone than in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone.



- The increase in livestock trekking distance to water is attributed to low precipitation within the pastoral areas occasioned to lack of recharge to water sources.
- Watering frequency in cattle and shoats is still 5-6 times in a week while for camel remained at 3-4 times in a week.

3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS

3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

3.1.1 Livestock Body Condition

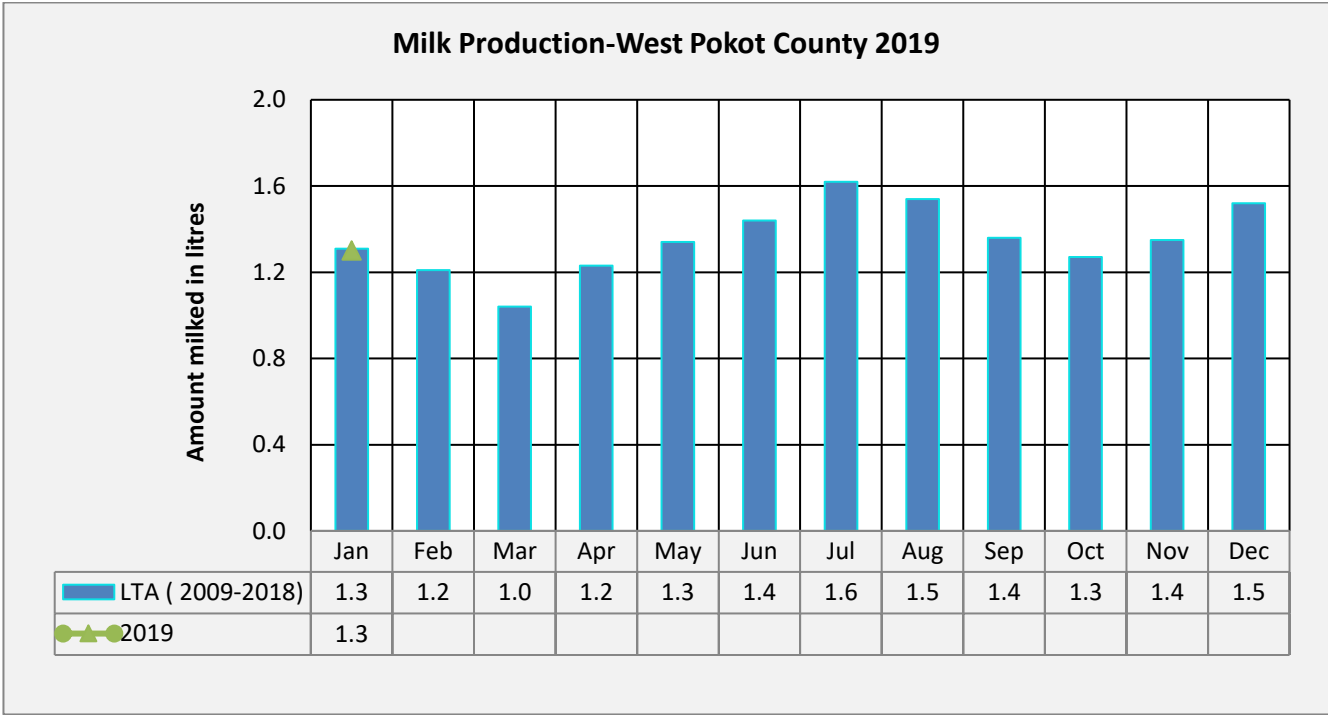
- The body condition for all livestock species is poor in pastoral while fair in agro-pastoral livelihood zones.
- The livestock body condition is projected to deteriorate across the livelihood zones, with the ongoing dry spell.
- In comparison to a similar period during a normal year, the body condition is normal for all livestock species. The trend is worsening as a result of poor forage regeneration.
- There was no significant variation in livestock body condition across the two livelihood zones.

3.1.2 Livestock Diseases

- Chepareria, Sook and Batei wards reported LSD and PPR diseases prevalence, while CCPP disease was reported in Masol and Riwo wards.

3.1.3 Milk Production

- In January, the County recorded 1.3 litres of milk per household per day on average, a decrease from 1.7 litres recorded in December.
- Generally, milk production dropped as compared to the previous month. The cattle produced most milk than other livestock species.
- The current household milk production is at par with the LTA for the month.
- The household milk production drop is attributed to diminishing forage access in the normal grazing areas.



3.2 RAIN-FED CROP PRODUCTION

3.2.1 Stage and Condition of food Crops

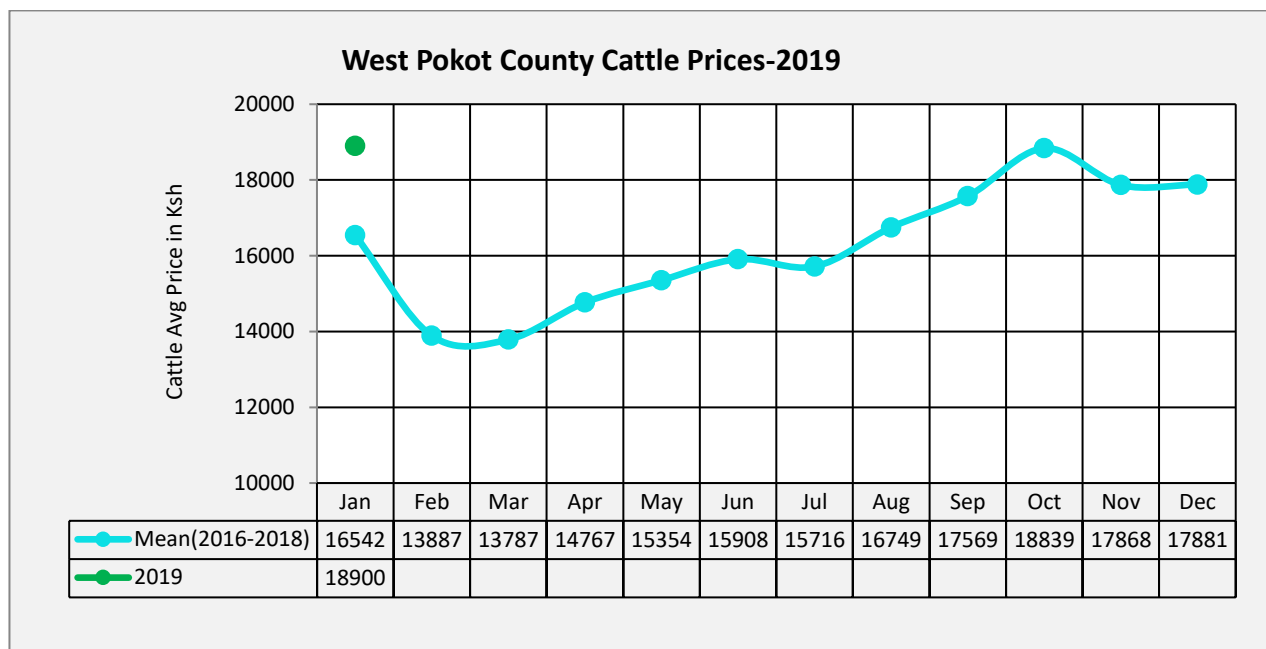
- Farmers are currently preparing farms for planting. The main crops grown include maize, beans and bulb onions.
- Mangoes and onion production for supply to major markets including Sigor, Ortum and Lomut is at normal levels as compared to the seasonal performance.
- The harvesting of mangoes in lowlands, with bulb onions in highlands that are supplied to Ortum and Sigor markets for distribution to other centres within and outside the County is still ongoing.
- The horticultural farming level is fair especially along the production zones of Sebit, Wakorr, Kabichbich and Lomut.

4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

4.1.1 Cattle prices

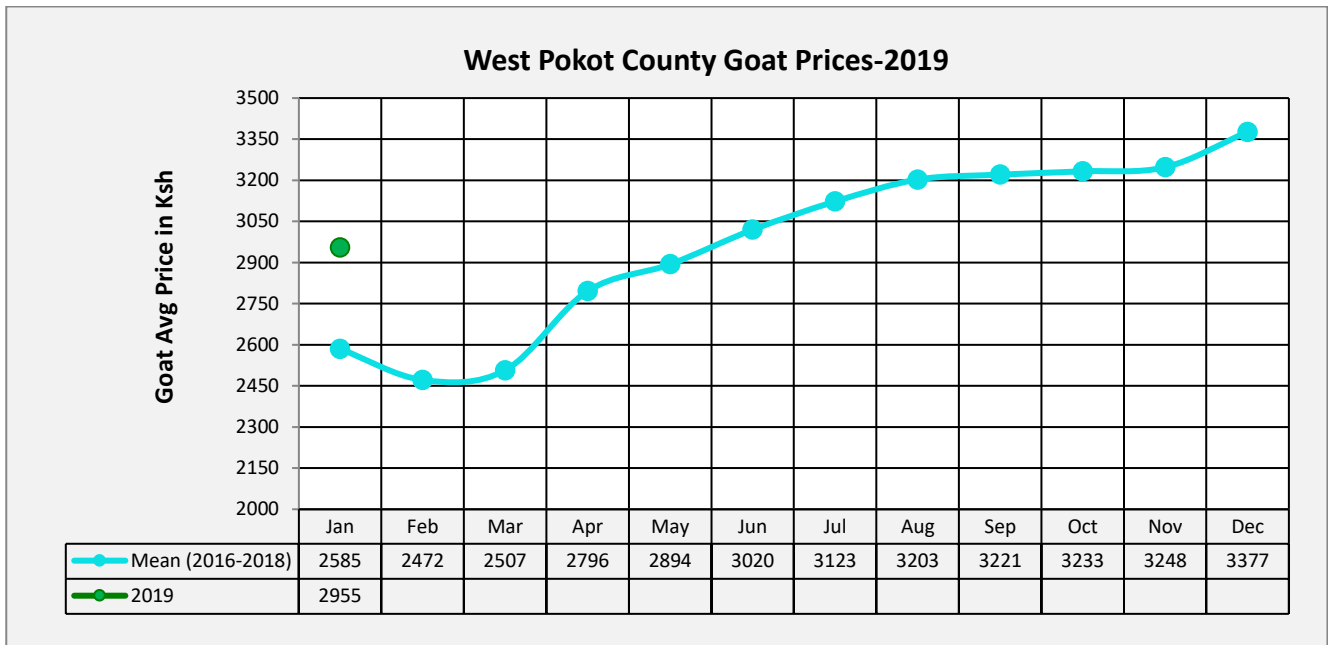
- The medium sized 4-year bull was sold at an average price of Kshs 18,900, revealing a decrease in price as compared to Kshs 20,000 recorded in the previous month.



- The cattle prices decrease is attributed to dwindling forage condition coupled with low recharge to water sources for livestock. The livestock sale influx was experienced in January due to high demand for school fees resulting to decreased prices in the markets.
- The current cattle price is above the LTA price (Ksh 16,542) for the month by 16 percent.

4.1.2 Goat Prices

- The County recorded an average price for a 2-year old medium size goat of Kshs 2,955 across the livelihood zones in January. The goat price dropped from (Kshs 3,740) recorded in December.

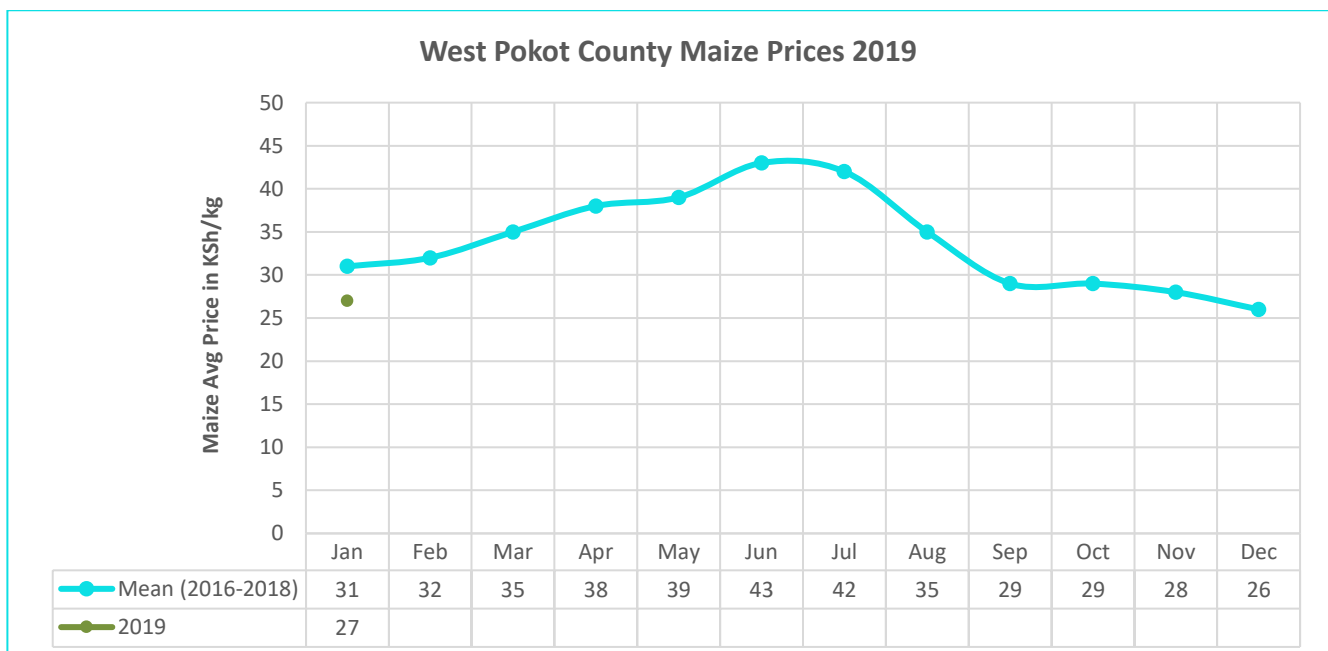


- The decrease in price is linked, to deteriorating body condition, besides poor forage condition and low recharge of water points during the month.
- The current price of goat is 14 percent above the LTA price for the month.

4.2 CROP PRICES

4.2.1 Maize

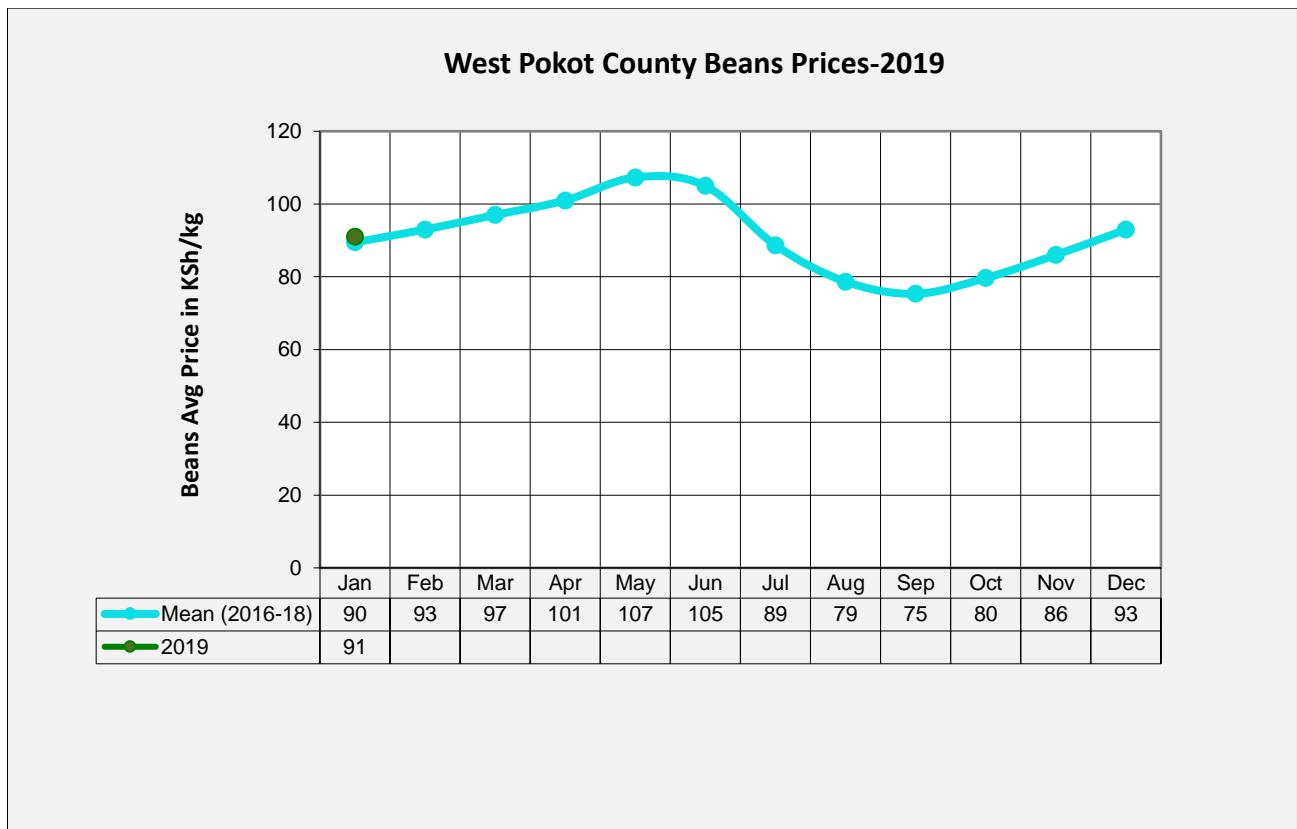
- Maize was sold at Kshs 27 per Kg in January. The price increased as compared to that recorded in December (Kshs 24).
- The current price is however 15 percent below the LTA price (Ksh31).



- The increase is attributed to market dynamics and unsteady external supply of maize from outside the county.
- Majority of the households depended more on local markets to replenish their maize stocks. Maize price is however expected to remain low due to cheap external sources (from Uganda and Trans Nzoia County), which are traditionally main suppliers to the County.

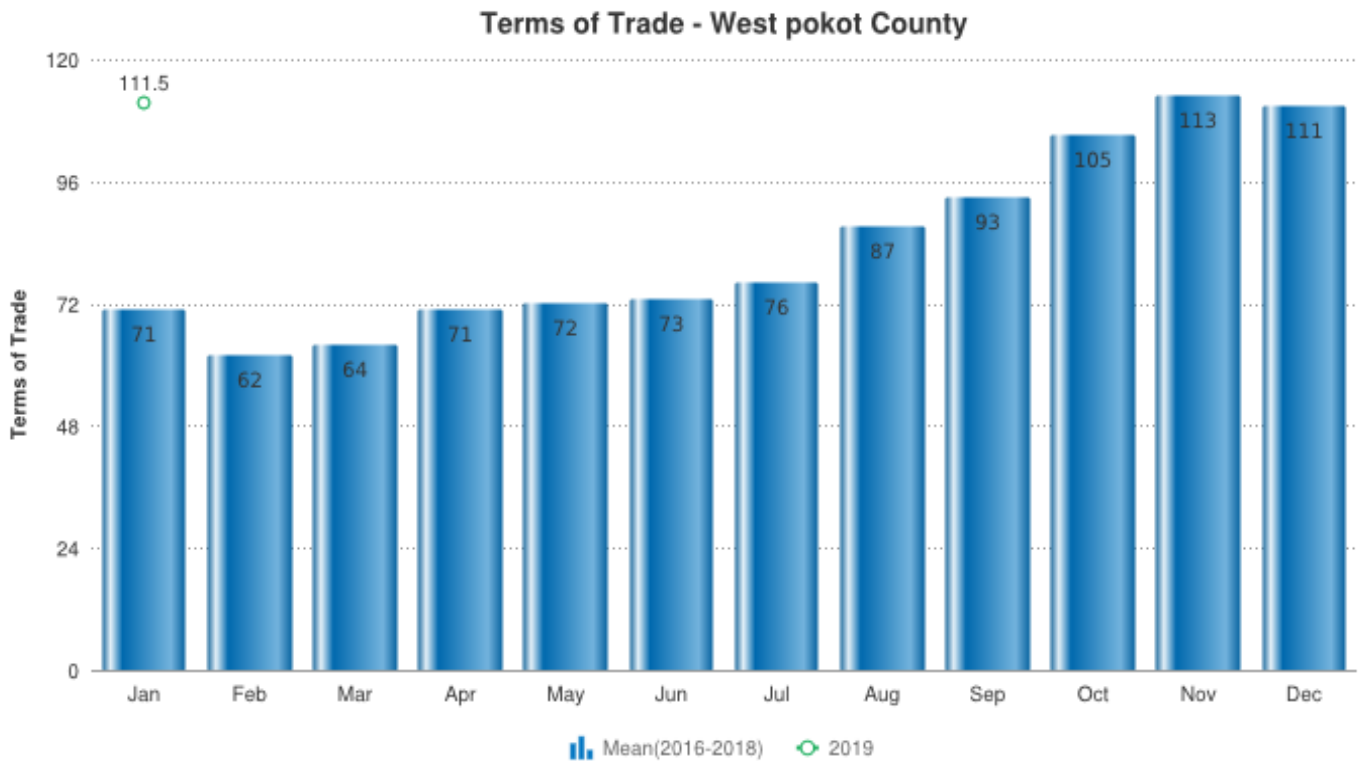
4.2.2 Beans

- During the month, beans traded at Kshs 91 per Kg; an increase from Kshs 81 recorded in December.
- The price increase is credited to unstable external supplies and low local harvesting in the County.
- There was no significant variation in price across the two livelihood zones since they both relied on the same external sources for supply.
- The current market price of beans is slightly above the LTA price (Ksh.90) for such time of the year by 0.2 percent.



4.3 LIVESTOCK PRICE RATIO/ TERMS OF TRADE (TOT)

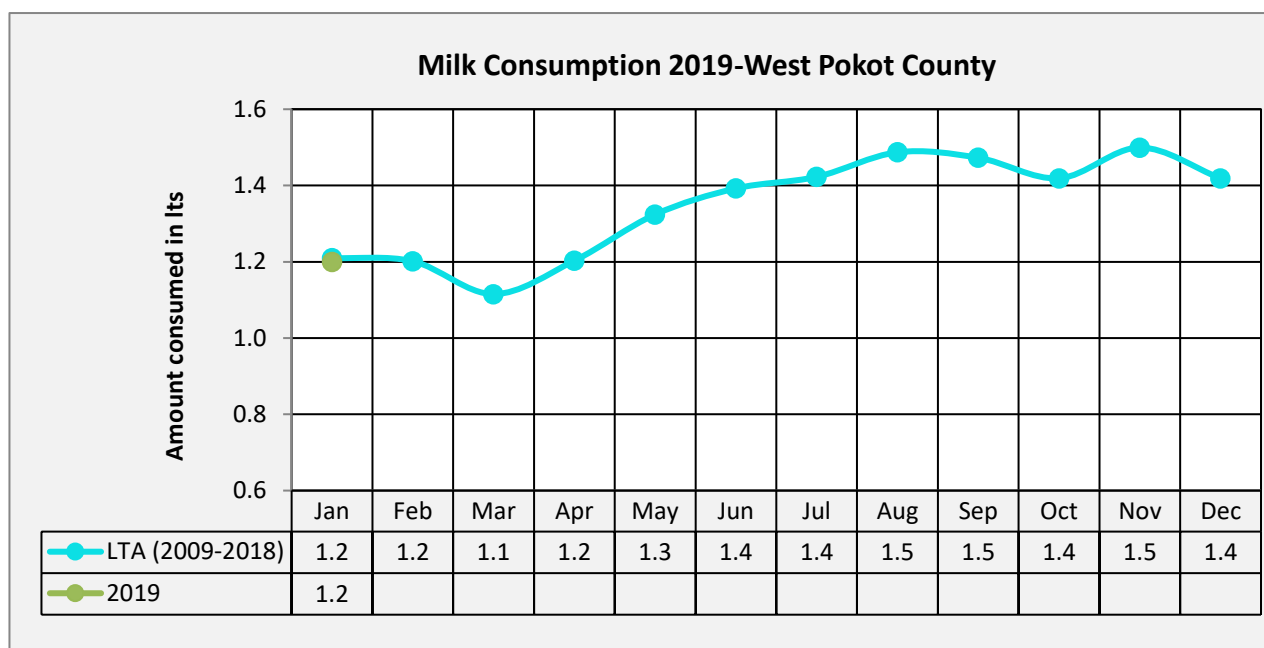
- The Terms of Trade (TOT) was 112 in January, a sharp decrease from 158 recorded in the previous month. The decrease portrays that pastoralists would obtain less maize for the sale of a goat currently than they did in December.
- The decrease in ToT is attributed to a drop in goat prices coupled with some rise in maize prices.
- The variation in TOT is anticipated over the next three months as the price of goat is expected to drop with the ongoing dry spell along with fluctuating maize prices in the same period.



5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- Households across livelihood zones consumed 1.2 litres of milk on average in January, the milk consumption decreased as compared to that recorded in December.



- The drop in milk consumption is attributed to the declining milk production occasioned by poor regeneration of forage. Milk access is poor.
- The amount of milk consumed is at par with the LTA for the same period of the year.

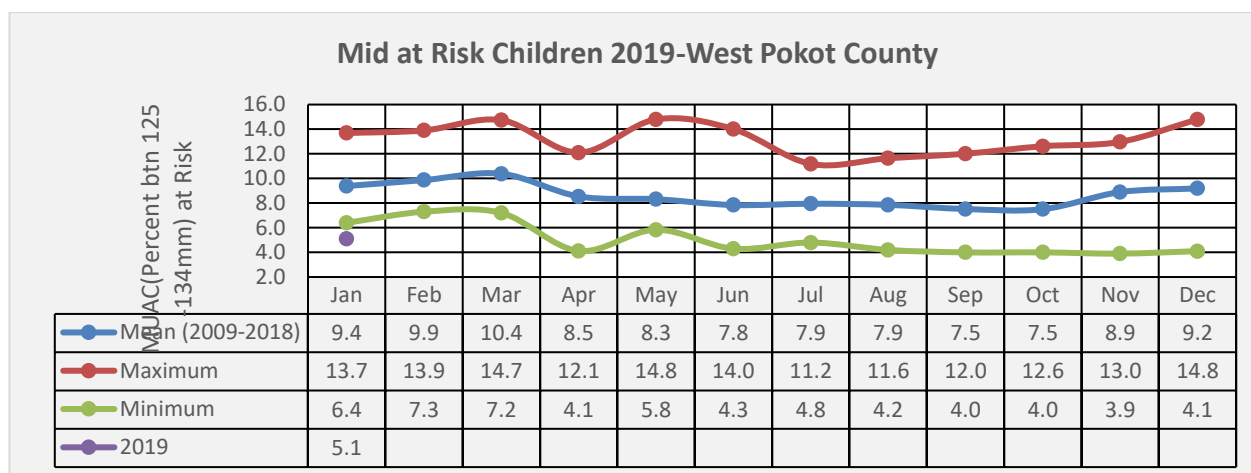
5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- During the month, the households' proportions of 69%, 18% and 13% were recorded of having Food Consumption Score (FCS) within Acceptable, Borderline and Poor categories respectively. The score slightly decreased for the Acceptable category with a significant decrease for Borderline and increase consecutively in poor categories in comparison to the previous month (71%, 25% and 4%). The FCS is acceptable within January.
- The mean FCS for the two livelihood zones in January was 40; a drop from that recorded in December.
- There was significant variation across the two livelihood zones with for instance 49% of households in the Pastoral zone being categorized as having Acceptable FCS in comparison with 98% households under the same category in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone. There is more food sources diversity in agro-pastoral livelihood zones as compared to pastoral livelihood zones.

5.3 HEALTH AND NUTRITION STATUS

5.3.1 Nutrition Status

- In January 2019, the proportion of 43 and 56 percent of girls and boys under 5 years respectively were sampled, where those categorized as being 'at risk' of malnutrition were at 5.1 percent; an increase from 4.6 recorded in December 2018.
- The current proportion of children rated as being 'at risk' of malnutrition lies below the LTA value of 48 percent for the such period of the year.



- During the month, the malnutrition status increased among the under-fives, as attributed to dwindling consumption and access to milk, including other essential health and nutrition commodities. These were the key factors of the upward trend in number of children 'at risk' of malnutrition.

5.3.2 Health

- Malaria cases still represented a commonly reported ailment among the sampled children during the month.

5.4 COPING STRATEGY

5.4.1 Coping Strategy Index (CSI)

- The County's CSI was 2.2; an increase from 1.8 recorded in December. The increase in CSI shows that households employed more strategies to cope, which could be linked to an unstable food commodity availability and less affordable prices in the markets.
- The pastoral livelihood zone recorded a CSI of 2.7 compared to 1.3 in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone, which is mainly credited to stable livestock productivity.
- The commonly employed consumption coping strategies employed by a few of the households in January included reliance on less preferred/less expensive foods.

6.0 CURRENT INTERVENTION MEASURES (ACTION)

6.1 NON-FOOD

- The County Government conducted Ring vaccination against PPR disease in Pokot South Sub-County.

7.0 EMERGING ISSUES

7.1 INSECURITY/CONFLICT/HUMAN DISPLACEMENT

- Some banditry incidences were reported along Turkana-West Pokot border.

7.2 MIGRATION

- No abnormal migrations were reported in the County.

7.3 FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS

- The livestock productivity is projected to decrease, since the forage conditions are likely to decline with the ongoing dry period, resulting in poor livestock body condition thus low livestock prices and restricted access to food due to the anticipated low purchasing power.
- The distance to water sources for both human and livestock is anticipated to increase further, with the ongoing dry spells.
- Milk availability is projected to decline with the dwindling regeneration of pastoral resources supporting livestock production. Cases of malnutrition are likely to rise over the period, as children would access less milk.
- Maize prices are expected to go up while that of goat projected to drop. As such, the terms of trade are likely to be unfavourable over this period.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PEACE AND SECURITY

- Sustain peace building community projects at borders to bring both sides to work together, especially peace projects at conflict hotspots.

2. WATER SECTOR

- Conduct timely stock piling of fast moving spares to ensure critical water facilities remain operational.

3. HEALTH AND NUTRITION SECTOR

- Carry out health preventive and promotion campaigns while providing health education on sanitation and proper utilization of water treatment chemicals so as to minimize the risk of water borne diseases outbreak.

4. LIVESTOCK SECTOR

- Upscale ring vaccination to curb rising PPR cases reported in Pokot North and Pokot South Sub-Counties.
- Support accelerated livestock off take to avert livelihood losses with looming drought episodes.
- Encourage stock management consistent with available pasture for optimal production and productivity due to land carrying capacity.