

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



A Vision 2030 Flagship Project



**APRIL EW PHASE**



**Drought Situation & EW Phase Classification**

**Biophysical Indicators**

- The County recorded insufficient rainfall across livelihoods zones during the first and second dekads of April, however, moderate torrential showers were received in the last week of the month. The temporal and spatial distribution was fair.
- The vegetation condition was at severe vegetation deficit band, with a worsening trend across livelihoods as depicted by the drop in the Vegetation Condition Index. All Sub-counties recorded severe vegetation deficit. Forage condition was poor during the month.

**Socio Economic Indicators (Impact Indicators)**

- The livestock body condition varied between poor and fair, with a deteriorating trend across the County. Distance to water sources increased further.
- The Terms of Trade were unfavourable with a worsening trend.
- Milk production and consumption at household level dropped significantly.
- Most of the households fell within the Acceptable Food Consumption Score, whereas the Coping Strategy Index increased.
- Malnutrition status increased, as the proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition went up but still within the normal range.

**Early Warning (EW) Phase Classification**

LIVELIHOOD ZONE	EW PHASE	TREND
AGRO PASTORAL	<b>ALERT</b>	WORSENING
PASTORAL	<b>ALARM</b>	WORSENING
<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>ALERT</b>	<b>WORSENING</b>

Biophysical Indicators	Value	Normal range
VCI-3month (County)	19	>35
VCI-3month (Pokot North)	19	>35
Forage Condition	Poor	Good

Production Indicators	Value	Normal range
Livestock Body Condition	Poor	Normal
Milk Production	1.0 Litres	>1.2 Litres
Livestock Migration Pattern	Usual	Normal
Livestock deaths (attributed to drought)	No deaths	No deaths

Access Indicators	Value	Normal range
Terms of Trade (ToT)	54	>71
Milk Consumption	1.0 Litres	>1.2 Litres
Return distance to water sources (household)	6.0 km	0.0-2.6km
Cost of water at source (Ksh. /20 litres)	Kshs 5	<Kshs 5

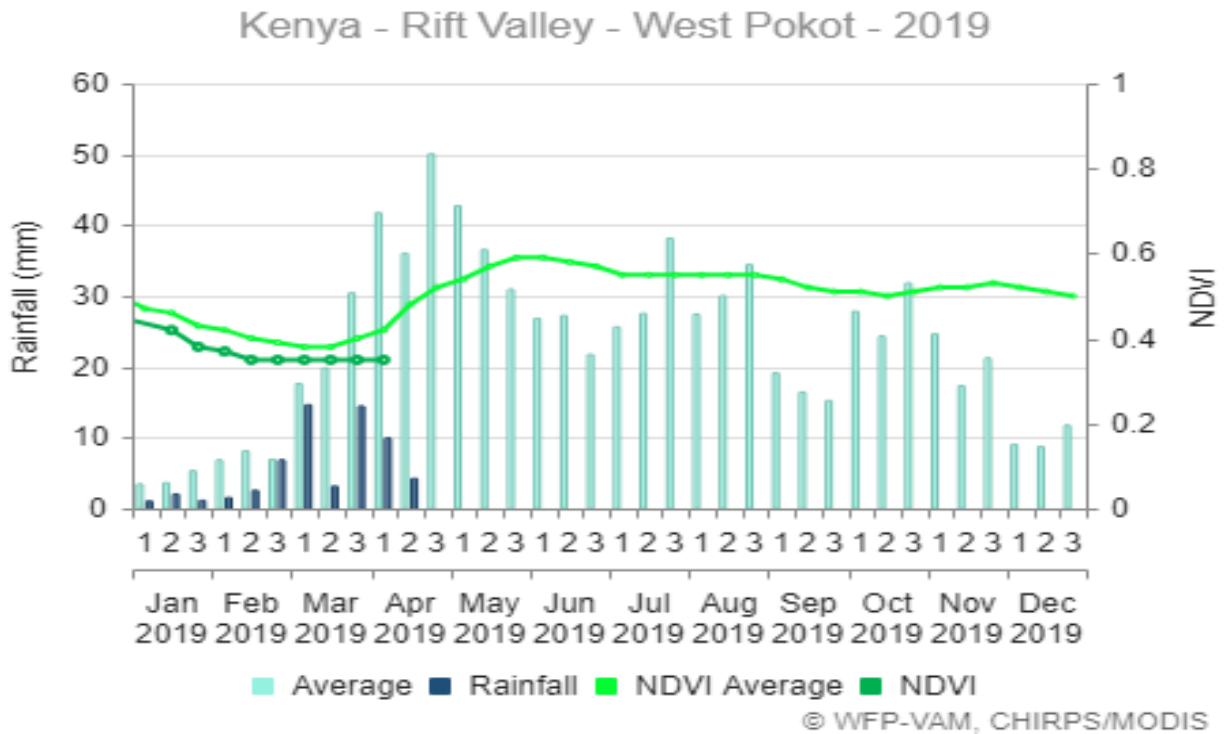
Utilization Indicators	Value	Normal range
Nutrition status, MUAC (% at risk of malnutrition)	6.0	0.0-9.6
Coping Strategy Index (CSI)	4.5	0.0-14.5
Food Consumption Score	34	>35

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

# 1.0 CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

## 1.1 RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

- The county received minimal precipitation in the first two dekads, however moderate rains were experienced during the last dekad across the County in April.
- The rainfall situation is below normal for such time of the year.



Source: VAM-World Food Programme

- The dekadal rainfall decreased from 14.6 mm to 9.9 mm in the first dekad, the amounts were below normal.

## 1.2 AMOUNT OF RAINFALL AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

- The spatial and temporal rainfall distribution was fair across the livelihoods, especially the last week of the month. The intensity was fair to good in all livelihood zones.
- The County remained generally hot in April.

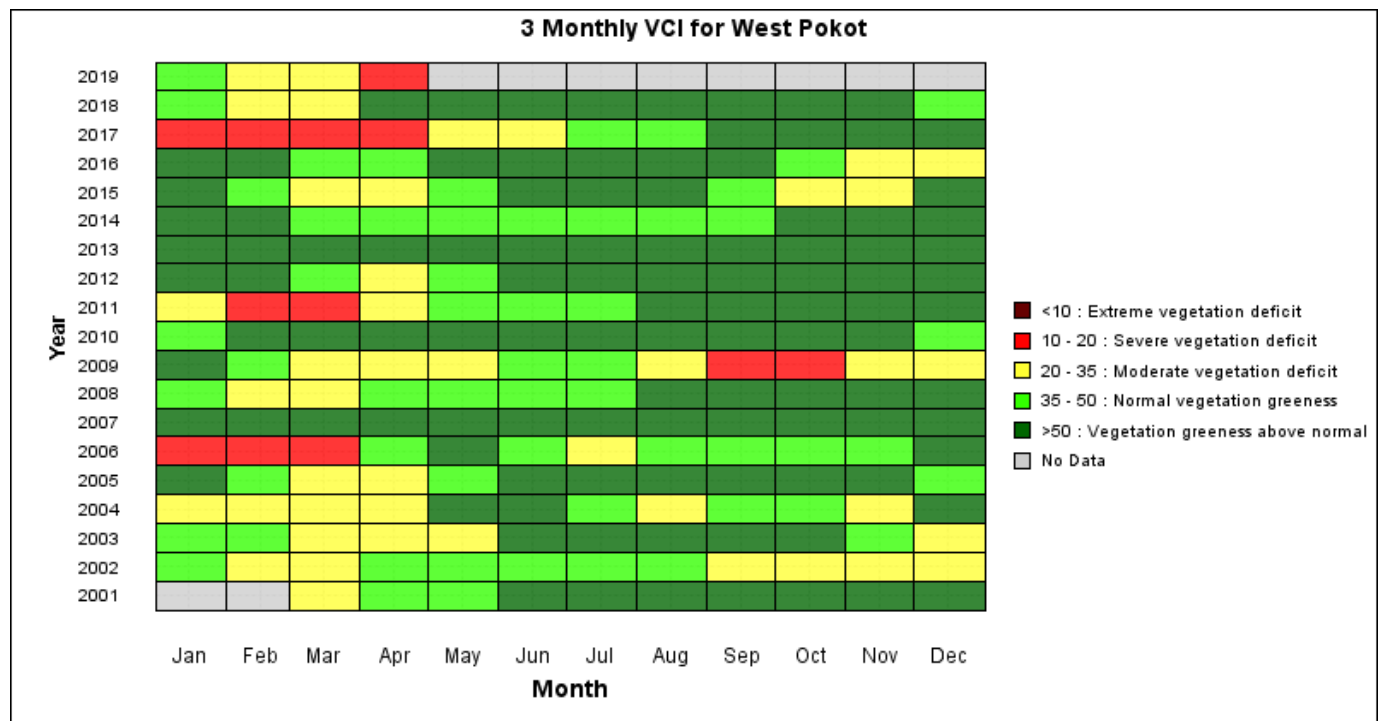
## 1.3 OTHER EVENTS

- Flooding was experienced along river Kanyangareng in Konyao area. Lightening also struck Pokot South sub county killing 3 children

## 2.0 IMPACTS ON VEGETATION AND WATER

### 2.1 VEGETATION CONDITION

#### 2.1.1 Vegetation Condition Index (VCI)



Source: Boku University

- The VCI (VCI-3month) which demonstrates the vegetation status of the County was 19, indicating a drop from 22 recorded in March. The current VCI depicts severe vegetation deficit condition.
- The VCI trend is declining across livelihoods. All sub-counties reported severe vegetation deficit. The decrease in VCI is from 27 to 19, 21 to 17, 21 to 19 and 22 to 19 in Pokot North, Pokot West, Pokot South and Pokot Central Sub-counties respectively. The decreasing trend in the VCI is credited to poor regeneration of vegetation cover due to delayed rains in April.

#### 2.1.2 Pasture

- The proportion of sampled community which reported that the pasture was poor remained 100 percent, similar to that of March.
- Pasture condition is poor across livelihood zones, communities stated that the condition was below normal for such time of the year. The trend is worsening in comparison to the previous month, the situation is owed to a delayed rains during the month.
- The pasture condition is expected to rejuvenate with the moderate anticipated rains.
- There is no significant variation in terms of pasture quality and quantity between livelihood zones.

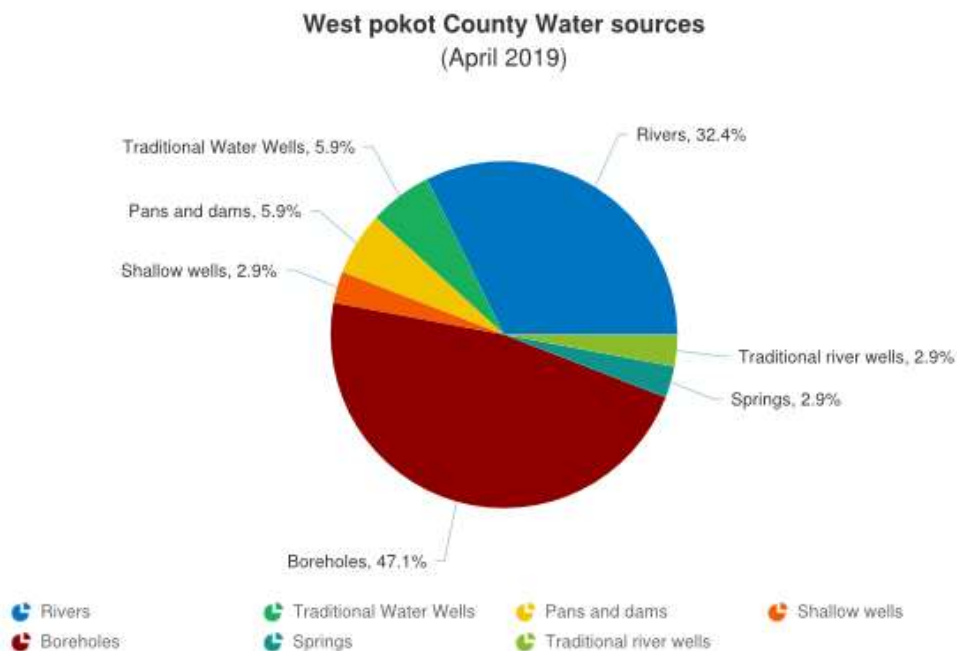
### 2.1.3 Browse

- During the month, the proportion of the sampled community which stated that the browse situation was poor is 100 percent, an increase from 90 percent recorded in March.
- The browse condition is poor across the livelihood zones, and is below normal for such period of the year. The quality of the browse condition is poor in comparison to that of March credited to prolonged dry spell.
- The quantity of browse remained poor across the livelihood zones and there was no significant variation between the pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones.
- The insecurity along Pokot-Marakwet/Turkana borders hinders access forage due to recurrent flares along the conflict hotspots.

## 2.2 WATER RESOURCE

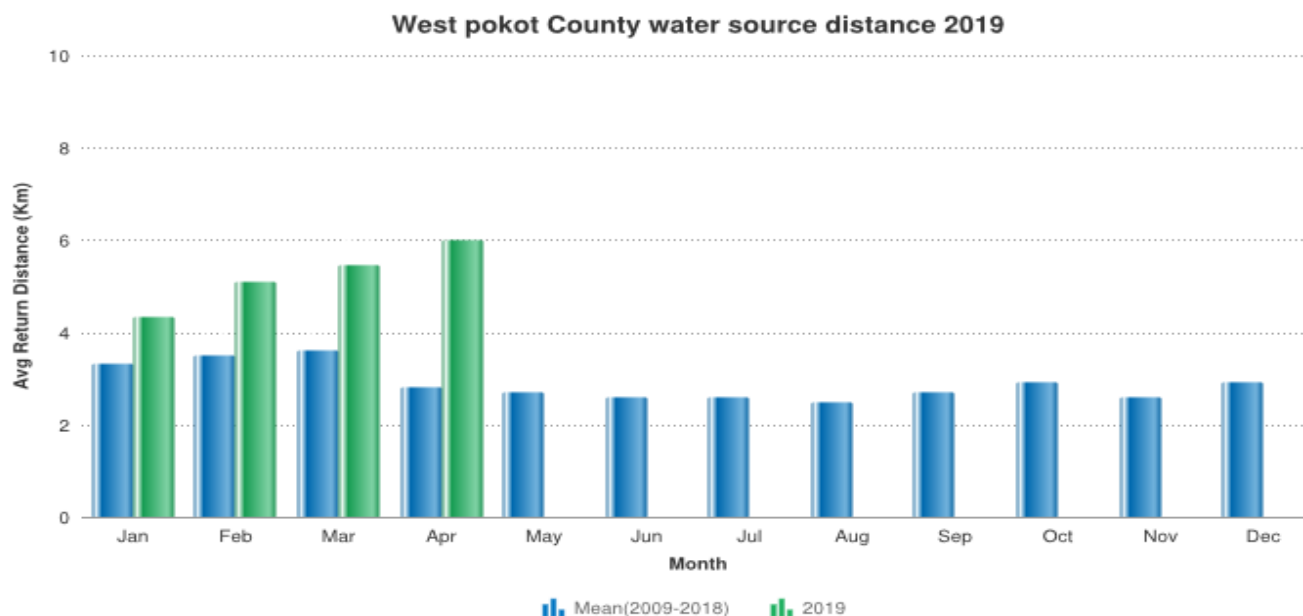
### 2.2.1 Sources

- In April, the proportion of sampled population using main water sources for both households and livestock is 47 for boreholes, 32 for river sand 6 for pan and dams. Other water sources in use include traditional water wells at 5.9 percent.
- There was no water recharge to all water sources in comparison to March, due to lack of rainfall.
- The current main sources in use are the normal sources where households draw water during such time of the year. However, most boreholes are congested since the yields are lower than normal.



## 2.2.2 Household Access and Utilization

- The return distance to water source from the household was 6.0km, an increase from 5.5 km recorded in March. The current distance is 84 percent above the Long Term Average (LTA) distance.
- The pastoral livelihood zones reported longer trekking distance to water source than the agro-pastoral livelihood zones. Both pastoral and agro-pastoral zones recorded dry conditions. The increasing trend in distance is due to lack of recharge to water sources within the month.

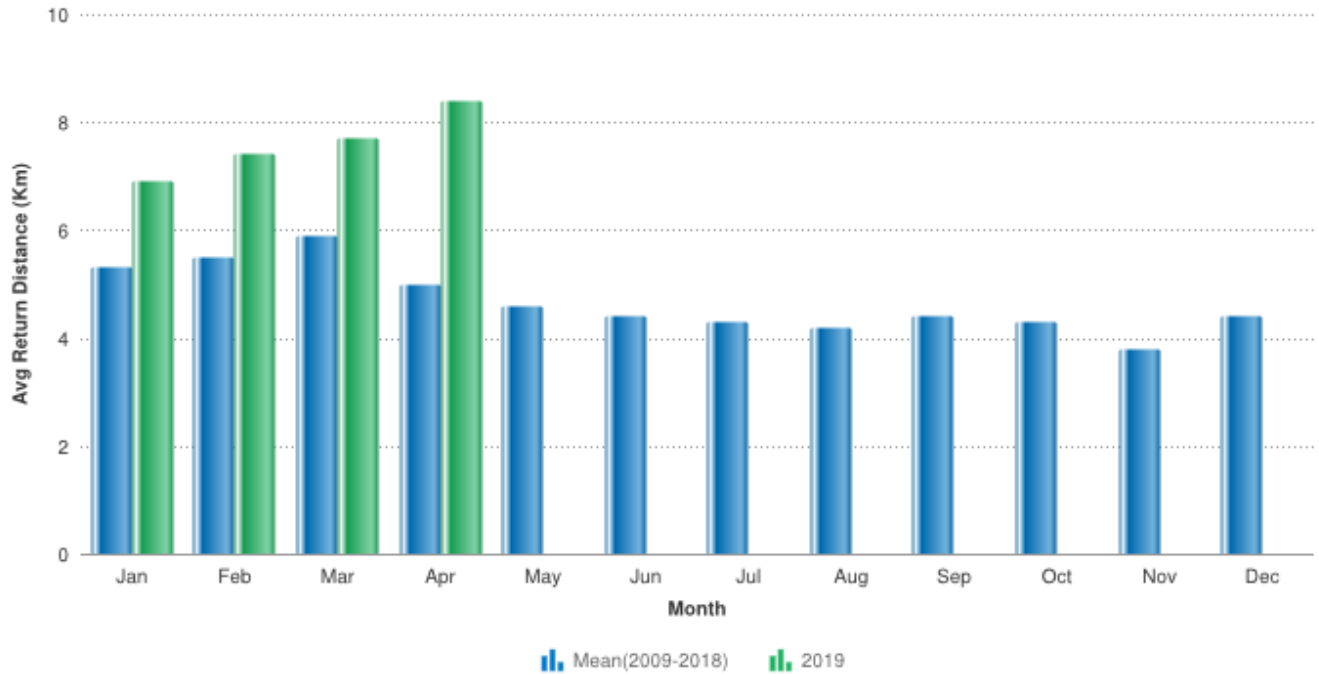


- The pastoral livelihood zones reported greater waiting time at water source than the agro-pastoral zones.
- The average household water consumption per person per day remained at 6-9 litres in the pastoral zones while that in the agro-pastoral zones was 7-10 litres.
- The cost of accessing water at the source was still free in the rural areas and different in urban centres where a 20litre Jerrican cost remained within normal ranges for the period.

## 2.2.3 Livestock Access

- In April, the livestock return trekking distance from grazing areas to water sources was 8.4km, signifying an increase from 7.7 km reported in March. In comparison to the normal trekking distance of 5 km, the current trekking distance lies above the normal range by 68 percent.
- The pastoral livelihood zone recorded longer trekking time from grazing areas to water as compared to that in the agro-pastoral livelihood zones.

### West pokot County water source distance from grazing area - 2019



- The increase in livestock trekking distance to water is attributed to poor rains within the pastoral zones occasioning low recharge to the water sources.
- Frequency of watering in cattle and shoats remained at 4-5 times in a week while for camel remained at -4times in a week.

## **3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS**

### **3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION**

#### **3.1.1 Livestock Body Condition**

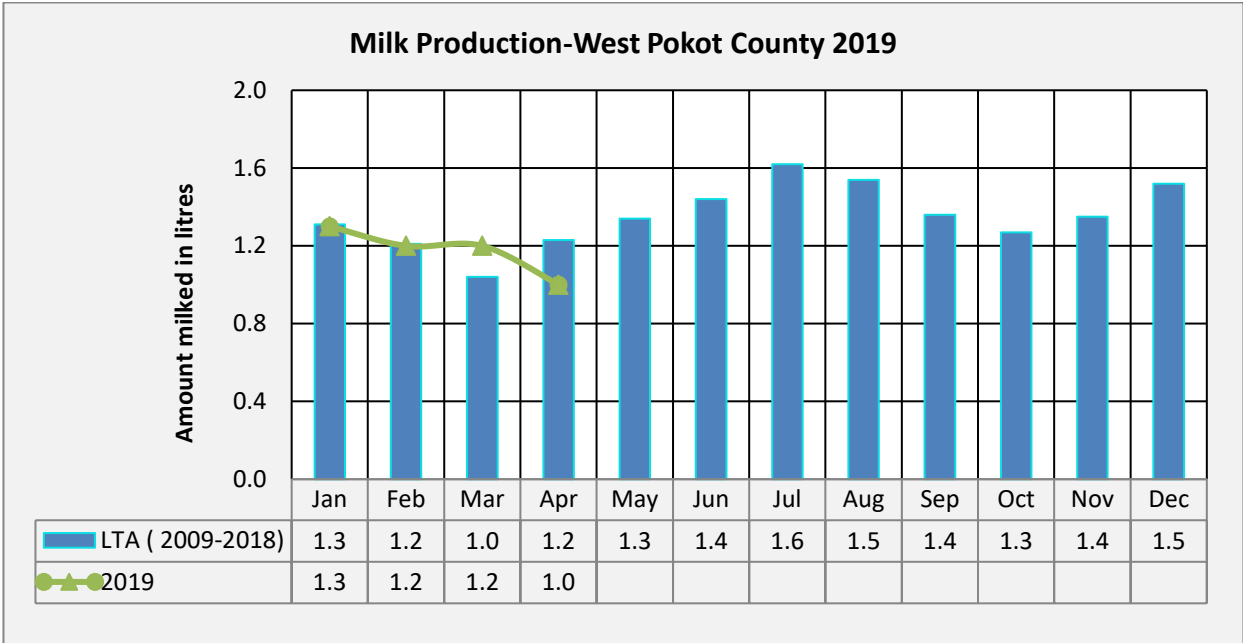
- During the month, the body condition for all livestock species still varied from fair to poor in both pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones, same as that reported in March.
- The livestock body condition is projected to improve across the livelihood zones, with the expected moderate rains May.
- The body condition is below normal for all livestock species in comparison to a similar period during a normal year. The trend is downward as a result of low forage rejuvenation.
- There was no significant variation in livestock body condition between the two livelihood zones.

#### **3.1.2 Livestock Diseases**

- Kapchok, Weiwei and Masol wards reported CCPP and heart water disease.

#### **3.1.3 Milk Production**

- The County recorded production of 1.0litres of milk per household per day on average in April, the amount decreased as compared to that of March.
- The cattle produced most milk than other livestock species.
- The current household milk production is below the LTA for the month.
- The household declining milk production is credited to dwindling forage access within the traditional grazing areas.



**3.2 RAIN-FED CROP PRODUCTION**

**3.2.1 Stage and Condition of food Crops**

- The County main crops include maize, beans, potatoes and bulb onions. Majority of the farmers are yet to plant their farms due to delayed rainfall.
- Generally, horticultural production and supply to major markets including Sigor, Ortum and Lomut is below normal levels compared to the seasonal performance.
- The harvesting of bulb onions in highlands is ongoing. These are supplied to Ortum and Sigor markets for distribution to other centres within and outside the County.
- Current level of farming is low especially along the production zones of Sebit and Wakorr.

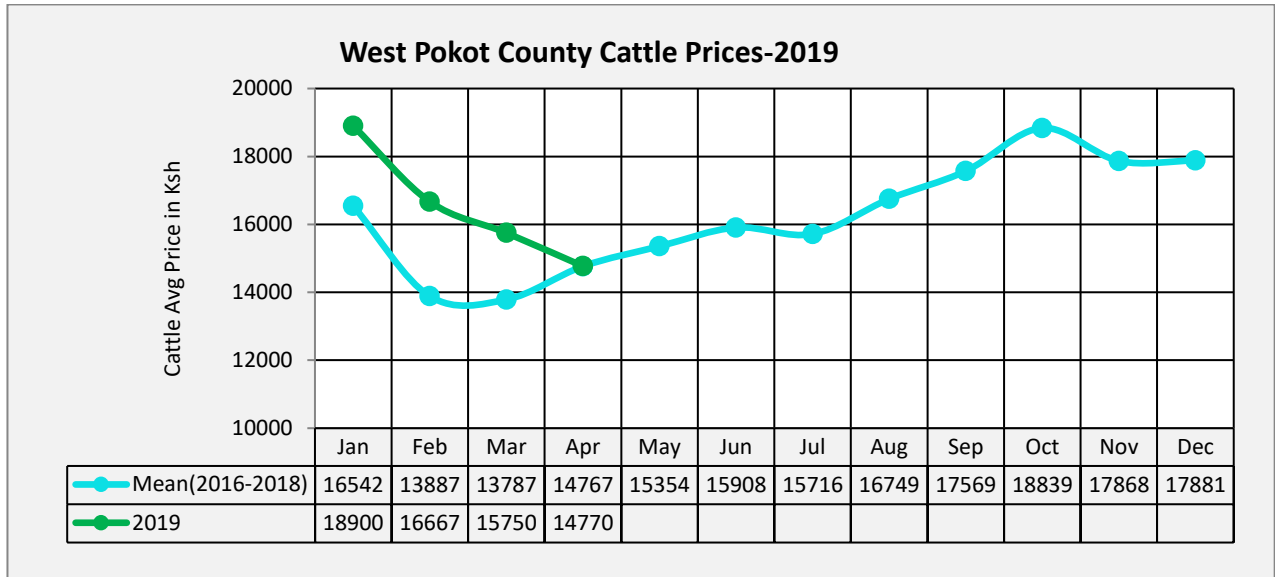


## 4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

### 4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

#### 4.1.1 Cattle prices

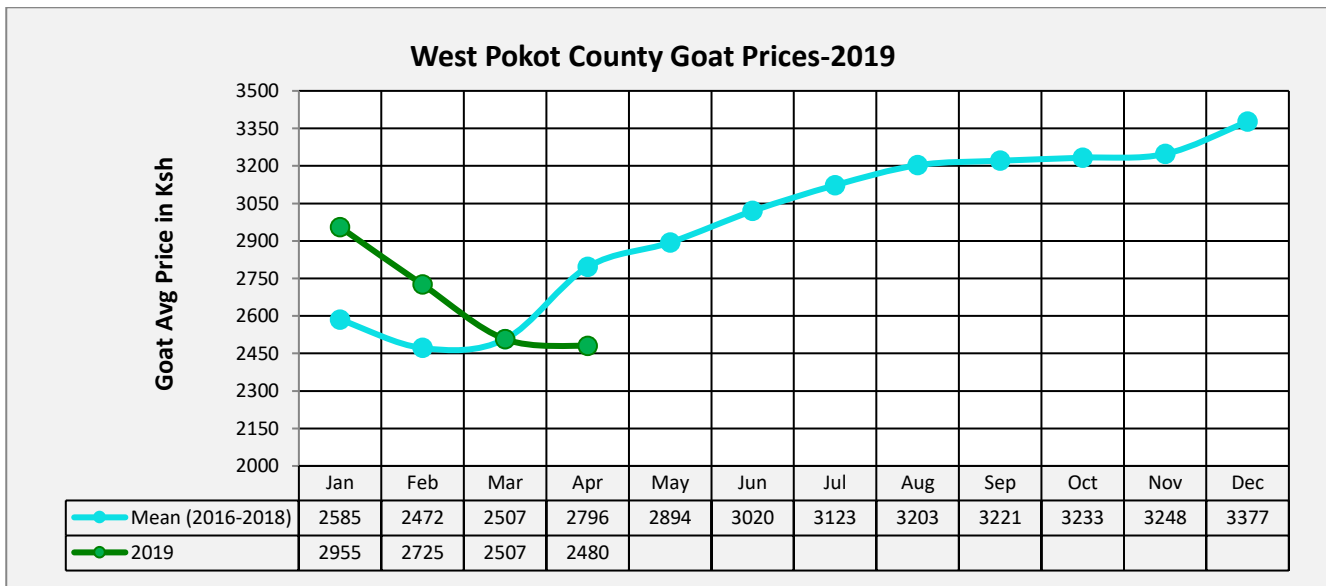
- The medium sized 4-year bull was sold at an average price of Kshs 15,770 in April which shows a drop in price as compared to Kshs 17,750 recorded in March.



- The cattle prices decrease is as a result of the declining forage condition, along with poor recharge of water sources for livestock.
- The current cattle price is at par with the long term average of the similar period.

#### 4.1.2 Goat Prices

- In April, the County recorded an average price of Kshs 2,480 for a 2-year old medium size goat across the livelihood zones. The goat price dropped from Kshs 2,507 recorded in March.

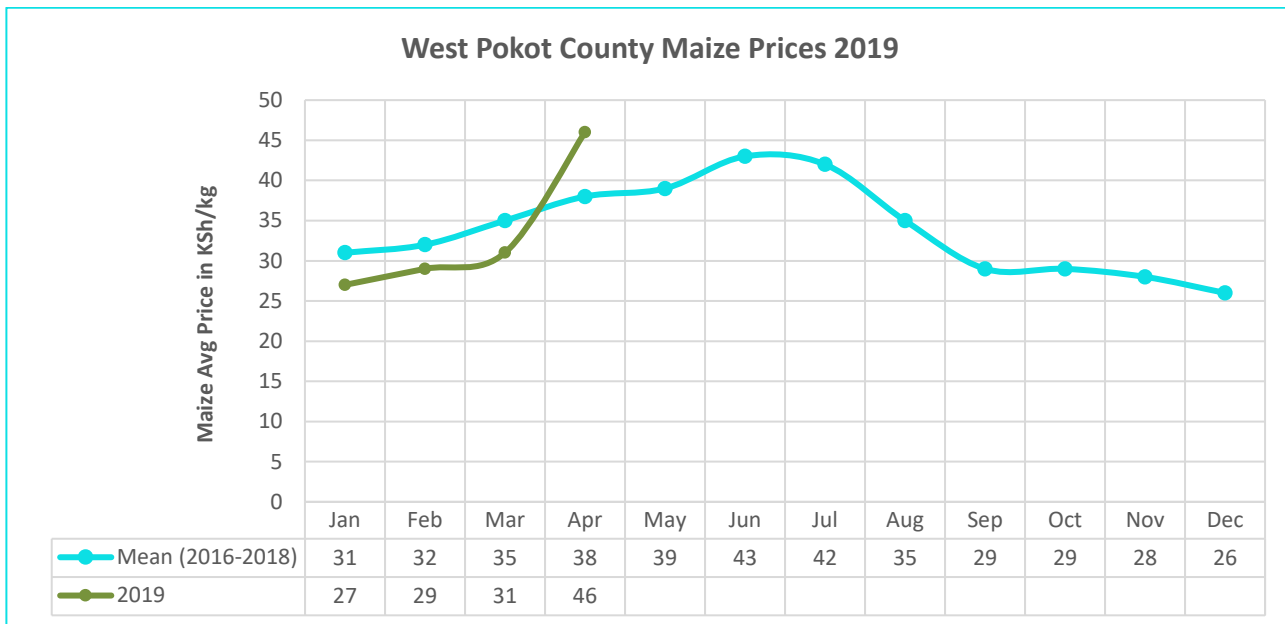


- The fall in price is attributed to worsening body condition coupled with poor forage condition and lack of recharge to water points within the month.
- The current price of goat is below long term average for the month.

## 4.2 CROP PRICES

### 4.2.1 Maize

- The maize was sold at Kshs 46 per Kg within the month, the price sharply went up a s compared to that recorded in March (Kshs 31).
- The current price is however 29 percent above the LTA price (Kshs 38).

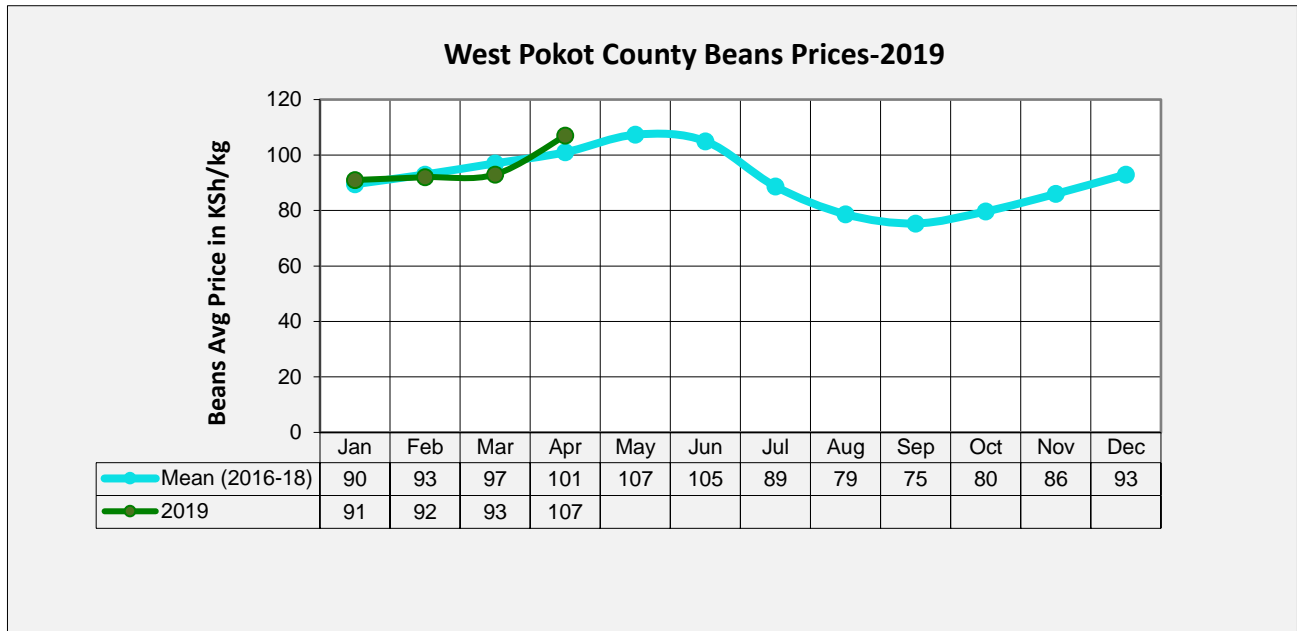


- The increasing price is attributed to sudden acute shortage of maize occasioned by traders hoarding the produce in anticipation of future better prices coupled with unstable external supply of maize from outside the county.
- Majority of the households depend more on local market purchase to replenish their maize stocks. Maize price is projected to be less affordable due delayed rains and declining livestock prices.

### 4.2.2 Beans

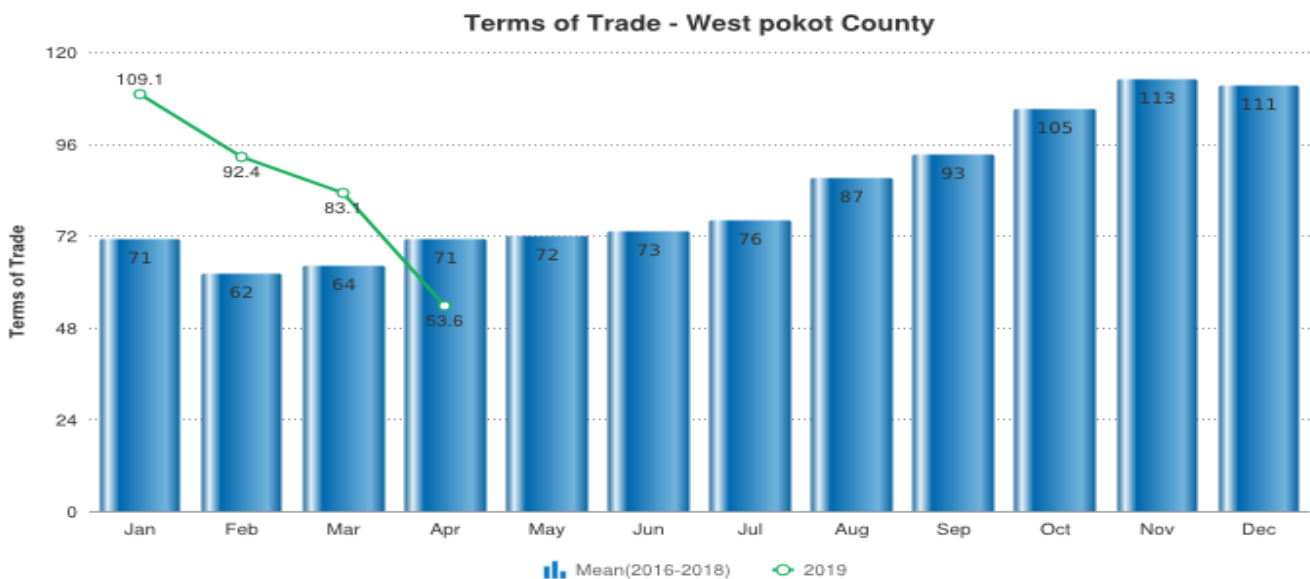
- In April, the beans traded at Kshs 107 per kg, portraying that the price increased as compared to that recorded in March.
- The price rise is attributed to erratic external supplies.
- There was no significant variation in price across the two livelihood zones since they both relied on the same external sources for supply.

- The current market price of beans is above the LTA price (Kshs 101) for such time of the year by 6 percent.



#### 4.3 LIVESTOCK PRICE RATIO/ TERMS OF TRADE (TOT)

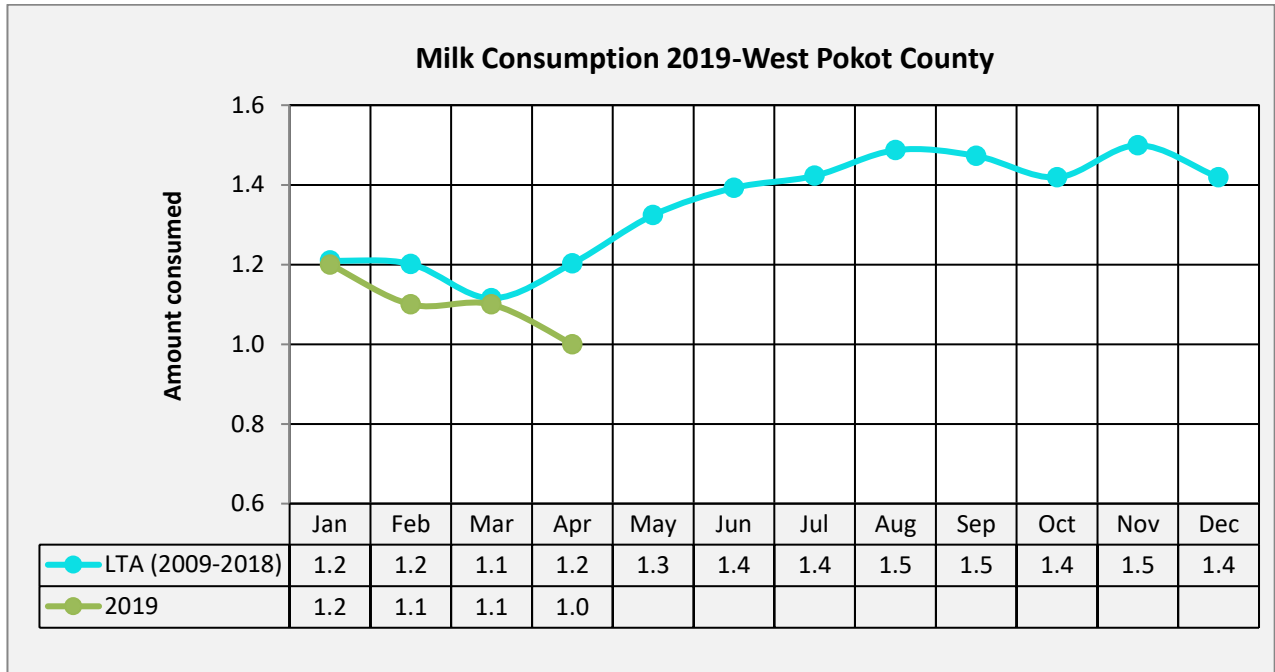
- The Terms of Trade (TOT) was at 54, a further drop from 83 reported in the March. The drop demonstrates that pastoralists would acquire less maize for the sale of a goat currently than they did in the previous month.
- The decline in ToT is credited to falling goat prices, along with increasing maize prices.
- The TOT variation is projected over the next three months as the price of goat is likely to stabilize with the onset of long rains along with rising maize prices within the period.



## 5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

### 5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- Households across livelihood zones consumed 1.0 litres of milk on average, a decrease from that recorded in March.



- The decreasing milk consumption is linked to the declining milk production resulting from low forage rejuvenation. Generally, milk access was poor.
- The amount of milk consumed is below the LTA for the same period of the year.

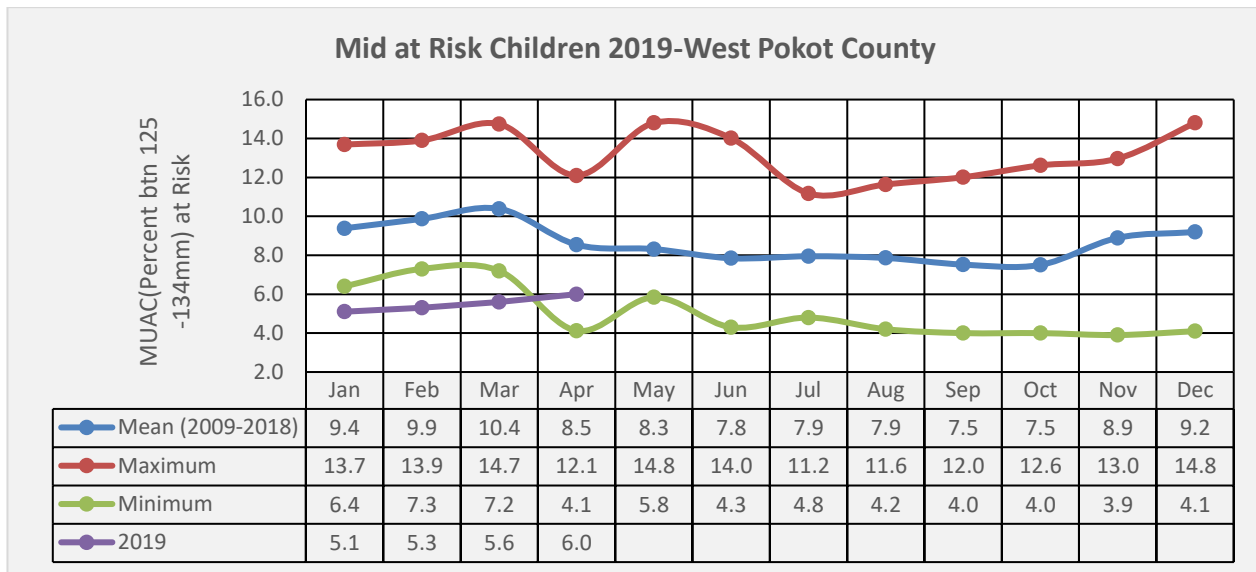
### 5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- The households' proportions of 59%, 25% and 25% were recorded of having Food Consumption Score (FCS) within Acceptable, Borderline and Poor categories respectively. The score dropped for both the acceptable borderline category, whereas the borderline and poor category increased in comparison to the previous month (59%, 24% and 17%). The FCS is generally, acceptable within the month.
- The mean FCS for the two livelihood zones was at 34 in April; a decrease from 38 recorded in the previous month.
- There was significant variation between the two livelihood zones with for instance 33% of households in the Pastoral zone being categorized as having poor FCS compared to 10% 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 livelihoods.

## 5.3 HEALTH AND NUTRITION STATUS

### 5.3.1 Nutrition Status

- The proportion of 47 and 53 percent of girls and boys under 5 years respectively were sampled, where children rated as being ‘at risk’ of malnutrition were at 6 percent, up from 5.6 recorded in the previous month.
- The current proportion of children rated as being ‘at risk’ of malnutrition lies below the LTA value of 8.5 percent for the such period of the year.



- The malnutrition status went up among the under-fives owing to declining milk consumption and access including other essential health and nutrition commodities. These were the main drivers of the increasing trend in number of children ‘at risk’ of malnutrition.

### 5.3.2 Health

- Commonly reported ailments among the sampled children include Malaria and Typhoid

## 5.4 COPING STRATEGY

### 5.4.1 Coping Strategy Index (CSI)

- The County CSI was 4.5 in April; an increase from 3.2 recorded in March. The increase shows that households employed more strategies to cope, which could be linked to unsteady food commodity availability and dynamic prices in the markets.
- The pastoral livelihood zones recorded a CSI of 4.5 compared to 4.3 in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone.
- The commonly employed consumption coping strategies by a few of the households in April included reliance on less preferred/less expensive foods.

## **6.0 CURRENT INTERVENTION MEASURES (ACTION)**

### **6.1 NON-FOOD**

- The County government carried out boreholes repairs across the County.
- The County Government and NDMA conducted water trucking to Pokot Central and Pokot North Sub-Counties.

## **7.0 EMERGING ISSUES**

### **7.1 INSECURITY/CONFLICT/HUMAN DISPLACEMENT**

- Cattle rustling incidences were reported along West Pokot/Elgeyo Marakwet border.

### **7.2 MIGRATION**

- Normal migrations were reported in the County, but higher livestock numbers above normal.

### **7.3 FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS**

- The livestock productivity is projected to recover, as the forage conditions are expected to be restored with the awaited rains in May, which would result in improved livestock body condition hence better livestock prices and access to food credited to the enhanced purchasing power.
- Milk availability is anticipated to increase with the likely rejuvenation of pastoral resources that support livestock production as rains are expected to revitalize pasture and water. Cases of malnutrition are likely to decline within the period, as children would access more milk.
- Maize prices are expected to drop while that of goat expected to stabilize. This way, the terms of trade are likely to be favourable over this period.
- The distance to water sources for both human and livestock is projected to drop, with the expected rains in May.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. HEALTH AND NUTRITION SECTOR**

- Conduct routine disease surveillance to ensure quick response to emerging cases.
- Conduct 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.

### **2. WATER SECTOR**

- Provide water treatment chemicals to check on the waterborne cases.
- Conduct water trucking to ensure critical facilities continue running.
- Carry out timely stock piling of fast moving spares to ensure critical water facilities remain operational.

### **3. LIVESTOCK SECTOR**

- Enhance livestock disease surveillance along migratory routes.
- Support accelerated livestock off-take to avert livelihood losses during drought episodes.
- Encourage stock management consistent with available pasture for optimal production and productivity due to land carrying capacity and livestock stocking rate.

### **4. PEACE AND SECURITY**

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