

National Drought Management Authority

Drought Status Update

Drought status

The Kenyan drought management system uses five drought early warning phases categorized as normal, alert, alarm, emergency and recovery. Currently, environmental indicators in 20 counties lie within the expected ranges for the time of the year and hence are classified in the normal drought stage. On the other hand, three counties including: Mandera, Garissa, and Wajir are classified in the alert phase implying that in these counties environmental indicators such as rainfall have fluctuated outside expected seasonal ranges.

In most counties, the trend is stable or worsening, as would be expected towards the end of the July - September dry season. Consequently as at the end of October, 9 counties were reporting a worsening trend while 12 counties recorded a stable trend.

Drought phase classification, October 2020

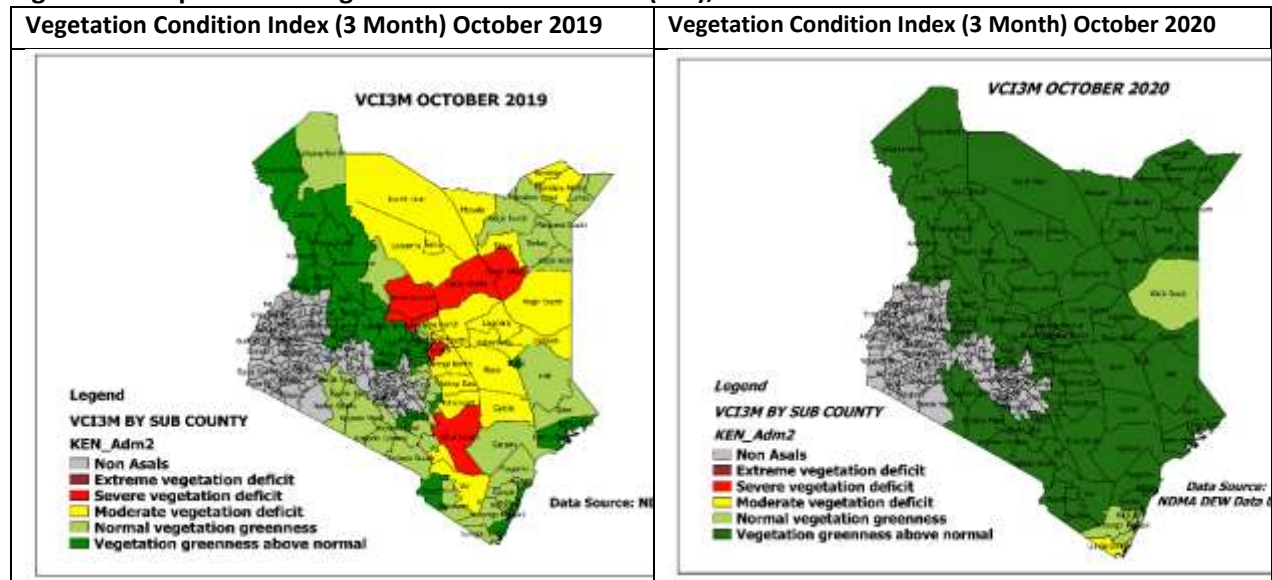
Drought status	Trend					
	Improving		Stable			Worsening
Normal	Kwale Embu (Mbeere)	Baringo Tana River Samburu Nyeri (Kieni) (Tharaka)	Turkana Lamu Narok Laikipia	West Pokot Taita Taveta Marsabit Tharaka Nithi	Kajiado Isiolo Meru (Meru North) Kilifi	Kitui Makueni
Alert					Mandera Garissa Wajir	
Alarm						
Emergency						
Recovery						

Vegetation condition

Figure 1 compares the vegetation condition index (VCI) in late October 2019 with that in late October 2020. When compared to similar period last year and the long term average, the current condition of vegetation is remarkably above October 2019 and long term average VCI values. The vegetation greenness index in most counties for the last six consecutive months has been above normal ranges which is attributed to the impact of the above average cumulative rains received during the March-April-May (MAM) 2020 rainfall season.

However, in Kwale County, the county VCI in October deteriorated slightly dropping to the normal vegetation greenness band with one sub-county Lunga Lunga recording moderate vegetation deficit. Other areas (Sub Counties) which recorded a slight worsening state of the vegetation (shift from above normal to normal vegetation greenness) during the month under review include: Kwale (Kinango, Matuga, Msambweni), Wajir (Wajir South) and Kilifi (Kaloleni, Rabai, and Kilifi South)

Figure 1: Comparison of Vegetation Condition Index (VCI), October 2019 and October 2020



Pasture and browse condition

As illustrated in Table 1, the current condition of pasture and browse in most of the arid and semi-arid (ASAL) counties is generally categorized in fair and good condition.

However, during the month of October poor pasture condition was observed in few counties like Garissa, Turkana, Wajir, Mandera, Kwale, Embu and Makeni. The deterioration in pasture situation in these areas was attributed to reduced regeneration owing to the dry condition experienced in September and in early October, but some improvement is expected following the onset of the OND rains.

Table 1.0: Pasture and browse condition, October 2020

<i>Pasture condition</i>			<i>Browse condition</i>		
<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>
Embu Garissa Kwale Makueni Turkana Wajir Mandera Meru	Isiolo Kajiado Kilifi Lamu Marsabit Kitui Nyeri Tharaka Nithi Tana River	Baringo Laikipia Narok Samburu Taita Taveta West Pokot	Kwale Makueni Mandera Meru Turkana Wajir	Embu Garissa Kitui Marsabit Lamu Tharaka Nithi Tana River	Baringo Isiolo Kajiado Nyeri Kilifi Narok Samburu Taita Taveta West Pokot

Livestock body condition

In October 2020 overall body condition for both cattle and goats was good and fair in all ASAL counties as shown in Table 2. In general, the body condition of all livestock species deteriorated especially during the first half of October owing to constraints in accessing quality forage within shorter trekking distances from the households.

However, a reversal trend is anticipated during the month of November since the OND rainfall is expected to bring about some regeneration of pasture and browse for utilization by the grazers and browsers respectively.

Table 2.0: Livestock body condition, October 2020

<i>Cattle body condition</i>			<i>Goat body condition</i>		
<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>
	Embu Lamu Garissa Kitui Nyeri Tana River Turkana Kwale Tharaka Nithi Makueni Mandera Meru Wajir	Baringo West Pokot Kajiado Kilifi Laikipia Marsabit Narok Isiolo Samburu Taita Taveta		Embu Lamu Garissa Kitui Nyeri Tana River Turkana Kwale Tharaka Nithi Makueni Mandera Meru Wajir	Baringo West Pokot Kajiado Kilifi Laikipia Marsabit Narok Isiolo Samburu Taita Taveta

Milk production

Milk production situation in the 23 ASAL counties is presented in Table 4. Milk production reduced considerably across counties in October. For example, in Marsabit County, average milk production per household per day dropped by a margin of 43 percent to 0.8 litres in October from 1.4 litres in September while household milk production per day in Wajir reduced by 29 percent from 2.1 litres in September to 1.5 litres in October. Similarly, in Kajiado County, average milk production per household per day decreased by 25 percent from 4 litres in September to 3 litres in

October. The observed drop in milk production was attributed to dry conditions and the associated general decline in availability of water, pasture and browse in most ASAL counties.

Table 4.0: Milk production, October 2020

Indicator	Current status			Trend		
	Above LTA	At LTA	Below LTA	Improving	Stable	Worsening
Milk Production	Isiolo	Mandera Meru Narok	Tana River Samburu Embu Kajiado Kitui Marsabit Turkana Baringo Garissa Laikipia Tharaka Kwale Makueni Wajir Kilifi Lamu West Pokot Nyeri Taita Taveta	Narok	Embu Baringo Garissa Isiolo Kwale Mandera Meru Tana River West Pokot	Samburu, Nyeri Wajir, Kilifi Kitui, Kajiado Lamu, Makueni Tharaka Nithi Taita Taveta Marsabit Turkana Laikipia

Forecast for October-November-December (OND) Short Rains Season

According to the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD) a drier than usual season is expected in most parts of Kenya. During OND season, it is expected that several parts of Kenya will experience depressed rainfall that will be poorly distributed both in time and space.

November is normally the peak month for the October-November-December (OND) Short Rains Season. As shown in the map below the November 2020 rainfall forecast indicates that parts of North Eastern (Garissa, Wajir, Isiolo, Marsabit and Mandera), the coastal counties (Tana River, Kilifi, Kwale, Taita Taveta and Lamu) and the South Eastern lowlands (Kitui, Kajiado, Makueni, Meru, Machakos and Tharaka) are likely to experience near average to below-average rainfall.



Figure 1: November 2020 Rainfall Forecast

Recommendations

In order to bring about appropriate early drought mitigation action, the EWS bulletins for October 2020 have outlined a number of recommendations:-

- Publicize the OND forecast as early warning information to all decision makers at national and county levels. Also to ASAL communities.
- Updating of contingency plans and activation of sectoral response plans to facilitate early response.
- Provision of food assistance and cash transfers to vulnerable households. According to the 2020 LRA conducted in August 2020, approximately 739,000 people across the 23 ASAL counties are estimated to be in the Crisis phase (IPC Phase 3) or worse and were assessed to be in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.
- Promote short season / early maturing crops.
- Expand irrigated areas, rehabilitate irrigation infrastructure and subsidize irrigation equipment.
- Enhance livestock disease surveillance, and conduct vaccination campaigns before livestock movements begin.
- Closely monitor pasture and water conditions across ASAL counties.
- Promote sale / marketing of livestock while animals are still in good body condition
- Repair and desilting of water storage facilities such as dams and water pans.
- Rehabilitation and maintenance of strategic boreholes and prepositioning of fast moving spare parts.
- Intensify monitoring and control of the spread of Desert Locust.
- Procure commodities for management of acute malnutrition.
- Close monitoring of the effects of COVID-19 on continuity of essential services and livelihoods as cases continue to rise to mitigate its effect on food and nutrition situation
- Cross-border peace committees should be revived to facilitate community dialogue on resource sharing mainly pasture and water.