

**National Drought Management Authority**  
**WEST POKOT COUNTY**  
**DROUGHT EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR MARCH 2018**



A Vision 2030 Flagship Project



**MARCH EW PHASE**



**Drought Situation & EW Phase Classification**

**Biophysical Indicators**

- The County received substantial rains with increased intensity across all livelihood zones in the first and second dekads, with fair spatial and temporal distribution. The ongoing long rains season is forecasted to be at normal to near normal performance.
- The vegetation condition is below normal, with high expectations of improving. All Sub-counties recorded moderate vegetation deficit band. Forage condition is fair and on upward trend.

**Socio Economic Indicators (Impact Indicators)**

- The body condition for cattle and sheep is fair across the County with an improving trend. Distance to water sources decreased slightly but fell above the normal range. Milk production and consumption are on increase, with the terms of trade remaining favourable.
- Most pastoralists remained in migration areas outside the County due to depletion of forage in their normal season grazing areas.
- Most households fell within the borderline food consumption score. Coping strategy index decreased.
- The proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition remained stable within the normal range.

**Early Warning (EW) Phase Classification**

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

Biophysical Indicators	Value	Normal range
VCI-3month (County)	28	>35
VCI-3month (Pokot North)	26	>35
Forage Condition	Fair	Good

Production Indicators	Value	Normal range
Livestock Body Condition	Fair	Good
Milk Production	1.4 Litres	>1.0 Litres
Livestock Migration Pattern	Normal	Normal
Livestock deaths (attributed to drought)	No deaths	No deaths

Access Indicators	Value	Normal range
Terms of Trade (ToT)	79	>76
Milk Consumption	1.3 litres	>1.1 litres
Return distance to water sources (household)	3.8 km	0.0-2.6km
Cost of water at source (Ksh. /20 litres)	Ksh. 5	<Ksh. 5

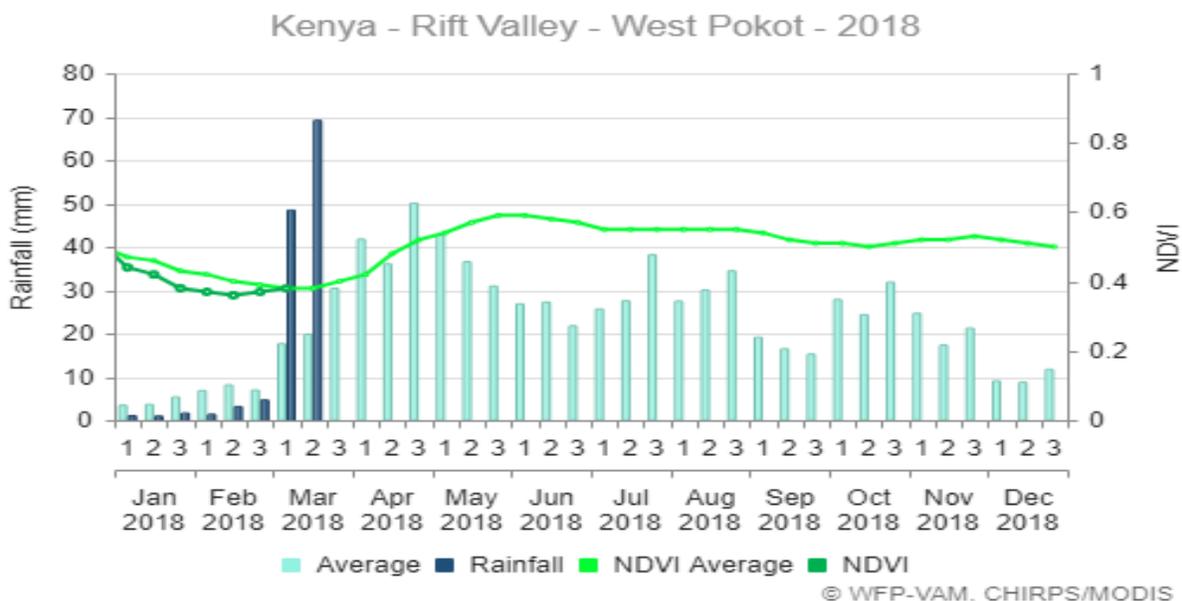
Utilization Indicators	Value	Normal range
Nutrition status, MUAC (% at risk of malnutrition)	6.5	0.0-9.6
Coping Strategy Index (CSI)	8.4	0.0-14.5
Food Consumption Score	40	>35

<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 enhanced rainfall amounts with higher intensity than the previous month and was recorded in the first and second dekads of the month. The month of March marks the onset of expected long rains season.
- This is normal for this time of the year as the rains start intensifying.
- Substantial rainfall was received in both lowlands and highland areas. The rainfall was characterised by fair temporal and spatial distribution.



Source: VAM-World Food Programme

- The dekadal rainfall in March increased from 3.5mm to 69.1 mm in the first dekad and from 3.0 mm in the previous month to 48.4 mm in second dekad. The amounts were above the long term average in both the first and second dekads.
- The current NDVI values were at par with the historical NDVI values due to sufficient rains during the month. The trend is stable with the increased precipitation.

## 1.2 AMOUNT OF RAINFALL AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

- Significant rainfall was recorded in both the lowlands and highlands with fair temporal and spatial distribution. However the rainfall amounts and intensity was high in the highlands.
- The County remained fairly wet within the month.

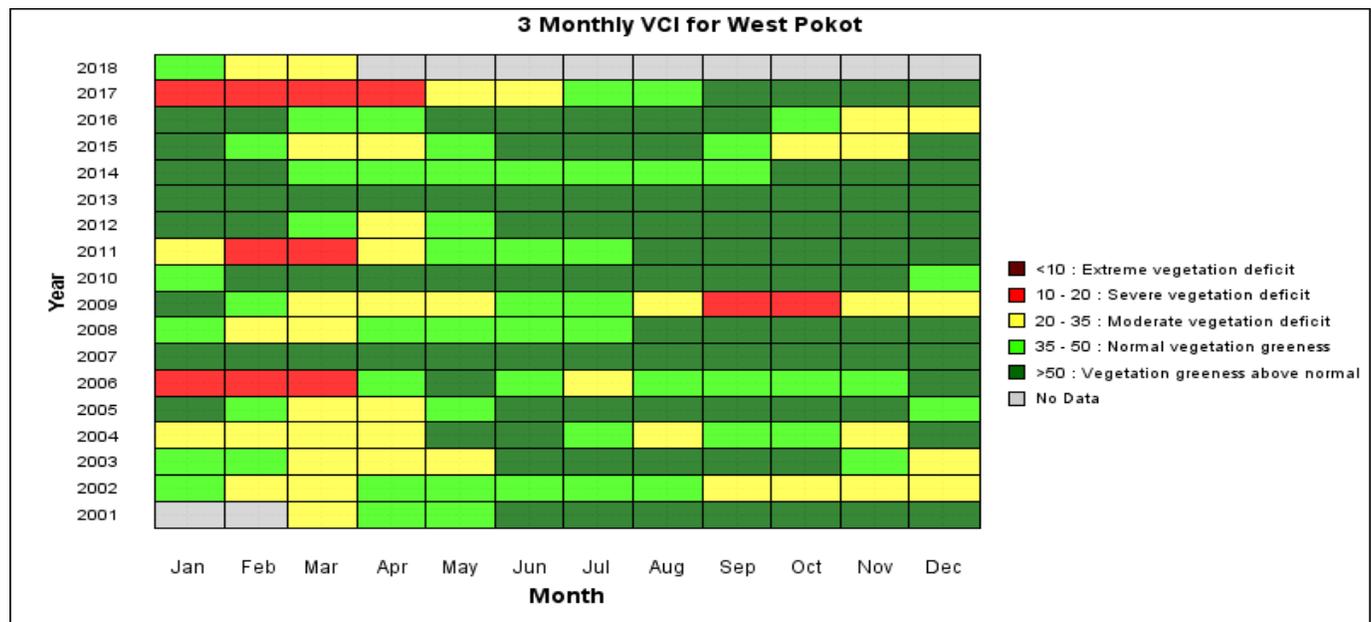
## 1.3 OTHER EVENTS

- There were no notable events such as floods, land/mud slides, lightning strikes and hailstorms that occurred during the month under review.

## 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 signifies the vegetation status of the County for March 2018 is 28, a decrease from 32 recorded during the previous month. The current VCI indicates moderate vegetation deficit; a situation below normal.
- The VCI depicts a downward trend across most parts of the county during the month under review. All sub-counties were categorized in moderate vegetation deficit band. The VCI for all Sub-counties: Pokot North, Pokot West, Pokot South and Pokot Central dropped from 27 to 26, 31 to 28, 38 to 26 and 38 to 34 respectively. The declining trend in the VCI is due to slow regeneration of vegetation despite substantial rains received within the County.

#### 2.1.2 Pasture

- The proportion of sampled communities who reported that pasture was good, fair and poor is 3, 37 and 60 respectively. The communities stated that condition was below normal for such a time of the year.
- The pasture condition is fair to poor across all livelihoods. The condition however, is below normal in comparison to the pasture situation during a normal year, when compared to the previous month, the trend is improving and is attributed to received rainfall during the month under review.

- The onset of long rains season during the month is projected to rejuvenate pasture across all livelihoods.
- The Pokot-Marakwet border conflict has remained a major constraint to pasture access.
- There is no significant variation in terms of pasture quality and quantity in both livelihood zones.

### **2.1.3 Browse**

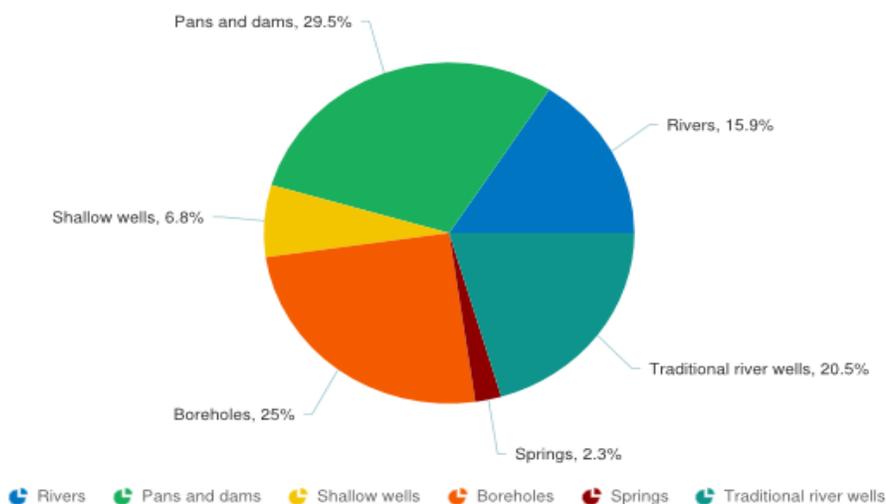
- The proportion of community population sampled who reported that the browse was good, fair and poor is 3, 74 and 23 respectively.
- The browse condition across the two livelihood zones, remained largely fair. This is normal in comparison to the browse situation during such period of the year. The quality of the browse improved in relation to that of the previous month due to better rainfall received during the current month.
- The conflict along the Pokot-Marakwet/Turkana borders continued to hamper access to browse.
- The quantity and quality of browse is fair in both zones and there is no significant variation between the Pastoral and Agro Pastoral livelihood zones.

## **2.2 WATER RESOURCE**

### **2.2.1 Sources**

- The proportion of the population using main water sources currently for households and livestock is 30, 25 and 21 for pans/dams, boreholes and traditional rivers respectively. Other water sources in use including rivers were at 16 percent.
- The water recharge levels increased in comparison to the previous month due to adequate rainfall.
- The water levels for rivers and boreholes have risen due to substantial recharge.
- The current main sources in use are the normal sources where households do rely on during this time of the year.

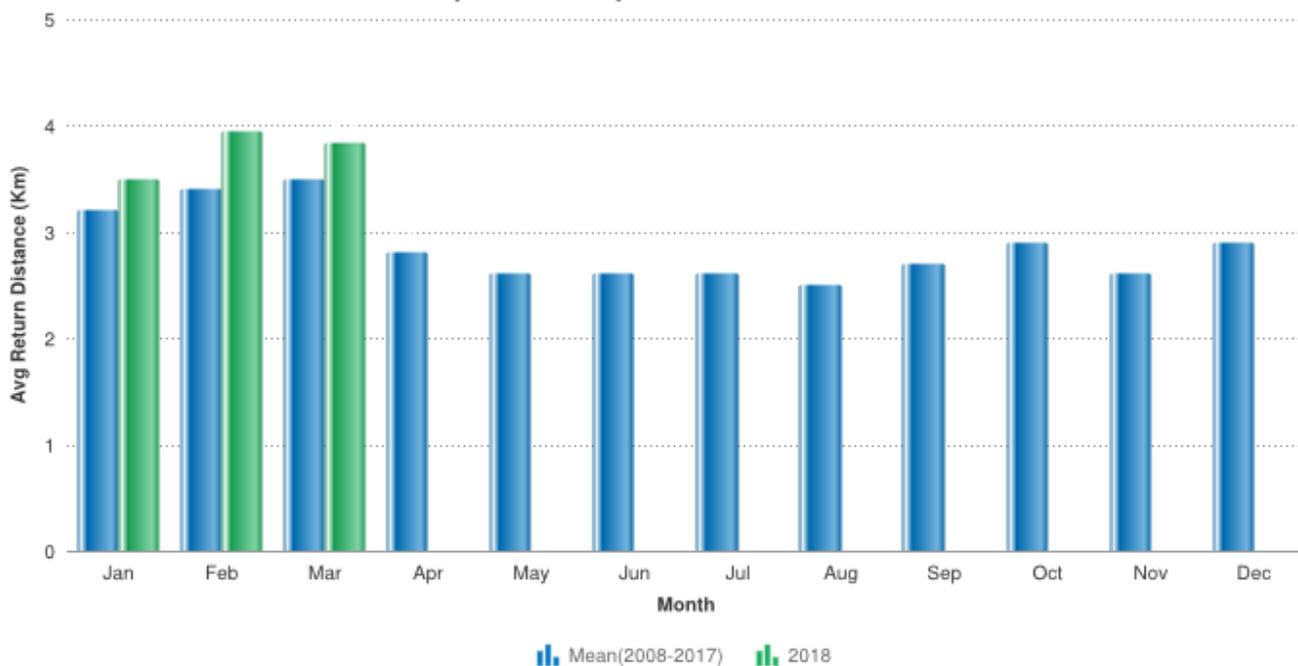
**West pokot County Water sources**  
(March 2018)



### 2.2.2 Household Access and Utilization

- The household return distance to water sources lightly decreased to 3.8 km during the month, from 3.9 km recorded in the previous month. The current distance is however 9 percent above the long term average distance.
- Pastoral livelihood zone reported longer trekking distances to water sources in comparison to the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone. Water distances decreased due to the sufficient water sources recharge during the month.

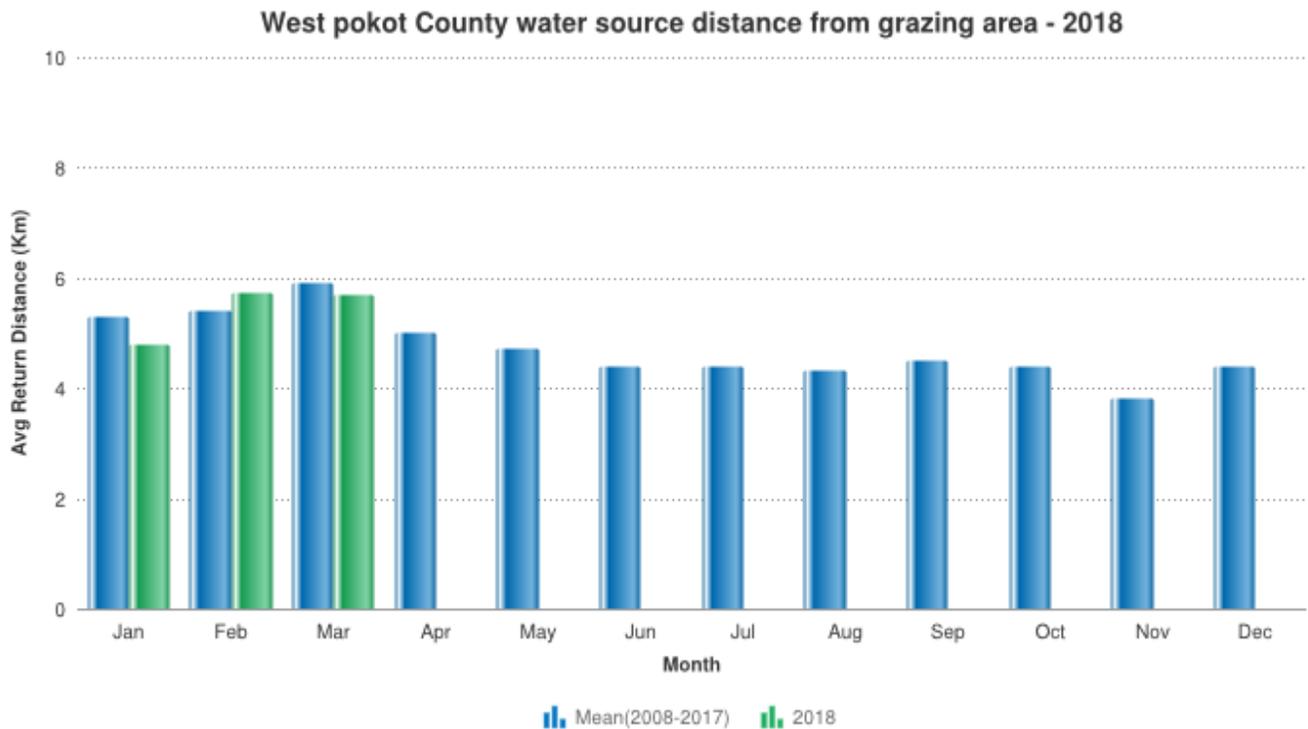
**West pokot County water source distance 2018**



- All livelihood zones recorded decreasing waiting time at water sources.
- The average household water consumption per person per day is at 8-13 litres in the Pastoral zone while that in the Agro-pastoral zone is still 10-15 litres.
- The cost of accessing water at the source is still 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 within March 2018 remained 5.7 km, same as that of the previous month. In comparison to the normal trekking distance of 5.9 km, the trekking distance lies below the normal range by 3 percent.
- The trekking distance from grazing areas to water sources is longer in Pastoral livelihood zone than in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone.



- The decreasing livestock trekking distance is mainly due to substantial rainfall within the month of March recharging most of the available water sources.
- Frequency for watering cattle and shoats increased to 4-6 times in a week while for camel is 3-5 times in a week.

## **3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS**

### **3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION**

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

- In both Pastoral and Agro-pastoral livelihood zones, the body condition is fair for all livestock species.
- The livestock body condition is projected to improve over successive months across all the livelihood zones, attributed to the ongoing long rains.
- In comparison to the similar period during a normal year, the body condition of all species is normal and this is attributed to fair forage condition generated during the month. The trend is upward as a result of the rains received during the month.
- There exists no significant variation in livestock body condition across the two livelihood zones.

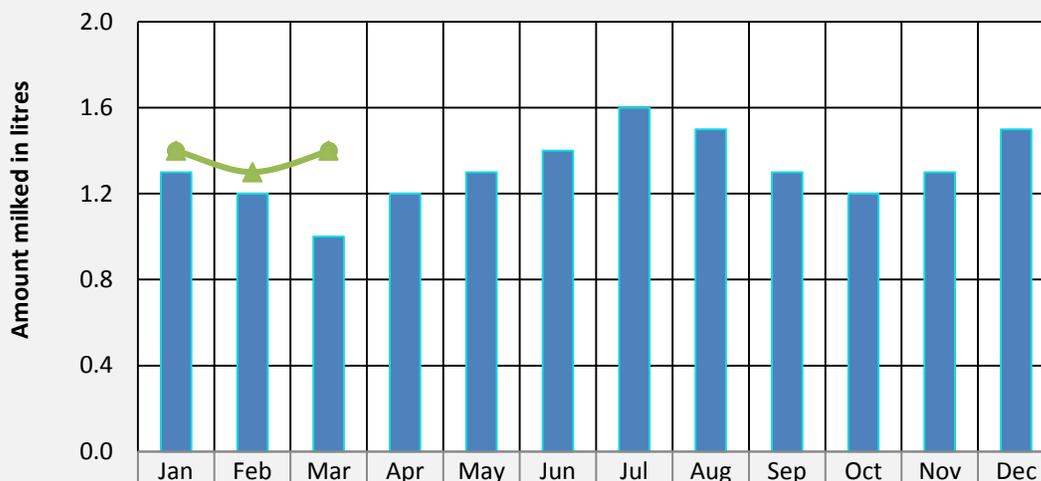
#### **3.1.2 Livestock Diseases**

- Incidences Diarrhoea in goats were reported in Riwo, Pokot North and Masol wards. Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) cases in cattle were reported in Kapchok ward.

#### **3.1.3 Milk Production**

- The County recorded an average of 1.4 litres of milk per household per day in March 2018,
- The milk production during the month improved slightly from that recorded in the previous month. Cattle produced most milk within the county.
- The current household milk production is 40 percent above the normal household for the month.
- There was an increase in the household milk production during the month due to the improving water situation in the normal grazing areas.

**Milk Production-West Pokot County 2018**



■ LTA ( 2008-2017)

●▲● Average 2018

### 3.2 RAIN-FED CROP PRODUCTION

#### 3.2.1 Stage and Condition of food Crops

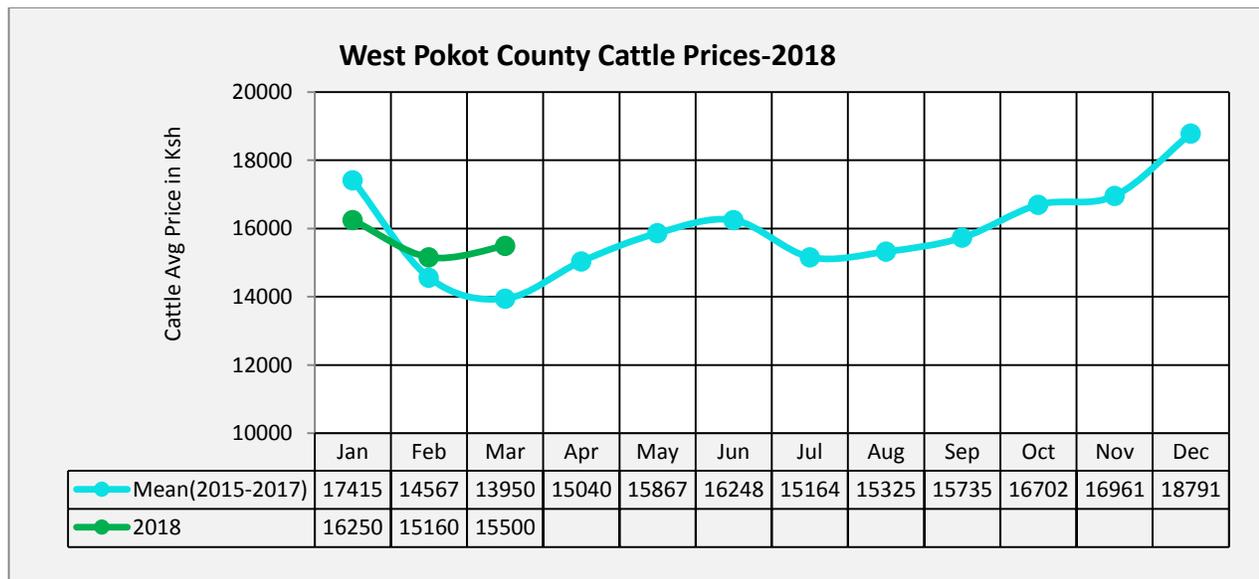
- In the County, the main crops grown are maize, beans and bulb onion. Most farms are currently under planting.
- The level of horticultural supplies of fruits such as pawpaw and onions to major markets including Sigor, Ortum and Lomut is anticipated to improve due to the ongoing long rains season
- Bulb onion weeding is ongoing (in areas such as Kokwotendwo and Kerelwa) which supply to Ortum market for distribution to other centres within and outside the County.
- Horticultural production is booming with increased farm activity being witnessed along the production zones of Sebit, Wakorr, Wei Wei and Lomut.

## 4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

### 4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

#### 4.1.1 Cattle prices

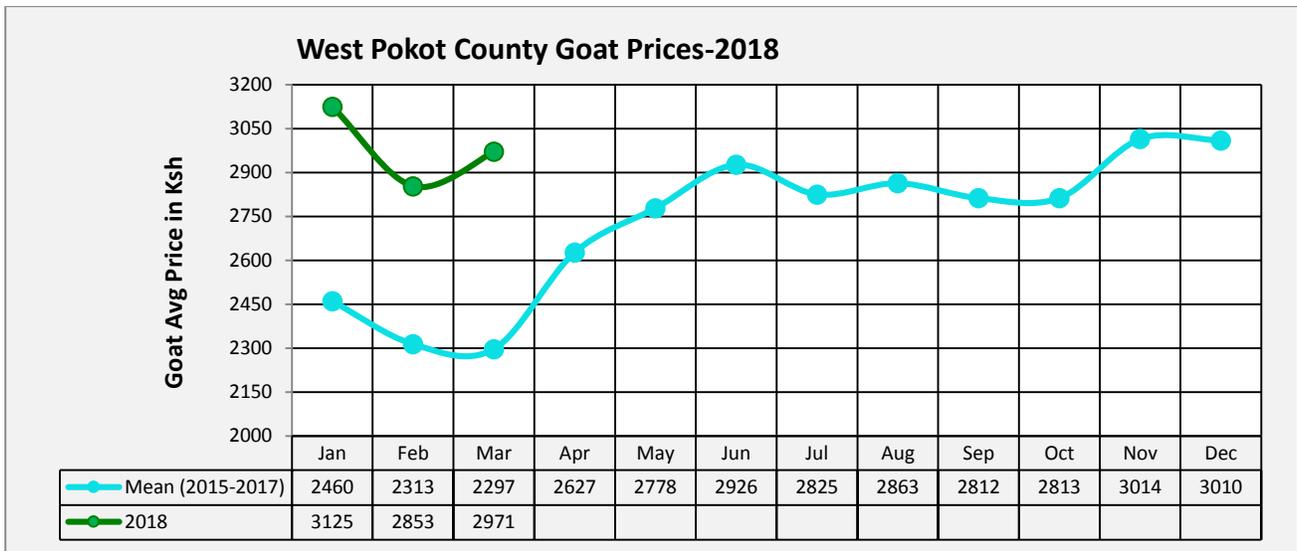
- In March, a medium sized 4-year bull in the County was sold at an average price of Ksh 15,500, which represents a slight increase from Ksh 15,160 that was recorded in the previous month.



- The increasing prices is mainly attributed to substantial rains received resulting in the anticipation of stability of pasture condition alongside water availability, resulting to improvement in the cattle body condition thus enhanced prices.
- The current cattle price is above the Long Term Average (LTA) price (Ksh 13,950) for the month by 11 percent.

#### 4.1.2 Goat Prices

- The average price of a 2-year old medium size goat was Ksh 2, 971 across all livelihood zones in the County during the month under review. The price increased in comparison to that of the previous month (Ksh 2,853).

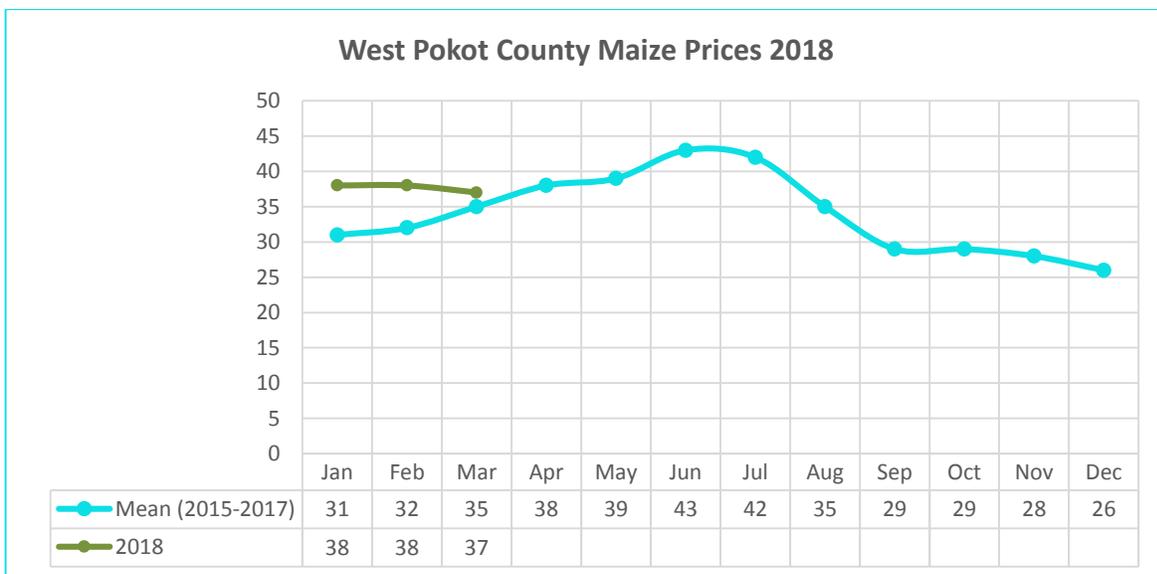


- The slight increase in price is mainly attributed to improving browse condition and significant recharge of water points resulting to a boost in the body condition.
- The current price of goat is however 29 percent above the LTA price for the month.

## 4.2 CROP PRICES

### 4.2.1 Maize

- The maize traded at Ksh 37 per Kg during the month, a slight drop from Ksh.38 recorded in the previous month.
- The current price is 6 percent above the LTA price (Ksh 35) for the month under review.



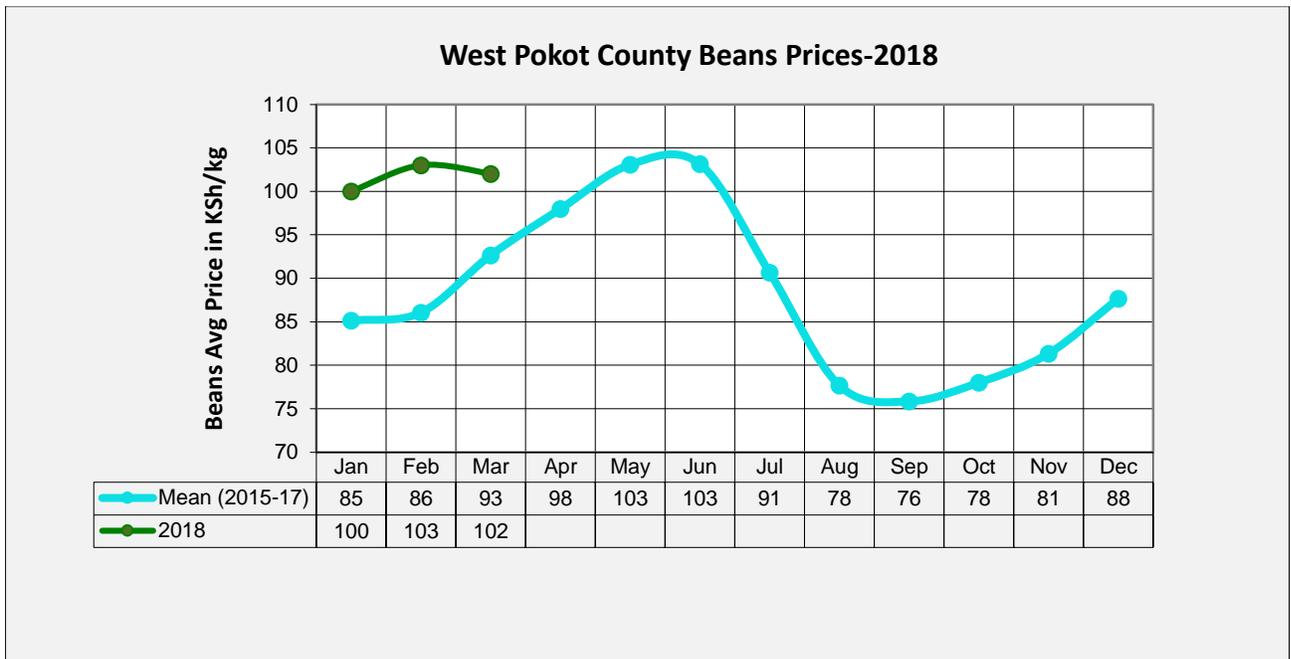
- The persistent Pokot-Marakwet border conflict and Pastoral zones in Pokot Central resulted to a higher price in comparison to other areas as a result of the normal external supply sources (being

affected. Generally, the increase is fairly due to lack of local harvest and unsteady external supply of maize.

- Most households depend more on local markets to replenish their stocks, thus maize price is likely to remain unstable as its supply fluctuates from local and external sources (Uganda and Trans Nzoia County) which are suppliers to the County.

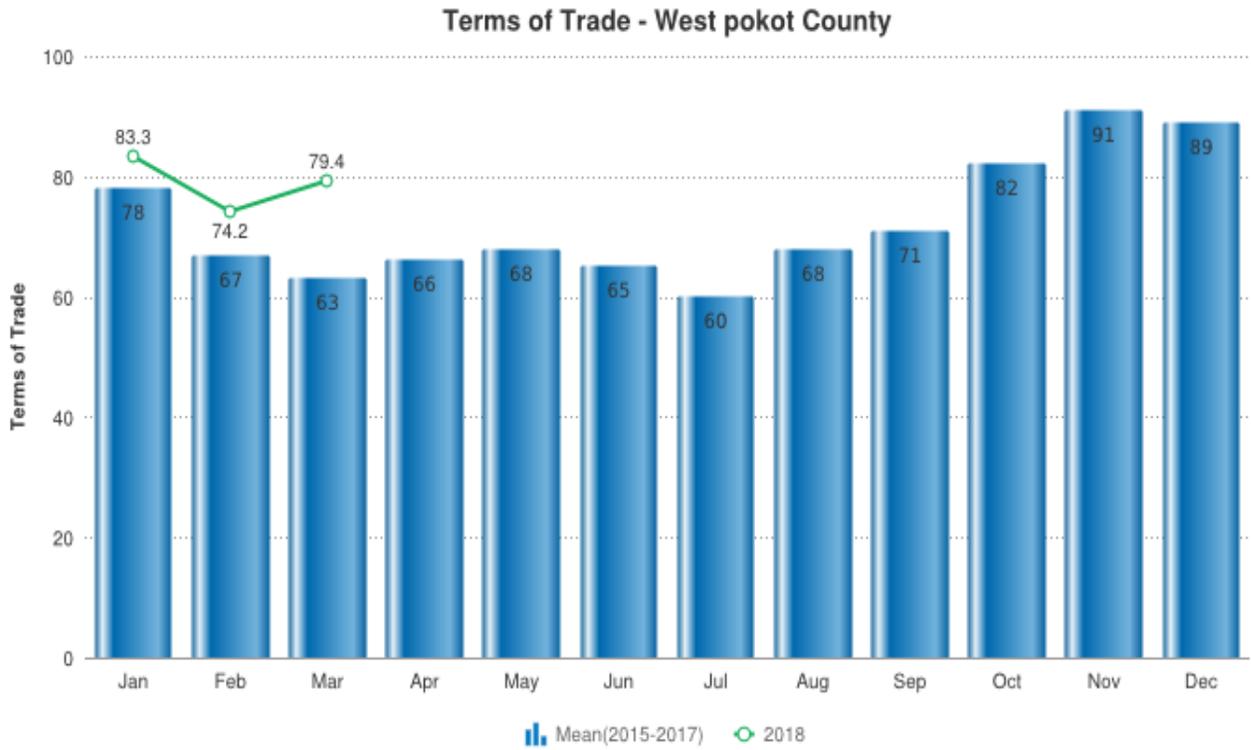
#### 4.2.2 Beans

- Beans traded at 102 per Kg in March 2018, a slight drop from that of the previous month.
- The prices stability is attributed to steady prices at external supplies.
- There was no significant variation in beans price across the two livelihood zones since they both relied on the same external sources for supplies.
- The current market price of beans remains significantly above the LTA price (Ksh.93) for a normal season during this time of the year by 10 percent.



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

- The Terms of Trade (TOT) is 79 in March 2018, having increased from 74 recorded in the previous month. This shows that pastoralists would obtain more maize for the sale of a goat than they did during the previous month. The current ToT is moreover 25 percent above the LTA for the month.
- The increase in ToT is mainly attributed to increasing goat prices and the stability in maize prices.

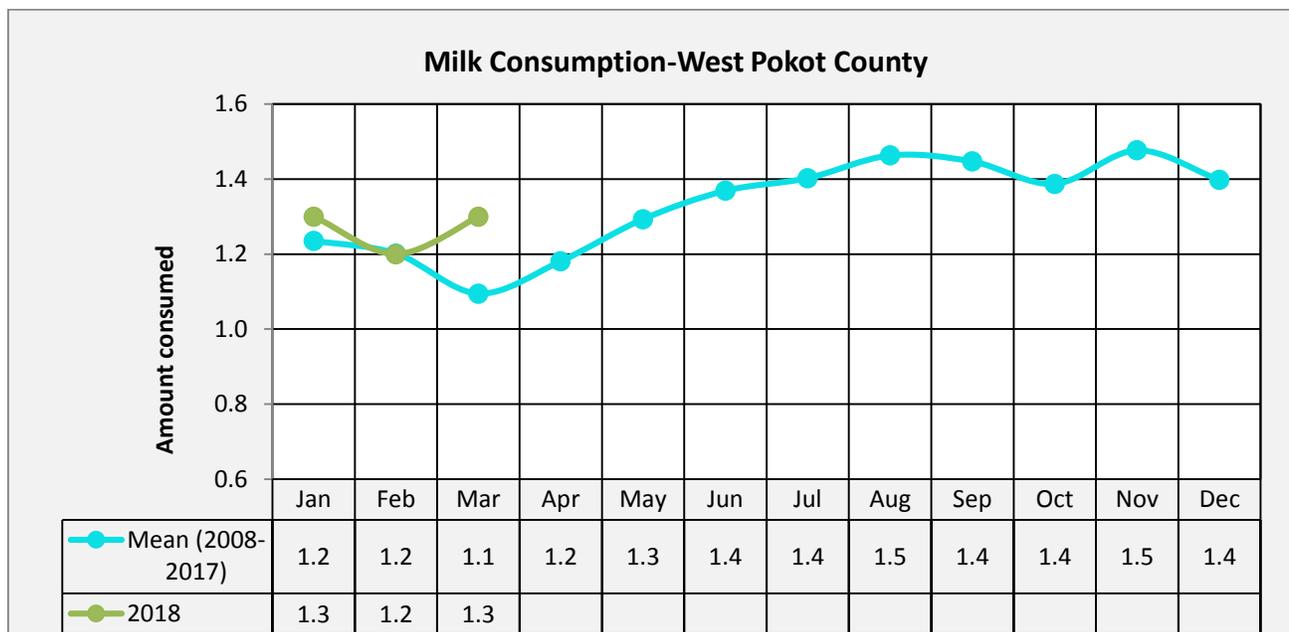


- Further variation is anticipated over the next three months as the price of goat is projected to increase with the ongoing long rains coupled with stability in maize price during the same period.

## 5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

### 5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- The households across all livelihood zones consumed 1.3 litres of milk on average, mainly from cattle, indicating an increase from the previous month (1.2 litres).



- The increase in milk consumption level is due to the slight improvement in production owing to improvement in water availability and reduced livestock trekking distances to water points.
- The quantity of milk consumed is in fact 8% above the LTA for the same period of the year.

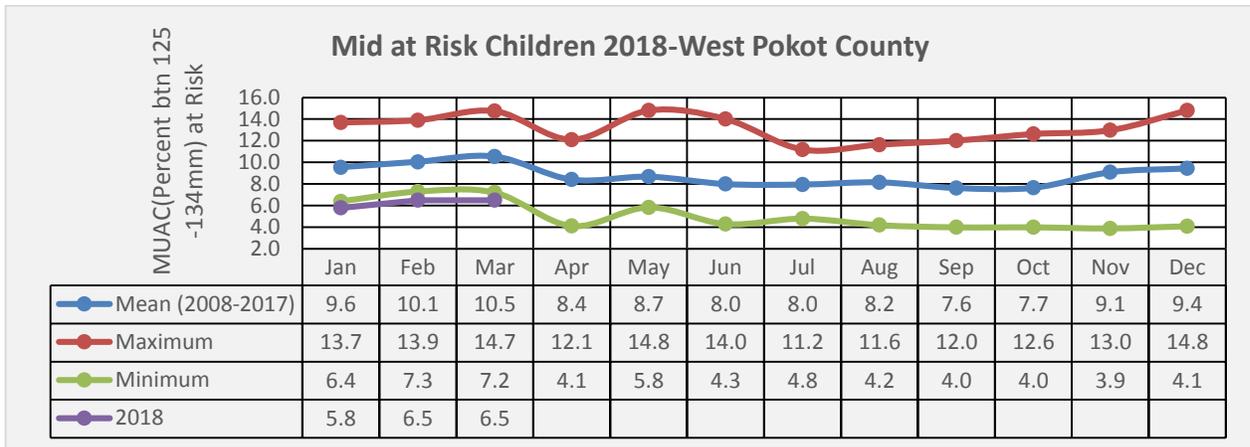
### 5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- The proportion of 42%, 43% and 5% of households had Food Consumption Score (FCS) within Acceptable, Borderline and Poor categories respectively during the month under review. In comparison with the previous month, where the proportions were 45%, 49% and 6% for Acceptable, Borderline and Poor categories respectively, the FCS remained stable.
- The mean FCS for the two livelihood zones during the month under review increased to 40 from 38.5 that was recorded in the previous month.
- There was a significant variation across the two livelihood zones as in the case where 38% of households in the Pastoral zone being categorized as having Acceptable FCS in comparison with 75% households under the same category in the Agro-pastoral zone.

## 5.3 HEALTH AND NUTRITION STATUS

### 5.3.1 Nutrition Status

- The proportion of 47 and 53 percent of girls and boys respectively were sampled.
- In March 2018, the percent of children rated as being ‘at risk’ of malnutrition remained at 6.5 same as that recorded in February 2018.
- The current percent of children rated as being ‘at risk’ of malnutrition lies below the LTA value of 10.5 for such a period in a normal year.



- The stability in malnutrition among under-fives is attributed to significant steady consumption and accessibility to milk including other essential health and nutrition commodities in the County. These were considered main drivers of the stability in number of children falling outside the normal range of children ‘at risk’ of malnutrition.

### 5.3.2 Health

- Malaria cases were the most commonly reported ailments during the month among the sampled children.

## 5.4 COPING STRATEGY

### 5.4.1 Coping Strategy Index (CSI)

- The CSI was 8.4 during the month of March 2018, which depicts a decrease in comparison to 9.3 recorded during the previous month. The decrease in CSI demonstrates that households employed less mechanisms to cope compared to the previous month, which could be attributed to steady food commodity availability and prices in the markets, as well as improved ToTs.
- Agro-pastoral livelihood zone recorded a CSI of 8.3 compared to the 8.5 in Pastoral livelihood zone, which is mainly attributed to instability in livestock productivity along the Pastoral zone.
- The notable consumption based coping strategies employed by majority of the households during the month included reliance on less preferred/less expensive foods.

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

### **6.1 NON-FOOD**

- WFP, ACF and County Government conducted ration protection program targeting 9,000 households.
- Cross border peace meetings were conducted by the National Government, SIKOM and County Government along the County borders.
- Pests' des Petis disease (PPR) and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) vaccination was undertaken by County Government in Pokot West Sub-County.

### **6.2 FOOD**

- Ministry of interior and coordination provided the following to each of all the four sub-counties in the Counties: 500 (50 kg) bags of maize, 200 (90 kg) bags of beans, 500 (50 kg) bags of rice and 40 cartons of cooking oil.

## **7.0 EMERGING ISSUES**

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

- There were reduced incidences of cattle rustling reported within the month, mainly in Pokot Central along Pokot-Marakwet border at Chesegeon.

### **7.2 MIGRATION**

- Most pastoralists in Pokot North Sub-County are still in the dry season grazing zones mainly outside the County (Uganda) due to the depletion of pasture and browse resources at traditional grazing areas.

### **7.3 FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS**

- Distance to water sources for both human and livestock use is expected to decrease further due to the onset of the long rains, thus likely to necessitate adequate recharge to water sources.
- The livestock productivity is expected to improve due to ongoing long rains season in March. The forage conditions would improve resulting to improved livestock body condition leading to better livestock prices.
- Nutritious food such as milk availability is expected to increase with the expected rejuvenation of pastoral resources supporting livestock milk production. Malnutrition is in turn likely to drop further.

- Maize prices are expected to stabilize with that of goat price projected to go up, thus as such the terms of trade likely to remain favourable over this period.
- Persistent conflicts along County borders could remain the greatest constraint to food security due to limited market accessibility and dwindling stocks in the market.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. LIVESTOCK SECTOR**

- Enhance surveillance while monitoring and vaccinating animals that will be migrating back into the County against FMD, PPR, CBPP and CCPP.
- Carry out rangeland reseeding to pastoral zones to necessitate pastureland rehabilitation.
- Prepare farmers for pasture establishment skills to enable maximum utilization of the ongoing rains.

### **2. AGRICULTURE**

- Upscale provision of drought escaping seeds to the farmers in Agro-pastoral zones as incentive for crop production.

### **3. PEACE AND SECURITY**

- Support peace building efforts along the Turkana and Marakwet borders so as to facilitate smooth market accessibility for majority of pastoral communities in conflict prone zones.

### **4. HEALTH AND NUTRITION SECTOR**

- Support integrated medical outreaches to all hotspots countywide while providing health education on sanitation and proper utilization of water treatment chemicals so as to minimize the risk of water borne diseases outbreak.

### **5. WATER SECTOR**

- Support farmers with modern smart water storage technologies to enable maximum harvesting and utilization of rain water.