

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



A Vision 2030 Flagship Project



FEBRUARY EW PHASE

Drought Status: ALERT



Maandalizi ya mapema

Drought Situation & EW Phase Classification

Biophysical Indicators

- The County received insufficient precipitation across the livelihoods zones during the first and second dekads of the month. The temporal and spatial distribution was poor. The month experienced windy and sunny intervals.
- The vegetation condition is at moderate vegetation deficit band, with a deteriorating trend across livelihoods as depicted by the decrease in the Vegetation Condition Index. Most Sub-counties recorded moderate vegetation deficit, with poor forage condition.

Socio Economic Indicators (Impact Indicators)

- The livestock body condition is fair with a worsening trend across the County. Distance to water sources increased further.
- The Terms of Trade is favourable, with milk production and consumption at household level decreasing significantly.
- Most of the households fell within the Acceptable Food Consumption Score, whereas the Coping Strategy Index increased slightly.
- Malnutrition status is on the increase, as the proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition went up although still within the normal range.

Early Warning (EW) Phase Classification

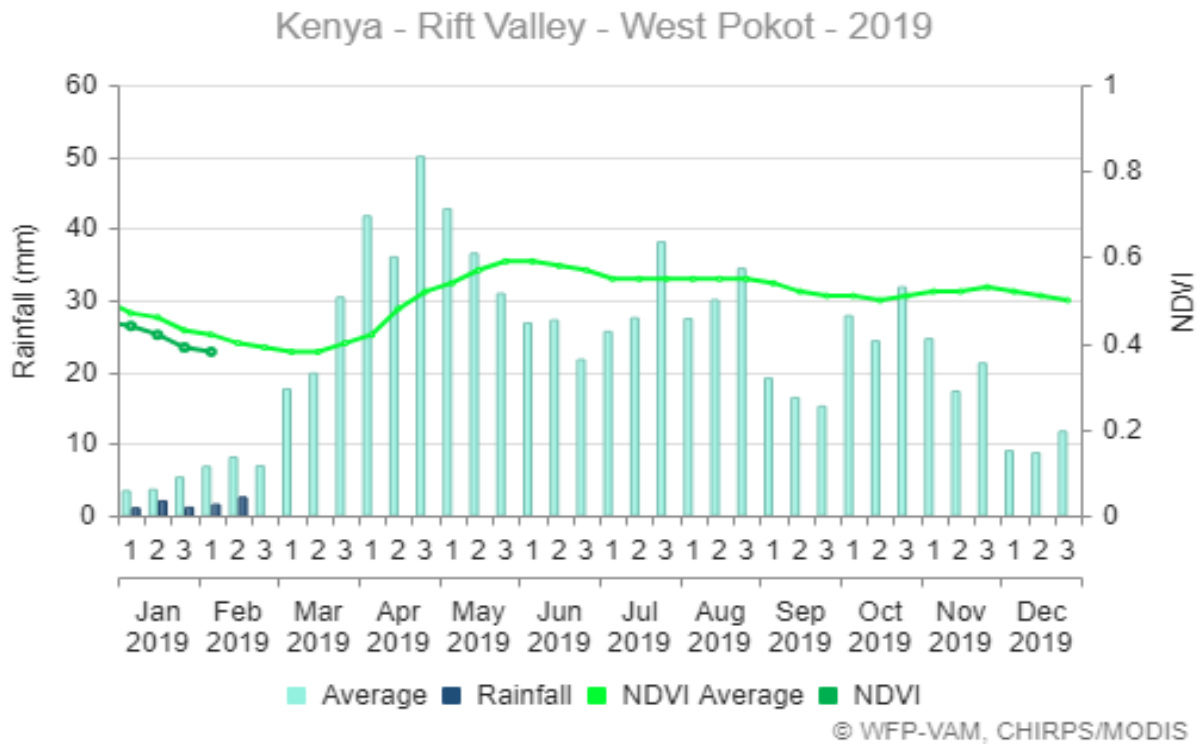
LIVELIHOOD ZONE	EW PHASE	TREND
AGRO PASTORAL	ALERT	WORSENING
PASTORAL	ALERT	WORSENING
COUNTY	ALERT	WORSENING
Biophysical Indicators		
Biophysical Indicators	Value	Normal range
VCI-3month (County)	31	>35
VCI-3month (Pokot North)	28	>35
Forage Condition	Poor	Good
Production Indicators		
Production Indicators	Value	Normal range
Livestock Body Condition	Fair	Normal
Milk Production	1.2 Litres	>1.4 Litres
Livestock Migration Pattern	Usual	Normal
Livestock deaths (attributed to drought)	No deaths	No deaths
Access Indicators		
Access Indicators	Value	Normal range
Terms of Trade (ToT)	92	>76
Milk Consumption	1.2 Litres	>1.4 Litres
Return distance to water sources (household)	5.1 km	0.0-2.6km
Cost of water at source (Ksh. /20 litres)	Kshs 5	<Kshs 5
Utilization Indicators		
Utilization Indicators	Value	Normal range
Nutrition status, MUAC (% at risk of malnutrition)	5.3	0.0-9.9
Coping Strategy Index (CSI)	2.4	0.0-14.5
Food Consumption Score	38	>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

- The County recorded traces of rains especially in the highlands. The ongoing dry spell is expected to end early in March due to anticipated onset of March-April-May (MAM) long rains season.
- The rainfall situation is below normal for such time of the year.



Source: VAM-World Food Programme

- The dekadal rainfall increased slightly from 1 mm to 1.5 mm and 2 mm to 2.5 mm in the first and second dekads respectively in February. Both first and second dekads amounts were below normal.

1.2 AMOUNT OF RAINFALL AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

- The spatial and temporal rainfall distribution remained poor across the livelihoods. The intensity was correspondingly poor in all livelihood zones.
- In February, the County remained dry.

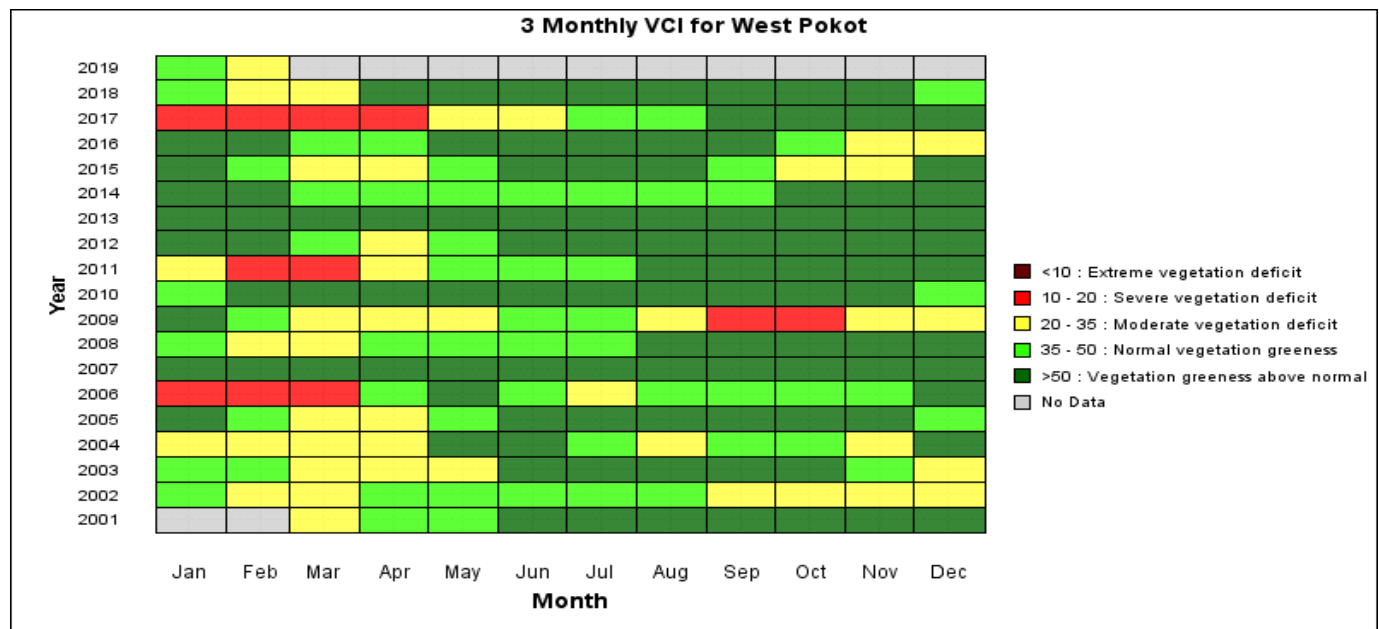
1.3 OTHER EVENTS

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

2.0 IMPACTS ON VEGETATION AND WATER

2.1 VEGETATION CONDITION

2.1.1 Vegetation Condition Index (VCI)



Source: Boku University

- During February, the VCI (VCI-3month) which depicts the vegetation status of the County was 31 signifying a decrease from 38 recorded in January. The current VCI demonstrates moderate vegetation deficit condition for the County.
- The VCI trend is declining across livelihoods. All sub-counties reported moderate vegetation deficit except Pokot South sub-county which recorded normal vegetation greenness. The decrease is from 32 to 28, 39 to 30, 50 to 37 and 40 to 32 in Pokot North, Pokot West, Pokot South and Pokot Central Sub-counties respectively. The downward trend in the VCI is attributed to inadequate regeneration of vegetation cover due to the dry condition within the month.

2.1.2 Pasture

- The proportion of sampled community which indicated that the pasture was poor is 100 percent, same as the one reported the previous month.
- The pasture condition is still poor across livelihood zones. The communities stated that the condition was below normal for the month. The trend is declining in comparison to the previous month attributed to dry conditions during the month.
- The pasture condition is expected to recover with the anticipated onset of long rains in March.
- There is no significant variation in terms of pasture quality and quantity between the livelihood zones.

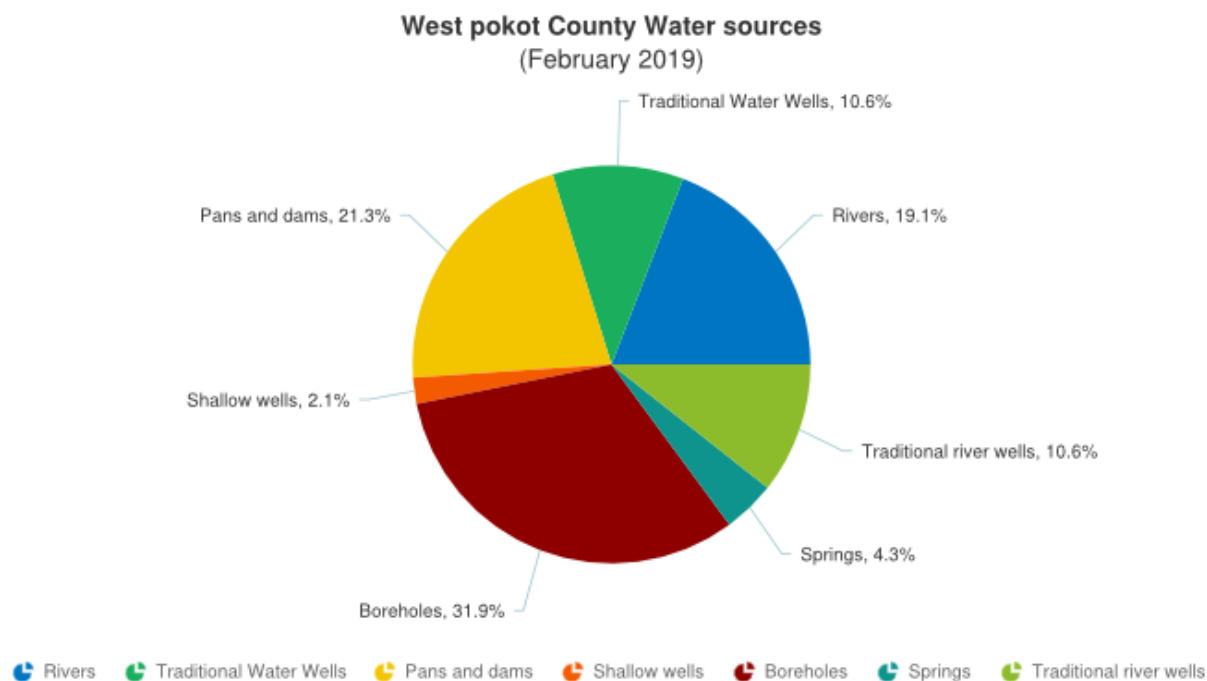
2.1.3 Browse

- The proportion of the sampled community which reported that the browse situation was poor is 85 percent, an increase from 30 percent reported in January.
- The browse condition is poor across the livelihood zones. The browse situation is however normal for such period of the year. The quality of the browse condition is poor in comparison to that of January owing to the dry situation in February.
- The quantity of browse is poor across livelihood zones and there was no significant variation between the pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones.
- Insecurity along conflict hotspots hinders access to browse along the Pokot-Marakwet/Turkana borders.

2.2 WATER RESOURCE

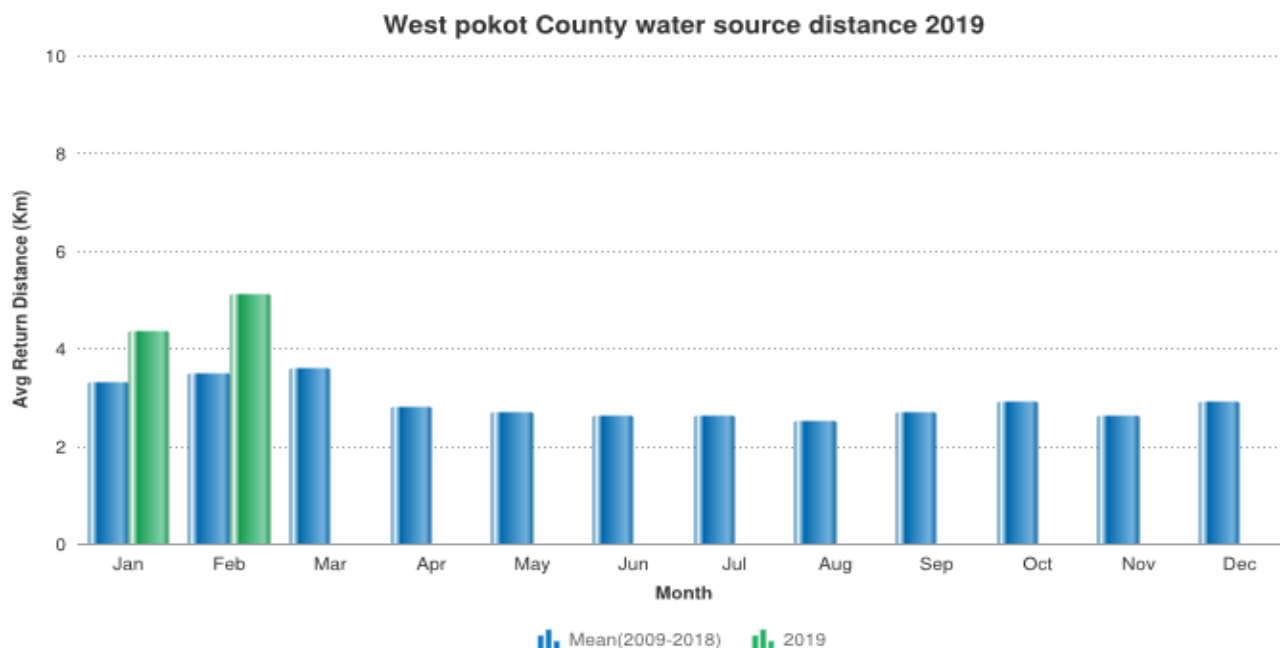
2.2.1 Sources

- During the month, the proportion of sampled population using main water sources for both households and livestock is 32 for boreholes, 21 for pan and dams and 19 for rivers. Other water sources in use include both traditional river wells and traditional water wells at 10.6 percent.
- There was no water recharge to all water sources in comparison to the previous month, due to lack of precipitation.
- The current main sources in use are the normal sources for such time of the year.



2.2.2 Household Access and Utilization

- The return distance to water source from the household is 5.1km; an increase from 4.1 km indicated in January. The current distance is 29 percent above the Long Term Average (LTA) distance.
- The pastoral livelihood zone reported longer trekking distance to water source than the agro-pastoral livelihood zone. Both pastoral and agro-pastoral zones recorded dry conditions. The increasing distance is attributed to the low surface water sources recharge in February

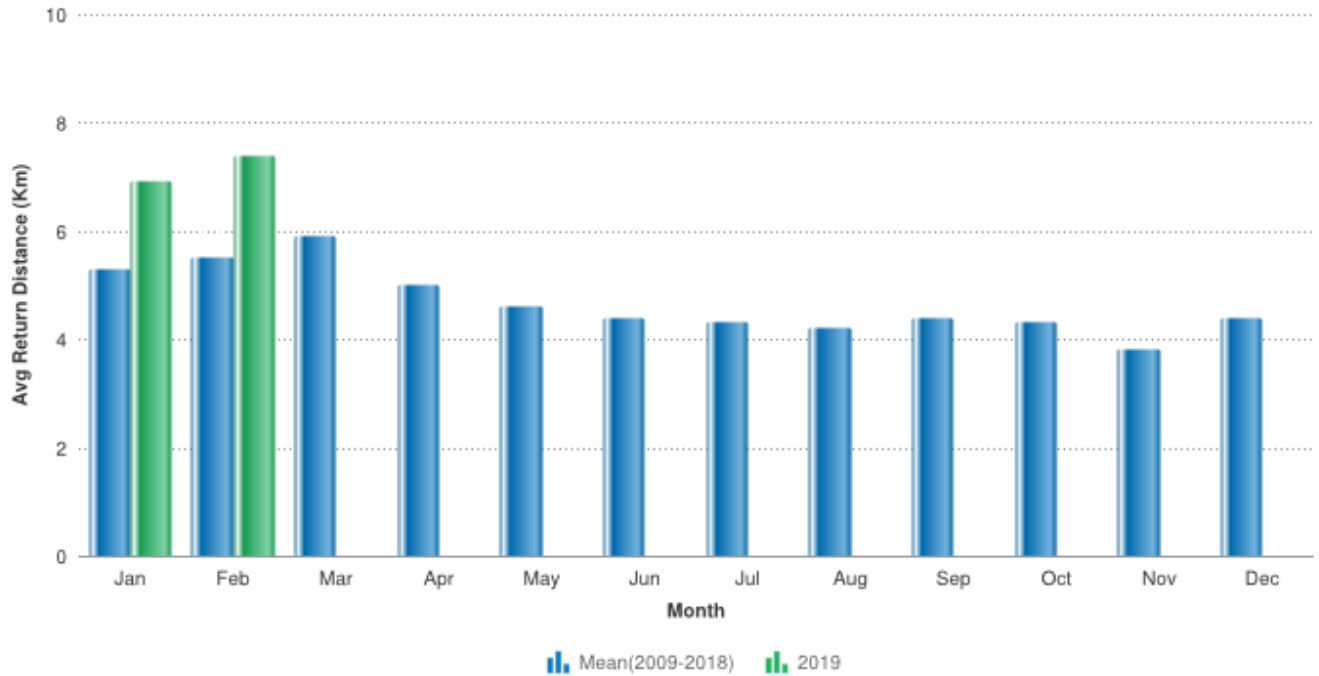


- Pastoral livelihood zones reported increased waiting time at water source.
- The average household water consumption per person per day remained at 8-10 litres in the pastoral zone while that in the agro-pastoral zone is at 9-11 litres.
- During the month, the cost of accessing water at the source is 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

- The livestock return trekking distance from grazing areas to water sources is at 7.4 km in February, portraying arise from 6.7 km recorded in January. In comparison to the normal trekking distance of 5.5 km, the current trekking distance lies above the normal range by 13 percent.
- In comparison, the trekking time from grazing areas to water sources is longer in the pastoral livelihood zone than in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone.

West pokot County water source distance from grazing area - 2019



- The increase in livestock trekking distance to water is due to lack of rainfall within the pastoral areas causing no recharge to water sources.
- In February, watering frequency in cattle and shoats remained at 4-5 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

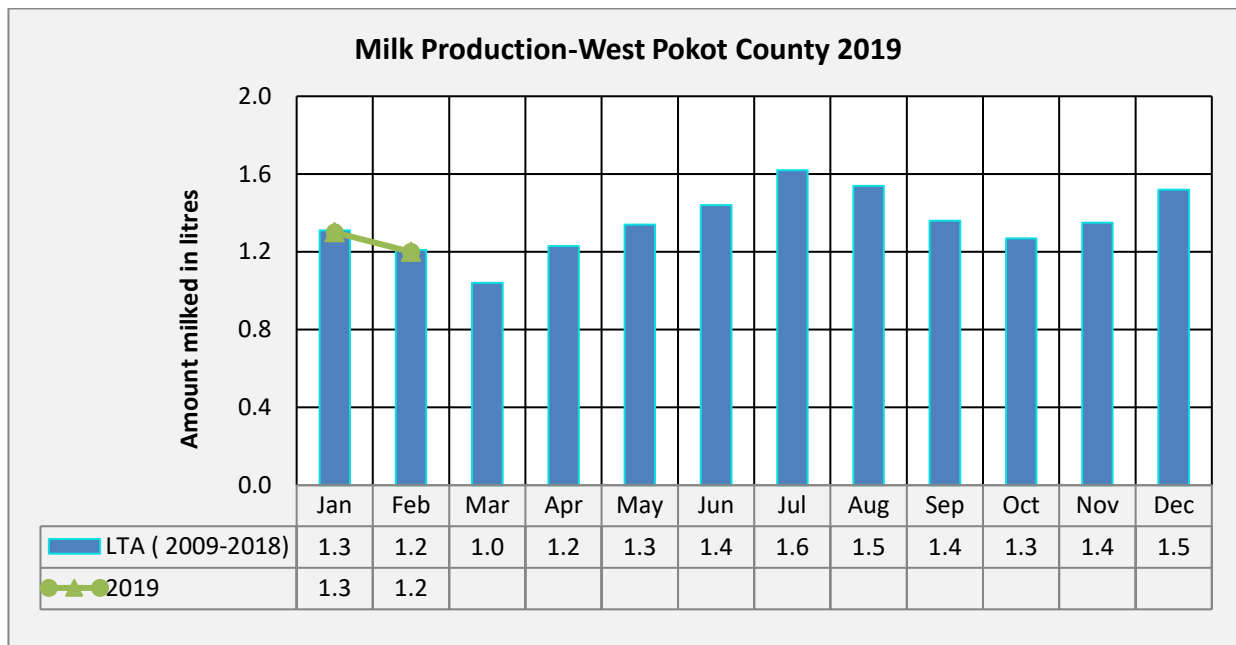
- The body condition for all livestock species was fair to poor in both pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones.
- The livestock body condition is anticipated to improve across the livelihood zones, with the onset of long rains expected early in March.
- The body condition is normal for all livestock species in comparison to a similar period during a normal year. The trend is declining as a result of poor forage rejuvenation.
- There was no significant variation in livestock body condition across the two livelihood zones.

3.1.2 Livestock Diseases

- Sook and Chepareria wards reported LSD disease, while CCPP disease was reported in Masol ward.

3.1.3 Milk Production

- During February, the County recorded 1.2 litres of milk per household per day on average, down from 1.3 litres recorded in January.
- The County milk production decreased as compared to the month of January. The cattle produced most milk than other livestock species.
- The current household milk production is still at par with the LTA for the month.
- The household milk production decline is credited to dwindling forage access in the traditional grazing areas.



3.2 RAIN-FED CROP PRODUCTION

3.2.1 Stage and Condition of food Crops

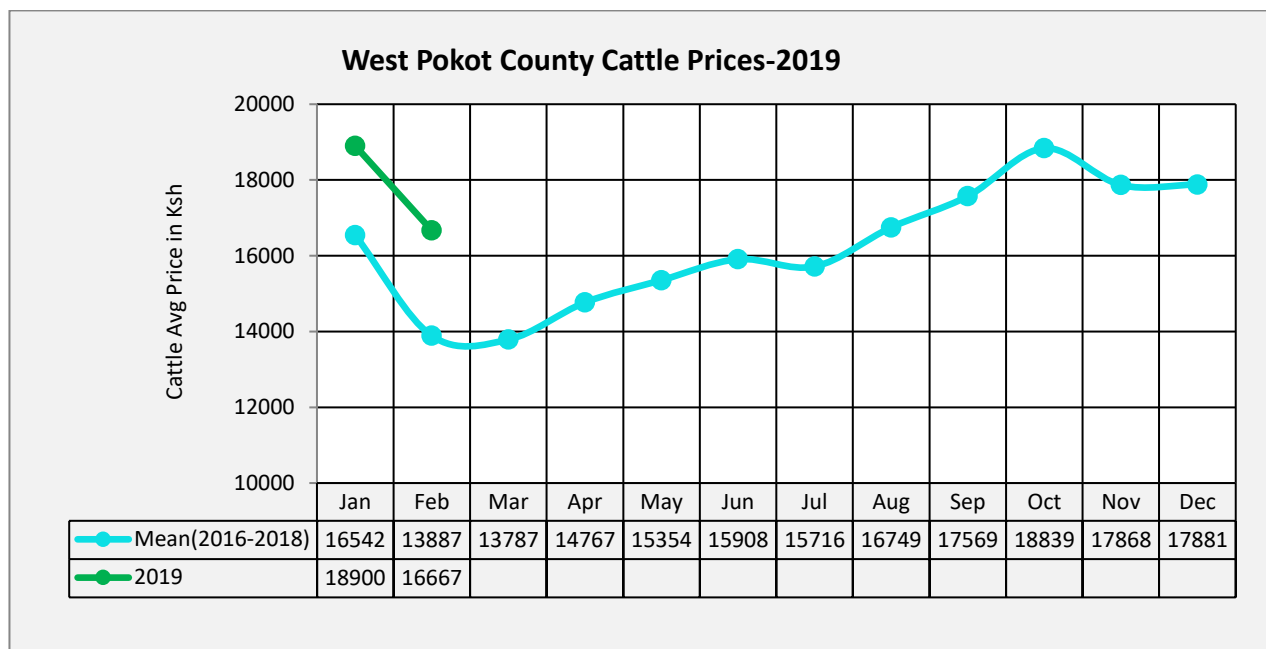
- The main crops grown include maize, beans and bulb onions. Currently farmers are cultivating farms for planting.
- Onion and mangoes production and supply to major markets including Sigor, Ortum and Lomut is at normal levels as compared to the seasonal performance.
- The harvesting of bulb onions in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

4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

4.1.1 Cattle prices

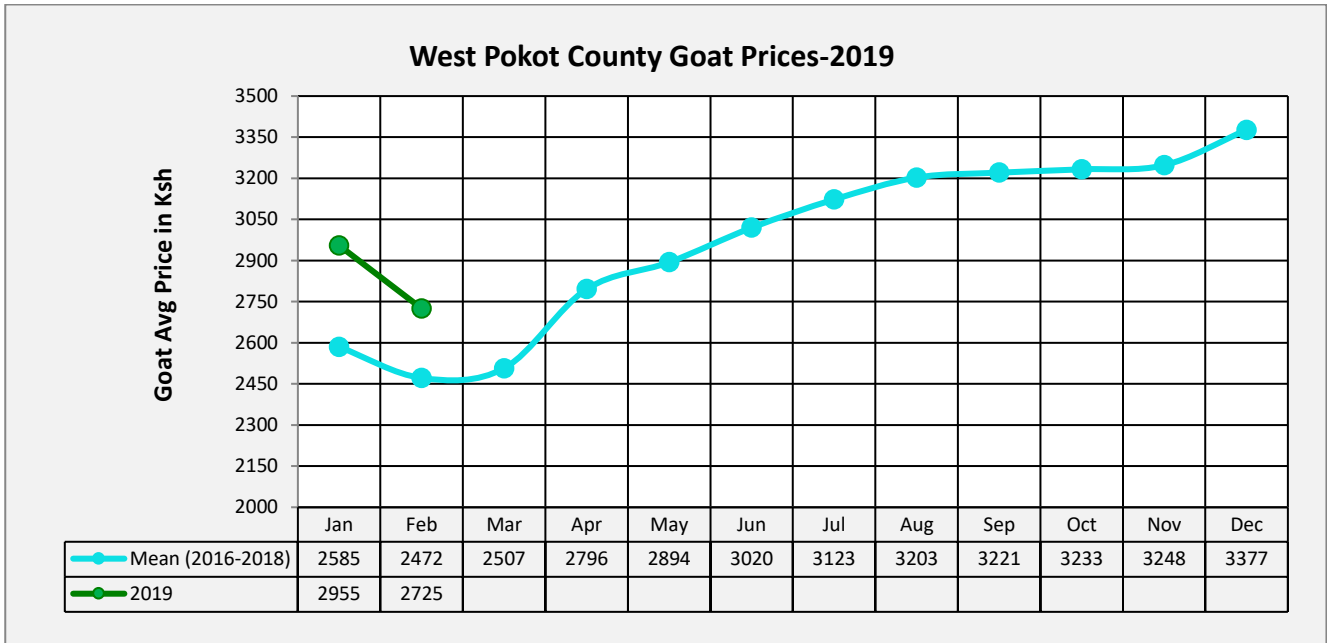
- During the month, a medium size 4-year bull was sold at an average price of Kshs 16,667, which denotes a drop in price as compared to Kshs 18,900 recorded in the previous month.



- The cattle prices decline is credited to diminishing forage condition along with poor recharge to water sources for livestock.
- The current cattle price is above the LTA price (Kshs 13,887) for the month by 20 percent.

4.1.2 Goat Prices

- The County recorded an average price for a 2-year old medium size goat of Kshs 2,725 across the livelihood zones in February. The goat price decreased from (Kshs2,955) recorded in January.

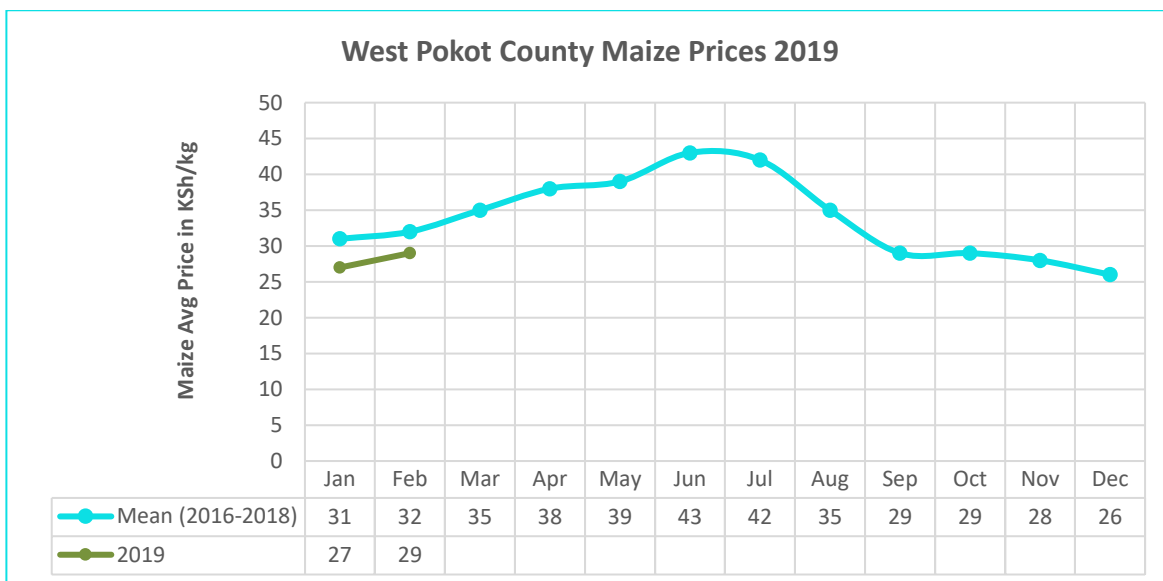


- The drop in price is attributed to worsening body condition coupled with poor forage condition and low recharge of water points within the month.
- The current price of goat is 10 percent above the LTA price for the month.

4.2 CROP PRICES

4.2.1 Maize

- The maize was sold at Kshs 29 per Kg in February, the price increased as compared to the one recorded in January (Kshs 27).
- The current price is however 9 percent below the LTA price (Ksh32).

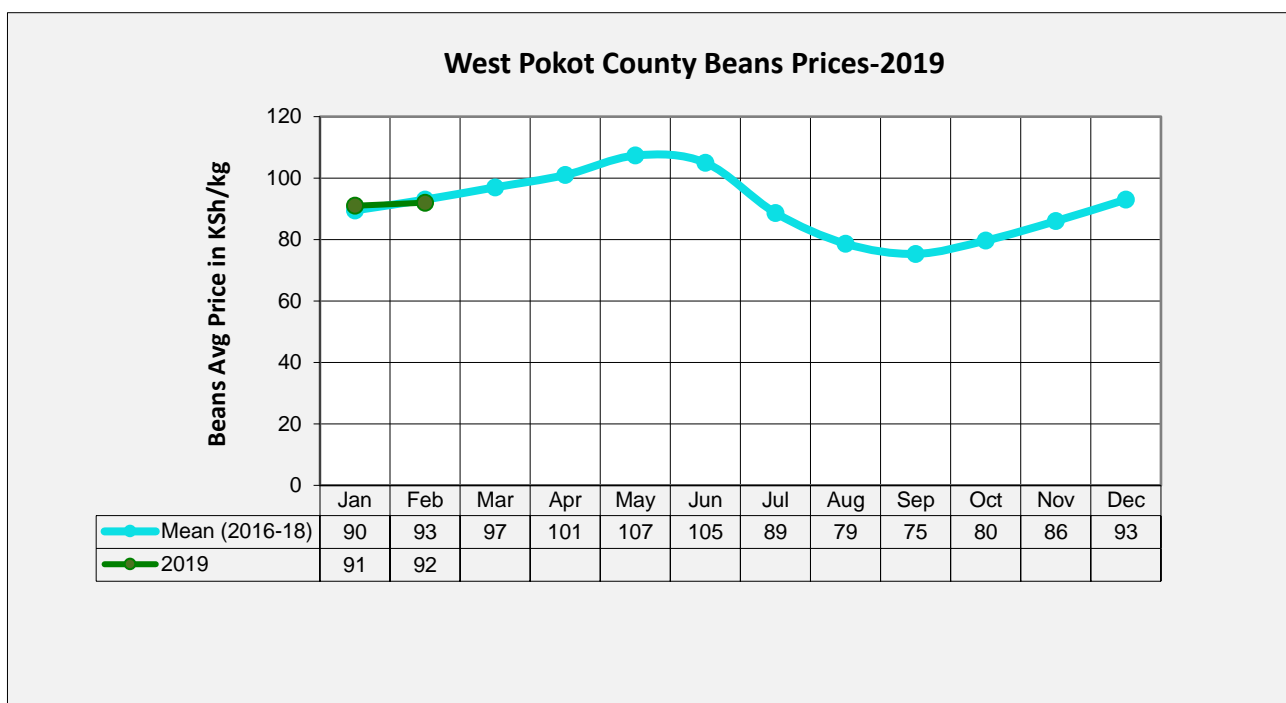


The increase is attributed to market dynamics and unstable external supply of maize from outside the county.

- Most of the households depended more on local markets to replenish their maize stocks. Maize price is projected to remain affordable due to cheap external sources (from Uganda and Trans Nzoia County), which are traditionally main suppliers to the County.

4.2.2 Beans

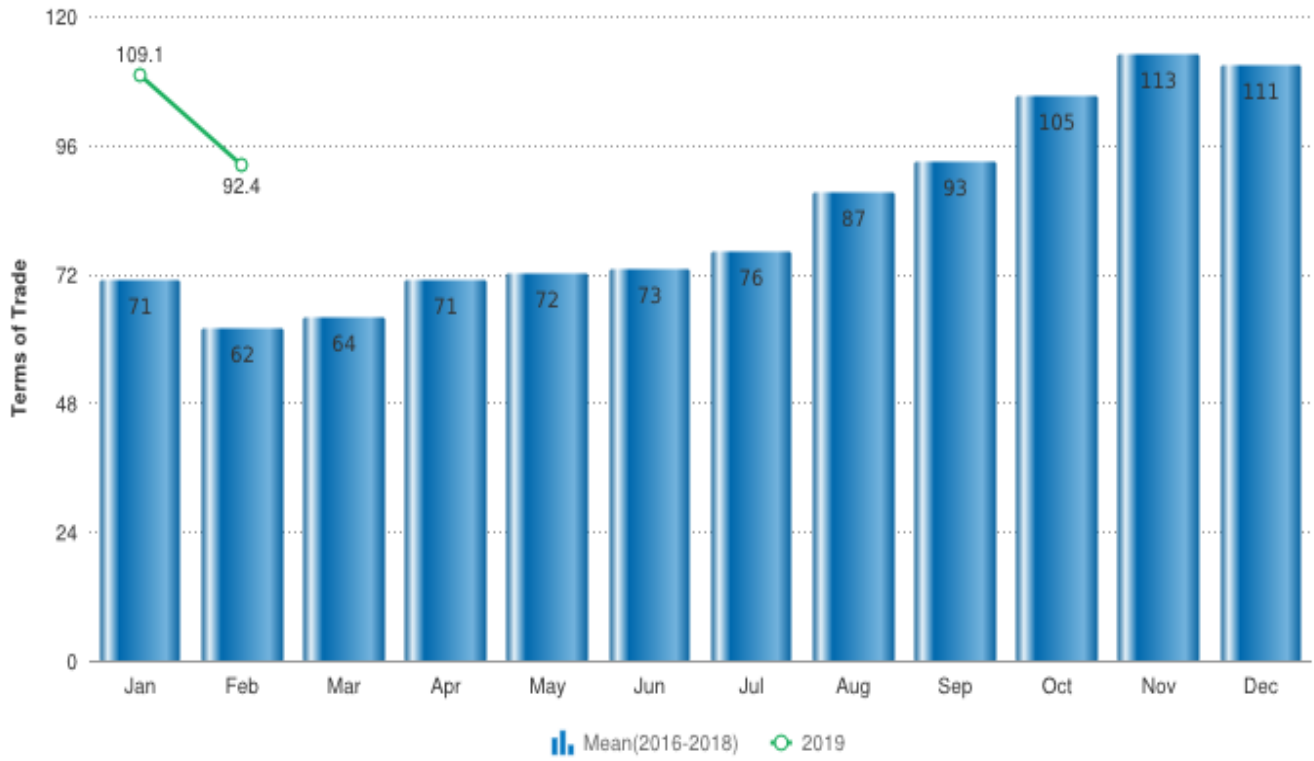
- The beans traded at Kshs 92 per kg; the price is stable compared to that recorded in January.
- The price stability is attributed to dynamic external supplies.
- There was no significant variation in price across the two livelihood zones since they both relied on the same external sources for supply.
- The current market price of beans is slightly below the LTA price (Ksh.93) for such time of the year by 0.1 percent.



4.3 LIVESTOCK PRICE RATIO/ TERMS OF TRADE (TOT)

- The Terms of Trade (TOT) was 92 in February, a sharp drop from 112 recorded in the January. The decline shows that pastoralists would obtain less maize for the sale of a goat currently than they did in the previous month.
- The decrease in ToT is credited to the decrease in goat prices along with increase in maize prices.
- The variation in TOT is projected over the next three months as the price of goat is anticipated to stabilize with the onset of long rains besides fluctuating maize prices during the same period.

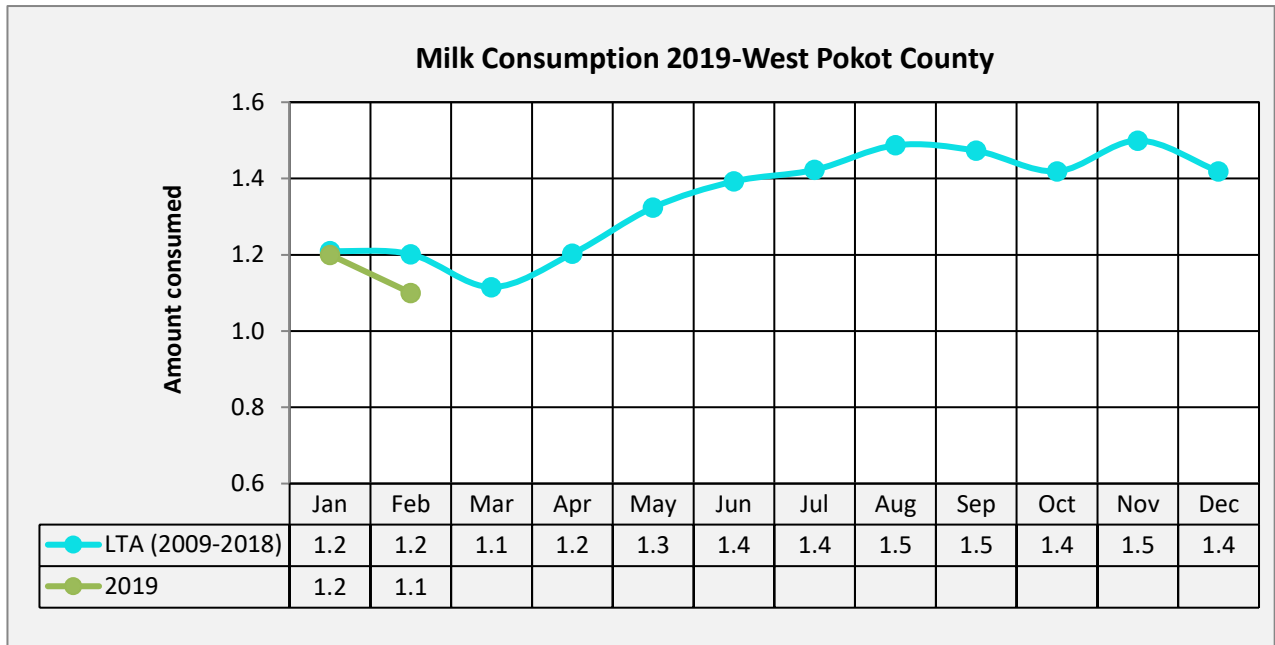
Terms of Trade - West pokot County



5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- The households across livelihood zones consumed 1.1 litres of milk on average. Milk consumption dropped as compared to the one recorded in January.



- The decline in milk consumption is as a result of the decreasing milk production caused by poor rejuvenation of forage. Milk access is still poor.
- The amount of milk consumed is below the LTA for the same period of the year.

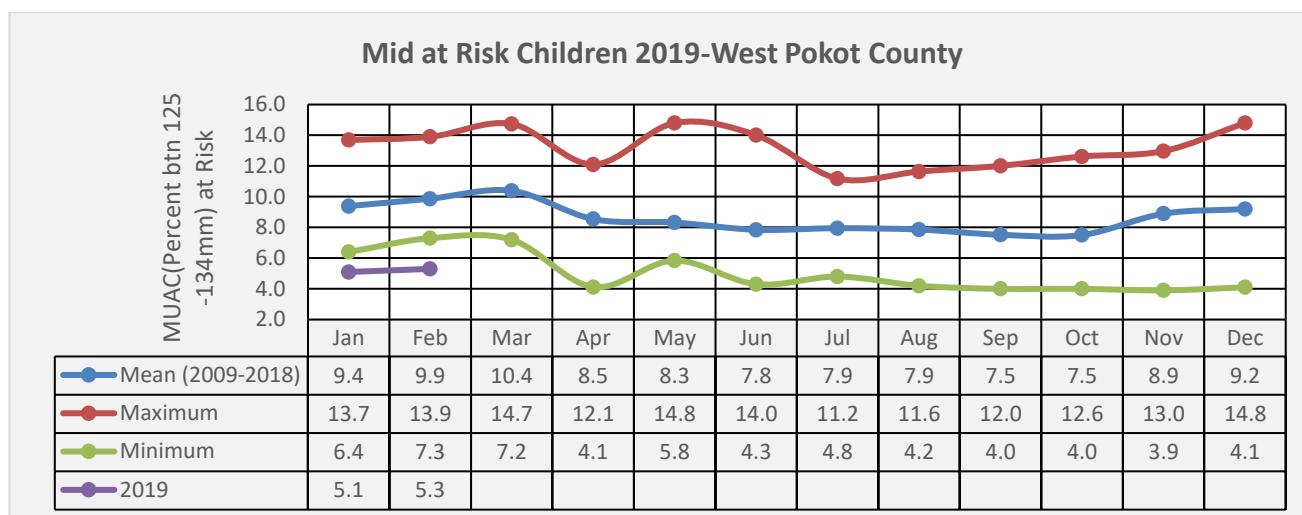
5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- The households' proportions of 61%, 26% and 13% were recorded of having Food Consumption Score (FCS) within Acceptable, Borderline and Poor categories respectively. The score decreased for the acceptable category with an increase for borderline and stability in poor categories in comparison to the previous month (69%, 18% and 13%). The FCS is acceptable within the month.
- In February, the mean FCS for the two livelihood zones in February was at 38; a decline from that recorded in January.
- There was significant variation across the two livelihood zones with for instance 39% of households in the Pastoral zone being categorized as having Acceptable FCS in comparison with 95% 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

- The proportion of 45 and 55 percent of girls and boys under 5 years respectively were sampled in February, where children rated as being ‘at risk’ of malnutrition were at 5.3 percent, up from 5.1 recorded in the previous month.
- The current proportion of children rated as being ‘at risk’ of malnutrition lies below the LTA value of 9.9 percent for the such period of the year.



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

5.3.2 Health

- During the month, Malaria cases were still commonly reported ailments among the sampled children.

5.4 COPING STRATEGY

5.4.1 Coping Strategy Index (CSI)

- The County’s CSI was at 2.4; an increase from 2.2 recorded in January. 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 zone recorded a CSI of 2.8 compared to 1.8 in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone, which is mainly attributed to better productivity in agro-pastoral areas than pastoral ones.
- The commonly employed consumption coping strategies employed by a few of the households in February included reliance on less preferred/less expensive foods.

6.0 CURRENT INTERVENTION MEASURES (ACTION)

6.1 NON-FOOD

- During the month, the County Government conducted Ring vaccination against LSD disease in Pokot Central and South Sub-Counties.

7.0 EMERGING ISSUES

7.1 INSECURITY/CONFLICT/HUMAN DISPLACEMENT

- Cattle rustling incidences were reported along Turkana/Marakwet and 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 increase, as the forage conditions are anticipated to recover with the projected onset of long rains season, resulting to improved livestock body condition thus fair livestock prices and improved access to food due to the enhanced purchasing power.
- The distance to water sources for both human and livestock is projected to decrease, with the expected long rains onset.
- Milk availability is expected to increase with the rejuvenation of pastoral resources that support livestock production. Cases of malnutrition are likely to drop over the period, as children would access more milk.
- Maize is expected to remain affordable while the price of goat projected to stabilize. As such, the terms of trade are likely to be favourable over this period.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. WATER SECTOR

- Carry out timely stock piling of fast moving spares to ensure critical water facilities remain operational.
- Silted water pans and dams need to be desilted before commencement of the long rains.

2. HEALTH AND NUTRITION SECTOR

- 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.

3. PEACE AND SECURITY

- Initiate peace meetings at conflict borders involving both parties.
- Support and sustain peace building community projects at borders to bring both sides to work together, especially peace projects at conflict hotspots.

4. LIVESTOCK SECTOR

- Encourage stock management consistent with available pasture for optimal production and productivity due to land carrying capacity and livestock stocking rate.