

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



A Vision 2030 Flagship Project



MAY EW PHASE



Drought Situation & EW Phase Classification

Biophysical Indicators

- Moderate rainfall was received across the livelihood zones during the first and second dekads of May. However, heavy rainfall was received in highlands. The temporal and spatial distribution was fair. The County remained generally cold and wet.
- The vegetation condition remained at severe vegetation deficit band, with a declining trend across livelihoods as depicted by the decrease in the Vegetation Condition Index.
- All Sub-counties recorded severe vegetation deficit except in Pokot South where moderate vegetation deficit band was recorded. Forage condition was fair during the month.

Socio Economic Indicators (Impact Indicators)

- The livestock body condition is fair, with an improving trend across the County. Distance to water sources slightly decreased.
- The terms of trade were unfavourable with a worsening trend, as maize price increased.
- Milk production and consumption at household level remained stable, albeit low.
- Majority of the households fell within the Acceptable Food Consumption Score. The Coping Strategy Index is stable.
- Malnutrition status is stable, as the proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition remained within the normal range.

Early Warning (EW) Phase Classification

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

Biophysical Indicators	Value	Normal range
VCI-3month (County)	18	>35
VCI-3month (Pokot North)	19	>35
Forage Condition	fair	Good

Production Indicators	Value	Normal range
Livestock Body Condition	Poor	Normal
Milk Production	1.2 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)	48	>71
Milk Consumption	1.0 Litres	>1.3 Litres
Return distance to water sources (household)	4.4 km	0.0-2.6km
Cost of water at source (Kshs /20 litres)	Kshs 5	<Kshs 5

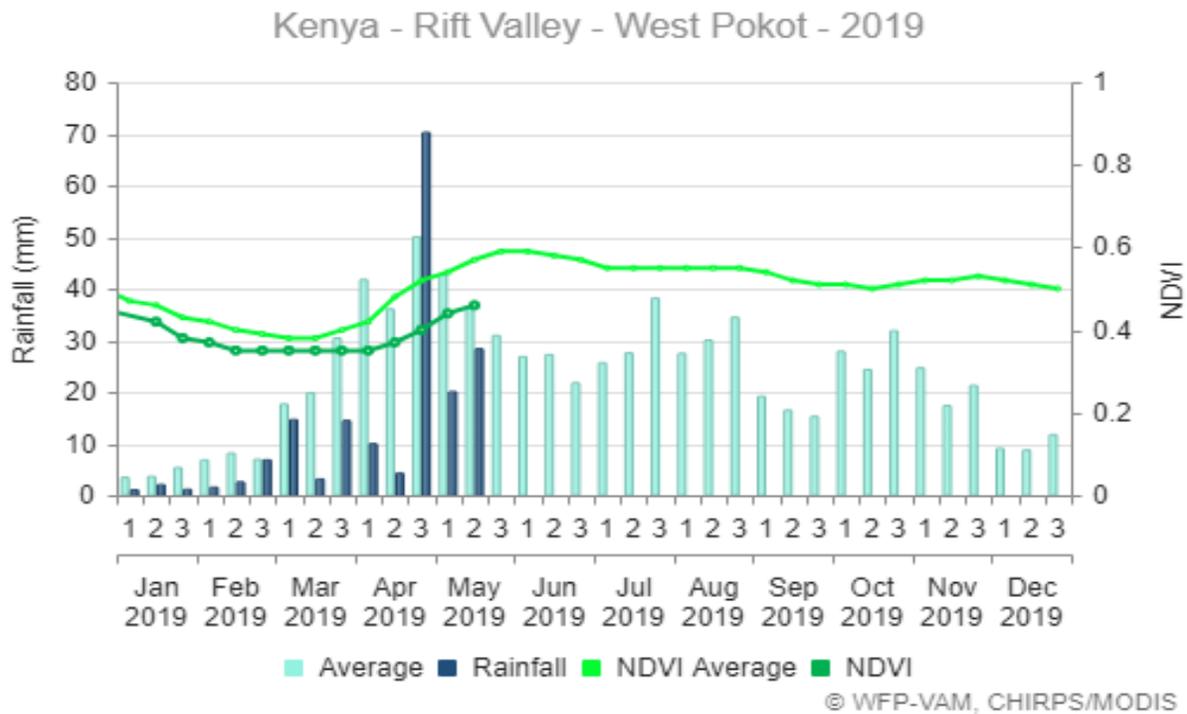
Utilization Indicators	Value	Normal range
Nutrition status, MUAC (% at risk of malnutrition)	6.1	0.0-9.6
Coping Strategy Index (CSI)	4.5	0.0-14.5
Food Consumption Score	34	>35

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

- During the month, the County received moderate precipitation in the first two dekads. The intensity was higher in the highlands than in the lowlands.
- The rainfall situation is below normal for such time of the year.



Source: VAM-World Food Programme

- The dekadal rainfall increased from 9.9 mm to 28.3 mm and 4.2 mm to 36.5 mm in the first and second dekads respectively. The amounts were however below normal.

1.2 AMOUNT OF RAINFALL AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

- In May, the spatial and temporal rainfall distribution was fair across the livelihoods, especially in the highlands. The intensity remained fair to good in all livelihood zones.
- The County was generally wet during the month.

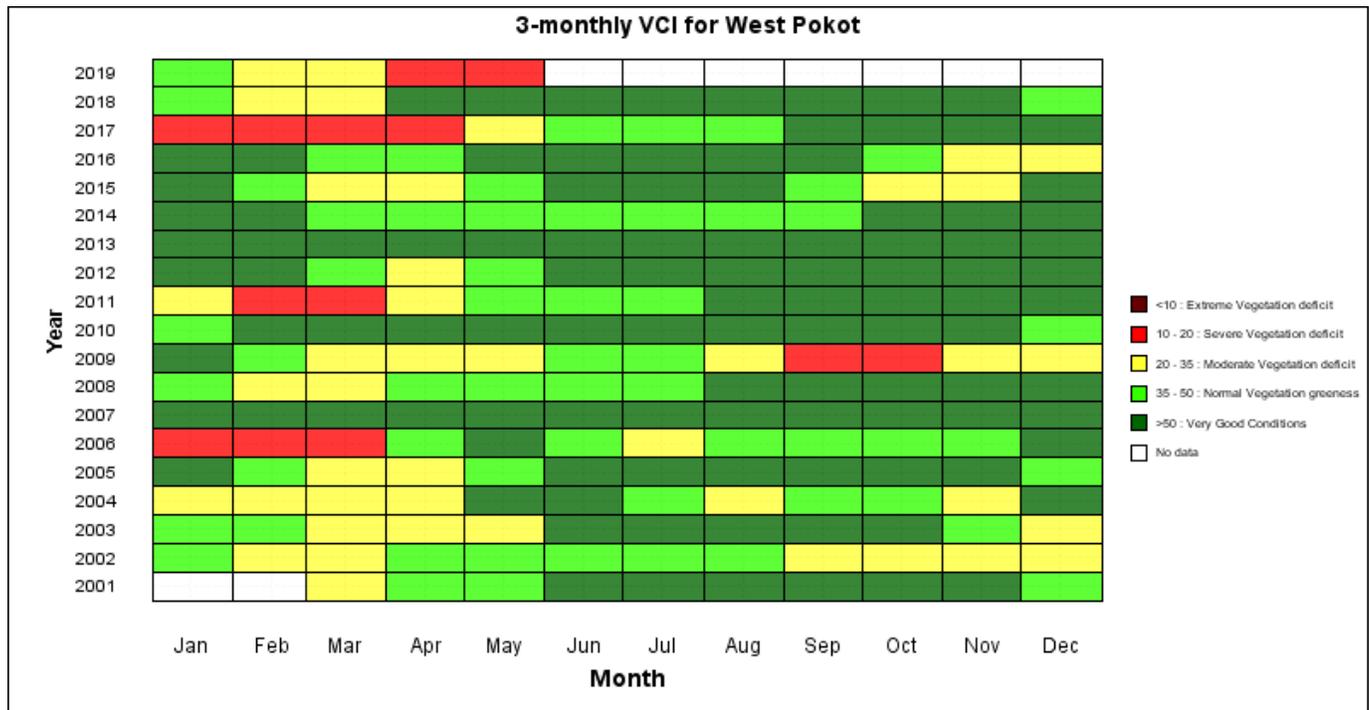
1.3 OTHER EVENTS

- No notable event was reported in 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 shows the vegetation status of the County was 18, indicating a slight decrease from 29 recorded in the previous month. The current VCI portrays a severe vegetation deficit condition.
- The VCI trend is stable across livelihoods. All sub-counties reported severe vegetation deficit except Pokot South sub-county. The decrease in VCI is from 19.4 to 19.2, 17 to 16.7 and 19 to 13 in Pokot North, Pokot West and Pokot Central Sub-counties respectively. Pokot South sub-county on the contrary, recorded an increase from 19 to 23. The downward trend in the VCI is attributed to poor rejuvenation of vegetation cover due to erratic rains in the previous month.

2.1.2 Pasture

- During the month, the proportion of sampled community which stated that pasture was poor dropped from 100 percent in April to 70 percent in May.
- Pasture condition is poor across the livelihood zones, communities reported that the condition was below normal for such time of the year. The trend is improving in comparison to the previous month, a situation credited to some moderate rains experienced during the month.
- The pasture condition is expected to regenerate with the increased rains.

- There is no significant variation in terms of pasture quality and quantity between the livelihoods.

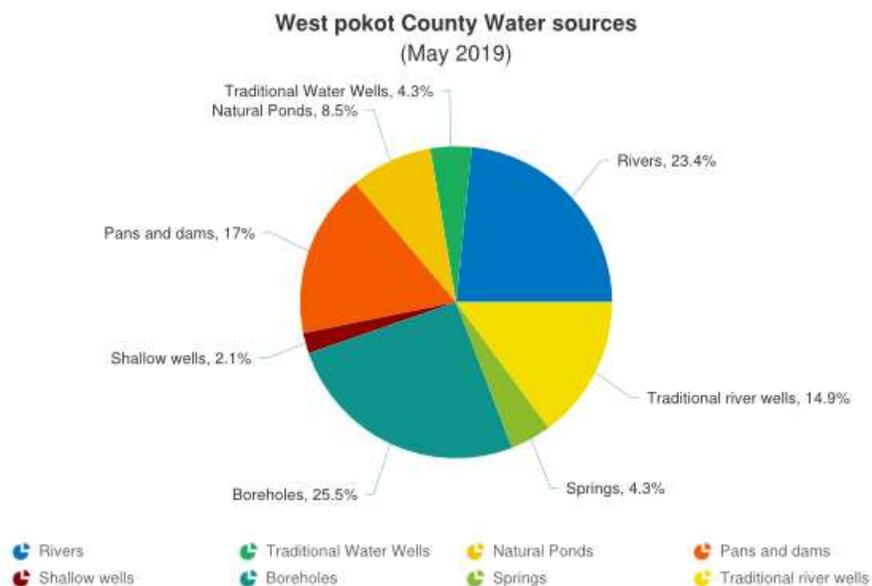
2.1.3 Browse

- In May, the proportion of the sampled community which reported that the browse situation was fair is 75 percent, representing an increase from the one recorded in April.
- The browse condition is fair across the livelihood zones, and is below normal for such period of the year. The quality of the browse condition is fair in comparison to that of April owing to erratic precipitation.
- The quantity of browse is fair across the livelihood zones and there was no significant variation between the pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones.
- The frequent flare-ups at Pokot-Marakwet/Turkana borders hinder access to the limited forage.

2.2 WATER RESOURCE

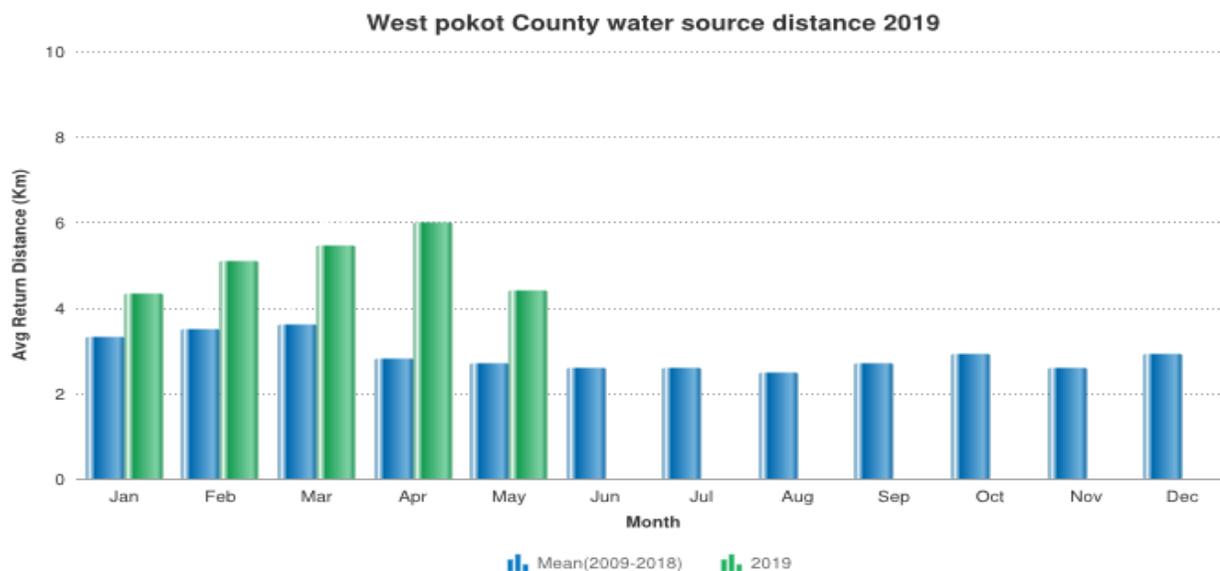
2.2.1 Sources

- The proportion of sampled population using main water sources for both households and livestock is 26 for boreholes, 23 for rivers and 17 for pan and dams. Other water sources in use include traditional water wells at 15 percent.
- There was significant water recharge to all water sources in comparison to April, due to moderate rainfall received.
- 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 May, the return distance to water source from the household was 4.4 km, a decrease from 6.0 km recorded in April. The current distance, though decreasing, is 32 percent above the Long Term Average (LTA).
- Pastoral livelihood zones recorded longer trekking distance to water source than the agro-pastoral livelihood zones. Both pastoral and agro-pastoral zones recorded fairly wet conditions. The decreasing trend in distance is attributed to moderate recharge to water sources.

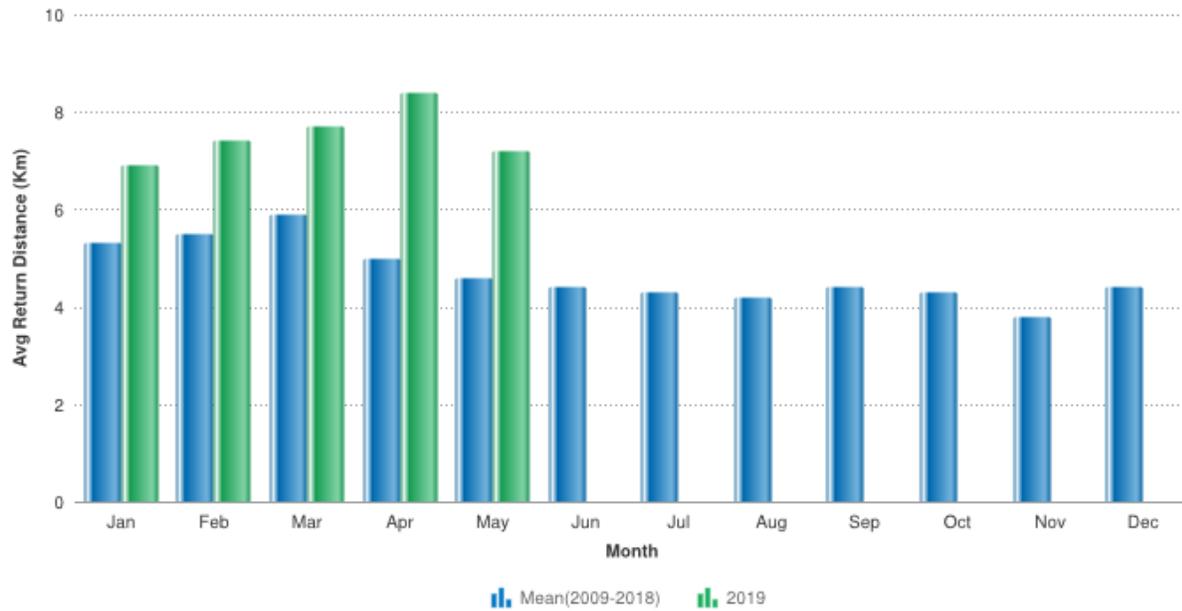


- The pastoral livelihood zones still recorded slightly more waiting time at water source than the agro-pastoral zones.
- The average household water consumption per person per day is at 7-10 litres in the pastoral zones compared to 8-11 litres in the agro-pastoral zones.
- The cost of accessing water at the source was remained free in the rural areas while in urban centres, the cost of a 20 litre Jerrican remained within normal ranges for the period.

2.2.3 Livestock Access

- The livestock return trekking distance from grazing areas to water sources was 7.2 km, signifying a decrease from 8.4 km recorded in the previous month. In comparison to the normal trekking distance of 4.6 km, the current trekking distance lies above the normal range by 36 percent.
- The pastoral livelihood zones reported longer trekking time from grazing areas to water as compared to the agro-pastoral livelihood zones.

West pokot County water source distance from grazing area - 2019



- The decrease in livestock trekking distance above is as a result of moderate rains within the pastoral zones occasioning fair recharge of the water sources.
- Frequency of watering in cattle and shoats is at 5-7 times in a week while for camel at 4-5 times in a week, similar to the previous month.

3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS

3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

3.1.1 Livestock Body Condition

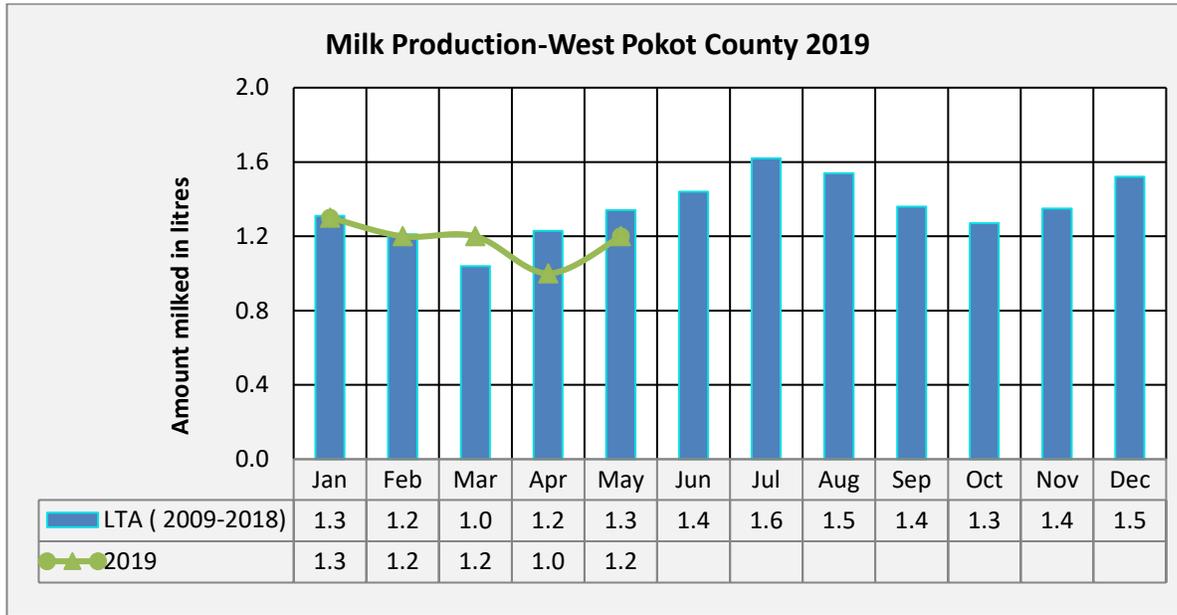
- The body condition for all livestock species still varied from fair to poor, as for the previous month in both pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones.
- The livestock body condition is expected to improve across the livelihood zones, with the ongoing moderate rains, which are expected to increase water and forage.
- The body condition is actually below normal for all livestock species in comparison to a similar period during a normal year. The trend is however stable as a result of fair forage regeneration.
- There was no significant variation in livestock body condition between the two livelihood zones.

3.1.2 Livestock Diseases

- Masol and Kapchok wards reported CCPP disease.

3.1.3 Milk Production

- In May, the County recorded production of 1.2 litres of milk per household per day on average, the amount slightly more than that of April.
- The cattle produced most milk than other livestock species.
- The current household milk production is 8 percent below the LTA for the month.
- The household stable milk production is owed to fair forage access within the traditional grazing areas.



3.2 RAIN-FED CROP PRODUCTION

3.2.1 Stage and Condition of food Crops

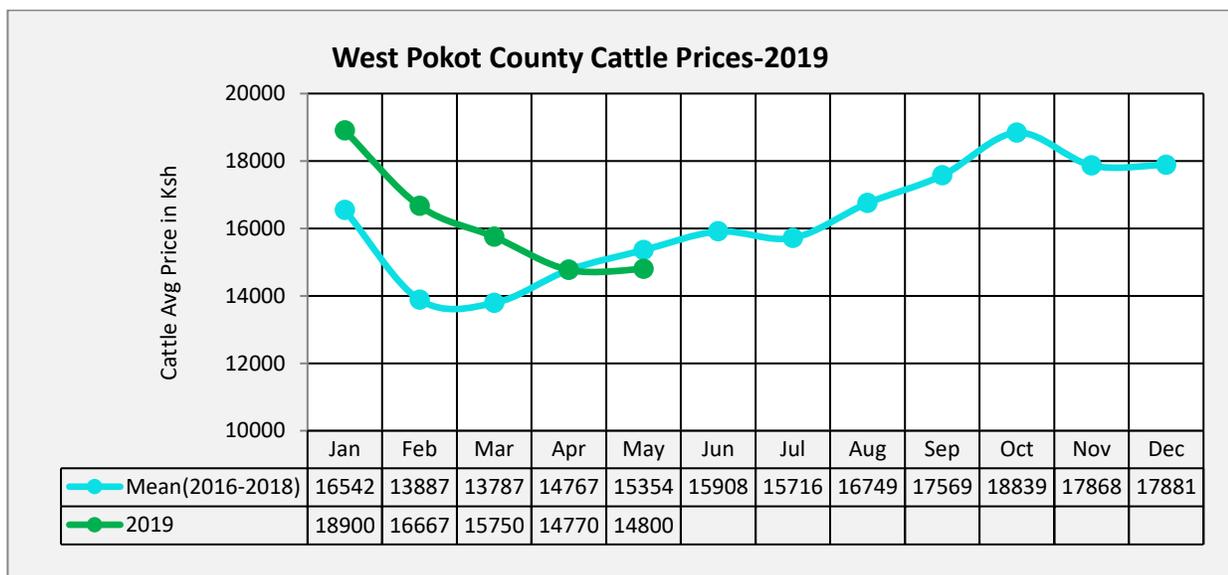
- The main crops in the County include maize, beans, potatoes and bulb onions, where majority of farmers have planted riding on the ongoing rains.
- Horticultural production and supply to major markets including Sigor, Ortum and Lomut is below normal levels compared to the seasonal performance.
- The harvesting of bulb onions in highlands is still ongoing. These are supplied to Ortum and Sigor markets for distribution to other centres within and outside the County.
- The level of farming has improved especially along the production zones of Sebit and Wakorr.

4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

4.1.1 Cattle prices

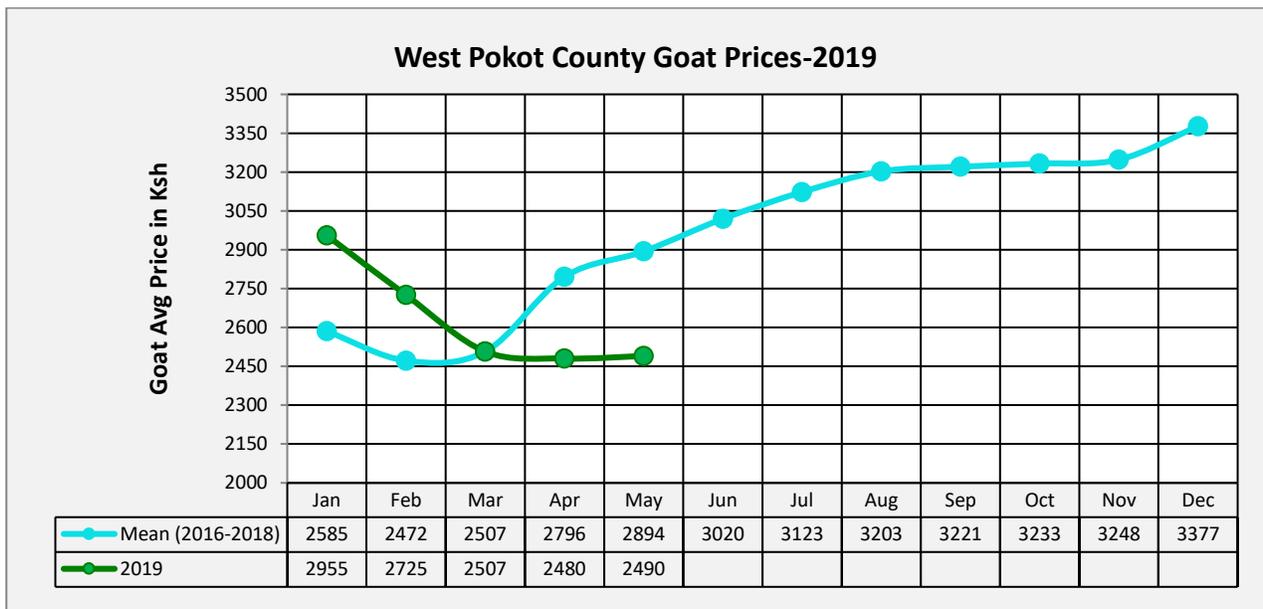
- During the month of May, the medium sized 4-year bull was sold at an average price of Kshs 14,800 which depicts stability in price as compared to Kshs 14,770 recorded in April.



- The cattle prices stability is as a result of the fair forage condition, along with moderate recharge of water sources for livestock, whose body was kept fair.
- The current cattle price is 37 percent below the long term average of the similar period.

4.1.2 Goat Prices

- The County recorded an average price of Kshs 2,490 for a 2-year old medium size goat across the livelihood zones. The goat price remained stable as compared to that of April.

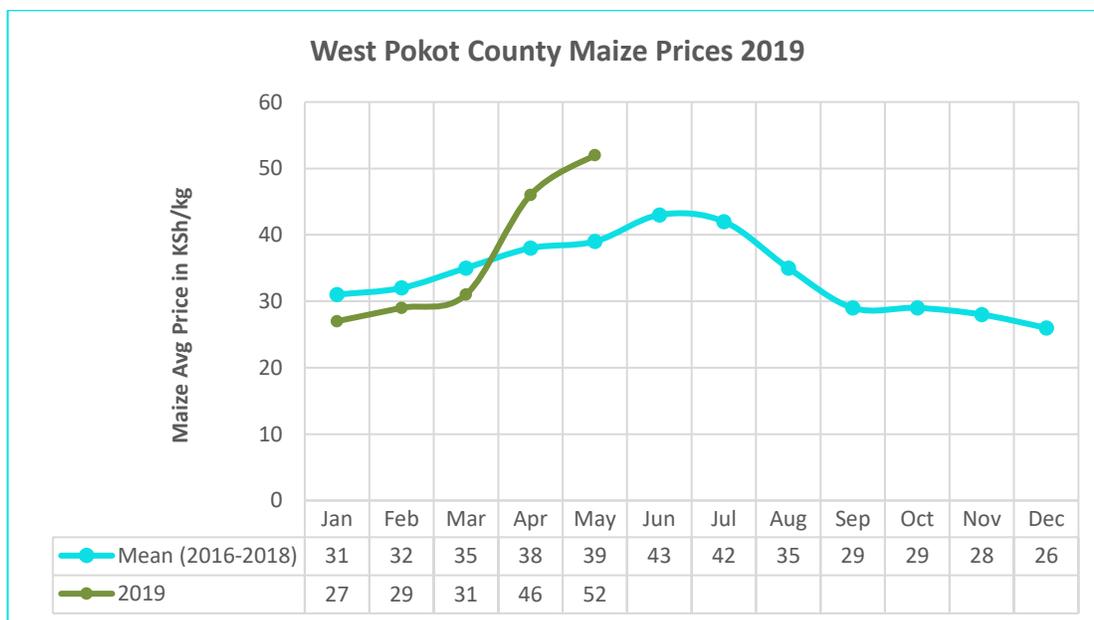


- The apparent stability in goat price is credited to improving body condition resulting from fair forage condition and significant recharge to water points.
- The current price of goat is 16 percent below LTA for the month.

4.2 CROP PRICES

4.2.1 Maize

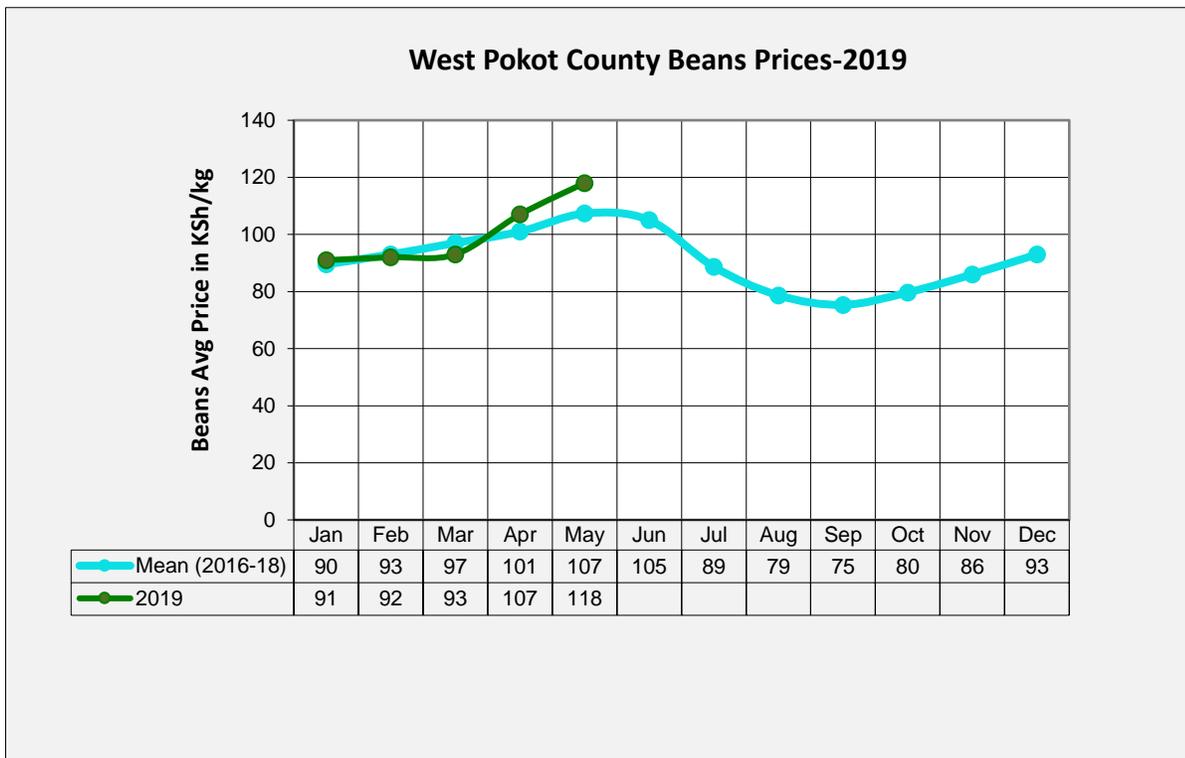
- In May, maize was sold at Kshs 52 per Kg, the price increased sharply as compared to that recorded in April (Kshs 46).
- The current price is however 33 percent above the LTA price (Ksh39).



- The increasing price is still credited 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.
- Most households depend more on local market purchase to replenish their maize stocks. Maize price is anticipated to be more affordable due ongoing rains and stabilizing livestock prices.

4.2.2 Beans

- The beans traded at Kshs 118 per kg in May, representing an increase as compared to the price in April (Kshs 107).
- The increase in price is credited 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 beans price is above the LTA price (Kshs 107) for such time of the year by 9 percent.



4.3 LIVESTOCK PRICE RATIO/TERMS OF TRADE (TOT)

- In May, the Terms of Trade (TOT) was at 48, a decrease from 54 recorded in April. The decline implies that pastoralists would acquire less maize for the sale of a goat currently than they did in the April.
- The drop in ToT is attributed to relatively low goat prices, against the rising maize prices.
- The TOT variation is projected over the next three months as the price of goat is likely to improve with the ongoing rains.

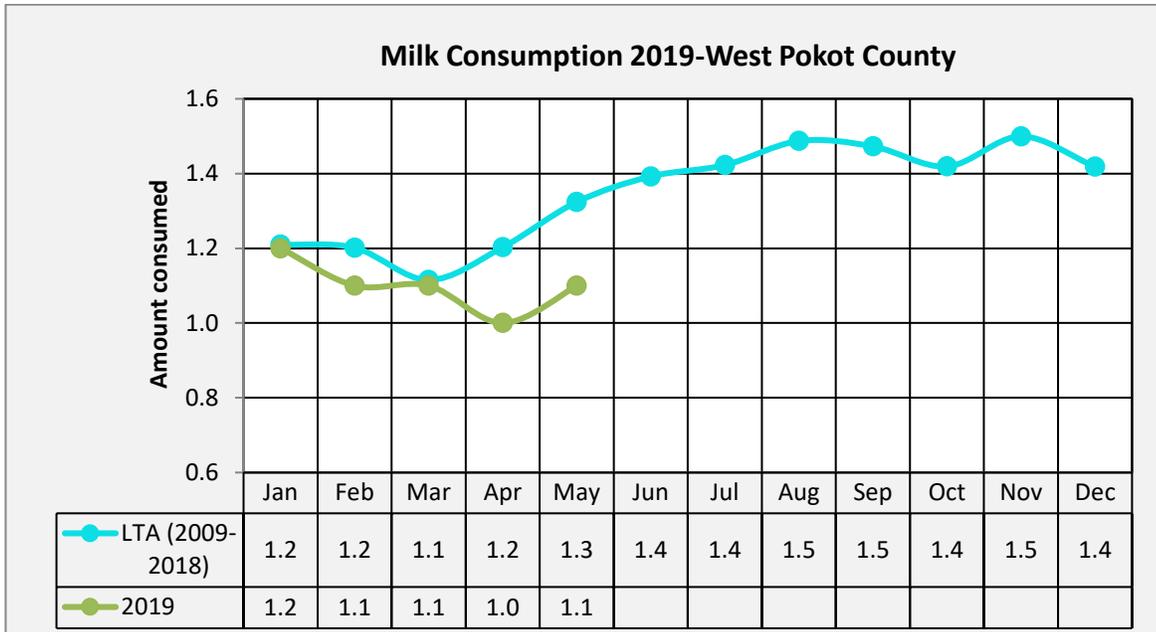
Terms of Trade - West pokot County



5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- During the month, households across the livelihood zones consumed 1.1 litres of milk on average, a slight increase from the one recorded in the previous month (1.0).



- The improving milk consumption is owed to the stable milk production arising from fair forage regeneration. Generally, milk access was fair.
- The amount of milk consumed is below the LTA for the same period of the year.

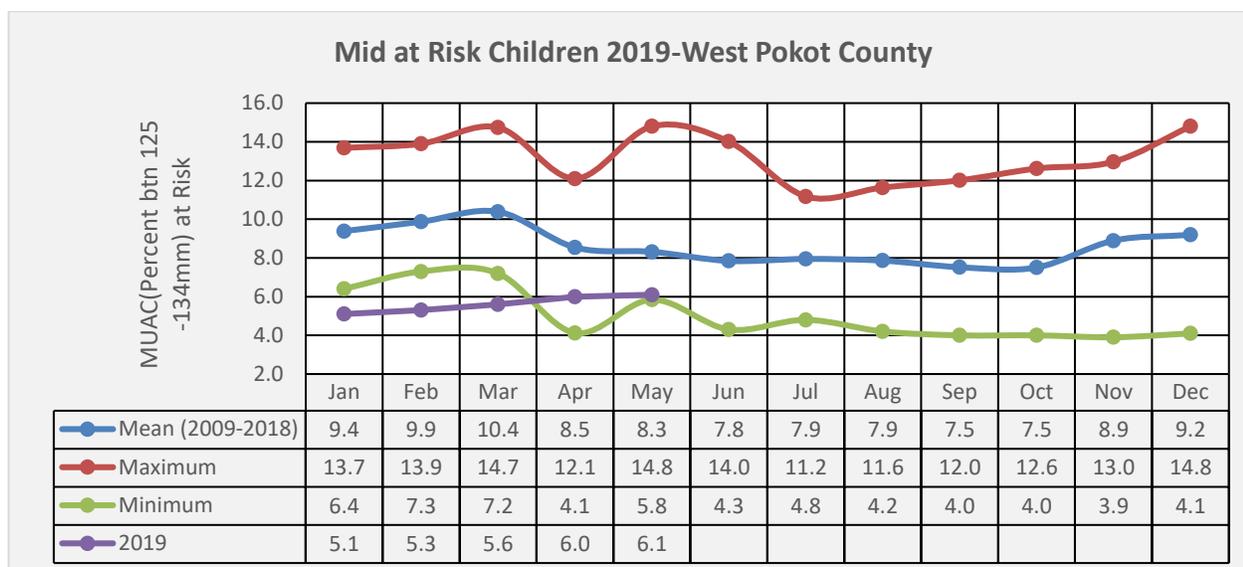
5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- The households' proportions of 65%, 19% and 16% were recorded of having Food Consumption Score (FCS) within Acceptable, Borderline and Poor categories respectively. The score increased for both the Acceptable and Borderline categories, as for the poor category decreased in comparison to the previous month. The FCS is generally, acceptable in May.
- The mean FCS for the two livelihood zones remained at 34 in May; same as that recorded in the previous month.
- There was significant variation between the two livelihood zones with for instance 93 % of households in the agro-pastoral zone being categorized as having acceptable FCS compared to 47% households under the same category in the 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

- In May, the proportion of 45 and 55 percent of girls and boys under 5 years respectively were sampled, where children rated as being 'at risk' of malnutrition were at 6.1 percent; a slight increase from 6 recorded in April.
- The current proportion of children rated as being 'at risk' of malnutrition lies below the LTA value of 8.3 percent for the such period of the year.



- The malnutrition status is stable among the under-fives due to fair milk consumption and access at household level. These were the key reasons for the stable trend in number of children 'at risk' of malnutrition.

5.3.2 Health

- The commonly reported ailments among the sampled children were Malaria and Typhoid.

5.4 COPING STRATEGY

5.4.1 Coping Strategy Index (CSI)

- The CSI for the County remained at 4.5 in May; same as that of April. The stability demonstrates that households employed same level of strategies to cope, which could be linked to unsteady food commodity availability and dynamic prices in the markets.
- Both the pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones recorded a CSI of 4.5.
- The commonly employed consumption coping strategies by a few of the households in May 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.

7.0 EMERGING ISSUES

7.1 INSECURITY/CONFLICT/HUMAN DISPLACEMENT

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

7.2 MIGRATION

- Normal migrations were reported during the month.

7.3 FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS

- Maize prices are projected to decline as that of goat anticipated to stabilize, whereby the terms of trade are likely to be favourable over this period.
- The distance to water sources for both human and livestock is expected to decrease, with the ongoing rains.
- The livestock productivity is expected to recover, as the forage conditions are anticipated to be restored with the ongoing rains, resulting to enhanced livestock body condition hence higher livestock prices and better access to food owed to the improved purchasing power.
- Milk availability is projected to improve with the regeneration of pastoral resources that support livestock production as rains are expected to invigorate pasture and water. Malnutrition cases are likely to drop within the period, as children would access more milk.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. WATER SECTOR

- Capacity build the community on water harvesting and storage techniques
- Provide water treatment chemicals to check on the waterborne cases.

2. LIVESTOCK SECTOR

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

3. PEACE AND SECURITY

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

4. 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 avoid the risk of water borne diseases outbreak.