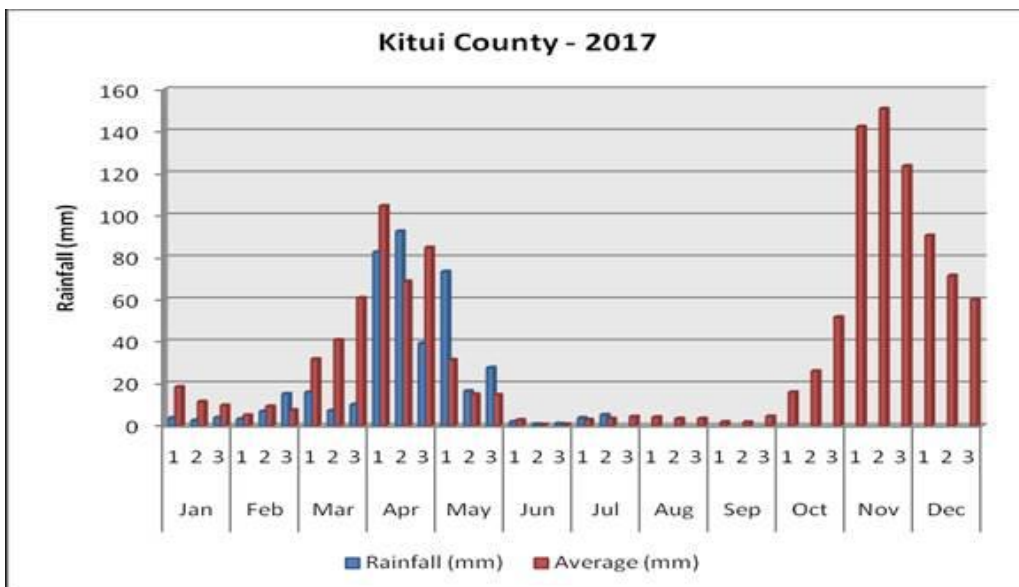


1.0 CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

1.1 RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

- Generally, the month of July was dry in-exception of light showers which were reported in sections of Mixed Farming livelihood zone and this is normal at this time of the year as shown in the figure below.



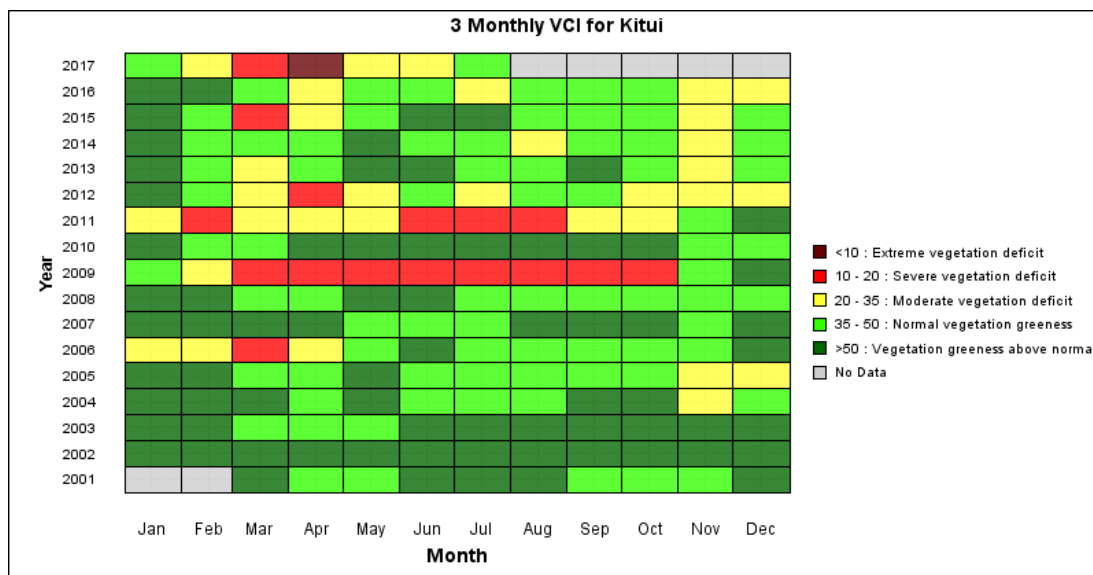
Source: WFT-VAM

2.0 IMPACTS ON VEGETATION AND WATER

2.1 VEGETATION CONDITION

2.1.1 Vegetation Condition Index (VCI)

- The vegetation greenness in the county was normal as indicated by 3 month VCI of 39.87. The situation was better in Kitui Central and Kitui West sub counties which recorded above normal 3 month VCI of 60.92 and 60.78 respectively.
- Mwingi central and Kitui East Sub Counties had moderate vegetation deficit as indicated by a 3 month VCI of 31.12 and 32.64 respectively. These particular sub counties received minimal rainfall during the long rains.



2.1.2 Field Observations (Pasture and Browse Condition)

2.1.2.1 Pasture

- The pasture quantity and quality conditions ranged from poor to fair across the livelihood zones. Mixed Farming (MF) livelihood zones had fair pasture condition while that in the Marginal Mixed Farming (MMF) livelihood zone was poor.
- On average, 69 percent of pasture was regarded as fair in July. The remaining 31 percent of pasture was poor.
- Nuu, Nguni, Mui, Ngomeni, Voo/ Kyamatu, Kanyangi, Endau/ Malalani and Kivou wards were among the areas which had pasture deficit compared to the rest of the wards in county.
- The available pasture condition is expected to last for 1-2 months. Currently, the condition is unusual at this time of the year.

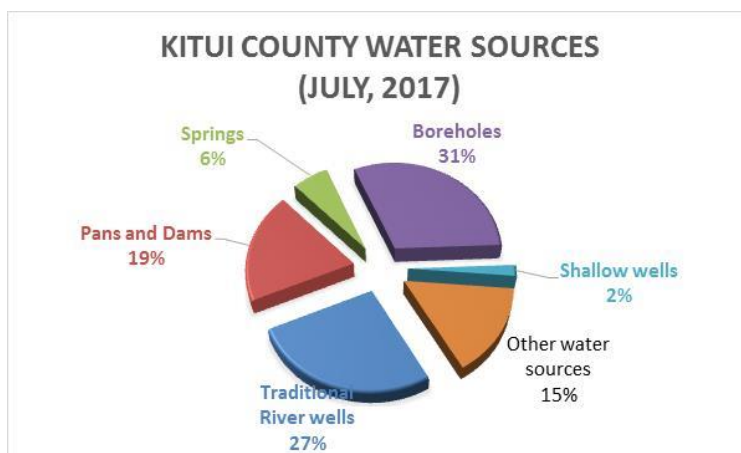
2.1.2.2 Browse

- The browse quantity and quality conditions ranged from poor to fair across the livelihood zones in the county. Mixed Farming livelihood zones had fair browse compared to poor/ fair browse in the Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zones.
- On average, 87 and 13 percent of browse was regarded as fair and poor respectively.
- The available browse is expected to last for between 2-3 months in Mixed Farming livelihood zone and 1-2 months in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone.

2.2 WATER RESOURCE

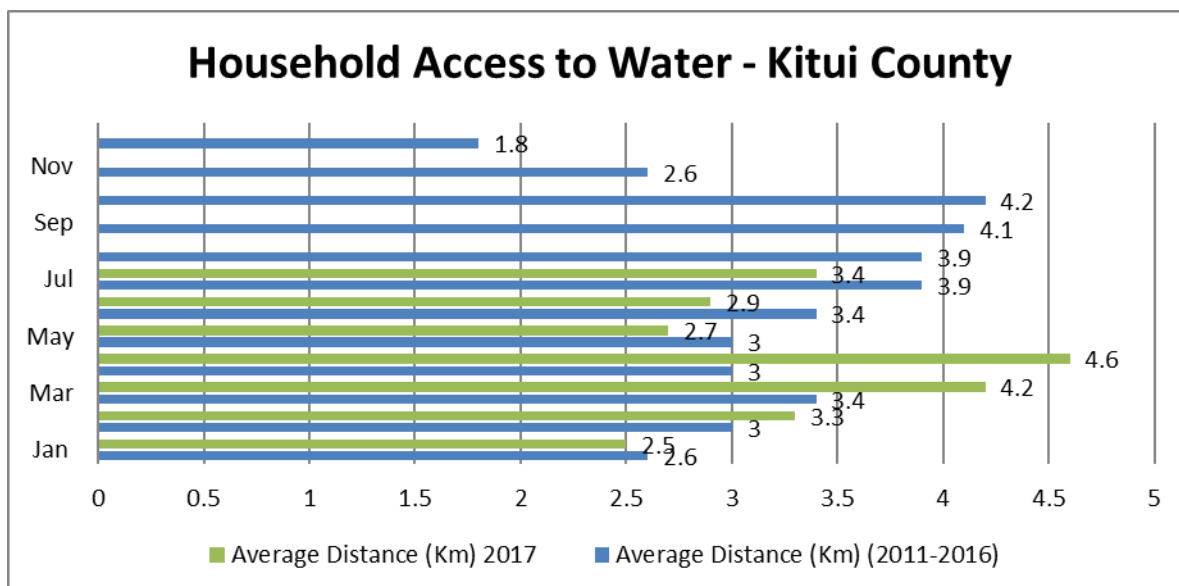
2.2.1 Sources

- The main water sources used by both human and livestock were boreholes, traditional river wells and pans & dams at 31, 27 and 19 percent respectively as shown in the figure and this is normal at this time of the year.
- Other water sources were piped water, spring, rock catchments and shallow wells.
- Although there were no alarming cases of water borne disease outbreaks reported in the county, concentration of livestock around few water points might lead to spread of communicable diseases.



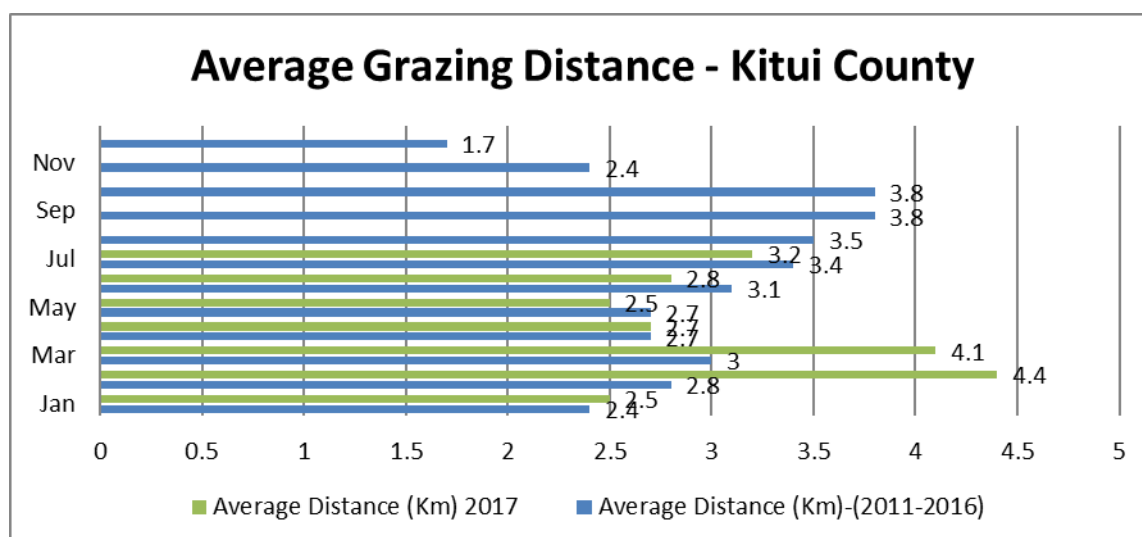
2.2.2 Household Access and Utilization

- The average return distances from the households to water sources significantly increased from 2.9km in the previous month to 3.4km in July and this was mainly attributed to low recharge and prevailing dry spell.
- A higher return distance of 4km was reported in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone compared to 2.8km in Mixed Farming livelihood zone. Exceptional return distances of above 10km were reported in Endau/Malalani, Nuu, Nguni, Ngomeni and Ikutha wards.
- The trend is below normal and within the expected range at this particular time of the year as shown in the figure below.



2.2.3 Livestock Access

- Livestock average return distances to grazing areas marginally increased to 3.2km in July from 2.8km in June. The distance varied across the livelihood zones with Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone recording a higher distance of 4km compared to 2.4km in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The increase in grazing distances was attributed to depletion of the nearby water sources and pastures/ browses thereby prompting livestock to search for these commodities elsewhere far from home.
- Livestock were watered once in two days in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone and daily in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current average grazing distance is normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



2.3 Implication to Food Security

- Although existing pasture/browse and water will sustain livestock productivity for the next 2 months hence stabilizing the food security situation, increasing trekking distances and concentration of livestock around the few remaining water points are likely to impact negatively on the food security.

3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS

3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

3.1.1 Livestock Body Condition

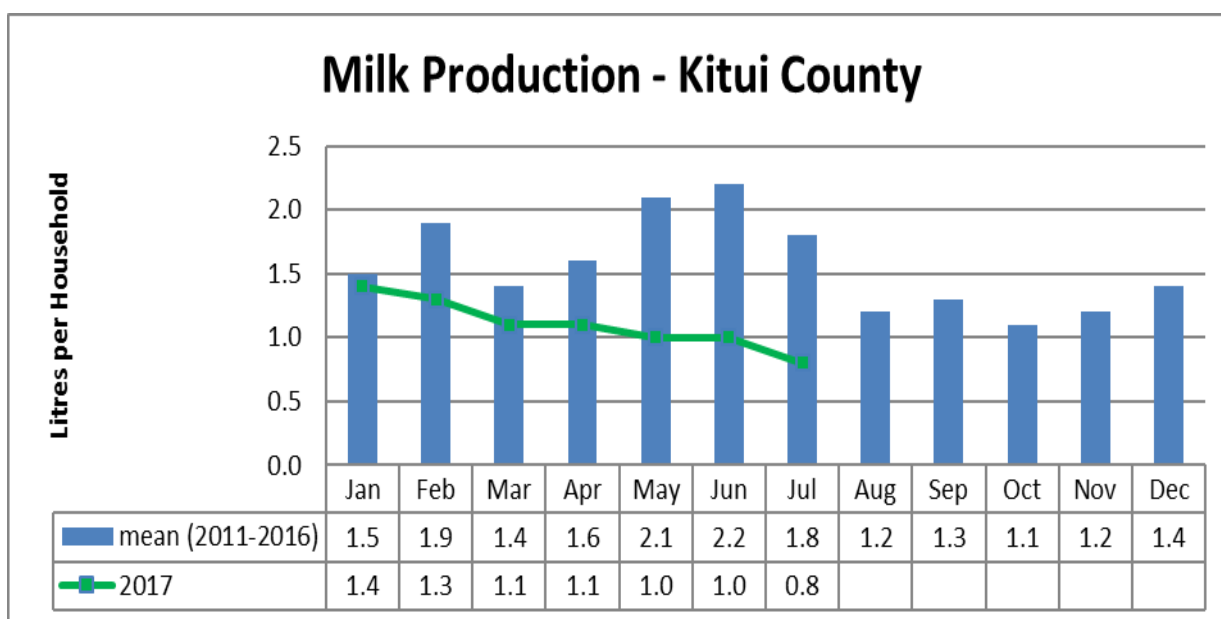
- The livestock body conditions ranged from fair to good across the livelihood zones in the county.
- Majority of livestock (41 percent) had moderate; neither fat nor thin body condition. The remaining 34 and 25 percent of livestock had borderline and good body condition respectively.
- These conditions were mainly attributed to increased distances to water sources, pasture and browse.

3.1.2 Livestock Diseases

- No notifiable livestock pest and disease outbreak were in the county.

3.1.3 Milk Production

- The average daily milk production per household marginally decreased to 0.8 litres across the livelihood zones in the county. This was 0.2 litres less than the daily amount of milk produced in the previous month and 1 litre less than the amount produced in the region at this particular time of the year. This was mainly attributed to deteriorating pastures/ browses condition and increasing livestock trekking distances.
- Milk production was mainly enhanced in Mixed Farming Livelihood zone (represented by Kwa Vonza/Yatta ward) at 2.4 litres per household per day compared to Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone (Nuu ward) at 0.5 litres per household per day.
- The current milk production per household is below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



3.2 RAIN-FED CROP PRODUCTION

3.2.1 Stage and Condition of Food Crops

- Maize, millet, sorghum, beans, cow peas, pigeon peas and green grams are the main crops grown in the county.
- Minimal harvest of maize, millet, sorghum, cow peas, pigeon peas and green grams was ongoing. However, poor harvest (approximately 30 percent of the normal production) is expected across the livelihood zones.
- Most areas, total crop failure is expected in Nguni, Nuu, Ngomeni, Athi, Ikutha and Endau / Malalani wards whereby crops never germinated due to moisture stress.

3.3 Implication of the Above Indicators to Food Security

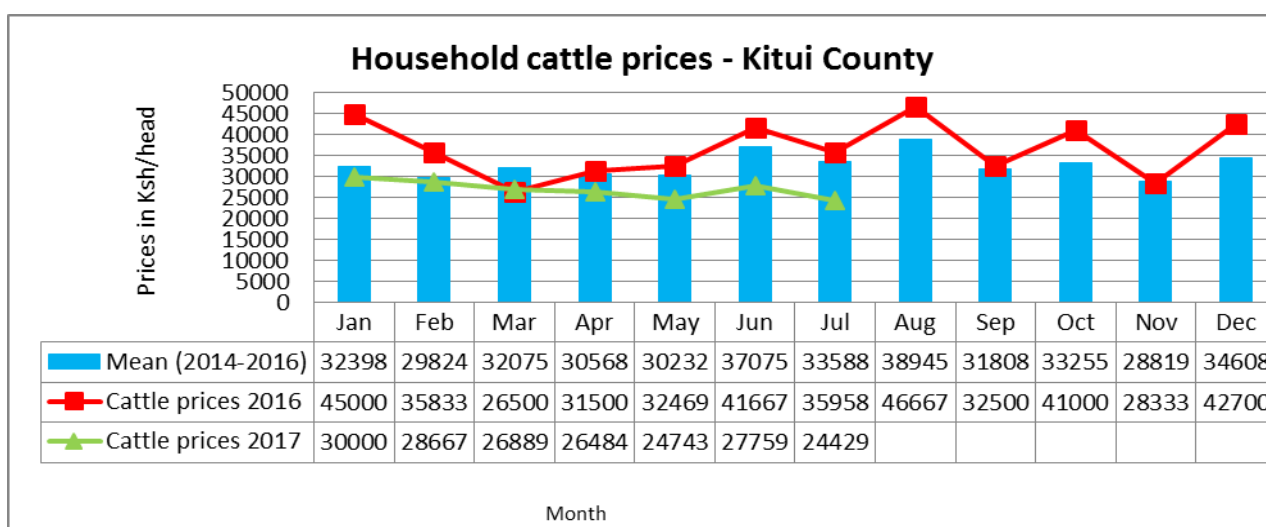
- Massive crop failure and decline in livestock productivity might lead to reliance of market for basic commodities hence a rise in price of basic commodities which might have a negative impact on the food security.

4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

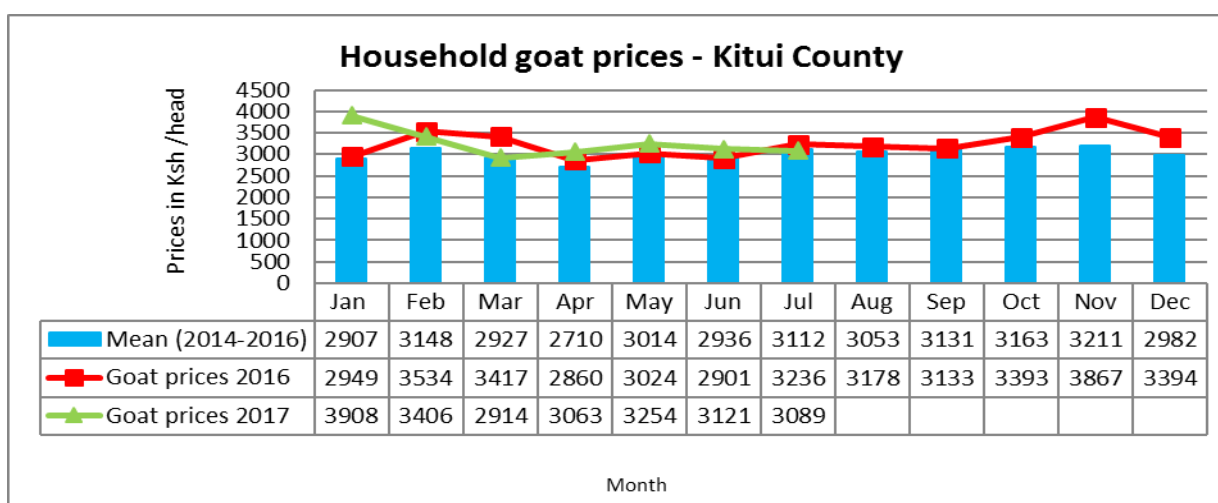
4.1.1 Cattle Prices

- The average cattle prices per household decreased to Ksh.24,429 in July from Ksh.27,759 in June. The decrease in price was mainly attributed to high supply of cattle in the livestock markets due to reduced alternative household income sources.
- A higher average price of Ksh.25,800 was recorded in Mixed Farming livelihood zone compared to Ksh.22,846 in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current price of cattle is below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



4.1.2 Small Ruminants Prices (Goat price)

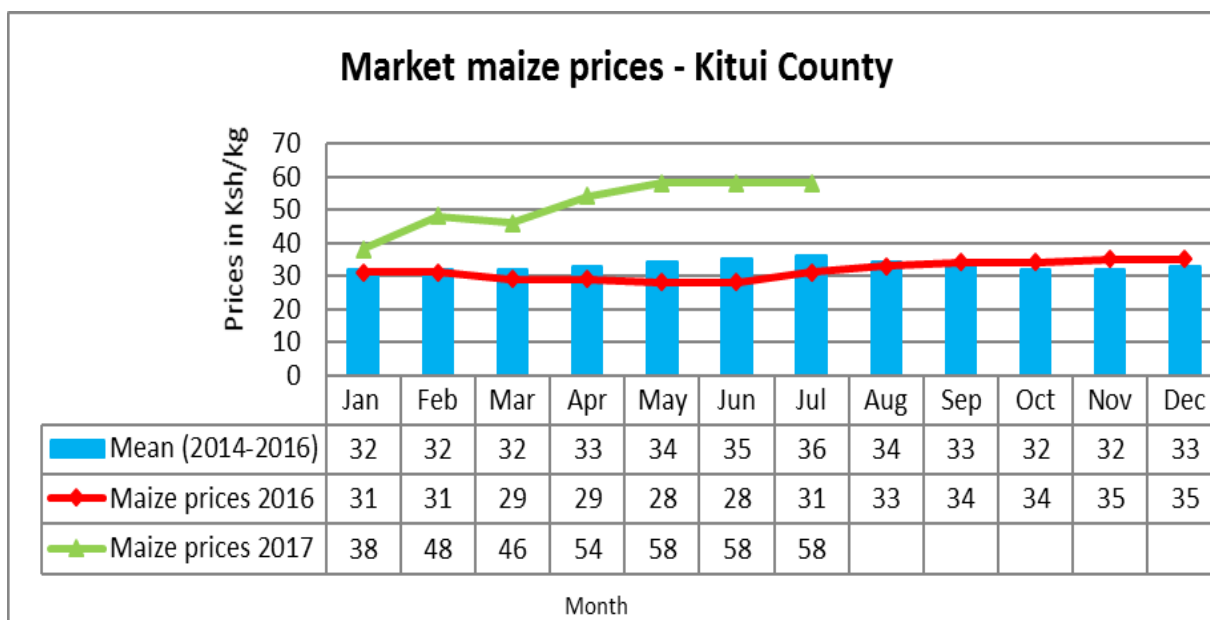
- The average household goat prices declined to Ksh.3,058 in July from Ksh.3,121 in June. Goat prices were higher in Mixed Farming livelihood zone at Ksh.3,500 compared to Ksh.2,615 in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- An average goat was sold at Ksh.4,000 in Mwingi and Kithyoko markets compared to Ksh.2,500 in Endau, Mutha and Nuu markets.
- The current goat price is below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



4.2 CROP PRICES

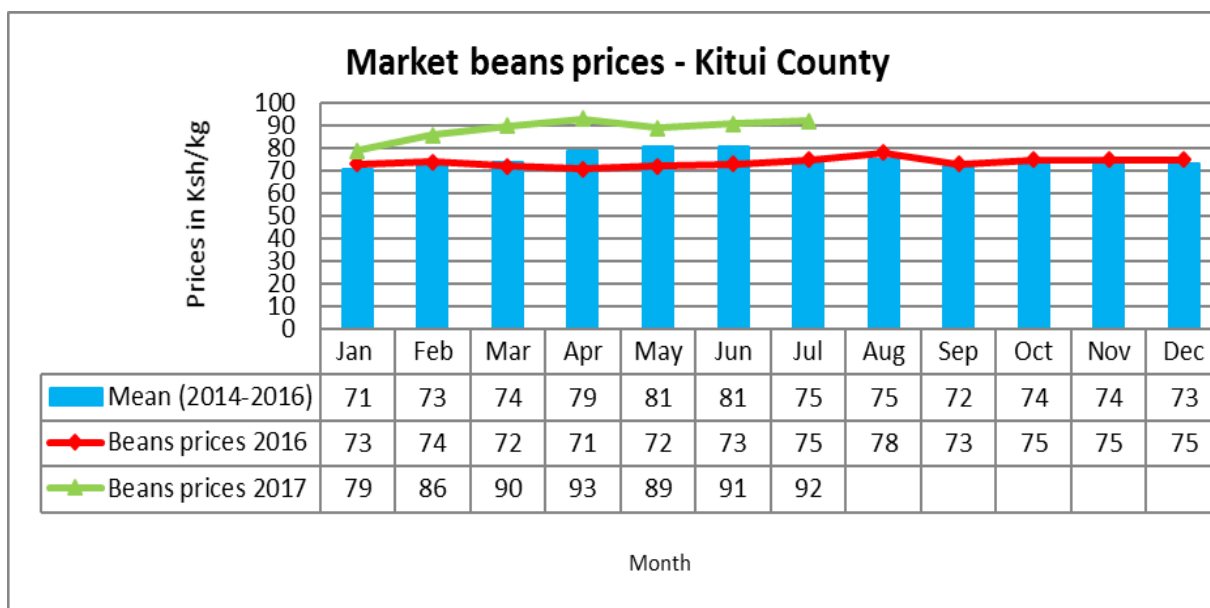
4.2.1 Maize

- The average maize price has remained stable since May at Ksh.58 per kilogram.
- The current maize price is Ksh.22 higher than the long term mean price and this is mainly attributed to a rise in the commodity from the source markets in parts of Rift Valley and Western Kenya and also high demand of the commodity from the local markets.



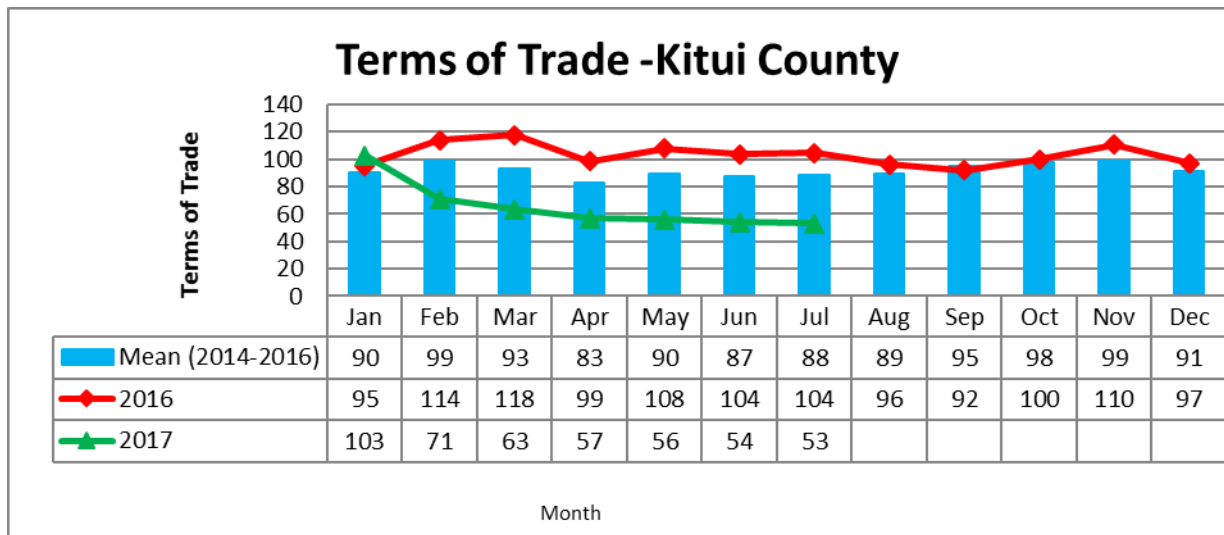
4.2.3 Beans

- The average beans price remained stable at Ksh.92 in July from Ksh.91 in June. The prices were higher in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone at Ksh.95 compared to Ksh.89 in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current beans price is above normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below and this was mainly attributed to poor crop harvest realized in most parts of the county.



4.2 Livestock Price Ratio/ Terms of Trade

- Terms of trade were unfavourable at a value of 53 in July compared to 54 in June. This implies that, the earnings from a sale of a goat could purchase 53kgs of maize in July compared to 54kgs in June.
- The current terms of trade are below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



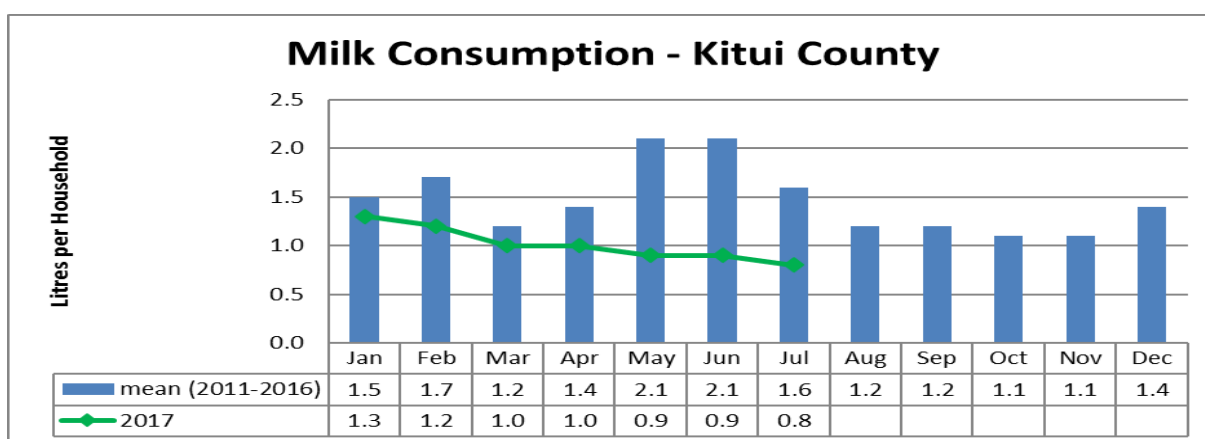
4.3 Implication of the Above Indicators to Food Security

- Household purchasing power is projected to continue worsening following declining livestock prices and increasing crop prices. This might have a negative impact on food security.

5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

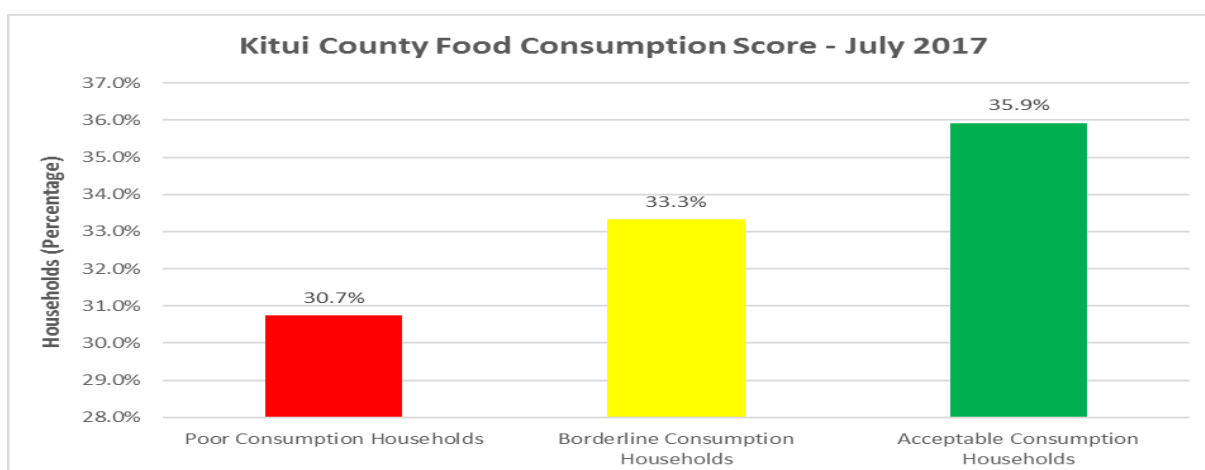
5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- The average daily household milk consumption marginally decreased to 0.8 litres in July from 0.9 litres in June. This was the 0.1 litres less than the average amount consumed in the previous month and 0.8 litres less than the amount consumed in a normal year.
- Milk consumption was higher in Kitui West Sub County at 1.2 litres and lower in Mwingi West Sub County at 0.8 litres.
- The current milk consumption is below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.
- The rate of consumption is projected to continue decreasing as the dry spell progresses.



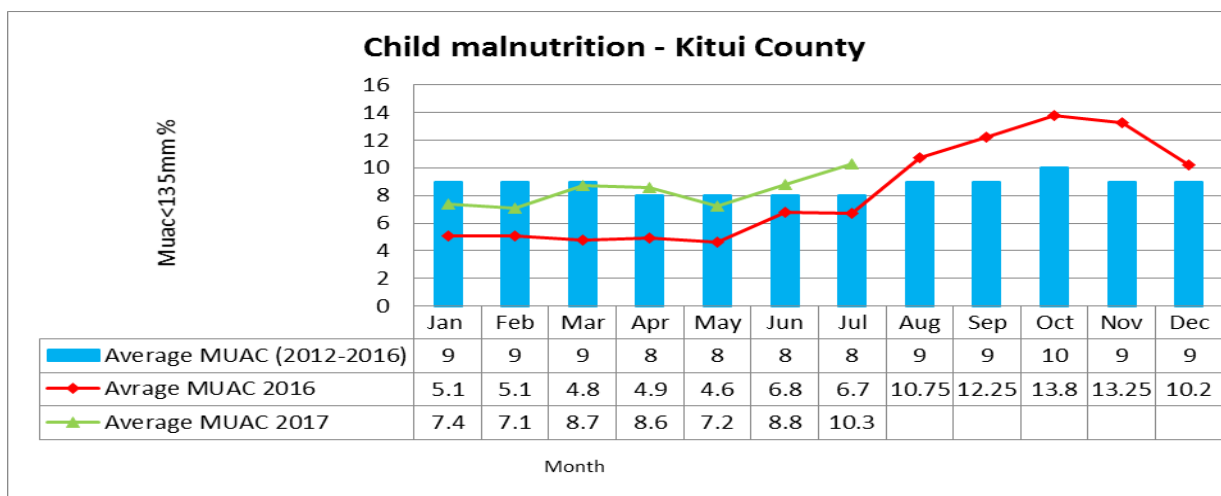
5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- Households in poor food consumption score declined to 30.7 percent in July from 47 percent in June and this was mainly attributed to on-going health impact interventions and availability of food commodities from own farms. The remaining 33.3 and 35.9 percent of sampled households were in borderline and acceptable food consumption score respectively as shown in the figure below.
- 40 percent of households in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone were in poor food consumption score compared to 23.3 percent in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- Mwingi North sub-county had the highest number (90 percent) of households with poor food consumption score followed by Mwingi Central sub-county (60 percent) and lastly Kitui West sub-county (56.7 percent).



5.3 NUTRITION STATUS

- The proportion of children at risk of malnutrition (MUAC<135mm) as measured by Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) rose to 10.3 percent in July from 8.8 percent in the previous month and this was mainly attributed to diminishing milk availability, poor feeding habits and lack of leguminous foods rich in proteins for consumptions by the households.
- Out of 1,070 under five years sampled children, the proportion of mid at risk (MUAC 125-134mm), moderately malnourished (MUAC 115-124mm) and severely malnourished (MUAC <115mm) children was 8.8, 1.4 and 0.1 percent respectively.
- The current proportion of children at risk of malnutrition is above the long term mean as shown in the figure below.

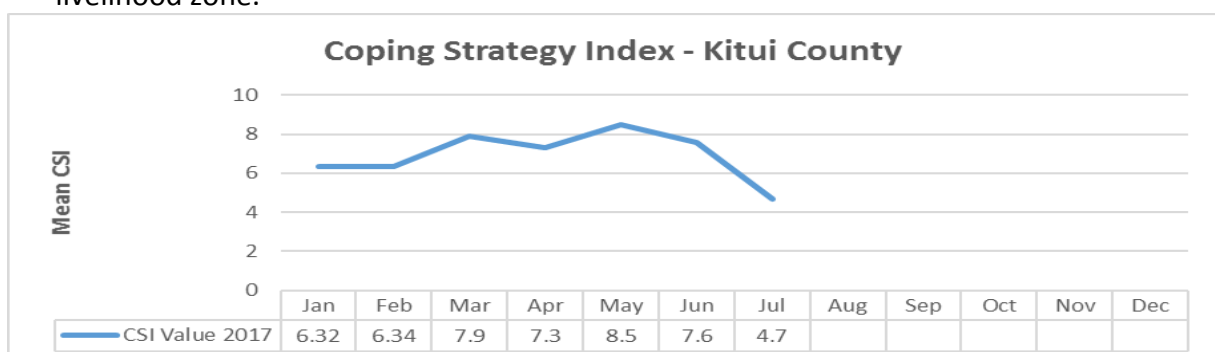


5.4 HEALTH

- No major human disease outbreak was reported across the livelihood zones.

5.5 COPING STRATEGIES

- The mean coping strategy index (CSI) significantly decreased to 4.7 in July from 7.6 in June. This implies that, households were employing normal coping mechanisms to cope with lack of food or money to buy food.
- Households in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone were employing coping strategies more frequently represented by a value of 6.4 compared to 2.9 in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.



6.0 CURRENT INTERVENTION MEASURES

6.1 NON-FOOD INTERVENTIONS

- Repair and maintenance of strategic water points to drought affected areas by County Government of Kitui.
- Okoa Uhai Cash transfer initiative targeting 30,043 beneficiaries across the county. The initiative was done by the National Government.
- Cash for assets programme targeting 22,220 beneficiaries in Kitui South, Kitui Rural, Kitui East, Mwingi Central and Mwingi North sub counties. The Program implemented by Government of Kenya through Action Aid, National Drought Management Authority, Caritas Kitui and World Food Programme.

6.2 FOOD AID

- Therapeutic Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition for the Under-fives, Pregnant and Lactating Mothers (Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP), Out Patient Therapeutic Program (OTP) & Stabilization Centres by Ministry of Health supported by several partners.
- Relief food distribution by the National Government through the county commissioner's office

7.0 EMERGING ISSUES

7.1 Insecurity/ Conflict/ Human Displacement

- Although tension is high along Kitui-Tana River County boundaries over livestock in-migration, no incidents over resource based conflict were reported during the month.

7.2 Migration

- Earlier than usual livestock in migration along Kitui-Tana River County boundaries was reported. The livestock were mainly in search of water and forage.

7.3 FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS

- Further deterioration in food security situation as the dry spell progresses
- Water stress to increase further as more water sources get depleted.
- Further deterioration of terms of trade may be experienced due to increasing maize prices and declining goat prices
- Increase in frequency and severity of use of coping mechanisms
- Further reduction in food consumption
- Increased risk of child malnutrition.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate/Short term

Agriculture Sector

- Distribution of drought tolerant seeds for short rains for drought recovery especially in the hard hit areas of Ngomeni, Nuu, Nguni and Endau/Malalani. This should be done before onset of OND 2017 (by Sept 2017). Over 30,000 HHs should be targeted to benefit across the County.

Water

- Water Trucking in Nguni, Nuu, Voo/Kyamatu Endau/Malalani and Ngomeni wards

Health and Nutrition

- Hotspot screening for malnutrition and provision of supplementary feeding

Medium and Long term

Agriculture Sector

Up scaling of current crop production improvement programs, which include

- Up scaling the Provision and distribution of improved high yielding sorghum seeds for increased crop production.
- Up scaling the Provision and distribution of sorghum and millets value addition and utilization disc mills.
- On- farm ponds funding support.
- Support on Provision and installation of open drip irrigation for food security and nutrition.
- Support on Provision & installation of drip irrigation kits for small scale cluster irrigation development for food security and income generation.

Livestock sector

- Livestock development programs to improve production (goats, chicken, cattle)

Water Sector

- De-silting of 16 earth dams and rock catchment
- Service of 150 boreholes and rehabilitation of 40 boreholes

Health Sector

- Improving Vitamin A supplementation to children under five years and de-worming
- Improving vector control activities

Education

- Expand HGSMP to more schools

Peace Building Initiatives

- Peace building and conflict management activities by the National Government along Kitui –Tana River County Borders.