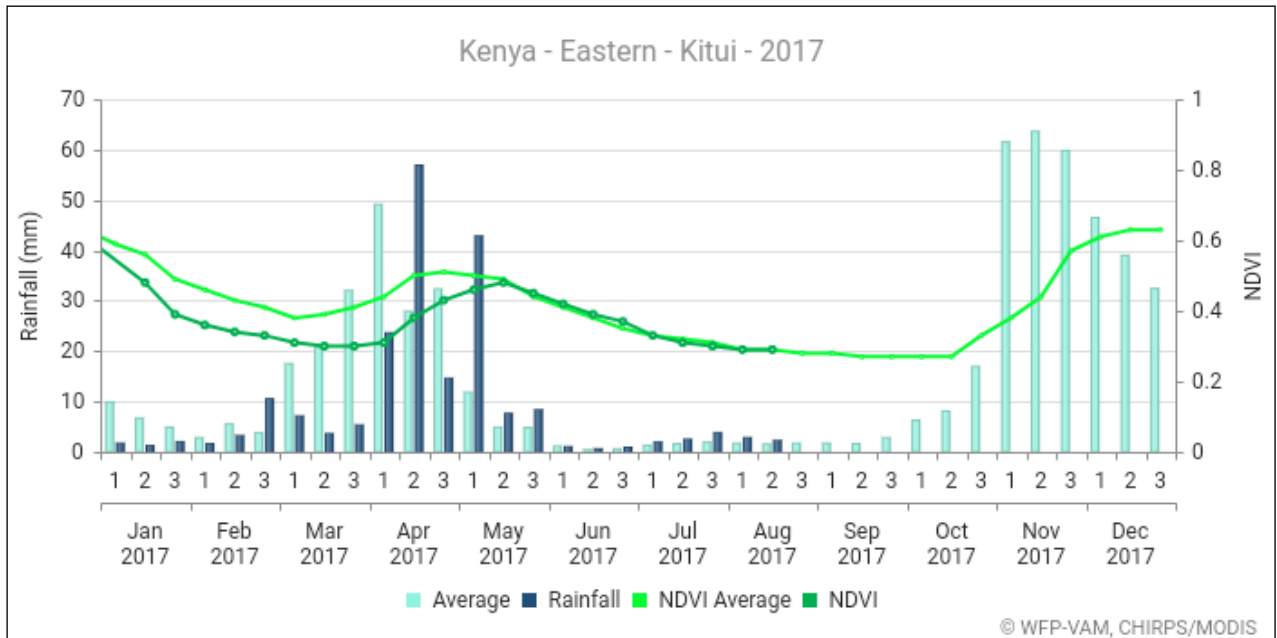


1.0 CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

1.1 RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

- Although light showers were observed in some parts of Kitui Central and Kitui West sub-counties, generally, no rainfall was received in the month of August and this is normal as shown in the figure below.

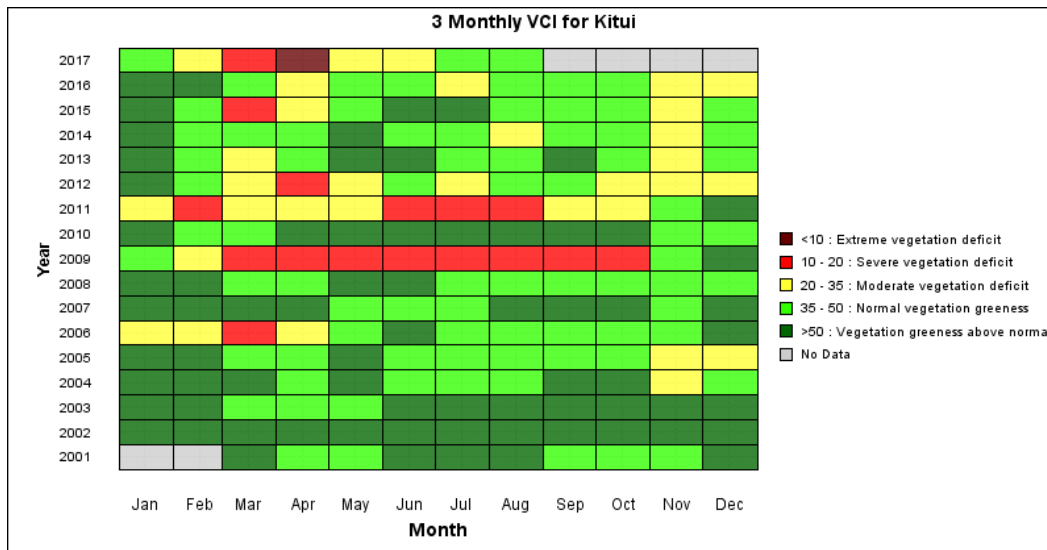


2.0 IMPACTS ON VEGETATION AND WATER

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 39.79 as shown in the figure below.
- The situation was better in Kitui Central and Kitui West sub counties which recorded above normal 3 month VCI of 65.43 and 60.63 respectively.
- Mwingi central and Kitui East Sub Counties had moderate vegetation deficit as indicated by a 3 month VCI of 34.07 and 33.8 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

- Generally, pasture conditions ranged from poor to fair across the livelihood zones in both quantity and quality and this is unusual at this time of the year.
- On average, 72% of pasture was regarded as poor in August compared to 31.3% in July. The remaining 28% of pasture was fair.
- The situation was predominantly bad in Nuu, Nguni, Mui, Ngomeni, Voo/ Kyamatu, Kanyangi, Endau/ Malalani and Kivou wards.
- The available pastures are expected to last for 1-2 months.

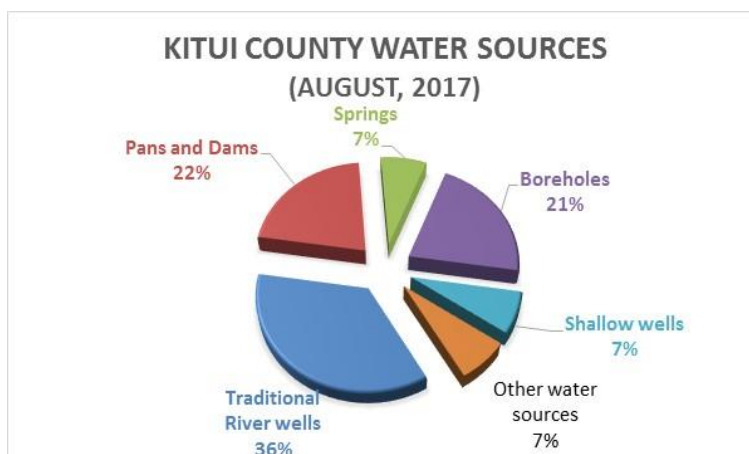
2.1.2.2 Browse

- The browse quantity and quality conditions ranged from poor to fair across the livelihood zones with exception of some parts of Kitui Central and Kitui West sub-counties which had good browse condition.
- On average 24% of browse was regarded as poor in August compared to 12.5% in July. The remaining 72% and 4% of browse was fair and good respectively.
- The available browse is expected to last for 2-3 months in Mixed Farming livelihood zone and 1-2 months in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone.

2.2 WATER RESOURCE

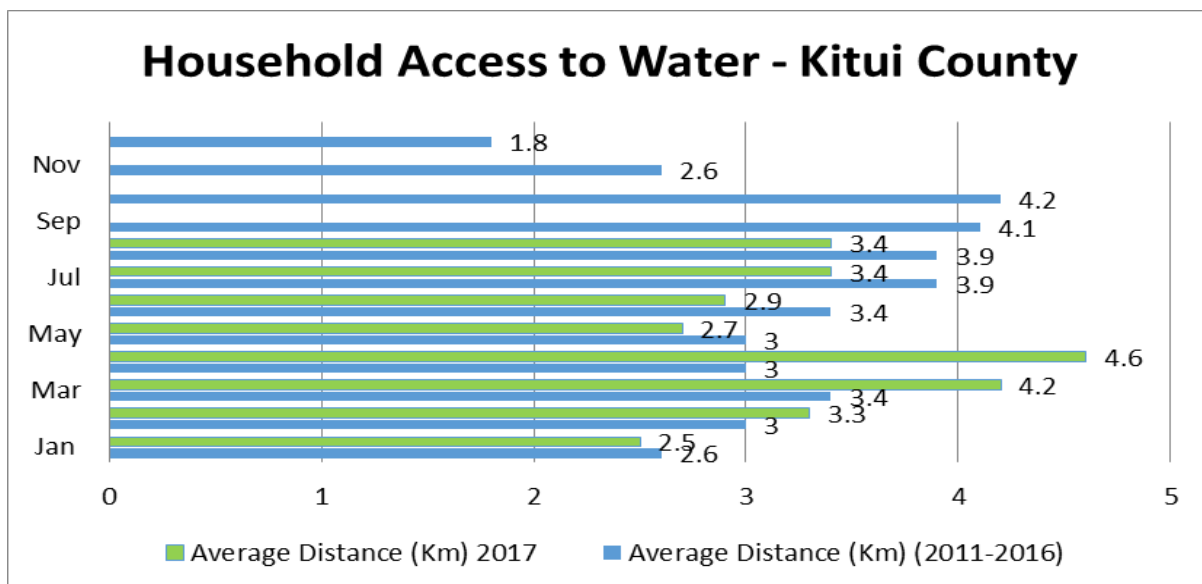
2.2.1 Sources

- The main water sources used by both human and livestock in the month of August were traditional river wells, pans & dams and boreholes at 36%, 22% and 21% 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.
- Concentration of livestock around few water points and increasing waiting time was observed in Marginal mixed farming livelihood zones.



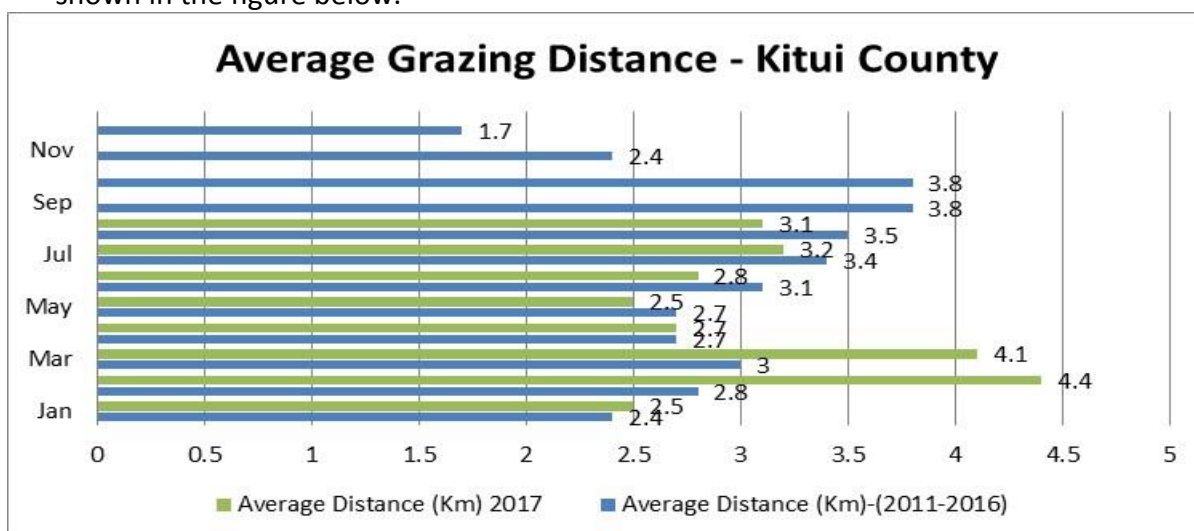
2.2.2 Household Access and Utilization

- The average return distances from the households to water sources remained stable at 3.4km in August. However, a higher distance of 3.8 km was observed in Marginal Mixed farming livelihood zone compared to 3km in Mixed farming livelihood zone.
- Exceptional return distances of above 10km were reported in Endau/Malalani, Mutha, Tseikuru, Zombe/Mwitika, Voo/Kyamatu, Mui, Nuu, Nguni, Ngomeni and Ikutha wards and this was mainly attributed to the progression of the drought in the region.
- 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 remained stable at 3.1km in August. The distance varied across the livelihood zones with Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone recording a higher distance of 3.5km compared to 2.8km in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The variance in distance can be attributed to livestock being watered at all water points including saline water points.
- 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 below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



2.3 Implication to Food Security

- Existing forage and water is likely to sustain livestock productivity for the next 2 months hence stabilizing the food security situation especially in Mixed Farming livelihood zone. However, the water situation for households might only sustain them for one month.
- In the marginal Mixed farming livelihood zone, especially in the hotspot areas of Endau/Malalani, Mutha, Tseikuru, Mui, Voo/Kyamatu, Zombe/Mwitika, Nuu, Nguni,

Ngomeni and Ikutha wards, the food security situation is likely to worsen further following depletion of pasture and increasing water distances.

3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS

3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

3.1.1 Livestock Body Condition

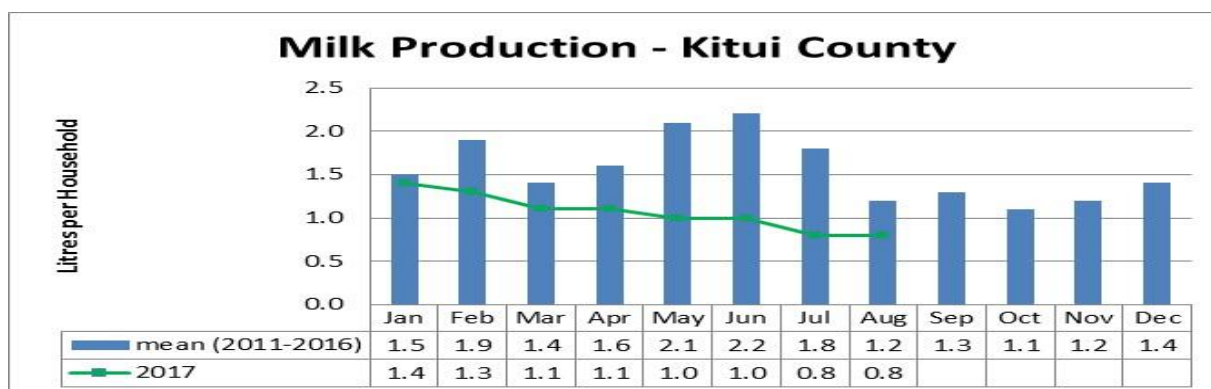
- The livestock body conditions ranged from fair to good across the livelihood zones in the county.
- Majority of livestock 52 percent had borderline, fore-ribs not visible, 12th and 13th ribs visible body condition and this was mainly attributed to deteriorating pasture condition and increasing trekking water distances especially in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone. The remaining 44 percent and four percent had moderate and good body condition respectively.

3.1.2 Livestock Diseases

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

3.1.3 Milk Production

- The average daily milk production per household remained stable at 0.8 litres across the livelihood zones in the county. This was 0.4 litres less than the amount produced in the region at this particular time of the year.
- 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

- The three-main rain-fed crops grown during the long rains season were green grams, maize and cowpeas. Other crops included sorghum, millet, pigeon peas and cassava.
- During the month only 40 percent households sampled harvested maize crop which at harvesting stage was fair/poor condition. This was reported mainly in areas with black cotton soils of Kitui West. Also, pigeon peas were harvested in mixed farming zone.
- Total crop failure was experienced in most areas where there was poor rainfall performance. These areas were: 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

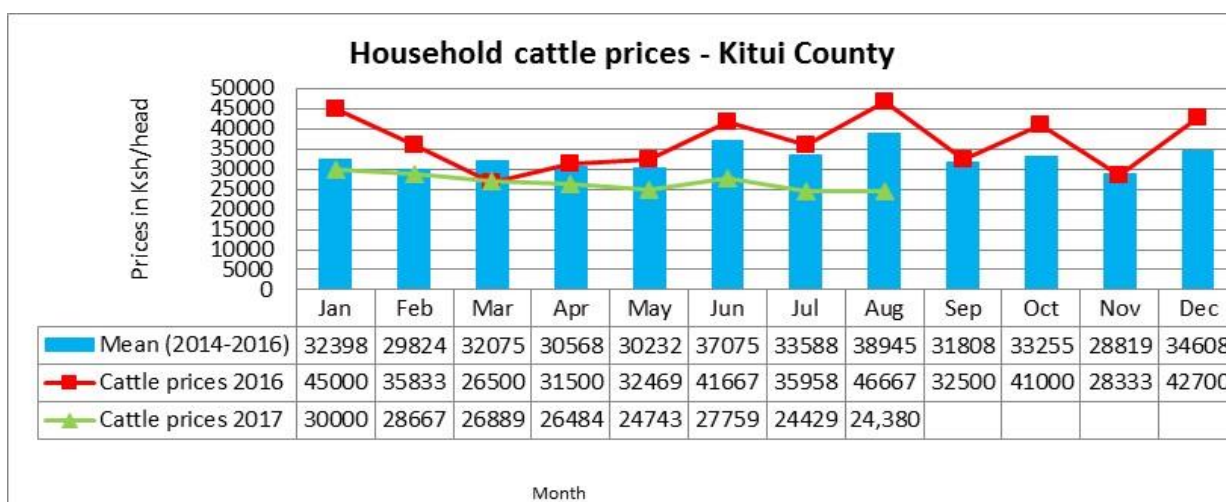
- Deteriorating livestock body condition will reduce livestock productivity hence impact negatively on food security.
- Below normal harvest is likely to increase households' reliance on market for basic food commodities which might lead to hiking of food prices.

4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

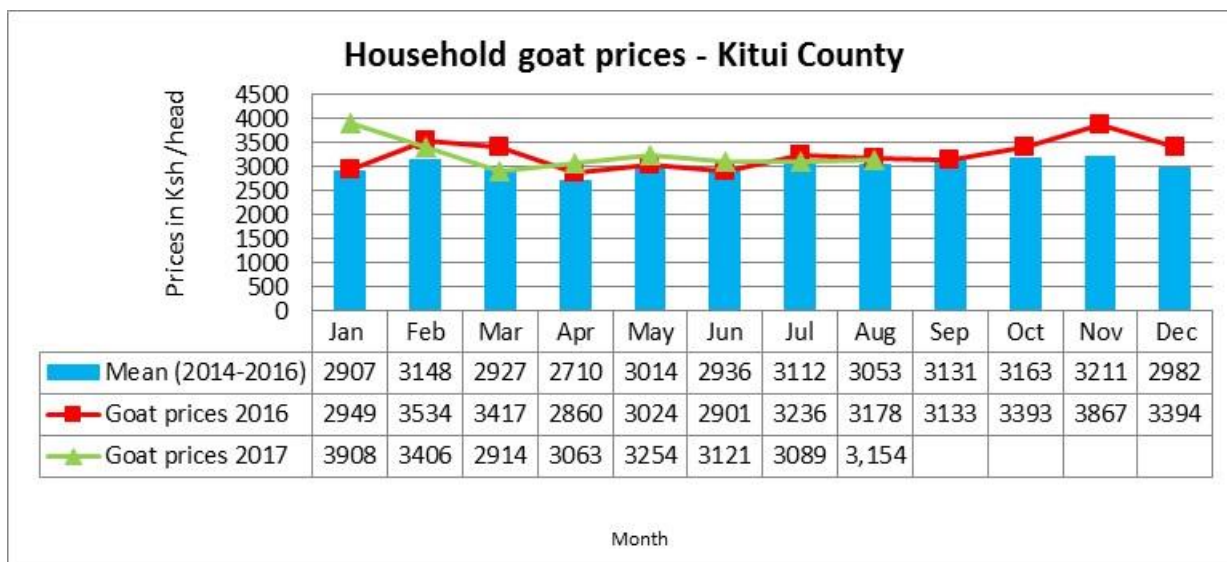
4.1.1 Cattle Prices

- The average cattle prices per household declined slightly from Ksh.24, 429 in July to Ksh.24, 380 in August and this was mainly attributed to deteriorating livestock body condition.
- A higher average price of Ksh.26, 036 was recorded in Mixed Farming livelihood zone compared to Ksh.22, 273 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)

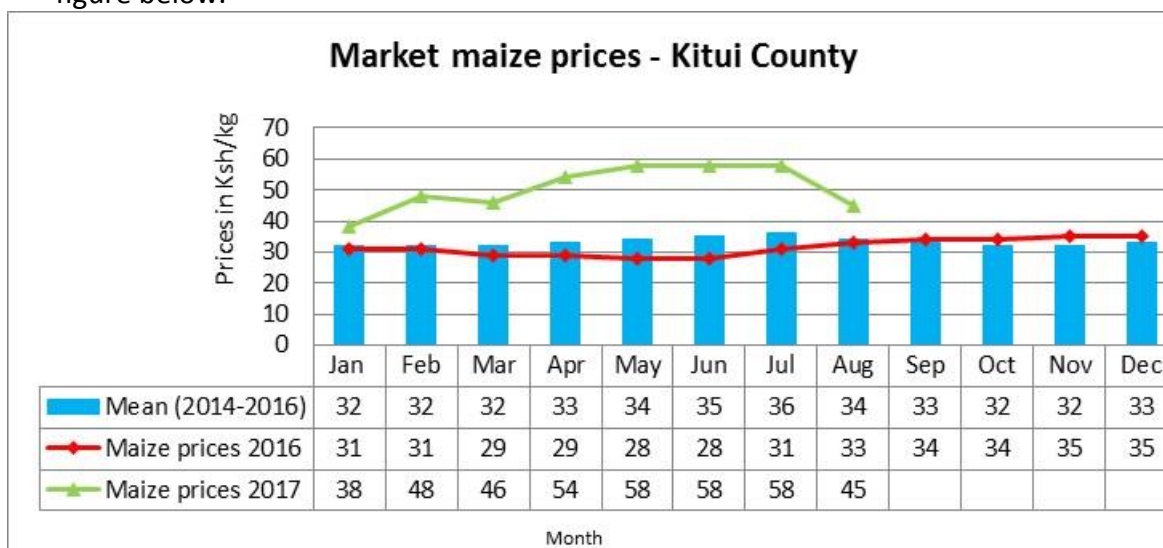
- The average household goat prices slightly increased to Ksh.3, 154 in August from Ksh.3, 089 in July and this was mainly attributed to stability in goat body condition as goat are more drought resistant compared to cattle.
- Goat prices were higher in Mixed Farming livelihood zone at Ksh.3, 182 compared to Ksh. 3,118 in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current goat price is above normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



4.2 CROP PRICES

4.2.1 Maize

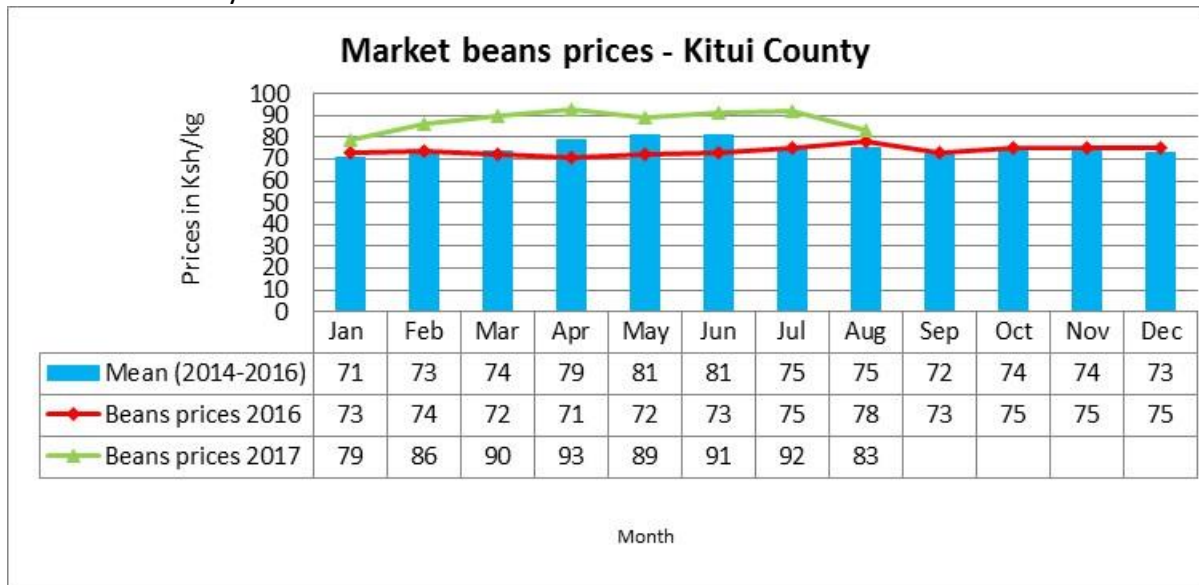
- In August, the average maize price per kilogram declined to Ksh.45 from Ksh.58 in July. The decrease was mainly attributed to availability of the commodity from the traders who get supply from the Rift Valley and neighbouring country of Tanzania.
- Maize price was higher in Mixed Farming Livelihood zone at Ksh.46 compared to Ksh.45 in Marginal Mixed Farming Livelihood zone.
- The current maize price is above normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



4.2.3 Beans

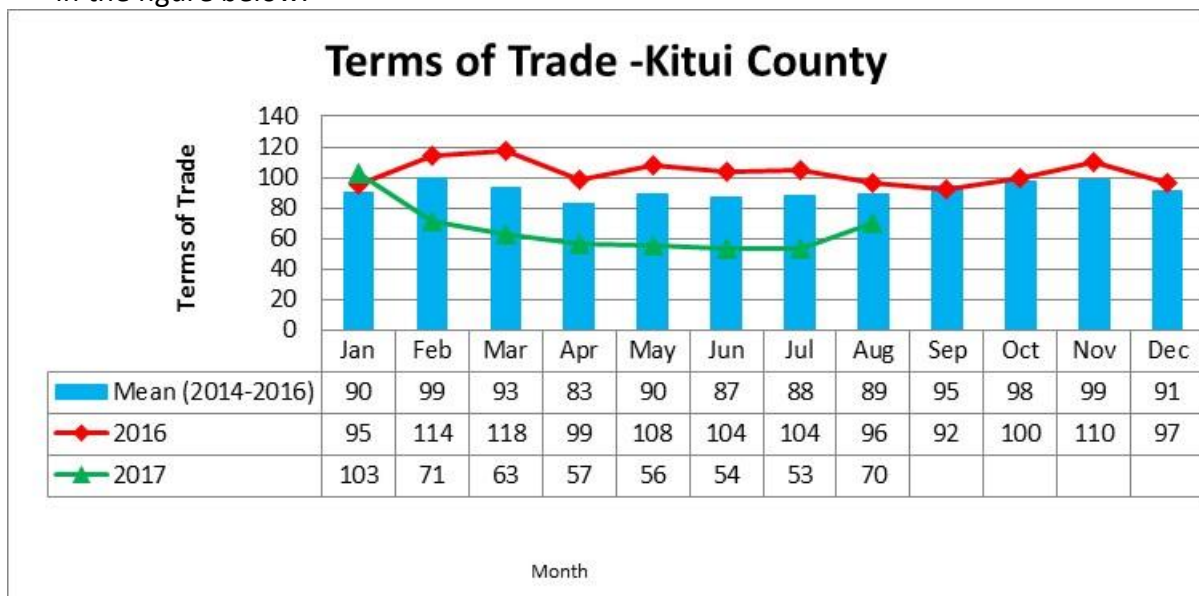
- The average beans price decreased in August to Ksh.83 from Ksh.92 in July. The prices were higher in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone at Ksh.91 compared to Ksh.77 in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.

- 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 favourable at a value of 70 in August compared to 53 in July. This implies that, the earnings from a sale of a goat could purchase 70kgs of maize in August compared to 53kgs in July. The main reason for this was the stability of goat prices and a decline in maize prices.
- The current terms of trade are still below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



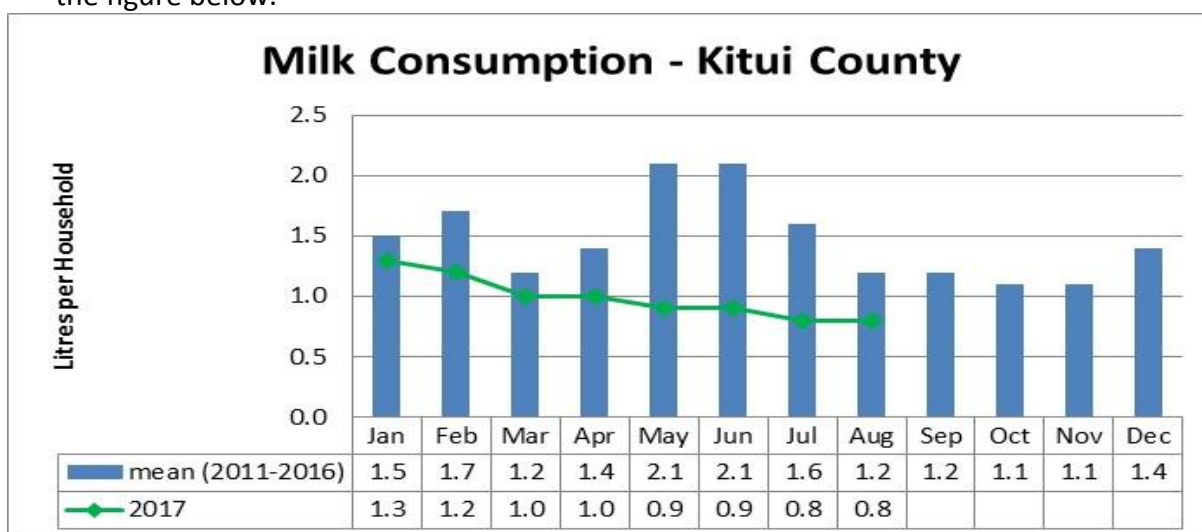
4.3 Implication of the Above Indicators to Food Security

- Household purchasing power has slightly improved but this is projected to be temporary since most farmers had little to no harvest hence demand of food commodities will increase with time having a negative impact on food security.

5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

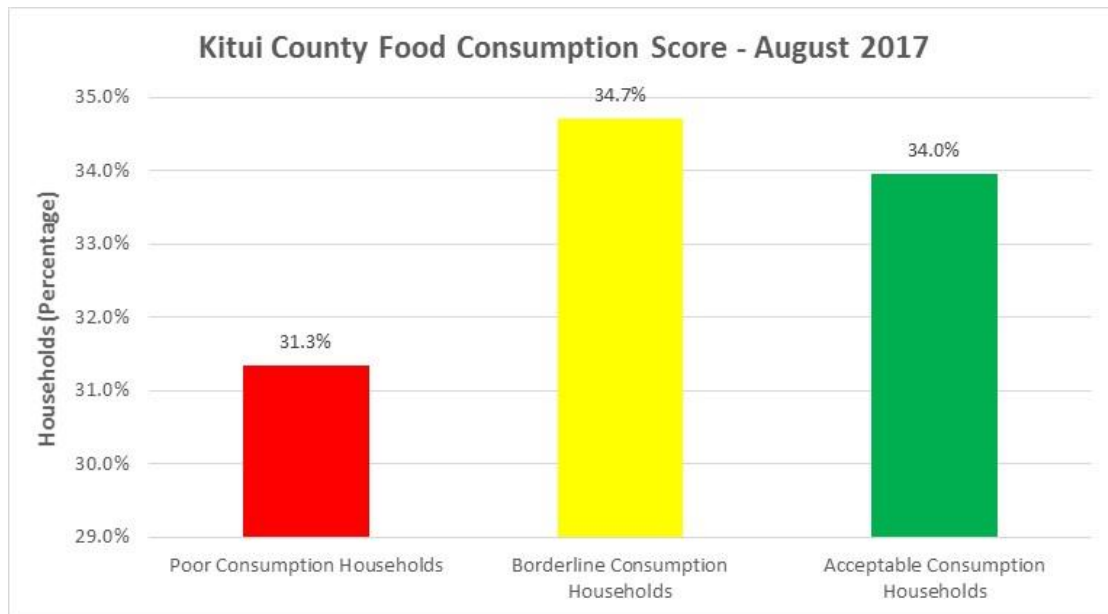
5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- The average daily household milk consumption has remained stable at 0.8Litres in August as it was last month.
- Milk consumption was mostly enhanced in Kitui West and Kitui Central sub counties at 1.2Litres and 1.1Litres per household per day respectively. The enhancement was mainly due to more farmers adopting to dairy farming.
- The current milk consumption is below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



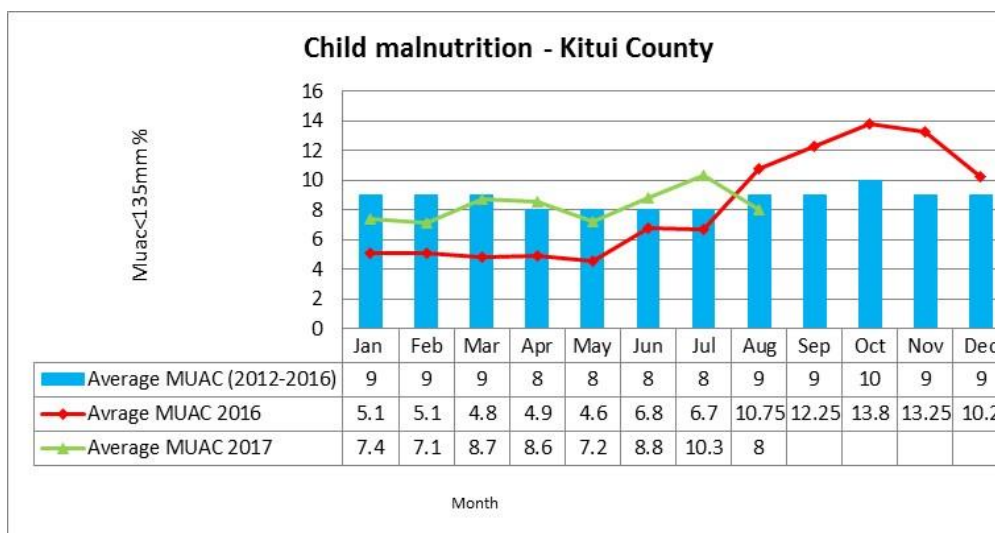
5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- Households in poor food consumption score showed a slight increase to 31.3 percent in August from 30.7 percent in July. The remaining 34.7 percent and 34 percent of sampled households were in borderline and acceptable food consumption score respectively as shown in the figure below.
- It was observed that more household are moving towards poor food consumption score through the borderline.
- 40.8 percent of households in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone were in poor food consumption score compared to 23.6 percent in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- Mwingi North sub-county had the highest number (90 percent) of households with poor food consumption score and Kitui Central Sub County had the highest number of households with acceptable food consumption score (93.1 percent).



5.3 NUTRITION STATUS

- The proportion of children at risk of malnutrition (MUAC<135mm) as measured by Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) sharply reduced to eight percent (8 percent) in August from 10.3 percent in the previous month and this was mainly attributed to ongoing high impact health interventions.
- 1,076 children under five years were sampled and out of this, the proportion of mid at risk (MUAC 125-134mm) was 7.1 percent and moderately malnourished (MUAC 115-124mm) 0.9 percent.
- No severely malnourished (MUAC <115mm) cases were reported in the month of August.
- The current proportion of children at risk of malnutrition is below normal compared to 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 STRATEGY

- The mean coping strategy index (CSI) decreased to 4.3 in August from 4.7 in July. 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 5.5 compared to 3.1 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.
- Chakula Kwa Jamii Cash transfer initiative targeting 30,043 beneficiaries across the county. The initiative is being done by the National Government.
- Cash for assets programme targeting 22,220 beneficiaries in Kitui south, Kitui East, Mwingi Central and Mwingi North sub counties. The Program is being implemented by the Government of Kenya through Action Aid, National Drought Management Authority, Caritas Kitui and United Nations World Food Programme.
- Emergency water trucking by the County government.
- Peace-building and conflict resolution activities are being carried out by various stakeholders.

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 office of the County Commissioner.

7.0 EMERGING ISSUES

7.1 Insecurity/ Conflict/ Human Displacement

- High influx of livestock compared to normal was reported along Kitui-Tana River counties boundary in search of water and forage which has brought a lot of tension to households living around those areas.
- No unusual incidents of conflicts were reported in the month of August.
- Sand harvesting has become rampant in the county's main rivers especially along Rivers Tiva, Enzou and Thua. This would result to drying up of traditional river wells and cause soil erosion. Moreover, this will be a source eminent conflict in future.
- During the month, charcoal burning has rampant as alternative livelihood.

7.2 FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS

- Further deterioration in food security situation as the dry spell progresses. In addition, the weather forecast shared by the metrological department indicates that most parts of the county would receive near normal rains and recovery of food security would be short leaved through January 2018.
- Water stress to increase further as more water sources get depleted.
- Accessibility of maize at cheaper prices from the source market may stabilize the terms of trade.
- 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

- Procurement and distribution of seeds and fertilizers for short rains for drought recovery

Water

- Emergency water trucking to Nguni, Nuu, Endau/Malalani and Ngomeni wards

Health and Nutrition

- Hotspot screening for malnutrition and provision of supplementary feeding.

Meteorological

- There is need to conduct Seasonal weather forecast and advisories in the county.

Medium and Long term

Agriculture Sector

- Up scaling of current crop production improvement programs

Livestock sector

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

- Livestock vaccination and disease surveillance.

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 Home grown school meal program (HGSMP) to more schools

Peace Building Initiatives

- Peace building and conflict management activities by the National Government.