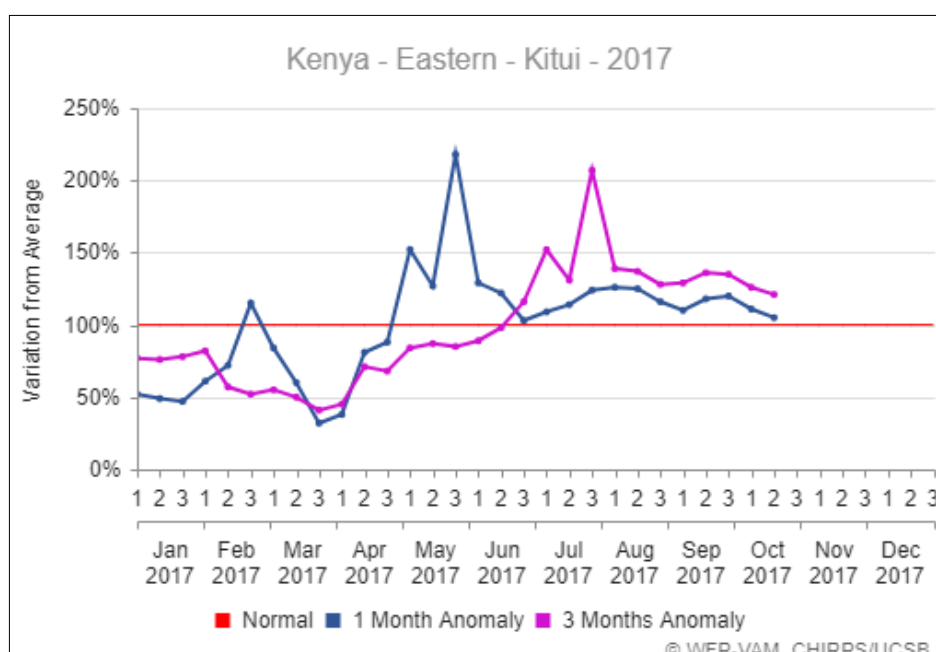


1.0 CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

1.1 RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

- The onset of the short rains was normal in the second week of October. Generally, the county received 121 per cent of 3 month normal rainfall as shown in the figure below.
- These rains were erratic and poorly distributed across the livelihood zones.



1.2 AMOUNT OF RAINFALL AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

- Temporal distribution was fair while spatial distribution was uneven across the livelihood zones. Cumulatively, Tharaka station in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone recorded the highest amount of rainfall at 204.1mm in 6 wet days compared to Kyuso station in Mixed Farming livelihood zone which received 26.2mm in 2 wet days as shown in the figure below.
- No rains were received in Nuu and other parts of Ngomeni and Nguni wards in Marginal mixed farming livelihood zones and this was unusual at this time of the year.

STATIONS	RAINFALL AMOUNT AS AT OCTOBER 30, 2017			
	SEPTEMBER		OCTOBER	
	TOTAL (MM)	WET DAYS	TOTAL (MM)	WET DAYS
MIGWANI	30.5	2	38.3	3
MWINGI	0	0	59.4	2
NUU	0	0	0	0
KYUSO	0	0	26.2	2
KATSE	0	0	94.5	4
THARAKA	0	0	204.1	6
TSEIKURU	0	0	49.5	2
NGOMENI	0	0	25	2

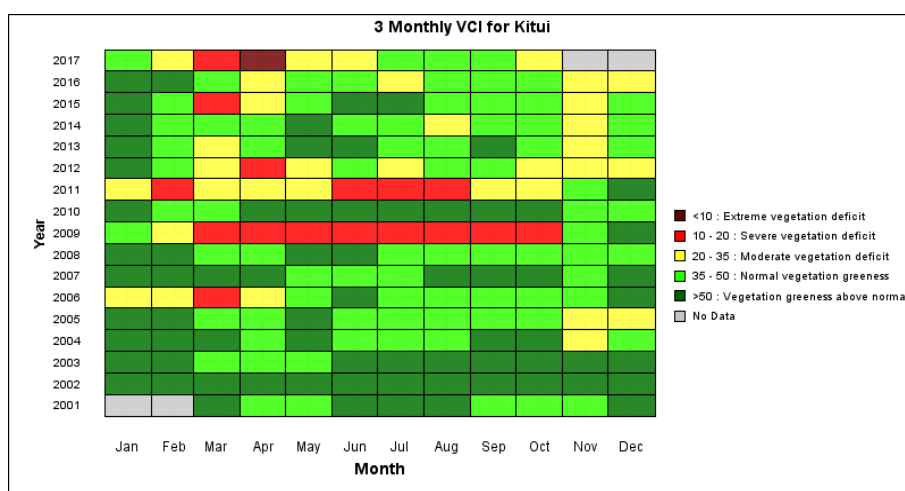
Source: County Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Irrigation

2.0 IMPACTS ON VEGETATION AND WATER

2.1 VEGETATION CONDITION

2.1.1 Vegetation Condition Index (VCI)

- The 3 month VCI for Kitui county was 24.34 in the month of October. This was 13.41 lower than the units recorded in the previous month. This implies that, Kitui county had moderate vegetation deficit in the month of October, a slight deviation from normal vegetation greenness witnessed in the month of September as shown in the figure below.
- Generally, there was a decline in vegetation greenness in all Sub Counties with Mwingi Central Sub County recording severe vegetation deficit represented by a 3 month VCI of 19.77 in October compared to 34.98 in the previous month.



2.1.2 Field Observations (Pasture and Browse Condition)

2.1.2.1 Pasture

- The pastures condition was poor in both quality and quantity across the livelihood zones with a deteriorating trend and this was unusual at this time of the year.
- This condition was projected to improve following the onset of the short rains.

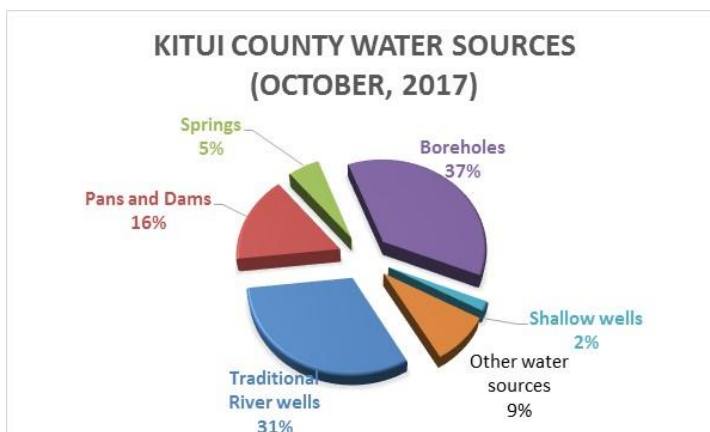
2.1.2.2 Browse

- The browse condition ranged from poor to fair across the county in the month. 40.7 percent of the browse was considered fair while the remaining 59.3 percent was poor.
- Browse was fair in the Mixed Farming livelihood zones compared to Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zones.
- The existing browse is expected to last for 1 to 2 months.

2.2 WATER RESOURCE

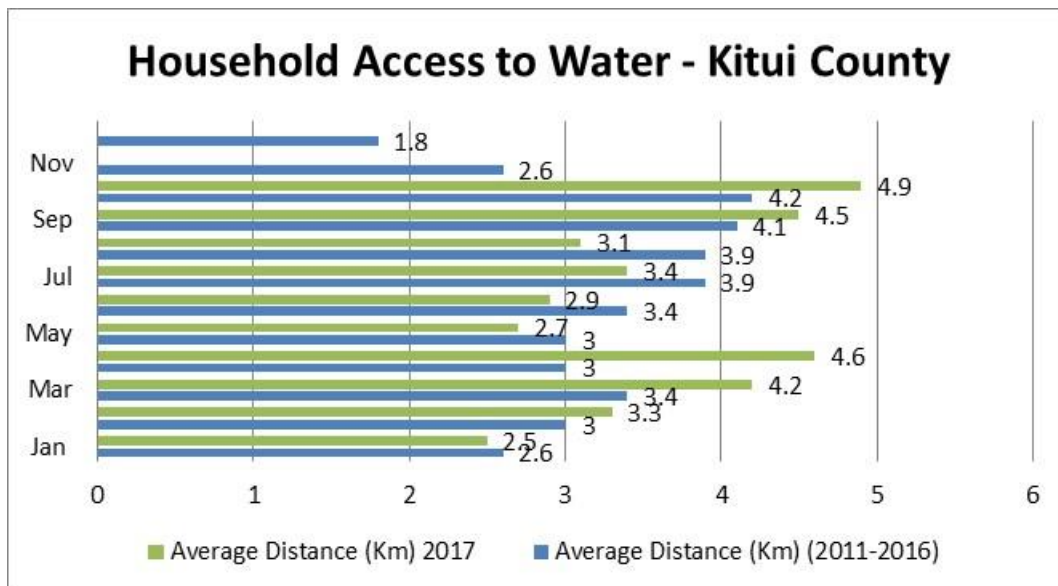
2.2.1 Sources

- The main water sources used by human and livestock in the month of October were boreholes, traditional river wells and pans & dams at 37 percent, 31 percent and 16 percent respectively as shown in the figure and this was unusual at this time of the year.
- Other water sources included spring water, piped water, rock catchments, shallow wells and roof catchments.
- Most of open water sources had dried up, while underground water sources were yielding modest amounts of water leading to concentration of livestock and human around few remaining water points.



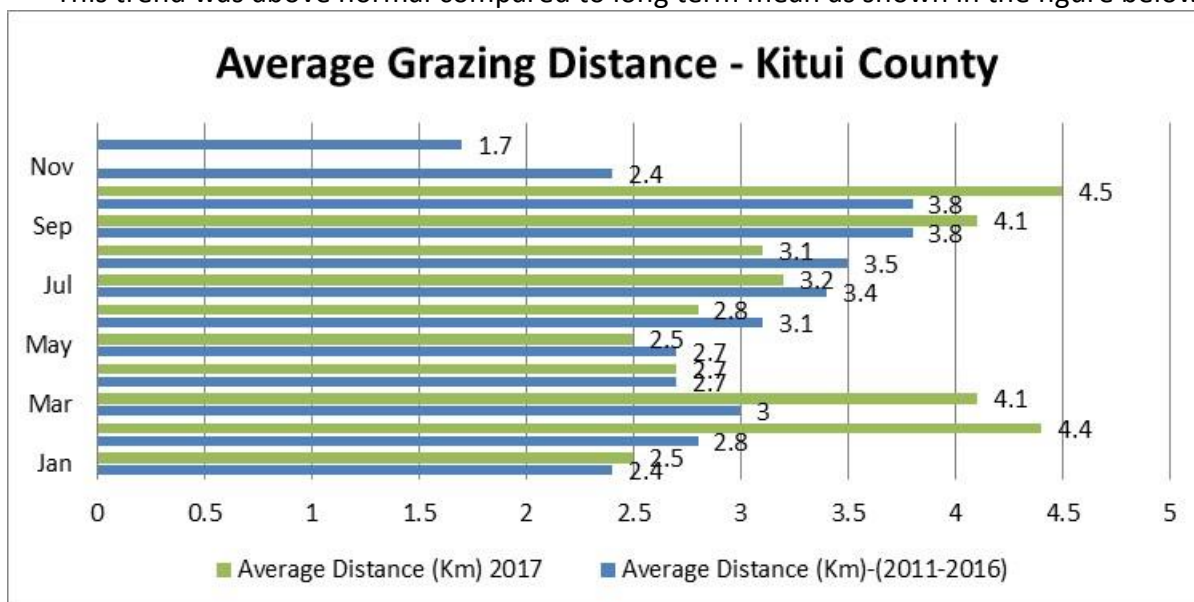
2.2.2 Household Access and Utilization

- The average return distances from the households to water sources increased from 4.5km in September to 4.9km in October and this was mainly attributed to poor recharge of water facilities at 0-20 percent and drying up of most of open water sources.
- These distances were 0.7 km longer than the normal distances covered in the area at this particular time of the year.
- Households in the Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zones were trekking longer distances in search for water at 6.1km compared to 4km in the Mixed Farming livelihood zones.
- About 19.6 percent of total households interviewed were treating their water before use. The main water treatment methods included water treatment chemicals, boiling and filtration at 92.5 percent, 5.7 percent and 1.9 percent respectively.
- The current water distances are above normal compared to long term mean at this time of the year as shown in the figure below.



2.2.3 Livestock Access

- Livestock average return distances to grazing areas increased to 4.5km in October compared to 4.1km in September. The distances varied across the livelihood zones with livestock in the Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone covering longer distances at 5.1km compared to 4km in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- This trend was above normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



2.3 Implication to Food Security

- Poor distribution of rainfall and deteriorating forage condition might have a negative impact on food security.

- Concentration of livestock and human around the few remaining water points pose a risk of communicable disease outbreak.

3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS

3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

3.1.1 Livestock Body Condition

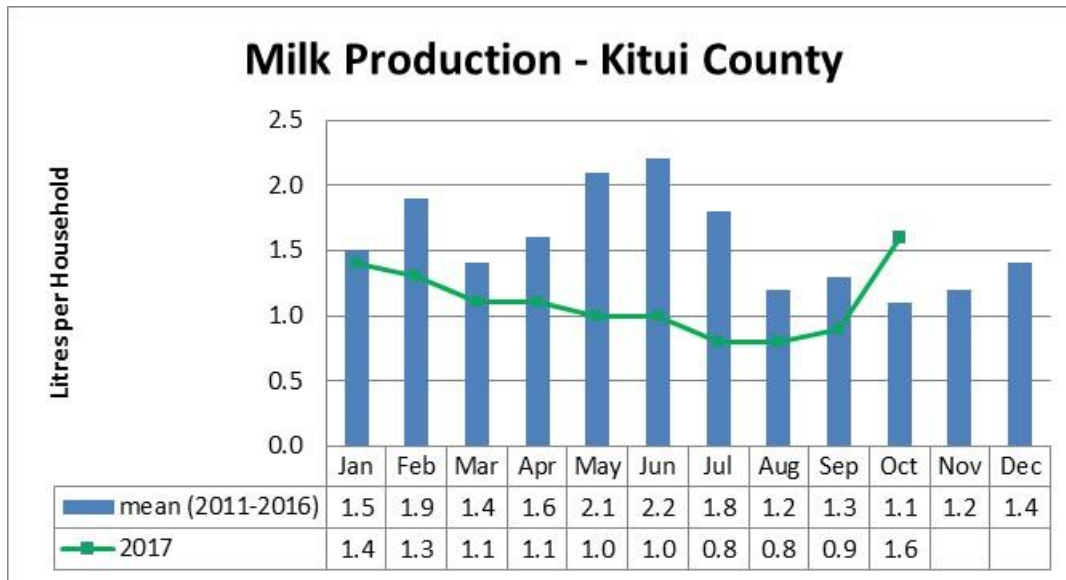
- The livestock body conditions ranged from poor to fair across the livelihood zones in the county.
- 52 percent of the livestock in the region were at borderline body condition, fore ribs not visible; 12th and 13th ribs visible. The remaining 22 percent, 15 percent and 11 percent had thin fore ribs visible, moderate (neither fat nor thin) and very thin no fat (bones visible) body condition respectively.
- Majority of livestock in Nguni and Nuu wards had very thin no fat, bones visible body condition and this was mainly attributed to the absence of pastures and browse for the livestock in the area.
- The trend was unusual at this particular time of the year.

3.1.2 Livestock Diseases

- No alarming livestock diseases outbreaks cases had been reported in the county.
- Livestock vaccination against lumpy skin disease (LSD) was conducted in Kitui West Sub County.

3.1.3 Milk Production

- The average daily milk production per household significantly increased from 0.9 litres in September to 1.6 litres in October.
- The current milk production was 0.5 litres more than the amount produced in the region at this particular time of the year.
- More milk was produced in Mixed Farming livelihood zone compared to Marginal Mixed farming livelihood zone.
- The current milk production per household was above 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

- Land Preparation and planting were underway across the livelihood zones.
- The main crops grown in the Mixed Farming livelihood zone included maize, cowpeas, pigeon peas, beans and green grams while in the Marginal Mixed farming livelihood zone farmers were growing maize, sorghum, millet, cowpeas and green grams and this is normal at this time of the year.

3.3 Implication of the Above Indicators to Food Security

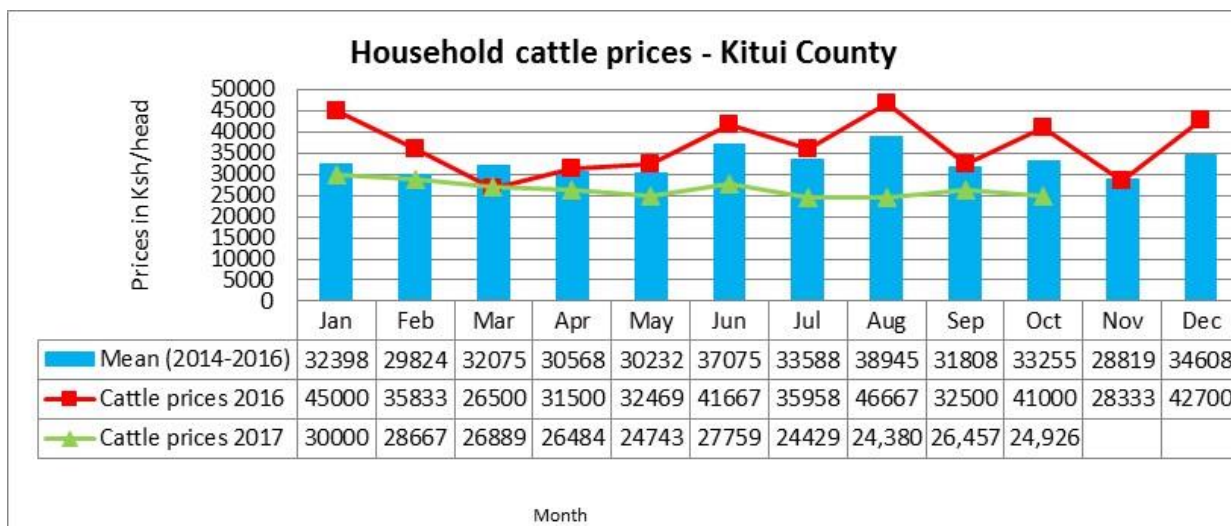
- Deteriorating livestock body condition will impact negatively on livestock productivity.
- Crops performance is likely to be negatively affected in areas where rains have not started.

4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

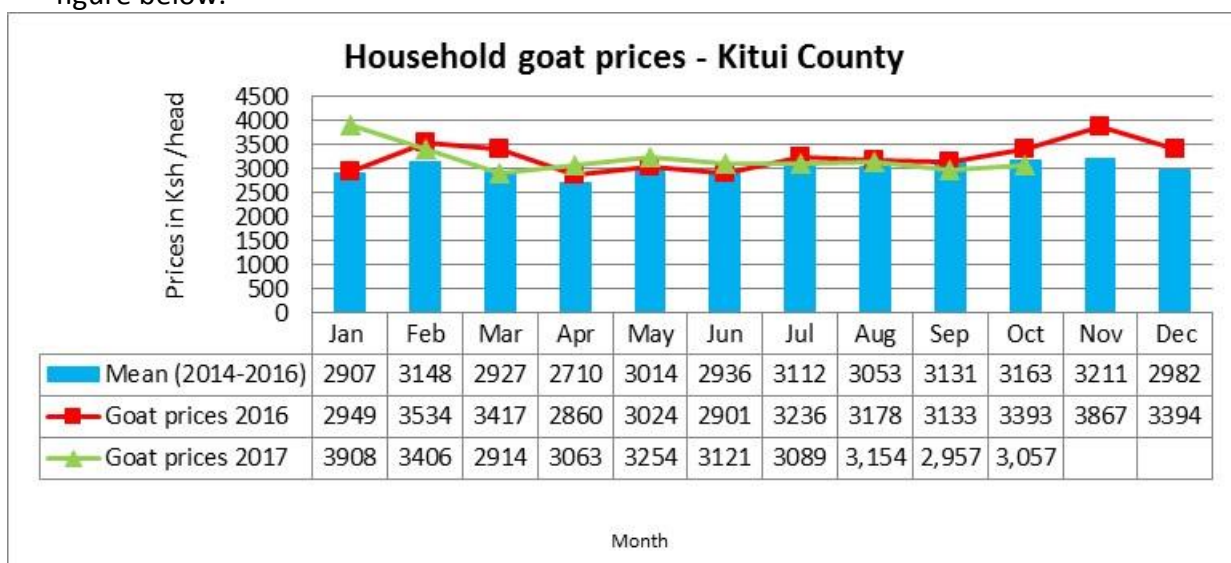
4.1.1 Cattle Prices

- The average cattle prices per household significantly decreased from Ksh.26, 457 to Ksh.24,926 in the month of October. This was mainly attributed to deteriorating livestock body condition.
- The prices were higher in Mixed Farming livelihood zone at Ksh.27,600 compared to Ksh.21,583 in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- This trend was below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



4.1.2 Small Ruminants Prices (Goat price)

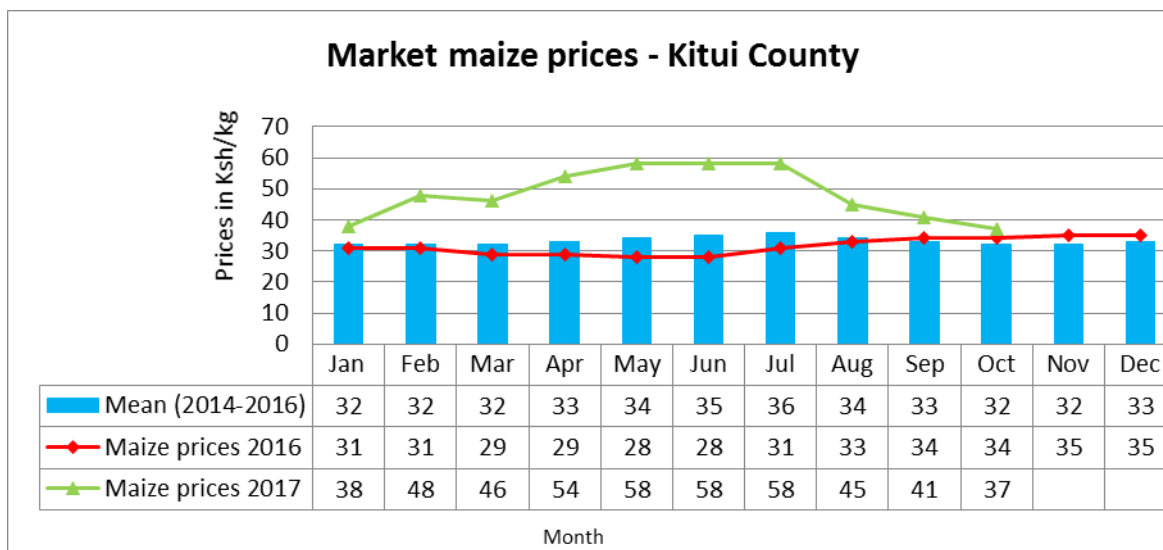
- The average household goat prices marginally decreased to Ksh.3,057 in the month of October from Ksh.2,957 in the previous month.
- Goat prices were higher in Mixed Farming Livelihood zone at Ksh.3,163 compared to Ksh.2,925 in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current price of goat was below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



4.2 CROP PRICES

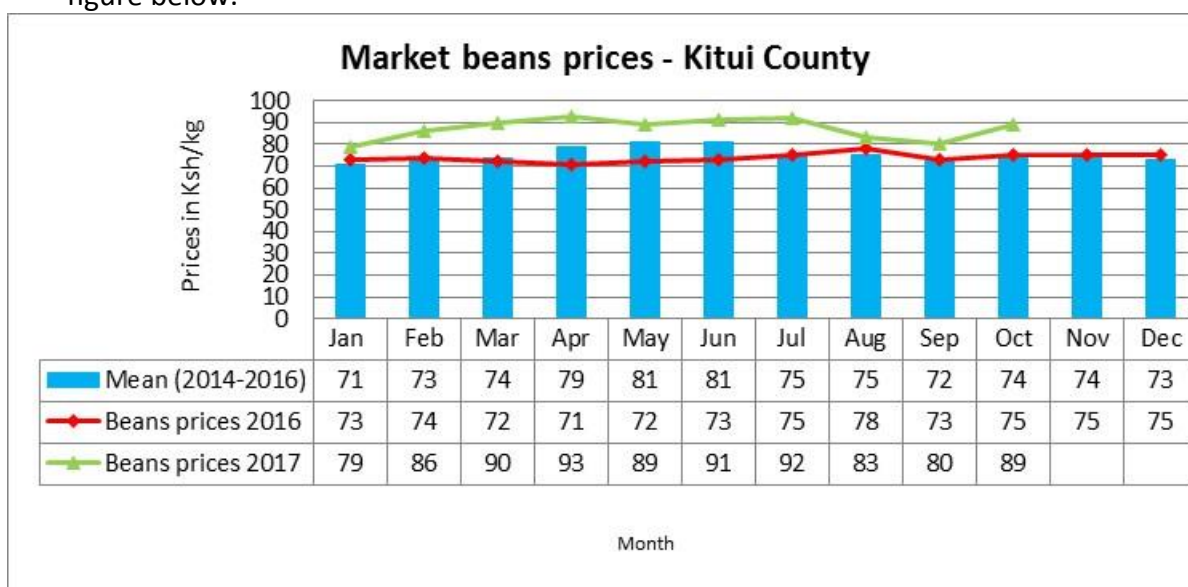
4.2.1 Maize

- The average maize price per kilogram marginally decreased to Ksh.37 in the month of October from Ksh.41 in September and this was mainly attributed to high supply of the commodity from the traders who get supply from the Rift Valley and neighbouring country of Tanzania.
- Maize was cheaper in Mixed Farming livelihood zone at Ksh.36 compared to Ksh.39 in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current maize price was above normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



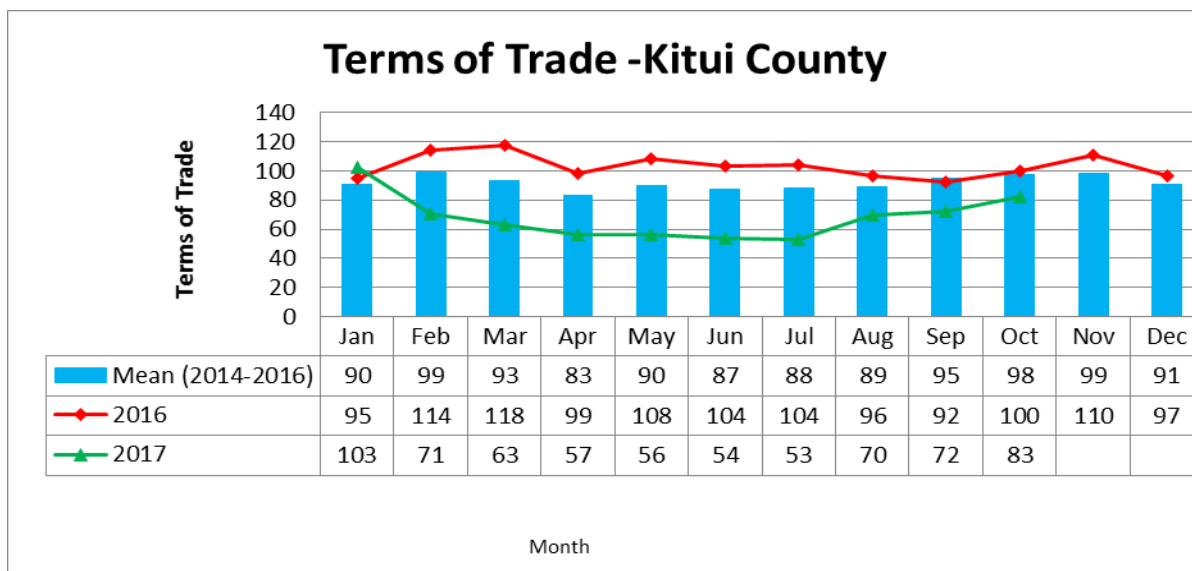
4.2.3 Beans

- The average beans price significantly increased to Ksh.89 in the month of October from Ksh.80 in September and this was mainly attributed to high demand of the crop planting seeds.
- Beans were cheaper in Mixed Farming livelihood zones at Ksh.83 compared to Ksh.97 in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zones.
- The current beans price was above normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



4.3 Livestock Price Ratio/ Terms of Trade

- Terms of Trade were favourable at a value of 83 in October from 72 in September. This implies that, the earnings from a sale of a goat could purchase 83kgs of maize in October compared to 72kgs in September and this was mainly attributed to a decline in maize price.
- The current terms of trade was below normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



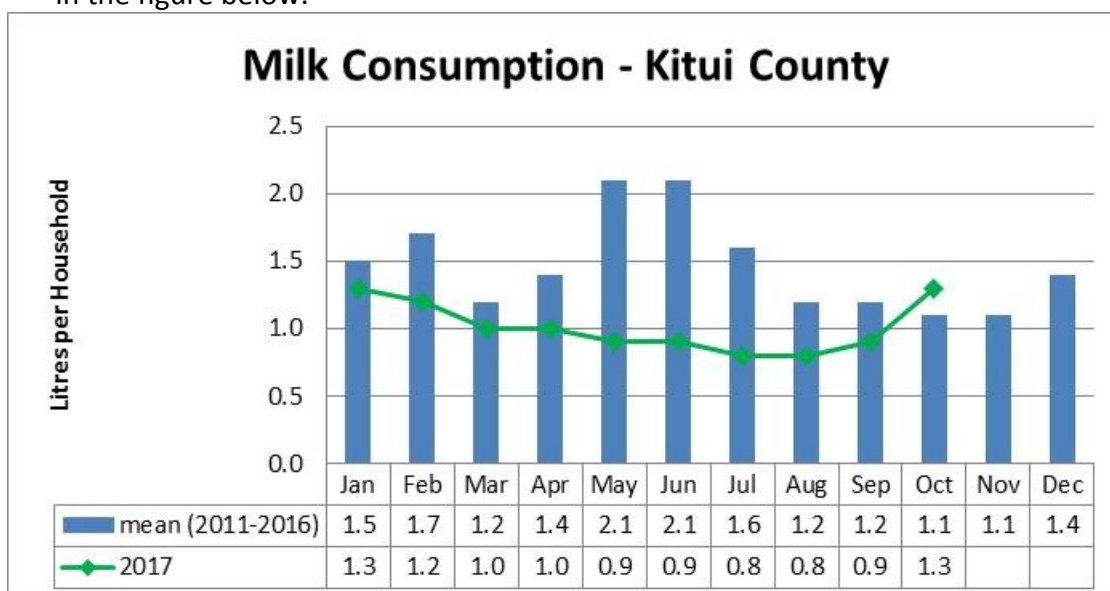
4.4 Implication of the Above Indicators to Food Security

- Stability in livestock prices and improving terms of trade are likely to have a positive impact on food security.

5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

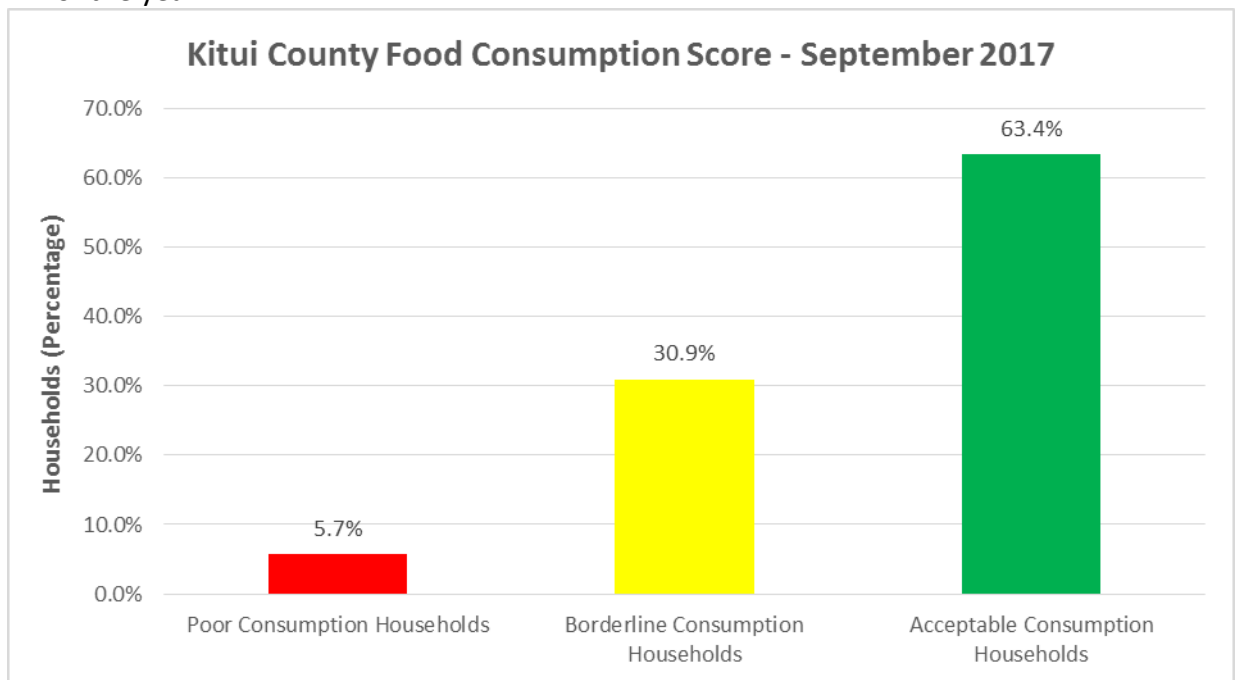
5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- The average daily household milk consumption marginally increased to 1.3 litres in October from 0.9 litres in September.
- More milk was consumed in the Mixed Farming livelihood zones compared to the Marginal Mixed farming livelihood zones.
- The current milk consumption was above normal compared to long term mean as shown in the figure below.



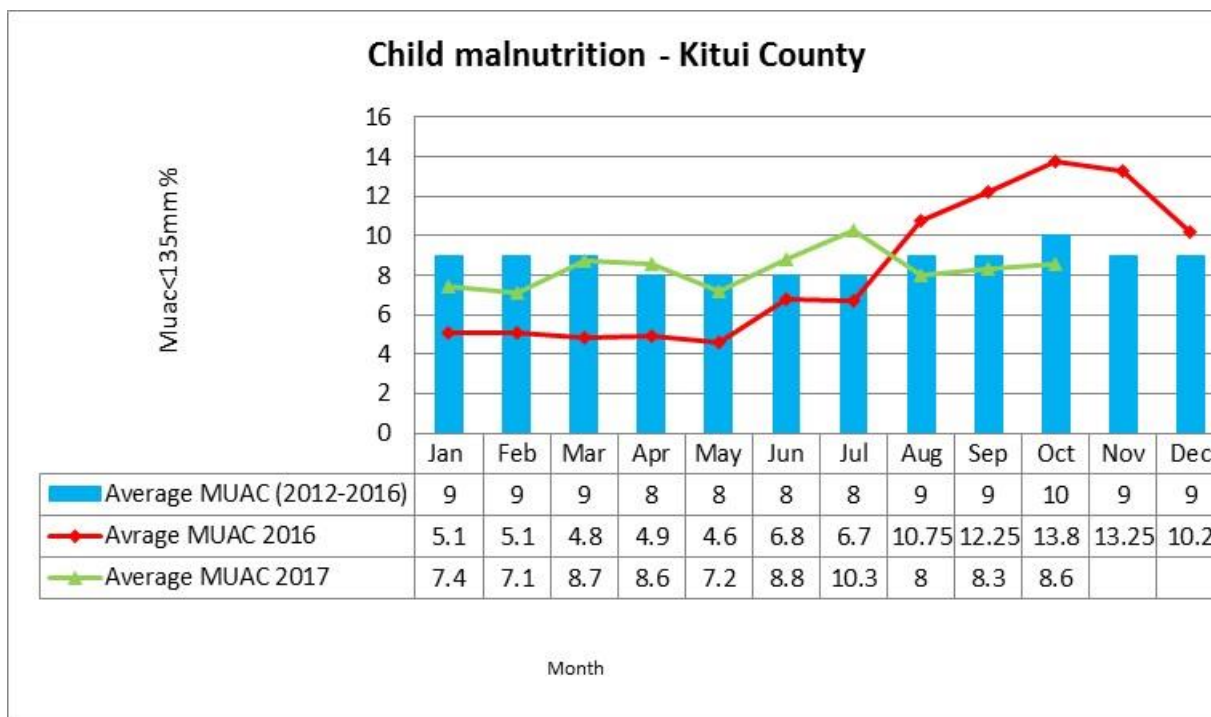
5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- The households in poor food consumption score decline from 18.4 percent in September to 5.7 percent in October and this was mainly attributed to an improvement in purchasing power and healthy eating habits by households.
- 63.4 percent and 30.9 percent of the households were at acceptable and borderline food consumption score respectively as shown in the figure below.
- 12.5 percent of the households in the Marginal Mixed farming livelihood zone had poor food consumption score and no household in the Mixed farming livelihood zone had poor food consumption score.
- This trend was normal and within the expected range in the region at this particular time of the year.



5.2 NUTRITION STATUS

- The proportion of children at risk of malnutrition (MUAC<135mm) as measured by Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) slightly increased to 8.6 percent in October from 8.3 percent in September.
- Out of 1,329 children under five years sampled, the proportion of mid at risk (MUAC 125-134mm), moderately malnourished (MUAC 115-124mm) and severely malnourished (MUAC <115mm) children were 8.1 percent, 0.3 percent and 0.2 percent respectively.
- The current proportion of children at risk of malnutrition was below normal compared to long term mean.

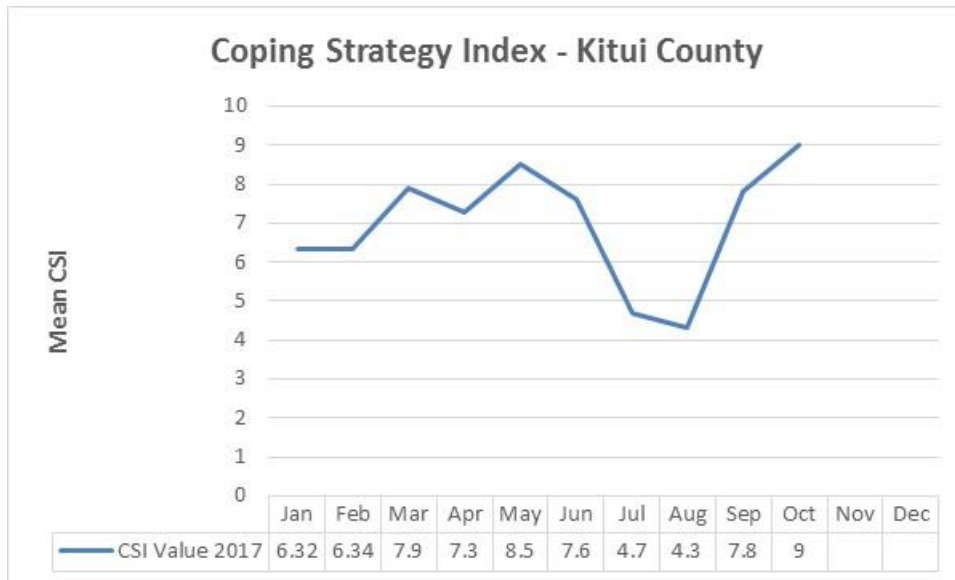


5.3. HEALTH

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

5.4 COPING STRATEGIES

- The mean coping strategy index (CSI) rose to 9 in October from 7.8 in September. This implies that, households were moderately applying consumption based coping strategies 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 11.4 compared to 6.5 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 in the areas by County Government of Kitui.
- Cash for assets programme by the National Government of Kenya through Action Aid, National Drought Management Authority, Caritas Kitui and United Nations World Food Programme targeting 22,220 beneficiaries in Kitui South, Kitui East, Mwingi Central and Mwingi North sub counties.
- Emergency water trucking by the County government.
- Peace-building and conflict resolution activities by various stakeholders.
- Ploughing of Agricultural lands for households across the county by County Government of Kitui.
- Relief seed distribution by County Government of Kitui.

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 ADRA Kenya targeting 500 households in Kivou and Waita Wards in Mwingi Central Sub County.
- Chakula Kwa Jamii Cash transfer by the National Government targeting 30,043 beneficiaries across the county.
- Relief food distribution by National Government.

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 October.

7.2 FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS

- 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 in hot spot areas.
- Water stress to increase further in hotspot areas (Nguni, Nuu and Ngomeni wards)
- Outbreak of communicable diseases due to concentration of livestock around few water points.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate/Short term

Agriculture Sector

- Distribution of seeds and fertilizers for short rains for drought recovery

Livestock Sector

- Provision of livestock feeds and sensitization on commercial offtake in hotspot areas (Nguni, Nuu and Ngomeni wards)

Water

- Emergency water trucking in Nguni, Nuu, 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

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.