



A Vision 2030 Flagship Project



National Drought Management Authority KITUI COUNTY DROUGHT EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR MAY 2021

MAY EW PHASE				Early Warning Phase Classification															
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 60%;"> <p>Drought Status: ALERT</p> <p>Maandalizi ya mapema</p> </div> <div style="width: 35%; text-align: center;"> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;">LIVELIHOOD ZONE</th> <th style="width: 15%;">EW PHASE</th> <th style="width: 55%;">TRENDS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Marginal Mixed Farming</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;">Alert</td> <td>Worsening</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed Farming</td> <td style="background-color: green;">Normal</td> <td>Worsening</td> </tr> <tr> <td>County</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;">Alert</td> <td>Worsening</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> </div>				LIVELIHOOD ZONE	EW PHASE	TRENDS	Marginal Mixed Farming	Alert	Worsening	Mixed Farming	Normal	Worsening	County	Alert	Worsening	Biophysical Indicators		Value	Normal ranges
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1.0 CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

1.1 RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

- The onset of the long rains was late in the first dekad of April compared to second dekad of March normally. The rainfall was characterized by poor temporal and uneven spatial distribution.
- Furthermore, cessation was late in the second dekad of May as opposed to first dekad normally.
- The county recorded an average of 35.1 and 13.3 milimetres of rainfall for the first, and second dekad of May compared to 11.8 and 4.9 milimetres normally respectively as shown in figure 1. This was 148 percent of normal rainfall recorded in May.

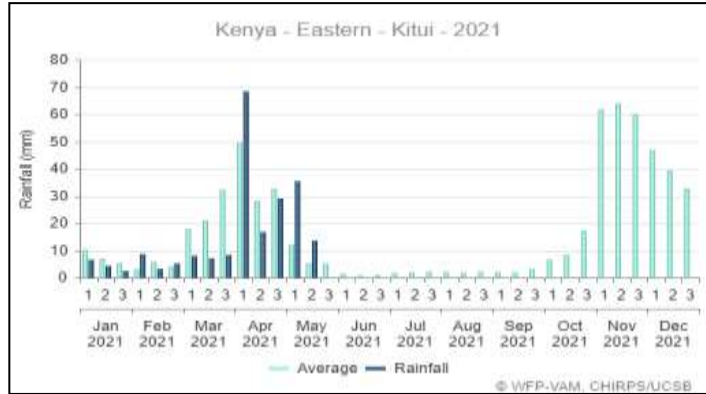


Figure 1: Rainfall Distribution for the Year 2021

1.2 AMOUNT OF RAINFALL AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

- Based on Kenya Metereological Department rainfall performance during March-April-May 2021 long rains season issued on 31st May 2021, most parts of the county recorded 76-100 percent of normal rainfall, with eastern and southern parts of Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zones, recording 51-75 percent of normal rainfall.
- Cummulatively, rainfall amount ranged between 30-280 milimetres in a span of 2-7 wet days in Marginal Mixed Farming stations and 20-420 milimetres in a span of 4-12 wet days in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.

2.0 IMPACTS ON VEGETATION AND WATER

2.1 VEGETATION CONDITION

2.1.1 Vegetation Condition Index (VCI)

- The county vegetation greenness increased by 15 percent to stand at a 3 month VCI of 39.49 in May from 34.29 in previous month. This is an indication of normal vegetation greenness as shown in figure 3.
- Kitui Rural sub county had a moderate vegetation greenness at 3 month VCI of 30.43 while Kitui Central sub county recorded above normal vegetation greenness at 3 month VCI of 50.04.
- However, Mwingi North, Mwingi Central, Kitui South, Kitui West, Kitui East and Mwingi West sub counties had normal vegetation greenness at a 3 month VCI of 36.51, 38.22, 38.6, 42.68, 42.87 and 44.04 respectively.
- The county vegetation greenness is below normal compared to long term mean as shown in figure 2.



Figure 3: Kitui County 3 Month VCI Matrix

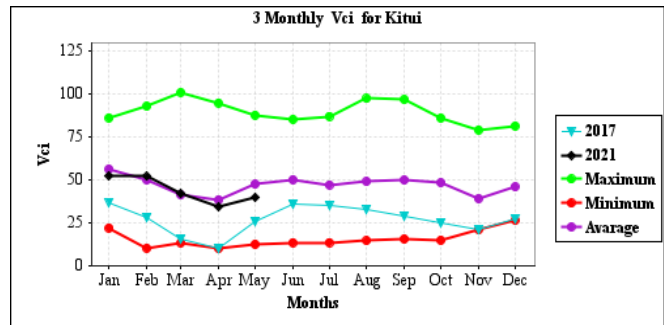


Figure 3: Kitui County 3 Month VCI Trend

2.1.2 Vegetation Condition Index Forecast

- Based on Sussex Vegetation Outlook for the month of June and July 2021, the 3-month VCI forecast indicates an improvement in vegetation condition across the sub counties in-exception of Mwingi Central and Kitui East sub counties which are likely to experience a decline in vegetation greenness.
- The county is expected to experience normal to above normal vegetation greenness as shown in figure 4 and this will boost availability and accessibility of livestock feeds.

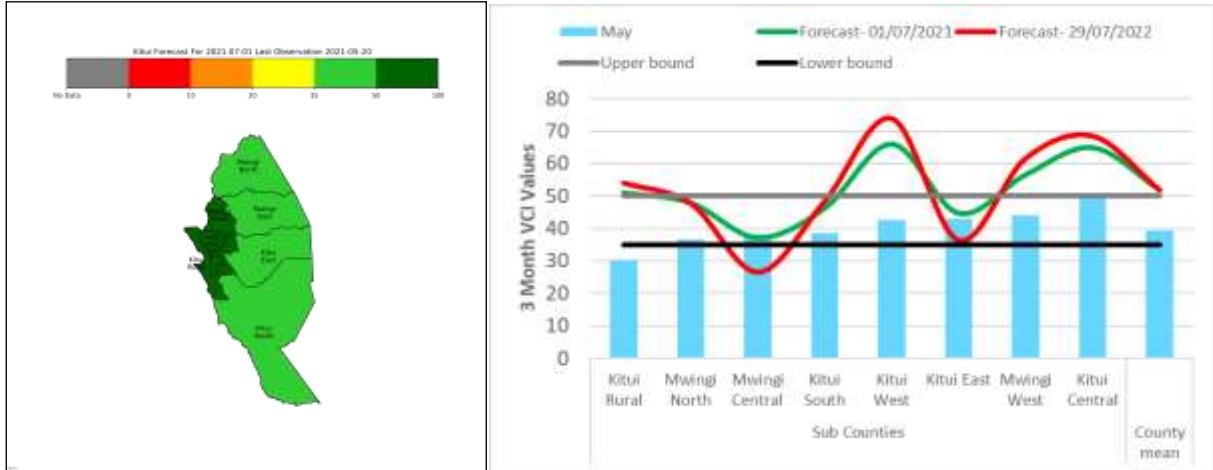


Figure 4: Kitui County 3 Month VCI Forecast

2.1.3 Soil Moisture Forecast

- The TAMSAT-ALERT Soil Moisture Forecast issued on 20th May 2021, indicates normal soil moisture conditions in most parts of the county as shown in figure 5 and this might impact positively on regeneration of livestock feeds.
- However, pockets of the county especially in Mixed Farming livelihood zones have a higher chance of experiencing below normal soil moisture conditions and this will impact negatively in crop production and households’ terms of trade.

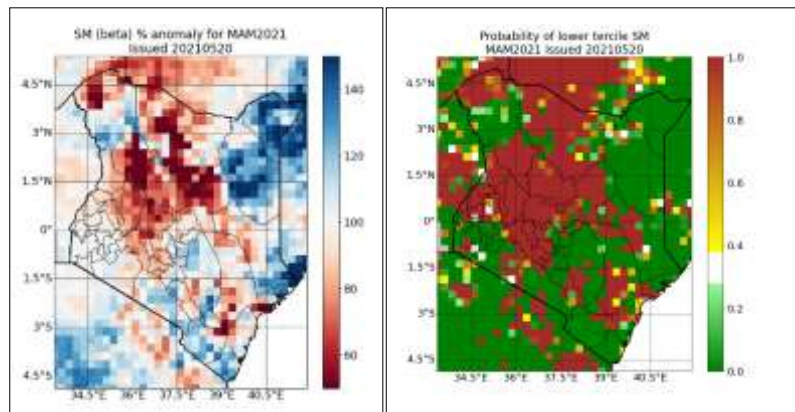


Figure 5: Kitui County Soil Moisture Forecast

2.1.4 Pasture

- Pasture condition ranged from poor to fair across the livelihood zones with an improving trend as shown in figure 6.
- On average, about 15 percent of pasture was poor in both quality and quantity in May compared to 41 percent in previous month. The remaining 67 and 19 percent of pasture was fair and good respectively.
- The available pasture is expected to last for 1-3 months across the livelihood zones compared to 2-3 months normally.
- Pasture condition was better in year 2020 compared to similar period in year 2021.

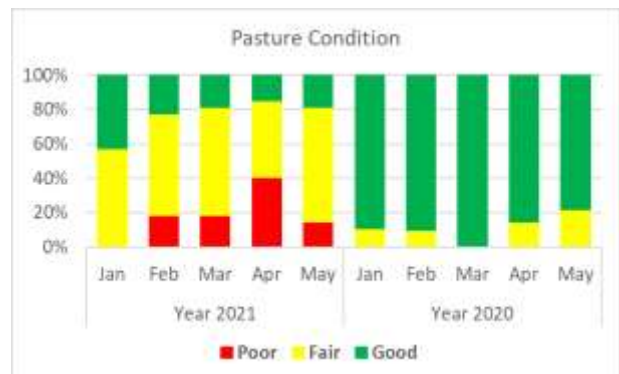


Figure 6: Kitui County Pasture Condition

2.1.5 Browse

- Browse condition ranged from poor to good across the livelihood zones with an improving trend as shown in figure 7.
- On average, about 37 percent of browse was regarded as good in May compared to 19 percent in previous month in both quality and quantity. The remaining 74 and seven percent of browse was fair and poor respectively.
- Browse is expected to last for 2-4 months compared to 3-4 months normally across the livelihood zones.
- Browse condition was better in year 2020 compared to similar period in year 2021.

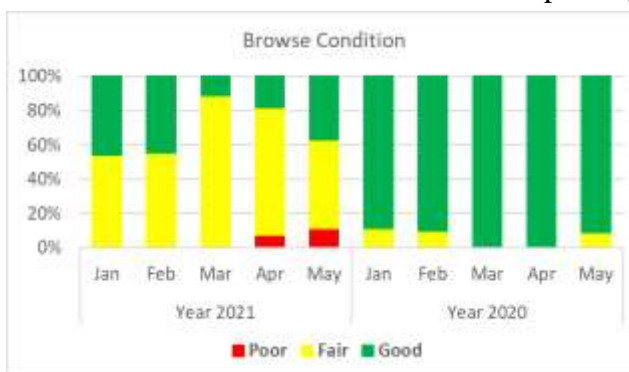


Figure 7: Kitui County Browse Condition

2.2 WATER RESOURCE

2.2.1 Sources

- The main water sources for both human and livestock consumption in May were pans & dams, boreholes, traditional river wells and piped water system as shown in figure 8.
- This situation is normal at this time of the year.
- Most of water facilities had a recharge level of less than 30 percent of their capacity.
- Water levels at open water facilities are likely to last for <1-2 months across the livelihood zones compared to 3-4 months normally. This is mainly due to high levels of siltation and poor recharge from 2021 long rains.

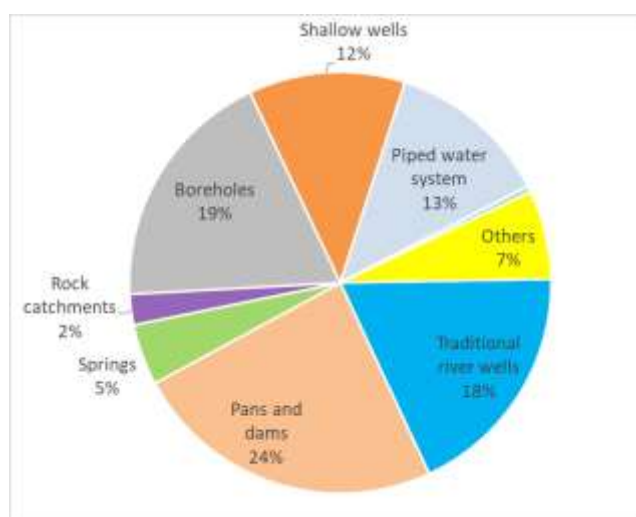


Figure 8: Major Water Sources in Kitui County

2.2.2 Household Access and Utilization

- The average return distances from the households to water sources remained the same as previous month at 4 km in May.
- Households in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone trekked an average of 4.2km compared to 3.8km in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current water distance is 23 percent lower than the long-term mean as shown in figure 9.
- Water consumption per person per day remained stable at 18 litres in May as it was in previous month.
- The proportion of households treating water before consuming stood at 16 percent in May compared to 19.7 percent in previous month. Water treatment chemicals and boiling were the most preferred treatment methods at 14.1 and 1.9 percent respectively.

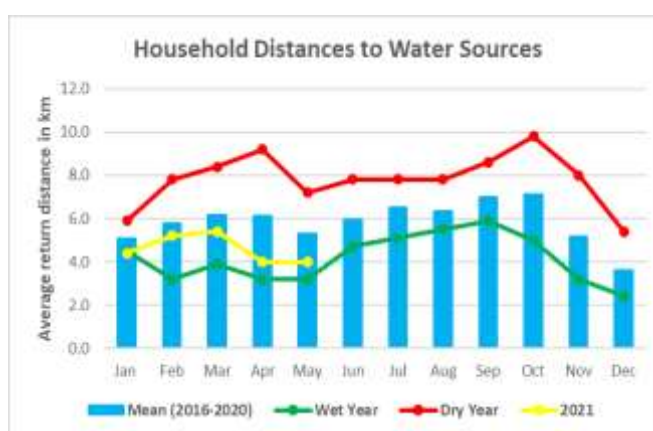


Figure 9: Household Access to Water

- The proportion of households buying water stood at 39 percent in May compared to 37 percent in previous month.
- The price of water per 20-litre Jerry can at source was normal at 2-5 shillings. In some areas, the price of water was one shilling. However, water retailed at 15-20 shillings from vendors.

2.2.3 Livestock Access

- The average return distances from livestock grazing areas to watering points increased by 15 percent to stand at 4.7km in May from 4.1 km in previous month. This was attributed to drying up of nearby water resources as a result of poor recharge and high evaporation rates.
- Livestock in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zones trekked a distance of 4.8km compared to 4.6km in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- Livestock watering frequency was daily in Mixed Farming and 3-4 days per week in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zones compared to daily normally.
- The current average distance from livestock grazing areas to watering points is 12 percent lower than the long-term mean as shown in figure 10.

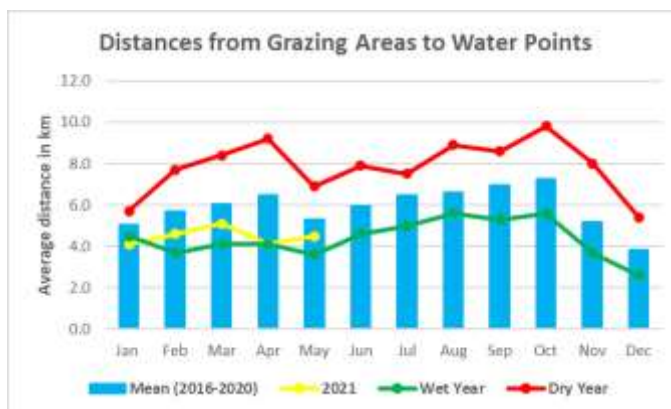


Figure 10: Average Grazing Distances

2.3 Implication of the Above Indicators to Food Security

- May rains will trigger a slight improvement in forage and water condition. This will boost livestock productivity and household purchasing power.

3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS

3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

3.1.1 Livestock Body Condition

- Livestock body condition ranged from fair to good for all species across the livelihood zones with an improving trend. This was due to improved forage availability.
- On average, 56 percent of cattle had good smooth appearance body condition in May compared to seven percent in previous month. The remaining 44 percent of the livestock had moderate (neither fat nor thin) body condition as shown in figure 11.
- Livestock body condition was better in year 2020 compared to similar period in year 2021.

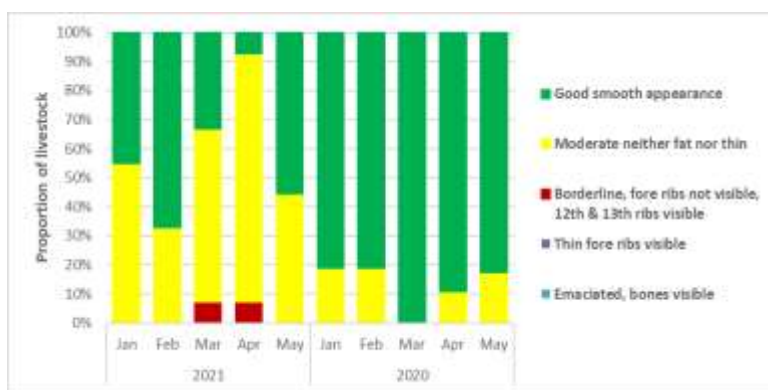


Figure 11: Cattle Body Condition

3.1.2 Livestock Diseases

- There were 136 confirmed cases of Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP) in Mwingi North, Mwingi Central, Kitui South (Ikanga/Kyatune ward) and Kitui East (Zombe/Mwitika ward) sub counties, 37 cases of trypanosomiasis in Waita, Athi and Mutha wards and six cases of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), with about 21 deaths as a result of CCPP.

3.1.3 Milk Production

- The average daily milk production per household decreased by 14 percent to stand at 1.2 litres in May compared 1.4 litres in previous month. This was due to increased watering distance and holding the milk for young ones to suckle.
- Households in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone produced an average of 1.7 litres per day compared to 0.9 litres in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current milk production is 14 percent below the long term mean as shown in figure 12.

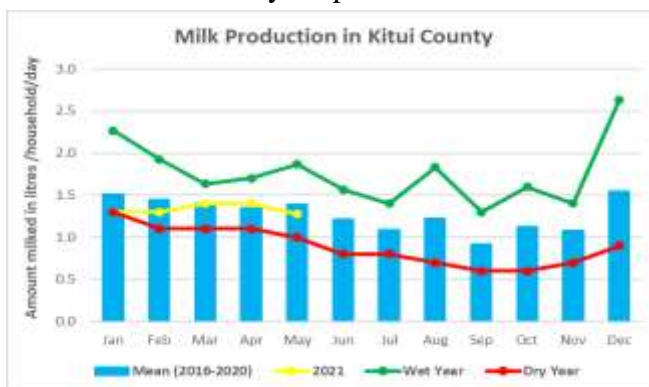


Figure 12: Milk Production

3.2 RAIN-FED CROP PRODUCTION

3.2.1 Stage and Condition of Food Crops

- The major crops planted in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone were green grams, millet, sorghum, cowpeas and maize. Moreover, maize, beans, pigeon peas, green grams and cow peas were planted in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- Crops were mainly at tussling or knee-high stage and in poor condition due to moisture stress.
- Area planted was lower than the long-term average due to late onset and poor performance of the long rains and most crops withered due to moisture stress.
- In addition to rain-fed cropping, farmers along main rivers (Athi, Tana, Tiva and Thua) had horticultural crops that were at various stages of development.

3.3 Implication of the Above Indicators to Food Security

- Crop production is likely to be impacted negatively by poor performance of rainfall leading to diminishing household terms of trade.
- Livestock productivity will be boosted by regeneration of pasture and improvement of water access and availability.

4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

4.1.1 Cattle Prices

- The average market price of cattle remained stable to stand at Ksh.33,896 in May from Ksh.33, 537 in previous month. This was attributed to stability in cattle body condition as a result of availability of livestock feeds.
- Cattle prices were higher in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone at Ksh.33,867 compared to Ksh.32,375 in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current market price of cattle is 33 percent higher than the long-term mean as shown in figure 13.

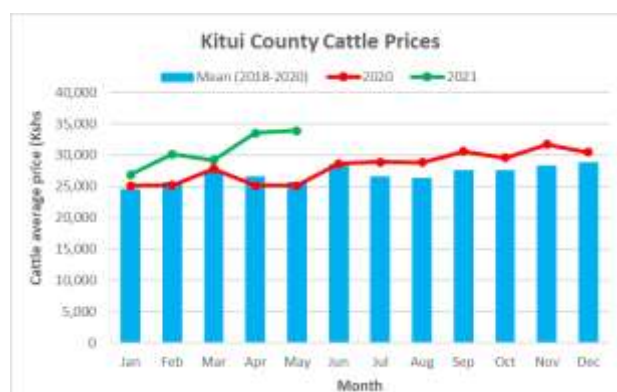


Figure 13: Cattle Prices

4.1.2 Small Ruminants Prices (Goat price)

- The average market price of goat remained stable to stand at Ksh.4,335 in May from Ksh. 4,269 in previous month. This was due to stability in goat body condition.
- Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone recorded a higher price of Ksh.4,633 compared to Ksh.3,903 in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current market price of goat is 22 percent higher than the long-term mean as shown in figure 14.



Figure 14: Goat Prices

4.2 CROP PRICES

4.2.1 Maize

- The average market price of maize per kilogram remained stable at Ksh.33 in May from Ksh.32 in previous month. This is due to availability of the commodity in the market from outside the county
- Maize price was higher in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone at Ksh.34 per kilogram compared to Ksh.32 in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current market price of maize is six percent lower than the long term mean as shown in figure 15.

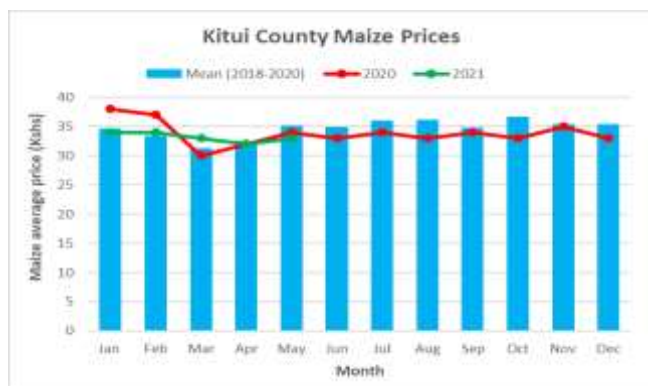


Figure 15: Maize Prices

4.2.2 Beans

- The average market price of beans per kilogram remained stable to stand at Ksh.95 in May from Ksh.91 in previous month.
- Beans price was higher in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone at Ksh.98 compared to Ksh.90 in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current beans price is 17 percent higher than the long term mean as shown in figure 16.
- Beans was mainly sourced from outside the county.



Figure 16: Beans Prices

4.3 Livestock Price Ratio/Terms of Trade

- Terms of trade remained stable to stand at 131 in May from 133 in previous month. This implies that, households were able to purchase 131 kilograms of maize from earnings of a goat in May from 133 kilograms in previous month.
- The sale of one goat would enable a household in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone to purchase 136 kilograms of maize compared to 122 kilograms in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current terms of trade is 28 percent higher than the long-term mean as shown in figure 17.

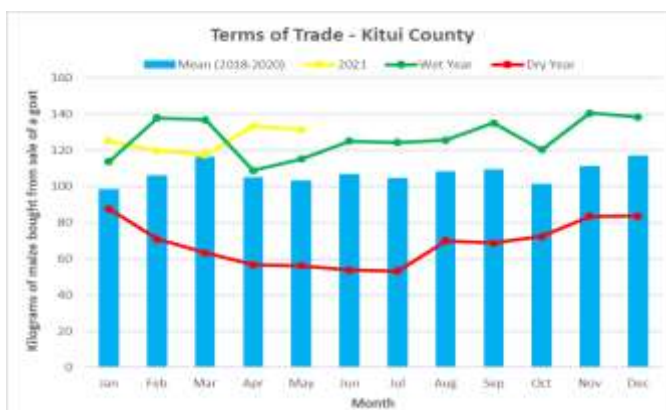


Figure 17: Terms of Trade

4.4 Implication of the Above Indicators to Food Security

- Crop prices are likely to rise following anticipated low productivity. This will impact negatively on household food consumption patterns.

5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- The average daily milk consumption per household declined by 18 percent to stand at 0.9 litres in May from 1.1 litres in previous month and this was due to decline in milk production.
- Milk consumption was higher in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone at 1.1 litres compared to 0.7 litres in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- The current milk consumption is six percent lower than the long-term average as shown in figure 18.

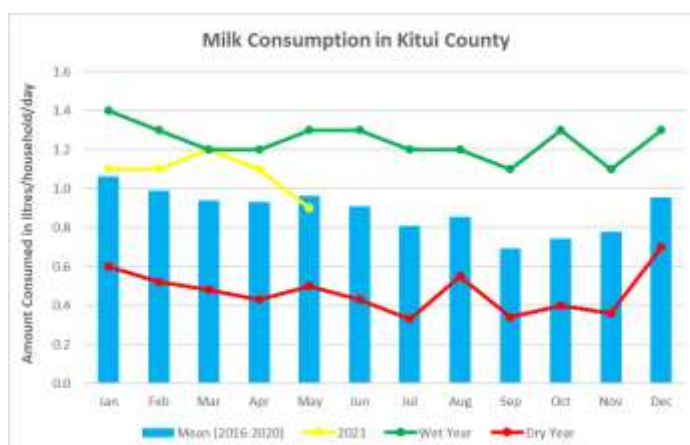


Figure 18: Milk Consumption

5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- The proportion of households in acceptable food consumption category declined to stand at 74.8 percent in May from 76.3 percent in previous month.
- The remaining 25.2 percent of the households were in borderline food consumption category as shown in figure 19.
- About 75.8 percent of the households in Mixed Farming livelihood zone were in acceptable food consumption category compared to 74.0 percent in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- More households were in acceptable food consumption category in similar period in year 2020 compared to year 2021.



Figure 19: Food Consumption Score

5.3 HEALTH AND NUTRITION STATUS

5.3.1 Nutrition Status

- The proportion of children at risk of malnutrition declined to stand at 2.7 percent in May from 3.1 percent in previous month.
- Moreover, no severely malnourished children were reported.
- The current level of children at risk of malnutrition is 3.9 percent lower than the long-term mean as shown in figure 20 and this is due to availability of diversified foods at household and market levels due to stability in terms of trade.

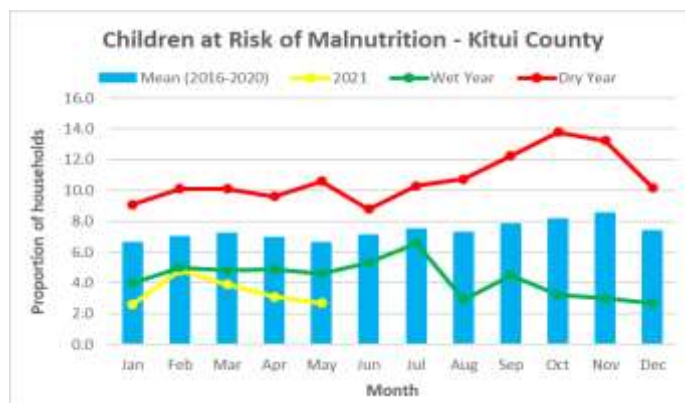


Figure 20: Children at Risk of Malnutrition

5.3.2 Health

- The proportion of children suspected to have fever with chills like malaria, fever with breathing difficulties and diarrhoea stood at 2.7, 0.7 and 1.6 percent in May compared to 1.9, 0.0 and 0.9 percent in previous month respectively.

5.4 COPING STRATEGIES

- The mean of reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) rose by eight percent to stand at 7.7 in May compared to 7.1 in previous month.
- Households in Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone had a high rCSI of 9.7 compared to 5.2 in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.
- Reliance on less preferred or less expensive food, reduced portion size of meals and reduced number of meals eaten per day were the most frequent coping mechanisms adopted across the livelihood zones.
- The current rCSI is 14 percent higher than the long-term mean as shown in figure 21.
- About 27.4, 15.6 and 2.6 percent of households were employing stressed, crisis and emergency food based coping mechanisms in May compared to 23.1, 15.2 and 1.5 percent respectively in previous month.
- In Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone, 17.3, 21.3 and 4.7 percent of households were employing stressed, crisis and emergency food based coping mechanisms to cope with lack of food or money to buy food compared to 40.0, 8.3 and 0.0 percent respectively in Mixed Farming livelihood zone.

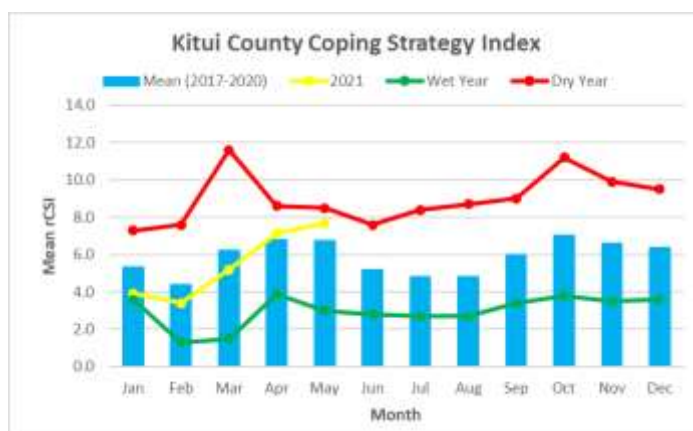


Figure 21: Reduced Coping Strategy Index

6.0 CURRENT INTERVENTION MEASURES

6.1 NON-FOOD INTERVENTIONS

- Promotion of high value horticultural crops, mango production & value addition and promotion of viable and equitable commercialization of the agricultural sector through value chain development and strengthening sorghum & millet value chains across the county; by County Government of Kitui in collaboration with various partners.
- Rehabilitation of water supplies, drilling of boreholes and construction of earth dams by County Government of Kitui in collaboration with various partners.
- Vitamin A Supplementation/Deworming, Growth Monitoring, Iron and Folic acid supplementation (IFAS) by Ministry of Health supported by development partners.
- Dissemination of climate and agro-weather advisories by Kenya Meteorological Department, County Government of Kitui and partners.

6.2 FOOD INTERVENTIONS

- Therapeutic integrated management of acute malnutrition for the under-fives, pregnant and lactating mothers [supplementary feeding program (SFP)], Outpatient therapeutic program (OTP) and Stabilization centres by Ministry of Health supported by several partners.

7.0 EMERGING ISSUES

7.1 Insecurity/Conflict/Human Displacement

- No abnormal incidences of insecurity, conflict or human displacement were reported in the county.

7.2 FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS

- Based on Kenya Meteorological Department Weather Outlook for June-July-August 2021 season issued on 31st May 2021, the county is expected to be generally sunny and dry throughout the forecast period occasioned by warmer than average temperatures. This will lead to depletion of rangeland resources.
- According to Sussex Vegetation Outlook for the month of June and July 2021, the county 3-month VCI forecast indicates normal to above normal vegetation greenness. This will boost availability and accessibility of livestock feeds. However, the vegetation greenness is likely to deteriorate in Mwingi Central and Kitui East sub counties.
- The TAMSAT-ALERT Soil Moisture forecast issued on 20th May 2021, indicates normal soil moisture conditions in most parts of the county and this will favour livestock feeds. However, pockets of the County especially in Mixed Farming livelihood zones will experience below normal soil moisture conditions which will impact negatively on crop production.
- Following poor performance of the long rain season, crop production is expected to decline across the county leading to low household purchasing power and increased price of food commodities. This will lower household food consumption patterns.
- Availability of crop residues will also boost livestock feeds.
- Based Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Desert Locust Situation Update issued on 3rd May 2021, the upsurge is continuing to decline in the Horn of Africa due to ongoing control operations. However, localized breeding could occur in parts of northern Kenya by any remnant infestations. Therefore, intense vigilance should be maintained in the county.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate/Short term

National Government, County Government and Development partners to collaborate on:

Agriculture Sector

- Promotion of rain water harvesting technologies for crop production.

- Set up experimental index insurance schemes.

Livestock Sector

- Intensifying livestock disease control measures in affected areas.
- Promote pasture conservation and management practices.

Water Sector

- Promote rain water harvesting technologies and management.
- Water infrastructure development and maintenance.

Health and Nutrition Sector

- Promoting home-based water treatment and conservation measures such as storage facilities across the county.
- Community awareness creation on COVID-19 preventive measures.
- Educate community on sanitation and hygiene related to water.

Education Sector

- Implementation of COVID-19 protocols in all learning institutions.

Social Protection Sector

- Mapping of vulnerable and at-risk households, affected food systems and responding through safety-nets.

Peace and Security Sector

- Enhancing peace building and conflict management activities along Kitui-Tana River border.