

## KENYA Food Security Outlook Update

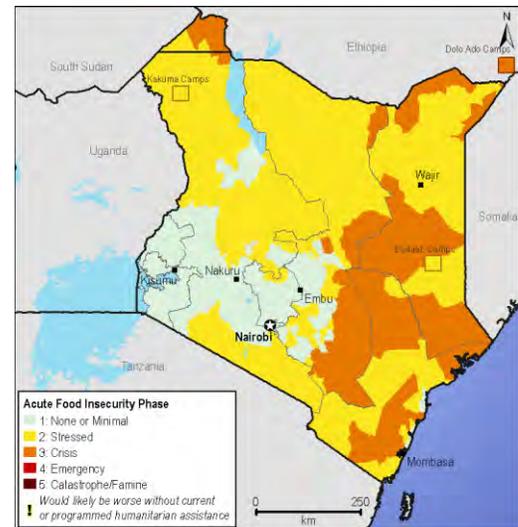
August 2012

*Increasing conflict in the pastoral areas endangers food security.*

### Key messages

- The increasing livestock trekking distances and migrations due to depletion of water and browse in southern Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, and Ijara, the influx of livestock from Ethiopia into Moyale and northern Wajir, as well as conflicts in Turkana, Isiolo, Samburu, Mandera, Wajir, Tana River, and Ijara are adversely impacting livelihoods leading to heightened household food insecurity.
- The harvesting of the long rains maize crop is ongoing in southern part of Rift Valley, Nyanza, and part of Western provinces. Meanwhile, the maize crop is at the grain filling stage in the main maize growing area in the northern Rift Valley. There are no reports of the Maize Lethal Necrotic Disease (MLND) spreading into the main maize growing areas, and the long rains maize output is expected to be average to above average in these areas.
- However, overall annual maize production in 2012 is likely to be below average due to the poor harvests in the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas and the effects of MLND in the other growing areas.
- The long rains maize harvests are expected to be significantly below average in the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas. The anticipated poor production coupled with the increasing crop sales in order to obtain cash for land preparation and purchases of seed for the upcoming short rains season is rapidly depleting household food stocks. The food access for marginal agricultural farmers is likely to be poor until after the next harvesting season from February to March 2013.

**Figure 1. Estimated current food security outcomes, August 2012**



Source: FEWS NET Kenya

For more information on the IPC Household-based Acute Food Insecurity Reference Table please see: [www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale](http://www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale)

### Pastoral conditions

The environmental conditions in the northeastern pastoral areas continue to worsen as the dry season intensifies, particularly in Isiolo, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, and Ijara. In particular, browse and water availability has significantly declined leading to uncharacteristically long distances to water for both livestock and domestic use, and heightened livestock movements. Water access is poor in the northeastern pastoral areas compared to the northwestern pastoral areas and agropastoral zones. For example, livestock watering distances are average or below average in Moyale, Marsabit, Turkana, Samburu, Baringo, Laikipia, and Narok. Conversely, watering distances have increased by over 25 percent in the last month and are currently more than double the usual distances in Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, Ijara, and Tana River.

The above average distances to water for livestock have triggered livestock concentration near permanent water sources such as boreholes and permanent rivers resulting in tensions and conflicts between pastoralists and agropastoralists in Ijara and Tana River Districts. Meanwhile, water trucking is ongoing in Ijara and Isiolo and may soon start in Wajir and Garissa. Water shortages are expected to intensify until late October across the northeastern pastoral areas. This will lead to longer livestock trekking distances and migrations. The depletion of browse has resulted in increased migration of camels and

*This report provides an update to the July 2012 Outlook report for Kenya.*

*The next Outlook report will be released in October 2012 and will cover the October 2012 to March 2013 period.*

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goats from Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, and Ijara to Kitui, Mwingi, and Lamu, increasing the risk of resource conflicts between pastoralists and local populations.

Increased livestock trekking distances are reducing livestock productivity. For instance, milk production from sheep and goats has marginally declined despite the increased lambing and kidding in the northeastern pastoral areas. However, in the northwestern pastoral areas, households' access to milk is sustained by good environmental conditions even though milk volume obtained per day is below normal. Also, livestock body conditions are deteriorating, and goat body conditions are only fair in Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, and Ijara. As a result, goat prices have declined by about five percent in the last month in these districts. However, goat prices are 50 to 80 percent above the five-year average for July across the northeastern pastoral areas and are more than double the July five-year average price in Turkana, Samburu, Moyale, Mandera, Laikipia, and Garissa. While maize prices are more than twice the five-year average for July, they have declined by about five percent since June. The decline in maize prices is attributable to improved market supply from the early harvesting areas in the western parts of the country and the southern Rift Valley, and reduced demand for maize due to sustained availability of milk in the last three months. However, pastoralists' terms of trade remain above the five-year average for July by up to 180 percent. The improved terms of trade (ToT) is mainly due to above average goat prices as maize prices remain high despite the recent reduction in price.

The proportion of children under five years of age 'at risk' of malnutrition, that is, with Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) less than 135 millimeters (mm) has either remained the same or declined by up to 25 percent since June suggesting that access to food is still good, for instance, in Wajir, Mandera, Ijara, Tana River, Narok, Laikipia, Baringo, Samburu, and Isiolo. The favorable terms of trade, ongoing interventions, and the continued availability of goat milk are the main sources of food for households. MUAC rates are 10 to 50 percent below the five-year average for July in Baringo, Ijara, Garissa, Turkana, Tana River, Samburu, Moyale, Isiolo, and Narok. However, nutritional status is likely to significantly decline as available water depletes, leading to reduced water consumption or the use of poor quality water, and as milk availability from goats and sheep declines during the dry season between now and October. The livelihoods for majority of poor and very poor households are still fragile and though food insecurity is currently at Stressed (IPC Phase 2), it is likely to either remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or move into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from August onwards when milk and water availability diminishes, particularly in the southern Wajir, eastern Isiolo, and most parts of Garissa, Tana River, and Ijara. Furthermore, the food security situation is likely to be adversely affected by increasing conflict over water resources in Isiolo, Samburu, Tana River, and Mandera, and the ongoing influx of livestock from Ethiopia into Moyale and northern Wajir.

### **Marginal agricultural farm households in the southeastern and coastal lowlands**

The poor performance of the long rains led to below average production. Thus, the long rains harvest including maize, sorghum, and pulses that started in late July is ending in August, almost as soon as it began. The maize harvest is expected to be less than 50 percent of average in most parts of the mixed farming zones in Mbeere, Tharaka, Kitui, Mwingi, Malindi, and Taita Taveta. However, households in the marginal mixed farming areas in these districts may not harvest more than 10 percent of average as the crop wilted. The available household stocks are unlikely to last for more than a month due to the poor production and sales of harvested crops such as green grams. Households are prioritizing selling crops in order to get cash for land preparation and the purchase of seeds for planting during the upcoming short rains season.

Pasture and browse conditions are generally average to above average particularly in the high altitude areas mainly as a result of enhanced pasture regeneration after the good October to December 2011 short rains and the subsequent March to May 2012 long rains which were much better than the long rains in the low altitude areas. However, available forage is likely to deplete rapidly due to a combination of a large influx of livestock from Northeastern Province and due to destruction following the unseasonable showers that have created an environment conducive to increased termite activity. Large camel and goat herds from Garissa, Wajir, Isiolo, and Tana River entered southern Meru North, eastern Mwingi, and Kitui as early as in May and June as opposed to the usual time they normally come in September. Large cattle herds are entering Lamu from Ijara. The influx of livestock has resulted in heightened competition for water and forage between local livestock and those from the northeastern pastoral areas resulting in conflicts that have caused disruption of livelihood activities and loss of lives in southern Meru North, eastern Mwingi, and Kitui. Meanwhile, tensions are high in Lamu. Pastoralists have been arrested for illegally grazing in the national parks situated in Makueni and Taita Taveta. The current influx of livestock is expected to intensify until mid- to late October when the short rains are expected to start.

The availability of some harvests, on-farm casual labor opportunities, and ongoing interventions are supporting current household food access. However, the increasing malnutrition rates, in the absence of unusual human diseases, are indicative of declining food access in many areas. For example, the proportion of children ‘at risk’ of malnutrition has increased by about five to 25 percent over the last month in Mwingi, Makueni, and Lamu. The MUAC rates are 15 and 50 percent above the five-year average for July in Meru North and Mbeere respectively. The majority of households are Stressed (IPC Phase 2), and are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural lowlands from August onwards when their food stocks and milk deplete, and water shortages increase.

**Prospects for national cereal supply and prices**

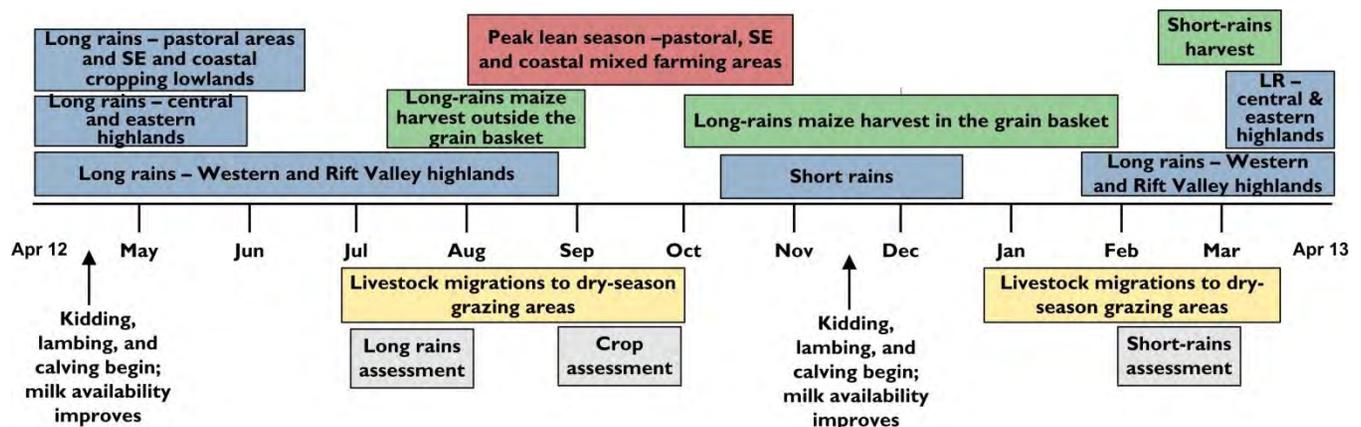
Harvesting of the long rains maize crop is steadily picking up in the southern Rift Valley, Nyanza, and parts of Western Provinces leading to improved market supply. Normally, these areas account for about 35 percent of the national long rains maize output. The improving supply of maize in the market is exerting a downward pressure on maize prices. According to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), about 59,500 hectares (ha) of maize has been affected by MLND in Bomet, Chepalungu, Borabu, and Naivasha Districts where up to 65 percent of the crop may be lost. In addition, about 600 ha of the crop are affected in northern Embu, upper parts of Meru Central, and Igembe South Districts where crop losses are estimated to be about 10 percent. However, despite these losses, prices are following more typical seasonal patterns. For example, during the first two weeks of August, the price of maize has remained stable or declined by five to 15 percent on wholesale markets in Kitale, Busia, Mombasa, and Nairobi. Wholesale prices of maize are expected to gradually decline through December as harvesting of the long rains maize continues. At the same time, wholesale prices of maize have dropped by five to 10 percent in Malindi and Kitui which are situated in the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas, as a result of increased market supply from cross-border inflows from Tanzania.

Nevertheless, maize prices remain well above the five-year average for July, for instance, by up to 110 percent in the northeastern and northwestern pastoral areas and the agropastoral livelihood zone. In the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas, maize prices were 15 to 80 percent above the five-year average in July. Maize prices are expected to remain high until after November when market supplies from the long rains maize harvest in the grain basket enters the market. Thereafter, maize prices are likely to rapidly decline.

**Ongoing interventions and impacts**

Various food and non-food interventions are ongoing, and the World Food Program (WFP) has prepositioned food supplies in the pastoral areas in anticipation of the enhanced October to December 2012 short rains reducing accessibility during the rainy season. External food needs are expected to continue to increase, at least until November when short rains are well established. As such, there is need to upscale the ongoing interventions in the meantime to mitigate the declining food security situation particularly in the northeastern pastoral areas and the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural lowlands.

**Seasonal calendar and critical events**



Source: FEWS NET Kenya