

KENYA Food Security Outlook Update

May 2012

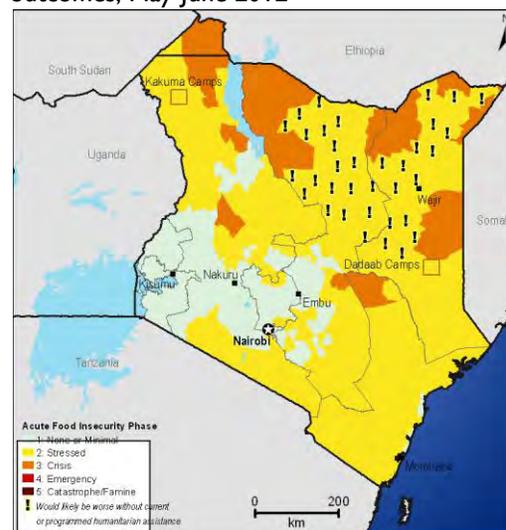
Poor long rains in parts of the pastoral areas moderating improvements in food security

- With the exceptions of pockets in the northern and northeastern pastoral areas, the long rains delayed by up to five weeks across the country. The rainfall performance has been generally good in many places outside of the northern and northeastern pastoral areas and the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas where rainfall has been below average and poorly distributed over both time and space. As a result, the majority of the households in these areas are classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2), while a few are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) (Figure 1).
- The improved availability of milk, short cycle crops, and casual labor opportunities are moderating the decline in household food security situation across the southeastern marginal agricultural zone. However, households are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) as food stocks are exhausted and market prices are above average and increasing. Food insecurity is intensifying in the coastal lowlands where the long rains have not recharged water sources or supported crop growth.
- According to the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) and local government officials, nearly 65 people have been killed and around 4,000 households have been displaced by flash floods and landslides. The flash floods have destroyed property and disrupted schooling and transportation in northwestern, western, and southwestern Kenya. Additional flooding and landslides are likely to occur in localized areas of West Pokot, Marakwet, Busia, Nyando and Meru where up to 200 millimeters (mm) of rain is forecast over the next seven days.

Progress of the 2012 March-May long rains

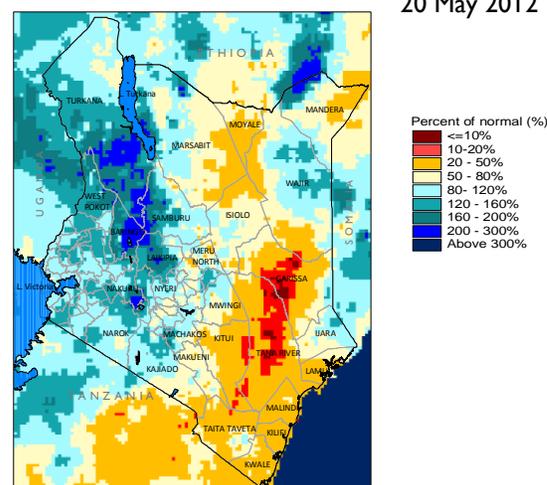
The long rains began late this year in most areas. Instead of starting in early March, rains did not start until April and were up to five weeks late, particularly in the main cereal-growing areas. In most parts of the pastoral areas and southeastern marginal agricultural areas the rains were one to two weeks late. The long rains picked up considerably in April and early May across the country. So far, the long rains have only been partially consistent with the seasonal forecast. For instance, as indicated in the forecast, the rains have been poorly distributed in time and space, and have been below 60 percent of normal in some parts of the northeastern and northern pastoral areas. However, highly depressed rains in parts of the coast region have been lower than forecast. Also, up to 120 percent of average rains in parts of northeastern pastoral are more than the forecast though not evenly distributed across these regions. Overall, the northwestern, western, and southwestern parts of the country have received normal to above normal rains, with total

Figure 1. Estimated current food security outcomes, May-June 2012



Source: FEWS NET Kenya

Figure 2. Rainfall estimates (RFE2) as a percent of normal rains (1995-2003 average) | 1 March to 20 May 2012



Data: USGS/FEWS NET Graphic: FEWS NET Kenya

This report provides an update to the April 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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rainfall amounts reaching 300 percent of normal in southern Turkana, eastern Baringo, and western Samburu (Figure 2). Localized areas in central Wajir and northern Mandera have received more than 120 percent of normal long rains, but they were poorly distributed temporally with some areas only having two or three days of rain. The long rains have been below normal and poorly distributed in the northeastern, southeastern, and coastal areas. They have been exceptionally poor in amount and distribution, averaging less than 20 percent of average and were received over less than 10 days in central Garissa and Tana River. The short term Global Forecast system (GFS) model maintained by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA/NWS/NCEP) indicates that rains are likely to continue into the fourth week of May in most areas with the exceptions of Marsabit, Isiolo, Garissa, Tana River, Ijara, Lamu, Malindi, and Kilifi districts.

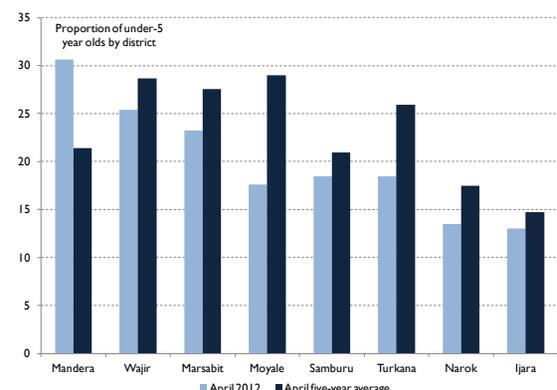
Pastoral conditions

With the exceptions of northern Mandera, central Wajir, western Marsabit and Isiolo, and southeastern Garissa, the long rains have been poorly distributed and below normal in the northern and northeastern pastoral areas. However, the availability of water, browse, and pasture is normal to above normal in many places due to improvements which followed the good short rains in late 2011. Consequently, improvements in livestock productivity have been sustained across the pastoral areas. For example, livestock body conditions are generally fair to good across the pastoral areas, and livestock prices are above average. Goat prices are above the five year average for April by 25 to 80 percent in Marsabit, Wajir, and Ijara, and by 100 to 200 percent in Mandera, Samburu, Turkana, and Moyale. However, due to high cereal prices, terms of trade are only 10 to 40 percent above the April five-year average in Wajir, Mandera and Samburu but 10 to 20 percent below the April average in Ijara and Marsabit. Kidding and lambing have increased, leading to improved milk availability, for instance, in Marsabit, Mandera, Moyale, Turkana, Samburu, Isiolo, and northern Garissa. Improved household food access is manifested in declining malnutrition.

According to surveillance data from the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), the proportion of children under five years of age 'at risk' of malnutrition as measured using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) less than 135 mm has declined across the pastoral areas with the exception of Ijara where it marginally increased. The proportion of children at risk of malnutrition is 10 to 30 percent below the five-year average for April in the pastoral areas except in Mandera where MUAC is about 45 percent above the five-year average likely due to insecurity that is limiting access to interventions (Figure 3).

Grazing resources have depleted in some of the areas where the rains have been poor, for example, in southern Wajir, eastern Isiolo, northeastern Mandera, and central Garissa and Tana River. As a result, livestock migration is unusually occurring in the middle of the long rains season in Tana River and Garissa. Meanwhile, persistent bush fires since January 2012 are further diminishing pasture and browse availability in northwestern Wajir and southwestern Mandera. The food security situation for pastoralists situated in areas where the rains have been exceptionally poor will decline starting in July. Livestock body conditions are likely to start declining due to the increasing trekking distances while household milk access may be disrupted by a combination of increased trekking distances and early livestock migration. Meanwhile there is risk of conflict in areas where livestock are concentrated, for instance, in northern Garissa, Mandera, and Tana River, and central Isiolo and Wajir. At the same time, outbreaks of contagious livestock diseases may occur due to increased livestock movements and concentrations. The prevailing high food prices are unlikely to relent at a time when livestock prices would likely be declining, and this may moderate households' purchasing capacities, leading to inadequate food consumption. Although food security outcomes have started to decline in some parts of the North and Northeast, the majority of pastoralists are likely to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) while some will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through September.

Figure 3. Comparative prevalence of Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) rates of under-five year olds below 135 mm/at risk of malnutrition in pastoral areas



Source: National Drought Management Authority (NDMA)

Marginal agricultural farm households in the southeastern and coastal lowlands

The mixed farming zones situated in the high elevation areas of the southeastern marginal agricultural zone have received near normal rains, including southwestern Mwingi, northwestern Kitui, western Tharaka and Mbeere, northern Makueni, and southern Meru North. In these areas, the maize crop is between dusting and tasseling stages. Sorghum and millet are in the head formation stage, and pulses are in the flowering or pod formation stages. Meanwhile, the crop condition is generally fair in the low elevation areas with the exceptions of eastern Kitui and Mwingi where rains have been poorly distributed, and farmers are currently carrying out the first weeding while others are still planting. The majority of farmers in the coastal lowlands have yet to plant the long rains crop. The few days of low rainfall cannot effectively support germination. In parts of Taita Taveta and Kwale, farmers are replanting after the early planted crop wilted due to prolonged dry conditions. While the early planted crop is likely to reach maturity, the overall long rains harvest in the coastal and southeastern lowlands is likely to be below average primarily due to reduced acreage in the coastal lowlands and the possible poor harvests in the marginal mixed farming areas of the Southeast. In those areas, planting was late or replanting has occurred. The harvest prospects for the late-planted crop will depend on the performance of the rains over May and June for the remainder of the season.

At this time of year, households often sell the remainder of their short rains harvest which was completed in February and March to cover both current food costs and the costs of inputs for the current season. Compared to the same time last year, household income from sale of crops has dropped by 50 percent, mainly due to the poor 2011/12 short rains harvests, for instance, in Mbeere. However, the improved availability of casual farm labor opportunities up by about five percent compared to same time last year, good access to milk, and the increased availability of short cycle crops for consumption are positively impacting on household food access in the Southeast. For example, the green gram harvest has started in pockets of the marginal mixed farming zone of Makueni. However, in the coastal region, increasing water stress and below normal availability of short cycle crops and casual labor opportunities is heightening household food insecurity. The majority of households in the southeastern and coastal lowlands are likely to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) since they are not engaging in irreversible coping strategies to provide a minimally adequate level of food consumption. The households in the coastal areas are worse off than other areas as the poor 2012 long rains followed below normal 2011 short rains.

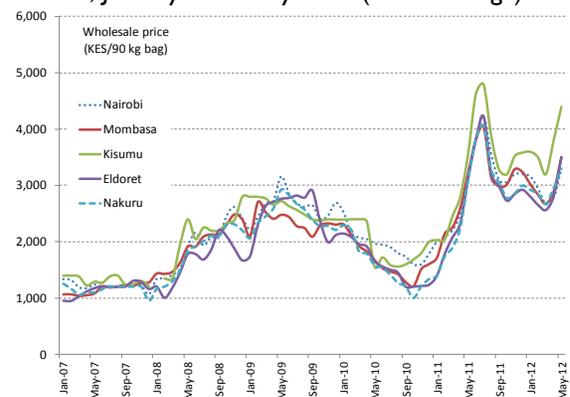
Refugees' food security prospects

From January 2012 until early May 2012, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 5,791 refugees entered the Kakuma refugee camp compared to 1,420 refugees during a similar period in 2011. In total, the refugee population in Kakuma increased by 2,514 people in April 2012, to a total of 94,844 refugees. The increasing arrival of refugees is fueled by increased conflict between South Sudan and Sudan and high insecurity and conflict in parts of South Sudan. While food availability is assured for all registered refugees, including those in the Dadaab refugee camps, access to other basic needs such as shelter and sanitation continue to be problematic. Refugees are classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

Prospects for national cereal supply and prices

The rapidly increasing price of maize is indicative of the tightening domestic supply (Figure 4). Between April and mid-May, maize prices have increased by 10 to 25 percent in markets situated within the surplus producing areas including Chwele, Kitale, Eldoret, and Nakuru. Similarly, retail prices have increased by about five percent in the deficit, but maize-producing areas of the southeastern and coastal lowlands and by 5 to 10 percent in the pastoral areas. The disruption of transport services due to floods, the increased demand for maize for planting due to a national shortage of certified seed, and the behavior of traders to continue holding stocks in anticipation of seasonally higher prices may be contributing to the rising maize prices. Maize prices are generally above average. For instance, in the major urban markets, maize prices are up to 25 percent above last year and 40 to 90 percent above the five-year average. Despite the significant

Figure 4. Maize price trends in the main wholesale markets, January 2007-May 2012 (initial average)



Source: Ministry of Agriculture of Kenya

increases in cross-border, informal imports that have more than doubled in April compared to March, maize prices are unlikely to decrease until after the early harvested crop from the surplus producing areas enters the market in August. However, harvests are likely to be delayed because of the late start and slow progress of planting due to the delayed onset of long rains and seed and fertilizer shortages. According to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), about 998,300 hectares, which is about 75 percent of the short-term average (three-year average) area put to maize production, had been planted by mid-May 2012. However, much of this area will be planted in May, especially in the main maize growing area in the Rift Valley where only about 40 percent of three-year average area has been achieved and in the Coastal lowlands where planting has just started.

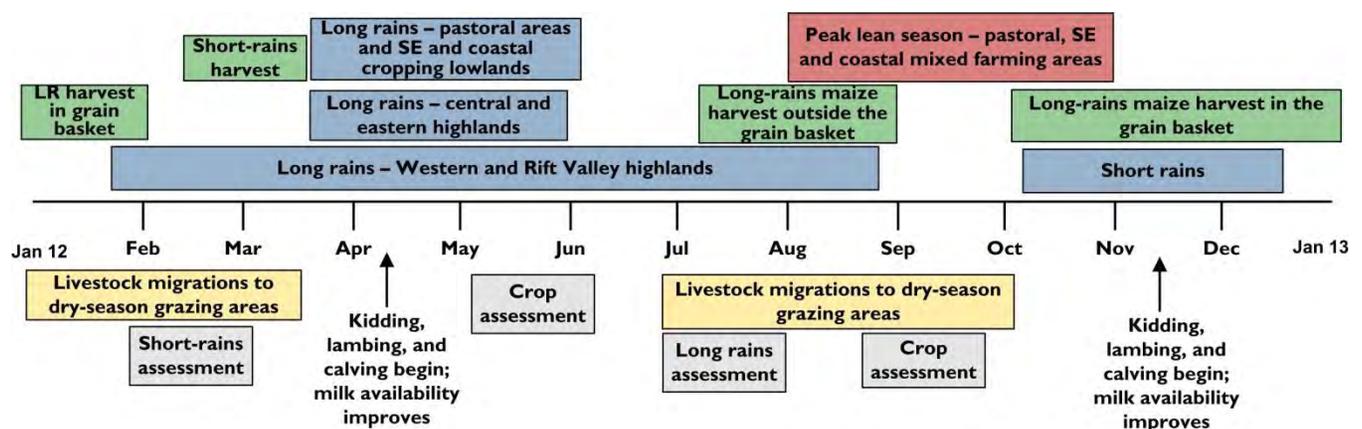
Ongoing interventions and impacts

According to the World Food Program (WFP), beneficiary re-targeting for general food distribution (GFD) and food/cash for assets (F/CFA) was completed in April. A total 1.25 million beneficiaries will be targeted under GFD and slightly over 800,000 through F/CFA from May to August 2012. Food distributions commenced towards the end of April and are expected to spill over into May. About 55 percent of the planned beneficiaries for April have received an estimated 10,000 MT or 51 percent of the plan of food commodities through GFD and FFA. Meanwhile, approximately USD 209,000 has been disbursed as CFA.

Flood affected populations

According to the Kenya Red Cross (KRC) and local administration officials, nearly 65 people have been killed as a result of flash floods and landslides. In particular, flash floods have been reported in Homa Bay, Kisumu, Migori, Nyando, Rachuonyo, Busia, Trans Nzoia, and Teso districts in western Kenya, Turkana, Samburu, Baringo, Marsabit, Isiolo, Trans Mara, Nakuru, Narok, Laikipia, and Kajiado districts in the Rift Valley, Taita Taveta, Malindi, Tana River, and Kilifi in the Coast Province, and in Nairobi. Meanwhile, landslides have been reported in Nairobi, Kisii, Makueni, Meru, Marakwet, Kirinyaga, and Thika districts. Nearly 4,000 households have been displaced or have lost livelihood assets due to the floods and landslides. While relief operations are continuing, the affected population still requires both non-food and food assistance. Additional households may be displaced because of further flooding and landslides in localized areas of West Pokot, Marakwet, Busia, Nyando and Meru where up to 200 mm of rains is forecast over the next seven days. Meanwhile, the overflowing River Tana is likely to cause flooding in Tana River, Malindi, and Kilifi. However, the flooding will have some likely positive benefits on pasture in these areas after the flood waters recede.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET Kenya