

KENYA Food Security Outlook Update

June 2013

Food security remains stable despite the erratic cessation of the long rains in eastern areas

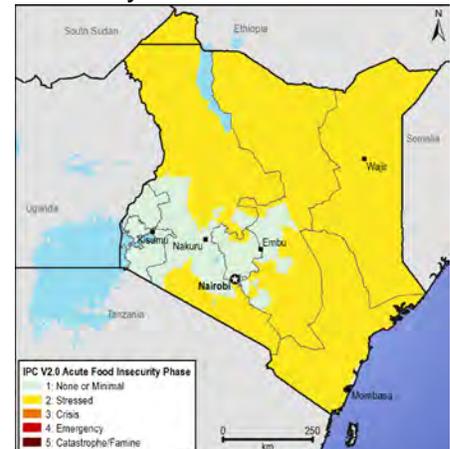
KEY MESSAGES

- Food security remained stable but Stressed (IPC Phase 2) across the country following the relatively good performance of the March to May long rains. As a result, a significant proportion of households can at least meet their minimum food requirements.
- However, the erratic ending of the long rains in the southeast and the highly likely below normal peak in the coastal strip in June/July may reduce food supply to below earlier expected levels and constrain household food availability and access between July and September.
- Maize prices remained stable across the country while livestock prices increased between April and May, increasing access to food for those households in the pastoral livelihood zones who depend on markets for their food.

CURRENT SITUATION

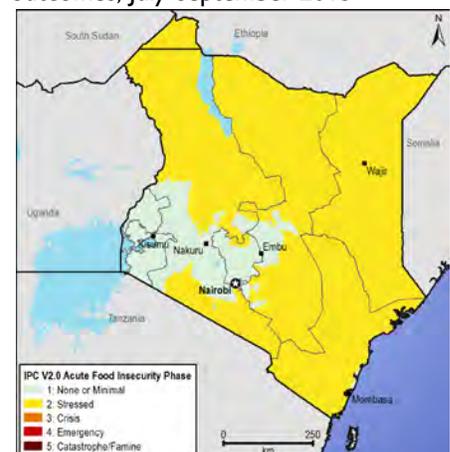
- In the Southeastern Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone including Makueni, Kitui, and Makueni Counties, the long rains ceased erratically between late April and the middle of May, coinciding with the maize's tasselling and kernel development stages, which requires considerable soil moisture to ensure normal yields. Although rangeland conditions remained good and stable across Makueni and Kitui Counties between April and May, a considerable, seasonal increase in distances to water points and grazing points were reported in Mwingi District, Makueni, and Tharaka Nithi County between April and May, leading to a considerable drop in milk production and consumption.
- The Coastal Marginal Agricultural Mixed Farming livelihood zone, including Kwale, Kilifi, and Lamu Counties, received above average rains in May, resulting in localized flooding that limited market access in parts of Lamu County and a seasonal increase in demand for casual labor for weeding. Compared to April, rangeland conditions improved in May but below average conditions still persisted in localized areas as indicated by [the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index \(NDVI\) from the last ten days of May](#).
- Maize prices rose at least six percent and 14 percent in the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas respectively while livestock prices remained stable but above the five-year average in May. Food consumption remained stable, and it was supported by the availability of green pulses from dry-weather resistant legumes, the relatively high availability of milk, and income from casual labor. As a result, households could access at least their minimum food requirements. Consequently, a combination of milk, green pulses, and supplemental programs resulted in stable nutrition. Exceptions were found in Tharaka Nithi and Lamu Counties where the proportion of children below five years of age with Middle Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) less than 135 millimeters (mm), defined as 'at risk' of malnutrition, were 22 and 64 percent above their five-year averages, respectively, driven by locally poorer access to milk in these areas.

Figure 1. Projected food security outcomes, June 2013



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 2. Projected food security outcomes, July-September 2013



Source: FEWS NET

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making, and does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. For more information on this scale, please visit www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale.

- In much of the pastoral livelihood zones, [NDVI from the last ten days of May](#) indicates wide areas with above-average biomass, reflecting adequate soil moisture. However, average biomass with some localized points of below average biomass were observable in Marsabit, Isiolo, Turkana, and Wajir Counties. Improved rangeland conditions between April and May resulted in seasonal improvement of livestock body conditions which kept the livestock prices significantly above their five-year average. Whereas maize prices remained stable in May, cattle prices increased significantly between April and May by 35 percent in Marsabit, by 36 percent in Wajir, and by 17 percent in Ijara. As a result of rising livestock prices being faster than rising prices of maize over the past several months, households selling cattle could access maize from the market. The proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition (with MUAC < 135 mm) remained stable and below their five-year averages, except in Marsabit where a marginal increase above the five-year average proportion occurred, driven partly by considerable incidence of human diseases over the March to May long rains. There was a 20 percent increase in Tana River, a 12 percent increase in Marsabit, and a 16 percent increase in Moyale in the proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition between April and May, driven partly by the occurrence of human disease and a decline in milk consumption, but these levels remained below their five-year averages.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

Most of the assumptions made in the [Kenya Food Security Outlook for April to September 2013](#) remain unchanged. However, the following assumption has been updated:

- Following the availability of updated climactic forecasting information, the agro-climatic assumption from the April to September Outlook is made more specific by including the forecast for the Coastal Marginal Mixed Farming Agricultural livelihood zone. In addition to the long rains continuing from June to August in the western and Rift Valley highlands, in the southern coastal strip in Mombasa, Kilifi, and Kwale Counties, the June to September rains are likely to be near-normal to below normal in terms of overall rainfall, but in the northern coastal strip in Malindi and Lamu Counties, June to September rains will be near normal to above normal in terms of total rainfall. In both areas, the rainfall will mainly occur in June and start to reduce in intensity from July.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2013

- The Southeast will likely experience dryness through September. Resulting moisture stress from normal seasonal dryness is likely to result in premature tasselling and silking of the maize crop and will reduce the output to below average. However, the availability of drought-tolerant legumes including cowpeas (*Vigna unguiculata*) in June and biennial pigeon peas (*Cajanus cajan*) from July through September will support food consumption. A combination of remittances and increases in income from livestock sales through September are likely to offset negative the effects of expected increases in maize prices through September and support household food access. In the Coastal Marginal Mixed Farming Agricultural livelihood zone, the expected rainfall peak in June that is likely to increase the seasonal availability of casual labor opportunities for weeding in June and for land preparation and the planting of cotton through September and increase the availability of early maturing green vegetables and cassava through August, supporting household food access. Besides, cross-border inflows of cereals from Tanzania are expected to reach their seasonal peak in June, and partly reduce excessive maize price increases in the southern parts of the coastal and southeastern marginal agricultural areas in proximity to the Taita Taveta border point. As a result, households will likely be able to at least meet their minimum food requirements and will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through September without engaging in irreversible coping activities.
- In much of the pastoral livelihood zones, the available pasture and browse are expected to last through September but with seasonal, dry season deterioration in quantity and quality. Currently, with availability of milk and relatively stable food prices and an increase in livestock prices, food security remains Stressed (IPC Phase 2). The deterioration of rangeland conditions, despite migration to dry season grazing areas by July, is likely to negatively impact on livestock body conditions and consequently milk availability will gradually decline through September. Although livestock prices are likely to remain elevated through August due to fairly good body conditions, continued increases in food prices in August and September coupled with seasonal occurrence of conflicts during the June to September dry season and human diseases may impede food security access through September. In those areas currently with below average biomass including parts of Marsabit, Isiolo, Tana River, Turkana, and Samburu Counties, food security may deteriorate to Crisis (IPC phase 3) by September if there will not be humanitarian interventions in place.