

## KENYA Food Security Outlook

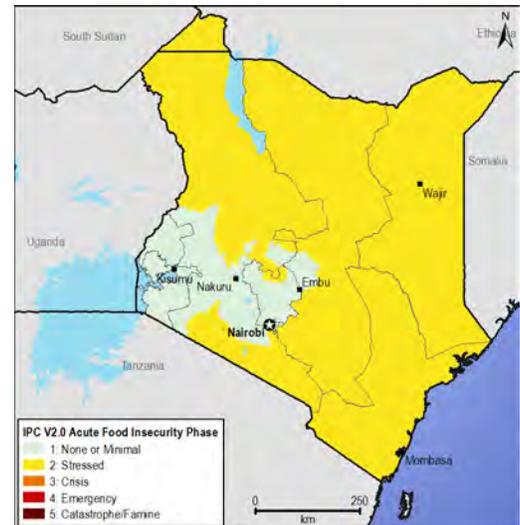
October 2013 to March 2014

*Food security to remain stable despite likely normal to below normal October to December rains*

### KEY MESSAGES

- The population in need of food assistance declined marginally between February and August 2013. The majority of households (63 percent) in need of assistance through February are located in pastoral areas while 37 percent are in the marginal agricultural livelihood zones, according to Kenya Food Security Steering Group's (KFSSG) long rains assessment conducted in August 2013. The improvement was attributed to the effects of food security and resilience building programs among other factors.
- The October to December short rain season is likely to be normal to below normal in the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural livelihood zones and in almost all the pastoral livelihood zones, lowering food availability and livestock productivity. Low levels of agricultural and livestock activities will likely reduce demand for rural labor for weeding, harvesting, and other seasonal tasks.
- Maize prices are expected to remain stable or increase marginally and remain above their five-year averages through December, partly driven by a below average long rains harvest from the high- and medium-potential areas, constraining food access for poor households whose income is likely to remain constant or decline due to limited casual labor opportunities between October and March.
- In much of the country, food security will deteriorate and remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through December as households increasingly depend on markets during a period when food prices are expected to increase marginally or remain stable. However, consumption and nutrition may improve slightly but food security will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from January through March following the short rains harvest even though the volume of maize harvest could be below average.

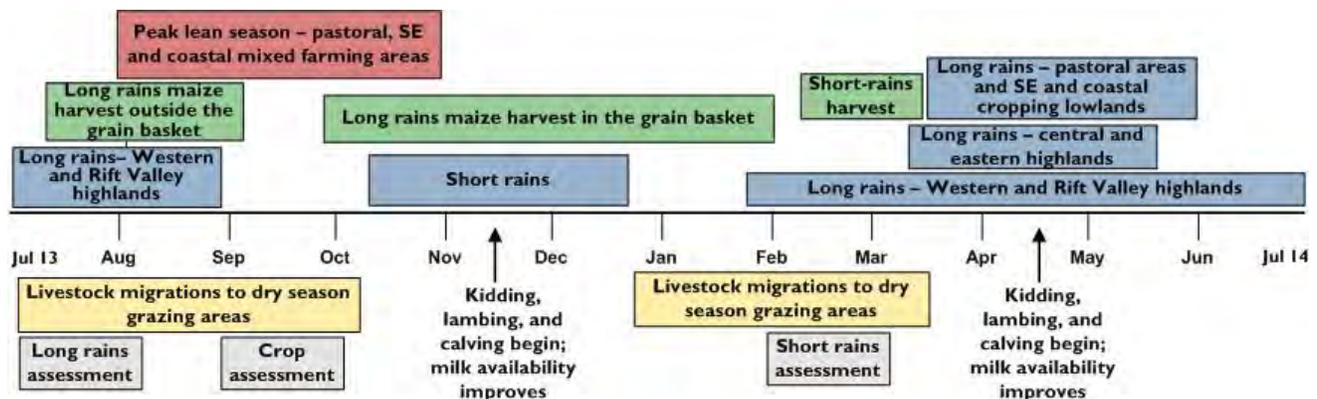
**Figure 1.** Current food security outcomes, October 2013



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](http://www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale).

### SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

## NATIONAL OVERVIEW

### Current Situation

Between February and August, the official number of households in need of emergency food assistance declined from 1.1 million to 0.85 million, according to the KFSSG long rains assessment conducted in August 2013. The decline in population in need of emergency assistance was attributed to the implementation of food security resilience programs among other factors. 63 percent of the population in need of food assistance was located in the pastoral livelihood zones in the Northeast and Northwest and agropastoral livelihood zones while 37 percent was located in the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas.

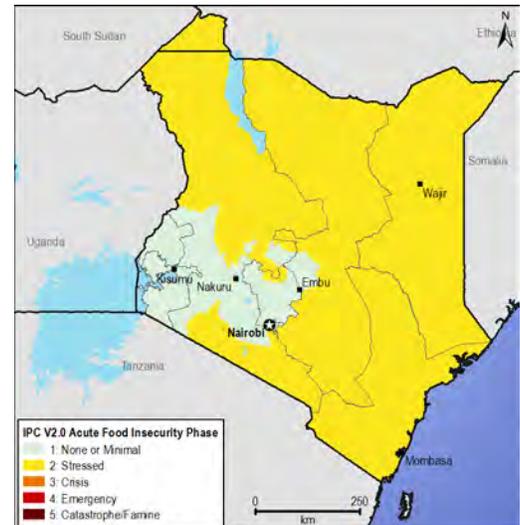
However, the recent gains in food security could be reversed, owing to the increasing general cost of living against relatively constant household income. The consumer price index (CPI) increased by almost two percent from 140.29 in August 2013 to 142.82 in September 2013, but food and non-alcoholic drinks price inflation increased by one percent higher than the overall inflation rate over the same time period. The annualized inflation rate stood at 8.29 percent in September 2013 with food and non-alcoholic drinks at 13 percent. Consumer price inflation has been increasing since reaching a low of 3.2 percent at an annual rate in December 2012.

The increase in inflation is attributed partly to the increase in fuel prices, which rose by one percent between August and September and were 12 percent above their five-year averages. Another contributor to rising prices has been the implementation of a 16 percent value added tax (VAT) on food commodities in September. In addition, both the October to December 2012 short rains and March to May 2013 long rains resulted in average to below average holdings of national strategic, household, trader, and miller food stocks, reducing food available for markets and consequently increasing food prices.

While maize stocks are being replenished by the harvest from the high-to medium- potential areas and maize imports from Uganda and Tanzania, household stocks have already been exhausted, especially in the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural livelihoods resulting in an increase in demand for maize. Wholesale maize prices increased marginally in Eldoret and by more than 8 percent in Kisumu but declined marginally in Mombasa and Nairobi between August and September. These prices however, remained eight, 14, 17, and 35 percent above the five-year average in Eldoret, Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu, respectively. The expectation of a below average maize harvest is probably contributing to keeping maize prices elevated. The October 2013 wholesale maize prices in Eldoret and Mombasa were also higher when compared to October 2012. Usually, in October, maize harvest from the North Rift Valley has arrived in the market, lowering the prices in Eldoret and Nairobi. In Mombasa, imports of maize from Tanzania usually lower prices during October. This has not been the case for these two areas during October. In the North Rift Valley, maize yields are average to below average, and in Mombasa, imports of maize from Tanzania declined between August and September owing to the below average performance of 2012/2013 season in Tanzania.

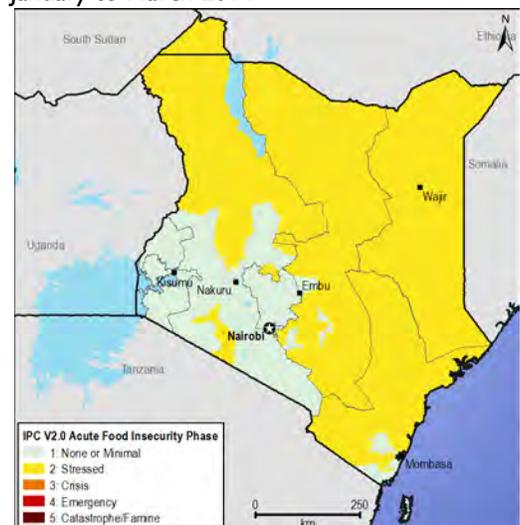
In the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural livelihood zones, households have exhausted household stocks. Along with the pastoral livelihood zones, market dependency has increased since August. Meanwhile, retail food prices, especially maize, increased marginally and remained above their five-year averages perhaps as a response to the national expected

**Figure 2.** Projected food security outcomes, October to December 2013



Source: FEWS NET

**Figure 3.** Projected food security outcomes, January to March 2014



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](http://www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale).

average to below average maize harvest from the long rains. Depletion of household stocks from the long rains harvest and an increase in transportation costs stemming from marginal increase in fuel prices between August and September have contributed to high prices. Moreover, with the August to October lean season in progress, availability of casual labor opportunities, which are mostly agricultural labor, has been low, resulting in seasonally low household incomes in September. As a result, food access and dietary diversity remained constrained between August and September.

Increases in food prices erode households' purchasing power, reducing the quantities and types of food that can be purchased and probably resulting in reduced quantities and diversity of food consumed. However, despite the relative increase in food prices and increasing difficulties in accessing food in the markets, food security in much of the country remains Stressed (IPC Phase 2) with the majority of the households able to acquire their minimum food requirements but lacking capacity to access non-food, livelihood protection essentials such as education and medical care.

### *Assumptions*

From October 2013 to March 2014, the projected food security outcomes are based on the following key national assumptions:

- The October-December 2013 short rain season is likely to be average to below average in amount and poorly distributed over time, according to the Kenya Meteorological Department and a variety of other regional forecasts and international models. Normal to above normal rainfall amounts are expected in much of the high- and medium-potential areas, near normal in much of the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas, and normal to below normal in the pastoral livelihood zones. The rains are expected to start between the first and second week of November, more than two weeks late in the Southeast and parts of the Coastal Marginal Mixed Farming Agricultural livelihood zone, and between fourth week of October and first week of November in much of the pastoral livelihood zones. Cessation is expected to be between first and third week of December, more than three weeks earlier than the normal.
- Although maize harvesting from the high- and medium- potential areas will peak in November, overall average to below average output is expected due to poor temporal distribution of the March to May long rains and delayed input distribution. However, the harvest will replenish national stocks, and distribution from the surplus high- and medium-potential areas to markets in maize-deficit areas in the Southeast and parts of the pastoral livelihood zones is expected to continue through December.
- A below average maize harvest in February/March from the October to December short rains is expected to replenish household stocks in February/March in the short rains-receiving areas.
- Maize prices are likely to remain stable through December and remain above their five-year averages driven by constrained supply due to a below average harvest from the high- and medium- potential areas and likely near normal cross-border maize imports from Tanzania through December. A gradual decline in prices is expected from January through March as alternatives to maize become available, easing maize demand and as the short rain's maize harvest becomes available in February/March.
- Livestock prices are likely to decline through November driven by deteriorating body conditions due to dry conditions until the rains start. Prices are likely, however, to increase from December due to a seasonal increase in demand for meat during the December festive season and improvement of livestock body conditions due to recovery following the improvement of rangeland conditions as the short rains start in October/November. Livestock prices may however, decline from January through March due to increase in supply on markets as households sell to finance school fees in January and deterioration of body conditions leads to lower prices in February/March.

### *Most Likely Food Security Outcomes*

The total maize harvest by January/March from the long and short rains is likely to be below average. Since markets across the country are functioning effectively, likely increases in prices, especially in Eldoret and surrounding major grain-producing area, are expected to be transmitted across the country through December. Food security across the country is expected to remain stable through March even though food prices are likely to remain high due to the 16 percent VAT that

results in increase in higher food prices and a below average maize harvest from the high- and medium-potential areas. Food access will be constrained for a significant proportion of population dependent on the markets for food.

Through December, the majority of households will manage to access their minimal food requirements across much of the country. Food security is likely to improve in localized areas including the higher elevation parts of Makueni County, Meru County, central parts of Kitui County, and the southern parts of Kwale County to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) by December/January due to the short rains harvest. Food security will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) though somewhat improved in much of the country between January and March driven partly by the availability of a small harvest from the short rains season and the likely easing of staple food prices, which will improve food access.

## AREAS OF CONCERN

### Southeast Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone

#### *Current Situation*

In much of the Southeastern Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone including Kitui, Makueni, Tharaka Nithi, Nyeri, Meru, and Mbeere Counties, the majority of poor households exhausted their household food stocks by September, resulting in a seasonal increase in demand for food from markets. Meanwhile, food prices, especially maize, increased between August and September driven by the increase in demand as well as the VAT, which resulted in an increase in prices. Maize prices increased marginally in much of the livelihood zone but increased by seven percent in Tharaka Nithi County between August and September driven by below average local maize production from the March to May long rains. Even with the marginal increase in maize prices, crop sales comprise a small proportion of household income so household food security has not benefited from the rising prices in this area. Although households have slowly commenced land preparation for the short rains season, these activities are picking up slowly and slightly later than normal, owing to the uncertainty of when the short rains will start.

Rangeland conditions seasonally deteriorated between August and September as the dry season progressed. Between August and September, distances to grazing points increased marginally and were between three to six kilometres in Kitui, Makueni, Tharaka Nithi Counties, and Mwingi Sub-County. The deterioration of rangeland conditions resulted in deterioration of body conditions and consequently, a decline in livestock prices with cattle prices declining by 21 percent in Kitui, 19 percent in Tharaka Nithi, 11 percent in Nyeri, and eight percent in Mwingi Sub-County between August and September. However, cattle prices remained more than 50 percent above their five-year averages in many of the markets in the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural livelihood zones. In August, prices of goats declined by eight percent in Makueni, 12 percent in Tharaka Nithi, and 17 percent in Nyeri Counties compared to September prices. Income from livestock sales account for less than six percent of the households' total income. Notably, milk production declined by about 14 percent at the household level in much of the livelihood zone with average household milk consumption decreasing by 10 percent in Tharaka Nithi County between August and September.

The increase in food prices amidst seasonally low household income from causal labor reduced household purchasing power, constraining household access to food and consequently food consumption. Although milk availability and consumption declined between August and September due to deterioration of pasture quality, the proportion of the children less than five years old 'at risk' (defined as having a mid-upper arm circumference less than 135 millimeters (MUAC<135 mm)) decreased in Kitui and Nyeri Counties and Mwingi Sub-County signifying improvement in nutrition. Supplementation programs likely drove some of the improvement in nutrition. However, nutrition deteriorated in Makueni County where milk production declined and food stocks had already been exhausted before September. The proportion of children 'at risk' also remained more than 30 percent below the five-year average except in Tharaka Nithi County where the proportion was 10 percent above the five-year average, attributed to poor feeding practices, recent drops in milk consumption, and an outbreak of measles. Notable spots with high 'at risk' prevalence included rates of 18 percent in Tharaka Nithi and 20 percent in Mui Sub-County in Kitui, all attributed to poor feeding practices, which could be a chronic contributor to malnutrition in these areas. Households are also engaged in coping strategies including increased engagement in brick making, sand harvesting, charcoal burning, and petty trading to gain additional income for food purchases. As a result, food security remains Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

### *Assumptions*

In addition to the national assumptions described above, the following assumptions have been made about the Southeastern Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone:

- Casual labor opportunities for land preparation and planting are likely to increase seasonally through November. However, opportunities may decline from December through March due to low weeding and harvesting activities stemming from the normal to below normal amounts of rainfall and poor temporal distribution, which may fail to support normal crop development.
- There is a likelihood of continued and expanded humanitarian and developmental interventions in these areas. For example, food for assets (FFA) is already programmed to continue in many areas through 2015, and it will likely be complimented by additional programs.
- In order to sustain food consumption, remittances from existing labor migrants are likely to increase through December as households increasingly depend on their relatives working elsewhere, primarily in urban areas within Kenya.

### *Most Likely Food Security Outcomes*

The majority of households in the Southeast have already exhausted their household food stocks, and they are dependent on the market for all their food. Although land preparation activities have slowly started, they are still seasonally low. Food prices are generally high for poor households, and although there are no significant food gaps, food consumption levels are seasonally low, especially in the marginal areas where food stocks were exhausted earlier than normal. Being the primary agricultural season in the southeastern areas, delayed onset of the October to December short rains as well as below average rainfall would likely result in below average casual labor opportunities and below average household income. Moreover, delayed onset may result in delayed maturity of drought-resistant, early-maturing crops such as cowpeas, which typically sustain consumption through December. Amidst increasing food prices, access to food, dietary diversity, and food consumption may worsen through December. Households will intensify coping strategies including increased use of petty trading, charcoal burning, and purchases on credit or with increase remittances from relatives working both temporarily and permanently in urban areas. Coping will generate some additional income to sustain market food purchases. Although food consumption will decline considerably, food security is expected to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) with households accessing the minimum dietary requirements through December. Although the maize harvest by February/March 2014 may be below average, harvests of drought-resistant legumes and cereals including sorghum and millet are likely be near average. As a result, food consumption will improve from January through March as some harvest from drought-resistant crops including sorghum, millet, green grams, and cowpeas become available for consumption. Despite the likely improvement, food security will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through March in much of the Southeast Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone with some localized areas especially the higher elevation areas likely improving to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) between January and March. Usually, higher elevation areas received more rainfall compared to the lower elevation areas, increasing the probability of a larger harvest.

## **Northeastern Pastoral livelihood zone**

### *Current Situation*

In the Northeastern Pastoral livelihood cluster including areas in Garissa, Isiolo, Tana River, Wajir, and Mandera Counties, rangeland conditions continued to seasonally deteriorate between August and September, driven by the seasonally dry conditions during the August to October dry season. For instance, distances to water points increased by more than 20 percent in Isiolo County, and they increased by more than 1.5 kilometers (km) in both Ijara Sub-County and Mandera Counties. Seasonal migration from Garissa to dry grazing areas in Isiolo's Merti Sub-County resulted in concentration of livestock and the accelerated depletion of pasture and browse. This concentration of livestock has caused conflicts between agropastoralists and pastoralists in Merti, especially over access to crop residues to use as forage.

Livestock prices declined between August and September, resulting in a seasonal decline in income from livestock over the same period. Cattle prices declined between six and eight percent in Isiolo and Garissa and by 37 percent in Mandera between August and September. Prices of goats also declined in Isiolo and Garissa Counties but increased in Mandera by

five percent, driven by seasonal dependency on goats for meat. Goats as opposed to cattle are more often used for sale and slaughter during the lean season. However, goat and cattle prices remained more than 50 percent above their five-year averages. More than 40 percent of household income across the Northeastern Pastoral livelihood cluster comes from the sale of livestock during this time of the year. A decline in livestock prices results in a decline of households' purchasing power at a time when food prices have increased considerably. Between August and September, maize prices remained stable in Garissa and Isiolo but atypically increased by 36 percent in Ijara, driven by a shortage in supply. Maize prices decreased by nine percent in Mandera over the same period. Prices for other food items especially sugar and rice increased considerably between August and September, driven by the implementation of the VAT and an increase in transportation costs. Households depend largely on markets for their food with more than 80 percent of all other food items being purchased on the market except milk, meat, and, at times, cooking fats. Consequently, constrained income against rising food prices considerably constrained food access for the majority of the households between August and September.

Seasonal increases in distances to water and grazing points, deterioration of livestock body conditions, and the seasonal reduction in the number of lactating females resulted in a decline in milk availability and consumption. Milk prices also increased seasonally to between KES 60 and KES 80 per liter (l) in Isiolo, Mandera, and Garissa Counties, making it difficult for the poor households to access milk from markets. A combination of decline in household income from the sale of livestock, general increase in food prices, and decline in consumption of milk resulted in an increase in the proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition. The proportion, measured as the proportion of children under five years of age with mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) less than 135 mm (MUAC < 135 millimetres) increased by six percent in Isiolo and 13 percent in Garissa. Notably in Sericho and Merti Sub-Counties in Isiolo County, the proportion was 20 percent and 25 percent, respectively. In much of the livelihood zone, the proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition remained more than 20 percent below the five-year average. Exceptions are parts of Garissa County where malnutrition has increased to above average, driven by a shortage of milk as livestock migrated to the dry season grazing areas and away from homesteads. Due to the increase in food prices against declining household income, household food access is seasonally low because pastoralists purchase much of their food. Despite the pressure of food prices, food security is Stressed (IPC Phase 2) with majority of households still managing the minimum dietary requirements with the money they get from sales of livestock, but dietary diversity is seasonally poor.

### *Assumptions*

In addition to the national assumptions described above, the following assumptions have been made about the Northeastern Pastoral livelihood zone:

- Although the total rainfall amount during the October to December short rains is likely to be normal to below normal, the expected short period between the onset and cessation will change the temporal distribution of the rains, which could easily result in floods in localized areas. As a result, the incidence of both livestock and human disease is likely to increase from October to December, primarily in the areas prone to floods. In addition, incidences of water- and vector-borne diseases including malaria are expected to increase through January, along usual seasonal patterns.
- Livestock body conditions will likely deteriorate through November because of the delayed recovery of pasture and browse following the likely late onset of the October to December short rains. Improvement is expected through December, followed by deterioration in body conditions starting in February as the rangeland conditions seasonally deteriorate over the February to March short dry season.
- Normal rates of lambing, kidding, and calving are expected through December, following the near normal level conceptions between May and June during the long rains. However, rates of survival could be reduced due to the dry season being prolonged into November and delayed regeneration of pasture and browse.
- Both food and non-food assistance, which has already been funded, will continue from October to March. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies that are implementing food and cash programs will pre-position food and non-food supplies to ensure continuity in areas likely to have limited road access during the October to December short rains, minimizing disruptions and delays to assistance.

### Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Available pasture and water will most likely last through December in much of the pastoral livelihood zones. However, the quality and quantity will deteriorate due to dry conditions. Delayed onset of the short rains will prolong the dry period and thus the lean season by delaying the regeneration of the pasture and browse, which will delay the recovery of livestock body conditions. Delayed regeneration of pasture will slow the recovery of livestock while calving, kidding, and lambing will coincide with seasonally below average rangelands conditions, which could reduce milk production and availability. Due to the extended seasonal deterioration of livestock body conditions through November, livestock prices are likely to decline, but they will likely increase in December, driven by demand during the festive season and a recovery of livestock body conditions. Household income, food access, and consumption will track the seasonal improvement of livestock and livestock prices, deteriorating through November and slightly improving in December. Food prices are expected to increase marginally through December, stretching available income. However, a combination of income from sale of livestock, milk availability, and income from engagement in petty trading as well as purchase of food through credit is expected to sustain food consumption with food security remaining Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Between January and March, the short dry season is likely to result in deterioration in rangeland conditions. Consequently, livestock prices may seasonally decline reducing income from livestock. However, some cows will still be milking, and milk is likely to be available at near normal levels through March. Food prices may also decrease slightly over the same period due to harvests from the Southeast, though these harvests are likely to be below average. As a result, food security will remain stable but Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through March.

### EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

**Table I:** Possible events over the next six months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Northeastern Pastoral livelihood zone	Unexpected above average amounts of rainfall and more even distribution	Above average amounts and good distribution of the short rains would improve the food security conditions through improved livestock body conditions and increased milk availability due to significant improvements in rangeland conditions.
Northeastern Pastoral livelihood zone	Significant increases in food prices	Abnormal increases in food prices would result in a considerable decline in the quantity of food purchased and consequently reduced amounts of food consumed. It would also limit the capacity of households to consume a diversity of foods and thus reduce dietary diversity.
Northeastern Pastoral livelihood zone	Significantly below average amount of October-December short rains	Significantly below average amounts and poor distribution of the short rains would result in further deterioration of livestock body conditions after November, reducing milk availability and consumption, which would likely increase malnutrition.
Northeastern Pastoral livelihood zone	Significant decline in livestock prices	A precipitous decline in livestock prices would result in reduced incomes for pastoralists and thus, reduced purchasing power and food access.
Southeastern Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone	Unexpected above average amounts of rainfall and good distribution	A considerably enhanced short rains season would increase food production, thus improving food availability. Enhanced rainfall would also increase casual labor opportunities, resulting in increased household income and hence access to other foods not produced by households, which would diversify diets.
Southeastern Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone	Significant increases in food prices	Exceedingly high food price increases would significantly constrain food access for these market-dependent households and decrease food consumption.

### ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes over a six-month period, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes those assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to develop scenarios estimating food security outcomes. Typically, FEWS NET reports the most likely scenario.