



KENYA FOOD SECURITY UPDATE – JULY 14, 2006

Food security summary and implications

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The end of June marked the beginning of the dry spell in the pastoral and marginal agricultural livelihood zones, which is expected to last until mid-October. While key fundamentals – water and browse – have recharged and regenerated substantially, household food security indicators have only marginally improved. Livestock, in particular, had endured a succession of 3-6 poor or failed seasons until generally good rains finally came in March 2006, and are recovering very slowly. The next several months will be critical in consolidating gains achieved during the recently concluded long-rains season.

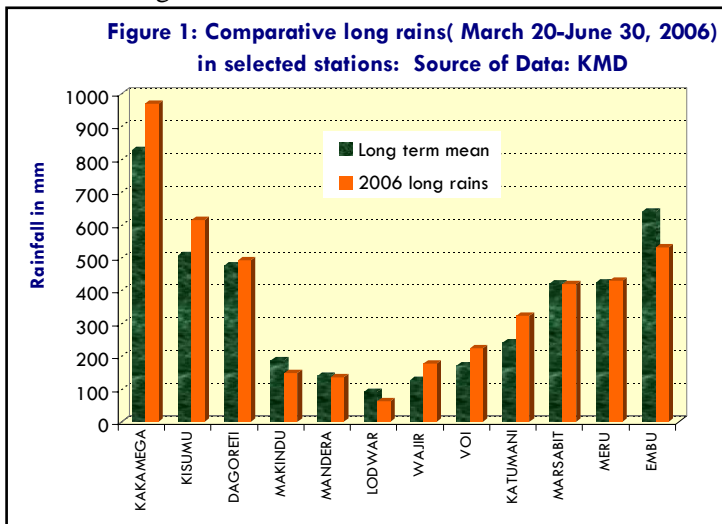
However, if the October to December short-rains are poor, livelihood and humanitarian crises similar to what was experienced during the previous short-rains season would re-emerge. Farm households in some of the drought-affected southeastern lowlands have had a poor long rains season again this year. A significant proportion of their crop was lost and maize prices are far higher than normal, further compounding their precarious food security status. While a good harvest in key growing areas could help to moderate market cereal prices, household purchasing capacities among drought-affected farm households remain low.

Current hazard summary

- The dry season begins in key pastoral districts before pastures had been sufficiently established.
- Extended migrations of both livestock and pastoralists expected to increase from and within areas of poor rains.
- High rates of child malnutrition (above 30% GAM in Mandera) are compounded by disease and poor hygiene.
- Limited recovery of pastoral herds casts a shadow on the long term prospects of pastoral welfare.
- Production was poor again in the south-eastern lowlands, after experiencing three consecutive poor seasons.

Mostly dry conditions prevail in June and are set to continue through mid-October

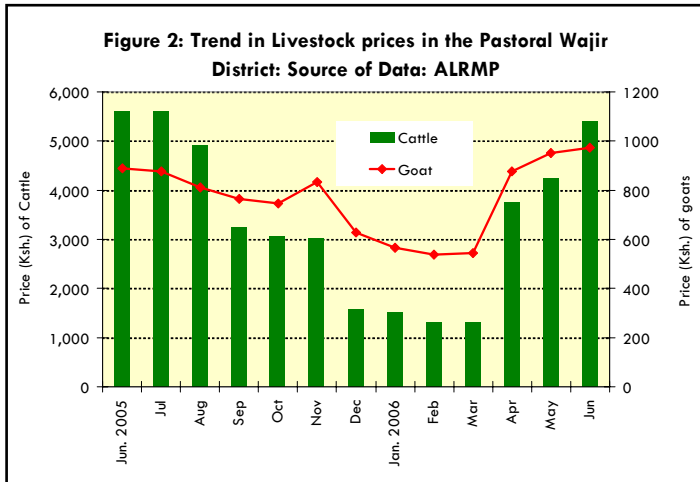
The 2006 long rains season has now ended in all areas of the country outside the Western and Rift Valley highlands and localized areas of the coastal strip. The dry spell marks the beginning of what is certain to be an especially difficult period for pastoralists who have had little respite from the long and debilitating drought that subsided just three months ago. While the long rains have provided measured relief to a significant proportion of pastoralists and marginal agricultural households, parts of the drought-affected areas received poor rains and continue to suffer significant stress. Although rains were generally near average, localized areas of Marsabit, Turkana, Wajir, Tana River, Mandera, Garissa and Samburu districts as well as the southeastern cropping lowlands received below average rainfall. Elsewhere in these districts, and in other pastoral and marginal agricultural districts, cumulative rains were reported good, though the temporal and spatial distribution was poor. Figure 1 shows the



contrast in the performance of the long-rains season in synoptic stations across the country. It is noted that the stations do not necessarily represent district-wide rainfall coverage. The Kenya Meteorological Department's June-August forecast suggests that the coastal and 'grain-basket' highlands will receive normal to above normal rains through that period.

Pastoralists' food security under pressure until October, at least

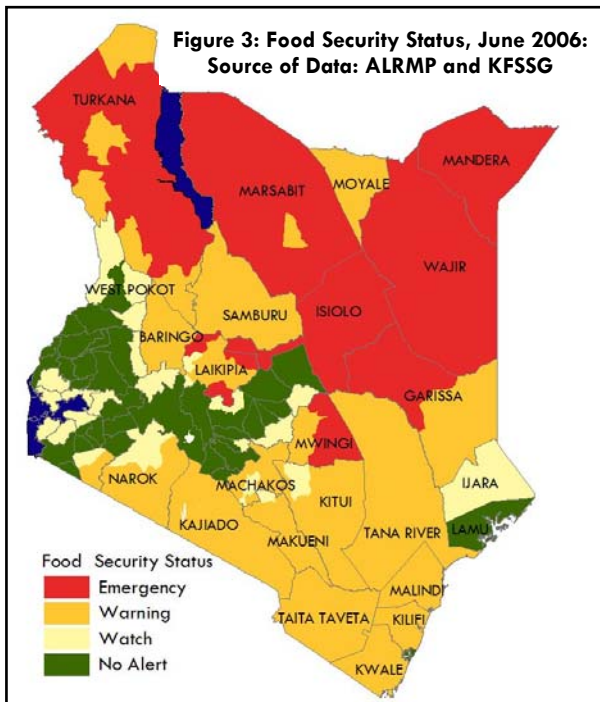
Pastoralists have now entered the dry season, the critical phase of their 2006 season. Pastoral districts in the northwest



including Turkana, Samburu, Baringo and Marsabit have had mediocre rains through the long-rains season and could experience an especially difficult July-October period. The northeastern pastoral districts have suffered heavy livestock losses and will face additional hardship from now through October. However, temperatures have dropped significantly across pastoral districts, slowing the deterioration of pasture and browse.

The Arid Lands Resource Management Project has reported that livestock body conditions have improved across the majority of districts with the exception of localized areas of Samburu and Baringo where cattle are weakening. Watering distances have started to rise once again but remain fairly low ranging between 2-3 kilometers in most

of the northeast and 5-10 kilometers in the northwest. Shallow wells and dams are the key sources of water and are expected to last for about two more months in the northeast. In contrast, water trucking has already started in the northwestern pastoral districts including Samburu and Marsabit and localized areas of Wajir. Pasture growth continues to be problematic since grass seeds lost their viability after remaining dormant for extended periods, following a succession of serious droughts until March 2006. Because regeneration of pasture was limited to a few areas, cattle are expected to be under the significant stress through the dry spell, until the beginning of the short rains. In addition, surviving livestock came into the 2006 long rains season in a weakened state and have not recovered sufficiently to cope with the dry spell. Despite the good rains, dry season grazing areas are rapidly disappearing. During the recent long drought, livestock failed to return home to what should have been wet-season grazing areas. Competition for resources had escalated, with



violent consequences, which have subsequently deterred migration to neighboring districts or across the country's borders. Inability to readily access grazing resources is likely to renew conflict incidences during this dry season.

Fortunately, livestock prices in nearly all the districts have been steadily increasing since March. In the last month, cattle prices across the pastoral districts rose by margins ranging 15-20 percent, while the rise in goat prices was a little lower ranging between 5-10 percent. Figure 2 is an illustration of the rising trend in livestock prices in Wajir District. While livestock prices are rising, they are still over 20 percent below their respective 5-year averages. While maize prices have been increasing in non-pastoral areas, prices in pastoral markets declined by up to five percent. This can be attributed principally to the increased supply of food at the household level, through relief food. Subsequently, pastoral terms of trade have improved in most areas, but remain much below seasonal norms.

The ALRMP has reported that rates of child malnutrition are declining in many of the districts. For example, the 'at risk' population, using the middle upper arm circumference (MUAC), declined from 37 percent to 24.4 percent in Wajir District. The decline in the 'at risk' population in other pastoral districts is less dramatic and remains exceptionally high in such areas as northern and western Marsabit, Manderla and Turkana. The general decline in malnutrition, however small, from the exceptionally high rates in March is attributed to a combination of an increase in supplementary and

therapeutic feeding; relief food; and improved milk availability. A possible deterioration in household welfare is possible in coming months because pastoral households and their livestock have had little time to recover from the devastating drought that subsided in March and remain highly vulnerable.

The ALRMP has reported that conflict incidences declined significantly during June in most pastoral districts with the exception of Samburu, Marsabit and Baringo. Concerted conflict mitigation efforts by the GoK, partners and pastoralists are improving co-existence between communities. For example in West Pokot District, access to markets has improved significantly. Renewed livestock trade across markets within and beyond the district has had a positive impact on household purchasing capacities. However, due to the volatile pastoral environment, the probability of a new conflict occurring remains high, in the absence of a systematic mechanism for mitigating conflict in a sustained fashion.

In spite of significant improvements in environmental indicators, especially the availability of browse, coupled with an easing of the hydrological drought, households in most pastoral areas remain in a precarious situation as shown on Figure 3. In the absence of relief food, many pastoral households would become extremely food insecure. For example, the ALRMP has reported that in Marsabit District, 60 percent of the household food supply is met by relief food. The disproportionate contribution of relief food toward short-term household food security in Marsabit and in many other pastoral districts is not entirely unexpected. The impacts of the nearly two-year drought, including the decimation of livestock that reduced herd sizes to unsustainable levels; limited on-going mitigation activities to minimize the impacts of successive poor seasons, compounded by limited access to alternative grazing lands has severely compromised food security in the short and medium term. While ongoing food and non-food interventions are beginning to address overwhelming food insecurity, longer term multi-sectoral interventions combined with well articulated emergency interventions hold the key to easing recurrent suffering by pastoral households.

Food distributions continue to address serious food insecurity especially among pastoralists

The emergency operation (EMOP) is continuing in 25 of the drought-affected districts through February 2007. The current phase of the EMOP includes 3.1 million beneficiaries and a further 535,000 children under the expanded feeding program. While the June distribution is still on-going in a few districts, about 3.1 million beneficiaries will be targeted by the distribution. During May, about 3 million beneficiaries, or 97 percent of planned beneficiaries, received a total of 34,440 MT of food aid. In addition, food needs of pastoralists who lost livestock and resettled close to urban centers are currently being addressed through the 10 percent contingency food aid fund. The EMOP post-distribution monitoring process completed in the last two weeks in the northeast indicated that vulnerability levels are still high in all the districts visited, including Garissa, Wajir, Mandera and Tana River, in spite of improvements in grazing and livestock indicators. The upcoming long rains assessment scheduled to begin in mid July will establish more comprehensively the impacts of the long-rains season on food security and clarify required food and non-food interventions.

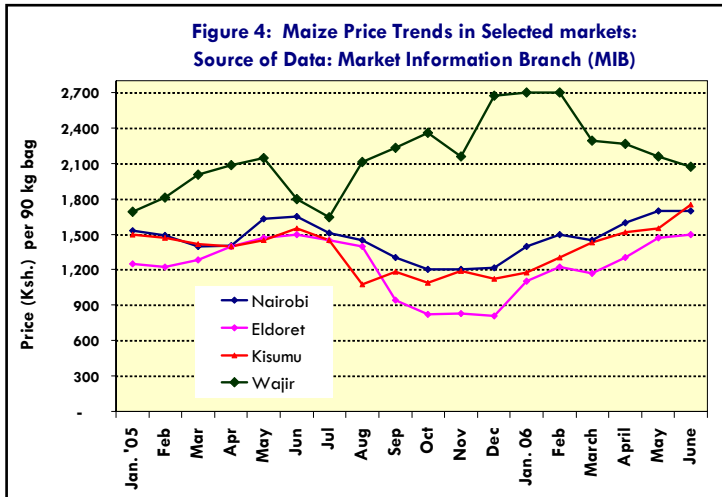
WFP has received donations totaling US\$127.7 million (almost 57 percent of the requirement). The pipeline for cereals in July is favorable subject to the final clearance of 20,500 MT of maize available in Mombasa and assures a full ration during the month. However, this is only adequate to last up to August. Unless there are new commitments for cereals, a pipeline break will ensue after August. Supplies of Corn Soya Blend (CSB) have also improved with the GoK in-kind donation and locally purchased stocks. In June, the CSB ration doubled from 40 to 80 grams for each person per day, and is distributed as part of the general food distribution ration, in the most drought-affected pastoral districts. In addition, WFP supports supplementary feeding programs in a number of districts. The pipeline for pulses and vegetable oil is promising in the medium term for all the districts but in the short term adequate stocks are available for only the nine pastoral districts. The World Food Program is currently reviewing availability of stocks at district level, which could possibly be handed over to the lead agency.

Crop estimates revised downward in marginal agricultural areas, prices remain high

Overall crop prospects for the 2006 long-rains season remain favorable. The most critical growing areas found in the Rift Valley and western highlands have experienced good rains through most of the season, coupled with an increase in cropped area, attributed to above average producer prices over the past several seasons. The stage of crop development ranges from the near tasselling stage in the high potential areas of the Rift Valley, to the harvesting stage in the early planting areas of southwestern Kenya and in the lowlands of Eastern, Central, Coast and Nyanza Provinces. Production prospects are less favorable in the central, southeastern and coastal lowlands, where crop production has been compromised by a combination of a late start and early end to the seasonal rains. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has

revised expected crop production from 2.8 million MT to an estimated 2.7 million MT, to reflect the poor crop in lowland areas. The MoA is continually revising production estimates, and the final long rains output projection is yet unknown. However total national output remains about 20 percent higher than average.

According to the MoA, national food stocks are about 623,000 MT, sufficient to overlap with the new harvest. The MoA has indicated that farmers are holding about 240,000 MT; traders 144,000 MT; millers 86,400 MT and the National Cereals and Produce Board about 153,000 MT of maize. Total stocks held currently, account for about two months



national supply of maize. The tight national supply situation should ease considerably through July 2007, assuming that overall favorable crop prospects are realized. Apart from domestic sources, harvests from the neighboring Uganda and Tanzania are beginning to flow into adjacent markets in the southern and western areas of the country. According to RATIN, an estimated 30,000 MT of maize, beans and rice were imported into Kenya through the Busia and Taita Taveta borders during June. While poor production in the southeastern lowlands is not unexpected because of a notoriously unreliable long-rains season, reduced output will severely compromise household food security. Farm households are just coming out of a prolonged and serious drought that lasted more than three consecutive seasons in most areas. Although food prices are expected to decline sharply after

July, many households do not have enough purchasing power to take advantage of these lower prices.

While the nation eagerly anticipates a good long rains harvest, a drop in rainfall between July and early September in the western highlands, could cause a major reversal in national crop prospects. The extent to which a favorable season hangs on the balance is illustrated by the fact that only six districts, all of them situated in the Rift Valley and western highlands, account for a disproportionate 40 percent of the entire national long rains¹ maize output. The districts are Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu, Nandi, Bungoma, Nakuru, and Kericho. Close monitoring of the season's progress will remain a priority for the Kenya Food Security Steering Group.

Maize prices have slightly increased in most markets across the country, outside the pastoral areas as well as in the early harvesting southwestern areas. The reduction in maize prices in pastoral markets, as show on Figure 4 by Wajir market, is attributed to reduced demand for maize due to increased food availability at the household level through relief supplies. Yet the disparity between prices in the pastoral markets and other markets underlines the unfavorable term of trade that already vulnerable pastoral households face. The reduction in maize prices in the southwest has resulted from increased supply of maize into markets especially in areas where harvesting has started. So far, quantities harvested are fairly low and related changes in prices are only localized. However, as harvesting of the early crop continues, the upward pressure on prices is expected to begin relenting in the subsequent months when harvesting of the main crop begins.

Conclusion

The 2006 long-rains season has provided significant relief to drought-affected pastoral and marginal agricultural households. In pastoral areas, the long-rains followed a period exceptionally high livestock mortality that started in November 2005 and peaked in March 2006, after a succession of several poor or failed seasons. Although some areas experienced crop failure, the long rains have improved the supply of food at the household level in drought-affected marginal agricultural households situated in the coastal and southeastern lowlands. Food security among drought-affected households, especially pastoralists, remains worrisome. The remaining livestock have only started to recover, yet the long dry season has already begun. While migration options are limited, movement to alternative grazing areas still offers the best hope for survival, suggesting that conflict mitigation activities are also crucial at this time. The next important event that could define the viability of the pastoral livelihood is the October-December short rains season. A good season could consolidate the beginning of the recovery process but a poor season could precipitate a livelihood and humanitarian emergency.

¹ The national long rains season is the principal production season, and the season's maize output accounts for 85 percent of total annual maize production.