







of the early planted crop dried after germination or the seed rotted as rainfall continuity was poor.

In Tana Riverine areas, where a small proportion of households had replanted their staple food crops after floods destroyed 55 percent of planted area, a new wave of river flooding since March destroyed the replanted crops. The floods also destroyed more than 200 acres of maize, beans, green grams and vegetables that had been planted during the current long rains season. Households are relying on perennial crop sales, such as mangoes, as a source of income.

**Livestock production:** Despite localized instances of below-normal vegetation, above-normal rangeland and water availability is indicative of good livestock production prospects in both pastoral

and marginal agricultural areas as the rainy season progresses (Figure 2). Although milk production typically lags between the start of the rains in March and peak livestock productivity in April/May, NDMA sentinel site data collected in March broadly showed that household milk production ranged from average to above average at 1.8-3.1 liters per day in pastoral areas and 1.3-4.5 liters in marginal agricultural areas. Milk production is highest in Nyeri at eight liters daily compared to an average of 4.8 liters. No migration is occurring, since vegetation has been adequate to maintain livestock in wet-season grazing areas near homesteads since January. NDMA sentinel site data also reported stable or improving pasture and browse conditions in March, except in Wajir and Mandera, where forage availability seasonally lagged behind the onset of the rainfall season. In April, NDVI data indicates rising vegetation availability in all counties. As a result, return trekking distances to livestock water sources ranged from 5-8 kilometers in March and were 17-71 percent below the five-year average. Livestock body conditions remain good except in Wajir and Garissa, where body conditions are 'fair' and deteriorating due to an outbreak of lumpy skin disease (LSD) and occurrences of contagious caprine pleuropneumonia (CCPP).

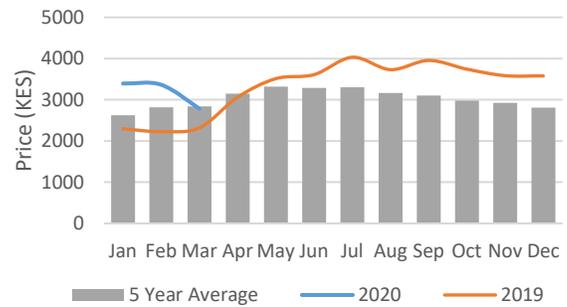
**Domestic water availability:** Seasonal declines in water availability were observed by NDMA prior to the full establishment of the long rains in March, including in Mandera, Turkana, Isiolo, and Garissa. However, water availability broadly remained above normal and water sources are now being replenished by the above-average rains in April. Return trekking distances to domestic water sources in pastoral areas were 2-5 km in March, or 41-74 percent below the three-year average. Exceptions included Mandera, where return trekking distances were 8 km or 17 percent above average. In marginal agricultural areas, water availability remains high due to off-season rains in February and an early onset of the March to May long rains. Household trekking distances remained below average in March, ranging from 2 to 4 km compared to the average 3-11 km.

**Markets and trade:** Although there are anecdotal reports that temporary market closures and panic buying resulted in temporary price spikes in some urban markets after the announcement of movement restrictions related to COVID-19, NDMA price data collected from key reference markets in March show a declining trend in the price of maize, the preferred staple food. Domestic market supply across the country and farmer's own-produced household stocks in agricultural areas were recently replenished, given the conclusion of the recent, near-average short and long rains harvests in early 2020. In most marginal agricultural areas, market demand is seasonally low since poor households' own-produced stocks are projected to last through July. The exceptions include Kwale, Lamu, Kilifi, Makueni, and Tharaka Nithi (Tharaka) counties, where local production was below the five-year average and poor households' own-produced stocks are likely to be depleted by late April. In addition, Kenya has already imported 205,000 MT of maize from regional sources and is projected to import 360,000 MT of maize from overseas to fill the 690,000 MT maize import gap for the July 2019-June 2020 consumption year. The East Africa Community member states are prioritizing cross-border trade in food commodities to supply local markets, though a slowdown in trade flows is of concern due to health checks and necessary precautions at border points and road checks.

Maize prices in March were near the five-year average in most key reference markets, including in Nairobi, with notable exceptions (Figure 3). In Eldoret, prices were 15 percent above average as farmers are holding their harvest in anticipation of better prices. Maize prices were 11-15 percent above average in Nyeri and Tharaka Nithi, due to low household stocks, and in Garissa and Mandera, due to high transaction costs from source markets. Prices were 11-22 percent below average in Kitui, due to available household stocks, and in Turkana and Marsabit, and sufficient supply from cross-border sources.

However, the bean supply remains low due to crop losses during the above-average rainfall season in 2019, which continued to drive above-normal prices in March. Prices were 13-40 percent above average across most key reference markets, aside from Kitui, Nyeri, and Taita Taveta where prices are average due to a combination of available household stocks, cross-border imports, and the presence of substitutes like green grams, cowpeas, and pigeon peas. Livestock prices in pastoral reference

**Figure 3.** Observed wholesale price of a 90-kg bag of maize, Nairobi, March 2020



Source: Ministry of Agriculture

markets also remained generally above average in March, driven by good body conditions and limited supply as livestock owners kept their stock with an aim of restocking their herds. Goat prices were 11-22 percent above the five-year averages in Wajir, Isiolo, and Turkana and 48-66 percent above average across other key reference markets.

#### *Current food security outcomes*

Based on available livelihoods information and the current economic impacts of COVID-19, it is likely that many poor households in urban areas such as Nairobi, Mombasa, Kilifi, Kwale and Mandera are facing difficulty meeting their minimum food needs and are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), though area-level outcomes remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Poor households dependent on casual wage labor, as well as poor households primarily dependent on gifts, remittances, or begging, are the most likely groups to be have food consumption gaps and subsequently higher-than-normal levels of malnutrition. According to the 2019 population census carried out by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Kenya's urban population is 15,415,483 persons, which is approximately 32 percent of the total population. A comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis (CFSVA) and nutrition assessment was carried out in high density urban areas by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) in 2010 established ten livelihood profiles. While the proportion of these different livelihood profiles differ across urban areas, it is estimated that poor casual waged laborers make up approximately 27 percent of the urban population on the national level, while gift-dependent households make up approximately 3 percent of the national population.<sup>1</sup> Poor households dependent on casual labor are at risk of food consumption gaps, given the head of household's average income of KES 500 (US\$ 4.67) in daily wages amounting to approximately KES 10,000 a month while the estimated cost of a minimum food basket is KES 11,000 per person per month. With the loss of jobs, reduction of casual wage labor opportunities, and declining remittances, many of these households are facing heightened difficulty meeting their food needs and likely have food consumption gaps or are relying on crisis livelihoods coping strategies. In addition, the restrictions on movement in and out of these cities has limited the sending of food items from rural to urban areas, cutting off an important source of food.

The GoK is in the process of finalizing the results of a community-based targeting exercise that was carried out countrywide to identify vulnerable households that have been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the exercise are expected to provide the number and location of vulnerable households to facilitate vulnerability mapping and humanitarian assistance in form of both food and non-food needs in order to prevent worse food security outcomes. FEWS NET intends to make use of the results of this targeting exercise to refine its urban area food security analysis and mapping.

**Pastoral areas:** Given the limited impacts of COVID-19 on pastoral livelihood activities, coupled with high livestock prices and average to above-average milk availability, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes remain most likely in most areas. However, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes exist at the household level, particularly among poor pastoral households that derive some income from casual wage labor in urban centers. In Tana Riverine livelihood zone, where recent floods destroyed crops and property and displaced households, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are most likely at the area level. The most vulnerable households, who have few assets and earn very limited income and are also facing food access constraints due to insecurity or flooding, are likely facing food gaps indicative of Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in Tana River, Isiolo, Mandera, Marsabit, Samburu, Turkana and Wajir counties. NDMA sentinel site data collected in March indicated stable to improving food consumption trends and stable use of consumption-based coping strategies, except in Garissa and Wajir where the proportion of households relying on stressed coping strategies increased. The proportion of children under five years of age 'at risk' of malnutrition (MUAC <135 mm) ranged from 9.6 – 15.9, which is 12 – 42 percent below average.

**Marginal agricultural areas:** Based on current household stock availability following near-average short-rains crop production, average household milk availability, and limited disruption to rural livelihood activities on staple food crop farms, Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes exist in most areas. However, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes persist in Lamu, Kilifi, and Kwale, where crop production was below average. Although these households are earning income from typical agricultural waged labor opportunities, the sale of own-produced crops is below normal. In addition, households dependent on casual wage labor in the urban areas of Kilifi and Kwale are most likely in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). According to NDMA sentinel site data in March, food consumption trends and dietary diversity have improved compared to February. However, 9-12 percent of poor households reported a poor food consumption score in Lamu and Kwale. The risk of malnutrition among children under five years, as measured using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC <135 mm), was 19-20 percent below average in Kitui and Makueni and 46-67 percent below average in Meru (Meru North), Tharaka Nithi, Kilifi and Kwale. However, the proportion 'at risk' increased in Lamu and Embu to 26-63 percent above average.

---

<sup>1</sup> The complexity of urban food security should be taken into consideration. The initial study from which the categorization of livelihood profiles is derived from sampled high-density, low-income urban locations and the proportions of the groups under analysis may differ.

## UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

Revisions to the assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most likely scenario for the [Kenya Food Security Outlook for February to September 2020](#) include:

- Based on above-average rainfall performance to date and short-term forecasts of high rainfall amounts, especially in western Kenya, an elevated risk of flooding is expected in western, central, southeastern, and coastal Kenya through at least May. Floods, especially in riverine areas, will cause destruction to property and crops and displacement.
- Based on available information from the Ministry of Health and leading local and international health experts including the WHO, the number of COVID-19 cases is likely to rise in the near- to medium term due to both the spread of the virus and increased testing. To limit the spread, the Government of Kenya is most likely to extend current movement restrictions through at least May, while easing or expanding inter-county movement restrictions depending on the trajectory of cases in hotspot areas. This scenario assumes that the current restrictions are likely to be eased from June to September on the national level, though the severity of current restrictions could remain in place in hotspot areas.
- Based on the scale down or suspension of operations in the transportation, manufacturing, hospitality, and informal sectors, poor casual wage laborers and other workers in the informal sector will face a significant reduction in income through at least May, especially in urban areas. Although an ease in movement restrictions is anticipated from June to September, the pace of recovery in household income may be slow as economic activity gradually rebounds.
- According to the World Bank, remittances to Kenya from abroad are expected to decline based on adverse economic conditions. Kenya recorded remittances of \$2.9 billion in 2019 (2.9 percent of GDP), with most remittances originating in the UK (34 percent) and the US (30 percent). While a projection is not currently available for Kenya, the World Bank projects remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa from abroad will decline by up to 23 percent. The decline in remittances is expected to directly and indirectly reduce the income of urban and rural poor households, as urban-to-rural transfers or transfers from better-off households to kin are likely to decline given the overall economic uncertainty from COVID-19. Remittances are likely to remain below normal levels from early May through the rest of the scenario period.
- According to revised economic growth forecasts by the GoK's Ministry of Finance and the World Bank, Kenya's economic growth rate has been revised downward to 1.5-2.5 percent due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on foreign exchange earnings, including remittances, and foreign direct investment. The exchange rate is anticipated to come under pressure, but inflation is anticipated to remain with the GoK's target range supported by expectations of favorable agricultural output in 2020 and low oil prices. The GoK's planned monetary policy and fiscal stimulus responses and access to an International Monetary Fund standby facility are anticipated to mitigate more severe economic impacts.
- Based on current and anticipated movement restrictions, rural households are expected to normally engage in the long rains agricultural season and livestock movements are expected to remain broadly normal.
- Although border closures with Uganda and Ethiopia may periodically slow down cross-border trade in food commodities due to constraints related to COVID-19, especially in terms of casual labor that supports trade, Kenya's maize supply is expected to remain sufficient during the scenario period. Based on FEWS NET's analysis of the 205,000 MT of maize already imported from the region and anticipated imports of 360,000 MT of maize from overseas during the July 2019-June 2020 consumption year, 82 percent of the cereal import gap through June 2020 is already expected to be filled. In addition, the Government of Kenya also plans to allow private traders to import about 4 million bags of maize for human consumption and livestock feed to increase the local maize supply; a 10-14 percent duty will be applied to ensure locally produced maize remains competitive. Further, the long rains harvest in marginal agricultural areas, beginning in July, remains most likely to be near average. As a result, the market supply of maize is expected to meet demand and moderate price increases, though prices are still expected to range from average to above average through September in accordance with earlier price projections.
- In addition to ongoing assistance, the GoK plans to provide direct cash transfers of KES 3,500 (USD 33) per household per month to vulnerable households affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19 beginning in May. Households will be targeted based on the ongoing, community-based household targeting exercise; it is assumed most targeted households will be located in the hot spot areas of Nairobi, Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, and Mandera. Under the Hunger Safety Net Programme, an emergency cash transfer of KES 3,500 per household per month will be scaled up to an additional 180,000 households in Turkana, Marsabit, Wajir and Mandera counties from April to July. and possibly extend until the COVID-19 pandemic is on the downward trend. Finally, additional assistance is being programmed for flood-affected households.

**MOST LIKELY PROJECTED OUTCOMES THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2020**

On the national level, the risk of food insecurity is expected to be highest in May and June based on the current and anticipated economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic associated with movement restrictions. Areas of concern include Nairobi, Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, Mandera, Kiambu, Kajiado, Kitui, Kwale, Nakuru, Siaya, Homa Bay, Kakamega, and Uasin Gishu. An increase in the population facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes, especially among poor households dependent on casual labor income in the informal sector, is expected as a result of declining income that will diminish household food access. However, given that the majority of households are still engaged in income-earning activities and food availability broadly remains stable, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes are currently expected to be sustained in most areas under the assumption of an easing of movement restrictions by June. Among the most vulnerable households, direct cash transfers planned by the GoK from late April and early May are expected to meet at least 30 percent of the average households' minimum food needs and these households are expected to be Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!). Flood-affected households in Busia, Kisumu, Nakuru, Kericho, Elgeyo Marakwet, Baringo and West Pokot are also of high concern, and are similarly expected to be Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) based on planned food assistance.

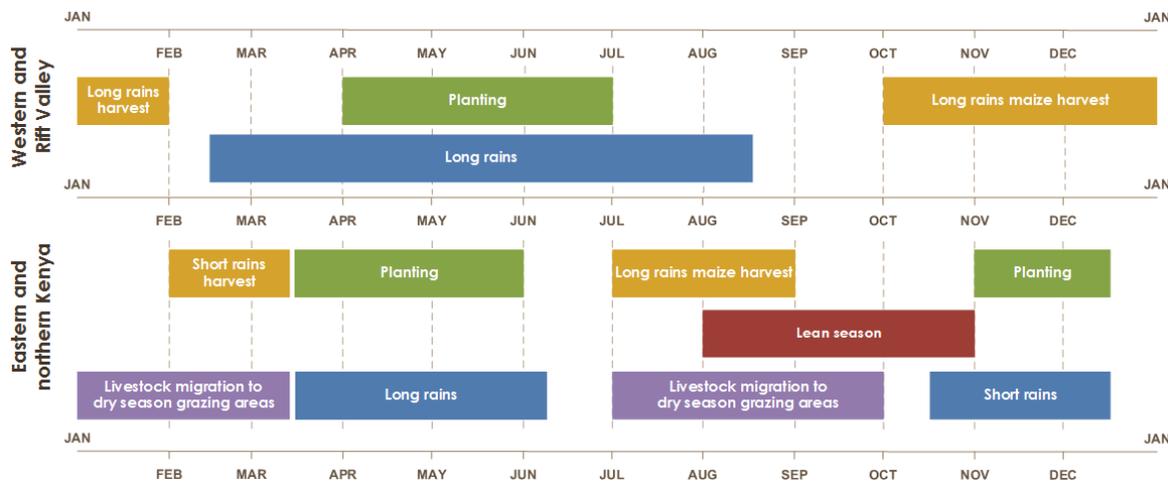
**In pastoral areas**, the impact of reduced household income from casual labor and above-average staple food prices are expected to be mitigated by enhanced livestock production from the above-average March to May long rains season for most households. Above-normal rangeland resources are broadly expected to sustain good livestock conditions while high livestock births are expected, and consequently, above-average livestock-to-cereals terms of trade and above-normal milk availability are expected to sustain better livestock and milk sales income and improve the nutritional status of children under five years of age through June. While the desert locust upsurge continues to pose a threat to food insecurity, particularly in insecure areas where control efforts are more limited, the regeneration of forage during the long rains season is expected to prevent significant damage during this period. Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected on the area level, though some poor households may remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Households that are most at risk of having food consumption gaps or engaging in livelihoods coping strategies are those in insecure areas of Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa counties bordering the Kenya-Somalia border, where they face concurrent insecurity that disrupts livelihood and market activities. Based on planned GoK cash transfers, Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes are likely among pastoral households dependent on labor income, particularly in areas affected by severe movement restrictions in Mandera and also in Wajir.

During the pastoral lean season from July to September, an increase in the food insecure population is expected and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes remain most likely. However, more severe deterioration is likely to be prevented given the positive effect of two consecutive above-average rainfall seasons on household income and nutrition from livestock production. Surveillance and control measures for desert locust are high both at county and national level, though damage during the dry season could affect localized areas. County preparedness is also anticipated to control Rift valley fever (RVF) outbreaks following the above-average rainfall season, though temporary quarantines that restrict movement, slaughter and sale of livestock could reduce household income. Poor households who are most likely to have difficulty meeting their food needs are those with limited livestock numbers. Among poor households' who are at risk of food gaps due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes are expected given planned GoK cash transfer assistance through August. However, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is expected in parts of Mandera where concurrent disruptions to livelihood activities and market access due to insecurity during the dry season is expected to limit household income and food access.

In Tana Riverine livelihood zone of Tana River county, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist through September, due to the flooding of main crops. Even with planned assistance, poor households are expected to have difficulty meeting their food needs due to two consecutive below-average harvests and the loss of other household assets.

**In marginal agricultural areas**, household food stocks from the preceding short rains season that will last through July, combined with the upcoming long rains harvest in July that typically provides 1-2 months of stocks, are expected to maintain Minimal (IPC Phase 1) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes at the area level through September. However, an increase in the number of households that are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is expected. Localized production shortfalls and crop losses due to desert locust will likely render households more dependent on purchasing staple foods from the market than normal, particularly in the areas of concern of Tharaka Nithi, Embu, Meru (Meru North), Makueni, Lamu, Kwale, and Kilifi. Further, in Kilifi and Kwale, where movement restrictions are more severe, households dependent on casual wage labor are expected to be Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) after receiving planned cash transfers. Food insecurity is expected to reach its peak in marginal agricultural areas in August/September, when long-rains food stocks are becoming depleted, household dependence on the market is highest, and income from agricultural labor is lowest.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR

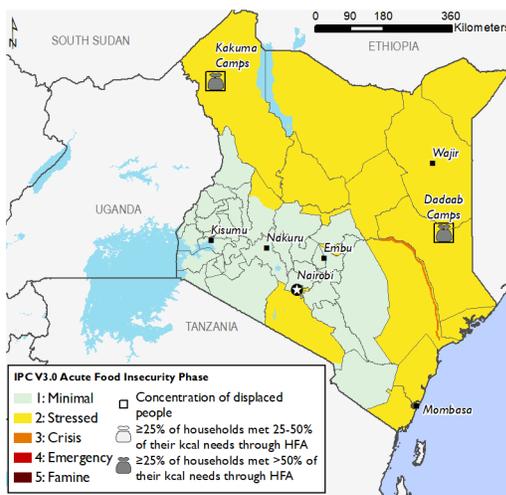


Source: FEWS NET

MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE\*

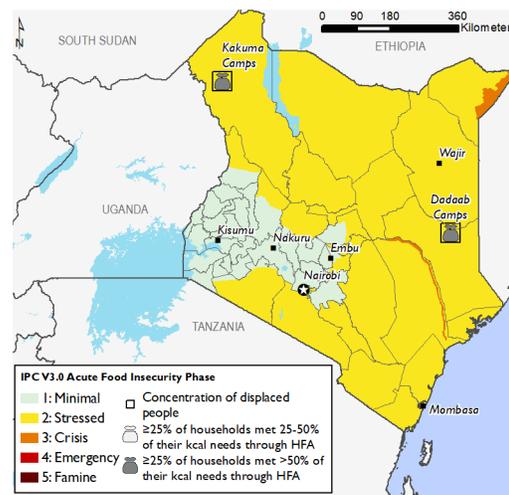
Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. ☐ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). ☑ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2020



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2020



Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates the FEWS NET’s Food Security Outlook, which is published three times per year. Learn more about our work [here](#).