

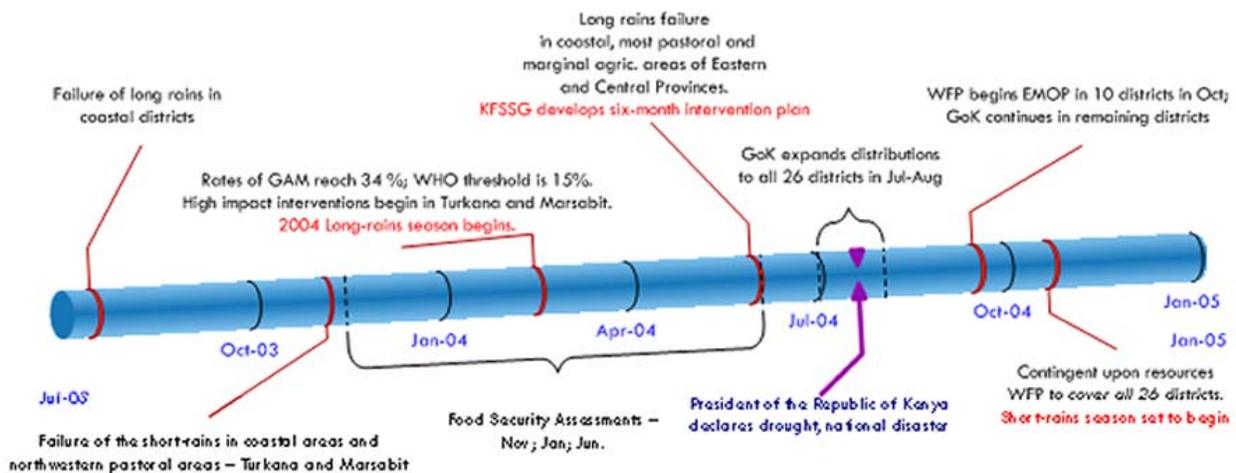


# Kenya Food Security Report – October 5, 2004

## Highlights

- Additional food pledges are required fill substantial food aid shortfalls.
- The threat of flooding increases with heavy rains reported in western Kenya.
- Key long rains harvest set to begin; while short rains planting is underway.
- Maize prices stable but high; supply set to improve in November.

## Kenya Drought : Chronology of Events



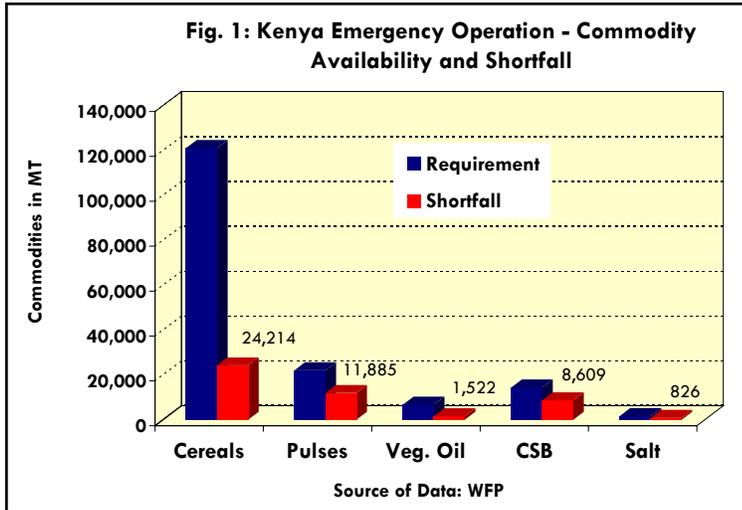
Graphics: FEWS NET Kenya

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## 1.0 Additional pledges needed to moderate rising food insecurity

Nearly 53 percent of the August – January Kenya EMOP is resourced. As of October 4, 2004, confirmed pledges amounted to \$ 45.1 million out of the total food requirement valued at \$81.3 million. Figure 1 shows the total food requirement, relative to the shortfall for the duration of the EMOP. While the cereals shortfall will likely be met, less than 50 percent of the Corn Soya Blend (CSB) and the pulses requirement is resourced. Food commodities need to be in the country by the end December 2004 if distributions are to occur before the next harvest begins in early February 2005.

The United States Government has contributed nearly 30 percent of the total requirement so far. The Government of Kenya is also a principal donor as well as DFID, CIDA, and the governments of Japan and the Netherlands.



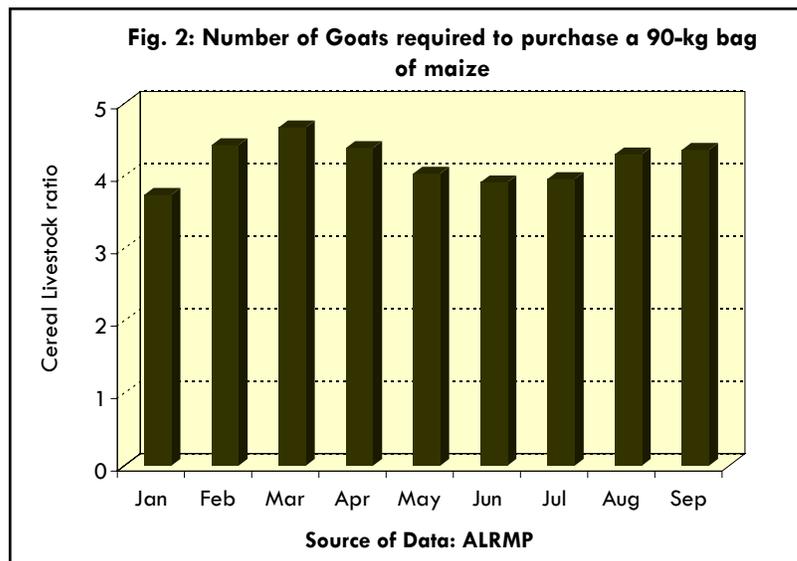
Since November 2003, the Government of Kenya (GoK) has distributed substantial amounts of relief food – more than 75,000 MT to over 1.5 million beneficiaries – to drought-affected pastoral and marginal agricultural districts. By early October, the GoK began to hand over emergency distributions to WFP under the EMOP. This transition is expected to take a few weeks. By the end of October, all targeted districts should be covered by the EMOP and lead agencies will take over distributions.

Although the short-rains should begin in mid-October and pastures and water sources should begin to improve, little or no milk or crop output is expected until February 2005. Subsequently, household food security will likely worsen, especially among pastoral households where rates of child malnutrition are beginning to rise. Things will worsen also in the coastal districts which are not overly dependent on the short rains.

## 2.0 Heavy rains in western Kenya; little respite in the worst-affected areas

Updated forecast information during mid-September seemed to indicate that the short rains would be favorable across the country, including in the pastoral areas, due to a warming trend in the sea surface temperatures over the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, and the advanced southward movement of the ITCZ. Over the past few weeks these expectations have diminished for the pastoral areas as the trends shifted.

Nevertheless, exceptionally heavy rains in the western and northwestern parts of the country during the last two weeks of September raised fears of renewed flooding in the flood-prone lake region. In particular, farm households in the lakeshore districts have yet to recover from the effects of the displacement and crop losses suffered during May 2004, at the height of the long rains. Other areas of the country that experienced heavy unseasonable rains during September include parts of the central and coastal areas, along with Samburu District and the worst-affected pastoral districts of Turkana and Mandera. While the rains have improved water availability in these pastoral districts, a substantial proportion of the livestock had migrated out of the district three months ago.



With the exception of pastoral areas that received unseasonable September rains, key environmental indicators continued to deteriorate in the pastoral districts. While food interventions in March helped to reduce food deficits in Turkana and Marsabit Districts, most food security indicators are worsening. Figure 2 shows declining livestock terms-of-trade in the worst-affected Lokitaung Division of Turkana District, now approaching the February to April 2004 levels which occurred at the peak of the drought earlier this year.

The Arid Lands and Resource Management Project (ALRMP) has further indicated that in Kitui and Kajiado Districts, livestock trekking distances average nearly 20 kilometers, and the watering frequency rate has increased to 2-3 days, up from one day. The influx of livestock from Garissa, Wajir and Tana River into Kitui and Mwingi Districts has raised tensions between the pastoral and marginal agricultural communities.

### **3.0 Anticipated good short rains harvest expected to reduce food deficits**

While the short-rains harvest is not anticipated until February 2005, the expectation of a good harvest in the cropping areas, following a favorable rainfall prognosis, suggests that the food security of the worst-affected agriculturally-based households will improve. In particular, the households in the lowlands of Eastern Province, who are heavily dependent on the short-rains harvest, and who experienced a near total crop failure last season, face a real opportunity to start a recovery process. The Ministry of Agriculture has indicated that land preparation has been unusually timely in these areas. In contrast, food insecurity among drought-affected coastal households may continue, in spite of expected good short rains. Little or no land preparation has been carried out so far. Due to the succession of crop failures, coastal households are unwilling to begin farm operations until the short rains start and this will inevitably result in yield losses. These households are already facing severe shortages of certified seed and other farm inputs.

The short-rains season has already begun in Western, Nyanza and southwestern areas of the Rift Valley Provinces, where planting has now been completed. These areas account for 50 percent of the expected 450,000 MT national short-rains maize harvest. The rest of the harvest should be derived mainly from the drought-affected lowlands of Eastern Province. The short-rains harvest should markedly increase household maize supply, helping to lower the prohibitively high food prices experienced during the past year and a half. However, most of the marginal agricultural households also depend on farm produce as a major source of income; thus lower prices may not benefit all equally.

Although the MoA projects that 180,000 MT of beans will be harvested, anticipated above normal rains in key growing areas could ruin the crop. This would seriously compromise household food security, since beans remain a major income earner among most of the drought-affected farm households.

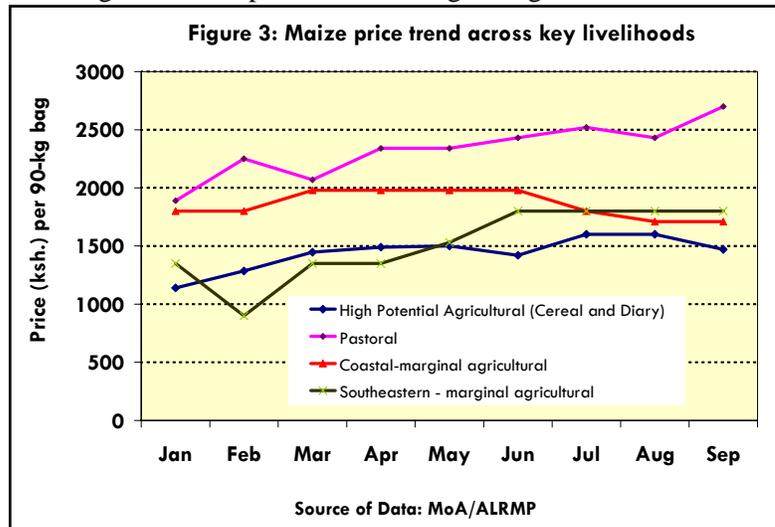
About 1.3 million MT of maize (representing 80 percent or 1.71 million MT of the total national long-rains maize output) will be harvested from November through January in seven key districts, namely: Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu, Nandi, Nakuru, Bungoma, Lugari and Mt. Elgon. Increased domestic maize supplies from the long-rains and short-rains harvests coupled with imports should lead to a substantial reduction in maize prices through April. This should also enhance local purchases of relief maize by the GoK and donors, helping to support producer prices.

In an attempt to cash in on current high maize prices, both traders and producers are buying and selling maize that has not dried properly. Unfortunately, premature harvesting and sale of wet maize may result in an aflatoxin re-contamination. The potential for an outbreak is exacerbated by the absence of adequate drying and storage facilities. Serious monitoring and enforcement of standards by relevant authorities is recommended at this time.

## 4.0 Maize prices likely to remain high through October

Maize prices have remained stable during September in most markets across the country, with exceptions found in markets adjacent to the harvesting areas, as well as in markets situated close to the Tanzanian and Ugandan borders. In spite of the duty waiver in early August, relatively little maize has been imported thus far. While the GoK expected 180,000 MT of private sector and 180,000 MT of GoK imports by the end of September, less than 80,000 MT of private sector and insignificant quantities of GoK imports have come into the country. Nevertheless, an estimated additional 70,000 MT of maize imports from Uganda and Tanzania from July through September have helped dampen domestic maize prices.

While maize prices are expected to start declining in November, September prices are still 40 – 60 percent higher than the 1998-2002 average. For the drought-affected pastoral and marginal agricultural households food prices remain beyond the reach of most households. Figure 3 shows the upward trend in the pastoral and marginal agricultural areas, in particular. Households in these areas are isolated from both the high potential and cross-border markets. Turkana represents a pastoral livelihood area; Makueni and Kilifi are marginal agricultural areas; and Eldoret market represents a high potential cropping livelihood area. The first three markets lie at the heart of the drought-affected areas.



The high maize prices continue to underline deepening food insecurity among the worst-affected households. Of particular concern are northwestern pastoral and coastal marginal agricultural households who have faced three to four successive poor seasons. Assessment teams found that as far back as in June 2004, these households had been forced to sell their breeding stock, leaving them with few viable options. The current low price of charcoal (Ksh. 80 per bag instead of the average Ksh. 200) is a clear indication of how many of these households have attempted to make ends meet in the absence of their productive assets. But strategies like charcoal, which depend on expendable natural resources, do not present long term sustainable solutions as they lead to environmental degradation and further impoverishment.

## Conclusion

While rising food insecurity has been moderated in part by relief food distributions, food needs are outstripping current availability. In addition, the food rations are not balanced, with shortfalls in CSB and pulses. Despite the ongoing food aid interventions, most indicators point to worsening household food insecurity. While expected favorable short-rains in cropping areas and increased domestic maize supply point to possible improvements, the worst-affected households will not harvest any produce until February 2005. Most of these households do not have sufficient income to purchase whatever food is available, so increased food supply will not necessarily led to improved food security, at least not until February next year and they will need continued assistance until then. Close monitoring of the flood-prone basins in now a priority due to the exceptionally heavy rains in western Kenya.