



KENYA FOOD SECURITY UPDATE MAY 2005

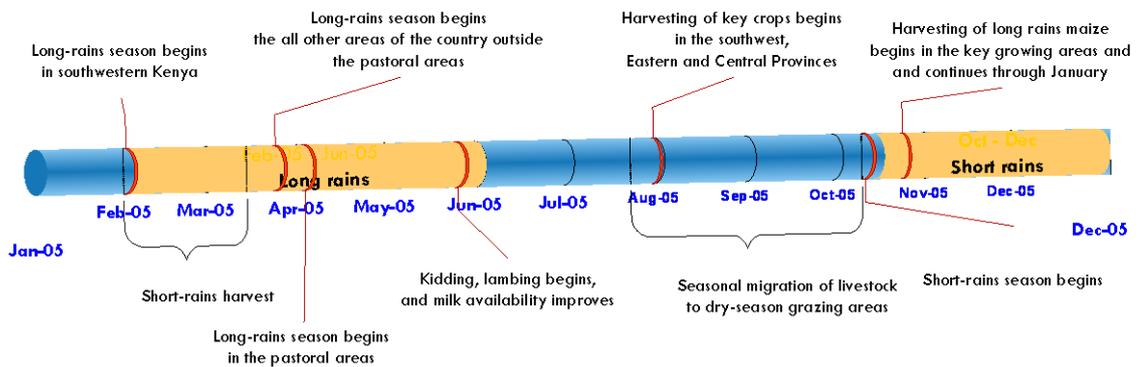
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SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The performance of the 2005 long-rains season, characterized by extended dry spells, is causing concern. The rains resumed at the end of April and their performance in May should provide a better basis for drawing conclusions about their impacts on national food security. However, a poor season in the drought-affected areas will only worsen food insecurity, particularly in the southeastern lowlands and eastern pastoral districts. Recovery of both pastoralists and farm households has already been interrupted by repeated droughts over the past five years.

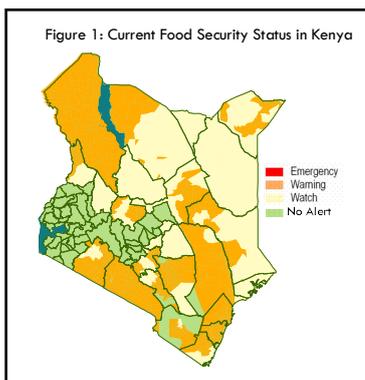
SEASONAL TIMELINE



CURRENT HAZARD SUMMARY

- Rainfall was well-below normal in a number of areas through late April.
- The onset of the long-rains season is more than one month late in the southeastern lowlands.
- Maize prices have remained 40-70 percent higher than normal, and are beginning to rise in marginal areas.
- Conflict escalated in the pastoral areas ~~in~~ during April.
- Exceptionally heavy rains are impeding food aid distributions in some pastoral areas.

FOOD SECURITY SUMMARY



The food security alert levels across Kenya remain the same as last month, as illustrated in Figure 1. Long-rains assessments set to begin in late June-early July should provide an updated analysis of the food security status of households in different parts of the country. A favorable food security outcome depends on an uncharacteristic continuation of the rains through June. In particular, pastoralists in the northeast have been slow to return to wet season grazing areas due to inconsistent rains through the end of April. This has reduced the amount of milk available to sedentary household members and extended their hunger period. In addition, food prices have remained far higher than normal. The adverse impact of the high prices will become more pronounced when farm households in the marginal agricultural areas exhaust their short rains harvest in the next three months. The Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) and the sectoral working groups are beginning the contingency planning process in the arid and semi-arid districts.

rose in Marsabit, Garissa, Samburu and Mandera districts. Malnutrition rates are also higher in the northeast than the northwest, as shown in Figure 3. The ALRMP has indicated that pastoralists are likely to migrate back to wet season grazing areas in May for the breeding season if current rains continue. This should improve availability of milk. While favorable 2004 short rains have moderated the impacts of the extended dry season, continued poor rains will worsen an already fragile situation, and forestall the recovery process. Subsequently, close monitoring of the season is recommended - should rains fail to materialize in May, pastoralists will be under severe stress.

Cattle prices have generally decreased across most of the pastoral districts by 6-15 percent, with the exception of Wajir and Ijara Districts. Goat prices, on the other hand, have increased by 2-18 percent in most pastoral markets. The body condition of the goats has improved fairly quickly, particularly in areas that received early rains in March. Nevertheless, ALRMP data shows that pastoral terms of trade declined during April in Baringo, Moyale, Marsabit, Mandera, Garissa, Turkana and Wajir districts, only improving in Ijara and Samburu Districts.

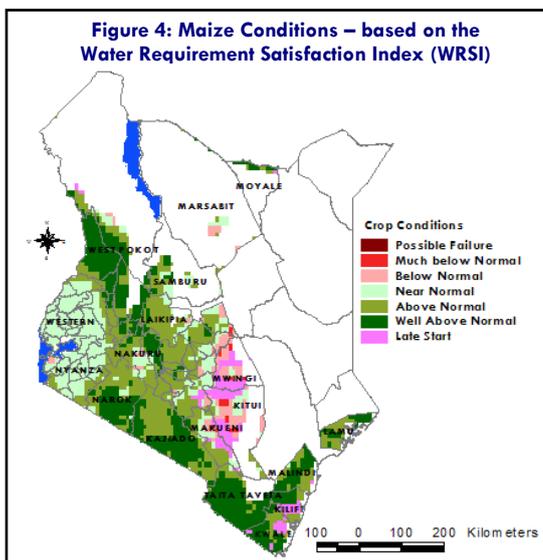
~~Pastoralist terms of trade are still in favor of pastoralists in all districts.~~

Conflict related to resource scarcity, exacerbated in some instances by clan disputes, escalated in April. Severe conflict accompanied by livestock losses and displacement of households was reported in Mandera, Marsabit, Samburu, Baringo and West Pokot. The ALRMP reported that 40 percent of the migration in Mandera District was related to conflict during April. In Samburu District, households have been displaced to Baragoi in the north after losing several lives and an estimated 200 head of livestock. In Marsabit District, pastoralists have responded to the insecurity by enlarging their villages to improve their ability to ward off future raids. Continued conflict has accentuated food insecurity by disrupting normal migration patterns, by keeping pastoralists away from favorable pastures such as in Mandera District, and by reducing access to livestock markets such as in West Pokot District.

FOOD AID SUFFICIENT THROUGH MAY; CEREALS SHORTFALLS LIKELY IN JUNE

Emergency relief food distributions reached about 1.4 million people in April, with ~~a the required full~~ food basket distributed to ~~the~~ targeted beneficiaries. The intended target of 1.6 million people was not achieved because heavy rains made roads impassable in parts of Northeastern and Eastern Provinces. Lack of distribution in Kitui District due to controversy surrounding the performance of the lead agency ~~difficulties in Kitui District was another limiting factor~~ also affected the number of beneficiaries being reached. About 1.6 million beneficiaries in 21 pastoral, agropastoral and marginal agricultural districts are targeted for May's distributions, ~~and a full ration proposed quantities are is planned for~~. An estimated 17,900 MT of food commodities will be distributed, comprised of 13,670 MT of cereals (maize and rice); 2,377 MT of pulses; 1,071 MT of CSB and 790 MT of vegetable oil. The re-targeting process, in line with recommendations of the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG), was conducted and completed by lead agencies in consultation with the WFP and the District Steering Groups.

Major concerns exist about the cereals pipeline for the June distribution. The emergency operation needs new pledges urgently, preferably in cash, to boost the cereals pipeline for the coming months. Cash could either be used to buy maize regionally or pay the associated costs to enable WFP to accept additional GoK pledges. The pipeline will not support a full basket for June and beyond without new pledges, if new EMOP contributions are not confirmed in the very near future.



LONG RAINS CROP DEVELOPMENT INTERRUPTED BY ERRATIC RAINS

The 2005 long-rains cropping season is well underway in arable areas of the country, except in the lowlands of Eastern Province, particularly in Kitui, Makueni and Mwingi districts, where rainfall has been poor throughout most of April. Rains re-started in some of the areas during the second week of May. While planting should have been completed by mid-April, only 50 percent of the crop has been sowed due to erratic rains. Some of the early planted crop has suffered substantial moisture-stress. Figure 4 shows the poor crop conditions in the lowlands of Eastern Province and fairly good conditions in other cropping areas, based on the Water Requirement Satisfaction Index.

Even though the long-rains season is the minor season in Eastern Province, contributing only around 30 percent to total annual production in these areas, the short-rains season was also mediocre in these same areas. Household food stocks from the short-rains season are expected to be used up over the next three months. The worst-affected households could suffer significant food stress, given the tight domestic market and high maize prices.

The extended dry spells during April also affected crops in the lowlands of Nyanza, Coast and Central Provinces. Unlike in the marginal agricultural areas of Eastern Province, continued crop development was made possible by intermittent showers throughout the month. Crops initially showing moisture stress have begun to recover in some areas.

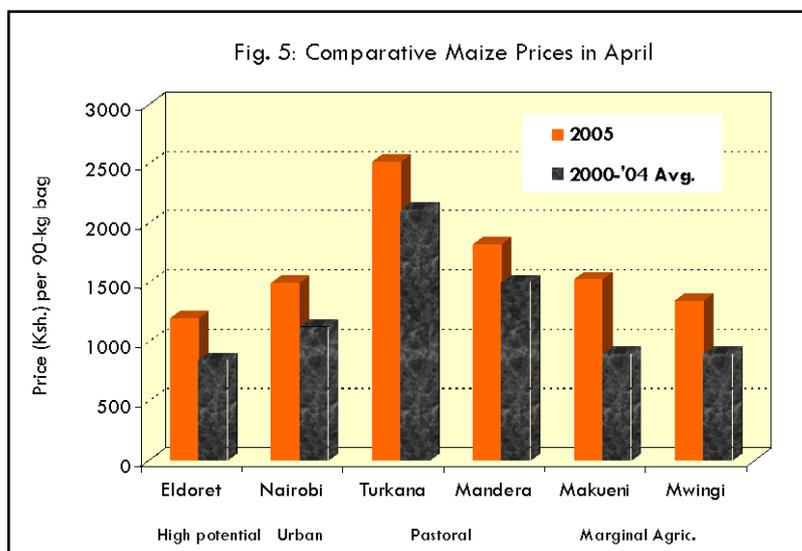
Crop production prospects have also improved in the 'grain-basket' districts of the Rift Valley Province as well as in Western and Nyanza Provinces, after rains resumed during the last week of April and continued through early May. Although 25 percent of planting has yet to be completed, the extended long-rains season in these key growing areas should facilitate crop maturity.

Nationally about 70 percent of the targeted acreage has been planted; Coast, Eastern and the Rift Valley have reported the lowest planting percentages. It is unlikely that crops planted after mid-May in the Coast and Rift Valley lowlands of Eastern Provinces will mature due to the brevity of the season.

The domestic market is expected to tighten through August, since the first harvest, from southwestern Kenya, will be delayed by more than one month. A shortfall of about 300,000 MT is anticipated before the harvest and the government of Kenya may facilitate importation of maize before then to stem the expected rise in maize prices. Currently the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) is holding 275,650 MT of maize – 265,650 for the SGR and 10,000 MT as commercial stocks.

MAIZE PRICES REMAIN HIGHER THAN NORMAL, RISING IN SHORT RAINS AREAS

Maize prices have remained largely stable, but higher than normal, through April. Figure 5 shows that April prices were 40-70 percent higher than normal in key reference markets. The NCPB has generally halted maize purchases in key harvesting areas yet maize prices have stayed high, underlying the tightening domestic market. Barring imports over the next few months, maize prices are expected to increase steadily through the end of August when the long-rains season



harvest in southwestern Kenya is expected. Prices have remained high even as cross-border imports from Tanzania, in particular, have continued. Due to the delay in the start of the season, the harvest will be over one month late, increasing the upward pressure on maize prices.

Maize prices are beginning to rise in markets situated in the short rains harvesting areas such as Mwingi, where the price has risen by 15 percent in just one month, from Ksh. 1,170 to Ksh. 1,350. The accelerated rise in food prices in these districts, attributed to the less than average short rains harvest, is of particular concern. The lowlands of Eastern Province are short-rains dependent; the long rains that are usually brief and unreliable have performed poorly so far and the next significant harvest is not expected until February 2006.

High food prices will also impact negatively on pastoral households. Their terms-of-trade are beginning to decline with

cereal prices beginning to increase faster than livestock prices. Consumers in urban centers are also faced with high maize flour prices exacerbated by rapidly rising fuel prices. Continuing higher-than-normal cereal prices will deepen food stress particularly in the pastoral and marginal agricultural areas as purchasing capacities continue to deteriorate.
