

*Food security improves with above-average short rains*

**KEY MESSAGES**

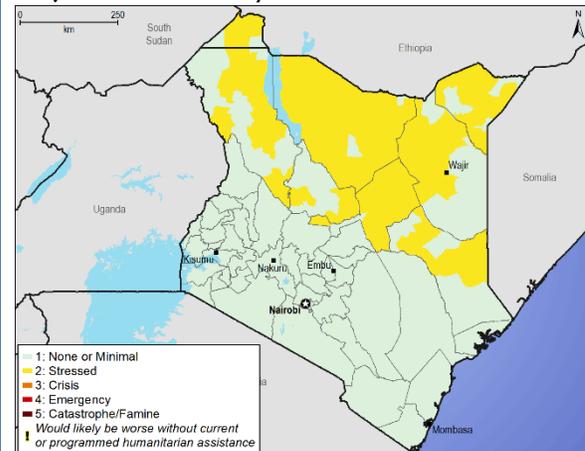
- Most areas of Kenya received above-average short rains, driven in part by the ongoing El Niño. Localized flooding and mudslides/landslides were reported in northwestern and northeastern pastoral areas and southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas. Although less extensive than previously expected, the Kenya Red Cross Society reported that the heavy rains resulted in approximately 70 deaths and displaced nearly 50,000 households.
- In pastoral areas, the short rains have led to the seasonal recovery of rangeland, increasing livestock productivity and improving food security. As a result, some pastoral households have improved to None (IPC Phase 1) in December. Further improvements are expected through March, with more households moving to None (IPC Phase 1), although many will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2).
- The long rains harvest in Western and Rift Valley was average and the February to March short rains harvest in southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas is expected to be average to above-average. Most households have improved to None (IPC Phase 1) and will remain in None (IPC Phase 1) through March.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

Above-average October to December short rains were received across most of Kenya. Localized, episodic flooding and landslides/mudslides were reported in parts of northwestern and northeastern pastoral areas and southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas. Although less extensive than previously expected, the Kenya Red Cross Society reported that the heavy rains resulted in approximately 70 deaths and displaced nearly 50,000 households. The rains also led to the destruction of crops in lakeshore (Mt. Elgon, Busia, Kisumu), central highland (Kirinyaga), northern rift (Trans Nzoia), coastal marginal (Taita Taveta), southeastern marginal (Kitui) and agropastoral (Narok and Tana River) areas, and livestock deaths in Turkana, Samburu, Marsabit, Mandera, Narok, Isiolo, and Laikipia Counties. Disaster preparedness measures were put in place by the national government, local governments, and partner organizations, which mitigated the impact of these events. These measures included advisories to flood-prone areas, digging of trenches, and advising farmers to plant and harvest early and plant short cycle crops that would be less affected by above-average rainfall.

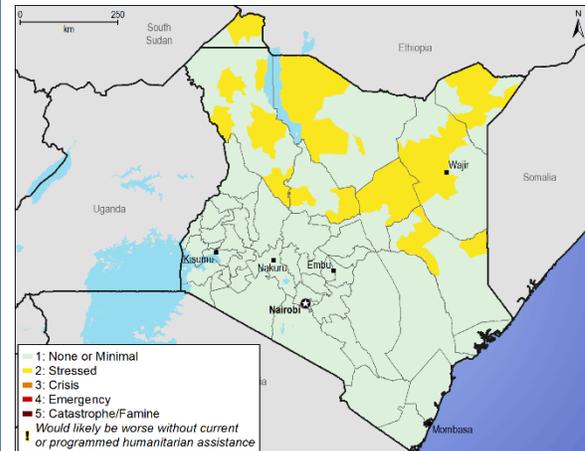
**In the northeastern and northwestern pastoral areas**, the short rains have led to the seasonal recovery of rangeland and recharged key water sources to 60-100 percent, increasing livestock productivity and improving food security. The distance

Projected food security outcomes, December 2015



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, January to March 2016



Source: FEWS NET

This map represents acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making. It does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. To learn more about this scale, click [here](#).

traveled to grazing and watering sources has reduced to less than 10 kilometers and nearly 90 percent of livestock have migrated back to wet-season grazing areas near homesteads. Livestock body conditions range from fair to good in most areas and are expected to improve further. However, localized areas in Isiolo, Wajir, and Garissa Counties have experienced rainfall deficits ranging between 25-80 percent of normal. As a result, these areas are reporting poor to fair rangeland and livestock body conditions. County-average retail maize prices in pastoral markets have remained stable between October and November, as imports keep markets well supplied. Maize prices in November were eight to 30 percent above the five-year averages in Wajir, Marsabit, Turkana, and Isiolo, near the five-year average in Mandera, and eight percent below the five-year average in Garissa. Goat prices seasonally increased approximately 10 percent from October to November in Garissa, Marsabit, and Mandera, and remained stable in Turkana and Wajir, due primarily to improved livestock body conditions. Increases in goat prices against stable cereal prices have ensured favorable livestock-to-cereal terms of trade, which increased nearly 11 percent between October and November. Some pastoral households have improved to None (IPC Phase 1), but many poor, pastoral households remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) given low livestock holdings from previous successive below-average seasons.

**In the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas**, the above-average short rains led to an increase in area planted. Crops are at various stages of development: maize is currently at knee-high stage, most beans are flowering, and potatoes are at tuber formation stage. Weeding for early-planted crops is ongoing in various counties, except for in parts of Makueni, Kwale, and Meru North where replanting of some crops is ongoing after erratic rainfall destroyed earlier crops. The distance traveled to domestic and livestock water sources has reduced to less than 2.5 kilometers. Staple food prices remained stable or declined marginally between October and November. Casual agricultural labor, a primary source of income for most poor households, is available at above-average levels as a result of the increase in area under cultivation. The availability of short-cycle crops, which are currently being harvested, has further improved household food consumption. The majority of households are in None (IPC Phase 1).

## UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most likely scenario for the [Kenya Food Security Outlook for October 2015 to March 2016](#) remain unchanged.

## PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH MARCH 2016

**In pastoral areas**, significant improvements in food security are expected as the short rains continue to improve rangeland. Livestock body conditions are showing considerable recovery and livestock prices are expected to rise. This will further improve the livestock-to-cereals terms of trade, as cereal prices are expected to remain stable. Availability of livestock-related labor opportunities will continue to provide income-earning opportunities to poor households, further supporting food access. With increased milk consumption and income available to support diversified diets, the proportion of children at risk of malnutrition is expected to decline. Further improvements to food security are expected and more households will move to None (IPC Phase 1). However, many pastoral households, including those in parts of Isiolo, Wajir, and Garissa, and those recovering from previous below-average seasons, are expected to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through March.

**In the southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas**, the above-average short rains are likely to result in average to above-average harvests in February/March, except in localized parts of Kwale and Makueni, which experienced a late start to the short rains and less cumulative rainfall. Above-average demand for agricultural labor will continue to increase household income, further supporting food access and consumption at the household level. The majority of households will remain in None (IPC Phase 1) through at least March.

## ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This monthly report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates FEWS NET's quarterly Food Security Outlook. Learn more about our work [here](#).