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Government of Kenya

WFP World Food Programme
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KENYA Food Security Outlook

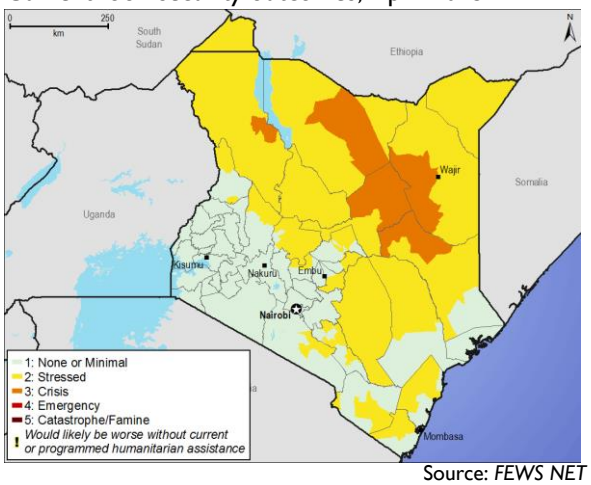
April to September 2015

Below-average long rains may still result in improved food security

KEY MESSAGES

- Nationally, food security is expected to remain stable through June, supported by typical availability of most food commodities from imports and from short-cycle crops from the long rains harvest.
- In the marginal agricultural livelihood zones, food security is most likely to remain stable through June with some food and income coming from the March to May long rains, which is the secondary agricultural production season in these areas. Food insecurity will heighten from July to September, with households in some localized areas in Kitui County being unable to purchase sufficient quantities and moving into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) by September.
- Pastoral areas are likely to have some improvements in food security though June. Food insecurity is likely to heighten from July to September, triggered by an early start of the lean season and faster than usual depletion of rangeland resources. Some poor households in localized parts of Wajir, Isiolo, and Garissa are likely to move or remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) at that time.

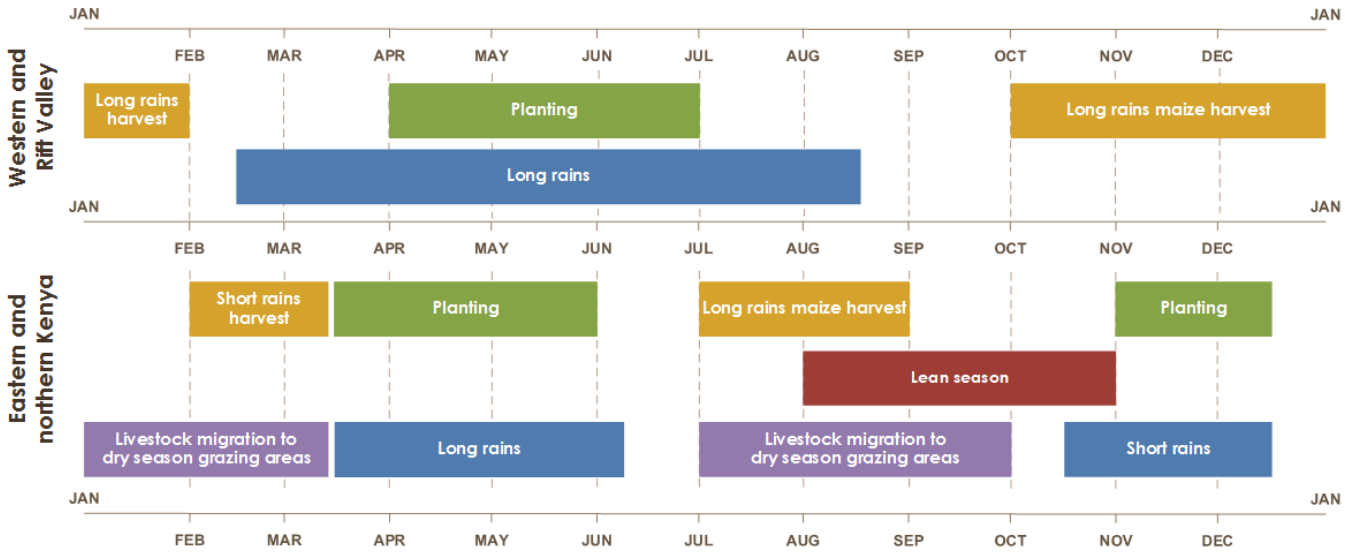
Current food security outcomes, April 2015



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.

SEASONAL CALENDAR IN A TYPICAL YEAR



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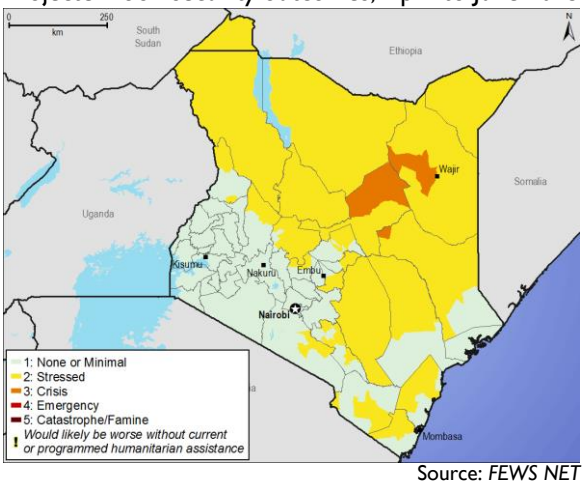
NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

Food security is normal and stable in most parts of the country, but in marginal agricultural areas and pastoral areas, households' food access declined, following the below-average October to December 2014 short rains (Ministry of Agriculture, February 2015 Food Security Situation Report). According to the Kenya Food Security Steering Group's (KFSSG's) short rains assessment report published in February 2015, an estimated 1.6 million people are acutely food insecure, predominantly in pastoral and marginal agricultural areas.

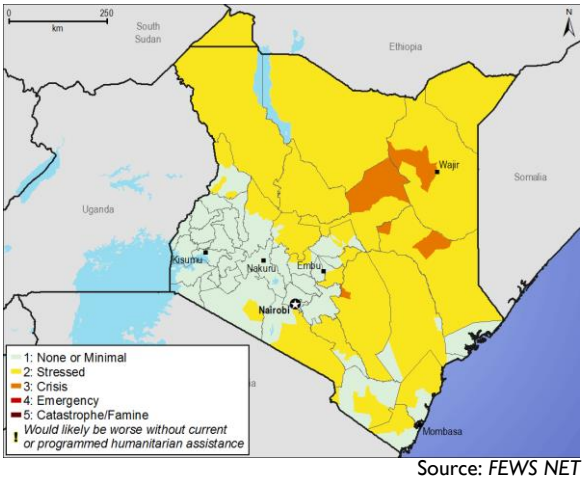
In the high- and medium-potential agricultural areas that did not have below-average October to December 2014 short rains, farmers still have substantial stocks, especially of **maize**. However, incomes and food access for these farmers is being reduced by post-harvest losses due to inadequate storage capacity, and the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) has been purchasing less maize this year than usual. The consumer price index (CPI) marginally increased between February and March, slightly decreasing households' food access and purchasing power. National stocks of staple foods like maize, beans, and rice are adequate and expected to last at least through June when harvesting of long rains crops begin. Between January and March, maize prices remained unusually stable in Nairobi and Kisumu, but they increased by five and nine percent in Mombasa and Eldoret, respectively. Stable prices were attributed to the availability of imports from Tanzania and Uganda and some supply from the short rains harvest. The price increase in Eldoret is plausibly due to the drawing down of stocks. March prices in these urban markets were up to 12 percent below their five-year averages in Nairobi and Eldoret, and they remained near their five-year averages in Kisumu and Mombasa.

Projected food security outcomes, April to June 2015



Source: *FEWS NET*

Projected food security outcomes, July to September 2015



Source: *FEWS NET*

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In both the marginal agricultural areas and the pastoral livelihood zones, acute food insecurity is largely a result of the below-average October to December short rains and, in some areas, the cumulative effects of the third below-average rainy season in a row. The worst hit areas are **the southeastern marginal agricultural areas** where households get up to 70 percent of annual crop production during the short rains season. In these areas, short rains crop production was well below average, resulting in reduced household food supply. With no food stocks from own produced crops, at a time of year when normally households would be consuming these, households are instead purchasing all of their food from the market. With seasonally limited income-earning opportunities, households' capacity to purchase food is seasonally low. However, stable food prices have maintained some household purchasing capacity, despite lower incomes this year due to reduced agricultural labor demand for the short rains harvest. To continue meeting basic needs, households are employing some coping strategies including increasing charcoal production, purchasing food on credit, and reducing the variety of foods consumed. The majority of households remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

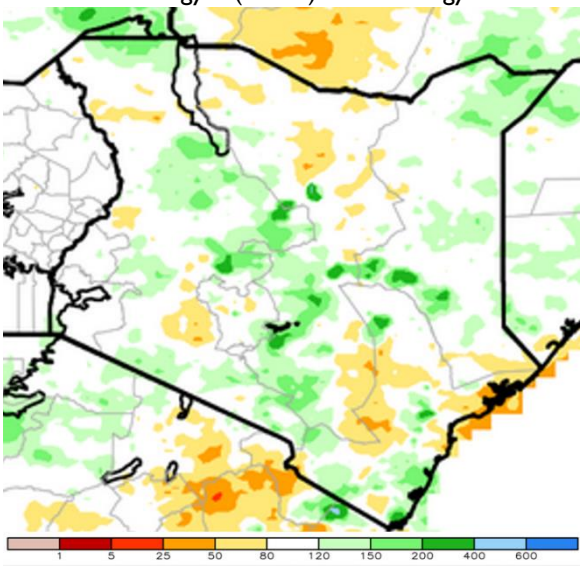
Since the start of **the long rains** in late March, most households were either doing land preparation or planting. The major crops being planted include sorghum, green grams (mung beans), millet, maize, pigeon peas, cowpeas, and groundnuts.

In **pastoral areas**, food security remains precarious after the below-average October to December 2014 short rains, especially in Northeastern Pastoral livelihood zone. The cumulative effect of the previous three below-average rainy seasons were compounded by the especially dry and hot January to March dry season in these areas. Water, pasture, and browse have

been difficult to find, especially in Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, Mandera, and Marsabit Counties, and in agropastoral areas in Kajiado, Narok, and Laikipia. Consequently, livestock had been unusually migrated with most livestock still in dry season grazing areas, but some have returned to the wet season grazing areas after onset of the rains. Longer trekking distances between water and pasture caused deterioration of livestock body conditions and health during the dry season. Access to milk and other livestock products remains very low, especially for household members who remained at homesteads.

The **long rains** started in these pastoral areas in late March or early April. So far, the rains have been erratically distributed, both in space and time, with average to below-average cumulative amounts in most pastoral and marginal agricultural areas (Figure 1). Rangeland resources have started recovering from the dry season.

Figure 1. Cumulative rainfall March1 to April 27, 2015 as a percent of the 1981-to-2010 mean, African rainfall climatology-2 (ARC2) methodology



Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/Climate Prediction Center (CPC)

Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made at the national level:

- According to the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD) and an examination of other forecasts, the remainder of the March to May long rains are forecast to be erratically distributed with average to below-average cumulative rainfall in pastoral and marginal agricultural areas and with average to above-average cumulative rainfall in most high- and medium-potential agricultural areas.
- Due to the below-average March to May long rains in marginal agricultural areas, below average crop production is expected in July/August. Long rains crop production is expected to be above average in the high- and medium-potential agricultural areas from October 2015 to January 2016.
- A modest increase in the availability of rangeland resources is expected between April and June in the pastoral, agropastoral, and marginal agricultural areas, but these are expected to deteriorate faster than normal during the July to September dry season.
- The primary lean season is expected to start early in July instead of August.
- Maize prices will typically increase between April and June due to increased demand from households who have exhausted their stocks earlier than usual. However, due to continued imports of maize from Uganda and Tanzania through June, these price increases are likely to be modest.
- Humanitarian assistance by the national government, county governments, and other agencies is expected to increase and widen in scope in response to deteriorating food and nutrition security between July and September.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Nationally, food security is expected to remain stable through June, supported by continued availability of food from imports and from short-cycle long rains crops. Maize production nationally in 2014 was around 20 percent below the five-year average, but cross-border imports have sustained stable supply on markets. Through June, the national maize balance sheet prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture notes that available maize stocks would be adequate with a surplus of 0.2 million metric tons (MMT) after June when the early harvest from the southern Rift Valley is expected to start.

In the **marginal agricultural livelihood zones**, between April and June, the most likely scenario points to marginal improvements in food security. While not the predominant agricultural season in these areas, short-cycle crops grown during the long rains and modest increases in agricultural labor wages will support food consumption. Remittances will also support household food consumption through June. Food prices are expected to typically but gradually increase through June, assisting households in maintaining some food access. Most households are expected to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2)

through June. During the July to October extended lean season, food security is expected to rapidly deteriorate. Though the long rains harvest usually starts in July, the expected below-average long rains are likely to lead to a below-average harvest in these areas, especially for cereal crops. Household incomes are expected to seasonally decline as casual labor opportunities dwindle due to the seasonal reduction in agricultural labor demand. Despite the deterioration of household food consumption, the majority of households are expected to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through September. However, localized areas may have many households with food consumption deficits, especially in parts of Kitui County, and move into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) by September.

In **pastoral areas**, marginal improvements in food security are expected in some areas while other areas are expected to remain at their current phase of acute food insecurity through June. The March to May rains started in the last week of March or early April, and they have been poor and erratically distributed in most areas. The current rains have been largely near average to below average, and are likely to result in modest improvements in food security through June, with some increased availability of rangeland resources expected. Some kidding, lambing, and calving will occur between now and June, but at below-normal rates. Both milk production and livestock prices are expected to have modest increase through June, increasing household food consumption and improving nutritional status. The majority of households will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2), but in some of the areas that were the driest and had depleted most of their resources even before the dry season, and where rainfall deficits have continued to be witnessed including parts of Wajir, Isiolo, and Garissa, poor households are likely to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). From July through September, faster than normal depletion of rangeland resources is expected due to average to below average recovery of these resources during the March to May long rains. With less income and food from milk and other sources, the lean season is likely to start a month early in July. The expected below-average crop harvest in agropastoral areas, sustained high staple food prices in these more isolated markets, below-average livestock prices, low milk availability, and below-normal household incomes, will lead to more households becoming food insecure. Through September, though most households will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2), poorer households in localized parts of Wajir, Isiolo, and Garissa are likely to remain in or move into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) during the July to September lean season.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Southeastern and coastal marginal mixed farming livelihood zones

Current Situation

Food security remains precarious following the below-average October to December 2014 short rains and the cumulative effects of three successive seasons of below-average agricultural production. Due to the below-average rains that ended early, most households did not harvest substantial amounts of food. They have no food stocks from their own production, as they would typically have at this time of year. Usually, some stocks last through July. Short rains maize production was well below the five-year average. Households are unusually buying food on markets at a time when household incomes are seasonally low, due to the limited availability of casual labor opportunities. Stable food prices are helping preserve households' purchasing power despite seasonally low incomes. Between February and March, retail maize prices remained stable in Kitui, Makueni, Embu, Taita Taveta, Kwale, and Kilifi Counties, and Meru North Sub-county. Markets in Tharaka Nithi and Nyeri Counties though had up to a 16 percent reduction in retail staple food prices. Continued availability of supplies from neighboring counties and some short rains crop harvests entering the markets maintained or lowered prices. Retail prices were up to 10 percent below their five-year averages except in Tharaka Nithi, Embu, and Taita Taveta Counties where prices were up to 30 percent above average, due to lower local production.

The March to May long rains started in the third or fourth week of March in these areas. So far, the rains have been very erratic with both poor spatial and temporal distribution, and they have been near average to below average in cumulative amount. Some farmers dry planted in early March, but most farmers wet planted after the rains started. Across the marginal agricultural areas, farmers who planted early have crops at the first weeding stage, while the majority of the farmers who planted later have crops at the germination stage. There was some localized flooding in Kilifi County. Water, pasture, and browse for livestock are slowly recovering from the deterioration that occurred during the warmer than normal January to March dry season. However, water availability for livestock remains less than usual. The average trekking distances are currently five to 10 kilometers (km) compared to the one to five km that is normal for this time of year. Across most areas, cattle body conditions have ranged from fair to poor, but for goats and sheep, body conditions ranged from fair to good.

During the dry season, milk production and consumption declined even more than normal, down to 60 percent of average in most areas.

The proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition, measured by a mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) less than 135 millimeters (mm), remained fairly stable in Kitui, Makueni, Tharaka Nithi, Embu, Taita Taveta, and Kwale between February and March. However, they marginally increased in Meru North Sub-County and Nyeri and Kilifi Counties, due to the seasonal reduction in household food consumption. MUAC rates have continued to remain up to 50 percent below their five-year averages, depicting stable nutrition in these areas. Continued nutrition support programs and relatively stable household food availability and consumption, through various coping mechanisms, have contributed to this stability in most areas.

Assumptions

In addition to the national assumptions made above, the following additional assumptions have been made for the southeastern and coastal marginal mixed farming livelihood zones:

- From July to September, rates of malnutrition are likely to increase due to declining food access.
- Agricultural labor opportunities are likely be widely available during planting in April and weeding between May and June. They will decline after that through September due to seasonal factors and the expected below-average long rains harvest.
- Households will intensify their use of coping strategies like charcoal burning, sand harvesting, and increasing petty trade between July and September as the lean season becomes established.
- Remittances from existing labor migrants will increase into these areas from July through September during the lean season.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Household food consumption is expected to marginally improve between April and June as short-cycle crops mature and households get some income from agricultural labor. Food access would likely be lower than average, as below-average rainfall leads to below normal demand for agricultural labor and below-average production of long rains crops. In addition, market access is constrained, as poor households do not have savings from income they typically earn from crop sales and labor during the short rains harvest in February/March. While long rains crop production is not the primary season for agricultural production in these areas, considering that the previous short rains harvest was very poor, and the fact that the next significant local harvest would not occur until March 2016, the expected below-average long rains harvest is unlikely to result in major improvements in food security in July/August. Food security is likely to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through June 2015.

From July to September, household food consumption is expected to wane further. The expected gradual increase in food prices, declining household income as the availability of labor opportunities seasonally declines, and increased reliance on markets for food as short-cycle long rains crops are consumed or sold will lead to increased food insecurity. These households have a low number of livestock to sell. At the early start of the lean season in July, some labor migration to urban areas in search of income-earning opportunities is likely. The majority of households would still be able to afford their minimally adequate dietary requirements through intensification of coping strategies, including switching to less expensive foods, labor migration primarily to urban areas, intensifying petty trade, receiving remittances, and purchasing food on credit. They will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through September. However, localized areas where short rains production was the least will likely have significant household food deficits, especially in parts of Kitui, Embu, and Tharaka Nithi Counties, with some areas in Kitui County moving into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) by September. Nutrition is expected to deteriorate during this time as food access and milk availability decline. Interventions though are likely to prevent increases in mortality or other extreme malnutrition outcomes. With more households becoming food insecure, agencies providing humanitarian assistance, including the national government, county governments, and development partners are expected to intensify their interventions, especially from July to September.

Pastoral livelihood zones

Current Situation

Food security continued to decline from January through April. From the short rains assessment conducted by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG), the food insecure population in pastoral areas increased to about 1.1 million people, an eight percent increase from August 2014 to February 2015. Less-than-usual recovery of pasture, browse, and water during the October to December short rains and previous rainy seasons was followed by a warmer-than-normal January to March dry season, in which these resources became even less available. The poor rangeland conditions and inadequate water access resulted in a decline in livestock productivity, heightening food insecurity.

The March to May long rains had a varied start. They started on time in some areas, including much of Turkana, Marsabit, Samburu, Wajir, and Garissa Counties. They started late in others, including much of Isiolo, Mandera, Tana River, West Pokot, Kajiado, and Narok Counties. The rains have so far been near average to below average in cumulative amounts (Figure 1) with highly uneven temporal and spatial distribution. Rangelands have started to recover but slowly, and most livestock have not yet been returned from dry-season grazing areas. Water points though have been moderately recharged since the start of the rains, with many reaching levels between half and three-quarters of their capacity. Trekking distances between water and pasture for livestock are still far, ranging from 10 to 15 kilometres (km) in the Northwest to 15 to 20 km in the Northeast in Isiolo, Garissa, Wajir, parts of Mandera, and Tana River Counties. Normal distances for this time of year are between five and 10 km.

Earlier than normal migration of livestock occurred towards the end of 2014, and the out-migrated livestock have continued to have declining productivity. Milk production remains low, ranging from 50 to 80 percent of average, with a lactating cow producing 0.5 to 1.5 liters per day, while averages for this time of year are two to six liters per day. Household incomes are seasonally low due to low livestock prices, caused primarily by poor livestock body conditions. In markets, most trade is currently of goats and sheep, as most cattle were migrated to dry season grazing areas and have yet to be returned to wet-season grazing areas that are closer to homesteads and market towns. Livestock prices declined up to 15 percent in Samburu, Kajiado, and West Pokot, but they remained fairly stable in Marsabit, Wajir, Mandera, Garissa, Isiolo, Tana River, and Baringo Counties between February and March. The decline was primarily the result of poor livestock body conditions, but the stability is likely related to the low number of livestock for sale in markets, despite some demand. Prices were up to 13 percent above their five-year averages in Kajiado, Samburu, Tana River, Baringo, and West Pokot Counties while being up to 20 percent below their five-year averages in Marsabit, Wajir, Mandera, and Garissa Counties. March maize retail prices on the other hand were stable in Kajiado, Samburu, Mandera, Garissa, Isiolo, and West Pokot Counties, but they fell six to 11 percent from February in Turkana, Marsabit, Wajir, Tana River, and Baringo Counties. These fairly stable maize prices were supported by ample supplies from imports and other parts of Kenya. As a result, livestock-to-cereal terms remain somewhat stable though below their five-year averages, and livestock sales have continued to support some food consumption.

A comprehensive nutrition situation analysis was conducted across the arid and semi-arid counties in February 2015, as part of the short rains seasonal performance assessments. The results were mostly similar to July 2014, with still higher but stable malnutrition rates in the northwestern pastoral areas in Turkana, Marsabit, and Samburu, and in agropastoral areas in West Pokot, Baringo, Kajiado, Laikipia, and Narok. There were higher rates of global acute malnutrition (GAM) and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) than in July 2014 in the northeastern pastoral areas in Wajir, Garissa, and Isiolo Counties. Between February and March, MUAC depicts stable nutrition in most of these areas except for Wajir and Mandera Counties where the proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition increased up to 10 percent to around 25 percent of children under the age of five being 'at risk' of malnutrition.

Assumptions

In addition to the national assumptions above, the following assumptions have been made about pastoral livelihood zones:

- Livestock productivity is likely to increase between April and June due to the regeneration of rangeland resources. Household income will most likely track livestock prices, increasing through July and then declining as rangeland conditions and livestock body conditions deteriorate, with lower prices and thus less household income by July.

- Households will intensify their use of coping strategies to generate income by August as the lean season becomes established.
- Livestock are expected to be migrated to wet-season grazing areas between April and June. These areas are closer to homesteads, increasing the availability of livestock products and the consumption of these products, including milk, by households.
- Humanitarian assistance will continue through September.
- Below normal rates of calving, lambing, and kidding are likely over the coming months. As a result, milk production is likely to remain below average. However, there will be a modest increase in household milk consumption following wet season calving, kidding, and lambing between April and June. Between July and September, faster than normal deterioration in rangeland resources will result in a rapid decline in milk production and consumption.
- Rangeland resources are likely to be eroded more quickly, as early as July in some areas, due to pressure from livestock and less recovery than normal during the long rains.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Through June, households in the pastoral livelihood zones are likely to experience modest improvements in food security, though some areas will remain acutely food insecure. The March to May long rains will increase the availability of water, pasture, and browse. While at a below normal rate, some kidding, lambing, and calving will occur. Livestock productivity is likely to increase in tandem with these resources, with milk production and livestock prices increasing through June. However, this will be short lived, as the regenerated rangeland resources quickly get consumed by livestock and used by households. Through June, the majority of households will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2), but in some of the areas that were the driest previously, where resources have been mostly exhausted during the dry season, and where the long rains are already below average, including parts of Wajir, Isiolo, and Garissa, poor households are likely to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through June.

From July through September, rangeland resources are expected to be depleted faster than normal due to below normal recovery during the long rains. With less income and less milk, the lean season is likely to start early in July instead of August. The expected below-average harvest in agropastoral areas, sustained high staple food prices, declining livestock prices, low milk availability, and low household incomes will reduce household food consumption. Livestock body conditions and their health are expected to continue to typically deteriorate as they will need to be trekked longer distances between grazing and water. The prices of livestock are expected to decrease, causing livestock-to-cereal terms of trade to decrease, limiting household income. Nutrition will follow household food consumption, remaining fairly stable through June. However, starting in July, household food access will become constrained as milk availability declines. Malnutrition rates are likely to rise to even higher levels. During this period, households are expected to intensify their coping strategies such as increasing reliance on firewood and charcoal sales, seeking additional casual labor opportunities, and relying on remittances. For the majority of households, food security will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2), but the areas already in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) are likely to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). However, an increasing number of poor households in localized parts of Wajir, Isiolo, and Garissa are likely to move into or remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Conditions for livestock production are not expected to improve until the start of the short rains in October.

EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

Table 1: Possible events over the next six months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Northern pastoral livelihood zones	Significantly above-average total rainfall during the March to May long rains	Substantial increases in water, pasture, and browse availability would lead to increased livestock production. However, in the case of associated flash floods, an unusually high level of livestock mortality may occur in flooded areas.
Northern pastoral areas	Increased conflict	Increased displacement and reduced market functioning would limit household food access.
Northern pastoral and agropastoral areas	Scaling up of food and non-food interventions by county governments and development partners	Food and income related to interventions could allow many more households to consume adequate quantities of food, meaning fewer areas would move into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) during the extended July to September lean season.
the Northeast	Even higher levels of civil insecurity	As markets are closed and access to grazing declines, incomes and livestock productivity would fall. This could also reduce access to these areas for the humanitarian and government agencies currently providing assistance.
Southeastern Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone	Well above-average March to May long rains	Substantial increases in long rains crop output and in livestock production could occur, but food security outcomes would not improve dramatically as this is the minor growing season in this area. At this point, it is unlikely that planted area could be increased enough to compensate for the well below average short rains harvest.
Southeastern Marginal Mixed Farming livelihood zone	Food prices decline markedly	This increase in purchasing power would likely reduce the use of coping strategies.

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming six months. Learn more here.