

Drought Situation Brief - KRDP 1

March 2014



This is the monthly drought situation brief for the KRDP 1 counties, based on information from the NDMA Early Warning Bulletins, FEWSnet, ReliefWeb, the Kenya Meteorological Department, news websites and as much as possible information from the field - Nanyuki, 7 April 2014.

In general it seems that the long rains have started in all KRDP 1 counties, although Baringo has not had much rain so far, and for most counties it is predicted that the rains will intensify in the coming weeks.

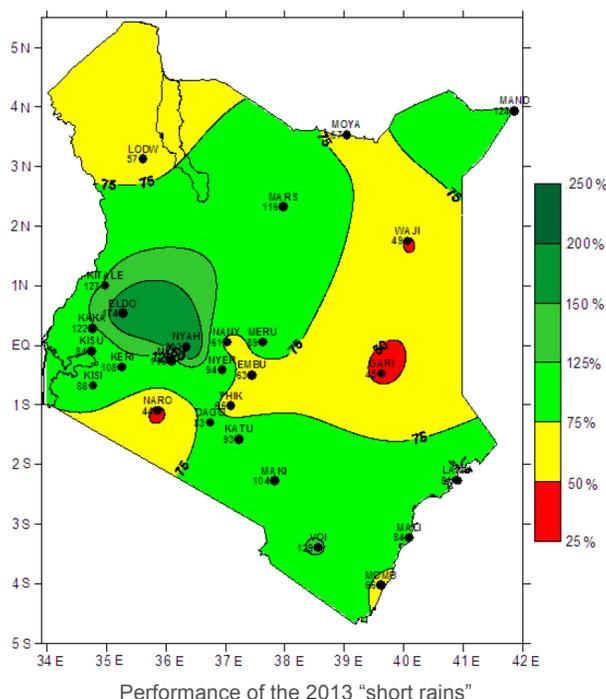
Food Security Outlook (FEWSnet)

“Below normal March to May rains likely to slow recovery in pastoral areas”. Recent predictions suggest that the long rains will be normal to below normal in terms of total amount. However, they are likely to be erratic in their distribution over much of the pastoral zones and to be interrupted by dry spells. The onset, which is often in the first week of March, has been delayed by two to three weeks in most areas.

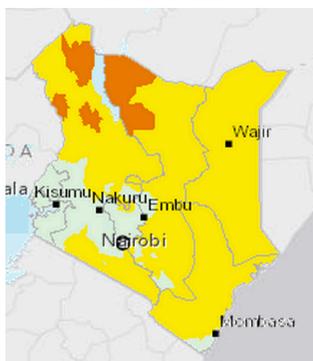
Through to May, warmer than normal temperatures, up to one degree above normal will persist. At the same time, the March to May long rains will have started later in March/April than normal, delaying the start of agricultural activities. Although delayed, the long rains will lead to regeneration of pasture, browse, and recharge water points to support kidding, lambing, and calving. Livestock will likely be returned to wet season grazing areas even if later than planned. Livestock body conditions, milk availability, and livestock prices will most likely track the availability of pasture and browse, decreasing through April and increasing in May/June. However, in Mandera, Wajir, and much of Marsabit Counties, the long rains will be delayed and depressed to compound the effects of the poor short rains season and the minor lean season may persist through June.

Looking back at the Jan-Feb dry season:

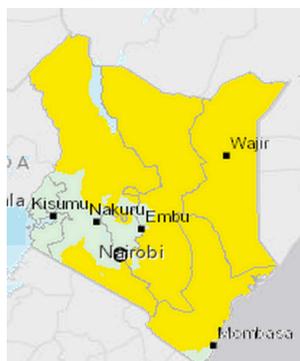
- Performance of the 2013 short rains was below normal for large parts of the Kenyan ASALs (see figure below).
- The acutely food insecure population increased from 0.85 million in August 2013 to 1.3 million in February 2014 according to the Kenya Food Security Steering Group’s short rains assessment.
- Acutely food insecure households were concentrated in northeastern pastoral areas in **Garissa, Isiolo, Mandera, Tana River, and Wajir Counties**.
- In the pastoral livelihood zones, rangeland conditions continued to deteriorate from January to February, owing primarily to above normal temperatures. Livestock body conditions deteriorated in line with worsening rangeland conditions leading to a decline in livestock prices across pastoral livelihood zones.



Near Term



Medium Term



Seasonal Weather Forecasts (March-May)

Isiolo, Marsabit, Tana River, and Wajir are likely to receive near normal rainfall with a tendency towards below normal (i.e. **depressed rainfall**). Baringo and Samburu are likely to receive near normal rainfall with a tendency towards above normal (i.e. **enhanced rainfall**).

Poor rainfall distribution is expected over in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs).



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Situation per County

In addition to the general drought situation overview, this section includes details of the specific situation per county. Most information comes from the NDMA Early Warning Bulletins. Also indicated is the warning stage for Pastoral Livelihood Zones (PZL). Please note that the latest EWBs that are available are from February!

Baringo (Warning stage PZL: **ALARM** – worsening)

Baringo received an average of 17.6 mm of rainfall during February, which was below normal. Quality of the available pasture has deteriorated fast in Agro Pastoral and Irrigated cropping livelihood zones and very dry (poor) in Pastoral livelihood zone, and livestock disease is on the increase. During the last four weeks the water availability decreased in all livelihood zones due to poor rainfall. From January to February, the average price of livestock decreased: Kshs 17,553 to 15,297 (cattle), Kshs 3,210 to Kshs 2,535 (goat), Kshs 2,597 to Kshs 1,995 (sheep).

Samburu (Warning stage PZL: **LATE ALERT** – worsening)

The quality and quantity of browse and pasture was fair to poor and continued to deteriorate as the dry spell persisted and an influx of livestock from Laikipia increased the pressure on the available resources. Distances to water points for both households and livestock significantly increased compared to January. The prices of all livestock fell significantly compared to January though still above long term average. Insecurity in Samburu North remained a major constraint in accessing and utilization of forage and water resources.

Isiolo (Warning stage PZL: *not given*)

All livelihood zones are experiencing drought conditions, severe in the Northern (Merti and Garbatulla) and western (Oldonyiro) pastoral LZ. Water access and availability worsened in the county compared to January. No rain fed crop harvest in the county after the short rains, which is not normal. Livestock was concentrated within the dry seasons grazing areas, and in-migration from Wajir, Garissa and Marsabit to Isiolo continued over February. Conflict increased in Garbatulla Sub County around Fororsa, Belgesh and Kulamawe water points.

Marsabit (Warning stage PZL: **EARLY ALARM** – worsening)

Off-season rains were received in all livelihood zones amounting to 29 mm around Mt Marsabit and its environs. Lowlands received minimal amounts. Quality and quantity of pasture and browse has greatly deteriorated across the County. As a result, livestock body condition is also deteriorating and outward migration is occurring in search of pasture and water. In pastoral livelihood zones, the distance to watering points is 20-25 km, which is higher than normal.

Normalcy has resumed in conflict torn Moyale and Sololo districts and businesses are slowly picking up. However, tension is still high among the ethnic tribes and insecurity incidents are reported along the Kenya-Ethiopia border.

Wajir (Warning stage PZL: **ALERT** – worsening)

The quality and quantity of pasture and browse in all the livelihood zones was poor and continued to deteriorate as the drought heightened, attributed to the dismal performance of the 2013 short rains. Water stress was evident in all the livelihood zones, and water trucking is ongoing in 150 centers across all livelihood zones with exception of Wajir Central. Livestock and household water access distances increased significantly. Average distance to grazing areas increased from 10.7 km in January to 15.4 km in February. No cases of resource-based conflict were reported.

Tana River (Warning stage PZL: **ALERT** – worsening)

February pasture and browse condition were poor in both Pastoral and marginal mixed livelihood zones but fair in mixed livelihood zones. Water conditions worsened across all livelihood zones. Main water sources in use were the river Tana, the irrigation canals, shallow wells, boreholes and pans. Distances to water from grazing increased to 7.6 km compared to 5.9 in January. In February, Tana Rivier was experiencing in-migration of cattle, goats and camel from Garissa.

In the news

“Kenya’s Turkana region brought to the brink of humanitarian crisis by drought” (The Guardian, 26 March)

Aid workers are warning of a looming humanitarian crisis in north-west Kenya, where a year-long drought and the late arrival of the rainy season have left more than 300,000 people in desperate need of food and water.

According to Practical Action, the drought has forced some people in the Turkana region to eat roots, berries and stray dogs to stay alive, as well as prompting 30,000 pastoralists to drive their cattle into neighbouring Uganda. It is predicted that the long rains, already three weeks late, will be lighter than usual when they finally fall, raising the prospect of widespread hunger.

Figures from the Kenya Food Security Steering Group suggest that the country’s acutely food insecure population increased from 850,000 to 1.3 million between August 2013 and February 2014, with the most vulnerable households in north-eastern pastoral areas.

