

National Drought Management Authority

GARISSA COUNTY

DROUGHT EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR MAY 2025



A Vision 2030 Flagship Project



MAY 2025 NORMAL EWS PHASE

Drought Status: **NORMAL**



Shughuli za kawaida

Drought Situation & EW Phase Classification

Biophysical Indicators

- The long rains season continued during the month with the county receiving a cumulative average rainfall of 111.89 mm. This amount was 62 percent above the normal long-term average for the month, highlighting a significantly wetter season compared to previous years though with poor distribution both in time and space.
- The three-month average Vegetation Condition Index (VCI) for the county stood at 88.0 indicating an above-normal vegetation condition across the majority of the county. However, not all areas experienced positive outcomes. Several wards continued to face vegetation stress and deficits.
- Overall pasture condition in all the livelihood zones of the county was assessed to be fair to good. But there was a drop compared to the previous months. Similarly, the browse condition was good across the livelihood zones
- The average return livestock trekking distance from grazing areas to water points is at 8.6km, representing a slight increase from the previous month but is 6% below the long term average for the month.

Socio Economic Indicators (Impact Indicators)-

Production indicators:

- The general livestock body condition of livestock across the county is fair to good, owing to the pasture and browse availability. Goats and camels had a good body condition, while cattle and sheep had a fair to good body condition.
- The average household milk production per day for the month under review is 2.4 litres compared to the long-term average of 2.0 litres across the livelihood zones

Access indicators:

- The average price of a medium sized goat Kshs 4890 and remained stable when compared with the previous month but is 20 percent above the long term average.
- The terms of trade were 47kilograms of maize in exchange for a medium sized goat as compared to the short term average of 40kilograms.
- During the month under review, average household milk consumption was reported at 1.5 liters per household per day

Utilization indicators:

- The average food consumption score (FCS) across the County is 34.6 against 37.7 of the long term average.
- During the reporting period, the average Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI), which measures the severity and frequency of consumption-based coping mechanisms employed by households, stood at 11.93 which above the LTA of 10.3
- The proportion of children at risk of malnutrition, as measured by Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC), was recorded at 14.5 % during the month under review which is 20 percent above the LTA.

Early Warning Phase Classification

Livelihood Zone	Phase	Trend
Agro-pastoral	Normal	Stable
Pastoral	Normal	Stable
Formal Employment/ Casual labour	Normal	Stable
County	Normal	Stable
Biophysical Indicators	Value	Normal Range/Value
Rainfall amount	111.89 mm	31.3 mm
VCI-3Month	88	50
Forage condition	Fair –Good	Good –very Good
Production indicators	Value	Normal
Livestock Body Condition	3-4	4-5
Milk Production	2.4 litres	2.0litres
Livestock Migration Pattern	No migration	No migration
Livestock deaths (due to drought)	No deaths	No deaths
Access Indicators	Value	Normal
Terms of Trade (ToT)	47	40kg
Milk Consumption	1.5 litres	1.4 litres
Return grazing distance to water sources in kilometres	8.6 km	9.1 km
Cost of water at source (20 litres)	Kshs5	< Kshs 5
Utilization indicators	Value	Normal
Nutrition Status (MUAC) at risk of malnutrition	14.5%	12.5%
Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)	11.93	10.3
Food Consumption Score	34.6	37.7

Long rains harvests
 • A long dry spell
 • Increased HH Food Stocks
 • Kidding (Sept)
 • Migrations & Herd separations

Short rains
 • Planting/weeding
 • High birth rates
 • Wedding

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

1. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

1.1 RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

- The long rains season continued during the month with the county receiving a cumulative average rainfall of 111.89 mm. This amount was 62 percent above the normal long-term average for the month, highlighting a significantly wetter season compared to previous years.

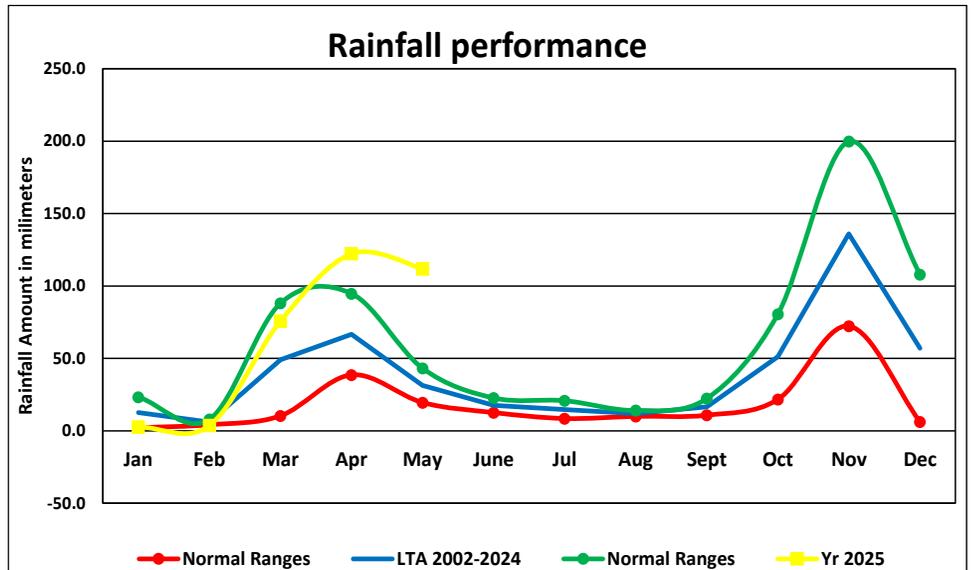


Figure 1: Rainfall performance

- Despite the above-average totals for the county the temporal distribution of rainfall was poor, with only four rainy days recorded across the county. Additionally, the spatial distribution remained uneven with northern parts of the county remaining dry during the month.
- Among the sub-counties, Ijara recorded the highest rainfall, with a total of 345.96mm, indicating highly enhanced moisture conditions in the area. On the other hand, Lagdera sub-counties received the lowest amounts, with 8.5 mm which is below the long term average.
- The season ended earlier than the normal in the second week of the month.
- In terms of temperature, the county experienced notably hotter conditions than the seasonal norm. Daytime maximum temperatures peaked at 37°C, while night-time minimum temperatures averaged around 24°C.

2.0 IMPACTS ON VEGETATION AND WATER

2.1 VEGETATION CONDITION

2.1.1 Vegetation Condition Index (VCI)

- The three-month average Vegetation Condition Index (VCI) for the county stood at 88.0 indicating an above-normal vegetation condition across the county.
- A total of 20 wards across various sub-counties reported above-normal vegetation greenness, signaling robust biomass growth and healthy pasture conditions.
- However, not all areas experienced positive outcomes. Several wards continued to face vegetation stress and deficits, including: Five wards in Lagdera Sub-County, three wards in Balambala Sub-County, one wards in Fafi Sub-County and two wards in Ijara Sub-County
- These areas recorded severe vegetation deficits, likely due to localized rainfall failure, delayed onset, or poor distribution of rains and early cessation.

2.1.2 Pasture and Browse condition

- Overall pasture condition in all the livelihood zones of the county was assessed to be fair to good. But there was a drop compared to the previous months. The cause of the drop is mainly attributed to limited pasture growth and the early cessation of the long rains season, which denied the full recovery of rangeland resources.
- Similarly, the browse condition was good across the livelihood zones. This good status is a consequence of extensive regeneration gained during the previous month, which has contributed to an overall improvement in browse availability. However, localized exceptions occur in sensitive and dry areas where browse availability remains poorer than average.
- Pasture condition is expected to be below normal season range and is predicted to sustain livestock grazing for approximately two months. On the other hand, available browse will probably not last longer than four months across the various livelihood zones due to the heavy winds occurring that precipitate faster drying of vegetation.

2.2 WATER RESOURCE

2.2.1 Source

- During the month under review, the majority of water sources across the County recorded significantly improved water levels. This positive development is largely attributed to the ongoing March-April-May (MAM) seasonal rains, which have contributed to widespread recharge of both surface and subsurface water source.

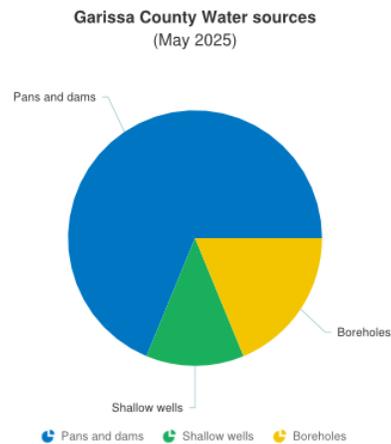


Figure 2: Water sources across the County

- A notable shift was observed in the community's reliance on different types of water sources, with increased preference for subsurface options such as boreholes and shallow wells. water pans and dams were the most heavily utilized, accounting for 64% of household usage, followed by rivers at 28%, and shallow wells at 11%. Additionally, 22% of households continued to depend on boreholes as their primary source of water.
- The overall state of water availability has improved compared to the previous month, with an estimated 60% recharge rate reported across most areas. Based on current storage levels and consumption patterns, the existing open water sources—such as pans, dams, and rivers—are projected to last for approximately two to three months, assuming average usage rates and no significant dry spell.
- Despite these gains, challenges remain in the safe access and utilization of water. A key concern is the widespread use of untreated water from open sources at the household level.

2.2.2 Household Access and Utilization

- The average household trekking distance to water sources was 5.6km as compared to 4.8km recorded the previous month. The slight increase is attributed to the poor distribution of rainfall across most zones in the County.
- When compared to a similar period, the current distance to water sources is above the long term average of 4.5 Km by 20 percent but remained below the upper control limit.
- The water distance may likely continue increasing as the season ended earlier than normal and the long dry spell started,
- Agro pastoral livelihood zone recorded an average consumption of 30 litres per person per day as compared to 35 litres normally while households in pastoral livelihood zone recorded an average of 20 litres per person per day as compared to 20-30 litres normally.

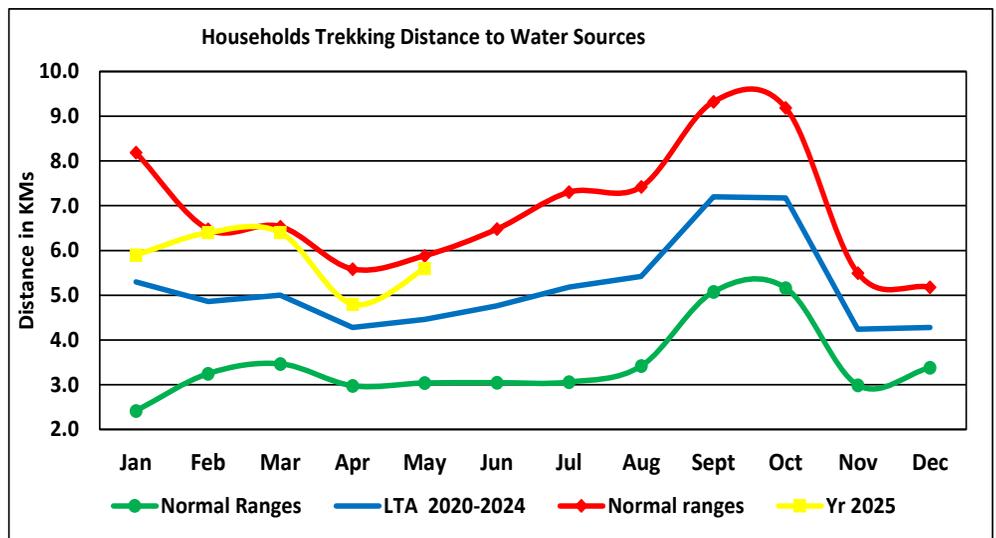


Figure 3: Household trekking distance to water sources

2.2.3 Livestock Access

- The average return livestock trekking distance from grazing areas to water points is at 8.6km, representing a slight increase from the previous month.
- Despite this increase, the current trekking distance is less than the long-term average and upper bound by approximately 6 percent and 32 percent, respectively, indicating relatively favourable access to water resources.

- Livestock in the pastoral livelihood zone trekked an average of 10 km, which is within the normal ranges kms, while in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone, livestock trek 5 kms compared to the normal range of 5-7 kms.
- Also, watering frequency for both cattle and small stock across all the livelihood zones is currently once daily, which is normal for the time of the year.

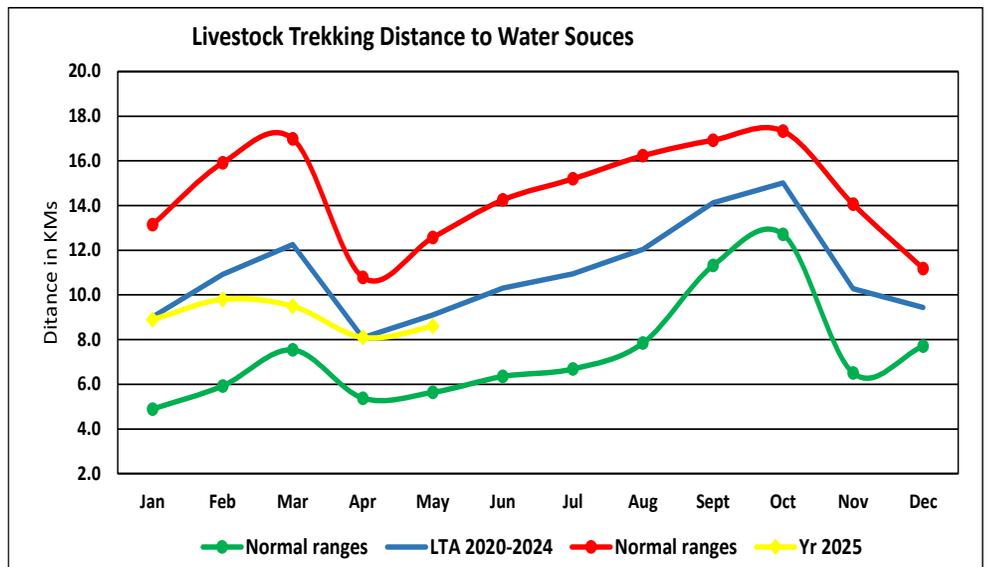


Figure 4: Livestock trekking distance to water sources

3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS

3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

3.1.1 Livestock Body Condition

- The general livestock body condition of livestock across the county is fair to good, owing to the pasture and browse availability. Goats and camels had a good body condition, while cattle and sheep had a fair to good body condition. This is indicative of the varying resiliency among the species and access to forage resources.
- 65% of sampled communities reported livestock are in Good Condition with a smooth appearance, indicating that they were well-fed and healthy from favourable environmental conditions that supported sufficient grazing and water availability for this period. 25% reported, livestock are in Moderate Condition which are neither fat nor thin, indicating an acceptable state but not at their best health or productivity level.
- 9% of sampled communities reported the lactating herds borderline body condition with visible 12th and 13th ribs and no visible fore ribs.

3.1.2 Livestock Diseases

- The active livestock disease surveillance Conducted by county veterinary department during the month reveals a pressing livestock health crisis affecting pastoralist communities, primarily driven by occurrence of diseases such as Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP), Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP). These diseases inflict substantial morbidity and mortality, with goats, sheep, and cattle suffering significant losses that jeopardize household food security, income, and cultural heritage.
- Despite these challenges, no significant livestock mortalities were reported during the period, except for isolated cases linked to predation.

3.1.3 Milk Production

- The average household milk production per day for the month under review is 2.4 litres compared to the long-term average of 2.0 litres across the livelihood zones.
- The milk production improved as compared to the long term average and the normal upper limit by 17 and 4 percent respectively.
- The increase in milk production was attributed to increased birth rate mainly for small stocks and cattle.
- Prices for milk reduced but remained high in both pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones, with prices within the range of Ksh. 70-80 per litre.

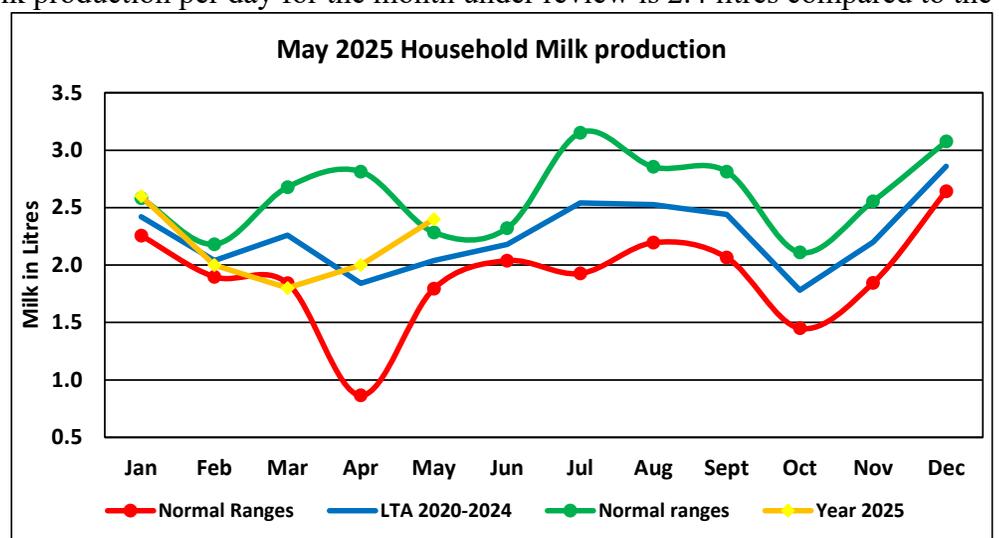


Figure 5: Milk Production

3.1 RAIN-FED CROP PRODUCTION

3.2.1 Stage and Condition of food Crops

- The sorghum and maize planted at the onset of the current long rains season were adversely affected by the poor geographical distribution of rainfall across Lagdera and Dadaab sub-counties. While some areas received adequate moisture to support crop growth, others experienced prolonged dry spells, leading to uneven development.
- In select locations where rainfall was more favourable, the crops have progressed to the flowering stage. However, even in these areas, signs of moisture stress are evident—manifested through yellowing leaves, reduced flowering intensity, and stunted growth. This stress condition poses a significant risk to the next crop development stages, particularly grain filling, which is critical for yield realization.
- Given the continued irregularity in rainfall and the visible signs of stress, there is growing concern that a substantial portion of the maize and sorghum crops may not reach full maturity and farmers are likely to divert for livestock feeding.

4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

4.1.1 Cattle Prices

- According to Figure 6, the average market price of cattle in May stood at Kshs 28,000, a slight increase from the Kshs 27,700 recorded the previous month. As observed, the current price is 31% above the short-term average and 24% above the standard upper cap for this period.

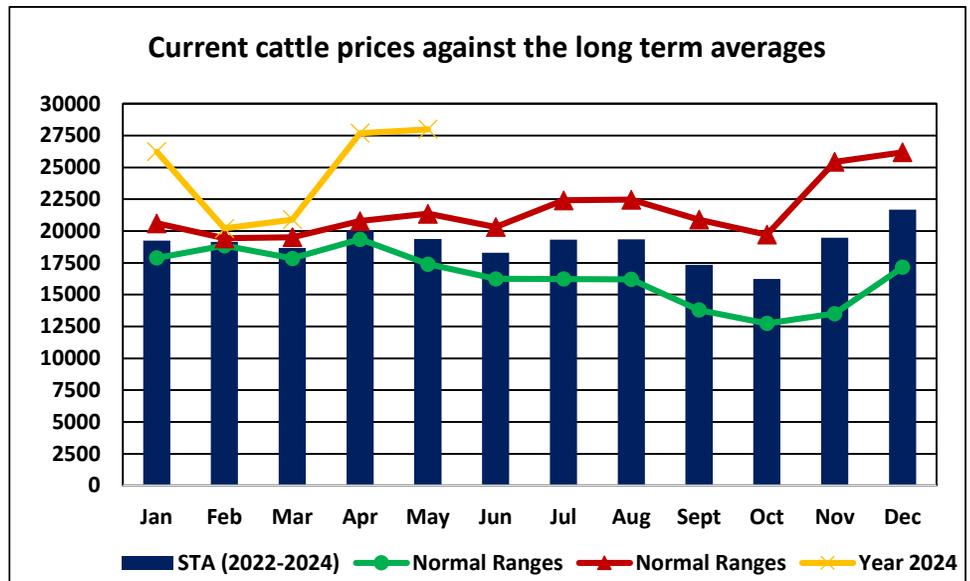


Figure 6: Average cattle prices

- The higher cattle prices are mostly contributed by good livestock body conditions, rooted in improved pasture and water availability from the March–April–May (MAM) rains and limited supply of cattle to local markets, as pastoralist families focus on restocking herds following previous drought seasons coupled with strong market demand across the county, placing prices under further upward pressure.
- Cattle prices will continue to be on the increase in the short run, as there is unbroken access to sufficient grazing and water supplies during the remainder of the rainy season.
- price variations by market indicated Garissa Township and Ifo markets had the highest average cattle prices, which reached as much as Kshs 38,000 while Bura market, on the other hand, had the lowest mean price of Kshs 20,000, suggesting localized supply-demand dynamics and possibly varying animal health.

4.1.2 Goats Prices

- The average price of a medium sized goat Kshs 4890 and remained stable when compared with the previous month
- The current goat price is above the short-term average and normal upper limit for similar period by 20 and 4 percent respectively as shown in Figure 7 below.
- The above normal goat prices were mainly attributed to good body condition and increased market demand coupled with low supply to the markets.
- Garissa township market, modogashe and Saka livestock markets posted the highest livestock prices ranging at Kshs 5,700 -6,300.

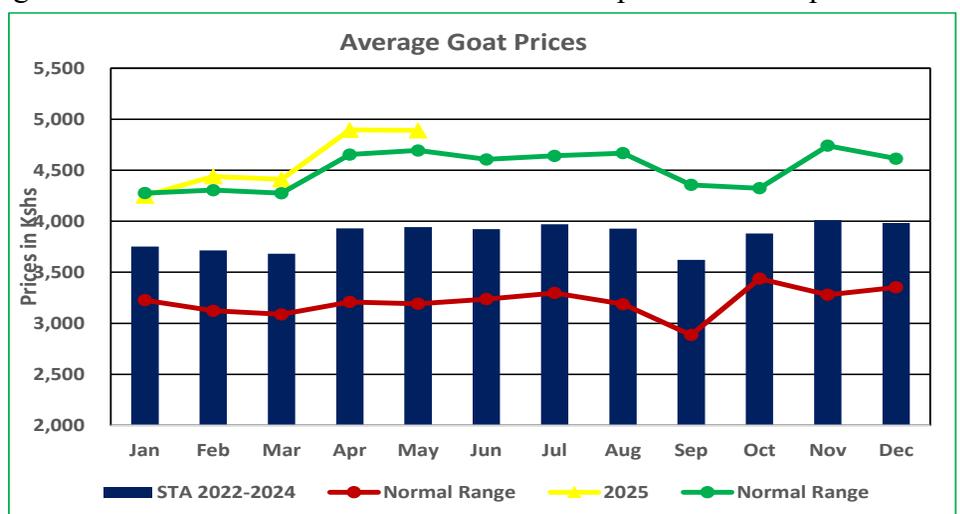


Figure 7: Average goat prices

- Considering the prevailing demand-supply dynamics and coinciding with the ongoing MAM season, it is anticipated that goat prices will continue to rise in the coming period.

4.2 CROP PRICES

4.2.1 Maize Prices

- During the reporting month, the average market price of maize is at Kshs 104 per kilogram, representing a slight increase from Kshs 101 per kilogram recorded in the previous month. The current price level is approximately 11% higher than the short-term average, as shown in the figure below.

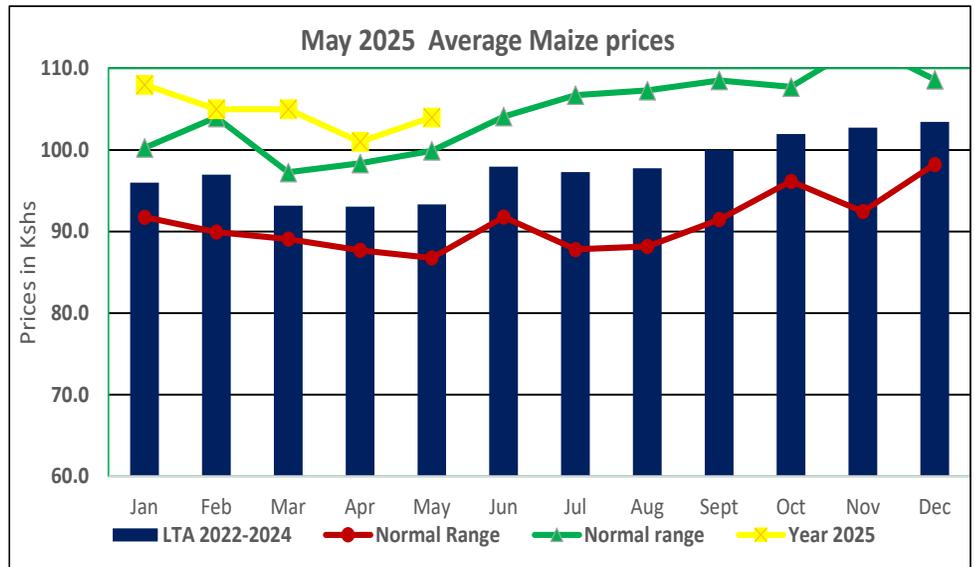


Figure 8: Average maize prices

- Additionally, when compared to the seasonal upper threshold price for this time of year, the current price is 4% above the expected range.
- Market variations were observed across the sub-counties with modogashe commodity market reporting the highest maize prices, reaching up to Kshs 120 per kilogram, highlighting significant market pressure in that area. In contrast, the lowest maize prices were recorded in Bura and Township markets, where prices ranged between Kshs 90 per kilogram.
- The prevailing above-average maize prices are largely attributed to high transportation costs driven by increased fuel prices and long haulage distances from major supply zones, reduced market supply, resulting from low local production in previous seasons and delays in inflows from external markets.

4.2.2 Sifted Maize Flour

- The average market price for a kilogram of sifted maize flour countywide is at Ksh 125 and increased as compared to the previous months.

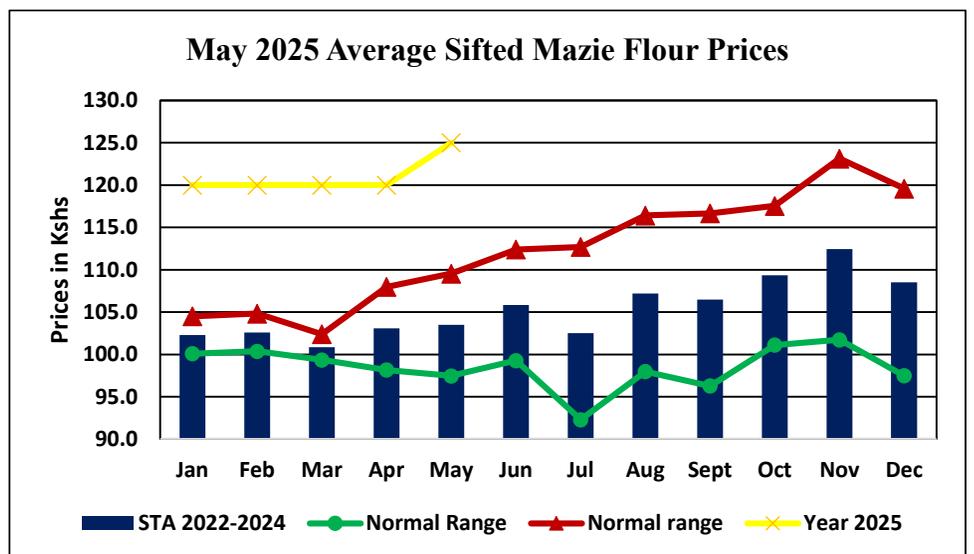


Figure 9: Average sifted maize prices

- The current price of sifted maize is above the short-term average price of Kshs 103.5/kg by 18 percent and has similarly surpassed the upper price limit by 12 percent.
- This shows an unusual and marked elevation in the cost of sifted maize flour.
- The recent price increase may indicate other underlying factors such as supply constraints or increased production costs that have pushed prices above historical levels and may affect household food security.
- There is variation in market prices in the different livelihood zones with the pastoral livelihood zone recording the highest sifted maize price of Kshs.135.

4.2.3 Terms of Trade (Goat prices vs Maize prices)

- The terms of trade were 47 kilograms of maize in exchange for a medium sized goat as compared to 48.5 kilograms recorded the previous month.
- The current terms of trade is higher than the normal short-term average of the month by 15 percent and similarly remained higher than the normal upper limit for the month under review as illustrated in figure 10 below.
- When compared in terms of livelihood zones, the Terms of trade for the pastoral livelihood zone has shown improvement due to the rise in livestock prices but is still low as cereal prices have remained high.

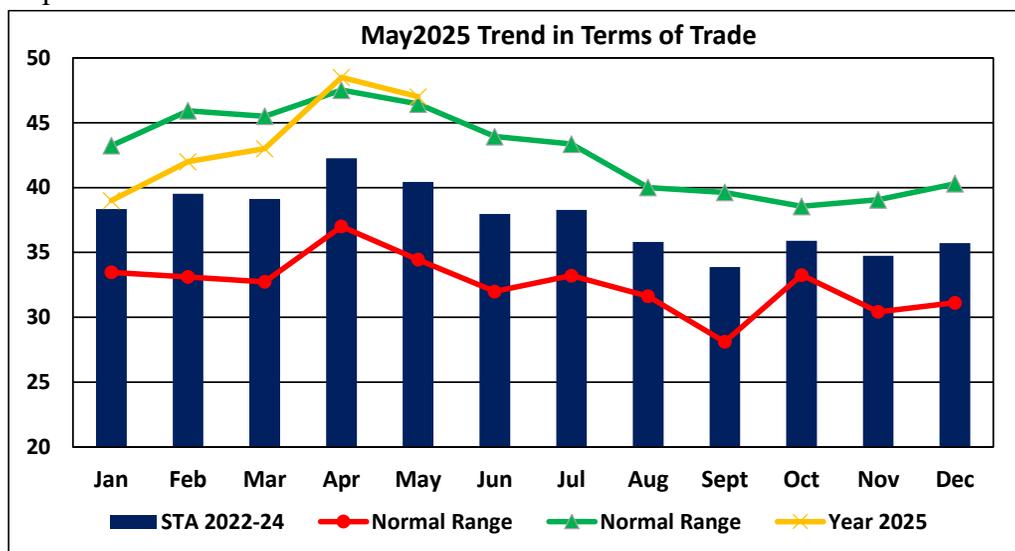


Figure 10: Terms of trade

5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- During the month under review, average household milk consumption was reported at 1.5 liters per household per day, showing a slight increase from 1.3 liters recorded in the previous month which indicates a modest improvement in household milk availability and access.
- The current level of milk consumption is slightly above the short-term average, reflecting positive developments in livestock productivity. However, it remains 12% below the upper normal threshold typically expected for this period, indicating that consumption has not yet fully recovered to optimal seasonal levels.
- Across the different livelihood zones, milk consumption is projected to increase in the coming weeks, driven by anticipated improvements in milk production from various livestock species. This expected rise in production is attributed to better pasture conditions, increased water availability, and improving livestock body conditions, particularly following recent rains.

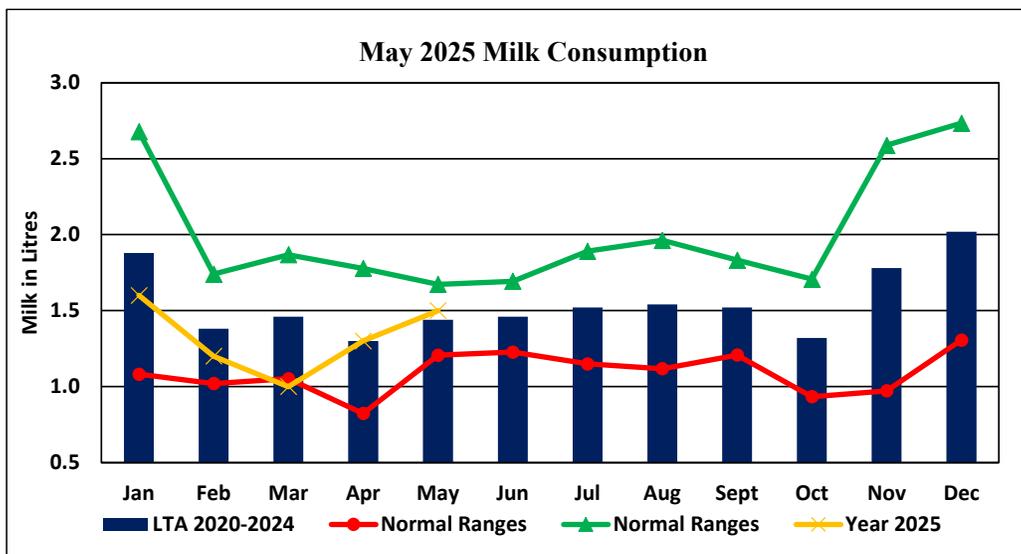


Figure 11: Household milk consumption

5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- The average food consumption score (FCS) across the County is 34.6 as shown in Figure 12 below.
- Across the livelihood zones, 8 percent of households are in the poor food consumption score category, whereas those with borderline and acceptable food consumption score were 54 percent and 40 percent respectively.
- This current average FCS is 8 percent below the long-term average for this period and remains 25

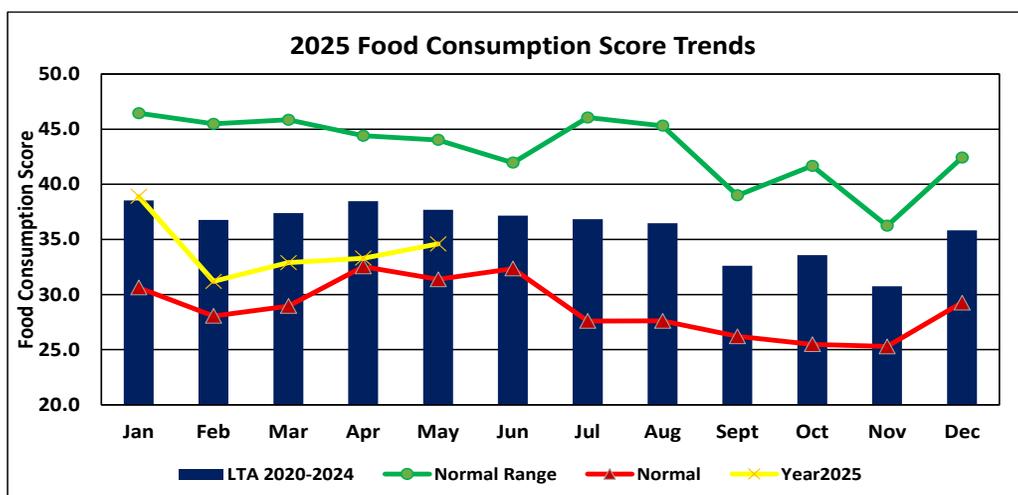


Figure 12: Food consumption score trends

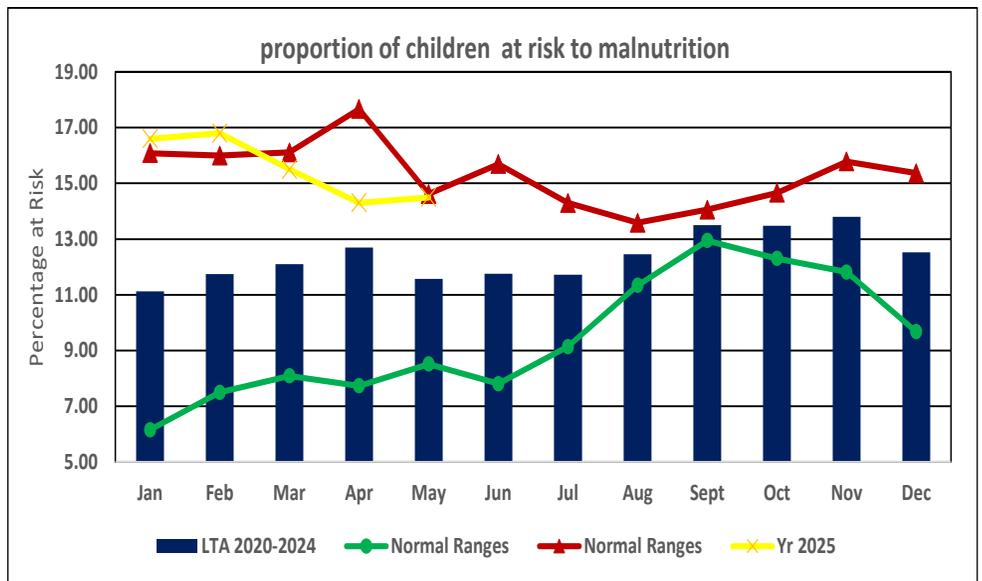
percent below the upper limit of the normal range for the month, indicating of limited intake of different food groups for households.

- When compared to the previous month, there was slight improvement in household consumption across the livelihood zones attributed to better purchasing power due to good livestock prices.
- The Pastoral Livelihood Zone has the highest population with poor food consumption score.

5.3 HEALTH AND NUTRITION

5.3.1 Nutrition Status

- The proportion of children at risk of malnutrition, as measured by Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC), was recorded at 14.5 % during the month under review. This reflects a slight increase compared to 14.3 % reported in the previous month.



- The current MUAC rate remains 20% above the long-term average, indicating persistent nutritional vulnerability.
- The current level of children at risk of malnutrition is within the established upper normal limit for the month indicating severe at risk levels.
- The key drivers contributing to the continued risk of malnutrition among children were poor dietary diversity, with many households lacking access to nutritious and varied foods and high prevalence of child-related illnesses, such as respiratory infections and diarrheal diseases.

• Health

- The most common illnesses currently affecting both under-five children and the general population across the county remain upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs), diarrhoea, and malaria. These health conditions continue to pose significant public health concerns, particularly in vulnerable communities.
- URTIs have been persistent due to fluctuating weather conditions, dust exposure, and overcrowded living environments, especially in informal and rural settlements. Diarrhoeal diseases are often linked to limited access to clean water and poor sanitation, which heighten the risk of waterborne infections. Meanwhile, malaria prevalence remains high in areas with stagnant water and inadequate mosquito control measures.

5.4 REDUCED COPING STRATEGIES INDEX - rCSI

- During the reporting period, the average Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI), which measures the severity and frequency of consumption-based coping mechanisms employed by households, stood at 11.93. This reflects a slight improvement compared to the previous month's average of 12.45, suggesting a marginal reduction in food stress levels across households.

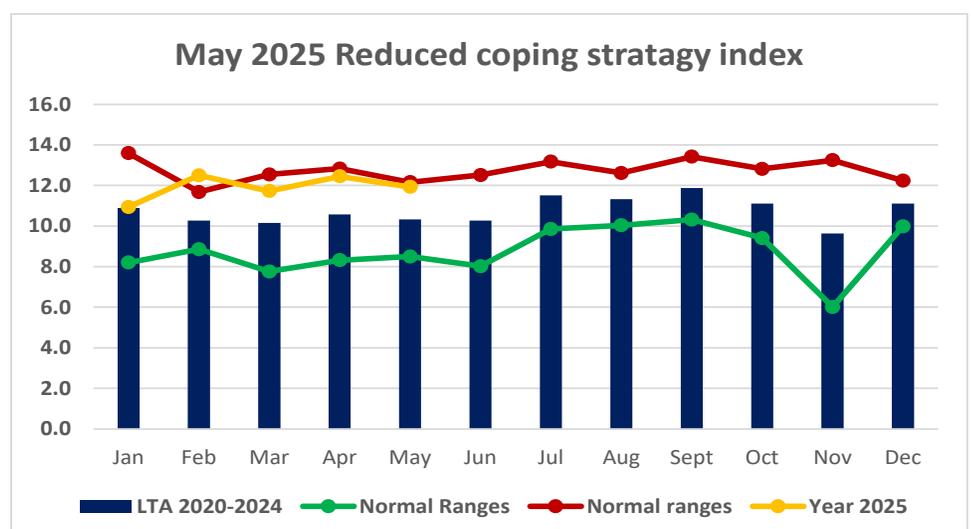


Figure 14: Reduced coping strategy index

- A breakdown by livelihood zones shows that pastoral households continue to face greater food insecurity, with an rCSI of 24, indicating more frequent and severe coping strategies. In contrast, households in agro pastoral areas reported a significantly lower rCSI of 2.4, suggesting relatively better food access and stability in those zones.
- Despite the slight overall improvement, many households are expected to persist with stressed coping mechanisms in response to ongoing food consumption gaps, primarily driven by limited access to food due to economic constraints and market dynamics.

- Across all livelihood zones, the most commonly reported consumption-based coping strategies are relying on less preferred or less expensive food items, and reducing the number of meals consumed per day.

6. CURRENT INTERVENTION MEASURES (ACTION)

6.0 FOOD INTERVENTION

6.1 NON-FOOD INTERVENTION

Table 1 Non-food and food interventions

Activity	Area covered	No. of Beneficiaries	Implementers
Livestock vaccination	Jarajila ward	All livestock species	Livestock department/ PGI
Drilling of boreholes and piping	Abdisamet, golija	3600 households	National water harvesting authority
Distribution of RUSF to children under fives	All sub counties	8,307 children	WFP
Cash transfer for health project and nutrition	Lagdera , balambala and Ijara	4,620HHs	SAVE the children
Routine disease surveillance activities both community based and active surveillance of markets	All sub counties	All livestock species	Livestock Department/womankind
Laying of water pipeline for maalimin and afweyne locations	Lagdera	1000 HHs	Water departments
Hunger safety net cash transfer to vulnerable households	All sub counties	9187HH	NDMA

7. 0EMERGING ISSUES

7.1 Insecurity/Conflict/Human Displacement

- No resource-based conflict was reported during the review month, signifying a period of comparative peace and stability within the community regarding access and usage of natural resources. Even so, the county continually suffers from security challenges associated with terrorist activities.
- Most of the insecurity is high in sub counties bordering the Somalia border. This is a persistent security threat that challenges development efforts, community safety, and the effective delivery of services, calling for sustained vigilance and coordination by security agencies and local stakeholders to address and mitigate potential threats.

7.2 Migration

- Livestock that migrated from Wajir County into Garissa County during the previous month have largely remained in place, contributing to increased pressure on already strained rangeland resources. The prolonged presence of these herds may accelerate the depletion of pasture and water sources, particularly in areas that are already experiencing ecological stress.
- Additionally, internal livestock movements within Garissa County continue, with herders relocating from the southern and central corridors toward the northern parts of the county. These northern areas benefited from an earlier onset of the season and thus have relatively better pasture and water availability.
- However, with the anticipated onset of the off-season coastal showers in the southern regions, it is likely that livestock will begin to return to traditional fall back areas in the south, as conditions there gradually

improve. This cyclical movement is expected but may still pose challenges in managing rangeland sustainability and ensuring equitable access to grazing resources across the county.

8.0 FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS

- While recent rainfall and vegetation improvements have marginally improved forage and water availability in some areas, several compounding factors continue to threaten household food security.
- Livestock body conditions is expected if the anticipated off-season coastal showers in southern parts of the county materialize.
- Livestock-to-cereal terms of trade are expected to remain below average, limiting the ability of pastoral households to convert livestock sales into sufficient food purchases.
- Disruptions in traditional income sources such as livestock trade, milk sales, and casual labor will likely persist in some areas.
- Households, particularly in pastoral areas, will likely continue to experience food consumption gaps, as indicated by the high reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) as limited market access, high food prices, and reduced purchasing power will sustain reliance on negative consumption-based coping mechanisms, such as skipping meals and prioritizing children over adults.
- Malnutrition levels, especially among children under five, are projected to remain elevated, given continued poor dietary diversity and reduced meal frequency. Health-related vulnerabilities such as diarrhoea and respiratory infections may exacerbate the situation in the absence of adequate nutrition interventions.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 2. Recommended interventions

Sector	Sub County	Recommended Intervention
Livestock	All sub counties	Livestock disease surveillance, active and community based
	Balambala, Fafi and Ijara	Fodder production and storage for the dry spell.
	Balambala, ijara	Scale up vaccination and treatment campaigns, particularly forPPR, CBPP, and CCPP, in high-risk areas.
	All sub counties	Pasture conservation and community husbandry practices trainings.
Education	Township and Fafi	Provide bursaries to needy and vulnerable students
	Lagdera, balambala and Ijara	Provide water storage tanks to schools for water harvesting through roof catchment.
Water	Dadaab and Fafi sub counties	Rehabilitation of boreholes in preparation for water stress.
	Lagdera ,fafi, balambala and ijara	Opening up of inlets for water pans
	Garissa Township, Fafi and Balambala	Provision of water treatment chemicals
Agriculture	All sub counties	Provision of seed and seedlings to farmers along rivers Tana for recovery
	All sub counties	Capacity building on integrated pest management for farmers
Health	All sub counties	Health and sanitation improvement for main towns
	All sub counties	Conduct integrated health and nutrition outreaches to enhance early detection and treatment of acute malnutrition in first priority sites
	All sub counties	Sensitize and distribute behaviour change communication (BCC) materials on optimal maternal and child nutrition practices to communities.
Coordination	All sub counties	Monitoring of ongoing interventions

	All sub counties	Conflict surveillance and awareness creation
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10. Annexes