




A Vision 2030 Flagship Project



National Drought Management Authority MERU NORTH COUNTY DROUGHT EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR APRIL 2025

APRIL EW PHASE	Early Warning Phase Classification			
	LIVELIHOOD ZONE	EW PHASE	TRENDS	
	Agro-Pastoral	Normal	Improving	
	Mixed Farming	Normal	Improving	
County		Normal	Improving	
<p>Drought Situation & EW Phase</p> <p>Classification Biophysical Indicators</p> <p>Rainfall: The month under review experienced enhanced rainfall across the county.</p> <p>Vegetation Condition: The vegetation condition index was normal to above normal in the county and all its sub counties.</p> <p>Socio-Economic Indicators (Impact Indicators)</p> <p>Production Indicators: Crop conditions are favorable across all livelihood zones. Legumes are currently flowering, and the maize crop has reached knee height. Livestock body conditions are good across all species. Milk production has increased and remains within the normal seasonal range.</p> <p>Access Indicators: Trekking distance to water sources for both household and livestock decreased and was below the long term average (LTA) due to recharge of water sources. The terms of trade remained stable and favorable to livestock farmers. Milk consumption increased and was above the LTA.</p> <p>Utilization indicators: More than half (58 percent) of the surveyed households are not consuming enough food to meet daily nutritional requirements, underscoring the urgent need for targeted food assistance and nutrition programs. Overall, 8.2 percent of children aged 6–59 months were found to be at risk of malnutrition across most surveyed areas. However, in the Agropastoral Zones of Igembe North, the situation was significantly worse, with over 37 percent of sampled children at risk. Of the sampled household's 86 percent of them employed coping strategies to meet their daily food consumption needs.</p>	INDICATORS	Value	Normal ranges/values	
	Rainfall Amount in mm	164 percent of LTA	80 -120 percent of LTA	
	VCI-3 month	Above Normal	Normal	
	Forage Condition	Good	Good	
	Production indicators		Value	Normal ranges
	Maize Crop Condition	Good	Good	
	Livestock Body Condition	Fair to Good	Good	
	Milk Production (in liters)	1.5	1.1-2.6	
	Livestock Migration Pattern	No Migration	No migration	
	Access Indicators		Value	Normal ranges
	Terms of Trade (TOT)	161	36-201	
	Return Distance to Water Sources (Km)	Household: 3.0 Livestock: 4.1	0.9 – 8.1 km 1.8-10.5 km	
	Utilization indicators		Value	Normal ranges
	The proportion of children aged 6-59 months at risk of malnutrition (MUAC 125-134)	8.2	2.1- 11.5 percent	
	Milk Consumption (in liters)	1.2	1.0-1.4 liters	
Reduced Coping Strategy Index (mean)	11.7	4.8-10.6		
Food Consumption Score (%)	Acceptable	41.8	≥ 80	
	Borderline	31.8	≤ 20	
	Poor	26.3	0	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short rains harvests ▪ Short dry spell ▪ Reduced milk yields ▪ Increased HH Food Stocks ▪ Land preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planting/Weeding ▪ Long rains ▪ High Calving Rate ▪ Milk Yields Increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long rains harvests ▪ A long dry spell ▪ Land preparation ▪ Increased HH Food Stocks ▪ Kidding (Sept) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short rains ▪ Planting/weeding 								
Dry Season	Long Rains	Dry Cool Season	Short Rains Season								
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

CLIMATIC CONDITION

RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

- The month was characterized by the peak of the March -April -May rains .The county received significantly higher amounts of rainfall in April compared to the previous month .
- According to WFP VAM data , the county received 87.60 mm and 146.50 mm of rainfall in the first and second decade of April respectively .
- The rainfall average of 117.05 mm for both decades was above the long term average of 71.85 mm for similar periods of the year as shown in figure one .
- Similarly , the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) for the first decade was above the long term average .

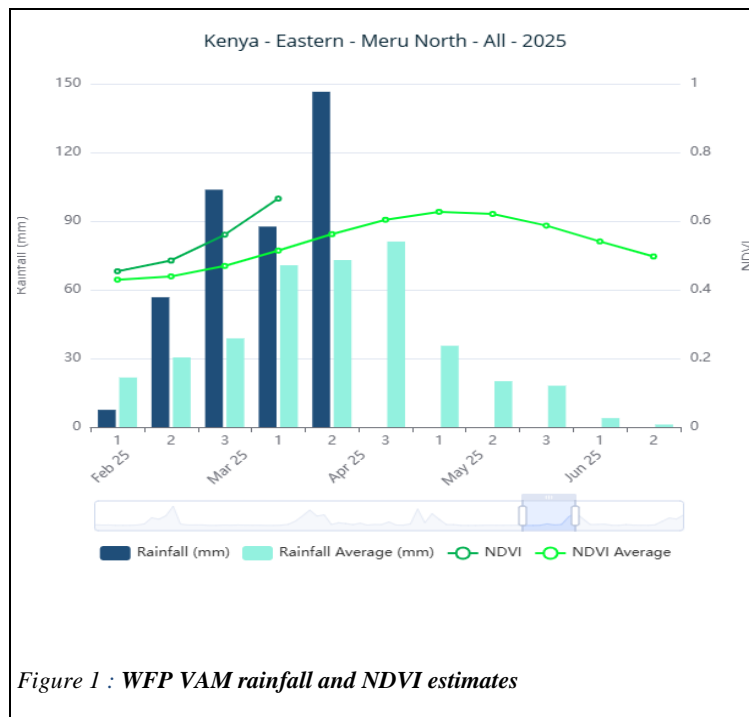


Figure 1 : WFP VAM rainfall and NDVI estimates

IMPACT ON VEGETATION AND WATER

VEGETATION CONDITION

Vegetation condition Index

- Figure 2 below shows the a 3-month ward-level Vegetation Condition Index (VCI) for Meru North, showing an improving vegetation condition, with the majority of the wards observing normal to above normal vegetation greenness.
- Wards in the Agropastoral zones, such as Njia, Amwathi, Athwana, Karama, Ntunene, and Naathu, indicated moderate vegetation index with a few isolated areas indicating severe vegetation deficit.
- The improvement in VCI is due to the regeneration of pasture and browse from the March-April-May period.

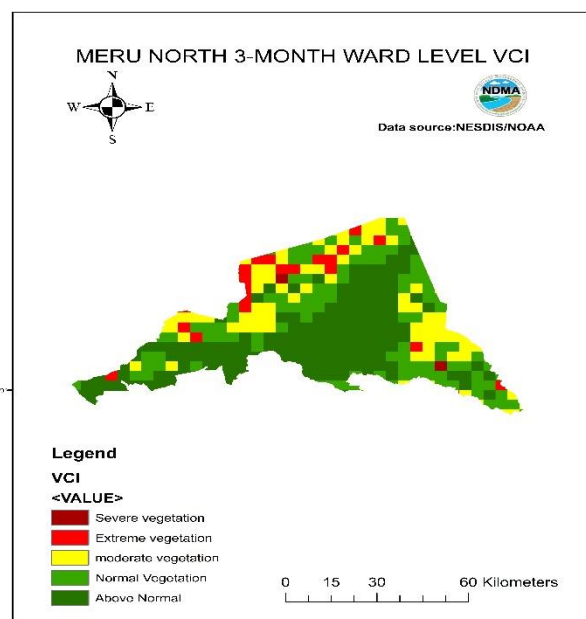


Figure 2 :A 3-Month Meru Wards Level VCI

FORAGE CONDITION

Pasture and Browse Condition

- The observed Pasture conditions ranged from fair to good in the Agropastoral Livelihood Zone of Igembe North, Igembe Central, and Tigania West, while browse conditions were generally good throughout the zone.
- In the Mixed Farming Zone, good pasture and browse conditions were observed across the zone
- Access to pasture and browse in some parts of the Agropastoral Livelihood Zones has been hindered by insecurity arising from cattle theft in specific parts of Igembe North.
- Pasture and browse condition is expected to last for 2-3 months in the Agropastoral livelihood zone of Igembe North, central, and Tigania West, and up to 3 months in the Mixed Farming Livelihood Zones.

WATER RESOURCES

Water sources

- The three major sources of water for livestock and human consumption were rivers , boreholes and piped water accounting for 32 ,24 and 23 percent of sampled households respectively .
- 10 percent of households relied on roof rain water harvesting.
- The proportion of households reliant on water vendors decreased from 16 percent in March to 10 percent in April 2025.
- 39 percent of sampled households purchased water for domestic use.
- The cost of water ranged from Kes 2.5 -Kes 5 in all areas in the Mixed Farming Zones and Marginal Mixed farming, and the majority of the Agropastoral zone. However, the cost water ranged from kshs 20 to 25 in a few areas in the Agropastoral Livelihood Zones such as Kamweline, Mulika, Kachiuru, and Kinisa .

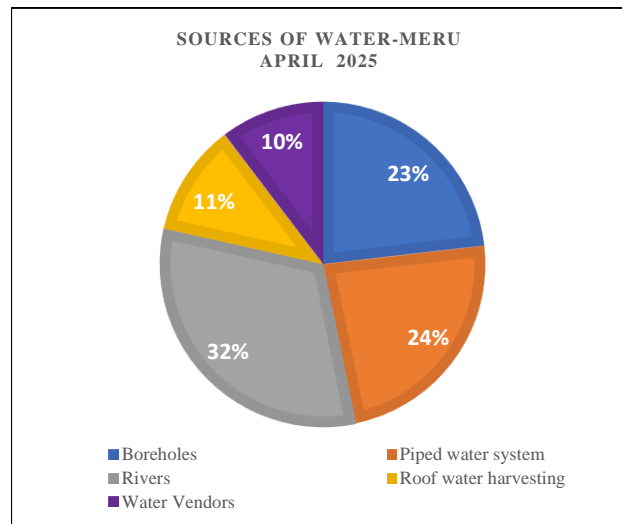


Figure 3: Major Sources of Water

Household Access and Utilization

- The household trekking distance to water sources observed a marginal decrease of 21 percent decrease from 3.8 kilometers in March to stand at 3 kilometers in April 2025.
- The current distance is 33 percent below the short term average of 4.5 kilometers for similar periods.
- The reduction in distances is attributed to the enhanced rainfall received in the month across the livelihood zone.
- The current distance is within the seasonal ranges of 1-8.1 kilometers.
- Areas with the highest distance were Kamweline, Kinisa, and Mwanika in the Agropastoral zone of Igembe North.
- 35 percent of households treat drinking water using filtration and boiling methods.

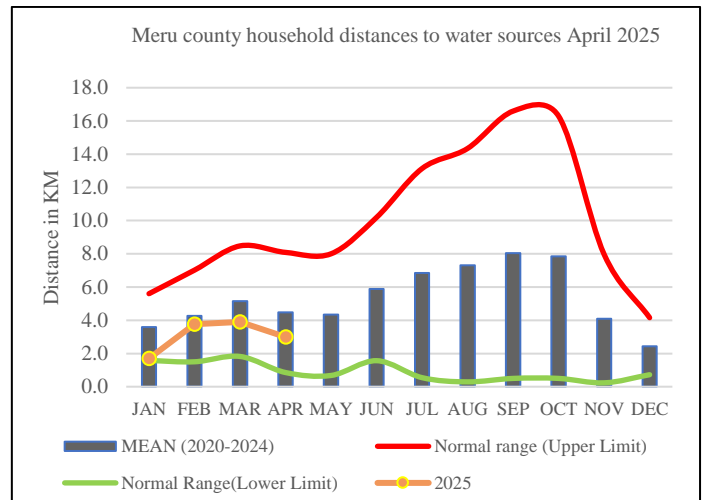


Figure 4: Household distances to water sources

Livestock Access to Water Sources

- The average livestock trekking distance to water sources recorded a 36 percent decrease from 6.4 kilometers to 4.1 kilometers in April 2025 .
- The current distance is 33 percent below the long term average of 6.1 kilometers and within the seasonal ranges of 1.8 – 10.5 kilometers for similar periods of the year.
- The decrease is due to the recharge of water sources and shorter trekking distances due to the regeneration of pasture and browse.
- The watering frequency for cattle and small stock was daily in the mixed livelihood zone of Tigania East, the agropastoral zones of Igembe Central, and Tigania. The frequency was 2-3 days in the Agropastoral zone of Igembe North.

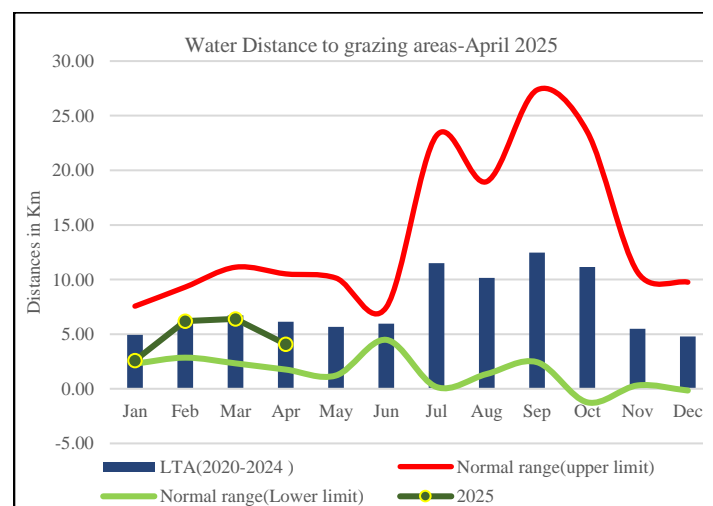


figure 5: Livestock Distances to Water Sources

PRODUCTION INDICATORS

Livestock Production

Livestock Body Condition

- Livestock body condition was generally good across the livelihood zone, except for the agropastoral zones of Igembe North, where the condition was fair to good.
- This is due to the restricted access to grazing zones due to high incidences of insecurity in the area.
- The good livestock body condition is attributed to the regeneration of rangeland resources, supported by the ongoing seasonal rainfall and the favorable performance of the previous two rainfall seasons. As a result, pasture conditions have not been depleted, and low inter-county migration from neighboring counties such as Isiolo and Wajir has further supported stability

Livestock diseases

- Suspected cases of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) were reported across the Agropastoral Zones of Tigania West .These vaccinations are typically facilitated by local animal health service providers, contributing to the overall health and resilience of livestock in the area.
- Livestock mortality were within normal rates.

Milk production

- The average milk production per household per day observed a slight increase from 1.4 liters in March to 1.5 liters in April 2025
- The increase is associated with improved livestock condition leading to increased productivity .
- The current milk production is below the long term average of 1.8 liters for similar periods of the year .
- Milk production is within the seasonal ranges of 1.1 to 2.6 liters for similar periods of the year, as shown in Figure 6.

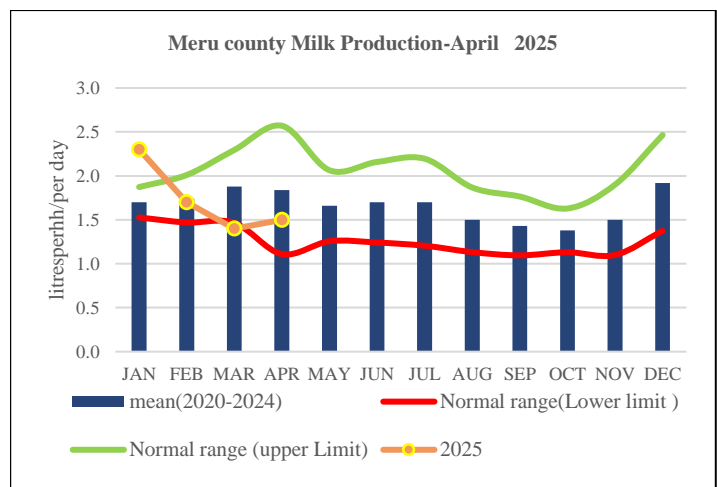


Figure 6; Milk Production

RAIN-FED PRODUCTION

Stage and Condition of Food Crops

- Crop conditions are generally favorable across all livelihood zones. The majority of farmers planted legumes such as beans this season, which are currently at the flowering stage, while maize crops have reached the knee-high stage.
- Farmers who planted later in the season are currently engaged in weeding.
- Overall, crops are in good condition, particularly in the mixed farming zone, and range from fair to good in

MARKET PERFORMANCE

LIVESTOCK MARKET

Cattle Prices

- The average market price of a medium-sized cow observed a 9 percent increase to stand at KES 38,417 in April, compared to KES 35,208 in March 2025
- The current price is 59 percent above the long-term average of KES 24,180 for the same periods of the year
- The favorable prices could be attributed to the increased demand and good livestock body condition across the livelihood zones.
- Markets in the Agropastoral Livelihood Zone fetched the highest prices compared to those in the mixed farming livelihood zone.

Goat prices

- The average price of a medium -sized goat observed a four percent increase to stand at kes 8,333 in April compared to Kes 8,000 March 2025 as shown in figure 8.
- The market price of a goat is 65 percent above the short term average of kes 5,055 for similar periods of the year .
- Similarly , the current price is above the seasonal ranges of KES 3624 – KES 6,487.
- The favorable prices are associated with good livestock body condition.

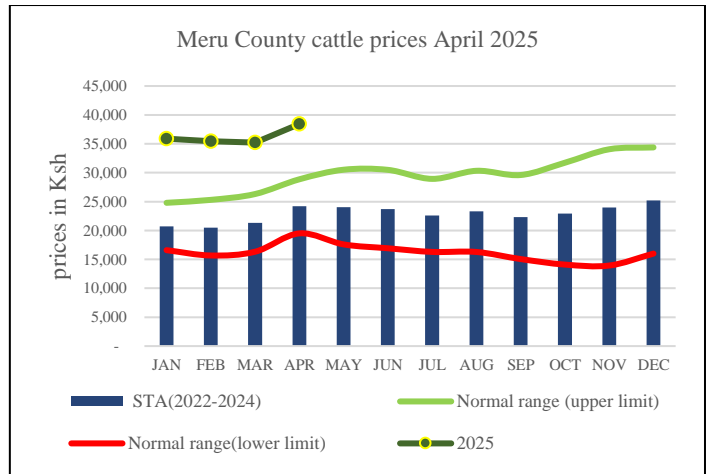


Figure 7: Cattle prices

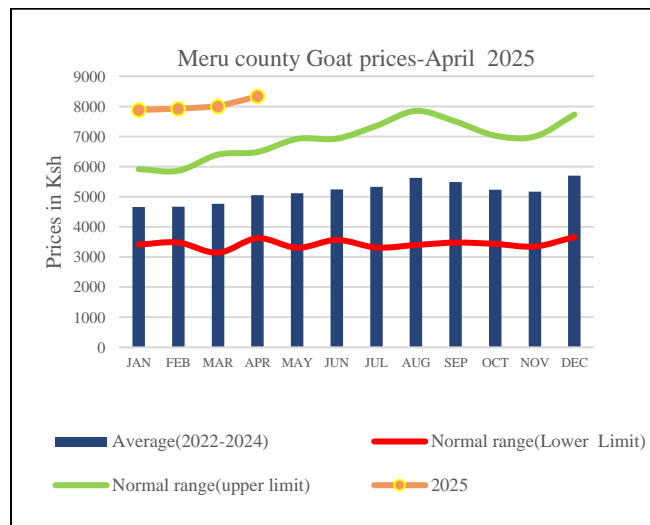


Figure 8: Goat Prices

CROP PRICES

Maize Prices

- The average market price of a kilogram of maize remained stable at KES 52 in April 2025 compared to KES 50 in March 2025.
- The stability is due to stable demand and supply across markets in the livelihood zones
- The current price is six percent above the short-term average of KES 49 and within the seasonal ranges of KES 31 – KES 68 for similar periods of the year.

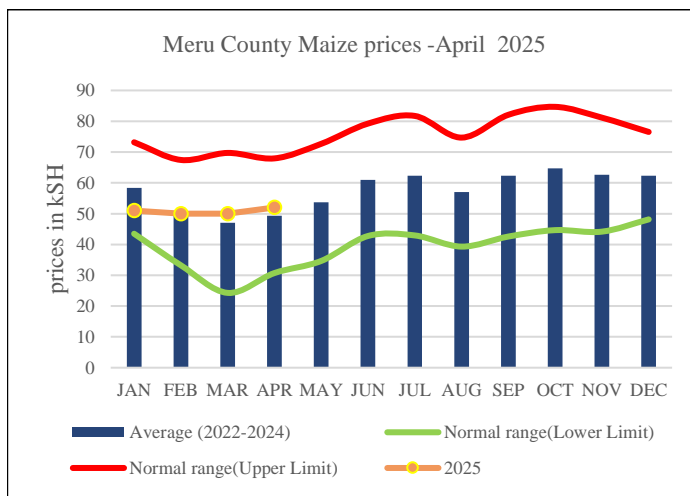


Figure 9:Maize Prices

Beans Prices

- The average market price of a kilogram of beans slightly increased from KES 100 in March to KES 109 in April 2025 .
- The increase in bean prices can be attributed to higher demand, as some farmers in parts of the livelihood zones used beans for planting earlier in the month, resulting in reduced market supply.
- The current bean price is five percent above the short -term average KES 104 and within the seasonal ranges of KES 65 – KES 144 for similar periods of the year .

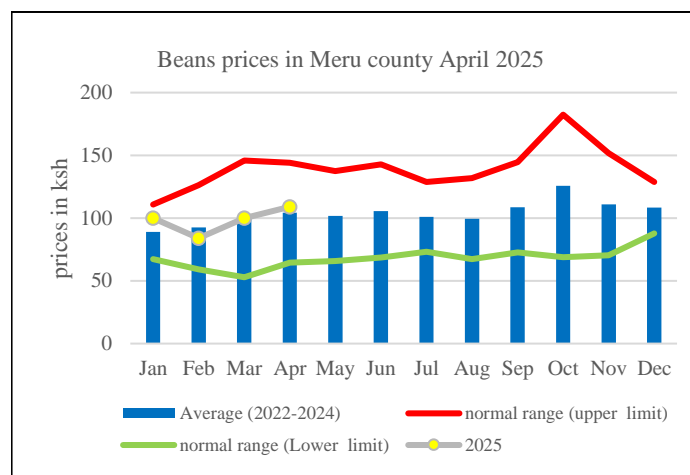


Figure 10: Bean Prices

Terms of Trade

- The terms of trade in April was comparable to the previous month at 161 kilograms of maize in exchange for a medium-sized goat.
- The stability in TOT is due to the stability in maize and goat prices across the livelihood zones.
- The current terms of trade are 36 percent above the short-term average of 118 kilograms and within the seasonal ranges of 36- 201 kilograms in exchange for a medium-sized goat.
- The terms of trade were more favorable to herders in the Agropastoral Livelihood Zone compared to those in Mixed Farming Zones

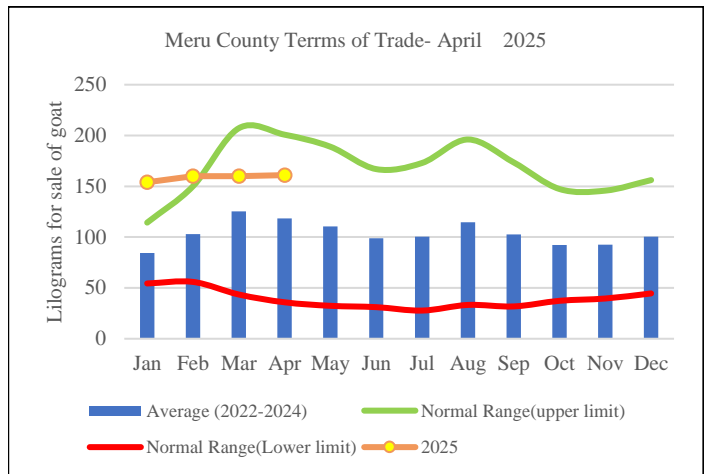


Figure 11: Terms of Trade

FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS

Milk Consumption

- The average milk consumption per day per household observed a slight increase at 1.2 litres compared to 1.1 litres in March 2025 .
- The increase is attributed to increase in production due to improved livestock body condition .
- The current milk consumption is above the long-term average of 1.1 litres and within the seasonal ranges of 0.9 – 1.3 litres for similar periods of the year.

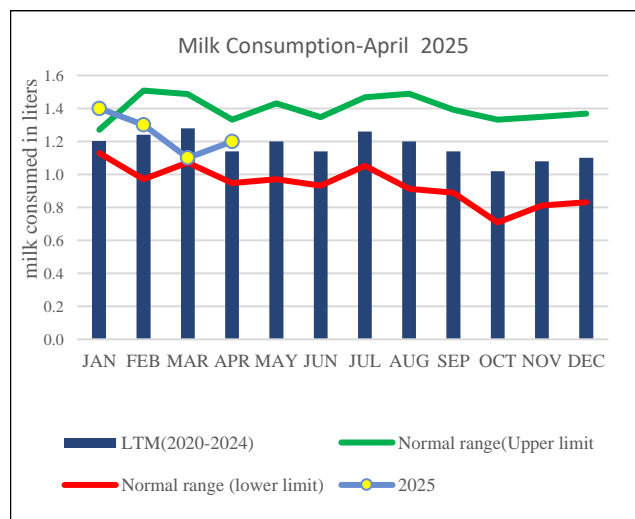


Figure 12: Milk Consumption

Food Consumption Score (FCS)

- The trend in food consumption score generally remained stable compared to the previous month.
- The proportion of households under the acceptable score observed a slight increase at 41.8 percent in April compared to 39.7 percent in March .
- Similarly , the proportion of households under poor score increased from 19.8 percent to 26.3 percent while the proportion under borderline score decreased to 31.8 percent in April compared to 40.5 percent in March.

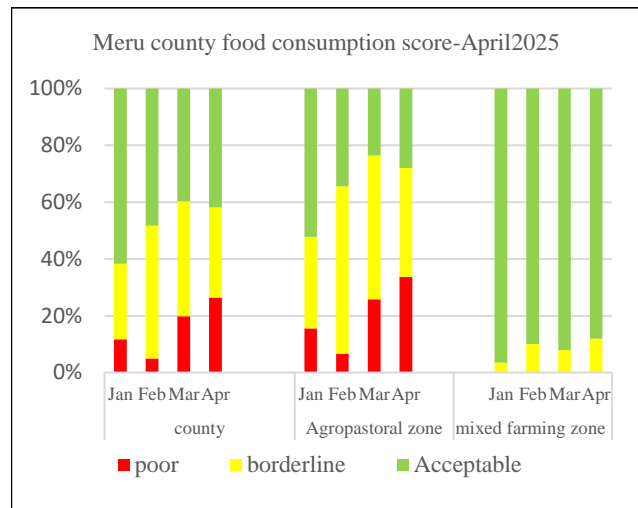


Figure 13: Food Consumption Score

- 92 percent of households in the Mixed Farming Zone were under the acceptable score, while eight percent were under the borderline score.
- Households in the Agropastoral zone observed worse food consumption trends, with 33.7 percent of households under the poor score and 38.4 and 28 percent of households under the borderline and acceptable score, respectively.
- The poor food consumption scores are generally attributed to poor purchasing power and general food-feeding habits across the livelihood zones.

HEALTH AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS

Nutritional Status

- The proportion of children aged 6-59 months at risk of malnutrition observed a 34 percent decrease to stand at 8.2 percent compared to 12.5 percent.
- The improvement in malnutrition rates in the county is associated with the increased milk consumption due to increased livestock productivity.
- The current percent is 21 percent above the short-term average of 6.8 and within the seasonal ranges of 2.1 – 11.5 for similar periods.
- Only 1.4 percent of the children were reported to be moderately malnourished.
- No severe cases of malnutrition were reported among the sampled households.

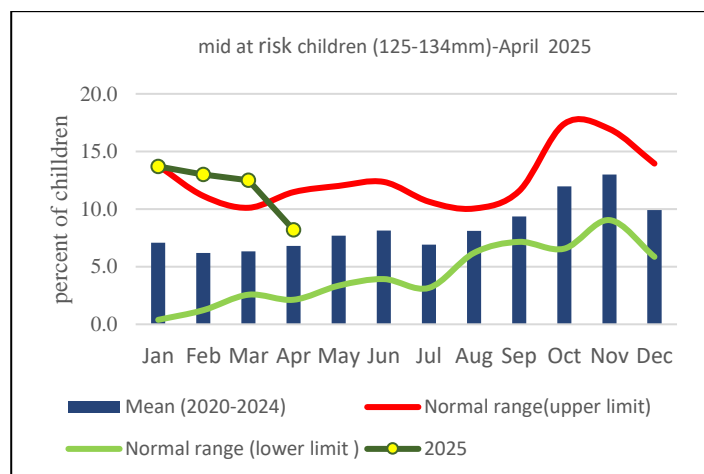


Figure 14: Nutritional status of children <5 by MUAC

- The Agropastoral livelihood zone of Kalimbene in Kangeta ward observed the highest rate of malnutrition, with 37.5 percent of children aged 6-59 months at risk of malnutrition in the ward.

COPING STRATEGIES

- Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) is often used as a proxy indicator of household food insecurity. rCSI is based on a list of behaviors (coping strategies).
- The average rCSI observed a five percent decrease from 12.3 in March to 11.7 in April 2025 .
- The current rCSI is 52 percent above the short term average of 7.7 and above the seasonal range of 4.8 – 10.6 for similar periods of the year .

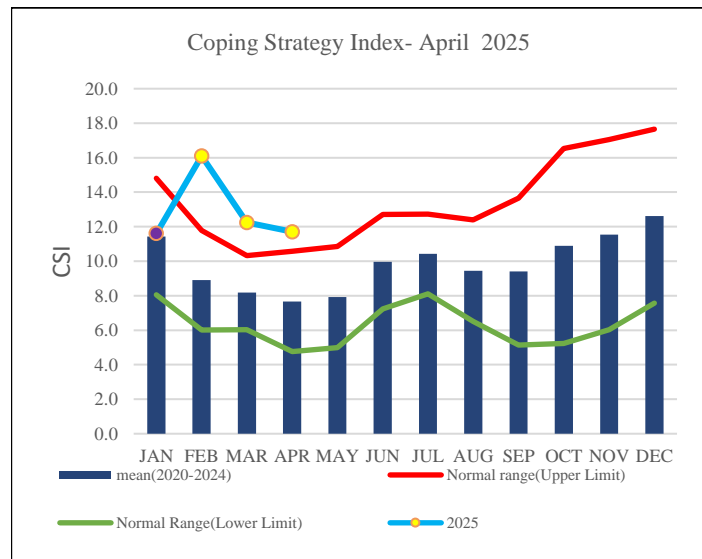


Figure 15: Reduced coping strategy index

- Despite the slight decline in the mean rCSI majority of the households employed coping strategies during the month under review. Of the sampled households , 64 and 22 percent were in stressed and crisis phase ,respectively. Only 14 percent of the households did not employ any coping strategy.
- The agropastoral livelihood zone observed a higher rCSI indicating more households in the zone were employing strategies compared to the mixed farming zone .

Source of income

- A significant majority, 95 percent of households, relied on casual labour as a major source of income, with the remaining 2.2 percent relying on the sale of livestock and livestock products, and 3 percent relying on trade as a major source of income.

Migration and security

- Insecurity remains high, especially in parts of Kamweline, Kinisa, Mwanika, and Njaruine. Herders in these areas are unable to access forage in the lower grazing areas due to fear of attacks.

Food Security Prognosis

- The month marked the peak of March-April-March with the lower parts of the Agropastoral livelihood zone of Igembe North and central receiving below average rainfall during the season.
- Farmers in the Mixed farming zones and Marginal Mixed Zones expect the season to perform well with crops in “fair to good condition across the zones.
- General livestock productivity is expected to increase in the next month due to the regeneration of forage and access to water sources.

- The price of cattle and goats is expected to slightly increase due to the good body condition, and prices of food commodities such as maize and beans are expected to increase slightly until the next harvest season.
- The state of insecurity is expected to persist, with communities from neighboring counties continuing with the frequent raids and attacks in an attempt to restock from the losses made in the prolonged drought period.
- The rate of malnutrition is expected to decline over the next one to two months, supported by the availability of milk and a variety of fresh vegetables such as kales among others.
- **Table 1 : Recommended Interventions**

Sector	Proposed Intervention	Proposed Implementer	Target Location/Population
Health and Nutrition	Upscale integrated health and nutrition outreaches	County Government of Meru and partners	Igembe North & Central, Mutuati and Tigania East & West
	Disease Surveillance: Strengthen monitoring of disease outbreaks such as cholera or malaria due to stagnant water and poor hygiene.	County Government and partners	Across the County
	Upscale on hygiene and sanitation promotions.	County Government of Meru and partners	Across the county
Agriculture	Pest and Disease Control: Monitor and manage the spread of pests (e.g., fall armyworms) that thrive in dry conditions. Promote practices like mulching and minimum tillage to maintain soil moisture. Promote farming of drought-resistant crops such as millet and sorghum in the next season.	County Government	Across the sub-counties
Livestock	Active Disease Surveillance	County Government of Meru	Across the County

Security	Increased surveillance and security forces at the Isiolo-Meru border	Interior Government	Igembe North ,Igembe Central ,Tigania West
Coordination	Strengthen collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, private sector players, and community groups.	NDMA	Igembe North, and Central, Tigania East and West and Buuri