

**National Drought Management Authority**  
**WEST POKOT COUNTY**  
**DROUGHT EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FEBRUARY 2018**



A Vision 2030 Flagship Project



**FEBRUARY EW PHASE**

**Drought Status: ALERT**



**Maandalizi ya mapema**

**Drought Situation & EW Phase Classification**

**Biophysical Indicators**

- **Rainfall:** The County received light showers across all livelihood zones in the first and second dekads, typical of poor spatial and temporal distribution. The state of water sources is below normal and declining although the on-going dry spell is likely to cease with the expected onset of long rains season.
- **Vegetation:** The vegetation condition is below normal, with a worsening trend. Pokot North and Pokot West Sub County slid into moderate vegetation deficit band. Forage condition is still fair during the month but declining steadily.

**Socio Economic Indicators (Impact Indicators)**

- The body condition for cattle and sheep is fair across the county with a deteriorating trend. Distance to water sources increased slightly and is above the normal range. Milk production and consumption are on decline, with the worsening terms of trade.
- Most pastoralists have migrated outside the county, due to depletion of forage in their normal season grazing areas.
- Most households fell within the borderline food consumption score category as the coping strategy index maintained an increase. The proportion of children 'at risk' of malnutrition increased though remained within the normal range.

**Early Warning (EW) Phase Classification**

LIVELIHOOD ZONE	EW PHASE	TREND
AGRO PASTORAL	<b>NORMAL</b>	WORSENING
PASTORAL	<b>ALERT</b>	WORSENING
COUNTY	<b>ALERT</b>	WORSENING

Biophysical Indicators	Value	Normal range
VCI-3month (County)	32	>35
VCI-3month (Pokot North)	27	>35
Forage Condition	Fair	Good

Production Indicators	Value	Normal range
Livestock Body Condition	Fair	Good
Milk Production	1.3 Litres	>1.6 Litres
Livestock Migration Pattern	Normal	Normal
Livestock deaths (attributed to drought)	No deaths	Nodeaths

Access Indicators	Value	Normal range
Terms of Trade (ToT)	74.2	>76
Milk Consumption	1.2 litres	>1.2 litres
Return distance to water sources (household)	3.9 km	0.0-2.6km
Cost of water at source (Ksh./20 litres)	Ksh. 5	<Ksh. 5

Utilization Indicators	Value	Normal range
Nutrition status, MUAC (% at risk of malnutrition)	6.5	0.0-10.1
Coping Strategy Index (CSI)	9.3	0.0-14.5
Food Consumption Score	38.5	>35

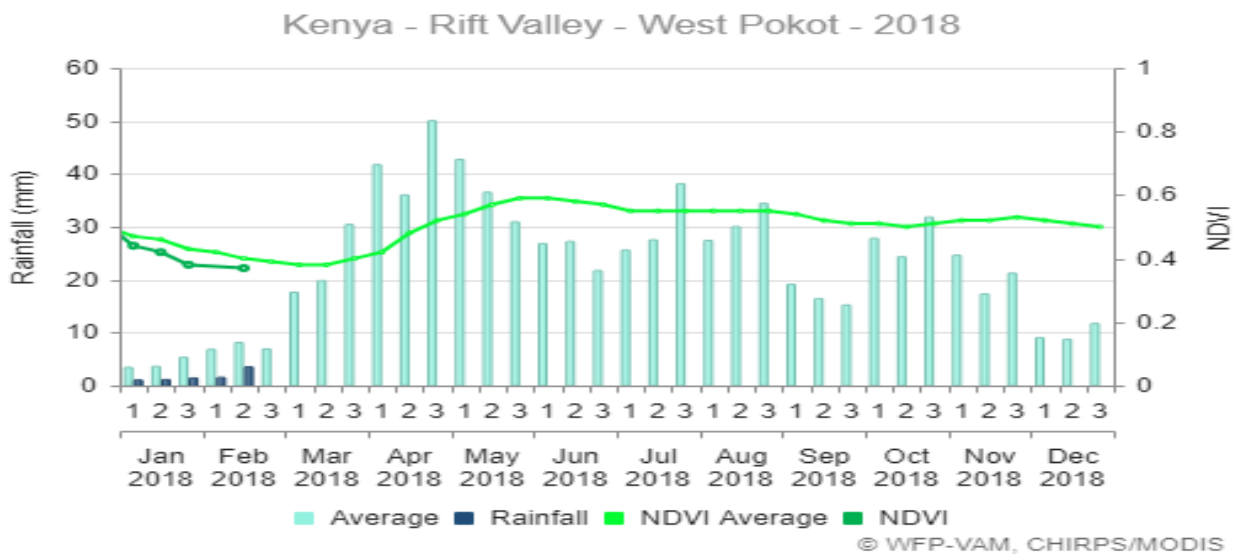
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Short rains harvests</li> <li>▪ Short dry spell</li> <li>▪ Increased HH Food Stock</li> <li>▪ Land preparation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planting/Weeding</li> <li>▪ Long rains</li> <li>▪ High Calving Rate</li> <li>▪ Milk Yields Increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long rains harvests</li> <li>▪ A long dry spell</li> <li>▪ Land preparation</li> <li>▪ Increased HH Food Stock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Short rains</li> <li>▪ Planting/weeding</li> <li>▪ (Irish potatoes, Cabbages and Onions)</li> </ul>
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Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	July	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

# 1.0 CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

## 1.1 RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

- The County received about 4 mm of rainfall; slightly higher than the previous month, which was recorded in second dekad of the month. The onset of the long rains season March-April-May (MAM) is expected in March 2018.
- The situation is normal for such time of the year as the dry spell is usually experienced.
- Traces of rainfall were received in lowlands, whereas light showers were received in highland areas, characterised by poor temporal and spatial distribution.



Source: VAM-World Food Programme

- In February, 2018, the decadal rainfall slightly increased to 3.5 mm as compared to 1.5 mm recorded in the previous month. The amounts however remained below the long term average in both the first and second dekads.
- The current NDVI values fell slightly below the historical values due to low precipitation during the month. The trend is deteriorating with the decreasing precipitation over time.

## 1.2 AMOUNT OF RAINFALL AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

- There was little rainfall recorded in the lowlands, with traces recorded in Koibos and Kabichbich rainfall stations in the highlands of the County.
- The county was fairly dry during the month.

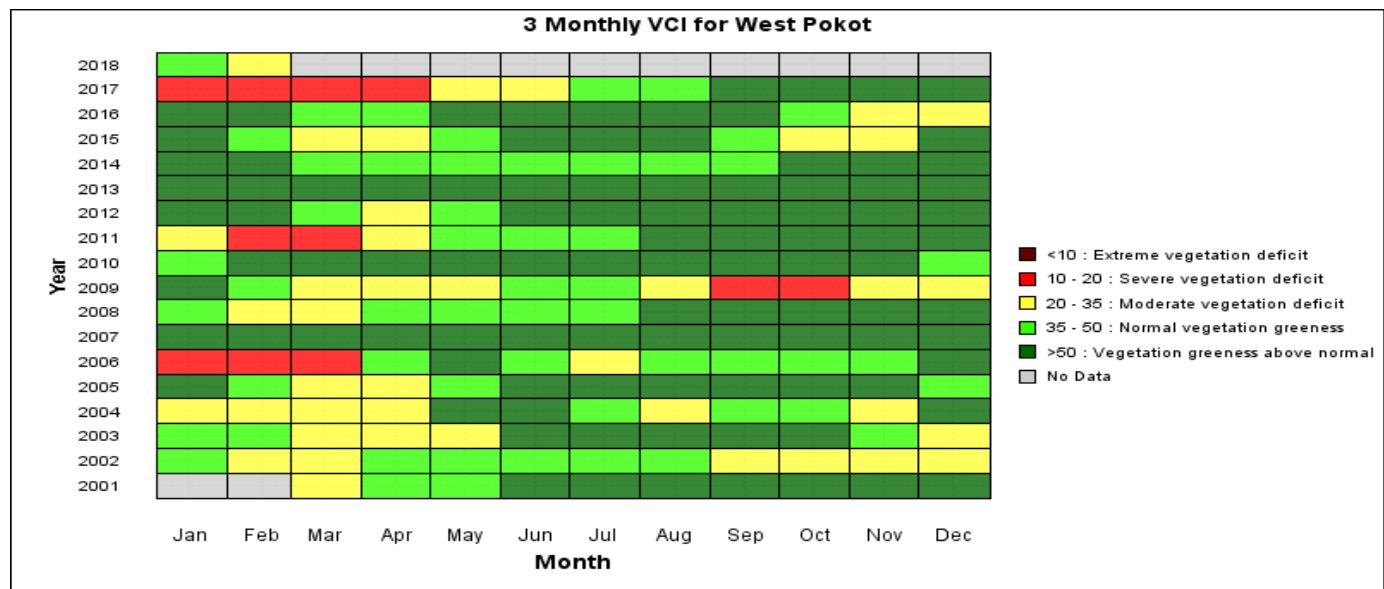
## 1.3 OTHER EVENTS

- There were no incidences such as floods, land/mud slides, lightning strikes and hailstorms reported during the month.

## 2.0 IMPACTS ON VEGETATION AND WATER

### 2.1 VEGETATION CONDITION

#### 2.1.1 Vegetation Condition Index (VCI)



Source: Boku University

- The VCI (VCI-3month); a measure of the vegetation status in the County for February 2018 is 32, representing a sharp decrease from 60 recorded in the previous month. The current VCI indicates moderate vegetation deficit for the County.
- The VCI connotes a worsening trend across all the sub-counties, with the exception of Pokot South and Pokot Central sub-counties, which exhibited normal vegetation greenness whereas both Pokot North and Pokot West sub-counties were categorized in moderate vegetation deficit band. The VCI for all the Sub-counties; Pokot North, Pokot West, Pokot South and Pokot Central dropped from 56 to 27, 57 to 31, 66 to 38 and 66 to 38 respectively. The declining trend in the VCI is due to poor regeneration of vegetation resulting from the dry spell experienced in the county during the month under review.

#### 2.1.2 Pasture

- The percentage of sampled communities who reported that pasture was good, fair and poor is 8, 63 and 29 respectively. The communities stated that the situation was normal for such a time of the year.
- The pasture condition still varies from fair to poor across all livelihoods. The condition is however normal in comparison to the one expected during a normal year, although compared to the previous month, the trend is worsening.

- Due to the pronounced dry spell during the month, the pasture situation is expected to deteriorate across all livelihoods in the county.
- The persistent Pokot-Marakwet border conflict remains the major constraint to pasture access.
- There is no significant variation in terms of pasture quality and quantity in between the livelihood zones.

### 2.1.3 Browse

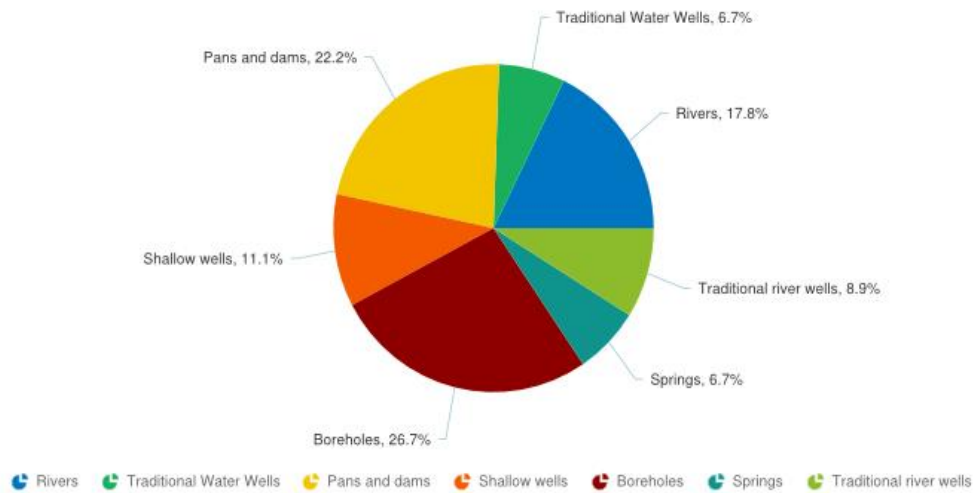
- The percentage of community population sampled who confessed that browse was good, fair and poor is 5, 84 and 11 respectively.
- The browse condition remained generally fair across the two livelihood zones, and as such normal in comparison to the browse situation during a similar period of the normal year. The quality of the browse condition dropped further in relation to that of the previous month due to poor rainfall during the month.
- The access to browse, just as in the case of pasture above is also constrained by the conflict along the Pokot-Marakwet-Turkana borders.
- The quality and quantity of browse is fair in both livelihood zones and there is no significant variation between the Pastoral and Agro-pastoral livelihood zones.

## 2.2 WATER RESOURCE

### 2.2.1 Sources

- The percentage of the population using **main** water sources currently (households and livestock) is 27, 22 and 18 from boreholes, pans/dams and traditional rivers respectively, while other sources including shallow wells being 11 percent.
- In comparison to the previous month, the water recharge levels dropped due to lack of rainfall.
- The water levels for rivers and boreholes have dropped due to poor recharge.
- The current **main** sources in use are the normal sources where households usually rely on during such a time of the year.

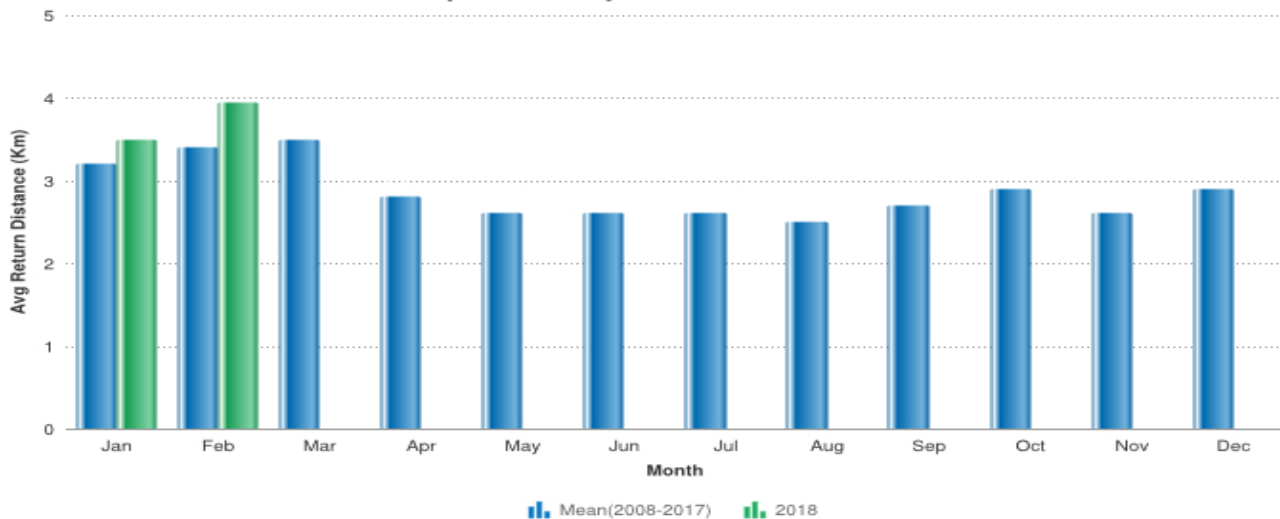
**West pokot County Water sources  
(February 2018)**



### 2.2.2 Household Access and Utilization

- The household return distance to water source is 3.9 km during the month, having increased from 3.5 km recorded in the previous month. The current distance is 15 percent above the long term average distance.
- Pastoral livelihood zone reported longer trekking distances to water sources in comparison to the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone. Water distances significantly increased due to insufficient water sources recharge during the month.

**West pokot County water source distance 2018**

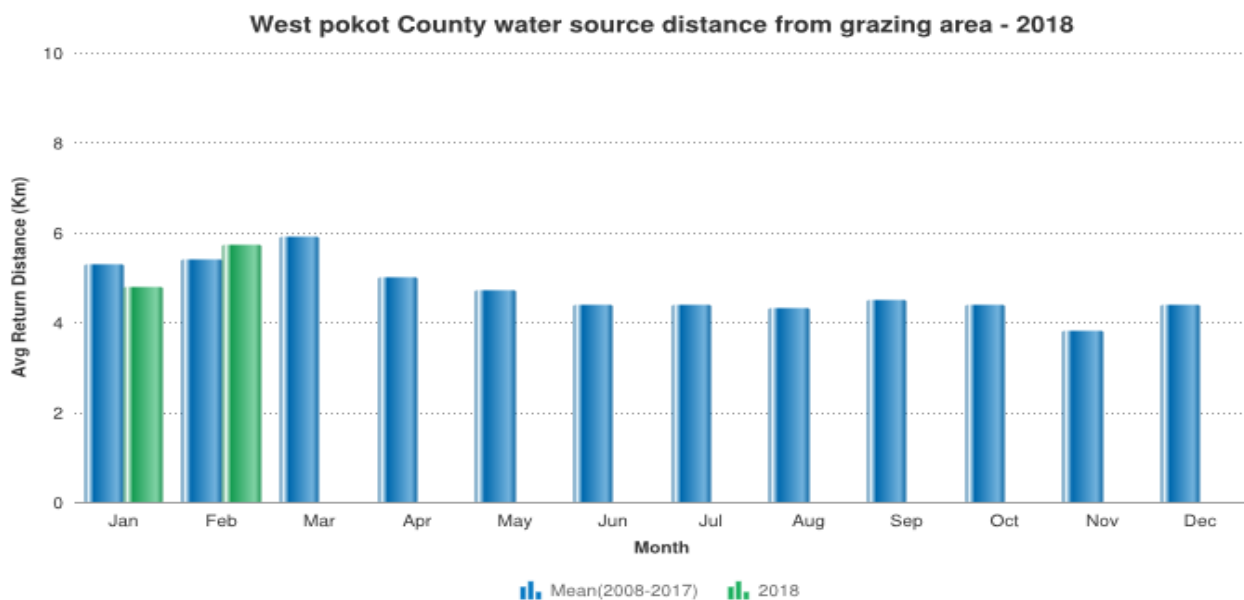


- Both the Agro-pastoral and Pastoral livelihood zones recorded increased waiting time at water sources.
- The average household water consumption per person per day stood at 7-12 litres in the Pastoral zone while that in the Agro-pastoral zone too remained 9-14 litres.

- The cost of accessing water at the source is still free in the rural areas unlike in urban centres where a 20 litre jerrican cost remained within normal ranges (Kshs. 5) for the period.

### 2.2.3 Livestock Access

- The livestock return trekking distance from grazing areas to water sources within February, 2018 is 5.7 km, which is an increase from the 4.8 km recorded in the previously. In comparison to the normal trekking distance of 5.4 km, the current trekking distance is above the normal range by 6 percent.
- The trekking distance from grazing areas to water sources is still longer in Pastoral livelihood zone than that in the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone.



- The increasing livestock trekking distance is mainly due to the dry spell episodes within the month of February, 2018 affecting the available water sources.
- Frequency for watering cattle and shoats reduced to 3-5 times in a week while for camel remained 2-3 times in a week.

## **3.0 PRODUCTION INDICATORS**

### **3.1 LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION**

#### **3.1.1 Livestock Body Condition**

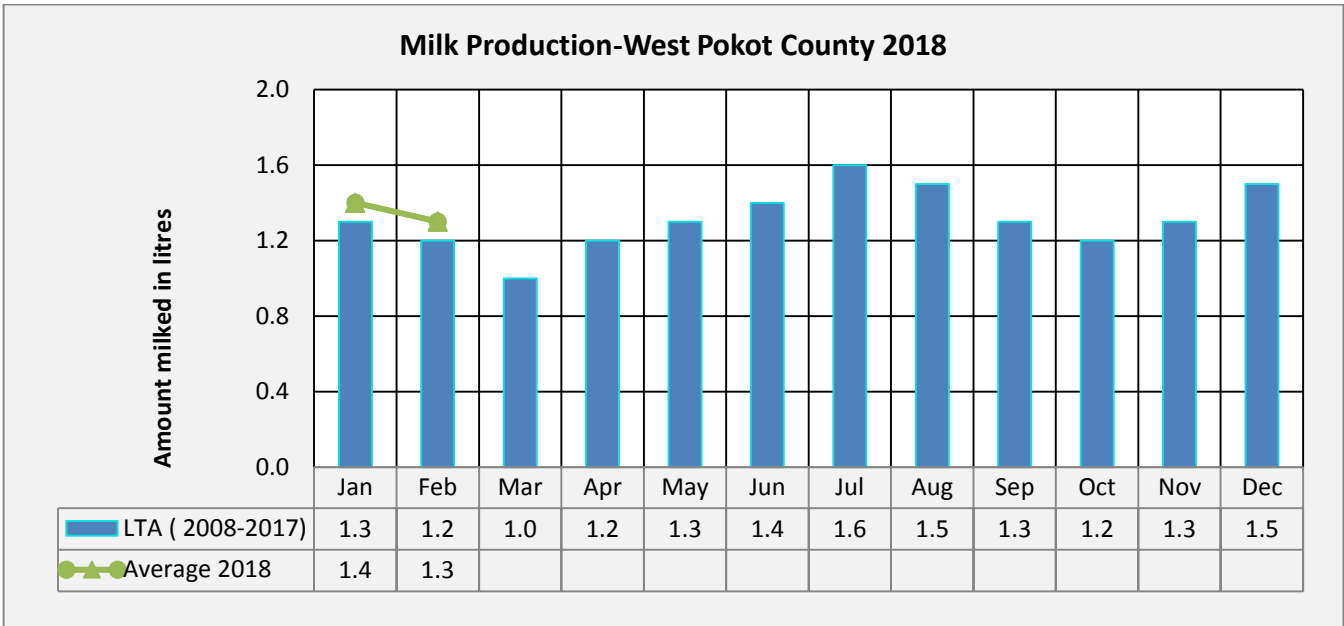
- The body condition is fair for all livestock species across the livelihood zones.
- The livestock body condition is anticipated to improve over the successive months, whence attributed to the expected onset of the MAM long rains.
- In comparison to a similar period of a normal year, the body condition of all species is normal, a scenario attributed to the fair cumulative forage condition generated during the October-November-December (OND) short rains season. Nevertheless, trend is downward owing to the dry spell that has taken over during the month.
- There is no significant variation in livestock body condition between the two livelihood zones.

#### **3.1.2 Livestock Diseases**

- The Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) incidences were reported in Pokot North, Riwo and Masol wards, with cases of abortion in goats being mentioned in Kongelai ward. Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in cattle was reported in Kapchok and Masol wards.

#### **3.1.3 Milk Production**

- In February 2018, the County recorded an average of 1.3 litres of milk per household per day, which shows a slight decrease from 1.4 litres recorded previously.
- The milk produced was mainly from cattle.
- The current household milk production though on downward trend is however 8 percent above the normal quantity for the household during a normal year for such time.
- The decrease in the household milk production during the month is attributed to the declining forage condition in the normal grazing areas.



**3.2 RAIN-FED CROP PRODUCTION**

**3.2.1 Stage and Condition of food Crops**

- The main crops grown are maize, beans and bulb onion, where most areas are currently under land preparation.
- The level of horticultural supplies such as mangoes, pawpaw and onions to major markets including Sigor, Ortum and Lomut is expected to improve due to the anticipated onset of the MAM long rains season.
- Bulb onion harvesting is on-going (in Kokwotendwo and Kerelwa) which do supply Ortum market for distribution to other centres within and outside the county.
- Horticultural production was booming with intensive market activity being witnessed especially along the production zones of Sebit, Wakorr, Wei Wei, and Lomut.

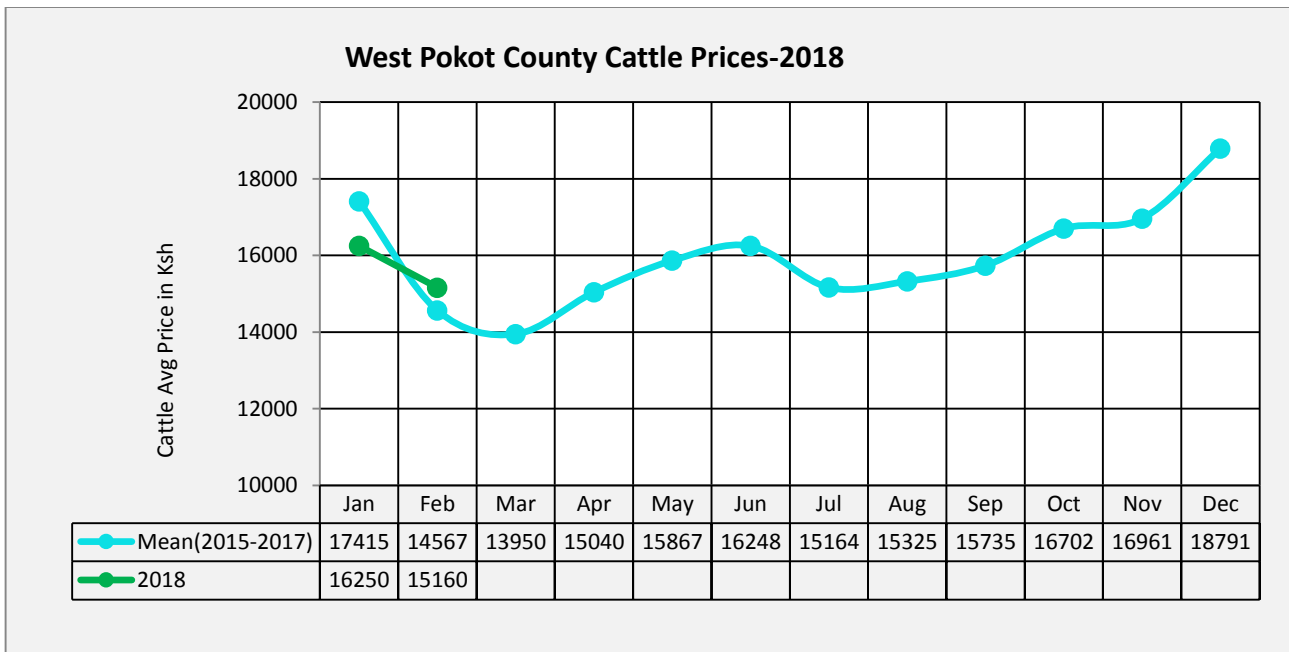


## 4.0 MARKET PERFORMANCE

### 4.1 LIVESTOCK MARKETING

#### 4.1.1 Cattle prices

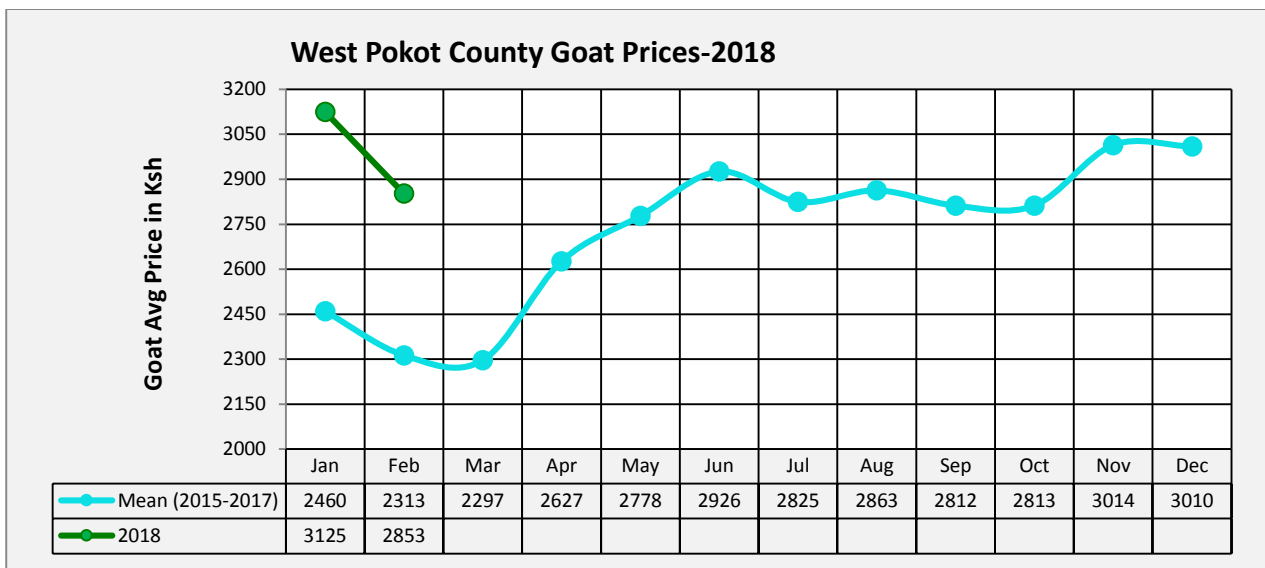
- During the month, a medium size 4-year bull was sold at an average price of Ksh. 15,160 in the county, which represents a decrease from Ksh. 16,250 that was recorded in the previous month.



- The decreased in price is mainly attributed to the on-going dry spell resulting in the instability of pasture condition and water availability, in turn leading to deterioration in the cattle body condition and decimated prices.
- The current cattle price is however above the Long Term Average (LTA) price by 4 percent.

#### 4.1.2 Goat Prices

- The average price of a 2-year old medium size goat is Ksh.2,853 across all livelihood zones in the County during the month under review. The price decreased in comparison to that of the previous month (Ksh 3,125).

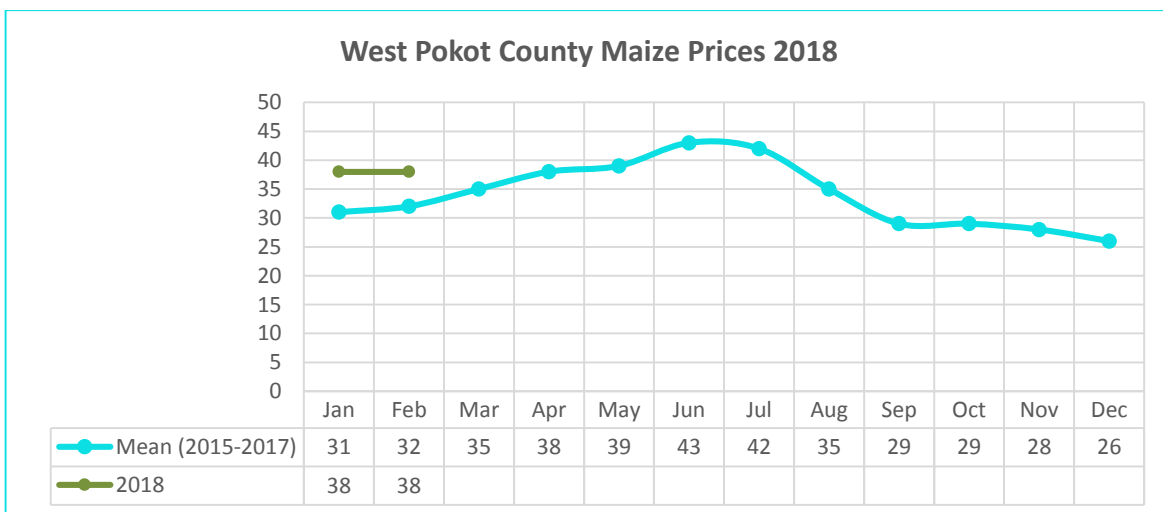


- The price decrease is mainly attributed to declining forage condition and poor recharge of water points resulting to deterioration in the body condition.
- The current goat price is albeit 23 percent above the LTA price for the month.

## 4.2 CROP PRICES

### 4.2.1 Maize

- Maize traded at Ksh. 38 per Kg during the month, same as that recorded in the previous month.
- The current price is 19 percent above the LTA price (Ksh 32) a similar month.

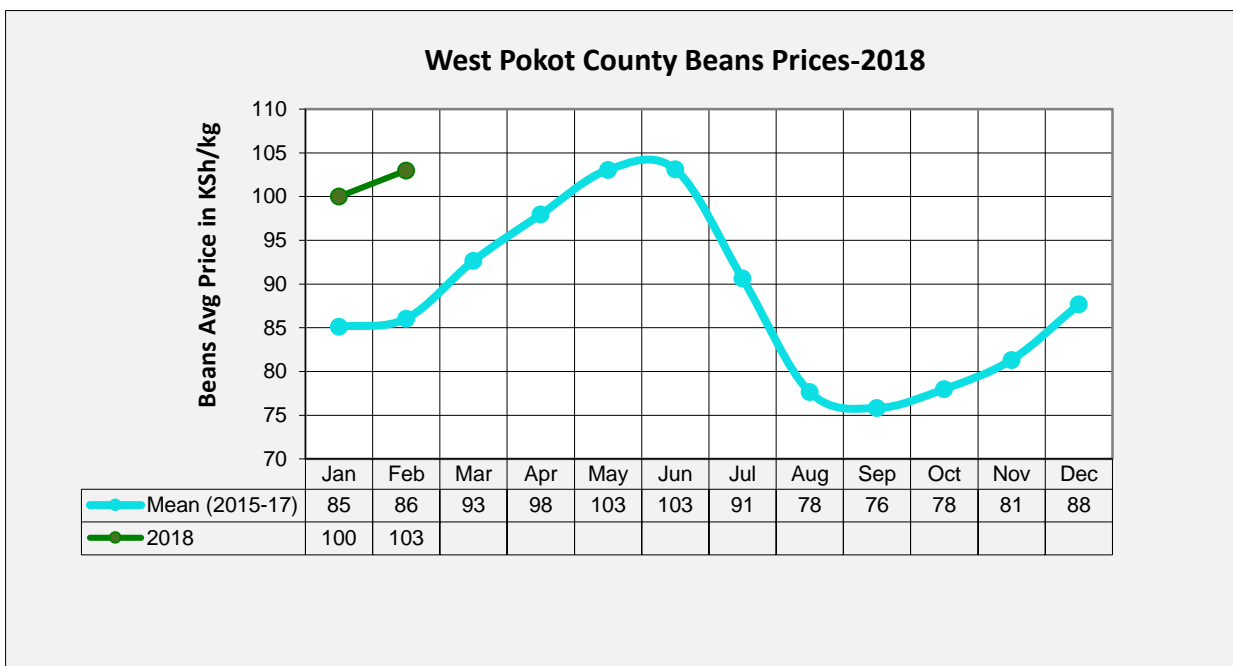


- The perennial Pokot-Marakwet border conflict in Pastoral zones of Pokot central resulted to a higher price in comparison to other areas as a result of the normal external supply sources being affected. Generally, the increase is due to lack of local harvest along with the unsteady external supply of maize.

- Households depend more on local markets to replenish their stocks, maize price is likely to remain unstable as its supply fluctuates from local and external sources (Uganda and Trans Nzoia County) which are suppliers to the county.

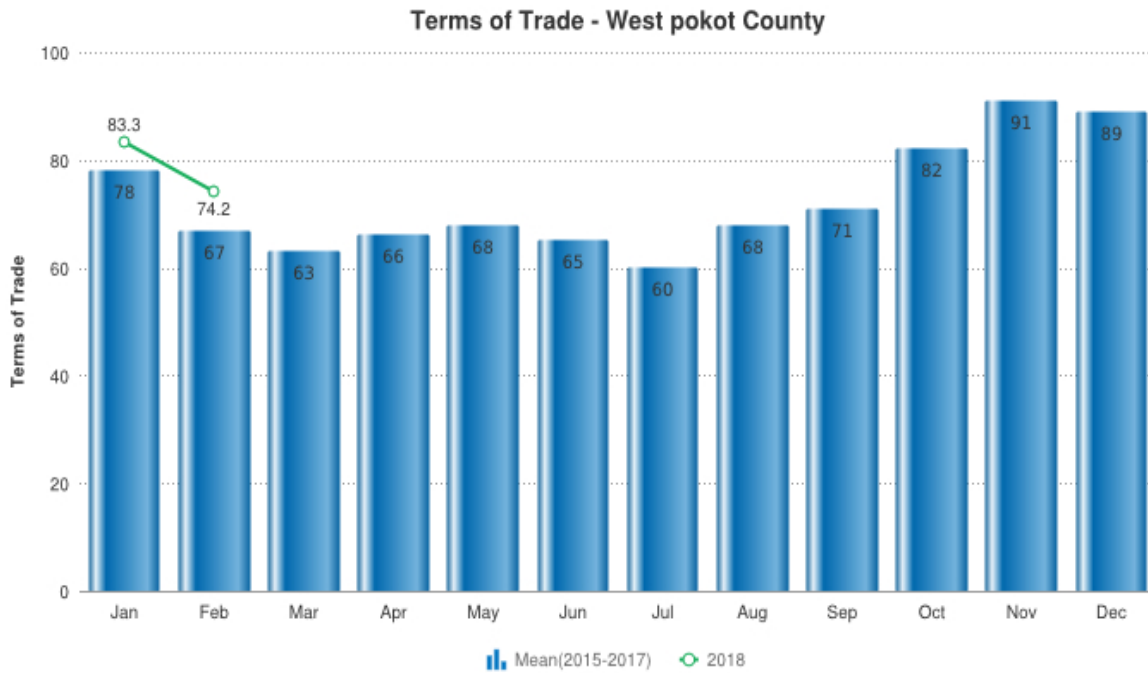
#### 4.2.2 Beans

- Beans traded at 102 per Kg in February 2018, representing an increase from Ksh 100 recorded in January, 2018.
- The increase is attributed to unsteady prices at external supplies resulting to price fluctuation.
- There was no significant variation in price across the two livelihood zones since they both relied on the same external sources for supplies.
- The current market price of beans is significantly above the LTA price (Ksh. 86) for a normal season during this time of the year by 20 percent.



#### 4.3 LIVESTOCK PRICE RATIO/ TERMS OF TRADE (TOT)

- The County recorded the Terms of Trade (ToT) of 74 during the month, marking a decrease from 83 recorded in the previous month. The current ToT implies that pastoralists can now obtain less quantity of maize for the sale of a goat than they did during the previous month. The current ToT is however 11 percent above the LTA for a month of the year.
- The drop in ToT is mainly attributed to decreasing goat prices versus increasing maize prices in the County. The trend is likely to continue.

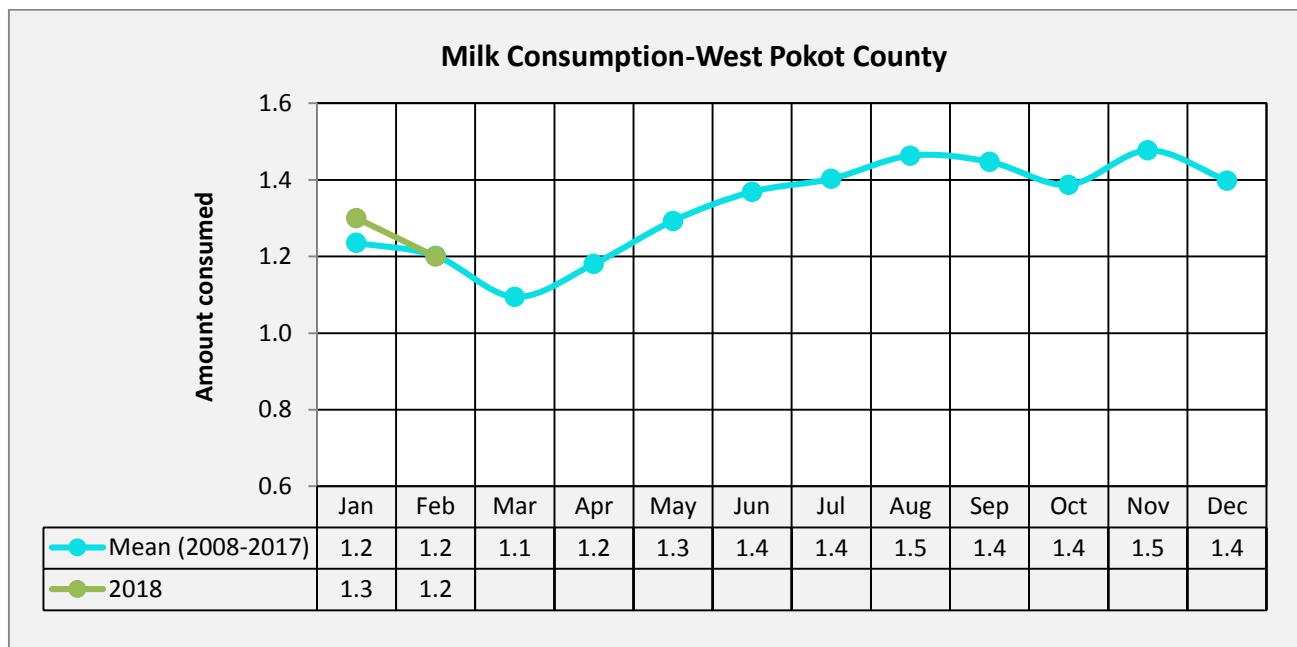


- Further variation is anticipated over the next three months as the price of goat is projected to fall with the on-going dry spell coupled with soaring of maize price during the same period until the MAM season reasonably sets in.

## 5.0 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND NUTRITION STATUS

### 5.1 MILK CONSUMPTION

- Households across all livelihood zones consumed 1.2 litres of milk on average, mainly from cattle, indicating a decrease from the previous month, which was 1.3 litres.



- The decrease in milk consumption is as a result of the decline in production occasioned by worsening body condition due to declining pasture and water for livestock.
- The quantity of milk consumed is however 8% above the LTA value for a similar period of the year.

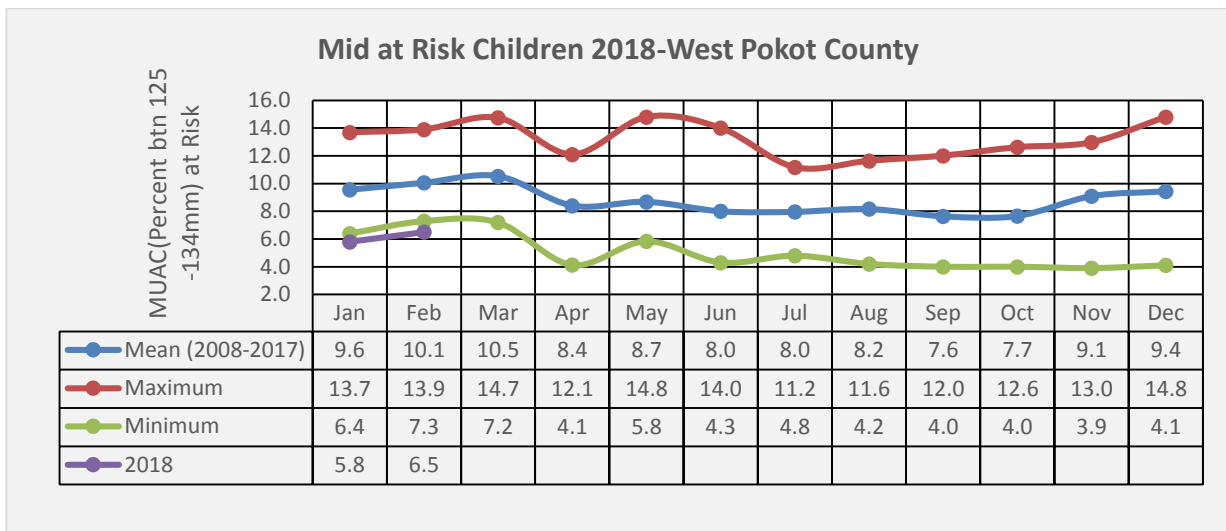
### 5.2 FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

- During the month under review, the proportion of 45%, 49% and 6% of households had the Food Consumption Score (FCS) within: Acceptable, Borderline and Poor categories respectively. In comparison with the previous month, where 53%, 40% and 7% of the households fell within: Acceptable, Borderline and Poor categories respectively, the FCS worsened as there were more households in the borderline category for the current month (49%) than the previous month (40%). The proportion of households within the Acceptable category decreased from 53% to 45% from January, 2018 to February, 2018 respectively, thus a worsening FCS for the current month.
- The mean FCS for the two livelihood zones during the month under review slightly dropped from 40 in January, 2018 to 38.5 in February, 2018.
- There was a significant variation across the two livelihood zones whereby 32% of households in the Pastoral zone were categorized as being within the Acceptable FCS compared to 65% households under the same category in the Agro-pastoral zone.

## 5.3 HEALTH AND NUTRITION STATUS

### 5.3.1 Nutrition Status

- The proportion of 53 and 47 percent of girls and boys respectively were sampled in the County during the current month.
- The percent of children rated being as ‘at risk’ of malnutrition was at 6.5, representing an increase from 5.8 recorded in the previous month.
- The current percent of children ‘at risk’ of malnutrition though on increase, lies below the LTA of 10.1 for a similar period in a normal year.



n = 902

- The apparent upward trend in malnutrition among children under five years in the County is attributed to the significant drop in consumption and accessibility to milk together with other essential health and nutrition commodities in the County. These were considered the main drivers of the increasing number of children falling in the group of ‘at risk’ of malnutrition so far.

### 5.3.2 Health

- Coughing and Typhoid cases were the most commonly reported ailments during the month among the sampled children.

## 5.4 COPING STRATEGY

### 5.4.1 Coping Strategy Index (CSI)

- The CSI was 9.3 during the month of February, 2018, which depicts a slight increase in comparison with 9.1 recorded during the previous month. The increase in CSI demonstrates that during this month, households employed more mechanisms to cope, as compared to the

previous month, which could be attributed to dynamic food commodity availability and increasing prices in markets.

- Agro-pastoral livelihood zone recorded a CSI of 8.9 compared to the 9.6 in Pastoral livelihood zone, which is mainly attributed to instability in livestock productivity in the Pastoral zone.
- The notable consumption based coping strategies employed by majority of the households during the month include, reliance on less preferred/less expensive foods.

## **6.0 CURRENT INTERVENTION MEASURES (ACTION)**

### **6.1 NON-FOOD**

- Peace meetings were conducted by SIKOM and County Government along county borders.
- Pests' des Petis disease (PPR) and LSD vaccination was undertaken by the County Government in Pokot West Sub-County.
- Action Against Hunger (ACF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Nutrition supported a series of mass screening and health outreaches targeting mainly Pokot Central and Pokot North Sub-Counties.

## **7.0 EMERGING ISSUES**

### **7.1 INSECURITY/CONFLICT/HUMAN DISPLACEMENT**

- Rampant cattle rustling incidences were reported within the month mainly in Pokot Central along Pokot-Marakwet border at Cheseгон where scores of people reportedly lost their lives and hundreds of livestock stolen with over 200 households displaced in Cheptulel area.

### **7.2 MIGRATION**

- Most pastoralists in Pokot North Sub-County have moved back to the dry season grazing areas mainly outside the County (Uganda) due to depletion of pasture and browse in traditional graze lands.

### **7.3 FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS**

- The livestock productivity is projected to improve due to anticipated onset of the MAM long rains season in March, 2018. The forage condition is likely to improve resulting into enhanced livestock body condition leading to better livestock prices.
- Nutritious food such as milk availability is expected to increase with the expected rejuvenation of pastoral resources supporting livestock milk production. Malnutrition is in turn likely to drop.
- Maize prices are expected to rise with that of goat price projected to stabilize, from which, the ToT is likely to be favourable over this period. Food security is then likely to improve.
- Persistent conflicts along County borders could remain the greatest constraint to food security due to limited market accessibility and dwindling stocks in the market.
- Distance to water sources for both human and livestock use is anticipated to decrease due to expected long rains onset having potential for adequate recharge to water sources.



## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. AGRICULTURE**

- Provide drought resilient seed varieties to the farmers in Agro-pastoral zones as a boost for crop production.
- Facilitate accurate and timely downscaled weather forecast to farmers.

### **2. LIVESTOCK SECTOR**

- Prepare and support farmers for pasture establishment (skills and seeds) to enable maximum utilization of the upcoming rains.
- Enhance disease surveillance while monitoring and vaccinating animals that would be migrating back into the county against FMD, PPR, CBPP, LSD and CCPP.
- Carry out rangeland reseeding to pastoral zones to enhance pastureland rehabilitation.

### **3. PEACE AND SECURITY**

- Support peace building efforts along the Turkana and Marakwet borders so as to facilitate smooth market accessibility for majority of pastoral communities in such conflict prone areas.

### **4. HEALTH AND NUTRITION SECTOR**

- Support integrated medical outreaches to all hotspots countywide while providing health education on sanitation and proper utilization of water treatment chemicals so as to minimize risks of water borne diseases outbreak.

### **5. WATER SECTOR**

- Support farmers with modern smart water storage technologies to enable maximum harvesting and utilization of rain water.