The food security situation for pastoralists, agro pastoralists, and marginal agricultural farming households is driven by seasonality and the most critical period is normally between August and November, often known as the lean season, before the onset of the short rains in mid/end October. During September, land preparation and planting occurs in the marginal agricultural and agro pastoral areas and demand for casual farm labour increases. The early harvests from the long rains in the high productive areas in Western Kenya has also started which normally leads to a slow reduction in maize prices towards the end of the year.

- The food security situation among beneficiaries is the same as in September last year but has improved compared with the previous round in May when 40% were severely food insecure compared to 25% in this round.
- The Food Consumption Score has remained stable for beneficiary households compared with September last year as well as with May 2013. Non-beneficiaries have also improved their food consumption compared with the same time last year.
- The price of the Minimum Healthy Food Basket has increased/remained stable since September last year apart from the Eastern pastoral zone (Tana River and Iljara) where the cost of the basket has steadily reduced. North-western pastoral (Turkana) still has the highest food basket prices at 76Ksh and the Eastern pastoral zone has the lowest basket price at 51Ksh.
- WFP has a new corporate monitoring indicator; Average Daily Dietary Diversity. The benchmark for this indicator is 4 food groups per day and some 49% of households consumed 4 food groups or more.
- Only 11% of children aged 6-23months consumed 4 food groups and only 8% ate iron rich food.
- WFP no longer has recovery projects in the Southern Pastoral livelihood zone (Narok and Kajiado) as the food security situation over the past 18 months has improved.

**Highlight**

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**Food security situation**

The proportion of severely food insecure in Kenya remains similar year on year for the month of September. Northern pastoral, South-eastern marginal farming, Western agro pastoral and the Coastal zones have improved since September 2012 in terms of the percentage of severely food insecure households.

A deterioration however is seen in the Eastern, North-eastern and North-western pastoral zones. The driver for this deterioration is increased food prices for the two northern pastoral zones and a reduced food consumption in the Eastern pastoral zone.
Household Food security situation

The food security situation among beneficiaries as mentioned is the same as in September last year but has improved compared with the last round in May when 40% were severely food insecure, compared with 25% in this round. There are also less severely food insecure in this round among non-beneficiary households and thus the situation has improved compared with September last year as well as with the previous round in May.

Northern pastoral, South-eastern marginal farming, Western agro pastoral and the Coastal zones have all improved in terms of the percentage of households being severely food insecure since September 2012. A deterioration however is seen in the Eastern, North-eastern and North-western pastoral zones. Apart from HIV clients, where a third are food secure, very few beneficiary households are food secure. Among non-beneficiaries, the Southern pastoral zone has the largest proportion of food secure households at 52%, which is a reduction since May when 66% were food secure.
The Food Consumption Score has remained stable for beneficiary households compared with September last year and the last round in May 2013. Non-beneficiaries have however improved their food consumption compared with the same time last year but deteriorated compared with the last FSOM round in May. There is currently approximately 15% of interviewed households who have a poor food consumption score, indicating that both quantity and dietary quality are compromised. The majority of beneficiary households with poor consumption live in the North-western and Eastern pastoral as well as the Coastal low potential farming zone. These three zones have seen a deterioration in consumption scores compared with September last year and last round in May. The same pattern is seen among non-beneficiaries in the same two pastoral zones while there has been an improvement in food consumption among non-beneficiaries since last year in all the other livelihood zones. The Grassland pastoral livelihood zone continues to have a very good consumption score among both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The number of meals consumed in a day has improved for all age groups compared with the same period last year, especially amongst children under 5 years of age. Some 22% of the households with young children fed their children 4 meals a day compared with only 8% in September last year and none in May 2013. While this improvement is welcome it is far from meeting an acceptable level. The proportion of older children and adults consuming three meals a day has also increased since last year and last round in May.

WFP has a new corporate monitoring indicator; Average Daily Dietary Diversity. The benchmark for this indicator is 4 food groups per day. Both beneficiary and non-beneficiaries consume on average 3.8 food groups per day and some 49% of households consume 4 food groups or more.
Sources of Food

Food aid remains the main source of cereals for beneficiaries while the market became an almost equal source for pulses in September due to WFP pipeline problems in the same month. The proportion of vegetables and milk from own production has reduced among beneficiaries compared with May 2013 and the market was the most important source. For non-beneficiaries, the market is by far the most important source of food items apart from milk where own production remains slightly more important.

Sources of Income

As mentioned in earlier FSOM reports, the income generating activities are very similar among beneficiary and non-beneficiary households and is a reflection of the livelihood zone they live in. The proportions of household engaging in the different activities are also very similar with the same period last year as it reflects on their seasonal nature.

Noticeable is however the increase in sale of natural resources as an income source in the North-eastern pastoral zone, which in this round was as important as livestock sale and livestock products. The percent of households reporting sale of livestock as their main income source also reduced compared with May 2013.

Unskilled labour and sale of natural resources were the most common income sources in the Coastal marginal livelihood zone. Sale of livestock was most common among the pastoralists in Grasslands and Western zones. Unskilled labour was also the main income source in the Southern marginal mixed farming zone as well as among HIV clients.

Begging has reduced in Northern Pastoral and increased as a source of income in North-western livelihood zone.
The month to month Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 1.8% from 140.29 in August to 142.82 in September 2013, while the overall annual inflation rate stood at 8.29% in September which is an increase from 6.67 in August 2013. This is higher than in both May 2013 and September 2012 when inflation was stable at 4.05% and 5.32% respectively.

Between August and September 2013, the month to month Food and Non Alcoholic drinks’ Index increased by 3% while the annual increase was 12.55%. The implementation of the VAT Act and seasonal factors affecting supply of common food crops were the main causes of rise in the food index. In aggregate, price rises outweighed falls in the average prices of various food items during this month; for instance, the price of processed milk increased by 22% as compared to August 2013. Cabbages, Irish potatoes, packaged maize flour and bread also increased by 11%, 5%, 4% and 1.5% respectively as compared to the previous month.

As per the price data collected during the FSOM round, maize prices have increased since May in most of the livelihood zones - including Kakuma and Daadab - apart from Coastal marginal agricultural, Eastern pastoral, Grasslands pastoral and Western agro pastoral, where prices reduced.

The price of the Minimum Healthy Food Basket has increased or remained stable since September last year apart from in the Eastern pastoral zone where the cost of the basket has steadily reduced. In North-western pastoral, Northern pastoral, North-eastern pastoral and Kakuma recorded higher prices of the staple maize and beans. North-western pastoral still has the highest food basket prices at 76Ksh and the Eastern pastoral zone has the lowest basket price at 51Ksh.

The purchasing power of households in North-western, North-eastern pastoral zones, as well as Kakuma has deteriorated since the same period last year and last round in May due to the increased prices as mentioned above. These households have not been able to increase their income to compensate for the increase in price.

There is a slight deterioration in purchasing power among beneficiaries in Grassland and Western agro pastoral livelihood zones despite a reduction in the price of the basket.

The situation in Dadaab is similar to September last year but there are many more households who could not afford the basket in this round compared with May even though the difference in basket price is marginal, indicating a reduction in income. The HIV clients remain slightly better off even though more than half of the households could not afford the minimum healthy basket.
The proportion of households who spent more than 65% of their income on food has reduced since the same time last year while those spending less than 50% of their income on food has substantially increased, particularly among beneficiaries.

Non-beneficiaries spend on average less than 50% of their income on food (see pie chart) making them less vulnerable to price shocks. Cereals was the largest food expenditure item for all households (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike) but was three times larger for cash beneficiaries. The average percentage spent on food was the same as in May 2013 as well as in September last year. In terms of purchasing high quality foods, non-beneficiaries and food beneficiary households were similar with a relatively high proportion spent on milk/meat/fish while this was almost non existent among cash beneficiaries. The proportion of income spend on fruit and vegetables is also higher among non-beneficiaries and food recipients than those households receiving cash.

Education remains the largest non-food expenditure item. Non-beneficiary and cash beneficiaries are both spending a large proportion on education (19% and 15%) which is much higher than among the households receiving food. Clothing was an equally large expenditure item for food beneficiary households in this round.

Cash beneficiaries spent a slightly higher proportion on repaying loans (6%) than in previous rounds which could be a reflection of delays in payments during some months, which could have led to households buying food and other goods on credit.
Household Coping Strategies (CSI)

The proportion of households that did not have to use any coping strategy in September increased to 30% for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. It is a clear improvement among beneficiaries since last round in May when 20% did not resort to any coping strategies. It is also a slight improvement from September last year when 26% of beneficiaries reported not having experienced food shortages and thus did not need to use any coping strategy. It is also an improvement for non-beneficiaries from 25% in September last year to 30% in 2013.

The remaining majority (70%) did however face food shortages and resorted to coping strategies but they were using less severe strategies than in the last round in May and the same time last year. The index for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries reduced to 11 from 16-17 in May.

The largest improvement since last round in May is seen in the North-western pastoral livelihood zone (Turkana) where the coping index has dropped from 24 to 12. There was also an improvement compared with same time last year and the biggest improvement year on year was seen in the Western Agro-pastoral zone that dropped from an index of 17 to only 4, which is regarded as very low and hence positive.

Use of Food assistance

As previously reported, the large majority of households do consume the food they receive. Sharing is the most common alternative, particularly in the Coastal marginal zone and North-western pastoral zone where some 15% of households reported having shared some of their ration with others. Dadaab and Kakuma continue to be the only locations where households reported selling parts of the ration (3%). It is however understood that this question is sensitive for beneficiaries to answer truthfully and thus a certain level of under-reporting is well noted.
Among the nearly 3000 households that are interviewed in each round a total of 652 children were under 2 years of age. Of these, 89% did not eat 4 food groups per day and were thus not getting enough nutrients. The four food groups is the standard benchmark for acceptable feeding practices and dietary diversity in infants and young children. Only 8% of the children had consumed any iron rich food and 15.5% of the infant and young children consumed vitamin A rich food in the 24 hour prior to the interview.

While continued breast feeding is commendably high in Kenya and 80% of children assessed, aged 20-23months, are still breastfed. Efforts to improve complementary feeding is urgently needed.

Admissions into the curative supplementary feeding programme have remained stable throughout 2013 for children less than 5 years of age. Admissions have also been relatively stable among pregnant and lactating women and have on average been lower than in both 2011 and 2012.

**Nutrition surveys**

The most recent integrated nutrition survey was carried out in Turkana South in July 2013. The results indicated that there was no significant change in the prevalence of wasting since 2012 and the nutritional situation in children less than 5 years of age remains critical (WHO benchmark). The GAM rate reported in July 2013 was 16.5%.

A similar survey was conducted in Turkana Central in the same month (July 2013) where the prevalence of GAM increased from 11.6% in July 2012 to 17.2%, indicating a deterioration in the nutrition situation from serious to critical. The deterioration in the situation was attributed to the heavy rains/floods that occurred during the long rains period (April 2013) that locked out Kerio Division from nutrition services.

Preliminary results from Dadaab nutrition survey also indicate an improvement in GAM. Kakuma survey is scheduled for November.
Please contact Grace Igweta, WFP M&E unit, Allan Kute or Yvonne Forsen, VAM, should you have any questions.