



Monthly Food Security Report for Somalia



FEWS NET /Somalia

Issued 9 April 2001

Food Security Assessment Unit

This report is a joint publication of FSAU and the USAID Famine Early Warning System (FEWS NET) for Somalia.

EDITORIAL

Food Security Highlights

Regional reports confirm that the poorer urban and pastoral groups in the northern and central parts of Somalia continue to feel the impact of the limited purchasing power related to the lost livestock trade. Reduced access to affordable water is aggravating the problems of many pastoralists. Reports suggest that remittances and wider kin networks have been able to cushion some of these difficulties while revealing that the most vulnerable are those with weak social and economic linkages.

The joint FEWS-Net /CARE 'Greater Horn Update' (Feb 2001*) comments on factors contributing to the 'process' of increasing destitution in the region. Examples from neighbouring countries show how dysfunctional economies can result when the normal 'wealth : asset balance' is lost. This threatens vital exchange relationships essential in allowing access to food and income sources.

In the Somalia context, where normal coping mechanisms are coming under increasing pressure, FSAU recognizes the need to monitor asset depletion and shifting wealth definitions. Most households appear to be pulling through the difficulties resulting from lost livestock exports (and associated trade and employment) but the cost of cumulative asset loss and increased pressures on the environment remain less visible. As the search for employment and the drift to towns increases, the urban poor populations clearly illustrate the growing demand for income diversification. (**internal FSAU Field Monitor report on IDPs and Urban Poor in Northern regions). This also underlines the need for alternative livestock markets and certification identified by the SACB Livestock Working Group. After its recent visit, an ILO team proposed interventions such as road construction, water development and re-forestation projects. However, with regard to the types of interventions mentioned above, it remains to be seen whether destitution increases significantly before any impact can be evaluated.

* available from FEWS-Net

** available from FSAU

- **Climate and vegetation Outlook:** As of 31st March, most of Somalia was seasonably dry, ie. normal. There were, however, a few fragmented areas in which rainfall was slightly more than average (Awdal, L. Juba and Bay) during the 3rd dekad. Reliable reports from the field also indicate moderate rainfall in Galkayo district (Mudug region) in this dekad. Concern remains over rainfall crucial for the crop production. If it does not rain in the first two weeks of April, *Gu* crop production in these areas will be compromised. More detailed information is available on request at FEWS: somalia@fews.net.
- **Todob (*) rains** received in some areas of the northern regions have brought some relief for livestock herders. However, pockets of vulnerability are reported i.e. from Quardo district in Nugal region indicates need for close monitoring of this area after some lactating animals, kids and lambs started dying due to lack of pasture and water.
- In southern regions, poor pasture conditions and increased pressure through immigration along cross-border areas are reported to be compounding the problems of pastoralists already competing for these resources.
- **Emerging vulnerable pockets** (SE-Galkayo, Addun area and coastal line from Hobyo to Wer-shik) need close monitoring as they do not have access to sufficient livestock products or fishing activities. Agro-pastoralists are considered better off as the majority are reported to be able to draw on household stocks.
- A noticeable **shift to local cereal consumption** continues as imported food items remain expensive due to further injections of new Somali bank notes and lack of commodities normally brought back by livestock traders from the Gulf markets.
- **Water prices** have tripled and unless the main rains arrive soon, poor pastoralists risk losing too many of their livestock. Those who do not have access to social or economic support are facing increasingly difficult times.

(*) Early *Gu* or *Todob* rains occur roughly every two to three years.

Nutrition Update

Nutrition survey in L. Juba

The nutrition survey in accessible areas of Lower Juba commenced on April 2nd. UNICEF, FSAU and WFP are participating in an effort to ensure that both health and food security issues are adequately understood in the analysis. For the first time, specific food security questions are being incorporated in the survey questionnaire. It is hoped that this interagency collaboration will result in one clear set of conclusions and recommendations.

Nutrition surveillance

Training in nutrition

surveillance has now been undertaken in 69 facilities throughout Somalia and a map showing the location of these sites is available from FSAU. Reports from health facilities are now reaching the FSAU – the data will be used in a more detailed analysis of nutrition problems and for the monitoring of trends in people presenting at health facilities.

Surveillance in Somaliland and Puntland

During March, the nutrition surveillance system has been extended to Somaliland in an effort to ensure that monitoring of

changes in nutrition status of vulnerable groups will be possible in the coming months. Surveillance efforts in Puntland have been intensified.

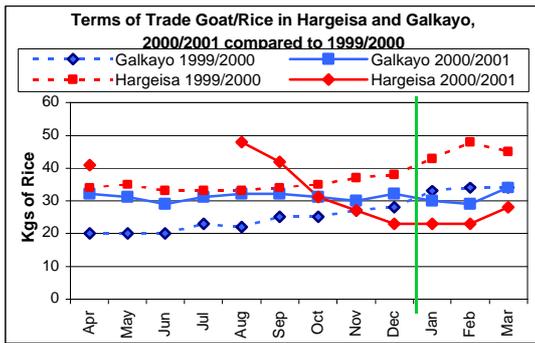
Influences on nutrition status of children in Somalia

Recent surveys indicate that the early introduction of fluids and foods other than breast-milk to children is likely to be a significant cause of the high malnutrition rates seen in younger age groups.

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TERMS OF TRADE* - NORTHERN & CENTRAL REGIONS

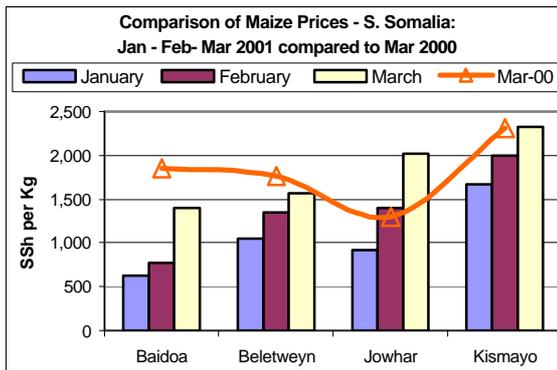
*TT



Since the ban, the deterioration in TT differs widely from one market to another. As an example, the evolution of TT was much less favorable in Hargeisa than in Galkayo (see graph). In Hargeisa, TT dropped immediately after the ban and became much lower than 12 months ago (?40 %, ?47 %, ?52 % in December, January, February respectively). The situation slightly improved this month, one first grade local goat being exchanged for 28 kg of rice in March 2001 as opposed to 45 kg in March 2000 (-38%). In Galkayo, the trend is not that alarming. One local quality goat fetched 34 kg of rice in March, which is similar to last year's level. Poor households shifted to cheap local cereals, earlier in Hargeisa and more recently in Galkayo. Goat/sorghum TT in Hargeisa stabilized at about 70 kg since December (close to last year's trend). However, access to cereals is becoming more and more difficult for the poorest urban and pastoral people due to very low purchasing power (less job opportunities, no animals left to sell). The situation is

similar in Burao. Goat/sorghum TT improved in Galkayo from 48 kg in January to 60 kg in March and are becoming better than last year at the same period. The market has been supplied by Southern Somalia (through Belet-Weyne) and by Ethiopia.

LOCAL CEREAL PRICES—SOUTHERN REGIONS



A decrease in cereal supply is normally observed in March in all markets in S. Somalia. The poorest households are running

March (the monthly average price of maize has more than doubled between January and March in Baidoa, ?124%). The increase in maize prices was less spectacular in Hiran region (?49% in Beletweyn) and Lower Juba (?40% in Kismayo).

out of stocks, while some of the middle and better off wealth groups might keep stocks in expectation of higher prices. Cereal prices consequently increase. Maize and sorghum prices have increased since the beginning of this year in S. Somalia (see inserted figure showing the maize price trend). Maize prices were generally very low since the last good *Gu* 2000 harvest which even acted as a disincentive for *Deyr* 00/01 maize production in the Shabelle Valley. Prices only started to increase in February.

In spite of a significant increase, prices expressed in Somali currency are still below or close to last year's level (see chart). The good *Gu* and *Deyr* season (see latest 'Crop Focus', Issue 2/2001, also available at www.unsomaliam.org under 'Food Security') as well as high supply of food aid from neighboring countries has influenced this. However, devaluation also plays a determining role (from 10,000 Ssh/USD in March 2000 to 14,500 Ssh/USD in March 2001). From the point of view of the buyer, the difference is even more favorable this year when expressed in USD (?45% in Baidoa). As an exception, maize prices doubled in Jowhar from January to March (?121%) to become much higher than last year at the same period (see chart). Expressed in USD, the difference is less significant (0.16 USD/kg in March 2001 as opposed to 0.13 USD/kg in March 2000). It has to be noted that more supply to the central and eastern areas of Galgadug and Mudug was provided through the coastal sand roads. Sorghum prices have been relatively stable up to January in the sorghum belt. Prices drastically increased in February/March in most markets. In Baidoa, price/kg rose from 400 Ssh in the first week of February to 1,000 Ssh in the last week of March, the reopening of the main Baidoa–Mogadishu road being one of the key explanatory factors. Elsewhere, sorghum prices are higher and mainly ranging from 1,500 to 2,000 Ssh/kg in March. In N. Somalia, local cereals are still relatively cheap compared to imported food commodities. Prices have slightly dropped in March in Hargeisa due to increased market supply (700 Ssh/kg of sorghum, -7%).

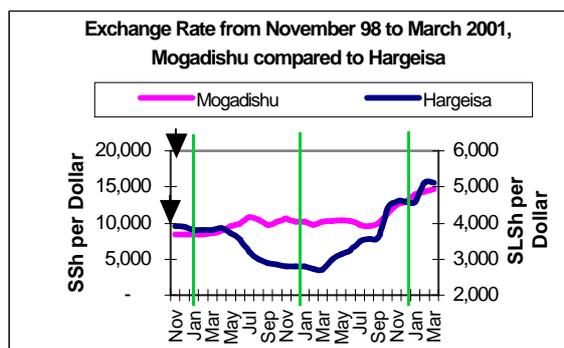
During this season of the year, poor riverine and poor rainfed agro-pastoral population groups in Shabelle Valley and Juba Valley have almost exhausted their stocks. In the irrigated areas of L. Shabelle, maize prices have been regularly increasing since January (from 650 Ssh early January to 1,600 Ssh late March in Qorioley and from 800 Ssh to 1,800 Ssh during the same period in Merka). In Baidoa, the price of maize has tripled from 500 Ssh/kg in the first week of February to 1,500 Ssh in the last week of

EXCHANGE RATES & IMPORTED FOOD COMMODITIES

The inserted figure shows that the Somali shilling stabilized at about 10,000 Ssh/US Dollar for a long period prior to the livestock ban (June '99 to September '00). After the ban, the shilling depreciated continuously and significantly in all reporting markets from September till February. No major difference occurred during the last two months. In Mogadishu Bakaara market, the shilling depreciated moderately by 3 %, from Ssh 14,300 in February to Ssh 14,700 in March '01. A similar trend was observed in other markets using the Somali shilling.

in February/March '01. The Somaliland shilling remained stable in March with respect to the previous month.

last year (livestock ban resulting in a drastic reduction of the hard currency income). Prices of imported food increased in most



The Somaliland shilling was already depreciating before the ban (from 2,700 Ssh in April '00 to 3,600 Ssh in Sept. '00). The depreciation has been sharper since the ban (rates fixed through authorities' interventions), the exchange rate reaching above 5,000 Ssh /US Dollar

The exchange rate was low before the ban, but higher afterwards, due to low supply of Dollars. In the absence of live animal exports, supply of imported commodities are lower this year compared to

markets due to lack of import commodities that are normally brought back by livestock traders from the Gulf markets. Sugar prices increased more than other commodities, due to low supply and high demand from neighboring countries. Prices/kg range from 5,000–6,000 Ssh near the sea ports to 7,000-8,000 Ssh in the inland markets (upto 9,000 Ssh/kg in El-Barde/Bakool). In March 2000, sugar prices were ranging from 3,000 Ssh/kg (Kismayo sea port) to 5,000 Ssh (Afmadow, El-Barde). Another reason of depreciated the Somali shilling was the importation of new bank notes (see previous 'Monthly Food Security Reports', also available at www.unsomaliam.org under 'Food Security').

FOOD AID DISTRIBUTION

This February, CARE distributed 550 MT in Southern Somalia as FFW and about 700 MT as free food in Gedo region. In March, FFW operations continued. CARE distributed 434 MT of sorghum and 31 MT of maize to Bay region (Baidoa, Ufurow and X/Dhere districts). In Hiran region, 310 MT were distributed (80% sorghum). Nearly half of the food aid was delivered to Belet-Weyne district (142 MT). Distributions amounted to 240 MT in Tieglow district (Bakool region, close to the border with Hiran).

Emergency food distribution for Gedo, planned to be dispatched in March, shall be reported next month.

In February, WFP distributed a total amount of 1,260 MT. The bulk of the assistance went towards rehabilitation (85 %). Among others, 156 MT were distributed in Jilib district (M. Juba), 266 MT in Jamame

district (L. Juba) and 317 MT to NW-Somalia (Hargeisa). Including relief, 160 MT were distributed in Jowhar (M. Shabelle). In March, FFW interventions went on in the Juba valley (422 MT for Jilib and Jamame districts). Relief food was provided to 11 burned villages in the Jilib area (63 MT). Two social support projects were carried out in Merca district (L. Shabelle) where food was distributed in support of adult education and school feeding. In the Northwest, close to 500 MT of food aid was distributed (Togdheer, Hargeisa, Sool and Sanag).

ICRC distributed food to leprosy and flood villages in Jilib district (M. Juba region) in February when 2000 beneficiaries received seeds and 1800 received food for 'seed protection' (55 MT of maize, 18 MT of beans and 9 MT of vegetable oil). Non food items were distributed to 1,000 IDPs in Galkayo.

HEALTH

Cholera. From the beginning of the year until early March, a total of 258 cases and 25 deaths have been recorded. Following brief outbreaks in Adale, Brava and Merka, M. and L. Shabelle regions, the outbreak in Mogadishu continues. As of mid-March (end of the 5th week of reporting), 231 cases and 6 deaths have been reported in the capital city. A suspected cholera outbreak has been reported in Wanleweyne, L. Shabelle, to which WHO, UNICEF and Muslim Aid have responded by establishing a CTC and conducting chlorination activities. Ability to respond to cholera in Mogadishu has suffered a serious setback due to the recent security incident in Mogadishu. The number of Kala Azar cases identified each month remains stable. No new cases have been identified in N-Somalia.

REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY HIGHLIGHTS AS REPORTED BY FSAU FIELD MONITORS >> P. 6

NW AND AWDAL

At the peak of the *Jilaal* season, significant amounts of *Todob* rains were received at a wider range in both regions (second dekad up to mid of the third dekad). Initial pasture regeneration in some pockets, SW of Hargeisa was immediately constrained by overgrazing. Cattle herders were prompted to out-migrate to the mountains and the *Hawd* plateau. Trend for out-migration of stocks from the coastal/sub-coastal areas around Lughaya is increasing. Agricultural activities (ploughing/planting) that were encouraged by the recent rains are signalling slight improvement of the food security situation in some areas. Locally produced cereal prices have dropped as a result of increased market supply and prices of imported staple commodities were re-adjusted due to stable currency exchange markets.

SOOL

Most of the region remained dry and early *Gu Todob* rains did not start well up to now. Further depletion of pastoral resources, severe temperature increases, growing demand for employment and food in-take are apparent as the *Jilaal* season has a significant impact on herders. The various food insecure pockets of upper Nugal, N. Ainabo and *Hawd* that received less rains during last *Deyr* and *Gu* continued to expand in March. Poor pastoralists far away from the main markets, have been highly affected by the livestock ban, as they depend mainly on livestock sales and their products. In the *Hawd* area, water prices increased by 10 % while in Sool plateaux by 20 % due to the break down of the Aur-Bogays borehole. In TT, 1 local quality shoat fetched one sack of sorghum in regional markets. Pastoralists are benefitting from increasing demand from Abu Dhabi markets for small ruminant skin from the on-going slaughtering during the *Jilaal* months. One piece of skin costs 18.000 SShs.

SANAG AND TOGDHEER

The *Gu* rains had started earlier than expected and prompted pastoralists to move in in search for water and better pasture. The Agro-pastoral groups whose income really depends on their agricultural products and fodder sales, are facing major income problems as a result of crop failure after two consecutive seasonal rains failures and no income from hay sales to livestock exporters. Raising water prices in *Hawd* of Togdheer due to the decreasing number of water berkads made poor families move to places where free or cheaper water is available. Food prices and the exchange rates remained the same throughout the month. In Burao market, the price of local quality shoat increased by 21 % as herders kept their animals for fattening during the rainy season. This resulted in less livestock supply in the markets. Finally, some poor households received relief food distributed by WFP.

NUGAL

Early *Todob* rains were received for one day in southern areas, relieving some pressure on the pasture. However, field reports from Qardo district in Garowe indicate that lactating animals, kids and lambs started dying because of lack of pasture and water. Prices for a barrel of water brought in by water trucks tripled since the *Jilaal* season (10.000 – 15.000 SoShs). Unless the main rains arrive soon, poor pastoralists with only small ruminants and herd sizes and with weak social and economic linkages risk losing too many livestock (unsustainable). This group will comprise 10-20 % of the pastoral population. Garowe town is smaller than Bosasso or Galkayo and less involved in the livestock trade. Construction activities are healthy in Garowe. However, again, the poor group is affected by the general recession and increasing food prices, but is smaller than Bosasso and Galkayo – those with poor access to remittances and social support are most vulnerable. The aforementioned group are subject to the impact of inflation as the average wage they earn remains constant.

BARI

No significant rains have yet arrived. Livestock prices have increased to match inflation. Food prices have risen slightly. Livestock production is low, though this *Jilaal*, in climatic terms only, is less severe than normal due to the good *Deyr* rains. However, poor urban and IDP groups, as mentioned above, have been facing increasing food prices and fewer job opportunities. The outlook for this group is even worse as, in the coming month a significant proportion of Bosasso people will move in land, away from the heat. This will decrease further the job opportunities in Bosasso. In addition, the port will close for all trade further reducing job opportunities and increasing the cost of many basic commodities. While most pastoralists are managing through increased livestock sales and intensifying/engaging in other activities – fishing, frankincense collection – the poorest with low asset levels and little access to social or economic support are facing increasingly difficult times. Water trucking has begun in Washington and Taageer villages.

MUDUG

Early *Todob* rains have fallen in a large area of this region. These brief but heavy rains provide some respite for livestock, with high rates of in-migration from other areas already taking place. While these rains do not signify the start of the main *Gu* rains, they will increase milk production and livestock value, and given the timely arrival of the main rains, support a temporary recovery for most pastoralists. Galkayo town, one of the major livestock trading centres, has been hard hit by the ban, resulting in fewer job/income opportunities and falling labour rates for the urban poor in particular. Those who have no or limited access to remittances or gifts are facing increasingly difficult conditions. A timely food distribution by WFP and Islamic organisations has taken place to IDPs in Margaga camp.

>> P. 5 REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY HIGHLIGHTS AS REPORTED BY FSAU FIELD MONITORS

GEDO

Due to the prolonged *Jilaal* season, livestock body condition has weakened and milk production continued to decline throughout the region. The pasture is dry and not palatable for animals and water scarcity and quality continues deteriorates becoming salty and not drinkable for both humans and livestock, especially in area between Garbaharey and Elwak. Local and imported commodities prices increased due to the high demand for cereals in other parts of the country and depreciation of Somali shilling which resulted in lower purchasing power of poor house holds. Poor pastoral, agro-pastoral (rain-fed farmer) and riverine farmers are already experiencing food and income short falls.

JUBA VALLEY

Insufficient *Gu* and *Deyr* rains combined with in-migrations from North-eastern Kenya, increased pressure on the pasture and water. Livestock products decline due to the long dry spell of the *Jilaal*. Severe shortage of water in the potential and inland grazing areas resulted in an out-migration of people and their livestock to permanent water points where over-grazing has been reported. Also, the expected yield of the off-season crop on the *deshaks* has been reduced by severe infestations of insect pest and increased prices of staple food have negatively affected agro-pastoralists and poor pastoralists. However, the overall food security situation of the region is considered normal, except for pockets like Hagar where there are severe shortages of water and locally produced staple foods.

LOWER SHABELLE

High river levels during the *Deyr* season have allowed irrigation for most riverine and agro-pastoral FEGs and allowing restocking of household cereal and improved access to food. In addition, good livestock marketing options in both local and Kenyan markets has helped to improve food security for agro-pastoralists and pastoralists. However, *Jilaal* climatic conditions have further deteriorated the pasture and water availability causing high population movement among rainfed agro-pastoralists and pockets of riverine FEGs. Continuing overgrazing along the rivers and hand feeding of lactating cattle has been observed. Agricultural activities such as land preparation, harvest of sesame and other cash crops as well as rehabilitation of main canals are under way. Planting of maize in localised irrigated areas has started and in K/warey, where sesame crops are still at early growing stage. (The harvest is expected to overlap with the *Gu* season). Cereal stocks for rain dependent and poor riverine households are scarce or already depleted and rely mainly of food purchase. Increasing local cereal prices in all local markets due to the high demand of maize from other markets has prompted farmers to sell their stocks. Cholera claimed the death of 20 persons in Wanle-weyn and localised outbreak of measles and dysentery was reported in Qoriole district.

BAKOL

Some localized areas received *Jar* rains, which is a good sign for the early start of the main *Gu* season. In pastoral zones, increasing distance between the pasture and water and depleted water points were reported. Agro-pastoralist areas (70-75%) are better off than the pastoralist ones (20-25%), also their food security situation was considered normal during this *Jilaal*.

TT slightly decreased, meaning, 1 first quality goat fetched less cereal than last month. The prices of imported food commodities increased and wages of unskilled labor remained stable. Poor pastoralist households continued to sell their assets, livestock and livestock products— while agro-pastoral households began the consumption of the underground storage.

BAY

Pasture condition has declined due to heavy grazing during dry *Jilaal* season. Livestock started moving to the open rangelands, because of the forthcoming planting time. Agricultural activities like bush clearing, land preparation, for coming *Gu* season creating job opportunities are on-going throughout the region. Other activities increasingly observed from mid March, were sale of firewood/charcoal and construction materials. In general, the food security situation is considered normal due to the good harvest in the previous *Gu* and *Deyr* seasons. Consequently, prices for staple food (sorghum, maize, cowpeas) are low while imported food items (sugar, rice, and cooking oil) remained high.

HIRAN

At this time of year, the water table of the main water source drops down and increasing water prices are forcing herders to allocate money for water purchasing rather than household cereal needs. This places extra strain on normal coping mechanisms. In the gro-pastoral area, pasture is extremely poor. The non-lactating cattle migrated to the open rangeland, while lactating cows and young calves remain behind to feed on old crop residues. The poor crop production of last *Deyr* season is not seriously affecting the region due to good cereal supply from cereal producing areas and food aid from neighboring region Zone 5 of Ethiopia. Cereal prices increased by 44% in February and 67% in March, due to supply reduction from Ethiopia (food aid). Imported commodities remain high and expensive because of injection of new Somali bank notes. However, the food security situation of the region is still considered normal.

COWPEA BELT

Hot and windy weather continued except for a few scattered rain showers from 19-23 March NW of Hobyo, X/Dhere and Adenyabab. Livestock are showing below normal condition after the seasonal water and pasture shortage resulting in lower production and marketability. Current pasture consists of dried grasses, shrubs, bush and trees are available in some remote areas far from water points. Pockets of pasture shortage are in the areas between Galkayo-Hobyo, Adado-Cabudwag-Dusmareb and parts of the coastal line from Elder to Cadale, Warshik. Farming activities such as hand levelling and dry sowing in rainfed areas have started. Market prices of imported items have increased as a result of continuous introduction of Somali shilling notes rising also prices of local products. In terms of food security, vulnerable pockets with less livestock products (SE-Galkayo, Addun area between Adado, Abudawak and Dusamareb) and fishing activities (coastal line from Hobyo, X/Dhere, Elder-Adale, and Warshik), need close monitoring.

MIDDLE SHABELLE

As a result of the prevailing *Jilaal* weather conditions that continue to deteriorate pasture and water availability, pastoralists moved their livestock (cattle to riverine areas, sheep to coastal plains and inland camel/goat near boreholes). Reduced animal production and reproduction but no disease outbreak were observed. Sesame crop harvest is ongoing and land preparation activity has started in both irrigated and rainfed areas where *kawakwa* technique is used for water harvest. Major staple foods are available in the local markets. In Riverine and Agro-pastoral Food Economies, households with surpluses are benefiting from increasing local cereal prices (maize ↑45%, sorghum ↑37%, cowpea ↑50% compared to last month) due to decreasing supply. In terms of coping mechanisms for the pastoral, 1 local goat fetches 68 kg of sorghum while the urban are disadvantaged due to lack of job opportunities and overall stability. Agricultural labour opportunities are scarce and limited income coming from self-employment (collection of grasses/fodder/firewood). The overall health and nutrition status is considered normal.