

# THE KENYA CASH CONSORTIUM LOCUST RESPONSE MARKET MONITORING INITIATIVE

ASAL Counties of Kenya - August 2020

## BACKGROUND

The invasion by desert locusts in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) counties that started in December of 2019 is still ongoing as per reports by the Food Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in August 2020.<sup>1</sup> The Government of Kenya and the FAO have been working hand in hand to contain the locusts and avert the threat that the pests pose to food security for both livestock and people living in the affected counties.

The desert locusts have affected large expanses of cropland and pasture, leading to increased likelihood of food insecurity, exacerbating the vulnerabilities and needs of local communities. This has had ripple effects on other sectors of the economy such as manufacturing and service industries in this areas which has caused negative changes in the markets.<sup>2</sup>

The number of COVID-19 cases in Kenya in August 2020 have continued to rise since the first confirmed case was reported in March 2020. Kenya has been undertaking various measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 including restrictions of movement, closure of public spaces with high human traffic such as schools and public events, dusk to dawn curfews, ensuring basic hygiene and social distancing.<sup>4</sup> These precautionary measures continue to have negative economic impacts on businesses, markets and workers with the country witnessing job cuts across various sectors and income of businesses and available working hours falling significantly.<sup>2</sup>

To understand the local market systems and inform humanitarian programming in the light of the desert locust invasion and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kenya Cash Consortium (KCC) led by ACTED in partnership with Oxfam and Concern Worldwide (CWW) with the support of IMPACT Initiatives conducted a joint market monitoring exercise in local markets in Turkana, Mandera, Samburu, Isiolo, Marsabit and Wajir counties. The KCC works with local implementing partners including; The Pastoralists Community Initiative and Development Assistance (PACIDA) and Sustainable Approaches for Community Empowerment (SAPCONE) working in Marsabit and Turkana respectively on behalf of CWW, Merti Integrated Development Programme (MIDP) and Wajir South Development Association (WASDA) in Isiolo and Wajir respectively on behalf of Oxfam and Rural Agency for Community Development and Assistance (RACIDA) in Mandera on behalf of ACTED. In Samburu, ACTED is implementing the activities directly. From August 2020, the market monitoring will be conducted on a bimonthly basis until the end of the project in December 2020.

This factsheet presents an overview of the median prices and the change in median prices of food and non-food items (NFIs), stock levels, days required to restock and the challenges experienced by local community members and vendors in the assessed ASAL counties in light of the locust invasion. The findings are **indicative** of the assessed locations and the timeframe in which the data was collected.

1. The FAO, locusts watch, retrieved from: <http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/2094/index.html>

2. Economic and policy issues in Desert Locust Management by Steen R. Joffe FAO, pg 25, retrieved from: <http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/oldsite/PDFs/TS27p1.pdf>



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## METHODOLOGY

Data collection for both the first round (R1) and second round (R2) of the bimonthly market monitoring initiative in August was conducted through phone interviews with **121 and 166 key informants** (KIs) respectively. R1 took place between 10 to 12 August while R2 data was collected between 24 to 26 August 2020.

The KI interviews were conducted with vendors<sup>3</sup> selling food and NFIs in the six counties. They were asked about the prices of food items, critical NFIs and challenges experienced in the market due to the locust invasion. Items were selected to support the calculation of the minimum expenditure basket (MEB), a context-specific set of key food items and NFIs that the typical six person ASAL county household (HH) is likely to prioritize on a regular/seasonal basis. A total of 29 items were assessed.

## LIMITATIONS

- All findings are indicative rather than representative of the affected communities in ASAL counties. Therefore findings should ideally be triangulated with other sources before being used to inform programming.
- All numeric figures are averages of estimates given by KIs at the time of data collection. Additional data cleaning has been done to remove outliers.
- Some key items required for the calculation of the MEB were not available in the markets making it impossible to calculate the August 2020 overall MEB price for ASAL counties.

## ASSESSED ASAL COUNTIES



## TRACKING OF PRICES FOR KEY ITEMS IN AUGUST (KES\*)<sup>6</sup>

Category	Assessed items	R1 Aug 10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	R2 Aug 24 <sup>th</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup>	% change (from Aug 2020 R1)
Food items	White maize 1Kg	70	50	-29%
	Maize flour 1Kg	80	80	0%
	Sugar 1Kg	100	120	20%
	Beans 1Kg	100	100	0%
	Salt 500gm	30	25	-17%
	Onions 1Kg	100	100	0%
	Kales 1Kg	77.5	50	-35%
	Vegetable oil 1L	200	200	0%
	Cowpeas 1Kg	100	100	0%
	Wheat flour 1Kg	80	80	0%
	Tea Leaves 50gm	30	20	-33%
	Traditional vegetables	100	80	-20%
	Rice 1Kg	100	100	0%
	Spinach 1Kg	90	50	-44%
	Cattle milk 1L	90	100	11%
Non-food items	Pen 1pc	20	20	0%
	Pencil 1pc	10	10	0%
	Rubber 1pc	5	10	1.3%
	Sanitary pads 8 pack	100	100	0%
	Jerrycan 20L	200	200	0%
	Cloth masks 1pc	NA	50	NA <sup>7</sup>
	Surgical masks 1pc	60	50	17%
	Firewood 1 bundle	200	250	25%
	Bucket 20L	NA	150	NA <sup>7</sup>
	Kerosene 1L	100	120	20%
	Bar soap 200gm	20	20	0%
	32 pages A5 exercise book	10	10	0%

The median reported prices for both food items and NFIs were commonly found to have experienced minor changes between the two rounds of data collection in August, with spinach and kale being the items with the highest decreases in price of -44% and -35%, respectively.

The highest increase in reported prices between the two data collection rounds in August was recorded for firewood (+25%), followed by kerosene and sugar (both +20%).

## MEDIAN PRICES OF KEY ITEMS PER COUNTY, AUGUST 24TH-AUGUST 26TH (KES\*)<sup>6</sup>

The median prices reported below represent the current market prices of the assessed food items and NFIs in the assessed markets in the targeted areas as of August 2020. These prices will be monitored on a monthly basis to help the KCC understand the changes in market prices and how this impacts the ability of the targeted beneficiaries to access food and some essential NFIs.

### Food items

County	White maize (1Kg)	Maize flour (1Kg)	Beans (1Kg)	Cowpeas (1Kg)	Rice (1Kg)	Sugar (1Kg)	Wheat flour (1Kg)	Vegetable oil (1L)	Tea leaves (50gm)	Salt (500gm)	Cattle milk (1L)	Onions (1Kg)	Kales (1Kg)	Traditional Vegetables (1Kg)	Spinach (1Kg)
Isiolo	50	80	100	NA <sup>7</sup>	100	120	100	200	25	20	80	85	60	80	60
Mandera	95	80	105	90	100	100	100	200	25	20	90	105	NA <sup>7</sup>	125	NA <sup>7</sup>
Marsabit	50	70	100	130	100	120	100	200	20	30	100	100	50	60	50
Samburu	45	45	100	110	100	115	130	200	20	20	120	100	35	NA <sup>7</sup>	40
Turkana	100	100	100	120	100	200	130	200	40	40	100	150	NA <sup>7</sup>	NA <sup>7</sup>	NA <sup>7</sup>
Wajir	80	80	120	100	100	100	120	200	20	10	100	110	60	80	50
overall median	50	80	100	100	100	120	120	200	20	25	100	100	50	80	50

Finding suggest that prices of key food items were particularly high in Turkana County; the median reported price of white maize here was found to be 50% higher than the overall average of KES 50, and the median reported price of onions (KES 150) was also found to be 50% higher than the overall average (KES 100).

These high prices are reflected in KI testimonies; the majority of KIs (71%) interviewed in Turkana reported perceiving that community members commonly faced challenges accessing markets due to the high prices of commodities.

### NFIs

County	Pencil (1pc)	Bucket (20L)	Rubber (1pc)	Kerosene (1L)	Firewood (1 bundle)	Barsoap (200gm)	Jerrycan (20L)	Surgical masks (1pc)	Cloth masks (1pc)	Sanitary pads (8 pack)	32 pages A5 exercise book (1pc)
Isiolo	10	NA <sup>7</sup>	10	120	NA <sup>7</sup>	30	170	NA <sup>7</sup>	NA <sup>7</sup>	90	20
Mandera	10	NA <sup>7</sup>	10	100	30	30	200	NA <sup>7</sup>	NA <sup>7</sup>	100	20
Marsabit	10	150	5	120	300	20	200	100	50	100	10
Samburu	5	250	5	110	NA <sup>7</sup>	20	200	45	50	50	15
Turkana	10	100	20	120	200	20	200	NA <sup>7</sup>	50	100	15
Wajir	10	NA <sup>7</sup>	10	180	30	20	230	50	NA <sup>7</sup>	100	30
Overall median	10	150	10	120	250	20	230	50	50	100	10

The NFIs recorded minor differences in median prices across the ASAL counties with kerosene and sanitary pads in Samburu being some of the outliers. Kerosene in Wajir reportedly recorded a median price that was 50% higher than the overall average (KES 180) while sanitary pads were cheaper in Samburu with a median price of KES 50 compared to an overall average of KES 100.

3. All vendor KIs are retailers

4. Ministry of health, Kenya, guidelines on management of COVID-19, page 2, retrieved from: [https://www.health.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Updated-Case-Management-Guidelines-26\\_03\\_20-1.pdf](https://www.health.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Updated-Case-Management-Guidelines-26_03_20-1.pdf)

5. Development Initiatives Socio economic impacts of COVID-19 in Kenya, retrieved from: <https://devinit.org/resources/socioeconomic-impacts-covid-19-kenya/>

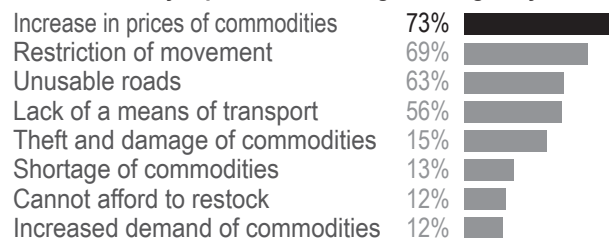
6. 1 USD=107.60832 KES in August 2020

7. Items whose prices are listed as NA were not available for sale in some counties and we could therefore not meet the 3 prices per item threshold required for the calculation of the median

## MARKET SUPPLY AND DEMAND CHALLENGES (R2)

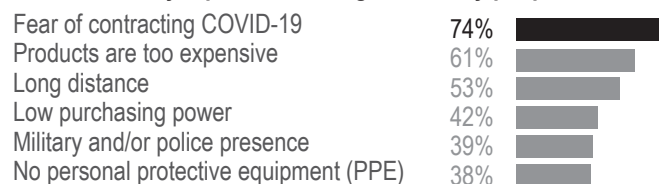
On average, a high proportion of the KIs (72%) reported experiencing challenges while restocking, with the increase in commodity prices being the most commonly reported challenge to restocking, cited by 73% of the KIs who reportedly experienced challenges.

### Most commonly reported restocking challenges by % of KIs reporting facing such challenges



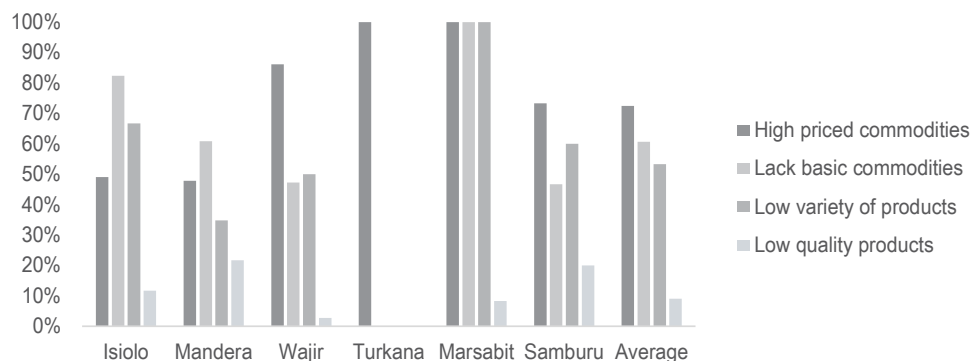
Overall, KIs commonly reported perceiving that community members experience challenges while accessing major markets in all the assessed counties.

### Most commonly reported challenges faced by people accessing markets, by % of KIs<sup>10</sup>



To prevent the spread of COVID-19, contingency measures were instituted in Kenya in March 2020, such as the requirement for all its citizens to wear face masks in all public places.<sup>4</sup> Over one third of KIs (38%) reported believing that a lack of PPE posed an additional barrier for people to access the market.<sup>8</sup>

### Most commonly reported challenges faced by community members when major markets are inaccessible by % of KIs<sup>10</sup>



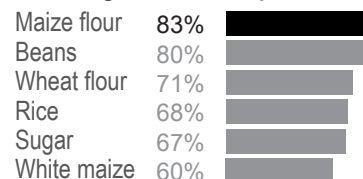
To further gauge the implications of access constraints for communities in the assessed counties, KIs were asked which challenges people face when major markets are inaccessible. Overall, some KIs (26%) reported that, in such cases, community members can still purchase their goods from centres in neighbouring villages, and 21% reported that people end up spending more money on key commodities (72%), or that they cannot access (some) key items at all (61%).

## MARKET CHALLENGES IN LIGHT OF THE LOCUST INVASION (R2)

Findings suggest that the desert locust invasion had negative effects on the ability of vendors in ASAL counties to conduct their businesses; effects that were potentially compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 46% of the KIs who reported perceiving that prices had changed due to the locust invasion, 88% reported that prices had increased. Such increases could cause reduced purchasing power of affected communities, particularly impacting the most vulnerable people.

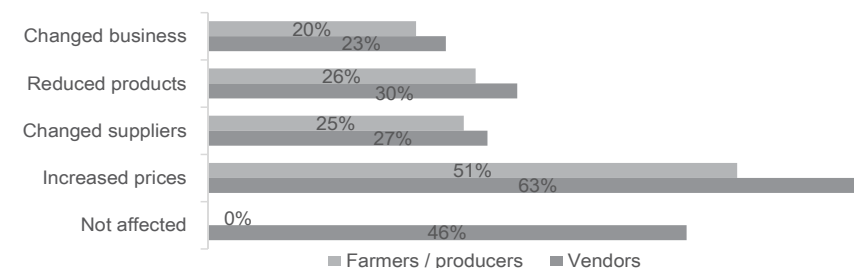
Overall, 45% of the KIs reported that the locust invasion had negatively impacted the availability of some key food items by reportedly causing the decreased availability of some key food items such as maize flour, beans, wheat flour, rice and sugar in markets in the assessed counties.

### Most commonly reported items of which the availability was negatively impacted by the locust invasion, according to KIs who reported on the negative impact of locusts on item availability:



KIs were asked to list the coping strategies used by themselves and other vendors, as well as those strategies they believed were used by local farmers and producers. Overall, 63% of KIs reported believing that vendors increased prices to stay in business, while other commonly reported coping strategies used by vendors and farmers/producers alike included reducing prices and changing suppliers. Interestingly, while 46% of the KIs reported believing that vendors were not affected (and hence did not use any coping strategies), none of the KIs reported this for farmers/ producers. In future, further research may be done to explain this finding.

### Most commonly reported coping strategies used by vendors and farmers/producers during the locust invasion by % of the KIs<sup>10</sup>



## CONCLUSION

Findings suggest that KIs perceived an increase in prices as one of the main challenges facing both community members and local vendors in markets across the ASAL counties, likely due to the compounding effects of the desert locust invasion and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, price data collected in August highlights decreased prices for some key food items, while for NFIs, prices seem to have generally increased. Continued monitoring of prices of key items in the following months is required to allow for a more robust overview of price trends over time.

Fear of contracting COVID-19 as well as having to travel long distances and the low purchasing power of the local community members were the main reported hindrances to accessing major markets. KIs moreover suggested that a lack of access to major markets commonly pushes people to spend more money on more highly priced key commodities to meet their basic needs, in turn likely exacerbating the vulnerability of locust affected communities in Kenya's ASAL counties.

8. Ministry of health, Kenya, guidelines on public use of face masks, retrieved from: [https://www.health.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MoH-Guidance-on-use-of-face-masks-and-gloves-for-general-public\\_final2-1.pdf](https://www.health.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MoH-Guidance-on-use-of-face-masks-and-gloves-for-general-public_final2-1.pdf)

9. Ministry of health on COVID-19 in August 2020

10. KIs were allowed to select multiple answers