MALAWI

IFPRI

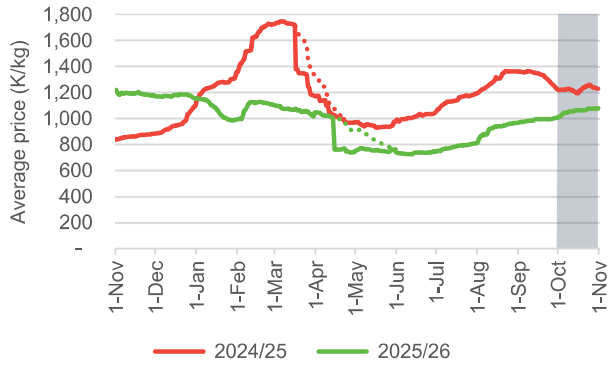
Highlights

- Retail prices of maize increased on average by 7 percent in October.
- Prices rose in all monitored markets across all regions of Malawi despite continued imports.
- The increase in domestic maize prices was modest thanks to stable supply of maize imported from neighboring countries.

Average maize prices increased by 7 percent in October

Figure 1 shows a trend in prices over the 12 months ending in October 2026, and for comparison, over the 12 months ending in October 2025. At the beginning of the harvest season, we start reporting prices of newly harvested maize, which has a higher moisture content than maize from the previous harvest. High moisture content makes maize unsuitable for storage or milling. During drying, it loses up to 20 percent of its weight. Solid lines in Figure 1 represent observed maize prices. Dotted lines represent prices adjusted for moisture content, reflecting the true price trend.

Figure 1: Trends in maize retail prices



Maize prices continued to rise in October (Figure 1), increasing by 7 percent from an average of K1,001/kg in the final week of September to K1,072/kg in the final week of October (Table 1). Compared with the same month last year, when the national average maize price was K1,240/kg, October prices were 14 percent lower. Maize prices exceeded the government's K900/kg minimum farmgate price across all monitored markets, with the exception of five of the six monitored markets in the Northern region, suggesting that most northern farmers who sold maize in October probably did so below the minimum too.

Prices were lowest in the north and highest in the south

Maize prices increased in all monitored markets in October. Although the rate of increase varied throughout the country, the typical trend with lowest prices in the north and highest prices in the south prevailed (Table 1 and Figure 2). By the last week of October, maize averaged K864/kg in the Northern Region, K1,021/kg in the Central Region, and K1,177/kg in the Southern Region (Table 1).

Imports continue dominating cross-border trade in maize

Malawi continued importing more maize than it exported through most monitored border locations in October (Table 2 and Figure 3). The relatively cheap imported maize provided downward pressure on domestic prices, which closely followed import parity prices (Figure 4). Despite the value of Malawi kwacha remaining fairly stable at informal exchange rates used for cross-border trade (Figure 5), import parity prices increased on average by just under 8 percent, which allowed domestic retail prices to increase commensurately.

Table 1: Weekly average retail prices (K/kg)

	Market	Week ending on 30-Sep	7-Oct	14-Oct	21-Oct	28-Oct	Monthly change
1	Chitipa	680	700	717	717	763	12%
2	Karonga	815	796	820	825	846	4%
3	Rumphi	750	762	750	750	836	11%
4	Mzimba (Mzuzu)	851	862	867	867	891	5%
5	Mzimba (boma)	813	838	869	875	909	12%
6	Mzimba (Jenda)	800	808	825	833	890	11%
7	Nkhatabay	900	917	933	933	933	4%
North		799	808	821	823	864	8%
8	Nkhotakota (Dwangwa)	925	942	950	950	950	3%
9	Nkhotakota	1,006	1,038	1,076	1,086	1,099	9%
10	Salima	1,010	1,050	1,080	1,080	1,097	9%
11	Mchinji	950	950	950	950	993	5%
12	Kasungu	967	983	983	983	983	2%
13	Lilongwe city (Nsungwi)	1,000	1,000	1,033	1,067	1,067	7%
14	Lilongwe (Mitundu)	917	958	983	984	999	9%
15	Dedza (Chimbiya)	918	964	1,000	1,000	1,000	9%
16	Ntcheu (Tsangano)	838	860	899	900	943	13%
Center		965	981	996	1,001	1,021	6%
17	Balaka	977	1,017	1,054	1,065	1,123	15%
18	Mangochi (M'baluku)	1,137	1,156	1,181	1,182	1,173	3%
19	Mangochi (boma)	1,040	1,073	1,080	1,080	1,080	4%
20	Machinga (Liwonde)	1,062	1,102	1,150	1,175	1,187	12%
21	Phalombe (Chiringa)	1,007	1,014	1,053	1,093	1,099	9%
22	Zomba (Mpondabwino)	1,167	1,227	1,274	1,267	1,267	9%
23	Blantyre (Lunzu)	1,061	1,103	1,132	1,133	1,133	7%
24	Blantyre city (Mbayani)	1,100	1,155	1,200	1,200	1,200	9%
25	Mwanza	1,000	1,029	1,033	1,033	1,033	3%
26	Mulanje	1,133	1,195	1,200	1,200	1,205	6%
27	Thyolo (Luchenza)	1,117	1,183	1,200	1,200	1,200	7%
28	Chikwawa (boma)	1,175	1,196	1,246	1,250	1,250	6%
29	Chikwawa (Ngabu)	1,110	1,170	1,187	1,187	1,187	7%
30	Nsanje (Bangula)	1,167	1,193	1,220	1,220	1,220	5%
31	Nsanje (boma)	1,169	1,191	1,232	1,227	1,227	5%
South		1,091	1,134	1,166	1,171	1,177	8%
Malawi		**1,001**	**1,028**	**1,051**	**1,055**	**1,072**	**7%**

Figure 2: Location of monitored markets

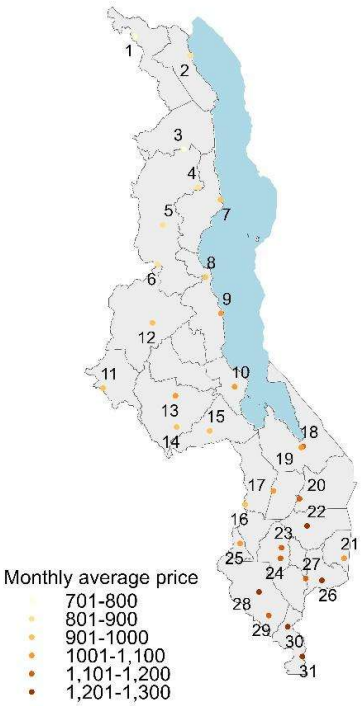
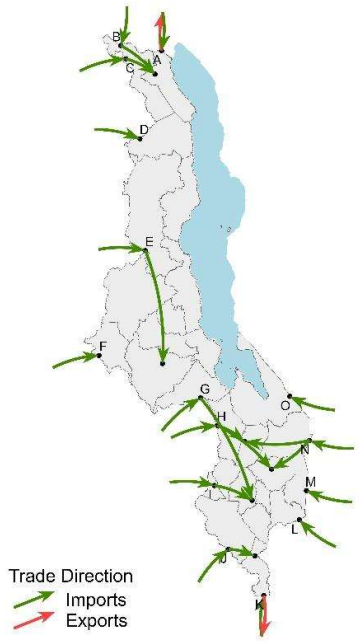


Table 2: Cross-border trade and import/export parity prices

	District (border post)	Neighbor	Week ending on 4-Oct	11-Oct	18-Oct	25-Oct	1-Nov
A.	Karonga (Songwe)	TZ	⟨ 750	⟨ 825	⟩ 817	⟩ 750	⟨⟩
B.	Chitipa (Mbirima)	TZ	⟨⟨ 625	⟨ 650	⟨ 644	⟨ 650	⟨⟨ 650
C.	Chitipa (Sopolera)	ZM	⟨⟨ 633	⟨ 650	⟨ 650	⟨ 717	⟨⟨ 613
D.	Rumphi (Hewe)	ZM	⟨ 650	⟨ 650	⟨⟨ 750	⟨ 750	⟨ 700
E.	Mzimba (Mqocha/Jenda)	ZM	⟩ 1,000	⟨ 917	⟨ 720	⟨ 780	⟨⟨ 810
F.	Mchinji	ZM	⟨ 850	⟨ 850	⟨ 850	⟨ 850	⟨ 900
G.	Dedza	MZ	⟨ 900	⟨ 900	⟨ 900	⟨ 860	⟨⟨ 945
H.	Ntcheu (Tsangano)	MZ	⟨⟨ 792	⟨ 850	⟨ 800	⟨ 750	⟨⟨ 925
I.	Mwanza	MZ	⟨ 887	⟨ 938	⟨⟨ 950	⟨ 850	⟨ 960
J.	Chikwawa (Mkumaniza)	MZ	⟨ 1,000	⟨ 950	⟨ 883	⟨ 950	⟨⟨ 900
K.	Nsanje (Marka)	MZ	⟩ 1,270	⟨ 1,033	⟨ 1,100	⟨ 1,200	⟨⟩
L.	Mulanje (Muloza)	MZ	⟨ 970	⟨ 1,000	⟨ 1,000	⟨ 1,020	⟨ 1,043
M.	Phalombe (Kolowiko)	MZ	⟨ 850	⟨ 913	⟨ 900	⟨⟩	⟨ 1,000
N.	Machinga (Nayuchi)	MZ	⟨ 913	⟨ 950	⟨ 1,100	⟨ 950	⟨⟨ 1,000
O.	Mangochi (Chiponde)	MZ	⟨⟨ 1,000	⟨ 933	⟨ 967	⟨ 1,200	⟨ 1,200

Notes: ⟨ net imports passing through to other districts, ⟨⟨ net imports into border district only, ⟨⟩ similar volume of trade in both directions, ⟩ net exports sourced from border district only, ⟩⟩ net exports sourced from other districts, - no cross-border trade. Import and export parity prices, i.e., the prices at which imported maize can be bought and those at which maize for export can be sold on the Malawi side of the border, are reported in K/kg.

Figure 3: Cross-border trade



Notes: Arrows illustrate net imports and net exports in the week ending on 01 November 2026

Figure 4: Import parity and retail prices in 2025/26

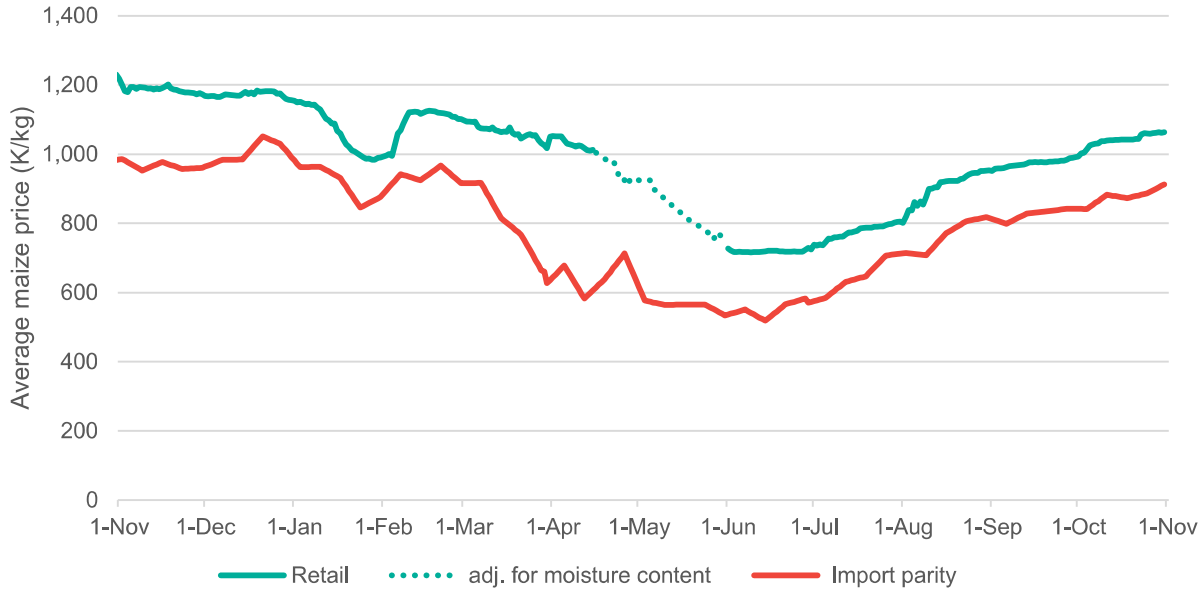
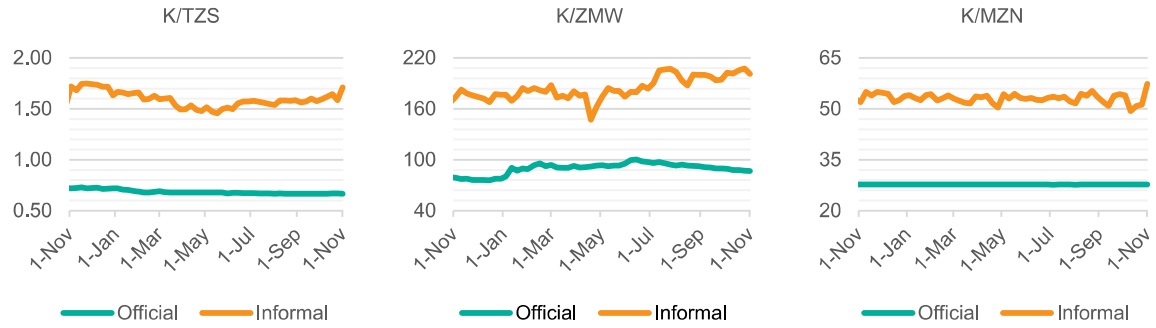


Figure 5: Exchange rates in 2025/26



Notes: Official rates are the selling rates published by the Reserve Bank of Malawi. Informal rates are reported by cross-border traders.

How data were collected

IFPRI Malawi has been monitoring maize retail prices in selected markets since November 2016. Price data are collected telephonically six times per week (excluding Sundays) from 31 markets across the country. Additionally, local import and export prices as well as the direction and terms of trade are collected on a weekly basis from 15 border locations. Three monitors (typically small grain traders) report from each location. All prices are reported in Malawi kwacha (K).

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