

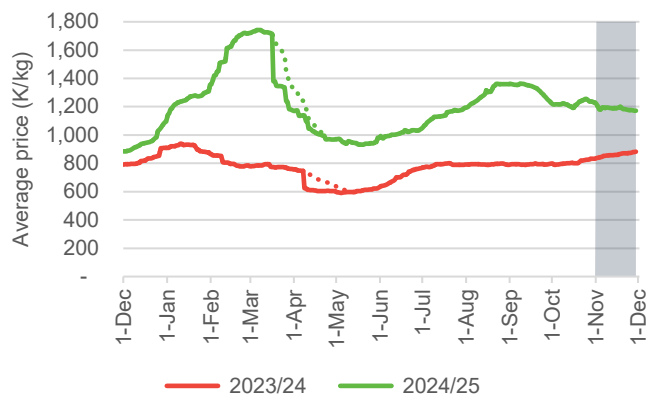
Highlights

- ▶ Retail prices of maize decreased in nearly all monitored markets by 6 percent on average in November.
- ▶ Sustained imports at steady exchange rates helped stabilize prices at a time when they would normally rise as peak lean season approaches.
- ▶ Imports dominated maize trade at all border points except Mchinji, which recorded exports to Zambia.

Average maize prices decreased by 6 percent in November

Figure 1 shows a trend in prices over the 12 months ending in November 2025, and for comparison, over the 12 months ending in November 2024. 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



The national average retail price of maize fell by 6 percent in November from K1,238/kg in the last week of October to K1,168/kg in the last week of November. Prices declined in almost all monitored markets (Figure 1 and Table 1). Such price decline is unusual this time of year. As peak lean season approaches, prices usually increase, like they did last year, when they rose by 5 percent in November (Figure 1).

Maize prices declined across all regions

This November, maize prices declined in all but three monitored markets (Rumphi, Chimbiya in Dedza, and Liwonde in Machinga all recorded a 2 percent price increase). Prices declined more in the Southern and Central Regions (6 percent on average) than in the Northern Region (3 percent), with the most notable price drops registered in Chikwawa boma (12 percent) and Salima (11 percent). These trends somewhat reduced Malawi’s latitudinal price gradient, but the North still register the lowest prices overall, averaging K1,009/kg in the final week of November, followed by the Central Region at K1,160/kg and the Southern Region at K1,228/kg (Table 1 and Figure 2).

Informal imports keep maize prices stable

Malawi remained a net importer of maize in November, with most monitored border locations registering continued inflows throughout the month (Table 2 and Figure 3). Compared to October, when inflows mostly stayed within border districts, November saw imported maize traded further inland to Blantyre, Zomba, Mangochi, Nkhotakota and Karonga (Figure 3). The only big exception to this trend emerged in the second week of the month, when large quantities of maize started flowing out of the country through Mchinji border towards Chipata. The reasons behind this anomaly are not immediately obvious. Notwithstanding the export activity in Mchinji, continued imports signal that domestic maize supply remains dependent on cross-border trade, which helps stabilize local markets. Relatively steady informal exchange rates used for much cross-border trade (Figure 4) contributed to the unusual maize price stability in November.

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

Market	Week ending on					Monthly change
	31-Oct	7-Nov	14-Nov	21-Nov	28-Nov	
1 Chitipa	911	896	929	923	903	- 1%
2 Karonga	940	971	981	966	931	- 1%
3 Rumphi	1,000	1,029	1,019	1,018	1,021	2%
4 Mzuzu (boma)	1,161	1,102	1,077	1,100	1,106	- 5%
5 Mzimba (boma)	1,113	1,088	1,059	1,057	1,071	- 4%
6 Mzimba (Jenda)	1,000	970	946	956	950	- 5%
North	1,036	1,020	1,009	1,013	1,009	- 3%
7 Salima	1,234	1,118	1,100	1,136	1,100	- 11%
8 Mchinji	1,186	1,210	1,225	1,232	1,183	0%
9 Kasungu	1,200	1,121	1,081	1,115	1,106	- 8%
10 Lilongwe city (Nsungwi)	1,326	1,249	1,238	1,245	1,220	- 8%
11 Lilongwe (Mitundu)	1,232	1,213	1,217	1,202	1,169	- 5%
12 Dedza (Chimbiya)	1,089	1,082	1,121	1,130	1,106	2%
Center	1,237	1,180	1,173	1,187	1,160	- 6%
13 Balaka	1,300	1,243	1,202	1,166	1,199	- 8%
14 Mangochi (M'baluku)	1,238	1,159	1,204	1,200	1,200	- 3%
15 Mangochi (boma)	1,167	1,186	1,133	1,129	1,062	- 9%
16 Machinga (Liwonde)	1,193	1,188	1,257	1,231	1,214	2%
17 Phalombe (Chiringa)	1,369	1,316	1,283	1,288	1,293	- 6%
18 Zomba (Mpondabwino)	1,381	1,343	1,348	1,319	1,300	- 6%
19 Blantyre (Lunzu)	1,269	1,216	1,215	1,215	1,186	- 7%
20 Blantyre city (Mbayani)	1,321	1,245	1,269	1,279	1,300	- 2%
21 Mwanza	1,396	1,345	1,300	1,300	1,271	- 9%
22 Mulanje	1,400	1,354	1,319	1,296	1,300	- 7%
23 Thyolo (Luchenza)	1,321	1,314	1,312	1,287	1,257	- 5%
24 Chikwawa (boma)	1,420	1,255	1,286	1,259	1,248	-12%
25 Chikwawa (Ngabu)	1,299	1,315	1,301	1,258	1,281	- 1%
26 Nsanje (Bangula)	1,258	1,257	1,250	1,231	1,219	- 3%
27 Nsanje (boma)	1,300	1,286	1,300	1,291	1,266	- 3%
South	1,306	1,265	1,254	1,240	1,228	- 6%
Malawi	1,238	1,194	1,185	1,185	1,168	- 6%

Figure 2: Location of monitored markets

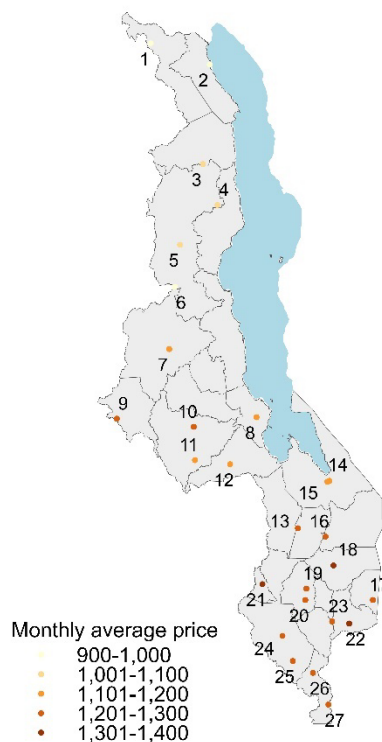
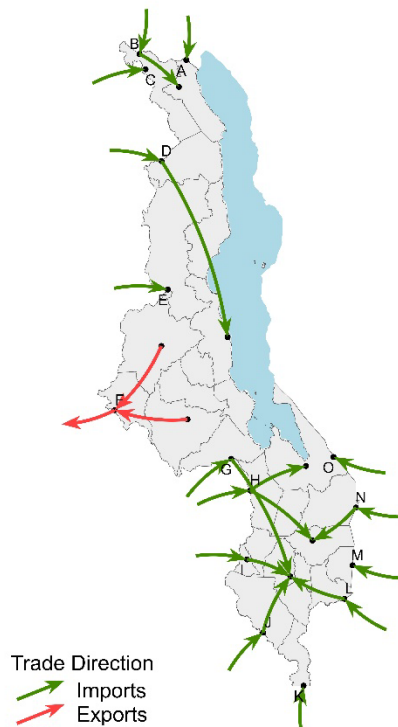


Table 2: Cross-border trade and import/export parity prices

District (border post)	Neighbor	Week ending on			
		9-Nov	16-Nov	23-Nov	30-Nov
A. Karonga (Songwe)	TZ	< 1,100	< 1,000	< 975	< 975
B. Chitipa (Mbirima)	TZ	<< 725	<< 925	<< 750	<< 700
C. Chitipa (Sopolera)	ZM	< 633	<< 713	<< 713	< 750
D. Rumphi (Hewe)	ZM	< 850	<< 900	<< 900	<< 867
E. Mzimba (Mqocha/Jenda)	ZM	< 843	<< 810	< 817	< 875
F. Mchinji	ZM	<< 980	>> 1,100	>> 1,185	>> 1,085
G. Dedza	MZ	< 967	<< 1,013	<< 1,000	< 987
H. Ntcheu (Tsangano)	MZ	< 1,000	<< 1,000	<< 950	<< 950
I. Mwanza	MZ	< 1,200	<< 1,083	<< 1,000	<< 1,167
J. Chikwawa (Mkumaniza)	MZ	<< 900	o	<< 1,000	<< 1,000
K. Nsanje (Marka)	MZ	<< 1,200	<< 1,200	< 1,200	< 1,200
L. Mulanje (Muloza)	MZ	< 1,140	<< 1,250	<< 1,133	<< 1,240
M. Phalombe (Kolowiko)	MZ	o	<< 950	<< 900	< 950
N. Machinga (Nayuchi)	MZ	o	<< 980	<< 960	<< 900
O. Mangochi (Chiponde)	MZ	< 900	<< 875	<< 960	< 900

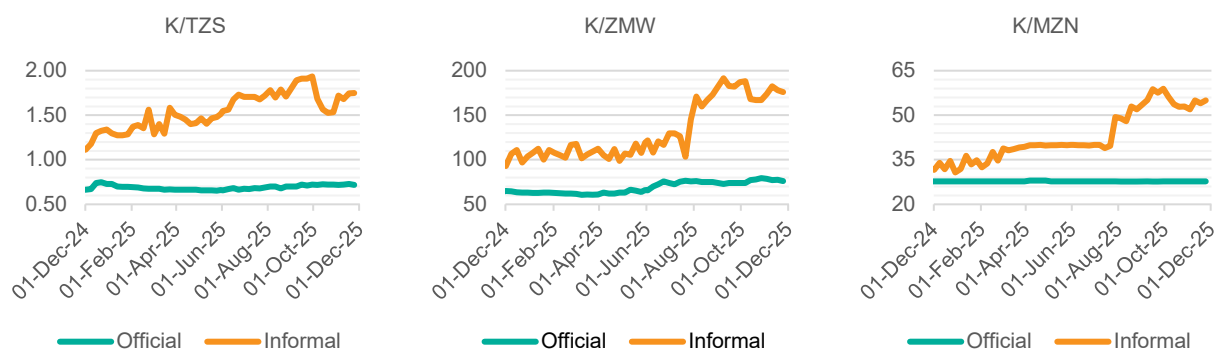
Notes: < net imports passing through to other districts, << net imports into border district only, o similar volume of trade in both directions, >> net exports sourced from border district only, >>> net exports sourced from other districts, - no cross-border trade. Import and export parity prices, i.e., 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 30 November 2025.

Figure 4: Exchange rates



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 27 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).