MALAWI
IFPRI

MAIZE MARKET REPORT APRIL 2026

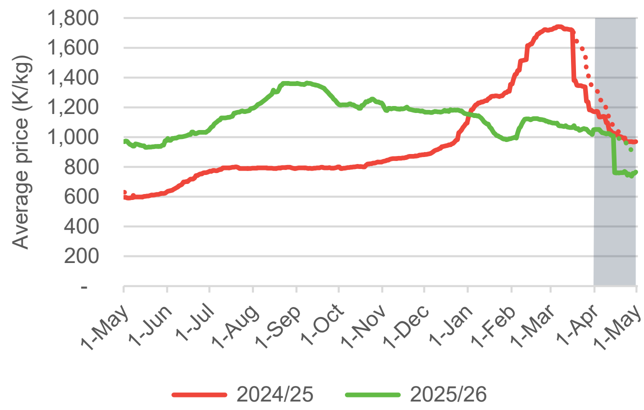
Highlights

- Average retail prices of maize declined by most measures, with lowest prices registered in the Southern Region
- Driven by increased domestic supply of newly harvested maize and cheap imports, maize retailed mostly below the government-mandated minimum farmgate price.

Average maize price decreased in April

Figure 1 shows a trend in prices over the 12 months ending in April 2026, and for comparison, over the 12 months ending in April 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. At moisture-adjusted values, maize prices fell on average by 9 percent in April.

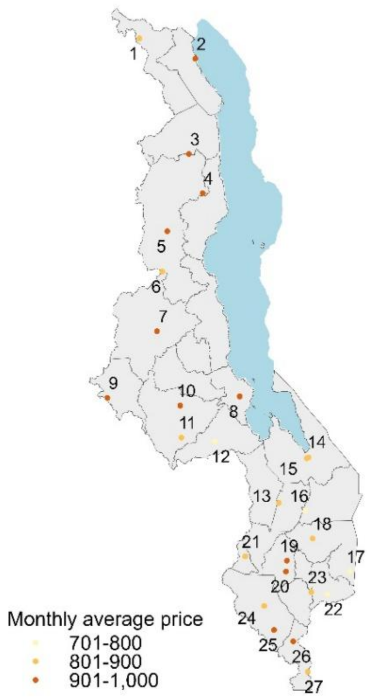
Figure 1: Trends in maize retail prices



Lowest prices in the south thanks to new harvest and cheap imports

However, actual prices faced by consumers differed depending on the freshness of purchased maize and market location. Due to its high moisture content, fresh maize retailed for significantly lower prices than maize from last year's harvest. As this year's harvest gained momentum in the south of Malawi, the relative abundance of fresh maize that it brought to the market depressed retail prices in that part of the country, flipping the usual pattern that would normally see higher prices in the south than in the north (Figure 2). Imports of newly harvested Mozambican maize (Table 2, Figure 4 and Figure 4) at a fairly stable parallel exchange rate (Figure 5) also contributed to this development. As a result, by the end of the month, the Southern Region experienced lower prices of both old and new maize than the rest of the country (Table 1), and maize was traded well below the government-mandated minimum farmgate price of K900/kg.

Figure 2: Location of monitored markets



Notes: Averages include new and old maize.

Table 1: Weekly average retail prices of old and new maize (K/kg)

	Old maize						New maize					
	Week ending on					Monthly	Week ending on					Monthly
Market	**31-Mar**	**7-Apr**	**14-Apr**	**21-Apr**	**28-Apr**	**change**	**31-Mar**	**7-Apr**	**14-Apr**	**21-Apr**	**28-Apr**	**change**
1 Chitipa	974	990	1,037	1,031	1,000	3%	867	725	804	810	798	-8%
2 Karonga	1,062	980	1,060	990	971	-9%	758	955	952	927	774	2%
3 Rumphi	959	1,004	1,021	1,027	1,043	9%		782	890	883	817	
4 Mzuzu (city)	957	1,111	1,094	1,092	1,025	7%	850	892	865	858	862	1%
5 Mzimba (boma)	950	1,005	999	991	980	3%	817	918	891	867	849	4%
6 Mzimba (Jenda)	1,045	1,000	1,000	1,000	955	-9%	800	800	793	733	731	-9%
North	990	1,025	1,040	1,029	998	1%	820	849	865	845	808	-1%
7 Salima	1,079	1,000	981	983	999	-7%	841	862	888	886	850	1%
8 Mchinji	1,056	1,082	1,091	1,020	980	-7%	800	748	807	802	662	-17%
9 Kasungu	1,036	1,062	1,152	1,167	1,071	3%	783	857	984	946	761	-3%
10 Lilongwe city (Nsungwi)	1,035	1,082	1,075	1,049	1,032	0%	792	814	766	761	814	3%
11 Lilongwe (Mitundu)	1,096	1,061	1,028	986	924	-16%	800	654	678	641	619	-23%
12 Dedza (Chimbiya)	1,067	987	944	927	872	-18%	778	576	602	624	598	-23%
Center	1,054	1,053	1,056	1,036	997	-5%	797	774	795	784	746	-6%
13 Balaka	1,043	1,043	955	933	901	-14%	725	800	679	712	729	1%
14 Mangochi (Mbaluku)	990	962	1,003	1,021	986	-0%	708	661	663	715	715	1%
15 Mangochi (boma)	1,081	1,043	988	974	1,046	-3%	817	800	743	714	804	-2%
16 Liwonde	985	946	847	769	703	-29%	744	701	638	674	642	-14%
17 Phalombe (Chiringa)	764	818	832	848	972	27%	550	542	544	570	721	31%
18 Zomba (Mpondabwino)	1,107	1,140	969	905	848	-23%	725	624	676	654	719	-1%
19 Blantyre (Lunzu)	1,067	1,074	1,037	1,060	1,160	9%	758	840	700	779	814	7%
20 Blantyre city (Mbayani)	1,093	1,163	1,106	1,091	1,104	1%	825	942	820	790	756	-8%
21 Mwanza	1,014	1,086	949	933	1,040	3%	717	907	737	699	824	15%
22 Mulanje	1,037	962	906	871	795	-23%	689	512	610	671	690	0%
23 Thyolo (Luchenza)	1,083	1,074	1,033	1,003	965	-11%	825	800	779	742	655	-21%
24 Chikwawa (boma)	982	986	998	921	821	-16%	600	753	760	748	665	11%
25 Chikwawa (Ngabu)	1,166	1,205	1,195	1,037	1,071	-8%	846	755	691	699	843	-0%
26 Nsanja (Bangula)	1,143	1,015	1,005	1,019	1,000	-13%	853	684	794	767	824	-3%
27 Nsanje (boma)	1,119	979	957	948	989	-12%	811	704	657	693	790	-3%
South	1,027	1,022	968	947	963	-6%	730	724	681	702	745	2%
Malawi	**1,032**	**1,035**	**1,014**	**995**	**982**	**-5%**	**749**	**763**	**755**	**757**	**755**	**1%**

Notes: The relatively large and seemingly random differences between price changes realized in different markets are likely due to changing amounts and moisture content of new maize traded there.

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

		Week ending on											
District (border post)	**Neighbor**		**5-Apr**			**12-Apr**			**19-Apr**			**26-Apr**	
			Old	**New**		**Old**	**New**		**Old**	**New**		**Old**	**New**
A. Karonga (Songwe)	TZ	⟨	800	-	⟨	1,000	700	⟨	1,000	800	⟨	1,000	800
B. Chitipa (Mbirima)	TZ	⟨	900	-	⟨	900	700	⟩	733	600	⟩	750	533
C. Chitipa (Sopolera)	ZM	⟨⟨	817	-	⟨	850	600	⟨	825	200	⟨	807	600
D. Rumphi (Hewe)	ZM	-	-	-	-	-	-	⟩	900	500	⟨	700	500
E. Mzimba (Mqocha/Jenda)	ZM	⟩	1,050	-	⟩	850	480	⟩	900	500	⟩	800	650
F. Mchinji	ZM	⟩	900	-	⟨⟨		400	⟨⟩	-	-	⟩	-	500
G. Dedza	MZ	⟨	930	-	⟨	800	540	⟨	700	500	⟨	867	667
H. Ntcheu (Tsangano)	MZ	⟨⟨	517	-	⟨⟨	850	417	⟨	-	500	⟨⟨	-	500
I. Mwanza	MZ	⟨⟨	800	-	⟨	-	550	⟨	-	600	⟨	763	400
J. Chikwawa (Mkumaniza)	MZ	⟨	583	-	⟨	-	450	⟨	500	300	⟨	700	600
K. Nsanje (Marka)	MZ	⟨	500	-	⟨	-	600	⟨		700	⟨	800	717
L. Mulanje (Muloza)	MZ	⟨⟨	750	-	⟨	-	450	⟨		600	⟨	600	510
M. Phalombe (Kolowiko)	MZ	⟨⟨	-	300	⟨⟨	-	333	⟨	500	400	⟨	667	533
N. Machinga (Nayuchi)	MZ	⟨	-	350	⟨⟨	-	250	⟨	700	270	⟨	500	270
O. Mangochi (Chiponde)	MZ	⟨⟨	890	-	⟩	-	920	⟨	700	650	⟨	750	600

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 4: Import parity and retail prices in 2025/26

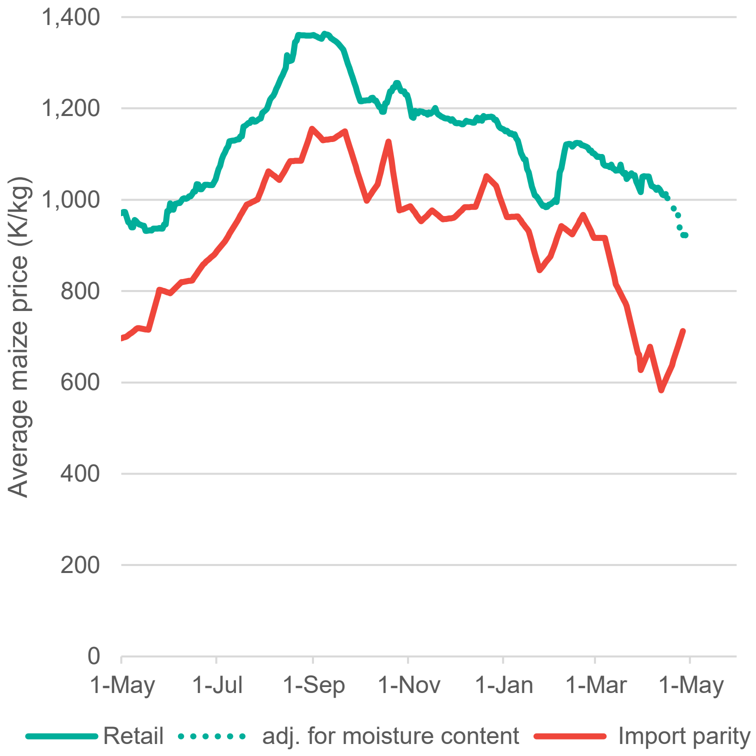
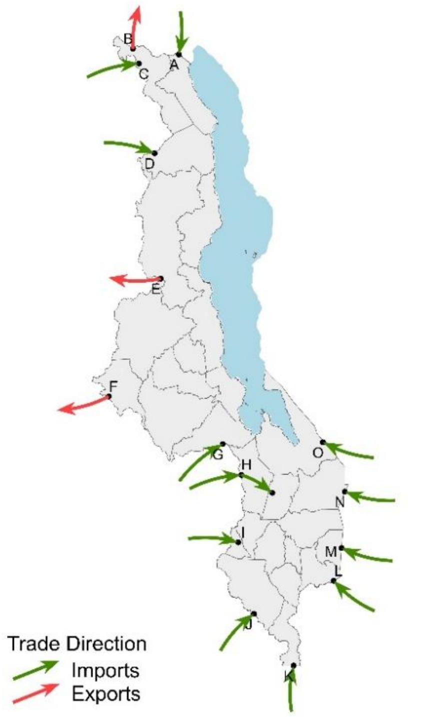
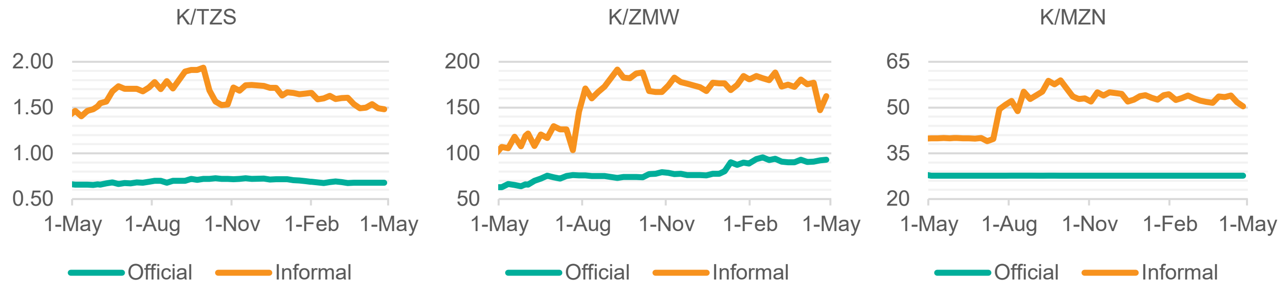


Figure 3: Cross-border trade



Notes: Arrows illustrate net imports and net exports in the week ending on 29 March 2026

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 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).

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