MAIZE MARKET REPORT

JULY 2025

Highlights

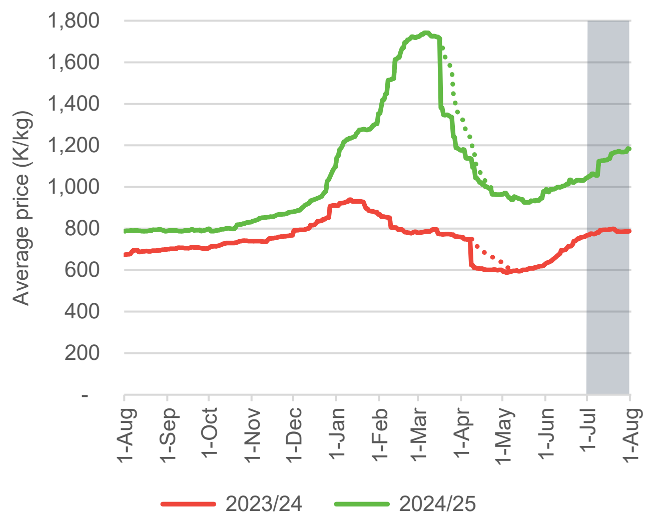
- Retail prices of maize increased on average by 13 percent in July.
- Prices rose in all monitored markets across all regions of Malawi despite continued imports.
- Prices rose most steeply in the Southern region, increasing interregional differences.

Maize prices increased by 13 percent in July

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

Maize prices continued to rise in July (Figure 1), increasing by 13 percent from an average of K1,034/kg in the last week of June to K1,169/kg in the last week of July (Table 1). Prices increased in all markets, with the most significant price jumps occurring in the second half of July, pushing all monitored markets in Central and Southern Region above the government-prescribed minimum farmgate price of K1,050/kg. All markets in the Northern Region reported retail prices below the minimum farmgate price, suggesting that northern farmers who sold maize in July probably did so below the minimum too. Still, average prices increased more rapidly in July 2025 than they did last year, when imports from Tanzania helped limit price growth to a modest 4 percent during the same period.

Figure 1: Trends in maize retail prices



Prices were highest and grew fastest in the south

Throughout July, maize was generally most expensive in the Southern Region and cheapest in the Northern Region (Figure 2). This pattern became gradually more pronounced, as prices grew on average fastest in the south and slowest in the north (16 and 9 percent respectively between the last week of June and the last week of July). Thus, in the last week of July, maize prices averaged K1,238/kg in the Southern Region, K1,154/kg in the Central Region, and K1,001/kg in the Northern Region (Table 1).

Imports continue dominating cross-border trade in maize

Malawi continued importing more maize than it exported through all monitored border locations except for Mbirima in Chitipa, which registered net exports in the second half of the month (Table 2). Much of this was reexported Zambian maize, however, and although the strong demand from Tanzania likely contributed to a relatively sharp increase in retail prices of maize in Chitipa, they still remained the second lowest of all monitored markets at the end of July (Table 1). Elsewhere, imported maize mostly stayed within border districts

(Table 2 and Figure 3). Continued imports suggest that domestic supply of maize was unable to meet demand, and that retail prices of maize would have been higher than they were in the absence of cross-border trade. However, this effect was limited by the depreciation of the kwacha in informal exchange markets (Figure 4), which pushed up import parity prices (Table 2).

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

Market	Week ending on 30-Jun	7-Jul	14-Jul	21-Jul	28-Jul	Monthly change
1 Chitipa	805	857	942	963	970	21%
2 Karonga	901	954	939	939	953	6%
3 Rumphi	988	1,014	1,002	1,000	990	0%
4 Mzuzu (boma)	954	967	1,015	1,033	1,043	9%
5 Mzimba (boma)	897	926	986	1,000	1,011	13%
6 Mzimba (Jenda)	904	938	925	943	996	10%
North	919	951	966	979	1,001	9%
7 Salima	1,064	1,067	1,124	1,140	1,167	10%
8 Mchinji	1,018	1,051	1,086	1,095	1,086	7%
9 Lilongwe city (Nsungwi)	1,063	1,050	1,147	1,189	1,200	13%
10 Lilongwe (Mitundu)	987	1,027	1,088	1,105	1,100	11%
11 Dedza (Chimbiya)	986	1,028	1,064	1,089	1,089	11%
Center	1,038	1,047	1,118	1,147	1,154	11%
12 Balaka	1,083	1,083	1,143	1,191	1,220	13%
13 Mangochi (M'baluku)	1,004	1,032	1,125	1,150	1,164	16%
14 Mangochi (boma)	990	1,017	1,045	1,098	1,100	11%
15 Liwonde	1,105	1,157	1,169	1,191	1,219	10%
16 Phalombe (Chiringa)	1,088	1,167	1,182	1,257	1,298	19%
17 Zomba (Mpondabwino)	1,100	1,214	1,262	1,286	1,300	18%
18 Blantyre (Lunzu)	1,071	1,094	1,186	1,223	1,215	13%
19 Blantyre city (Mbayani)	1,030	1,030	1,134	1,224	1,280	24%
20 Mwanza	1,096	1,107	1,187	1,212	1,262	15%
21 Mulanje	1,107	1,133	1,262	1,287	1,300	17%
22 Thyolo (Luchenza)	1,110	1,100	1,181	1,219	1,233	11%
23 Chikwawa (boma)	1,067	1,130	1,211	1,225	1,239	16%
24 Chikwawa (Ngabu)	1,080	1,080	1,111	1,202	1,267	17%
25 Nsanje (Bangula)	1,060	1,060	1,091	1,153	1,193	13%
26 Nsanje (boma)	1,127	1,127	1,205	1,233	1,283	14%
South	1,070	1,098	1,166	1,212	1,238	16%
Malawi	**1,034**	**1,056**	**1,116**	**1,150**	**1,169**	**13%**

Figure 2: Location of monitored markets

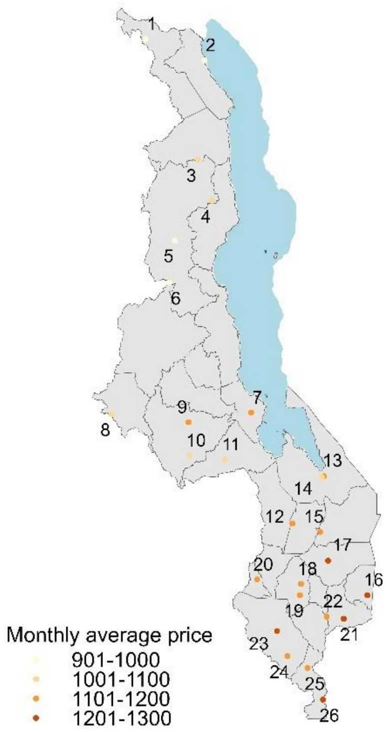
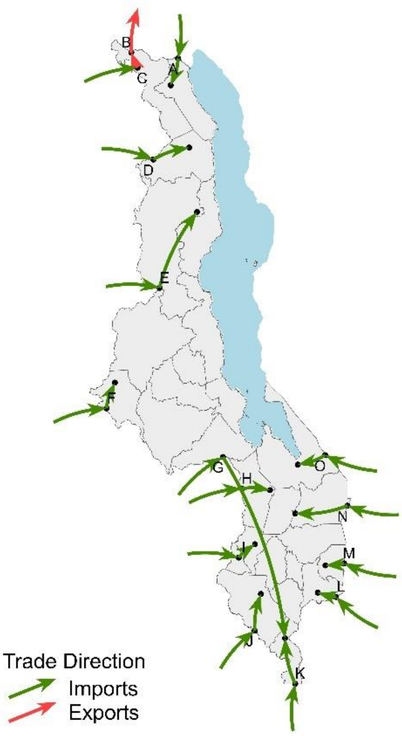


Table 2: Cross-border trade and import/export parity prices

District (border post)	neighbor	Week ending on 7-Jul	14-Jul	21-Jul	28-Jul
A. Karonga (Songwe)	TZ	⟨ 1,000	⟨ 917	⟨ 1,083	⟨ 933
B. Chitipa (Mbirima)	TZ	⟨ 767	⟩ 800	⟩ 833	⟩ 975
C. Chitipa (Sopolera)	ZM	⟨⟨ 700	⟨ 750	⟨ 677	⟨ 767
D. Rumphi (Hewe)	ZM	⟨ 750	⟨ 750	⟨ 767	⟨ 783
E. Mzimba (Mqocha/Jenda)	ZM	⟨ 790	⟨ 800	⟨ 900	⟨ 817
F. Mchinji	ZM	⟨ 750	⟨ 850	⟨ 825	⟨ 1,033
G. Dedza	MZ	⟨⟨ 970	⟨⟨ 957	⟨⟨ 1,000	⟨⟨ 1,027
H. Ntcheu (Tsangano)	MZ	⟨ 917	⟨ 933	⟨ 993	⟨ 1,013
I. Mwanza	MZ	⟨⟨ 965	⟨ 933	⟨ 1,050	⟨ 1,100
J. Chikwawa (Mkumaniza)	MZ	⟨ 973	⟨ 975	⟨ 1,000	⟨ 1,050
K. Nsanje (Marka)	MZ	⟨ 1,000	⟨ 1,100	⟨ 1,117	⟨ 1,133
L. Mulanje (Muloza)	MZ	⟨ 990	⟨ 1,107	⟨ 1,080	⟨ 1,073
M. Phalombe (Kolowiko)	MZ	⟨ 1,000	⟨ 1,083	⟨ 1,030	⟨ 1,087
N. Machinga (Nayuchi)	MZ	⟨ 1,000	⟨ 1,050	⟨ 987	⟨ 1,100
O. Mangochi (Chiponde)	MZ	⟨ 1,007	⟨ 1,067	⟨ 1,027	⟨ 1,093

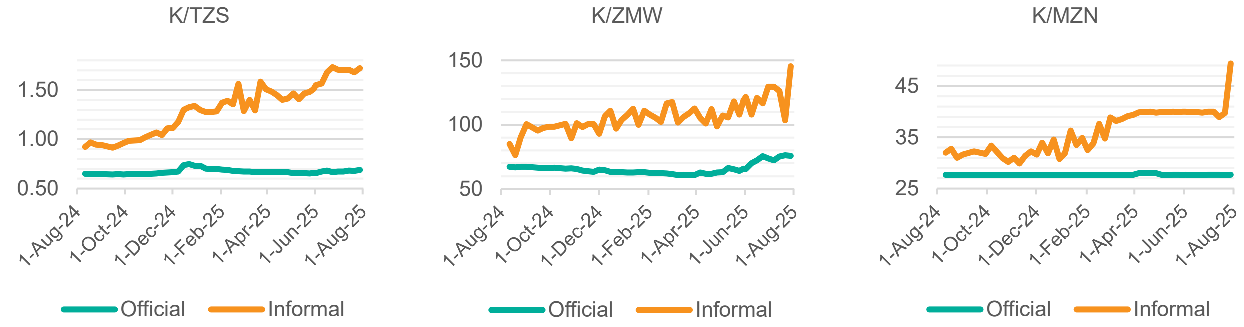
Notes: ⟨ net imports passing through to other districts, ⟨⟨ net imports into border district only, ⟨⟩ similar volume of trade in both directions, ⟩ net exports sourced from border district only, ⟩⟩ net exports sourced from other districts, - no cross-border trade. Import and export parity prices, i.e., 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 flows



Notes: Arrows illustrate net imports and net exports in the week ending on 28 July 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 26 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 crossing points. Three monitors (typically small grain traders) report from each location. All prices are reported in Malawi kwacha (K).

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