MALAWI

STRATEGY SUPPORT PROGRAM

IFPRI Malawi Monthly Maize Market Report **March 2024**

The Monthly Maize Market Report was developed by researchers at IFPRI Malawi to provide clear and accurate information on the variation of maize prices in selected markets throughout Malawi. All prices are reported in Malawi Kwacha (K).

Highlights

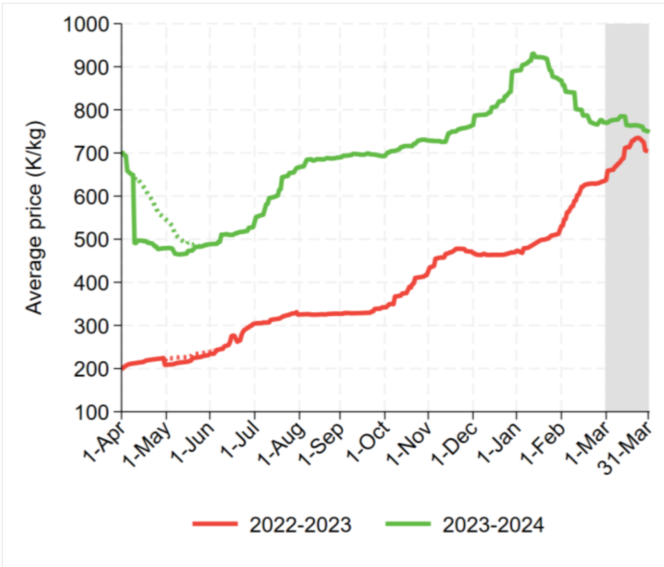
- Retail prices of maize decreased by 2 percent in March.
- Maize prices were highest in the Southern region and lowest in the Northern region.
- ADMARC sales were reported in 10 of 26 markets monitored by IFPRI.
- Retail prices of maize in Karonga were lower than in neighboring countries.

Prices decreased by 2 percent in March

Figure 1 shows a trend in prices over the 12 months ending in March 2024, and, for comparison, over the 12 months ending in March 2023. At the beginning of the harvest season, we start reporting prices of newly harvested maize, which has a higher moisture content compared to maize from the previous harvest. High moisture content makes it unsuitable for storage or milling. During drying, it loses about 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.

The overall weekly average maize price declined by 2 percent from K771/kg in the final week of February to K759/kg in the final week of March (Figure 1 & Table 1). The majority of IFPRI monitored markets (18 out of 26) experienced a weekly average price decline in the same period. Notably, Luchenza market in Thyolo reported the steepest decline, with prices falling by 9 percent.

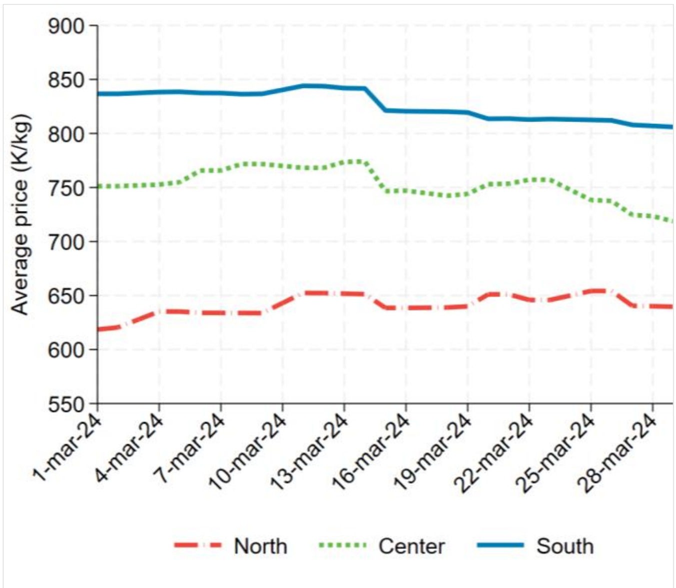
Figure 1. Long-run trends in average maize retail prices



Maize prices highest in the South

Despite having the largest decline (5 percent) in monthly average prices compared to the other regions, the Southern region recorded the highest price of K825/kg in March, down from K870/kg in February (Figure 2 & Figure 3). Additionally, the highest weekly average price was recorded in a market within the Southern region, Chikwawa, where maize was sold at K943/kg in the first week of March (Table 1).

Figure 2. Average daily maize retail prices by region



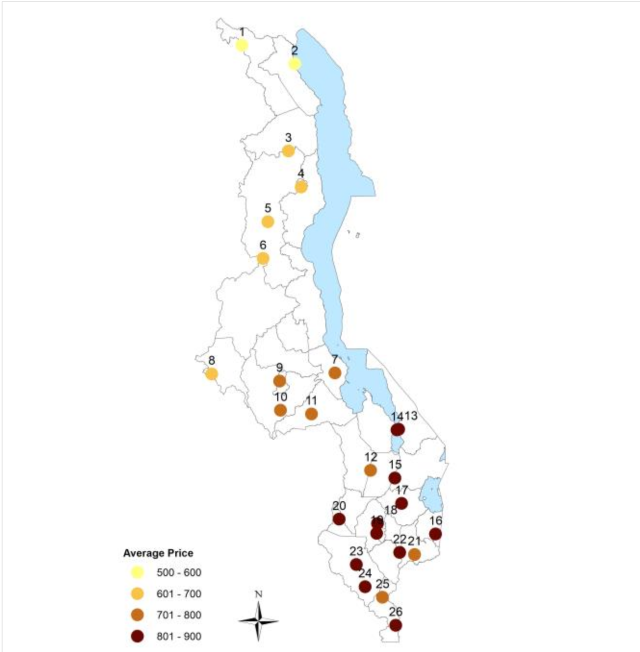
The Central region saw a 3 percent decrease in monthly average prices, dropping from K769/kg in February to K750/kg in March. Different from the Southern and the

Central regions, the Northern region experienced a slight rise in daily average prices (Figure 2). Rumphi market in the region reported the highest increase, of 19 percent, in weekly average prices between the last week of February and the last week of March (Table 1). Regardless, the region still reported the lowest monthly average price of maize, relative to other regions, at K641/kg.

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

	Week ending on					
	28-Feb-24	7-Mar-24	14-Mar-24	21-Mar-24	28-Mar-24	Change
Chitipa[1]	593	643	624	578	567	-4%
Karonga[2]	592	572	570	583	568	-4%
Rumphi[3]	592	600	632	669	705	19%
Mzuzu[4]	667	644	677	658	676	1%
Mzimba[5]	617	617	658	707	702	14%
Jenda[6]	652	700	711	658	656	1%
Salima[7]	740	773	820	815	789	7%
Mchinji[8]	688	721	708	650	653	-5%
Nsungwi[9]	800	800	800	788	800	0%
Mitundu[10]	725	763	783	750	744	3%
Chimbiya[11]	735	724	744	733	711	-3%
Balaka[12]	777	800	800	796	757	-3%
M'baluku[13]	823	800	814	805	796	-3%
Mangochi[14]	830	804	805	800	800	-4%
Liwonde[15]	800	808	843	800	800	0%
Chiringa[16]	802	817	836	812	800	0%
Mpondabwino[17]	927	917	895	883	899	-3%
Lunzu[18]	879	864	878	844	858	-2%
Mbayani[19]	875	857	865	848	808	-8%
Mwanza[20]	805	817	823	775	789	-2%
Mulanje[21]	825	800	806	750	774	-6%
Luchenza[22]	883	850	839	817	805	-9%
Chikwawa[23]	918	943	917	866	847	-8%
Ngabu[24]	871	830	814	827	820	-6%
Bangula[25]	802	780	774	753	760	-5%
Nsanje[26]	821	876	900	900	848	3%
All markets	**771**	**774**	**782**	**764**	**759**	**-2%**

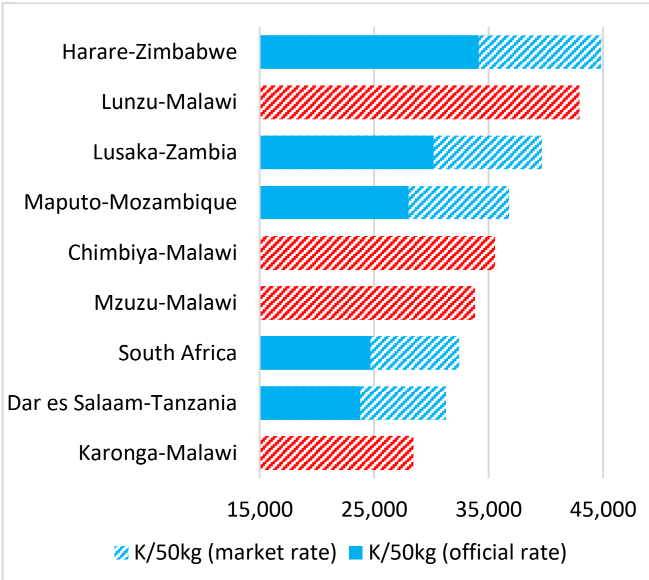
Figure 3. Location of markets



Regional prices

Different from the typical pattern, Karonga market in the Northern region reported the lowest weekly average price at the market exchange rate (K2,300/$) compared to other markets in the region. Conversely, Harare in Zimbabwe reported the highest weekly average price at the market exchange rate compared to other markets in the region. Meanwhile, weekly average prices at Lunzu Market in the South and Chimbiya market in the Center were higher, relative to other markets in the region, at the official exchange rate (K1,750/$).

Figure 4. Regional comparison (March 2024)



Note: Weekly average price for the week ending on 28th March

ADMARC activities

ADMARC sales were reported in 10 of the 26 markets monitored by IFPRI, 5 in the Northern region, 2 in the Central region and 3 in the Southern region. No ADMARC purchases were reported in any of the 26 markets.

How data was collected

IFPRI Malawi has been monitoring retail maize prices and ADMARC activities in selected markets since March 2016. Currently, data is collected from 26 markets across the country, with monitoring occurring six days per week, excluding Sundays. At least three monitors report data from each market. Data is collected by means of phone calls to the monitors. Regional prices reported in Figure 4 are sourced from weekly reports from Commodity Insights Africa.

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