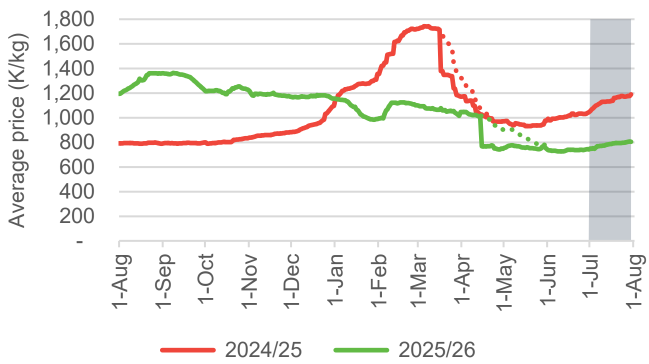
Highlights

- Retail prices of maize increased on average by 8 percent in July.
- Prices rose most sharply in the Southern region, increasing interregional differences.
- Continued maize imports through all monitored border locations helped keep Malawian prices low.

Average maize prices increased by 8 percent in July

Figure 1 shows a trend in prices over the 12 months ending in July 2026, and for comparison, over the 12 months ending in July 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



After reaching a post-harvest nadir in mid-June, national average retail prices of maize increased by 8 percent from K731/kg in the final week of June to K791/kg in the final week of July (Table 1 and Figure 1). This is still well below the minimum farmgate price of K900/kg, suggesting that many farmers likely sold their maize for less than what government mandates. It is also significantly less than last year, when the national average retail price of maize was K1,169/kg in July (Figure 1).

Prices were highest and grew fastest in the south

Throughout July, maize prices remained highest in the Southern Region and lowest in the Northern Region (Table 1 and Figure 2). Regional price differences became more pronounced over the month, with prices increasing fastest in the Southern Region while declining slightly in the Northern Region (14 percent and 1 percent, respectively, between the last week of June and the last week of July). Consequently, by the last week of July, average maize prices reached K866/kg in the Southern Region, compared with K773/kg in the Central Region and K618/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 (Table 2 and Figure 3). Continued imports suggest that supply of maize in neighboring countries remained strong enough for to suppress prices in Malawi. Despite the weakening of the Malawi kwacha vis-à-vis its Zambian counterpart at informal exchange rates used in most cross-border trade (Figure 5), import parity prices of maize remained well below domestic prices, providing an effective cap on the retail prices of maize in Malawi (Figure 4).

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

Market	30-Jun	7-Jul	14-Jul	21-Jul	28-Jul	Monthly change
	Week ending on					
1 Chitipa	505	500	500	500	500	-1%
2 Karonga	675	651	610	592	608	-10%
3 Rumphi	600	600	600	600	600	%
4 Mzuzu (city)	698	682	664	658	658	-6%
5 Mzimba (boma)	652	652	659	675	700	7%
6 Mzimba (Jenda)	567	567	567	585	606	7%
North	625	617	607	609	618	-1%
7 Salima	763	776	802	814	820	7%
8 Mchinji	705	700	713	716	717	2%
9 Kasungu	800	800	800	800	800	%
10 Lilongwe city (Nsungwi)	787	795	800	800	800	2%
11 Lilongwe (Mitundu)	650	650	673	694	714	10%
12 Dedza (Chimbiya)	608	640	674	707	707	16%
Center	740	748	762	770	773	4%
13 Balaka	710	737	783	793	798	12%
14 Mangochi (M'baluku)	820	817	812	824	832	1%
15 Mangochi (boma)	800	812	815	799	813	2%
16 Machinga (Liwonde)	707	734	798	824	830	17%
17 Phalombe (Chiringa)	700	736	800	800	812	16%
18 Zomba (Mpondabwino)	880	921	939	964	976	11%
19 Blantyre (Lunzu)	715	765	810	877	894	25%
20 Blantyre city (Mbayani)	820	836	849	878	900	10%
21 Mwanza	717	714	745	800	800	12%
22 Mulanje	752	785	868	900	900	20%
23 Thyolo (Luchenza)	800	835	894	900	900	13%
24 Chikwawa (boma)	750	779	847	939	967	29%
25 Chikwawa (Ngabu)	780	864	886	932	940	21%
26 Nsanje (Bangula)	844	870	875	900	923	9%
27 Nsanje (boma)	829	859	876	900	900	9%
South	759	789	830	856	866	14%
Malawi	**731**	**747**	**769**	**784**	**791**	**8%**

Figure 2: Location of monitored markets

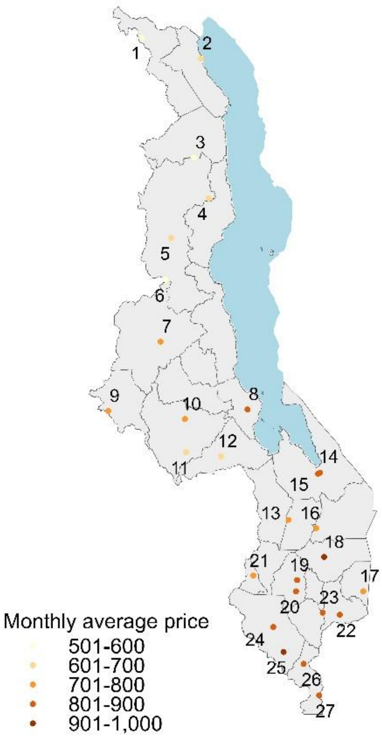
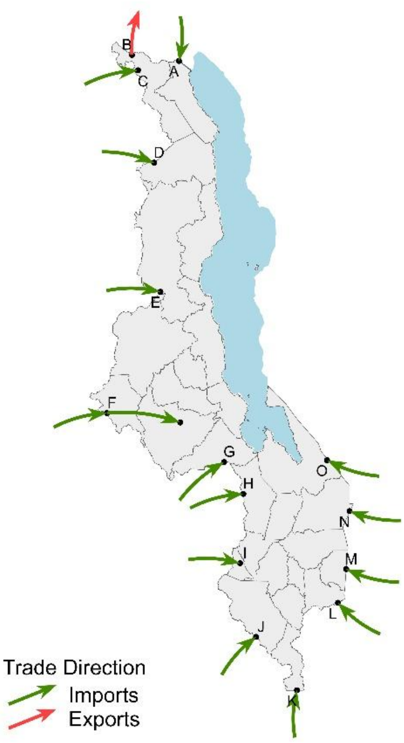


Table 2: Cross-border trade and import/export parity prices

District (border post)	Neighbor	5-Jul	12-Jul	19-Jul	26-Jul
		Week ending on			
A. Karonga (Songwe)	TZ	- -	- -	〈〈 650	〈 650
B. Chitipa (Mbirima)	TZ	〈 400	- -	〈 350	〉 450
C. Chitipa (Sopolera)	ZM	〈 425	〈〈 400	〈 400	〈 450
D. Rumphi (Hewe)	ZM	〈〈 425	〈〈 475	〈〉	〈 500
E. Mzimba (Mqocha/Jenda)	ZM	〈〈 450	〈 440	〉 550	〈 550
F. Mchinji	ZM	- -	〈 550	〈 500	〈〈 700
G. Dedza	MZ	〈〈 550	〈〈 600	〈〈 605	〈 600
H. Ntcheu (Tsangano)	MZ	〈〈 500	〈〈 550	〈 550	〈 600
I. Mwanza	MZ	〈〈 600	〈〈 567	〈 800	〈 800
J. Chikwawa (Mkumaniza)	MZ	〈 600	〈 667	〈 800	〈 900
K. Nsanje (Marka)	MZ	〈 800	〈 800	〈 800	〈 900
L. Mulanje (Muloza)	MZ	〈〈 655	〈〈 687	〈〈 700	〈 767
M. Phalombe (Kolowiko)	MZ	〈〈 643	〈〈 700	〈 700	〈 800
N. Machinga (Nayuchi)	MZ	〈〈 745	〈 783	〈 800	〈 783
O. Mangochi (Chiponde)	MZ	〈 800	〈 833	〈 900	〈 900

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 26 July 2026

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

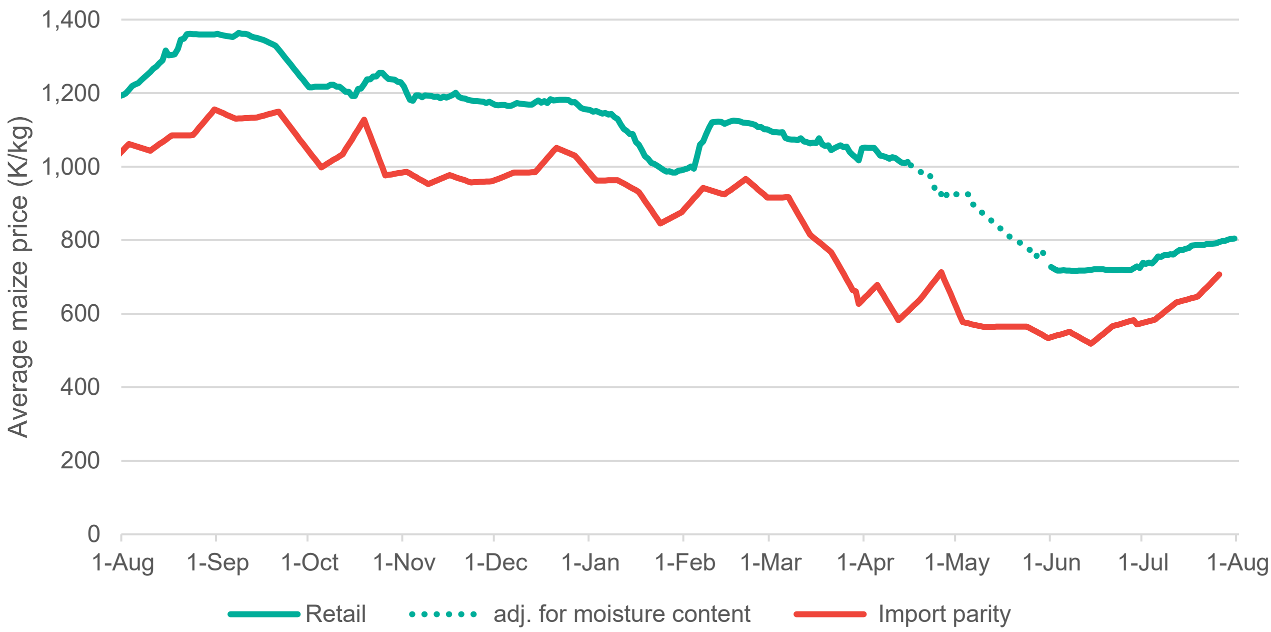
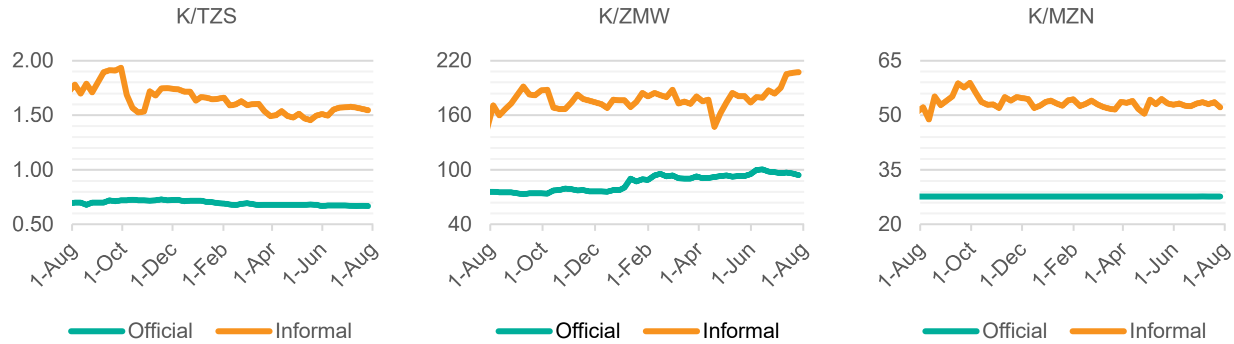


Figure 5: Exchange rates in 2025/26



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 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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