MAIZE MARKET REPORT

AUGUST 2026

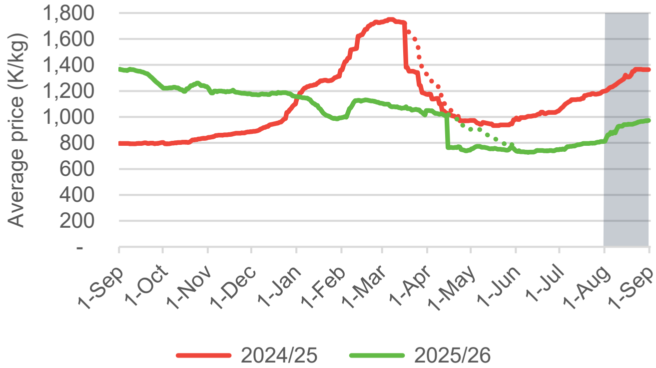
Highlights

- Retail prices of maize increased on average by 20 percent in August.
- Prices rose in all monitored markets across all regions of Malawi despite continued imports.
- Imports dominate cross-border trade in Maize at all monitored border locations.

Average maize prices increased by 20 percent in August

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



Maize prices continued to rise in August (Figure 1), increasing by 20 percent from an average of K803/kg in the last week of July to K960/kg in the last week of August (Table 1). By comparison, last year saw a 16 percent increase during the same period. Prices increased in all markets, with the most significant price jumps occurring in the second half of August, pushing all monitored markets in the Southern Region above the government-prescribed minimum farmgate price of K900/kg. All markets in the Northern Region reported retail prices below the minimum farmgate price, suggesting that northern farmers who sold maize in August probably did so below the minimum too.

Regional price trends

Maize prices increased in all monitored markets in August. Although the rate of increase varied throughout the country, the typical trend with lowest prices in the North and highest prices in the South prevailed (Table 1 and Figure 2). By the last week of August, maize averaged K751/kg in the Northern Region, K943/kg in the Central Region, and K1,037/kg in the Southern Region (Table 1). Maize prices exceeded the government mandated minimum farmgate price of K900/kg in 21 of the 31 monitored markets by the end of the month.

Imports continue dominating cross-border trade in maize

Malawi continued importing more maize than it exported through most monitored border locations, with the exception of Songwe in Karonga and Hewe in Rumphi, which reported no cross-border trade in maize due to minimal price differences across the border (Table 2 and Figure 3). The Malawi kwacha continued to weaken against the Zambian kwacha at informal exchange rates used in cross-border trade, while exchange rates against other neighboring currencies remained relatively stable (Figure 5). Despite this, import-parity prices remained below domestic retail prices in most markets, indicating that imports continued to exert downward pressure on domestic maize prices (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	519	579	587	592	645	24%
2 Karonga	610	724	744	742	743	22%
3 Rumphi	600	600	613	630	707	18%
4 Mzimba (Mzuzu)	658	685	696	708	751	14%
5 Mzimba (boma)	700	739	789	800	824	18%
6 Mzimba (Jenda)	613	683	769	773	780	27%
7 Nkhatabay	750	771	787	820	846	13%
North	631	677	705	715	751	19%
8 Nkhotakota (Dwangwa)	817	822	847	871	899	10%
9 Nkhotakota	791	853	957	962	960	21%
10 Salima	820	840	966	994	1000	22%
11 Mchinji	717	845	900	902	943	32%
12 Kasungu	799	848	873	883	883	11%
13 Lilongwe city (Nsungwi)	800	906	985	1000	1000	25%
14 Lilongwe (Mitundu)	730	825	876	896	900	23%
15 Dedza (Chimbiya)	720	800	858	867	851	18%
16 Ntcheu (Tsangano)	700	743	803	812	819	17%
Center	769	846	912	924	941	22%
17 Balaka	804	880	973	951	980	22%
18 Mangochi (M'baluku)	845	864	974	1009	1040	23%
19 Mangochi (boma)	813	867	921	941	950	17%
20 Machinga (Liwonde)	837	926	979	992	987	18%
21 Phalombe (Chiringa)	826	833	932	1000	1005	22%
22 Zomba (Mpondabwino)	983	987	989	1011	1032	5%
23 Blantyre (Lunzu)	900	949	960	968	990	10%
24 Blantyre city (Mbayani)	908	951	1010	1075	1093	20%
25 Mwanza	800	863	899	939	966	21%
26 Mulanje	914	948	981	1000	1005	10%
27 Thyolo (Luchenza)	900	900	979	1007	1089	21%
28 Chikwawa (boma)	972	940	891	1080	1148	18%
29 Chikwawa (Ngabu)	940	942	1076	1102	1091	16%
30 Nsanje (Bangula)	943	964	1009	1062	1084	15%
31 Nsanje (boma)	900	933	1069	1200	1174	30%
South	883	917	975	1,013	1,037	17%
Malawi	**803**	**856**	**913**	**937**	**960**	**20%**

Figure 2: Location of monitored markets

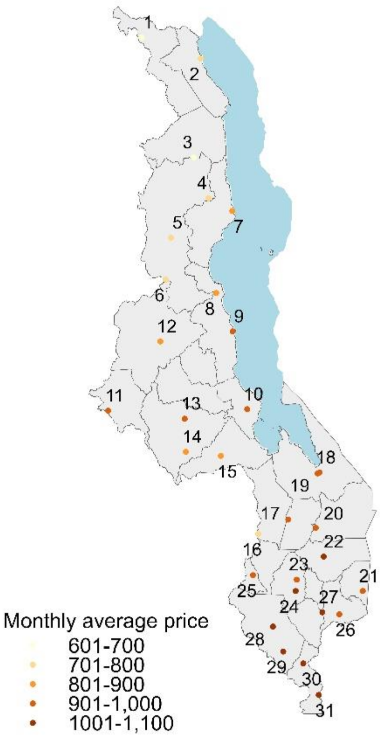
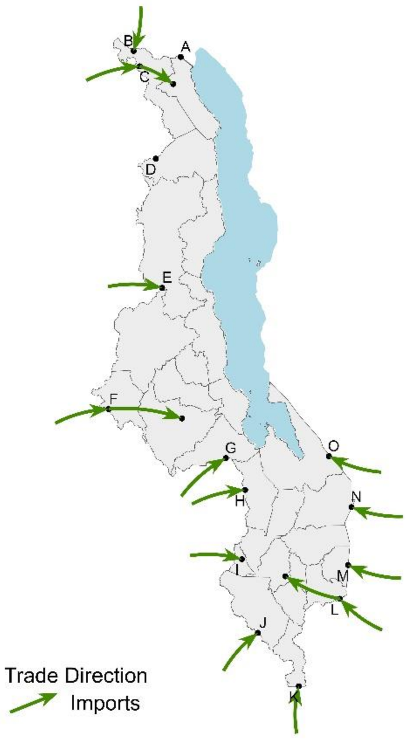


Table 2: Cross-border trade and import/export parity prices

District (border post)	Neighbor	2-Aug	09-Aug	16-Aug	23-Aug	30-Aug
		Week ending on				
A. Karonga (Songwe)	TZ	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
B. Chitipa (Mbirima)	TZ	⟨ 500	⟨⟩ -	⟨⟨ 500	⟨⟨ 600	⟨ 650
C. Chitipa (Sopolera)	ZM	⟨ 480	⟨ 483	⟨ 525	⟨ 500	⟨⟨ 550
D. Rumphi (Hewe)	ZM	⟨ 500	⟨ 400	- -	- -	- -
E. Mzimba (Mqocha/Jenda)	ZM	⟨ 650	⟨⟨ 625	⟨⟩ -	⟨⟩ -	⟨ 750
F. Mchinji	ZM	- -	⟨ 550	⟨ 500	⟨⟨ 850	⟨⟨ 850
G. Dedza	MZ	⟨ 800	⟨⟨ 755	⟨⟨ 740	⟨⟨ 775	⟨ 800
H. Ntcheu (Tsangano)	MZ	⟨ 600	⟨⟨ 633	⟨⟨ 717	⟨⟨ 733	⟨ 750
I. Mwanza	MZ	⟨ 800	⟨ 800	⟨⟨ 850	⟨⟨ 900	⟨ 900
J. Chikwawa (Mkumaniza)	MZ	⟨ 817	⟨ 675	⟨⟨ 750	⟨⟨ 875	⟨ 900
K. Nsanje (Marka)	MZ	⟨ 900	⟨ 913	⟨ 1,100	⟨ 1,000	⟨ 1,000
L. Mulanje (Muloza)	MZ	⟨ 817	⟨ 817	⟨ 830	⟨⟨ 840	⟨⟨ 850
M. Phalombe (Kolowiko)	MZ	⟨ 800	⟨⟨ 825	⟨⟨ 810	⟨ 827	⟨ 800
N. Machinga (Nayuchi)	MZ	⟨ 787	⟨⟨ 833	⟨⟨ 850	⟨ 950	⟨ 950
O. Mangochi (Chiponde)	MZ	⟨ 800	⟨⟨ 850	⟨ 878	⟨ 880	⟨ 880

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 30 August 2026

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

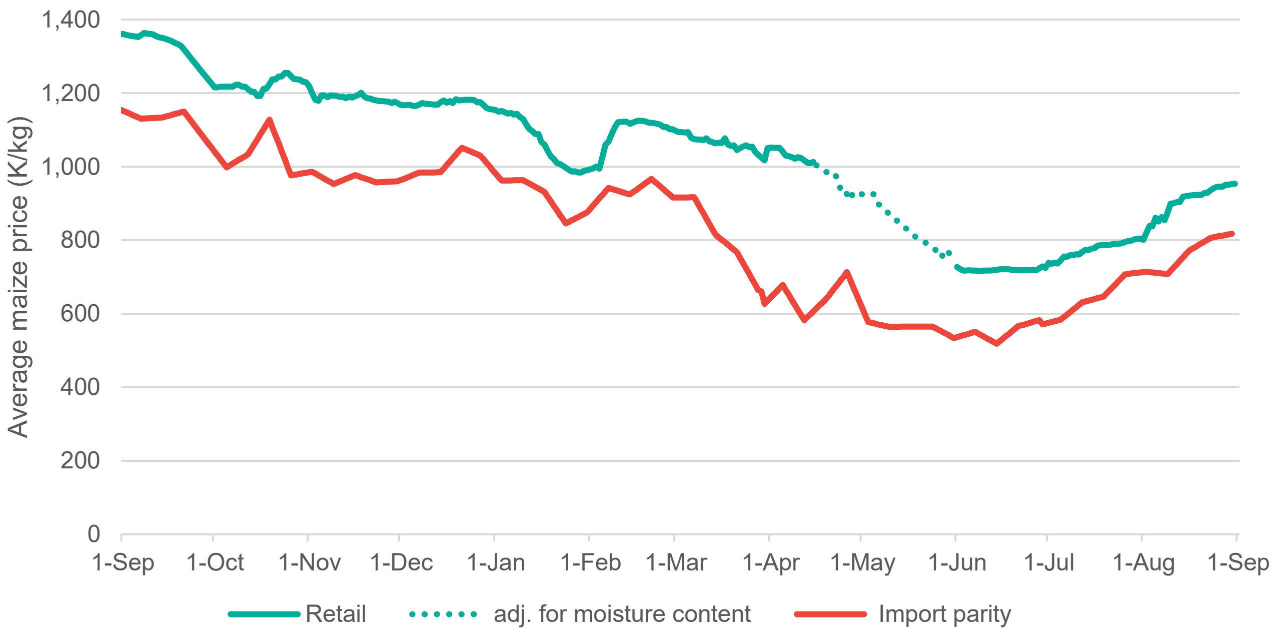
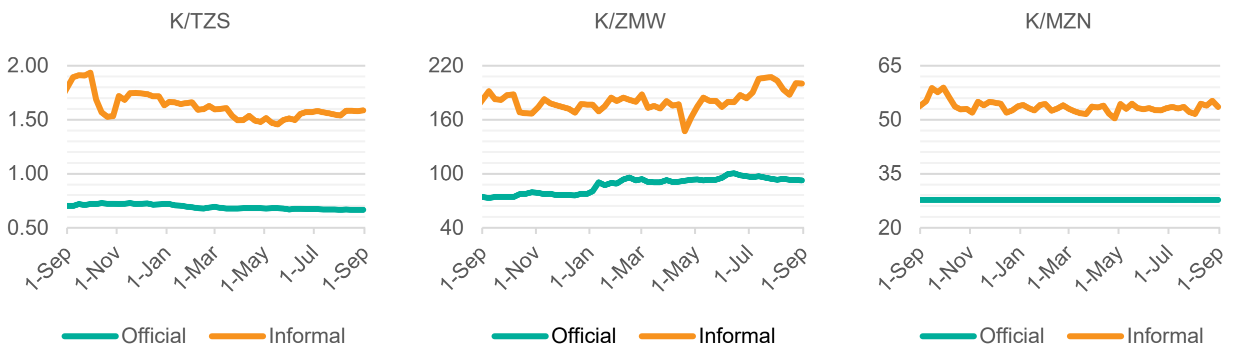


Figure 5: Exchange rates in 2025/26



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 31 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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