

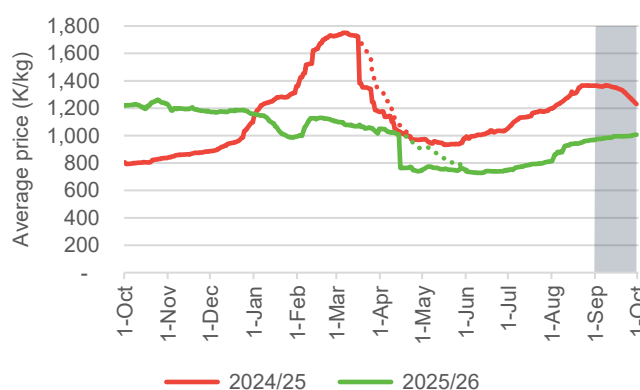
Highlights

- ▶ Retail prices of maize increased on average by 3 percent in September.
- ▶ The increase in domestic maize prices was modest thanks to stable supply of relatively cheap maize imported from neighboring countries.
- ▶ Retail prices of maize were highest in the Southern Region, and lowest in the Northern Region, where they remained below the minimum farmgate price in many markets.

Average maize prices increased by 3 percent in September

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



National average maize prices increased by a modest 3 percent from K966/kg in the final week of August to K997/kg in the final week of September, continuing the upward trend observed since July 2026 (Figure 1 and Table 1). Compared with the same month last year, when the national average maize price was K1,361/kg, September prices were 27 percent lower. All monitored markets in the Southern and Central Region except for Tsangano in Ntcheu had prices above the government-prescribed minimum farmgate price of K900/kg. In the Northern Region, only Nkhata Bay recorded a retail price at the minimum farmgate price, suggesting that most northern farmers who sold maize in September probably did so below the minimum too.

Prices were lowest in the north and highest in the south

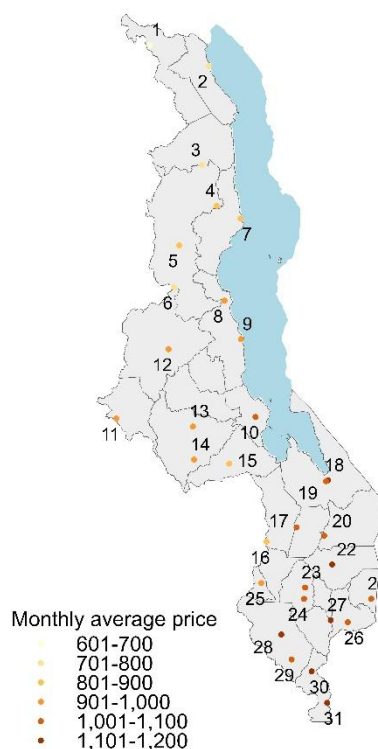
Maize prices increased in most monitored markets in September, with only a few exceptions in the Southern Region, where they fell by a modest 1 or 2 percent. However, the typical trend of lowest prices in the North and highest prices in the South prevailed (Table 1 and Figure 2). By the last week of September, maize averaged K796/kg in the Northern Region, K961/kg in the Central Region, and K1,088/kg in the Southern Region (Table 1). Maize prices exceeded the government mandated minimum farmgate price of K900/kg in 24 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, except for Mqocha/Jenda in Mzimba and Marka in Nsanje, which reported some limited maize exports (Table 2 and Figure 3). Maize prices in neighboring countries did not increase much, and the value of Malawi kwacha at informal exchange rates used for cross-border trade remained fairly stable (Figure 5), so the average price of imported maize increased only modestly by less than 4 percent during September (Table 2). The availability of imported maize put downward pressure on domestic retail prices, which, as a result, also increased only by just over 3 percent (Figure 4).

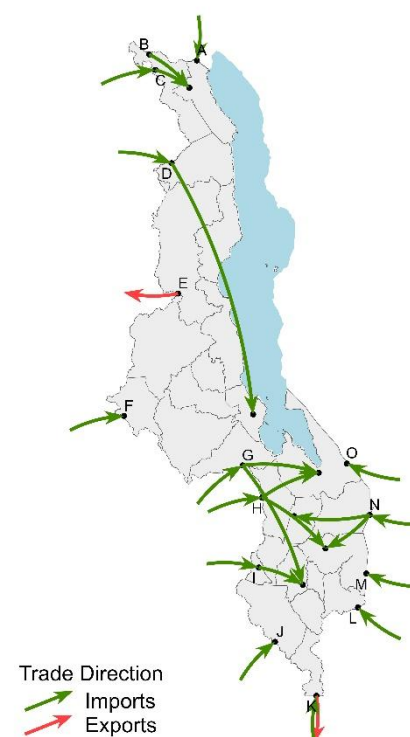
Table 1: Weekly average retail prices (K/kg)

Market	Week ending on					Monthly change
	30-Aug	7-Sep	14-Sep	21-Sep	28-Sep	
1 Chitipa	660	674	700	694	678	3%
2 Karonga	742	770	773	775	806	9%
3 Rumph	743	750	750	750	750	1%
4 Mzimba (Mzuzu)	758	782	829	837	849	12%
5 Mzimba (boma)	807	825	841	835	806	- 0%
6 Mzimba (Jenda)	783	798	800	800	800	2%
7 Nkhatabay	850	864	880	900	900	6%
North	759	776	792	794	796	5%
8 Nkhotakota (Dwangwa)	900	914	917	926	920	2%
9 Nkhotakota	960	960	960	967	1,000	4%
10 Salima	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,004	0%
11 Mchinji	950	954	967	963	950	0%
12 Kasungu	883	887	921	989	957	8%
13 Lilongwe city (Nsungwi)	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	0%
14 Lilongwe (Mitundu)	900	900	900	904	917	2%
15 Dedza (Chimbiya)	849	871	886	888	903	6%
16 Ntcheu (Tsangano)	825	831	856	852	832	1%
Center	944	948	957	965	961	2%
17 Balaka	1,003	1,018	1,042	1,023	982	- 2%
18 Mangochi (M'baluku)	1,060	1,097	1,100	1,103	1,134	7%
19 Mangochi (boma)	950	961	1,000	1,007	1,035	9%
20 Machinga (Liwonde)	985	986	1,000	1,014	1,064	8%
21 Phalombe (Chiringa)	1,019	1,033	1,033	1,027	1,000	- 2%
22 Zomba (Mpondabwino)	1,033	1,090	1,121	1,193	1,167	13%
23 Blantyre (Lunzu)	995	1,000	1,003	1,020	1,052	6%
24 Blantyre city (Mbayani)	1,098	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	0%
25 Mwanza	973	975	988	1,000	1,000	3%
26 Mulanje	1,019	1,062	1,067	1,074	1,114	9%
27 Thyolo (Luchenza)	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,107	1%
28 Chikwawa (boma)	1,180	1,180	1,180	1,178	1,172	- 1%
29 Chikwawa (Ngabu)	1,086	1,080	1,085	1,087	1,095	1%
30 Nsanje (Bangula)	1,092	1,100	1,100	1,107	1,150	5%
31 Nsanje (boma)	1,167	1,167	1,167	1,170	1,177	1%
South	1,046	1,061	1,071	1,080	1,088	4%
Malawi	966	977	987	995	997	3%

Figure 2: Location of monitored markets**Table 2: Cross-border trade and import/export parity prices**

District (border post)	Neighbor	Week ending on			
		6-Sep	13-Sep	20-Sep	27-Sep
A. Karonga (Songwe)	TZ <	813 -	- <	725 <	775
B. Chitipa (Mbirima)	TZ <	600 <	650 <	617 <	600
C. Chitipa (Sopolera)	ZM <	600 <	633 <	600 <	638
D. Rumph	ZM <	700 <	700 <	725 <	625
E. Mzimba (Mqocha/Jenda)	ZM >	950 >	850 >	- >	1,000
F. Mchinji	ZM <	750 <	550 <	500 <	850
G. Dedza	MZ <	760 <	750 <	813 <	850
H. Ntcheu (Tsangano)	MZ <	750 <	750 <	783 <	800
I. Mwanza	MZ <	900 <	1,000 <	1,040 <	977
J. Chikwawa (Mkumaniza)	MZ <	1,000 <	1,000 <	900 <	1,000
K. Nsanje (Marka)	MZ <	950 <	1,000 <	1,100 <	-
L. Mulanje (Muloza)	MZ <	800 <	850 <	930 <	933
M. Phalombe (Kolowiko)	MZ <	817 <	900 <	883 <	860
N. Machinga (Nayuchi)	MZ <	842 <	800 <	887 <	903
O. Mangochi (Chiponde)	MZ <	900 <	933 <	913 <	975

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 27 September 2026

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

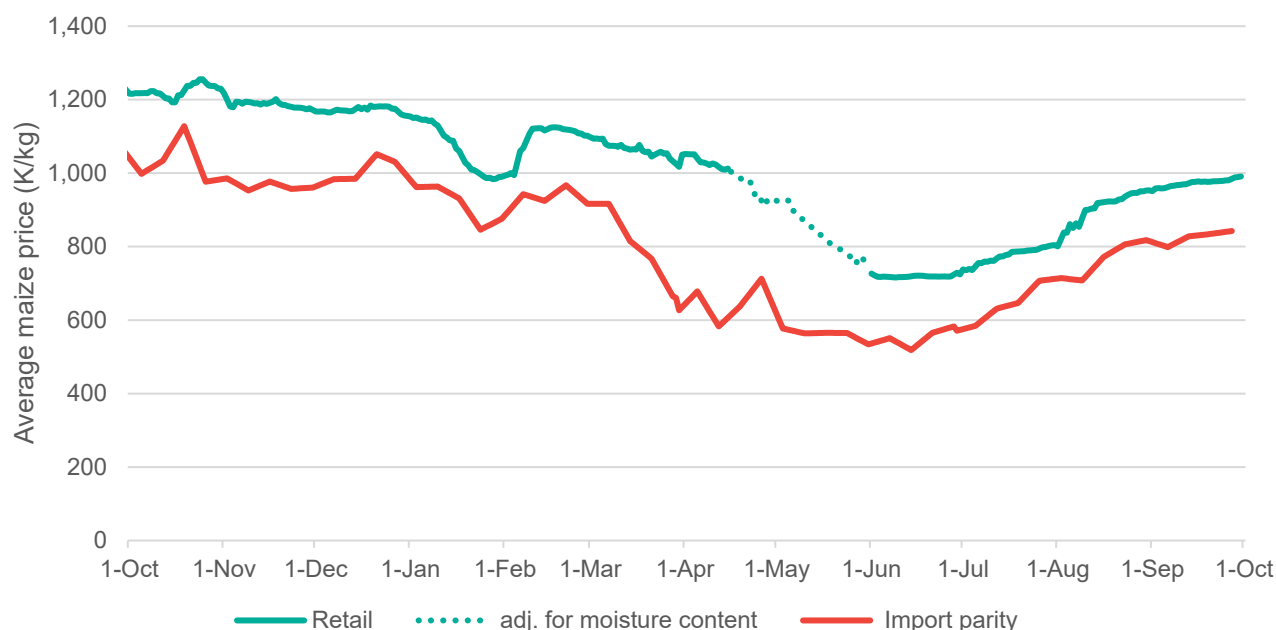
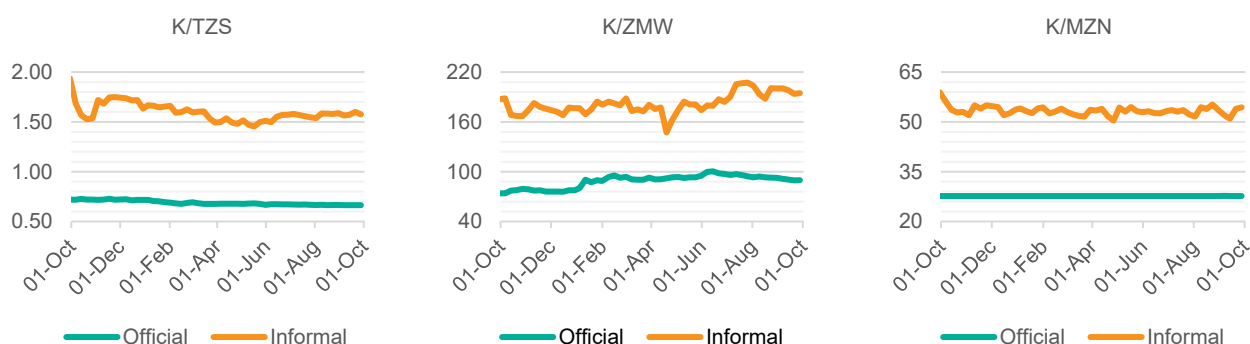


Figure 5: Exchange rates in 2025/26



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).



Ireland



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