

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

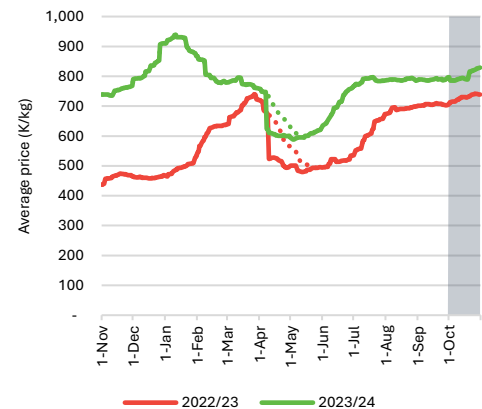
- Retail prices of maize increased by 4 percent in October.
- Maize prices were lowest in the Northern region and highest in the Southern region.
- ADMARC sales were reported in 5 of the 26 markets monitored by IFPRI.
- ADMARC purchases were reported in 4 markets.
- Retail prices of maize in Malawi were lower than most neighboring countries at the market exchange rate.

Maize prices increase by 4 percent in October

Figure 1 shows a trend in prices over the 12 months ending in October 2024, and, for comparison, over the 12 months ending in October 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.

In the final week of October, the average retail price of maize increased to K819/kg, a 4 percent rise from the September closing price of K790/kg (Figure 1 and Table 1). This upward trend followed a period of price stability, which was maintained thanks to steady informal imports of maize from Tanzania. Most maize currently traded in Malawi is reportedly of Tanzanian origin. The Kwacha price of informally imported maize increased as the Malawi Kwacha lost market value from K2,600/\$ at the end of September to K2,800/\$ a month later, pushing up retail prices across Malawi. Increased transport costs due to fuel shortages throughout the country likely also contributed to the uptick in prices. However, the trend is likely to continue even if fuel supply stabilizes as Malawi enters the lean season.

Figure 1. Trends in average maize retail prices



Prices highest in the South

In line with the national trend, all three regions experienced significant price increases, albeit at varying levels (Figure 2). The Southern region consistently maintained the highest average prices, starting at approximately K865/kg and showing a gradual increase to around K898/kg by the end of the month. Similarly, the Central region followed a steady upward trend, rising from K771/kg to about K808/kg. Finally, the Northern region, which had the lowest prices, showed minor fluctuations, moving within a narrower range from K619/kg to K640/kg (Table 1 and Figure 2).

This reflects a broader pattern of maize trade from Tanzania, which produced a surplus of the commodity this year, towards southern Africa, where dry spells driven by the El Niño climatic phenomenon led to production shortages. Tanzanian maize enters Malawi mostly informally at the market exchange rate, and gains value as it moves South. Some is retailed along the way, and the remainder leaves Malawi through informal trade with Mozambique.

An increase in the price of imported maize from around K550/kg in September to over K600/kg at the end of October, likely due to dwindling surplus stock in Tanzania, contributed to some of the growth in maize prices in Malawi. Increased transport costs due to fuel shortages in Malawi further contributed to rising prices, as did strong demand in Mozambique, where maize entered from Malawi for as much as K1,100/kg (up from around K900/kg in September).

Regional prices

Reports from markets elsewhere in the region are consistent with the pattern of Tanzanian maize being traded south- and east-ward. At the market exchange rate (K2,800/\$), maize prices in Malawi are comparable to or higher than prices in Tanzania, but lower than maize prices in Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa (Figure 3).

ADMARC activities

In October, ADMARC made purchases in 4 of the 26 markets monitored by IFPRI: Salima, Mpondabwino in Zomba, and Luchenza in Thyolo. ADMARC sales were reported in 5 markets: Rumph, Mzuzu, Luchenza in Thyolo, Bangula in Nsanje, and Nsanje boma (Table 2).

Table 2. Any ADMARC purchase (red) and sale (green) in October

Market	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25	27	29	31
1 Chitipa																
2 Karonga																
3 Rumph																
4 Mzimba (Mzuzu)																
5 Mzimba (boma)																
6 Mzimba (Jenda)																
7 Salima																
8 Mchinji																
9 Lilongwe city (Nsungwi)																
10 Lilongwe (Mitundu)																
11 Dedza (Chimbiya)																
12 Balaka																
13 Mangochi (Mbaluku)																
14 Mangochi (boma)																
15 Liwonde																
16 Phalombe (Chiringa)																
17 Zomba (Mpondabwino)																
18 Blantyre (Lunzu)																
19 Blantyre city (Mbayani)																
20 Mwanza																
21 Mulanje																
22 Thyolo (Luchenza)																
23 Chikwawa (boma)																
24 Chikwawa (Ngabu)																
25 Nsanja (Bangula)																
26 Nsanje (boma)																

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

Market	Week ending on					Change
	30-Sep	7-Oct	14-Oct	21-Oct	28-Oct	
1 Chitipa	548	561	576	585	602	10%
2 Karonga	575	569	588	600	625	9%
3 Rumph	633	629	613	600	600	-5%
4 Mzimba (Mzuzu)	636	634	695	661	666	5%
5 Mzimba (boma)	718	719	758	747	730	2%
6 Mzimba (Jenda)	650	646	665	683	683	5%
North	637	635	660	657	661	4%
7 Salima	791	784	793	801	808	2%
8 Mchinji	769	776	790	803	826	7%
9 Lilongwe city (Nsungwi)	763	753	726	713	800	5%
10 Lilongwe (Mitundu)	750	755	792	801	814	8%
11 Dedza (Chimbiya)	731	744	778	787	786	8%
Center	762	760	759	758	804	5%
12 Balaka	810	799	792	794	820	1%
13 Mangochi (Mbaluku)	813	813	819	823	847	4%
14 Mangochi (boma)	800	800	800	837	855	7%
15 Liwonde	841	870	885	892	906	8%
16 Phalombe (Chiringa)	850	850	850	850	850	0%
17 Zomba (Mpondabwino)	927	903	917	920	942	2%
18 Blantyre (Lunzu)	811	810	814	857	864	7%
19 Blantyre city (Mbayani)	900	897	900	900	901	0%
20 Mwanza	877	873	880	893	935	7%
21 Mulanje	893	879	864	879	875	-2%
22 Thyolo (Luchenza)	896	887	900	889	916	2%
23 Chikwawa (boma)	940	926	809	910	949	1%
24 Chikwawa (Ngabu)	855	853	861	876	882	3%
25 Nsanja (Bangula)	874	869	888	902	899	3%
26 Nsanje (boma)	887	876	871	901	930	5%
South	864	860	860	872	888	3%
Malawi	791	787	791	796	821	4%

Figure 2. Location of markets

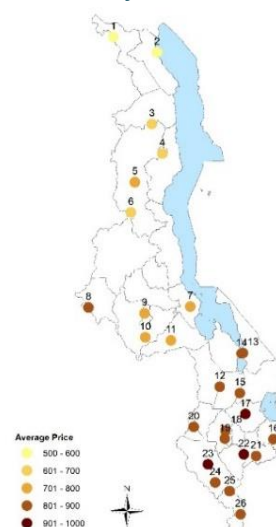
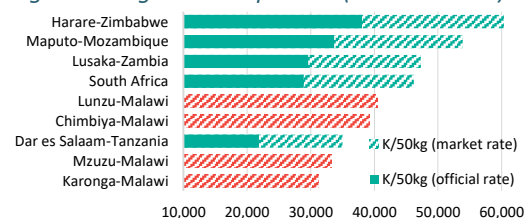


Figure 3. Regional comparison (October 2024)



Note: Average price in the week ending on 28th October

How data were collected

IFPRI Malawi has been monitoring retail maize prices and ADMARC activities in selected markets since October 2016. All prices are reported in Malawi Kwacha (K). Data are collected telephonically six times per week (excluding Sundays) from 26 markets across the country. Three monitors report data from each market. Regional prices reported in Figure 3 are sourced from weekly reports by Commodity Insights Africa.



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