

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 7 percent for old maize and 2 percent for new maize in April.
- Prices of new maize were highest in the Southern region and lowest in the Northern region.
- By the end of April, new maize was retailing below the minimum farmgate price across the Northern and Central regions, and in 7 of the 15 monitored markets in the Southern region.
- No ADMARC sales or purchases were reported in the 26 markets monitored by IFPRI.
- Retail prices of maize in Karonga were lower than in neighboring countries.

Prices decreased by 2 percent in April

Figure 1 shows a trend in prices over the 12 months ending in April 2024, and, for comparison, over the 12 months ending in April 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 April, maize prices continued their downward as newly harvested maize increased supply (Figure 1). The weekly average price of maize declined by 7 percent from K760/kg in the final week of March to K709/kg in the final week of April for old maize (Table 1). During the same period, the weekly average price of new maize dropped by 2 percent from K612/kg to K597/kg – well below the minimum farmgate price set by the government at K650/kg.

Maize prices highest in the South

Compared to other regions, the Southern region had the highest monthly average prices of both old and new maize (Figure 2). Old maize averaged K774/kg in the South while new maize averaged K643/kg. By the end of April, new maize was retailing below the minimum farmgate price in 7 of the 15 monitored markets in the Southern region and in all monitored markets in the Central and Northern regions (Table 1).

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

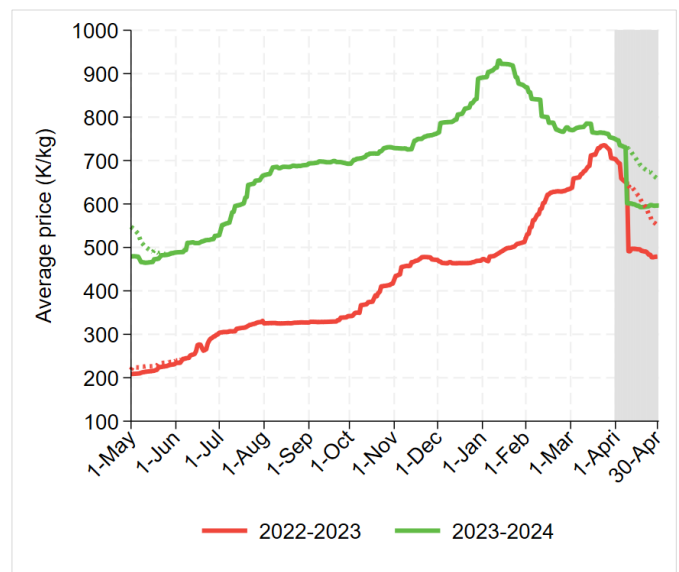
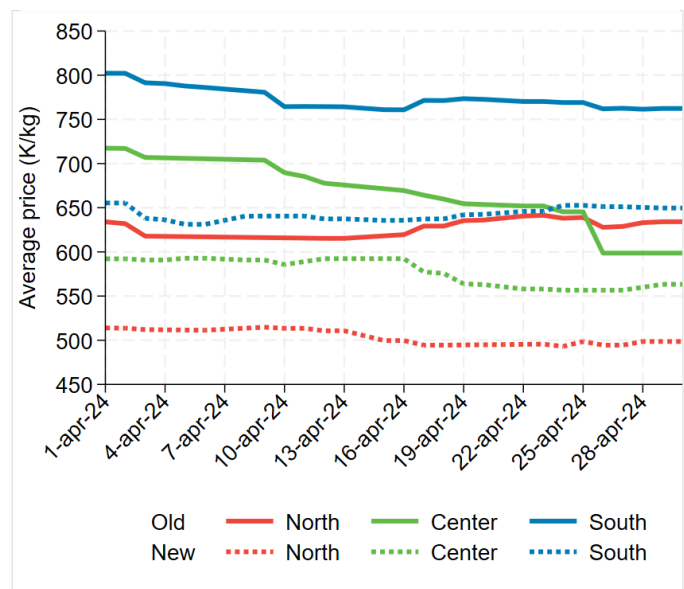


Figure 2. Average daily maize retail prices by region

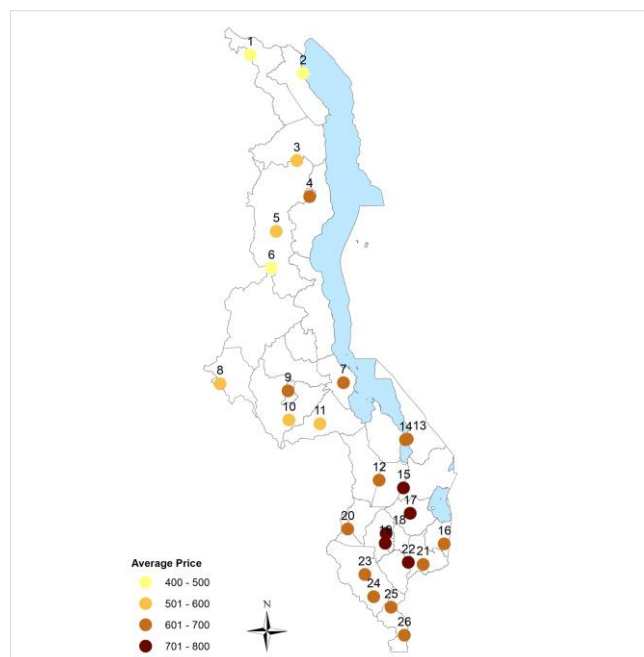


In a departure from the typical trend, where the Northern region usually records the lowest prices, the Central region saw old maize prices decline below those in the Northern region towards the end of April (Figure 2). This unusual trend can be attributed to traders clearing out old stock to make way for the influx of new maize in the region, leading to the discounted price. Prices of new maize followed the normal pattern, with Chitipa in the North recording the lowest new maize price at K421/kg in the last week of the month.

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

	Week ending on											
	28-Mar-24		7-Apr-24		14-Apr-24		21-Apr-24		28-Apr-24		Change	
	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
Chitipa ¹	573	500	533	492	534	479	594	421	635	448	↑11%	↓10%
Karonga ²	571	456	542	445	534	433	534	427	534	426	↓-7%	↓-7%
Rumphi ³	705	500	676	528	667	563	668	565	657	540	↓-7%	↑8%
Mzuzu ⁴	676	529	675	574	683	591	690	593	700	625	↑4%	↑18%
Mzimba ⁵	702	592	673	535	653	517	665	513	675	500	↓-4%	↓-15%
Jenda ⁶	656	500	632	500	625	487	625	457	632	435	↓-4%	↓-13%
Sallima ⁷	796	640	700	640	700	645	700	627	657	600	↑17%	↓-6%
Mchinji ⁸	653	578	620	581	601	569	562	551	533	547	↑18%	↓-5%
Nsungwi ⁹	800	693	800	693	767	627	758	600	760	600	↓-5%	↓-13%
Mitundu ¹⁰	744	533	750	533	704	545	638	511	576	474	↓23%	↓-11%
Chimbiya ¹¹	711	517	676	512	664	567	646	587	610	567	↑14%	↑10%
Balaka ¹²	757	650	723	650	709	585	726	563	700	563	↓-7%	↓-13%
M'baluka ¹³	796	620	796	578	797	566	777	562	790	607	↓-1%	↓-2%
Mangochi ¹⁴	800	717	800	712	800	707	790	643	800	633	↓0%	↓-12%
Liwonde ¹⁵	800	756	782	751	777	714	787	700	800	700	↑0%	↓-7%
Chiringa ¹⁶	800	533	746	545	611	562	600	563	709	595	↑11%	↑12%
Mpondabwino ¹⁷	899	705	900	709	900	713	886	716	839	710	↓-7%	↑1%
Lunzu ¹⁸	858	700	834	548	787	652	756	687	770	694	↑10%	↓-1%
Mbaya ¹⁹	808	710	800	704	812	708	838	683	833	669	↑3%	↓-6%
Mwanza ²⁰	789	667	800	646	800	644	800	669	800	681	↑1%	↑2%
Mulanje ²¹	779	558	767	567	767	567	729	612	700	681	↑10%	↑22%
Luchenza ²²	811	700	800	700	800	700	800	700	800	700	↓-1%	↑0%
Chikwawa ²³	847	650	786	646	770	644	771	661	771	691	↓-9%	↑6%
Ngaibu ²⁴	820	580	815	568	800	580	800	595	800	600	↓-2%	↑3%
Bangula ²⁵	757	633	750	633	679	625	650	633	650	626	↓14%	↓-1%
Nsanje ²⁶	854	683	781	650	729	619	700	600	700	600	↓18%	↓-12%
All markets	760	612	737	602	718	600	711	594	709	597	↓-7%	↓-2%

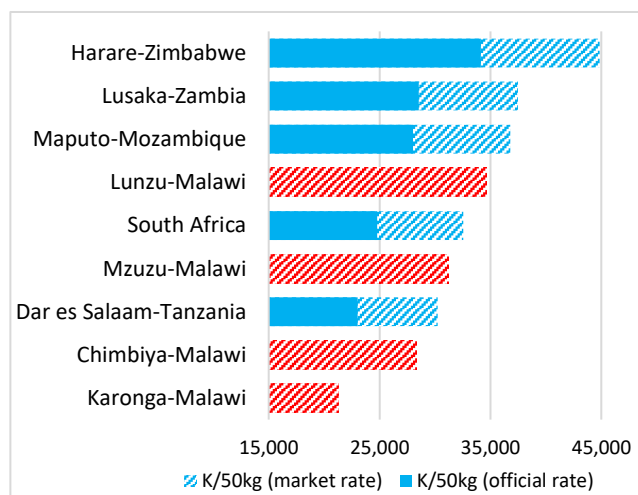
Figure 3. Location of markets



Regional prices

Consistent with the previous month's trend, Karonga market in the Northern region reported the lowest weekly average price at both the official (K1,751/\$) and the market exchange rate (K2,300/\$) compared to other markets in the region, mainly due to the relatively low prices of new maize. Conversely, Harare market in Zimbabwe recorded the highest weekly average price, notably exceeding its regional counterparts, at the market exchange rate. Meanwhile, Lunzu market in the South emerged as the priciest at the official exchange rate, surpassing other regional markets.

Figure 4. Regional comparison (April 2024)



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

ADMARC activities

No ADMARC sales or purchases were reported in any of the 26 markets monitored by IFPRI in the month of April.

How data was collected

IFPRI Malawi has been monitoring retail maize prices and ADMARC activities in selected markets since April 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.