



The Food Price Monitor: Kenya is a monthly report developed for the Food Security Portal (FSP), facilitated by IFPRI, with the goal of providing clear and accurate information on commodity price trends and variations in selected markets throughout Kenya. The reports are intended as a resource for those interested in agricultural commodity markets in Kenya, namely producers, traders, consumers, or other agricultural stakeholders.

## Highlights

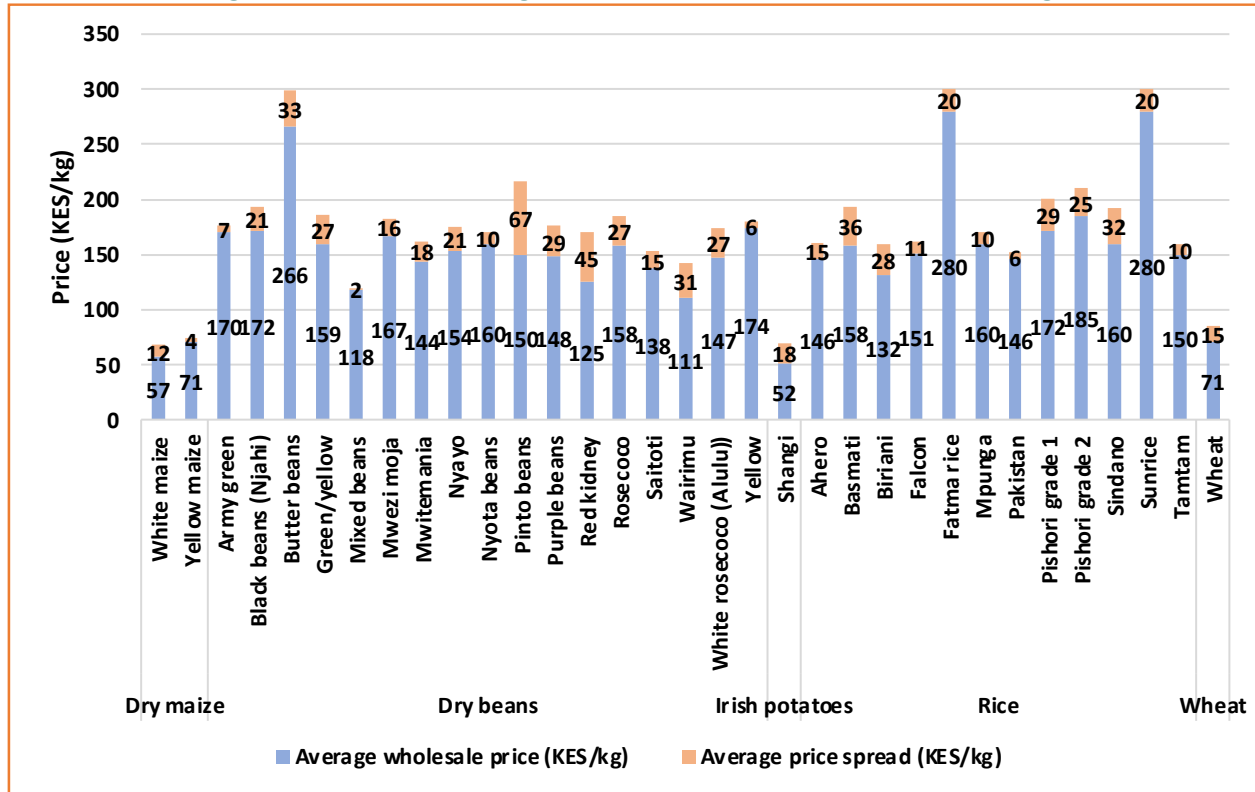
- ▶ Variations in commodity wholesale and retail pricing margins are due to factors such as high fuel and transportation costs, seasonal fluctuations, the presence of middlemen, and increased local demand.
- ▶ Price disparities for various varieties of beans in different regions result from market dynamics like supply and demand, intermediaries, currency depreciation leading to higher export costs, and rising fuel prices.
- ▶ Higher maize prices in Eldoret stem from farmers hoarding maize for better prices, resulting in low supply and high demand.
- ▶ Price hikes in densely populated areas for Irish potatoes are due to heightened demand, perishable nature leading to scarcity, presence of middlemen, and increased transportation costs driven by higher fuel prices.
- ▶ High prices of rice and wheat are a result of heavy reliance on the international market, leading to elevated prices due to importation expenses, compounded by currency depreciation against the dollar and high marketing expenses.

## Overall Wholesale and Retail Prices for February

In February 2024, Figure 1 displays the average wholesale and retail prices of maize, beans, potatoes, rice, and wheat in major Kenyan markets. Most commodities experienced price margins ranging from 2% to 15%. For instance, yellow maize showed a margin of 6%, while various types of dry beans such as Army green, black beans (Njahi), and butter beans had margins between 4% and 13%. Rice varieties like Ahero and Falcon had margins of 7% to 10%, while dry

white maize and certain bean types exhibited margins of 17% to 23%. Moreover, commodities like Pinto beans and Red Kidney beans had higher price margins, ranging from 28% to 45%. These variations in pricing margins can be attributed to factors such as high fuel and transportation costs, seasonal fluctuations, the presence of middlemen, and increased local demand.

Figure 1: Overall average wholesale and retail prices (KES/Kg)



Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of February 2024

## Wholesale and Retail Commodity Prices

Various varieties of beans were found across different regions, with Green Yellow and Wairimu available in all selected areas. Additionally, Black beans (Njahi) and Mwitmania were prevalent everywhere except in Kisumu, while Nyayo beans and Rosecoco were present in all regions except for Nyeri. White Rosecoco (Alulu), on the other hand, was present in all regions except Nairobi. Eldoret and Nakuru regions reported the highest accessibility to bean varieties due to their status as major producing regions in the country. As expected, retail prices for all bean varieties were higher than wholesale prices. In comparison to the national wholesale average prices, wholesale pricing for most bean varieties was higher in the Eldoret, Mombasa, and Nairobi regions, while retail pricing was higher in the Eldoret, Kisumu, and Nyeri regions. Beans are crucial commodities, often consumed with maize. Some markets like Nairobi and Mombasa cater to urban consumers, while others like Eldoret are producing areas located in the grain basket zone. Kisumu, on the other hand, is a large market located in a deficit area with marginal agricultural productivity. Therefore, price disparities can be attributed to market dynamics such as supply and demand,

the presence of intermediaries, the depreciation of the Kenyan shilling leading to higher export costs, and increased transportation expenses due to rising fuel prices.

All regions reported the availability of dry white maize, while Kisumu and Nakuru recorded the availability of both white and yellow dry maize. Eldoret and Mombasa showed higher wholesale prices of 64KES/kg and 75KES/kg, respectively, compared to the national average wholesale price of 57KES/kg. Additionally, Eldoret, Mombasa, Nairobi, and Nyeri recorded higher retail prices of 73KES/kg, 75KES/kg, 79KES/kg, and 75KES/kg, respectively, compared to the national average retail price of 69KES/kg. The higher prices in the breadbasket region of Eldoret could be attributed to farmers hoarding their maize, expecting better prices, thus leading to low supply and high demand. However, according to the Milling Middle East and Africa Digital Magazine report (March 2024), maize farmers in Kenya have expressed concern after the price of maize started going down due to cheaper imports from neighboring Uganda flooding the informal market, slashing the cost by 19%. Additionally, wholesale prices of maize remained mostly stable in Kenya in January 2024, below their very high year-earlier values but above the levels of two years earlier, influenced by a weak national currency inflating

prices of agricultural inputs, including fuel and production costs (GIEWS FPMA Bulletin, February 2024).

In Nairobi, Irish potatoes exhibited significantly higher prices, reaching 93KES/kg compared to the national average wholesale price of 52KES/kg. Similarly, Nakuru and Nairobi displayed notably higher retail prices of 104KES/kg and 76KES/kg, respectively, in contrast to the national average price of 70KES/kg. The price hikes in densely populated areas can be attributed to various factors, including heightened demand and the scarcity of the commodity due to its perishable nature, the presence of middlemen, and increased transportation costs driven by higher fuel prices. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the prices of potatoes (Irish) increased by 1.7% between December 2023 and January 2024 (The Kenya Wallstreet Newsletter, February 2024). The Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture reports a current shortage of 1.7 million metric tons of the product, which has pushed up prices. This scarcity is attributable to the use of unofficial seeds from the previous harvesting season to plant potatoes instead of certified seeds by government seed agencies such as the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS).

All regions reported the presence of Biriani and Pishori rice, with Basmati rice common to all regions except Mombasa, while Sindano rice was common in all regions except Nairobi. Additionally, Mombasa had varieties like Fatma, Tamtam, Mpunga, and Sunrice, while Eldoret had Falcon and Kisumu had Ahero and Pakistan rice. Eldoret and Kisumu recorded higher retail and wholesale prices for most common rice varieties. These high prices stem from heavy reliance on the international market to meet consumption demands, leading to elevated prices due to importation expenses. These costs are further compounded by the depreciation of the Kenyan shilling against the dollar and high marketing expenses.

Eldoret and Kisumu reported elevated wholesale prices for wheat at 90KES/kg and 76KES/kg, respectively, compared to the country's average of 71KES/kg for dry wheat. Similarly, retail prices in Eldoret (100KES/kg), Kisumu (90KES/kg), and Nyeri (100KES/kg) exceeded the national average of 86KES/kg. Due to heavy reliance on imports to meet domestic wheat demand and the depreciating value of the Kenyan shilling against the dollar, the availability and prices of wheat are subject to fluctuations in international trade dynamics, potentially resulting in price increases.

**Table 1: Average wholesale and retail prices (kes/kg) by region for February**

Product	Variety	Average w/sale price (KES/ kg)						Average retail price (KES/ kg)						Total average w/sale price (KES / kg)	Total average retail price (KES/ kg)
		Eldoret	Kisumu	Mombasa	Nairobi	Nakuru	Nyeri	Eldoret	Kisumu	Mombasa	Nairobi	Nakuru	Nyeri		
Dry beans	Army green	180		180		150		190		185		157		170	177
	Black beans (Njahi)	190		160	175	168	168	200		170	198	170	228	172	193
	Butter beans	295			256	185		345			260	195		266	299
	Green/yellow	180	174	165	164	138	135	190	225	170	187	165	177	159	186
	Mixed beans					118						120		118	120
	Mwezi moja	169			165			180			186			167	183
	Mwitmania	170		140	149	125	136	180		150	172	125	182	144	162
	Nyayo	169	151	165	161	125		180	207	170	186	130		154	175
	Nyota beans	160						170						160	170
	Pinto beans		150						217					150	217
	Purple beans		146	145			153		183	150			200	148	177
	Red kidney		149			112	113		217			117	177	125	170
	Rosecoco	163	155	170	163	140		176	211	180	190	171		158	185
	Saitoti	170		125	153	114		180		150	180	119		138	153
	Wairimu	100	138	135	103	93	99	125	196	140	120	98	176	111	142
White Rosecoco (Alulu)	200	146	75		144	144	220	175	80		180	190	147	174	
Yellow	174						180						174	180	
Dry maize	White maize	64	56	75	57	44	49	73	64	75	79	52	75	57	69
	Yellow maize		51			87			57			89		71	75
Irish potatoes	Shangi	50	44	48	93	37	41	52	70	67	104	76	49	52	70
Rice	Ahero		146						161					146	161
	Basmati	190	173		131	147	151	220	250		152	166	180	158	194
	Biriani	154	143	130	100	116	150	200	151	140	126	150	190	132	160
	Falcon	151						162						151	162
	Fatma rice			280						300				280	300
	Mpunga			160						170				160	170
	Pakistan		146						152					146	152
	Pishori grade 1	200		200	178	150	157	230		220	195	186	190	172	201
	Pishori grade 2	200	169					220	200					185	210
	Sindano	190	163	160		150	146	200	240	170		184	173	160	192
	Sunrice			280						300				280	300
Tamtam			150						160				150	160	
Wheat	Wheat	90	76	60	67	66	66	100	90	75	83	67	100	71	86

Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of February 2024

## Wholesale and Retail Price Trends by Region

There were fluctuations in weekly prices across different regions during the first week and weeks two through four. Eldoret exhibited varied results, including increasing, decreasing, and constant prices. A comparison of wholesale prices between week 1 and week 4 revealed that most dry beans experienced price increases ranging from 1% to 7%, while Mwitmania and Wairimu beans maintained stable prices. Conversely, dry maize, Biriani, and Falcon rice saw price decreases of 14%, 15%, and 5% respectively. Shangi Irish potatoes witnessed a 7% price increase, while most rice varieties and dry beans maintained stable wholesale prices. Regarding retail prices, a comparison between week 1 and week 4 showed a mix of decreasing, stable, and increasing prices. Some dry beans maintained stable prices, while others experienced price increases ranging from 1% to 7%. Dry maize saw a decrease of 12%, while Shangi Irish potatoes experienced a 9% increase. Wheat and all available rice varieties maintained stable prices.

Similar trends were observed in Kisumu, where most food commodities exhibited stable wholesale prices, with a few showing minor fluctuations. Comparing wholesale prices between week 1 and week 4, most dry beans experienced price decreases ranging from 0.3% to 6%, while dry white and yellow maize saw decreases of 3% and 5% respectively. Conversely, Shangi Irish potatoes, Basmati rice, and Pishori grade 1 rice witnessed price increases of 8%, 0.1%, and 1% respectively. Most other rice varieties recorded decreases ranging from 0.1% to 7%, while dry wheat maintained stable prices. In terms of retail pricing, comparing week 1 to week 4 revealed a general decrease in prices for most commodities. This included all dry beans, with prices decreasing between 1% and 18%, Shangi Irish potatoes (1%), and most rice varieties showing decreases between 0.5% and 4%. Biriani rice saw an increase of 3%, while dry white and yellow maize experienced decreases of 13% and 14% respectively. Pishori grade 1 rice and wheat maintained stable prices.

A comparison of wholesale and retail prices for Mombasa from weeks 1 to 4 revealed a significant increase of 27% and 14% in both wholesale and retail prices for Shangi Irish potatoes. In contrast, all other food items, such as various dry beans, white maize, rice varieties, and wheat, exhibited no change in either wholesale or retail prices during the same period. This price stability can be attributed to consistent imports from countries like Tanzania, Uganda, and Pakistan, as well as the availability of food commodities from nearby producing regions.

## FOCUS ON POTATOES ACROSS SELECTED REGIONS

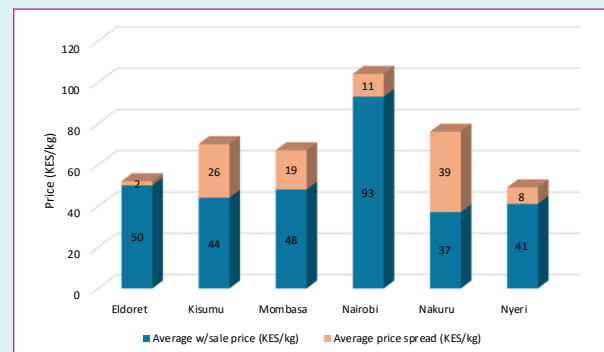
Potato farming in Kenya is not only a lucrative agricultural venture but also a vital component of the country's food security and economy. With its dual role as a staple food and a cash crop, potatoes have seen a rapid increase in production driven by factors such as urbanization and the growth of fast-food industries. Primarily cultivated in the Highland areas of Kiambu, Nakuru, and Uasin Gishu, potato farming also thrives in regions like Nyandarua, Nyeri, West Pokot, and Keiyo Marakwet.

The demand for potatoes is expected to continue rising alongside urbanization trends. Potatoes are favored for their ease of cooking and affordability, making them a popular choice in fast-food establishments, particularly among the middle class. Kenya boasts a variety of potato types, with the white variety being commonly used for making French fries due to its sweeter taste and shorter shelf life compared to the red type. Unlike many other vegetables, Irish potatoes in Kenya are not grown from seeds but from tubers.

In February 2024, the prices of Irish potatoes varied across regions, with Nairobi recording higher wholesale and retail prices of 93 KES/kg and 104 KES/kg, respectively. Nakuru also saw higher retail prices of 76 KES/kg. Factors such as seasonality, increased demand, rising fuel prices affecting transportation costs, and the involvement of middlemen all contribute to the fluctuation in potato prices.

Potato prices exhibit volatility, fluctuating significantly between harvest and off-harvest seasons. This volatility complicates marketing strategies for farmers, who must decide when to sell to maximize returns. Storing potatoes carries the risk of spoilage (Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, 2022)

**Figure 1: Average wholesale and price spread of potatoes (KES/kg) in selected regions**



Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of February 2024.

In the Nairobi region, most commodities experienced rising wholesale and retail prices when comparing prices from week 1 to week 4. Wholesale prices for all commodities increased, except for Nyayo beans, which remained stable. Dry beans saw price increases ranging from 0.5% to 8%, maize increased by 3%, Shangi Irish potatoes by 4%, wheat by 7%, and available rice recorded increases between 0.7% and 13%. Similarly, retail prices followed a similar upward

trend, with most commodities experiencing price increases. This increase in prices in the densely populated, non-producing city can be attributed to rising demand, increased fuel costs leading to higher transportation expenses, and the involvement of middlemen.

Price comparisons between weeks one and four in Nakuru revealed mixed findings, with certain food commodity prices experiencing increases, decreases, or remaining unchanged, while most commodities recorded declining prices. Among wholesale prices, commodities that experienced reductions included Shangi Irish potatoes (23%), Basmati rice (10%), Pishori rice (6%), Sindano rice (3%), and dry wheat (3%). Some dry beans witnessed price increases ranging between 5% and 19%, whereas Army green, Mwitemania, Rosecoco, and Nyayo beans maintained stable prices. White and yellow beans saw an increase in prices of 4% and 19%, respectively. The Nakuru region, being one of the major producing regions, experiences declining prices due to the availability of food commodities.

When comparing costs from week one to week four, Nyeri witnessed both price rises and decreases for wholesale prices, with the majority experiencing increases, along with a mix of stable, increasing, and decreasing retail prices. Commodities that observed increasing wholesale prices included Black beans (Njahi) (1%), Mwitemania (0.3%), Biriani rice (3.6%), and wheat (0.1%). Meanwhile, commodities that experienced decreasing wholesale prices

encompassed dry beans, ranging between 2% and 19%, dry white maize (2%), and rice, with variations between 1% and 3%. Particularly noteworthy was the significant 29% increase in the wholesale price of Shangi Irish potatoes, attributed to factors such as scarcity, high demand, seasonality, and the involvement of middlemen. Retail prices exhibited a combination of stable, increasing, and decreasing trends, with the majority showing increases. All dry beans recorded increasing retail prices ranging between 3% and 8%, while dry white maize saw a decrease of 0.4%. Notably, Shangi Irish potatoes registered a significant increase of 27% in retail prices. Dry wheat and all available rice varieties maintained stable prices, except for Sindano rice, which saw an increase of 3%

## Comparison of National Average Prices between January and February

Comparing overall prices (national averages for all commodities) for January and February 2023 reveals that most of the wholesale and retail prices remained stable, with few experiencing decreases or increases (Table 2). Most commodities exhibited stable retail and wholesale prices within a range of 3% and -5%. The stability or slight decline in wholesale and retail prices for most commodities between January and February can be attributed to the availability of food commodities from various producing areas and imports from neighboring East African countries and beyond.

**Table 2: Comparison of January and February prices**

Product	Variety	Average Wholesale Price (Kes/Kg)			Average Retail Price (Kes/ Kg)		
		Jan-24	Feb-24	Percentage change	Jan-24	Feb-24	Percentage change
Dry beans	Army green	172	170	-1%	185	177	-4%
	Black beans (Njahi)	171	172	1%	198	193	-3%
	Green/yellow	164	159	-3%	187	186	-1%
	Mixed beans	108	118	9%	109	120	10%
	Mwezi moja	155	167	8%	180	183	2%
	Mwitmania	145	144	-1%	165	162	-2%
	Nyayo	150	154	3%	175	175	0%
	Nyota beans	150	160	7%	170	170	0%
	Pinto beans	152	150	-1%	220	217	-1%
	Red kidney	131	125	-5%	177	170	-4%
	Rosecoco	160	158	-1%	186	185	-1%
	Saitoti	140	138	-1%	156	153	-2%
	Wairimu	110	111	1%	141	142	1%
	White beans	177	147	-17%	200	174	-13%
	Yellow	175	174	-1%	190	180	-5%
Dry maize	White maize	59	57	-3%	72	69	-4%
	Yellow maize	68	71	4%	76	75	-1%
Irish potatoes	Shangi	49	52	6%	66	70	6%
Rice	Ahero	145	146	1%	166	161	-3%
	Basmati	162	158	-2%	195	194	-1%
	Biriani	132	132	0%	160	160	0%
	Falcon	150	151	1%	160	162	1%
	Fatma rice	280	280	0%	300	300	0%
	Mpunga	160	160	0%	170	170	0%
	Pakistan	137	146	7%	151	152	1%
	Pishori grade 1	171	172	1%	201	201	0%
	Pishori grade 2	184	185	1%	209	210	0%
	Sindano	160	160	0%	196	192	-2%
	Sunrice	280	280	0%	300	300	0%
	Tamtam	150	150	0%	160	160	0%
Wheat	Wheat	71	71	0%	87	86	-1%

Key	
<3 but >-5	Stable
>-5 but >-17	Decrease
>=5 but <10	Slight decrease

Source: Daily Market Survey for the month February 2024

## FOCUS ON NAIROBI REGION

Nairobi, Kenya's bustling capital city, situated in the southeastern part of the country, is a dynamic and diverse urban center. It stands as the nation's primary economic, political, and cultural nucleus, drawing individuals from various corners of Kenya and beyond. As the most populous city in Kenya, Nairobi holds significant importance as the epicenter of the country's economic and cultural activities.

The city's food supply is sourced from various regions within Kenya, as well as through imports from neighboring East African nations and other local and international producers. Pricing data for key agricultural commodities was gathered from two major wholesale markets in Nairobi: Nyamakima and Wakulima (Marikiti). Nyamakima market, operating from 6 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every day, serves as a vital hub for grains, while Wakulima market specializes in fresh produce.

Maize originates from regions such as Kitale, Nakuru, Narok, and Namanga (at the Kenya-Tanzania border), while beans come primarily from Busia (at the Kenya-Uganda border) and Namanga. Rice is sourced from Mombasa and Kirinyaga Counties, with the latter being home to the Mwea irrigation scheme. Wheat production centers around Narok and Namanga. Additionally, various rice varieties are imported from Asian countries like India, Pakistan, and Vietnam. Irish potatoes are predominantly traded at the Marikiti wholesale market, which operates throughout the day for retailers and opens in the early hours (3-5 a.m.) for wholesalers. The market attracts a diverse array of traders, including farmers, wholesalers, brokers, retailers, vendors, and porters transporting goods to various bus stops. Irish potatoes primarily come from Narok County, Kinangop, and Nyahuru County.

**Table 3: Average Retail and Wholesale Prices, Nairobi Region**

Product	Variety	Average w/sale price (KES/kg)				Total average w/sale price (KES/kg)	Total average retail price (KES/kg)
		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4		
Dry beans	Black beans (Njahi)	171	178	178	177	175	198
	Butter beans			256	256	256	260
	Green/yellow	164	162	165	167	164	187
	Mwezi moja	161	167	167	167	165	186
	Mwiternania	144	150	150	156	149	172
	Nyayo	161	161	161	161	161	186
	Rosecoco	163	163	163	164	163	190
	Saitoti	153				153	180
	Wairimu	104	100	102	106	103	120
	White maize	57	56	59		57	79
Dry maize							
Irish potatoes	Shangi	92	93	95	95	93	104
Rice	Basmati	131	130	131	132	131	152
	Birani	92	104	104	104	100	126
	Pishori grade 1	175	178	180	180	178	195
Wheat	Wheat	66	67	69	70	67	83

Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of February 2024.

## Outlook for the Month of March

The projected changes are outlined for the month of January:

- Food commodity prices are expected to decrease from February to April as the government plans to import maize and rice.
- Import costs for food commodities are expected to decrease as the Kenyan Shilling continues to strengthen against the dollar.
- Irish potato prices are anticipated to rise in late March due to heightened demand during the Easter festivities.



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## ABOUT THIS SERIES

The Food Security Portal (FSP), facilitated by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), aims to improve food security for the world's poor and increase the resilience of global food systems against food and financial crisis. The project brings together international, regional, and country-level data, news, and research aimed at meeting countries' immediate food security needs and building long-term global food security. The FSP is designed to pool information in structured ways to ensure high-quality, timely, and relevant data and to provide the opportunity for collaboration among policymakers, development professionals, and researchers.

This report is part of the FSP's efforts to monitor country-level food prices in order to improve the governments' ability to respond to and prevent food crises. It presents monthly price trends and movements for key food commodities, including dry beans, dry maize, rice, wheat, and Irish potatoes, in selected major regions and markets in Kenya.

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## DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu, and Nyeri regions of Kenya. These regions comprise the key markets in major urban centers. The five selected commodities comprise the major staple foods in Kenya<sup>1</sup>.

Data assistants, some of whom were traders, collected average daily wholesale and retail prices from the main markets of the selected regions. Data was collected daily for six days (Mondays to Saturdays) from stockists/wholesalers and traders in the morning hours.

During the last week of the month, the following qualitative data were captured:

- General observations on food prices during the month, including price variations and the lowest, highest, and prevailing wholesale and retail prices
- The source of food commodities and their availability throughout the month
- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as government restrictions including curfews and cessation of movement, on food prices and availability (both supply and demand)
- Traders' adaptation strategies to the COVID-19 pandemic, including sourcing and selling

Additional secondary data was obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Government Food Security War Room (FSWR), Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries (MoALF), and Regional Agriculture Trade Intelligence Network (RATIN).

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<sup>1</sup> NB: While the report covers wheat, consumption of that commodity in Kenya is comprised mainly of wheat products (flours, pastries, and highly processed foods) rather than raw wheat itself.

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