FOOD SECURITY PORTAL FACILITATED BY IFPRI

SUPPORTED BY European Commission

FOOD PRICE MONITOR: MAIZE AND RICE IN EAST AFRICA

AUGUST 2024

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

Highlights

- Across all the countries, there was a slight increase in maize wholesale and retail prices from July to August, except Kenya, which experienced a decline in maize prices due to increased supply and carryover stock from the previous harvest. Generally, all countries experienced a year-on-year decline in maize prices due to the increased seasonal supply and favorable weather conditions.

- Tanzania remains a significant source of Maize in Eastern and Southern Africa, and in August, it supplied countries such as Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda. Increased exports partly explain the increase in maize prices observed.

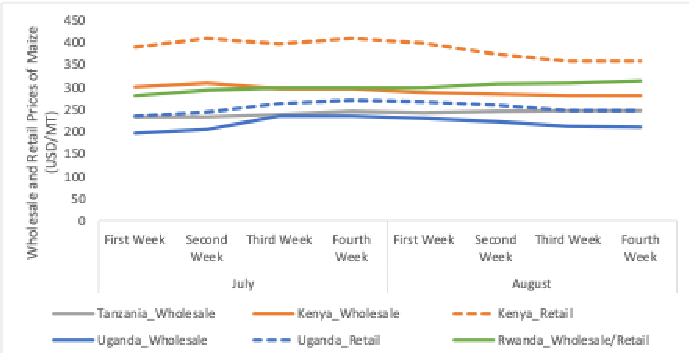
- There was a decline in the price of rice across all East African countries, with a minor increase in price in Kenya. In contrast, imported prices were relatively stable across the East African countries.

- Government interventions continue to affect the prevailing prices in the local market. In Kenya, the Government imposed a two percent tax on imported cereals, while the Government of Rwanda increased the farm gate price cap for Maize. In Tanzania, the National Food Reserve Agency purchased a significant amount of Maize from farmers and only released two percent of it to traders.

Changing Maize Prices in East Africa

The price of Maize was highest in Kenya, particularly in retail prices, followed by Rwanda, and it was lowest in Uganda across July and August (Figure 1 below). Compared to July, there was a gradual increase in the average weekly price of Maize for most countries, particularly after the second week. Nevertheless, prices in Kenya declined in the third and fourth weeks of August. (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Average wholesale and retail price of maize in East Africa (July - August 2024)



Source: Authors' construction using data from the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade for Tanzania, eSoKo for Rwanda Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya and Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda

Maize's average monthly retail and wholesale prices (Table 1) only dropped in Kenya but increased in other countries. The monthly retail average price in Kenya dropped by 7.9 percent from USD 401/MT in July to USD 372/MT in August. The price drop was due to the previous season's carryover stock, the bountiful harvest in August, and expected imports as projected by the Government (Ndirangu, 2024).

In Uganda, the retail prices slightly rose by 0.9 percent from USD 253/MT in July to USD 255/MT in August despite Uganda having the lowest prices in the region. Similarly, the wholesale prices experienced a slight increase of 0.6 percent from USD 217/MT in July to USD 219/MT in August 2024. The slight price increase in Uganda following several months of declining prices can be attributed to low production in the 2024 first-season harvest that ended in July(FAO,2024). In Rwanda, the prices remained relatively stable between July and August, with a slight increase of 0.3 percent from USD 292/MT in July to USD 293/MT in August. The Government of Rwanda's decision to increase the farm gate price for Maize[1] will likely lead to expanding the area planted to Maize and rising supply. The Government of Rwanda continues to play a major role in determining prices for commodities like Maize and rice.

In Tanzania, the price of Maize increased by 3.3 percent, from USD 237/MT in July to USD 245/MT in August. There is growing demand for Maize from Tanzania from neighboring countries, including Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Malawi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Zambia (The Guardian, 2024). Tanzania is a key source of maize exports in the Eastern and Southern African regions with surplus production. In 2023, Tanzania produced 8.1 million tonnes of Maize against a demand of 6 million tonnes, the excess of which was for exports. In 2024, an excess surplus of Maize was anticipated to be 4 million tonnes(The Guardian, 2024).

Comparing the prices in July 2024 with the same month in July 2023, there is an overall decline in prices across the East African countries between the two periods. Maize's retail and wholesale prices in Kenya dropped by 18.9 percent and 29.8 percent, respectively. In Uganda, retail prices experienced a more significant decrease of 41.8 percent and 32.3 percent for retail and wholesale prices, respectively. This can partly be explained by the limited exports to neighboring countries and sufficient carryover stocks from the previous harvests (FAO,2024). In Rwanda, compared to August last year, the maize prices dropped by 46.3 percent, and in Tanzania, the wholesale prices decreased by 39 percent. Generally, all countries experienced a year-on-year decline in maize prices due to the increased seasonal supply compared to the previous year (AGRA, 2024).

Table 1: Changes in average monthly retail and wholesale price of maize in East Africa for July - August, 2022-2024

Country	Market Levels	Monthly Average Prices July 2024	Monthly Average Prices August 2024	% Change July-August 2024	Monthly Average Prices August 2023	% Cha betw Aug 202 Aug 20
Kenya	Retail	401	372	-7.9	494	-18
Uganda	Retail	253	255	0.9	434	-41
Rwanda	Retail	292	293	0.3	544	-46
Kenya	Wholesale	300	283	-5.8	427	-29
Uganda	Wholesale	217	219	0.6	321	-32
Rwanda	Wholesale	292	293	0.3	544	-46
Tanzania	Wholesale	237	245	3.3	388	-39

Source: Authors construction using data from FSP (for Uganda), Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries (for Kenya), Ministry of Agriculture (for Tanzania), and e-SoKo (for Rwanda)

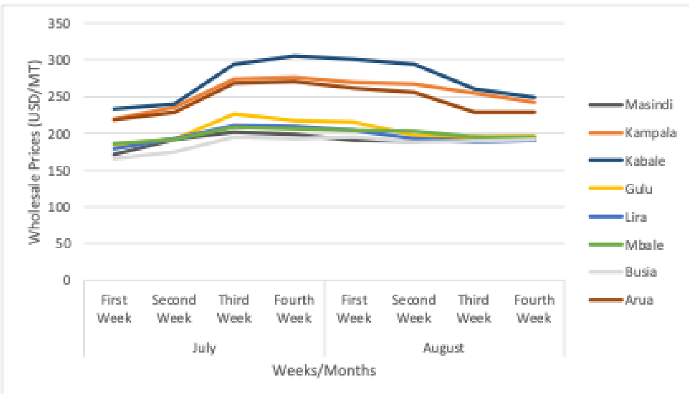
Uganda

The prices of Maize in the Masindi and Busia markets were relatively stable in August. Masindi and Busia had the lowest average prices, while Kabale had the highest. In Kampala, prices experienced a slow decline, with a small weekly margin in the first two weeks and a sharp decline in the last weeks as the first season harvest got depleted. A similar

[1] https://www.africa-press.net/rwanda/economy/govt-to-buy-26000-tonnes-of-rice-to-cushion-farmers-from-losses

trend was observed in most other markets, although Arua had the highest fluctuations over the weeks.

Figure 2: Average weekly wholesale prices of maize in selected markets in Uganda (July - August 2024)

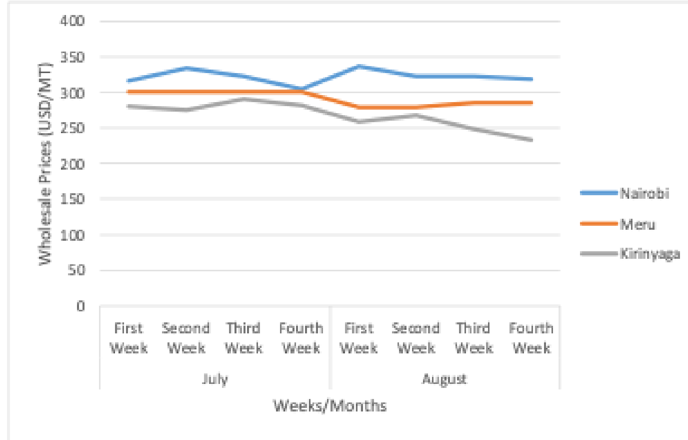


Source: Author's construction using data from the Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda

Kenya

The price of Maize was highest in Nairobi , the capital city followed by Meru and lastly Kirinyaga (Figure 2). The price in Nairobi is the highest due to its location in the city thus experiencing higher demand and prices compared to Meru and Kirinyaga, which are nearer to major maize-producing areas, and therefore experience lower prices and transportation costs (Kizito & Wiggins, 2022). Additionally, the seasonal harvest period may explain the decline in the price in Kirinyaga leading to an increased local supply during this period.

Figure 3: Average weekly retail prices of maize in selected markets in Kenya (July - August 2024)

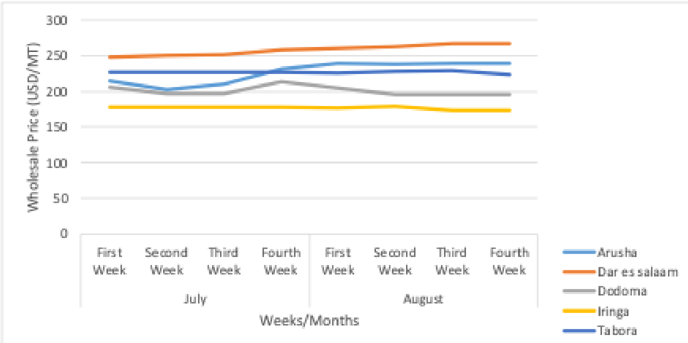


Source: Authors' construction using data from the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya.

Tanzania

In Tanzania, prices were highest in Dar es Salaam and lowest in Iringa (Figure 4). The price started at USD 260/MT in early August and rose slightly to USD 267/MT by the fourth week in Dar es Salaam. The prices in Arusha, Iringa, and Tabora averaged USD 239/MT, USD 176/MT, and USD 227 /MT, respectively. Overall, prices were stable in most markets from July to August which can be explained by National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) 's purchase of Maize from the local markets as a way to stabilize prices (Bank of Tanzania,2024). In August, NFRA purchased 118,625 tonnes of Maize sourced from Rukwa, Songwe, Arusha, Njombe and Ruvuma regions and 2,421 tonnes of Maize was released to traders. In this way, the Government plays a significant role in regulating the prevailing maize prices in the local markets (The Guardian, 2024).

Figure 4: Average weekly retail prices of maize in selected markets in Tanzania (July - August 2024)



Source: Author's construction using data from the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade for Tanzania

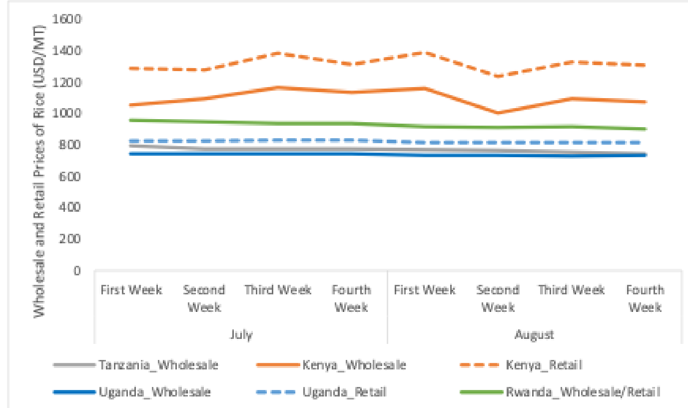
Changing Rice Prices in East Africa

The price of rice remained relatively stable in Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania. Only Kenya witnessed price fluctuations. The retail rice prices remained the highest in Kenya, fluctuating between USD 1,387/MT and USD 1,1305 /MT in August. Prices were highest in the first week, dipped in the second week, and rose again in the third week, averaging USD1314 /MT in August's third and fourth weeks. The wholesale prices followed a similar trend, showing an increase in price from the last week in July, then a dip in price in the second week, and finally rising in the third week, averaging at USD 1.080/MT in the last two weeks of August.

In Uganda, the retail price of rice remained relatively stable, ranging from between USD 824 /MT and USD/MT 812/MT between July and August. There were also minimal week-to-week price changes in July and August, indicating relatively low prices. Wholesale prices also remained stable at an average of USD 736/MT throughout July and August, fluctuating between USD 743 /MT and USD 729/MT. No significant price increases or drops were observed.

In Rwanda, the price of rice had a steady, slow decrease from the first week of July at USD 955 /MT to USD 899 /MT in the last week of August, and prices were relatively stable within the weeks, indicating a slow and steady decrease between the two months. The Government of Rwanda is also considering purchasing 26000 tonnes of rice from farmers to cushion them from low demand, which might keep prices steady. In Tanzania, there were more significant weekly price fluctuations in August than in July; prices decreased from USD 768/MT in the first week to USD 740/MT in the last week.

Figure 5: Weekly average wholesale and retail prices of rice in East Africa (July - August 2024)



Source: Authors' construction using data from the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade for Tanzania, eSoKo for Rwanda and the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya and the Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda.

Overall, average monthly retail prices remained relatively stable in Kenya but declined slightly in Uganda, while wholesale prices declined across all countries, with Rwanda experiencing the most significant drop (Table 2). The decline in the monthly average price of rice results is due to availability of domestic food stock, which has boosted the availability of food commodities like rice in the market (Ndirangu,2024). In Uganda, there was a drop in retail prices by 1.7 percent from July 2024 to August 2024. The average monthly wholesale price also dropped by 1.7 percent from USD 742/MT to 730/MT. In Rwanda, the retail price of rice dropped by 3.4 percent between July and August 2024 due to the bumper harvests and available unsold rice stock. Trader's preferences to purchase lower-priced imported rice rather than domestically produced rice comes with the expectation of making more profits.

In Tanzania, the average monthly wholesale prices decreased by 2.8 percent from USD 777 /MT to USD 755/MT in August 2024 due to the bumper domestic harvest from May to September (FEWSNET,2024).

Compared to the same month last year, there was a decline in the average monthly price of rice across all the countries except Kenya (Table 2). The decline in the price of rice was highest in Uganda (34.9 percent) for wholesale, followed by Rwanda (31.5 percent). Tanzania had the lowest decrease (22.2 percent). However, Kenya had an increase of 12.8 percent for retail and 4.1 percent for wholesale prices.

Table 2: Monthly retail and wholesale price changes of rice in East Africa (July - August 2024, August 2023, and August 2022)

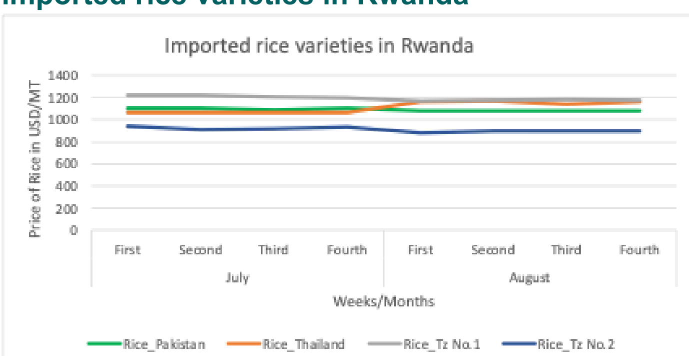
Country	Market Levels	Monthly Average Prices July 2024	Monthly Average Prices August 2024	% Change July & August 2024	Monthly Average Prices August 2023	% Change August 2023 & August 2024
Kenya	Retail	1311	1313	0.1	1164	12.8
Uganda	Retail	825	811	-1.7	1142	-29.0
Rwanda	Retail	942	910	-3.4	1328	-31.5
Kenya	Wholesale	1109	1079	-2.8	1036	4.1
Uganda	Wholesale	742	730	-1.7	1120	-34.9
Rwanda	Wholesale	942	910	-3.4	1328	-31.5
Tanzania	Wholesale	777	755	-2.8	970	-22.2

Source: Author's construction using data from the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade for Tanzania, eSoKo for Rwanda Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya and Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda

From July to August, imported rice prices in Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya remained relatively stable for all the rice varieties, including rice from Tanzania and Asia. The imported rice price from India is expected to decrease across all countries following the speculation that India will remove the export ban following surplus rice stock and an expected increase in rice harvest from the monsoon rains (Das,2024)

In Rwanda, the price of imported rice varieties was stable from July to August, except for Rice from Thailand (Figure 6). For the other varieties, minor fluctuations only occurred between the fourth and the first week of August.

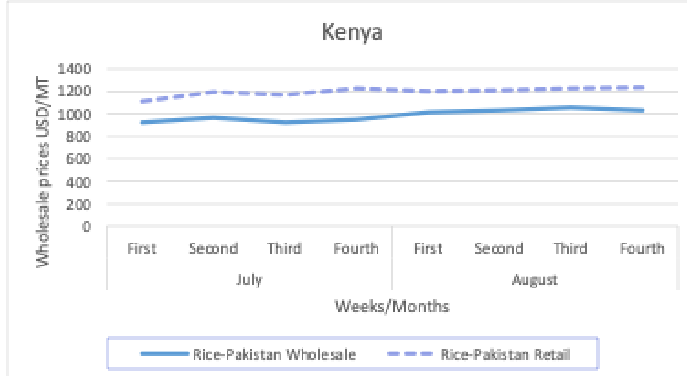
Figure 6: Weekly average wholesale price of imported rice varieties in Rwanda



Source: Author's construction using data from eSoKo for Rwanda of the Ministry of Agriculture

In Kenya, there was a slow, gradual increase in the wholesale price of imported rice from July to August. Kenya's agriculture and food authority introduced a new two percent tax on imported cereals starting in August (Kitimo, 2024), possibly explaining the upward shift in the price of Pakistan rice from the second week of August.

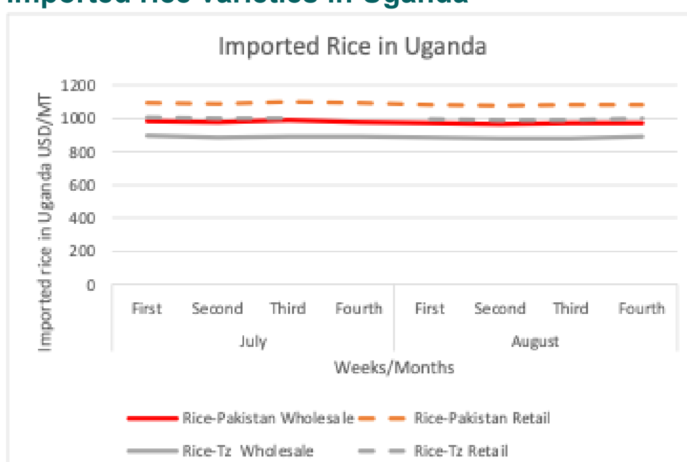
Figure 6: Weekly average wholesale price of imported rice varieties in Kenya



Source: Analysis using data from the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya

In Uganda, imported Pakistani and Tanzanian rice had relatively stable wholesale and retail prices from July to August. The Tanzanian wholesale price averaged USD 884/MT and the retail price averaged USD 995/MT. Pakistan's wholesale price was also relatively stable, averaging at USD 970/MT, and retail price was USD 1081 /MT. This could also be explained by the very slight drop in the fuel prices of 0.3 percent in August (UBOS,2024).

Figure 7: Weekly average wholesale price of imported rice varieties in Uganda



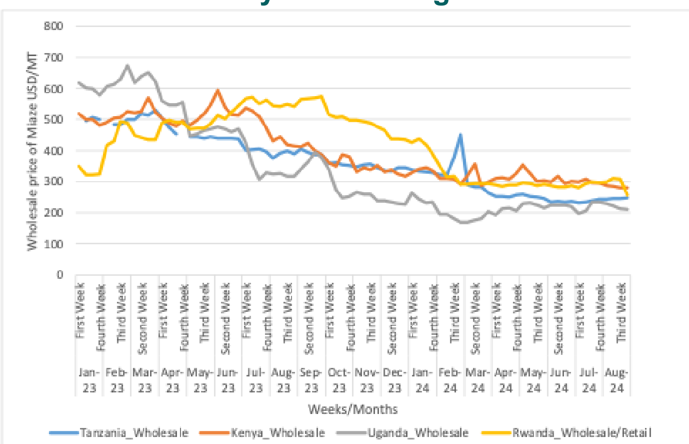
Source: Author's construction using data from the Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda

Summary and Future Outlook

The year-on-year price differences show a decline in the price of Maize across all the East African countries from August 2023 to August 2024, with the price of Maize being persistently low in Uganda across the years and Kenya having the highest price in August (Figure 8). This decline is due to the abundant previous harvests in 2024 compared to 2023 (FAO,2024b). Uganda continues to have the lowest price of Maize due to bountiful harvests. However, in the past four months, the price of Maize reversed from the downward trend and started increasing slightly (see figure below). The prices, however, remain lower than they were at the start of

2023. So, the cost of Maize will remain low in Uganda in the subsequent months, although the late start of the second rainy season in September (FAO, 2024a) might signal increasing prices in the following months due to low supply. In Kenya, the surplus of Maize in stock of 31.07 million (50 Kg) bags will cushion the country from fluctuating prices. Tanzania continues to be the leading exporter of Maize in East Africa, and it is currently extending its supply to South African countries like Zambia and Malawi. For instance, in July, Tanzania announced its intention to export 650,000 tons of Maize to Zambia due to prolonged drought in Zambia. This could reduce stock and translate into increased maize prices in East African countries (The Guardian,2024).

Figure 8: Weekly average wholesale prices of maize from January 2023 to August 2024

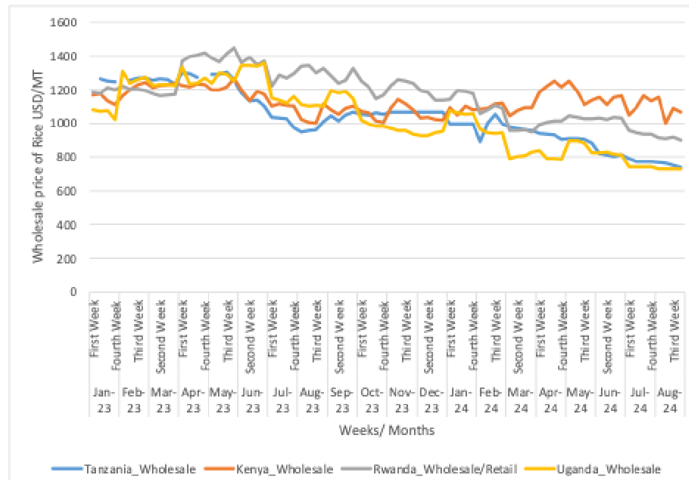


Source: Author's construction using data from the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade for Tanzania, eSoKo for Rwanda Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya and Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda

For the price of rice, the trends in the wholesale price (USD/MT) across Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda from January 2023 to August 2024 (Figure 9 below) are characterized by fluctuations and country variation (Figure 9). Overall prices were relatively stable in early 2023, but around mid-2023, there were sharp drops in prices in different parts of the country, especially in Uganda, followed by Rwanda. For Tanzania, the prices seemed to decline smoothly and steadily throughout the period, remaining consistently lower than the rest of the countries. Prices in Kenya, by contrast, were much more erratic and began to follow an upward trend at the end of 2024.

In Rwanda, the Government has revealed its intention to set up a permanent agency to purchase all cereals that lack a market to cater for periods of scarce supply (Africa Press,2024), which will curb likely price fluctuations in the country. The price of imported rice within the region is externally determined by factors such as global supply and prevailing exchange rates. In such a case, the East African countries might benefit from lower prices of imported rice. India, one of its major importers, is expected to remove the ban on its rice exports following surplus production (Das,2024).

Figure 9: Weekly average wholesale and retail price of rice from January 2023 to August 2024



Source: Author's construction using data from the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade for Tanzania, eSoKo for Rwanda Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya and Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda

Data and Methodology

Data for wholesale and retail prices of rice and maize for Uganda and Tanzania were obtained from the (1) Food security Portal (FSP)[2] facilitated by the International Food Policy Research Institute, (2) Kenya Market Information System [3] sourced for the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Co-operatives (MALF) for Kenya, and e-Soko (3)[4] for Rwanda. Also, we maintain that the data source for commodity prices for Rwanda neither indicates whether the prices are retail or wholesale. Further, the data for Kenya and Rwanda were collected in the local currencies, measured in Kshs/Kg and Rwf/Kg, and converted to USD/MT. Additionally, we averaged the weekly and daily wholesale

[2] The Food Security Portal data for East African countries is from the Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network (RATIN) and is available at food price monitoring Africa weekly average - dataset - [ckan (foodsecurityportal.org)](http://foodsecurityportal.org)

[3] Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Co-operatives, Kenyan Market Information System. Data available via http://amis.co.ke/site/market/900?product=1&per_page=100

[4] e-SOKO price data is available from the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources of the Republic of Rwanda: http://www.esoko.gov.rw/esoko/Dashboard/Login.aspx?DashboardId=4&dash=true&Login=true

and retail prices of maize and rice across the markets for each country in East Africa while drawing comparisons between January and February. We also analysed within-country weekly average wholesale prices of maize in selected markets of Uganda and Kenya. We also computed monthly average changes in rice wholesale and retail prices between January and February for the East African region to quantify any changes in the two periods. Finally, we constructed graphs of wholesale and retail prices of domestically produced and imported rice for Uganda and Rwanda.

References

Africa Press. (2024, January 10). Govt to buy 26,000 tonnes of rice to cushion farmers from losses. *Africa Press.* Retrieved December 10, 2025, from https://www.africa-press.net/rwanda/economy/govt-to-buy-26000-tonnes-of-rice-to-cushion-farmers-from-losses

Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. (2024, September). *Food security monitor: August issue, edition 50.* Retrieved from https://agra.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Food-Security-Monitor_August-Issue-Editon-50_Final-120924.pdf

Bank of Tanzania. (2024). *Monthly economic review.* Retrieved January 10, 2025, from https://www.bot.go.tz/Publications/Regular/Monthly%20Economic%20Review

Das, S. (2024, October 23). Govt may consider lifting curbs on rice exports. *Financial Express.* https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-govt-may-consider-lifting-curbs-on-rice-exports-3485291/

Famine Early Warning Systems Network. (2024, August). *Price watch: August 2024.* FEWS NET. Retrieved December 7, 2025, from https://fews.net/global/price-watch/august-2024

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2024a). *GIEWS country brief: Uganda.* Retrieved December 12, 2025, from https://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=UGA

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2024b). *Rwanda: Country brief.* Global Information and Early Warning System. Retrieved January 10, 2025, from FAO GIEWS website.

Kitimo, A. (2024, August 25). Rice, wheat flour prices to rise on new cereals' custom levy. *Business Daily*. https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/economy/rice-wheat-flour-prices-to-rise-on-new-cereals-custom-levy-4738890

Ndirangu, W. (2024, July 24). 24.5 million bags of Maize to be harvested from the long rains. *Kenya News Agency.* Retrieved October 15, 2025, from https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/24-5-million-bags-of-maize-to-be-harvested-from-the-long-rains

The Guardian. (2024, October 7). Demands for export markets spur maize prices. *IPP Media.* Retrieved November 16, 2025, from https://www.ippmedia.com/the-guardian/business/read/demands-for-export-markets-spur-maize-prices-2024-10-06-154836

Uganda Bureau of Statistics. (2024). *Consumer price index (CPI) press release: August 2024.* Retrieved from https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/CPI-Press-Release-August-2024.pdf

About the authors

Annet Adong: Center for Development Research, University of Bonn Germany

Ronald Ochen and Jolly Achola: Makerere University, Kampala Uganda

INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

A world free of hunger and malnutrition

IFPRI is a CGIAR Research Center

1201 Eye Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005 USA | T. +1-202-862-5600 | F. +1-202-862-5606 | Email: ifpri@cgiar.org | www.ifpri.org | www.ifpri.info