



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

- ▶ Maize prices increased across most countries except Rwanda. In Kenya, prices rose sharply by price increases 12% over 3 months and 24% year-on-year, driven by structural supply deficits and high demand.
- ▶ Uganda experienced a moderate increase of 10% to 13%, driven by cross-border demand, particularly exports to Kenya and South Sudan.
- ▶ Tanzania had gradual relative stability but remained elevated in the long term due to export pressures.
- ▶ Rice prices remained relatively stable, with slight increases linked to global market conditions.
- ▶ In Kenya & Tanzania, rice prices rose sharply in February, driven by import costs and exchange rates. While rice prices in Uganda & Rwanda remained relatively stable, with only small increases.
- ▶ The region continues to face risks, including climate variability, high input costs, exchange rate pressures, and geopolitical tensions.

- Fuel prices remain a key transmission channel for food inflation, driven by rising energy costs that increase transportation, processing, and distribution costs, particularly for bulky staples like Maize. Recent global developments in 2026 indicate that energy price shocks linked to geopolitical tensions are already feeding into food price inflation (Reuters, 2026).

Changing Maize Prices in East Africa

Maize prices across East Africa showed mixed but generally upward movements between December 2025 and February 2026, reflecting tightening domestic supply conditions alongside broader regional pressures (Figure 1).

In Kenya, wholesale prices increased from USD 360/MT in the first week of December to over USD 420/MT by early February, while retail prices peaked at USD 572/MT in the third week of February. This sharp rise indicates tightening domestic supply conditions and strong consumer demand, consistent with recent findings that Kenya continues to face structural maize deficits and persistent inflationary pressures (AGRA, 2026).

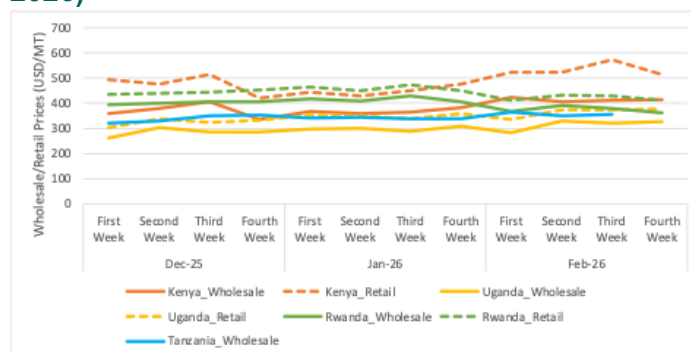
In Uganda, wholesale prices rose more gradually from USD 262 in early December to about USD 327/MT by late February, while retail prices increased from USD 302/MT to about USD 375/MT. This relatively moderate increase reflects Uganda's role as a regional surplus producer, although prices are increasingly influenced by cross-border demand from deficit countries such as Kenya and South Sudan. Recent evidence confirms that Uganda has experienced only modest month-on-month increases (around 2–3%), driven by strengthening regional demand rather than domestic shortages (AGRA, 2026).

In Rwanda, prices exhibit a declining trend toward February, with wholesale prices falling from around USD 406–417/MT in January to about USD 363 by late February, and retail prices also easing. This aligns with recent regional evidence showing that Rwanda is one of the few countries experiencing year-on-year price declines (about –13%), likely due to improved domestic supply and policy interventions (AGRA, 2026).

In Tanzania, wholesale prices increased steadily from USD 321 in early December to about USD 364 in February, reflecting stable but tightening supply conditions. While month-on-month changes appear modest, recent data show that Tanzanian maize prices remain elevated over the medium term (20–24% higher over 3–12 months), suggesting sustained regional demand pressures (AGRA, 2026).

Overall, Figure 1 underscores that maize markets in the region remain highly vulnerable to both domestic and external pressures, including climate variability, rising fuel and fertilizer costs, and exchange rate fluctuations. Recent evidence confirms that despite relatively stable global cereal supplies, localized constraints and cost-push factors continue to sustain high food prices across Sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, 2026; World Bank, 2025; AGRA, 2026).

Figure 1: Average wholesale and retail price of maize in East Africa (December 2025 - February 2026)



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

The monthly average price data reveal divergent maize price dynamics across East Africa between December 2025 and February 2026, with most countries experiencing moderate to strong price increases, while Rwanda recorded declining trends (Table 1).

In Kenya, retail prices rose from USD 476/MT in December 2025 to USD 533/MT in February 2026, representing an 11.9% increase over the period and a substantial 24% rise year-on-year. This sharp increase highlights persistent structural supply deficits and strong domestic demand, consistent with recent 2026 evidence showing that Kenya continues to face elevated maize prices due to production shortfalls and high input costs (AGRA, 2026). Similarly, Uganda recorded a 12.6% increase in retail prices between December and February, rising from USD 324/MT to USD 365/MT, alongside a 12% year-on-year increase. While Uganda is typically a surplus producer, the observed price increases reflect growing cross-border demand and rising marketing costs, particularly transportation and fuel. Recent assessments confirm that even surplus markets are increasingly exposed to regional demand pressures and cost-push inflation (World Bank, 2025).

In contrast, Rwanda experienced a 8.4% decline in retail prices, dropping from USD 459 in January to USD 420 in

February 2026, although prices remain slightly higher than the previous year's 4% increase. This decline suggests improved domestic supply conditions and/or effective market interventions, positioning Rwanda as an outlier in the region. Similar patterns have been observed in recent regional monitoring, where Rwanda exhibited relative price stability due to better supply management and policy controls (FAO, 2026).

Wholesale markets largely mirror retail trends but with slightly lower volatility. Kenya’s wholesale prices increased by 11.7%, from USD 370/MT in December to USD 413/MT in February, reflecting a 23% year-on-year increase and reinforcing evidence of sustained supply constraints. In Uganda, wholesale prices rose from USD 285/MT to USD 315/MT, reflecting a 10.6% increase, while Tanzania recorded a more modest increase of 5.6%, suggesting relatively stronger domestic supply buffers. However, Tanzania’s 16% year-on-year increase indicates that prices remain elevated due to regional export demand and broader cost pressures. By contrast, Rwanda again diverges, with wholesale prices declining by 9.7% and showing a slight year-on-year decrease (-2%). This reinforces the observation that Rwanda’s maize market is currently less exposed to the upward pressures affecting neighboring countries.

Table 1: Changes in average monthly retail and wholesale price of maize in East Africa for December 2025 – February 2026

Country	Market Levels				% Change		% Change
		Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Dec-25 & Feb 26	Feb-25	
Kenya	Retail	476	449	533	11.9%	428	24%
Uganda	Retail	324	350	365	12.6%	325	12%
Rwanda	Retail	444	459	420	-8.4%	403	4%
Kenya	Wholesale	370	368	413	11.7%	336	23%
Uganda	Wholesale	285	299	315	10.6%	295	7%
Tanzania	Wholesale	338	343	357	5.6%	307	16%
Rwanda	Wholesale	401	415	375	-9.7%	383	-2%

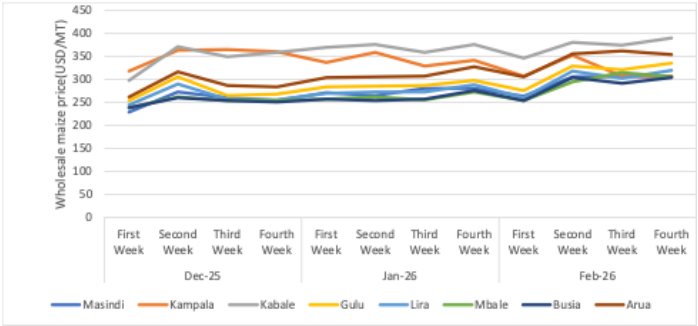
Source: Authors construction using data from FSP (for Uganda), Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries (for Kenya), Ministry of Agriculture (for Tanzania), and e-SoKo (for Rwanda)

Uganda

Maize wholesale prices across major Ugandan markets, Masindi, Kampala, Kabale, Gulu, Lira, Mbale, Busia, and Arua, show a moderate but consistent upward trend from December 2025 to February 2026, with significant variation (Figure 2). Uganda’s position as a key exporter to neighboring deficit countries continues to exert upward pressure on domestic prices. Prices were generally lowest in surplus-producing areas such as Masindi and Mbale, while higher levels were observed in deficit and urban markets, particularly Kampala and Kabale, where prices frequently exceeded USD 350–390 by February. The data also reveal a

temporary dip in early February, followed by a sharp increase in the second and third weeks, suggesting short-term supply fluctuations linked to market inflows and trader responses. Border markets such as Busia and Arua also recorded rising prices, reflecting strong cross-border demand and regional trade flows.

Figure 2: Average weekly retail prices of maize in selected markets in Uganda (December 2025 – February 2026)

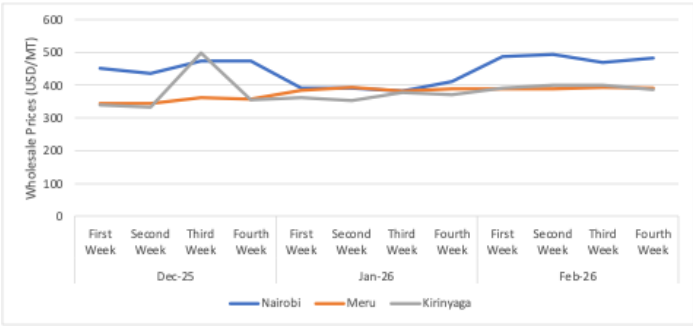


Source: Authors’ construction using data from the Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda.

Kenya

Maize wholesale prices across key Kenyan markets, Nairobi, Meru, and Kirinyaga, exhibited a clear upward trend between December 2025 and February 2026, with notable intra-month fluctuations reflecting short-term supply dynamics (Figure 3). Prices in Nairobi, the country’s main consumption hub, remained consistently higher and more volatile, rising from about USD 452/MT in early December to nearly USD 494/MT by mid-February, before stabilizing slightly toward the end of the month. Similarly, Meru and Kirinyaga recorded moderate but steady increases, with prices converging around the USD 390–400/MT range in February, suggesting tightening supply conditions across both surplus and deficit regions. The temporary decline observed in January across all markets indicates seasonal supply improvements, likely from short-harvest inflows, followed by renewed upward pressure in February as stocks tightened. Kenya exhibits sharp price increases and higher volatility, driven by supply deficits and import dependence. Recent reports indicate that reduced domestic production and increased demand, particularly from the feed industry, have sustained high maize prices in Kenya throughout 2025 (AGRA, 2026). This reinforces Kenya’s vulnerability to both regional shortages and global market disruptions.

Figure 3: Average weekly retail prices of maize in selected markets in Kenya (December 2025 – February 2026)

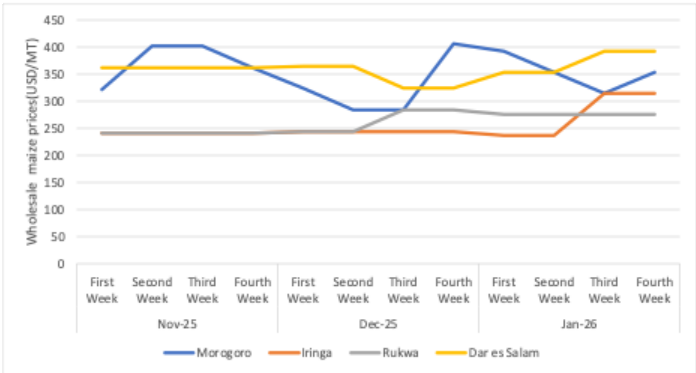


Source: Authors' construction using data from the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya.

Tanzania

Tanzania shows relatively moderate and stable price increases, suggesting stronger domestic supply conditions. However, regional demand, especially exports to Kenya, continues to exert upward pressure on domestic markets. While maize wholesale prices in Morogoro, Iringa, Rukwa, and Dar es Salaam show a pattern of relative stability between December 2025 and January 2026, there was heightened volatility experienced in February 2026. During December and January, prices remained largely unchanged across most markets, particularly in Rukwa, where prices remained constant at around USD 275/MT, indicating stable supply conditions in surplus-producing regions. In contrast, Dar es Salaam, the main consumption hub, consistently recorded higher prices, reflecting urban demand pressures and transport costs. By February, however, prices increased sharply, especially in Morogoro, which peaked at over USD 500/MT in the third week, while Dar es Salaam also saw elevated, fluctuating prices, reaching above USD 420/MT. This shift suggests tightening supply conditions and increased market uncertainty.

Figure 4: Average weekly retail prices of maize in selected markets in Tanzania (December 2025 – February 2026)



Source: Weekly Market Bulletin, Ministry of Agriculture, Tanzania

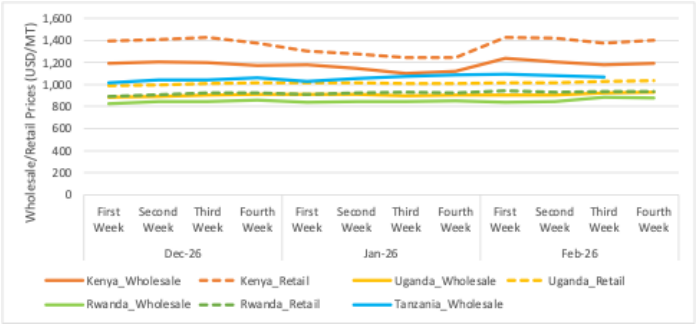
Changing Rice Prices in East Africa

Rice prices across East Africa remained relatively stable compared to Maize between December 2025 and February 2026, with only moderate fluctuations across wholesale and retail markets (Chart 6). This is primarily due to their dependence on imports and global supply chains rather than local production conditions. Also, this coincides with the slowdown in global rice prices in 2025, driven by short-term stability (World Bank, 2025). However, the observed February price increases, particularly in Kenya and Tanzania, suggest emerging pressures linked to exchange rate movements, global price adjustments, and rising logistics costs (FAO, 2026; World Bank, 2025; AGRA, 2026). In Kenya, both wholesale and retail prices declined slightly in January, followed by a rebound in February, with retail prices peaking at around USD 1,424/MT in early February, indicating sensitivity to short-term supply and import cost dynamics. Uganda’s rice prices remained largely stable throughout the period, with wholesale prices fluctuating within a narrow band (approximately USD 885–928/MT) and retail prices around USD 992–1,033/MT, reflecting relatively steady supply conditions. In Rwanda, prices rose slightly toward February, while Tanzania showed a gradual upward trend in wholesale prices, rising from about USD 1,016/MT in December to above USD 1,090/MT in February, suggesting tightening supply or rising distribution costs.

Overall, Figure 6 shows that rice markets in the region are less volatile and more stable than maize markets, primarily because they depend on imports and global supply chains rather than on local markets. However, the observed February price increases, particularly in Kenya and Tanzania, suggest emerging pressures linked to exchange rate movements, global price adjustments, and rising logistics costs.

Recent evidence (2025–2026) indicates that while global rice supplies remain adequate, renewed increases in global food prices and trade-related uncertainties are beginning to transmit into domestic markets, especially in import-dependent countries (FAO, 2026; World Bank, 2025; AGRA, 2026).

Figure 5: Weekly average wholesale and retail prices of Rice in East Africa (December 2025 – February 2026)



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

Monthly rice price data across East Africa indicate relative stability, with mild upward trends from December 2025 to February 2026, contrasting with the sharper increases observed in maize markets (Table 2). Retail prices in Kenya declined in January before rebounding to USD 1,405/MT in February, resulting in a marginal overall increase of 0.2% and a substantial 27% year-on-year rise, highlighting sustained inflationary pressures. Uganda and Rwanda recorded modest but steady increases, with retail prices rising by 1.9% and 1.5% respectively, reflecting stable supply conditions supported by imports. On the wholesale side, all countries experienced gradual increases, particularly Tanzania (3.9%), indicating tightening supply and rising transaction costs. Year-on-year comparisons show significant increases across all markets (16–27%), underscoring persistent structural pressures in rice markets despite short-term stability. Generally, rice markets in East Africa are less volatile but still experiencing gradual price escalation, largely driven by import dependence, exchange rate movements, and rising logistics costs rather than domestic production shocks (FAO, 2026; World Bank, 2025; AGRA, 2026).

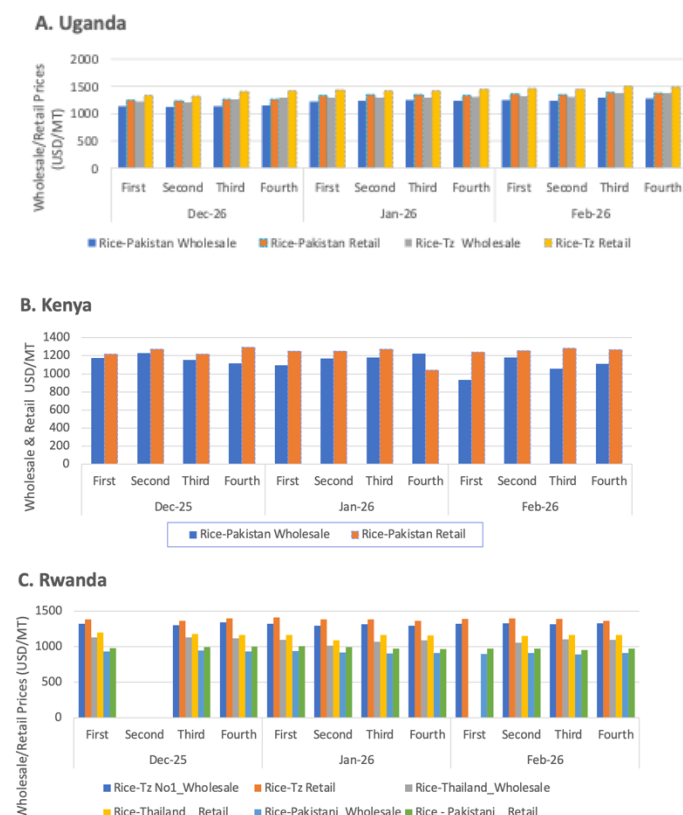
Table 2: Monthly retail and wholesale price changes of rice in East Africa (December 2025 – February 2026, February 2025, and February 2024)

Country	Market Levels	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	% Change Oct-25 & Dec-25	Dec-24	% Change Dec-24 & Dec-25
Kenya	Retail	1401	1267	1405	0.2%	1110	27%
Uganda	Retail	1003	1012	1022	1.9%	880	16%
Rwanda	Retail	914	922	936	1.5%	768	22%
Kenya	Wholesale	1191	1136	1204	1.1%	1035	16%
Uganda	Wholesale	896	906	916	2.1%	774	18%
Tanzania	Wholesale	1040	1063	1080	3.9%	850	27%
Rwanda	Wholesale	842	844	861	2.3%	683	26%

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

Prices of imported rice remained moderately stable but sensitive to macroeconomic factors, particularly exchange rates and global trade conditions. Exchange rate depreciation continues to drive food price increases by raising import costs. Evidence shows that currency volatility remains one of the strongest predictors of food inflation in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly for rice and agricultural inputs (World Bank, 2025). Recent literature shows that currency depreciation significantly increases the cost of imported food commodities in Africa, amplifying domestic inflation even when global prices are stable (World Bank, 2026).

Figure 6: Weekly average wholesale and retail prices of imported rice varieties in East Africa (Dec 2025 – Feb 2026)



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

Summary and Future Outlook

Maize prices increased notably across the majority of these countries. This upward trend can be attributed to several interconnected factors. Primarily, the region is experiencing a tight supply due to unfavorable weather conditions that are affecting crop yields. Additionally, strong regional demand for Maize, a staple in many East African diets, has further exacerbated the price increase. Costs associated with production and distribution, including fuel, fertilizer, and transportation, have also risen significantly, further compounding economic pressure on maize prices.

Rice prices, however, have remained relatively stable during this timeframe. This stability is largely because rice markets are more influenced by international imports and global market conditions rather than local agricultural production. Therefore, fluctuations in global rice supply and demand have a more substantial effect than local factors.

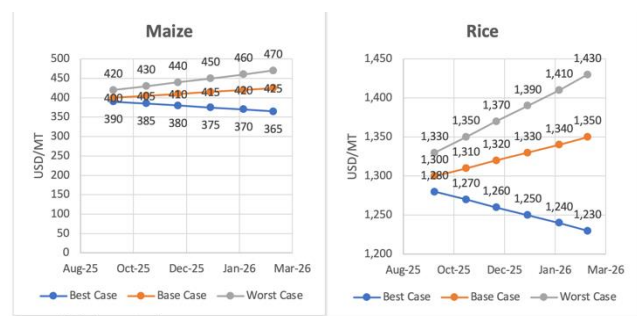
Furthermore, the report underscores the importance of various external drivers that shape the food price landscape in the region. Climate variability, including unpredictable weather patterns and extreme events, plays a critical role in agricultural productivity. Exchange rate fluctuations are also significant, as they affect the cost of imports and exports. Lastly, ongoing geopolitical tensions can create instability in markets, posing risks to food security in East Africa. The interplay of these elements is crucial to understanding the current and future dynamics of food pricing in the region.

In Figure 7, we make the following assumptions:

- In the base-case scenario, prices will follow moderate trends based on current supply and demand patterns.
- In the best-case scenario, prices remain stable or decline slightly due to favorable weather conditions, good harvests, and smooth trade flows.
- And in the worst-case scenario, prices rise sharply due to poor rainfall, supply disruptions, or higher import costs.

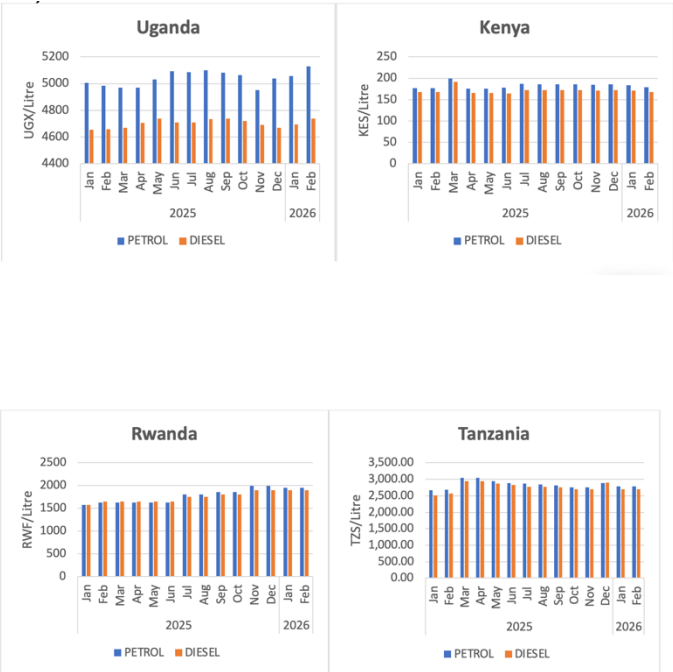
Given the ongoing geopolitical tensions exacerbated by conflicts involving the US, Iran, Israel, and Palestine, it is likely that domestic cereal prices will gravitate towards the worst-case scenario. The energy price shocks linked to these tensions are contributing to food price inflation (Reuters, 2026). This is primarily because cereals rely on fertilizers and fuels for transportation to market. In 2026, there have been significant increases in fertilizer prices due to supply disruptions, which could lead to reduced input use and lower agricultural output in the future.

Figure 7: East Africa Maize and Rice Price Outlook (Oct 2025 to Mar 2026)



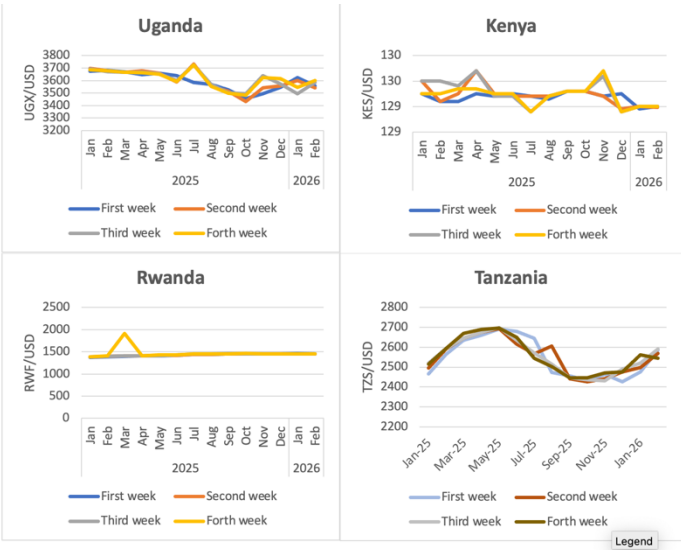
Source: Author's construction

Figure 8: Weekly average evolution of domestic fuel prices in East Africa (Jan 2025 – Feb 2026)



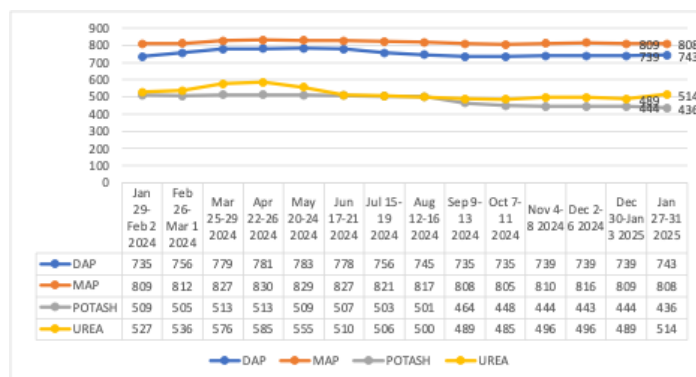
Source: Author's construction

Figure 9: Monthly average evolution of exchange rates of local currencies and the Dollar in East Africa (Dec 2025 – Feb 2026)



Source: Author's construction

Figure 10: Weekly evolution of global fertilizer prices (Jan 2025 – Jan 2026)



Source: Authors' construction using data from DTN¹

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 System³ 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 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.

¹ <https://www.dtnpf.com/agriculture/web/ag/crops/article/2025/02/05/urea-uan32-lead-fertilizer-prices>

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 \(foodsecurityportal.org\)](https://data.ckan.org/dataset/foodsecurityportal)

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

⁴e-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>

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