FOOD PRICE MONITOR: MAIZE AND RICE IN EAST AFRICA

MARCH 2026

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

- The wholesale price of Maize in Kenya remained relatively stable and lower than in February, ranging between USD 382–390/MT.
- Uganda showed a stronger upward trend, particularly in wholesale markets, driven by increasing demand from neighboring countries.
- Maize price in Rwanda in March remained relatively stable due to improved supply availability or reduced demand pressures.
- Tanzania's wholesale maize prices declined slightly, reflecting relative market stabilization after earlier increases.
- 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.
- Across the region, Kenya maintained the highest retail prices, while Uganda's prices gradually increased. Rwanda experienced a gradual price decline, and Tanzania remained the most stable market
- Rice prices were more stable than Maize across the region. Most countries recorded only slight increases in both retail and wholesale rice prices between January and March 2026.

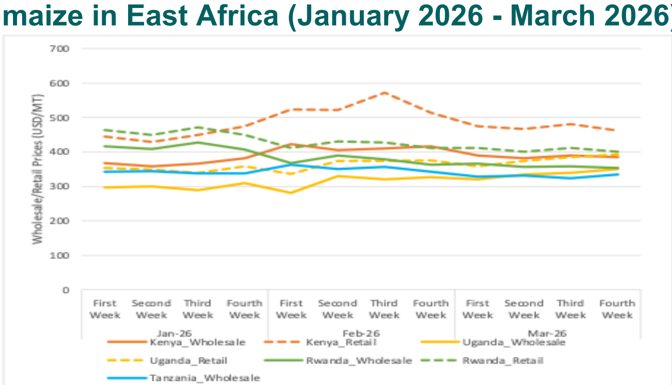
- Despite short-term fluctuations, both maize and rice prices in many countries were higher than March 2025 levels, particularly in Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania, and will likely increase given the uncertainty in global fuel and fertilizer prices caused by the geopolitical situation in the Strait of Hormuz. Countries such as Kenya, with fertilizer subsidy programs, may be in a position to cushion their farmers.

Changing Maize Prices in East Africa

Wholesale price of Maize in Kenya remained relatively stable and lower than they were in Febuary ranging between USD 382–390/MT, while retail prices declined gradually from USD 474/MT to USD 462/MT. The price margins between wholesale and retail prices remained relatively high. indicating sustained consumer demand. There was a gradual increase in the wholesale and retail price of Maize in Uganda in March. Wholesale prices ranged from USD 276–298/MT, while retail prices varied between USD 320–345/MT. Prices in March were below the levels reached at in Febuary suggesting improved supply conditions and market adjustment. Maize prices in Uganda have declined over the few weeks due to expected inflows of cheaper grain from Tanzania and increased availability of alternative local foods, which have reduced demand (Bii, 2026). Maize prices in Rwanda remained relatively stable. Wholesale prices stabilized at a lower range of USD 353–366/MT, while retail prices were between USD 412/MT to USD 401/MT. Stable prices in Rwanda were largely due to inflows of harvested Maize and improved market availability further (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2026). In Tanzania, maize wholesale prices remained relatively stable throughout the period, with only minor week-to-week fluctuations and no strong directional trend. This stability also aligns with the country's subdued inflation environment, where headline inflation remained at 3.2% in March 2026 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2026).

Across the region, Kenya maintained the highest retail prices, while Uganda's prices gradually increased. Rwanda experienced a gradual price decline, and Tanzania remained the most stable market as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Average wholesale and retail price of maize in East Africa (January 2026 - March 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

Monthly average maize prices across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda from January to March 2026 indicate mixed market trends across countries and at the retail and wholesale levels, reflecting varying supply dynamics, seasonal harvest patterns, and regional trade flows (Table 1).

In Kenya, maize prices showed moderate fluctuations but remained relatively stable overall. Retail prices increased from USD 449/MT in January to a peak of USD 533/MT in February before declining to USD 471/MT in March, representing an overall increase of 4.9% over the period. On a year-on-year basis, March 2026 retail prices were 7% higher than the USD 440/MT recorded in March 2025, indicating sustained consumer price pressure. Wholesale prices followed a similar pattern, rising from USD 368/MT in January to USD 413/MT in February before easing to USD 387/MT in March, reflecting a 5.2% increase over the quarter. Compared to March 2025 (USD 371/MT), wholesale prices were 4% higher, suggesting moderate upstream price stability.

Uganda experienced a consistent upward trend in maize prices, especially at the wholesale level. Retail prices rose steadily from USD 350/MT in January to USD 378/MT in March, marking an 8.0% increase. However, on a year-on-year basis, retail prices were only slightly higher (1%) than the USD 374/MT recorded in March 2025, indicating relative stability compared to the previous year. Wholesale prices showed stronger growth, rising from USD 299/MT in January to USD 337/MT in March, a 12.7% increase. Despite this quarterly increase, wholesale prices were 2% lower than the USD 344/MT recorded in March 2025, suggesting that recent gains have not fully offset earlier declines.

In Rwanda, maize prices declined significantly over the period, particularly at the wholesale level. Retail prices dropped from USD 459/MT in January to USD 406/MT in March, representing an 11.5% decrease. Despite this decline, retail prices remained 19% higher than the USD 341/MT recorded in March 2025, indicating that prices are still elevated compared to the previous year. Wholesale prices followed a similar downward trend, decreasing from USD 415/MT in January to USD 359/MT in March, a 13.5% reduction. However, on a year-on-year basis, wholesale prices were 20% higher than the USD 298/MT recorded in March 2025, suggesting that the recent decline reflects short-term corrections rather than a full market normalization.

In Tanzania, wholesale maize prices remained relatively stable with a slight downward trend over the three months. Prices increased from USD 343/MT in January to USD 357/MT in February, then declined to USD 329/MT in March, resulting in an overall decrease of 4.1%.

On a year-on-year basis, March 2026 prices were 2% higher than the USD 321/MT recorded in March 2025, indicating modest upward pressure despite short-term easing.

Overall, The monthly average retail and wholesale price of Maize in Kenya was lower in March than in Febuary and January. In Uganda, the monthly average retail and wholesale prices of Maize were slightly higher in March than in the last two months, partly due to the uncertainty of early planting versus waiting for the March rains. In Tanzania and Rwanda, the average wholesale price of maize was also lower than in February and January. Compared with the same month last year, maize prices were generally higher in March 2026 than in March 2025 across all countries. Rwanda exhibited the highest yearly percentage increase, and Uganda the lowest driven by a weak currency and transport costs. The *Nation Media Group, (April 2026*) noted that the national average retail price of Maize in Kenya was 15 percent higher than its year-earlier level, mainly due to high fuel prices inflating transport costs and a reduced short-rains harvest.

Table 1: Changes in average monthly retail and wholesale price of maize in East Africa for January 2026 – March 2026

Country	Market Levels	Monthly Average Prices Jan 2026	Monthly Average Prices Feb 2026	Monthly Average Prices March 2026	% Change Jan-2026 to March 2026	Monthly Average Prices March 2025	Monthly Average Price Change between March 202 and Marc 2026
Kenya	Retail	449	533	471	4.9%	440	7%
Uganda	Retail	350	365	378	8.0%	374	1%
Rwanda	Retail	459	420	406	-11.5%	341	19%
Kenya	Wholesale	368	413	387	5.2%	371	4%
Uganda	Wholesale	299	315	337	12.7%	344	-2%
Tanzania	Wholesale	343	357	329	-4.1%	321	2%
Rwanda	Wholesale	415	375	359	-13.5%	298	20%

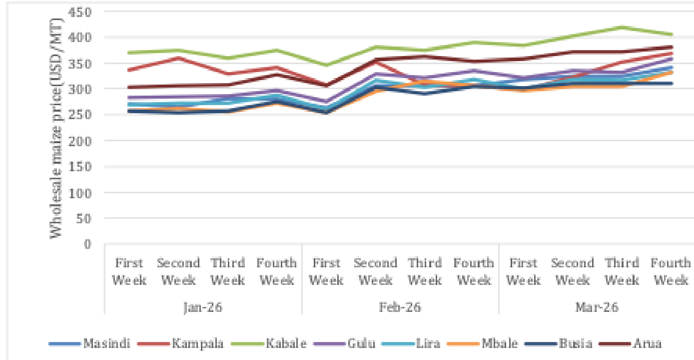
Source: Authors construction using data from FSP (for Uganda), Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries (for Kenya), Ministry of Agriculture (for Tanzania), and e-SoKo (for Rwanda)

Uganda

Prices in March generally trended upward across most markets, with some stabilization in a few areas. Masindi rose steadily to USD 341/MT by the fourth week, while Kampala increased significantly to USD 369/MT, reflecting strengthening urban demand. Kabale remained the highest-priced market, peaking at USD 419/MT before easing slightly. Northern markets such as Gulu and Lira also recorded steady increases, while Mbale and Busia showed more gradual upward movements. Arua maintained relatively high and rising prices, reaching USD 381/MT by month-end.

Overall, there are strong regional disparities in Uganda's maize markets, driven by differences in production zones, consumption centers, and cross-border trade flows. The noticeable price increases from February into March suggest tightening supply conditions and increased market demand, particularly in deficit and transit markets.

Figure 2: Average weekly retail prices of maize in selected markets in Uganda (January 2027 – March 2026)

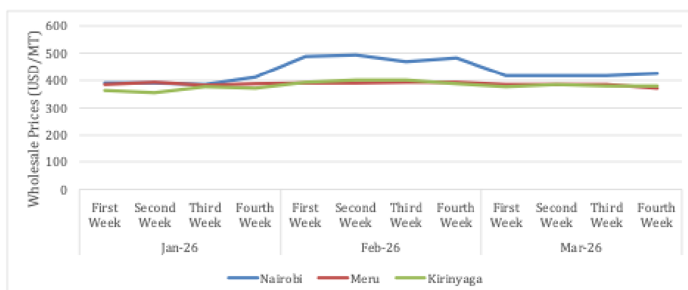


Source: Authors' construction using data from the Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda.

Kenya

Overall, persistent regional price differences: Nairobi reflects strong consumption-driven pricing, while Meru and Kirinyaga exhibit more stable, supply-linked market behavior. The February price surge, followed by partial easing in March, suggests short-term supply constraints and a subsequent market adjustment.

Figure 3: Average weekly retail prices of maize in selected markets in Kenya (January 2026 – March 2026)



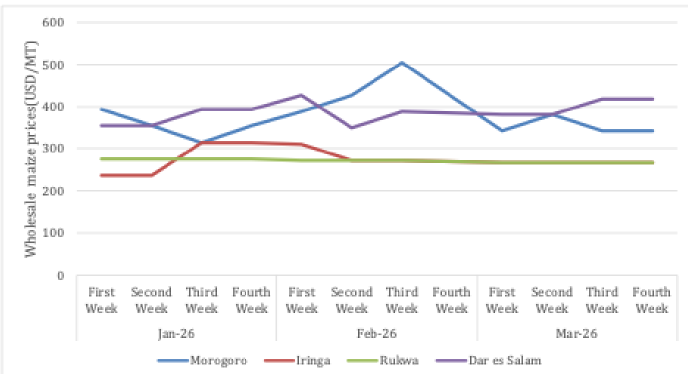
Source: Authors' construction using data from the Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya.

Tanzania

In March 2026, prices eased in most markets but remained relatively elevated compared to January levels. Morogoro declined to a range of USD 342–380/MT, while Iringa and Rukwa stabilized at lower levels around USD 266/MT. Dar es Salaam, however, maintained relatively high prices, increasing to USD 418/MT by the third and fourth weeks, indicating sustained urban demand despite easing supply pressures elsewhere.

Overall, there are clear regional price disparities: Dar es Salaam reflects demand-driven pricing, while Iringa and Rukwa remain supply-driven and stable. The sharp price spike in February, followed by a partial correction in March, suggests temporary supply disruptions and subsequent market adjustment across Tanzania's maize markets.

Figure 4: Average weekly retail prices of maize in selected markets in Tanzania (January 2026 – March 2026)



Source: Weekly Market Bulletin, Ministry of Agriculture, Tanzania

Changing Rice Prices in East Africa

During January to March 2026, rice prices in East Africa remained relatively high, with clear divergence across countries and market levels. Kenya continued to record the highest retail prices despite some fluctuations, while Uganda maintained relatively stable price levels. Rwanda experienced a noticeable price increase toward March, while Tanzania remained stable, with slight upward pressure in wholesale markets. Across the region, retail prices remained significantly higher than wholesale levels, reflecting persistent marketing costs and value chain margins.

In March, prices showed a slight easing but remained high. Wholesale prices ranged between USD 1,135–1,208/MT, while retail prices fluctuated between USD 1,302–1,384/MT. The persistent gap between wholesale and retail prices, generally above USD 150/MT continues to reflect sustained consumer price pressure.

Uganda

Uganda's rice market remained relatively stable with mild upward movements. In January, wholesale prices ranged from USD 900 to USD 911/MT, while retail prices remained stable at USD 1,007–1,015/MT.

In February, prices rose slightly, with wholesale prices at USD 928/MT and retail prices at USD 1,033/MT, suggesting modest demand growth.

By March, prices stabilized further, with wholesale prices ranging from USD 916 to USD 930/MT and retail prices from USD 1,008 to USD 1,025/MT. Overall, Uganda experienced limited volatility, indicating balanced supply and demand conditions. The Daily Monitor (March 2026) noted that while specific rice price data showed stability, overall food inflation in Uganda remained a concern for households.

Rwanda

Rwanda's rice prices showed a gradual upward trend, particularly in March. In January, wholesale prices ranged from USD 836 to USD 849/MT, while retail prices fluctuated between USD 912 and USD 929/MT.

In February, prices increased moderately, with wholesale prices reaching USD 881/MT and retail prices peaking at USD 944/MT. By March, wholesale prices rose significantly, peaking at USD 945/MT in the first week before fluctuating downward, while retail prices reached a high of USD 986/MT before easing to USD 906/MT. This pattern suggests short-term supply constraints followed by market adjustment. Local rice prices in Rwanda, on the other hand, are generally reported to follow regional and global trends.

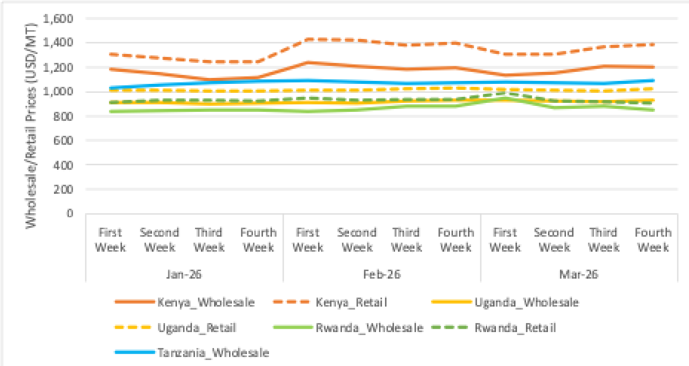
Tanzania

Tanzania's rice market remained relatively stable with mild fluctuations. In January, wholesale prices increased steadily from USD 1,029/MT to USD 1,089/MT, indicating gradual upward pressure. In February, prices remained elevated but stable, fluctuating between USD 1,070–1,091/MT, although fourth-week data is unavailable.

By March, prices remained consistent, ranging between USD 1,069–1,094/MT, ending slightly higher at USD 1,094/MT. The overall stability suggests steady supply conditions with sustained regional demand.

Rice price trends across East Africa between January and March 2026 highlight varying market dynamics. Kenya maintained the highest and most volatile retail prices, while Uganda exhibited the greatest stability. Rwanda experienced a noticeable upward shift in March following gradual increases, and Tanzania showed consistent price stability with slight upward pressure. These patterns reflect differences in domestic supply conditions, consumption demand, and regional trade flows shaping rice markets across the region.

Figure 5: Weekly average wholesale and retail prices of Rice in East Africa (January 2026 – March 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 average rice prices across Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania between January 2026 and March 2026 reveal divergent price movements across countries and market levels, reflecting differences in post-harvest supply conditions, domestic demand pressures, and cross-border trade dynamics (Table 2). While Kenya experienced a notable decline in retail prices over the period, Uganda and Rwanda recorded modest price stability, and Tanzania saw continued wholesale price increases. Year-on-year comparisons show significant easing in Kenya but persistent double-digit inflation across most other markets.

In Kenya, rice prices exhibited contrasting trends the retail and wholesale segments, with retail prices showing a sharper downward adjustment over the three months. Retail prices increased from USD 1,267/MT in January 2026 to USD 1,405/MT in February, before declining to USD 1,339/MT in March, resulting in a net increase of 5.7% from January to March. However, on a year-on-year basis, retail prices in March 2026 were 10% lower than the USD 1,480/MT recorded in March 2025, signaling a significant easing of consumer-level inflationary pressures compared to the previous year. Wholesale prices followed a similar but less volatile pattern, rising from USD 1,136/MT in January to USD 1,204/MT in February, then easing to USD 1,174/MT in March, representing a 3.3% increase over the period. Year-on-year, wholesale prices stood 4% above the USD 1,132/MT recorded in March 2025, indicating that upstream costs remain moderately elevated despite recent retail-level relief.

In Uganda, rice prices remained remarkably stable between January and March 2026, suggesting balanced supply-demand conditions in the domestic market. Retail prices increased marginally from USD 1,012/MT in January to USD 1,022/MT in February, before settling at USD 1,017/MT in March, a modest 0.5% increase over the three-month period. Despite this short-term stability, retail prices were 16% higher than the USD 873/MT recorded in March 2025, reflecting sustained year-on-year inflationary pressure at the consumer level. Wholesale prices followed a slightly stronger upward trend, rising from USD 906/MT in January to USD 923/MT in March, a 1.9% increase. Year-on-year, wholesale prices were 19% above the USD 778/MT recorded in March 2025, indicating that supply-side pressures continue to underpin Uganda's rice market relative to the previous year.

In Tanzania, wholesale rice prices continued their steady upward trajectory over the period, reflecting sustained demand pressures or constrained supply conditions. Prices increased from USD 1,063/MT in January 2026 to USD 1,079/MT in March, representing a 1.5% increase over the three months. Compared with USD 874/MT recorded in March 2025, wholesale prices were 23% higher on a year-on-year basis, highlighting persistent upward momentum and indicating that Tanzania remains one of the most supply-constrained rice markets in the region.

In Rwanda, rice prices displayed modest increases across both retail and wholesale levels, though with notable differences in magnitude. Retail prices rose from USD 922/MT in January to USD 933/MT in March, a 1.2% increase, and stood 18% higher than the USD 793/MT recorded in March 2025, reflecting moderate but consistent year-on-year inflation. Wholesale prices showed a slightly stronger upward trend, rising from USD 844/MT in January to USD 884/MT in March, a 4.7% increase over the period. Year-on-year, wholesale prices were 24% above the USD 714/MT recorded in March 2025, suggesting that upstream price pressures in Rwanda's rice supply chain remain more pronounced than at the retail level.

Overall, rice price trends across East Africa between January and March 2026 demonstrate diverging market dynamics across countries and market segments. Kenya recorded a notable year-on-year decline in retail prices, despite modest increases over the three months, signaling a potential easing of earlier inflationary pressures. Uganda and Rwanda experienced short-term price stability, followed by modest increases, underpinned by persistent double-digit year-on-year inflation. Tanzania maintained a clear upward trajectory in wholesale prices, reflecting sustained supply constraints or robust regional demand. These patterns underscore the importance of country-specific harvest cycles, import dependency, and trade flows in shaping rice price movements across East African markets.

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

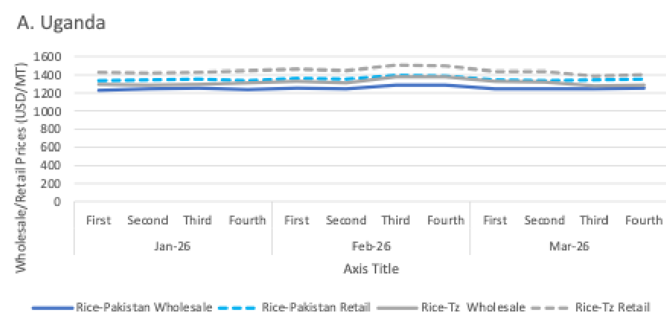
Country	Market Levels	Monthly Average Prices Jan 2026	Monthly Average Prices Feb 2026	Monthly Average Prices March 2026	% Change Jan 2026 to March 2026	Monthly Average Prices March 2025	Monthly Average Price % Change between March 202 & Marc 2026
Kenya	Retail	1267	1405	1339	5.7%	1480	-10%
Uganda	Retail	1012	1022	1017	0.5%	873	16%
Rwanda	Retail	922	936	933	1.2%	793	18%
Kenya	Wholesale	1136	1204	1174	3.3%	1132	4%
Uganda	Wholesale	906	916	923	1.9%	778	19%
Tanzania	Wholesale	1063	1080	1079	1.5%	874	23%
Rwanda	Wholesale	844	861	884	4.7%	714	24%

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

Uganda

In March 2026, prices for both Pakistan and Tanzania Rice declined, indicating a partial market correction. Pakistan-origin rice wholesale prices fell to an average of approximately USD 1,245/MT, while retail prices declined to about USD 1,346/MT. Similarly, Tanzania-origin rice wholesale prices decreased to around USD 1,301/MT, with retail prices averaging approximately USD 1,417/MT. The decline suggests easing supply pressures or normalization of demand following the February peak.Overall, rice prices in Uganda increased from January to February, then declined in March. Throughout the period, Tanzania-origin rice consistently commanded a higher price than Pakistan-origin rice at both wholesale and retail levels. This persistent premium highlight ongoing differences in consumer preference, regional supply dynamics, and cost structures between imported and regionally sourced Rice.

Figure 6: Weekly average wholesale and retail prices of imported rice varieties in Uganda (January- March 2026)



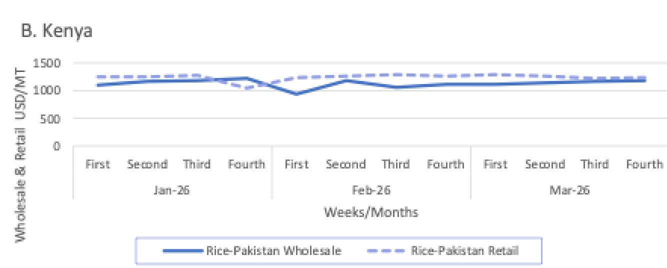
Source: Author's construction using data from the Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda

Kenya

In March 2026, wholesale prices recovered moderately, rising to an average of about USD 1,149/MT, while retail prices slightly decreased to approximately USD 1,252/MT. Despite the recovery in wholesale prices, retail prices did not increase proportionately, further reinforcing weak or delayed transmission between the wholesale and retail markets.

Overall, the data indicate a highly volatile wholesale market alongside a comparatively rigid retail pricing structure. The divergence between wholesale and retail price movements, particularly the sharp retail drop in January and the wholesale dip in February, suggests inefficiencies in price transmission, possible data inconsistencies, or the influence of external factors such as government interventions, contract pricing, or supply chain frictions.

Figure 7: Weekly average wholesale and retail prices of imported rice varieties in Kenya (January- March 2026)



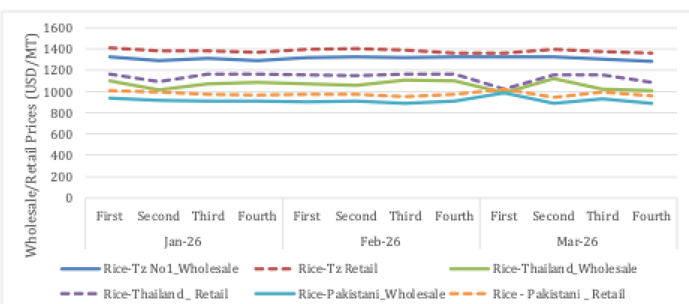
Source: Analysis using data from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperatives for Kenya

Rwanda

In March 2026, divergent price movements emerged across the three rice categories. Tanzania No.1 rice prices declined slightly, with wholesale prices averaging approximately USD 1,313/MT and retail prices around USD 1,374/MT, indicating mild easing after February stability. Thailand-origin Rice experienced a more noticeable decline, with wholesale prices dropping to about USD 1,034/MT and retail prices to approximately USD 1,105/MT, reflecting softening demand or increased supply. Pakistan-origin Rice showed mixed behavior, with wholesale prices recovering slightly to an average of about USD 923/MT, while retail prices increased to approximately USD 980/MT, suggesting some adjustment in retail margins or delayed transmission of earlier wholesale movements.

Overall, Rwanda's rice market is clearly segmented, with Tanzania No. 1 rice consistently commanding the highest prices, followed by Thailand rice, and then Pakistan rice as the lowest-cost option. Price movements over the three were relatively stable for premium Rice but more variable for lower-priced imports. The persistence of these price differentials underscores strong consumer preferences tied to quality, origin, and purchasing power, as well as differentiated supply chains across rice sources.

Figure 8: Weekly average wholesale and retail prices of imported rice varieties in Kenya (January- March 2026)



Source: Analysis using data from eSoKo website for Rwanda

Summary and Future Outlook

Between January and March 2026, maize and Rice markets across Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania exhibited divergent but structured price dynamics, reflecting differences in domestic supply conditions, import dependence, and regional trade flows. While maize prices showed mixed movements across countries, rice markets displayed clearer patterns of regional stratification and synchronized shifts.

For Maize, price trends varied significantly across the region. Uganda recorded a consistent upward trend, with both wholesale and retail prices rising steadily from January to March, suggesting tightening domestic supply and sustained export demand. Anticipated adverse weather conditions and high demand from neighboring countries (Kenya and South Sudan) are likely to drive maize prices in Uganda in the subsequent month.

Kenya experienced notable volatility, with a sharp price increase in February followed by a partial correction in March, indicating unstable supply inflows and demand fluctuations. Rwanda showed a general downward trend, with prices easing from January through March, pointing to improved supply conditions or reduced demand pressures. Tanzania, where only wholesale data are available, exhibited moderate fluctuations without a clear, sustained trend, suggesting relatively balanced market conditions. The World Bank (March, 20 2026) noted that more than 87 million people are facing hunger in East and Southern Africa, underscoring the importance of stable staple food prices.

For Rice, price movements were more synchronized across countries but still reflected clear cross-country differences. Kenya recorded the highest price levels at both wholesale and retail, despite a slight decline in March following a February peak, indicating that import pressures are easing after earlier tightening. Uganda maintained stable but gradually increasing prices, reflecting steady demand and relatively controlled supply conditions. Rwanda showed greater variability, with prices rising into March after earlier fluctuations, suggesting shifting import dynamics or supply adjustments. Tanzania recorded a steady upward trend in wholesale prices, suggesting tightening domestic supply or rising regional demand.

Across the region, retail prices remained consistently higher than wholesale prices, highlighting persistent costs related to transportation, storage, and market distribution. In addition, rice markets continued to show clear structural differences between countries, with Kenya operating as a higher-price market, while Uganda and Rwanda maintained relatively lower but more variable price levels.

Overall, the period from January to March 2026 highlights the continued sensitivity of staple food markets in East Africa to supply fluctuations and regional trade dynamics. While maize markets reflected country-specific supply conditions, rice markets showed stronger regional linkages, with price movements suggesting tightening conditions in February followed by partial stabilization in March. The World Bank (March 2026) reported that global rice prices closed 5 percent higher since December 2025, but regional markets in East Africa remained relatively insulated from these global pressures.

In Uganda, rising demand from Kenya and South Sudan, driven by expected adverse weather conditions, is likely to push maize prices higher in Uganda in the near term. Traders anticipate further increases, especially if Tanzania's supplies decline by April 2026. Rice prices are expected to remain relatively stable but with gradual increases, driven by steady demand and rising import and supply chain costs (Farmgain Africa, 2026)

In Kenya, maize farmers are increasingly turning to regional markets in Uganda, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo as domestic prices remain stagnant and rising imports threaten further declines following the ongoing geopolitical situation in Iran. In northern Kenya, farmers who had been holding onto their produce in anticipation of better prices are now shifting their focus to cross-border trade, as falling local prices continue to put pressure on their incomes (Bii, 2026).

Meanwhile, the Government of Kenya's subsidy program is expected to lower input costs for farmers during the upcoming maize planting season, improving affordability and likely easing upward pressure on maize prices by supporting increased production (Milling Middle East & Africa, 2026).

Maize farmers across Rwanda are optimistic following the introduction of a new, improved maize variety, genetically modified TELA maize (Byukusenge, 2026). Rice prices in Rwanda remain relatively high, partly due to the influence of imported Rice particularly from Tanzania which affects domestic price formation and consumer preferences.

Across the region, the [World Bank](#) (March 20 2026) warns that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East could potentially push 45 million additional people into acute hunger by mid-2026, with risks including energy price shocks and trade route disruptions that could affect fertilizer and grain imports to East Africa. Trends show that maize prices have been declining sharply across all countries since 2023, with prices in Uganda being the lowest on average over the period. Global fuel prices increased, and with the announcement of the Blockage on the Strait of Hormuz in Iran, (9) fertilizer prices are also likely to be affected by constrained shipping and elevated insurance risks to energy-driven production costs, price volatility, and regional supply vulnerabilities[1](fig 10) which will likely affect the maize prices in the region.

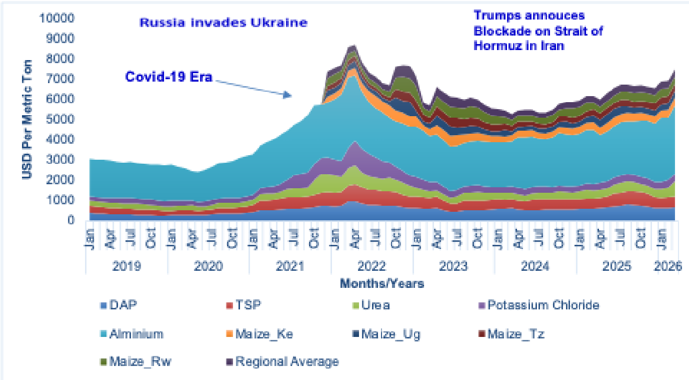
Figure 9: Trends of Global Oil Prices and Domestic Maize Prices in East Africa

Source: Author's construction using data from the World Bank Price Sheets & the Ministry of Agriculture, Tanzania; the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya; Esoko for Rwanda; and the Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda for domestic maize prices.

Since 2023, the price of Rice has generally been declining (following a gradual rise due to the Russia-Ukraine war), and global oil prices have also been declining, with rice prices in Kenya well above those in other countries. The current global crisis following Trump's blockage of the Strait of Hormuz in Iran has led to higher global fuel and fertilizer prices (Figure 11). This is also likely to affect maize prices due to rising transportation costs. A significant amount of fertiliser transits through the Strait of Hormuz (35 percent of global urea flows, over one quarter of ammonia trade, just above 20 percent of phosphates, and roughly 45 percent of global sulfur exports transiting the Strait) and therefore there is a lot of uncertainty caused by the current geopolitical situation.

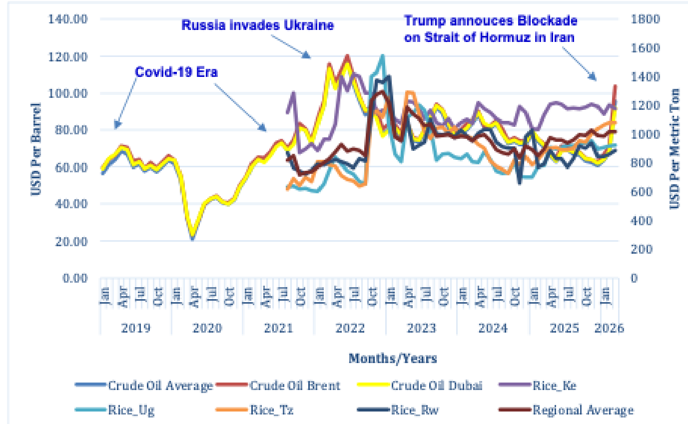
[1] https://www.ifpri.org/blog/the-iran-wars-impacts-on-global-fertilizer-markets-and-food-production/#:~:text=%E2%80%A2,posing%20significant%20food%20security%20risks.

Figure 10: Trends of Global Fertiliser Prices and Domestic Maize Prices



Source: Author's construction using data from the World Bank Pint Sheet for global oil prices and the Ministry of Agriculture, Tanzania, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya, Esoko for Rwanda and the Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda for domestic maize prices.

Figure 11: Trends of Global Oil Prices and Domestic Rice Prices



Source: Author's construction using data from the World Bank Pint Sheet for global oil prices and the Ministry of Agriculture, Tanzania, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives for Kenya, Esoko for Rwanda and the Daily Market Traders Survey for Uganda for domestic rice prices.

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 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.

[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)

[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

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