



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

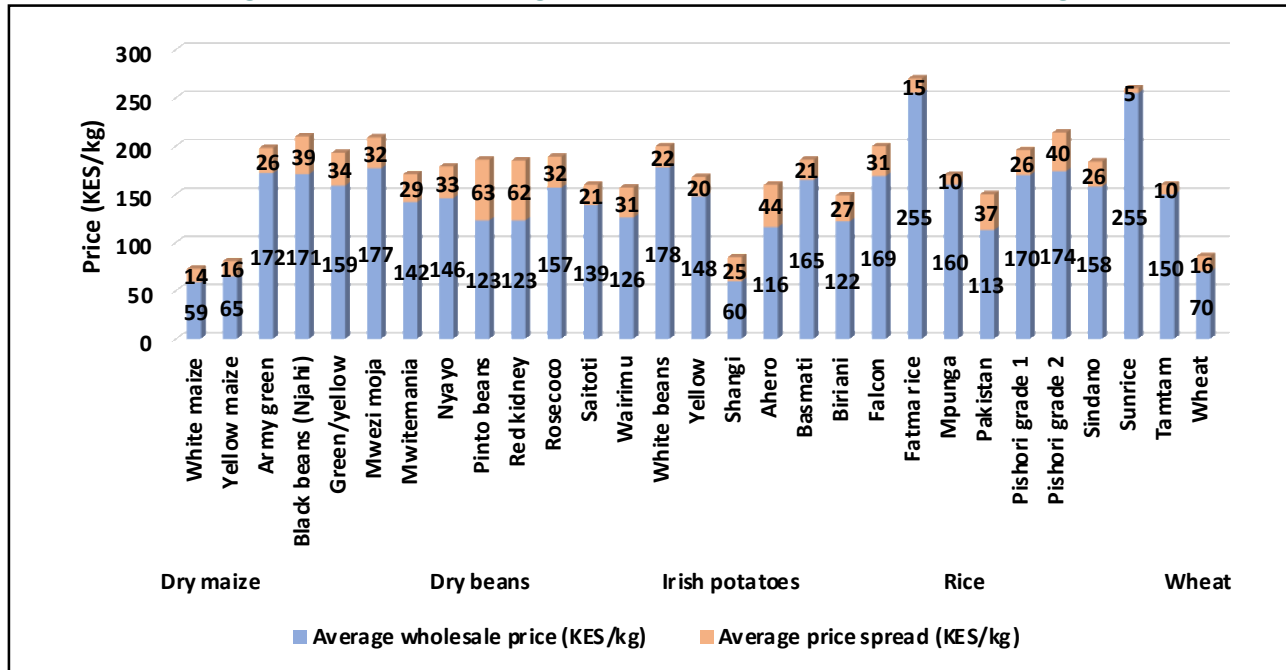
- ▶ Several reasons, including high fuel and transportation costs, the availability of middlemen, and rising local demand, are attributable for the observed discrepancies in wholesale and retail pricing margins.
- ▶ Maize prices dropped due to traders selling their stocks in anticipation of the upcoming "long-rains" harvest in September 2023
- ▶ The rising prices for Irish potatoes in populated towns can be explained by factors such as increased demand and scarcity of the perishable commodity, the presence of middlemen, and elevated transportation costs driven by higher fuel prices.
- ▶ Wheat price fluctuations stem from climate change impacts, rising input costs, and increased demand.

## Overall Wholesale and Retail Prices for September

In September 2023, the major Kenyan markets' average wholesale and retail prices for maize, beans, potatoes, rice, and wheat are shown in Figure 1. A few commodities saw price margins of between 2% and 5%. These were; dry beans [Saitoti (15%), white beans (12%), and yellow beans (14%)] and rice [Basmati (13%), Fatma 96%), Pishori grade 1 (15%), Mpunga (6%), Sunrice (2%), and Tamtam (7)]. For numerous commodities, most dry beans and rice recorded

price margins of between 16% and 25%. Wheat saw price margin of 23%. Pakistan rice (33%), Ahero (38%) and Shangi Irish potatoes (42%) are among food commodities which saw higher price prices more than 33%. Red Kidney and Pinto beans saw significantly higher price margins of 50% and 51% respectively. The observed variations in wholesale and retail pricing margins can be attributed to several factors, such high fuel and transportation costs, the availability of middlemen, and increasing local demand.

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



Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of September 2023

## Wholesale and Retail Commodity Prices

Different beans varieties were recorded in various regions but Black beans (Njahi), Nyayo and Wairimu were available in all selected regions. Other common beans by region included Rosecoco which were present everywhere apart from the Nyeri region, and Mwitmania beans, which were present everywhere apart from the Kisumu region (Table 1). Eldoret and Nakuru regions reported most of the accessible bean varieties. As anticipated, retail prices for all bean varieties were higher than wholesale prices. When compared to national wholesale average prices, the wholesale pricing for the majority of bean varieties were higher in the Eldoret, Mombasa and Nairobi regions while retail pricing were higher in Eldoret and Kisumu region. The observed price variation can be attributed to market factors like supply and demand, the accessibility of middlemen, increased transportation costs associated with rising fuel prices. The price of beans in Kenya varies with bean variety, season, and demand for beans. For instance, Njahi beans are the most expensive beans since they are a delicacy on special occasions (Soko directory, September 2023).

All regions reported dry white maize, while only the Nairobi and Kisumu regions reported yellow maize. In comparison to the national average wholesale and retail prices of 59KES/kg and 73KES/kg, dry white maize showed higher wholesale prices in Nairobi (67KES/kg), and Mombasa (75KES/kg), as well as higher retail prices in Mombasa (75KES/kg), Nairobi (86KES/kg), and Nyeri (82KES/kg). In comparison to dry white maize, dry yellow maize had higher

average national wholesale (65KES/kg) and retail prices (81KES/kg). In comparison to the Kisumu region, Nairobi observed higher wholesale (75KES/kg) and retail prices (98KES/kg) for yellow maize. The market in Nairobi is typical of urban consumers, whereas the market in Kisumu is large and located in an area with little agricultural production. High transportation costs, the existence of middlemen, and market characteristics like high demand and low supply all contribute to high wholesale and retail prices. Decline in maize prices was observed because traders released their stocks in anticipation of the “long-rains” harvest to be gathered from September 2023.

Irish potatoes recorded significantly higher prices in Nairobi (92KES/kg) and Eldoret (68KES/kg) compared to the national average wholesale price of 60KES/kg. Similarly, Kisumu and Nairobi showed highly significant retail prices of 113KES/kg, and 103KES/kg respectively, compared to the national average price of 85KES/kg. Price increases in populated towns can be attributed to several factors, including high demand and scarcity of the commodity due to its perishable nature, the availability of middlemen, and high transportation costs due to higher fuel prices.

Except for Kisumu, all regions reported Sindano rice in addition to Pishori rice, which was common to all. Mombasa had Tamtam, Mpunga, Fatma, Sunrice, Eldoret had Falcon, while Kisumu had Ahero and Pakistan rice. All places had basmati rice, a nonaromatic kind, apart from Mombasa and Kisumu. Eldoret recorded higher retail and wholesale prices for Pishori and Basmati rice. High rice prices are attributable to climatic changes and the cost of production especially the

cost of fertilizers and chemicals (Kenya News Agency, October 2023).

Eldoret (81KES/kg) and Kisumu (78KES/kg) had high wholesale prices for wheat compared to the country's average of 70KES/kg for dry wheat. In addition, retail prices in Eldoret (110KES/kg), Kisumu (92KES/kg), and Nairobi

(90KES/kg) were higher than the national average (86KES/kg). Variation in wheat prices is as a result of climatic changes, high input costs, and increased demand brought.

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

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	200	135	180		157		240	217	185		166		172	198
	Black beans (Njahi)	221	142	160	166	171	169	250	230	170	189	180	251	171	210
	Green/yellow	200	159	165	162	144	128	230	230	170	185	172	174	159	193
	Mwezi moja	200			159		111	240			180		175	177	209
	Mwitmania	180		140	152	136	109	220		150	177	143	169	142	171
	Nyayo	158	138	165	149	149	120	197	209	170	175	159	169	146	179
	Red kidney		143			102			221			149		123	185
	Rosecoco	180	150	170	165	130		220	214	180	180	150		157	189
	Saitoti	167		125	158	120		200		150	180	122		139	160
	Wairimu	131	135	135	138	112	103	169	183	140	160	125	167	126	157
Dry maize	White maize	47	56	75	67	54	51	61	71	75	86	60	82	59	73
	Yellow maize		54		75				61		98			65	81
Irish potatoes	Shangi	68	49	46	92	57	49	77	113	70	103	96	51	60	85
Rice	Ahero		116						160					116	160
	Basmati	200			134	168	162	211			160	190	185	165	186
	Biriani	169	103	110	94	134		200	148	120	120	162		122	149
	Falcon	169						200						169	200
	Fatma rice			255						270				255	270
	Mpunga			160						170				160	170
	Pakistan		113						150					113	150
	Pishori grade 1	217		175	168	148	169	250		180	191	180	200	170	196
	Pishori grade 2	200	152					230	200					174	214
	Sindano	200		145	94	149	157	240		150	120	180	184	158	184
	Sunrice			255						260				255	260
Tamtam			150						160				150	160	
Wheat	Wheat	81	78	60	67	66		110	92	75	90	68	70	86	

Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of September 2023

## Wholesale and Retail Price Trends by Region

There were variations in weekly prices among regions from week one and weeks two through four. Eldoret reported a variety of results, including increasing decreasing, and constant prices, with most food commodities demonstrating steady pricing. A comparison of week 1 and week 4 prices shows that most dry beans recorded stable prices for both wholesale and retail prices. Retail prices for dry white maize and Irish potatoes increased by 46% and 5%, respectively, while wholesale prices increased by 29% and 4%, respectively. Apart from Pishori grade 1, which had a minor increase in both wholesale and retail prices of 8% and 1%, respectively, the prices of most rice varieties remained unchanged. Wheat saw a 7% slight drop in wholesale price and a steady increase in retail pricing.

Similar findings were seen in Kisumu, where most food commodities showed stable wholesale pricing and a small number showed increases and decreases. Most readily available dry bean varieties (Army green, Black beans, green yellow, red kidney, Pinto, and Rosecoco) had a decrease in wholesale prices ranging from 1% to 7%. The wholesale price of Shanghi Irish potatoes dropped by 5%, and the wholesale prices of various rice varieties, such as Ahero and Biriani, dropped by 2% and 9%, respectively. Among the food items with steady pricing were wheat, Nyayo beans, Red Kidney beans, Pakistan rice, and Pishori grade 2 rice. It was noteworthy that the prices for both wholesale and retail Pishori grade 2 rice and wheat remained steady. White and yellow dry maize varieties saw increases in wholesale and retail prices of 0.5% and 7% for yellow maize and 3.4% and 7% for white maize, respectively.

Only Shanghi Irish potatoes exhibited a minor increase in both wholesale and retail prices of 4% and 2%, respectively, according to a study of wholesale and retail prices in Mombasa between weeks 1 and 4. All other food items, including all varieties of dry beans, white maize, all types of rice, and wheat, showed no change in wholesale or retail prices. Prices have stayed consistent because of imports from countries like Tanzania, Uganda, and Pakistan as well as availability of food commodities from neighboring producing areas.

Nairobi, a populated city and non-producing area, experienced a variety of outcomes, with just a small number of commodities seeing steady or dropping prices while others saw increases in wholesale and retail prices. All readily accessible dry bean wholesale price grew by 1% to 16%, Shanghi Irish potatoes prices rose by 18%, while wheat prices only slightly increased by 2%. This is due to factors such as a lack of supply, excessive demand, the use of

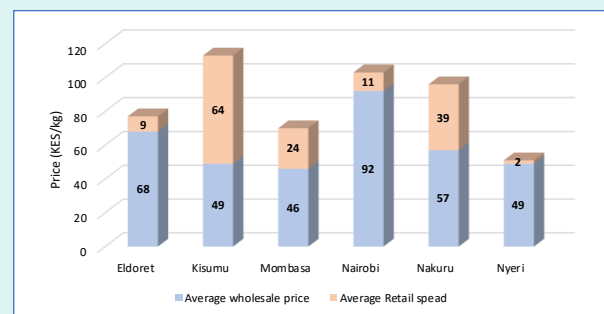
## FOCUS ON POTATOES ACROSS SELECTED REGIONS

Potatoes farming in Kenya is one of the most lucrative farming businesses in the country. They are the second most important food crop after maize. Potato farming is primarily done in the Highland areas of Kiambu, Nakuru, and Uasin Gishu. Additionally, the major Irish potato growing regions in Kenya include Nyandarua, Elgeyo Marakwet, Meru, Nyeri, Taita Taveta, Narok, Bomet, Trans Nzoia, Bungoma, West Pokot, Kisii, Nyamira, Kirinyaga, Murang'a, Baringo, Nandi, Laikipia and Kericho.

Irish potatoes are a perennial favorite in Kenyan kitchens and are in demand year-round. Kenya's most popular types are: White variety whose shelf life is shorter than that of the red type. White varieties are commonly used to make French fries and typically sweeter. Irish potatoes are not grown in Kenya from seeds, unlike many other types of vegetables. Instead, the Irish potatoes' chopped portions sprout new plants. "Seed potatoes" are cut-off pieces Greenlife Crop Protection Africa,2014-2013.

Irish potatoes saw a range in prices in September 2023, depending on the region. Retail pricing was on average 85 KES/kg while wholesale prices were on average 60 KES/kg. Higher wholesale prices of 68 KES/kg and 92 KES/kg, respectively, and higher retail prices of 113 KES/kg and 103 KES/kg were observed in Eldoret and Nairobi. Increased demand, high fuel prices that raise transportation costs, and the use of middlemen are all variables that have an impact on prices in the two regions.

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



Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of September 2023.

intermediaries, rising fuel prices, and expensive transportation. Retail prices for white and yellow maize rose by 11% and 10%, respectively, while wholesale prices rose by 12% and 7%. Biriani rice's wholesale costs stayed the same, whereas basmati and Pishori grade 1 prices decreased by 1.5% and 3%, respectively. This is linked to crop surpluses in the county and its neighboring nations' producing regions.

Price comparisons between weeks four and one in Nakuru showed inconsistent findings, with certain food commodity prices increasing, decreasing, or remaining unchanged. Commodities such as black beans (Njahi), Mwitmania, Saitoti, and Rosecoco, as well as several types of rice

(Basmati, Pishori grade 1, and Sindano), all had constant retail prices. Retail prices for Nyayo, Red kidney, and Wairimu dry beans decreased by 3% to 7%, while wheat prices decreased by 11% and dry white maize prices decreased by 12%. Irish potatoes from Shangi saw an increase in wholesale and retail prices of 11% and 22%, respectively, which can be attributed to seasonality, high demand, an increase in the cost of transportation due to an increase in fuel, and the presence of middlemen.

When comparing costs from week four to week one, Nyeri saw both price rises and decreases. Food commodities that experienced price rises at wholesale levels included varieties of rice with price increases ranging from 0.1% to 16% and available dry beans with price increases ranging from 2% to 37%. Wairimu beans (5%) and white maize (10%) were two commodities whose wholesale prices were declining. The region's wholesale and price patterns vary due to seasonality, competitive factors, and the availability of intermediaries.

## **Comparison of National Average Prices between August and September**

A comparison of overall prices (national averages for all commodities) for August and September 2023 shows that most wholesale and retail prices are stable or declining, with a few showing increases (Table 2). Most commodities had stable retail and wholesale price (between 3% and -5%). Shangi Irish potatoes saw significant increase in wholesale and retail prices of 62% and 44% respectively attributable to scarcity, high demand, involvement of middlemen and higher transportation costs owing to rising fuel prices. The wholesale and retail prices for most commodities were stable or even declined between August and September because of the availability of food commodities from various producing areas as well as imports from neighboring East African countries and beyond.

**Table 2: Comparison of August and September prices**

Product	Variety	Average Wholesale Price (Kes/Kg)		Percentage change	Average Retail Price (Kes/ Kg)		Percentage change
		August	September		August	September	
Dry maize	Maize	67	59	-12%	78	73	-6%
Dry beans	Army green	172	172	0%	182	198	9%
	Black beans (Njahi)	175	171	-2%	203	210	3%
	Green/yellow	154	159	3%	189	193	2%
	Mwitmania	139	142	2%	160	171	7%
	Nyayo	149	146	-2%	178	179	1%
	Pinto beans	132	123	-7%	191	186	-3%
	Red kidney	145	123	-15%	192	185	-4%
	Rosecoco	159	157	-1%	185	189	2%
	Saitoti	125	139	11%	150	160	7%
Wairimu	125	126	1%	152	157	3%	
Irish potatoes	Shangi	37	60	62%	59	85	44%
Rice	Ahero	119	116	-3%	160	160	0%
	Basmati	140	165	18%	164	186	13%
	Biriani	113	122	8%	138	149	8%
	Fatma rice	255	255	0%	269	270	0%
	Mpunga	160	160	0%	170	170	0%
	Pakistan	121	113	-7%	146	150	3%
	Pishori grade 1	164	170	4%	190	196	3%
	Pishori grade 2	141	174	23%	177	214	21%
	Sindano	137	158	15%	163	184	13%
	Sunrice	255	255	0%	260	260	0%
Tamtam	149	150	1%	159	160	1%	
Wheat	Wheat	71	70	-1%	88	86	-2%

Key	
<3 but >-5	Stable
>-5 but >-15	Decrease
>3 but <10	Slight decrease
>10 but <25	Increase
>25 but < 65	Significant increase

Source: Daily Market Survey for the month September 2023

## Outlook for the Month of October

During the month of October, the following changes are expected:

- Production of foods including maize, beans, and wheat, will rise. The rise has been ascribed to the abundant rainfall this year that helped produce food crops, therefore, a drop in prices in the coming months.
- Irish potatoes are expected to become more expensive in the coming months. The increase has been attributed to the commodity's seasonality, high demand, and scarcity.
- Maize prices are expected to drop as farmers from the breadbasket regions (Uasin Gishu, TransNzoia, Nakuru and Nandi counties) are expecting bumper harvest in the coming months.
- Prices of rice are expected to rise until the month of December due to low productivity due to high cost of production. Due to rising import costs, the depreciation of the Kenyan shilling, and high inflation rates, imports are also anticipated to be costly.

## FOCUS ON KISUMU REGION

Kisumu, located in western Kenya, is close to Lake Victoria, the biggest freshwater lake in both Africa and the world. Kisumu is the third-largest city in Kenya after Mombasa, which is a coastal city, and Nairobi, the country's capital. In the Lake Victoria Basin, it is the third-largest city after Mwanza, Tanzania, and Kampala, Uganda. The location provides a suitable environment for agricultural and aquatic cultural activities despite being a big market located in an area with a food deficit and low agricultural production. In the Kano Plains in Kisumu County is where rice is grown under irrigation. Some of Kenya's highest-yielding sugarcane fields are located on the northern and eastern edges of the Kano Plains. The production of sugarcane is concentrated in places like Kibos, Miwani, and Chemelil. Additionally, Kisumu County provides fresh vegetables, chicken, beans, sweet potatoes, and maize.

Kibuye Market, one of the biggest open-air markets in Eastern and Central Africa, is where commodity prices are gathered. Most of the neighboring sub-counties and counties in the Nyanza region may get fresh produce and other agricultural and non-agricultural commodities at the market. A variety of agricultural products are sold in both the wholesale market and the retail region. The Kibuye Market, which is open to the public for shopping, is managed by the County government of Kisumu. Every day of the week, beginning on a typical day at 4:00 am, the market is open. The busiest trading days of the week are on Saturdays and Sundays, when traders gather in great numbers.

Traders sourced traded food commodities from various regions, dry maize was sourced from Trans-Nzoia (Kitale), Busia (Kenya-Uganda border) and Uasin-Gishu (Eldoret) and Kisii counties, Irish potatoes from Narok, Elgeyo-Marakwet and Nakuru counties (Molo), dry beans from Western and Uganda (Busia) and wheat from Busia (Kenya-Uganda border).

During September, prices of most commodities saw a reduction of prices when week 1 wholesale prices were compared to week 4, with reductions ranging between 1% and 8%. The wholesale and retail prices of the white and yellow dry maize varieties increased by 0.5% and 7% and 3.4% and 7%, respectively. The region's rising maize costs may be a result of middlemen's engagement, increasing demand, and rising fuel prices that raise the cost of transportation.

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

Product	Variety	Average wholesale price (KES/kg)				Total average wholesale price (KES/kg)	Total average retail price (KES/kg)
		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4		
Dry beans	Army green	136	135	134	135	217	
	Black beans(Njahi)	143	142	142	142	230	
	Green/yellow	160	159	158	158	230	
	Nyayo	138	138	138	138	209	
	Pinto beans	151	149	148	148	221	
	Red kidney	143	143	143	143	221	
	Roseocco	151	150	149	149	214	
Dry maize	White maize	56	56	57	57	71	
	Yellow maize	53	54	54	54	61	
Irish potatoes	Shangi	51	48	46	46	113	
	Abaro	118	115	115	115	160	
Rice	Birani	107	107	101	98	148	
	Pakellan	113	113	113	113	150	
	Fishon grade 2	152	152	152	152	200	
Wheat	Wheat	79	79	76	79	92	

Source: Daily Market Survey for the month of September 2023.

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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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