

Maize prices increase in some districts during peak lean period

Key points:



Maize prices rose sharply in Kasama between November and December



Bean prices have increase in Northern Province, up 9 percent in Kasama and up 3 percent in Luwingu



Groundnut prices have risen by over 15 percent in Luwingu (Northern Province) and Mafinga (Muchinga Province)

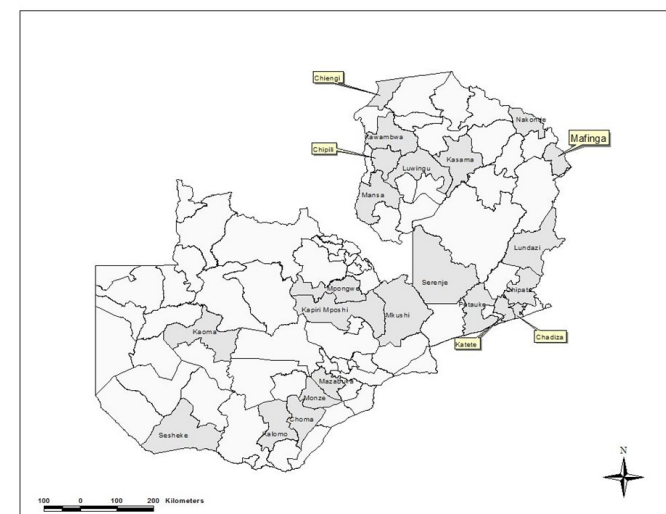


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Methodology

WFP Zambia's in-house call centre has been operational since May 2016 as a part of WFP's [mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping \(mVAM\) initiative](#). The in-house call centre conducts telephone interviews with key informants to collect weekly information on the prices of foods including maize, rice, groundnuts, cassava and beans, as well as information on general food availability and market accessibility. The surveys are carried out with a sample of 51 traders across 24 districts. The number of responses (171) remained the same during November and December 2016. Phone surveys contain inherent response biases; therefore, the bulletin reports patterns and trends rather than precise estimates.

Map 1: Districts surveyed in December 2016



Source: mVAM, December 2016

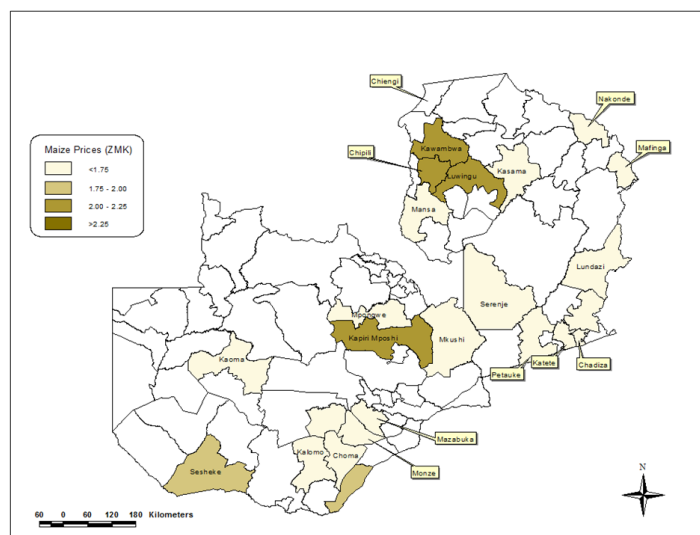


Maize prices increase in some monitored districts

Maize prices have risen in most monitored districts in Central Copperbelt, Eastern, Muchinga, Northern and Western provinces since November 2016 (Figures 1a and 1b). Increases of between 10 and 17 percent were recorded in districts such as Sesheke (Western), Serenje (Central), Chipata and Petauke (Eastern) as well as in Kasama (Northern). However, some districts in Southern, Luapula and Eastern provinces recorded stable prices.

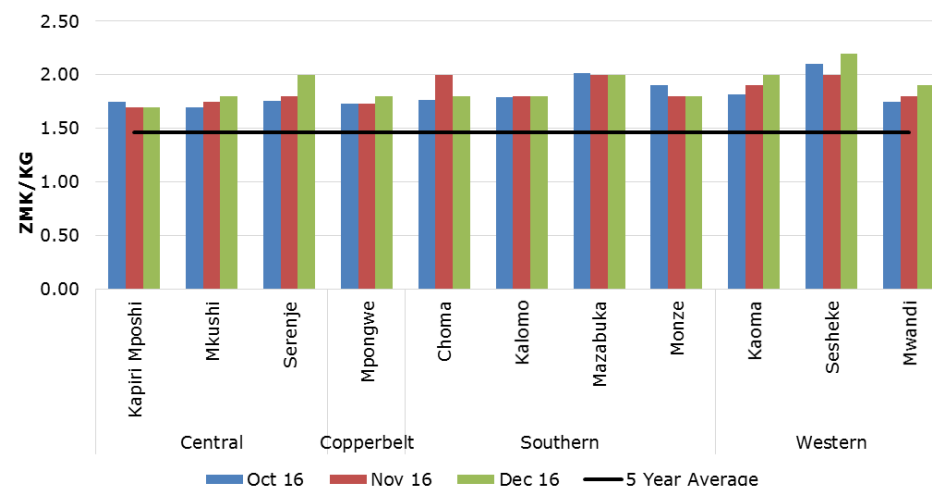
Despite seasonal price increases that reflect the ongoing lean period, maize prices remain suppressed by the ongoing export ban. The December average maize price for the 24 monitored districts (ZMK1.89/kg) is higher than the national five-year average (December 2010– December 2015) of ZMK1.46/kg (source: [FAO GIEWS](#)). The trend is the same for the districts of Pemba, Namwala and Sinazongwe, where Concern Worldwide and Save the Children UK are implementing Emergency Cash Transfer programmes in response to the effects of El Niño. In these districts, the price of maize (ZMK 2.13/kg) is also higher than the national five-year average.

Map 2: Maize prices by district (ZMK/kg)



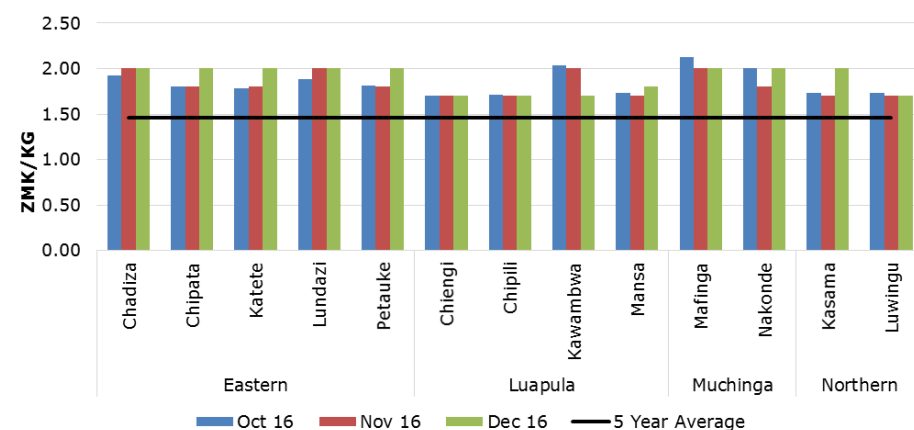
Source: mVAM, December 2016

Figure 1a: Maize prices (ZMK/kg) in monitored districts within Central, Copperbelt, Southern and Western provinces



Source: mVAM, December 2016

Figure 1b: Maize prices (ZMK/kg) for monitored districts in Eastern, Luapula, Muchinga and Northern provinces



Source: mVAM, December 2016



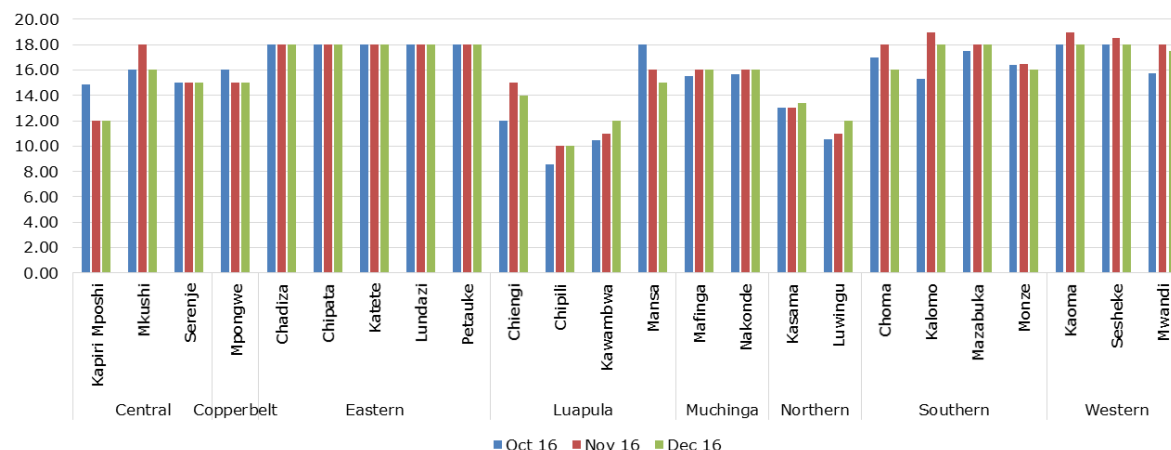
Bean prices are stable and groundnut prices fluctuate

Throughout December, bean prices were stable in most monitored districts. There were decreases recorded in some districts of Western (Kaoma and Sesheke), Central (Mkushi), Luapula (Chiengi and Mansa) and Southern (Choma and Kalomo) provinces. The largest price drops (11 percent) were reported in Mkushi and Choma. Price stability is attributed to steady availability and demand between November and December.

Groundnut prices varied across the monitored districts during December 2016. There were increases in Northern (Luwingu), Southern (Choma and Monze), Muchinga (Mafinga), Luapula (Mansa, Kawambwa and Chipili) and Copperbelt (Mpongwe). Falling prices were mostly recorded in Central and Western provinces. As shown in Figure 3, groundnut prices rose by 20 percent in Luwingu (Northern), by 15 percent in Mafinga (Muchinga), and by 8 percent in Mpongwe (Copperbelt) and Mansa (Luapula).

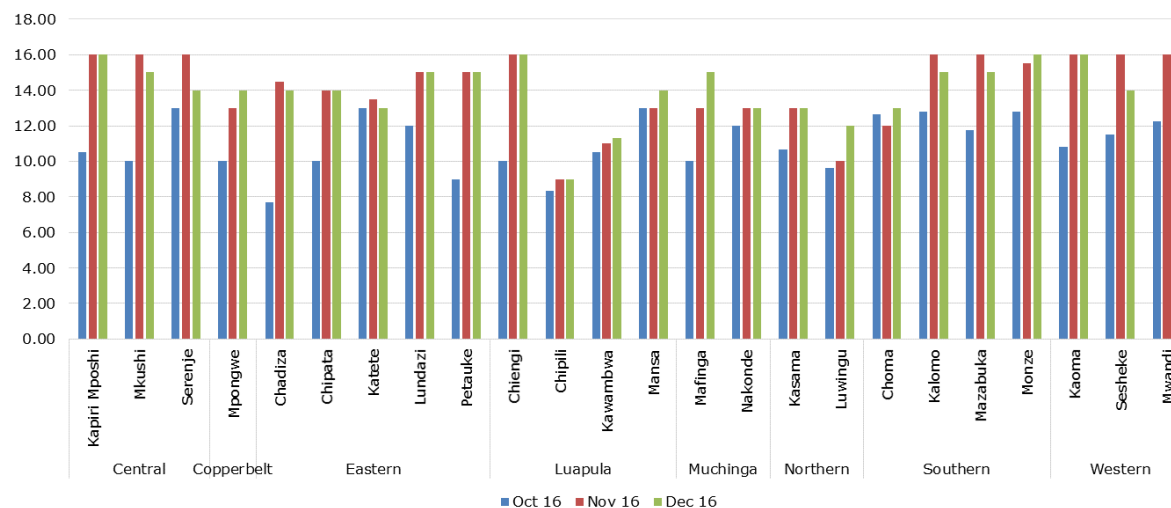
Some of the price increases in Northern and Luapula provinces can be attributed to demand from international buyers, mainly from Burundi and Rwanda. The price variations for beans and groundnuts in Pemba, Namwala and Sinazongwe – where emergency cash transfers are being implemented – are the same as in the 24 districts assessed by mVAM.

Figure 2: Bean prices by district (ZMK/kg)



Source: mVAM, December 2016

Figure 3: Groundnut prices by district (ZMK/kg)



Source: mVAM, December 2016



Most of the traders interviewed are also who sell the produce they grow. With the 2016/17 agriculture season underway, most traders continued to cite high transportation costs caused by poor road infrastructure as one of the main factors hampering their business. However, the farmer-traders also consider high production costs and limited access to agricultural inputs as major constraints. They believed that access to improved and diversified inputs would result in better yields and more legumes, which would likely improve their business even during the upcoming marketing season. With the extension of the government export ban, access to external international maize markets (Zimbabwe and Malawi) will continue to be a constraint for the traders.

Figure 4: Word cloud of open-ended responses



Source: mVAM, December 2016



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