

Food Security and Markets Monitoring Report

Situation Update

Zimbabwe's 2024/25 agricultural season was marked by uneven rainfall distribution, with southern regions receiving above-average precipitation while northern and eastern areas faced delayed and erratic rains. According to SADC and FAO reports, maize production is expected to remain 10–15% below national requirements due to poor rainfall distribution and prolonged dry spells, particularly affecting smallholder farmers. Humanitarian efforts remain underfunded, with only 35% of required agricultural recovery financing secured, heightening concerns over food insecurity (OCHA, March 2025).

Economically, Zimbabwe experienced deflation (-0.1% in March 2025) due to tight monetary and fiscal policies, though staple food prices showed mixed trends. While maize meal prices remained stable, vegetable oil saw sharp increases (14.8% month-on-month), and rice prices declined. The blended inflation rate stabilized at 0%, with the Zimbabwean dollar (ZWG) accounting for 24% of transactions. The Food Poverty Line (ZWG 864.20 per person) and Total Consumption Poverty Line (ZWG 1,260.52) reflect persistent affordability challenges, particularly for low-income households.



Highlights



In USD terms, the month on month inflation was 0.1% down from 0.2% while the annual inflation was 15% for March 2025. In local currency, the month on month inflation rate was -0.5% down from 0.5% in February 2025 (RBZ).



The WFP internal crop and livestock monitoring continue to note some improvements in crop, livestock and pasture conditions in several districts in the country due to significant rains received in both surplus and deficit- producing areas.



Price of food on the international market remained nearly unchanged according to the FAO price index. The index stood at 127.1 points.



Maize meal was available in an average of 90% of the rural and urban markets. Other food commodities monitored were generally available in most markets.



The seasonal rainfall performance has been characterised by mixed conditions with the southern parts of the country receiving above normal rains while the north received normal to below normal rainfall



The USD and ZWG cost of the monitored food and non food essential needs basket remained the same in both urban and rural markets when compared to February 2025.



Food security situation and the progression of the rainfall season

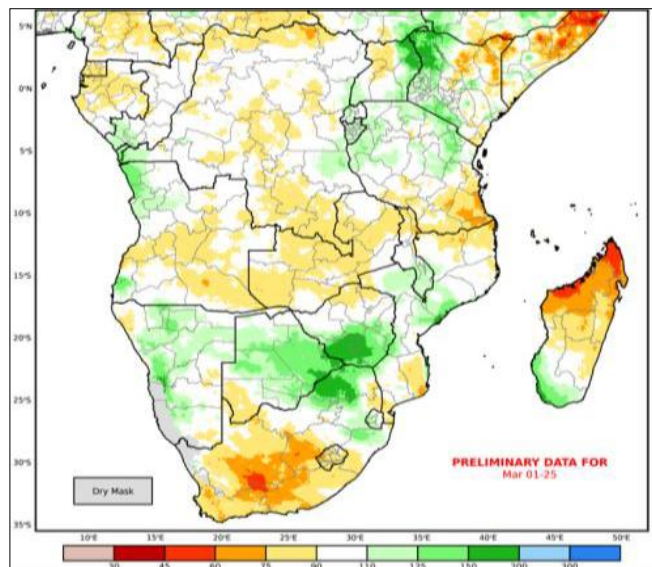
According to the SADC Climate Services Centre's Agromet Bulletin (March 2025), Zimbabwe experienced variable rainfall during the 2024/25 season, with significant regional disparities. The southern parts of the country, including Masvingo and Matabeleland South provinces, received above-average rainfall, recording 150–200% of the long-term average—the highest since 1981 (**Map 1**). In contrast, northern and eastern districts, such as Mashonaland Central and Manicaland, faced erratic and delayed rains. The late onset of precipitation, particularly in key maize-producing regions, delayed planting by 3–4 weeks, raising concerns about reduced yields in the upcoming harvest season.

The FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS, March 2025) estimates that Zimbabwe's maize production may show modest recovery compared to the previous season but will likely remain 10–15% below national requirements. This shortfall is attributed to poor rainfall distribution in northern farming (high production) belts, where cumulative precipitation was 20–30% below average in critical crop-establishment phases. Additionally, the Zimbabwe Meteorological Services Department (March 2025) reported that prolonged mid-season dry spells in January and February further stressed crops, particularly in communal farming areas reliant on rain-fed agriculture.

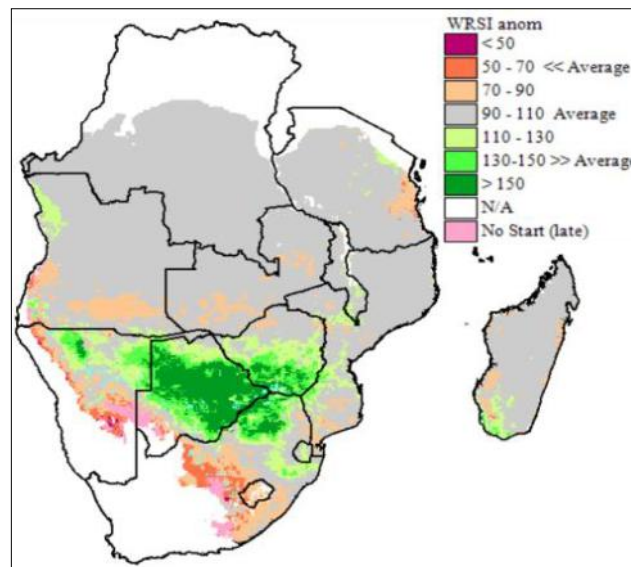
WFP internal monitoring, indicate that the delayed and uneven rainfall may have some negative impacts on yield, particularly for smallholder farmers who constitute the majority of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector. With seed reserves depleted in some districts due to replanting efforts, farmers' reliance on market purchases has increased, driving up demand and prices for staple crops. The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT, March 2025) reported a 25% month-on-month increase in maize grain prices in deficit-prone areas, exacerbating food access challenges for low-income households.

The upcoming April–June 2025 harvest will be critical in determining the severity of food insecurity. Early projections suggest improved yields although national production might remain insufficient to meet domestic demand, necessitating continued grain imports. Humanitarian partners, including FAO and the Zimbabwean Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Rural Development, are implementing resilience programs. However, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, March 2025) reported that only 35% of the required funding for agricultural recovery programs has been secured.

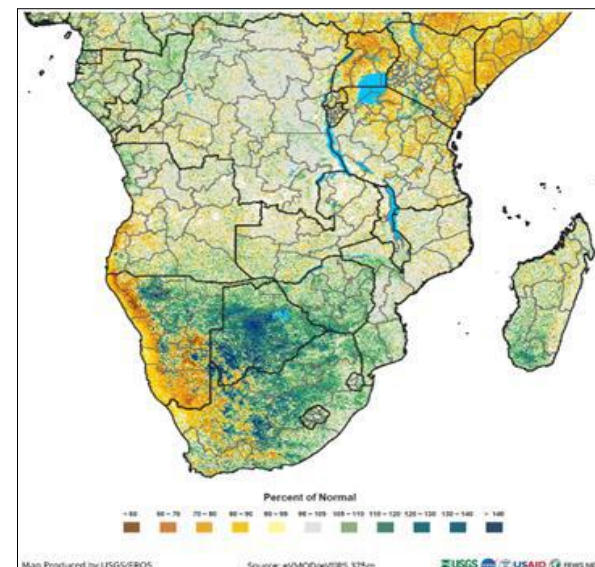
Map 1: CHIRPS Rainfall Oct-Mar (CHC/ FEWSNET)



Map 2: WRSI Anomaly as at 20 Mar (FEWSNET)



Map 3: NDVI 11 to 20 March (USGS/ FEWSNET)





Macro-economic situation

In March 2025, Zimbabwe's monthly consumer inflation rate for the local currency dropped to -0.1%, a further decline from the previous month's rate of 0.1% (**Figure 5**). The deceleration in price growth was seen in both food and non-food categories. The central bank has maintained a tight monetary policy which involves limiting money supply credit availability and tight fiscal policy which involves reducing government spending aimed at reducing market volatility. Inflation in US dollar terms was 0.1% in March compared to 0.2% in February (**Figure 4**). The blended inflation rate was at 0% in March 2025 compared to 0.3% in February 2025 (**Figure 5**). The ZWG accounted for 24% of all transactions in the country while the US dollar account for the remaining 76%.

At the end of March 2025, the foreign currency exchange rate was pegged at ZWG26.77 to 1USD which is comparable to ZWG26.56 to 1USD recorded at the end of February, 2025. The parallel market exchange rate remained stable at about ZWG37.00 to 1 USD in March 2025 similar to February 2025.

The FAO Food Price Index* (FFPI) averaged 127.1 points in March 2025, remaining nearly unchanged from February. Declines in cereals and sugar price indices offset increases in those of meat and vegetable oils, while the dairy price index remained stable. Overall, the FFPI was 8.2 points (6.9 percent) higher than its corresponding level one year ago but remained 33.1 points (20.7 percent) below its peak reached in March 2022.

The Food Poverty Line (FPL) for one person in March 2025 was ZWG864.20. FPL represents the amount of money that an individual requires to afford a daily minimum energy intake of 2,100 calories. ZIMSTAT uses the consumer basket for an individual deemed to be extremely poor to calculate the poverty line. The Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL) for one person was ZWG 1,260.52 in March 2025. TCPL is derived by adding the non-food consumption expenditures of an individual deemed to be extremely poor and the FPL.

Figure 4: Inflation rates (USD)

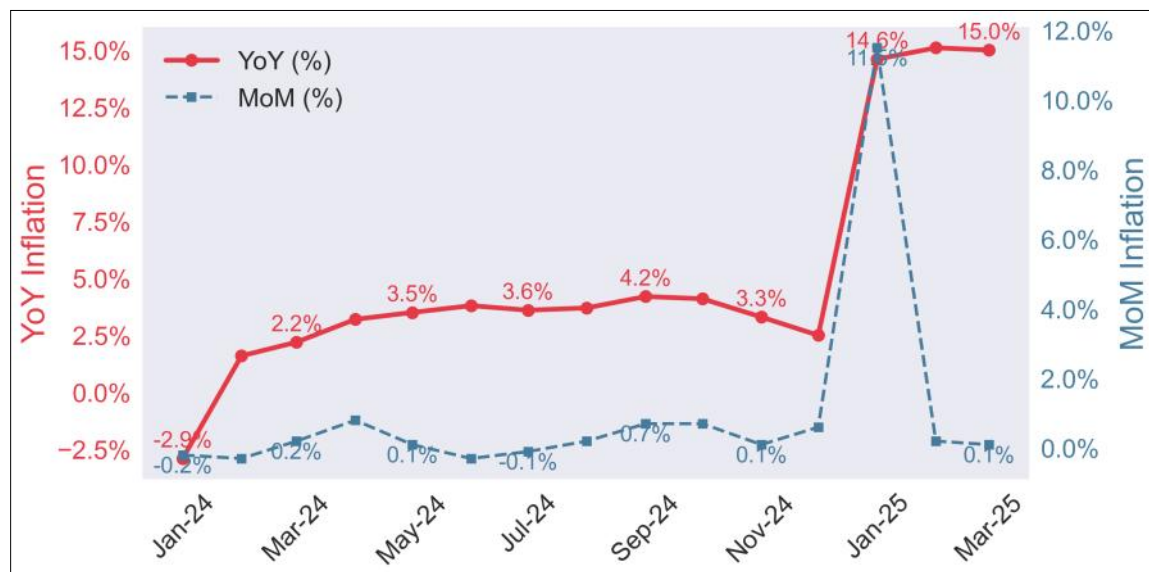
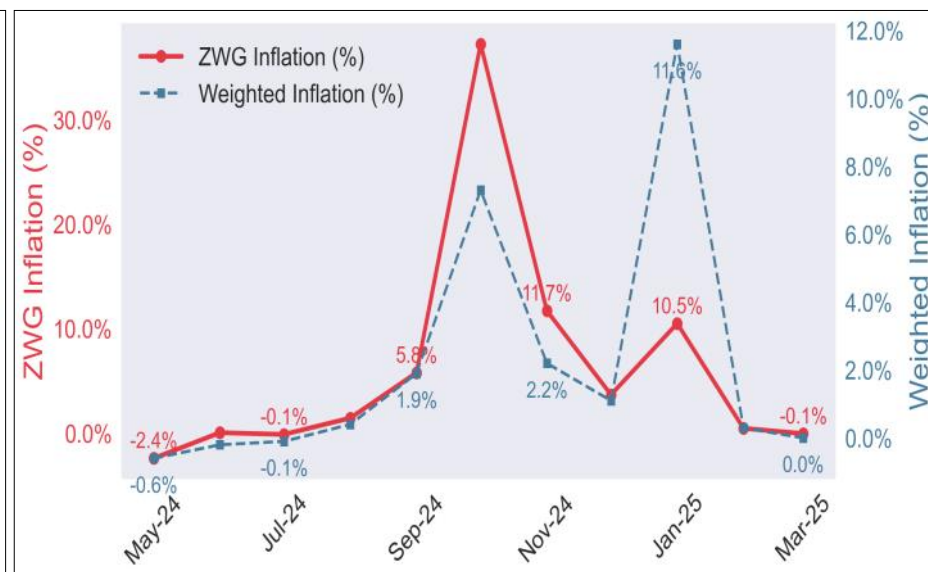


Figure 5: ZWG and Blended inflation



Data Source: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 2025



Rural Market Performance Update: a review of availability and prices of basic food basket commodities (ZWG and USD)

The USD value of the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) which represents minimum household requirements to meet their essential needs, was estimated at an average of \$22.93 which is comparable to \$23.30 recorded in February 2025. The March 2025 cost was comparable to the cost 6 months ago and the cost a year ago. The local currency (ZWG) cost of the MEB was estimated at ZWG898.58 in March 2025 which is comparable to ZWG903.31 in January 2025.

Figure 6: Rural USD food price % change (Month-on month)

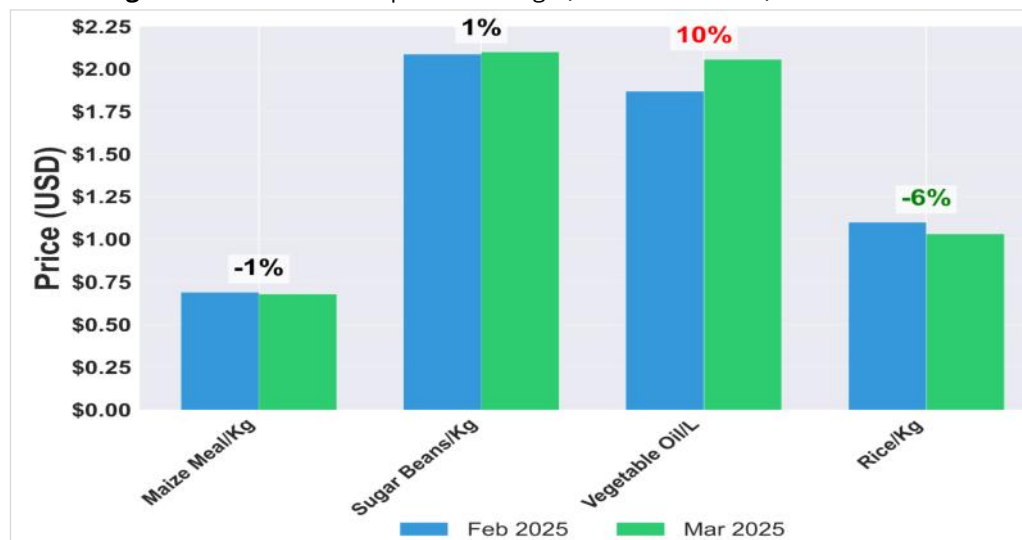
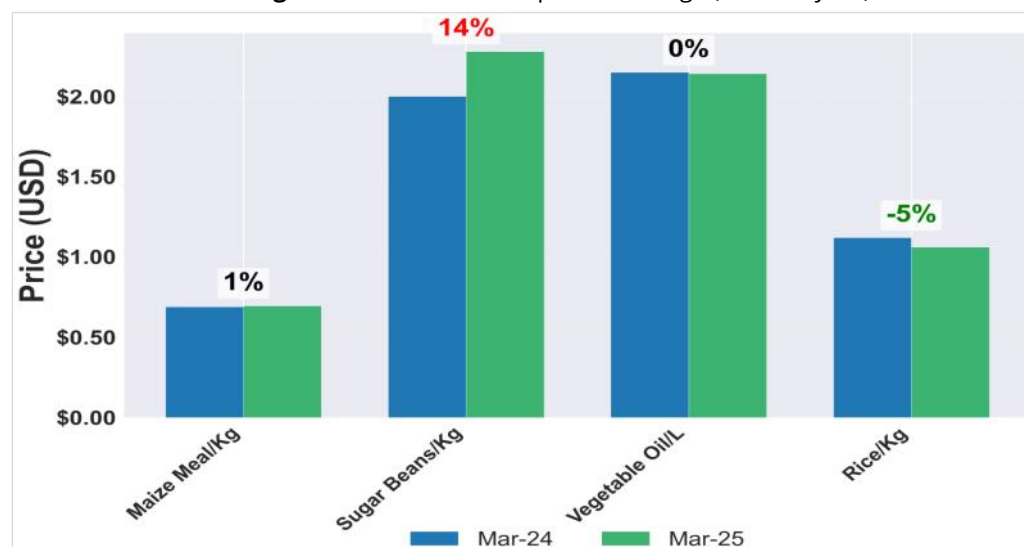


Figure 7: Rural USD food price % change (Year-on-year)



Availability of most commodities remained high and comparable to availability in February 2025 (**Table 1**). Maize, the primary staple, is available as mealie meal in shops (88%). The supply is high and stable as most grain processors report enough stock of grain. Availability of rice (98%) and vegetable oil (95%) is high and stable.

Month-on-month the price of maize meal and sugar beans remained stable. Vegetable oil recorded the most significant increase, with its price increasing by 10%, indicating a sharp rise in cost compared to the previous month. In contrast, rice was the only commodity that saw a decrease in price, dropping by 6%. (**Figure 6 and Table 1**).

Year-on-year the price of maize meal remained relatively more stable. Sugar beans experienced a substantial rise of 14.0%. On the other hand, vegetable oil price was stable year-on-year. Rice recorded the most significant drop among the commodities, with a 5% decrease in price compared to the previous year. (**Figure 7**).

Table 1: MEB commodity prices in USD and ZWG and availability.

ITEM	USD % price			ZWG % price			Feb Availability	Mar Availability
	Feb USD	Mar USD	change	Feb ZWG	Mar ZWG	change		
Maize Grain/Kg								
Maize Meal/Kg	0.69	0.68	-1%	27.77	25.95	-7%	91	88
Sugar Beans/Kg	2.09	2.10	1%	82.86	96.00	16%	56	59
Vegetable Oil/L	1.87	2.06	10%	89.14	90.00	1%	100	95
Rice/Kg	1.10	1.03	-6%	40.81	40.71	0%	100	98
Salt/Kg	0.60	0.59	-1%	23.00	25.00	9%	100	97
Sugar/Kg	1.38	1.39	0%	51.18	53.82	5%	95	100
Kapenta/Kg	9.88	10.13	3%	400.00	390.00	-3%	91	84
Flour/Kg	1.00	1.00	0%	39.03	36.23	-7%	96	96
Chicken/Kg	4.00	3.50	-13%	145.00	140.00	-3%	5	5
Eggs/Kg	2.75	2.78	1%	111.27	111.67	0%	71	48
Vegetables/Kg	1.00	1.00	0%	29.00	25.00	-14%	5	5
Full MEB	23.30	22.93	-2%	903.31	898.58	-1%	74	70



Urban Market Performance Update: a review of availability and prices of basic food basket commodities (ZWG and USD)

The cost of the full minimum expenditure (MEB) food basket in USD in urban markets was estimated at an average price of USD24.36 which is stable when compared to USD23.90 reported in February 2025. Compared to a year ago, the USD cost of the basket increased by 5%. In local currency the cost was estimated at an average price of ZWG818.80 which is 15% less than ZWG966.97 in February 2025.

Figure 8: Urban USD food price % change (Month-on-month)

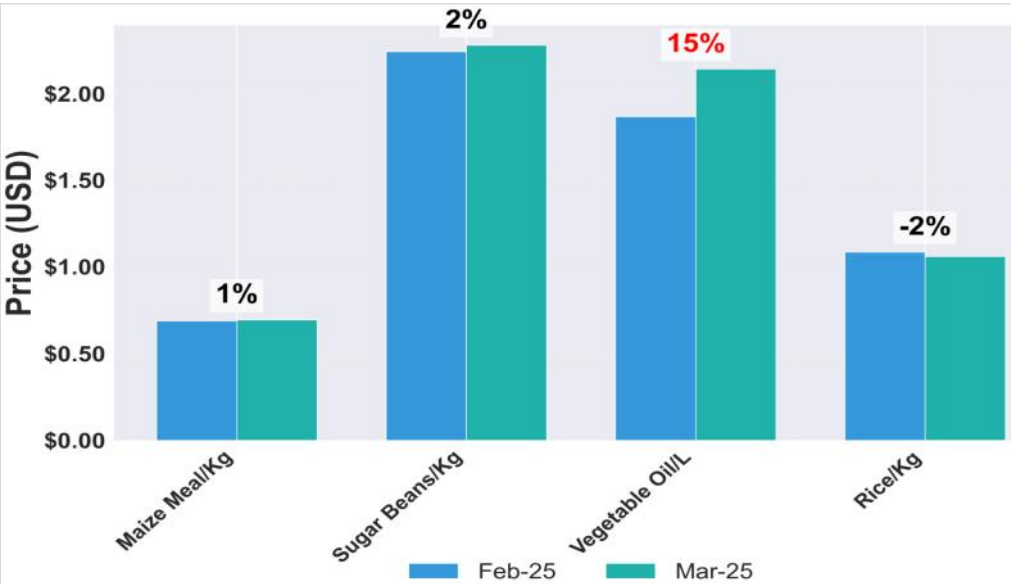
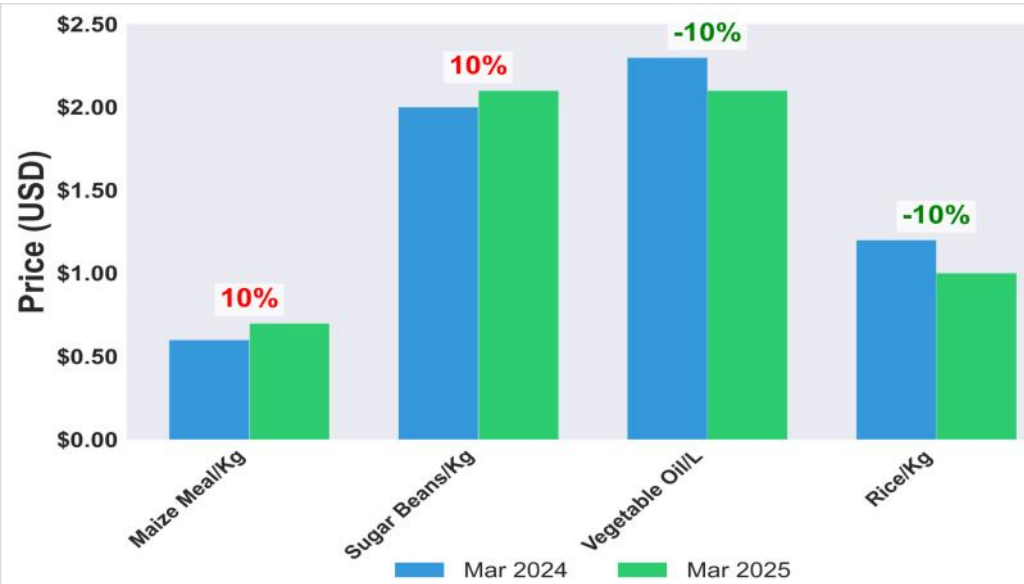


Figure 9: Urban USD food price % change (Year-on-year)



Maize meal, the primary staple, was generally available in urban markets reported by 92% of the monitored traders. The urban markets had high assortment of food commodities including both local and imported maize meal, rice and wheat products. (Table 2).

Month-on-month the price of maize meal remained unchanged over the period. Similarly, sugar beans maintained the same price in both months, showing no change. Vegetable oil experienced a notable increase of 150%, indicating a sharp month-on-month price rise. In contrast, the price of rice remained stable Figure 9). This could be related to the stabilization of the inflation rates.

Year-on-year maize meal and sugar beans both experienced a 10% increase in price over the one-year period, In contrast, vegetable oil and rice showed a 10% price decrease, as indicated by shorter green bars in 2025. (Figure 9). The prices are 156% higher than prices 6 months ago. Rural and urban markets seem to be using less of the local currency hence it is difficult to make conclusions on price changes.

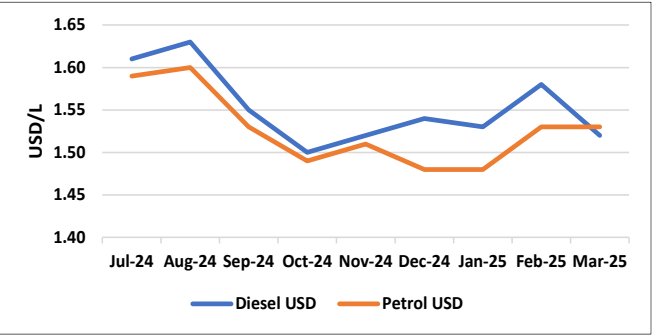
Table 2: MEB commodity prices in USD and ZWG and availability

ITEM	USD % price			ZWG % price			Feb Availability	Mar Availability
	Feb USD	Mar USD	change	Feb ZWG	Mar ZWG	change2		
Maize Grain/Kg				-	-			
Maize Meal/Kg	0.69	0.70	1%	28.96	21.10	-27%	92	91
Sugar Beans/Kg	2.24	2.28	2%	96.00	81.92	-15%	93	93
Vegetable Oil/L	1.87	2.14	15%	75.00	72.00	-4%	100	98
Rice/Kg	1.09	1.06	-2%	40.85	34.65	-15%	96	96
Salt/Kg	0.53	0.55	4%	23.00	24.00	4%	100	100
Sugar/Kg	1.33	1.36	3%	49.80	47.42	-5%	96	91
Kapenta/Kg	10.93	10.10	-8%	391.38	390.00	0%	85	91
Flour/Kg	1.00	1.00	-1%	39.00	30.73	-21%	92	91
Chicken/Kg	4.52	4.50	0%	180.00	175.00	-3%	39	35
Eggs/Kg	2.59	2.78	7%	111.11	112.31	1%	79	74
Vegetables/Kg	0.97	1.00	3%	30.00	30.00	0%	50	39
Full MEB	23.90	24.36	2%	966.97	818.80	-15%	84	82



Fuel price (USD and ZWG)

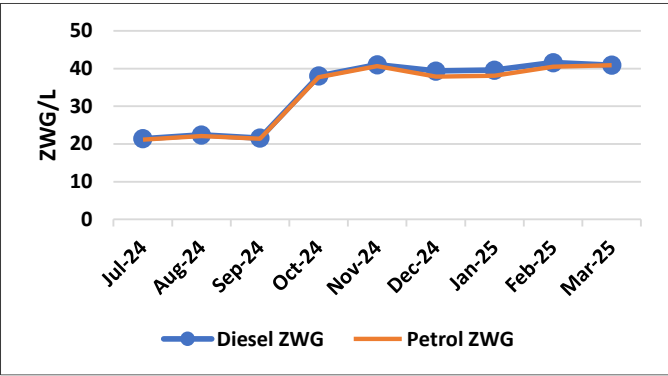
Figure 10: Fuel USD price trends



The price of diesel and petrol was pegged at \$1.52/L and \$1.53/L respectively. The price is comparable to the February 2025 price (Figure 10). In comparison with the same time a year ago, the USD prices were 15% and 6% less for diesel and petrol respectively.

In local currency the March 2025 price of fuel remained stable at \$40.92/L for both diesel and petrol (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Fuel ZWG price trends



Data Source: ZERA, 2025

Data Source: ZERA, 2025

Non-food commodities (USD and ZWG)

Availability of soap remained stable in both rural and urban markets when compared to February 2025 (Table 3).

rural and urban markets. This is most likely related to the stabilization of the inflation and exchange rates (Table 3).

NB: (The cheapest brand is monitored, however sometimes due to unavailability, different brands are monitored which could explain the high price differences).

Both USD and local currency (ZWG) prices for laundry and bath soap remained stable in both

Table 3: Non-Food Commodity prices in ZWG, USD and availability

Commodity	Availability				Price in USD				Price in ZWG			
	Feb	Mar	Avail % change		Feb (\$)	Mar (\$)	% change \$		Feb (ZWG)	Mar (ZWG)	% change \$	
Laundry Soap Rural	96%	98%	2%	↔	\$ 1.23	\$ 1.23	0%	↔	ZWD 39.00	ZWD 41.07	5%	↔
Laundry Soap Urban	98%	99%	1%	↔	\$ 1.23	\$ 1.23	0%	↔	ZWD 35.00	ZWD 36.48	4%	↔
Bathing Soap Rural	98%	100%	2%	↔	\$ 0.26	\$ 0.25	-4%	↔	ZWD 9.44	ZWD 9.78	4%	↔
Bathing Soap Urban	97%	98%	1%	↔	\$ 0.28	\$ 0.29	3%	↔	ZWD 10.89	ZWD 10.68	-2%	↔



Methodology



Data for this reporting period, was mainly collected between 1-31 March 2025 and is based on interviews with 47 traders of which 31 were in rural and 16 in urban districts. About 90% of the interviews were conducted face-to-face while other interviews were collected remotely.

Checking availability at market level: If a trader reports having sold a commodity within the last week, the commodity is considered available in their respective market. Availability at district-level is calculated as the share of markets with commodity availability across districts. Missing data indicate that none of the interviewed traders generally trades the commodity. For the full harmonized markets monitoring database, please visit: [Economic: Prices - Dataviz | WFP - VAM](#).

The harmonised markets monitoring initiative is conducted by WFP in partnership with members of the National Cash Assistance Working Group (NCWG).

Partners who collected this month's data:

AARDS, PANAFRICARE, Plan International, Terre Des Hommes Italia, Welthungerhilfe and World Vision Zimbabwe.



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