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Food Basket Price Monthly

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FOOD BASKET PRICE MONTHLY

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The basket of food products included in this publication is derived from the Income and Expenditure Survey (IES) of 2014/15', compiled by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). This food basket is to be representative of consumer spending on food and, as a result of the IES 2014/15 release and the CPI base year (2016=100) adjustment, the food basket had since been altered. Cognisance of the above background should be taken when interpreting the data.

Highlights

- *Food inflation increased to 3.5% during August 2018, year-on-year (y-o-y) from 3.4% reported in July 2018, with Headline inflation slowing to 4.9% from 5.1%, mainly from softening prices in Transport as a contributing factor to Headline CPI*.*
- *Meat price inflation eased to 5.3% (y-o-y) from 5.6%, with vegetables increasing to 8.9% (y-o-y), from 8.8%. Milk, eggs and cheese inflation retracted to 3.7% y-o-y, resulting from the egg imports to satisfy demand.*
- *In August 2018, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket reached R833.41 compared to the R844.72 reported in July 2018, indicating a month-on-month (m-o-m) percentage decrease of 1.3%. When compared to August 2017, an annual (y-o-y) percentage increase of 0.5% was reported.*

**Note: Transport CPI was down by 0.1 percentage point during August 2018, as a contributing factor to Headline CPI. Transport CPI includes vehicle purchases, public and private transport, with fuel being one of the running costs involved. Recent fuel price volatility, as a result of global price changes and exchange rate fluctuations, will most probably reflect in food prices over the next few months.*

1. Introduction

The NAMC monitors food prices at retail level and releases regular authoritative reports. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) established the Food Price Monitoring Committee (FPMC) at the NAMC to track and report food price trends in South Africa; to provide explanations of the observed trends and to then advise the department on any possible action that could be taken should national and household food security be threatened. The FPMC was established after the high food price episode of 2000/01 season. The functions of the FPMC were continued by the NAMC after the FPMC completed its work in August 2004. The NAMC issues four quarterly Food Price Monitoring Reports annually and, since 2005, also publishes an annual Food Cost Review, which documents the margins between farm and retail prices of the major food products, amongst other topics. In 2015, the NAMC began releasing a quarterly Farm-to-Retail-Price-Spread (FTRPS) publication, which seeks to provide more insight into the factors driving commodity and food price margins. This publication, the Food Basket Price Monthly Report, came as a result of discussions with industry to keep a more frequent watch on the movements of food prices.

2. Overall inflation and food inflation

The August 2018 Consumer Price Index (CPI) released by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) indicated that the headline CPI and the food and non-alcoholic beverage price indices reached 4.9% and 3.5%, respectively, compared to the 5.1% and 3.4% reported in July 2018. **Figure 1** show the trends in the headline CPI and food and non-alcoholic beverage inflation rates on a monthly basis, from January 2012 to August 2018.

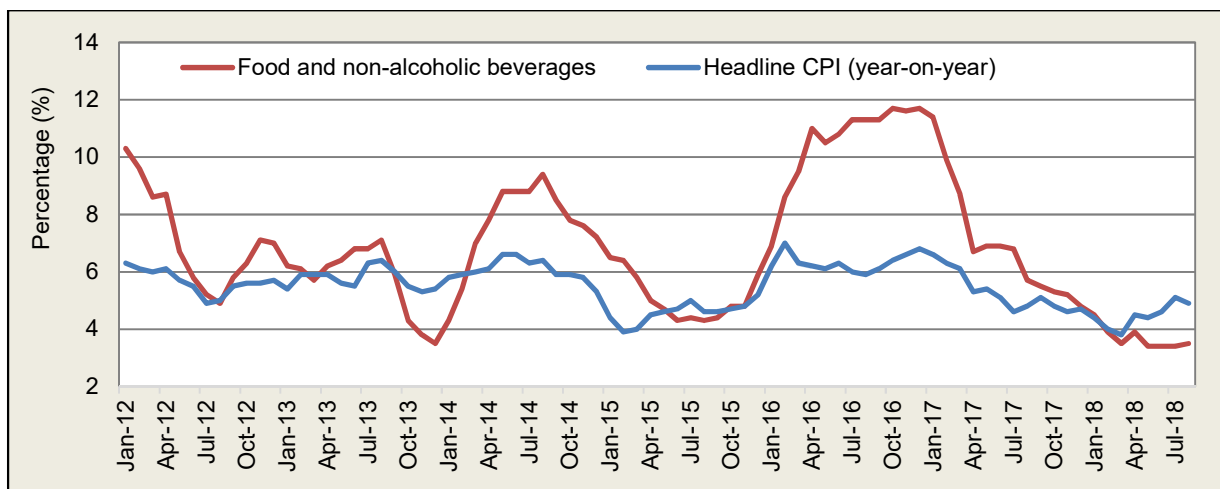


Figure 1: Headline CPI and food and non-alcoholic beverage CPI
Source: Stats SA, 2018

3. Comparison between urban and rural prices: August 2018

Table 1 compares prices of selected food items in rural and urban areas for August 2018. The food items which showed the largest price differences between **urban** and **rural** areas in August 2018 were: sunflower oil (750ml) at a difference of R4.71, Ceylon/black tea (62.5g) at R3.16 difference, and a loaf of white bread

(700g) at a difference of R0.19. This indicates that urban consumers paid more for some of these food items than their rural counterparts. In other cases, however, rural consumers paid more for certain products (e.g. white sugar (2.5kg), special maize meal (2.5kg), margarine spread (500g), and peanut butter (400g), than their urban counterparts.

Table 1: Comparison between urban and rural food prices (selected food items)

Product	Urban Food Prices August 2018 (R/unit)	Rural Food Prices August 2018 (R/unit)	Price difference (R/unit)
Full cream milk – long life 1ℓ	13.84	14.70	-0.86
Loaf of brown bread 700g	11.58	11.76	-0.18
Loaf of white bread 700g	12.98	12.79	0.19
Special maize 2.5 kg	17.58	19.81	-2.23
Super maize 2.5 kg	20.78	21.77	-0.99
Margarine spread 500g	26.95	28.67	-1.72
Peanut butter 400g	28.40	29.70	-1.30
Rice 2kg	25.60	25.49	0.11
Sunflower oil 750mℓ	22.26	17.55	4.71
Ceylon/black tea 62.5g	15.65	12.49	3.16
White sugar 2.5kg	35.12	40.29	-5.17
Average			-0.39

Source: Stats SA, 2018

4. The NAMC food basket

This section analyses the nominal cost of a basic 28-item NAMC urban food basket, based on average food price data for the period August 2018 vs. August 2017. Composition of the current food basket (as revised in 2017) include: apples (per kg), baked beans – tinned (410g), bananas fresh (per kg), beans – dried (500g), beef mince fresh (per kg), beef offal fresh (per kg), cabbage (per kg), Ceylon/black tea (250g), cheddar cheese (per kg), chicken giblets (per kg), eggs (1.5 dozen), fish (excl. tuna) – tinned (400g), full cream milk – long life (1ℓ), instant coffee (250g), IQF chicken portions (2kg), a loaf of brown bread (700g), a loaf of white bread (700g), margarine brick (500g), onions fresh (per kg), oranges (per kg), peanut butter (400g), polony (per kg), potatoes fresh (per kg), rice (2kg), sugar white (2.5kg), sunflower oil (750mℓ), super maize meal (5kg) and tomatoes fresh (per kg).

In August 2018, the nominal cost of this 28-item NAMC urban food basket reached **R833.41** compared to the **R844.72** reported in July 2018, indicating a m-o-m percentage decrease of 1.3%. When compared to August 2017, an annual (y-o-y) percentage increase of 0.5%, was reported.

The 28-item NAMC urban food basket products (in nominal terms) are highlighted in **Table 2**. Products exceeding the South African Reserve Bank's (SARB) upper annual inflation band of 6%, include the following: baked beans – tinned 410g (7.2%), Ceylon/black tea 250g (7.3%), eggs 1.5 dozen (14.9%), oranges – fresh per kg (25.7%), beef mince – fresh per kg (8.6%), IQF chicken portions – 2kg (8.3%), cabbage – fresh per kg (6.8%), onions – fresh per kg (28.6%), potatoes – fresh per kg (9.8%), and tomatoes – fresh per kg (15.9%).

Table 2: Percentage change in a basic NAMC food basket (28 item) prices

Category	Product	Aug-17	Jul-18	Aug-18	% change y-o-y	% change m-o-m
Beans	Baked beans - tinned 410g	9.29	9.84	9.96	7.2%	1.2%
Beans	Beans - dried 500g	18.98	18.90	19.01	0.2%	0.6%
Beans	Peanut butter 400g	27.56	27.86	28.40	3.0%	1.9%
Coffee, Tea	Instant coffee 250g	35.30	36.42	36.05	2.1%	-1.0%
Coffee, Tea	Ceylon/black tea 250g	32.30	35.05	34.67	7.3%	-1.1%
Dairy, Eggs	Full cream milk - long life 1ℓ	13.89	13.70	13.84	-0.4%	1.0%
Dairy, Eggs	Eggs 1.5 dozen	38.32	43.78	44.02	14.9%	0.5%
Dairy, Eggs	Cheddar cheese per kg	104.28	105.12	100.35	-3.8%	-4.5%
Fats, Oils	Brick margarine 500g	22.09	22.27	22.55	2.1%	1.3%
Fats, Oils	Sunflower oil 750mℓ	21.87	21.47	22.26	1.8%	3.7%
Fruit	Apples - fresh per kg	18.81	18.96	18.35	-2.4%	-3.2%
Fruit	Bananas - fresh per kg	13.64	13.24	13.27	-2.7%	0.2%
Fruit	Oranges - fresh per kg	10.99	13.99	13.81	25.7%	-1.3%
Protein	Beef mince - fresh per kg	77.39	84.73	84.02	8.6%	-0.8%
Protein	Beef offal - fresh per kg	43.08	35.80	35.35	-17.9%	-1.3%
Protein	Chicken giblets per kg	35.98	34.41	34.69	-3.6%	0.8%
Protein	IQF chicken portions - 2kg	61.75	68.16	66.90	8.3%	-1.8%
Protein	Fish (excl. tuna) - tinned 400g	17.67	18.34	18.32	3.7%	-0.1%
Protein	Polony per kg	42.90	44.19	41.69	-2.8%	-5.7%
Bread & Cereals	Loaf of brown bread 700g	12.11	11.34	11.58	-4.4%	2.1%
Bread & Cereals	Loaf of white bread 700g	13.22	12.95	12.98	-1.8%	0.2%
Bread & Cereals	Super maize meal 5kg	44.32	35.72	34.63	-21.9%	-3.1%
Bread & Cereals	Rice 2kg	25.62	26.01	25.60	-0.1%	-1.6%
Vegetables	Cabbage - fresh per kg	11.82	12.51	12.62	6.8%	0.9%
Vegetables	Onions - fresh per kg	11.66	14.44	15.00	28.6%	3.9%
Vegetables	Potatoes - fresh per kg	10.72	11.72	11.77	9.8%	0.4%
Vegetables	Tomatoes - fresh per kg	14.32	18.04	16.60	15.9%	-8.0%
Sugary foods	White sugar 2.5kg	39.22	35.76	35.12	-10.5%	-1.8%
Basket	Total Rand Value	829.10	844.72	833.41	0.5%	-1.3%

Source: Stats SA and BFAP, 2018

Table 3 below monitors three additional protein cuts that were included products in the CPI basket (post-January 2017).

Table 3: Percentage change in additional chicken product prices

Category	Product	Aug-17	Jul-18	Aug-18	% change y-o-y	% change m-o-m
Protein	Chicken portions – fresh per kg	56.94	60.03	59.89	5.2%	-0.2%
Protein	Chicken portions frozen – non IQF average per kg	47.92	48.19	47.72	-0.4%	-1.0%
Protein	IQF chicken portions – 1kg	18.36	45.49	39.74		-12.6%

Source: Stats SA, 2018

To further explore the impact of inflation on consumers, **Figure 2** presents an illustration of the average nominal cost growth of specific food groups within the 28-item NAMC food basket, comparing the periods August 2018 vs. August 2017 (y-o-y) and August 2018 vs. July 2018 (m-o-m). The following food categories in this basket experienced increased annual inflation: vegetables, coffee & tea, fruit, bean products, fats & oils, dairy & eggs, and animal protein.

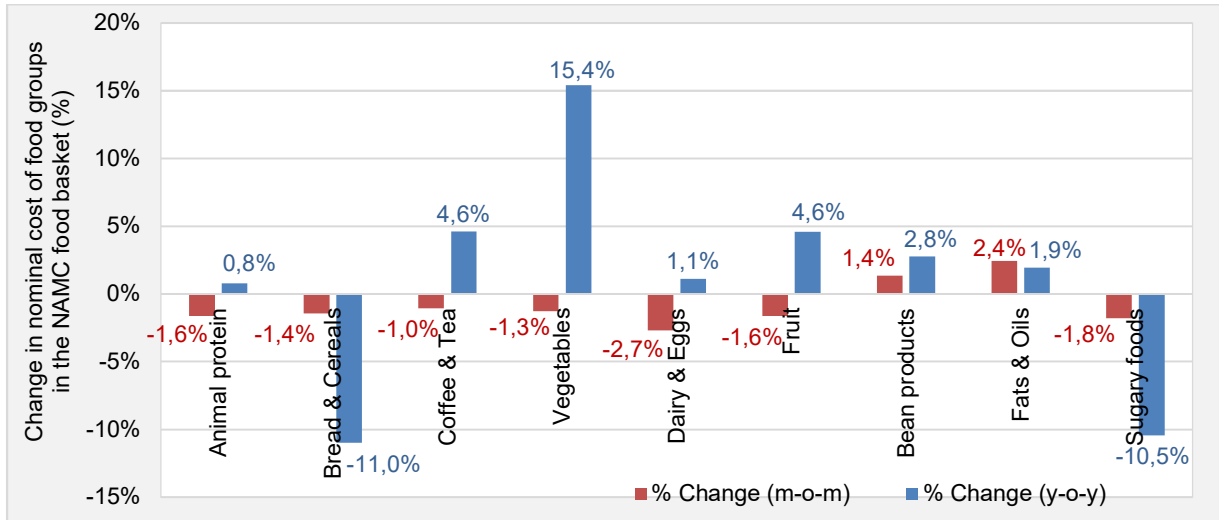


Figure 2: Nominal cost growth of specific food groups within the 28-item NAMC food basket, comparing August 2018 vs. August 2017 and August 2018 vs. July 2018

Source: BFAP & NAMC calculations, Stats SA data, 2018

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