



National Agricultural  
Marketing Council

Promoting market access for South African agriculture

# Markets and Economic Research Centre



## Food Basket Price Monthly

*Issue 37 – Jan/2019*

# FOOD BASKET PRICE MONTHLY

## January 2019

*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 and non-alcoholic beverage inflation decreased to 3% during December 2018, year-on-year (y-o-y) from 3.4% reported in November 2018, with Headline inflation decreasing to 4.5%.*
- *Meat price inflation decelerated to 1.8% (y-o-y) from 2.8%, with vegetable and fish inflation increasing by 8.5% and 5.7%, respectively. Sugary food prices increased by 4% over the same period.*
- *During January 2019 Fuel (93 ULP) prices decreased to R13.79/ℓ from R15.01/ℓ (m-o-m), with 0.05% Diesel decreasing to R13.13/ℓ from R14.67/ℓ (m-o-m).*
  - *Prices are predicted to decrease further by 12c/ℓ for petrol, and 36c/ℓ for diesel, towards the end of January 2019. This This will bring a third month of petrol price decreases, a combined reduction of around R3/ℓ.*
  - *Although international crude oil prices increased slightly, the overall price is still lower than December's average. The R/\$ exchange rate also strengthened over this period.*
- *During December 2018, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket reached R849.44 compared to the R849.69 reported in November 2018, indicating a (m-o-m) percentage decrease of 0.03%. When compared to December 2017, an annual (y-o-y) percentage increase of 0.03% was reported.*

## 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 December 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 4.5% and 3%, respectively, compared to the 5.2% and 3.4% reported in November 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 December 2018.

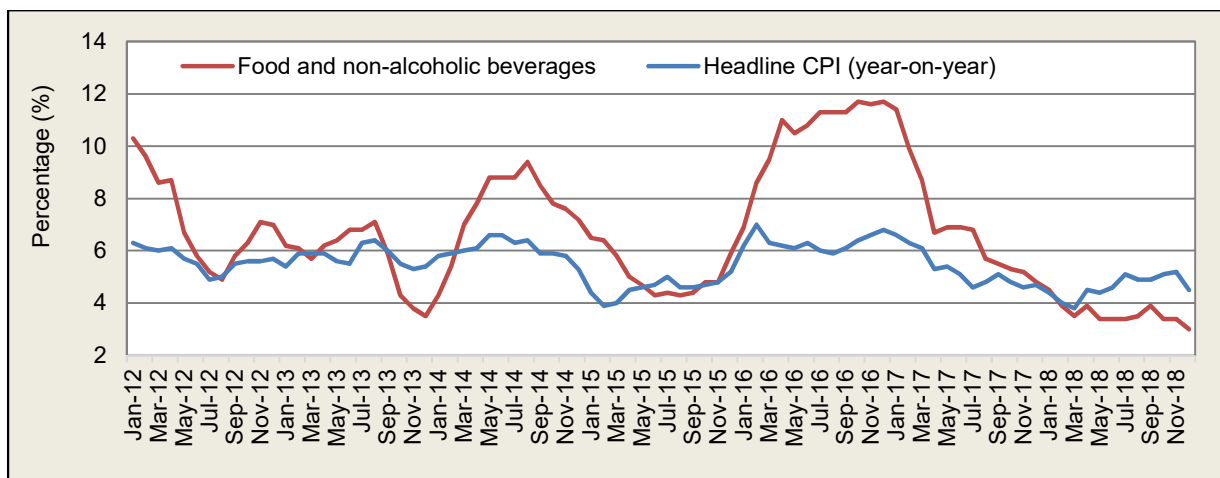


Figure 1: Headline CPI and food and non-alcoholic beverage CPI  
Source: Stats SA, 2018

## 3. Comparison between urban and rural prices: December 2018

**Table 1** compares prices of selected food items in rural and urban areas for December 2018. The food items which showed the largest price differences between urban and rural areas in December 2018 were: sunflower oil (750ml) at a difference of R4.75, Ceylon/black tea (62.5g) at R3.35 difference, and special

maize meal (2.5kg) at a difference of R0.37. 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. peanut butter (400g), white sugar (2.5kg) and full cream milk – long life (1ℓ), than their urban counterparts.

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

Product	Urban Food Prices December 2018 (R/unit)	Rural Food Prices December 2018 (R/unit)	Price difference (R/unit)
Full cream milk – long life 1ℓ	13.94	14.73	-0.79
Loaf of brown bread 700g	11.82	12.04	-0.22
Loaf of white bread 700g	13.29	13.02	0.27
Special maize 2.5 kg	17.33	16.96	0.37
Super maize 2.5 kg	21.12	21.18	-0.06
Margarine spread 500g	27.07	27.80	-0.73
Peanut butter 400g	28.06	30.54	-2.48
Rice 2kg	25.83	26.18	-0.35
Sunflower oil 750mℓ	22.88	18.13	4.75
Ceylon/black tea 62.5g	15.83	12.48	3.35
White sugar 2.5kg	39.09	41.03	-1.94
<b>Average</b>			<b>0.2</b>

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 December 2018 vs. December 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 December 2018, the nominal cost of this 28-item NAMC urban food basket reached **R849.44** compared to the **R849.69** reported in November 2018, indicating a m-o-m percentage decrease of 0.03%. When compared to December 2017, an annual (y-o-y) percentage increase of 0.03% 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: Ceylon/black tea 250g (7.6%), apples – fresh per kg (7.3%), beef mince – fresh per kg (7.9%), fish (excl. tuna) - tinned 400g (6.3%), polony per kg (7.3%), onions – fresh per kg (11.7%), potatoes – fresh per kg (7.1%) and tomatoes – fresh per kg (13%).

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

Category	Product	Dec-17	Nov-18	Dec-18	% change y-o-y	% change m-o-m
Beans	Baked beans - tinned 410g	9.63	10.05	9.94	3.2%	-1.1%
Beans	Beans - dried 500g	19.31	19.34	19.28	-0.2%	-0.3%
Beans	Peanut butter 400g	27.88	28.02	28.06	0.6%	0.1%
Coffee, Tea	Instant coffee 250g	36.10	35.74	35.64	-1.3%	-0.3%
Coffee, Tea	Ceylon/black tea 250g	31.96	35.33	34.39	7.6%	-2.7%
Dairy, Eggs	Full cream milk - long life 1ℓ	14.01	13.93	13.94	-0.5%	0.1%
Dairy, Eggs	Eggs 1.5 dozen	44.45	42.92	41.87	-5.8%	-2.4%
Dairy, Eggs	Cheddar cheese per kg	106.37	104.55	105.77	-0.6%	1.2%
Fats, Oils	Brick margarine 500g	22.38	22.44	22.17	-0.9%	-1.2%
Fats, Oils	Sunflower oil 750mℓ	22.06	22.88	22.88	3.7%	0.0%
Fruit	Apples - fresh per kg	19.10	19.77	20.49	7.3%	3.6%
Fruit	Bananas - fresh per kg	14.87	13.83	14.78	-0.6%	6.9%
Fruit	Oranges - fresh per kg	15.91	13.79	14.99	-5.8%	8.7%
Protein	Beef mince - fresh per kg	78.82	84.79	85.08	7.9%	0.3%
Protein	Beef offal - fresh per kg	42.77	35.04	34.75	-18.8%	-0.8%
Protein	Chicken giblets per kg	35.77	34.39	34.31	-4.1%	-0.2%
Protein	IQF chicken portions - 2kg	67.08	63.17	63.62	-5.2%	0.7%
Protein	Fish (excl. tuna) - tinned 400g	17.23	18.27	18.31	6.3%	0.2%
Protein	Polony per kg	42.15	42.24	45.24	7.3%	7.1%
Bread & Cereals	Loaf of brown bread 700g	11.99	11.80	11.82	-1.4%	0.2%
Bread & Cereals	Loaf of white bread 700g	12.91	13.17	13.29	2.9%	0.9%
Bread & Cereals	Super maize meal 5kg	40.57	38.04	35.14	-13.4%	-7.6%
Bread & Cereals	Rice 2kg	24.52	26.09	25.83	5.3%	-1.0%
Vegetables	Cabbage - fresh per kg	12.96	12.63	12.92	-0.3%	2.3%
Vegetables	Onions - fresh per kg	13.03	14.88	14.55	11.7%	-2.2%
Vegetables	Potatoes - fresh per kg	11.82	12.62	12.66	7.1%	0.3%
Vegetables	Tomatoes - fresh per kg	16.48	20.21	18.63	13.0%	-7.8%
Sugary foods	White sugar 2.5kg	37.09	39.76	39.09	5.4%	-1.7%
<b>Basket</b>	<b>Total Rand Value</b>	<b>849.22</b>	<b>849.69</b>	<b>849.44</b>	<b>0.03%</b>	<b>-0.03%</b>

Source: Stats SA and BFAP, 2018

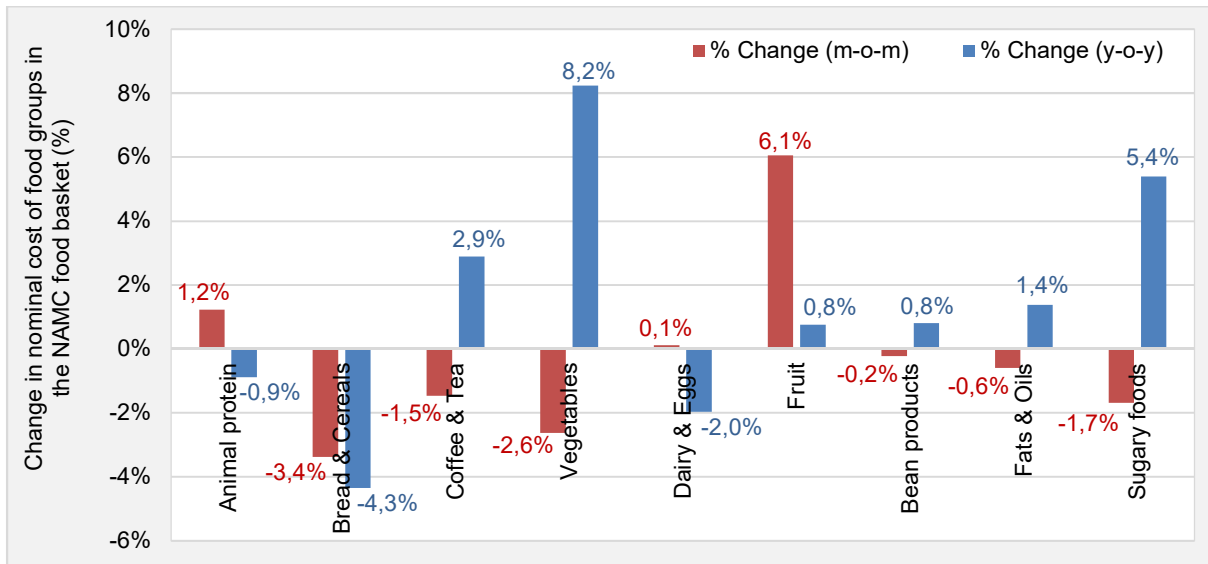
**Table 3** below monitors three additional protein cuts that were included products in the CPI basket (post-January 2017).

**Table 3: Percentage change in additional chicken product prices**

Category	Product	Dec-17	Nov-18	Dec-18	% change y-o-y	% change m-o-m
Protein	Chicken portions – fresh per kg	58.51	59.61	59.82	2.2%	0.4%
Protein	Chicken portions frozen – non IQF average per kg	49.49	46.52	47.00	-5.0%	1.0%
Protein	IQF chicken portions – 1kg	31.24	42.99	42.99	37.6%	0.0%

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 December 2018 vs. December 2017 (y-o-y) and December 2018 vs. November 2018 (m-o-m). The following food categories in this basket experienced increased annual inflation: vegetables, sugary foods, coffee & tea, fats & oils, bean products and fruits.



**Figure 2: Nominal cost growth of specific food groups within the 28-item NAMC food basket, comparing December 2018 vs. December 2017 and December 2018 vs. November 2018**  
 Source: BFAP & NAMC calculations, Stats SA data, 2018

Compiled by:

Trends and discussion on selected topics:  
 Rika Verwey

BFAP:  
 Hester Vermeulen

Enquiries: Christo Joubert: +27 12 341 1115 or +27 76 999 7766 or [christo@namc.co.za](mailto:christo@namc.co.za)

Stats SA is acknowledged for assistance provided to the NAMC in terms of food price data.

© 2019. Published by the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC).

**Disclaimer:**

Information contained in this document results from research funded wholly or in part by the NAMC acting in good faith. Opinions, attitudes and points of view expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the NAMC. The NAMC makes no claims, promises, or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of this document and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions regarding the content thereof. No warranty of any kind, implied, expressed, or statutory, including but not limited to the warranties of non-infringement of third party rights, title, merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose or freedom from computer virus is given with respect to the contents of this document in hardcopy, electronic format or electronic links thereto. Reference made to any specific product, process, and service by trade name, trade mark, manufacturer or another commercial commodity or entity are for informational purposes only and do not constitute or imply approval, endorsement or favouring by the NAMC.