

MERC

Markets & Economic Research
Centre

Food

Basket Price
Monthly

*28 Selected food
basket price items:*

NAMC urban food
basket

*Comparison between urban
and rural prices: May 2019*



URBAN AND RURAL FOOD PRICE TRENDS: APRIL 2019 VS. APRIL 2018



FOOD BASKET PRICE MONTHLY

June 2019

Highlights

- Food and non-alcoholic beverage inflation increased from 2.9% to 3.2% during May 2019 year-on-year (y-o-y), with Headline inflation increasing to 4.5% from 4.4%.
 - o The main drivers for increased inflation include pressure from rising petrol prices, more expensive food, housing and utilities.
- Vegetables and bread & cereals were the highest food inflation contributors (y-o-y) with 8% and 7.8%, respectively, with meat price inflation 0.9% lower than a year ago.
- Fuel prices increased by 9c/ℓ in June 2019 to reach R16.57/ℓ (93ULP) and R16.76/ℓ (95ULP), respectively. Diesel 500ppm increased from R14.88/ℓ to R15.21/ℓ (+33c/ℓ).
 - o Carbon tax of 9c/ℓ for petrol and 10c/ℓ for diesel which came into effect on June 5th.
 - o July 2019 fuel prices are predicted to decrease by 90c/ℓ for petrol, with diesel expected to decrease by 70c/ℓ. This as a result of international crude oil prices declining together with the R/\$ exchange rate depreciating on the back of political announcements surrounding the Reserve Bank.
- During May 2019, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket amounted to R874.70 compared to the R879.38 reported during April 2019, resulting in a monthly percentage decline of 0.5%. When compared to May 2018, an annual (y-o-y) percentage increase of 3% was reported.

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.

Overall inflation and food inflation

The May 2019 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 increased (y-o-y) with 4.5% and 3.2%, respectively, from 4.4% and 2.9% reported during April 2019. 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 May 2019.

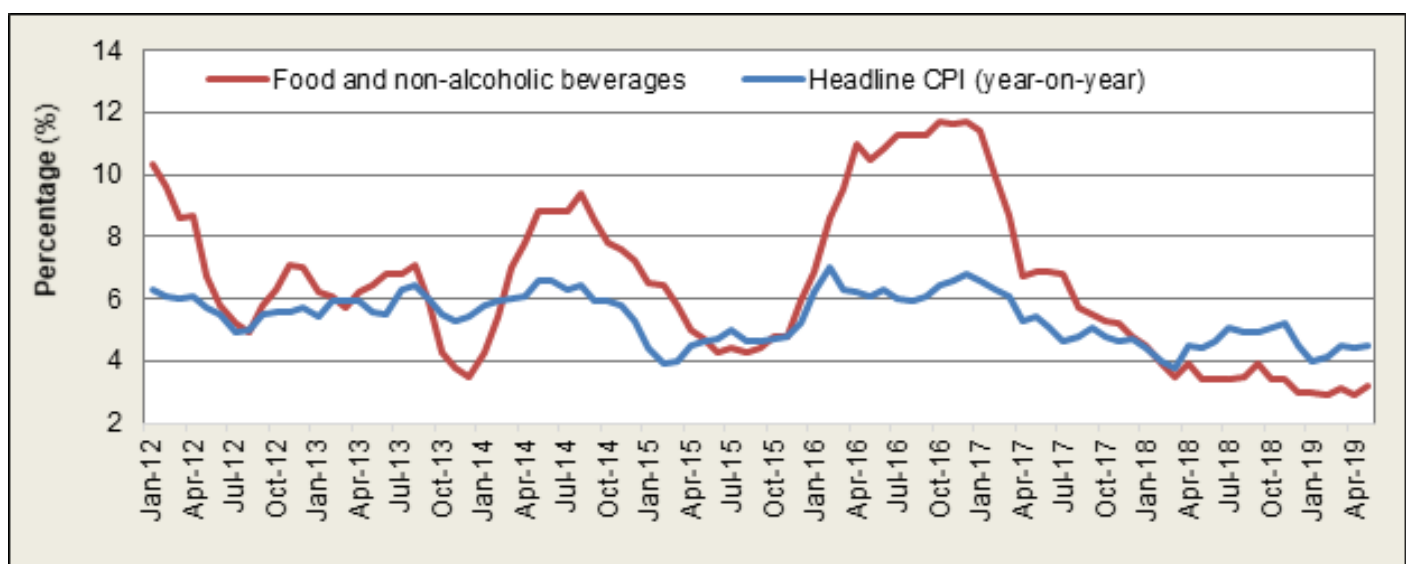


Figure 1: Headline CPI and food and non-alcoholic beverage CPI

Source: Stats SA, 2019



Comparison between urban and rural prices May 2019

Table 1 compares prices of selected food items in rural and urban areas for May 2019. The food items which showed the largest price differences between urban and rural areas in May 2019 were: sunflower oil (750ml) at a difference of R3.96, Ceylon/black tea (62.5g) at R3.53 difference, and super maize meal (2.5kg) at a difference of R0.95. 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 (white sugar (2.5kg), peanut butter (400g), and margarine spread (500g)), than their urban counterparts

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

Product	Urban Food Prices May 2019 (R/unit)	Rural Food Prices May 2019 (R/unit)	Price difference (R/unit)
Full cream milk – long life 1ℓ	14.45	15.29	-0.84
Loaf of brown bread 700g	12.63	12.55	0.08
Loaf of white bread 700g	13.96	13.54	0.42
Special maize 2.5kg	20.79	20.37	0.42
Super maize 2.5kg	23.53	22.58	0.95
Margarine spread 500g	27.40	28.43	-1.03
Peanut butter 400g	28.75	30.78	-2.03
Rice 2kg	26.02	26.78	-0.76
Sunflower oil 750ml	21.99	18.03	3.96
Ceylon/black tea 62.5g	16.47	12.94	3.53
White sugar 2.5kg	39.20	42.39	-3.19
Average			0.14

Source: Stats SA, 2019

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 May 2019 vs. May 2018. 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).

During May 2019, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket amounted to R874.70 compared to the R879.38 reported during April 2019, resulting in a monthly percentage decrease of 0.5%. When compared to May 2018, an annual (y-o-y) percentage increase of 3% 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: apples – fresh per kg (8.9%), bananas – fresh per kg (15.7%), fish (excl. tuna) - tinned 400g (6.8%), polony per kg (13.8%), loaf of brown bread 700g (10.9%), loaf of white bread 700g (8%), super maize meal 5kg (12.5%), cabbage – fresh per kg (17.9%), potatoes – fresh per kg (6.3%), tomatoes – fresh per kg (15.2%) and white sugar 2.5kg (8.7%).



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

Category	Product	May-18	Apr-19	May-19	% change y-o-y	%change m-o-m
Beans	Baked beans - tinned 410g	9.99	10.58	10.57	5.8%	-0.1%
Beans	Beans - dried 500g	19.06	19.43	19.16	0.5%	-1.4%
Beans	Peanut butter 400g	27.81	28.79	28.75	3.4%	-0.1%
Coffee, Tea	Instant coffee 250g	35.45	35.80	35.18	-0.8%	-1.7%
Coffee, Tea	Ceylon/black tea 250g	34.77	35.62	36.03	3.6%	1.2%
Dairy, Eggs	Full cream milk - long life 1ℓ	13.89	14.30	14.45	4.0%	1.0%
Dairy, Eggs	Eggs 1.5 dozen	44.21	41.47	40.49	-8.4%	-2.4%
Dairy, Eggs	Cheddar cheese per kg	106.12	104.39	107.73	1.5%	3.2%
Fats, Oils	Brick margarine 500g	22.35	21.97	21.29	-4.7%	-3.1%
Fats, Oils	Sunflower oil 750ml	22.28	22.62	21.99	-1.3%	-2.8%
Fruit	Apples - fresh per kg	19.85	22.39	21.61	8.9%	-3.5%
Fruit	Bananas - fresh per kg	14.48	16.42	16.76	15.7%	2.1%
Fruit	Oranges - fresh per kg	18.47	23.80	18.62	0.8%	-21.8%
Protein	Beef mince - fresh per kg	83.94	84.11	83.20	-0.9%	-1.1%
Protein	Beef offal - fresh per kg	36.11	34.24	35.01	-3.0%	2.2%
Protein	Chicken giblets per kg	33.77	33.97	33.86	0.3%	-0.3%
Protein	IQF chicken portions - 2kg	67.43	65.08	67.11	-0.5%	3.1%
Protein	Fish (excl. tuna) - tinned 400g	18.25	19.37	19.49	6.8%	0.6%
Protein	Polony per kg	40.90	46.86	46.53	13.8%	-0.7%
Bread & Cereals	Loaf of brown bread 700g	11.39	12.56	12.63	10.9%	0.6%
Bread & Cereals	Loaf of white bread 700g	12.92	13.85	13.96	8.0%	0.8%
Bread & Cereals	Super maize meal 5kg	36.55	40.57	41.13	12.5%	1.4%
Bread & Cereals	Rice 2kg	25.40	26.12	26.02	2.4%	-0.4%
Vegetables	Cabbage - fresh per kg	12.19	14.18	14.38	17.9%	1.4%
Vegetables	Onions - fresh per kg	13.68	13.75	14.00	2.3%	1.8%
Vegetables	Potatoes - fresh per kg	12.05	12.50	12.81	6.3%	2.5%
Vegetables	Tomatoes - fresh per kg	19.74	24.98	22.74	15.2%	-9.0%
Sugary foods	White sugar 2.5kg	36.06	39.66	39.20	8.7%	-1.2%
Basket	Total Rand Value	849.11	879.38	874.70	3.0%	-0.5%

Source: Stats SA and BFAP, 2019



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 NAMC's 28-item food basket, comparing the periods May 2019 vs. May 2018 (y-o-y) and May 2019 vs. April 2019 (m-o-m). Food categories in this 28-item food basket experiencing the highest annual inflation includes vegetables, sugary foods, bread & cereals and fruit. Table 1: Comparison between urban and rural food prices (selected food items)

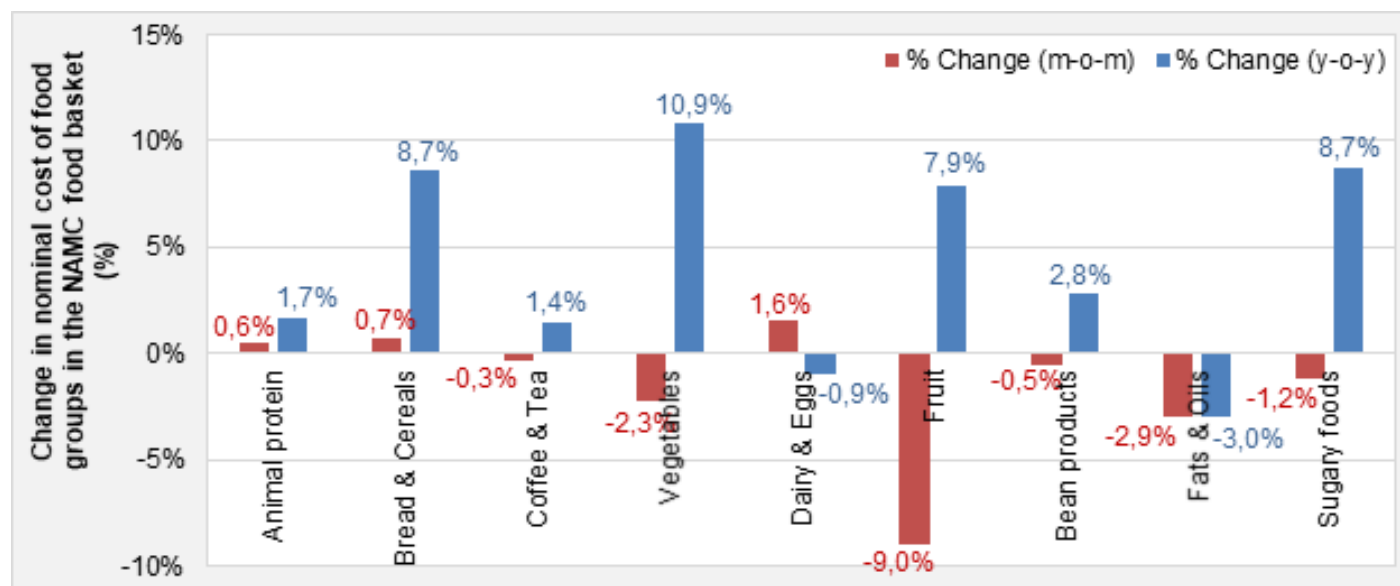


Figure 2: Nominal cost growth of specific food groups within the NAMC's 28-item food basket, comparing May 2019 vs. May 2018 and May 2019 vs. April 2019

Source: BFAP & NAMC calculations, Stats SA data, 2019

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

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