



SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY PRODUCTS PRICE MONITOR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- According to data provided by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the average international poultry meat price index in the fourth quarter of 2024 stood at 119.60 points, marking an 8.8 % increase compared to the 109.93 points recorded in the fourth quarter of 2023.
- During the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2024: On a year-on-year comparison, data from the South African Revenue Service (SARS) show that South Africa imported a total of 93 557 tonnes of chicken meat, indicating a 6.6% increase from the 87 771 tons imported in Q4 of 2023. The main contributing products to the observed increase in chicken meat imports during Q4 were value-added-processed items which increased by 15750.0%, followed by boneless chicken (other) (292.6%), frozen mechanically deboned meat (MDM) (29.7%), and frozen chicken offal (12.9%).
- Comparing the fourth quarter (Q4) with the third quarter (Q3) of 2024, producer prices for Individual Quick Frozen (IQF) chicken and whole fresh chicken increased by 6.2% and 2.1%, respectively, while prices for frozen chicken decreased by 3.8%. Many factors have contributed to the recent trends in producer prices, including the rising of global maize prices, driven by low water levels along major sea freight routes, such as Brazil's Madeira River and the United States' (USA's) Mississippi River (FAO, 2025). These trends highlight the strong dependence of the South Africa's poultry industry on international commodities.
- When comparing Q4 of 2024 to Q3 of 2024, the prices for IQF chicken portions (per 2kg) increased by 1.5%. However, while the prices for fresh chicken portions remained unchanged during the same period, prices for whole fresh chicken, chicken giblets and non-IQF frozen chicken portions decreased by 0.7%, 1.5%, and 3.1%, respectively.
- During the fourth quarter of 2024, the average spot price for a ton of yellow maize was R4 845, indicating a 23.6% increase compared to the corresponding period in 2023. The average spot price in Q4 of 2024 was 19.54% higher than that of Q3 of 2024. On the other hand, soybean prices decreased to R8 862 per ton during the same quarter (Q4), reflecting a 4.26% decrease when compared to the previous year and a 3.05% increase when compared with Q3 of 2024. While for sunflower seed, the average spot price stood at R10 145 in the fourth quarter of 2024, representing a 12.10% and 12.18% increase when compared with spot prices recorded during Q4 of 2023 and Q3 of 2024, respectively.

1. Introduction

The majority of South Africa's population obtains affordable animal protein from poultry, making it crucial for maintaining and improving the country's food and nutrition security. This report tracks the prices of different chicken meat products in South Africa. Moreover, compares these prices to the current global poultry market trends and submits appropriate recommendations. The former Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), currently referred to as the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), established the Food Price Monitoring Committee (FPMC). The National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) was mandated by DALRRD to track and report on identified food price trends. The following trends are reported on a quarterly basis: international poultry meat prices, imports of chicken products into South Africa, producer pricing and retail poultry prices. To provide a more comprehensive comparison between domestic poultry prices and global market prices, the analysis also includes feed prices.

2. International poultry meat price index

Figure 1 presents the global poultry meat price index trend from Q4 of 2016 (October - December) to Q4 of 2024 (October - December), with the period 2014-2016 used as the base years. According to data provided by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the average international poultry meat price index in the fourth quarter of 2024 stood at 119.60 points, marking an 8.8 % increase when compared to the 109.93 points recorded in the fourth quarter of 2023. When comparing changes between the fourth quarter of 2024 and the third quarter of 2024, the index decreased by 0.1% from 119.72 points. The drop in international poultry prices observed in December 2024 was driven by ample supplies, particularly from Brazil, where competitive feed prices supported production (FAO, 2025).

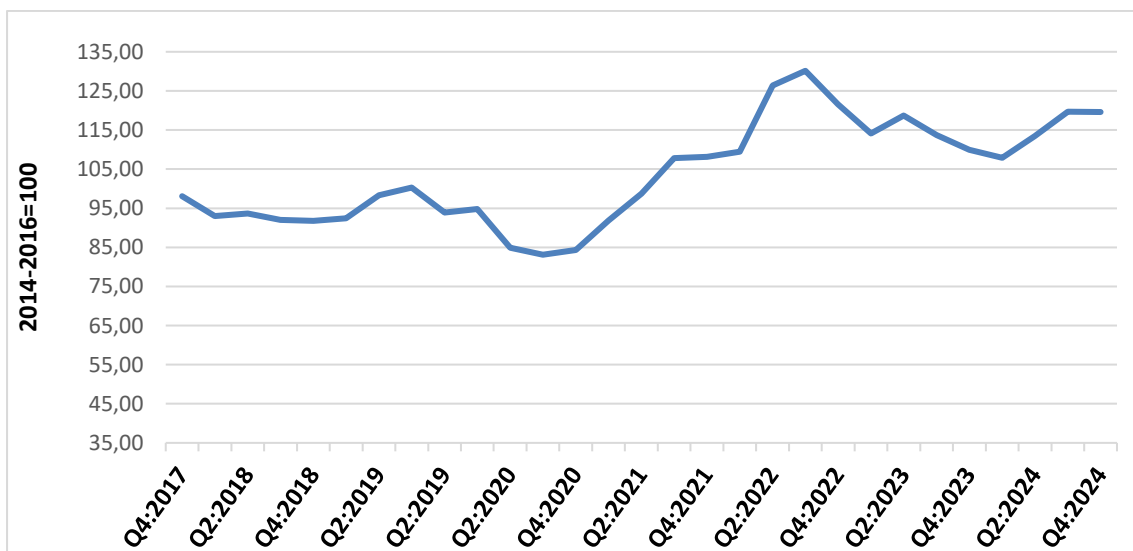


Figure 1: International Poultry Meat Real Price index (IPMRPI)

Source: FAO, 2025

3. Chicken meat imports

This section compares the volume of chicken meat (in tonnes) imported into South Africa between quarter 4 (October-December) of 2024 and quarter 4 of 2023, as well as quarter 4 (October-December) of 2024 versus quarter 3 (July-September) of 2024. On a year-on-year comparison, data from the South African Revenue Service (SARS) show that South Africa imported a total of 93 557 tonnes of chicken meat in Q4: 2024, indicating a 6.6% increase from the 87 771 tons imported in Q4: 2023. The main contributors to the observed increase in chicken meat imports during Q4 were value-added processed products which increased by 15750.0%, followed by boneless chicken (other) (292.6%), frozen mechanically deboned meat (MDM) (29.7%), and frozen chicken offal (12.9%) (see Table 1). In the third quarter of 2024, 99 115 tonnes of chicken meat were imported into South Africa, representing a 5.6% drop from the fourth quarter of the same year. Notably, frozen half chicken (100.0%), frozen chicken wings (59.5%), frozen carcasses (56.7%), frozen chicken Drumsticks (41.6%) and frozen chicken offal (40.1%) were the main causes of the observed decline in imports during this time.

Table 1: South Africa’s chicken meat imports by volume (tons)

Tariff description	HS Code	Q4: 2023	Q3: 2024	Q4: 2024	Q4: 2024 vs Q4: 2023	Q4: 2024 vs Q3: 2024
		Tons	Tons	Tons	Annually % Change	Quarterly % Change
Frozen chicken MDM	0207.1210	51 168	62 859	66 372	29.7	5.6
Frozen chicken carcasses	0207.1220	1 658	3 304	1 431	-13.7	-56.7
Whole frozen chicken	0207.1290	2 491	2 104	1 389	-44.2	-34.0
Fresh chicken cuts	0207.1300	0	0	0	-	-
Boneless chicken breasts	0207.1411	505	2	25	-95.0	1 150.0
Boneless chicken thighs	0207.1413	0	0	0	-	-
Boneless chicken other	0207.1415	81	244	318	292.6	30.3
Frozen chicken livers	0207.1421	2 169	2 812	1 784	-17.8	-36.6
Frozen chicken feet	0207.1423	12 167	13 536	12 428	2.1	-8.2
Frozen chicken heads	0207.1425	0	0	0	-	-
Frozen chicken offal	0207.1429	4 231	7 971	4 777	12.9	-40.1
Frozen half chicken	0207.1491	12	8	0	-100.0	-100.0
Frozen chicken leg quarter	0207.1493	6 929	3 536	3 384	-51.2	-4.3
Frozen chicken wings	0207.1495	1 373	1 520	616	-55.1	-59.5
Frozen bone-in chicken breast	0207.1496	0	122	158	-	29.5
Frozen chicken thighs	0207.1497	648	55	39	-94.0	-29.1
Frozen chicken Drumsticks	0207.1498	3 972	611	357	-91.0	-41.6
Value-added processed	1602.3290	2	245	317	15 750.0	29.4
Other	0207.1499	365	186	182	-50.1	-2.2
TOTAL IMPORTS		87 771	99 115	93 577	6.6	-5.6

Source: SARS, 2025

4. Average producer price trends

Figure 2 shows typical producer prices for frozen chicken (maximum brine allowed 10%), whole fresh chicken and Individual Quick Frozen (IQF) chicken pieces (maximum brine allowed 15%) from the fourth quarter of 2012 to the fourth quarter of 2024. When comparing the fourth quarter (October – December) of 2024 and 2023, producer prices for chicken frozen, whole fresh chicken and IQF chicken pieces decreased by 10.5%, 8.7%, 5.7%, respectively. When comparing the fourth quarter of 2024 with the third quarter of 2024, producer prices for IQF chicken and whole fresh chicken increased by 6.2% and 2.1%, respectively yet producer prices for frozen chicken decreased by 3.8%. A number of factors contributed to the recent observed trends in producer prices. For instance, the notable rise in global maize prices largely driven by low water levels along major sea freight routes, such as Brazil's Madeira River and the USA's Mississippi River (FAO, 2025). These trends highlight the strong dependence of South Africa's poultry industry on international commodities.

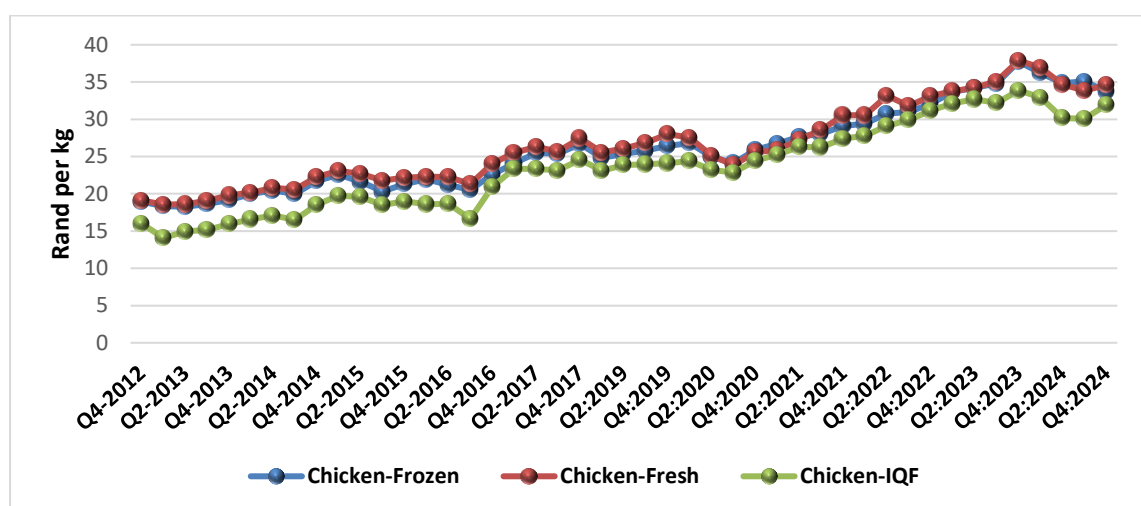


Figure 2: Quarterly average producer prices

Source: AMT, 2025

5. Average retail prices for selected poultry products

Figure 3 presents average quarterly retail prices for selected poultry products from the fourth quarter (October - December) of 2021 to the fourth quarter of 2024. Over this period, retail prices for non-IQF frozen chicken portions, fresh chicken portions, chicken giblets (per kg), IQF chicken portions (2kg), and whole chicken increased by 21.3%, 16%, 15.9%, 15.8% and 8.7%, respectively. Between the fourth quarter of 2024 and the fourth quarter of 2023, poultry retail prices also increased. Notably, the price for IQF chicken portions, fresh chicken portions (per kg), non-IQF frozen chicken portions, and whole fresh chicken increased by 3.0%, 0.9%, 0.4% and 0.4%, respectively. Conversely, the retail price of chicken giblets (per kg) decreased by 1.2%. When comparing the fourth quarter of 2024 to the third quarter of 2024, prices for IQF chicken portions (per 2kg) increased by 1.5%. During the same period, the prices for fresh chicken portions remained unchanged, as retail prices for whole fresh chicken, chicken giblets and non-IQF frozen chicken portions decreased by 0.7%, 1.5%, and 3.1%, respectively.

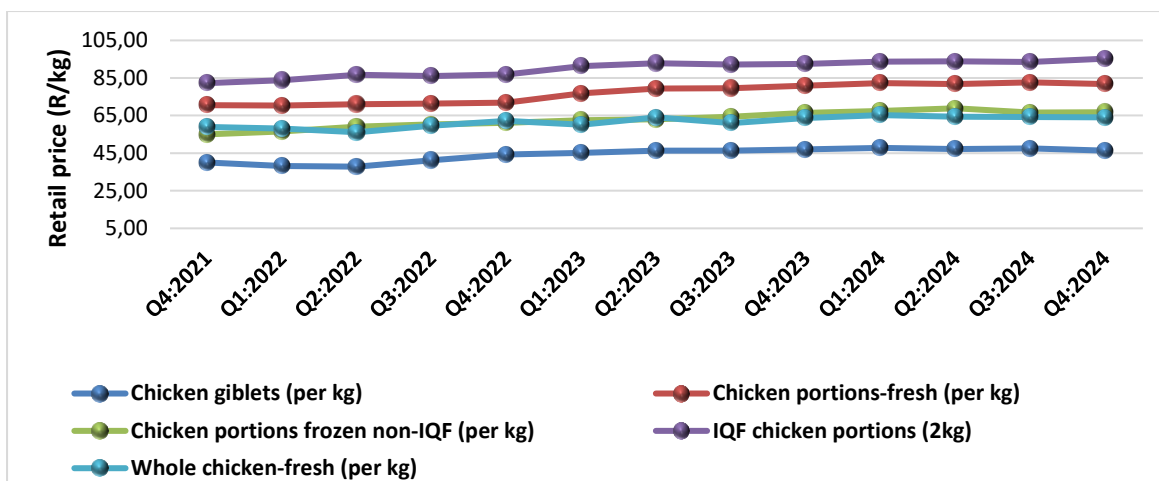


Figure 3: Average quarterly retail prices for selected chicken products.

Source: Stats SA, 2025

6. Feed prices

Figure 4 presents the quarterly SAFEX spot prices for yellow maize, sunflower seed and soybeans. As of December 2024, the FAO global food price index stood at 5.5 points (4.8%) higher compared to December 2023. This increase is linked to global price hikes, for example, the oil price index increased by 31.1%, followed by the dairy price index which increased by 15.0% and meat price index which increased by 5.2%. On the other hand, indices for cereal and sugar decreased by 10.9% and 12.2%, respectively. The month-on-month change highlights that between November 2024 and December 2024, only the FAO meat price index had an increase by 0.4%. The increase in the meat price index was driven by higher quotations for bovine, ovine and poultry meats which offset the decline in international prices for pig meat (FAO, 2025).

In the fourth quarter of 2024, the average spot price for a ton of yellow maize was R4 845, indicating a 23.6% increase compared to the corresponding period in 2023. The average spot price was 19.54% higher than the third quarter of 2024. On the other hand, soybean prices decreased to R8 862 per ton during the same quarter, reflecting a 4.26% decrease compared to the previous year and a 3.05% increase when compared with the third quarter of 2024. While for sunflower seed, the average spot price stood at R10 145 in the fourth quarter of 2024, representing a 12.10% and 12.18% increase when comparing it to quarter 4 of 2023 and quarter three of 2024, respectively.

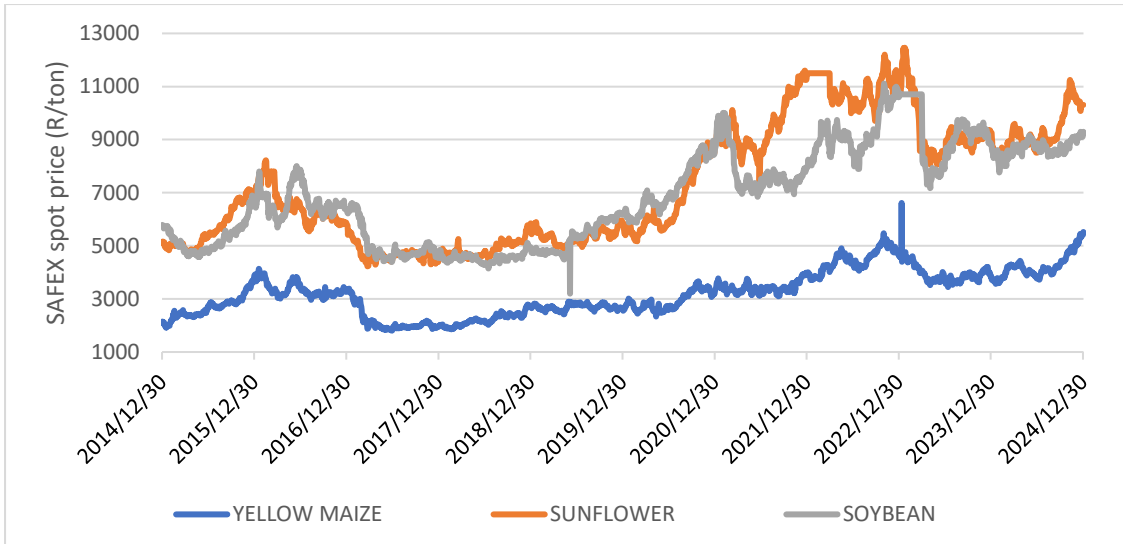


Figure 4: SAFEX spot prices grains used for animal feed

Source: JSE-SAFEX, 2025

7. Real Farm to Retail Price Spread

Figure 5 presents changes in the real farm-to-retail price spread (FTRPS) and the proportion of real farm value since December 2010. The FTRPS represents the difference between what consumers pay for a food product at retail and the actual value of the farm product used in its production.

An analysis of data for the fourth quarter (October to December) of 2024 shows that the real farm value share increased by 5.75% while the real FTRPS for whole fresh chicken decreased by 8.53%. The real farm value share for whole fresh chicken reached 55.81% in December 2024. Over the year-on-year span from December 2023 to December 2024, the real farm value share decreased by 5.78%, while the real FTRPS increased by 1.84%. This could be due to the competitiveness in the poultry value chain being affected by factors such as imports, avian flu outbreaks, and high feed prices, among others.

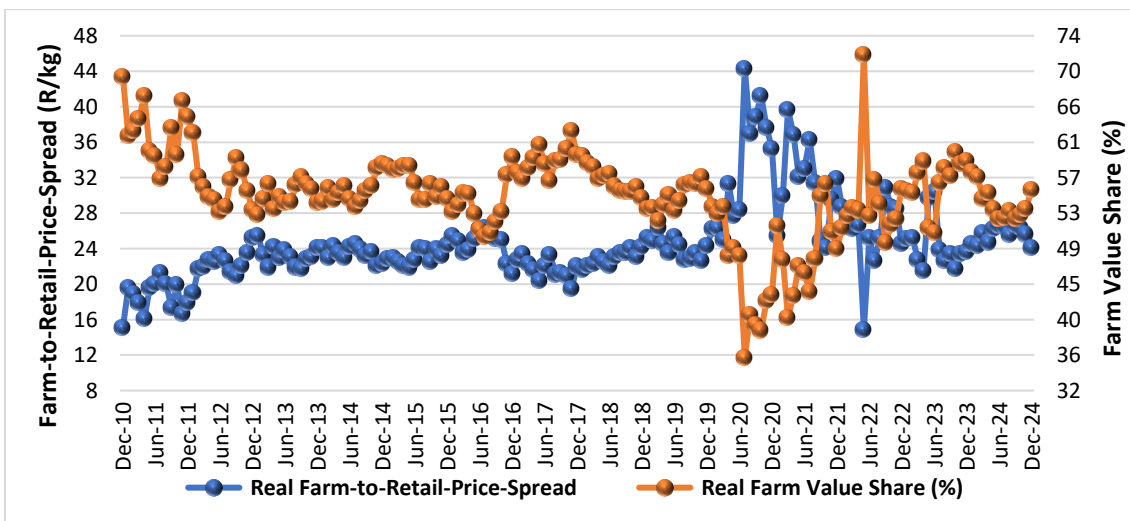


Figure 5: Real farm-to-retail-price-spread and farm value share of poultry

Source: Stats SA, AMT, and own calculations, 2025

Compiled by:

Trends and discussion on selected chicken portions by:

1. Thulani Ningi
2. Lwazi Dladla
3. Thabile Nkunjana
4. Corné Dempers
5. Dr Moses Lubinga

Enquires: Thulani Ningi at TNingi@namc.co.za or Moses Lubinga: HLubinga@namc.co.za

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