FOOD BASKET PRICE MONTHLY

NAMC FOOD BASKET: 28 SELECTED FOOD ITEMS PRICES

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Food Basket
Price Monthly
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Important note

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) updated the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket of goods and services and the respective weights in the February 2025 CPI release.

The July 2026 official data is used in this report. as the official release of the August 2026 CPI data is scheduled for September 23, 2026 (see link below from the Stats SA website):

https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141July2026.pdf

Highlights

During July 2026, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket amounted to R1 353.75 compared to the R1 362.14 reported in June 2026. This represents a monthly decrease of 0.6% and a year-on-year increase of 0.2%.

July 26 vs. July 25	Inflation bracket				
	12% or more	**Between 6% and 11.99%**	**Between 3% and 5.99%**	**Between 1% and 2.99%**	**Inflation close to zero or deflation**
Stats SA food groups:		Fish & other seafood (6.6%)	Other foods (4.4%) Unprocessed food (3.2%) (4.0%)	Oil & fats (2.8%) Sugar. confectionery. and desserts (2.2%) Milk, other dairy products & eggs (1.9%) Meat (1.5%)	Processed (-1.9%) Cereal products (-2.0%) Vegetables (-2.5%) Fruit & nuts (-7.5%)
Individual food items in NAMC food basket (listed in order of decreasing inflation rates):	Tomatoes (15.3%)	Bananas (9.8%) Ceylon/black tea (6.4%) Beef offal (6.0%)	Tinned fish (4.6%) Instant coffee (4.5%) Full cream long life milk (4.4%) Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) chicken portions (4.1%) Onions (3.9%) Sunflower oil (3.8%) White bread (3.5%) Cheddar cheese (3.0%)	Peanut butter (2.4%) White sugar (1.9%) Brown bread (1.8%)	Chicken giblets (0.5%) Polony (0.4%) Brick margarine (-1.0%) Oranges (-1.1%) Cabbage (-1.4%) Beef mince (-3.3%) Baked beans (-4.1%) Eggs (-5.7%) Dried beans (-8.1%) Apples (-8.2%) Maize meal (-12.4%) Potatoes (-12.5%) Rice (-12.8%)

1. Overall inflation and food inflation

Figure 1 presents trends in the global real food price index reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In July 2026. the FAO real food price index averaged 113 points, a 0.6% increase from 112.3 points in June. This increase was 1.12% higher than the same period in 2025. The month-on-month increase in global food inflation was driven by rising prices for vegetable oils, Sugar, and cereals all of which outweighed price decreases in meat and dairy products. During this period, Sugar, cereals, and vegetable oil price indices increased by 5.6%, 3.4%, and 2%, respectively. The observed high sugar prices were due to concerns that persistent hot and dry weather in the European Union (EU) and El Niño-related weather conditions could reduce sugar crop yields and production in key producing countries in Asia. Additional support came from expectations of higher ethanol demand in Brazil. which could divert more sugarcane to ethanol production and reduce sugar availability.

On the other hand, the observed increase in cereal prices was driven mainly by a 5.8% increase in global wheat prices amid concerns over disruptions to Black Sea export flows, as well as damage to export infrastructure and heatwave-related crop losses in key producing countries. Maize and sorghum prices also edged higher due to adverse weather conditions in part of the Corn Belt in the United States (US) while barley prices declined on favourable crop prospects and rice prices remained broadly stable. Moreover, higher vegetable oil prices were mainly due to higher palm and soy oil prices. The increase of palm oil prices was underpinned by strong demand from Indonesia's biodiesel sector and higher crude oil prices which outweighed the downward pressure from seasonally higher production in Southeast Asia. Soy oil prices were supported by sustained feedstock demand in the US and stronger global import demand, driven by improved price competitiveness. Although sunflower and rapeseed oil prices declined due to expectations of larger supplies in the 2026/27 season. The increases in palm and soy oil prices more than offset these declines, resulting in an overall increase in vegetable oil prices.

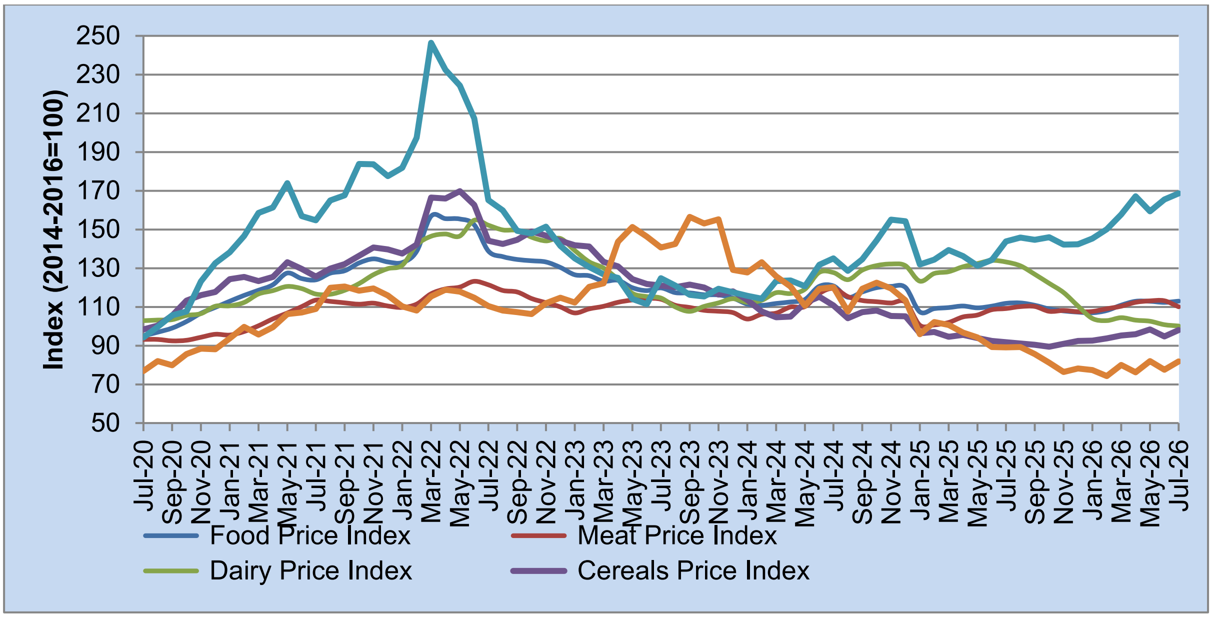

Figure 1: The FAO global real food price indices
Source: FAO, 2026

In terms of dairy products, its price index recorded a 0.7% decline during this period. The observed decline was mainly due to lower butter and milk powder quotations which outweighed a modest increase in cheese prices. Skim milk powder prices fell as ample export supplies from the EU and Oceania together with more cautious buying following earlier price increases weighed on the market. Whole milk powder prices also declined due to subdued import demand particularly from China and increased export competition. Butter prices decreased as improving milk fat availability and expanding export supplies helped ease supply tightness especially in Europe. However, cheese prices recorded a modest increase due to tighter seasonal milk supplies in the EU and this was insufficient to offset the overall downward pressure from lower butter and milk powder prices. On the other hand, meat prices declined for the first time in 2026. The decline was mainly driven by lower poultry, pig, and bovine meat prices. Poultry meat prices fell amid ample export supplies from Brazil and increased competition in global markets. Pig meat prices also declined due to abundant supplies in the EU and subdued global demand, while bovine meat prices eased as import demand from Asia softened. In contrast, ovine meat prices continued to rise, supported by tight exportable supplies in Oceania and sustained global demand. Nevertheless, this was insufficient to offset declines in the other major meat categories.

Figure 2 illustrates fluctuations in global inflation across selected countries with significant trade relations with South Africa. These countries include the BRICS member countries (namely, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). and other countries such as Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, and the United Kingdom (UK). Between June and July 2026, food inflation rates decreased in most countries with only a few recording a month-on-month increases. For instance. South Africa's food inflation recorded its sixth monthly decrease, declining from 1.9% in June to 0.9% in July. This is equivalent to a 53% month-on-month decline. Similarly, the UK's food inflation declined from 1.7% to 1.3%, followed by Brazil from 3.8% to 3.4%, China from -1.6% to -1.5%. and Zambia from 6.7% to 6.4%. On the other hand, Namibia experienced a 48% increase in its food inflation between June and July, rising from 2.5% in June to 3.7% in July, followed by Russia with a 29% increase from 3.4% in June to 4.4% in July, Botswana from 5.7% to 6.6%, and India from 5.3% to 5.5%.

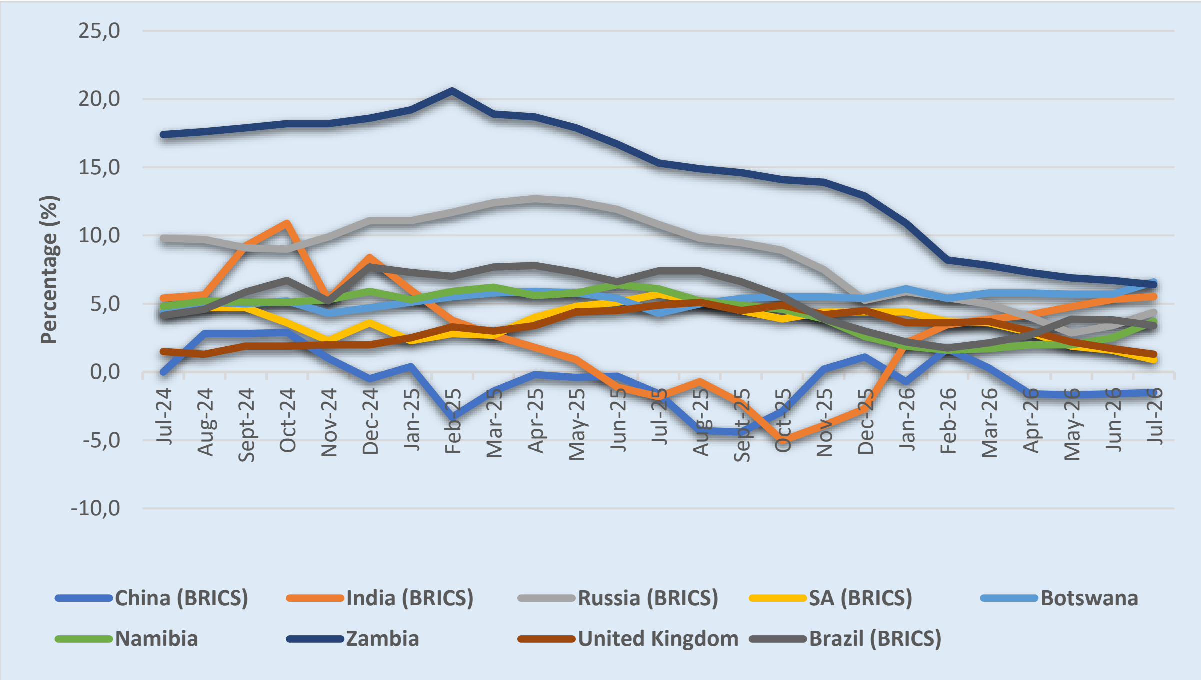

Figure 2: Food inflation in selected countries
Source: Trading Economics, 2026; Stats SA, 2026 & NAMC calculations

Figure 3 presents trends in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for South Africa from July 2020 to July 2026. along with the inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages (NAB). In July 2026. Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) confirmed that the annual headline CPI was 4.3%, down by 14% from the 5% reported in June 2026, marking its first monthly decline since February 2026. The inflation rate for food and NAB also continued to decline in July falling to 0.9% from 1.9% recorded in June. representing a 53% monthly decline. Notably, the main drivers of current inflation in food and NAB were fish & other seafood which recorded an increase of 1.9%. followed by other foods (0.4%). vegetables (0.3%). and milk, other dairy products & eggs (0.1%). In contrast, unprocessed foods declined considerably by 0.1%, followed by meat and sugar, confectionery & desserts both of which declined by 0.2%, processed foods (0.4%), cereal products (0.7%), oils & fats (0.8%), and fruit & nuts (2.2%).

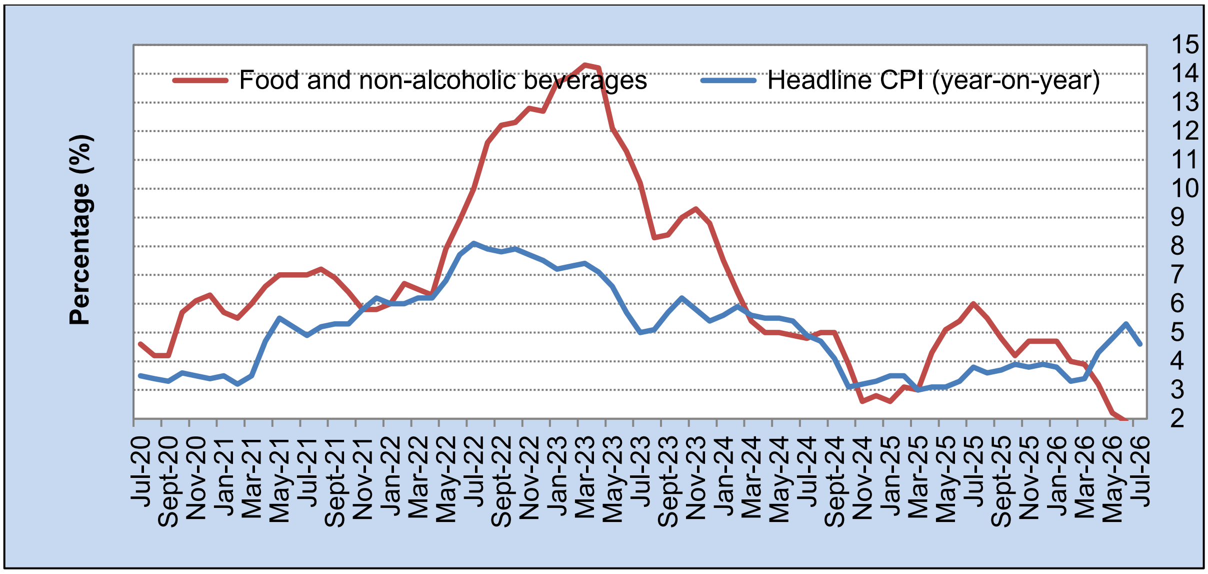

Figure 3: South Africa's headline CPI and Food & non-alcoholic beverages' inflation
Source: Stats SA. 2026; NAMC calculations

2. Monthly comparison of prices between urban and rural areas for July 2026

Table 1 presents the prices of selected food items in rural and urban areas, highlighting the price differentials between both locations. Urban areas exhibit higher prices, with the largest difference observed for Ceylon/Black Tea for R12.96, followed by Peanut butter R5.58 and Sunflower oil R1.44. The price difference of bread and milk are minimal, although brown bread is slightly more expensive in rural areas. Conversely, rural areas show higher prices for bananas, white sugar and rice each costing approximately R1 more than urban areas. On average price urban households pay R1.71 more than rural areas.

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

Product	Urban Food Prices July 2026 (R/unit)	Rural Food Prices July 2026 (R/unit)	The price difference (R/unit)
Full cream milk - long life 1ℓ	20.93	20.88	0.05
Brown bread 700g	17.72	17.88	-0.16
White bread 700g	19.61	19.58	0.03
Bananas per kg	17.74	18.67	-0.93
Maize meal 2.5kg*	39.06	n/a	n/a
Margarine spread 500g*	39.76	n/a	n/a
Peanut butter 400g	49.6	44.02	5.58
Rice 2kg	37.84	39.66	-1.82
Sunflower oil 750mℓ	37.97	36.53	1.44
Ceylon/black tea 250g	66.34	53.38	12.96
White sugar 2.5kg	67.81	69.61	-1.80
Average price difference			1.71

Source: Stats SA. 2026; NAMC calculations. * Rural prices for maize meal (2.5 kg) and margarine spread (500g) were not available (n/a) in the July 2026 data.

3. The NAMC food basket: July 2026 vs July 2025

In this section, the cost of NAMC's 28-item urban food basket is explained through a comparison of average food prices in July 2026 and July 2025. **Table 2** presents nominal prices of these 28 food items that comprise the NAMC's urban food basket. The analysis shows that the cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket increased by 0.2% in July 2026 when compared to the same period last year, reaching R1353.75. However, this is equivalent to a 0.6% month-to-month decrease from the R1362.14 cost recorded in June 2026. Between July 2026 and July 2025, among these 28 items, only 12 items recorded price increases that exceeded the 1-3% inflation target set by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB). Notable products in this category include tomatoes which experienced a substantial price surge of 15.3%, followed by bananas (9.8%), Ceylon/black tea (6.4%), beef offal (6.0%), fish (4.6%), instant coffee (4.5%), full cream milk (4.4%), IQF chicken portions (4.1%), onions (3.9%), sunflower oil (3.8%), white bread (3.5%), and cheddar cheese (3.0%).

Table 2: Percentage change in the price of a basic NAMC food basket (28-item)

Category	Product	July 25 (R/unit)	June 26 (R/unit)	July 26 (R/unit)	Change year-on-year (%)	Change month-on-month (%)
Beans	Baked beans - tinned 410g	15.88	15.45	15.23	-4.09	-1.42
	Beans - dried 500 g	34.74	32.20	31.92	-8.12	-0.87
	Peanut butter 400g	48.45	49.93	49.6	2.37	-0.66
Coffee & Tea	Ceylon/black tea 250g	62.33	66.59	66.34	6.43	-0.38
	Instant coffee 250g	74.43	77.14	77.81	4.54	0.87
Dairy & Eggs	Cheddar cheese per /kg	158.32	163.10	163.10	3.02	0.00
	Eggs 1.5 dozen	64.85	61.13	61.15	-5.71	0.03
	Full cream milk -long life 1ℓ	20.05	20.76	20.93	4.39	0.82
Fats & Oils	Brick margarine 500g	31.53	32.49	31.23	-0.95	-3.88
	Sunflower oil 750mℓ	36.59	37.77	37.97	3.77	0.53
Fruit	Apples per kg	27.84	25.57	25.55	-8.23	-0.08
	Bananas per kg	16.16	18.30	17.74	9.78	-3.06
	Oranges per kg	20.96	22.33	20.73	-1.10	-7.17
Animal Protein	Beef mince per kg	126.79	123.15	122.64	-3.27	-0.41
	Beef offal per kg	56.82	61.73	60.22	5.98	-2.45
	Chicken giblets per kg	48.10	46.91	48.34	0.50	3.05
	Fish (excl. tuna) 400g	28.46	29.15	29.76	4.57	2.09
	IQF chicken portions 2kg	97.87	102.33	101.89	4.11	-0.43
	Polony 1kg	58.49	61.45	58.71	0.38	-4.46
Bread & Cereals	Brown bread 700g	17.4	17.74	17.72	1.84	-0.11
	White bread 700g	18.94	19.76	19.61	3.54	-0.76
	Rice 2kg	43.37	37.52	37.84	-12.75	0.85
	Maize meal 5kg	74.32	67.31	65.09	-12.42	-3.30
Vegetables	Cabbage each	23.16	22.79	22.84	-1.38	0.22
	Onions per kg	27.4	27.89	28.47	3.91	2.08
	Potatoes per kg	20.7	17.98	18.12	-12.46	0.78
	Tomatoes per kg	30.69	36.31	35.39	15.31	-2.53
Sugary foods	White sugar 2.5kg	66.57	67.36	67.81	1.86	0.67
Total Rand Value		**1 351.21**	**1 362.14**	**1 353.75**	**0.19%**	**-0.62%**

Source: Stats SA, 2026; NAMC calculations

Figure 4 provides an overview of changes in the average nominal cost of the different food groups within the NAMC's 28-item food basket, offering a comparative analysis of July 2026 with July 2025 (year-on-year) and July 2026 with June 2026 (month-on-month). When examining year-on-year price differences, the food group that contributed most significantly to the observed food inflation was coffee & tea, with a 5.4% increase. Following this was vegetables, which increased by 2.8%, then sugary foods (1.9%), fats & oils (1.6%), animal protein (1.2%), and dairy & eggs (0.8%). In contrast, fruits decreased by 1.4%, while bean products and bread & cereals dropped by 2.3% and 8.9%, respectively. When reviewing month-on-month changes. sugary foods showed an increase of 0.7%, followed by coffee & tea (0.3%) and dairy & eggs for which rose by 0.1%. In contrast, vegetables prices decreased by 0.1%, followed by animal protein (0.7%), bean products (0.9%), bread & cereals (1.5%), fats & oils (1.5%) and fruits (3.3%).

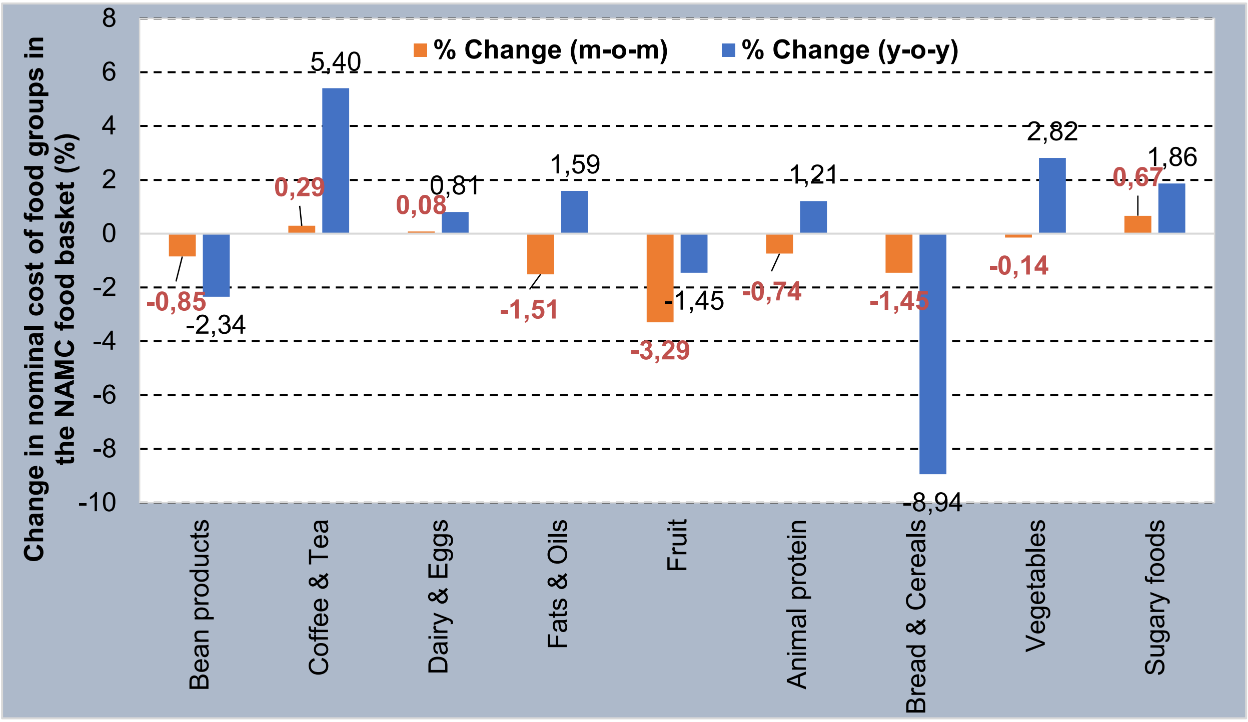

Figure 4: Nominal change in the cost of specific food groups within the NAMC's 28-item food basket. comparing July 2026 vs. July 2025 and July 2026 vs. June 2026
Source: Stats SA. 2026; NAMC calculations

In conclusion, food inflation in South Africa decreased for the sixth consecutive month in July 2026, while headline inflation decreased making its first monthly decline since February 2026. These trends contrast with global developments. where food prices increased due to the rising in international prices for sugar, Cereals and vegetable oil. Despite the slight decline in food and NAB inflation in South Africa, price indices of some food groups remained elevated; these were animal protein, coffee and tea, dairy & eggs, fats & oils, vegetables and sugary products. Domestically. these inflationary pressures were also mirrored in the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket. which recorded a modest year-on-year increase despite a slight month-on-month decrease. Furthermore. persistent spatial price disparities remain evident. although their direction varies across food products. Urban consumers paid notably higher prices for items such as tea, peanut butter, and sunflower oil, whereas rural consumers faced higher prices for products such as rice, bananas and white sugar.

Background Information:

The NAMC monitors food prices at the retail level and releases regular authoritative reports. The Department of Agriculture, then known as 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 the 2000/01 season. The NAMC continued the functions of the FPMC after the FPMC completed its work in September 2004. The NAMC issues four quarterly Food Price Monitoring reports annually and, since 2005, also publishes an annual Food Cost Review report, 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, was initiated following discussions with the industry to maintain a more frequent monitoring of food prices.

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