



FOOD BASKET PRICE MONTHLY



NAMC FOOD BASKET: 28 SELECTED FOOD ITEMS PRICES Issue 130 – September 2026

Food Basket Price Monthly September 2026

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 August 2026 official data is used in this report, as the official release of the September 2026 CPI data is scheduled for October 21, 2026 (see link below from the Stats SA website):

<https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141August2026.pdf>

Highlights

During August 2026, the nominal cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket amounted to R1 348.68 compared to R1 353.75, reported in July 2026. This represents a monthly decrease of 0.4% and a year-on-year decrease of 0.6%.

August 26 vs. August 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 (7.5%)		Other foods (4.2%) Unprocessed food (3.1%)	Oil & fats (2.6%) Milk, other dairy products & eggs (2.1%) Sugar, confectionery, and desserts (2.0%) Meat (1.5%)	Vegetables (-0.6%) Processed (-1.2%) Cereal products (-1.9%) Fruit & nuts (-5.5%)
Individual food items in NAMC food basket (listed in order of decreasing inflation rates):	Bananas (23.5%) Onions (14.3%)	Tomatoes (6.9%) Tinned fish (6.6%)	Ceylon/black tea (5.3%) Beef offal (4.9%) Full cream long life milk (4.4%) White bread (4.2%) Sunflower oil (3.9%) Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) chicken portions (3.4%) Instant coffee (3.0%)	Peanut butter (1.9%) White sugar (1.3%)	Brown bread (0.7%) Chicken giblets (-0.6%) Brick margarine (-0.9%) Cabbage (-0.9%) Potatoes (-1.0%) Beef mince (-1.9%) Cheddar cheese (-2.4%) Apples (-3.8%) Baked beans (-4.2%) Oranges (-4.6%) Eggs (-5.7%) Polony (-7.2%) Dried beans (-8.2%) Rice (-12.3%) Maize meal (-12.9%)

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). The FAO real food price index averaged 114.9 points in August 2026, representing a 1.9% increase from the 112.7 points recorded in July. The increase was 3% higher than the same period in 2025. This significant month-on-month increase in global inflation was mainly driven by rising prices of all food product indices, with sugar recording the largest monthly increase of 11.9%, followed by dairy (2.3%), cereals (2.2%), meat (1%), and vegetable oils (0.6%), respectively. The observed increase in sugar prices was mainly driven by growing concerns over the global sugar supply outlook for the 2026/27 season. The contributing factors included, but were not limited to, reduced sugar beet yield prospects in the European Union (EU) due to persistent hot and dry weather; adverse El Niño-related conditions continued to influence production in key Asian producing countries; lower sugar output in Brazil's Centre-South region; and India's announcement of duty-free raw sugar imports, which further supported global price increases.

On the other hand, the observed increase in dairy prices was mainly driven by higher milk powder and cheese prices. The European Union's (EU) tightening milk supplies, coupled with hot, dry weather conditions in major producing regions, also supported higher prices while sustained import demand, particularly for skim milk powder, added further upward pressure. Cheese prices also increased due to limited milk availability in the EU, offsetting weaker market conditions in Oceania where seasonal milk production and export supplies continued to rise. Butter prices remained relatively stable as stronger European quotations were balanced by lower prices in Oceania. The increase in cereal prices was due to strong global demand, weather concerns that affected crop prospects in key producing regions, and continued uncertainty surrounding Black Sea export flows. Wheat prices were supported by export disruptions in the Black Sea region, reduced production prospects in parts of Europe due to hot and dry weather, and a weaker United States (US) dollar. Maize prices also rose amid concerns over yield prospects in the US and the EU, strong demand from the ethanol and feed sectors, disruptions to Ukrainian exports, and concerns over input supplies following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Prices of sorghum, barley, and rice also strengthened, supported by firmer feed grain markets, sustained import demand, currency movements, and expectations of tighter rice supplies.

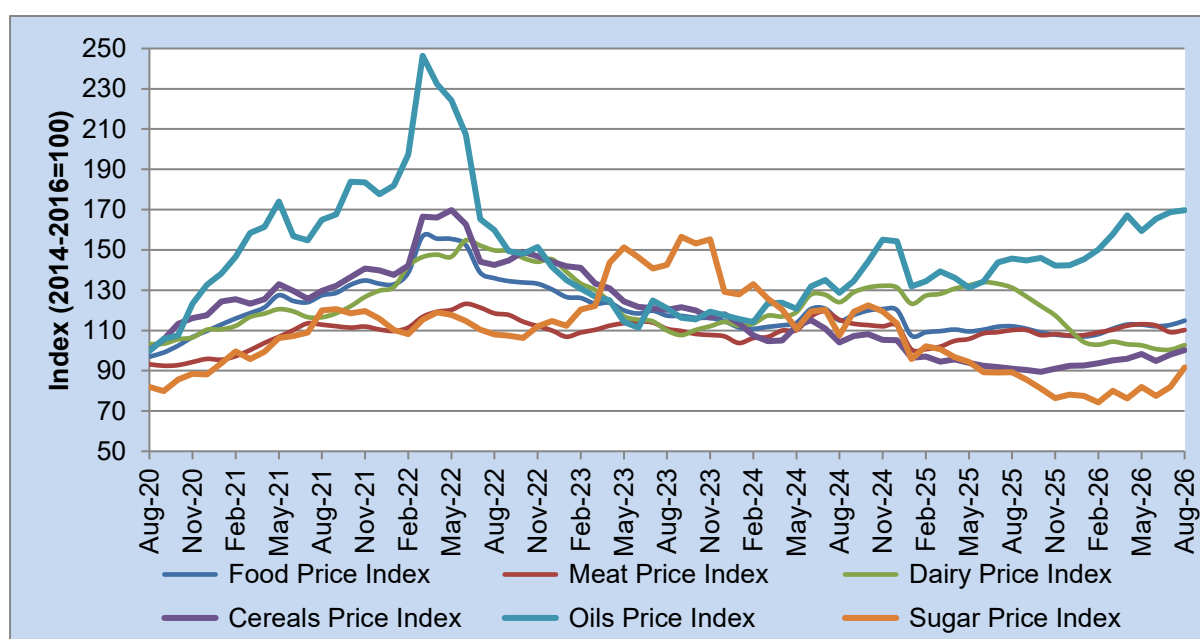


Figure 1: The FAO global real food price indices

Source: FAO, 2026

Moreover, the increase in meat prices was driven by higher poultry, pig, and ovine meat prices. Poultry prices rose due to stronger global import demand and a rebound in Brazilian export prices. Pig meat prices increased, most particularly in the EU, where high temperatures slowed animal growth and reduced the availability of slaughter-ready pigs. Ovine meat prices also strengthened due to limited export supplies from New Zealand and sustained global import demand. In contrast, bovine meat prices declined as slower exports from Brazil and increased competition from Australia in alternative markets placed downward pressure on export prices. For vegetable oils, the observed increase was driven by higher palm and soy oil prices. Palm oil prices increased due to strong global import demand and concerns over the potential impact of El Niño-related weather conditions on production in Southeast Asia. Soy oil prices remained firm, supported by strong export demand from South America. In contrast, sunflower and rapeseed oil prices declined slightly due to weaker import demand and expectations of ample supplies during the 2026/27 season.

Figure 2 illustrates fluctuations in global food 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 July and August 2026, the food inflation rate increased in most countries, with only a few recording a month-on-month decrease. Food inflation for the UK remained relatively constant at 1.3%. South Africa's monthly food inflation increased from 0.9% in July to 1.1% in August. Russia recorded the second-largest increase in its food inflation, following South Africa, increasing from 4.4% in July to 5.1% in August. This was followed by Namibia, whose food inflation rose from 3.7% to 4%, India (from 5.5% to 6%), and Brazil (from 3.4% to 3.5%). In relative terms, Botswana experienced a 10.6% monthly decline in its food inflation, from 6.6% in July to 5.9% in August, followed by China and Zambia, whose food inflation rates declined from 1.5% to 1.4%, and from 6.4% to 6%, respectively.

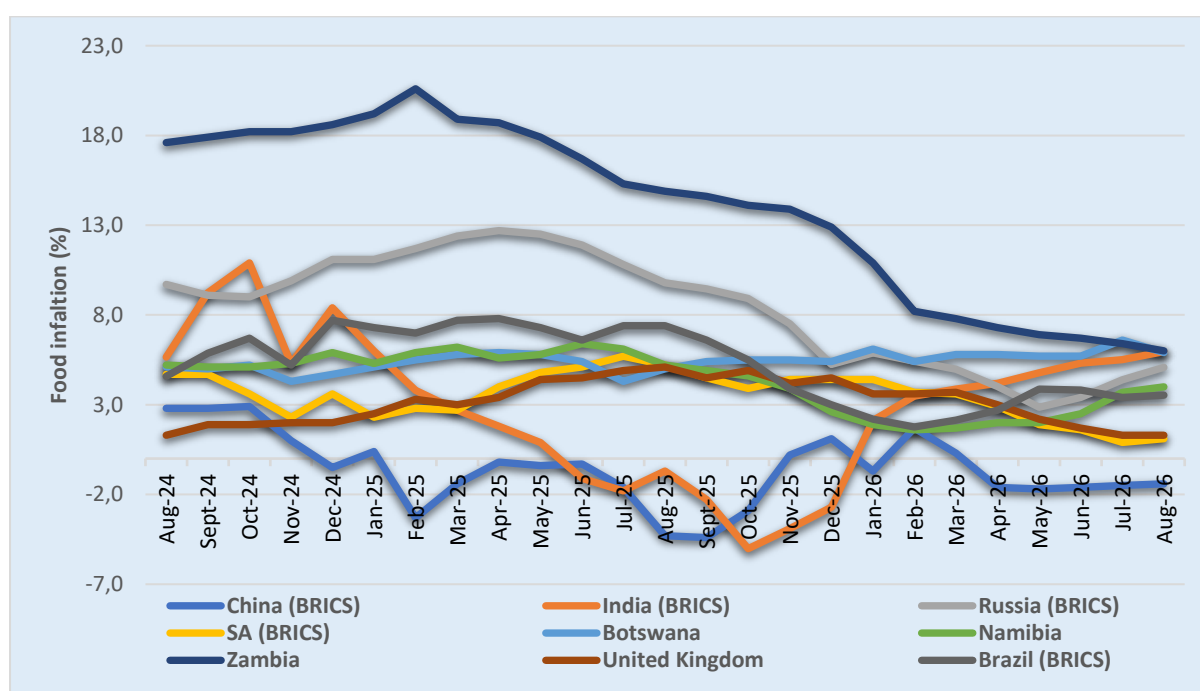


Figure 2: Food inflation in selected countries

Source: Trading Economics, 2026; Stats SA, 2026 & NAMC calculations

Figure 3 presents trends in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for South Africa from August 2020 to August 2026, along with the inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages (NAB). In August 2026, Statistics South Africa (SA) confirmed that the annual headline CPI was 4.4%, up by 2.3% in relative terms from 4.3% reported in July 2026. The inflation rate for food and NAB recorded its first monthly increase in 2026, increasing from 0.9% in July to 1.1% in August, equivalent to approximately a 22% monthly increase in relative terms. Notably, fruits & nuts were the leading drivers of the inflation rate for

food and NAB, which recorded a 2.7% increase, followed by fish & other seafood (1.1%), other foods (0.5%), meat (0.4%), oils & fats (0.3%), unprocessed foods and milk, other dairy products & eggs, both of which increased by 0.2%, and processed foods (0.1%). In contrast, sugar, confectionery & desserts remained constant, cereal products and vegetables declined by 0.2% and 1.3%, respectively.

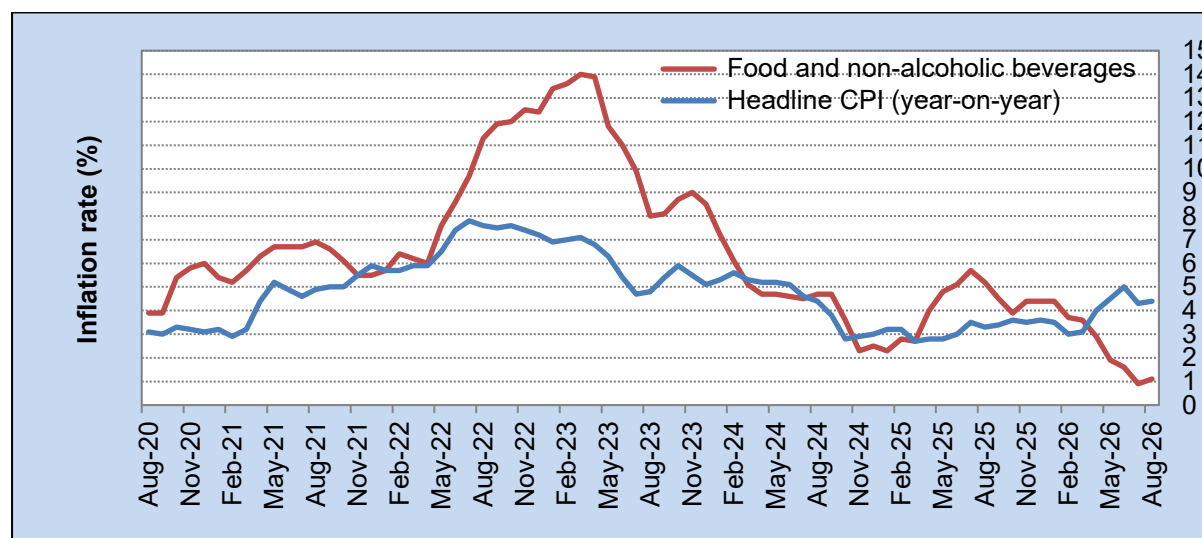


Figure 3: South Africa's headline CPI and Food & non-alcoholic beverages' inflation

Source: Stats SA. 2026; NAMC calculations

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

Table 1 presents a comparative analysis of expenses associated with selected food items in urban and rural areas during August 2026. Recent data released by Stats SA reveals variation in prices for certain products when purchased in urban versus rural regions. Urban consumers paid more for Ceylon/black tea, which exhibited the highest price difference of R8.59, followed by peanut butter (R4.52), sunflower oil (R1.40), and white bread (R0.06), compared to rural consumers. For the nine food items, urban households on average pay R0.96 more than households in rural areas.

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

Product	Urban Food Prices August 2026 (R/unit)	Rural Food Prices August 2026 (R/unit)	The price difference (R/unit)
Full cream milk - long life 1ℓ	20.98	21.03	-0.05
Brown bread 700g	17.56	17.85	-0.29
White bread 700g	19.62	19.56	0.06
Bananas per kg	20.53	21.25	-0.72
Maize meal 2.5 kg*	38.53	n/a	n/a
Margarine spread 500g*	40.12	n/a	n/a
Peanut butter 400g	50.39	45.87	4.52
Rice 2kg	37.42	39.96	-2.54
Sunflower oil 750ml	38.00	36.60	1.40
Ceylon/black tea 250g	66.49	57.90	8.59
White sugar 2.5kg	67.57	69.92	-2.35
Average price difference			0.96

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 August 2026 data.

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

In this section, the cost of NAMC's 28-item urban food basket is explained by comparing average food prices in August 2026 and August 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 decreased by 0.6% in August 2026 when compared to the same period last year, reaching R1348.68. However, this is equivalent to a 0.4% month-to-month decrease from the R1353.75 cost recorded in July 2026. Between August 2026 and August 2025, among the 28 items, only 11 items recorded price increases exceeding the 1-3% inflation target set by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB). Notable products in this category include bananas, which experienced a substantial price surge of 23.5%, followed by onions (14.3%), tomatoes (6.9%), fish (6.6%), Ceylon/black tea (5.3%), beef offal (4.9%), full cream milk (4.4%), white bread (4.2%), sunflower oil (3.9%), Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) chicken portions (3.4%), and instant coffee (3.0%).

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

Category	Product	August 25 (R/unit)	July 26 (R/unit)	August 26 (R/unit)	Change year-on- year (%)	Change month-on- month (%)
Beans	Baked beans - tinned 410g	15.85	15.23	15.18	-4.23	-0.33
	Beans - dried 500 g	34.72	31.92	31.88	-8.18	-0.13
	Peanut butter 400g	49.45	49.60	50.39	1.90	1.59
Coffee & Tea	Ceylon/black tea 250g	63.15	66.34	66.49	5.29	0.23
	Instant coffee 250g	75.34	77.81	77.57	2.96	-0.31
Dairy & Eggs	Cheddar cheese per /kg	163.30	163.10	159.35	-2.42	-2.30
	Eggs 1.5 dozen	63.91	61.15	60.29	-5.66	-1.41
	Full cream milk -long life 1ℓ	20.10	20.93	20.98	4.38	0.24
Fats & Oils	Brick margarine 500g	32.36	31.23	32.07	-0.90	2.69
	Sunflower oil 750ml	36.58	37.97	38.00	3.88	0.08
Fruit	Apples per kg	26.78	25.55	25.75	-3.85	0.78
	Bananas per kg	16.63	17.74	20.53	23.45	15.73
	Oranges per kg	21.50	20.73	20.51	-4.60	-1.06
Animal Protein	Beef mince per kg	127.40	122.64	124.92	-1.95	1.86
	Beef offal per kg	56.67	60.22	59.45	4.91	-1.28
	Chicken giblets per kg	48.41	48.34	48.13	-0.58	-0.43
	Fish (excl. tuna) 400g	28.60	29.76	30.48	6.57	2.42
	IQF chicken portions 2kg	98.34	101.89	101.65	3.37	-0.24
	Polony 1kg	59.68	58.71	55.40	-7.17	-5.64
Bread & Cereals	Brown bread 700g	17.43	17.72	17.56	0.75	-0.90
	White bread 700g	18.83	19.61	19.62	4.20	0.05
	Rice 2kg	42.66	37.84	37.42	-12.28	-1.11
	Maize meal 5kg	74.92	65.09	65.26	-12.89	0.26
Vegetables	Cabbage each	23.17	22.84	22.96	-0.91	0.53
	Onions per kg	25.79	28.47	29.49	14.35	3.58
	Potatoes per kg	19.32	18.12	19.12	-1.04	5.52
	Tomatoes per kg	28.67	35.39	30.66	6.94	-13.37
Sugary foods	White sugar 2.5kg	66.69	67.81	67.57	1.32	-0.35
Total Rand Value		1 356.25	1 353.75	1 348.68	-0.6%	-0.4%

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, comparing August 2026 with August 2025 (year-on-year) and August 2026 with July 2026 (month-on-month). When examining year-on-year price differences, the food group that contributed the most to the observed food inflation vegetables, with a 5.4% increase.

Following this was coffee & tea, which increased by 4.0%, then fruits (2.9%), fats & oils (1.6%), sugary foods (1.3%), and animal protein (0.2%). In contrast, the nominal cost of bean products decreased by 2.6%, while dairy & eggs dropped by 2.7% and bread & cereals by 9.1%. When reviewing month-on-month changes, fruits increase by 4.3%, followed by fats & oils (1.3%) and bean products, which rose by 0.7%. In contrast, coffee & tea prices decreased by 0.1%, followed by bread & cereals (0.3%), sugary foods (0.4%), animal protein (0.4%), dairy & eggs (1.9%), and vegetables (2.5%).

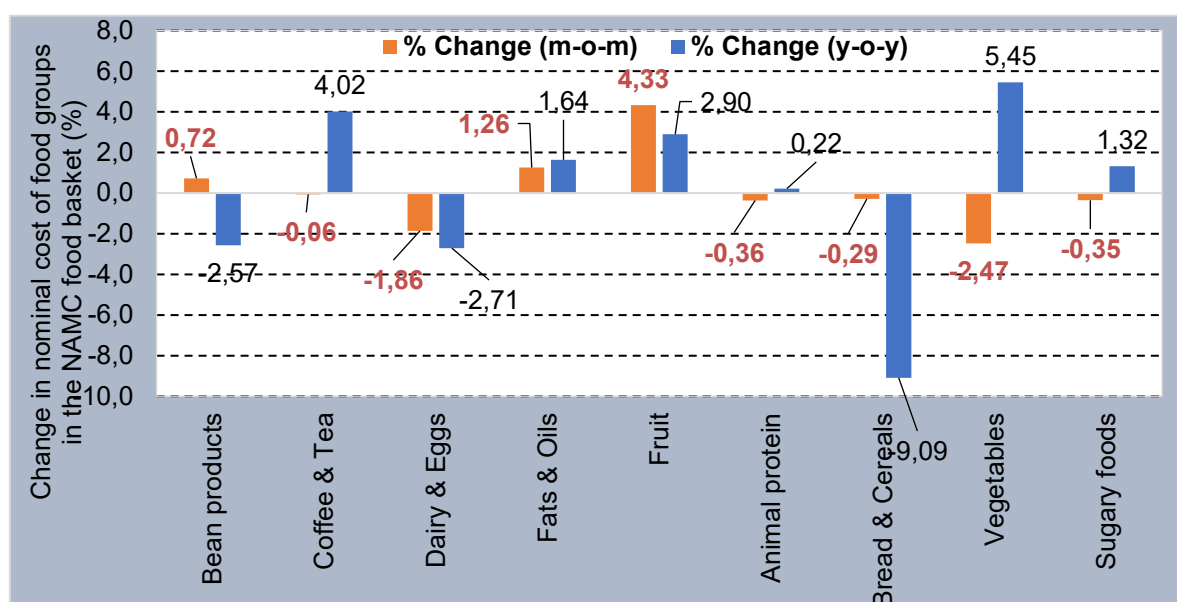


Figure 4: Change in the nominal cost of specific food groups within the NAMC's 28-item food basket.

Source: Stats SA, 2026; NAMC calculations

In conclusion, food inflation in South Africa recorded its first monthly increase in 2026, while headline inflation also increased in August 2026. These trends align with global developments, whereby food prices increased due to rising international prices for sugar, dairy, cereals, meat, and vegetable oil. Notably, the drivers of the increase in food and non-alcoholic beverages (NAB) inflation in South Africa included price increases across several food groups, namely fruits and nuts; fish and other seafood; other foods; meat; oils and fats; unprocessed foods; milk, other dairy products and eggs; and processed foods. The NAMC's 28-item urban food basket recorded a modest year-on-year decrease, as well as 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, sunflower oil and white bread, 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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