NAMC

Promoting market access for South African agriculture



POULTRY PRODUCTS PRICE MONITOR

Quarter 2: July – September 2026



www.namc.co.za

QUARTERLY[1] POULTRY PRODUCTS PRICE MONITOR

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- *According to data provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the average international poultry meat price index stood at 123.5 points in the second quarter of 2026 (July - September), marking a 2.55% increase compared to the 120.4 points recorded in the first quarter of 2026 (April - June). Similarly, on an annual basis, the index reflected a 6.54% increase, moving from 115.9 points in Q2 of 2025 to 123.5 points in Q2 2026.*

- *The second quarter of 2026 (July – September) reflected the following: quarterly comparison, data from the South African Revenue Service (SARS) indicates that South Africa imported a total of 86 236 tons of chicken meat, representing a 7.50% decline from the 93 226 tons imported in the first quarter of 2026. On an annual basis, imports increased by 16.5% compared to the second quarter of 2025. The following selected poultry products recorded the highest increases: frozen bone-in thighs (171%), frozen bone-in wings (169%), whole frozen chicken (147%), frozen bone-in leg quarters (112%), and frozen chicken carcass (92%). Contrary to the above, frozen bone-in drumsticks, frozen chicken mechanically deboned meat (MDM), and frozen bone-in breasts declined by 47%, 30%, and 28%, respectively.*

- *On a quarterly basis, average retail prices increased for chicken giblets, fresh whole chicken, and fresh chicken portions by 2.25%, 1.33%, and 0.71%, respectively. Year-on-year, all the selected products recorded increases; frozen non-IQF chicken portions (6.20%), fresh chicken portions (6.04%), 2kg IQF chicken portions (5.72%), chicken giblets (3.12%), and fresh whole chicken (2.55%).*

- *The average producer price trend indicates a declining trend both on a quarterly and annual basis for all selected products. Quarterly IQF chicken declined by 14.25%, followed by fresh chicken 13.59% and frozen chicken decreasing by 6.49%. On an annual basis, the declining trend was as follows frozen chicken (8.22%), IQF chicken (7.01%), and fresh chicken (5.73%).*

- *During the second quarter of 2026, the average spot price for a ton of yellow maize was R3 683, indicating a 15.25% decline compared to the corresponding period in 2025, and recorded a 11.62% increase compared to the first quarter of 2026. Similarly, the sunflower seed spot price averaged at R10 013 per ton, reflecting a 11.29% increase annually, and a 14.36% quarterly increase from Q1 of 2026. The soybean price followed a similar trend also increasing quarterly by 19.45%, and 10.03% annually.*

[1] The report follows South Africa's April-March financial year cycle. Quarter 2 (Q2) refers to the second financial-year quarter.

Contents

1. **Introduction** 2
2. **International poultry meat price index** 2
3. **Chicken meat imports** 4
4. **Average retail prices for selected poultry products** 5
5. **Average producer price trends** 6
6. **Feed prices** 8
7. **Real Farm to Retail Price Spread** 9
8. **Conclusion** 10

1. Introduction

Poultry occupies a pivotal position within South Africa's food system, extending beyond its role as a widely consumed source of animal protein to serve as an important contributor to household nutrition, food affordability and economic activity. Against this backdrop, this report examines developments in poultry prices across the domestic value chain, while placing these movements within the context of international market conditions to provide a clearer understanding of how global trends, domestic supply dynamics and market pressures interact. The former Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), currently known as the Department of Agriculture (DoA), established the Food Price Monitoring Committee (FPMC), which mandated the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) to track and report on food price trends. The report covers a comprehensive set of indicators, including international poultry meat price indices, chicken import volumes, producer and retail price changes, and feed input costs; all assessed every quarter.

2. International poultry meat price index

In **Figure 1**, the international poultry meat price index (base years 2014 – 2016 = 100) traces the trajectory from quarter 2 (July - September 2015) through quarter 2 (July – September 2026). According to FAO data, the poultry price index averaged 123.5 points during July to September 2026, representing a 6.54% increase compared with the corresponding period in 2025 and a 2.55% increase from the previous quarter. This indicates a strengthening of international poultry prices, with the market experiencing greater price pressure than in the preceding quarter.

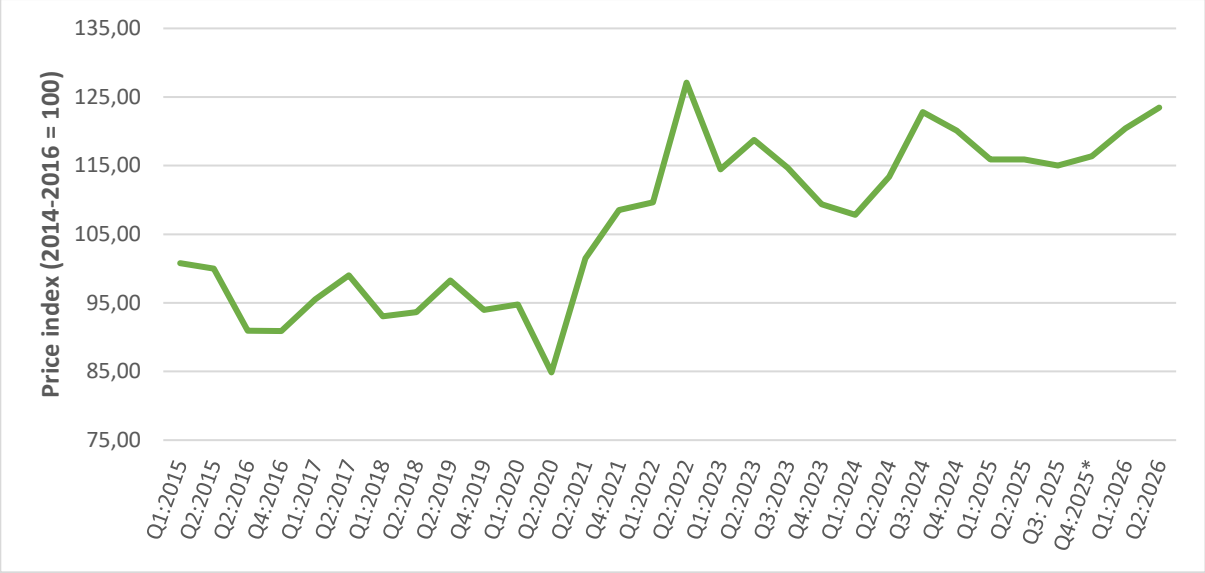


Figure 1: International Poultry Meat Price Index (IPMPI)
Source: FAO, 2026

The quarterly increase is consistent with developments in international poultry trade during this period. According to the FAO, international poultry prices strengthened during July and August, supported by increased Brazilian export quotations and firm global import demand. Brazil remains one of the world's most influential poultry exporters, and changes in its export prices can have a direct bearing on international poultry market conditions. In August 2026, the FAO reported that the rebound in Brazilian export prices was supported by strong global import demand.

An important consideration is that international poultry prices are influenced not only by the cost of producing chicken but also by the availability of exportable supplies and competition between importing countries. When major importing markets increase their purchases, exporters can redirect supplies towards destinations offering more attractive prices. This places upward pressure on export quotations, particularly when demand is strong across several regions simultaneously.

For South Africa, these international developments are relevant because imported poultry products compete with locally produced chicken, particularly in the frozen product segment. Higher international quotations can increase the cost of importing poultry, potentially improving the competitiveness of local producers. The 6.54% annual increase in the index therefore suggests that international poultry market conditions were firmer than in 2025. This may have created a more challenging environment for importers seeking competitively priced poultry, while potentially offering some protection to local producers against low-priced international supplies.

3. Chicken meat imports

Imports form an important component of this market structure, complementing domestic production by helping to bridge supply gaps, broaden product availability and maintain competitive pricing. The role of imports is particularly significant in balancing fluctuations in local production and responding to changing consumer demand, thereby contributing to the overall accessibility, affordability and stability of poultry products in the South African market.

During the second quarter (Q2) of 2026 (July – September), **Table 1** indicates that South Africa's total chicken imports declined from 93 226 tons in the first quarter to 86 236 tons in the second quarter of 2026, representing a quarterly decrease of approximately 7.5%. This indicates a further moderation in import volumes following the substantial decline already observed in the previous quarter. However, the reduction in total imports should not be interpreted as a uniform decline in demand for imported poultry. The considerable increases in selected frozen chicken categories suggest that importers may have adjusted their purchasing patterns in response to changing product demand, domestic supply conditions and international price competitiveness.

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

Tariff description	HS Code	Q2:2025	Q1:2026	Q2:2026	Q2:2026 vs Q2:2025	Q2:2026 vs Q1: 2026
		Tons	Tons	Tons	Annual % Change	Quarterly % Change
Whole frozen chicken	0207.1100	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
Frozen chicken MDM	0207.1210	45 212	65 410	45 979	2	-30
Frozen chicken carcasses	0207.1220	1 865	1 658	3 176	70	92
Whole frozen chicken	0207.1290	952	683	1 689	77	147
Fresh chicken cuts & offal	0207.1300	0	1	0,00	-99	-100
Boneless chicken: Breasts	0207.1411	35	6	0	-100	-100
Boneless chicken: Thighs	0207.1413	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
Boneless chicken: Other	0207.1415	350	204	344	-2	69
Frozen chicken: Livers	0207.1421	2 561	2 656	2 415	-6	-9
Frozen chicken: Feet	0207.1423	10 930	7 178	8 894	-19	24
Frozen chicken: Heads	0207.1425	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
Frozen chicken: Other	0207.1429	3 714	5 947	5 433	46	-9
Frozen bone-in: Half Chicken	0207.1491	8	0	0	-100	0
Frozen bone-in: Leg Quarters	0207.1493	5 482	6 339	13 441	145	112
Frozen bone-in: Wings	0207.1495	1 423	971	2611	83	169
Frozen bone-in: Breasts	0207.1496	27	18	13	-54	-28
Frozen bone-in: Thighs	0207.1497	37	76	206	461	171
Frozen bone-in: Drumsticks	0207.1498	459	1458	777	69	-47
Other	0207.1499	563	621	1208	114	94
Value-added processed chicken	1602.3290	394	0	49	-88	251250[2]
TOTAL IMPORTS		**74 012**	**93 226**	**86 236**	**16.5**	**-7.50**

Source: SARS, 2026. *n/a denotes not defined.*

[2] The extremely large quarterly increase is attributable to the fact that no imports were made in 2025 Q1, which then used as the baseline in the calculation.

The increases in frozen bone-in thighs (171%), frozen bone-in wings (169%), whole frozen chicken (147%), frozen bone-in leg quarters (112%) and frozen chicken carcass (92%) could suggest that importers continued sourcing frozen products despite the overall decline in import volumes. These products may be attractive because they offer relatively affordable protein options and can be stored for longer periods. On the other hand, the declines in frozen bone-in drumsticks (47%), frozen chicken mechanically deboned meat (MDM) (30%), and frozen bone-in breasts (28%) suggests that importers reduced their exposure to certain products during the quarter. The decline in frozen chicken MDM is particularly noteworthy as it is a key input for the processed meat industry. A reduction in MDM imports could reflect changes in procurement requirements among local processors, increased availability of alternative MDM, or inventory adjustments.

The annual figures demonstrate how significantly the compositions of imports has changed. Frozen bone-in thighs increased by 461%, while frozen bone-in leg quarters and other poultry products increased by 145% and 114%, respectively. These increases suggest that particular frozen products gained importance in the import basket, even as overall imports declined. Conversely, the 88% decrease in value-added processed chicken, 54% decline in frozen bone-in breasts and 19% decline in frozen chicken feet indicate weaker import activity in these categories. It is also important to distinguish between percentage movements and actual imported volumes. Where whole frozen chicken, fresh chicken cuts and offal, and boneless chicken breasts recorded zero or negligible imports, the percentage movements should not be interpreted as evidence of a meaningful shift in the national poultry supply. Similarly, the 49 tons of value-added processed chicken imported in Q2, compared with zero in Q1, represents a return of imports from a negligible base rather than a substantial increase in market supply. The absolute quantities provide a more reliable indication of the commercial significance of these movements.

Overall, the import trends suggest that South Africa's poultry market was experiencing a gradual adjustment in sourcing patterns. Improved local production conditions and changing procurement decisions contributed to lower aggregate imports, while international price differences and demand for frozen cuts may have continued to sustain imports in selected categories.

4. Average retail prices for selected poultry products

Figure 2 presents average quarterly retail prices for selected chicken products from the first quarter of 2020 to the second quarter of 2026. Retail chicken prices displayed relatively moderate movements on a quarterly basis, with frozen non-IQF portions and 2kg IQF portions declining by 0.51% and 0.25%, respectively. In contrast, chicken giblets increased by 2.25%, whole fresh chicken by 1.33%, and fresh chicken portions by 0.71%. The annual figures indicate that all selected retail products remained more expensive than in the corresponding period of 2025. Frozen non-IQF portions recorded the highest increase at 6.20%, followed by fresh chicken portions at 6.04% and 2kg IQF portions at 5.72%.

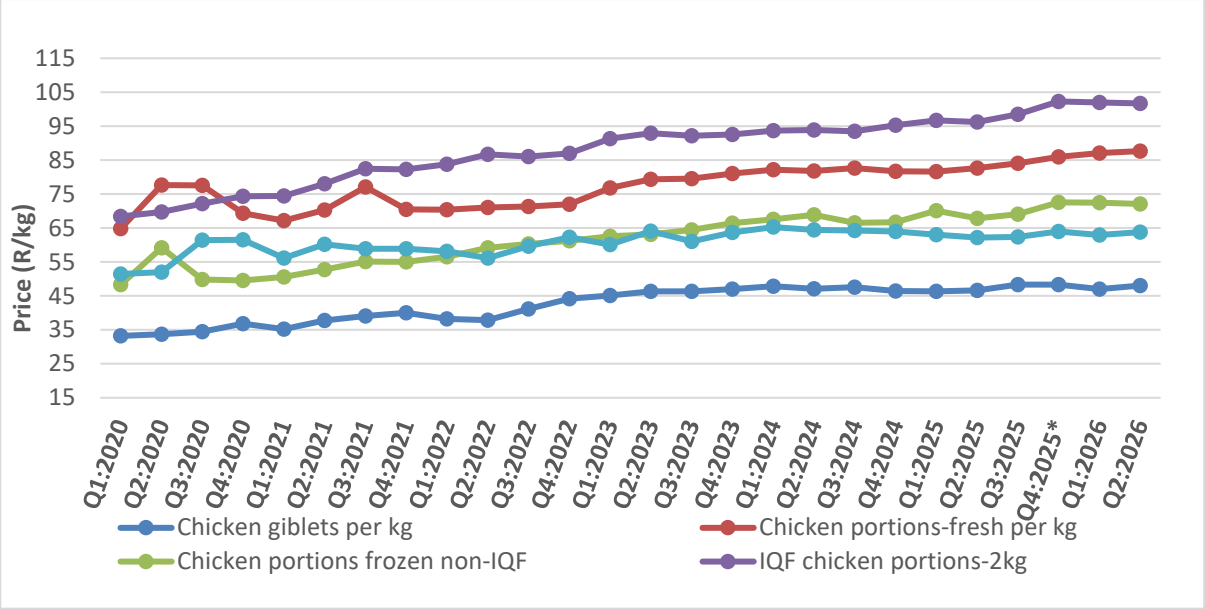


Figure 2: Average quarterly retail price for selected chicken meat products.
Source: Stats SA, 2026

The marginal decline in frozen non-IQF and IQF chicken portions may be attributable to the increased availability of selected imported frozen products during the quarter. Although total imports declined, the substantial increase in frozen thighs, wings and leg quarters imports may suggest that competition remained relatively strong within the frozen poultry segment, subsequently supressing prices due to an abundant supply.

The increase in chicken giblets by 2.25% may reflect changes in the availability of lower-value chicken products and relatively stable demand from price-sensitive consumers. Giblets are generally marketed at more affordable price points, making them important for households seeking economical sources of animal protein.

The annual increases in frozen and fresh portions may also reflect the additional costs associated with processing and packaging. Portioning a whole chicken requires further handling, cutting, packaging and refrigeration, all of which add costs before the product reaches the retail shelf.

5. Average producer price trends

Figure 3 shows producer prices for frozen chicken (maximum brine allowed 10%), IQF chicken pieces (maximum brine allowed 15%), and whole fresh chicken from the first quarter of 2015 to the second quarter of 2026. During quarter 2 producer prices recorded substantial declines across all three product categories. Frozen chicken decreased by 6.49% quarter-on-quarter, while IQF chicken and fresh chicken declined by 14.25% and 13.58%, respectively. On an annual basis, the downward trend continued, with frozen chicken declining by 8.22%, IQF chicken by 7.01% and fresh chicken by 5.73%.

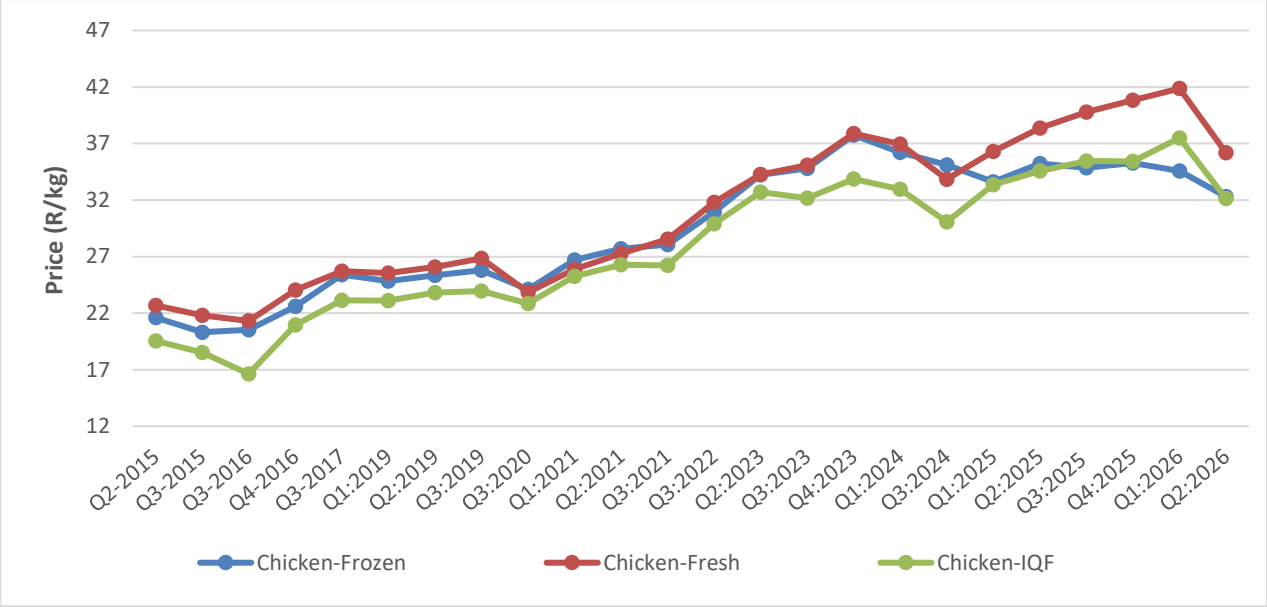


Figure 3: Quarterly average producer prices

Source: AMT, 2026

These movements suggest that producers experienced considerably less pricing power during July–September 2026 than in the preceding quarter. The declines are particularly significant because they occurred across both frozen and fresh products, indicating that the pressure was not confined to a single segment of the poultry market.

The improvement in domestic poultry production and availability of chicken in the domestic market may be attributable to the movements of producer prices. As local producers may have had some relief from more favourable production conditions and lower feed costs during the earlier part of 2026, production volumes may have gradually increased. Greater availability of locally produced chicken would have placed pressure on producer prices, particularly where market demand was not increasing at the same pace as supply.

The substantial decline in IQF producer prices of 14.25% is particularly noteworthy. IQF chicken is an important product in the South African market because of its convenience, affordability and relatively long storage life. However, it competes with imported frozen portions. The increase in imports of frozen thighs and wings during the quarter may have contributed to stronger competition in the broader frozen chicken market. Where importers offer competitively priced products, local processors may be required to reduce their selling prices to retain customers and maintain market share.

The decline in fresh chicken producer prices of 13.58% also suggests that the domestic market was experiencing increased availability or weaker pricing conditions. Fresh chicken is generally more dependent on local production and distribution because it has a shorter shelf life than frozen products. If producers increase output faster than retailers and food-service businesses can absorb the additional volumes, they may need to lower their selling prices to move stock before it loses commercial value.

Frozen chicken producer prices declined by a comparatively smaller 6.49%. This may indicate that frozen chicken prices were relatively more stable because of their longer shelf life, greater storage flexibility and continued demand from wholesalers and food-service businesses. Producers and distributors can also manage frozen inventories over a longer period, reducing the urgency to sell immediately when market conditions soften.

Additionally, the electricity tariff increases effective from July 2026 may have added another layer of pressure. Poultry production relies on electricity for ventilation, lighting, water systems, temperature control and automated feeding equipment. Processing facilities also require electricity for slaughtering, refrigeration, freezing and packaging. The tariff increases possibly raised costs at both farm and processing levels.

6. Feed prices

Figure 4 illustrates the movement in SAFEX feed commodity prices during July–September 2026, which presents a more mixed picture compared with the previous quarter. Yellow maize averaged R3 683 per ton, representing a 15.25% decline compared with the corresponding period in 2025, but an 11.62% increase from Q1 2026. Sunflower seed increased to R10 013 per ton, reflecting a quarterly increase of 14.36% and an annual increase of 11.29%. Soybeans recorded the largest quarterly increase, rising by 19.45% to R8 156 per ton, while increasing by 10.03% annually.

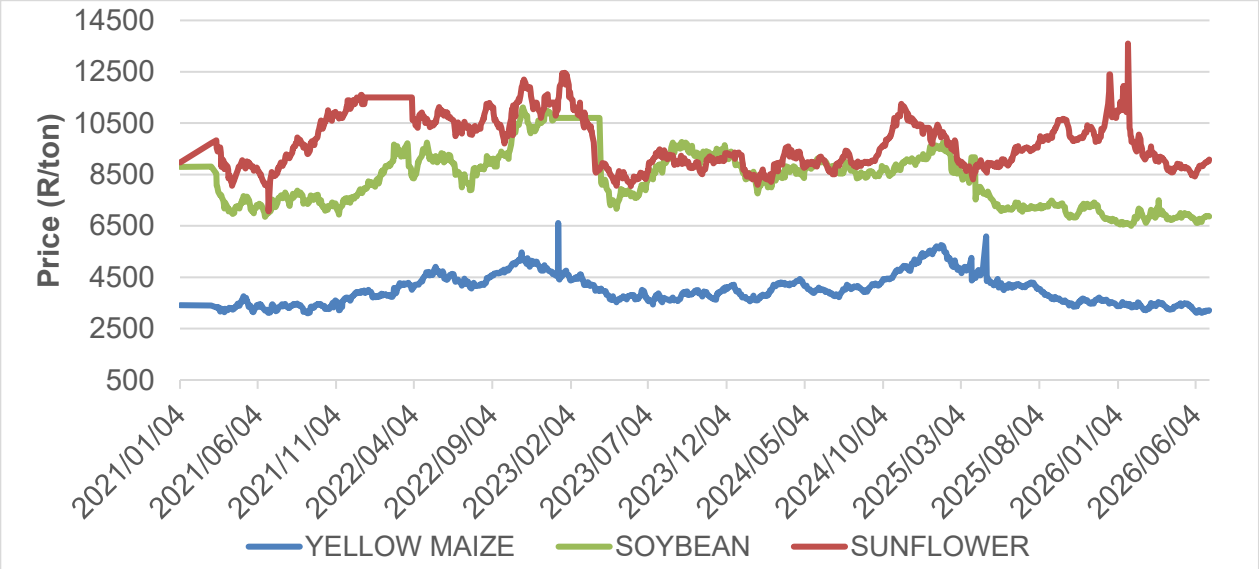


Figure 4: Quarterly spot prices per ton
Source: JSE-SAFEX, 2026

While yellow maize prices increased by 11.62% from the previous quarter, the annual decline of 15.25% indicates that maize remained considerably more affordable than during the corresponding period in 2025. This is largely associated with the recovery in South African grain production following improved rainfall conditions and favourable growing conditions across several major maize-producing regions. The strong domestic harvest helped improve maize availability and reduced the need for buyers to compete aggressively for limited supplies.

However, the quarterly increase suggests that some upward price pressure was returning to the market.

Sunflower seed prices increased by 14.36% quarter-on-quarter and 11.29% year-on-year, indicating a considerably firmer market than that observed during the previous quarter. The increase therefore represents an additional cost consideration for poultry feed manufacturers, particularly those incorporating sunflower meal into their feed formulations. Soybeans experienced the most significant increase among the three feed commodities, rising by 19.45% quarter-on-quarter to R8 156 per ton. The annual increase of 10.03% further indicates that soybean prices had become substantially more expensive than in the corresponding period of 2025. This is particularly important for the poultry industry because soybean meal is a major source of protein in commercial broiler feed. Adequate protein is essential for muscle development, growth rates and efficient feed conversion. Consequently, sustained increases in soybean prices can translate into higher feed formulation costs.

Overall, the feed commodity figures indicate that while South Africa's improved grain harvest continued to provide some protection against excessive production costs, the sharp quarterly increases in oilseeds represented an emerging risk to poultry producers. If these increases are sustained, they could gradually translate into higher production costs and renewed upward pressure on poultry prices in subsequent quarters.

7. Real Farm to Retail Price Spread

Figure 5 illustrates that between July and September 2026, the real farm value share of fresh whole chicken declined by 5.98 percentage points, while real FTRPS increased by 13.90%. The real farm value share of fresh whole chicken meat was 54.35% of the retail price in September. On an annual basis (September 2025 – September 2026), the real farm value share declined sharply by 17.91% in relative terms, while the real FTRPS increased significantly by 34.07%.

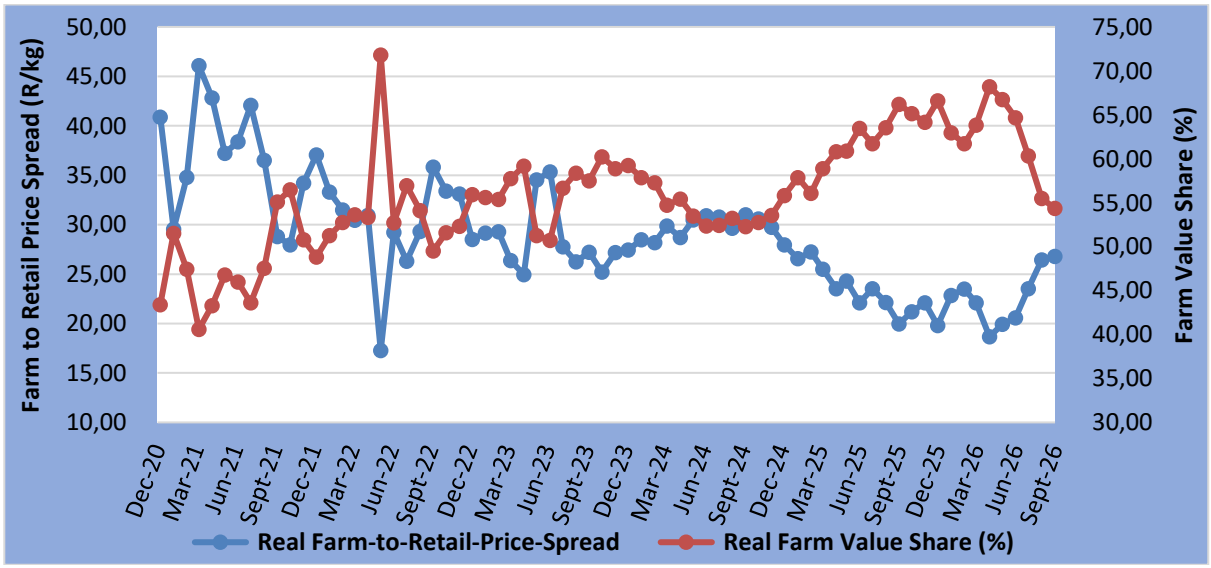


Figure 5: Real farm-to-retail-price-spread and farm value share of whole fresh chicken
Source: Stats SA, AMT, and own calculations, 2026

The quarterly decline in farm value share is consistent with the significant reductions in producer prices recorded during the period. Fresh chicken producer prices declined by 13.58%, while retail prices for whole fresh chicken increased slightly by 1.33%. This divergence is particularly important because it suggests that the reduction in prices received by producers was not reflected in lower retail prices to the same extent. Producers received less for their products, while consumers continued paying relatively similar prices at retail level.

Moreover, the electricity tariff hike in July 2026, affecting poultry processing facilities, cold-storage warehouses, distribution centres and retail refrigeration systems. These businesses require reliable electricity to maintain product quality, preserve food safety and prevent losses throughout the cold chain. The increase in electricity costs could therefore have contributed to the widening spread, particularly for frozen and chilled poultry products.

8. Conclusion

The period July to September 2026 reflects a poultry industry experiencing increasing pressure to balance sustainable production, market competitiveness and consumer affordability. While improved domestic grain availability continued to support the industry's production capacity, the sharp quarterly increase in soybean and sunflower seed prices, together with higher electricity costs, signalled emerging input-cost pressures. At the same time, declining producer prices, changing import patterns and relatively stable retail prices highlighted growing differences in how market conditions were experienced across the value chain. The widening farm-to-retail price spread is particularly noteworthy, as it suggests that the benefits of lower farm-gate prices were not necessarily being passed through to consumers, while producers captured a diminishing share of the final retail value. International poultry prices also strengthened, reinforcing the importance of global supply conditions and trade competitiveness in shaping the domestic market.

Ultimately, the quarter highlights the need for a more balanced and efficient poultry value chain, one that strengthens local production, promotes fair competition, improves cost efficiencies and ensures that the benefits of favourable agricultural conditions translate into sustainable producer returns and more affordable poultry products for South African consumers. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening poultry market information systems, monitoring producer-to-retail price transmission, and assessing the implications of changes in feed costs and import composition for domestic market competitiveness.

Compiled by:
Trends and discussion on selected chicken products by:
1. *Lesedi Mokoena*
2. *Dr. Moses Lubinga*

Enquiries: Lesedi Mokoena: lmokoena@namc.co.za or Moses Lubinga: HLubinga@namc.co.za
Stats SA is acknowledged for the assistance provided to the NAMC in terms of food price data.
Cover page photos: Pexels, Pixabay, Freepik, Unsplash and Vecteezy
© 2026. 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 concerning 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, trademark, 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.



NAMC
Promoting market access for South African agriculture

T: +2712 341 1115
E: info@namc.co.za
W: www.namc.co.za