

**MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS
CONSUMER AFFAIRS DIVISION**

**MONTHLY RETAIL PRICE BULLETIN
ON BASIC SUPERMARKET ITEMS, MARKET ITEMS AND POULTRY
FEBRUARY 2011**

This Bulletin presents data highlights on the average price movements over the period January to February 2011 for:

- a. selected food and other items available at supermarkets;
- b. fruits, vegetables, fish and meat available at the municipal markets; and
- c. fresh chicken available at poultry depots.

1.0 GENERAL PRICE MOVEMENTS – JANUARY TO FEBRUARY 2011

1.1 Selected Food and Other Items available at Supermarkets

Overall, there was an increase of 0.45% in the average price of selected food and other items available at Supermarkets throughout Trinidad during the period under review.

This increase in prices of 0.45% was in actuality 0.47 percentage points more when compared to the previous reporting period from December 2010 to January 2011. The following price movements were recorded during the period under review:

1.1.1 Price Increases

Item Group	% change
Tuber and Similar Produce	1.13
Oils and Fats	1.11
Sweeteners	1.02
Dried Fruits	0.69
Toiletries and Cleaning Products	0.56
Non Alcoholic Beverages	0.55
Dairy Products	0.51
Legumes	0.40
Cereals	0.39
Sauces and Condiments	0.36

1.1.2 Price Decreases

Item Group	% change
Fish	0.55
Juices and Preparations for Infant Use	0.28
Meat	0.04

1.2 Selected Fruits, Vegetables, Fish and Meat available at Municipal Markets

The month of February witnessed an overall decrease of 7.43% in the prices of Fruits, Vegetables, Fish and Meat available at Municipal Markets. This decrease was 5.36 percentage points less when compared to the previous month, January 2011.

1.3 Fresh Chicken available at Poultry Depots

Live chicken prices increased by 5.76% during the period under review. This fee averaged \$4.17 in January and \$4.41 in February. The pluck and gut fee, however, decreased by 0.71%. This fee now averages \$9.74.

2.0 SPECIFIC PRICE MOVEMENTS – JANUARY TO FEBRUARY 2011

2.1 Selected Food and Other Items available at Supermarkets

2.1.1 Price Increases

The food items which showed notable percentage price increases during the period January to February 2011 were:

Item	January \$	February \$	Actual Dollar Value \$	Change %
Lamb Leg (454g)	32.70	35.39	2.69	8.23
Chilled Chicken (454g)	11.55	12.34	0.79	6.84
Goat Leg (454g)	21.07	22.46	1.39	6.60
Pork Shoulder (454g)	16.81	17.83	1.02	6.07
Lamb Shoulder (454g)	22.06	23.18	1.12	5.08

The increase in the prices of Meat such as Lamb, Goat and Pork is due to a combination of high local demand as well as difficulties being experienced in the major producing countries of Australia and New Zealand owing to unpredictable weather conditions.

2.1.2 Price Decreases

Among the items which showed notable percentage price decreases were:

Item	January \$	February \$	Actual Dollar Value \$	Change %
Chilled Chicken Wings (454g)	15.84	14.52	1.32	8.33
Chilled Chicken Thighs (454g)	12.48	11.57	0.91	7.29
Goat Shoulder (454g)	21.41	20.17	1.24	5.79
Frozen Chicken Breast (pk)	14.89	14.06	0.83	5.57
Chicken Sausage (141g)	3.94	3.73	0.21	5.33

2.2 Selected Fruits, Vegetables, Fish and Meat available at Municipal Markets

2.2.1 Price Increases

Among the most significant were:

Item	Size	January \$	February \$	Actual Dollar Value \$	Change %
Carrots	454g	5.18	5.78	0.60	11.58
Cassava	454g	2.76	3.01	0.25	9.06
Green Fig	bundle	2.70	2.89	0.19	7.04
Lettuce	head	6.22	6.65	0.43	6.91

The prices of Fruits and Vegetables decreased by 8.58% during the period under review. This is attributed to a fall in the price of fruits although certain vegetables remained high. Citrus fruits are “coming into season” and this is reflected in the price drop¹.

¹ Trinidad and Tobago’s Newday Newspaper 10/02/2011 “Citrus prices fall but veggies continue to rise”

2.2.2 Price Decreases

Among the items showing the most significant price decreases were:

Item	Size	January \$	February \$	Actual Dollar Value \$	Change %
Celery	bundle	1.92	1.26	0.66	34.38
Chive	bundle	1.93	1.38	0.55	28.50
Sweet Pepper	454g	7.76	5.61	2.15	27.71
Cucumber	454g	3.79	3.03	0.76	20.05
Hot Pepper	each	1.02	0.83	0.19	18.63
Tomatoes - Small	454g	8.77	7.52	1.25	14.25

2.3 Fresh Chicken available at Poultry Depots

The decrease in the price of fresh chicken at the local poultry depots is the result of an increase in imports of whole chickens and leg and thigh parts in the local market thereby resulting in a glut and supplies of live boilers remaining unsold².

3.0 OUTLOOK FOR MARCH 2011

It is evident that some food items such as Goat and Pork Shoulder are showing increases in prices owing to increases on the international market and are expected to continue on this trend. Expectations are that there will be more increases in the forthcoming month.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

Given the current and emerging trends in food prices, it is recommended that the RPMU continue to closely monitor price movements on both the local and international markets and that this information be made available to the wider public.

The Corporate Communications Unit (CCU) of the Ministry of Legal Affairs can embark upon an educational campaign which should involve publishing the prices of food items

Trinidad Express Newspapers 03/12/2010 "Pluck shops cry foul over cheap imported birds"

from the various local geographical areas made available by the RPMU. This would enable consumers to make more informed decisions when making purchases.

On a wider scale however, and, given the significant impact of fluctuations in the prices of fruits, vegetables and fresh produce on food price inflation, a system for monitoring and sharing information on local production of these items should be developed. This would assist in the development of proactive strategies to address forecasted shortages and preempt price volatility. The development of such a system may require collaboration among the MLA/CAD, the Central Statistical Office, the Ministry of Food Production, Land and Marine Affairs and the various stakeholder organizations in the agriculture sector.

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