

**MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS  
CONSUMER AFFAIRS DIVISION**

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

This Bulletin presents data highlights on the average price movements over the period February to March 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 – FEBRUARY TO MARCH 2011**

**1.1 Selected Food and Other Items available at Supermarkets**

Overall, there was an increase of 1.23% 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 1.23% was in actuality 0.78 percentage points more when compared to the previous reporting period from January to February 2011. The following price movements were recorded during the period under review:

**1.1.1 Price Increases**

<b>Item Group</b>	<b>% change</b>
Fish	8.56
Sweeteners	5.56
Dairy Products	1.64
Meat	1.36
Non Alcoholic Beverages	1.04
Toiletries and Cleaning Products	1.01
Cereals	0.91
Legumes	0.56
Oils and Fats	0.51
Juices and Preparations for Infant Use	0.14

### 1.1.2 Price Decreases

Item Group	% change
Tuber and Similar Produce	2.40
Sauces and Condiments	1.78
Dried Fruits	1.14

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

The month of March witnessed an overall decrease of 4.34% in the prices of Fruits, Vegetables, Fish and Meat available at Municipal Markets. This decrease was 3.09 percentage points more when compared to the previous month, February 2011.

### 1.3 Fresh Chicken available at Poultry Depots

Live chicken prices increased by 3.85% during the period under review. This fee averaged \$4.41 in February and \$4.58 in March. The pluck and gut fee, however, decreased by 0.51%. This fee now averages \$9.69.

## 2.0 SPECIFIC PRICE MOVEMENTS – FEBRUARY TO MARCH 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 February to March 2011 were:

Item	February \$	March \$	Actual Dollar Value \$	Change %
Mackerel (425g)	10.68	15.64	4.96	46.44
Brown Sugar (454g)	3.37	4.46	1.09	32.34
Corn Flakes–Local (180z)	18.23	20.13	1.90	10.42
Goat Leg (454g)	22.46	24.46	2.00	8.90
Eggs (dozen)	15.88	17.18	1.30	7.45

The increase in the prices of:

- Mackerel is due to rises in the price of diesel which is used to power fishing vessels. It is expected that Fish prices would continue on this trend as analysts have predicted that there would be further increases in crude oil prices<sup>1</sup>.
- Brown Sugar – Consumers witnessed a price increase of 32.34% or \$1.09. This increase is the result of price increases on the international market which has filtered down to consumers. This rise was brought about as a result of:
  - Poor weather conditions in top sugar producing countries of Brazil and India;
  - Brazil’s diversification from sugarcane to ethanol; and
  - Increasing global demand for large amounts of sugar.

The increase in the international price of raw sugar has prompted global concerns on supply capabilities.

- Meat and Dairy Products – The market experienced price increases in both Meat and Dairy Products. These increases are due to adverse weather conditions in the major producing countries of Australia and New Zealand which have slowed down production, resulting in lower exports and higher prices<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.1.2 Price Decreases

Among the items which showed notable percentage price decreases were:

Item	February \$	March \$	Actual Dollar Value \$	Change %
Mustard (Bottle)(16oz)	9.83	5.86	3.97	40.39
Split Peas (454g)	2.94	2.80	0.14	4.76
Frozen Drumsticks (pk)	15.42	14.70	0.72	4.67
Goat Shoulder (454g)	20.17	19.26	0.91	3.61

<sup>1</sup> “Cost of fish and chips set to rise 50% as rising fuel prices hit fishermen”  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1021448/Cost-fish-chips-set-rise-50-rising-fuel-prices-hit-fishermen.html>

<sup>2</sup> Trinidad and Tobago Mirror 13/02/2011 “Meat and dairy prices to rise”

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

### 2.2.1 Price Increases

Among the most significant were:

Item	Size	February \$	March \$	Actual Dollar Value \$	Change %
Cucumber	454g	3.03	4.26	1.23	40.59
Fish (Carite)	454g	26.69	29.37	2.68	10.04
Banana	454g	5.40	5.75	0.35	6.48
Carrots	454g	5.78	6.07	0.29	5.02

The prices of Fruits and Vegetables decreased by 6.08% during the period under review. This is attributed to a fall in the price of certain vegetables as highlighted in the table below (Section 2.2.2).

### 2.2.2 Price Decreases

Among the items showing the most significant price decreases were:

Item	Size	February \$	March \$	Actual Dollar Value \$	Change %
Hot Pepper	Each	0.83	0.56	0.27	32.53
Melongene	454g	5.68	4.10	1.58	27.82
Chive	Bundle	1.38	1.04	0.34	24.64
Tomatoes (Small)	454g	7.52	5.70	1.82	24.20
Tomatoes (Medium)	454g	10.56	8.04	2.52	23.86

## 2.3 Fresh Chicken available at Poultry Depots

The increase in the price of fresh chicken at the local poultry depots is attributed to increases in international feed prices which constitute the majority of the cost of raising poultry.

### **3.0 OUTLOOK FOR APRIL 2011**

It is evident that food items from the various item groupings such as Sugar, Eggs and Corn Flakes are showing increases in prices owing to increases on the international market and are expected to continue on this trend. Expectations are there will be further 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 of food items on both the local and international markets and this information should 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 from the various local geographical areas made available by the RPMU. This would enable consumers to make more informed decisions when making purchases; and
- A system for monitoring and sharing information on the local production of fruits, vegetables and fresh produce should be developed which should entail 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. This would assist in the development of proactive strategies to address forecasted shortages and preempt price volatility of such items.