



Food prices up again in August.

The cost of the PMBEJD Household Food Basket increased sharply between March and April and continued its upward trend, albeit at a slower rate until June. July saw a drop in the cost of the basket. It appeared, on the trends in our data, that food prices were stabilising but August is again showing an increase.

The highest food price spikes happened between March and April (5,8% or R187,08), April and May showed lower increases (1,8% or R62,84), May and June, saw a 0,4% or R15,31 increase, and June and July showed a decrease in prices of -2,1% (-R73,09). Now, however between July and August, prices increased by 1,7% (R57,85). The upward trend in August suggests that prices are again on the rise. This is very worrying as increases are happening off a high base. We had not expected an upward movement so soon, nor had we expected the increase to be as sharp as it is. We do not know why prices have increased in August: many of the disruptions that had caused food prices to spike from March are no longer at play and South African agricultural output is strong.

Between July 2020 and August 2020, the **cost of the Household Food Basket** increased by 1,7% (R57,85). Over the past five months of lockdown, the cost of the basket increased by 7,8% (R249,99); and year-on-year the cost has increased by 13,2% (R403,46). The total cost of the basket in August is **R3 470,99**.

The picture coming out of the Pietermaritzburg data is not good. The foods which have started spiking again, are the core staple foods in the household trolley. Core staple foods are prioritised first in the household food purse. Price escalations on the core foods determine whether families are able to keep hunger at bay and enable meals to be cooked. Price increases on core foods also act to reduce the spend on dietary diversity essential for families to secure proper health. There is not a lot women can do in the face of rising prices on core staple foods. It is not really possible to reduce the volumes, or substitute them with other foods, or drop them out of the trolley.

Between July 2020 and August 2020, the **cost of these core foods** increased by 2,3% (R31,75). Over the past five months of lockdown, the cost of these core foods increased by 8% (R106,06); and year-on-year the cost has increased by 15,6% (R193,84). **The cost of the core foods is at the highest level we have ever seen.**

Government's intervention to top-up the social grants was necessary. The top-ups have helped, but they have not been enough. The top-ups whilst absorbing some of the food price escalations have not been sufficient to protect families from the negative impact of the lockdown or Covid-19. The situation would not have changed enough by October 2020 for the top-ups to be withdrawn. If we withdraw the top-ups too soon, millions of households will be in a worse position than they were pre-Covid; and be plunged into a depth of poverty that this country has not yet seen. It will then become extremely difficult to support a recovery in the economy and society.

Whilst South Africa seems to mostly be coming around to the realisation that Covid is not just something that has a short-term time period of economic consequences. Most of us are not yet aware of the depth of the consequences (**households are not absorbing the shock of Covid and the lockdown** – Covid has broken people; it has broken things), nor that even the extended period of consequences will be much longer than is currently supposed; nor of the magnitude of the changes and socio-economic and socio-political disruptions ahead of us. We are not just going to get out of Covid. This is real and we best wake up to where we are.

We must start understanding this and put instruments in place to properly support families to rebuild their lives, and in a different way to what was before. We suggest that the top-ups be made permanent and increased to enable a more substantial framework of support to families until we are able to see an improvement in employment and/or the ability of people to create a livelihood and when prices come down and stabilise off a lower base. Other instruments also need to urgently come on stream: The Basic Income Grant should be rolled out to enable families a chance to create a livelihood and mothers a chance to feed their families. The National Minimum Wage level will also have to be revised upwards.

[See summarised data on pages 2-7, footnotes on page 7, and comprehensive price data on pages 8-10].

1. The cost of the PMBEJD Household Food Basket.

The cost of the Household Food Basket increased sharply between March and April and continued its upward trend albeit at a slower rate until June. July saw a drop in the cost of the basket. It appeared, on the trends in our data, that food prices were stabilising but August is again showing an increase. See Figure 1.

Month-on-month, the price of the basket **increased** by **R57,85 (1,7%)**, from R3 413,14 in July 2020 to R3 470,99 in August 2020.

Year-on-year, the price of the basket **increased** by **R403,46 (13,2%)**, from R3 067,52 in August 2019 to R3 470,99 in August 2020.

Over the past five months, covering the period pre-lockdown (2 March) to 3 August 2020, the price of the PMBEJD Household Food Basket **increased** by **R249,99 (7,8%)**, taking the total cost of the basket in August 2020 to **R3 470,99** (from R3 221,00 in March 2020).

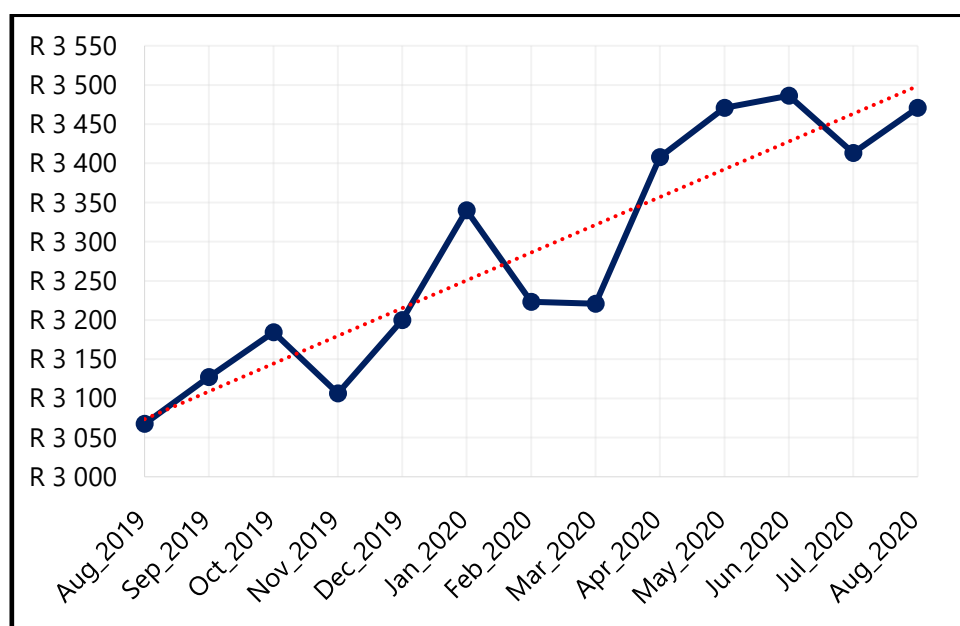


Figure 1: Year-on-year cost of the PMBEJD Household Food Basket, August 2019 to August 2020.

The highest spikes between months happened between March and April (5,8% or R187,08), April and May showed lower increases (1,8% or R62,84), May and June, saw a 0,4% or R15,31 increase, and June and July showed a decrease in prices of -2,1% (-R73,09). Now, however between July and August, prices increased by 1,7% (R57,85). *The sharp upward trend in August suggests that prices are again on the rise. This is very worrying as increases are happening off a high base. We had not expected an upward movement so soon, nor had we expected the increase to be as sharp as it is. See Table 1.*

Table 1: Summary cost of PMBEJD Household Food Basket over the past month, five months of lockdown, and year-on-year.

Month	Aug_2019	Mar_2020	April_2020	May_2020	Jun_2020	Jul_2020	Aug_2020	Mar 2020 vs. Aug 2020	%	Aug 2019 vs. Aug 2020	%
Total Household Food Basket	R3 067,52	R3 221,00	R3 408,08	R3 470,92	R3 486,23	R3 413,14	R3 470,99	R249,99	7,8%	R403,46	13,2%

We are particularly worried about the increase in prices of the core staple foods in the household trolley. Core staple foods are prioritised first out of the household purse. These foods ensure that families do not go hungry and that meals can be cooked. These foods include the core starches (maize meal, rice, cake flour, samp and potatoes), foods which allow meals to be prepared and palatable (cooking oil, salt, onions, curry powder, stock cubes and soup), and the key proteins of sugar beans and frozen chicken, additional foods in this category include sugar and tea.

Month-on-month many of these core foods have again shown increases. Between July 2020 and August 2020, the cost of these core foods increased by 2,3%. Over the past five months of lockdown, the cost of these core

foods increased by 8%; and year-on-year the cost has increased by 15,6%. *The cost of the core foods is at the highest level we have ever seen. See Figure 2 and Table 2*

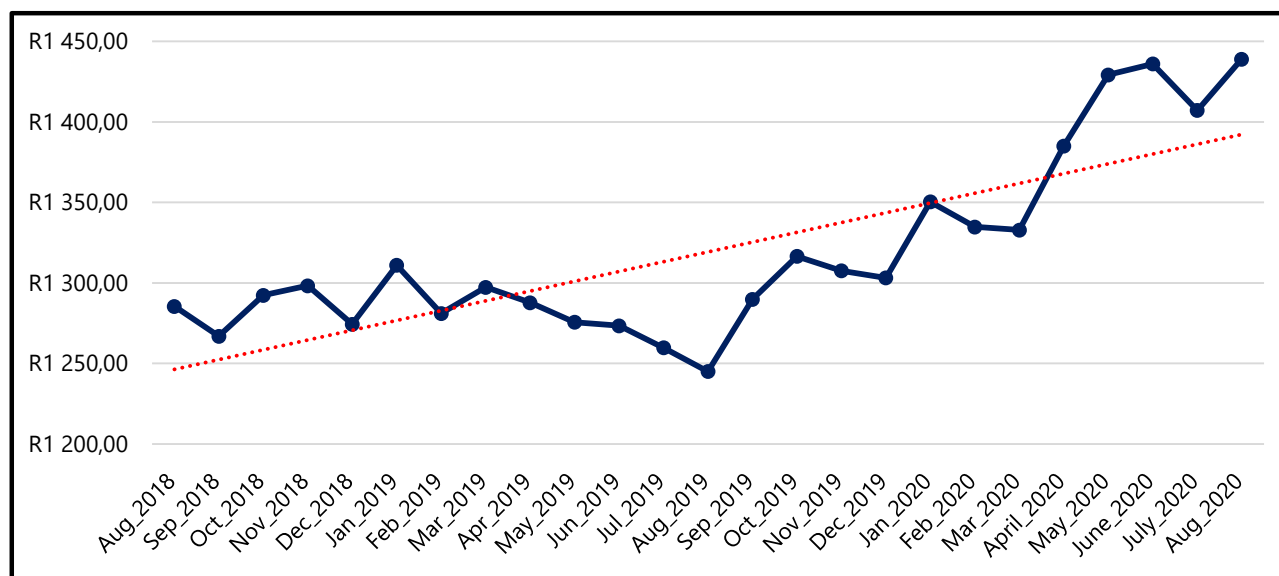


Figure 2: Cost of the **core foods** in the PMBEJD Household Food Basket, August 2018 to August 2020.

Table 2: Summary cost of **core foods** in the PMBEJD Household Food Basket over the past month, five months of lockdown, and year-on-year.

Month	Aug_2019	Mar_2020	April_2020	May_2020	Jun_2020	Jul_2020	Aug_2020	Mar 2020 vs. Aug 2020	%	Aug 2019 vs. Aug 2020	%
Cost of core foods	R1 245,09	R1 332,87	R1 384,98	R1 429,24	R1 435,96	R1 407,18	R1 438,93	R106,06	8,0%	R193,84	15,6%

The picture coming out of the Pietermaritzburg data is not good. Core staple foods are prioritised first in the food budget. Price escalations on the core foods determine whether families are able to keep hunger at bay but these also reduce the amount of money needed to secure nutritionally-rich foods essential for health and nutrition (and a strong immune system, women’s health and child development) viz. protein and calcium, vitamins, minerals and fibre. *See Table 3.*

Table 3: Sample of inflation on some of the core foods in household food basket over the past month, five months of lockdown, and year-on-year.

Major staples	July vs. August 2020	March vs. August 2020	August 2019 vs. August 2020	Cost of foods in August 2019	Cost of food in August 2020
Maize meal	3%	7%	24%	R212,66 /35kg	R263,86 /35kg
Rice	0%	28%	37%	R81,39 /10kg	R111,59 /10kg
Cake Flour	7%	18%	25%	R69,99 /10kg	R87,19 /10kg
White sugar	2%	4%	10%	R137,59 /10kg	R150,79 /10kg
Sugar beans	9%	27%	25%	R86,19 /5kg	R107,39 /5kg
Cooking oil	2%	13%	23%	R83,99 /5L	R102,99 /5L
Potatoes	39%	33%	38%	R46,59 /10kg	R64,41 /10kg
Onions	-1%	11%	16%	R52,99 /10kg	R61,59 /10kg

Conversations with women in April and May 2020 revealed that with children and workers at home, food runs out faster, and so women (who were able too) were buying higher volumes of the core staple foods of maize meal, rice, flour, cooking oil, potatoes and cabbage; at an extra spend of around R500 a month.ⁱ Women told us that the money to cover this extra cost mostly came from a loan shark. *Today, three months on,* most children and some workers are still at home (waiting for regulations to relax so they can return to work or who have lost their jobs or have received a pay cut, or who now work fewer days). We don’t know how many families are still able to source extra money to buy more food; neither do we know how many women have been able to outrun the loan shark’s debt repayments whilst also finding new ways to source more credit. The

upward shift again of increasing prices on core staple foods, for families with less money in their pockets and with children and workers at home, is a triple whammy – **there have to be implications for increased levels of hunger and deteriorations in health and nutrition; for deepening debt levels; and social instability.**

There is not a lot women can do in the face of rising prices on core staple foods. It is not really possible to reduce the volumes, or substitute them with other foods, or drop them out your trolley. As a woman in Gugulethu explained, *“You can sit and stare at that 10kg flour on the shelf, you can leave it there and keep coming back to it three or four times whilst you round the supermarket with your trolley; you can even leave that shop and go to another one, and another one after that to see if you can’t find it at a cheaper price. You can carry on staring at the flour on the shelf in that next supermarket but you know you have to buy it. You stand there staring, knowing all the meals you can make with that flour, knowing how many people that flour will feed and for how long, knowing also that buying less will mean hungry children and buying a cheaper brand might not rise properly. You pick up that 10kg that you eventually choose and you weigh it in your hands. You weigh it in your heart. You hold it close to your chest. You end up buying it because you have children at home. You have to buy it.”*

Women have told us for several years how they go about choosing foods on the supermarket shelves. A myriad of factors is considered when choosing the food that gets put into the trolley. Moving to cheaper brands of foods when prices on the favoured brand has increased is also not simple. Choosing cheaper brands carries varying risks depending on what the food is. Core staple foods carry the highest risk because (1) the money outlay on these foods is proportionally very high. If the cheap brand turns out to be rubbish then there is no more money to replace it. (2) these foods form the basis of most meals – and if the taste is too different then children will complain incessantly and mothers will feel shame; (3) cheaper staples often take a lot longer to cook – this eats the available electricity and really irritates women as it steals their time and money, whilst aggravating hungry children. *(It really is time to disabuse ourselves that electricity is just for light. All South African staple food must be cooked);* (4) some core staple foods such as maize meal are fortified, women know this, and worry that the cheaper brand of maize meal is cheap for a reason, and that their children’s already compromised nutrition may be compromised further.

- ✓ Sugar is sugar is sugar? No, it is not: cheaper brands are not as sweet, instead of putting one spoon of sugar in your tea, you now have to put two or three in; and therefore, the sugar does not last as long.
- ✓ Cheaper oils: some of these oils smell and change the taste of food, are greasy, made of unhealthy inputs and go rancid faster.
- ✓ Cheaper flours: some of these flours do not rise properly.
- ✓ Cheaper maize meal: suspect some are not fortified, take longer to cook, are wetter, taste different, change colour (yellow and orange), burn, go off faster, do not cook as much volume and therefore run out faster.
- ✓ Cheaper rice: do not fluff up nicely, take longer to cook, taste different and burn, and don’t last as long.
- ✓ Sugar beans: taste different and take longer to cook.

Shifting to cheaper brands comes with a cost: the foods will not last as long, will not cook properly, will go off faster, will waste money on electricity and time. Women have to change how they cook these foods. When tallying up the negative consequences it is often cheaper just to stick with the known and preferred brand. However, we are seeing greater shifts towards cheaper brands as a survival strategy because women whilst able to work through the obstacles that the cheaper brands bring; are not able to work through the fact that there is too little money available. Women tell us that they will switch back to their preferred brand *“as soon as they get back on their feet.”*

Because the price of the core basic staples is now seen as very expensive, the risk to switch to cheaper brands (which although cheaper are still expensive) is not an easy one to make. In the end, as voiced above, women do not really have much choice – core staple foods must be secured; and even though there are now more shifts to cheaper brands, these brands are still expensive whilst carrying risks which women have to navigate in the kitchen whilst placating their children.

When women go shopping, they first buy the core staple foods and tally up how much is left in the purse. This is stressful because money is dwindling and her shopping list is long and the nice foods which provide some

variation on the dull plate and make bodies happy and healthy and children hug their mothers, mostly the nutritionally-rich foods, then start falling off the list. Some women tell us these choices are so painful they rather let the checkout counter be the shock arbiter. Women in Pietermaritzburg have vividly explained this to us for several years, the explanation goes something like this, *"When you are in front of the cashier, you tell her you have R1 200, 'please tell me when I have reached that point.' You put the most important foods through first. You pray. Then when the cash register starts acceleratingly towards your limit, with the cashier almost ready to stare you down, you start shifting foods anxiously around in your trolley and back and forth on the counter which has turned into a chess board and you a dithering chess player. At this point you are making mad calculations in your head, many of which have nothing to do with math. You steel yourself for the consequences. At some point the shock comes and so does clarity. You choose the most important of the most important foods left on the counter and push them over into the teller's square for scanning. You leave the rest at the counter. I used to feel embarrassed of what other shoppers behind me would think, ashamed even. I don't feel this anymore. You just have to lift your head and turn to look at the next counter and the woman there is doing exactly the same thing as you. You leave there utterly exhausted with your packets and empty purse and you don't look back."*

Shopping is not a pleasant experience. Now with Covid the shopping procedure is much worse as foods are spiking erratically, women have to make quicker decisions and the risk of making the wrong decision carries a greater financial consequence because there is far less money in your pocket and your children are at home so food has to last longer.

Women are telling us they are getting very worried about the cost of foods in supermarkets and their ability to ensure that families are able to be fed. Over the past month, we are sensing that there has been a shift on the ground. Women are struggling and things are getting harder. People are feeling very stressed and unsettled and are wondering when we will be coming out of this situation. The public mood also seems to be changing. People seem to be more conscious of one another and what is happening around them. There is an anger and a frustration around not being in control and being too uncertain about what the future will be like. Our sense is that some type of break or rupture is coming, although we are not yet sure in what form/s it will take.

2. The cost of the PMBEJD Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene products Basket.

The cost of the Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene Basket increased sharply between March and April and then slowly declined through May, June, and July. August however is again showing an increase.

Month-on-month, the price of the basket **increased** by **R16,09 (2,4%)** from R675,05 in July 2020 to R691,13 in August 2020.

Year-on-year, the price of the basket **increased** by **R50,16 (7,8%)**, from R640,97 in August 2019 to R691,13 in August 2020.

Over the past five months, covering the period pre-lockdown (2 March) to 3 August 2020, the price of the basket **increased** by **R31,04 (4,7%)**, taking the total cost of the basket in August 2020 to **R691,13** (from R660,09 in March 2020).

Domestic & personal hygiene products are critical expenses for safe hygiene and overall health and well-being. In March and April women told us that in an attempt to protect their families from contracting Covid-19, women were buying higher volumes of green bar soap, bath soap and *jik*.ⁱⁱ The money to secure domestic & personal hygiene products is sourced from within the food budget. These products compete viciously with the food budget just generally but now with Covid-19, not being able to secure sanitises and disinfectants, is not something that women want to negotiate but they are forced by low incomes to make impossible choices. It comes down to a degree of safety and food on the table – here more nutritionally-rich food will be removed from the trolley to make room for potentially life-saving disinfectants. Public health messages to *"wash your hands with soap and water and keep your surfaces clean,"* good proper advice, has a cost, and this cost for families living on low incomes, comes off the plate.

3. We are underestimating the depth of the consequences of Covid.

South Africa seems mostly to be coming around to the realisation that Covid is not just something that has a short-term time period of economic consequences. What most of us are however not yet aware of is the depth of the consequences, nor that even the extended period of consequences will be much longer than what is currently being imagined. This is because we have yet to fully comprehend what Covid hit. Covid hit a country that has been in a very deep socio-economic, political and governance crisis for several years. But Covid also hit a country which has not acknowledged that marginalisation has exploded over the past several years. At a micro-level, the lives of millions of South Africans have simply disappeared off the radar.

Explained as follows: You haven't worked for years or you lose your job. You drop out of society. You are no longer visible. You have no voice. You aren't seen. Your poverty, your problems are your own and your family's and neighbour's. Your invisibility is not captured, you are not seen in the statistics, you are not accounted for in policy, political decisions don't address you, nobody hears you or listens to you or sees you. You are not there, you don't exist.

We simply do not have enough information about the lives, and struggles, and loves, and thoughts and dreams of millions of people, who over the past several years have been forced into the margins of society. *How do women put food on the table? How resilient are women to shocks?* We are not conscious of the consequences of Covid and the lockdown on most of our people because we never knew our people even before Covid. In our conversations with women over the past several years in Pietermaritzburg, and expanded into other areas since April,ⁱⁱⁱ we know that before Covid, families were barely holding it together.

We are not dealing with *just* another shock, albeit an extreme one, which can be withstood, absorbed even, and one with negative consequences which will just simply go away with time. Households have not been able to absorb the shock of Covid and the lockdown. Covid has broken people, it has broken things. In a matter of a few short horrible months, lives have been completely shattered. Women are telling us that *"lives are falling apart."* Jobs have been lost. Livelihoods wrecked. Mothers have no chance to feed their children properly. Financial buffers have dried up. Relationships have cracked, families have broken apart. Homes have been lost. People have died. The dreams and plans and visions of families have been devastated, and people are in such a broken state that they do not know how they are going to get out of this mess, how to put their lives back together, how to move forward.

We are not just going to get out of Covid. This is it. It is real and we best wake up to where we are. The consequences of Covid will be very severe, will be with us for a much longer time period than currently projected, and the changes and the socio-economic and socio-political disruptions that will happen because of Covid (and government's handling of it) will be great.

It is important that we start understanding this, very quickly, and put instruments in place to properly support families to rebuild their lives, and in a different way, so that we are able to move beyond the deadening, desperate lives we lived before.

4. We should be cautious not to withdraw the top-ups on grants too soon.

Our data shows that over the past 5 months, the cost of the Household Food Basket increased by **R249,99** (7,8%), with the total cost being **R3 470,99** in August 2020. The cost of the Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene Basket increased by **R31,04** (4,7%), with the total cost being **R691,13**. We know that most children and some workers are still at home. We know about food running out faster. We know about the need to buy more hygiene products to protect ourselves from contracting Covid-19. We know that most families have no savings. We know that our unemployment rate is horrific. We know that many families have workers who have lost their jobs, or who still have a job but have got a pay cut, or who have to work fewer hours or days. We know that most South African workers who do have a job are paid terribly low wages. We know the financial situation of many families is very bad. We know that the price of food has increased and that families are struggling to put food on the table. We know that many mothers have no chance to feed their children properly.

Government's intervention to top-up the social grants from May 2020 was necessary. The top-ups have partly absorbed high food and domestic & hygiene product price escalations. The top-ups have helped, but they

have not been enough to account for the need to buy more food nor the losses of income. The top-ups have therefore not been sufficient to protect families from the negative impact of the lockdown regulations or Covid.

We do not think that the situation would have changed enough by October 2020 for the top-ups to be withdrawn (as planned based on the information at hand in April). Given that we now have more up-to-date information on Covid-19 and the social and economic impact and consequences of our responses, including the deterioration in our economy and escalations in the price of a basket of food; the top-ups should be extended until we are able to see an improvement in employment and/or the ability of people to create a livelihood and when food prices come down and stabilise off a lower base. **If we withdraw the top-ups too soon millions of households will be in a worse position than they were pre-Covid**, as the R250 or R350 or R500 buffer will no longer be there and yet the expense levels of food, electricity and transport will still be at the high levels seen in lockdown and Covid and the promised jobs will still not be here. **Millions of households will be plunged into a depth of poverty that this country has not yet seen, and it will then become extremely difficult to support a recovery in the economy whilst also having to put society back together again in new ways.**

We would suggest that the top-ups be made permanent and increased to enable a more substantial framework of support to families. Other instruments also need to urgently come on stream: The Basic Income Grant^{iv} should be rolled out to (1) enable unemployed workers a chance to create a livelihood and (2) a chance to feed their families. The National Minimum Wage level will also have to be revised upwards.

ⁱ See PMBEJD (2020). Research Report. *Covid-19: Families living on low incomes may be spending 30% more on food than they did two months ago*. Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group [PMBEJD]. Pietermaritzburg. 26 May 2020. See link: <https://pmbejd.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PMBEJD-Research-Report-26052020.pdf>

ⁱⁱ See PMBEJD (2020). Research Report. *Observations from the supermarket floor*. Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group [PMBEJD]. Pietermaritzburg. 8 April 2020. See link: [https://pmbejd.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Observations-from-the-supermarket-floor Covid-19-lockdown_PMBEJD_08042020.pdf](https://pmbejd.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Observations-from-the-supermarket-floor-Covid-19-lockdown_PMBEJD_08042020.pdf)

ⁱⁱⁱ Since April, PMBEJD started a process of expanding the scope of our conversations with women and collecting food prices and affordability data in Johannesburg (Soweto, Tembisa, Alexandra and Hillbrow), Cape Town (Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Philippi, Delft and Dunoon); and Durban (KwaMashu, Umlazi, Central Durban and Mtubatuba).

^{iv} See PMBEJD (2020). Discussion Paper. *Unemployment and the Basic Income Grant*. Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group [PMBEJD]. Pietermaritzburg. 29 July 2020. See link: https://pmbejd.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/PMBEJD-Discussion-Paper_29072020.pdf

AUGUST 2020 Household Food Index

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2019/20			change in Rands		change in %	
		Aug_2019	Jul_2020	Aug_2020	Jul 2020 vs. Aug 2020	Aug 2019 vs. Aug 2020	Jul 2020 vs. Aug 2020	Aug 2019 vs. Aug 2020
Maize meal	25kg + 10kg	R 212,66	R 254,98	R 263,86	R 8,88	R 51,20	3%	24%
Rice	10kg	R 81,39	R 111,59	R 111,59	R 0,00	R 30,20	0%	37%
Cake Flour	10kg	R 69,99	R 81,59	R 87,19	R 5,60	R 17,20	7%	25%
White sugar	10kg	R 137,59	R 147,99	R 150,79	R 2,80	R 13,20	2%	10%
Sugar beans	5kg	R 86,19	R 98,59	R 107,39	R 8,80	R 21,20	9%	25%
Samp	5kg	R 35,39	R 34,74	R 35,49	R 0,75	R 0,10	2%	0%
Cooking oil	5L	R 83,99	R 100,79	R 102,99	R 2,20	R 19,00	2%	23%
Salt	1kg	R 15,39	R 15,99	R 15,59	-R 0,40	R 0,20	-3%	1%
Potatoes	10kg	R 46,59	R 46,30	R 64,41	R 18,11	R 17,83	39%	38%
Onions	10kg	R 52,99	R 61,99	R 61,59	-R 0,40	R 8,60	-1%	16%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 307,99	R 339,89	R 323,30	-R 16,59	R 15,32	-5%	5%
Curry powder	200g	R 27,59	R 28,19	R 29,59	R 1,40	R 2,00	5%	7%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R 37,18	R 33,98	R 34,78	R 0,80	-R 2,40	2%	-6%
Soup	400g x2	R 26,78	R 28,78	R 28,38	-R 0,40	R 1,60	-1%	6%
Tea	250g	R 23,39	R 21,79	R 21,99	R 0,20	-R 1,40	1%	-6%
Maas	4L	R 40,79	R 41,59	R 42,79	R 1,20	R 2,00	3%	5%
Eggs	60 eggs	R 86,19	R 91,59	R 90,99	-R 0,60	R 4,80	-1%	6%
Chicken feet	5kg	R 172,34	R 203,59	R 201,09	-R 2,50	R 28,75	-1%	17%
Gizzards	2kg	R 67,48	R 64,89	R 60,89	-R 4,00	-R 6,59	-6%	-10%
Beef	2kg	R 140,99	R 153,39	R 148,89	-R 4,50	R 7,90	-3%	6%
Wors	2kg	R 100,19	R 113,39	R 126,89	R 13,50	R 26,70	12%	27%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R 58,48	R 72,49	R 76,39	R 3,90	R 17,91	5%	31%
Tomatoes	6kg	R 46,23	R 54,98	R 59,99	R 5,01	R 13,76	9%	30%
Carrots	5kg	R 17,59	R 21,59	R 19,19	-R 2,40	R 1,60	-11%	9%
Butternut	10kg	R 54,30	R 45,13	R 61,70	R 16,57	R 7,40	37%	14%
Spinach	8 bunches	R 40,00	R 63,92	R 59,94	-R 3,98	R 19,94	-6%	50%
Cabbage	2 heads	R 21,58	R 31,98	R 29,58	-R 2,40	R 8,00	-8%	37%
Cremora	800g	R 32,59	R 32,79	R 33,79	R 1,00	R 1,20	3%	4%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R 91,75	R 104,34	R 104,34	R 0,00	R 12,59	0%	14%
Canned beans	410g x6	R 61,75	R 66,55	R 68,34	R 1,79	R 6,59	3%	11%
Bananas	4kg	R 44,76	R 33,49	R 36,69	R 3,20	-R 8,07	10%	-18%
Apples	1.5kg	R 16,39	R 15,79	R 16,19	R 0,40	-R 0,20	3%	-1%
Margarine	1kg x2	R 67,58	R 75,58	R 71,18	-R 4,40	R 3,60	-6%	5%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R 45,98	R 56,38	R 62,38	R 6,00	R 16,40	11%	36%
Polony	2.5kg	R 64,49	R 60,39	R 54,39	-R 6,00	-R 10,10	-10%	-16%
Apricot jam	900g x2	R 52,78	R 58,38	R 57,18	-R 1,20	R 4,40	-2%	8%
White bread	25 loaves	R 259,80	R 287,40	R 290,40	R 3,00	R 30,60	1%	12%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R 238,40	R 256,35	R 258,85	R 2,50	R 20,45	1%	9%
Total household food basket		R 3 067,52	R3 413,14	R3 470,99	R 57,85	R 403,46	1,7%	13,2%

Month-on-month: The cost of the household food basket *increased* by R57,85 (1,7%) to R3 470,99 in August 2020.

Year-on-year: The cost of the household food basket *increased* by R403,46 (13,2%) from R3 067,52 in August 2019 to R3 470,99 in August 2020.

The household food basket has been designed together with women living on low incomes in Pietermaritzburg. It includes the foods and the volumes of these foods which women living in a household with seven members (the average low-income household size in Pietermaritzburg) tell us they typically try and secure each month. Food prices are sourced from supermarkets (5) and butcheries (4) that target the low-income market and which women identified as those they shop at. Food selection at the supermarket shelves mirrors how women themselves make decisions at the supermarket shelves viz. that the foods are chosen on relative affordability and reasonable quality. The date for data collection is between the 1st and 4th day of each month. There are 38 foods in the household food basket.

The household food index is designed with women living on low incomes to provide a sense of what the food baskets of low-income households cost in Pietermaritzburg and is specifically designed to measure food price inflation as experienced by households living on low incomes. Although located in Pietermaritzburg, the household food index may provide a picture into food price inflation as experienced by households living on low incomes in South Africa.

Household Food Index: March 2020 to August 2020 & year-on-year.

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2019/20			change in Rands		change in %	
		Aug_2019	Mar_2020	Aug_2020	Mar 2020 vs. Aug 2020	Aug 2019 vs. Aug 2020	Mar 2020 vs. Aug 2020	Aug 2019 vs. Aug 2020
Maize meal	25kg + 10kg	R 212,66	R 246,47	R 263,86	R 17,39	R 51,20	7%	24%
Rice	10kg	R 81,39	R 87,19	R 111,59	R 24,40	R 30,20	28%	37%
Cake Flour	10kg	R 69,99	R 73,79	R 87,19	R 13,40	R 17,20	18%	25%
White sugar	10kg	R 137,59	R 145,19	R 150,79	R 5,60	R 13,20	4%	10%
Sugar beans	5kg	R 86,19	R 84,39	R 107,39	R 23,00	R 21,20	27%	25%
Samp	5kg	R 35,39	R 35,79	R 35,49	-R 0,30	R 0,10	-1%	0%
Cooking oil	5L	R 83,99	R 91,19	R 102,99	R 11,80	R 19,00	13%	23%
Salt	1kg	R 15,39	R 15,39	R 15,59	R 0,20	R 0,20	1%	1%
Potatoes	10kg	R 46,59	R 48,45	R 64,41	R 15,96	R 17,83	33%	38%
Onions	10kg	R 52,99	R 55,24	R 61,59	R 6,34	R 8,60	11%	16%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 307,99	R 339,44	R 323,30	-R 16,14	R 15,32	-5%	5%
Curry powder	200g	R 27,59	R 27,59	R 29,59	R 2,00	R 2,00	7%	7%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R 37,18	R 35,58	R 34,78	-R 0,80	-R 2,40	-2%	-6%
Soup	400g x2	R 26,78	R 26,38	R 28,38	R 2,00	R 1,60	8%	6%
Tea	250g	R 23,39	R 20,79	R 21,99	R 1,20	-R 1,40	6%	-6%
Maas	4L	R 40,79	R 39,79	R 42,79	R 3,00	R 2,00	8%	5%
Eggs	60 eggs	R 86,19	R 86,99	R 90,99	R 4,00	R 4,80	5%	6%
Chicken feet	5kg	R 172,34	R 173,59	R 201,09	R 27,50	R 28,75	16%	17%
Gizzards	2kg	R 67,48	R 59,44	R 60,89	R 1,46	-R 6,59	2%	-10%
Beef	2kg	R 140,99	R 151,44	R 148,89	-R 2,55	R 7,90	-2%	6%
Wors	2kg	R 100,19	R 111,94	R 126,89	R 14,96	R 26,70	13%	27%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R 58,48	R 64,94	R 76,39	R 11,46	R 17,91	18%	31%
Tomatoes	6kg	R 46,23	R 59,15	R 59,99	R 0,84	R 13,76	1%	30%
Carrots	5kg	R 17,59	R 23,79	R 19,19	-R 4,60	R 1,60	-19%	9%
Butternut	10kg	R 54,30	R 49,13	R 61,70	R 12,57	R 7,40	26%	14%
Spinach	8 bunches	R 40,00	R 63,92	R 59,94	-R 3,98	R 19,94	-6%	50%
Cabbage	2 heads	R 21,58	R 26,98	R 29,58	R 2,60	R 8,00	10%	37%
Cremora	800g	R 32,59	R 32,19	R 33,79	R 1,60	R 1,20	5%	4%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R 91,75	R 101,56	R 104,34	R 2,78	R 12,59	3%	14%
Canned beans	410g x6	R 61,75	R 65,16	R 68,34	R 3,18	R 6,59	5%	11%
Bananas	4kg	R 44,76	R 47,16	R 36,69	-R 10,47	-R 8,07	-22%	-18%
Apples	1.5kg	R 16,39	R 24,65	R 16,19	-R 8,46	-R 0,20	-34%	-1%
Margarine	1kg x2	R 67,58	R 63,98	R 71,18	R 7,20	R 3,60	11%	5%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R 45,98	R 57,18	R 62,38	R 5,20	R 16,40	9%	36%
Polony	2.5kg	R 64,49	R 60,49	R 54,39	-R 6,10	-R 10,10	-10%	-16%
Apricot jam	900g x2	R 52,78	R 51,98	R 57,18	R 5,20	R 4,40	10%	8%
White bread	25 loaves	R 259,80	R 248,35	R 290,40	R 42,05	R 30,60	17%	12%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R 238,40	R 224,35	R 258,85	R 34,50	R 20,45	15%	9%
Total household food basket		R 3 067,52	R3 221,00	R3 470,99	R 249,99	R 403,46	7,8%	13,2%

From March 2020 to August 2020: The cost of the household food basket *increased* by R249,99 (7,8%) from R3221,00 in March 2020 to R3 470,99 in August 2020.

Year-on-year: The cost of the household food basket *increased* by R403,46 (13,2%) from R3 067,52 in August 2019 to R3 470,99 in August 2020.

The household food basket has been designed together with women living on low incomes in Pietermaritzburg. It includes the foods and the volumes of these foods which women living in a household with seven members (the average low-income household size in Pietermaritzburg) tell us they typically try and secure each month. Food prices are sourced from supermarkets (5) and butcheries (4) that target the low-income market and which women identified as those they shop at. Food selection at the supermarket shelves mirrors how women themselves make decisions at the supermarket shelves viz. that the foods are chosen on relative affordability and reasonable quality. The date for data collection is between the 1st and 4th day of each month. There are 38 foods in the household food basket.

The household food index is designed with women living on low incomes to provide a sense of what the food baskets of low-income households cost in Pietermaritzburg and is specifically designed to measure food price inflation as experienced by households living on low incomes. Although located in Pietermaritzburg, the household food index may provide a picture into food price inflation as experienced by households living on low incomes in South Africa.

Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene Index: March 2020 to August 2020 & year-on-year.

Products tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2019/20			change in Rands		change in %	
		Aug_2019	Mar_2020	Aug_2020	Mar 2020 vs. Aug 2020	Aug 2019 vs. Aug 2020	Mar 2020 vs. Aug 2020	Aug 2019 vs. Aug 2020
Green bar soap	8 bars	R 49,98	R 50,38	R 55,98	R 5,60	R 6,00	11%	12%
Washing powder	3kg	R 59,99	R 57,79	R 60,79	R 3,00	R 0,80	5%	1%
Dishwashing liquid	750ml	R 25,59	R 26,19	R 26,19	R 0,00	R 0,60	0%	2%
Handy Andy	750ml	R 22,39	R 23,19	R 22,39	-R 0,80	R 0,00	-3%	0%
Jik	750ml	R 21,79	R 23,39	R 22,59	-R 0,80	R 0,80	-3%	4%
Jeyes Fluid	500ml	R 36,19	R 36,19	R 35,99	-R 0,20	-R 0,20	-1%	-1%
Toilet paper	24 rolls	R 86,39	R 86,79	R 98,79	R 12,00	R 12,40	14%	14%
Bath soap	500g x 2	R 24,39	R 26,38	R 26,38	R 0,00	R 1,99	0%	8%
Toothpaste	100ml x3	R 37,57	R 43,77	R 42,57	-R 1,20	R 5,00	-3%	13%
Vaseline	500g	R 25,99	R 26,74	R 28,99	R 2,25	R 3,00	8%	12%
Cream	big bottle x2	R 35,18	R 34,38	R 33,98	-R 0,40	-R 1,20	-1%	-3%
Roll-on deodorant	x4	R 57,18	R 60,76	R 67,96	R 7,20	R 10,78	12%	19%
Spray-on deodorant	big spray x 3	R 68,78	R 73,77	R 73,17	-R 0,60	R 4,39	-1%	6%
Sanitary pads*	2 big packs	R 64,38	R 66,78	R 69,57	R 2,79	R 5,20	4%	8%
Shoe Polish	100ml	R 25,19	R 23,59	R 25,79	R 2,20	R 0,60	9%	2%
Total household domestic and hygiene products		R 640,97	R 660,09	R 691,13	R 31,04	R 50,16	4,7%	7,8%

From March 2020 to August 2020: The cost of the household domestic and personal hygiene products basket **increased** by R31,04 (4,7%) from R660,09 in March 2020 to R691,13 in August 2020.

Year-on-year: The cost of the household domestic and personal hygiene products basket **increased** by R50,16 (7,8%) from R640,97 in August 2019 to R691,13 in August 2020.

Domestic and personal hygiene products are critical expenses for safe hygiene and overall health and well being. The money needed to secure domestic and personal hygiene products are sourced from within the food budget. These products compete with the food budget.