

PRICE MONITORING REPORT

A. Introduction

Over the recent years, Mauritius has been experiencing rising prices of essential products. Those of food and non-alcoholic beverages have increased by more than 47% from January 2021 to February 2026¹. A typical household who spent on average around Rs 9,072 on food items in January 2021 required about Rs 13,355 in February 2026, corresponding to an extra Rs 4,283 per month².

In view of the above, the Competition Commission has embarked on a price monitoring exercise to understand the underlying factors driving up prices of food items. The exercise is intended to provide a basis for conducting in-depth assessment, including profitability analysis if warranted to inform potential enforcement actions under the Competition Act 2007.

In this regard, 11 products have been selected whose prices have increased significantly. These products represent a total weight of 25% in the food basket items of households. Of the selected products, 6 are subject to price controls (marked by '*' in Table 1) in the form of maximum-up ranging between 19% - 28% with a special allowance of 1% - 6%. Also, pilchards, cooking oil and powdered milk benefit from government subsidy as from August 2025.

Table 1: Price increases of selected food items

Commodity	Unit	Jan-21	Feb-26	Jan 21 - Feb 26
Corned Beef *	340 g	90.65	168.58	86%
Frozen chicken	kg	154.1	249.50	62%
Sardines in vegetables oil*	125 g	24.87	38.82	56%
Fresh Chicken	kg	142.15	215.15	51%
Frozen Mutton	kg	395.34	595.11	51%
Tea	125 g	50.82	73.98	46%
Frozen beef	kg	313.24	453.24	45%
Pilchards in tomato sauce *	425 g	86.73	119.90	38%
Cooking oil*	L	51.83	69.40	34%
Margarine*	500 g	83.7	111.42	33%
Powdered milk*	kg	204.61	241.21	18%

¹ T.3, [Historical series, Consumer Price Index](#), Statistics Mauritius

² Estimated using figures from historical series, CPI and household budget survey 2023 - T. 5.1 P. 24), Statistics Mauritius

B. Analysis of prices of selected products

For the price analysis, the common cost drivers for the imported products would potentially be costs at source, freights, and exchange rate. Energy costs in terms of fuel & electricity, and labour influence both the distribution of imported goods and to a larger extent production of goods locally.

In this regard, the trade weighted basket of major trading partners currencies (MERI1) indicates a depreciation of Mauritian rupee by 16% over the period January 2021 to February 2026. For that period, our rupee has depreciated against USD and Euro by 17% and 14%, respectively.

Although the Containerized Freight Index³ (an international benchmark) shows a fall of about 34% in freights for the period under consideration, the actual import freights data shows otherwise. Hence, our analysis will be on actual freights incurred rather than international benchmark.

Similarly, the common local cost components have increased by 64% for fuel and 80% for industrial use electricity. Labour costs increased by 42%, as per the local Wage Rate Index.

Against this backdrop, we conducted the analysis of the price increases for the selected products.

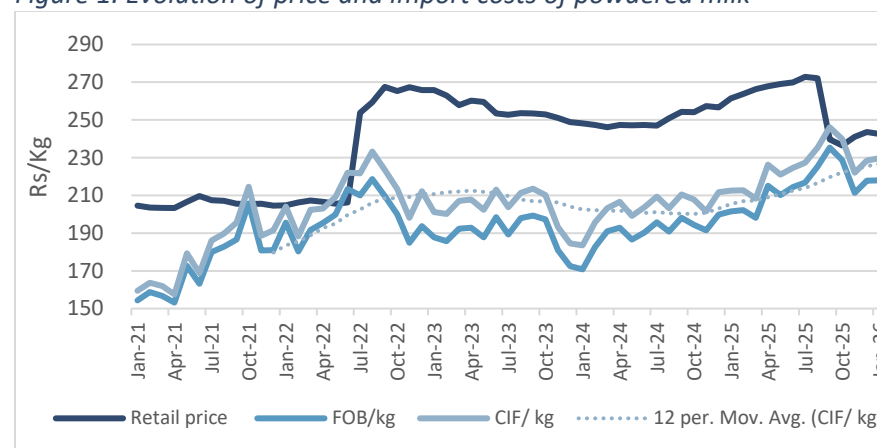
Powdered Milk

The price of powdered milk has registered an increase of 18% from Rs 204.61 in January 2021 to Rs 242.21 in February 2026. When factoring the

subsidy of Rs 50 per kg, the price would have been Rs 292.2 per kg, indicating an increase of 42%⁴.

Figure 1 illustrates the evolution of the retail price of powdered milk against the import costs for the period under review.

Figure 1: Evolution of price and import costs of powdered milk



Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

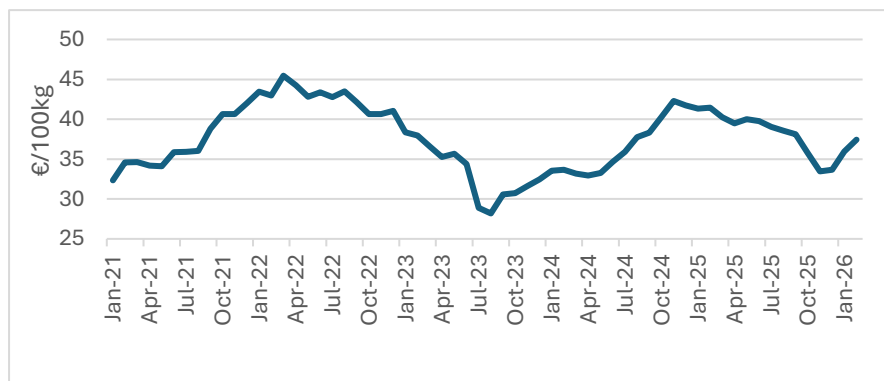
Import costs of powdered milk increased from Rs 159 to Rs 229 per kg or by 44%. This increase was attributable to the extent of 21% points on account of exchange rate depreciation, 20% points due to higher cost at source and 3% points in terms of freights and insurance.

³ [Containerized Freight Index, Trading Economics](#)

⁴ [Price Analysis and Monitoring Division \(PAMD\)](#), Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

To ascertain whether milk costs increased at the source, we analysed farmgate milk prices in New Zealand, our major source of importation, for the period under review, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: New Zealand Farm-gate raw milk price €/100kg



Source: CLAL, Farm-gate milk prices, New Zealand.

It is observed that raw milk price at gate in New Zealand is volatile with an increase of around 16% over the whole period January 2021 to February 2026. The increase thus explains the higher import costs at source.

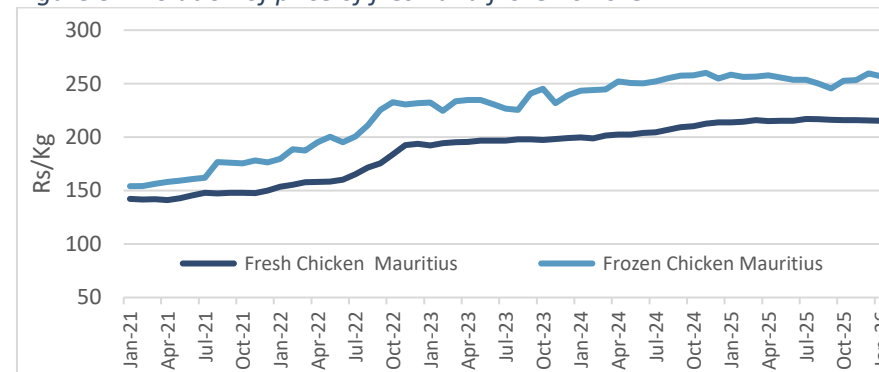
It is, however, highlighted that the average price-import cost margin has increased from around Rs 45 per kg in January 2021 to Rs 63 per kg in February 2026, i.e., by Rs 18 per kg. While the increase can potentially be attributed to higher local cost elements, further assessment is warranted to ascertain the real causes of such increase.

Fresh and frozen chicken

Chicken is the most consumed meat in Mauritius. Like in many other countries, the local poultry market is highly concentrated.

Figure 3 shows the evolution of the average retail prices of fresh and frozen chicken.

Figure 3: Evolution of price of fresh and frozen chicken



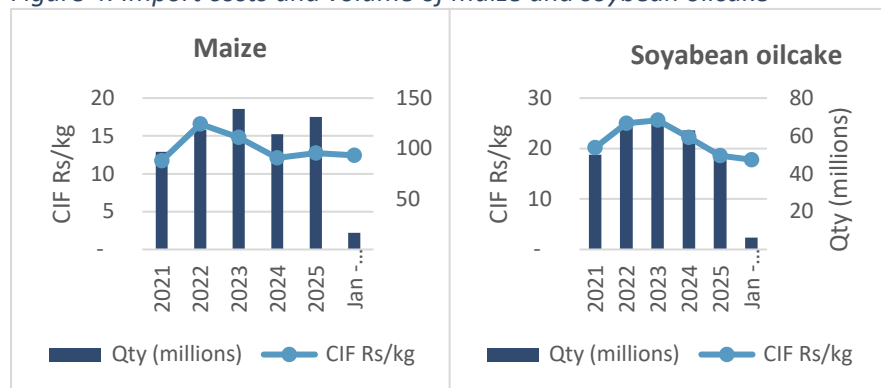
Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

It can be observed that the per kilogram price of fresh and frozen chicken have increased from Rs 142.15 and Rs 154.10 in January 2021 to Rs 215.15 and Rs 249.50 in February 2026, respectively. These represent increases of 51% and 62%, respectively.

The main cost component in chicken production is feeds, which can constitute up to 70% of the total costs of production. Key inputs such as maize and soya oilcake, used for feed production, are imported.

Figure 4 illustrates the volume and cost of imports for maize and soyabean oilcake for the period January 2021 to February 2026.

Figure 4: Import costs and volume of maize and soybean oilcake



Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

It is observed that the import costs of maize increased from Rs 12/kg in 2021 to Rs 17/kg in 2022 but subsequently fell back to its January 2021 level. Similarly, soybean oilcake increased between 2021 and 2023 but then fell to 18/kg in February 2026. We have also noted similar trend for imported day-old grandparent chicks. These developments should have exercised a downward pressure on prices of chicken.

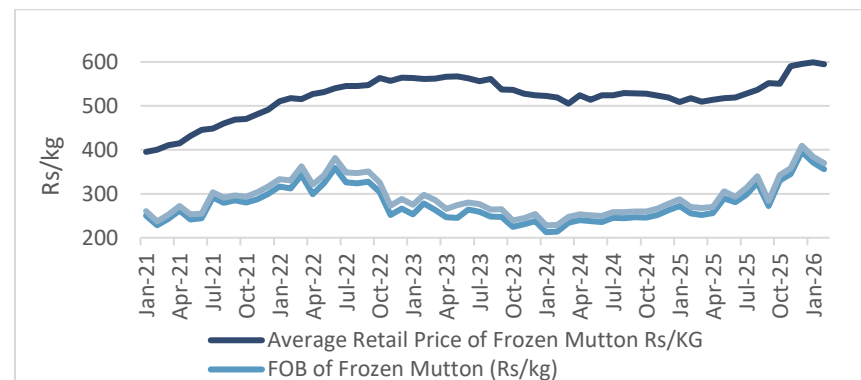
While the increasing price of chicken can to some extent be attributed to rising labour and energy costs, further assessment is warranted to understand the price dynamics in the local poultry industry, which is highly concentrated with barriers to entry.

Frozen Mutton

Mauritius imports frozen mutton mainly from Australia, which represented a share of 73% of its total imports in 2025.

Figure 5 illustrates the evolution in the average price of frozen mutton and the costs of importation, both in term of FOB and CIF.

Figure 5: Evolution of price and import costs of frozen mutton

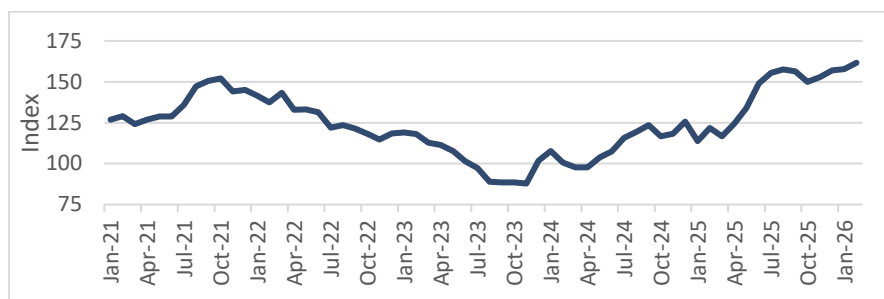


Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

We observe that the price has increased from about Rs 395/kg in January 2021 to Rs 595/kg in February 2026, representing a rise of 51%. For that period, the import costs of frozen mutton per kg, inclusive of freights and insurance (i.e. CIF/kg) increased from Rs 260 to Rs 369 or by 42%. This increase is on account of exchange rate (20%), costs at source, as reflected in FOB (21%) and freights (1%).

To ascertain the increase in the cost of frozen mutton, we have analysed movements in the FAO Ovine Meat Price Index for January 2021 to February 2026.

Figure 6: FAO Ovine Meat Price Index



Source: FAO Food Price Index

An upward trend in the FAO Ovine Meat Price Index is observed from 126.8 in January 2021 to 161.6 in February 2026, representing an increase of approximately 27%. This somehow mirrors higher cost of importation of frozen mutton into Mauritius.

Analysis of the trend of price and import costs indicates ‘rockets and features’ effect in so far lower costs of importation is not translated into lower prices but higher import costs lead to higher prices. We note that for period June 2022 to January 2024, import costs per kg fell by Rs 153 from Rs 381 to Rs 228. The decrease in price was a meagre Rs 22 per kg during that period.

Another issue identified is the price-import margin which over the period increased from Rs 135/kg in January 2021 to Rs 226/kg with highest value of Rs 302/kg in April 2023. In comparison, price-import cost margin for frozen beef decreased from Rs 146/kg in January 2021 to Rs 108/kg in February 2026.

⁵ Data from Statistics Mauritius.

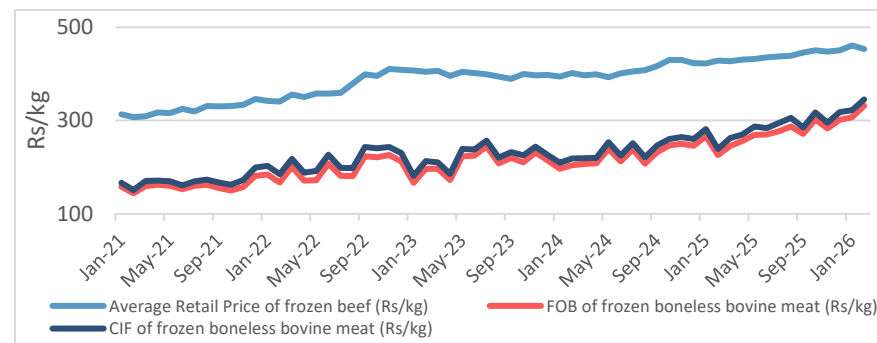
In view of the above, further analysis is warranted on the cost structure and profit margins for supply of imported frozen mutton in Mauritius.

Frozen beef

Frozen beef meat is mostly imported from India, accounting for 62% of total imports in 2025⁵, Australia (16%), South Africa (10%), and Brazil (7%).

Figure 7 illustrates trend in average price and import costs of the product.

Figure 7: Evolution of price and import costs of frozen beef



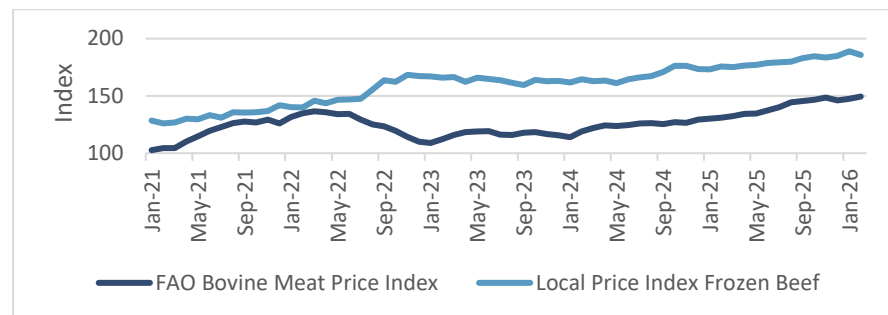
Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

The average retail price of frozen beef has increased from Rs 313/kg in January 2021 to Rs 453/kg in February 2026, representing a 45% rise. For the same period, the import costs in terms of CIF more than double from Rs 167 to Rs 345 per kg or by approximately 107%.

An analysis of the increase in the cost of importation indicates that depreciation of the Mauritian rupee accounted for 30%, costs at source increased by 75%, and freights 2%.

To ascertain the increase in the price of frozen beef, we analyse movements in the FAO Bovine Meat Price Index.

Figure 8: FAO vs Local Price Index



Source: FAO Food Price Index

From Figure 8, it can be observed that the increase in import costs was consistent with developments in international markets. Notwithstanding the difference in the base year, the increase in the FAO Bovine Meat Price Index was around 46% compared to increase of 75% in the FOB price, accounted for exchange rate depreciation.

Like frozen mutton, the ‘rockets and features’ effect is also noted for frozen beef where local retail price does not follow decrease in imports costs. The price-import cost margin, though decreased to Rs 108 per kg in February 2026 and relatively lower than for frozen mutton, remains significant.

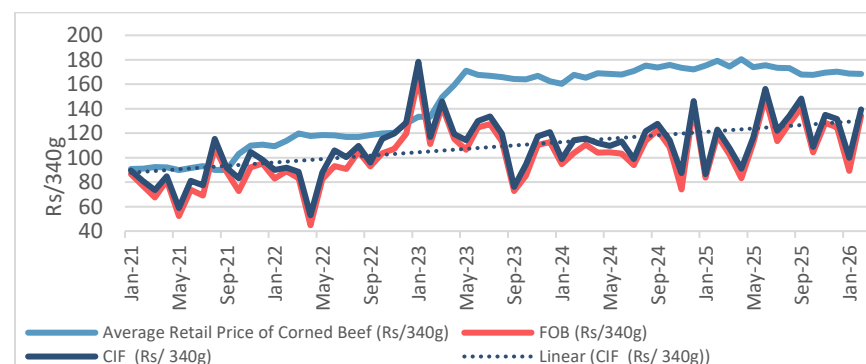
As such, further analysis into the pricing and profitability on imported frozen beef is also warranted.

Corned Beef

Corned beef is imported and is currently subject to maximum mark-up of 19% with a 1% special allowance. The price of corned beef is thus mainly influenced by import costs.

Figure 9 illustrates the evolution of the price and costs of corned beef over the period January 2021 to February 2026.

Figure 9: Evolution of price and import costs of corned beef



Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

The price of 340g can corned beef increased from around Rs 91 in January 2021 to Rs 168.60 in February 2026 or by 86%. For that period, the cost of imports increased from Rs 89 to Rs 139 for 340g can, representing an increase of around 56%. This increase in the percentage points can be decomposed in terms of impact of depreciation of exchange rate (23%); increase in the cost at source as measured by FOB (32%) and freights (2%).

The price-cost margin is highly volatile and does not seem to be providing enough information to fully understand the price increase. Nonetheless, the product is subject to lowest maximum mark-up of 19% (plus 1% special

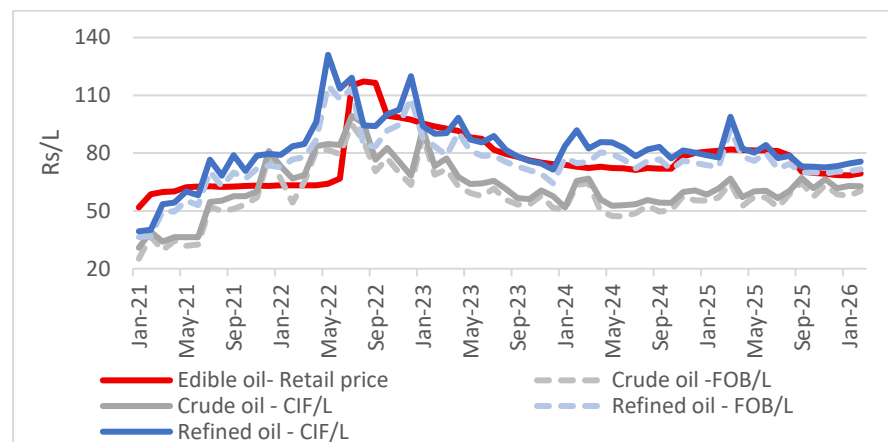
allowance) and the price-import costs margin reflects the quantum set by the government.

Edible oils

Mauritius imports both crude and refined cooking oil to meet local demands. The price of cooking oil is subject to a maximum mark-up of 22% (plus 2% special allowance) and a subsidy of Rs 15 per litre, as from August 2025.

Figure 10 presents the retail price of cooking oil alongside the import costs of refined and crude oil from January 2021 to April 2026.

Figure 10: Evolution of price and import cost of edible oil (Rs/L)



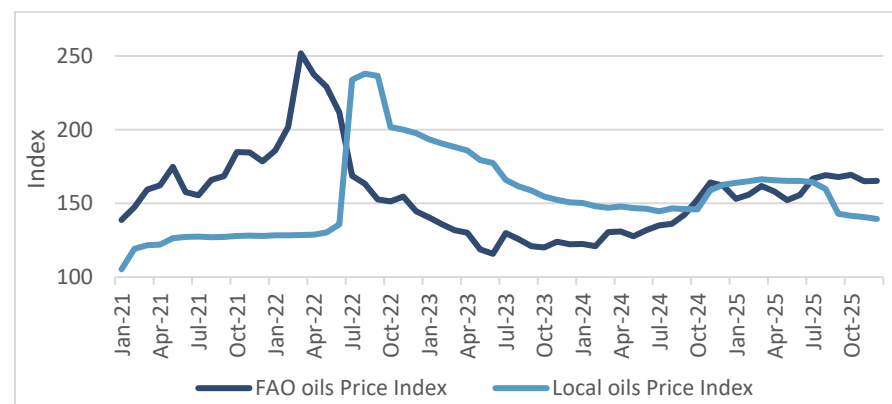
Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

Over the observed period, the retail price of cooking oil increased from Rs 52 per litre to Rs 76 per litre or by 34%. Without the government subsidy, the increase would have around 63%.

During the same period, the increase in import costs for both crude and refined cooking oil was around 100%. This increase is attributed to around 31% for exchange rate depreciation, 68% in costs at source and 1% freights.

A comparison of the local cooking oil prices and international prices was made to assess price movement in the local and global context, as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: FAO vs Local Oil Price Index



Source: FAO Food Price Index

Overall, it is concluded that the significant increase in import costs and the retail price of cooking oil in Mauritius is consistent with the international context.

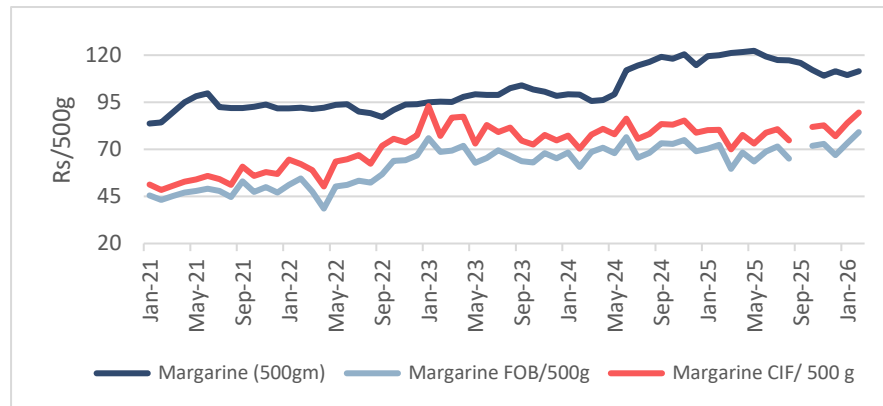
Margarine

Margarine is both imported and produced locally. This exercise focuses on import costs as publicly available data on local cost of production is limited. It is to be highlighted that imported margarine is subject to a maximum

mark-up of 28% with a special allowance of 6%, effective as from August 2025.

The evolution of the retail price and import costs of margarine are presented in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Evolution of price and import costs of margarine



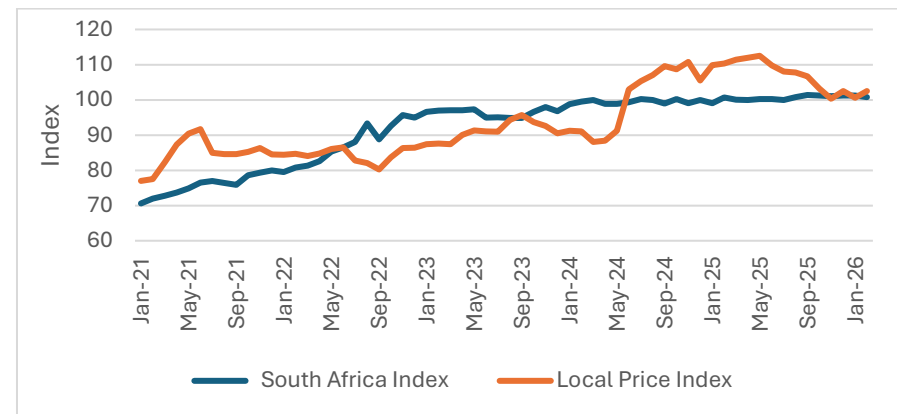
Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

Between January 2021 and February 2026, the retail price of 500g margarine increased from Rs 84 to Rs 111 or by 33%. During that period, the cost of imports (CIF for 500g) rose from Rs 51.34 to Rs 89.56, representing an increasing of 74%.

It is estimated that this increase in import cost was due exchange rate (25%), cost at source (43%) and freights (6%).

To ascertain the increase in the cost of imports, a comparison of the local price movements to that in South Africa, a major source of our importation, was undertaken.

Figure 13: Local vs South Africa price



Source: Data from Statistics South Africa

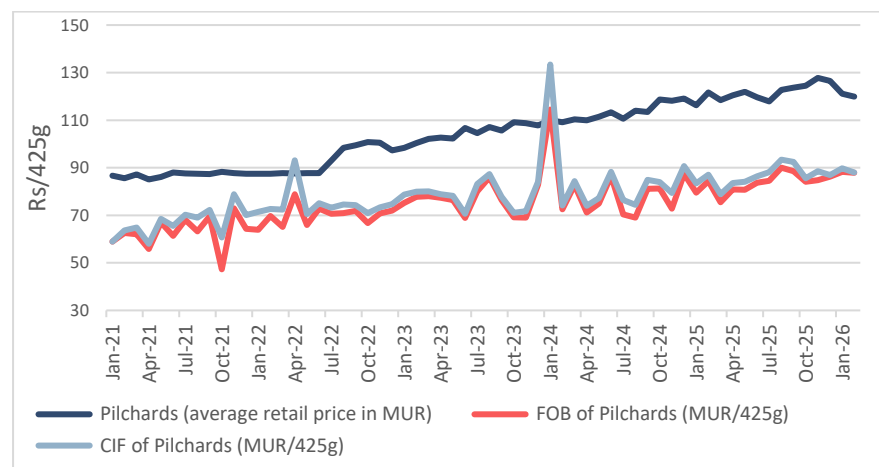
In general, it is observed both price indices for Mauritius and South Africa follows an upward trend with similar quantum of price change over the period January 2021 to February 2026. Hence, there does not appear to be any significant pricing issue that would warrant further assessment regarding margarine.

Pilchards in tomato sauce

Pilchards in tomato sauce is subject to the maximum mark-up 20% (plus a special allowance of 2%. As from August 2025, government provides a subsidy of Rs 10 per can 425g of pilchards.

The evolution of price and import costs of pilchards in tomato sauce is illustrated in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Evolution of price and import costs of pilchards



Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

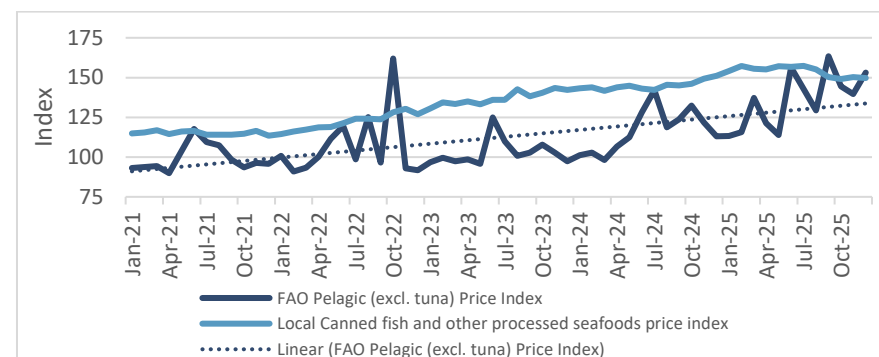
The average price of pilchards rose by about 38% from around Rs 87 in January 2021 to Rs 120 in February 2026. Without the subsidy, the retail price would have been Rs 130, corresponding to an increase of 50%⁶.

The import costs (CIF) mirror the price increase of around 50% from Rs 59/425g to Rs 89/425g⁷. This increase is attributable to about 28 % due to higher cost at source and 22% for exchange rate depreciation.

We use the FAO Pelagic Index, as the international benchmark, to ascertain the increase cost of importation. The trend in the FAO index is shown Figure 15.

⁶ [Price Analysis and Monitoring Division \(PAMD\)](#), Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

Figure 15: FAO Pelagic Price Index vs local price index



Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius and FAO Index

We observed an increase of around 60% in the FAO Pelagic Price Index indicating that the increase in the import costs of pilchards in Mauritius is consistent with the international benchmark.

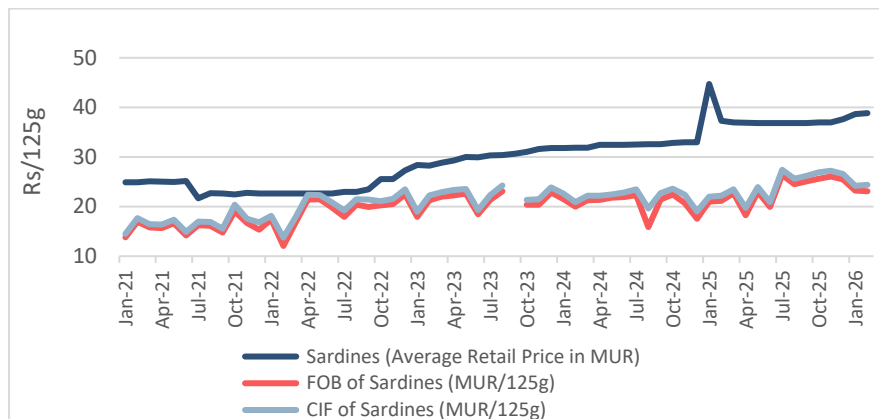
Sardines in vegetable oil

Like pilchards, sardines in vegetable oil is subject to the maximum mark-up 20% (plus a special allowance of 2%). In fact, both pilchards and sardines fall under small pelagic fish category.

The evolution of average price, FOB and CIF of canned sardines are illustrated in Figure 16.

⁷ In the absence of product-specific import cost data for pilchards in tomato sauce, data for other prepared or preserved fish, whole or in pieces but not minced, have been used as a proxy for import costs.

Figure 156: Evolution of price and import cost of sardines



Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

The average retail price of sardines in vegetable oil stood at about Rs 39 in February 2026, compared to around Rs 25 in January 2021, showing an increase of 56%.

Over the same period, the average cost of imports (CIF) for sardines per 125 g moved from Rs 14 to Rs 24, indicating a rise of around 68%. This increase reflects a combination of higher costs at source of around 33%, freights of 3% and increases due to exchange rate movements of 32%.

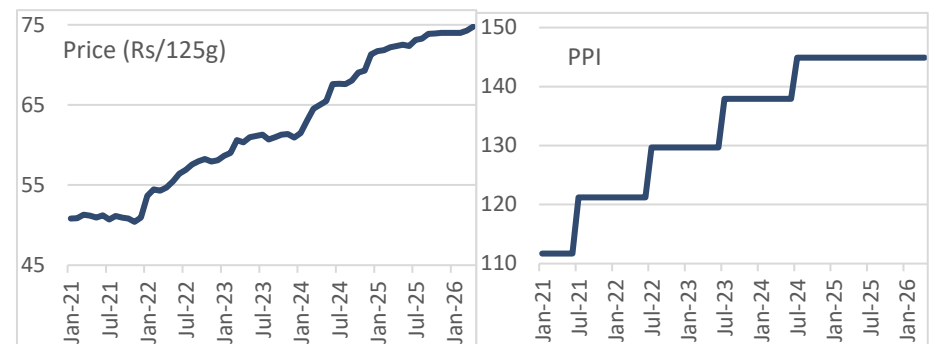
While the increase in the average imported cost for sardines seems to be consistent with the FAO Pelagic Price Index, it is noted that price-import cost margin per can of 125g increased from Rs 10 in January 2021 to Rs 14 in February 2026. This suggests that factors beyond import costs have also influenced the retail price.

Tea

The local black tea industry is characterised by imports restriction, except for an allowable volume for blending purposes to meet domestic demand.

Figure 17 illustrates price movements and the cost of tea production, measures in terms of Agricultural Producer Price Index for tea (green leaf).

Figure 16: Black Tea - Average Retail Price and Producer Price Index (PPI)



Source: Data from Statistics Mauritius

The price of black tea has risen by 46% between January 2021 and February 2026. For that period, the cost of green tea leaf which accounts for about 75% of the total cost of tea production, increased by 32% as reflected in the PPI. Other factory and distribution cost elements have also increased given the surge in electricity, fuel and wages costs by 80%, 42% and 49%, respectively.

While the increase in price of tea can largely be attributed to cost factors, it is observed that internationally⁸ price of tea has registered a lower increase 18% for the period compared to 46% in Mauritius. This is somehow reflected in the cost of black tea imported for Kenya, our main source, for blending purposes. This raises the question of the restrictive importing policy impact on price of tea to the detriment of consumers, albeit public interest such as food security and local employment protection are also policy considerations that cannot be discarded.

C. Conclusion

This price monitoring exercise indicates that prices of the selected products are mostly affected by cost factors. The depreciation of the rupee also accounts for a significant fraction of the cost increase in respect to imported products and inputs; along with surge in labour and energy costs locally.

The analysis, however, recommends further assessment of the pricing behaviour along the supply chain to better understand the price-import cost margin for powdered milk, sardines, frozen beef and in particular frozen mutton.

A proper understanding of the local chicken market is also necessary given that price increase is not fully reflective of certain major cost component, in particular imported input for feeds production. Though, local costs in terms of wages, electricity and fuel have gone up and could potentially explain the rising price of chicken.

It is to be highlighted that the analysis contain in this document does not indicate wrongdoing by enterprise involved in importation, production or

distribution of the concerned products. It provides for basis to conduct further analysis, where necessary, within the ambit of the Competition Act.

⁸ World Bank Commodity Markets