

17 December 2024

PRESS RELEASE

Ordinary Consumers Anew Struggle with Chicken Prices

Consumers continue to struggle with the soaring prices of frozen chicken, one of the most widely consumed meat products in Fiji. Market surveillance conducted by the Consumer Council of Fiji across different supermarkets has revealed significant markups on chicken prices, making it increasingly difficult for Fijians to afford this staple during the festive season, when demand is at its peak.

Data collected from one of the most widely consumed chicken brands in Fiji shows alarming price markups, evidenced by the following breakdown of prices for three of the most commonly purchased sizes:

- **Number 16 chicken:** Retail prices go as high as \$21 in some supermarkets, with an average price of \$20.50. The wholesale price of this chicken is \$17.28, reflecting a markup of \$3.22 (18%) on every chicken.
- **Number 19 chicken:** This chicken is being sold for as high as \$25.50 in some supermarkets, with an average retail price of \$23.76. The wholesale price was recorded at \$20.10, an average margin of \$3.66 (18%) per chicken.
- **Number 21 chicken:** Retail prices for this chicken reach as high as \$28.50, with the Council's average retail price recorded at \$26.71. The wholesale price is \$22.19, reflecting an average margin of \$4.52 or a markup of 20% per chicken.

While the Council acknowledges that supermarkets operate in a free market and have the discretion to set their prices, the current markups are placing an unnecessary financial burden on consumers, especially during the Christmas and festive season when chicken is highly consumed.

The Council strongly urges supermarkets to exercise fair pricing practices that do not exploit consumers during this critical time of the year. Free market economics should not come at the expense of the public's well-being and their ability to access essential food items.

Chief Executive Officer, Seema Shandil, stated: "Chicken is a dietary staple for many Fijian families, and the festive season is a time when its demand naturally increases. It is disappointing to see such high markups, which disproportionately affect those already struggling with the rising cost of living. We call on supermarkets to reconsider their pricing strategies to ensure affordability and fairness for consumers."

Consumers who notice unreasonable price increases or unfair practices are encouraged to report them to the Consumer Council of Fiji through the toll-free helpline (155) or by emailing complaints@consumersfiji.org.