**Producer Price Index – Agriculture (PPI-A)**

**First quarter 2022**

**(Base period year 2018 = 100)**

**1. Introduction**

The Producer Price Index-Agriculture (PPI-A) gives a measure of the average change in the selling prices which producers receive for their agricultural products.

In order to reflect changes in the production pattern of agricultural products, a new set of weights has been worked out with year 2018 as base period, the previous one being 2013. The weights for the PPI-A have been worked out based on the results of the Census of Agriculture conducted in 2014 and information about crop productions and livestock obtained from the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food security. Table A.1 shows the previous and the new sets of weights. Monthly weights by commodity group and product are given in Table 12.

This issue of the Economic and Social Indicators presents PPI-A indices for the months of January, February and March 2022 as well as for the period January 2018 to December 2021 is based on the new weighting pattern and base period.

Table 10 presents the monthly indices as well as the quarterly and yearly average for the agricultural sector. Comparative monthly indices for the agricultural sector are given in Table 11.

The methodology for the computation of PPI-A as well as the revision of the weights from base 2013 to that of 2018 are given in the annex of this publication.

**2. Changes in production pattern (weights) from 2013 to 2018**

The changes in the weights from 2013 to 2018 as

well as main explanations for the changes are as

follows:

The weight of “Crop products” has decreased from 611.6 in 2013 to 558.9 in 2018 while that of “Animals and animal products” has increased from 388.4 in 2013 to 441.1 in 2018. In the sub group “Crop products”, the decrease in weight is mainly attributable to a decrease in the weight of “Sugar cane” from 356.8 in 2013 to 212.1 in 2018, partly offset by increases in the weights of “Fresh vegetables” from 134.2 in 2013 to 209.7 in 2018, “Fruits and nuts” from 64.0 in 2013 to 67.6 in 2018, “Edible roots and tubers” from 35.7 in 2013 to 39.3 in 2018 and “Flowers, ornamental plants” from 7.9

in 2013 to 9.9 in 2018. Regarding the sub-group “Animals and animal products”, the rise in the weight is mainly due to increases in the weights of cattle from 25.2 in 2013 to 43.7 in 2018, poultry from 267.1 in 2013 to 283.9 in 2018 and that of eggs from 66.3 to 95.0 (Table A.1).

**2. Producer Price Index - Agriculture: First Quarter 2022**

*2.1 Structure of PPI-A*

*(Base period: 2018=100)*

PPI-A covers two sub-groups, namely: "Crop products" and "Animals and animal products". "Crop products" is further subdivided into "Sugar cane" and “Other crop products”. “Other crop products” heavily influences both the “overall” index and that of the sub-group “Crop products”, of which it constitutes 34.7% and 62.0% of the respective weights.

*2.2 Changes in the monthly index*

Fig 1: Overall monthly indices, April 2021 – March 2022

2021 2022

Figure 1 shows the monthly evolution of PPI-A for

the period April 2021 to March 2022.

PPI-A, which was 119.8 in December 2021, increased by 29.6% to reach 155.3 in March 2022. The monthly increases were as follows: January (+1.2%), February (+13.5%) and March (+12.9%).

The index for the sub-group "Crop products", which carries 55.9% of the total weight, increased by 41.1% from 128.0 in December 2021 to 180.6 in March 2022. The monthly increases were as follows: 1.8% in January, 21.0% in February and 14.5% in March respectively.

*2.2.1 Sugar cane*

The index for the period July 2021 to March 2022 was 154.5 based on the forecast for the crop year 2021-2022. This index will be revised at the end of June 2022 when the final price is available.

*2.2.2 Other crop products*

The index for "Other crop products" which was 111.9 in December 2021, increased by 75.7% to reach 196.6 in March 2022, mainly due to increases in the prices of fresh vegetables (tomato, creepers, carrot and other fresh vegetables) (+120.8%) and, fruits and nuts (+27.2%).

In January, this index increased by 3.3%, mainly due to increases in the prices of fresh vegetables (tomato, creepers and other fresh vegetables) (+6.0%), partly offset by decreases in the prices of fruits and nuts (-2.3%).

In February, the index increased by 38.1%, mainly due to increases in the prices of fresh vegetables (tomato and creepers) (+61.6%).

In March, the index rose by 23.1%, mainly due to increases in the prices of fresh vegetables (tomato, carrot, beans and other fresh vegetables) (+28.9%) and, fruits and nuts (+20.3%).

*2.2.3 Animals and animal products*

The index for the sub-group "Animals and animal products" which was 109.3 in December 2021, increased by 12.8% to reach 123.3 in March 2022, mainly due to increases in the prices of poultry (+13.2%) and eggs (+18.9%).

In January, this index increased by 0.3%, mainly due to increases in the prices of cattle (+2.0%).

In February, the index increased by 2.3%, mainly due to increases in the prices of poultry (+3.5%).

In March, the index rose by 10.0%, mainly due to increases in the prices of poultry (+9.3%), and eggs (+18.6%).

More details of changes on a month-to-month basis are given in Table 6 and changes over the corresponding month of the previous year in Table 7.

*2.3 Changes in the quarterly index*

Fig 2: Overall quarterly indices, 2nd quarter 2020 – 1st quarter 2022

2020 2021 2022

Figure 2 and Table 8 show the movement of quarterly PPI-A covering the period of 2nd Quarter 2020 to 1st Quarter 2022.

The overall index for the first quarter of 2022 increased by 19.5% when compared to the previous quarter and by 21.6% when compared to the corresponding quarter. Percentage changes on a quarterly basis and the net contributions of commodity groups and products to the overall index are given in Table 9.

*2.4 Changes in the yearly index*

The average prices which producers received from the sale of agricultural products in the year 2021 were 5.6% higher compared to the year 2020. The annual indices for the years 2019 - 2021, annual changes and the net contributions of commodity groups and products to the change are presented in Table 10.

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**ANNEX**

**Producer Price Index – Agriculture (PPI-A)**

**Methodology for the computation of PPI-A**

1. **Introduction**

The analysis of price data implies a comparison of current and past prices. Comparison overtime is required to study the price movement in order to understand the history and to indicate future outlook. While price relatives of single commodities can be studied in isolation, a general conclusion can only be derived from averages, covering a given set or class of commodities. The indicators of average price changes are the price indices.

**2**. **Scope**

The PPI-A covers agricultural products that are classified according to the latest Central Product Classification (CPC) Ver.2.1. There are two divisions: Division 01 - Crop Products and Division 02 - Animals & Animal Products. “Crop Products” is further divided into 7 Commodity Groups namely:

Group 012: Fresh vegetables

Group 013: Fruit and nuts

Group 014: Oilseeds and oleaginous fruits

Group 015: Edible roots and tubers

Group 016: Stimulant and spice

Group 018: Sugar cane

Group 019: Flowers, ornamental plants

**3. Commodity Coverage**

The bulk of the products in agriculture, with the exception of forestry, fishing and agricultural services, is taken into account in the producer price index. Thus, about 75% of the gross output of the agricultural sector has been considered.

**4. Observation Units**

There are essentially three types of observation units for collecting producer prices: (i) producers (ii) purchasers and (iii) markets. However, in the context of Mauritius, different types of observation units are used for different commodities as shown below:

(a) For main commercial crops (sugar cane and tea leaf etc.), the respective marketing agency is the source of the price data.

(b) For vegetables, price data are obtained mainly at three auction markets which are situated at Vacoas, Flacq and Port Louis respectively.

(c) For fruits, prices are recorded from different sources such as planters and first middlemen.

(d) For animals and animal products, price data are available at sources varying from marketing agencies to producers.

**5. Definition of prices**

A price is a pure price when the same amount of money refers to what the buyer pays and what the seller receives. Since the price series form the basis for calculation, the index of the output prices must be representative of what the farmer actually receives.

The prices must be recorded at a point in the marketing of the product which is as close as possible to the farmer. This means that the selling prices should be recorded at the farm gate or (if this is not possible) at the next stage of the commodity flow.

**6.** **Purpose of the agricultural price indices**

The purpose of the price indices is to provide information on trends in producer prices of agricultural products and purchase prices of the means of agricultural production.

The selling prices of agricultural products and the purchase of the means of production have a decisive influence on farmers’ income. It would, therefore, be useful to have indicators showing how agricultural revenue and expenditure are influenced by their price component.

The agricultural price indicators are of two types: -

1. Prices received by farmers represent the producer prices of agricultural products (output prices)
2. Prices paid by farmers are the purchase prices of agricultural requisites (input prices)

The two classes of prices mentioned above are considered important in the context of economic analysis and agricultural policy decisions. Index numbers based on them show the average changes in these prices.

It is to be noted that only the output price index for different groups of commodities is compiled.

**7. Price received by agricultural producers**

As mentioned earlier, the prices for the index should be farm-gate prices, but this is not possible in many cases. Hence, in lieu of the farm-gate price, the wholesale price of the product is recorded at the three auction markets located in Vacoas, Flacq and Port Louis.

In regards to sugarcane, there is no actual market price for the product. The final price for a crop is only available after the crop year to which it refers. Provisional estimates of the price of sugar is provided by Mauritius Sugar Syndicate. This is however revised as soon as the final price is available. The same procedure is applied to tea whereby prices are obtained from National Agricultural Products Regulatory Office (NAPRO).

**8. Frequency of Price Collection**

The frequency of price collection varies from weekly for some commodities to only once a year in others. Broadly speaking, the frequency of price collection is as follows: -

1. For vegetables, price data are collected every second and fourth week of a month at the three earlier mentioned auction markets.
2. For commodities for which prices are fairly stable, data suppliers are visited on a quarterly basis, but prices are collected for each month of the quarter. For example, crop products – potato, onion etc.
3. For the main commercial crops like sugar cane and tea, the reported prices are normally fixed for the crop year by the respective marketing agency.
4. For the remaining type of items not mentioned above, the price data are collected on a monthly basis.

**9. Weights**

***9.1 Weighting scheme and choice of the base period***

As price data are associated with a commercial transaction, it is logical to relate prices to sales rather than total production. However, since the value of production for the market (sales) is not available here, the value of the total production is considered as a proxy in the calculation of weights. Furthermore, since meteorological conditions and market forces may generate high fluctuations, the weighted base is taken as the average of the total production for three years.

It may be noted that ‘Food and Agriculture Organisation’ and ‘Eurostat’ recommend that if the quantity weight base is the average of 3 years, then the reference base for prices should be the middle year. In the new set of indices, the weights have been derived by multiplying the average of production during the years 2017, 2018 and 2019 by the average of unit prices in 2018, the reference period. The weight is assigned to each commodity group on the basis of total production (as a proxy for sales) pertaining to the particular group. At the commodity level, the weights are apportioned within the commodity group on the basis of the production of each product.

Quarterly and annual indices have been computed using a weighting system based on the production value for the base period.

***9.2 Evolution of weights from 2013 to 2018***

**Table A.1: Weights by commodity group, previous and new base periods**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Commodity Group** | **Previous Weight** | **New weight** |
| **Base period: 2013** | **Base period: 2018** |
| **Crop Products** | **611.6** | **558.9** |
| **Sugar Cane** | **356.8** | **212.1** |
| **Other crops products** | **254.8** | **346.7** |
| **Fresh Vegetables** | **134.2** | **209.7** |
| Beans | 4.6 | 7.8 |
| Brinjal | 6.0 | 7.7 |
| Cabbage | 5.9 | 11.9 |
| Cauliflower | 2.9 | 3.0 |
| Carrot | 8.8 | 13.6 |
| Onion | 12.3 | 10.9 |
| Tomato | 37.3 | 63.3 |
| Creepers | 30.0 | 60.8 |
| Other fresh vegetables | 26.4 | 30.7 |
| **Fruits and nuts** | **64.0** | **67.6** |
| Banana | 10.1 | 12.8 |
| Pineapple | 20.4 | 29.4 |
| Other fruits | 33.5 | 25.4 |
| **Oilseeds and oleaginous fruits** | **3.4** | **5.8** |
| Groundnut | 2.3 | 2.1 |
| Coconut | 1.1 | 3.7 |
| **Edible roots and tubers** | **35.7** | **39.3** |
| Potato | 29.0 | 30.8 |
| Other Root crops | 6.7 | 8.4 |
| **Stimulant & spice** | **9.6** | **14.6** |
| Tea | 7.5 | 12.0 |
| Ginger | 2.1 | 2.5 |
| **Flowers, ornamental plants** | **7.9** | **9.9** |
| Anthurium | 2.4 | 3.0 |
| Rose | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| Other flowers | 4.6 | 5.8 |
| **Animals & Animal Products** | **388.4** | **441.1** |
| Cattle | 25.2 | 43.7 |
| Pigs | 11.5 | 3.1 |
| Goat | 3.4 | 0.7 |
| Deer | 6.9 | 8.8 |
| Poultry | 267.1 | 283.9 |
| Eggs | 66.3 | 95.0 |
| Milk | 8.0 | 5.9 |
| **Overall Index** | **1,000.0** | **1,000.0** |

**10. Index calculation**

The PPI will be calculated according to a Laspeyres formula:

**It = ∑ Wi (Pti/Poi) x 100**

**∑ Wi**

Where:

**It** is the index for the current period t

**Pti**  is the price of commodity i in the current period t

**Poi** is the price of the commodity i in the reference period o (2018)

**Wi** is the weight associated with commodity i

As per the International Monetary Fund’s recommendation to harmonize the method of computation of all indices, prices of commodities collected at different auction markets are computed using geometric mean instead of simple average.

**11.** **Uses of agricultural price indices**

The construction of agricultural price index numbers may serve various purposes as shown below: -

1. Economic analysis, in particular the estimation of general price trends and their relationship with other pertinent variables, e.g. the study of domestic price changes in relation to prices observed in external markets or the movement of agricultural production.
2. Monitoring the implementation of agricultural price policy decisions such as the introduction or modification of support prices
3. Forecasting price movements in connection with market studies or business cycle research.
4. Compilation of national accounts at constant prices. In order to estimate the growth of the real product of the agricultural sector, deflator indices are needed. They are appropriately weighted indices of agricultural commodities or input items.

**12. Seasonality**

Prices and quantities of many agricultural commodities show seasonal variations. As vegetables and fruits are extremely seasonal products, it is therefore decided to use the method of variable baskets with fixed monthly weights in the base year.

There are 12 monthly baskets of representative products. The composition of these baskets varies each month. Certain products whose marketing period covers the whole year appear in all 12 monthly baskets, while others, which are more seasonal, appear only in some of them. However, the composition of the basket for a given month is fixed over time.

**13. Missing Prices**

There is also, in the field of agricultural price observation, the case of missing prices for a product must be taken into account because there is an index weight for the respective month. In these cases, imputation is carried out as per International Monetary Fund’s recommendations.

**14. Periodicity**

The index is calculated on a monthly, quarterly as well as on an annual basis. While quarterly and annual price indices can normally be calculated as the simple (unweighted) average of the monthly indices, it is recommended that the monthly sales figures for the base year be used as weights to calculate the quarterly and annual indices. If sales figures are not available, total production can be used as a proxy when most of the production is available for sales. Such is the case in Mauritius and the values of total production have been used as weights.