

Apple prices continue to fall from January peak

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Apple prices were \$2.88 a kilogram in March, down more than \$2.00 since hitting a record high in January, Stats NZ said today.

Overall, food prices fell 0.3 percent in March, mainly due to lower fruit and vegetable prices.

Fruit and vegetable prices were down 3.0 percent due to seasonally lower prices for apples and carrots.

"Apple and carrot prices usually fall at this time of the year as we approach the colder months. One kilo of apples cost \$2.88 in March compared with \$4.40 in February and \$5.04 in January," consumer prices acting manager Nicola Growden said. "Apples remained slightly more expensive than the March 2016 average price of \$2.67 a kilo."

Higher prices for avocados and mandarins partly offset the decrease in fruit and vegetable prices.

Grocery food prices rose 0.2 percent, with higher prices for chocolate (up 6.1 percent) and cheese (up 3.0 percent). Chocolate prices rose, influenced by higher prices for boxed chocolate. A 250g of boxed chocolate cost \$8.74 in March, up from \$6.77 in February. Cheese prices were at their highest level since August 2014.

Annual food prices up, led by milk, cheese, and butter

Food prices increased 1.3 percent in the year to March 2017, led by grocery food. This followed an increase of 2.2 percent in the year to February 2017.

Grocery food prices increased 2.2 percent in the year, with higher prices for most dairy products. Fresh milk prices increased 6.5 percent, the largest annual increase since November 2014. Cheese and butter prices also increased, up 11 percent and 27 percent, respectively.

Fruit and vegetable prices increased 2.6 percent, influenced by higher prices for carrots, kumara, and strawberries. Vegetable prices increased 4.4 percent and fruit prices increased 0.6 percent.

Meat, poultry, and fish decreased 1.5 percent mainly due to lower prices for chicken. Chicken prices decreased 6.5 percent for the year, and have been falling annually since June 2015.

[Nicola Growden explains the food price index results.](#)

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For media enquiries contact: Nicola Growden, Wellington 04 931 4771, info@stats.govt.nz
Authorised by Liz MacPherson, Government Statistician, 13 April 2017