Market monitor: The first 30 weeks of 2024 at fresh produce markets

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The average weekly price of potatoes in the first 30 weeks of 2024 reflected an overall downward trend for most of the period, unlike the same period in 2023. However, price increases were observed in weeks 15, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, and 30. The average weekly price in week 30 was R7.85 lower than during the same period in 2023. *Figure 1* indicates the weekly average price at all markets for all classes and sizes.

By the end of week 30, the average weekly price was R72.09 per 10 kg bag, representing a 23% increase week on week. This steep increase was mostly due to low volumes of fresh produce received at the fresh produce markets (FPMs) during that week. The lower volumes may possibly be attributed to frost damage experienced across large parts of Limpopo in July this year.

Lower stock levels

Figure 2 reflects daily average stock levels and the daily average price. It clearly indicates that stock levels decreased to a large extent compared to June 2024, and confirms the decrease in stock levels towards the end of July, resulting in the higher daily prices achieved during week 30. In order for daily prices to remain high, producers must ensure stable delivery patterns, especially in times of high demand, and the supply of good quality products to FPMs at all times.

Figure 3 indicates the average stock levels in each month as opposed to levels during the same month a year ago. June and July 2024 reflect an increase of 109 387 and 282 234 10kg bags respectively, compared to June and July 2023. A comparison of sales in June to that in July this year,

Figure 1: Weekly average prices of all classes and sizes at all FPMs. (Source: RSA file)

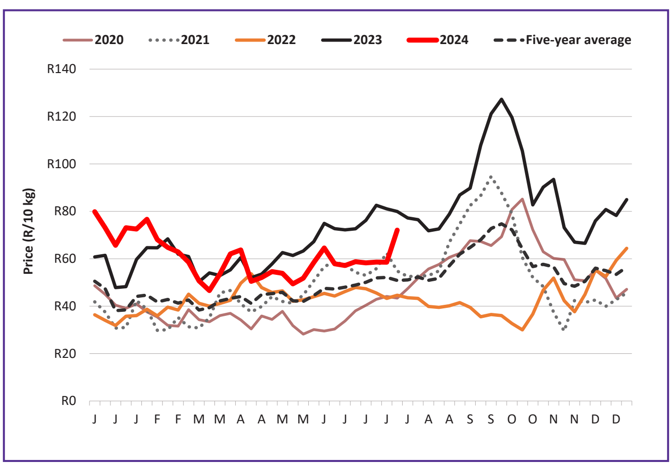


Figure 2: Daily average stock levels compared to the daily average price of all classes and sizes.

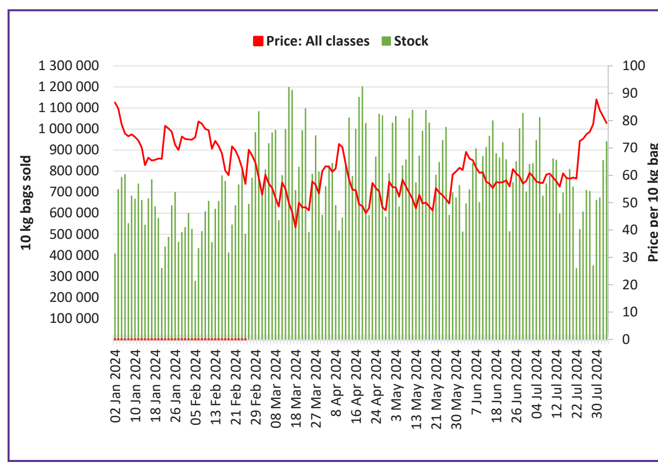


Figure 3: Average daily stock levels per month in 2023 versus 2024.

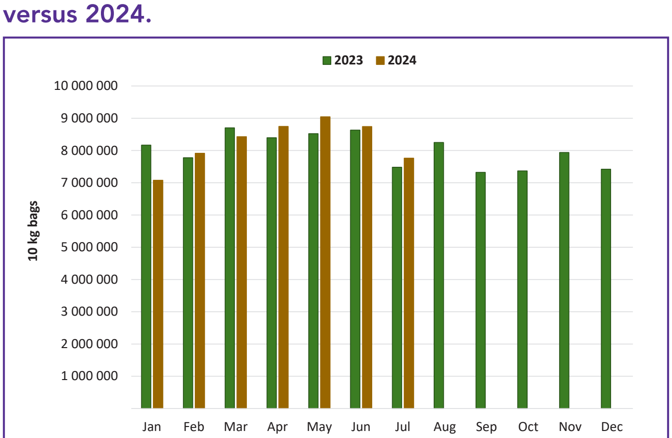
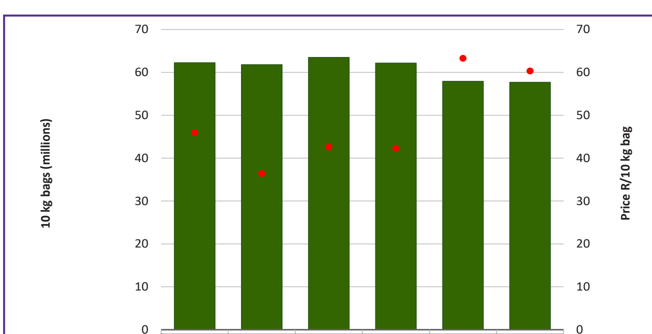


Figure 4: Cumulative number of 10 kg bags sold at FPMs until week 30 of every year (average price). (Source: RSA file)



	5-year avg.	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of bags sold	62 256 256	61 814 220	63 487 973	62 165 924	57 908 653	57 693 020
Average price	R45.98	R36.43	R42.61	R42.3	R63.28	R60.34

Figure 5: Monthly sales at FPMs from 2020 to 2024 (all packaging converted to 10 kg bags).

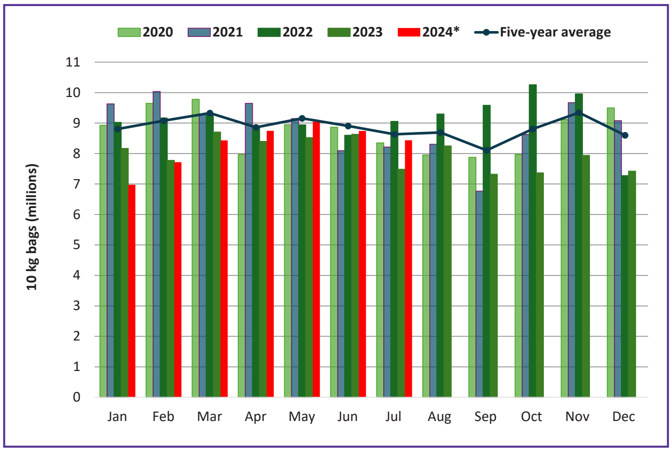


Figure 6: Year-on-year change at the top five markets from 2023 to 2024.

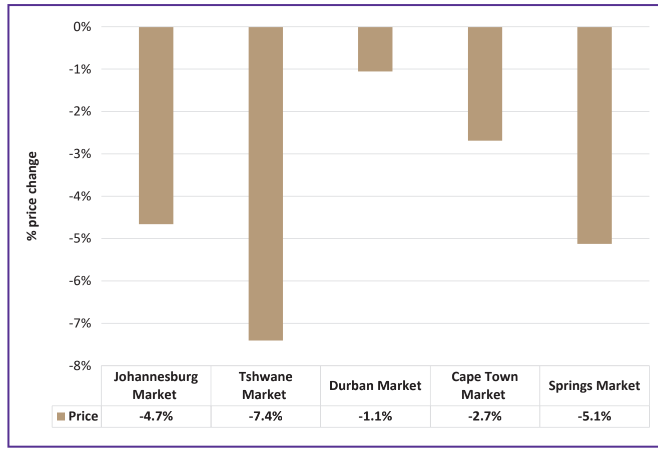


Figure 7: Top five markets' year-on-year changes in bag sales.

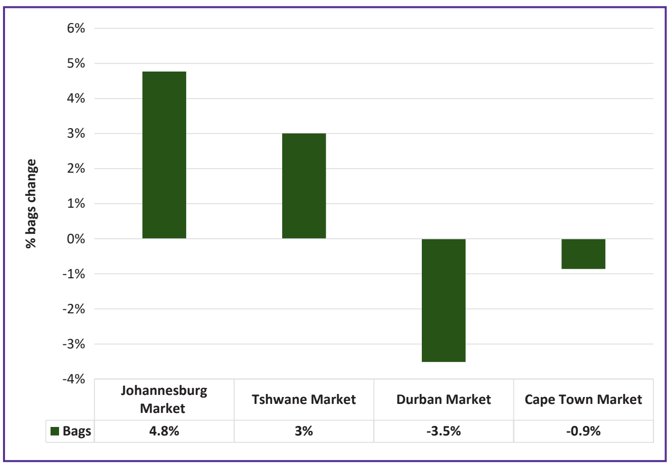


Figure 8: Sales performance across regions during the first 30 weeks of 2023 compared to 2024.

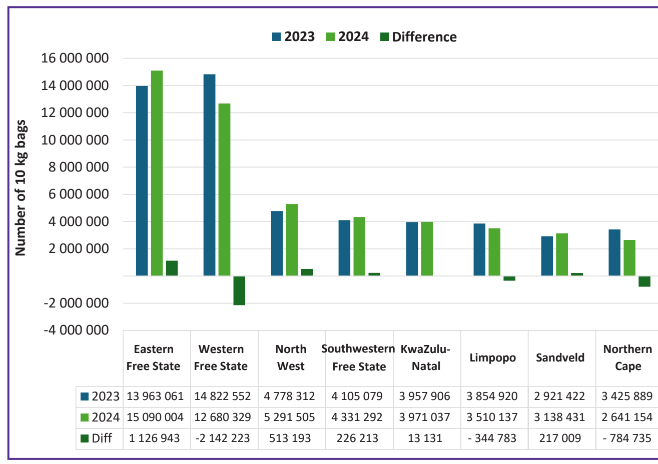


Table 1: Sales at FPMs up until week 30 of 2024.

				Percentage of sales at FPMs			
Market	**Number of bags 10 kg**	**% of total**	**Avg price (R/10 kg)**	**Class 1**	**Class 2**	**Class 3 & 4**	**Class 1 M**
Johannesburg	24 007 428	41.6%	60.16	75%	16%	9%	17%
Tshwane	11 027 144	19.1%	59.00	63%	23%	13%	15%
Durban	5 402 665	9.4%	60.87	73%	17%	9%	24%
Cape Town	4 714 644	8.2%	68.39	70%	25%	5%	21%
Springs	3 039 096	5.3%	56.08	60%	23%	17%	13%
Bloemfontein	1 520 912	2.6%	60.69	55%	29%	15%	14%
East London	1 604 580	2.8%	63.26	68%	22%	10%	21%
Klerksdorp	1 496 922	2.6%	56.29	64%	22%	13%	16%
Welkom	1 358 638	2.4%	56.69	50%	31%	19%	10%
Port Elizabeth	1 406 227	2.4%	61.59	67%	23%	10%	24%
Pietermaritzburg	1 228 138	2.1%	55.67	62%	23%	15%	15%
Vereeniging	318 292	0.6%	55.83	66%	24%	10%	14%
Witbank	321 027	0.6%	59.83	63%	22%	14%	13%
Nelspruit	233 155	0.4%	72.13	72%	20%	8%	9%
Kei (Mthatha)	12 954	0%	–	26%	42%	32%	17%
Total	**57 691 822**	**100%**	**–**	**69%**	**20%**	**11%**	**17%**

Table 2: Sales per region at FPMs until week 30 of 2024.

				Percentage of sales at FPMs			
Region	Number of bags 10 kg	% of total	Avg price (R/10 kg)	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3 & 4	Class 1 M
Eastern Free State	15 090 004	26%	55.35	61%	23%	**16%**	13%
Western Free State	12 680 329	22%	58.45	70%	20%	10%	21%
North West	5 291 505	9%	66.56	79%	14%	7%	16%
Southwestern Free State	4 331 292	8%	69.14	76%	14%	10%	21%
KwaZulu-Natal	3 971 037	7%	64.55	73%	20%	6%	12%
Limpopo	3 510 137	6%	66.24	85%	12%	3%	20%
Sandveld	3 138 431	5%	67.05	71%	27%	3%	21%
Northern Cape	2 641 154	5%	54.56	55%	20%	25%	13%
Gauteng	2 551 114	4%	60.6	85%	11%	4%	24%
Northeastern Cape	1 537 839	3%	56.71	57%	33%	11%	19%
Other regions	1 431 406	2%	45.75	47%	38%	15%	13%
Ceres	659 430	1%	71.63	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mpumalanga	613 789	1.06%	66.92	80%	16%	4%	18%
Eastern Cape	243 957	0.42%	58.1	60%	31%	8%	19%
Southern Cape	397	0%	56.85	76%	24%	0%	0%
Southwestern Cape	1	0%	120	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total	**57 691 822**	**100%**	**–**	**69%**	**20%**	**11%**	**17%**

shows that 976 211 fewer bags were sold in July.

Weekly and monthly sales

According to *Figure 4*, sales at the FPMs during the first 30 weeks of 2024 decreased by 0.37% (approximately 215 633 10kg bags) since 2023's corresponding figure. Sales in the first 30 weeks of this year exceeded the 57 million 10 kg bag mark. However, 4.56 million 10kg fewer bags were sold than the five-year average of the same period. The average price for the first 30 weeks is also depicted in *Figure 4*, with 2024's average price of R14.36 being higher than the five-year average price.

Figure 5 illustrates monthly sales at the FPMs since 2020. In June, sales decreased to 8.74 million 10 kg bags, compared to May's sales of 9.04 million 10 kg bags. In July 2024 sales further decreased to only 7.76 million 10kg bags, representing a decrease of 11% compared to sales in June this year.

Top bag sales

Table 1 contains the number of bags sold at the various FPMs during the first 30 weeks of 2024. The five biggest markets during this period were collectively responsible for 83.5% of the country's sales. The average price (all classes and sizes) for each market also appears in *Table 1*.

In terms of the top average price per 10 kg bag received at the markets during the first 30 weeks, Nelspruit Market was in first place with R72.13 per 10 kg bag followed by Cape Town with R68.39 per 10 kg bag, and East London with R63.26 per 10 kg bag. In terms of Class 1 (all sizes) sales, Johannesburg and Durban Markets' total sales consisted of 75 and 73% Class 1 bags, respectively – the highest of the top five markets. These two markets are also in top position in terms of Class 1 Medium bag sales.

Price changes

Figure 6 reflects the year-on-year price change at the top five markets for the first 30 weeks of 2024, with prices at all five markets reflecting a decrease. Tshwane Market's price showed the greatest decline with a decrease of 7.4%. The volumes sold at this market increased by 3% year-on-year, as is shown in *Figure 7*. The volumes sold at Johannesburg Market increased by 4.8% year-on-year.

Figure 8 contains a comparison of the seven biggest regions' sales during 2024 and 2023. The Western Free State, Limpopo, and Northern Cape regions sold fewer 10 kg bags with the other regions all selling more 10 kg bags during this period than in the previous year.

Class 1 sales

The three biggest regions in the market sold 57% of the potatoes available at FPMs (*Table 2*) during the first 30 weeks of 2024. *Table 2* also illustrates the percentage composition of each region's Class 1, 2, 3, and 4 potatoes supplied during this period. Nine of the 16 regions recorded a percentage of Class 1 sales above 60% from January to July this year. The top six regions in terms of Class 1 sales include Gauteng and Limpopo at 85% each, Mpumalanga at 80%, North West at 79%, and Southwestern Free State and Southern Cape at 76% each.

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