Global food prices increased due to higher demand, a byproduct of the COVID-19 recovery with the reopening of foodservice operations. Conversely, grocery sales slowed since the pandemic-induced stockpiling and panic buying of 2020, although online sales remain strong due to significant consumer behavioral shifts. The food industry continued to be highly impacted by trends within the transportation sector, including rising logistics costs and challenges with final-mile delivery among transportation providers.

**Global Food Prices (April 2021 vs. 2020)**

- **Sugar Index**: 50% YOY
- **Meat Index**: 5.1% YOY
- **Dairy Index**: 24.1% YOY

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

### Global Prices Gain

**MAY 2021**

**Worldwide Food Prices (April 2022)**

- **30.6% YOY**: April 2021 = Highest increase since May 2014

**Meat Prices (April 2021)**

- **BEEF**: 4.6% YOY
- **POULTRY**: 5.1% YOY
- **PORK**: 4.7% YOY

Source: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

### Ditching the Cart

Grocery sales fell year-over-year as purchasing patterns returned to normal levels following panic buying and stockpiling behaviors of shoppers at the height of the pandemic. Conversely, online grocery sales were up as the pandemic changed how people shop.

**Sea New Heights**

Sales grew across every species of seafood in 2020, as more consumers reported that they were increasing consumption of seafood for health reasons.

**DiChilled Out**

Frozen food sales continue to perform strongly as consumers look for convenience.

**Power Plants**

Even though plant-based meals still represent only a small portion of total meat sales, the U.S. plant-based foods market grew significantly, and online sales of plant-based foods were up 35% in January 2021.

**Sugar Craze**

Worldwide sugar prices were up nearly 60% YOY in April due to strong purchasing, resulting from concerns over a slow harvest and tighter global supplies.

**Restaurants Revived**

Over 110,000 U.S. restaurants closed, either temporarily or permanently, within the last year, with nearly 2.5 million jobs lost due to the pandemic. As restrictions were lifted and more people were vaccinated, restaurant and foodservice industry sales made quick comebacks, yet were still down from 2019 sales.

### Restaurants Transactions (March 2021 vs. 2020)

- **Restaurants**: 32%, 6% from 2019
- **Quick-Service**: 29%, 5% from 2019
- **Full-Service**: 210%, 25% from 2019

Source: NPD Group

### Nothing Corny About That

Higher corn pricing has been driven by increased demand from China and lower-than-average yields.

### Got Milk?

Dairy prices increased across the board as foodservice establishments resumed operations and schools reopened. Milk production per cow in the U.S. was down 44 pounds in February from 2020.

### To learn more, download B. Riley’s Food Monitor at brileyfin.com/insights