

Monitor

Food

VOLUME
425



FOOD PRICES REMAIN VOLATILE

BEEF RISING

Beef prices skyrocket due to historically low cattle herds

EGGS DOWN

Egg prices have fallen from the historic highs of the last two years as the industry recovers from the effects of avian flu

MIXED BAG

Tariffs caused elevated prices for seafood, while pork, chicken, sugar, and cocoa prices decline

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Deals are a moving target with a constantly shifting mix of people, numbers and timing. We are here to simplify this process for you. Our associates are experts at analyzing situations and quantifying values you need on the most complex deals, so you can leverage our extensive industry knowledge to close the deal.

Trend Tracker

	Meat (Beef)	Seafood
NOLVs	Decreasing ▼	Mixed ⬆️
Sales Trends	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
Gross Margin	Decreasing ▼	Mixed ⬆️
Inventory	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
Pricing	Beef: Increasing ▲ Pork and Chicken: Decreasing ▼	Shrimp: Increasing ▲

NOLVS

- **Meat:** NOLVs decreased primarily due to decreased gross margins.
- **Seafood:** NOLVs increased or decreased one to seven percentage points directly related to whether or not the company was able to increase prices and margin in the wake of tariff impacts.

SALES TRENDS

- **Meat:** Sales increased due to higher pricing.
- **Seafood:** Sales increased due to an increase in demand, although those companies impacted most directly by tariffs saw some declines.

GROSS MARGIN

- **Meat:** Gross margins for meat have been decreasing due to higher input costs.
- **Seafood:** Gross margins decreased for those companies directly impacted by tariffs that were not able to increase prices, while gross margins increased for some that were able to proactively implement price increases to offset tariffs.

INVENTORY

- **Meat:** Inventory levels increased due to higher costs.
- **Seafood:** Inventory levels are up due to increased demand.

PRICING

- **Meat:** Beef prices increased due to historically low cattle stocks amid strong demand. Pork prices are flat to down, while chicken prices are down.
- **Seafood:** Seafood prices have increased due to the effects of tariffs.
- **Dairy:** Milk prices have increased year-over-year due to increased demand for dairy products.
- **Eggs:** Egg prices are down from the historic highs of recent years.
- **Corn:** Corn prices are up year-over-year due to a decrease in acreage.

Overview

Six years after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, global food prices remain volatile, with some categories experiencing sharp increases while others posted declines.

The FAO World Food Price Index in April 2026 averaged 130.7 points, rising 1.6% year-over-year and marking its third consecutive monthly gain, following increases of 0.6% in February and 2.4% in March. The recent upward pressure on global food prices is primarily attributed to increased production costs and transportation expenses, regional conflicts impacting supply chains, and tariffs on imported products such as seafood adding upward pressure domestically.

The beef category has experienced the sharpest price increases over the past year due to a reduced supply of cattle in both the U.S. and Brazil. The World Food Price Index for meat reached a record high of 129.4 points in April, with global prices up approximately 6.0% year-over-year in April 2026. In the U.S. alone, beef prices are predicted to increase between 6.3% and 9.4% this year, with the domestic cattle herd at its lowest level since 1951.

While prices for beef are on the upswing, prices for certain commodity foods, such as cocoa and sugar, are currently decreasing. Per the latest World Bank Commodity Pricing Data, year-over-year global prices for cocoa were down 50% to 60% from earlier peaks and sugar prices were 21% lower in April 2026 as compared to 2025. Global benchmark prices for coffee have declined from recent highs, though U.S. retail prices remain elevated.

Within the U.S., overall food prices in April 2026 were 3.8% higher than in the same month of 2025, per the most recent Consumer Price Index (“CPI”) released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (“BLS”). In terms of individual categories, the index for beef and veal rose 14.8% year-over-year due to continued demand coupled with the aforementioned lower supply of cattle. Conversely, retail egg prices in April 2026 were 39.2% below the prior year’s levels as the industry recovers from the effects of the avian flu and related high prices experienced last year.

The index for food consumed at home (groceries) increased 3.2% in April 2026 versus 2025, with the index for food away from home (restaurants) rising 3.6% during the same period. Full-service meals at sit-down restaurants were up 3.8% year-over-year, while takeout prices increased 3.2%, indicating continued pricing pressures in both channels.

Tariffs have unevenly impacted different categories based on their country of origin or the use of certain materials that are subject to tariffs. Items from Mexico, such as tomatoes, avocados, limes, and bell peppers, currently face possible price increases due to potential tariffs and trade tensions with Mexico. Other international products, such as seafood and European cheeses, have seen price increases as retaliatory and direct tariffs are passed to consumers. In terms of raw materials, prices for canned soups and vegetables are rising due to tariffs on imported steel and aluminum used for packaging these goods.

Another noted trend in the food industry this year is the continued popularity of private label products. Persistent inflation has driven consumers to purchase these lower-cost goods, with private label sales growing by over 30% over the past five years. Private labels are frequently promoted, which makes them very attractive to consumers. In addition to cost savings, the quality of private label goods has improved, with some retailers now offering premium, organic, and specialized items, such as those found at Trader Joe’s, where 80% of products are private label.

Meat

BEEF

Per USDA figures, overall retail beef prices averaged \$10.47 per pound in April 2026, increasing from \$10.09 in the prior month while remaining above the price of \$8.83 per pound posted in April 2025. Ground beef prices climbed from \$5.80 to \$6.90 per pound year-over-year, while round steak increased from \$8.00 to \$9.41 per pound during the same period.

The current increase in beef prices is due to several factors but is primarily driven by the decrease in the amount of cattle available for slaughter. According to the USDA, the domestic cattle herd has shrunk to 86.2 million heads, which represents the lowest level since 1951. This shortage was compounded by trade and animal health restrictions affecting imports, including an outbreak of the New World screwworm parasite that suspended imports from Mexico.

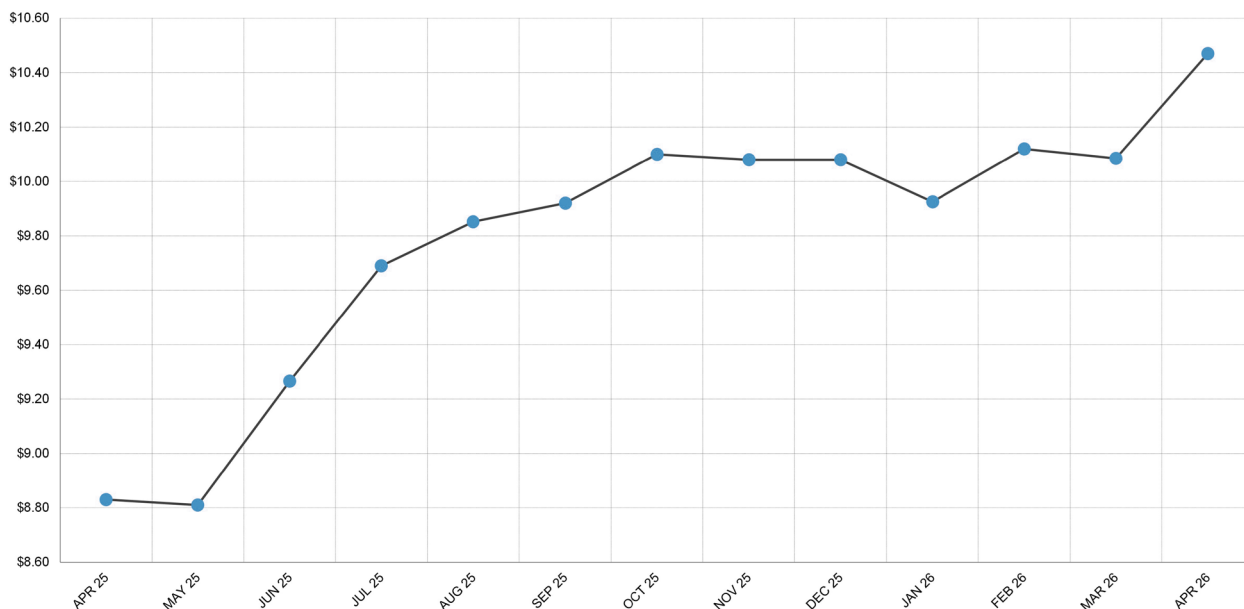
The lack of availability of cattle has led to a decline in domestic beef production. The USDA's latest projections expect U.S. beef production to decrease by approximately 2% in fiscal year 2026 compared to 2025.

Total beef production for 2026 is projected to total 25.79 billion pounds, down from an estimated 26.19 billion pounds in 2025.

With less domestic inventory on hand, the amount of beef purchased from overseas has increased, with imports increasing 28% for the first quarter of this year compared to the same period in 2025. Conversely, beef exports fell 14.3% in 2025 and are down 11% year-to-date due to the limited supply.

Despite the rising prices, beef remains in high demand among consumers with the summer grilling season approaching. As a result, beef prices are expected to remain elevated through the summer months and likely into year-end, with the USDA predicting an overall increase of 6.3% in 2026. Some analysts believe that cattle prices will continue to climb through 2030, as it takes a long time to rebuild cattle herds; as such, supply will remain tight.

1 Monthly Choice Beef Retail Value Per Pound April 2025 through April 2026 (\$ per pound)



Meat

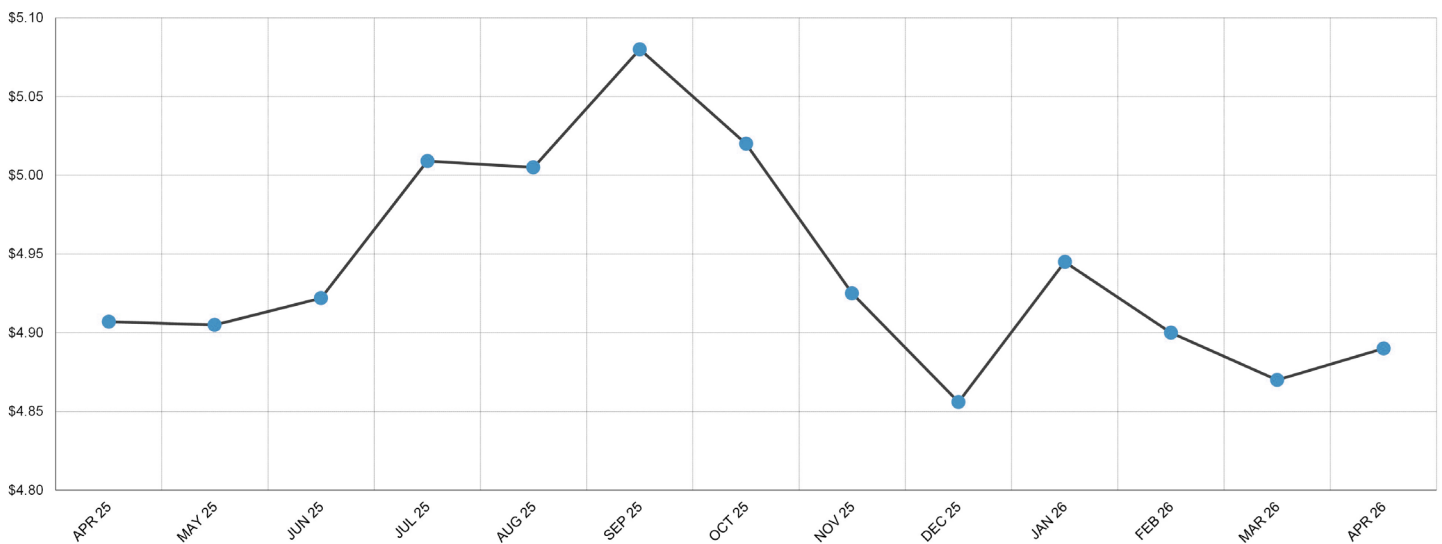
PORK

U.S. retail pork prices averaged \$4.89 per pound in April 2026, up slightly from \$4.87 per pound in the prior month but down from \$4.90 per pound year-over-year. Retail bacon prices decreased from \$7.01 to \$6.83 per pound year-over-year, while ham prices fell from \$4.45 to \$4.34 per pound. These declines followed a 1.3% increase in overall pork prices at supermarkets between December 2025 and January 2026.

Total pork production is expected to total 27.98 billion pounds in 2026, representing a 1.4% increase over 2025. The increase in production, however, will likely be partially offset by strong export demand. Total pork exports are projected to increase 3.3% to 7.2 billion pounds this year, driven by higher demand from Mexico and other western hemisphere countries.

Overall, the USDA predicts that pork prices will increase 0.4% to 1.9% through year-end due to a spike in consumption as shoppers seek other proteins to replace higher-priced beef. Current pork trends in 2026 reflect a shift toward high-quality “steak-cut” preparations to replace expensive sirloin steaks and tips. Seasonal factors may also come into play; analysts note that prices for certain items, such as bacon, typically rise from late May through the summer months as grilling demand peaks.

2 Monthly Choice Pork Retail Value Per Pound
April 2025 through April 2026 (\$ per pound)



Meat

POULTRY

U.S. retail broiler prices averaged \$2.39 per pound in April 2026, decreasing from \$2.41 per pound in March 2026 and down from \$2.45 per pound in the prior year. During the same period, chicken breast prices decreased from \$4.18 to \$4.17 per pound year-over-year, while prices for chicken legs fell from \$1.79 to \$1.71 per pound, per USDA data.

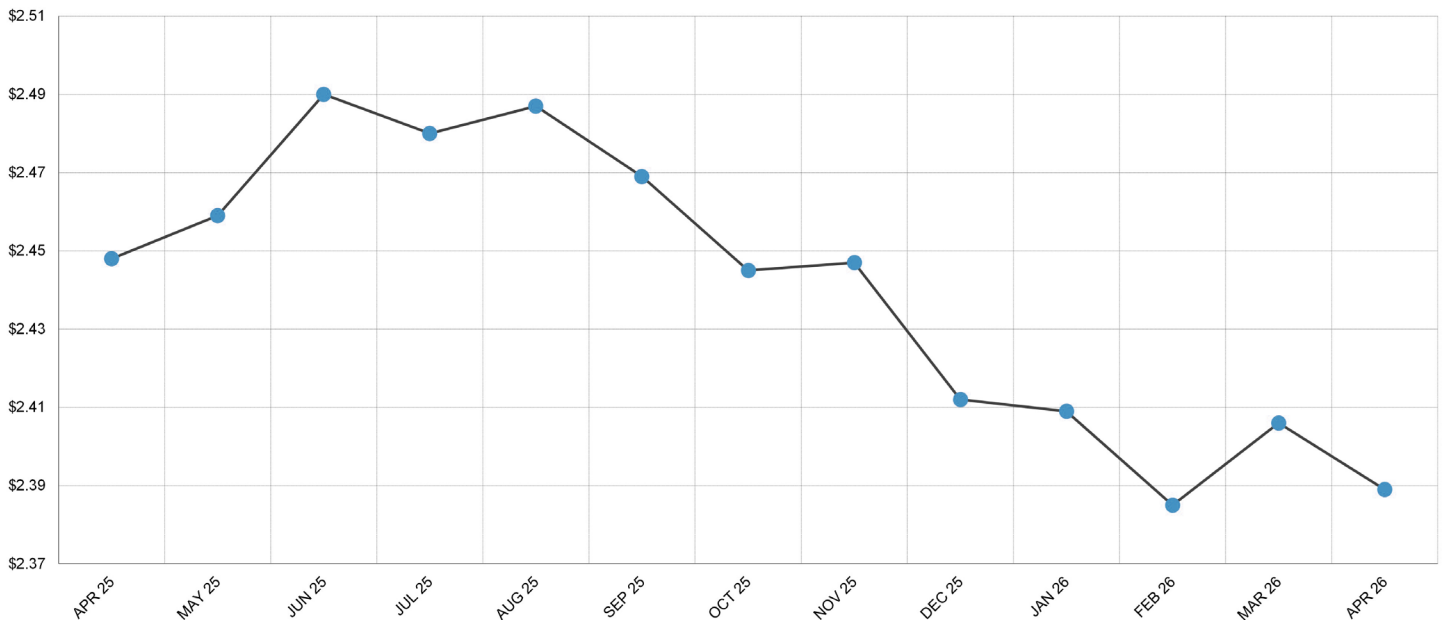
Part of the reason for the price decreases appears to be an increased supply. U.S. broiler production is forecast to reach 48.9 billion pounds in 2026, an increase of approximately 1.0% to 1.5% compared to 2025. Recent data showed a 4.8% year-over-year increase in monthly production, attributed to both higher slaughter numbers (up 3.1%) and heavier bird weights (up 1.7%).

Unusually high beef prices are currently driving consumers to choose chicken as a more affordable protein for their meals, which may result in increased prices for poultry in the coming months. In particular, consumers appear to be drawn toward dark meat and boneless wings, with thighs also in high demand as grilling season approaches.

The USDA notes that consumer demand has also moved away from whole birds toward further-processed products such as nuggets, strips, and pre-marinated “meal-ready” options.

As a result of this demand, analysts expect prices for breast meat, tenders, and thighs to inch upward through the summer months. In fact, the USDA notes that the current lag in poultry prices could be short-lived, with prices forecast to increase up to 4.1% in 2026, should demand remain strong.

3 Monthly Retail Broiler Composite
April 2025 through April 2026 (\$ per pound)



Eggs

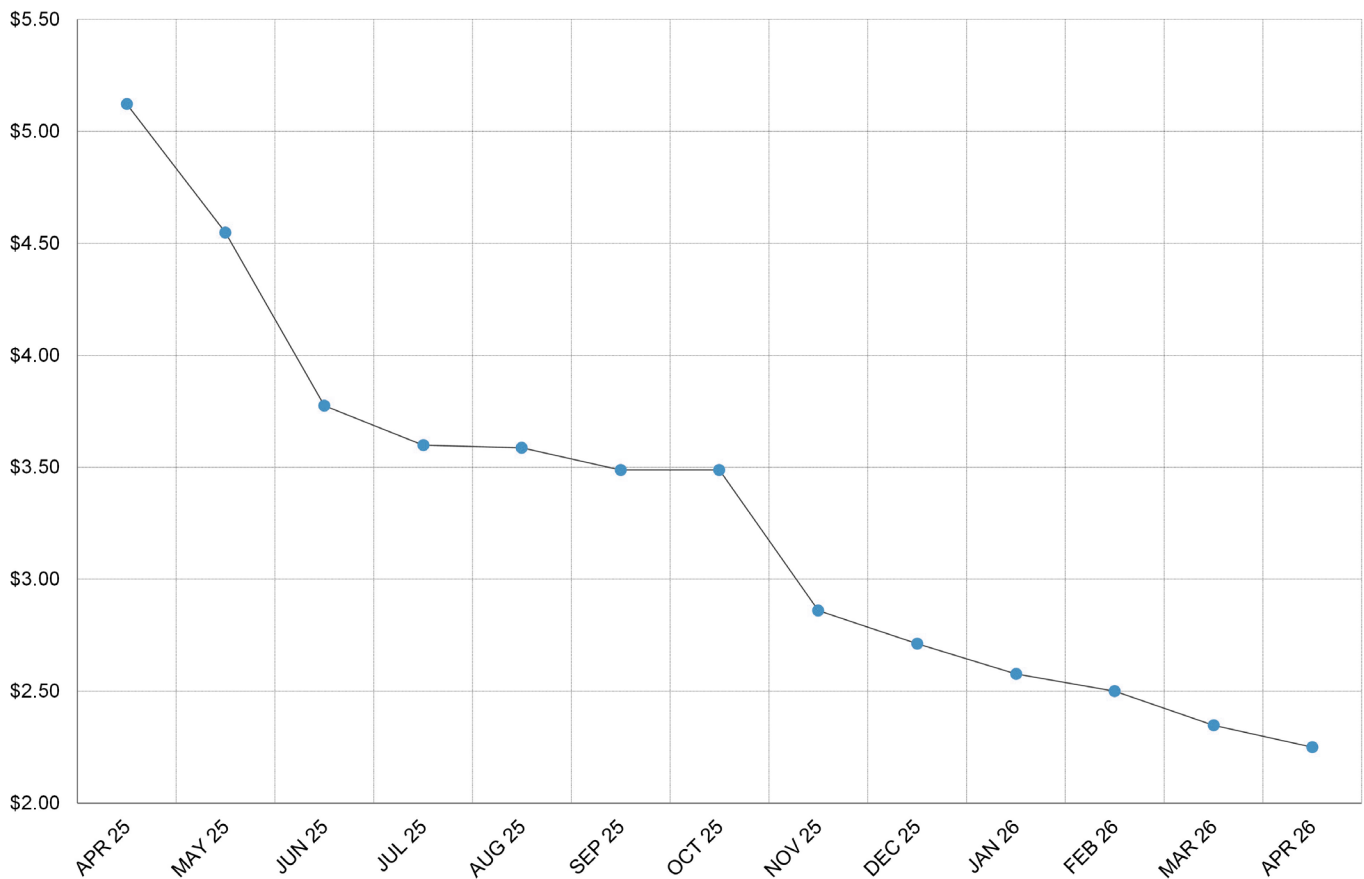
U.S. retail egg prices averaged \$2.25 per dozen in April 2026, down significantly from \$5.12 per dozen during the same month of last year. Egg prices are experiencing a significant downward trend compared to the record highs of early 2025 as the industry continues to recover from the devastating effects of avian influenza. Additionally, seasonal demand for baking and traditional uses have declined, and many consumers and industrial buyers have pivoted toward liquid egg products or other protein alternatives, placing downward pressure on prices.

According to USDA analysts, outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza have been far less severe thus far in 2026 as compared to 2025.

Per the latest available figures, January 2026 losses amounted to 1% of the conventional flock as compared to 8% in January 2025. Since the last outbreaks, producers have been aggressively rebuilding their layer flocks, which had expanded to approximately 309 million hens in 2026 according to USDA estimates. As a result, the USDA notes that overall U.S. egg production is on track to increase nearly 6.0% to 9.32 billion dozen in 2026.

Barring the presence of any new disease outbreaks, the USDA expects egg prices to continue softening throughout the year, with overall retail egg prices expected to fall by more than 27% in 2026.

4 Monthly Egg Retail Value April 2025 through April 2026 (\$ per dozen)



Seafood

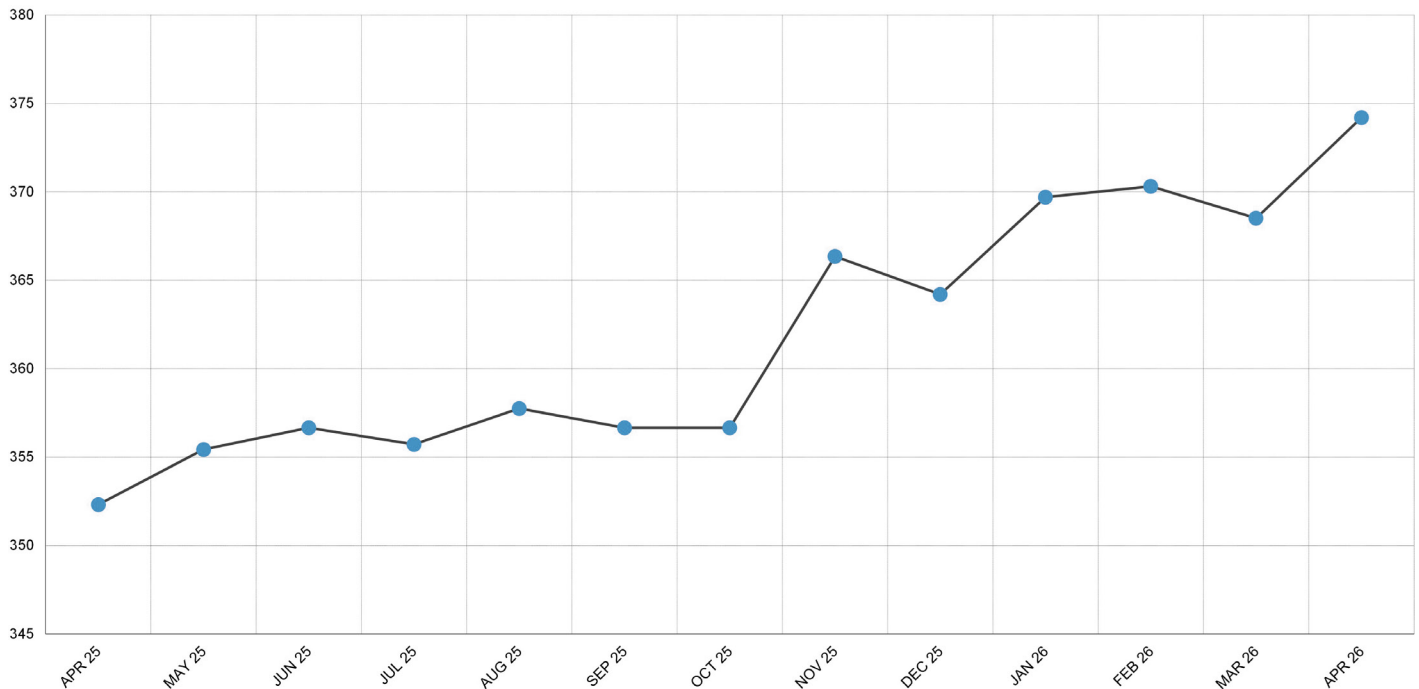
Per USDA data, the CPI for fish and seafood increased 1.5% in April 2026 from the prior month on a seasonally adjusted basis, while the yearly index for fish and seafood increased by 6.2%. The index for frozen fish and seafood was up 12.0% year-over-year, while the processed fish and seafood index grew 7.5% and the fresh fish and seafood index rose 5.5%. Current data shows that overall seafood prices are rising faster than their 20-year historical average.

Overall seafood prices are rising in 2026 due to a combination of severe supply constraints for popular species, new trade tariffs, and high logistics costs driven by geopolitical tensions.

The U.S. seafood market, which relies on imports for approximately 80% of consumption, has been notably impacted by tariffs on key trade partners such as India and China. India is a top supplier of frozen shrimp to the U.S., while China provides processed salmon, tilapia, and various crustaceans.

In addition to the tariffs, ongoing geopolitical tensions have impacted critical shipping routes, leading to higher insurance and transportation fees for many seafood products, contributing to the increase in prices.

5 Monthly Consumer Price Index - Fish and Seafood April 2025 through April 2026



Dairy

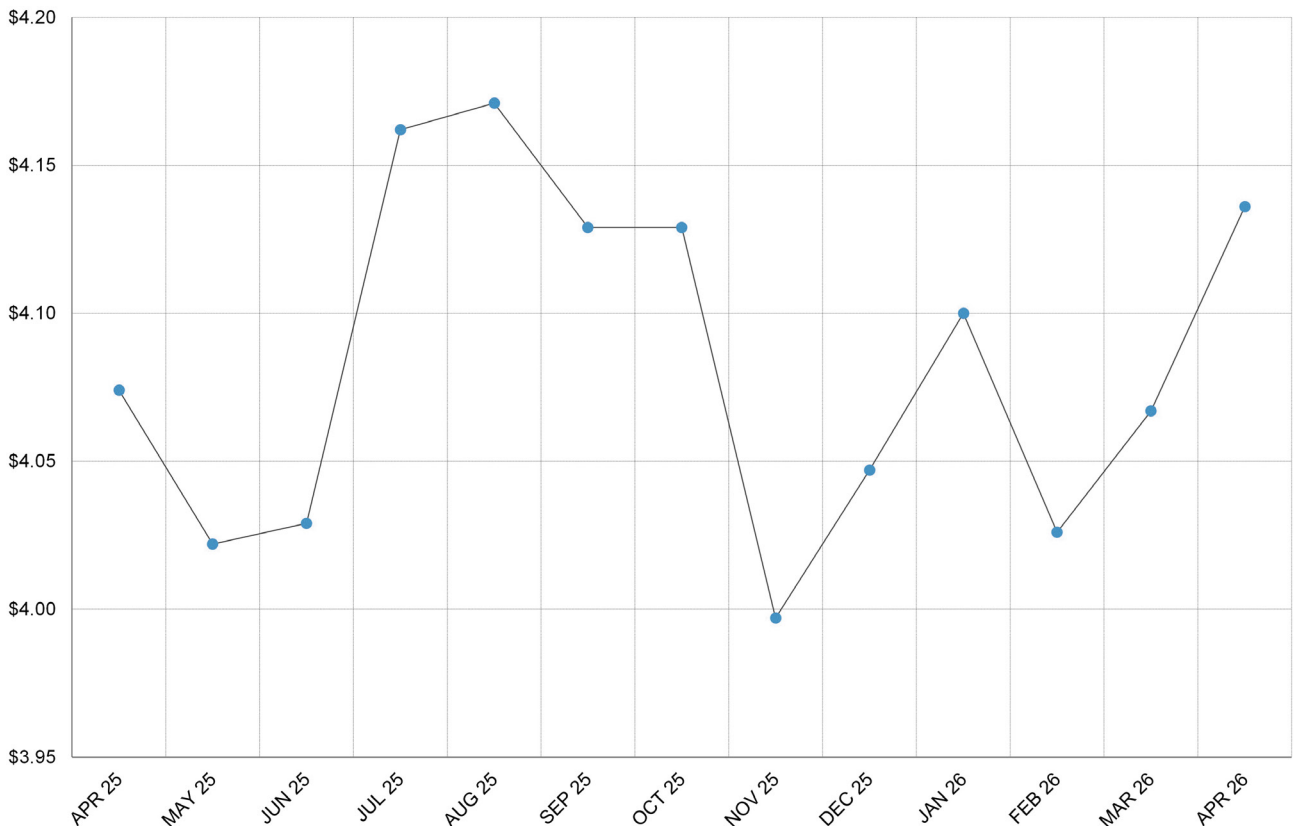
USDA retail prices for whole, fortified milk averaged \$4.14 per gallon in April 2026, increasing from the average of \$4.07 per gallon posted in the prior year. During the same period, cheddar cheese prices increased from \$5.74 to \$6.03 per pound, while ice cream increased from \$6.22 to \$6.24 per half gallon.

The USDA estimates total U.S. milk production for 2026 at 235.3 billion pounds, which represents a record high and an increase of 1.5% over 2025 figures. Production for other dairy products is also on the rise, with total cheese production up 1.2% year-over-year and butter production up 1.2%. The growth in production is primarily attributed to an expanding dairy herd, which is projected to average 9.61 million heads this year compared to 9.49 million heads in 2025.

Despite the increase in production, demand for dairy products – particularly cheese – from both domestic and overseas customers remains robust, placing upward pressure on prices. Per the USDA, the month of March 2026 set an all-time single-month record for cheese exports, with 63,435 metric tons exported, a 29% increase year-over-year. The total dairy export value for the fiscal year 2026 is now projected at \$9.8 billion, a \$500 million increase from previous estimates.

Overall, the USDA expects dairy prices to increase modestly this year, by 0.8%, as increased supplies are helping to keep pace with strong demand. Additionally, while demand for cheese remains strong, fluid milk consumption rates continue to decline due to the popularity of milk alternatives, offsetting any significant increases in prices at the retail level.

6 Average Monthly Milk Retail Prices - Fresh, Whole, Fortified Per Gallon April 2025 through April 2026



Sugar

Per the USDA, domestic raw sugar prices averaged \$0.3600 per pound in April 2026, down 4% from the April 2025 price of \$0.3744 per pound. Sugar prices have been dropping as the world is on track to produce more sugar than it consumes this season.

Global production is forecast at approximately 189.3 million tons – a record high output – due to the recovery of sugar production in the growing regions of India and Thailand following adverse weather patterns. In the U.S. alone, the state of Louisiana is forecast to produce a record 2.197 million short tons, raw value (“STRV”), marking its sixth consecutive year of growth, while Florida is projected to produce 2.082 million STRV, an 8% increase from last year.

Consumption of sugar continues to decline in the U.S., with consumption down 4.4% over the past two years as Americans opt for healthier eating patterns. The popularity of GLP-1 medications has also led to lower demand. Additionally, many consumers are turning to alternatives such as stevia, agave nectar, and monk fruit in place of sugar, with USDA analysts estimating a 9% increase in consumption of alternative sweeteners from 2025 to 2026 alone.



Corn

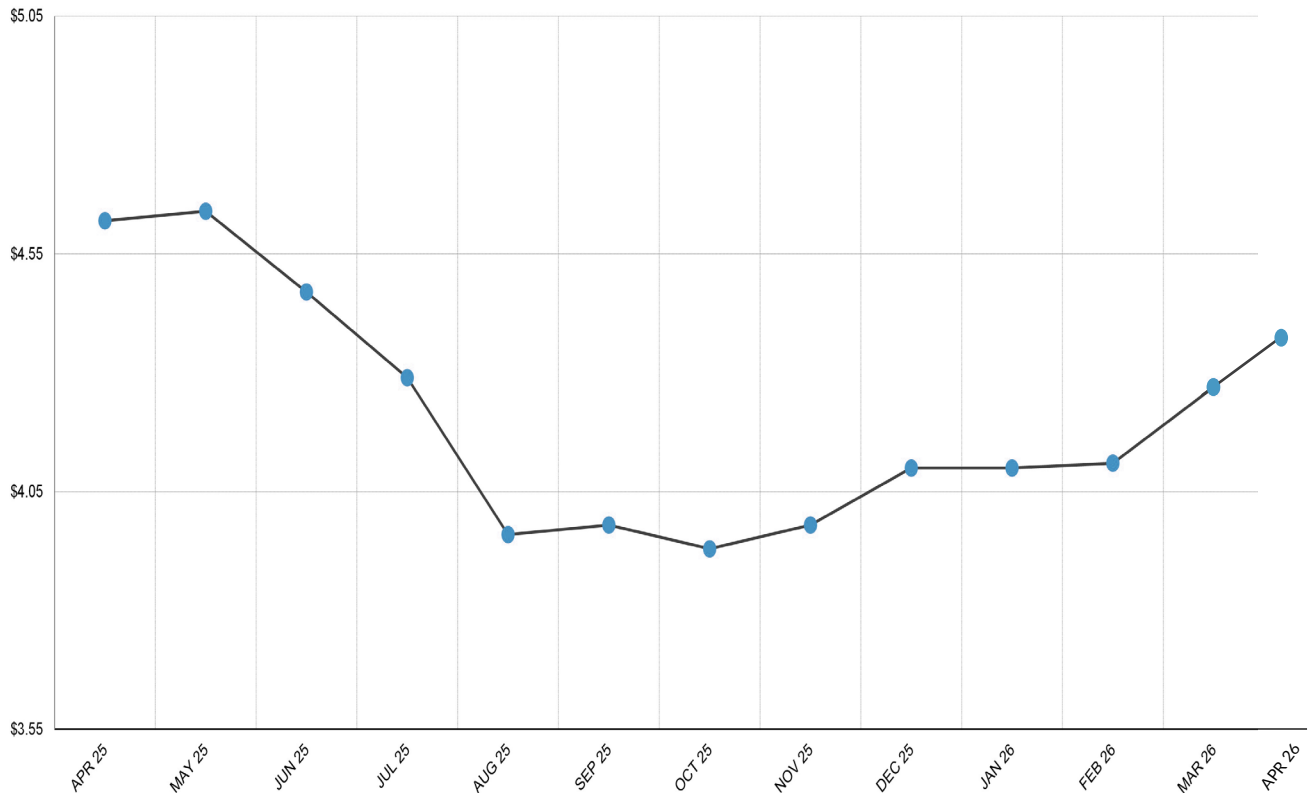
Prices for U.S. #2 Yellow Corn was \$4.31 per bushel in April 2026, down from \$4.57 per bushel in April 2025 but above the price of \$4.27 per bushel in March 2026. Per the USDA, corn prices are showing stability at lower levels compared to previous years, with projections of a season-average farm price of \$4.20 per bushel for the 2025/26 year.

The U.S. is the top producer of corn in the world, accounting for nearly 35% of total annual output. The USDA predicts a 7% decrease in corn production, or approximately 15.8 billion bushels, for the 2026/27 cycle as farmers have shifted

approximately 4.8 million acres away from corn crops. Margins have been challenged by rising fertilizer and energy costs due to ongoing geopolitical tensions, which have led farmers to reduce their acreage amounts. Despite the lower crop yields, however, the U.S. maintains substantial global stocks of approximately 2.2 billion bushels, which is expected to insulate the industry from any significant price increases in the near future.

Globally, corn production for the 2025/2026 marketing year is projected to reach approximately 1.3 billion metric tons, continuing a trend of record-high global output, according to USDA Foreign Agricultural Service data.

7 U.S. #2 Yellow Corn - Price Per Bushel - April 2025 through April 2026



Cocoa and Coffee

COCOA

According to the USDA, global raw cocoa prices have dropped nearly 60% from their record highs of 2024 and 2025. Global cocoa prices reached historic peaks of over \$11,000 per metric ton in late 2024 due to severe crop shortfalls in Ivory Coast and Ghana. Prices have since retreated, trading between \$3,100 and \$4,300 per metric ton as of early May 2026.

While the weather patterns that caused shortages have since abated, overall stock levels remain low. As a result, retail prices for chocolate and candy are expected to remain elevated in 2026, with a projected 8.1% increase through year-end.

Interestingly, while health-conscious U.S. consumers have steered away from simple sugars and corn syrup, chocolate consumption remains high, particularly for dark chocolate, which many consumers perceive to be a healthier option. The recent focus on premium, high-cacao dark chocolate bars (some with over 70% cacao), which contain less sugar per serving than traditional milk chocolate, has also driven cocoa prices upward.

COFFEE

The coffee industry has been volatile in recent months. As mentioned previously, global benchmark prices for coffee have declined from recent highs, but U.S. retail prices were up 18.5% in April 2026 year-over-year. According to the USDA, this pricing discrepancy stems from a variety of factors, including increased domestic consumption, higher roasting costs, and the effects of recent trade policies with regard to imports.

Within the U.S., the retail cost of coffee currently averages \$9.46 to \$9.72 per pound, depending on the geographical area. Prices have more than doubled in some markets from pre-pandemic levels in 2020, when coffee averaged \$4.17 per pound.

Per the USDA, while worldwide production is technically projected at a record 178.8 million bags, sharp increases in consumption rates – particularly in the U.S. – is expected to drop global ending stocks for a fifth consecutive year down to 20.1 million bags. Additionally, severe droughts in Brazil's Minas Gerais region have reduced premium Arabica output by 4.7%, resulting in a shortage of the coffee type preferred by U.S. consumers. As a result, domestic coffee prices will likely continue to rise.



Food Reference Sheet

USDA RETAIL PRICES FOR DAIRY PRODUCTS

	April 2026	March 2026	April 2025
Milk, fresh, whole, fortified (\$/gallon)	\$4.136	\$4.067	\$4.074
American processed cheese (\$/pound)	\$4.690	\$4.783	\$4.987
Cheddar cheese, natural (\$/pound)	\$6.029	\$5.970	\$5.743



Food Reference Sheet

USDA CHOICE BEEF VALUES, PRICE SPREAD, AND ALL-FRESH RETAIL VALUE DOLLARS PER POUND OF RETAIL EQUIVALENT

	April 2026	March 2026	April 2025
Retail Value	\$10.473	\$10.085	\$8.832
Wholesale Value	\$5.754	\$5.897	\$5.123
Net Farm Value	\$5.553	\$5.351	\$4.888
Farm to Retail Spread	\$4.920	\$4.734	\$3.944
Wholesale to Retail Spread	\$4.719	\$4.188	\$3.709
Farm to Wholesale Spread	\$2.010	\$5.460	\$2.350
All-Fresh Beef Retail Value	\$9.642	\$9.545	\$8.501

USDA PORK VALUES AND SPREADS DOLLARS PER POUND OF RETAIL EQUIVALENT

	April 2026	March 2026	April 2025
Retail Value	\$4.892	\$4.871	\$4.907
Wholesale Value	\$1.748	\$1.832	\$1.830
Net Farm Value	\$1.163	\$1.366	\$1.090
Wholesale to Retail Spread	\$3.144	\$3.039	\$3.077
Farm to Wholesale Spread	\$0.598	\$0.669	\$0.740
Farm to Retail Spread	\$3.742	\$3.708	\$3.807

USDA RETAIL PRICES FOR POULTRY CUTS DOLLARS PER POUND OF RETAIL EQUIVALENT

	April 2026	March 2026	April 2025
Retail Broiler Composite	\$2.389	\$2.406	\$2.448
Wholesale Broiler Composite	\$0.894	\$0.847	\$1.170
Wholesale to Retail Broiler Spread	\$1.495	\$1.559	\$1.278
Chicken, Fresh, Whole	\$2.026	\$2.033	\$2.059
Chicken, Legs, Bone-In	\$1.712	\$1.739	\$1.789
Chicken, Boneless Breast	\$4.168	\$4.172	\$4.180



Experience

GA Group has worked with and appraised many large and well-known companies within the food service industries. While our clients remain confidential, they have included meat processors and distributors, seafood distributors, leading fresh and processed fruit and vegetable distributors, and specialty and prepared food distributors servicing restaurants, retailers, food service companies, and wholesalers across the U.S.

GA Group has appraised companies such as the following:

- One of the nation's largest independent canning and frozen food companies and one of the world's largest producers of fresh and packaged fruits and vegetables.
- Processors of both conventional and organic frozen vegetables, and manufacturers and distributors of frozen and canned vegetable and fruit products.
- A major dairy marketing cooperative that offers cheese, butter, non-fat dry milk, aseptic, and other dairy products.
- A producer of cheese and dairy powders, grated hard Italian cheeses, dairy concentrates, seasonings, and similar products for the foodservice industry.
- A leading manufacturer of private label soft drinks, including juice, carbonated soft drinks, sport drinks, and other beverages.
- A manufacturer and distributor of desserts, sour cream products, and dips.
- A processor and distributor of milk and other dairy products such as cultured yogurt, sour cream, cream, cream cheese, and ice cream.
- A seafood distributor maintaining its own chain of restaurants, offering a wide variety of frozen seafood items including lobster, crab, and scallops.
- Multiple importers and distributors of fresh and frozen seafood products to large national food wholesalers.
- Leading portion-controlled beef, pork, lamb, and poultry cutting operations designated for the casual dining and quick serve restaurant segments.
- A distributor of sweeteners, non-dairy creamers, croutons, crunchy toppings, stuffing, breadcrumbs/cracker meals, foodservice stuffing mixes, snacks, and snack mixes.
- A producer and distributor of ice cream and related frozen goods.
- Vertically-integrated producers of high-quality coffees for the restaurant and supermarket industries.
- A producer and distributor of various fruit juices, as well as vitamin-enriched water and cocktail mixers.
- Producers and distributors of desserts, such as frozen cheesecakes, gourmet cakes, mini desserts, and brownies.
- A processor, packager, and distributor of nuts such as pecans, cashews, almonds, and peanuts.
- An importer, producer, and bottler of olive oils, vinegars, and specialty foods.
- Distributors of specialty food products, including pasta, sauces, marinades, and fine artisan cheeses.
- A processor and distributor of snack and specialty foods, such as roasted nuts and seeds, snack mixes, sesame sticks, candies, and dried fruit.

GA Group has been involved in the liquidation of several food processing and distribution companies, including South Pacific Specialties, LLC; Metropolitan Foods; BSB, Inc.; New Sam Woo Trading; Markel Johnson; and Gulf Shrimp Company, as well as food processing, storage, and distribution equipment for companies such as Winn Dixie, Maui Pineapple Company, Humboldt Creamery, Loeb Equipment, and Webvan. Food processing, storage, and distribution equipment liquidated by GA Group included blow molding lines, bagging machines, bottle conveyors, milk separators and pasteurizers, filling lines, pizza manufacturing lines, vacuum sealers, freezers and coolers, stainless steel tanks, liquid lines, and frozen and refrigerated box trucks.



Monitor Information

The *Food Monitor* relates information covering most commodity food products, including industry trends, market pricing, and their relation to the valuation process. GA Group internally tracks recovery ranges for beef, pork, poultry, dairy products, seafood, coffee, sugar, corn, and fruits and vegetables in all price points, but we are mindful to adhere to your request for a simple reference document. Should you need any further information or wish to discuss recovery ranges for a particular segment, please feel free to contact your GA Group Business Development Officer.

The information contained herein is based on a composite of GA Group's industry expertise, contact with industry personnel, industry publications, liquidation and appraisal experience, and data compiled from a variety of well-respected sources believed to be reliable. GA Group does not make any representation or warranty, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this issue. Neither GA Group nor any of its representatives shall be liable for use of any of the information in this issue or any errors therein or omissions therefrom.



Meet Our Team

APPRAISAL & VALUATION TEAM

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Bill Soncini
National Sales Manager
Managing Director
Midwest Region
(773) 495-4534
[CONTACT](#)



David Seiden
Managing Director
Mid-Atlantic / Southeast Regions
(404) 242-0683
[CONTACT](#)



Ryan Mulcunry
Managing Director
Northeast / New York / Canada Regions
(857) 231-1711
[CONTACT](#)



Akilah Moore
Director, Business Development
Midwest Region
(708) 921-1262
[CONTACT](#)



Jennie Kim
Managing Director
Western Region
(818) 974-0602
[CONTACT](#)



Chase Fountain
Vice President
Mid-Atlantic Region
(860) 751-2677
[CONTACT](#)



Nick Disimile
Director, Business Development
Southwest Region
(516) 707-7040
[CONTACT](#)

OPERATIONS

Chad P. Yutka, ASA
Executive Managing Director
Corporate Advisory Valuation Services
(312) 909-6078
[CONTACT](#)

Kristi Faherty
Managing Director
(617) 270-5808
[CONTACT](#)

Natalie Baharun
Associate Director
(818) 746-9384
[CONTACT](#)

Kim Gatto
Senior Writer
(508) 330-5548
[CONTACT](#)

ASSET DISPOSITION TEAM

Scott Carpenter
CEO
Retail, Merchant &
Industrial Solutions
[CONTACT](#)

Paul Brown
Senior Vice President
Industrial Solutions
[CONTACT](#)

REAL ESTATE TEAM

Michael Jerbich
President
GA Real Estate
(312) 894-7621
[CONTACT](#)

Peter Lynch
Principal
GA Real Estate
(626) 213-3999
[CONTACT](#)



About GA Group

GA Group is a privately held financial services company offering a comprehensive set of tailored solutions to meet our clients' diverse needs. Our experts value, monetize, lend against, or acquire assets across a broad range of sectors from both healthy and distressed companies.

GA Group and its predecessors are celebrating 50 years of customer service, and the company's leadership has over 100 years of collective experience in the industry. GA Group is majority-owned by funds managed by Oaktree Capital Management, L.P. To learn more, visit www.gagroup.com.



MONITOR FOOD
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WESTLAKE VILLAGE (HQ)

2829 Townsgate Road,
Suite 103
Westlake Village, CA 91361

ATLANTA

3424 Peachtree Road NE,
Suite 2200
Atlanta, GA 30326

BOSTON

140 Kendrick Street,
Building C West
Needham, MA 02494

CHICAGO

1 N. Franklin,
Suite 1150
Chicago, IL 60606

DALLAS

910 S. Pearl Expy.,
Suite 21
Dallas, TX 75201

AUSTRALIA

Level 29, Chifley Tower
2 Chifley Square
Sydney, NSW 2000
Australia

**GA EUROPE
COÖPERATIEF U.A.**

Postbus 175
5340 AD Oss,
Netherlands

