

The Star : Bread prices set to go up

Written by Administrator

Friday, 11 September 2009 16:06 - Last Updated Friday, 11 September 2009 16:08

KUALA LUMPUR: The price of bread, the staple breakfast of most Malaysians, is likely to increase with rising wheat flour prices. Since April, the price of wheat flour has increased by a whopping 80%. A 25kg sack of non-general purpose (GP) wheat flour, which is used to make bread, is now priced at RM59.30, against RM33.60 in April. Last month, it was fixed at RM44.30. Non-GP wheat flour is not a controlled item but the price of white bread, which is made from this type of flour, is controlled. The other type of wheat flour is general-purpose flour, commonly used for making cakes and cookies. This type of flour is price-controlled. Local bread manufacturers said they were caught in a dilemma, as they cannot raise the price of white bread, a controlled item, which is the main product of bakeries. Bakery Manufacturers Association president Mashood Wahab said 60% of items produced at bakeries were white bread, with the remaining products being high-fibre, wholemeal and buns which were not price-controlled. Never in the history of the industry has prices of wheat flour increased in such a dramatic manner, he said at his bread factory in Jalan Sungai Besi yesterday. Mashood, who is a director of Federal Bakery, a reputed bread manufacturer, said the price of a loaf of white sandwich bread was now being sold at RM1.20 (small) and RM2 (big) by members of the association. He said for every small loaf of bread produced, manufacturers were losing about 45 sen with the price increase. He said with the current price of wheat flour, the loaf should be sold at RM1.60 for the manufacturers to at least break even. The price of wheat flour has spiralled over the past half year with lower production due mainly to the drought in Australia. According to statistics, Malaysia imports about 1.2 million tonnes of the grain a year. Mashood said the association would meet Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry officials next week to find a solution. I hope something will come out of the discussions, otherwise some bakeries may close down, while others might have to reduce their workforce. Flour Millers Association of Malaysia chairman Teh Wee Chye said they would meet Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Mohd Shafie Apdal on Tuesday.

PRICE-CONTROLLED ITEM

General-purpose wheat flour

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Used in making: cakes, kuih, roti jala, roti canai

White bread made from non-general purpose wheat flour, a non-controlled item

NOT CONTROLLED

Non general-purpose wheat flour

Price of a 25-kg sack up from RM33.60 to RM44.30 and then to RM59.30.

Used in making: white sandwich bread, high-fibre and wholemeal bread and buns, yellow noodles

Atta flour

Price increased from RM1.40 per kg to RM2.40 (commercial price)

Used for making: chapati, puree

Rava flour (semolina)

Price up from RM1.60 per kg to RM2.60 (commercial price)

Used for making: thosai, kesari

Rice flour

Price up from RM1.14 per kg to RM1.29

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(commercial price) </p><p><u>Used for making:
</u>puttu mayam
appam
bee hoon </p>◆