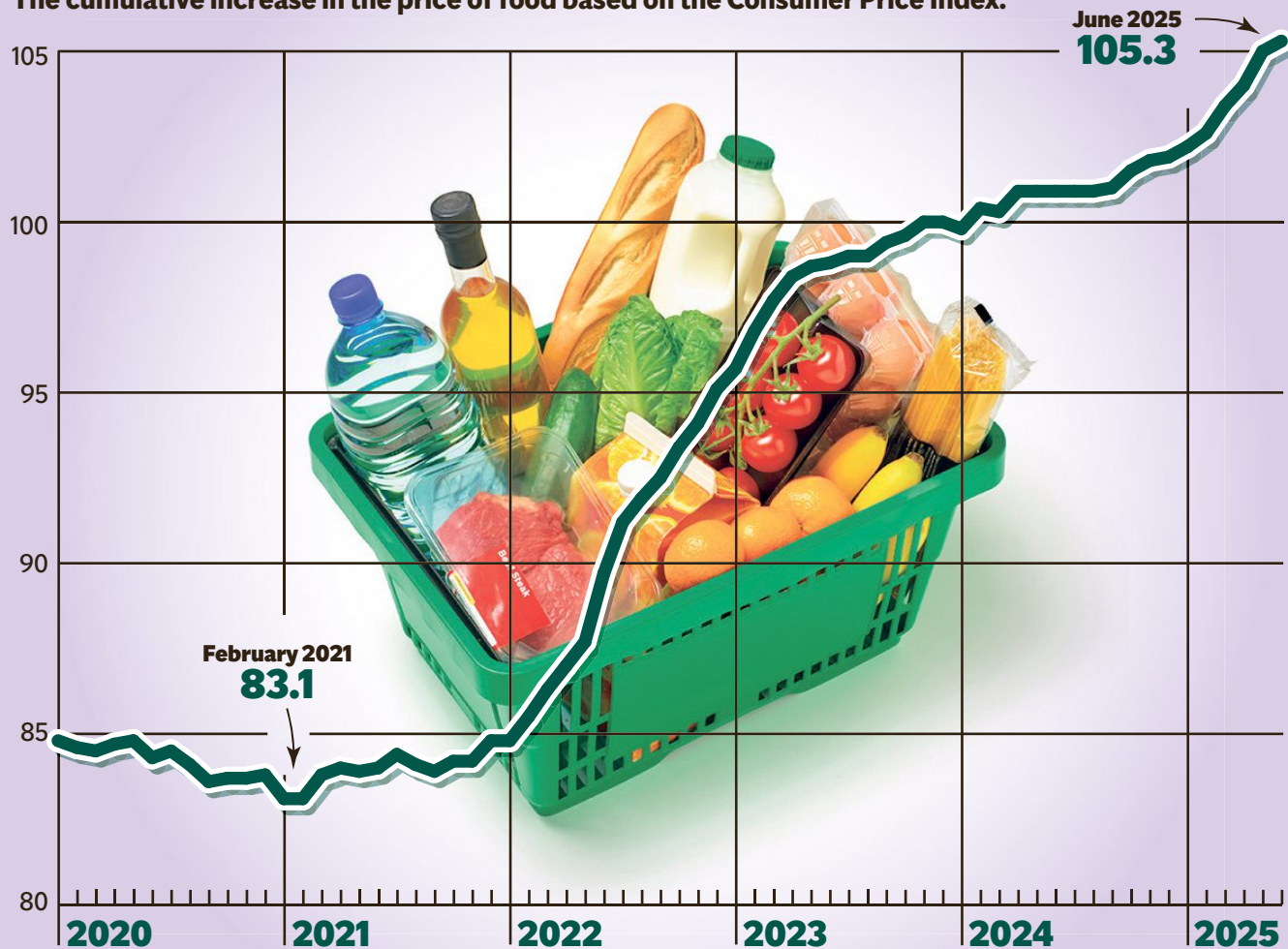


THE INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES SINCE THE START OF 2020

The cumulative increase in the price of food based on the Consumer Price Index.



Source: Central Statistics Office. The baseline figure of 100 on the graph represents food prices in December 2023. This means that a representative basket of goods has increased from 83.1% of the baseline in February 2021 to 105.3% of the baseline in June 2025.

How the price of some common grocery products has increased over the past 12 months

	Striploin steak (kg) €28.63 ↑ €5.26
	White sliced pan (88g) €1.67 ↑ 6c
	Potatoes (2.5kg) €3.81 ↑ 29c
	Cheddar cheese (kg) €11.34 ↑ 95c
	Butter (lb) €4.83 ↑ €1.10

Supermarkets deny price gouging as minister vows action on high food bills

New powers will be given to the consumer watchdog

**SENAN MOLONY,
CHARLIE WESTON
AND MARGARET DONNELLY**

Supermarkets have hit back at accusations of price gouging, insisting their prices are competitive and profit margins are low.

It comes after new figures show grocery prices continue to rise, exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis for families.

Some meat prices are up 22pc in the past year alone, with butter up by 30pc in a year. Junior retail minister Alan Dillon acknowledged “the rising cost of groceries and its impact on consumers”, and promised action including new fines.

“The Government intends to provide the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) with new additional powers to impose administrative financial sanctions in respect of breaches,” Mr Dillon said.

The Government this week rebuffed proposed Social Democrats legislation that would force major grocery retailers to reveal their profits in Ireland. There is no intention to reinstate price controls on staples, such as bread, milk, tea and butter, which were imposed in the past.

Social Democrats TD Jennifer

Whitmore said in the Dáil that consumers “have a right to know whether surging grocery prices reflect genuine input cost increases or blatant price gouging”.

But Retail Ireland, a division of employers’ group Ibec which represents supermarkets, rejected accusations of price gouging and said its members remain firmly committed to delivering value and choice for consumers.

“Although pricing decisions rest with individual retailers, the high level of competition in the Irish market continues to deliver strong value for consumers,” they said.

Retail Ireland insisted that despite an increase in some categories recently, Irish food inflation trends are below the EU average. It said a 2023 CCPC report confirmed the Irish grocery market remains highly competitive.

Profit margins in grocery retail “are low and recent price increases are overwhelmingly due to cost increases further up the supply chain”, it said.

Overall prices were up by 1.8pc in the year to June, the latest inflation figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) show.

But food and non-alcoholic beverage prices are rising at more than twice the level of general inflation – up by 4.6pc in the year.

The cost of a pound of butter is now up by €1.10 in the year, a 30pc surge in cost.

Irish cheddar cheese is almost €1 dearer per kilogramme, with two litres of full-fat milk up by 27c.



Junior retail minister Alan Dillon is promising financial sanctions

The cost of striploin steak is up more than €5 per kilogramme in the past year to €28.63, or 22.5pc.

Even cheaper cuts of meat have jumped in price. Diced beef is now €13.26 per kilo, a rise of €2.42 in a year. This works out at a surge of 22pc.

A white sliced pan (88g) is now 6c dearer than last year at €1.67. Irish cheddar cheese now costs €11.34 per kilogramme – up by 95c in the year.

A pint of stout is now just over €6, the CSO said – which is up from €5.79 last year.

“The only visible increase to food price to families is the price on the shelf, so it is important to understand the break-

down of the price of staple food from farm to shelf,” Mr Dillon said.

“The food supply chain is a complex global system that requires price fairness and transparency from farm to fork.

“Ultimately, the Government can only intervene if there is evidence of unfair market practices.”

But he said he was engaging with Agriculture Minister Martin Heydon, asking for the Agri-Food Regulator to determine market analysis and pricing trends across the supply chain for groceries.

Meanwhile, several major retailers – including Life Style Sports, DID Electrical, Rathwood Home and Garden World, and most recently, Boots Ireland – have recently been prosecuted by the CCPC for misleading discount practices during seasonal sales.

These cases marked the “first wave of enforcement under new pricing transparency laws”, Mr Dillon said, although none involved food retailers.

Mr Dillon said, however, that Tesco Ireland had last year admitted to breaching consumer law by failing to display unit pricing on Clubcard promotional labels, undermining consumers’ ability to make informed choices.

He said the cases taken by the CCPC also established that any advertised discount must be based on the lowest price in the previous 30 days.

“These actions reflect this Government’s strong commitment to protecting consumers,” he said.

However, he also said businesses in

Ireland are generally free to set their own prices, “once they do so independently and in compliance with consumer protection law”.

“While inflation is stabilising in some areas, food prices remain stubbornly high. I am determined to understand why,” he said.

He has requested an update to a high-level analysis of the Irish grocery retail sector, and the CCPC will report to Government in coming weeks.

However, he added: “All aspects of the supply chain have faced increased costs of doing business in recent years stemming from global pressures such as increases in feed, energy, fertiliser prices and increased labour costs.”

Irish Farmers’ Association president Francie Gorman said: “There is full transparency around what farmers get paid for what they produce.

“Nor is there any dispute about the increase in input costs, particularly in the last three years. Food was far too cheap for far too long.”

President of the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association, Denis Drennan, said politicians and corporate retailers had together fostered “a fantasy” at consumer level about the astronomical costs of a historic transition to low-emissions environmentally sustainable farming.

“Getting the food of the mandated standard to the fridge of your local supermarket has a cost – economically and environmentally – and that cost has to be paid,” he said.