



CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

新加坡消费者协会

செய்துபுது பவனிலுறமுதல் பவகிடு

PERSATUAN PENGGUNA-PENGGUNA SINGAPURA

170 Ghim Moh Road, #05-01, Ulu Pandan Community Building, Singapore 279621

Tel: 64631811 (HOTLINE) 64611882 (MEMBERSHIP) Fax: 64679055

email: complaints@case.org.sg & members@case.org.sg

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MEDIA RELEASE

CASE FOUND PRICES OF FRAGRANT RICE IN SUPERMARKET VARIED, SOME OF SUCH PRICE DIFFERENCES CAN BE AS HIGH AS 48%

In view of rising inflation, the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) conducted a survey during the first week of May to check on rice prices. Since price increase of rice is of great concern to consumers, we decided to conduct a special survey on prices of rice. We noticed that fragrant rice is very popular among consumers. Therefore, the focus of this survey is on fragrant rice only. By conducting this survey, we wish to give consumers an overview of the pricing of fragrant rice sold in Singapore. In addition, it is noticeable that pricing of fragrant rice is not consistent across different supermarkets/hypermarkets and the price differences can be huge.

To obtain a more comprehensive set of survey results, CASE randomly chose 1 to 2 supermarkets/hypermarkets each from 5 zones in Singapore: North, South, East, West and Central. They are namely Carrefour at Plaza Singapura, Cold Storage at Harbourfront Centre, Giant at Vivocity, Mustafa at Little India, NTUC FairPrice at Clementi Central, Prime at Hougang Ave 1, Sheng Siong at Ten Mile Junction, and Shop 'N' Save at Toa Payoh Central.

A total of 10 brands of fragrant rice were surveyed across 8 different supermarkets/hypermarkets. This includes both housebrands and non housebrands.

Please refer to table 1 below for the list of fragrant rice surveyed as well as the range of

prices. (Note: All prices listed refer to the normal selling price or regular price, and they are subjected to promotions and discounts depending on the retailer).

Table 1: List of fragrant rice survey and the range of prices surveyed from supermarkets and hypermarkets (Highlighted brands are housebrands).

S/N	Brand	Range of prices (5kg)		% difference	Range of prices (10kg)		% difference
		Lowest	Highest		Lowest	Highest	
1	Golden Peony Fragrant Rice	\$9.00	\$12.80	42.22%	\$24.80	-	-
2	Golden Phoenix Fragrant Rice	\$13.30	\$15.00	12.78%	\$18.80	\$28.00	48.93%
3	Golden Pineapple Fragrant Rice	\$9.64	\$10.50	8.92%	\$19.00	\$19.60	3.15%
4	New Moon Premium Fragrant Rice	\$10.20	\$13.20	29.41%	\$18.90	\$25.50	34.92%
5	Royal Umbrella Fragrant Rice	\$13.80	\$15.00	8.69%	\$26.80	\$27.30	1.86%
6	Songhe Thai Fragrant Rice	\$11.20	\$14.85	32.58%	\$21.85	\$28.65	31.12%
	Golden Peony Fragrant Rice	\$7.50	-	-	-	-	-
	Golden Phoenix Fragrant Rice	\$6.60	-	-	-	-	-
	Golden Pineapple Fragrant Rice	\$8.75	\$9.10	4.00%	-	-	-
	Golden Phoenix Fragrant Rice	\$7.50	-	-	-	-	-

There are 2 main parts to Table 1 shown above:

1. The range of prices for different brand of fragrant rice for a 5kg pack and 10kg pack were shown. For instance, for Golden Peony Fragrant Rice, it would mean that the price range for a 5kg pack is between \$9.00 to \$12.80. For a 10kg pack, only the lowest price is stated. This is because Golden Peony Fragrant Rice is found in the shelf of only 2 supermarkets among those surveyed, and it was observed that the regular price of a 10kg pack is \$24.80 in both supermarkets.

2. The percentage difference of the lowest price and highest price surveyed for a particular brand of fragrant rice is calculated. With reference to Golden Peony Fragrant Rice again, the percentage difference for a 5kg pack between the prices surveyed in various supermarkets/hypermarts is 42.22%.

Table 1 is also presented in the following 3 charts for comparison purposes. (For detailed prices of fragrant rice surveyed in the supermarkets/hypermarts, please refer to enclosed Annex A.)

Figure 1. To show the range of prices of non housebrand fragrant rice (5kg)

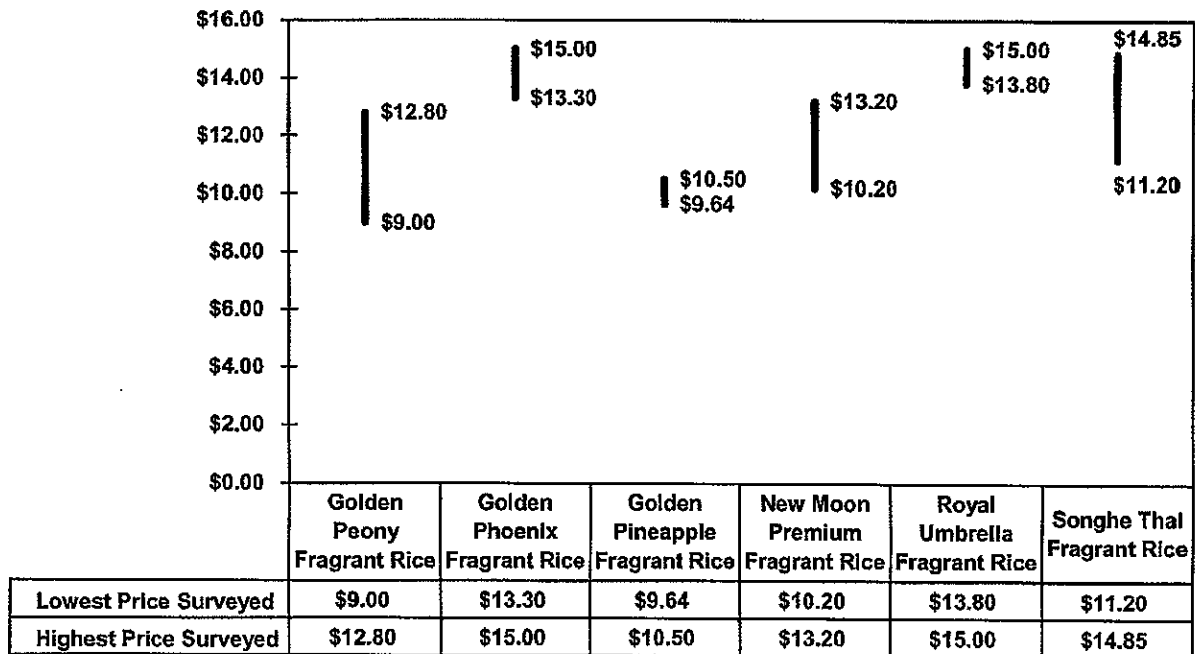


Figure 2. To show the range of prices of non housebrand fragrant rice (10kg)

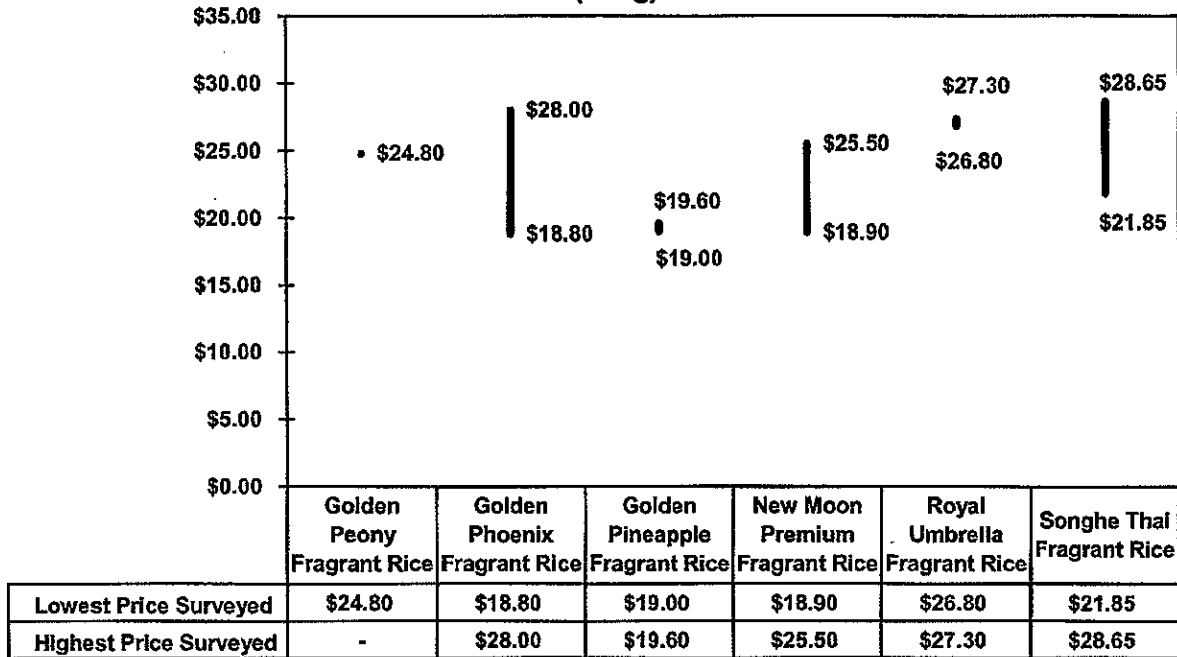
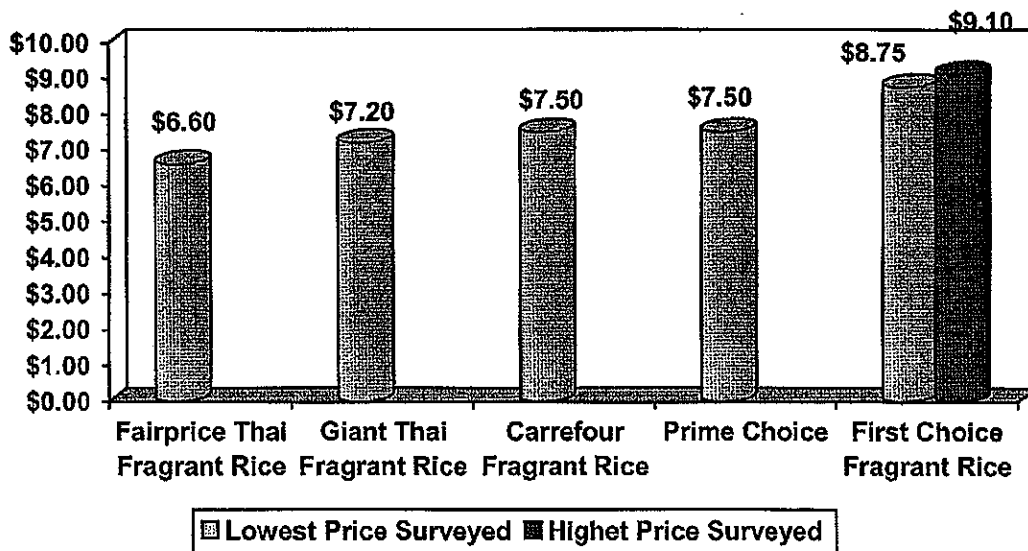


Figure 3. To show the range of prices for housebrand fragrant rice (5kg)



(Note: For figure 3, prices for housebrand fragrant rice – First Choice Fragrant Rice, is available in 3 supermarkets/hypermarket among those surveyed and there are price variations. For the other 4 housebrand fragrant rice, there are no price variations as they are each available in only one of the supermarket surveyed in the list.)

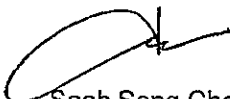
From our findings, CASE notes the following:

1. Prices of fragrant rice in supermarkets and hypermarts are very competitive, and they carry out promotions from time to time. With sales promotions and discounts, it is observed that prices generally vary slightly in each supermarket/hypermart.
2. Housebrands fragrant rice are generally cheaper than non housebrands fragrant rice.
3. We found that the lowest housebrand fragrant rice (5kg pack) is Fairprice Thai Fragrant Rice with a regular price of \$6.60 while the lowest non housebrand fragrant rice (5kg pack) is Golden Peony Fragrant Rice with a regular price of \$9.00 (Cold Storage Harbourfront Centre).
4. Both Songhe Thai Fragrant Rice and Royal Umbrella Fragrant Rice are available in all the supermarkets surveyed, and they are among the more expensive brands of rice in comparison with the other 8 brands surveyed.
5. Regular prices for Royal Umbrella Rice that are found to be available in the shelf of the supermarkets are quite consistent in the prices surveyed. (5kg at \$13.80 and 10kg at \$26.80).
6. It is noted that the regular prices of the same brand of fragrant rice could vary from one supermarket to another. For instance, we found that Prices of Songhe Thai Fragrant Rice tend to vary greatly, ranging from \$11.20 to \$14.85 for a 5kg pack, and \$21.85 to \$28.65 for a 10kg pack.

7. CASE also notice that the greatest percentage difference in prices in different supermarket for non housebrand fragrant rice is Golden Peony Fragrant Rice (42.22%) for a 5kg pack and Golden Phoenix Fragrant Rice (48.93%) for a 10kg pack.
8. It is also noted that the percentage differences for non housebrand fragrant rice is the least in Royal Umbrella Fragrant Rice for both 5kg (8.69%) and 10kg (1.86%) pack.
9. CASE does not take into consideration any brands that are out of stock at the time of our survey.

CASE encourages the public not to hoard rice even though rice prices have been increasing. Hoarding rice may force prices up further. As mentioned, as the price or percentage differences in fragrant rice may be huge, consumers should shop around and compare prices so that they can get the better price for their purchases. However, if consumers wish to opt for cheaper alternative, they may wish to go for white rice instead of fragrant rice. We strongly urge all consumers to buy what is required, and all retailers to be transparent in their pricing.

According to UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation experts, world rice prices are forecasted to remain high this year, in spite of a record global crop, because of export restrictions and rising consumption. Prices are expected to remain high, at least until the third quarter of 2008, unless restrictions on exports are eased in the coming months.


Seah Seng Choon
Executive Director
CASE

