

By [Lisa M. Keefe](#) on 3/6/2015

In the 12 months ended in January, the price of meats overall rose 12.6 percent, led by a 19.0 percent increase for beef and veal, USDA reported in its monthly food price index.

Pork prices for the 12-month period were up 7.4 percent and poultry was up just 2 percent.

Compared to December, January's retail beef prices rose 0.1 percent, poultry increased 0.7 percent, but pork prices declined 0.1 percent.

Despite the record-high prices seen for fresh meat and meat products in 2014, overall food price increases were near the 20-year historical average of 2.6 percent. Other food items, such as fresh vegetables, sugars and sweets, and nonalcoholic beverages recorded lower-than-average inflation, or even deflation, USDA said.

### **Price forecasts**

Looking ahead in 2015, USDA dropped its forecast for price increases on pork, to 1.5 to 2.5 from 2 percent to 3 percent last month. The forecast for poultry is for price increases to be around 2.5 to 3.5 percent higher, the same as in December, and retail beef and veal prices still are expected to increase by 5 percent to 6 percent.