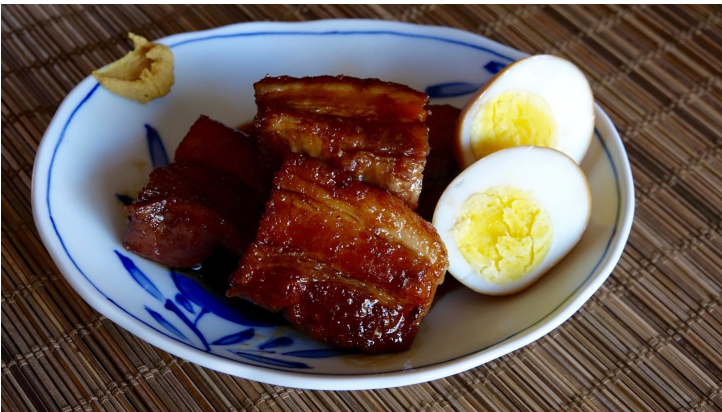


Japan pork costs rise to record as egg prices stay elevated

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Pork reaches a 23-year survey high as egg prices remain elevated, highlighting persistent pressure across Japan's meat and poultry markets



Japan's retail pork and egg prices have reached record or near-record levels in September, adding to pressure on consumers as higher import costs, global pork demand and lingering effects of last year's avian influenza outbreak reshape the country's food market.

The average retail price of pork loin rose to 293 yen per 100 grams in September, the highest level recorded since Japan's agriculture ministry began its survey in August 2003. The latest data underline the sustained strength of the domestic pork market as consumers increasingly turn to locally produced meat.

The average price of a 10-egg pack reached 309 yen during the latest reporting month, matching the record high previously recorded in March, May and June. Egg prices remain elevated as the Japanese market continues to absorb the effects of last year's avian influenza outbreak, while seasonal egg-based products launched by fast-food chains have added to demand.

Pork prices are also being shaped by developments beyond Japan's domestic supply chain. Rising prices for imported pork, partly reflecting the yen's depreciation, have made domestic pork relatively more attractive to consumers. At the same time, stronger pork demand in global markets is adding to the pressure on international supplies and prices.

The latest figures come from the agriculture ministry's monthly retail price survey, which covers 470 stores across Japan, with 10 stores surveyed in each of the country's 47 prefectures. The September survey was conducted from September 7 to 9.

The simultaneous strength in pork and egg prices highlights the different forces influencing Japan's animal-protein markets. Pork is facing a combination of currency-driven import costs and stronger demand for domestic product, while eggs continue to reflect supply disruptions from avian influenza alongside seasonal consumption patterns.