Delivering New Zealand's most affordable protein

As Kiwi households navigate cost-of-living pressures, putting nutritious meals on the table is increasingly challenging. According to Consumer NZ's 2026 survey, 82% of New Zealand households say their food budget is under strain. The survey also found that more than 70% of New Zealand households have changed their shopping behaviour due to rising costs, with many buying more budget brands, purchasing in bulk and cutting back on premium products.

With protein affordability becoming an increasingly important issue for New Zealand households, access to affordable, nutritious protein has never been more important.
For Tegel, these realities are shaping how the business thinks about its role in New Zealand's food system.
"Protein is an essential part of a healthy diet, and chicken remains one of the most affordable and accessible protein choices available to New Zealanders," says Craig Harrison, Tegel's Head of Marketing.
"Not only is it a cost-effective option for families, but it's also a lean, nutritious protein that can be used in countless ways. That's particularly important at a time when household budgets are under pressure."

The price of protein at the supermarket is shaped by two things: where in the world it's sold, and how efficiently it's made. New Zealand's world-renowned beef and lamb command pricing that reflects strong global demand. Chicken, by contrast, is predominantly produced for the domestic market with agile production cycles, highly optimised systems, and a supply chain built for local availability. These factors help support pricing stability and reliable availability for consumers.

It's this combination of efficiency and accessibility that makes chicken such a dependable everyday choice for New Zealand households

Innovation Driven By Consumer Needs

Understanding how New Zealanders shop, cook and eat is central to Tegel's approach to innovation.
For Vicki Goodall, Tegel's Marketing Manager – Innovation & Insights, consumer insights play a critical role in identifying growth opportunities and shaping products that meet evolving needs.
"*We start with people. Our role is to deeply understand consumers and translate those insights into products that make life easier,*" says Goodall.
One of the clearest trends emerging is a shift in behaviour, with consumers becoming more value-conscious and increasingly focused on getting the most from every dollar spent.

"We know many New Zealanders are changing the way they shop due to the cost of living. At the same time, they're looking for products that save time, simplify meal planning and help them feed their families well without sacrificing quality or nutrition."

Helping Families Get More from Every Meal

Tegel's innovation pipeline is increasingly focused on helping families create affordable, nutritious meals with less effort. Central to that is chicken mince, one of the fastest-growing cuts in the category and a product that speaks directly to how families are adapting. As a versatile base ingredient, it can be used across familiar family favourites including spaghetti bolognese, tacos, lasagne and meatballs. Its growth reflects something broader: Kiwi families aren't abandoning the meals they love, they're adapting protein choices to help manage household budgets while maintaining favourite meal occasions.

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"Chicken is incredibly versatile," says Harrison. *"Whether it's a stir-fry, homemade pizza, lasagne or a quick weeknight dinner, it remains one of the easiest and most affordable proteins for families to build meals around."*

Alongside staple products, Tegel's Take Outs range reflects growing demand for convenient, restaurant-inspired meal solutions that help families enjoy a takeaway-style experience at home for less.

Convenience is also a growing priority. Consumers are increasingly looking for products that are easy to prepare, work across multiple meal occasions and help reduce the daily challenge of deciding what's for dinner.

Products such as Tegel Meal Maker reflect this trend, providing a convenient, ready-to-use protein option that helps families create quick and nutritious meals with minimal preparation.

"*Our goal is to keep people inspired,*" says Goodall. *"People are busy, and they're tired of constantly thinking of new meal ideas. We want to make nutritious eating simple, convenient and achievable."*

Affordability Without Compromise

While affordability is a key consideration for many households, value must be balanced with quality, safety and trust.

As New Zealand's leading chicken producer, Tegel invests in maintaining the standards consumers expect. All Tegel chicken is produced in New Zealand and is SPCA-certified across its broiler and free-range supply, giving people confidence in the quality and welfare credentials behind the products they buy.

"We know people want products that are affordable, but they also want to trust the food they're putting on their family's table," says Harrison.

Looking Ahead

As consumer expectations continue to evolve, Tegel sees further opportunities to innovate around affordability, convenience and nutrition.

Whether it's helping families make protein go further, creating new meal solutions or providing inspiration for everyday cooking, the focus remains on supporting New Zealanders through changing times.

Chicken has always played an important role on Kiwi dinner tables

"Chicken has always played an important role on Kiwi dinner tables," says Craig. "Our job is to continue finding new ways to make it easier, more affordable and more convenient for families to enjoy"

As cost pressures continue to shape household spending decisions, protein affordability is fast becoming one of the most pressing questions facing New Zealand's food system. Tegel's response is simple: continue innovating so that quality, nutritious protein remains within reach for New Zealand families today and into the future.