

Food Prices Down Slightly in the First Quarter of 2012

This quarter's Stretch Your Dollar menu and recipes are available on fillyourplate.org

Arizona, April 12, 2012 – Arizona retail food prices at the supermarket are down slightly in the first quarter of 2012, according to the latest Arizona Farm Bureau Federation Marketbasket Survey. The informal survey shows the total cost of 16 basic grocery items was \$50.79, down 60 cents or about 1% below the fourth quarter of 2011. Comparatively, the American Farm Bureau Federation's national survey was \$52.47, up \$3.24 or 7% higher compared to the fourth quarter of 2011.

Compared to this time last year, the 2012 first quarter Marketbasket shows that food prices have increased \$2.94, or 6%.

“Everyone is looking to save money. As the mother of four growing children, cooking at home is one way we save money and serve up good healthy food at the same time,” said Sharla Mortimer, Arizona Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee chair and rancher and farmer in Yavapai County. “Additionally, I buy seasonal fruits and vegetables to stretch our food budget.”

In Arizona, ground beef and flour accounted for the biggest increase in the Marketbasket this quarter.

“Ironically, in the last three Marketbaskets, we've gone back and forth with the 1% change,” explains Murphree. “The U.S. is the biggest producer and shipper of our food and feed grains. This typically keeps our overall food prices more economical than the rest of the world. So we want our corn, wheat, soybean and other grain farmers to keep doing what they do so well.”

The importance of improving farm practices is not lost on Arizona Farm Bureau members. “To feed the majority of Americans, crop and livestock agriculture must continually become more efficient, and in many cases, larger to spread energy and labor costs across more acres to help stabilize prices at the grocery store,” said John Boelts, vegetable farmer from Yuma, Arizona and Yuma County Farm Bureau president. Boelts, who said the cost for just one refueling of one large tillage tractor can be more than \$600, explained that labor and energy are the two largest operating costs that must be controlled.

To access an entire menu focused on those food items *down* in price in the first quarter and designed around stretching your food dollar, go to www.fillyourplate.org. Look for the latest “Stretch Your Food Dollar” menu and the additional food savings tips.

Of the 16 items surveyed in Arizona, eight decreased and eight increased, compared to the 2011 fourth quarter survey. The national survey quarter-to-quarter comparison shows 13 increased and 3 decreased.

In Arizona, off-the-shelf prices for sirloin roast showed the greatest decrease in price down 98cents to \$4.85 a pound; bacon down 62 cents to \$4.23 a pound; milk down 16 cents to \$2.84 a gallon; shredded cheese down 10 cents to \$4.58 a pound; vegetable oil down 9 cents to \$2.51 for the 32 oz. bottle; eggs down 8 cents to \$1.99 a dozen; white bread down 5 cents to \$1.75 a 20-oz. loaf; and toasted oat cereal down 3 cent to \$2.99 for the 8.9 oz. box.

Ground chuck showed the largest price increase up 53 cents to \$3.83 a pound. The other items that increased in price were flour up 41cents to \$2.54 for the 5-pound bag; deli ham up 35 cents to \$5.11 a pound; boneless chicken breast up 23 cents to \$3.66 a pound; apples up 11 cents to \$ 1.44 a pound; salad mix up 8 cents to \$2.63 for the 1-pound bag; russet potatoes up 4 cents to \$2.83 for the 5-pound bag and orange juice up 3 cents to \$3.01 a half gallon.

The year-to-year direction of the marketbasket survey tracks with the federal government’s Consumer Price Index report for food at home. As retail grocery prices have gradually increased over time, the share of the average food dollar that America’s farm and ranch families receive has dropped.

“In the mid-1970s, farmers received about one-third of consumer retail food expenditures for food eaten at home and away from home, on average. That figure has decreased steadily and is now just 16 percent, according to the United States Department of Agriculture’s revised Food Dollar Series Department statistics,” explains John Anderson, American Farm Bureau Economist. The USDA’s new Food Dollar Series may be found online at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/FoodDollar/app/>.

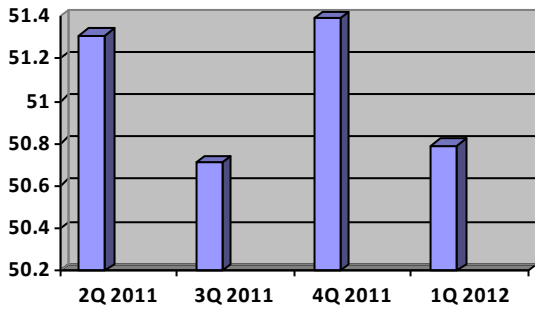
Using the “food at home and away from home” percentage across-the-board, the Arizona farmer’s share of this quarter’s \$50.79 Market Basket total would be \$8.13.

The Farm Bureau Market Basket Survey is unscientific, but serves as a gauge of actual price trends across the state. Arizona’s bargain shoppers statewide should find individual items at prices comparable to the Farm Bureau survey averages and certainly cheaper with discounts and in-store specials. Arizona Farm Bureau seeks to identify the best in-store price, excluding promotional coupons and special deals.

	First quarter - 2012			Fourth quarter- 2011	
	Arizona	National		Arizona	National
Red Delicious apples	\$ 1.44	\$ 1.59	▲	\$ 1.33	\$ 1.40
Russet potatoes, 5 lbs	\$ 2.83	\$ 3.01	▲	\$ 2.79	\$ 2.75
Ground Chuck, lb.	\$ 3.83	\$ 3.53	▲	\$ 3.30	\$ 3.17
Sirloin tip roast, lb.	\$ 4.85	\$ 4.75	▼	\$ 5.83	\$ 4.15
Sliced deli ham, lb.	\$ 5.11	\$ 5.43	▲	\$ 4.76	\$ 4.69
Bacon, lb.	\$ 4.23	\$ 4.21	▼	\$ 4.85	\$ 4.05
Boneless chicken breast, lb.	\$ 3.66	\$ 3.19	▲	\$ 3.43	\$ 3.24
Whole milk, gallon	\$ 2.84	\$ 3.53	▼	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.76
Shredded Mild cheddar cheese, lb.	\$ 4.58	\$ 4.65	▼	\$ 4.68	\$ 4.32
Eggs, one dozen large, Grade A	\$ 1.99	\$ 1.77	▼	\$ 2.07	\$ 1.72
All-purpose flour, 5 lbs.	\$ 2.54	\$ 2.65	▲	\$ 2.13	\$ 2.38
Orange juice, ½ gal.	\$ 3.01	\$ 3.36	▲	\$ 2.98	\$ 3.17
Vegetable oil, 32 oz.	\$ 2.51	\$ 2.97	▼	\$ 2.60	\$ 2.96
American Salad Mix, 1 lb	\$ 2.63	\$ 2.85	▲	\$ 2.55	\$ 2.48
Toasted oat cereal, 8.9-oz. Box	\$ 2.99	\$ 3.13	▼	\$ 3.29	\$ 3.07
White bread, 20-oz. Loaf	\$ 1.75	\$ 1.85	▼	\$ 1.80	\$ 1.92

Key: ▲ up ; ▼ Down; E even

2011 Market Basket Survey Results



Arizona Farm Bureau Money Saving Tips to Stretch your Food Dollars

- Make a list and stick to it.
- Check the newspaper for sale items then make a plan where to shop.
- Go through your pantry and keep it organized so you know what you have.
- Use grocery store club cards and then compare prices to store brands.
- Buy fresh items, instead of processed items.
- Consider buying frozen vegetables, they are picked fresh, flash frozen immediately and are less expensive and will keep longer.
- When planning your menu think of ways to maximize the use of the “Stretch Your Food Dollar” menu as a springboard to create your own menu. Create meals around the items down in price. If you feel you can’t build a menu using an item that is down in price such as orange juice ...use citrus slices instead.
- Buy in bulk, but don’t buy more than you can eat.
- Clip and use coupons. Put a ‘C’ next to items on your list that you have a coupon for, it will help you remember to use it at the checkout stand.
- Shop the edges of the store avoiding the items at the ends of the aisles.
- When shopping meat sales items, consider stocking your freezer.

Stretch Your Food Dollar Menu XVII

Arizona Farm Bureau put together a menu to help you stretch your food dollar by utilizing items that have gone *down* in price. This quarter’s items down in price are sirloin roast, bacon, milk, shredded cheese, vegetable oil eggs, toasted oat cereal, and white bread. To obtain actual recipes for the “Stretch Your Food Dollar Menu XVII” go to www.fillyourplate.org and click on the recipe tab.

Menu for the Week:

Sunday: Italian Beef
Hoagie rolls
Green Salad
Milk or Iced Tea

Monday: Quesadillas (build your own)
Chips and Salsa
Fresh Fruit salad
Milk or Iced Tea

Tuesday: Zucchini Casserole
Cheese baked apples
Milk or Iced Tea

Wednesday: Quiche Lorraine
Fresh fruit
Milk or Iced Tea

Thursday: Shredded Beef Tacos
Refried Beans
Milk or Iced Tea

Friday: Tucson’s Best London Broil
Rainbow Chard, White Beans and Bacon
Milk or Iced Tea

Saturday: Spaghetti (your choice of sauce)
Green salad

Milk or Iced Tea

***You may adjust this suggested menu to your family's likes and need

Shopping list

Dry goods:

Hoagie Rolls
1 package Spaghetti
Tortilla Chips
Tortillas (burrito size)
1 package taco shells

Produce:

1 bag Romaine or American salad mix
3 medium yellow onions
3- Roma tomatoes
1 bunch rainbow chard
4 medium zucchini (6-8 inches long)
6 medium apples- Gala or Fuji
1 clove garlic
1 lime
1 bunch grapes
1 package strawberries
2 kiwi

Dairy:

2- Gallons milk
1 pint light cream
2- 2 cup bag of shredded cheese
8 oz package Swiss cheese

1 dozen eggs

Meats:

1 4-pound roast (one that shreds when well done)
1 flank steak
2 pounds bacon

Misc:

1 jar spaghetti sauce
1 package dry Italian dressing mix
1 jar sliced pepperocini
1 can refried beans
1 can white beans
1 jar salsa (your favorite)
1 16 oz can stewed tomatoes
1 prepared pie crust
1 cup Beef consommé
Small bottle soy sauce

Pantry items you might have on hand:

Croutons	Salt & Pepper
Thyme	Nutmeg
Brown sugar	Butter or margarine
Marjoram	Oregano

The cost of all the items on the "Stretch Your Food Dollar Menu XVII" is about \$87.60. Note that most of the shopping list items for this quarters menu are non-processed...keeping costs down.

About the Arizona Farm Bureau

Arizona Farm Bureau began a quarterly Market Basket starting the fourth quarter of 2006. The Arizona Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization dedicated to preserving and improving the Agriculture industry through member involvement in education, political activities, programs and services. Go to www.azfb.org to learn more. To obtain "Stretch Your Food Dollar" menu and nutrition information go to www.fillyourplate.org. As a member services organization, individuals can become a member by contacting the Farm Bureau.

For information on member benefits, call 480.635.3609.