

## Classic Thanksgiving Dinner Still Affordable

WASHINGTON, D.C., November 13, 2008 – Menu items for a classic Thanksgiving dinner including turkey, stuffing, cranberries, pumpkin pie and all the basic trimmings will cost just a bit more this year, but remain affordable, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

AFBF's 23rd annual informal price survey of classic items found on the Thanksgiving Day dinner table indicates the average cost of this year's feast for 10 is \$44.61, a \$2.35 price increase from last year's average of \$42.26.

"Throughout the year we're fortunate to enjoy a bounty of foods produced in every state of our great nation," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "It's especially appropriate as we gather at the Thanksgiving table to savor not only food and fellowship, but to take a moment to recognize that this blessing begins with our hard-working farm and ranch families."

The AFBF survey shopping list includes turkey, bread stuffing, sweet potatoes, rolls with butter, peas, cranberries, a relish tray of carrots and celery, pumpkin pie with whipped cream, and beverages of coffee and milk, all in quantities sufficient to serve a family of 10.

The cost of a 16-pound turkey, at \$19.09 or roughly \$1.19 per pound, reflects an increase of 9 cents per pound, or a total of \$1.46 per turkey compared to 2007. This is the largest contributor to the overall increase in the cost of the 2008 Thanksgiving dinner.

"Food prices rode the energy price roller coaster up during the first half of 2008, and as the year winds down, energy prices have moderated somewhat but food prices have not come down," said Jim Sartwelle, an AFBF economist. "Despite that, the components of this classic Thanksgiving dinner cost less compared to 1988 when the effects of inflation are removed. Even at these slightly higher prices, the cost per person for this special meal remains lower than what Americans pay for most 'value meals' at fast-food outlets."

Other items showing a price increase this year were: a 12-oz. package of brown-n-serve rolls, \$2.20; a 12-oz. package of fresh cranberries, \$2.46; a 30-oz. can of pumpkin pie mix, \$2.34; two 9-inch pie shells, \$2.26; a 14-oz. package of cubed bread stuffing, \$2.57; a relish tray of carrots and celery, 82 cents; a half-pint of whipping cream, \$1.70; a pound of green peas, \$1.58; and three pounds of sweet potatoes, \$3.12.

A combined group of miscellaneous items, including coffee and ingredients necessary to prepare the meal (onions, eggs, sugar, flour, evaporated milk and butter) dropped in price by 60 cents to \$2.69. A gallon of whole milk dropped 10 cents to \$3.78.

Sartwelle said despite recent retail price increases, American consumers have enjoyed relatively stable food costs over the years, particularly when adjusted for inflation. This year's average cost of \$44.61 is equivalent to \$20.65 in 20-year inflation-adjusted dollars. The real dollar cost of the Thanksgiving dinner has declined more than 8 percent since 1988, according to Sartwelle.

The 6-percent increase in national average cost reported this year by Farm Bureau for a classic Thanksgiving dinner tracks closely with the organization's quarterly marketbasket food surveys (available online at <http://newsroom.fb.org>) and the federal government's Consumer Price Index (available online at <http://data.bls.gov/>), Sartwelle noted.

Farm Bureau volunteer shoppers are asked to look for the best possible prices, without taking advantage of special promotional coupons or purchase deals, such as spending \$50 and receiving a free turkey. Shoppers with an eye for bargains in all areas of the country should be able to purchase individual menu items at prices comparable to the Farm Bureau survey averages. Another option for busy families without a lot of time to cook is ready-to-eat Thanksgiving meals for up to 10 people, with all the trimmings, which are available at many supermarkets and take-out restaurants for around \$50 to \$75.

The AFBF survey was first conducted in 1986. While Farm Bureau does not make any statistical claims about the data, it is an informal gauge of price trends around the nation.

A total of 179 volunteer shoppers from 38 states participated in this year's survey. Farm Bureau's survey menu has remained unchanged since 1986 to allow for consistent price comparisons.

For a PDF of the graphic comparing the cost and inflation-adjusted cost of a Classic Thanksgiving Dinner, [click here](#).

<b>Item</b>	<b>2007 Price</b>	<b>2008 Price</b>	<b>Difference</b>
16-pound turkey	\$17.63	\$19.09	+\$1.46
Cube stuffing, 14 oz.	\$2.40	\$2.57	+\$0.17
Pumpkin pie mix, 30-oz.	\$2.13	\$2.34	+\$0.21
Pie shells (2)	\$2.08	\$2.26	+\$0.18
Sweet potatoes, 3 lbs.	\$3.08	\$3.12	+\$0.04
Rolls, 12	\$1.89	\$2.20	+\$0.31
Green peas, 1 lb.	\$1.46	\$1.58	+\$0.12
1-pound relish tray (carrots and celery)	\$.66	\$.82	+\$0.16
Milk, 1 gallon whole	\$3.88	\$3.78	-\$0.10
Fresh cranberries, 12 oz.	\$2.20	\$2.46	+\$0.26
Cream, ½ pint	\$1.56	\$1.70	+\$0.14
Misc. ingredients	\$3.29	\$2.69	-\$0.60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$42.26</b>	<b>\$44.61</b>	<b>+\$2.35</b>

<b>National Averages</b>
1986--\$28.74
1987--\$24.51
1988--\$26.61
1989--\$24.70
1990--\$28.85
1991--\$25.95
1992--\$26.39
1993--\$27.49
1994--\$28.40
1995--\$29.64
1996--\$31.66
1997--\$31.75
1998--\$33.09
1999--\$33.83
2000--\$32.37
2001--\$35.04
2002--\$34.56

2003--\$36.28
2004--\$35.68
2005--\$36.78
2006--\$38.10
2007--\$42.26
2008--\$44.61

-30-

**Contacts:** Cyndie Sirekis    John Hart  
(202) 406-3649    (202) 406-3659  
[cyndies@fb.org](mailto:cyndies@fb.org)    [johnh@fb.org](mailto:johnh@fb.org)