



Contact: Anne Marie Moss, (503) 399-1701, ext. 313

Food Check-Out Week, Feb. 15-21, Targets Healthy Eating On a Budget

(SALEM, February 10, 2009) — With the continuing economic squeeze, many Americans are concerned that the cost of a healthy diet is out of reach. However, according to a U.S. Agriculture Department study, the cost of eating healthy hasn't changed as much as less-healthy alternatives. Eating healthy food within a budget does require smart shopping

Farm Bureau's Food Check-Out Week, Feb. 15-21, 2009, is devoted to helping teach Americans how to stretch their grocery dollars with healthy, nutritious food. America's farmers and ranchers are committed to producing safe, healthy, and abundant food. And they share a common concern with consumers when it comes to putting nutritious meals on the table while sticking to a tight budget.

The good news: a March 2008 USDA report favorably supports the economics of healthier eating. Recent food price data show that prices for unprepared, readily available fresh fruits and vegetables have remained stable relative to dessert and snack foods, such as chips, ice cream, and cola. Therefore, as defined by foods in the study, the price of a "healthier" diet has not changed compared to an "unhealthy" diet.

Farm Bureau's Food Check-Out Week is aimed at helping American consumers learn how to shop effectively to put nutritious meals on the table with fewer dollars. "Learning to use your grocery dollars wisely ensures that nutrition isn't neglected," according to Mary Grimes, Chair of the Oregon Farm Bureau Women's Advisory Council.

"Fruits and vegetables – along with whole grains, low-fat dairy products, lean meats, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts – are an important part of a healthy diet. Buying fresh produce when it's in season and costs less, while buying frozen fruits and vegetables when they're not in season, is a smart way to stretch that dollar," says Grimes.

Farm Bureau has developed Food Check-Out Week educational materials dedicated to helping consumers make healthier food purchases. Information on several topics — including "Tips for Better Nutrition on a Tight Budget," "How Much Should I Eat?," "Understanding Food Labels" and "Understanding What MyPyramid Means" — is available on the American Farm Bureau website at fb.org.

On Monday, February 16, the Oregon Farm Bureau Women's Advisory Council will donate at least \$850 worth of food to two Ronald McDonald Houses in Portland, recognizing the need everyone has to find solutions to feeding families healthful foods on a tight budget. The Ronald McDonald House provides a "home-away-from-home" for families of seriously ill children receiving medical treatment in the Portland Metro area. The food will be used to help feed families staying at the house.

Now in its eleventh year, Food Check-Out Week also highlights America's safe, abundant and affordable food supply, made possible largely by America's productive farmers and ranchers. According to the most recent (2007) information from the USDA's Economic Research Service, American families and individuals spend, on average, less than 10 percent of their disposable personal income for food.

###

Editors: Members of Oregon Farm Bureau's Women's Advisory Council will be at the following location purchasing food for Ronald McDonald House Charities in recognition of Food Check-Out Week:

9:30-10:30 a.m., Monday, Feb. 16
Haggen Foods
8515 SW Tualatin Sherwood Rd in Tualatin
Location contact: Anne Marie Moss, cell: (503) 551-4799

***Note about photo opportunities: For the first half hour at least, members of the Women's Advisory Council will be grocery shopping. Between around 10:15 and 10:30 a.m. there will be good visuals of many full grocery carts being filled and wheeled out of the stores. The delivery of goods to the Ronald McDonald Houses would also provide good photo opportunities.**

###

* Note: "Farm Bureau" is a registered trademark; please capitalize in all cases.

The Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is a voluntary, grassroots, nonprofit organization representing the interests of the state's farmers and ranchers in the public and policymaking arenas. As Oregon's largest general farm organization, its primary goal is to promote educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement for its members and the farming, ranching, and natural resources industry as a whole. "The voice of Oregon agriculture," OFB works to find solutions that will benefit all of the state's agriculture producers.

First established in Oregon in 1919, Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 counties and has more than 8,000 member families that are professionally engaged in agriculture. Barry Bushue, an east Multnomah County berry and nursery stock producer, is OFB's 15th president.

Oregon Farm Bureau, 3415 Commercial St. SE, Salem, Oregon 97302, (503) 399-1701
www.oregonfb.org

