



FOOD CHECK-OUT WEEK
Celebrating Safe, Abundant, Affordable Food!

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Farm Bureau Celebrates Food Check-Out Week

(Portland, Oregon – February 5, 2008)—The average cost of food in America remains affordable overall. According to the most recent information from the Agriculture Department’s (USDA’s) Economic Research Service, American families and individuals spend, on average, less than 10 percent of their disposable personal income for food.

Applying that statistic to the calendar year means the average household will have earned enough disposable income -- that portion of income available for spending or saving -- to pay for its annual food supply in about 37 days or five weeks, according to the Oregon Farm Bureau.

In recognition of this, Oregon Farm Bureau is celebrating Feb. 3-9, 2008, as Food Check-Out Week.

Not only is America’s food supply among the world’s safest, it is the most affordable, said Mary Grimes, chair of the OFB Women’s Advisory Council. “The abundant, affordable and safe domestic food supply produced by America’s farmers and ranchers is responsible, at least in part, for our nation’s increasing standard of living.”

To mark the occasion, the OFB Women’s Advisory Council purchased \$1,000 of food for the Ronald McDonald Houses in Portland, using funds raised by the council and donated by county Farm Bureaus. The Ronald McDonald House provides a “home-away-from-home” for the 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.

“Americans work longer each year to pay for their housing, federal taxes and medical care, compared to food,” Grimes said.

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According to the Tax Foundation, Americans work an average of 52 days each year to pay for health and medical care, 62 days to pay for housing/household operation, and 77 days to pay federal taxes.

Grimes said the food we enjoy as consumers is a product of our successful food production and distribution system, as well as America's farmers and ranchers continuing to have access to effective and affordable crop protection tools.

This week should hold meaning for most Americans, she said. "We remain concerned that some Americans cannot afford to buy the food they need, but we are proud of the role Oregon farmers play in producing the most affordable food in the world."

The percent of disposable personal income spent for food has declined over the last 35 years. In 1970, it took Americans 14 more days to earn enough income to pay for their food supply for the year. According to USDA, food is more affordable today due to a widening gap between growth in per-capita incomes and the amount of money spent for food.

This overall decrease is made more notable by trends indicating Americans are buying more expensive convenience foods, as well as more food away from home.

USDA's latest statistic, compiled for 2006, includes food and non-alcoholic beverages consumed at home and away from home. This includes food purchases at grocery stores and other retail outlets, including food purchases with food stamps and vouchers for the Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) program. The statistic also includes away-from-home meals and snacks purchased by families and individuals, as well as food furnished to employees.

Food Check-Out Day tracks the amount of income needed by Americans to purchase food on an annual basis, Grimes said. "There have been some slight fluctuations over the past few years, but food prices have remained relatively stable over time."

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To learn more about Food Check-Out Week, visit www.fb.org.