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STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update By Senator Howard Marklein November 20, 2015

Thanksgiving Dinner Prices Down Slightly in 2015

It is a wonderful time of the year in Wisconsin. Thursday is Thanksgiving and gun deer season began on Saturday. The holiday season is a perfect opportunity to spend time with family and friends sharing good conversation and a delicious meal.

Every year, the Wisconsin Farm Bureau releases the average cost for a Thanksgiving Dinner for 10 people in Wisconsin. Their results are a price sample of 12 Thanksgiving food items in 36 communities in Wisconsin in October and November. This year, the cost of a traditional Thanksgiving dinner in Wisconsin is down slightly to about \$50.08. This is a decrease of 78 cents from 2014, when the average cost of the meal was \$50.86. The change represents a 1.5% drop in cost for Thanksgiving dinner this year. The survey includes the prices for most traditional items such as turkey, stuffing, cranberries, and pumpkin pie.

Thanksgiving dinner in Wisconsin costs three cents less than the national average of \$50.11. The average price for a 16-pound turkey in Wisconsin is about \$23.36, which is slightly more than the national average of \$23.04. However, this is the same as last year's average price for a turkey in Wisconsin.

There have been some concerns nationally that the outbreak of avian flu earlier this year would negatively impact the supply of turkeys this Thanksgiving. Nearly eight million turkeys were lost during the outbreak last spring. This situation reduced supplies nationwide and sent prices up. However, Thanksgiving tends to be an outlier for turkey sales. Grocers usually discount turkeys, some even selling them at a loss, to lure shoppers into their stores. Consultants for the poultry industry also point out that many of the birds meant for Thanksgiving this year were born, slaughtered, and frozen before the outbreak of avian flu last spring.

The rest of the meal largely relies on produce prices. The price of cranberries remains unchanged this year. The price of sweet potatoes has decreased for this year's meal by six cents. The pumpkin crop suffered a loss from a particularly rainy season. Illinois, the largest grower of pumpkins in the nation, saw a 50% loss of crop, which has caused prices for pumpkin pie mix to increase by seven cents. For a pound of green peas, the price in Wisconsin has dropped from \$1.68 to \$1.45.

Fortunately, for those who are traveling to be with family and friends, the cost of fuel is the lowest since 2008. The national average price of gasoline in November is \$2.21 per gallon, which is 72 cents less than it was a year ago. The average price for gas in every state is now below \$3 per gallon.

This year, we have a lot for which we are thankful. If you are traveling over the Thanksgiving holiday, I wish you a safe trip. Enjoy your time with family and friends. Happy Thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving Dinner: Cost of Popular Items

Item	Wis. 2015	Wis. 2014	National 2015
Turkey, 16 lbs.	23.36	23.36	23.04
Milk, 1 gallon whole	3.33	4.04	3.25
Cream, half pint	1.84	1.81	1.94
Rolls, 12	2.04	1.85	2.25
Relish tray (1 lb. carrots-celery)	.72	.68	.79
Fresh cranberries, 12 oz.	2.44	2.44	2.29
Pumpkin pie mix, 30 oz.	3.29	3.22	3.20
Pie shells (2)	2.36	2.31	2.47
Cube stuffing, 14 oz.	2.74	2.60	2.61
Sweet potatoes, 3 lbs.	3.33	3.39	3.57
Green peas, 1 lb.	1.45	1.68	1.52
Misc. ingredients	3.18	3.48	3.18
TOTAL	\$50.08	\$50.86	\$50.11

*Source: Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, November 2015

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