

**AG NOTES**  
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**FOOD INFLATION**

This article was put out by the UT Extension Consumer Economics Team. We've heard about the higher prices in the food chain, and here is a discussion of how it is affecting Thanksgiving. ( I may add some comment.)

Everyone knows that the cost of practically everything has increased. Since last year inflation has boosted overall prices 8.2 percent, but the cost of groceries has increased a whopping 13 percent, which University of Tennessee Extension says will impact this year's Thanksgiving Day meals. Many staple items, including butter, eggs and potatoes, have had steep price increases.

Andrew Griffith, associate professor in the UTIA Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, says despite an increased number of birds being placed, turkey production in 2022 is down 4.6 percent compared to 2021 year-to-date. Their average live weight is down, too. This has resulted in an increase in 8- to 16-pound whole hen prices. Whole hen prices exceeded \$1.72 per pound in September but while they are expected to decline prior to Thanksgiving, they are still likely to remain above \$1.50 per pound. Simply stated, turkey prices have followed other meat prices higher. (And to compound the issue, the Highly Pathic Avian Influenza disease has taken its toll on poultry, including turkey operations, reducing the supply for the season.)

To identify the total cost for a Thanksgiving meal for 10 people, UT Extension's Consumer Economics Leadership Team surveyed grocery stores across Tennessee from November 1 to November 7 to discover how much families could expect to spend on the holiday. This week was chosen to reflect some grocers running specials at certain items. Led by Ann Berry, a professor with UT Extension's Family and Consumer Sciences, the team surveyed rural and urban locations along with independently owned and big box stores, representing retailers from each of the three regions of the state. Prices for store brands were used when available. Some grocers reported not having some items in stock during this week or estimating that they may not be in stock at all before Thanksgiving.

The survey included items that are traditionally served at a Tennessee Thanksgiving meal, including turkey and stuffing, cranberry sauce, ham, mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole, green bean casserole, English pea salad, deviled eggs, pumpkin pie with whipped cream and rolls. The leadership team also estimated that the Thanksgiving meal would feed 10 people.

The total cost of the complete meal for 10 was \$112.30, with a per person cost of \$11.23. Kristen Johnson, assistant professor and UT Extension nutrition specialist, also advises that Thanksgiving leftovers provide an opportunity to think creatively, try new dishes or develop new holiday traditions. Leftover turkey, green beans, corn, sweet potatoes and other vegetables can be used in soups, stews, sandwiches and casseroles. And leftover cranberries make a great topping for oatmeal, waffles or pancakes. She also stresses to practice food safety steps to keep your food safe this holiday season to prevent foodborne illness.

Thanksgiving leftovers should be used within 3-4 days. Set a reminder to use or freeze your leftovers by the Monday after Thanksgiving. As you're preparing your Thanksgiving meal and your Thanksgiving leftovers, remember that perishable foods should not remain at room temperature for more than two hours. Place perishable foods in the refrigerator or the freezer within two hours of removing them from the oven or refrigerator.

## HEALTH

I procrastinate. There, I said it. I don't like it, so I'm going to do something about, probably next week! I usually get around to most things in due time, and if I don't, I'll get to it later.

Well, after having a birthday two weeks ago, I admit I'm not as agile as I used to be. And I may be a bit forgetful, that is, unless I remember to do stuff right away. And the same is true for my health. I used to think that I'm immune to everything, and I don't need to worry about catching anything, because I'm healthy.

Well, I went to a conference last week where there were 650 of us from all across the state, and I was perfectly healthy when I got there. But that changed in three days. I came home Thursday with a fever and chills. I had a temperature of 103, a deep cough that caused problems, and other flu-like issues. It has taken four days to get to a point that I think I'll make. Putting this article together was a bit of a struggle.

I'm blessed to have a wife that is a saint and a good nurse. I felt bad about exposing her to this mess. But she hasn't had the symptoms and I think she'll be ok. I'm going to change my priorities some when it comes to health care. Melody and the kids and grandkids are into so much I don't want to miss anything. I owe it to them and to me.

We are now into wrestling. Back home in East Tennessee we used to call it "wrassling"! My granddaddy swore up and down that the moon landing was in a studio, but he'd watch "wrassling" with a passion and he'd holler and twist and jerk and go on like it was real. He'd never believe that it was show!

So, I can't wait to go to watch Hank wrestle! I've been warned that I can't get on the floor and I have to behave! Sure, we'll see how that turns out! But, I'm going to protect myself so I can go!

Maybe you should take a little extra precaution to protect yourself.