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The Week Book

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Y's Works on the Wreck of Hurricane Sandy

PHOTO BY JUDY STRATMAN

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Yankton High School's Home of the Ducks and Goats

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Drought Won't Hit Holiday Dinner Prices Too Hard

Turkey Prices Are Up, But Thanksgiving Meal Still Considered A Bargain

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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Months of drought should have minimal impact on the price of this year's Thanksgiving Day dinner, according to an agriculture organization.

The retail cost for turkey, stuffing, cranberries, pumpkin pie and all the basic trimmings increased less than 1 percent this year, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF).

AFBF's 27th annual informal price survey covers classic items found on the Thanksgiving Day dinner table. This year's average cost for a meal for 10 is \$49.48, a 28-cent price increase from last year's average of \$49.20.

"At just under \$5 per person, the cost of this year's meal remains a bargain," said AFBF President Bob Stallman.

The big ticket item — a 16-pound turkey — cost \$22.23 this year. The price comes to about \$1.39 per pound — an 4-cent increase per pound, or 66 cents for the whole turkey — compared to 2011. The whole bird was the biggest contributor to the final total, showing the largest price increase compared to last year.

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. There is also plenty for leftovers.

For local shoppers, turkey supplies are not a concern, and the bird still remains the Thanksgiving meat of choice, said Tonya Graff, store director for Hy-Vee in Yankton.

"Turkey as a commodity is up in price. The higher cost has to do with a lot of things that are fed the turkey, like corn and pellets," she said. "There is also the drought and factors such as fuel prices and transporting the food. And whenever fuel is up, the cost of plastic is up. Wrapping turkey in plastic comes with a cost."

Graff noted the overall market basket will remain a bargain this Thanksgiving.

"Even with the higher prices, turkey is still a very affordable meat. And Thanksgiving still remains a very affordable meal," she said. "Turkey prices aren't as volatile as beef, pork and chicken. But even with beef, there are still some great buys."

At Hy-Vee, about 80 to 85 percent of turkey sales are frozen birds, Graff said.

She has noticed a shift in buying trends in recent years.

"During the last four or five years, families get smaller turkeys. A large turkey for a family of four is a fairly large bird to prepare," she said. "And some people do prime rib, pork loin or seafood. We even



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

A showcase filled with turkeys awaits Thanksgiving shoppers at the Hy-Vee store in Yankton. Customers appear ready to "gobble" up the supply, as the bird remains affordable even with a price increase, said store director Tonya Graff. The overall cost of the Thanksgiving meal should go up an estimated 1 percent, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

have some families in town who have told us they do fresh pizzas on the grill."

Shoppers are also using more fresh produce than in past years, Graff said. However, costs may determine the choice of apple or pumpkin pie.

"Apples are expensive, but that has more to do with the freeze they had last spring. Next year, they may have a bumper crop; it's one of those cycles. It's all very seasonal," she said. "On the other hand, one of the all-American foods is pumpkin pie. People think this is just the one time of year they can have pumpkin, but it's available 365 days a year. There are plenty of pumpkins. We had a shortage two or three years ago, where you couldn't get pumpkins, but that's not the case this year."

The relatively stable Thanksgiving dinner cost might surprise many people in a drought year for the Great Plains. However, other parts of the nation have

Turkey day to cost a bit more

American households will pay, on average, \$49.48 for a party of 10 on Thanksgiving Day, or 28 cents more than last year. That's less than a 1 percent increase and still less than \$5 a person, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.



Thanksgiving dinner cost

Item	2011 price	2012 price	Difference
16-pound turkey	\$21.57	\$22.23	\$0.66
Misc. ingredients	3.10	3.18	0.08
Dozen rolls	2.30	2.33	0.03
1-pound relish tray (carrots and celery)	0.76	0.76	No change
Pumpkin pie mix, 30 oz.	3.03	3.02	-0.01
Pie shells (2)	2.52	2.51	-0.01
Green peas, 1 lb.	1.68	1.66	-0.02
Fresh cranberries, 12 oz.	2.48	2.45	-0.03
Milk, 1 gallon whole	3.66	3.59	-0.07
Cubed stuffing, 14 oz.	2.88	2.77	-0.11
Sweet potatoes, 3 lbs.	3.26	3.15	-0.11
Whipping cream, 1 pint	1.96	1.83	-0.13
Total	\$49.20	\$49.48	+\$0.28

Source: American Farm Bureau Federation
Graphic: Chicago Tribune

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PHOTO: JUDY STRATMAN

Yankton firms Eisenbraun & Associates and Steiner's Locker Service have received awards for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). At Eisenbraun & Associates, National Guard member and employee Zach Auch (center) presents the award to Brett Kennedy (left) and Dan Eisenbraun (right).

Local Businesses Honored For Supporting Military

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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Yankton businesses Steiner's Locker Service and Eisenbraun & Associates don't expect special recognition for supporting their military employees.

Even so, their backing has earned them honors from the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) program.

ESGR volunteer Judy Stratman presented the awards to the employers, who were both stunned.

"They just say it's the right thing to

do," Stratman said of the recipients.

But doing "the right thing" provides a huge morale boost, said Stratman, a WNAX radio personality.

For military personnel, training and missions bring concerns on the home front as well as on the battlefield, she said. Those worries are greatly relieved by employers who provide time for military duty and guarantee a job will await the returning personnel.

Zach Auch, a South Dakota National Guard (SDNG) member, nominated his employer, Eisenbraun & Associates. Dan Eisenbraun and Brett Kennedy were presented with the award.

Auch, a surveyor and crew chief assistant, has worked for the firm for about three years. He has served with the SDNG for 1 1/2 years and is currently assigned to the 153rd Engineer Battalion in Huron.

"With my job, I travel a lot and will be gone two or three weeks at a time," he said. "They (company officials) make sure I have whatever weekend that I need off (for monthly drills) or any extra days for military purposes. They work with me on that."

The Yankton engineering firm has gone beyond providing time off for monthly drills or annual training. Auch

joined the SDNG after he started employment with the firm, and the company allowed him the 10 weeks for basic training and 18 weeks for advanced individual training (AIT).

"When I left for basic training, it was mid-October and so busy (at the firm). But they allowed me a couple of weeks off before I left to take care of all my family issues and anything else," Auch said. "And they said I would get back my job (when I returned from military duty), that it was waiting for me."

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Area Governors Differ On Health Exchange

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Iowa and Nebraska are turning down different paths to comply with the federal health care overhaul, which reflects the broader struggle many Republican governors face now that they must submit to a law they feverishly oppose.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad said Friday that his administration will continue to work on a state-based exchange, but he left open the pos-

sibility of defaulting to a federal exchange or some combination of the two. In Nebraska, Gov. Dave Heineman declared the state-based exchange too expensive and told the federal government to build one for his state.

Heineman and Branstad both insist that they're making a good-faith effort to follow the law, despite a frustrating lack of guidance from the federal government. But Democrats in both states who closely follow health care say the governors haven't done nearly as

much as they could have to prepare, betting instead that Mitt Romney would win the presidency and make good on his promise to repeal the law.

This week, the governors had to choose: Launch a state-run health insurance exchange — billed as the best way to maintain local control — or toss it back to the federal government?

At least 17 states and the District of Columbia have committed to cre-

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EYES FORWARD

This Mount Marty flutist looks up at band director Dean Rettetdal during the MMC's annual fall band concert, held Sunday night at Marian Auditorium in Yankton. Sunday's program included selections ranging from the musical "Oliver!" to "Earhart: Sounds of Courage," which depicted the final journey of aviatrix Amelia Earhart. Also featured was Jeremy Hegg's "Custer's Band," a composition that was specially commissioned by Mount Marty's Gregorian Club in 2004. To see or purchase images from this event, visit spotted.yankton.net. (Kelly Hertz/P&D)