

The East Greenwich Pendulum

East Greenwich, RI
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R.I. Farm Bureau donates food to the Ronald McDonald House in Providence

(PROVIDENCE RI) — To celebrate Food Check Out week, the RI Farm Bureau and several of its farmer members, have donated several hundred dollars worth of food to Ronald McDonald House in Providence. Farmers who donated are Aquidneck Farms, Jaswell Farms, Pezza Farm, Salisbury Farm, Young Family Farm, Ferobink Farm and Confreda Farm.

Farm Bureau's Food Check-Out Week, Feb. 20-26, 2011, focuses on helping Americans learn 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.

Concern about the cost of a healthy diet being out of reach remains on the minds of many Americans as the nation continues to work through serious economic woes. However, according to an Agriculture Department study, the cost of eating healthy hasn't changed as much as some less-healthy alternatives. Eating healthy food while on a budget does require strategic shopping.

"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 Bill Stamp, president of RI Farm Bureau.

The good news is that a recent 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 strategically to put nutritious meals on the table with fewer dollars. "Learning to use your grocery dollars wisely helps ensure that nutrition isn't neglected," according to Stamp

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. Go to the American Farm Bureau Web Site fb.org and hit the Order Materials button and Food Check-Out Week on the left column. There is a small fee for the documents.

"Knowing your food budget, planning balanced meals, making a list and sticking to it are just a few of the tips we offer consumers," says Stamp.

Now in its 13th 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 (2009) 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.