

Farmer price index shows food mark-ups

Convenience, parking, a sexy image, "free trips" and a kitchen maid are all part of a consumer's weekly food bill, says Peter Hannam, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA). "Shoppers have to look at their purchasing habits and make sure they're not paying for someone else to do the kitchen work," Hannam added. "Consumers should buy nutrition, not convenience."

Speaking to over 800 members of the Canadian Women's Club of Toronto, Hannam said the price of food on the supermarket shelf and the price paid for that same food to the farmer rarely coincide.

Hannam added that, because of the monopolistic power wielded by large supermarket chains, the OFA had felt it necessary to introduce the Farmer Price Index (FPI) to show this discrepancy in prices and to indicate the "extensive" markups by both processors and retailers. He said marketing boards, traditionally disliked by consumers, follow accepted business practices set by various professions, unions and manufacturers yet frequently face "witch-hunts".

"That's probably because food is an everyday item and people react very emotionally to its price," he said. "But everybody should realize that consumers are important to farmers. After all, they are our customers and we need each other. That's why I have no time for those people who try to build barriers between us and who try to create antagonisms that aren't there."

Hannam explained that consumers pay for much more than the food they eat, with their food bill. They pay for the convenience of having a supermarket in the vicinity, for the parking provided by suburban plazas and for the sales promotions. "We even pay for the advertisement that tells us we're going to save at a particular store."

He questioned the whole concept of specials, whether larger sizes or more cans of any item really were money savers. He explained how food staples are split and placed throughout the store to deliberately create a desire in the shopper to buy items that are not in the shopper's original plans. And, Hannam added, processed foods have had the greatest increase in sales. "If the consumer really complains about the high cost of food, he should look at his purchasing habits. With processed foods, we're paying for a lot more than just nutrition."

In discussing the FPI, Hannam explained that, since the index had been created in February, the OFA had discovered that some of the causes for increased food costs were the 40 per cent hike in prices of imported fruits, the 176 per cent hike in the price of a five-pound bag of P.E.I. potatoes at the retail level over the farm gate prices, and the 57 per cent markup, again at the retail level, in the price of chicken.

Hannam added that the cost of dairy products, eggs and poultry, all under marketing boards with supply management principles, had increased minimally or had dropped in price.

4-H interclub show held at Erin Fair

By Mark J. Leahy
Halton 4-H Clubs were well represented at 4-H Interclub Competition at Erin Fair. Judges were: Field Crop, Tom Weber; Dairy, Ray Royce and Beef, Dave Sleigh. Field Crop exhibits were judged on Friday, Oct. 6 with the following results. Corn,

2nd, Randy Fish, B Group, Glenn McClure and Marilyn McNabb; C Group, Hans Treviranus, Hay, A Group, Bill Robinson and David Wilson; B Group, Bob Wilson, Barley, B Group, Bob Allison. The 4-H Dairy Interclub Show was held Saturday, Oct. 7. Junior Holstein Heifer Class, 1st, Suzanne Wingrove; 3rd, Charles Bird; 5th John McPhail and 6th, Diego Luzza. Intermediate Holstein Heifer Class, 2nd, Carl Ann Laidlaw and 3rd Marilyn Bird. Senior Holstein Heifer Class, 2nd, Steve Wingrove; 3rd Kim Peddie; 5th Randy Peddie; and 7th, Kim Wingrove. In B Group were Randy Proud, Joe Weeden and Stuart McPhail. Reserve Champion Calf was exhibited by Suzanne Wingrove.

Group of 3 dairy Heifers, 1st Kim Peddie, Randy Peddie and Kim Wingrove; 4th Steve Wingrove, Marilyn Bird and Suzanne Wingrove;

Hornby North Junior Club

By Lorie LeRiche
The third meeting of Hornby North Jr. 4-H Club was on Oct. 2 at Mrs. Adam's home, R.R. 2, Georgetown. We made peanut butter and carrot spread, peanut butter and apple spread; also metric white sauce which can be made into soup with a vegetable or flavor, and potato cheese chowder a la metric which was very good tasting.

6th, Joe Weeden, Stuart McPhail and Carol Ann Laidlaw; 8th, John McPhail, Charles Bird and Diego Luzza. The 4-H Beef Interclub Show was held Monday, Oct. 9. Steer Classes, Angus, 2nd, Nancy McKinnon; 4th, Bev Wingfield; and 5th, Paul Wilkinson. Hereford, 1st, David McCann; 4th, Brian Wingfield; 7th, Doug McCann; 8th, Rob Leriche; and 9th, Doug Donaldson. Shorthorn, 1st, David Lasby. Heifer Class, 3rd, Ruth Gillies; 5th Roger Boyd; 6th, Kevin Donaldson. David McCann was winner of the Joe Dunbar trophy with the top Hereford 4-H Calf.

Group of 3 Beef Animals, th, Nancy McKinnon, Bev Wingfield, and Paul Wilkinson (steers); 7th, David McCann, Doug McCann and Rob Leriche (steers); 9th, Ruth Gillies, Kevin Donaldson, and Roger Boyd (heifers).

Interclub sheep day

By Henry J. Stanley
Four members of the Halton 4-H Sheep Club competed at Rockton Fair against other members from Haldimand, North Niagara and Wellington 4-H Sheep Clubs. Judge Neil Comfort, St. Anns, placed the lambs on type and then the 4-H

member on his or her ability to show the lamb. In the Senior Section, Joseph Weeden, Oakville, won the sheepskin rug for the top lamb and placed third in showmanship. In the Juniors, Richard Stanley, Rockwood received the Mrs. Lloyd Deeks Trophy for the top lamb and the Amos Kitchen Trophy for high score in showmanship. Kevin Donaldson, Campbellville and Jamie Richardson, 613 Turner Drive, Burlington, placed in the second prize group for lamb and showmanship.

In the Novice Showmanship Class for first year members, Kevin moved up to the first prize group. All members in the first prize group also received a Sheep Focus hat or T-shirt from Mrs. Lloyd Deeks, wife of the Haldimand 4-H club leader. This show concluded activities for the Halton 4-H Sheep Club members for 1978. The 13 young people had a most successful year and are looking forward to starting up their club once again in early January.

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FALL PLOWING is now taking place all over the country, farmers taking advantage of the fine weather. Russ and Harry Murray plow in tandem.

Crop prediction: very variable

Very variable is the word on crop yield for Halton County this year, according to Ministry of Agriculture representative, Henry Stanley. Fighting the weather is the farmers' lifelong battle. Some win, some don't and that seems to be the story for 1978. Any farmers who managed to beat fall rains last year and get their plowing done had a better chance of good corn crops. When seed was in the ground early in April or May, despite the long wet spring, it was a good size to withstand the two month drought of June and July. However, the dry spell set most crops back two or three weeks in maturity. Stanley states fields of grain harvested in August were also variable. Early plantings came through well while late crops were very poor. Straw was universally short and there was very little second cut hay, thanks

to the drought. Most silage corn is off the fields now, Stanley says, and the crop looked good. Warm heavy August and September rains helped here, although some corn was frozen early making it drier than it should be. High moisture grain corn is being harvested now and is showing effects of the drought by being late to maturity. Sparse corn fields in the southern half of the county are being fed to cattle directly rather than bother with a poor harvest yield. It will not be as good a corn crop as the county had last year, the agricultural representative concludes. However, it is unlikely prices will be affected too much because of good U.S. corn yields. It's not all bad news, though. Soft fall rains have left fields in good condition for next year and raised the water levels, Stanley says. Winter wheat looks really good having got off to an excellent start.

Holstein winners at Erin Fair

By Henry J. Stanley
Halton Holstein breeders were quite successful at the West Central Ontario Championship Holstein Show at Erin Fair on Friday, Oct. 6. A total of 157 head of cattle were exhibited by 57 breeders, with the judge Earl Woodrow of Beeton. Halton exhibitors placed as follows: Senior Bull Calf, 1st, Bertram R. Stewart, Hornby and Harry Moore, Terra Cotta. Yearling Bull, 1st, Indian Garden Farm (Ken Murray), Acton. Grand Champion Bull, Bertram R. Stewart and Harry Moore. Junior Heifer Calf, 8th and 9th, Fred Nurse, Georgetown. Heifer Calf (July 1977 to June 1978), 3rd, Claude F. Pickett, Georgetown; 11th, Claude F. Pickett and James Carney, Milton; 19th, Indian Garden Farm. Junior Yearling Heifer, 2nd and 12th, Fred Nurse; 3rd, Jeff Nurse, Georgetown. Senior Yearling Heifer, 1st Claude F. Pickett; 2nd Gordon R. Sinclair, Burlington; 16th and 17th, Indian Garden Farm. Three Year Old Heifers, 1st and 3rd, Claude F. Pickett; 15th, Fred Nurse. Four Year Old Heifers, 17th, James C. Reid, Georgetown. Mature Cow, 4th, Jeff Nurse; 11th Indian Garden Farm. Some of these top animals will be showing once again at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair's 50th anniversary.



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