

# June 2008

## Nutrition InfoGram

Issue Number: 22

A bimonthly Electronic Newsletter from the Nutrition and Health Promotion Team of the California Department of Aging (CDA)

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### News:

#### **“Food Consumer Price Index (CPI), Prices, and Expenditures: Analysis and Forecasts of the CPI for Food”**

From the USDA Economic Research Service

Food Price Outlook, 2008

In 2008, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all food is projected to increase 4 to 5 percent as retailers continue to pass on higher commodity and energy costs to consumers in the form of higher retail prices. The main factors behind higher food commodity costs include stronger global demand for food, increased U.S. agricultural exports resulting from stronger demand and a weaker dollar,

weather-related production problems in some areas of the world, and increased use of some food commodities, such as corn, for bioenergy uses.

Food-at-home prices are also forecast to increase 4 to 5 percent, while food-away-from-home prices are forecast to increase 3.5 to 4.5 percent in 2008. The all-food CPI increased 4 percent between 2006 and 2007, the highest annual increase since 1990. Food-at-home prices, led by eggs, dairy, and poultry prices, increased 4.2 percent, while food-away-from-home prices rose 3.6 percent in 2007.

### March 2008 Prices

Egg prices increased 0.5 percent in March and are 29.9 percent above the March 2007 level. Dairy prices decreased 1 percent between February and March 2008 but are still up 11 percent from the March 2007 level. The fresh fruit index is now up 2 percent overall from last year at this time, with apple prices up 7.5 percent and banana prices up 14.9 percent, while orange prices are down 19.8 percent. Since last year at this time, fresh vegetable prices are down 0.3 percent, with other fresh vegetable prices down 6.6 percent and lettuce prices down 3.2 percent. However, potato prices are up 3.4 percent and tomato prices are up 18.2 percent.

Please view more information on the Food Price Outlook at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/CPIFoodAndExpenditures/consumerpriceindex.htm>.

### **“Prices Take a Bit Out of Aid”**

By Tim Jones and Mary Ann Fergus; Chicago Tribune 4/8/2008

Food stamp usage has hit a new high, and more Americans than ever — a record 28 million projected this year — are using them, but with the steep climb in food prices, the monthly food allowance doesn't go nearly as far. Moreover, food stamps are being used up earlier in the month by those who receive them, draining discretionary income is often used to buy food after the stamps run out.

Food price inflation began to take off in 2007, with price spikes not seen since 1980. Annual adjustments are made in the purchasing power of food stamps, but they have not kept pace with food inflation.

Food prices have jumped an average of 5.5 percent in the past six months, and according to America's Second Harvest, which oversees the national network of food banks, are estimated to rise 7.5 percent annually in each of the next five years. That's triple the inflation rate of 2002 through 2006.

Corn figures into the equation because more farm acreage is being used for the development of ethanol for fuel. That shift has caused the price of corn to soar to

about \$6 per bushel from an average of \$2.40 per bushel over the past three decades.

Higher corn prices mean that it costs more to feed cattle, and that spurs inflation and a consumer cost squeeze: Most food stamp recipients will run through their monthly food allowance in about two weeks.

The number of people on food stamps has been growing steadily, from 21.2 million in 2003 to 26.5 million in 2007, according to the Department of Agriculture. In the past year, the number of Americans receiving food stamps rose by 1.3 million.

To view the full article, visit <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-food-stampsapr08,0,2834154.story?page=1>.

### **“Farm Bill Veto Set to Prolong Uncertainty” By Jess Halliday, Food USA**

May 21, 2008 President Bush is expected to veto the Farm Bill today on the grounds that it would grant subsidies to wealthy farmers at a time when grocery bills are rising - although his decision could be overridden.

The controversial [Farm Bill](#), which would replace expiring legislation dating from the Great Depression era, was passed by the Senate last week. The overall cost of the five-year bill would reach a hefty \$289B.

"We see a bill that is bloated; that asks taxpayers, at a time of record-high farm income, to pay - and at a time when they're paying more for groceries, to pay even more to wealthy farmers. And we don't think that's the right approach," said spokesperson Scott Stanzel Monday.

"The President wanted a bill that would reform our farm laws for the future, that would make wise use of taxpayers' money, and that wouldn't increase [subsidies](#) at a time of record-high incomes."

However a further twist in the bill's destiny is that farm leaders assert a Bush veto could be over-ridden. This could come about by the House, Senate and Congress each calling a new vote, with a resulting two thirds majority in favor of enactment.

The question of subsidies aside, the bill does contain some elements that its supporters draw upon as providing benefit for tax payers and the American people. For instance, it would increase funding for nutrition programs like [food stamps](#), which could be to the benefit of sectors of the population most likely to suffer as a result of rising food prices on retailers' shelves.

Land stewardship and biofuels development would also benefit from additional funding. Biofuels are cited as one of the reasons for rising agricultural commodity prices, but the US is spearheading research into second generation biofuels, which would draw on waste cellulose material instead of diverting grain supplies from food.

Some have said it is a piece of legislation that would go so far as to change the way American people eat, for the healthy better.

As Bush's second presidential term ends this year, if he does not sign the farm bill now it would be down to his successor. John McCain, presumed Republican candidate for the top job, indicated in a speech Monday that he, too, would veto the bill in its current form were he in Bush's shoes. Democrat candidate wannabes Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama have applauded the Senate's passing of the bill and called in Bush to sign it.

For more information on this article visit: <http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/news/ng.asp?id=85424>.

### **Resources of Interest:**

#### **RD 411**

RD411.com offers FREE access to downloadable, peer-reviewed materials that can empower nutrition professionals to do their jobs more efficiently, which, in turn, translates into improved patient care.

Now nutrition professionals all over the world can benefit from a centralized resource that provides evidence-based practice tools to optimize nutrition services, information on the latest products based on the current scientific information available, and resources that can be used for client and professional education.

RD411's philosophy is simple – the more successful each individual dietitian is, the more successful the profession is as a whole. This is a community site and that welcomes submissions and ideas from all colleagues and practitioners. RD411's goal is to get you out of the office and back with patients or clients doing what you do best!

For more information visit this website at: <http://www.rd411.com/index.php>.

## **American Diabetes Association**

### **“Diabetes Care: Clinical Practice Recommendations 2008”**

ADA Clinical Practice Guidelines are based on a complete review of the relevant literature by a diverse group of highly trained clinicians. After weighing the quality of evidence, from rigorous double-blind clinical trials to expert opinion, recommendations are drafted, reviewed, and submitted for approval to the ADA Executive Committee; they are then revised on a regular basis, and subsequently published in Diabetes Care.

The 2008 Clinical Practice Recommendations include topics such as

- Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes-2008
- Diagnosis and Classification of Diabetes Mellitus
- Nutrition Recommendations and Interventions for Diabetes: a position statement of the Diabetes Association
- Diabetes Management in Correctional Institutions and more

View the 2008 Clinical Practice Recommendations at:

[http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/vol31/Supplement\\_1/](http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/vol31/Supplement_1/).

## **Celiac Disease**

### **Prevalence**

The prevalence of Celiac Disease (CD) in North America has been estimated to be 1:3000, but a recent American study found the prevalence among the general not-at-risk population to be 1:105, while the prevalence in at-risk groups such as first-degree relatives of CD patients was 1:22, suggesting that CD is greatly under diagnosed. CD can affect persons of many ethnic backgrounds, but appears to rarely affect persons of purely Chinese, Japanese, or Afro-Caribbean descent.

To view this information on Celiac Disease, visit the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality’s website at:

<http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/epcsums/celiacsum.htm>.

### **The Gluten Free Diet: A Comprehensive Resource**

This website offers free resources such as information about Celiac Disease, the gluten-free diet, celiac groups, celiac medical centers, and many free handouts.

Visit the website for information on Celiac Disease and to view available resources at <http://www.glutenfreediet.ca/index.php>.

## Going Green

### **“From Local Chow to Green Machines: ADA Members are Turning Foodservice into Eco-Friendly Operations”**

By Linda Eck Mills

Many factors are driving the green movement in foodservice, from meeting consumer demand for eco-friendly products to conserving resources and dollars to joining a global effort to protect and preserve our natural environment. While motivations may differ, many challenges of going green remain the same: budget constraints, limited space, labor or equipment and, of course, knowing where to start.

The key is to make small changes at a time since “trying to make all the changes at once can be costly and overwhelming,” says Hartman of the V.A. Medical Center in Martinsburg.

Some considerations:

- Buying from local growers calls for flexibility. Menus may need to change according to what is in season and what is available.
- When buying from local growers, realize that they may not be licensed or inspected by a government authority. “This means the foodservice director must take on the responsibility of visiting the producer to ensure the product is grown, harvested, stored, washed and transported in a safe manner,” says Monica Theis, MS, RD, senior lecturer for at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Consider what you can do to maximize “source reduction” which includes reducing packaging, quantity of disposables, quantity of food produced, and increasing the use of recycle centers.
- Look for the ENERGY STAR label when purchasing major appliances, office equipment, lighting, home electronics and more.
- Use eco-friendly detergents such as Apex by Ecolab.
- Cut back on using disposables. Replace plastics, Styrofoam, and even paper with biodegradable and compostable disposables since the latter take less energy to manufacture and are not made from toxic or pollution-causing sources. There are environmentally-friendly substitutes for just about any disposable foodservice item.

More information on this topic can be found at:

[http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home\\_15321\\_ENU\\_HTML.htm](http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home_15321_ENU_HTML.htm).

## **Volunteer Recruitment**

### **“Fact Sheet: There are Real Benefits to Volunteering”**

By the Administration on Aging

Older volunteers are tremendous assets to their communities. Studies indicate that there are real health reasons for older persons to volunteer. While researchers agree that additional research is needed, they also agree that volunteering improves the overall quality of life for older persons because it gives meaning and purpose to their lives. It also offers the following specific benefits:

- Volunteers are healthier. Studies show that older persons who volunteer have fewer medical problems than the senior population in general.
- Volunteering increases one’s physical health and agility. Volunteer activities help older persons stay physically active. Older adults who engage in regular physical activity, whether moderate or intense, have lower incidences of heart disease and diabetes. They are also at lower risk for other cardiovascular diseases.
- Volunteering increases one’s cognitive and mental well-being. This points to the “use it or lose it” theory for cognitive ability. Volunteering helps keep the brain engaged, which helps protect the memory as people age.

Each year approximately seven to nine million older people use Older Americans Act (OAA) services, whose delivery largely depends upon the efforts of half a million volunteers. These volunteers work through a nationwide network of federal, state, and local organizations that offer opportunities and services to active older persons as well as those elderly who need help.

To view the full article, visit: [http://www.aoa.gov/press/fact/oam\\_Volunteer.pdf](http://www.aoa.gov/press/fact/oam_Volunteer.pdf).

## **Customer Service Article**

### **“How to Differentiate Your Company”**

By Kelly J. Watkins, MBA

How your staff treats clients determines if they will return.

Whatever business you’re in, the primary element that distinguishes you from the competition is your employees and the level of service they offer. What your employees do and how they act determines client satisfaction.

You may invest thousands or millions of dollars in your facility, your phone system, or your computers. Yet, what matters most to customers is how they are treated by employees and volunteers. Are you investing in your employees? Are

they properly trained? And I don't mean in the technical aspects of the job. I'm talking about training and empowering staff to provide exceptional service.

Does your staff know your company's customer service philosophy? Do they know how to handle customers who request a refund or demand a guarantee? Can they communicate with the customer using good listening, verbal and non-verbal skills? Does your staff know how to adapt communication to different behavior styles? Can they effectively deal with upset customers?

Developing customer-oriented employees requires an investment. Every employee who comes in contact with a client will make an impact. What type of impact do you want them to make?

More information can be found at:

<http://www.keepcustomers.com/customer%20service%20articles.htm>.

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