

Is Food Cheap?

How Much Work Buys A Meal?

If you think your food bill is too large, it isn't the farmer's fault, although he will probably get the blame. Nothing could be further from the truth. By applying new scientific facts and methods the farmer probably has done more than anyone to keep the cost of living from rising even higher. While it's true that food prices are higher than they used to be, only a very small part of this has actually ended up in the farmer's pockets.

To keep track of consumer food prices, the U. S. Department of Agriculture established what is known as the "market basket". It is made up of the various food items consumers buy and in about the same quantities. Over the past 10 years the items in this mystical food basket have increased by \$243. But let's look at where this increase in food cost went.

Farmers got only \$3.00 of it. The big bite was taken by labor, \$130. This was because wages increased and because consumers demanded more services with the food they purchased. Transportation got 33 of the 243 dollar increase. Even the government in the form of taxes gained \$4.00 more than the farmer. Other costs such as packaging, super-duper supermarkets, advertising, financing, and research got the remaining \$73.00.

Just to prove that food is cheap in relation to other things, consider what you can buy with an hour's pay now as compared with 1929, which until our present period of prosperity was considered a pretty good year for everyone. An hour of factory work would buy 12 pounds of steak in 1929 but would buy 22 pounds in 1957. It took as much labor to earn four quarts of milk in 1929 as eight quarts in 1957. The same hours of labor in 1927 bought 11 dozen eggs. In 1957 it bought 3.7 dozen

Food is cheap and through production and marketing research is getting cheaper. The next time you shop for food, think what your food bill might have been if farmers had not adopted improved farming methods which lowered their costs and increased their output and then passed almost all of these savings on to consumers in the form of low food prices.

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PP&L is proud to help further the education of these able young people and to salute the local educators who are doing such an outstanding job in molding the leaders of tomorrow.

PP&L's general scholarship program is based on an awareness that now, more than ever before, the nation's continued growth depends on college-trained young people in

all fields. Thus PP&L, like many other progressive American businesses, is helping provide necessary assistance so that the nation's colleges and universities can continue to contribute substantially to the progress that has brought America to the leadership position it holds today.

High school students who are interested in competing for PP&L scholarships next year may secure a preview of the program by asking, at our nearest office, for a copy of the booklet issued in connection with this year's awards. A new edition, giving the full details on next year's competition, will be available at Central Eastern Pennsylvania high schools early this fall.



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