

Family Living Focus

by
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Children can learn much from watching plants grow both indoors and outdoors. Start with easy-to-grow seeds that grow rapidly, such as radishes, tomato, and lettuce. Teach your child about daily care and let him/her take full responsibility for the garden.

5. Solitary activities. Many children will find great enjoyment in having their own library card to choose books for summer reading. Others may find working on jigsaw puzzles of interest, or keeping a daily journal of their summer-time experiences.

6. Household jobs. Children can learn much responsibility by becoming involved in household jobs such as laundry, cleaning, washing the car, and even preparing dinner on occasion. Assign weekly jobs for all family members to accomplish.

7. Family Activities. Some ideas to consider:

- Community visits to local historic landmarks, museums, airports, zoos, etc.

- Weekly Dinner Themes (i.e. finger food night, ethnic dinners, leftover night)

- Family picnics in the backyard or at a local park

- Contests (watermelon seed-spitting, water balloon toss, obstacle course)

- Making homemade ice cream, sun tea, or refreshing summer punches

- Nature hikes, bike rides, volleyball, swimming and other outdoor activities

- Indoor family pajama party or backyard campout

- Clean-the-Basement/Attic Parties, Neighborhood Clean-ups

- Family vacations

Once activities are chosen, they can then be recorded on a family

Beef Prices Increase While Producer Income Declines

AMES, Iowa — Americans paid an average of 4.9% more for their beef products since 1989, while prices their producers received fell by more than 15% in the same period.

"The share of the retail food dollar producers receive has declined in the last seven years from 59% to 47%," states Gene Paul, National Farmers president.

As feed grain prices continue to rise, and producer prices continue to decline, National Farmers is concerned about the future of America's independent livestock producers.

calendar posted in a prominent location of the home for all to see, such as the kitchen or family room. Color-coded markers can be used for each family member to write in those activities that he/she will be participating in throughout the summer. As an example, young Johnny could use a blue marker to record the dates of his 4-H club meetings, band camp in July, and weekly take-out-the-trash responsibilities. A family calendar can be a great way for family members to stay organized throughout the summer so that important dates and activities do not get overlooked.

Summertime is a such a wonderful season for children and families to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors and the healthful benefits of leisure activities. Make the most of your family time this summer by planning now!

"The trend in packer industry concentration is a real concern to us," explains Paul. "Three or four meat packing firms control a large percentage of the market, and as competition is eliminated, prices will be affected."

"We believe we need to resist the current trend, and maintain a marketplace that is fair, open, and competitive," states Paul. "Americans have always believed in fairness, and when they're given an equal chance to compete, a stronger and healthier system always emerges."

As competition is eliminated in purchasing fed cattle, hogs and sheep, the negative influence also affects prices for feeders and breeding stock.

"When there are so few buyers, common sense will tell you that the market as a whole will be biased against the seller," states Richard Ellinghuysen, director of Livestock for National Farmers.

"If the industry truly wants to provide the incentive for the producer, then the producers share should at least remain the same, not decrease."

"Producers are told they need to produce a good quality product, even improve it, so that beef can compete with poultry," Ellinghuysen explained. "But if the farmers share of the food dollar has gone down 15% during the last seven years, what kind of incentive is there for producers to invest more money in their operation."

FAMILY FUN IN THE SUMMERTIME

Summer is coming! While we envision our children being full of energy and ideas for summertime fun, many children will declare boredom within days of the onset of their summer vacation.

At this time of year, parents ought to be giving some thought to what their children will be doing this summer. A little advance planning and family creativity can help make summertime fun last throughout the season. It begins with a few simple steps to help parents and children get started on the right path to family fun.

One of the best ways to begin planning for summertime fun is to hold a family meeting. At the meeting, each family member can share their own ideas for summer activities that they would like to participate in. This list may include summer camps, family vacations, community events, or recreational activities. Once a list of activities is generated, consideration can then be given to each activity, including the time, cost, transportation arrangements needed to carry it out, and the overall "do-ability" of the activity.

Individual and family activities can then be voted upon and decided as a family.

For those who may need some help getting started on a list of summertime activities for children and family members, here are some ideas:

1. Hobbies/Collections. All children can learn new talents and explore their creative side by taking up a hobby that they enjoy. Children can try woodworking, cooking, playing a musical instrument, or photography. Collections such as bugs, rocks, stamps, coins or butterflies may also be appealing to youngsters of all ages.

2. Recreation/sports programs. Explore the recreation programs in your area, at summer playgrounds or community centers. Check out local swimming pools, basketball and soccer leagues, and other sports programs that may be of interest to your child.

3. Community service. There are many opportunities for youth to become involved in volunteer work. Contact area hospitals, nursing homes, churches, or community centers for opportunities that may be available.

4. Indoor/outdoor gardens.

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