

Ag News and Notes

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Happy 4th of July- As we prepare to celebrate the 250th Birthday of our Great Country, I know many of you will be grilling out with family and friends. Below is an article from the American Farm Bureau Federation that tracks the cost of an average cookout for 10 people. I really don't know what difference this makes, but I thought it was interesting. In the meantime, from all of us here at the Extension Office, we wish you a wonderful holiday and remind everyone to stay safe and cool.

Families celebrating the Fourth of July with a cookout will find that grocery store prices closely reflect the inflation level over the last year. An Independence Day cookout will cost \$73.82 for 10 guests this year, according to the 2026 American Farm Bureau Federation annual Marketbasket Survey.

This is up \$2.90 from last year, which is a 4% increase. The overall annual inflation rate in the United States is 4.2% for 12 months ending in May, which is consistent with the findings of the Marketbasket Survey, even though the survey tracks a much smaller basket of items.

At \$7.38 per person, this is the most expensive Fourth of July cookout since Farm Bureau began surveying costs in 2016. However, after adjusting for inflation, cookout costs have remained relatively stable in recent years and remain below the peak reached in 2022.

"Families across the country are dealing with higher prices for many expenses, including groceries," said American Farm Bureau Federation Economist Dr. Faith Parum. "As you look at the purchasing power of the dollar, however, it has remained relatively stable when it comes to food. America's families spend less of their disposable income on food than most other nations, and we enjoy one of the most abundant, affordable and safe food supplies in the world."

The Marketbasket Survey shows an increase in the cost of 10 of the 12 tracked items, including ground beef, pork and beans, strawberries and hamburger buns.

Several factors influence the increased costs. The retail price for 2 pounds of ground beef increased 5.5% to \$14.06. America's ranchers continue to rebuild their herds following years of severe drought, which has affected supplies. It will take several years for herds to recover to pre-drought levels.

Strawberries cost \$5.27 for two pints, an increase of 12.4%. Strawberries increased in price, in part, because of a devastating frost in Florida that destroyed many young plants early in the spring. High labor costs for fruits and vegetables are also a factor, as well as increased fuel costs for refrigeration and transportation.

A 32-ounce can of pork and beans is up 37 cents from 2025 to \$3.06. The cost of aluminum drastically increased this year, driving up the production cost of cans.

Hamburger buns cost an average of \$2.53, a 7.7% increase from last year. Increased production, transportation, and labor costs contributed to the price increase of hamburger buns.

Two bright spots in the survey were potato salad and chips. The price for potato salad fell 17.8% from 2025 to \$2.91. This can be attributed partially to a key salad ingredient – eggs. Egg prices have dropped as flocks recovered from avian influenza. Healthy potato harvests reduced the cost of making potato salad and chips. Chips were down 4 cents from 2025 prices to \$4.76.

AFBF President Zippy Duvall said, "Higher prices at the grocery store don't always translate to more money for farmers. The farmer's share of the food dollar is around 6% after expenses. Farmers are dealing with natural

disasters and higher supply costs while making the same – or sometimes less – money for the food they grow. Still, they're committed to growing safe, affordable, sustainable and abundant food for our nation.

"Farmers represent less than 2% of the population, but they carry a great responsibility in providing nutrition for the remaining 98% of America. The critical role they play has traditionally been supported by investments in innovation, research and risk management, all made possible by the farm bill. We encourage lawmakers to celebrate America's 250th anniversary and then return to D.C. with a renewed commitment to pass a new, modernized farm bill. It's an investment in our country's future."

The federal government's broader [Consumer Price Index](#) report for all items shows an overall increase of 4.2%, while food shows an increase of 3.1% compared to a year ago. Farm Bureau's informal Marketbasket Survey examines only those foods commonly associated with summer cookouts.

The July Fourth Cookout Survey is part of the Farm Bureau Marketbasket series, which also includes the popular annual Thanksgiving dinner cost survey of common food staples Americans use to prepare a holiday meal at home.

Volunteer shoppers across the country, including Farm Bureau members and others, collected data from stores in every state and Puerto Rico.

Individual Prices, AFBF 2026 Summer Cookout

- 2 pounds of ground beef, \$14.06 (+5.5%)
- 2 pounds of chicken breasts, \$8.06 (+3.5%)
- 3 pounds of pork chops, \$14.79 (+4.7%)
- 1 pound of cheese, \$3.60 (+1.7%)
- 1 package of hamburger buns, \$2.53 (+7.7%)
- 2 ½ pounds of homemade potato salad, \$2.91 (-17.8%)
- 32 ounces of pork and beans, \$3.06 (+13.8%)
- 16-ounce bag of potato chips, \$4.76 (-0.8%)
- 13-ounce package of chocolate chip cookies, \$4.25 (+6.3%)
- ½ gallon of ice cream, \$5.99 (+5.3%)
- 2 pints of strawberries, \$5.27 (+12.4%)
- 2 ½ quarts of lemonade, \$4.54 (+3.9%)

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