

America still has affordable food

The cost of food in America remains affordable. According to the latest statistics compiled by the Agriculture Department's Economic Research Service, American families and individuals currently spend, on average, just under 10 percent of their disposable personal income for food.

Applying that statistic to the calendar year means the average household will have earned enough disposable income -- that portion of income available for spending or saving -- to pay for its annual food supply in about 36 days, according to the Kansas Farm Bureau.

In recognition of this, Kansas Farm Bureau is celebrating Feb. 3-9 as Food Check-Out Week. Everyone is encouraged to sign up at your local grocery store to enter to win a chance for \$15 in free groceries during this week. One winner will be selected from the entries received at each store. Be sure and sign up at Sainty Supers, P&L Market, Hilltop General Store and Hometown Market in Bird City.

Not only is America's food supply the world's safest, but it's also the most affordable, said Alisa Rath, Cheyenne County coordinator. "The safe, abundant and affordable domestic food supply produced by America's farmers and ranchers is responsible, at least in part, for our nation's increasing standard of living."

"Compared to food, Americans work longer each year to pay for their housing, federal taxes and medical care," Mrs. Rath said.

According to the Tax Foundation, Americans must work 52

days each year to pay for health and medical care, 62 days to pay for housing/household operation and 77 days to pay their federal taxes.

Mrs. Rath said the affordable, high-quality food we enjoy as consumers is a product of our successful food production and distribution system, as well as America's farmers and ranchers continued access to effective and affordable crop protection tools.

This week should hold meaning for most Americans, she said. "Although we are concerned that some Americans cannot afford to buy the food they need, we are proud of the role Kansas farmers play in producing the most affordable food in the world."

The percent of disposable personal income spent for food has declined over the last 35 years. In 1970, it took Americans 15 more days to earn enough income to pay for their food supply for the year. According to United States Department of Agriculture, food is more affordable today due to a widening gap between growth in per-capita incomes and the amount of money spent for food.

This overall decrease is made more notable by trends indicating Americans are buying more expensive convenience foods, as well as more food away from home.

Food Check-Out Day tracks the amount of income needed by Americans to purchase food on an annual basis, she said. "Despite a few fluctuations over the past few years, food prices have remained relatively stable over time."



WINDSONG CHORUS entertained in St. Francis on Sunday. Above, Neala Carmichael, St. Francis, leads the group in some 'Hee Haw' singing. Below, Carol Ross and Colleen Gardner, center, are part of a group that sang 'Old MacDonald.'



Old friends keep in touch through their computers

By Karen Krien
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With the introduction of internet, the world has continued to become smaller and smaller. Neil McCumber, St. Francis, found out just how small it was when he received an e-mail from Walt Reston, who was one of four men in a missile launch crew in Germany.

Mr. McCumber and Mr. Reston along with Nixon Adams and Allen Owens, made up the crew.

The e-mail started: "Hey 'Sarge.'"

Mr. Reston said he had been thinking about Mr. McCumber through the years and wondered what had become of him.

"I've been scanning all our slides and photo albums so that I can save them as computer files, and the old ones seem to have made me nostalgic," Mr. Reston said. "I was able to find your middle initial on my Sembach 'Curtailment of Assignment' orders."

"With this info, I started searching the internet, concentrating on Colorado and Kansas. I started with the Denver area, as that was where I lost contact with you. I found what looks like your old address in Aurora and what I thought might be your e-mail address. I then sent an e-mail and



Mr and Mrs Walt Reston

an inquiry letter, no response... I kept searching and hit 'pay dirt' when I found this Aug. 11, 2005, photo from *The Saint Francis Herald*." (Photo pictured.)

Mr. McCumber joined the Air Force in 1954. After basic training, he went to mechanic schooling in Texas, then he went to Salina where he was at Smokey Hill Air Force Base which eventually was changed to Shilling Air Force Base; and, later, transferred to

Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka.

He was then selected to train in the pilotless missile program. He was stationed in Germany and, had there been a war, he would be commanded to start the engines and send the missile. He carried one key and his commanding officer carried the other key.

When he returned to the states and trained crews in the updated missile program.

Before retiring from the Air Force in 1974, he was on courier duty, delivering top secret mail to officers.

Out of the Air Force, he and his wife, Nancy, then moved to Aurora with four kids, a dog, two cars and a tent. In 2004, they moved to St. Francis after having discovered the quiet little town. He and Mrs. McCumber opened up Nancy's Bed and Breakfast on 301 E. Spencer.

Today, he has turned his flying interests to radio-controlled miniature airplanes and hunting. He also works part-time for the city as the overseer of the roadside park.

Mr. McCumber said he hasn't seen Mr. Reston since 1966 but he and Mrs. McCumber may try to plan a trip to the eastern United States and see Mr. Reston, who lives in Massachusetts.



NANCY AND NEIL McCumber enjoy an evening with their friend Walt Reston in the 1960s

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