

New Survey Examines How West Coast Consumers Are Handling the Tough Economy - and the Choices They're Making in the Store and at Home

New 'Together We Can' Web Site Offers Help with Shopping and Meal Preparation Tips Designed to Save Consumers Money

LIVINGSTON, Calif., Dec. 15 /PRNewswire/ -- Following the official announcement by the National Bureau of Economic Research that the U.S. is in a recession, West Coast poultry producer Foster Farms today released new survey findings examining how the economy is impacting consumer lives, from grocery shopping and meal preparation to holiday giving plans.

The survey findings indicate that West Coast consumers have been heavily impacted by the recession and that they have already adapted their shopping and cooking habits to increase savings. At the same time, these households see a silver lining in their ability to control grocery shopping and food preparation costs more than other areas of daily life (such as commuting, housing, etc.). The findings also suggest that consumers are moving away from viewing food as entertainment and are eating healthier by going back to basics. Highlights include:

-- West Coast families have been hit hard by the economy with one in four respondents having been personally affected by job loss or foreclosure and 40% of respondents knowing two to five people who have been similarly affected.

-- The majority (54.7%) of consumers surveyed said grocery shopping has become more difficult compared to last year.

-- 22% of West Coast consumers are having difficulty or can no longer afford to feed their family the way they liked due to the cost of groceries.

-- Despite the poor economy and rising food prices, 78% of consumers said that grocery shopping is something that they feel they can control, versus other economic factors.

-- 78.5% of those surveyed said they are now shopping smarter and feel a sense of accomplishment when they save. 35.6% said their family is eating healthier in this economy.

-- 64.1% of respondents said they are eating at home at least one more night a week instead of going out.

-- 87.6% of respondents agree that family meals provide a source of comfort.

-- Despite the economy, most families (70.3%) will enjoy the same meals they always have over the holidays, without sacrificing quantity or the quality of foods prepared.

Knowing that many consumers are in search of new savings strategies and affordable meal solutions, Foster Farms today introduced Together We Can (<http://www.FosterFarms.com/twc>), an online resource featuring tips for saving money in the kitchen and at the store. By incorporating a few of the recommended shopping and cooking tips (<http://www.FosterFarms.com/twctips>) into daily routines, savvy households could save more than 10% on their annual grocery shopping budgets.

On the Together We Can site (<http://www.FosterFarms.com/twc>), Foster Farms offers tips that together add up to significant savings:

-- Pick up the Pace -- The more time you spend in a store, the more money you'll spend. On average, shoppers spend 50 cents to a dollar per minute they spend in a store beyond a half hour. Set an alarm if you need to, and organize your shopping list by store layout so you have a game plan.

-- Shop Solo -- Some moms report saving \$15 per shopping trip by going solo (a savings of \$780 year!). Time your shopping while your kids are at school, at a friend's or in the care of another family member. Offer to switch kids with a friend for an hour each week so you can both reap the time and money savings!

-- Crock pots -- Crock pots are known for their tasty, filling meals and easy, no-fuss recipes. For 10 cents you can heat your crock pot for 8 hours, whereas it costs 32 cents to run your oven for only an hour.

"The economy is challenging for food producers and retailers, as well as consumers," said Ira Brill, Foster Farms' Director of Marketing Services. "At Foster Farms we recognize that consumers look to chicken as an affordable protein that is enjoyed by all members of the family. We are committed to producing the highest-quality product, while providing meal solutions and shopping suggestions that enable them to stretch their dollars. We are especially sensitive to consumer needs because Foster Farms is located in California's Central Valley, which has been hit particularly hard by the economic recession."

About Foster Farms

Founded by Max and Verda Foster in 1939, Foster Farms continues today as a family-owned and operated company. Foster Farms ready-to-cook, fresh chicken is all natural with no preservatives or sodium-based additives. For more than 70 years, families in the Western United States have trusted Foster Farms for the highest-quality, locally raised, fresh chicken.

* The phone survey of 1,000 California, Oregon and Washington consumers with primary responsibility for grocery shopping was conducted between November 14 and November 24, 2008, by Salt Lake City-based NSON Opinion Research. It was a representative sampling.

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