

Chicken wing consumption spikes during Super Bowl

By Huffington Post

Rumors of a chicken wing shortage are likely unfounded, so wing fans can breathe a sigh of relief. And these wing fans are serious about their devotion – the National Chicken Council estimates that 1.23 billion chicken wings will be consumed over Super Bowl weekend this year.

This is down slightly from 2012, when the NCC estimated that 1.25 billion wings would be consumed. If 1.23 billion wing segments were laid end to end, they would stretch from Candlestick Park in San Francisco to M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore – 27 times.

“Chicken companies produced about one percent fewer birds last year, due in large part to record high corn and feed prices,” said Bill Roenigk, chief economist and market analyst at the National Chicken Council, in a press release. “Corn makes up more than two-thirds of chicken feed and corn prices hit an all-time high in 2012, due to two reasons: last summer’s drought and pressure from a federal government requirement that mandates 40 percent of our corn crop be turned into fuel in the form of ethanol. Simply put, less corn equals higher feed costs, which means fewer birds produced.”

Wings are currently the highest priced part of the chicken, which is somewhat ironic since they first became popular as a cheap byproduct of rising demand for boneless, skinless chicken breast in the 1980s. Apparently, there’s such high demand for wings now that some restaurants sell chicken breast meat branded as boneless wings.

The NCC estimates that more than 13.25 billion chicken wings will be sold (as wings, not as components of a whole chicken)

throughout the year. To truly comprehend the power of the Super Bowl, the NCC has created this graph based on grocery store and supermarket 2012 chicken wings sales. It's clear that an outsized share are sold Super Bowl weekend.