

Prediction: Food prices to be stable through 2015

By Russ Parsons, Los Angeles Times

There's good news for shoppers in the latest Consumer Price Index update from the Department of Agriculture, released last week. Food prices in general should show little to no increase over last year. But there are a couple of exceptions and a couple more troubling caveats.

First the good news: The latest report by the USDA's Economic Research Service predicts that supermarket food prices will increase only 2 percent to 3 percent in 2015. Fresh fruits and vegetables are predicted to increase less than 1 percent.

What will probably be more expensive is beef. Prices are predicted to increase by 5 percent to 6 percent as the effects of the Midwestern drought linger. Though the weather improved some there this summer, it takes cattle 16 to 18 months to reach maturity, so the effects remain.

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