

Inflation hits local farmers markets vendors

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Vendors at local farmers markets said they are not immune from inflation effects. Most food vendors at the Pendleton Farmers Market on Friday, Aug. 19, said they had to hike prices and some curtailed travel.

Meat processing costs hammered Pat-n-Tam's Beef of Stanfield.

"In April our butcher's fees shot up," Tam Mallon said. "We haven't curtailed travel. We waited as long as we could before raising prices."

Vern Klicker of Klicker Homestead Berries, who lives 15 miles up Mill Creek from Walla Walla, also has stayed on the road.

"We haven't cut back on travel," he said, "but we've had to raise prices a bit. Fertilizer went up by three times last year. These little plastic containers are a petroleum product. But gas prices haven't stopped us."

Fresh produce vendors from Milton-Freewater's M&J Martinez Garden still are traveling as well.

"We didn't cut back," Joanna Leu said. "We need to get out. We have had to raise prices, though. People have noticed, but they've still supported us."

Other vendors have reduced travel due to



Photos by Yasser Marte/East Oregonian
Vern Klicker of Klicker Homestead Berries sets up a bounty of blueberries Friday, Aug. 19, 2022, at the Pendleton Farmers Market. Klicker comes from Walla Walla to sell an abundance of his fruit in Pendleton. He said the business "had to raise prices a bit" due to rising costs.

high fuel costs.

"My prices at markets are the same," chicken kebob vendor Lua Ena of the Polynesian Grill, Hermiston, said. "But when I do events, I have to raise them up. I never thought I'd have to pay \$110 for a 40-pound box of chicken. I have cut back on travel because of fuel prices. I do more local events, not so far away."

Key Family Farms has been sticking closer to home in Milton-Freewater.

"We are traveling less," Jamie Key said, "and we

had to raise prices.

Vendor Lyneile Horst of the Kitchen Cupboard, Long Creek, was forced to hike prices as well.

"Our jam went up one dollar a jar," she said.

Salsa vendors Lucia Alvarez and Mama Lucy Salva said they had raised prices, and have also suffered supply chain shortages.

"We've had no vacation or anything," Alvarez said. "Not only are jars real expensive, but they're hard to find."

Food inflation in the United States hit 10.9% in July, the highest since May of 1979, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The food at home index rose 13.1%, while away from home rose by 7.6%.

Compared to the previous month, food prices were up 1.1%, the seventh consecutive monthly increase of 0.9% or more, mainly due to a rise in the cost of nonalcoholic beverages (2.3%), coffee (3.5%), dairy and related products (1.7%).



Baskets of white peaches and apricots are on display Friday, Aug. 19, 2022, at Pendleton Farmers Market. The fruits are from Jamie Key of Key Family Farm of Milton-Freewater.



Joanna Leu of M&J Martinez Garden displays a variety of vegetables Friday, Aug. 19, 2022, at the Pendleton Farmers Market. M&J Martinez Garden traveled from Milton-Freewater and discussed how they had to raise prices because of inflation.

Faith-sponsored food outreach program draws 200 residents

By ANTONIO ARREDONDO
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Hundreds of people gathered on the afternoon of Friday, Aug. 19, outside Electric Sundown, Pendleton, for a food giveaway.

The Pendleton chapter of the Baha'i Faith held the event. It was the group's second food drive of the year, and second at Electric Sundown. Bill Young said the location of Electric Sundown, 14 S.E. Third St., provided by owner Lance Leonnig has been a huge help.

"It's in our target area," said Young, a member of the Pendleton Food Pantry Team for the Pendleton Baha'i community. "It's shaded, and Lance makes sure to give us space. He's been huge in terms of encouraging us."

Young and his other Baha'i members have been working to address the food desert of Pendleton — the area on the southeast side of town with no grocery stores.

It's a problem the Baha'i community has begun to address as of late. Members held their first food outreach drive on July 10 with modest results. Young said they received 62 boxes from the Community Action Program

of East Central Oregon. One CAPECO box can feed a family of four for three to five days.

For the second edition of the giveaway, the group also dealt with impending road work on Southeast Byers Avenue. The construction was going to block off access to the Electric Sundown until Young made some calls.

"We called public works and voila," Young said, "they changed it specifically for us."

With one roadblock out of the way, eight Baha'i faithful and two CAPECO members prepared for the groups to come. With 36 more boxes of food than in July, the results were expected to increase.

This time around, around 200 community members attended, either picking up food for themselves or a friend. Young said his team also shipped boxes to other stores, so those working shifts could get what they needed.

Young attributed the success of the outreach program to additional canvassing and word of mouth. Places such as the First Presbyterian Church in Pendleton shared news of the event with its members. And with one successful campaign already under their belt, residents knew they were a good

place to get food from, Young said.

The next hurdle Young and his team faces is some of the stigmas against aid. The Baha'i member said several of those he talked with admitted they needed help but refused to receive it.

"They were cutting the conversation off early," Young said. "They didn't feel comfortable."

While the group works to get food for all, Young said he plans for their next event. The church group hopes to purchase a full-time food pantry, but that process could take months. Young said their initial facility proposal to operate out of Washington Elementary School was rejected, but he said the hope is to work with the school in the future.

Without a pantry, the giveaways will continue to happen at Electric Sundown. Young said the next event is planned around Round-Up week. While no date has been made official yet, Young offered up the week after the rodeo as a tentative time.

Regardless of the pantry, Young was satisfied with the giveaway Aug. 19 and the help it gives to the Pendleton community.

"We're all feeling good today," Young said.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Lexington residents to vote in November on whether to allow psilocybin businesses

LEXINGTON — Lexington voters join the leagues of local communities voting on whether to ban psilocybin-related businesses and manufacturing.

The town council on Friday, Aug. 19 adopted a resolution referring the ban to the ballot in the November general election, Town Recorder Veronica Hess reported.

Oregon voted in 2020 to allow manufacturing, distributing and possession of psilocybin and psilocin, psychedelic chemicals found in some mushrooms. State law provides that a city council may adopt an ordinance to give local voters the say in prohibiting the establishment of any of those registered or licensed activities.

Approval of this referendum would prohibit the establishment of psilocybin product manufacturers and psilocybin service center operators within Lexington.

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SURPLUS AUCTION

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

BMCC Health Educ. Bldg and NW Parking Lot
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Preview & Registration: 9 AM - 10 AM

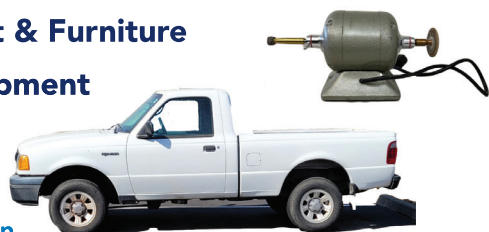
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