

THIS 'N THAT

Williams County Extension Homemakers & Friends Newsletter
Family & Community Education

AUGUST 2011

TIDBITS

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Whew! This heat and humidity is getting the best of me! I am not a hot weather fan to begin with but this unusual humidity is compounding the effects. Excessive heat can pose severe health risks so refer to the article on page four to stay healthy for the rest of this summer.

Last month I wrote about the Fiber Arts Retreat in Bismarck. Is anyone planning to attend? I am going and would have room for passengers to join me. I think it is going to be a fun weekend- as well as educational. Give me a call or e-mail if you are interested. For further information go to our website.

JC Penney has changed the name of their Round Up program to Pennies from Heaven. The program will function the same as always. When you make a purchase at the Williston JC Penney Store from now until August 27th you can round your purchase up to the nearest dollar and the change will be donated to Williams County 4-H. These really have been "Pennies from Heaven" for our 4-H program. During the April Roundup we received \$543! Please consider rounding up when you make a purchase during August..

Keep cool and enjoy the rest of summer!



DATES TO REMEMBER:

- **Aug. 12 & 13** Chokecherry Festival, Harmon Park
- Aug 26-28** Fiber Arts Retreat for 4-H leaders and teens – Bismarck
- Aug 29-30** Extension District Conference (out of office)
- October 10** Homemakers Fall Council Meeting 7pm, 2nd floor conference room Courthouse

WHY IS THE COST OF GAS SO HIGH?

With prices at the pump soaring, everyone's pocketbook is feeling the pinch. There are several factors that affect the price of gas. We'll look at where your money goes when you fill up and provide some tips to help you avoid sticker shock when the pump finally clicks off.

So, why is gas so expensive? Luckily, you don't need to retake high school economics to understand two simple principles that guide the cost of fuel: supply and demand. As Americans, we consume a lot of gas—178 million gallons daily, to be exact. The more we drive and fly, the more our country's demand for gas increases, which raises prices.

Supply has an equal effect on price. Oil, the main ingredient of gas, is a limited resource. It must be found, extracted, refined, transported and sold ... that's a lot of work! Throw in a hurricane or war and oil supplies can drop, raising prices.

So, what does your \$3-4 per gallon pay for anyway? The biggest part, about 66%, is the cost of crude oil. Refining, distribution and marketing make up 19%. Uncle Sam takes 12% through taxes. Finally, your local gas station gets about 3%, allowing them to cover their expenses and turn a small profit.

Now that you know why it takes so much money to keep your gas tank full, here are some tips to help make sure your pockets aren't on "E".

Drive less. The best way to lower your gas bill is to drive less. When running errands, try to combine multiple trips into one. Going only a few blocks? Walk or ride your bike for a gas-free, emission-free and healthy trip! Want to split gas cost? Carpool with a friend or coworker.

Take it easy. Speeding may or may not get you an expensive ticket, but it does waste gas. Driving 70 instead of 60 is like spending an extra \$.54 per gallon at today's prices. You're not Mario Andretti; accelerate slowly and coast to lights.

Shop around. Gas prices vary in every area, so make sure you aren't overpaying. Check out GasBuddy.com to find low prices in your area. Remember, don't waste your savings by driving too far to save a few cents per gallon! Going to gas stations across town can eat up your savings, so find the best price that's close to home.

Take a wrench to it. To keep your car from becoming a gas hog, proper care is the key. Check your tire pressure often and make sure it's up to par with the manufacturer's recommendation. Got a clogged air filter? It could be choking your engine; replace it with a new one. Refer to your owner's manual to keep your car in tip-top shape.

Source: *Oklahoma Money Matters*



Two simple principles guide the cost of fuel: supply and demand.



FORTUNE FAVORS THE PREPARED MIND LOUIS PASTEUR

Planning to stop at the grocery store to pick something up on your way home? Before you do, stop and assess your resistance level. Are you hungry, tired, rushed or feeling down after a busy day? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, and this is the only time you have to go to the store, put yourself on high alert! You will be more vulnerable to marketing ploys, product placement, sales signs and impulse buys.

Before walking into the store, be prepared! Agree with yourself that you will ONLY buy the things on your list. Go to a familiar store where you can head directly to those items and leave without walking up and down all the aisles. Don't take a cart or basket. If you're tempted to treat yourself or buy extra items, repeat to yourself: *This is a quick stop for these items and I'm out of here. I'm fast and focused. This is a quick stop for these items and I'm out of here. I'm fast and focused.* By preparing yourself you will be able to pass up the impulse buys that beckon. Source: *Inspired Savings*

IT'S BLUEBERRY SEASON

Blueberries Offer Big Health Benefits in a Small Package

Blueberries are known as a superfood for good reason; these tiny morsels pack a punch with flavor and nutrition. Compared with 40 other fruits and vegetables, blueberries top the list for fighting aging, cancer and heart disease. They are a favorite of The Produce Lady, who shares her tips for enjoying blueberry goodness.

Nutrition Blueberries are high in dietary fiber, niacin and vitamins A and C. They also contain antioxidants and flavonoids, all important for good health and prevention of disease. It's hard to believe that something this delicious is so good for you. One-half cup of blueberries contains only 40 calories, so eat up!

Selection & Storage The best berries are light gray-blue to indigo blue. A berry with any hint of red is not fully ripened and will not ripen after being picked.

To ensure that your food is safe, always wash your hands before handling produce. Once you have your berries home, wait to wash them until just before using, rather than before storing. This practice will keep them from becoming mushy. But do chill the berries as soon as you get them home. If refrigerated, fresh-picked berries will keep 10 to 14 days. Store covered containers of berries in a cool, moist area of the refrigerator, such as in the hydrator (vegetable keeper), to help extend the usable life of the fruit. Recommended storage time for purchased berries is three to five days.

You can enjoy the good quality of blueberries year-round by purchasing extra to freeze. The best technique for freezing, which also works for many other berries, is to place the berries one-layer deep on a cookie sheet or in a dish. Do not wash before freezing to keep the skins from toughening. Freeze the berries, then pour them into freezer containers. Because unwashed berries freeze individually, they pour easily from containers in desired amounts. Remember to rinse frozen and fresh berries just before serving.

Source: *The Produce Lady, NC State University*



HINT: When using frozen blueberries in baking, do not thaw them. Always add them frozen so they will not "bleed" into your baked goods.

BLUEBERRY SMOOTHIE

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen
8 oz. yogurt, any flavor
1 banana, peeled
1 cup milk, more if desired
1 tbsp. wheat germ, if desired

DIRECTIONS:

Mix all ingredients. Blend in a blender until smooth and serve. Serves 2.



Source: *John Braswell, Mississippi State University Extension Services, Poplarville, MS*

CDC TIPS FOR PREVENTING HEAT RELATED ILLNESS

We have been experiencing extreme heat accompanied by unusually high humidity for several days now. This can lead to heat-related illness. People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves. The body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough.

Several factors affect the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather. When the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Other conditions related to risk include age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug and alcohol use.

The best defense is prevention. Here are some prevention tips for home and work:

- Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic), regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Warning: If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask him how much you should drink while the weather is hot.
- Don't drink liquids that contain alcohol or large amounts of sugar—these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also, avoid very cold drinks, because they can cause stomach cramps.
- When at home, stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall or public library—even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat. Call your local health department to see if there are any heat-relief shelters in your area.
- Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s, fans will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath, or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- NEVER leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle— or any pets.



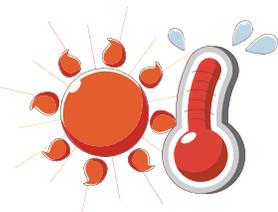
Although any one at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Check regularly on:



- Infants and young children
 - People aged 65 or older
 - People who have a mental illness
 - Those who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure
- Visit adults at risk at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants and young children, of course, need much more frequent watching.

If you must be out in the heat:

- Try to limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours.
- Cut down on exercise. If you must exercise, drink two to four glasses of cool fluids each hour. A sports beverage can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat. Warning: If you are on a low-salt diet, talk with your doctor before drinking a sports beverage. Remember the warning in the first "tip" (above), too.
- Try to rest often in shady areas.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat (also keeps you cooler) and sunglasses and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher (the most effective products say "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on their labels).



For further information go to: www.emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp

Did you know... If the amount of water in your body is reduced by even 1%, you will feel thirsty. (This is why you need to drink 8 glasses of water everyday!)