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GROCERY SHOPPERS FACE INCREASED PRICES
New Survey Reveals Smaller Chains Still Offer Greater Savings



(BOSTON) -- A survey released today by ConsumerWorld.org reveals what some grocery shoppers have been muttering about -- prices have gone up since last summer -- by between three and nine percent for the items checked. But, lower prices can still be found by smart shoppers.

The largest increase was at Market Basket which suffered through an employee and customer boycott last summer. In substantial part, the reason for Market Basket's price hikes was the elimination of its extra four percent across-the-board discount that was applied to all orders throughout 2014. Higher beef and egg prices accounted for most of the rest of the increase there and at all chains. [Note: These are the average increases for the basket of items checked, and not an overall increase storewide for all items.]

Sample Basket of Common Food Items
Price Changes* August 2014 to August 2015

<u>Chain</u>	<u>Price increase</u>
Market Basket	9%
Star Market	8%
Stop & Shop	7%
Price Rite	7%
Aldi	6%
Save-A-Lot	3%

**for surveyed items*

"While Market Basket is perceived by many to be the lowest-priced supermarket, smaller limited assortment stores have even lower prices, but they have yet to be discovered by most shoppers," commented Consumer World founder Edgar Dworsky.

The chain with the lowest prices in the survey was Aldi, where a basket of common store brand items was 19% less than Market Basket, 30% lower than Stop & Shop, and 37% lower than Star Market. Price Rite and Save-A-Lot, two other limited assortment stores, were 12-14% cheaper than Market Basket. Overall, Aldi had the lowest prices on all but two of the items checked.

On the high side, Star Market had the highest prices despite more than half of the items being on sale. Their prices were 29% higher than Market Basket, while Stop & Shop's prices were 15% more. What cost a total of only \$25.78 at Aldi was over \$41 at Star Market – 59% more.

These smaller stores primarily stock their own store brand of goods and usually carry only one size of each. The stores are small in comparison to full-size supermarkets because of their lack of variety and brand name choices. Their meat and produce departments are smaller too, carrying only popular items that may or may not be priced aggressively. There are about three dozen limited assortment supermarkets operating in Massachusetts.

The survey revealed that some individual items varied greatly in price from store to store, sometimes selling for a dollar or two more, or even double or triple the lowest price.

- A 40-ounce jar of store brand peanut butter was a low \$2.99 at Aldi, \$3.49 at Save-A-Lot, \$3.99 at Market Basket, \$4.49 at Stop & Shop, and a whopping \$4.99 at Star Market.
- A one-pound box of saltine crackers was a low 85 cents at Aldi, but double the price at Stop & Shop (\$1.89) and triple the price at Star Market (\$2.50) despite being on sale there.
- A 48-oz bottle of vegetable oil ranged from a low of \$1.99 at Aldi to a high of \$4.99 at Star Market.

See:

2015 comparison chart at: <http://www.consumerworld.org/pubs/supermarketsurvey2015chart.pdf>

2014 comparison chart at: <http://www.consumerworld.org/pubs/supermarketsurvey2014chart.pdf>

Consumer World checked the prices of nearly two dozen common store brand grocery items on August 5, 2015 at Market Basket (Chelsea), Stop & Shop (Chelsea), Star Market (Somerville), Aldi (Medford), Save-A-Lot (Chelsea) and Price Rite (Revere), and compared them to prices it found on August 6, 2014 at those same stores. Sixteen of those items were stocked by each of the six grocery chains in both 2014 and 2015 and are included in the totals shown in the accompanying charts. Other items are shown for comparison purposes only.

NOTE: A limited survey such as this one can only provide a sample of the price differences and price changes between stores for the items selected. Few perishable items were included because most of those items were not available at Market Basket in August 2014 due to the boycott when the items in the survey were first selected. Shoppers are encouraged to compare prices for themselves, shop at several stores, buy sale items in quantity whenever possible, and use coupons.

Consumer World[®], launched in 1995, is a Boston-based, public service consumer resource guide with over 2000 links to everything "consumer" on the Internet. **Edgar Dworsky**, the founder and editor of ConsumerWorld.org and MousePrint.org, is a former Assistant Attorney General in the Consumer Protection Division of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office. ###

Supermarket Comparison Price Survey - How Other Supermarkets Compare to Market Basket

by Consumer World, August 5, 2015										
										Item
		Aldi	Price	Save-A-	Market	Stop &		Star		Included
		Medford	Rite	Lot	Basket	Shop	sale	Market	sale	in
Store Brand			Revere	Chelsea	Chelsea	Chelsea	item?	Somerville	item?	Total
Mac & Cheese 7.25 oz.		0.33	0.40	0.39	0.60	0.79		1.00	y	yes
Chunk Light Tuna 5 oz.		0.65	0.79	0.69	0.80	0.99		0.89	y	yes
Creamy Peanut Butter 40 oz.		2.99		3.49	3.99	4.49		4.99		no
Creamy Peanut Butter 18 oz.		1.49	1.69	1.49	2.00	2.19		2.99	y	yes
Soft Margarine 45 oz.		1.79	1.99	1.99	2.59	3.39		2.99	y	yes
Eggs dozen large least expensive		2.35	2.49	2.69	2.79	3.19		2.99	y	yes
Milk gallon 2%		2.69	2.49	2.69	2.59	2.69	y	2.99		yes
Peas canned 15 oz.		0.65	0.89	0.65	0.75	0.69		0.99		yes
White Flour 5 lbs.		1.99	1.69	1.49	1.99	2.69		3.49		no
Mayonnaise 30 oz.		1.89	1.89	1.99	2.19	3.49		2.79	y	yes
Vegetable Oil 48 oz.		1.99	2.29	1.99	2.59	2.50	y	4.99		yes
Iceberg Lettuce		0.89	1.29	1.49	0.99	1.49		1.49		no
Saltine Crackers 16 oz.		0.85	0.99	0.99	1.50	1.89		2.50		yes
Chocolate Sand. Cookies 15.x oz.		1.49	1.99	1.50	2.00	2.19		2.99		yes
Boneless Chicken Breast 1 lb pkg		2.49	2.99	2.89	1.99s	3.49		3.99		no
White Bread 18 - 20 oz.		0.99	0.99	0.99	1.19	1.50	y	1.49		yes
Ground Beef least expensive 1 lb.		3.79	3.99	3.65	3.99	4.49		4.49	y	yes
Spaghetti 32 oz. or 2@16 oz.		1.45	1.72	1.78	2.00	1.98		2.00	y	yes
Orange Juice from concn. 59 oz.		1.69	1.99	1.99		1.99		2.79		no
Chocolate Baking Chips 12 oz.		1.59	1.59	1.99	2.29	2.29		2.49		yes
Raisin Bran Cereal 18.7 - 20 oz.		1.79	1.89	1.99	2.00	2.44		2.50	y	yes
Cheerios-type Cereal 14 oz.		1.69				2.49		2.00	y	no
		Total 2015	\$25.78	\$28.08	\$27.46	\$31.87		\$36.70		\$41.08
		Compared to Market Basket	-19%	-12%	-14%	<--->		+15%		+29%
		Total 2014	\$24.26	\$26.30	\$26.60	\$29.16		\$34.23		\$38.19
		Price Change 2014 to 2015	+6%	+7%	+3%	+9%		+7%		+8%
		Lowest price (and included in total)								Note: No store brand tuna at Price Rite. Star Kist substituted.
		Item included in total.								Note: If one store did not have an item in 2014 or 2015, it was excluded from the total this year.
										Note: Smallest pack available used for meat department items.