

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



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Give Thanks for Our Missouri Turkey Farmers

JEFFERSON CITY — When Thanksgiving Day rolls around and we gather to count our blessings and celebrate the treasured holiday with our family and friends, let's not forget that our delicious turkeys — the top attraction of our holiday meal — may have come from our own agriculture-rich state.

Missouri is one of the leading producers of turkeys, and among the top six states that produced 175 million of the 271 million turkeys raised in the U.S. in 2007. An estimated 46 million turkeys — one-fifth of the annual total of 235 million consumed in the U.S. last year — were eaten at Thanksgiving. With the average weight of turkeys purchased for Thanksgiving weighing around 15 pounds, that translated into approximately 690 million pounds of turkey consumed in the United States during Thanksgiving in 2007. Not surprising when you learn nearly 88 percent of Americans surveyed by the National Turkey Federation reported they eat turkey at Thanksgiving.

Turkey is also enjoyed throughout the rest of the year. Approximately 22 million turkeys were consumed last year at Christmastime and 19 million during the Easter holiday. With turkey low in fat and high in protein, it's gaining more and more popularity at the American dinner table — with 50 percent of U.S. consumers reportedly eating turkey at least once a week.

That's good news for Missouri agriculture and one of the reasons the governor agreed again this year to pardon a Missouri turkey during Thanksgiving week to draw attention to our state's rich agricultural heritage. At this writing, this year's lucky turkey was set to be named "Turkulese" or "Stewie," depending on the outcome of a statewide naming contest. More than 2.3 million people have gone online to join in the fun of naming this year's pardoned bird.

You may be interested to know that the Missouri Farm Bureau recently conducted its annual survey of the average cost of this year's traditional Thanksgiving dinner. The cost for 10 people — which includes a 16-pound turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, cranberries, rolls, two pumpkin pies and more — will average \$44.50 in Missouri. The price is up, but feeding 10 people for \$4.45 per person — with leftovers — is still a good bargain. You can't eat out for that.

I do want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and blessed Thanksgiving. We really do live in a land of plenty and can count a multitude of blessings. I know I am truly blessed to have a wonderful family, great friends, and satisfying work, which includes serving as your state senator. I am thankful that you have once again entrusted me to represent your interests in Jefferson City, and I will do my best to forward meaningful legislation that will benefit the lives of residents in southeast Missouri.

Have a wonderful holiday, and do enjoy your tasty turkey and all the trimmings.

As always, if you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at 1-877-291-5584.

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