

Food Price Pinch

"I understand what they're going through cause I'm going through it too," she said stocking a shelf full of broccoli.

Ozark Natural Foods Produce Manager Pauline Thiessen tries to find a balance between the payroll and the buying burden she has to pass on to her customers.

"We still have overhead, we still have employees to pay," she said. "The prices have definitely gone up from the larger company that we deal with."

She knows shoppers notice the dollars and cents shooting up for everyday staples.

"Prices have gone up, but prices for so many things have gone up," shopper Joseph Judd said while standing in the checkout line.

"I would say bread, sugar, milk," mom Genoah Kidlow said. "Teddy Grahams have gone up by \$3.00. It makes it hard to buy healthy foods for your kids."

For the most part, economist Kathy Deck, Director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Arkansas, believes it's something beyond the average retailer's realm of control.

"The producers have to make a profit, and they're going to sell to who pays the most," she said simply.

Right now, there's a demand for food across the globe.

"We have to compete for those resources and price is how we do it," she said.

So, a shortage of wheat in Russia or the amount of meat China eats ends up affecting stock in stores.

"We live in a very globalized world," Deck said. "All of these things show up in term of prices we pay."

The recession's left many American's making less.

"Folks didn't feel like they had the ability to go to their bosses and say please give me more money," Deck said.

But they're paying more.

"I think it's ridiculous," Kidlow said. "The groceries need to be at a reasonable price with the economy like it is."

There are ways to save some pennies.

"If you're willing to take the time to do the price comparison, you can still save some money," Deck said.

But we'll have to dig down, knowing a dollar doesn't go as far. And we'll have to be ready when workers like Pauline Thiessen have to up the ante. So they can continue to stock the shelves as costs climb.