

Grocery price manipulation

Letter to the editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 09.21.23

Grocery prices have risen far higher than inflation could explain, and have remained high as prices for most other goods have fallen. Wages haven't kept pace, and many North Carolina families have been facing difficult choices in order to keep food on the table.

MAGA Republicans gleefully blame President Biden, even as inflation rates have fallen significantly over the past year. Others blame climate change, the war in Ukraine, and pandemic supply chain interruptions. The main culprit, however, is corporate consolidation which suppresses competition and allows suppliers to name their price.

Four multinational meat-packing operations - Tyson, JBS, Cargill, and National Beef – control 85% of the American beef market. From the humble hamburger to the sizzling steak, consumers either pay up or go without. Even shortages like last year's "egg crisis" provided record profits for the corporate giants who control the market.

Many of the brand name foods filling our supermarket shelves come from enormous "food cartels" like PepsiCo, Coca Cola, Nestle, Unilever, Mars, Kellogg's, General Mills. Many "store brands" come from the same food cartels. Grocery store chain consolidation further limits competition with five conglomerates controlling nearly half of grocery sales and more mergers expected.

The savings resulting from economies of scale aren't passed on to consumers; they drive record profits that enable corporations to lobby our MAGA Republican legislators to ensure that they remain committed to corporate "freedom" from regulation.

For over a century, America's anti-trust laws have fostered fair competition and protected consumer interests. Today, multinational corporate cartels prosper as millions of Americans struggle to afford groceries, while MAGA Republicans slash government aid and shrug as children go hungry. That's hardly making America "great" again. Please remember that next time you vote.

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