



#6 They promote take out. If money is really tight for a family, having to leave a tip may be just enough to be a deterrent. A lot of large chains are promoting take out by having preferred parking right in front. You may not be able to offer this option, but is ordering take-out from your facility easy to do? Is it clear how to do it, where to pick it up, and how much it will cost? Do your customers know it's available?

#7 They offer coupons or incentives. Can you do something or offer an incentive to a diner by coming on the off hours? Do you have an email Advertising list?

#8 They are watching controllable costs: When was the last time you took note of just how many paper napkins went out to a guest in a stack? How many creamers and packet controlled items went in the garbage because someone failed to pay attention to a controllable cost?

## Are you looking for Easy Cost Effective product solutions?:

It's hard to change out recipe ingredients and not change the quality of your end product. Many chefs and operators work for years to perfect recipes, plate presentations, menu choices, etc. But, as the US dollar continues to weaken, restaurants must switch to more cost effective products such as the high ticket imported ingredient to a domestic counterpart. It is possible to look at less known cuts of meat and feature more cost effective formulations such as a beef shoulder tender, a pork ribeye roast, and a Denver cut steak.

Other things we can do to help offset some costs are to look at additional categories besides proteins. Switching from an all butter block to a European butter block, which clarifies the same as butter and has all the flavor of butter, could save an operator 20% on their cost of butter. It has a slightly different butter fat content and doesn't work as well to bake with, but nonetheless, cooks just the same as an all butter product. Liquid butter, another great alternative to butter would work nicely for sauté, some sauce work, spread to grill bread or make garlic bread, great for making wing sauce, and is very cost consistent in a rapidly changing dairy market. Cream soup base is another very effective alternative to heavy cream when making cream based soups or sauces.

Olive oil, an ingredient we all love and would hate to give up. What if instead of giving it up all together, we cooked in a domestic blended oil, and saved the imported high priced olive oil to drizzle over the top and tickle the tastebuds on the very first bite?



## THE BATTLE FOR ACRES



Shortages in crops has been our focus for the past two newsletters. This time, I'd like to take a look at how other shortages are having an impact on the foodservice industry. Coal, used for steel production has failed to meet it's production commitments in Australia. Asian steelmakers are largely dependent on coal from Australia, the world's largest coking coal exporter, to make steel. The stoppage is coming as steelmakers around the world have been raising their prices over the last year, including several pricing increases in recent weeks, in an attempt to recoup high energy, raw material, and shipping costs.

Why is this so important? Food cans. The problems for food cans will be compounded by a sharp increase in the price of tinplate due to the rise in iron ore, coke, energy, and tin during the past two years. Most specifically in the US, these costs will be passed through canmakers to food processors, and ultimately to the consumer. Early in last October, a 15% increase in the price of tinplate for North American customers was announced.