



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Meat monopolies ripped off McDonald's and everybody else

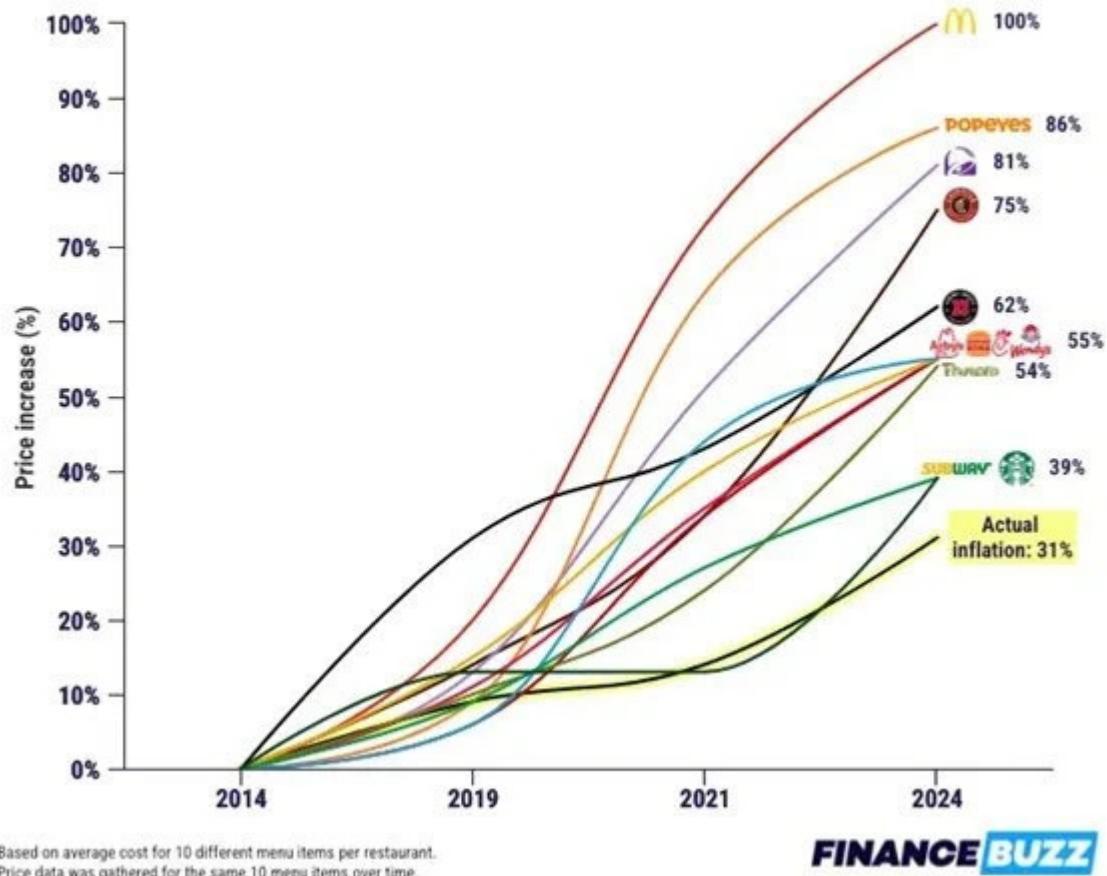
written by Stephen Millies

October 18, 2024

Skyrocketing food prices are a corporate conspiracy

Fast food price inflation

Menu prices have outpaced national inflation rates at every fast food restaurant since 2014.



McDonald's filed an [antitrust suit](#) on Oct. 4 against the four biggest meatpackers, claiming the outfits conspired to jack up beef prices since at least 2015. The four accused dead animal monopolists — Cargill, JBS, National Beef Packing Company, and Tyson — had total sales of \$315 billion last year.

Meanwhile, McDonald's — the world's #1 junk food pusher — raked in \$25 billion. Its local franchises, which exploit over two million workers, had sales of tens of billions more.

All these mega-rich corporations are criminal cartels. When they start accusing each

other, the working class can learn some of the truth.

According to [government figures](#), food prices rose by 27% between January 2020 (the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic) and September 2024. Many families and individuals are paying even more.

Millions of poor and working people can't afford to shop at supermarkets anymore. Instead, they're buying bags of noodles and other food items at so-called dollar stores.

There were nearly [22 million](#) millionaires in the United States in 2021. The same year, [53 million](#) people lined up at food banks across the country to get something to eat for themselves and their families.

The dramatic increase in food prices wasn't the result of droughts, although capitalist climate change is harming agriculture. The supply chain issues at the seaports hardly affected grocery prices since most food is produced domestically.

The price gouging certainly isn't the fault of immigrant workers, who account for a majority of U.S. farmworkers, many of whom are undocumented. Billionaire Trump supporter Nelson Peltz — who controls McDonald's archrival Wendy's — refused to pay farm workers more than a penny per pound for picking tomatoes.

Monopoly allowed Cargill, JBS, National Beef Packing Company, and Tyson to boost beef prices. The four outfits now control more than 80% of the beef market.

Take over the packers and the supermarket chains!

As McDonald's [suit](#) points out, "Conspiracies are easier to organize and sustain when only a few firms control a large share of the market."

McDonald's should know. It's being [sued](#) for antitrust violations for denying the

right of employees to work at another McDonald's location for better wages. This "no-poach" rule is illegal yet common in the corporate world.

As far back as 1888, the United States Senate investigated the meatpackers' price-fixing in the buying and selling of livestock. Numerous anti-trust [suits](#) followed over the decades.

None of these cases stopped the continuing monopolization of meatpacking, poultry production, or any other industry. Nor did antitrust laws stop grocery chains from swallowing each other.

The [proposed acquisition](#) of Albertsons by Kroger will create a supermarket monster with 5,000 stores and 700,000 employees. Along with the even bigger Walmart, these outfits will control 29% of U.S. grocery sales.

While the meat monopolies raised prices through the roof, over 59,000 workers in their plants fell ill from COVID-19. At least [269 died](#).

During the pandemic, people were urged to keep six feet apart. Meat bosses sneered at social distancing. On many meat and poultry production lines, workers were just two feet away from each other, almost guaranteeing sickness and possible death.

Then, Smithfield Foods CEO Kenneth Sullivan wrote to Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts that "social distancing is a nicety that makes sense only for people with laptops." In a [letter](#) to Senators Elizabeth Warren and Cory Booker, Sullivan declared, "For better or worse, our plants are what they are."

"For better or worse," hundreds of workers died while the meat monopolists collected billions more in profit. All the capitalist monopolies need to be taken over by the people.



<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2024/10/18/meat-monopolies-ripped-off-mcdonalds-and-everybody-else/>