



# florida Consumer E-Newsletter

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brought to you by the Division of Consumer Services

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Charles H. Bronson, Commissioner

*a message from*



*the  
Commissioner*

Dear Friends:

You should use extreme caution at the checkout line to make sure that you are not overcharged, especially during the holiday season. Always check your receipts and verify at the checkout counter for special prices that may be advertised. This will ensure your holiday funds can be stretched a little further.

Remember, we're here for you. Our Consumer Call Center will answer any consumer related questions you may have and assist you in filing a complaint against a company doing business in the State of Florida. You can reach us by the following: calling within Florida 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352), outside of Florida 850-488-2221, ¡Español! 1-800-FL-AYUDA (352-9832), or by visiting our website at: [www.800helpfla.com](http://www.800helpfla.com).

*Charles H. Bronson*

Checkout price scanners were first introduced in grocery stores in the 1970's and now retailers have become dependent on them. The automated systems drastically speed consumer transactions, but there are no assurances to consumers that the computerized pricing and scanning systems are accurate. Therefore, it is left to the consumer to be observant at the checkout line.



**SCANNING—THE RIGHT PRICE**

You should pay particularly close attention to sale priced items and to merchandise that has been marked down. Sometimes the store's scanners don't reflect the sale or markdown price. While stores have made improvements in scanner error rates, mistakes can and will happen. Many times the mistakes are in favor of the consumer but sometimes they are not.

It is very important for consumers to know the price of the merchandise they're buying and compare it to what is scanned or charged at the checkout line. Review your receipt before leaving the store. If there is a discrepancy, you should immediately bring it to the attention of the store personnel. If the store refuses to correct the problem, call the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' toll-free hotline at 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) to report the problem.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is responsible for checking the accuracy of all types of commercial weighing and measuring devices, including price scanning devices. Department inspectors randomly inspect scanner systems throughout the state using a nationally developed procedure for determining accuracy. Stores that fail to meet the adopted 98% accuracy standard due to excessive undercharges are inspected at an increased frequency; stores that fail to meet the standard due to excessive overcharges face sanctions ranging from warning letters to fines of up to \$5,000. Additionally, any errors discovered during an inspection must be corrected immediately.

Shopping should be a fun experience. Make the best of yours by making sure you've been scanned the *Right Price*.

***Remember... An educated consumer is the best defense against fraud and deception***