

BusinessWeek

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS November 7, 2007, 3:15PM ET

Wal-Mart to pay Wis. for overcharges

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MILWAUKEE

Wal-Mart will pay the state of Wisconsin almost \$90,000 for overcharging customers for bulk coffee and vegetables, the state announced Wednesday.

Inspectors for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection found 280 violations of weights and measures rules at nine Wal-Mart stores canvassed last year. The inspectors checked a total of 40 Wal-Mart stores.

They found violations at stores in West Bend, Appleton, Oshkosh, Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls, Manitowoc, Prairie du Chien, Platteville and Rice Lake, the DATCP said in a news release.

The stores were charging customers for the weight of packaging when they bought bulk items such as coffee, broccoli and sweet potatoes, the DATCP said. State law requires stores to subtract the weight of packaging material when weighing food.

"In some cases, consumers were paying 21 cents too much for a bag of grind-it-yourself coffee," DATCP administrator Janet Jenkins said.

Wal-Mart spokeswoman Sharon Weber said the company has taken action to correct the problem and make sure its weights are accurate.

"Wal-Mart directed all of its Wisconsin stores to implement the new procedures, including those that were cited," she said, adding that the company "regrets any inconvenience."

Consumers who believe they have been overcharged can call the DATCP at 1-800-422-7128.

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