

KROGER CO  
Form 11-K  
June 09, 2016

**UNITED STATES**  
**SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

Washington, D.C. 20549

**FORM 11-K**

**ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2015.

OR

**TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the transition period from            to

Commission file number 1-303

**Harris Teeter Supermarkets, Inc. Retirement and Savings Plan**

**701 Crestdale Road**

**Matthews, North Carolina 28105**

(Full title of the plan and the address of the plan)

# **The Kroger Co.**

**1014 Vine Street**

**Cincinnati, OH 45202**

(Name of issuer of the securities held pursuant to the  
plan and the address of its principal executive office)

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**REQUIRED INFORMATION**

Item 4. Plan Financial Statements and Schedules Prepared in Accordance with the Financial Reporting Requirements of ERISA.

**HARRIS TEETER SUPERMARKETS, INC. RETIREMENT AND SAVINGS PLAN**

Financial Statements and Supplemental Schedule

As of December 31, 2015 and 2014 and for the year ended December 31, 2015

(With Report of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm Thereon)

*REPORT OF INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM*

To the Participants of the Harris Teeter Supermarkets, Inc.

Retirement and Savings Plan and the Retirement Plan

Committee of Harris Teeter Supermarkets, Inc.

Matthews, North Carolina

We have audited the accompanying statements of net assets available for benefits of the Harris Teeter Supermarkets, Inc. Retirement and Savings Plan (the Plan ) as of December 31, 2015 and 2014, and the related statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the year ended December 31, 2015. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Plan s management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with standards of the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (United States). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. We were not engaged to perform an audit of the Plan s internal control over financial reporting. An audit includes consideration of internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Plan s internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, and evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the net assets available for benefits of the Plan as of December 31, 2015 and 2014, and the changes in its net assets available for benefits for the year ended December 31, 2015, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

The supplemental information in the accompanying schedule of assets (held at end of year) as of December 31, 2015, has been subjected to audit procedures performed in conjunction with the audit of the Plan s financial statements. The supplemental information is presented for the purpose of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements but includes supplemental information required by the Department of Labor s Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. The supplemental information is the responsibility of the Plan s management. Our audit procedures included determining whether the supplemental information reconciles to the financial statements or the underlying accounting and other records, as applicable and performing procedures to test the completeness and accuracy of the information presented in the supplemental information. In forming our opinion on the supplemental information in the accompanying schedules, we evaluated whether the supplemental information, including its form and content, is presented in conformity with the Department of Labor s Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974. In our opinion, the supplemental information in the accompanying schedule is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

/s/ Dixon Hughes Goodman LLP

Charlotte, North Carolina

June 9, 2016

**HARRIS TEETER SUPERMARKETS, INC. RETIREMENT AND SAVINGS PLAN**  
**STATEMENTS OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS**  
**December 31, 2015 and 2014**

|   | 2015                  | 2014,<br>as adjusted  |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>   |                       |                       |
| Cash  | \$ 18,706             | \$                    |
| Fully benefit-responsive investment contract, at contract value | 48,787,607            | 47,374,622            |
| Investments, at fair value:                                     |                       |                       |
| Mutual funds  | 555,001,847           | 557,397,204           |
| Common collective trust fund                                    | 26,658,169            | 27,542,231            |
| Kroger Shares   | 10,759,223            | 2,603,471             |
|   | 592,419,239           | 587,542,906           |
| Receivables:  |                       |                       |
| Participant contributions                                       | 663,064               | 642,108               |
| Employer contributions  | 15,963,010            | 14,673,052            |
| Notes receivable from participants                              | 32,983,391            | 30,641,718            |
|   | 49,609,465            | 45,956,878            |
| Total Assets  | 690,835,017           | 680,874,406           |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>  |                       |                       |
| Administrative expenses payable                                 | 22,441                | 15,250                |
| <b>NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS</b>                        | <b>\$ 690,812,576</b> | <b>\$ 680,859,156</b> |

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

**HARRIS TEETER SUPERMARKETS, INC. RETIREMENT AND SAVINGS PLAN**  
**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS**  
**For the Year Ended December 31, 2015**

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Investment income:  |                |
| Dividends   | \$ 27,816,797  |
| Net change in fair value of investments                     | (20,389,353)   |
|   | 7,427,444      |
| Interest income on notes receivable from participants       |                |
|   | 1,427,616      |
| Contributions:  |                |
| Participant   | 34,331,209     |
| Employer  | 23,972,566     |
|   | 58,303,775     |
| Total Additions   |                |
|   | 67,158,835     |
| Deductions:   |                |
| Benefits paid to participants                               | 56,580,046     |
| Administrative expenses                                     | 625,369        |
| Total Deductions  | 57,205,415     |
| <b>NET INCREASE IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS</b>    |                |
|   | 9,953,420      |
| <b>NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS, beginning of year</b> |                |
|   | 680,859,156    |
| <b>NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS, end of year</b>       |                |
|   | \$ 690,812,576 |

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

**HARRIS TEETER SUPERMARKETS, INC. RETIREMENT AND SAVINGS PLAN  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
December 31, 2015 and 2014**

NOTE A DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN

Harris Teeter Supermarkets, Inc. (the Company) is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Kroger Co. (Kroger). The Company is the sole Member of Harris Teeter, LLC (the Employer) and sponsors the Harris Teeter Supermarkets, Inc. Retirement and Savings Plan (the Plan).

The following description of the Plan provides only general information. On July 29, 2014 the Plan was amended and restated, generally effective January 1, 2014. On December 28, 2015 the Plan was again amended and restated, generally effective January 1, 2016. The common shares of Kroger are referred to as Kroger Shares herein. Participants should refer to the Plan document for a more complete description of the Plan's provisions.

General

The Company sponsors the Plan, which is a defined contribution plan with 401(k) features. The Plan is maintained by the Company primarily for the benefit of employees of the Employer. The Plan is subject to the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). Under the provisions of the Plan, eligible employees may elect to have the Company make contributions to the Plan on their behalf out of their regular salary and bonus (before state and federal income taxes). Employees become eligible to participate in the Plan after three months of employment. Participants may generally contribute up to 30% of gross pay not to exceed established limits of \$18,000 for 2015. Highly compensated employees are subject to additional contribution limitations. In addition to established limits, participants age 50 or older may contribute catch-up contributions of \$6,000 for 2015. Participants may elect to make pre-tax and/or Roth contributions, subject to the aggregate limits stated above.

Contributions

The Plan includes Company matching contributions at a rate determined at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors of the Company or its delegate. The Company matching contributions are applicable only to the first 4% of compensation contributed by participants. The matching contributions are deposited with each payroll contribution.

For each plan year (January 1 - December 31), the Company generally makes an Automatic Retirement Contribution (ARC) to an individual participant's account if the participant has completed at least 1,000 hours of service during the 12-month period ending on September 30 of each plan year and is employed by the Company or its subsidiaries on the last day of the plan year. Contributions are a percentage of the individual participant's pay, determined on the basis of the combined years of age and years of service as of the last day of the plan year.

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Participants may generally direct the investment of their contributions, the Company's matching contributions, and their ARC from among various investment options offered by the Plan, including Kroger Shares, subject to certain limitations. In the event an effective investment direction is not made by the participant, and in the case of contributions made by or on behalf of a participant that, under the terms of the Plan, are to be invested in the Plan's default investment, such contributions shall be invested in a default investment fund that meets the requirements of ERISA, Department of Labor Regulations and any other related regulations or similar guidance. Currently, the Plan's default investment fund is an age-appropriate retirement fund based upon retirement at age 65. Participants may not direct more than 20% of their contributions into Kroger Shares. If participants direct more than 20% of their contributions into Kroger Shares, the excess will be invested in the Plan's default investment. In addition, amounts may not be transferred from existing investment funds to Kroger Shares if the resulting amount of Kroger Shares exceeds 20% of the aggregate value of the participant's account. Generally, a participant's Kroger Shares account will be invested exclusively in Kroger Shares. The Company intends the Kroger Shares account to be a permanent investment fund unless the Company's Retirement Plan Committee determines, in its

sole discretion, that the continued holding or purchase of Kroger Shares would be inconsistent with ERISA.

#### Participant Accounts

Each participant's account is credited or charged with the participant's contributions, allocations of the Company's contributions, plan earnings, benefit payments and allocations of administrative expenses and plan losses. Allocations of administrative expenses may be determined on a per participant basis or prorated across all participants' investments based proportionately on each participant's account balance, depending upon the category and nature of the expense. There is also a quarterly administrative credit provided to participants based upon the amount the Plan's recordkeeper receives for administrative services from certain of the Plan's investments. The benefit to which a participant is entitled is the benefit that can be provided from the participant's vested account.

#### Payment of Benefits

Upon a bona fide termination of service from the Company, participants may receive the vested value of their account. In general (and except for certain distributions associated with the ARC which include an annuity purchase option), payment of any benefit is made in the form of a lump-sum payment, or the participant may elect partial or installment distributions, as outlined in the Plan document. In-service withdrawals are subject to certain restrictions, and they generally include rollover withdrawals, age 59-1/2 withdrawals, merged ESOP plan withdrawals, certain financial hardship withdrawals and qualified reservist distributions. Participants are taxed on their accounts upon withdrawal, except for qualified rollovers into other tax deferred plans, and withdrawal of Roth contributions plus earnings thereon, subject to certain restrictions.

#### Vesting

Participants are immediately vested in their contributions plus actual earnings thereon. For Company matching contributions and ARC, a participant is fully vested in the contributions plus actual earnings thereon after three years of service. A Year of Service requires a minimum of 1,000 hours of service during the vesting computation period with the Company or an affiliate.

#### Forfeited Accounts

A participant who terminates service without a fully vested interest forfeits any nonvested balance in his or her Company contributions account and ARCs as of the earlier of (a) distribution to the participant of the participant's vested balance, or (b) the last day of the first Plan year in which the participant incurs five consecutive Breaks in Service, as defined by the Plan. The forfeited funds are used to offset Employer contributions. Forfeitures utilized to offset Employer contributions totaled \$3,510,377 during 2015. The forfeiture balance was \$138,865 and \$110,558 at December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively.

#### Notes Receivable From Participants

Participants may borrow from certain of their fund accounts, subject to certain restrictions and requirements, a minimum of \$500 and up to a maximum equal to the lesser of \$50,000 or 50 percent of their vested account balance excluding ARC and merged ESOP accounts. Only one loan per year may be taken, but up to two loans can be outstanding at a time. A third loan, which is not subject to the minimum requirement, may be granted at any time for the sole purpose of applying the proceeds of such third loan to other outstanding loans to avoid or cure a loan default resulting from an administrative error. Except for certain loans relating to a participant's principal residence, loans must be repaid within five years. Loans bear a fixed interest rate of one percent over the prime rate in effect at the time of borrowing. Interest on loans outstanding ranged from 4.25% to 9.25%, reflecting the change in interest rates during the life of the outstanding loans. Principal and interest is paid through payroll deductions.

NOTE B SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Accounting

The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America ( GAAP ).

In May 2015, the Financial Accounting Standards Board ( FASB ) issued an amendment of the FASB Accounting Standards Codification ( ASC ) for Fair Value Measurement (Topic 820): Disclosures for Investments in Certain Entities That Calculate Net Asset Value per Share (or Its Equivalent). The amendment removes the requirement to present investments for which the practical expedient is used to measure fair value at net asset value ( NAV ) within the fair value hierarchy table. Instead, an entity would be required to include those investments as a reconciling item so that the total fair value amount of investments in the disclosure is consistent with the fair value investment balance on the statement of net assets available for benefits. The amendment is effective for Plan years beginning after December 15, 2015; however, earlier application is permitted. The Plan management has elected to adopt the early application of the amendment and has applied the provisions retrospectively. The adoption had no impact on the statements of net assets available for benefits as of December 31, 2015 and December 31, 2014 or the statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the year ended December 31, 2015.

In July 2015, the FASB issued amendments of the FASB ASC for Defined Contribution Pension Plans (Topic 962). Under the amendments: fully benefit-responsive investment contracts are measured, presented and disclosed only at contract value; certain disclosure requirements are eliminated for both participant-directed investments and nonparticipant-directed investments; and, investments (both participant-directed and nonparticipant-directed investments) of employee benefit plans are grouped and disclosed only on the basis of general type. The amendments are effective for Plan years beginning after December 15, 2015; however, earlier application is permitted. Plan management has elected to adopt the early application of the amendments and has applied the provisions retrospectively.

#### Use of Estimates

The preparation of the financial statements in conformity with GAAP requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and changes therein, and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

#### Fully Benefit-Responsive Investment Contracts

Fully benefit-responsive investment contracts held by a defined contribution plan are reported at contract value. Contract value is the relevant measurement attribute for fully benefit-responsive investment contracts because contract value is the amount participants would receive if they were to initiate permitted transactions under the terms of the plan.

#### Investment Valuation and Income Recognition

As reported by T. Rowe Price Trust Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of T. Rowe Price Associates, Inc. (the Trustee ), Plan investments are reported at fair value. Fair value is the price that would be received from an asset sale or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. See Note C for a discussion of fair value measurements.

Purchases and sales of securities are recorded on a trade-date basis. Interest income is recorded on the accrual basis. Dividends are recorded on the ex-dividend date. Net appreciation and depreciation in fair value of investments is comprised of the net realized and unrealized gains and losses.

The Equity Index Trust Fund is a common collective trust fund operated by the Trustee. Each investor's beneficial interest in the net assets of the trust is represented by units, an unlimited number of which are authorized. Unit transactions are subject to terms, conditions, and limitations defined in the Declaration of Trust. Trust units are issued and redeemed only on a valuation date and at the net asset value per unit computed on that date. The Equity Index Trust Fund's financial instruments are valued and its net asset value is computed at the close of the New York Stock Exchange each day it is open for business. The investment objective of the trust is to seek long-term capital appreciation by investing primarily in common stocks. Specifically, the trust seeks to replicate the total return of the U.S equity market as represented by the S&P 500 Stock Index.

Notes Receivable from Participants

Notes receivable from participants are measured at their unpaid principal balance plus any accrued but unpaid interest. Delinquent notes receivable from participants are reclassified as distributions based upon the terms of the Plan document and the loan policy.

Administrative Expenses

All direct expenses, to the extent allowed by law, are charged to the Plan. Direct expenses include trustee, investment consulting, record-keeping, legal, and auditing expenses related to the Plan.

Payment of Benefits

Benefit payments to participants are recorded when paid.

NOTE C FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

ASC Topic 820, *Fair Value Measurements and Disclosure*, defines fair value, establishes a framework for measuring fair value, and establishes a fair value hierarchy which prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques. Fair value is the price that would be received in an asset sale or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. A fair value measurement assumes that the transaction in an asset sale or to transfer the liability occurs in the principal market for the asset or liability or, in the absence of a principal market, the most advantageous market. Valuation techniques that are consistent with the market, income or cost approach, as specified by ASC Topic 820, are used to measure fair value.

The standard describes three levels of inputs that may be used to measure fair value:

- Level 1** Inputs to the valuation methodology are quoted prices available in active markets for identical investments as of the reporting date;
- Level 2** Inputs to the valuation methodology are other than quoted prices in active markets, which are either directly or indirectly observable as of the reporting date, and fair value can be determined through the use of models or other valuation methodologies; and
- Level 3** Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable inputs in situations where there is little or no market activity for the asset or liability and the reporting entity makes estimates and assumptions related to the pricing of the asset or liability including assumptions regarding risk.

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A financial instrument's level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement. The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for instruments measured at fair value, including the general classification of such instruments pursuant to the valuation hierarchy.

### *Common Stock*

This investment is valued at the closing price reported on the active market on which the individual security is traded. This investment is classified within Level 1 of the valuation hierarchy.

### *Mutual Funds*

These investments are publicly traded investment vehicles, which are valued daily at the closing price reported on the active market on which the individual securities are traded. These investments are classified within Level 1 of the valuation hierarchy.

### *Common Collective Trust Fund*

This investment is a public investment vehicle valued using the NAV provided by the administrator of the fund. The NAV is based on the value of the underlying assets owned by the fund, minus its liabilities, and then divided by the number of shares outstanding. The fair market value of the Common Collective Trust Fund has been established using the NAV under the practical expedient approach and therefore is not assigned to a level in the hierarchy table.

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The methods described above may produce a fair value calculation that may not be indicative of net realizable value or reflective of future fair values. Furthermore, while Plan management believes its valuation methods are appropriate and consistent with other market participants, the use of different methodologies or assumptions to determine the fair value of certain financial instruments could result in a different fair value measurement at the reporting date. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2015 and 2014.

The following table sets forth by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Plan's investments measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2015 and 2014.

|   | As of December 31, 2015 |         |         | Total          |
|---|-------------------------|---------|---------|----------------|
|   | Level 1                 | Level 2 | Level 3 |                |
| Mutual funds                              | \$ 555,001,847          | \$      | \$      | \$ 555,001,847 |
| Kroger Shares                             | 10,759,223              |         |         | 10,759,223     |
| Total investments in fair value hierarchy | \$ 565,761,070          | \$      | \$      | 565,761,070    |
| Investments measured at net asset value   |                         |         |         | 26,658,169     |
| Total investments at fair value           |                         |         |         | \$ 592,419,239 |

|   | As of December 31, 2014 |         |         | Total          |
|---|-------------------------|---------|---------|----------------|
|   | Level 1                 | Level 2 | Level 3 |                |
| Mutual funds                              | \$ 557,397,204          | \$      | \$      | \$ 557,397,204 |
| Kroger Shares                             | 2,603,471               |         |         | 2,603,471      |
| Total investments in fair value hierarchy | \$ 560,000,675          | \$      | \$      | 560,000,675    |
| Investments measured at net asset value   |                         |         |         | 27,542,231     |
| Total investments at fair value           |                         |         |         | \$ 587,542,906 |

*Fair Value Estimated Using Net Asset Value per Share*

The following table at December 31, 2015 and 2014 sets forth a summary of the Plan's investments with a reported estimated fair value using net asset value per share:

|                    | Fair Value at<br>December 31,<br>2015 | Fair Value at<br>December 31,<br>2014 | Unfunded<br>Commitment | Redemption<br>Frequency | Other<br>Redemption<br>Restrictions | Redemption<br>Notice<br>Period   |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Equity Index Trust | \$ 26,658,169                         | \$ 27,542,231                         | \$ 0                   | Daily                   | None                                | 90-day advance<br>written notice |

NOTE D STABLE VALUE FUND

The Stable Value Fund is a collective trust fund sponsored by T. Rowe Price Associates, Inc. Each investor's beneficial interest in the net assets of the trust is represented by units, an unlimited number of which are authorized. Unit transactions are subject to terms, conditions, and limitations defined in the Declaration of Trust. Trust units are issued and redeemed only on a valuation date and at the net asset value per unit computed on that date. Trust units may be redeemed on a daily basis to meet benefit payments and other participant initiated withdrawals permitted by retirement plans invested in the trust. The investment objectives of the trust are to maximize current income consistent with the maintenance of principal and to provide for withdrawals for certain participant initiated transactions under a retirement plan without penalty or adjustment. The trust will attempt to achieve these objectives by investing principally in guaranteed investment contracts ( GICs ) issued by

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insurance companies; investment contracts issued by banks ( BICs ); structured or synthetic investment contracts ( SICs ) issued by banks, insurance companies, and other issuers, as well as the securities supporting such SICs (underlying assets); separate account contracts; and other similar instruments that are intended to maintain a constant net asset value while permitting participant initiated, benefit-responsive withdrawals for certain events.

The Stable Value Fund investment has been identified as a fully benefit-responsive investment. Participants ordinarily may direct the withdrawal or transfer of all or a portion of their investment at contract value. Contract value represents contributions made to the benefit-responsive investments, plus earnings, less participant withdrawals, and administrative expenses. The benefit-responsive investments impose certain restrictions on the Plan, and the investments themselves may be subject to circumstances that impact their ability to transact at contract value, as described in the following paragraphs. Plan management believes that the occurrence of events that would cause the investments to transact at less than contract value is not probable.

All investment contracts held by the Stable Value Fund are effected directly between the trust and the issuer of the contract and are nontransferable. Permitted participant-initiated withdrawals refer to withdrawals from the trust by an employer-sponsored defined contribution plan directly as a result of participant transactions allowed by the Plan, such as participant withdrawals for benefits, loans, or transfers to other funds or trusts within the Plan.

#### NOTE E INCOME TAX STATUS

The Internal Revenue Service ( IRS ) has determined and informed the Company by a letter dated June 7, 2013, that the Plan and related trust are designed in accordance with applicable sections of the Internal Revenue Code ( IRC ). Although the Plan has been amended and restated since the effective date of the determination letter, the Plan's administrator believes that the Plan is designed and is currently being operated in compliance with the applicable requirements of the IRC, except as described below. On January 29, 2016, the Company submitted to the IRS a request for determination that the Plan and its related trust are qualified under IRC Section 401(a) and 501(a), respectively.

GAAP requires the Plan's management to evaluate tax positions taken by the Plan and recognize a tax liability (or asset) if the Plan has taken an uncertain position that more likely than not would not be sustained upon examination by the IRS. The Plan's administrator has analyzed the tax positions taken by the Plan, and has concluded that as of December 31, 2015 and 2014, there are no uncertain positions taken or expected to be taken that would require recognition of a liability or disclosure in the financial statements. The Plan is subject to routine audits by taxing jurisdictions; however, there are currently no tax audits for any tax periods in progress.

On January 29, 2016, the Company submitted to the IRS a request for a compliance statement under the Voluntary Correction Program ( VCP ) to resolve certain Plan operational failures identified by the Plan administrator. These failures have been or are being corrected in a manner that the Company believes is consistent with established IRS correction procedures. The Plan administrator and counsel for the Plan believe that these failures and the VCP application will not impact the tax qualification of the Plan and that the Plan continues to maintain tax qualified status under the applicable sections of the IRC. The Plan administrator believes that the final outcome of the VCP will not have a material effect on the Plan's financial statements.

#### NOTE F PLAN TERMINATION

The Company expects to continue the Plan indefinitely but has the right to amend or terminate the Plan as necessary. If the Plan were to be terminated, Plan participants would become fully vested in their account balances and all assets of the Plan would be distributed to the individual participants based upon their individual account balances at the date of termination.

NOTE G PARTY-IN-INTEREST TRANSACTIONS

Certain Plan assets invested in mutual funds with a fair value of \$516,516,655 and \$516,729,299 at December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively, a common collective trust fund with a fair value of \$26,658,169 and \$27,542,231 at December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively, and a fully benefit-responsive investment contract with a contract value of \$48,787,607 and \$47,374,622 at December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively, are managed by the Trustee or by T. Rowe Price Associates, Inc. (a company related to the

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Trustee through common ownership). Such transactions qualify as party-in-interest transactions as defined by ERISA. Fees paid by the Plan to the Trustee for administrative services were \$4,750 for the year ended December 31, 2015. There are additional fees paid by the Plan to parties-in-interest for investment management and other services, which are included in the net appreciation/depreciation and/or administrative expenses reported in the statement of changes in net assets available for benefits.

At December 31, 2015, the Plan held 256,721 shares of Kroger Shares with a fair value of \$10,759,223. At December 31, 2014, the Plan held 40,197 shares of Kroger Shares with a fair value of \$2,603,471.

### NOTE H RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The Plan provides for investments in various investment securities which, in general, are exposed to various risks, such as interest rate, credit, and overall market volatility risks. Further, due to the level of risk associated with certain investment securities, it is reasonably possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near-term and such changes could materially affect the participants' account balances and amounts reported in the statements of net assets available for benefits.

### NOTE I SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

The Company has evaluated subsequent events since the date of these financial statements. The Company has determined there are no other material subsequent events which require adjustment to or additional disclosure in the Plan's financial statements.

### NOTE J RECONCILIATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO FORM 5500

The following is a reconciliation of net assets available for benefits per the financial statements to the Form 5500 at December 31, 2015 and 2014:

|  | 2015           | 2014           |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Net assets available for benefits per the financial statements                                 | \$ 690,812,576 | \$ 680,859,156 |
| Adjustment from contract value to fair value for fully benefit-responsive investment contracts | 38,786         | 696,881        |
| Net assets available for benefits per the Form 5500  | \$ 690,851,362 | \$ 681,556,037 |

The following is a reconciliation of the net increase in net assets available for benefits per the financial statements to net increase in net assets available for benefits per the Form 5500 for the year ended December 31, 2015:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Net increase in net assets available for benefits per the financial statements | \$ 9,953,420 |
|--|--------------|

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|   |    |           |
|---|----|-----------|
| Prior year adjustment from contract value to fair value for fully benefit-responsive investment contracts   |    | (696,881) |
| Current year adjustment from contract value to fair value for fully benefit-responsive investment contracts |    | 38,786    |
| Net increase in net assets available for benefits per the Form 5500   | \$ | 9,295,325 |

**HARRIS TEETER SUPERMARKETS, INC. RETIREMENT AND SAVINGS PLAN**  
**SCHEDULE H, LINE 4i SCHEDULE OF ASSETS (HELD AT END OF YEAR)**  
**EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 56-0905940**  
**PLAN NUMBER: 003**  
**December 31, 2015**

| (a)   | (b)<br>Identity of Issue, borrower,<br>lessor, or similar party | (c)<br>Description of Investment, including<br>maturity date, rate of interest,<br>collateral, par, or maturity value | (d)<br>Shares | (d)<br>Cost** | (e)<br>Current Value |
|---|---|---|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| <b><u>FULLY BENEFIT-RESPONSIVE INVESTMENT CONTRACT, AT CONTRACT VALUE</u></b> |   |   |               |               |                      |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Stable Value Fund   | 48,787,607    | \$            | 48,787,607           |
| <b><u>MUTUAL FUNDS</u></b>  |   |   |               |               |                      |
|   | American Funds  | Cap World Growth & Income Fund  | 219,621       |               | 9,520,558            |
|   | Loomis Sayles   | Core Plus Bond Fund   | 1,107,955     |               | 13,605,682           |
|   | Harding Loevr   | International Equity Instl Fund   | 422,209       |               | 7,219,766            |
|   | Prudential  | Global Real Estate Fund   | 88,957        |               | 2,106,512            |
|   | Harbor  | Small Cap Growth Opp Instl Fund   | 593,767       |               | 6,032,674            |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | U.S. Bond Index Fund  | 241,585       |               | 2,633,280            |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2005 Fund  | 229,096       |               | 2,847,666            |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2010 Fund  | 492,078       |               | 8,306,271            |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2015 Fund  | 1,666,044     |               | 22,791,486           |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2020 Fund  | 3,443,917     |               | 67,810,731           |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2025 Fund  | 5,624,664     |               | 84,088,724           |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2030 Fund  | 3,455,408     |               | 75,362,457           |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2035 Fund  | 3,215,608     |               | 50,774,455           |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2040 Fund  | 2,117,200     |               | 47,806,386           |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2045 Fund  | 2,591,261     |               | 39,283,523           |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2050 Fund  | 1,243,817     |               | 15,846,231           |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Retirement 2055 Fund  | 1,271,179     |               | 16,156,684           |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Value Fund  | 317,883       |               | 9,933,833            |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Small Cap Value Fund  | 170,932       |               | 6,208,232            |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Blue Chip Growth Fund   | 921,065       |               | 66,666,696           |
|   |   | Total Mutual Funds  |               | \$            | 555,001,847          |
| <b><u>COMMON COLLECTIVE TRUST FUND, AT FAIR VALUE</u></b>                     |   |   |               |               |                      |
| *   | T. Rowe Price Associates,<br>Inc.                               | Equity Index Trust  | 372,737       | \$            | 26,658,169           |

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| <u>COMMON STOCK</u>         |                      |  |         |                |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|--|---------|----------------|
| *                           | The Kroger Co.       | Kroger Shares  | 256,721 | \$ 10,759,223  |
| <u>PARTICIPANT LOANS***</u> |                      |  |         |                |
| *                           | Participant Loans*** | Interest rates ranging from 4.25% to 9.25%, maturing through October 2030. |         | \$ 32,983,391  |
|                             |                      |  |         | \$ 674,190,237 |

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\* Party-in-Interest to the Plan

\*\* Cost omitted for participant directed investments.

\*\*\* The accompanying financial statements classify participant loans as notes receivable from participants.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the trustees (or other persons who administer the employee benefit plan) have duly caused this annual report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

HARRIS TEETER SUPERMARKETS, INC. RETIREMENT AND SAVINGS  
PLAN

By: Harris Teeter Supermarkets, Inc., as Plan Sponsor

Date: June 9, 2016

By: /s/ Scott K. Nations  
Vice President

EXHIBIT INDEX

**Exhibit No.**

23.1 Consent of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

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