



DatelineERS

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Economic Research Service

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ERS is the main source of research and analysis from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, providing timely information on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America.

New on the Web

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A [podcast](#) on global agriculture and the Doha Round of trade talks

Watch for it in the September issue of [Amber Waves Online](#)

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Commodity Markets and Trade

ERS Outlook reports provide timely analysis of major commodity markets and trade, including special reports on hot topics. All reports, along with a calendar of future releases, are available at: www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook

Estimating Farmers' Share of Retail Food Prices

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err24

A new report from the Economic Research Service, *How Low has the Farm Share of Retail Food Prices Really Fallen?* estimates the share of retail food prices farmers earn on various commodities. Estimates are based on baskets of foods representative of what a typical American household buys at retail for at-home consumption, compared with revenues earned by farmers for a corresponding basket of commodities. Using updated market basket estimates for two major commodity groups—fruits and vegetables—the report finds that the farm share has been shrinking, but less than previously estimated.



How Income See-Saw Affects School Lunch Eligibility

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err23

Income volatility challenges the effectiveness of the safety net that USDA food assistance programs provide low-income families, according to *The Income Volatility See-Saw: Implications for School Lunch*. ERS examines income volatility among households with children and the implications of volatility for eligibility in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The results show that income volatility was higher for successively lower income groups and that the major determinants of changes in NSLP eligibility were changes in total household hours worked and in the share of working adults. Among households in the study, an estimated 27 percent that were income eligible for subsidized lunches at the start of the school year were no longer eligible for the same subsidy by December, under former eligibility rules.



Featured Briefing Room: ARMS

Agricultural Resource Management Survey

www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing

The annual Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) is USDA's primary source of information on the financial condition, production practices, resource use, and economic well-being of America's farm households. Online briefing room provides information on ARMS, links to studies using ARMS data, and ARMS updates.



Tobacco Production Costs and Returns in 2004

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/tbs/aug06/tbs26001

This study focuses on factors that led to changes in the estimated residual returns to management and risk from tobacco production in 2003-04. Residual returns per acre for flue-cured tobacco declined less than for burley tobacco in 2004 because yield increases for flue-cured tobacco helped to offset increases in economic costs. Residual returns above economic costs were calculated using data from the last tobacco surveys, conducted in 1995 for burley tobacco and 1996 for flue-cured tobacco, and updated with 2004 data on prices, yields, marketing costs, and quota levels.

Dairy Backgrounder

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ldp/2006/07jul/ldpm14501

Over time, shifts in consumer demands, in the location and structure of milk production, in industry concentration, in international markets, and in trade agreements have dramatically altered the U.S. dairy industry and changed the context for dairy policies and the sector as a whole. In the future, the U.S. dairy industry is likely to become more fully integrated with international markets. At the same time, dairy products such as fluid milk, butter, and cheese are likely to continue to be used increasingly as ingredients for restaurants and in processed foods while still being sold in their traditional forms.

Coming Soon...More on School Lunches

The National School Lunch Program Participants



The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) serves millions of children each day, but there is little information on the characteristics of those children. This study reports new estimates of NSLP participant characteristics using two national surveys: the 2001 Panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the 1999-2002 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). Study results also show that these two surveys are suitable sources of data on NSLP participants since they are consistent with more aggregated administrative data of the Food and Nutrition Service. The surveys supplement periodic characteristics data available from the School Nutrition and Dietary Assessment (SNDA) surveys.

Be on the Lookout for the September issue of...

Amber Waves

- Food assistance: How strong is the safety net?
- The Doha round of global trade talks: market access is key
- Effects of agricultural policy on land use and the environment
- Data feature: More women turning to horse farming

Watch for it at:

www.ers.usda.gov/amberwaves

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