



# 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.

## Coming in July

### A special issue of *Amber Waves*

This issue showcases a collection of articles on conservation and the environment.

View it at:

[www.ers.usda.gov/  
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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](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook)

## Farming Still an Industry of Family Businesses

American farms vary widely in size and other characteristics, but farming is still an industry of family businesses. Ninety-eight percent of farms are family farms, and they account for 86 percent of farm production. Very small farms are growing in number, and small family farms continue to own most farmland. But production is shifting toward very large family farms.

Because small-farm households receive most of their income from off-farm work, general economic policies—such as tax policy or economic development policy—can be as important to them as traditional farm policy.

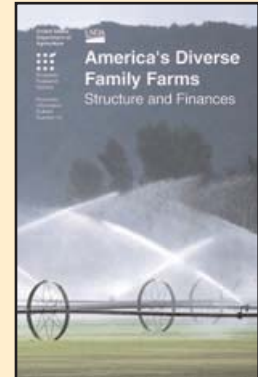
Two reports from ERS look at how U.S. farming is organized.

For the full report, see:

**Structure and Finances of U.S. Farms: 2005 Family Farm Report**  
[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB12](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB12)

For the brochure, see:

**America's Diverse Family Farms: Structure and Finances**  
[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB13](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB13)



## India's Policy of High Tariffs on Oilseeds Affords Little Benefit to Oilseed Producers

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR17](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR17)

Extensive policy intervention continues to affect oilseed production, trade, and processing in India. According to *The Role of Policy and Industry Structure in India's Oilseed Markets*, India's current policy of high tariffs on oilseeds and oil affords little benefit to oilseed producers and imposes high costs on consumers. Reducing oilseed barriers would encourage processors in India to use more imported oilseeds, resulting in lower processing costs, and increased net revenues and employment. It would also afford U.S. soybean producers an opportunity for exports.





## Adoption of Genetically Engineered Varieties by U.S. Farmers Is Widespread for Major Crops

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB11](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB11)

Ten years after the first generation of genetically engineered (GE) varieties became commercially available, adoption of these varieties by U.S. farmers is widespread for major crops. Driven by farmers' expectations of higher yields, savings in management time, and lower pesticide costs, the adoption of corn, soybean, and cotton GE varieties has increased rapidly. *The First Decade of Genetically Engineered Crops in the United States* focuses on genetically engineered crops and their adoption in the United States over the past 10 years. It examines the three major stakeholders of agricultural biotechnology and finds that (1) the pace of research and development activity by producers of GE seed (the seed firms and technology providers) has been rapid, (2) farmers have adopted some GE varieties widely and at a rapid rate and benefited from such adoption, and (3) the level of consumer concerns about foods that contain GE ingredients varies by country, with European consumers being most concerned.

## Original Nutrients Targeted by WIC Are No Longer Lacking in the Diets of U.S. Preschool Children

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EB8](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EB8)

USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides supplemental foods to participants, in most cases through vouchers for retail purchase of foods designated as approved by the program. WIC food packages were initially designed to include foods rich in nutrients that were lacking in the diets of low-income participants. *Nutrient Adequacy of Children Participating in WIC* summarizes two recent ERS-sponsored studies that provide new assessments of nutrient intakes of WIC children, income-eligible children not participating in the program, and children ineligible for the program. According to the two studies, it appears that of the original nutrients targeted by WIC, protein, calcium, vitamin A, and vitamin C are no longer lacking in the diets of preschool children in the United States.



## Fruit and Vegetable Backgrounder

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/VGS/Apr06/VGS31301](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/VGS/Apr06/VGS31301)

The U.S. fruit and vegetable industry accounts for nearly a third of U.S. crop cash receipts and a fifth of U.S. agricultural exports according to the *Fruit and Vegetable Backgrounder*. A variety of challenges face this complex and diverse industry in both domestic and international markets, ranging from immigration reform and its effect on labor availability to international competitiveness. The national debate on diet and health frequently focuses on the nutritional role of fruit and vegetables, and a continued emphasis on the benefits of eating produce may provide opportunities to the industry.

In the domestic market, Americans are eating more fruit and vegetables than they did 20 years ago, but consumption remains below recommended levels. In terms of per capita consumption expressed on a fresh-weight basis, the top five vegetables are potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, sweet corn, and onions while the top five fruit include oranges, grapes (including wine grapes), apples, bananas, and pineapples. The industry also faces a variety of trade-related issues, including competition with imports. During 2002-04, imports accounted for 21 percent of domestic consumption of all fresh and processed fruit and vegetables, up from 16 percent during 1992-94.

### How to get more information ...

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