

DatelineERS

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Economic Research Service

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

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.

2007 Agricultural Outlook Forum

REGISTRATION

Registration for the March 1-2, 2007 Agricultural Outlook Forum is now open. Register by February 5 and save on the registration fee.

www.usda.gov/ocel/forum

Announcing...

Multimedia Section in the Newsroom

A multimedia page designed to house ERS audio slideshows and other multimedia products is now in the newsroom.

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

Amber Waves November 2006

Amber Waves magazine covers the full range of ERS research and analysis, including articles on food, farming, natural resources, and rural America.

www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves

Managing Risk With Revenue Insurance

As a tool based on revenue shortfalls, revenue insurance may do a better job of stabilizing farm income and may protect more farms than insurance plans or farm programs that protect against yield or price shortfalls separately or provide fixed-income transfers.

Adjusting for Living Costs Can Change Who Is Considered Poor

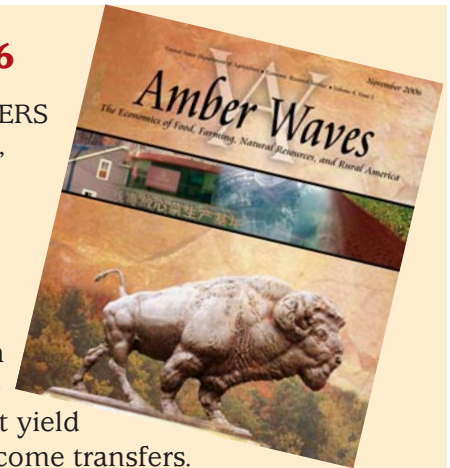
When Federal poverty measures are adjusted to account for geographic cost-of-living differences, estimated poverty rates in metro areas are higher than in non-metro areas. Adjusting poverty measures to account for cost-of-living differences could change the distribution of Federal funds for poverty-based programs.

Brazil's Booming Agriculture Faces Obstacles

Brazil's position as a food and agricultural superpower could be moderated by supply side factors, growth in domestic food demand, and the changing composition of food demand.

Food Safety Improvements Underway in China

With increased demand abroad and at home for safer food, China is in the midst of a campaign to overhaul its food system and improve food safety standards.



Food Industry Mergers and Acquisitions in the U.S.

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ERR27

Processing plants in eight major food industries were highly productive before being acquired and they significantly improved their labor productivity afterward, according to an analysis of plant-level census data. The industries are meat packing, meat processing, poultry slaughtering and processing, cheese making, fluid milk processing, flour milling, feed processing, and oilseed crushing as reported in *Food Industry Mergers and Acquisitions Lead to Higher Labor Productivity*. The analysis suggests that mergers and acquisitions contributed to the general improvement in labor productivity from 1972-92, echoing an earlier ERS study. Labor productivity is defined as output per worker.

Market Effects of Eliminating Planting Restrictions Are Likely To Be Limited and Confined to Specific Regions and Commodities

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ERR30

Participants in U.S. farm programs are restricted from planting and harvesting wild rice, fruit, and most vegetables (nonprogram crops) on acreage historically used for program crops (known as base acreage) as reported in *Eliminating Fruit and Vegetable Planting Restrictions: How Would Markets Be Affected?* However, a recent World Trade Organization challenge to U.S. programs has created pressure to eliminate planting restrictions. Eliminating restrictions would not lead to substantial market impacts for most fruit and vegetables. Current planting restrictions are not a limiting factor for many producers because of program rules, market or agronomic conditions. Production shifts would be more likely in regions where the land and climate are suitable for fruit and vegetable production and non-program acreage is in limited supply.



U.S. Dairy Industry Is Becoming More Adept at Competing Worldwide

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ERR28

The U.S. dairy sector is facing and responding to global competitive forces that are contributing to the sector's vibrancy as reported in *U.S. Dairy at a Global Crossroads*. Those forces—demand for new products, changes in technology, and rapid economic growth in emerging developing countries, particularly in Asia—are bringing about innovations leading to increasing dairy consumption, more opportunities for dairy product trade, and foreign direct investment benefiting both U.S. consumers and producers. As global demand for milk and new dairy products expands, the role of dairy policies that support prices is diminishing and the roles of flexibility and innovation in improving competitiveness in the dairy sector are increasing.

In 2005, 89 percent of American Households Were Food Secure

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ERR29

Eighty-nine percent of American households were food secure throughout the entire year in 2005, meaning that they had access, at all times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members according to *Household Food Security in the United States, 2005*. The remaining households were food insecure at least some time during that year. The prevalence of food insecurity declined from 11.9 percent of households in 2004 to 11.0 percent in 2005, while the prevalence of very low food security remained unchanged at 3.9 percent.

State Action Can Improve the Food Security of Residents

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/EIB20

States differ in the extent to which their residents are food secure—meaning that they have consistent access to enough food for active, healthy living according to *What Factors Account for State-to-State Differences in Food Insecurity?* The prevalence of food security in a State depends not only on the characteristics of households in the State, such as their income, employment, and household structure, but also on State-level characteristics, such as average wages, cost of housing, levels of participation in food assistance programs, and tax policies. Taken together, an identified set of household-level and State-level factors account for most of the State-to-State differences in food security. Some State-level factors point to specific policies that are likely to improve food security, such as policies that increase the supply of affordable housing, promote the use of Federal food assistance programs, or reduce the total tax burden on low-income households.



How to get more information ...

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