



DatelineERS

New ERS research and analysis at: www.ers.usda.gov

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.

Now Available

Food Availability Data System

The ERS Food Availability (Per Capita) Data System, updated to 2005, includes three distinct but related data series on food consumption.

The data serve as popular proxies for actual consumption.

Click here to view:
[Food Availability \(Per Capita\) Data System](#)

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



Valuing Counter-Cyclical Payments To Account for Marketing-Year Price Changes

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err39

Counter-cyclical payments supplement incomes of eligible producers enrolled in commodity programs. *Valuing Counter-Cyclical Payments: Implications for Producer Risk Management and Program Administration* describes a computer program that improves upon USDA's method of estimating payment rates and that producers and forecasters can use. This enhanced method produces unbiased estimates. Forecasters and producers can also use the model to calculate the probabilities of repayment.

U.S. Grain Industry Adjusts for Specialty Grains

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err35

Specialty grains coming onto the market (e.g., fiber-enriched wheat) are requiring adjustments in the marketing system, including information documentation and management, in order to preserve their added value or prevent accidental commingling with standard grains, according to *The Changing Face of the U.S. Grain System*. As differentiated grain markets expand, the U.S. grain industry faces new demands for identity preservation, segregation, and product tracing. This will require adaptations in grain production and handling, closer market coordination, more extensive information systems, new risk management tools, a better understanding of costs, and more third-party services for auditing, verification, and quality assurance.



Urban Households Increased Their Expenditures on Food between 2003 and 2004

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib23

Using data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey, *Food Spending in American Households, 2003-04* presents concise information on nationwide urban food expenditure patterns by select demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. The data show that between 2003 and 2004, per capita spending on food in U.S. urban areas rose from \$2,035 to \$2,207. This change reflects increases of 7.9 percent in at-home food expenditures and 9.3 percent in away-from-home food expenditures. Over the same period, per capita food expenditures as a share of total income in urban areas dropped from 9.8 percent to 9.5 percent.



How Changes in Commodity Costs Affect Retail Coffee Prices

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err38

Cost Pass-Through in the U.S. Coffee Industry uses data from the coffee industry to examine to what extent changes in commodity costs affect manufacturers and retail prices. On average, a 10-cent increase in the cost of a pound of green coffee beans in a given quarter results in a 2-cent increase in manufacturer and retail prices in the current quarter. If a cost change persists for several quarters, it will be incorporated into manufacturer prices approximately cent-for-cent with the commodity-cost change. Given the substantial fixed costs and markups involved in coffee manufacturing, this translates into about a 3-percent change in retail prices for a 10-percent change in commodity prices. Coffee manufacturers do not appear to take advantage of manufacturing and production cost variation to raise retail prices; retail prices respond the same to both increases and decreases in costs of coffee beans.



Factors Affecting Carrot Consumption in the United States

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/VGS/2007/03Mar/VGS31901/

Carrots are one of the most popular vegetables in the United States and fresh-market carrot consumption has been increasing over the past few decades. Using a combination of ACNielsen Homescan panel data and USDA's Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, this report examines where and how much fresh and processed carrots are eaten and links this consumption to various economic, social, and demographic characteristics of consumers. The analysis indicates that per capita carrot consumption is greatest in the East and Central regions of the country. About 80 percent of fresh-market carrots are purchased at retail and consumed at home, with the majority consisting of fresh-cut (including baby) carrots.

Coming Soon...*Farm Bill Resources: A One-Stop Web Page*



Farm Bill Issues: ERS Research and Analysis

Analysis by the Economic Research Service informs the debates and discussions among lawmakers and other stakeholders as they assess various options for the next farm bill.

ON the table are commodity, conservation, trade, nutrition, and rural development policies. A new web page directs you to selected ERS research and analysis that examines the economic effects of current and alternative policies on producers, consumers, taxpayers, and rural communities.

Look for it on our Website in late March

How to get more information ...

More information about the items featured in Datelin *ERS* can be found on our website: www.ers.usda.gov by going to the web address listed in each article. This newsletter is available online at www.ers.usda.gov/news