



# 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 Report



Highlights indicators of social and economic conditions in rural areas. **Read more 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.

### This Month

- Cotton & Wool
- Feed
- Oil Crops
- Rice
- Wheat

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

## Food Stamps and Food Choices

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB29/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB29/)

Food stamp recipients, like other Americans, struggle with nutrition problems associated with choice of foods, as well as amounts. This series of reports *Can Food Stamps Do More To Improve Food Choices? An Economic Perspective* compiles evidence to help answer whether the Food Stamp Program can do more to improve the food choices of participants. The report examines the role of affordability and price of healthful foods



in influencing food choices and the likely success of any policy targeted at changing food choices through food stamp bonuses or restrictions. It also examines other approaches to changing food choices, including nutrition education and potential strategies drawn from the behavioral economics literature. Meaningful improvements in the diets of food stamp recipients will likely depend on a combination of many tactics. Measuring the effect of any policy change on food choices and health outcomes remains a challenge.

## Changing Structure of Dairy Farming

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err47/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err47/)



U.S. dairy production is consolidating into fewer but larger farms. *Profits, Costs, and the Changing Structure of Dairy Farming* uses data from several USDA surveys to detail that consolidation and to analyze the financial drivers of consolidation. Specifically, larger farms realize lower production costs. Although small dairy farms realize higher revenue per hundredweight of milk sold, the cost advantages of larger size allow large farms to be profitable, on average, even while most small farms are unable to earn enough to replace their capital. Further survey evidence, as well as the financial data, suggest that consolidation is likely to continue.



## Is Obesity Related to Food Assistance?

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err48/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err48/)

In contrast to previous years, the most recent data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES) show almost no relationship between food stamp participation and weight status. The ERS report *Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs and Obesity: 1976-2002* analyzes multiple years of cross-sectional data to understand trends in the relationship between food assistance program participation and body weight. The purpose is to examine whether the relationship is consistent over time and across population subgroups.

## Global Growth and U.S. Trade

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR46/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR46/)

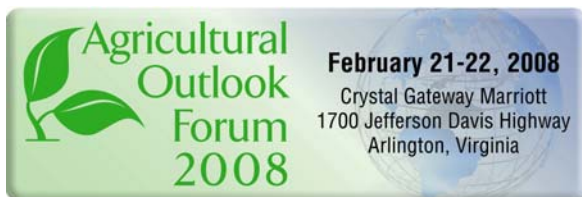
After a decade of uneven export growth and rapidly growing imports, U.S. agriculture has begun to reassert its position in global trade markets. Rising exports and signs of moderating import demand are in marked contrast to previous trends. *Global Growth, Macroeconomic Change, and U.S. Agricultural Trade* places recent changes in perspective by highlighting the role of two specific factors that heavily guide U.S. agricultural trade patterns: global growth and shifts in foreign economic activity that affect U.S. exports, and macroeconomic factors underlying the growth of U.S. imports.



## How Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Has Affected World Poultry-Meat Trade

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/LDP/2007/10oct/LDPM15902/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/LDP/2007/10oct/LDPM15902/)

In 2003, following outbreaks of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 virus, global import demand for both uncooked and cooked poultry declined substantially at first, due to consumers' fear of contracting avian influenza by eating poultry meat. Consumer fears adversely affected poultry consumption in many countries, leading to lower domestic prices, decreased production, and lower poultry-meat exports. These reductions proved to be short-lived, as prices, consumption, production, and exports returned to preoutbreak levels in a relatively short time. As consumers gained confidence that poultry was safe if properly handled and cooked, world demand for cooked poultry increased. The cooked-poultry share of total cooked and uncooked global exports nearly doubled from 2004 to 2006. In 2006, the world poultry industry was again under pressure due to HPAI H5N1 outbreaks, this time in Europe. By the end of the year, however, world poultry-meat output had reached a new high, although, for some European countries, it was slightly below the 2005 level.



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## Energizing Rural America in the Global Marketplace

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