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Only 7 percent of Americans Eating Recommended Whole Grains

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The U.S. Government is promoting whole-grain foods, responding to mounting evidence of their association with maintaining a healthy weight and reducing the risk of heart problems and other diseases.

The U.S. Grain Consumption Landscape: Who Eats Grain, in what Form, Where, and How Much? compared Americans' consumption of



grains with recommendations in the Government's 2005 Dietary Guidelines, using data from USDA's Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, 1994-96 and 1998. The analysis confirmed a national preference for refined grains—only 7 percent of survey respondents met the 2005 whole-grain recommendation. The authors compared grain consumption by economic and demographic characteristics of consumers, and also examined the effects of consumers' social, economic, and demographic characteristics and dietary perceptions and practices. The results suggest that consumers who perceive grain consumption as important and read food labels during shopping tend to eat more whole grains than do other people. When data from more recent surveys are analyzed, results of the present study can serve as a baseline from which to gauge changes in the American diet and the consumption of whole grains.

Commodity Program Payments Accelerated Structural Change

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err51/



In the last 25 years, U.S. crop farms have steadily declined in number and grown in average size, as production has shifted to larger operations. Larger farms tend to receive more commodity program payments, because most payments are tied to a farm's current or historical production, but whether payments have contributed to farm growth is uncertain. *Commodity Payments, Farm Business Survival, and Farm Size Growth* uses

farm-level data from the Census of Agriculture to determine whether there is a statistical relationship between farm commodity program payments and greater concentration in production. The analysis indicates that, at the regional level, higher commodity program payments per acre are associated with subsequent farm growth. Also, higher payments per acre are associated with higher rates of farm survival and growth.

Production Costs Lower on Larger Operations

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib32/

Hog production in 2004 was characterized by wide variation in the types, sizes, and economic performance of operations. Operations specializing in a single production phase generated more than three times the product value, on average, of those using the traditional farrow-to-finish approach. Low-cost operations tended to be larger, located in the Heartland, and operated by farmers whose primary occupation was farming. Small and medium operations far outnumbered large and very large operations, but large and very large operations accounted for most of the production. *Characteristics and Production Costs of U.S. Hog Farms, 2004* reports that the average production costs declined as the size of the hog operation increased, a result of reduced capital costs and more efficient input use. Hog production was highly concentrated in the Heartland, but the largest operations were specialized hog finishing units in the Southern Seaboard.



The Changing Economics

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err52/

The increasing size and specialization of hog operations reflect structural change in U.S. swine production during the past 15 years. The number of farms with hogs has declined by over 70 percent, as hog enterprises have grown larger. Large operations that specialize in a single phase of production have replaced farrow-to-finish operations that performed all phases of production. The use of production contracts has increased. Operations producing under contract are larger than independent operations and are more likely to specialize in a single phase of production. *The Changing Economics of U.S. Hog Production* reports that these structural changes have coincided with substantial gains in efficiency for hog farms and lower production costs. Most of these productivity gains are attributable to increases in the scale of production and technological innovation. Productivity gains likely contributed to a 30-percent reduction in the price of hogs at the farm gate.

An Analysis of Recreational Farm Operations

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err53/



Farm-based recreation provides an important niche market for farmers, but limited empirical information is available on the topic. Access to two USDA databases, the 2004 Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) and the 2000 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, provided researchers with a deeper understanding of who operates farm-based recreation enterprises, such as hunting and fishing operations, horseback riding businesses, on-farm rodeos, and petting zoos. The *Farm-Based Recreation: A Statistical Profile* reports that regression analysis identified the importance of various farmer and farm

characteristics, as well as local and regional factors associated with farmer operation of, and income derived from, farm-based recreation.

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