



DatelineERS

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Economic Research Service

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ERS is a 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.



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Commodity Markets and Trade

ERS Outlook reports provide timely analysis of major commodity markets and trade.

This Month

- Rice
- Cotton and Wool
- Feed
- Wheat
- Oil Crops
- Sugar and Sweeteners
- Vegetables and Melons
- Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry

All reports along with a calendar of future releases are available at:

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook

Emerging Issues in the U.S. Organic Industry

www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB55

Consumer demand for organic products has widened over the last decade. While new producers have emerged to help meet demand, market participants report that a supply squeeze is constraining growth for both individual firms and the organic sector overall. Partly in response to shortages in organic supply, Congress included provisions in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (2008 Farm Act) that, for the first time, provide direct financial support to farmers to convert to organic production. This report examines recent economic research on the adoption of organic farming systems, organic production costs and returns, and market conditions to gain a better understanding of the organic supply squeeze and other emerging issues in this rapidly changing industry.



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The WIC Program: Background, Trends, and Economic Issues

www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR73



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The mission of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children through age 4 who are at nutritional risk. WIC provides nutritious foods to supplement diets, nutrition education, and referrals to health care and other social services. Almost half of all infants and about a quarter of all children ages 1-4 in the United States participate in the WIC, and it is USDA's third-largest food and nutrition assistance program, accounting for 10 percent of total Federal spending on food and nutrition assistance. This report describes the WIC program—how it works, its history, program trends, and the characteristics of the population it serves. It also examines current issues facing WIC, focusing mainly on those with important economic implications.

Briefing Room

Food Expenditures

www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/CPIFoodAndExpenditures/Data/Expenditures_Tables

ERS analysis of food expenditures provides valuable information on how consumers spend their food dollar and how their consumption patterns change. ERS provides historical data through 2008 on U.S. food expenditures. These recently updated food expenditure tables can answer a wide range of questions:

- How much did consumers spend on groceries (“food at home”) in 2008?
- How much was spent at outlets other than food stores?
- What type of food outlet had the most sales?
- Have sales of food prepared away from home (e.g., in restaurants) changed?
- How much of personal disposable income have U.S. households spent on food?
...and much more.

To view the tables go to the ERS link (above).

Reports to Congress

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 called for a study evaluating the role of animal manure as a source of fertilizer, and other uses, and a study on food deserts - areas with limited access to affordable and nutritious food. Both reports are now available:

- *Manure Use for Fertilizer and for Energy*
www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/AP/AP037
- *Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food - Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences*
www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/AP/AP036



Russia's Growing Agricultural Imports



www.ers.usda.gov/publications/wrs0904

Over the past nine years, Russian agricultural imports have grown considerably, from \$7 billion in 2000 to \$33 billion in 2008. This import growth has made Russia the second largest agricultural importer among emerging markets, after China. The main reasons for the import rise are macroeconomic—high growth in Russian gross domestic product, which increases consumer income and purchasing power, and real appreciation of the ruble, which makes imports less expensive vis-à-vis domestically produced goods. The economic crisis that hit Russia (and the world) in autumn 2008 makes the outlook for Russia's agricultural imports uncertain in the short term. However, the Russian economy is expected to stabilize within a year or two, at which time agricultural imports should continue to grow, although at a lower rate than in past years.

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