



# Dateline ERS

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Economic Research Service

April/May 2010

U.S. Department of Agriculture

ERS is a primary source of economic 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.



Food Atlas Press Kit

[www.ers.usda.gov/FoodAtlas/PressKit/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/FoodAtlas/PressKit/)

## Commodity Markets and Trade

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

### April/May

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

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

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

## Amber Waves June 2010

**Amber Waves** magazine presents the full range of ERS research and analysis, covering food, farming, natural resources, and rural America.

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

### Challenges Facing USDA's Conservation Reserve Program

Improved targeting of benefits, encouragement of better conservation practices, and heightened competition among bidders could hold promise for increasing the environmental benefits and lowering the cost of the Conservation Reserve Program.

### Next-Generation Biofuels: Near-Term Challenges and Implications for Agriculture

Next-generation biofuel companies are using a variety of strategies to overcome high initial capital costs, limited access to low-cost biomass, and other hurdles to remain financially viable during pre-commercial development.

### Former Soviet Union Region To Play Larger Role in Meeting World Wheat Needs

USDA projects that wheat exports by Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan will increase by 50 percent by 2019, and the region could lead the world in wheat exports by the end of the decade. **Listen to a podcast with one of the authors.**

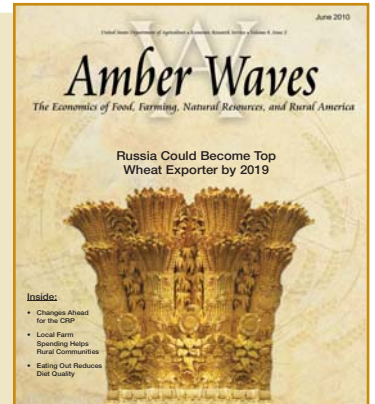
### America's Organic Farmers Face Issues and Opportunities

The number of certified organic crop and livestock operations and acreage under organic management has grown rapidly over the past decade, but adoption of organic farming practices in the U.S. still lags behind many other countries.

### The Quarterly Food-at-Home Price Database

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/TB1926/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/TB1926/)

The **Methodology Behind the Quarterly Food-at-Home Price Database** report presents a detailed description of the methodology used to construct the QFAHPD from 1999-2006 Nielsen Homescan data. The database includes quarterly mean prices of 52 food categories for 35 market groups covering the contiguous United States. Data from 2006 indicate that cross-market price variation can be as much as three to four times greater than annual food price inflation.



Inside:  
• Changes Ahead for the CFP  
• Local Farm Spending Helps Rural Communities  
• Eating Out Reduces Diet Quality



## Assessing the Benefits of Public Research: USDA's Agricultural Research Service

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR95/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR95/)

Evaluation of publicly funded research can help provide accountability and prioritize programs. In addition, Federal intramural research planning generally involves an assessment of the appropriate Federal role, if any, and whether the research should be left to non-government organizations. Of the many methods of evaluation available, peer review—used primarily for establishing scientific merit—is the most common. Economic analysis focuses on quantifying ultimate research outcomes; however, standard economic techniques may not be amenable for evaluating some important public research priorities or for institutional assessments. Using three case studies of research conducted by USDA's Agricultural Research Service, the report ***Assessing the Benefits of Public Research Within a Economic Framework: The Case of USDA's Agricultural Research Service***

reviews quantitative methods and applies qualitative economic reasoning and stakeholder interviewing methods to evaluate the economic benefits of Federal intramural research.



### Special Outlook Reports Focus on Agriculture Abroad

***Trade and Food Security Implications from the Indonesian Agricultural Experience*** evaluates the impact of Indonesia's transition from a food-first focus to an export-oriented development strategy on its agricultural production, productivity growth, consumer food demand, and lifestyle. [www.ers.usda.gov/publications/WRS1001/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/WRS1001/)

***Price Volatility in Afghanistan's Wheat Market*** analyzes the role imports have played in stabilizing Afghan wheat prices by mitigating the effects of shortfalls in domestic production and assesses whether Afghanistan's internal wheat markets are sufficiently connected with international markets to cope with volatility in domestic output. [www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/WHS/2010/04Apr/WHS10D01/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/WHS/2010/04Apr/WHS10D01/)

***Indian Sugar Sector Cycles Down, Poised to Rebound*** describes and analyzes the current situation and outlook for supply, demand, and trade of sugar by India, the world's second largest sugar producer, following a decline in India's sugar production that shifted the country from net exporter to net importer during 2009/10. [www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/SSS/2010/Apr04/SSSM26001/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/SSS/2010/Apr04/SSSM26001/)

***Fruit Policies in Japan*** reviews Japanese government programs to support domestic fruit production and how these policies affect fruit consumption in one of the largest markets for U.S. fruits. [www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/FTS/2010/Apr04/FTS34101/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/FTS/2010/Apr04/FTS34101/)

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