



# DatelineERS

New ERS research and analysis at: [www.ers.usda.gov](http://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.

## China's Agricultural Imports Boomed During 2003-04

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/WRS0504](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/WRS0504)

China's agricultural imports more than doubled between 2002 and 2004 due to surging demand for basic commodities, a more open trade regime, and tighter commodity supplies in the Chinese domestic market.

## Production Costs and Returns for Tobacco in 2003

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/TBS/may05/tbs25801](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/TBS/may05/tbs25801)

Average net returns per acre were estimated to be negative for burley and flue-cured tobacco in 2003. Total economic costs for burley and flue-cured tobacco production likely rose in 2003 from 2002 due to higher costs for energy, labor, and quota rental rates.

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

## More People in Low-Income Countries Not Getting Recommended Nutrition

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/GFA16](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/GFA16)

Just over 1 billion people in 70 low-income countries are estimated to have consumed less than the recommended nutritional requirements in 2004, according to *Food Security Assessment, GFA 16*. This marks an increase from more than 830 million in 2003. Over the coming decade, food security is projected to improve most significantly in Asia, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean. The situation is expected to deteriorate in Sub-Saharan Africa, where deep poverty, political unrest, and the effects of HIV/AIDS hinder prospects for improvement.



## The Newsroom Features ERS Research "In Brief"

[www.ers.usda.gov/News/InBrief.htm](http://www.ers.usda.gov/News/InBrief.htm)

If you've visited our Newsroom recently, you may have noticed some changes. We've expanded the selection of concise summaries of reports and made it easier to find.

You'll find the link to this *in brief* section at the top of the Newsroom front page. The list of briefs contains short descriptions of each and a link to their full text.

The briefs are often 2-6 pages and quickly impart the most important parts of our research, including why the topic is of current interest, what the study found and the implications, and how the study was conducted.

The briefs are organized by topic:

- agricultural policy
- diet and health
- farms and farm households
- food assistance and security
- food industry and markets
- food safety
- natural resources and environment
- research, technology, and productivity
- rural and community development
- trade and international markets

Check out the *in brief* section at [www.ers.usda.gov/News/InBrief.htm](http://www.ers.usda.gov/News/InBrief.htm) or get to it through our Newsroom front page at [www.ers.usda.gov/News](http://www.ers.usda.gov/News)

## Costs and Benefits of Labeling Away-from-Home Food

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ERR4](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ERR4)

Americans spent about 46 percent of their total food budget on food away from home. Such foods tend to be less nutritious and higher in calories than foods prepared at home, and some studies have linked eating away from home to overweight and obesity in adults and children.

Current nutrition labeling law exempts much of the food-away-from-home sector from mandatory labeling regulations. However, public health advocates have called for mandatory nutrition labeling for major sources of food away from home, such as fast-food and chain restaurants. *Nutrition Labeling in the Food-Away-From-Home Sector: An Economic Assessment* provides an economic assessment of a food-away-from-home nutrition labeling policy, including justifications for policy intervention and potential costs and benefits of the policy.



## North American Countries are Reforming their Agricultural Policies

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/WRS0503](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/WRS0503)

The United States, Mexico, and Canada have each made significant changes to their agricultural policies over the past several years, according to *Recent Agricultural Policy Reforms in North America*. In the area of income supports, each country has instituted a countercyclical program that provides additional assistance to producers during downturns in commodity prices, and each continues to decouple key support programs from production decisions.

## Factors Affecting U.S. Pork Consumption

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/LDP/may05/ldpm13001](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/LDP/may05/ldpm13001)

Pork ranks third in annual U.S. meat consumption, behind beef and chicken, averaging 51 pounds per person. The Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals (CSFII) indicates that most pork is consumed at home. Pork consumption is highest in the Midwest. Rural consumers eat more pork than urban/suburban consumers. Pork consumption varies by race and ethnicity. Higher income consumers tend to consume less pork.

Demographic data in the CSFII suggests future declines in per capita pork consumption as the share of Hispanics and the elderly in the population rises because those two groups eat less pork than the national average. However, total U.S. pork consumption will grow because of an expansion of the U.S. population.



## Conference: Globalization and Restructuring in Rural America

[www.ers.usda.gov/emphases/rural/GlobalConf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/emphases/rural/GlobalConf)

Technological breakthroughs, changes in consumer preferences, and global factors have transformed how things are made and where they are produced. Rural communities are often more reliant on trade-sensitive sectors and less economically diversified than urban areas.

### How can Federal and local governments assist in rural restructuring?

You are invited to attend a conference at ERS on **Monday, June 6—Globalization and Restructuring in Rural America**—to discuss rural economy issues, such as: textile and apparel plant closings, the offshoring of call centers, worker and community programs, and successful community strategies.

For more information about the conference, or to register online, see our website at: [www.ers.usda.gov/emphases/rural/GlobalConf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/emphases/rural/GlobalConf) or contact Karen Hamrick at 202-694-5426, [khamrick@ers.usda.gov](mailto:khamrick@ers.usda.gov).

To register, please contact Loretta Miller at 202-694-5379, [lmiller@ers.usda.gov](mailto:lmiller@ers.usda.gov).

### How to get more information . . .

More information about the items featured in Dateline ERS can be found on our website: [www.ers.usda.gov](http://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](http://www.ers.usda.gov/news)