

RuralAmerica

USDA/ERS • Volume 17, Issue 2 • Summer 2002

Douglas E. Bowers, Executive Editor
Carolyn Rogers, Associate Editor
Dale Simms, Managing Editor
Victor B. Phillips, Jr., Layout and Design

Rural America (ISSN 0271-2171) is published four times per year by USDA's Economic Research Service.

Rural America welcomes letters to the editor as well as ideas for articles. Address editorial correspondence and inquiries to the Executive Editor, *Rural America*, ERS-FRED, Room 2171, 1800 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-5831; or call 202-694-5398.

Contents of this magazine may be reprinted without permission, but the editors would appreciate acknowledgment of such use and an advance copy of the material to be reprinted. Opinions expressed within do not necessarily represent the policies of USDA. Use of commercial and trade names does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by USDA.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity provider and employer.

Contents

Feature Articles

- 2** Wealth and Income Contribute Jointly to the Economic Well-Being of Farm Operator Households
Ashok Mishra, Hisham El-Osta, Mitchell Morehart, James Johnson, and Jeffrey Hopkins
- 14** Income Inequality in America: Nonmetro Income Levels Lower Than Metro, But Income Inequality Did Not Increase as Fast
Diane K. McLaughlin
- 21** Population Change in the Midwest: Nonmetro Population Growth Lags Metro Increase
Willis Goudy
- 30** Rural Health Issues for the Older Population
Carolyn C. Rogers
- 37** Implications of Medicare Restructuring for Rural Areas
Carolyn C. Rogers

Rural Updates

- 44** Rural Development Policy: Transition Year Brings Changes for Rural Development
Richard J. Reeder
- 54** Federal Tax Policy: Numerous Changes Lower Income and Estate Taxes
James Monke and Ron Durst
- 58** Earnings: Nonmetro Earnings Continue Upward
Robert M. Gibbs and Timothy S. Parker



On the cover:
Photo courtesy EyeWire Photography, Inc.

