



DatelineERS

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Economic Research Service

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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.

New On the Web

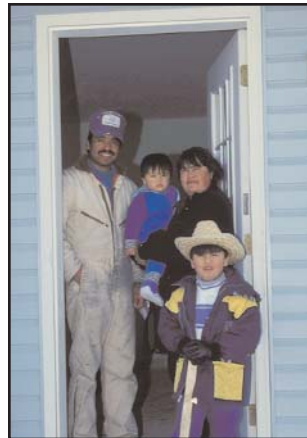
Invasive Species Management Research

A compilation of research on Invasive Species Management from 2003-2005 is available in the Invasive Species Briefing Room under features.

www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/invasivespecies/#features

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



Rural Hispanic Populations Nearly Doubled, 1980-2000

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib8

Between 1980 and 2000, the Hispanic/Latino population in rural and smalltown America nearly doubled from 1.4 to 2.7 million and is now the most rapidly growing segment of the population in nonmetropolitan (nonmetro) counties. In 1980, Hispanics constituted just over 3 percent of the nonmetro population, a figure that rose to 5.5 percent in 2000. Since 1980, growth in the Hispanic population has contributed over 25 percent of the total nonmetro population increase and over 50 percent of the nonmetro minority population increase.

Hispanic population growth has helped to stem decades of smalltown population decline in some States, demographically and economically revitalizing many rural communities. Hispanic population growth in new destinations outside traditional Hispanic settlement areas in the nonmetro Southwest can drive change in local economies and can raise questions about social service provision, socioeconomic adaptation and integration, and other important public policy issues for nonmetropolitan counties.

Rural Hispanics at a Glance provides the latest information from the 2000 Census and other Federal data sources about Hispanics living in nonmetro counties. The report also provides data on important demographic, labor market, income, poverty, and social service indicators for nonmetro Hispanics.

Marketing and Production Contracts on the Rise

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib9

Marketing and production contracts covered 39 percent of the value of U.S. agricultural production in 2003, up from 36 percent in 2001 and a substantial increase over estimated values of 28 percent in 1991 and 11 percent in 1969. *Agricultural Contracting*

Update: Contracts in 2003 shows that large farms are far more likely to contract than small farms; in fact, contracts cover over half of the value of production from farms with at least \$1 million in sales. Although use of both production and marketing contracts has grown over time, growth is more rapid for production contracts, which are largely used for livestock.





Workers in Acquired Plants Realized Modest Employment and Wage Increases

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err13

Empirical analysis of mergers and acquisitions in eight important food industries suggests that workers in acquired plants realized modest increases in employment and wages relative to other workers. According to *Effect of Food Industry Mergers and Acquisitions on Employment and Wages*, mergers and acquisitions reduced the likelihood of plant closures while high relative labor costs encouraged plant shutdowns. These results differ from commonly held views that mergers and acquisitions lead to fewer jobs, wage cuts, and plant shutdowns.



Prospects for India's Emerging Apple Market

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fts/jan06/fts31901

Strong economic growth is projected to lead to continued expansion of Indian apple demand, but the high cost of domestic and imported apples compared with other Indian fruit is likely to limit consumption to higher income consumers. U.S. apples have accounted for the largest share of Indian imports, but face increasing competition from high-quality and low-cost Chinese apples. Although India has a high (50-percent) tariff on imported apples, internal marketing margins—or returns to traders over and above measured costs—account for a significantly larger share of consumer apple prices than do import prices, tariffs, or marketing costs.

New Directions in China's Agricultural Lending

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/wrs0601

China has substantially boosted lending to farmers and agribusinesses in recent years. The balance of loans to farmers doubled between 2001 and 2005. Loans for agribusinesses and rural infrastructure rose as well. Rural credit cooperatives and banks that lend to agriculture are being reformed and commercialized but agricultural lending is still largely policy-driven. The boost in farm lending is one of several policy initiatives to aid farmers.

Wheat Backgrounder

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/whs/dec05/whs05K01

U.S. wheat plantings are about 30 percent lower than in the early 1980s. Wheat demand fell with changing consumer preferences and strong competition in export markets. Low returns led to the substitution of competing crops for wheat, particularly on the Plains. Farms depending on wheat sales for over half of their receipts have much lower farm incomes and financial assets compared with other farms producing wheat. These wheat-dependent farms, which produce about 40 percent of the Nation's wheat output, rely heavily on Government payments and off-farm income. Attractive returns for competing crops and modest wheat demand are expected to limit future wheat plantings. But low wheat stocks along with prices above \$3 per bushel will prevent a large decline in acreage.

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