



# Dateline ERS

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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.



## Commodity Markets and Trade

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

### This Month

- Rice
- Feed
- Wheat
- Oil Crops
- Cotton and Wool
- 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](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook)

## China's Agricultural Modernization: Challenges Remain After 30 Years of Reform

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB51](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB51)

Thirty years ago China began implementing a series of reforms to improve efficiency in agricultural production. Since then reforms have reshaped China's agriculture and elevated its position in the world economy. This report provides an overview of current issues in China's agricultural development and policy responses to these issues, and assesses the effects of these policies on China's growing role in international markets.



## Alternative Farm Definitions

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB49](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB49)

USDA defines "farm" very broadly to comprehensively measure agricultural activity. Consequently, most establishments classified as farms in the United States produce very little, while most production occurs on a small number of much larger operations. Recently, more stringent requirements have been proposed for farms to qualify for Federal agricultural program benefits. *Exploring Alternative Farm Definitions: Implications for Agricultural Statistics and Program Eligibility* outlines the structure of U.S. farms, discusses the current farm definition, evaluates several potential criteria that have been proposed to define target farms more precisely, and examines how these criteria affect both statistical coverage and program eligibility.

## Changes in Manure Management in the Hog Sector

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB50](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB50)

In recent years, structural changes in the hog sector, including increased farm size and regional shifts in production, have altered manure management practices. Also, changes to the Clean Water Act, State regulations, and increasing local conflicts over air quality issues, including odor, have influenced manure management decisions. *Changes in Manure Management in the Hog Sector: 1998 - 2004*

examines how hog manure management practices vary with the scale of production and how these practices evolved. The findings suggest that larger hog operations are altering their manure management decisions in response to nutrient application constraints, and that environmental policy is contributing to the adoption of conservation-compatible manure management practices.



## U.S. Public Agricultural Research: Changes in Funding Sources and Shifts in Emphasis, 1980-2005

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB45](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB45)

This report focuses on the way public agricultural research is funded in the United States and how changes in funding sources over the last 25 years reflect changes in the type of research pursued. Over the years, proposals have recommended shifting the focus of public agricultural research from applied to basic research, and giving higher priority to peer-reviewed, competitively funded grants. The public agricultural research system in the United States is a Federal-State partnership, with most research conducted at State institutions. This report finds that in recent years, State funds have declined, USDA funds have remained fairly steady (with changes in the composition of funding), but funding from other Federal agencies and the private sector has increased. Efforts to increase competitively awarded funds for research have fluctuated over time, as have special grants (earmarks). Along with shifts in funding sources, the proportion of basic research being undertaken within the public agricultural research system has declined.

## An Illustrated Guide to Research Findings From USDA's Economic Research Service

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB48/Interactive](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB48/Interactive)

This interactive chartbook contains an illustrated sampling of recent ERS research. With creative design layouts, the guide covers the breadth of the Agency's research on current policy issues: from biofuels to food consumption to land conservation to patterns of trade for agricultural products. What you won't find in the collection is any mention of economists' favorite analytical tools (regression analyses, for example). This guide highlights results, not process, and is a valuable resource for policy makers and media stories.



### The 2008/2009 World Economic Crisis: What It Means for U.S. Agriculture

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/WRS0902](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/WRS0902)

The world economic crisis that began in 2008 has major consequences for U.S. agriculture. This special outlook report outlines the effect of the current crisis on agriculture. Weakening of global demand from declining economic growth is expected to result in reduced export demand and lower agricultural commodity prices, compared with those in 2008. These, in turn, reduce U.S. farm income and place downward pressure on farm real estate values. So far, the overall impact on U.S. agriculture is not as severe as on the broader U.S. economy because the record-high agricultural exports, commodity prices, and farm income in 2007 and 2008 put U.S. farmers on solid financial ground. There is much uncertainty concerning the depth and extent of the current crisis on the U.S. economy. The long-term outcomes for U.S. agriculture are dependent on whether or not there is a global realignment of exchange rates to correct current macroeconomic imbalances.

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