



# 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.

## New Data on the Web:

### County Typology Codes

To provide policy-relevant information about diverse county conditions, a new set of county-level typology codes now captures differences in economic and social characteristics.

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

### Western Irrigated Agriculture

This data, in 147 electronic tables, summarizes the farm-structural characteristics for irrigated farms in the 17 Western States based on USDA's 1998 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey.

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

### 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)

## U.S. Hispanic Population Moves Outside Southwest

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rdr99](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rdr99)

Since 1980, the nonmetro Hispanic population in the United States has doubled and is now the most rapidly growing demographic group in rural and small-town America. *New Patterns of Hispanic Settlement in Rural America* finds that by 2000, for the first time, half of all nonmetro Hispanics lived outside the Southwest, increasingly in areas of the Midwest and Southeast.

## Amber Waves June 2004

*Amber Waves* magazine covers the full range of ERS research and analysis, including articles on food, farming, natural resources, and rural America.

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



### *Where Will Demographics Take the Asia-Pacific Food System?*

The population of the Asia-Pacific region is rapidly becoming more urban, increasing in number, and getting older. Over the next 20 years, these three demographic trends will generate powerful economic forces that will challenge the region's food system.

### *Emergency Providers Help Poor Households Put Food on the Table*

The Federal Government spent over \$40 billion in 2003 on food assistance to low-income Americans. Yet, many needy people still turn to the almost 40,000 privately run food pantries and soup kitchens in the United States.

### *Have Conservation Compliance Incentives Reduced Soil Erosion?*

Cropland soil erosion has fallen since the 1980s, in part because the Federal Government started requiring farmers to engage in conservation activities or risk losing selected Federal payments. But other factors are also at work.

### *Rural Hispanics: Employment and Residential Trends*

The Hispanic population is the largest, fastest growing minority in the U.S. Although largely an urban phenomenon, the Hispanic population is growing in nonmetro areas for the first time. What does this mean for the social, economic, and political future of rural America?



## China May Begin To Import Corn and Wheat

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FDS/may04/fds04C01](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FDS/may04/fds04C01)

Many analysts see signs that China's corn market is reaching the turning point in a decade-long cycle. According to *Is China's Corn Market at a Turning Point?*, China curtailed corn exports in calendar year 2004 and may begin to import corn during marketing year 2004/05.

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/whs/may04/whs04D01](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/whs/may04/whs04D01)

Another report, *China's Wheat Economy: Current Trends and Prospects for Imports*, provides an overview of current wheat production and consumption trends in China, including factors that contributed to slumping imports in recent years. It projects that China will regain its status as a net wheat importer, with imports rising sharply in the next year or two but then falling back to modest levels after that.

## More Coordination Could Improve Food Aid

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/GFA15](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/GFA15)

*Food Security Assessment, GFA-15* says that food aid continues to be an important tool to fight hunger, but the effectiveness of food aid could be improved by increased coordination between donor groups, more transparent eligibility criteria, and fewer fluctuations in year-to-year aid levels.

## Low-Income Households Spent Less on Fruits and Vegetables

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/AER833](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/AER833)

In 2000, on average, low-income households spent \$3.59 per capita per week on fruits and vegetables, while higher income households spent \$5.02. *Low-Income Households' Expenditures on Fruits and Vegetables* also reports that low income households, if given a marginal increase in income, would not spend it on additional fruits and vegetables. Low-income households would likely allocate this increased income to other items deemed more essential, such as meats, clothing, or housing.



## Meat and Poultry Plants Invest in Food Safety

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/tb1911](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/tb1911)

*Meat and Poultry Plants' Food Safety Investments: Survey Findings* provides evidence that market forces have worked in conjunction with regulation to promote the use of more sophisticated food safety technologies. It reports the results from the first national survey of the types and amounts of food safety investments by meat and poultry plants since the late 1990s.

## Welfare-to-Work Affected Wages and Economic Growth

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FANRR40](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FANRR40)

From 1996 to 2000, the influx of public assistance recipients into the labor force put downward wage pressure on low-skill occupations, making wage growth smaller than it would have been. *Moving Public Assistance Recipients Into the Labor Force, 1996-2000* shows the influx also contributed 1 percentage point of real economic growth in terms of gross domestic product from 1996 through 2000.

## U.S.-Mexico Corn Trade Retains Some Pre-NAFTA Characteristics

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FDS/may04/fds04D01](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FDS/may04/fds04D01)

*U.S.-Mexico Corn Trade During the NAFTA Era: New Twists to an Old Story* indicates that the growing U.S.-Mexico corn trade has changed significantly since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, but it retains many of its pre-NAFTA characteristics.

## WIC Had Modest Effect on Infant Formula Retail Prices

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FANRR39](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FANRR39)

*WIC and the Retail Price of Infant Formula* reports that for a given set of wholesale prices, WIC and its infant formula rebate program resulted in modest increases in the supermarket price of infant formula, especially in States with a high percentage of WIC formula-fed infants. However, lower priced infant formulas are available to non-WIC consumers in most areas of the country.

### How to get more information . . .

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