

...Upfront

FoodReview (ISSN 1056-327X) is published three times a year by the Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Send questions, requests, and editorial comments to *FoodReview*, USDA, Room 2015-South, 1800 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-5831.

Annual subscriptions are \$27.00 to U.S. addresses (\$54.00 foreign). Call toll-free 1-800-999-6779 (weekdays, 8:30-5:00 ET) to charge your order to American Express, Visa, or MasterCard (callers outside the United States, please dial 703-605-6220). Or, order by mail from ERS-NASS, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22161. Make your check or money order payable to ERS-NASS. Please include your complete address and daytime telephone number. Sorry, but refunds cannot be issued.

The use of commercial or trade names does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by USDA or ERS.

Contents of this magazine may be reprinted without permission.

Economics Editor:

Rosanna Mentzer Morrison
(202) 694-5411
rosanna@ers.usda.gov

Managing Editor:

Linda Hatcher
(202) 694-5121
lhatcher@ers.usda.gov

Art Director:

Susan DeGeorge

Editorial/graphic assistance:

Wanda Reed-Rose

The 1990's: A Dynamic Decade for the U.S. Food System

Consumers in the 1990's demanded quick, easy-to-prepare grocery foods to match their fast-paced lifestyles. And, the rising incomes of the second half of the decade allowed consumers to pay for these convenience foods and for more away-from-home eating. The proportion of the food dollar spent eating out grew from 44 percent in 1990 to 47.5 percent in 1999. This demand for convenience translated into higher labor, packaging, energy, and other food marketing costs. Between 1990 and 1999, marketing costs rose 45 percent and accounted for most of the 37-percent rise in domestic consumer food spending.

The increasing prosperity of the 1990's is reflected in declining participation and expenditures for some domestic food assistance programs. Led by the Food Stamp Program, overall food and nutrition assistance expenditures grew by over 50 percent between 1990 and 1996. But beginning in 1997, expenditures began falling. By fiscal 1999, total expenditures for Federal food and nutrition assistance programs stood at \$32.9 billion—14 percent below 1996's peak.

The 1990's was a dynamic decade for food safety. In 1996, USDA issued new rules and testing procedures for meat and poultry processors to reduce disease-causing pathogens. All federally inspected meat and poultry plants had to adopt Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans for identifying food safety hazards, establishing ways to reduce or eliminate the hazards, and verifying the controls were successful. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration initiated a HACCP program in 1995 for seafood processors and proposed HACCP procedures for fruit and vegetable juices in 1998. During the 1990's, the Government also launched several national campaigns aimed at educating retailers, foodservice operators, and consumers on safe ways to store and prepare food.

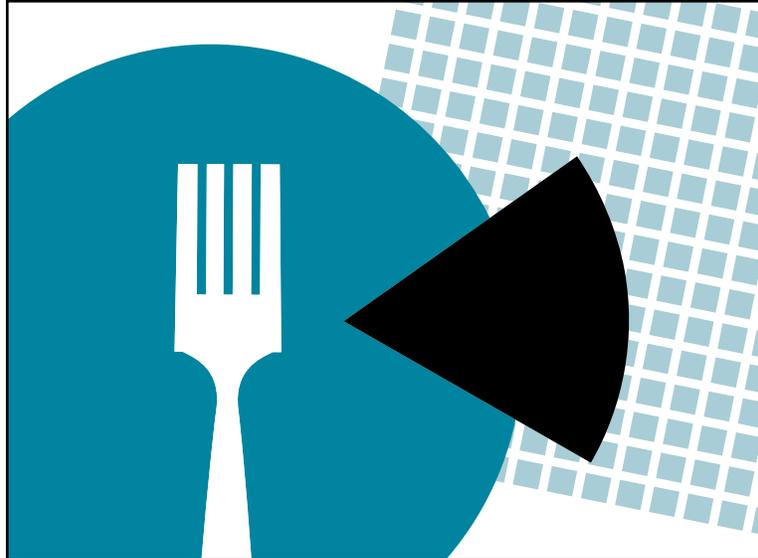
It was a dynamic decade for nutrition as well. With the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act, implemented in 1994, consumers had a wealth of nutrition information on food packages allowing quick and easy in-store comparisons between foods. Food manufacturers raced to offer low-fat or "lite" versions of popular food products. In 1996, 2,076 new food products claimed to be reduced in fat or fat-free—nearly 16 percent of all new food products introduced that year. As the decade ended, fat-phobia seemed to have cooled some, replaced by interest in fiber, calcium, folate, and other disease-fighting nutrients. During the 1990's, meals served as part of government-supported feeding programs were revamped to comply with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. And, the 1992 Food Guide Pyramid proved to be a popular graphic for helping consumers translate the *Dietary Guidelines* into food choices.

Unfortunately, much of the Government's dietary advice appears to be getting lost in the translation. Analyses of food supply data, adjusted for spoilage and waste, by USDA's Economic Research Service find the average American diet unbalanced when compared with the recommended servings from the Food Guide Pyramid. Our food choices reflect a topsy-turvy pyramid, top heavy with added sugars and fats and light on whole grains, fruits, and dairy products. No wonder many of us ended the decade heavier than we started.

Rosanna Mentzer Morrison
Economics Editor, *FoodReview*
Food and Rural Economics Division

P.S. In Recent Reports from USDA's Economic Research Service at the end of this issue, you'll find summaries and ordering information for food-related reports released over the last year.

Inside...



The 1990's: A Dynamic Decade for the U.S. Food System

Food Consumption and Spending

2 Per Capita Food Supply Trends: Progress Toward Dietary Guidelines

—*Judy Putnam, Linda Scott Kantor, and Jane Allshouse*

15 Spotlight on National Food Spending

—*Annette Clauson*

18 Food Spending by U.S. Households Grew Steadily in the 1990's

—*Noel Blisard*

Food Marketing

23 Foodservice Sales Reflect the Prosperous, Time-Pressed 1990's

—*Charlene C. Price*

27 Food Marketing Costs: A 1990's Retrospective

—*Howard Elitzak*

Food Assistance and Nutrition

31 Food Assistance Expanded, Then Contracted in the 1990's

—*Victor Oliveira*

38 Nutrition Policy in the 1990's

—*Stephen R. Crutchfield and Jon Weimer*

Food Safety

44 Food Safety Efforts Accelerate in the 1990's

—*Stephen R. Crutchfield and Tanya Roberts*

Information Updates

50 Recent Reports from USDA's Economic Research Service