

Preface

This research report is an electronic version of ERS's former *Food Marketing Review* report. At this point, organization and content remain much the same as the previous version. However, users now benefit from links between a reference to an appendix table or chapter and their actual occurrence. Besides the new electronic format, most significant changes have come in the appendix tables. We have eliminated extraneous information and combined similar data. Consequently, the number of appendix tables has been roughly cut in half. Unfortunately, because we collect a wide range of data from a variety of sources, data for various series often begin and end at different dates.

The U.S. food system has undergone much change since 1996, when the last version of this report was published. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is replacing the U.S. Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system, which presented problems in creating comparable time series for some tables. Additional information on the move to NAICS can be found at the U.S. Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>).

We will continue to improve the content and tailor the organization of this report to users' needs. To this end, we welcome your comments and suggestions (contact Steve Martinez, martinez@ers.usda.gov).

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