



United States Department of Agriculture

Economic
Research
Service

Administrative
Publication
Number 062

September 2013



Selected charts from

Ag and Food Statistics: Charting the Essentials



A message from the Under Secretary

With the abundance of news and information on the food and agriculture sector, sometimes it is helpful to take a step back and look at the big picture. Whether you are new to the topic or are a long-time sector expert, there are a number of key indicators that you will want to follow.

How much, for example, do agriculture and related industries contribute to the U.S. economy? What are the leading agricultural exports? What share of their income do Americans spend on food? How do job earnings in rural areas compare with metro areas? How much of the Nation's land is occupied by agriculture?

In a new online product, *Ag and Food Statistics: Charting the Essentials*, USDA's Economic Research Service tells the basic story in numbers—statistics presented in more than 75 charts and maps, each with accompanying text. This booklet presents a preview of what you'll find on ERS's website. The charts and maps are organized into nine topics (see below) and are available at www.ers.usda.gov/essentials.

Whether you're a public official, researcher, educator, student, or journalist, I think you'll find the *Essentials* informative and useful in your endeavors.

Catherine E. Woteki

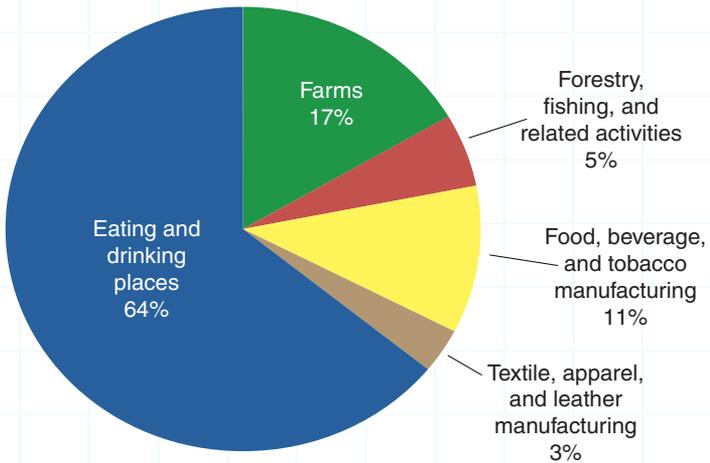
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Ag and Food Sectors and the Economy
Land and Natural Resources
Farming and Farm Income
Rural Economy
Agricultural Production and Prices
Agricultural Trade
Food Availability and Consumption
Food Prices and Spending
Food Security and Nutrition Assistance

Nearly a tenth of American jobs are in agriculture and food-related industries.

Employment* in agriculture and related industries, 2008-11 average



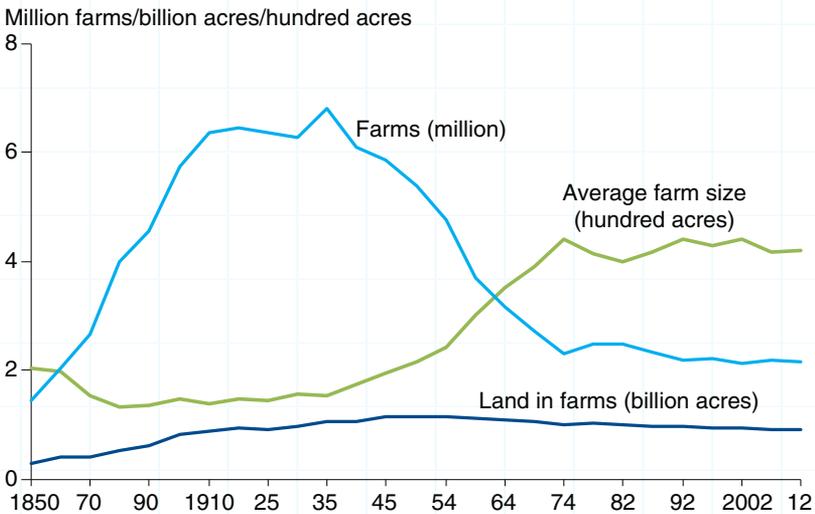
*Full- and part-time jobs.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Agriculture and food-related jobs totaled 16 million in 2011.

Today's farms are fewer (about 2 million) and bigger (about 400 acres per farm).

Farms, land in farms, and average acres per farm, 1850–2012

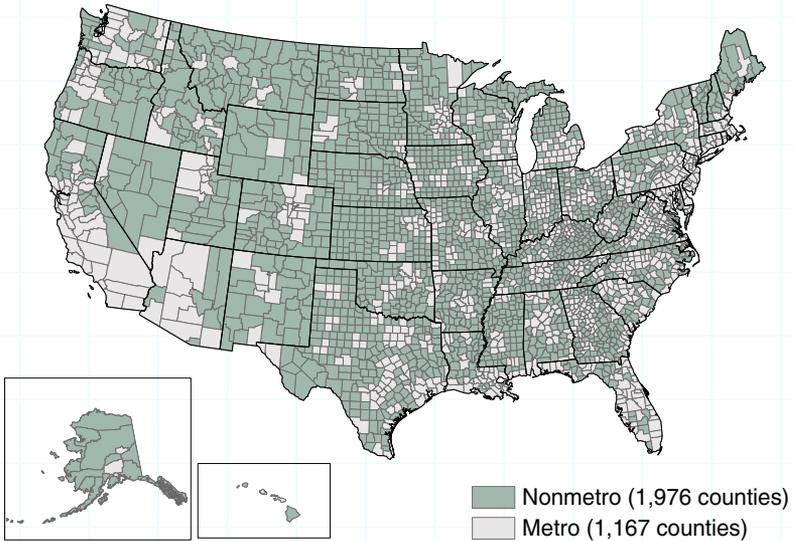


Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture and "Farms, Land in Farms, and Livestock Operations: 2012 Summary," for 2012 data.

The number of U.S. farms peaked at 7 million in 1935.

Close to 46 million people—about 15 percent of U.S. residents—live in rural (nonmetro) areas.

Metro and nonmetro counties, 2013

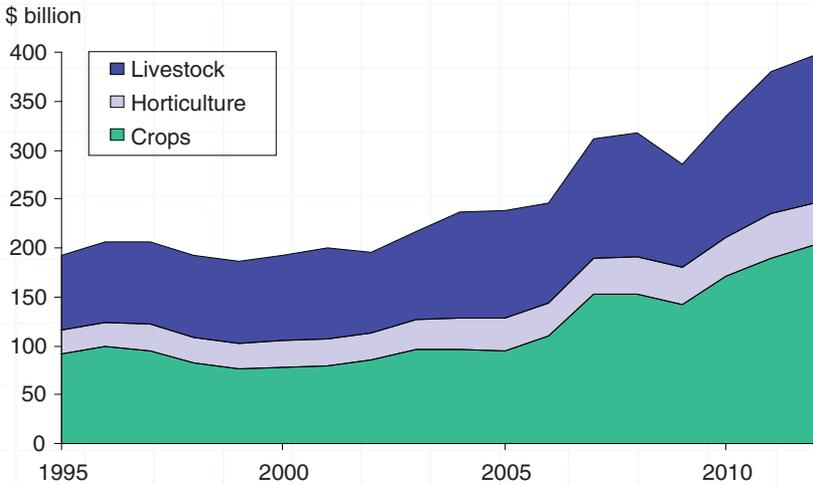


Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Census Bureau.

Nonmetro counties make up 72 percent of the Nation's land area.

Rising farm prices and higher yields have boosted the value of U.S. farm commodities...

Value of U.S. agricultural production, 1995-2012



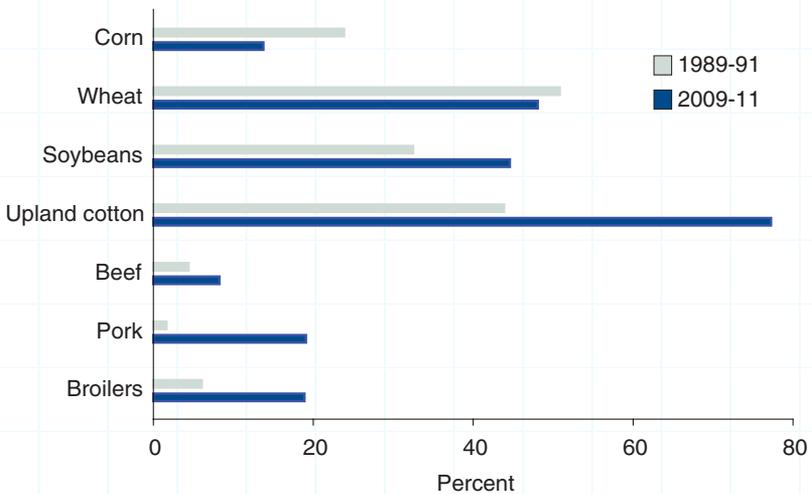
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service calculations using data from ERS and USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Quick Stats Database and various reports.

The farm value of U.S. agricultural production totaled \$397 billion in 2012.

...with the export market more important for some commodities than others.

U.S. export shares, 1989-91 and 2009-11 averages

Exports as a share of total disappearance



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Baseline Related Historical Data.

The share of U.S. corn that is exported has fallen since 1989-91 as the domestic market has used more corn for ethanol.

Americans' demand for processed food products shows up in the processing share of the food dollar...

2011 Food dollar: Industry Group (nominal)

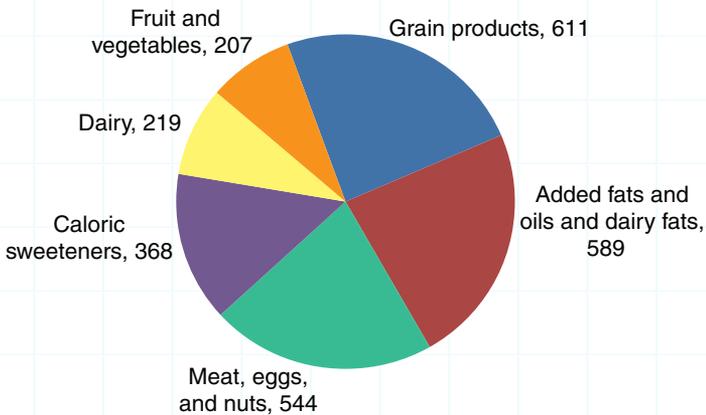


Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Food Dollar Series.

The farm share of the U.S. retail food dollar is just 10.8 percent.

...and is reflected in the share of our daily calories that come from added fats and oils and sweeteners.

Daily calories per capita by food group, 2010



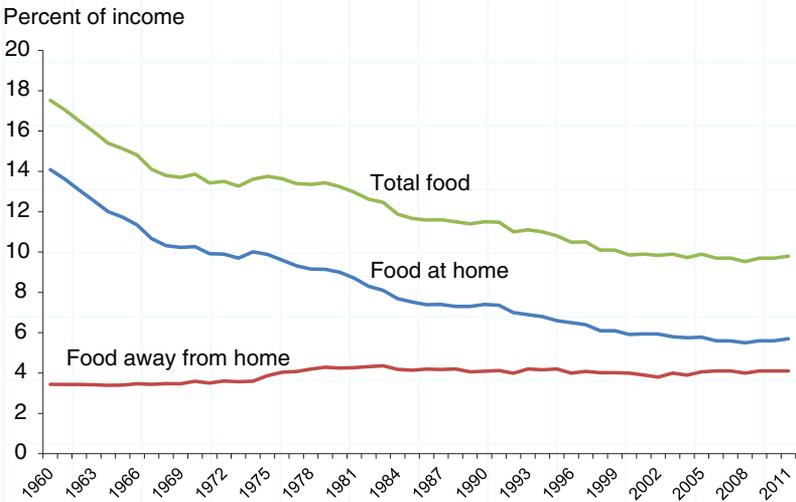
Added fats and oils and caloric sweeteners are added to foods during processing or preparation.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Loss-Adjusted Food Availability Data.

Fruit and vegetables account for only 8 percent of our calories.

Over the last 50 years, the share of income Americans spent on food fell from 17.7 percent to just under 10 percent.

Percent of per capita disposable income spent on food in the United States, 1960-2011



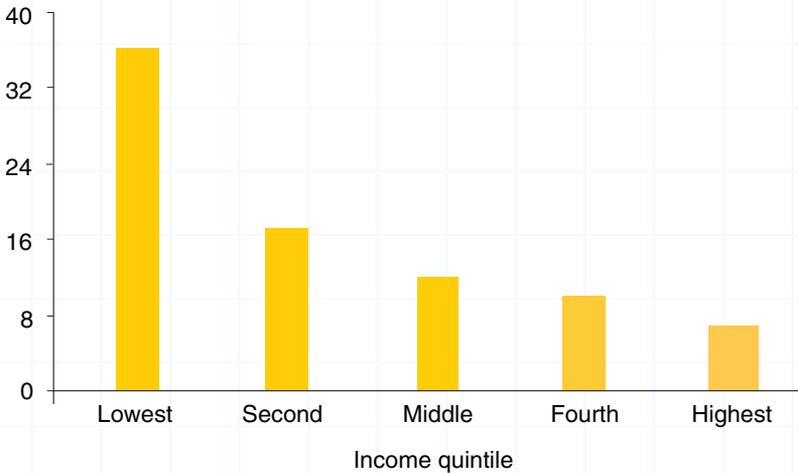
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Food Expenditure Series.

Recently, rising food prices and stagnant incomes have caused the average share of income spent on food to flatten.

But low-income households spend a much higher share of income on food.

Share of income spent on food across U.S. households, 2011

Percent of household income spent on food



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2011.

When food accounts for a large share of income, income cuts and higher food prices can make a household vulnerable to food insecurity.

Like to see more?



View the complete *Essentials* on the ERS website.

This collection of charts and maps presents essential information on the farm sector, food spending and prices, food security, rural communities, and the interaction of agriculture and natural resources.

- Organized by topic – choose among nine categories
- Contains over 75 charts and maps
- Includes descriptive text with each chart
- Charts and maps periodically updated

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