

# 2003

## The Economics of Obesity Workshop

April 22, 2003 • Economic Research Service • USDA • Washington, DC



**Food Assistance and  
Nutrition Research Program**

**Mission: Research for a Healthy, Well-Nourished America**

# The Economics of Obesity

*A Workshop Organized by the Economic Research Service, USDA, the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, and the George J. Stigler Center for the Study of the Economy and the State, University of Chicago*

**Waugh Auditorium, 3rd Floor**  
**Economic Research Service, USDA**  
**1800 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-5831**

**8:00–8:30 a.m.**

**Continental Breakfast**

**8:30–9:00 a.m.**

**Welcome and Introduction**

Betsy Kuhn ..... Director  
Food & Rural Economics Division, ERS, USDA

Susan Offutt ..... Administrator  
ERS, USDA

Tomas Philipson ..... University of Chicago

**9:00–10:30 a.m.**

**Causes of the Growth in Obesity**

Fred Kuchler ..... Moderator  
ERS, USDA

*Why Have Americans Become More Obese?*  
David M. Cutler ..... Harvard University

*The Growth of Obesity and Technological Change*  
Tomas Philipson ..... University of Chicago

Pauline Ippolito ..... Discussant  
Federal Trade Commission

**10:30–10:45 a.m.**

**Coffee Break**

**10:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.**

**Causes of the Growth in Obesity**

Betsy Frazao ..... Moderator  
ERS, USDA

*An Economic Analysis of Adult Obesity: Results from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*  
Michael Grossman ..... National Bureau of Economic Research

*Maternal Employment and Overweight Children*  
Patricia Anderson ..... Dartmouth College

Alok Bhargava ..... Discussant  
University of Houston

**12:15–1:15 p.m.**

**Lunch**



## Program Agenda

**1:15–2:45 p.m.**

### Consequences of the Growth in Obesity

Biing Hwan-Lin .....Moderator  
ERS, USDA

*The Labor Market Impacts of Obesity*

John Cawley .....Cornell University

*Health Insurance: Obesity and its Economic Costs*

Jay Bhattacharya .....Stanford University

Darius Lakdawalla .....Discussant  
RAND Institute for Civil Justice

**2:45–3:00 p.m.**

### Coffee Break

**3:00–4:30 p.m.**

### Implications for Theory and Practice

Craig Gundersen .....Moderator  
ERS, USDA

*Obesity and Nature's Thumbprint: How Modern Waistlines Can Inform Economic Theory*

Trent Smith .....University of Bonn

*Methods of Surveying Diet and Physical Activity*

Richard Forshee .....Virginia Tech University

Parke Wilde .....Discussant  
ERS, USDA

**4:30–5:00 p.m.**

### Federal Role and Future of Obesity Research

David Smallwood .....Moderator  
ERS, USDA

Jay Variyam .....Discussant  
ERS, USDA

Pauline Ippolito .....Discussant  
Federal Trade Commission

Tomas Philipson .....Discussant  
University of Chicago

**5:00 p.m.**

### Conclusion



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