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Economic Research Service

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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.

With 64 Cents, Consumers Can Meet Daily Serving Recommendations for Fruits and Vegetables

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib790

For just 64 cents, Americans can meet the USDA's recommended three servings of fruits and four servings of vegetables per day, according to *How Much Do*

Americans Pay for Fruits and Vegetables?. Americans do not consume recommended levels of fruits and vegetables, and one argument has been that they are expensive, especially when purchased fresh. However, analysts found that after adjusting for waste and serving size, 63 percent of fruits and 57 percent of vegetables were least expensive in their fresh form. The report estimates the annual retail price per pound and per serving for 69 forms of fruits and 85 forms of vegetables. More than half were estimated to cost 25 cents or less per serving.



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Rural Poverty Rates Continue to Exceed Metro Poverty Rates

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rdr100



Although metro and nonmetro areas have shared similar patterns of reductions and increases in poverty rates over time, there continues to be a wide and persistent gap between nonmetro and metro poverty rates. In 2002, 14.2 percent of the nonmetro population, or 7.5 million people, were poor, compared with 11.6 percent of the metro population. *Rural Poverty at a Glance* provides the most recent information on

poverty trends and demographic characteristics of the rural poor. The rate of poverty is not only an important social indicator of the well-being of the least well off, but it is also widely used as an input in shaping Federal policies and targeting program benefits. The report also documents large metro-nonmetro gaps when poverty is analyzed by race, ethnicity, age, and family structure.

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:
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Forecasting Feed Grain Prices in the Midst of Structural Change

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FDS/Jul04/fds04F01

Structural change has been occurring throughout the feed grains sector and has affected commodity markets and price forecasting relationships. Structural changes that have affected feed grains stem from government policy such as the 1996 Farm Act, international trade agreements such as NAFTA, and changing consumer preferences. In *Forecasting Feed Grain Prices in a Changing*

Environment, a statistical test of structural change is provided along with price forecasting models for corn, sorghum, barley, and oats. The models provide a framework to forecast season-average, farm-level prices and gauge the consistency of supply, demand, and price forecasts.

EU's Preferential Agreements for Fruits and Vegetables Create Disadvantage for U.S. Exports

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/VGS/Jul04/vgs30301

The European Union (EU) participates in regional and preferential trading arrangements more than any other country or region. Over 70 percent of EU fruit and vegetable imports are from countries benefiting from preferential treatment for some portion of that trade.

The most valuable preferences are accorded to the 42 least developed countries, while 77 former colonies of EU countries also receive important preferences. According to *European Trading Arrangements in Fruits and Vegetables*, the EU's many preferential agreements create a mosaic of tariffs, quotas, and other import restrictions that vary considerably among products and among preferred partners, which makes analysis impossibly complex. Exports from countries without preferences, including the United States, are at a disadvantage in EU markets.



WORKSHOP:

Understanding Demand Shifts for Grain-Based Foods
September 28, 2004

The Food Industry Center
University of Minnesota
McNamara Alumni Center

Because the U.S. food market is a mature market, increased demand for any one grain-based food tends to come at the expense of demand for another. In addition, demographic influences, such as increasing ethnic diversity, and the aging of the U.S. population, are affecting grain-based food demand.

This workshop, sponsored by USDA's Economic Research Service and the Farm Foundation, will bring together individuals from government, the food industry, and universities who have experience analyzing demand for grain-based food products and have knowledge of data sources for assessing and monitoring consumption trends.

Registration is \$450 (\$150 for University or government employees) and includes the pre-workshop dinner, continental breakfast, lunch, and other refreshment breaks. Registration and payment is due no later than September 10, 2004.

For more information, go to
www.ers.usda.gov/Features/GrainWorkshop

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