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Economic Research Service

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

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.

Amber Waves



Coming in
April '04

- ◆ Food traceability
- ◆ Food safety innovations
- ◆ Environmental stewardship and farmers' bottom line
- ◆ Further enlargement of the European Union

www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves

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: www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook

Expenditures for Food Assistance Set Record High

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr28-4/

The *Food Assistance Landscape* shows that expenditures for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 15 food assistance programs increased 9.4 percent in fiscal 2003 to a record high of \$41.6 billion, exceeding the previous historical record of \$38.1 billion in fiscal 1996. About 1 in 5 Americans is estimated to participate in at least 1 of 15 food assistance programs at some point during the year.



U.S. and EU Agricultural Sectors--How Do They Compare?

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/WRS0404/

U.S.-EU Food and Agriculture Comparisons examines similarities and differences in multiple aspects of the agricultural sectors of two of the world's largest agricultural producers and traders. This report provides information and analysis on a wide range of topics relating to agriculture in the U.S. and EU, including comparisons of farm structure, production, agricultural productivity, risk management, environmental and commodity policy, trade, and food consumption, as well as implications of EU enlargement for bilateral relations.



Economic Incentives Motivate U.S. Traceability Systems

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/AER830/

Traceability in the U.S. Food Supply: Economic Theory and Industry Studies describes the results of an investigation into the amount, type, and adequacy of traceability systems in the United States, focusing particularly on the fresh produce sector, the grains and oilseeds sector, and the cattle/beef sector. The results stem from research into market studies literature, interviews with industry experts, and on-site interviews with owners, plant supervisors, and/or quality control managers in fruit and vegetable packing and processing plants; beef slaughter plants; grain elevators, mills, and food manufacturing plants; and food distribution centers.

Costs of Producing Milk Rises

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/sb974-6/

Characteristics and Production Costs of U.S. Dairy Operations examines how milk production costs vary among U.S. producers. Characteristics and production costs of operations are compared and grouped according to selected regions, enterprise size, and production costs.



New Data on the ERS website

www.ers.usda.gov/data/sdp/view.asp?f=specialty/95003/

A new data set on the *U.S. Strawberry Industry* shows harvested acreage, yield, and production of strawberries by state. It also contains monthly prices (wholesale and retail), disappearance, frozen stocks, supply and utilization, monthly imports and exports, and selected world data on supply and production.

www.ers.usda.gov/data/exchangerates/

The *Agricultural Exchange Rate Data Set* contains annual and monthly data for exchange rates important to U.S. agriculture. It includes both nominal and real exchange rates for 80 countries (plus the European Union) as well as real trade-weighted exchange rate indexes for many commodities and aggregations.



special outlook reports

U.S. Imports of Foreign-Grown Tobacco Decline

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/tbs/feb04/tbs200301/

The *U.S. Tobacco Import Update* examines the role of foreign tobacco in the U.S. tobacco industry during the 2002/03 crop year. Disappearance or use of U.S. imports (arrivals) of foreign-grown tobacco leaf and stems slipped from 587 million pounds in 2001/02 (July-June) to 580 million pounds during 2002/03 (July-June). Cigar and unstemmed flue-cured imports advanced.



Strong Growth in U.S. Exports from 1976-96

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fau/feb04/fau8501/

Processed Agricultural Exports Led Gains in U.S. Agricultural Exports Between 1976 and 2002 shows that U.S. agricultural exports rose to \$53 billion in calendar year 2002, an increase of \$30 billion in nominal dollars since 1976. In real terms, the average rate of export growth was 1.7 percent per year. U.S. export gains occurred mainly in high-value products (HVPs); bulk exports rose slightly, but suffered a significant loss of market share.



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