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On the Map

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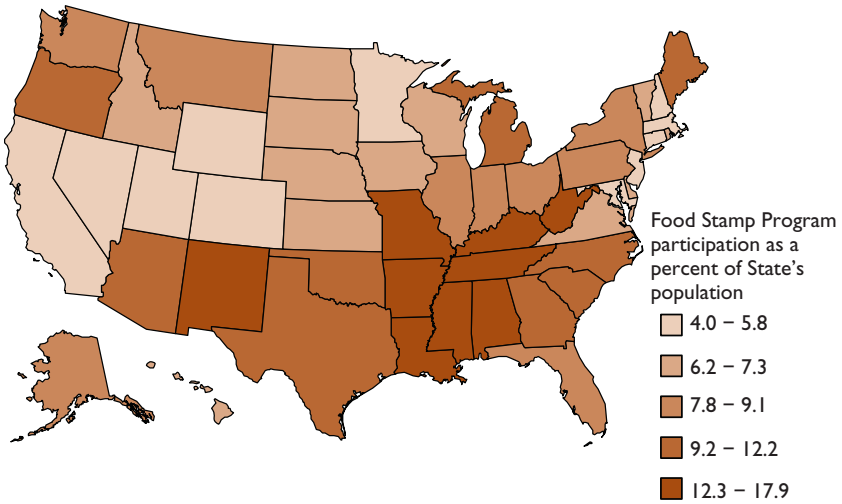
Participation in USDA's Food Stamp Program varies by State

An average of 25.6 million people, or 8.7 percent of the U.S. population, received food stamps each month during fiscal year 2005, an increase from 8.1 percent in 2004. Hurricane-ravaged Louisiana had the largest share of its residents receiving food stamps in 2005—17.9 percent—displacing the District of Columbia, which had led the Nation in participation during 2001-04. Participation shares increased in most States from 2004, despite small declines in Rhode Island, Idaho, Nevada, and Wyoming. Average participation shares were lowest in New Hampshire at 4.0 percent, followed by New Jersey, Wyoming, and Nevada.

Linda Scott Kantor, lkantor@ers.usda.gov

Average monthly Food Stamp Program participation, 2005



Source: Prepared by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service and U.S. Census Bureau.

In the Long Run

May 2007

Fewer households had difficulty putting enough food on the table in 2005

The prevalence of food insecurity—the lack of consistent access to adequate food for active, healthy living—in U.S. households declined in the late 1990s, then increased following the recession in 2001. Food insecurity continued to increase through 2004, in spite of renewed economic growth, then declined by about one percentage point to 11.0 percent in 2005. The prevalence of food insecurity for households with children was about 5 percentage points higher than the national average, and followed a similar pattern over the past decade.

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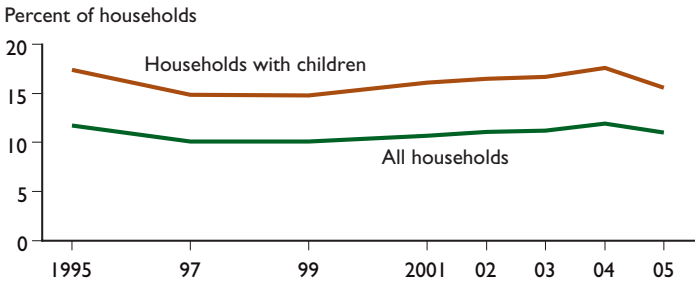
Prevalence of food insecurity in U.S. households, 1995-2005



Statistics for 1996, 1998, and 2000 are not shown because they are not directly comparable with those for other years.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Fruit and vegetable availability up 20 percent since 1970

The total amount of fruit and vegetables (fresh and processed) available for consumption in the United States reached 690 pounds per person in 2005, up 113 pounds, or 20 percent, since 1970. In 2005, per capita availability stood at 275 pounds for fruit and 415 pounds for vegetables. ERS food availability data suggest that citrus fruit availability declined by 13 pounds per person between 1970 and 2005, while availability of noncitrus fruit (particularly apples) increased by 46 pounds. Potatoes and tomatoes are the top two vegetables in terms of annual availability and have been trending upwards alongside increases in dark dark-green and orange vegetables.

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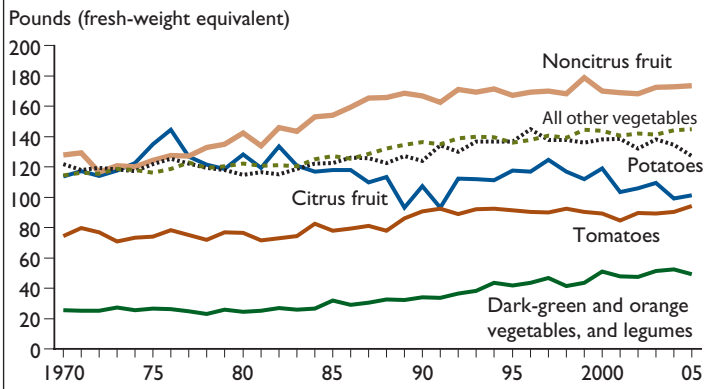
Per capita U.S. fruit and vegetable availability, 1970-2005



Source: ERS Food Availability (Per Capita) Data, a proxy for food consumption, available at www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption/