Recent Reports From USDA’s Economic Research Service

To order publications, please call our USDA Order Desk at 1-800-999-6779 from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. ET Monday-Friday except Federal holidays. Outside the U.S., please dial 1-703-605-6220. Refer to the stock number when ordering. Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover accepted. Electronic copies off the ERS website, if available, are free of charge; only selected reports are available electronically.

Food Consumption and Spending


America’s Eating Habits: Changes and Consequences, edited by Elizabeth Frazão, ERS. Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 750. Individual chapters in this book provide different perspectives on the nutrition problem in the United States, including: what are the economic costs associated with unhealthy eating patterns; how do dietary patterns compare with dietary recommendations; and how do national income and prices, advertising, health claims, and trends in eating away from home affect nutrient intake. May 1999. Stock # ERS-AIB-750. $60.00.

Away-From-Home Foods Increasingly Important to Quality of American Diet by Byung-Hwan Lin and Elizabeth Frazão, ERS, and Joanne Guthrie. Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 749. The increasing popularity of dining out over the past two decades has raised the proportion of nutrients obtained away from home. Since the trend of eating out frequently is expected to continue, strategies to improve the American diet must address consumers’ food choices when eating out. January 1999. Stock # ERS-AIB-749. $14.00.

Factors Affecting Nutrient Intake of the Elderly by Jon P. Weimer, ERS. Agricultural Economic Report No. 769. The rapid expansion of the population age 60 and older has a number of economic implications. The people in this group, about 18 percent of the population, account for about 30 percent of all health care expenditures. This exploratory investigation provides estimates of the effects of selected characteristics of the household and its constituents on individual nutrient consumption of elderly heads of households. October 1998. Stock # ERS-AER-769. $12.00.

Moving Toward the Food Guide Pyramid: Implications for U.S. Agriculture by C. Edwin Young and Linda Scott Kantor, ERS. Agricultural Economic Report No. 779. Recent studies show that average diets differ considerably from Food Guide Pyramid recommendations. The change in food consumption needed to meet Food Guide Pyramid serving recommendations will result in adjustments in U.S. agricultural production, trade, nonfood uses, and prices. The net adjustment in crop acreage is projected to be relatively small, about 2 percent of total cropland in 1991-95. However, this small net adjustment masks larger anticipated changes for some sectors. July 1999. Stock # ERS-AER-779. $14.00.

Consumer Acceptance of Biotechnology: Lessons From the rbST Experience by Lorna Aldrich and Noel Blisard, ERS. Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 747-01. The controversial introduction of rbST, a laboratory version of bST, a growth hormone that stimulates milk production in cows, may provide hopeful lessons for other foods produced by biotechnology. Milk sales remained steady after rbST became available to dairy farmers, even though a multitude of public opinion surveys documented widespread concern about food safety and biotechnology, and some analysts predicted a drop in milk consumption of up to 20 percent. December 1998. Stock # ERS-AIB-747-01. $10.00.


Food Cost Review, 1950-97 by Howard Elitzak, ERS. Agricultural Economic Report No. 780. Food prices, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), increased 2.6 percent in 1997. This increase was greater than the overall increase in the CPI (which rose 2.3 percent) for the third consecutive year. Higher charges for processing and distributing food, as measured by the farm-to-retail price spread, were primarily responsible for the 1997 increase. July 1999. Stock # ERS-AER-780. $16.00.


The Impact of Minimum Wage Increases on Food and Kindred Products Prices: An Analysis of Price Pass-Through by Chinkook Lee and Brian O’Roark, ERS. Technical Bulletin No. 1877. An input-output model is used to analyze price pass-through effects of a minimum wage increase on prices of the food and kindred products and food-service industries. These sectors employ a disproportionate share of minimum wage workers, but results suggest a $0.50 increase in the present minimum wage would increase food prices less than 1 percent for most of the 12 food and kindred products prices and 1 percent at eating and drinking places. August 1999. Stock # ERS-TB-1877. $14.00.

Vertical Coordination in the Pork and Broiler Industries: Implications for Pork and Chicken Products by Steve W. Martinez, ERS. Agricultural Economic Report No. 777. Recent changes in structure of the U.S. pork industry reflect, in many ways, past changes...
in the broiler industry. Production contracts and vertical integration in the broiler industry facilitated rapid adoption of new technology, improved quality control, assured market outlets for broilers, and provided a steady flow of broilers for processing. These arrangements might be expected to result in larger supplies of higher quality pork products at economical prices. April 1999. Stock # ERS-AER-777. $14.00.


Food Assistance
The Changing Food Assistance Landscape: The Food Stamp Program in a Post-Welfare Reform Environment by Craig Gundersen, Michael LeBlanc, and Betsey Kuhns, ERS, Agricultural Economic Report No. 773. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) dramatically transformed and continues to transform the food assistance landscape in the United States. The Act cut more funds from the Food Stamp Program than it did from any other program, through reductions in benefits per person and restrictions in eligibil-

International Marketing Trends
Food Security Assessment: Why Countries Are At Risk by Shahla Shapouri and Stacey Rosen, ERS, Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 754. Food insecurity in many low-income, developing countries is projected to intensify unless steps are taken to reverse the performance trend of agricultural productivity, foreign exchange earnings, and population growth. This study evaluates availability and distribution of food and analyzes their trends through 2008 by projecting food gaps to maintain per capita consumption, meet nutritional needs, and fulfill requirements stemming from unequal food distribution. August 1999. Stock # ERS-AIB-754. $14.00.

U.S. Foreign Direct Investment in the Western Hemisphere Processed Food Industry by Christine Bolling, Steve Neff, and Charles Handy, ERS, Agricultural Economic Report No. 760. Foreign direct investment (FDI) has become the leading means for U.S. processed food companies to participate in international markets. Affiliates of U.S.-owned food processing companies had $30 billion in sales throughout the Western Hemisphere in 1995, nearly 4 times the level of processed food exports. This report puts U.S. foreign direct investment and trade in processed foods to the region into global perspective, and finds evidence that, in the aggregate for the 1990′s, trade and FDI are complementary—not competitive—means of accessing international food markets. March 1998. Stock # ERS-AER-760. $16.00.