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Research Informs Policy Decisions

As Under Secretary of USDA's Research, Education, and Economics mission area, I am pleased to see our research applied to critical issues facing the Nation today. This farm policy special issue of *Amber Waves* does just that by giving insight to pertinent topics that are being considered in the upcoming 2007 farm bill discussion.

For example, funding for conservation programs will be a focus in the 2007 farm bill and is highlighted within this collection of articles. ERS research summarized in the articles gives insight to program cost-effectiveness, conservation compliance, green payments, and environmental credits.

Programs related to specialty commodities, such as fruit and vegetables, are also important topics addressed in this compilation. The implications for relaxing fruit and vegetable planting restrictions for commodity program participants and fruit and vegetable availability for nutrition assistance program participants are topics included to stimulate thinking about specialty commodity policy.

One of the feature articles presents information on managing risk with revenue insurance. Implications of adjusted gross farm income with payment limitations are revealed by indicators of the geographic distribution of government payments as a proportion of gross income. In addition, Food Stamp Program effectiveness, policy challenges posed by the changing face of rural America, and fast-paced growth of a bioenergy sector are also covered in these reprinted articles.

This special issue is a great opportunity to showcase our exciting and timely research. It is my sincere hope that these articles serve to inform, enlighten, and provoke thought as discussion of the upcoming 2007 farm bill continues.

Gale Buchanan
Under Secretary
Research, Education, and Economics
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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