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Recent Meetings

Decoupled Payments and Farm Sector Models

In October 2004, ERS and the Farm Foundation cosponsored the workshop "Modeling Decoupled Payments," which focused on including payments not directly linked to market prices or farm production, known as decoupled payments, in farm sector models. Presenters from ERS, academia, international organizations, and private industry discussed recent changes to agricultural policy in the U.S. and the European Union and alternative approaches to modeling to address challenges posed by decoupled payments. **Mary Anne Normile**, mnormile@ers.usda.gov, and **Paul Westcott**, westcott@ers.usda.gov



Eyewire

Demand for Grain-Based Foods

In September 2004, ERS and the Farm Foundation cosponsored a workshop titled "Understanding Demand Shifts for Grain-Based Foods" in Minneapolis, MN. The workshop was hosted by The Food Industry Center of the University of Minnesota. About 50 participants from the food industry, government, the media, and academia shared information on the effects of current consumer trends and nutrition issues on demand for grain-based foods. Participants also discussed how different data sources can contribute to the assessment and monitoring of consumption trends. Presentations by ERS economists addressed U.S. per capita food availability and intake and how intake estimates vary by demographic categories. **Jean Buzby**, jbuzby@ers.usda.gov

A New ERS Lecture Series

In September 2004, ERS inaugurated the Henry C. Taylor Lecture series. A pioneer in the field of agricultural economics, Taylor helped to create the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the predecessor of ERS, and served as its first director. Professor Jagdish Bhagwati, noted international trade economist at Columbia



Henry C. Taylor

University, delivered the first Taylor Lecture. In his talk, "In Defense of Globalization," Bhagwati shared observations on the outcomes of World Trade Organization negotiations and insights on outsourcing and other related current economic issues. Recognizing that Taylor was also the first leader of the Farm Foundation, the event concluded with a presentation of the Taylor Commemorative Plaque to Bhagwati by current Farm Foundation President Walt Armbruster. A reception followed honoring former leaders of ERS, including Ken Farrell, John Lee, and J.B. Penn. This annual lecture series is designed to promote discourse on contemporary economic issues of interest to agricultural economists within and outside ERS and USDA. **Susan Offutt**, soffutt@ers.usda.gov

New Releases

Ownership and Classification of Agbiotech Patents

Researchers from ERS and Rutgers University have compiled a database of over 11,000 U.S. utility patents issued between 1976 and 2000 for a broad range of agricultural biotechnology applications (www.ers.usda.gov/data/agbiotechip/). The database includes a system of technology classification and extensive information on patent assignee ownership history—especially important in light of the large number of industry mergers, acquisitions, and spinoffs in the last decade. The database was assembled to help science policy researchers understand the dynamic effects of intellectual property protection in emerging areas of technology, but

also to provide a useful picture of "who is doing what" in agbiotech. **John King**, johnking@ers.usda.gov, and **Paul Heisey**, pheisey@ers.usda.gov

Farm Income Estimates and Forecasts

ERS has released updated estimates of 2003 farm income. Net farm income, which is a measure of the sector's profitability, was a record \$59.2 billion in 2003, up 59 percent from the \$37.3 billion earned in 2002, and about 24 percent above the average of the preceding 10 years. Net cash income, which gives an indication of cash income generated from the farm business, was estimated at a record \$68.6 billion in 2003, up 35 percent from the \$50.8 billion earned in 2002 and

about 20 percent above the 10-year average. The farm sector was estimated to have contributed a record \$101.4 billion in value-added to U.S. national economic output in 2003, up 29 percent from 2002 and 16 percent above the 10-year average. Farm income forecasts for 2004 will be updated on November 9 (www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/farmincome/). **Roger Strickland**, rogers@ers.usda.gov

The citations here and in the rest of this edition are just a sample of the latest releases from ERS. For a complete list of all new ERS releases, view the calendar on the ERS website: www.ers.usda.gov/calendar/

Activities

Customized Agricultural Resource Management Survey Data on ERS Website

As of November 9, visitors to the ERS website can create tailor-made summaries of data on crop production practices, commodity costs of production, and farm and farm household financial information (www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/arms/). Newly available data from the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) will allow users to tabulate data for the Nation, as well as for 15 featured States with high cash returns from farming. **Robert Dubman**, bdubman@ers.usda.gov

ERS Awards Grants for Research on the Economics of Invasive Species Management

ERS recently made seven competitive funding awards totaling \$1.1 million for research on the economics of invasive species management. Research will focus on three areas: (1) stakeholders and incentives for efficient invasive species program management, (2) practical decision tools for invasive species management, and (3) trade and invasive species. Award recipients and details of their planned research are available on the ERS website (www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/invasivespecies/preism.htm). **Donna Roberts**, droberts@ers.usda.gov, and **Craig Osteen**, costeen@ers.usda.gov

Agricultural Resource Management Survey Promoted on RFD-TV

In September 2004, Kitty Smith, ERS Resource Economics Division Director, and Rich Allen, NASS Deputy Administrator for Programs and Products, were interviewed by Max Armstrong on a live telecast on RFD-TV. The interview explored the purposes and uses of USDA's Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), and informed farmers about the value of the information collected in the survey. ARMS surveys are being readied to go into the field this winter. Two 30-second Public Service Announcements about ARMS were also recorded for airing throughout the year. **Kitty Smith**, ksmith@ers.usda.gov

Baby Boomers Increasingly Move to Rural Areas

The oldest members of the baby boom cohort are now 58 years old, just entering the stage in their lives when they tend to migrate for retirement. Current research shows that baby boomers are shifting toward rural and small town destinations, but they seem to be attracted to a more diverse set of destinations, compared with older cohorts. Researchers from ERS and Vermont's Middlebury College are conducting a study to gauge the impacts of baby boomer retirement migration on rural and small town America. The study will examine how demographic, natural amenity, housing market, urban proximity, and economic factors affected the migration flows of baby boomers into rural areas during the 1990s. Findings will also help researchers to better predict the future migration patterns of baby boomers over the next 20 years. **John Cromartie**, jbc@ers.usda.gov



Improvements in Pesticide Data

In September 2004, ERS economist Jorge Fernandez-Cornejo participated in the kickoff meeting of the Pesticide Data Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics (ACAS) in Washington, DC. The subcommittee, composed of government, academic, and industry representatives, was established to explore improvements and efficiencies in the data collection of pesticide use in agricultural and nonagricultural applications. These improvements would include analysis, processing, and communication of crop protection product information. **Jorge Fernandez-Cornejo**, jorgef@ers.usda.gov

Keeping Agricultural Market Access Data Current

The Agricultural Market Access Database (AMAD) is a collaboration among national and international research institutions, including ERS, to provide an up-to-date, comprehensive source for data on agricultural tariffs and tariff rate quotas. In September 2004, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada hosted a meeting of AMAD members to discuss potential enhancements to the database, including adding tariff preferences for developing countries and integrating AMAD with the World Bank/United Nations Conference on Trade and Development data system in order to provide easy access to developing countries. **John Wainio**, jwainio@ers.usda.gov

