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Current Activities

Allocating Resources to Manage Invasive Species and Pests

As part of ERS's research program on the economics of invasive species, ERS and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) are developing a methodology for allocating resources to manage invasive species and pests. The effects of invasive species on production, trade, and the environment differ across species. A single methodology for ranking agricultural pests according to different effects will help policymakers to allocate resources in a consistent and transparent manner. A recent workshop with APHIS's Center for Plant Health Science and Technology was one step in the process of constructing a methodology. **Kitty Smith, ksmith@ers.usda.gov**

Collaboration With the Food and Agriculture Organization

ERS economists routinely collaborate with partners around the country and around the world, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy. In October 2003, Joseph Cooper served as the

environmental economics advisor to FAO's Roles of Agriculture Project, which analyzes the side effects (both beneficial and adverse) of agriculture in developing countries. Also at FAO in October, Keith Wiebe discussed shared research interests in land degradation and agricultural productivity, and Shahla Shapouri described ongoing ERS analysis of global food security. **Keith Wiebe, kdwiebe@ers.usda.gov**

How Are Changing Preferences Affecting World Food Markets?

ERS research indicates that, although consumer demand for processed food products continues to rise, trade may not keep pace with demand growth. Industry trends toward tighter coordination will encourage tailoring local product manufacturing to specific country markets. The global food industry will continue to evolve in response to specific consumer demands in individual markets. Strategies in developed countries are expected to focus on quality enhancement and consumer trust, while market expansion will be important in the growing developing country markets. In general, market forces



PhotoSpin

are expected to push the global food industry toward greater efficiency, higher quality products, more integrated food supply chains, and fewer players. Future work in this area will focus on linkages between consumer markets and producers. **Anita Regmi, aregmi@ers.usda.gov**

Ag Policy Information Reaches a Wider Audience

ERS economists and technical staffers teamed up recently to create web applications utilizing Flash MX to deliver information in a more dynamic and interactive fashion. The first Flash presentation highlights a recent ERS conference on trade policy, "WTO: Competing Policy and Agendas for Agricultural Trade" (available on the ERS website at: www.ers.usda.gov/features/wto/conference/post-conference/). The second presentation, "Potential Market Impacts of the 2002 Farm Act: Current and Future" (available on CD-ROM), integrates video, text, audio, and graphics into an effective educational tool on U.S. farm policy for overseas audiences. **Suchada Langley, slangley@ers.usda.gov**

New Releases

Education in Rural Areas

Rural Education at a Glance (RDRR-98-1), the latest in a series of ERS reports on rural social and economic conditions, draws upon the most recent Federal data to summarize the education characteristics of rural America. This six-page report charts the progress made in educational attainment in the 1990s and documents the increasing importance of education to the economic well-being of rural workers and places. It also notes the challenges of a persistent education gap between rural racial and ethnic groups as well as between regions. **Robert Gibbs, rgibbs@ers.usda.gov**

More Information on Production Practices

Data from the *Agricultural Resource Management Survey* (ARMS) have typically provided information on individual production practices. A recent enhancement to this database (available at: www.ers.usda.gov/data/cropproductionpractices/) allows users to examine production practices—particularly those related to nutrient and pesticide management—in much greater detail. Specifically, researchers can now generate tables that will help them analyze and understand the relationships between different production practices. Data are presented in html tables, and are available to download as Excel spreadsheets from a link at the bottom of each table. **James Payne, jpayne@ers.usda.gov, and C.S. Kim, ckim@ers.usda.gov**

Agricultural Resources and Environmental Indicators Database and Mapping Tool

ERS has developed an online interactive mapping tool that displays data on agriculture and related issues from a variety of sources (available at: <http://maps.ers.usda.gov/agresources/>). Users can create maps and tables that display published county-level data from the *U.S. Census of Agriculture for 1997, 1992, and 1987*. Additional data on population, natural resources, and other variables will appear in the future. **William Quinby, wquinby@ers.usda.gov**

Rural
Education
At A
Glance

