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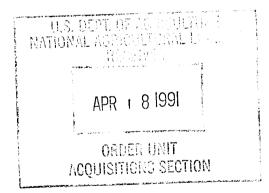
FOOD DEMAND ANALYSIS

Implications for Future Consumption

Edited by

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Sponsored by The S-165 Southern Regional Research Committee and The Farm Foundation



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PREFACE

This collection of papers deals with food demand analysis but emphasis is placed on implications for future consumption. We hope to provide the reader with informative and stimulating papers as well as comments from various distinguished discussants. This book is sponsored by Southern Regional Research Project S-165. The title of this regional project is "U.S. Food Demand and Consumption Behavior." The current project was preceded by previous Southern Regional Projects, which also focused on food demand analysis. Over the years, this regional research effort has acquired a nationwide participation. Currently Agricultural Experiment Stations from every region of the country are participating in S-165, although most of the participants are from the South.

We can say with considerable pride that the S-165 Regional Project now includes many, if not most, of the agricultural economists at landgrant universities in the United States. The participants in this Regional Project are predominantly agricultural economists, although the disciplines of rural sociology and human nutrition are also represented; this diversification is of great benefit to the Regional Project. Over the years, the members of this Regional Project have been united by their common research focus and by their shared interest in major national food-consumption and consumer-expenditure surveys. These shared-data interests have, in particular, included the Department of

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Agriculture's Nationwide Food Consumption Survey and the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey.

The seed for this book was sown approximately 6 years ago at our annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas. At that meeting, we developed the current Regional Research Project proposal that was subsequently approved for funding. In our current project, we specifically wished to demonstrate the practical usefulness of our research and to share the results of our work with as large an audience as possible. Therefore, we made a commitment in our project proposal to hold a symposium on the implications of our demand analysis for future food consumption and to publish the symposium proceedings as a monograph.

In addition to the effect of income and prices traditionally studied in demand analysis, the pattern of food consumption in the United States is affected by a broad range of socio-demographic factors. Moreover, the characteristics of the U.S. population have been changing at an accelerating rate over the last few decades. Among the most apparent socio-demographic changes are the decrease in average household size, particularly the increase in one- and two-person households; the increase in the average age of the population, especially the rapidly rising number of senior citizens; the growing number of women in the work force, especially married women, thus creating multi-income families; and regional population shifts, particularly toward certain Sunbelt and Rocky Mountain states. All these changes, and a considerable number of other socio-economic factors not mentioned, affect food consumption patterns. For this reason, considerable practical interest exists in the work of food demand analysts who are trying to assess the impact of these myriad changes.

We approach the task of drawing inferences concerning future food consumption with considerable professional humility. As social scientists, we have no crystal ball which reveals the future. In fact, it has been said that those who use the crystal ball learn to eat ground glass. We are required to study current and past relationships in order to make predictions about the future. Our Regional Research Committee had lengthy discussions at our last two annual meetings concerning the role of social scientists in formulating projections. Some of the papers develop specific numerical forecasts, whereas others simply discuss the implications of their analysis in a more general vein. Both approaches can provide useful insights regarding future food consumption patterns.

The major contribution of our research lies in the analysis of key behavioral relationships, the results of which must be combined with additional assumptions to create forecasts. Typically in making projections, certain of the underlying assumptions are explicitly stated, but others may be only implicit and not directly stated. For example, demand forecasts require assumptions about income growth and distribution and changes in baseline population characteristics. Further assumptions, either explicitly or implicitly, are required concerning the general price level and commodity-specific prices. The latter can be affected by both supply shocks and technical changes. In addition, the stability of the estimated behavioral relationships over long periods of time must be assumed. One possibility is to develop

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various scenarios based on different underlying assumptions. However, even then there will almost certainly still be a set of assumptions that are invariant across the various scenarios. To the extent possible, though, the underlying assumptions should be made explicit to avoid misinterpretation of the results.

This book, based on the symposium proceedings, consists of 14 chapters. Comments from discussants are presented after certain chapters. Chapter 1 constitutes a review of the state of the art of demand analysis methodology by the three authors of a recent book on the subject. Chapter 2 focuses on a specific methodological issue of considerable current interest involving functional forms in demand analysis. The next two chapters concern the development of empirical estimates of particular demand models to draw inferences about future food consumption. These latter two chapters give an indication of the different approaches that can be used to address this issue, each providing rewarding insights. Joe Havlicek of Ohio State University serves as the discussant of these initial four chapters.

Chapter 5 addresses the relation between economic, social, and demographic changes and food consumption. Chapter 6 deals with the issue of structural change and its implications in demand analysis. The next three chapters concern the impacts of specific demographic factors, in particular the impacts of household size and composition and the elderly on food consumption patterns. Lester Meyers of the Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides a discussion of Chapters 5 through 9 inclusive.

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Chapters 10, 11, and 12 concentrate on the demand for particular food groups or commodities, specifically beef, citrus juices, as well as convenience and non-convenience foods, in that order. The final two chapters concern specific demand analysis issues, important from either a methodological or empirical perspective. The discussant of the last five chapters is Joe Purcell from the Georgia Experiment Station.

> Oral Capps, Jr. Benjamin Senauer

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