



United States Department of Agriculture

Economic Research Service

The Economics of Food, Farming, Natural Resources, and Rural America

New or updated information is available from [USDA ERS](#).

This update covers Monday, November 16, 2009 to Friday, November 20, 2009

WHEAT DATA

This data product contains statistics on wheat - including the five classes of wheat: hard red winter, hard red spring, soft red winter, white, and durum - and rye. Includes data published in the monthly Wheat Outlook and previously annual Wheat Yearbook. Data are monthly, quarterly, and/or annual depending upon the data series.

Released by 4 p.m. ET.

Released Friday, November 20, 2009

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/Wheat/>

FEED GRAINS DATABASE

Interactive database that contains statistics on four feed grains (corn, grain sorghum, barley, and oats), foreign coarse grains (feed grains plus rye, millet, and mixed grains), hay, and related items. Tables previously published annually in the Feed Yearbook are available and updated continuously as data are added to the database. Custom queries also allow users to retrieve historical data.

Released by 4 p.m. ET.

Released Friday, November 20, 2009

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FeedGrains/>

FY 2010 FOOD ASSISTANCE AND NUTRITION RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The annual Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Conference identifies emerging research issues related to domestic food assistance and nutrition programs administered by USDA. Recently completed research will also be discussed. This year's conference □ Emerging Issues and Recent Findings □ will be held on December 10, 2009, in the Frederick Waugh Auditorium at the Economic Research Service, 1800 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Information on registration and a preliminary agenda is available.

Released Friday, November 20, 2009

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/ConferenceCenter/FANRP/FANRPDec2009/>

ETHANOL AND A CHANGING AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) of 2007 established specific targets for the production of biofuel in the United States. Until advanced technologies become commercially viable, meeting these targets will increase demand for traditional agricultural commodities used to produce ethanol, resulting in land-use, production, and price changes throughout the farm sector. This report summarizes the estimated effects of meeting the EISA targets for 2015 on regional agricultural production and the environment. Meeting EISA targets for ethanol production is estimated to expand U.S. cropped acreage by nearly 5 million acres by 2015, an increase of 1.6 percent over what would otherwise be expected. Much of the growth comes from corn acreage, which increases by 3.5 percent over baseline projections. Water quality and soil carbon will also be affected, in some cases by greater percentages than suggested by changes in the amount of cropped land. The economic and environmental implications of displacing a portion of corn ethanol production with ethanol produced from crop residues are also estimated.

Released Wednesday, November 18, 2009

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR86/>

MEAT PRICE SPREADS

This data set provides monthly average price values, and the differences among those values, at the farm, wholesale, and retail stages of the production and marketing chain for selected cuts of beef, pork, and broilers. In addition, retail prices are provided for beef and pork cuts, turkey, whole chickens, eggs, and dairy products.

Released Wednesday, November 18, 2009

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/MeatPriceSpreads/>

COMPARING TWO SOURCES OF RETAIL MEAT PRICE DATA

The livestock industry uses information on meat prices at different stages in the marketing system to make production decisions. When grocery stores began using electronic scanners to capture prices paid for meat, it was assumed that the livestock industry could capitalize on having these point-of-sale data available as a measure of the value of its products. This report compares scanner price data with publicly available data collected by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Of the two data types, scanner data provide more information about retail meat markets, including a wider variety of meat-cut prices, multiple measures of an average price, the volume of sales, and the relative importance of discounted prices. The scanner data sample, however, is not statistically drawn, and complicated processing requirements delay its release, which makes scanner data less useful than BLS data for analyzing current market conditions.

Released Tuesday, November 17, 2009

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR88/>

AQUACULTURE DATA

Aquaculture is the production of aquatic animals and plants under controlled conditions for all or part of their lifecycle. This data product provides statistics on domestically grown catfish and trout and U.S. imports and exports of fish and shellfish that may be products of aquaculture, such as salmon, shrimp, and oysters.

Released Tuesday, November 17, 2009

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/Aquaculture/>

LIVESTOCK, DAIRY, AND POULTRY OUTLOOK

Timely livestock, dairy, and poultry information, focusing on current and forecast production, price, and trade statistics for each of the sectors.

Released Tuesday, November 17, 2009

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/LDP/>

U.S. AGRICULTURAL TRADE DATA UPDATE

Provides a monthly update of year-to-date quantities and values of U.S. agricultural exports and imports. Also provides data on leading destination countries for exports and import source countries.

Released Monday, November 16, 2009

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FATUS/#monthly>

AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK STATISTICAL INDICATORS

Statistical Indicators previously published in Agricultural Outlook addressing a broad spectrum of agriculture-related issues. Includes commodity and food prices, general economic indicators, government program expenditures, farm income estimates, and trade and export statistics.

Released Monday, November 16, 2009

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/AgOutlook/AOTables/>

FOOD SECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES

The Food Security in the United States briefing room provides a central point for obtaining information about current trends in food security and the most recent reports and data related to food security. Recent statistics are based on data from the December 2008 food security survey. In 2008, 85 percent of U.S. households were food secure throughout the entire year, meaning that they had access, at all times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members. The prevalence of food insecurity (14.6 percent) was up from 11.1 percent in 2007. This is the highest recorded prevalence rate of food insecurity since 1995 when the first national food security survey was conducted. ERS plays a leading role in Federal research on food security in U.S. households and communities.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/>

HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES, 2008

Eighty-five percent of American households were food secure throughout the entire year in 2008, meaning that they had access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members. The remaining households (14.6 percent) were food insecure at least some time during the year, including 5.7 percent with very low food security—meaning that the food intake of one or more household members was reduced and their eating patterns were disrupted at times during the year because the household lacked money and other resources for food. Prevalence rates of food insecurity and very low food security were up from 11.1 percent and 4.1 percent, respectively, in 2007, and were the highest recorded since 1995, when the first national food security survey was conducted. The typical food-secure household spent 31 percent more on food than the typical food-insecure household of the same size and household composition. Fifty-five percent of all food-insecure households participated in one or more of the three largest Federal food and nutrition assistance programs during the month prior to the 2008 survey.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR83/>

LIVESTOCK AND MEAT TRADE DATA

The Livestock and Meat Trade Data Set contains monthly and annual data for imports and exports of live cattle, hogs, sheep, and goats, as well as beef and veal, pork, lamb and mutton, chicken meat, turkey meat, and eggs. The tables report physical quantities, not dollar values or unit prices. Data on beef and veal, pork, and lamb and mutton are on a carcass-weight-equivalent basis. Breakdowns by country are included.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/MeatTrade/>

AMBER WAVES, DECEMBER 2009, VOL. 7, ISSUE 4

Amber Waves presents the broad scope of ERS's research and analysis. The magazine covers the economics of agriculture, food and nutrition, the food industry, trade, rural America, and farm-related environmental topics. Available on the internet and in print, Amber Waves is issued in print four times a year (March, June, September, and December). The internet edition, or eZine, includes links to web- only resources, such as podcasts and additional articles.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/December09/>

THE POST-BUYOUT EXPERIENCE: PEANUT AND TOBACCO SECTORS ADAPT TO POLICY REFORM

Marketing quota and price support programs for peanuts and tobacco were a longstanding feature of U.S. farm policy, from the 1930s until the Government enacted quota buyouts, in 2002 for peanuts and 2004 for tobacco. Quota owners were compensated with temporary payments, but elimination of the quota programs exposed producers more to market risks and brought about structural changes at farm, regional, and marketwide levels. Since the buyouts, many peanut and tobacco farms have exited production. The farms that remain are mostly larger and have adopted new risk management strategies, such as contracting. Freed of the planting restrictions in the quota programs, production of peanuts, and to a lesser extent of tobacco, has been relocated to regions better suited to their growth. While total acreage and prices for peanuts and tobacco have remained below pre-buyout levels, the lower prices along with increased production efficiency have supported renewed growth in demand, particularly in export markets.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB60/>

FOOD INSECURITY UP IN RECESSIONARY TIMES

The recent economic downturn has brought a sharp increase in the number of Americans who report having difficulty meeting their food needs. In fact, in 2008, the number and percentage of U.S. households classified as food insecure reached the highest level recorded since Federal monitoring of food insecurity began in 1995. USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs provide additional resources in times of rising food insecurity. In fiscal 2008, combined expenditures for all USDA food and nutrition assistance programs totaled \$60.6 billion, an increase of 10 percent over expenditures in 2007.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/December09/Features/FoodInsecurity.htm>

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND PROSPECTS FOR GROWTH

Recent increases in inflation-adjusted crop prices have sparked renewed interest in the potential for continued increases in crop yields, particularly since increases in crop yields could affect food security, bioenergy production, and the Nation's response to global climate change. Although market forces and biological factors influence corn yields, research investments have been the driving force behind increasing corn yields in the past. Continued scientific advances could accelerate the rate of growth in corn yields, but achieving a nationwide yield of 300 bushels per acre by 2030 would require a tripling of the projected growth rate, and would be historically unprecedented.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/December09/Features/USCornYields.htm>

GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS THREATENS FOOD SECURITY IN LOWER INCOME COUNTRIES

Import capacity is expected to decline in many lower income countries due to the global economic downturn, with potential food security implications. Based on an ERS study, the number of food-insecure people in 70 developing countries was estimated to increase 2 percent in 2009. The highest growth in food insecurity is likely to be in Sub-Saharan Africa because domestic agricultural production is assumed to revert to average levels following above-average production in 2008 and remain the most vulnerable region through the next decade.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/December09/Features/GlobalEconomic.htm>

REMOVAL OF GOVERNMENT CONTROLS OPENS PEANUT AND TOBACCO SECTORS TO MARKET FORCES

Farm legislation in the early 2000s eliminated longstanding supply controls and geographic restrictions on the production of peanuts and tobacco. Adjustments to the new environment occurred rapidly as many producers decided to quit growing peanuts and tobacco, and a substantial number of producers quit farming entirely. While farm numbers declined at a different rate for peanuts and tobacco, the ensuing consolidation produced fewer, but larger, farms for each crop that are more efficient and responsive to market developments.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/December09/Features/PeanutTobacco.htm>

DEBT LANDSCAPE FOR U.S. FARMS HAS SHIFTED

Farm business debt levels have risen noticeably over the past decade, reaching a record \$240 billion in 2008. But the value of farm assets has grown even faster, increasing the wealth of farm operators. Nonetheless, recent declines in farm income and falling land prices have raised concerns about the financial position of U.S. farms that rely heavily of debt. In 1986, nearly 60 percent of farms used debt financing. By the end of 2007, farm debt was more concentrated in fewer, larger farm businesses, with only 31 percent of farms owing debt. And while the unused debt repayment capacity of farm operators is much lower than it was during the 1980's farm financial crisis, larger farms are more likely to use a high share of their debt capacity. As a result, while the farm sector as a whole is in sound financial shape, some segments of the sector could be over-extended if incomes and land prices continue to fall.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/December09/Features/DebtLandscape.htm>

INCOME VOLATILITY IS RISING, WITH MIXED EFFECTS ON NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PARTICIPATION

Income volatility has increased over the last four decades, with the greatest increase among those with the lowest incomes. The interaction of income volatility and program design has important implications for eligibility and participation in food and nutrition assistance programs, with some families not applying when eligible and others leaving while still eligible. In recent years, the effects of income volatility were eased when major nutrition assistance programs extended the periods for which households receive benefits.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/December09/Features/IncomeVolatility.htm>

THE DEBT FINANCE LANDSCAPE FOR U.S. FARMING AND FARM BUSINESSES

Income and wealth for farm businesses have changed noticeably this decade. Debt levels have been rising, asset levels have outpaced debt despite a recent fall in land prices, and equity has more than doubled for farm businesses. However, recent declines in farm income and falling land prices have raised concerns about the financial position of U.S. farms. Total farm sector debt reached a record \$240 billion in 2008, a \$26-billion increase over 2007. Debt is expected to decline to \$234 billion in 2009. The distribution of debt among farm operators has also been changing. In 1986, nearly 60 percent of farms used debt financing. By 2007, the number had dropped to 31 percent. In essence, farm debt has become more concentrated in fewer, larger farm businesses. Lenders and farm operators indicate that real estate accounts for the largest use of farm debt. Debt repayment capacity utilization (DRCU) of farm operators has dropped since the 1980s. DRCU dropped from 27 percent in 2000 to 22 percent in 2007. Larger farms are more likely to use more of their debt capacity.

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See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/AIS87/>

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