



ERS is working to enhance product consistency and improve the transparency of our work to the general public. We're enhancing the value-added nature of our work, strengthening ties between research and outlook, and working more closely with our inter-agency USDA partners.

Improved Quality of Communication

Newsletters—ERS converted all periodic reports to electronic newsletters as of January 2002. Since that time, we've issued more frequent *Fruit and Tree Nut*, *Sugar and Sweeteners*, and *Vegetable and Melon* reports. The field crop and livestock reports follow the same schedule as in past years, and will continue to do so in 2003. We're also updating monthly data in a more timely way through "most frequently requested tables" in briefing rooms and in special releases.

E-Outlooks—We're issuing 15 "supplemental article" e-outlooks that are notified to newsletter subscribers in 2002. Currently, 20 are planned for 2003. Look for e-outlooks later in 2002 on "issues in China's corn market," "the impact of imports of sugar-containing products on U.S. sugar deliveries," "U.S.-Mexico broiler trade," and more. Are there any you'd like to see us do?

Agriculture and Trade Reports—These "ATR" reports are longer reports that complement our newsletters and e-outlooks. They are monograph-length reports that bring together the best of our research and outlook programs. In 2002, we've issued global food assessment and NAFTA ATRs; we have ones on EU-U.S. policy comparisons, Cuba, plus others, in the works.

A New Macroeconomic Presence on the ERS Website—This spring, we initiated an Exchange Rate data page (based on a request from last year's Data Users' meeting), and an International Macroeconomic Data Page (updated twice yearly). We're posting a Macroeconomics Briefing Room in October, which analyzes income growth, financial linkages, employment, and more.

Program Integration

More Timely, User-Friendly Baseline—ERS is working with WAOB and other agencies and is planning in 2003 on providing more timely access to key baseline data and information. Rather than issuing one major report in February, we will rely more on our briefing rooms, providing macro assumptions, data, and analysis in December; trade assumptions, data, and analysis in January; and domestic S&U tables and income projections in early February. Look for a streamlined baseline document in February, plus scenario analysis releases throughout the year.

"Commodity Market Information System"—Milton Ericksen, an ERS employee on detail to the WAOB, is coordinating a proposed USDA effort that focuses on the development of web-based excellence centers for key commodities and issues. These centers will enhance user access to critical commodity data, information, and analysis across USDA through "one-stop shopping."

Trade Data Coordination—With FAS's PSD and FATUS systems on-line, users can now access trade data directly from FAS. Our FATUS data page provides summary tables and we provide key trade information in the context of our commodity and country briefing rooms, but

rely on FAS for the underlying data. An FAS-ERS-WAOB committee oversees how USDA manages its trade data and works with the Census Bureau to correct errors.

New Initiatives

New ERS Flagship Magazine—ERS will debut a new, flagship magazine at USDA's Outlook Forum on February 20th. This new magazine will succeed *Agricultural Outlook*, *Food Review*, and *Rural America*, and cover the entire scope of the agency's work. The new magazine will be issued 5 times per year in hard copy, with frequent updates on the webzine component. All *AO* tables will reside on the webzine, at least through 2003. In the interim, we'll be working on new databases and products to provide more timely, easier-to-access delivery.

Dynamic Outlook Page on the ERS Website—This page will serve as a critical link to help users find all of our regular outlook publications, "e-outlook" articles on key issues, and key outlook-related tables on commodities, exchange rates, farm income, plus more.

Retail Price Reporting for Meat—In a mandated effort, ERS is publishing meat scanner data for beef, pork, chicken, turkey, veal, and lamb. Unlike BLS data, the meat scanner data include the effects of featuring, an index of volume sold, and percent sold under feature. The data are updated monthly on the 20th and are available as standard spreadsheets or a queryable database. The primary data are collected by a cooperator and provided to ERS in aggregated form.

"Models on the Web"—As part of the Federal government's Data Quality Initiative, ERS will be putting model documentation and in some cases, downloadable models, on our website. We will be starting this effort over the next few months, and will include our WTO models (which were developed with a cooperator) and ERS's in-house cattle model.

Food Prices—ERS has published monthly food price updates in *AO*. As the information content in monthly changes is perhaps small, we're planning to publish two-times-a-year updates and focus more on analyzing retail market dynamics. With new forms of competition emerging and a greater focus on consumer demand, our output will extend beyond the effects of primary commodity price changes to explain, in a larger context, key determinants of retail price changes.

Floriculture Program—ERS has resurrected its floriculture program, and will be publishing a newsletter and yearbook each year. In 2003, we will be introducing a floriculture and nursery crops briefing room to provide more frequent data updates and access to timely articles.

WTO database—ERS is developing a queryable database containing information on the implementation of WTO commitments by individual members in the areas of domestic support, export subsidies, and market access. Watch for it later this fall on the WTO Briefing Room.

New Briefing Rooms—ERS has briefing rooms of importance to the food and agricultural economy, with 70 currently in place. In addition to floriculture/nursery crops, we're planning new rooms on animal products, livestock market structure, and Japan. Are there others you'd like to see us create?

Questions or Comments? Please address them to Joy Harwood, Deputy Director for Market Outlook, at jharwood@ers.usda.gov or 202-694-5202