

■ Office of the Chief Economist

The Office of the Chief Economist advises the Secretary on policies and programs affecting U.S. agriculture and rural areas. This advice includes assessments of USDA program proposals, legislative proposals, and general economic developments that have implications for agriculture and rural areas.

In addition, the World Agricultural Outlook Board and the Office of Risk Assessment and Cost Benefit Analysis report to the Office of the Chief Economist.

World Agricultural Outlook Board

The World Agricultural Outlook Board is USDA's focal point for forecasts and projections of global commodity markets. Each month the Board brings together interagency committees of experts to forecast the supply, use, and price of major commodities in the United States and abroad. The committees also clear agricultural forecasts published by other USDA agencies. This teamwork assures that USDA forecasts are objective and consistent.

Because the weather is vital to crop forecasts, specialists from the Board work side-by-side with weather forecasters from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to monitor the weather and assess its effects on crops. They provide timely information on potential changes in global production. In related work, the Board also coordinates departmentwide activity on long-term economic projections, remote sensing, and climate.

Office of Risk Assessment and Cost Benefit Analysis

This office is responsible for coordinating, reviewing, and approving all risk assessments of major regulations of the Department related to human health, human safety, or the environment. In addition, it provides direction to USDA agencies on appropriate methods of risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis and serves as a focal point on matters relating to risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis.