

2027 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES - ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

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PREFACE

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2027 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the "Budget" is in regard to the 2027 Budget, unless otherwise noted. All references to years refer to fiscal year, except where specifically noted. The budgetary tables throughout this document show actual amounts for 2024 and 2025; Working Families Tax Cut Act of 2025; Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agency Appropriations Act, 2026; and the President's Budget request for 2027. Amounts for 2026 estimated levels include: non-enacted amounts such as Full-Time Equivalent levels, fleet levels, information technology investment levels, recovery levels, transfers in and out, balances available end of year, and obligation levels.

Throughout this publication, the Working Families Tax Cut Act is used to refer to the Public Law 119-21.

Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, sequestration is included in the numbers for mandatory programs in 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027.

In tables throughout this document, amounts equal to zero (0) are displayed as dashes (-). Amounts less than 0.5 and greater than zero are rounded and shown as a zero (0). This display treatment is used to prevent the masking of small non-zero amounts that do not round up to one (1). Due to rounding, some tables may not sum exactly.

AGENCY-WIDE**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The Economic Research Service (ERS) was established in 1961 from components of the former Bureau of Agricultural Economics principally under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621 -1627). The mission of ERS is to inform and enhance public and private decision making by anticipating emerging issues and conducting sound, peer-reviewed economic research on policy-relevant issues related to agriculture, food, natural resources, and rural America. ERS is also the primary source of statistical indicators that, among other things, gauge the health of the farm sector (including farm income estimates and projections), assess the current and expected performance of the agricultural sector (including trade), and provide measures of the food retail and consumer. The Agency's intramural research is conducted by a highly trained staff of economists and social scientists through an integrated program of research, market outlook, analysis, and data development. Key clientele includes White House and USDA policy officials, program administrators/managers, the U.S. Congress, other Federal agencies, State and local government officials, and organizations including farm and industry groups interested in public policy issues.

ERS develops its research program in coordination with other USDA research agencies, USDA program agencies, and other external collaborators. Activities to support this mission involve research and development of economic and statistical indicators on a broad range of topics, including but not limited to profitability, costs of production, commodity market analysis, global agricultural market conditions, trade opportunities, impacts of animal disease and pest pressure, agribusiness concentration, farm business and household income, farm program participation and risk management, soil health and land use, farm and retail food prices, foodborne illnesses, and nutrition and food quality and safety, food assistance programs, drought preparedness, conservation, technology adoption, and rural prosperity. Research results and economic indicators on such important agricultural, food, natural resource, and rural issues are fully disseminated to public and private decision makers through reports and articles; special internal staff analyses, briefings, and presentations; and data products.

ERS has headquarters offices in Washington, D.C., and Kansas City, MO. As of September 30, 2025, ERS had 299 employees, 296 permanent full-time employees and 3 temporary full-time or part-time employees including 104 employees reporting to the headquarters offices and 195 in the field.

ERS activities contribute to the success of USDA’s overall mission to provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management. USDA is currently developing the FY 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan. A detailed FY 2027 performance plan, including Key Performance Indicators, can be found at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/performance>.

GAO REPORTS

Table ERS-1. Closed, Implemented GAO Reports

ID	Date Opened	Date Closed	Title
25-106000	1/17/2025	3/11/2025	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Federal Actions Needed to Help Connect College Students with Benefits
25-106347	12/5/2023	11/12/2024	Department of Agriculture: Financial Assistance to Livestock Feeding Operations
24-106539	12/5/2023	9/23/2024	Food Insecurity and the Charitable Food Assistance Network
25-106389	12/5/2023	11/14/2024	H-2A visa program
25-106595	12/5/2023	7/31/2025	USDA Dairy Support Programs
25-106455	12/5/2023	6/9/2025	Options to Enhance Fiscal Policy to Automatically Stabilize the Economy
25-107576	7/25/2024	9/29/2025	Federal Research Funding to Minority Serving Institutions
25-107124	6/11/2024	9/24/2025	Comptroller General Forum on the Federal Statistical System
25-107604	2/11/2025	5/13/2025	Charitable Food Assistance for GAO's 2025 Duplication, Overlap, and Fragmentation report
25-106503	11/1/2024	1/14/2025	WIC Infant Formula: Single-Supplier Competitive Contracts Reduce Program Costs and Modestly Increase Retail Prices

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTEs

Table ERS-2. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs) ¹

Item	2024		2025		2026		2027	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations	\$90,612	312	\$90,612	299	\$90,612	225	\$74,982	225
Mandatory Appropriations	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-
Total Discretionary Appropriations	90,612	312	90,612	299	90,612	225	74,982	225
Total Adjusted Appropriation	90,612	312	90,612	299	91,612	225	74,982	225
Total Obligations	90,612	312	85,400	299	91,612	225	74,982	225
Total Obligations, ERS	90,612	312	85,400	299	91,612	225	74,982	225
Total, Agriculture Available.....	90,612	312	90,612	299	91,612	225	74,982	225
Total Available, ERS	90,612	312	90,612	299	91,612	225	74,982	225

¹ This table does not match MAX Schedule X due to reimbursables.

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTEs

Table ERS-3. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs

Item	2024 Actual			2025 Actual			2026 Estimated			2027 Estimated		
	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total	HQ	Field	Total
SES.....	5	2	7	6	1	7	6	1	7	6	1	7
GS-15.....	41	32	73	41	38	79	15	25	40	15	25	40
GS-14.....	23	44	67	23	34	57	12	40	52	12	40	52
GS-13.....	19	84	103	24	66	90	11	71	82	11	71	82
GS-12.....	4	35	39	8	35	43	2	28	30	2	28	30
GS-11.....	1	14	15	1	14	15	2	9	11	2	9	11
GS-9.....	-	6	6	-	6	6	-	3	3	-	3	3
Total Permanent.	93	219	312	103	196	299	48	177	225	48	177	225
Total Perm. FT EOY	93	219	312	103	196	299	48	177	225	48	177	225

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS

Table ERS-4. Shared Funding Projects (thousands of dollars)

Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
Working Capital Fund:				
Administrative Services:				
AskUSDA Contact Center	\$24	\$24	-	-
General Counsel Legal Compliance.....	-	34	419	419
Human Resources Enterprise System				
Management	7	7	24	25
Integrated Procurement Systems.....	31	26	17	17
Mail and Reproduction Management Division .	62	43	38	38
Material Management Service Center	14	12	20	20
Personnel and Document Security Program ...	17	19	18	
Subtotal	155	165	536	519
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center	91	101	91	91
Finance and Management:				
Internal Control Support Services	2	2	1	1
Financial Shared Services	97	85	65	65
National Finance Center.....	92	82	78	78
Subtotal	191	169	144	144
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center	1,863	1,831	1,511	1,482
Department Administration Information				
Technology Office	109	3		
Digital Infrastructure Services Center.....	1,527	1,926	1,191	1,191
Enterprise Cybersecurity Services	179	179	175	175
Enterprise Data and Analytics Services	185	188	130	133
Enterprise Network Services	1,147	1,229	667	667
Subtotal	5,010	5,356	3,674	3,648
Correspondence Management Services:				
Office of the Executive Secretariat	10	18	14	14
Total, Working Capital Fund	5,457	5,809	4,459	4,416
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Agency Partnership Outreach	23	23	13	14
America’s Agricultural Heritage.....	-	-	2	2
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility	8	2	-	-
Employee Experience	12	9	1	-
Medical Services.....	17	-	-	-
NCR Interpreting Services.....	7	10	14	14
OCFO Shared Services Branch.....	-	-	2	4
Office of Customer Experience.....	9	5	-	-
Physical Security	15	19	9	9

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Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
Security Detail	17	26	55	55
Security Operations	23	22	25	25
Talent Group	10	11	1	-
TARGET Center	5	5	4	4
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs	146	132	126	127
Agency Total	5,603	5,941	4,585	4,543

ACCOUNT 1: SALARIES AND EXPENSES

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored; deleted matter enclosed in brackets):

Salaries and Expenses

For necessary expenses of the Economic Research Service, [~~\$90,612,000~~]\$74,982,000.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table ERS-5. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (in dollars)

Item	Amount
Estimate, 2026	\$90,612,000
Change in Appropriation	<u>-15,630,000</u>
Budget Estimate, 2027.....	<u>74,982,000</u>

PROJECT STATEMENTS

Table ERS-6. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)²

Item	2024		2025		2026		2027		Inc. or	FTE	or Chg
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Dec.	Dec.	Key
Discretionary Approp:											
Agricultural Research	\$90,612	312	\$90,612	299	\$90,612	225	\$74,982	225	-\$15,630	-	(1)
Subtotal Disc. Approps	90,612	312	90,612	299	90,612	225	74,982	225	-15,630	-	
Mandatory Approp:.....											
Organic Production	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-1,000	-	
Subtotal Mand. Approps	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-1,000	-	
Total Adjusted Approp	90,612	312	90,612	299	91,612	225	74,982	225	-16,630	-	
Total Appropriation	90,612	312	90,612	299	91,612	225	74,982	225	-16,630	-	
Total Available .	90,612	312	90,612	299	91,612	225	74,982	225	-16,630	-	
Lapsing Balances.....	-	-	-5,212	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Obligations	90,612	312	85,400	299	91,612	225	74,982	225	-16,630	-	

This table does not match MAX Schedule X due to reimbursables.

Table ERS-7. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)³

Item	2024		2025		2026		2027		Inc. or	FTE	or Dec
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimate	s	Estimate	FTE	Dec.	Dec.	.
Discretionary Obligations:											
Agricultural Research	\$90,612	312	\$85,400	299	\$90,612	225	\$74,982	225	-\$15,630	-	
Subtotal Disc Obligations	90,612	312	85,400	299	90,612	225	74,982	225	-15,630	-	
Mandatory Obligations:											
Organic Production	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-1,000	-	
Subtotal Mand Obligations	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-1,000	-	
Total Obligations	90,612	312	85,400	299	91,612	225	74,982	225	-16,630	-	
Add back:											
Lapsing Balances.....	-	-	5,212	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Available .	90,612	312	90,612	299	91,612	225	74,982	225	-16,630	-	
Total Appropriation	90,612	312	90,612	299	91,612	225	74,982	225	-16,630	-	

² This table does not match MAX Schedule X due to reimbursables.

³ This table does not match MAX Schedule X due to reimbursables.

JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES

Funding is requested for ERS' core programs of research, analysis, market outlook, and data development. Proposals for ERS budget priorities include research that: (1) builds on unique or confidential data sources or investments at the Federal level; (2) provides coordination for a national perspective or framework; (3) requires sustained investment and expert teams; (4) directly serves the U.S. Government's or USDA's long-term national goals; and (5) addresses questions with short-run payoff or that have immediate policy implications. ERS also seeks to cover the breadth of USDA programs (except forestry) and requests funding to ensure sustained expertise and to support the department through analysis of farming, commodity markets and trade, conservation, productivity growth, rural prosperity, food safety, food markets, and nutrition. ERS' strength in data linking, and in developing, modeling, and monitoring outcome measures, including program performance and agricultural productivity growth, will contribute substantively to advance USDA's priority goals. In accordance with administration policy announced in the Budget, ERS will follow new government-wide grants guidance prohibiting the use of Federal funds to pay for subscriptions to academic journals, as well as for the publication of research results that are not specifically required by Federal statute or approved in advance by a federal agency. This policy preserves funds to support actual research by ensuring that the American taxpayer does not pay for the research, publication, and access to that research, essentially triple charging the public for the same product.

The numbers and letters of the following listing relate to values in the Change (Chg) Key column of the Project Statement:

Economic Analysis and Research

- (1) A decrease of \$15,630,000 and no FTEs for salaries and expenses (\$90,612,000 and 225 FTEs available in 2026).
- a) A decrease of \$18,000 for National Security Related Expenses being transferred to the Office of Homeland Security (\$18,000 available in 2026).
The decrease in funds of \$18,000 for National Security Related Expenses, being realigned to the Office of Homeland Security (OHS), will enhance efficiency and effectiveness within USDA. This strategic realignment will centralize resources under OHS, which provides leadership in national security through policy development, emergency preparedness and response initiatives, and threat mitigation coordination. Consolidating the budget under OHS eliminates redundancies, ensures more coordinated resource allocation, and improves the execution of departmental security policies, ultimately bolstering the USDA's resilience and readiness without compromising overall security
- b) A decrease of \$12,612,000 for pay and employee costs.
In pursuit of streamlining workforce efforts, facilities, and other government efficiencies, the Economic Research Service will reduce or sunset research on lower priority items, including research that does not directly benefit the taxpayer, like developing country markets, international productivity, climate change, equity, and food loss and waste monitoring and research. Communication activities, such as reports, charts, webinars, and data products will be streamlined to minimize information overload and promote only the most important findings. ERS will also use funding for any staff relocation actions that may be required.
- c) A decrease of \$1,000,000 for Congressionally Directed Reports.
In pursuit of streamlining workforce efforts, facilities, and other government efficiencies, ERS will reduce staff working on white papers for Congressionally Directed reports, while continuing to meet statutory deadlines. ERS is regularly required to conduct reports at the request of Congress or other external stakeholders to meet urgent needs. Being timely, relevant, and data driven is a core value of ERS' mission and ERS will work diligently to continue meeting its deadlines and providing accurate data with fewer resources. The following are examples of reports requested; Agroforestry Data (House Report 118-583);

Biofuels Supply Chain (House Report 118-583); Supply Chain Resiliency (House Report 118-583); Data Collection on Religiously Informed Diets (Senate Report 118-193); International Commodity Trade (Senate Report 118-193); Organic Data Analysis (Senate Report 118-193).

- d) A decrease of \$2,000,000 for data acquisitions related to food markets and prices.
 In pursuit of streamlining workforce efforts, facilities, and other government efficiencies, ERS will reduce the acquisition of primary data on food markets and choices. ERS has a robust Consumer Food Data System that provides a comprehensive, integrated set of data that delivers relevant, accurate, and credible evidence to inform USDA, Congress, and the public about the food sector, from farmgate to fork, about key national issues such as diet quality and nutrition, food prices and more. ERS will streamline efforts to produce the highest priority data with the resources available.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs

Table ERS-9. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs for Economic Research Service (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

State/Territory/ Country	2024		2025		2026		2027	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
District of Columbia...	\$27,183	93	\$27,183	104	\$24,000	75	\$24,000	75
Missouri	63,429	219	58,217	195	66,612	150	50,982	150
Obligations	90,612	312	85,400	299	90,612	225	74,982	225
Lapsing Balances.....	-	-	5,212	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	90,612	312	90,612	299	90,612	225	74,982	225

Table ERS-10. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs for Mandatory Agricultural Program (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

State/Territory/Country	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
Missouri	-	-	\$1,000	-
Obligations	-	-	1,000	-

OBJECT CLASSIFICATION

Table ERS-21. Classification by Objects – Discretionary Funding (thousands of dollars) ⁴

Item No.	Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
Personnel Compensation:					
	Washington D.C.....	\$11,488	\$12,788	\$10,348	\$11,488
	Personnel Compensation, Field	\$21,512	\$25,848	\$20,340	\$20,340
11	Total personnel compensation	33,000	38,636	30,688	31,828
12	Personal benefits	13,985	15,913	14,867	15,867
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	15	5	4	4
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	47,000	54,554	45,559	47,699
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	1,000	844	1,439	1,279
23.1	Rental payments to GSA.....	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	1,000	1,000	1,612	1,000
24.0	Printing and reproduction.....	75	2	2	4
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,000
	Other goods and services from Federal				
25.3	sources	14,000	12,000	14,000	9,000
25.5	Research and development contracts	21,000	11,000	21,000	10,000

⁴ This table does not match MAX Schedule X due to reimbursables.

Item No.	Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
26.0	Supplies and materials	2,537	2,000	3,000	3,000
	Total, Other Objects	43,612	30,846	45,053	27,283
99.9	Total, new obligations	90,612	85,400	90,612	74,982
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	\$206,695	\$216,255	\$217,465	\$221,814
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	\$128,565	\$128,810	\$135,250	\$137,955
	Average Grade, GS Position	13.5	13.6	13.7	13.7

Table ERS-32. Classification by Objects – Mandatory Funding (thousands of dollars)

Item No.	Item	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated
Other Objects:					
25.5	Research and development contracts...	-	-	\$1,000	-
	Total, Other Objects	-	-	1,000	-
99.9	Total, new obligations	-	-	1,000	-

STATUS OF PROGRAMS

The Economic Research Service (ERS) anticipates trends and emerging issues in agriculture, food, natural resources, and rural America and conducts high-quality, objective economic research to inform and enhance public and private decision making. ERS shapes its research program and products to serve those who routinely make or influence public policy and program decisions. ERS research provides context for and informs the decisions that affect the agricultural sector, which in turn benefits everyone with efficient stewardship of our agricultural resources and the economic prosperity of the sector. As a Federal Statistical Agency, ERS provides timely, objective data on the well-being of America's farmers, consumers, natural resources, and rural communities.

Enhance farm sector and household well-being and rural prosperity**Current Activities**

ERS conducts research that strengthens the understanding of American farms, the agricultural sector, and rural communities. This includes analysis of commodity markets, the competitiveness of U.S. farms at home and abroad, and the health of the rural economy. ERS research and analysis provides insights into market conditions facing U.S. agriculture, potential avenues for innovation and market expansion, and the effects of farm policies. The agency conducts research on the effects of new agricultural technologies and practices on farm business and sector performance as well as their implications for the changing size and organization of U.S. farms. ERS produces USDA's estimates of farm business and farm household income and identifies and analyzes market structure and technological developments that affect farm efficiency and profitability.

ERS research and analysis also provides insights into how the agricultural sector is evolving in both the short and long term. ERS's ongoing Commodity Outlook and Cost of Production programs address the impacts of market factors impacting supply, demand, prices, and costs and returns of agricultural commodities.

- The Commodity Outlook program produces monthly outlook reports and research results for 25 commodities, including most of the major U.S. crop, livestock, dairy, and poultry commodities.
- Cost of Production analysts produce annual estimates for 12 major crops, livestock, and dairy commodities and conduct research on the factors impacting commodity costs and returns.
- This foundational work enables ERS to provide quick analysis for USDA leadership and Congress, and statistical data and analysis to inform decision makers in the public and private sectors.

Analysis of the major factors driving the outlook for agricultural commodity markets plays a central role in supporting USDA's World Agriculture Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE), which serves as the benchmark for information on major global commodities. Each year ERS also coordinates the USDA's Baseline projections for U.S. and world agriculture for the coming decade. The 2025-2034 long-term projections were presented at the 2025 USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum and helped shape planning for the federal budget. Baseline Projections have long supported Farm Service Agency's estimation of budget costs for farm program commodities. In addition to its importance for USDA's policymakers, the annual Baseline Projections report and related data products are essential references for public and private decision makers.

ERS's rural research explores how investments in businesses, communities, and people affect the capacity of rural economies to prosper in a changing global marketplace. The agency analyzes how employment opportunities, Federal policies, demographic trends, and public investment in infrastructure and technology enhance economic opportunity and quality of life for rural Americans.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress

Farm income and wealth statistics measure the financial performance of the U.S. farm sector. ERS provides authoritative information on the financial health of the farm sector, including the

performance of farm businesses and well-being of farm households. Published three times a year, these core statistical indicators provide guidance to policy makers, lenders, commodity organizations, farmers, and others interested in the financial status of the farm economy. ERS's farm income statistics also inform the computation of agriculture's contribution to the U.S. economy in the Bureau of Economic Analysis statistics for Gross Domestic Product.

Between 1948 and 2021, total farm output grew by 1.46 percent annually. Since the 1960s, the USDA has been monitoring the U.S. farm sector's productivity. Over time, the composition of inputs to agriculture has changed, shifting from labor and land use to more use of intermediate inputs and durable capital assets. During the period, input quality changes in labor, capital (including land), and intermediate input contributed positively to annual output growth. While total inputs in agriculture declined annually, total factor productivity, a measure of the efficiency of inputs, grew at nearly 1.5 percent per year, singlehandedly driving farm output growth over the seven-decade period. In 2021, total farm output was about 2.9 times its 1948 level.

Between 2020 and 2023, population growth occurred in rural America as a whole and was concentrated among younger and older age groups. ERS provides up-to-date information on rural economic and demographic trends in an annual series, Rural America at a Glance. The latest report indicates that working age populations in rural counties are shrinking, resulting in greater concentration in younger and older age groups. The findings were communicated via a public webinar and in briefings to senior USDA policy makers.

Program Evaluations

ERS carries out regular reviews of its most important farm income, household well-being, and rural prosperity data products to make sure that they adhere to the ERS data quality standards, which cover objectivity, utility, and transparency of data products and their dissemination. Recently, the agency reviewed the Farm Income and Wealth data product, the Commodity Costs and Returns data product, as well as the Poverty Area Measures data product.

Expand trade and market access for American agriculture

Current Activities

ERS conducts research on the economic performance and competitiveness of U.S. agriculture in international markets. U.S. producers rely on export markets to sell agricultural and food products, sustain and grow revenues, and contribute to employment, particularly in rural communities. This research program examines emerging patterns of agricultural trade and the associated economic drivers including income and population growth, and domestic and trade policies, and provides information on the principal underlying factors affecting U.S. and global agricultural trade.

In order to inform assessments of the future demand for U.S. agricultural products ERS conducts research on the state of global, production and the demand for U.S. export in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Commonwealth of Independent States. ERS informs potential demand for U.S. agricultural products with its annual assessment of international food security.

Recent Progress

U.S. agricultural exports to Southeast Asia increased from \$9.4 to \$14.2 billion from 2012 to 2022, and the U.S. share of Southeast Asia's agricultural imports was steady at just over 11 percent. Southeast Asia has potential for growth as an agricultural export market, with its growing population of middle-class consumers, especially for exporters such as the United States. Leading U.S. exports to Southeast Asia are soybean products, wheat, cotton, skim milk powder, and distillers' grains. China and Brazil, two of the top competitors, were the only exporters that gained market share over the period. China surpassed the United States to become the largest foreign supplier of agricultural goods to Southeast Asia, but few of China's products compete directly with U.S. products. However, Brazil's soybean products, cotton, poultry, and beef compete with U.S. products. Currently, the primary U.S.

competitors for major agricultural commodities exported to Southeast Asia are Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, China, India, Canada, and Argentina.

Tree nut import tariffs put in place in Turkey target the U.S, reducing U.S. exports to Turkey by 19.4 percent (almonds) and 26.6 percent (walnuts). Impacts were estimated using a computable general equilibrium model and trade data, and findings were communicated through an Economic Bulletin and briefings.

Program Evaluations

ERS carries out regular reviews of its most important trade and market access data products to make sure that they adhere to the ERS data quality standards, which cover objectivity, utility, and transparency of data products and their dissemination. Recently, the agency reviewed their Foreign Agricultural Trade of the United States data product, the Agricultural Trade Multipliers data product, the State Agricultural Trade data product, and the Sugar and Sweeteners Yearbook Tables data product.

Improve the Nation's nutrition and reducing food prices

Current Activities

ERS conducts research on the economic forces influencing consumer food choices and the effect of these choices on nutrition and health outcomes. To understand these relationships, ERS examines the interactions between factors such as food prices, grocery store accessibility, food labeling, household income, and household composition. Market and industry level factors examined include product offerings by firms, changes in store types and store formats, firm and consumer reactions to food safety incidents, and the role of government programs and the food system as a whole in the macro-economy.

ERS analyzes USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs, often coordinating research priorities with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. These programs receive substantial Federal funding and affect the daily lives of millions of America's children. Long-term research themes include dietary and nutritional outcomes, food program targeting and delivery, and measurement of program participation.

ERS food safety research focuses on enhancing methodologies for valuing societal benefits associated with reducing food safety risks, understanding consumer and producer responses to food safety incidents, assessing industry incentives to enhance food safety through new technologies and supply chain linkages, and evaluating regulatory options and change. ERS research also investigates the safety of food imports and the efficacy of international food safety policies and practices.

Recent Progress

The USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) Food Price Outlook (FPO) provides data on food prices and forecasts annual food price changes up to 18 months in the future. On a monthly basis, ERS forecasts the annual percentage change in food prices for the current year and beginning in July each year, for the following year. These forecasts are primarily based on the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Producer Price Index (PPI) data., ERS typically releases its monthly update on the 25th of the month.

Program Evaluations

ERS carries out regular reviews of its most important nutrition and food price data products to make sure that they adhere to the ERS data quality standards, which cover objectivity, utility, and transparency of data products and their dissemination. Recently, the agency reviewed their Food-at-Home Monthly Area Prices data product, their Purchase to Plate data product, their Food Expenditure Series data product, and Vegetable and Pulses data product.