USDA Economic Research Service
Innovations & Response to COVID-19

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June 4, 2021
ERS anticipates trends and emerging issues in agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America and conducts high-quality, objective economic research to inform and enhance public and private decision making.
ERS at a Glance

The Economic Research Service (ERS) is a principal Federal statistical agency.

- $85M budget & 329 FTE appropriated in FY21
- As of May 5, 2021, ERS has 226 permanent employees
- Offices in Kansas City & Washington D.C.
- In FY20, completed 130 annual research reports & supporting publications & 417 staff analyses for government officials.
Secretary Vilsack’s Priorities

- Climate change
- Tackling the pandemic
- Open and competitive markets
- Food and nutrition security
- Racial and social equity
- Building back the economy
- And more...
ERS Data Products in Response to the Pandemic

- **Commodity Outlook Reports** examine the impact of changing U.S. food consumption patterns during the pandemic and the significant effects of the stay-at-home order on corn ethanol production.

- **National Food Acquisition and Purchase Survey (FoodAPS)** links different types of data & integrates information from several sources on food, nutrition, economics, environment, & health.
ERS Products
(Continued)

▪ **Rural America at a Glance** examines the pandemic effects on recent demographic and economic conditions in rural areas.

▪ **Food-at-Home vs. Food-Away-From Home** monitoring on purchase patterns and research comparing nutritional quality of food prepared at home vs. away from home.

▪ And More…

### Share of working adults preparing food, eating at home, and time spent by worksite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Worked from home</th>
<th>Worked away from home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food preparation</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating at home</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes per day</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Note: Food preparation activities include food and drink preparation, food presentation, kitchen and food clean-up, grocery shopping, and travel to and from the grocery store.
New Initiatives

- **ERS COVID-19 Rapid Response Team** providing timely economic analysis to help policymakers understand the current impact and status of the pandemic.

- **COVID-19 Working Paper Series** publishing initial research and analysis on topics relevant to understanding the impacts of the pandemic in a short turnaround timeframe.
New Initiatives

(Continued)

- **Household Pulse Survey** developed in partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau and 5 other Federal agencies to produce statistics on food insufficiency during the pandemic.

- **Weekly Updates** to food retail sales and food service transactions. These metrics provide critical information on the effects of the pandemic and other food system stressors.
Survey of Irrigation Organizations

- Collaboration between ERS, NASS, & OCE
- Update of 1978 Census of Irrigation Organizations
- Survey collected data on 2,677 organizations:
  - Water supply delivery
  - Groundwater management
- Developed in partnership with other Federal agencies and regional, state and local stakeholders
Water outflows for irrigation water delivery organizations, 2019

- Deliveries
- Intentional releases
- Losses

Farms and ranches
Conveyance losses
Other purposes
Downstream users
Domestic users
Industrial users
Other delivery organizations
Managed aquifer recharge
Environmental flow requirements

Note: Acre-feet is the amount of water needed to cover one acre of land under a foot of water. Conveyance losses represent water lost during transport or storage because of groundwater seepage or evaporation. Conveyance loss data only accounts for self-reported losses that occurred within organizations’ storage and conveyance infrastructure and do not account for losses that might occur before water entered the organizations’ systems or after water is delivered to the farm.

On the Horizon

- **Strategic Initiatives Grants for staff research** harnesses ERS human capital, research, data and modeling to address emerging challenges.