Selected charts from

Ag and Food Statistics
*Charting the Essentials, 2017*
A message from the Administrator

The USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS) conducts high-quality, objective economic research to inform and enhance public and private decision making on emerging issues in agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America. Our online product, *Ag and Food Statistics: Charting the Essentials*, covers key food and agricultural indicators and illustrates the scope of ERS’s work through a series of 70 charts and maps. This booklet provides a sample of those maps and charts available on the ERS website.

Organized into nine topics, *Charting the Essentials* anticipates questions, such as how much do agriculture and related industries contribute to the U.S. economy? How has rural America recovered from the Great Recession? What are the top destinations for U.S. agricultural exports? What percent of income do Americans spend on food?

Since its launch, *Charting the Essentials* has provided a resource for public officials, researchers, educators, students, journalists, and anyone looking for current information on these topics.

I invite you to explore this booklet, and visit the ERS website where you can view and download all 70 charts and maps, as well as a variety of reports and other products, such as our daily Charts of Note and our online magazine, *Amber Waves*.

Mary Bohman, Ph.D.
Administrator
Agriculture and Food Sectors and the Economy

The U.S. agriculture sector extends beyond the farm to include restaurants, food manufacturers, and foodstores.

Employment in agriculture, food, and related industries, 2015

- 21.0 million jobs* (11.1 percent of U.S. employment)
- Farming (1.4%)
- Forestry, fishing, and related activities (0.5%)
- Food, beverage, and tobacco manufacturing (1.0%)
- Textile, apparel, and leather manufacturing (0.3%)
- Food and beverage stores (1.7%)
- Food service, eating and drinking places (6.3% of U.S. employment)

*Full- and part-time jobs. Categories do not sum to totals due to rounding.
… and 5.5 percent of U.S. gross domestic product (GDP).

Value added to GDP by agriculture, food, and related industries, 2007-15

![Graph showing value added to GDP by agriculture, food, and related industries from 2007 to 2015.](image)

Note: GDP refers to gross domestic product.  

Food ranked third behind housing and transportation in U.S. households’ expenditures in 2015.

Share of U.S. household consumer expenditures by major categories, 2015

![Pie chart showing share of U.S. household consumer expenditures by major categories in 2015.](image)

Note: “Other” includes personal care products, tobacco, and miscellaneous expenditures.  
Rural Economy

Recent trends point to relatively slow employment and population growth in rural areas, and continued higher poverty levels than in urban areas. The trends, however, vary widely across rural America.

Rural America has been slow to recover from the Great Recession.

U.S. rural and urban poverty and unemployment rates, 2000-16

Poverty and unemployment rate (percent)

Note: Rural/urban determined by nonmetro/metro status as defined by the Office of Management and Budget. Gray vertical bars indicate recessions. Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Census Bureau (poverty) and Bureau of Labor Statistics (employment).
On the whole, rural areas have lost population recently…

Population change by metro/nonmetro residence, 1977-2016

Percent change from previous year

1.6 1.2 0.8 0.4 0.0 -0.4

Metro
U.S.
Nonmetro

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, county population estimates.

… but this varies across the United States.

County population change, 2010-16

Rural areas vary in the industries that underpin their economies.

ERS county economic typology, 2015

Note: The 2015 county typologies use data from 2010-12.
Land and Natural Resources

U.S. agricultural production relies heavily on the Nation’s land, water, and other natural resources, and has a direct impact on the quality of the natural environment.

Agricultural production is a major use of land, accounting for over half of the U.S. land base.

Major land uses in the United States, 1945-2007

*Special uses includes rural parks and wilderness areas, rural transportation, defense/industrial lands, and farmsteads.
Five States—Nebraska, California, Arkansas, Texas, and Idaho—account for just over half of the Nation’s irrigated acres.

**Acres of irrigated land, 2012**

*U.S. total = 55,822,231 acres*


USDA’s mix of conservation efforts have shifted from removing environmentally sensitive land from production (primarily though CRP) toward programs that target working land.

**Major USDA conservation program expenditures, 1996-2015**

$ billion (constant 2012 dollars)

Notes: Working land programs include the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, Conservation Technical Assistance, and predecessor programs. Predecessors of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program include the Wetlands Reserve Program, Farmland Protection Program, and part of the Grassland Reserve Program. Other programs include Voluntary Public Access, Healthy Forest Reserve Program, Agricultural Management Assistance, and watershed programs. Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from Office of Budget and Policy Analysis budget summary data.
Farming and Farm Income

Early 20th century agriculture was labor intensive, and it took place on many small, diversified farms. Much of today’s agricultural production takes place on large, specialized farms.

The number of farms has leveled off at about 2.1 million. . . .

Farms, land in farms, and average acres per farm, 1850-2016

Million farms, billion acres, or hundred acres per farm

…but agricultural output has grown, along with improvements in agricultural productivity.

**U.S. agricultural output, inputs, and total factor productivity, 1948-2013**

Index, 1948=1

U.S. net farm income is forecast to fall for the fourth consecutive year in 2017…

Median household income of farm operators by source and sales class, 2015

*Sales = Gross cash farm income (the sum of the farm’s crop and livestock sales, government payments, and other farm-related income).
Markets for major agricultural commodities are typically analyzed by looking at supply-and-use conditions and the implications for prices. Many interactions and relationships exist between and among different commodities. For example, corn production and prices affect feed costs in the livestock sector.

U.S. crop production is concentrated in California and the Midwest, while livestock production is more spread out across the country.

Corn and soybean acreage has increased since 1990, while fewer acres are planted with wheat and cotton.

**U.S. planted area: Corn, wheat, soybeans, and upland cotton, 1990-2016**

[Graph showing the planted area of corn, soybeans, wheat, and upland cotton from 1990 to 2016.]


Farm-level prices for agricultural commodities rose for much of the 2000s, but have declined in recent years…

**U.S. prices received by farmers, 1990-2016**

[Graph showing the index of prices received by farmers from 1990 to 2016 for all agricultural production, livestock, and crops.]

... contributing to declining farm sector cash receipts.

Gross cash farm income components, inflation adjusted, 2000-17F

$ billion (constant 2009)

Note: F = forecast. Values are adjusted for inflation using the chain-type GDP deflator, 2009=100.
Data as of February 7, 2017.
Agricultural Trade

The leading U.S. exports are grains and feeds, soybeans, livestock products, and fruit, vegetables, and other horticultural products. The leading U.S. imports are horticultural and tropical products. Canada, Mexico, and East Asia are major U.S. trade partners.

The United States exports more agricultural goods than it imports, but the surplus fell to $20 billion in 2016, as the value of U.S. imports continued to rise and …

U.S. agricultural trade, 2000-16

China, Canada, and Mexico are the top destinations for U.S. agricultural exports.

... the value of U.S. agricultural exports was flat after declining in 2015 due to falling commodity prices, slowing of the global economy, and an appreciating dollar.
Overseas customers account for 40 percent or more of the market for U.S. cotton, almonds, rice, soybeans, and wheat.

Export share of U.S. farm production, 2013-15

Note: Data are reported for the 2013/14-2015/16 marketing years. Specific marketing years vary by commodity type.
ERS’s Food Availability data measure per capita annual supplies of several hundred food commodities moving through the U.S. marketing system. A second data series—Loss-Adjusted Food Availability—adjusts for losses from farmgate to fork—such as damaged products, spoilage, and plate waste—to more closely approximate per capita consumption.

According to ERS’s loss-adjusted food availability data, U.S. diets are out of balance when compared to the Dietary Guidelines’ recommendations.

Estimated average U.S. consumption compared to recommendations, 1970 and 2014

Percent of recommendations

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Our diets have made some progress; we are consuming fewer caloric sweeteners…

U.S. per capita sweetener availability, 1970-2014

Pounds per person, dry-weight


… and eating more vegetables …

Most commonly consumed vegetables among U.S. consumers, 2014

Pounds per person

Loss-adjusted food availability data are proxies for consumption.
... and fruit, though we still need to eat more and increase the diversity to achieve a healthier diet.

**Most commonly consumed fruits among U.S. consumers, 2014**

- **Oranges**: 35 pounds per person
- **Apples**: 28 pounds per person
- **Bananas**: 9 pounds per person
- **Grapes**: 5 pounds per person
- **Strawberries**: 2 pounds per person
- **Pineapple**: 1 pound per person
- **Watermelon**: 1 pound per person

Loss-adjusted food availability data are proxies for consumption.  
Even large swings in farm commodity prices result in modest changes in food prices...

**Change in all-food CPI and field crop prices, 1992-2016**

- Annual percent change

*Production-weighted average for corn, wheat, and soybeans.
...as much of Americans’ retail food dollar pays for more stable processing, retailing, and foodservice costs.

2015 food dollar (nominal): Industry group

Note: “Other” includes two industry groups: Agribusiness plus Legal & Accounting.

Food away from home’s share of total food expenditures rose to 50.1 percent in 2014, surpassing at-home food sales for the first time.

Food-at-home and away-from-home expenditures in the United States, 1960-2014

ERS monitors the food security of U.S. households through an annual, nationally representative survey. While most U.S. households are food secure, a minority of U.S. households are food insecure—they struggle to afford enough food for all household members. Some experience the more severe very low food security, where food intake of one or more members is reduced and normal eating patterns are disrupted.

U.S. households in the middle-income quintile spend about 12 percent of their incomes on food, but lowest-income families spend over 30 percent.

Food spending and share of income spent on food across U.S. households, 2015

Some of these families may find themselves facing food insecurity…

**Prevalence of food insecurity by selected household characteristics, 2015**


… and seek support from USDA’s food and nutrition assistance programs.

**Inflation-adjusted USDA expenditures for food and nutrition assistance, fiscal 1985-2016**

Participation in SNAP—the largest of these assistance programs—varies across States, reflecting differences in need and program policies.

**Percent of population receiving SNAP benefits in fiscal 2016**

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