

Economic Research Service, USDA

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and analysis on national rural and agricultural conditions and trends, and identifying and assessing the potential impact of public and private sector actions and policies that affect rural areas and the agricultural sector. General functions are:

(1) Analyzing and reporting on current economic and demographic issues facing rural areas and agricultural, especially how changes in the national and global economies affect rural areas and the agriculture sector.

(2) Determining the effects of economic, social, and governmental events and actions on the demand for and supply of rural local government services, the quality of such services, and the relationships between local services and the viability of rural communities.

(3) Developing and disseminating information on current trends in the non-metropolitan and farm populations, the number, location and characteristics of such people, and the factors associated with these trends.

(4) Developing estimates and analyzing labor force trends in rural labor markets, including analyses of unemployment and employment by industry and occupational groups, including farm labor.

(5) Developing data on the income situation of rural people and evaluating the effectiveness of alternative public policies and programs in improving incomes of rural people, especially people in disadvantaged groups.

(6) Monitoring information on and analyzing the development of rural portions of geographic regions of the United States, including changes in industry mix, impacts of energy costs, credit availability, and other economic activities.

(7) Analyzing and reporting on developments in rural and agricultural financial markets and in Federal tax laws, and their consequences for agriculture and rural economies.

(8) Collecting and disseminating financial information on farms and farm enterprises, and developing techniques necessary to measure and describe the financial condition of the agriculture sector and its components.

[61 FR 1827, Jan. 24, 1996, as amended at 64 FR 40736, July 28, 1999]

§ 3700.4 Authority to act for the Administrator.

In the absence of the Administrator, the following officials are designated to serve as Acting Administrator in the order indicated:

Associate Administrator
Director, Commercial Agriculture Division
Director, Food and Consumer Economics Division
Director, Natural Resources and Environment Division
Director, Rural Economy Division
Director, Information Services Division
Director, Office of Energy and New Uses

PART 3701—PUBLIC INFORMATION

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301, 552; 7 CFR part 1, subpart A and appendix A thereto.

SOURCE: 66 FR 57845, Nov. 19, 2001, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3701.1 General statement.

This part is issued in accordance with the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture in part 1, subpart A of this title and appendix A thereto, implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552). The Secretary's regulations, as implemented by the regulations in this part, govern the availability of records of the Economic Research Service (ERS) to the public.

§ 3701.2 Public inspection, copying, and indexing.

5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2) requires that certain materials be made available for public inspection and copying and that a current index of these materials be published quarterly or otherwise be made available. Members of the public may request access to such materials maintained by ERS at the following office: Information Staff, ARS, REE, USDA, Room 1-2248, Mail Stop 5128, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705-5128; Telephone (301) 504-1640 or

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(301) 504-1655; TTY-VOICE (301) 504-1743. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Information maintained in our electronic reading room can be accessed at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/foia/#Electronic>.

§ 3701.3 Requests for records.

Requests for records of ERS under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(3) shall be made in accordance with § 1.5 of this title and submitted to the FOIA Coordinator, Information Staff, ARS, REE, USDA, Mail Stop 5128, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705-5128; Telephone (301) 504-1640 or (301) 504-1655; TTY-VOICE (301) 504-1743; Facsimile (301) 504-1648; e-mail vherberger@ars.usda.gov or shutchison@ars.usda.gov. The FOIA Coordinator is delegated authority to make determinations regarding such requests in accordance with § 1.3(c) of this title.

§ 3701.4 Multitrack processing.

(a) When ERS has a significant number of requests, the nature of which precludes a determination within 20 working days, the requests may be processed in a multitrack processing system, based on the date of receipt, the amount of work and time involved in processing the request, and whether the request qualifies for expedited processing.

(b) ERS may establish as many processing tracks as appropriate; processing within each track shall be based on a first-in, first-out concept, and rank-ordered by the date of receipt of the request.

(c) A requester whose request does not qualify for the fastest track may be given an opportunity to limit the scope of the request in order to qualify for the fastest track. This multitrack processing system does not lessen agency responsibility to exercise due

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diligence in processing requests in the most expeditious manner possible.

(d) ERS shall process requests in each track on a “first-in, first-out” basis, unless there are unusual circumstances as set forth in § 1.16 of this title, or the requester is entitled to expedited processing as set forth in § 1.9 of this title.

§ 3701.5 Denials.

If the FOIA Coordinator determines that a requested record is exempt from mandatory disclosure and that discretionary release would be improper, the FOIA Coordinator shall give written notice of denial in accordance with § 1.7(a) of this title.

§ 3701.6 Appeals.

Any person whose request is denied shall have the right to appeal such denial. Appeals shall be made in accordance with § 1.14 of this title and should be addressed as follows: Administrator, ERS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

§ 3701.7 Requests for published data and information.

Published data and reports produced by ERS since 1996 are available on the ERS Web site at <http://www.ers.usda.gov>. Searching on the website is available by topic, by title, or by date. The titles displayed in the search include ERS’s separately published research reports as well as articles in ERS-produced periodicals. Full text of all the titles are available at no cost (usually in PDF Files). Printed copies and reports published before 1996 (while supplies last) can be purchased from the ERS-NASS sales desk at the National Technical Information Center at 1-800-999-6779 (8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, M-F).