



United States
Department
of Agriculture

Economic
Research
Report
Number 56

March 2008



A Report from the Economic Research Service

www.ers.usda.gov

Convergence in Global Food Demand and Delivery

**Anita Regmi, Hiroyuki Takeshima,
and Laurian Unnevehr**

Abstract

Using food expenditures and food sales data over 1990-2004, this report examines whether food consumption and delivery trends are converging across 47 high- and middle-income countries. Middle-income countries, such as China and Mexico, appear to be following trends in high-income countries, measured across several dimensions of food system growth and change. Convergence is apparent in most important food expenditure categories and in indicators of food system modernization such as supermarket and fast-food sales.

Keywords: food expenditure, food delivery, food demand convergence, retail food sales, foodservice sales, food label claims, supermarket sales, fast-food sales, global food market.

About the Authors

Anita Regmi is in the Market and Trade Economics Division, Economic Research Service (ERS), U.S. Department of Agriculture. Hiroyuki Takeshima is a Ph.D. Candidate and Laurian Unnevehr a professor, both at the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois. Senior authorship is not assigned.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank Erik Dohlman and Bill Coyle of ERS, USDA; Linda Fulponi of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Ernest Carter of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service; and Everett Petersen of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for their reviews of the report. This research was supported under USDA/ERS Cooperative Agreement # 43-3AEK-5-80053. Finally, special thanks are extended to Dale Simms for editorial assistance, and Wynnicc Pointer-Napper for design assistance.

Content

Summary iii

Introduction 1

Background 3

Data and Methodology 5

Results 8

 Convergence in Food Expenditures 8

 Convergence in the Food Delivery System. 10

 Similarity in Product Preferences 12

Conclusions 15

References 16

**Appendix A—Details of Convergence Regression Results
for Food Expenditure Categories** 18

 A1. Regression results for total food expenditures 18

 A2. Regression results for total cereal expenditures 19

 A3. Regression results for total meat expenditures 20

 A4. Regression results for total seafood expenditures 21

 A5. Regression results for total dairy expenditures 22

 A6. Regression results for total oil and fat expenditures 23

 A7. Regression results for total fruit expenditures 24

 A8. Regression results for total vegetable expenditures 25

 A9. Regression results for total sugar and confectionery
 expenditures 26

 A10. Regression results for total caffeinated beverage
 expenditures 27

 A11. Regression results for total soft drink expenditures 28

 A12. Regression results for other food expenditures 29

Appendix B—Euromonitor International 30

 Data Background. 30

 Data Definitions 30

 Data Obtained from IMIS 30

 Data Obtained from GMID 31

Appendix C—Product Label Data 33