

## A SNAPSHOT OF U.S. RURAL AND URBAN AREAS

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) has just released updated estimates for U.S. population and other topics. This information is available by county and state as well as for the United States as a whole.

### U.S. Urban and Rural Population

The ERS projects that the 2009 total population for the U.S. will be 307,006,550. This breaks into an estimated urban population of 256,758,711 and an estimated rural population of 50,247,839. For both rural and urban areas these numbers indicate an increase from the 2000 population. It is an increase of approximately 1.4 million residents in rural areas and an increase of approximately 24 million residents in urban areas.



### Income, Poverty and Employment in Urban and Rural Areas

According to the ERS fact sheets, the per capita income in rural areas (measured in 2007 dollars) has increased from \$28,023 in 2006 to \$28,781 in 2007. This represents an increase of 5.4%. Urban areas of the United States experienced an increase in per capita income during the same time period of 3.8%. In 2006 the per capita income for urban areas was \$39,806. This increased to \$40,570 in 2007.

The average earnings per job in rural areas increased from \$33,224 in 2006 to \$33,693 in 2007, an increase of 2.8%. In urban areas, the average earnings per job in 2006 was \$51,510. This increased to \$51,551 in 2007, an increase of .2%.

Poverty estimates for 2008 show that approximately 15% of rural residents and approximately 13% of urban residents are living at or below poverty level.

Both urban and rural areas have experienced an increase in unemployment. In 2007, the unemployment rate in rural areas was 4.8% and in urban areas was 4.6%. In 2008, the unemployment rate in rural areas was 5.6% and in urban areas was 5.8%.

### Farm Characteristics

In 2008, the number of U.S. farms was 2,200,000. This is a slight decrease from a year earlier when the number of farms was 2,204,950.

Based on the U.S. Census of Agriculture, the ERS lists the approximate total land area (in acres) that was used for farming in 2007 as 922,095,840. This represents 40.8% of the approximate total land area in the U.S. The average farm size for 2007 was 418 acres with approximately 3.6% of farms working 2,000 or more acres.

### Top Commodities, Exports, and Counties

The ERS lists the top five agriculture commodities in 2008 and the percent of U.S. total value:

- |                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| 1. Corn            | 15.9% |
| 2. Cattle & calves | 14.9% |
| 3. Dairy products  | 10.7% |
| 4. Soybeans        | 9.0%  |
| 5. Broilers        | 7.1%  |

The top five agriculture exports and their value as estimated for 2008:

- |                           |                 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Soybeans & products    | \$19.33 billion |
| 2. Feed grains & products | 18.14 billion   |
| 3. Wheat & products       | 14.83 billion   |
| 4. Other                  | 12.68 billion   |
| 5. Live animals & meat    | 9.45 billion    |

According to the ERS, the top five counties in agricultural sales in 2007 were all in California (in order): Fresno County, Tulare County, Kern County, Merced County and Monterey County.

For much more information and research please visit the Economic Research Service website:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/StateFacts/>

*Don't forget to check out the National Association for Rural Mental Health  
36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference:*



**National Association for  
Rural Mental Health  
36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

June 2-5, 2010  
Colorado Convention Center, Denver, Colorado

<http://www.narmh.org/>