

**New Diet, Consumption, & Health information at  
Economic Research Service (ERS)**

Issues in Food Assistance - How do food assistance programs improve the well being of low-income families?

The costs of USDA's three largest food assistance programs-food stamps, school meals and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)-are easier to measure than the benefits of those programs. In 2000, the three programs' direct costs were \$28 billion. As shown in this issues brief, the well being of low-income families who participate in food assistance programs is enhanced by the alleviation of the severity of poverty, an increase in food security, satisfactory nutrient intake, and increases in household food expenditures.

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr26/fanrr26-9/>

Effects of Food Assistance and Nutrition Programs On Nutrition and Health: Volume II, Data Sources

This is the second of four reports completed by Abt Associates Inc., under the contract "The Nutrition and Health Outcome Study." This report is an evaluation of various data sources for their potential for analyzing the impacts of USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs. Data sources are evaluated against three criteria: coverage of both program participants and non-participants; identification of participants and determination of eligibility among non-participants; and availability of impact measures. Each data source is classified into one of four categories: principal, potential, recognized, and insufficient. Principal and potential sources are discussed and profiled in this report.

See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FANRR19-2/>