Lessons from Leveraging Available Data to Enhance  
The National Household Food Acquisition and Purchase Survey (FoodAPS)  

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ERS’ Mission

Inform and enhance public and private decision making on economic and policy issues related to Agriculture, food, rural development, and the environment.
Mission of Food Economics Division

• Take stock of the contemporary food policy and program objectives related on consumer food choice behaviors and their outcomes such as nutrition, health, and food security.

• Identify the key questions and issues of interest to the Administration, the Congress, and the public.

• Obtain and or develop the necessary data and information in support of the analytical work necessary to examine the identified/evolving questions.

• Produce the right products and information, and provide wide and responsible access to the data, and the resulting statistical results and methodologies used.
Unique Data Products*

- **Food Availability and Loss**
- **Food Price Outlook**
- **Food Security in the United States**
- **Food Expenditures**
- **Food Dollar**
- **Farm-to-Retail Price Spreads**

- **Retail Fruit and Vegetable Prices**
- **Quarterly Food-at-Home Prices**
- **Cost Estimates of Foodborne Illnesses**
- **Food Access Research Atlas**
- **Food Environment Atlas**
- **SNAP Policy Database**

* Reviews
# Annual Web Usage Stats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Product</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Access Research Atlas</td>
<td>350,726</td>
<td>294,836</td>
<td>308,247</td>
<td>322,817</td>
<td>371,016</td>
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<td>Fruit and Vegetable Prices</td>
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<td>52,408</td>
<td>77,441</td>
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<td>Food Environment Atlas</td>
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<td>Food Price Outlook</td>
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<td>111,325</td>
<td>115,122</td>
<td>105,129</td>
<td>108,906</td>
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<td>Food Expenditures</td>
<td>49,238</td>
<td>41,933</td>
<td>44,464</td>
<td>45,996</td>
<td>45,430</td>
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<td>Food Availability and Loss Data System</td>
<td>57,135</td>
<td>59,171</td>
<td>65,006</td>
<td>57,272</td>
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<td>Food Consumption and Nutrient Intakes</td>
<td>19,288</td>
<td>17,248</td>
<td>22,299</td>
<td>19,720</td>
<td>16,552</td>
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<tr>
<td>Price Spreads from Farm to Consumer</td>
<td>9,679</td>
<td>9,254</td>
<td>17,314</td>
<td>14,693</td>
<td>15,167</td>
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<td>Food Dollar Series</td>
<td>13,163</td>
<td>12,367</td>
<td>13,748</td>
<td>15,463</td>
<td>14,897</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **FoodAPS**                                          | **3,946**| **9,482**| **11,748**| **15,483**| **14,100**| 2nd q, 2018
| Food Security in the United States                   | 15,120 | 14,162 | 19,711 | 19,766 | 13,872 |
| Cost Estimates of Foodborne Illnesses                | --     | 4,920  | 7,771  | 8,111  | 8,280  |
| Commodity Consumption by Pop Characteristics          | 8,366  | 7,584  | 7,105  | 6,345  | 5,096  |
| Quarterly Food-At-Home Price Database                | 5,407  | 4,697  | 4,391  | 4,229  | 3,736  |
| SNAP Policy Database                                  | 3,143  | 3,122  | 3,898  | 4,209  | 3,310  |

2nd q, 2018
Up by 1368
The three-prong strategy:

1. Invest in proprietary data
2. Supplement existing government surveys
3. Integrate and link disparate sources of data

Why FoodAPS?

- **Diets, nutrition & obesity**
  - What foods households buy, how much they pay, where they shop, and what’s the nutritional quality?

- **Food and nutrition safety net**
  - How are participants in food assistance similar or different along these dimensions different from other low-income nonparticipants?

- **Changing consumer preferences**
  - How do consumers respond to price changes, new information, and product attributes?

- **Food environment and affordability**
  - What’s the role of food environment on food choices? Does ease of access matter for nutritional quality of purchases?
FoodAPS
https://www.ers.usda.gov/foodaps

• Jointly sponsored with FNS

• Designed and implemented in consultation with government, academic, and industry leaders and experts
What is FoodAPS?

- It’s a “Study” rather than a simple “Survey”
  - Integrates **multiple types of information from multiple disparate sources**
  - Brings together **food, economics, nutrition, health, food assistance program participation, and environmental factors**
- **NOT** intake, rather acquisitions
- More than an expenditure study, FoodAPS focuses on **prices and quantities of acquired food at the item level**
- Includes foods **at home and food away from home items as well as free foods**
- Only sources of information on **items** food assistance participants acquire using program benefits and their own resources
## Data Collection Week for a Household

### Household tracks food acquisitions
in booklets and with scanner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Screen**
- **Train HH**
- **Interview #1** (Demographics & program participation)
- **Interview #3** (Knowledge & security & finances, income)
- **Incentives**
- **Collect material**

**PR = Primary Respondent**

PR calls to report FAFH

USDA Economic Research Service
www.ers.usda.gov
FoodAPS Platform Integrates Multiple Sources of Disparate Data

- State Administrative Records
- Characteristics of local Food Environment
- Stores
- Stores & Restaurants
- Food item descriptions

- State
- Federal
- Proprietary
FoodAPS Resources

FoodAPS National Household Food Acquisition and Purchase Survey

USDA’s National Household Food Acquisition and Purchase Survey (FoodAPS) is the first nationally representative survey of American households to collect unique and comprehensive data about household food purchases and acquisitions. Detailed information was collected about foods purchased or otherwise acquired for consumption at home and away from home, including foods acquired through food and nutrition assistance programs. The survey includes nationally representative data from 4,826 households, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households, low-income households not participating in SNAP, and higher income households. For a more detailed description of the survey, see Background.

What’s next for FoodAPS? USDA has awarded a contract to develop and implement a second round of FoodAPS (FoodAPS-2). See Background: What’s next? for details.

ERS has expanded access to FoodAPS data by removing identifying variables and publishing public-use data files (see below). Users can now download the public-use data in three file formats: SAS, STATA, and CSV. If the public-use files are not sufficient for the researchers’ needs, see the Data Access page for instructions about how to gain access to restricted-use data.

The public-use files include the household-level and individual-level interview files, the food-at-home (FAH) and food-away-from-home (FAFH) event files, the FAH and FAFH item files, data from the Meals and Snacks form, a summary of the individual daily reporting status, household access to FAFH outlets and SNAP-authorized FAH retailers, and estimates of household SNAP eligibility. All codebooks and a User’s Guide, providing an overview of the survey and data sets as well as general notes about using the data, are also available (see Documentation below).

- Public-Use Data Files and Codebooks