Conclusions

The objective of this study was to project U.S. commodity consumption for the period 2000-2020, using data from USDA's 1994-96 and 1998 Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals. An econometric system was estimated (1) to explain consumers' eating-out habits as well as their diet-health knowledge, and (2) to relate food consumption, both at home and away from home separately, to consumers' eating-out habits, diet-knowledge knowledge, income, and their social and demographic characteristics. Using projected values of economic, social, and demographic factors for 2000-2020, we projected at-home and away-from-home food consumption for the same period. Then we used a unique food-commodity translation database to convert food consumption to commodity consumption. Twenty-five food groups and 22 commodity groups were analyzed in this study.

The total consumption of all 22 commodities is predicted to rise during the period 2000-2020, mainly due to the projected addition of 50 million consumers in the Nation. But, the per capita consumption of many commodities is predicted to fall. The results suggest that fruits will lead all commodities in terms of growth in both total and per capita consumption. Certain vegetables, such as lettuce and tomatoes, are predicted to grow substantially, while per capita potato consumption (fried and other) is predicted to decline, retarding the growth in total U.S. potato consumption. The increase in meat,

poultry, and fish consumption varies. Per capita fish and poultry consumption is predicted to rise while per capita consumption of beef, pork, and other meat is predicted to fall. Per capita consumption of milk and cheese is predicted to fall, while per capita consumption of yogurt and eggs is predicted to rise. The consumption of nuts and seeds and grains is also predicted to rise over the next two decades.

Both at-home and away-from-home fruit consumption are predicted to grow substantially over the 2000-2020 period, with at-home growth ranging between 24 and 28 percent and away-from-home growth between 20 and 22 percent. Fish consumption is expected to grow by 30 percent away from home and 23 percent at home. The growth of away-from-home fish consumption exceeds the growth of at-home consumption for other commodities, including beef, pork, other meat, eggs, milk, vegetable oils, nuts and seeds, all vegetables, grains, and sugar. The separation of at-home and away-from-home consumption in our analysis points out that food and commodity consumption is affected by a host of economic, social, and demographic factors. Some of the factors, such as income, have opposite effects on these two market segments. In addition to its direct, positive effect on fruit consumption, for example, rising income boosts eating out and hence dampens fruit consumption away from home. But, rising income also contributes to improved diet-health knowledge and hence results in more fruit consumption at home.

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