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Technological Changes in the Transportation Sector--Effects on U.S. Food and Agricultural Trade: A Proceedings

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Miscellaneous Publication No. 1566. 112 pp, October 2000

ERS sponsored a workshop, Technological and Structural Change in the Transportation Sector: Effects on U.S. Food and Agricultural Trade, March 17-18, 1999, in Washington, DC. The program's objectives were to raise awareness within ERS about the role and importance of transportation in U.S. food and agricultural trade and to discuss the need of an agency research agenda in this area. More than 60 people attended. Bob Thompson of the World Bank and Jeffrey Frankel of the Brookings Institution led with discussions about the role of transportation in the global food system and the importance of integrating geography and transportation in analysis of international trade. Other panels dealt with transportation technology, past and future, the changing policy environment for ocean shipping, logistical and technological developments aiding exports of specific commodities, including the use of supply chain management. Representatives of the Agricultural Marketing Service discussed the availability of transportation cost data, and the availability of other shipping data was discussed by representatives of the PIERS database, a product of the Journal of Commerce. Two ERS research projects were summarized, one using GTAP and another applying the gravity model to estimate the extent to which distance is less of an inhibiting factor in exporting certain U.S. agricultural exports. The administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, the ERS associate administrator, and representatives of the Transportation Research Board, the USDA's World Board, and the Farm Foundation discussed potential ways ERS could include the transportation variable in its research. The program was cosponsored by the Farm Foundation and World Perspectives, Inc.

Keywords: transportation, distance, technology, agricultural trade, united states

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