

Food and Nutrition Policy Research



For more than two decades, RTI International has been analyzing and evaluating the effects of policies and regulations affecting food and agriculture to improve the health and well being of our nation. Our multidisciplinary research capabilities include regulatory impact and policy analysis, model development, database design and maintenance, risk analysis, program evaluation, consumer behavior research, consumer and industry surveys, field data collection, and food marketing studies.

At RTI, we combine an in-depth understanding of a broad range of food policy topics with extensive quantitative and qualitative research capabilities. Specific topics include food assistance and insecurity, food labeling, food marketing, food safety, nutrition, and obesity.

We provide independent, science-based research to help agencies and organizations achieve their missions and address analytical challenges. Our multidisciplinary staff of economists, program evaluators, nutritionists, behavioral scientists, policy analysts, statisticians, survey researchers, and risk assessors conduct research for private organizations and federal agencies. Recent clients include the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of Health, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Capabilities Highlights

RTI's research capabilities provide the foundation for addressing the complex and pressing food policy issues affecting our nation's public health and economy. Our research staff offer a full spectrum research capabilities.

Analysis and Modeling Capabilities

- Compliance cost estimation
- Consumer demand system modeling
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Econometrics
- Economic modeling
- Nutritional epidemiology
- Probabilistic risk assessment
- Program and policy evaluation
- Scanner data analysis
- Statistical analysis

Data Collection Capabilities

- Consumer and industry surveys by telephone, mail, and Web
- Dietary recall and food frequency
- Expert elicitation
- Focus groups and in-depth interviews
- Industry interviews
- Observation studies



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- On-site data collection
- Virtual-reality shopping simulator (*iSHOPPE*)

Other Capabilities

- Database design and maintenance
- Education and training content development, delivery, and evaluation
- Literature reviews
- Scientific peer reviews

Research Highlights

Consumer Research

- Characterization of consumer use and understanding of preparation instructions for meat and poultry products
- Estimation of consumer-level food loss that occurs at and away from home
- Experimental studies on consumer response to alternative nutrition labeling features
- Development and evaluation of educational materials on foodborne illness prevention for older adults
- Evaluation of USDA campaigns on consumer food thermometer use

Economic Modeling

- Estimation of costs to the Gulf oyster industry of implementing technologies to reduce risk of *Vibrio vulnificus* illness
- Estimation of economic effects of alternative marketing arrangements in the livestock and meat industries
- Estimation of economic effects of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) rules on beef markets
- Cost model for retail product labeling changes
- Impact analysis of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) regulation on meat and poultry plants

Program and Policy Evaluation

- Evaluation of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) nutrition education demonstration projects
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Vendor Management Study

- Assessment of front-of-package (FOP) and shelf nutrition labeling systems' effects on consumers, food producers, and retailers and development and testing of FOP algorithms
- Evaluation of the Nutrient Rich Foods approach for improving dietary quality
- Estimation of the effect of soda taxes on caloric intake and tax revenue

Risk Analysis

- Farm-to-fork risk assessment for fresh produce
- Consumer phase risk assessment for *Listeria monocytogenes* in deli meats
- Improving hygiene and food preparation practices in child care centers
- Public health risk assessment for FDA regulated commodity-hazard combinations
- Integrated decision support system for food safety risk management

Surveys and Databases

- 2009–2010 FDA Food Safety Survey
- Survey of meat, poultry, and egg product establishments' food safety practices
- Private food testing laboratories database
- Dietary supplement, labeling, and ingredient databases
- Livestock and meat marketing transactions data collection and industry surveys

Working Closely with Our Clients

RTI is a federally qualified vendor, pre-approved to work with agencies under multiple contract mechanisms with USDA, FDA, and PSC and through GSA MOBIS Consulting Services (SIN 874-1) and Survey Services (SIN 874-3).

More Information

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RTI International is one of the world's leading research institutes, dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. Our staff of more than 2,800 provides research and technical services to governments and businesses in more than 40 countries in the areas of health and pharmaceuticals, education and training, surveys and statistics, advanced technology, international development, economic and social policy, energy and the environment, and laboratory testing and chemical analysis. For more information, visit www.rti.org.

RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.

