

How we work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Solutions for food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, and nutrition based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management approaches.

As a trusted partner to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), our team supports your mission to provide economic opportunity through innovation, promote climate-smart agricultural practices, and preserve our natural resources. Through research and analysis, we support decision-making and policy development that improves food and nutrition security throughout the world.

With more than 60 years of experience, our researchers are at the forefront of improving the human condition; helping to solve issues in the agricultural, food, and environmental domains; and ensuring a sustainable and equitable future for all.

Our Expertise



Agriculture and the Environment

Providing insight to our partners to better manage resources and develop policies for food production amid environmental changes. We develop models to account for the interrelated nature of climate challenges and food and agricultural markets.



Food Labeling and Marketing

Conducting analyses using a broad range of tools to understand the effects of labeling and marketing. We evaluate options and provide insights to improve nutrition, food safety, consumer practices, and to reduce food waste.



Food Safety

Increasing the safety of the food supply at all stages of the food supply chain through our unique application of expertise in policy research and analytics, combined with experience in epidemiology of foodborne diseases, risk analysis, consumer behavior, and implementation.



Nutrition and Food Security

Delivering solutions related to food security and nutrition, simultaneously addressing issues of equity. We provide research and analyses to improve food choices and accessibility for all consumers both domestically and internationally.

Analysis & Modeling

- Consumer preference modeling
- Cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses
- Econometrics
- Economy-wide modeling
- Foodborne disease epidemiology
- Geospatial analyses and data visualizations
- Land use modeling
- Nutritional epidemiology
- Scanner data analyses
- Techno-economic analyses
- Vulnerability assessments

Other Capabilities

- Bioinformatics and machine learning/artificial intelligence
- Community-based participatory research
- Database design and maintenance
- Health and risk communication
- Intervention development
- Systematic and scoping reviews
- Scientific peer reviews
- Virtual reality and web-based training and education

Program & Policy Evaluation

- Formative research
- Process evaluation
- Outcome evaluation
- Impact evaluation

Data Collection

- Consumer, producer, and industry surveys
- Dietary recall and food frequencies
- Expert elicitations
- Focus groups
- In-depth interviews
- Observation studies

Capabilities

Experience

Building Decision-Support Tools to Advance Sustainable and Cost-Effective Strategies

RTI supports USDA's aim to strengthen climate smart agriculture by assessing climate change impacts on future crop productivity.

Assessing the Impact of Elevated Carbon Dioxide on Global Nutrient Availability

In collaboration with EPA, USDA, and other research partners, RTI led a study to assess the combined effects of changes in productivity and nutrient content on global nutrient availability per capita at the country level under climate change scenarios.

Developing Measures of the Food Price Environment

RTI is supporting USDA in assessing store and household scanner data, creating the Monthly Food-at-Home Price Database, and developing other data products that enhance researchers' ability to use the data for economic analyses.

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Trade Model

RTI developed an Excel-based model of more than 700 food and agricultural products to allow USDA to quickly estimate the economic impacts of new trade policies and regulatory measures on trade flows, prices, and consumer and producer surplus.

Potential Impacts of the Military Hunger Prevention Act on SNAP Eligibility

RTI conducted a study for the USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS), to examine how eligibility for SNAP within active-duty families would change if the Military Hunger Prevention Act is enacted.

Expert Panel to Estimate the Costs of Food Safety

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) required data to implement food safety measures. RTI developed estimates of costs of capital equipment, labor, materials, and other costs associated with food safety investments made by meat and poultry slaughter and processing establishments under FSIS's jurisdiction.



Evaluation of the DC Healthy Tots Act (HTA) Policy Implementation

RTI assisted the National Farm to School Network in assessing the implementation and impacts of the HTA local food reimbursement incentive.

Analyzing Consumers' Value of "Product of USA" Labeling Claims

The USDA FSIS received complaints and petitions that suggest that the "Product of USA" labeling claim may not accurately reflect consumer understanding about the origin of FSIS-regulated meat products. To help inform FSIS's future rulemaking around this labeling, RTI is conducting a nationally representative web-based survey and experiment to provide information on consumer awareness, understanding, and willingness to pay for the current "Product of USA" label versus other potential revised definitions. The survey will use a limited-time exposure experiment to assess consumer awareness and a discrete choice experiment to measure consumer willingness to pay.

Scanner Capability of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Authorized Small Retailers

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) requires all SNAP-authorized retailers to use scanning technologies that can distinguish between SNAP-eligible items and ineligible items when redeeming SNAP benefits. RTI conducted interviews with vendors, a nationally representative survey of small SNAP-authorized retailers, and in-depth interviews with a subset of retailers. We analyzed the data to estimate adoption rates for scanning technology among small SNAP-authorized retailers to assess readiness for meeting the Farm Bill requirement, described the barriers and benefits to adopting scanning technologies, and provided cost estimates for nonadopting retailers to comply with this requirement.

USDA Offices We Serve

- Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
- Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- Economic Research Service (ERS)
- Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
- Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
- Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)
- Forest Service (FS)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Contract Vehicles & GSA Schedules

- Programs Related to Food Safety (FSIS)
 - Contract Number: 12-3A94-18-A-0005
 - Period of Performance: 8/31/2018-8/30/2023
- GSA Multiple Award Schedule
- OASIS Pool 1
- OASIS Pool 2: Social Sciences
- OASIS Pool 4

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