

The National Academies of SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

Panel on Improving USDA's Consumer Data for Food and Nutrition Policy Research Third Meeting – September 21, 2018

The National Academy of Sciences Building, Room 120
2101 Constitution Ave NW, Washington, DC

AGENDA

Meeting Goals: The panel's third meeting will include a number of presentations geared toward informing the panel as it considers its charge and continues shaping a strategy for producing a report that fully addresses it. Discussions will continue to focus on the potential of non-survey (e.g., commercial, administrative) data sources, linking of data sources, and the data needs of researchers and policy makers, and the ability of existing data to address questions of interest. Statistical agencies have begun forming data sharing partnerships as a cost-effective way to develop rich data sources that benefits the collaborating agencies as well as policy makers and outside researchers. During closed session, the panel will begin shaping a report outline and work on a strategy for moving forward with drafting text. Panel members should come prepared to discuss what they think the most pressing issues are for the Consumer Food Data System, and for ERS more broadly, to be addressed in the report.

Open Session

8:30 Breakfast available

9:00 Plan for the day, goals for the meeting and of the panel more broadly

– **Marianne Bitler**, *Chair*

9:10 Update on recent developments at ERS and with FoodAPS-2

– **Jay Variyam**, **Mark Denbaly**, ERS

9:30 Improving data for policy research. For this session, researchers are asked to discuss their ideas for improving food and nutrition data—including integration of commercial and administrative data—to inform key policy issues.

- The value (and limits) of linking SNAP administrative data with other types of administrative data (unemployment Insurance, Medicaid, K-12 education) as well as the limits of existing survey data.

– **Colleen Heflin**, Syracuse University

- Use of retail panel loyalty card data and Rhode Island state administrative records (housed in a secure facility at Brown University) to analyze how SNAP benefits are spent. Evidence needed to design a “smarter SNAP”

– **Justine Hastings**, Brown University

- Understanding/assessing the quality of administrative SNAP data used in FoodAPS. Broader thoughts on food consumption data needs for obesity and other health research.
 - **Chuck Courtemanche**, Georgia State University
- Open discussion

11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:15 Data Integration and linkages for policy research, use of administrative data

There is high value to ERS's Consumer Food Data System of linkages to external data sets—e.g., to NHANES, Nielsen datasets, IRI datasets, SNAP administrative data, CPS, SIPP, ACS, BRFSS, CEX, Nationwide Food Consumption Survey, PSID, State and local-level datasets with information on low-income households, etc. During this session, we discuss practices being developed by the statistical agencies for combining data sources.

- Administrative data linkages in the federal statistical system; the Next-Generation Data Platform—a collaboration between Census, ERS and FNS that links SNAP (19 States and 39 counties in CA) and WIC data (11 states) to Census survey data and administrative data: 17 State TANF agencies, VA, HUD and HHS data (Medicare and Medicaid) in a secure environment (described in the White paper provided to the panel).
 - **Amy O'Hara**, panel member and Georgetown University, will introduce the topic, highlighting strengths and weakness, potential and limitations, of statistical agency data linking approaches.
 - **Rachel Shattuck**, Census Bureau, to present views on the quality and utility of what ERS calls the Next-Generation Data Platform, challenges you see for the project going forward, and how the partners ERS/FNS and Census could improve it in the future.
 - **John Eltinge**, Census Bureau, to discuss interagency workshops and explorations related to quality issues associated with using multiple data sources (including proprietary data).
- Record Linkage programs at NCHS. NCHS has developed a record linkage program designed to maximize the scientific value of the Center's population-based surveys. Linked data files create new data resources that can support research to inform the development and evaluation of public health programs and policies. The focus of this presentation will be on existing linkages between NCHS national population health surveys, such as the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), and administrative data collected from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) largest housing assistance programs including, the Housing Choice Voucher program, federally supported public housing, and privately owned, subsidized multifamily housing. The presentation will include an assessment of the concordance between survey and administrative data sources and present results from studies looking at comparisons of health characteristics between persons receiving housing assistance and those who do not.
 - **Lisa Mirel**, NCHS

12:30 *Lunch break*

1:30 Additional non-government sources for filling data gaps in ERS's Consumer Food Data System program

- Feeding America—Collaborates with Urban Institute on a research program that attempts to detail the frequency of visits to food pantries by individuals, either as a temporary, emergency food source or as a regular supplemental food source. Feeding America also has a program to study the effectiveness and efficiency of a range of program interventions. What data do they use; what data do they produce; what are the unmet data needs.
 - **Rob Santos**, Urban Institute. Member of Feeding America Technical Advisory Group
- Improving geospatial information in ERS's food data system (for example, for assessing the role of accessibility of food outlets role in SNAP participation and effectiveness)
 - **Alessandro Bonanno**, Colorado State University
- Open discussion

2:30 Using proprietary data for food policy research

- Types, sources, and considerations in using store scanner data, household scanner data, and nutrition data from labels for food policy research. Presentation is based on researching statistical properties of the data; investigating sources, coverage, and uses of the data; and conducting analyses.
 - **Mary Muth**, RTI
- Understanding WIC issues with proprietary (scanner) data. Comments as a long time user of ERS Consumer Food Data and; ideas about how the data system should evolve over the next decade.
 - **Helen Jensen**, Iowa State
- The Census Bureau's work on improving economic statistics through web scraping and machine learning to discover, collect, and process data from the web.
 - **Carma Hogue**, U.S. Census Bureau
- Open discussion

4:00 *Adjourn*