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Recommended Daily Allowances (RDAs) Soon to Change

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1999 and 2003, from 213.1 pounds to 215.7 pounds. Per capita beef consumption is projected to decline from 64.8 pounds to 60.4 pounds. Per capita pork consumption is projected to decline slightly from 51.9 pounds to 49.8 pounds. Beef’s share of consumption is projected to decline from 30.4 percent to 28 percent, and pork’s share during the same period is projected to decline slightly from 24.4 percent to 23.1 percent. Beef and pork’s loss is poultry’s gain, as poultry’s share is projected to increase from 37 percent to 41 percent.

**Net Farm Income**

Iowa net farm income for 1999 is projected to be down another 9 percent from 1998 to $2.22 billion. This is 15 percent below the five-year average of $2.61 billion from 1993 to 1997. Net farm income is projected to rise rapidly to $2.82 billion in 2002 before declining to $2.48 billion in 2003.

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**Recommended Daily Allowances (RDAs) Soon to Change**

Recommended daily allowances (RDAs), commonly seen on packaged food, may soon be replaced. The Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine is currently revising the RDAs for nutrient intake.

“The Food and Nutrition Board is working to establish new reference intakes for all nutrients, which will be called Daily Reference Intakes (DRIs),” Alicia Carriquiry, associate professor of statistics, said.

There are four DRIs for each nutrient: estimated average requirement (EAR), recommended daily allowances (RDA), adequate intakes (AI), and upper tolerance levels (UL). The DRIs will be concerned not only with inadequate intake levels, but also with excessive intake levels.

Many food intake surveys ask people what they normally eat, or what they eat in one day. However, there were concerns that these approaches didn’t provide the information needed to set dietary policies; and therefore, researchers at Iowa State University developed new statistical methods to address these needs.

“We made a recommendation on the number of days for which information is collected,” Carriquiry said. “When two days of dietary data are available for some individuals in a sample, it’s possible to estimate long-term average intake.”

To implement the new statistical methods, the ISU team developed a software program, which initially was called Software Intake Distribution Estimation (SIDE). Since then, a more user-friendly Windows-based version, C-SIDE, has been developed and that version is the one currently being used by university and government researchers and nutritionists. A PC-based version of the software is under development.

“As more people began to use the statistical method, there was more interest in the software, and an increasing demand for a PC-based version,” said Helen Jensen, Food and Nutrition Policy division head at the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development.

The SIDE or C-SIDE software is used to analyze a given population’s intake of nutrients, Carriquiry said. From this analysis, specific population groups can then be identified as at risk for inadequate or excessive levels of nutrients, Jensen said. Those specific population groups identified could be children, senior citizens, women, or those with low incomes, for example.

“Surveys can tell us the food-intake status of a certain segment of the population. The next step is to evaluate factors associated with food choices, the role of food preparers, and then make recommendations for changes,” Jensen said.

(Editor’s note: Parts of this article were excerpted from the ISU College of Agriculture 1998 Annual Report, page 33.)