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| **Background Regarding USDA Long-term Projections**  USDA’s long-term agricultural projections presented in this report are a departmental consensus on a longrun scenario for the agricultural sector. These projections provide a starting point for discussion of alternative outcomes for the sector.  The scenario presented in this report is not a USDA forecast about the future. Instead, it is a conditional, longrun scenario about what would be expected to happen under a continuation of current farm legislation and other specific assumptions. Critical long‑term assumptions are made for U.S. and international macroeconomic conditions, U.S. and foreign agricultural and trade policies, and growth rates of agricultural productivity in the United States and abroad. The report assumes that there are no domestic or external shocks that would affect global agricultural supply and demand. Normal weather is assumed. Changes in any of these assumptions can significantly affect the projections, and actual conditions that emerge will alter the outcomes.  The report uses as a starting point the short-term projections from the November 2012*World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates* report. The macroeconomic assumptions were completed in October 2012.  The projections analysis was conducted by interagency committees in USDA and reflects a composite of model results and judgment-based analyses. The Economic Research Service had the lead role in preparing the departmental report. The projections and the report were reviewed and cleared by the Interagency Agricultural Projections Committee, chaired by the World Agricultural Outlook Board. USDA participants in the projections analysis and review include the World Agricultural Outlook Board; the Economic Research Service; the Farm Service Agency; the Foreign Agricultural Service; the Agricultural Marketing Service; the Office of the Chief Economist; the Office of Budget and Program Analysis; the Risk Management Agency; the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. |