C-FARE November Newsletter Plaintext:

Market Corner:

The 2020 wildfire season has been remarkable in its scale. In recent months we have seen record-setting amounts of land burning in California and extensive fire events across many states. This increased fire activity is not just a United States phenomenon; 2020 has seen above-average fire activity in Australia, Brazil, Argentina, Russia, and Indonesia.

These wildfires impose both high financial and social costs that include lost forest resources, property and infrastructure losses, disaster relief, lost business activity in affected communities, and increased medical costs.

With an eye toward better understanding the economic aspects of wildfires, C-FARE will host a webinar entitled “Economic Perspectives on Wildfire: Preparation, Property, and Health” on November 16, 2020. This session, co-organized with the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (AERE), will feature a panel of three economists whose expertise centers on wildfires. Our speakers include Drs. Matthew Wibbenmeyer (Resources for the Future), Patty Champ (United States Forest Service), and Eric Zou (University of Oregon). They will be talking about topics that include the breadth of wildfire costs; how communities can better prepare to face wildfire risks; and the contributions of wildfire to increased mortality through smoke exposure, sometimes over surprisingly large distances. I will host the webinar, and Dr. Karen Palmer, AERE President-Elect, will moderate the panel and field audience questions.

There has been no shortage of discussion of how public land management should change in the face of this increased fire risk, and there is renewed interest in issues such as mandatory wildfire risk disclosures for home sales and the role of electrical utilities in managing risk. Some things that I am particularly interested in hearing our panelists’ thoughts on is how key markets such as real estate, insurance, and forest-based resources are likely to evolve in the coming years, as well as their thoughts on what households and businesses in affected areas should be doing now to adapt to increasingly fire-friendly conditions. Please join us at 12 pm EST on Monday, November 16 if you are also interested in hearing more.

For consideration of this and more trends and topics, stay tuned! Share this newsletter with others. And to add your email, simply reply to this email. We want to hear from you

- Sean Cash, Tufts University
Director Spotlight:

MATT HOLT (@mattholtprof) is currently a Professor and Head of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at Virginia Tech. His Ph.D., in Agricultural Economics, is from the University of Missouri.

INTERESTS Broadly, his interest encompasses a set of topics relating to markets for food and natural resources. His more recent research has explored the role of nonlinear dynamics and structural breaks in econometric time series models for natural resource markets and climate-related relationships.

PRESENT He currently serves as a Co-PI on the Three-State Data Science for the Public Good Coordinated Innovation Network that integrates important elements of data science, Cooperative Extension, and experiential learning. A born Hoosier, he and his brother maintain an active farming interest in northern and central Indiana.

RECENT WORK In the past several year’s Matt has published multiple works on a variety of topics including Global Hemispheric Temperatures and Co-Shifting: A Vector Shifting-mean Autoregressive Analysis and The Influence of Weather Extremes on the Spatial Correlation of Corn Yields.

Q1 2021 Trends:

“As the difficult economic situation lengthens, federal nutrition assistance programs are becoming a larger fraction of all consumer food spending more broadly. As the initial stop-gap emergency measures mature, it will be interesting to see how a more lasting nutrition safety net develops during the final season of the COVID struggle.”

25 Years of Food Security Measurement: Request for Proposals

To mark the 25th anniversary of U.S. household food security measurement, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service (USDA ERS) will fund a suite of competitive grants on food security measurement methods, data, and future research needs.

The selection and coordination of the projects will be managed by an external cooperator, a collaboration between Tufts University (Dr. Parke Wilde) and the University of Missouri (Dr. Irma Arteaga). A forthcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) invites proposals for research projects funded up to $50,000 (primarily small projects using secondary data or reviews of the existing research literature) and up to $100,000 (larger projects including primary data collection and new analysis).

We are open to new ideas, innovative approaches, and critical feedback to aid ERS in advancing food security measurement and research. The selected proposals may cover a variety of topics,
but all selected proposals will demonstrate actionable items that ERS can pursue to improve or extend the food security measurement, data, and research program.

Each grantee will produce a written conference paper, present the paper at the conference in April 2022, and produce a manuscript for inclusion in a journal special issue with a draft manuscript due in August and a final manuscript due in November 2022.

Contact parke.wilde@tufts.edu to receive the RFP.

New Directions:

**Could Working From Home Be Better For Your Health?** A 2020 study from The Review of Economics of the Household by Brandon J. Restrepo (USDA ERS) and Eliana Zeballos (USDA ERS) suggests that those who work from home are likely to spend 25 more minutes engaged in food production per day and 48 more minutes eating and drinking per day. This may provide teleworkers with health benefits since home-produced meals tend to be lower in calories and higher in nutrients. [The full study is available here…](https://example.com) [Tina Witherspoon / Unsplash]

**Is Soil Sensitivity To Drought Getting Worse?** Corn yields within the U.S. Corn Belt have increased despite changes in climate. This trend in increased yield has been coupled with an increase in soil sensitivity to drought. This Stanford Woods study not only displays a problem but also offers some ways to reverse the effects. [The full study is available here…](https://example.com) [Chris Bair / Unsplash]

**Are Consumers Confused About Whole Grain Labeling?** Parke Wilde and Fang Fang Zhang of Tufts University dove deep into whether or not consumers are able to differentiate what is the most healthy, whole-grain choice when given multiple options. Their findings were that 47% of the respondents were incorrect when asked about bread products and 29-37% incorrect with cracker products. [The full study is available here…](https://example.com) [Foodism360 / Unsplash]