

## Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: Patterns of Price Differences Between Nontraditional and Traditional Food Retailers

Type of Report  
(ERR, EIB, EB) Economic Research Report

Agency: Economic Research Service [X] Influential Scientific Information  
USDA [ ] Highly Influential Scientific Assessment

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Subject of Review: Nontraditional stores, including mass merchandisers, supercenters, club warehouse stores, and dollar stores, have increased their food offerings over the past 15 years and often promote themselves as a lower-priced alternative to traditional supermarkets. How much lower *are* food prices at these stores? In order to better understand nontraditional stores' impact on the affordability of food, this study analyzed 2004-2006 Nielsen Homescan data, which includes all food-at-home purchases for about 40,000 households in 52 markets and selected non-metro areas. Four broad food groups, dairy, meat, fruits and vegetables, and grains, were used to compare price differences at the national and market level. These food group categories were divided into four levels of aggregation for each year. The broadest aggregation level was comprised of broad food categories, such as low-fat milk. The second level of aggregation compared products of the same brand or a narrower subgroup of the broad categories (for items that do not have national brands, such as fresh fruit). The third level of aggregation compared products with the same individual package sizes, such as 6 ounce containers of yogurt. The final and most specific aggregation level compared products with the same UPC. The most commonly purchased products were used in this study at each aggregation level. A linear regression model was used to control for other factors that may influence the average price for a given food item or group of foods, such as region and quarter purchased.

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to ensure the high-quality of the economic analysis, transparent explanation of methods, objective interpretation of results, and effective communication to the intended audience.

Type of Review: [ ] Panel Review [X] Individual Reviewers  
[ ] Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 5/5/10 End: XX/XX/XX Completed: 7/8/10

Number of Reviewers: [ ] 3 or fewer [X] 4 to 10 [ ] More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Economists

Reviewers selected by: [X] Agency [ ] Designated Outside Organization  
Organization's Name:

Opportunities for Public Comment? [ ] Yes [X] No

If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:

How:

When:

Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No