



United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service

Disseminating Government Data Effectively in the Age of Open Data

Mirvat Sewadeh

The Economic Research Service (ERS)

- One of the 13 principle Federal statistical agencies
- Over 30 data products covering various economic aspects of food and agriculture from the farm to retail level



Agenda

- Context
- Challenges
- Good/effective practices



A new and evolving context

- Open Data policy
- Increased demand for statistical information (quantity and quality)
- Rapidly changing technology *and* user expectations



Internal challenges

- Prevalence of data silos
- Understanding (and keeping up with) user needs
- Communicating uncertainty



Objective

- **Objective:** Make the *Right* data available to the *Right* users in the *Right* format
- **Right Data** Relevant (timely, topical), accurate, meet federal standards
- **Right Users** Data reach the intended users
- **Right Format** Data are available to users in a format that meet their needs



Effective practices at ERS

Right data

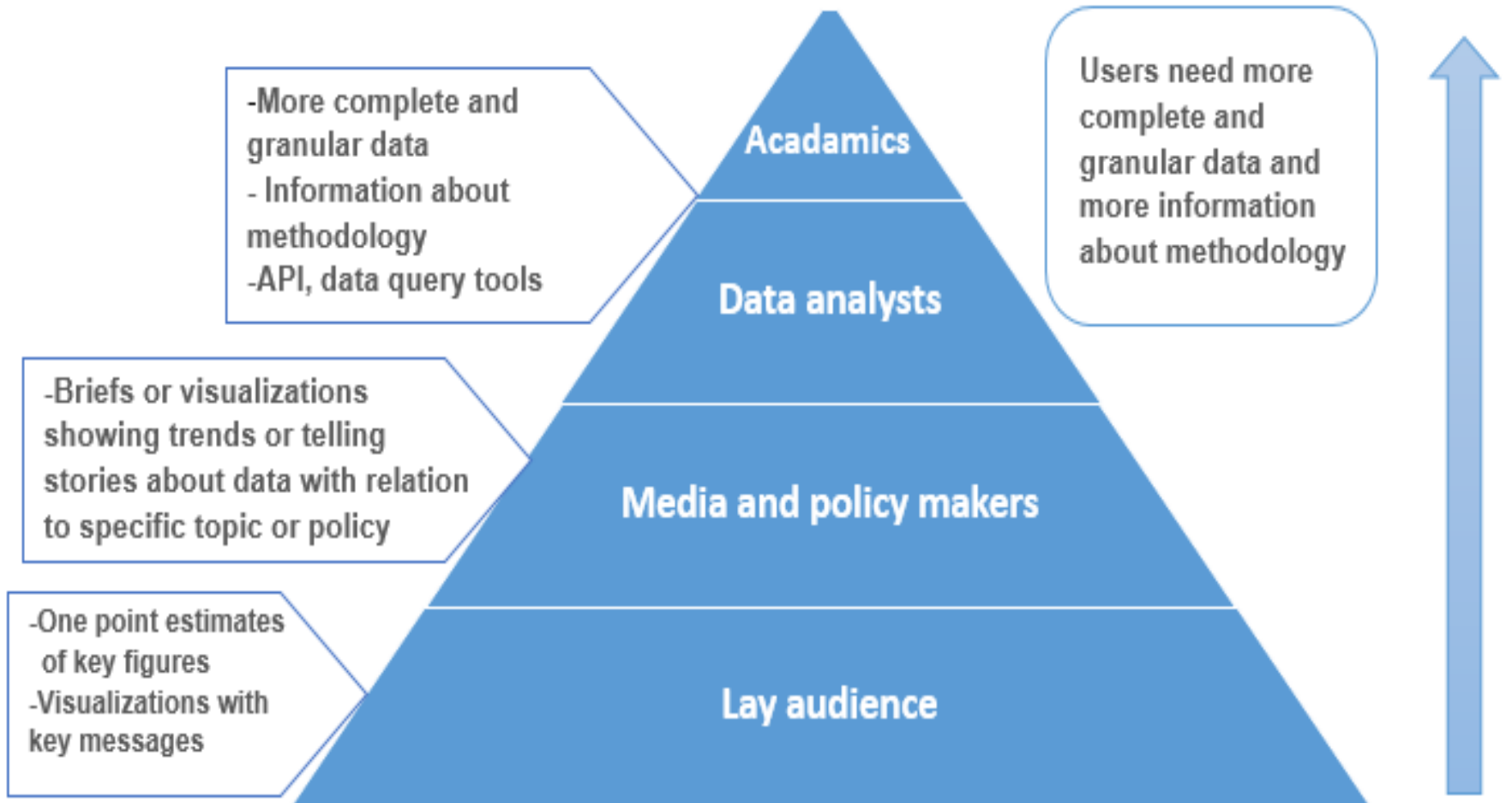
- **Ensuring data quality:** The ERS has formed a Data Product Review Council which assesses data using six measures: Purpose, utility, objectivity, integrity, accessibility, transparency

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/mediaImport/1784215/dprcreviewchecklist.pdf>

- **Posting process checks**
- **Errata policy**



Right users and right format



Right users and right format: Examples

- **Vary format for data delivery**
- **Lay audience** : visualizations, blogs
<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/international-markets-trade/us-agricultural-trade/outlook-for-us-agricultural-trade/>
- **Media and policy makers** : twitter, briefs
topical charts <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/charts-of-note/>
- **Data analysts and academics**: Data analysts
APIs, CSV , data documentation (standard errors)



Work underway

- Consolidation of some key data sets
- Data automation



Questions?

Thank you!

Join us online: www.ers.usda.gov
Follow us on Twitter: [@USDA_ERS](https://twitter.com/USDA_ERS)

