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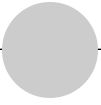
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# **The Economics of Food Price Volatility**



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**A National Bureau of  
Economic Research  
Conference Report**



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# **The Economics of Food Price Volatility**

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Edited by

**Jean-Paul Chavas, David Hummels,  
and Brian D. Wright**

**The University of Chicago Press**

Chicago and London

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8. Unless otherwise determined by the Board or exempted by the terms of paragraphs 6 and 7, a copy of this resolution shall be printed in each NBER publication as described in paragraph 2 above.

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## Preface

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The year 2008 saw large swings in food prices. The causes and effects of such swings have generated much interest around the world. The effects of food price volatility on farmers, consumers, and food market participants are complex. For example, while high food prices benefit farmers, they hurt consumers. The linkages between food price volatility and the functioning of food markets remain poorly understood, and so are the implications for agricultural and trade policy. This motivated us to organize a conference to study these issues and provide an updated evaluation of current knowledge.

The conference was held in Seattle on August 15–16, 2012. It was jointly sponsored by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) and the American and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) and was funded by a grant from the Economic Research Service (ERS) at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). The economics of food price volatility was the focus of the conference, which involved the presentation and discussion of papers by distinguished researchers and experts on the subject. The objective of this book is to make this information widely available.

Following the conference in Seattle, all papers were subject to external reviews and revised. The revised versions of the papers along with their associated discussions are the ones presented in this book. As such, the book reports and assesses the latest research on central issues related to recent food price volatility. This research evaluates current knowledge on the causes and effects of food price volatility, examines the extent to which particular current economic conditions contribute to this volatility, and identifies issues that are in need of further investigation. By disseminating new research on food price volatility, the book intends to help both private and public decision makers develop improved management strategies and policies that can address current and future food market instability.

