Food Prices and Rural Poverty
M. Ataman Aksoy and Bernard M. Hoekman (eds.)

The impact of price developments on world food markets on poor households in developing countries is an important policy question. Who gains and who loses from agricultural commodity price changes depends on the specific circumstances of households, and, at the level of nations, on the structure of production and trade. The contributions to this volume review trends in international prices and trade patterns of key food commodities, and assess the incidence of food price changes in a number of developing countries using household level data on sources of incomes and consumption patterns.

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“The link between food prices and poverty is as complex as it is important. Aksoy and Hoekman have put together a book that significantly advances our knowledge of this link. The book not only explores the conditions under which the poor are affected by food price movements but includes a number of empirical studies on the price-poverty link in specific developing countries. It deserves careful study by governments and NGOs.”

Tim Josling, Professor Emeritus, Food Research Institute, and Senior Fellow, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University.

“The timing of this book could hardly have been more appropriate: while the international community still ponders on the poverty implications of the 2007-08 global food crisis, food prices are on the rise again and create nervousness. Governments are being called upon to protect the poor against high food prices. But we know too little about the actual relationship between food prices and poverty. This book provides us with new insights into this critical link, and goes far beyond the simplistic views that have prevailed so far. Policy makers concerned about food prices and poverty should study it carefully.”

Stefan Tangermann, Professor Emeritus, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, University of Göttingen; former OECD Director for Trade and Agriculture.

“The spike in international food prices in 2008 was a reminder to the world of how vital food prices are for those billion or more people near or below the extreme poverty line. Most of those poor people live in rural areas, but many are net buyers rather than net sellers of food. Even so, they may benefit indirectly through higher wages when the farm price of food rises. The only way to identify which groups are at risk is through careful empirical studies at the household level for each country. This volume brings together a rich collection of such studies. By covering rural areas of Africa, Asia and Latin America, it offers a range of insights for policy makers who too often focus only on the more visible urban poor.”

Kym Anderson, George Gollin Professor of Economics, University of Adelaide.