

DISCUSSION

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I appreciate the efforts made in the papers to develop a set of understandable definitions for the universe of interest, basic analysis units (the production unit), and the sampling frame. Conceptually, I found the papers sound, logically developed, and easy to comprehend. Perhaps the most appalling point (buried somewhat in both papers) was the admission that today's Consumer Price Index, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and a measure with which many labor contracts rely for cost of living increases, is not based upon sound statistical principles but rather depends heavily upon commodity experts in the Bureau. It is gratifying to learn that efforts are being made in developing the new indexes to correct this serious flaw.

There are too many initials used in the papers without proper definitions. The non-Bureau of Labor Statistics person would have trouble with the PPIR, WPI, ISPI, POPI, PPI, PFU, and CPIR initials.

And, finally, the papers generate quite a few questions which must be answered before the revised indexes can be considered as statistically based: what about the variance estimates? what was specifically learned about estimation problems? what are the criteria for sample size determination?

Considering the significance of the current indexes, let's hope that the revisions will have some sensible measures of statistical reliability.