

AQUACULTURE SURVEYS

OMB No. 0535-0150

A. JUSTIFICATION

This is a request for approval of this information collection for 3 additional years. There are small changes to universe sizes but no changes to methodology or procedures.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

The primary function of the National Agricultural Statistics Service is to estimate production, prices, and stocks of all important agricultural food, fiber, and specialty commodities. The Aquaculture Surveys described in this docket collect information on trout and catfish inventory, acreage, and sales as well as catfish processed and feed deliveries for catfish. Aquaculture is a method of producing high protein, low fat products that are in demand by consumers.

Congress has mandated the collection of basic data for aquaculture and provides funding for these surveys. Public Law 96-362, the National Aquaculture Act, [attachment A](#), was passed to increase the overall effectiveness and productivity of Federal aquaculture programs by improving coordination and communication among Federal agencies involved in those programs. Congressional hearings on the National Aquaculture Act established:

- Harvest of marine fish exceeds natural propagation, thereby making it difficult to meet the increasing demand for aquatic food,
- That to supply the domestic market for aquatic food the United States imports much of its fish and shellfish and this dependence contributes to the uncertainty of supplies,
- Domestic aquacultural production has the potential for growth,
- Many areas of the United States are suitable for aquaculture but are subject to land-use or water-use management policies that do not adequately consider the potential for aquaculture. Information is needed to measure the growth and importance of domestic aquaculture.

NASS conducted the first Census of Aquaculture for the conterminous United States in January 1999 and the second in January 2005. These censuses were conducted to supplement the aquaculture data collected from the full Census of Agriculture, conducted every 5 years. The full Census of *Agriculture* collection includes aquaculture information on the number of farms producing aquaculture products, quantity sold, and value of sales for catfish, trout, bass, other fish, crawfish, and other aquaculture products. The 2005 Census of *Aquaculture* provided detailed information relating to on-farm aquaculture

practices, including statistics on size of operation, inventory, method of production, point of first sale, cooperative agreements and contracts, sources of water, aquaculture distribution for restoration or conservation purposes, and production and sales. The aquaculture sample surveys in this docket help track important sectors of the industry in the years between these censuses.

General authority for these data collection activities is granted under U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2204 ([attachment B](#)) which specifies that "The Secretary of Agriculture shall procure and preserve all information concerning agriculture which he can obtain ... by the collection of statistics ... and shall distribute them among agriculturists."

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

Trout and catfish grower surveys provide inventory numbers, sales, losses, and other information needed to accurately evaluate the aquaculture industry. Survey results are used by government agencies in planning farm programs. Data compiled from aquaculture surveys are used by federal and State government agencies in making important aquaculture policy decisions, thereby reducing dependency on government programs.

The Foreign Agricultural Service uses aquaculture data to evaluate the potential to establish funding requests for Targeted Export Assistance Programs.

Survey results are used by Cooperative Extension Service and Sea Grant College extension professionals who work with aquaculture clientele. The information is extremely useful in analyzing changing trends in the number of commercial operations and production levels by State. The information is used to demonstrate the growing importance of aquaculture to officials of Federal and State government agencies who manage and direct policy for programs in agriculture and natural resources. Extension specialists use the data to demonstrate the impact of educational programs and other Land-Grant University efforts that are directed to assisting and developing economically viable aquaculture operations. The type of information collected and reported provides extension educators and research scientists with data that indicates important areas that require special educational and/or research efforts, such as causes for losses of fish and pond inventories of fish of various sizes.

Monthly information from the catfish processor survey on pounds of catfish processed, prices, and end-of-month inventories is used as the basis for future contract negotiations between industry growers and processors. The Arizona Game and Fish Department uses the published grower price as a basis for establishing contract levels for the purchase of catfish for their Urban Fishing program. Growers and processors use this same information as a marketing guide. Financial institutions use this report to evaluate prospective loans to growers and processors. The processor report is used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, in conjunction with its Federal Food and Nutrition Programs.

Catfish feed delivery surveys provide data on feed delivered for food-size, fingerlings, and brood fish. Survey results will be used by growers and industry to forecast future marketings of catfish based the relationship of feed consumption to weight gain.

Information on prices received for catfish, feed consumption, and processing volume by month is used to analyze trends that impact supply and demand and timing of market decisions. The information is used by aquaculture extension specialists to assist potential investors who are seeking such information for decision-making purposes.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

Web-based data reporting is available for most of the NASS information collections (a small number will be impractical or otherwise unsuitable). A Questionnaire Repository System has been developed and populated to enable simultaneous creation of paper and Web survey instruments for each survey.

These surveys have been converted to Electronic Data Reporting (EDR), so that respondents may chose between paper or web-based reporting. The response to Web-based aquaculture surveys was 3 percent for 2006.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service cooperates with State departments of agriculture and land grant universities to conduct agricultural surveys. They meet both State and Federal needs, thus eliminating duplication and minimizing reporting burden on the agricultural industry. These aquaculture surveys are the only timely and reliable source of information on the aquaculture industry; data collected on this survey are not available from any other source.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

Responses to the grower, processor, and feed delivery questionnaires can be answered from normal operating records with a minimum of difficulty. Data from catfish processors are collected only from firms with the capacity to handle at least 2,000 pounds live weight in an 8 hour shift.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Collecting data less frequently than annually for the trout survey, semi-annually for the

catfish grower survey, and monthly for the catfish processor and feed deliveries surveys, would not appreciably reduce respondent burden since normal operating records are kept on a weekly or monthly basis. In addition, less frequent reporting would significantly reduce the value of the information.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

8. Provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments.

The Notice soliciting comments was published in the Federal Register on May 15, 2007 on pages 27285-27286. The one comment received is included in supplementary documents.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and record-keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

State Directors in all NASS State Field Offices (Fos) maintain industry contacts within the respective States. Government agencies contacted are the Department of Commerce, Foreign Agricultural Service, Cooperative Extension Service, and the Agricultural Marketing Service. Other groups contacted to keep a well-rounded perspective of the aquaculture industry are the Catfish Farmers of America, the Catfish Institute, and the Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture. This Subcommittee was created in response to P.L. 96-362, the National Aquaculture Act ([attachment A](#)), to increase the overall effectiveness and productivity of Federal aquaculture programs by improving coordination and communication among Federal agencies involved in those programs. This Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture is made up of representatives of the Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Interior, Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Small Business Administration, the Farm Credit Administration, and the Department of State.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents.

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

All questionnaires include a statement that individual reports are kept confidential. U.S. Code Title 18, Section 1905 and U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2276 (attachment C) provide for the confidentiality of reported information. NASS has provided a secure environment for web-based reporting to maintain the confidentiality of the respondent and the data. All employees of NASS and all enumerators hired and supervised under a cooperative agreement with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture must read the regulations and sign a statement of compliance. (The NASS Privacy Impact Assessment is attachment D.)

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

Response burden hours are shown in the following table.

Projected 2004-2005 Aquaculture Surveys Response Burden Hours												
Survey	Sample Size	Freq	Response*				Non-response				Total Burden Hours	
			Count	Freq. x Count	Min./Resp.	Burden Hours	Count	Freq. x Count	Min./Non-res	Burden Hours		
Trout Growers	890	1	825	825	15	206	65	65	1	1	207	
Catfish Growers	January	1,295	1	1,145	1,145	15	286	150	150	1	3	289
	July **	850	1	760	760	15	190	90	90	1	2	192
Catfish Processors	20	12	19	228	10	38	1	12	1	0	38	
Catfish Feed Delivery	14	12	14	168	5	14	0	0	1	0	14	
Total	3,069		2,763	3,126		734	306	317		6	740	
Frequency			1.1312				1.035948					

* Response counts based on most recent response rates, shown in B.1.

** Four States only, sub-sample of January.

Cost to the public of completing the questionnaire is assumed to be comparable to the hourly rate of those requesting the data. Reporting time of 740 hours are multiplied by \$22 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$16,280.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection of information.

There is no cost burden to respondents.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government; provide a description of the method used to estimate cost which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses, and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

Total annual cost to the Federal government for the grower and processor surveys is \$480,000; these surveys are funded by Congressional appropriation in the NASS budget. Most of the funds are for data collection and analysis personnel, with the remainder going to printing, data processing, postage, and travel.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I (reasons for changes in burden).

In the previous submission the response total for non-respondents was omitted from the overall response total. A combination of increases/decreases in the universe sizes for all five surveys and including the non-respondents responses in this submission results in an increase of 259 responses. The 740 burden hours remain unchanged.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The January trout grower survey is mailed to producers about the 30th of December each year. Survey results are summarized and published in late February in the *Trout Production* report.

The January catfish grower survey is also mailed about the 30th of December in the 11 participating States. Production and inventory results are summarized and published in early February in the *Catfish Production* report. The July catfish grower survey is mailed about the 30th of June in the 4 major producing States and an abridged version of *Catfish Production* is released in late July.

Monthly catfish processor questionnaires are mailed from Washington, D.C. about the 25th of each month. Also, respondents are mailed an instruction sheet for accessing the Web-survey instrument. To account for all firms, telephone follow-ups are made to respondents beginning about the 15th of the following month. The survey is summarized and published by the 23rd of the following month in the *Catfish Processing* report.

Monthly catfish feed questionnaires are faxed to respondents each month from the Mississippi State Field Office (MS FO) located in Jackson, MS. To account for all mills, telephone follow-ups are made to respondents who do not return a mail questionnaire within a week of receipt. The survey is summarized and published at the same time as the *Catfish Processing* report. The report, *Catfish Feed Deliveries*, is released through the NASS Agricultural Statistics Board.

Release dates for all surveys are published on the NASS Home Page, www.nass.usda.gov. Publications are available on-line immediately after release at http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_Subject/index.asp. Select letter “T” for *Trout Production* report or “C” for *Catfish Production, Catfish Processing, or Catfish Feed Deliveries* reports.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

There is no request for approval of non-display of the expiration date.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions” of OMB Form 83-I.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

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