

Supporting Statement – Part A

AGRICULTURAL SURVEYS PROGRAM

OMB No. 0535-0213

This supporting statement addresses renewal for a group of list frame surveys and one area frame survey that comprise the National Agricultural Statistics Service's core program. There is the introduction now of another sampling frame for one State based on data from the Farm Service Agency.

A. JUSTIFICATION

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 functions of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) are to prepare and issue State and national estimates of crop and livestock production, disposition, and prices and to collect information on related environmental and economic factors. Crop and livestock statistics help maintain a stable economic atmosphere and reduce risk for production, marketing, and distribution operations. Modern agriculture increasingly calls upon NASS to supply reliable, timely, and detailed information in its commodity estimation program. The surveys in this docket make up the most scrutinized reports published by NASS because of their impact on the commodities market, government policy, imports, exports, prices, and private industry.

The Agricultural Surveys Program is a combination of surveys utilizing several different sampling frames. Basic agricultural data is collected from farmers and ranchers throughout the nation and used to prepare agricultural estimates and forecasts of crop acreages, yields, and production; stocks of grains and oilseeds; hog and pig inventory; sheep inventory and lamb crop; goat and kid inventory; cattle inventory; cattle on feed, and land values. The surveys provide the basis for estimates of the current season's crop and livestock production and supplies of grain in storage. Survey results provide the foundation for setting livestock and poultry inventory numbers. Estimates derived from the surveys supply information needed by farmers to make decisions for both short- and long-term planning.

The list surveys in this information collection are grouped together because they are interrelated probability surveys that make up much of the NASS core estimating program. An integral part of this estimating program is the area sampling frame used to select the samples for the June Area Frame Survey (JAS). Indications from this survey are used to estimate the major crops grown, livestock inventories, on-farm grain stocks, and agricultural land values and rents. Being an area frame survey, all land in a State is represented. Current Agency survey design utilizes area frame surveys to measure incompleteness of various commodity list frame surveys. To determine incompleteness, operators found in the area sample are matched against all names on the list frame for that commodity. When there is a match, the operator is "overlap" and represented by the list frame. When there is not a match, the operator is "non-overlap" and will be expanded by the inverse of the probability of selection

on the area frame to account for incompleteness of the list frame. The two frame components combine to provide an unbiased estimate of the population.

The JAS is also used to measure incompleteness of the Agricultural Labor Survey, OMB 0535-0109, and the Agricultural Resources Management Study, OMB 0535-0218. The survey also provides the area sampling base for Objective Yield Surveys, OMB 0535-0088; objective yield samples are selected from tracts reporting the crop of interest on the June Agricultural Survey.

These surveys are timed to ensure that data collection occurs as infrequently as possible, yet often enough to maintain statistically defensible crop, livestock, and stocks estimates. These commodities affect the well being of the nation's farmers, commodities markets, and national and global agricultural policy.

General authority for these data collection activities is granted under U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2204 ([attachment A](#)) which specifies that "The Secretary of Agriculture shall procure and preserve all information concerning 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.

Uses of NASS statistical information are extensive and varied. The producer is the primary user; other users of agricultural statistics are farm organizations, agribusinesses, State and national farm policy makers, and foreign buyers of agricultural products. Federal farm programs require information on acreages, production potential, stocks, prices, and income. Agricultural statistics are used to plan and administer other related federal and State programs in such areas as consumer protection, conservation, foreign trade, education, and recreation. Estimates are used by producers to determine production and marketing strategies, by the agricultural industry to assess markets and potential demand for products, and by the federal government to analyze potential and actual production.

Federal agricultural agencies that use information from these surveys are the Economic Research Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, Agricultural Marketing Service, and Farm Service Agency. The Bureau of Economic Analysis in the Department of Commerce is a major non-USDA agency that uses data from this information collection to prepare national and regional estimates of farm income and products. The Forest Service and Department of Interior use data collected on forage values to establish public land grazing rates in Western States.

Several agricultural agencies utilize NASS data to carry out programs required by legislation. Examples are the school lunch program, administration of marketing orders, grazing fee rates, and establishment of foreign trade policies. The Secretary of Agriculture uses information collected to help determine agricultural policy.

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.

Nearly all of NASS information collections have been converted to Web-based data collection, what NASS calls electronic data reporting or EDR. A small number are impractical or otherwise unsuitable. A questionnaire repository system has been built which enables simultaneous creation of comparable paper and Web survey instruments for each survey. All of the surveys in this docket have been converted to EDR except for the June Area Frame Survey which conducted only by personal interview. The current proportion of survey responses that employ the Web is about 2 percent for farms and 6 percent for agribusinesses—3 percent for this overall information collection.

The main portal for our on-line surveys is <http://www.agcounts.usda.gov>. Once there, the respondents have to enter the valid survey code and the user ID printed on the label of the questionnaire mailed to them. We do not want anyone other than a selected respondent to access the survey Web pages. .

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.

NASS cooperates with other agencies in the Department of Agriculture, State and local governments, State departments of agriculture, and land grant universities to conduct agricultural surveys. Examples of this effort are the integration of questions into the January Cattle Survey and the January Sheep and Goat Survey to collect non-ambulatory data for APHIS NAHMS. This cooperation provides information meeting both State and federal needs, thus minimizing duplication and reporting burden on the agricultural industry.

NASS takes every precaution to ensure that respondents are not visited or interviewed unnecessarily. Through the use of computer databases, the name, address, and previous crops grown by respondents are maintained and not asked repeatedly for each survey. If a respondent grows or raises more than one commodity, information for all commodities is obtained during one interview.

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.

Sampling techniques can minimize unnecessary contacts by ensuring that respondents with a low likelihood of having the item of interest are sampled at a very low rate. Under the current survey concept, operations with multiple commodities have a chance for selection in only one survey as opposed to multiple chances using commodity-specific surveys. A replicated

sampling scheme is utilized to minimize burden. Most responses can be supplied without resorting to record books, which keeps burden to a minimum.

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.

Less frequent data collection would eliminate data needed to keep the government and agricultural industry abreast of changes at the State and national levels. Timing and frequency of the various reports dependent on these surveys have evolved to meet the needs of government and the industry while minimizing the burden on the reporting public.

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 Federal Register Notice soliciting comments was published on May 15, 2007, on page 27283. One public comment was received and is included in the 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.

NASS works with the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center under cooperative agreement to evaluate ways to reduce survey non-response. The Agency has established cooperative agreements with Iowa State University to review sample design and nonresponse adjustment, the University of Houston for research on model based estimation, George Mason University for research on spatial data smoothing, and Syracuse University to evaluate models for yield estimation.

NASS consults with Economic Research Service regarding cross-tabulations for type and size of farms, land use patterns and land values, and rental rates. NASS also collaborates with APHIS/National Animal Health Monitoring System for collection of information on animal health management.

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 confidential. U.S. Code Title 18, Section 1905 and U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2276 ([attachment B](#)) provide for the confidentiality of reported information. 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. (Privacy Impact Statement is in [attachment C](#).)

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.

Burden hours based on the average completion time per questionnaire are summarized below.

Agricultural Surveys Projected Annual Response Burden for 2007-08

Survey	Survey Month	Sample Size ^{1/}	Responses			Non-response			Total Burden Hours
			Estimated Count	Min. per Resp.	Burden Hours	Estimated Count	Min./ Non-Resp.	Burden Hours	
Area Frame									
Advance Materials ^{2/}		41,500	41,500	5	3,458	---		---	3,458
Agricultural Tracts ^{3/}		41,500	34,000	20	11,333	7,500		375	11,708
Non-agricultural Tracts		41,000	41,000	5	3,417	---	3	---	3,417
Area Quality Control	Jun	1,500	1,500	5	125	---	---	---	125
Area Questionnaire Testing		50	50	20	17	---	---	---	17
List Frame									
Agricultural Yield	Adv ^{2/}	26,500	26,500	5	2,208	---		---	2,208
	May	14,500	12,200		2,033	2,300		115	2,148
	Jun	5,000	4,200		700	800		40	740
	Jul	9,000	7,500		1,250	1,500		75	1,325
	Aug	26,500	22,000		3,667	4,500		225	3,892
	Sep	12,500	10,300		1,717	2,200		110	1,827
	Oct	14,500	12,000		2,000	2,500		125	2,125
	Nov	10,500	8,700		1,450	1,800		90	1,540
	Acreage Update ^{4/}		8,000		10	1,333	2,000	3	100
Cattle Inventory	Adv ^{2/}	54,500	54,500	5	4,542	---		---	4,542
	Jan	44,100	35,900	20	11,967	8,200		410	12,377
	Jul	10,400	7,500	20	2,500	2,900	3	145	2,645
Cattle on Feed (2,033 /mo.)	All	24,400	17,500	15	4,375	6,900	3	345	4,720
Crop Acreage and Grain Stocks (Quarterly Agricultural Survey)	Adv ^{2/}	73,800	73,800	5	6,150	---		---	6,150
	Mar	73,800	59,000		19,667	14,800		740	20,407
	Jun	67,500	54,000		18,000	13,500		675	18,675
	Sep	55,600	44,500		14,833	11,100		555	15,388
	Dec	72,800	58,200	20	19,400	14,600	3	730	20,130
Hog Inventory	Adv ^{2/}	39,600	39,600	5	3,300	---		---	3,300
	Mar	9,200	6,950		1,158	2,250		113	1,271
	Jun	9,200	6,950		1,158	2,250		113	1,271
	Sep	9,200	6,950		1,158	2,250		113	1,271
	Dec	12,000	9,050	10	1,508	2,950	3	148	1,656
Land Values	Jan	2,200	1,760	20	587	440	3	22	609
Rice Stocks (on-farm)	Aug	2,000	1,800	15	450	200	3	10	460

Agricultural Surveys Projected Annual Response Burden for 2007-08									
Sheep and Goat Inventory	Adv ^{2/}	23,200	23,200	5	1,933	---	3	---	1,933
	Jan	23,200	18,560	20	6,187	4,640		232	6,419
	Jul	4,600	3,680	20	1,227	920		46	1,273
List Quality Control		3,000	2,900	5	242	100	3	5	247
List Questionnaire Testing		100	100	10	17	---	---	---	17
FSA Frame – Nebraska Only									
Agricultural Yield	Adv ^{2/}	1,300	1,300	5	108	---	3	---	108
	May	600	500	10	83	100		5	88
	Jun	300	250		42	50		3	45
	Jul	400	330		55	70		4	59
	Aug	1,300	1,050		175	250		13	188
	Sep	700	580		97	120		6	103
	Oct	700	580		97	120		6	103
	Nov	600	500		83	100		5	88
	Acreage Update ^{4/}		600			100		150	8
Crop Acreage and Grain Stocks (Quarterly Agricultural Survey)	Adv ^{2/}	3,300	3,300	5	275	---	3	---	275
	Mar	3,200	2,560	20	853	640		32	885
	Jun	3,000	2,400		800	600		30	830
	Sep	2,300	1,840		613	460		23	636
	Dec	3,300	2,640		880	660		33	913
FSA Questionnaire Testing		50	50	10	8	---	---	---	8
Totals	Respondents ^{1/}	273,133	774,330		159,336	116,420		5,825	165,161
Frequency				2.834993		0.426239			

^{1/} Sample sizes shown are the number of questionnaires mailed to respondents each month but since all but one month are sub-samples, the actual number of respondents (on the frame) is shown once, in bold. Total count is reflected in frequency figures.

^{2/} Advance Materials: burden allowance for pre-survey letters, endorsement letters, background sheets, etc.; examples are included with information collection instruments.

^{3/} Agricultural Tracts: includes allowance for nominal pre-screening when indicated.

^{4/} Acreage Update: optional one-time distressed acreage extra data collection in extreme weather conditions.

The combined reporting for all surveys of 165,161 hours is multiplied by \$24 per hour, for a total cost to the public of \$3,963,864.

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 for this information collection.

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.

The cost to the Federal government for the Agricultural Surveys Program is expected to total \$17 million annually.

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).

The combined annual burden for all surveys is 165,161 hours, up 24,138 hours from the current inventory of 141,023. This increase is due to small changes in sample sizes, the addition of pre-survey and publicity materials, addition of questionnaire testing allowance for each sampling frame, and addition of possible agricultural yield distressed acreage update. Change of frame for Nebraska quarterly acreage and yield surveys did not cause any change burden allowance.

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.

Each State Field Office (FO) is responsible for editing its own questionnaires. After computer edits, detailed computer data analyses and summaries are provided by Headquarters to each FO for evaluation and estimation. In Headquarters, State summaries and estimates are combined to regional and U.S. totals.

Collection of JAS (area) data will be the last day of May through mid-June. In late June estimates of crop acreage will be published in the *Acreage* report, hog and pig data will be published in the *Hogs and Pigs* report, and grain stocks in the *Grain Stocks* report. Farm numbers will be published in *Farms and Land in Farms* in late July.

The Agricultural Surveys data collection reference date for livestock inventories and grain stocks are the first of the survey month. Crop acreage and production are collected for the current crop year. The majority of all data are collected during the first 15 working days of the month. All release dates for the year are scheduled at one time and a release calendar is published and distributed prior to January 1.

Grain stocks and crop acreage and/or production estimates are released four to six weeks after the survey reference date in a quarterly acreage release and the annual summary.

Data collection for the Agricultural Yield Surveys centers around the first of the month, starting about 3 days prior to the date to which the report relates.

The January cattle inventory report is generally released during the last week of January and the July cattle report is released during the last week of July.

The January cattle on feed report is released during the third week of the month.

Monthly estimates of inventory, placements, marketings, and other disappearance of cattle in 1,000+ feedlots are published for the thirteen largest States, for “Other States,” and for the U.S.

The quarterly *Hogs and Pigs* report is generally released on the last Friday of the survey month, except for the December report which must be released at least one day prior to one full commodity market trading day.

The *Agricultural Land Values and Cash Rents* report is based on the June area frame plus a supplemental January list survey and is published the first week of August.

The January sheep and goat inventory report is generally released during the last week of January. The July sheep inventory report is released during the third week of the month.

The August 1 rice stocks release is published the end of August.

Survey Schedule: Data Collection and Publication			
Survey	Data Collection	Release Date	Publication
June Area Survey	Jun	late June	<i>Acreage, Hogs and Pigs, Grain Stocks</i>
		late July	<i>Farms and Land in Farms</i>
		1 st week Aug	<i>Agricultural Land Values and Cash Rents</i>
Acreage and Grain Stocks	Mar	late Mar	<i>Prospective Plantings</i>
	Jun	late Jun	<i>Acreage (same as (G) above)</i>
	Sep	late Sep	<i>Grain Stocks Small Grains Summary</i>
	Dec	mid-Jan	<i>Crop Production Annual Summary</i>
Agricultural Yield	May-Nov	mid-month	<i>Monthly Crop Production</i>
Cattle Inventory	Jan	1 st week Feb	<i>Cattle</i>
	Jul	4 th week Jul	
Cattle on Feed	Jan	4 th week Jan	<i>Cattle on Feed</i>
	Feb-Dec	3 rd week/mo.	
Hog Inventory	Qtrly	last Friday in survey month	<i>Hogs and Pigs</i>
Land Values	Jan	1 st week Aug	<i>Agricultural Land Values and Cash Rents</i>
Sheep Inventory	Jan	4 th week Jan	<i>Sheep and Goats</i>
	Jul	3 rd week Jul	
Rice Stocks	Aug	late Aug	<i>Rice Stocks</i>

Release dates for all surveys are published in advance on the NASS Web 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. Once there, select first letter

of report title from alphabet list and then specific commodity or publication.

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.

No approval is requested for 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.

June 2007