



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
Census and Survey Division  
Survey Administration Branch



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TO: David Granatstein  
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FROM: NASS Clearance Officer  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Room 5336A, Mail Stop 2024-S  
1400 Independence Avenue  
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**RE: N Notice of Intent to Seek Approval to Revise and Extend an Information Collection (Docket Number 0535-NEW, 2008 Organic Production Survey)**

On behalf of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), I would like to thank you for correspondence and suggestions regarding the Notice of Intent to Seek Approval to Conduct an Information Collection. Our role as fact finders for the Nation's agriculture will be served well throughout the academic community interested in more detailed information regarding the organic industry. In partnership with ERS and AMS we are pleased to continue expanding our knowledge base within the agriculture sector. The continued growth in organic agriculture production has not gone unnoticed by the USDA and our countries legislative body.

NASS is very pleased to have the opportunity to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics regarding organic agriculture production and marketing. NASS prides itself on providing these statistics without compromising the confidentiality of information provided by individual respondents. Our current confidentiality policy dictates the level of detailed statistics we can produce. The content of the report form has been developed with consideration given to providing more detailed information about specific organic agriculture production. AMS and ERS are stakeholders in this endeavor and we have solicited input from both bodies, notably Dr. Cathy Greene.

Data from the 2007 AMS certifier's list has identified specific commodities that are more widely produced. Using that information we intend to collect specific commodity level data on crops and livestock. The data we collect will go through disclosure programming which may eventuate suppression of relevant information. These suppressions are vital to our reputation for safeguarding personal information. We have designed a questionnaire that grants us the latitude to publish national, regional, and possibly more local level data. All these are of critical importance to the organic supply chain.

NASS considers the certified, exempt, and transitioning organic producers as our base population. We believe that establishing a baseline report is the first step. However, the level of appropriation limits us to the scope of the data items collected. Only with continued appropriations can NASS provide the level of quality statistics currently dedicated to non-organic agriculture. As a follow-on to the 2007 Census of Agriculture we are confident that we can assimilate and disseminate the most comprehensive data set for production and sales within the organic sector to date.

We have actively engaged ERS and AMS for input into the content and direction of the questionnaire. Furthermore we have sought guidance from the Organic Farming Research Foundation personnel and their ongoing studies. We will continue to solicit input from the groups mentioned and other fellow stakeholders, particularly data users and organic growers, in order to insure a quality product from this project. The Washington State University's requests have been considered and incorporated into the 2008 Organic Production Survey.

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