

**Part B -- 2009 SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

**Farmers Market Questionnaire  
OMB NO. 0581-0169**

**18 B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING  
STATISTICAL METHODS**

**THE AGENCY SHOULD BE PREPARED TO JUSTIFY ITS DECISION NOT TO USE STATISTICAL METHODS IN ANY CASE WHERE SUCH METHODS MIGHT REDUCE BURDEN OR IMPROVE ACCURACY OF RESULTS. WHEN ITEM 17 ON THE FORM OMB 83-1 IS CHECKED "YES", THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE SUPPORTING STATEMENT TO THE EXTENT THAT IT APPLIES TO THE METHODS PROPOSED.**

- 1. DESCRIBE (INCLUDING A NUMERICAL ESTIMATE) THE POTENTIAL RESPONDENT UNIVERSE AND ANY SAMPLING OR OTHER RESPONDENT SELECTION METHOD TO BE USED. DATA ON THE NUMBER OF ENTITIES (E.G., ESTABLISHMENTS, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, HOUSEHOLDS, OR PERSONS) IN THE UNIVERSE COVERED BY THE COLLECTION AND IN THE CORRESPONDING SAMPLE ARE TO BE PROVIDED IN TABULAR FORM FOR THE UNIVERSE AS A WHOLE AND FOR EACH OF THE STRATA IN THE PROPOSED SAMPLE. INDICATE EXPECTED RESPONSE RATES FOR THE COLLECTION AS A WHOLE. IF THE COLLECTION HAD BEEN CONDUCTED PREVIOUSLY, INCLUDE THE ACTUAL RESPONSE RATE ACHIEVED DURING THE LAST COLLECTION.**

Questionnaires will be sent to the manager of each market in the National Directory of Farmers Markets. This is the most complete listing of farmers markets known to exist. The total number of farmers markets in the Directory is 4,685. The 2006 survey, which used the Directory as the list frame, yielded a 34.5 percent response rate. We expect a 35 percent response rate will be achieved with this survey. The responses received from this survey will be compared to the Directory to ensure that each state is represented proportionally to its relative composition in the Directory. In addition, responses received from each state will be compared to the ratio of rural versus urban markets listed in the Directory. This comparison is to ensure that the relative composition of respondent farmers markets mirror the rural/urban composition of the markets in the Directory for each state. If either of these ratios is found to be out of line

with the Directory, efforts will be made to obtain additional respondents so that ratios will mirror the directory. We estimate that there will be 3,045 market managers that will not respond to the survey. In order to measure the potential non-response bias and create the least amount of burden to market managers, we anticipate surveying a random sample of a minimum of 15 percent of the non-respondents, which we provisionally estimate at 2,000, using a short form of the original survey. We will continue surveying respondents until the composition of the sample mirror the Directory in terms of the states represented and the ratio of urban to rural markets for each state are achieved. The electronic version of the non-responses survey can be found at:

<http://www.farmersmarketsurvey.com/inventory.html>

**2. DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES FOR THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION INCLUDING:**

- **STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY FOR STRATIFICATION AND SAMPLE SELECTION;**
- **ESTIMATION PROCEDURE;**
- **DEGREE OF ACCURACY NEEDED FOR THE PURPOSE DESCRIBED IN THE JUSTIFICATION;**
- **UNUSUAL PROBLEMS REQUIRING SPECIALIZED SAMPLING PROCEDURES, AND**
- **ANY USE OF PERIODIC (LESS FREQUENT THAN ANNUAL) DATA COLLECTION CYCLES TO REDUCE BURDEN.**

AMS will attempt to contact the market manager for each market known to exist in the U.S. An invitation e-mail will be sent to each market manager listed in the National Directory of Farmers Markets that provided an e-mail address. The e-mail invitation to participate in the voluntary survey will include a web link for the survey website <http://www.prr.msu.edu/USDAFarmersMarket/login.html>. Markets without e-mail addresses will be sent a printed version of the survey with a cover letter. In the cover letter, respondents will be informed that the survey can be completed on line and we will provide them with the survey website. This procedure was used in the 2006 survey and resulted in a response rate of 34.5 percent. AMS has made every effort to gather a complete listing of e-mail addresses of farmers markets when farmers market managers update their market contact information in the Directory that is maintained by AMS. Currently AMS has email addresses for 1,994 of the 4,685 (42.6 percent) of markets known to currently exist.

We will again be working with Michigan State University Department of Community Agriculture Recreation and Resource Studies to develop the survey website as we did in 2006. In addition to website development MSU will develop the database used to save data from survey respondents and will import that raw data into SPSS database for our analysis.

**3. DESCRIBE METHODS TO MAXIMIZE RESPONSE RATES AND TO DEAL WITH ISSUES OF NON-RESPONSE. THE ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY OF INFORMATION COLLECTED MUST BE SHOWN TO BE ADEQUATE FOR INTENDED USES. FOR COLLECTIONS BASED ON SAMPLING, A SPECIAL JUSTIFICATION MUST BE PROVIDED FOR ANY COLLECTION THAT WILL NOT YIELD "RELIABLE" DATA THAT CAN BE GENERALIZED TO THE UNIVERSE STUDIED.**

A response bias survey has been developed for farmers market managers who did not respond to the primary survey. This survey is much like the one that was conducted for the 2006 survey. Four improvements have been made to the non-response survey. The first change is an increase in the number of non-respondents that will be contacted; second is an increase in the target number of responses we desire; third is ensuring the relative composition of respondents reflect the known population of markets in terms of states represented; and fourth is ensuring that the ratio of rural versus urban markets per state mirror the known population of farmers markets. Based on our estimates of the number of non-respondents, we intend to double the number of respondents to the non-respondent survey to 480 responses. The results of the non-response survey are intended to identify any bias that might exist in our sample pool. We anticipate surveying a random sample of a minimum of 15 percent of the non-respondents, which we provisionally estimate at 2,000, using a short form of the original survey. If the 15 percent threshold is not achieved initially, addition requests for respondent participation will be made to make up for the shortfall. The questions included in the non-responses survey are:

- Are you still the manager/contact of this farmers market
- Was this market open last season?
- How many years has your market been open?
- Is your market manager a paid employee?
- How many vendors did your market have last season?
- How many customers attended your market weekly?
- What were the annual sales of your market last season?

- Which one of the following statements about your market was most true last season?
  - We had more demand than supply – we need more vendors
  - During last season our supply exceeded demand – we needed more customers
  - Supply and demand of products were roughly equal last season

The size of markets that responded to the 2006 non-response survey did appear to be smaller than those of the full survey. This may imply that the results of this study overestimated the magnitude of the farmers market sector. The 2006 non-response survey markets had lower mean value of sales, number of vendors and number of customers served. Both the non-response survey and the original survey had large variation with these variables but the median values for these variables are much closer. For this reason median values for sales, number of vendors and customers served may describe the sector more accurately.

However, one group that did appear to be underrepresented in the survey was individuals that managed two or more farmers markets. The response rate for managers of multiple markets was only 10.3 percent. Our efforts to account for the increased paperwork burden faced by managers of multiple markets by redirecting the survey to a secondary point of contact proved largely unsuccessful. Out of the 965 managers of multiple markets in the population listed on our contact sheet, only 99 responded to the survey (10.3 percent), compared to an average response rate of 34.5 percent. Many managers of multiple markets (7.7 percent) were located in California. California reported that 57 percent of its markets had managers who managed two or more markets. The relative unwillingness of this group of managers to participate in the survey resulted in an overall underrepresentation of the Far West region in the survey population. We plan to overcome this issue by getting unique contact names for each market where possible to reduce the respondent burden on any one manager.

**4. DESCRIBE ANY TESTS OF PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE UNDERTAKEN. TESTING IS ENCOURAGED AS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF REFINING COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION TO MINIMIZE BURDEN AND IMPROVE UTILITY. TESTS MUST BE APPROVED IF THEY CALL FOR ANSWERS TO IDENTICAL QUESTIONS FROM 10 OR MORE RESPONDENTS. A PROPOSED TEST OR SET OF TESTS MAY BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL SEPARATELY OR IN COMBINATION WITH THE MAIN COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.**

AMS has submitted this collection instrument to three persons to evaluate the time necessary to complete the questionnaire and to evaluate the instrument for understanding and clarity.

**5. PROVIDE THE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED ON STATISTICAL ASPECTS OF THE DESIGN AND THE NAME OF THE AGENCY UNIT, CONTRACTOR(S), GRANTEE(S), OR OTHER PERSON(S) WHO WILL ACTUALLY COLLECT AND/OR ANALYZE THE INFORMATION FOR THE AGENCY.**

AMS has consulted with David Hancock of USDA's National Agricultural Statistical Service (202-690-2388) and Dr. Edward Mahoney of Michigan State University-Community Recreation and Resource Studies Department (517) 432-0270 on developing the survey strategy. The AMS/MSD employee who will collect and/or analyze the survey information is Edward Ragland (202) 690-1327.