

Supporting Statement

MINK SURVEY

OMB No. 0535-0212

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

- 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 has been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

Each NASS Field Office (FO) is responsible for maintaining a list of all known and potential mink producers in that State. Prior to the annual survey each year, association lists, buyer lists, co-op lists, etc., are used to identify new names; these are checked against the existing list frame to avoid duplication. States with no mink producers in previous years must determine if any mink ranchers have entered the market and are now in operation in their State. The Sampling Branch's List Frame Section in Headquarters (202-720-8853) is responsible for support of FO list activities for the mink survey.

The Mink survey is a census of all potential mink operations in the U.S. Most of these mink facilities produce pelts but there is a changing group of operations that temporarily may go out of production. As shown below, in the 2008 data collection period of 2007 data, there were 359 potential mink operations on FO list frames. Of this total 283 produced pelts and 76 facilities had no production or had gone out of business. Of the 359 operations we attempted to contact, 168 completed a questionnaire by mail, 152 by phone enumeration, 7 by personal enumeration, and 3 by use of the internet. This gave us a response rate of 91.9%.

Survey	Sample Size	Freq.	Total Contacts	Total Responses	Response Rate
Mink Survey	359	1	359	330	91.9%

Counts of mink farms producing pelts in the 13 major producing States for 2007, the latest data year, are listed in the table below. In that year there were 283 operations producing pelts.

Number of Mink Farms in Production in 2007, Major States and U.S.					
State	Producing Farms	State	Producing Farms	State	Producing Farms
Idaho	24	Montana	8	Utah	65
Illinois	7	Ohio	9	Washington	9
Iowa	17	Oregon	18	Wisconsin	71
Michigan	9	Pennsylvania	11	All Other States	9
Minnesota	23	South Dakota	3	United States	283

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**

Questionnaires are initially mailed to all potential producers the middle of March. This year NASS obtained a letter of endorsement from the national association, Fur Commission USA, which will be included in the same mailing. Second requests are sent to non-respondents in early April. Mail response on the mink survey is approximately 53 percent. Then mail non-respondents are telephoned in late April. In cases where producers cannot be reached by telephone, personal contacts are made the last week of April. Data for inaccessible operations are accounted for on an individual basis through contacts with county agents or other informed persons, expansion of reported data, or by imputation based on historical data. All data are analyzed for unusual values. Data from each operation are compared to its own past operating profile and to trends from similar operations. The survey is summarized in each FO; recommendations, comments, and previous year revisions are transmitted over a computer network to HQ. In order to include price information from marketing associations which is not available until the last week of June, the publication is not released until mid-July.

- 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.**

Survey data are subject to non-sampling errors such as omissions and mistakes in reporting and in processing the data. While these errors cannot be measured directly, they are minimized by carefully reviewing all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

- 4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken.**

No tests of procedures are proposed for this survey because it is a complete enumeration.

- 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.**

Survey design and methodology are determined by the Statistical Methods Branch, Statistics Division; Branch Chief is Dave Aune, (202)720-4008.

Sample sizes for each State are determined by the Sampling Branch, Census and Survey Division; Branch Chief is William Iwig, (202)720-3895.

Data collection is carried out by NASS State Statistical Offices; Deputy Administrator for Field Operations is Marshall Dantzler, (202)720-3638.

The Mink Survey is managed by the Poultry and Specialty Commodities Section in HQ; Section Head is Bruce Boess, (202) 720-4447. The Livestock Branch Chief is Dan Kerestes (202)720-3570. Commodity statisticians are responsible for coordination of sampling, questionnaires, data collection, data processing, Field Office support, national and regional summaries, analysis, presentations to the Agricultural Statistics Board for final estimates, publication, and the Estimation Manual.

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