

2009 Supporting Statement - Part B

Farmers Market Questionnaire 0581-0169

B. COLLECTIONS 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 HAD BEEN CONDUCTED PREVIOUSLY, INCLUDE THE ACTUAL RESPONSE RATE ACHIEVED DURING THE LAST COLLECTION.**

Questionnaires will be sent to the manager of each market on the National Directory of Farmers. This is the most complete listing of farmers markets known to exist. The total number of farmers markets in directory is 5,200. The 2006 survey, which used the national directory as the list frame, yielded a 34.5 percent response rate. No sampling procedure is planned for this survey. We are attempting to contact each U.S. farmers market known to exist.

- 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.**

No sampling procedure will be used in this survey. 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. Markets without e-mail addresses will be sent a paper 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 on the National Directory of Farmers Markets that is maintained by AMS. Currently AMS has email addresses for 2,878 of the 5,200 (55.3 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 was developed and disseminated to farmers market managers who did not respond to the 2006 survey of farmers markets. We have plans to repeat this in this survey that we plan to undertake in 2010. The results of the non-response survey were intended to identify any bias that might exist in our sample pool. The non-response survey was mailed to 1,000 non-respondents with the expectation that at least 100 questionnaires would be returned; 239 were actually received. The respondents to the non-response survey were asked:

- How many years has your market been open?
- Is your market manager a paid employee?

- How many vendors did your market have in 2005?
- How many customers attended your market weekly?
- What were the annual sales of your market in 2005?
- Which one of the following statements about your market was most true in 2005?
 - o We had more demand than supply – we need more vendors
 - o During 2005 our supply exceeded demand – we needed more customers
 - o Supply and demand of products were roughly equal in 2005

The size of markets in the non-response survey appeared to be smaller than those of the full survey. This may imply that the results of this study overestimate the magnitude of the farmers market sector. The 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 customer served may describe the sector more accurately.

However, one group that appeared to be underrepresented in the survey were 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 two 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 (on developing the survey strategy. The AMS/MSD employee who will collect and/or analyze the survey information