

Supporting Statement – Part A

**AGRICULTURAL SURVEYS PROGRAM**

OMB No. 0535-0213

This supporting statement addresses a three year renewal for a group of list frame surveys and one area frame survey that comprise the National Agricultural Statistics Service's core program.

**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 these 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 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. Nearly 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 and three small surveys that are not suitable for internet data collection. The current percentage of farmers and ranchers that employ the use of the Web to report their data on these surveys continues to hold around two percent. NASS is investigating ways to improve this cost effective means of data 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.

Through the use of our Survey Management System (SMS), farm operators that are selected to participate in more one survey during a given time period (quarterly Crops/Stocks and quarterly Hogs) are contacted only once to collect data for both surveys, in order to reduce as much respondent burden as possible.

**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 August 17, 2010, on pages 50744 - 50745. No public comments were received for this notice.

**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 has a new cooperative research agreement with the University of Maryland's Survey Research Center. The current focus of the program is to address quality processes at our new National Operations Center; which is projected to be opened in St. Louis, MO around August 2011. We also have cooperative research efforts underway with the National Science Foundation and Washington State University, and the National Science Foundation and University of Nebraska, Survey Research Center. One component of both of the projects is to reduce survey non-response. The Agency has established a new cooperative agreement with Iowa State University to review the area frame process and is planning to address geospatial estimation using administrative data and satellite data to estimate acreage of smaller commodities. This effort could result in reduced sample sizes sometime in the future. We are working with University of Southern Illinois to enhance models for yield estimation.

NASS consults with the Economic Research Service (ERS) regarding cross-tabulations of type and size of farms, land use patterns and land values, and rental rates. NASS also collaborates with the National Animal Health Monitoring System (APHIS) for collection of information on animal health management. Data from some of the surveys included in this docket are used by several different USDA agencies, including RMA, FSA and AMS. NASS also receives regular feedback and input from the Ag Advisory Committee on our various programs.

Throughout the year, numerous NASS statisticians and managers will attend private industry and producer's association meetings around the country. They take note of changes within the various industries and try to update our data collection instruments when possible, to keep our data current and useful to all data users.

**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.**

Questionnaires include a statement that individual reports are kept confidential. U.S. Code Title 18, Section 1905 and U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2276 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 (NASDA) must read the regulations and sign a statement of compliance

Additionally, NASS and NASS contractors comply with OMB Implementation Guidance, "Implementation Guidance for Title V of the E-Government Act, Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA), (Public Law 107-347). CIPSEA supports NASS' pledge of confidentiality to all respondents and facilitates the agency's efforts to reduce burden by supporting statistical activities of collaborative agencies through designation of NASS agents; subject to the limitations and penalties described in CIPSEA.

**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.

The combined reporting for all surveys of 192,027 hours is multiplied by \$24 per hour, for a total cost to the public of \$4,608,648.

Ag Surveys 2011 - 2013 - OMB 0535-0213

Survey	Survey Month	Estimated Sample Size 5/	Freq	Estimated Responses				Non-response				Total Burden Hours
				Resp. Count	Freq x Count	Min./ Resp.	Burden Hours	Nonresp Count	Freq. x Count	Min./ Nonr.	Burden Hours	
<b>Area Frame</b>												
Advance Materials 2/	Adv 2/	43,000	1	34,400	34,400	5	2,867	8,600	8,600	2	287	3,154
Agricultural Tracts 3/	June	43,000	1	34,400	34,400	20	11,467	8,600	8,600	2	287	11,754
Non-agricultural Tracts		42,000	1	33,600	33,600	5	2,800	8,400	8,400	2	280	3,080
Area Quality Control		1,500	1	1,200	1,200	5	100	300	300	2	10	110
Area Questionnaire Testing	NA	50	1	40	40	20	13	10	10	2	1	14
<b>List Frame</b>												
Ag Yield	Adv 2/	99,900	1	79,920	79,920	5	6,660	19,980	19,980	2	666	7,326
	May	15,000	1	12,000	12,000	10	2,000	3,000	3,000	2	100	2,100
	Jun	6,200	1	4,960	4,960	10	827	1,240	1,240	2	41	868
	Jul	9,700	1	7,760	7,760	10	1,293	1,940	1,940	2	65	1,358
	Aug	28,000	1	22,400	22,400	10	3,733	5,600	5,600	2	187	3,920
	Sep	13,500	1	10,800	10,800	10	1,800	2,700	2,700	2	90	1,890
	Oct	15,500	1	12,400	12,400	10	2,067	3,100	3,100	2	103	2,170
	Nov	12,000	1	9,600	9,600	10	1,600	2,400	2,400	2	80	1,680
Cattle Inventory	Adv 2/	62,000	1	49,600	49,600	5	4,133	12,400	12,400	2	413	4,546
	Jan	50,000	1	40,000	40,000	20	13,333	10,000	10,000	2	333	13,666
	Jul	12,000	1	9,600	9,600	20	3,200	2,400	2,400	2	80	3,280
Cattle on Feed (2,000 per month) 1/	All	2,000	12	1,700	20,400	15	5,100	300	3,600	2	120	5,220
Crop Acreage and Grain Stocks (Quarterly Agricultural Surveys)	Adv 2/	304,000	1	243,200	243,200	5	20,267	60,800	60,800	2	2,027	22,294
	Mar	82,000	1	65,600	65,600	20	21,867	16,400	16,400	2	547	22,414
	Jun	73,000	1	58,400	58,400	20	19,467	14,600	14,600	2	487	19,954
	Sep	66,000	1	52,800	52,800	20	17,600	13,200	13,200	2	440	18,040
	Dec	83,000	1	66,400	66,400	20	22,133	16,600	16,600	2	553	22,686
Crop and Livestock Loss Survey (New) 4/	NA	5,000	1	4,000	4,000	10	667	1,000	1,000	2	33	700



Ag Surveys 2011 - 2013 - OMB 0535-0213

Survey	Survey Month	Estimated Sample Size 5/	Freq	Estimated Responses				Non-response				Total Burden Hours
				Resp. Count	Freq x Count	Min./ Resp.	Burden Hours	Nonresp Count	Freq. x Count	Min./ Nonr.	Burden Hours	
<b>List Frame , cont.</b>												
Hog Inventory	Adv 2/	42,000	1	33,600	33,600	5	2,800	8,400	8,400	2	280	3,080
	Mar	11,000	1	8,800	8,800	10	1,467	2,200	2,200	2	73	1,540
	Jun	9,000	1	7,200	7,200	10	1,200	1,800	1,800	2	60	1,260
	Sep	9,000	1	7,200	7,200	10	1,200	1,800	1,800	2	60	1,260
	Dec	<b>13,000</b>	1	<b>10,400</b>	10,400	10	1,733	<b>2,600</b>	2,600	2	87	1,820
Land Values	Jan	<b>2,500</b>	1	<b>2,000</b>	2,000	20	667	<b>500</b>	500	2	17	684
Rice Stocks (on farm)	Aug	<b>2,000</b>	1	<b>1,600</b>	1,600	15	400	<b>400</b>	400	2	13	413
Sheep and Goat Survey	Adv 2/	23,500	1	18,800	18,800	5	1,567	4,700	4,700	2	157	1,724
	Jan	<b>23,500</b>	1	<b>18,800</b>	18,800	20	6,267	<b>4,700</b>	4,700	2	157	6,424
	Jul	5,000	1	4,000	4,000	20	1,333	1,000	1,000	2	33	1,366
List Quality Control	NA	3,000	1	2,400	2,400	5	200	600	600	2	20	220
List Questionnaire Testing	NA	100	1	80	80	10	13	20	20	2	1	14
Totals 6/		<b>525,000</b>		<b>420,100</b>	988,360		183,840	<b>104,900</b>	245,590		8,187	192,027

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 the supplementary documents.

3/ Agricultural Tracts: includes allowance for pre-screening when it is warranted.

4/ New Survey: optional follow-up survey to be used to update data to accommodate natural disasters (floods, freeze damage, hurricane, diseases, etc.) or delayed harvests.

5/ Estimated Sample Sizes: The publicity materials, and some of the months are subsamples of the corresponding shaded areas. The shaded areas were summed to come up with the total sample sizes.

6/ Totals may not add due to rounding.

- 13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection of information.**

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with 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 \$30 million annually.

- 15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported (reasons for changes in burden).**

The combined annual burden for all surveys is 192,027 hours, up 25,048 hours from the current inventory of 166,979. This increase in burden is due primarily to an increased usage of pre-survey letters and publicity materials to promote and encourage respondents to reply by either mail or internet. Hopefully, this will result in an increase in response rates as well as help to reduce data collection costs. The remainder of the increase is due to an adjustment in sample sizes to accommodate changes in the farming population.

	Program Change Due to Agency Discretion	Change Due to Adjustment in Agency Estimate	Totals
Annual Number of Responses	344,517	23,200	367,717
Annual Time Burden (Hrs)	23,448	1,600	25,048

- 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 *Quarterly Hogs and Pigs* report, and grain stocks in the *Grain Stocks* report. Farm numbers will be published in *Farms and Land in Farms* in mid - February.

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 on 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 cattle on feed reports are generally released during the third week of the month. Monthly estimates of inventory, placements, marketings, and other disappearance of cattle in 1,000+ (capacity) feedlots are published for the eleven 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 (land values) and a supplemental cash rents survey (0535-0002) conducted in March. The combined data 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 fourth week of the month.

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

Survey Schedule: Data Collection and Publication			
Survey	Data Collection	Release Date	Publication
June Area Survey (JAS)	Jun	late June	<i>Acreage, Hogs and Pigs, Grain Stocks</i>
		Mid-Feb	<i>Farms and Land in Farms</i>
		1 <sup>st</sup> 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</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>Crop Production, Monthly</i>
Cattle Inventory	Jan	Last week of Jan	<i>Cattle</i>
	Jul	4 <sup>th</sup> week Jul	
Cattle on Feed	Jan - Dec	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of each month	<i>Cattle on Feed</i>
Hog Inventory	Qtrly	last Friday in survey month	<i>Hogs and Pigs</i>
Land Values	Jan	1 <sup>st</sup> week Aug	<i>Agricultural Land Values and Cash Rents</i>
Sheep Inventory	Jan	4 <sup>th</sup> week Jan	<i>Sheep and Goats</i>
	Jul	4 <sup>th</sup> week Jul	
Rice Stocks (on farm)	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](http://www.nass.usda.gov). Publications are available on-line immediately after release at [http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_Subject/index.php](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_Subject/index.php). Once there, you can select the Sector, Group, Commodity, and Data Item you wish to review for a 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.

October, 2010