FIELD CROPS PRODUCTION

OMB No. 0535-0002

TERMS OF CLEARANCE

Date 06/05/2009

TERMS OF CLEARANCE: In accordance with 5 CFR 1320, the information collection is approved for three years. NASS should provide their plans for conducting nonresponse bias analyses to OMB in 2009.

As a part of the NASS normal operating procedures, NASS sets a target level to get a positive response rate of at least 80% on all surveys but more importantly to achieve greater than 80% coverage of the commodity being surveyed. Some surveys may have a high level of coverage but the desired response rate is not achieved due to size and distribution disparity in the population, A limited number of producers often account for the largest percent of the item of interest. In addition, many of these surveys are not sample surveys, but complete censuses of the small target populations. Thus, achieving an 80% response rate is less critical as non-response weight s are not combined with sample weights for these surveys. Standardization processes are under way across NASS field crop surveys to ensure consistent statistical methods are in place that produce sound estimation outcomes which adhere to coverage and response rate targets. Standardization will reduce the number of surveys needed to maintain a reliable statistical estimation data series and in turn reduce respondent burden.

With surveys such as the Weekly Crop Progress, we are asking respondents to provide us with observations and their opinion of the growing conditions and the crop conditions in their area. This is not a probability based survey sample, but we can examine the extent of refusal and other forms of nonresponse and its impact on the resulting data, if any. In addition, since the growing conditions are changing continuously and on a regional basis, later follow up contacts are also not feasible. To help insure quality data we collect information from crop observers with local knowledge in each area of interest. C

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. NASS conducts probability surveys where possible, as documented in OMB docket No. 0535-0213, the Agricultural Surveys Program for the major crop commodities such as corn, soybeans and wheat. Most of the more specialized field crops such as potatoes, tobacco, dried beans, and mint are included in this docket. Because of unique field crop characteristics such as concentration of a crop in localized geographical areas or the relative importance of the crop, the use of supplemental follow-on surveys is needed. The surveys in this docket use a combination of mail questionnaires, telephoning, internet, and personal interviews. They are conducted to ensure that there are sufficient samples to provide accurate indications for NASS published estimates.

Commodity-specific surveys for alfalfa/other grass seeds, dry beans, mint, special oilseeds, sunflowers (non-oil), potatoes, sweet potatoes, sugar beets, sugarcane, and tobacco are used in those States where better coverage of localized growing areas is needed. Results are published in the next monthly *Crop Production* release. In some States and with certain commodities, it has proven to be more effective if we include commodity price information, stocks and some processing questions on the production questionnaires. This has helped to reduce the frequency at which individual operators are contacted to collect data.

Variety surveys are conducted in several States to estimate acreage planted by wheat and barley variety. The wheat variety survey is conducted as part of State cooperative agreements. The barley variety survey is conducted as part of a cooperative agreement with the American Malting Barley Association.

The County Agricultural Production Surveys (CAPS) or County Estimates Surveys are conducted each year at the end of the growing season to help estimate field crops acreage harvested and final production at State and county levels. In item A.12. we have identified that there are two separate county estimate surveys; the small grains and the row crops. The small grains are your bread and cereal grains, these crops are harvested in the summer months (May – July), so we conduct a county estimate survey following harvest to minimize memory bias.

The row crops (corn, soybeans, etc.) are harvested in the fall, or early winter, so this data is collected in the Dec. – Jan. time period. The two samples are pulled independently; it is possible that a farmer could receive both questionnaires if they produce both types of crops.

The weekly Crop Progress and Condition Survey, published in *Crop Progress,* provides timely information about the development and condition of crops between issues of the monthly *Crop Production* release. Questions concerning soil moisture content, insect or disease presence, and the stages of crop production are also asked to better inform farmers of conditions in their region as well as other parts of the country.

The annual Cash Rent Survey is conducted of farmers who have rented land historically on a cash basis. These data will be used to satisfy the requirement of the 2008 Farm Bill to publish county level cash rent data for both crop land and pasture land.

General authority for these data collection activities is granted under U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2204. This statute specifies that "The Secretary of Agriculture shall procure and preserve all information concerning agriculture which he can obtain ... by the collection of 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.

Crop forecasts published in the monthly *Crop Production* report and other releases are used by farmers, agribusinesses, and many government agencies in analyzing the nation's production and marketing of field crops and grains. The Secretary of Agriculture uses estimates of crop production to administer farm program legislation and import-export programs.

The weekly crop progress and condition inquiry, published in the *Crop Progress* report every Monday, provides an efficient way for the Department of Agriculture to closely monitor agricultural developments across the country which may affect the nation's food supply. Numerous briefing reports are prepared for the Secretary of Agriculture on crop condition, phenological development, and harvest progress. The reporting of insect and disease damage can put farmers in other areas on alert to take preventive measures, thus minimizing possible damage. Information on shortages of soil moisture and extremes in temperatures can presage possible affects on yield.

County estimates for field crops are needed by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency to carry out their respective legislative mandates**.** Their primary use of the data is to determine average yields by county, used in determining participating farmers' compensation payments. The county-level cash rent survey data enable FSA program payment rates to better reflect market conditions. The information may be similarly useful to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The information will also benefit the agricultural sector more generally by enabling the rental market for cropland to operate more competitively.

Variety surveys are used by the Agricultural Research Service, plant breeders, researchers, and growers to determine the acreage by variety and measure acceptance of new varieties. The impact of insect or disease outbreaks can be measured from variety surveys after the tolerance of a particular variety is determined. Varietal data on wheat are used for determining production and available supplies by class. Class data are of great importance to government analysts and exporters in planning the disposition of U.S. wheat crops since exports comprise approximately one-half of total use.

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. Some or all of the survey instruments for the following commodities have been converted: dry beans, mint, special oilseeds, potatoes, sugarcane, non-oil sunflower, sweet potatoes, tobacco, and the weekly crop progress and condition report. The conversion of several more of the smaller surveys will be completed this year. The remaining instruments that will not be converted are too infrequent or too impractical to use that mode of data collection. The current proportion of survey responses that employ the Web is at 66.2% for crop progress, 4.6 % for row crop county estimates, 3.2% for small grain county estimates, and about 5.2 % for the remaining information collections that are available on the internet. This results in an overall response rate of 17.1% for surveys available on the internet.

While web reporting is offered to all of our survey respondents, the majority of our respondents do not reply to our surveys using the internet. The Crop Progress survey is an exception due to the target population. Crop Progress targets people who are knowledgeable of the agriculture across their county or district and can

report to this survey on a weekly basis. The majority of the people sampled by this survey are County, State or Federal employees; Agricultural teachers at a local high school; NASDA field enumerators who are also farmers; etc. Since these people respond on a weekly basis, they prefer to use the internet to respond. With many of our other surveys, farmers may only be selected to conduct a survey once every couple of years, so they would rather just fill out the paper questionnaire and mail it back in. Approximately, 25% of U.S. farmers are over the age of 65 and many of them either don't own a computer or don't feel comfortable reporting their data on the internet.

NASS has looked into various modes of data collection. We have tested an approach similar to what the Census Bureau uses to collect population data when we conducted our Content Test for the Census of Agriculture, and while it slightly increased the number of web responses, it drastically reduced the overall number of responses. Based on this research we will not be using that approach in the Census of Agriculture or our other surveys. In addition, the majority of our surveys are extremely time sensitive. Some surveys are conducted on a weekly or monthly basis and we will mail out a questionnaire to the respondent with instructions on how to respond by internet, or return the questionnaire by mail. If we have not received their response within a few days we must switch over to either phone or personal enumeration. On the majority of our monthly or quarterly surveys the data collection period is limited to approximately 10 days. Using the intense modes of data collection that NASS relies on is the only way in which we can achieve one of our primary directives – the collection and publication of quality data in a timely and useful manner.

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. The address for the crop progress is different, however, because it was the first survey NASS converted to the Web: http://cpcsweb.nass.usda.gov.

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 State Departments of Agriculture and land grant universities to conduct agricultural surveys. These surveys meet both State and Federal needs, thus eliminating duplication and minimizing reporting burden on the agricultural industry. Some States have added a few additional questions to their questionnaires to accommodate the needs of their State cooperators and eliminate the need for a separate survey for some of these specialty crops. There

is no duplication of questions asked of producers in this docket except for the probability surveys conducted by NASS, which they supplement. In addition, respondent lists are carefully compared to ensure there is no overlap.

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.

Information requested on surveys included in this docket can be provided with a minimum of difficulty by respondents, generally without having to consult their record books.

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.

Collecting data less frequently would eliminate information needed to keep the U.S. Department of Agriculture abreast of changes at the State and national level. Timing and frequency of the various reports have evolved to meet the needs of Department clients, including producers, agribusinesses, and government agencies, yet minimize 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 5CFR 1320.5.

Survey data are collected weekly and monthly depending on the need for information to keep the U.S. Department of Agriculture abreast of changes at the State and national level.

There are no other special circumstances that would cause the information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information guidelines in 5CFR1320.5.

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 February 6, 2012 on page 5759. Two public comments were received; both letters are attached to this renewal package, neither warranted a response.

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 recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultations with plant breeders, researchers, growers, industry associations, and other government agencies such as FSA and NRCS are carried out to ensure that data collected reflect all varieties and the proper timing to obtain accurate information.

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.

All 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 these regulations and sign a statement of compliance annually.

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.

Average completion time per questionnaire is based on time required for other surveys of similar length. Calculation of burden hours is shown in the table below. Estimated response counts are based on an 80% target response rate and minutes per response shown are the maximum average times for all questionnaires used for the commodity.

Projected Burden for Field Crops (OMB 0535-0002) for 2012 - 2014

Survey	Estimated Sample Size	Freq	Estimated Responses				Non-response				Total Burden Hours
			Resp. Count	Freq x Count	Min./ Resp.	Burden Hours	Nonresp Count	Freq. x Count	Min./ Non Resp	Burden Hours	
Commodity Specific Surveys											
Alfalfa/Other Grass Seed	25	1	20	20	10	3	5	5	2	0	4
Dry Beans, Dry Peas & Lentils											
Dry Bean Cleaner Survey	100	2	80	160	10	27	20	40	2	1	28
Dry Bean Dealer Inquiry	25	2	20	40	10	7	5	10	2	0	7
Commercial Bean Seed Survey	25	2	20	40	10	7	5	10	2	0	7
Dry Bean Planting Intentions	500	2	400	800	10	133	100	200	2	7	140
Dry Bean Inquiry (mid-season)	6,000	1	4800	4,800	10	800	1,200	1,200	2	40	840
Dry Bean Inquiry (end-of-season)	6,000	2	4800	9,600	15	2,400	1,200	2,400	2	80	2,480
Dry Peas and Lentils	400	1	320	320	10	53	80	80	2	3	56
Mint											
Mint Grower	300	1	240	240	10	40	60	60	2	2	42
Mint Dealer	10	1	8	8	15	2	2	2	2	0	2
Oilseeds, special	1,000	1	800	800	15	200	200	200	2	7	207
Sunflower, non-oil	10	3	8	24	10	4	2	6	2	0	4
Potatoes											
Spring Season Production Forecast	500	2	400	800	10	133	100	200	2	7	140
Summer Season Production Forecast	800	2	640	1,280	10	213	160	320	2	11	224
November Production Forecast	4,500	1	3,600	3,600	15	900	900	900	2	30	930
Disposition	5,100	1	4,080	4,080	20	1,360	1,020	1,020	2	34	1,394
Sweet Potato Disposition	1,150	1	920	920	15	230	230	230	2	8	238
Sweet Potatoes Buyers	100	1	80	80	15	20	20	20	2	1	21
Sugarbeets	10	4	8	32	25	13	2	8	2	0	14

Survey	Estimated Sample Size	Freq	Estimated Responses				Non-response				Total Burden Hours
			Resp. Count	Freq x Count	Min./ Resp.	Burden Hours	Nonresp Count	Freq. x Count	Min./ Non Resp	Burden Hours	
Tobacco											
Tobacco Forecast (March/June)	150	2	120	240	5	20	30	60	2	2	22
Tobacco Inquiry (Other)	150	5	120	600	10	100	30	150	2	5	105
Tobacco Price Inquiry	3,000	1	2400	2,400	15	600	600	600	2	20	620
Tobacco Buyer Survey	15	1	12	12	20	4	3	3	2	0	4
Variety Surveys											
Wheat and Barley	30,000	1	24000	24,000	10	4,000	6,000	6,000	2	200	4,200
Malting Barley Survey	2,000	1	1600	1,600	10	267	400	400	2	13	280
County Estimates											
County Agricultural Production Survey (CAPS) Small Grains	110,000	1	88,000	88,000	15	22,000	22,000	22,000	2	733	22,733
County Agricultural Production Survey (CAPS) Row Crops	200,000	1	160,000	160,000	20	53,333	40,000	40,000	2	1,333	54,667
Alaska Acreage & Production Survey	300	1	240	240	15	60	60	60	2	2	62
Alaska Spring Acreage Survey	300	1	240	240	20	80	60	60	2	2	82
Crop Progress and Condition Report (Crop Weather)	4,000	40	3,200	128,000	10	21,333	800	32,000	2	1,067	22,400
Cash Rent Survey	250,000	1	200,000	200,000	10	33,333	50,000	50,000	2	1,667	35,001

Cost to the public for completing the questionnaires is assumed to be comparable to the hourly rate of those requesting the data. The combined reporting for all surveys of 146,977 hours is multiplied by $24 per hour, for a total cost to the public of $3,527,448.

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

There is no cost burden to respondents.

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 (equipment, overhead, printing, and staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The total cost to the Federal government to conduct field crop surveys and prepare estimates is approximately $10 million, most of which is staff cost.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I (reasons for changes in burden).

The total burden of 146,977 hours is down 26,313 hours from the current inventory of 173,290 hours. This decrease is due to several factors: by redesigning the CAPS surveys we were able to decrease the estimated number of minutes it takes to complete each questionnaire; we were also able to reduce the overall CAPS sample sizes by 90,000 operations per year; reductions in frequency and sample sizes were also incurred on several of the smaller surveys.

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.

Questionnaires are mailed out to each person in the target samples for the surveys included in this data collection request. Respondents who do not return their questionnaires by mail or internet will be attempted by phone enumeration. On surveys such as the weekly Crop Progress survey, we encourage the respondents to use the internet to complete the questionnaires due to the very short data collection period. The data are reviewed for reasonableness prior to keying into data processing media for editing and summarization. They are summarized by crop reporting districts and the indications are weighted for the State, based on the relative importance of the commodity in the district. State indications are plotted on time series charts which typically comprise 10 years of survey indications and final estimates. Three primary indicators are obtained for each crop: an identical comparison of current year acreage to the previous year acreage, acreage as a percent of total farmland, and average yield for

respondents reporting.

Crop production estimates are issued from Headquarters in Washington, D.C. in the monthly *Crop Production* reports, the January annual summary, June acreage report, or specialty releases as shown in the table below. Crop progress and condition data are published in the weekly *Crop Progress*. State-funded cooperative survey reports may be released from the individual Field Offices as well as in Headquarters publications. The *Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin* is prepared in cooperation with the National Weather Service Meteorologists, USDA's Cooperative Extension Service, and World Agricultural Outlook Board.

2012 Field Crops Production Surveys

Survey	Data Collection Period	Publication	
		Publication Name	Release Date
Alfalfa/Clover Seed	Jul	FO monthly release	August
Dry Beans	Jun - Nov	*Crop Production*	12th of month
Mint	Nov	*Annual Summary*	January
Oilseeds, Special	Oct - Dec	*Crop Production*	12th of month
Potatoes	Apr - Dec	*Crop Production*	12th of month
		Potatoes	Sep 20
Sugar beets	Apr, Jun, Nov, Dec	*Acreage*	end of Jun
Sugarcane	Jun; varies Aug-	*Crop Production*	12th of month
Sunflower, Non-oil	Mar, Jun, Dec		
Sweet potatoes	Mar, Jun, Dec		
Tobacco	Jun, Aug - Nov	*Acreage*	end of Jun
		Crop Production	12th of month
Variety Surveys: Barley	Jun	*Variety Summaries*	mid-Jul
Acreage and Production	varies Aug-Jan	*Annual Summary*	January
Crop Progress	weekly Apr-Nov	*Crop Progress*	Mondays

These publications are available on-line immediately after release at http://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Reports_By_Title/index.asp.
Once there, you should select the first letter of the report title from the alphabet list and then the specific commodity or publication.

National Crop Progress and Condition Reports:
http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1048.

State Crop Progress and Condition reports:
http://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/State_Crop_Progress_and_Condition/index.asp

Crop Production Releases:

http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1046

Potato Summaries:
http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1123

County Estimates Release Schedule for 2011 production:
http://www.nass.usda.gov/Data_and_Statistics/County_Data_Files/Release_Schedule/index.asp

Statistics by State for specialty commodities:
http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/

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.

There is no request for approval of 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.

April, 2012

Revised August, 2012