



Agricultural Resource Management Survey

United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service Economic Research Service

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The Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), developed and conducted by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and Economic Research Service (ERS), is USDA's primary source of information on the production practices, resource use and economic well-being of America's farm operations and farm households. The survey targets selected commodities on a rotating basis to collect additional data on production costs and returns. This year, NASS and ERS will concentrate on collecting this information from broiler producers and sorghum and barley growers.

HOW ARE THE DATA COLLECTED?

NASS will collect data on the economic well-being of nearly 35,000 farms in the 48 contiguous states beginning in January and continuing through the end of April. Farmers have the option of responding via one of the following data collection methods:

- Internet – Secure, online reporting is the timeliest, most cost-effective method.
- Mail – Participants fill out and mail back the questionnaire that they received.
- Personal interview – A trained enumerator may conduct a personal interview to assist with data collection.

NASS representatives will ask all participating producers to provide data on their farm operating costs, capital improvements, assets and debts for agricultural production, as well as farm-related income, government payments, off-farm income and operator and household characteristics for the previous year.

Commodity-specific questionnaires will include additional questions. NASS will ask producers selected for the broiler portion of the survey about their broiler feed, housing and sales. Sorghum and barley questionnaires will ask the growers to provide information about their drying practices, including cost and fuel used to dry the grains.

HOW IS THE INFORMATION USED?

USDA, U.S. Congress, farm groups, agribusinesses and other decision-makers use the information from ARMS to make the decisions that shape the future of U.S. agriculture. Many federal policy and program that affects U.S. farmers and farm families is based on ARMS data. For example:

- ARMS plays a major role in calculating the state and local income estimates, which are used to allocate federal funds for programs such as Medicaid and the Supplemental Security Income.
- USDA heavily relies on the data collected by the ARMS throughout the Farm Bill discussions and decision-making.
- ARMS provides annual cost-of-production estimates required by Congress for more than 15 commodities covered under farm-support legislation.
- The Bureau of Economic Analysis uses ARMS data to calculate the farm sector portion of the U.S. gross domestic product.

The information provided by survey respondents is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the privacy of all responses and publishes data only in aggregate form, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS will publish the farm economic data in the annual *Farm Production Expenditures* report, to be released August 2, 2012. All reports are available through the NASS website: www.nass.usda.gov. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540.

All ERS reports are available on ERS website: www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/arms