

Supporting Statement

VEGETABLE SURVEYS

OMB No. 0535-0037

A. JUSTIFICATION

This long-running docket is being submitted for an extension of 3 years. When data collection related to this information collection is approved, it will be the implementation of a reworking of the Vegetable Program.

The reworking consists of

- Standardized questionnaires to collect data for most commodities
- Data collection that will occur twice a year:
 - o Forecasts and Preliminary Estimates for certain commodities in August for a September report
 - o End of season acreage and production estimates for most commodities in November for a January report.
- Centralized processing in national and/or regional offices,
- Adjustments to burden minutes on individual questionnaires.

Within the ROCIS submission system there will be a sizeable shift in the number of responses and total burden due to additional samples and the adjustment in burden minutes per questionnaire for the standardization effort.

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 objective of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is to collect, prepare, and issue State and national estimates of crop and livestock production, prices, and disposition; as well as economic statistics, environmental statistics related to agriculture and also to conduct the Census of Agriculture. The Vegetable Surveys Program obtains basic agricultural statistics for fresh market and processing vegetables in major producing States. Vegetable statistics are used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help administer programs and by growers, processors, and marketers in making production and marketing decisions. The fresh market estimating program now consists of 25 selected crops and the processing program consists of 8 principal crops.

The vegetable program has two types of utilization: some crops are for the fresh market only, some are for processing only, and some are dual crops--both fresh

market and processing. The fresh market vegetable program consists of specialized growers who are surveyed at the conclusion of the growing season for estimates of crop production. Producers of onions, strawberries, and asparagus are surveyed in August to obtain forecasted acreage and production.

For processed vegetables, processors are surveyed in August for acreage contracted and estimated yield for asparagus, snap beans, sweet corn, green peas, and tomatoes. In late November, processors are asked for final acreage harvested, production, and value. Processed Cucumbers and pickle stocks are different enough to need their own questionnaires, rather than be included with the other groups of vegetables. California also has unique processed tomatoes questionnaire since they are the only State to set vegetable county estimates.

As part of OMB docket number 0535-0218, Agricultural Resource Management, Chemical Use, and Post-harvest Chemical Use Surveys, NASS is building nationally coordinated data bases on agricultural chemical use and related farm practices. These vegetable surveys provide base information for much of the data collected in that docket.

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 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.

Data reported on vegetable inquiries are used by NASS to estimate acreage intended to plant, acreage planted, acreage harvested, yield/production, price, and utilization for the crops listed below.

Crop	Utilization		Crop	Utilization	
	Fresh Market	Process		Fresh Market	Process
Artichokes	X	X	Honeydew Melons	X	
Asparagus	X	X	Lettuce	X	
Beans, Lima		X	Onions	X	X
Beans, Snap	X	X	Peas, Green		X
Broccoli	X	X	Peppers, Bell	X	X
Cabbage	X		Peppers, Chile	X	X
Cantaloupes	X		Pumpkins	X	X
Carrots	X	X	Spinach	X	X
Cauliflower	X	X	Squash	X	X
Celery	X	X	Strawberries	X	X
Corn, Sweet	X	X	Tomatoes	X	X
Cucumbers	X	X	Watermelons	X	
Garlic	X	X			

These estimates provide vital statistics for growers, processors, and marketers to use in making production and marketing decisions. Private industry forecasters use the data to track production levels for the industry. Federal and State agencies use the annual summary when developing and appraising government programs affecting the vegetable industry. Allied industries such as container manufacturers, chemical manufacturers, and plant breeders use the data in feasibility studies to assess the economic impact of products and define market size and location. Data have been provided to foreign governments interested in U.S. vegetable production and to extension specialists at land grant universities.

Survey results are used by the Economic Research Service (ERS) for the *Vegetables and Pulses Outlook Reports* produced in March, June, September, and December. Vegetable data provide information to assist the Agricultural Marketing Service in the administration of market orders for tomatoes, celery, onions, lettuce, and melons. Another user of NASS data is the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, to help administer their Generalized System of Preferences Program, which determines preferred imports from other countries. The International Trade Commission utilizes vegetable data in its studies of import relief.

In the table above, data for some of the commodities are collected only for fresh or processed markets on the US level. However, some States will collect data for both fresh and processed markets to fulfill State cooperator agreements with NASS Field Offices.

- 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.**

Starting with the 2013 data collection in August and November, web-based data reporting will be available for surveys in the Vegetables Forecast and End of Season Vegetables portions of this information collection. The onions, strawberries, and asparagus data collection were accessible for web-based data collection in 2012. The remainder of the Vegetable Forecast and End of Season portions will be accessible for web-based data collection by the end of 2013. The Specialty Surveys include surveys that satisfy Cooperative Agreements with State Departments of Agriculture. NASS plans to continue to make surveys accessible to web-based data collection as quickly as possible.

- 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.**

The National Agricultural Statistics Service cooperates with State departments of agriculture and land grant universities to conduct agricultural surveys. The surveys meet both State and Federal needs, thus eliminating duplication and minimizing reporting burden on the agricultural industry. These surveys are the only timely and reliable source of information on the vegetable industry. Data collected are not available from any other source.

- 5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-1), describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

Information from growers can be provided with a minimum of difficulty by the respondent and generally without having to consult their record books. Processors and shippers provide the requested information from their normal day-to-day operating records.

In the enclosed sample questionnaires, NASS has included several MASTER versions of the questionnaires. These versions contain all of the different commodities that data are collected for in each of the different seasons and different States. States will select the commodities produced in their respective State(s) to shorten the questionnaires down to only the essential questions. The emphasis of the questionnaires differs between the August and November data collections. In August, we ask the respondents what they planted for the growing season and to forecast what they expect their end of season production will be.

In November, NASS asks what happened regarding the crops harvested in the current year. In addition to the questions about harvestings and plantings, the November survey will collect data on value of production and additional information on products that are processed or dried and placed into storage.

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 data needed to keep the agricultural industry abreast of changes at the State and national level. Timing and frequency of the various reports have evolved to meet the needs of customers and yet minimize the burden on the reporting public. NASS has been undertaking a major standardization effort in 2012 to consolidate many of the vegetable questionnaires across all States. Along with this we have decreased the frequency of most of these surveys from quarterly to semi-annual. In this renewal docket we are conducting a forecast survey early in the season and an end of the season survey.

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 Notice soliciting comments was published in the Federal Register on November 16, 2012 on page 68732. NASS received two comments from Ms. Jean Public on this renewal request.

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 is in frequent contact with growers and processors to keep abreast of activities in the vegetable industry. Other government agencies such as the Foreign Agricultural Service, Economic Research Service, and Agricultural Marketing Service are consulted. Other contact sources are associations such as the Food Products Association, the Produce Marketing Association, United Fresh, and the National Onion Association.

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, U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2276, and Subtitle A of the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA), (Public Law 107-347) 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.

NASS and NASS contractors comply with OMB Implementation Guidance, (Implementation Guidance for Title V of the E-Government Act, CIPSEA). 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.

Cost to the public of completing the questionnaire is assumed to be comparable to the hourly rate of those requesting the data. Reporting time of 9,402 hours are multiplied by \$24 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$217,584.

Projected Response Burden for Vegetable Surveys 2013 - 2015

Crop	QID	Sample Size	Freq	Responses				Non-response				Total Burden Hours
				Resp. Count	Freq x Count	Min./ Resp.	Burden Hours	Nonresp Count	Freq. x Count	Min./ Nonr.	Burden Hours	
Fresh Market Vegetables Forecast												
Asparagus Grower Inquiry - Aug.	123371	300	1	240	240	10	40	60	60	2	2	42
Strawberry Grower Inquiry - Aug.	123370	2,100	1	1,680	1,680	10	280	420	420	2	14	294
Onion Grower Inquiry - Aug.	123372	1,500	1	1,200	1,200	10	200	300	300	2	10	210
Vegetables for Processing - Aug.	123388	500	1	400	400	10	67	100	100	2	3	70
End of Season Vegetables												
Strawberry Grower Inquiry - Nov	123414	500	1	400	400	10	67	100	100	2	3	70
Onion Grower Inquiry - Nov.	123433	1,500	1	1,200	1,200	10	200	300	300	2	10	210
Vegetables for Processing - Dec.	123441	500	1	400	400	15	100	100	100	2	3	103
Vegetable Grower Inquiry - Nov.	133501	20,000	1	16,000	16,000	15	4,000	4,000	4,000	2	133	4,133
Cucumbers for Pickles - Dec.	123415	200	1	160	160	10	27	40	40	2	1	28
Specialty/State Surveys												
Chile Grower Survey	301123	500	1	400	400	10	67	100	100	2	3	70
Chile Buyer & Processor Survey	QID	10	1	8	8	10	1	2	2	2	0	1
Vegetable Survey - Delaware	123019	600	1	480	480	20	160	120	120	2	4	164
Annual Specialty Crops Survey - Hawaii	060127	700	1	560	560	15	140	140	140	2	5	145
New England End of Season Fruit & Vegetable Inquiry	000136-NH	3,600	1	2,880	2,880	20	960	720	720	2	24	984
Vegetables End of Season - New Jersey	000136	500	1	400	400	15	100	100	100	2	3	103
Processed Tomato Report (Not for County Estimates) - California - Jan. & Aug.	QID	27	2	22	43	5	4	5	11	2	0	4
Processed Tomato County Estimates - California - May & Dec.	QID	27	2	22	43	15	11	5	11	2	0	11
Publicity Materials												
EDR Cover Letter		33,064	1	26,451	26,451	5	2,204	6,613	6,613	2	220	2,424

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 estimated cost to the Federal government for the vegetable program is \$2.0 million. Approximately \$1,700,000 will go to federal salaries, \$150,000 will go to NASDA enumerators for data collection and \$150,000 will go to printing, postage and other miscellaneous expenses. NASS has been undertaking a major standardization effort in 2012 to consolidate many of the vegetable questionnaires across all States. Along with this we have decreased the frequency of several of these surveys, resulting in a reduction in projected costs by \$750,000 from the previous approval. Most of the costs are personnel costs.

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 projected burden is 9,066 hours (Item #12). This program change is an increase of 4,304 hours from the previous inventory of 4,640. This adjustment is the result of slightly larger sample sizes and the inclusion of burden for the publicity materials and Electronic Data Reporting (EDR) instruction sheet being mailed to respondents. In addition some of the surveys were under estimated on completion times in the previous submission. The fresh market vegetable questionnaires that were previously estimated at 5 minutes each have been raised to 10 minutes each. The sample size for the New England 'end of season' questionnaire had to have its sample size increased along with the time to complete the questionnaire raised from 15 minutes to 20 minutes.

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.

The vegetable surveys obtain data from the major producing States for all of

the major commodities in their State. Samples are selected nationally for each State based on targeting the particular commodity of interest. Vegetable data are collected by the National Operations Division (NOD) and within the Field Offices (FOs). The data are summarized nationally with all States using the same summary and receiving consistent indications across all States and commodities. Thirty-Eight States participate in the program; Thirty-seven are published under the fresh market vegetable program, while twenty-seven are published under the principal processing program.

The forecast fresh market vegetable program includes estimates for asparagus, onions, and strawberries (for CA, FL, and OR only). Estimates published in the September release (published around the 6th) include acreage, yield, production, and price.

The forecast processing vegetable program includes estimates of contracted acres intended for harvest and contracted yield/production.

The annual end of season vegetable release contains estimates set for acreage, yield, total production price for all vegetables in the estimation program.

Vegetable data are published twice a year. There is the *Vegetables* report, released in September and the end-of-season *Vegetable Annual Summary* which is issued in January.

Below is the link to the September release:

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1177>.

Below is the link to the Annual release:

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1183>.

State statisticians and Headquarters statisticians have an Estimation Manual which contains standard analysis and estimation procedures.

- 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.

February, 2013

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