

2013 Proposed Changes

USDA National Farmers Market Managers Survey

OMB NO. 0581-0169

Overview

AMS has proposed a number of improvements in the National Farmers Market Manager Survey to increase the accuracy of data collected, reduce the number of information requests made by AMS of farmers market managers, increase survey response rate and improved identification of the type of firm listed in the Directory. With this renewal and revision survey questions will be data driven which means that respondents only see and are asked to answer questions that pertain to their market operation. In addition, this survey is designed in a modular fashion where all respondents are asked to respond to a core set of questions and separate modules of questions that are asked of a randomly stratified sample of farmers market managers. The modular approach allows for questions covering a wide array of topics while minimizing the amount of respondent burden.

Merging USDA's National Farmers Market Directory with The National Farmers Market Managers Survey

Since 1994 AMS has maintained a National Farmers Market Directory. Currently the directory contains 7,864 listings of farmers markets from across the country. In 2012, 3,445 market managers updated their listing in the Directory. Most of the information listed in the National Farmers Market Directory is pertinent to the National Farmers Market Managers survey however none of the data in the Farmers Market Directory has been utilized by the National Farmers Market Survey in the past. In this renewal and revision of this information collection we propose to merge the two efforts to more efficiently use the data collected, improve survey response rate and reduce respondent burden.

Going forward market managers that list their market in USDA's National Farmers Market Directory will be asked to participate in USDA National Farmers Market Manager Survey after they have completed their market listing. This will eliminate the need of AMS to make contact with these same market managers to inform them of the national survey and ask for their participation. Market managers that listed their market in the Directory in previous years will view a pre-populated input-form of their previous listing which they can review and revise to list their market. About ninety percent of market manager that list their market in the Directory revise their market data from the previous year which makes the update process easier and requires less time for most market managers.

Expanding the types of Directory listings to improve the accuracy of the National Farmers Market Directory

Over the years AMS has observed that a number of direct to consumer farming operations that are not farmers markets have used USDA's National Farmers Market Directory to advertise their

business. These firms no doubt also want to take advantage of the free nation forum provided by the Directory to advertise their businesses. While AMS is in favor of supporting all types of direct to consumer marketing efforts of farm operations, AMS also wants to clearly and correctly identify the direct market business types that are advertised in the National Farmers Market Directory. In previous years AMS has manually inspected the Directory listings to remove all listing that are not farmers markets. (USDA for the purpose of the Directory defines farmers markets as “two or more farm vendors selling at a common direct retail outlet at the same physical location on a recurring basis”). AMS wants to enhance its manual efforts of verifying Directory listings by adding a means that direct marketing operations can self-identify the type of direct marketing farming operation they desire to advertise in the Directory and provide separate listings for each of these direct marketing business types.

AMS proposes to add three additional direct to consumer marketing listing that direct farm marketers can choose from to list their direct marketing operation. These listings will include Mobile Farmers Markets, On-Farm Markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's). When a direct marketer enters the landing page for the Farmers Market Directory they will see a question that asks which type of direct marketing operation they operate and a definition for each direct marketing activity, Farmers Market, On-Farm Market, CSA or Mobile Market. AMS hopes to gain a more accurate list of farmers markets nationally by developing a national listing for on-farm markets, CSA's and mobile markets. The definitions below will be provided for the four direct marketing operation types.

Farmers market: Two or more farm vendors selling at a common direct retail outlet at the same physical location on a recurring basis.

Mobile Market: is a vehicle capable of moving or being moved from which produce/ farm products are sold or offered for sale.

Mobile farm market:

- is not a restaurant on wheels or “kitchen on wheels”;
- is not “meals on wheels” for senior and/ or disadvantaged population;
- is not a truck delivering free produce to disadvantaged population;
- is not a produce delivery truck (because sales of farm products must be transacted at the vehicle)

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation: is a farm or network/ association of multiple farms, IN THE USA, that offer household consumers regular (usually weekly) deliveries of locally-grown farm products during the harvest season on a prearranged subscription basis. CSA subscribers pay either their entire yearly/seasonal subscription fee or designated installments in advance of the production season in return for a share of

the anticipated harvest. These shares may consist of a portion of the participating farm(s) entire product range, as determined by the farm(s), or a specific basket of products pre-selected by the buyer. Some CSAs allow contributions of labor in lieu of a portion of subscription costs, or have a sliding scale for subscription fees based on household income.

On-Farm Market: is a single farm operation that sells agricultural and/or horticultural

products directly to consumers from their farm or adjacent to their farm. The major portion of products sold are grown on their farm and/or sourced from neighboring farms.

Direct marketers will be able to list in one or more of these types of direct marketing listings at no charge. AMS believes that providing an avenue for farm operators to list their direct farming operations in the Directory will help their marketing effects. In term AMS hopes to gain a more accurate list of farmers markets nationally and begin a national listing for on-farm markets, CSA's and mobile markets. The input forms for on-farm market, CSA's and mobile markets and a table outlining the changes proposed in the National Farmers Market Managers survey are attached.