



Agricultural Yield Survey

United States Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service

April 2010

The Agricultural Yield Survey is the primary tool used by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to measure crop production throughout the growing season. This survey enables NASS to track and report any changes that might occur due to weather, pests, disease and other factors.

HOW ARE THE DATA COLLECTED?

The Agricultural Yield Survey is conducted in all states except Alaska and Hawaii. Data are gathered from a selected sample of producers who grow at least one of the crops of interest. Monthly sample sizes range from 7,500 to 28,000.

The information is gathered on a monthly basis from May through November of every year. During the first month, operators provide information on acres planted, acreage for harvest, and expected yield per acre. In the following months, the same operators are contacted to update their expected yield per acre, enabling NASS to track any production changes that might result from changing growing conditions.

During the survey period data will be collected from producers of:

- Small Grains (May-August) – barley, oats, winter wheat, durum wheat, other spring wheat
- Hay (May, August and October) – alfalfa, other hay, hay stocks
- Tobacco (July-October) – burley, air cured, dark fired
- Row Crops (August-November) – corn, cotton, dry edible beans, peanuts, rice, soybeans, sorghum, sugarcane

NASS collects the data from producers mainly via phone interviews. Additionally, NASS uses mail questionnaires and personal interviews on a limited basis. Producers can also respond using the Internet.

HOW IS THE INFORMATION USED?

Data from the Agricultural Yield Survey is a critical component of NASS's monthly *Crop Production* report, which provides a measure of the current state of U.S. agricultural production. All sectors of the U.S. agricultural industry – producers, buyers, suppliers, policymakers and others – rely on crop production estimates to make sound business decisions. For example:

- The information can help producers develop marketing plans for their operations, determining what to produce and how and when to sell it.
- The information enables the industry to forecast transportation and storage requirements and evaluate export potential.
- USDA agencies use the information to determine crop insurance and disaster aid payments along with other program benefits.
- Farm organizations use the information to help form their policy positions.

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.

All reports are available through the NASS web site: www.nass.usda.gov. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540.