



December Agricultural Survey

United States Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service

December 2010

The December Agricultural Survey is the largest and most important year-end survey conducted by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). It provides the official USDA data on final production and harvested acres of major agricultural commodities.

HOW ARE THE DATA COLLECTED?

The December Agricultural Survey is conducted annually in all states, except Alaska and Hawaii. NASS will collect data from approximately 82,000 farms, which are selected from among the nation's 2.2 million farms. During the first two weeks of December, farm operators will be contacted and may respond using one of the following data collection methods:

- Telephone – Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (or CATI) is the primary method.
- Mail – Participants fill out and mail back the questionnaire that was mailed to them.
- Internet – Secure, online reporting is the timeliest, most cost-effective option.
- Personal interviews – NASS representative may conduct a personal face-to-face interview.

The information collected about specific commodities varies from state to state. However, all participating producers will be asked to provide information on their total acres, acres planted and harvested, total yield and production of specific commodities. Producers will also be asked to provide information on the quantities of grains and oilseeds stored on-farm.

HOW IS THE INFORMATION USED?

Once results of the survey are compiled and analyzed, NASS will publish the information in a series of reports. These include the annual *Crop Production* summary and the quarterly *Grain Stocks* report, both to be released on January 12, 2011.

All sectors of the agricultural industry rely on NASS acreage, production and stocks estimates to help make sound business decisions. For instance:

- The data levels the playing field for farmers and ranchers, giving them access to the same information as elevators, input suppliers, bankers and others with whom they do business.
- The information assures international customers that the United States will continue to be a reliable supplier of major commodities and enables the industry to evaluate export potential.
- Universities, Extension agents, private and government economists, the farm media and others depend on the data to help them analyze what is on the horizon.
- Farm organizations use the information to inform 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.

