



# Sheep and Goat Survey

United States Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service

July 2010

U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts the Sheep and Goat Inventory Survey every January and July. The July survey provides information on breeding and market sheep and goats, as well as lambs and kids born as of July 1.

## **HOW ARE THE DATA COLLECTED?**

NASS conducts the July survey in 42 states and gathers sheep and goat inventory information from nearly 4,400 operations. Farm and ranch operators are generally contacted during the first two weeks of the month via:

- Telephone – Computer-assisted telephone interviewing is the primary method.
- Mail – Participants fill out and return the questionnaire that was mailed to them.
- Internet – Secure, online reporting is the timeliest, most cost-effective option.
- Personal interview – An interview can be arranged upon request.

## **HOW IS THE INFORMATION USED?**

NASS will publish the July survey results in the biannual *Sheep and Goats* report, to be released July 23. Additional information on the total number of goat and sheep operations and percent of inventory by herd size is published every February in the *Farms, Land in Farms, and Livestock Operations* report.

Data from these surveys are used as a critical decision-making tool for sheep and goat producers and the industry as a whole. For example:

- Producers use the information to determine production and marketing strategies and to plan purchases and capital investments.
- Timely estimates of sheep and goat inventory allow input suppliers, packers and government to evaluate the expected slaughter volume for future months and to determine potential supplies for export.
- Accurate data about sheep and goat inventory and production enable USDA and producer organizations to plan for and decisively address crisis situations such as disease outbreaks.
- Factual information on supplies, production potential and income is a key element of the decision-making process for the federal farm programs.
- Having quality information helps the industry be more responsive to the American and international public and to increase consumer understanding and awareness of the benefits of U.S. sheep and goats and their products.

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](http://www.nass.usda.gov). For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540.

