

## 1 Supporting Statement Part B

### ORGANIC SURVEY OMB No. 0535 - 0249

#### B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

The target population for the 2014 Organic Survey is all certified organic farms, farms exempt from certification, and transitioning farms. Certified organic farms must meet the qualifications set out by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the USDA and be certified compliant by an approved agent of AMS. Farms employing organic practices but selling less than \$5,000 of organic products are exempt from certification. Transitioning farms have filed a plan and begun the process of becoming certified organic. The Organic Survey is a census of all target population operations that indicated organic production on their 2012 Census of Agriculture form. The 2011 Organics Production Survey conducted in 2012 was a complete census of operations identified as certified organic producers. The exempt operations (sales less than \$5,000) and transitional farms were excluded from the 2011 sample. The final mail list included 9,904 farms that met the above criteria and the response rate was 67.3 percent.

In 2008 the survey was conducted as a mandatory follow-on survey to the 2007 Census of Agriculture. In 2011 the survey was conducted as a voluntary, reimbursable survey. In 2014 the survey will be conducted as a mandatory, follow-on survey to the 2012 Census of Agriculture. The estimated sample size for the 2014 census is approximately 17,500 and the target response rate is estimated at 85 percent or higher.

Response Rates

Survey	Sample Size	Freq.	Total Contacts	Total Responses	Response Rates
2008 Organic Production Census	27,511	1	27,511	23,913	86.9%
2011 Organic Production Survey	9,904	1	9,904	6,665	67.3%

\* The 2008 survey was mandatory.

\* The 2011 survey was voluntary.

\* In 2008, approximately 8% of the sample responded by EDR.

\* In 2011, approximately 2% of the sample responded by EDR.

\* In 2008, the sample consisted of operations that were classified as either certified organic, transitional organic, or exempt from certification (organic sales of less than \$5,000).

\* In 2011, the sample consisted of operations that were classified as certified organic. We excluded operations that were either transitional organic, or exempt from certification (organic sales of less than

2. **Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:**
- **statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,**
  - **estimation procedure,**
  - **degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,**
  - **unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures.**

**Data Collection:** Extensive efforts will be used to maximize response, and thus reduce the extent of non-response adjustment to the survey. Approximately 17,500 questionnaires will be mailed in January with a second mailing for non-respondents in February. All questionnaires will be keyed from image at the National Operations Division (NOD) in St. Louis, MO. The initial mailings will contain the questionnaire, a cover letter, and an Electronic Data Reporting (EDR) instruction sheet. For non-respondents, the follow up mailing will contain another copy of the questionnaire, a cover letter, and an EDR instruction sheet and a return envelope. There will be phone follow up for those who do not respond to the mail requests. There will also be a limited number of face-to-face interviews conducted.

**Stratification:** All operations will be stratified based on their organic total value of sales or their organic acres under production. Due to the influence on published totals, extremely large operations will be made “must” records and will be classified in an extreme operator (EO) stratum. Operations in an EO stratum that do not respond to the survey will be estimated by Regional Field Office personnel. Due to the diversity of organic farming operations from state-to-state,

the EO definitions will vary by state. Approximately 10% of the total sample size will be targeted for an EO stratum within each State. For all other non-EO strata, there will be a non-response weight applied to the responding operations, in order to account for the non-respondents. This non-response weight will be a simple factor derived by taking the stratum size and dividing by the number of responding operations within the stratum population.

**Item Imputation:** For individual questions that go un-answered, but are determined to be necessary for a completed report, an imputation algorithm will be utilized. An analyst in a Regional Field Office can trigger imputation by coding a cell value with a "-1". The algorithm will attempt to place an average in for that cell, using either a strata average or State average for that value.

**Weighting:** Since this is a Census, all operations will have a weight equal to or approximately one. For non-EO strata's each record's weight may be increased by a non-response factor, described above. This will become the final weight used to generate all published estimates.

- 3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

A public information campaign will be used for the Organic Survey. The objective is to make organic producers aware of the survey, its importance to them and the Nation, and to encourage their response. This campaign will work through farm organizations, radio broadcasters, farm press, agribusinesses, and the NASS Regional Field Offices.

To ensure a high response rate and to reduce the non-response bias in the final Organic Survey estimates, NASS will attempt to collect data from non-respondents by telephone. A limited number of interviews will be completed by personal enumeration. The telephone and personal enumeration activities will begin in mid-January, and extend through much of March.

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will be including an article in their organic newsletter in late 2014, telling their readers that NASS will be conducting this survey in early 2015. In this article AMS will give a brief statement on how this data is important to the organic industry and why producers need to respond to the NASS survey.

**4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken.**

Based on the 2011 Organic Production Survey results, minor improvements were made to the 2014 questionnaire prior to testing to improve the ease at which the respondent could complete the questionnaire. Nine cognitive interviews with producers were conducted with the intent to clarify and improve the flow and questions on the survey. Additionally, the feedback provides valuable information to be used for training enumerator staff involved in the telephone and field interviews. The results of the cognitive interviews are attached to this OMB submission. Within the results are recommendations made by our testers to improve the questionnaire along with what changes NASS made to accommodate the suggestions.

**5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.**

Sample Design was performed by Alison Black (202)720-2518, Survey Design by Jeremy Beach (202)720-3159 and Specifications by Gina Geffrard (202) 720-7734

Data collection is carried out by NASS Field Offices the Director of Field Operations is Kevin Barnes at (202) 720-8220.

The NASS survey statistician in Headquarters for this survey is Gina Geffrard (202) 720-7734, in the Census and Survey Division. She is responsible for coordination of sampling, questionnaires, data collection, data processing, and Field Office support.

The NASS commodity statisticians in Headquarters in the Fruits, Vegetable, and Special Crops Section is Fred Granja (202)720-4288, Steve Sakry (202)720-0339 in the Field Crops Section will be working on Field Crops, Tom Kruchten (202)690-4870 in the Livestock Branch will be working on livestock and poultry. These statisticians are all located in the Statistics Division. They are responsible for looking at the summary and publication.

Brian Richards (202)690-8637 in the Census Data Section, Summary, Estimation, and Disclosure Methodology Branch is charge of creating the summary.

November 2014  
Revised December 2014