

## 1 Supporting Statement

### Organic Certifier Survey (OCS)

OMB No. 0535-NEW

#### **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.**

This survey will be a census of all individuals who have been approved by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), National Organic Program (NOP) to certify US farmers and ranchers who produce organic products. This data series was originally collected by the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) from 1997 through 2011, and by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service from 1992 through 1994. The data have not been collected since then. NASS has been asked to revive this data series by collecting data for calendar years 2014 and 2015, after which NOP will take over responsibility for the data collection and summarization.

When ERS collected the data, they were able to obtain a nearly 100% response rate for these annual surveys. They received data files by mail, email, and through personal enumeration. NASS will use the same data collection modes and expects to obtain similar response rates.

- 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.**

In 2011, there were 22 State and 41 private organic certifiers for the United States. They certified farmers and ranchers, transporters, processors, storage facilities, and import/export operations. For years 2014 and 2015 NASS will collect farm-level certified organic commodity data from the organic certifiers.

Since 2002, AMS NOP has accredited operations (both State and private) that conduct the certification of farm operations.

In the Supporting Statement Part A, item 12, the burden table displays burden that is allotted for the 'Operation Profile and Orientation' (one hour) and a separate line item for the actual survey to be conducted. During the orientation portion of the visit, a NASS enumerator will familiarize the certifier with NASS, the survey, and how and what data should be reported. Our confidentiality protection and disclosure policies will also be reviewed, and the certifiers will be asked to sign a disclosure agreement to permit NASS to publish the collected data.

NASS expects that many of the certifiers will have the farm level data saved in electronic files. NASS plans to take the data in its original format, then reformat it to fit into the NASS data collection system, rather than burden the respondent with changing their files to accommodate NASS. For certifiers that keep farm level records on paper only, enumerators will work with those certifiers to go through their records and collect the data in questionnaire format. This will be done at a time that is convenient for the certifier, to help minimize burden.

When summarizing the data, no standard errors will be calculated since this is a census of all operations, we expect 100% response, and no coverage adjustments are needed since the frame should have complete coverage. For publication, NASS expects that statistics for some commodity types, geographical areas, or both may need to be combined to uphold nondisclosure rules based on confidentiality.

- 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.**

ERS or AMS have collected data from organic certifiers for approximately 20 years and have obtained nearly 100% response rates for the last few years. NASS intends to use data collection procedures similar to those ERS used, such as personally enumerating each certifying agent and NASS expects similar success rates.

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

No tests will be conducted. Since this data collection will be similar to the data collection ERS was doing previously, with the same target population, respondents are familiar with providing the data that NASS will be collecting.

**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.**

NASS is conducting the OCS surveys through its Census and Survey Division, Census Planning Branch, Census Production Section. The Section Head is Adam Cline (202) 690-8802.

Sample design will be developed by NASS's Sample Design Section; Section Head is Peter Quan, (202) 720-5269.

They were reviewed by NASS Summary, Estimation, and Disclosure Methodology Branch, Methodology Division; Branch Chief is Jeff Bailey, (202)720-4008. Data summary will be conducted by Audra Zakzeski (202) 720-6264.

Data collection is carried out by NASS Field Offices; Eastern Field Operation's Director is Jay Johnson, (202) 720-3638 and the Western Field Operation's Director is Kevin Barnes (202) 720-8220.

The NASS Environmental, Economics and Demographics, Branch will be responsible for regional and national summaries and publication; Branch Chief is Troy Joshua, (202) 720-6146.

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