

MINK SURVEY

OMB No. 0535-0212

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 Mink Survey is all mink pelt producers in the United States. NASS regional field offices (RFOs) are responsible for updating lists of all known and potential mink producers in the states in their regions. Prior to the annual survey each year, association lists, buyer lists, co-op lists, and other sources are used to identify new mink producers. These are checked against the existing list frame to avoid duplication. RFOs with no mink production in their region in previous years must determine if any mink operations have entered their region. The NASS Frames Maintenance Group in St. Louis, MO is responsible for supporting RFO list maintenance activities for the Mink Survey.

As shown in the table below, in the 2015 data collection period (2014 production year), of the 268 sampled operations with mink pelt production, 228 responded to the Mink Survey, for a response rate of 85.1 percent.

Survey	Sample Size	Freq.	Total Contacts	Total Responses	Response Rate ^{1/} -
Mink Survey	268	1	268	228	85.1%
Mink Price Survey	2	1	2	2	100.0%

^{1/} All response rates referenced in this docket are calculated using the guidelines set forth in OMB Statistical Directives 1 and 2.

Current counts of known or potential mink farms producing pelts in the 13 major producing states are listed in the table below:

Number of Known or Potential Mink Farms in 2015, Major States and U.S.					
State	Producing Farms	State	Producing Farms	State	Producing Farms
Idaho	31	Montana	6	Utah	67
Illinois	7	Ohio	10	Washington	8
Iowa	16	Oregon	15	Wisconsin	74
Michigan	11	Pennsylvania	12	All Other States	11
Minnesota	20	South Dakota	4	United States	292

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**

The Mink Survey is a census of all known or potential mink operations in the U.S., so all mink operations on NASS' list frame are selected for the survey.

The Mink Price Survey collects data from two prominent auction houses. These operations handle approximately 90 percent of all pelts sold by producers. NASS has an ongoing agreement with both of these operations in order to publish a calculated U.S. average market price for pelts based on their combined data.

All data are analyzed for unusual values. Reported data from each operation are compared to what that operation previously reported, as well as to data from similar operations. Partial missing data for operations can be accounted for on an individual basis through phone follow-up with the operation, contacts with county agents or other informed persons, or imputation based on historical data or reported data from similar operations. Complete non-responses are accounted for by expanding reported data from similar operations.

Mink Survey data are initially summarized by state, then state recommendations, comments, and previous year revisions are sent from NASS regional field offices to NASS headquarters in Washington, D.C. NASS statisticians meet for an Agricultural Statistics Board to do a final analysis of the data, including prices from the Mink Price Survey, and produce final estimates at the state and national levels.

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.**

Questionnaires are initially mailed in late April or early May. A second mail request is sent in mid-May to non-respondents. Remaining non-respondents are telephoned in late May or early June. In cases where producers cannot be reached by telephone, personal contacts are made during the last week of May. For the Mink Survey, respondents have the option to report via a web-based questionnaire throughout the entire data collection period.

Survey data are subject to non-sampling errors such as omissions and mistakes in reporting and in processing the data. While these errors cannot be measured directly, they are minimized by carefully reviewing all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

As a whole, this industry is very aware of how important it is to have timely, accurate statistics concerning their industry. The industry endorsement letter has proved to be a very effective tool in achieving satisfactory response rates.

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

No tests of procedures or questionnaire content are proposed for either of the mink surveys.

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), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

Survey design and methodology are determined by the Summary, Estimation, and Disclosure Methodology Branch, Statistics Division; Branch Chief is Jeff Bailey, (202)720-4008.

Sample sizes for each State are determined by the Sampling, Editing, and Imputation Methodology Branch, Methods Division; Branch Chief is Mark Apodaca, (202)720-5805.

Data collection is carried out by NASS Regional Field Offices. The Eastern Field Operations Director is Jay Johnson, (202) 720-3638. The Western Field Operations Director is Kevin Barnes, (202) 720-8220. Survey data are also reviewed and summarized by the Regional Field Offices.

The Livestock Branch Chief is Dan Kerestes (202)720-3570. Commodity statisticians within the Livestock Branch are responsible for coordination of sampling, questionnaires, data collection, data processing, Regional Field Office support, national and regional summaries, analysis, presenting the data to the Agricultural Statistics Board for final estimates, publication, and the Estimation Manual.

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