



# Prices Received Survey

United States Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service

2012

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts the monthly Prices Received Survey to estimate the prices farmers and ranchers receive for crop and livestock commodities. The information collected will provide price data to monitor financial developments in the agriculture sector.

At the end of every month, NASS publishes a *Agricultural Prices* report that includes data on approximately 65 commodities. Price data from current and previous years are also available through Quick Stats, NASS's online database.

## HOW ARE THE DATA COLLECTED?

Each month, NASS mails out the Prices Received Survey questionnaire to approximately 2,000 operators in 37 states. Which commodities the survey asks about varies from state to state, but in all cases the survey asks commodity buyers to report the prices producers received the previous month and to provide a preliminary estimate of the current month's price.

Producers who receive the survey may respond in either of the following ways:

- **Online** – Secure, online reporting is the most timely, cost-effective option. The cover letter includes instructions for this easy option.
- **By mail or fax** – Producers fill out the survey questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided or via fax.

A NASS representative will contact producers who have not responded by the second week of the month to offer the option of a telephone or personal interview.

## HOW IS THE INFORMATION USED?

All sectors of the agriculture industry rely on NASS to produce timely and accurate prices received data to make sound business decisions. For example:

- Prices received data are a component of USDA's Parity Index, which measures the economic well-being of producers and is useful for designing financial safety-net programs.
- The Farm Service Agency uses the market year average price, derived from the monthly Prices Received Survey, to determine counter-cyclical payments to producers.
- The Economic Research Service calculates the farm share of consumer expenditures using the price data.
- Land grant universities and extension service offices promote increased prosperity and economic security for producers by incorporating sound price data into marketing and financial management strategies.
- The World Trade Organization relies on price data to make decisions about international trade, including tariffs and other trade policies.
- Federal and state agencies use price data to project revenues and the need for public services.
- Agribusinesses use income estimates derived from the prices surveys to evaluate markets for location, expansion, and contraction of their business activities.

The information provided by survey respondents is confidential by Federal 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.

