

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Generic Testing – 2019 National Farmers Market Managers Survey

OMB No. 0535-0248

This mini-supporting statement is being submitted to OMB to define the need for conducting qualitative research, in the form of cognitive interviews, for the upcoming 2019 National Farmers Market Managers Survey (NFMMS).

The 2019 NFMMS will be a new survey, sponsored by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), which will ask questions about the organization of farmers markets, marketing activities and outcomes, annual budgets (including grants), and experiences of the farm manager. The NFMMS will be conducted in 2020 for the reference year 2019. Response to the NFMMS will be voluntary. The OMB docket to approve the NFMMS will be submitted by AMS.

The purpose of this research study is to conduct no more than 40 cognitive interviews with representatives from farmers markets in order to assess respondents' understanding of the draft questions and the potential measurement error associated with these questions. The goals of these cognitive interviews will be to: understand the respondents' comprehension of questions and terminology; understand barriers to the retrieval of information requested on the questionnaire, including any record keeping practices; observe the respondents judgement and communication of the information requested, and how to align with response to the question/questionnaire's intent; and, glean ways to reduce respondent burden while maximizing overall response strategies.

The cognitive interviews for this research study will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will include up to 10 exploratory cognitive interviews to help develop the draft questions in the survey. The second phase will use up to 30 confirmatory cognitive interviews to finalize the questions and their response options. Respondents for the cognitive testing will be recruited from the AMS National Farmers Market Directory.

The current draft NFMMS questions are provided as an attachment, along with potential probes to use during the cognitive testing.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances making collection of information necessary.

The 2019 National Farmers Market Manager Survey (NFMMS) will be a new survey, sponsored by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The NFMMS will ask questions about the organization of farmers markets, marketing activities and outcomes, farmer experiences, annual budgets (including grants), and experiences of the farm manager. The purpose of this research study is to conduct no more than 40 cognitive interviews with representatives of farmers markets in order to assess respondents' understanding of the draft questions and the potential measurement error associated with these questions. The goals of these cognitive interviews will be to: understand the respondents' comprehension of questions and terminology; understand barriers to the retrieval of information requested on the questionnaire, including any record keeping practices; observe the respondents judgement and communication of the information requested, and how to align with response to the question/questionnaire's intent; and, glean ways to reduce respondent burden while maximizing overall response strategies.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose information is to be used.

The information gathered through the qualitative research will be analyzed by NASS's Methodology Division, Census and Survey Division and the Agricultural Marketing Service to determine the changes to the format and content of the NFMMS, as well as the best way to ask questions about the constructs of interest on the survey.

The draft questionnaire is attached to this request. A draft of the types of questions asked during the cognitive interviews is also attached.

3. Use of improved information technology.

The cognitive interviews proposed would be done in person by trained cognitive interviewers from the field or HQ.

4. Efforts to identify duplication.

No additional efforts will be taken to identify duplication. Farmers markets who are selected for the cognitive interviews will be selected from the AMS National Farmers Market Directory.

5. Methods to minimize burden of small businesses.

For these cognitive interviews, no special efforts will be made to minimize burden of small businesses.

6. Consequence if information collection were less frequent.

This is a one-time cognitive interview project, conducted in two phases. The questionnaire for the survey is due in September 1, 2018 for submission with the AMS docket. Therefore, these cognitive interviews are planned for April – August 31 2018, so that any changes can be incorporated into the version submitted to OMB at that time.

7. Special circumstances.

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

8. Federal register notice and consultation with outside persons.

Not applicable.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents.

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Confidentiality provided to respondents.

The same confidentiality that is applied to the NFMMS will be applied to data collected during the cognitive interviews.

11. Questions of a sensitive nature.

The NFMMS may ask questions related to a farmer market's budget, which could be considered sensitive.

12. Hour burden and annualized costs to respondents.

All interviews will be conducted by trained cognitive interviewers or survey methodologists who work at either NASS headquarters or one of the NASS Field Offices.

We plan to conduct a maximum of 40 one and a half hour cognitive interviews for a total of 60 total burden hours.

NASS uses the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment

Statistics (most recently published on March 31, 2017 for the previous May) to estimate an hourly wage for the burden cost. The May 2016 mean wage for bookkeepers was \$19.34. The mean wage for farm managers was \$36.44. The mean wage for farm supervisors was \$23.47. The average of the three is \$26.42. The annual estimated reporting time of 60 hours is multiplied by \$26 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$1,560.

13. Total annual cost burden to respondents.

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

14. Annualized costs to federal government.

Costs for conducting the qualitative research interviews are estimated at \$20,000. This will cover expenses for staff payroll, travel, survey analysis, and any other expenses that may be incurred while updating survey materials based on our findings.

15. Reasons for changes in burden.

This mini-supporting statement addresses the use of burden to conduct testing for the NFMMS.

16. Tabulation, analysis, and publication plans.

No data will be published from these tests. Data are for internal use only, but results may be presented at outside conferences or seminars.

17. Request for approval of non-display of expiration date.

There is no request for approval of non-display of the expiration date.

18. Exceptions to certification statement.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS:

1. Respondent universe, sampling, and response rate.

NFMMS will use the AMS National Farmers Market Directory to identify farmers markets that meet the screening criteria for the NFMMS. The farmers markets will not be statistically sampled; rather, they will be hand selected based on their size, longevity, location in both urban and rural environments, and other important criteria that are identified. HQ staff, NASS State Statisticians, and Regional Field Office staff and NASDA staff will recruit respondents for the interviews.

2. Procedures for the collection of information.

Interviewers will follow standard pretesting techniques as defined in the original Supporting Statement Part A for the Generic Clearance docket (0535-0248).

3. Information collected adequate for intended uses.

Farmers markets will be selected based on specific criteria as stated above.

4. Test of procedures or methods.

Not applicable.

5. Individuals consulted on statistical aspects of survey.

Selection of methods of testing for this qualitative research was done by the Methodology Division; Chief Cognitive Research Methodologist is Jaki McCarthy, (202) 690-2389. Senior Survey Methodologist is Kathy Ott, (202) 720-1114.

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