

Supporting Statement

VEGETABLE SURVEYS

OMB No. 0535-0037

A. JUSTIFICATION

This long-running docket is being submitted for an extension of 3 years. Numerous improvements were made to this program in the current approval. There are only minimal changes to the surveys included in this Information Collection Request.

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The primary objective of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is to publish useful statistics related to agriculture. This includes estimates of crop and livestock production, prices, and disposition; economic and environmental statistics; and conducting the quinquennial Census of Agriculture. The Vegetable Surveys program obtains basic agricultural statistics for fresh market and processing vegetables in major producing states. Vegetable statistics are used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help administer programs and by growers, processors, and marketers in making production and marketing decisions. Estimates for the fresh market and processing vegetable program now consists of 27 selected crops.

The vegetable program classifies vegetables by utilization; all crops can be used by both the fresh and processed markets.

The fresh market vegetable program surveys growers, who are contacted in November and asked to report acres planted and harvested, quantity of vegetables produced, and how much of their crop was sold through fresh markets or for processing along with the correlating prices. Producers of onions, strawberries, and asparagus are also surveyed in August to obtain forecasts of acreage and production for the current crop year.

For processed vegetables, processors are surveyed in August for acreage contracted and estimated yield for asparagus, snap beans, sweet corn, green peas, and tomatoes. In late November, processors are asked for final acreage harvested, production, and value. California also has a unique processed tomatoes questionnaire since they are the only State to set vegetable county estimates.

As part of the Agricultural Resource Management, Chemical Use, and Post-harvest Chemical Use Surveys (OMB docket number 0535-0218), NASS maintains databases on agricultural chemical use and related farm practices. The vegetable surveys in this docket provide base information for much of the data collected in that docket.

General authority for these data collection activities is granted under U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2204 which specifies that "The Secretary of Agriculture shall procure and preserve all information concerning agriculture which he can obtain ... by the collection of statistics ... and shall distribute them among agriculturists."

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

Data reported on vegetable inquiries are used by NASS to estimate acreage planted and harvested, yield/production, price, and utilization for the crops listed below as a part of the Federal vegetable program.

Vegetable Data for Both the Fresh Market and Processors Will be Collected for the Following Crops Under the Federal Program	
Artichokes	Lettuce, Head
Asparagus	Lettuce, Leaf
Beans, Lima	Lettuce, Romain
Beans, Snap	Onions
Broccoli	Peas, Green
Cabbage	Peppers, Bell
Cantaloupes	Peppers, Chile
Carrots	Pumpkins
Cauliflower	Spinach
Celery	Squash
Corn, Sweet	Strawberries
Cucumbers	Tomatoes
Garlic	Watermelons
Honeydew Melons	

The following vegetable and herb data is collected under external project agreements with State cooperators. Rather than conduct two separate surveys, the additional data is collected using the same Federal questionnaires. The cooperators, reimburse NASS for the additional data collection and summary costs.

Vegetables and Herbs Collected Under External Project Argeements (EPA's) with States	
Vegetables	Herbs
Beets	Basil, Asian
Bittermelon	Basil, Italian
Cabbage, Head	Basil, Other
Cabbage, Chinese	Dill
Cabbage, Mustard	Parsley
Collard Greens	Parsley, American
Eggplant	Parsley, Chinese (Cilantro)
Escarole/Endive	Parsley, Italian
Kale Greens	Spearmint
Lettuce, All	Other Herbs
Onions, green	
Peppers, All	
Potatoes	
Potatoes, Sweet	
Daikon Radish	
Squash, Italian	
Squash, Oriental	
Squash, Summer	
Squash, Winter	
Watercress	
Watermelons, Seed Varieties	
Watermelons, Seedless Varieties	

These estimates provide vital statistics for growers, processors, and marketers to use in making production and marketing decisions. Private industry forecasters use the data to track production levels for the industry. Federal and State agencies use the annual summary when developing and appraising government programs affecting the vegetable industry. Allied industries such as container manufacturers, chemical manufacturers, and plant breeders use the data in

feasibility studies to assess the economic impact of products and define market size and location. Data have been provided to foreign governments interested in U.S. vegetable production and to extension specialists at land grant universities.

Survey results are used by the Economic Research Service (ERS) for the Vegetables and Pulses *Outlook Reports* produced in March, June, September, and December. Vegetable data provide information to assist the Agricultural Marketing Service in the administration of market orders for tomatoes and onions. Another user of NASS data is the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, to help administer their Generalized System of Preferences Program, which determines preferred imports from other countries. The International Trade Commission utilizes vegetable data in its studies of import relief.

In the table above, data for the commodities are collected only for fresh or processed markets on the US level. States will collect data for both fresh and processed markets to fulfill State cooperator agreements with NASS Field Offices.

- 3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

Beginning in 2013 NASS expanded its data collection modes for the August and November vegetable surveys to include web-based data reporting. The onions, strawberries, and asparagus data collections were accessible for web-based data collection in 2012. In 2015, just over one percent of the respondents completed the survey using the internet. The chili pepper and tomato surveys that are conducted under external project agreements with State cooperators are being worked on and should be available on the internet in the near future.

- 4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

The National Agricultural Statistics Service cooperates with state agricultural departments and universities to conduct agricultural surveys. The surveys meet both state and federal needs, thus eliminating duplication and minimizing reporting burden on the agricultural industry. These surveys are the only timely and reliable source of information on the vegetable industry at the national level. The statistics published are not available from any other source.

- 5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small**

entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

Information from growers can be provided with a minimum of difficulty by the respondent and generally without having to consult their record books. Processors provide the requested information from their normal day-to-day operating records.

In the enclosed sample questionnaires, NASS has included several MASTER versions of the questionnaires. These versions contain all of the different commodities that data are collected for in each of the different seasons and different States. States will select the commodities produced in their respective State(s) to shorten the questionnaires down to only the essential questions. The emphasis of the questionnaires differs between the August and November data collections. In August, we ask the respondents what they planted for the growing season and to forecast what they expect their end of season production will be. In November, NASS asks what happened regarding the crops harvested in the current year. In addition to the questions about harvestings and plantings, the November survey will collect data on value of production and additional information on products that are processed or dried and placed into storage.

NASS recently conducted a complete review of the vegetable programs across the United States.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts a crop program review every five years following the publication of the Census of Agriculture. The primary purpose of this review is to ensure that NASS' annual estimation program targets commodities and states that are the most relevant to U.S. agriculture based on the latest information available. The primary source of information used by NASS is the Census of Agriculture, since it is the most comprehensive. In addition, NASS will analyze our Annual Crop Production estimates, as well as administrative data from the Farm Services Agency (FSA) before making any program changes.

When determining which states should be included in any commodity program, NASS selects states that, in aggregate, account for 95 percent of the U.S. production. States within a particular commodity program are classified as either Full Program states or Annual Program states. Full Program states normally account for around 90 percent of the U.S. total, while Annual Program states make up the remaining five percent. The only difference between a Full Program state and an Annual Program state is how the estimates are published in the monthly Crop Production reports. State level acreage, yield, and production forecasts are published for each Full Program state during the growing season, but state level forecasts for Annual Program states are not. However, at season's end, state level estimates for both Full Program and Annual Program states are published. The percentage breakouts may vary somewhat across commodities

based on how the production is distributed across states. For Fruits, Vegetables, and Specialty Crops, 95 percent coverage can be somewhat difficult to reach without adding many additional states to the program. In those instances, only the major producing states are included in the program.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Collecting data less frequently would eliminate data needed to keep the agricultural industry abreast of changes at the State and national level. Timing and frequency of the various reports have evolved to meet the needs of customers and yet minimize the burden on the reporting public. NASS has been undertaking a major standardization effort since 2012 to consolidate many of the vegetable questionnaires across all States. With the exception of the two tomato surveys conducted in California, all of the other surveys have been reduced to once a year.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

8. Provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments.

The Notice soliciting comments was published in the Federal Register on March 29, 2016 on page 17434. NASS did not receive any public comments on this renewal request.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and record-keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

NASS is in frequent contact with growers and processors to stay informed about the vegetable industry. NASS also frequently consults with other government agencies such as the Foreign Agricultural Service, Economic Research Service, and Agricultural Marketing Service. Other groups NASS has consulted with are the Food Products Association, the Produce Marketing Association, United Fresh, and the National Onion Association.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents.

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

All questionnaires include a statement that individual reports are kept confidential. U.S. Code Title 18, Section 1905 and U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2276 provide for the confidentiality of reported information. All employees of NASS and all enumerators hired and supervised under a cooperative agreement with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) must read the regulations and sign a statement of compliance. (Privacy Impact Statement is attached.)

Additionally, NASS and NASS contractors comply with OMB Implementation Guidance, "Implementation Guidance for Title V of the E-Government Act, Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA), (Public Law 107-347). CIPSEA supports NASS' pledge of confidentiality to all respondents and facilitates the agency's efforts to reduce burden by supporting statistical activities of collaborative agencies through designation of NASS agents; subject to the limitations and penalties described in CIPSEA.

The following CIPSEA Pledge statement will appear on all future NASS questionnaires.

The information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection provisions of Title V, Subtitle A, Public Law 107-347 and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed in identifiable form to anyone other than employees or agents. By law, every employee and agent has taken an oath and is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation.

Minor changes were made to the wording of the pledge so that it would be consistent with NASS procedures.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was

estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

This renewal has a sample size of 19,000, a total number of 19,030 responses and a total of 5,838 burden hours.

Average minutes per response for the vegetable surveys are based on the amount of data asked on each questionnaire and the time needed for telephone follow-ups. Total hours of burden is shown in the table below.

Cost to the public of completing a questionnaire is assumed to be comparable to the hourly rate of those requesting the data. Reporting time of 5,838 hours is multiplied by \$25 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$145,950.

NASS regularly checks the Bureau of Labor Statistics' [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) (Published March 30, 2016). Mean wage rates for bookkeepers, farm managers, and farm supervisors are averaged to obtain the wage for the burden cost. The May 2015 mean wage for bookkeepers is \$18.74. The mean wage for farm managers is \$33.60. The mean wage for farm supervisors is \$23.22. The mean wage of the three is \$25.19.

Projected Response Burden for Vegetable Surveys 2016 - 2018												
Crop	QID	Sample Size	Waves of Data Collection	Responses				Non-response				Total Burden Hours
				Resp. Count	Waves x Count	Min./Resp.	Burden Hours	Nonresp Count	Waves x Count	Min./Nonr.	Burden Hours	
Fresh Market Vegetables Forecast												
Asparagus	123371	300	1	240	240	10	40	60	60	2	2	42
Strawberry	123370	2,000	1	1,600	1,600	10	267	400	400	2	13	280
Onion	123372	1,500	1	1,200	1,200	10	200	300	300	2	10	210
Processors	123388	200	1	180	180	10	30	20	20	2	1	31
End of Season Vegetables												
Strawberry	123414	500	1	400	400	10	67	100	100	2	3	70
Onion	123433	1,000	1	800	800	10	133	200	200	2	7	140
Processors	123441	200	1	160	160	15	40	40	40	2	1	41
End of Season Vegetables	133501	13,000	1	10,400	10,400	20	3,467	2,600	2,600	2	87	3,554
Specialty/State Surveys												
Chile Grower Survey	143677	200	1	170	170	10	28	30	30	2	1	29
Chile Buyer & Processor Survey	143678	10	1	9	9	10	2	1	1	2	0	2
Processed Tomato Report (Not for County Estimates) - California (January)	QID	30	1	24	24	5	2	6	6	2	0	2
Processed Tomato County Estimates - California (May and November)	QID	30	2	24	48	15	12	6	12	2	0	12
Publicity Materials												
EDR Cover Letter		18,970	1	15,207	15,231	5	1,269	3,763	3,769	2	126	1,395
Cognitive Testing												
Questionnaire Testing		30	1	30	30	60	30	0	0	2	0	30

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection of information.

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

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government; provide a description of the method used to estimate cost which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses, and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The estimated total cost to the Federal government for the vegetable program is \$1.5 million. Approximately \$1,275,000 will go to federal salaries, \$113,000 will go to NASDA enumerators for data collection and \$112,000 will go to printing, postage and other miscellaneous expenses. The standardization efforts that NASS has been undertaking since 2012 for the various vegetable surveys has reduced our expenditures for the vegetable surveys by \$500,000 from the previous approval.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I (reasons for changes in burden).

Several changes have occurred since the previous approval. NASS has completed the standardization of the vegetable surveys. The reduction to the number of responses and burden are due to two primary factors: changing our sampling methodology to allow operations with multiple crops to be sampled only once; and the discontinuation of several of the State funded surveys (DE, HI, NJ and New England region) and the data to be collected through the standard US questionnaires. Some of the sample sizes were adjusted to allow for changes in the target population. The following table reflects these combined changes.

	Response Changes		Non-Response Changes		Totals	
	Number of Responses	Burden Hours	Number of Responses	Burden Hours	Number of Responses	Burden Hours
Adjustment Totals	(982)	(1,113)	(228)	(101)	(1,210)	(1,214)
Program Change Totals	(10,251)	(1,928)	(2,627)	(86)	(12,878)	(2,014)

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical

techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The vegetable surveys obtain data from the major producing States for all of the major commodities in their State. Samples are selected nationally for each State based on targeting the particular commodity of interest. Vegetable data are collected by the National Operations Division (NOD) and within the Regional Field Offices (RFOs). The data are summarized nationally with all States using the same summary and receiving consistent indications across all States and commodities. All States participate in the vegetable program and data are published for both the fresh market vegetables and the processed vegetables, following the NASS confidentiality rules.

The forecast fresh market vegetable program includes estimates for asparagus, onions, and strawberries for all States. Estimates published in the August release include acreage, yield, production, and price.

The forecast processing vegetable program includes estimates of contracted acres intended for harvest and contracted yield/production.

The annual end of season vegetable release contains estimates set for acreage, yield, total production price for all vegetables in the estimation program.

Vegetable data are published twice a year. There is the *Vegetables* report, released in August and the end-of-season *Vegetable Annual Summary* which is issued in February.

Below is the link to the September release:

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1177>.

Below is the link to the Annual release:

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1183>

Below is the link to the California Process Tomato Reports:

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/California/Publications/Vegetables/Processing_Tomato/index.asp

Below is the link to the New Mexico Chile Pepper Reports:

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/New_Mexico/Publications/

[Special_Interest_Reports/index.php](#)

State statisticians and Headquarters statisticians have an Estimation Manual which contains standard analysis and estimation procedures.

- 17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

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

- 18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions" of OMB Form 83-I.**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

May 2016

Revised August 2016