

AMS Response: NASS Review of OMB Documentation for the AMS Farmers Market Questionnaire

The document only refers to farmers markets already on the National Directory. Will there be any new markets added to Directory during this process and how they will be treated?

In the Supporting Statement Part B, AMS has clarified how farmers market managers that did not get notified about the farmers market manager survey in the process of updating their listing in the national Farmers Market Directory would find out about and gain access to the National Farmers Market Managers Survey. An excerpt from Supporting Statement Part B that clarified this process is listed below in quotes.

“The e-mail invitation to participate in the directory update and the national farmers market managers’ survey will be sent to all participate in the Directory. The invitation will include a web link to the directory update. After market managers/market representatives complete their listing or listing update they will be invited to participate in the national farmers market managers’ survey. AMS has made every effort to gather a complete listing of e-mail addresses of farmers markets when farmers market managers update their market contact information on the Directory. Currently AMS has e-mail addresses for 6,845 markets, representing 80.5 percent of the approximately 8,503 markets in the Directory. In addition, AMS will announce the Directory update and the voluntary market manager survey on the Department’s website, contact farmers market associations, State Departments of Agriculture, and the Farmers Market Coalition. Theses stakeholders will be informed that the survey can be completed online after their market is listed or updated in the Directory. AMS will provide stakeholders with the address of the farmers market directory update/listing link. Any market that lists or updates their listing in the farmers market directory can choose to participate in the national farmers market managers’ survey.”

Nine Module There is no estimate of sample size. Shouldn't there be a minimum and maximum number of units to be sampled? I know that this is based on who responds but is there some guide or expected number of responses? There is also no mention on how the additional 6 special modules will be handled. How they will be sampled? How often they will occur?

USDA’s National Farmers Market Directory lists markets that feature two or more farm vendors selling agricultural products directly to customers at a common, recurrent physical location. Every market manager that lists or updates a listing in the farmers market directory is asked to participate in the national farmers market managers’ survey. The sampling method used is convenience sampling. All market managers are asked to participate.

The farmers market managers’ survey has two major components: Core Component and three groups of Special Modules. Each manager has to answer the questions in Core Component first, and then, he/she is automatically selected to one group of Special Modules. Each special module is a research topic (e.g.,

healthy eating) with a series of questions. The system dynamically and continually counts the number of responses for each group of Special Modules. At the moment the Core Component is completed, a manager is assigned to the group of Special Modules with the smallest number of responses. As a result, each group of Special Modules gets the equal number of responses (sample size). In order to reduce the time burden for managers, each group of Special Modules contains one "permanent" module that is asked every year (three such modules in total), three modules solely asked in odd years, and three modules solely asked in even years. The sample size for each group of Special Modules is equally distributed.

What if 8% of this strata does not respond? However the document then states that the proportion of completed surveys within the strata will be selected. Taking only the proportion of the strata that responded for a further sample will create an under covered biased sample. Also the document says that survey results will be weighted using the directory. What methodology will be used to determine the weight?

The survey is based on a convenience sampling frame. Every farmers market manager that enters information into the directory update system is invited to participate in the survey. There are no limits for the sample size during the managers' survey period. In data analysis and interpretation stage, we will conduct an analysis (e.g., Chi-Square test) to examine whether the distribution of survey responses by region and market size represents the distribution of markets by region and market size listed in the directory (Table 1). If not, a weight score based on the region and farmers market size in the directory will be applied to the survey dataset for further analyses. Other methods, e.g., non-response adjustment, may be applied in the future based on the distribution of the responses and the research topics and needs.

TABLE 1. Distribution of Markets in the US

	9 or Fewer Vendors on a Typical Market Day	10 or More Vendors on a Typical Market Day
Region 1: Northeast	7.8%	15.5%
Region 2: Midwest	7.1%	21.6%
Region 3: South	7.4%	19.8%
Region 4: West	2.6%	18.3%

The document also says "There is no sampling procedure used in this section of the collection" Are they referring to the National Survey that is voluntary? Or the special modules where a sample design name is mentioned with no other details?

There is no sampling used in the collection of data necessary to populate the community-supported agriculture, on-farm and food hub directories. An excerpt from the Support Statement –Part B is listed below.

The estimate for the respondent universe pertaining to the three direct to customer marketing directories **that will be merged into this collection** is as follows:

On-Farm Markets	50,000 operations
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's)	6,500 operations
Food Hubs	<u>250 operations</u>
Total	56,750 operations

The data developed by this information collection will be used to populate three on-line direct marketing directories in these three marketing channels.

There is no sampling procedure used in this section of the collection.

It appears that the farmers markets will only be contacted by email. This is only approximately 80% of the farmers markets on the National Directory. What about the other 20% that do not have a valid email address associated with it; will they be excluded?

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"The e-mail invitation to participate in the directory update and the national farmers market managers' survey will be sent to all participate in the Directory. The invitation will include a web link to the directory update. After market managers/market representatives complete their listing or listing update they will be invited to participate in the national farmers market managers' survey. AMS has made every effort to gather a complete listing of e-mail addresses of farmers markets when farmers market managers update their market contact information on the Directory. Currently AMS has e-mail addresses for 6,845 markets, representing 80.5 percent of the approximately 8,503 markets in the Directory.

In addition, AMS will announce the Directory update and the voluntary market manager survey on the Department's website, contact farmers market associations, State Departments of Agriculture, and the Farmers Market Coalition. These stakeholders will be informed that the survey can be completed online after their market is listed or updated in the Directory. AMS will provide stakeholders with the address of the farmers market directory update/listing link. Any market that lists or updates their listing in the farmers market directory can choose to participate in the national farmers market managers' survey."

The document does provides approximate numbers and percentages of markets that will respond to update their information and who will respond to the survey. Again no sample numbers for the special projects are given.

Beyond the small mention in the document that the sample will be weighted to the 2016 directory there are no other weighting factors mentioned in the supporting statement. Will there be any weighting adjustments? Non-response adjustment?

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