

AMS Response: NASS Local Food Survey Overlap with the AMS Farmer Market Questionnaire

The NASS Local Food Marketing Practices Survey that has recently been reviewed by OMB 0535-NEW does not conflict and does not overlap with AMS' National Farmers Market Managers Survey with Modules – OMB 0581-0169. The AMS collection was last renewed by OMB April 19, 2013. These collections have very different survey populations. The NASS survey seeks to gather information from individual farmers and how direct sales through any marketing channel impact their farming operation. The AMS survey seeks to talk to farmers market managers to gather operational characteristics regarding that specific direct to customer marketing channel.

The new NASS survey was reviewed internally in part by AMS personnel and was funded partially by AMS. The target population for the NASS Local Food Marketing Practices Survey is any farm that sells its products directly to consumers or to retail outlets that in turn sell directly to consumers. In 1975 the USDA, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Census Bureau agreed on a definition of a farm that is still in use today: “A farm is currently defined, for statistical purposes, as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural goods (crops or livestock) were sold or normally would have been sold during the year under consideration.” This collection focuses on individual farm sales.

The target population for AMS' National Farmers Market Managers Survey with Modules – OMB 0581-0169 is any manager or market representative opening a new or operating an existing farmers market. For the purpose of the AMS survey, farmers markets is defined as a venue that feature two or more farm vendors selling agricultural products directly to customers at a common, recurrent physical location. The findings of AMS' survey are used to provide market transparency and intelligence regarding one of the country's most prolific direct to customer marketing channels. Findings from this survey are used by various constituents of the farmers market sector. Constituents include but are not limited to farmers market managers, groups or communities seeking to establish/sponsor a new or seek to expand a currently existing farmers market venue. Findings are also used by community planners, economic development professionals, university researchers and government policy makers. Market managers can reference the findings of the study to get a better understanding of farmer recruitment, product mix, location options, paid verses unpaid market managers, and levels of community involvement to name a few. This collection focuses on farmers market operations.

One section of the National Farmers Market Managers Survey with Modules collection, OMB 0581-0169 gathers the information necessary to populate USDA's National Farmers Market Directory. This Directory is a free service offered to managers/representatives of farmers markets to advertise their market operation. The directory provided potential customers market location, months, days and time of operation, products offered, method of payment excepted, number of vendors and map of the market location and driving directions to the market.

On May 30, 2014 AMS expanded its family of direct to customer directories with OMB's approval of Local Food Directories and Survey, OMB 0581-0289. This information collection gathered the data necessary to populate three additional free national direct to customer directories, USDA's National Community-Supported (CSA) Directory, USDA's Food Hub Directory and USDA's On-Farm Market Directory. Like USDA's National Farmers Market Directory these on-line resources provide marketing information to potential customers such as but not limited to: contact information, products offered and method of payment. All three of these directories provide the public information necessary to source product through these direct to customer marketing channels.

The functionally, purpose and the population served by the AMS collections are distinctively different from the NASS collection and do not overlap.