

Nursery and Christmas Tree Production Surveys

OMB No. 0535-0244

A. JUSTIFICATION

There will be a significant reduction in the number of respondents and respondent burden for this renewal request. The Nursery and Christmas Tree Production Survey (NCTPS) which was conducted once every three years in seventeen States has been discontinued due to the reinstatement of the Census of Horticultural Specialties which is conducted once every five years in all fifty States. The Nursery and Floriculture Chemical Use Survey (NFCUS) was conducted once every three years in six of the largest horticultural producing States. It was last conducted in 2011, referencing 2010 data. Due to budget cuts this survey was discontinued after that and will not be renewed in this approval request.

Only the two State surveys which are conducted in Oregon will be renewed at this time. Both of these surveys are conducted through External Project Agreements. The name of this collection will now be referred to as Nursery and Christmas Tree Production Surveys (NCTPS).

- 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.**

Through cooperative agreements with State governments, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has and will continue to collect data for State governments, universities and other organizations under external project agreements (EPAs). NASS provides the same quality of sampling, data collection, summarization and grower confidentiality that we provide to federally funded surveys.

According to the 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties, 23,221 growers in the United States produced \$13,789,046,000 in sales. Of those totals, 1,281 Oregon farmers produced \$932,041,000 in sales of horticultural commodities. Included in these counts for Oregon are 331 producers of Christmas trees. These operations sold \$127,395,000 of Christmas trees in 2014 or just under 35 percent of the US total.

In the past NASS has conducted these EPAs for the State of Oregon in the years that funding was made available. The Christmas tree survey has been funded for 2017 and the Nursery Production Survey is being discussed and is contingent upon funding being provided.

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.**

The Oregon surveys are conducted under a cooperative agreements with Oregon's State Department of Agriculture. The two Oregon surveys are conducted annually if funding is available.

- 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.**

Web-based data reporting has been implemented for most of the NASS information collections (a small number will be impractical or otherwise unsuitable). If EPA monies are available, the Christmas tree and nursery production surveys will be available for internet data collection.

- 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.**

NASS is very careful not to duplicate work planned by other Government agencies. NASS Field Offices are contacted and asked to document any State programs that overlap with the surveys contained in this docket. NASS is making every attempt to use existing data and only ask additional questions that are needed. Internal committees within USDA that include NASS, the Economic Research Service, the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Agricultural Research Service, Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service, and the Natural Resource and Conservation Service have been formed to help coordinate all aspects of NASS data collection efforts.

The NASS Advisory Committee on Agricultural Statistics, appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, also provides advice on NASS program areas and suggests when data series need to be expanded or altered to better serve the public's needs. This committee is composed of a diverse representation of experts from private industry, government, and universities. The committee meets annually.

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.

The Oregon Christmas tree survey will be a census of operations with 15 or more acres of trees, and a sampling of operations with less than 15 acres of trees (based on data obtained from the 2014 Horticulture Census). Sample Design will target on the operations that have the greatest impact on this industry, so the number of small operations will be kept relatively low.

With all NASS surveys, we try to identify those data items absolutely necessary to answer the needs of data users. Information requested on these surveys may require respondents to refer to their records for the answers. To minimize the interview time, NASS uses the same formatted questionnaire that we have used in the past that was developed to coincide with grower's record keeping practices. Data collection for these surveys will be coordinated with other surveys to minimize contacts with respondents.

NASS has a working group currently developing a respondent burden management tracking system to monitor respondent burden across surveys. The processing system will further refine sampling procedures and management of surveys. NASS continues to conduct research on potentially new sampling and data modeling strategies to reduce data requirements and respondent burden.

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.

NASS is charged with the responsibility of providing the Secretary of Agriculture, the Congress, the Executive Branch, farm groups, and the public with reliable, up-to-date information concerning the Nation's farms and ranches. The Floriculture and Nursery Chemical Use Surveys were conducted for the reference years of 2003, 2006, and 2009. The data was used to update the NASS Chemical Use database. Funding for subsequent years was not provided and this survey has been discontinued. The national Nursery and Christmas Tree Production Survey which was also conducted for the same reference years as the chemical use survey was discontinued and that data has been provided by the Census of Horticulture which is conducted once every five years.

Since the Christmas tree and nursery growers are a very important part of Oregon's agricultural production, the Oregon State Department of Agriculture secures funds to have these two surveys conducted periodically between the Census of Horticulture, so they have more up to data for this industry.

- 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 survey.

- 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 Federal Register Notice soliciting comments was published on May 26, 2016, on pages 33461-33462. One comment was received from Ms. Jean Public. The comment is attached to this docket.

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 recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

These surveys are being funded through external project agreements. We have been working with the Oregon State Department of Agriculture, who in turn has been working with their State Grower's Associations.

- 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 must read the regulations and sign a statement of compliance.

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, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

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.**

Average completion time per questionnaire is based on previous surveys and the time required for other surveys of similar length. Calculation of burden hours is shown in the table below. Estimated response counts are based on previous response rates.

Cost to the public for completing the questionnaire is assumed to be comparable to the hourly rate of those requesting the data. Average annual reporting time of 601 hours, are multiplied by \$25 per hour for a total annual cost to the public of \$15,025.

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.

- 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 (equipment, overhead, printing, and staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

With the two national surveys being discontinued there will be no costs to the Federal Government for this approval. The Oregon Christmas Tree Survey has been funded and is being conducted as a reimbursable survey. The Oregon Nursery Production Survey is being discussed and is tentatively approved if funding becomes available.

- 15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported (reasons for changes in burden).**

There are two primary program changes that have resulted in an overall decrease in total burden hours. The national Nursery and Christmas Tree Production Survey and the Nursery and Floriculture Chemical Use Survey have both been discontinued. Secondly we have altered our sampling methodology for the Oregon Christmas Tree Survey. The overall total annual burden will have a decrease of 4,474 hours and 21,425 contacts.

- 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.**

Oregon Nursery Survey results are published after each annual survey. The two publication names are "*Oregon Nursery and Greenhouse Survey*" and "*Oregon Christmas Trees*". Previous results of both Oregon surveys can be found at:

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Oregon/Publications/Horticulture/.

The U.S. Horticulture Census (OMB # 0535-0236) can be found at:

https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/Census_of_Horticulture_Specialties/

- 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.

August, 2016

Revised November, 2016