

Overview of Questionnaires used for the 2015 Content Test

The United States Census of Agriculture – 2015 Test questionnaire submitted contains all content for the Census of Agriculture (COA) Content Test. New or changed content from the 2012 Census of Agriculture is shown in blue. Deleted content is not identified on the questionnaire, but the 2012 COA questionnaire is provided for reference. This exact questionnaire will not be used for the 2015 Content Test, but will serve as the base for the four different questionnaire versions that will be tested.

The submitted 2015 Content Test questionnaire has these characteristics:

- Long Form
- Demographics/Characteristics towards the front
- 28 pages
- Pre-printed commodities for all sections
- Commodity code tables embedded in the questionnaire for each applicable section
- Revised version for Section 1 (Acreage)

During Phase One, there will be four questionnaire versions used for the mailout test. Each questionnaire version will have modifications to the above characteristics. Those modifications are listed in Table 1. The planned evaluations are listed in Table 2.

Table 1: Questionnaire versions and treatment groups for 2015 Census of Agriculture Content Test

| Treatment Group | Approximate Sample Size | Questionnaire Version Characteristics | Universe |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | 10,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long form • Demographics up front • 24 pages | Full universe |
| 2 | 10,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No pre-printed commodities • Separate booklet for commodity codes • Revised version of Section 1 (Acreage) • Contact card used for some sample | Universe used for Short Form |
| 3 | 10,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long form • Demographics up front • 24 pages • SOME pre-printed commodities (to make the questionnaire 24 pages) • Some commodity code tables embedded, but also displayed in booklet • Separate booklet for codes • 2012 version of Section 1 (Acreage) • Contact card used for some sample | Full universe |
| 4 | 10,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long form • Demographics in back • 24 pages • No pre-printed commodities • No commodity code tables embedded in questionnaire • Separate booklet for all codes • Revised version of Section 1 (Acreage) with total cropland question and breakouts for Question 2. • Contact card used for some sample | Full universe |
| 5 | 10,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short form • Reduced content • Demographics in front • 16 pages • No pre-printed items • Commodity code tables may be embedded in questionnaire • Possibly using a separate booklet for codes | Reduced universe based on 2014 short form test universe. This universe targets operations with a limited number of commodities. |

Table 2: Evaluation criteria for questionnaire treatment groups

| Comparisons | Evaluation criteria |
|---|--|
| Version 2 versus 5 Long form versus short form (same section ordering and samples) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response rates • Number of commodities reported • Edit rates (uncodable answers, edit failures) |
| Version 1 versus 3 Preprinted codes versus no preprinted codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of commodities reported • Edit rates |
| Version 1 versus 4 Demographics early versus demographics late | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response rates • Item missing rates in demographics • Item missing rates later in form (breakoffs) |
| Version 3 versus 4 2012 Section A (Acreage) versus the revised Section A (Acreage) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of records with cropland harvested greater than sum of crops harvested • Distribution of operations in the subcategories for acres rented or leased from others. |

June 2015