

Non-substantive Change Justification for 2017 Census of Agriculture Content Testing

This is a non-substantive change request to the Census of Agriculture Content Testing docket 0535-0243. These changes are being made in response to the initial testing described below.

Phase One – Originally, NASS was approved to mail out 50,000 forms (10,000 short and 40,000 long), but due to budget, this number was reduced. NASS mailed out a reduced sample size of 29,740 (6,500 short forms and 23,240 long forms). NASS received 17,333 completed reports; 1,205 out of business, 114 refusals, 10,100 inaccessible, and 988 undeliverable reports.

Phase Two, Round One – NASS conducted 136 quantitative/qualitative interviews out of the 200 that were originally approved.

Phase Three – Following the initial two tests, the questionnaire content, layout and wording were changed. The revised questionnaire has been attached to this non-substantive change request. The form we are using for this 2016 Census of Ag internet only test has identical content to the 2017 Census of Agriculture (OMB 0535-0226) questionnaire. A letter will be sent out to the approximately 15,000 farm or ranch operators, giving them instructions on how to access the internet's revised test questionnaire; asking them to complete the survey. At the end of the internet version of the questionnaire, the respondents will be asked several questions in which they can score the usability of the internet questionnaire on a scale of 1 to 5. The main intent of the Phase Three is to test an all-new internet operating system that should make the survey more user friendly.

Phase Two, Round Two – NASS still plans to conduct one final round of testing where we will center on the Internet version of the questionnaire. We will be looking for any changes or improvements that we can make to the 2017 Census.