

Non-substantive Change Request

(0535-0249) Organic Production Survey

For the 2016 survey the emphasis on certified organic production has been made more prominent throughout the entire questionnaire than it was in 2015. With the 2015 questionnaire, if a farm operator was not a certified producer, the skip pattern on the front page should have sent the respondent to the end of the questionnaire. Some operators who were transitional or exempt from certification completed the questionnaire when they should have skipped the majority of the questions. This change should make it much easier on operators who screen out of the sample.

The USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA), asked to have several non-substantive changes made to the questionnaire to provide greater detail to some of the commodity data; in exchange we were able to drop several sections of the questionnaire that don't need to be asked on an annual basis. In addition, we combined input from respondents to the 2015 survey with comments we received from NASDA enumerators, along with input from cognitive testing conducted on the revised questionnaire and have made several changes that should make it easier for the respondents to reply to the questionnaire.

The following changes are reflected in the new version of the questionnaire.

Sect. 1 – Operation Information

- Certified organic pastureland and rangeland were combined into one question.

Sect. 3 – Certified Organic Grapes

- Certified organic grapes were broken into varieties for fresh and wine production, instead of total organic grapes,
- Grapes for juice were unchanged,
- Grapes for raisins were broken out to fresh and dry weights,

Sect. 5 – Certified Organic Citrus Fruits

- Citrus was broken out to its own category, instead of being included with other organic fruits, tree nuts, and berries

Sect. 6 – Other Certified Organic Berries, Tree Nuts and Fruits

- Other berries, nuts and fruits were broken into fresh and processing.

Sect. 7 – Certified Organic Vegetables Grown in the Open

- Organic vegetables grown in the open are broken into fresh and processing
- Organic vegetables grown under protection have been dropped.

Dropped these sections completely

- GMO/GE Presence in Organic Crops Section
- Marketing Practices for Organic Products
- Transitional Acreage
- Operator Characteristics

From testing, the dropped sections vs. the expanded sections, the overall burden for the questionnaire remained constant, averaging approximately 40 minutes to complete. These

October 2016

changes along with minor cosmetic or grammar changes should make the questionnaire much easier for the respondents.