

Protocol A (Conservative Version Presented First)

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is (). I work for the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Let me explain a bit about what we'll be doing today. NASS conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports on virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture. In order to earn, and keep, the trust of our respondents we work hard to keep all the information they give us safe and protected. We are actually required by law to protect the data.

Recent changes to the laws require us to make some changes in the way we explain how we keep data protected to our respondents. To ensure that the changes we make are clear and easy to understand to respondents, we are talking to you and many others to get your feedback to the wording.

We are looking for your honest feedback and reactions. There aren't any right or wrong answers here, your opinions and thoughts are what matters today. We want to know what you would think if you heard the language before responding to NASS surveys. With your 'respondent hat' on, I'll be giving you the new language and then asking you a series of questions to get your feedback on it. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Current NASS Confidentiality Statement:

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.

Here is the way we currently explain how we protect data. [Hand respondent Current Statement and ask them to read it. When finished administer probes below]

1. Can you tell me what this means in your own words?
2. What is your general reaction to this statement?
3. If you heard or read this statement before a survey, would it influence your decision to participate or not? Please explain.
4. Do you have any concerns with how your (operation's / personal) information would be treated after hearing/reading this?

5. I want to ask you some questions about what the language covers and doesn't cover. Please make your best guess, even if you're not sure of the answer. If you gave NASS data and were assured confidentiality using this language, who would be able to see your information?
 - a. What would they be able to do with your information?
 - b. I'm going to read a list of groups, tell me if they'd be able to see the information you provided
 1. National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
 2. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
 3. Internal Review Service (IRS)
 4. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
 5. All federal government agencies
 6. Congress
6. Besides who can access your information, the language also talks about what can be done with it. Specifically it says it can only be used for "Statistical purposes." What do you think that means?
7. I'm going to read a list of activities, tell me if you think they'd be allowed under this language?
 1. It could be combined with other survey answers to create summary statistics
 2. It could be published exactly as you provided it
 3. It could be given to other statistical agencies
 4. It could be given to the IRS
 5. It could be given to other federal government agencies
 6. It could be given to private companies
8. What else could be done under this language?

Proposed Statement A (Conservative change)

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, any person is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation. Your data are further protected by Department of Homeland Security employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data.

As I mentioned, there have been changes to the laws related to the protection of NASS survey data. [Hand respondent Statement A and ask them to read it. When finished administer probes below]

1. The main difference between this and the previous statement is the addition of the last sentence - Your data are further protected by Department of Homeland Security employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data. – What does that statement mean to you?
2. What is your general reaction to it?
3. If you heard this language before a survey, would it influence your decision to participate or not?
4. NASS collects a variety of information from its farmers and ranchers including things like agricultural inputs and yield, chemical use, farm labor and wages, income and expenditures, etc. Would receiving this statement before a survey, impact your willingness to disclose any types of information? If so, what types?
5. Do you have any concerns with how your personal information would be treated after hearing this?
6. The new addition mentions the Department of Homeland Security. Are you familiar with that agency? If yes: what do you know about them?
7. With this new language, what will the Department of Homeland Security be doing?
 - a. What will they have access to?
 - b. Will they be able to see your individual answers to NASS survey questions?
8. What does “cyber security monitoring” mean to you?
9. What do you think “the systems that transmit your data” are?
10. When this says “systems that transmit your data,” what kinds of information do you think is included as “data”?
11. If you received this new language on a survey asking for information about your farm operation would it impact your decision to respond?

Proposed Statement B (Liberal change):

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, any person is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation. Further, NASS information systems are protected by Federal employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data.

[Hand respondent Version B and ask them to read it. When finished administer probes below]

We are also considering a different option to put at the end: Further, NASS information systems are protected by Federal employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data.

1. What does that statement mean to you?
2. Do you think it means the same thing as the first version I showed you, or is it different?
 - a. How is it the same/different?
3. What is your general reaction?
4. With this language, who do you think could see your information?
5. Who could monitor the systems that transmit your data?
 - a. NASS
 - b. The USDA
 - c. The Department of Homeland Security
 - d. The IRS
 - e. Anyone else?
6. If you received this new language on a survey asking for information about your operation would it impact your decision to respond?
7. NASS collects a variety of information from its farmers and ranchers including things like agricultural inputs and yield, chemical use, farm labor and wages, income and expenditures, etc. Would receiving this statement before a survey, impact your willingness to disclose any types of information? If so, what types?
8. When this statement says "NASS information systems" what does this mean to you?
9. Would you be more or less likely to respond if you received one version or the other? (show both)
10. Which version do you think best conveys that your information would be kept confidential?

Revision Goals

1. What we're trying to communicate is that the Department of Homeland Security will be monitoring the electronic systems where survey data is transmitted and stored. They won't be looking at individual survey answers, instead monitoring the systems

to look for viruses, mal-wear and other threats. Is that consistent or inconsistent with the revisions I showed you? (show both versions)

2. Do you think that one version does a better job at communicating that than the other?
3. Do you have any suggestions on how we might better communicate that?
4. We're almost done, thanks for your feedback so far. In general, do you have any concerns about how the government treats the data you provide for surveys?
5. Do you have any suggestions or other feedback?

Protocol B (Liberal Version Presented First)

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is (). I work for the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Let me explain a bit about what we'll be doing today. NASS conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports on virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture. In order to earn, and keep, the trust of our respondents we work hard to keep all the information they give us safe and protected. We are actually required by law to protect the data.

Recent changes to the laws require us to make some changes in the way we explain how we keep data protected to our respondents. To ensure that the changes we make are clear and easy to understand to respondents, we are talking to you and many others to get your feedback to the wording.

We are looking for your honest feedback and reactions. There aren't any right or wrong answers here, your opinions and thoughts are what matters today. We want to know what you would think if you heard the language before responding to NASS surveys. With your 'respondent hat' on, I'll be giving you the new language and then asking you a series of questions to get your feedback on it. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Current NASS Confidentiality Statement:

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.

Here is the way we currently explain how we protect data. [Hand respondent Current Statement and ask them to read it. When finished administer probes below]

1. Can you tell me what this means in your own words?
2. What is your general reaction to this statement?
3. If you heard or read this statement before a survey, would it influence your decision to participate or not? Please explain.
4. Do you have any concerns with how your (operation's / personal) information would be treated after hearing/reading this?
5. I want to ask you some questions about what the language covers and doesn't cover. Please make your best guess, even if you're not sure of the answer. If you gave NASS data and were assured confidentiality using this language, who would be able to see your information?
 - a. What would they be able to do with your information?
 - b. I'm going to read a list of groups, tell me if they'd be able to see the information you provided
 1. National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
 2. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
 3. Internal Review Service (IRS)
 4. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

5. All federal government agencies
 6. Congress
6. Besides who can access your information, the language also talks about what can be done with it. Specifically it says it can only be used for “Statistical purposes.” What do you think that means?
 7. I’m going to read a list of activities, tell me if you think they’d be allowed under this language?
 1. It could be combined with other survey answers to create summary statistics
 2. It could be published exactly as you provided it
 3. It could be given to other statistical agencies
 4. It could be given to the IRS
 5. It could be given to other federal government agencies
 6. It could be given to private companies
 8. What else could be done under this language?

Proposed Statement B (Liberal change):

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, any person is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation. Further, NASS information systems are protected by Federal employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data.

As I mentioned, there have been changes to the laws related to the protection of NASS survey data. [Hand respondent Statement B and ask them to read it. When finished administer probes below]

1. The main difference between this and the previous statement is the addition of the last sentence - Further, NASS information systems are protected by Federal employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data. – What does that statement mean to you?
2. What is your general reaction to it?
3. If you heard this language before a survey, would it influence your decision to participate or not?
4. NASS collects a variety of information from its farmers and ranchers including things like agricultural inputs and yield, chemical use, farm labor and wages,

income and expenditures, etc. Would receiving this statement before a survey, impact your willingness to disclose any types of information? If so, what types?

5. Do you have any concerns with how your personal/operation's information would be treated after hearing this?
6. When this statements says "NASS information systems" what does this mean to you?
7. What does "cybersecurity monitoring" mean to you?
8. What do you think "the systems that transmit your data" are?
9. When this says "systems that transmit your data," what kinds of information do you think is included as "data"?
10. If you received this new language on a survey asking for information about your farm operation would it impact your decision to respond?

Proposed Statement A (Conservative change)

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, any person is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation. Your data are further protected by Department of Homeland Security employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data.

[Hand respondent Version A and ask them to read it. When finished administer probes below]

We are also considering a different option to put at the end: Your data are further protected by Department of Homeland Security employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data.

1. What does that statement mean to you?
2. Do you think it means the same thing as the first version I showed you, or is it different?
 - a. How is it the same/different?
3. What is your general reaction?
4. If you received this new language before a survey, would it influence your decision to participate or not?

5. NASS collects a variety of information from its farmers and ranchers including things like agricultural inputs and yield, chemical use, farm labor and wages, income and expenditures, etc. Would receiving this statement before a survey, impact your willingness to disclose any types of information? If so, what types?
6. Do you have any concerns with how your personal information would be treated after receiving this information?
7. The new addition mentions the Department of Homeland Security. Are you familiar with that agency? If yes: what do you know about them?
8. With this new language, what will the Department of Homeland Security be doing?
 - a. What will they have access to?
 - b. Will they be able to see your individual answers to NASS survey questions?
9. Would you be more or less likely to respond if you received one version or the other? (show both)
10. Which version do you think best conveys that your information would be kept confidential?

Revision Goals

1. What we're trying to communicate is that the Department of Homeland Security will be monitoring the electronic systems where survey data is transmitted and stored. They won't be looking at individual survey answers, instead monitoring the systems to look for viruses, mal-wear and other threats. Is that consistent or inconsistent with the revisions I showed you? (show both versions)
2. Do you think that one version does a better job at communicating that than the other?
3. Do you have any suggestions on how we might better communicate that?
4. We're almost done, thanks for your feedback so far. In general, do you have any concerns about how the government treats the data you provide for surveys?
5. Do you have any suggestions or other feedback?

Protocol C (Add-on to other studies)

Introduction

For this next task, I would like to get some feedback from you regarding our confidentiality statement. NASS conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports on virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture. In order to earn, and keep, the trust of our respondents we work hard to keep all the information they give us safe and protected. We are actually required by law to protect the data.

Recent changes to the laws require us to make some changes in the way we explain how we keep data protected to our respondents. To ensure that the changes we make are clear and easy to understand to respondents, we are talking to you and many others to get your feedback to the wording.

We are looking for your honest feedback and reactions. There aren't any right or wrong answers here, your opinions and thoughts are what matters today. We want to know what you would think if you heard the language before responding to NASS surveys. With your 'respondent hat' on, I'll be giving you the new language and then asking you a series of questions to get your feedback on it. Do you have any questions before we begin?

[Hand respondent Version A and ask them to read it. When done administer probes below]

Proposed Statement A (Conservative change)

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, any person is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation. Your data are further protected by Department of Homeland Security employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data.

1. What is your general reaction to this statement?
2. I want you to focus your attention to the last sentence - Your data are further protected by Department of Homeland Security employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data. – What does that statement mean to you?
3. What is your general reaction to this last sentence?
4. If you heard this language before a survey, would it influence your decision to participate or not?
5. NASS collects a variety of information from its farmers and ranchers including things like agricultural inputs and yield, chemical use, farm labor and wages, income and

expenditures, etc. Would receiving this statement before a survey, impact your willingness to disclose any types of information?

a. If yes, what types?

6. Do you have any concerns with how your personal information would be treated after hearing this?

7. This new statement mentions Department of Homeland Security. Are you familiar with that agency?

a. If yes, what do you know about them?

8. With this new language, what will the Department of Homeland Security be doing?

a. What will they have access to?

b. Will they be able to see your individual answers NASS survey questions?

9. What does “cyber security monitoring” mean to you?

10. What do you think “the systems that transmit your data” are?

11. When this says “systems that transmit your data,” what kinds of information do you think is included as “data”?

12. If you received this new language on a survey asking for information about your operation would it impact your decision to respond?

Proposed Statement B (Liberal change)

We are also considering another option. [Hand respondent Version B and ask them to read it. When finished administer probes below]

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, any person is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation. Further, NASS information systems are protected by Federal employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data.

The only difference between this statement and the one you just read is the sentence at the end:

1. What is your general reaction to this statement?
2. I want you to focus your attention to the last sentence - Further, NASS information systems are protected by Federal employees and contractors through cybersecurity monitoring of the systems that transmit your data. - What does that last statement mean to you?
3. Do you think it means the same thing as the first version I showed you, or is it different?
 - a. How is it the same/different?
4. What is your general reaction to this last statement?
5. With this language, who do you think could see your information?
6. Who could monitor the systems that transmit your data?
 - a. NASS
 - b. The USDA
 - c. The Department of Homeland Security
 - d. The IRS
 - e. Anyone else?
7. If you received this new language on a survey asking for information about your operation would it impact your decision to respond?
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 - a. If so, what types?
9. When this statement says "NASS information systems" what does this mean to you?
10. Would you be more or less likely to respond if you received one version or the other? (show both).
11. Which version do you think best conveys that your information would be kept confidential?

Revision Goals

1. What we're trying to communicate is that the Department of Homeland Security will be monitoring the electronic systems where survey data is transmitted and stored. They won't be looking at individual survey answers, instead monitoring the systems to look for viruses, mal-wear and other threats. Is that consistent or inconsistent with the revisions I showed you? (show both versions)

2. Do you think that one version does a better job at communicating that than the other?
3. Do you have any suggestions on how we might better communicate that?
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5. Do you have any suggestions or other feedback?