

Non-substantive Change Request

0535-0218 – Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) Phase III

In January 2018, NASS will be conducting the 2017 Census of Agriculture (0535-0226) which has a mandatory reporting requirement. In addition NASS will be conducting the 2017 Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) Phase III which has a voluntary reporting requirement. Both of these surveys collect whole farm data for the calendar year of 2017. The entire ARMS III sample is included in the Census of Agriculture population. In order to reduce respondent burden, NASS is submitting this non-substantive change request.

In the past NASS has created a combined questionnaire for the ARMS III surveys that contained the questions from the Census of Agriculture questionnaire with the unique questions asked by the ARMS III questionnaires. Farm operators who were willing to complete the longer ARMS III questionnaires did not need to complete the Census of Agriculture survey. NASS created a data set from the completed ARMS III questionnaire that fulfilled the reporting needs of the Census of Agriculture. NASS plans to do the same in 2018 for the operations that are sampled for the ARMS III surveys. There are two versions of the ARMS III questionnaire that will be used in 2018; one for the general Cost and Returns Report and one for the Wheat Cost and Returns Report. In 2013 NASS conducted a combined general Cost and Returns Report and the Soybean Cost and Returns Report.

Farm operators who refuse to complete the voluntary ARMS III questionnaires will still be required to complete the mandatory Census of Agriculture. There will be no increase in the amount of respondent burden or sample size associated with this non-substantive change that includes an expanded ARMS III questionnaire. The 100 minutes that is currently approved for the ARMS III questionnaire along with the 50 minutes that is approved for the Census of Agriculture will be more than enough to cover the expanded questionnaire. If the operator refuses to complete the ARMS III questionnaire the 50 minutes for the Census burden will be used.