

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
Generic Testing – Census of Agriculture
OMB No. 0535-0248

This mini-supporting statement is being submitted to OMB to define the need for conducting usability interviews under the Generic Testing docket. No more than 100 operations will be interviewed. These usability interviews are being conducted in preparation for the planned 2020-2021 Census of Agriculture Content Tests, as well as the 2022 Census of Agriculture. NASS has and will continue to make enhancements to the web instrument in response to requests from data users, advisory committees, and internal staff. Additional usability interviews may be requested as part of the 2020 Census of Agriculture Content Test docket (OMB 0535-0243) to allow NASS to interview respondents and non-respondents from the Content Test, as well as to pretest any changes made based on the initial Content Test.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances making collection of information necessary.

In preparation for the 2022 Census of Agriculture, two content tests are planned. These are the 2020 and 2021 Census of Agriculture Content Tests, to be conducted in late 2020/early 2021 and late 2021/early 2022. Prior to these content tests, there are some formatting and functionality changes that have been proposed for the Census of Agriculture web instrument, such as using previously reported data (PRD) to enhance the user experience and decrease reporting burden. The purpose of this usability testing is to evaluate the effectiveness of any proposed formatting and functionality changes.

Some of the usability testing will be done prior to the 2020 Content Test mailout, some prior to the 2021 Content Test, and depending on findings and proposed changes from these findings, potentially prior to the 2022 Census of Agriculture.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose information is to be used.

The information gathered through these usability interviews will be analyzed by NASS's Methodology Division, Research and Development Division, and Census and Survey Division to determine if additional modifications need to be made to the web instrument. Approved changes will be implemented into the Census of Agriculture Content Tests, which are planned for data collection starting in late 2020 (covering calendar year 2020) and late 2021 (covering calendar year 2021).

3. Use of improved information technology.

These usability interviews will be conducted using face-to-face interviews or telephone using screen sharing software.

4. Efforts to identify duplication.

No additional efforts will be taken to identify duplication. Operators who are selected for the usability interviews will be drawn from the NASS list of known farm operations who fit particular criteria such as number and types of commodities produced, geographic location, and size of operation, as well as reported internet access. Duplication is removed before operators are added to the NASS list frame.

5. Methods to minimize burden of small businesses.

For these usability interviews, no special efforts will be made to minimize burden of small businesses. In fact, small operations may be targeted to be sure they are included in the testing, given the large number of small operations in the Census.

6. Consequence if information collection were less frequent.

The usability testing will be conducted in multiple rounds. We plan to conduct up to four rounds of usability testing during the time period from January 2020 through October 2022.

7. Special circumstances.

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

8. Federal register notice and consultation with outside persons.

Not applicable.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents.

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Confidentiality provided to respondents.

The same confidentiality that is applied to the Census of Agriculture will be applied to data collected during the usability interviews.

11. Questions of a sensitive nature.

The Census of Agriculture contains questions related to farm related income, expenses, market value of land and buildings, and demographics that could be considered sensitive. These are the same types of questions that have been used on the Census of Agriculture in the past.

12. Hour burden and annualized costs to respondents.

The tests will be conducted by trained cognitive interviewers and survey methodologists.

	Number of respondents	Hours per interview	Total burden hours
Usability Testing	100	1.5	150

We plan to conduct a maximum of 100, one and a half hour usability interviews for a total of 150 total burden hours. Reporting time of 150 hours is multiplied by \$36.84 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$5,526.00.

NASS uses the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment Statistics (most recently published on March 29, 2019 for the previous May) to estimate an hourly wage for the burden cost. The May 2018 mean wage for bookkeepers was \$20.25. The mean wage for farm managers was \$38.43. The mean wage for farm supervisors was \$24.42. The mean wage of the three is \$27.70. To calculate the fully loaded wage rate (includes allowances for Social Security, insurance, etc.) NASS will add 33% for a total of \$36.84 per hour.

13. Total annual cost burden to respondents.

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

14. Annualized costs to federal government.

Costs for conducting these usability interviews are estimated at \$100,000. This will cover expenses for staff payroll, travel, survey analysis, and any other expenses that may be incurred while updating survey materials and instruments based on our findings.

15. Reasons for changes in burden.

This mini-supporting statement addresses the use of burden to conduct usability testing for the Census of Agriculture Content Tests and the 2022 Census of Agriculture.

16. Tabulation, analysis, and publication plans.

No data will be published from these tests. Data are for internal use only, but papers or presentations may be submitted and presented at conferences or interagency working groups. No identifying information will be presented.

17. Request for approval of non-display of expiration date.

There is no request for approval of non-display of the expiration date.

18. Exceptions to certification statement.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS:

1. Respondent universe, sampling, and response rate.

NASS will use list frame data to identify operations or operators that cover a wide variety of types and sizes. The operators will not be statistically sampled; rather, they will be hand selected based on their characteristics, such as demographics, size, number and types of commodities produced, geographic location, and reported high speed Internet access. NASS regional field office staff, state office staff, NASDA enumerators, and NASS HQ staff may recruit respondents for the interviews.

2. Procedures for the collection of information.

Interviewers will follow standard usability interviewing techniques as defined in the original Supporting Statement Part A for the Generic Clearance docket (0535-0248).

3. Information collected adequate for intended uses.

Operations will be selected based on specific criteria in order to assess specific sections of the questionnaires.

4. Test of procedures or methods.

Not applicable.

5. Individuals consulted on statistical aspects of survey.

Selection of methods of testing and training is done by the Methodology Division and Research and Development Division; Chief Cognitive Research Methodologist is Jaki McCarthy, 202-690-2389.

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