

**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 cognitive testing under the Generic Testing docket. No more than 100 operations will be interviewed. These cognitive 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 survey instrument in response to requests from data users, advisory committees, and internal staff. Additional cognitive interviews may be requested as part of the 2020 Census of Agriculture Content Test docket (OMB 0535-0226) to allow NASS to interview respondents and non-respondents from the Content Test, as well as to pretest any changes made based on the Content Test.

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Circumstances making collection of information necessary.**

The purpose of this cognitive interview testing is to evaluate how respondents interpret and respond to changes in wording to existing questions, the addition of new questions, to further evaluate questions that were identified as potentially problematic, and to evaluate supporting materials (e.g., cover letters, post card reminders, instruction booklets, etc.).

Approximately 100 cognitive interviews will be conducted in 2020 in preparation for the two rounds of content field tests that will be conducted under the 2020 Census of Agriculture Content Testing docket (0535-0243). The first Census of Agriculture Content Test will be conducted in late 2020/early 2021 referencing 2020 calendar year and the second content test will be conducted in late 2021/early 2022 referencing 2021. This request is for cognitive interviews to be conducted prior to these field content tests.

OMB #	Title	Test	Date
0535-0248	Generic Clearance of Survey Improvement Projects	Cognitive Testing	2020
0535-0243	Census Content Testing	Phase 1 Content Test	Late 2020 - Early 2021
0535-0243	Census Content Testing	Phase 2 Content Test	Late 2021 - Early 2022
0535-0226	2022 Census of Agriculture	Live Census Conducted	2023 Referencing 2022 data

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

The information gathered through these cognitive 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 survey instrument. Approved changes from the cognitive testing will be incorporated into the two Census of Agriculture Content Tests (OMB # 0535-0243), 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 cognitive 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 cognitive interviews will be drawn from the NASS list of known and potential 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. The information obtained in this testing is not available from any other sources.

**5. Methods to minimize burden of small businesses.**

For these cognitive 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 population.

**6. Consequence if information collection were less frequent.**

The cognitive testing will be conducted iteratively if necessary. We plan to conduct testing during the time period from February 2020 through December 2020.

**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 cognitive 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
Cognitive Testing	100	1.5	150

We plan to conduct a maximum of 100 one and a half hour cognitive 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 cognitive 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 cognitive testing for the Census of Agriculture Content Tests in preparation for 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 cognitive 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.

February 2020