



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service



May 29, 2019

Alex Wolf

Dear Mr. Wolf,

Thank you for your recent letter concerning the renewal of the Organic Survey. The primary functions of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) are to prepare and issue State and national estimates of crop and livestock production, disposition, and prices and to collect information on related environmental and economic factors, whole farm characteristics, and operator demographics. Timely, reliable, and detailed statistics help maintain a stable economic atmosphere and reduce risk for production, marketing, and distribution operations. NASS is the primary data collection Agency of the US Dept. of Agriculture.

The content of the Organic Survey has been developed over the years at the request of numerous data users, including, but not limited to: Risk Management Agency, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, Agricultural Marketing Service, Economic Research Service, Natural Resource and Conservation Service and many others. NASS has been conducting cognitive interviews in the larger organic producing states looking for ways to improve the questionnaire. NASS is also looking for ways to streamline the questionnaire to reduce respondent burden and data collection costs, while still providing data users with the detailed data they need.

**Recommendation:** The most important way the quality and utility of the information to be collected can be enhanced is by adding usage (demand), import/export, and ending stocks data. Ideally, USDA would provide a supply and demand balance sheet for each of the major organic crops (corn, soybeans, and wheat at minimum), as it does for conventional crops in the World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates.

**Reply:** While this is a good question, it would greatly increase the scope and target population of our current survey. NASS does not currently track imports or exports of commodities or have a listing of entities that deal with the shipment of organic products. At some future time we may be able to incorporate organic stocks data into some of our other crop surveys.

Once a finalized draft of the questionnaire is ready it will be submitted to OMB along with the supporting statements, samples of publicity materials, and other documents for the public to review for 30 days. After that OMB will be able to begin their review of the complete docket materials. The materials will be available in the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs system <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain>.

The Organic Survey is extremely important to our data users. Your comments will be provided as a part of this submission to the Office of Management and Budget.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Again, many thanks!

Joseph L. Parsons  
Chair, Agricultural Statistics Board  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service