

Potatoes Objective Yield Survey

About the Survey

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts the Objective Yield Survey each year to monitor sample areas of potato fields during the growing season. By gathering data on potato plants, hill count and measurement, NASS can better determine the official estimate of potato yield and production.

NASS publishes the findings in the monthly *Crop Production* report in September, November, and December. The previous year's final yield and production estimates for potatoes are published in the *Crop Production* report every September.

All reports are available on the NASS website: www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/index.asp.



How NASS Collects Data

In July, NASS representatives will contact selected producers in the seven major potato producing states to participate in the Objective Yield Survey. An initial visit with the producer will consist of a brief interview to determine field production and to gain permission to enter the selected field.

Once in the field, the representatives will establish two sample areas to monitor during the growing season. Once the vines are dead or within two days of harvest, our representatives will return to these fields to take measurements and make hill counts using sanitary procedures. These visits will not require any time from the producer.

In addition to taking regular monthly measurements, we will select some fields for inclusion in the post-harvest gleaning sample. Those producers will need to contact the NASS representative during harvesting, so we can acquire samples to determine harvest loss.

Who Uses the Information?

This survey is a crucial tool for estimating potato yield and production in the United States. All sectors of the agricultural industry rely on NASS yield and production estimates to help make sound business decisions. For example:

- Farmers use the information to evaluate expected prices and to determine when and how to market their crops.
- Agribusinesses that provide farmers and ranchers with inputs, equipment, and other goods and services use the information when developing their future marketing strategies.
- Congress relies on current yield and production data to help formulate farm legislation.
- USDA agencies use the crop yield data to determine crop insurance and disaster aid payments along with other program benefits.