

NASS Programs

Cotton 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 cotton fields during the growing season. By gathering data on cotton plants, boll count and weight, NASS can better determine the official estimate of cotton yield and production.

NASS publishes the findings each month, August through November, in the monthly *Crop Production* report. Cotton final yield and production estimates will be published in the *Annual Crop Production* report every January.

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



How NASS Collects Data

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

Once in the field, the representative establishes two sample areas to monitor during the growing season. On all future visits NASS representatives counts and measures the cotton plants within the sample areas. These monthly visits do not require any time from the producer.

In addition to taking regular monthly measurements, NASS selects 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 cotton 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.

