

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Generic Testing – National Conservation Practice and Motivation Survey (NCPAMS)

OMB No. 0535-0248

This mini-supporting statement is being submitted to OMB to define the need for conducting qualitative research, in the form of cognitive interviews, for the 2020 Pilot Study for the National Conservation Practice and Motivation Survey (NCPAMS) and the 2021 NCPAMS full survey.

The National Conservation Practice and Motivation Survey is a joint data collection effort between NASS and the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) scheduled for FY 2022, with a pilot study for FY2021. The purpose of the national survey is to target producers who own or operate cropland, grazing land, concentrated livestock feeding operations, and forestry. NASS will collect information about these types of operations to understand conservation practices within the United States in terms of the following:

- 1) Prevalence and frequency of conservation practice adoption,
- 2) Scope/intensity of individual operation conservation practices,
- 3) Relationship between assistance/support and decision to adopt, expand, transfer, or discontinue conservation practices; and
- 4) Motivations for adopting, expanding, transferring, maintaining, or discontinuing conservation practices.

To prepare for this NCPAMS survey, NASS and NRCS will conduct the Conservation Practice and Motivation Survey (CPAMS) Pilot Study in FY 2021. The pilot study will target four states: Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Pennsylvania. Responses to the pilot survey are voluntary.

This request covers cognitive testing for both the pilot study and the full NCPAMS. The purpose of this research study is to conduct no more than 50 cognitive interviews with a mix of operators that own or operate cropland, grazing land, concentrated livestock feeding operations, and forestry land in order to assess respondents' understanding of the draft questions and the potential measurement error associated with these questions.

The current draft of the questionnaire is provided as an attachment, along with potential probes to use during the cognitive testing.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances making collection of information necessary.

The National Conservation Practice and Motivation Survey is a new survey that will be conducted for the first time during a pilot survey in FY2021. Given that almost all questions will be new, cognitive testing is recommended with the goals of understanding the respondents' comprehension of questions and terminology, understanding barriers to the retrieval of information requested on the questionnaire, observing the respondent's judgement and communication of the information requested, and understanding how to align responses to the question/questionnaire's intent.

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

The information gathered through the qualitative research will be analyzed by NASS's Methodology Division, Census and Survey Division, and NRCS to determine the changes to the format and content of the survey, as well as the best way to ask questions about the constructs of interest on the survey.

The draft questionnaire is attached to this request. A draft of the types of questions asked during the cognitive interviews is also attached.

3. Use of improved information technology.

Due to the restrictions on in-person interviews, cognitive interviews will be conducted over the phone, using paper or electronic copies of the questionnaire and/or shared screens, where possible. All cognitive interview will be conducted by trained cognitive interviewers from the field or HQ.

4. Efforts to identify duplication.

No additional efforts will be taken to identify duplication. Respondents who are selected for the cognitive interviews will be selected from the NASS list frame, which has duplication removal efforts performed on an ongoing basis.

5. Methods to minimize burden of small businesses.

For these cognitive interviews, no special efforts will be made to minimize burden of small businesses. Ideally, we hope to include operations of varying sizes, from diverse sales groups.

6. Consequence if information collection were less frequent.

This is a one-time cognitive interview project, conducted in two phases. Phase 1 will be to conduct up to 20 cognitive interviews for the pilot study. Phase 2 will be to conduct the remaining interviews for the NCPAMS full survey. The questionnaire for the pilot survey is due by December 31, 2020 and the questionnaire for the full survey is due December 31, 2021. Therefore, the pilot study cognitive interviews are planned for November and early December 2020, and the full survey cognitive interviews are planned for September and October 2021.

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 survey will be applied to data collected during the cognitive interviews.

11. Questions of a sensitive nature.

The survey does not ask questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Hour burden and annualized costs to respondents.

Trained cognitive interviewers or survey methodologists who work at NASS headquarters or in the field will conduct all interviews.

We plan to conduct a maximum of 50 cognitive interviews with an average duration of sixty minutes for 50 total burden hours.

Cost to the public of completing a questionnaire is assumed comparable to the hourly rate of those requesting the data. Reporting time of 50 hours is multiplied by \$37.47 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$1,873.50.

NASS uses the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment Statistics (most recently published on March 31, 2020 for the previous May) to estimate an hourly wage for the burden cost. The May 2019 mean wage for bookkeepers was \$20.65. The mean wage for farm managers was \$38.63. The mean wage for farm supervisors was \$25.25. The mean wage of the three is \$28.18. To calculate the fully loaded wage rate (includes allowances for Social Security, insurance, etc.) NASS will add 33% for a total of \$37.47 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 the qualitative research interviews are estimated at \$31,000. This will cover expenses for staff payroll, development of materials, travel (if in-person interviewing is allowed), analysis of findings, and any other expenses that may be incurred while updating survey materials based on our findings.

15. Reasons for changes in burden.

This mini-supporting statement addresses the use of burden to conduct testing for the survey.

16. Tabulation, analysis, and publication plans.

No data will be published from these tests. Data are for internal use only, but results may be presented at outside conferences or seminars.

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 the list frame and previous survey data to identify operations that meet the screening criteria for the NCPAMS Survey. The operations will not be statistically sampled; rather, they will be hand selected based on their size, location, presence of particular crops or livestock, and other important criteria that are identified. HQ staff, Regional Field Office staff, and/or NASDA enumerators will recruit respondents for the interviews.

Respondents for the cognitive testing will be recruited using the NASS list frame and previous survey data, particularly from the Census of Agriculture.

2. Procedures for the collection of information.

Interviewers will follow standard pretesting 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 as stated above.

4. Test of procedures or methods.

Not applicable.

5. Individuals consulted on statistical aspects of survey.

The Methodology Division did selection of methods of testing for this qualitative research; Senior Survey Methodologists are Kathy Ott (202) 720-1114 and Ken Pick (202) 720-5778.

October 2020