



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service



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Tricia Kovacs
Deputy Administrator,
Transportation and Marketing Program
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service

Dear Ms. Kovacs,

NASS thanks you and your AMS colleagues for the work you do and the support you have given us with our numerous surveys. NASS strives to provide the most accurate, timely and complete data as possible, while minimizing respondent burden on the US farmers and ranchers. The Local Food Marketing Practices Survey (LFMPS) is an important part of NASS's Census of Agriculture program.

This year has been a very unique year in many ways. The LFMPS will provide important information on how direct marketing of food to consumers has been impacted. The LFMPS is conducted once every five years and provides a snapshot of each particular year.

The suggestions and comments you provided were shared with our survey development team to review and see if they could be implemented into the existing survey to strengthen the data collection instrument while minimizing any additional burden on respondents. The development team consisted of survey methodologists, mathematical statisticians, agricultural statisticians, commodity statisticians, and questionnaire designers. After reviewing the information, you provided, NASS decided to take the action described on the next page.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Again, many thanks!

Sincerely,

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



Proposed research questions from AMS:

1. Comparing 2020 to 2019, what has been the effect of COVID-19 on farm sales in direct marketing channels?
2. Comparing 2020 to 2019, what has been the effect of COVID-19 on marketing expenses in direct marketing channels?
3. Comparing 2020 to 2019, what has been the effect of COVID-19 on the on-line sales of products that are shipped by mail or delivered door-to-door?
4. Comparing 2020 to 2019, what has been the effect of COVID-19 on the on-line sales of pre-ordered products to be picked-up at a farmer's market, on-farm stand, or CSA?
5. Comparing 2020 to 2019, what has been the effect of COVID-19 on food sales?

NASS Reply:

The following four questions allows NASS to meet the research needs of AMS, while also taking into consideration operational concerns (e.g., questionnaire length, no time to cognitively test) and respondent burden (minimizing the questionnaire length). These four questions were modified using the cognitively tested question currently on the Census Bureau's Small Business Pulse Survey. On that survey, the specific question is: Overall, how has this business been affected financially by the COVID-19 pandemic? (large negative effect, moderate negative effect, little or no effect, moderate positive effect, and large positive effect).

Question 1 below addresses two of the AMS research questions: **(AMS #1)** What has been the effect of COVID-19 on farm sales in direct marketing channels? **(AMS #5)** What has been the effect of COVID-19 on food sales? It is recommended the question be asked in broad terms regarding farm sales for the respondent's farming business. Inferences as to what specific marketing channels are impacted can be concluded based off their previous responses to the four marketing channel sections. Furthermore, an analysis could be done by previous sections answered, and a variable could be coded based off respondents' previous proportional sales to each marketing channel.

Question 2 below addresses one AMS research question: **(AMS #3)** What has been the effect of COVID-19 on the on-line sales of products that are shipped by mail or delivered door-to-door? AMS would like to define online sales as "online marketplace sales only include products that are shipped by mail or delivered door-to-door." It is recommended that this change not be made as it will impact the definition of sales used elsewhere in the questionnaire, and potentially could lead to context order effect and response error due to misinterpreting the construct.

Question 3 below addresses one AMS research question: **(AMS #4)** What has been the effect of COVID-19 on the on-line sales of pre-ordered products to be picked-up at a farmer's market, on-farm stand, or CSA?

Question 4 below addresses one AMS research question: **(AMS # 2)** What has been the effect of COVID-19 on marketing expenses in direct marketing channels? Although the survey team has concerns about using the term "marketing expenses", we recognize that in general these questions will most likely solicit a subjective response from the respondent and records will most likely not be used.

These new questions will be placed in a separate section at the end of the questionnaire.

COVID-19 Impact on Operation (Agricultural Marketing Service)

1. When comparing 2020 to 2019, how have **farm sales** for this operation been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? Select only one.
 - Large decrease in farm sales
 - Moderate decrease in farm sales
 - Little or no effect in farm sales
 - Moderate increase in farm sales
 - Large increase in farms sales
 - Don't know
 - Not applicable to this operation
2. When comparing 2020 to 2019, how have **online sales** for this operation been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? Select only one.
 - Large decrease in online sales
 - Moderate decrease in online sales
 - Little or no effect in online sales
 - Moderate increase in online sales
 - Large increase in online sales
 - Don't know
 - Not applicable to this operation
3. When comparing 2020 to 2019, how have **the pre-ordering of agricultural products** to be picked-up at a farmer's market, on-farm stand or CSA been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? Select only one.
 - Large decrease in pre-ordering of agricultural products
 - Moderate decrease in pre-ordering of agricultural products
 - Little or no effect in pre-ordering of agricultural products
 - Moderate increase in pre-ordering of agricultural products
 - Large increase in pre-ordering of agricultural products
 - Don't know
 - Not applicable to this operation

4. When comparing 2020 to 2019, how have **marketing expenses** for this operation been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? Select only one.
- Large decrease in marketing expenses
 - Moderate decrease in marketing expenses
 - Little or no effect in marketing expenses
 - Moderate increase in marketing expenses
 - Large increase in marketing expenses
 - Don't know
 - Not applicable to this operation

The following two questions will be placed within the existing questionnaire.

In Section 1 – Direct to Consumer Sales, after Question 24, add:

- In what year did this operation first produce and sell food directly to an **online marketplace**?

In Section 6 – Practices, Question 6:

- **Change existing question stem to,** “Did this operation participate in the following programs in 2020?”
- **Add following response options:**
 - Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
 - Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
 - USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Distribution Program
 - USDA CFAP Direct Payment Program