

SUPPORTING STATEMENT – PART A**2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties
OMB No. 0535-0236**

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requests approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for the reinstatement of the Census of Horticultural Specialties survey to be conducted as a follow-on survey to the 2022 Census of Agriculture and is authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Title X - Horticulture and Organic Agriculture). The Census of Horticultural Specialties was last conducted in 2020 for the reference period of 2019.

The 2024 Census of Horticulture (CHS) target population consists of all US commercial horticulture operations that produced and sold \$10,000 or more in horticulture crop sales or have the potential to produce and sell \$10,000 or more of the items of interest. The 2024 CHS sampling frame is comprised of active 2024 NASS list frame records with horticultural control data of interest: bedding plants, potted flowering plants, cut flowers, cut cultivated florist greens, herbaceous perennials, foliage plants, trees, shrubs, ground covers, vines, fruit and nut trees, sod, dry bulbs, greenhouse produced vegetables, commercial vegetable transplants, vegetable and flower seeds, hemp grown under protection, Christmas trees, short term woody crops, aquatic plants, unfinished or prefinished plants, propagation materials, and other nursery or greenhouse plants, including mushrooms and mushroom spawns. Data collection is expected to begin around January 1, 2025, to collect production and sales data for 2024. A final report will be published around December 2025. Data will be published at both the US and State levels where possible.

A. JUSTIFICATION

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The Census of Horticulture Specialties is one of a series of special study programs that enhances the data collected by the Census of Agriculture. It is designed to provide detailed statistics on the area used for production and sales for eighteen categories of the horticulture industry. The primary objective of the 2024 Census of Horticulture specialties is to obtain a comprehensive and detailed picture of the horticulture sector of the economy. The Census of

Horticultural Specialties is the only source of a comprehensive data series on the horticulture industry for every state.

The Census of Horticultural Specialties has been conducted periodically since 1898 to show how the industry has changed over time. Since 1950 it has been conducted approximately every 10 years. Growing data needs to make policy decisions concerning the horticulture industry have prompted a request from the Secretary of Agriculture and Congress to conduct this survey every 5 years beginning with the 2014 survey as a follow-on to the Census of Agriculture. It is the only source of detailed and consistent data on horticultural crop production and sales by type of plant at both State and national levels.

Although the Census of Agriculture collects data on horticultural crops, the various plants that makeup these categories are constantly evolving. Due to the changing makeup of horticulture, more information is needed to: 1) determine how imports affect domestic horticulture production; 2) determine if lessening quarantine regulations will affect domestic horticulture production; and 3) determine value of horticultural crops affected by natural disasters and disease. Horticultural crops are high value crops which farmers could grow to diversify their farming operations, but more information about them is needed. Planning and research on alternative crops is vital to determining which horticultural crops are good to grow in certain areas and the input that would be required to make these operations successful. Horticultural operations are large consumers of pesticides and other chemicals, so research funding is critical to this industry to develop more effective horticultural chemicals or plants that are resistant to common diseases.

The Census of Horticultural Specialties is one of a series of census special studies for the Census of Agriculture which provides more detailed statistics relating to a specific subject. The Census of Horticultural Specialties is an integral part of the 2022 Census of Agriculture and is conducted under the authority of the Census of Agriculture Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-113). The law requires that the Secretary of Agriculture conduct a census of agriculture in 1998 and every fifth year following 1998.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The primary objective of the 2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties is to obtain a comprehensive and detailed picture of the horticultural sector of the economy. It is the only source of detailed production and sales data at the national level. The continuation of this census will allow for bench marking of changes to the industry.

The Census of Horticultural Specialties will include statistics on number and value of plants grown and sold, the value of land, buildings, machinery and equipment, selected production expenses, marketing channels, hired labor, area used for production, and type of structure.

The Census of Horticultural Specialties provides detailed statistics to government agencies, academia, nursery and floriculture industries, and others on the size and structure of the horticulture industry for planning, policy making, research, and market analysis. Some data users are listed below.

- The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) uses this information to prepare estimates for annual input-output (I-O) accounts for:
 - o Nursery Stock Production,
 - o Nursery Stock Sales – Categories,
 - o Sod, Sprigs or Plugs, Marketing Channels, and
 - o Estimated Value of Land, Buildings, Machinery and Equipment.
- The Economic Research Service (ERS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) relies on horticultural specialties data to provide essential data for economic models that analyze the horticultural segment of the agricultural sector.
- The National Agricultural Statistics Service of USDA uses the data to determine which crops will be included in its annual Commercial Floriculture Survey.
- To the growers and producers of horticultural products, the report serves as a vital tool to examine the current state of horticultural specialty production in the U.S., study historic trends and current conditions to plan for the future, and design new and improved methods to increase horticultural specialty production and profitability. Growers can also use this information to determine production costs that can improve productivity or demonstrate feasibility of future capital investment.
- Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) monitors the import and export of all agricultural products.
- Rural Business - Cooperative Service of USDA uses the data to assist horticultural producers interested in organizing cooperatives.
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of USDA uses the data to assist in research into plants identified by quarantine regulations.

- Federal Crop Insurance Corporation of USDA uses the data for product development, budget projections, resource allocation planning, and performance measurement.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency uses the data for policy making decisions and to study consumers of pesticides.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor uses the data in calculating a Producer Price Index on horticultural crops. The Census of Horticultural Specialties provides more detailed crop categories than the Census of Agriculture.
- State water resource agencies will use the data for formulating and assessing the need for new water supplies to accommodate this growing industry.
- Land Grant Universities and Extension Specialists use the data to study production, cost of inputs, and marketing of horticultural crops. Horticulture students use the publication as a major resource in developing their farm or business plans.

Without the Census of Horticultural Specialties, government policy makers and planners would lack valuable information needed to accomplish their missions. Instead, they would have to rely on assumptions and guess work to determine policy.

- 3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

Electronic Data Reporting or web questionnaires will be available on the internet for all respondents to complete. When this survey was last conducted in 2020 referencing 2019, NASS received 25% of the completed questionnaires by internet.

Blank questionnaires will be mailed out to the entire sample with both a return envelope and instructions on how to access the web version of the questionnaire. Approximately three weeks later, non-respondents will be mailed a follow-up reminder letter with another copy of the questionnaire. Respondents will be reminded that this survey needs to be completed by mid-February 2025. Remaining non-respondents will be interviewed by either phone or by personal visit.

NASS will also be publicizing this survey with:

- Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture (COSDA),
- Community Based Organization Workshop,
- USDA Radio,
- RFD-TV (Rural Media Group),
- Attendance at trade shows,
- Social Media (Twitter and Facebook), and
- County Extension Newsletter.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

The Census of Horticultural Specialties is the only source of comprehensive horticultural data tabulated and reported for each State and leading counties within the Nation. The NASS annual Commercial Floriculture Survey collects a portion of these data in all 50 states. The top 28 states are published individually, the remaining states are combined into the "Other States" total in the Floriculture publication. To eliminate duplication between the Census of Horticultural Specialties and the annual Commercial Floriculture Survey, NASS will combine the survey populations and data will be collected jointly for the production and sales data for 2024. Except for the annual Commercial Floriculture Survey, there are no other sources that duplicate the data provided by the Census of Horticultural Specialties.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-1), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The Small Business Administration defines a nursery or floriculture operation as an operation with less than \$3,750,000 in annual sales. Approximately 95% would be classified as small.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The 2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties survey is a follow-on survey to the 2022 Census of Agriculture. The Census of Agriculture is conducted every 5 years and the Census of Horticultural Specialties on average has occurred every 10 years since 1959. However, in 2009 Federal funding became available so

that the Census of Horticultural Specialties could be conducted on a 5-year cycle as a follow-on survey.

This Census of Horticultural Specialties is the only source of comprehensive horticultural data tabulated and reported for every State and selected counties (where it is possible) within the Nation.

- 7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.**

There are no special circumstances associated with this survey.

- 8. Provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments.**

The Federal Register Notice soliciting comments was published on March 7, 2024 on pages 16527-16528. One public comment was received.

The public comment and the reply letter are attached to this reinstatement request.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

The content of the Census of Horticultural Specialties questionnaire was developed over time through input sought from NASS Regional Offices, USDA subject matter experts, industry organizations, and numerous data users. NASS Field Enumerators have provided feedback on previous surveys from comments made by respondents as to improvements or clarifications that could be made, to make the questionnaires more user friendly and flow better. Regional and State directors will attend industry meetings or trade shows and seek input from growers.

- 9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents.**

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

- 10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and**

the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

Questionnaires include a statement that individual reports are confidential. U.S. Code Title 18, Section 1905; U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2276; and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2018, Title III of Pub. L. No. 115-435, codified in 44 U.S.C. Ch. 35 and other applicable Federal laws. All employees of NASS and all enumerators hired and supervised under a cooperative agreement with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) must read the regulations and sign a statement of compliance.

The following CIPSEA Pledge statement will appear on all future NASS questionnaires.

The information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only. Your responses will be kept confidential and any person who willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both. This survey is conducted in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2018, Title III of Pub. L. No. 115-435, codified in 44 U.S.C. Ch. 35 and other applicable Federal laws. For more information on how we protect your information please visit: <https://www.nass.usda.gov/confidentiality>.

Response to this survey is required by law under Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

The most sensitive questions on the questionnaire relate to value of sales and expenses.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

Total burden hour calculations are shown below. The minutes-per-response figures come from previous NASS surveys. Cost to the public of completing the questionnaire is assumed to be comparable to the hourly rate of those requesting

the data. Average annual reporting time of 51,677 hours is multiplied by \$42.75 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$2,209,191.75.

NASS uses the Bureau of Labor Statistics' [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) (most recently published on April 3, 2024 for the previous May) to estimate an hourly wage for the burden cost. The May 2023 mean wage for bookkeepers was \$23.84. The mean wage for farm managers was \$43.35. The mean wage for farm supervisors was \$29.23. The mean wage of the three is \$32.14. To calculate the fully loaded wage rate (includes allowances for Social Security, insurance, etc.) NASS will add 33% for a total of \$42.75 per hour.

2024 - Census of Horticulture - Projected Respondent Burden											
Census of Horticulture Survey	Sample Size	Freq	Responses				Non-response				Total Burden Hours
			Resp. Count	Freq x Count	Min./ Resp.	Burden Hours	Non-resp Count	Freq. x Count	Min./ Non-resp	Burden Hours	
Questionnaire											
First Mailing	40,000	1	16,000	16,000	60	16,000	24,000	24,000	2	800	16,800
Second Mailing	24,000	1	9,143	9,143	60	9,143	14,857	14,857	2	495	9,638
Follow-up Enumeration	14,857	1	10,057	10,057	60	10,057	4,800	4,800	2	160	10,217
Sub Total	40,000		35,200			35,200	4,800	43,657		1,455	36,655
Publicity Materials											
Pre-survey Postcard/Pressure Sealer	40,000	1	16,000	16,000	1	267	24,000	24,000	1	400	667
Reminder Email/Pressure Sealer **	30,000	1	5,400	5,400	1	90	24,600	24,600	1	410	500
Publicity Materials *	40,000	1	35,200	35,200	8	4,693	4,800	4,800	2	160	4,853
Instruction Sheets	40,000	1	35,200	35,200	15	8,800	4,800	4,800	2	160	8,960
Sub Total	40,000		35,200			13,850	4,800			1,130	14,980
Quality Control Survey (Telephone Only) - Recontact operators to verify quality of NASDA enumerators.											
Quality Control Worksheet (phone only)	500	1	500	500	5	42	0	0		-	42
Sub Total	500		500	500		42	0	0		0	42
Total	40,000		35,200	51,200		49,092	4,800	67,657		2,585	51,677

* Cover letter, follow-up letter, EDR instructions, etc.

** Reminder post card will be sent between the first and second mailing of the questionnaire encouraging the respondent to reply by internet.

- 13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.**

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

- 14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government; provide a description of the method used to estimate cost which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (equipment, overhead, printing, and staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

The cost to the government for the 2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties is included in the appropriation for the 2022 Census of Agriculture. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$4,300,000. This amount is spent over a three fiscal year period; \$500,000 the year prior to data collection, \$3,300,000 for data collection and processing, and the remaining \$500,000 for publication the year after data collection. The approximate cost breakdown is as follows: federal personnel, \$2,700,000; NASDA field and phone enumeration \$700,000; data processing \$800,000; and printing, training, and other incidental costs \$100,000.

- 15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I (reasons for changes in burden).**

This is a reinstatement of a previously approved survey. It was last conducted in 2020 for the reference period 2019. The sample size for the 2024 survey will be approximately 40,000 with an estimated 51,677 hours of respondent burden.

- 16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.**

The 2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties publication will contain approximately 300 pages consisting of an introduction, approximately 42 tables, a summary, and an appendix with a copy of the questionnaire, similar to the previous publication. Data will be published for 50 states and leading counties by commodity, where possible.

The web links for the previous publications can be found below.

The 2019, 2014, 2009 and 1998 Census of Horticultural Specialties publication can be found at the following website.

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Census_of_Horticultural_Specialties/index.php

The annual Commercial Floriculture Survey Highlights can be found at the following website.

[USDA - National Agricultural Statistics Service - Surveys - Floriculture Name](#)

Approximate time schedule for the 2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties is as follows:

CASI Push Letter –	December 16, 2024
Initial Questionnaire Mail Out –	December 30, 2024
Thank you Reminder Mailing –	February 14, 2025
Follow-up Mail Out for Non-Response –	March 20, 2025
Census of Horticulture Release Date –	December 16, 2025
▪ (Nursery, Floriculture and Specialty Commodities)	

- 17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

There is no request for approval of non-display of the expiration date.

- 18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions” of OMB Form 83-I.**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

July 2024