

1 Supporting Statement – Part A

**AQUACULTURE SURVEYS**

OMB No. 0535-0150

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

This is a request for the renewal of this information collection for an additional three years. In addition to the national Catfish and Trout Production Surveys, NASS is requesting approval to conduct two state-specific aquaculture surveys that is being conducted under a reimbursable agreement. The States of Hawaii and Pennsylvania.

- 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 National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) primary function is to prepare and issue state and national estimates of crop and livestock production, disposition, and prices, as well as specialty agricultural and environmental statistics. The Aquaculture Surveys described in this docket collect information on trout and catfish inventory, acreage, and sales. On occasion, some of the NASS Regional Field Offices will request to conduct state-specific aquaculture surveys under reimbursable agreements. Under this approval only the States of Hawaii and Pennsylvania have made such a request.

Congress mandated the collection of basic data for aquaculture and provides funding for these surveys. Public Law 96-362, the National Aquaculture Act of 1980 was passed to increase the overall effectiveness and productivity of federal aquaculture programs by improving coordination and communication among federal agencies involved in those programs.

16 U.S. Code § 2803 - National Aquaculture Development Plan

e. **CONTINUING AQUACULTURE ASSESSMENT:** The Secretaries, through the coordinating group, shall undertake a continuing assessment of aquaculture in the United States for the purpose of maintaining, on a continuing basis—

- (1)** a complete profile of the aquacultural industry with respect to the incidence, size, and status of commercial aquacultural enterprises;

- (2)** the identification of the private and public institutions and organizations involved in aquacultural research, extension, credit, and market development;
- (3)** the identification of the various aquatic species being cultured and a description of the status of commercial development of each of those species;
- (4)** to the extent practicable, the identification of aquacultural production regions, species, and markets that have significant potential for development;
- (5)** a catalog describing all Federal programs and activities that directly or indirectly encourage, support, or assist aquaculture; and
- (6)** the identification of the economic, physical, legal, institutional, and social constraints that inhibit the development of aquaculture in the United States.

NASS conducted the Census of Aquaculture in January 1999, January 2005, January 2014, and again in January 2019; each referencing the previous year's data. These detailed censuses were conducted to supplement the aquaculture data collected from the full Census of Agriculture, conducted every 5 years. The full 2017 Census of Agriculture collection included aquaculture information on the number of farms that produced aquaculture products, quantity sold, and value of sales for catfish, trout, other food fish, crawfish, mollusks, ornamental fish, sport fish, baitfish, and other aquaculture products. The 2018 Census of Aquaculture provided detailed information relating to on-farm aquaculture practices, including statistics on size of operation, inventory, method of production, point of first sale, sources of water, aquaculture distribution for restoration or conservation purposes, and production and sales. The annual Catfish and Trout Surveys are necessary to measure changes that occur within this industry in the years between these more comprehensive censuses.

The next Census of Agriculture is being conducted in 2023 referencing the production year of 2022 and the next Census of Aquaculture is scheduled to be conducted in 2024 referencing the production year of 2023.

General authority for these data collection activities is granted under U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2204. This statute specifies that "The Secretary of Agriculture shall procure and preserve all information concerning agriculture which he can obtain ... by the collection of statistics ... and shall distribute them among agriculturists."

For the Pennsylvania Aquaculture Census - Act 98 of the 1998 Pennsylvania General Assembly Amended Title 3 (Agriculture) of the Pennsylvania

Consolidated Statutes, added provisions relating to aquacultural development; imposed powers and duties on the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Section 4217 of Pennsylvania P.L. 768, No. 94 mentions “The department shall cooperate with the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service to compile biennially a survey of this Commonwealth's aquacultural industry. Persons licensed under sections 4220 (relating to registration for artificial propagation) and 4222 (relating to registration for dealers of live aquatic animals) whose businesses involve the sale of fish shall submit annually at the conclusion of each calendar year a summary report of sales specifying the amount or weight of each species sold and gross receipts. The contents shall be used by the department solely for statistics. The individual summary reports are not public records and shall not be made public without written consent of the party submitting that report.”

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service is part of the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

**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.**

Trout and Catfish Grower Surveys provide inventory numbers, sales, and other information needed to accurately measure the aquaculture industry. Survey results are used by government agencies in planning farm programs and making other policy decisions.

The Foreign Agricultural Service uses aquaculture data to evaluate the potential to establish funding requests for Targeted Export Assistance Programs.

Survey results are used by members of the Cooperative Extension System and the National Sea Grant College Program who research and work in aquaculture. The information is used to analyze changing trends in the number of commercial operations and production levels by state, as well as to demonstrate the growing importance of aquaculture to officials of federal and state government agencies who manage and direct policy for programs in agriculture and natural resources. Extension specialists use the data to demonstrate the impact of educational programs and other efforts to assist in developing economically viable aquaculture operations. The type of information collected and reported provides extension educators and research scientists with data that indicate important areas that require special educational and/or research efforts, such as causes for fish loss and pond inventories of fish of various sizes.

State-specific surveys, such as the Annual Aquaculture surveys conducted in Hawaii and Pennsylvania, are important to both state producers and state legislators. In Hawaii alone aquaculture is a growing multi-million dollar a year industry producing many unique and diverse items. The state-specific surveys are funded by the State(s) but are included in this OMB approval package.

NASS benefits from these cooperative agreements by: (1) obtaining additional data to update its list of farm operators; (2) encouraging both parties to coordinate Federal survey activities and activities funded under a cooperative agreement to reduce the need for overlapping data collection and/or spread out respondent burden; and (3) facilitating additional promotion of NASS surveys and statistical reports funded by annual Congressional appropriations.

Respondents benefit from these cooperative agreements by: (1) having their reported data protected by Federal Law (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); (2) having data collection activities for Federal and Cooperative surveys coordinated to minimize respondent burden; and (3) having high-quality agricultural data that are important to a state or region be collected and published.

- 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.**

The Aquaculture surveys are collected first by mail with an Computer-Aided Self-Administered Interview (CAWI) option and then by phone. The CAWI option allows respondents to choose between paper and internet-based reporting. In 2022, approximately 17 percent of completed Trout Production Survey questionnaires were completed by EDR. In 2022, catfish producers completed approximately 8 percent of their questionnaires by EDR.

- 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 National Agricultural Statistics Service cooperates with state departments of agriculture and universities to conduct agricultural surveys that meet both state and federal needs, thus eliminating duplication and minimizing reporting

burden on the agricultural industry. Data collected in these surveys are not available from any other source.

NASS also conducts the Census of Aquaculture approximately every five years. The Census of Aquaculture will be conducted in January 2024, referencing 2023 production year. The annual Trout and Catfish surveys that normally would be conducted in January 2024 will not be conducted, since they would have duplicated the Census of Aquaculture that will be conducted in January 2024.

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

Using the Small Business Administration's new definition of a small business in the aquaculture industry (less than \$3,250,000 in sales), approximately 83 percent of the January Catfish sample and approximately 91 percent of trout operations are small businesses by this definition. The data collected are typically easy to retrieve from regular business records. Also, where applicable, less complex or diverse operations will be screened out of having to complete certain sections on questionnaires that target commodities they do not produce.

**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.**

Collecting data less frequently for these aquaculture surveys would not appreciably reduce respondent burden since normal operating records are kept on a weekly or monthly basis. In addition, less frequent reporting would significantly reduce the value of the information.

**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 information collection.

**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 notice soliciting comments was published in the Federal Register on January 4, 2023 on pages 338 - 339. One public comment from Jean Public was received on this renewal 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 record-keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

NASS Regional Field Offices (RFOs) maintain industry contacts within their respective regions. Government agencies contacted include the Department of Commerce, Foreign Agricultural Service, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, the Agricultural Marketing Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Other groups contacted to keep a well-rounded perspective of the aquaculture industry include the Catfish Farmers of America, the Catfish Institute, the National Aquaculture Association, the U.S. Trout Farmers Association, and the Interagency Working Group on Aquaculture. The Interagency Working Group on Aquaculture is made up of representatives of the Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Interior, Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Small Business Administration, the Farm Credit Administration, the Department of State, and the Smithsonian Institution.

Some of the individuals that we have spoken with are:

Caird Rexroad III  
[Caird.RexroadIII@ars.usda.gov](mailto:Caird.RexroadIII@ars.usda.gov)

Paul W. Zajicek  
[paul@thenaa.net](mailto:paul@thenaa.net)

(Caird Rexroad III and Paul Zajicek are on a working team with Jean N. Porter, NASS Livestock Branch, Poultry and Specialty Commodities Section, Section Head.

Gary Fornshell  
Extension Educator, Aquaculture  
University of Idaho  
[gafornsh@uidaho.edu](mailto:gafornsh@uidaho.edu).

Cheryl L. Cook  
Deputy Secretary for the Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture

[chercook@pa.gov](mailto:chercook@pa.gov)

**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 Title III of Pub. L. No. 115-435 (CIPSEA) provide for confidentiality of reported information. 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 confidentiality pledge statement will appear on all 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 voluntary.

CIPSEA is also invoked for the state-specific surveys conducted under this information collection in Hawaii and Pennsylvania. Confidentiality is protected by following disclosure rules. One exception is in Hawaii where two large operations have historically signed a disclosure letter so that summarized values can be published.

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

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

**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.**

The renewal has an annual sample size of 1,592, a total number of 2,950 responses and a total of 551 burden hours. This annual total factors in the January Catfish and Trout Survey will not be conducted in early 2024 due to the 2023 Census of Aquaculture (OMB Control Number 0535-0237).

Average minutes per response for the aquaculture surveys are based on the amount of data asked on each questionnaire and the time needed for telephone respondents to find and report the data. Total hours of burden is shown in the table below.

Cost to the public of completing a questionnaire is assumed to be comparable to the hourly rate of those requesting the data. Reporting time of 551 hours is multiplied by \$37.94 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$20,904.94.

NASS uses the Bureau of Labor Statistics' [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) (most recently published on March 31, 2022 for the previous May) to estimate an hourly wage for the burden cost. The May 2021 mean wage for bookkeepers was \$21.70. The mean wage for farm managers was \$37.71. The mean wage for farm supervisors was \$26.18. The mean wage of the three is \$28.53. To calculate the fully loaded wage rate (includes allowances for Social Security, insurance, etc.) NASS will add 33% for a total of \$37.94 per hour.



Aquaculture Loss Survey <u>21</u>	300
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,300</b>

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection of information.**

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, and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

Total annual cost to the Federal Government for the surveys is expected to be approximately \$500,000 annually. These costs are funded by Congressional appropriations to the NASS budget. Most of the funds are for data collection and analysis personnel, with the remainder going to printing, data processing, postage, and travel. The personnel costs are based on the fully loaded wage rates (includes allowances for Social Security, insurance, etc.). Funding for the Hawaii and Pennsylvania state-specific surveys are provided through a cooperative agreements and is not included in the cost to the Federal Government.

**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).**

Due to the survey not being conducted for the 2023 production year (enumerated in 2024), there is a decrease in number of responses and a decrease in respondent burden from what is currently approved. The below table summarizes the changes to the mandatory survey (Pennsylvania Aquaculture Census) and the voluntary surveys.

Responses	Requested	Program Change I to New Statute
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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 January Trout Production Survey is mailed to reach producers near the beginning of January each year. Survey results are summarized and published in late February in the *Trout Production* report:

<https://usda.library.cornell.edu/concern/publications/t722h882h?locale=en>

The January Catfish Production Survey is also mailed to reach respondents near the beginning of January in the nine participating states. Production and inventory results are summarized and published in early February in the *Catfish Production* report. The July Catfish Grower Survey is mailed to reach respondents near the beginning of July in the three major producing states and an abridged version of *Catfish Production* is released in late July.

<https://usda.library.cornell.edu/concern/publications/bg257f046?locale=en>

The annual Aquaculture Survey conducted in Hawaii is directed at all commercial growers of aquatic plants and animals. The publication is typically released in the fall for the previous year's data.

[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Hawaii/Publications/Livestock,\\_Poultry,\\_and\\_Dairy/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Hawaii/Publications/Livestock,_Poultry,_and_Dairy/index.php)

The Aquaculture Census conducted in Pennsylvania is directed at all commercial aquaculture growers. The publication is typically released in the summer for the previous year's data.

[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Pennsylvania/Publications/Survey\\_Results/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Pennsylvania/Publications/Survey_Results/index.php)

The publications for the various NASS surveys can be found on the NASS home page:

[https://www.nass.usda.gov./Publications/Reports\\_by\\_Release\\_Day/index.php](https://www.nass.usda.gov./Publications/Reports_by_Release_Day/index.php)

- 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.

April 2023