

MINK SURVEY

OMB No. 0535-0212

In an effort to increase the transparency of NASS's survey processes and provide information on the quality of its estimates, NASS publishes Methodology and Quality Measures Reports for some commodities. The Methodology and Quality Measures Reports are published at the same time or shortly after estimates are released.

This supporting statement incorporates data and methodology from the NASS 2024 Mink Methodology and Quality Measures Publication located at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Methodology_and_Data_Quality/Mink/08_2024/minkqm24.pdf

Every five years NASS conducts a program review following the completion of the Census of Agriculture. NASS considered public input requested through a program review announcement [released on Dec. 19, 2023](#) for these changes.

The mink program changes are summarized in the following Agricultural Statistics Board Notice:

April 4, 2024 “NASS announces program changes following five-year review” at this link: <https://www.nass.usda.gov/Newsroom/Notices/2024/04-04-2024.php>

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

- 1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

Sampling: The target population for the Mink Survey is all mink operations which are defined as all agricultural establishments with one or more mink females bred on the land operated. This survey is a complete census of the records on the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) List Frame with positively reported mink data from a past survey. The List Frame is a current and unduplicated list of agricultural operations, and all current mink operations are assumed to be on the list. If a new mink operation is found at any time, the operation is added to the List Frame. Since this is a census of mink operations, all sampling weights are equal to one. Each respondent operation accounts only for itself.

As shown in the table below, in the 2024 data collection period (2023 production year), of the 96 sampled operations with mink pelt production, 76 responded to the Mink Survey, for a response rate of 79.2 percent.

Mink Response Rates for 2024					
Survey	Sample Size	Annual Frequency of Data Collection	Total Contacts	Total Responses	Response Rates ^{1/}
Mink Survey	96	1	96	76	79.2%
Mink Price Survey	2	1	2	1	50.0%

^{1/} All response rates referenced in this docket are calculated using the guidelines set forth in OMB Statistical Directives 1 and 2.

2. **Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:**
 - **statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,**
 - **estimation procedure,**
 - **degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,**
 - **unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures**

The Mink Survey is a census of all known or potential mink operations in the U.S., so all mink operations on NASS' list frame are selected for the survey.

The Mink Price Survey collects data form prominent auction house(s). These operations handle approximately 90 percent of all pelts sold by producers. NASS has an ongoing agreement with both of these operations in order to publish a calculated U.S. average market price for pelts based on their combined data.

Analysis Tools: Edited data are processed through an interactive analysis tool which displays data for all reports by item. The tool provides scatter plots, tables, charts, and special tabulations that allow the analyst to compare an individual record to similar records. Outliers and unusual data relationships become evident and HQ staff review them to determine if they are correct. The tool allows comparison to an agricultural operation's previously reported data to detect large changes in the operation. Data found to be in error are corrected, while accepted data are retained.

Non-sampling Errors: Non-sampling errors are present in any survey process. These errors include reporting, recording, and editing errors. Steps are taken to minimize these errors, such as comprehensive interviewer training, validation, and verification of processing systems, application of detailed computer edits, and evaluation of the data via the analysis tools.

3. **Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

Survey Timeline: Mink data are collected for the previous year's production beginning in late April to mid-May NASS opens the survey for web data collection the day the survey is mailed. Depending on the coding of records by the regions additional data collection will occur via an in-person field visit or by phone. As a rule of thumb, field and phone data collection will begin one day prior to the first day of May. Headquarters (HQ) completes analysis, summarization, and sets estimates over approximately a six-week period ending mid-July. Estimates are released to the public mid-July on the date designated by the Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) on its annual publications calendar

Estimators: The Mink Survey is a complete enumeration of all known mink operations. Mink operations are selected from the list of all agricultural operations and new operations are added into the sample when discovered. No coverage adjustment is made. Response to the Mink Survey is voluntary. Producers may refuse to participate in the survey, may not be located during the data collection period, or may submit incomplete reports. The nonresponse data items, and sampling units are manually imputed by HQ statisticians. Since manual imputation is conducted for all nonresponse units and items, point estimates are an accounting of all responses and manual imputations. The measurement of error due to sampling in the current survey period is irrelevant for a fully enumerated census. Moreover, standard errors and coefficients of variation (CVs) are zero for all current data items collected.

Estimation: When all samples are accounted for, all responses are fully edited, and the analysis material is reviewed, HQ executes a summary to evaluate and analyze State and National data. Since the survey instrument is identical all States, the samples can be pooled, and National survey results computed. The summary results provide multiple point estimates and information used to evaluate the quality of the survey estimates, such as response rates. HQ is responsible for performing a detailed review of their survey results. Any irregularities revealed by the summary must be investigated and, if necessary, resolved. Using the historical survey estimates, HQ must validate the survey results and set State and National estimates. The data are viewed in tabular and graphical form. For the National estimates, NASS assembles a panel of statisticians to serve on the ASB. The ASB reviews the National results and establishes the National estimates. State totals sum to the National level. Previous year's estimates are subject to revision when current year's estimates are set. Revisions are the result of late reports or corrected data.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken.

No tests of procedures or questionnaire content are proposed for either of the mink surveys.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

Survey design and methodology are determined by the Summary, Estimation, and Disclosure Methodology Branch, Methodology Division; Branch Chief is Lindsay Drunasky. Lindsay's email is lindsay.drunasky@usda.gov and phone number is (202) 690-8141.

Sample sizes for each State are determined by the Sampling, Editing, and Imputation Methodology Branch, Methods Division; Branch Chief is Andrew Dau. Andrew's email is andrew.dau@usda.gov and phone number is (202) 690-8141.

Data collection is carried out by NASS Field Offices; Eastern Field Operation's Director is Jody McDaniel. Jody's email is jody.mcdaniel@usda.gov and phone number is (202) 720-3638. Western Field Operation's Director is King Whetstone. King's email is king.whetstone@usda.gov. His phone number is (202) 720-9567.

The Census and Survey Division, Survey Administration Branch Chief is Suzanne Adams. Suzanne's email is suzanne.adams@usda.gov and phone number is (202) 720-4028.

Statistics Division, Livestock Branch is responsible for national and regional summaries, analysis, and presentation of data to the Agricultural Statistics Board for final estimates, publication, and the Estimation Manual. The Livestock Branch Chief is Travis Averill. Travis's email is travis.averill@usda.gov and phone number is (202) 692-0069.

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