

FRUIT, NUTS, AND SPECIALTY CROPS

OMB No. 0535-0039

A. JUSTIFICATION

1This submission is a request for approval of this long-running information collection for three years. There are some changes to the sample size included in this renewal. Two of the surveys that were previously funded through cooperative agreements with State Departments of Agriculture have been discontinued due to lack of funding for coming years.

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 primary function of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is to prepare and issue current official State and national estimates of crop and livestock production, value, and disposition. Estimates of fruit, tree nuts, and specialty crops are an integral part of this program. Fruit crop supply, acreage, production, disposition, and price data are collected per Title 7 U.S. Code §1421d. These estimates support the NASS strategic plan to cover all agricultural cash receipts.

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."

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.**

Data reported on fruit, nut, and specialty crops are used by NASS to estimate crop acreage, yield, production, utilization, price, and value in States with significant commercial production. These estimates are essential to farmers, processors, importers and exporters, shipping companies, cold storage facilities and handlers in making production and marketing decisions. Estimates from these inquiries are used by market order administrators in their determination of expected crop supplies under federal and State market orders.

The information was used in the development of the United States – Mexico – Canada Agreement (USMCA), which was signed on November 30, 2018 and enacted on July 1, 2020.

Other government agencies also need these data. Estimates for these commodities are used by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) for crop insurance issues and by the Farm Services Agency (FSA) to determine disaster payments. The International Trade Commission has used these data to resolve anti-dumping investigations. Additionally, the information is used as base data for the Water Quality/Food Safety surveys.

Many of the larger bee and honey producers are dependent upon this data as they travel around the country leasing out their colonies to pollinate crops as they come into bloom.

- 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.**

Nearly all of the larger NASS information collections have been converted to Web-based data collection, what NASS calls Computer-Aided Self-Administered Interview, or CASI. Conversion of the numerous versions of the fruit, nut, and specialty crop questionnaires is progressing, where practical.

With the standardization of these questionnaires, NASS is planning to conduct more centralized surveys which will use fewer questionnaire versions and concentrate all data collections into fewer times during the year. This is in attempt to reduce the number and frequency of contacts per respondent. In 2022 - 2023 approximately 6.2% of the respondents, replied by internet.

The main portal for our on-line surveys is <http://www.agcounts.usda.gov>.

Once there, the respondents have to enter the valid survey code and their own user ID, which is printed on the label of the questionnaire that was mailed to them. This limits access to the system to only those farm operators who were selected to be in the survey.

- 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.**

NASS cooperates with State departments of agriculture and land grant universities to conduct agricultural surveys. This eliminates duplication of data gathering by more than one agency. For the commodities in this docket, if information is available from State agencies and other federal agencies, then NASS will use these administrative data to reduce burden on the public.

The NASS, National Operations Division, Frames Maintenance Group, located in St. Louis, Missouri is responsible for maintaining and updating our List Frame of all known farming operations. By monitoring data collection periods for each commodity, cross-referencing growers by commodity, and combining information for multiple commodities on a single questionnaire, duplication of data collection is eliminated. In addition, after the 2022 Census of Agriculture (0535-0226) is completed, the data will be saved to our List Frame. Each year in the spring, NASS is able to adjust our stratified samples to better reflect changes in this industry. This keeps total respondent burden to the lowest possible level.

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.

Information from growers can be provided with a minimum of difficulty and generally without having to consult their record books. Information from processors can be completed from normal day-to-day operating records. Administrative data is obtained for commodities that are State or federally regulated, thereby eliminating burden on growers and processors. Administrative data from other entities are used whenever possible. In instances where administrative data provides sufficient coverage and accuracy, we consider these opportunities to discontinue surveys and reduce burden.

To further reduce overall respondent burden, NASS utilizes stratified simple random sampling and multivariate probability proportionate to size sampling designs, where possible; rather than conducting a complete enumeration of any group of specialty commodity producers. These designs significantly reduce the burden on the smaller producers as they are designed to select relatively larger producers.

According to the Small Business Administration's definition of a small producer, approximately 47,120 operators or 85 percent of this population 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.

Following the review of the different commodities after the 2017 Census of Agriculture, in 2019 NASS made adjustments, where possible, to reduce the frequency of data collections. Any further reductions in frequency of data collections would prevent USDA and the agriculture industry from being kept abreast of changes at the State and national level. The diversity of commodities included in this docket and the varying seasonality of each commodity warrants the frequency of data collection currently used by NASS. Data are collected for the different stages of production and consumption of the different commodities, for production, sales, prices, and processing.

- 7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly; requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;...**

Historically, some surveys were conducted monthly during the growing season to keep USDA and the agriculture industry abreast of changes at the State and national level. Timing and frequency of the reports have evolved to meet the needs of producers, agribusinesses, and government agencies. Following a comprehensive review of the data obtained by the 2017 Census of Agriculture, NASS made some changes to the commodities and frequency of data collections in the previous approval.

Many of the fruit, nut and specialty crop surveys were conducted at times of the year that coincided with the crop growth cycle(s) and harvest or marketing periods. Some of these surveys have been consolidated into other fruit/nut surveys to help minimize the frequency at which NASS has to contact the respondents.

- 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 September 8, 2023, on page 62047-62048. NASS did not receive any public comments.

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.

USDA Data Users Meetings

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) held its spring meeting on April 18, 2023. Proceedings of the meeting can be found at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Education_and_Outreach/Meeting/2023/2023springdatausersqa.pdf. The video recording of the meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/DIFQB9SRIQ0>.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) held its fall meeting on October 17-18, 2023. Proceedings and video recordings of this and previous meetings can be found at. The video recording of the meeting can be found at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Education_and_Outreach/Meeting/index.php.

NASS and partner agencies organize the annual meetings for USDA stakeholders. Other participating USDA agencies include the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Economic Research Service (ERS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), and the World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB). The U.S. Census Bureau also participates. Leaders from each agency can provide an overview of current issues and then respond to questions and comments.

Individuals who want to attend future meetings can register online at www.nass.usda.gov/Education_and_Outreach/Meeting/. Summaries of previous meetings are available at the same web page.

NASS Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics Meeting

The Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics, which consists of 20 members appointed from seven categories covering a broad range of agricultural disciplines and interests, hosted a meeting on November 14-15, 2018. During that time, the Advisory Committee discussed topics including the status of NASS programs, Census of Agriculture Updates, Census of Agriculture Program Plans, and the NASS Strategic Plan. The Committee meeting was open to the public. Notes from the meeting can be found at the following location.

https://www.nass.usda.gov/About_NASS/Advisory_Committee_on_Agriculture_Statistics/2019/ACAS%20November%202018%20Meeting%20Executive%20Summary.pdf

Members of the newly elected committee can be found at the following link and are attached to this renewal submission.

https://www.nass.usda.gov/About_NASS/Advisory_Committee_on_Agriculture_Statistics/2020/ACAS%20member_list_Sept%202020.pdf

In addition, NASS consults with the Extension Service, grower organizations, farmers, and other organizations on a regular basis, especially by our State and Regional Field Offices. In addition, NASS commodity statisticians will attend some of the various commodity meetings when possible.

Additional individuals that NASS talks with on a regular basis to get feedback and input on our data collections include:

Bill Lapp
Advanced Economic Solutions
Bill@aesresearch.com
402-980-1164

John Newton, Ph.D., Chief Economist
American Farm Bureau Federation
202-406-3729 w 502-641-4636 c
www.fb.org
jnewton@fb.org

Almonds:

Bryce Spycher (California Almond Board)
bspycher@almondboard.com
1150 9th St #1500, Modesto, CA 95354
209-549-8262

Walnuts:

Michelle Connelly (California Walnut Board)
MConnelly@Walnuts.org
101 Parkshore Drive, Suite 250, Folsom, CA 95630
(916) 932-7070

Hawaii Specialty Crops:

Hawai'i Department of Agriculture
1428 S. King Street, Honolulu, HI 96814
C: (808) 286-2617
W: (808) 956-7312
Matthew.K.Loke@hawaii.gov

Grapes:

Kathy Diaz (California Department of Food and Agriculture)
kathy.diaz@cdfa.ca.gov
(916) 900-5011
1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Maple Syrup:

Mark L. Isselhardt
Maple Specialist
University of Vermont Extension
Mark.Isselhardt@uvm.edu
802-899-9926

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>.

All individuals who may access these confidential data for research are also covered under Titles 18 and CIPSEA and must complete a Certification and Restrictions on Use of Unpublished Data (ADM-043) agreement.

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 a sample size of 55,435, a total number of 64,990 responses and 28,114 burden hours. Average minutes per response for the fruit, nut and specialty surveys are based on the amount of data asked on each questionnaire and the time needed for telephone follow-ups. Total hours of burden are shown in the tables below.

Cost to the public of completing the questionnaire is assumed to be comparable to the hourly rate of those requesting the data. Reporting time of 28,114 hours are multiplied by \$40.51 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$ 1,138,898.14.

NASS uses the Bureau of Labor Statistics' [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) (most recently published on April 25, 2023 for the previous May) to estimate an

hourly wage for the burden cost. The May 2022 mean wage for bookkeepers was \$22.81. The mean wage for farm managers was \$40.29. The mean wage for farm supervisors was \$28.28. The mean wage of the three is \$30.46. To calculate the fully loaded wage rate (includes allowances for Social Security, insurance, etc.) NASS will add 33% for a total of \$40.51 per hour.

Category	Commodity	Sector
		Mid-Season Indications (Growers)

100	1	80	80	10
20	2	16	32	15

	Coffee	Growers
	Hops	Growers
		Growers

The sample sizes are multiplied by 80% to get the targeted Response Count. This is the target number of completed reports for each survey. The frequency of the surveys can vary with each survey, some are conducted monthly, some quarterly, some monthly-seasonal, some annually, weekly-seasonal, etc. The non-response count consists of the 20% that are expected to be refusals or inaccessible records. The minutes per response are the average amount of time it takes to complete each questionnaire. Non-respondents are allotted 2 minutes to glance over the pre-survey letter or the questionnaire they receive in the mail before deciding to refuse to complete the survey.

On page two of the table above, just after tree nuts, you will see a category for mixed which contains grapes, almonds and walnuts. The walnut data is collected only every other year. The OMB approval process is for a 3-year cycle, so the longer version of the questionnaire, which includes walnuts, will only be done once under this approval. Under the column for waves of data collection, we have done this as fractions (1/3 and 2/3) to allocate the burden hours for this 3 year approval request.

The surveys that are being sent to processors or handlers are generally a complete census of this population, since these are relatively small populations. On the grower surveys, we treated the largest producers as must records and included them all in our samples. For the medium and small size operations we selected a random sampling within each stratum for the target States. The estimate of burden for each of the surveys is based on a minimum target response rate of 80%.

- 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 total cost to the federal government to conduct the fruits, nuts and specialty crops surveys and prepare estimates will remain at approximately \$4.7 million. Approximately \$3,525,000 will go to federal salaries (the fully loaded wage rate includes allowances for Social Security, insurance, etc.), \$825,000 will go to NASDA enumerators for data collection and \$350,000 will go to printing, postage, and other miscellaneous expenses.

NASS has several agreements with commodity groups and State Departments of Agriculture to conduct several of these surveys. These surveys are collected under the same methodology used on the other NASS surveys and are protected under the same confidentiality we have for all of our surveys. The costs for these surveys is incurred by the individual State cooperators and are calculated based on the costs of similar surveys conducted by NASS for 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).

The new annual burden of 28,114 hours is down 3,496 hours from the previous inventory of 31,610 hours. The net decrease is a result of program changes and adjustments. The program changes involve the discontinuation of five surveys that were previously conducted under cooperative agreements. with that will not be included in this renewal.

- Prune Crop Inquiry previously funded by the California State Department of Agriculture,
- Missouri Grape Production and Utilization Survey previously funded by the Missouri Department of Agriculture. The survey, funded by the same cooperator, will utilize the Grape Variety Inquiry utilized for Texas.
- Macadamia Nut Processor Report previously funded by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, and
- Macadamia Nut Loss Report previously funded by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture.
- Grape Inventory Surveys previously funded by the Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council.

The adjustments come from minor changes to the target populations and sample sizes,

Differences for Fruit	
	New Request

- 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.**

Questionnaires for all surveys in this information collection are returned to the State or Regional Field Offices and reviewed for reasonableness prior to keying into data processing media for summarization. State and/or Regional statisticians analyze survey results, recommend estimates or forecasts for their State(s), and transmit the data to Washington, D.C. State survey results are summarized nationally and by major regions or State groupings. Individual State recommendations are reviewed and changed, if necessary, to reach national and regional estimates.

Growers' disposition questionnaires are mailed soon after completion of harvest for the majority of the fruit and nut crops. The *Noncitrus Fruits and Nuts Summary* report is issued the following May to show final utilization and value. End-of-season citrus acreage, yield, production, price, and value estimates including final utilization and price data for the previous marketing season are published in the August *Citrus Fruits* release.

These publications are available on-line immediately after release at:

http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_Subject/index.php?sector=CROPS.

Once there, select the commodity group and then the item of interest.

From this same link, you can select a specific State name, and be taken to a listing of specialty publications such as the ones in California for commodities such as almonds, olives, raisins, etc.

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/California/Publications/Specialty_and_Other_Releases/index.php.

A complete listing of the NASS data publications can be found at the following web site:

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Reports_by_Release_Day/.

- 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.

December 2023