

From: [Cline, Adam - REE-NASS](#)
To: [Noonan, Margaret E. EOP/OMB](#); [Chittenden, Brent - REE-NASS](#); [Harrell, Levi - OCIO-OCIO, DC](#); [Ragland-Greene, Rachelle - OCIO-OCIO, DC](#); [Van Horn, Struther - REE-NASS](#); [Parsons, Joe - REE-NASS](#); [Jones, LaKeya - REE-NASS](#)
Subject: RE: Questions about OMB No. 0535-0039 ("Fruit, Nuts, and Specialty Crops")
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 12:05:48 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Hi Margaret,

Thank you for your email and for your thorough review of the "Fruit, Nuts, and Specialty Crops" survey. We appreciate the opportunity to address your questions and provide further clarity.

Regarding cognitive testing, NASS did not conduct any cognitive testing on this specific question prior to its requested addition back to the 2026 survey. However, the question was previously on the survey from 2011 until 2022. It was removed during a questionnaire redesign before the 2023 survey and is now requested to be added back to the 2026 questionnaire. The instrument was tested thoroughly prior to the redesign, and debriefing interviews were conducted following the 2023 collection. The concept of "taps" did not demonstrate any cognitive issues.

The necessity of the follow-up question was emphasized by NASS's Frames Maintenance Group before the 2026 survey. This question is crucial for maintaining an accurate frame, as it helps identify operations that did not set any taps for maple syrup during the survey year but may do so in the future. By including this question, we ensure that we do not exclude potential future respondents who might engage in maple syrup production, thereby improving the accuracy of our frame and the survey's overall quality.

The follow-up question applies only to a subset of the sampled operations, specifically those who indicated they did not set any taps during the survey year. The time required to read and respond to the question is minimal, and it can be answered without the need to retrieve any additional information from records or memory. Given these factors, we anticipate that the inclusion of this question will have a negligible impact on the overall burden on respondents.

It is not feasible to postpone the addition of this question until the ICR renewal in 2027. The question was previously included on surveys before 2023 and is being requested to be reintroduced for the 2026 survey. Excluding it now would hinder our ability to maintain an accurate and manageable frame for maple syrup operations, which could inadvertently increase the burden by sending the survey to operations that are no longer relevant. Ensuring we gather accurate future participation data through this question is vital for minimizing the overall burden on respondents.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require further clarification or would like to schedule a follow-up call to discuss this matter further.

If possible, we would still like to have a check-in meeting soon. Would a 30-minute meeting on Monday, June 30 at 9:30a or 1:00p work for you?

Thanks,

Adam

Adam Cline

Chief

Data Collection Branch | Census and Survey Division



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From: Noonan, Margaret E. EOP/OMB <Margaret.E.Noonan@omb.eop.gov>

Sent: Monday, June 16, 2025 12:06

To: Chittenden, Brent - REE-NASS <brent.chittenden@usda.gov>; Harrell, Levi - OCIO-OCIO, DC <Levi.Harrell@usda.gov>; Ragland-Greene, Rachelle - OCIO-OCIO, DC <rachelle.ragland-greene@usda.gov>; Van Horn, Struther - REE-NASS <Struther.VanHorn-Ewert@usda.gov>; Cline, Adam - REE-NASS <adam.cline@usda.gov>; Parsons, Joe - REE-NASS <joe.parsons@usda.gov>

Subject: Questions about OMB No. 0535-0039 ("Fruit, Nuts, and Specialty Crops")

Good morning,

I have completed my review of 'Fruit, Nuts, and Specialty Crops' and I have some questions –

1. Did NASS do any cognitive testing/pretesting/piloting of the proposed new question?

1. Were any taps set on this operation for collecting maple sap in 2023 or 2024?

INCLUDE taps set on trees on your operation, regardless of whether you owned the land.

⁰⁰⁵ 1 ☐ Yes - Go to Item 2

3 ☐ No - 1a. Do you intend to set any taps in the future?

⁰⁰⁶ 1 ☐ Yes 3 ☐ No 2 ☐ Don't Know

Go to Item 12

2023 and 2024 Production Data

Last Year - 2023 This Year - 2024

2. What is the justification for the follow up question for respondents answering no? In other words, why is this being asked and how will this information be used?
3. Do you have any evidence to support the claim that adding a question will not increase burden? I don't think adding the question will significantly increase the burden, but I don't think it's likely that's there's no effect on burden.
4. Would it be possible to postpone adding the new question until it's time for the ICR renewal in 2027?

Please let me know if you'd like to set up a follow up call.

Thanks,
Margaret

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