

1Supporting Statement Part B

ORGANIC SURVEY

OMB No. 0535 – 0249

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.**

The target population for the Organic Survey is all certified organic farms and transitioning farms. Certified organic farms must meet the qualifications set out by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the USDA and be certified compliant by an approved agent of AMS. Transitioning farms have filed a plan and begun the process of becoming certified organic. The Organic Survey is a census of all entities that meet the criteria described above.

The estimated sample size for the organic survey is estimated to be less than 27,000.

Survey	Type	Sample Size	Response Rate
2019 Organic Survey	Mandatory	22,729	73.6%

- 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.**

Data Collection: Extensive efforts will be used to maximize response, and thus reduce the extent of non-response adjustment to the survey. The initial mailing to respondents in early December will consist of a pressure sealer mailer that will contain information on how the respondents can go online and complete the

questionnaire through our Computer-Aided Self-Administered Interview (CASI) system. This will be followed in early January by a mailing of approximately 27,000 mailing packets containing a questionnaire, cover letter, instruction sheet, and return envelope. A third mailing in late January to nonrespondents will be a reminder pressure sealer mailer. The fourth mailing in late February will contain another questionnaire, cover letter, instruction sheet, and return envelope. All questionnaires will be keyed from image at the National Operations Center (NOC) in Olivette, Missouri. E-mail reminders may be used for respondents who opted-in to receiving E-Mail reminders. There will be phone follow-up for those who do not respond to the mail requests. There will also be a limited number of face-to-face interviews conducted.

Stratification: All operations will be stratified based on their organic total value of sales or their organic acres under production. Due to the influence on published totals, extremely large operations will be made “must” records and will be classified in an extreme operator (EO) stratum. Operations in an EO stratum that do not respond to the survey will be estimated by Regional Field Office personnel. Due to the diversity of organic farming operations from state-to-state, the EO definitions will vary by state. Approximately 5% of the total sample size will be targeted for an EO stratum within each State. For all other non-EO strata, there will be a non-response weight applied to the responding operations, in order to account for the non-respondents. This non-response weight will be a simple factor derived by taking the stratum size and dividing by the number of responding operations within the stratum population.

Item Imputation: For individual questions that go un-answered but are determined to be necessary for a completed report, an imputation algorithm will be utilized. An analyst in a Regional Field Office can trigger imputation by coding a cell value with a “-1”. Single imputation of missing values is done using a predictive mean matching nearest neighbor algorithm. If this algorithm fails, mean imputation of missing values is used as a backup.

Weighting: For non-EO strata's each record's weight will include a non-response adjustment and a coverage adjustment. The record's weight for EO strata's will also include a coverage adjustment weight. This will become the final weight used to generate all published estimates.

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.**

A public information campaign will be used by NASS for the Organic Survey. The objective is to make organic producers aware of the survey, its importance to them and the Nation, and to encourage their response. This campaign will work through farm organizations, radio broadcasters, farm press, agribusinesses, and the NASS Regional Field Offices.

To ensure a high response rate and to reduce the non-response bias in the final Organic Survey estimates, NASS will attempt to collect data from non-respondents by telephone. A limited number of interviews will be completed by personal enumeration. The telephone and personal enumeration activities will begin in March and extend through much of April.

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

The main validation of current procedures is to remain in contact with organic growers, processors, and industry leaders and solicit their expert advice. Additionally, NASS conducted twelve cognitive interviews across the nation between March 3, 2025 and June 1, 2025 on the 2025 Organics Survey (OMB No. 0535-0249) to assess respondents' understanding of draft questions in the draft questionnaire, and the potential measurement error associated with them. Specifically, the underlying objective of the cognitive interviews are to:

- Understand how respondents comprehend questions,
- Identify barriers to retrieving the information requested on the questionnaire, including any record keeping practices,
- Observe how respondents judge and communicate the information requested to determine whether it aligns with the question/questionnaire's intent,
- Reduce respondent burden while maximizing response efficiency

Highlights from the findings of the cognitive interviews include:

- Confirmation that splitting the expense question in Section 13 (question 9) helped to address respondent confusion about what they should report for the individual response options.
- Confirmation that respondents were able to report commodity sales and quantities for fresh market and commercial processing respectively
- Confirmation that reordered question items and sections enabled respondents to correctly interpret individual items.

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), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

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 his phone number is (202) 690-8141.

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 her phone number is (202) 690-8141.

The NASS survey administration, data collection, estimation, and publication are carried out by NASS Regional Field Offices; Western and Acting Eastern Field Operation's Director is King Whetstone. King's email is king.whetstone@usda.gov. His phone number is (202) 720-9567. The survey administrators are responsible for coordination of sampling, questionnaires, documentation, training, and data processing.

The NASS census administrator in Headquarters of the Census Planning Branch, Census and Survey Division; Branch Chief is Donald Buysse. Donald's email is donald.buysse@usda.gov and his phone number is (202) 738-3764. The census administrators are responsible for coordination of sampling, questionnaires, data collection, training, Interviewer's Manuals, Census Administration Manuals, data processing, and other Regional Office support.

The NASS commodity statisticians in Headquarters in the Crops and Livestock Branches located in the Statistics Division are responsible for reviewing the data and are responsible for looking at the summary and publication. The Crops Branch Acting Chief is Anthony Prillaman. Anthony's email is anthony.prillaman@usda.gov and his phone number is (706) 713-5401. The Livestock Branch Chief is Travis Averill. Travis can be contacted by email at travis.averill@usda.gov or phone at (202) 692-0069. The Environmental, Economics and Demographics Branch Chief is Bryan Combs. Bryan can be contacted by email at bryan.combs@usda.gov or phone at (202) 720-5084.

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