

1 Supporting Statement – Part B

LOCAL FOOD MARKETING PRACTICES SURVEY

OMB No. 0535-0259

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 reports. The Methodology and Quality Measures Reports are published at around the same time or shortly after estimates are released.

This supporting statement incorporates data and methodology from the most recent Local Food Marketing Practices Survey Methodology and Quality Measures Publication located at:

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/Local_Food/quality_measures/2020_FMPS%20Methodology.pdf

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 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey consists of:

- Any farm that sells its products through one of the four marketing channels: 1) Consumers, 2) Retail Markets, 3) Institutions, and 4) Intermediate Markets, and
- Any farm with an unknown presence of sales through one of the four marketing channels listed above.

In 1975 the USDA, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Census Bureau agreed on a definition of a farm that is still in use today: "A farm is currently defined, for statistical purposes, as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural goods (crops or livestock) were sold or normally would have been sold during the year under consideration."

The sample for this survey will total approximately 65,000 farm or ranch operations. These operations will be drawn from NASS's List Frame which contains historic data collected from the 2022 Census of Agriculture and other NASS surveys. For the 2025 Local Foods Marketing Practices Survey all four marketing channels were identified on the 2022 Census of Agriculture which enhances the frame where operations can be selected based on participation in specific marketing channels. Records will use their coverage adjustment weight from the 2022 Census of Agriculture. This coverage adjustment methodology is consistent with the coverage adjustment used for Census of Organics and the Census of Horticulture. Response to this survey is mandatory.

The US response rate was 56.9 percent in 2020.

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 Local Foods Marketing Practices Survey (LFMPS) sampling frame is comprised of all active farm operations (framflag=1, excluding abnormal operations in all states on NASS's List Frame. The LFMPS sampling frame was stratified by region, state, group, subgroup and strata. States were placed into one of seven regions; and grouped by operations that reported local food gross sales in 2022 Census of Agriculture Section 27 (Group 1) and those that did not report local food sales (Group 2). Group 1 was stratified using total local foods gross sales as a measure of size. In contrast, Group 2 was partitioned into operations that were likely (Sub-Group 1) or less likely (Sub-Group 2) to have local food sales and then stratified using farm value of sales (FVS-cT202) as a measure of size.

All data will be analyzed for unusual values. Data from each operation will be compared to historical data (if available), as well as to trends from similar operations. Missing data for an operation will be estimated based on similar operations or historical data. Individual state, regional, and aggregated national estimates will be reviewed by NASS's Agricultural Statistics Board for reasonableness, then published (where sufficient data are available). If State-level data cannot be published due to confidentiality rules, the data will be published on either a regional and/or national level.

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.

NASS will provide respondents with a variety of modes for completing the survey, including internet, mail, telephone, or personal interview. A customer service phone number is included at the top of the questionnaire in case respondents have any questions.

Initially, a pressure-sealed letter will be mailed to all respondents giving them a secure access code to go on-line and complete the survey using our Computer-Aided Self-Administered Interview (CASI) system. Non-respondents will then be mailed a cover letter with the questionnaire that will describe the importance of the data and how it will be used, as well as explain that individual data will be kept confidential. Instructions on how to access the CASI questionnaire will be provided again. After two attempts sending questionnaires by mail, NASS will attempt to contact the respondents by phone or personal interviews.

Survey data are subject to non-sampling errors such as omissions and mistakes in reporting and in processing the data. Error is minimized by carefully reviewing all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

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

NASS conducted sixteen cognitive interviews across the nation between March 3, 2025 and June 1, 2025 on the 2025 Local Foods Marketing Practices Survey (OMB No. 0535-0248) 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:

- Identification of the reasons for why some respondents incorrectly screen into the survey using the intermediate markets response option.
- Identification of the appropriate response options for question items in section 2 asking respondents to report the number of other operations at a particular direct-to-consumer market outlet.
- Confirmation that respondents were able to report the distance between their operation and the market outlet without much difficulty.

- Confirmation that respondents were better at reporting expense amounts for individual items and that they also did not share the same definition of the term "marketing expenses" used in the previous questionnaire.

Included in this request is an annual fifty interviews for cognitive testing to improve how the respondents provide data.

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.

The NASS census administrators 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 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.

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.

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.

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 and phone number is (202) 720-9567. The survey administrators are responsible for coordination of sampling, questionnaires, documentation, training, and data processing.

May 2025