

2025 Area Screening Survey, a Pilot Study for the June Area Survey

OMB No. 0535-0264

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 potential respondent universe for this collection consists of approximately 12,000 tracts across the states of Colorado, Illinois, New York, Oregon, and Texas. The sampling method will include all known agricultural tracts, identified using USDA-NASS's list frame, which maintains a detailed profile (control data) of each establishment.

The sample size is determined to assess whether the proposed questions will obtain the necessary data for analysis. To ensure sufficient data are collected for analysis, telephone follow-ups are conducted for any survey that does not achieve at least an 80 percent response rate, subject to available funding.

This is a new information collection under the Quick Response for Cooperator-funded Surveys Generic Clearance (OMB 0535-0264).

- 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**

Overview – As with all USDA-NASS surveys, the goal is to collect data from at least 80% of the records sampled and more importantly, achieve a weighted unit response rate of at least 70% of the production data or production area. We utilize mail, phone interviews, and if funded, Computer Assisted Self Interviewing (CASI) to collect data. In our ongoing effort to collect quality data in a timely and

economic manner, USDA-NASS utilizes mail as the first method of data collection (with a CASI option, if funded) with phone interview follow up for non-response. With limited funds for extensive data collection, phone enumeration is targeted for non-response.

Sampling – The target population for the 2025 Area Screening Survey, a pilot study for the June Area Survey, comprises all tracts in Colorado, Illinois, New York, Oregon, and Texas. USDA-NASS's list frame contains all known agricultural establishments. A profile, referred to as control data, is maintained for each establishment on the list frame. This allows USDA-NASS to define list frame sampling populations for specific surveys and to implement efficient sampling designs.

- 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.**

USDA-NASS's Field Office (FO) staff routinely visit producers and industry organizations to promote the programs and importance of cooperating. USDA-NASS maintains a presence at National industry meetings, often setting up promotional booths at trade shows. Occasionally, letters of endorsement are obtained from industry leaders.

NASS relies on multiple modes for collecting data. Questionnaires are mailed to the sampled operations who can either return them by supplied postage-paid envelopes, email, fax, Computer Assisted Self Interviewing (if funded), or telephone. If we have not received a response within the allotted time, phone enumerators will be used to contact the respondents. FOs conduct this non-response follow up until data collection funds are exhausted.

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

The 2025 Area Screening Survey is being conducted as a pilot study to support potential improvements and validate methodology changes for the June Area Survey. The results from the 2025 Area Screening Survey -- a pilot study -- will inform changes to the information collection approach and ensure any updated methodology is robust and effective for the June Area Study. Pilot studies are essential for testing new data collection methods and ensuring they are reliable before large-scale implementation. They also identify and address issues in survey design and implementation and help streamline data collection by pinpointing the most efficient methods.

The 2025 Area Screening Survey underwent an expert review with several experienced survey methodologists from NASS. An expert review is a method of qualitative evaluation that relies on an evaluator's experience, knowledge of relevant research, and opinions to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of a questionnaire. Areas of consideration included: feedback on potential areas of confusion for respondents, concepts, flow, areas in need of clarification, response options, language, skip patterns, and reference periods.

To assess respondents' understanding of questions, and the potential measurement error associated with them, cognitive debriefing interviews are planned to be conducted after data collection. Specifically, the underlying objective of the cognitive debriefing interviews are to:

- Understand how respondents comprehended questions,
- Identify any barriers that may have existed when retrieving the information requested on the questionnaire, including any record keeping practices,
- Get retrospective feedback on how respondents judged and communicated the information requested to determine whether it aligned with the question/questionnaire's intent,
- Reduce respondent burden while maximizing response efficiency by making any updates/changes to the questionnaire for future iterations.

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.

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.

The NASS survey administrators in Headquarters of the Survey Administration Branch, Census and Survey Division; Branch Acting Chief is Scott Cox. Scott's email is scott.cox@usda.gov. and phone number is (202) 617-0484. The survey administrators are responsible for coordination of sampling, questionnaires, data collection, training, Interviewer's Manuals, Survey Administration Manuals, data processing, and other Regional Office support.

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