United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service

Transportation and Marketing Program

Transportation Economics Division

1400 Independence Avenue SW
Stop 0266
Washington, DC 20250

May 1, 2026

Mr. Thomas J. Smith
U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Rd
Washington, DC 20233

RE: Federal Register notice for the 2027 Commodity Flow Survey (OMB Number: 0607-0932)

Dear Mr. Smith:

The Agricultural Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) writes to convey USDA's strong support for the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) continued collection of the Commodity Flow Survey (CFS), for the 2027 survey cycle. As USDA works to strengthen the resilience of our Nation's food and agricultural systems, the CFS provides essential, publicly available origin-destination freight data that are otherwise unavailable at national and state levels.

CFS data provide a rare, unique insight into truck movements of agricultural products. Using CFS (and data products derived from it), USDA is able to analyze agricultural product shipment patterns by truck across the U.S., identify bottlenecks, and support research on supply chain resilience. For example, a 2024 USDA-funded study used CFS-based datasets to map refrigerated commodity flows of perishable meat and prepared foods to provide an approximation of intra-continental U.S. refrigerated truck movements.

In addition, CFS data are the primary input into DOT's Freight Analysis Framework (FAF), which provides the only publicly available, nationally comprehensive, origin-destination data for agricultural freight that is inclusive of farm-based shipments. Such data enable analysts to trace where farm commodities move and how supply chains change over time. FAF captures modal share information (truck, rail, water, air, pipeline), allowing the agricultural sector to assess dependencies across different commodity sectors on specific freight modes and to evaluate modal flexibility. USDA regularly uses CFS and FAF data in its public reporting and market analysis to provide State-level context on which lanes and modes may experience changes in traffic as grain inventories fluctuate across the United States, both year-to-year and within the crop year.

Thank you for considering this letter of support for approval of the 2027 CFS clearance package, which would enable the continued collection, publication, and improvement of this invaluable survey. For USDA and its stakeholders—including agricultural producers and shippers—CFS provides essential insights critical to understanding the U.S. food and agriculture supply chain.

Sincerely,

JOHN SPARGER Digitally signed by JOHN SPARGER
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John Adam Sparger
Director
Transportation Economics Division