

USDA NASS Presentation Summary

As the federal agency responsible for agricultural statistics in the United States, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) delivers a wide range of data products providing acreage, prices, yields, and more, in multiple formats. NASS conducts hundreds of surveys during the year, but beginning farmers and ranchers, and the organizations that serve them find the Census of Agriculture as the premier comprehensive resource for national, state and county level agricultural information.

As noted by our Secretary of Agriculture, "The Census results reiterate the continued need for policies that help grow the rural economy from the middle out. The data illustrate the power of USDA efforts to grow the economy and strengthen infrastructure in rural America, create new market opportunities for farmers and ranchers, and provide access to capital, credit and disaster assistance for producers of all sizes. The Census also shows the potential for continued growth in bioeconomy, organics, and local and regional food systems. USDA will continue to focus on innovative, creative policies that give farmers, ranchers and entrepreneurs the tools they need to attract a bright and diverse body of talent to rural America."

- *Historical uses of NASS data*

Farmers, ranchers, policymakers, community planners, agribusinesses, researchers, USDA, and other federal and state government agencies use NASS data for planning, market assessment, decision making, and ongoing research. Farmers and ranchers use the data to make specific decisions about their operations, such as what crops to plant, how many cattle or other livestock to raise, when to buy or sell agricultural commodities, and many more. Policymakers use the data to allocate funds based on state and community needs and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of programs and policies, as well as determine who may be affected by proposed agricultural legislation. Community planners and cooperatives use the data to identify needed services and facilities plan recreational, educational, and create community awareness programs based on the interests and concerns of local producers. Companies and industry groups use the data to monitor trends evaluate financial performance develop unbiased baseline industry information and to determine supply, prices, and export potential. Researchers and analysts use the data to monitor industries and their impacts on the economy, and to adapt new technologies to increase agricultural productivity.

USDA agencies use the data to administer farm loan, insurance, disaster assistance, and other programs, and to allocate local and national funds for farm programs (including extension service projects, agricultural research, conservation, farm loans, and land grant colleges and universities). Federal and state agencies use the data to plan and administer agriculture programs as well as conservation, consumer protection, education, land valuation, recreation, trade, transportation, water and irrigation use, and worker safety programs.

High-quality statistical information is essential to those involved in agriculture. But it is equally essential to directly and indirectly related industries, services, programs, and economic sectors. Good data provide an understanding of current conditions as well as future trends and possibilities. In addition to creating an accurate, up-to-date picture of U.S. agriculture, the information NASS provides contributes to a stable economic climate and reduces risk. By being equally available to all users, NASS data help to level the playing field.

- *Web Access, Data Delivery, Special Tabulations and Customer Service*

NASS continues to improve data delivery to a dynamic and diverse public by providing web access, new data tools, special tabulations and customer service. You can find all published NASS reports by visiting our website www.nass.usda.gov. From there, people have access to *Quick Stats 2.0*, an online database to retrieve customized tables. For those new to this tool, a new tutorial video provides easy-to-follow instructions.

Census of Agriculture data is available by visiting www.agcensus.usda.gov. To simplify access to Census of Agriculture data, NASS created a number of online tools for people to find and use data of interest, in addition to PDFs.

- The *Desktop Data Query Tool 1.00* provides desktop access to the 2012 and 2007 Census data. Once downloaded, the application can be run from a computer's local drive or a network.
- *Agricultural Atlas Maps* allow you to view profiles of the nation's agriculture at the county-level in a series of multicolor pattern and dot maps.
- In addition to the maps, *Cartographic Boundary Files*, used with Geographic Information System (GIS) software, can be downloaded as a base for medium to small-scale thematic mapping.
- *State and County Profiles* summarize key data describing agriculture at those levels.

When needed data are not published elsewhere, NASS provides data users with customized summaries or Special Tabulations. Special Tabulations are publishable, re-summarized data tables for the Census of Agriculture or NASS surveys. Output is limited to a specific analytic purpose and customized to a specific request. To request a Special Tabulation from the NASS Data Lab, you can complete the on-line request form or you can contact NASS directly at 202-690-0380 or 202-690-0360 or your NASS regional office.

In addition to web access to reports, new data tools, and special tabulations, NASS provides toll-free customer service at (866) 632-9992. Users are encouraged to call the toll-free customer service line or their regional NASS office for any assistance needed navigating the NASS website and data tools.

- *2017 Census Questions*

- Is any additional or different information needed on beginning farmers and ranchers?
- Is any additional or different information needed on the 2017 Census?
- How to best engage and reach new farmers and ranchers to respond to the Census?

Our goal is to provide you with the facts so that you can make policy decisions, design programs, etc.