

Key Messages for Enumerators

Basic Facts

- The Census of Agriculture is...
 - Taken every five years.
 - A complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them.
 - The only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the nation.
- A farm is defined by Congress as any place that produced and sold, or normally would have sold, \$1,000 or more of agricultural product in a given year.
- Changes to the 2017 Census of Agriculture include...
 - A new question about military veteran status.
 - Expanded questions about food marketing practices.
 - New questions about on-farm decision-making to better capture the roles and contributions of beginning farmers, women, and others running the operation.
- To get a complete and accurate picture of U.S. agriculture, NASS will continue to collect census data through spring. Data release is February 2019.

Why Respond?

- The better the data, the more accurate the reports.
 - Accurate reports mean better decisions made by data users such as policymakers, agribusinesses, researchers, trade associations, extension educators, and producers themselves.
- Being represented in the data benefits your operation, community, and industry.
 - The data are widely-used and often relied on when developing policy like the Farm Bill, and when determining funding for research, assistance programs, disaster relief, ag education, improving

infrastructure in your area (e.g. broadband expansion, paving roads), and more.

- Being underrepresented in the data is to risk being underserved. There is strength in numbers – every response matters.

FAQs

Q: How did you get my information?

A pre-census survey was mailed in December 2016 as a way to identify all active farms and ranches in the United States – a list building effort to ensure that every producer is included in the census. NASS also obtains mailing lists from public and private sources associated with agriculture.

Q: Must I respond to the census of agriculture?

Yes. United States law (Title 7, U.S. Code, and Public Law 107-347) requires all those who receive a census to respond even if they did not operate a farm or ranch in 2017.

Q: What happens if I don't respond?

Our hope is that producers understand the benefits of response. Though no one has been fined for not taking part in the census, those producers have missed an important opportunity that could affect their operations and communities for the next several years.

Q: This looks long. How long will it take?

Not every section pertains to every operation. Larger operations might need 40 to 50 minutes to complete the questionnaire, smaller operations will probably complete it more quickly. The online questionnaire has time-saving features that make it the fastest way to respond.

Q: Is my information confidential?

Yes. The data will be available in aggregate form only, ensuring that no individual operation or producers can be identified, as required by federal law.



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

(888) 424-7828 | www.agcensus.usda.gov