

# Introduction to NASS



**United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service**

A Presentation by the NOD-Training Group



# NASS

## National Agricultural Statistics Service

- Surveys hundreds of thousands of farmers/ranchers each year:
  - Mail, Internet, Telephone, Personal Interviews.
  - Data is free and publicly available.
  - Hundreds of statistical reports published annually.
- Every 5 years - Complete Census of every U.S. agricultural operation.



# The data source for American agriculture

## History:

- George Washington conducted first American agricultural survey in 1791
- First Census of Agriculture conducted in 1840
- USDA established by Abraham Lincoln in 1862
- “Division of Statistics” established in 1863

## Today:

- NASS is one of 19 agencies within the USDA
- Approximately 1000 employees
- Regional Field Offices
- Washington DC headquarters unit
- St Louis National Operations Center



# What We Are NOT

- Political appointees
- A regulatory body
- Policymakers
- Market commentators
  - NASS provides data
  - Data users interpret how it applies to their situation

# NASS Mission Statement

**“To provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. Agriculture.”**

- **Timely:**

- Surveys revolve around a reference date with data collection times dictated by specific due dates.
  - Example: Yield reports have a congressional mandate - data has to be published around the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month, and still reference the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month.

- **Accurate:**

- Gather data in a confidential, systematic, unbiased way.

- **Useful:**

- Publically available results benefit the entire industry.



# Need For Information Is Critical

- To remain competitive, everyone in the industry needs to be well informed.
- Accurate, useable data about changes or opportunities creates a powerful tool benefiting sectors at every level.
- Enables everyone in the agricultural community to make better decisions and become more successful.

# Who Uses This Data?

- Farmers and ranchers:
  - Make decisions about what and how much to grow or raise.
  - Determine best time to sell stored crops.
  - Compare planting progress/crop conditions to regional averages.
  - Utilize when negotiating with insurance companies and banks.
- Farm organizations:
  - Plan and develop relevant programs.
  - Aid in production and profitability of members.
- Processors:
  - Better prepare for industry shifts.
  - Serve producers more cost-effectively.



# More...Who Uses This Data?

- **Agribusinesses:**

- Identify and act on business opportunities.
- Formulate inventory and pricing plans.
- Anticipate changing needs of customers.

- **Media:**

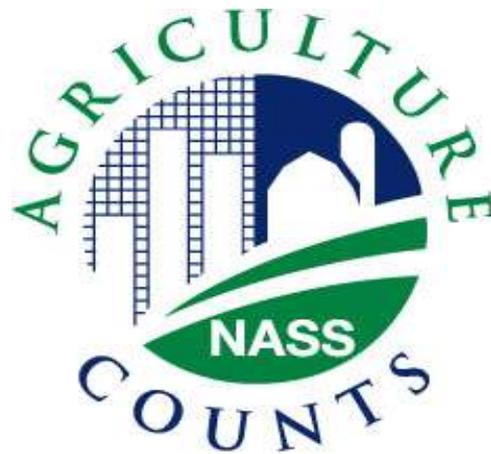
- Create context for news stories.
- Inform readers and promote industry issues.



- **Government agencies:**

- Make and administer key legislative decisions for the industry.
- Create and evaluate programs to promote the industry.

# A Little More on What NASS Does...and Where YOU Fit In



# Surveys, Estimates and Publications

- A three step process (simplified greatly):
  1. Conduct a **survey**
    - Collect raw data from farmers on crops, animals, ag production economics/practices, etc
  2. From that data, tabulate state and national level **estimates**
    - Acres planted; livestock inventories; seed, fuel and fertilizer expenses; etc.
  3. Produce all of that information in an electronic **publication** or release or dataset

# Surveys, Estimates and Publications

- Field crops:
  - Prospective Plantings (March)
  - Monthly Yield (May – Nov)
  - Acreage (June)
  - Small Grain Summary (September)
  - Annual Crop Production (January)
- Livestock:
  - Cattle (January)
  - Quarterly Hogs & Pigs (March, June, Sept, & Dec)
  - Milk Production (quarterly)
  - Cattle on Feed (monthly)

# MORE Surveys, Estimates and Publications

- Agricultural Resource Mgmt Survey (ARMS)
- Cash Rents
- Crop Progress/Crop Weather
- Vegetables
- Mushrooms
- Prices Received (various commodities)
- Prices Paid (by farmers for inputs)
- Stocks (various commodities in storage)
- Cold Storage
- Bee and Honey

# MORE Surveys, Estimates and Publications

- Aquaculture
- Maple Syrup
- National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS)
- Chemical Use
- Fruit
- Land Values
- Floriculture & Nursery Production
- Cotton Ginnings
- Farm Labor
- Plus many, MANY more

– Most of which you'll get a chance to work on

# Where to find the information?

- NASS publishes nearly 500 agriculture statistical reports each year.
  - PLUS many other publications at the individual state level.
- Go to [www.nass.usda.gov/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/)
- Click on the tab marked “Publications”.
- From here, you can find:
  - The most requested reports
  - OR a specific report by month or topic.

# Where to find the information?

USDA United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service

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**Search NASS**  
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Charts and Maps  
Research and Science  
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**Statistics by State**  
Select a State

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The National Agricultural Statistics Service provides timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.

**Today's Reports from NASS** [More](#)

**Oct 12, 2011**

**Cotton Ginnings** [Text](#) | [PDF](#) | [CSV](#)  
Released at 08:30 A.M. ET

**Crop Production** [Text](#) | [PDF](#) | [CSV](#)  
Released at 08:30 A.M. ET

**Broiler Hatchery** [Text](#) | [PDF](#) | [CSV](#)  
Released at 3:00 P.M. ET

**Headlines**

[2010 U.S. Marketing Year Average Price of Cotton Up from 2009](#)

[NASS to Re-Survey Operators With Unharvested Small Grains](#)

[Postharvest Chemical Usage Survey Suspension](#)

[Potatoes 2010 Summary Release Rescheduled](#)

**I Want To...**

- Make sure I'm counted
- Respond to NASS surveys online
- Ask a specialist
- Request a special tabulation
- Submit Feedback on the Chemical Use program
- Find charts or maps or geospatial data
- Learn about career opportunities
- Find North American agricultural statistics

**Find NASS Publications**

- Today's Reports
- Date
- Subject
- Keyword
- Release Day
- Title
- Browsing our Guide to Products and Services

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# Where to find the information?

The screenshot displays the NASS website's 'Publications' page. At the top, the USDA logo and 'National Agricultural Statistics Service' are visible. A navigation bar includes links for Home, About NASS, Newsroom, Publications, Data and Statistics, Census, Surveys, Help, and Contact Us. A search bar on the left allows for 'Search NASS' with a 'Go' button. Below the search bar, there are links for 'Advanced Search' and 'Search Tips'. A 'Browse NASS by Subject' section lists categories such as Crops and Plants, Demographics, Economics and Prices, Environmental, Livestock and Animals, Charts and Maps, Research and Science, and Education and Outreach. A 'Statistics by State' dropdown menu is also present. The main content area features a 'Publications' header, a 'Today's Reports from NASS' section for 'Oct 12, 2011' listing reports like 'Cotton Ginnings', 'Crop Production', and 'Broiler Hatchery', and a 'Reports Calendar' for 2011. A 'Find NASS Publications' sidebar offers filters for Date, Subject, Keyword, Release Day, and Title. Below this, there are social media links and a 'Follow NASS' section. A 'Receive reports by Email' section is also visible. The 'About NASS Estimates' section includes links for Understanding Agricultural Estimates, Data Quality Measures, Request a Special Tabulation, and Citation Request. An 'Also See' section lists North American Agricultural Statistics and Research Reports. At the bottom, a 'Most Requested Reports' section lists items like Acreage, Agricultural Prices, Cattle, Rice Stocks, Small Grain Summary, and Crop Progress - National. Arrows point from the 'Most Requested Reports' section to the 'Research Reports' link in the 'Also See' sidebar.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service

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## Publications

### Today's Reports from NASS

More

Oct 12, 2011

**Cotton Ginnings**  
Released at 08:30 A.M. ET Text | PDF | CSV

**Crop Production**  
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### Reports Calendar

More

2011		
January	February	March
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December

The 2011 Agricultural Statistics Board calendar is available for download in PDF format:: full calendar, printer-friendly  
You may also click here to order 2011 ASB pocket calendars.

### Most Requested Reports

Acreage \*  
Agricultural Prices  
Cattle \*  
Cattle on Feed \*

Rice Stocks \*  
Small Grain Summary \*  
Crop Progress - National  
Crop Progress & Conditions

### Find NASS Publications

- Date
- Subject
- Keyword
- Release Day
- Title
- Browsing our Guide to Products and Services

### Follow NASS

Receive reports by Email  
National | State | News

### About NASS Estimates

- Understanding Agricultural Estimates
- Data Quality Measures
- Request a Special Tabulation
- Citation Request

### Also See

- North American Agricultural Statistics
- Research Reports

# \*\*Confidentiality\*\*

- Information we gather is personal and sensitive.
- Laws and regulations governing NASS **guarantee** respondents that information given will be kept strictly confidential and used for statistical purposes only.
- Data must never be shared or discussed with anyone who is not a NASS employee.
- To protect the public trust - No breach of confidentiality will be tolerated.
  - Signed Confidentiality Certificate
  - A breach of confidentiality is cause for immediate dismissal.
  - Violators may also face a fine of \$250,000 and a possible sentence of up to five years imprisonment.

# In conclusion...

- The NASS mission (“...timely, accurate, useful statistics...”) is *vital* to the agricultural economy
- We fulfill that mission in a 3 step process:
  - Conduct a **survey** (collect data)
  - From that data, produce agricultural **estimates**
  - Make that **information** available
- YOU are an integral part of that job
  - Without enumerators, there would be no data
  - AND no data = no estimates, no information