



Why NASS Needs Survey Data from Producers (November 2018)

Background

Producers may be reluctant to provide NASS with survey data if they feel they have already provided the information to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) or other USDA agencies in order to participate in various farm or risk management programs. Their time and effort is valuable and it may feel redundant to provide data to NASS. It is important that enumerators and other NASS representatives be able to convey why it is important for producers to complete their survey even if they have provided similar data to another USDA agency.

Key Points on NASS data

- NASS provides the Farm Service Agency and the Risk Management Agency, among many others, with important statistics that they then use to serve farmers and ranchers (see program list on reverse).
- As always, individual responses to NASS surveys are kept confidential. Data are published in aggregate form so that no individual operation or operator can be identified.
- NASS data are NOT subject to Freedom of Information Act requests and are not used for taxation or regulation.
- NASS **does** use FSA data, in combination with survey and remote sensing data, to make our crop and livestock estimates.
- The timing, definitions, and categories of NASS and FSA data are different and not interchangeable on a one-for-one basis.
- These differences are because NASS survey data and FSA data are used for different purposes.
- FSA administers programs that serve farmers with payments based on, for example price drops, disasters, policy priorities and other needs that can arise at any time.
- **NASS provides confidential, consistent, comparable, data on a routine schedule year in and year out for use by USDA and by any farmer, rancher, researcher, educator, market analyst, agribusiness, commodity association, or member of the public equally and at no cost, for their unique needs.**
- For example, NASS crop production forecasts can help both livestock and crop producers make forward contracting, feed purchase, and other marketing decisions. Think of the many ways you use data daily – it may be NASS data that originated with a farmer survey and you don't realize it.
- NASS's role is to provide timely, accurate and useful data on agriculture in the United States year in and year out. We are not involved in any political activity or policy development.
- In order for NASS to provide this critical public service, we need information from the most knowledgeable source – you the producer.
- **It is important to respond to NASS surveys and to other USDA agency program requirements.**

Additional information on FSA uses of NASS data:

FSA uses NASS data for these programs

- County Loan Rates for Wheat, Feed Grains and Oilseeds
- Regional Loan Rates for Pulses
- Loan Repayment Rates
- Program Parameters for ARC and PLC
- Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)
- Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs
- Dairy Programs
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- County Committee Elections
- Beginning Farmer Ownership Loan Eligibility
- Guaranteed Loan Limit Adjustments
- Production Loss Calculations
- Funding Targets and Allocations
- Farm Business Planning
- Farm Appraisals

Resources for more information:

- [Why Corn and Grain Producers Should Respond to National Agricultural Statistics Service Surveys \(long version\)](#) – 4-page flyer detailing FSA, RMA and other uses of NASS data for USDA programs.
- [Why Corn and Grain Producers Should Respond to National Agricultural Statistics Service Surveys \(short version\)](#) – 2-page flyer
- [Why they Matter: Crop Surveys](#) – Brochure
- [Why they Matter: Livestock Surveys](#) - Brochure
- [Talking About NASS Guide](#)
- [NASS Confidentiality Brochure -](#)
- [USDA's Market Facilitation Program](#) (for losses due to tariffs)
- [USDA Details Trade Mitigation Calculations](#)
- [How USDA calculated the payments for the Market Facilitation Program](#) - Note: The 2017 production data used in the calculations was from USDA's NASS and USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.