NASS Survey Training

2021 Ag Yield Surveys

United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

NOD-Training Group
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Ag Yield Overview

- The agricultural industry relies on current NASS yield and production estimates:
  - Helps growers develop marketing plans for their operations
  - Enables the industry to forecast transportation and storage requirements and evaluate export potential.
  - USDA agencies use the information to determine crop insurance and disaster aid payments along with other program benefits.
  - Congress relies on current yield and production data in formulating farm legislation
  - Farm organizations use the information to help form their policy positions.
General Survey Information

- Project Code: 128 – Monthly Ag Yield Survey

- Questionnaires: Mailed out around 23rd of each month

- Release: *Crop Production*, Around the 10th of each month, 12:00 P.M. (Eastern)
Questions asked

• “Typically”:
  – Acres to be harvested, Expected yield

• BUT that varies by month and commodity, can also include:
  – Acres planted
  – Hay production (previous year) and current stocks
  – Irrigated and non-irrigated crops
  – Single and double cropped
  – Harvest complete?
Items of interest

- Depending on state and month:
  - **Small Grains** (May – August)
    - Winter Wheat, Durum Wheat, Other Spring Wheat, Barley, Oats
  - **Hay Stocks** (May)
  - **Tobacco** (July – October)
    - 6 types
  - **Row Crops** (August – November)
    - Corn, Pima & Upland Cotton, Dry Edible Beans, Peanuts, Rice, Soybeans, Sorghum, Sugarcane, Canola, Sunflower (oil/non-oil)
  - **Dry Hay** (August, October)
    - All Hay, Alfalfa Hay, Other Hay

- **Note**: Operators who are sampled for the Ag Yield Small Grains survey will be in the sample every month from May to August
Things to watch out for

• Low or high yields
• Acres utilized for other than what we are asking
  – Example: asking about corn harvested for grain, and the farmer also reports his silage information
• Acreage not harvested for any purpose (abandoned)
  – What happened to it? (flooded out, dried up??)
• Non-irrigated yields higher than irrigated
• Double cropped yields higher than single cropped
• Big changes month to month
Reluctant Responses

• “Just started to harvest.” or “Not sure what the final yields will be.”
  – At this time we are just looking for your best estimate of expected yields. Is it better or worse than last year’s crop? What was your yield last year?

• “I report all this to my FSA office.”
  – I understand. While we do ask about your acreage, we’re also asking about your expected yields and some crops that you may not report with FSA.
Reluctant Responses

• “It’s too early to tell.” or “Can’t report accurately.”
  – At this time we are just asking for an estimate of expected yields. How does it compare to last year? Is it better or worse? What was your yield last year?

• “I’m still planting my crops, I can’t give you an estimate on my yields yet.”
  – We’re only collecting data on certain crops, would you be able to tell me that information?
Things to Remember

• Ag Yield surveys are conducted monthly during the growing season
• Looking for farmers *current* estimates of expected yield over the course of the growing season
• Commodities of interest vary over the growing season
  – Small Grains, Row Crops, Hay
• Watch out for big changes in acres harvested and/or expected yield, odd situations, etc
  – Leave good notes
…More Things to Remember

• Work through some practice interviews to familiarize yourself with the survey
  • Questions can vary from month to month
  • Different items are asked over the growing season

• Contact your supervisor or Regional Field Office with any questions

Thanks for all your work on the survey!