

Vegetable Grower Inquiry – November 2021

Survey Description

The Survey collects price and yield information on vegetable crops. The survey results are used by growers when making production and marketing decisions, Cooperative Extensions to provide outreach and education, and the State Departments of Agriculture to assist growers. The results are also used to administer relief payments for crop losses by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Use of the Data

The major data user of this survey's information is the Farm Service Agency's Noninsured Crop Assistance Program (NAP). The NAP program provides cash payments to producers of noninsured crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. In previous years, farmers have told us they reported on this survey because they were familiar with the NAP program. Referencing the NAP program may be a good selling point to a reluctant operator.

Fresh Market/Processing Vegetables, Melons, and Herbs:

Fresh Vegetables and Dual Use Vegetables:

Growers are asked to provide data for several vegetables as well as select melons and herbs.

Planted and Harvested Acres:

- Acres are to be reported to the nearest tenth acre (example: 5 1/3 = 5.3, 5 acres = 5.0).
- Some growers may report the total area dedicated to a crop in rows, row feet, or square feet. Please work to obtain enough information to allow us to translate the area into acreage, if possible. Questions to consider:
 - How many rows of the crop do you have?
 - What is the length of row?
 - What is the average space between rows?
 - How many plants are in a row?
 - How much can be produced from a single row?
- In all cases, do **not** include acreage from home gardens or greenhouse production.
- Harvested acreage can never be more than planted acreage.
 - Harvested acreage can be zero if there was a crop failure, the crop was abandoned, or nothing was harvested – leave a note to explain.
 - A low harvested-to-planted ratio should be confirmed and explained.

Total Sales/Yields:

- Record total quantity harvested that was sold or will be sold, unit and pounds per unit.
- If unit is not lbs, cwt, or tons, please specify with comment what unit it is (bushel, crate, dozen, etc) – remember to **record weights of packages used**
- Total quantity harvested and total quantity sold or to be sold should generally be very close to each other. If respondent feels the vast majority of crop, but not 100%, was sold and cannot separate sales vs. other use, please ask for total harvested or yield, and leave a comment.
- On the other hand, if a grower markets a very small percentage (if any) of their production, leave a remark (example: "donated them to charity")
- Unusually high or low yields should be confirmed and explained.
- If harvested acreage is greater than zero, then production cannot be zero.

Unit and Pounds per Unit:

- Sometimes growers report production using one unit (by the pound), sell retail by a different unit (by a bunch/dozen/bag), and sell wholesale by another unit (by the bushel).
- It is important to record the proper unit used for production and sales, along with the corresponding weight per unit (if unit is other than a pound).

Price per Unit or Total Dollars Received:

- Please record price per unit to the nearest cent (\$1.25, etc.)
- If the price seems unusually low or high, please confirm and explain. (e.g. “respondent verified, organic farm”)
- You also have the option to enter the total dollars received instead of a price per unit.

Special situations:

- Vegetables – Multiple crops:
 - In some cases, a grower may have multiple plantings on the same acreage. In this case, **record the acreage once for each crop and collect total production from all harvests.**
 - Example: 5 acres peas in spring, followed by 5 acres peppers, followed by 5 acres peas in fall. Peas: record 10 acres planted and harvested and production from both harvests. Peppers: record 5 acres planted and harvested and production.
- Crops not planted, but grown:
 - Some commodities, like asparagus and berry crops are not planted every year. Asparagus is planted one year, cut, and then the crop grows back the following year without having to be replanted. Planted Acres should serve as “bearing acres” in these cases.
- Mixed Vegetable Gardens:
 - Several operations may report they have a “mixed vegetable garden” and do not have much of any one crop. In those cases:
 - Ask if more than a tenth of an acre (about 5,000 square feet) is devoted to any one commodity. Focus on those first.
 - Leave notes on the area, production, and sales for the remaining crops with smaller areas
- Total Acres of Vegetables
 - The purpose for asking the total number of vegetable acres is to properly account for land that has been double or triple-cropped. In those cases, the sum of the vegetable acres harvested will be greater than the total acres of vegetables.
 - Vegetable acres cannot be zero or blank if vegetables are reported.
 - If total vegetable acres planted is significantly higher than the sum of the vegetables reported, please leave a note to explain what other vegetables are missing, not accounted for by this survey, or if there is idle vegetable land.
 - If the sum of the vegetables reported in the table is higher than the vegetable acres, then please leave a note to explain why (ex. double- or triple-cropping).