

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:**

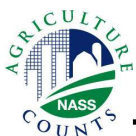
- Surveys revolve around a reference date with data collection times dictated by specific due dates.
 - Example: Yield reports have a congressional mandate - data has to be published around the 12th of the month, and still reference the 1st of the month.

- **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/
- 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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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

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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 *](#)
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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