



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service

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# Talking About NASS

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A guide to help employees of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) communicate more effectively about our mission and the value of our important work to producers, the ag industry, local communities, and our nation.

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# Introduction

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*When was the last time you were able to explain what we do at NASS – and be excited about it? Or, to describe how NASS’ efforts affect a farmer, rancher, or small business – and help them see the value of our work in their daily lives?*

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If you had just the right words to explain it all and heard someone say, “Wow, I didn’t know that,” you might find you stand a bit taller. You might feel a greater sense of pride and purpose.

The fact is, NASS’ work – your work – does matter. It makes a difference for individual producers, local communities, ag-based businesses, and the industry as a whole. Our data impact local economies and chronicle how agriculture in America has evolved over time.

But as important as our work may be, many throughout NASS have recognized a growing need to convey its value to individual producers, businesses, and stakeholders in ways they care about. We need to consistently answer their age-old question:

## ***What’s in it for me?***

This is particularly urgent given declining survey response rates.

Part of our mission at the Public Affairs Office (PAO) is to tell this story more clearly so that it resonates with people.

## ***And to help you to tell the story too.***

This guide marks a critical step in making this happen. . .

# Using this Guide

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*This guide was designed for you – whether you are a NASS employee or an enumerator who may be interested in using it as a hands-on tool.*

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It includes background information on an updated NASS brand strategy and a library of key statements and talking points you can use for both internal and external communications. Refer to this guide before you speak with local producers, draft a technical report, or give a presentation to community leaders. Though it is not a media training guide, it can also help you describe NASS and its value in conversations with the news media. The content is designed to be flexible, mixed and matched, and to help you tell our story.

*Below is direction on how to use each section of this guide:*

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## **UNDERSTANDING THE REVAMPED NASS BRAND IDENTITY**

Take a few minutes to review this section and learn about our updated brand strategy as well as our target audiences, communications objectives, and core messaging.



## **DESCRIBING THE VALUE OF NASS DATA TO ITS USERS IN 30 SECONDS**

Use these points to quickly and easily illustrate the value of NASS data to various target audiences.



## **TALKING TO DATA PROVIDERS**

It is critical that data providers readily understand not only what NASS does, but why our work matters to them. This section provides points you can make during your discussions with providers.



## **SHARING THE FACTS ABOUT NASS**

Turn to this section for clear and direct fact-based statements about what we do and how our data are used. You'll find messages organized in tables by specific questions and topics, including:

- ▶ Who we are and what we do
- ▶ Who uses NASS data?





# Understanding the Revamped NASS Brand Identity

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*A brand is far more than just a logo. A brand influences how we feel and what we think about a certain service, product, or organization. But a brand is not intended to be a sales gimmick, or to serve as political or marketing spin. It's intended to represent a core identity. In this case, it's about how we define and present NASS consistently to various audiences.*

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We all know the power of a great brand with a strong identity. We gravitate towards brands that represent our values, that we connect with on an emotional level, that we view as standing for something “bigger” – something we can believe in.

What does it take to build and promote a brand identity? It requires a concrete and thoughtful strategy. It demands a collective understanding of that strategic vision. It requires support tools. And, it requires each of us to be focused and disciplined as we carry the brand messaging out into the world.

For the last year, PAO has been focused on refreshing the NASS brand identity by conducting research, creating a strategic communications plan, and developing communications tools to support an updated storytelling style. You may have seen some of these preliminary efforts with a Census of Agriculture ad campaign that was tested early in 2018 in select states. This guide is another significant step. It outlines our communications goals, brand strategy, and target audiences, and provides brand messaging and statements we can use during a range of situations – from conversations with producers to presentations with local legislators. It serves as a critical reference tool to support new communications. And it will enable all of us to be consistent in our efforts.





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## WHAT ARE OUR COMMUNICATIONS GOALS?

To revamp our brand, we first identified our overall communications goals. They include:

- ▶ **Communicate a rock-solid, comprehensive NASS image and demonstrate its association with USDA**
  - Highlight the synergies between NASS and USDA.
  - Promote USDA NASS' historical authority, unparalleled access, and depth of data; its integrity, reliability, and credibility; relevance to policy; trust among data providers; and its independence and objectivity.
  - Position NASS as a critical *ingredient* in a variety of end products.
  - Demonstrate NASS' pivotal place within the ag industry ecosystem.
  
- ▶ **Tailor messaging to audiences based on their needs and interests**
  - In all cases, make the personal and localized connection between what NASS does and why it matters to the audience.
  - Stress symbiotic relationships as appropriate.
  
- ▶ **Use communications to facilitate interactions with NASS**
  - Ultimately, increase survey participation.
  - Boost the usage and citation of USDA NASS data.



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## OUR BRAND STRATEGY: WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO?

With our communications objectives clear, we developed tactical strategies for building the core brand identity. They are to:

- ▶ Promote the synergies and common positive attributes shared by USDA and NASS  
We are:
  - Service-oriented
  - People-oriented
  - Ag focused and dedicated
  - An agency with a long history of service to the ag industry
  - Experts with deep knowledge and access to data
  - Stable government entities
  - An official (credible) voice for the ag industry
  
- ▶ Demonstrate that NASS data is an “ingredient” for a host of products, services, decisions, and outcomes
  - Farmers use NASS data to make informed business decisions.
  - Legislators use the data to develop policy.
  - Journalists use the data to tell stories.
  - Students use the data for research.
  - Insurance adjusters use the data for policies and claims.
  - Commodity traders use the data to make market moves.
  - USDA uses the data for program development, payments, and delivery.
  - EPA uses the data to evaluate regulations and requirements.
  - NASDA members use the data to support state and local ag programs.

- ▶ Answer the key questions:  
***Why should I care? What does the NASS brand mean to me?***



## OUR STEADFAST MISSION

*Our brand identity is not the same as our mission statement. The NASS mission statement has not changed. Our core values have not changed.*

This brand identity effort is merely intended to support NASS' ability to clearly communicate the importance of our work to individual producers, businesses, and stakeholders – and to do so in ways they care about.

### **Our Mission:**

To provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.

### **Our Core Values:**

- ▶ **Trust** – We maintain producer trust and protect the privacy and data of those who provide personal and agricultural information, as required by law.
- ▶ **Credibility** – We maintain credibility among data users by issuing complete and accurate information about agriculture.
- ▶ **Objectivity/Statistical Independence** – We produce and disseminate unbiased statistical information on an equitable, impartial, and transparent basis.
- ▶ **Policy Relevance** – We provide high-quality statistical data essential for making informed policy decisions.
- ▶ **Commitment** – We are committed as an agency and individually to these values and are proud to serve American farmers and ranchers, rural communities, and all who rely on the information we produce.

As we fulfill our mission and embrace our core values, it is important to note what we *do not* do.

### **NASS does not. . .**

- ▶ Set policy
- ▶ Regulate activities
- ▶ Permit influence
- ▶ Disclose individual reports
- ▶ Favor any group above others





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## TARGET AUDIENCES: WHO ARE WE SPEAKING TO?

NASS communicates with a host of audiences. The two primary audiences are data providers and data users.

### ***Data Providers***

They include large ag businesses, small-to-medium sized family-owned operations, and niche farms and ranches, whether rural or urban. We rely on them to complete our surveys. Without them, we can't do our jobs. But to inspire their participation, we need to give them good reason to take action.

Data providers are motivated by a mix of factors. They calculate whether or not it's worth their time and effort to participate – which is referred to as a “value equation.” The stronger that value equation is (the more substantive reasons we can give them), the more likely they'll be to participate. They will be motivated by practical aspects, such as the useful data and information that surveys yield and will also weigh factors that resonate deeply on a personal or emotional level (i.e., pride, loyalty, family, tradition, community). When we communicate with data providers, we need to make these connections.

### ***Data Users***

Our data users are individuals, businesses, and organizations. They include large and small ag-based businesses, equipment manufacturers, service providers, researchers, policymakers, and community leaders – as well as data providers themselves. They are interested in and use our data for many different reasons. From industry reports to research and analysis to product inspiration and decision-making, NASS data are a key ingredient in a range of efforts. As such, individuals, businesses, and organizations add rich meaning, potential, and purpose to NASS data.

However, many who use our data do so through secondary sources and may not even realize the data originates from NASS. Highlighting this link and asking for proper citation by those who are making NASS data available to others will increase awareness of the connection between NASS and the data.



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## CORE BRAND MESSAGES: WHAT ARE WE SAYING?

A brand message communicates big concepts in simple terms. It should be aspirational and evocative. It is the foundation for addressing the brand strategy, audiences, and goals.

Our core brand message is clear ...

***As the statistical agency for USDA, NASS provides useful agricultural data to help you work smarter.***

Let's break this concept down a bit to see how it supports the strategy, audiences, and goals.

- ▶ ***“As the statistical agency for the U.S. Department of Agriculture...”*** highlights the synergies between NASS and USDA and their official relationship.
- ▶ ***“Provides useful agricultural data to help you”*** supports the ingredient brand strategy. It describes and quantifies the type of data we provide. They aren't just statistics. They are useful. It also alludes to an element of partnership and the existence of a symbiotic relationship.
- ▶ ***“You”*** speaks to all audiences, whether it's a data provider or data user. It's flexible, pointed, and direct. There's no mistaking who might benefit. The answer is, *you* will.
- ▶ ***“Work smarter”*** answers the question, ***“What's in it for me?”*** It's inspiring and invites a conversation. It's open-ended and adaptable to support a variety of applications. And, it speaks to a level of pride and desire. After all, who doesn't want to work smarter and potentially be more successful? For data providers, it also pushes aside any notion that they need to work *harder* to succeed. Our data can give them an advantage by enabling them to work smarter.



# Describing the Value of NASS Data to its Users in 30 Seconds

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*With our core brand message clear, we can add details and examples to promote the value of NASS data and its impact on specific audiences or users. This is how we apply brand messaging in the real world to talk consistently about NASS. Use these examples as references for describing how different audiences “use NASS data to work smarter.”*

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## **HOW DO NASS DATA HELP FARMERS OR RANCHERS WORK SMARTER?**

Farmers and ranchers are able to use NASS data in direct and indirect ways. That means they may consult the data themselves to make smarter business decisions or use ag-based products and services that rely on NASS data. As an example, NASS crop production forecasts can help both livestock and crop producers make forward contracting, feed purchase, and other marketing decisions. In these cases, producers use concrete facts and figures to make well-informed decisions, which helps to eliminate guesswork, reduce risk, and improve profitability. In another example, information on the concentration of certain agricultural products and related supplies can help a new farmer determine where to start or expand their operation. It can also enable a business such as a trucking company to determine new routes. Brokers, accountants, lenders, market and investment analysts, appraisers, and others also use the data to serve producers.

## **HOW DO NASS DATA HELP OTHERS WITHIN USDA TO WORK SMARTER?**

For other USDA agencies, such as the Farm Service Agency (FSA), turning to NASS data means that FSA staff can make solid market assessments, validate economic opportunities, and be better stewards of federal funds as they help hard-working farm families access billions of dollars in new credit, either directly or guaranteed through commercial lenders. In 2017 alone, FSA was able to assist more than 120,000 family farmers with loans totaling just over \$25 billion.



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## HOW ARE FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL POLICYMAKERS ABLE TO WORK SMARTER?

When policymakers use NASS data to work smarter, they have the facts and statistics they need to make *well-informed* policy decisions and to create budgets that will serve and benefit their agriculture constituents.

For example, one state used data to justify a governor's commission to support the poultry industry and separately to support counties developing right-to-farm legislation. In another state, local farm supporters used NASS data to successfully advocate for a snow removal budget that ensured producers in their area, such as dairy farmers, could count on cleared roads for daily product transportation services to keep their businesses running.

State departments of agriculture universally use NASS data on behalf of farmers and ranchers to market agricultural products, create "buy local" programs, and interest international markets in local products.

At the federal level, legislators use NASS data to determine service and infrastructure gaps. For instance, making the case for investment in broadband access and infrastructure requires an analysis of an area's population and economic activities. NASS data can provide critical details and insights for rural and ag-based regions and facilitate the legislators' analysis.

## HOW ARE MANUFACTURERS ABLE TO WORK SMARTER?

When manufacturers turn to NASS data, they are able to work smarter by identifying market opportunities for new products and services. They can also better predict demand for those products and meet the supply needs of growers and producers. By using hard data to make informed decisions, they are in a better position to increase sales and improve profits.



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## **HOW ARE “PRECISION AG” COMPANIES ABLE TO WORK SMARTER?**

Precision ag companies have developed a range of products, software, and apps that improve farm management capabilities. They also use NASS data to develop their own data models, which pinpoint trends, inspire solution ideas, and identify opportunities to serve the ag industry. Having access to accurate and timely statistics keeps these companies in tune with and responsive to what producers want and need.

## **HOW ARE AGRICULTURE TRADERS ABLE TO WORK SMARTER?**

Agriculture traders use NASS data to evaluate U.S. export potential, identify viable markets, analyze trends, and negotiate trades between buyers and sellers. Tapping reliable data strengthens their ability to provide important brokerage services and to become a valued business partner.

## **HOW ARE JOURNALISTS ABLE TO WORK SMARTER?**

When journalists turn to NASS data to review trends and patterns in their area, they can identify topics that will be of interest to their readers. They can also draft more compelling stories that include community-based data and statistics of significance. In this way, journalists are better able to serve their audience and enable their media vehicle – be it a newspaper, radio station, or podcast – to be more relevant. In the process, they can often promote local agriculture and raise awareness about the current state of farming and ranching among non-agricultural residents.

## **HOW ARE RESEARCHERS ABLE TO WORK SMARTER?**

A wide range of researchers, analysts, and other professionals use NASS data to answer challenging questions on such topics as crop management, chemical pesticides, land usage, and veterinary science. They refer to NASS data to identify and analyze emerging trends and issues, and assess their implications. They also use NASS data to align their work with industry needs, so they are able to advance their individual fields of study in meaningful ways. Many researchers also use NASS data to augment their own data collection efforts, to maximize their efforts, to apply for grants, and to establish education and extension programs that are appropriate for the needs and opportunities revealed by the data. Their research can result in producer benefits such as improved crop yields, new variations, and new technologies.



# Talking to Data Providers

*It is critical that data providers understand how our work positively affects them. This section explains these important points and provides answers to other key questions they may have.*

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## **MAKE YOUR POINT!**

This column presents easy-to-digest main points.

**You can use NASS data in a variety of ways to work smarter.**

## **ADD THE DETAILS.**

This column presents explanations to support the main points.

NASS is the primary statistical agency for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For more than 150 years, we have been known for our expertise, the quality of the data we collect, our contributions to statistical science, and our commitment to publishing ag data that can be used in multiple ways by producers like you to work smarter.

Working smarter means using reliable facts and figures to make well-informed decisions that eliminate guesswork, reduce risk, and improve profitability. For example, you may choose to incorporate NASS data into your decision-making by consulting survey or Census data to:

- ▶ Determine crop and livestock productivity and yields in your area
- ▶ Track trends
- ▶ Set prices
- ▶ Improve operational efficiencies and reduce risk
- ▶ Negotiate cash rents
- ▶ Identify trends, best practices, and patterns that will enable you to be more competitive
- ▶ Analyze consumer demand for your ag-based products – be it foods that nourish a nation or wool that keeps us warm
- ▶ Make informed risk management decisions



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**MAKE YOUR POINT!**

This column presents easy-to-digest main points.

**ADD THE DETAILS.**

This column presents explanations to support the main points.

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**NASS data affect every aspect of your business – even though you may not realize it.**

Agriculture statistics have a powerful and far-reaching impact, although you may not realize the many ways that NASS data are used to support your business.

You are under constant pressure to improve yield, provide safe food, ensure nutrition, contain costs, and more. Many products and services you rely on daily to meet these goals are offered by businesses that use NASS data to guide their products, services, inventory, and prices.

For example, ag-based businesses use NASS data to:

- ▶ Determine product inventory to meet demand
- ▶ Develop new equipment and tools, or improve existing models
- ▶ Develop software and apps to advance farm management capabilities
- ▶ Calculate risk levels for lending programs
- ▶ Design studies for agricultural experiments to increase crop productivity and yields
- ▶ Improve their own ability to serve your business



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**MAKE YOUR POINT!**

This column presents easy-to-digest main points.

**ADD THE DETAILS.**

This column presents explanations to support the main points.

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**Other USDA agencies use NASS data to support farm and community programs, such as crop insurance, that you depend on.**

Other USDA agencies, such as the Risk Management Agency (RMA), use NASS data to provide services and support to farm and community programs in your region.

*As one example, RMA consults NASS data to develop and evaluate many crop insurance programs. In fact, NASS conducts surveys for RMA to help develop new insurance products. Without our data, their risk calculations would not accurately reflect your community's needs. That might result in insurance premiums being too high (where you pay too much for insurance) or too low (where insurance claim totals don't equal your true crop or production losses). Relying on credible and trustworthy NASS data means RMA is better equipped to develop risk management programs designed to more adequately protect you.*

*In another example, USDA uses NASS data to identify opportunities to strengthen the future of agriculture. When data showed 31% of American farmers are women who make a \$12.9 billion impact on the economy, the agency established a Women in Ag mentoring network. Its goal is to help women in the U.S. connect with other women leaders in agriculture across the country. This will ensure that the next generation of women farmers are educated, encouraged, and empowered to take on the challenges of meeting the world's growing food, fuel, and fiber needs. If you are a woman farmer, such programs affect and benefit you directly.*





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**MAKE YOUR POINT!**

This column presents easy-to-digest main points.

**As the statistical agency for USDA and an official source of comprehensive information, NASS data are used to support research, education, and advocacy for the future of agriculture in your region.**

**ADD THE DETAILS.**

This column presents explanations to support the main points.

Governments and organizations at all levels use NASS data to develop agricultural education and research priorities and to advocate for farming and ranching among non-agricultural neighbors and groups.

That means, your local, state, and national leaders use NASS data to address agriculture-related issues that impact you directly. Regardless of where you live, researchers in such fields as bacteriology, genetics, biochemistry, dairy science, environmental studies, entomology, plant sciences, rural sociology, veterinary medicine, wildlife, and ecology all have access to and use NASS data to advance their studies.

They use our data to:

- ▶ Answer challenging questions on such topics as crop management, chemical pesticides, land usage, and veterinary science
- ▶ Detect trends in invasive pests or plant species, or in viruses and illnesses affecting livestock
- ▶ Design studies for agricultural experiments to increase crop productivity and yields
- ▶ Evaluate the impact of climate and the environment on agriculture
- ▶ Understand the vital economic role of various ag industry sectors
- ▶ Promote the ag industry locally, regionally, and nationally
- ▶ Educate students about agriculture
- ▶ Pinpoint best practices for producers and promote their adoption

*As one example, Oklahoma State University's (OSU) Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources conducts research using NASS data and parlays findings into practical extension programs that help Oklahomans solve issues of importance to them, their families, and their communities. Having access to NASS data enables OSU to maximize its research efforts – critical to a public land-grant institution. So vital are NASS data to OSU's ability to achieve its mission and serve Oklahomans, the University teamed up with USDA to strongly promote NASS surveys and encourage producers to respond.*



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**MAKE YOUR POINT!**

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**NASS data indicate the health and well-being of your community – which not only affects you, but also your friends, neighbors, and family members.**

NASS data are evidence of the health and well-being of the agriculture industry in your community, and at the local level throughout your state.

It is an indicator of how:

- ▶ Agriculture production in your area is thriving and where economic opportunities exist.
- ▶ You and your neighbors are utilizing land and resources.
- ▶ Producers are responding to or influencing food trends across the country and nourishing people around the world.

In this way, NASS data support the flow of goods and services in your region.

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**In service of the ag industry and on behalf of USDA, NASS data tell your story and the story of the millions of farmers and ranchers who came before you.**

NASS has contributed to the historical documentation of the American farmer and rancher since 1863.

In that time, we have:

- ▶ Documented yields
- ▶ Chronicled every flood, windstorm, or drought and its effect on regional crop prices
- ▶ Shown the many ways communities have weathered highs and lows
- ▶ Tracked market trends that have influenced and shaped ag businesses in rural towns

Telling this ever-evolving story is critical so that citizens today – as well as future generations – understand and appreciate agriculture’s influence on shaping the American economy and daily life.

For producers like you, consulting our report archives can enable you to learn from past efforts, trends, mistakes, and outcomes and use them to make smarter, well-informed business decisions.



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**MAKE YOUR POINT!**

This column presents easy-to-digest main points.

**ADD THE DETAILS.**

This column presents explanations to support the main points.

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**Your participation in NASS surveys matters to your business and to your community.**

Without adequate participation from local producers like you, NASS surveys cannot accurately reflect the health and well-being of the agriculture industry in your area.

That means. . .

- ▶ Your county, state, and national leaders won't have access to data that represent the needs of your area. Without localized NASS data, they aren't able to develop more effective legislation and policies to benefit farmers and ranchers in your area or to evaluate the value of programs and policies already in place.
- ▶ Area businesses that serve you and your fellow producers won't have the data they need to determine the right mix of products and services. Plus, their pricing may be off or their inventory insufficient. That impacts your profit margin and your ability to do your work.
- ▶ Researchers won't be able to advance their studies and solve real-world problems that affect your business.
- ▶ USDA, in partnership with various producer groups, won't be able to adequately prepare for and respond to crises in your region (e.g., disease outbreaks) with accurate inventory and production data.

**When you participate in our surveys, NASS takes great care to protect the confidentiality of your information.**

The information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only. Your name, addresses, phone numbers, and the data you report about yourself and your operation are fully protected by law. Only authorized persons working for NASS as employees or sworn agents can access individual records—and only for approved official purposes. Everyone signs a confidentiality form pledging not to compromise reported information. Anyone who discloses the information is subject to a fine, a jail term, or both.

In addition, we keep paper responses in a secure area and electronic responses on a secure server. All questionnaires are destroyed as required by law. And, when NASS prepares official statistical estimates, we do so under tight security and publish only aggregated data, not individual or farm-specific data.



***Notes and Localized Talking Points***

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**MAKE YOUR POINT!**

**ADD THE DETAILS.**

Add your own local or topical examples and notes here to customize your conversations.

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# Sharing the Facts about NASS

*When you need to share specific facts about NASS – maybe during a presentation or meeting – use these messages. In the left column, you'll find short, concise messages that you can scan quickly and use in a variety of scenarios. If you need more specifics, look to the right column, where you'll find more details.*

## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

### MAKE YOUR POINT!

This column presents easy-to-digest main points.

### ADD THE DETAILS.

This column presents explanatory statements to support the main points.

#### **NASS is the statistical agency for USDA.**

As the statistical agency for the U.S. Department of Agriculture for more than 150 years, we are the official source of primary, comprehensive, current information on the farms, ranches, and people who provide food, feed, and fiber to our nation and the world. And we measure all agricultural activities down to the county level from everyone, especially small farmers.

Our mission is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.

#### **What we do**

- ▶ Collect, assemble, process, and disseminate data about all aspects of U.S. agriculture based on survey, satellite, and administrative information.
- ▶ Conduct hundreds of national weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual surveys each year, along with many more at regional, state, and local levels.
- ▶ Conduct a detailed census of every farm, ranch, and agricultural producer every five years.
- ▶ Publish more than 400 national reports and hundreds of thousands of data items each year that help others make farm-level, business, and policy decisions.
- ▶ Partner with state agriculture departments, universities, and others to conduct additional surveys to meet partners' specific needs.
- ▶ Conduct ongoing statistical research on survey design, sampling, and other topics to advance the accuracy of statistical science.



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## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

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### **MAKE YOUR POINT!**

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### **ADD THE DETAILS.**

This column presents explanatory statements to support the main points.

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#### **NASS staff are experts!**

NASS staff come from many different geographic areas and academic backgrounds.

About three-quarters of our 900 staff members are agricultural statisticians, math statisticians, and IT specialists. The rest are economists, geographers, cartographers, managers, administrative, budget, and communications professionals.

We work at headquarters in Washington D.C., at a national operations center in St. Louis, and in 12 regional and 33 state offices.

We:

- ▶ Are intellectually curious.
- ▶ Apply technical skills and rigor to all of our work.
- ▶ Have a deep understanding of agriculture.

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#### **NASS is internationally recognized for its expertise.**

NASS is recognized internationally for our expertise and resources, the quality of our data, and our contributions to statistical science.

We work with the U.S. Agency for International Development and other federal agencies to provide technical assistance and training on a reimbursable basis to help developing and transitioning countries improve and expand their capacity to produce agriculture statistics.

Providing such assistance benefits both the country receiving the assistance and the United States:

- ▶ By helping other countries advance their agricultural statistics systems, USDA improves its ability to assess world food and fiber production.
- ▶ Establishing strong working relationships with ag statisticians around the world helps NASS gather and develop new ideas for improving U.S. agriculture statistics.

In today's global trade economy, timely and accurate statistics are essential for smooth and efficient markets.



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## WHO USES NASS DATA?

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### MAKE YOUR POINT!

This column presents easy-to-digest main points.

### ADD THE DETAILS.

This column presents explanatory statements to support the main points.

<b>Farmers and ranchers</b>	Farmers and ranchers use NASS data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Develop production and marketing strategies</li><li>▶ Plan purchases and capital investments</li><li>▶ Compare their operation, rental rates, prices, and productivity against others in the state or across the United States</li><li>▶ Make specific decisions about their operations such as what crops to plant, how many cattle or other livestock to raise, etc.</li><li>▶ Benchmark and track how herd numbers, acreage, technology use, and practices, such as nutrient management and conservation tillage, compare to the practices of local farmers, farmers in their state, or those across the country</li></ul>
<b>USDA agencies</b>	USDA agencies (including RMA and FSA) use NASS data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Evaluate and administer insurance, disaster, commodity, conservation, credit, and other farm programs</li></ul>
<b>USDA and producer groups</b>	USDA, in partnership with various producer groups, uses NASS data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Prepare for and respond to crises (e.g., disease outbreaks) with accurate inventory and production data</li><li>▶ Create market access for producers</li><li>▶ Advocate for farmers and ranchers</li></ul> <p><b><i>Well-known data about the share of a food dollar that goes to farmers come from NASS data.</i></b></p>
<b>Federal and state agencies</b>	Federal and state agencies use NASS data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Make well-informed policy</li><li>▶ Evaluate the effectiveness of programs and policies</li><li>▶ Determine the impact of proposed agriculture legislation on farmers and rural communities</li><li>▶ Respond to emergencies and diseases affecting agriculture</li></ul>



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## WHO USES NASS DATA?

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### MAKE YOUR POINT!

This column presents easy-to-digest main points.

### ADD THE DETAILS.

This column presents explanatory statements to support the main points.

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#### Local officials, community planners, and cooperatives

Local representatives use NASS data to:

- ▶ Identify needed services and facilities
- ▶ Identify recreational, educational, and community awareness programs based on the interests and concerns of local producers
- ▶ Respond to emergencies and diseases affecting agriculture
- ▶ Make a range of decisions that directly affect producers (e.g., decisions about local food marketing, export opportunities, etc.)
- ▶ Describe the economic impact, either positive or negative, of a policy or proposal to local agriculture
- ▶ Share county statistics with legislators and county commissioners to demonstrate the strength of agriculture in an area and to justify local budget-based funding elements for ag

*For Example, NASS data can be used to show the economic and employment value of an agricultural sector to advocate for farm-friendly zoning or right-to-farm programs.*

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#### Processor, warehouse, storage, and transportation companies

Ag-related businesses use the data to:

- ▶ Assess the timing and size of harvest
- ▶ Determine the need for and location of new facilities
- ▶ Gear up or down for anticipated livestock slaughter volume and cold storage capacity

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#### Manufacturers and suppliers of farm equipment, materials, tools, and parts

Manufacturers and suppliers use NASS data to:

- ▶ Understand trends and identify opportunities to develop new products to serve the ag industry
- ▶ Predict demand for their products so they have ample supply and stock to meet demand
- ▶ Improve their own ability to serve the ag industry better





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<b>Precision ag companies</b>	Precision ag companies use NASS data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Develop products, software, and apps that improve farm management capabilities</li></ul>
<b>Commodity markets</b>	Commodity markets use NASS data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Establish futures and commodity prices</li></ul>
<b>Agriculture traders and international customers</b>	Agriculture traders use NASS data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Evaluate U.S. export potential</li></ul> International customers use NASS data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Determine the U.S. supply of major commodities</li></ul>
<b>Industry and market analysts</b>	Industry and market analysts use NASS data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Forecast production and supply expansion and contraction</li></ul>
<b>Researchers, economists, extension agents, farm media, and others</b>	Researchers, analysts, and other professionals use NASS data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Identify and analyze emerging trends, issues, and their implications</li><li>▶ Answer challenging questions on such topics as crop management, chemical pesticides, land usage, and veterinary science</li><li>▶ Develop grant programs for emerging animal health, food and feed production, and crop transition research needs as well as those that take ag research into production</li><li>▶ Quantify economic impact of the agricultural industry on the state or county economy</li></ul>
<b>The public</b>	As a government agency, NASS data are publicly available to anyone who wants to access them. The data can answer public curiosity about local farming, farmers markets, agri-tourism, water supply, demographics in agriculture, impacts of weather on local food and feed supply, and much more.



## *Notes and Localized Talking Points*

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**MAKE YOUR POINT!**

**ADD THE DETAILS.**

Add your own local or topical examples and notes here to customize your conversations.

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# Need More Examples?

*They are available to NASS employees through the NASS Portal. Please add your own examples for others to use. Go to:*

- ▶ <http://nassportal/oa/PAO/Lists/DataUseTracking/AllItems.aspx>

*Data users, including some producers, cite examples of how they use Census of Agriculture statistics here:*

- ▶ [https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Census\\_Story/](https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Census_Story/)

