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2023
Cash Rents Survey

Interviewer's Manual

Table of Contents

1   General

1.1   Survey Purpose

The Cash Rents Survey is conducted on an annual basis by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The 2023 Cash Rents Survey data collection period is from late February through the end of June. To help with survey coordination in the month of March, the Cash Rent questions are included on the March APS questionnaire. During June, cash rents data is collected on the June Area Survey in all states except for Alaska and Hawaii. State, Regional, and National level cash rents estimates will be published in August and September for all states excluding Alaska. County and District level cash rents estimates will be published in September.

The Cash Rents Survey obtains basic cash rents data from farmers and ranchers all over the Nation. This survey provides the basis for estimates of the current year's Cash Rents paid for Irrigated Cropland, Non-Irrigated Cropland, and Permanent Pasture.

A respondent surveyed has the right to know:

1.   Under what Authority information is collected.
2.   The purpose for the information collected.
3.   How information about their operation will be used.

Reports received from individual farmers and ranchers remain confidential and are used only in combination with other reports to arrive at County, District, State, Regional, and National level estimates. Official information regarding these rights can be found in your 'NASDA Employee Handbook'.

1.2   Need for Cash Rents Reports

NASS was directed through the "Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008" and amended by the "Agricultural Act of 2014" to collect cash rents data for use by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in program administration

Section 2110 – Cash Rental Rates: "(A) Annual Estimates – The Secretary (acting through the National Agricultural Statistics Service) shall, not less frequently than once every other year, conduct a survey of per acre estimates of county average market dry land and irrigated cash rental rates for cropland and pastureland in all counties or equivalent subdivisions within each State that have 20,000 acres or more of cropland and pastureland."

1.3   How Reports are Used

The Cash Rents Report will be utilized by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for program administration. Estimates derived from this survey supply basic information needed by farmers to make decisions for both short term and long term planning. The Cash Rents Report may also be used by individual producers in planning expenses for their agricultural operation or by Extension or University Staff in developing operating budgets

for agricultural operations in their locale.

1.4   Reports Associated with the Cash Rents Survey

1. State Level Cash Rents Report
- Released August 4, 2023.
- State, Regional, and National level estimates will be published on Quick Stats on the following NASS website:

http://www.nass.usda.gov

2. County Level Cash Rents Report
- Released on August 25, 2023.
- County and District level estimates will be published on Quick Stats on the following NASS website:

http://www.nass.usda.gov

2 Terms and Definitions

2.1 General

Enumerators and Supervisors working on the Cash Rents Survey should be familiar with the definitions of the terms listed below. Other terms and definitions not listed below can be found by going to http://www.nasda.org and then click on 'NASDA-NASS ' → 'Personnel Resources' →'References' → 'NASS Terms and Definitions '. If you do not have Internet access, please contact your NASDA Coordinator.

2.2 Cash Rents Survey Terminology

Acre – Unit of land area commonly used in the U.S.; equals 43,560 square feet.

Animal Unit (AU) – A standard measure based on feed requirements (an average daily consumption of 26 lbs. dry matter per day) used to combine various classes of livestock with size, weight, age, and use.

Animal Unit Month (AUM) – Tenure of one AU for one month. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) refers to an AUM as a Head Month.

Cash Rent – Fixed, predetermined dollar amount paid for the use of irrigated cropland, non-irrigated cropland, and permanent pasture. Please see Section 5 to determine which acres to include and exclude for this survey.

Confidentiality – The assurance from NASS to respondents, backed by federal law that individual information collected on authorized USDA surveys will not be released to any person, organization or institution, including court subpoenas. See the 'NASDA Employee Handbook' for regulations.

Control Data – Information on ELMO about individual farm or ranch operations which defines the type and size of the operation, i.e. acres of cropland, grain storage capacity, livestock numbers by species, etc.

Crop – A plant which is harvested for use by people or livestock.

Cropland – Land which can produce a crop for harvest. Cropland includes land cropped, idle land suitable for cropping, land in orchards, berries, vineyards, nursery, greenhouse, wild hay, and short rotation woody crops. Exclude woodland, marshes, farmsteads, wasteland, or land suitable only for pasture. Pasture is not considered a crop, but cropland used for pasture is included.

Data Collection – The process of completing interviews or field counts, or otherwise accounting for (refusal, inaccessible, out-of-business) all selected sample units in a survey.

Editing – Reviewing entries for reasonableness and validity of completed questionnaires. Unusual but correct responses should be flagged and explained with notes indicating it was verified with the respondent. With impossible data relationships, probe for the correct responses.

Enumerator – A person trained to conduct interviews or make field counts and record the information gathered in the interviews or counts.

Farm – Any place which produced and sold or normally would have produced or sold $1,000 worth of agricultural products during the year.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) – An Agency of the USDA which administers farm commodity and conservation programs for farmers and makes loans. FSA programs are primarily directed at agricultural producers or, in the case of loans, at those with farming experience.

Farmstead – The part of the farm consisting of the main set of buildings, adjacent yards or corrals, family garden, and family orchard.

Inaccessible – A sample unit which cannot be contacted, interviewed, enumerated, etc., during the survey period.

Irrigated Cropland – Land that normally receives or has the potential to receive water by artificial means to supplement natural rainfall. Irrigated cropland may consist of land that will or will not be irrigated during the current year, but still has the facilities and equipment to do so. Irrigation facilities and equipment such as wells, pumps, canals, ditches, reservoirs, lakes, tanks, ponds, rivers, streams or creeks are usually present or on nearby acres.

Irrigation – Artificial watering of land by surface flooding, sprinkling, or sub-irrigation methods to stimulate plant production in place of, or in addition to, natural precipitation.

Landlord – The owner of land or buildings which are rented to another person for cash, a portion of the crop or livestock, other proceeds, or free.

List Sampling Frame (LSF) – A list of agricultural operators in a state. Each classified operation name becomes a sampling unit. The name may be an individual, manager, farm or ranch, corporation, institution, etc.

Livestock – Any domestic animal produced or kept primarily for farm, ranch, or market purposes, including beef and dairy cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, and horses.

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) – A USDA agency responsible for collecting, estimating, and publishing current statistics on the Nation's agriculture.

National Operations Center (NOC) – This facility located in St. Louis, MO receives the Cash Rents report forms, processes, and captures the data for NASS edits.

Non-Response – Failure of a respondent to reply to a survey questionnaire; may be item non-response (refuse to answer one or more questions), survey non-response (refuse to answer any or most of the questions), or inability of enumerator to locate respondent during the survey period.

Operating Arrangements – The managerial organization of farm or ranch operations by which day-to-day decisions are made. Operating arrangements are classified as:

1. **Individual** – A land operating arrangement in which one person makes the day-to-day management decisions. This includes incorporated family farms even though a legal partnership involving spouse, sons, daughters, etc. exists.

2. **Managed** – A land operating arrangement in which day-to-day management decisions are made by a hired manager. The ranch foreman or farm manager must have managerial authority to make the day-to-day decisions instead of the land owner. Managers are usually paid a salary, although bonuses may be tied to production or performance.

3. **Partnership** – A land operating arrangement where two or more persons contribute some combination of land, labor, capital, equipment, materials, and management. Each person participates in day-to-day management decisions and shares in profits or losses, but not necessarily on an equal basis.

Operation – Establishments primarily engaged in the production of crops or plants, vines and trees (excluding forestry operation) and/or the keeping, grazing or feeding or livestock or poultry for animal products, for animal increase or value increase. Questionnaires with 'This Operation' or 'On This Operation' terminology reference the questionnaire label.

Operator – The person responsible for all or most of the day-to-day decisions such as planting, harvesting, feeding, or marketing for the tract or total land operated. The operator could be the owner, hired manager, cash tenant, share tenant or a partner. If land is rented or worked on shares, the tenant or renter is the operator.

Out-of-Business – A previous farm or ranch operator who no longer makes the day-to-day decisions on land suitable for agriculture; raises no crops, livestock, or poultry; has no on-farm grain storage facilities. They may own farmland which is being operated by someone else. See "Retired", and "Sold-out."

Pasture – An enclosed area of untilled ground covered with vegetation and grazed by animals.

Permanent Pasture – Pasture planted and established with perennial or self-seeding annual plants that have been maintained through several years of grazing.

Primary Name – The first line of the name and address on the mailing label represents an individual, partnership, or operation name of a farming, ranching or agribusiness operation.

Quarter Section – An area of land that is one fourth of a surveyed section and 160 acres in size. Also expressed as ¼ section.

Questionnaire – A form or computer program (CATI, CAPI) used to ask specific questions from and to record the responses given by selected sample units to the survey questions.

Rangelands – Unimproved, non-irrigated pasture or grazing land not suitable for growing crops. Ground covered by natural vegetation only.

Reference Date – The date used as a reference point for asking respondents survey questions. For example, the reference date for the Agricultural Surveys is the first day of the month, for the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) it's a specific year.

Refusal – A person representing a sample unit who will not cooperate in the survey and who refuses to provide sufficient information to satisfactorily complete the questionnaire, or who will not give an enumerator permission to complete the field counts or measurements.

Release Date – The date the survey results are published and released.

Rent – Reimbursement to the owner (landlord) from the user (tenant) for land, buildings, equipment, livestock, etc., used in production.

Respondent – The person who provides the information necessary to complete a survey interview.

Retired – A previous farm or ranch operator who is now out-of-business because he/she has reached an age to retire from farming or ranching. He/she may still own farmland, which is being operated by someone else. See "Out-of-Business."

Sampling Frame – A population or list of all possible units which meet specified criteria to draw a sample.

Section – A surveyed and recorded unit of land equal to 640 acres.

Share Rent – Method of paying rent, where the owner receives a share of the crop, livestock (or product, such as milk or wool) as payment for use of land, buildings, equipment, livestock, etc.

Sharecropper – A tenant who shares the crop, livestock, and/or livestock products with the landowner, who often extends credit to and closely supervises the tenant. The sharecropper generally supplies only labor.

Sold-out – A previous farm or ranch operator or operation that is now out-of-business due to selling the entire farming or ranching operation; no longer owning any farmland; crop, livestock, or poultry facilities or grain storage facilities. See "Out-of-Business."

Statistics – Totals, averages, percentages, and other numbers computed from population or sample data.

Target Operator / Operation – Reference to the operator / operation listed on the questionnaire label. See "Operator", "Operation", and "Operating Arrangement."

3   Standard Survey Procedures

3.1   General

The following pages describe materials and procedures for conducting interviews, guidelines for completing questionnaires, and instructions for turning in completed work. This chapter should be studied carefully before beginning work and used as a reference during the survey period.

3.2   Materials

3.2.1   Field Interviewing

You should have the following materials before you start field or personal interviewing:

1. Black Lead Pencils
2. Blank Questionnaire; legal pad (optional for taking notes)
3. Clipboard for Questionnaire (optional)
4. iPad
5. Stylus (optional)
6. Survey Materials
   a. Pre Survey Letter (optional)
   b. EDR Instructions (optional)
7. An Administrative Form Envelope
8. NASDA Employee Handbook (optional)
9. Interviewer's Manual
10. NASDA Identification Card (NAS-005)

3.2.2   Telephone Interviewing in Blaise

Most telephone interviewing will be done at a central location using the Cash Rents Blaise Instrument. The Blaise System automatically delivers forms and manages call backs and appointments for enumerators. You should have the following materials before you start telephone interviewing in Blaise:

1. Black lead pencils for recording information on paper questionnaires in case an error occurs on the Blaise Instrument or if the computer quits working
2. Blank Questionnaires
3. Survey Materials
   a. Pre Survey Letter
   b. EDR Instructions
4. NASDA Employee Handbook
5. Interviewer's Manual
6. Daily timesheets will be entered in timevantage with Payroll Network

3.3   Supervision and Quality Control

Your Supervisor will set up an appointment to talk with you at the beginning of the survey. This initial contact helps you start well and allows your Supervisor to review work you have completed. You should hold some of your completed work for your Supervisor to review, if you have been instructed to do so. You may have to contact the respondent again to clear up any mistakes uncovered during your Supervisor's review.

Following the initial visit, your Supervisor will maintain contact with you and probably visit you again later in the survey. If you have problems during the survey, contact your Supervisor as soon as possible.

Your Supervisor or the Regional Field Office (RFO) will contact some of your respondents after you interview them as part of a quality check. The respondent will be asked to recall the interview and verify information collected during your interview.

3.4   Interview and Call Back Procedures

Interview the farm or ranch operator.   Information collected from persons other than the operator often turns out to be less accurate.

Generally, you can contact the operator and complete the interview on the first attempt, but occasionally you may need to make one or more callbacks. Plan each follow-up attempt to call at various times of the day.

3.5   Burden Statement

Regulations require Federal agencies to estimate the average time required to complete a questionnaire. The following burden statement is located on the front page of the Cash Rents questionnaire in the middle of the sheet:

> *According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number is 0535-0002. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.*

The average time may represent the actual average completion time from previous surveys, or it may be an estimate based on similar surveys. If the respondent has problems with a questionnaire, with the time required to complete it, or the burden statement, he/she may write a letter to the respective office in your state. If the need arises, please provide them the address to the office and the name of the Regional Director.

The burden statement appears on all questionnaires mailed to respondents. If a respondent is mailed a copy of the questionnaire, an enumerator collecting data by personal interview need not present a copy of the burden statement at the time of the

interview.

Questionnaires collected in CATI, do not have a burden statement. The burden statement, however, is listed on the front page of the CAPI instrument.

Respondents often ask, "How long will this survey take?" Enumerators should note the burden statement average time requirement and never directly contradict it. However, enumerators may provide additional information, such as:

> *"The official average for this survey is 10 minutes, but interviews I have been doing in this area are averaging around 5 minutes."*

3.6   Refusals

Most people you contact will cooperate and furnish the needed information. However, there are always a few people who are reluctant to provide information. It is important to be courteous and friendly. Make a diligent effort to obtain the respondent's cooperation by explaining the purpose of the survey, confidentiality of the data, and the need for accurate agricultural statistics. The 'NASDA Employee Handbook' explains why reports issued from these surveys are important, and suggests ways the respondent might use the reports to make decisions.

If the respondent refuses to report, you should:

1. Conclude the interview with a friendly attitude and always leave the respondent with a positive impression of you as a professional interviewer.

2. Record the reason for the operator's reluctance. Documenting the reason for a refusal provides the RFO with important information. As a whole, the notes from a survey or a group of surveys create an overview that can be valuable to the RFO.

Above all, don't become discouraged if you get a refusal. Some people won't talk to anyone. Experience tells us many refusals are just caught at a bad time for a survey or interview. On your next interview, continue to meet people with ease and friendliness.

3.7   Completing the Questionnaire

In instances where an additional questionnaire must be completed on paper, be sure to make all entries clear, easy to read, and use a **black** lead pencil.

In CAPI, be sure to explain all responses that seem to be outside of what you would expect as a dollar per acre rental rate. Remember, it's better to probe to provide explanations of data that appears out of the ordinary than to recontact the operator at a later date.

3.7.1 Boxes or Entry Cells (Item Code Boxes)

Answers must be written entirely within the box or space provided (including YES and NO check boxes) and properly located in relation to pre-printed decimals and zeros. If the answer to a question is NONE, enter a dash (-) instead of a zero. A zero may be mistaken for a 6. Similarly, write all numbers clearly so a 3 and 5 are not confused, or a 1 and a 7.

3.7.2 Enumerator Instructions

The following four numbered bullets list some general questionnaire rules you will encounter as you interview a respondent.

1. Enumerator instructions are enclosed in square brackets. These instructions are not read to respondents.

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3. In 2023, for the total acres **RENTED** or **LEASED FROM OTHERS** (reported in item 1b), will any **cropland** or **pasture** acres be rented or leased for cash? (Acres cut and to be cut for hay should be considered cropland and reported in item 3a or 3b. **Exclude** land rented/leased on a share basis, flex or cash-share hybrid basis, per head or AUM basis, free of charge, rents/leases with buildings such as barns included in the rent/lease, BLM and Forest Service land, Christmas tree land, aquaculture, and land rented on a whole farm basis.)

☐ **YES** – {Enter code 1 and **continue**}   ☐ **NO** – {Enter code 3 and go to **item 5**}

In this example, the instructions following the check boxes direct you to the next question to be asked. You will not read enumerator instructions to the respondent.

2. Optional words are enclosed in parentheses. You may read these words to the respondent to further clarify the question.

---

a. How many acres of **non-irrigated cropland** will be rented or leased for **cash**? (**Include** acres cut and to be cut for hay.) . . . .

The optional wording is "(**Include** acres cut and to be cut for hay)". You may read this to the respondent if necessary to clarify the question and obtain the correct response.

3. Always ask the next question, unless instructed to do otherwise with a skip instruction.

---

b. How many acres of **irrigated cropland** will be rented or leased for cash? (**Include** fruit, nut, berry, vineyard, nursery, and hay land, and all other irrigated cropland.) . . . .

This question would be asked if question 3 were answered yes, but skipped if answered no.

4. **Always** make notes about answers outside of expected ranges (on the paper questionnaire). Do not write notes or make unnecessary entries in the answer cell. One example would be if the operation paid an extremely high cash rent per acre due to the location or quality of the land. Your notes provide an explanation to the reviewer when the questionnaire is edited by a statistician.

3.8   Mailing

Completed questionnaires should be returned according to the regional field office and your supervisor's instructions. All Cash Rents respondents, except ones matched with March surveys were mailed a questionnaire from the NOD. Questionnaires that weren't mailed from the NOD could have been mailed from each RFO.

Unless you are instructed otherwise by your supervisor or the field office, you should return completed work at the end of each day to the Regional Field Office. Use the envelopes provided by the RFO.

Keep a record of all questionnaires you return to the RFO or your supervisor. It is recommended that you record helpful information such as the date and time of mailing, place of mailing, and the list of POIDS. This information will help the RFO locate delayed questionnaires and survey materials.

Contact your supervisor for instructions on handling questionnaires completed near the end of the survey period.

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4   Interviewing Procedures

4.1   General

This chapter contains basic instructions to help you complete your Cash Rents Survey assignments.

Questionnaires may be self-administered (mail & EDR), personally enumerated (either on paper or in CAPI) or collected by telephone enumeration. The primary means of data collection will be through mail & EDR.

4.2   Name and Address Labels

4.2.1   Target Name

It is important for you to understand the meaning of the term **"Target Name"**. The term "Target Name" refers to the individual's name appearing alone on the label, or the operation name on the label for managed operations or OpDom 99 operations. The individual name appearing on the label is the person you should contact. Your Field Office will provide information on identifying the Target Name at one of your training workshops.

4.2.2   Labels

Here is an example of a List Frame name and address label. The format of this label is standard across all Regional Field Offices.

```
Line 1: Barcode
Line 2: Stateid TargetPoid Tract Subtract Smeta Skey dup_no
Line 3: EDRSVYCODE                              'STR' Targetstra*  Method  Mseqnum
Line 4: Match1  Match2  Match3  Match4  Otherfield  OpDistrict  OpCountyid
Line 5: Opername                         OpdomStatu  Supervisor  Enumerator
Line 6: Wholename
Line 7: Addrdelive
Line 8: Placename   Statealpha   Zip5-Zip4                45 POID (if applicable)
```

Displayed on the label will be an individual's name (Target Name). In some cases, a farm or ranch name (Operation Name) or a combination of individuals' names may be present.

Rule #1: **The Target Name (the individual name) is the sampled unit. Information collected will focus on this individual.**

Consider the following examples:

```
 Ima P. Farmer
RR 4 Box 36
Anytown, YS 12345
```

Figure 4.1: Individual Target Name listed on the label.

Ima P. Farmer is the Target Name. **You should collect data for all operations Ima is involved in.** If Ima is involved in more than one operation (an individual row crop operation and a partnership cattle operation), then two questionnaires must be completed. The original questionnaire should contain the data for the individual operation. A second questionnaire must be completed for the partnership operation. If Ima is involved in a partnership operation only, then the original questionnaire should be completed for the partnership operation.

```
Erma & Ama Farmer
Erma Farmer
RR 2 Box 19
Anytown, YS 12345
```

Figure 4.2: Combination of Names with Individual Target Name listed on the label.

In this example, Erma Farmer is the Target Name. **You should collect data for all operations Erma is involved in.** The partnership or combination of individual names is listed to let you know Erma was involved in a partnership with Ama in the past. You should complete the original questionnaire for the partnership if it still exists. Complete a separate questionnaire(s) for any other operation(s) Erma is involved in. If the partnership no longer exists, make a note, correct the label to delete Erma and Ama Farmer, **and complete the questionnaire for Erma's individual operation.**

```
NASDA Acres Farm
Ura Farmer
RR 3
Anytown, YS, 12345
```

Figure 4.3: Operator is Target Name.

In this example Ura Farmer is the Target Name. You should collect data for all operations Ura is involved in. The name NASDA Acres Farm is included to let you know Ura used this farm name. You should complete the original questionnaire with Ura Farmer's individual information. If Ura Farmer is involved in a separate partnership operation, complete a separate questionnaire. **If you determine Ura Farmer is still operating but not as NASDA Acres Farm, mark through the farm name, write a note on the questionnaire, and complete the original questionnaire to include information for Ura Farmer's operation.**

Rule #2: **Information for managed operations will always be collected for the Operation Name on the label.**

NASS Inc
Serv Farmers, Mgr
RR 6 Box 714
Anytown, YS 12345

Figure 4.4: Operation with Manager.

This label suggests NASS Inc. is a managed operation. If this is true, complete the questionnaire for NASS Inc., regardless of Serv's involvement. This data collection rule is true for all managed operations.

Once the questionnaire for the managed operation is completed, Rule #1 applies to the person managing the operation. An additional questionnaire must be completed if Serv has a separate individual or partnership operation. **In the case where Serv Farmers operates a farm or ranch that has no association to NASS Inc., correct the label, write an explanatory note, and complete the questionnaire for NASS Inc. and an additional questionnaire for Serv Farmers's operation.**

OpDom – 99
Independence Avenue Acres Farm
Bea Farmer
RR 2 Box 111
Anytown, YS 12345

Figure 4.5: OpDom – 99 Operations Require Special Handling.

This example shows an OpDom 99 operation. Your office will use an OPDOM status code of 99 to indicate that the target name is the **Operation Name** shown on the label, and not the **individual's name. You will only complete one questionnaire for the operation named on the label.** Even though the individual named on the label (Bea Farmer) may be involved in other operations, you will not complete additional questionnaires for the other operations. The designation of OpDom 99 is reserved for complicated operating arrangements or when the manager manages multiple operations Your RFO will provide special instructions for handling OpDom 99 situations.

Examples of typical OpDom 99 operations include:

1. If the contact person does not make the day to day decisions (i.e. secretary, accountant, trustee, etc)

2. Large, stable firms that may readily change managers or operators.

3. Operations that may require different individuals to be contacted for various types of data (i.e., a University Farm or Prison Farm).

4. Farms or ranches identifying individuals who manage more than one operation.

4.2.3   Name and Address Corrections

Verify the correct spelling of the name(s) and that the address is complete. Make corrections on the label. Examples of common corrections are:
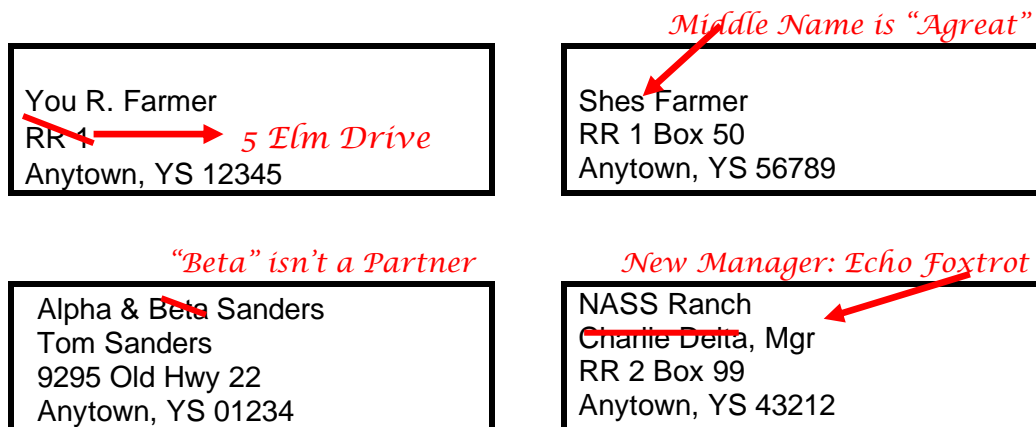
Middle Name is "Agreat"

You R. Farmer
RR 1   *5 Elm Drive*
Anytown, YS 12345

Shes Farmer
RR 1 Box 50
Anytown, YS 56789

"Beta" isn't a Partner

New Manager: Echo Foxtrot

Alpha & Beta Sanders
Tom Sanders
9295 Old Hwy 22
Anytown, YS 01234

NASS Ranch
Charlie Delta, Mgr
RR 2 Box 99
Anytown, YS 43212

Figure 4.6: Common Corrections to Names and Addresses

Most post offices will not deliver third class mail if the address is not complete. In many cases, a rural route number is not sufficient if the Target Name also has a box number.

4.3   Locating List Frame Respondents

The following procedures will be helpful in locating operations selected from the List Sampling Frame:

1. The name of the town in the address will indicate the general area where the respondent is located. Other identifying data such as county, township, or section may be available. These features can be located on a county highway map.

2. If township or section data are not available, inquiring in the general neighborhood is usually the quickest way to locate a respondent.

3. Some Field Offices have County Directories or plat books available showing farm locations.

4. County Extension Service Agents, FSA offices, NRCS offices, Post Offices, grain companies, or Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service offices are examples of good sources for help in locating a respondent.

5. If an operation selected from the List Sampling Frame has been unusually hard to find, make notes on the questionnaire describing travel directions to the operation. Directions can be kept on file in the RFO and given to enumerators on future surveys.

4.4   Responding to Questions

Successful interviewers in all professions agree that one of the keys to success is to rehearse their responses to various situations; a form of mental preparation for the job ahead. Arming yourself with this level of preparation will provide you with one of the keys necessary for successful interviewing.

Shown below are situations you might encounter when interviewing operations selected from the List Frame and possible solutions. These are not the only situations (or solutions) you will discover. However, a key to successful interviewing is your ability to respond properly to any situation. Take the time to discuss these and other situations with your Supervisor. Find out how they have handled similar situations, and the success of their approach.

The Respondent:

1. **Completed a mail questionnaire, but has not mailed it at the time of your arrival.**

    Offer to deliver the questionnaire to the RFO. Review the recorded answers with the respondent to verify it is complete and accurate.

2. **Says the questionnaire has been mailed to the NOD.**

    Tactfully ask for the data again. Tell the respondent the information is important and needed in case the mailed questionnaire is not received in time. Thank the respondent for having mailed the questionnaire.

3. **Is reluctant and claims the questionnaire has been mailed back to the NOD.**

    You are expected to complete a questionnaire for each assigned Target Name. Indicate to the respondent the report may not be received in time and it will only take a few minutes to obtain the data. Since you will visit most of these respondents again on future surveys be courteous and pleasant so you will always be welcome.

4. **Asks, "Why are you back again, I was just contacted for a survey last month?"**

    Explain that the National Agricultural Statistics Service makes acreage and grain stock estimates every three months, cattle estimates every six months and other estimates on a monthly or seasonal basis. The reason for making this visit is to obtain current information for their Cash Rental arrangements.

    Most large operations are contacted each survey. The reason they are contacted so often is because a small number of operations like theirs have a significant effect on the total estimate for your state. To make our Cash Rents estimates as reliable as possible, we need their information.

5. **Asks, "How do I know that you won't share my information with someone?**

   Explain to them that information requested in this survey is used to prepare estimates of selected agricultural commodities. Under Title 7 of the U.S. Code and CIPSEA, Title V, Subtitle A (Public Law 107-347), facts about your operation are kept confidential and used only for statistical purposes in combination with similar reports from other producers.

5 Completing the Cash Rents Questionnaire

5.1 Questions 1 & 2: Acres Operated on Operation

Please round all entries to whole acres.

These questions ask for acres on the entire operation. This includes **_ALL_** acres on their operation even those that are not for a cash rental agreement. Asking these questions helps the farmer/rancher focus on the acres that are needed throughout the questionnaire.

5.2 Question 4: Cash Rent Questions

5.2.1 Screening Question

Question #4 of the Cash Rents questionnaire is a screening question (3420) that is used to verify the Target Name on the label is involved in a cash rental agreement, no matter how small. Screening each Target Name for cash rental activity before asking specific items of interest is important.

This question refers back to the acres that were reported in question #2b. In question 1b, the operator was asked for their entire acres that were rented or leased from others.

Question #4 reads as follows:

> 4. In 2020, for the total acres RENTED or LEASED FROM OTHERS (reported in item 2b),
> will any cropland or pasture acres be rented or leased for cash?
> (Acres cut and to be cut for hay should be considered cropland and reported in item 4a or 4b.)
>
> (Exclude land rented/leased on a share basis, flex or cash-share hybrid basis, per head or AUM basis, free of charge, rents/leases with buildings such as barns included in the rent/lease, BLM and Forest Service land, Christmas tree land, aquaculture, and land rented on a whole farm basis.)
>
> **Code**
> 3420
>
> 1 ☐ Yes - Enter code 1 and continue   3 ☐ No - Enter code 3 and go to Conclusion

If the respondent answers **YES** to the screening question, put a "1" in the 3420 box and continue with the questionnaire.

If the screening question is answered **NO** for the Target Name, please put a "3" in the 3420 box, go to Item 5 on the back page, and conclude the interview.

Maple syrup only operations are considered woodland acres and should not be counted as cropland. Christmas tree only operations should not be counted in the Cash Rents survey since they have an abnormal cash rental agreement where they make nominal payments each year and then make a balloon payment when the trees are cut. Aquaculture only operations are not considered cropland or permanent pasture.

Public Lands are to be included in the Cash Rents survey unless they are rented on an AUM or fee per head basis. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land should be

excluded as rented land.

Whole farm rental agreements and flexible rental agreement are special cases. Whole farm rental agreements include both land and buildings. Flexible rental agreements are agreements in which the rent is not determined until after the crop is harvested. In both cases, the interviewer should document the rental agreement by writing the acres in IC902 only. The total dollar amount should be left blank as well as the corresponding acres. Enumerator should leave a note describing the situation for the analyst.

5.2.2   Cash Rents Questions

Land is considered irrigated cropland by the following definition:

> **Irrigated cropland** *is the land that normally receives or has the potential to receive water by artificial means to supplement natural rainfall. Irrigated cropland may consist of land that will or will not be irrigated during the current year, but still has the facilities and equipment to do so. Irrigation facilities and equipment such as wells, pumps, canals, ditches, reservoirs, lakes, tanks, ponds, rivers, streams or creeks are usually present or on nearby acres.*

Cash rented acres and cash rent dollar per acre will be obtained for Irrigated Cropland, Non-Irrigated Cropland, and Permanent Pasture that is rented on a per acre basis for cash.

Include:
1. Acres rented/leased on a per acre basis for cash

Exclude:
1. Acres rented/leased for a share of the crop or livestock
2. Acres rented/leased on a fee per head, per pound of gain, or AUM basis
3. Acres rented/leased that includes **dwelling and buildings** along with farmland
4. Acres rented/leased free of charge
5. Water operations, such as off shore seafood operations.

Record the number of acres for each type of land (Irrigated Cropland, Non-Irrigated Cropland, & Permanent Pasture). If no acres of that type of land are rented for cash, enter a dash in the appropriate box.

The "crop year" varies between states and even by commodities or areas within a state. In some states, a "crop year" is a twelve month period which crosses two calendar years. For example, the fall of 2014 may be considered the start of the 2015 crop year. An example would be small grains planted in the fall of 2014 for harvest in 2015 followed by the planting of soybeans to be harvested in October or November 2015.

In some areas, the "crop year" may be less than twelve months. If the respondent's cash rented acres are rented for only a portion of the crop year, calculate and enter estimated rent that is expected on these acres for the entire crop year.

For example, if a respondent grows more than one crop on the rented acres and pays a separate rent for each, the rents should be added together. Likewise, if a producer other

than the respondent rented the same land before the respondent or it is likely that the acres will be rented to someone else after the respondent's crop is harvested, the rents should be added together to best approximate the total cash rent per acre received over the entire crop year. If the respondent is unable to report the rent, enter DK (don't know) next to the box.

5.3   Question 4: FSA Relative Question

These two questions are included to compare low or high cash rental rates with rental from close family relatives (grandparents, parents, siblings, and children).

5.4   Office Use Boxes

5.4.1   Response Code Box (9901)

Identify the type of response by coding the 9901 Code Box. The valid codes are:

1 = Complete
2 = Refusal (Target Name refused to provide information)
3 = Inaccessible (Target Name or satisfactory respondent could not be located)
4 = Office Hold
5 = ~~Estimated Refusal~~ – Not Allowed for Cash Rent Survey
6 = ~~Estimated Inaccessible~~ – Not Allowed for Cash Rent Survey
7 = ~~Office Hold- Estimated~~ – Not Allowed for Cash Rent Survey
8 = Known Zero

5.4.2   Respondent Code Box (9902)

Identify the respondent by coding the 9902 Code Box. The valid codes are:

1 = Operator (Target Name), Manager
2 = Spouse (of Operator or Partner)
3 = Accountant or Bookkeeper
4 = Partner
9 = Other (any person not covered by codes 1 through 4)

5.4.3   Mode Code Box (9903)

Identify the type of response by coding the 9903 Code Box. The valid codes are:

1 = (PASI) Mail
2 = (PATI) Telephone
3 = (PAPI) Face-to-Face
6 = E-mail
7 = Fax
19 = Other

5.5   Date Code Box (9910)

Record the code representing the day the questionnaire is completed in the 9910 Code Box. The date is recorded, in two digits for month (MM), Day (DD), and Year (YY). For example, May 1, 2023 is recorded: 050120.

5.6   Enumerator Identification Code Box (9998)

Enter your Enumerator Identification Number in 9998 Code Box.

5.7   Phone Number (9911)

The phone number box has been given an item code (9911) to help the NASS National Operations Center add additional phone numbers to the list frame from mail returns. For any enumerated questionnaire, normal NASS procedures should be used for updating or adding phone numbers. This would include making modifications to the printed label on the questionnaire.