



# Potato Stocks Inquiry Training Materials

Below you will find links to a video, PowerPoint presentation, survey information sheet, and practice interviews for NASS's Potato Stocks Inquiry. The practice interviews can be used to enter data in CATI or CAPI to get familiar with those data collection instruments.

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Strategic Planning and Business Services Division  
Strategic Planning Branch  
Workforce Performance and Staff Development Section

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## **NASS Survey Training Potato Stocks Inquiry**

# **December, February, April, and June**



**United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service**



**Workforce Performance and Staff Development Section**



# Survey Overview

- Why the Potato Stocks Inquiry is conducted:
  - Farmers use the reports to decide when to sell their crop.
  - Shippers, processors, and brokers monitor crop movement to help decide when to buy and when to ship.
  - Different aspects of the industry (chipping, fries, dehydrated, etc) need stocks information to gauge the supply of potatoes suitable for their products.
  - Grower associations use the information to update their marketing plan as the season progresses.
- Generally, about 60-70% of the total potato crop goes into storage

# Survey Information

- Project Code: **195 - Potato and Stocks Survey**
- Questionnaires:
  - Mailed out around the 23<sup>rd</sup> of each preceding month
  - Web reporting option available
- Release:
  - *Potato Stocks*
  - Around the 16<sup>th</sup> of each month at 3:00pm (EST)

NASS website: [www.nass.usda.gov/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/)



# Survey Questions

In December only we collect:

- Total **storage capacity** of ALL structures to store potatoes

Then in during all four quarters we collect:

- Total quantity of **potatoes in storage** on the 1<sup>st</sup> of those months



# Survey Questions

- **Quantity lost** ... through 1<sup>st</sup> of each month:
  - December, February, April, and June
- **Quantity lost** due to shrink, cull, or dumping through 1<sup>st</sup> of each *previous* month
  - Through 1<sup>st</sup> of: January, March, May, respectively
    - Only asked in February, April, and June
  - Measuring the *total* loss AND the *monthly* loss
- Note: Only collecting information on potatoes.
  - **Exclude any sweet potatoes**

# Things to Watch Out For

- Large change in potatoes in storage
- Potatoes in storage exceed total production
- More potatoes stored than storage capacity
- Large amount of loss
  - Includes any lost in storage AND any unusable potatoes harvested and hauled from the field
    - Potatoes are perishable. Quality can decline in storage
    - *Typically* around a couple percent of the total each month in storage

# Things to Remember

- Some producers may report in total pounds instead of hundred weight (CWT)
  - Please verify they report in CWT





# Reluctant Responses

- Small farmer/operation
  - I'm glad you brought that up. All operations are important big or small. The management practices of a smaller operation are different from the larger ones, and this is your chance to let your voice be heard. Information you provide can help others become aware of the challenges facing small operators.
- “All my potatoes are contracted—what does it matter what I have in storage?”
  - That's a good question. Both farmers and buyers need information about current stocks to determine if there are enough potatoes to fill demands, to accurately price any open market potatoes, and to make future decisions.

# Conclusion

- Encounter something odd or unexpected  
leave a note
- Know what to watch out for
- Work through some practices before  
interviewing
- Contact you supervisor with any questions you  
may have



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## **Potato Stocks Inquiry Information Sheet**

### **Overview/Data Use**

Potato Stocks reports are used by all parts of the potato industry to aid in the orderly movement of the crop. Farmers can use the reports to determine when to sell. shippers, processors, and brokers monitor crop movements to help them decide when to buy and ship. The chipping industry needs information on stocks by type to gauge the supply of suitable potatoes for their products. The United Potato Growers of America use stocks data to update and improve their marketing plan as the season progresses.

### **Survey**

- Conducted in December, February, April, and June.
- Random sample of growers with on-farm capacity, plus a census of non-grower agribusinesses. (potato shippers, processors, warehouses)
- Potato capacity and quantity is measured in hundredweight (CWT)
- Collect the total potato storage capacity
  - Remember, capacity must be “on farm/operation”

- Total quantity of potatoes stored on the operation on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month (December, February, April, and June)
- Quantity of potatoes lost from shrinkage, cull, or dumping Through the first of each of the survey months (December, February, April, and June)
- Then we ask for the quantity lost through the first of each of the previous month (only asked in February, April, and June)
  - Include unusable potatoes hauled out of the field
  - These questions are asked to measure the total loss and the monthly loss.
- Comment space provided for operator to supply any information about their potato crop/ potatoes in storage.
  - These comments aide in making more accurate estimates and are notably important for specialty crops.

# Potato Stocks Inquiry Practice Interviews

*Instructions: For **December** practice interviews, use 250,000 CWT as the “Total Storage Capacity of all facilities, buildings, and structures used on this operation to store Potatoes”. Also, for **December**, ignore the question asking about the amount of loss from the beginning of the season to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the current month.*

## **Practice Interview 1:**

Who is responding? **Operator**

Let me verify the name, address, and phone number that I have for this operation. Is this information correct? **Yes**

What was the Total Quantity of potatoes in storage facilities owned or leased by this operation on (reference date)? **180,000 Total CWT**

What was the Total Quantity Lost due to shrinkage, cull, or dumping (include unusable potatoes hauled out of the field) from the beginning of the season to 1<sup>st</sup> for previous month? **9 Total CWT**

What was the Total Quantity Lost due to shrinkage, cull, or dumping (include unusable potatoes hauled out of the field) from the beginning of the season to 1<sup>st</sup> of current month?  
**11 Total CWT**

Do you have any comments about the potato crop for your locality? **No**

Do you make any day-to-day decisions for another farm or ranch? **No**

Would you rather have a brief summary emailed to you at a later date? **No**

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## Practice Interview 2: Operator Retired

Which of the following answers best describes why the operation is not in business?

### Operator Retired

Who is responding? **Spouse, Jessie Farmer**

Let me verify the name, address, and phone number that I have for this operation. Is this information correct? **Yes**

Did this operation have any storage capacity on (reference date)? **No**

Has this operation been sold, rented, or turned over to someone else? **Yes**

What is the name of the new operation or firm? **Jones Potatoes**

What is the new operator's name? **James Jones**

What is the new operator's address?

**987 Potato Lane Dr.  
Waterloo, ID 12345**

What is the new operator's telephone number, including area code? **123-555-9876 cell**

Will you grow any field crops, hay, or specialty crops such as fruit, vegetables, or floriculture? **No**

Do you own or raise any livestock or poultry? **No**

Do you have facilities for storing whole grains, pulse crops, or oilseeds? **No**

Do you own or operate any CRP/WRP, pasture, woodland, idle land? **No**

Do you make any day-to-day decisions for another farm or ranch? **No**

Would you rather have a brief summary emailed to you at a later date? **No**



### **Practice Interview 3:**

Who is responding? **Operator**

Let me verify the name, address, and phone number that I have for this operation. Is this information correct? **Yes**

What was the Total Quantity of potatoes in storage facilities owned or leased by this operation on (reference date)? **23,000 Total CWT**

What was the Total Quantity Lost due to shrinkage, cull, or dumping (include unusable potatoes hauled out of the field) from the beginning of the season to 1<sup>st</sup> of previous month? **8 Total Tons**

What was the Total Quantity Lost due to shrinkage, cull, or dumping (include unusable potatoes hauled out of the field) from the beginning of the season to 1<sup>st</sup> of current month? **45,000 Total Pounds**

Do you have any comments about the potato crop for your locality? **No**

Do you make any day-to-day decisions for another farm or ranch? **No**

Would you rather have a brief summary emailed to you at a later date? **No**

