



# Vegetable Grower Inquiry Training

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

<b>Links</b>	<b>Length (minutes/pages)</b>
<a href="#"><u>Vegetable Grower Inquiry Overview Video</u></a>	16
<a href="#"><u>Vegetable Grower Inquiry Presentation</u></a>	18
<a href="#"><u>Vegetable Grower Inquiry Information Sheet</u></a>	5
<a href="#"><u>Vegetable Grower Inquiry Practice Interviews</u></a>	4

Workforce Performance and Staff Development Section

[Click here to  
return to list  
of materials](#)

# NASS Survey Training

## Vegetable Grower Inquiry



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



**Workforce Performance and Staff Development Section**





# Vegetable Grower Inquiry

- Measure the yields and prices of various vegetable commodities
- FSA's non-insured crop disaster assistance program (NAP) utilizes the estimates derived from this survey to pay growers for crop losses that are not covered by insurance.
- Without this survey, NAP payments could be calculated based on the lower price of those processed vegetables from across the country.

# Survey Info

- Project Code: **137 – Dual Purpose Veg**
- Questionnaires:
  - Mail out around October 25
- Release Date
  - *Vegetables Annual Summary*
  - Mid-February (3pm EST)



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

# Instructions:

- Report for **all** land operated
- Report for entire crop year (all seasons)
- **Fresh Market Price:** Total dollars received or average \$/unit sold through *all* outlets
- **Processing Price:** Should reflect all payments to growers plus costs of materials and services provided by processors to get the commodity to the plant door
- **Exclude:** greenhouse production, home gardens, and personal or home use

# Fresh Market Sales

- **Fresh Market Price:** Total dollars received or average \$/unit sold through *all* outlets
- Utilized production that is not processed and includes fresh cut.
- The Fresh Market Price should be the total dollars received or average price per unit sold and should reflect an F.O.B. (Free/Freight on Board) shipping point price, or equivalent, for all grades and qualities sold for fresh market. The F.O.B. shipping point is a point of first sale.
- Equivalent points of first sale include farm, roadside, farmer's market, grower auction, and U-pick sales.

# Processing Sales

- **Processing** refers to processes that alter the general state of the commodity, such as canning, cooking, freezing, dehydration, milling, grinding, pasteurization, pickling, or juicing.
- The Processing Price should be the total dollars received or average price per unit sold and should reflect all payments to growers plus the costs of materials and services provided by processors to get the raw commodity to the plant receiving door.

# Survey Questions

- Screening:
  - Did this operation grow any vegetable crops, melons, or herbs during the year?
    - (Also asking about watermelons and cantaloupes for some states)





# Total Acres

- How many acres of all vegetables, melons, and herbs planted for harvest in [State] in during the year?
  - Exclude Irish potatoes
- Note: Count each acre only once, regardless of how many times the same crop was harvested from those acres

Example: Kale can be harvested 6 – 8 times in one season from the same planting.



# For each crop



- Looking for:
  - Acres Planted
    - If crop was planted on the same acreage more than once, report the acres more than once
    - Ex: 10 acres of lettuce that were planted, harvested, and planted again would be recorded as 20 acres.
  - Acres Harvested
  - Quantity of crop harvested or expected to be harvested
    - Unit
      - (lbs, CWT, tons, bushels, etc)
    - Weight of that unit
      - (If not reported in lbs, CWT, or tons)

# For each crop

- Of the total quantity harvested, how much was:
  - Sold Fresh Market or Seed:
    - Quantity sold
    - Total dollars received
  - Sold for Processing:
    - Quantity sold
    - Total dollars received
  - Used to make processed items for this operation to sell?
    - Quantity only, no \$
  - Stored to be sold (sweet potatoes and onions only)
    - For fresh market
    - For Processing
  - Harvested, but not sold?
    - Quantity only, no \$



# Crops (varies by state)

Artichokes	Cabbage, Mustard	Greens, Kale
Asparagus	Cantaloupes	Honeydew Melons
Beans, Long	Carrots	Lettuce, All
Beans, Snap	Cauliflower	Lettuce, Head
Beets	Celery	Lettuce, Leaf
Bittermelon	Cucumbers	Lettuce, Romaine
Broccoli	Eggplant	Onions, Dry
Cabbage, All	Escarole & Endive	Onions, Green
Cabbage, Chinese	Garlic	Other Herbs
Cabbage, Head	Greens, Collard	Other Vegetable

# Crops (varies by state)

Parsley	Spinach	Watercress
Peas, Green	Squash, All	Watermelons
Peppers, All	Squash, Italian	
Peppers, Bell	Squash, Oriental	
Peppers, Chile	Squash, Summer	
Peppers, Green Chile	Squash, Winter	
Peppers, Red Chile	Sweet Corn	
Potatoes	Sweet Potatoes	
Pumpkins	Taro	
Radish, Daikon	Tomatoes	

# Vegetable Crop Notes:

- Cabbage: exclude Napa
- Carrots: include baby carrots
- Sweet corn: include baby corn
- Tomatoes: exclude tomatillo and greenhouse
- Asparagus: bearing acres = planted acres
- Dry Onions, All: exclude green onions/scallions
- Pumpkins: include ornamentals

# Final Questions

- Will this operation grow any vegetable crops, melons, or herbs in the future?
  - Yes, No (maybe so?)
- Comments about crops in the report



# Things to watch out for:

- Be mindful of decimal points where applicable
- Ratio of harvested acres to planted acres is low
- Total acres less than sum of reported acres planted
- Acres harvested but none sold
- Average price high/low
- Yield high/low
- Quantity reported as sold, but no \$ received



# What is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)?

- Customers buy “shares” of a farmer’s harvest at the beginning of the growing season.
- In return, the customer receives fresh produce each week as the harvest season progresses.
  - Operator may be unable to give quantities and/or prices
  - Try to get as much production or yield data as possible
  - Ask about price of shares, weekly quantities, etc
  - Leave good notes



# Reluctant Respondents

- NAP Program – some operators have only reported because they were familiar with NAP.
- 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.”

# Conclusion

- Good notes are very important
  - When in doubt, comment it out
  - Your comments are key to good estimates
- Get familiar with the survey before interviewing

World record 138.25lb cabbage!



World  
Record  
18.9lb  
Carrot!



[Click here to return to list of materials](#)

# Vegetable Grower Inquiry

## Extra Information

### **Survey Description**

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

### **Use of the Data**

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



## Fresh Market/Processing Vegetables, Melons, and Herbs:

### Fresh Vegetables and Dual Use Vegetables:

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

### Planted and Harvested Acres:

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

## Total Sales/Yields:

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

## Unit and Pounds per Unit:

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

## Price per Unit or Total Dollars Received:

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

## Special situations:

- Vegetables – Multiple crops:
  - In some cases, a grower may have multiple plantings on the same acreage. In this case, **record the acreage once for each crop and collect total production from all harvests.**
    - Example: 5 acres peas in spring, followed by 5 acres peppers, followed by 5 acres peas in fall. Peas: record 10 acres planted and harvested and production from both harvests. Peppers: record 5 acres planted and harvested and production.
- Crops not planted, but grown:
  - Some commodities, like asparagus and berry crops are not planted every year. Asparagus is planted one year, cut, and then the crop grows back the following year without having to be replanted. Planted Acres should serve as “bearing acres” in these cases.
- Mixed Vegetable Gardens:
  - Several operations may report they have a “mixed vegetable garden” and do not have much of any one crop. In those cases:
    - Ask if more than a tenth of an acre (about 5,000 square feet) is devoted to any one commodity. Focus on those first.
    - Leave notes on the area, production, and sales for the remaining crops with smaller areas

- Total Acres of Vegetables
  - The purpose for asking the total number of vegetable acres is to properly account for land that has been double or triple-cropped. In those cases, the sum of the vegetable acres harvested will be greater than the total acres of vegetables.
    - Vegetable acres cannot be zero or blank if vegetables are reported.
    - If total vegetable acres planted is significantly higher than the sum of the vegetables reported, please leave a note to explain what other vegetables are missing, not accounted for by this survey, or if there is idle vegetable land.
    - If the sum of the vegetables reported in the table is higher than the vegetable acres, then please leave a note to explain why (ex. double- or triple-cropping).



# Vegetable Grower Inquiry Practice Interviews

[Click here to  
return to list  
of materials](#)

Use average yield and price data from the annual vegetable summary found on the NASS website at [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov). This summary is typically released around February 15. Use the U.S. average yield and prices for these practice interviews which might trigger warnings, if using Blaise, depending on the state in which you're practicing. (Additionally: this is only meant to be a basic guide, please feel free to deviate from the script to test things like reporting in different units, checking for warnings/errors (if using Blaise), practicing different scenarios, etc.)

## Practice Interview 1

Who is responding? **Operator**

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

Did this operation grow any vegetable, melon, or herb crops? **Yes**

How many acres of vegetables, melons, and herbs were planted for harvest in [state]?

**11.0**



How many acres of [specific vegetable] were planted? **11.0**

How many of these 11.0 acres of [specific vegetable] were or will be harvested? **10.0**

What was the total quantity of [specific vegetable] harvested or expected to be harvested? **Yield from release X 10.0 harvested acres**

What was the total quantity of [specific vegetable] sold or expected to be sold for fresh market? **The total production you just calculated**

What was the average price or total dollars received for the [specific vegetable] sold for fresh market? **Price from annual vegetable summary**

What was the total quantity of [specific vegetable] sold or expected to be sold for processing? **0**

What was the amount of [specific vegetable] used to make processed items for this operation to sell? **0**

What was the amount of [specific vegetable] harvested, but not sold? **0**

Will this operation grow any vegetable crops, melons, or herbs in the future? **Yes**

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

This completes the survey! Thank you again.



## Practice Interview 2

Who is responding? **Spouse (Mary Farmer)**

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

Did this operation grow any vegetable or herb crops? **Yes**

How many acres of vegetables, melons, and herbs were planted for harvest in [state]?

**310.0**

How many acres of [specific vegetable] were planted? **100.0**

How many of these 100.0 acres of [specific vegetable] were or will be harvested? **100.0**

What was the total quantity of [specific vegetable] harvested or expected to be harvested?

**U.S. average yield from annual summary X 100.0 harvested acres**

What was the total quantity of [specific vegetable] sold or expected to be sold for fresh market? **0**

What was the total quantity of [specific vegetable] sold or expected to be sold for processing? **The total production you calculated**

What was the average price or total dollars received for the [specific vegetable] sold for processing? **U.S. average price from annual summary**

What was the amount of [specific vegetable] used to make processed items for this operation to sell? **0**

What was the amount of [specific vegetable] harvested, but not sold? **0**

How many acres of [specific vegetable] were planted? **210.0**

How many of these 210.0 acres of [specific vegetable] were or will be harvested? **200.0**

What was the total quantity of [specific vegetable] harvested or expected to be harvested? **Average U.S. yield from annual summary X 200.0 harvested acres**

What was the total quantity of [specific vegetable] sold or expected to be sold for fresh market? **Half of the total production you just calculated**

What was the average price or total dollars received for the [specific vegetable] sold for fresh market? **U.S. average price from annual summary**

What was the total quantity of [specific vegetable] sold or expected to be sold for processing? **¼ of the total production you calculated**

What was the average price or total dollars received for the [specific vegetable] sold for processing? **Use the same price you used for fresh market**

What was the amount of [specific vegetable] used to make processed items for this operation to sell? **0**

What was the amount of [specific vegetable] harvested, but not sold? **The remaining ¼ of calculated production**

(Operator had no other vegetable acres)

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

This completes the survey! Thank you again.

