



## *Guide to Encouraging Survey Participation*

### **General Statement when Encouraging Response**

Each phone call is an effort to gather reliable, objective information directly from the source – American farmers and ranchers. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is mandated by Congress to gather and release these reports. There is always speculation about each new crop season and agricultural producers are the main source of the facts. Speculation can lead to unjustified swings in market prices. Producers can reduce this uncertainty in the marketplace by responding.

### Handling Uncertainty and Encouraging Survey Response

#### **1. The government uses this information against us.**

It is hard to overestimate the importance of NASS data. Statistical information on acreage, production, stocks, prices and income is essential for the smooth operation of federal programs. It is also indispensable for planning and administering related federal and state programs in such areas as consumer protection, conservation, environmental quality, trade, education, and recreation.

Reliable, timely and detailed statistics help to maintain a stable economic climate.

#### **2. Every time one of these reports comes out, the price of grain goes down.**

The fact is prices go up as often as they go down.

**Corn:** For the period of 1985–2024, the prices increased 86 times on the day after the monthly Crop Production reports, had no change 21 times, and decreased 92 times. The average increase was 7.6 cents, and the average decrease was 7.5 cents. If you look at prices one week after the monthly Crop Production report for the same period, it shows prices increased 100 times one week after the crop report, had no change 1 time, and decreased 98 times. The average increase was 12 cents, and the average decrease was 13.3 cents.

**Soybeans:** For the period of 1985–2024, the prices increased 100 times on the day after the monthly Crop Production reports, had no change 5 times, and decreased 94 times. The average increase was 16.5 cents, and the average decrease was 16.2 cents. If you look at prices one week after the monthly Crop Production report for the same period, it shows prices increased 101 times one week after the crop report, had no change 3 times, and decreased 95 times. The average increase was 24.8 cents, and the average decrease was 26.6 cents.

**Wheat:** For the period of 1987–2024, the prices increased 93 times on the day after the monthly Crop Production reports, had no change 11 times, and decreased 99 times. The average increase was 9.7 cents, and the average decrease was 8.5 cents. If you look at prices one week after the monthly Crop Production report for the same period, it shows prices increased 101 times one week after the crop report, had no change 4 times, and decreased 98 times. The average increase was 16.4 cents, and the average decrease was 19.9 cents.

**Upland cotton:** For the period of 1989–2024, the prices increased 109 times on the day after the monthly Crop Production reports, had no change 0 times, and decreased 119 times. The average increase was 98.1 points per pound, and the average decrease was 99.5 points per pound. If you look at prices one week after the monthly Crop Production report for the same period, it shows prices increased 121 times one week after the crop report, had no change 1 time, and decreased 106 times. The average increase was 199.7 points per pound, and the average decrease was 209 points per pound.

### **3. Why am I always picked to do the survey?**

NASS randomly selects farms/ranches based on size, commodities produced, and part of the country. Each farm/ranch selected represents a certain number of others of the same size and type. On average, each farm operation we talk to represents over 100 other operations and your response is critically important.

### **4. Why not ask my neighbor or someone else?**

Your farm was selected and once selected cannot be replaced. If you choose not to respond, others of similar size and type will not be represented. We do not want to miss this opportunity to have your voice be heard.

### **5. How do I get off the list?**

Since 1975, a farm has been defined as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products (crops or livestock) were or could be produced or sold. If you meet that definition of a farm we cannot drop you from the list. To provide accurate information, we must maintain a complete list no matter how small.

### **6. Who has access to my information and what is it used for?**

Information collected on surveys is confidential. All employees are subject to fines of \$10,000 and ten years in prison for releasing confidential information. Data is only used in aggregate, no individual information is ever released in NASS reports.

### **7. Why don't you just go to the Farm Service Agency (FSA)? They have all my information.**

FSA does not have the information in as timely a manner or as much detail as NASS needs. FSA uses our data to trigger and deliver farm programs directly affecting payments to producers.