



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service



Dear Colleagues,

The United States Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service conducts the Census of Agriculture just once every five years, and it's that time again. Currently, the census is the only complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. It includes even the smallest plots of land – rural or urban – growing fruits, vegetables, or raising food animals, if \$1,000 or more of such products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

The information produced by the Census of Agriculture guides Congress, agribusiness, policymakers, researchers, local governments and many others on the creation and funding of agricultural programs and services – decisions that can directly impact your local operations and the future of the agriculture industry for years to come.

This December, the 2017 Census of Agriculture will be mailed to more than three million U.S. farmers. **Your support in promoting the census is critical to its success.** Over the next few months, **please help us remind producers of the importance of their responses.** It is through the census that they can show the nation the value and importance of agriculture.

This year, NASS will collect new information, including data on active duty and military veteran farmers, as well as expanded questions about food marketing practices. Please note that new farmers or existing farmers who have not participated in a prior Census of Agriculture still have time to sign up to be counted through June at www.agcounts.usda.gov.

When the census forms are received in December, farmers will be encouraged to respond online, or alternatively via mail. Improved this year, the online questionnaire is convenient and dynamic – accessible on any electronic device. It's user-friendly, calculates totals automatically and skips questions that do not pertain to that operation. This new online census form saves time and effort.

Census of Agriculture responses are due by February 5, 2018. The results will be available beginning in February 2019, in aggregate form only to ensure that no individual operation or producer can be identified as required by federal law.

Thank you for helping to spread the word that the 2017 Census of Agriculture is ***Your Voice, Your Future, Your Opportunity***. For more information about the census, please visit www.agcensus.usda.gov, follow NASS on Twitter @usda_nass, or call (800) 727-9540.

Sincerely,

Hubert Hamer
Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service
United States Department of Agriculture

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