

What is the Census of Agriculture?

The Census of Agriculture, taken every five years, is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census looks at land use, ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income, expenses and many other areas. For America's farmers and ranchers, the Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future and their responsibility.

Why is the Census of Agriculture important?

The Census provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation. Through the Census, producers can show the nation the value and importance of agriculture, and they can help influence decisions that will shape the future of American agriculture for years to come. By responding to the Census, producers will help themselves, their communities and all of U.S. agriculture.

Who uses Census of Agriculture data?

Census data is used by all those who serve agricultural producers and rural communities – federal, state and local governments, agribusinesses, trade associations and many others. For instance, companies and cooperatives use the information to determine the locations of facilities that will serve agricultural producers. Community planners use the information to target needed services to rural residents. USDA uses the information to ensure that local service centers are staffed at appropriate levels. Legislators use the information to shape farm policies and programs. And, of course, farmers and ranchers can use Census data to help make informed decisions about the future of their own operations.

How is the Census conducted?

The 2007 Census of Agriculture report forms will be mailed to farm and ranch operators on December 28, 2007, to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they can complete the Census questionnaire online via a secure Web site.

Will my information be kept confidential?

Absolutely. Respondents are guaranteed by law (Title 7, U.S. Code) that their individual information will be kept confidential. NASS uses the information only for statistical purposes and publishes data only in tabulated totals. The completed Census forms cannot be used for taxation, investigation or regulation purposes. The privacy of individual Census records also is protected from disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act.

Must I respond to the Census?

Yes. United States law (Title 7, U.S. Code) requires all those who receive a Census report form to respond even if they did not operate a farm or ranch in 2007.

What if I only have a small operation or do not participate in government farm programs?

The Census of Agriculture is the responsibility of *every* agricultural operation, regardless of the size or type of operation. For Census purposes, a farm is any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the Census year.

When will 2007 Census results be released?

NASS will release Census data, in both electronic and print formats, beginning in February 2009. Detailed reports will be published for all counties, states and the nation.

Where can I find Census of Agriculture data?

Census of Agriculture data is available through the NASS field office in your state, as well as many depository libraries, universities and state government offices. It is also available online at www.nass.usda.gov or www.agcensus.usda.gov. For additional information on the Census of Agriculture or any NASS survey, call the Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540.