



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **NASS to Look at Louisiana Rice and Soybean Production Practices and Costs**

Baton Rouge, La. – How will we determine the viability of south Louisiana rice farms after the devastating 2005 hurricane season? Were there new production practices that offered a reasonable chance of growing a profitable crop? Acreage of rice in the state has dropped considerably, partly due to the hurricanes. Pressure from low prices and rising production costs has made growing rice more difficult in recent years, especially in 2006. Salt water intrusion kept some south Louisiana rice land out of production in 2006.

Did the threat of Asian Rust cause soybean growers to adjust their 2006 production plan? What method of treatment was used by growers who actually found the disease in their fields? Has the widespread use of GMO seed really helped the average soybean farmer's bottom line? How did the 2006 drought affect profitability?

These and other important questions will be answered when the U.S. Department of Agriculture conducts the 2006 Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS). "ARMS is USDA's primary source of information on the production practices, resource use and economic well-being of America's farm households," said Nathan Crisp, Director of the Louisiana Field Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

From October to December, NASS will conduct personal interviews with nearly 9,000 farm operators nationwide, including 327 producers in Louisiana. These farmers will be asked to provide information on their fertilizer, nutrient and pesticide applications, as well as their pest management and irrigation practices.

"This is the second phase of the ARMS survey, where we focus on production practices and costs. This year, we are looking at rice and soybeans," said Crisp. "During the third phase of the survey, in early 2007, we will follow up with some producers to obtain additional economic data to be able to provide a complete economic picture." Crisp added, "The last time we collected comprehensive rice production and economic data was in year 2000, and it's been at least that long for soybeans, so it's particularly important that all growers respond."

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While ARMS is a lengthy and complex survey, its importance cannot be underestimated, according to Crisp. “Virtually every federal farm program and policy is based on ARMS data,” he said. “Conservation programs, price support programs, risk management programs, research programs – you name it. All of them rely on information generated through this survey. That’s why it’s so important that farmers take the time to participate and ensure that we have the most accurate and up-to-date information, straight from the source.”

Crisp assures ARMS participants that the confidentiality of their responses is protected by law. “NASS strictly safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only state-level and national-level data, ensuring that no individual producer or operation can be identified,” he said.

For more information about ARMS and other surveys conducted by NASS, contact the Louisiana Field Office at 225 922-1362 or visit the NASS web site at: [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov).