



# Sheep and Goat Inventory Survey

United States Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service

July 2008

U. S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service conducts the biannual Sheep and Goat Inventory Survey every January and July. This survey measures the number of breeding and market sheep and goats, lambs and kids born during the previous year, as well as wool production and mohair production.

## **HOW ARE THE DATA COLLECTED?**

The Sheep and Goat Inventory Survey is conducted nationwide in January and includes nearly 23,000 sheep and goat operations. In July, the survey includes a sample of approximately 4,600 sheep and goat operations. Farm and ranch operators are generally contacted during the first two weeks of the month via:

- Telephone – Computer-assisted telephone interviewing is the primary method.
- Mail – Participants fill out and mail back the questionnaire that was mailed to them.
- Personal interview – A respondent can request an interview with a NASS representative.
- Internet – Secure, online reporting is the timeliest, most cost-effective option.

## **HOW IS THE INFORMATION USED?**

NASS will publish the survey results in the *Sheep and Goat* report to be released July 25, 2008. Estimates of the total number of operations with sheep and percent of inventory by herd size are published in *Farms, Land in Farms, and Livestock Operations* in January.

This information is a critical decision-making tool for sheep and goat producers and the industry as a whole. For instance:

- Sheep and goat inventory estimates provide an important baseline of herd size. The estimates of inventory and lamb and kid crop all provide data that enable producers and industry to evaluate the number of animals that will eventually move to market – helping producers make marketing decisions and plan for herd expansion or reduction.
- Timely estimates of sheep and goat inventory allow input suppliers, packers and government to evaluate the expected slaughter volume for future months and to determine potential supplies for export.
- Accurate data about sheep and goat inventory and production enable USDA and producer organizations to plan for and decisively address crisis situations such as disease outbreaks. Having quality information also helps the industry to be more responsive to the American and international public and to increase consumer understanding and awareness of the benefits of U.S. sheep and goats and their products.

The information provided by survey respondents is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the privacy of all responses and publishes only in aggregate form, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

All reports are available through the NASS web site: [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov). For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540.