



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**Census of Agriculture  
January 2003**

### **NATION'S 2002 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE REPORT FORMS DUE**

Farmers and ranchers are reminded that the deadline for returning their 2002 Census of Agriculture report form is Feb. 3, 2003. Conducted by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the census takes place only once every five years. It serves as the Nation's only uniform, comprehensive information source on agriculture production, inventories, sales and expenses for all states and counties.

"The Nation's agricultural sector has a critical stake in this census of agriculture," said Doug Hartwig, North Dakota State Statistician. "Whether a large feedlot or a CRP only farm, every response is important because it helps in the development of future farm programs. We encourage participants to return completed forms as soon as possible to ensure that Agriculture counts."

Hartwig points out that an accurate report of the farm operations in every state and county will help put together a complete, detailed picture of the Nation's agriculture. Snapshots of U.S. agriculture dating back to 1840 are a valuable resource to farmers, farm organizations, agribusiness, farm media, and county, state and federal governments.

Census data are used to:

- ▶ examine long-term trends and anticipate the future direction of agriculture.
- ▶ allocate local and national funds for farm programs.
- ▶ help agribusiness develop sales territories and marketing plans for fertilizer, seed, processing, storage, transportation, and equipment.
- ▶ help State and Federal government agencies evaluate effects of changes in farm legislation.
- ▶ assess patterns in water use and irrigation to determine resource and management needs.
- ▶ allocate cooperative extension funding, services, and research at the local level.

Help completing the census report form is only a free phone call away at 1-888-4AG-STAT. Those with questions about completing the form, or who did not receive a form by February but believe they qualify as a farm or ranch, can call the toll-free number. The census is required by law (Title 7, U.S. Code) and by mailing your form in we can decrease the costs by eliminating further mail and personal follow-ups.

Results from the 2002 Census of Agriculture will be published on Feb. 3, 2004. They will be available on [www.usda.gov/nass/](http://www.usda.gov/nass/), through your local NASS State office, as well as from many libraries and land grant universities. Individual reports are held strictly confidential by law (Title 7, U.S. Code).

*Find agricultural statistics for your county, State, and the Nation at [www.usda.gov/nass/](http://www.usda.gov/nass/).*

**For More Information Contact:**

Doug Hartwig, State Statistician ■ NDSU, IACC 448 ■ 701-239-5306  
E-mail: [nass-nd@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-nd@nass.usda.gov) ■ Internet: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/nd/>