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National Agricultural Statistics Service



News Release

New England Field Office

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USDA TO COLLECT DATA ON FARMERS' PLANTING INTENTIONS FOR 2009

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – What crops do farmers intend to plant this growing season? Will field corn acreage be above or below last year? What about oats and barley in Maine? Or dry hay in Vermont? These are just a couple of the critical questions the New England Field Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will be asking more than 2,000 producers region wide as part of the March Agricultural Survey.

"The March Agricultural Survey is one of the most important surveys conducted each year by NASS," explained Gary Keough, director of the NASS New England Field Office. "This survey will provide the first official estimates of U.S. farmers' planting intentions for 2009, giving a glimpse at the upcoming growing season.

"Data from the March Agricultural Survey benefit farmers and ranchers by providing timely and accurate information to help them make critical decisions for their operation. When producers finalize their cropping and marketing plans, this survey will be one of the most important sources of information for them," added Keough.

Beginning the end of February, NASS will contact selected New England producers by mail or telephone and ask them to provide information on the crop acreage they intend to plant for the 2009 crop year, including planned dry hay, field corn, barley, and oats acreage. NASS will also collect data on quantities of grains and oilseeds stored on-farm. The information will be compiled and analyzed then published in a series of USDA reports, including the annual *Prospective Plantings* report and quarterly *Grain Stocks* report, both to be released on March 31.

As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. "NASS safeguards the privacy of all responses and publishes only state- and national-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified," stated Keough.

All reports are available on the NASS web site: www.nass.usda.gov. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS New England Field Office at 1-800-642-9571.