



April 30, 2004

Frequently Asked Questions about Weekly Crop Progress & Condition Reporting

Alert USDA about Crop Conditions via Internet

You can help alert USDA about crop progress and unusual crop conditions DURING the growing seasons. Instead of waiting until the crop is in, you can give us an early warning of crop situations that may need our attention for possible assistance.

How much time is expected of me?

Except for the 10-15 minutes to report each week, there should be no additional time needed to help with this project. We are only trying to find people who already have crop knowledge as a result of their normal work routines.

How can I become a weekly crop reporter?

If you can help PA agriculture with this popular weekly crop update, you will be given your own User and Password. To become a Crop reporter or for more information, call us at 1-800-498-1518 and ask for the Crop Progress statistician. Or send an email message to nass-pa@nass.usda.gov with subject as "Crop Progress."

How do I report each week?

If you are knowledgeable about crops across your county AND have Internet access, you qualify to be a weekly crop reporter. It only takes about 10-15 minutes each week to alert USDA of the crop situation in your county using the Internet report form.

When does this program begin and end?

In Pennsylvania, this USDA report is issued weekly during the growing season from the first week in April to the last week in November. It contains the state average of crop progress and conditions of field crops, fruits and vegetables in Pennsylvania and Nationwide. Comments from county reporters add a local flavor to the publications.

Can I see an example of the Internet reporting system?

Yes. See <http://cpcsweb.nass.usda.gov/>.

Use State=PA, User=demo42, Password=penn42, Survey= Crop Weather.
[The user and password are case sensitive, you must use all small letters.]

How am I notified of when the Internet system is available for my report?

Reporters will be sent an email notice every Thursday or Friday when the system is available. A reminder email is also sent first thing Monday morning.

When is my weekly report expected?

We ask that reports are completed by 10 am on Monday. A Monday report is preferred to include any significant weekend weather events, but an earlier report will gladly be used if Monday is not practical for you that week.

How about crops that I don't know anything about?

Reporters can skip crops or other items for which you have no opinion.

How often should I respond during the growing season?

This is a voluntary survey to collect **opinions** on crop progress and conditions. For reliable survey results across the growing season, we ask that reporters submit responses nearly every week so changes can be measured from week to week.

I am responsible for a few counties.

Are you asking for a separate report for each one?

At the beginning of the season, reporters can choose to report for one county or a group of counties for the entire growing season; this depends on the geographic area for which you are knowledgeable. Only one report is needed to cover a group of counties unless you prefer to submit a separate report for each county.

Do I get any credit for doing this?

Comments from reporters are published in the statewide release describing special situations in your county. This provides visibility for your organization because your name and organization will be seen, with your comments, by about 3,000 subscribers across Pennsylvania. As a reporter, you will also receive the weekly summary via email.

What are the publications that come from this effort?

The Pennsylvania report is issued Monday evening, after 4 pm. A text message is sent via email subscriptions and the PDF file of the paper report is loaded to Internet by Tuesday, first thing in the morning. There are also four national reports issued Monday – Wednesday that use the information collected from weekly reporters across the USA. To see the various summaries that are published, see <http://www.nass.usda.gov/pa/cropwthr/cropwthr.htm> .

I know of people in other organizations who are already reporting for my county.

Why should I do it too?

Some counties have not been represented at all in previous years. Also, it is beneficial to have one county reporter from various county organizations or individuals. 1) Since this is an opinion survey, different reporters may have different opinions for the same crops. 2) Reporters will only answer for the crops they know about. 3) If a reporter misses one week, we hope to have another report from that county.