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NEWS RELEASE

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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VIRGINIA FARMERS PROVIDE FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Today's farmers face constant challenges as they battle lower prices, higher input costs, land values, and rent. These and other issues place economic strain on farmers—but how much? The Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service will give Virginia farmers the chance to answer that question by participating in the 2002 Agricultural Resource Management Survey.

“Reliable, accurate descriptions of the current economic health of Virginia’s farms is crucial,” said Steven Manheimer, State Statistician, “especially when policymakers, farm organizations, analysts, local USDA agents, news media, farm suppliers, lenders, and others make decisions that affect growers.”

These surveys specifically help Virginia’s farmers by letting their voices be heard. Policymakers rely on these data when they formulate farm policy and determine the amount of federal assistance for farmers. For instance, during the past three years, U.S. farmers averaged more than \$21.7 billion in direct government payments. This is nearly \$12 billion more than the average total annual payment from 1995 to 1998. Data from this survey was used to determine direct payments and other Federal farm programs.

Producers chosen to participate in the 2002 Agricultural Resource Management Survey will be visited by an interviewer to complete the report at the farm operator’s convenience. Results will be published in a series of reports on the current farm financial situation.

Farm Production Expenditures, the first report with results from the survey, will be released July 17, 2003. For a copy of the finished report or to obtain other agricultural statistics, visit the National Agricultural Statistics Service website at www.usda.gov/nass/ or call 1-800-772-0670.

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