

Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS
February 22-23, 2011



U.S. Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

SUMMARY
Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics (ACAS)
February 22-23, 2011
Marriott Crystal Gateway
1700 Jefferson Davis Hwy
Arlington, VA 22202
Attendees at Meeting

Members Present

Mr. James M. Baise	Mr. Roger S. Mix
Mr. Jose A. (Agapito) Candelaria	Ms. Doris E. Mold
Dr. Beth Carroll	Dr. Emmett Redd
Ms. Rosalee K. Coleman	Dr. Lawrence E. Sanchez
Mrs. Carole R. Engle	Mr. Brian D. Thomas
Dr. John C. Foltz	Mrs. Louise Waterman
Mrs. Tammy Gray-Steele	Dr. Robert D. Yonkers
Mr. Douglas A. Huebsch	Dr. Linda J. Young
Mr. Larry Leonard Janssen	Mr. William G. Bostic, Jr. (Ex-Officio Member)
Mr. Carl R. Mattson	Mrs. Sally Thompson (ERS Ex-Officio)

Members Absent

Mr. Walter Edwin Kee	Mr. John R. Kort (Ex-Officio Member)
Dr. John D. Lawrence	

NASS Personnel Participating:

Dr. Ann Bartuska, Deputy Under Secretary of Research, Education, and Economics
Dr. Cynthia Clark, NASS Administrator
Joe Reilly, Associate Administrator and Committee Executive Director
Hubert Hamer, Agricultural Statistics Board Chair
Joseph Prusacki, Director of Statistics Division
Bob Bass, Director, National Operation Center
Renee Picanso, Director, Census and Survey Division
Chris Messer, Branch Chief of Program Administration Branch
Janice Goodwin, Deputy Western Field Offices
Mark Harris, Director, Research and Development Division
Michael Valivullah, Director, Information Technology Division
Marc Tosiano, Staff Director, Marketing and Information Services
Sue DuPont, Head, Marketing Section
Marlo D. Johnson, Committee Secretary
Carolyn Foster, Management Analyst
Harold Ballou, Staff Director, Training and Career Development Office
Jody Roberts, Training and Career Development Office

Special Guest:

Letiti Toomer, USDA NRCS
Robert Burk, Executive Director of Research, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Office

Public:

Maggie Mitchell	Minor Crop Farmer Alliance
Stephen Brown	Glacial Lake Cranberries

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Day One Summary-February 22, 2011

I. Introduction

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair, Doris Mold, on Tuesday, February 22, 2011, at 8:00 a.m for the new members. Joseph Reilly, Committee Executive Director and Doris met with the new members. Everyone introduced themselves and then Mr. Reilly gave a presentation on the purpose of the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics (ACAS).

Doris Mold, committee chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m., which included all members and staff of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Committee Members and NASS staff was asked to introduce themselves. Doris Mold welcomed everyone to the meeting and then asked Deputy Under Secretary of Research, Education, and Economics (REE), Dr. Ann Bartuska, to provide an update on REE.

II. Welcome

Dr. Ann Bartuska started by welcoming the members to Washington, DC. Dr. Bartuska expressed to the committee how important their input is for guiding the Departments statistical program and priorities. She gave a brief explanation of her background, and discussed the transition and role of the new REE Office. She discussed how National Agricultural Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEE) and ACAS relate and when and where NAREEE meetings are held.

During the next two days, the members were asked to consider a wide range of topics including:

- Energy and Organic Survey;
 - REE is looking forward to the ACAS feedback on NASS effort and priority for the Energy and Organic Survey.
- 2012 Agricultural Census Content;
 - This is important to the Department to identify minimum and socially disadvantaged farms. Also, NASS is planning and preparing for the next Census of Agriculture.

Dr. Bartuska also stated that she cannot resist noting that in the most recent “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government” survey conducted by OPM in 2009, NASS was ranked number one as the best place or agency to work in within the entire U.S. Department of Agriculture for the third survey in a row. NASS has a long history of being a very inclusive and high performing organization and your efforts to keep that record going are notable as the agency goes through a major transformation in their business operations.

- Dr. Bartuska expressed that Secretary Vilsack has challenged the Department to undertake cultural transformation. REE and NASS have embraced this challenge. The main areas of focus are:
 - Leadership
 - Employee Development
 - Talent Management
 - Recruitment and Retention
 - Customer Service and Community Outreach

III. 2009 Recommendations and Overview

Joe Reilly, Associate Administrator of NASS, reviewed the Advisory Committee's recommendations from 2009. He also discussed the purpose and responsibilities of the Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Secretary on the conduct of the periodic census and surveys of agriculture, other related surveys, and the types of agricultural information to obtain from respondents. The committee also prepares recommendations regarding the content of Agricultural reports. It also presents the views and needs for the data of major suppliers and users of Agriculture statistics. The duties of the Committee are solely advisory. Joe also discussed the mission of NASS, which is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.

NASS is responsible for administering the USDA's statistical estimating program and the 5-year Census of Agriculture; coordinating Federal/State agricultural statistics needs; conducting statistical research for other Federal/State or private organizations and other countries, and statistical research.

NASS Does Not:

- Set policy;
- Regulate activities;
- Permit influence;
- Disclose individual reports; and
- Favor any group above others.

2009 Recommendations and Responses:

- The Advisory Committee commends NASS for its prompt and positive action in revising the acreage estimates contained in its October 10, 2008 Crop Production Report once it became aware of errors in one of the external data sources used as the basis for the estimates. This unprecedented revision was a bold and appropriate move

- to maintain the integrity and reputation of NASS as a reliable and timely source of agricultural statistics.
- *NASS would like to thank the Advisory Committee for complimenting us for taking corrective action on the October 10, 2008 Crop Production Report.*
 - The Advisory Committee considers the data enclave pilot project a success. The Committee recommends that NASS continue and expand this process to allow researchers secure and controlled access to appropriate micro data.
 - *National Opinion Research Center is pushing and offering scholarships to Researchers at Universities in order to expand the use of the Data Enclave. Also, NASS has approved and commenced 12 Researchers from different Universities that have requested use of the Data Enclave. NASS will look at the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey and other surveys to see if more can be added to the Data Enclave.*
 - NASS should review the options available to publish a return over feed cost statistic for the dairy industry that is updated for current production conditions and tailored for significant milk production states. A preliminary report (or final) should be presented to the USDA Data Users session in the Fall of 2009.
 - *Joseph Prusacki, Director of the Statistics Division will discuss this topic during his presentation.*
 - In order to better inform the public about food production and to provide better data and information to agriculture policy makers, where practical, NASS should publish agricultural commodity production volume by farm size on an annual basis.
 - *Joseph Prusacki, Director of the Statistics Division will discuss this topic during his presentation.*
 - The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS consider Energy, Land Ownership, and Local Food Systems for follow-on surveys for the 2012 Census.
 - *Chris Messer, Chief of the Program Administration Branch, will discuss this topic during her presentation.*
 - The Advisory Committee recommends NASS consider Field Office surveys for Agricultural Economic Land Ownership Survey (AELOS), Energy and local food systems.
 - *Unfortunately, this was not a high priority and was not funded at this time.*

- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS fully reinstate the Chemical Use Survey.
 - *NASS was able to obtain funding for the Chemical Use Survey, and this program has been fully reinstated.*
- The Advisory Committee recommends creating a Subcommittee Team to assist NASS with making their website more user friendly for Data Users'.
 - *Jeff Bailey, Chief of the Geospatial Information Branch, will give a demonstration on the Crops Web Portal, which is a change to NASS' website.*
- The Advisory Committee would like for NASS to extend the Enclave for further study by including more surveys.
 - *At this time, NASS is only able to offer access to the ARMS Survey Data.*
- The Advisory Committee would like for NASS to consider looking at some Census demographics for the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey because it is very inclusive and detailed.
 - *NASS will start to review the Census Content in 2012 and will take this recommendation into consideration.*
- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS maintain control of the confidential data collected by a statistical agency.
 - *NASS will maintain control of all data that is collected and not send any records to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).*

IV. State of NASS

Cynthia Clark, Administrator, welcomed and thanked everyone for taking the time out of their busy schedules to help NASS chart the future of NASS. She stressed the importance of the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics in this endeavor.

Dr. Clark then emphasized the “Principles and Practices of A Federal Statistical Agency” as outlined by the Office of Management and Budget directive. These include:

- Relevance to Policy Issues;
- Credibility Among Data Users;
- A Strong Position of Independence; and
- Trust Among Data Providers.

She then provided a synopsis of her career that has led to her assuming the NASS Administrator position. As Cynthia discussed her vision for NASS, she focused on the “Principles and Practices,” and how these help define her commitment to raise NASS’s already high level of Service. Her practices include:

- A clearly defined and well accepted mission;
- Openness about sources and limitations about data provided;
- Cooperation with data users;
- Commitment to quality and professional standards of practice;
- Professional advancement of staff;
- Improving Technical and Management Training;
- Coordination and cooperation with other Statistical Agencies.

Through these practices, her goals and vision for NASS include improving data quality; expanding career opportunities for staff; producing cost efficiencies in our program delivery; and positioning NASS to serve production agriculture community and the mission of USDA more broadly.

Cynthia then provided an update on the FY 2011 and FY 2012 budget situation for NASS. FY 2011 was still under a continuing resolution (CR) at the time of this discussion. The most likely scenario's for NASS included a full year CR (same spending levels as FY 2010 -\$162 million); reverting to FY 2009 spending levels (\$10.3 million below the FY 2010 level); or a full year CR with an across-the-board rescission. NASS management is currently planning for a full year CR and will have to adjust to any additional reductions once the actual budget is appropriated. By planning for full year CR, NASS has already eliminated the Census of Aquaculture, the TOTAL survey, and trimmed travel, equipment and supplies by 10 percent.

The President's FY 2012 budget was released on February 14, 2011. For NASS, this included an increased funding request for county estimates and the cyclical Census of Agriculture activities. These increases were partly offset by efficiencies in producing livestock county estimates and livestock prices received. Additionally, the *July Sheep and Goats* report and the quarterly *Agricultural Labor* report are recommended for elimination.

Cynthia concluded by discussing cultural transformation, which is the process of creating a workplace where all employees and customers are treated with dignity and respect, and provided the opportunity for success. Cultural Transformation focus within NASS and the Department are on leadership, employee development, talent management, recruitment and retention, and customer service and community outreach.

Cynthia thanked the committee for their time and re-emphasized that she is looking forward to working with the ACAS to help improve an already great agency.

V. 2012 Agricultural Census Outreach

Chris Messer, chief of the Program Administration Branch (PAB), discussed 2012 Agricultural Census Outreach. Her presentation included lessons learned, coverage goals, building the list, and 2012 approach.

- Lessons Learned
 - Prepare for expenses in dollars and time related to a diversified communications campaign
 - Trend towards declining response rates
 - Undercoverage of small and minority farmers
 - Cultural and language barriers
 - Mistrust of government
 - Limited resources

- Coverage Goals
 - Coverage of all farms will be at least 75% for each State (8 States had coverage less than 75% in 2007)
 - Coverage of cattle inventory will be at least 85% for each State (7 States had coverage less than 85% in 2007).
 - Coverage of goat inventory will be at least 88% at the U.S. level (coverage in 2007 was 84.6%).
 - Coverage of total minority (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (all regardless of ethnicity)) race operated farms will be at least 75% at the U.S. level (coverage in 2007 was 72.9%)
 - Coverage of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin (all regardless of race) operated farms will be at least 65% at the U.S. level (coverage in 2007 was 61.0%).

- Building the Census Mail List
 - 4 page census screener
 - List sources
 - State lists
 - National lists
 - Specialty commodities

- Approach for 2012 Census
 - Partnership building
 - Direct farmer contact
 - Earned media/public relations
 - Paid media/advertising
 - Contracting with Osborne and Barr
 - Set manageable goals

- Find what resonates with your audience
- Create a consistent “brand”
- Engage others to help tell story
- Diversify communications channels

VI. National Operations Center

Bob Bass, Director of the National Operations Center (NOC), discussed the new center. Data collection methods have progressed in NASS as sampling frames, survey designs, and program needs have evolved. Gone are the days of the rural mail carrier survey, the windshield survey, crop meters, and non-probability mail surveys. Instead, NASS has moved to more probability based, defensible designs that are required for the precision in the estimation program demanded by data users. NASS’ new designs require precise data collection to occur and present numerous challenges in timeliness, efficiency, and costs. The primary mode of data collection we have employed to meet these needs is telephone. Today, excluding the census, over half of data collected in NASS is by telephone.

In order for NASS to achieve operational efficiencies and continue to collect high quality data, the telephone has to be at the center of our survey designs. Although we have made progress in redistributing telephone data collection to six regional centers, this progress has been limited due to a lack of a comprehensive transition strategy and lack of funds. Likewise, sample frame development and maintenance is integral to data collection activities, as well as training for those interviewers contacting the farmers and ranchers across the United States. The impetus for this proposal not only pertains to operational efficiencies but also a number of other factors/potential gains associated with data quality.

The proposal presented here is simple. The major thrust of our plan is “**the data**”. It is all about the data --- collection, handling, processing, analyses, and estimation. Data collection, frame maintenance, and training conducted at fewer locations, by highly trained staff ensuring standardized procedures, can reduce the source of error inherent to all activities and improve data quality. In addition, administration of these activities, by fewer staff in a centralized design, will reduce operational cost by reducing staff resources necessary to complete the tasks. Our approved design directs the construction of a centralized operations center for NASS. This center is designed with the assumption that efficiency and standardization are more easily achieved in a centralized structure. All data collected by mail, telephone, EDR, or face to face enumeration will be handled by the operations center. Location for the center was selected based on several factors including quality of life, cost of living, transportation efficiencies, availability of highly qualified staff, and telecommunications capabilities.

The NOC will include the following:

- Administrative Group (Director / Deputy Director)
- Call Center (154 seats)
- Frames Maintenance Group

- Forms Processing Group
- Training Group
- Survey Instrument Design Groups

NASS acquired GSA space in St. Louis, Missouri for the new National Operations Center. Construction is underway to prepare the space to meet detailed specifications. The business plan calls for about 100 full-time NASS staff when the center is fully operational. The Call Center will be staffed by intermittent staff and will require approximately 400 persons to provide the staff necessary to fully staff calling operations. List sampling frame operations will be relocated from each Field Office to the centralized approach employed by the NOC. Survey/census instrument design will be relocated from Headquarters to St. Louis over a period of time as resources allow. The National Operations Center is planned to open in August 2011 and be fully staffed and operational by October 1, 2012.

The design, construction, staffing, and operations of the National Operations Center is based on the premise of increased standards, more efficient use of resources, and reduced operating costs. Centralized calling and list frame operations, enhanced interviewer training and evaluation, and more closely monitored data collection will reduce survey errors, improve data quality, and reduce survey costs. The opportunity to improve quality while reducing costs rarely presents itself. NASS is seizing this opportunity as we continue to meet the expanded data needs for agriculture.

VII. Census of Agriculture Programs

Chris Messer, Chief of Program Administration Branch (PAB) discussed Census of Agriculture Programs, which include On-Farm Renewable Energy Survey, Organic Production Survey, Census of Horticultural Specialties, and Farm Ranch and Irrigation Survey (FRIS).

The Census of Agriculture is a major NASS statistical series and the data is critical to the agency's mission and reputation. In addition, as the agency's largest data collection program, efficiencies in data collection costs can result in savings to the agency with the goal of continuing quality statistics.

The plans for the 2012 Census of Agriculture begin with review of the data items collected on the 2007 Census of Agriculture along with supporting justification and changes from census stakeholders for new data items. The review also identified data items which would be better obtained through census follow-on surveys or other non-census NASS surveys.

The content review resulted in the following changes from 2007 for the 2012 Census of Agriculture:

- Expanded energy section
- Land use practices
- Agroforestry

- Cash rents
- Capture additional county or counties other than principal county

The purpose of the Census Data Collection Testing Team is to implement and oversee the Census Content Test, which will include redesign of the census forms with the intent of improving items on the form known to have the greatest incidences of error.

The Data Collection Testing Team recommended changes from 2007 for the 2012 Census of Agriculture are:

- Revised land and acreage sections
- Value of sales captured with commodity
- Electronic Data Reporting
- Customized Arizona American Indian/Navajo Form
- Government payments

Day Two Summary-February 23, 2011

VIII. Status of Programs / Agricultural Statistics Board Process

Hubert Hamer, Chairperson of Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB), provided a review and highlights of the 2007 Census of Agriculture. NASS was able to build stronger partnerships with Community Based Organizations; release the first American Indian Publication, and enumerated 2.2 million farms and ranches. He also presented information on the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey (FRIS), Organic Production Survey, Census of Horticultural Specialties, and On-Farm Energy Production Survey.

Hubert also discussed the Agricultural Chemical Use Survey program (ACU). This survey program was reduced significantly in 2007 due to budget constraints, and then fully restored in 2010. The major Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit recommendations for program improvement include:

- Meeting and consulting with data users
- Improving web-site access
- Strengthening cooperative agreements with States
- Identifying and leveraging public ACU data

Additionally, Hubert discussed the County Level Cash Rents Survey, Dairy Product Prices, and the Agricultural Prices Program Review. He provided an overview of the NASS 2010 Program Review report used to support budget reduction strategies.

The purpose of the NASS 2010 Program Review report was to review all aspects of the Agency's estimation program, including all census and annual programs and data series in anticipation of budget reduction for FY 2012 and beyond. The Team solicited input from Headquarters and Field Office staff for potential program changes and the associated short and long-term impact to the NASS budget, long term data series, and data users.

Hubert discussed potential program reductions based on the budget and the criteria used to make those decisions. He mentioned the NASS Strategic Planning Council (SPC), their agenda and meeting schedule.

He discussed the Agricultural Statistics Board process and the security measures employed during "Lockup". The term "Lockup" refers to the area where NASS statisticians are literally locked in with armed guards posted outside the locked doors. No one gains admittance to the area without clearance and a special pass. Once inside, no one can exit until the report is released. Hubert also discussed why the Board process is used and why the procedures were developed.

Finally, Hubert introduced himself as the new Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics Committee Executive Director.

IX. How NASS Statistics are used by Program Agencies (i.e. RMA, and FSA)

Joseph Prusacki, of Statistics Division (SD), discussed “How NASS Statistics Are Used by Program Agencies.” Examples of how NASS statistics are used by program agencies include:

- County Estimates are used by USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) in the administration of the Group Risk Income Protection (GRIP) and Group Risk Plan (GRP) programs.
- FSA uses the monthly grain prices as the trigger price for their Counter Cyclical Program (CCP) and ACRE Program.
- FSA uses NASS weekly Peanut Prices for their peanut program.
- FSA uses NASS monthly feed price ratio to administer the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program, primarily for the program’s Feed Cost Adjuster.

Joe responded to two recommendations from the 2009 meeting.

- NASS should review the options available to publish a return over feed cost statistic for the dairy industry that is updated for current production conditions and tailored for significant milk production states.
- In order to better inform the public about food production and to provide better data and information to agriculture policy makers, where practical, NASS should publish agricultural commodity production volume by farm size on an annual basis.

X. Demonstration of the Crops Web Portal

Jeff Bailey, Chief of the Geospatial Information Branch (GIB), gave a demonstration on the new web portal called CropScape which was released to the public in January 2011. CropScape is a state-of-the-art portal for the dissemination of the NASS Cropland Data Layer (CDL). The CDL is a national crop specific land cover classifications which is widely used for a variety of applications for climate and environmental ecosystem monitoring, health research, and agribusiness decision support. Additionally, NASS uses the CDL to produce acreage and yield estimates during the crop year. CropScape features a web-service based interactive map visualization, dissemination, and querying system. This portal is readily available to anyone with an internet connection. The data can be directly exported to ArcGIS Explorer and Google Earth for mashups or delivered to other applications via web services. This system greatly improves equal-accessibility, visualization, and dissemination and facilitates crop geospatial information usage.

XI. Returning Chairperson

The nomination committee re-nominated Doris Mold to serve as Chairperson and Mike Baise as the Co-Chairperson for the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics, beginning with

preparation for the 2012 meeting. Doris Mold and Mike Baise accepted the nomination and were approved by attending members.

XII. Closing Remarks for the Advisory Committee

Joe Reilly announced that the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 2012, and it will be held in Washington, D.C. The meeting was adjourned.

XIII. Committee Recommendations

Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB): Recommendation #1

BACKGROUND: When NASS has to consider possible program reductions due to budget reasons, certain criteria are taken into consideration. These criteria include: principal economic indicator data; data which directly impact the market; data necessary to implement USDA programs which provide payments to farmers and are used to administer the farm safety net for producers; and data for which there are no other publically available sources of information.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee recommends that NASS consider adding a criteria for reducing report frequency rather than report elimination.

Agricultural Statistics Board: Recommendation #2

BACKGROUND: The Advisory Committee is concerned about repetitive questions that are asked on the NASS surveys. Specifically, question redundancy for items such as all land, cropland, grain storage capacity, and individual crop acres planted should be limited during each growing season. Increased respondent access of Previously Reported Data for these items should be made available for phone interviewers through Electronic Data Reporting.

RECOMMENDATION: The Advisory Committee recommends NASS aggressively pursue respondent burden reduction and investigate expanded use of previously reported data, where appropriate.

Public Comments (Specialty Crops): Recommendation #3

Mary Brazeau Brown – Glacial Lake Cranberries

BACKGROUND: 56% of the cranberry industry is represented by one major vertically integrated cooperative handler and 44% of the industry is independent handlers. There is a disparity in NASS reporting price paid per barrel of cranberries, since the large cooperative pays their coop members based on a “pool” price for a finished processed product, compared to the independents getting paid for their raw product. Currently there exists in the industry a price discrepancy of approximately \$50 per barrel (\$65 vs. \$15) that is being simply averaged and thereby not representing either party, and in fact, blatantly distorts reality.

Quartile reporting of the prices growers receive would be more beneficial to those who rely on NASS/USDA numbers.

RECOMMENDATION: Glacial Lake Cranberries recommends that NASS consider the nature of the unique cranberry industry, and help them and others whose decisions ultimately affect their livelihood, to have statistics that more accurately reflect the nature of our industry.

Census: Recommendation #4

BACKGROUND: Fiscal year 2011 and 2012 budget did not include any funds for the Census of Aquaculture and Land Ownership Survey. Therefore, NASS was unable to conduct these surveys.

RECOMMENDATION: The Advisory Committee is recommending that USDA support the reinstatement of the Census of Aquaculture survey as early as possible.

Census: Recommendation #5

BACKGROUND: NASS was approached by the National Archive and Record Administration (NARA) with a proposal to work cooperatively in order to permanently preserve the contents of the Census of Agriculture questionnaires and to release them for public research after a period of 75 years. NASS adheres to strict confidentiality rules, and the Advisory Committee feels that NASS should stand behind their word. The Committee also feels that response rates will be affected if the producers find out that their data will be released in 75 years starting with the 2012 Census.

RECOMMENDATION: The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS not release Census of Agriculture data to NARA and maintain control of the confidential data collected by the Agency.

Census: Recommendation #6

BACKGROUND: American Indian and Alaska Native farm and ranch operators on reservations, villages, corporations, pueblos, and nations across the United States face many unique challenges. Many of these producers have atypical land tenure arrangements and land usage agreements, especially on allotted or trust acres that are controlled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. On Indian lands, there are indigenous crops and crop uses and a myriad of cultural practices in agriculture. Many farmers and ranchers on Indian operations are small and often remote operations that function as subsistence farms. These operations are less likely to participate in USDA farm programs, and are likely not to be on any program databases; hence, there is low probability that these operations are on the NASS Census mail list.

RECOMMENDATION : A motion was put forth to the Committee to have NASS conduct a follow-on census, similar to irrigation or horticulture census, which focuses solely on the unique

sovereignty and cultural aspects faced by American Indian and Alaska Native farm and ranch operators on reservations, villages, corporations, pueblos, and nations across the United States.

The motion was tabled and referred to a subcommittee that would further develop the concept to present to the Advisory Committee at a later date. Volunteers to this subcommittee include Jose Candelaria, Lawrence Sanchez, Tammy Steele, Brian Thomas, and Linda Young.

Census: Recommendation #7

BACKGROUND: NASS was commended for all the work being done in the field to reach producers and better count the small, new, and minority-operated farms and ranches that for so long were possibly being undercounted. An added consequence to this NASS initiative is that many formerly underserved producers are learning more about available USDA programs.

RECOMMENDATION: NASS should expand its outreach and education efforts to reach all operators, regardless of size or location, by continuing to work with land-grant institutions, and both non-government and community-based organizations.

Economic/Environmental: Recommendation #8

BACKGROUND: Value Added is a financial term which refers to the increased value of a product as it moves through the various stages of manufacturing or marketing. There are a number of ways that the value of a commodity can be increased. There are also numerous definitions/interpretations of what value added means. The Agricultural Advisory Committee encourages NASS to investigate this concept for future measurement.

NASS will need to weigh USDA and public need for the data against respondent burden as well as data quality. With such a variance in use of the term value added NASS will have to tackle the issue of defining value added and then determine whether our respondents can accurately report a number for that value. Tracking value added sales on a larger scale for all commodities would be a long term goal and could potentially add additional cost to data collections. Research and testing would be needed in order to assure proper definition, coverage, and accounting of value added products. Efforts to assess the value of farm direct sales to consumers or retail outlets will present a challenge of what product sales to include or exclude based how value added is defined.

Some examples of what is considered unique, value - added products by the Council include:

- Disease-free garlic seeds being grown for domestic and international producers;
- Native species plants grown for surrounding urban areas;
- Organic free - range chicken raised;
- Herbal soaps and tinctures;
- Unique wine grape varieties.

RECOMMENDATION: The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS pursue measurement of agricultural value added sales.

Economic/Environmental: Recommendation #9

BACKGROUND: The Chemical Use Program was cut due to budgetary decisions in 2007. This program was partially reinstated in 2009 and fully restored in 2010.

RECOMMENDATION: The Advisory Committee recommends that USDA and NASS continue to support the recently restored Agriculture Chemical Use Survey which includes fertilizer and pesticides.

Economic/Environmental: Recommendation #10

BACKGROUND: The Advisory Committee is concerned about the loss of agricultural land.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee supports implementing a program to monitor the loss of land used in agriculture production annually.

Economic/Environmental: Recommendation #11

BACKGROUND: NASS performance metrics include cost per completed survey, response rates, edit rate, imputation rates, sampling error, and other measures of nonsampling error.

RECOMMENDATION: **The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS investigate providing the NASS Advisory Committee with survey performance metrics which will help the Committee to advise NASS on the efficiency of its services.**

Appendix I - Agenda

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE STATISTICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport
1999 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, Virginia 22202
February 22–23, 2011

Tuesday, February 22

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic/Activity</u>	<u>Discussion Leader</u>
8:00 a.m.	Meeting with New Members	Doris Mold / Joseph Reilly
9:30 a.m.	Call to Order	Doris Mold, Committee Chair
9:40 a.m.	Welcome	Ann Bartuska, Deputy Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics
10:00 a.m.	Introductions and Overview	Doris Mold
10:30 a.m.	' <i>State of NASS</i> ' (Efficiencies', Research, Cultural Transformation, Budget, and NOC)	Cynthia Clark, NASS Administrator
11:15 a.m.	Discussion	Doris Mold
11:30 a.m.	Lunch	Hotel
12:30 p.m.	2009 Recommendations and Overview	Joe Reilly, Associate Administrator and Committee Executive Director
1:30 p.m.	Discussion	Doris Mold
1:45 p.m.	2012 Agricultural Census Outreach	Renee Picanso, Director of Census and Survey Division Chris Messer, Chief of Program Administration Branch
2:30 p.m.	Discussion	Doris Mold

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE STATISTICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport
1999 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, Virginia 22202
February 24–25, 2009

Tuesday, February 22
(Continued)

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic\Activity</u>	<u>Discussion Leader</u>
3:00 p.m.	National Operation Center (NOC) Concept, Organization, and Timeline	Bob Bass, Director of National Operation Center (NOC)
3:45 p.m.	Break	
4:00 p.m.	Discussion	Doris Mold
4:15 p.m.	Energy and Organic Survey, Agricultural Census Content, Horticultural Specialties, and Farm Ranch and Irrigation Survey (FRIS)	Chris Messer
5:15 p.m.	Discussion	Doris Mold
5:30 p.m.	Depart	

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE STATISTICS
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Crystal city Marriott at Reagan National Airport
 1999 Jefferson Davis Highway
 Arlington, Virginia 22202
 February 24–25, 2009

Wednesday, February 23

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic\Activity</u>	<u>Discussion Leader</u>
7:30 a.m.	Call to Order and Overview of Day 1	Doris Mold
7:45 a.m.	Status of Programs / Agricultural Statistics Board Process	Hubert Hamer, Chairperson of Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB)
9:00 a.m.	Break	
9:15 a.m.	How NASS Statistics are used by Program Agencies (i.e. RMA, and FSA)	Joseph Prusacki, Director of Statistics Division and Executive Director of ASB
10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:15 a.m.	Public Comments	
11:15 a.m.	Demonstration of the Crops Web Portal	Jeff Bailey Chief Geospatial Information Branch
11:45 a.m.	Lunch	Hotel
12:45 p.m.	Committee Requested Topics and Recommendations	Doris Mold
1:15 p.m.	Discussion and Recommendations	Doris Mold
1:45 p.m.	Present Recommendations	Doris Mold
3:30 p.m.	Wrap up	