

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

Is my identity protected? Yes. Your name, addresses, phone numbers, and the data you report about yourself and your operation are fully protected by law. The laws that prohibit NASS from disclosing your information also protect the information from legal subpoena and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

Who has access to my data? Only authorized persons working for NASS as employees or sworn agents can access individual records—and only for approved official purposes. Everyone signs a confidentiality form pledging not to compromise reported information. Anyone who willfully discloses any identifiable information is subject to a jail term of up to five years, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both.

Will you publish information about me or my operation? No. NASS does not disclose individual data.

How do you keep my data secure? NASS analysts process data independent of names and addresses. Paper responses are kept in a secure area, and electronic responses are kept on a secure server. NASS prepares official statistical estimates under tight security, and publishes only aggregated data, not individual or farm-specific data.

What about when NASS collects data for other agencies? NASS does not conduct surveys for private, proprietary purposes but periodically collects data for universities, state agencies, and other federal agencies. The results of any survey NASS conducts are public, but published findings never include personal identifiers such as name, address, phone number, etc.

**Confidentiality. . .
Protected by law and a
top NASS priority.**

RESPONDING TO A NASS SURVEY

NASS encourages those who receive a survey or census questionnaire to respond online. It is fast, easy, and secure. Another option is to return the questionnaire in the provided postage-paid envelope.

You may also provide your information to an enumerator via telephone or personal interview. Telephone and field enumerators working on behalf of NASS are bound by the same laws and the same confidentiality pledge as NASS employees.

Whether you respond online or by mail, telephone, or personal interview, the information you provide is protected by law and the NASS Confidentiality Pledge.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more on how we protect your information, go to www.nass.usda.gov/confidentiality.

For help in filling out a survey, call or email NASS Customer Service:
800-727-9540 | nass@nass.usda.gov

To learn more about NASS, go to www.nass.usda.gov. Click:

- "Data & Statistics" to access Quick Stats, the online database
- "Publications" to view published reports
- "Surveys" for information about a specific survey
- "Online Response" to fill out your survey online

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

NASS Confidentiality Pledge

**USDA's National Agricultural
Statistics Service protects your
privacy and your data.**

It's the law.



**United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service**

www.nass.usda.gov

As USDA's statistical agency, the National Agricultural Statistics Service provides information on U.S. farms and ranches that provide food, feed, and fiber to our nation and the world.

OUR MISSION

Providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture

WHAT WE DO

NASS conducts hundreds of national weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual surveys each year, along with many more at regional, state, and local levels. Every five years, we also conduct the Census of Agriculture, a detailed count of U.S. farms, ranches, and the people who operate them.

In doing our work, we rely on farmers and ranchers, livestock feeders, agribusiness managers, and others involved in agriculture. They supply the data and are also among the major users of the reports, forecasts, and estimates NASS produces. NASS is bound by law – and pledges to every data provider – to use the information for statistical purposes only.

OUR PLEDGE

The information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only. Your responses will be kept confidential and any person who willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both.

NASS surveys are conducted in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection provisions of Title V, Subtitle A, Public Law 107- 347, and other applicable federal laws. For more information on how we protect your information please visit: www.nass.usda.gov/confidentiality.

PARTICIPATING IN NASS SURVEYS IS SAFE. IT'S PRIVATE. IT'S SECURE.

Safe. Your answers are protected by law.

- Title 7, U.S. Code, Section 2276, and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA), Public Law 107-347, require that we not disclose names, addresses, latitude/longitude coordinates, reported data, and other personal information.
- Every NASS employee and agent has signed a written pledge and is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she discloses confidential information.

Private. NASS goes to great lengths to protect your personal information and your data.

- Only authorized persons working for or on behalf of NASS can access individual data records and only for approved official purposes.
- Your information is not subject to Freedom of Information Act requests.
- NASS publishes aggregated data, not individual or farm-specific data. NASS never publishes survey results in a way that identifies individuals or their operations unless the individual has approved the release of the data in writing.
- NASS does not sell or share information from our mailing lists.
- Analysts from other USDA agencies that use NASS data (e.g., the Economic Research Service or the Natural Resources Conservation Service) are bound by the same confidentiality laws as NASS employees.

Secure. Keeping your data secure during and after data collection and report preparation is a top NASS priority.

- NASS keeps all survey responses physically and electronically secure.
- NASS uses state-of-the-art security technology in collecting, processing, and publishing survey findings.
- NASS prepares official estimates and forecasts under tight security to ensure only authorized staff working on the report have access to the information before it is publicly released.
- Data are released to everyone at the same time so that no individual or organization has an unfair advantage through early access to the information.

