A CAREER CHOICE THAT ADDS UP

Careers in…

Statistics
Mathematics
Information Technology
and other fields

at USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service

United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

USDA

AGRICULTURE COUNTS

As the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) provides timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. NASS is the official source of comprehensive, current information on the farms, ranches, and people who provide food, feed, and fiber to our nation and the world.

Who We Are

We are a diverse team of professionals from many different geographic areas and academic backgrounds. Some have in-depth knowledge and training in statistics and mathematics, others have statistics and math course work but majored in other fields. NASS staff are largely statisticians, mathematicians, and computer scientists and other information technology specialists. Our staff also includes economists, geographers, administrative, budget, communications, and other professionals.

What We Do

We collect, assemble, analyze, and disseminate data about U.S. agriculture. We conduct more than 400 weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual surveys each year in order to provide data and reports that others rely on to make farm-level, business, and policy decisions related to agriculture. Every five years, we also conduct the Census of Agriculture, a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches, regardless of the size or type of operation. In addition, we conduct ongoing research on survey design, sampling, and other cutting-edge statistical issues.

"Even before coming on board, I could tell that NASS is committed to its people. NASS kept in touch on a weekly basis during the time it took to obtain my security clearance, and from my first day in the office, everything worked as it should. NASS is very welcoming to newcomers and will be a great place for a long and productive career."
— Ravi Govada, IT Project Manager

"In my first three years at NASS, I worked in St. Louis and in Washington, D.C., gaining experience while working as a data editor, survey analyst, and project manager before taking on responsibility for a national survey. Now back in St. Louis, I am doing more technical work to verify the lists NASS uses in conducting surveys." ***— Christina Spellman, Agricultural Statistician, former Pathways Recent Grad***

Why Join the NASS Team?

1. **Make a difference.** Farmers, ranchers, policymakers, community planners, agribusinesses, researchers, USDA, and other federal and state agencies use NASS data for planning, market assessment, decision making, and ongoing research. The information NASS provides is essential to U.S. agriculture, a major sector of the economy. It contributes to a stable economic climate and reduces risk.

2. **Work with smart, motivated colleagues.** NASS staff are dedicated to providing objective, reliable data. Employees come from a wide range of majors and collaborate across offices to produce hundreds of on-time, high-quality products each year.

3. **Enjoy excellent pay and benefits.** NASS pays competitive government salaries and offers a range of benefits that help you create a satisfying work-life balance rarely found elsewhere.

4. **Advance your education.** NASS offers academic and professional development opportunities to give you the tools you need for your job and to help you advance your career. This may include college courses, graduate-level degree programs, cross-training programs, workshops, seminars, and online courses.

5. **Pursue career opportunities in Washington, D.C., and in offices across the country.** Work in the nation's capital, with all the opportunities and attractions of a major international city. Or work in one of our 12 regional offices or at our National Operations Center in St. Louis.

"Coming to NASS after nearly 20 years in the private sector has been personally and professionally rewarding. By helping to protect computer hardware, software, communications, and operating systems, I know I contribute to the agency's mission and am making a difference." ***— Curtis Brooks, Computer Security Officer***

"What I really value about NASS is the absolute commitment to data objectivity."
— Tyler Wilson, Survey Methodologist, former Pathways Recent Grad

Career Opportunities

Agricultural or survey statistician. Design the surveys, build the frames, conduct various phases of large-scale surveys, develop procedures for interpreting survey results, and analyze the data for trends and results. May include commodity or survey statistics, remote sensing, the Census of Agriculture, and management. **Minimum qualifications:** A bachelor's degree with 15 semester hours in math and statistics (with at least 6 in statistics) plus 9 additional hours in other physical or social sciences.

Mathematical statistician. Evaluate the data for validity and accuracy, develop and apply models that resolve problems, and conduct research on survey design, sampling, and other methodological issues. May include estimation theory, statistical computing, non-sampling error management, remote sensing, and management. **Minimum qualifications:** A bachelor's degree with 24 semester hours in math and statistics (with at least 12 in math and 6 in statistics). A math or statistics master's degree is desirable, as is computer proficiency and experience in statistical software packages. Doctoral degree wanted for research positions.

Information technology specialist. Design and maintain the computer systems that process and analyze data. May include software development and maintenance, systems support, technology research, technical support, database administration, security, Web design and maintenance, and management. **Minimum qualifications:** A bachelor's degree or experience in computer science, information science, management information systems, mathematics, statistics, operations research, engineering, or similar field.

Finance, communications, human resource, administrative, and other professionals. These positions support NASS' core work of planning surveys and censuses and collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data. They are essential to NASS operations but are fewer in number, and vacancies occur less often.

NASS Staff by Job Type	%
Agricultural / Survey Statistician	56
Mathematical Statistician	12
IT Specialist	11
Administrative / Clerical	10
Statistical Assistant	5
Geographer / Cartographer	2
Finance, Communications, HR	2
Intern	2
All Staff	100

NASS hires college graduates from a wide range of majors:

- Agricultural Economics
- Agricultural Sciences
- Business Administration
- Computer Science
- Demography
- Economics
- Engineering
- GIS
- Geography
- Information Science
- Mgmt. Information Systems
- Marketing
- Mathematics
- Operations Research
- Public Relations
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Statistics

Students and Recent Graduates

USDA Pathways Programs provide opportunities for current students and recent graduates to get started in federal service working in agriculture, science, statistics, math, and other fields.

Internship Program — Students in high school (including home schooling) or pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree in a qualifying institution (including certificate programs and community colleges) have the opportunity for paid work experience while pursuing their education. Interns may work during the summer, during academic semesters, or year round.

Recent Graduates Program — Individuals who graduated from a qualifying program or program in the last two years (six years for veterans) participate in a dynamic one-year program offering a full-time position that includes mentoring, training, professional development, and a potential long-term career in the federal government.

"NASS' commitment to providing accurate and useful statistics drew me to the agency. The role of agriculture – how it touches everyone – is very meaningful to me. I'm fortunate to work with others with similar values, and to use my skills to communicate the work and priorities of this critical agency. " — Nancy Kim, NASS Public Affairs Specialist – Web Content

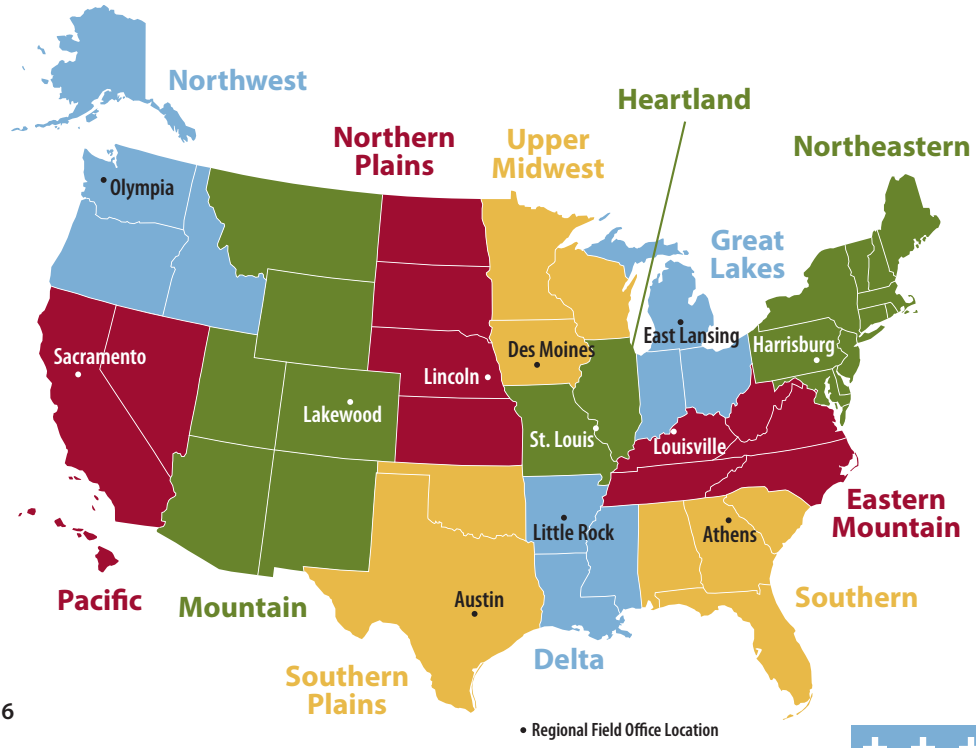
*"NASS has been an excellent place to launch a career in the federal statistical service." — **Nathan Cruze, Ph.D., Mathematical Statistician, former Pathways Recent Grad***

NASS and You

If you are a statistics or math major or have the minimum credits required, have a background or even just an interest in agriculture trends and issues, enjoy solving problems, and want to learn and grow throughout your career, consider joining the NASS team.

With options to work at headquarters in Washington, D.C., or in offices around the country, many of us build our careers by gaining experience in various locations. Headquarters manages surveys, analyzes data, conducts cutting-edge statistical research, and publishes national reports. Regional field offices collect and publish similar data specific to their regions, states, and localities. The operations center in St. Louis develops data collection instruments and procedures, maintains our list frame, collects and processes data, and trains our interviewers.

As the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., offers historic landmarks, world-class museums, prestigious universities, and a variety of restaurants, theaters, music venues, professional sports teams, and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Offices around the country, in or near state capitals, each have their own location-specific characteristics and amenities.

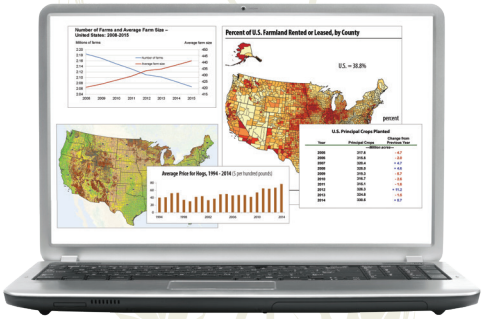


"Over the past decade, I began my career at NASS, took that experience and those skills honed, and accepted a position with our sister agency, USDA's Economic Research Service. Recently, I had the great opportunity to return to NASS. Coming back has been a true homecoming because of the many relationships that I developed over the years and the impactful work I continue to do here." — Kevin Hunt, NASS Geographer

Benefits

In addition to a competitive government salary, NASS offers a range of benefits to help you create balance in your professional and personal life:

- Health insurance, including dental and vision options
- Annual leave – 13 days per year initially, 20 days after 3 years, 26 days after 15 years
- Sick leave – 13 days per year (can be used for self and to care for sick family member)
- 10 paid holidays per year
- Paid parental leave for childbirth, adoption, or foster care placement
- Flexible spending accounts (health and dependent care)
- 40-hour work week
- Flexible hours and telework options
- Optional life and long-term care insurance
- Retirement plan
- Optional tax-deferred Thrift Savings Plan, with up to 5% agency match (similar to a 401K)
- Locality pay by geographic area
- Periodic pay increases
- Potential cash awards for outstanding performance
- Professional development and training



For More Information

Visit ***www.nass.usda.gov/careers***
or
Call NASS Human Resources (800-832-4180)
or call or email one of our Regional Field Offices.

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