



USDA Fall Data Users' Meeting
November 15, 2022
Question and Answer Summary

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Question & Answer Summary

The following is a summary of questions and answers from the Data Users' Meeting. Material is organized based on the order they were answered in both the Open Forum and breakout sessions. There was not time to answer all questions in all sessions, but any unanswered questions were reviewed, and the appropriate agency has provided a written response

Note: Questions and answers were lightly edited for readability.

Open Forum: Question and Answer Summary

Question: Karen Braun

Did the November WASDE estimates for Ukraine grain exports assume that the Black Sea Grain Initiative would end (i.e. not be extended) from Nov. 19?

Answer: Mike Jewison

As always, with any given month, the export for Ukraine are based on all the available information at the time of publication.

Question: Karen Braun

Do the November WASDE estimates for 22/23 U.S. corn exports assume the same share (in percentage terms) going to China as in 21/22?

Answer: Mike Jewison

They do not publish bilateral trade forecasts.

Question: Karen Braun

How do the latest USDA estimates for China grain/oilseed S&D reflect China's current policy? Are there assumptions that restrictive COVID policy lightens imports/demand in 22/23?

Answer: Keith Menzie

Well at least for oilseeds we don't use any explicit assumptions. How we go about forecasting the imports at least for soybeans is we make assumptions about what we expect protein consumption to be and then back our way into soybean imports from that assumption. Right now we are assuming fairly weak growth in protein consumption for 2022-2023.

Question: Nimai Mehta

I'm researching agricultural land/land use rights and reform in South Asia, and wondering if there is anyone in USDA that works in this area - i.e. on the issue of land rights in any part of the world.

Answer: Kelly Maguire

I'm not aware of research that we have specifically in this area, but I am wondering if perhaps FSA might have a response on this and the reporting that we do with regards to foreign ownership of land.

Answer: Mike Walter

We do collect some of that data, but it is not so much on rights. It is just where the foreign interest is in the United States. Send me [an email](#) and I would be happy to provide a contact and see if that will help you further down the trail.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

We don't have a systematic way of tracking land use rights around the world, but the topic comes up in our work and analysis of farm production. I invite the person to reach out to us, if there is a specific question about a specific country, we might be able to help or reach out to our posts to see if there is anything available. There is nothing cataloged or a systematic way for that.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I would look at the Asian development bank's website and there may be an expert there in that space; they have a lot of stats and obviously they are interested in this part of the world. Something that you might consider.

Question: Karen Braun

USDA's estimates for Chinese corn ending stocks have not drastically fluctuated in the last 3-4 marketing years as is the current market narrative. Why not and what information goes into the Chinese corn stock estimates? What is USDA seeing that is keeping these stocks largely constant?

Answer: Mike Jewison

In the case of China, recall that on the supply side our production estimates are those as published, at least in the case of corn for example, by the National Bureau of Statistics and when you account for use in the balance sheet the stocks are merely what is left after that. And so, in essence, your stocks are largely constrained by the supply assumptions.

Question: Ken Lovett

For the ESRMS 2.0, will FAS release a meta-data file and/or documentation regarding formatting and perhaps correlations between ESRMS and ESRMS 2.0?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

We are beefing up engagement with the data users on the export sales report in the new 2.0 system. In addition to seeking feedback on how users are consuming the data, we will be looking to determine what is the best means of providing a preview of the data and the reports in the new system in advance so that people have a heads up of how things will look and what is going to be included. We're looking at that, I don't have the specific approach that we're going to take right now, but I invite you to [shoot me an email](#). We are looking to talk to many users as well and we may be able to reach out to you and get some feedback directly. I know that you are a regular consumer of the data.

Question: Bill Nelson

How do I get on the list of users of FAS export data to be involved in feedback on the revised reporting system?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

I will offer a couple of suggestions. First, we do have a sign up now on our home page to get the Export Sales Report through the GovDelivery system. If you sign up for the ESR reports through GovDelivery we will capture your information there and be able to reach out to you. And particularly if we get our survey approved, we can send you that. Also, you can [send me an email](#) as well.

Question: Ken Lovett

Would the WAOB consider including full balance sheets for Wheat by Class? The complete balance sheets are released by ERS in subsequent days, but it would be helpful to see this complete information released in the WASDE.

Answer: Bill Chambers

That is a very good question and now is the great time to bring it up. Yes, we will consider it. In fact, I was emailing with Mark Simone during our short break and it is something that is on his radar screen. We can certainly look at it.

We have done our wheat by class this way for as long as I have been here but it doesn't mean that it has to stay this way for ever and ever. If we do make a change, we usually do it in the May WASDE. Prior to that release, we will provide an explanation of how the rows and columns will appear after any changes are made.

Question: Marvin Miller

In the handout, it says that NASS published the first Methodology and Quality Measures report for Floriculture since 2016. I do not see where to access this on the NASS website

Answer: Lance Honig

They are not always the easiest to find if you don't know where to find them. If you go to the [website](#) and click on Publications you will find one that says Methodology and Quality Measure reports. That is where all of these are kept for all the different programs not just floriculture. They don't pair up with the release. We are looking to expand the number of

these reports that we do. If you go back to some of the modernization and even some of the web design that we are working towards, I think you will find them much easier to find together than what the current structure allows. That is where you would find them now though. Click on publications and look for [Methodology and Quality Measure reports](#).

Floriculture specific Methodology and Quality Measures documents:

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Methodology_and_Data_Quality/Floriculture/index.php

Answer: Joe Parsons

As this type of agency, I think it is important to be transparent and say what you are doing. We love to have folks see those and understand how we do these things.

Question: Jerry Cessna

Does NASS have plans to add any data reporting concerning aquaculture?

Answer: Travis Averill

For aquaculture program at NASS, we do the biannual catfish program in January and July and the trout survey in January is released in February. We get aquaculture data from the Census of Agriculture, that is the platform that drives our Census of Aquaculture program the following year. Now pertaining to your question, we have no plans to add any data reporting concerning aquaculture outside of the programs that I have mentioned from the three annual programs two catfish, one trout along with the Census of Ag and Census of Aquaculture. The Census of Aquaculture will be the 2023 reference year. And that will be published most likely in December of 2024.

Question: Karen Braun

With the corn/soy acreage review moved to Sept, will NASS review acreage again in Oct or Nov going forward? Or can we expect those assumptions don't change (aside from extraordinary circumstances or a special survey).

Answer: Lance Honig

We won't consider looking at the acres again in October or November unless there is some sort of weather event that creates a need to do that. And in that case, we would do an ASB notice ahead of time. Unless you see otherwise, assume that September is the month that we lock the planted acres in.

Question: Pre-submitted question

Where can I find data about Federal crop insurance performance including liabilities, premiums, and losses?

Answer: Michael Hibbs

I can briefly walk you through how to access this in a step by step way from the [Risk Management Agency website](#). There are email addresses along the way if there are questions. We're happy to answer anything that you might send. Near the top of that website there is a section of drop downs and one is called Tools. That is where you will find the applications and tools available. For this particular question, I would point the user to the Summary of Business section. After selecting that, you will see several pre-generated reports. One-page reports on crop insurance and you will find a link to the application called Summary of Business about midway down the page that can actually be used for more customizable data reports. To the

bottom right of that same page, you can find links under Summary of Business which can take you do downloadable data files for things like claims data, livestock participation, and other data file that is you might be interested in, and all of these do show liabilities, premiums and losses. Again, email if you need help along the way navigating the website.

Question: Peter Meyer

Finding accurate double-crop soybean acreage data currently requires a deep dive into the FSA data since there are no revisions to the number after the June Acreage report. Would it be possible to add a “double crop question” to the January Crop Production report survey?

Answer: Lance Honig

I can answer it really short and say yes, it is always possible we can do that. And it is a good question and something that we will take a look back at it. It is too late for this iteration; it would require an additional question on the December Ag survey which is fixing to go into the mail in the next couple of weeks. We will consider this for next year and it is on our radar and we should have a pretty good answer for you by the next data users meeting in the spring.

Question: Pre-submitted question

Does RMA publish insurance offer information such as yields, prices, and premium rates? Can the information be downloaded in a user-friendly format like Excel?

Answer: Ryan Seely

On the normal [Risk Management Agency webpage](#), just go to Tools, and then go to RMA Information Reporting System. From there, you can click on Insurance Offer Reports. It will give a whole list of offer dates, prices, options, and everything you need to just go through and select and download all of our information. So, if you click on insurance offer prices it will then ask you what year you want, the insurance plan, state, and county. You can generate an excel spreadsheet from there and that should give you all the information in one downloadable format.

Question: Ken Lovett

Regarding the Crop Acreage Data reporting, could there be a more timely and consistent release of the data at 12:00 EST?

Answer: Mike Walter

We had a little slip up on how we released and we did it ahead of time. We mentioned automating it into a dashboard so we don't love how we do that today either and we are definitely looking at process improvements so as we rollout the publication dashboard I think it would be a great time to look at the time we do it and the frequency that we do it as well. Can't

make any promises but it is definitely something on the radar that we are looking to make better.

Question: Jerry Gidel

The change to updating US planting and harvesting acres to Sept has shown some big changes. Overall, total US ag acres seems to be shrinking more than expected. Any ideas why there has been a big difference between NASS and FSA acreage data?

Answer: Lance Honig

I don't think it has anything to do with the October versus September time frame, I think the question is why have we seen bigger changes later in the season? And then part two of that is why do we see slightly smaller differences between NASS and FSA than we have seen in recent years? There are a couple of different answers to those questions, first in terms of the bigger changes throughout the season. The last couple of years we have seen some bigger swings in the acres from March to June and even to the end of the season. I think that has to do with changes that the farmers have made and so there was planting later and then some of it we're looking at it as well. It is not just corn or soybeans we look at it for every crop every year. When we see larger changes throughout the season we go back and make sure that there is nothing inherent in our processes that could be contributing and at this time we have not found anything on our side. That doesn't mean that we are not continuing to look and seeing if anything that we are doing procedurally could be improved upon. As far as difference in the NASS and FSA acres? We have made a concerted effort over the last couple of years to shrink that difference to analyze the data of what we get from FSA and comparing it to what we are doing. There is more work to be done there, it is hard to know what you don't know. It is a difficult piece to measure and some of the work that we have done has shown us that there is a bit less of the acreage that doesn't get reported to FSA than what we believe we've seen in the past. I can't tell you 100% that it is necessary changed as much as it is we have a better ability to measure it. And we have made an intentional decision to show a little bit tighter relationship between the FSA acres and NASS because of the measures that we have seen that show there is less unreported acres than what we saw in the past. We'll continue to do everything that we can moving forward if there is more tools and data available. Whatever it is, that is one of those topics that we are very interested in as well as trying to figure out how to measure that portion specifically that isn't being reported to FSA.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I am keenly interested in that gap between final reported data and where we're at. And there has been some good work done, looking almost field by field in some cases from some imagery and such. And I think as Lance stated anytime that we wind up making a pretty big change we go back and the question that we ask ourselves is whether we missed something. Is there something available to us that when we took the original decision that we should or could have seen? I think that is logical.

Question: Jessica Richard

Can you detail the cattle contract development a bit more?

Answer: Jason Karwal

“A bit” is probably a good word to put because we can't share too much because currently there is regulation being drafted that is going to be published that will have all the details of this so we don't know them all yet. What we do know is we've been tasked with creating an interface for users to look at examples of cattle contracts being used to trade cattle across the country. We use the current swine library that the packers and stock yards has put together, but we will do it in more of a dashboard style and make it easier to find specific data points in there. While we do expect the final product to be fall of next year, we are going to release a pilot in the January/February 2023 timeframe and keep an eye out for when that will be up and available to view. It is a newer project that is in the works now, but we are hoping to have a good product sometime next year.

Question: Kristina Jones

Are there any plans to release data on renewable diesel exports out of the US? Either via EIA or GATS would be fantastic, especially as the industry grows. Are there any plans from EIA to split out feedstock by RD and biodiesel producers? Now it is currently clumped together.

Answer: Julie Harris

The short answer to both is not at the moment. So, I'll take them separately. But the issue with the export data is that we actually don't collect the export data here at EIA, we get it from the Census Bureau, and they don't have a separate code for renewable diesel. And that is how we map it. So not right now. Because we don't really have the ability to do it.

On the second question splitting out the feed stock because of the plant types, that is also something that we can't do at the moment. We have to do a disclosure analysis on the data, and we can't publish them if they disclose data for individual companies. But as the renewable diesel market is growing, that issue hopefully will be alleviated, and we will be able to start publishing the feed stock data separately by plant type. We are going to keep an eye on that and as more players get into that market. Then that won't be a such an issue anymore.

Question: Joe Parsons

Renewable fuels and biodiesel producers have stocks of soyoil on hand and there is an assumption by analysts that they will use it immediately for producing fuel. But they may also store soyoil. The fluctuation of how much soyoil they have stored is of interest to some analysts. Would EIA consider collecting stored soyoil stocks from these biofuel producers?

Answer: Julie Harris

That is not on the table right now, but we can certainly take that back to management and say that there is industry interest in that information.

Question: Jerry Cessna

Does Census have plans to make data on MONTHLY shipments to Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories available for free in the near future?

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Joe DeCampo

There are currently no plans to publish that data beyond annually.

Question: Michael Zuzolo

Given the current global environment, in the upcoming MY, does USDA plan to formulate S/D statistics for China & Russia separate & independent from official Chinese & Russian Agr. Ministries? Or some type of additional scrutiny, such as greater weight to attaché reports?

Answer: Bill Chambers

I'm not aware that our Chairs are considering changing their methods. We don't have to take official data from either China or Russia or anywhere else. Our method is to take all the information that is available to us and come up with the best estimate that we can with that information. We understand that some of the data we get out of certain countries may be less than perfect.

Question: Bill Nelson

With respect to the experience of the failed August exports sales update, it was difficult to find the new FAS pathway to the reports. I was contacted by multiple colleagues as to where to find the data. Can you simply make that process easier when you eventually go to the new version? Like an obvious link on the FAS homepage?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

There was some confusion. We didn't handle that in the best way that we could. When we go out with the new system again, we will make sure that it is clear and with direct links.

Question: Bill Nelson

FAS export sales report - Will you maintain the complete set of archived weekly data in the next version? I may not have seen it correctly, but my brief look in the failed August update was a set of data not back to 1990.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

Yes, if I'm not mistaken, when we rolled out the system we might have cut the data off because of time and resources to be able to get all the older data archived, but when we go out with the new system, we will have all the archived data.

Question: Allie de Irueste

What changes should we expect to see on the replacement to the SJ_LS711 report? Will this new reporting process mean that the actual daily slaughter values will be posted earlier?

Answer: Jason Karwal

The data it is on the report will not change much. The base data will be the same. The report will be in PDF format, but the main change is that the data will be available through the Market News and also the API. That is the goal of moving it to the other system. There will be some additional stats like the year ago or other things that we don't currently publish. As far as the daily report I assume that you are referring to the estimated daily slaughter and we are already putting that out as we have it. We know that is a sought-out data and there is still quite a bit of manual data collection in the morning. It takes a few hours to put that together every day and it is released as soon as we have it available. So, I don't think we'll see that any earlier once it is in the new system.

Question: Bill Nelson

One of the ERS slides showed the baseline report. Are there changes coming to the baseline?

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Kelly Maguire

The baseline is always updated once per year to reflect the policy changes or major market changes that happen within the prior year; that process occurred in October and was reflected in the numbers that were released on November 7. The next official update will not occur until October 2023 and would, for instance, include information on capacity changes in Ukraine and any other market and policy developments that happen between now and then. In February 2023, the complete report will be released including international projections along with descriptive text, but this information is also based only on the conditions that existed at the time the October WASDE was released. I am assuming that is what the question was about and that is an example of what will be included in the next baseline.

The baseline reflects the condition, it is just that. It is a view static view of what the world was, and, in this case, it will be 2022.

Answer: Bill Chambers

We have to be very careful how we use the baseline. Note that it is not an official forecast. Also, an important purpose of the baseline is for the President's budget and an important assumption we make is policy in place. We don't make policy projections (particularly domestic policy) or try to forecast policy changes that may or may not happen. This is done for a lot of reasons one of which is it would lead to incorrectly accounting for that policy in the budget.

Question: Bevan Everett

The GATS used to have a UN database option in it up until this year. Why was its separated off and where can one find that data today?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

UN Comtrade changed its data interface and as a result the system that we used to incorporate the Comtrade data in GATS no longer functions. We have been working with our IT staff to

restore access within GATS. At the moment we don't have an expected timeline of when that will be done. Here's the [link](#) for the direct access to the data.

Question: Karen Braun

U.S. export inspection data has recently been delayed multiple times due to technical issues. How come? Is this an ongoing problem?

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Jason Karwal

The Federal Grain Inspection Data has been delayed in release several times lately. The data that USDA receives on this has been delayed in being reported due to logistical issues at the source. AMS is working on improving this process moving forward.

Question: Karl Skold

USDA-AMS is increasing moving to PDF files for quick access to reports. Why? Please keep text files. For example, actual slaughter is moving to a PDF.

Answer: Jason Karwal

This is something that we have been working on for a few years. We made the consolidated decision a few years ago to switch the format from .txt files to the PDF. For several reasons, we don't have the capability to support those files anymore, we have to do several conversions to get anything we are putting out in text back to that and it is fairly expensive and inefficient for us. And everything going forward will be in the PDF formats for the reports. As we switch them, we try to make sure that they are available in other formats, I know there are a lot of people that come in and pull the data off to the text files and scrape that and that has been a long-time process for a lot of users. We understand there is an inconvenience there and it is really the only way that we can do it going forward.

We have the data available in several different formats, including the API, to get the data without having to pull it off the PDF report. They can reach out to me or on the website there are ways to submit questions as well.

Question: Erik Daniel Guerra Rodriguez

Are there any possibilities you could add White corn information (production, exports) etc.

Answer: Lance Honig

That probably would be a pretty big lift for us at NASS. We would have to collect a lot more information to break the corn data down by in this case color or other types. I am curious, I don't remember offhand but I think FSA in their 578 data has a breakout for that, there would be acres information there. And there may be some RMA data as well in their Book of Business.

You know there is a little different use case and it might be a little different insurance product too. So those are two spots.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

For the export data, essentially, we show what we get from the Census Bureau. In terms of our foreign supply demand data (PSD) I don't think we have resources or capacity to break out white corn.

Answer: Mike Jewison

I would just add if you go to the ten digit level, you can find white corn export on Census. For the U.S. that is.

Written Answer: Patrick Packnett

Here's the White Corn export code for the US. 1005904055 - CORN,WHITE,EX SD

Answer: Post meeting follow-up from Patrick Packnett

It may also be worth noting that while there isn't an internationally harmonized HS 6-digit level code for white corn, depending on the export market of interest, some other countries (in particular Mexico and those in Central America) have import codes designating white corn at the HS8 or HS10 digit level.

Question: Joe Kleinman

What is the USDA doing on an overall and agency level to fix the data dissemination and reliability issues that have become endemic over the past few months? We have seen the failure of the launch of FAS ESR 2.0 launch, multiple instances where AMS data has been delayed by "technical difficulties", inconsistent access and delayed release of NASS and WASDE releases as the USDA webservers seem to be unable to handle the volume of user activity during midday releases, etc, etc.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

I don't think these incidents are related any way. Our ESR launch was isolated and not driven by any of the same issues that the reports and other items mentioned in the question. We are working to ensure a successful launch of our ESR 2.0, as I described earlier, the next rollout will certainly be a lot better.

Answer: Bill Chambers

There have not been any delays in the WASDE release over the last few months. Still, we have increased our in-house technical support in the lockup itself. It has been a little while, we started around maybe in the spring. But we have increased our tech presence in lockup to make sure there are no problems.

Answer: Lance Honig

When you are talking about NASS and WASDE delays, I think what you are referring to is at least the expectation is within one or 2 seconds. We have had occasions where it has been four or 5 seconds or maybe even 10 seconds and things of that nature. The thing that I would just remind folks of and certainly we are doing everything that we can to keep that at the smallest amount possible, but the one thing that I will remind folks of even when that occurs it is still providing equal access because everybody is still having an opportunity at the same time. And then the other issues that we sometimes run into is there are multiple places where these reports are archived right now as well. And so specifically for the NASS reports, if you go to the [website](#) we always have a section called Today's Reports and that link that is provided there actually links to a different storage location than if you go through the publications tab and that will link you to a site out on Cornell. There have been occasions where one file is available a little sooner than the other and things of that nature. We know about that, and we are doing everything that we can to mitigate that. And again, I hate to keep going back to it, but part of the modernization is to get away from this archaic way of having this available in multiple locations out there on our own website.

Question: Karl Skold

Is it possible to move weekly imports for meat products to the datamart?

Answer: Jason Karwal

We do currently separate them between mandatory and voluntary and datamart is the platform that we lease the mandatory data. And that is a voluntary report and we do plan to bring it into the market news platform and I do not currently have a date for when that will happen. For most reports like that we do have data sets available that we can share with you if you wanted to reach out directly to me or through the contacts on the websites we can try to get information for you if you're just trying to get the data for that report series.

Question: AL Anderson-Lazo

When will there be an update on Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land Survey, and are there other places (and publications) to find more recent data?

Answer: Tony Dorn

For the TOTAL survey, or land ownership, the last TOTAL was done in 2014 and the release was in 2015 and the next one is scheduled for to 2025 release based on the 2024 reference year. Just keep in mind there are two components. Farmers can be landlords and there is a landlord piece too where we get information from landlords who can be individuals, partners, trusts and all sorts of arrangements can be landlords so that really makes an extra effort for us to go out and survey and collect the data. So that will be the next information that I will have available in 2025. I'm not too sure of other information, I know there is some local information possibly with state departments of agriculture in the State level and there might be local information and I don't have anything specific.

Answer: Joe Parsons

We know the data are really valuable. They can be challenging to collect because we are going to at least a fragment of the population that we don't typically go to and there are a number of landlords for which maybe they are aged or pretty hands off etc. It can be a challenge to actually collect this data. But it is of great interest. One other thought that I had although I don't think it would tell you much about transition states. But there are private data from core logic that you may be able to understand some transactional data.

Question: Bevan Everett

The AMS did a report on the Transportation of US Grains back in 2017 with modal share analysis as of 2014. The CME is doing a review of the delivery system and how the grain belt has changed. For those who are contributing to the update, it would be helpful if the AMS could update that with the current year.

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Jason Karwal

We do have our grain modal share report. The PDF versions are here: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/transportation-analysis/modal>, and we also post the data to our open data platform, here: <https://agtransport.usda.gov/stories/s/n6ag-hd3y>. The latest data is through 2019. We're working on 2020 at the moment and should have it out in the next month or two. The data is very slow to come out. We only got the 2020 data toward the end of this summer and have just been trying to find time to draft the report since then.

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Joe Parsons

We had a reimbursable agreement in cooperation with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the North Dakota State University's Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute to better understand local grain transportation market flows and the investments made by those producers in a set group of states, but it has been a while. Here's a [link](#) to their 2015 report.

Question: Hussain Jiwani

The corn county level yields are released in January. Are there any plans to release the county level yield on monthly basis when the state level yields are released?

Answer: Lance Honig

They are not released until late February, and we don't have any plans to do it any more frequently. In order to publish all the way down to the county level you have to collect a much larger pool of data which means much higher burden on producers and so for that reason in particular we don't have any immediate plans to do that. One thing that I would say though is if you look in the [briefing slides](#) that we provide following the crop production reports during the growing season we typically include a map for both corn and soybeans that show the modelled numbers using remote sensing information. It is a graphic image, a map that shows for the key growing area kind of how the yields are distributed. It is certainly not county level yields, I'm

not suggesting that it is, but it is a product that gives a visual of how they are distributed across the key growing area for corn and soybeans.

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Newsroom/Executive_Briefings/2022/11-09-2022.pdf

See pages 9 & 19 of the above link for the modeled yield maps.

Question: Megan Scott

I realize you are modernizing the NASS Quick Stats interface, but the "Keyword Search" has gone missing. Any chance this will be reinstated?

Answer: Lance Honig

Hopefully. I can tell you as a part of modernization effort we have been moving both the database and applications to more modern style servers including some cloud applications and when you do that some of these what we would call legacy applications, they don't like to talk to each other well. And we have had some bumps with trying to keep everything up and going as we go through the transition. Be patient with us as we get there, we are doing everything that we can to keep it going in this hybrid environment as we transition through the process. Specifically on the key word search I will have to go back and double check.

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Lance Honig

Update: NASS does plan to re-enable the keyword search functionality as soon as possible.

Question: Karen Braun

USDA's Ukraine grain S&D estimates still include Crimea, correct? Does that mean that Crimea and other occupied territories are not being considered in USDA's Russian estimates?

Answer: Bill Chambers

You are correct. We continue to include Crimea as a part of the Ukraine. This is also true for other parts of the occupied territories. We follow the State Department's lead on this. That is how we do it, yes.

Question: Al Anderson-Lazo

Is there an equity series of publications, what's the best way to find them? Also, we are especially interested in data on outreach and TA, I heard earlier that AMS collects related data, might we hear more about this across this and other census areas?

Answer: Kelly Maguire

My suggestion for ERS information would be the Trending Topics page on the ERS website and there is a specific page talking about the work that we have been doing on equity. So that will point you to research, data, topic pages and such. So that is the best place to find a consolidated set of information related to equity.

Answer: Joe Parsons

One thing that I was thinking of and I may have the nature of this question off a little bit. Whenever AMS or others, for example, might be doing rule making, you go out for public comment in the Federal Register. Then I think you produce a record of what sort of outreach and responses you got. Is that true? I think I need to know a little more about the question. Obviously, we do our version of outreach like for the Census of Agriculture would be to reach out to all types of groups and commodity organizations and others to spread the word and the importance of the data collection. I'm not sure if that is the nature the question though.

Answer: Post meeting follow-up from Jason Karwal

USDA's ongoing efforts regarding equity, underserved stakeholders, public outreach and technical assistance are summarized in the ["USDA Agri-Food Supply Chain Assessment: Program and Policy Options for Strengthening Resilience"](#) published by AMS.

Question: Rob Murphy

Mandatory price reporting for pork seems to be plagued by routine late release of reports due to "packer submission problems". Why does this happen so frequently and what is the plan to rectify it?

Answer: Jason Karwal

We do have over 50 plants that are submitting hog and pork data, about 20,000 lines of data per day in total, to us six times a day at four different deadlines for which we have an hour to turn around a report. We have to include all data that is submitted. We reached out to industry a few years ago and asked them how they want us to handle these situations and they unilaterally agreed they want us to wait until all data is received and verified for accuracy to ensure a complete picture of the marketplace and avoid revisions and that is the path that we try to follow. We do try to work with the packers to make sure that everything is working correctly. Many issues involve system infrastructure, labor, mechanical challenges, and weather among various others. But with security these days and updates that happen daily between our systems and their systems problems come up that we try to rectify as soon as we can. Most of the time it is just us making sure that we have all the data available before we publish the reports so that they are complete the first time. And it is just you know with that many plants reporting that many times a day it leaves a lot of room for error, and we are really trying to make sure that data is complete before we put it out, that is probably the best answer that I can give.

Question: Julie Ingwersen

Can you clarify conflicting corn production estimates in a USDA/FAS GAIN report from Kyiv released Nov. 9? The report's "Production" section says "FAS Kyiv estimates the following production numbers for MY2022/23: barley – 5.9 MMT, corn – 21.2 MMT, wheat – 19.6 MMT, and rye – 336,000 MT." BUT the report's S&D table shows "New Post's" 22/23 corn production

estimate at 25.8 MMT, and USDA's official number of 31.5 MMT. How big a cut is the Post projecting: 25.8, or 21.2? The report is here: <https://bit.ly/3X3kWb9>

Answer: Patrick Packnett

I'll start since this is an FAS report. There was an error in the text of that report. And I would just confirm that the correct number is in the table at 25.8. And I will also note that this report came in after or was released after the WASDE report so I think we will be taking a look at this report and making any adjustments that might be necessary in the December WASDE.

Answer: Bill Chambers

Just one small comment. We value the GAIN reports, but they don't necessarily make it into the official WASDE estimates. They will sometimes differ. Official USDA data are in the WASDE report and the PSD database.

Question: Steven Schuetz

Where can I find the methodology that NASS uses to generate the "NASA Terra MODIS Modeled Yield" that is mentioned in the NASS Executive Summary/Monthly Briefing.

Answer: Lance Honig

There's a [nice paper](#) that was written by the team that produces that. I think you will find that to be helpful. It probably has the best detail explaining the process that I have seen.

Question: Andrew Mattheis

Are there projects/programs to get groundwater data for trying to improve the quality of the groundwater for us, livestock and agriculture? Especially in poor groundwater areas. Is the data helping with projects if yes?

Answer: Kelly Maguire

I don't think this is perhaps exactly what they're asking about but the [Survey of Irrigation Organizations](#) is what comes to mind as information. This is a survey that was done a few years ago with ERS and NASS and it is looking at how the water is managed, looking at both groundwater and surface water.

Answer: Joe Parsons

There are some state-level departments of natural resources that have pretty extensive reporting about well head levels and some things. And in addition, NASS publishes the [Irrigation and Water Management Survey](#). There are some states, especially I'm thinking along the Great Plains that have quite a bit of data about groundwater and the state of California has extensive reporting I know.

Question: Lacey Holland

For Export Sales, will the new data format be shown far in advance, so we have time to change our processes? Could both processes run in tandem for a period of time?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

We will find an appropriate way to preview the data formats before we release them officially when we cut over to the new system. In terms of running both systems in tandem, I'm not sure that is something that we can do. We get all the data from the exporters and it's quite a burden for them to provide the information and I think we want to avoid asking them to report the data into two different systems. And of course, the output reports come from the data that we collect in the same system from the reporters. However, we will be taking a look at all options as we move forward with the new system.

Question: Jerry Gidel

The current yield trend in the baseline seems not to update its trend numbers given the past few years. A jump from 172 to 181 bushels U.S. corn yield for 2023 seems very unusual. I heard your general reply but updating data trends seem also appropriate.

Answer: Bill Chambers

I have done a lot of trends and where you start the trend and where you end it has a big impact on what the final number is. I am confident that the trend was updated. Trends with different starting and ending points can give very different answers.

Answer: Mike Jewison

For the baseline, it is not a forecast. It is not a forecast of what we think is going to happen in the future. So please don't treat it that way. Bill already outlined exactly what the purposes of the baseline are. I wanted to get that out there.

The yield that we use in the baseline is still based on the work that I did with Paul Westcott back in 2012 now I think it was. Almost 10 years ago. We re-estimate that and update the coefficient as it is noted in the WASDE every year and it is essentially the same methodology for corn.

Question: Joe Kleinman

Is it possible for NASS to update silage area and production during the season as opposed to just at season end?

Answer: Lance Honig

That is another item that I will add to my list of things to go back and look into. I will remind folks that following every Census of Agriculture, NASS goes back and does a complete program review, such as which commodities and which states are included. And also, it will be an opportunity to look at issues like this and any others like it. And so there will be some more feedback coming on that following the Census as well. We'll take a look at this.

Question: Jacqueline Holland

What years are used to calculate the trendline yields for corn? Or where should I look online to find that info?

Written Answer: Mike Jewison

The estimation period used is noted in the footnote section of the corn balance sheet table in the WASDE. For example, in the May 2022 WASDE on page 12 the footnote reads: "The yield projection is based on a weather-adjusted trend, estimated using the 1988-2021 time period, assuming normal summer growing season weather but lowered to reflect the slow pace of planting progress as of early May."

Question: Joe Kleinman

Could WAOB publish the coefficients used each year in the Wescott-Jewison model? Either on a historical basis or an ongoing basis.

Written Answer: Mike Jewison

The data used for the model can be found via NASS quickstats and the National Center for Environmental Information.

A detailed explanation of the methodology can be found here:

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=36652>

Question: Dale Durcholz

Back in the middle 1990s, some researchers in USDA did a study on NASS's corn production estimate (Wang comes to mind as one of the people involved). Has there been any thought to doing an updated study? I learned of this study from a farmdoc article a few years ago. It goes a long way to helping users understand how you do what you do, and the estimates that are released.

Written Answer: Lance Honig

There isn't anything specific planned right now, but we will give it some consideration.

Breakout A: AMS Market News

Question: Jeff Koenig

Do you think there may be other trade leakages considering what was found on the garden crops? "Trade leakages" means not capturing HTS codes.

Answer: Patty Willkie

It was the differences in the 33 commodities of the NAPCO program for the Cognos disposition codes. We are now capturing everything with Ace and the HTS codes. So, it's one hundred percent reporting. If it's being entered into Ace with an HTS code, we're pulling it out of Ace. We created codes in the large commodities. We've pulled out added HTS codes for cilantro, things that are hidden, if there's enough to justify it adding a code. Right now, I don't have enough parsnips to do it. Parsnips are low on the totem pole but some of the other things are being pulled out. There is a link on the Market News portal of the new HTS codes that have been created. All the codes that have been created will be updated on the Market news portal twice a year, in January and July of every year. I have an email distribution list that I email out twice a year. You can email me your email to be added. Also, there are various emails going around with different import broker associations, so you can be kept apprised of the new HTS codes to use. We can definitely keep you informed of the new codes.

They weren't capturing the HTS codes. It was just the produce they were inspecting for APHIS. It's two different programs.

Question: Jason Carver

Regarding the creation of the 31 new HS forthcoming with January data released in March, do those breakouts also include Export codes or only import?

Answer: Patty Willkie

They are separate codes. I think export codes are called schedule B export codes, I'm not working with those. I've not really looked at those. It's a different set because those are considered technically in Market News's purview as domestic shipments because we track them domestically. But there are schedule B export codes and those can be found on the International Trade Commission's website.

Question: James Campbell

Is there an update on Chicken API? Slug 3646.

Answer: Jason Karwal

We are seeing the current chicken prices through the API and have been for a few weeks now, but I'm not sure which chicken report you're referring to? Slug 3646 is available through the API. If you are having issues getting that one, please reach out to us.

Breakout B: An Overview of Wheat, Dairy, and Food Price Outlook Data

Question: Karen Braun

Could someone drop a link to this ERS wheat data charting?

Written Answer: Molly Burress

The wheat data is located here: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/wheat-data/>. Documentation is available here: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/wheat-data/documentation/>. The visualization Andrew mentioned is forthcoming. If you would like to send Bryn and Molly your email address, we can send you a notification when the Wheat Data visualization releases. Molly.Burress@usda.gov; Bryn.Swearingen@usda.gov

Question: Chris Eggerman

How do you allocate food use among classes of wheat?

Answer: Andrew Sowell

The basic allocations as you may know, the tables provide the food use for all wheat and durum. The question is how do we allocate the other four classes? It basically comes down to expert judgment on a quarterly basis. It's a combination of having some industry contacts that we check against as well as our own research into price differentials and what we think is happening in the market regarding that.