



USDA Spring Data Users' Meeting
April 18, 2023
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 it was answered in the Open Forum. There was not time to answer all questions, 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: Joseph Lardy

You currently list export sales to “unknown.” I cannot fathom why you still use it. Certainly, there is a known party/country on the other side of the trade. So why do we keep using “unknown”?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

This question has come up here in the past, and our regulations allow for exporters to report sales to unknown destinations to us when they don't know the destination of the shipment, or where the product is going, and we understand that there are a number of circumstances within the trade where that might be the case. So as long as our regulations allow for that, then we have to continue to allow for it under the program. We believe that the most important thing is that we get information from the exporters about the sale and the quantity as quickly as possible, so the industry understands that that product has been committed. If we were to delay reporting until every detail is known, then that takes information and data away from the market. The exporters do come back to us and change the destination to the country when they know it. Ultimately before the product is shipped a destination has to be declared. We're trying to operate the program to provide the most transparency for the market. I think this is something we can continue to think about, but for the moment I don't think we're going to make a change.

Question: Katelyn McCulloch

We are working on updating our Quick Stats API for NASS and the documentation that we found online is dated 2013. I was wondering if you could either direct us to some more updated information, or if you had an idea of when an update might come out?

Answer: Tony Dorn

We're going to have a new API system. There is new documentation. It's with the swagger interface too. Milk production is available and that's what we're moving into. The API, as we're moving into new technology, we don't really have plans to upgrade that or anything because we're moving into the new cloud-based environment that we're releasing our estimates. If there's anything specific that doesn't work now or doesn't follow, we'll fix that or do anything we need to do with that.

This year, we're really going to focus on field crops and economics. We have a lot of data products. A lot of data goes out from NASS, including the census products. So it's going to take several years to get everything out, but that we're working as fast as we can. By the end of this year, we're hoping to have the field crops economics. As we do more, we should see similarities and other release products where we can get things out faster. The more we get out we should see an increase in the speed of what we can roll out faster. We'd love to have it as soon as we can and move into the new system, because we're going to maintain 2 systems as long as

there's a data need for that. We're not going to cut the data users off so that you don't have something that works. As we get more documentation and user information in the new system, we will provide that as well. So we're looking at a few years down the road, but we're doing as fast as we can.

Answer: Joe Parsons

Little bit of that funds available too. If we are able to obtain more funds for modernization, we'll be able to go faster. We've kind of orchestrated our contract to reflect that, but you know it's availability of funds, but we are very keen to move forward.

Question: Chase Bender

So far there appears to be more fragmentation of data globally. For example, the world's largest wheat exporters no longer releasing public trade data. And we've seen recently a dramatic reduction in the number of international traders operating that country. Given the fact that a substantial percentage of market participants rely on the USDA as the standard bearer for supply and demand data, is there any concern at the USDA about this? Is the USDA doing anything differently to try to maintain the best possible forecasts?

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

Clearly, things have gotten more challenging in the past couple of years. Obviously, the USDA is always trying to maintain its best possible forecasts.

Answer: Mark Simone

With regard to Russia, they haven't put out their export data for start of the year. That's obviously an issue. We do use customs data. We do use port loading data, vessel lineups. We do utilize a private vendor, a multitude of sources. Ideally there'd be only one source, but here we are using multiple sources and trying to basically triangulate or even use more sources and FAS Global Commodity Agricultural Division (GGAD) do a great job at that. I tip my hat to them, but it's not easy.

Question: Nathan Arentsen

The Census of Agriculture has a new Internet question. I think it's question 26 talking about broadband access. What level of geographic granularity do you expect to use when you report that data?

Do you plan to coordinate any of the data you receive with the FCC as they try and update their broadband map?

Answer: Tony Dorn

That along with all the other Census products will be published at the county level. The Census of Agriculture is really the only tool that we have for the county level information, and that's

done every 5 years so it'll be at the county level like all the other data products and Census of Agriculture.

We also have a release called the technology use or computer use. That's done every other year, and that is at the state level that has information about that. The same type of information Internet use as well. So that's also available.

We're aware of the FCC, but if we really don't coordinate our data products, with our being a Federal Statistical Agency doing things independently. We don't usually do joint publications or things like that with the FCC. We are aware of that. Really, what we're talking about, NASS surveys is farms. So it's really the broadband on farms, versus the coverage of rural areas and things like that. That would be a different scope than what NASS is publishing. We interview the farmers and what broadband is on farms, not necessarily urban areas or rural regions.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I think, the fundamental problem with creating some is they may use the data to help inform their maps, but, as you know, you know that we have to maintain confidentiality of respondents from respondents, and so, being able to integrate that data directly, could be problematic with FCC. The other thing I'll say is there are data from the American Community Survey. Also, they're very similar questions, and I don't know the level of granularity in which they publish.

Question: Don Close

I would like to give my compliment to the job that AMS has done developing the Cattle Contract Library. If you go back to the listening session that was held in Kansas City, and I think was spring of 2022, if you go back and listen to the request of the stakeholders that was given in that meeting, and the recording of that meeting is available. If you go back and listen to the request of the stakeholders then go back and look at what AMS was able to put into the Cattle Contract Library, they've done an impeccable job. I think it's really good work.

I have a question on a different area, and just the last couple of weeks there's been a huge change in the report of the number of imported cattle from Mexico on weekly, and they've aggregated a bunch of different categories. I don't see initially the weekly data we were getting.

Answer: Brittany Koop

Our goal was to improve efficiencies there, where we were releasing, around 9 different reports on the various exports and imports crossing the border down there. So our goal was to improve it, to get a consistent data flow across our regions. So if there's data on this new report that you think is missing, please reach out specifically to me.

Question: Richard Knight

To Don's point, the issue that I've found with it, USDA ERS, because I'm looking at following it on a weekly basis as well. When you go back and compare the previous format (the weekly format) to your new report, the totals are not matching up on a weekly basis. So while I'm guessing it

looks like you split out steer and heifers by Texas, New Mexico, and I think Arizona, I'm guessing and trying to figure out how that adds up the totals for the week are not matching up with what you were previously publishing under the old format. I think I got over the year only 2 weeks to actually match up to your totals.

Answer: Brittany Koop

So I think one of the issues of the new format is prior to this new format, we were including roping cattle, roping steers, in with feeder steers, and this new format is breaking them out. So once again, email the address in the bottom of that report and we can get that straightened out with you. There was one pickup one week in there, but otherwise it should all total out.

Question: Natalia Sesi

Does FAS consider putting Attaché estimates into database format?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

No, we have never considered databasing the attaché forecasts. They aren't official USDA forecasts. That's a report from our attaches in country as what they are seeing on the ground. We take that into the WASDE process, but we have not found a need to database those estimates.

Question: Dale Durcholtz

When are you going to put a more visible link to the IPAD division on the FAS home page? I would guess there are a lot of users that aren't familiar with this information, or how to find it. I typically do a google search in lieu of trying to get to the info from the FAS page.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

This was raised before and gives me opportunity to report that we have actually linked the IPAD data to the main FAS homepage. If you go under our data and analysis tab, you'll see a link for geospatial data, geospatial resources. If you click on that link, it takes you directly to all of those great products including the Crop Explorer and the GADAS system, and a whole host of other information that we use to do our crop forecast. So take a look, and please continue to provide feedback if we can make things more useful.

Question: Bill Nelson

At the October meeting, there was a question about the removal of UN data from GATS. My recollection was that plans were for that data to return. Please update.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

I have to apologize for this one. Yes, we have provided that data in the past. The UN changed their means of transmitting the data to us. So our connection kind of got broken, and we've been working with our IT team to re-establish access to that data. It has not gone as quickly as we would hope, but we're still working on it, and hopefully we can restore it as soon as possible.

Question: Pre-submitted

Where can someone find Federal crop insurance data that would include items such as liabilities, premiums, and/or losses, and maybe the associated states, counties, and crops?

Answer: Michael Hibbs

Near the top of the public website at rma.usda.gov there is a dropdown called Tools, and within that area you'll find all the different tools, applications available. For this specific question on crop insurance, I'd point the user to the Summary of Business link, where you're going to find crop insurance data. There are several summarized reports. Just one click reports at various levels. State, County, crop, things of that nature down near midway on that page there is a link to an application, but I think for this specific question, I'd point the user to another set of links that will take you to some downloadable data files. These would include things like liabilities, premiums, and losses. They're going to be at different levels like state, county, and crop. Along the way there are email links because it's kind of hard to just tell someone how to get there. If you're out there playing around, and you do have questions, please send us an email, and we're always happy to assist.

Question: Rachel Berry

We are looking for information on the updating for the DMC decision tool. How frequently is pricing updated for this decision tool?

Answer: Post meeting follow-up from Mike Walter

According to the DMC tool administrator, the tool is designed to update the margin estimates every day. However, he acknowledges the decision tool software has a few issues that they're working on to resolve.

Question: Bill Nelson

Love the feedgrain data query product. Have been hoping for 10 years for the same for oilseeds. Any possibility that could be seen in the future?

Answer: Jen Bond

I think that's a great idea, and I think a lot of innovation starts with these great ideas and suggestions here and over time we've tried to incorporate some from folks like the gentleman sitting next to me and more. So I think it's something that we could explore. It always takes resources, so I think it needs to be balanced against the other tasks that we have to support our mission. But we'll take another consideration. The individual who asked this question is certainly familiar with the wide variety of tables that we have in oil crops, so it sounds like they're wanting an advancement in the functionality, something that you can search, so I think that's a great thing for us to look into. I think our data deputy is also online and it may have some additional insights to share on the feasibility of doing that.

Answer: Molly Burress

You read our mind because this has been a topic of internal discussion. So this is very much something that we would like as well.

Question: Bruno Arthur

Please provide the URL links where we could find the published research papers of USDA.

Answer: Kelly Maguire

Go to ers.usda.gov and there's a bar at the top, and one of them is [Publications](#). You click on that, it's a dropdown, and it'll give you everything going back that we've digitized back to 1978 or so. You can search by topic, author, type of publication.

Answer: Joe Parsons

Most of our deeper dives at NASS, we publish the data we publish, and we document it. We do other [research papers](#) documenting about, statistical research to improve our data collection and such, and that, too, is on our website. The other thing I would say is that the [National Ag Library](#) also has a wealth of links. Everything from across the department, and a lot of other journals. When you think about ARS, scientists, and so forth, there are a lot of items get published by USDA.

Question: Bill Lapp

Thanks to AMS for a lot of timely response from your employees. We appreciate that and you do a great job of collecting data. EIA brought out new information on production of for feedstock usage and a breakout between biodiesel and renewable diesel for soybean oil, which is really fantastic. The thing we're missed, the really big piece we're missing, and I brought this up last year, is how much inventory there is at these plants of feedstock, because that's really important. Joe, somewhere in your labyrinth, there's codes that tell us how much renewable, what the renewable Diesel code is, for imports and exports, and I have really struggled to find those 2 codes. The Drought Monitor has not had Oklahoma on it for like 2 years. I don't know what Oklahoma did to NASS, but I wish they'd fix that. Mark, are you going to give us hybrid spring and Durham projections in May because that's what I heard. You're going to do detailed balance sheets beginning in May?

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

We're going to change the format of the table beginning in May. But we're not changing the timing of the New Year forecast. So there won't be anything for 23/24 by class in May.

Answer: Mark Simone

The by class tables for the 2023/24 MY don't come out until July.

Answer: Joe DeCampo

On our Census website, we do have a schedule B search engine. You can just, you can type in a word, description. It will populate what the scheduled B code is, and then import codes are maintained by the International Trade Commission. So whatever you find on schedule B side, you can find it on the HTS site, because the first 6 digits will be the same.

Answer: Julie Harris

First of all, thanks for the shout out for the feedstocks. We're so happy that we can add something that of interest to you all, and I know I know that there's interest in the soybean oil stocks. I mean, I've heard that already, and just a reminder that, we have a cycle for getting approval for our survey forms, and we're just now getting approval through OMB for changes that we're making. That will be implemented imminently, and that is not part of the package. So it'd be 3 years before we can even make survey form changes. So, keep asking, and we can see if we can make that happen in the next round.

Answer: Post meeting follow-up from Lance Honig

The drought monitor product in question is produced by the World Ag Outlook Board and uses winter wheat information from the Census of Agriculture to identify major and minor growing areas. There are several instances across the country where disclosure issues prevent the necessary data from being published, such as some minor winter wheat producing areas of Oklahoma. As a result there is a "hole" over portions of Oklahoma. NASS will work with WAOB to see if we can come up with a solution.

Question: Jennie Campbell

Can NASS add stocks of soyoil (or other vegoils and fats, for example) that biofuel plants to the monthly Fats and Oils report? And/or can the EIA add that to their monthly feedstock usage survey?

Answer: Julie Harris

Same answer as previous.

Answer: Joe Parsons

We don't have intentions right now of adding that question to our current survey.

Clarification: Bill Lapp

This is really important because the stocks of oil at the end of the 22/23 crop year about less than 2 billion pounds. And these plants could have in excess of 3 billion pounds of stocks. So it's important to know whether they have them or not in terms of market functionality. So there's a 3 year window for NASS to be a hero.

Answer: Joe Parsons

We'll keep that in mind.

Question: Jerry Gidel

Why it takes so long for EIA to get some of the information about the final details out? Let's say the amount of gasoline is poured into the tank cars so it doesn't blow up. It takes them at least 2 months after the USDA gets their stuff. It's another month that they put their stuff out right now. I'm not sure we've got January at this point available to finalize the total number of actual EIA output of ethanol that we have on the finalized state. It seems like we could get that tied up a little closer here, at least get the thing tied up with the output that is putting out by EIA about what they say is their final. We get our corn usage, and we ultimately get some of the week monthly. But the finalized data is so far gone at EIA as it's been an issue. I've talked with other people in the past on this and it hasn't improved. So is there any ideas when that might be updated and tightened up?

Answer: Julie Harris

We do publish ethanol production on a weekly basis in our weekly data. And yes, you're right. That's not final. The monthly data coming out, you know, after the fact. January is out there. We published the January data on March 30.

Question: Jerry Gidel

You didn't put out the amount of slippage of gasoline to finalize the actual total that comes out 3 weeks after the published data. It comes out just to nearly at the end of the month, for the for the one year decision. So that's also a part of the final total if you're going to port gasoline in there to make sure it doesn't blow up. That's not at all. That's actually being produced.

Clarification: Joe Parsons

The gasoline necessary to denature that ethanol or denaturing term.

Answer: Julie Harris

All the data that we publish on a monthly basis in the petroleum Supply Monthly that has to do with ethanol and gasoline production come out 2 months after the fact, and that's what we publish.

Question: Jerry Gidel

Still is there, and what you just talked about. Yeah, I understand your 2 months. But I also want to understand that there's this 3-week delay to get the denatured total. Now it's pretty easily consistent, but not always from there, and it seems like that would be not that hard of factor to be able to have it. There as we looked at the numbers that you published for a month. Think about how the user out there wants to finally get his books taken care of, and it's a pain to wait that long and wait 3 more weeks after you still tell me a number. I'm sure you understand that the denaturing is actually published 3 weeks later. And sometimes you're guessing this, what it is.

Answer: Julie Harris

I don't have an answer to that right now. We can consider it.

Question: Chase Bender

We have biodiesel import and export data from the EIA. We have, renewable diesel import data. We don't have renewable diesel export data and given that we're renewable diesel productions are already bigger than biodiesel productions about to be substantially bigger. Are there plans to start publishing that or collecting that data anytime soon?

Answer: Julie Harris

We haven't been reporting exports of renewable diesel because we don't have an HTS code that's unique to renewable diesel. We get that data from our friends at Census.

Answer: Joe DeCampo

I'm not sure of exactly which numbers we do and don't have available.

Clarification: Joe Parsons

Renewable diesel and biodiesel come from 2 separate processes. And so the renewable diesel is becoming much more popular as of way of being produced, and so I think there's an interest in that particular case. You can pump it directly into a tank and use it without any blending or anything. So that's part of the motivation as production ramps up. Anyway, that's part of the reason for the requests for the code.

Question: Alan Brugler

I'd like to revisit the Russia Ukraine situation again, and how World Outlook Board in particular, is handling the supply and demand between those 2 countries. I mean, you got provinces that are being taken over. You've got well documented, cases of grain being in stolen and moved to Russia. I did a study a couple of months ago that showed that the production was probably less than the Russians were claiming. But could you kind of explain how you're handling that situation?

Answer: Mark Simone

The differences between what USDA is and what the Rosstat is in terms of production. It's largely yield for USDA. We did some analysis of both. Analysis of remote sensing and weather-based yield regression and conditions. For the past crop year in Russia were not as good as the 2017/18 record yield year, and so we had reservations. And there's precedent at USDA, not necessarily taking every foreign Government's production numbers. We did not take government estimates for South America oil seeds production in the past. Well, we didn't take it for India in 2015/16, we didn't take it for India this year. So there's that precedence, and I'm sure you are aware of it. And we've stated our reasons. And of course, we don't take Crimea

and Rosstat does. We also don't take the areas that are annexed by Russia. That's for the 4 Ukraine oblasts.

Question: Alan Brugler

Are they still counting the grain that was stolen and taken to Russia?

Answer: Mark Simone

How solid are data sources within Ukraine. We've got the first production estimate was a preliminary estimate. They're supposed to come out with the final estimate it's supposed to come out in March. It hasn't yet. Has it come by in April? As far as we know, it does not include annexed areas occupied by Russia. So no! It's a difficult situation, admittedly. I don't trust the numbers from either one of those countries for that reason.

Question: Alan Brugler

How are you handling this?

Answer: Mark Simone

There's been reports that it's some of us being exported illicitly, you know. Flag or unflagged vessels. It's difficult. I mean, it's lot of problems, sure. Do they leave the country or not? Fine, so did it leave the company or not? You know that you've there's been reports that turned off they're transponders. When what countries actually goes to, we don't have anything to verify where that where they actually ended up. So it's a difficult situation for us. Admittedly, when we will actually get everything worked out? Who knows?

Answer: Mike Jewison

It's a fluid situation, and I think the question before about trade data sources. I mean, I think a lot of folks in here may not realize that for even for countries for which we have reliable data such as China, at least, you think it is right. We're still looking at exporter data. There's trade as it fits together in the world, is never perfect empirically right. And that situation has just been compounded by the fact that you have conflict. Now I will say on the flip side that, for example, in the case Ukraine corn, we do have more transparency of what's pulling out of the Black Sea relative to before the conflict. But in terms of the commingling of grain potentially it's tough to disentangle that. So, and of course the amount of what's potentially commingled and stolen, if you will. That's also a subjective kind of question. Right? That's not. Maybe we captured in so far as it's on the balance sheet right? If our estimation of what Russia exports, we have no way of disentangling, whether that's stolen grain or not. Conversely, what Ukraine reports. We take that as face value, and of course those are those numbers are evaluated in the context of importing countries. If I've got most of the Ukraine corn going to China and Europe, there's the other side of that coin to make sure that actually lines up.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

I just want to highlight that FAS published a [Russia Wheat Commodity Intelligence Report](#). That was our best attempt to try to add more information for the public, support our estimates and explain why we believe the numbers are what they are. People can take a look at that report which is cleared by the World Board, so just wanted to add that.

Question: Chris Eggerman

Are crop acres excluded from condition ratings if they appear unlikely to be harvested? At what point does that happen – as soon as they appear unlikely to be harvested, or not until they are tilled up? I'm thinking of winter wheat affected by drought in the Southern Plains.

Answer: Chris Hawthorn

Each week we're asking the percent of the crop that is expected to be harvested. So as you get closer to harvest, you can see more variability in the conditions of the acres remaining to be harvested.

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Lance Honig

Let me preface this answer with a reminder that crop condition (and progress) reporting is subjective so there is not an exact answer for how everyone reports. But based on the guidelines we provide to the respondents and considering the fact that individual farmers do not report for this survey, the assumption is generally made that acres that are still standing could be harvested. The standard definition for very poor is "extreme degree of loss to yield potential, complete or near crop failure" so it is likely that unless a reporter knows that specific standing acres will be abandoned, they would be reflected in this category.

Question: Jerry Gidel

The impression that's I've been getting is that the USDA's people are going out to make the evaluation about the viability of the crop for insurance purposes, and that during the month of April, so about halfway a little bit for into that scenario, and that is a very, very important situation this year, considering the quality and the crop conditions we have out there in that and particularly specifically relates to this question about crop conditions, because, of course, it's probably in the poor and very poor category that we're at and it's always the game of what's the harvest today? Acres versus the harvested acres? And right now there's been a tradition of 7, 8 million on that. Now this year, this kind of close to 10 is what you guys are estimating, which I think is the right way to be on the side of the question. But maybe it's 12. Maybe it's 13. All of a sudden we go up substantially here on that unharvested situation, because of the fact that this crop is on a teeter totter here. It's either going to get that one last rain that gives them the chance to have a something for the custom cutters to go buy. Or are

they going to drive all the way to Nebraska? Yeah, that's the thing we're at right now. Is there any kind of feel or any update that might be helpful? I guess to some extent nobody really knows until we get the final numbers from these people going out there to evaluate; if it's going to be good or bad.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I'll let our folks at RMA chime in here in just a second. But, as you know, the folks that are hired by the AIPs to go out and evaluate the crops, and such, I don't know exactly when they're out there, or what rate they're going to be out there. That's a little hard for at least for us to know, and I'm not so sure that RMA would know what pace they're at, because they go through those AIPs first.

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Michael Hibbs

Thank you for your questions. All available data on crop loss information by damage cause can be found on our public website at <https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/Information-Tools/Summary-of-Business/Cause-of-Loss>.

Question: Dale Durcholz

Are we going to start getting some reliable prices for renewable diesel at the wholesale and retail level. The absence of any price data is forcing the industry to "back into" prices to understand the economics of the industry. At present, the west coast and maybe the gulf coast are the most important regions.

Answer: Julie Harris

I'm unaware of any plans right now to be publishing any of those prices, but you know I can certainly express to our management that there's interest for that.

Question: Gayle Pounds-Barnett

Are there any plans to make the swine marketing contract library resemble the Cattle Contract Library?

Answer: Jason Karwal

Currently, no, but once we hope that the Cattle Contract Library is made permanent, we'll definitely start conversations to look at that, to hopefully provide some more clarity to that data that we already have available and make it a little easier to access but right now it's just something we have in the back of our minds that could happen. But there's no definitive plans as of now.

Question: Don Close

So with those 2 reports being done by separate agencies, how are you going to milled the two?

Answer: Jason Karwal

I don't know. That's the conversation that has to be had. We're in the same agency. So we'll make it work somehow. Two units in the same agency.

Question: Jerry Gidel

I will be presenting the corn slides and Dale has contributed some of his soybean analysis sides as well. The question that's been gnawing at me for a few years is that I think the USDAs approach with the regression analysis has been based upon a 1990 to now trend. If you look at that particular trend up there, it seemed like it worked well, until about 2018. I know there's been wet weather, dry weather, and not a too bad a situation here 2 years ago, but it just wasn't able to get back up to 176.5-177, then last year we had the issues of dryness in the Western corn belt. One of the things that has been talked about from the USDA is that they've used the weather adjusted yield. To get to their 181, and the more recent trends that they use, we forget about what happened in 2012 and just take it out of our regression analysis, which is has somewhat logical scenarios in it and didn't do a terribly bad job back in 2014-2017, we were splitting the potential out there. But right now, I have a hard time imagining a 181 yield. So, in that case, utilizing this trend from 1990 regression analysis (new slide) – we know there are problems with regression analyses, but it's a standard tool we all use. So here we are, 2 years ago we hit it on the head and this year we'd be at 179. Well, it's 2 and a half bushels less than the trend line that we've been using without 2012 in it. To some extent I just feel like USDA trend should be closer to the potential range we are at. I feel it's maybe gotten lost in the fact that that we've got too steep a line going. It doesn't mean that that all of us in the analytical world understand the statistics and we also understand the fact that weather can have a big impact, but the one thing that does come along is the fact that our investors in the East Coast and the big funds, they look at the USDA statistics and say, "Wow, that Ag Outlook says it's a 2 billion extra supply because we are using 181 yield. I think we may be need to bring this back into a closer range. Either, we put 2012 back into the trend line – I know we just issued 181.5 and we can't retract it – but it's something to consider as we march forward. One of the other alternatives is to look at a trend line that goes from 2013 to now (new slide). That particular trend line puts the yield at 177.4. Now you say, "Wow! We we've had 174 and close to 177, but in reality maybe we are on a plateau and we don't really know the genetic world. We're all marching forward, we are all going to have fantastic stuff. How much closer can we make the rows? How much weed control can we do? This is an issue you're going see on the bean side, but on the corn side that hasn't really been an issue. It hasn't been something that's been talked about that maybe, in the short term, is a guarantee. We still have the longer term things going to 200 bushels and we are all optimistic, we all love it. If that happened, we have to make sure we get plenty of ethanol and a few other things to figure out how to sell it, but I wanted to bring up the concept and share these ideas. I know that this is not a place that we can make changes, but it's a scenario to look at a better idea, so that the information flow that comes out to the world can be taken in the right way. Right now they're getting 181.5 and they're feeling like,

well, there might be a 184, which to me is a pretty optimistic number after 173. I had a discussion with one of my friends in this business and he says we can't make that adjustment on the weather into the trend. I agree, but the trend at this point might be at least bringing back the 123 number and making it more realistic to be in the proper range of possibilities.

Question: Dale Durcholz

I first looked at a soybean yield chart and it had nothing on it. When you look at this, the mid 1970s to about 1990 the yield trend was actually flat; then you go from 1990 to about 2005 the yield trend was flat; and then you step it up again and your yield trend flattened out. Certainly in the last 5 to 6 years you get this feeling that the yield trend is flattened out again. If you go on to the next slide Joe, it shows it better. If you look at it when yields come in, and the same thing is true for corn, we're making adjustments. It seems like we go through a period where we have yield improving, but at a slower rate – and that's what really shows by the green line on here. Then there is a kind of a stair step when you get a sudden influx of technology into the mix and you have a big leap upward, then we trend higher at a slightly lower rate for a number of years. Again, so what I'm saying is the yield don't come in linear fashion, and I think the same thing is true, for corn. I have another slide for corn that I could share with people if they were interested showing where the slope changes over time. I think that's one thing that people kind of lose sight of is that yield improvements come in surges, and then they slow down because technology comes in surges, then it kind of did this trend until we get that next big change. Once again, I understand what both Keith and Michael and the rest of them are trying to do with the linear thing and the weather adjusted trend. If I remember right, that was something from Paul Westcott back a number of years ago. The problem you end up with in using what I do on beans and what I do on corn where my slope changes a little bit is where do you gauge where that slope is changed and that's something that you can never really be comfortable with. So, with all of that, USDA can't use yield trends like I use or like what Jerry was showing on corn, but I think the industry needs to talk about it a little bit more in here that, even though the USDA is putting out this yield, maybe this is really more representative of where we are and what we are today.

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

USDA's objective is to be transparent and consistent and put out information that people can understand. And if you're starting to talk about nonlinear trends over time, it gets pretty complicated, and I think Dale even pointed out that trying to make those adjustments in real time over time would add another layer of complexity.

Answer: Mike Jewison

The first component to this is What was the original impetus for the method that we have? The original impetus was we just came out of the 2012 drought and most folks in this room understand that we don't collect survey data, that's not our wheelhouse; that is what NASS does. Any of these methods that we talk about, whether weather models, satellite imagery, or crop conditions, in my opinion, will always be inferior to survey-based estimates that NASS

provides. So, coming out of the 2012 drought, Paul Westcott was the primary author of the paper we wrote, which is about a decade old now, but the method is the same. We wanted to come up with an effective way to, if necessary, adjust yields early in the season should there be adverse weather prior to survey data being available from NASS. And so that was the impetus for what we did. I think it's a blunt instrument, to be sure, and it's certainly no substitute for survey data, but I think the transparent method in which we did it, and the fact that you can replicate it (it's not complicated), it serves its purpose in providing an objective starting yield. So, I would say to you, Jerry, I would say the opposite question would be, if we saw normal planting progress for corn, for example, and we had cooler than normal and wetter than normal temperatures such as what we saw in 2004 or 2009, where would the national yield be? Would it be 181.5? I would posit that the probability of that would be much greater than 181.5, so we're trying to reflect the possibility of outcomes both to the upside and the downside.

Clarification: Jerry Gidel

Okay, now which 2 years are you talking about?

Answer: Mike Jewison

2004 and 2009, just as examples.

Clarification: Jerry Gidel

2004 and 2009, both of those are the abnormal years of 165 yields versus the 145 to 153 yields during the early 2000s - you're saying that that was really reality?

Answer: Mike Jewison

I'm saying that our starting point is trying to reflect a mean yield that would best represent the potential outcomes for both of the upside and the downside.

Question: Jerry Gidel

I understand that, so to reproduce your outcome of currently at 181 the only way I can get to that is to drop 2012. Did you drop 2012?

Answer: Mike Jewison

We controlled for the fact that the 2012 was abnormal in the sense that it was much drier than normal June, and then it continued through the summer months, July and August.

Question: Jerry Gidel

Which started the year before.

Answer: Mike Jewison

What I would say, too, is, well, I appreciate what you and Dale are looking at, a simple linear trend does not provide us a methodology by which we can objectively adjust yields prior to survey data being available for NASS. Right?

Question: Jerry Gidel

I totally agree.

Answer: Mike Jewison

What would we base it on, crop conditions?

Question: Jerry Gidel

I think the one thing that I pointed out in this is the fact that if we put the 2012 in there, it would be a lot more representative of the last 5 years and would provide us a middle ground yield of 178-179. But 181 is our top side all the way to 185, while the bottom side down to 178 we haven't been able to achieve. So to me, projecting a yield that is 4.5 bushels above the previous yield we've ever had doesn't seem like to me as a realistic expectation to put out. It's not between you and me, it's between us and the investors and the people that look at our statistics that have all the money. They're the people that are using the billion bushel carryover stock. That say, "Oh, we have to be short corn in our trades, because [the crop is] going to be huge." Now to me if it says it's 113 or 115, maybe they have a different edit. That's what I am pointing out. All I'd say is with 2012 back in there, it compensates for the 2 years that you talked about, and we have a more realistic turn. Now, maybe this is the year El Nino is going to show up on May 31 first, and we're going to have a 183 bushel year. I hope that you're right. Let's go for it. But I'm still worried about the fact that we are not, seeing that in the current trend. Now, we don't want to put that in our mindset, that this is what we're going to have, but we all think and we all look at these statistics, and when you look at those statistics, I think they provide an unrealistic number that a lot of people are misrepresenting as to what was realistic, and the conditions we have right now. Now, that's my opinion on the corn. The beans, I agree. It's hard to make a stairstep world, and the same thing on corn. But I think if you put those 2012 in there, you get a hell of a lot closer.

Answer: Mike Jewison

Can I add one thing, Jerry? Bob Neilson, Professor Emeritus at Purdue University, long time corn Guy, coincidentally wrote an article in February of 23, it's on his King Corn blog, very short article, but very good. In the article, the title headline is Grain Yield Trends: Don't be fooled, he offers 2 anecdotes, which I thought were useful in this context of talking about short term trends and I'm going to quote him here.

'The year I graduated from high school was the end of a 10 year round of impressive improvements in national corn grain yields, with the exception of the 1970 southern corn leaf blight epidemic. The linear trend yield calculated for that 10-year time period was a pretty good fit to the data (r squared 72%) and indicated that the yield increased at a rate of 2.9 bushels per

acre per year. They were undoubtedly agricultural experts at the time, who confidently proclaimed that the third miracle of corn yield improvement had occurred, and yet by the year 2023 this year the average US. National corn grain yield would be close to 237 bushels per acre.'

That's one anecdote, he's got another one:

'Similarly, the advent of hybrid corn with transgenic traits in the mid-1990s was loudly hailed as a precursor of the third miracle of corn yield improvement. Such proclamations were based in part on simple trust in the power of biotechnology. Others pointed to the 10-year trend line, beginning in 1996, that seemingly showed the historical trend in corn yield improvement of 1.9 bushels per acre per year, had miraculously increased to 2.7 bushels per acre per year. That apparent increase in the linear rate of corn yield improvement predicted a national average corn grain yield for the year 2023 of 200 bushels per acre.'

So, I'm not going to continue to read, but the point is that neither short-term estimate was correct. That's where I'm going with this and your point is well taken. In terms of the last 10 years, I would argue, are largely a function of poor weather planning, weather, and growing season weather in the corn belt. Again, just to reiterate, what we try to do is every year find what would be the objective starting point in terms of normal weather, normal planning, progress. And it's easy to get lost in recency bias, as it were. I won't talk anymore, because we're kind of we're talking past each other a little bit here, and I'll let Joanna talk about soybean yields.

Answer: Joanna Hitchner

The soybean yield is also guided by the Westcott-Jewison model. Before NASS surveys for yield in August, the World Board projects yields from May through July in the WASDE report. We have variables in the Westcott-Jewison model that help us evaluate the season, like is the planting progress going well for corn? How is the June and July weather? And so every month there are variables that we can peg ourselves to and adjust our thoughts from May through July before NASS publishes a yield in August. It's a helpful model for our process and a transparent methodology to people outside of USDA. Also, one thing that we have done, and this goes to Dale's point, is we have started to incorporate a shift in our model about 2 years ago. Starting back in 2013/14, we see years of data above what we would expect trend would be, and there was some sort of shift in the trend line. So, we do add a shift variable starting in 2013/14 to the Westcott-Jewison model.

Question: Jose Montes

Jason Karwal mentioned that AMS has about 735 reports available via API. Where can we see a list of those reports or how can know if a particular report is available via API?

Answer: Jason Karwal

The API actually has a query you can run for reports available. We can definitely follow up with them on providing those after this. But we do have a specific way to pull all the reports that are available or have data available, and either of the voluntary or mandatory APIs.

Answer: Michael Jeter

We also have the on the marketing site. We do provide a list of the market types and reports are available via the API.

Question: Hussain Jiwani

The weekly crop condition data for corn and soybean is available on state level. Are there any plans to get this on a more granular level like regions within the state?

Answer: Chris Hawthorn

Not at this time. The turnaround time is very quick to be able to just get it at the state level and the national level. I don't see that being feasible in the future.

Answer: Joe Parsons

We also have a little bit of a confidentiality problem. When you get down to sub state level. Now, one thing that we have for some crop progress information, we have a research division product that's a gridded area. And I to be honest with you, I can't remember what variables that covers at the moment. The gridded area from our crop weather can give researchers a little bit more of a sub-state look at some crop weather information.

Answer: Post meeting follow-up from Lance Honig

The Crop Progress and Condition Gridded Layers data and documentation can be found at [Crop Progress Gridded Layers](#).

Question: Daniel O'Brien

While understanding the difficulty of representing wheat varieties in global wheat supply-demand data, still would it be possible to provide more global wheat variety and class data in either the WASDE reports or associated Crop Outlook reports? If wheat class differentials were represented globally it could be of value to various domestic U.S. wheat groups and/or traders.

Answer: Mark Simone

Wheat by class, globally, is difficult. Certainly in Canada and US there are some similarities across other areas of the world definitely. Not that much, and it would be a challenge getting that standardized. Never going to pursue that.

Question: Julie Ingwersen

Is China subject to the same rules on daily export announcements as everyone else? There have been multiple times that sales to China are heavily rumored yet sometimes it's weeks before sales are announced.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

All countries are subject to the same regulations in our export sales reporting. I noted earlier that we have heard rumors that some of these sales had been made days or weeks ahead of the time that they were reported. As I noted with our new export sales reporting system that they're working on, we are trying to address that situation through collecting more specific information from the exporters rather than the aggregate reporting that they currently do. We want to require contract by contract basis reporting, but on the larger sales we are collecting that data. So overall, we have heard these rumors, or complaints of possible late reporting and we're trying to figure out how we can best address that through the program to make sure that there's confidence in the data that we're reporting.

Question: Julie Ingwersen

Please re-cap the progress from USDA/FAS in upgrading its export sales reports.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

Over the last few months we have had several, I think 6, outreach sessions with the exporters who report data to us. We've shown them the export sales reporting system to familiarize them with the system. We've talked about the new approach that we want to take with the contract-based reporting. We have heard concerns from them, that it would be overly burdensome to provide the data in the manner that we're requesting. So we've heard those concerns. We have opened the system today for the exporters to go in to test, to play around with the system to enter their data, to see if the system works for them. We also hope that they will test the electronic upload facility which we have built in to try to minimize the burden on them in terms of reporting. So if they can program their systems to be able to download the data into a specific format that we've provided, then those spreadsheets can be automatically uploaded into our system. And we hope that that will make the process easier particularly for reporters who have a lot of data to send to us. So the system is open for testing. We were encouraging and pleading with companies to go in to test the system. We need all the exporters to go in, put hands on the system and make sure it works for them. We are also planning to issue a Federal Register Notice soon that will give everyone a chance to provide input to us officially about the burden of reporting sales through the system. They'll have an opportunity to comment about the contract-based reporting. And we're also encouraging data users who may have concerns like what was mentioned earlier about the late reporting to also provide comments. If you have an interest in the confidence and reliability of this data, make your views known. I would add also that we plan to have outreach sessions with data users to collect any additional comments about the formats of our reports, and about the query system in addition to the feedback that we've receive through the survey that we put out. In addition to the test that we're doing now

with the reporters, data users will also have an opportunity to see these reports in advance before we change over systems, to make sure that that data, as we have it prepared and delivered, will work for users as well.

Question: Joseph Lardy

The new export system that is being revamped had a much different layout. Data was being reported in different quantities and the columns were in a different order. Are you going to give users a sample of what the final format will be before it happens? Also, would it make sense to implement on the new marketing year for corn and beans so less user formatting headaches?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

Yes, as I noted the data users will have an opportunity to see the reports and the query system in advance when we open up the data user side of the system for testing which should happen soon. We don't believe that the change over to the new system will cause or require us to shift marketing years for these commodities.

Question: Karen Braun

I want to clarify that a 181.5 corn yield, in USDA's opinion, reflects the probable National result with relatively normal weather. Very good weather, like in 2004 or 2009, could push 2023 yield even higher, like 184+?

Answer: Mike Jewison

My point of the example was just to illustrate the fact that we're talking about average or normal weather and normal planting progress, right? So, to answer your question, the expectation, if you had 2004 or 2009-like yields under normal planting progress. The expectation would be. Yes, you would be above 181.5 in terms of where that would end up, the survey data would tell you at the end of the year.

Question: Francisco Scott

Is the risk symmetric?

Answer: Mike Jewison

The answer is no. The precipitation, the impact from one standard deviation above the mean is not the same as one standard deviation below the mean.

Question: Francisco Scott

I would like to hear, maybe from the panelists, about API efforts that you guys are having. I have had some success with some APIs, but not with others. I use NASS, AMS, FAS and I have had a lot of trouble.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I think we're all going to say that it's we're on a journey and we're working at it.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

We have APIs out there for our key data products. As you suggested, if you have had trouble using our APIs, see me after the meeting, and I'll be happy to put you in touch with our IT folks who can help you and walk you through it. We've worked with other people in the past who have struggled with the APIs, but you know we have them. People use them. I don't know that we're planning any changes to them necessarily, but we're happy to help you work with them.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I want to echo that from NASS. As I know that it can be a challenge sometimes to find ways to find what you're looking for in Quick Stats, for example. If you want to use an API, you know there's a little bit of a hurdle to that, so if you're having trouble, on whatever report there are names in the back of that report. Reach out to us, or even call the 800 number and we'll get somebody on it to work with you to get you where you need to be. I wish that we had more data that we could show, we haven't turned on the milk data yet; milk data is good. At this point we need to turn the API on, but when we do, you're going to see that you can pull back everything, including footnotes and all really nice stuff that you can do with, how we'll have the new API organized for our new dissemination process, but really just getting started.

Question: Joel Karlin

We've seen big changes in national acreage from the March Intentions to June, and then to the final. But going on Quick Stats. There's no state acreage data for the June acreage prior to 2018, and there's no state acreage for March intentions prior to 2012, and I was curious if that will be updated and as I was thinking about this question and thinking about Dale and Jerry's comments. I'm curious if people at USDA have done some work on the fact that row crop acreage in the Dakotas is increased tremendously over the past few years, and whether that's how to get a deleterious effect on the national yield. But I'm primarily concerned about this acreage data and NASS being updated at the state level.

Answer: Chris Hawthorn

The March and June data missing from Quick Stats was overlaid by subsequent estimates. Beginning in 2018 we left each estimate in Quick Stats for reference purposes.

Answer: Joe Parsons

We all have all that data from the track records at a national level, but none of the State level.

Answer: Chris Hawthorn

The March and June data are only in Quick Stats going back to 2012 at the national level. We plan to add more historic data as time allows. We hope is to load everything needed make all of the track records calculations from within Quick Stats.

Answer: Joanna Hitchner

We have looked at putting North Dakota into the yield model. North Dakota area has grown tremendously in the past few years. But with just a few years of large area growth we haven't found it to be statistically significant within the model. But perhaps if we see more years of consistent acreage, it will have a bigger impact on the model and then we would include it. Also, we have a committee process and we don't just run one model. We run a variety of models but have found the results to be in line with the Westcott-Jewison results.

Answer: Joe Parsons

You always like to say if you went back to the mid-nineties, and you look at the soybean levels today in North Dakota, saving for prevent plant kind of season. You could fit the entire landmass of Maryland, is how about the amount of soybean acreage has increased in North Dakota. It's pretty striking. North Dakota is both an objective yield State, and what we call a speculative state. So we consider a speculative region for soybeans. So that's not true for corn, even though there's a substantial amount of corn in North Dakota.

Question: Rob Rowbotham

There are 2 different series where I'm looking for more information. One is in the whey protein area for both whey protein isolates and whey protein concentrate. Looking for sales data on both price and volume similar to what we see in dairy market news for other dairy commodities, and then also international trade import export information. And the second set of data we're looking for really falls to AMS in the FMMOs. The Federal milk marketing orders. We'd like to see something that's de-identified for processor milk, payroll data specifically at a farm granularity and that's where we have to get in the de-identification of production components and cell count information so that we can try to for forecast better milk supply over time. As we're seeing the tremendous concentration that we are in the dairy industry.

Answer: Jason Karwal

The Dairy team is working with the individual that asked these questions to assist him in getting the information he needs.

Question: Matt Roberts

As you transition to APIs, are the plans there to continue to make those full data downloads, to continue making those available or are you planning to deprecate that service?

Answer: Joe Parsons

No, we'll still have it to where you can very easily download data, and, in fact, it will be easier. Dairy data for a particular state or group of states, you'll be able to actually manipulate that page to make it look like how you'd like. And you can even save it. So that, it'll look like that the next time we release or populate with new data. So it should be very intuitive.

Answer: Tony Dorn

As we develop the new website, we've gone out to different data users. And we're always taking feedback as far as exactly what we need. So, right now I think you're talking about if the Pdfs or something like that could be downloadable?

Clarification: Matt Roberts

I'm actually enough of the dinosaur. I download the entire Quick Stats database right here locally. Those are up there just as entire zip files. It allows me to work on a plane it allows me to work in places that I don't have reliable connectivity, or I don't have to deal with when the internet decides to die.

Answer: Tony Dorn

The databases that are available, we're going to be able to do the same thing. Let users do the same thing in a different way. We're going to keep Quick Stats out there for quite a while to make sure that we cover all the uses before we stop providing that data. So everybody has a smooth transition, a long enough transition, so we don't immediately go to something else. But all the databases will be available for downloading.

We're still developing exactly how that looks you can get a really good taste for it [right now](#) what's out there. But we're going to add more query features. And along with the APIs we will provide more support as far as like downloading and users to be able to get their hands on the data and do things that you want to do in a way that you know you can't really do with Quick Stats. Like just Joe said too, there's going to be more information available, such as timestamp when the data was released. Information about the data, foot notes, data, dictionary items too, that are going to be available electronically in the downloads that you're going to be able to pull to give you more information about what we have. So that will be available. We have that in mind and we're continually using usability tests with different data users, too. We want to make sure that we're keeping everybody's uses in mind while we develop so that we don't just do what we think we want. But we want to do what everybody needs too, and we know there's a lot of different uses out there, and that's one of them that we're keeping in mind as we develop it.

Answer: Joe Parsons

And I'll just add that there's lots of different kinds of data users. For example, there's some folks that are very interested in, perhaps a state, and we plan, although we're not far enough along that it makes sense to do this yet. The ability to very easily create a set of statistics that describe

a state or an area and be able to surface those. And there's things kind of come into focus. We'll start doing some more training and stuff, we're still a little ways away.

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Lance Honig

Due to security concerns, NASS has retired the FTP site previously used to download the complete datasets from Quick Stats. You can access these data from the new location at <https://nass.usda.gov/datasets>.

Question: Katelyn McCulloch

I realize this is just a test site for milk production, but is NASS going to continue to group the data by report that it has historically come out from?

Answer: Tony Dorn

Structurally, you're going to dairy, field crops, livestock, economics, and so on. So there'll be groups of data where you can easily. It's logical how you get to that website and see what data is there.

Clarification: Katelyn McCulloch

So, not necessarily by the name of the report, but by a different category.

Answer: Tony Dorn

The common name, yes.

Answer: Joe Parsons

We'll make an effort that there's a crosswalk, so folks aren't lost.

Question: Chase Bender

You put together some really good prices for a lot of different markets that are very opaque. Sometimes, and it's my understanding that a lot of these prices are voluntary reporting. So in some cases some prices that the market tends to follow just won't show up for many weeks, or even months at a time. Is there any thought on ways to prevent that going forward? For example, corn oil, the crude degummed corn oil price. Central Illinois hasn't printed. It's a weekly price that hasn't printed since January.

Answer: Jason Karwal

We're at the mercy on the voluntary side of what we can get reported to us. That example is a market that has historically been held pretty close to the vest on how they market those products. And we have to be careful to meet confidentiality and also be able to supply data, we don't have enough sources of data in that case, and I have no foreseeable plan to how we could get it. I mean, we're always trying, but there's just certain instances where, if we don't have

enough data, we can't report it. And that's the bottom line. But we do get requests for that specific data quite a bit. We do have people feet on the ground. We work through our state coordination. We do have working agreements with about 30 States, with reporters, and we do task them was trying to find information like that and help us get other sources. But oftentimes, when you have a market like that, that's very condensed, and everybody knows each other, and one person doesn't want to give it to USDA. They all tend to go that way, and it's difficult to break in. But the best answer I can give you is, we do try to get those data points. And if there's any data points that you, you know are aware of, that you think would be beneficial or wants us to look into, we're always open to those discussions as well.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I'll make this a pitch. At this point, too, is that as you work with companies and other folks that may be clients, or whatever else, you need to explain to them the feedback loop process that, we need data reported in order, to describe what's going on, and to accurately report back to you all about the current situation.

Question: Erik Daniel Guerra Rodriguez

With Mexico's banning GMO corn from USA, are they any plans from the USDA to publish any information of how much of the corn in USA is NonGMO?

Answer: Joe Parsons

Well, we don't publish how much is non-GMO, but we do publish how much is GMO. It's a pretty high proportion. There are some other data from FSA for some sub-corn types. That can be useful but for GMO. We also have published a long series on GMO Soybeans as well in Cotton. Am I leaving anything out? I think that's the full set. At some point we may have published some data about alfalfa as well, but I don't recall when or where that would have been.

Question: Ty Kreitman

This question is related to survey sample sizes, response rates directed towards NASS. What are some broader trends that you're seeing in sample size or response rates? Some of the biggest challenges for maintaining those, and then maybe some strategies for mitigating those risks.

Answer: Tony Dorn

For a lot of our surveys, we have CV targets, and we have targets that we have to make for our accuracy. So, if response rates go up or down, you know the sample size. If there's a trend. Well, we like that, too, of course we need more sample size a lot of times. If response rates are going down, it's always a challenge. A lot of the surveys that we have, outside the census products, are voluntary. So that's why we keep trying to pass the word, and how important it is to respond to data, because survey data is really the live ground truth that everybody relies on,

and hear from the data. So, that's there is a definite trend of sample size. We're looking coverage as well. So, there's only so many samples that are large producers. There's not an unlimited sample of farmers in the country, too. What we've been doing a lot of with public relations, with outreach, things like that, we've been doing a lot of that. To stress the importance of the data. And I mean, just as overall trends I mean, you can see the questions here, too. There's more and more demand for more granular data and more data. So that's also an issue for respondent burden on farmers. We have to keep that in mind, too. We send long questionnaires sometimes with lots of economic questions, detailed questions, and that's a big burden on farmers. They're the ones who keep getting all the surveys. So, we're trying to be cognizant, gatekeepers of that in a way too. We try to make it easy for farmers to respond as a big part of that. So, it all kind of ties together, trying to get the information from the farmers. Make it easy and accurate, so that they can report so that all ties in. You know, it's important piece of sample size, but it's related to the whole issues that we're facing and that we're dealing with and getting responses so we're getting accurate data out there.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I'll add a couple of comments. I had the privilege of the other day of giving some remarks at a conference, looking back over the last decade from 2007 to 2017 census of agriculture, we're still collecting 2022, we dropped about 8 percentage points over the timeframe in response. And so, on 2 million farms, that's like 160,000 responses. And so our ability to produce data at a national level not impacted. Most states not impacted really so much. You have to start worrying about maybe some bias issues. This is in the census, right? So you have, pretty much everyone is included in the census. When you get down to county level, things get blurrier. That is where you start losing granularity. You're also subject a little bit more about what you can publish. You've got confidentiality restraints, and in our survey programs you can back up almost the level. You know a smaller corn state. Could we be off? More likely. Yeah, as response rates go down. On farm grain stocks, for example, if you're thinking about a smaller state, and you're towards the end of a marketing year, it's kind of a rare event, anyway, to find on farm stocks. The uncertainty is worse at the lower levels of aggregation, and it does give you pause if you're a statistician. Really, this isn't something unique to NASS, or, to the Federal Statistical system. Ask anybody in the Survey research world anywhere, and lots of discussions on why and how. Our response to each relative to other Federal agencies, and certainly other folks in the Survey Research world are, really great. We're going back to the to where we were with the census. Right now we're pacing about 6 percentage points. I think that's right. It might be oscillating a point or 2 from the pace that we were on last year. I don't have a response rate cause you pretty much have to be done, and it's kind of a complex computation actually. But we're pacing a little below it. So anything you all can do when you go out, and you talk to clients or farmers, or give a talk. Is that data is very useful. And it's useful in ways you might not anticipate. Whether that comes in how things get allocated. That those that data get used in just a myriad of ways. Whether it's on the hill or within the department, to make judgments and to allocate things, or looking at, equity issues and things like that. Now on our annual survey program. The other thing to bear in mind is, if you're a big wheat guy, we're probably going to

come talk to you right because you have a lot of a total. And that's the way sampling will tend to work. What gets challenging is, if you're a big wheat guy, you also raise organic corn, and some reason you decide to grow a lot of vegetables and melons, you're going to be in all of those surveys, and you might even land in ARMS as well. So those folks really do get a lot of burden, and we take, every effort that we can to build a relationship with them and continue that relationship over time. But it's not easy. We do ask a lot of folks that are that are relatively influential in agriculture. But that influence can vary, depending on what we're looking at. Right now, we did some oversampling of traditionally underserved groups, for example, in our ARMS survey. So those folks became quite important, and they were more likely to have the burden placed on them of a relatively long survey, for instance. So it depends on sort of what's going on with our survey program.

Question: Ruba al Hindi

How do you report for the total number of Yield targeted agricultural commodities in Quarter basis, for example: do you sum up all total of Yield of commodities for the 4 quarter to report on the annual basis?

Answer:

NASS has reached out to the requestor for clarification.

Question: Subodh Acharya

Is there any plan to backfill some of the missing data, for example the missing county variations in previous years?

Answer: Joe Parsons

We publish county level data in the census. We publish it for certain commodities, and in some cases we're not able to publish a particular county. Either because of confidentiality, or it was a complimentary disclosure meaning that county was not a disclosure problem, but we had another county in which we had to not show because of confidentiality. Of course, you can't just, not cover one, because you got one degrees of freedom. So, in that case we will not publish, and never will publish that value, and some folks get a little tangled with that when they see D's, or something in a column, but it's part of our commitment under the Federal requirements of collecting confidential information.

Question: David Widmar

As somebody who tries to replicate the Westcott Jewison model from a decade ago, is it still replicable, or are there updates that you've done? You mentioned something along the lines of a soybean adjustment. So is there any guidance you could provide?

Answer: Mike Jewison

We always will note in the footnote of the WASDE tables how each yield is arrived at. It's add another year and re-estimate the coefficients. All of the data is probably available. If you have any issues in terms of the national climactic data center changed how you get data. So if you have issues of that, send me an email, and I'll be happy to show you if that's an issue in terms of new weather data that would be out. But it's essentially the same, just adding more years.

Answer: Joanna Hitchner

We use the Westcott-Jewison model and add a shift variable starting in 2013/14. If you have any questions or you want to know more, please contact me at Joanna.Hitchner@usda.gov.

Answer: Mike Jewison

I just want to say, there's this, these weather models. I actually saw a paper published. It was the Pre-World War One version of the Ohio naturalist, where agronomists at the time, were doing the exact same thing. So it's what Paul and I worked on. It's certainly not novel, right? And again, and this the whole idea is the simplicity behind it, and standing on the shoulders of giants. Just to reiterate, there's a difference between a person with weather without survey data and someone who goes out and collects survey data.

Question: Haili

I appreciate USA Trade online's data for Import/Export at the State and District level. I am from Hawaii Department of Ag, many times, data of shipping into Hawaii is critical info for local decision makers. Is it possible that trade data between States are available in the future?

Answer: Joe DeCampo

Interstate trade is a little trickier. It's not going to be in UTO because they're strictly international trade. I believe the Census Bureau has something called the commodity flow survey that really comes out once every 5 years. That'll have more information there about interstate trade.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I don't know if there is any sort of administrative data for landings, at shipments of products into Hawaii.

Question: Ron Sterk

Are you planning to close the hole in S&D data involving non-reporters? When will you be able to gather/report sugar data from non-traditional refiners, about the only category that is growing in sugar and thus is having a greater impact on the accuracy of sugar production data.

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Barbara Fesco

The Sugar Program authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to collect data from importers of sugars, syrups, or molasses to be used for human consumption, in a manner prescribed by the Secretary. Given the myriad and ever-changing set of importers, USDA has traditionally estimated imports for human consumption as a proxy for imports by non-reporters rather than survey such importers directly. Each month, we take the total imports during the month, as reported by Customs, and subtract the imports reported by U.S. cane refiners who report to USDA. The difference is inferred to be sugar for human consumption based on the assumption that only cane refiners would be importing raw sugar. USDA is aware that new enterprises, which rely on raw sugar as an input, have established operations in the U.S. To avoid having their imports count as deliveries for human consumption, we will seek to add them as reporters. We have already added a new melt house/refiner to our list of required reporters. As we add new reporters who import raw sugar, the category for non-reporter deliveries will diminish.

Question: Bill Nelson

The 2020/21 soybean residual remains a negative number. Do you foresee that ever getting back to zero or positive? As a negative, how do we interpret it?

Answer: Joanna Hitchner

The residual is the sum of all the errors in the balance sheet. So, we have the supply given by NASS, and we have the use categories that are published publicly. And then the residual is negative. In normal years, you would think that the residual would be slightly positive due to variables like full fat feeding of soybeans. However, that is not always the case with potential errors in all of the other variables in the balance sheet.

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

I would think, why shouldn't it be negative? And you could think about it centered just above 0.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I think it would be odd for it to be greatly negative. Let's put it that way. Or greatly positive, except in the case of the feeding.

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Lance Honig

NASS has a process in place for publishing final revisions to the previous 5 years following each Census of Agriculture. Should any revisions be needed for grain stocks for the 2017-2021 seasons, they will be published in early-January 2024.

Question: Jerry Gidel

Given the numbers that we have for this year, since we're talking about something few years back, we had a negative residual, and that the current soybean statistics and the huge residual we're carrying right now. At over 150 million, very similar to last year, we had to go and readjust down the soybean size of the crop. We decided not to make a change this month. I understand there's no reason to make it change possibly until now, and maybe you want to wait till June. But at this point it seems like that we've got quite a battle going on here between the size of the crop and the demand levels, and we've got a huge difference going on. We could potentially have a smaller crop size that would also impact our carry over stock at the end of the year, and there didn't seem to be a tip of the hat, even that that possibility existed. I'd like to acknowledge that there might a possibility going on in the crop size for beans.

Answer: Joanna Hitchner

We do our analysis before NASS comes out with their stocks number. We do a residual analysis, just like the industry does, and what NASS published for stocks wasn't that far off from our expectations. So, we didn't see a need for the adjustment in March. Perhaps if we wait until June and we see something different then, yes, we'd make the adjustment. But our assessment, prior to seeing that number, wasn't that far off from what we estimated.

Clarification: Jerry Gidel

The statistics that were available to the public gave you a 57 million difference. Once we got better statistics, we got a 35 million difference.

Answer: Joanna Hitchner

Are you talking about the published trade estimates?

Clarification: Jerry Gidel

The trade estimate was 57. Then, when we got all the statistics and census, and also your updated crush statistics, that moved all the way down to a 35 million difference which must have been your idea of what was going to come in. That's why you didn't change it or make some suggestion of a potential soybean crop size adjustment. I'm not saying it has to be. If you made the judgment that 35 million wasn't enough, then that's fine. But it's an interesting situation. When you look at the statistics that are available, and then you come up with what it might turn out to be for a statistic. Soybeans are a very difficult one, because it's a small output of stocks. I agree that's not the easiest one to make a judgment to me. Soybeans always are highly important to the market and highly emotional.

Answer: Joanna Hitchner

Some of the trade estimates were way off, like the high estimate of 1.9 billion bushels, so if you took the average of the trade estimates to guess the stock number, you would be way off in terms estimating the stocks or residual.

Answer: Keith Menzie

We tend to look for a pattern to over a series of stocks reports. Second quarter stocks can be quite variable, and the pattern doesn't necessarily show up. Tend to want to wait, see a third quarter stock. I also obviously agree with Joanna. If you evaluate the data and the history of residual the way we did, we didn't really find the stock estimate to be very far off what we were expecting.

Written Question & Answer Summary

Question: Ryan Nielsen

WAOB is expanding the wheat by class S&Ds in the monthly WASDE reports - will "cash average price" be included by class? (they are included in the delayed NASS ag prices report)

Written Answer: Mark Simone

The WASDE will not provide season-average farm price projections by class.

Question:

Does RMA have any data available that includes yield, rates, and prices?

Written Answer: Michael Hibbs

On the Risk Management Agency webpage, you will select the Tools dropdown section from the main page. Then you would select the link for RMA Information Reporting System. Under "Browse by Application", a user would select Area Plan Reports, which will lead you to yield data. For rates and prices, 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 what you're interested in and then you can generate an excel spreadsheet.

Question: Rachel Giometti

I was looking at the WASDE at a Glance report and didn't see it updated since Feb. Is there any approx. time frame that this would be updated?

Written Answer: Kelly Maguire

The WASDE at a glance data visualization is updated with the latest data at 3 p.m. on the day after the WASDE releases. The tool presently displays data that is current through the April 2023 WASDE. It is possible that the stakeholder needs to clear the cache to refresh the screen with the latest version of the viz. We also recommend viewing the viz in Google Chrome.

Question: Unknown

I would like to request that information could be collected annually on seed production of specific vegetable seed crops in the US (acreage, quantity, location, etc.), including organic seed crops. Also that Census of Agriculture tables which detail farm and producer characteristics by race and ethnicity would also include statistics on certified and exempt organic producers, and farms with organic sales.

Written Answer: Lance Honig

NASS does not currently have funding available to collect and publish data for vegetable seed production on an annual basis, but we do have the ability to provide collect and provide additional data on a reimbursable basis. Any data collected under such an agreement are

subject to the same rigor and standards as those part of our Federal program, and any results would be released publicly to ensure equal access to all.