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NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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USDA Reports 55.3 Million Acres of Irrigated U.S. Farmland 2013 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Data Now Available

Washington, Nov. 13, 2014 – There were 229,237 farms with 55.3 million irrigated acres in the United States, according to the 2013 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey results, published today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). According to the 2008 irrigation survey results, there were 235,715 farms with 55.5 million irrigated acres.

“The 2013 irrigation survey expands on the data collected about irrigation during the 2012 Census of Agriculture and provides the most comprehensive source of up-to-date information regarding on-farm irrigation in the United States,” said NASS Administrator Joseph T. Reilly. “The latest report reveals key data on the agriculture industry’s use and stewardship of our nation’s water resources.”

Data highlights from the 2013 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey include:

- The largest portion of irrigated farmland acres in the United States were dedicated to harvested cropland – including grain and oilseed crops, vegetables, nursery and greenhouse, and hay crops.
- Farmers irrigated nearly 52 million acres of harvested cropland acres in 2013.
- The irrigation results show more irrigated acres with sprinkler systems than gravity irrigation.
- Equipment, in general, is one of the leading irrigation expenditures with farmers and ranchers spending \$2.6 billion on irrigation equipment, facilities, land improvements and computer technology in 2013.
- The total amount of water used in 2013 was 88.5 million acre feet.
- The average acre feet applied was 1.6 which compares with 1.7 in the 2008 irrigation survey. (An acre foot is the volume of a sheet of water one acre in area and one foot in depth).
- Irrigated area of horticulture under protection was 1.40 billion square feet in 2013. This compares with 1.37 billion square feet in 2008.
- Irrigated acres of horticulture grown in the open was 524 thousand acres in 2013. This compares with 580 thousand acres in 2008.

The 2013 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey followed up with 35,000 producers who indicated in the 2012 Census of Agriculture that they irrigate. To ensure the most accurate and complete results, NASS made an additional effort to include nursery and horticulture producers in the 2013 Irrigation Survey. Producers provided information on water sources and amount of water used; acres irrigated by type of system; irrigation and yield by crop; and system investments and energy costs.

“The results of the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey can be used to understand the use of improved technology, and lead to more efficient water use practices,” said Reilly. “For farmers and ranchers who are looking for more efficient ways to irrigate their land and ways to reduce their expenses, the results of the survey will provide a valuable tool to help them make informed decisions about the future of their operations.”

To access the results of the 2013 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

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NASS is the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture and is committed to providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. We invite you to provide occasional feedback on our products and services. Sign up at http://bit.ly/NASS_Subscriptions and look for “NASS Data User Community.”

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