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Pacific Region Farm News



Cooperating with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and the Hawaii and Nevada Departments of Agriculture
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CENSUS OF HORTICULTURE ARRIVING IN MAILBOXES THIS WINTER

Sacramento, CA – As millions of Americans venture out to purchase a fresh cut Christmas tree or poinsettia this month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will be surveying the producers of those cherished holiday traditions. NASS is conducting the 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties to gather detailed information on horticultural production and sales across the United States.

"The Census of Horticulture includes producers of floriculture, nursery and other specialty crops," said Vic Tolomeo, Director of the NASS Pacific Regional Field Office. "According to the most recent Census of Agriculture results, nursery and floriculture products were more than a \$14.5 billion industry in the United States in 2012 – \$2.5 billion in California. This special census is an opportunity for producers to provide detailed information on their industry to help ensure the continued growth and sustainability of horticultural farming."

Last conducted in 2009, this census will provide the only source of comparable and consistent data at the national and state levels for the industry. NASS will gather information on horticultural activities conducted during 2014, including production of horticultural crops, value of products, square footage used for growing crops, production expenses and more.

Tolomeo noted that the opportunity to respond to the Census of Horticulture is not something that comes along once a month, or even once a year. "Participation is important because this census is a unique opportunity to provide information that will be used by policymakers, organizations and businesses for the next several years to help make decisions regarding the availability of goods and services, funding, policies and other key issues that affect the industry," he said.

In December, NASS mailed the census to selected horticultural operations in the United States. For the 2014 Census of Horticulture Specialties, an operation is defined as any place that grew and sold \$10,000 or more of horticultural specialty products in 2012, as reported in the 2012 Census of Agriculture.

"Responding to the Census of Horticulture is especially vital for floriculture producers this year," explained Tolomeo. "NASS will also use the information collected from the census to publish the annual *Floriculture Crops* report, a source of data heavily relied on by local industry."

Producers can fill out the Census online via a secure website, www.agcensus.usda.gov, or return their form by mail. Federal law (Title 7, U.S. Code) requires all producers who receive a form to respond and requires NASS to keep all individual information confidential.

Recipients are required to respond by February 5, 2015. NASS will publish the Census of Horticulture results in December 2015 and the annual *Floriculture Crops* report on June 4, 2015. For more information about the Census of Horticulture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 851-1127.

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