



PRESS RELEASE



NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

United States Department of Agriculture • Washington, DC 20250

Northwest Regional Field Office • Olympia, WA 98507

Ag Statistics Hotline: 1-800-727-9540 • www.nass.usda.gov

Posted online February 1, 2016

Regional Contacts

Phone: 1-800-435-5883

Email: nassrfonwr@nass.usda.gov

- Washington – Christopher Mertz, NW Regional Director
- Idaho – Vince Matthews, State Statistician
- Oregon – Dave Losh, State Statistician
- Alaska – Sue Benz, State Statistician

USDA to Gather New Data on Organic Agriculture Production

Olympia, February 1, 2016 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has begun conducting the 2015 Certified Organic Survey to gather up-to-date data on certified organic crops and livestock in the United States. This special survey effort is critical to help determine the economic impact of certified organic agriculture production in the United States.

NASS is mailing the survey to all known organic farms in the United States, including the Pacific Northwest region of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The form asks farmers to provide information on acreage, production, and sales for a variety of certified organic crop and livestock commodities. In addition, NASS is gathering information about organic farmers' production and marketing practices. The agency urges all participants to respond by February 19. After this date, NASS will follow up by mail, phone and personal interviews with those who have not responded. Producers can return their forms by mail or complete the survey online at www.agcounts.usda.gov.

"The Pacific Northwest continues to be an important leader in Organic production with Washington and Oregon ranking second and fourth in the U.S. sales respectively according to the 2014 Organic Census of Agriculture data." said Christopher Mertz, Director of NASS Northwest Regional Field Office. "As farm sales from organic agriculture products increase, demand for accurate statistics about organic farming grows as well. This survey will be another step forward by USDA in its commitment to helping organic agriculture thrive and will ensure that future decisions impacting the industry stem from factual information."

Agriculture statistics are frequently used by business and policy decision makers, and in this case farmers themselves stand to reap the most benefits. The 2015 Certified Organic Survey will provide data for USDA's Risk Management Agency to evaluate crop insurance coverage to help provide adequate pricing for organic producers. The report, to be released September 2016, will also assist farmers, suppliers and others in the private sector in planning the production and marketing of new products to help sustain industry growth.

"NASS has a long-standing reputation for providing objective, accurate data about all aspects of U.S. agriculture, but the only way for us to provide accurate reports is with farmers' input," added Mertz. "This is a voluntary survey and I hope that all organic farmers who receive it will recognize it as a way to benefit their industry and take the time to respond."

As is the case with all NASS surveys, information provided is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified, as required by federal law. For more information about the 2015 Certified Organic Survey visit

www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Organic_Production/index.php.