



News Release

Census Countdown Begins for Indiana Farmers and Ranchers

Farmers in Indiana will soon have the opportunity to make a positive impact on their communities and industry by taking part in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Census, to be mailed at the end of this year, is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them.

"The Census remains the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation," said Greg Matli, State Statistician. "It's a critical tool that gives farmers a voice to influence decisions that will shape the future of their community, industry, and operation."

The Census highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income, expenditures, and other topics. This information is used by all those who serve farmers and rural communities from federal, state and local governments to agribusinesses and trade associations. For example, legislators use the data when shaping farm policy and agribusinesses factor it into their planning efforts.

"Your answers to the Census impact farm programs and rural services that support your community," Matli said. "So do your part and be counted when you receive your form, because there's strength in numbers that only the Census can reveal."

In 2012, Indiana farmers reported a total of 58,695 farms, spanning 14,720,396 acres. This showed a decrease of 2,243 Indiana farms from the previous Census in 2007. Indiana ranked 2nd among the states with cropland planted to a cover crop and ranked 5th among the states with renewable energy producing systems. This telling information and thousands of additional farm and ranch statistics are only available every five years, as a direct result of responses to the Census.

Producers who are new to farming or did not receive a Census in 2012 still have time to sign up to be counted in this critical effort at www.agcensus.usda.gov.

For more information about the Census, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call 1-888-4AG-STAT. The Census of Agriculture is *Your Voice, Your Future, Your Opportunity*.

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