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CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE COUNTDOWN BEGINS FOR AMERICA'S FARMERS AND RANCHERS

WASHINGTON, March 16, 2017 – America's farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to strongly represent agriculture in 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 of Agriculture remains the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every county in the nation,” said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. “As such, census results are relied upon heavily by those who serve farmers and rural communities, including federal, state and local governments, agribusinesses, trade associations, extension educators, researchers, and farmers and ranchers themselves.”

The Census of Agriculture highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and other topics. The 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed that over three million farmers operated more than two million farms, spanning over 914 million acres. This was a four percent decrease in the number of U.S. farms from the previous census in 2007. However, agriculture sales, income, and expenses increased between 2007 and 2012. This telling information and thousands of other agriculture statistics are a direct result of responses to the Census of Agriculture.

“Today, when data are so important, there is strength in numbers,” said Hamer. “For farmers and ranchers, participation in the 2017 Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future, and their opportunity to shape American agriculture – its policies, services and assistance programs – for years to come.”

Producers who are new to farming or did not receive a Census of Agriculture in 2012 still have time to sign up to receive the 2017 Census of Agriculture report form by visiting www.agcensus.usda.gov and clicking on the ‘Make Sure You Are Counted’ button through June. NASS defines a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year (2017).

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture and to see how census data are used, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.

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