



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
NORTH DAKOTA FIELD OFFICE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Census Countdown Begins for North Dakota's Farmers and Ranchers

Fargo, December 12, 2012 –Farmers and ranchers in North Dakota will soon have the opportunity to make a positive impact on their communities by taking part in the 2012 Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Census 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 Darin Jantzi, Director. “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 looks at 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,” Jantzi 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 2007, farmers reported a total of 31,970 farms, spanning across 39.7 million acres. This shows a 4 percent increase in the number of North Dakota farms from the previous Census in 2002. However, the average farm size decreased from 1,283 acres in 2002 to 1,241 acres in 2007. These are just two of the thousands of statistics available every five years as a direct result of farmer responses to the Census.

NASS will mail out Census forms in late December, to collect data for the 2012 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2013. Producers can fill out the Census online via a secure website, www.agcensus.usda.gov, or return their form by mail. Federal law requires all agricultural producers to participate in the Census and requires NASS to keep all individual information confidential.

For more information, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov. The Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future, your responsibility.

NOTE: IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ACCESS TO THIS ELECTRONICALLY, IT CAN BE OBTAINED AT THE FOLLOWING LINK AND IS NAMED “2012 CENSUS NEWS RELEASE”:
http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/North_Dakota/Publications/Miscellaneous/index.asp

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