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News Release

New England Field Office

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USDA TO SURVEY FARMERS' PLANTING INTENTIONS FOR 2008

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – How many acres of field corn do farmers intend to plant this growing season? Will intended acreage be above or below last year? These are just a couple of the critical questions the New England Field Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will be asking more than 2,000 producers statewide as part of the March Agricultural Survey.

“The March Agricultural Survey, also known as the Crops/Stocks Survey, is one of the most important surveys conducted each year by NASS,” explained Gary Keough, director of the NASS New England Field Office. “This survey will provide the first official estimates of U.S. farmers' planting intentions for 2008, giving a glimpse at the upcoming growing season.

“Data from the March Agricultural Survey benefit farmers and ranchers by providing timely and accurate information to help them make critical decisions for their operation. When finalizing cropping and marketing plans, this survey will be one of the most important sources of information for producers,” added Keough.

Beginning the end of February, selected New England producers will be contacted by mail or telephone and asked to provide information on the crop acreage they intend to plant for the 2008 crop year, including planned dry hay, field corn, barley, and oats acreage. NASS will also collect data on quantities of grains and oilseeds stored on-farm. The information will be compiled and analyzed then published in a series of USDA reports, including the *Prospective Plantings* report and quarterly *Grain Stocks* report, both to be released on March 31.

As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. “NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all responses and publishes only state- and national-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified,” stated Keough. All reports are available on the NASS web site: www.nass.usda.gov. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS New England Field Office at 1-800-642-9571.