NEWS RELEASE
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
United States Department of Agriculture • Washington, DC 20250
Ag Statistics Hotline: (800) 727-9540 • www.nass.usda.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Countdown to Census: What You Need To Know

Only eight weeks until producers start to receive the 2017 Census of Agriculture

WASHINGTON, Sept. 25, 2017 – In just a couple months, farmers and ranchers across the nation will start receiving the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Producers can mail in their completed census form, or respond online via the improved web questionnaire. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service has extensively revised the online questionnaire to make it more convenient for producers.

“The updated online questionnaire is very user-friendly – it can now be used on any electronic device, and can be saved and revisited as the producer’s schedule allows,” said NASS Census and Survey Division Director Barbara Rater. “Responding online saves time and protects data quality. That’s our mission at NASS – to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. Better data mean informed decisions, and that’s why it is so important that every producer respond and be represented.”

New time-saving features of the online questionnaire include automatically calculating totals, skipping sections that do not pertain to the operation, and providing drop-down menus of frequent responses. Producers still have one week to try the online questionnaire demo on the census of agriculture website (www.agcensus.usda.gov).

The census website will continue to be updated with new information through the census response deadline of February 5, 2018. One recently added feature is a new video from Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue reminding all producers to respond when they receive their 2017 Census of Agriculture in the mail later this year.

Revisions and additions to the 2017 Census of Agriculture aim to capture a more detailed account of the industry. Producers will see a new question about military veteran status, expanded questions about food marketing practices, and questions about on-farm decision-making to better capture the roles and contributions of beginning farmers, women farmers, and others involved in running the business.

Response to the census of agriculture is required by law under Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113. The same law requires NASS to keep all information confidential, to use the data only for statistical purposes, and only in aggregate form to prevent disclosing the identity of any producer. The time required to
complete the questionnaire is estimated at 50 minutes. In October, NASS will make a census preparation checklist available on the census website to help producers gather necessary information in advance.

Conducted once every five years, the census of agriculture is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them; it is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the country. Farmers and ranchers, trade associations, government, extension educators, researchers, and many others rely on census of agriculture data when making decisions that shape American agriculture – from creating and funding farm programs to boosting services for communities and the industry. The census of agriculture is a producer’s voice, future, and opportunity.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).