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USDA to Gauge Farmland Ownership and Farm Economics

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23, 2014 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will begin surveying farmland owners to measure financial impacts and challenges of land ownership. Landowners will receive forms for the Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land (TOTAL) survey by the end of December.

“The latest Census of Agriculture helped us determine that more than 350 million acres of farmland in the United States are rented or leased, but it has been more than a decade since we spoke to individuals who own that land,” said Jay Johnson, Director of NASS’ Census and Survey Division. “Today’s economic conditions change so quickly that we constantly have the need for new and updated data, which reflect the true conditions in agriculture sector.”

More than 80,000 farmland owners and producers across the United States will receive TOTAL forms. The TOTAL survey program will collect data from both farmers and landlords, who are not farm operators themselves, to create a complete picture of farm costs, land ownership, demographics about landowners, and improvements made to farmland and buildings, among other characteristics.

The statistical agency is currently in the process of mailing out the survey forms to respondents in 48 contiguous states. In February, trained interviewers will also begin reaching out to the respondents who have not provided their input to answer any questions and help them fill out the survey forms.

The survey builds on information collected in the 2012 Census of Agriculture. As with all parts of the Census, responses to TOTAL are mandatory by law. The same law also ensures confidentiality of individuals’ data. NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all responses, ensuring no individual respondent or operation can be identified.

“I know this is one of our lengthier surveys, but there is a tremendous amount of value in the information farmers and landowners provide,” added Johnson. “I hope all individuals who receive the TOTAL survey form will take the time to respond.”

NASS will publish results of the TOTAL survey in its Quick Stats database in August 2015. Quick Stats is available online at quickstats.nass.usda.gov. NASS will also publish the economic data gathered in the annual *Farm Production Expenditures* report on August 4, 2015. All NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov.

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NASS is the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture and is committed to providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. We invite you to provide occasional feedback on our products and services. Sign up at http://bit.ly/NASS_Subscriptions and look for “NASS Data User Community.”

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