

Supporting Statement

VEGETABLE SURVEYS

OMB No. 0535-0037

A. JUSTIFICATION

This long-running docket is being submitted for an extension of 3 years. There are a few differences from the previous docket, such as minor changes to sample sizes and a few minor updates to some of the questionnaires to accommodate changes in this industry. The only significant change to procedures or methodology involves an increase in the amount of phone follow-up calling to farm operators who do not respond to mail surveys.

Within the ROCIS submission system there will be a sizeable shift in the number of responses and total burden. The previous submission was made prior to the implementation of the ROCIS system. The burden and number of responses associated with the non-respondents were itemized in the Supporting Statement Part A, Item 12, but they were not included in the total burden when it was moved into the ROCIS system.

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The primary objective of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is to collect, prepare, and issue State and national estimates of crop and livestock production, prices, and disposition; as well as economic statistics, environmental statistics related to agriculture and also to conduct the Census of Agriculture. The Vegetable Surveys Program obtains basic agricultural statistics for fresh market and processing vegetables in major producing States. Vegetable statistics are used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help administer programs and by growers, processors, and marketers in making production and marketing decisions. The fresh market estimating program now consists of 25 selected crops and the processing program consists of 8 principal crops.

The vegetable program has two types of utilization: some crops are for the fresh market only, some are for processing only, and some are dual crops--both fresh market and processing. The fresh market vegetable program consists of specialized growers who are surveyed during the growing season for estimates

of crops such as onions and strawberries. Producers growing multiple crops are surveyed at seasonal intervals in major producing States.

For processed vegetables, processors are surveyed the first week of April for their intended acreage of vegetables for processing and the first week of July for acreage contracted. Mid-season surveys (green peas, July 1; snap beans, sweet corn, and tomatoes, September 1) are conducted to record crop condition and yield. In the fall, processors are asked for final acreage harvested, production, and value. California tomato processors are surveyed separately for intended acreage; preliminary acreage; and acreage, production, and price. Processors of asparagus, an early season crop, are surveyed for harvested acreage, yield/production in April and planted acres, harvested acres, yield/production, price/value in September. Cucumbers and green peas are different enough to need their own questionnaires, rather than be included with the other groups of vegetables.

As part of OMB docket number 0535-0218, Agricultural Resource Management, Chemical Use, and Post-harvest Chemical Use Surveys, NASS is building nationally coordinated data bases on agricultural chemical use and related farm practices. These vegetable surveys provide base information for much of the data collected in that docket.

General authority for these data collection activities is granted under U.S. Code Title 7, Section 2204 which specifies that "The Secretary of Agriculture shall procure and preserve all information concerning agriculture which he can obtain ... by the collection of statistics ... and shall distribute them among agriculturists."

2. **Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

Data reported on vegetable inquiries are used by NASS to estimate acreage intended to plant, acreage planted, acreage harvested, yield/production, price, and utilization for the crops listed below.

Crop	Utilization		Crop	Utilization	
	Fresh Market	Process		Fresh Market	Process
Artichokes	x	x	Honeydew Melons	x	
Asparagus	x	x	Lettuce	x	
Beans, Lima		x	Onions	x	
Beans, Snap	x	x	Peas, Green		x
Broccoli	x	x	Peppers, Bell	x	x
Cabbage	x		Peppers, Chile	x	x
Cantaloups	x		Pumpkins	x	x
Carrots	x	x	Spinach	x	x
Cauliflower	x	x	Squash	x	x
Celery	x	x	Strawberries	x	x
Corn, Sweet	x	x	Tomatoes	x	x
Cucumbers	x	x	Watermelons	x	
Garlic	x	x			

These estimates provide vital statistics for growers, processors, and marketers to use in making production and marketing decisions. Private industry forecasters use the data to track production levels for the industry. Federal and State agencies use the annual summary when developing and appraising government programs affecting the vegetable industry. Allied industries such as container manufacturers, chemical manufacturers, and plant breeders use the data in feasibility studies to assess the economic impact of products and define market size and location. Data have been provided to foreign governments interested in U.S. vegetable production and to extension specialists at land grant universities.

Survey results are used by the Economic Research Service (ERS) for the *Vegetables and Melons Outlook Reports* produced in February, April, June, August, October, and December and for the *Vegetables and Melons Situation and Outlook Reports* yearbook in July. Vegetable data provide information to assist the Agricultural Marketing Service in the administration of market orders for tomatoes, celery, onions, lettuce, and melons. Another user of NASS data is

the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, to help administer their Generalized System of Preferences Program, which determines preferred imports from other countries. The Foreign Agricultural Service uses domestic production data on products such as fresh tomatoes, eggplant, chile peppers, squash, watermelons, and onions that are import sensitive, since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) provides added protection against import surges of products while tariffs are being phased out. The International Trade Commission utilizes vegetable data in its studies of import relief.

In the table above, data for some of the commodities are collected only for fresh or processed markets on the US level. However, some States will collect data for both fresh and processed markets to fulfill State cooperator agreements with NASS Field Offices.

- 3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

Many of the surveys in this information collection are small, non-probability surveys that are in the lowest priority group. Web-based data reporting is being implemented for most of the NASS information collections; with the exception of a small number of surveys where it will be impractical or otherwise unsuitable. Collections have been prioritized for conversion based on their frequency, complexity, and market sensitivity. NASS plans to continue to moving surveys into the EDR system as quickly as possible. In the Supporting Statement, Part B, Item 2, we describe some of the initiatives that NASS has begun to undertake to improve many aspects of our organization. With the development of a centralized data base environment, and a centralized data collection center we will move closer to developing an environment in which we can create and maintain EDR questionnaires for most of these specialty surveys. The target completion date for these initiatives is mid 2012.

- 4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

The National Agricultural Statistics Service cooperates with State departments of agriculture and land grant universities to conduct agricultural surveys. The surveys meet both State and Federal needs, thus eliminating duplication and minimizing reporting burden on the agricultural industry. These surveys are the only timely and reliable source of information on the vegetable industry. Data collected are not available from any other source.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-1), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

Information from growers can be provided with a minimum of difficulty by the respondent and generally without having to consult their record books. Processors and shippers provide the requested information from their normal day-to-day operating records.

In the enclosed sample questionnaires, NASS has included several MASTER versions of the questionnaires. These versions contain all of the different commodities that data is collected for in each of the different seasons. States will select the commodities produced in their respective State(s) to shorten the questionnaires down to only the essential questions. The emphasis of the questionnaires will change with each season. In the early spring or late winter we ask the respondents about any late season crops that were harvested in their State from the previous year along with what they intend to plant in the upcoming growing season. In the spring, NASS asks what they did actually plant in the current year and how that compares with what they planted the previous year. In the summer, NASS asks about early harvestings and additional plantings that have occurred. In the fall and end of season reports, in addition to the questions about harvestings and plantings, we will collect data on value of production and additional information on products that are processed or dried and placed into storage. NASS will also conduct some more specialized surveys to collect added information about some unique commodities like onions, green peas, strawberries, etc.

With some specialty growers, States will create a questionnaire for that particular producer group (strawberries, tomatoes, green peas, etc.). This helps to keep the respondent burden for all respondents to a minimum. It also allows the Field Offices to customize some of the questions, so that they can address issues that are unique to that commodity.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Collecting data less frequently would eliminate data needed to keep the agricultural industry abreast of changes at the State and national level. Timing and frequency of the various reports have evolved to meet the needs of customers and yet minimize the burden on the reporting public.

- 7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.**

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

- 8. Provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments.**

The Notice soliciting comments was published in the Federal Register on July 2, 2009 on page 31687.

There were no public comments received.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and record-keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

NASS is in frequent contact with growers and processors to keep abreast of activities in the vegetable industry. Other government agencies such as the Foreign Agricultural Service, Economic Research Service, and Agricultural Marketing Service are consulted. Other contact sources are associations such as the National Food Processors Association, the Produce Marketing Association, the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, and the National Onion Association.

- 9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents.**

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

- 10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

Questionnaires include a statement that individual reports are confidential. U.S. Code Title 18, Section 1905 and Title 7, Section 2276 provide confidentiality for reported information. All employees of NASS and all enumerators hired and supervised under a cooperative agreement with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) must read the regulations and sign a statement of compliance.

Additionally, NASS and NASS contractors comply with OMB Implementation Guidance, "Implementation Guidance for Title V of the E-Government Act, Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002

(CIPSEA), (Public Law 107-347). CIPSEA supports NASS' pledge of confidentiality to all respondents and facilitates the agency's efforts to reduce burden by supporting statistical activities of collaborative agencies through designation of NASS agents; subject to the limitations and penalties described in CIPSEA.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

Cost to the public of completing the questionnaire is assumed to be comparable to the hourly rate of those requesting the data. Reporting time of 4,640 hours are multiplied by \$24 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$111,360.

Projected Response Burden for Vegetable Surveys

Crop	QID	Sample Size	Freq	Responses				Non-response				Total Burden Hours
				Resp. Count	Freq x Count	Min./ Resp.	Burden Hours	Nonresp Count	Freq. x Count	Min./ Nonr.	Burden Hours	
Master Fresh Market Vegetables												
Spring	000128	3,200	1	2,560	2,560	5	213	640	640	2	21	235
Summer	000128	3,400	1	2,720	2,720	5	227	680	680	2	23	249
Fall	000128	2,500	1	2,000	2,000	5	167	500	500	2	17	183
Winter	000128	1,500	1	1,200	1,200	5	100	300	300	2	10	110
End of Season ^{1/2}	000136	13,000	1	10,400	10,400	15	2,600	2,600	2,600	2	87	2,687
Master Processed Vegetables												
Spring	000104, 000107	100	1	80	80	10	13	20	20	2	1	14
Summer	000104, 000107	235	1	188	188	10	31	47	47	2	2	33
Fall	000104, 000107, 000121,QID, 000202	125	1	100	100	10	17	25	25	2	1	18
Fall, for CA and IL	000112	40	1	32	32	15	8	8	8	2	0	8
End of Season	000136, 000104, 000107	400	1	320	320	15	80	80	80	2	3	83
Price												
Sweet Corn Prices	000020	350	3	280	840	5	70	70	210	2	7	77
Specialty Surveys												
Chile Grower Survey	QID	180	1	144	144	10	24	36	36	2	1	25
Chile Buyer and Processor Survey	QID	35	1	28	28	10	5	7	7	2	0	5
Cucumbers for Pickles	000118	35	3	28	84	10	14	7	21	2	1	15
Fresh Market Winter Melon and Veg Shipper Survey	000236	135	4	108	432	10	72	27	108	2	4	76
Utah Onion Shipper Survey	QID	35	1	28	28	10	5	7	7	2	0	5

Projected Response Burden for Vegetable Surveys

Crop	QID	Sample Size	Freq	Responses				Non-response				Total Burden Hours
				Resp. Count	Freq x Count	Min./ Resp.	Burden Hours	Nonresp Count	Freq. x Count	Min./ Nonr.	Burden Hours	
Onions												
Spring	000220, 000234, 000232	800	1	640	640	10	107	160	160	2	5	112
Summer	000233, 000234, 000220, 000232	950	1	760	760	10	127	190	190	2	6	133
Fall	000233, 000222, 000234, 000220, 000232	500	1	400	400	10	67	100	100	2	3	70
Winter	000233, 000234, 000220, 000232	600	1	480	480	10	80	120	120	2	4	84
End of Season	000233, 000234, 000220 000232	2,000	1	1,600	1,600	10	267	400	400	2	13	280
Disposition Surveys												
Generic Questionnaire for Production and Disposition Survey	QID	1,000	1	800	800	10	133	200	200	2	7	140
Totals		31,120		24,896	25,836	0	4,425	6,224	6,459		215	4,640
^{1/} End of Season questionnaire in New England also includes some fruit questions, which are accounted for under 0535-0039. Also, the Alabama questionnaire asks for information on irrigation. Fifteen minutes are allotted for vegetable questions.												

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection of information.

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government; provide a description of the method used to estimate cost which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses, and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The estimated cost to the Federal government for the vegetable program is \$2.75 million. This is a well established program and most costs are personnel costs.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I (reasons for changes in burden).

The total projected burden is 4,640 hours (Item #12). This is an increase of 768 hours from the previous inventory of 3,872. This adjustment is the result of slightly larger sample sizes.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The vegetable surveys obtain data from the major producing States for all of the major commodities in their State. States with a small number of growers contact all known commercial producers; States with a large number of growers contact a sample. Vegetable data are collected and summarized within the Field Offices (FOs). Forty States participate in the program; some FOs conduct as many as six surveys a year and some have end-of-season surveys only.

The seasonal fresh market vegetable program includes estimates of selected crop acres for harvest in the winter, spring, summer, and fall seasons (published around the 10th of January, 3rd of April, 10th of July, and 3rd of October) plus annual acres planted and harvested, yield, price/value, and production published at the end of the year. Onion estimates include an estimate of grower's preliminary acres for harvest, a yield/production forecast, and an end-of-season estimate of acres harvested, yield/production, and price/value. The strawberry program in major producing States consists of a forecast of acres for harvest, expected yield/production, and an end-of-season survey to estimate acres planted and harvested, yield/production, and price/value.

The seasonal processing vegetable program includes estimates of intended acres for harvest, preliminary acres, condition and yield, and final acreage, production, and value.

Vegetable data are published six times a year. There is the quarterly *Vegetables* report released each January, April, July, September, and October; the end-of-season *Vegetable Annual Summary* is issued in January. A report is issued in September for processing vegetables only. Content of the reports varies according to the survey content, crop maturity, and degree of utilization.

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1177>.

State statisticians and Headquarters statisticians have an Estimation Manual which contains standard analysis and estimation procedures.

- 17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

There is no request for approval of non-display of the expiration date.

- 18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions" of OMB Form 83-I.**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

Submitted September 2009
Revised February, 2010