

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Generic Testing – Census of Agriculture

OMB No. 0535-0248

This mini-supporting statement is being submitted to OMB to define the need for conducting cognitive interviews and usability interviews under the Generic Testing docket. No more than 50 operations will be interviewed. The interviews are being conducted in preparation for the upcoming 2015-2016 Census of Agriculture Content Test. NASS has made numerous updates to the questionnaires in response to requests from data users, advisory committees, and internal staff. Additional cognitive interviews and usability interviews will be requested as part of the upcoming Census of Agriculture Content Test docket (OMB 0535-0243) to allow NASS to interview respondents and non-respondents from the Content Test, as well as to pretest any changes made based on the Content Test.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances making collection of information necessary.

In preparation for the 2017 Census of Agriculture, the Census of Agriculture Content Test will consist of a sample of 50,000 and will be conducted in late 2015 and early 2016. There are several questionnaire content and format changes that have been implemented for the Census of Agriculture form, including extensive changes requested by NASS's advisory groups.

NASS plans to conduct cognitive testing prior to the Content Test mailout.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose information is to be used.

The information gathered through cognitive interviews will be analyzed by NASS's Methodology Division, Research and Development Division, and Census and Survey Division to determine if additional modifications need to be made to the questionnaires, editing parameters, data collection strategies, etc. Approved changes will be implemented into the Census of Agriculture Content Test, which is scheduled to begin data collection in late December 2015.

3. Use of improved information technology.

The cognitive interviews will be conducted using face-to-face interviews, and will use paper and pencil. Usability interviews will be done using the questionnaire in NASS's Electronic Data Reporting (EDR) system.

4. Efforts to identify duplication.

No additional efforts will be taken to identify duplication. Operators who are selected for the cognitive interviews will be drawn from NASS list of known farm operations who fit particular criteria such as number and types of commodities produced, value of sales, minority status, gender, the number of people who make day to day decisions. Duplication is removed before operators are added to the NASS list frame.

5. Methods to minimize burden of small businesses.

For the cognitive interviews, no special efforts will be made to minimize burden of small businesses.

6. Consequence if information collection were less frequent.

The cognitive testing will be conducted during July, August, and September 2015 so that changes can be made before questionnaires for the Content Test are made final in the fall.

7. Special circumstances.

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

8. Federal register notice and consultation with outside persons.

Not applicable.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents.

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Confidentiality provided to respondents.

The same confidentiality that is applied to the Census of Agriculture will be applied to data collected during the cognitive interviews.

11. Questions of a sensitive nature.

The Census of Agriculture contains questions related to farm related income, expenses, market value of land and buildings, and demographics that could be considered sensitive. These are the same types of questions that have been used on the Census of Agriculture in the past.

12. Hour burden and annualized costs to respondents.

The tests will be conducted by trained cognitive interviewers to make sure that the respondents understand the intent of each question and that they are able to provide the requested information.

	Number of Respondents	Hours per Interview	Total Burden Hours
Cognitive Testing	50	1.5	75

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 50 hours are multiplied by \$25 per hour for a total cost to the public of \$1,875.

NASS regularly checks the Bureau of Labor Statistics' [Occupational Employment Statistics](#). Mean wage rates for bookkeepers, farm managers, and farm supervisors are averaged to obtain the wage for the burden cost. The May 2014 mean wage for bookkeepers is \$18.30. The mean wage for farm managers is \$34.89. The mean wage for farm supervisors is \$22.86. The mean wage of the three is \$25.35.

13. Total annual cost burden to respondents.

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

14. Annualized costs to federal government.

Costs for conducting the cognitive interviews are estimated at \$50,000. This will cover expenses for staff payroll, travel, survey analysis, and any other expenses that may be incurred while updating survey materials based on our findings. Several NASS employees who have been trained in conducting cognitive interviews in several states will conduct the cognitive interviews.

15. Reasons for changes in burden.

This mini-supporting statement addresses the use of burden to conduct testing for the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

16. Tabulation, analysis, and publication plans.

No data will be published from these tests. Data are for internal use only.

17. Request for approval of non-display of expiration date.

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

18. Exceptions to certification statement.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS:

1. Respondent universe, sampling, and response rate.

NASS will use list frame data to identify operations or operators that cover a wide variety of types and sizes. The operators will not be statistically sampled; rather, they will be hand selected based on their characteristics, such as demographics, size, number and types of commodities produced, and geographic location. NASS State Statisticians and Regional Field Office staff will recruit respondents for the interviews.

2. Procedures for the collection of information.

Interviewers will follow standard cognitive interviewing techniques as defined in the original Supporting Statement Part A for the Generic Clearance docket (0535-0248).

3. Information collected adequate for intended uses.

Operations will be selected based on specific criteria in order to assess specific sections of the questionnaires.

4. Test of procedures or methods.

Not applicable.

5. Individuals consulted on statistical aspects of survey.

Selection of methods of testing and providing of training is done by the Research and Development Division; Chief Cognitive Research Methodologist is Jaki McCarthy, (703) 877-8000. Statistical Methodology Research Branch Chief is Wendy Barboza, (703) 877-8000.

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