

Non-substantive Change Request

0535-0249 –Organic Survey

The Organic Survey Information Collection Request or ICR is currently approved through December 31, 2017. In the original supporting statement the survey was approved as a mandatory survey for the 2015 data collection (2014 reference period) since the funding for that one year was provided under the 2012 Census of Agriculture approval. In 2016 NASS would like to change this survey back to a voluntary survey, since the funding is coming through the NASS general fund. NASS is anticipating a similar response rate to the 2011 survey (67.1%) which was also a voluntary survey.

There have been some minor changes to the questionnaire in response to the quality control checks that were done to the 2015 survey. In addition there are some sections of the questionnaire that don't need to be repeated annually, but can be done once every five years, following the Census of Agriculture.

Questionnaire changes

- Collecting data on certified and transitioning producers only. Exempt information will only be collected during census years due to the complications of identifying the population.
- Commodity sections; removed 'conventional' column (promotes more publishable data)
- Apple section; limit to top 10 varieties (promotes more publishable data)
- Dropped crop insurance section (not needed annually)
- Dropped production expenses section (not needed annually)
- Dropped production practices section (not needed annually)
- Added classification section to assist with categorizing producers that did not have organic production (improve data quality)
- Overall changes include improving the include and exclude statements to assist respondents and improve data quality

Approximate sample size remains unchanged at 17,500. However the burden per questionnaire has been reduced from 45 minutes to 40 minutes. This will reduce the total burden hours from 14,249 to 13,004, a reduction of 1,245 hours.