



Agricultural Resource Management Survey

United States Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service

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The Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), conducted by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), is USDA's primary source of information on the production practices, resource use and economic well-being of America's farm operations and farm households. The survey targets selected commodities on a rotating basis to collect data on costs of production. This year, NASS will collect information on operating expenditures and production costs from conventional and organic wheat growers, and hog and pig producers.

HOW ARE THE DATA COLLECTED?

NASS will collect data on the economic well-being of approximately 35,000 farms in the 48 contiguous states beginning in January and continuing through the end of April. Producers have the option of responding via one of the following data collection methods:

- Mail – Participants fill out and mail back the questionnaire that was mailed to them.
- Internet – Secure, online reporting is the timeliest, most cost-effective method.
- Personal interview – An interview with an enumerator may be conducted to assist with data collection.

The information collected about specific commodities varies somewhat from state to state. But all participating producers will be asked to provide data on their farm operating costs, capital improvements, assets and debts for agricultural production, as well as farm-related income, government payments, off-farm income and operator and household characteristics for the previous year.

Commodity-specific questionnaires will gather additional data. Producers selected for the hog portion of the survey will also be asked about their feed rations, housing, manure handling, and breeding and production practices. Organic wheat growers will be asked about their certified organic wheat marketing, sales and prices.

HOW IS THE INFORMATION USED?

The information from ARMS is used not just by USDA, but Congress, farm groups, agribusinesses and others who make the decisions that shape the future of U.S. agriculture. In fact, just about every federal policy and program that affects U.S. farmers and farm families is based on ARMS data. For example:

- When considering federal disaster assistance for producers, policymakers rely on ARMS as a source of baseline data.
- USDA's Office of Energy Policy and New Uses relies on ARMS data to estimate farmers' annual expenses for gasoline, diesel, natural gas, propane and other fuels.
- ARMS provides annual cost-of-production estimates required by Congress for more than 15 commodities covered under farm-support legislation.
- The Bureau of Economic Analysis uses ARMS data to calculate the farm sector portion of the U.S. gross domestic product.

The information provided by survey respondents is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the privacy of all responses and publishes data only in aggregate form, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS will publish the farm economic data in the annual *Farm Production Expenditures* report, to be released August 3, 2010. All reports are available through the NASS web site: www.nass.usda.gov. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540.