

Kansas Farmers and Ranchers Encouraged to Participate in Census of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Kansas Department of Agriculture are urging all Kansas farmers to sign up for the 2012 Census of Agriculture, and to share stories about how Census data benefit them.

The agencies want to make sure all Kansas farmers and ranchers are counted in the upcoming Census. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service conducts the Census of Agriculture every five years and is currently preparing to send the Census form to all agricultural producers in December.

The Census of Agriculture is a leading source of facts and figures about American agriculture. Conducted every five years, the Census provides a detailed picture of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them.

Kansas Agricultural Statistics staff members notified producers on National Agriculture Day, on March 8, about the Census.

"As we celebrated National Ag Day, it was a great opportunity to reflect on the important contributions of Kansas farmers and ranchers," said Jason Lamprecht, acting director of Kansas Agricultural Statistics. "Census data can help us to better tell the amazing story of American and Kansas agriculture, but that story will be incomplete if farmers aren't all counted."

To put together a complete list of agricultural producers, NASS sent out the National Agricultural Classification Survey, or NACS, early in 2012. This initial survey helps identify potential agricultural activities in the United States and people who should receive the Census form later this year. Producers who did not fill out the NACS can still sign up for the Census by visiting www.agcensus.usda.gov and clicking "Be Counted – Make Your Voice Heard."

Federal law requires all agricultural producers to participate in the Census of Agriculture. The same law requires the national statistics service to keep all information confidential. In the Census, and in all related surveys, the statistics service safeguards the privacy of all respondents so that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

Farmers and communities benefit from Census of Agriculture data, and the USDA invites producers to share their Census stories in their own words. At the "Share your Census Story" web page, producers can tell how local, state and national farm services, programs and policies were shaped by Census of Agriculture data. They can also convey that by just answering a few simple questions, the Census data significantly affected their lives, operations and communities.

"Sharing information about how agricultural and rural programs enhance their quality of life will help others understand the importance of Census information and encourage them to sign up and be counted," Lamprecht said.

For more information about NACS and the Census of Agriculture, to add your name to the Census mailing list, or to share your Census story, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov. The national statistics service will mail Census forms on December 29, 2012, to collect data for the 2012 calendar year.