

USDA TO MEASURE THE FINANCIAL HEALTH OF AMERICAN FARMS

[PHOENIX, ARIZONA] – Farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to set the record straight about the issues that affect them – and to help ensure that policies and programs are based on accurate, real-world data. This is the goal of the annual Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

ARMS is USDA’s primary source of information on production practices, resource use and economic well-being of America’s farm operations and farm households. “Just about every federal policy and program that affects U.S. farmers and farm families is based on information from ARMS,” said Steven Manheimer, director of the NASS Arizona Field Office. “This information is used not just by USDA and Congress, but also by farm groups, agribusinesses and others who make the decisions that shape the future of Arizona agriculture.”

The survey will be conducted beginning in February and continuing through the end of March 2011. In an effort to obtain the most accurate data, NASS will reach out to nearly 35,000 producers nationwide, including 185 in Arizona. Producers will be asked to provide data on their operating expenditures, production costs and household characteristics.

“Farm organizations, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, other government agencies, members of Congress, and State and local officials use the collective information from ARMS to answer questions and make important decisions concerning the economic viability of American agriculture, the rural economy and other emerging issues,” explained Manheimer.

As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all responses, ensuring no individual respondent or operation can be identified. The economic data gathered in ARMS will be published in the annual *Farm Production Expenditures* report on August 2, 2011. All NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov.

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