



# **Summary of the 2007 USDA Data Users Meeting**



**Rosemont, Illinois  
Monday, October 29, 2007**



**2007 USDA Data Users Meeting  
Monday, October 29, 2007  
Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare  
5440 North River Road  
Rosemont, IL 60018**

**AGENDA**

12:30 p.m.	Registration
1:00 p.m.	Introduction and Overview Carol House National Agricultural Statistics Service
1:15 p.m.	Agency Reviews
	Warren Preston Agricultural Marketing Service
	Greg Pompelli Economic Research Service
	Tim Roche Foreign Agricultural Service
	Steve Wiyatt National Agricultural Statistics Service
	Gerald Bange World Agricultural Outlook Board
2:30 p.m.	Open forum for questions and comments from participants
2:45 p.m.	Break
	Open forum continues
4:30 p.m.	Concluding comments
	<a href="http://www.nass.usda.gov">http://www.nass.usda.gov</a>

# Agricultural Marketing Service 2007

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) includes six commodity programs: Cotton, Dairy, Fruit and Vegetable, Livestock and Seed, Poultry, and Tobacco. The programs employ specialists who provide standardization, grading, and market news services for those commodities. They enforce such Federal Laws as the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, the Federal Seed Act and the Mandatory Reporting Act of 1999. AMS commodity programs also oversee marketing agreements and orders, administer research and promotion programs, and purchase commodities for Federal food programs.

## CURRENT ISSUES OF INTEREST

### LIVESTOCK MANDATORY REPORTING:

On October 5, 2006, the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act of 1999 (Act) was reauthorized through September 30, 2010, with the Reauthorization Act. The Reauthorization Act separates the reporting requirements for sows and boars from barrows and gilts, among other changes. On August 8, 2007, AMS published in the *Federal Register* the proposed regulation to re-establish the Livestock Mandatory Reporting program. This rulemaking is necessary to re-establish the regulatory authority for the program's continued operation, incorporate the swine reporting changes contained within the Reauthorization Act, as well as enhance the programs overall effectiveness and efficiency. Similar to the statutory requirement to separate reporting of sows and boars from barrows and gilts, the proposed rule separates the reporting of steers and heifers from cows and bulls, among other modifications.

### WEB PORTAL ENHANCEMENTS:

The Market News Portal was released to the public October, 2005, with fruit and vegetable and livestock and grain information. It has proven to be popular as it empowers users of Market News data like never before. For the first time, customers can access directly the Market News Information System (MNIS) or database. Additionally, they can customize the Portal to meet their individual information needs and can download the data in the format they find most useful. The Portal also offers currency and metric conversion as well as customized weather information.

As market reporters and customers have used the Portal, they have identified several key areas for improvement. These areas of improvement include enhanced graphing capability, access to large blocks of data, and simpler tools for first time or inexperienced users. The enhancements will be rolled in three phases, with phase one just completed. Phase two, which is in user acceptance testing, will add the capability to store and retrieve segregated organic and greenhouse data, as well as to improve other data retrieval capabilities. Phase three will be the system requirements and analysis phase for adding the other commodities to the Portal, such as poultry, dairy and cotton. The additional commodity groups will be added to the Portal as resources become available.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE DATA:

In the interest of facilitating international trade, several Federal agencies are working together to develop the ACE/ITDS project, one of the largest IT projects ever undertaken by the Government. Simply put, ACE/ITDS is a single-window filing system for international trade. Currently, in order to import an item into the United States, the importer must fill out separate declaration forms for several different agencies. With ACE/ITDS, the trade will be able to input the data once into the system. From there, each respective agency will be able to extract the information they need to make a decision on the import: whether or not to allow it into the country, how much duty ought to be paid, if there is any hazardous materials to look out for, and so forth. This system will ensure that all imports will be acted upon by the responsible government agencies, while also eliminating unnecessary delays at the border and eliminating unnecessary paperwork.

For Market News branches, the integration into ACE/ITDS will lead to great improvements in the completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of our reporting. Data that are currently compiled and released on a semi-weekly or monthly basis will become available in near-real time. The near-instantaneous release of import and export information, as opposed to the current 30-45 day release, will give the agriculture industry more and better information with which to make marketing decisions. Market News will also have access to more information through ACE/ITDS. We should be able to obtain information on imports categorized by such characteristics as variety, size, color, and condition. To use a quick example, instead of having an import classified as “mango,” it would be classified as “Tommy Atkins mango, 10 size, fresh” or “Keitts mango, sliced and frozen in plastic bags.” This greater degree of specificity will allow Market News to better serve its customers in the future.

## CHANGES TO AMS REPORTS AND NEW REPORTS

### **Dairy:**

#### **Changes to Dairy Market News Reports in 2007**

Responding to an industry request, the daily Chicago Mercantile Exchange dairy price flash report was expanded to include prices and changes for each day during the current week. This allows data users to see the current week's prices, especially helpful at midweek, in one report. (MD\_DA997)

Due to changes within the industry, the Northeast Condensed Skim price series, which includes Northeast Class II and Northeast Class III condensed skim prices, was modified to display each price range to the nearest cent. (MD\_DA210)

Due to industry consolidation, two reports had the regions combined into Central and East, resulting in two less reports. The new reports are now: Nonfat Dry Milk - Central and East (MD\_DA650) & Dry Buttermilk - Central and East (MD\_DA350)

#### **Dairy Product Mandatory Reporting**

On July 3, 2007, the Agricultural Marketing Service published an interim final rule that established a Dairy Product Mandatory Reporting Program as required by law. The Dairy Market

Enhancement Act of 2000, and certain provisions of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, amended the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to provide for timely, accurate, and reliable market information to facilitate more informed marketing decisions and promote competition in the dairy product manufacturing.

The program: (1) Requires persons engaged in manufacturing dairy products to report certain information including the price, quantity, and moisture content where applicable, of dairy products sold by the manufacturer; and (2) Requires persons storing dairy products to report information on the quantity of dairy products stored. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) collects the information. Any manufacturer that processes and markets less than 1 million pounds of dairy products per year is exempt from the reporting requirements.

AMS has implemented a plan to verify the price information submitted to NASS. AMS visits butter, nonfat dry milk, cheese and dry whey manufacturers that file reports. AMS verifies that eligible sales transactions agree with information reported to NASS and checks to determine whether eligible sales transactions were not reported.

### **Fruit and Vegetable:**

#### **Organic Data**

AMS Market News has entered into an interagency agreement with the Risk Management Agency (RMA) of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation for the second consecutive year. The agreement calls for Market News to further enhance its database and the Market News Portal to better accommodate organic data and to make it readily retrievable by users, as well as to make the new retail reports available to the public out of the database and the Portal. The agreement includes a multi-year project to expand the existing data collection for organic fruits and vegetables, as well as grain and other commodities. The RMA funded enhancements to the Market News Information System, or database, and the Market News Portal will be available by the first of 2008.

#### **New Reports**

National Fruit and Vegetable Retail Report  
Boston Wholesale Cut Flower Price Report

#### **New F.O.B. Reports**

Apples (organic) - Washington  
Cantaloupes – Caribbean Imports FOB Philadelphia  
Carrots (organic) - California  
Clementines - Peru  
Honeydews - Caribbean Imports FOB Philadelphia  
Lettuce (Romaine and Green Leaf) – New Jersey  
Mangoes - Caribbean Imports FOB Philadelphia  
Onions (organic) – Georgia  
Oranges (Cara Cara) - California  
Pineapples - Caribbean Imports FOB Philadelphia  
Raspberries - Mexico  
Tangelos – South Africa

## **Livestock and Grain:**

### **New Reports**

CW_LS149	Regular Sale from Jackson County Livestock Market in Ripley, West Virginia
RA_LS761	Carolina Stockyards, Siler City Monday, NC Weighted Average Report
NW_LS785	Iowa Weekly Weighted Average Slaughter Cattle Report
RH_LS550	Danville, VA Sheep and Goat Auction
GX_GR311	United Producers Inc Weekly Hay Auction-Shelbyville, IL
GX_GR312	Arthur Sale Barn Weekly Hay Report-Arthur, IL
RA_LS753	Kilby's Livestock Market, North Wilkesboro, NC Weighted Average Report
RA_LS756	Shelby Livestock Yard, Shelby, NC Weighted Average Report
SV_LS142	Stanford, KY - Blue Grass South Livestock Market Cattle Auction Report
NV_LS143	Tennessee Bred & Pairs Replacement
WH_GR310	Nebraska/Iowa Hay Summary
LN_LS322	New Holland, PA Sheep and Goat Weighted Average Report
NW_GR213	Nebraska Ethanol Corn and Co-Products Processing Values
RA_LS750	Southeast Livestock Exchange, Waynesville, NC Monthly Video Auction
SF_GR111	South Dakota Ethanol Plant Report
SV_LS174	Kentucky Bluegrass of Campbellsville Livestock Market
SV_LS176	Cattlemen's Livestock Auction, Bowling Green, KY
NW_GR116	Iowa Soybean Processor Report
AM_LS141	New Mexico Direct Feeder Cattle Report
GX_GR120	Eastern Cornbelt Organic Grain & Feedstuffs Report (Bi-Weekly) Wtd Avg Report
SV_LS143	Stanford, KY - Blue Grass South Livestock Market Cattle Auction Report
BL_LS749	Miles City Livestock Commission Co. Miles City, MT Weighted Average
WH_LS763	Nebraska Livestock Market of Norfolk
NW_LS550	Ohio Goat Auction, Hillsboro Ohio Graded Goat Sale
MD_LS156	Summary of Wisconsin Livestock Auction at Sparta
MD_LS157	Summary of Wisconsin Feeder Cattle Auction at Altoona
SJ_LS311	Mexico, MO Sheep & Goat Auction (Fri)
GX_GR313	Hamilton's IL, Madison County Ag Hay Auction (Seasonal- Mon)
RA_LS755	Weighted Average Auction Report of Siler City, North Wilkesboro, Turnersburg, Mount Airy, Shelby, Norwood and Smithfield, NC.
WH_LS761	Columbus, NE – Columbus Sales Pavilion Feeder Cattle Weighted Average and Slaughter Cattle Report

### **Discontinued Reports**

MS_GR101	Export Grain Demand Wire
RA_LS153	Union County Livestock Market
RA_LS168	Canton Livestock Market

## **Poultry:**

### **New Reports**

- **Mechanically Separated Chicken**

In 2007, USDA Poultry Market News and Analysis expanded coverage of the mechanically separated chicken market by combining the current Central and Eastern regional reports into a national report and expanding coverage to include the entire U.S. The new report presents the information in a more user-friendly format that allows users

to more quickly and easily comprehend the marketplace. Market News has developed this report with its industry cooperators. The new report is currently being released concurrent with the Eastern and the Central Region MSC reports until January 4, 2008, when it will become the single MSC market report covering the national trading of MSC. (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/mncs/PDF%20Reports/MSC/msc.htm>)

- **Shell Egg Demand Indicator (SEDI)**

In 2007, USDA Poultry Market News and Analysis, working with the American Egg Board (AEB) and the United Egg Producers (UEP), developed a measurement tool for estimating demand for shell eggs. The *Weekly Shell Egg Demand Indicator* report estimates shell egg demand through calculations modeled after known industry production and marketing practices. Input data is collected from several sources including the Weekly Shell Egg Inventory and Weekly Eggs Processed Under Federal Inspection reports and from the monthly NASS Chickens and Eggs report. The actual demand indicator is expressed as a whole number where a positive indicates better than average demand relative to the most recent 26 weeks and a negative indicates less than average demand compared to the same time period. After receiving unanimous support from the AEB and UEP, public release of the report began on October 24, 2007. (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/mncs/shell.htm>)

## Revisions/Updates

- **Weekly Retail Chicken Feature Activity Report – Addition of Individually Quick Frozen Products**

Through 2006, Poultry Market News and Analysis reviewed retail feature activity for the most common individually quick frozen (IQF) chicken products for possible inclusion into the very successful supermarket feature activity report series. The level of retail featuring of IQF products can provide valuable insight into consumer trends at the retail counter as well as the relative health of the marketplace. As a result of this review, an IQF section comprised of the three most commonly featured uncooked IQF chicken items was added in March 2007. These items include boneless/skinless breasts, breast tenders, and wings. As these items are packed in various sized bags, all advertised prices are reported on a price per pound basis. Poultry Market News & Analysis continues to monitor additional items for possible inclusion but see inconsistent featuring of dark IQF cuts. (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/mncs/RetailReports/RtlChick.htm>)

- **Weekly Retail Chicken Feature Activity Report - Addition of Specialty and Organic Products**

Featuring of Specialty (produced from chickens raised on an all vegetable diet without antibiotics and minimally processed) chicken items continues to expand with the introduction over the past year of several new “natural” product lines, most recently, Tyson introduced an “all natural” line. Specialty cut-up birds and Specialty and Organic boneless thighs are becoming more common in ad space and are candidates for eventual inclusion. Poultry Market News & Analysis continues to review these items and others for possible inclusion. In September 2007 on the first anniversary of the introduction of the Specialty and Organic section, Poultry Market News & Analysis added year ago data to the report. (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/mncs/RetailReports/RtlChick.htm>)

- **Weekly Retail Shell Egg and Egg Products Feature Activity Report – Egg Products**  
In 2005 in conjunction with industry members and trade groups, Poultry Market News & Analysis developed a market news report covering supermarket feature activity for the most common consumer grades of shell eggs. In October 2006, upon the completion of a full year of reporting, the report was updated to include year ago comparison data. At the same time, the report was expanded to a third page to include similar information for the most commonly marketed forms of liquid egg products. Also on the third page as a regular feature is a graph showing the relationship in featuring activity between regular shell eggs and liquid egg products and a second graph showing the relationship between Large white shell egg activity and the Large egg inventory. In addition, a special section was included during the November-December holiday observations covering supermarket feature activity of egg-nog. In October 2007 on the first anniversary of the introduction of the egg products section, Poultry Market News & Analysis added year ago data to the report. (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/mncs/RetailReports/RtlEgg.htm>)

### **Tobacco and Cotton:**

All tobacco reports have been eliminated except for the Quarterly Stocks report due to the elimination of the mandatory grading program by Congress. The Tobacco and Cotton Programs will be merging in the near future.



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*ERS aims to provide timely, high-quality agricultural market information. Through several new initiatives, we are enhancing the value-added nature and transparency of our work.*

### **Enhancing Timeliness and Value-Added in Data Delivery**

**Wheat Data** - This data product builds on the lessons learned from the development of the Feed Grains Database and embodies the current best data delivery practices used on the ERS website. The product contains statistics on the five classes of wheat and rye. Includes data published in the monthly *Wheat Outlook* and previously annual *Wheat Yearbook*. Data are monthly, quarterly, or annual depending upon the data series. Data are available as predefined tables that can be viewed in HTML, Excel, and PDF formats. Find this data product at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/Wheat/>

**Livestock Data** – This data product is the next in a steady line of data deliveries based on the Wheat Data format and standards. This data product will combine data from the *Red Meat* and *Poultry Yearbooks* and the monthly *Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Outlook* data tables to create a more convenient and current data source for livestock data. The first element to be released will be expanded livestock trade data.

**Price Spreads from Farm to Consumer** – This product presents improved estimates of the spread between what consumers pay for food products and what farmers receive for the associated agricultural commodities. This effort includes the release of new series for fresh fruits and vegetables based on detailed purchase data showing what American households have been buying at supermarkets. Access to this series, detailed documentation, and other materials has been improved through a new data product available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FarmToConsumer/>

**Farm Business and Household Survey Data: Customized Data Summaries from ARMS** – This data product helps describe farming in America and answers many of the most common questions about who farms, where they farm, how they farm, and the economic well-being of America's farm households. The information comes from the annual Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) data and reflects what farmers tell us about their businesses, farming practices, and households. See the data at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/arms/>

**Regional Agricultural Profiles System** - The forthcoming Regional Agricultural Profiles System will allow you to map 2002 Agricultural Census data by ERS farm resource regions as well as USDA farm production regions. Charts and downloadable data tables will accompany the maps. (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/ARMS/resourceregions/resourceregions.htm>)

### **Improved Quality of Communication**

**Amber Waves**—ERS's flagship magazine continues to be recognized for its informative articles on timely topics. The May 2007 Special Issue, for example, was dedicated to articles on Food and Farm Policy. In the next few issues, look for articles on this year's wheat market, the effects of China's exchange rate policies, the U.S. hog industry, and other topics drawn from ERS research and outlook programs.

**Farm Bill Side-by-Side** – ERS is committed to publishing a summary comparison of the major provisions of the next Farm Bill with 2002-07 legislation shortly after the new Farm Bill is signed into law. This side-by-side comparison will include highlights of the new bill, a users' guide, a policy glossary, and links to background ERS publications.

**E-Outlooks**—By year's end, we will have issued 16 special reports in 2007 examining the forces shaping the future of commodity markets and trade. This year's topics focused on the effect of China's exchange rate policies on U.S. trade, an assessment of NAFTA in its thirteenth year, the impact of ethanol on the U.S. agricultural sector, and the completion of the ERS commodity "backgrounder" series.

**Newsletters**—ERS continues to issue over 80 regularly scheduled outlook reports in 10 series. We are continuing to update processes for our clients to receive market news, and will be posting newsletters in HTML on the web for better access to text, tables, and charts. Print features and \*.pdf reports will still be available. The 2008 calendar will be posted as soon as a budget is passed.

### **Leveraging Cooperators to Enhance Our Ability to Analyze Markets**

**Conversion Factor Initiative**— A new joint effort led by Pennsylvania State University and the International Life Sciences Institute will build on earlier efforts by the University of Minnesota Food Center to update and validate food conversion factors. This project relies on industry experts to help researchers estimate conversion factors and to validate new and existing conversion factors.

**Cooperative Agreements**—We have a number of cooperative agreements on the economic impacts of invasive species affecting agricultural production. (For information, see <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/InvasiveSpecies/>.) In 2007, ERS continued funding to process and present data for the Mandatory Price Reporting System in an agreement through Colorado State University. The National Academy of Sciences report on the Economic Development and Current Status of the Sheep Industry in the United States will be released to the public in February 2008. In conjunction with the Farm Foundation, ERS is supporting a workshop series on grain market dynamics to improve our understanding of these markets.

### **New Directions**

ERS has initiated a **Food and Eating Module** as a supplement to the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) of Bureau of Labor Statistics. The module, developed jointly with the National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, contains questions on eating while engaged in other activities, such as while watching TV or while driving. These data will allow research on whether certain patterns of eating and time use are associated with obesity and whether food assistance recipients are more time pressured than other low-income individuals. The 2006 data will be available in the first part of 2008.

A new module, the **Flexible Consumer Behavior Survey** (FCBS), as a supplement to the Department of Health and Human Services' National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) aims at understanding linkages among individuals' knowledge and dietary guidance, their economic circumstances, their food-choice decisions, and their nutrient intakes. Combining the NHANES core data with this new survey allows analysis of how individual behavior, information, and economic factors affect food choices, dietary status, and health outcomes. The FCBS data will be available in 2009.

**Questions or Comments? Please address them to  
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## *Accessing Global Commodity Information from USDA 's*

### *Foreign Agricultural Service*

#### **FAS Reorganized November 13, 2006:**

#### **Goals of the Reorganization:**

The reorganization focused on inherently governmental activities such as:

- Building on FAS' strength in commodity analysis to do a better job of analyzing how U.S. exports may be affected by developments such as foreign import bans, new trade agreements, and new technologies like biotechnology and biofuels.
- More effectively linking the country expertise of FAS overseas offices with an increased focus in Washington on key countries and regions.
- Providing program participants with better, streamlined, and transparent service.
- Grouping staff members into single, focused work units with clearly defined missions.
- Strengthening FAS' ability to monitor and enforce trade agreements and to support the dispute settlement efforts of the U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR) Office.
- Placing special emphasis on identifying and resolving SPS issues that affect trade.
- Providing better support, both at home and abroad, to USDA regulatory agencies that are essential partners in resolving foreign SPS issues.
- Focusing USDA international development and trade capacity work on building relationships with foreign governments for quicker informal solutions to trade disruptions.

#### **Realignment into Three Key Areas**

Four major organizational components focus on FAS' *policy functions*.

- The **Office of Scientific and Technical Affairs** (OSTA) provides the industry with a portal for issues related to SPS, technical barriers to trade (TBT), and market access work. USDA takes a lead role as the U.S. enquiry point under the World Trade Organization's SPS Agreement and prepares and tracks foreign country submissions for U.S. SPS determinations.

- The **Office of Country and Regional Affairs (OCRA)** develops strategies to support bilateral negotiations and informal dispute settlement processes. OCRA analyzes agricultural, trade, macroeconomic, financial policies, and country positions on issues under negotiations. OCRA also prepares focused analysis on key countries and regions of the world and provides a strong link to the expertise of FAS' unique network of overseas offices.
- The **Office of Negotiations and Agreements (ONA)**, in consultation with USTR, develops trade policy and strategy for international trade negotiations. ONA monitors trade agreement compliance and provides support for dispute settlements. The group also helps coordinate USDA policy positions in international organizations.
- The **Office of Global Analysis (OGA)** focuses on cross-cutting analysis on programs, policies, and industry-wide issues to support USDA's trade agenda. OGA also manages FAS global production, supply, and demand data and analysis.

Two program areas concentrate on *trade capacity building and agricultural development* in developing nations and administer export and import programs.

- In keeping with the President's National Security Strategy, the **Office of Capacity Building and Development (OCBD)** carries out activities that are in line with U.S. international economic development goals. OCBD operates food aid programs and trade, science, and regulatory capacity building projects, including training and technical assistance programs, and supports USDA's post-conflict, post-disaster reconstruction efforts.
- The **Office of Trade Programs (OTP)** administers programs that support marketing efforts, especially those carried out by the U.S. private sector, including the Market Access Program, the Foreign Market Development Program, Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops, and the Quality Samples Program. OTP also administers the export credit guarantee and Dairy Export Incentive Programs. Import programs include those for sugar, dairy, and trade assistance.

Two areas focus on *operations*. The Office of Foreign Service Operations supports overseas Foreign Service staff, while the Office of Administrative Operations supports Washington headquarters staff.

The Office of the Administrator includes the Civil Rights Staff and the Offices of Legislative and Public Affairs.

For information on the reorganization and to determine contact points for all programs needs, visit the FAS website at [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov).

**Market intelligence** lies at the root of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) effort to promote exports. FAS acquires data from satellite imagery, foreign statistics, and through its global network of offices in over 130 countries. FAS overseas offices produce nearly 3,000 market intelligence reports on a wide variety of subjects each year. In Washington, D.C., FAS' Office of Global Analysis (OGA) has the responsibility to analyze this information along with the World Agricultural Outlook Board, Economic Research Service and other USDA agencies, to publish short term world production, supply and demand (PS&D) estimates on a monthly basis. FAS commodity knowledge supports USDA on issues of market access, food aid, export credits, and technical assistance and provides a source of unbiased information for the market.

### **The FAS ON-Line and New Data Products:**

You can tap into the FAS information network of agricultural counselors, attachés, and trade officers stationed abroad, and analysts, marketing specialists, negotiators, and related specialist in Washington, D.C. through the Internet at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov>. Through this Web site, you can quickly go to specific commodity Web pages with analysis, data, and timely news items, often related to market access or competitive issues faced by U.S. exporters. The FAS website also provides a portal to the web pages of all FAS overseas offices. A Google powered web search has recently been added to FAS On-Line. In the past year there have been several major improvements to the Web site. **RSS Feed** for press releases - FAS is now providing an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed of its ten most-recent News Releases. Using the RSS reader of your choice, you'll always be up-to-date when FAS publishes breaking news. **Export Sales Query** System database provides weekly and historical USDA data on current U.S. export sales and shipments for certain grains, soybeans and products, wheat products, rice, flaxseed, linseed oil, cotton and cottonseed products, sunflower seed oil, beef, and cattle hides and skins. This new database allows users to search this data from January 1, 1999 to the present based on commodity and country of destination. Finally one year ago, FAS **expanded its Production Supply and Distribution (PS&D)** on-line database that provides information on agricultural commodities for the United States and other countries. Users are now able to create a personal PS&D user account that allows them to save their on-line custom queries. The custom query and display options were enhanced to include commodity codes, country codes, monthly data, market-year data and top the 10 countries for a specific commodity. New reports are available with analytical details of agricultural production trends. In addition, the reformatted database produces monthly reports beginning with July 2006 data as well as market year reports.

The major news about FAS online is that more and more people are coming to the FAS Web site to get the information FAS produces. In July 2007 we had an all-time high of some 44,000 visitors per week day with only 5 percent of them coming from inside FAS. Keep in mind that in the summer, we usually go down. By contrast, in July 2006 our average daily week-day visitors were about 27,000.

For addition information please contact [info@fas.usda.gov](mailto:info@fas.usda.gov).

### **U.S. Trade Internet System:**

USDA has a searchable, web-based U.S. export and import trade system with data for agricultural, fishery, and forestry products. This dynamic web-based system is designed to service frequent requests for trade data from farmers; industry associations; federal, congressional and state officials; university researchers; and journalists. The database is searchable at any level of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States. Since initial implementation, many user-requested features have been added to the application to provide increased flexibility and enhance system capability. Clicking on areas within the body of the report accesses some of these new features. Some features are activated from the toolbar across the bottom of the output. Find the US Trade Internet system at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/ustrade/>. For additional information please contact [USTHelp@fas.usda.gov](mailto:USTHelp@fas.usda.gov).

## **Development of a new US Trade System:**

The business requirements have been compiled for a new U.S. Trade System. System design and development are now beginning. The goal is to provide the means for system users to quickly and easily identify U.S. agricultural trade flows and trends through a simple and flexible web based interface using data visualization and better analytical tools. It will have all functionality of the current FAS Internet Trade system. Some of the envisioned enhancements include:

- AD-Hoc Reporting (match current system)
- Data Visualization (Charts, Maps)
- Data Analysis (Drilldown, Color Coding)
- Enhanced Data Downloads
- Enhanced Output formats
- Addition of Census Units of Measures and real time modification
- Improved methods to save selections
- Inclusion of U.S. state trade data
- Inclusion of custom district trade data
- Inclusion of Pre-1989 data

## **USDA FAS PS&D Online:**

FAS released a new enhanced World Agricultural Production Supply and Distribution On-line (PS&D On-line) application on August 31, 2006. The new application retains all of the ease-of-use and functionality of the old version, while incorporating powerful and exciting new features. FAS has improved its data release process so that in most cases WASDE data is now released at 9am. The new PS&D On-line system enhancements include:

- Query
  - The ability to create a personal PS&D user account and save queries for future use
  - The ability to include commodity, country, and attribute codes
  - The ability to seamlessly query across commodities and attributes
  - A top countries option
  - The ability to view previous month data for the current year
  - The ability to include month and year changes
  - A “file format” option that places information in every cell (Excel users should use this function to replace downloadable datasets)
- Reports
  - New online reports that provide additional detail of the global agricultural situation
  - Links to Current World Production, Market and Trade Reports (circulars)
- Downloadable Data Sets
  - Revamped and consolidated downloadable data files
  - Addition of attribute and unit codes to allow easier linking across commodities
  - Archive of these monthly sets will be available soon
  - NOTE: These files are now too large to open in excel (Excel users should use this function to replace downloadable datasets)
- Other
  - A yearly release schedule allows users to pre-plan data availability.
  - New Attributes:
    - Yield for grains, oilseeds and cotton
    - Food Seed and Industrial Consumption – Grains
    - Soybean Meal Equivalent (SME) – Protein Meals



- Stocks-to-Use – Cotton
- Country regions that match U.S. Trade online definitions

We invite you to explore the new PS&D online at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline>  
For additional information please e-mail FAS at [psdonline@fas.usda.gov](mailto:psdonline@fas.usda.gov).

### **USDA's Crop Explorer:**

USDA's *Crop Explorer* Web site (<http://www.pecad.fas.usda.gov/cropexplorer>) provides customers with timely and accurate crop condition information on a global scale unavailable from any other source. Crop Explorer is a primary source of agricultural market intelligence for decision makers. Every 10 days, more than 2,000 maps and 33,000 charts are updated on the Crop Explorer Web site. A partnership with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) links satellite imagery and lake level estimates. Satellite imagery is posted to Crop Explorer twice a day. More information can now be found from Crop Explorer including links to:

- Commodity Explorer - Crop View Commodity Search Tool
- Geographic Search - MetaCarta
- Global Crop Production Analysis - FAS (<http://www.pecad.fas.usda.gov>)
- Global Reservoirs/Lakes – NASA/TOPEX
- MPA Accumulated Rainfall - TRMM Multi-Satellite Precipitation Analysis
- Photo Gallery – Digital Photos on the Ground by Region, Country and Crop
  
- RSS News Feeds—Headlines, Archives, and World Agricultural Production
- Satellite Imagery Gallery - NASA/MODIS

### **World Production, Market and Trade Reports:**

The *World Market and Trade Reports* provide the latest analysis and data on a number of agricultural commodities, outlining the current supply, demand and trade estimates for the United States and many major foreign countries. FAS releases monthly updates for cotton, grain, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables, and world agricultural production and biannual updates on meat and dairy products. Field crop publications are released on the business day following release of the World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE). Horticultural publications as well as coffee and sugar estimates, are published at twice a year. Find FAS' current commodity information at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdDataPublications.aspx>.

### **Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) (Attaché Reports):**

The GAIN system is a searchable online archive of all field reports submitted by FAS overseas offices. GAIN covers all major crop and livestock products and provides timely information to U.S. exporters and to commodity analysts who use field data to aid USDA in determining global production, supply, and demand estimates. In addition to traditional commodity reporting, GAIN also includes reports on high value foods, fishery and forestry products, trade policy monitoring, and sector reports on food processors and the hotel and restaurant industry abroad. In recent years, FAS has added new annual reports on Biotechnology regulations by country, Export Certificate requirements by country, and Biofuels. The foreign-based staff of FAS submits about 3,000 reports each year.



The GAIN system is currently being redesigned to update the technology platform of the system, and to provide an increased emphasis on real-time reporting. The GAIN search engine may be accessed at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/scriptsw/AttacheRep/default.asp>

The public can register to subscribe to daily or weekly summaries of new releases. Users can receive reports on specific countries and/or commodities on the FAS website at:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/scriptsw/faspush/default.asp>. For additional information please e-mail FAS at: [Reports.Officer@fas.usda.gov](mailto:Reports.Officer@fas.usda.gov)

### **FAS Worldwide Magazine:**

FAS Worldwide, which debuted in March 2005, is an online magazine from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. It is designed to cover the full spectrum of the Agency's responsibilities and activities. This electronic publication provides comprehensive information about the multiple goals and activities of FAS in a flexible, user-friendly format. This online publication supersedes AgExporter, the monthly print magazine published by FAS through December 2004. The current issues include articles about Market and Trade Data such as "France Still Offers Opportunities for U.S. Food and Agricultural Products", or "[Sales of Premium Products to EU Drive Record U.S. Seafood Exports](#)". These and past issues are located at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/>

### **Export Sales Reporting:**

Weekly export sales reports serve as a timely early warning system on the possible impact of agricultural sales on U.S. supplies and prices. The Export Sales data is released each week and is the aggregate of exporter's previous week's sales and exports of reportable commodities. The data can be used, for example, to assess the level of export demand, to determine where markets exist, and to assess the relative position of different commodities in those markets. This monitoring system provides a constant stream of up-to-date information on the quantity of U.S. agricultural commodities sold abroad.

While the Export Sales Reporting Program has been in existence for over 35 years, we are continually working to improve the information flow to the public. One of the latest developments is the on-line Export Sales Query System. The latest Export Sales data will be available through the Query System with historical data being available back to January 1, 1999. A key feature of the query system is a graphics package that tracks the current week's exports by commodity and country and compares this to the year prior and a 5-year average. The full U.S. Export Sales report is published every Thursday at 8:30 am eastern time and can be found at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/esrd1.html>. For additional information please e-mail: [esr@fas.usda.gov](mailto:esr@fas.usda.gov).

*If you have comments on the information above, please contact Tim Rocke OGA/ISA - Industry And Sector Analysis Division Director, FAS at (202) 690-0292 or [Tim.Rocke@fas.usda.gov](mailto:Tim.Rocke@fas.usda.gov).*



## NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE STATISTICS DIVISION

### What's New and What's Changing

**NASS Mission Statement: To provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. Agriculture**

#### Crops

A new weekly report, *Peanut Prices*, was issued starting on October 13, 2006. This report includes the weekly price received by farmers for each type of farmer stock peanut (Runners, Spanish, Valencia, and Virginia) along with the quantity marketed. Data for the prior four weeks are also included.

A special corn objective yield report, *Corn Objective Yield Survey Data, 1992-2006*, was issued on May 18, 2007. This report provides information on the types of data collected from the corn objective yield surveys and how they relate to the Agricultural Statistics Board yield estimates. This information was provided to data users to aid in understanding the corn objective yield program and to provide a historical perspective of the changes that have occurred in the objective yield data over the last 15 years.

A special soybean objective yield report, *Soybean Objective Yield Survey Data, 1992-2006*, was issued on July 27, 2007. This report provides information on the types of data collected from the soybean objective yield surveys and how they relate to the Agricultural Statistics Board yield estimates. The information was provided to data users to aid in understanding the soybean objective yield program and to provide a historical perspective of the changes that have occurred in the objective yield data over the last 15 years.

State and U.S. level market year average prices for canola, rapeseed, mustard seed, safflower, and proso millet were published in the November *Agricultural Prices* report. Prior to this year, these prices were not published until the *Crop Values* report was released in February.

Colorado and Kansas were added to the canola estimation program and were published as part of the combined Other States total in the *Crop Production 2006 Summary* report.

In July 2007, NASS began estimating percent of acreage planted to yellow type potatoes. Historically, yellow potatoes have been included with white potatoes. However, white potatoes yield differently and are utilized differently than yellow potatoes, and yellow type potatoes have been an increasing portion of the potato crop over the past few years.

Beginning with the 2007 crop, winter potatoes were combined with spring potatoes in Florida. Florida's winter potato crop continues to decrease in acres and number of growers. Growers in Dade County, which was Florida's major winter potato county, no longer produce potatoes. Winter potato shipments for the previous two years had less than three percent of Florida's total sales.

Beginning in 2007, the percent of major varieties planted for fall potatoes was published in the September *Crop Production* report. Previously, this information was not available until the November *Crop Production* report.

Beginning in March 2007, the *Prospective Plantings* report now includes planting intentions for dry edible peas, chickpeas, Austrian winter peas, and lentils. Previously, the first planted acreage estimates for these crops were not published until the June *Acreage* report.

Beginning in 2007, Mississippi was added to the blueberry estimation program.

In 2007, NASS began estimating and publishing acreage, yield, production, price, and value for Scotch and Native varieties of spearmint in Washington.

Beginning in January 2008, NASS will discontinue estimating and publishing equivalent on-tree returns for fresh peaches in the January *Noncitrus Fruits and Nuts* report. Beginning in January 2008, NASS will publish fresh and processed peach estimates for quantity, price, and value.

Beginning with the 2007 crop year, Florida was dropped from the tobacco estimation program. Florida accounted for less than 1 percent of the U.S. acreage.

Beginning in 2007, the number of States included in the annual Floriculture program was reduced from 36 to 15.

## **Livestock**

A special report, *Overview of the U.S. Sheep and Goat Industry*, was issued September 28, 2007. This report covers a graphic historical look at sheep and goat supplies in the United States for the last 25 years. Historical data on the inventory, operations, sheep, lamb, and wool prices as well as inventories of angora, milk, and meat goats and data on mohair price and production were presented.

A new report, *Ethanol Co-Products Used for Livestock Feed*, was issued June 29, 2007. This report was a joint effort between NASS and the Nebraska Corn Board involving 12 Midwestern States. The report highlights the use of co-products among dairy, cattle on feed, and beef cow operations as well as hog producers. The study also identifies the concerns and barriers that prevented producers from using co-products.

Two new data series, net poult placed and eggs hatched, were added to the monthly *Turkey Hatchery* released in April. Net poult placed replaced the poult placed data series to capture the impact of international trade on the turkey industry. The previous poult placed data series will remain accessible on the Quick Stats web site for analysis purposes, but will no longer be updated. The new data series, net poult placed, can be found on Quick Stats.

A reliability table was added to the August *Turkey Hatchery* and the August *Turkeys Raised* releases. The reliability tables show how well an estimator of interest performs in estimation. Ten years of data are used to calculate the "Root Mean Square Error" percent that compares the first estimate to the final estimate.

The monthly *Dairy Products* report released in March 2007, contained new cumulative U.S. level tables for lactose (human and animal) and total whey protein concentrate. The table containing ice cream, nonfat, and hard was discontinued. The two new tables continue in subsequent monthly Dairy Products releases.

Beginning with the annual *Dairy Products 2006 Summary* released in April 2007, State level tables for ice cream, regular, total; ice cream, lowfat, hard; and ice cream, lowfat, soft; were discontinued due to confidentiality concerns and data quality issues at the State level. U.S. level estimates are still provided in the Frozen Product tables of this publication.

The monthly *Cold Storage* report released in January 2007 contained modifications to the publication to reduce respondent burden. The following items at the US and regional level were discontinued: other shelled nuts, other in-shell nuts, canned hams, other canned meat, miscellaneous cooler items, and miscellaneous freezer items. Regional publication of pork ribs, pork trimmings, and other pork were discontinued. Consolidation of publication regions occurred for pecans and chicken.

An interim final rule was published in the Federal Register on July 3, 2007 (72 FR 36341), that establishes a Dairy Product Mandatory Reporting Program as required by law. The rule was effective on August 2, 2007. This program will be carried out by NASS and the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). Beginning with week ending July 7, 2007, all weekly *Dairy Product Prices* data reported to NASS are subject to verification by AMS.

## **Environmental, Economics and Demographics**

A new U.S. monthly price series was started for canola in the August *Agricultural Prices* report. This series also includes prices each month for Minnesota and North Dakota. Previously, only Market Year Average prices were available from NASS. Canola prices will be used in the calculation of the monthly All Farm Products received index beginning in 2008.

The NASS Quick Stats database available to the public contains the most current month prices paid and received index values. Previously, index revisions were calculated quarterly (January, April, July, and October). The new process allows the public to obtain the most current index values even though not published in a NASS *Agricultural Prices* release.

The *2007 Agricultural Prices Summary* will be released to coincide with July monthly *Agricultural Prices* release. Both reports contain some of the same data, so releasing them on the same day will reduce confusion for data users.

The 2007 January Labor Survey was not conducted due to budget constraints. However, the All Hired, Field & Livestock, and Field annual average wages and number of workers will be published in November for the Regions and U.S., as in the past. State level wages will not be published.

The *Agricultural Chemical Usage 2007 Restricted Use Summary* will be released on May 21, 2008, in conjunction with the *Agricultural Chemical Usage 2007 Field Crops Summary*.

The *Agricultural Chemical Usage 2007 Postharvest Applications Summary* will not be published in March 2008 as planned since the Postharvest Applications survey was not conducted. The Postharvest Applications survey will also not be conducted in 2008.

The *Agricultural Chemical Usage 2007 Fruit Summary* scheduled for July 30, 2008, will not be published since the 2007 Fruit Chemical Usage survey was not conducted in 2007. Apples and organic apples are commodities of interest on the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) Phase II. These data will be included in the *Agricultural Chemical Usage 2007 Field Crops Summary* on May 21, 2008.

An *Agricultural Chemical Usage 2008 Fruit Summary* will not be published. The 2008 Fruit Chemical Usage survey will not be conducted in 2008.

There will be no *Agricultural Chemical Usage 2008 Field Crops Summary* published. The 2008 ARMS Phase II Chemical Usage data will not be collected.

The *Agricultural Chemical Usage 2008 Restricted Use Summary* will not be published due to no chemical usage surveys being conducted.

## **2007 Census of Agriculture**

NASS will mail out Census forms on December 28, 2007 to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the convenient option of filling out the Census online via a secure web site. Information from the Census will be available in February 2009.

In preparation for the 2007 Census of Agriculture, NASS is undertaking the most comprehensive public outreach campaign in its history. Marketing efforts are aimed at educating producers about the importance of their participation, with a special focus on outreach to small, minority, limited-resource, and non-traditional farmers and ranchers – those who may not have been counted completely in the past. Components of the 2007 Census communications campaign include:

- Partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs), producer groups, agribusinesses, and sister USDA agencies;
- Participation in a wide variety of farm-oriented trade shows and conventions;
- Proactive media relations aimed at securing articles, editorials and other “free” coverage by key publications and broadcast outlets;
- Paid advertising in selected publications and on selected radio networks in areas with high concentrations of minority and limited-resource farmers;
- Public service (donated) advertising, both print and broadcast;
- Point-of-purchase displays (counter stands, tent cards and other materials) at retailers, elevators, banks, local USDA service centers, and other places where farmers conduct business; and
- Creation of a dedicated Census website – [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov).

## **NASS INTERNET SITE**

In December 2005, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) launched its newly redesigned web site at [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov).

The site continues to provide comprehensive statistical data on every facet of U.S. Agriculture. The Quick Stats Agricultural Statistics Database offers the ability to search for data by commodity, State(s), and year(s). National, State, and county level data can then be downloaded for easy use in a database or spreadsheet. Technological enhancements include a new Google-powered search engine, a Scalable Vector Graphic (SVG) interactive mapping application, and Rich Site Summary (RSS) news feeds. Data users are encouraged to bookmark the site and visit it often, as it will be frequently updated with new information.



## **World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB) Office of the Chief Economist (OCE), USDA**

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Comments about World Agricultural Outlook Board programs may be directed to Gerald A. Bange, Chairperson, WAOB, Mail Stop 3812, South Building, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-3812; (202) 720-6030; [gbange@oce.usda.gov](mailto:gbange@oce.usda.gov).

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### **World Board Update**

**Report Usage Grows.** During the past year, WAOB issued 12 monthly *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE)* reports, as scheduled; and delivered 52 weekly *Weather and Economics Briefing* reports to the Secretary and top staff. Interagency Commodity Estimates Committees (ICECs), chaired by WAOB senior economists, cleared all USDA economic outlook reports to assure consistency with official USDA estimates.

The *WASDE* report is among USDA's most widely viewed reports. From October 2006 to August 2007, the *WASDE* was accessed 14,046 times on average per month on the USDA Web site. Also, the *WASDE* report has 6,991 subscribers on the USDA-Cornell site, which is operated by Cornell through a partnership relationship with USDA.

WAOB staff prepared numerous special economic reports and weather assessments for the Secretary and Chief Economist. For example, WAOB analyzed the impact of the rapid growth of corn use for ethanol production on grain, livestock, and dairy markets; estimated probable crop losses associated with a severe freeze on California's citrus industry; and, analyzed the probable impact of genetically modified rice on U.S. exports and prices. WAOB reviews and approves USDA's estimates of corn use for ethanol production and monitors ethanol production capacity in the U.S., including plant expansion and new plants under construction. Also, WAOB continued to monitor and project the market impact of trade restrictions on U.S. beef products to Japan and South Korea.

### **Foreign Information Exchange.**

- World Board Chairman Gerald Bange traveled to China to speak at the National Grains & Oilseeds Conference in July 2007. This was his eighth trip to China where he's traveled to encourage greater exchange of data and statistical methodology in the effort to refine the sharing of global information sources.
- USDA-WAOB Chief Meteorologist, Ray Motha, and Keith Menzie, Oilseeds Analyst, traveled to India late October-early November 2006. Motha was finishing his second term as president of the World Meteorological Organization's Commission for Agricultural Meteorology. Menzie spoke to the Commission on how weather data are used to help determine global supply and demand estimates and the tools used to produce the analysis. Menzie also traveled throughout India meeting producers, oilseed processors, and government officials.



- David Stallings, WAOB Senior Economist, traveled to Argentina in late May to speak about the USDA agricultural projections report at “Agrotendencias 2007,” a conference sponsored by private-sector grain handlers and processors.
- Shayle Shagam, Livestock, Dairy & Poultry Analyst, traveled to Argentina and Uruguay in March 2007, to learn about production and markets and also exchange information about U.S. livestock systems. Shagam met with U.S. embassy officials, Argentine trade officers, producers, butchers, and also visited slaughter houses, markets, and feedlots.
- Carol Skelly, Cotton Analyst, attended the China International Cotton Conference in Urumqi, China, and followed up with travel to Beijing. She met with a number of high-level Chinese government and industry officials to exchange views about the sources of discrepancies in the China cotton balance sheet. China is the world's largest cotton producer, consumer, and importer. Following these meetings, USDA departed from its long-standing policy and raised its cotton production estimate for China (2004 through 2006 crops) above the level indicated by the China National Bureau of Statistics.
- Jerry Norton, Grains Analyst, traveled to Brussels, Belgium, in late September to speak on the impact of biofuels on world commodity markets at an Agra Informa conference. Norton presented an overview of the policy and market environment contributing to the ongoing expansion in ethanol and biodiesel production in the United States and discussed how that expansion is affecting U.S. grain and oilseed supplies and use.
- In September, Keith Menzie and Mark Brusberg, Agricultural Meteorologist, traveled to Brasilia, Brazil, to meet with the agricultural department’s government meteorologists and crop analysts. They discussed potential data-sharing arrangements to enhance WAOB's meteorological analysis and crop estimation procedures.
- WAOB also hosted visitors from Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, and Russia.

**Weather Monitoring.** The Joint Agricultural Weather Facility (JAWF), managed by WAOB and staffed by WAOB and National Weather Service personnel, issued daily national agricultural weather summaries and, in cooperation with the National Agricultural Statistics Service, published 52 issues of the *Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin (WWCB)*. On a rotational basis, WAOB prepared issues of the weekly *U.S. Drought Monitor*, produced jointly with the National Weather Service and the National Drought Mitigation Center in Nebraska. WAOB’s JAWF also prepared numerous early warnings and assessments of significant weather events that affected agriculture. The meteorologists routinely describe projected storm tracks, wind speeds, and rainfall, and use GIS to delineate crop areas and project probable crop losses.

From October 2006 to August 2007, the *WWCB* was accessed 20,065 times per month; and the *Morning Weather Summary* was accessed 4,259 times per month. WAOB’s *Climatic Profiles* publication was accessed 29,087 times per month.

**USDA’s Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum.** The 2007 Agricultural Outlook Forum, organized by WAOB, attracted a record 1,865 attendees and wide press coverage. The 2007 Forum featured Secretary Mike Johanns and leading CEOs focusing on the impact of bioenergy on agriculture. The program featured in-depth and timely sessions on the major issues, including the U.S. Farm Bill, affecting the agricultural sector. Publication of the 10-year baseline projections just prior to the Forum provided critical strategic planning information for firms in agriculture,



food, and fiber industries. In association with the 2007 Agricultural Outlook Forum, WAOB initiated the Student Diversity Program for the purpose of increasing the diversity of agricultural professionals. Sponsors funded Forum attendance for 11 students from Land-Grant Colleges and Universities. **The 2008 Forum will be held February 21-22 in Arlington, Virginia.** More information is available at: [www.usda.gov/oce/forum](http://www.usda.gov/oce/forum) or contact Brenda Chapin at (202) 720-5447 or email [bchapin@oce.usda.gov](mailto:bchapin@oce.usda.gov).

**Web Sites:**

Office of the Chief Economist: [www.usda.gov/oce/](http://www.usda.gov/oce/)

World Agricultural Outlook Board: <http://www.usda.gov/oce/commodity/wasde/index.htm>

## U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

### Foreign Trade Division

Each month the Foreign Trade Division of the United States Census Bureau (Census) releases the FT-900 *U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services* report, which is one of the principal economic indicators for the United States. This report along with other information can be found on our Web site at [www.census.gov/trade](http://www.census.gov/trade)

### Current Issues of Interest

#### Regulation

The regulations mandating the electronic reporting of exports through the Automated Export System or AESDirect continue to await implementation. We still anticipate issuing these Regulations. However we do not have an estimated publication date.

#### Data Products

In February 2007 we added a containerization breakout for vessel shipments to the port data product on USA Trade Online. Anyone interested in a 30-day trial of this product should contact Fay Johnson at [fay.m.johnson@census.gov](mailto:fay.m.johnson@census.gov) or 301-763-2311.

We are working to add a state export data product and data by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) within the next year. The state export data will be by Harmonized System code (2-, 4-, or 6-digit) or NAICS code (2-, 3-, or 4-digit) by country by state. The measures available will include total value, vessel value, air value, and vessel and air shipping weight. The NAICS data product will be by NAICS code (2-, 3-, 4-, 5-, or 6-digit) by country by district for imports and exports. The measures available will include total value, vessel value, air value, containerized value and vessel, air, and containerized shipping weight.

#### Revisions

Questionable data should be brought to our attention as early as possible. Please contact Paul Herrick of our Commodity Analysis Branch at [paul.e.herrick@census.gov](mailto:paul.e.herrick@census.gov).

Please review our revision policy at: <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/guide/revisions.html>

Revisions are posted on our website at: <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/corrections/index.html>

#### Other Foreign Trade Division Contacts:

Website: [www.census.gov/trade](http://www.census.gov/trade)

Schedule B: [www.census.gov/scheduleb](http://www.census.gov/scheduleb)

FTD References: [www.census.gov/tradereference](http://www.census.gov/tradereference)

FTD Statistics: [www.census.gov/tradestats](http://www.census.gov/tradestats)

Foreign Trade Data Products: (301)763-2227 or Fax: (301) 763-4347

FTD Regulations: [www.census.gov/traderegs](http://www.census.gov/traderegs)

FTD AES: [www.census.gov/aes](http://www.census.gov/aes)

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**Data Users Meeting**  
**Summary of Questions and Comments**  
**Rosemont, Illinois**  
**October 29, 2007**

**Note:** The following write-up presents a topical summary of issues discussed during the afternoon open forum. Discussions have been consolidated by topic.

**Dissemination of Data**

A comment was made on AMS's tremendous collection of data---price discovery is very important---but their dissemination of data is not good. Could AMS outsource to NASS, ERS, or a private firm to improve the website? Warren Preston replied that he agrees that access to reports needs to be improved and that AMS will be working on ways to make those improvements.

One participant commented that NASS's Quick Stats was a phenomenal tool! He also indicated that ERS could use more work on oilseeds and should put a link to NASS. He asked if ERS could get a price discovery system. Information on international trade of B100 biodiesel data would be helpful. Greg Pompelli indicated that ERS was working with Farm Foundation to improve data products.

A data user commented that the wheat data product is tremendous. It is good to see it updated and keeping up with market dynamics.

A participant requested that the Executive Summary from the *WASDE* report be merged into the *Crop Production* report? For example, it could describe how much objective data was collected for the report. He would like to have HTML products available at the time of dissemination, so they could just be dropped into other websites for quick dissemination. Steve Wiyatt replied that he was not sure what additional information we could publish, but he would like to talk about this issue in more detail.

A data user indicated that the *WASDE* summary for livestock is good. However, it is hard to use the tables on corn, beans, and wheat. He suggested a table showing current month, previous month, and previous year estimates for corn, beans and wheat exports.

**Cold Storage**

A data user commented that he was glad that AMS had put an auditing feature into place for Cold Storage (dairy products). He asked whether anyone in the room used that data. A participant commented that he did use the Cold Storage data. In addition, another participant indicated that he is interested in looking at cheese products by variety. Steve Wiyatt indicated that publishing this data by variety would create potential disclosure issues even if re-aggregated back to the U.S. level. The question was pursued, whether NASS could aggregate back at the U.S. level on an annual basis only. Dan Kerestes indicated that NASS will review and see if this is possible.

**Ethanol and Energy**

In a lengthy discussion about ethanol, one participant asked what were the drivers for month-to-month corn ethanol usage. For plants that come on line later in the year, can USDA publicly provide capacity information, i.e. showing monthly change in capacity based on what is coming

on line? Jerry Bange replied that it is hard to track this by just looking at plants coming on board. The World Board utilizes the Energy Information Agency's (EIA) weekly data on blending.

Further discussion on ethanol production by participants: There are declining levels of utilization, but ethanol production is still profitable. The 51 cents credit is still helping significantly, particularly helping biodiesel being exported to Europe.

One participant asked how to move the bio-preferred program process along. Is there a consensus of what the carbon footprint of ethanol is? Jerry Bange indicated that Roger Conway, Director of the Office Renewable Energy in USDA, would be the best person to whom to direct that question.

Someone asked whether the Census Bureau was developing a report on energy? It is hard to combine everything together from the different data sources. Keith Menzie replied that the Census Bureau is in the process of expanding reports including biodiesel. He indicated that the Department of Commerce is meeting with EIA to work out data collection issues.

There is a connection between renewable fuels standards and profitability. How strong an impact will the energy bill have on agriculture, not factoring additional legislation?

### **Acreage, Production and Stocks**

One data user asked what percent of objective yield reports that were analyzed for the latest *Crop Progress* report had actual grain weight. Greg Thessen replied 85 percent.

With large increases in acres in states that traditionally did not have large corn acreage--is NASS considering adding all these states to *Crop Progress* reports?

NASS did a special acreage survey on certain crops such as wheat in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. The survey said 400,000 acres were abandoned in August, but by September the abandonment was 800,000. Rumor said many acres were zeroed out by insurance in mid-June. How do acreage changes occur throughout the year? How does a special report work? Why didn't NASS pick it up all the abandonment until September? Steve Wiyatt replied that NASS conducts a special survey on crops when weather conditions prompt. This year, conditions changed as the season progressed and farmers' expectations changed significantly. In September, we have a much larger sample of farmers than in August. This larger sample did a better job of picking up abandonment.

Speaking about the adjustment NASS made to planted acres during forecast season, one participant asked whether there are any plans for NASS and USDA to publish Farm Service Agency administrative data? Because if not, the participant felt that individuals will be going en masse to USDA for access to this data. Steve Wiyatt responded that the administrative data is controlled by FSA, and they would have to make the decisions about any publication.

One participant asked NASS about the upcoming December 1 stocks report --what's going to happen to feed residual because NASS double counted on September 1? Has any thought been given to this? As new crop replaces old crop in exports, what will happen? Greg Thessen replied that NASS measures stocks on a specific reference date which eliminates double counting. The new crop stocks that may have been exported prior to September 1 would not be double counted but reported as old crop utilization in the old crop balance sheet rather than the

new crop balance sheet. Since these exports were counted as utilization in the wrong crop year, this has the potential to increase the unexplained disappearance (feed and residual) of the new crop between September 1 and December 1.

One data user requested that the *Crop Progress* report be released at 3:00 p.m. (est.) instead of 4:00 p.m.? Steve Wiyatt indicated that the weekly timeline is now very tight, so this will not happen any time soon.

One participant asked whether NASS gets access to Risk Management Agency (RMA) insurance data early in the year or only at the end. Greg Thessen replied that NASS usually gets the RMA acreage data at the end of the year. We have asked for the data earlier in the year but RMA has to wait until the data is reported to them from insurance companies. Given the lag time in reporting from adjusters to insurance companies to RMA, it is hard to get the abandon acreage from RMA before September.

### **Export Sales/International Trade**

With regards to China data, someone commented that groups seem to be more and more political.

A data user commented that the biggest frustration he has is with data from Mexico regarding beef and pork. Weekly export data does not match monthly data. Has USDA looked at monthly FAS data vs. Census? There has been a large structural change from 5 years ago, and the data differences are becoming a bigger problem each month. Jerry Bange replied that this issue is of great concern to USDA, but they are not sure what the solution is.

Does the World Board use the currency exchange rate in models for export projections? Jerry Bange replied "yes".

One participant wanted to see more transparency in numbers. We see export inspections, preliminary, and 2nd preliminary on the wire service, but never see the final. Can USDA put this out to make it transparent to all data users? In particular this data user would like to see previous numbers added to the adjustment to produce one new number.

For online systems, what HTS level will be available (6-digit or 10-digit) and when will it be available? Warren Preston indicated that AMS is moving forward, but progress is contingent on funding. He is not sure where it stands.

With regards to wheat, there are many disparities between forecasted USDA (*WASDE*) wheat export numbers and private forecasts. What is your confidence in your numbers? What will you be looking at for November? Jerry Bange replied that he is confident that WAOB uses the best information possible

### **Grain Storages/ Trading**

The ten year average corn production harvested by September in Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana is 80 million bushels. This year it was 230 million which means 150 million bushels moved immediately to the river barge replacing exports markets in the Midwest.

Clients are moving grain in containers. Is NASS catching this trade? What is your confidence in catching this? Do we pick up grain storage from livestock integrators? Steve Wiyatt said yes,



we treat them all as Off-Farm Storage Facilities. A data user commented that export sales should catch container sales.

### **Beef**

A comment was made on the growing importance of National Box Beef Report for looking at trends in the beef industry.

### **Other Issues or Comments**

With increased future participation by index funds and investment groups in commodity markets, do you see a broadening of your data user base?

A data user suggested that the Chief Economist be invited to the next data users meeting. There are transparency issues. Dr. Collins testified on the Hill on numbers two months ago. Where did the 2008 crop acres come from? What involvement did economists have? Was it independent? Some data users felt blindsided because there was no public notification ahead of time that Dr. Collins would be addressing these questions. Jerry Bange replied that Keith was called to the Hill on short notice. He answered the questions posed to him to the best of his knowledge and opinion, including some projections. The whole of Dr. Collins testimony became public record quickly.