



# Partnering to Count and Serve U.S. Farmers

A Handbook to Increase Participation  
in the Census of Agriculture

**CENSUS OF  
AGRICULTURE**



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service

## CONTRIBUTORS

### **National Agricultural Statistics Service**

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20250

[nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](https://nass.usda.gov/AgCensus)

Tel: 800-727-9540

### **Landowners Association of Texas**

2825 Country Road 190

Liberty, TX 77575

[latexas.org](https://latexas.org)

### **Texas/Mexico Border Coalition**

5175 FM 1017

San Isidro, TX

[tm-bc.org](https://tm-bc.org)

### **Texas Small Farmers and Ranchers**

1511 South Texas Ave, Suite 300

College Station, TX 77840

[tsfrcbo.org](https://tsfrcbo.org)

First Published 2012

Revised 2024

# Contents

## **PREFACE** ..... 5

Joseph L. Parsons, Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service

## **1. WHY Partner?** ..... 6

Using this Handbook ..... 6

NASS-CBO Partnerships: A Brief History ..... 7

## **2. CREATING a Partnership** ..... 8

Get to Know Each Other ..... 8

Clarify Expectations ..... 10

Define the Agreement ..... 10

## **3. COLLABORATING for the Census of Agriculture** ..... 11

Build the Census Mailing List ..... 12

Promote the Census ..... 14

Encourage Participation in the Census ..... 16

Disseminate Census Results ..... 17

Continue the Partnerships ..... 19

## **NASS Offices** ..... 20

## **THANK YOU for your partnership** ..... 23

Jody McDaniel & King Whetstone, Directors, Field Operations, National Agricultural Statistics Service

### **FEATURES**

The Census of Agriculture: Why It Matters ..... 6

NASS Pledges: Your Identity and Your Data Are Secure ..... 8

Talking about NASS ..... 9

Trust: Essential to a Successful Partnership ..... 9

Race, Ethnicity, Gender Profiles: You Asked, We Responded ..... 10

Five-year Census of Agriculture Cycle ..... 11

Who Is Counted? ..... 12

Sign Up to Be Counted ..... 13

Tools to Promote the Census of Agriculture ..... 14

Respond Online ..... 16

2022 Census of Agriculture Data ..... 18



# Preface

Welcome to the 2024 Community-based Organizations (CBO) Workshop! We are so excited to meet with you to showcase the results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture.

First, we want to express our deepest gratitude to every CBO that contributed to ag census outreach efforts, from signing up farmers to be counted and encouraging response during data collection to sharing the results. Thank you for helping to ensure that these vital data about your communities were collected, accounted for, and reflected within the results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture. Your support is truly invaluable.

We want to welcome our new CBO partners to the workshop. The virtual venue permits us to include more organizations than ever, allowing us to nurture both new and existing partnerships in a greater capacity. We look forward to cultivating a long-lasting and fruitful collaboration with all of you to ensure our joint goal of serving U.S. agriculture.

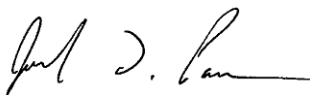
**Through NASS and CBO collaboration over the last 17 years, we have seen significant improvements regarding the coverage and response of underserved producers to the Census of Agriculture, and have had numerous opportunities to share new agricultural resources with and in support of your constituents.**

In this year's workshop, we will highlight the latest agricultural census data, explore ways that NASS and CBOs can expand efforts to reach minority and limited resource producers, and detail how agricultural data can be used to support them and your organizations more effectively. You will have the opportunity to give feedback and share successes and challenges from this agricultural census cycle during multiple breakout sessions.

We know that there is no single approach that will work to reach all groups or regions of the country. Our goal is to continue to work collaboratively with you and your organizations to develop strategies that will better promote the availability and uses of ag census data, as well as our other data products, to your constituents.

**NASS data is from producers for producers.** Thank you for all you do for U.S. agriculture. We look forward to our continued work together serving our nation's dynamic communities that provide food, feed, and fiber to the world.

Sincerely,



Joseph L. Parsons

Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service



# 1. WHY Partner?

The Census of Agriculture is the leading source of facts and statistics on U.S. agricultural production. Conducted every five years by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Census of Agriculture provides a detailed picture of U.S. farms and ranches. It is the only uniform, comprehensive agricultural data set for every state and county or county equivalent in the United States, including race, ethnicity, and gender data.

Farm organizations, businesses, state departments of agriculture, elected representatives and legislative bodies at all levels of government, public and private sector analysts, news media, academia, community-based organizations (CBOs), and USDA agencies all routinely use agriculture census data to:

- Formulate, evaluate, change, and promote policies and programs that help agricultural producers, including underserved producers.
- Study historical trends, assess current conditions, and plan for the future.
- Develop market strategies, create more efficient production and distribution systems, and identify services and facilities needed in rural communities.
- Develop and improve methods to increase agricultural production and profitability.
- Allocate local and national funds for farm programs (including extension service projects, agricultural research, conservation programs, farm loan programs, and land grant colleges and universities).
- Develop grant proposals to address rural and agricultural issues.

Community-based organizations are nonprofit organizations that focus on the social and economic aspects of communities and community development in the locations they represent. CBOs often have intimate knowledge of community needs and assets and can better organize community members to address community concerns. They generally have excellent contacts and respect within their communities. CBOs often focus on individuals of various cultures, races, ethnicities, or other social or demographic characteristics. Many CBOs have an agriculture focus and provide training on agricultural practices or on USDA programs.

The Census of Agriculture is an opportunity for NASS and partner organizations to ensure all farms and ranches are counted. Decisions based on census data will affect agricultural operations and producers for years to come.

## Using this Handbook

This census handbook identifies the various phases of the census and ways NASS staff and CBOs can work together. Section 2 focuses on creating a partnership, with information on getting to know one another, clarifying expectations, and defining the agreement. Section 3 details how to work together throughout the census cycle, providing strategies and activities for NASS staff and CBOs.

### THE CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE: Why It Matters

Farmers and ranchers benefit when the agriculture census takes a complete count of farms, ranches, and the producers who operate them. USDA uses the information to develop short- and long-term improvements, strategies, and safeguards to better serve U.S. agriculture.

The data collected in the Census of Agriculture play a role in determining future decisions about:

- Farm Bill
- Farm programs
- Transportation and marketing locations
- Telecommunications connectivity
- Rural economic development
- Production practices
- New agricultural technologies
- Conservation programs
- And more

**“Census of Agriculture data is accurate, credible, and diverse. It’s broad enough that it allows us to make connections, but it’s also specific enough that we’re able to accurately identify the needs of young farmers.”**

- Michelle Lynn Hughes, Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming

## NASS-CBO Partnerships: A Brief History

NASS has actively expanded its outreach to historically underserved farmers and ranchers as well as to producers with small, new, and beginning operations, since assuming responsibility for the Census of Agriculture in 1997. These producers were hard to reach, and as a result were often underrepresented in census results. NASS conducted a census pilot study in three states in 2002 to test new procedures for enumerating producers in Indian Country. Formerly, each reservation was counted as a single operation, even though a reservation may have had numerous American Indian and Alaska Native producers farming and ranching within the reservation boundaries. NASS also began to seek out and build collaborative partnerships with more CBOs.

By the 2007 Census, NASS had developed procedures and refined processes to make sure all farms and ranches were included, regardless of size, location, or type of operation. NASS was working with farming and ranching associations, businesses that provide goods and services to the agriculture sector, and a growing list of CBOs with ties to underrepresented farmers and ranchers.

For the 2007 Census of Agriculture, NASS turned to CBOs for help in identifying and reaching minority and other underserved farmers and ranchers, establishing credibility with them, and promoting the census. NASS conducted a national workshop in Kansas City, Missouri, for representatives from 37 CBOs. The workshop provided basic information on NASS, training on the 2007 Census of Agriculture, and ample time for CBO representatives to work among themselves and with NASS staff to develop preliminary NASS-CBO partnering plans. By the end of the workshop, 21 partnership plans had been developed; many more were submitted in the days and months that followed.

The 2007 Census experience showed that partnerships between NASS field offices and state-specific community-based organizations can 1) build a more complete census list by adding many producers who had previously been missed, and 2) generate additional responses to the census form. New farmers, women, and historically underserved producers learned that participating in the census gives them a voice in demonstrating the value of U.S. agriculture and their role in it.

For the 2017 and the 2022 Census of Agriculture cycles, NASS and key partners built on the 2007 experience and outreach model by creating and then updating this handbook, which is designed to help CBOs and NASS staff develop national and local partnerships that positively impact the population the CBOs serve.

NASS headquarters and field office staff have expanded outreach initiatives to a wide range of hard-to-reach and often underrepresented producers: those who identify from various races and ethnicities, women producers, new and beginning producers, young producers, urban producers, veteran producers, and those who operate small farms and ranches. The role of CBOs working on behalf of their constituents has continued to grow as they identify deficiencies and implement a variety of programs to address problems at the local level. NASS and CBOs work together to ensure all farmers and ranchers are counted, so hard-to-reach and underrepresented producers can be better served in their local communities.

NASS continues to sponsor partnering workshops around the Census of Agriculture cycle, holding two types of workshops for CBOs. One workshop early in the five-year census cycle focuses on list building and promoting census awareness and participation. After census data are released, a second workshop focuses on how CBOs can use the data and available publications to reach and serve their members.

## 2. CREATING a Partnership

A primary responsibility of NASS regional directors and state statisticians is to build and maintain support for NASS programs in their area. Traditionally, NASS field staff work through commodity organizations, producer organizations, and state cooperators (e.g., state departments of agriculture) to gain support for NASS programs and maintain good levels of participation in surveys. In return, NASS delivers reliable agricultural production statistics.

Community-based organizations have a long-standing tradition of advocacy on behalf of their client base, particularly CBOs that embody and represent harder-to-reach, often underserved groups. NASS has found and research shows that CBOs are highly successful in promoting awareness of, and encouraging participation in, programs that benefit their communities. These communities benefit when NASS partners with CBOs that represent them.

### Get to Know Each Other

Working with CBOs requires a different kind of relationship than working with NASS's traditional partners, but the results are equally productive and rewarding. CBO constituents are more likely than other producers to be underrepresented in government statistics and therefore, more likely to be underserved by government programs. NASS works actively with CBOs and other partners to identify and reach out to underserved producers.

**If you are a CBO representative, it is useful to know some basic information about NASS's mission, structure, goals, and operations.**

- NASS provides timely, accurate, and useful statistics on U.S. agricultural production, economics, land, water, energy, environmental management, and farmer and rancher demographics.
  - NASS is a relatively small USDA agency, with offices across the country.
  - NASS has no political appointees, provides impartial statistics, and does not engage in political advocacy.
  - NASS collects and delivers data; it does not provide grants or agricultural assistance programs.
- NASS conducts hundreds of surveys each year and prepares reports with official estimates on almost every aspect of U.S. agriculture. These objective reports are released in various formats (electronic, print, or both) on a preannounced schedule that is fair and impartial.
  - NASS conducts the Census of Agriculture every five years. The census covers the United States and Puerto Rico as well as Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
  - By law, all responses to NASS surveys and the Census of Agriculture are confidential. NASS will not disclose data about an individual farm or ranch operation.

### NASS Confidentiality Pledge

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service protects your privacy and your data.

It's the law.



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
[www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov)

### NASS PLEDGES: Your Identity and Your Data are Secure

The information you provide in the agriculture census and NASS surveys will be used for statistical purposes only. Your responses will be kept confidential and any person who willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both.

NASS surveys are conducted in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection provisions of Title V, Subtitle A, Public Law 107- 347, and other applicable federal laws. For more information on how we protect your information please visit:

[www.nass.usda.gov/confidentiality](http://www.nass.usda.gov/confidentiality)



- NASS state statisticians and regional directors understand the importance of meaningful outreach to all producers; they care about the mission of collecting comprehensive, high-quality data and want to work with CBOs in a mutually beneficial way.
- Use the partner “Talking about NASS” guide to communicate effectively about the value of NASS data to producers, communities, and others.

- CBOs place high value on personal integrity, trust, and service to others. Ultimately, whether they partner with NASS may rest on your personal trustworthiness and commitment to serving all farm and ranch producers.
- Use the employee “Talking about NASS” guide to communicate the value of NASS’s work and the importance of participating in NASS surveys and the agriculture census.

**If you are a NASS official, learn about the mission, values, and goals of community-based organizations in general, and then learn in detail about potential CBO partners in your area.**

- Agriculture-related CBOs serve a defined community and may be self-funded and run by volunteers.
- CBOs vary in size and organizational structure. Some are formally incorporated; others are small and more informal.
- CBO leaders and their constituents may not know NASS even if they have worked with other USDA agencies. How you get to know a CBO’s leadership should depend on its structure and style. Some will prefer a more formal introduction.
- CBOs have varying histories, missions, structures, resources, and outreach. As a NASS official, whether at headquarters or in a field office, you must take time to listen and understand what individual CBOs do and what their interests are, to determine what partnering opportunities may exist.
- To learn about a particular CBO, participate at a local event, talk with CBO representatives, and talk with representatives from USDA agencies that have worked with the CBO.

**TRUST: Essential to a Successful Partnership**

The importance of developing trust cannot be overstated. Trust must be the cornerstone of any NASS–CBO partnership because without trust the partnership will not function. Although it may feel awkward at first, take steps to get to know each other. Early face-to-face meetings are a good idea. The discovery phase of getting to know your partner is important. Trust generally develops at a personal level first, and then organizational trust can follow.

**Honesty and sincerity are essential.**

**TALKING about NASS**

Two new guides (one for NASS staff, one for partners) provide the key phrases and talking points to help you help others understand what NASS does, the value of NASS data, and examples of how farmers and ranchers can use the data. It gives you what you need for a 30-second encounter, a detailed presentation, a media interview, and more.



[nass.usda.gov/go/nass-guide.pdf](http://nass.usda.gov/go/nass-guide.pdf)

## Clarify Expectations

The joint expectation of NASS and CBOs working together is to get the best possible count and characteristics of farmers, ranchers, and their operations. Each side brings particular interests and capacities.

### **CBOs can:**

- ▶ Help identify underserved farm and ranch producers to add to the census mail list (the list to whom NASS sends the census questionnaire).
- ▶ Help promote the census and other NASS activities at the local level.
- ▶ Provide access and outreach to CBO constituents and other hard-to-reach populations.
- ▶ Use Census of Agriculture results in their ongoing outreach to their constituencies and in advocating on their behalf.

### **NASS officials can:**

- ▶ Identify and include in the census mail list farmers and ranchers who have received funding or other assistance from the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program, also called the 2501 Program.
- ▶ Represent all farmers, ranchers, and their operations accurately in official Census of Agriculture results.
- ▶ Show the status and trends on issues affecting underserved producers and their operations at county, state, and national levels.
- ▶ Provide access to NASS and other USDA resources.
- ▶ Maintain the partnership and support CBO efforts on a continuing basis not just during the census.
- ▶ Create a dynamic Census of Agriculture web page with materials that field offices and CBOs can use in all phases of census promotion and data collection.
- ▶ Post materials prepared by field offices and CBOs to SharePoint for internal sharing across NASS.
- ▶ Partner with other USDA agencies to inform them about the census timeline and get their help.
- ▶ As funds allow, periodically conduct national workshops to train and collaborate with CBOs.

## RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER Profiles: You Asked, We Responded

When NASS introduced national- and state-level summaries of 2012 Census data for various underserved groups, CBOs and their members asked NASS to produce county-level summaries as well. NASS now summarizes Census of Agriculture farm and producer data in easy-to-access profiles at national, state, and county levels for American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, Hispanic/Latino/Spanish, and female producers.\*

Farmers, ranchers, CBOs, extension staff, researchers, policymakers, and USDA agencies use the data to:

- Target education and outreach efforts to underserved farmers and ranchers
- Learn what these farmers produce
- Determine whether USDA and other programs reach underserved farmers
- Include accurate and timely information in grant applications and other documents

\* To protect individual confidentiality, the profiles are available for states and counties that have at least 30 farms with that producer group.

[nass.usda.gov/go/reg](http://nass.usda.gov/go/reg)

## Define the Agreement

An informal memo or agreement can be crafted that conveys an understanding of what each partner expects from the other, what the CBO and NASS jointly expect to accomplish, and what resources each brings to the partnership. Such an agreement provides clarity for both NASS and the CBO.

Resources may be technical or in the form of human capital. NASS has only limited funding and CBOs may not have funding to take on additional tasks. However, CBOs can do many things to support and promote the census at little or no cost.

# 3. COLLABORATING for the Census of Agriculture

NASS conducts the Census of Agriculture in five-year cycles of preparation, promotion, data collection, and results dissemination. The graphic shows the five-year cycle for the 2022 and 2027 censuses.

CBOs and other partners have a significant role to play throughout the process, particularly with respect to building the list, promoting the census, encouraging participation, and disseminating results.

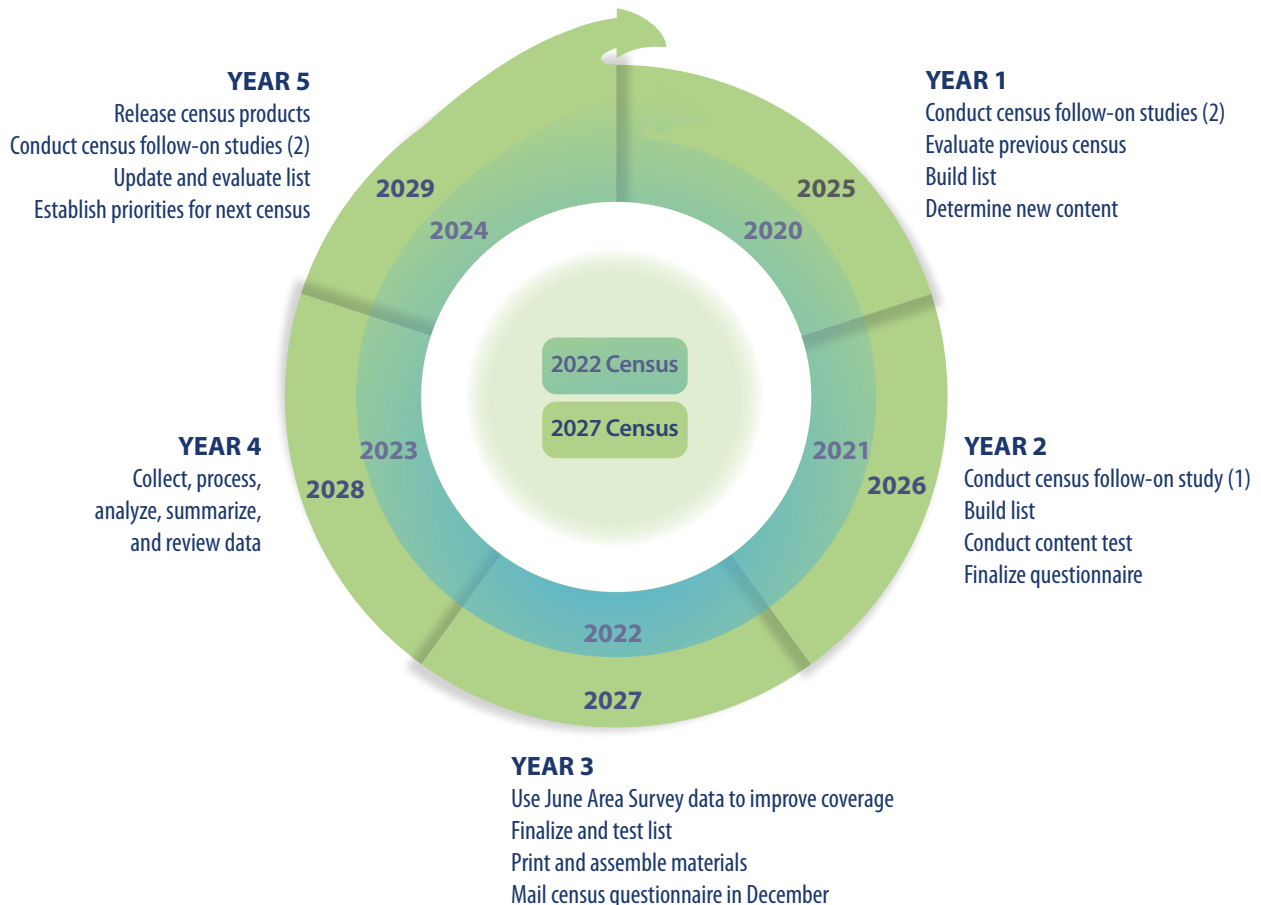
However, the tasks are not entirely sequential; they are continual, frequently overlap, and generally reinforce each other. In partnering to increase the participation of underserved populations in the Census of Agriculture, NASS and CBOs must develop strategies and activities for each phase.

**“The census data is critical to us because we really need to know where farmers are and what is their representation...It could possibly gauge a lot of our work for the next 10 years.”**

- Donna DeCaille, MS, The Federation Of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund

## Five-year Census of Agriculture Cycle

(shown for 2022 Census and 2027 Census)



## Build the Census Mailing List

An important first step in conducting any census is determining who needs to be included. The goal is to account for all farms and ranches that produced and sold, or had the potential to sell, at least \$1,000 of agricultural products during the census year. This requires building a complete and accurate name and address list for all agricultural operations that meet this definition.

Well before the census starts, NASS and partners work hard to develop a comprehensive list of agricultural producers (farm and ranch producers).

Most list building is completed by July 1 of the census year. For example, in preparation for the 2022 Census of Agriculture, NASS conducted a screening survey of approximately one million potential farming operations in the first half of 2022 to determine whether they should be included in the census mailing list.

Identifying large agricultural operations is relatively straightforward. USDA may have had many prior contacts with such operations. Large farms and ranches are visible and well known, they participate in a variety of agricultural and community programs, and their impact can be seen and quantified. Smaller operations — particularly those owned by individuals from an underserved population — may be harder to find.

With their excellent contacts with their own constituencies, CBOs can reach agricultural producers who might not be on the NASS list. NASS is always happy to add names to its list of farms and ranches. Ag producers new to NASS surveys and censuses can sign up on the web at any time at [agcounts.usda.gov/getcounted](https://agcounts.usda.gov/getcounted).

### WHO Is Counted?

Determining who is farming what land is an important initial step in conducting the agriculture census. In the language of the census and surveys, this is “building the list.” An accurate list of agricultural operations results from a careful process of asking questions, talking with people in the community, consulting various available lists, and reaching out in many ways to agricultural producers and others in the community.

Producer refers to a person who is involved in making decisions about such things as planting, harvesting, livestock management, and marketing for the farm operation. The producer may be the owner, a member of the owner’s household, a hired manager, a tenant, a renter, or a sharecropper. If land is rented or worked based on shares, the renter or tenant is the producer for that land.

**“The Census of Agriculture provides us with vital information on beginning farmers, including demographics and types of farm enterprises established. We rely on this data to inform us of beginning farmer trends. All farmers, especially beginning farmers, need to respond to the census survey to help guide not only policy but also supportive funding structures.”**

- Sridharan (Sri) Sethuratnam, Ph.D., California Farm Academy,  
Center for LandBased Learning

## NASS Activities

NASS headquarters and field staff create materials and messages that CBOs can use to encourage signup and help build the census mailing list. NASS staff can:

- Give CBOs enough census signup brochures and postcards to distribute at meetings and other events, in their communities, and in their day-to-day encounters. Ask CBOs to collect the completed cards onsite and send them to NASS.
- Ask CBOs for lists of farm producers in order to mail out the signup brochure and postcard. As part of the request, NASS can offer to compile, reorganize, or reformat the lists or, if funds are available, to reimburse a CBO for this work.
- Conduct a training workshop bringing together CBOs to work with NASS staff and with each other.
- Hold local and regional information meetings for list building.
- Attend, exhibit, and speak at CBO informational or annual meetings. Secure a spot on the agenda to promote the census. Be accessible.
- Attend, exhibit, and speak at local and national trade shows and symposia.
- Serve on state and local committees that reach out to constituents to discover best practices used by other agencies and organizations.
- Work with tribal leaders. Consistent with Executive Order 13175 requiring consultation with tribes, develop an outreach strategy with the tribal leadership to promote census awareness and participation.
- Work with the National Association of Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) to hire, train, and certify qualified individuals from CBOs.
- Actively promote awareness of and participation in the Census of Agriculture on X, Facebook, and other social media channels.

## CBO Activities

Helping NASS identify underrepresented producers and signing them up to receive the census questionnaire is key to partnering on the census. CBOs can:

- Ask members and clients to complete the sign-up postcard at every meeting and other opportunity. Collect the cards and send them to NASS.
- Provide NASS a current list of members and clients. Tell NASS about any other organizations that may have relevant producer lists.
- Distribute the NASS signup brochure and postcard with an endorsement letter from your organization to members and clients.
- Provide the NASS signup brochure and postcard to members and affiliates to use in their day-to-day contact with other producers.
- Encourage members and clients to sign up for the census online, by phone, or by mail (returning the postage-free signup card).
- Contact local county-wide appraisal districts in your area and request listings of agricultural landowners.
- Post census signup information to your website or Facebook page. Use these links in presentations. If you have a smartphone, play audio or video pieces when you are out and about in the community.
- If you have an X account, re-post NASS messages about the census or create your own.



### SIGN UP to Be Counted

Producers can sign up at any time to ensure they are on the census list. Signing up online is the fastest, easiest way to do so. On the NASS website, look for a "Complete your survey online" button, and sign up to be counted.

If you prefer, you can sign up by phone (888-424-7828) or by mail (return the postage free signup card).

**Large or small, your operation is important to U.S. agriculture!**

## Promote the Census

Even as NASS and partners continue to identify producers and build the census mailing list, a serious effort must begin to promote the census and encourage individuals to complete their questionnaire when they receive it in December of the census year.

NASS provides a wide variety of tools, ideas, and opportunities to promote the census. Some materials are perfect for CBO members and clients; others can be adapted for particular audiences.

### TOOLS to Promote the Census of Agriculture

For each Census of Agriculture, the NASS Public Affairs Office creates a variety of online and hard copy tools and messages for promoting the census and encouraging participation. For the 2022 Census, the package includes:

- Brochures (English, Spanish, Hmong, Navajo)
- Sample blogs and newsletter articles
- News release templates
- Web buttons and banners
- Drop-in ads for publications
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Banners
- Posters/Flyers
- Quick-reference pocket cards
- Testimonial videos
- Feature stories authored by CBO
- Public service announcements
- PowerPoint presentations
- Sample social media messages

Partner tools and messages for the 2022 Census are available for NASS field offices, CBOs, and other stakeholders to use in reaching out to farmers and ranchers. Find the latest outreach products at [nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](https://nass.usda.gov/AgCensus).

## NASS Activities

To help CBOs encourage broad participation in the census, NASS field offices can:

- Point CBOs to the available promotion tools.
- Develop talking points localized for your area — NASS data are timely, useful, and reliable; they are widely used for program development, resource allocation, and other purposes; good census data requires universal participation; underrepresented farmers and ranchers must participate to be visible and heard in future decision making; census data provide useful information to local producers (with examples from the previous census).
- Participate in media outreach and interviews (radio, television, print, and web); create public service announcements; speak at CBO meetings and community events; participate in and exhibit at local and national trade shows and symposia.
- Work with tribal leaders. Consistent with Executive Order 13175 requiring consultation with tribes, develop an outreach strategy with the tribal leadership to promote awareness and participation.
- Collaborate with other USDA agencies conducting educational and outreach activities to maximize limited resources. USDA agencies with related missions and themes include the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Rural Development (RD).
- Work with CBOs to plan effective use of limited funds. Distributing flyers, placing articles and announcements, securing local radio coverage, mailing to members, tweeting, posting to Facebook, and email campaigns are effective and cost-effective ways to secure participation.
- Send information to the NASS Public Affairs Office about CBO activities and outreach for posting to X and YouTube, including pictures, video, PSAs, and information on speeches, meetings, and other events.

## CBO Activities

CBOs — with their links to members, clients, and the communities in which they live — are ideally suited to promoting the Census of Agriculture and encouraging underserved populations to participate. Identify your own innovative ideas for reaching underserved producers in your area. Then make your plan in collaboration with NASS. Consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ Check the NASS Census of Agriculture web page frequently. Click “Partner Tools” for materials, opportunities, ideas, and publicity tools to promote the census.
  - ▶ Use available ads, logos, videos, buttons, and banners to promote the census in your materials. Link your web page directly to the census web page.\*
  - ▶ Invite NASS officials to make presentations at your annual meetings and other events and to work with your organization on ways to use census data.
  - ▶ Use existing census data to show how valuable the data are. For example, use the data 1) when you describe your organization’s mission or apply for grants, and 2) to compare the producers you serve relative to other producers in your state.
- ▶ Include articles or ads written by you or NASS in your newsletters, on your web page, and in other communication tools.
  - ▶ Encourage media outlets and press contacts to include census articles and radio advertisements.
  - ▶ Endorse and distribute NASS promotional materials at farm- and ranch-related events. Post flyers, posters, and other materials where they will be widely seen.
  - ▶ Become familiar with the census questionnaire so you can explain it to your members and clients.
  - ▶ Promote the census at local farm groups, agribusiness meetings, and church business meetings, as well as at other local events, including family gatherings.
  - ▶ Include census-promoting taglines on your website, at all census events, and in banners and posters at businesses, churches, and community centers.
  - ▶ If you have an X account, re-post NASS messages about the census or create your own.

Visit the Census of Agriculture web page often for Partner Tools and for up-to-date information.  
[nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](http://nass.usda.gov/AgCensus)

\* NOTE: Use Census of Agriculture logos, ads, videos, buttons, and banners liberally to promote the census. Do NOT use the NASS or USDA logo without permission through the NASS field office.

The screenshot shows the top of the NASS website. On the left is the USDA logo and the text "United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service". On the right are social media icons for YouTube, RSS, Flickr, and Facebook, along with a search bar labeled "Search NASS". Below the header is a navigation menu with items: Data & Statistics, Publications, Newsroom, Surveys, Census, About NASS, Contact Us, and Help. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail "You are here: Home / AgCensus". On the left, there are "Quick links for Census of Ag" including Press Kit, Partner Tools, Frequently Asked Questions / More Information, Census Report Forms and Instructions, and Ag Census-Solicitation for Input. Below these is a section for "Historical Census of Ag Publications". The main content area features a large green banner that reads "Census of Agriculture" and "DATA NOW AVAILABLE" with a right-pointing arrow. Below the banner, it says "The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Even small".

## Encourage Participation

Participation in the Census of Agriculture is important. NASS and its partners work hard to ensure all agricultural producers take advantage of the opportunity to participate. Underserved producers, in particular, may need phone or in-person follow-up in overcoming a variety of obstacles to responding. Obstacles may include 1) uncertainty about whether they are considered an agricultural operation, 2) fear of reporting to a government agency, or 3) the length and complexity of the form. By working with their members and clients, CBOs can help farmers and ranchers overcome such obstacles and help increase participation in the census.

## NASS Activities

To help CBOs increase their members' and clients' participation in the agriculture census, NASS staff can:

- Encourage CBOs to use the resources and promotion materials available on the census web page.
- Encourage CBOs to link their websites directly to the "Respond Online" button that will be available once the census questionnaires are mailed.
- Provide NASDA-trained enumerators in many settings and at many events to assist farmers and ranchers who are willing to fill out the census questionnaire but may face language or other obstacles. By providing help in completing the form, enumerators increase the census participation rate. CBO members trained as enumerators can be particularly useful in this role.\*

### RESPOND Online

Responding online is secure and easier than ever. The Respondent Portal is convenient and dynamic – you can access it on most electronic devices. It's user-friendly, calculates totals automatically, and skips questions that do not pertain to your operation.

**The online form saves time and effort!**

## CBO Activities

CBOs can undertake a wide variety of activities to get farmers and ranchers to complete their census forms. Consider the ideas mentioned here, but also think about what kinds of activities and events will best help your members and clients complete their questionnaire, whether online or by mail, telephone, or personal interview.

- At every opportunity, encourage farmers to complete their questionnaires. Ask:
  - Did you receive your Census of Agriculture form?
  - Have you returned it?
  - Would you like assistance filling it out?
- Provide a link on your website to the "Respond Online" button that will be available on the census web page once the questionnaires are mailed. Responding online is now easier than ever. The online tool skips questions you don't need to answer.
- Include NASS staff and trained enumerators at CBO events such as membership meetings or agriculture education days. Include time during which producers can receive guidance in completing their census questionnaires.\*
- Collaborate with other CBOs and share space, resources, and staff time to host or support events and activities at which NASS staff or trained enumerators provide census assistance.\*



\* NOTE: Only NASS staff and trained NASDA enumerators are qualified to complete the census questionnaire with the individual. CBO staff and others can encourage producers and provide stories and evidence about why producers should complete the questionnaire, but they may not get directly involved in collecting a producer's information.



## Disseminate Census Results

USDA agencies, other federal and state agencies, institutions, agribusinesses, legislators, researchers, and farmers and ranchers use census data in making operational, funding, program, and policy decisions.

**Disseminating the census data is as important as collecting it.**

## NASS Activities

Once NASS releases the census findings, NASS staff should take — and make — opportunities to thank CBOs for their help and show them and their constituents the value of the census data.

- ▶ When NASS releases Census of Agriculture findings, set up a time to present the information back to partnering CBOs. Show what the data tell about the populations represented by the CBO. Show how their numbers, demographics, and economic impact may have changed from previous censuses.
- ▶ Develop and enhance communication tools to reach CBO clients and the general public. Sometimes this will mean tailoring headquarters-provided products and presentations for specific audiences.
- ▶ Encourage CBOs to use the same channels they used in promoting the census to share the census results. NASS headquarters will create a range of products and tools to help in disseminating the information. You may need to adapt these materials or create something new for a particular audience.
- ▶ Your CBO partner may have ongoing events, celebrations, or special meetings throughout the year. Make yourself available and be part of the program if requested. Consider creating an educational/informational program not specifically NASS-based, but related to math or agriculture. Outreach doesn't always have to be census or survey driven. Participating in partnering activities with CBOs fosters collaboration, furthers stewardship, and continues to build trust.

## CBO Activities

Having asked those they serve to participate in the Census of Agriculture, CBOs should convey to their members and communities how census results reflect their participation.

- ▶ Share infographics, highlights, profiles, and other summary information widely and help those who want to delve further into the data to know how to use the tools.
- ▶ Ask NASS staff to make presentations and to help you make presentations highlighting census results.
- ▶ Disseminate Census of Agriculture information through all available channels, including X, Facebook, other electronic platforms, your newsletter, your website, and emails.
- ▶ Share the information with your media contacts and tell your story.
- ▶ Help your members and clients understand the value of being counted in the census. USDA agencies use census data in determining programs, funding levels, and priorities. Other federal departments, state agencies, universities, companies, and private research organizations also use census data.
- ▶ When you use census data to advocate on behalf of issues of concern to your members, let them know how you are using the data and how important their participation is to providing an accurate, up-to-date picture.

**“Farmers should fill out their Census of Agriculture because it helps us get better representation of all different farmers and all different people, which ultimately makes us trust the data more.”**

– Lucy Toyama, New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Tufts University

## 2022 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE DATA

The 2022 Census of Agriculture Data produced 6.4 million individual data items describing U.S. producers, the farms and ranches they operate, and the commodities they produce and sell.

The data are available in many formats and at many geographic levels. Data are available for Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands as well as on a variety of special topics.

### Just a few of the many ways to access the data:



#### Highlights

#### Ag Census Highlights

Two-page reader-friendly summaries of key findings about commodities, producer groups, and issues.



#### State and County Profiles

Two-page summaries of key economic and producer data for every state and county.



#### Quick Stats

NASS's online database lets you pull customized tables for the most recent as well as for previous censuses.



#### Congressional District Data

Data for congressional districts are available in a new interactive tool and in two-page profiles.



#### American Indian Reservations

Agricultural and demographic reservation-level data for all farms on 73 American Indian reservations.



#### Watershed Data

Selected census data are available for watersheds at the 6-digit Hydrologic Unit Code boundaries.



#### Ag Census Web Maps

Access key 2022 Census data through a collection of interactive maps. Available September 10, 2024.



#### Zip Code

Selected census data available by 5-digit postal zip code. Available November 7, 2024.



#### Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Profiles

Two-page summaries at national, state, and county level of key economic and producer data about farmers and ranchers in seven demographic groups: American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, Hispanic/Latino/Spanish, and female producers.

## Continue the Partnerships

Collecting and disseminating agricultural statistics every five years should not be the only partnership activity between NASS and CBOs. As the census cycle closes, continue to share the results widely with farmers, ranchers, and others with agriculture interests, and then keep the partnership active in the next census cycle.

## NASS Activities

In disseminating results of the last census and preparing for the next census, NASS should continue outreach to underserved populations and keep the partnership active. NASS should make CBOs aware of opportunities to comment on the content of the next Census of Agriculture.

The year after NASS releases the census data is a good time to start planning for the next census.

- Sit down with your CBO partner(s), use what you learned last time, and map out a new strategy. This NASS — CBO partnership is a great network of support. Find new ways to collaborate — exchange ideas and identify ways to share resources.
- Continue to develop outreach materials that convey a consistent image (brand). Repeat and reinforce the image so CBO partners and potential partners recognize and help promote the NASS mission and philosophy. Work with NASS headquarters to keep messages consistent.
- In addition to nurturing your current partnerships, work equally hard to find, develop, and nurture good relationships with new partners. Make sure they know each other and develop good working relationships in advance of the next census.
- Give feedback to NASS headquarters on what you learned about reaching out to underserved farmers and ranchers so your experience and the lessons you learned can inform future agency communications.
- Let CBOs know that the NASS-CBO partnership was invaluable to the success of the census.

## CBO Activities

CBOs should continue to reach out to NASS and remain active partners in the years between censuses.

- Consider including in your goals or guiding principles something like the following statement: “Improving the quality of data provided by USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA NASS) to more accurately reflect the role of minority/underserved farmers and ranchers.”
- Continue to promote the importance of census participation at all CBO events and meetings, in your presentations, and on your website.
- After reviewing census results, express any concerns about the data so NASS and CBOs can plan strategies to increase the level of participation by underserved producers in future censuses.
- Develop active partnerships with other CBOs in order to expand your impact and achieve your goals.
  - Collaborate with other CBOs or land-grant institutions to take advantage of outreach opportunities.
  - Plan a joint meeting with one or more CBO partners and share resources such as meeting space, promotion costs, and staff time to facilitate a successful event.
  - Share outreach best practices with each other. In fragile budget times, using effective and efficient outreach activities to reach as many underserved farm and ranch producers as possible is essential.
  - Find common ground — for example, similar membership base, close proximity of your coverage areas and regions, or something as simple as mutual admiration for the other organization’s commitment and compassion — and build a close, mutually beneficial working relationship.

# NASS Offices

## Headquarters

Washington, D.C.  
800-727-9540  
NASS@usda.gov

## National Operations Center

St. Louis, Missouri  
314-595-9500  
NOC.administration@usda.gov

## Regional Field Offices



### Delta Region

800-327-2970  
nassrfodlr@usda.gov

### Eastern Mountain Region

800-928-5277  
nassrfoemr@usda.gov

### Great Lakes Region

800-453-7501  
nassrfoglr@usda.gov

### Heartland Region

800-551-1014  
nassrfohrl@usda.gov

### Mountain Region

800-392-3202  
nassrfomtr@usda.gov

### Northeastern Region

800-498-1518  
nassrfoner@usda.gov

### Northern Plains Region

800-582-6443  
nassrfonpr@usda.gov

### Northwest Region

800-435-5883  
nassrfonwr@usda.gov

### Pacific Region

800-851-1127  
nassrfopcr@usda.gov

### Southern Region

800-253-4419  
nassrfosor@usda.gov

### Southern Plains Region

800-626-3142  
nassrfospr@usda.gov

### Upper Midwest Region

800-772-0825  
nassrfoumr@usda.gov

## State Statisticians and Regional Field Office (RFO) Directors (August 2024)

Alabama	Charmaine Wilson	256-836-3450
Alaska	Andrew Brosier	907-745-4272
Arizona	Rodger Ott, Regional Director	720-787-3150
Arkansas and Delta RFO	Jill Bishop, Acting Regional Director	501-217-1932
California and Pacific RFO	Gary Keough, Regional Director	916-738-6601
Colorado and Mountain RFO	Rodger Ott, Regional Director	720-787-3150
Delaware	Shareefah Williams	410-841-5740
Florida	Mark Hudson	407-648-6013
Georgia and Southern RFO	Anthony Prillaman, Regional Director	706-424-1409
Hawaii	Gary Keough, Regional Director	916-738-6601
Idaho	Benjamin Johnson	208-421-2299
Illinois	Mark Schleusener	217-524-9606
Indiana	Nathanial Warenski	765-494-8371
Iowa and Upper Midwest RFO	Greg Thessen, Regional Director	515-776-3401
Kansas	Doug Bounds	785-260-1508
Kentucky and Eastern Mountain RFO	Dave Knopf, Regional Director	502-907-3218
Louisiana	Kathy Broussard	225-922-1362
Maryland	Shareefah Williams	301-347-8179
Michigan and Great Lakes RFO	Marlo Johnson, Regional Director	517-324-5301
Minnesota	Dan Lofthus	651-728-3113
Mississippi	Esmerelda Dickson	601-359-1259
Missouri and Heartland RFO	Brad Summa, Regional Director	314-595-9594
Montana	Eric Sommer	406-422-2733
Nebraska and Northern Plains RFO	Nicholas Streff, Regional Director	402-470-8803
Nevada	Gary Keough, Regional Director	916-738-6601
New England (Includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)	Pam Hird	202-615-9845
New Jersey	Bruce Eklund	503-308-0404
New Mexico	Margie Whitcotton	800-392-3202
New York	Charles Walker	410-259-2138

North Carolina	Tony Dorn	787-485-1715
North Dakota	Darin Jantzi	701-412-5953
Ohio	Ben Torrance	220-228-5533
Oklahoma	Troy Marshall	405-415-8851
Oregon	Dave Losh	503-260-3901
Pennsylvania and Northeastern RFO	Kevin Pautler, Acting Regional Director	717-787-3904
South Carolina	Jacqueline Moore	803-734-2506
South Dakota	Erik Gerlach	605-212-9832
Tennessee	Dave Knopf, Regional Director	502-907-3218
Texas and Southern Plains RFO	Wilbert Hundl, Jr., Regional Director	512-501-3201
Utah	John Hilton	801-524-5003
Virginia	Herman Ellison	502-907-3250
Washington and Northwest RFO	Dennis Koong	360-890-3302
West Virginia	Alissa Cowell-Mytar	304-357-5123
Wisconsin	Greg Bussler	608-287-4775
Wyoming	Leslee Lohrenz	720-787-3150

\* For up-to-date contact information, go to: [nass.usda.gov/go/rfo](https://nass.usda.gov/go/rfo)

# To All Our Valued Partners,

As we reflect on the engaging conversations and connections forged during this workshop, we want to express our deepest appreciation for your dedication. The staff of the NASS Regional Field Offices are eager to collaborate with you, fellow farmers, and ranchers to highlight your stories. We understand that the most successful agricultural census hinges on our enduring partnership.

As a key component of this partnering effort, we're thrilled to announce a powerful new resource for all of us working to support our communities: the 2022 Census of Agriculture data, released this past February. This treasure trove of information offers a detailed snapshot of American agriculture, from farm sizes and crop types to land ownership and farmer demographics. It's like a roadmap, highlighting areas where our communities need the most support. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity! Let's work together to leverage this data to make informed decisions, strengthen our programs, and empower the agricultural communities we serve.

While the next census is still several years away, now is the time to solidify our foundation. A complete population count is the essence of any census, and it begins with identifying everyone involved. We challenge our Regional Field Office staff to work hand-in-hand with you, our valued partners, to expand our census list. Every producer deserves a voice and representation in the data. Our field operations staff are the cornerstone of NASS's outreach efforts. You should all depart with clear knowledge of your local NASS team, their contact information, and a plan to connect. These "boots on the ground" are eager to attend your stakeholder meetings and events, fostering engagement with your constituents and broadening our reach to all producers. They are truly dedicated to supporting you and your organization.

As we approach the 2027 Census of Agriculture, your advocacy becomes crucial. While significant work lies ahead, let's celebrate our achievements, like this very workshop. We reiterate our sincere gratitude for your commitment to participate and advocate for farmers and ranchers nationwide. Please don't hesitate to offer suggestions and feedback. Your insights are invaluable.

On behalf of everyone at NASS, thank you for your participation. We look forward to a continued and productive partnership.



Jody McDaniel, *Director, Eastern Field Operations*, National Agricultural Statistics Service



King Whetstone, *Director, Western Field Operations*, National Agricultural Statistics Service

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*

**CENSUS OF  
AGRICULTURE**



[nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](https://nass.usda.gov/AgCensus)