

Dear Editor,

The 2007 Census of Agriculture form will soon be delivered to Wyoming's farmers and ranchers. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Census enables these agricultural producers to show the nation the value and importance of Wyoming agriculture.

Not only does the Census give the ranchers and farmers of Wyoming the chance to be heard, but it gives them the valuable opportunity to influence key decisions that will shape the direction of American agriculture in general and our community in particular for years to come.

Census data is used by all those who serve farmers and rural communities – federal, state and local governments, agribusinesses, trade associations and many others. For instance, companies and cooperatives use the information to determine the locations of facilities that will serve agricultural producers. Community planners use the information to target needed services to rural residents. USDA uses the information to ensure that local service centers are staffed at appropriate levels. Legislators use the information when shaping farm policies and programs. And, of course, Wyoming's livestock and crop producers like me can use Census data to help make informed decisions about the future of their own operations.

The Census offers a tremendous value to all rural stakeholders, and the time it takes to complete the form pales in comparison to what we get in return. So if you receive a Census report form, please fill it out accurately and return it.

After all, the Census is our voice, our future and our responsibility.

Sincerely,

Glenda Shepler

Director

USDA/NASS/WY Field Office