



Prices Received Survey

United States Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service

2008

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts a monthly survey to estimate prices received by farmers and ranchers for crop and livestock commodities. Each month, commodity buyers are asked to report the prices producers received for the previous month and to provide a preliminary estimate on the current month's price.

HOW ARE THE DATA COLLECTED?

The Prices Received Survey is conducted monthly for grains, oilseeds, pulse crops and major livestock. Depending upon the commodity surveyed, data may be gathered from elevators, buyers, auctions, stockyards, packing plants, processors, canneries, and producers, as well as state boards, marketing cooperatives and grower associations. Data collection methods include:

- Personal interviews – A NASS representative generally conducts an interview for the initial survey contact. Follow-up visits may occur and can be requested by the respondent.
- Mail/Fax – Participants fill out and mail or fax back the questionnaire that was mailed to them.
- Telephone – Interviews may be conducted over the telephone.
- Internet – Secure online reporting is the timeliest, most cost-effective option.

HOW IS THE INFORMATION USED?

NASS publishes a monthly *Agricultural Prices* report that includes data on approximately 65 commodities. In addition, NASS will publish the annual *Agricultural Prices Summary* on July 31, 2008. This report will include data on some 130 commodities. All sectors of the U.S. agricultural industry – producers, buyers, suppliers, policymakers and others – rely on prices received data to make sound business decisions. For example:

- Prices received data are a component of USDA's Parity Index, which measures the economic well-being of producers and is useful for designing the Farm Bill's financial safety-net programs.
- The Farm Service Agency uses the market year average price, derived from the monthly Prices Received Survey, when determining the counter-cyclical payments to producers.
- The Economic Research Service calculates the farm share of consumer expenditures using this price data.
- Federal and state agencies use price data to project revenues and the need for public services.
- The Extension Service and land grant universities promote increased prosperity and economic security for producers by incorporating sound price data into marketing and financial management strategies.
- Grower associations and elected representatives need prices received data to lobby for legislation that promotes and supports U.S. agriculture.
- The World Trade Organization relies on price data to make decisions about international trade, including tariffs and other trade barriers.
- Agribusinesses use income estimates derived from prices surveys to evaluate markets for location, expansion, and contraction of their business activities.

The information provided by survey respondents is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the privacy of all responses and publishes data only in aggregate form, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

All reports are available through the NASS web site: www.nass.usda.gov. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540.