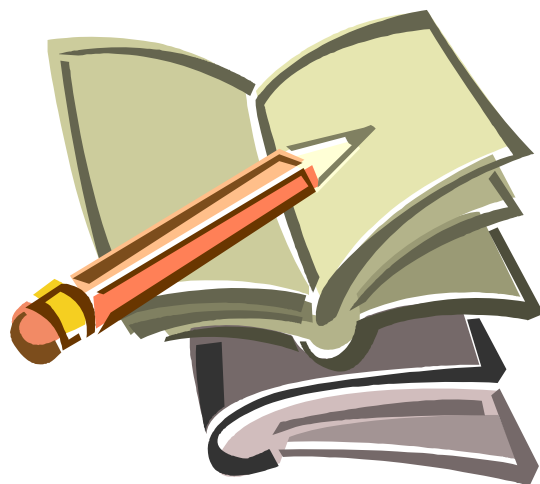


Summary of 2005 USDA Data Users Meeting



**October 17, 2005
Chicago, Illinois**



2005 USDA Data Users Meeting
October 17, 2005
Embassy Suites, Ohare' Airport

Agenda	12:00 p.m.	Registration
	1:00	Introduction and Overview Carol House National Agricultural Statistics Service
	1:10	Agency Reviews John Van Dyke Agricultural Marketing Service Joy Harwood Economic Research Service John Nuttall Foreign Agricultural Service Steve Wiyatt National Agricultural Statistics Service Gerald Bange World Agricultural Outlook Board Venita Powell U.S. Census Bureau
	2:00	Open forum for questions and comments from participants
	3:15	Break
	3:30	Open forum continues
	4:30	Concluding comments
	4:45	Special Presentation: Corey Jenkins (NASS) New NASS Data Dissemination Tools



<http://www.usda.gov/nass/>

Agricultural Marketing Service 2005

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 and the Federal Seed Act.

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

MANDATORY PRICE REPORTING:

The Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act of 1999 (Act) and a one year extension expired on September 30, 2005. Currently, the program is operating on a voluntary basis. Currently the Senate has passed a one year extension and the House has passed a five year reauthorization provision.

WEB PORTAL PROJECT:

The Market News Portal for Fruits and Vegetables and Livestock and Grain Market News is on line and providing instant, near real-time access to daily and historical reports on agricultural commodities. The new portal is at: <http://marketnews.usda.gov>. Poultry, Dairy, and Cotton programs will soon follow with their portal development.

The new Web portal will help businesses make important marketing decisions with instant access to USDA databases. Users can create, save and re-use customized searches of USDA's extensive historical information and this customized information is available almost instantaneously.

Customers who register and create an account on the Web site can log into the portal and create their own market summary charts to provide snapshots of commodity prices based on location and dates. Registered users can also access additional features - such as storing electronic bookmarks to quickly locate specific data, call up weather reports nationwide and make metric and currency conversions. There is no cost to register.

Established in 1915, USDA Market News is celebrating in 2005 its 90th year of service to American agriculture. USDA Market News issues over 1,000 daily reports on fruits and vegetables, livestock, dairy products, grain, poultry and cotton. The service helps businesses make informed marketing decisions and serves as the primary data source for many other uses - such as contract pricing, dispute resolution, and insurance settlements.

Future Portal Enhancements

- Develop Web services that would allow users to receive scheduled data sets automatically.
- Mapping commodities to the shipping districts and to the offices issuing reports.
- Highlight changes in the daily market to inform users at a glance of market fluctuations.

MARKET INFORMATION ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAS:

AMS worked with the countries of North, Central and South America to create the Market Information Organization of the Americas (MIOA). The primary purpose of MIOA is to facilitate the timely and consistent exchange of market information on agricultural products, and to work towards creating standards for terminology, methodology and technology. Due to the tremendous growth in trade between the countries of the Americas, it is critical that these countries work together to enhance the transparency of markets. There are currently 22 member countries of MIOA.

The organization has accomplished the following:

1. Developed an initial website, with a truly interactive site to be established later. The web address is: www.mioa-oima.org
2. Created a Resource Binder. The Binder has key information on and outlines the areas of coverage for each of the market information organizations in the membership.
3. Started a project to evaluate or assess the market information organizations and their systems within each of the member countries. Initially, one country from each of the four regions was evaluated over the last few months. The report on the first phase of the assessment is due to the Executive Committee of MIOA in early November.
4. Began work on a Panamerican Dictionary of Terms for agricultural commodities. The purpose of this dictionary is to have a source of product names by which they are marketed in the member countries, with a goal of allowing users to cross reference product names in the different countries.

Member Countries:

Argentina	Honduras
Bolivia	Guatemala
Brazil	Nicaragua
Canada	Panamá
Chile	Paraguay
Colombia	México
Costa Rica	Perú
Dominican Republic	Uruguay
Ecuador	Venezuela
El Salvador	United States

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 and often redundant 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. The Agricultural Marketing Service is one of the first agencies to become involved with this project.

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 is currently compiled and released on a semi-weekly or monthly basis will become available in near-real time. The impacts of these enhancements cannot be understated. 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 get imports separated by such things 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

Fruit and Vegetable:

New F.O.B. Shipping Point Reports:

Organic Strawberries from California
Apple Pears from California
Brussel Sprouts from California
Cantaloupes from North Carolina
Clementines and Lemons from Chile
Lemons from Mexico

Revised Reports:

Enhance the "National Shipping Point Trends" publication by adding a national prospective on the movement of onions and potatoes.

Livestock and Grain:

Pork Reporting

Livestock and Grain Market News (LGMN) Branch has been working with the pork industry to update the yields used to calculate the Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Carlot Pork Composite Carcass Cutout value. In addition to revising the cut yields, we will also be modifying our reporting methods for the National Carlot Pork Report, and reviewing the criteria used to ensure that the cutout value is reflective of the current market.

The cutout value was last revised in 1997, and as a result, there are numerous modifications to the standard yields that need to be made. In addition, some cuts have been deleted from the calculation while others have been added. The revised cutout value will be effective January 3, 2006. A side by side comparison of the new primal values and the current and revised cutout

value was available starting October 3, 2005. A new section for enhanced cuts will be added and the quotes for the Smoker Trim Picnics in combos will be removed.

Further, in order to ensure that the LGMN Branch provides accurate and timely information about the latest pork cut trades, beginning January 3, 2006, only actual trades that occur on the given day will be shown in the morning and afternoon National Carlot Pork Report. In the past, we have continued to print the last quote along with letter designations to indicate the last day a product trade was reported. While this may be useful to establish the last established price, these quotes may not reflect current market conditions and trading levels. This information will still be available through the archive search on our Web site.

Lastly, our purpose for reviewing the criteria used to ensure that the cutout value is reflective of the current market is to provide the industry information that accurately reflects current market conditions. If it is determined during this review that the cutout value is not accurately reflecting current market levels on some occasions, we may consider not publishing a cutout value on those days.

Please contact USDA's LGMN Branch office in Des Moines, Iowa, at (515) 284-4460 for additional information.

Livestock, Meat, and Wool and Grain and Feed Publications.

These publications will be discontinued January 1, 2006. Users of the information contained in these reports will be directed to existing reports that contain the information or new reports will be developed that include specialized information that is included in these publications.

Poultry:

New Reports:

Retail Feature Activity Reports

In conjunction with industry members and trade groups, Poultry Market News has developed a series of market news reports covering the feature activity by grocery retailers for the most common consumer cuts of chicken and turkey, and grades of shell eggs. These new reports expand AMS Market News reporting coverage into the retail sector and provide a tool for users to measure, analyze, anticipate, and react to retail marketing trends.

Weekly Poultry and Egg Market Update

This new reports provides users with a weekly snapshot of each of the major poultry and egg markets in narrative and graphical form, placing virtually all of the major market information needed on a regular basis at the user's fingertips. The report compares current market conditions to those of one week ago and one year ago. Graphs show the relationship between current pricing to pricing of one year ago and to an average of the past three years pricing.

Revisions

Weekly Fresh Turkeys:

In 2005, Weekly Fresh Turkey report was expanded a national level. Previously, only the eastern region of the U.S. was included. With the report coverage expanded to a national basis, all major U.S. turkey processors are now included in the report, increasing the volume of trading comprising the report and strengthening confidence in the price discovery process.

At the same time, the report format was updated to reflect current industry practice and to make it more user-friendly.

Holiday Retail Promotions Featuring Poultry:

For a number of years, AMS Market News reporters have collected retail price information for poultry items, mainly turkey, featured during holiday marketing periods. This information was never been officially released but was shared with turkey industry cooperators, trade associations, and a few media outlets. The information allowed users to compare how their products were being featured and against which of their competitors in various markets. In response for industry requests to expand the information and make it public, AMS Market News began to release this retail price information in the form a new report available seasonally to the public in Adobe pdf format on the AMS Market News website. Due to the volume of information, the report is made available in sections. The report covers feature activity for whole turkeys, turkey breasts, ducklings, geese, roasters, broth, and turkey dinners categorized by conventional, kosher, U.S. Organic, or free-range. Retail activity for each item is categorized by region (Eastern, Central, and Western U.S.) corresponding to established turkey marketing regions. Major retail markets are listed under each region and include primary retail outlets in each market.

Weekly Eggs Processed Under Federal Inspection:

In recent years, the in-line segment of the egg products industry has seen rapid growth which has impacted the dynamics of both the shell egg and egg products industries. In response to concerns raised by the shell egg industry, AMS Market News added information to the Eggs Processed report showing the relationship between in-line and off-line plant production. Each week, the total number of cases broken by in-line facilities is provided along with the percentage of cases broken by in-line facilities. A similar breakdown is provided for liquid whole egg production. Using this information, users can now track seasonal and long term trends in the respective production of in-line and off line plants.

Midwest Regional Eggs:

In 2005, AMS Market News was releasing two reports covering the trading of shell eggs to retailers in the Midwest, the Daily Chicago and Midwest Egg report and the Daily Midwest Regional Egg report. The Chicago and Midwest report covered the market for shell eggs delivered to the store door while the Midwest Regional report covered the market for shell eggs delivered to the warehouse. AMS Market News incorporated the Chicago and Midwest delivered store door information into the Midwest Regional report and discontinued releasing the Chicago and Midwest report separately. While this change did not result in the loss of any existing market coverage, the simply combination of delivered warehouse and delivered store door price information into one report eliminated confusion over having two overlapping reports. In addition, the format of the Midwest Regional Egg report was made more user-friendly and efficient report with all Midwest shell egg market coverage contained in a single report.

Monthly Inventory U.S. Dried Eggs:

In response to requests from the U.S. Egg Products industry, AMS Market News updated its Monthly Inventory of U.S. Dried Eggs to show blended product as a separate class while providing total poundage for each class of dried egg along with a percentage of total dried egg inventory for each class of dried egg. These changes allow users to more easily assess the relative inventory of dried egg products.

Dairy:

Developed a new market report on dry permeate (a whey product)

More graphs of dairy statistics have been added to the webpage

Subscription services for mailed reports were discontinued effective May 2005. The last mailed report will be sent at the end of April 2006. The format of the mailed report will continued to be carried on our web site.

Tobacco:

All tobacco reports have been eliminated except for the Quarterly Stocks report due to the elimination of the mandatory grading program by Congress.

AMS Contacts: Agricultural Marketing Service:

E-mail to: AMSWebmaster@usda.gov

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<u>Livestock & Seed Programs</u> Barry L. Carpenter 202-720-5705 Barry.Carpenter@usda.gov	<u>Transportation & Marketing Programs</u> Barbara Robinson 202-690-1300 Barbara.Robinson@usda.gov	<u>Compliance & Analysis Programs</u> David Lewis 202-720-6766 David.Lewis@usda.gov

*ERS is enhancing the value-added nature and transparency of our work.
We're developing several new initiatives that focus on improved data delivery.*

Improved Quality of Communication

Outlook Audience Page—Updated weekly, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook/> provides a critical link to our outlook publications, data, and “e-outlooks” on special topics. Also see ERS’s data page (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/>).

E-Outlooks—These 20-30 page special reports focus on in-depth analyses of the forces shaping markets. By December, we’ll have issued more than 30 this calendar year. Examples include: *Did the Mandatory Requirement Aid the Market? Impact of the Mandatory Livestock Reporting Act*; *Recent Agricultural Policy Reforms in North America*; *China’s New Farm Subsidies*; and *NAFTA at 11: The Growing Integration of North American Agriculture*. We’ll be issuing nine commodity background reports from October through February, as we have done prior to past farm bill debates.

Newsletters—ERS will be issuing over 100 regularly-scheduled outlook reports in 14 series in 2006—the same number as in 2005. Look for the 2006 calendar posting on the ERS website soon—it also includes the schedule for exchange rate, costs of production, macro, and other data products.

Amber Waves—ERS’s flagship magazine draws much of its content from our outlook program. Look for upcoming pieces on how livestock diseases are affecting global meat trade, sectoral adjustments after the tobacco buyout, and other topics.

Enhancing Timeliness and Value-Added in Data Delivery

New Data Products—We posted a revamped *Feed Grains Database* (now with data on GCAUs, feed-price ratios, etc.) and plan on providing user-friendly and flexible data query systems for major commodities. We posted *China: Agricultural and Economic Data* in June, and a base acres mapping tool (*Farm Program Acres*) in October. We’re planning an *Elasticities Database*; it will contain income, expenditure, own-price, and cross-price elasticities for the U.S. and other countries (where available), including data on horticultural and grocery food products.

Market Analysis & Trade Electronic Reporting System (MATTERS)—This project’s goal is to improve user access and internal processes. We plan to: 1) produce monthly outlook report tables more efficiently by using automated data feeds; 2) deliver yearbook tables through standardized queries (including “print all”); and 3) investigate html outlook newsletters that allow users to “get data” for charts through accompanying links.

Agricultural Resource Management Study (ARMS)—USDA’s Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), based on responses of 19,500 farm households, is available on-line (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/arms>). In November, ERS will be adding new tables from the 2004 ARMS. Data on the site include income, wealth, and other financial indicators; production costs; cropping practices; and farm structural characteristics, as well as summary financial statements.

Usability Initiative—We need volunteers to participate in usability research and other types of product evaluations. To sign up, please e-mail Brenda Powell (bapowell@ers.usda.gov).

Analytical Transparency

“Models on the Web”—ERS is moving toward downloadable models on our website. Excel models for corn, soybeans, and wheat are updated monthly (same day as WASDE) that use futures prices to forecast season average prices and CCP rates for corn, soybeans, and wheat. Look for other models soon, including an “Agricultural Trade Multiplier” data delivery system, which allows users to identify economic activity generated by a change in exports for a wide selection of commodities.

“Behind-the-Scenes” Calculations—We’re also providing step-by-step detail on the derivation of some of our outlook projections. Our first posted calculations are illustrated for wheat food use and wheat exports; see <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Wheat/wheatfooduse.htm> and <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Wheat/wheattrade.htm> for details.

Leveraging Cooperators to Enhance Our Ability to Analyze Markets

Conversion Factor Initiative—ERS is working with the University of Minnesota’s Food Industry Center and others to update conversion factors (refining our estimates of food use, trade, and other variables). We are developing a “consortium” of government and private experts to keep the factors as up-to-date as possible. Priorities in the first phase are red meats and horticultural crops.

Cooperative Agreements—We have many agreements with universities, on topics such as: the impacts of China’s water scarcity on future production and trade; forecasting national sheep market indicators; the economic impacts of avian influenza entry into the U.S. through migratory birds; and other topics.

Other New Directions

Program of Research on the Economics of Invasive Species Management—PREISM provides approximately \$1 million annually for grants and cooperative agreements. It’s in its third year and examines economic issues related to managing significant invasive pests in increasingly global agricultural markets. The next PREISM workshop will be October 20-21, 2005 at ERS.

New International Research Emphases—In addition to our extensive work on China, look for special international reports analyzing: the macroeconomic forces shaping agricultural markets (impacts of energy price shocks, exchange rate dynamics in specific commodity markets); Brazil (livestock, soybean markets); and India (biotechnology, wheat, cotton, etc.).

Retail Data and Analysis—ERS started a new quarterly report, *Food Dynamics*, on September 30, which identifies major products with significant swings in sales volume or prices based on AC Nielsen data. The report provides warning signals of changes in market conditions and consumer behavior with only a 6-week delay, and can be used to assess consumers’ reactions to market developments and such as price spikes, supply shortages, or food safety incidents.

Questions or Comments? Please address them to Joy Harwood, Deputy Director for Market Outlook, at jharwood@ers.usda.gov or 202-694-5202

Accessing Global Commodity Information from USDA 's

Foreign Agricultural Service

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. In Washington, D.C., FAS' Commodity and Marketing Program (CMP) 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 Public Web Site 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 specialists in Washington, DC 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.

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/>

US Trade- New developments:

During FY2006 FAS will be reviewing US Trade user and data requirements. If you have comments or suggestions about the US Trade system or data please email them to USTHelp@fas.usda.gov.

USDA FAS PS&D Online:

The current Web-based browser allows users to instantly access and download USDA forecasts after lockup, including fruits and vegetables that are not part of USDA's lockup procedures. Users may select from a menu of pre-defined tables categorized by commodity or by commodity group, or create custom queries for specific commodities, attributes and/or countries. The system enables you to view queried data on screen or download it as a file that you can open with your spreadsheet or database program. A yearly release schedule allows users to pre-plan data availability. Use this system at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/psd/>

PS&D - New developments:

In the first quarter of 2006, FAS will unveil a new version of PSD Online. We've listened to our users' comments and created an application that retains all of the ease-of-use and functionality of the current version, while incorporating some powerful and exciting new features. We've also revamped and consolidated the downloadable data files. Samples of the new downloadable files can be obtained from the links provided on the current PSD Web page. Please note that the data in these files are neither current nor official. These files exist solely as examples.

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. Every 10 days, more than 2,000 maps and 33,000 charts are updated on the Crop Explorer Web site. A partnership with NASA (the National Aeronautics and Space Administration) provides satellite imagery and lake and reservoir surface elevation estimates. Satellite imagery is posted to the Crop Explorer Web site twice a day. Crop Explorer is a primary source of agricultural market intelligence for decision makers. Farmers, agribusinesses, commodity traders and researchers, as well as federal, state, and local government agencies, find Crop Explorer invaluable in making reliable forecasts about production, supply, demand and food assistance needs. The Crop Explorer site can also be found from PECAD's Web page where articles about in-country crop conditions and agricultural production briefs are now searchable by country and commodity. Visit <http://www.pecad.fas.usda.gov/> for more information or contact the Production Estimates and Crop Assessment Division at (202) 720-0888.

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. These releases have been popular with users. Find FAS' current commodity information at

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/currwmt.asp>

Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) (Attaché Reports)

This electronic reporting system, covering all major crop and livestock products, provides timely information to U.S. exporters and commodity analysts and is a resource to aid USDA in determining global production, supply, and demand estimates. It provides information on policies and market demand that affect the sales of U.S. agricultural products worldwide. Reaching beyond traditional commodity reporting, this system also provides updates on high value foods, fishery and forestry products, trade policy monitoring, and sector reports on food processors and the hotel and restaurant industry abroad. The foreign-based staff of FAS submits about 3,000 reports each year. You may subscribe to receive reports on a specific country, commodity, or per single issue. Reports are at FAS Online:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/scriptsw/faspush/default.asp>

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. FAS Worldwide is located at

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/>

Export Sales Report

Weekly export sales reports serve as a timely early warning system on the possible impact of agricultural obligations on U.S. supplies and prices. The data is the aggregate of the previous week's sales and exports of U.S. exporters. 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 that are sold abroad.

Although the report has been in existence for awhile, we are continually working to improve the information flow to the public. As always, the full US Export Sale report is published on the FAS Web page every Thursday at 8:30 am eastern time. Find the Export Sales Report at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/esrd1.html>

ESR- New Developments:

FAS have developed an on-line data query system for the *U.S. Export Sales Report*. The data will be available at 9 am the day of publication. In addition on the U.S. Export Sales Web page, we have added an archived folder that contains all the weekly reports back to 1998. FAS expects to launch these enhancements in the last quarter of FY2005. As additional funds become available, other options to the query will be added.

U.S. Horticultural Reports

The U.S. Horticultural Sector Charts Report and US. Horticultural Trade Issues Report have replaced the monthly and quarterly reports previously published.

These publications and more, including links to the new FAS Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) databases, are available on the Horticultural & Tropical Products (HTP) Division Web page at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/htp/>. The HTP Web page is updated with the latest information on policy and technical developments affecting trade in horticultural commodities. The analytical articles formerly published in *World Horticultural Trade and U.S. Export Opportunities* are now updated on the HTP Web page. For further information on this site, please contact Larry Deaton at (202) 720-3423.

If you have comments on the information above, please contact John Nuttall, Assistant Deputy Administrator (Acting) for Analysis, CMP, FAS at (202) 720-4762 or John.Nuttall@fas.usda.gov



FOREIGN TRADE DIVISION

Each month the Foreign Trade Division of the United States Census Bureau (Census) releases the “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 Information available includes:

- “U.S. International Trade in Goods & Services,” current and historical issues
- Information on the Automated Export System (AES)
- Schedule B commodity classification search
- Export and import statistics by country or commodity
- U.S. foreign trade export regulations

WHAT’S NEW?

- *The Census Bureau released a special report on Gulf Coast District/Port statistics. These reports can be found at: www.census.gov/trade/tradestats.*

DATA QUALITY

In order for Census to accurately analyze, review, correct and publish quality statistics, we continuously interact with other government agencies. Census and USDA have established a working group which established liaisons within each agency to communicate and attempt to resolve data discrepancies in a timely manner. In addition, Census receives the monthly Grain Report from USDA. This report is used by Census to ensure that the statistics published by the two agencies are consistent.

The U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, issues commodity-specific corrections in response to investigations initiated by the community of data users. Updates are posted at least once every two weeks. The data is sorted by commodity code, affected statistical year and month, and posted date. These corrections can be found on our Website at <http://www.census.gov/tradestats>.

It is important to contact Census “immediately” with any questions on our published statistics. It is easier for Census to verify current rather than prior year statistics.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Main Foreign Trade Page: <http://www.census.gov/trade>

FTD AES Page: <http://www.census.gov/aes>
<http://www.census.gov/naics>
AES Hotline (800) 549-0595 AESDirect Help Desk (877)-715-4433

FTD Reference Page: <http://www.census.gov/tradereference>

FTD Statistics Page: <http://www.census.gov/tradestats>

Foreign Trade Data Products: (301) 763-2227 or Fax: (301) 457-2647

FTD Regulations Page: <http://www.census.gov/traderegs>

FTD Schedule B: <http://www.census.gov/scheduleb>

FTD Shippers's Export Declaration: <http://www.census.gov/sed>

FTD FT900 Press Release: <http://www.census.gov/ft900>

Correspondence can be written or faxed to:

Foreign Trade Division
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233-0001
Fax: (301) 457-1159

Inquiries about our published statistics can be written, E-mailed, or faxed to:

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FOREIGN TRADE
STATISTICS YOUR KEY
TO TRADE
U. S. CENSUS BUREAU



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**

Livestock

U.S. and State level estimates for angora, milk, and meat and other goats were added to the *Sheep and Goats* report released in January 2005. This information expands the previous 3-State estimate for angora goats.

A special report, *Sheep and Goats Death Loss*, was issued in May 2005. U.S. and State level data on the inventory and value of losses for sheep, lambs, and goats from animals and non-predators were covered in the report.

A new quarterly report, *United States and Canadian Hogs and Pigs* was issued in October 2004. This publication is a result of a joint effort by Statistics Canada and NASS to release the total hogs, breeding, market hogs, sows farrowed, and pig crop for both countries within 1 publication. Historical data from 2000 to the present were included in this report.

A special report, *Non-Ambulatory Cattle and Calves*, was issued in May 2005. This report was a cooperative effort between NASS and the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services, and includes non-ambulatory cattle and calf totals by region, weight category, and type of operation.

A new report, *Farms, Land in Farms, and Livestock Operations*, was issued in January 2005. This report contained data on the number of farms, land in farms, and average farm size for individual States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. The number of cattle, hog, and sheep operations and operations by size group for individual States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. are now published in this report.

The monthly *Milk Production* report released in February 2005 was expanded to include 3 additional States; Colorado, Kansas, and Oregon were added to increase the number of individually published States to 23.

A special report, *U.S. Broiler and Egg Production Cycles*, was issued in September 2005. This report covered the cycle of broiler and table egg production from a NASS statistical point of view. Historical data on egg production, hatchery capacity, layer inventory, young chicken slaughter, and the value of production were presented in the report.

The individual States estimates for the 11 published States were dropped from the July Cattle release.

In the February (Annual) *Cattle on Feed* report the 4 lower size group categories were combined into 2 size groups at the State level for number of feedlots, inventory, and marketings. However, all 4 size categories were published at the U.S. level. This reduced the number of estimates that had to be suppressed to protect the confidentiality of individual operations, but still retained the data series at the U.S. level.

Michigan, Texas, and Wisconsin were dropped from the monthly Hogs & Pigs price program. A market year average price will still be provided annually.

Oregon, Colorado, and Kansas were added to monthly milk prices and quarterly milk cow replacement prices. This was done as a result of adding these same 3 States to the monthly *Milk Production* report.

Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, and Tennessee were added to the sheep estimates published in the January *Sheep and Goats* report. These 4 States were also published individually in the *Meat Animals Production, Disposition, and Income-2004 Summary*.

The mix of States in the monthly price report changed from 15 to 18 for sheep prices. Kansas and Utah were dropped, whereas, Kentucky, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wyoming were added. These changes were based on data availability.

Puerto Rico was added to the February (annual) *Milk Production* report, the *Milk Production, Disposition, and Income-2004 Summary*, *Chickens and Eggs-2004 Summary*, and *Poultry Production and Value-2004 Summary*.

Environmental, Economics, and Demographics

The April 2005 *Agricultural Prices* report marked the beginning of using “hot links” to help reduce the size of the publication. Data will be referenced by its Web address, instead of being reprinted.

The *Farm Computer Usage and Ownership*, released July 2005, was the 5th benchmark taken that monitors adoption of computer usage in the farm population. Benchmarks are done every 2 years beginning in 1997. This year’s release had questions about how operators access the Internet. Dialup, at 69 percent, was the most common method reported.

Agricultural Chemical Usage-2004 Field Crops, released May 2005, introduced a new set of tables created to provide useful and relevant information on the distribution of chemical use rate data. These tables show the 10th percentile, median, 90th percentile, mean, and coefficient of variation distribution of the most commonly used active ingredients for each commodity at the program State level. Distribution rate tables were also added to *Agricultural Chemical Usage-2004 Vegetables*, which was released July 2005.

The Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) is USDA’s primary vehicle for collecting data about production practices, inputs, farm costs, and financial conditions. Beginning with the 2004 survey, the sample was greatly expanded to include over 30,000 operations, which improved data quality and permitted release of State-level estimates for the leading 15 cash receipt States. The 10 ARMS regions were reduced to 5 regions. The *Farm Production Expenditures-2004 Summary*, released in July 2005, is the first product from ARMS containing the new and increased number of estimates.

Crops

Due to the discovery of Asian soybean rust in the United States and the heightened speculation of how growers would react to the fast-spreading, yield-reducing disease, several questions were included in the 2005 March Agricultural Survey for the 31 major soybean-producing States. The purpose of the questions was to collect data to measure farmer awareness of Asian soybean rust

and how its discovery has impacted their planting decisions for the 2005 crop. Results were published in the March 2005 *Prospective Plantings* report.

On-farm and off-farm sunflower stocks were published in the March *Grain Stocks* report. This change was requested by the National Sunflower Association and provided the industry with a middle-of-the-marketing year stocks estimate.

The pilot haylage/forage program will be expanded to 18 States (CA, IA, ID, IL, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, NM, NY, OH, PA, SD, TX, VT, WA, and WI) and will be published in the *2005 Crop Production Annual*. West Virginia will be dropped from the program. All and alfalfa haylage, along with all and alfalfa forage, will be published.

Biotechnology variety statistics were discontinued in the March *Prospective Plantings* report, but were published in the June *Acreage* report. June is the best time frame to make these estimates considering that all plantings are nearly complete for the crops for which biotech varieties are being estimated. Also, the track record of March indicated acreages devoted to biotech varieties is of limited value for all crops at the U.S. level since actual plantings can change significantly from intentions.

Florida citrus forecasts were added to the November *Crop Production* report to help measure the impact of several hurricanes moving through Florida during August-September 2005 on the citrus crop. Citrus forecasts are typically not included in the November *Crop Production* report.

Statistics on fresh apple slices were published in the July 2005 *Noncitrus Fruits and Nuts Summary*. These statistics were requested by the apple industry due to the large increase in fast food chains use of fresh apple slices. Monthly fresh fruit prices were also included in the July 2005 *Noncitrus Fruits and Nuts Summary* for the first time.

Potatoes 2004 Summary, released in September 2005, included all final data in 1 report for potatoes by variety, potato size and grade, potato certified seed, and monthly potato prices.

A comprehensive review of all commodity statistical programs was conducted by NASS following the release of the 2002 Census of Agriculture. The following reports were modified due to this review and the accompanying data added:

Prospective Plantings, released March 31, 2005; Oats for Alabama and Virginia, Durum wheat for Idaho, flaxseed for all States and the U.S., and canola acres for Montana.

Acreage, released June 30, 2005; Oats for Alabama and Virginia, Durum wheat for Idaho, canola acres for Montana, and safflower for California and Montana.

Crop Production; Wheat acreage, yield and production for Wisconsin beginning in May 2005, cotton production forecasts for Florida and Kansas beginning in August 2005, and additional wheat by class information was also provided by publishing winter and spring white wheat both by soft and hard white wheat beginning in May 2005.

Small Grains Summary, released September 30, 2005; State level percent of production estimates for soft and hard white winter and spring wheat.

Agricultural Prices, beginning in July 2005; State level monthly price data for oats in California, Kansas, and New York and State level monthly price data for Durum wheat in Idaho.

Electronic Data Reporting

NASS continued to expand the use of electronic data reporting (EDR) during FY2005. EDR allows respondents to report data via the Internet. EDR was made available for the following commodities/surveys during FY2005.

Agricultural Yield	Prices Received for Grain
Almonds	Prunes (CA)
Cucumbers for Pickles: Intended Acres	September Crop/Stocks
Cucumbers for Pickles: Preliminary	September Off-Farm Grain Stocks
Cucumbers for Pickles: Acreage Production & Value	Walnuts
Dates	Prices Paid Ag Chemicals, Fertilizers, Lime
Figs	Prices Paid Feed
Hops	Prices Paid Fuel
June Crop/Stocks	Prices Paid Machinery
Kiwifruit	Prices Paid Seed
Macadamia Nuts	Catfish
Maple Syrup	Cattle on Feed
Mint	Milk Production Monthly
Nectarines	Milk Production Quarterly
Olives	Quarterly Hogs
Papayas	Trout Survey
Pineapples	Turkey Hatchery (Monthly)
Pistachios	Turkey Hatchery
Plums (CA)	

Census

Results from the *2003 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey* (FRIS) were released in November 2004. FRIS is a follow-on to the census of agriculture.

A content test for the 2007 Census of Agriculture will be conducted in January 2006. The sample size for this test is 30,000.

The 2005 Census of Aquaculture will be mailed out in December 2005. Results are expected to be published during fall 2006.

Summary of Questions and Comments October 17, 2005

Note: The following write-up presents a topical summary of issues discussed during the afternoon open forum. Material is presented in chronological order as all discussions on a specific topic were addressed together.

Notification of Change in NASS Procedures or Recently Released Data: A question was directed to NASS regarding the soybean acreage revision in the October *Crop Production* report. Acknowledging that a press release was posted to the NASS Website the day before the release, the person asking the question still wondered if communications could be improved to increase the probability that more users would be alerted to the announcement. Steve Wiyatt reminded the group that NASS began three years ago to update planted and harvested acreage in the October report if a review of FSA certified acreage indicated the need for revisions. However, he also indicated that alerting data users to changes is a current challenge NASS is addressing. It is similar to the challenge of announcing when data are changed in a recently released report. There is discussion about creating an email distribution list for this kind of information. Someone else suggested we try to get the news services to help spread the word.

The next question was why there was such a large change to soybean acreage in the October *Crop Production* report. Steve Wiyatt of NASS indicated there are a number of possible reasons for the change. Perhaps there wasn't as much double cropping as expected because of the drought. Perhaps sampling and non-sampling errors associated with the statistical data decreased precision in earlier estimates. NASS sometimes make changes to acreage estimates after the marketing year is completed due to balance sheet analysis. If disappearance and stocks data indicate production levels are at the wrong level, then revisions will be made. The NASS procedures allow for these periodic revisions.

A comment was made that the timing of changes needs to be consistent. If changes are made in October, keep reporting them in October. Don't change months each year.

A question was asked about the September 30 *Small Grains* Summary and wheat production by class being revised, but users not being notified. NASS realized after the release that the wrong weights were used when distributing winter wheat production to its classes, therefore a revision was necessary. Steve Wiyatt again stated that a procedure needs to be identified to better notify data users.

Someone asked what we mean when we use the term "administrative data.." Steve Wiyatt of NASS indicated it is data from another source (such as FSA certified acreage or information from the boll weevil sign-up program) rather than survey data collected by NASS.

Energy Production: Is there a way to estimate biodiesel fuel and the amount of grain used to produce ethanol? Industry is having trouble measuring this grain usage. Keith Menzie (WAOB) said that the WAOB is currently considering such a usage breakout on the balance sheet. USDA wants to make sure there is a quality data source instead of just providing a 'best guess.' Data available on the FSA Website are the only information currently available. There is some indication a report from Census Bureau may be able to break out this utilization. This information could be available as early as 2006. Keith Menzie asked if tracking of soybean oil and the production of methyl-ester would be helpful. Industry stated this would be a good start.

A data user indicated he is not sure USDA is monitoring energy production from biodiesel and ethanol plants. Gerald Bange of WAOB indicated several sessions in the upcoming February

Outlook Conference will address this topic. USDA is keeping track of this data. In fact, the USDA has an office specifically dedicated to Energy which reports to the USDA's Chief Economist.

Are any plans to develop estimates on stocks, monthly production, and exports of ethanol and livestock usage of dried distillers grains (DDGs)? Bill Tierney of WAOB responded that USDA is looking into what is being fed to U.S. livestock. This is complex because there is not a lot of data available on a regular basis to aid in compiling this type of information.

There was a request for the agencies to get together to provide some sort of estimate of ethanol production. The new ethanol plant expansion capacity does not seem to fit with the WAOB usage estimates. Why is WAOB low? Bill Tierney says WAOB relies on the monthly Energy Information Agency (EIA) report. They try to look at when plants are coming on line. They also have administrative data on how much capacity is being used. Just stating something will be built does not provide the entire picture. It must be studied to determine when it will be completed, if it will run at full capacity, and if it will replace an older facility. There are also limiting factors from State legislation and the willingness of petroleum plants to incorporate the use of these alternative fuel sources into their plans.

It was mentioned that there is no information on fuel usage on farms and it would be nice to have this data.

A participant stated that fertilizer prices are closely related to natural gas prices. To what extent is this being analyzed in relation to crop production next year? Bill Tierney responded the baseline is not published until just before the February Ag Outlook Conference. USDA is now working on the first draft of the baseline. Input prices, such as fertilizer prices, are being considered by the models. However, while it seems rational for producers to switch to soybeans is possible, experience indicates rotation plans tend to lock more acreage in than one would think.

Residual: It was stated there was a very large residual in last year's crop balance sheet. There is also a concern over this year's crop and the potential residual. Steve Wiyatt of NASS indicated some of the early soybean harvest last year may have gone into previous year crushings or exports. These beans would never have been accounted for in the stocks estimates. What are mechanisms for corn? Bill Tierney of WAOB states whenever you lack a source, you must estimate with other methods. The grain stocks report provides a data source, but is only available four times a year. Some models are used that suggest large crops, (i.e. yield far exceeds trend) result in a larger residual than normal.

China: A question was directed to WAOB on whether they see any progress toward China to providing accurate corn stocks and do they think China even knows what their corn stocks are? Gerald Bange of WAOB said the answer to the second question is no. USDA has been working with China for the past 10 years. It is encouraging to see the various agencies in China now represented at the same meeting. In the past, you couldn't get agencies together. At least they are talking now. However, the truth is it is difficult for Beijing to know what is actually going on at the local level. There are 900 million people living in the rural areas of China and it is not easy to trace usage among all of these people. It appears China is trying to grasp the situation and improve their programs.

Census Bureau Representation: Participants requested that additional Census Bureau areas, specifically the Manufacturing and Construction Division (MCD), have representatives at next year's Data Users Meeting.

Outlook Conference: What is protocol on the presentations for the Ag Outlook Conference considering baseline report release? Gerald Bange of WAOB indicated the baseline is developed well in advance of the February Ag Outlook Conference and is released several weeks prior to the Conference. Speakers often use updated estimates. Questions were received on why the baseline numbers change, even the most recent. The May WASDE estimates are more solid basis than the baseline or the estimates used in the February Ag Outlook presentation. This is the first 'official' estimate made by USDA. Following up on the baseline comments made by Jerry Bange, Joy Harwood of ERS provided more information on USDA's on-going work on a stochastic approach to improve outlay estimates developed from the baseline. A key function of the baseline is its use in forecasting 10-year CCC outlays for OMB use in the President's budget.

Wheat Imports by Class: Why are USDA wheat imports by class data so precise? What is the source of information used to set these estimates? Bill Tierney of WAOB indicated various sources are available to set this estimate. Canadian Wheat Board information, Census Bureau trade data, industry data, and FAS data are all used.

Joint US/Canadian Reports: The joint US/Canadian hog reports are appreciated. However, the numbers are not additive because the survey questions are different. Have attempts been made to standardize the questions? The pork industry supports a change to standardize these reports. Steve Wiyatt of NASS indicated this has been discussed. The reference date is still a concern, but this didn't seem to be a concern of the industry. If USDA changes some questions, the industry would like some overlap in the data series. Dan Kerestes of NASS indicated StatCanada has no intention in changing their reference date. If we change the reference date, there will be a break in the data series. If we are looking for a percent change from year-to-year, then reference dates don't really matter. Looking at the questions, there are plusses and minuses in both countries. Statistics Canada separates boars from their breeding stock numbers. Statistics Canada only uses three weight groups, USDA uses four. Is this better? It would need to be explored. USDA is looking into modifying some of its questions, but is not rushing into this. USDA is approaching this cautiously to make sure it is done correctly.

Livestock Production Contracts and Manure Data: A data user indicated he has historically complained about the limited amount of data on livestock production contracts. He thanked USDA for the new data from the Census of Agriculture. ERS has also provided some interesting reports on this topic. He would like to encourage continued development on this topic. He also indicated the first data on manure are available in the 2002 Census of Agriculture. This is a good step forward, but needs improvement.

Wheat Price Data: A comment was made about the need for better wheat price data from AMS. There needs to be prices for milling quality and other wheat. John Van Dyke of AMS indicated he would take the comment under advisement.

Weekly Trade Data: A comment was directed to John Van Dyke of AMS about weekly trade data and some explicit problems which exist with it. There data originate from APHIS. The data user asked if APHIS can be informed about the importance of this data. John says AMS will readdress this with APHIS.

Non-Ambulatory Livestock: NASS was asked about non-ambulatory cattle survey data. The data user indicated his members did not think these data were very useful. If they had any say, the resources would be better used to collect the age of non-ambulatory livestock. Dan Kerestes indicated NASS is under contract with APHIS to collect this information for their work. APHIS is required to release the numbers and they contract with NASS to provide the most statistically reliable estimates available. In addition to the cattle numbers currently published, sheep and hog estimates will be published in the future. Before the non-ambulatory hog survey is finalized,

participants requested industry experts be consulted for input to ensure the data are as accurate as possible, to which NASS agreed.

Mandatory Price Reporting: There were some concerns mentioned over mandatory price reporting and the relationship between the morning report and the afternoon report. There is concern the two reports are not correlated. John Van Dyke of AMS indicated the morning report usually has limited data. The movement of the reports does tend to follow the movement of the market. What can be done about the movement of animals within a company, from one subsidiary to another? In relation to the movement within a company, John Van Dyke indicated no price information is reported for within company movement. Only volume and quality data are reported. However, if sales are made from one packer to another packer, then price data are reported.

Detailed Beef Information in Cold Storage Reports: A request was addressed to NASS concerning the possibility of providing detailed information on beef (boneless vs bone in) in the cold storage report? Dan Kerestes indicated NASS would be glad to look at what can be collected for beef parts. He requested an e-mail to identify exactly what parts are requested. NASS will determine if the industry can provide this information and if there would be enough data to publish.

Export Sales: FAS was asked if there was any chance to see export sales data on pork and/or broilers? FAS looked at the poultry and pork when beef was added to export sales. All were included in the Federal Register notice, but based on comments only beef was added. FAS is willing to reexamine this topic.

Export Closures due to Disease Outbreaks: When there are avian flu outbreaks, however mild, some countries completely eliminate imports from US, while others only prohibit imports from certain states. If the US ever has a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak, what would USDA expect the protocol of other countries to be? FMD is considered to be more serious and would probably result in a complete closure. This is really an APHIS question and something they would have to address.

Validation of Data in Cold Storage Report: What procedure does NASS have for auditing validity of voluntary reports for cold storage and what is the response rate? Dan Kerestes of NASS stated that audits are not done. However, the data goes through a extensive edit and most errors are detected. However, errors sometimes get through and may be identified and revised in the following month's report. Dan Kerestes of NASS stated the participation for cold storage is good. The biggest challenge for cold storage is that facilities have multiple products and not all have the same products. This makes it meaningless to calculate overall response rates. Response rates must actually be calculated by commodity. NASS did review the key commodities in the cold storage report and a good response rate is being achieved. What is more important is the amount of the product covered and NASS has a good handle on coverage. Misreporting is always a concern.

Foreign Hog Production: An attaché report indicated Chinese hog inventory will be up 5 percent in the next year. Does USDA have any indication that this information is better than the data reported for grains? FAS indicated there are always concerns. However this is probably the best data available. USDA does not just sit back and assume this information is final. The data are continually monitored. Are we sure the increase in Brazil is real? Procedures include reviewing the attaché report and other available data, and then possibly questioning the attaché post for verification. Through this process, USDA believes it has the best information available.

Brazil Soybean Estimates: There is a great discrepancy between USDA and trade estimates on Brazil soybean production. It was asked if any light could be shed on the current USDA

estimate. Gerald Bange of WAOB stated they are looking at the numbers on a daily basis. Estimates out of Brazil are all over the board. USDA did miss it badly each of the past 2 years. The rainfall apparently percolates through the soils very quickly, creating a drought type condition and USDA weather models did not pick this up in time. The yields were lower than expected. Conversely, the acreage estimates have been pretty good. USDA had anticipated about a 4 percent reduction in acreage this year, but Brazil is only reporting 2-to-3 percent decline in area. The big question now is what will the weather be? Rain is really needed in January and February. NASS is beginning to work with Brazil and this is a good sign. It would be useful to not have multiple 'official' estimates coming out of Brazil.

Use of Satellite Imagery to Estimate Feedlot Inventories: There are some large feedlots in Oklahoma that use aerial photography to calculate inventories. Has NASS had any thoughts about using satellite imagery to help estimate cattle on feed? Steve Wiyatt indicated this is something NASS could consider. Ariel photography has been used in one State. However satellite imagery is for a specific point in time and is not consistent for all feedlots, and may not be consistent with the NASS reference date.