



# NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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## **NASS Asks Farmers to Sign up for Census, Share Their Story** *Census helps tell the story of American agriculture*

**Washington, March 8, 2012**—In recognition of National Ag Day on March 8, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) calls on America’s farmers and ranchers to sign up for the 2012 Census of Agriculture and to share stories about how Census data benefits them. Recognizing the central role of agriculture in Americans’ lives, USDA wants to make sure it counts all farmers and ranchers in the upcoming Census. USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts the Census of Agriculture every five years and is currently preparing to send the Census form to all agricultural producers in December.

“National Ag Day is an opportunity to celebrate the important contributions of America’s farmers and ranchers,” said Renee Picanso, director of NASS’ Census and Survey Division. “Census data can help us to better tell the amazing story of American agriculture, but that story will be incomplete if farmers aren’t all counted.”

To put together a complete list of agricultural producers, NASS sent out the National Agricultural Classification Survey (NACS) early in 2012. This initial survey helps identify all potential agricultural activities in the United States and who should receive the Census form later this year. Producers who did not fill out the NACS can still sign up for the Census by visiting [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov) and clicking “Be Counted – Make Your Voice Heard.”

Federal law requires all agricultural producers to participate in the Census of Agriculture. The same law requires NASS to keep all information confidential. In the Census, and in all related surveys, NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

The Census of Agriculture data benefits farmers and communities considerably, and NASS invites producers to share their Census stories in their own words. On National Ag Day, NASS will launch the “Share your Census Story” web page, where producers can tell how local, state and national farm services, programs and policies were shaped by Census of Agriculture data. They can also convey that by just answering a few simple questions, the Census data significantly affected their lives, operations and communities.

“Sharing information about how agricultural and rural programs enhance their quality of life will help others understand the importance of Census information and encourage them to sign up and be counted,” said Picanso.

For more information about NACS and the Census of Agriculture, or to add your name to the Census mailing list, or share your Census story, visit [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov). NASS will mail Census forms on December 29, 2012, to collect data for the 2012 calendar year.

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