

National Agricultural Statistics Service, Agricultural Statistics Board

CHARTER

1. Committee's Official Designation

The committee shall be known as the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics, hereafter referred to as the Committee or the ACAS.

2. Authority

The Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics was originally established by the Secretary of Commerce on July 16, 1962. The Committee is also established in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. App.2.

3. Objectives and Scope of Activities

The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Secretary on the conduct of the periodic censuses and surveys of agriculture, other related surveys, and the types of agricultural information to obtain from respondents. The committee also prepares recommendations regarding the content of agriculture reports, and presents the views and needs for data of major suppliers and users of agriculture statistics. The committee draws on the experience and expertise of its members to form a collective judgment concerning agriculture data collected and the statistics issued by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

4. Description of Duties

The duties of the Committee are solely advisory in nature. The Committee makes recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture with regard to the agricultural statistics program of NASS, and such other matters as it may deem advisable, or which the Secretary of Agriculture, Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, or the Administrator of NASS may request.

5. Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports

The Committee reports to the Secretary of Agriculture through the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics.

6. Support

A representative of NASS will serve as the Executive Secretary to the Committee. In addition, NASS will provide administrative staff support to the Committee.

7. Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years

The total annual cost to operate the Committee is \$70,000. In addition, staff year requirements are estimated to be 0.2 full time equivalents. Committee members serve without pay. Reimbursement will be provided to members for travel expenses and per diem for attendance at Committee and subcommittee meetings.

8. Designated Federal Officer

NASS will appoint a permanent Federal employee to serve as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO), in accordance with established USDA policies and procedures. The DFO will approve the advisory committee's and subcommittees' meetings; prepare and approve all meeting agendas; attend all committee and subcommittee meetings, adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest; and chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.

9. Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings

The Committee will meet approximately annually. The subcommittees will meet as deemed necessary by the DFO.

10. Duration

This charter will be in effect for two years.

11. Termination

After a two-year period from the filing date, the charter may be renewed in accordance with Section 14 of FACA (5 U.S.C. App. 2 § 14).

12. Membership and Designation

12a. This Committee will be fairly balanced in its membership in terms of the points of view represented and the functions to be performed. Steps will be taken to encourage

fresh points of view, such as establishing staggered membership terms and limiting the number of renewed memberships.

12b. Equal opportunity practices in accordance with USDA policies will be followed in all appointments to the Committee. To ensure that the recommendations of the Committee have taken into account the needs of the diverse groups served by USDA, membership will include to the extent possible, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women and persons with disabilities.

12c. The USDA prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

The Secretary of Agriculture will appoint the membership of the Committee. Furthermore, members will serve for two-year terms, and can serve no more than three consecutive terms. Membership will consist of 20 individuals with diverse capabilities distinguished by their broad range of knowledge and interest in, though not limited to, agricultural economics, rural sociology, farm policy analysis, and agricultural education. Members will also be drawn from representatives of state and local governments; agriculture-related industry and trade or marketing associations; major national farm organizations; and producer organizations. A representative from the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, and a representative from the Economic Research Service, USDA, shall serve as ex officio members of the Committee.

12d. Of these members, one will become the chairperson who is recognized for his or her ability to lead a group in a fair and focused manner and who has been briefed on the mission of this Committee. The Chairperson of the Committee shall be elected by members to serve a one-year term. A co-chairperson may be assigned, especially to facilitate his or her transition to become the chairperson in the future.

12e. Ethics Statement

To maintain the highest levels of honesty, integrity and ethical conduct, no Committee or subcommittee member shall participate in any "specific party matters" (i.e., matters are narrowly focused and typically involve specific transactions between identified parties) such as a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, grant, agreement, or related litigation with the Department in which the member has a direct or indirect financial interest. This includes the requirement for Committee or Subcommittee members to immediately disclose to the DFO any specific party matter in which the member's immediate family, relatives, business partners or employer would be directly seeking to financially benefit from the Committee's recommendations.

All members will receive ethics training to identify and avoid any actions that would cause the public to question the integrity of the Committee's advice and

recommendations. Members who are appointed as “Representatives” are not subject to Federal ethics laws because such appointment allows them to represent the point(s) of view of a particular group, business sector or segment of the public.

Members appointed as “Special Government Employees” (SGEs) are considered intermittent Federal employees and are subject to Federal ethics laws. SGE’s are appointed due to their personal knowledge, academic scholarship, background or expertise. No SGE may participate in any activity in which the member has a prohibited financial interest. Appointees who are SGEs are required to complete and submit a Confidential Financial Disclosure Report (OGE-450 form) and, upon request, USDA will assist SGEs in preparing these financial reports. To ensure the highest level of compliance with applicable ethical standards USDA will provide ethics training to SGEs on an annual basis. The provisions of these paragraphs are not meant to exhaustively cover all Federal ethics laws and do not affect any other statutory or regulatory obligations to which advisory committee members are subject.

13. Subcommittees

The National Agricultural Statistics Service has the authority to create subcommittees. Subcommittees must report back to the parent committee, and must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency.

14. Recordkeeping

The records of this Committee, formally and informally established subcommittees, or other subgroups of the committee, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 26, Item 2 or other approved agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552. Information about this Committee is available online at:

http://www.nass.usda.gov/About_NASS/Advisory_Committee_on_Agriculture_Statistics/index.asp

15. Filing Date

June 5, 2012