

# Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**February 17-18, 2004**



**U.S. Department of Agriculture**

**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE**  
**Summary**  
**Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics (ACAS)**  
**February 17-18, 2004**  
The Residence Inn by Marriott-Pentagon City  
Arlington, Virginia  
**Attendees at Meeting**

**Members Present**

Gary Adams	Lucy C. Meyring
Walter J. Armbruster	Jack C. Mitenbuler
Roger M. Cryan	Bobby R. Phills
Robert D. Epperson	Ronald Plain
Jacklyn Marie Folsom	Ross R. Racine
John I. Gifford	James D. Rieck
R. Edmund Gomez	Ira Silvergleit
Carol A. Gregg	Robert William Spear
Mark W. Jenner (Chair)	Mark E. Whalon
Ling-Jung (Kelvin) Koong	Ewen M. Wilson (Census Bureau Ex-Officio)
William Lapp	Ronald C. Wimberley
Sheila K. Massey	Ivan Wyatt

<b>Members Absent</b>	
Phil Fulton (Ex-Officio)	Ranvir Singh
Ron Olsen	

**NASS Personnel Participating:**

Ron Bosecker, Administrator  
Carol House, Committee Executive Director and Associate Administrator  
Joe Reilly, Deputy Administrator for Field Operations  
Rich Allen, Deputy Administrator for Programs and Products  
Bob Bass, Associate Deputy Administrator, Western Field Operations  
Marshall Dantzler, Director of Census and Survey Division  
George Hanuschak, Director of Research and Development Division  
Hubert Hamer, Associate Deputy Administrator, Eastern Field Operations

Jack Nealon, Director of Information Technology Division  
 Steve Wiyatt, Director of Statistics Division  
 Dale Hawks, Committee Secretary  
 Jay Johnson  
 Gustavo Limon

**Public:**

Hugh Joseph, Research Associate Small Farm Program, Tufts University	Juan A. Marinez, Assistant to the Director CES, Michigan State University
Ray McAllister, Regulatory Science & Policy, Leader Crop Life America	Lorette Picciano, Executive Director, Rural Coalition
Annabelle Romero, Director Native American Programs, USDA Office of Civil Rights	John Smylie, Senior Vice President, Association of Equipment Manufacturers
Fred Vogel, International Comparison of Price (ICP) Global Office Manager, World Bank	Kareema Clark, Oster Dow Jones News Service

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## **Day One Summary - February 17, 2004**

### **I. Introduction**

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair, Mark Jenner on February 17, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. Committee Members and NASS staff were asked to introduce themselves. Mark welcomed everyone to the meeting and then asked Executive Director, Carol House, to start the meeting with the "State of NASS" presentation.

### **II. State of NASS**

Carol House, started by welcoming the members to Washington, D.C. and expressed gratitude for the members help with the success of the 2002 Census of Agriculture process.

Carol provided a brief overview of the 2002 Census of Agriculture processing accomplishments: collected and processed more than 1.4 million usable report forms during the past year; utilized new Optical Character Recognition (OCR) data capture procedures, electronic scanning of images, the use of calibration techniques to account for the list under coverage, and the demographic summary results; and, on February 3, 2004, NASS successfully released both the U.S. preliminary 2002 Census of Agriculture and the Puerto Rico Census of Agriculture.

Some of the other accomplishments in 2003 included NASS working with Farm Service Agency (FSA) to form a new partnership on retrieving certified crop acreage numbers earlier in the growing season. We released a special reports on marketing contracts for corn, soybeans and wheat for enhancing agriculture marketing. The monthly Hogs and Pigs report was discontinued in part by a recommendation from ACAS subcommittee and industry, to lessen the burden on producers. A special analysis report on the adoption of corn biotechnology for 10 major corn producing states was released.

Security and contingency planning has been a main focus over the past year. The Continuity Of Operations (COOP) plan has been revised to include new lockup facilities outside the South Building in our Fairfax office. Risk assessments have been conducted for all data and applications to ensure data security. Employee awareness campaign and security have been emphasized during training.

Other accomplishments during the year included expanding the statistics program, e-government, expanded ARMS program, the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP), and other reimbursable agreements.

NASS appropriated budget for FY 2004 is \$128.2 million compared to \$138.4 million in FY 2003. This includes a 4.1% salary increase of which 2.1% was funded, a decrease in census dollars of \$16.5 million, and an increase of \$4.8 million for the expanded agriculture estimates programs. In FY 2005, the expected budget total is \$137.6 million including a 1.5% pay increase, a decrease of \$3.1 million for dropping the Census of Horticulture, and an additional \$7.4 million for the expanded agriculture estimates programs, \$2.5 million for small area

estimation, and \$785,000 for e-government. These budgets reflect appropriated monies and do not include reimbursable agreements such as CEAP.

### **III. 2002 Census of Agriculture Results and Survey Methodology**

Rich Allen previewed a presentation for the USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum, entitled “How to Interpret New Demographic Information in the Preliminary 2002 Census of Agriculture Release,” which would be presented later in the week. The goals of the presentation were to clarify of the census of agriculture definitions, provide understanding of new summary procedures, and present new 2002 relationships.

The census of agriculture is the only uniform collection of U.S. agriculture information, demographic information, and measures of changes in farms and farming practices. Rich emphasized the importance of the census to U.S. agriculture and the farm sector. The 2002 Census of Agriculture emphasis was on relevance to the data user while the 1997 Census of Agriculture emphasis was on comparability with previous censuses that were done by the Commerce Department.

The farm definition is any place that had \$1,000 or more of agricultural products produced and sold or normally would have been sold, during the census year. Many of these farms are very small farms which are very difficult to identify and put on a census mail list. This leads to undercoverage of the census.

NASS used new statistical methodology in this census to assign additional weights to farms which reported to account for undercoverage. Thus, the tables for the 2002 Census of Agriculture provide numbers fully adjusted for coverage as well as nonresponse. Coverage adjustments were also made to the 1997 data to allow for comparisons to the new 2002 data. Rich highlighted total number of farms, farm numbers by sales class, minority and Hispanic farm operators, total operators, number of households sharing income from the farm, number of persons living in household, farm type, principal operator primary occupation and work off farm, and average age of the operator.

### **Day Two Summary - February 18, 2004**

### **IV. Recent Legislation on Data Sharing and Confidentiality**

Carol House gave a presentation on recent legislation on data sharing and confidentiality. NASS is protected by law from any court or legislative action on confidentiality with U.S. Code Title 7, Chapter 55, Section 2276 and U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1902 and 1905. The Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA) of 2002, which broadens confidentiality protection to include all data collected by statistical agencies for exclusively statistical purposes. It also permits data sharing between specified statistical agencies (NASS is not one of them). In addition, the penalty for misuse has increased to five years in prison and fines up to \$250,000 or both.

## **V. 2007 Census of Agriculture**

Joe Reilly discussed planning for the 2007 Census of Agriculture. The first step will be to evaluate the 2002 Census of Agriculture content and products. Additionally, we plan to solicit data user comments and ideas for the next census as soon as possible after the release in June 2004. In 2005, the activities of the census will be centered around the design of the initial report form and conducting content and evaluation tests. For 2006, we will concentrate on the revisions from the content test and finalizing the report form. The activities in 2007, will be printing the report forms, finalizing the mail list, conducting area frame enumeration and list frame screening. In 2008, the focus will be on collecting, editing and analyzing data with 2009 activities concentrating on the publication of the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

A goal for the 2007 Census of Agriculture will be to reduce the respondent burden by eliminating questions and/or increasing the use of historical and administrative data. Another goal will be to integrate methodology and content with the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) to have common definitions and questions with the census. A final goal will be to improve overall coverage with list frame improvements, expanded area frame for census year, and screening of nonfarms and landlords.

## **VI. Subcommittee Report on Minority and Small Farms**

Bobby Phills led the discussion as the chair for the subcommittee on minority and small farms. The Committee was charged to review, evaluate, and recommend ways to make minority and small farmers more inclusive in the NASS census data collection process. The subcommittee noted that, according to the preliminary census, more than 827,000 farms had value of sales less than \$2,500 and a total of nearly 1.818 million farms had value of sales less than \$100,000. Based on these factors small farms represent a significant portion of the total 2.129 million farms.

The subcommittee submitted five recommendations which were modified and approved by the entire committee (see Section XI).

## **VII. Remote Sensing Program**

The committee wanted to know more about the NASS remote sensing program, so George Hanuschak presented the following information.

The purpose of the program is to provide the Agency with county and state level acreage indications of major commodities for use by NASS in setting official statistics and, secondarily, to provide the public with a useful Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer. Satellite imagery is great but it could not replace surveying farmers for the following reasons: June estimates are released before satellite analysis can identify the crop canopy, cloud cover may further delay analysis and/or cause gaps in coverage, and conducting surveys give us the ability to ask other questions besides acreage.

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) has been providing satellite imagery to NASS under a cooperative agreement for joint use of Landsat imagery.

Sharing has benefitted the programs within USDA. The following eleven states are currently in the program: Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Another acreage estimation project involves NASS and the Florida Department of Citrus efforts to count citrus trees. The satellite imagery is excellent for determining healthy blocks as well as established trees and replants. The joint venture will benefit both the Florida Department of Citrus and NASS to have accurate tree counts to estimate acreage and production.

### **VIII. Committee Requested Topics**

Committee members initiated discussions on a variety of topics that led to committee recommendations (Recommendations in Section XI).

Jack Mitenbuler gave a presentation on crop protection and pesticide issues. The crop protection pesticide data are necessary and useful in many different industries, government, and academic programs. The Federal Government has an active program collecting data on a variety of crops in alternating years. State governments also collect and make data available. In the pesticide industry, there are numerous companies collecting and analyzing data for use in a variety of research and business applications. Both industry and government use the data for registration, regulatory and risk assessment initiatives. Jack asked that a subcommittee be formed to explore the possibility of a public-private collaboration on the collection and analysis of pesticide data. An alliance of industry and government will have plenty of challenges including issues like data confidentiality. A public-private alliance would offer all stakeholders an opportunity for broader access to data to cover a greater range of needs including marketing, risk assessment, tracking, and market value assessments. Another possible benefit could be reduced cost for both government and industry.

Mark Whalon led a discussion on urban sprawl and the need for more statistical information to address these issues. He proposed that a subcommittee be formed for the purpose of developing specific recommendations to address these data needs.

Other topics were discussed including: the potential for a joint Canadian/U.S. Report on hogs; extent NASS should be involved with new livestock identification programs; the need for statistics that include products where value is added to the products at the farm, i.e., the making of cider from apples; and the need for more statistics on organic production.

### **IX. Public Comments**

Hugh Joseph, addressed the Advisory Committee about needs he saw for expanding enumeration of immigrants, refugees, Native Americans and minority groups as a whole engaged in U.S. production agriculture. Specifically, Mr. Joseph suggested the following four areas that enhancements could be made; add immigrants and refugee status as an additional classification, enumerate all farm operators in American Indian/Native American Reservations, expand outreach efforts to identify and enumerate undercounted farmers now, and support associated research and demonstration pilot projects.



*[Chair's note: Mr. Joseph's name was mentioned as a possible associate or participant in the discussion of the recommendation to establish a minority subcommittee].*

Fred Vogel, asked for clarification on changes in the methodological procedures used in the 2002 Census of Agriculture that differ from the procedures used when the Census of Agriculture was administered by the Census Bureau. Mr. Vogel's concern was that the decision to leverage NASS human and statistical resources at all levels to produce the most accurate and relevant agricultural data would lose the value of the traditional Census of Agriculture as a reference point to NASS surveys.

*[Chair's note: Both industry relevance and historical consistency have great value. With the rapid changes occurring daily in the agricultural sector, collecting relevant data has required some changes in the traditional methodologies. The Advisory Committee has expressed long-standing support of NASS to stay relevant and consistent.]*

#### **X. New Chairperson**

The election committee nominated Mark Whalon to serve as Chairperson for the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics, beginning with preparation for the 2005 meeting. Mark Whalon accepted the nomination and was approved by attending members.

#### **XI. Closing Remarks for the Advisory Committee**

Carol House announced that the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for early 2005 and will be held in Washington, D.C. the same week as the USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum. The meeting was adjourned.

#### **XII. Committee Recommendations**

##### **Recommendation 1**

The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS directs its State Statistician in New Mexico to take a leadership role in forming a working group including personnel from New Mexico State University Extension Service, New Mexico State Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and other relevant agencies to develop a pilot project to conduct a follow-up survey of Indian reservation and other minority farmers and ranchers in New Mexico.

- The State Statistician should submit a proposal to Headquarters for approval and such proposal should include names of cooperators, time-line for completion and funding needed for the project to be completed by December 2005. It should be noted that successful completion of this pilot project should serve as a model for other State Statistical Offices.
- We further recommend that NASS also identify alternative funding strategies/mechanisms in case additional funding is not received from the Department or Congress.

### Recommendation 2

The Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary of Agriculture and NASS embark on a department-wide concerted effort to ensure that all agencies' efforts are collectively conducted in a fashion that brings about the enumeration of all minorities involved in agriculture. NASS should take the lead and work with the State Departments of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development, Risk Management Agency, and Cooperative State Research Education, and Extension Service to invite representatives of minority groups to participate in meetings to ensure they are enumerated within each state.

### Recommendation 3

The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS make the Minority and Small Farm subcommittee a standing subcommittee, and coordinate its efforts on minority participation with other NASS supported groups and committees, i.e. the National Enumeration and Outreach working group, and any others that may evolve.

### Recommendation 4

The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS discuss with Statistics Canada the possibility of publishing a quarterly combined U.S. and Canadian hog inventory report.

### Recommendation 5

The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS capture on-farm value added to agricultural production and agri-tourism for the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

### Recommendation 6

The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS organize a subcommittee to the NASS Advisory Committee to explore improvements in the data collection of pesticides use in agricultural and non-agricultural applications. These improvements would include analysis, processing, and communication of crop protection product information. A variety of government, academic, and industry efforts now collect pesticide use data for research, business, marketing, regulatory, and risk assessment purposes.

- Restricted access to some of these sources of data limits their utility for important regulatory purposes. Coordination and collaboration among such data efforts could reduce or eliminate such barriers. Furthermore, overlap and duplication of effort can be identified and reduced with economic benefits for all involved.
- Such a subcommittee could have a limited assignment of six months to a year, to explore the options for improvements in pesticide use data collection, and report back to the NASS Advisory Committee with recommendations for NASS and other stakeholders.

Jack Mitenbuler was named chair of this committee. He was instructed to provide a list of potential subcommittee members for review and approval of the committee.

#### Recommendation 7

The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS establish a one year working subcommittee to address under-served and under-reported agriculture developments associated with land use transformation changes including but not exclusively:

- Sprawl (rapid change in or loss of agricultural lands)
- Specialty crop agriculture with developments or rapid change in
  - \$ Retirement farming
  - \$ Hobby farming
  - \$ Specialty crops developments
  - \$ Agri-tourism
  - \$ Farm stay movement
- The subcommittee would address agricultural developments associated with land use transformation changes to explore and develop already existing data into new statistics relevant to these changes.

Mark Whalon and Ron Plain were named to this subcommittee.

#### Recommendation 8

The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS should not have any **responsibility** in the development, planning or implementation in any National livestock identification system.

- We further recommend that NASS should have access to such databases after its establishment to enhance the efficiency of NASS operations.

#### Recommendation 9

The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS should explore how to incorporate collection of data on certified organic production into the 2007 Census of Agriculture, ARMS, other surveys, and reports by commodity.

## **Appendix I - Agenda**

New Advisory Committee Members Orientation: Tuesday, February 17 at 10 a.m.

### **Tuesday, February 17**

<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Topic\Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Discussion Leader</u></b>
1:00 p.m.	Call to Order and Introduction	Mark Jenner, Committee Chair
1:10 p.m.	Meeting Plans <i>'State of NASS'</i>	Carol House, Associate Administrator and Committee Executive Director
2:00 p.m.	Discussion on <i>'State of NASS'</i>	Mark Jenner
2:30 p.m.	Break	
2:45 p.m.	2002 Census of Agriculture Results and Survey Methodology	Rich Allen, Deputy Administrator for Programs And Products
4:00 p.m.	Discussion of 2002 Census of Agriculture	Mark Jenner
4:45 p.m.	Adjourn	
5:15 p.m.	Reception	

**Wednesday, February 18**

<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Topic\Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Discussion Leader</u></b>
8:00 a.m.	Recent Legislation on Data Sharing & Confidentiality	Carol House
8:30 a.m.	Discussion of Data Sharing & Confidentiality	Mark Jenner
8:45 a.m.	2007 Census of Agriculture	Joe Reilly, Deputy Administrator for Field Operations
9:30 a.m.	Break	
9:45 a.m.	Discussion of 2007 Census of Agriculture	Mark Jenner
Noon	Lunch	
1:00 p.m.	Subcommittee Report on Minority and Small Farms	Bobby Phills
1:15 p.m.	Discussion of Minority and Small Farms	Mark Jenner
1:30 p.m.	Committee Requested Topics (Balance of NASS Survey Programs, Pesticide Usage, and other topics)	Carol House
2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:30 p.m.	Discussion of Committee Topics	Mark Jenner
3:30 p.m.	Public Questions and Comments	Mark Jenner
4:00 p.m.	Recommendations and Wrap up	Mark Jenner
4:30 p.m.	Closing Remarks	Carol House
4:45 p. m.	Adjourn	