

Historical outline

This was the 26th Census of Agriculture organized in the United States. From 1840 to 1950 it was organized on a decennial basis and later on every five years. From 1977 it was organized in years ending with 7 and 2.

Organization

The 1997 Appropriations Act transferred the responsibility of the Agricultural Census from the Bureau of the Census, which had organized 24 censuses, to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), which organized the 25th agricultural census in 1997, and the 26th in 2002.

Enumeration period

Data were collected through a mail survey. The mail out took place during the middle of December 2002.

Reference date/period

The reference date for inventory items was 31 December 2002, while for other data reference period was the calendar year 2002.

Definition

- **Agricultural holding** is any place involved in agricultural operations, from which US\$ 1 000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold during the census year.
- **Abnormal holdings** include Institutional, Research, Experimental and American Indian Reservation Farms.

Coverage

The agricultural census covered the entire country and all sectors of agriculture.

Frame

Since the census was organized as a mail survey, the main part of the frame was a mail list called Census Mail List (CML). This list was assembled from previous census records, USDA mail registers, and other authorized sources, and then increased by NASS with the inclusion of lists provided by State and Federal Agencies and trade associations, like Federal Government, producer associations, seed growers, pesticide applicators, veterinarians, marketing associations and special commodity growers.

Method

Data were collected through a mail out/mail back enumeration method, with two follow-up to non respondents. The Census was based on a combination of complete enumeration and sampling: the sampling method was fully applied in Alaska and Rhode Island, while in the other States complete enumeration was applied to holdings reporting special characteristics (e.g. holdings expected to have a large total value of agricultural products sold or a large area); complete enumeration was also applied to counties which reported, in 1997 agricultural census, less than 100 holdings. Prior to the initial mail out, NASS Field Offices selected (tagged) approximately 30 000 respondents for personal enumeration rather than mail out/mail back enumeration. Two different questionnaires were used, called "Non-Sample" and "Sample" Forms. 12 regional versions of the Non-Sample Form and 13 regional versions of the Sample Form were used: the Non-Sample Forms, consisting of 19 sections for the collection of basic information; the Sample Forms, containing the same 19 sections plus an additional five sections covering items such as fertilizers and chemicals, machinery, farm labour etc.

Data source

Census of Agriculture 2002, Summary and State Data (Vol.I), Geographic Series, Part 51. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the United States of America.

Contact

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