



Preparing for the 2017 Census of Agriculture: What to Expect

Producers, you should receive your 2017 Census of Agriculture in the mail very soon – if you haven't already!

Within the mid-size white envelope, you'll find:

- Your census questionnaire with survey code
- A letter from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service
- Instructions/Quick Reference Guide
- Return envelope

The amount of time it takes to complete the census is around 40-50 minutes. However, we hope to shorten that a bit by providing this census preparation overview and the convenience of online reporting (see details on the back of your letter). Have your survey code handy and go to www.agcounts.usda.gov to get started.

Preparing for census

Preparing for the census is sort of like preparing for tax season. You will need basic farm or ranch information like acreage, how the land is used, breakdowns of income, expenditures, inventory, products used, farm labor, etc. Financial ledgers or whatever system you use for bookkeeping is essential. Items like weight slips, check stubs, bank statements, etc. may all come in handy.

The following is a list of topics to prepare for:

- **Acreage** – total, acres rented/leased, insured or enrolled in conservation programs; how much acreage is cropland, pastureland, wooded, bearing and non-bearing; products used
- **Land Use Practices** – irrigation, tillage, cover crop practice
- **Income** – amount received from assistance and loan programs; gross sales
- **Expenses** – livestock, fertilizer, seed, gas, feed, utilities, maintenance, labor, rent, medical and vet supplies, storage, etc.
- **Labor** – demographics; decision-making on the farm; total number of farm/ranch workers
- **Crops** – bearing/nonbearing, harvested and/or tapped amounts, gross value of sales/total dollar amount received for delivering commodities under production contracts
- **Livestock** – number of head (may be broken down by purpose, e.g. meat, milk, and how they were fed), total number sold or moved, gross value of sales/total dollar amount received for delivering commodities under production contracts
- **Other** – marketing practices; renewable energy; machinery/equipment inventory; value of land, buildings, and equipment