

Very soon, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will be focused on encouraging all farmers and ranchers to respond to the [2012 Census of Agriculture](#). All of us at USDA can be a part of this important process and I hope that you will help.

The Census of Agriculture is conducted only once every five years across our country's farmland and agricultural communities. USDA, those involved in agriculture, and many others use the results of the Census to make important policy and business decisions that impact people across our nation.

While the Census is particularly vital for folks in rural America, it's important to remember that well-informed policy decisions have a positive impact for all of us. Even for families in our biggest cities, a strong rural America means an abundant food supply, cleaner water, extraordinary outdoor recreation, and more. That's why it couldn't be more important to make sure that all of our nation's farmers and farmland are accurately accounted for.

NASS mails the Census of Agriculture in mid December with a return deadline of February 4, 2013. Here are three ways you can help now and through the next few months:

1. Use Census promotional materials. Click [here](#) to view the online materials available for the 2012 Census. Your state NASS field office can provide further materials and guidance.
2. Share Census facts with producers. Find [FAQ's](#) online to answer questions you may receive about the Census. Remind them that their information is totally confidential. The results of the Census show the strength and diversity of U.S. agriculture. It's farmers' voice, their future and their responsibility.
3. Encourage farmers and ranchers to respond. Remind producers they can easily and securely respond online after they receive their census form at [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov). For questions or help completing their form, direct respondents to NASS at [\(888\) 424-7828](tel:8884247828).

I appreciate your support of the Census – just one more way that your work is impacting all Americans. Questions, comments or concerns regarding the upcoming Census can be directed to Sue King ([sue.king@nass.usda.gov](mailto:sue.king@nass.usda.gov)) or Krissy Young ([krissy.young@nass.usda.gov](mailto:krissy.young@nass.usda.gov)) in NASS.

Sincerely,

Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture