

Completing Census Of Agriculture Benefits Local Farmers And Communities

(NAPSA)—When the Census of Agriculture rolls around every five years, Darwin Miller sees its benefit both as the owner of a farm and as an agricultural service provider.

Miller, the education director for the Hardin County office of the Iowa State University Extension, uses Census data to analyze agricultural trends, determine educational programming needs and research the agricultural market.

Census data came in handy for Miller when a corn processor considered locating in Hardin County, Iowa.

“They asked me to research corn availability in a 50-mile radius,” Miller says. “I used Census of Agriculture data to provide that information.”

As a result, the Census directly benefited local farmers because the processor used the data to decide where to locate.

Agribusinesses such as processing facilities, ethanol plants, equipment and implement dealerships, and seed producers all rely on Census data to determine where they need to add or expand services or build new operations. So, too, do financial operations and government agencies as they decide where best to concentrate lending, educational and other support efforts.

But just as Miller uses the Census data to assist communities in his county, Miller (a family-farm owner himself) also understands producers’ concerns about having to fill out forms with detailed information about their operations. However, he knows firsthand how the Census data benefits his operation as well as his own community. Thus, he fills out the Census questionnaire faithfully to make sure he and his farm are accurately counted.

“Because I know how significant the information is to our agricul-



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tural industry, I realize the importance of completing the questionnaire accurately and mailing it before the deadline,” Miller says.

Although filling out the Census of Agriculture may seem inconsequential, farmers can make sure their voices are heard and that their production efforts are counted by responding accurately and promptly, Miller says. Making sure their operation is counted can actually help add to producers’ bottom lines if aggregate information from the Census results in a company deciding to increase or improve needed services nearby.

“By completing the Census, producers provide vital information that can increase demand for their products and help improve their local economy,” Miller says.

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will begin its mail out of the 2007 Census of Agriculture in late December and responses are due February 4, 2008. By responding, farmers and ranchers can have a voice in shaping the future. After all, Miller says, the Census is your voice, your future and your responsibility. For more information about the Census, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call 1-888-4AG-STAT (1-888-424-7828).