

Farm Facts & Figures

Counting On America's Farms

(NAPSA)—Pamela Potthoff started milking cows before she started attending school. It was the beginning of a life devoted to agriculture, both as a producer and as an active farm association executive. Potthoff is passionate about her profession and, like many agricultural producers across the country, wants to ensure a strong future for the industry. One way to do this, she notes, is to participate in the nationwide Census of Agriculture conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Taken every five years, the Census of Agriculture is a complete count of America's farms, ranches and the people who operate them. The collective information is published and used as a valuable planning tool for farmers, community planners, private industry and government agencies alike.

"The information gathered through the Census of Agriculture is accurate and timely," says Potthoff, who also serves as president of Women Involved in Farm Economics, a national organization that focuses on boosting farmer profitability and enhancing cooperation between farm organizations. "It is used by Congress when determining legislation and by government agencies to supplement their information for farm programs. We use it to help make decisions about our own farm operation and it's given local businesses a snapshot at their target audience and the surrounding demographics."

Most importantly, the Census of Agriculture gives producers a voice.



"Agriculture plays a vital role in the U.S. economy, and will continue to do so as trends lean toward renewable energy opportunities," says NASS Administrator Ron Bosecker. "Unfortunately, though, many farmers don't feel they have a say in the future of agriculture. By responding to the Census, each producer has the power to influence key decisions that will shape American agriculture for years to come."

The 2007 Census of Agriculture forms will be mailed out in late December 2007. All producers who receive a form are required by law to complete and return it (either via mail or online) by February 4, 2008. Additionally, that same law safeguards the privacy of producers' responses.

"We're committed to making this Census the best count ever. It's about the future of our nation's agricultural and rural communities, and we need all farmers and ranchers to complete it as accurately and quickly as possible," concludes Bosecker. "It is their voice, their future and their responsibility."

For more information about the Census, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call toll-free (888) 4AG-STAT, or (888) 424-7828.