

Economic well-being of U.S. farms, ranches to be measured

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will spend the next several months gathering information about production practices from farmers and ranchers across the nation through the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS).

The results of this survey will serve as a primary source of information for numerous federal policies and programs that affect U.S. farms and farm families.

"Accurate data are key to better decision-making," said Dean Groskurth, regional director of the NASS Northern Plains Regional Office. "By responding to ARMS, Nebraska farmers and ranchers ensure that decisions impacting them are based on accurate real-life information."

NASS conducts ARMS jointly with USDA's Economic Research Service. In an effort to obtain the most accurate data, the federal agencies will reach out to nearly 33,000 producers nationwide, including 1,745 in Nebraska, between January and April. The survey asks producers to provide data on their operating expenditures, production costs and household characteristics.

"We realize that this survey is lengthy and some producers may have questions or need clarification," explained Groskurth. "In February, our interviewers will begin reaching out to those farmers and ranchers who have not yet responded, to answer any questions they may have and help them fill out their questionnaires."

In addition to accurate data, NASS is strongly committed to confidentiality. Information provided by respondents is confidential, by law. The agency safeguards the confidentiality of all responses, ensuring no individual respondent or operation can be identified.

The economic data gathered in ARMS will be published in the annual Farm Production Expenditures report in August 2014.