

USDA to Measure Financial Well-Being of Michigan Farmers

Beginning in January, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will spend several weeks gathering information about farm economics and production practices from farmers and ranchers across Michigan, as the agency conducts the third and final phase of the 2023 Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS).

ARMS is a joint effort between NASS and USDA's Economic Research Service. The information farmers and ranchers provide through the survey influences national and state policy-making decisions. In addition, ARMS data are used to calculate the farm sector portion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The survey also collects detailed information on production practices, costs, and returns for 13 principal commodities on a rotating basis.

"ARMS is the only survey that measures the current financial well-being of Michigan producers and their households as a whole," said Marlo D. Johnson, Regional Director of the USDA NASS, Great Lakes Region. "The results of this survey will help inform decisions on local and federal policies and programs that affect Michigan farms and farm families."

In an effort to obtain the most accurate data, NASS will reach out to more than 40,000 producers nationwide, including over 700 in Michigan, between January and April. The survey asks producers to provide in-depth information about their operating revenues, production costs, and household characteristics. The 2023 ARMS survey in Michigan includes 2 special versions of the questionnaire focused on farm costs and returns for oat and soybean producers. The survey also includes questions on conservation practices, farm and household finances, and off-farm employment.

In January, interviewers will begin reaching out to those farmers who have not yet responded by mail or on-line. We appreciate their time and are here to help them with the questionnaire so that their information will continue supporting sound agricultural decision-making.

In addition to producing accurate information, NASS has strong safeguards in place to protect the confidentiality of all farmers who respond to its surveys. The agency will only publish data in an aggregate form, ensuring the confidentiality of all responses and that no individual respondent or operation can be identified.

The expense data gathered in ARMS will be published in the annual *Farm Production Expenditures* report on July 26, 2024. That report and others are available at nass.usda.gov/Publications. More reports based on ARMS data and more information about ARMS are available at ers.usda.gov/arms.