

Friday Feedback for Friday, January 29, 2021

Floriculture Reminder - Collom

For those enumerators assigned Floriculture, this serves as a gentle reminder to please ramp up data collection efforts. We have received very few reports to date and we are concerned that floriculture operations are beginning to get very busy with Valentine's Day and spring work. The later data collection begins, the harder it will be to connect with operators.

Due to the complexity of this survey, all reports should be completed on the labeled paper questionnaires provided (not in CAPI) and returned to the Regional Office in East Lansing via UPS. All paper questionnaires (complete, refusal, inaccessible) should be returned to the office.

June Area Dry Run – Miyares/Lawson

Information about the testing of a new system being developed to collect June Area data in CAPI has been posted to the CAPI Dashboard. For now, if you were not contacted to be part of what they are calling the "June Area Dry Run" testing, this information can be ignored. More information will be provided in the coming weeks to supervisors and enumerators about June Area plans.

Chemical Use Survey Wrap-up – Miyares/Goings

While the ARMS II Survey is fairly well wrapped up, analysis of the Vegetable Chemical Use Survey (VCUS) will be continuing through at least February. Please be sure to hold on to any VCUS forms you completed this fall in case Regional Office Staff need clarification on something. We have found a few cases where items may have been miskeyed into CAPI, such as chemical codes, application rates, or application units, that can be quickly corrected once we are able to take a quick look at the original paper form.

If you made notes to update comment sheets for ARMS II or VCUS, and those notes were not submitted through CAPI, please be sure to send those notes to East Lansing via UPS so the comment updates can be processed.

The survey team is trying to determine how many enumerators used desktop or laptop computers to complete Chemical Use Surveys (VCUS or ARMS II) instead of their iPads. Please let your supervisor know by February 5 so we can make our tallies in time for a supervisor meeting scheduled for February 8.

ARMS III Update and Reminders – Erickson/Miyares

Scores from the online enumerator quiz will be pulled from the website today (January 29), and again next week on Wednesday (February 3), and Friday (February 5), to be distributed to NASDA supervisors. All enumerators are expected to complete their quizzes no later than February 5.

Don't forget about the ARMS III Training Teleconferences that are scheduled for next week. The dates for these state-specific teleconferences are as follows:

- Indiana Enumerators: Tuesday February 2, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
- Michigan Enumerators: Tuesday February 2, 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- Ohio Enumerators: Wednesday February 3, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Dial-in numbers and access codes were provided in the pre-survey kits shipped earlier this month. The number can also be found in the "[Teleconference Agenda and Etiquette](#)" document near the top of the ARMS III Page. If you are unable to participate in your state's teleconference, please reach out to your supervisor or NASDA Coordinator to discuss attending a different state's teleconference.

The focus of the teleconference will be on due dates, forms management, and items to pay special attention to when collecting data and reviewing completed forms. We will not be covering specific sections of the questionnaire unless a question arises.

As a reminder, the expectation is that enumerators need to complete their home study before beginning enumeration. This includes your review of the manuals and hard copy materials sent to you via UPS, opening and reviewing all of the files on the Purdue site, review of the online training videos, attendance at the training teleconference, completion of the online enumerator quiz, connecting with your supervisors to discuss their expectations, and conducting practice interviews with a partner. Once you have completed your training, we would appreciate your feedback on how the training went. There is an [online training evaluation](#) form which can be completed on the ARMS III Page. Your feedback is very important to us as we continue to determine the best ways to provide enumerator training during these challenging times.

Friday Feedback for Friday, January 22, 2021

New Statistician in the GLR - Hiegel

Hello, my name is Jack Hiegel. I am a native of St. Charles, Missouri. I graduated from Truman State University last December with a Bachelor in Statistics and Minors in Actuarial Science and Spanish. I previously served as a Student Trainee with the NOD in St. Louis before transferring up to Michigan. In my spare time, I like to read, write, and keep up on current events. I am looking forward to working for NASS and gaining a deeper understanding of agricultural statistics.



W-2 Information – Kimball

W-2's are now available in iSolved to view and print. W-2's are located under Employee Self Service, in the W2/ACA/1099 Forms tab as shown to the right.



For at least the last 4 years, NASDA has delivered W-2's electronically instead of through the mail. There are a few enumerators who are “grandfathered” into receiving the forms through the mail because they originally elected to continue to receive their form in the mail. This is no longer an option. If you do not have access to a printer, please contact Katherine Kimball by email at Katherine.kimball@usda.gov and she will mail you a copy of your W-2.

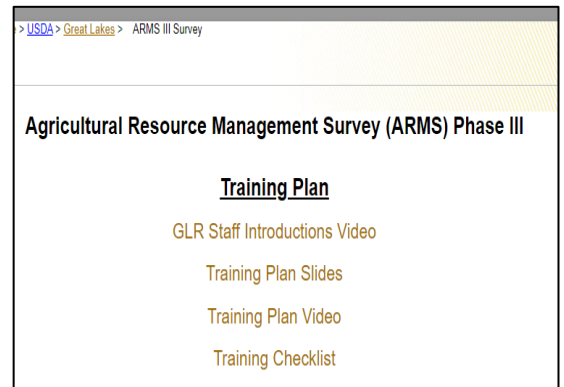
ARMS III Update – Erickson/Miyares

UPS Packages with ARMS III Assignments and supporting materials were shipped to enumerators from East Lansing this week. If you have not received your package by Monday January 25, please contact the Great Lakes Regional Office and we will try to track it down for you.

Once your packages arrive, please review the assignments and compare them to your CAPI listings. If there are discrepancies, please contact your supervisor right away. Please note that there may be some records that may already be checked in according to CAPI, and that's okay. Please do not throw those records away, but put them aside, as some of those operators may need to be re-contacted to clarify the responses on what they mailed in or completed over the internet themselves.

Once you have verified that you have the materials you are expecting, start by going to the [ARMS III](#) page on the Purdue GLR website. The ARMS III Survey Page was designed to be the one-stop shopping place for all of your survey needs, from training through data collection. At the very top of the page, you can start by watching the GLR Staff Introductions and the Training Plan Video, which will explain the expectations for the training. Directly below there is a link to a training checklist, which was designed to help you keep track of everything you are expected to do as part of your self-study.

The focus for the next two weeks should be on preparing for the start of data collection. Enumerators are authorized up to 18 hours of self-study time, which includes: time to read the interviewer manual, review the supplemental materials provided in your UPS package and on the Purdue site, watch the training videos posted to the Purdue site, take the study quiz (on-line), communicate with your supervisor, attend your state's teleconference facilitated by the regional office, and conduct mock interviews over the phone with a partner. Data collection may begin once your supervisor is satisfied that you are fully "trained" on this survey.



National Popcorn Day

Celebrated annually every January 19, National Popcorn Day recognizes a treat that satisfies enjoyed by millions. This time-honored snack can be sweet or savory, caramelized, buttered or plain, molded into a candied ball, or tossed with nuts and chocolate. Popcorn has been used for everything from arts and crafts to the foundation of some of the most popular treats around.

Popcorn started becoming popular in the United States in the middle 1800s. By 1900, Charles Cretors, a candy-store owner, developed a machine for popping corn with steam and had horse-drawn popcorn wagons going through the streets of Chicago. Shortly thereafter, Louise Ruckheim added peanuts and molasses to popcorn to bring Cracker Jack to the world.

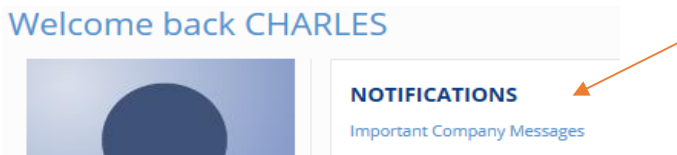
Indiana growers harvested a record high total of 94,000 acres of popcorn in 2020, up 20,000 acres from the previous year. Total production for the state was 4.61 million cwt, up 35 percent from 2019. To review an article and watch some videos about Indiana's popcorn history from the Hoosier Ag Today, click or tap [HERE](#).

Friday Feedback for Friday, January 15, 2021

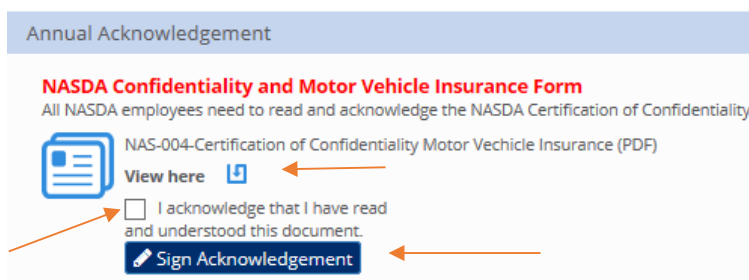
Annual Signatures for Confidentiality Form

All employees will need to sign the annual NASDA Certification of Confidentiality (NAS-004) form in iSolved. Beginning this week, when you log into iSolved you will see a message to acknowledge the form. *Please sign/acknowledge the Confidentiality form by February 15, 2021.*

To sign/acknowledge any form in iSolved, click on **"Important Company Messages"** or **"Documents Requiring Your Review"** on the iSolved Welcome screen. See sample below.



You will see forms listed on the screen. Click **"View Here"** to read/review the form. Next, close the window, then **Check the box**, then click **"Sign Acknowledgement"** which will be your electronic signature. Thank you!



While you're taking care of this, don't forget to also sign/acknowledge the NASS PII Form. On the Welcome page, click on "Documents Requiring Your Review". You will see the 2021 Agency Personal Identifiable Information (PII) Form. Click "View Here" to read/review the form and then click "Sign Acknowledgement." Completing this form is in place of the traditional annual Information Security Awareness training that has been conducted in the past. Your "signature" shows that you understand and agree with the principles outlined in the PII Form. Up to 15 minutes is allowed for enumerators for this review and signing. Time is to be coded to Project Code 350. Signing must be completed by January 31, 2021

From NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer

Happy New Year! 2020 presented us with multiple challenges that impacted all aspects of our lives. I am so proud of the work you each did this past year to ensure our mission delivery. NASS released 341 reports since our move to exclusively enumerating by telephone in March. Thank you!

I would like to wish you and your family the best for the New Year and keep up the great work!

Upcoming Due Date Reminders

- The last day to submit Quarterly Colony Loss forms in CAPI is Sunday January 17.
- The last day to submit Row Crop CAPS forms in CAPI is Monday January 18.
- The last day to submit Ag Labor forms in CAPI is Tuesday January 19.

The Regional Field Office will be closed on Monday January 18 in observance of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Friday Feedback for Friday, January 8, 2021

ARMS III Training Plans – Save the date!

Plans for the Agricultural Resource Management Survey Phase III (ARMS III). This is what we can share so far regarding training for these surveys, which, like was done for Phase II, will be structured like a State School, just administered remotely.

- Packages containing samples and study materials, including interviewer manuals and blank questionnaires, are scheduled to be shipped to enumerators the week of January 18.
- A series of recorded video presentations created by NASS Statisticians from across the country will be posted to the Purdue/GLR website for all enumerators to watch as part of their self-study.
- The "home study quiz" will also be moved away from paper to an on-line format. Unlike the quiz for Phase II, which was broken down into multiple parts, the quiz for Phase III will be kept altogether as one form with 30 questions. Once complete, results of the quiz will be shared with your supervisor and NASS Staff.
- All enumerators will participate in a live teleconference facilitated by the Regional Field Office staff. The dates for these state-specific teleconferences are as follows:
 - Indiana Enumerators: Tuesday February 2, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
 - Michigan Enumerators: Tuesday February 2, 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
 - Ohio Enumerators: Wednesday February 3, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Dial-in numbers and access codes will be provided in the pre-survey kits going out the week of January 18. If you are unable to participate in your state's teleconference, please reach out to your supervisor or NASDA Coordinator to discuss attending a different state's teleconference.

- Enumerators will be meeting with their supervisors by phone some time between January 25 and February 5 to go over answers to the quiz, review administrative items and review survey issues specific to your geographic area. These are intended to be more like “breakout sessions” rather than mini-schools.
- You will also be provided with practice exercises that help you feel more comfortable with conducting ARMS III interviews by telephone.
- Once your supervisor has certified you have been fully “trained” for the survey and you have participated in a teleconference, you can begin data collection on the surveys. ARMS III data collection will run until April 20.

Do you need UPS Labels?

Data collected on ARMS III will be collected on paper, with completed forms expected to be sent to supervisors for review before being forwarded to Jeffersonville, Indiana for keying and scanning. If you need UPS labels that can be used to send completed ARMS paperwork to your supervisor, please submit requests for labels through the order form on the GLR home page, which can be found at this [LINK](#). Enumerators should not need to order labels to send work to Jeffersonville, as those are already being created and will be sent out as needed.

Upcoming Due Date Reminders

- The last day to submit January Milk Production forms in CAPI is Monday January 11.
- The last day to submit January Cattle or Sheep and Goat forms in CAPI is Tuesday January 12.