

Friday Feedback for Friday, October 30, 2020

Due Date Reminders - Erickson

Please make a note of the surveys which have due dates within the next week:

- Objective Yield: All Form B data must be in CAPI by November 2. Also please make sure that the dates entered on the B-Forms match the dates on the tags with samples that are being sent to the lab in Missouri.
- November Ag Yield: Submit all records in CAPI by November 4 at 11:59
- Potato Acreage and Disposition: Submit all records in CAPI by November 4 at 11:59

It's Almost Floriculture Time! – Collom

The 2020 Floriculture survey will begin shortly after Christmas for Michigan and Ohio floriculture producers. The first mailing is scheduled for December 29. Very little information has been provided to us at this point other than the survey will occur. As soon as we know more, we'll pass that information along to you. Please plan on conducting the floriculture survey this winter.

ARMS II/VCUS Training Feedback Wanted – Second Request!

The Surveys Team at the Regional Field Office needs your feedback on how well the training plan we used for the ARMS II and Veg Chem Survey worked for you. We created an online evaluation form which can be reached at this [LINK](#). Please take the time to let us know before November 6 what we could do to improve upon this model. At this time, it appears that training for the ARMS III Survey may need to be structured similarly so if there are ways we can improve upon what we did for this survey, we'd like to know.

Quarts Added in CAPI as a Valid Fertilizer Application Unit for ARMS II

A few years ago, several field offices had requested foliar feed fertilizer applications be allowed to be reported in quarts on the Fall Chemical Use Surveys, including ARMS II. While the code was never added to the paper form, quarts have been allowed for the past few years in the computer systems as code "13", and the option was recently added to CAPI in the pulldown options for units in the Fertilizer Table. The change will be made permanent on all chemical use surveys, and it will be updated on the paper forms for 2021. This update will also be included in the "ARMS II Oversight" document, which is available [HERE](#) on the Purdue site.

Counting Split Interview Time for ARMS and VCUS

We received a question recently regarding how best to record the starting time and ending times for ARMS and VCUS interviews that may be split over multiple contacts. Suppose an enumerator spoke to the operator one day from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and collected what information the operator could provide, but then the enumerator had to call the custom sprayer to obtain the rest of the information, and that conversation went from 1:15 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Since the total time conducting interviews was 75 minutes, the start and end times recorded on the form should reflect this. It can either be combined into having a start time of 0900 and an end time of 1015 or you can record a start time of 1315 and an end time of 1430. What you should not do is say that the interview began at 0900 and ended at 1400, as that will artificially inflate the interview time to five hours.

Ralph Gann, Former Indiana State Statistician:

The Great Lakes Region is sad to report that Ralph Gann, former State Director of the Indiana Field Office, passed away last Sunday evening. This was unexpected as he had been to the doctor recently and was told everything looked good. His obituary can be found at this [LINK](#).

Friday Feedback for Friday, October 23, 2020

Objective Yield Updates - Erickson

The Corn and Soybean Objective Yield Surveys are just about wrapped up for the year. Thank you all for your hard work! We realize that enumeration has been especially difficult this year, so the effort you have made to make OY a success this year is very much appreciated. Our response rate this year was 84%!

Many of you have completed your final pre-harvest visits (and gleanings). For samples where you completed your final visit since last month, please submit the final Form-B ASAP. Make sure the fieldwork date matches the date you actually did the final pre-harvest visit, which matches the dates on the ID cards. If you have a sample where the units were harvested before you were able to complete the final visit, please submit a Form-B (with a note), using status code 3.

For gleaning samples, please send the completed Form-E with the sample to the Lab. If you are unable to complete the gleaning, please let your Supervisor know. In this case, no further action is needed, and you may return the Form-E to the kit envelope.

I am sure everyone will be finished with their OY work soon (if not already). However, we are required to run Final Summaries for the year in mid-December, so, please hold on to your kit envelopes (containing all forms for that sample) until December 16. At that time, please shred any OY materials you have that contain PII. Also, please work with your Supervisor regarding your satchel. The supplies in the satchels (anchor pin, tape measures, etc.) will be used again next year. If something is missing or defective, your Supervisor needs to know so he/she can order a replacement.

Local Foods is Coming Back! – Collom

The Local Food Marketing Practices Survey will be administered in 2021. The survey will begin in December with a “heat-pressed” mailer sent to all selected farm operations. This mailer will include instructions on how to report via the accounts.usda.gov website and will include the farmer’s unique login information. A paper questionnaire will be mailed to farmers that do not complete their survey via the internet in January. A second paper questionnaire will be mailed to non-responding farmers in February. Follow-up enumeration will not begin until March.

Because the Local Foods Survey is a follow-on to the Census of Agriculture, it is a mandatory survey for all sampled operations. You may speak with farmers that mention they have received this survey when you contact them about a different survey. Please encourage these farmers to complete their Local Foods questionnaire and return it via mail or the internet. A copy of the questionnaire has been uploaded to the NASDA-Purdue website for your review. More information will be sent to you as we receive it.

We are not planning on having assignments available to enumerators until February or March. Please contact your NASDA coordinator with any questions. NASDA coordinators have total sample sizes by supervisor group if you are interested.

Interpreting the “Consent” question on VCUS and ARMS II

Those who have played with the CAPI Training Instruments for ARMS 2 or VCUS have noticed that the very first question on the form is asking whether or not the operator provided you consent to contact a custom applicator to obtain the spray records. In many cases, this consent isn’t required because there is no custom applicator to contact; however, the instrument will not let you enter ANY data into CAPI for the survey unless you check “YES” to this box. If there are concerns about whether consent is required, use the paper consent form included in your kit envelope. The form has been redesigned for operators to provide this consent verbally. We have contacted our HQ about this and were told that this part of the instrument will not be changed this year.

ARMS II/VCUS Training Feedback Wanted!

The Surveys Team at the Regional Field Office needs your feedback on how well the training plan we used for the ARMS II and Veg Chem Survey worked for you. We created an online evaluation form which can be reached at this [LINK](#). Please take the time to let us know before November 6 what we could do to improve upon this model. At this time, it appears that training for the ARMS III Survey may need to be structured similarly so if there are ways we can improve upon what we did for this survey, we’d like to know.

“Why is the computer telling me that my quiz answer is wrong?”

We’ve had a few people express frustration that the electronic quiz for ARMS II is marking every response wrong to the open-response question, “List two ways that farmers can benefit by completing the ARMS 2 Survey.” Unfortunately, the computer that is automatically grading your quizzes has no way of judging whether or not what you entered is correct (even if it is correct). To make matters simple, the computer is just marking them all wrong, but fear not. The responses are going to be manually reviewed by Field Office staff and if it appears there is a problem with the response, it will be shared with your supervisor. Supervisors will also be notified who has completed their quizzes and if there were any of the multiple choice questions that you may have gotten wrong. Everyone who completed the quiz should be able to go back in and see what they did so they can discuss any concerns with their supervisors.

New “Oversights” Link on ARMS/VCUS Survey Pages

As we begin data collection efforts on the ARMS Phase II and the Vegetable Chemical Use Survey (VCUS), there are going to be too many issues that come up that can possibly be addressed in the weekly Friday Feedback. To that end, we are going to start posting information on the Purdue Site under a link called “Oversights” on each survey page. This document will contain discoveries and problems identified while reviewing the paper questionnaire, the manuals, the CAPI instrument, and respondent booklet. We will be updating this on at least a weekly basis. The first “oversights” document for ARMS II is scheduled to be posted to the Purdue GLR Site later today 10/23.

Getting Survey Results to those who do not have email:

A few years ago, NASS made a decision that, as a rule, it was no longer going to ask respondents if they wanted to receive a hard copy of results to a survey they completed. For many of our respondents, this is not an issue as many have access to NASS reports through the internet at their fingertips, while others will sign up to receive those results via e-mail, either through the subscription services, or through providing an e-mail address at the end of the questionnaires. We recognize that a small percentage of operators do not have access to e-mail or the internet but are interested in receiving the results. The regional office, however, no longer has the means or resources to have a subscription service where we are able send out regular mailings to operators who just want to receive any and all of our reports by U.S. Mail, whether that person was a survey respondent or not. We can make an accommodation, however, for respondents who specifically request to receive a hard copy of survey results via U.S. Mail for a survey they just completed who do not have access to e-mail or the internet. The enumerator must clearly state in the CAPI comments that the respondent needs to receive a hard copy of the results for that particular survey via U.S. Mail, but that request must be repeated for every survey the operator completes. Please feel free to contact the Regional Office if you have any questions.

“This guy won’t give information over the phone. Why are you still pushing it out?”

We have a number of operators on our List Frame who have been coded as requiring field enumeration due to resistance to working with call centers, a preference for working with particular enumerators, or are simply large enough operators to where we realize that a personal, local touch could ensure cooperation for that survey and for others to come. We also have a number of operators who are wary of providing information over the telephone, even to local enumerators they have known for years. If you have any operators in your listings who fall into that category, but the comments on the record do not reflect this, it is critical that you contact the Regional Field Office so that those comments can be updated. If we see a comment on a record which says, “Operator will not do surveys over the phone; do not contact until face-to-face enumeration is permitted again”, that record will either be coded as “Mail Only” or will be held in the office. Without an explicit comment telling us not to, however, it is likely that records normally coded for field enumeration (DCM 26, 30, 60 or 70) will get pushed out for telephone enumeration for the time being.

Friday Feedback for Friday, October 16, 2020

Need Supplies? Please Submit Requests by Monday 10/19

The GLR Office Staff will be preparing UPS Packets for the November 1 Surveys (Vegetable Grower Inquiry, November Potatoes, November Ag Yield) early next week. If you have any supply requests, perhaps something you noticed missing from your ARMS II/VCUS materials, please submit them via the [NASDA Order Form](#) on the Purdue GLR Website no later than Monday October 19 so we can include those materials in next week's planned shipments.

ARMS II/VCUS Updates: – Miyares/Cooper/Goings

It was great being able to connect with enumerators during this week's teleconferences for ARMS II and Veg Chem! Thanks to everyone for your participation and your great questions. If there were further questions you thought about after the teleconference was over, feel free to contact the folks on the survey team or your NASDA Coordinator.

If you were unable to attend any of the three scheduled teleconferences, a recording of the first teleconference is available on the ARMS II survey page. It is labeled as "Video 9".

At this point, everyone should have received their ARMS/VCUS materials via UPS. If you did not, please contact the regional field office right away so we can track things down. Also, we've received a few reports that there may have been some samples accidentally placed in the wrong package in our rush to get them out before the holiday weekend. If you find that you are missing samples, or possibly received samples that weren't yours, please contact your supervisor or NASDA Coordinator right away so we can correct the problem.

The VCUS Survey Pages are now LIVE on the Purdue GLR Website. Where many of the materials are in common between both surveys, we did not create as many examples or videos for that survey, so if you are working VCUS but not ARMS II, you may be able to fill in some of the gaps by reviewing the ARMS II materials.

The CAPI Instrument for VCUS will be available for field testing early next week. Just like with the ARMS II, we want every enumerator working the VCUS to take the time to enter at least one practice form into the CAPI Training system. This way, you can be familiar with how that system works and help us identify any bugs or quirks with the system so we can alert out HQ in order to get things fixed.

How are we supposed to work with the Amish on these telephone surveys?

According to a recent study, there are approximately 150,000 Amish people living in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. As many of you may be aware, the Amish are known for simple living, plain dress, and Christian pacifism. While there are some New Order Amish who have access to community telephones and cell phones, many of the Old Order Amish are resistant to adopt many conveniences of modern technology, including telephones, with a view to not interrupt family time, nor replace face-to-face conversations whenever possible.

Since face-to-face interviews are not permitted at this time, operators with no phone number on file selected for NASS Surveys have been coded either as "Office Holds" or as "Mail Only with no follow-up". Amish operators with telephone numbers on file are still being coded to be contacted by phone. We are advising enumerators to make at least two phone attempts for these operators, once at the start of the survey and once near the middle of the survey period to give that operator the opportunity call us back. If the respondent does not call back, then the form can be coded as inaccessible.

Still haven't figured out the GLR Website?

The NASDA GLR Website, hosted by Purdue University, is the one-stop shop for all of your enumerator needs. In addition to being a resource library for survey materials, there are survey calendars, training videos, guides and handbooks, contact information for regional office staff, and links to helpful websites.

At the very top of the page, there is a link to a file which provides a basic introduction to everything on the GLR website, including information about how to access the GLR website on a home computer, and how to access the CAPI Dashboard, CAPI Training, and CAPI Production from your home computer. If you haven't reviewed this document, or you could use a refresher, click [HERE](#) for more information.

Friday Feedback for Friday, October 9, 2020

Upcoming Due Date Reminders

- The last day to submit October Milk Production forms in CAPI is Friday October 9.
- The last day to submit October Colony Loss forms in CAPI is Tuesday October 13

ARMS II/VCUS Updates: – Miyares/Cooper/Goings

As a reminder, all enumerators who are working either the ARMS Phase II or Vegetable Chemical Use Surveys are expected to participate in a live training teleconference facilitated by the Regional Field Office staff. The dates for these state-specific teleconferences are as follows:

- Michigan Enumerators: Thursday October 15, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
- Indiana Enumerators: Thursday October 15, 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- Ohio Enumerators: Friday October 16, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

To connect to the teleconference, dial 888-844-9904, then enter Access Code 2954625#. Please plan to dial in about 10 minutes early so we can be certain to start on time. If you are unable to attend your state's teleconference, please reach out to your supervisor or NASDA Coordinator and we can arrange for you to attend a different state's teleconference.

The Regional Field Office received the labeled Vegetable Chemical Use Surveys and Interviewer's Manuals on Thursday October 8, and received the Respondent Booklets with all of the Chemical Codes for VCUS on Friday Morning October 9. Regional Office Staff worked furiously to get all materials for both the ARMS II and VCUS out the door by the end of Friday October 9 so enumerators can have what they need to in time for next week's teleconferences. Because the respondent booklets came so late, they were not able to be included with each kit envelope; however, each enumerator will be receiving enough for their samples plus a few extra for training purposes.

For those wanting to get a head start on their self-study before their ARMS/VCUS materials arrive, the ARMS II Page on the Purdue GLR Website is live. To begin your self-study, look for the link on the top of the page for the Welcome Information (see below). The VCUS website is still under construction; however, there is enough similarity between the two surveys where enumerators only assigned work for VCUS can begin their self-study by reviewing the ARMS Materials on the GLR Website.

Purdue Agriculture > [USDA](#) > [Great Lakes](#) > ARMS II

Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) Phase II

First time to this page? Click [HERE](#) to begin your Self-study

Please feel free to contact John Miyares or your NASDA Coordinator if you have any questions.

Federal Holiday Reminder: – Miyares/Cooper/Goings

Observed annually on the second Monday in October in the U.S., Columbus Day commemorates the date when Christopher Columbus first set foot in the Americas in 1492. Columbus Day has been a Federal holiday since 1937, but it is not considered a major holiday. Federal offices, including the Regional Field Office and Post Offices, will be closed, but most businesses and some banks will remain open.

Friday Feedback for Friday, October 2, 2020

Labor Survey Suspended – Courser

NASS will not collect data in October and therefore will not publish the biannual Farm Labor report in November.

Please see the attached [Federal Register Notice](#) Information about the farm labor program is available at this [LINK](#).

Please discontinue any data collection associated with the October Labor survey and destroy all associated pre-survey materials.

Upcoming Due Date Reminders

- Any Objective Yield Form B's collected late in the day yesterday (October 1) must be submitted in CAPI by today (October 2).
- The last day to submit October Ag Yield forms in CAPI is Sunday October 4.
- The last day to submit Small Grain CAPS records in CAPI is Wednesday October 7.
- The last day to submit October Milk Production forms in CAPI is Friday October 9.

ARMS II/VCUS Update: – Miyares/Cooper/Goings

Survey materials for the ARMS II and Veg Chemical Use Survey (VCUS) are scheduled to be shipped to enumerators late next week. We are still waiting to receive materials for the VCUS and would prefer to ship everything at the same time if possible. If VCUS materials are further delayed, we will send the ARMS II materials first.

The ARMS II Page on the Purdue GLR Website will be live by Monday October 5. In addition to providing electronic copies of the survey materials, the page will be the central to enumerator training. Once it becomes available, all enumerators working the ARMS II Survey are encouraged to visit the page to explore the resources provided.

Instead of the traditional pre-survey letter normally sent, a full copy of the ARMS II questionnaire, the respondent booklet, and a strategy letter explaining that this year interviews will need to take place by phone were mailed to operators on September 24 from the National Processing Center (NPC) in Jeffersonville, IN. Michigan operators were sent a separate pre-survey letter which explained that they will be eligible to receive two credits towards a Restricted Use Pesticide Applicator License by completing the survey. Copies of the strategy letter and the special Michigan Pre-survey Letter will be available on the Purdue GLR website.

A similar plan to mail advance copies of the questionnaire is in place for the VCUS, except respondents will not be mailed their copies until October 29. We are still waiting to receive VCUS materials from our HQ, which has also slowed development of the VCUS Survey Pages on the GLR Website. Although our goal is to have all of the training materials available for both surveys out by the end of next week, data collection for the VCUS will not begin until November 2.

Although there will be a CAPI instrument utilized this year for data entry by enumerators for both ARMS II and VCUS, respondents will not have the option of completing the form themselves online, nor were they provided an envelope to be able to mail back a completed paper form. The paper copy was sent to respondents to help make the telephone interview process go more smoothly so that the operator would be able to follow along as the enumerator asks questions. If the operator loses or throws away the copy that was sent, the Regional Field Office has enough blank forms to be able to send every respondent a second copy.

Please feel free to contact John Miyares or your NASDA Coordinator if you have any questions.