

Friday Feedback for Thursday, December 31, 2020

A Big Thank You

As we close the books on a challenging 2020, the staff at the Regional Office wanted to take this opportunity to thank you. Thank you for your perseverance and flexibility. Thank you for finding ways to connect with our farmers, and thank you for your continued commitment and dedication to the mission of providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to agriculture.

The work you do matters and it makes a difference. Not only did you take on the extraordinary task of transitioning work to telephone enumeration, many of you have excelled at it. Thank you for continuing to provide quality work under heavy workloads and tight time constraints, especially during these extraordinary times. We are constantly in awe of the passion and talent we have on our NASDA staff, and we are proud to work with each one of you. Happy New Year to all, and we can't wait to see what we can accomplish in 2021.

Michigan Small Fruit and Hops Survey Closeout

For those enumerators who have been working the Small Fruit and Hops survey, please send any questionnaires and PRD Printouts back to the regional office in East Lansing as soon as possible.

VCUS Closeout

Wednesday December 30 was the last day to submit Vegetable Chemical Use Survey forms in CAPI. Thanks to everyone for their hard work on this challenging project. If any Michigan enumerators have completed bubble sheets for MDARD, please be sure to send those back to East Lansing as soon as possible. We need to process the forms no later than the first week of the new year in order to have the RUP Credits counts towards 2020 certifications.

Disconnect Reminders

The procedures for handling disconnects for the January Surveys remains the same as in previous cycles. Please enter "Bad Ph" in the Attempted Call Log for any records where the phone number is bad. We will be querying the CAPI system between Tuesday 1/5 and Wednesday 1/6 looking for records with "Bad Ph". Regional Field Office staff will conduct disconnect research on these records. Any updates we find will be updated in the "Enumerator Notes" and should be visible on these records no later than Friday January 8. Please do not submit records as "inaccessible" because of a disconnected phone number until research has been complete and we are able to determine that no new numbers are available. If one of the new numbers provided works, please be sure to update the contact information in CAPI. If some of the numbers do not work, please let us know through comments so we can make notes about bad numbers to not send out again.

Removing old checked in CAPS from CAPI Listings

Every Monday Morning, regional office staff are turning off County Agricultural Production Survey (CAPS) forms from CAPI listings that were checked in at least two weeks earlier. This means on Monday January 4, we will be removing any CAPS forms that were checked in prior to December 21. This process will hopefully reduce some of the excess clutter in the CAPI listings as we head towards a busy January Survey Cycle.

Holiday Closures

The Regional Field Office will be closed on Friday January 1 for the New Year's holiday.

Friday Feedback for Friday, December 18, 2020

Floriculture Update (MI and OH)

The Floriculture operations for you to enumerate have been sent to you in your latest UPS package. Enumerators should complete these interviews over the phone and return the completed paper questionnaire to the Great Lakes Regional office via UPS. Please do not complete the questionnaire in your CAPI instrument. You should review your CAPI instrument prior to phoning to determine whether operations have completed their questionnaire via mail. Those operations reporting by mail do not have to be phoned and the blank labeled questionnaire that you have for operations that reported via mail can be destroyed. We have had a very strong mail response so far.

Looking Ahead to ARMS III

This year's ARMS III Surveys have already been mailed to respondents and a follow-up mailing is scheduled to take place by February 8. There will be two version this year, the normal "Cost and Returns Report" as well as a special version for Hog Operations. Follow-up phoning will take place between early February and mid-April.

The training model will be very similar to ARMS II. There will be a series of video presentations recorded by NASS staff posted to the Purdue site along with online quizzes. There will also be a teleconference scheduled for each state's enumerators during the first week of February facilitated by Regional Office Staff. Supervisors will also be connecting with enumerators to discuss specific enumerator expectations, and practice exercises will be available for enumerators to work through. More information will be available as we get closer to the date.

Verifying Researched Phone Numbers

When enumerators report bad phone numbers for farm operators during the survey proper and the List Frame Team at the Regional Office supplies possible phone number(s), it is helpful to hear back from the enumerator if any or none of the phone numbers were valid. The tracking history in ELMO will only show present and past phone numbers that have been associated with that record. The possible new phone numbers list frame is supplying, if they have never been on the record, are not entered into ELMO until they are verified as good phone numbers. If they are not verified, they will not be in the tracking history. If we learn that some of these numbers are invalid, the team will insert a comment listing them. What we want to avoid are future requests for phone numbers resulting in the same invalid phone numbers to attempt.

Annual Security Training Reminder

As a reminder, every NASDA field enumerator should log into iSolved to 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 complete by January 31, 2021.

January 1 Packets

UPS packages containing survey information for this month's Cattle, Milk Production, Sheep & Goat, Bee & Honey, Quarterly Colony Loss, Floriculture, and Agricultural Labor Surveys will be shipped to enumerators between Friday December 18 and Monday December 21. These packages should arrive at enumerator homes before Christmas. If you do not receive your packet by Wednesday December 23, please contact your supervisor or your NASDA Coordinator.

Holiday Closures

The Regional Field Office will be closed on December 24 and 25 for the Christmas holiday. There will be no Friday Feedback next week.

Improved Quick Fix for iPad Problems

We've continued to receive reports of people seeing the "Picker" error pop up on their iPads as they are entering data in CAPI as well as other errors that are hindering enumerator ability to get their work done. After consultation with our HQ, we have developed an alternative way that you may be able to correct the problem yourself before having to call Linda or Mike. The updated fix has been posted in the alerts area of the GLR Home Page, which can also be found at this [LINK](#).

Friday Feedback for Friday, December 11, 2020

Agricultural Labor Survey Returning

The Agricultural Labor Survey suspension has been lifted and NASS will begin data collection activities immediately with the goal of publishing the *Farm Labor Report* on February 11, 2021. This means that there is a lot of work to do in order to get the survey collected, analyzed, summarized, and published in a very short time period.

GLR Staff recognize that the January Survey Cycle is already very full with seven other ongoing surveys. To that end, the number of Labor forms assigned to field enumerators will be limited to those which match January Livestock Surveys already assigned for field enumeration. The remaining forms will be sent to the call center for enumeration or will be coded as “mail only” in order to reduce respondent burden and enumerator burden.

Questionnaires were mailed to respondents on 12/10. The survey that will be conducted will be the same one that was scheduled to be conducted in October. The reference period will not change for data collection and will remain the weeks containing the 12th day of the month for July and October 2020. Follow up phoning will begin at the end of December and continue into January, following a similar timeline to the other January 1 Surveys. Survey information, including the survey calendars, should be updated on the Purdue Site by Monday 12/14. Survey materials for those enumerators assigned work will be sent via UPS no later than 12/21.

Please contact your NASDA Coordinator for more information.

Closing out ARMS II

Thanks to everyone for their hard work on this year’s ARMS II! Data collection efforts were extremely challenging this year, but we had a number of enumerators who stepped up to the challenge well. As a reminder, if you have any out-of-business forms or updates to ELMO comments which need to be made where the comment wasn’t entered into CAPI, please be sure to send those updates to East Lansing as soon as possible. Also, if any Michigan enumerators have “bubble sheets” to send in, please get them to East Lansing right away.

GLR to Welcome New Deputy Director

Tynisha (Ty) Tolbert will be coming to the Great Lakes Region to serve as the region’s new Deputy Director, replacing Kif Hurlbut, who transferred to the NASS IT Division in September.

Ty is a native of Louisiana, a musician, a community volunteer, and a world traveler. She grew up in a rural agricultural community where she learned the joys of growing fresh vegetables with her family. At 18, she earned and won the National USDA 1890 Scholarship. She chose to attend Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and majored in Agricultural Economics. During her time in college she interned at NASS’s Louisiana Field Office.

Upon graduation, she worked in Estimates and Surveys in the Oklahoma Field Office. After regionalization, she moved to Little Rock, AR to the Delta Region where she served as the NASDA Field Coordinator and NASDA DCC Coordinator. After 18 months, she was offered a TDY position in the Survey Administration Branch in Washington D.C. as the National CEAP, Prices Paid, and Agricultural Labor Survey Administrator. During her 3 years as a National Survey Administrator, she was able to work with NASDA staff across the Nation on implementing the first fully digital data collection acreage map for CEAP Phase 1.

After 3 years, she accepted the Regional Group Leader position in the Delta Regional Office. During these three years, she worked to cultivate a positive spirit of effective collaboration in order to meet tough projects. She has won numerous awards including an Administrator’s Award for Excellence during her leadership on the Census of Agriculture as a Regional Group Leader. She is excited about joining the great team in the Great Lakes Region and hopes to work with each team member!

Friday Feedback for Friday, December 4, 2020

Disconnect Reminders

The procedures for handling disconnects this cycle remains the same as in previous cycles. Please enter “Bad Ph” in the Attempted Call Log for any records where the phone number is bad. We will be querying the CAPI system between Friday 12/4 and Monday 12/7 looking for records with “Bad Ph” and the Regional Field Office staff will conduct disconnect research on these records. Any updates we find will be updated in the “Enumerator Notes” and should be visible on these records by Wednesday December 9. Please do not submit records as “inaccessible” because of a disconnected phone number until research has been complete and we are able to determine that no new numbers are available.

New EDR Survey Code Not Displaying in CAPI Properly

Starting with the October 1 Surveys, the Survey Code that respondents use to access the AgCounts Electronic Data Reporting (EDR) System was reduced from 17 characters to 12. The CAPI System is not showing what the new code should be, but rather it is showing what the old code would have been.

The new code incorporates the two-digit FIPS, the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th digit of the person ID, and a six-character password. In the example shown from CAPI below, which still shows the old EDR Survey Code, the new code should be 390451VXCTSD.

Operator InformationClose

AGRICULTURAL SURVEY - DECEMBER

POID: 977004510 **TRA:** 1 **SUB:** 1 **OP DOM:** 0

DCMS: 220 **STR:** **LABELS:**

Survey Code: 39 977004511 VXCTSD

Operator:
JOHN DOE

We have notified our headquarters to the issue and they let us know that the problem will be corrected with the next version of CAPI that will be published. In the meanwhile, both the 12 character and 17 character codes will work on the AgCounts website.

Chemical Use Tables Not Appearing in CAPI?

We have received a few reports across the region that people who have been entering ARMS II and Veg Chem data into CAPI have not been seeing the Chemical Tables that are supposed to be in Section D. If you observe this issue, please be sure to let your supervisor know, and then contact Linda or Mike at the Regional Office in order to let them help you through the fix. Don't forget in the meanwhile that you are able to access CAPI on a home computer or laptop by using a Chrome browser by following instructions that can be found [HERE](#).

We've also continued to receive reports of people seeing the “Picker” error pop up on their iPads as they are entering data in CAPI. There is a fix for this posted in the alerts area of the GLR Home Page, which can also be found at this [LINK](#).

Bubble Sheet Reminder – Michigan Chemical Use Survey Respondents

If any Michigan enumerators need to have “MDARD Recertification Seminar Records”, also known as “Bubble Sheets” sent to respondents, please let the Regional Field Office know right away so we can get those processed before the end of the calendar year. If you have any bubble sheets in hand with information from the respondents, those need to be sent to the Regional Field Office right away. If you have any questions about the bubble sheets or the procedures, please reach out to John or Paul at the Regional Field Office.

Training Resources Available on NASDA.ORG

Did you know that the Training Group at the NASS National Operations Division creates and posts a lot of survey training information through the nasda.org website. Although the materials available vary from survey to survey, they generally include a narrated PowerPoint presentation which discusses some of the general aspects of the smaller surveys that may not get that much attention. To access this information, first go to the survey specific page on the Purdue site, then click on the link to the right which says “NASDA Training Info”. When the surveys page appears, enter the indicated key word in the search box.

MINT GROWER SURVEY		
Pre-Survey Materials	Questionnaires	Other Information
Enumerator Memo Pre-survey Letter	Indiana Questionnaire	NASDA Training Info (Type “Mint” in the search box)

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