

Friday Feedback for Friday, February 28, 2020

Grain and Oilseed Outlook – Hurlbut

At USDA's 96th Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum in Virginia last week, the USDA's Office of the Chief Economist presented a report titled the "Grain and Oilseed Outlook for 2020" which included projections of the 2020/21 U.S. supply, demand, and prices for wheat, corn, rice, soybeans, and soybean products. Projections were based on implications of the January 10 NASS *Winter Wheat and Canola Seedings* report, and assumed normal weather conditions for spring planting and summer crop development, and the authors noted that the forecasts would be updated in the May 12 *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates* (WASDE) report, which will also incorporate the planting intentions as indicated by our March Agricultural Survey, which will be published on March 31 in the *Prospective Plantings* report. The full report can be found at this [LINK](#).

Among the projections in this report, the U.S. corn outlook for 2020/21 was forecasted at 15.5 billion bushels, and a larger soybean crop at approximately 4.2 billion bushels, with both seeing gains in new crop exports and domestic use. Planted acres for both crops combined were projected at a combined 179 million, with the increase coming from an expected decline in wheat and cotton plantings. The report also projected higher ending corn stocks, but lower ending soybean stocks, which could help bump up soybean prices, but bring down corn prices.

It is quite possible that enumerators may see some pushback from the farmers we are contacting for surveys in the next month, since forecasts like this do influence markets. We have already heard of one producer who refused to complete an ARMS III form because of what was published in this report, apparently wondering how USDA could come up with a forecast for record production before planting had even begun yet. At this point, what we can say to farmers who ask about that report because they've read or heard about it is that the projection was developed from a mathematical model based on ideal conditions for weather, available cropland based on traditional rotations, expectations for global trade growth taking into account continued competition from other countries, and expected higher corn use for ethanol and feed. Ultimately, all of the variables used in creating this forecast are subject to change based on actual conditions during planting and the growing season, which are measured by NASS through surveys like the Quarterly Agricultural Surveys, the Monthly Ag Yield Surveys, and the end of season County Agricultural Production Surveys, and if there is a record which needs to be straightened out, we need the cooperation of all of our farmers on these surveys to get the message out as to what is actually happening on farms.

National Farmer Market Managers Survey - Miyares

The National Farmers Market Managers Survey (NFMMS) is a new external project agreement that the National Agricultural Statistics Services (NASS) is conducting on behalf of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Transportation and Marketing Program (TMP). This inaugural questionnaire will survey paid and/or volunteer managers who make day-to-day operation decisions for farmer's markets in the United States. Per the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), a "farmer's market" is defined as two or more vendors operating at the same location on a continual basis (including seasonal, i.e. summer only), selling agricultural products directly to consumers. AMS and other USDA agencies intend to use these data to measure the customer demand of local foods from the farmers market manager's perspective, look for potential expansion opportunities, target access to nutritional foods, market nutritional education, measure access to local foods and certified organic foods, and strengthen community engagement.

There are approximately 1000 farmers markets scheduled to be contacted in our region. While most of the data collection will take place from our call centers, there will be some field data collection scheduled for the month of April where markets may need to be personally visited because there is no contact phone number available. There will also be callouts taken from the call centers, and possibly some research necessary to find some of these markets for which there is no formal address on file. Please stay tuned to the Purdue Site for more information.

Census of Horticulture Update – Collom/Laird

A reminder postcard was recently sent to all non-responding Census of Horticulture farmers. The postcard was a reminder to the farmer to complete the questionnaire. You may receive a question in your travels. Just wanted you to be aware. The postcard looks like this:



If you have already completed your 2019 Census of Horticultural Specialties, thank you! If not, please do so online or by mail today.

Responding online is fast and secure. To get started, go to www.apcounts.usda.gov and enter your 17-digit survey code.

USDA guarantees that your individual responses will be kept confidential, as required by federal law. The same law also makes your participation in the 2019 Census of Horticultural Specialties mandatory, as the survey is part of the Census of Agriculture Program. Learn more at www.nass.usda.gov/go/hort.

If you have questions, need assistance or your survey code to respond online, please call (888) 424-7828. If we do not receive your completed questionnaire online or by mail soon, a second form will be mailed to you.

Thank you for your participation.

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New W-4 Form to complete in iSolved - Kimball

There have been many inquiries about the amount of taxes (or lack of any) being taken out of 2020 pay checks. This change is due to the implementation of a new W-4 form this year. If you have not completed the new W-4 form in iSolved, the system is making its best “guess” for you based on your old W-4 form.

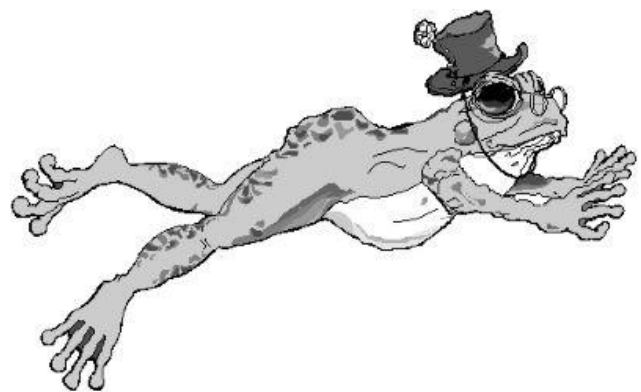
Payroll Network has created a new video ([How To Complete the New Form W4](#)) that is very helpful in explaining the process of how to find the new W-4 form in iSolved and what you need to complete the form (current paystub, recent W-2 and spouse job information). The video is located under the **QUICK LINKS** heading on the iSolved home page. To find the video in iSolved, please see the screen shot below or touch on this link [HERE](#).



Leap Day

2020 is a Leap Year, and February 29 is Leap Day. Leap Day occurs every four years except in years ending with “00” that are not divisible by 400. The complex calculation is due to the fact that the earth rotates around the sun once about, but not exactly, every 365 ¼ days. Since the actual rotation time is slightly less than this, there are some years when we can skip Leap Years (the last one was skipped in 1900). Occasionally, the folks who maintain the official time for the planet will add an occasional “Leap Second” to correct minor variations.

If your birthday is on Leap Day, congratulations, you finally get to celebrate your birthday on your birthdate.



Friday Feedback for Friday, February 21, 2020

ARMS III Updates – Erickson

I would like to thank everyone for their contributions to the successful ARMS III workshops. Here are a few reminders:

- Please use your iPad to manage your assignments.
- Refusals, inaccessibles, and out-of-business records should be submitted on the iPad (with comments).
- For out-of-business records, please complete the ARMS III Screening Supplement and the Out-Of-Business form, and send them to the office in East Lansing.
- The ARMS III questionnaire for refusals, inaccessibles, and out-of-business reports should not be sent anywhere.
- Good reports with data must be sent to NPC either by you or your Supervisor.

Please see the 'Form Management' document on the Purdue website for more details.

Within the next couple of weeks, you may receive some records from your NASDA Coordinator that require field follow-up. As we discussed at the workshops, some EDR & mail returns are sent in with quite a bit of missing data (mainly expenses). We are working on sorting through these records to see which ones should be held back, and which ones should be sent to you for follow-up. You will likely receive a copy of the scanned image of what the respondent sent in. Your NASDA Coordinator will provide more detailed instructions.

Please remember that it doesn't take much for someone to qualify for ARMS III. Many people don't consider themselves a farmer if they only have a few acres of CRP or a few head of livestock. It is OK to complete an ARMS III Screening Supplement for any record. For someone who rents out most of their ground but still has CRP (for example), the questionnaire should not take very long to complete.

Please make as many contacts as possible the next few days. The data collection period for the March Surveys is rapidly approaching, and it won't be long before farmers will begin fieldwork, so setting up appointments may soon become difficult.

There are a very limited number of extra blank questionnaires available at the Regional Field Office. If you have extra blank questionnaires that you are holding on to that you won't need, please get them to your supervisor, as there may be someone else in another area that might need to use them. If you need a few extra blanks to leave with respondents, please first check with your supervisor before contacting East Lansing.

Don't forget about the information available on the Purdue website. The PowerPoint presentations and a lot of other information is there for your reference.

New Wording for March 1 Stocks Questions – Miyares/Weber

Due to the large percentage of corn and soybeans that were reported as unharvested on the December Agricultural Survey, NASS has modified the instructions on how one is to report on-farm stocks as of March 1 for the March Agricultural Survey. Please note that these updated instructions are NOT on the paper form, but only in electronic forms (CATI, CAPI, EDR/Web Forms). The new wording is as follows:

“Please account for whole grains and oilseeds stored March 1 on the total acres operated, whether for feed, seed or sale. They may have belonged to you or someone else (sold or unsold), or been stored under a government program (loan, farmer owned reserve, or CCC). Also include any expected production from 2019 crops remaining in the field that you still intend to harvest for either grain or seed.”

Enumerators are advised to probe for the presence of any unharvested corn or soybeans from the 2019 crop that the operator still intends to harvest to make sure that their potential production is included as part of the on-farm stocks. If the crop will be abandoned, then those crops do not need to count towards stocks. Under no circumstances should unharvested acres from 2019 be included as acres planted for the 2020 crop year. Please contact your supervisor or your NASDA Coordinator if you have any questions.

March 1 Survey Packets on the way! – Miyares

UPS Packages are going out today with the March Agricultural Survey (March Crops APS) and March Hog information. If you see on your iPad that you have assignments for Crops and Hogs but do not receive a package, please contact your supervisor or your NASDA Coordinator so we can track down the package. Included in these packages are some labeled paper questionnaires that match with ARMS III and/or the Census of Horticulture. These are being provided for your convenience for data collection purposes, but data for these surveys still must be completed on the iPads.

Tracking contact attempts on the iPad – Miyares

Field Office and NASS HQ staff are starting to pay attention to how much enumerators are using the tools within the CAPI system to keep track of attempted contacts and scheduled appointments with respondents. With the March Agricultural Survey, enumerators are strongly encouraged to document attempted contacts with operations using the tools on the iPad prior to the March 11 callout date. If, by the callout date, an operation in your assignment listing looks like it hasn't been contacted yet and there is no appointment scheduled with the operator to complete the survey in the "Attempted Contact" notes (in the "Operator Information" area), then the form may be reassigned to a different enumerator at the callout date.

Operator Information Close

AGRICULTURAL SURVEY - DECEMBER CROPS APS
POID: 301474370 TRA: 1 SUB: 4 OP DOM: 45
DCMS: 665 STR: LABELS:
Survey Code: 26 301440211 NBBGMR
Operator:
JOHN DOE
555 FARMTOWN ROAD
FARMTOWN, MI 45000
Operation:
DOE FARMS INC
Person Phone: (419) 555-5555
Other Phone: (419) 555-1234
Operation Phone: (419) 555-4321

Attempted Contacts

Date	Time	Notes	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Save"/>

Sexual Harassment Training Reminder

NASDA has mandated that all telephone and field enumerators complete mandatory Sexual Harassment training prior to March 1. Many enumerators completed this training during the recent ARMS III Schools while several telephone specialists who are not working the ARMS survey have completed the training independently on-line. If you have not completed this training as of yet, please do so before March 1. Time spent on this training should be billed to Project Code 350 if you have no ARMS III assignments.

National FFA Week

February 22-29 is National FFA Week, a time for FFA members to host activities that raise awareness about the role the FFA plays in the development of agriculture's future leaders and the importance of agricultural education. National FFA Week always runs Saturday to Saturday and encompasses February 22, George Washington's birthday. The National FFA Board of Directors designated the week-long tradition, which began in 1948 in recognition of Washington's legacy as an agriculturist and farmer. More than 700,000 FFA members will celebrate the role agriculture plays in our lives while sharing the message of agricultural education. For more information visit <https://www.ffa.org/national-ffa-week/>.



Friday Feedback for Friday, February 14, 2020

iOS Update – Laird

Apple has recently released iOS 13.3.1. It has been approved for download on all CAPI iPads. Please contact your CAPI POC or NASDA supervisor if you have issues. Instructions can be found on the [CAPI Dashboard](#), or by tapping [HERE](#).

FOR ALL FUTURE UPDATES, please check the status of the iOS updates on the [CAPI Dashboard](#). All iPads have this icon on their home screen. Now, when you see an iPad notification for a new iOS update, please visit the [CAPI Dashboard](#) to see if HQ has approved the update install.

Update on Fruit PDI, Berry PDI, Fruit Rotational and Prices Paid (Michigan Only) – Collom/Saffell

The Fruit Rotational questionnaires have not yet arrived from our print center. We are going to delay sending the Fruit Rotational, Fruit PDI, Berry PDI and Prices Paid work to enumerators and supervisors until late in the week of February 24. The Fruit/Berry/Rotational/Prices Paid work doesn't begin until March 9. The March 1 survey work (Crops and Hogs) will still be sent to enumerators via UPS on or around February 20, and in those packets, we will include labeled Fruit and Berry PDI questionnaires that match with either the Census of Horticulture or ARMS III. As for the other surveys, we will do our very best to let supervisors know when these are shipped so that enumerators can be on the look-out for the UPS truck.

“All Hands” Meeting – Johnson

NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer held a meeting for all NASS Staff on February 12, 2020. He thanked everyone, (NASS and NASDA) for all of their help and patience after the “Shutdown” ended. He mentioned that NASS received a lot of emails and phone calls during the “Shutdown” requesting data. This shows how important NASS data is to the industry. He also mentioned how appreciative he was for all of the work that went into the re-interview surveys conducted this past summer, the efforts to prepare for the delayed 2017 Census release, and our flexibility to work with adjusted survey dates throughout the year. NASS Headquarters is looking at options to decrease the number of inaccessible forms and increase response rates across all surveys. Enumerator voices are being heard by Headquarters. A big Thank You from Hubert Hamer and the Great Lakes Region Staff.

Greg Matli Retiring March 27 – Price

Indiana State Statistician Greg Matli will be retiring after 32+ years of Federal Service. Greg began as a NASDA telephone enumerator in Illinois in 1985, going on to be a supervisor enumerator of the Regional Corn and Soybean lab. On May 10, 1987, Greg left Illinois to begin his Federal career in the Crops Unit, working on estimates for dry edible beans, sugarbeets, apples, peaches, and the potato objective yield survey. In 1990, Greg moved to North Dakota to take a position as the Group Leader of the Livestock/Survey section for four years before moving to Washington DC where Greg worked in the List Sampling Frame Section before serving as the National Hog Statistician. In 1999, Greg moved to Indiana where he served as the Estimates Section Head for eight years before being promoted to the position of Deputy Director of the Indiana Office. In 2013, when Indiana became part of the Great Lakes Region, Greg was promoted to State Statistician.

Please come and help celebrate Indiana State Statistician Greg Matli's retirement from USDA – NASS. An open-house reception with a light buffet and a cash bar will be held at the Columbia Room, 625 Columbia Street, Lafayette, Indiana from 4:00 to 8:00 pm on Saturday, March 28, 2020. Open mic comments will start at 6:30 p.m. Please RSVP to gregmatli@yahoo.com if you plan to attend.

After March 27, Greg can be reached at gregmatli@yahoo.com.

Another Michigan ARMS III School in the Books – Hurlbut

Thank you all for your many contributions that made for another successful ARMS III School. I think we are off to a good start with the survey. We would like to collect your opinions on what went well and what didn't, so we can start setting our training goals for the June school. Please take the survey linked below, it is fairly short and mobile device friendly. This is a survey for those who attended the Michigan ARMS III workshop only.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2CKBGHP>

Not Too Late for Indiana, Ohio ARMS III School Survey – Hurlbut

The post-school feedback surveys for Indiana and Ohio are still open for response. Ironically, the response rate has been fairly low. We would like as much material as possible to plan and set training performance goals for June. Please respond if you haven't already. Links below:

Indiana School Attendees: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6CPSTM9>

Ohio School Attendees: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LM5MSW9>

2019 Crop Season Highlights Available on Purdue Site – Hurlbut

At each of the three ARMS III Schools, I did a presentation on the 2019 Crop Season Highlights, with an emphasis on the Principal Crops grown across the U.S., and a special focus on Corn and Soybeans acreage and production. This presentation was prepared by Lance Honig, Chief of the Crops Branch at USDA NASS Headquarters and we were given permission to share this with our stakeholders. For those interested in reviewing or citing this presentation, a copy of it is available on the Purdue site. It can be found in the ARMS III pages under the heading "2019 Crop Season Highlights". It can also be reviewed by clicking or tapping [HERE](#).

Library Lovers Day

Library Lovers' Day is celebrated on 14th February each year to honor libraries, librarians, book lovers, and lovers of libraries. On Library Lovers' Day, we celebrate the enduring relationship between our community and the libraries. This also provides an opportunity to celebrate those who love and support libraries and to remind decision makers how loved and cherished libraries are by the entire community. Not everyone receives flowers on Valentine's Day but everyone is welcome at their library.

Friday Feedback for Friday, February 7, 2020

Michigan Fruit Rotational Survey Update – Saffell

The specialty crop inventory survey will be mailed late next week or early the subsequent week. Phone and interview non-response follow-up will begin in mid-March. An exact schedule will be done when we find out the mailing date. There will be a training teleconference the first week of March. Target crops include grapes, hops, cranberries, brambles, strawberries, and Saskatoon berries.

Lynn Spisak Retirement Party Reminder and Book of Letters – Bowman/Miyares

As many of you know, Lynn Spisak retired on January 3 after 40 years of Federal Service at the USDA NASS Great Lakes Regional Office. We are celebrating Lynn's career with a retirement party on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Ozzy's Kabob, 3536 Meridian Crossings Drive #260 Okemos, MI 48864. The restaurant is only about a half mile from the hotel in Okemos where ARMS III School participants will be staying and the party was scheduled for when and where it was so that as many of her NASDA friends would be able to attend. The cost will be \$15 plus tax and gratuity per person with Mediterranean dishes served family style. If you would like to attend, and you have not yet RSVP'd to Denise Bowman previously, please reach out to Denise as soon as possible by e-mail to denise.bowman@usda.gov or by phone direct at 517-324-5322.

We would like to present Lynn with a book of letters and cards from people she worked with over the years at her retirement party on February 12. If you would like to send a card or letter for Lynn's book, please either send it to Denise Bowman by email at denise.bowman@usda.gov, or mail it to Denise Bowman at the USDA/NASS Great Lakes Regional Office at 3001 Coolidge Road Suite 400, East Lansing, MI 48823. We would like to have all cards and letters by February 7, 2020 so we will have time to finish making the book. Lynn will be every appreciative for anyone who takes the time to send a card or letter.

Another Ohio ARMS III School in the Books

Thank you all for your many contributions that made for another successful ARMS III School. I think we are off to a good start with the survey. I would like to collect your opinions on what went well and what didn't, so we can start setting our training goals for the June school. Please take the survey linked below, it is fairly short and mobile device friendly. [This is a survey for those who attended the Ohio ARMS III workshop only.](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LM5MSW9)

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LM5MSW9>

USDA Announces Details of Risk Management Programs for Hemp Producers

USDA Announced the availability of two programs that protect hemp producers' crops from natural disasters. A pilot help insurance program through Multi-Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI) provides coverage against loss of yield because of insurable causes of loss for hemp grown for fiber, grain, or CBD oil, and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage protects against losses associated with lower yields, destroyed crops, or prevented planting where no permanent federal crop insurance program is available. Producers may apply now, and the deadline to sign up for both programs is March 16, 2020. For more information, tap [HERE](#).

National Wear Red Day

On National Wear Red Day, held every year on the first Friday in February, women all over the country will be wearing red to help raise awareness of women's heart health. The American Heart Association hopes that by asking people to wear such a noticeable and powerful color on this day, attention can be brought to cardiovascular disease. Statistics show that heart disease and stroke kill one in three women, more than all forms of cancer combined. Since the inception of National Wear Red Day in 2003, nearly 90 percent of women have made at least

one healthy behavior change, more than 50 percent have increased their exercise, and more than 40 percent have checked their cholesterol levels. The “Go Red” campaign has helped increase awareness so women can be better attention if they are experiencing symptoms