

Friday Feedback for Friday, May 29, 2020

Prioritizing Work – Miyares

Starting today, there are ten active surveys going on in the GLR. It can be very easy to get overwhelmed by what you see and some of you may not know where to begin. As always, we recommend completing the survey with the earliest due dates first. Due within the next few days are most of the Small Fruit and Hops Inventory Survey (MI Only) and Wheat Objective Yield (OH Only). Next week, we have due dates for Cherry Production (MI Only), Ag Yield (all states), and Potato Stocks (MI Only). After that we have the Hog Report (June 13), followed by Agricultural Survey (June 15), and Cash Rents (June 19). The Census of Horticulture and Land Values survey continue until June 30 while the Integrated Screening Survey (ARMS 1) runs until early July.

CAPI Coding – Miyares/Lawson

The following are reminders about coding practices for surveys in CAPI.

- Please don't code a record as "inaccessible" at the start of a survey if the operator is unavailable at the time you call. The only reason someone should be inaccessible for a survey that runs for several weeks is if the operator is out of the state, in the hospital, or in some way physically away and unavailable to complete the survey before data collection ends.
- If a respondent says that they have mailed in the form, will mail in the form or plan to complete it online later, select the "MAILED IN" option from the comment block within the open survey. This will change the form's status to "Mailed In", which will allow the form to be completed at a later time either by you or the respondent. If the form were coded as either a refusal or as inaccessible in CAPI instead of using this "Mailed In" option, the form gets "checked in" and becomes unavailable to follow up with later.
- Please don't code "disconnects" as inaccessible. We have tools to try to find better phone numbers in the Regional office. Please reach out to your supervisors or your NASDA Coordinator if you run into some records where research for a better phone number is necessary.

Addressing Confusion about the Land Values Survey – Miyares

As people have started reviewing the samples for the June Surveys, we've started to receive some questions about why the Land Values sample looks so much different than the other ongoing surveys. This article hopes to address some of the frequently asked questions with this survey:

Why does the same person in my CAPI listings have two different POIDs? For June Crops or ISS, the POID starts with a 3 but for the Land Values Survey, the POID starts with a 1? The Land Values survey was sampled from the Area Frame based on enumerator visits and screening activities that took place in June 2019. POIDs were assigned for each area tract operator. To distinguish them, POIDs on the Area Frame start with a 1 while POIDs on the List frame start with a 3, 7, 8, or 9.

Is there any way I can see these operators grouped together? If you go to the GRID CONTROLS in CAPI and select to have the records grouped by "XSTATELINK" instead of by POID, then you should be able to see the records grouped together if they were previously linked together in ELMO. If there are records that still won't group together that way, please contact the office and we'll see if there is a reason why they're not linked together.

I see some cases where the operation has both an Area record and a List record, but the XSTATELINK won't group them together. Why not? The June Area Survey is "Operator Dominant", which means that we are focusing on the person operating the tract, not the operation. If the person completing the June Area Survey last year told the enumerator that the tract was theirs alone and that they had no partners and there were no other names associated with the operation, then we could not overlap them or link them together across the frames.

So if I think that the area record and the list record are supposed to be linked together, but they are not, how can I fix this? The easiest way to make sure they can get linked is if we have all of the names associated with the operation listed as partners on both the Area record and the List record, even if the person is only a “silent partner” and doesn’t make all of the day-to-day decisions for the area tract. Be sure to add all of the names in CAPI when you are verifying names and addresses and doing partner checks. If you are absolutely sure what you’re seeing is the same operation, but with different operators between the List and the Area, we need to determine who is supposed to be the primary target and get comments updated on both records for this.

Answers to other Frequently Asked Questions about the Land Values Sample can be found at this [LINK](#).

Friday Feedback for Friday, May 22, 2020

June Survey Field Kits and Training Materials – Miyares

Field kits containing information for upcoming June Surveys were sent to enumerators on Wednesday May 20. Everyone should be receiving these packets either by today or right after the weekend. If you do not receive your packets by Tuesday May 26, please contact the Regional Office.

Included in these packets this month is the new copy of the “Agricultural Surveys Interviewer Manual”. These manuals include information on several surveys being conducted throughout the year, including the Quarterly Agricultural Surveys (Crops APS), the Quarterly Hog Report, the Cattle Reports, the Sheep and Goat Report, the Monthly Ag Yield Survey. These manuals, normally distributed before mid-year workshops, should be kept for reference until new manuals are issued and distributed in May 2021.

With the later-than-normal distribution of the manuals, office staff have prepared some “Survey Information Sheets” for the June Ag Survey, the Land Values Survey, and the Integrated Screener Survey. These documents highlight the changes to these surveys from past years and address particular items to pay attention to when collecting data for these surveys. The Survey Information Sheets can be found on the individual survey pages on the Purdue Site along with the enumerator memo, pre-survey letter, and electronic copy of the questionnaire. Please be sure to read and review them before beginning data collection.

Preparing for the June Hog Survey – Erickson

Prior to working on the June Hogs Survey, please take some time to review the materials on the website under the ‘Hog Report’ tab. You will notice the normal items, such as the enumerator memo, pre-survey letter, questionnaire, and other training materials. I want to point out a particular slide in the ‘Training Slides’ file. It is slide #23, and is titled ‘Industry Issues’. As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused some packing facilities to shut down recently. This disruption of the flow of pork from the farm to the store has caused some hog producers to make some difficult decisions. These decisions range from euthanizing market hogs, to altering feed programs, to aborting litters. COVID-19 might also put strain on the contractee/contractor relationship as these tough management decisions are made.

The Hog questionnaire can handle any type of hog operation, as well as any unusual circumstances. So, please make sure you are familiar with the questionnaire, and enter good notes to justify anything that seems a little out of the ordinary. It is much easier to justify special circumstances if you enter good notes. Two potentially sensitive items are questions 2a & 2b on page 3 and question 8 on page 4. If some litters were aborted recently, then items 2a & 2b might not seem to make sense relative to item 2. If hogs were euthanized, then item 8 might be much higher than normal. Also, the relationship between question 2 on page 3 (total # of sows & gilts for breeding...) and question 7 on page 4 might seem strange if there was a reduction in sows recently.

Grain Transportation Survey – Dothage

NASS, in cooperation with the North Dakota State University's Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute and the Agricultural Marketing Service, is conducting a Farm to Market Grain Transportation survey to better understand local grain transportation market flows and investments. For the Great Lakes Region, Indiana has been selected to be in this survey.

The sample consists of around 1,000 farmers in Indiana. The questionnaire includes questions about the types of vehicles used to transport their 2019 corn and soybean crops, the destination of their crop (processor, feed market, storage, etc), distance traveled to delivery point, and other related topics.

The questionnaires will be mailed out at the end of June, with a data collection period running through July and ending in late August. Aside from matches with other surveys, there will be limited local enumeration. The call centers will handle the majority of data collection. If you have any questions, please contact Stephen Dothage at (517) 324-5327.

Small Fruit and Hops Update – Saffell/Laird

Due to the continued moratorium on face-to-face enumeration, we will be extending the data collection dates for a handful of large operations in the Michigan Small Fruit and Hops survey until June 30. The last day of data collection for most forms will still be May 31. If a sampled operator assigned to you to call is no longer in your CAPI listing on June 1, then no further contacts should be attempted for that operation. Any forms remaining in your CAPI listing on June 1 may still be attempted up until June 30. Please contact Marty or Mike if you have any questions or concerns.

Farmers Market Manager Survey Reminder – Dothage/Miyares

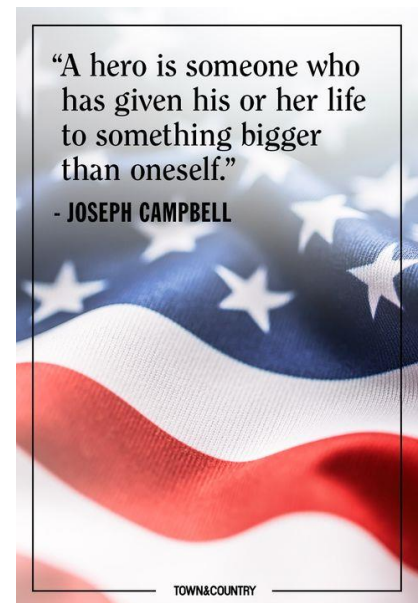
As a friendly reminder, the last day to submit completed forms for the Farmers Market Manager Survey is this coming Monday May 25. Special thanks to everyone who has put in extra efforts to collect high quality data for this very important project.

Memorial Day Thoughts

Observed on the last Monday of May, Memorial Day honors the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. Military and were not able to return home because of the sacrifice they made for our quality of life. This year Memorial Day occurs on May 25. All Federal Offices will be closed for this official federal holiday.

While we may not be able to gather with family and friends this Memorial Day, and the number of parades and events surrounding the day will be limited this year, let us still remember, as we renew our commitment to honor those we have lost, that every day there are dedicated men and women putting their lives on the line to protect all of us. Surely there is no more fitting way to honor those who have sacrificed and gave their lives in service to their country than to celebrate the very qualities for which they died: life in all its richness, liberty to discover all that life offers, and the pursuit of happiness through community, family, prosperity, opportunity, freedom, quality, and safety.

This Memorial Day additionally gives us cause to acknowledge the great sacrifices our healthcare workers have made to stop the spread of the coronavirus and preserved the lives of those who have fallen ill during the pandemic. While not detracting from Memorial Day's focus on those who served in the military and making the ultimate sacrifice, it may be fitting this year that we also acknowledge all those in the present time who have recently given their lives so that we may continue to enjoy the places we collectively and individually call "home".



Friday Feedback for Friday, May 15, 2020

Data Collection in Difficult Times – Hurlbut

Bad news continues to come in from all corners of the agricultural industry due to circumstances that were beyond our imagination not too long ago. The Agricultural Labor survey just wrapped up, and while response rates weren't spectacular, we held our ground which is an accomplishment in these challenging circumstances. Soon you all will be reaching out to hog producers, one of the hardest hit industries. You will also start work with the June Agricultural Survey, which always sets the yearly starting point for discussion about the agricultural economy in the U.S. and the world. There are other surveys as well, some specialized and with smaller sample sizes, but they make our information base complete.

I don't recall the last time our Nation was this focused on numbers. Centers for Disease Control figures are checked as frequently as the clock on the wall. Unemployment figures are read off constantly. Closest to us, the once unthought-of troubles of the mightiest agricultural industry appear in statistics as well. When things improve, and they always do, the first light will come through the same figures we watch so closely and that we work so hard to prepare.

Hope is based on a foundation of information, and your role in providing that information is paramount. Thank you for your continued commitment to service of U.S. Agriculture.

GLR Welcomes Student Intern – Rolewicz

My name is Allison Rolewicz and I am finishing up my Junior year at Central Michigan University where I study statistics and computer science. I am from a small town just north of Grand Rapids, Michigan. I am excited to begin learning more about real-world applications pertaining to my field of study--it is an honor to be working for an organization that utilizes statistics for positive change and as a means to serve others! In my spare time I enjoy crocheting, music, outdoor activities, and spending time with close family and friends.

Cash Rent Supplies – Morris/Miyares

There will be one final push of about 1400 new Cash Rent assignments in the region to phone starting May 22. These 1400 forms will include records matched with June surveys as well as records that are in counties requiring improved coverage. If you need additional paper questionnaires or an updated set of assignment listings, please place a request through the order form on the GLR Home Page, which can be accessed [HERE](#).

Delayed start of June phoning for selected operations – Miyares

Calling for our major June Surveys (Crops, Hogs, ISS, Land Values) is scheduled to begin on May 29; however, for selected operations with a historically high response rate by either mail or online, the CAPI Start Date for those forms will be adjusted to allow those operators time to get their forms in. This project was piloted in March for operators called from the call centers, and it worked very well. This quarter, the process will be used for CAPI eligible records as well provided that the form isn't matched with a second survey that might have an earlier due date. All affected forms will have a comment in the enumerator notes saying that the start date is being delayed.

Important iPad Info – Lawson/Laird

HQ has tested and approved the latest version of the Apple operating system: iOS 13.4.1 Please **update the iPad at your earliest convenience**. A WiFi connection will be required. Touch here for detailed instructions: [How to update iOS](#).

After updating the iOS it is important to touch on the gray settings icon to verify that each of the follow settings are still correct:

- General – Software Update – Automatic Updates is OFF
- Display & Brightness – Auto Lock – Set to 15 minutes
- Home Screen & Dock – Multitasking – Turn OFF ALL 3 items
- Accessibility – Home Button – Select “Slowest” Click Speed
- Touch ID & Passcode – Enter password used to unlock iPad – Require Passcode = “After 15 min”
- Privacy – Location Services – Location services = ON, CAPI = While Using & Mobile Iron = Always
- Safari – ensure that Block Pop- ups is OFF

Here are some responses to pop-up messages you may see:

- Carrier Settings update – Select “Update”
- Mobile Iron has been monitoring in the background – Select “Continue to allow”
- Allow “CAPI” to use your location – Select “Allow While Using App”
- Follow-up message to use your current location – Select “OK”

Here are some CAPI troubleshooting tips:

- Tap on “Clear Preferences” just above the word “English” on the CAPI login screen
- Temporarily turn off WiFi – Helpful for lag time when logging into CAPI or when maps stall
- (Be sure to be logged out of CAPI first) – Then double press the home button & swipe up to close all running items
- Close excessive Safari windows by touching the “X” on each tab
- Go into Settings – Safari – Clear History and Website Data, then do a hard reboot by holding in the power and home buttons until you see the Apple.

Finally, here are some other iPad related tips:

- Logout of CAPI every night
- Never try more than 2 failed attempts to unlock the iPad – Call for assistance as the iPad can be easily unlocked remotely avoiding having to completely reset it back up from Hello
- Touch [HERE](#) to add a calculator to the iPad home screen
- Do NOT use the Apple mail App – Touch [HERE](#) to see the proper way to access gmail on the iPad
- Watch the [CAPI Dashboard](#) & Alerts at the top of the Purdue website for tips or known issues

Friday Feedback for Friday, May 8, 2020

NAHMS Delayed

NASS Management met with APHIS/NAHMS and discussed the upcoming NAHMS projects scheduled for 2020. It was through these meetings and discussions to postpone all 2020 NAHMS surveys until 2021. For our region, these surveys include the NAHMS Small Swine Producer Study and the NAHMS Large Swine Producer Study, which are now scheduled to take place in the summer of 2021. More information will be conveyed as we receive it and as we get closer to the date.

Looking Ahead to Row Crop OY – Erickson

In response to the suspension of this year's June Area survey, the NASS Objective Yield (OY) Survey Team met to discuss survey procedures for the 2020 Row Crop OY Surveys. Significant decisions are outlined below.

- Samples will be drawn from the June Crops APS Survey, similar to how Wheat OY samples are drawn from the March Crops APS survey, based on planted acres reported.
- Field selection will also be similar to what is currently done with Wheat OY in Ohio, where a direction variable will be selected for each samples.
- All Form A's will be completed by telephone interview.
- The first Form B's data will not be completed in our region until the end of August.

More information about this survey, including a training plan, will be provided as we get closer to the dates.

Managing Buckets of Cash...Rents – Morris/Miyares

Many enumerators have noticed that the Cash Rent samples on their iPads that they've been working on for the last 2-8 weeks were removed from their CAPI listings this morning and replaced with new records. In order to mitigate the burden on the CAPI system and on our local enumerators who are now being asked to complete many more cash rent forms than they have in the past, the cash rent samples that would have been sent to be called from our Data Collection Centers (DCCs) were divided into "buckets" which would be called at different times.

The first bucket of forms was available from April 24 to May 7, and included forms that matched with other April/Early May surveys (Milk Production, Quarterly Colony Loss, April Labor, May Ag Yield). The second bucket of forms was made available today (May 8) and will be available in CAPI until May 21. A third bucket of forms, which will include matches with ARMS I/ISS and some early June Surveys (Ag Yield, Potato Stocks, Cherry Production), will be available between May 22 and June 4, and a fourth bucket of forms, which will include matches with the major June surveys (Crops APS, Land Values, Hogs) will become available on May 29.

Please note that some records which disappeared from CAPI listings from the first bucket of forms may get turned back on again towards the end of the survey period (after June 4) if it is determined that the extra records are needed to improve coverage in certain counties.

Land Values Survey – Miyares

In order to obtain land values indications that would normally have been collected on the June Area Survey, NASS will be conducting a one-time only Land Values Survey this June. The sample will consist of approximately 2500 agricultural tract operators from the 2019 June Area Survey. The questionnaire is a single two-sided sheet with questions that would normally have been asked in Section M of the June Area Ag Tract Questionnaire, including values of cropland and pastureland per acre, market value of the entire operation, and the change in the value of the land between last year and this year. Questions about the likely use of the land if sold were removed from the form. Sampled operations matched with other June Surveys will be contacted during the first half of June while non-matches will be completed during the second half of June. More information will become available over the next few weeks and posted to the GLR website.

Friday Feedback for Friday, May 1, 2020

Mail is Moving Slowly – Collom

While most of us have heard of the unofficial US Postal Service Slogan, “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds”, the current pandemic has limited how “swift” the mail is moving at this time. Questionnaires are taking many days longer to reach the farmer and subsequently many days longer to get to the National Operations Center in St. Louis once the farmer mails in the return. It is possible that you will receive a lot of comments from respondents saying, “I just got this in the mail” or “I just mailed it in”. Please be understanding of the situation and remind the operators that with the mail moving slowly you may need to call them back before the survey ends in order to get their data.

When can we go back out? – Miyares

It has been just over 40 days since the moratorium on field enumeration was put into place, and now with some states beginning to loosen their shelter-in-place orders, some are wondering when it will be okay to start field enumeration again. Please remember that NASDA along with NASS will be communicating guidelines about how the resumption of normal activities will be taking place. Enumerators should follow any guidance which comes from Charlie Ingram and from the Regional Field Office. A recent memo from NASDA regarding data collection for the Wheat Objective Yield survey in Ohio was sent to all enumerators and can be found [HERE](#).

The Value of Statistics – Johnson/Hurlbut

In addition to many field enumerators expressing frustration about the challenges of doing enumeration over the phone when many are used to doing personal interviews, we’ve received reports from enumerators about operator pushback on recent surveys. Many farmers are trying to figure out how to stay in business as commodity markets, labor resources, and supply chains have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and don’t see the importance of completing a voluntary survey. Our challenge is to convince operators that now is the time to report more than ever before so that their farm’s information is included as part of the state- and national-level statistics, especially in this challenging time.

NASS statistics are used by farmers, agribusinesses, and commodity groups to measure the health of agriculture, determine where supply needs and inventories are, predict demand, and assess market strength. Lawmakers and policymakers use our statistics to formulate legislation to provide support, stability, and economic opportunities to the industry. Without this information, government leaders can’t access local data, and USDA can’t prepare for or respond to crises like the one we are going through now. NASS is the one agency that is able to provide unbiased information about the current state of agriculture because it gets the data directly from the source: the farmers and ranchers doing the work on the ground, and when stakeholders, decision makers, and data users want to know how this pandemic affected the agricultural industry, they will look to NASS for the data. However, in order for NASS to meet this mission of providing accurate, useful, and timely statistics in service to agriculture, we need to cooperation of the farmers in our survey programs. NASDA enumerators are the key to getting that cooperation from these reluctant respondents.

We recognize that this year the challenge is much harder than it has been in the past, so if you are looking for advice on how to do things differently, talk to your supervisor or your NASDA Coordinator who may be able to help. We also know that we have enumerators who have been successful in their efforts despite the obstacles that have come about this year, and please know that we do plan to recognize those enumerators who have gone above and beyond this year when it comes time to put together award recommendations. Thank you for your continued hard work in service to agriculture.

Finding New Farmers Markets – Miyares/Dothage

A number of people have asked about what they should do if, while working the Farmers Market Manager Survey, they find out about a farmers market that wasn't on our list or wasn't in the survey sample.

- Can we add them to the sample and fill out a questionnaire for their market? Unfortunately, no. The rules governing this survey do not allow for new adds during the survey period.
- What if the market is the same market as the one on the questionnaire, but it has a different name? Collect the data and fix the name. Make sure you have clear comments entered into CAPI to explain the situation.
- What if the same person is the market manager for multiple markets? Can I combine the data on one form? No. Separate farmers markets require separate questionnaires.
- What should I do with the information about the new market? Isn't that information important? Yes. You should either enter all of the information about the new market into a CAPI comment (operation name, contact/manager name, address, phone number) or send the information to your NASDA Coordinator so we can get the new entity added to the list. In addition to those newly identified markets being eligible for future farmers market surveys, we will be reaching out to many of these farmers' markets to ask for their vendors lists in preparation for the 2022 Census of Agriculture.
- Should I fill out a NACS for the new market? No. The NACS is for newly identified farmers. Most of the questions on the NACS would not apply to a Farmers Market.
- Should I fill out an out-of-business for markets that are no longer in operation? No. Just like the NACS, the out-of-business form is to screen for farming activity. The best way to get us information about out-of-business farmers markets is to fill out Section 7 of the Farmers Market Manager Survey.

Cash Rents Update – Morris/Miyares

Most of the Cash Rent forms that are currently available for completion on the iPad will be turned off after May 7. Many of these forms have been available for phoning since the beginning of April or have been matched with ongoing surveys. Turning these forms off will allow us to make room for more Cash Rent assignments, which will be available between May 8 and May 21. A third push of new forms, which will include matches with ARMS I/ISS and June Ag Yield, will be made available from May 22 to June 4. Matches with June 1 Surveys (Crops, Hogs, etc.) will be available starting May 29. After June 4, if the data suggests that we need additional completed reports in certain counties, then we may turn some forms back on for additional follow-up.

Using CAPI on a Desktop or Laptop – Miyares

Are you running up against a deadline for survey completion and worried that you're not going to be able to get your work submitted on time? Is your iPad causing you fits? Don't forget you can access CAPI, CAPI Training, and the CAPI Dashboard from a personally owned laptop or desktop computer in addition to your NASS Issued iPad. Instructions for accessing these tools can be found at this [LINK](#). If you need help setting this up, please check with your supervisor or NASDA Coordinator.