

Friday Feedback for Friday, July 24, 2020

August 1 Survey Information On The Way!

Enumerator packets for the August 1 Surveys were shipped out on Wednesday July 22. Packets should be arriving by Friday July 24 depending upon the distance from the office. If you see assignments for the August 1 Surveys on your iPad (Ag Yield, Apple/Peach forecast, Potato PDI) and you have not received your packet by either Monday or Tuesday, please contact your NASDA Coordinator

Objective Yield Materials Posted to the Website

The samples for this year's Row Crop Objective Yield Surveys are finally available. Enumerators in Indiana and Ohio will be contacted about working this year's survey and about the training plan your supervisor will be planning. Survey materials have also been posted to the Purdue site at this [LINK](#). Assignments and training materials will be sent to individual enumerators soon.

Highlights of changes from this year's survey include:

- Sample sizes have increased by about 100 samples for corn and 100 samples for soybeans across both states. This is a significant increase from last year, but still slightly below where we were at two years ago
- The first field-level data will be collected at the end of August, as was done in 2019, in preparation for USDA's September 12 *Crop Production* report.
- Form A will need to be completed over the phone with operators.
- With the suspension of the June Area Survey in 2020, field selection procedures on the Form A have been modified to resemble what has historically been done on Wheat Objective Yield in Ohio. A special appendix in the interviewer manual has been created to explain these procedures.
- Form A will be completed in CAPI starting this year, meaning there won't need to be anything shipped to East Lansing. The new instrument should be available to play with in CAPI Training by next week.

Due to the social distancing guidelines and restrictions on the number of people who can assemble in any group due to the ongoing pandemic, there will be no state schools and no mini-schools this year. Your supervisor will reach out to you to discuss the training plan unique to your group.

Be Safe in the Heat!

As we start venturing back outside in the summer heat, don't forget about staying safe outdoors this summer. Heat-related ailments can be dangerous and lead to serious complications, especially when treatment is delayed. Make sure you have a plan to handle heat-related health emergencies and that enumerators and supervisors know about it. The symptoms of heat stress should never be ignored, including dizziness, fainting, nausea, vomiting, headaches, muscle cramps, confusion, shallow breathing, rapid pulse/heartbeat, red/hot skin, and lack of sweating. Here are some things to remember about working in fields on hot days:

- **Drink plenty of water.** This will help to prevent heat exhaustion, which occurs when the body loses too much salt and water due to excess sweating.
- **Take frequent breaks in the shade,** especially after prolonged exposure to extreme heat. This is especially important during periods of intense heat and for those who wear protective gear.
- **Don't rush through tasks.** People build up their heat tolerance gradually. If you've been quarantined indoors for the last four months, be sure to start out slowly and take frequent breaks.
- **Know the signs.** Anyone working outdoors should know the signs and symptoms of heat-related ailments and feel comfortable reporting them. Supervisors should also be able to spot them.

While the work we do is important, it is not as important as the health and safety of our enumerators.

Friday Feedback for Friday, July 17, 2020

NASDA provides updates and guidance for Objective Yield Data Collection

On March 18, NASDA and NASS suspended all face-to-face meetings and interviews with survey respondents in response to the ongoing uncertainty around the coronavirus pandemic. While this guidance remains in effect, the upcoming Corn and Soybean Objective Yield (OY) surveys bring some unique challenges for data collection, and many aspects of the Corn and Soybean OY program have been adjusted for this year to accommodate the current realities. Changes to the program include delivery of equipment and supplies, field selection procedures, and training plans. More information will be provided in the coming weeks through your supervisors and through the GLR Home Page on the Purdue Website detailing these changes. Supervisors will be meeting with RFO staff through a teleconference on July 23 to discuss the changes to the survey and the training plan.

On April 6, NASDA and NASS issued guidance for special situations when enumerators have work related activities that may require driving, such as for Corn and Soybean OY field visits. Driving to field sample locations by enumerators will be allowed only for the purpose of setting up the survey plots and making the crop counts in the field, but only enumerators who have been assigned corn and soybean OY survey assignments have approval to drive for this activity. Here are some other important guidelines on this:

- Enumerators are not to have any in-person contact with respondents or others.
- Enumerators working in two-person teams to complete OY fieldwork is allowed only if enumerators feel comfortable doing so, and provided they follow all social distancing, health and safety recommendations. Enumerators are strongly encouraged to wear face masks or covering if they work in close contact with one another, such as helping with the setup of the field plot.
- Enumerators working in teams are also allowed to carpool if they feel comfortable and safe doing so. We highly recommend that enumerators wear face masks or coverings and enumerators should not ride together if they are feeling sick. Enumerators may also drive separately to field locations if they are not comfortable carpooling.
- Enumerators may claim mileage for approved travel time.
- Enumerators will be able to claim a total of \$25 for any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as face masks, gloves, etc., if needed as a reimbursement on their time sheet.
- Enumerators should follow any state or local stay-at-home orders, including social distancing recommendations and any advisories from state and local government agencies, public health authorities, and medical professionals, in addition to any federal guidelines.
- If enumerators need to drive in an area that is limited or restricted by state and/or local authorities, the NASS Regional office will provide an official letter stating that the enumerator's travel is on behalf of USDA-NASS and is considered as "essential" business.

National Ice Cream Day July 19

Celebrated annually since 1984 on the third Sunday of July in the United States, this unofficial holiday celebrates one of the staples of summertime. The holiday was created by an official proclamation by President Reagan in 1984. While the holiday was only supposed to be celebrated once, on July 15, 1984, the ice cream industry decided to continue the tradition every year since. Many ice cream parlors and stores have sales or specials on their products.

Traditionally made by freezing a mixture of cream or milk, sugar, and some kind of flavoring, ice cream is often eaten after a meal as a dessert or as a mid-meal snack. In the days before refrigerators became common kitchen equipment, ice cream was a food reserved for the royals and the rich and it was only eaten during special occasions. The development of refrigeration technology quickly made ice cream a commonly enjoyed dessert around the world. Today, ice cream is enjoyed by over 90 percent of Americans and people can easily make ice cream at home with the help of portable ice cream makers.

Friday Feedback for Friday, July 10, 2020

Don't Forget Your Cell Phone Benefit

On March 25, NASDA sent a memo to all enumerators announcing that enumerators now can claim cell phone charges each period they are assigned telephone enumeration work instead of just once per month. NASDA Coordinators have noticed that not all enumerators are taking advantage of this benefit on their time sheets. A copy of the memo has been posted to the GLR Website and can be accessed [HERE](#).

Upcoming Due Dates

The July Surveys are quickly coming to a close. Don't forget about the following upcoming due dates.

- Friday July 10: Last Day to Submit Milk Production or Cattle Surveys Matched with Milk Production
- Monday July 13: Last Day to Submit Integrated Screening Surveys (ISS)
- Tuesday July 14: Last Day to Submit Quarterly Colony Loss
- Wednesday July 15: Last Day to Submit Michigan Small Fruit and Hops Forms coded for telephone enumeration.
 - Note: There are a small number of records which require field enumeration that have CAPI Stop Dates of August 31. These should be held onto until the moratorium on field enumeration is lifted. If field enumeration is not permitted on these records before August 31, further instructions will be provided at that time.
- Thursday July 16: Last Day to Submit Cattle Surveys that are Not Matched with Milk Production

Please be sure to communicate with your supervisors regarding any forms that need "Final Submission" or to be "Saved for Review" on the very last day of each survey.

ARMS II Update – Miyares

A few weeks ago, we announced plans for the administration of the Fall Chemical Surveys, including Veg Chem and ARMS II. We received a memo right before the holiday weekend that ERS has decided not to conduct the Corn PPCR in 2020 (long form). NASS is still planning to conduct the Soybean PPR (short form) at this time, but these plans are subject to change.

In the event we are not able to perform face-to-face interviews for ARMS II, a CAPI instrument is currently being developed for Soybeans. We've never had a CAPI instrument for ARMS 2, so NASS HQ will provide training for the RFOs and the CAPI Enumerators. The training for RFO staff will be held the week of September 15th, and training for enumerators will be incorporated into the training program for the fall chemical surveys, tentatively scheduled for the last two weeks of September. Exact dates and training details will be given at a later time.

National Cheer Up the Lonely Day

Loneliness is an inevitable part of life. For some people, it can be temporary, and for others it may be a daily struggle. Loneliness can affect the young and the old, and people from all walks of life. It can be harmful to the mental, physical, and social health of those suffering from it.

Each year on July 11, National Cheer Up the Lonely Day aims to spread awareness about the damaging effects of loneliness and asks people to give some of their time to bring happiness and cheer into the lives of those who may be lonely.

The idea for the holiday, created by Francis Pesek of Detroit, MI, was to find a way to promote kindness toward others who were lonely or forgotten as shut-ins or in nursing homes with no relatives or friends to look in on them. People have celebrated this holiday by spending time with lonely people and helping them feel loved. In the age of social distancing, you can call them, send them a note to tell them that you miss them and you think about them, or perhaps send a small gift, candy, or flowers to cheer them up!

Friday Feedback for Thursday, July 2, 2020

Offices Closed Friday July 3

With July 4 falling on a Saturday this year, all Federal offices will be closed on Friday July 3 to observe Independence Day. Wishing everyone a safe and enjoyable holiday weekend!

IMPORTANT iPad Service Update – Lawson/Laird

Beginning July 1, much of the technical support for iPads which has historically been handled by NASS Staff has been taken over by USDA IT support staff outside of NASS. While NASS still has control over the CAPI application, and will still be managing samples and field assignments, NASS staff can no longer quickly reset passwords or PINs for iPads. Requests of this nature will still go through Linda and Mike, who will relay the request to USDA's Customer Experience Center. Because of the change in control, it may take up to 48 hours for these kinds of requests to be processed.

The regional office is recommending that enumerators regularly log into their iPads and make sure that any passwords and PINs being used are kept up to date. When you receive your survey assignments near the end of each month, be sure to log into both the CAPI and CAPI Training applications at that time to make sure you can access your work at least two days before the start of data collection so that if there is a problem, there will be enough time to get it straightened out before the survey you're working on goes live.

June Crop Reports – Collom

Too often we hear from producers that all NASS reports drive down prices. We know that the facts do not bear this out. The latest example saw prices across all commodities up sharply Tuesday afternoon after the release of the *June Acreage* and *Grain Stocks* reports.

Thank you for your efforts in helping to collect data to tell the facts of American agriculture. NASS reports, regardless of their effect on commodity markets, help to tell the truth of what is happening on farms all over the United States. You should be proud of the good work you accomplish each day to help serve American agriculture.

Here is a [LINK](#) some initial commentary from commodity market reporters.

Ag Yield Reminder - Miyares

If an operator reports that they aren't going to be harvesting any small grains this year on the July Ag Yield survey, please try to follow up. As a rule, those who are in the July Ag Yield sample are those who reported intentions to plant small grains (wheat, barley, or oats) on the March Crops/Stocks survey. If those intentions changed, or if the intended acres were cut for grain hay or haylage, please let a comment on the record to explain the situation.

Disconnect Reminders – Miyares

As was mentioned in a previous edition of Friday Feedback., please do NOT code and submit "disconnects" as inaccessible until the end of a survey period. By coding and submitting these records as inaccessible at the start of a survey, they become unavailable for respondents to complete online, either by EDR or by CAPI, even if we were to find a better number. Additionally, for many of the surveys with data collection periods of two weeks or longer, NASS is sending second reminders in pressure-sealed envelopes asking respondents to complete the form by mail or online if possible.

Here are some recommended guidelines for coding any future records where all phone numbers are disconnected (reprinted from the June 5 edition of Friday Feedback):

1. Mark the disconnects in the “Address Verification Screen”, then touch “Save Info”

Address verification Verify Address

Operation Information	Current Information	Update if necessary
Operation Name:	DOE FARMS INC	DOE FARMS INC X
Mailing Address:		
Other Address:		
City:		
State:		
Zip:	0 - 0	-

Operator Information	Current Information	Update if necessary
Operator's Name:	JOHN DOE	JOHN DOE X
Mailing Address:	██████████	██████████ X
Other Address:		
City:	██████████	██████████ X
State:	NH	NH X
Zip:	03275 - 0	03275 -

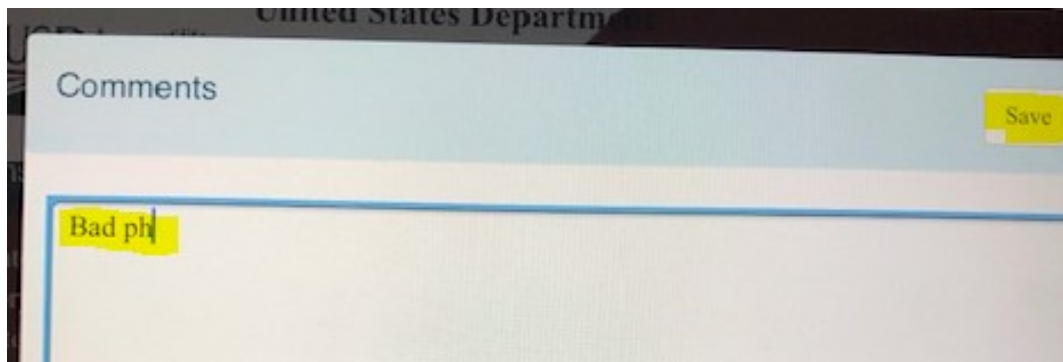
Contact Information	Current Information	Update if necessary
Person Phone:	██████████	999-999-9999 <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check if disconnected
Other Phone:	██████████	999-999-9999 <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check if disconnected
Operation Phone:	██████████	999-999-9999 <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check if disconnected
E-Mail Address:		

Return to Listing Save Info Verify Address

2. Leave a comment within the General Comments section by touching the comment icon.



3. Enter the comment “Bad Ph”, then touch Save. By using this standard comment, Regional Field Office staff will be able to search more easily for disconnected records.



4. Touch on this icon to return you to the listing page.



5. Leave the record sitting in your listing. Do NOT submit the record as inaccessible until the LAST day of the survey. You will know that the comment has been saved by looking at the Comment Icon and seeing that a number is indicated.

Also remember that the Regional Field Office has tools to find better phone numbers that should be tried before giving up on contacting an operation. You can call the Regional Office Main Line at 517-324-5300 or your NASDA Coordinator for help. If you prefer e-mail, please be sure to send the request to both Lisa Jones (lisa.a.jones@usda.gov) and Marty Saffell (marty.saffell@usda.gov) just in case one of them is out of the office.

If by the last day before the end of the survey period a better phone number has yet to be found, or the one the office found isn't any good, then be sure to review all of the comments on records not yet submitted and submit them as inaccessible so we know that the phone numbers on the record will need to get removed. Please contact your supervisor or your NASDA Coordinator if you have any questions.