

## **Friday Feedback for Thursday, September 30, 2021**

### **Government Shutdown – Kalas/Tolbert**

As of Thursday at noon, it appears a partial government shutdown is possible. If a spending bill is not passed by midnight tonight (9/30/21) several government agencies will shut down, including NASS. If that happens, all NASDA work must cease immediately until a continuing resolution or funding bill is passed. With that in mind, all enumerators must submit survey work in CAPI and timesheets in iSolved as soon as possible today, Thursday 9/30/2021, AND turn off your iPads. NASDA Coordinators and Katherine will be processing payroll so that enumerators will get paid for work completed this pay period.

Also, in the event of a shutdown, DO NOT ship anything via UPS to our office (or anywhere else for that matter), be it paper questionnaires, objective yield samples, iPads, supplies, personnel paperwork, etc., until agency funding is restored.

For enumerators in Indiana and Ohio working Objective Yield, please try to complete all field work for this month by today, Thursday 9/30, in the event that we are unable to work on Friday 10/1. If we are shut down, please reach out to your farmers to let them know of the situation and please maintain communication with them regarding the status of the plots in the sampled fields. If a farmer contacts you before we reopen to say they will be harvesting the field, enumerators will be allowed to go to the field to remove equipment (poles, spikes, flagging ribbon, etc.) from the sampled fields, but should NOT be collecting data for plant counts or measurements or completing a Form B. Time and mileage for trips to remove equipment from fields can be claimed once government funding has been restored.

We ask that you stay informed about the status of the government shutdown via normal news outlets and social media (using personal devices only). We will notify supervisors immediately when the situation changes. We will also post a message in the “Office Updates and Alerts” section of the Purdue website when the shutdown ends. If you have questions of an immediate nature that need to be answered while the office is closed, please contact Charlie Ingram at 202-296-9680.

### **Additions to ARMS II Survey Page –Miyares**

Three new items have been added to the ARMS II Survey Page on the Purdue Site this week. These include:

- A Slideshow Presentation and Video which covers general information about how we are going to be administering ARMS II in the Great Lakes Region
- A CAPI Demonstration Video, which goes over some highlights from the very unique but complex CAPI Instrument that has been developed for ARMS II (scheduled to go live on or after October 5), and
- The first list of identified oversights from the ARMS II Survey.

Enumerators are encouraged to review all of these items to make sure they are caught up to speed on the latest information about the survey. Additionally, the General Information slides contain information about when it would be appropriate to claim necessary time and mileage for ARMS II Survey Activities.

### **Census Content Test for Mail and Web - Samson**

Beginning in January 2022, the Census Planning Branch will be sampling a small group of operators to complete the Census of Agriculture online. These operators will receive a letter with EDR instructions, instead of a paper copy of the questionnaire. This sample will measure the response rates of using EDR only, as well as, help evaluate the cost savings from sending a letter instead of a full 24-page report form. Farmers who do not respond will receive up to two additional mailings. You may receive some questions from farmers you contact in January and February about this letter. Ideally, the farmer should fill out the Census online on their own, but you can always assist the farmer in accessing the EDR website. There will not be a field or phone follow-up to this survey.

## **Cleaning Up Old Comments**

One of our never-ending battles in maintaining our List Frame is keeping our operator comments up to date. Some comments have been attached to farmer's records for many years and may no longer be relevant, or may be adding clutter to more important information you may need to know about a particular operator. While contacting your NASDA Coordinator or staff at the Regional Office is always an option, we know that you may run into these situations during off hours that you don't want to forget.

The Regional Office has added some recent enhancements to the tools it uses to review comments entered into CAPI during a survey. Specifically, we now identify comments that contain certain key words that are then flagged for special review. Some of those key words include: Fix, Update, Comment, CMT, CMNT, and ELMO (NOTE: ELMO is short for "Enhanced List Maintenance Operations" and it is the system we use to maintain both the list frame and the area frame; all of an operator's comments are stored there). If one of these key or phrases is included in a CAPI comment, it is guaranteed to be reviewed by regional field office staff.

There are several other key words and phrases that we will look for in comments to make sure we are handling operations properly. The full current list of key words is now available on the Purdue GLR Home Page and can be found at this [LINK](#). Please note that other comments entered into CAPI which may help to explain data relationships to statisticians are still important (unusual yields, changes in inventory, low number of acres harvested compared to acres planted, etc.) and are reviewed by statisticians as they prepare their estimate recommendations. The focus with these particular key words and phrases is to make sure that we can isolate records which need to be updated in ELMO. With some surveys having very large samples, sometimes notes entered into CAPI get lost in the shuffle. The key word search helps us to identify the comments that should not be overlooked.

## **Reporting Bugs in CAPI Instruments – Miyares/Dothage**

The Regional Office is developing an on-line form that will allow enumerators to report problems with specific CAPI instruments. The link to the form will be available on the Purdue GLR Home Page in the "Forms" area and should be available sometime in the next week. This new form will work in a similar way to the "NASDA Order Form" which enumerators use to order supplies. Enumerators would specify the survey name, the POID, and the question or screen where the problem was observed. There will also be a place where enumerators can describe the problem with the instrument so that we can relay that information to programmers who can correct it.

The idea for this system was suggested at a recent NASDA Supervisor meeting and was motivated by problems discovered in the new CAPI instrument for ARMS II. The types of problems that might be reported could include spelling errors within questions, questions being asked that shouldn't be, questions being skipped, questions being asked in the wrong order, questions not allowing enumerators to put in a proper answer, or anything else that could make it difficult for you to enter complete survey data into CAPI. The hope is that by having an on-line reporting system for CAPI problems, there will be an easier way to track issues as they arise without having to wonder who in the office to call to report the problem.

Please note that this system would not be intended to report problems with CAPI Passwords; those still need to be reported to your NASDA Coordinators.

## **Friday Feedback for Friday, September 24, 2021**

### **NASS Hemp Acreage and Production Survey - Collom**

NASS will begin conducting a hemp survey this fall. This survey was mandated by the last farm bill. Hemp producers are licensed by their respective state departments of agriculture and this is where the primary list of producers to be contacted came from. NASS also used a list of producers that reported growing hemp to FSA. State departments of agriculture are also responsible for overseeing testing harvested hemp to ensure that the THC content of the hemp is below the federally mandated 0.3% THC content.

It is important to note the distinction between HEMP and MARIJUANA and it will be vitally important that you are able to make the following distinction: HEMP contains less than 0.3% THC while Marijuana has a THC content greater than this level. Enumerators should always say “HEMP” when talking to producers for this survey.

More information will be forthcoming, and enumeration is not expected to begin for a while yet. More concrete dates will be available in a few weeks. A draft version of the questionnaire has been posted to the NASDA-Purdue website if you are interested. This questionnaire is subject to change.

### **Small Grain CAPS Update – Morris/Miyares**

We've been making some great progress on Small Grain CAPS over the past few weeks! Over the next few days, NASDA Coordinators will be communicating with supervisors on counties with low coverage we'll want to prioritize for calling. Stay tuned!

There are a small number of CAPS assignments that have been called from the call center that are matched with one of the fall chemical surveys, and a few that were matched with Milk Production, that haven't yet been completed. Those records are going to be temporarily removed from the CAPI listings tonight, and then reactivated on September 30 to coincide with the start of the October 1 surveys. We don't want to have our operators called twice within a week for two different surveys if we can avoid it.

### **October 1 Survey Packages On the Way! – Collom/Morris**

UPS Packages containing materials for October 1 Surveys, including Milk Production, Quarterly Colony Loss, Ag Labor, and Ag Yield, were shipped to enumerators on Wednesday and Thursday. Most enumerators will start seeing the packages arrive today. If you were assigned October 1 survey work do not receive your package by Tuesday, September 28, please contact your NASDA Coordinator.

For those working ARMS II, there are a few printed pages containing information about a multi-part question in the irrigation section that was inadvertently left off questionnaire. Because there is not a lot of irrigated corn in our region, we did not see the need for printing off one copy of the missing question for every sample, but if you do find someone who has irrigated corn, please be sure to ask the question. The question is included in the CAPI instrument.

### **Chemical Use Survey Updates – Miyares/Goings**

Assignments for both ARMS II and the Fruit Chemical Use Survey (FCUS) should now be visible in both CAPI Training and CAPI Production. Enumerators are encouraged to take the time to enter practice data into the CAPI Training instruments in order to familiarize yourselves with how they are expected to work. A CAPI Demonstration video for ARMS II will be created over the next week and should be available on the Purdue Site before data collection begins in earnest. The expectation is that all ARMS II and FCUS records be submitted in CAPI; however, FCUS records with more than 50 chemical applications reported may be shipped to the NOD to be keyed rather than submitted in CAPI. Supervisors were provided UPS labels to send those forms to the NOD.

You may have noticed while reviewing your ARMS survey materials that the respondent booklets were missing a page of chemicals. The missing page was printed and inserted with the respondent booklets in each kit envelope. We have been told that the copy of the respondent booklet that was sent to farmers does include all of the

information that it was supposed to and did not require the printing of the extra page. The correct copy of the full respondent booklet was also posted to the ARMS II Survey Page on the Purdue GLR Website.

Hard copies of the interviewer manuals for the FCUS were included in the UPS packages containing the October 1 Survey Materials. The separate mailing was necessary because the printing of the manuals was delayed. One important item to note about the FCUS interviewer manual is that when it was written, it was assumed that field enumeration was going to be permitted for this survey, so there are several places where the manual seems to suggest that field enumeration is permissible when it is not (for example, “What to do on your first visit to the operation,” or “Do not include driving time as part of the interview time.”). Please do your best to ignore that information, as there was not enough time to revise the manual to reflect the current reality before it went to print.

Procedures have changed for 2021 regarding the completion the MDARD Recertification Record (i.e., the “bubble sheets”) for those respondents wishing to take advantage of the two restricted use pesticide (RUP) applicator credits for completing one of the fall chemical surveys. Respondent signatures are no longer required on the bubble sheets themselves; but all of the other information asked for on the bubble sheets must be collected from the operator during the phone interview, including the operator’s name as it appears on the applicator license, the applicator number, the type of certification, and the type of credits they need. Information from the bubble sheets must be sent to the Regional Office in East Lansing, where it will be compiled into a spreadsheet and sent to MDARD. Please reach out to your supervisor if you have any questions.

The FCUS pages on the Purdue Site are now live. Unlike the ARMS page, we did not create any training videos specific to Fruit Chem due to time and resource constraints. PowerPoint presentations posted to the site do cover the major sections of the questionnaire.

### **More Tar Spot Information**

As a follow up to an article from two weeks ago, we would like to share a posting found on the Michigan Farm News website, which contains a video showing the kind of damage that Tart Spot can do to infested corn fields. The link to the article and video can be found [HERE](#).

As a reminder, Tar Spot has been observed in all three states in our region. Field enumerators working Objective Yield should take caution when entering fields with Tar Spot and should avoid doing anything that could potentially spread the fungus from one corn field to another.

### **Yield Concerns**

Crop forecasts up to this point have shown very strong yields, even potential record yields, for several of our region’s crops; however, in addition to pressures from diseases like Tar Spot, our region has seen a significant amount of rain and wind in the last week that could impact not only crop yields, but operators’ ability to get their crops out of the field. As we begin to collect October 1 yield information, please be sure to solicit comments from operators regarding concerns about yields this cycle, and take notes regarding the potential for lost acreage. Be sure to note, when asked, whether harvest was complete at the time of the interview. On the ARMS II questionnaire, there are separate lines for harvested yield and abandoned acres that need to be considered as well.

### **National Farm Safety and Health Week**

Celebrated annually since 1944 during the third week of September, National Farm Safety and Health Week serves as a reminder, for those both on and off the farm, to spread awareness about farm safety. This recognition has been an annual promotion initiated by the National Safety Council and has been proclaimed as such by each sitting U.S. President since Franklin Roosevelt. This time of the year, when farmers are working tirelessly to get their crops harvested, is also the time when many farm accidents happen. In an average year, between 400 and 500 farmers are killed, while many more get injured.

The GLR created a video highlighting farm safety as part of the materials developed for the Objective Yield virtual training website. As we prepare for our eventual return to field enumeration, it is important that we spend some time talking and thinking about the hazards you must be aware of when you are visiting farms. You can click or tap [HERE](#) to watch this 20-minute long video.

## **Sad News**

The Great Lakes Region is saddened to report on the passing of former Southwest Michigan Enumerator Bruce Landis, who died on Monday, September 20 at his home. Cards of condolence may be sent to his wife, Joyce Landis, at 1024 23 Mile Road, Homer, MI 49245. An online obituary can be found at this [LINK](#).



## **Friday Feedback for Friday, September 17, 2021**

### **New Arrival**

The Great Lakes Regional Office is excited to announce the arrival of Weston Gabriel Cooper, son of statistician Wes Cooper and his wife Princess Kinard. Weston was born on September 8 at 8:41 a.m. measuring 20.5 inches and weighing exactly 7 pounds. Everyone is doing well.

Wes will be on extended leave for the next several weeks. Brooke Morris will be handling the Small Grain CAPS and Jamie Price will be administering the Monthly Ag Yield survey for the time being.



### **June Area Photos Still in the Field - Miyares**

As of September 17, the Great Lakes Regional Office has still not received over 300 aerial photos from the June Area survey from Indiana and Ohio. Photos which are no longer needed for the Objective Yield survey should be returned to East Lansing as soon as possible. All photos are due back in the office by October 1. If you still need the aerial photo after October 1 for Objective Yield for some reason, please contact your Supervisor to discuss options.

### **Objective Yield Reminders - Erickson**

CAPI remains open for the Form-A's for both Corn & Soybean Objective Yield. About 20% of the Form-A's remain inaccessible, so please continue to try to complete them. Also, please submit your Form-A completes on a timely basis.

The Form-B's for both Corn & Soybeans will be populated for the October 1 survey next week. Samples that are refusals or lost samples will NOT be populated to CAPI. So, samples that were inaccessible last month, as well as 'good' samples, will be populated to CAPI. Crops are maturing rapidly, so please monitor your fields closely. The Form-B data collection period begins on September 24, with an exception. If a final pre-harvest visit must be completed prior to September 24 because the sample field is mature, please go ahead and complete

the final pre-harvest visit. In this case, promptly send the harvested sample to the lab in St. Louis, along with completed id cards. However, you must hold the completed Form-B until CAPI is open. Please submit the Form-B when CAPI is open. Also, make sure the correct field work date is used. The field work date will match the date on the id cards. For final pre-harvest visits, the status code must equal '4'.

Please take a few minutes and review the 'sample packaging procedures' document on the Purdue website. It is located under the 'CORN AND SOYBEAN OBJECTIVE YIELD' tab. When submitting data on CAPI, please be careful to enter the data correctly. Many of the errors last month were due to numbers incorrectly entered into CAPI. Don't forget to reference last month's Form-B as you complete the next Form-B. It is rare for plant counts to change month to month, so please be sure to enter good notes to justify any unusual circumstances.

### **Chemical Use Survey Updates – Miyares/Goings**

The training website for the ARMS Phase II Survey is now live! In addition to hosting electronic copies of the various documents needed to conduct the survey, there are a set of brand new training videos which review the survey content. Please take the time as part of your home study activities to review these videos and the other content on the pages.

Enumerator training materials for the ARMS II and Fruit Chemical Use Survey (FCUS) are on their way to enumerators via UPS. If you do not receive your package by Tuesday September 21, please contact the regional office. The only item we have not yet received are the interviewer manuals for Fruit Chem. Those will be sent next week with the other October 1 Survey Materials.

Completed reports for both ARMS II and FCUS are expected to be in CAPI this year, but where the CAPI instrument is new to both of these surveys, the CAPI team at NASS HQ is still working through several issues discovered during testing. We expect that the final CAPI instruments for these to be ready by the first full week of October. It should be noted that for the Fruit Chem survey, completed reports that require the use of more than one pesticide supplement (more than 50 applications) may be sent to St. Louis to be keyed rather than entered into CAPI. Michigan supervisors will be provided with UPS labels to send completed work to the NOD, and they will discuss with you how they would like these forms to be handled.

There will not be a training teleconference facilitated by the regional office for these surveys. Instead, supervisors will be facilitating mini-schools over the next few weeks. Please be sure to communicate with your supervisor regarding the date and time for your mini-school.

## **Friday Feedback for Friday, September 10, 2021**

### **Upcoming Due Dates**

The September 1 Survey Cycle is beginning to wind down. Please keep in mind the following important dates:

- The last day to submit September Hogs and September Turkeys Raised forms in CAPI is Sunday, September 12.
- The last day to submit September Agricultural Survey forms in CAPI is Wednesday, September 15.
- Small Grain CAPS data collection can continue through September and ends October 7. There will be a small percentage of CAPS forms which will be deactivated on September 23 and turned back on September 30. These include matches with October 1 Surveys, including Milk Production, Quarterly Colony Loss, and ARMS II.

### **Tar Spot in Corn**

The wetter than normal August has increased disease pressure in crops this year, and wind-driven rain and storms can spread spores of pathogens to new plants and fields. One particular disease that has been impacting our region this year is tar spot.

First discovered in the U.S. in 2015, tar spot is a fungal disease that causes black specks to form on leaves. Severely infected leaves at grain fill can limit sugar availability, resulting in premature death in plants where ears do not completely fill, leading to an overall loss in kernel weight and yield.

The fungus that causes tar spot appears to overwinter in invested crop debris, but the exact means of how it overwinters or infects are not completely known. It is believed that wind-blown or splashing rain likely moves fungal spores from crop debris onto the leaves of the new corn crop which then becomes infected.

Comments from Crop Weather reporters and operators responding to our ag yield surveys suggest that tar spot is beginning to take a heavy toll on corn fields in the Great Lakes Region and across the corn belt.

Enumerators working Objective Yield samples should pay particular attention when entering fields that may be infected with tar spot, or any fields where disease could be present. We would hate for NASS or NASDA to be accused of helping to spread diseases from one farm to another. Cleaning equipment before and after field entry, use of disposable gloves and boot covers, as well as limiting the number of fields entered in a given day can help reduce the potential spread of diseases from one farm to another.

### **FSA Error**

The Farm Service Agency erroneously published their certified acreage on Wednesday, September 8. These data should have been published after the NASS Crop Production release on Friday, September 10. The data were quickly removed from the FSA website, but eventually were restored as the data had already been made public.

The early release of the data was a major error as these are tradable data. Farm publications were quick to pick up and provide negative commentary on the error. Enumerators should be aware of the situation and be able to provide explanation for what occurred should they be asked. [Corn, soybean markets lose steam | Wednesday, September 8, 2021 | Successful Farming \(agriculture.com\)](#)

## **Friday Feedback for Friday, September 3, 2021**

### **Ag Yield Due Date Reminder**

Please don't forget that all completed records for the Ag Yield survey must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, September 6. As a reminder, inaccessible operators do not need to be submitted unless you have a comment to submit that needs to be captured back to that record regarding your attempted contacts.

We've seen some Ag Yield records come through that have reported not growing any corn or soybeans. For the most part, this is unexpected because the operators in the Ag Yield sample would have told us either in June or in August that they didn't grow these crops then. If any operator indicates that they don't have the target crops, please probe further to help us clarify the situation.

### **Wheat Classes**

The September Crops APS survey asks for winter wheat acreage to be separated by class. In Indiana and Ohio, almost all of the winter wheat grown is soft red, while in Michigan, wheat producers grow both soft red and soft white winter wheat. If you speak to a grower who tells you they are growing hard red or hard white winter wheat, please probe further to verify what is being reported and leave comments in CAPI to explain the situation.

### **Fall Chemical Surveys Update**

There is not much new to report since last month on ARMS II (all states) and the Fruit Chemical Use Survey (MI Only) being conducted this fall. We are still waiting for paper questionnaires, respondent booklets, interview manuals, and other supplies to arrive in the office before we can get a lot of work done. Data collection for both surveys is scheduled to begin October 1, and so long as the supplies arrive on schedule, we should be able to meet those dates. If you were assigned work for ARMS II and or FCUS, your supervisor will be contacting you about getting together for a mini-school, which will likely take place sometime between September 22 and October 2. Training materials are still being developed with the goal of having materials shipped to enumerators and posted on the Purdue site by September 17.

### **Labor Day – Monday September 6**

Labor Day, always the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, on September 5, 1883.

By 1894, 23 more states had adopted the holiday, and on June 28, 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed a law making the first Monday in September of each year a national holiday.

The Regional Field Office will be closed on Monday September 6 in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

