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NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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2017 Census of Agriculture Gets Underway *Questionnaires being sent to over 3 million U.S. producers*

WASHINGTON – Nov. 28, 2017 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) starts mailing the 2017 Census of Agriculture to the nation’s producers this week. Conducted once every five years, the census aims to get a complete and accurate picture of American agriculture. The resulting data are used by farmers, ranchers, trade associations, researchers, policymakers, and many others to help make decisions in community planning, farm assistance programs, technology development, farm advocacy, agribusiness setup, rural development, and more.

“The Census of Agriculture is USDA’s largest data collection endeavor, providing some of the most widely used statistics in the industry,” said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. “Collected in service to American agriculture since 1840, the census gives every producer the opportunity to be represented so that informed decisions can support their efforts to provide the world with food, fuel, feed, and fiber. Every response matters.”

The census will be mailed in several phases through December. Farm operations of all sizes which produced and sold, or normally would have sold, \$1,000 or more of agricultural product in 2017 are included in the census. The census is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the nation.

NASS revised the census forms in an attempt to document changes and emerging trends in the industry. Changes include a new question about military veteran status, expanded questions about food marketing practices, and questions about on-farm decision-making to help better capture the roles and contributions of beginning farmers, women farmers, and others involved in running a farm enterprise.

“Producers can respond to the census online or by mail. We highly recommend the updated online questionnaire. We heard what people wanted and we made responding to the census easier than ever,” said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. “The online questionnaire now has timesaving features, such as automatic calculations, and the convenience of being accessible on mobile and desktop devices.”

The census response deadline is February 5, 2018. Responding to the Census of Agriculture is required by law under Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113. The same law requires NASS to keep all information confidential, to use the data only for statistical purposes, and only publish in aggregate form

to prevent disclosing the identity of any individual producer or farm operation. NASS will release the results of the census in February 2019.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.

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