

# Impact of Outreach Initiatives on the 2007 Census of Agriculture

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## Abstract

The census of agriculture data includes farm counts for all types and sizes of farms, including counts of farms operated by females and by individuals belonging to different racial and ethnic groups. These data are critically important to policy makers in developing agricultural programs that effectively support minority and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. In order to improve the quality of census data on minority farms, the National Agricultural Statistics Service conducted an extensive outreach program in preparation for the 2007 Census of Agriculture. The outreach initiatives were intended to improve response to the census and coverage of farms by the Census Mail List. This paper describes the outreach initiatives and documents the resulting non-response and coverage adjustments applied to the 2007 census data.

**Key Words:** census of agriculture, census outreach, small farms, American Indian agriculture, minority farm operators, census response rates, census coverage

## 1. Introduction

The census of agriculture, currently conducted every five years in the United States (U.S.), provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every State and county or county equivalent in the U.S. Agriculture census data are routinely used by all levels of government, the business community, educational institutions, and farm organizations to develop policies, programs, and business decisions in support of U.S. agriculture. These data include crop acreage and production, livestock inventories, agricultural sales, and numerous other agricultural data items. In addition, the census provides farm counts for all types and sizes of farms, including counts of farms operated by individuals belonging to different racial and ethnic groups. Language, lack of awareness and lack of trust in the government are major barriers to providing accurate census data for these groups.

This paper discusses an extensive outreach effort by NASS to promote participation in the 2007 Census of Agriculture. In early 2006, NASS contracted with Osborn & Barr Communications, Inc, a public relations firm specializing in agricultural issues, to develop a Marketing Communications Plan for the census. Portions of this plan addressed outreach to minority populations at the national level. Each NASS Field Office (FO) also developed a state-specific outreach plan. For the first time NASS conducted outreach through Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) who serve minority, immigrant, and other under-served populations. Also, NASS conducted extensive outreach to American Indian tribes. In addition, NASS developed a Spanish

version of the census report form for use by their Field Offices for collecting data from Spanish speaking producers.

## 2. The Need for Census Outreach

Two important phases of conducting the census of agriculture are: 1) building as complete a list as possible of all farms and potential farms, and 2) obtaining a response from as many establishments on the list as possible. Neither of these steps is completely attainable so list incompleteness and non-response adjustments are necessary. Obtaining adequate list completeness has proven to be an even greater challenge for minority operated farms. And while response has been adequate for all demographic groups in previous censuses, continued response is a concern as the number of new minority farmers increases and as new procedures are implemented for conducting the census on American Indian reservations. Operators who have no experience with NASS or the census of agriculture are often hesitant to participate in the census. Consequently, an extensive outreach program was implemented with special emphasis on minority operators.

List-building involves obtaining numerous lists of potential agricultural operators from various sources and merging them together to create the census mail list. Typically, some categories of records are screened prior to the census to identify their potential farm status and eliminate non-farm records from the list. The census methodology then uses an area frame to measure incompleteness of the census mail list. Prior to 2002, coverage adjustments based on area frame data were only calculated for major items at the State and National levels. Starting in 2002, a calibration process was used to reweight the list respondents to reflect under-coverage and allow coverage adjusted data to be published at the county level. Even though the data are coverage adjusted, adequate list coverage is still critically important in order to provide as accurate census data as possible.

Since 1969, all censuses of agriculture were conducted primarily as a mailout/mailback enumeration of the census mail list. Recent censuses have included some telephone and personal interview follow-up to help increase response. In addition, the 2007 census provided an electronic data reporting option over the internet. Different strategies have been used to categorize census mail list records into non-response weighting cells. County of operation and size of operation, as identified on the census mail list, are two primary variables used to create the weighting cells. Non-response weights are calculated for each cell and applied to each respondent record to adjust for non-response. However, as with adjusting for list incompleteness, adequate response is needed for all types and sizes of farms in order to publish as accurate census data as possible.

Non-response and coverage adjustments from the 2002 census for all farms, female operated farms, farms whose principal operator was of Hispanic ethnicity, and farms whose principal operator was of each specific race are provided in Table 1. Non-response adjustments were actually lower for each minority group except American Indians than for the total, indicating above average response rates by farm operators in these categories. However, continued response in 2007 and future censuses is a concern as the number of new minority and immigrant farmers increases and as new procedures for conducting the census on American Indian reservation are implemented. Also, Table 1 indicates that coverage adjustments were very large for Hispanic and Black or African American operators, indicating weak coverage of these minority operated farms on the census mail list. Organizations serving ethnic and minority communities are often

suspicious of any government inquiry for lists. Fears may be based on previous mistreatment and discrimination, concern about immigration status, and/or a culture that values privacy. These suspicions and fears also tend to reduce response for those minority operators who are on the census mail list.

<b>Table 1: Number of Farms and Percent Non-response and Coverage Adjustments by Principal Operator<sup>1/</sup> Characteristic, 2002 Census of Agriculture</b>			
Principal Operator Characteristics	Number of Farms	Non-Response Adjustment (percent)	Coverage Adjustment (percent) <sup>2/</sup>
All Farms	2,128,982	12.26	17.90
Female	237,819	12.02	24.18
Hispanic origin	50,592	9.77	43.14
Black or African American	29,090	11.11	43.87
American Indian	15,494	13.58	20.19
Native Hawaiian	983	10.48	18.01
Asian	8,375	10.65	18.60
More than one race	7,661	11.59	22.88

<sup>1/</sup> An operator is someone who makes the day to day decision on a farming operation. A farm may have multiple decision-makers (partners). The Principal operator is defined as the senior operator on a farming enterprise. Thus there is one, and only one, Principal operator per farm. Interpretation of “senior” is left to the respondent.

<sup>2/</sup> Excludes Alaska and Hawaii.

Methodology for collecting census data on American Indian reservations is changing so the 2002 data are not necessarily indicative for future censuses. Prior to 1997, an American Indian reservation was counted as a single farm operation in the census. In many cases there was a “tribal farm” that was operated collectively by a manager for the tribe. There were also many individual American Indian producers on most reservations that operated a farm/ranch independently of the tribal farm. These small farms were not counted prior to 1997. In 1997, NASS implemented a partial step toward counting these farms. A single census questionnaire was filled out by tribal leaders providing the total acres and agricultural production from these independent producers. The tribal leaders also made an estimate of the number of independent farms on the reservation. This information was published in both 1997 and 2002 in an appendix to the main census publication. As a further step, NASS conducted a pilot project for the 2002 census to build lists of American Indian farmers on reservations in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. This project was successful and resulted in approximately 1,500 individual American Indian operated farms in these three States being included in the U.S. total of 15,494. The appendix data indicated there were 8,541 American Indian agricultural operators on reservations in addition to the 15,494 American Indian farms counted through existing methodology in the census. Most of these additional operators were in New Mexico and Arizona. In planning for the 2007 census, NASS made a commitment to work with American Indian tribes to implement these new procedures

which were piloted in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota in 2002, involving building lists of farm operators, modifying collection methodology to accommodate the different culture, and collecting individual census questionnaires on reservations.

### 3. Public Relations Outreach

In early 2006, NASS contracted with Osborn & Barr Communications, Inc, a public relations firm specializing in agricultural issues, to develop a Marketing Communications Plan for the census. To guide development of the plan, Osborn & Barr conducted focus groups of agricultural producers from a diverse range of farm types, races, and ages. There were three major findings from these focus groups:

- 1) Agricultural producers are cynical about the value and purpose of the Census.
- 2) Agricultural producers respond positively to the ideas that the Census:
  - a. Gives them a voice.
  - b. Can have a positive impact on their community.
- 3) Agricultural producers are also motivated by the fact that participation is required by law.

Based on these findings, the following key promotional message for the census was developed.

**The 2007 Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future, your responsibility.**

**Voice: Showing the nation the value and importance of U.S. agriculture.**

**Future: Impacting the future of your operation and your entire community.**

**Responsibility: *Every* response makes a difference – and it's the law.**

In general, this key message seemed to resonate well with the minority producers from different cultural backgrounds. They want their contributions to U.S. agriculture to be recognized as there are many USDA programs providing financial assistance where funds are allocated across race, ethnicity, and gender categories based on census data. So it is very important to be counted accurately. Also, the minority and socially disadvantaged populations are very community oriented and are concerned about their community's future. NASS's pledge to maintain confidentiality of the census data is also important to minority producers. Many minority producers have faced discrimination during their lifetime and are very careful about sharing information about themselves with persons outside of their community. Many of the NASS Field Offices emphasized confidentiality through their outreach efforts to specific minority groups.

As part of the marketing plan, the NASS Marketing and Information Services Office and the NASS Field Offices participated in numerous conferences and events sponsored by minority organizations during 2007 and early 2008. A wide range of publicity materials, news releases, and public service announcements (including Spanish-language and Navajo-language versions) were used to promote participation in the census. Although limited by budget, NASS also paid for some advertising in print media and on the radio in specific States and regions with the highest concentrations of minority producers.

#### 4. Outreach through Community-Based Organizations

A community-based organization (CBO) is a nonprofit organization which works to serve the disadvantaged in the community in which it is located. CBOs may focus on African-American, Hispanic, American Indian, Asian or other social or demographic audiences. Many CBOs have an agricultural focus and provide training on agricultural practices or on USDA programs designed to support agricultural producers. CBOs generally have excellent contacts and respect within their communities, and thus, can provide NASS with promotional and data collection opportunities which may be difficult otherwise.

A few CBO leaders took the initiative in 2003 to start a dialogue with NASS and other USDA agencies about improving the quality of the census data for the 2007 Census of Agriculture. From these initial discussions, NASS started to develop partnerships with a few CBOs. For example, NASS developed a partnership with the Texas-Mexico Border Coalition (TMBC), which serves Hispanic/Latino agricultural producers in southern and western Texas. Through this partnership, NASS developed a brochure targeted for Hispanic/Latino producers that included:

- 1) a statement of support from the TMBC Chairman,
- 2) 2002 census data on Hispanic farms and ranches,
- 3) information on the benefits of census data to agriculture, and
- 4) information on how to “sign-up” to be included on the 2007 census list, including a tear-off postcard, a toll-free telephone contact, and a website to submit name, address, and demographic information.

Other brochures were subsequently created and targeted to other minority groups, including African-American agricultural producers, Asian producers, American Indian producers, and women producers. These brochures were distributed to the NASS Field Offices for their use at meetings and conferences and to distribute to their CBO partners. The brochures were also distributed at various national conferences of minority organizations.

By early 2006, NASS had assembled a list of over 600 CBOs, USDA contacts, university contacts, and other institutions that served different minority and socially disadvantaged agricultural communities across the U.S.. Each NASS Field Office was responsible for contacting the CBOs and institutions in their State to determine their interest in supporting preparations for the 2007 census and to start developing a partnership relationship, as appropriate. The FOs already had relationships with some of these CBO contacts. The CBOs were invited to support the census by:

- 1) providing lists of clients or supporting census list-building activities,
- 2) promoting response to the census by their clients, and/or
- 3) assisting with census data collection.

While some new partnership relationships were created by these contacts, in general, this effort was not as productive as anticipated. Many CBOs are busy with ongoing projects and have few resources to devote to other initiatives. Also, there is a lack of familiarity with NASS and the importance of the census to their clients. NASS recognized this effort as a beginning to develop relationships that could benefit the 2012 and future censuses.

#### **4.1 Community-Based Organizations Partnering Workshop**

In recent years, the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights hosts a workshop for CBOs and other institutions to inform them of USDA programs and share ideas on supporting minority and socially disadvantaged agricultural producers. After the August 2007 workshop, several CBOs expressed interest in being more involved with the 2007 Census of Agriculture. They stressed the importance of accurate minority operator counts and wanted to help make that a reality. In response, NASS quickly organized a national CBO partnering workshop. The goals of the workshop were: (1) to have a 2007 Census of Agriculture that fully and accurately reflects all segments and aspects of the agricultural industry across the United States, including a complete and accurate representation of minority operators, and (2) to seek mutual partnerships with CBOs which would significantly enhance NASS's ability to reach minority populations. The hope was that the CBO partnering activities started at the workshop would serve as the beginning of strong long-term relationships.

The two and one half day national workshop took place in Kansas City, Missouri on November 14-16, 2007. Fifty CBO representatives were invited. Thirty-seven participants, representing thirty-two CBOs ultimately attended the workshop. The workshop consisted of basic information on NASS, training on the 2007 Census of Agriculture, and ample time for the CBO representatives to work among themselves and with NASS staff to develop preliminary CBO-NASS partnering plans. Many of the partnering plans focused on conducting *Census Days* across the country.

Two reoccurring themes during the Kansas City workshop concerned the mutual desire of the CBOs and NASS to improve the quality of Census data for minority operators and improve trust issues between these groups and USDA. The CBO representatives were appreciative of NASS's dedication to improving data for the 2007 Census and voiced multiple compliments to NASS's handling of CBO partnering activities.

#### **4.2 Census Days**

Census Days were events planned and implemented through a partnership between NASS and CBOs. The events took place in selected counties across the country with significant numbers of minority operators. Most Census Days took place between January and March 2008 and consisted of NASS, NASS interviewers, and CBO staff being available to assist operators complete their 2007 Census of Agriculture questionnaires.

There was no set formula for Census Days. However, they typically fell into two categories: (1) those that were held as "stand alone" events, and (2) those that were held in conjunction with existing CBO activities. NASS typically provided funds to cover: (1) facility rental, (2) food/beverages, (3) promotional mailings or telephone calls, (4) CBO representative travel expenses, and (5) CBO staff time. In addition, Census Days sometimes included distributing non-Census information that was of interest to farmers. This included information on other USDA programs and farming practices. One consequence of this approach is that many census reports were obtained from agricultural producers who were not on the original census mail list. Typically, non-addressed census report forms were used to collect data from each producer. Special handling was required to insure proper non-response and coverage adjustment weighting of the census data.

Preliminary figures show that 183 Census Days were conducted across the county, mainly in southern states, resulting in around 600 completed census reports. However, many unaccounted census reports were taken by the participants to be completed at home and returned to NASS through the mail.

## **5. Outreach to American Indian Tribes**

As noted previously, new methodology was introduced for the 2002 census on a pilot basis in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota to obtain census data from individual American Indian farm operators on reservations. Previously, most reservations were counted as single farms in the census data, resulting in individual producers not being represented in the census farm counts. The census farm counts are increasingly being used for administering various USDA farm programs, so these counts need to accurately represent each demographic group. NASS recognized that expanding this change in methodology to all reservations in 2007 would require considerable outreach and discussion with tribal leaders on reservations around the country.

In January 2005, NASS created an American Indian liaison position to serve as a primary contact person with the American Indian tribes across the country. NASS moved the duty station for this position from Washington, D.C. to Albuquerque, New Mexico in August 2005 to facilitate closer contact with many of the western U.S. tribes and reservations, especially the American Indian pueblos located in New Mexico.

A large percentage of the American Indian agricultural operators were not familiar with the census of agriculture, nor with NASS and USDA. The initial outreach efforts began slowly and continued on a persistent and steady course to create rapport, build credibility, and establish relationships and networks. Over time, the liaison became a familiar face at many of the American Indian organized meetings and workshops, which helped bridge the gap of both a conspicuous absence of government on many tribal lands as well as an inherent mistrust of most government employees and programs due to historical mistreatment. Building trust and having someone accessible were key elements to successful outreach with many of the tribes. Also, becoming recognizable well before the initiation of the census data collection period and serving as a point of contact between tribes and NASS was a reassuring element.

As plans for the 2007 census were developed, including the collection of census data from individual American Indian operators on reservations, the Navajo Nation government expressed strong interest in working with NASS to obtain accurate American Indian census data. The Navajo Nation is the largest American Indian reservation in the U.S., covering over 42 million hectares in three adjoining States: Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

Conducting an agricultural census for the Navajo Nation required a completely different data collection approach compared to USDA's traditional census. Some of the difficulties to address included cultural differences, educational differences, a very strong distrust of the U.S. federal government and the fact that you are dealing with a highly centralized government. A Navajo Nation census was made even more challenging because the reservation is large and has thousands of possible farms.

For the 2007 Census of Agriculture, development of the Navajo data collection plan began in early 2005. There was great concern that the existing Census of Agriculture Report Form used to collect data primarily via the mail service was not appropriate for the Navajo Nation. Consequently, face-to-face interviews were used as the primary data collection mode. Over 200 Navajo enumerators were hired in Arizona and New Mexico to collect the majority of the Navajo census data. Also, an Interviewer Aide was developed and used in conjunction with the official report form to facilitate data collection that better matched the farming practices on the Nation. This greatly simplified the training required and provided a more reasonable interview for both enumerator and farmer.

A third part of the Navajo data collection plan included targeted radio advertisements and public service announcements. NASS ran census radio ads beginning in March 2008 through the completion of the Census data collection. NASS received very good feedback regarding the radio ads and they will be part of the data collection plan for the 2012 Census of Agriculture.

The importance of the census of agriculture is much more widely recognized by American Indian tribes around the country than prior to the 2002 census. Participation in the census process by the tribes and individual American Indian operators in the 2007 census reflect the impact of NASS's outreach efforts to date. The full impact will only be realized in the 2012 and future censuses if the outreach efforts continue to firmly establish familiarity and trust between the tribes and NASS.

## **6. Spanish Language Initiatives**

In addition to providing promotional material, news releases to the print media and public service announcements to radio stations in Spanish, NASS developed a Spanish-version of the census report form for 2007 and also provided assistance over the telephone in Spanish. As noted previously, Hispanic producers increased by over 50% from 1997 to 2002. While most of these producers speak and understand English, some of these producers are only fluent in Spanish.

The Spanish-version of the report form was only used when requested by a producer. The English mail version included a toll free number to call for assistance on the face page. Directions to call this number were also printed in Spanish. The recorded response then directed the caller to a Spanish speaking receptionist if requested. Less than 2000 callers requested assistance in Spanish. Of these, around 200 requested to receive a Spanish-version of the report form in the mail. In addition, many FOs used the Spanish-version of the report form for Census Day events serving Hispanic producers.

## **7. Results**

NASS does not have any direct measures of the improved awareness of the census or intent to respond to the census by American farmers and ranchers, which were two of the primary purposes of the census outreach initiative. Two meaningful measures are the percent non-response adjustment and the percent coverage adjustment for the number of farms in the different minority categories.



Table 2 shows the number of farms from the 2002 and 2007 censuses for all farms and for each of the minority farm categories. The large increase for American Indian farms is heavily influenced by the initiative, described previously, to count all individual farms and ranches on American Indian reservations. Most of the farms that identify more than one race are White and American Indian, so this initiative also impacted the increase for that category as well. As noted, the Alaska and Hawaii data were not coverage adjusted in 2002. Their counts are relatively insignificant at the U.S. level, except that Hawaii accounted for about 25% of the Asian farms and about 43% of the Native Hawaiian farms. Since the 2007 data for Hawaii are coverage adjusted, the U.S. counts from the two censuses are not comparable for these two categories and result in relatively large increases. Because of these differences between 2002 and 2007, further analysis of percent non-response adjustment and percent coverage adjustment will just be based on data for the Female, Hispanic, and Black or African American categories.

<b>Table 2: U.S. Number of Farms and Percent Change by Principal Operator<sup>1/</sup> Characteristic, 2002 and 2007 Censuses of Agriculture</b>			
Principal Operator Characteristics	2002 <sup>2/</sup>	2007 <sup>2/</sup>	Percent Change
All Farms	2,128,982	2,204,792	3.6
Female	237,819	306,209	28.8
Hispanic origin	50,592	55,570	9.8
Black or African American	29,090	30,599	5.2
American Indian	15,494	34,706	124.0
Native Hawaiian	983	1,356	33.9
Asian	8,375	11,214	38.0
More than one race	7,661	12,592	64.4

<sup>1/</sup> An operator is someone who makes the day to day decision on a farming operation. A farm may have multiple decision-makers (partners). The Principal operator is defined as the senior operator on a farming enterprise. Thus there is one, and only one, Principal operator per farm. Interpretation of “senior” is left to the respondent.

<sup>2/</sup> Alaska and Hawaii counts were not coverage adjusted in 2002. Alaska counts were not coverage adjusted in 2007.

### **7.1 Impact on Percent Non-Response Adjustment**

One of the purposes of NASS’s outreach efforts was to positively impact response to the census. Of special interest were the minority populations where much of the outreach was targeted. Table 3 presents the percent of the census number of farms attributed to non-response adjustments (USDA/NASS, Appendix A) for all farms and separately for farms with a female, Hispanic, and Black or African American principal operator for 2002 and 2007. Percent non-response adjustment is a proxy for response rate for these categories of farms. As indicated, the percent non-response adjustment actually increased for each category of farm between 2002 and 2007. Unfortunately, there is no way to measure if the percent non-response adjustment would have increased even more

without the outreach efforts. The increases are at least partially due to the overall increase in the size of the census mail list, from 2,843,550 in 2002 to 3,194,373 in 2007, and the fact that many of these new records represented small operators who were unfamiliar with the census, NASS, and USDA.

<b>Table 3: U.S. Percent Non-Response Adjustment by Principal Operator<sup>1/</sup> Characteristic, 2002 and 2007 Censuses of Agriculture</b>			
Principal Operator Characteristics	2002	2007	Point Change
All Farms	12.26	14.65	+2.39
Female	12.02	13.99	+1.97
Hispanic origin	9.77	13.56	+3.79
Black or African American	11.11	18.35	+7.24

<sup>1/</sup> An operator is someone who makes the day to day decision on a farming operation. A farm may have multiple decision-makers (partners). The Principal operator is defined as the senior operator on a farming enterprise. Thus there is one, and only one, Principal operator per farm. Interpretation of “senior” is left to the respondent.

<b>Table 4: U.S. Percent Coverage Adjustment by Principal Operator<sup>1/</sup> Characteristic, 2002 and 2007 Censuses of Agriculture</b>			
Principal Operator Characteristics	2002	2007	Point Change
All Farms	17.90	16.24	-1.66
Female	24.18	24.02	-0.16
Hispanic origin	43.14	39.00	-4.14
Black or African American	43.89	29.11	-14.78

<sup>1/</sup> An operator is someone who makes the day to day decision on a farming operation. A farm may have multiple decision-makers (partners). The Principal operator is defined as the senior operator on a farming enterprise. Thus there is one, and only one, Principal operator per farm. Interpretation of “senior” is left to the respondent.

## 7.2 Impact on Percent Coverage Adjustment

The second purpose of NASS’s outreach efforts was to obtain new lists of targeted minority farm operators in order to improve coverage of farms by the Census Mail List (CML). Coverage adjustment procedures (USDA/NASS, Appendix A) were applied to the census data, but better coverage would improve the accuracy of the published census data, especially at the county level. The percent of the census total attributed to coverage adjustment is a proxy for CML coverage. Table 4 provides percent coverage adjustment measurements for all farms and separately for farms with a female, Hispanic, and Black or African American principal operator for 2002 and 2007. In general, coverage adjustments were reduced in 2007 implying improved CML coverage. These reductions were at least partially due to the outreach efforts, especially the relatively large reduction

for Black or African American farms, which was one of the targeted types of farms for outreach.

### **7.3 Non-Measurable Impact of Outreach Initiatives**

Probably more important than any gains NASS made on reducing the percent of the census totals due to non-response and coverage adjustments are the improved relationships that have been developed with minority operators and the CBOs serving them. NASS is now recognized in many minority circles as a trusted partner, which is opening up new partnering opportunities for the 2012 census. The outreach efforts and new relationships with minority groups have also increased their interest in census data and publications.

## **8. Conclusions and Recommendations**

NASS conducted an extensive outreach effort to publicize the 2007 census of agriculture to the entire agricultural community and specifically to minority operators, with general goals of increasing list coverage and response to the census. Aspects of the outreach effort included:

- 1) participation in conferences and events sponsored by minority organizations,
- 2) paid advertizing in specific States with large numbers of minority producers,
- 3) developing partnership relationships with CBOs,
- 4) developing list-building brochures targeted to each minority group,
- 5) conducting a census workshop for CBO representatives,
- 6) conducting Census Days in partnership with CBOs,
- 7) assigning an American Indian liaison to develop initial relationships with tribes,
- 8) using primarily personal enumeration on the Navajo Reservation,
- 9) using an Interview Aide to facilitate data collection from Navajo operators,
- 10) using targeted paid advertisements on the Navajo Reservation,
- 11) making Spanish-language and Navajo-language public service announcements available, and
- 12) using a Spanish-version of the census report form when requested.

The percent of the census total for different categories of farms attributed to non-response adjustment and to coverage adjustment were evaluated as measures of the impact of these outreach efforts on the census results. Non-response actually increased from 2002 to 2007 for all farms and for targeted minority farms. Just maintaining response on censuses and surveys is becoming more difficult. The non-response may have been even higher without the outreach. Conversely, the percent of the census totals attributed to coverage adjustments decreased from 2002 to 2007, which is at least partially due to the outreach efforts and emphasis to minority operators on the importance of being included in the census counts. In addition, NASS's outreach efforts helped develop stronger relationships with minority groups around the country and prepared a strong foundation for developing plans for the 2012 census.

It is difficult to measure the direct impact of each outreach effort. But each effort should be evaluated as objectively as possible in order to develop effective marketing programs for each racial and ethnic group in preparation for the 2012 census. The strategies need to accommodate the increasing diversity of agricultural operators in the U.S. as new and recent immigrants pursue farming and ranching as a career. Targeted outreach to Indian

Country will continue to be needed as NASS expands the census to individual operators on additional American Indian reservations in 2012. Outreach to all farm operators, and especially minority operators, should continue to have a high priority for NASS in order to provide accurate and useful census statistics for all racial and ethnic groups.

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