

The Census of Agriculture

According to the United States Department of Agriculture's 2002 Census of Agriculture, there are 187 farms in Bibb County. If you or someone you know owns one of these farms, you will receive a census form in the mail. Please take time to complete and submit it--online or by mail.

More than 40,000 Alabama farmers and two million nationally are being asked to participate in the 2007 Census of Agriculture. Farmers who receive a census form are required by law to fill out the census and return it by Feb. 4, 2008. But the law also requires that individual information be kept confidential. Only tabulated totals can be released.

The Census of Agriculture, conducted every five years, is the only source of uniform agricultural data from the county to the national levels. This census is conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agriculture Statistics Service.

NASS will mail out census forms on Dec. 28, 2007, to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by Feb. 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the convenient option of filling out the Census online via a secure Web site.

Governmental units use the information to plan policies and programs. Universities use the data in teaching and outreach efforts. Businesses and industries use the information to guide them in all aspects of agribusiness from product development and marketing to locating processing and manufacturing plants.

Census questions will cover a variety of topics including land use and ownership, irrigated land; crop acreages and quantities harvested; livestock and poultry; value of products sold; payments from federal programs; and number of employees among others.

The Census of Agriculture defines a farm as a place that produced and sold \$1,000 or more of agricultural products.

The last census in 2002 counted more than 2.1 million farms in the United States and more than a million of those had sales of less than \$10,000.

The first agriculture census was conducted in 1840 and was conducted every 10 years until 1920. From 1925 until 1974, it was conducted every five years. Beginning with the 1982 Census, they were conducted in years ending in 2 and 7. The 2007 census will be the nation's 27th.

For more information about the 2007 Census of Agriculture, please contact the NASS Alabama Field Office at (334)279-3555 or visit www.agcensus.usda.gov online.

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