

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
between the  
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE  
and the  
EXTENSION SERVICE

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish a continuing working relationship between the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the Extension Service (ES), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in support of programs which will help to foster and enhance: (1) scientific collection of timely crop, livestock, economic, and environmental statistics which are needed to serve the best interest of both the agricultural community and the total national society, (2) effective dissemination of these statistics to the general public for use in decision making, and (3) conduct of educational programs to facilitate the interpretation and proper use of agricultural statistics. This MOU revises the previous Agreement between the two agencies, dated April 5, 1973.

II. Authority and Background

The Cooperative Extension System (the Extension Service, in cooperation with the State Cooperative Extension Services) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service have a long history of cooperation and coordination. Both Agencies have field organizations which provide their primary channel of communication to the public. Implementation of this agreement will help to assure more fully coordinated programs.

Extension Service

The Extension Service engages in cooperative extension work to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture, home economics, and rural energy pursuant to the Smith-Lever Act, as amended (7 USC 341-349) and Section 1444 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (7 USC 3221).

ES serves as the educational arm of USDA and is responsible for carrying out educational programs in cooperation with the State Cooperative Extension Services located in both the 1862 and 1890 Land-Grant Colleges, including Tuskegee University. The Cooperative Extension Services develop educational programs to provide information to the general public. One such endeavor is designed to assist people in communities by providing the motivation and knowledge to deal with human, social, natural resources, or economic problems, thus making the communities better places in which to live and work. Through such programs of education and information, citizens groups, local and state officials, farmers and ranchers, and businesses are assisted in their efforts toward improving the level of living in rural areas.

### National Agricultural Statistics Service

The National Agricultural Statistics Service administers USDA's program of collecting, compiling, and disseminating current national and State agricultural statistics. NASS provides the official State and National forecasts and estimates of crops, livestock, poultry, dairy, prices, labor, and related agricultural items including economic and environmental statistics. Research designed to improve the statistical methods and techniques used to produce agricultural statistics is also conducted. In addition, NASS performs reimbursable survey work for other Federal, State, and producer organizations. These responsibilities are authorized under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 USC 1621-1627).

Statistical data developed by NASS on the Nation's agriculture are essential for the orderly development of production and marketing decisions by farmers, ranchers, and other agribusinesses. These agricultural data series are also used for monitoring the ever-changing agriculture sector and for making and carrying out agricultural policy relating to farm program legislation, commodity programs, agricultural research, agricultural chemical uses, rural development, and related activities. Cooperative agreements with State agencies provide much additional State and county data.

### Background

NASS depends upon Extension personnel to help farmers understand crop, livestock, economic, and environmental statistics produced by NASS and to help create a climate in which farmers will cooperate in providing data needed by NASS to produce these reliable crop, livestock, economic, and environmental statistics. Extension does on occasion take surveys for the purpose of facilitating the operation of its programs. Extension may obtain assistance from NASS in drawing samples for surveys and other consultative assistance to insure the use of sound scientific methods.

NASS provides the official State and National forecasts and estimates of crops, livestock, poultry, dairy, prices, labor, and related agricultural items including economic and environmental statistics. Data on approximately 150 crop, livestock, economic, and environmental items are covered in some 300 National and 9,000 State reports issued each year. Data collected and published on prices paid and received by farmers are basic to the computation of target prices, program deficiency payments, parity prices and farm income. NASS estimates are essential to administration of farm program legislation, other agricultural legislation, and monitoring of all farm program activities. Cooperative arrangements with State agencies provide for additional State and county data.

- III. The Extension Service-USDA will work with State Cooperative Extension Services to:
- A. Develop and conduct educational programs through and in cooperation with the State Cooperative Extension Services in which the crop, livestock, economic, and environmental data released by NASS will be used and identified as the official USDA statistics and presented as objective information.
  - B. Convey an understanding to farmers and to the general public that the NASS data are obtained through proven statistical techniques. Extension programs will provide information and education to farmers and agricultural supply and marketing firms concerning:
    - (1) the value and use of official statistics in planning operations and marketing of farm products,
    - (2) the methods of crop and livestock estimation used in NASS, and
    - (3) the importance of timely and accurate response to NASS surveys.
  - C. Continue its contribution to weather-crop reports by encouraging County Extension Personnel to provide prompt response when requested to the weekly questionnaires on the progress and condition of crops.
  - D. Assist NASS in carrying out certain data gathering activities at times when this cooperative activity is mutually agreed upon. This includes assisting NASS in developing and maintaining current lists of farmers, processors, and handlers of agricultural commodities in order to maintain a capability for the efficient collection of timely and accurate statistics.
  - E. Assist NASS in identifying problems concerning agriculture and rural communities which require new or additional statistical information.
  - F. Request the advice and assistance of NASS in planning and conducting surveys.
  - G. Coordinate data collection activities with NASS to minimize duplication of effort and increased respondent burden.
  - H. Encourage communication and cooperation between State Cooperative Extension Services and the appropriate NASS State Statistical Office personnel including the identification of personnel to serve in a liaison capacity.

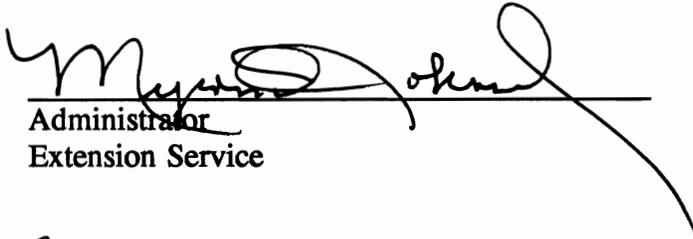
IV. The National Agricultural Statistics Service will:

- A. Provide ES with a reasonable number of all National and State publications and releases of current and historical statistical data immediately after publication, as requested.
- B. Provide information on NASS statistical methods and operations directly to designated leaders in State Cooperative Extension Services and to the ES-USDA.
- C. Cooperate with ES in designing, developing, and supporting training programs and pilot or demonstration projects regarding agricultural statistics.
- D. Encourage communication and cooperation between NASS State Statistical Office personnel and the appropriate State Cooperative Extension Service, including the identification of appropriate staff to consult with State Cooperative Extension personnel on problems involving sampling, data collection, and statistical analysis.
- E. Provide advice and assistance to Extension in planning and conducting surveys, and as appropriate make surveys for Extension on a mutually agreeable basis.

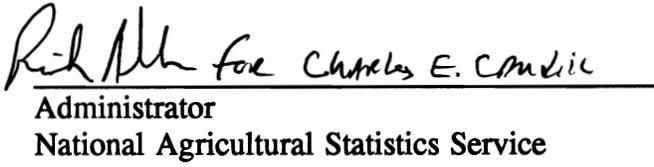
V. Mutual Agreements:

- A. NASS and ES each will assign a senior staff member who will serve in a liaison capacity.
- B. Any joint endeavors involving reimbursement or transfers of funds between the two Agencies will be handled in accordance with Section 1472(b)(2) of the Food Security Act of 1985 and normal Government financial procedures, and will be properly documented. When State Cooperative Extension funds are involved, the concurrence and approval of the appropriate State Cooperative Extension Director will be required.
- C. This Memorandum of Understanding shall become effective on the date of final signature and shall continue indefinitely. It may be amended by agreement of the parties in writing. It may be terminated by either party upon thirty days notice, in writing to the other party. This agreement supersedes the previous Agreement dated April 5, 1973.

- D. A copy of this Memorandum of Understanding will be distributed to each NASS State Statistical Office and each State and County Cooperative Extension Service Office.

  
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Administrator  
Extension Service

4-25-92  
Date

  
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Administrator  
National Agricultural Statistics Service

4-9-92  
Date