



2020 USDA Fall Data Users' Meeting
October 28, 2020
Question and Answer Summary

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Question & Answer Summary

The following is a summary of questions and answers from the Data Users' Meeting. Material is organized based on the order they were answered. There was not time to answer all questions but the unanswered questions were reviewed and the appropriate agency has provided a written response. The questions from each breakout session follow with both live and written responses. Finally, slides are appended at the end.

Note: Questions and answers were lightly edited for readability.

Main Session: Live Question and Answer Summary

Question: Raphael Bucciarelli

When will the historical WASDE's be available in a database format?

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

It is a project we have been working on for a long time. We are still working toward it and getting very close. I remind everyone that it is a huge undertaking. What we are trying to do, or what we are doing, is pulling together every piece of data from each WASDE that was released starting in September 1973 up until current. That's more than 600 WASDEs in the time series. We have worked out most of the glitches. Cross my fingers, I anticipate we will have it available by the end of the year. Keep an eye on the World Board website. We are working on it and it is getting close and we'll have it available soon.

Question: Paul McAuliffe

On the October 11 WASDE report the USDA forecast China corn imports of only 7 MMT, whereas the USDA export sales commitments to China exceeded that forecast.

- a. Why did the USDA choose to not reflect the exporter contracts at the Export Sales Department of the USDA and instead use a lower forecast of corn imports by China in 2020/21?
- b. Did the USDA issue a written statement explaining that odd conflict of forecast China corn imports and existing US / China contractual purchases?
- c. Has the USDA ever chosen to ignore official USDA export sales data in the past for ANY corn importing country? Yes / No?

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

A couple of points on that. Keep in mind that export sales are not an official forecast. They do get canceled over time, at times, just because the sales are reported, the product is reported as being sold at a date in the future does not always mean those sales are going to occur. The other point I would make, one of the things we try not to do is forecast changes in policy, including changes in policy by foreign countries. In this case, China has a TRQ in place that seemed potentially to be limiting those imports. Even that can change. Those perceptions can change. The situation is fluid. I would point to those two factors as explaining why we were where we were on that export forecast.

Answer: Mike Jewison

The policy in place assumption is the primary reason for the difference. As you know with the China WTO accessions the corn TRQ is just over 7 million tons and our 7 million ton forecast assumes the full TRQ utilization. During the September WASDE chat on Twitter we also reiterated this policy place assumption. In addition to that, there has probably been confusion amongst market watchers because China's National Development and Reform Commission, the government entity that has purview over the issuance of import quota issued an announcement

in mid-September that indicated unchanged import quota for calendar year 2021 despite those large outstanding sales. Notably, in that announcement there was no indication of additional quota for calendar year 2020 or 2021. All of that said, as I've said many times in this meeting before, in any given month, every number is on the table. We closely monitor all available shipment data, as we would for every WASDE. Absent announcement of additional quota allocation by NDRC, if there were an indication that import shipment, as opposed to the sales data, we are going to be above TRQ, we would do our best to reflect that. As you know, the U. S. corn export number is not what export sales report. If you were to look at the data of the Census Bureau, relative to export sales, on average over the past several years, the export sales number in aggregate runs about 5% below what the U. S. Census exports are in aggregate. You would believe Census is capturing things potentially that export sales is not. I can't go into detail about why that is, it may be a question and for the Export Sales Office at FAS. As you know, our corn import number for China is, in the end, reported by China customs. During the year we look at partner country data such as shipment data from Ukraine and the U. S., but in the end, what it is in the PS&D is what China customs reports. I think there is one other item about the phase 1 purchase agreement. We released the white paper in early February that basically said the phase 1 agreement does not play a direct role in our market analysis and forecasts.

Question: Joseph Lardy

The USDA seems to have ultimate faith in their yield model and are hesitant to make changes to yields. Last year was historical and the crop wasn't there, test weights were low, and every textbook would say yields needed to fall below where the USDA said they were. Because USDA won't change yields, the public has to deal with revisions to the always mysterious feed/residual category. In a historic year, can you admit the yield was wrong and actually change it?

Answer: Dan Kerestes

I do not think it is correct to say the USDA never changes its yield. I will let Lance go into further detail into our revisions and our forecast during the year. He can explain that.

Answer: Lance Honig

First of all, I agree with what Dan said. We will change yield, in fact if you talk about revisions you can even look back to just the last season. In fact, I think we have a question coming up a little bit later on as to why we made a revision in the following January to the previous year's acreage, yield, and production. So it does happen, although admittedly it does not happen a lot. At the end of the day, whether it's a change, a revision, or whatever term you want to use for our yields, it will be data driven. If the question is looking at outside components, you feel like the yield should be different, that's one thing, but our task is to estimate yield on based on all the data that we have. So, with the data that we have for last season did not indicate that we needed to make a revision to yield. So, that's why, this last month, when the period was open for both corn and soybeans to make revisions to the previous year's yields, we did not make any significant revisions because we did not have data that suggested we needed to do that. That is what drives the process for us. When we have information that says we need to, we will and I use last year as an example of that.

Question: Joseph Lardy

How come the USDA has not revised corn exports higher especially the Chinese numbers. USDA has Chinese imports at 7mmt when there is already more sales than that on the books?

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

I think this is the same question that Mike addressed.

Question: Karen Braun

Where was it posted or mentioned that NASS in January typically reviews the previous year's U.S. corn crop for the final time? And where was it mentioned that the process had been moved to September this year? I don't feel like anyone in the market was truly aware of this procedure and the change, and that led to surprises both in September and in January.

Answer: Dan Kerestes

Our policy has not changed. Lance, do you want to reaffirm everything we've been doing this past year?

Answer: Lance Honig

There are two parts to this question. Asking where it was documented or conveyed in the past that the previous year's crop was open to revision in January. Obviously talking about corn again. That practice has been in place for as long as I can remember actually. The best place I know to find it would be in our Guide to Products and Services that we issue each year. It is posted on the website. It lays out brief details to everything we do throughout the season. Each report is listed in there and tells you what components are open to have estimates changed or republished. That will be the documentation that would point to that. As far as moving that for corn from January earlier three months to September, that change was made to align things not only with what we did in soybeans, but more importantly it helped us to align to previous year's production revisions with the ending stocks for that season's crop. We initially started communicating this roughly a year ago, so last fall's Data Users' Meeting. That was probably when this was first widely discussed. At that point, we had not made the change. There are a lot of questions about why we were not looking at production revisions at the same time we were publishing ending stocks which is a very valid question. We talked about it again this spring in the most recent Data Users' Meeting, and I talked about it in many, many venues in the timeframe in between there. Whether it was meetings or various media outlets and things of that nature. So, we did communicate it in a lot of different ways over the course of about one year. I was aware about the afternoon before the reports came out at the end of September that it sounded like there might be confusion out there. Again, we try to communicate it in as many ways and formats as we could over a long period of time. Based on some of the confusion that was there, we probably need to look and see if there are other ways we could have communicated that for similar decisions that get made in the future.

Question: Karen Braun

Changes to the previous quarter's U.S. corn stocks during the final review of the previous year were always historically minor. The 2018/19 revision found an extra 106 million bushels in the stocks, and the 2019/20 adjustment came with the removal of 205 million bushels. That is MUCH more than ever before and it seems like something is broken somewhere. Is this only going to get worse next time? Is production being missed? Is feed and residual being abused?

Answer: Lance Honig

As far as revisions to the previous quarter stocks, let's talk about the June stocks revision that was made at the end of September. I think that is what started a lot of this conversation. The reality is, every indication we get, whether it's stocks, acreage, yield, production, there is always somewhat of a range around those indications and therefore the estimates can be adjusted a little bit within that range. One of the things that could cause you to re-evaluate exactly where that estimate was is future information that you collect. In the case of stocks, when you get that following quarter information in addition to get a measure of the stocks, we get a measure of the disappearance between June and September in this case. We get some additional information at the end of September for the entire marketing year. As we looked at all of that information and looked back at June, it became apparent to us in looking at some of the relationships both in terms of disappearance and feed and residuals, although just to be clear, we do not set a feed and residual number and we did not have a feed and residual target in mind. However, when we looked at the relationships that existed with the new information in September, for September, it became apparent to us that we needed to make adjustments to June to make those relationships more in line with what we've seen historically. More in line with what appeared to be more appropriate for the situation that we were in. Therefore we made that revision to the previous quarter. It was larger than what we've seen historically. Some of the differences in those relationships we saw were larger than what we have seen historically. What does that mean moving forward? We do not know. Just as we always do, we base all of these decisions on the data that we have at the time we make the estimates. So, if we would be faced with a similar situation in the future, it would be very likely that you would see revisions again, but we do not know that we're going to see that in the future. I cannot tell you this means anything in particular about the future, but that we will continue to let the data drive the decisions that we make for all of the estimates that we publish.

Question: Steven Pires

What is the chance the cotton data collection survey return to a yearly cycle? The data is useful and we are grateful to utilize it each year.

Post-meeting clarification: Steven Pires

It is possible to collect cotton data associated with the *NASS Highlights: Agricultural Chemical Use Survey's* on a yearly basis?

At the moment, there are sometimes significant time gaps between each survey and also sometimes the data is mis-used until new data becomes available. This data is highly linked to

number of acres surveyed and planted each year so comparing down acre planted years with higher acre planted years (2015 vs 2017, for example) can lead to flawed conclusions. Having to wait two years to get more representative data for comparison (in 2019) is challenging when trying to address some of these questions with chemical use.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Joe Parsons

Thanks for the question. It is possible to collect cotton chemical use data annually, but not likely without an additional funding source. Since 1990, NASS has surveyed U.S. farmers to collect information on the chemical ingredients they apply to agricultural commodities through fertilizers and pesticides. On a rotating basis, the program currently includes fruits; vegetables; major field crops such as cotton, corn, potatoes, soybeans, and wheat; and nursery and floriculture crops. The Agricultural Chemical Use Survey for cotton was last conducted during the 2019 crop year and published on May 8, 2020. Due to a limited budget, data are periodically collected for each major commodity and the target crops are rotated on a multi-year cycle. Cotton was previously targeted in 2017 and 2015, and is scheduled to be a target commodity again in 2021. The frequency of cotton chemical use data collection is similar to corn and soybeans.

In certain years, the chemical use collection for cotton and other commodities is funded as part of the ARMS survey program. Commodity specific ARMS survey are used for generating cost of production estimates and other commodity-specific economic research. The ARMS survey is jointly funded by NASS and ERS. The rotation scheme for ARMS commodities may be found [here](#).

Question: Sadru Dada

When was the last WASDE report on tree nuts?

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

The WASDE has never included any of the specialty crops. You may be asking about Outlook Reports on Fruit and Tree Nuts, and that is an ERS question.

Answer: Kelly Maguire

The last Outlook Report on fruit and tree nuts was issued in March of this year. It is available on the ERS website, under publications, you can search for fruit and tree nuts outlook.

Question: Todd Prezler

I enjoy APIs you have created over the last few years, however would be great if there was a common approach across agencies, or would all go through a common API.

Answer: Dan Kerestes

This is a timely question for NASS. We are working on redoing our QuickStats database. It is a big project.

Answer: Joe Parsons

I'll fill in till Dan comes back. Like Dan was saying, we are working on our QuickStats database and reimagining our dissemination, or that part of it. A lot of it is going to be built around an API. We are very excited about that and the Application Programming Interface is what we're going to build our modernization around. It is our intention to use the USDA's data lake, or EDAPT system to put that out. It is an environment that I suspect others will ultimately wind up making some use of as well. So, I cannot claim that we will all have a common API, but it is something within the Chief Data Officer community. USDA has a Chief Data Officer, and part of that is to make data across USDA a more strategic asset. I think, at least in spirit, we are hearing your question.

Answer: Mike Lynch

We have developed a couple of APIs as we developed our new MARS system. We also created one for our Livestock Mandatory Reporting data.

Answer: Jason Karwal

There is a higher initiative at the Secretary level to bring together what they're referring to as a data lake and make that data as integrated as possible. Within our part of our agency, getting those APIs lined up is difficult. I'm sure as we move ahead, and more and more of us are using these, we'll start to try to make those work together as easily as possible. This would be a large and challenging project that I am sure would take years. We are always available for anyone who wants to reach out who is trying to bring some of that together. We can work with NASS or any other groups to get it to work the best way possible.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

FAS is a relatively new entrant into this arena with APIs. We had one for the PS&D system for a couple of years now. We recently released APIs for our export sales reporting, as well as our GATS database. Those are all up on the API home page that we've released. In the future, we will be happy to participate in any USDA effort to put these in a standardized place and format. Right now, we are just happy to have these up and they are getting very good use right now.

Answer: Joe Parsons

You will hear more from us about the QuickStats modernization project and what are plans are as we have something directly to be able to show you. I know we have been reaching out to a few of our Data Users to get some input as well. There is more to come.

Question: Bill Lapp

The Food Box program has been generally very well run from what I can tell. However it has had a dramatic impact upon availability of some commodities (such as cheese, egg products). In the past six months, cheese prices have moved from \$1 to \$3 to \$1.60 to \$2.70 Question: can we get some data on the volumes of the key products being distributed in the 100 mm food boxes?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Mike Lynch

I reached out to our Commodity Procurement (CP) Program and learned that unfortunately, the Food Box volume data is not available. One of the tenants of the program was to provide flexibility for industry to determine the contents of the box based on what was available or what was most needed to move off the market, and to be able to switch products as the market adjusted from the food service supply chain to retail. Since this flexibility was baked into the program, there was no easy way to get the specific product data in a reportable format. So, AMS is able to report on the numbers of the various boxes (produce, meat, dairy, milk, combination), but does not have details of the actual contents of the food boxes beyond that level.

Question: Scott Sheely

I work in the area of agriculture workforce and find that I need to go to various departments for information. The Ag Census gives us farmers, DOL gives us paid workers in the ag and food industry, and DHS and DOL gives us farmworkers and people in programs for foreign-born workers. Isn't there some way that all of this information could be brought together with credit given to everyone who contributes?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Kelly Maguire

ERS uses a number of data sources on agricultural labor from other Federal agencies, as well as the NASS-ERS Agricultural Resource Management Survey, to provide public information about farm workers, farm business operations, and the role of labor in agricultural production and productivity growth. The variety of information we release through our data products in turn requires specific information not available from a single source due to differences in sampling frame and survey objectives as determined by the responsible agency, among other reasons. We combine information from multiple sources, for example, to present a complete economic and demographic profile of the hired farmworker population made available on our farm labor topic page.

Question: Peter Meyer

When was the error in the June Stocks corn number identified and why was that not communicated to the market sooner than 90 days after the fact?

Answer: Lance Honig

First of all, before I directly answer the question, I want to clarify there was not an error in the June stocks. When new information became available in September and that new information being information about September, it caused us to re-look at some of those relationships. At NASS, an error represents something, either misreported or something that went wrong in the process. When that occurs, which is very rare, we would literally go back, and reissue that report, something we would call an errata. To clarify that, as soon as we became aware of it. In this particular case, it is new information that became available in September as part of the

normal process of collecting September stocks, causing us to go back and look at those relationships and as part of our process, the previous quarter stocks being open and published in the September stocks report as is normally the case, and that is why it occurred in the timeframe that it did, and not earlier, because there was no error earlier on that was discovered. We did not withhold any information. It was all just part of the normal process of evaluating previous data as we move through the stocks season.

Question: Sam Funk

USDA reports have referenced the Global Trade Atlas (GTA) source for exports and imports in other markets, which is very important as we seek to consider timely export competition and global trade. There have been multiple times in years gone by when we tried to get more information in collaborative systems among many other nations. Will we ever be able to provide this information as in the GTA to provide global trade analytics in a timely basis for market transparency in a publicly available and free basis given the need for export understanding in the trade paradigm?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

If I understand correctly, they're talking about the Global Trade Atlas, which is a commercial source of international trade data. That is provided by private firms on a subscription basis. There are at least three companies out there that I am aware of that purchase and compile and make that information available through their own databases. We subscribe to one of them for our analytical purposes at USDA. We do not have access to, or the ability to provide that information, as a free service to the public. But it is available commercially. It is a private sector service and the companies who are involved are doing it for profit, and we're not planning to enter that arena at all. Our GATS database does offer international trade data from the United Nations. While this is annual data as opposed to monthly, with a significant lag, it is free of charge and may be helpful for general analysis of international trade flows.

Question: Jerry Gidel

The USDA's quarterly corn stocks have had higher volatility and correction in the past two years vs the past 7-8 years. Any reasons or ideas for improvement of this highly important quarterly report?

Answer: Lance Honig

Specifically, no we do not know why there has been more volatility in the last couple of seasons. It is something that is also a concern to us. It is a topic we have discussed within NASS. We are in the process, just as we do for all of our programs, when the need arises or just on a frequent basis anyway, just re-stepping back through all of the process to see if anything has perhaps changed across the industry in general that means we need to make any modifications to how we collect the information, how we asked the questions, all the way through to how we evaluate the data. Something we would typically do, but anytime we see something out of the

ordinary like we have seen the last couple of seasons, it does make us look just a little bit closer at the processes and procedures. We haven't changed anything in our procedures. Nothing is broken in terms of something that we did that's out of the ordinary on our side of the house. That doesn't mean we can't make improvements. It doesn't mean we can't try to find ways to ensure that everything we are collecting is being reported the way that we expect it to be reported. As of right now, we are not aware of any particular reason in the process that would cause that to happen. We'll continue to dig in and make sure, just as we would in any other program, that everything is being run as well as it can be and is current based on where the industry is at.

Question: Joe Kleinman

One of the biggest challenges I face as a data user when using data from multiple USDA agencies is the lack of standardization of metadata between agencies. This comes up with commodity names and geographic references very often. For example, FAS Export Sales data uses non-standard country names and FSA crop area data has issues with county and state FIPS information. What steps are you taking to standardize metadata within and across agencies?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

It is an area that the Chief Data Officer would be interested in as FAS and USDA advances this mission around data and standardization. I am not aware of any real effort to work across the USDA agencies to standardize metadata at this time.

Answer: Joe Parsons

We use the NIST FIPS standards at NASS.

Answer: Brad Karmen

For the most part we use standard FIPS codes but some of our counties are split. So, we have two county offices in one county. When we have that, we have to create a FIPS code. But I don't know if we have even a dozen of those in the U. S. Other than that, they are standard FIPS codes. You do bring up the point about commodity codes. For example, being different commodity codes, commodity names. We are different across agencies. I am more familiar with the compatibility, or incompatibility, between FSA and RMA because we're under the same mission area. We do have different commodity codes for valid reasons internally. It doesn't help the user because they don't know our reasons. But often when that occurs, we do have a crosswalk to get from our data to RMA data. I'm not sure if that is publicly available. It's a lot of data where we talk back and forth between the two agencies, it's at the producer level. Because of privacy issues we do not share those. If you're looking at aggregated data, and to the extent we're not compatible, we can probably share with you a crosswalk that will help you.

Question: Paul McAuliffe

On Friday October 23 the USDA / USTR released an interim report emphasizing record China commitments of corn, beef, pork and soybeans from the US but failed to explain why the USDA China import forecast remains at just 7 MMT (likely about 5 MMT below US current US to China corn commitments and 9 MMT below world corn commitments to China (12 USA and 4 MMT below Ukraine).

a. The interim report on October 23 stated China has met 71% of Phase 1 Ag. Purchase target. The Phase 1 Purchases are measure in terms of shipments NOT sales. The interim report adds to the misleading comment by the USDA on China corn imports.

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

I think we talked at length about the September corn export forecast I'm not sure there is too much more to say about that. I point out again and re-emphasize that Mike mentioned it specifically in his response, we do not consider the phase 1 purchase targets in our forecasts. Our forecasts are based on market conditions and sales and trade data to date. The phase 1 deal is independent of our forecast. Beyond that, the report came out from USTR last Friday, and I do not have much to say about that. I could kick it over to Patrick if he has any comments on that one.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

The only thing I would add, FAS was involved in helping to put that report together. The question mentioned sales. We obviously use sales as well as import and export data to try to estimate what we think is going to ship to China in 2020. While sales do not count, we are using them to try to forecast what will happen ultimately with actual trade.

Question: Marvin Miller

How is NASS coming with the Census of Horticultural Specialties? How is NASS coming with the Floriculture Crops: 2019 Summary? What is the current anticipated release date?

Answer: Dan Kerestes

We are working on both reports right now. The Census of Horticulture report and the Floriculture crops. We plan on releasing those on December 8th. Both at the same time.

Question: Tyler Cozzens

The retail whole turkey price has not been released since February 2020. Why has this not been released and are there plans to release this information?

Answer: Mike Lynch

We have a weekly retail feature report that we have been reporting those prices for whole birds and turkey parts. Again it's retail feature. I wonder if Tyler's question, I do not know if ERS published any retail prices and had a retail turkey price or not?

Clarification: Tyler Cozzens

The question is related to the ERS Meat Price Spreads release of retail prices. The file is titled, "Retail prices for beef, pork, poultry cuts, eggs, and dairy products" and the specific data series is titled "Turkey, frozen, whole."

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Kelly Maguire

ERS Meat Price Spreads reports the frozen turkey price from Bureau of Labor Statistics food price data series. With the release of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) each month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) also publishes average retail prices for select utility, automotive fuel, and food items. The last publication of frozen turkey prices was February:

https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/APU0000706311?amp%253bdata_tool=XGtable&output_view=data&include_graphs=true

AMS also reports some retail prices and has some turkey prices from the sources that they collect from at:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/pywretailturkey.pdf>

Question: Jenny Campbell

There is a significant amount Renewable Diesel capacity being added in the US and that is expected to be very important for the US soyoil market. Can you confirm if US soyoil used in Renewable Diesel is included in the Biodiesel category of WASDE or if it falls under food, feed, other? If it is not included in the biodiesel category, do you have plans to make a separate category to break out the renewable diesel?

Answer: Keith Menzie

The first part of the question, currently renewable diesel or any soybean oil used for renewable diesel is included in the residual category food, feed, and other industrial. As far as how we will handle that in the future, that's going to be a function of how EIA eventually reports the data. We are not completely clear on that yet, whether they are in a position to report soybean oil used for all renewables or if they will break it out by category. That remains to be seen.

Answer: Mike Conner

As many of you know, we have a new survey of biofuels. Historically, we have done ethanol and biodiesel and we've tracked biodiesel feedstock among other things. Our new survey is in the process of being rolled out. The first month of data collection is going to be the month of October. We are going to take a couple of months and look at the data. Our goal at this point is to begin publishing the new data from the survey, starting with the full calendar year of 2021. So, the first data to come out will be January 2021, with data to be released at the end of March 2021. Currently, our plan is actually to report total feedstocks across all biofuel, rather than trying to split it out between biodiesel, renewable diesel and other things. That is our plan right now. We can certainly discuss that going forward as we start to roll the data out.

Question: Joseph Lardy

Will the USDA ever consider splitting apart the feed and residual component on the corn balance sheet?

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

The answer is no, I do not think so. We do not actually have good data specifically on feed use.

Answer: Mike Jewison

I would just add, and I think this has come up for several years, understanding what exactly the feed and residual category is, right? On the supply side of the balance sheet you have the area harvested times the yield and beginning stocks from the prior year which make up the supply-side. On the demand side, corn used for ethanol, exports and other categories and the feed and residual is literally the feeding, whatever that aggregate level is, plus the residual error of all those categories just mentioned for the supply and demand side of the balance sheet. I've heard people say in the past, for example suggesting a feed survey. I'm not sure that would be the most prudent approach to put that out. More effort, if anything should be producer response rates and/or any help that NASS needs in terms of better collecting the survey data. I do not think it is something in the short run that will be possible.

Question: Patrick Alkire

Why does USDA still allow buyers to designate as 'Unknown Destination' on sales over 100,000 tons reported through the daily system? Seems like USDA is doing itself and the trade a disservice by still allowing this.

Answer: Amy Harding

In our regulations, if a reporting exporter does not know the country of destination at the time the sale is made, they can report it as unknown destination. We do not discriminate on the amount of tonnage of the sale. Unless we change our regulations, the exporters can continue to report as unknown destination.

Main Session: Written Question and Answer Summary

Question: Jennie Campbell

There have recently been large changes to previously reported Grain Stocks numbers as well as historical yield/production numbers, particularly corn. Has the process of determining Grain Stocks changed? Has the weighting of which factors to rely on when looking at stocks survey, yield, acres, and F&R (animal) numbers?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS has not changed the procedures used to establish estimates for acreage, yield, production, or stocks. More details on the revision process are described in other answers.

Question: Bryce Knorr

When will the searchable database for grain prices on the AMS website be updated on a timely basis? Currently, for example, data for the North Central Iowa cash corn prices ends on 7/31/2020. Many other markets so similar lags.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Mike Lynch

All of our Grain reporting has moved over into our new MARS collection and reporting system, with My Market News being the public front end. The report has moved from text format to pdf format and are located here: https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/ams_2850.pdf
The report data can be downloaded from My Market News site manually or via our new API. The User Guide for using the API to consume that data is located here https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resources/2019-08/MyMarketNews-AP-Excel-UserGuide_1.pdf.

Question: Joe Kleinman

Can you describe the change in methodology/modelling of Grain Stocks that led to the September revision of On Farm stocks for June 1? Historically NASS has not revised previous On Farm stocks because farmers are not resurveyed about previous quarters.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Current Quarter

As part of the normal estimating process each quarter, NASS analyzes and considers all available data for the current quarter:

- Survey Indicated Levels for both On and Off Farm Quantities Stored
 - Direct expansions of indicated stocks totals
 - Current quarter stocks as a percentage of the previous quarter stocks
 - Current quarter stocks as a percentage of production
- Administrative Data

- Imports
- Exports
- Ethanol Use
- Livestock Inventory Levels (Grain Consuming Animal Units (GCAU))
- Relationships compared to Historical Levels
 - Quarterly Disappearance
 - Season-to-Date Disappearance
 - Quarterly Implied Feed and Residual
 - Season-to-Date Implied Feed and Residual

All survey indications include point estimates with a statistical range of reliability. Estimates are established that best satisfy all available data and relationships, as described above.

Previous Quarter

Previous quarter stocks estimates are subject to revision each quarter throughout the year. Revisions can be necessary due to many factors. The most common reason, which typically results in very small revisions, is late-reported data. Less common, but sometimes more impactful, is the re-analysis of previously reported data in light of new information gleaned from reported data for the subsequent quarter.

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Question: Jerry Gidel

The impact of changes have made F/R levels quite volatile and the current 5.8 billion bu. over nearly 400 million Y/Y. What about quality are a factor?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

I don't believe that the estimate changes have made Feed & Residual levels volatile, but rather volatile Feed & Residual levels have led to revisions to estimates. As for crop quality, NASS

collects on-farm stocks directly from producers and off-farm stocks from commercial facilities. In both cases, respondents are asked to provide totals stored in standard units. NASS does not collect data on quality factors.

Question: Marvin Hoekema

If NASS is redoing quick stats API will you have backwards compatibility? We have extensive programming already in place.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Joe Parsons and Bryan Combs

NASS understands that many data users currently utilize our API. While we work toward improving our QuickStats user interface we are also creating a new more user friendly API. The current API will not be impacted by these activities in the short term. Long term plans have not yet been determined, any changes to the existing API will be widely communicated well in advance of any changes.

Question: Bevan Everett

Do you have any speculations about why the residual usage was so high in 19/20? GCAUs up 2% while F+R was up 7%.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS does not speculate on why residual levels fluctuate in any given season.

Question: Jerry Gidel

Please tell us what is API?

Written Answer:

Application Programming Interface. Often used to communicate machine to machine.

Question: Bill Lapp

Specific to Sept 30 stocks and final 2019 production: disappearance is a criteria for stocks revision, and is it also a criteria for production revisions? IMHO, the residuals for soybeans during 19/20 were such that a significant stocks or production revision would have been justified on 9/30/20.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Disappearance is one factor that NASS considers when establishing stocks levels and whether or not production revisions are necessary. In reviewing all available data NASS did not believe that

significant revisions were warranted for soybean production or stocks for the 2019-20 season.

Question: Scott Irwin

When did NASS start changing previous corn stock estimates based on "relationships in the data"? How is this reasoning not circular? Without an independent feed survey to measure true corn feed demand there is simply no way to determine if relationships that look out of whack are due to unresolved corn production errors or survey errors in the stocks report. Why not leave stock estimates alone and leave all the errors in feed and residual where they belong conceptually?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS has always considered data relationships including quarter-to-quarter disappearance, quarterly and annual implied residual, etc. We have not in the past, nor do we now, estimate actual residual levels. We use these relationships to determine the most appropriate estimates based on the indications provided by the surveys conducted to collect the stock inventory levels.

Question: Katelyn McCulloch

Are there any plans to survey/census count for on-farm grain storage capacity? The 2012 Ag Census (table 43) had an update, but I did not see it in the 2017. After extensive flooding in recent years and derecho this year, it would be informative.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS publishes estimates of both on and off farm storage capacity on an annual basis in the January Grain Stocks report.

Question: Wayne Stoskopf

After NASS had resurveys of producers in 2019 with large prevent plant claims and in 2020 for crop conditions after the derecho, how much did the resurveys impact reports? Any lessons learned or future changes to producer surveys from the last two years of experiences?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

The resurveyed data for both last spring and following the Derecho this summer both provided valuable insight that directly resulted in updated estimates. Both of these situations were the result of abnormal weather events and as such do not necessarily tell us anything about the normal estimating process.

Question: Lindsey Hendrick

Do you anticipate that the QuickStats updates will change how developers are currently able to interact with the raw dataset? For example, we can currently query QuickStats via programming software. How might that functionality change?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Joe Parsons and Bryan Combs

NASS does not anticipate a change to this functionality.

Question: Tom MacFarland

Please offer details on how the USDA will either support or at least accommodate data retrieval using the R language tidyUSDA package and accompanying functions. I am especially keen to know if larger data downloads will be supported using this set of tools, going beyond current limits.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Joe Parsons and Bryan Combs

NASS is currently actively engaged in the development and design of our new QuickStats user interface and API. While the specifications are still early in the development process, we anticipate R language packages such as the tidyUSDA package will be able to interact with the new system. At this time, we do not know how download limits will be impacted.

Question: Egery Sepling

The Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) filed the Italian type of cheese production by product Parmesan in U.S. was 32,410 pounds while import from Italy the Parmigiano Reggiano was 9,389 tons. It's negative correlation.

In Europe, the cheese labelled Parmesan can be directly linked with Protected Designation of Origin P.D.O.

- a. How in the future would you assess the progress distributing Parmesan in U.S. linked with authentic designation of Origin which is Italy? Could it possible to overcome the divergences between two jurisdictions handling differently the right to produce Parmesan?
- b. How the price of milk listed in Chicago Mercantile Exchange could ascend cross-border collaboration in Parmesan production? Manufacturers hedging buying milk for production for instance?

Answer: Answered during Breakout Session 1B by Patrick Packnett

This is not really a data question; the United States does not provide geographic indicator protections for any product including Parmesan cheese. And so, we don't restrict the production or marketing of Parmesan. Now the U.S. does have trademark protections for Parmigiano Reggiano, and so it is a protected trademark, but we don't equate Parmesan with Parmigiano Reggiano as they do in most of the European Union. We don't anticipate any change in our

policy in that regard, and as I said Parmigiano Reggiano is a protected trademark and the market will have to determine what would be the production of Parmesan in the United States versus how much Parmigiano Reggiano we actually import.

Question: Jose Montes

AMS has been updating the way to research for reports. In the past, one could find reports using report title: LetterLetter_LetterLetterNumberNumberNumber and a date range. The new method is more focused on Slug ID or Slug Name, and a specific date is requested. Furthermore, in the past one could go back up to 5 years, whereas the new method search method does not go beyond 3 years back. Where can we find information on how to use the new research method, i.e. find corresponding Slug ID's to Report Titles, how to search for date ranges and how can we request data older than 3 years?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Mike Lynch

The search features of the new report archive page at <https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/filerepo/reports> has some significant update differences from the previous version of the search page. The system is more dependent on the specific slug ID and slug name of certain reports but does also allow searches by partial report title names and filtering by the market type names for specific searches. The system also has individual landing pages for each report that are intended to provide all usable information on a single report. It is recommended that once users locate the landing page for a specific report, that they either bookmark that page or utilize features within the My Market News website to create a user account and save those pages as favorites or sign up to receive email updates when specific reports are published. There are plans in the future to update the new search page to allow users to search within date ranges and to allow more specific title word searches. There are also additional resources available to assist user in identifying specific report information at the following site <https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/general-resources>. Additionally, users can always request additional support or send any questions or inquiries by emailing us at mymarketnews@usda.gov.

We also want to be clear that all of the most recent copies of AMS Market News reports are still available on the AMS Market News website at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news>. These report links are updated with the latest copies of Market News reports as soon as the reports are published. There is also access to downloadable datasets with the information that is published on the AMS Market News reports available on our old Market News data portal sites that can be located at <https://www.marketnews.usda.gov/mnp/> and our new My Market News data portal located at https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/public_data. All of the data available at the My Market News site is also available through our API. Additional information on the API can be found at <https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/mymarketnews-api>.

AMS is planning to have 5 years of report file archives available on the new report archive site at <https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/filerepo/reports> and on the individual report landing pages by December 31, 2020. Inquiries can be made to receive emailed copies of any archived Market News reports by emailing mymarketnews@usda.gov. This email can also be used for

any Market News request, as well as, to request being added to an email list for updates related to Market News reports and data in the future.

Question: Bill Lapp

What is schedule for release of renewable diesel and feedstock usage data (release date and beginning month of data)?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Mike Conner

The scheduled release date for data on renewable diesel fuel and feedstock consumption is Wednesday, March 31, 2021. The first data will be for the month of January 2021 with new monthly data released on the last business day of each month.

Question: Paul Smolen

I noticed a difference between GATS soybean export data to certain destinations and corresponding Census data for vessel shipments. I would expect GATS to be higher for Mexico and Canada reflecting shipments by truck and rail. But I can't explain the differences for most Asian destinations (Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia Vietnam. Philippines, Burma), that happen to be receivers of soybean vessel shipments by container as well as bulk. The differences are spread during the year and amount to GATS being about 5-10% higher than Census Vessel volumes to those destinations.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Jason Carver

We're able to confirm that the GATS data matches USA Trade Online data queried through their (HS) **District-level Data**. However, we note that when USA Trade Online is queried through HS **Port-level Data**, which has the capability to distinguish between Vessel and Containerized shipments the quantities do not match the USA Trade Online data (HS) District-level Data. We have a theory about why that might be. It may be the case that some shipments do not clearly identify mode of transport (bulk vs. containerized), thus the HS **Port-level data** doesn't reflect the total presented in the HS **District-level Data**. Ultimately this is a question for Census, we'd be happy to work with you to coordinate a call with Census to better understand the differences between their Port-level and District-level data.

Question: Joseph Lardy

Lance, you keep mentioning new information that you find, warrants changes to the balance sheets. Tell us EXACTLY what this new information is. To adjust corn stocks by 200 million bushels, there has to be something material and certainly something that the market would like to understand what information could cause a change that large.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

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 - Season-to-Date Disappearance
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All survey indications include point estimates with a statistical range of reliability. Estimates are established that best satisfy all available data and relationships, as described above.

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Question: Todd Preszler

Monthly crop yields reported in the Crop Production report have 2 to 3 input streams: Farmer Survey, Field Objective Observations, Remote Sensing..... Would it be possible to see the input from each stream, so the market can anticipate changes to the published yield from expected changes that may influence one or more of the streams?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS does not publish direct survey indications or other raw inputs contributing to individual estimates. We do provide detailed information regarding what inputs are used and the methodology used to incorporate all data sources.

Question: Karen Braun

Is there any way you can elaborate on specifically what the historically large discrepancies were with the U.S. corn stocks data between June 1 and September 1?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

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Question: Sam Funk

The Derecho event across the Midwest has been tabbed as likely the largest ever single-day event for crop insurance. RMA is still gathering claims for this event and the typical data available publicly cannot be tied explicitly to the Derecho. Is it possible that ERS might look at the specific impacts for corn and soybeans and the relevant risk management protection provided by Federal Crop Insurance – including a fact-based provision of indemnity payments and losses incurred by this event?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Kelly Maguire

ERS has started to investigate the data and is looking into the possibility of doing some additional work on the impacts.

Question: Robert Bischoff

Is Sesame Seed production being collected and tabulated?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS does not estimate sesame seed on an annual basis. It is included in the Census of Agriculture which is conducted and published every five years.

Question: Andrea Massetti

How do you use satellite data on yield estimation? Does it entail validation or it is part of the estimation itself? Do you expect developments in the use this kind of data in the near future?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Although survey-based indications of yield remain the primary sources of data, modeled yield indications from satellite data are used directly in the estimation process to supplement the survey data. There are slides detailing the use of satellite data included with this transcript.

Question: Arlan Suderman

Each time we harvest a wet low-test weight corn crop, we see surprisingly low stocks numbers show up during the year in the quarterly reports that suggest stronger usage. While such corn tends to have lower energy content, requiring more usage, it also tends to see more shrinkage in the bin (i.e. the farmer reports higher production than he ends up taking out of the bin. Have you considered adjusting your yield estimate procedures in these years to account for such?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS surveys ask producers to report actual yields after harvest. We do not collect information regarding moisture content, test weight, or other quality factors. Without actual data we would not consider adjusting yields and/or production.

Question: Todd Preszler

In the RMA data, double reporting of winter usage (grazing and harvest) has been allowed in the last 2 years. From the use/purpose data there is no way to triangulate to remove this double counting. Is there a way to separate this, or designate it, so we can observe true total acreages?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from David Zaroni, RMA

No, RMA's publicly available data does not allow for identifying overlapping acres of dual-use wheat. Since RMA reports insured acres, and these acres are, in fact, insured twice as separate crops (no different than double cropping), RMA doesn't consider that double counting.

Question: Ashely Lowe

Since mid-2018, the weekly negotiated cash slaughter cattle price for Colorado (LM_CT166) has not been reported on a consistent basis due to *Confidentiality*. Is there anything in the works to remedy this issue or will we continue to go weeks/ months without knowing the official price for that state?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Mike Lynch

The main issue with reporting data consistently on the Colorado cattle report is that there are not enough packers buying negotiated cattle in that region on a regular weekly basis. We need to have at least 3 packing companies buying cattle fairly regularly over a 60-day period in order for the data to pass the [3/70/20 Confidentiality Guideline](#). The LMR Act requires USDA to publish data collecting in a manner that preserves the identity of reporting packers, as well as

parties to contracts and proprietary business information. We use the 3/70/20 Confidentiality Guideline as the tool to carry this out.

To address this issue of reporting negotiated cattle data for Colorado and other regions in the 5-Area region while managing the confidentiality of the data, last year AMS had a study conducted by academia from Kansas State University and Iowa State University to explore the feasibility of reporting negotiated cattle in 0-14 day and 15-30 day delivery windows while also looking at whether the regions within the 5-Area region could be realigned to improve data reporting. The [final report from that study](#) was released a year ago, and AMS hosted a [stakeholder meeting in Kansas City, MO](#) last December to present the findings and recommendations.

While these recommendations did not gain a lot of traction, they did stimulate numerous other ideas among members of the cattle industry. Some of these ideas included proposed legislative mandates for purchasing negotiated cattle, while a couple others proposed AMS establish regional minimum volume thresholds. These ideas are included in a couple different bills that have been introduced to Congress. We will have to wait and see which legislative path is taken, if any, when Congress takes up the LMR reauthorization bill before December 11, 2020, which is when the current authorization will expire.

In addition, AMS does publish the "[Colorado Weekly Direct Slaughter Cattle Report - Formulated, Forward Contract, And Negotiated Grid Purchases](#)" which provides weekly values for cattle purchased through other means or pricing than negotiated.

Question: Hussain Jiwani

USDA releases crop condition data by state. Are there any plans to release crop condition data by regions within the states?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Although there are no plans to publish crop condition data at a more granular level than the State as part of the Federal program, NASS would consider publishing instances where funding is provided by an outside entity. There are currently a few instances where this occurs. Also, NASS is developing a new product that will provide a visualization of the data at more detailed level.

Question: Bill Lapp

Would NASS ever consider enlisting the help of the data users community, in developing a supplemental survey to support/enhance your quarterly stocks survey?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Joe Parsons

Thanks for the question Bill. As part of continual process improvement, NASS reviews survey programs and processes on a periodic basis. NASS is beginning an internal review looking at

several aspects of the on farm and off farm grain stocks surveys and estimation program. If we were to determine such a survey was necessary, we would certainly reach out to our data users and other stakeholders for input.

Question: Alan Brugler

How is WASDE estimating Chinese corn stocks, specifically the strategic component? Record high prices in China suggest that stocks are extremely tight, yet WASDE shows quite large stocks. The public stocks used for auctions appear to have been exhausted prior to harvest.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Mark Jekanowski

USDA's estimate of corn stocks in China includes all stocks public and private. With corn imports largely policy driven, China's domestic corn market is essentially disconnected from the world. High prices were also seen in 2014/15, during a time period when it was widely believed that they were building stocks. Adding to the uncertainty of the stock estimates were the large revisions in China's corn production history that took place in the fall of 2018. These revisions by China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) were without precedent in contemporary agricultural statistics and it is not clear if the changes represented an attempt to reconcile with reported auction totals from China's National Grain Trade Center.

In the end stocks represent one of several utilization categories on the demand side of the balance sheet but are ultimately largely constrained by supply assumptions, which in this case are driven by the official production estimates from NBS. Given NBS does not publish official estimates of stocks or utilization, forecasts of stock totals will vary.

Question: Eric Coroneil

For the Irrigation and Water Management Survey (previously FRIS), why was the non-irrigated yield data collection discontinued? Is it a permanent decision?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

The non-irrigated yield represented the non-irrigated yield of irrigators, not the general farming population, and was commonly misunderstood and mis-used. It was removed permanently.

Question: Alan Brugler

US ag producers are indicating soybean moisture down to 8-9% at harvest, and corn at 13%. If sold at those weights, scale tickets will be "light" and USDA will have fewer bushels. How is NASS handling this problem?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

For the Objective Yield samples, moisture content is a factor that is used to determine yield at the standard moisture level. Producers are asked to report their actual yields, and hopefully account for moisture and test weight issues.

Question: Jennie Campbell

Thanks for the answer re RD/BD. Just one follow up comment to Mike Connor is that from sbo perspective it's not so much a request for the RD vs BD split, it's that right now the RD is in the food/other non-biodiesel category as opposed to the biodiesel so it makes the non-biodiesel category hard to interpret. So it would be much better to have RD+BD in a combined category of sbo for biofuels if the two biofuels can't be broken out.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Mike Conner

Monthly biofuel feedstock data reported by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) will include feedstocks consumed for production of fuel alcohol, biodiesel, renewable diesel fuel, and other renewable fuels beginning with data for January 2021 scheduled for release on Wednesday, March 31, 2021. The one exception is that EIA biofuel feedstocks consumption data released in 2021 will exclude feedstocks consumed in refineries that co-process biofuel feedstocks with petroleum. The next regular opportunity to make survey changes to collect consumption of biofuel feedstocks co-processed with petroleum will be in 2023.

Question: Gary Blumenthal

Given the greater participation rate today, will you consider this technical approach for future sessions?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Joe Parsons

We have been very pleased with the additional turnout and engagement the virtual format has given us in April and again with this data user's meeting. However, we also know from the feedback that many participants miss an in-person format. As the current situation evolves and in-person events become practical again, we expect to host at least one meeting per year in person. The in-person meeting may also have an option for virtual questions and a live feed. We also will likely continue with a second meeting each year that is virtual only.

Question: Paul McAuliffe

Please explain why WAOB did not limit China imports to 4 MMT rather than 7 MMT. Your forecast implies China will cancel some sales but you do not know when or how much they will cancel.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Mark Jekanowski

Our 20/21 corn import forecast for China of 7 mmt in the October WASDE essentially assumed full TRQ utilization, which is policy in place. It recognizes that demand from China is strong, but also that a long-standing policy exists in China that could limit total volume. It is true that we do not know when or how much sales they might cancel or roll into the future. We did not have reason to believe that a 4 MMT import level was the best forecast.

Question: Paul McAuliffe

For NASS June 1 stocks, WHY did those numbers change the most in History? On farm, Off farm? and in total?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Although we don't necessarily know "why" the required revisions were larger than normal for June 2020, following is an explanation of the process.

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Question: Paul McAuliffe

One of our customers is asking if USDA can release their reports when the futures markets are closed. So releasing them at for example 2:30 PM Eastern time would be better so

- A) People have time to read them for one hour or so when the markets are closed
- B) Give the market time to digest what the USDA says.

Customer Message:

Thank you for sharing, agree w/your comments, it is an important industry and their stocks, acreage and yield reports have caused massive price volatility.

Releasing reports during markets open vs when it is closed is also ridiculous, they could release the reports either after the close or during the 45 minute break in the morning. I believe they work hard and want to do their best but the lack of transparency needs to change.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Many factors are considered when determining report times. The last time a change was made, a Federal Register Notice was issued seeking comment before a decision was made. Different data users have different preferences regarding what that time should be. As for non-market hours, NASS does not control when the markets are open or closed, so moving the report times would not necessarily guarantee that market open/closed times wouldn't move also.

Question: Don Frahm

Is there a range of interpretation that prevails around off farm corn stocks that you might elaborate on?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS is exploring the possibility of publishing measures of accuracy for the surveys that provide stocks indications.

Question: Daniel O'Brien

In some of the daily grain market reports (such as DC GR110 (Western Kansas Grain Markets) and DC_GR112 (Central Kansas Terminal and Processor Daily Grain Report), changes were made in the format of these reports that aggregated prices in to ranges (cash prices, basis, etc.) after July 31, 2020. Although the aggregate, regionalized data reported now still have some value,

now these daily reports provide no location specific information that was useful to agricultural producers in these regions. Now the data is "regionalized" with limited or no value to people that were monitoring these specific markets. And there is no way to go back into the data portal to find these specific locations. This change may be irreversible given tight resources, etc., but these reports are now only marginally of value to users, whereas they were a valuable logistical grain price resource prior to these changes.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Mike Lynch

AMS transitioned the daily grain reports to regional reports for several reasons. First for consistency across the country. Prior to this change, some state country grain elevator reports were reported by location while many were reported by regions within the state. When we (AMS) moved our grain reporting to our new MARS reporting system this summer, we needed to pick a lane for one consistent reporting format to best manage our resources. One of the key factors taken into consideration here was that most locations did not include all of the grain elevators in that location. Many had several other firms in the same town/location that were not represented on our reports because some firms did not cooperate in reporting or there was a change in ownership of existing firms. Also, some locations had only one firm in town that had either sold, will not report, is closed, or only bids during harvest. Additionally, given the number of grain elevators in the major grain producing states and the limited afternoon timeframe to collect the data, state reporting staff do not have time to call every elevator every day.

While we recognize location-specific reporting offers pinpoint values, regional reporting provides a more robust and consistent overall price series. The regional reporting adopted by AMS mirrors the existing NASS regions, which are more universally known.

Breakout Session 1A: Program Changes

Question: Jody Campiche

To clarify, the removal of district estimates for cotton does not result in the publication of additional counties?

Answer: Lance Honig

That is correct. Not anticipated based on the 2019, estimates. That doesn't mean that they wouldn't have been a factor in the 2020 season, or future seasons. It just so happens that based on how the data all worked out in 2019, it didn't result in any additional publication. That's largely because we have the exception for cotton. It allows us to publish more counties in general. Any County with 5,000 bales of production is already able to be published regardless of the coverage, or standards that are in place. With fewer counties not meeting the standards you have fewer complementary suppressions that result from the district boundaries.

Question: Teresa Crook

Do you anticipate adding back into the estimates - dry edible beans or sugar beets?

Answer: Lance Honig

At this point we don't. It's a funding driven process. I point out we do have a number of, what we would call, externally funded data series out there. In any case if there is an organization out there that would like to fund putting these estimates back we do have a process in place. We can work through that process. It's dollar driven. Right now, based on the funding we have available, the crops that I listed that remain are the crops that we anticipate publishing moving forward. Just to clarify, those were only discontinued at the county level. We do continue to publish state and national estimates for all of those crops that I mentioned.

Question: Bill McCary

Will NASS consider reporting actual ear weights and pods weights from its objective yield survey?

Answer: Lance Honig

I don't anticipate that happening. There is a number of raw survey indications that we have, whether its ear weights, pod weights, or other indications we collect and utilize in establishing our estimates and we don't publish all of the raw data or raw indications that we receive. I don't anticipate that changing for ear weights and pod weights.

Question: John Ellis

For the removed crops, any other sources of data at the county level? RMA.

Answer: Lance Honig

There is some information available specifically through FSA. It's going to be acreage. As I mentioned early on, typically FSA does not collect yield information. RMA does of course capture some yield information in addition to acreage. That data tends to be a little less readily available than what you will find with FSA or NASS. Exactly how available that's going to be would really be a question for RMA. I point out that the current process that information from RMA specifically when it comes to yield becomes even available internally much later in the process than what NASS is able to publish for their crops.

Question: Dale Durchholz

Would you go through the thought process in making the adjustments in the corn stocks numbers that extended back 3 quarters, if I remember correctly?

Answer: Lance Honig

Most recently the biggest change that occurred was to the June stocks when we published our September report. We made a fairly significant revision to the June stocks numbers. As I talked about in the large session, that's really due to the new information we collected in September. Once you learn about the September quarter, it tells you something about the disappearance between the two quarters. It tells you a little bit about the relationship that exists quarter by quarter throughout the year. Having that extra information for that next quarter sometimes reveals something about how you may need to re-evaluate the estimates you set for the previous quarter. That was the driving force behind the revision. We always have the option to revise the previous quarter and at the end of the season we have an option to revise all the quarters throughout the year. It's largely built into the process. Gives us an opportunity to make changes like this also it helps us have an option of including things like late reports and things of that nature. As far as the revision that was made, again, it was based on relationships after gaining information on September quarter. Very limited late information comes in, so that was not the driving force but it is a component, revisions. That's why I pointed out.

Question: Marvin Miller

When you report non-harvested acreages, do you ever report reasons, e.g., natural disasters in certain states, drought issues, floods, etc., in the commentary?

Answer: Lance Honig

In each of our crop production reports, on the back part of the report, you will find individual crop narratives, or text portions. Sometimes we will share some commentary on things that

have occurred for various crops throughout the year. It is largely anecdotal data at that point. The data is what it is. If something significant happens you are probably going to find some reference to it in the narrative on the back but not necessarily going to tell you how much of that abandonment, or non-harvested area was due to a specific source. It puts context around why you might be seeing values that are larger than you would see in a normal year. A little bit of information in the commentary. Certainly we are just providing the estimate. We are not trying to provide too many details as to why the estimates are where they are.

Question: Wayne Stoskopf

For the additional counties for corn and beans, what do they typically look like? For example, are they smaller in total acres for those crops? Any impacts on irrigated and non-irrigated estimates?

Answer: Lance Honig

It's a generalization I'll make, but typically yes, those additional counties are probably in most cases going to tend to be smaller counties. The reason for that is we have two reasons you are going to see more counties published. The first reason is the elimination of the district boundaries. Those additional counties we are talking about are complementary suppressions, which means they met the standards on their own, but to ensure another county that didn't meet the standards -- that data cannot be revealed -- so we had to not disclose the complementary county as well. The rule of thumb typically when you go to select a county to be that complementary suppression is you look to one of the smaller counties within the same district. By default, those tend to be a bit on the smaller side than what you would have seen. The other reason you are likely to see more counties published in the upcoming season is because of that additional coverage rule we put into place. The 10 reports and 10% coverage. It's harder to say if that would necessarily be larger or smaller counties. Intuitively, it kind of feels like they would tend to be smaller. The reality is that's going to be largely driven by the data we collect. Those additional counties means maybe we didn't have quite 30 reports, or quite 25 percent coverage but we did have more than 10 reports and 10% coverage. That's kind of a double-edged sword because in trying to determine if they're small or large because on the one hand you might think it means they are small and that's why we couldn't get more reports. The flip side of things is it's harder to meet coverage in the large county than it is in a small county. You could likely see a mix of smaller and larger counties coming into play with the changes to the publication standards.

Question: Bevan Everett

Did COVID-19 have any impact on data gathering this year that may not be an impact next year?

Answer: Lance Honig

I have no idea what next year's going to look like relative to COVID-19. I'm not going to speculate on that. The biggest impact to NASS relative to data collection, and I think we publicized this widely, is that under current situation face-to-face enumeration is obviously not an option for us to keep everybody safe. We utilize multiple methods for data collection. We mail forms out. Everyone has an opportunity to complete this online. We do a lot of phone follow-up to collect data. That was a change we had to make however, it did not prevent us from being able to collect data on any estimates we were publishing.

Question: Dale Durchholz

Do you think the crop condition ratings published weekly are having an impact on your farmer survey for the crop report? Have you looked to see if there's a correlation?

Answer: Lance Honig

I don't believe we've looked specifically at whether or not there is a correlation. I personally don't think there is. The crop condition information we collect comes from a completely different source. It's mostly county extension agents, some FSA employees, and various other individuals across the country who, as part of their normal work, have the opportunity to come in contact with both producers and see for themselves firsthand progress and conditions across the county they work in. I would say, probably no more than any other information that circulates out there on an ongoing basis that may impact farmers thoughts on what yields may be on an ongoing basis.

Question: Marvin Hoekema

How does the milk cow survey differ between 50 state and 24 state releases? It seems the hard counts come with the 48 state releases with the largest revisions and the estimates are provided with the monthly 24 state updates.

Answer: Travis Averill

The milk production report at NASS we do a monthly survey and a quarterly survey. On a quarterly basis January, April, July, and October we gather information from the producers on milk cows. How many cows they have on their facility. Those off-quarter months we actually use strictly administrative data from various sources through the U.S. to account the 24 state programs and also use the administrative data to work back into the nonpublished 26 states that gives us the U.S. production levels on a monthly basis.

Question: John Ellis

Is there a summary document outlining how your estimates (yields/acreage/production) are made? I.e., a digital copy of what you described verbally earlier in the presentation? If so, where might I find that description for each crop?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Although there is not a document that provides the equivalent of the slides presented for corn for all remaining crops, NASS does have significant documentation regarding our survey and estimating processes available on our website at www.nass.usda.gov.

Question: Bill McCary

Comment: The crop condition data for several crops has an extremely useful relationship with yields.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Many data analysts have developed models that utilize crop condition estimates to forecast yield with mixed results.

Question: Jerry Gerlach

Will NASS consider moving report times to non-market hours, like somewhere in the 45 minute pause in the AM? Humans cannot compete against the computers on split second reaction times at report release.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Many factors are considered when determining report times. The last time a change was made, a Federal Register Notice was issued seeking comment before a decision was made. Different data users have different preferences regarding what that time should be. As for non-market hours, NASS does not control when the markets are open or closed, so moving the report times would not necessarily guarantee that market open/closed times wouldn't move also.

Breakout Session 1B: Foreign Production, Trade, and Imports/Exports

Question: Jeff Peterson

Will this meeting continue to be virtual in the future?

Answer: Mark Jekanowski

I don't think any formal decision has been made yet, but I would not be surprised if even post pandemic we continue to have some sort of a virtual presence, maybe one time a year virtual and another time in person. I don't know, but those conversations have not happened yet and those decisions certainly have not been made. But just the very fact that we get so much more participation in this kind of setting, it is something we might want to continue doing in some form.

Question: Bill Lapp

ERS provides a great report on monthly exports of beef/pork/poultry in carcass weight equivalent - the day after the report is released. This is extremely valuable. Is there any reason that we could not get the same for wheat by class?

Answer: Bill Chambers

We will bring it up to ERS. This has come up and honestly it has kind of fell off my radar but we will bring it up. I think there is a certain possibility that we could do that but I do not want to speak for ERS.

Answer: Mark Simone

It is currently an internal number shared among the ICEC committee members.

Answer: Bill Chambers

Yes, we do in fact have the data and so I think it could be a possibility and I will bring it up again with ERS and see if we can have that happen. I think ERS is considering it and moving towards doing it, but I am not certain.

Question: Brian Carroll

USDA FAS Export Sales - One item of interest from the first session were exports to unknown destinations. Would the FAS consider digitizing its history or future volumes switched from Unknown to Known countries such as is being done on the PDF 'Bell' report?

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Amy Harding

After exploring this question, I have learned that we will not be able to generate a new report showing this information. However, we will include this request in the update to the Export Sales Reporting and Maintenance System scheduled to happen in the next couple of years.

Question: Karen Braun

Question about GATS and Census data: is there a schedule for revision of past data? For example, sometimes I will download some export data and I will notice that data from the previous year, for example, is slightly different from what I previously downloaded.

Answer: Joe DeCampo

We revise our data the first week of every June, commensurate with the publication of April statistics, and that data goes back at that point 3 years. So, for example, this past year we revised 2017, 2018, and 2019. Then we always do it in three-year chunks going forward. Let me add, in the interim, we do publish corrections onto our Census website. It is just USA Trade online that is only updated once a year. I can send the link to where we post other corrections.

<https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/corrections/index.html>

Question: Joe Kleinman

Is there a place where WAOB/FAS detail for which countries they use official data from foreign countries and for which countries you use USDA estimates/numbers? It seems that USDA adopts official data from some countries at different points in the reporting/forecasting cycle and for some counties USDA uses USDA information.

Answer: Mike Jewison

There is no source that we publish in terms of line by line, country by country what the official source is. I would say it depends on the country and the commodity, it is not one size fits all depending upon the country and the commodity you're looking at. In a general sense, if we believe the official data to be somewhat reliable, for example on the production side, and consistent with our view of the weather and satellite imagery, we adopt it, right? That does not always fit. So, in terms of actually having that laid out, I am not aware of it existing anywhere and it is something we can look at potentially.

Answer: Mark Simone

It would be great if we had a rule, every year, people could tell each country whether we adopted the data or not but some years we don't know. We have good reason for not taking the data for that particular country. I will not name that country, but we have made those kind of calls, and in other years we have taken it, adopted the production data. So, I really do not want to get into kind of a rule, it is a judgment call ultimately and varies on year and varies on country and varies on each commodity so yes, I will just leave it at that. It varies, bottom line.

Question: Egery Sepling

The Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) filed the Italian type of cheese production by product Parmesan in U.S. was 32,410 pounds while import from Italy the Parmigiano Reggiano was 9,389 tons. It's negative correlation.

How in the future would you assess the progress manufacturing Parmesan in U.S. linked with authentic designation of Origin which is Italy? Could it possible to overcome the divergences between two jurisdictions handling differently the right to produce Parmesan?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

This is not really a data question; the United States does not provide geographic indicator protections for any product including Parmesan cheese. And so, we don't restrict the production or marketing of Parmesan. Now the U.S. does have trademark protections for Parmigiano Reggiano, and so it is a protected trademark, but we don't equate Parmesan with Parmigiano Reggiano as they do in most of the European Union. We don't anticipate any change in our policy in that regard, and as I said Parmigiano Reggiano is a protected trademark and the market will have to determine what would be the production of Parmesan in the United States versus how much Parmigiano Reggiano we actually import.

Question: Karen Braun

Question for FAS on daily export sales: I did not feel like the question about allowing exporters to list buyers as "unknown" was answered in the last session. For what reason does the policy allow exporters to designate a buyer as unknown? From what I understand, sounds like it is very uncommon that a buyer or destination is truly unknown.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

I think what Amy answered earlier is that the regulations that we have on the books right now allow for it. And unless those are changed, then that is current practice. We do review the regulations from time to time, and it is something we can explore, but that is where things are right now.

Answer: Post-meeting follow-up from Amy Harding

The ability to report sales to unknown destinations is a longstanding feature of the ESR regulations. We will look into the origins and possible rationale and consider if this is something we need to propose changing the next time we update the regulations.

Question: William Tehero

What types of analytic tools do you use for your data? Is Excel your go-to software?

Answer: Mike Jewison

Everybody has different tools and we all know some folks in the audience are analysts and you deal with a lot of data on a daily basis. Myself personally, really varies and it varies in terms of the interface and if you are running a meeting and interacting with committee members and want to be able to present data in a very fluid format, python would be an example in the last few years that I found to be very useful. Obviously yes, Excel is a good crutch to lean on at

times. And some other folks I know use Stata or other statistical software for crunching data, but I would say especially for some of our in-house weather products, Mark, you could probably speak to that and we have a lot of automated weather products that our meteorologists use that interface ArcGIS and Python and combination of that so I would say it depends, but generally speaking besides Excel, Python, SAS, Stata, and I probably left some out and if anybody has any other ones that they use feel free to jump in.

Answer: Mark Brusberg

As a weather group, we do use Excel, because we have developed simple regression modeling. We also use ArcMap for our geographical information system. That is able to provide some statistical data in terms of what areas are impacted say by the footprint of a hurricane or by drought etc. You can bring in-situ data and satellite products into the same project which is very valuable. Actually, we used to be able to write our own software in Visual Basic, Mike mentioned Python, and for some reason the powers that be decided that Visual Basic was not good anymore so that sort of left us in a lurch. So yes, we have forced ourselves to be adaptive. We do try to stay on the state of the art. We do not use Lotus 123 anymore or dBase IV, things like that. We have been successful in migrating.

Answer: Patrick Packnett

I think we are using a lot of the data products that have already been mentioned by Mike and others. Of course, our production guys are using a lot of geospatial data, so they are using the ESRI software and ArcGIS. I would just like to note here, that FAS has developed a new product that is available to the public called GADAS. We plugged it at this meeting in the past, but it is a pretty slick geospatial data tool that is pulling in all of the satellite imagery and weather, rainfall data, everything that we basically use to do our crop analysis is available out there to the public through our GADAS interface and we're using the same interface to do our crop analysis internally. So, shameless plug there for that system which we put a lot of effort into developing that and we think it is making our work a lot more efficient.

Answer: Bob Tetrault

In addition to the ArcMap and Excel and Python that was all mentioned, the web GIS, Patrick just talked about, the GADAS system, is our latest and that is built off of the ESRI software but it is available, as Patrick said, to the public through a web interface. That is one of our go-to analytical tools right now.

Question: Jerry Gidel

Mike Jewison, Despite the NASS response to volatility of stocks question earlier, could the quality of the crop a major reason for this discrepancy. Corn's test weight and starch levels reducing the US ethanol conversion rate is a leading indicator. Has World Board consider this in its analysis. A 400 million jump in yearly feed usage seems out of place even with higher slaughter weights in the second half of US corn crop year.

Answer: Mike Jewison

I mentioned in the previous session how to think of feed and residual mathematically. And I will say just right off the bat, I don't think there is any right answer. There is a number of possible explanations for the volatility. I think to do justice to this conversation this really should involve NASS because we at the World Board are not privy to the survey data. So, I think a truly valuable discussion should obviously involve NASS, but from my perspective, yes, certainly test rates could be a possibility. The question is if you are going to try to capture that, how would you do it, in a survey? It might be hard to do. If you think through mechanically, understanding it is hard -- survey responses in general people do not like to respond, but NASS does fairly well in response rates related to other industries. But just trying to think through mechanically, and again I am not the NASS expert and NASS is the gold standard for collection and dissemination of publicly available agricultural statistics, right? They set the bar. But yes, test weight, certainly a possibility. Error in the other usage categories and you mention conversion weights for corn used for ethanol, right? Well, you're comparing EIA series to a NASS series and not quite apples to apples, right? And there will be some expected variabilities and that number. And obviously I will throw it out there because there are people that are listening here, the feed residual number has been quite humbling and this will probably not be the last time I say this and it is quite humbling to try to forecast that, obviously there are other analyst that struggle a bit with it too but there is certainly a rational conversation maybe we could have. Is it a stocks survey thing? It is a method as far as that goes? I don't know, this conversation should occur, unfortunately with NASS and given the time constraints, we can't get to that deep of a conversation in the first session, but certainly something we should at least talk publicly about because I think again as NASS would say, they do the best within the tools that they are given. And they are trying to improve every single time, right? So, something to think about going forward but definitely I would prefer -- I am the guy at the World Board again, no influence, not privy to any of the survey collections and how that all fits together, so good question and I appreciate it.

Question: Joseph Lardy

If I query FAS weekly data for pork exports to China and compare that to the monthly GATS data, they are very different. On the weekly in May, net sales to china on pork is 2,949 tons. The GATS query has 108,869 tons. Why the difference? I was told the weekly doesn't count the same things but aren't all exports just that...exports?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

Our weekly export sales data has sales and shipments exports whereas the GATS is just all exports. And these numbers have never been exactly the same.

Answer: Lindsay Kuberka

I looked at this about a month ago, and if you compare GATS, you want to use the right

grouping because exports sales reporting only captures muscle cuts and does not include Offals and variety meats and prepared and processed products. If you use the FATUS grouping in GATS which is pork, fresh and frozen, you'll get a pretty good approximation of what should be in export sales. And when I look at the number for China in particular, year-to-date, we are at about 92% coverage for ESR so that means export sales reporting is capturing about 92% of what it should be when you compare to the official trade data. So, there is going to be a little bit of difference because we are comparing weekly data to monthly data and there is of course some different product coverage. The good news is that the export sales report for pork now captures a lot more trade than it did a few years ago when the requirement for pork was introduced.

Question: Ken Lovett

Follow-up on ethnaol calc ... what conversion are you using for bushels of corn vs gal of ethanol?

Answer: Mike Jewison

Obviously as I stated before, it's EIA data relative to what the NASS survey data says and understanding that it is not quite apples to apples. It's the historical relationship between the NASS survey data and the EIA survey data and the interplay between these two would be our assumption for the conversion rate, which as you know can be volatile at times, but obviously for consistency sake we try to maintain that month in and month out and obviously adjust as we see new data.

Question: Jeff Peterson

How is corn used for ethanol calculated in the WASDE report?

Answer: Mike Jewison

In a broad sense, obviously we start with assumptions for motor gasoline consumption in the US, trade, in terms of ethanol trade exports and imports, in addition to stocks. We rely heavily on what EIA says for forecast obviously they have a structural model for the short run for motor gasoline consumption, but we also utilize some judgment based on the latest weekly indications from the EIA weekly petroleum status reports.

Question: Todd Preszler

In Weekly Exports the data can have spikes, where the implied exports are 2-3 times higher than recently. Is this a lag in paperwork?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

It is probably not a lag in paperwork and not a lag in paperwork from the FAS perspective. I don't know in terms of the actual reporters, but we do have regulations that require the sales to

be reported within a specific timeframe, so they are not supposed to be saving them up and reporting them all at once. It is a requirement to report it timely.

Answer: Amy Harding

Periodically we do have late reporting, but it is not anything that is really all that large. I imagine that might show a little bit of a spike every now and then. But there is a definite timeframe in which the exporters have to report their weekly data. So, it would just be that there are more sales and more exports in any given timeframe.

Question: Egery Sepling

FAS was saying the trademark has registered successfully, so, would you anticipate to deploy IoT sensor GPS ID written into decentralized blocks for preventing counterfeit Parmigiano Reggiano manufacturing?

Answer: Patrick Packnett

Yes, I am not sure I really understand the question. And even if I did, I probably don't have an answer unfortunately. I apologize for that, but you know if the questioner wants to provide more clarification and send it in; it is something we can look at, but this is probably outside of my jurisdiction.

Question: Joseph Lardy

We can see inspection data and sale data each week. When we get to the end of the marketing year, how is the final WASDE export number derived?

Answer: Mark Simone

For the grains and oilseeds, we use U.S. Census data. That's our final number.

Answer: Mike Jewison

The one exception being cotton, essentially cotton is in a different world, but I don't think the inference of this question relates to cotton.

Question: Jerry Gidel

Given the volatility of world weather are you keeping a close a sharp eye on conditions in important growing area by satellite? Unfortunately, US dryness wasn't fully calculated in the USDA's 181 bu corn yield in August. Are the attache leaving the office?

Answer: Mark Brusberg

If I understand the question correctly, it is do we use satellite information? We do use some composite products, one of the strongest ones we found is that vegetative health index, which is a combination of the bands of the satellite looking at vegetation but also temperature. And

then we could get a pretty good approximation if there is any stress due to dryness. Other than that, we do use a lot of the actual weather observations. If you are referring to the drought, the drought monitor does use in-situ data and some satellite products. The drought monitor is not always a good proxy for what the actual losses are, as a matter of fact, I think that is one of its shortcomings. Having said that, you know we do use these products globally and as Patrick pointed out, Foreign Ag Service does have some of the products that they use operationally in support of the WASDE online so there is a lot of information going into the WASDE and into the drought monitor into other things that are monitoring international crop production.

Question: Callie McAdams

Could you share the website for the online geographic data analytic tool you mentioned?

Written Answer:

GADAS: <https://geo.fas.usda.gov/GADAS/index.html>

Question: Brittney Wells

What website can we find those (export sales reporting) reports on?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Patrick Packnett

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/export-sales-reporting-program>

The link to the reports is in the middle of the page.

Question: Joe Kleinman

Are FAS attache s&d data available digitally?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Patrick Packnett

Post forecasts and PSDs are available in GAIN reports, there is not a separate digital source.

Question: Ken Lovett

With the monthly PS&D data set releases, the livestock portions are published for download later than the grains and oilseeds. Is it possible to release all the data at the same time?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Patrick Packnett

Livestock and poultry data are released at 3 PM on the same day as the WASDE report in January, April, July, and October. We currently have no plans to change the timing of the report.

Breakout Session 2A: Ensuring Accuracy of Market News Reports

Question: Jose Montes

AMS has been updating the way to research for reports. In the past, one could find reports using report title: LetterLetter_LetterLetterNumberNumberNumber and a date range. The new method is more focused on Slug ID or Slug Name, and a specific date is requested. Furthermore, in the past one could go back up to 5 years, whereas the new method search method does not go beyond 3 years back. Where can we find information on how to use the new research method, i.e. find corresponding Slug ID's to Report Titles, how to search for date ranges and how can we request data older than 3 years?

Answer: Jason Karwal

Currently we are still in the process of moving archived reports to the My Market News site. We had an issue with some of the metadata with those reports. We had to stop and reassess how we were doing that. We are back to loading them, some reports are completed and some still in process. We plan to have five years of archives available on My Market News by the end of the calendar year. There are different ways to get that data. As I just mentioned there will eventually be a web API to pull the files down. We also have specific report landing pages where the files can be found. If there are currently reports that people need, we have the ability to get those for you. Contact me directly or through the contact information on My Market News. If there are issues with searching reports or trying to figure out what IDs or reports have been changed to, there are resources. Again, we are available, and we can help with any questions related to that.

Question: Marvin Hoekema

Is there an easier way to search for reports on MARS? Now you either have to search by the slug or through the plethora of menu items. There does not seem to be a plain text 'google' Boolean search for reports/commodity terms. Is that possible for MARS? A common complaint of MARS from people I work with is that it is very difficult to find the information. Thanks.

Answer: Jason Karwal

The My Market News site is where the report archives are, the AMS site is still where the current report is housed. That would be my first suggestion if you're looking for the most recent edition. If you're looking for archives, we are still finishing that piece up and there will be a web API available that is specifically for searching and pulling down the report files. If you are searching for the data that is what is available on the data page of My Market News. There are a few ways to do it. If you contact us, we could walk through that. The data is by report, and I'm not sure if that's where the confusion lies.

Question: Carolyn Liebrand

Agree very hard to find data by key word.

Answer: Jason Karwal

There are different filters for the data itself. I am not sure if it is the data or reports you're looking for. There are ways to drill into that, but it is specific. Again, we can walk anybody through that.

Question: Charlie Balstad

Is there an index to find the slug by the old report title, ie. what is the slug for SJ_LS710?

Answer: Jason Karwal

There are resources. There are several files on My Market News set up with that exact information of the reports their old slug and the new ones if they've changed. That's on the resources page on my market news. For both dairy and livestock that have changed.

Answer: Mike Lynch

Under the My Market News home page there is a link on the home and it says general resources. There is a spreadsheet we do our darndest to keep up to date with legacy slug numbers to new slug numbers. Going back to the search engine, on the file repository search the report title input box, accepts partial keywords. If you just know the word Kentucky, or cattle, if you do a partial word, it will work. We are seeking to improve the flexibility of that to be more Google friendly.

<https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/general-resources>

Answer: Jason Karwal

One thing to remember is in April and May we did discontinue a lot of the old text reports on LMR. A lot of those reports completely changed, which is why a lot of people get hung up on searching for some of those. We do have those changes and those Excel files as well.

Question: Joel Greene

Mandatory programs seem to have achieved goals. Any thoughts on whether or not mandatory programs should be extended to other commodities, e.g., specialty crops.

Answer: Mike Lynch

It is more of an industry driven initiative. An industry ask, if that industry wanted to do that I do not see AMS deciding that this works so great for livestock meat and dairy products, let's make a mandate that makes other commodity areas send data to us. It would have to come from the stakeholders.

Question: Ashley Lowe

Very difficult to find by keyword because the words have to be in the exact order of title. For example, I can type "livestock slaughter" and get reports but when I type "slaughter livestock" I get no results at all.

Answer: John Gallagher

It is finicky but we are working on enhancing flexibility. My recommendation and Jason would say the same, keep it simple. Do one word. Once you find the report you can always use the slug number. We hear your feedback. We are working to address it. I assure you that.

Breakout Session 2B: Using Satellite Data

Question: Jeff Peterson

How much of weighting does the satellite data have in determining the objective yield?

Answer: Lance Honig

If you are talking about the objective yield survey, then it will be no impact. Those are completely independent processes. The objective yield information is based solely on the information that our enumerators capture from going into the fields and taking counts, measurements, and harvesting portions of those fields. If the question is really about how much weight the satellite data get in determining estimates, I'll hold off until after my presentation which will hopefully shed some light on that.

Question: Mark Nelson

Will the PowerPoint presentations be made available?

Answer: Lance Honig

They will be. I think our intent is to attach them to the end of the transcript. Yes, the answer is the presentations will be provided after the fact.

Question: Bill Lapp

As I understand it, corn crop estimates are published based upon an equivalent moisture level (15%). If the crop in a given area is higher in moisture (say 18%), it is adjusted DOWNWARD to reflect a "wetter than normal" crop. If the crop in a given area is drier than normal, would it be safe to assume the crop is revised UPWARD?

Answer: Lance Honig

Here we will be talking about the objective yield survey. The answer is yes, the way the math works in the models for the objective yield, everything is adjusted to that standard moisture level whether it needs to be adjusted up or down. That is factored in. And so, from that perspective, the answer is yes.

Question: Bryce Knorr

How many years of data do you use for your remote sensing crop yield models?

Answer: Lance Honig

Are you referring to internally, the work that Rick and his staff does, how many years do they use, I'll let Rick answer that. Whether it is satellite information or any other indication on our

side of the house, we tend to look at 5, 10 and even in some cases, 15 years of data as we evaluate all the indications.

Answer: Rick Mueller

When we are building the model, we are going back and drilling into time back into 2006-2007. For the actual model of that year, we are just using the data collected for that growing season, beginning in April and running through till August-September-October reporting periods.

Answer: Lance Honig

We take all of those indications they provide to us and we evaluate them over time. We have a number of years available to us. Off the top of my head, I do not remember exactly how many years we have with the current yield model but it is quite a few. We do have a good history that we can draw upon for performance.

Answer: Dave Johnson

It really goes back to 2008. That was the year we had good land cover information for the Corn Belt. So, we have a number of years at hand.

Question: Todd Preszler

For the current growing season, how do you determine which MODIS pixels to include as a corn pixel?

Answer: Dave Johnson

That is where the CDL comes into play. Having that internally within the season helps us mask out the corn or soybean pixels, so using higher resolution information to mask out the coarser resolution. I will say just through a matter of experience that the mask can be fairly general, so even if you do not have a great CDL the model still works pretty wonderfully. If you have a good-looking cornfield, the soybean field across the road is probably good-looking too. Even if there is a mixing of crops in the MODIS pixels, it still seems to work out.

Question: Andrea Massetti

Does the CDL change during the year? Is it revised? Why is it published in February?

Answer: Rick Mueller

The CDL is held confidentially for each production cycle/period. In June, we are focusing mainly on winter wheat. As we move into August and September, we are going to more and more states. We cannot release that because it is considered market sensitive data at that point. We basically release it in February when we have completed all 48 states and the markets have settled and everything is published. This is kind of like publishing coincident with the county estimates in February.

Question: Xing Liu

Which satellite product do you use in estimating the acreage? MODIS terra?

Answer: Rick Mueller

I talked about basically in the beginning of my talk, we are using medium resolution satellites. That was the DMC satellite, Landsat, Sentinel, Resourcesat. That's all 30 meter based products. The MODIS terra/ MODIS aqua is used for the crop yield. That is 250 meters. That is lower resolution, but the premise of MODIS is daily observation. The Landsat and Sentinel gives us less frequent coverage, but higher resolution.

Question: Sigurd Lindquist

Any ideas as to how many acres are not reported at the FSA office?

Answer: Lance Honig

That does vary by crop and by state. As I mentioned earlier, in general we will say more than 95% for some crops. For some it could be 98%, maybe even more. It varies geographically. There are some parts of the country where there are larger populations who choose not to participate in some of those programs, therefore, coverage may be a bit lower. There could be other spots where participation is even higher. Overall, I think as a general rule more than 95%, so very strong coverage.

Question: Elaine Kub

FSA acres reported by farmers should be available by mid-July, right? Couldn't those be used (as sample data, but not total acreage, obviously) sooner than October?

Answer: Lance Honig

There's a couple of factors there, and history has taught us, you can even go out and download the information directly from the FSA website. They post it out there on a monthly basis, August through January, and you can see for yourself that's simply not the case. There's a variety of factors that can cause that. Number one, not everyone reports by the reporting deadline. There are reasons for that, it just is what it is. But in addition to that there's a process they have to go through to have that data all uploaded and incorporated into the process. I'm not going to try to explain why that might take as long as it does from an FSA perspective, it's a massive amount of information, but the bottom line is the data itself reveals on a reporting basis, it isn't complete until early October. In an early planting season, it can be a little earlier than that but even then you're still talking a September timeframe, and certainly not a July timeframe. So, the data just bears out the answer to that question.

Answer: Joe Parsons

We have done some fairly large-scale investigations using FSA as a sampling frame. It results in some challenges. There are some other ways we can use FSA data to reduce burden and we have and are continuing to investigate that. It's a complicated answer, but to simply use it as a sampling frame within season turns out to be pretty challenging both due to its incompleteness and trying to make it work in a short period of time.

Question: Elaine Kub

To clarify, farmers' deadline for reporting planted row crop acreage to most Midwestern county FSA offices is July 15, I think. I realize it's not yet official "certified" acreage, but as much info as is available in the system ... couldn't it be sampled and used as an indicator already in July?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS does review the FSA acreage totals throughout the growing season, even before the reporting deadlines have passed. Based on the analysis we have completed with this data, we have not found it to be complete enough to be reliable that early in the season.

Question: Jeff Peterson

What was the URL of cropscape?

Written Answer:

<https://nassgeodata.gmu.edu/CropScape/>

Question: Xing Liu

How do you decide the threshold of calculating the NDVI integral? Same value for all the counties?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Rick Mueller

As mentioned in the presentation, our remotely-sensed yield modeling relies heavily on accumulating NDVI over a set threshold through the season and relating that to yield. We've spent a lot of time trying to understand the best threshold and unfortunately have not found there to be a single value that works universally. In other words, it varies by geography, scale, and crop type. Having said that however, for corn and soybeans at a Corn Belt level an NDVI value of between 0.55 and 0.60 is where the model optimizes. If focused more locally on a region that has higher average yields that value probably needs to be set greater than 0.60. Conversely, an area with lower yields works better with a lower value than 0.55.

Question: John Ellis

Will the crops included in the CDL data dwindle over time as NASS efforts decline?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Rick Mueller

The crops included in the CDL are derived from the USDA/FSA/Common Land Unit (CLU) and are independent of NASS reported data. There are no expectations that the CLU data will dwindle since there are farm program incentives for producers to report their data to FSA. The CDL program uses the NASS/JAS data to produce internal estimates of acreage during the growing season and we are working on methods to use the CLU as the basis for modeling acreage rather than use NASS/JAS. So, expectations are that the CDL will continue to capture newly reported crops in the FSA/CLU program and expand upon the number of crops identified and will continue to provide NASS an independent assessment of crop acreage and inform upon disasters when/where possible.

Question: Andrea Massetti

What do you mean "satellite" indication in corn planted area slide? Visual examination?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

This is in reference to the modeled acreage indications based on satellite imagery analysis completed by NASS.

Question: Sigurd Lindquist

What is the response rate of farmers surveys?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Response rates vary from survey to survey, and state by state, however in general they tend to average 60-75%.

Question: Alan Brugler

Does NASS use the satellite data to fill in holes in the farmer survey data?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS does not specifically substitute satellite data for gaps in farmer reported data, however satellite data is helpful in interpreting survey results, especially when there are multiple survey sources.

Question: Joe Kleinman

Why don't you use FSA and RMA yield/production data for final production numbers? Wider coverage and accuracy than NASS Farm surveys.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

Although producers do report their planted acreage to FSA, they do not report information regarding harvested area, yield, or production. NASS does not have full access to yield data from RMA and therefore has not been able to evaluate it as a data source. Timing is also a factor with RMA yield data since producers are not required to report final data until purchasing the following year's policies.

Question: Jeff Peterson

Why would the crop yield get adjusted up if the harvested moisture is below 15% on corn?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

The mathematical formula used to calculate yield for objective yield sample data includes a factor to adjust to standard moisture content. This only impacts the objective yield indications.

Question: Ken Lovett

Pertaining to future derivative products, would NASS consider leveraging the CDL to provide state level percentages of crop rotation combinations (such as corn-on-corn, corn-after-soy, soy-after-corn, etc)? Similar to the percentage of soy following another crop.

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS is always exploring ways to provide information that is useful to the agricultural community subject to available resources.

Question: Scott Irwin

Would you consider publishing historical statistics on the accuracy of different yielding indications for corn and soybeans?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

NASS remains committed to being as transparent as possible while maintaining the integrity of the data used in our estimating processes, including exploring ways of potentially providing more measures of accuracy for various indications.

Question: Dale Durchholz

How has the loss of plant population impacted the ability to project yields in August? This year's shift in ear pop was especially notable. Has it made the Aug forecast less valuable; should it

simply be abandoned?

Answer: Post-meeting answer from Lance Honig

We don't believe that the absence of objective yield data in August has reduced the accuracy of the August yield forecasts and therefore don't believe it is less valuable.

Presentation Slides

Following this page are the slides presented during the Data Users' Meeting.

- Main Session
- Breakout Session 1A: Program Changes
- Breakout Session 2A: Ensuring Accuracy of Market News Reports
- Breakout Session 2B: Using Satellite Data



2020 USDA Fall Data Users' Meeting

October 28, 2020

Joe Parsons

Chair, Agricultural Statistics Board



Agenda

12:30pm	Welcome and Agency Introductions
12:40pm	Open Forum
1:40pm	Break
1:50pm	Breakout Session #1
2:35pm	Break
2:45pm	Breakout Session #2
3:30pm	End

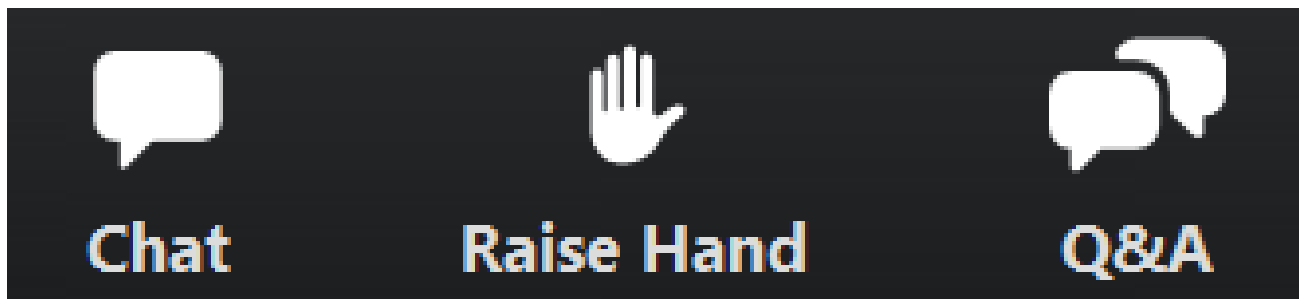


Housekeeping

- Closed captioning links provided in registration confirmation, the email attachment sent yesterday, or in the chat window.
- The session is being recorded and will be available on our website: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Education_and_Outreach/Meeting/index.php
- Transcript of Q&A with any additional questions we don't have time to answer will be available on our website and emailed to all attendees.



Asking a Question in Zoom



Q&A – Questions will be answered live by our panelists or by typed response

Raise Hand – We will unmute you to ask a verbal question

Chat – Technical Issues

Email - Marisa.Reuber@usda.gov or LaKeya.Jones@usda.gov



- Coronavirus operational information from NASS:
 - The health and safety of our employees, enumerators, and survey respondents are our first priority.
 - We have stopped in-person data collection for now and strongly encourage farmers and ranchers to respond online.
 - All reports remain on schedule and we will announce any changes to our publication schedule, if there are any, as quickly as possible by news release, our website, and twitter(@usda_nass).
 - USDA has a series of questions and answers regarding COVID-19 at [USDA.gov/coronavirus](https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus) across a host of topics and agencies. Your question may have already been addressed on the Q&A on the website.



Introductions

- Mike Conner, Petroleum and Biofuels Statistics Team, Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy
- Statistics Canada
- INEGI – Mexico



Introductions

- Dr. Spiro Stefanou, ERS Administrator
- Dr. Cindy Nickerson, USDA Deputy Chief Economist
- Hubert Hamer, NASS Administrator

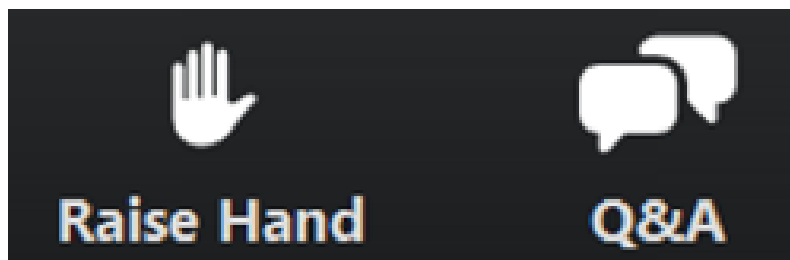


Panelists

- Mike Lynch, Agricultural Marketing Service
- Kelly Maguire, Economic Research Service
- Patrick Packnett, Foreign Agricultural Service
- Brad Karmen, Farm Service Agency
- Mark Jekanowski, World Agricultural Outlook Board
- Joseph DeCampo, U.S. Census Bureau
- Dan Kerestes, National Agricultural Statistics Service



Open Forum



Q&A – Questions will be answered live by our panelists or by typed response

Raise Hand – We will unmute you to ask a verbal question

Email - Marisa.Reuber@usda.gov or LaKeya.Jones@usda.gov



Breakout Sessions

	Session A	Session B
1:50 p.m.	Program Changes	Foreign Production, Trade, and Import/Export Data
2:35 p.m.	10 Minute Break	
2:45 p.m.	Ensuring Accuracy of Market News Reports	Using Satellite Data

Links to join can be found in

- Your registration email
- Agenda emailed yesterday
- Chat window



2020 USDA NASS Data Users' Meeting

Program Changes

Lance Honig, Chief
Crops Branch

Agenda

Crop County Estimates

**Elimination of Agricultural Statistics
District (ASD) Estimates**

Reduction of Crops & Practices

Implementation of Model-Based Estimates

Updated Publication Standards

Additional Published Estimates

**Number of Acres Remaining to be Planted in
June Acreage; Number of Acres Remaining to
be Harvested in *Annual Crop Production*.**

Elimination of ASD Estimates

Why?

Allows publication of more county level estimates

Consistent with Livestock and Census of Agriculture

District boundaries can be arbitrary

What Else?

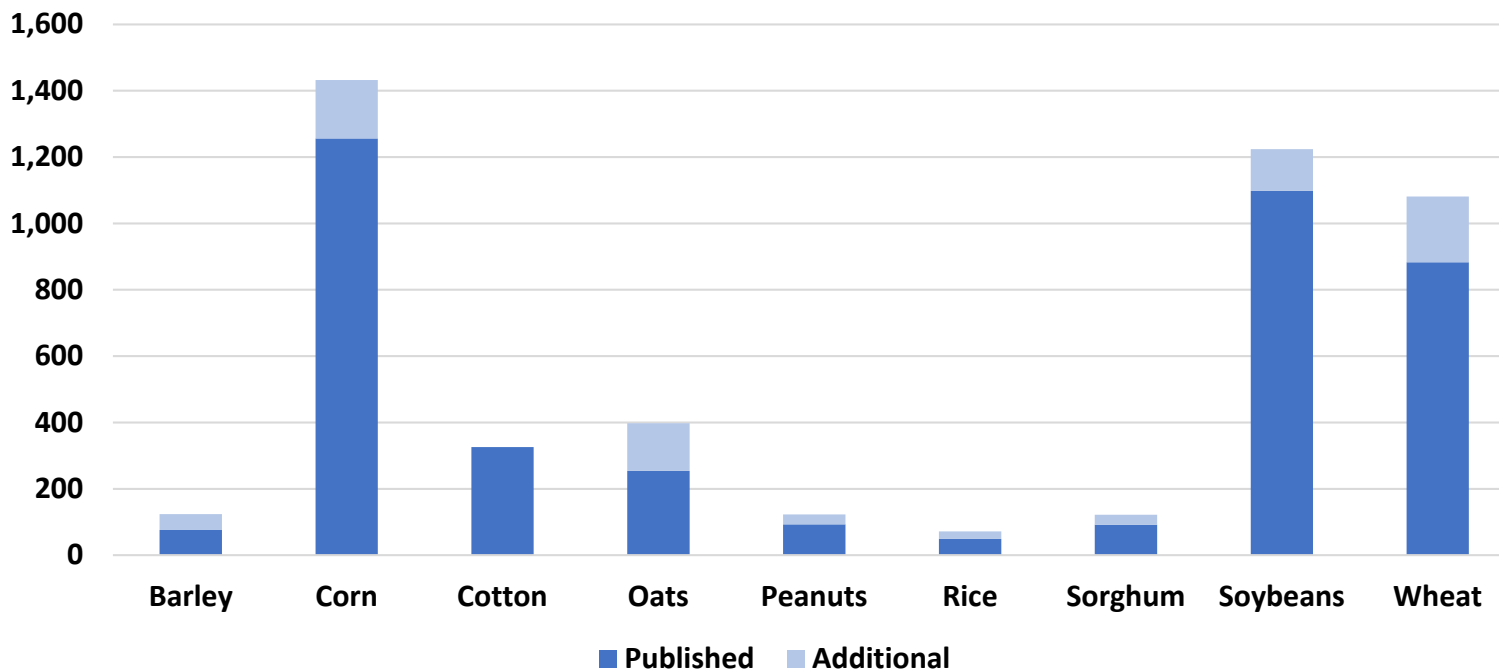
No in-season ASD forecasts

When?

Effective with 2020 crop year

Elimination of ASD Estimates

Counties Published and Additional Counties Eligible Approximate Counts for 2019 Estimates



Reduction of Crops and Practices

Why?	Reduced Funding
What Was Eliminated?	Dry Edible Beans, Flaxseed, Hay, Potatoes, Sugarbeets, Sugarcane, Sunflower, Tobacco
	Irrigated/Non-Irrigated Practices
When?	Effective With 2019 Crop Year
What Remains?	Barley, Corn, Cotton, Oats, Peanuts, Rice, Sorghum, Soybeans, Wheat



Implementation of Model-Based Estimates



Why?

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Panel Recommendation

Transparent and Reproducible

Allows Publication of Estimates of Precision (CVs)

When?

Effective With 2020 Crop Year

Key Points

Survey data remains critical

Increased transparency with ability to publish “recipe”

Model improves estimates in cases of sparse data by drawing strength from auxiliary data

Utilizes Bayesian Modeling Techniques



Implementation of Model-Based Estimates



Planted Area Inputs

Survey Planted Area Expansion and Standard Error

FSA Certified Acres

RMA Insured Acres

State Planted Estimate

Harvested Area Inputs

Survey Harvested-to-Planted Ratio and Standard Error

FSA Failed Acres

RMA Failed Acres

Rounded Planted Estimate

State Harvested Estimate



Implementation of Model-Based Estimates



Yield Inputs

Survey Yield Indication and Standard Error

National Commodity Crop Productivity Index (NCCPI)

State Yield Estimate

Cotton Ginnings (Covariate)



Implementation of Model-Based Estimates



Production

Not Modeled

Harvested Area Estimate x Yield Estimate (Rounded)

Modeling Technique Produces CV (Published)

Updated Publication Standards

Why Have Them?

Ensure individual operation data remains confidential

Ensure estimates are “fit for use”

Why Update?

Maximize Counties Published

Panel Recommendation

What Was New?

Market Facilitation Program Data

When?

Effective with 2020 crop year

Updated Publication Standards

Confidentiality

Ensures no individual's information is revealed.

Must have at least 3 positive reports of yield.

No single operation can represent large proportion of total for county.

No Change to These Rules

Updated Publication Standards

Acreage Threshold

Small acreage is troublesome to estimate.

Estimate of Harvested Acreage must be at least 100.

Old Rule – Estimate of
Planted Acreage must be
at least 500.

Updated Publication Standards

Coverage

Minimum of 30 positive yield reports.

OR

Reported harvested acreage from reports with positive production must account for at least 25% of the harvested acreage estimate.

OR

Minimum of 10 positive yield reports AND Reported harvested acreage from reports with positive production must account for at least 10% of the harvested acreage estimate.

Third “Option” was Added



Updated Publication Standards

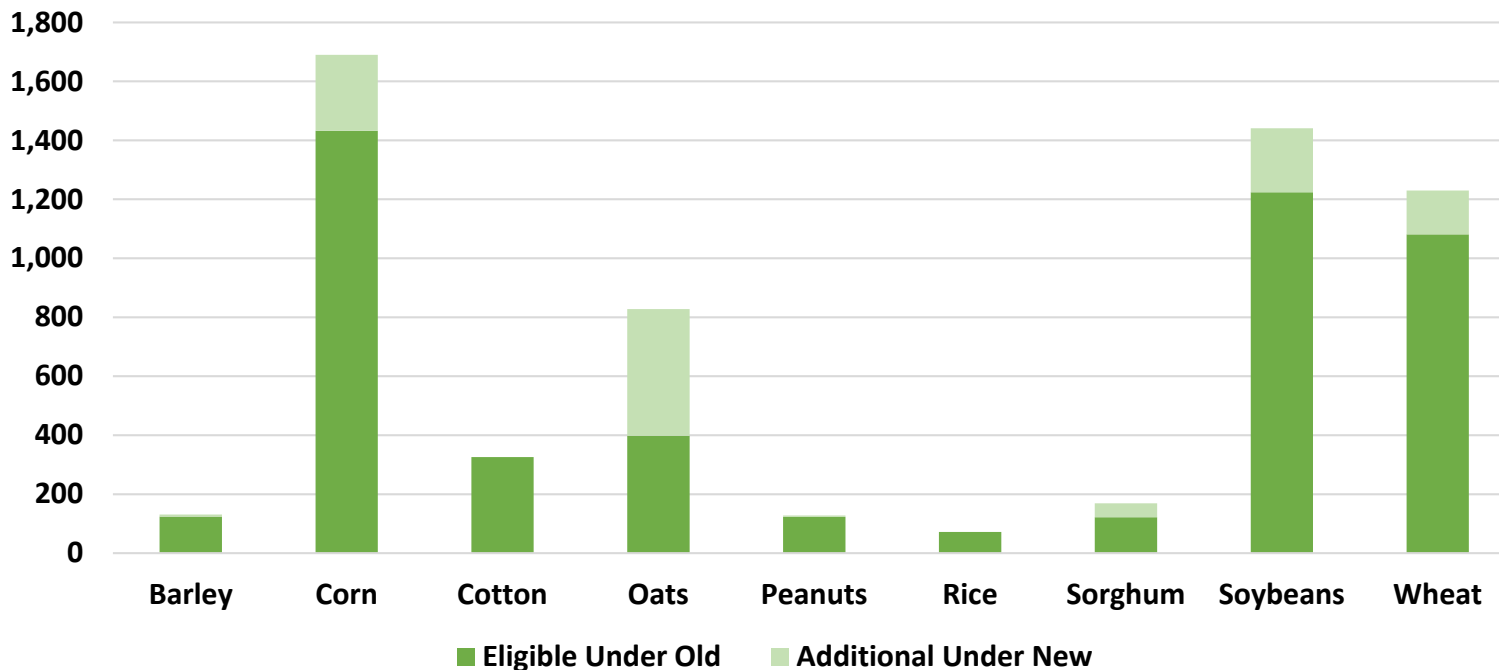


Cotton Exception

Due to the quality of administrative data for cotton (ginnings), coverage requirements may be disregarded if production is at least 5,000 bales.

Updated Publication Standards

Counties Eligible Under Old and New Standards Approximate Counts for 2019 Estimates





Additional Published Estimates

<i>June Acreage</i>	Number of Acres Remaining to be Planted
	U.S. Corn and Soybeans
	Added in Response to Multiple Requests
<i>Annual Crop Production</i>	Number of Acres Remaining to be Harvested
	U.S. Corn and Soybeans
	Added in Response to Multiple Requests



#StatChat



**STAT
CHAT**
SERIES

Join @usda_nass using #StatChat
to ask NASS's Lance Honig about
the *Crop Production* report.

@usda_nass
#STATCHAT

**TUES
NOV 10
1PM ET**



All Reports Available At

www.nass.usda.gov

For Questions

(202) 577-6558

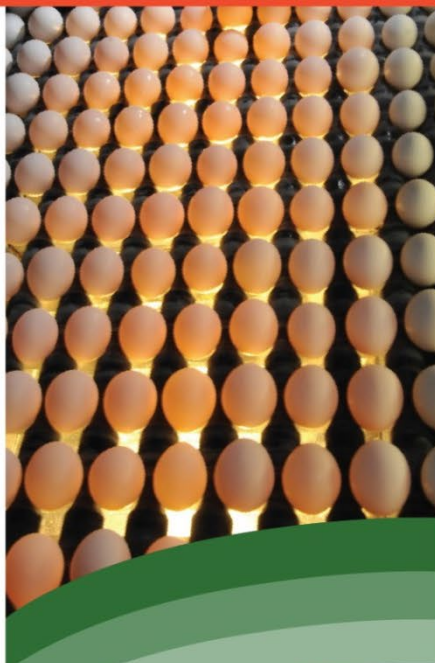
Lance.Honig@usda.gov



United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service

Creating Opportunities for American Farmers and Businesses



Ensuring Accuracy of Market News Reports

AMS is committed to providing *Timely, **Accurate**, Comprehensive, and Unbiased* Market Data

Review, Verification, and Correction Procedures for both Mandatory and Voluntary Livestock and Dairy reports

DPMRP, FMOS, Market News, and My Market News

<https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/>

Dairy Product Mandatory Reporting Program (DPMRP)

7 CFR 1170

- ✓ Weekly Procedures
 - ✓ Revisions
- ✓ Annual Validations
- ✓ Audits
- ✓ Personal and regular contact with reporters
- ✓ Ongoing training for reporters, auditors, and program staff

DPMRP: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/mmr/dmr>

Federal Marketing Order Statistics (FMOS)

- ✓ Review Procedures
 - ✓ Revisions
- ✓ My Market News
- ✓ Datamart
- ✓ API

FMOS: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/resources/marketing-order-statistics>

Datamart: <https://mpr.datamart.ams.usda.gov/>

API User Guide:

<https://mpr.datamart.ams.usda.gov/USDA%20LMPRS%20API%20User-Guide.pdf>

Livestock Mandatory Reporting (LMR)

7 CFR 59

Reporting Staff

- ✓ Daily Checklists
- ✓ Internal System Checks
- ✓ Reporters Communication With Plants
- ✓ Weekly Data Reviews & Tracking
- ✓ Report Revisions

LPGMN Reports: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/livestock-poultry-grain>

Livestock Mandatory Reporting (LMR)

7 CFR 59

Auditors

- ✓ Procedures
- ✓ Pre-audit Tools
- ✓ Communication With Reporters
- ✓ Scheduled Audits
- ✓ Formal Written Reports of Audit Results
- ✓ Conduct Periodic Spot Checks

LMR: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/mmr/lmr>

Voluntary Price Reporting (VPR)

Reporting Staff

- ✓ Speak with both buyers and sellers to confirm trading
- ✓ Pre-Release Report Checklist
- ✓ Post-Release Report Checklist
- ✓ Weekly / Bi-Weekly Data Review
- ✓ Contact Visits
- ✓ Reporter Certification (2-year cycle)

MMN Reports & Data: <https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/>

MARS and My Market News Updates

Recent and Upcoming Changes and Updates

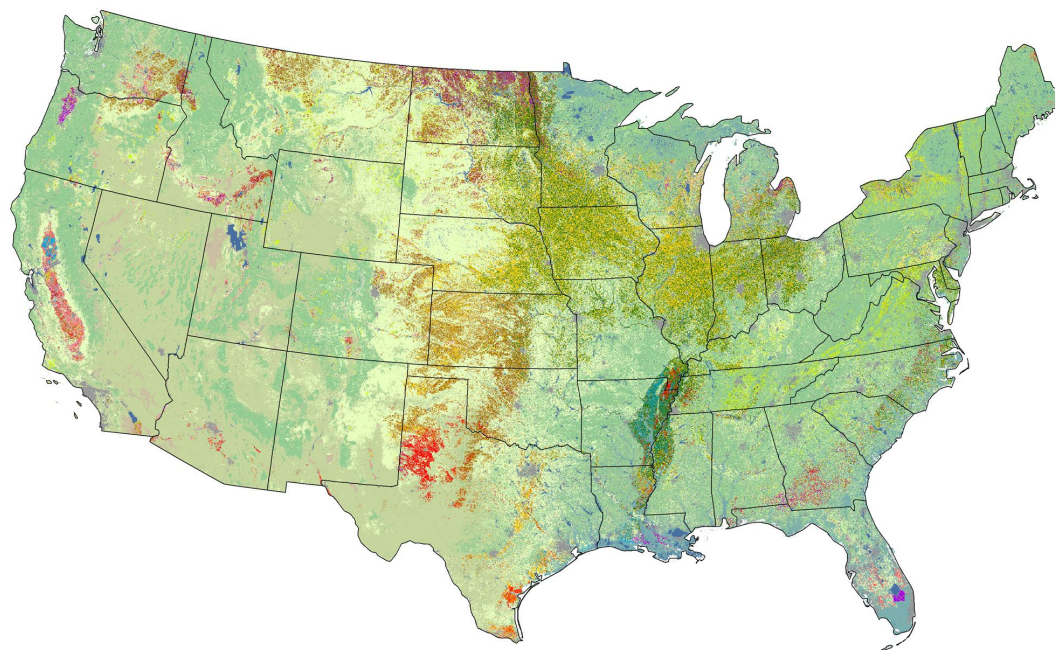
- ✓ New Market Type Data Available on MMN
- ✓ New Web API for Identifying Corrections
- ✓ New Feature to for Identifying Corrected Data Sets Through MARS and LMR API Coming
- ✓ New Feature to Pull Report Files Through a Web API Coming
- ✓ Process of Updating Documentation on MMN
- ✓ New Market Type Data Sets Coming to MMN in Next 6 months

MMN: <https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/>



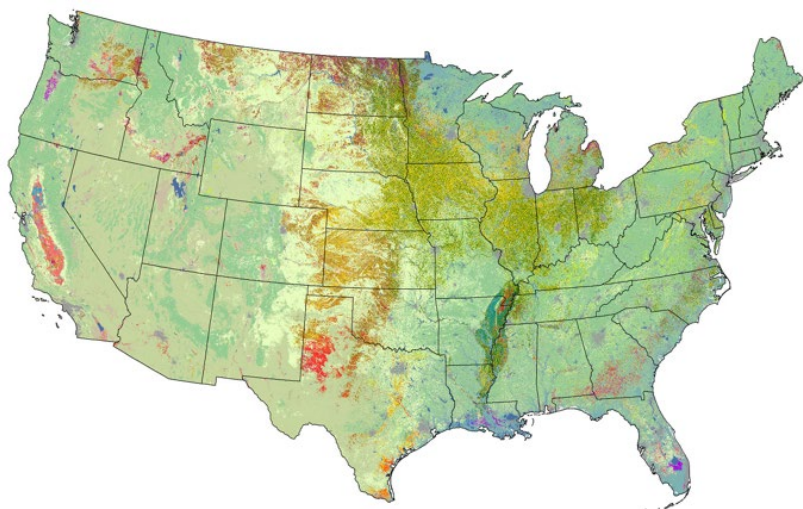
Questions?

NASS Remote Sensing Program



Rick Mueller & Dave Johnson
Spatial Analysis Research Section

Cropland Data Layer



Major Land Cover Categories

Agriculture

Corn
 Soybeans
 All Wheat
 Fallow/Idle Cropland
 Other Hay
 Alfalfa
 Other Crops
 Cotton
 Vegetables/Fruits/Nuts
 Sorghum
 Other Small Grains
 Rice

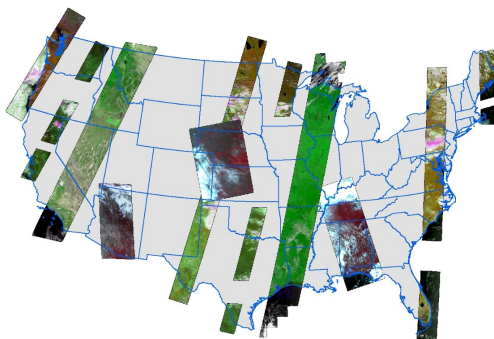
Non-Agriculture

Woodland
 Shrubland
 Pasture/Grass
 Urban/Developed
 Wetlands
 Water
 Barren
 Perennial Ice/Snow

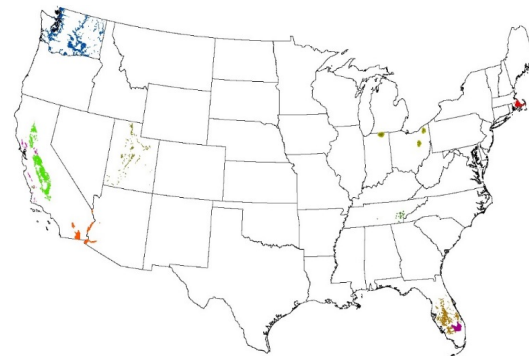
- Estimate crop acreage
- Monitor crops throughout growing season
- 30 meter spatial resolution
- National annual landcover product
12+ years
- Over 100+ crop categories
- Built using machine learning/decision trees

Cropland Data Layer Inputs

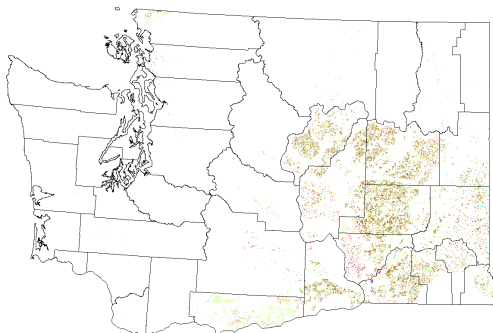
DMC Deimos-1 & UK2,
Resourcesat-2, Sentinel-2
A/B, Landsat 8



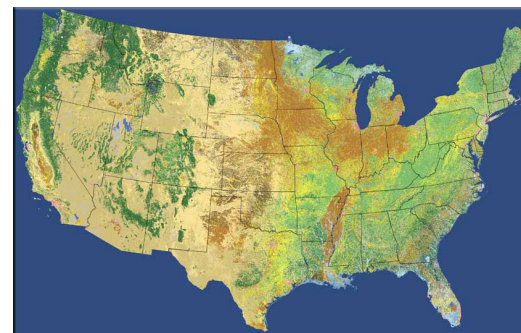
Supplemental Ground
Reference Data



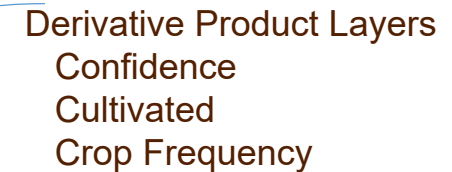
Farm Service Agency:
Common Land Unit



2016 NLCD &
Derivative
products



CropScape
NRCS Geospatial Data Gateway
NASS website



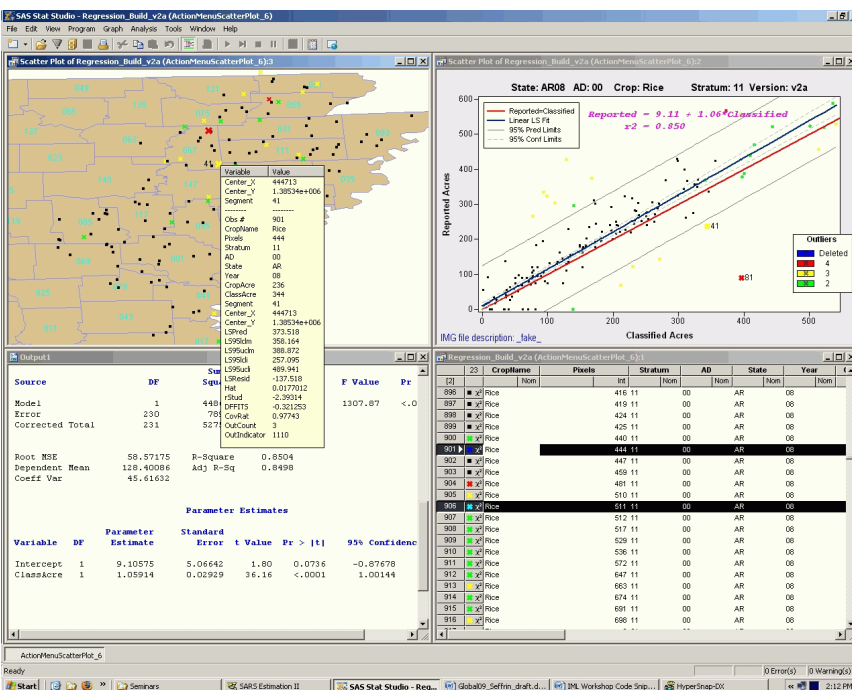
Disaster Assessments

Area Sampling Frame

June Area Survey Imputation

Land in Farms

Soil Moisture





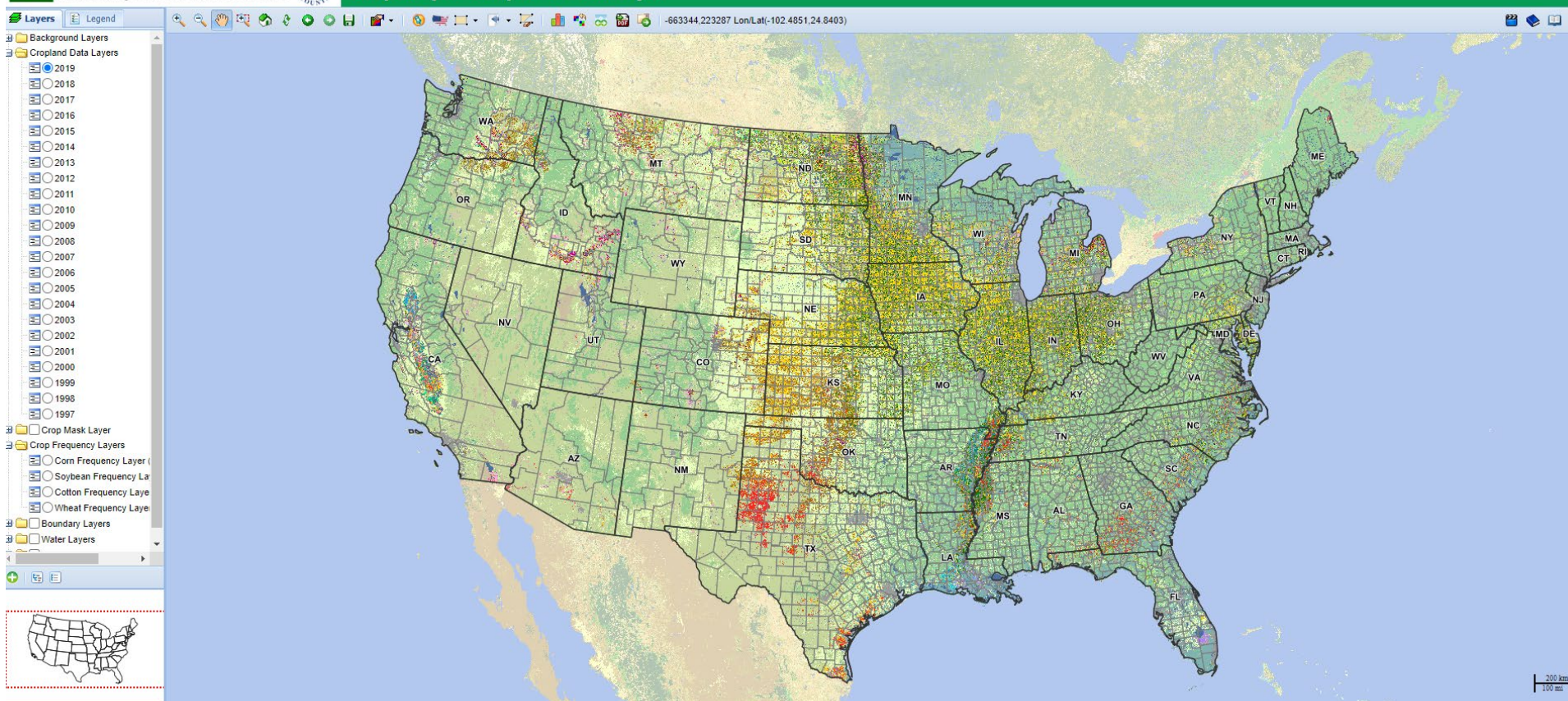
CropScape: CDL Dissemination



USDA United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service



CropScape - Cropland Data Layer



USDA Home | NASS Home | Research and Development Division | About CDL | Metadata | Citation | Contact | ViewScape | National Download
Copyright © Center For Spatial Information Science and Systems 2009 - 2020
Technical Support Zhengwei.Yang@nass.usda.gov



CropScape: <https://nassgeodata.gmu.edu/CropScape/>

Yield Goals

- Provide independent indications of corn and soybean yields utilizing remotely sensed data
- For inclusion into the Crop Production Forecasts
 - August, September, October, November
 - National/Speculative region, state, and a few ASDs
- Follow with county-level indications after season is complete



ISSN: 1936-3737

Crop Production

Released May 9, 2014, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Winter Wheat Production Down 9 Percent from 2013
Orange Production Up Slightly from April Forecast

Winter wheat production is forecast at 1.40 billion bushels, down 9 percent from 2013. As of May 1, the United States yield is forecast at 43.1 bushels per acre, down 4.3 bushels from last year.

Hard Red Winter production, at 746 million bushels, is up slightly from a year ago. Soft Red Winter, at 447 million bushels, is down 21 percent from 2013. White Winter, at 209 million bushels, is down 7 percent from a year ago. Of the White Winter production, 10.9 million bushels are Hard White and 198 million bushels are Soft White.

The United States all orange forecast for the 2013-2014 season is 7.21 million tons, up slightly from the previous forecast but down 13 percent from the 2012-2013 final utilization. The Florida all orange forecast, at 110 million boxes (4.96 million tons), is up slightly from the previous forecast but down 17 percent from last season's final utilization. Early, midseason, and Navel varieties in Florida are forecast at 53.3 million boxes (2.40 million tons), up 1 percent from the previous forecast but down 21 percent from last season. The Florida Valencia orange forecast, at 57.0 million boxes (2.57 million tons), is unchanged from the previous forecast but down 14 percent from last season's final utilization. California and Texas production forecasts are carried forward from April.

Florida frozen concentrated orange juice (FCOJ) yield forecast for the 2013-2014 season is 1.58 gallons per box at 42.0 degrees Brix, down 1 percent from the April forecast and down 1 percent from last season's final yield of 1.59 gallons per box. The early-midseason portion is projected at 1.52 gallons per box, up 1 percent from last season's yield of 1.51 gallons per box. The Valencia portion is projected at 1.64 gallons per box, down 3 percent from last year's final yield. All projections of yield assume the processing relationships this season will be similar to those of the past several seasons.

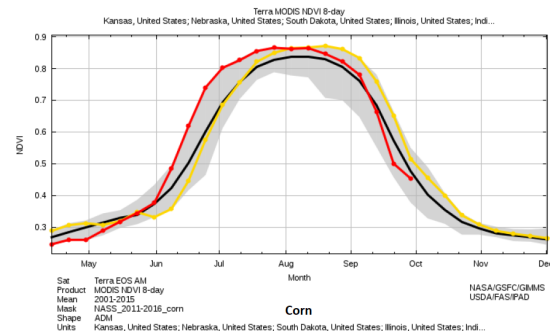
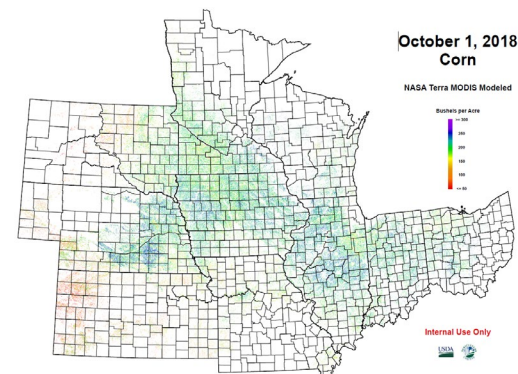
Remote Sensing Crop Yield Modeling and Estimation

• Premise

- Positive correlation between crop yield and biomass – plant vigor - “greenness” - NDVI
- Negative correlation between crop yield and land surface temperature

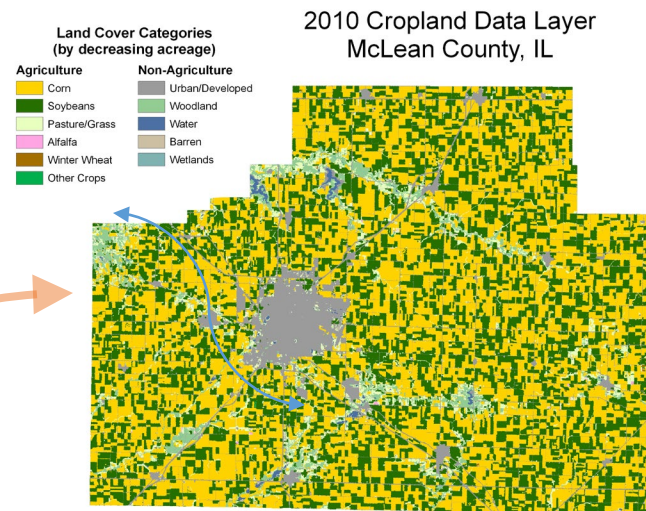
• Utilize time-series MODIS satellite data to obtain biomass and temperature estimates throughout growing season

- Construct empirically-based prediction model based on historical imagery and NASS county-level yield statistics
- Integrating over season
- Use Cropland Data Layer to isolate known crop areas



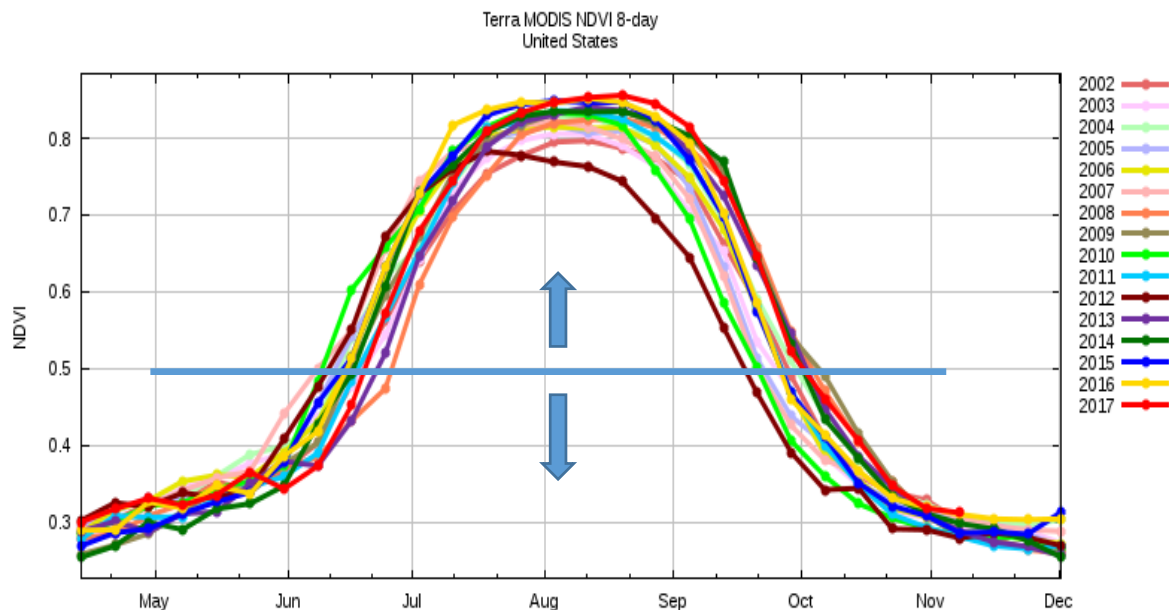
Relationship between available MODIS variables and crop yield

- County-level time-series database was built from 2006 -> present
- Every eight day exists a MODIS observation through the growing season which can be averaged to county-level
- For every county we also know the NASS published average yield historically
- Thus, we can look at the relationships and if strong enough build yield models



state	county	year	yield	NDVI	DLST	23-Apr	1-May	9-May	17-May	25-May	2-Jun	10-Jun	18-Jun	26-Jun	4-Jul	12-Jul	20-Jul
17	93	2010	168.6			2980.673	3264.547	3862.318	3866.409	3990.153	5893.765	7558.422	8108.906	8559.559	8826.817	8930.85	8935.61
17	95	2010	159.9			2992.195	2977.046	3203.401	3377.778	3848.078	5771.909	7450.655	8012.679	8310.476	8537.081	8645.006	8702.09
17	97	2010	?			3337.864	3836.186	5403.508	4459.949	4311.525	5635.508	7575.966	7776.288	8082.441	8575.966	8689.22	8524.83
17	99	2010	162.9			2844.2	2971.099	3332.757	3486.144	3937.887	6032.626	8059.657	8344.285	8565.456	8784.721	8903.283	8939.18
17	101	2010	156.9			3874.741	3988.952	4349.537	4930.498	5452.197	6205.825	7687.592	8022.794	8396.337	8589.467	8770.097	8827.56
17	103	2010	173.6			2782.144	2805.154	3018.966	3094.823	3512.443	5563.73	7306.284	8102.134	8554.694	8918.413	8949.941	8862.48
17	105	2010	166.6			2816.087	3007.861	3371.65	3608.025	3988.44	6100.426	8236.687	8503.526	8751.071	8872.207	8945.958	8805.10
17	107	2010	155.7			2706.578	2846.325	3249.914	3622.797	4402.778	6661.937	8254.186	8426.524	8515.872	8656.284	8755.741	8782.62
17	109	2010	141.8			3104.659	3240.878	3479.558	3558.215	4056.188	6151.458	7440.174	7913.743	8068.891	8437.704	8697.558	8783.25
17	111	2010	171.4			3079.982	3283.63	3659.725	3626.941	3909.787	5483.311	7163.395	8116.372	8578.756	8844.542	8908.066	8886.72
17	113	2010	169.5			2727.7	2899.42	3316.302	3573.485	4053.523	6484.888	8304.741	8585.89	8846.408	8960.349	8953.985	8860.08
17	115	2010	168.5			2791.229	2943.968	3442.016	3862.389	4880.537	7264.473	8749.776	8793.049	8769.201	8787.036	8828.984	8797.02
17	117	2010	146.9			3213.265	3342.063	3617.414	4030.15	4799.472	6474.308	8021.675	8511.256	8646.314	8885.395	8920.521	9010.37
17	119	2010	166.3			3282.816	3405.388	3712.914	4087.371	4860.512	6581.844	8129.837	8410.098	8587.161	8826.583	8879.477	8854.28
17	121	2010	149.7			3524.353	3534.901	3931.625	4260.018	4856.34	6251.207	7828.069	8242.445	8450.967	8601.465	8853.656	8952.45
17	123	2010	163.3			2748.186	2881.69	3261.708	3448.857	3851.546	5647.397	7541.326	8205.306	8567.037	8799.09	8891.405	8974.80

Find Optimal
Threshold Value



Sat Terra EOS AM
Product MODIS NDVI 8-day
Mean 2001-2015
Mask NASS_2011-2016_corn
Shape ADM
Unit United States

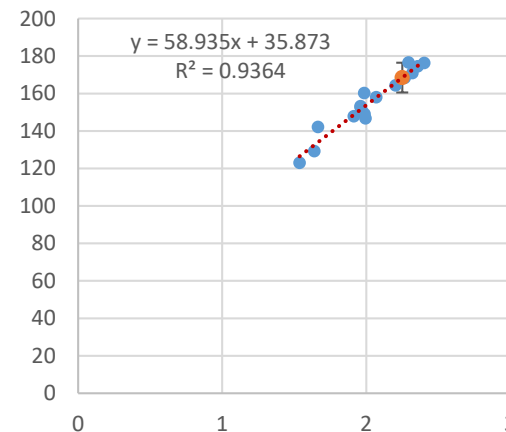
year	yield	andvi
2000	136.9	1.635
2001	138.2	1.758
2002	129.3	1.639
2003	142.2	1.665
2004	160.3	1.986
2005	147.9	1.914
2006	149.1	1.988
2007	150.7	1.97
2008	153.3	1.96
2009	164.4	2.204
2010	152.6	1.962
2011	146.8	1.995
2012	123.1	1.537
2013	158.1	2.069
2014	171	2.32
2015	168.4	2.267
2016	174.6	2.357
2017	176.6	2.294
2018	176.4	2.402

NASA/GSFC/GIMMS
USDA/FAS/IRAD

Calculate area under the
curve, over a threshold
and relate to past years.



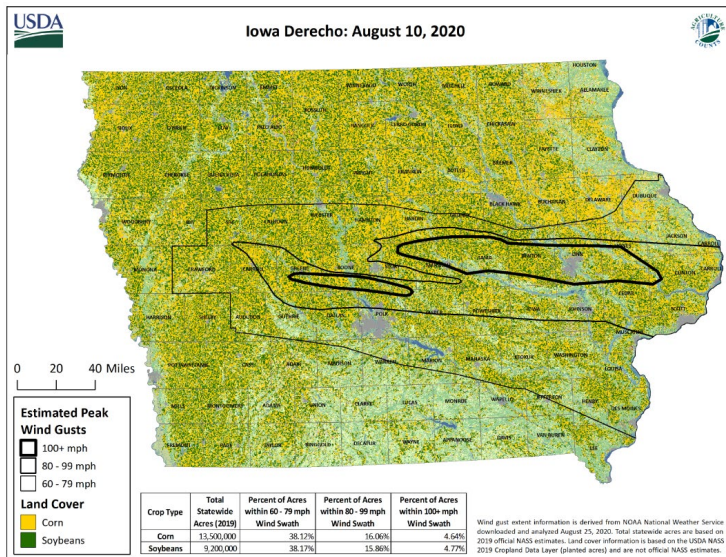
Integrate Season



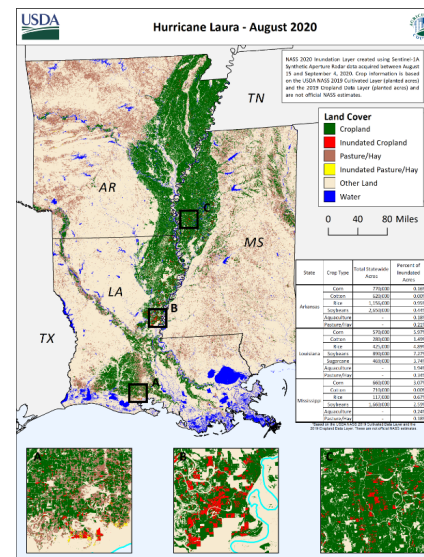
U.S. 2020 Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters



This map denotes the approximate location for each of the 16 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters that impacted the United States from January–September 2020.

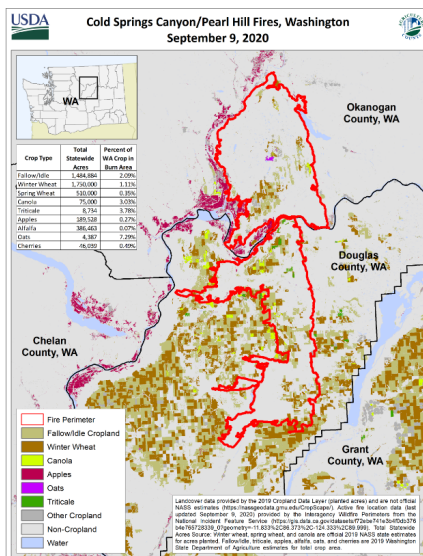


Iowa
Derecho

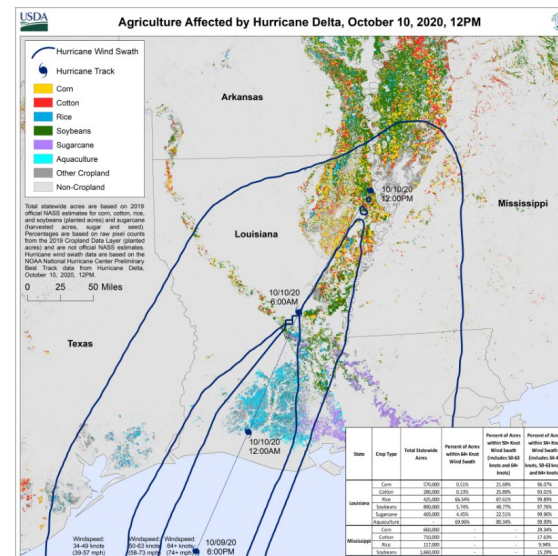


Hurricane
Laura

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Research_and_Science/Disaster-Analysis/index.php



Washington
State
Wildfires



Hurricane
Delta



2020 USDA NASS Data Users' Meeting

Using Satellite Data

Lance Honig, Chief
Crops Branch

Agenda

Use of Satellite Data

Short Answer

Items Satellite Data Informs On

Hierarchy of Indications

Greatest Uses of Satellite Data

Short Answer

**How Are
Satellite Data
Used?**

**Satellite Data are Supplementary to Survey and
Administrative Data**

Why?

Accuracy and Bias – Relative to Other Indications

Timing

Items Satellite Data Informs On

Which Estimates?

Planted Acreage -- YES

~~Harvested Acreage~~ -- NO

Yield -- YES

~~Production~~ -- NO

Hierarchy of Indications

Varies by...	Estimate: Planted Acreage, Harvested Acreage, Yield, Production
	Crop
	State
Changes	Over Time

Hierarchy of Indications

**Every Indication is Evaluated
Against Final Estimate for
Accuracy and Bias**

Year	Final Estimate	Indication 1	% Difference
2015	10,000	9,080	1.101
2016	12,000	11,111	1.080
2017	15,000	13,755	1.091
2018	13,000	11,929	1.090
2019	14,000	12,958	1.080

Significant Bias – But Consistent



Hierarchy of Indications

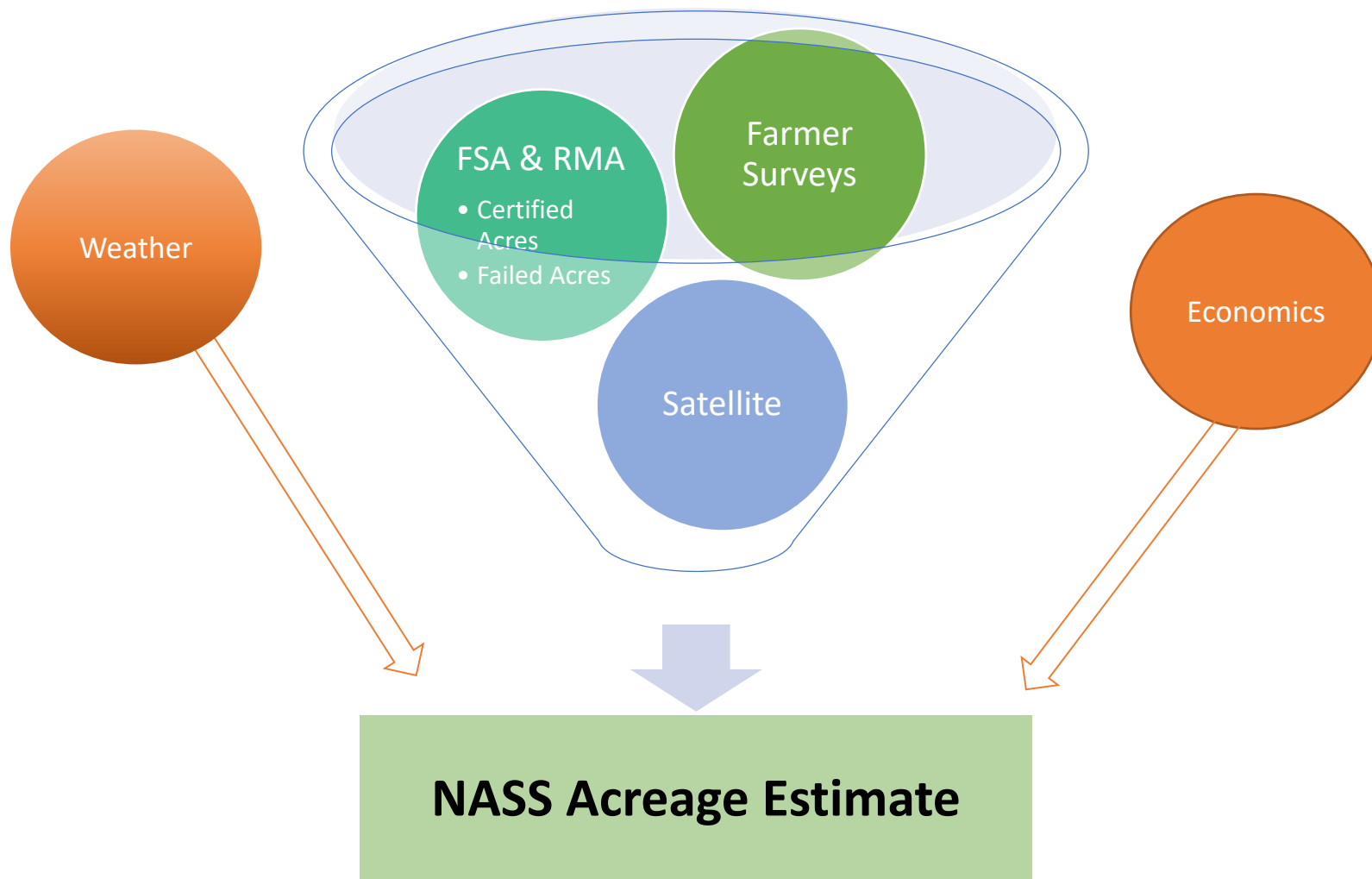
**Every Indication is Evaluated
Against Final Estimate for
Accuracy and Bias**

Year	Final Estimate	Indication 2	% Difference
2015	10,000	10,049	0.995
2016	12,000	11,540	1.040
2017	15,000	14,563	1.030
2018	13,000	13,026	0.998
2019	14,000	13,659	1.025

Small Bias – But Somewhat Inconsistent



Hierarchy of Indications





Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Planted Acreage

March

June

October

Final

Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Planted Acreage

March

March Ag
Survey

June

October

Final

*** Multiple Indications for Each Source**

Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Planted Acreage

March

March Ag
Survey

June

~~March Ag
Survey~~

June Ag
Survey

FSA Certified
Acres

October

Final

*** Multiple Indications for Each Source**

Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Planted Acreage

March

March Ag
Survey

June

~~March Ag
Survey~~

June Ag
Survey

FSA Certified
Acres

October

~~March Ag
Survey~~

June Ag
Survey

FSA Certified
Acres

Satellite

Final

*** Multiple Indications for Each Source**

Hierarchy of Indications

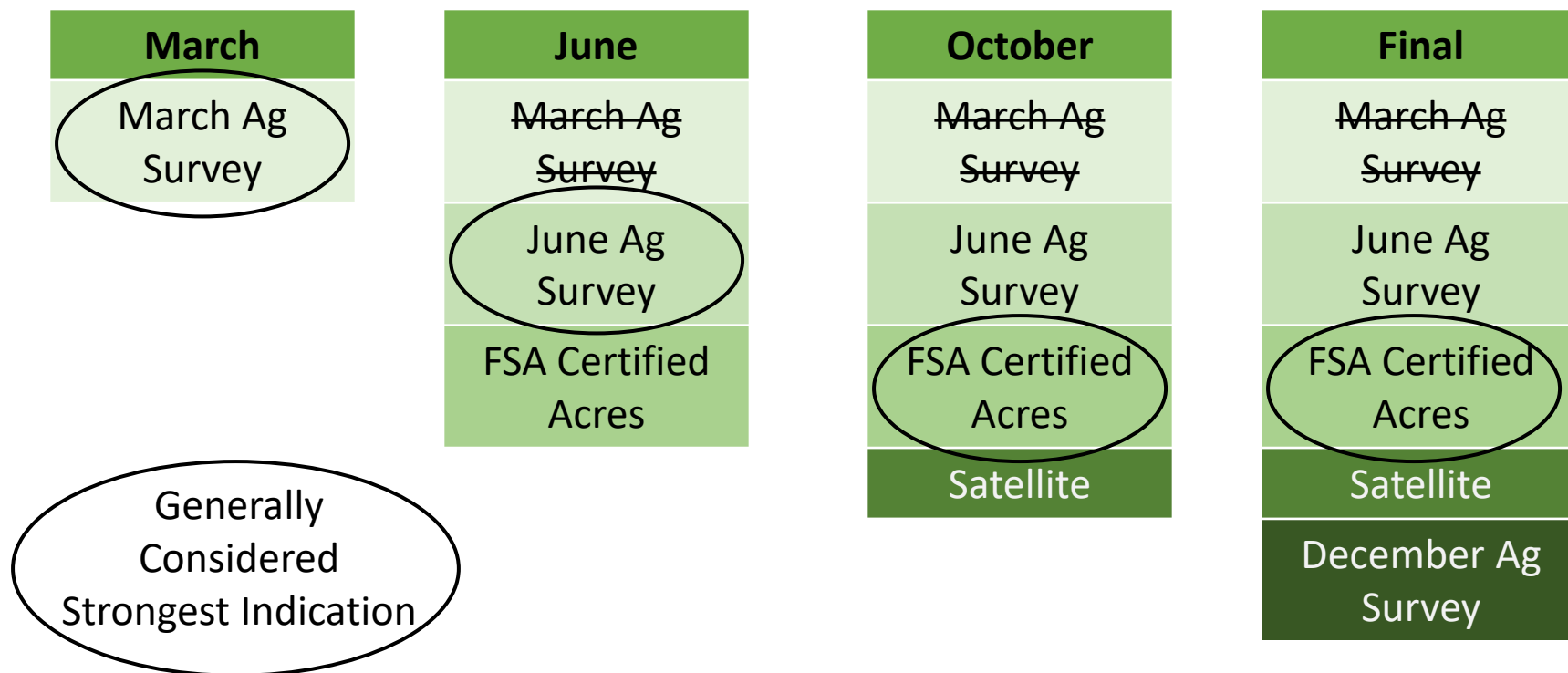
Corn Planted Acreage

March	June	October	Final
March Ag Survey	March Ag Survey	March Ag Survey	March Ag Survey
	June Ag Survey	June Ag Survey	June Ag Survey
	FSA Certified Acres	FSA Certified Acres	FSA Certified Acres
		Satellite	Satellite
			December Ag Survey

*** Multiple Indications for Each Source**

Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Planted Acreage



*** Multiple Indications for Each Source**

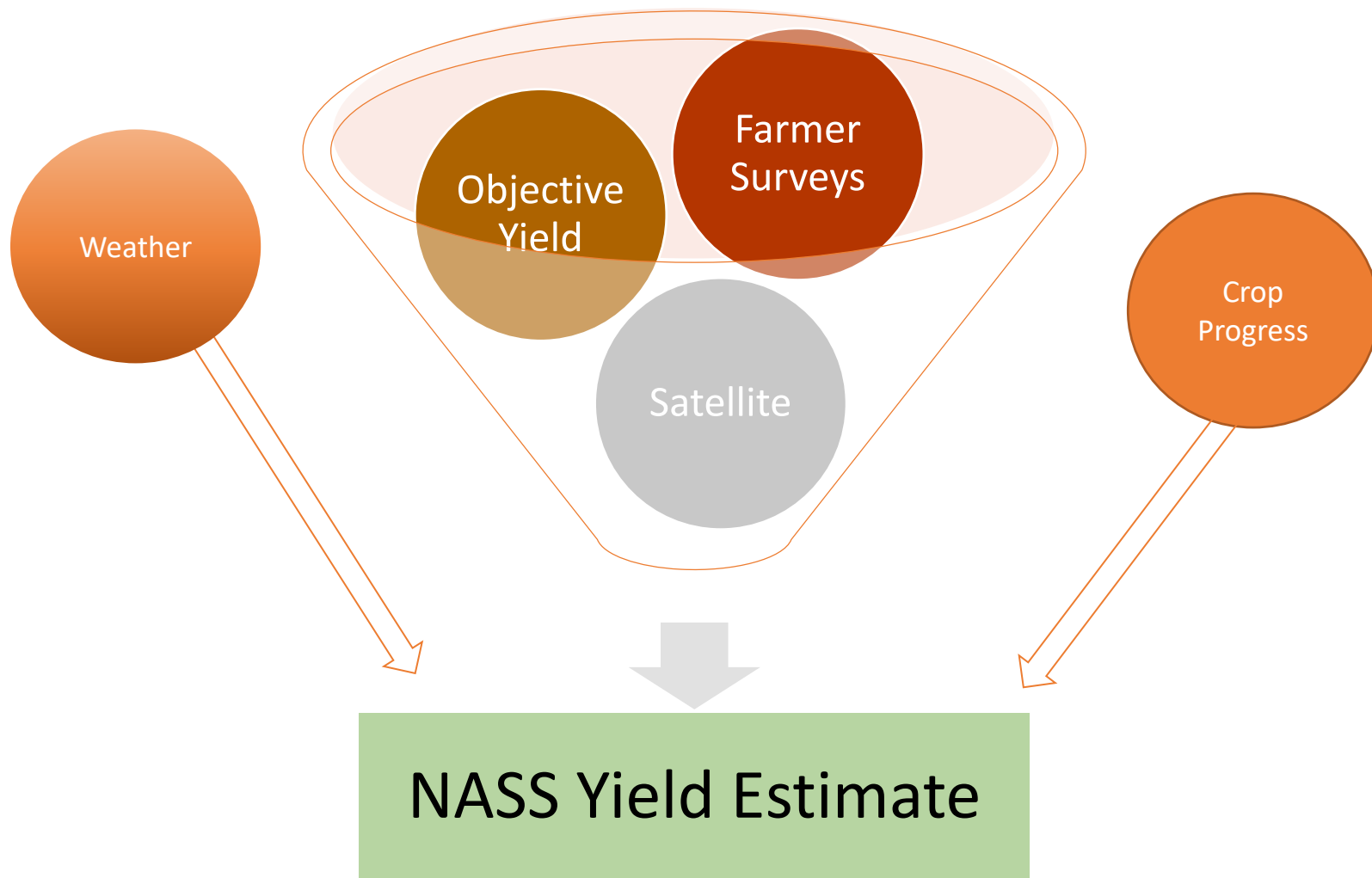
Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Planted Acreage

Why is Satellite Data Supplementary?

March	No Crops Emerged (or Planted) So No Satellite Data Available
June	Limited Emergence So No Satellite Data Available
October	FSA Certified Acres Nearly Complete
Final	FSA Certified Acres Complete

Hierarchy of Indications





Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Yield

August

September

October

November

Final

Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Yield

August

Ag Yield
Survey

Satellite

September

October

November

Final

Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Yield

August	September	October	November
Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey
Satellite	Satellite	Satellite	Satellite
	Objective Yield Survey	Objective Yield Survey	Objective Yield Survey

Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Yield

August	September	October	November	Final
Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey
Satellite	Satellite	Satellite	Satellite	Satellite
	Objective Yield Survey	Objective Yield Survey	Objective Yield Survey	Objective Yield Survey
				December Ag Survey

Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Yield

August	September	October	November	Final
Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey	Ag Yield Survey
Satellite	Satellite	Satellite	Satellite	Satellite
	Objective Yield Survey	Objective Yield Survey	Objective Yield Survey	Objective Yield Survey
				December Ag Survey

Generally
Considered
Strongest Indication

Hierarchy of Indications

Corn Yield

Why is Satellite Data Supplementary?

August	• Driven by Vegetation, Which Doesn't Always Correlate with Yield • Can't Distinguish Between Acres To Be Harvested and Those Not To Be Harvested • Can't Distinguish Between Acres for Grain and Acres for Silage
September	
October	
November	
Final	December Ag Survey - Reported Harvest Results from Large Sample of Producers

Greatest Uses of Satellite Data

How DOES NASS Use Satellite Data?

Provide Independent Indications to Help Interpret Survey and Administrative Data

Identify and Determine Magnitude of Extreme Events (i.e. Weather)

Inform for Unscheduled Estimating Periods Due to Unexpected Events



#StatChat



**STAT
CHAT**
SERIES

Join @usda_nass using #StatChat
to ask NASS's Lance Honig about
the *Crop Production* report.

@usda_nass

#STATCHAT



**TUES
NOV 10
1PM ET**





All Reports Available At

www.nass.usda.gov

For Questions

(202) 577-6558

Lance.Honig@usda.gov