



Small Scale and Niche Market Pork Producers Should Respond to the 2022 Census of Agriculture¹

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The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conducts a Census of Agriculture every five years. The census is a complete count of farms and ranches in every county of every state in the U.S. Other information gathered during a census includes but is not limited to land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and market value of agricultural products. For the 2022 Census there are new questions about the use of precision agriculture, hemp production, and hair sheep, and there are updates to internet access questions. Decision makers identify trends and new developments in the agricultural sector of the Virginia and U.S. economies comparing data to earlier censuses.

Federal, state and local governments, as well as various agribusinesses, require comprehensive and impartial Census data when making decisions that dramatically affect rural communities, such as:

- community planning,
- location of sites for new stores or companies,
- availability of operating loans and other funding,
- location and staffing of USDA Service Centers (single locations where customers

can access the services provided by the Farm Service Agency [FSA], Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS], and the Rural Development agencies), and

- Farm programs and policies.

Farmers and ranchers themselves use Census data to help make informed decisions about the future of their own operations.

All persons that produce or grow any agricultural products, including field crops, fruits, vegetables, floriculture and livestock, regardless of the size of the operation, should complete the 2022 Census of Agriculture form. For purposes of the Census of Agriculture, a farm is defined as any place (urban or rural) from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year. This definition of a farm has been in effect since 1974. Federal law (Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113) requires those receiving a Census of Agriculture form in the mail to respond.

The NASS publishes the results of the Census of Agriculture in aggregate form only, protecting the identity of individual operators or producers, as required by law. All tabulated data receives an extensive disclosure review prior to publication. Any tabulated item that identifies data reported by an individual respondent or

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allows a respondent's data to be accurately estimated or derived is "suppressed" and coded with a "D". Data such as number of hogs and pigs sold, or the value of hogs and pigs sold is unreported if, for example, there is only one pig farm in a particular county in Virginia. A "D" appears for those items on the appropriate line and in the appropriate column of the published table. In contrast, the actual number of farms reporting an item is not confidential information and appears.

Completed forms are due by **February 6, 2023**. However, if you miss the deadline, the USDA requests that you return the forms as soon as possible. Respondents can complete the Census online at:

www.agcensus.usda.gov

or return their forms by mail. Also, a list of frequently asked questions census can be found at:

<https://usda.gov/s/article/2022-census-of-agriculture>

For more information on the 2022 Census of Agriculture, visit the aforementioned websites or call 800-727-9540.

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