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INTRODUCTION

General Information

The pre-enumeration awareness program for the 1987 Census of Agriculture had three major goals:

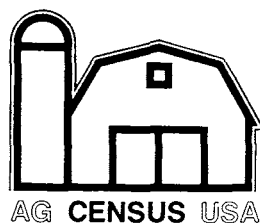
1. Make the agriculture community (farmers, ranchers, and agribusiness data users) aware of the census
2. Encourage everyone to respond (to increase the overall response rate)
3. Speed response during the early days of the census

The Agriculture Division formed a census awareness working group to prepare an agriculture census data products promotion and marketing plan, and, in cooperation with the agency's Public Information Office, Data User Services Division, and Congressional Affairs Office, developed a multimedia publicity program for the 1987 census. This included premailout activities to inform respondents and data users about the census, an inhand effort to reach respondents and encourage early and complete response while the census questionnaires were arriving in their mail, and a post-mailing effort to provide news about the census operation and the data collected. Bureau staff briefed Members of Congress, farm organization representatives, agriculture magazine and newspaper editors, and farm broadcasters, and distributed informational materials to schools, businesses, private organizations, and individuals throughout the country. Before the census mailout in December 1987, and throughout much of the data collection period, the publicity concentrated on raising general awareness of the census and encouraging response. Once the bulk of the data had been collected, the objectives switched to informing the public (particularly potential data users) about data content, format, media, and availability.

The Bureau added a new facet to the 1987 awareness program when, for the first time, it entered into a formal contract with the Advertising ("Ad") Council to develop selected materials for publicizing the agriculture census. The advertising firm of Ogilvy & Mather contributed staff time and expertise in producing television, radio, and print public service announcements (PSA's) for the agriculture census.

Theme and Logo

The Bureau revised the logo for the 1987 agriculture census, depicting a barn and silo with "AG CENSUS USA" below it.



The theme for the promotion campaign was "America Counts on Agriculture," and this slogan was reproduced on the posters and overprinted on press releases and other publicity materials. Public service announcements (PSA's) produced for use by the broadcast media generated a second theme of "Raise the Flag"—a reference to raising the flag on mail boxes as respondents returned their report forms by mail.

CENSUS PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

Radio and Television

Agriculture Division staff met with representatives of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB) in July 1986 to begin planning the 1987 agriculture census broadcast campaign and to hear recommendations and suggestions from NAFB members, particularly on using radio for the publicity campaign. In August, members of the Agriculture Division, Public Information Office, and other Bureau personnel attended a 2-day seminar sponsored by the Ad Council to brief its members on current and post-census publicity plans, and to discuss the most productive use of advertising agency services.

The broadcast publicity developed for the 1987 agriculture census employed radio, building on the experience gained in the previous two censuses, and television, which had not been part of the 1978 promotion effort and had been used very little for 1982. In November 1987, the Census Bureau began sending news releases, publicity materials, and PSA's on agriculture census activities to some 6,350 radio stations, 1,000 broadcast television stations, and about 560 cable television stations. The press releases were short items concerning specific phases of the census operation, starting with an announcement that the 1987 census soon would begin and continuing with notes on the actual beginning of data collection, return date, and so on. The primary radio broadcast publicity vehicles were two awareness program tapes. The first contained a set of three PSA's (10-, 30-, and 60-second spots prepared by the Ad Council). The second had statements of support from agribusiness leaders and government officials, and interviews with prominent agriculture and agribusiness personalities, such as the national secretary of the National Farmers Organization, the director of economics and planning for Southern States Cooperative, Inc., and the market research manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperatives. The Bureau distributed copies of the PSA's to all radio stations on the media outlet lists maintained by the Ad Council, the Public Information Office, and NAFB-member stations. The Ad Council also prepared a set of three (20, 30, and 60 seconds long) television PSA's. The Bureau distributed copies to some 1,500 broadcast and cable stations, and to NAFB member stations, and the 12 Census Bureau regional offices, which helped promote the agriculture census in their respective regions.

Audiovisual Program

The Bureau employed a private contractor to develop a 12-minute agriculture census promotional program of 75 color slides and a cassette-recorded narration for use by the USDA's Extension Service (ES) and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), the Census regional offices, and other interested parties. Approximately 6,200 copies of the slide show were distributed to ES and ASCS county offices throughout the country, and several hundred more to land grant colleges and universities, State departments of agriculture, the Census Bureau's own regional offices, and the National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS's) State offices. On request, county agencies (such as local planning boards, schools, libraries, and so on) could also get the slide show on video cassette.

Printed Materials

General—Despite the inroads made by the electronic media, printed materials—newspapers, magazines, posters, brochures, and the like—remained an important source of information for the public. The 1987 census public awareness campaign made extensive use of these materials, distributing posters, tentcards, and brochures to offices and organizations all over the country for display; providing articles, informational releases, and drop-in advertisements to magazines and newspapers; and producing standardized speeches, agriculture census guides and lesson plans, and a series of census related stories tailored to each State for release to the general news media.

Posters—The Census Bureau printed over 65,000 copies each of the 18" x 24", 10 1/2" x 14", and 8 1/2" x 11" 1987 agriculture census posters, in red, green, and blue ink on heavy white stock. Approximately 38,000 copies of each went to vocational agricultural teachers and programs, together with a cover letter requesting teachers to ask their students to place the posters in the windows of local businesses. Some 3,500 copies of each were delivered to the USDA for use by its various agencies; and 16,800 of the 8 1/2" x 11" version were mailed to U.S. Postal Service rural post offices (these were identified as any responsible for rural delivery routes). The Bureau also sent copies to farm organizations and trade associations.

Brochures and standardized speeches and statements—The Bureau prepared pre- and post-mailout promotional brochures for the awareness campaign. The pre-mailout brochure, *Preview of the 1987 Census of Agriculture*, was an eight-page folder that outlined the history, legal authorization, and scope of the enumeration, and explained the need for the census, uses of the data, and when operators could expect to receive the report forms. The post-mailout items included the nine-page brochure, *1987 Census of Agriculture*. This included much of the background material in the *Preview*, but also provided basic descriptions of the

data release program and told how to obtain the data or more information on the census and Bureau programs. A second post-mailout item, *Characteristics of Agriculture in the United States*, was a 12-panel, 4-color folder of graphics and maps prepared from 1987 Census of Agriculture data. The Agriculture Division staff distributed these materials at conventions and shows and sent copies of the brochures to USDA's ES and ASCS field offices.

A Bureau staff member also wrote a 5- to 6-minute standardized speech primarily for use by USDA's ES and ASCS staff in their local meetings and presentations. Seven thousand copies were printed and distributed: 3,300 copies to the ES county offices, and 3,200 more to the ASCS's county offices, plus copies to the land grant colleges and universities; various agricultural, trade, and public service (e.g., Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees), and Rotary) associations; and State departments of agriculture.

Newspapers and magazines—The Bureau began distributing printed promotional materials in November 1987, when 2,000 information kits, each containing a copy of the report form, a telephone contact sheet, the data release program, the brochures *A Preview of the 1987 Census of Agriculture* and *Questions Most Frequently Asked About the Census of Agriculture*, and an 8 1/2" x 11" copy of the poster, were sent to congressional offices. In December, 3,200 more of the kits went out to newspaper and magazine news editors (some also were sent to radio news directors).

In February 1987, the Bureau contacted the editors of some 200 agriculture news magazines and requested that they devote one of their editions' covers to an agriculture census story. The Bureau hired professional photographers to produce appropriate pictures from all over the Nation for possible use on magazine covers and offered copies of these photographs to magazines that agreed to use the census material. A significant problem for the magazines was that they were being asked to allocate portions of their holiday and New Year's issues—the most valuable and productive issues for the publishers in most cases—to the census, as well as the cover. Nevertheless, several magazines agreed to use the census photographs for their cover stories, and a number of others included noncover census stories in their December-January issues.

The Bureau also prepared 5 precensus feature stories on the agriculture census and sent copies to approximately 1,700 print news outlets beginning in December 1987. These were followed by a series of 21 feature stories, providing summaries of the census results for leading agricultural States, and for States that had a low response rate in the 1982 census. Copies of the State stories were sent to the State bureaus of the major wire news services, as well as to 1,700 or so magazines and newspapers that had received the precensus material.

Agriculture census guide—The Agriculture Division prepared Form 87-A10, *Report Form Guide*, as a reference

manual for county agents, vocational agriculture teachers, USDA agencies (National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), etc.), and others to use in helping farmers, ranchers, and other respondents complete their report forms. The A10 was 42 pages long and contained explanations and detailed instructions for completing each item on both the sample ("long"—including "must" and "certainty") and nonsample report forms. Perhaps as importantly, the A10 had information on what respondents should not include in their response. For example, the instructions for section 1, item 3 on the report forms ("Land rented or leased to others") described what land should be included, and instructed the respondent not to list (1) pastured cropland or pastureland used or rented by others from the addressee on a per-head basis, or (2) land from which another person bought a crop that was ready for harvesting.

Copies of the guide, together with cover letters and/or additional materials (such as the precensus lesson plan), were distributed as follows:

Organization or agency	Copies
Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS)	*3,200
Farmers Home Administration (FmHA)	3,000
Extension Service (ES)	*3,300
National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS)	
State offices (5 each)	250
High school vocational agriculture teachers	8,500
Land grant college and university agriculture departments (2 each)	74
State data centers (SDC's), lead agencies (2 each)	100
Census Bureau regional offices (10 each)	120

*The copies provided to the ES and ASCS (these were sent to the field offices) were part of a census information kit that included the *Guide*, the census poster, copies of standardized speeches, the *Preview of the 1987 Census of Agriculture* brochure, a pamphlet on questions most frequently asked about the census, and a prepared news story.

Agriculture census lesson plans—The Census Bureau employed private contractors to develop precensus and postcensus agriculture census lesson plans for use by vocational agriculture classes. The precensus publication, Form 87-A16, *Lesson Plans: The Census of Agriculture*, provided background information on the census and four specific lesson plans covering production agriculture, agribusiness uses for census data, relating census data to community development, and the purpose of the agriculture census together with its use by public and private agencies. The postcensus *Lesson Plans: The Census of Agriculture* (no form number was assigned) covered data products available and uses of the census data in more detail.

The Census Bureau distributed approximately 8,000 copies of the plans to high school vocational agriculture programs and 4,000 more to participants in the USDA's "Agriculture in the Classroom" program. About 3,000

copies also were distributed to land grant universities, teacher education programs, community colleges that had agriculture programs, and to farm and trade organizations.

Special Materials

During the 1982 agriculture census program, the Bureau purchased a supply of baseball-style hats bearing the census logo for distribution by NAFB members. As the hats proved very popular and provided additional publicity for the enumeration, the Bureau decided to use them again for 1987, again asking the NAFB to help promote the enumeration by using the hats in contests and publicity activities at their member broadcast stations. The Bureau ordered about 4,000 hats bearing the census logo. One hundred eighteen NAFB member stations agreed to help; the agency sent each station 20 of the hats. The rest were given away at conferences and meetings, and on request. The promotional materials included 10,000 circular press-on stickers and 10,000 buttons, half of each bearing the census logo, the other half the motto "America Counts on Agriculture." These were given away at conferences and meetings.

As part of the postcensus promotion campaign, the Bureau ordered 6,000 order form display boards; 3,300 of these were distributed to ES county offices, while others went to ASCS State and county offices, Census regional offices, and State data centers. The boards listed various kinds of data publications available, and included a pocket for publication order forms. The Bureau began distributing supplies of the order forms in January 1989; the publication program was not complete by that time, but the order forms contained the necessary directions as well as the estimated publication schedule for those products not then available.

Agribusiness and Agricultural Organizations

The largest user of agriculture census data, after the Federal Government, is the agribusiness sector of the economy. The Census Bureau and agribusiness have a mutual interest in achieving a complete and accurate census and the Bureau has always tried to enlist the help of agribusiness in publicizing the enumeration and encouraging operators to respond. The Bureau also has made the promotional materials (posters, brochures, guides, "dropin" advertisements, and so on, distributed to the news media, county agents, teachers, and others) available to agribusinesses and agribusiness associations.

In May 1987, the Bureau began a program to work with major farmer and commodity associations to promote the census. In July and August 1987, the director of the Census Bureau sent letters to the State offices of the Farm Bureau Federation, the National Grange, the National Cattlemen's Association, and other agriculture organizations and commodity associations explaining the importance of the census and asking for the support of their organizations in publicizing the census and encouraging

early and complete response. The Bureau supplied copies of news releases and feature articles to farm organizations' publications, and provided staff and materials for information booths at conventions held by various agriculture oriented associations.

The groups represented on the Census Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics (see ch. 2 for member organizations and their representatives) cooperated with the publicity campaign, including publicizing the census through their own advertising and promotional facilities, and having their representatives on the Committee record and/or film interviews or supporting statements.

POSTCENSUS PUBLICITY AND ASSISTANCE TO DATA USERS

News Releases and Stories

News releases—After the census, there was a publicity campaign to inform potential data users of the kind of data being published and their availability. The Agriculture Division prepared a series of news releases based on the 1987 census results; beginning in August 1988, 50 stories using the advance data—one for each State—were mailed to the national wire services, national and local newspapers, and agriculture-oriented magazines. Each two-page article contained selected basic data from the 1987 census, together with comparative data from 1982, including information on number of farms, acres in farms, total value of sales, and so on, and graphic displays of selected items. Copies of these news releases also were made available on the Bureau's online information system—CENDATA™—and through an electronic connection, on AgriData Network's online system.

Summary story—The State stories were followed in October 1989 by another, on the Summary of the United States report of the Volume 1, *Geographic Area Series*. The story highlighted the statistics in that publication, concentrating on the increases in the value of agriculture products sold and the number of small farms measured in the census. A detailed analysis of U.S. data also was prepared for release to agriculture finance and marketing media.

Feature stories—During 1990, the Agriculture Division staff wrote and distributed a series of feature articles on 1987 census data for a variety of subjects of special interest, such as farm characteristics, age of operator, aquaculture, and machinery and equipment.

Professional Meetings

Census Bureau representatives attended a variety of trade shows, professional association conferences, agricultural news media conferences, and trade and commodity association meetings to help publicize the census. The

Agriculture Division and other Bureau staff made particular efforts to attend meetings of such organizations as the American Agricultural Editors' Association, the National Association of Agricultural Journalists, the National Association of Farm Broadcasters, and the Agricultural Relations Council, to enlist the support of the associations and their members in promoting cooperation with the census. Attendance at such meetings provided opportunities not only to promote census activities and explain census programs, but enabled Bureau representatives to hear suggestions for improving their efforts. Agriculture Division personnel staffed booths, made presentations or speeches, or participated in discussions and workshops at an average of four or five association meetings each month for much of the 1987 census period, including participation at successive meetings for the entire period for a number of prominent organizations.

State Farmer Meetings

The Bureau representatives also attended annual meetings of State-level farm organizations—such as the American Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union, and the National Cattlemen's Association—staffing booths, making presentations, and setting up exhibits, to promote the census to the leaders and members of the State organizations. The agency tried to target meetings in important agricultural States, and in States with a history of low response to the agriculture enumeration.

Guide to the 1987 Census of Agriculture and Related Statistics

In 1988, the Census Bureau's Data User Services Division (DUSD), in cooperation with the Agriculture Division, prepared a 38-page publication—*Guide to the 1987 Census of Agriculture and Related Statistics*. This publication outlined the background and procedures of the agriculture census, and provided details about the agriculture census data series and the publication media used for each, together with descriptions of other Census Bureau data sets that included agriculture related information, or that might be useful to agriculture census data users. The guide included the publication plans for both the 1987 economic and agriculture censuses and lists of reference sources. The Bureau distributed copies of the guide to its regional offices and professional advisory committee members, State data centers, clearinghouses for Census data services, and as part of its census curriculum support project. The guide was available on request at the Bureau's exhibit booths or presentations at conferences and conventions around the country, and from both Agriculture Division and DUSD.