
Introduction

HISTORY

For more than 156 years, the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, conducted the Census of Agriculture and related censuses and surveys. The 1997 Appropriations Act contained a provision that transferred the responsibility from the Bureau of the Census to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The census of horticultural specialties is a part of the agriculture census program.

The 2009 Census of Horticultural Specialties is the ninth census of horticultural specialties. Previous horticultural specialties censuses were conducted in conjunction with the census of agriculture and were taken in 1889, 1929, 1949, 1959, 1970, 1979, 1988, and 1998. The 2009 Census of Horticultural Specialties includes producers of floriculture, nursery, and other specialty crops, such as sod, food crops produced under glass or other protection, transplants for commercial production, and propagative materials.

USES OF CENSUS DATA

The census of horticultural specialties is the leading source of detailed production and sales data at the National and State level. The census of horticultural specialties is routinely used by government agencies, academia, nursery and floriculture industries, and the general public. Census data are used to:

- Evaluate, change, promote, and formulate policies and programs that help horticultural specialty producers;
- Study historic trends, assess current conditions, and plan for the future;

- Design new and improved methods to increase horticultural specialty production and profitability;
- Analyze and report on the current state of horticultural specialty production in the U.S.

News media and agricultural associations also use census data as background material for stories and articles on U.S. horticultural specialty production.

AUTHORITY

The census of agriculture is required by law under the "Census of Agriculture Act of 1997," Public Law 105-113 (Title 7, United States Code, Section 2204g). The law authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct surveys deemed necessary to furnish annual or other data on the subjects covered by the census. The 2009 Census of Horticultural Specialties was conducted under the provisions of this section.

HORTICULTURAL SPECIALTIES OPERATION DEFINITION

The definition of a horticultural specialty operation is any place that produced and sold \$10,000 or more of horticultural specialty products during 2009. This same definition was used in the 1998 Census. The definition used for the censuses in 1988, 1979, 1970, and 1959 included operations growing and selling \$2,000 or more of horticultural products during the census year. The definition used prior to 1959 used a \$1,000 minimum sales limit.

The definition of a farm in the census of agriculture, which is the basis for identifying horticultural specialty operations, has also varied. Since 1974, the census of agriculture has included all farms from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were

produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year. Prior to 1974, the farm definition was based on a lower value of products sold and included a relationship to acres on the operation.

COMPARABILITY OF DATA

Most data are comparable between the 2009 and 1998 censuses of horticultural specialties. A few changes were made to the 2009 census that affect comparability for some data items. See Appendix B, General Explanation for a detailed discussion of these changes. Dollar figures are expressed in current dollars and have not been adjusted for inflation or deflation. The data published in this publication are not directly comparable to 2007 Census of Agriculture data or 2009 Commercial Floriculture Survey data. Although data were collected for the 2009 Census of Horticultural Specialties and the 2009 Commercial Floriculture Survey with the same report form, differences in the kinds of statistics collected and in collection methodology do not allow for direct comparability.

REFERENCE PERIOD

The 2009 Census of Horticultural Specialties covers operations for the 2009 calendar year, except for a small number of operations that maintained their records on a fiscal year basis. These operations were permitted to report their fiscal year that included at least half of the 2009 calendar year. Data for trees on operation were collected for January 1, 2010. Data on estimated value of land, buildings, machinery and equipment were reported for December 31, 2009.

TABLES AND APPENDICES

Chapter 1. Table 1 shows U.S.-level historical data through the 1889 census. Tables 2 through 34 show detailed U.S.- level data for 2009.

Chapter 2. Tables 1 through 41 present selected data for all States reporting a data item.

Appendix A. Provides information about data collection and data processing activities and

discusses the statistical methodology used in conducting and evaluating the census. Table A provides reliability estimates of U.S. and State totals for operations, total value of sales, total wholesale value of sales, and total retail value of sales. Table B provides reliability estimates of U.S. totals for selected items.

Appendix B. Includes definitions of specific terms and phrases used in this publication, including items in the publication tables that carry the note “see text.” Facsimiles of the report form and instruction sheet used to collect data are also included.

RESPONDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

In keeping with the provisions of Title 7 of the United States Code, no data are published that would disclose information about the operations of an individual farm or ranch. However, respondents who had provided written and signed permissions to publish individual data in the 2010 Commercial Floriculture publication were asked if they would allow their individual data to be published in the census. Those that agreed provided written and signed agreements for the census. All tabulated data are subjected to an extensive disclosure review prior to publication. Any tabulated item that identifies data reported by a respondent, or allows a respondent’s data to be accurately estimated or derived, was suppressed and coded with a ‘D’ unless that data was from a respondent who had provided NASS with signed documentation to publish their data. The number of operations reporting an item is not considered a release of confidential information and is provided even though other information may be withheld.

DATA PRODUCTS AND CUSTOM TABULATIONS

The 2009 Census of Horticultural Specialties data, as well as the 2007 Census of Agriculture Volume 1 Geographic Area Series and related reports, are available on the NASS website at www.nass.usda.gov. The 2007, 2002, 1997, and 1992 volume 1 series and some related reports are also available.

Custom-designed tabulations may be developed

when data are not published elsewhere. These tabulations are developed to individual user specifications on a cost-reimbursable basis and shared with the public. The census volume 1 on a downloadable desktop query tool and the census Quick Stats are alternative data sources that should be investigated before requesting a custom tabulation.

All custom tabulations are subject to a thorough review prior to release to prevent the disclosure of any individual respondent data. Requests for custom tabulations can be submitted via the internet from the NASS home page, by mail, or by e-mail to:

DataLab
National Agricultural Statistics Service
Room 6436A, Stop 2054
1400 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-2054

Or

Datalab@nass.usda.gov

ROUNDING

For data reported to the nearest 1,000 units, the sum of the data may not equal the reported total due to rounding.

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

The following abbreviations and symbols are used throughout the tables:

- Represents zero.
- (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.
- (NA) Not available.
- (X) Not applicable.
- (Z) Less than half of the unit shown.
- cwt Hundredweight.
- sq ft Square feet.