

USDA To Collect Final 2008 Crop Production Numbers

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

How much corn, cotton, rice, sorghum, and soybeans have farmers produced this growing season? Have yields been above or below expectations? How much of these commodities do they have stored on their farms? Did Hurricanes Gustav and Ike make major impacts on Arkansas crop production? These are just some of the critical questions the Arkansas Field Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will be asking producers statewide as part of the December Agricultural Survey.

"The December Agricultural Survey, also known as the Crops/Stocks Survey, is the largest and most important year-end survey conducted by NASS," explained Becky Cross, director of the NASS Arkansas Field Office. "This survey is the basis for the official USDA estimates of production and harvested acres of all major row crop agricultural commodities in the United States and will be used to help establish official county yield estimates for each Arkansas county."

"With new agricultural trends emerging, data from the December Agricultural Survey will benefit farmers by providing timely and accurate in-

formation to help them make critical year-end business decisions and begin planning for the next growing season. When finalizing cropping and marketing plans, this survey will be one of the most important sources of information for producers," added Cross.

During the first two weeks of December, selected Arkansas producers will be contacted by mail, telephone, or farm visit and will be asked to provide information on their 2008 crop production and on-farm stocks. The information will then be compiled analyzed, and published in a series of USDA reports, including the annual *Crop Production Summary* and quarterly *Grain Stocks* report, both to be released on January 12, 2009.

As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. "NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all responses and publishes only state and national-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified," stated Cross. All reports are available on the NASS web site: www.nass.usda.gov. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Arkansas Field Office at (800) 327-2970. Δ