USDA To Measure The Financial Health Of The Ag Industry

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

Starting in January, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will conduct its annual Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS). This survey gives farmers and ranchers an opportunity to provide accurate, real-world data that will help shape the policies, programs and issues that affect them.

"ARMS asks a small, but representative, sample of farmers about their operation in order to understand the current financial state of U.S. agriculture," said Becky Cross, director of the NASS Arkansas Field Office. "Participation in ARMS is so important because government and agricultural leaders use the information needed to make sound decisions that impact the future of farmers, their families, their businesses and their communities."

The survey will be conducted between December 28, 2009 and March 31, 2010. In an effort to obtain the most accurate data, NASS will reach out to nearly 35,000 producers nationwide, including 1,460 in Arkansas. Producers will be asked to provide data on their operating expenditures, production costs and household characteristics.

"Farm organizations, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, other government agencies, members of Congress, and State and local officials use the collective information from ARMS to answer questions and make important decisions concerning the economic viability of American agriculture, the rural economy and other emerging issues," explained Cross.

As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all responses, ensuring no individual respondent or operation can be identified.

The economic data gathered in ARMS will be published in the annual *Farm Production Expenditures* report on August 5, 2010. All NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov. Δ