

Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Secretary Harsdorf encourages farmers to complete ag census

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Madison, Wisconsin - 'Tis' the season when mailboxes and front porches are overflowing with holiday cards and wrapped packages. Through all the hustle and bustle, farmers should also look for their 2017 Census of Agriculture form, set to arrive in the mail this December. Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Sheila Harsdorf encourages farmers to complete and return their Census this winter.

"I know how busy you are with fall harvest and farm chores, but I promise you that filling in your Census is time well-spent," said Harsdorf. "As a legislator, I saw how valuable census data was when making policy decisions. I know as Secretary, we here at DATCP will use the census information often when working with government officials, agribusinesses and industry partners."

The Census of Agriculture is a complete count, taken every five years, of America's farms, ranches and the people who operate them. About 84% of Wisconsin farmers completed the 2012 Census of Agriculture, which was one of the highest response rates in the country. Wisconsin State Statistician Greg Bussler hopes that we can exceed that number this year.

“The Census of Agriculture is the only source of uniform, comprehensive and impartial agricultural data for every county in the nation,” explained Bussler. “The more farmers who complete the census, the more accurate the information we’ll have available for decision makers to rely on.”

Data on land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, expenditures and more is captured. Information provided in the Census of Agriculture will be kept confidential, and results will be available in aggregate form only.

Farms of all sizes, whether in rural or urban areas, should be counted. A farm is any place from which at least \$1,000 of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during 2017.

“The Census is each farmer’s opportunity to report how big of an impact agriculture really has on our local communities, state and country,” added Harsdorf. “This is the chance for farmers to share their story and influence future budgets, services, programs and policies. Thank you for taking time to complete the Census.”

New this year, farmers can complete the Census online or via the mail. The online form is accessible on any electronic device, calculates totals automatically and skips questions that do not pertain to your operation.

Visit www.agcensus.usda.gov for more information.

The deadline for farmers to complete the census is February 5, 2018. Census data will be available in February 2019.

For more information, call the National Agricultural Statistics Service at [\(888\) 424-7828](tel:8884247828).

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