

Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Harsdorf reminds farmers to return ag census

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MADISON – Wisconsin prides itself as an agricultural leader. There is another agricultural title the state is currently chasing – the most returns of the Census of Agriculture. Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary Sheila Harsdorf reminds farmers to return their questionnaire if they have not already done so.

“Thank you to all the Wisconsin farmers who have completed their Census of Agriculture,” said Harsdorf. “The more responses submitted by Wisconsin farmers, the more the data will accurately reflect what is actually happening in our state’s fields and barns.”

The U.S. National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts the Census of Agriculture once every five years. As of February 14, about 45% of Wisconsin farmers had returned their questionnaires. This is the fourth highest response rate in the country but lagging two of Wisconsin’s neighbors: Iowa and Illinois.

While the initial deadline passed earlier this month, NASS is still accepting questionnaires. In the coming weeks, farmers who have not responded will receive a follow-up phone call or reminder mailing. 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.

“So many times we’ll say as farmers that we wish we could influence decisions being made on our behalf at the local, state and federal level,” added Harsdorf. “This is truly our chance. The Census data is used by policy makers to make decisions about farm policies and budget allocations.”

The Census of Agriculture is the only source of uniform, comprehensive and impartial agricultural data for every county in the nation. Information provided in the Census of Agriculture is kept confidential, and results will be released in aggregate form only.

Farmers can respond online at www.agcounts.usda.gov or by mail. For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov. For questions or assistance with the census, call toll-free (888) 424-7828.