

# Commerce Department plans farm irrigation census

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Current data on the Nation's rapidly expanding irrigation acreage will be collected by the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, in survey questionnaires to be mailed early in January to a sample of farms and ranches.

The survey follows and is a part of the regular Census of Agriculture conducted this year. Survey report forms

will have questions about irrigation water sources, quantity used, and distribution methods. In addition, information will be obtained on crop acreage irrigated, yields, well numbers and capacities, pump energy requirements, and expenses.

The 1979 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey, considered by census officials as the most detailed data

collection effort in this field, is designed to produce comprehensive statistics on irrigation for the Nation that are unavailable from other sources.

Survey forms will be mailed to about 10 percent of U.S. irrigators. Although response to the four-page form is mandatory, census officials stress the law also requires that individual reports be kept confidential.

Only statistical totals will be published.

If book figures are not available, officials said that best estimates will be accepted. The forms should be returned within 20 days of receipt in postage paid envelopes provided by the Census Bureau. The results are expected to be published in early 1981, as part of Volume 5 Special Reports 1978 Census of Agriculture.

Irrigation is playing an increasingly important role in American agriculture. The total of irrigated acres increased from 37 million to 41.2 million during 1964-74.

The arid acres of the West were the greatest users, with 23.5 million acres under irrigation in 1974.

The region was followed by the South, 10.8 million acres; the North Central States, 6.8 million (nearly double its 3.6 million in 1964); and the Northeast, almost 200,000 acres. The 1979 survey is expected to show another sharp national increase.

The 1974 Census of Agriculture showed that only 12 percent of U.S. farms were irrigated, yet they accounted for 27 percent of the value of all agricultural products sold and 37 percent

of the value of all crops sold. In addition, 63 percent of orchard land and 52 percent of the acres of all vegetables harvested for sale are irrigated.

Bureau officials point out that: Irrigation is one of the principal methods of growing more food on less land.

Demographers expect the world population to double to 8 billion persons in 30 years, while land available for growing crops remains almost static. Information on irrigated crop production will help to estimate food supplies available in 2010.

Irrigation accounts for 81 percent of all water consumed in the United States.

Since the total supply of water essentially is unchangeable, its efficient use is critical to the growth in many parts of the Nation.

## Latest in no-till on tap at sixth annual conference

COCKEYSVILLE, Md. — Efficient use of fertilizer, new practices that extend no-till production, and new sources of energy for farm use will be topics covered during the Sixth Annual Mid-Atlantic No-Tillage Conference scheduled for January 3 at the Hunt Valley Inn near Cockeysville, Md.

"The conference is designed to bring farmers up-to-date on the latest developments in no-till corn, small grain, and forage production," says Richard S. Witmer, of Middletown, Md., program chairman.

Witmer points out that tickets for the conference are available at all extension service offices.

Donald K. Myers, Extension agronomist at Ohio State University, will discuss no-tillage drill developments, placing emphasis on the newer types used for forages and small grains.

Recent findings in field research on no-till fertilization of corn will be presented by V. Allan

Bandel, Extension agronomist at the University of Maryland.

Edwin M. Wheeler, president of the Fertilizer Institute, Washington, D.C., will present the topic, "A New Era in Agriculture." He will focus his remarks on agriculture in the 1980's that previews energy, crop production, and exports.

Systems which hold the potential to supply energy for the 1980's will be presented by Dr. Joseph H. McLain, president of Washington College.

No-tillage practices and rotations that extend no-till farming over more acres and more farms will be discussed by Dr. Willis L. McClellan, Extension agronomist at The Pennsylvania State University.

Five farmers who have had extensive experience growing no-till corn, small grains, and forage will present their findings to those attending, the program chairman notes. They are Neal and Nelly

Springer, of Knox County, Ohio; John H. Koons, of Franklin County, Pa.; Donald Lippy of Carroll County, Md.; and James Clark, Jr., of Howard County, Md. The five will discuss such topics as no-till planting in heavy-manure,

designing a no-till planter, and new sources of energy for no-till production.

Witmer said the speaking program will start at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. Industry exhibits will be manned from 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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