

NASS

Agriculture Counts

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Editor's note: This is a monthly column from the Pennsylvania Ag Statistics Service (PASS), a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA). The Website is www.usda.gov/nass/.

FLORICULTURE, NURSERY AND CHRISTMAS TREE PRODUCTION

The greenhouse and nursery industry is consistently among the top five sectors of Pennsylvania agriculture. Within crops, the value of horticulture sales is a very close second to mushroom sales.

In 2002, Agaricus mushroom sales totaled about \$391 million, which was 9.7 percent of all Pennsylvania agricultural sales. Greenhouse and nursery sales were about \$360 million, or 8.9 percent of all sales. The next largest crop was corn, with \$128 million of sales or 3.2 percent of the total.

To measure the floriculture portion of this industry, the annual Commercial Floriculture Survey was recently mailed to about 1,200 producers in Pennsylvania as part of a 36-state survey across the nation.

In order to measure the other part of the horticulture industry, the Nursery and Christmas Tree Production Survey is done every

two or three years. It was mailed to about 1,000 Pennsylvania growers as part of a 17-state program. This survey was first completed for 2000 production.

The results of these surveys include information about production, sales, and average prices received for various plant materials. Some growers have used these reports to evaluate their own prices against the state average and prices in surrounding states.

The floriculture report includes information about annual bedding plants, herbaceous perennials, flowering potted plants, cut flowers, cut (florist) greens, foliage plants, and propagative material. The nursery and Christmas tree survey includes data on broadleaf and coniferous evergreens, deciduous shade and flowering trees, deciduous shrubs, fruit and nut plants, cut Christmas Trees, transplants for commercial truck crop production, and propagation material or lining out stock.

The Floriculture Crops Summary will be issued on April 27 and the "Nursery and Christmas Tree Summary" on July 26 (see www.usda.gov/nass/search.htm).

Nursery And Floriculture Chemical Usage

Without actual application rates from growers, the EPA may assume growers use far more pes-

ticides than they actually do. This could hurt the horticultural industry if pesticides are unnecessarily removed from the market.

A recent example is when US-Apple used this and other information to preserve the use of azinphos-methyl (Guthion) to control insects and mites. Similarly, the National Potato Council was also able to preserve the use of methamidophos (Monitor) to control virus-carrying aphids and triphenyltin hydorzide (TPTH, Supertin) for late blight.

About 700 growers in Pennsylvania, along with 3,500 growers in five other states, will get a letter in the mail that explains the survey. The survey is conducted every two or three years. Trained interviewers will then contact the selected operators to set up a meeting time that is convenient for the grower.

The interview typically lasts about an hour, but it can help to preserve chemicals you rely on. Having fertilizer and pesticide records on hand will help to simplify the interview. In Pennsylvania, growers will be able to earn one core pesticide credit for responding to the survey. The results of this study will be released Sept. 15, 2004 (see www.usda.gov/nass/search.htm).

Free Catalog
The "NASS 2004 Guide to Products And Services" is avail-

able by calling (800) 727-9540. This 30-page booklet describes the national program of agricultural statistics provided by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

All national reports are listed with instructions for how to access the reports at no charge via e-mail subscriptions and the Internet. National reports on paper can also be ordered for a fee. However, paper reports from Harrisburg are still free to growers. Call (800) 498-1518 for an order form.

Year-End Surveys Continue

Last month I discussed the year-end surveys done in December for crops, hogs, and poultry. In January, we ask growers for your help to measure production of other commodities for 2003. Once again, the surveys mentioned below are conducted in all major states to generate national and state production statistics for 2003. To see the results of all these surveys, see our Website at www.usda.gov/nass/.

I hope you can find the time to help us make the most accurate "Agriculture Counts" by returning your survey form as soon as possible or answering our questions over the telephone.

Jan. 1 Cattle And Sheep Surveys

These two surveys provide the only state-level measure of cattle

and sheep herds. In July, only the largest operations are contacted for input to national-level data.

The cattle survey generates inventories for beef cows, milk cows, bulls, heifers, steers, and calves. The survey also asks and publishes data about death loss, calves born, cattle on feed, and value of breeding stock.

The sheep survey targets inventories and values of ewes, rams, lambs for breeding, and market lambs by weight group. Other data requested includes lambs born, death losses, wool production, and wool prices received by farmers.

A letter was sent to about 1,600 cattle and 300 sheep growers that were selected and we will ask for your help during early January. Both the "Cattle" and "Sheep and Goats" reports will be issued Jan. 30 (see www.usda.gov/nass/search.htm).

Honey Production

This annual program generates state and national statistics about number of colonies, honey production, stocks on hand, and average prices.

In Pennsylvania, about 200 apiarists have already been sent the annual survey. Telephone calls will be made to nonrespondents in late January. The "Honey" report will be published Feb. 27 (see www.usda.gov/nass/search.htm).

Commissioners Present Agricultural Awards

WEST CHESTER (Chester Co.) — The Chester County Commissioners and the Chester County Agricultural Development Council presented two agri-

cultural citations at the Dec. 9 commissioners meeting. These awards are given annually for excellence in agriculture.

The Angelo J. Zunino and Son, Inc. mushroom opera-

tion was honored with the Farmer of the Year Award for 2003. Angelo J. Zunino and Son, Inc. is a modern mushroom enterprise in New Garden Township operated by David Zunino with the help of his family, including five sons.

David Zunino has implemented best management practices at their facilities and the operation has been an outstanding cooperator with the Chester County

Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service. They use the net system technology for efficiency in their operation, and use runoff and wastewater in ways that prevent pollution. Their mushroom business is a tradition that spans four generations of the family.

The 2003 Distinguished Agricultural Service Award was presented to Charles (Chip) Roten, a vice president with The Peoples

Bank of Oxford. He has devoted much of his professional career to providing various types of loans for the agricultural community. He has established the Peoples Bank of Oxford as the leading bank in Pennsylvania utilizing the Next Generation Loan Program. Roten has worked with county and state officials to improve and streamline the program. He has shared his knowledge of agricultural lending with other lenders and is highly regarded in the agricultural community.



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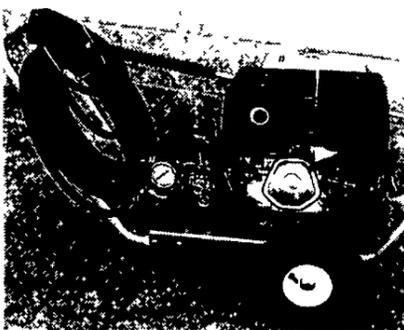
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