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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 4/6/2018**

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## Arkansas Agriculture Department Urges Response to Census of Agriculture

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Arkansas Agriculture Department joins the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in urging Arkansas agricultural producers to respond to the United States Census of Agriculture by April 30, 2018. The Census of Agriculture is a survey sent to producers across the country every five years to look at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, and income and expenditures. The Census of Agriculture is the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every state and county in the nation.

“Agriculture is our state’s largest industry contributing over \$21 billion to our economy each year. Our diverse agricultural production ranges from livestock, poultry, aquaculture, row crops, specialty crops, and forestry. It is important that we have reliable data to quantify the many ways that our diverse production contributes to the economy. The Arkansas Agriculture Department takes our obligations to our state’s largest industry very seriously. The Census of Agriculture, and other annual surveys conducted by NASS, provides invaluable data that helps us to understand how to best serve our farmers and ranchers throughout the state” says Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward.

According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Arkansas has currently completed 50.91% of Census inquiries compared to the national figure of 54.10%. Producers can choose to respond via online survey, which offers new timesaving features, at [www.agcounts.usda.gov](http://www.agcounts.usda.gov), or by mail. Everyone who received the 2017 Census of Agriculture questionnaire is required to complete the survey even if they are not currently farming. The first few qualifying questions on the form will determine whether completing the entire questionnaire is necessary. A full Census resource guide is available [here](#) with frequently asked questions, instructions, and more.

“We are working to ensure that Arkansas farmers, ranchers, and all landowners understand the requirements of the Census, and how to have their information included among results,” says Eugene Young, Regional Director USDA-NASS. “This data informs state and national leaders about how to make the best possible decisions regarding policy, funding, and programs for our agricultural industry. All commodities should take this opportunity to be represented seriously, and we are here to make the process as simple and convenient as possible,” he said.

NASS is required by federal law to keep all information confidential, use the data only for statistical purposes, and only publish in aggregate form to prevent disclosing the identity of any individual producer or farm operation. Find the 2012 Census of Agriculture Report, [here](#). Findings from the 2018 Census of Agriculture are predicted by NASS to be available by the spring of 2019.

The Arkansas Agriculture Department is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation.

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