

73. USDA REPORTING AND OPERATIONS

We support:

1. Continuance of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a cabinet level department.
2. Efforts of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Illinois Agricultural Statistics Service, and all other governmental agricultural surveys, and encourage members to provide their most accurate information when surveyed for crop, livestock and other reports on a voluntary basis.
3. The USDA improving the accuracy and timely release of national and international statistics, and maintain the confidentiality of individual farm reports.
4. Legislation to reinstate public access of the Common Land Unit (CLU) data to Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Data Gateway.
5. Educational efforts to inform the American consumer that the USDA serves a variety of consumer interests and not just those of the farm population.
6. Locally-elected farmer county committees to administer and oversee USDA farm and agricultural credit programs.
7. Maintaining the NRCS within the USDA.
8. The USDA to adequately fund, staff, and train local offices to enhance farmer services.
9. Maintaining the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) budget at levels no lower than the 2007 budget appropriation.
10. Long-term funding of the USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA).
11. USDA plans to create a new soybean yield estimate model for the September crop report that reflects the significant changes in soybean production models.
12. The USDA including the number and origin of imported and destination of exported livestock in monthly livestock reports.
13. USDA efforts to enhance and expand electronic filing of USDA forms and dissemination of information.
14. Upgrades of computer technology and appropriate software to allow the NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), RMA, and NASS to utilize and share the same farm program enrollment and production information, provided appropriate privacy disclosures and safeguards are utilized.
15. A thorough review, including local input, of any proposed closure of a local USDA or FSA office before a decision is made.
16. NASS to regularly report data on the production and use of ethanol co- products used for livestock feed.

We oppose the expansion of the locally-elected county committees by the addition of appointed committee members.