

The deadline for returning completed Census of Agriculture forms may have come and gone, but it's not too late for Nebraska farmers and ranchers to respond.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) reminds farmers and ranchers that their voices are important and need to be heard. As a result, census responses are still being accepted.

"A strong agricultural industry is a critical component in having a strong U.S. economy," says Dean Groskurth, director of the NASS Nebraska field office.

"By providing town planners, community leaders, lawmakers and individual farm and ranch operators with the most comprehensive and accurate U.S. agricultural reports, they have the resources to make informed, sound decisions to ensure a solid future," he said.

The deadline for submitting the census forms was Feb. 4, and many farmers responded. However, the remaining farmers and ranchers who did not respond by the original due date will receive another copy of the form in the mail.

"Accurate and comprehensive information from all farmers and ranchers is important, so everyone plans appropriately for the future needs of the agriculture industry, and gets a true picture of where U.S. agriculture is today," says Groskurth.

"This information is only gathered every five years, so we need the participation of every farmer and rancher to ensure they receive a planning tool that will provide them with the most benefit and value," he said.

Producers may use a secure website, www.agcensus.usda.gov, to complete the census, or return their forms by mail. Federal law requires all agricultural producers to participate in the Census and requires NASS to keep all individual information confidential.