

## ***What is coverage adjustment?***

The Census of Agriculture measures activities of the farm sector by gathering data from a list of known agricultural operators. The list is compiled from past census records, federal agencies and trade associations. NASS maintains as complete a list as possible. However, it's likely that some farms will not be included in the lists. NASS measures the completeness of the lists by conducting surveys (Area Frame Surveys) where they randomly sample tracts of land. In these sample tracts, every agricultural operation and all agricultural land is counted and compared to the census lists. Adjustments are then made in the totals based on the information obtained from these samples. For example, if the Area Frame Samples suggest that farms are under-counted by the census lists, then upwards adjustments are made in census table data reported. This happened in Massachusetts – the number of farms reported in the 1997 census was 5,574 while the adjusted total was 7,307. (More information on the 2012 Agricultural Census at: <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov>)