



2024 Agricultural Production Survey Content: Submission Form

Stats NZ and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) are now seeking submissions for the 2024 Agriculture Production Survey (APS). If you have a suggestion relating to a change in the current questionnaire or for a new question, please complete and return this form.

The strategy for the 2024 APS is for minimal change to survey content. Under this strategy, Stats NZ and MPI can consider limited changes to existing topics to improve the survey's relevance and data quality. New topics can be raised for consideration, where the APS is the appropriate vehicle for collection.

The scope of the 2024 APS covers agricultural production and farm practices, including questions on land use, livestock, grazing, supplementary feed crops, grain and seed crops, horticultural crops, and fertiliser use. Please note, horticulture-related questions are not included every year, but they will be included in 2024 APS.

To view the publicly available outputs from the APS, please refer to the [Stats NZ website](#).

To make a submission, please complete the submissions section below and email it as an attachment to rizwan.ahmad@stats.govt.nz.

Submissions must reach Stats NZ by 5pm on Friday 18th August 2023.

Included with this form for your use and reference:

- this year's survey (2023 Agricultural Production Survey (APS) - which doesn't include horticultural questions)
- last year's census (2022 Agricultural Production Census (APC) - which covers all available questions, including horticulture questions)

Contact details

Name of organisation (if on behalf of an organisation)

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Suggested changes for the 2024 Agricultural Production Survey

- 1) What changes / additions would you like made to the 2024 APS questionnaire?

Please clearly describe suggestions relating either to a change in existing questions or relating to new questions. (Please expand the box below as necessary)

IrrigationNZ notes that the stated purpose of both the APC and the APS are the same, "*Information from this census [or survey] is used for planning and evaluation by farming and industry organisations, government, local councils, researchers and community groups*". Thereby, for data users, consistency is implied.

- A. IrrigationNZ notes that, as per the consultation documents, in the annual APS 2024 the section of questions on fertilizer use (q 72 to 74) are identical to the 5 yearly APC 2022 section of questions on Fertilizer use (q95 to 97).

However, IrrigationNZ note that it is inconsistent that data on irrigation is not treated the same way. In the APS 2023 there are no questions on irrigation practices or infrastructure, and presumably this will also apply to APS 2024.

IrrigationNZ recommends that for consistency the whole set of available APC questions on irrigation use are replicated every year in the APS starting with 2024, subject to our previously accepted amendment as noted in section B.

- B. IrrigationNZ has previously submitted in 2021 and 2022 on the APS and APC and noted in the questions related to "Farm Practices – Irrigation" on irrigation system

type, that “all other travelling and sprayline systems not otherwise covered (e.g. guns, fixed and rotary booms, pods, long laterals, K-line, side roll, hand shift pipe, solid set - fixed grid)” is incorporated into one answer.

IrrigationNZ successfully submitted to StatsNZ that; *solid set - fixed grid sprinklers* should be separated out as an individual system type to be a more useful comparison to efficient “*centre pivots and linear moves (include area covered by end guns)*” and other less efficient systems in the data sets.

- 2) Why are these changes / additions needed and who will benefit from it?
(Please expand the box below as necessary)

- A. IrrigationNZ believe the omission of irrigation questions from the annual survey misses the opportunity to gather important data to better inform public and private sector views on irrigation practices and freshwater impact.

IrrigationNZ note that the annual Our Freshwater reports published by StatsNZ and MfE have consistently commented on irrigation practices bracketed with fertilizer use, and labelled both as being environmental detractors. It may be that the inconsistency in official data gathering on irrigation could be leading to this somewhat uninformed and dated view. The Deputy Secretary for Joint Evidence, Data and Insights Group of Ministry for the Environment has welcomed our expert and informed engagement on this matter.

It would be a more balanced approach that if fertilizer appears in both the APS and APC, that irrigation should also appear in both.

IrrigationNZ acknowledge that fertilizer use is typically seen as an annual consumable, and the questions on irrigation focus on infrastructure type. However, the type of irrigation system used and changes in on-farm systems happening each year relate directly to demonstrating the efficiency of annual freshwater use.

IrrigationNZ see the rapid rate of change in on farm irrigation infrastructure and therefore improved freshwater management in the sector is in direct response to significant policy signals and regulation changes. This would suggest a 5 yearly data set increment is now inadequate to properly understand the rate of change and improvement occurring related to freshwater use.

- B. In response to our 2021 submission to StatsNZ on the APC 2022, on solid set and fixed grid data, IrrigationNZ received the following unsatisfactory response;

Thank you for your submission to the 2022 Agricultural Production Census (APC). The review of submissions is complete and the changes to be made decided. Unfortunately it was decided not to implement your suggestions for the following reasons:

1. solid set - fixed grid

This type of system does not appear different enough to be split into its own line. Splits like this would only be made if there was a significant difference in the systems as to how it affects farm production.

Thanks again for your submission,
Stephen Groves, Design Analyst

A more considered and accurate response was received following our 2022 submission on the APS 2023.

“I’m just touching base with you regarding your submission for the 2023 Agricultural Production Survey (attached for reference). The agriculture team here at Stats NZ and our partners at MPI recently met to discuss this submission. After review, we’ve decided to accept this submission and, in future, we will separate out solid set (fixed grid) systems onto their own line within the irrigation systems questions. E.g., the question, ‘During the year ended 30 June, what area of the farm was actually irrigated using each of the following systems?’

The team agree that it is important to understand the uptake of solid set systems given their automation and improved efficiency. Our understanding is that solid set systems are expanding quite rapidly, and we feel that monitoring their use will be valuable moving forward, especially given increasing concerns around water usage, environment and climate.

We do not include this irrigation question in the survey each year. It is currently scheduled to be included during census years, and we will update this question for inclusion in the 2027 census. Note that the survey is reviewed yearly and changes may be made if there is an update to priorities or concerns that warrant changes to the questions or question frequency.

Thank you again for your submission. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or want to discuss any points further.
Ngā mihi nui,

Jovanna Leonardo, Data Broker

While this acknowledgement was pleasing for the 2027 AP, not gathering this data until 2027 is still inadequate and does not meet the StatsNZ stated purpose and implied consistency.

IrrigationNZ highlights our recommendation that inclusion of irrigation questions should be brought forward to the APS 2024 and thereafter used annually in alignment with our part A recommendation above.

3) If the suggested change represents an additional topic, what are the current sources of this information? (Please expand the box below as necessary)

The inclusion of irrigation questions in the annual survey is not new data as such but would clearly create better consistency with the understanding of interactions of fertilizer use in relation to freshwater use for irrigation.

While Regional Councils may also be gathering data sets on freshwater use through consent reporting (RMA Water Measurement regulations) and in future in a data base associated with Freshwater Farm Plans, there is no indication of a reliable nationally held data base that adequately informs the rate of change in irrigation practices that would better inform views on the role of irrigation.

IrrigationNZ would hope its opinion as the only national body representing all irrigation practices was acknowledged and our recommendation adopted. IrrigationNZ is available and eager to engage further on these issues and share our expertise, should Stats NZ be interested.