

2012 | CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO BRING DATA TO LIFE

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UNECE Workshop on the Communication of Statistics
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Overview – Census of Agriculture

- Conducted once every five years
- Provides information about nearly all aspects of farming and ranching
- Helps tell the story of U.S. agriculture
- Used for decision-making in private and public sectors



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Overview – Data Release

- Task: Overcome the challenges while maintaining a high level of consistent, accurate, and official communications from a federal statistical agency
- Goal: To increase interest in and use of the data, and help engage and build NASS' data provider and user communities



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Overview – Data Release

Increasing challenges for the 2012 Census data release:

- New audiences
- More audience segmentation
- New and additional media/communications platforms
- More clutter and noise to cut through than ever before



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Research – Data Release

Internal and external research revealed stakeholders wanted:

- Continuous interaction, including website updates
- Infographics, including more robust localized information
- Social media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter
- Increased use of hashtags
- Outreach events
- Instructions on how to access data

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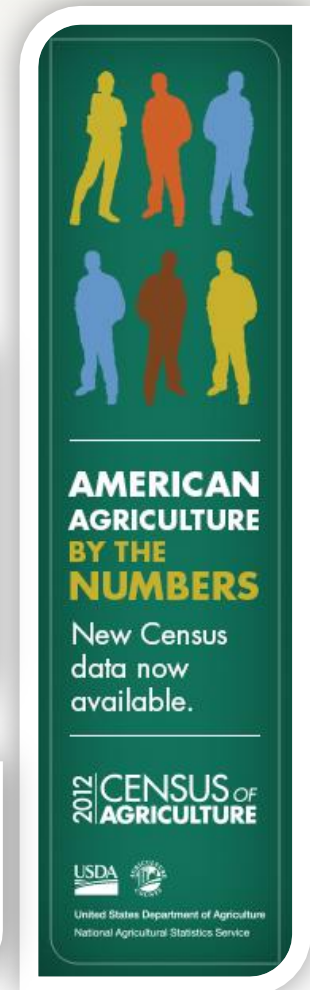
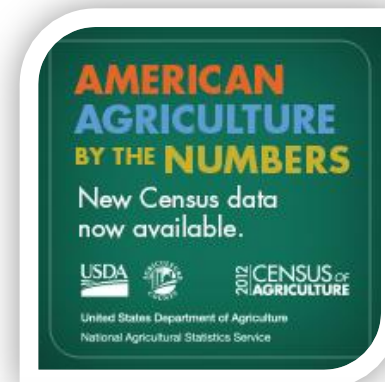


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Overview – Data Release Campaign

- Integrated Communications Campaign:
*Census of Agriculture, American Agriculture
by the Numbers*

(Sample Online Banners and Ads)



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Planning – Exploring New Media Platforms for Data Release

Social Media Options Available for the 2012 Census:

- Twitter (@usda_nass)
- USDA Blog
- USDA Facebook
- USDA YouTube
- #AgCensus
- flickr
- Google+

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Implementation – Preliminary Census Data Release (Phase 1)

Starting the push with social media:

- Live tweeting from the USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum
- Census preliminary highlights featured in content on USDA YouTube channel
- Release of infographics (website, Twitter, Facebook, print)
- Continued use of #AgCensus hashtag
- Release of Quick Stats tutorial video on USDA YouTube
- Census data featured in posting on the USDA Blog

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Implementation – Preliminary Census Data Release (Phase 1)

Immediate Results:

- 1.4 million+ impressions the first day
- Several hundred retweets of the #AgCensus messages



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Implementation – Final Census Data Release (Phase 2)

Continuing the push with new and social media:

- Live virtual press conference with Twitter Q&A
- Press conference posted to USDA YouTube
- Release of infographics (website, Twitter, Facebook, flickr, print)
- Continued use of #AgCensus hashtag
- Weekly Census series on the USDA Blog
- Weekly Census series on USDA Facebook page

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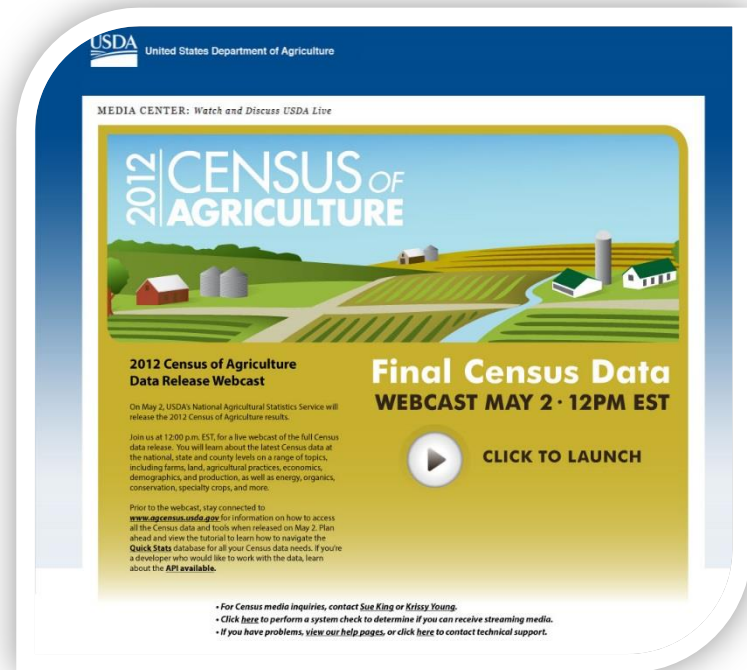


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Implementation – Final Census Data Release (Phase 2)

Immediate Results:

- A series of news releases promoting the virtual media event were distributed generating more than 318 news stories resulting in more than 3.5 million impressions
- Nearly 1,000 stakeholders dialed into the LIVE virtual media event



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Evaluation and Impact

Final results by the numbers:

- Twitter posts = 5.8 million impressions in the first week
- #AgCensus was used 1,700+ times in one week.
- 250+ retweets during that time.
- 6,000+ new Twitter followers during the year following Census release.

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Evaluation and Impact

More examples of results:

- Website traffic increased more than 70 percent during the month of data release
- By the end of the year, more than 5,000 media stories cited NASS or Census data
- Infographic images have been viewed more than 50,000 times and continue to generate a lot of interest on both Facebook and Twitter

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Evaluation and Impact

Long-term results:

- A series of maps from a Census poster, “Where Does the Food on MyPlate Come From,” have been viewed more than 24,000 times on Flickr
- USDA leaders participated in new efforts, such as a Google+ Hangout discussing Census women farmers results
- NASS’ communications team has trained more than a third of all state statisticians on Twitter best practices, resulting in a stronger ongoing communications campaign

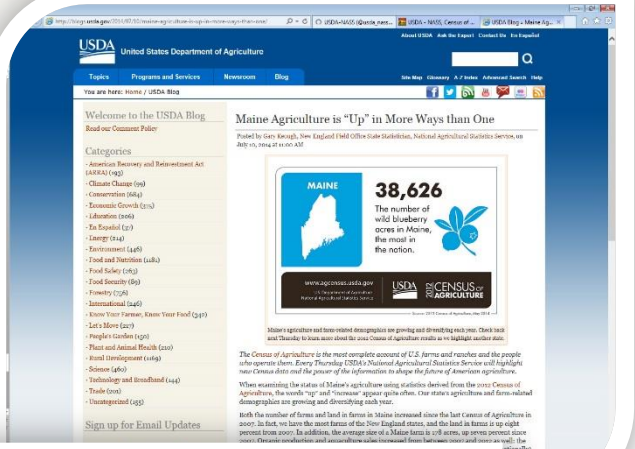
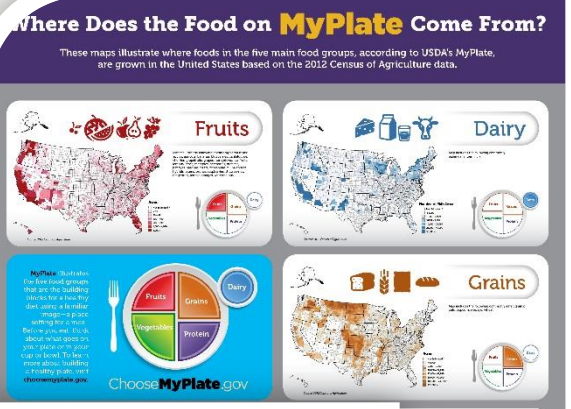
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Evaluation and Impact



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Future Thinking – Next Steps for Social Media and Communicating Statistics

- Continuing to explore new and expanded tools (i.e. Pinterest, YouTube, Facebook)
- Looking at how to keep the momentum going and continuing to engage and build an online community
- Exploring new ways to use our existing social media platforms to promote data collection and release data
- Planning for the next Census of Agriculture in 2017

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