

Statistical Methodology

Name of Survey: Fruit Chemical Use

Name of Summary: Agricultural Chemical Use 2011 Fruit Crops Summary:
(Access at USDA-NASS Quick Stats: <http://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/>. See Sector: Environmental, Group: Fruit Crops, Commodity: Fruit)

Data Collection Period: October 1 and continues through mid January

Sample Size, Sampling Frames and Methods: There were 6,573 samples drawn from the NASS List Sampling Frame for the Fruit Chemical Use Survey. This extensive sampling frame covers all types of farms and accounts for about 90 percent of all land in farms in the United States. Samples were selected from states with the largest production for the selected fruit crops. The sample design for the Fruit Chemical Use Survey (FCUS) uses a Multivariate Probability Proportional to Size (MPPS) sampling design. The probability of being selected for the sample was based on the percentage of acreage for a given crop that a grower had on the state database. The maximum of these probabilities was selected to draw the sample. The general idea is to assure that the total acreage of all targeted fruit crops that a grower has on the list was included when determining a grower's probability of selection.

Modes of Data Collection: Personal interview

Selected Terms and Definitions:

Active Ingredient: The specific pesticide ingredient which kills or controls the target pest(s) or other target material(s), or otherwise results in the pesticide effect(s). All pesticide-use estimates in report are at the active ingredient level; one or more active ingredients are present in known amounts in the pesticide products reported in survey.

Estimates of active ingredient used were reported in a single unit of equivalence, per ingredient. For salt, ester, or amine active ingredients, estimates were reported in the parent acid equivalents. For example, the acid derivatives glyphosate isopropylamine salt and 2,4-D, 2-ethylhexyl ester were reported in the glyphosate and 2,4-D equivalents, respectively. For copper compounds, estimates were reported in the metallic copper equivalent.

Active Ingredient Code: A unique code assigned to each active ingredient upon registration with the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs to facilitate pesticide regulation.

Area Applied, Percent: Percent of total planted acres which received one or more applications of a specific fertilizer nutrient or pesticide active ingredient. (*In Quick Stats: Treated, Measured as Percent of Area Planted*)

Avoidance: A strategy in which the detrimental effects of pests on crops are mitigated or eliminated solely through various cultural practices. Avoidance is one of four classes of pest-management practices for which data are included in the report.

Beneficial Insects: Insects (small invertebrate animals, mostly of arthropod classes Insecta and Arachnida) which are collected and introduced onto crop acres because of their value in biological control as predators on harmful insects and parasites.

Chemigation: Application of agricultural chemicals, including pesticide products, by injection into irrigation water.

Crop Year: The period starting immediately after harvest of the previous year's crop and ending at harvest of the current year's crop.

Farm: Any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year. Government payments are included in sales.

Fertilizer: A soil-enriching agricultural input which contains one or more plant nutrients. Data for three primary macronutrients nitrogen (N), phosphate (P), and potash (K), and the secondary macronutrient sulfur (S) are not included in this year's report.

Fungi: Various organisms of the kingdom Fungi, which obtain nutrients by decomposing plant or other organic life. This pest group includes mushrooms, molds, mildews, smuts, rusts, and yeasts. Fungal infestations have the potential to reduce crop production and/or lower the grade quality of the host crop.

Mechanism of Action (MOA): The method or biological pathway by which the pesticide or active ingredient kills or controls the target pest(s) or other target material(s).

Monitoring: A strategy involving the observance or detection of pests through systematic sampling, counting, or other forms of scouting. Monitoring may include prediction of pest population levels through the observance of environmental factors such as weather or soil and crop quality. Monitoring is one of four classes of pest-management practices for which data are included in the report.

Nematodes: Unsegmented, parasitic worms of the phylum Nematoda. Prominent animal pest with the potential to be highly destructive, lowering crop production and grade quality significantly.

Number of Applications: The average number of times a treated acre received a specific fertilizer nutrient or pesticide active ingredient. (*In Quick Stats: Applications, Measured in Number*)

Pesticide: Defined by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as "(1) any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling or mitigating any pest, (2) any substance or mixture of substances intended for use as a plant regulator, defoliant, or desiccant, and (3) any nitrogen stabilizer..." (*Title 7, U.S. Code, 136*). Under FIFRA, pesticides are registered and regulated through the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs. Four classes of pesticides are included in report: (1) herbicides targeting weeds, (2) insecticides targeting insects (3) fungicides targeting fungi, and (4) other chemicals targeting all other pests or other materials (including extraneous crop foliage).

Pheromone: A chemical substance produced by an insect which serves as a stimulus to other individuals of the same species for one or more behavioral responses.

Prevention: A strategy in which a pest population is kept from infesting a crop or field by taking various preceding actions. Prevention is one of four classes of pest-management practices for which data are included in the report.

Rate per Application: Ratio indicating pounds (lbs) of a fertilizer primary nutrient or pesticide active ingredient applied, per single application, per planted acre. (*In Quick Stats: Applications, Measured in Lb/Acre/Application*)

Rate per Crop Year: Ratio indicating pounds (lbs) of a fertilizer primary nutrient or pesticide active ingredient applied, counting all applications per crop year, per planted acre. (*In Quick Stats: Applications, Measured in Lb/Acre/Year*)

Suppression: A strategy which involves the control or reduction of existing pest populations in order to mitigate crop damage. May include physical or biological controls, or management of resistance build-up through pesticide rotation. Suppression is one of four classes of pest-management practices for which data are included in the report.

Data Review and Estimation Procedures: Estimates were based on data collected, reviewed, and verified through the cooperative efforts of the USDA-NASS Environmental and Demographics Section and Program-State Field Offices. NASS maintains chemical use databases which contain product recommended use ranges and active ingredient concentrations per product. These databases are used to review pesticide product usage data and to convert pesticide product usage data to the equivalent active ingredient levels for publication. Review and finalization of all data proceeded with assessment of reasonableness and consistency at the record, state, and U.S. levels.

Total Applied estimates were calculated and published at the population-level using official USDA-NASS 2011 acreage estimates by state (published in “Noncitrus Fruits and Nuts– 2011 Summary” [ISSN: 1948-2698] and “Citrus Fruits – 2011 Summary” [ISSN: 1948-9048]). For this reason, all published estimates apply at the population-level defined by these official estimates. Note that although official USDA-NASS crop acreage estimates are subject to revision, the Total applied estimates are not subject to revision.

Indications were published if five or more reports were received and summarized for a given variable and if the indication was greater than or equal to one half of the pre-determined rounding unit for that variable. Distribution and reliability measures were published if 30 or more reports were received and summarized for a given variable.

Reliability: Estimates were subject to sampling variability; sampling variability was measured by the coefficient of variation (cv), expressed as a percent of the estimate. The cv’s were derived and published for Percent Treated, Number of Applications, Rate per Application, and Rate per Crop Year pesticide-usage variables. In general, a lower cv indicates a more precise estimate. The cv’s differed considerably by variable, chemical, and crop. The narrower the numerical range of responses per variable and the larger the number of positive responses per variable, the smaller the sampling variability. For these reasons, cv’s were generally lower for active ingredient Rate of Application estimates and for estimates associated with the most often reported active ingredients. The reported application rates almost always fell within the manufacturer’s relatively narrow recommended usage range, and a relatively large number of reports were received for the most widely used active ingredients.

Estimates were additionally subject to non-sampling errors. Non-sampling errors result when the target population is mis-defined through list duplication or incompleteness or sample unit data is mis-recorded through mistakes in reporting, recording, or processing the data. Strict quality control measures were implemented at each step of the survey and data review process to minimize the occurrence and magnitude of non-sampling errors.

Revision Policy: Estimates are final at first publication and are not subject to revision.