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2018-06-15 / On Second Thought Tweet Print

## Every farm counts

In spite of notable efforts on the part of the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and others, American Indians continue to be one of the most underrepresented groups in the Census of Agriculture. The number of American Indian producers participating in the census has increased tremendously since the questionnaire became the responsibility of the USDA in 1997, and especially since 2007 when every American Indian farm and ranch began reporting individually. But we still have a lot of work to do to get everyone represented in the data.

Indian Country is faced with many challenges created by policy—some of which was created without our input. When federal, state, and local farm policy and programs are contemplated, NASS data are what policymakers reference to inform their decisions. Programs developed based on crops grown, conservation practices used, and even agri-finance opportunities can all be adversely affected if we don't tell our story through participation in the Ag Census. If we, as a community, do not fill out the Census of Agriculture, the data will not reflect our numbers or our needs and that could have a negative economic impact on our communities.

A stark example of this adverse impact lies in the 2012 Census data which showed that the 56,092 farms and ranches operated by 71,947 Native Americans sold a total of \$3.24 billion in ag products raised on 57.3 million acres. The average size of a farm or ranch operated by Native Americans (1,021 acres) was over 200 percent larger than the national farm average (434 acres) while receiving only 67 percent (\$6,698) of the amount of farm program payments received by others (\$9,925). When you contemplate the per acre disparity, you can clearly see the reason we need to be more active.

Another example of the importance of the Ag Census is demonstrated by what it doesn't count. As a result of the failure to recognize subsistence production, tens of thousands of our Alaskan Native relatives go totally uncouncted. As a result, there is virtually no mention of subsistence agriculture in federal farm policy.

The Census of Agriculture aims to be a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and their operators, and remains the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data available at the state, county, and Tribal level. Embrace the opportunity to be heard.

The future is ours to shape. It is not too late to complete your 2017 Census of Agriculture. The paper questionnaire is due by June 15. However, the Ag Census can be completed online at [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov) through July. For questions about or assistance with your form, call (888) 424- 7828.

Zach Ducheneaux, Intertribal Agriculture Council

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Anne McGinness Kearse is the attorney responsible for this communication.



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8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Saturday, May 12  
S.C. State Fairgrounds  
Enter Gate 12 (Rosewood Drive)

# RICHLAND RECYCLES DAY

Richland County's free annual recycling event!

ITEMS ACCEPTED:

- HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE: paint, chemicals, cleaners, fluorescent light bulbs
- TIRES: from cars, light trucks, bikes, wheelbarrows; limit 8 per family
- ELECTRONICS: computers, TVs, stereos, household items with power cords
- SCRAP METAL: stoves, washers/dryers, bikes, lawn mowers (no gas/oil), metal chairs
- PESTICIDES: accepted from any S.C. resident
- PAPER FOR SHREDDING: limit 8 boxes per family

Items NOT ACCEPTED include cooking oil, mattresses and wood (wooden furniture).  
Not sure if your item can be accepted?  
Call 803-576-2440 during regular business hours for information.

The Department of Agriculture will accept pesticides from any S.C. resident. All other drop off is for Richland County residents only. No commercial or business drop off.



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halfway down Cedaridge Road

**We will have tons of items for sale and a lemonade stand!**

All proceeds from the sale will benefit the Cure Sanfilippo Foundation, which has raised \$5.5 million and funded 17 research grants since 2013 directed towards a cure for Sanfilippo Syndrome. Much of our support has been from Columbia in honor of **Saving Eliza** and we are so grateful to be a part of this community.

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