



County Mailing List: Appropriate for a Needs Assessment?

Can I use my newsletter mailing list to conduct a needs assessment in agriculture?

Many county agents ask if it is a good idea to use an agriculture newsletter mailing list as the basis for selecting names for a survey on farmers' needs. One benefit is that a list of names and addresses is already together. But, there are pitfalls in using such lists. Below is a list of questions to help you to decide whether to use a present mailing list or whether to start a list from scratch.

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| 1. HAVE YOU UPDATED YOUR LIST IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS? | NO | YES |
| 2. DOES YOUR LIST INCLUDE FARMERS IN YOUR COUNTY WHO ARE NOT COOPERATORS? | NO | YES |
| 3. HAVE YOU DELETED FROM YOUR LIST IN THE LAST MONTH ANY FARMERS WHO HAVE GONE OUT OF BUSINESS OR WHO HAVE RETIRED? | NO | YES |
| 4. IS YOUR LIST LIMITED TO JUST FARMERS (FULL OR PART-TIME) OR DOES IT INCLUDE AGRIBUSINESS, AGENCY SANITARIANS, EQUIPMENT DEALERS OR HIRED LABOR? | NO | YES |
| 5. IF YOUR LIST IS A COMBINATION OF FARMERS AND AG RELATED PEOPLE, DOES EACH NAME HAVE A SYMBOL FOR YOU TO DISTINGUISH THE FARMERS? | NO | YES |

If you can't answer yes to *all* the above questions, the likelihood is that you shouldn't use your present mailing list.

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