

The Centralized Survey Experience at National Agricultural Statistics Service

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The past two years have been a time of great change for Blaise programmers at the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). We have not only undertaken the challenge of converting a number of disseminated Blaise instruments into Centralized solutions, but have also had to face sweeping agency changes including a vast upgrade to virtual desktops; adapting to and in some cases assisting with the centralization of other systems which interact with Blaise; updating code to incorporate a new massive call center; doubling the number of employees in our section with somewhat “green” programmers who are sitting one time zone away at the new call center; and other challenges.

When we last presented at IBUC XIII, we reported on the successes and lessons learned from converting our first survey to a Centralized environment: the Mink Survey. Since that time we have centralized a number of surveys, and so this paper will outline our continuing learning experience with that effort including the hurdles we faced as each survey nuance made itself known. It will also briefly discuss the adaptations we’ve made in reaction to the “100 moving targets” that has become our continuously evolving agency.