

National Agricultural Producers Data Cooperative (NAPDC)

Agricultural Data Principles¹ - Final Version

December, 2025

Introduction

Based on the NAPDC Agricultural Data Governance Workgroup's meetings, and conversation by the workgroup members, this document reflects the NAPDC Agricultural Data Principles. These principles are organized by the core areas of challenge and concern identified during our initial clustering phase, and they establish the foundational commitments for our approach to data stewardship and agricultural producer engagement within the NAPDC network.

NAPDC Core Agricultural Data Principles

These principles reflect the areas of agreement that emerged from the workgroup's conversations about what responsible agricultural data practices should look like across the NAPDC network. They form the foundation of the NAPDC Agricultural Data Governance Framework. The following table is organized into clusters that mirror the main challenge areas identified earlier in the process. Each "We will..." statement captures a clear, actionable commitment that the group agreed should guide day-to-day research and producer engagement.

Cluster Overview

During the workgroup sessions, members identified four core challenge areas that shape responsible data practices within the NAPDC network: clear communication, meaningful farmer participation, consistent and transparent agreements, and shared understanding of data concepts. These clusters help

¹ Principles = our baseline "rules of the road" across NAPDC.

Tools (next) = short, reusable aids that operationalize each principle (e.g., checklists, notice templates, consent summaries).

organize the principles and show how they relate to the everyday work of researchers and producers.

Note: To keep the language simple, we use the term ‘farmer’ or ‘producer’ to refer to all agricultural producers, including ranchers.

**Foundational Principles by Cluster: Organizing Framework for the NAPDC
Agricultural Data Governance System**

Category/Cluster	NAPDC Core Principles
Farmer Communication & Data Use Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will clearly and accurately communicate how data are collected, used, and shared in plain language. ● We will provide farmers with timely notice of any changes in data use, access, or partners with a choice to accept or decline. ● We will communicate not only the risks but also the potential outputs farmers may receive from data use.
Farmer Data Participation & Practical Data needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will work to understand what makes agricultural data participation possible for farmers and respect their time. ● We will provide clear information about how data will be accessed and collected so they can make informed choices.
Farmer–Researcher Data Agreements: Clarity, Risks & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will state the purpose and scope of data use. ● We will set clear rules for how we (NAPDC) handle concerns about the data we collect. ● We will clearly define what types of data will be collected and how farmers will contribute specific data for the research.

Category/Cluster	NAPDC Core Principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will acknowledge and respect the ownership interests of farmers and other data contributors.
Farmer Data Education & Extension Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will co-develop and provide clear, accessible materials to help farmers understand data use and implications before consenting. ● We will co-develop and share training and resources about data management best practices. ● We will provide or reference materials that clarify data types/categories with concrete, farmer-relevant examples (e.g., aggregation, re-use).

From Principles to Practice: What Comes Next

With agreement on these foundational principles, the workgroup will now shift into building the NAPDC Agricultural Data Governance Toolkit, the practical, plain-language tools that bring each principle to life. This toolkit will include items such as checklists and communication templates, consent/ data agreement building blocks. These tools will help ensure that researchers, extension agents, and producers can consistently apply the principles across diverse NAPDC projects, supporting trust, transparency, and good data stewardship.