

APPENDIX A: PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

USDA used several tools that fed the development of this Strategic Plan. The types of tools included:

- Program Evaluations
- Advisory Committees
- Inspector General (OIG), General Accounting Office (GAO), and Other External Reviews
- Internal Management Studies and Performance Measurement Systems

The following table highlights some of these tools as they relate to USDA’s strategic goals and management initiatives.

Program Evaluations Used to Develop the Strategic Plan				
Goal	Evaluations/Analyses	Brief Description	What Was The Effect	Date
Goal 1 <i>Economic opportunities</i>	Regional market evaluations in preparation of FAS export support/ assistance	Over the past 18 months, 5 regional market teams in FAS have evaluated foreign competition, export potential, trade barriers, and government program resource applications.	FAS completed a new, market-based export support strategy with regional sales goals to help U.S. exporters recapture an increased export share.	2000 through July 2002
	FAS staff review agency-wide performance reporting and verification.	Staff interview each FAS division with GPRA reporting responsibilities, evaluate verification procedures, and report to the Administrator.	Enabled FAS to validate the information provided, identify discrepancies, and develop more meaningful performance measures.	Annually
	OIG and GAO audits and reviews	Review the export credit guarantee programs as part of annual CCC financial audit. Provide procedural and security evaluations.	FAS staff discuss audit and program procedures for potential changes to be more effective and cost efficient.	Annually
Goal 3 <i>Protect agriculture</i>	Mission Area Assessments	Review the vulnerabilities, exercises and corrective actions.	Protect the food & agriculture system’s critical infrastructure	September 2004
	Animal Health Safeguarding Review	Review by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.	Recommendations set a strategic roadmap for the Agency around animal health issues.	October 2001
	Agency reports	Review initiatives to monitor progress, evaluate results and ensure goals and objectives are met.	Internal taskforce activity.	Various
Goal 4 <i>Nutrition and health</i>	Household Food Security in the U.S., 2000	A statistical report on the prevalence of food security, food insecurity, and hunger in U.S. households (based on the September 2000 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement).	Used to define the outcome measures, and set targets, for the prevalence of hunger among children and low-income people in the U.S.	March 2002 Annually
	Food Assistance Research Conferences	Customers, subject-matter experts, and academics identify information needs and issues for next year’s competitive grants and cooperative agreements.	Identified major research themes for the year’s competitive grants process.	May 2002 Annually
Goal 5 <i>Natural resources</i>	Assessments of U.S. natural resources under RPA (Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act)	Track indicators used by the RPA Assessment	Identified policy issues for priority attention.	Every 5 years

Program Evaluations Used to Develop the Strategic Plan				
Goal	Evaluations/Analyses	Brief Description	What Was The Effect	Date
All Goals	Review of the Relevance and Adequacy of the Research, Education and Economics (REE) agencies' budget	As required by law, annually the National Research, Education, Extension, and Economics Advisory Board reviews the relevance, priority, and adequacy of REE funding. The Board then sends the results to the Secretary in a letter.	Influenced budget decisions.	Annually
	OMB Program Performance Assessment using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)	Review Electric Loan Program, Multiple Family Housing Program, Direct Payments Program, Water and Wastewater Grants, Wildland Fire Management, Farmland Protection Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Forest Service Capital Improvement and Maintenance Program, Crop Insurance Program, Agriculture Quarantine Inspection, Animal Welfare, Food Aid, Food Safety and School Lunch Program.	Structured OMB Review as part of the budget process to help determine program effectiveness.	Fall 2002
	OIG audits	Audit USDA financial systems, 5 stand-alone agency financial statements, and the USDA Consolidated Financial Statements.	Improved internal controls and financial system, and received an unqualified opinion.	Various

USDA will also undertake many new evaluations over the next five years. The following table highlights some of the longer-term studies as they relate to USDA's strategic goals and management initiatives.

Future Program Evaluations and Other Analyses				
Goal	Evaluations/Analyses	General Scope	Methodology	Timetable
Goal 1 <i>Economic opportunities</i>	Analysis of FCIC's product portfolio	Comprehensive review of the risk management products offered by FCIC.	Actuarial and underwriting experts will review current and proposed crop insurance products, and opportunities for new products to assist the FCIC Board in developing a product strategy.	The initial phase of the evaluation is scheduled for completion on May 15, 2003.
	Review of FCIC policies, plans of insurance and related materials	Comprehensive quality review of FCIC's policies plans of insurance and related materials.	Actuarial and underwriting experts will review FCIC legislation, regulation, and program materials to recommend any potential ways to improve the overall quality of the program.	The initial phase of the review is scheduled for completion on March 31, 2003.
Goal 2 <i>Rural opportunities</i>	No program evaluations are planned.			

USDA STRATEGIC PLAN for FY 2002–2007

Future Program Evaluations and Other Analyses				
Goal	Evaluations/Analyses	General Scope	Methodology	Timetable
Goal 3 <i>Protect agriculture</i>	Coordinate with agencies outside USDA for emergency preparedness and rapid response	Describes current interagency activities that constitute homeland security.	Memorandums of Understanding will be developed among all appropriate USDA agencies and with independent agencies or agencies in other executive departments. Land-Grant Colleges and Universities and extension-based education programs will train “trainers” to identify and respond to suspected disease incidents.	September 2003
	Support the President's homeland security initiatives through science and action programs	Develop an integrated database to manage threats to the U.S. food system.	Complete the Security Analysis System, which will integrate analysis functions with data from other Federal agencies, and State, local, and private organizations, to create a decision support system for managing threats to the U.S. food system.	September 2004
	Veterinary Services State Emergency Management Standards Review	Verify statutes of States and territories in meeting emergency preparedness standards for animals.	2 phases: a self-assessment by the Federal/State veterinarians, then a follow-up review by regional emergency managers.	October 2003
	HACCP Evaluation	Evaluate the impact of the HACCP Final Rule.	Multi-year project; various components	October 2002
	National Academies of Science (NAS)	Review of the Agency draft risk assessment of E. Coli O157:H7 in ground beef.	Peer review	Began in February 2002 and ongoing
	National Academies of Science (NAS)	Study the role of scientifically determined criteria, such as microbiological criteria, in production and regulation of meat and poultry products.	Comprehensive study	To be completed by March 2003
Goal 4 <i>Nutrition and health</i>	Universal Free School Breakfast Pilot and Study	Assess the effects of free school breakfasts for all children on academic performance, absenteeism, tardiness, behavior, and cognitive development	Demonstration project comparison of school systems that provide free breakfast for students vs. paid to determine impact on academic performance	FY 2004
Goal 5 <i>Natural resources</i>	Evaluation of Wetlands Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Farmland Protection Program, and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	Determine effectiveness in meeting the intent of Congress and effectiveness and efficiency of management of the programs	Oversight and Evaluation Quick Response Review	FY 2003

Future Program Evaluations and Other Analyses				
Goal	Evaluations/Analyses	General Scope	Methodology	Timetable
Goal 5 <i>Natural resources</i> (continued)	Reform and Assessment of Conservation Programs, called for by the 2002 FSRIA	Coordinate land retirement and agricultural working lands conservation programs to eliminate redundancy, streamline delivery, and improve services to agricultural producers	To be determined by 2003	Report delivered to Congress by December 2005
	Evaluation of the Conservation Technical Assistance Program	Perform the evaluations nationally	Program Evaluation	FY 2003
	National Conservation Appraisal and Program required by the Resources Conservation Act of 1977	Appraise the status, condition, and trend of soil, water, and related resources on non-Federal land Analyze costs and benefits of alternatives for USDA conservation programs	Analysis of NRI and other resources data bases; development of modeling tools as needed; projections of effects on the economy and the environment of alternative scenarios	Appraisal due December 2005, and program due December 2007 to Congress
	Evaluation of the Resources Conservation and Development Program, called for by the 2002 FSRIA	Nationwide evaluation in consultation with RC&D councils to determine effectiveness of the program and develop recommendations.	To be determined by 2003	Report delivered to Congress by June 2005
All Goals except 2	Peer Review of Research Projects Maintaining the core scientific capability of all ARS research programs and projects	Agriculture Research Service (ARS) gets input from customers/ stakeholders to establish relevancy, then develops an Action Plan. The outside Peer Panel evaluates each project in the National Program (NP).	ARS revamped its quality control program several years ago to meet the requirements in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. The Office of Scientific Quality Review (OSQR) was established. All research is prospectively reviewed to ensure quality.	Every 5 years
	Peer Review of Individual Scientists Maintain the core capability of the ARS scientific workforce by periodically reviewing the work of each scientist	A highly qualified peer panel reviews the case write-up for each ARS scientist on a regular basis against standards established by OPM.	The Research Position Evaluation System (RPES) applies OMB's Research Grade-Evaluation Guide (RGEG) to determine the grade level of research positions.	Every 3 to 5 years
All Goals except 2	National Research Council (NRC) Study of Opportunities in Agriculture	NRC established a multi-disciplinary committee, held public forums, and formed subcommittees to evaluate aspects of research being conducted by REE.	The National Research Council is completing a Congressionally mandated study of Opportunities in Agriculture. The NRC Committee evaluated the quality of research conducted by the USDA REE mission area.	By the end of CY 2002
	2002 Farm Bill Review of ARS	The 2002 FSRIA mandates a Review of the Agricultural Research Service by an 8-member Task Force appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture.	The Task Force will review ARS and "evaluate the merits of establishing one or more National Institutes focused on disciplines important to the progress of food and agricultural science."	To be determined by the Task Force

Future Program Evaluations and Other Analyses				
Goal	Evaluations/ Analyses	General Scope	Methodology	Timetable
All Goals	OMB's PART	PART is used to assess the management and results of selected programs	Department and OMB staff develop responses to a series of questions assessing program management and performance	Annually