

APPENDIX A: DATA VERIFICATION AND VALIDATION

Data Verification and Validation identifies the quality of performance data reported in this Annual Performance Plan. The Plan’s performance goals and indicators are contained in the first column. The Data Source column identifies from where this data is collected (the source). The Verification/Validation Method column provides information on the method used for assessing data completeness, accuracy, consistency, timeliness and related quality control practices; and whether data are appropriate for the performance measures used in the Plan. The Data Limitations column describes limitations of data to evaluate performance and indicates unavailable or low-quality data.

Data Verification and Validation			
Performance Goals	Data Source	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations and Remedial Steps
1.1.1 Estimated annual trade opportunities preserved through WTO trade negotiations and notification process.	Manual and automated systems capture required data.	USDA employs a mix of manual and automated procedures and systems to verify and validate performance goals and indicators. Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) managers have developed verification and validation procedures for each measure to improve the accuracy of information reported for USDA’s Annual Performance Report. The FAS Compliance Review Staff periodically audits the procedures and reporting for completeness and accuracy.	The shortage of staff resources for meeting the many U.S. commitments to World Trade Organization (WTO) trade issues and other foreign-market access barriers may result in significant data-collection time lags. 100% follow-up verification and validation of successes reported on market access issues is beyond FAS’ current resource availability. Recent computer technology upgrades will enable FAS to improve data collection, storage and access capability within the next 2–3 years. However, insufficient staff resources in the interim will continue to significantly limit recording data and verifying successes.
1.1.2 Estimated gross trade value of markets expanded/retained by market access activities other than WTO notification process.			
1.1.3 Average tariff rate on agricultural imports worldwide.	Manual and automated systems capture required.	USDA employs a mix of manual and automated procedures and systems to verify and validate performance goals and indicators. Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) managers have developed verification and validation procedures for each measure to improve the accuracy of information reported for USDA’s Annual Performance Report. The FAS Compliance Review Staff periodically audits the procedures and reporting for completeness and accuracy.	The shortage of staff resources for meeting the many U.S. commitments to World Trade Organization (WTO) trade issues and other foreign-market access barriers may result in significant data-collection time lags. 100% follow-up verification and validation of successes reported on market access issues is beyond FAS’ current resource availability. Recent computer technology upgrades will enable FAS to improve data collection, storage and access capability within the next 2–3 years. However, insufficient staff resources in the interim will continue to significantly limit recording data and verifying successes.

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1.1.4 Increase the new or modified export protocols that facilitate access to foreign markets.	APHIS Phytosanitary Issues Management Staff, APHIS National Center for Import/Export, APHIS Foreign Service Officers, & <i>Foreign Agricultural Trade of the United States</i> annual report	APHIS Trade Support Team reviews data from various APHIS staff officers and goes through an extensive interview process before publishing the annual <i>SPS Accomplishments Report</i> . It has also provided some definitions and guidance around counting these protocols and work plans for the various APHIS programs involved in trade.	Data can not be tracked and monitored in "real time." Some APHIS programs report accomplishments on a monthly basis, but most often data is only aggregated once at the end of each fiscal year. Data around the status of SPS export protocols is housed in more than one APHIS program area. PPQ has a separate database from VS. No remedial action to be taken at this time.
1.1.5 Increase the international animal and plant health standards adopted.	International Plant Protection Convention. International Organization of Epizootics	Official reports from the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)'s <i>Commission on Phytosanitary Measures</i> ; Official reports from the International Organization of Epizootics (OIE)'s <i>International Animal Health Code Commission</i>	There are no known data limitations
1.2.1 Increase the activities/projects completed in support of international economic development and trade capacity building in developing and transition countries.	Manual and automated systems capture required data.	USDA employs a mix of manual and automated procedures and systems to verify and validate performance goals and indicators. Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) managers have developed verification and validation procedures for each measure to improve the accuracy of information reported for USDA's Annual Performance Report. The FAS Compliance Review Staff periodically audits the procedures and reporting for completeness and accuracy.	For research, training and technical assistance activities related to building trade and economic capacity via sound science and technology, data are deemed to be of high quality and have no known limitations.
1.2.2 Share of countries' food import needs met through USDA-administered food assistance programs.			For food aid, both food aid needs and supplies are constantly in flux, making the analytical process for matching specific food aid needs around the world with U.S. domestic supply availability at any give time extremely time-consuming. The changing nature of the data needed to make effective decisions is the major limitation. Subject to availability of budgetary resources, FAS intends to explore developing a more automated means of securing timely and accurate information relative to food aid needs and supply availability within the next two years.

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<p>1.2.3 Improve food security and nutrition through McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program by the number of daily meals and take-home rations for mothers, infants, and schoolchildren.</p>	Manual and automated systems capture required.	USDA employs a mix of manual and automated procedures and systems to verify and validate performance goals and indicators. Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) managers have developed verification and validation procedures for each measure to improve the accuracy of information reported for USDA's Annual Performance Report. The FAS Compliance Review Staff periodically audits the procedures and reporting for completeness and accuracy.	The shortage of staff resources for meeting the many U.S. commitments to World Trade Organization (WTO) trade issues and other foreign-market access barriers may result in significant data-collection time lags. 100% follow-up verification and validation of successes reported on market access issues is beyond FAS' current resource availability. Recent computer technology upgrades will enable FAS to improve data collection, storage and access capability within the next 2-3 years. However, insufficient staff resources in the interim will continue to significantly limit recording data and verifying successes.
<p>1.2.4 Improve literacy and primary education through McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent increase in enrollment for Girls/Boys • Percent increase in the proportion of children who are promoted 	Manual and automated systems capture required.	USDA employs a mix of manual and automated procedures and systems to verify and validate performance goals and indicators. Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) managers have developed verification and validation procedures for each measure to improve the accuracy of information reported for USDA's Annual Performance Report. The FAS Compliance Review Staff periodically audits the procedures and reporting for completeness and accuracy.	The shortage of staff resources for meeting the many U.S. commitments to World Trade Organization (WTO) trade issues and other foreign-market access barriers may result in significant data-collection time lags. 100% follow-up verification and validation of successes reported on market access issues is beyond FAS' current resource availability. Recent computer technology upgrades will enable FAS to improve data collection, storage and access capability within the next 2-3 years. However, insufficient staff resources in the interim will continue to significantly limit recording data and verifying successes.
<p>1.3.1 Increase the use of bioenergy and biobased products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualify the number of products in five or more categories for inclusion on the Designated Biobased Products List • Encourage a number of farmers to produce energy for their own use and sale • Develop a research program for competitive grants for bioproducts made from biomass 	Federal Statute, regulations and operating procedures of other similar programs in Federal government.	Check source documents for USDA guidelines developed.	There are no known data limitations.
	Federal procurement procedures and practices.	Check source documents and consult with procurement officials in Federal Agencies and with OMB's OFPP that preference to biobased products are in place.	Ease of use of electronic information system supporting program by Federal procurement officials. Remedial: interact with and consult with Federal procurement officials to improve ease of use.
	Manufacturers of biobased products and testing institutions conducting tests on products for biobased content, BEES analysis and product performance.	Cross check of data at time of entry into electronic information system that the products are in the proper categories.	Create audit system to check on data validity; develop firewalls in electronic information system to protect integrity of data from outside manipulation.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop accounting rules and guidelines for greenhouse gas offset activities in agriculture 	Regulatory programs in USDA of similar nature, FSRIA statutory language, Copyright search.	Cross check of data and use of professional copyright search firms for the criteria to be established.	Make use of established procedures to assure minimization of problems in implementing label program.
<p>1.4.1 Expand the USDA risk management tools available for agricultural producers to use in managing production and price risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase crop insurance coverage as measured by potential liabilities covered by crop insurance Increase crop insurance participation as measured by planted acres having crop insurance coverage Increase the number of commodities eligible for crop insurance 	RMA maintains databases of all crop insurance statistics, including detailed farmer information collected from the private companies that sell the crop insurance.	All data from the private companies is validated through the Data Acceptance System edits before being added to the insurance experience databases. All RMA databases and business information is audited annually by independent auditors, as well as periodically by OIG and other government auditing entities.	All data for these indicators are contained in RMA's databases, are complete at reporting time and are audited for accuracy.
<p>1.4.2 Improve customer service by increasing the efficiency of loan processing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the average direct loan processing time Reduce the average guaranteed loan processing time 	<p>Guaranteed Loan System (Guaranteed Loan Processing Timeliness)</p> <p>MAC System (Direct Loan Processing Timeliness)</p>	<p>Reports generated from the Executive Information Service system and the intranet are the primary means of measuring farm loan program performance. FSA National Office reviews these reports quarterly to monitor progress towards achievement of the performance goals. Additionally, web-based FOCUS programs have been developed and are used to monitor performance.</p>	There are no known data limitations.
<p>1.4.3 Improve fiscal soundness of the direct loan portfolio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the direct loan delinquency rate at or below 15% Maintain the direct loss rate at or below 15% 	Program Loan Accounting System (Direct Loan Loss and Delinquency Rates)	<p>Most farm loan program data originates from FSA's accounting system and is subject to internal and external audit. Service center staff enters application processing progress as applications are processed. The reliability of this data has been enhanced through system changes and reviews. Comprehensive reviews are conducted annually to ensure that loan decisions are sound and that program implementation is in accordance with statutes and regulations.</p>	

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<p>1.4.4 Eligible commodity production placed under marketing assistance loan or loan deficiency based on economic conditions in the farm sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheat, corn, sorghum, barley, oats and soybeans • Upland cotton 	<p>Production Data - NASS Published Estimates Database (http://www.nass.usda.gov.81/ipedb/)</p> <p>Loan and LDP data - National Loan Summary Report and LDP Summary Report. Online Reports section of FSA's Price Support Division (PSD) web page: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/psd/</p>	<p>Data for the amount of commodity placed under marketing assistance loans and LDP originates from the USDA Service Centers, where it is input by FSA staff. This data is then uploaded daily to an automated system maintained at Kansas City. To help ensure accuracy of system data, FSA personnel perform periodic spot checks to verify the quantity and eligibility of commodities placed under loan or LDP.</p>	<p>NASS production data may not be final for some commodities for up to two years after the end of the crop year. In addition, NASS may not always have data for every state in which the PSD database shows loan or LDP activity. This report only includes data for those states with both loan and/or LDP data and NASS data. Therefore, a data limitation is that results may not always account for 100 percent of loan/LDP activity and actual production.</p>
<p>1.4.5 Increase farm commodity and loan programs that can be accessed, completed and accepted electronically.</p>	<p>Web based Database maintained by FSA's Forms, Graphics and Records Branch, within the Management Services Division.</p>	<p>Data is updated daily as additional forms are added or a change in the status of a form occurs. For example, forms may become obsolete or programs expire. Reports are generated on request for Agency management.</p>	<p>Information contained in the Database constantly changes because of program changes or system enhancements, which allow additional forms to be added.</p>
<p>2.1.1 Create or save additional jobs through USDA financing of businesses.</p>	<p>Guaranteed Loan System (GLS).</p>	<p>This is an accounting system for the Agency's portfolio of guaranteed loans. It contains a variety of edits to minimize the risk of inaccurate data being placed in the system. It provides reports used by OIG in their annual audit of the Rural Development financial Statement.</p>	<p>There are no known data limitations.</p>
<p>2.1.2 Reduce the Business and Industry Portfolio delinquency rate, excluding bankruptcy cases.</p>			
<p>2.1.3 Improve the ability of small, rural towns to enjoy economic growth through provision of financing to support high-speed telecommunications services (broadband):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of entities • Number of counties 	<p>Borrower Loan Applications.</p>	<p>All loan advances must be for approved purposes. Therefore, upon completion of the project, funds will have been expended to bring broadband service to the counties indicated in the application. In addition, loan fund audits will be scheduled for borrowers after the full draw down of funding and project completion.</p>	<p>There are no known data limitations.</p>
<p>2.2.1 Improve the quality of life in Rural America:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase financial assistance to rural households to buy a home • Increase the number of minority homeowners • Provide access for residents to new and/or improved essential community facilities • Provide access for residents to clean drinking water 	<p>Program Loan Accounting System (PLAS), Guaranteed Loan System (GLS) and Dedicated Loan Origination and Servicing System (DLOS).</p>	<p>These systems contain a variety of data edits to minimize the risk of inaccurate data being placed in the system. Reports from these systems are used by OIG in development of the Rural Development audited financial Statement.</p>	<p>There are no known data limitations.</p>

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3.1.1 Conduct risk assessments of microbial, chemical and physical hazards to meat, poultry and egg products.	Internal program documents.	To gauge our progress, we conduct public meetings and technical conferences and issue draft risk assessments to the public for comment.	This measure does not reflect all species that we test for and therefore, only a few measures are reflected in this report.
		To ensure the scientific validity, we request outside, independent science-based review of risk assessments.	Three types of hazards that pose potential risks to the Nation's food supply are: microbial, chemical and physical hazards. This measure represents only potential microbial hazards.
3.1.2 Enhance industry compliance with regulatory requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidence of Salmonella on broiler chickens • Incidence of Salmonella on market hogs • Incidence of Salmonella on ground beef 	The Microbial & Residues Contamination Information System (MARCIS).	Salmonella laboratory testing results are stored in MARCIS. MARCIS provides information on microbiological, chemical and pathological analyses of meat and poultry and their processed products.	Based on past national food safety initiatives, three "representative" species were chosen for this report, however, based on the sampling frame in a given time period a given set of test results can affect the overall numbers up or down independent of the intended target measure.
	The Pathogen Reduction Enforcement Program (PREP).	PREP is used for scheduling and recording Salmonella compliance data.	Three types of hazards that pose potential risks to the Nation's food supply are: microbial, chemical and physical hazards. This measure represents only potential microbial hazards. USDA maintains Salmonella data on a calendar year not fiscal year basis.
3.1.3 Enhance industry compliance with regulatory requirements.	MARCIS.	Results from laboratory analyses are used to verify the achievement of pathogen reduction targets and compliance with national baseline standards.	Three types of hazards that pose potential risks to the Nation's food supply are: microbial, chemical and physical hazards. This measure represents only potential microbial hazards.
		Standard recognized scientific protocols are used.	USDA maintains data on a calendar year not fiscal year basis.
3.1.4 Develop new systems for detecting foodborne hazards.	Agriculture Research Service.	Peer Review or Codex.	There are no known data limitations.
3.2.1 Increase the percent of known, significant introductions of plant disease or pests that are detected before they spread from the original area of colonization and cause severe economic and environmental damage.	Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) National Agricultural Pest Information System (NAPIS)	Data is verified and validated through the appropriate state regulatory agencies before it is entered into NAPIS	Lack of comprehensive pest data set due to insufficient personnel to conduct surveys; Inconsistent data quality from state-to-state due to inadequate equipment and training; Getting data from states in a timely manner is sometimes difficult Remedial Steps: PPQ is hiring a significant number of additional personnel trained in pest detection technologies. It is also expanding cooperative agreements to implement the CAPS survey in all

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			States, training identifiers, and procuring up-to-date surveillance equipment. In addition, it is conducting research to develop better survey tools and techniques, and conducting pathway analyses.
3.2.2 Number of significant introductions of foreign animal pests or diseases that spread beyond the original area of introduction and cause severe economic or environmental damage, or damage to the health of animals or humans.	Submissions from state, federal, and university cooperative laboratories to the Foreign Animal Disease Surveillance system.	Sample submissions verified through expert diagnosticians at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) and the Foreign Animal Disease Laboratory at Plum Island.	Non-reporting from producers or field veterinarians of suspect cases impacts the potential magnitude of the foreign animal disease outbreak. Remedial Steps: Increased educational efforts and public awareness campaigns are initiated if it appears that a foreign animal disease outbreak has occurred, in order to minimize non-reporting of suspect cases.
3.2.3 Increase the number of States and territories, which meet the standards for preventing, detecting and responding to animal health emergencies.	The key Federal and State offices in each State and territory.	USDA – In FY 2003 and 2004, APHIS will reassess progress towards meeting the standards by using a national self-assessment of the State systems (which involves Federal and collaboration in completing the assessment instrument). The 12 emergency managers APHIS is planning to hire then would work with 4-5 States each to verify and validate the assessment results.	The assessment tool is self-administered by State and Federal officials in each State.
3.2.4 Increase the number of States that can provide necessary Federal animal diagnostic services.	The National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL).	Each laboratory must submit their qualifications and procedures for approval to NVSL and periodic on-site are conducted when necessary.	Periodic check tests to ensure competency are required.
3.2.5 Improve the capabilities of plant diagnostic laboratories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certify National Plant Pest and Disease Diagnostic Network Centers • Connect State Plant Diagnostic Laboratory to the National Agricultural Pest Information System at Purdue University 	<p>State Labs; National Plant Pest and Disease Diagnostic Network Centers.</p> <p>National Agricultural Pest Information System.</p>	<p>Internal review; Report signoff by designated authority.</p> <p>Confirmation of diagnostic data by certified labs; Technical formatting; Bio-technical review by the National Agricultural Pest Information System Director</p>	Completeness; Technical accuracy; Timeliness.
3.2.6 Release a series of new or improved varieties or germplasm that exhibit enhanced disease resistance to each of the following plant diseases: Sclerotinia, downy mildew, rusts and exotic viral diseases.	<p>Agricultural Research Service.</p> <p>Crop Science; HortScience J.</p>	<p>Internal Review, Technical Release and Release by ARS</p> <p>PI Signoff; Technical formatting.</p> <p>Journal Peer review.</p>	<p>Completeness of reports; Inclusion of all releases. Timeliness; Completeness of progress reports. Inclusion in cultivar & germplasm release lists.</p> <p>ARS may release varieties and/or germplasm under exclusive or non-exclusive licensing agreements.</p>

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<p>4.1.1 Improve Access to Nutritious Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Stamp Program participation • Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children participation • National School Lunch Program participation • School Breakfast Program participation • Child and Adult Care Food Program meals served • Summer Food Service Program participation 	<p>Reports from State agencies.</p>	<p>Program data are submitted by States and entered into two "parent systems", the Food Stamp Integrated Information System (FSPIIS) and the Special Nutrition Program Integrated Information System (SNPIIS). Regional offices follow up with States to resolve issue of missing or questionable data. Once reviews are complete and any questions or concerns regarding the data are resolved, the data are moved from a "preload system" into the National Databank production system and become USDA's official program data.</p>	<p>Because USDA relies on this data for a number of important administrative and budget preparation functions, as well as for performance planning and reporting, it employs multiple reviews, monitoring, editing and analysis to ensure that final data are complete, consistent and accurate. However, the data show absolute levels of program delivery, rather than participation rates of eligible populations.</p> <p>Participation data must be supplemented with estimates of eligible populations, measures of food security and other information to more fully evaluate program effectiveness. The latter data are generally not available in a timeframe useful for preparing annual performance reporting, but have been incorporated in strategic plan measures and will be reported periodically.</p>
<p>4.2.1 Promote Healthier Eating Habits and Lifestyles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for fruits and vegetables provided through nutrition assistance programs 	<p>Agency administrative and financial records.</p>	<p>This estimate is based on records of direct commodity purchases for nutrition assistance programs, which is reconciled monthly and annually to ensure accuracy and participation levels for certain programs that support fruit and vegetable consumption, collected from State agencies consolidated and reviewed for accuracy and consistency by FNS.</p>	<p>The estimate is based on research on the proportion of program dollars used by program participants and operators to support fruit and vegetable consumption.</p> <p>USDA will use any new research-based estimates of the proportion of program dollars used to support fruit and vegetable consumption to revise its estimation methodology as it becomes available.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Meals Initiative monitoring reviews conducted by State agencies 	<p>State reports, supplemented and verified by reviews and management evaluations conducted by FNS State reports.</p>	<p>Data are collected, compiled and reviewed generally for consistency by USDA.</p>	<p>USDA's ability to ensure complete and accurate data reported by State agencies on local school compliance with program nutritional requirements is limited by the fact that data collection is voluntary, informal and without standardized procedures. These limitations result from the strong opposition from the [school food service community] to a more formal data collection process.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of WIC mothers initiating breastfeeding 	WIC Participant and Program Characteristics studies.	These biennial studies, conducted by FNS, include data on breastfeeding initiation. Since these studies are census data collections, they are not subject to sampling error; in addition, [non-response is very low,] thus minimizing bias in the data. These data will be verified as practicable by other studies.	Data is only available biennially. In addition, continued ability to collect this data is contingent upon funding to conduct these studies; without adequate funding at FNS for this work data may not be available.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDA nutrition education materials and education interventions disseminated 	Agency administrative records/Commerce Department's National Technical Information Service.	USDA—compile Web use data each month to verify data accuracy. USDA—gather distribution data from sources such as internal mailing lists and agency print orders and other lists.	Data on the overall number of materials disseminated cannot be directly linked to the number or proportion of participants reached by these events. USDA intends to evaluate the impact of its nutrition education efforts as resources permit.
	USDA administrative records.	Data on Web use compiled monthly, are accurate and verifiable. Distribution data are gathered from sources such as internal mailing lists and agency print orders and other lists.	No significant limitations on the validity of accuracy of the data related to consumers' use of the Web. The accuracy of the distribution lists can be enhanced by regular monitoring and reporting of the number of copies mailed or distributed by other means (e.g. distribution at national conferences).
<p>4.3.1 Improve Food Program Management and Customer Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the Food Stamp payment accuracy rate Decrease the number of children certified for free school meals in excess of those estimated eligible 	Annual Quality Control statistical reports based on a sample of 60,000 actual State FSP cases.	USDA sub-sampling and review, regression analysis and on-site reviews of State operation.	The data has no known limitations.
	Data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) (estimated number of students eligible for free and/or reduced price meals).	The CPS sampling and estimation methodologies produce reliable national monthly estimates of American worker and consumer economic and demographic characteristics.	The indicator measures the level of potential opportunity to participate and receive benefits improperly, but the extent to which certification error translates into improper payments is unclear.
	Federal nutrition assistance program data (the number of students certified to receive these benefits).	USDA compiles Federal program data from State reports and reviews it for completeness and reasonableness.	Using NSLP free and reduced-price certifications to distribute billions of dollars in education and other aid adds to the difficulty of directly linking certification error with a specific level of erroneous NSLP payments. Studies could be conducted to assess the extent to which certification errors result in erroneous payments as resources permit.

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5.1.1 Continue to restore, rehabilitate and maintain fire-adapted ecosystems by moving Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and non-WUI hazardous fuels from a moderate/high risk to a lower risk of catastrophic fire.	National Fire Plan.	Coordination/verification with FS Regions.	<p>The data has no known limitations and the data are deemed to be of high quality</p> <p>Remedial steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish consistent reporting across all venues (Federal, State, local, Tribal) Include data elements for all aspects of the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy (suppression, rehabilitation/restoration, community assistance and reduction of hazardous fuels) Integrate performance and budget processes and systems, currently under development, as the first and most important step in achieving consistent and higher-quality data.
5.1.2 Ensure Federal fire management plans are in compliance with Federal Wildland Fire Policy.			
5.1.3 Control unplanned and unwanted fires during initial attack.			
5.1.4 Allotment acres administered to 100% of standard.	FS Management Attainment Report (MARS)	Coordination/verification with FS Regions.	There are no known data limitations.
5.1.5 Cleanup CERCLA sites on lands and facilities under USDA custody and control.	CERCLA Reporting Data.	Senior management attests to the quality (completeness, accuracy, consistency, timeliness) of the performance and financial data they report. Senior technical specialists review the submitted data for gross errors and inconsistencies and perform a limited number of program reviews and audits each year.	There are no known data limitations.
5.2.1 Protect the productive capacity of agricultural and forestland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect against degradation Working cropland and grazing land by applying conservation practices 	Forest Stewardship Management Plans.	Data provided by field and state forestry agencies are reviewed for accuracy and consistency by regional program managers.	Data are considered reliable.
	FS contract with National Association of State Foresters to compile forestry Best Management Practice information.	States and territories provide the BMP data, which are reviewed and compiled by a principal scientist.	Data are collected biennially by NASF; contingent on FS funding.
	NRCS Performance and Results Measurement System (PRMS).	PRMS was designed to ensure the data would be collected accurately and consistently nationwide. Internal controls to ensure data quality include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-line definitions and help screens for all performance data collection items Telephone hotline Surveys and reviews conducted by the national oversight and evaluation staff. 	Data are reported by agency employees and partners in each field offices across the Nation. Ongoing quality assurance activities are designed to minimize variation in interpretation of data definitions. Additional training is provided if reviews indicate a need. <p>Data are considered reliable.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going quality assurance activities conducted by NRCS State offices. Program and functional appraisals are also carried out. Performance data are reviewed as part of these appraisals. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive cropland and grazing land under long-term land retirement contracts Total erosion prevented (Mil tons) 	FSA National CRP Contract and Offer Data Files.	CRP data is uploaded from the USDA Service Centers to the automated CRP data files weekly. CRP offer data files are uploaded following each general signup period. These files are evaluated to determine the environmental benefits of CRP and upon contract approval; the data is updated to reflect land use, land treatment and environmental benefits. To help ensure program integrity, service center employees conduct on-site spot checks and review producer files prior to annual payment issuance to ensure conservation practices are maintained in accordance with program requirements.	Data limitations primarily result from (1) the time lag from when signups are held and contracts signed and when the data is input into the automated systems at the Service Center, (2) continual updating of the CRP contract data and (3) periodic changes in the data that is reported in the contract and offer data files.
	FSA National CRP Contract and Offer Data Files and NRCS PRMS.	<p>See description of PRMS above.</p> <p>See the description of the CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above.</p> <p>Erosion impacts of CRP are estimated using regional average National Resources Inventory (NRI) erosion rates on CRP land in 1997 ("after CRP") compared with erosion rates estimated to have occurred on CRP land in 1982 ("before CRP"). Erosion rates "before CRP" are estimated by a multi-step process. First, 1982 average erosion rates by county, type of erosion and erodibility index (EI) from the NRI are assigned to each CRP contract based on the contract's county, erosion type and EI. State (and regional, if needed) average erosion rates are used to assign erosion rates to CRP contracts that do not have assigned rates after the first step. Erosion prevented, by type of erosion, is the difference between the "before" and "after" erosion estimates.</p>	<p>PRMS data are considered reliable.</p> <p>See Statement on CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above.</p> <p>Erosion on CRP land is estimated using data points from the NRI. While this is a large sample that can be used to represent erosion reductions, it is an estimate. Future CRP general signups will gather information that will permit the estimation of erosion reductions for each CRP contract, resulting in improved performance reporting.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-industrial private forestlands under approved stewardship management plans (Acres) 	FS Performance Measurement Accountability System (PMAS).	Annual program review by FS in cooperation with National Association of State Foresters.	Program data submitted into PMAS by State Foresters. This presents no limitations, in that cooperative program review ensures continued data and program quality.
<p>5.2.2 Manage watersheds to provide clean and abundant water supplies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal feeding operations with comprehensive nutrient management plans and working land with nutrient management improved plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developed - Applied Working land with conservation measures applied to reduce potential for off-site pollution by nutrients 	NRCS Performance and Results Measurement System (PRMS).	See PRMS information above.	FY 2002 is the first year of implementation of the new guidance for CNMPs. Extensive training of field staff was conducted prior to implementation. Data are considered reliable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheet and rill erosion prevented 	FSA National CRP Contract and Offer Data Files and NRCS PRMS.	<p>See description of PRMS above.</p> <p>See the description of the CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above.</p> <p>Erosion impacts of CRP are estimated using regional average National Resources Inventory (NRI) erosion rates on CRP land in 1997 ("after CRP") compared with erosion rates estimated to have occurred on CRP land in 1982 ("before CRP"). Erosion rates "before CRP" are estimated by a multi-step process. First, 1982 average erosion rates by county, type of erosion and erodibility index (EI) from the NRI are assigned to each CRP contract based on the contract's county, erosion type and EI.</p> <p>State (and regional, if needed) average erosion rates are used to assign erosion rates to CRP contracts that do not have assigned rates after the first step. Erosion prevented, by type of erosion, is the difference between the "before" and "after" erosion estimates.</p>	<p>Data are considered reliable.</p> <p>See Statement on CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above.</p> <p>Erosion on CRP land is estimated using data points from the NRI. While this is a large sample that can be used to represent erosion reductions, it is an estimate. Future CRP general signups will gather information that will permit the estimation of erosion reductions for each CRP contract, resulting in improved performance reporting.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce nitrogen application on land under long-term retirement contract 	FSA National CRP Contract and Offer Data Files.	See the description of the CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above.	Statewide averages of cropping patterns and fertilizer application rates were used instead of on-farm

Data Verification and Validation			
Performance Goals	Data Source	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations and Remedial Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce phosphorus application on land under long-term retirement contract 	NASS Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS).	Reduced nitrogen and phosphorus applications are estimated using CRP contract data and NASS land management practice data. Land under long-term land retirement contract is assumed to have been growing a normalized mix of crops by State. Fertilizer application rates for those crops are estimated using State averages from the ARMS surveys. Reduced nutrient applications are estimated by merging fertilizer application rates with CRP State acres.	data. In aggregate State averages probably reflect CRP landowner land management practices.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land in buffers under long-term retirement 	FSA National CRP Contract and Offer Data Files.	See the description of the CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above. The amount of land managed as buffers is a subset of the total acres under long-term land retirement contract. Conservation practices such as grass filter strips and riparian buffers planted with trees are identified within the contract data.	Data are considered reliable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land benefiting from application of improves to irrigation management 	NRCS Performance and Results Measurement System (PRMS).	See PRMS information above.	Data are considered reliable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon sequestered in soil and vegetation through long-term retirement of crop and grazing land 	FSA National CRP Contract and Offer Data Files.	See the description of the CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above. Carbon sequestration is estimated using CRP contract data and current global change research data. The CRP contract data is sorted to identify the area in grass and tree cover. The tree data are then sorted by region and age. For grasslands, estimates of the carbon sequestered per acre are obtained from the Agricultural Research Service and merged with CRP contract data used to estimate total carbon sequestered by CRP grasslands. FS estimates of the carbon sequestered per acre by region, tree species and age are merged with the corresponding data from CRP contract data to estimate total carbon sequestered by CRP forestlands. Total carbon sequestered is the sum of the grassland and forestland estimates.	See statement on CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above. The data for estimating the amount of carbon sequestered is still under development. Current estimates rely on extrapolation of regional parameters. Additional research may lead to improved measurement capabilities, resulting in more accurate estimates. The data currently reported represents the best estimates available at this time, but could change as the USDA/DOE carbon accounting rules are completed.

Data Verification and Validation			
Performance Goals	Data Source	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations and Remedial Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase national implementation rate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forestry best management practices States conducting effectiveness monitoring 	Biennial report to FS by National Association of State Foresters (NASF), under the leadership of NASF Water Resources Committee.	Sample of timber harvest operations in each state lead by state Forestry Best Management Practices coordinator in cooperation with FS and EPA representatives and stakeholders from industry, conservation groups and environmental groups	Compilation is carried out biennially by NASF, not annually. NAS, the FS and EPA have agreed that biennial tracking of use of BMP's in timber harvesting operations provides adequate performance monitoring. FS is providing funding to NASF in FY 2003 to cover monitoring costs.
5.2.3 Ensure diverse wildlife habitats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase protection of wetlands by enrolling in the Wetlands Reserve Program wetlands identified as high priority by States 	NRCS WRP National database.	WRP data provided by field and State offices are reviewed for accuracy the national program manager.	Data are considered reliable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetlands and associated upland under multi-year CRP contracts 	FSA National CRP Contract and Offer Data Files.	See the description of the CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above.	See statement on CRP Contract and Offer Data Files.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply new management practices to improve wildlife habitat on working cropland, grazing land, forest and other land 	NRCS Performance and Results Measurement System (PRMS).	See PRMS information above.	Data are considered reliable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land retired from cropping and grazing and restored to ecosystems with high benefits for wildlife, included threatened and endangered species 	FSA National CRP Contract and Offer Data Files.	See the description of the CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above.	See statement on CRP Contract and Offer Data Files above.