

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE  
FY 2003  
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

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## NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE FY 2003 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

### Introduction

This FY 2003 Annual Performance Report (APR) is presented by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements. This report supports the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) FY 2003 Accountability and Performance Report. This FY 2003 APR reflects the goals and objectives in the NASS 2000-2005 Strategic Plan. The agency is currently updating its strategic plan to align its goals and objectives with the 2002-2007 USDA Strategic Plan and the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area goals. Only Federal employees were involved in the preparation of this report.

### Background

NASS provides the basic agricultural and rural data needs for the people of the United States, those working in agriculture, and those living in rural communities by objectively providing important, usable, and accurate statistical information and services needed to make informed decisions. NASS's statistics keep those involved with America's biggest industry well-informed, provide the basic information necessary to keep agricultural markets stable and efficient, and help maintain a level playing field for all users of agricultural statistics. USDA published its first crop report in 1863, and further strengthened this responsibility in 1905 by creating the Crop Reporting Board now the Agricultural Statistics Board. NASS is the primary statistical Agency in USDA whose mission is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U. S. agriculture. These responsibilities were authorized in the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627). NASS is responsible for conducting the census of agriculture program that provides comprehensive information about the Nation's agriculture every 5 years. NASS's responsibility to conduct the census of agriculture is authorized under Public Law 105-113, the Census of Agriculture Act of 1997 (Title 7 U.S.C. 2204g). Internally, the statistics are used across USDA and are provided to other agencies in their analyses of programs, policy development, etc., as well as, use in their annual performance measures.

NASS's current official statistics program and the census of agriculture program are complemented by its statistical research and service program. This component works to improve statistical survey methodology and to test advanced technology for timely and cost efficient production of high quality agricultural statistics.

### Summary of the NASS Performance Scorecard At-A-Glance

Of the 28 measures included in the Annual Performance Plan (APP), 19 measures were used to measure the Agency's performance in 2003. Four measures did not have targets because the NASS Organizational Climate Survey was not conducted. However, NASS employees participated in the 2002 Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) sponsored by OPM. From this survey, NASS received a Best Places to Work Index of 66.8, ranking NASS in the top 20<sup>th</sup> percentile out of 189 Federal organizations surveyed by OPM. The four measures tied the American Customer Satisfaction Survey (ASCI) were not measured for the same reason, the customer survey was not conducted. Information for calculating total cash receipts becomes available a year later for one of the measurements. Of the 19 measures, 14 measures or 74 percent met or exceeded established performance targets, down 10 points from the level of performance achieved in 2002, but comparable to 2001 performance.

Performance Scorecard for FY 2003			
<i>Annual Performance Indicators</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Result</i>
Percent of NASS reports that are complete and contain no data errors.	99%	100%	exceeded
Percent of NASS reports released on time.	100%	99.8	not met
Percent of total national agricultural production included in the NASS annual statistics program.	95%	data not available	-
Customer satisfaction rating for accuracy and usefulness of report content.	81	-	not measured
Customer satisfaction rating for timeliness of delivery, frequency, and ease of use of NASS reports.	77	-	not measured
Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release.	0	0	met
Accumulative number of IPM practices used to monitor risk assessment.	24	24	met
Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on post-harvest application related to food safety.	9	9	met
Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on agricultural practices related to food safety.	30	30	met
Accumulative number of commodities surveyed to meet data needs for policy and economic decisions relating to stewardship of natural resources and the environment.	95	92	not met
Accumulative number of nursery and floriculture groups surveyed to meet data needs for policy and economic decisions relating to stewardship of natural resources and the environment.	15	15	met
Number of new and enhanced statistics collected in the census of agriculture needed for evaluating emerging issues in the agricultural sector.	No target set	-	-
Response rate for the 2002 Census of Agriculture is equal to or higher than 1997.	86%	88%	exceeded
Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives.	Narrative	Narrative	met
The number of cooperative agreements and MOU's between NASS and outside partners.	160	168	exceeded
Customer service rating for courtesy and professionalism of NASS personnel in dealing with customers.	85	-	not measured
Number of new data products and services produced to fulfill customer requests.	5	20	exceeded
American Customer Satisfaction Index measures NASS's customer satisfaction with NASS reports, products, and services.	72	-	not measured
Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce.	67%	69%	exceeded
Percent of employees who have low/very low morale.	No target set	-	-
Number of substantiated EEO complaints by NASS employees.	0	0	met
Percent of NASS budget appropriations spent on training and career development for NASS employees.	3.0%	2.0%	not met

Performance Scorecard for FY 2003			
<i>Annual Performance Indicators</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Result</i>
Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that the physical environment makes it easy to do their job well.	No target set	-	-
Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that they are kept informed about issues affecting their jobs.	No target set	-	-
Departmental security rating for NASS.	Green	Red	not met
Number of computer security breaches resulting in disclosure of confidential data or loss / modification of sensitive data.	0	0	met
Percent of employees receiving "Security Awareness" Training.	100%	100%	met
Accumulated number of new GPEA eGovernment (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.	10	6	not met

**STRATEGIC GOAL 1: TO PROMOTE AN AGRICULTURAL FOOD AND FIBER SYSTEM THAT IS PRODUCTIVE AND HIGHLY COMPETITIVE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.**

In the REE mission area, agricultural research is key to achieving sustained, long-term improvement in the competitive position of U.S. agriculture. REE programs allow effective responses to changes -- economic, social, and environmental -- that affect production agriculture and contribute to the reduction of trade barriers related to product quality and safety. The products of research -- value-added processing, new uses for existing crops and animals, and biobased products and their commercialization -- enhance the global competitiveness of U.S. agriculture and the success of its farmers and ranchers.

Producers and other data users need objective, reliable, and timely data to make informed production and marketing decisions. Production agriculture measured as fully and as accurately as possible permits each commodity sector to determine supplies and competitive prices for world marketing of U.S. agricultural products. Official statistics promote a level playing field in production agriculture with impartial information available to all at a predetermined and publicized date and time.

Objective 1.1: Timely, accurate, and impartial agricultural statistics are available to all at a publicized date and time and are used throughout the agricultural sector to evaluate supplies and promote competitive prices for U.S. commodities around the world.

NASS is the primary agricultural statistics Agency in USDA. Annually, NASS publishes over 500 national reports, covering over 120 crop and 45 livestock items, complemented by over 8,000 additional State reports. These basic and unbiased data are critical to maintain an orderly association between the consumption, supply, marketing, and input sectors of agriculture. Official USDA national, State, and county estimates are issued annually relating to number of farms and land in farms; acreage, yield, production, and stocks of grains; production of hay, oilseeds, cotton, potatoes, tobacco, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, and selected specialty crops; inventories and production of hogs, cattle, sheep and wool, goats and mohair, mink, catfish, trout, poultry, eggs, and dairy products; prices received by farmers for products, prices paid for commodities and services, and related indexes; cold storage inventories; and other related items that affect the agricultural economy. Additionally, estimates relating to nursery and greenhouse production, agricultural chemical use, postharvest chemical use are provided on a periodic basis. Every 5 years NASS conducts the census of agriculture which expands program coverage to include rare specialty commodities, equine, and numerous demographic data series. Consequently, annual performance targets for coverage are 100 percent in census years and fluctuate in the interim years. Annual performance goals, targets, and actuals are summarized in the following table:

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Target	FY 2003 Actual
1.1.1 Percent of NASS reports that are complete and contain no data errors.	100%	100%	99%	100%
! Percent of NASS reports released on time.	99%	99.8%	100%	99.8%
! Percent of total national agricultural production included in the NASS annual statistics program.	94%	100%	95%	Data not available <sup>1</sup>
! Customer satisfaction rating for accuracy and usefulness of report content.	81	-	81	Not measured <sup>2</sup>
! Customer satisfaction rating for timeliness of delivery, frequency, and ease of use of NASS reports.	77	-	77	Not measured <sup>2</sup>
! Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release.	0	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> Data are not available until 2004. <sup>2</sup> American Customer Satisfaction Survey was not conducted

Table 1: Annual Performance Goals and Indicators for Reports and Releases

Charts and Tables: NASS sets annual performance targets for timeliness and completeness of the reports. The actual performance for reports and releases exceeded the FY 2003 target for completeness and came very close in meeting its very stringent timeliness target of 100 percent. A new threshold of 99.5% of on-time reports was adopted in 2003. NASS statistical program coverage target for the 2003 calendar year is not available until 2004. Cash receipts data for 2003 for the commodities covered in the annual statistics program should reach 100 percent using the 2003 Census of Agriculture, however it is not known at this time.

Year	No. of NASS Reports and Releases	No. of reports released on time	Actual Percent	Target Percent	No. of reports without corrected erratas	Actual Percent	Target Percent
1996	384	384	100%		380	99%	
1997	369	369	100%		367	99.5%	
1998	425	425	100%		425	100%	
1999	419	418	99.8%		416	99.3%	
2000	425	424	99.8%		425	100%	
2001	481	476	99.0%		481	100%	
2002	508	507	99.8%		508	100%	
2003	487	486	99.8%	100%	487	100%	99%

Table 2: NASS Reports and Releases

Year	Estimated Total U.S. Cash Receipts (Mil. Dollars)	Total U.S. Cash Receipts in NASS Statistical Programs (Mil. Dollars)	Percent	Target
1996	199,138	186,287	94%	
1997	207,910 <sup>1</sup>	207,910	100% <sup>2</sup>	
1998	196,173 <sup>1</sup>	190,908	97%	
1999	187,612 <sup>1</sup>	169,297	90%	
2000	191,977 <sup>1</sup>	186,592	97% <sup>1</sup>	
2001	199,779 <sup>1</sup>	186,914	94% <sup>1</sup>	
2002	192,948	192,948	100% <sup>2</sup>	
2003	-	- <sup>3</sup>		95%

<sup>1</sup> Revised <sup>2</sup> Census of Agriculture provides complete coverage.

<sup>3</sup> Data not available until 2004.

Table 3: U.S. Cash Receipts in NASS Statistical Programs

**Data Assessment:** The performance data for assessing reports and releases are based on the national reports released by Washington D.C. Headquarters offices and are scheduled on the annual ASB reports calendar. Agency information is maintained internally in Headquarters offices by the Marketing and Information Services Office (MISO). It is maintained and reviewed for consistency, completeness, and accuracy. Any revisions to the previous years APR data are footnoted in this report.

The 2002 Census of Agriculture is a NASS publication that provides complete coverage of U.S. farm cash receipts. Therefore, in census years the coverage equals 100 percent. The USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) data is used for calculating NASS statistics program coverage percentage in non-census years. Farm cash receipts for 2003 are not available until 2004.

The American Customer Satisfaction Survey was not conducted in 2003. NASS's first-ever American Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted in 2001.

Data security is a critical component of NASS processing and information dissemination. Any instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release is reported to the Chairman and Secretary of the Agricultural Statistics Board.

**Analysis of Results:** NASS met its performance goal. NASS released one report late and was not able to attain the 100 percent performance target for releasing reports on time. NASS statistical programs are expected to account for 95 percent of U.S. cash receipts, but data are not available until 2004. There were no instances of data security improprieties reported.

A brief analysis is provided for each of the indicators for this performance goal:

! **Reports and Releases:** NASS met its performance goal. NASS came very close to fully achieving the 100 percent performance target for releasing reports on-time. The 2003 reports calendar was published in the fall of 2002. This annual publication lists release dates for all USDA national statistical reports, covering over 120 crops and 45 livestock items. Several changes in the calendar implemented in 2001 continued in 2003 which included the release of the monthly Crop Production reports released on or about the 10th of the month rather than the 11th and with fewer Crop Production reports released on Fridays.

Of the 487 scheduled reports on the 2003 ASB calendar, 99.8 percent of reports, were released on-time. The Peanut Stocks and Processing report scheduled for release September 29, 2003 was delayed until Wednesday, October 1, 2003, at 3:00 p.m. The delay of the release had no market

impact. NASS has attained 100 percent on-time performance in 3 out of the last 8 years (1996-2003). The tragic events of September 11, 2001, prevented USDA from attaining this performance measure in 2001 that would have otherwise been realized.

Furthermore, there were no erratas published in 2003. Report errors determined to be "market sensitive" are corrected with a publication of an official errata notice. Cosmetic and non-data errors or "non-market sensitive errors" are tracked, documented, and corrected, but an official errata is not published for those reports and they are not included in performance data. Revisions to preliminary data series, forecasts, or estimates are part of the Agency's standard operating procedures and are not considered as errors.

- ! *Annual Statistics Program Coverage:* NASS statistical program coverage is based on cash receipt estimates published by ERS. Cash receipts provide a standard unit for collapsing and comparing livestock and crop production. Commodities not covered by NASS are estimated using economic models or external data sources to achieve completeness. Commodity coverage for 2002, unavailable in the previous report, was 100 percent.

Beginning in 2000, every noncensus year excludes other poultry, all other livestock, jojoba, miscellaneous vegetables, miscellaneous fruits and nuts, all grass seeds, and horses. In years with no census special studies, crawfish and other aquaculture are excluded. In years with no special studies and no nursery and greenhouse survey, all nursery and greenhouse are excluded from the program coverage calculations. NASS program coverage expands to 100 percent during census years conducted every 5 years ie. 1997, 2002, etc. The census allows for open-ended reporting of all commodities produced, thus providing a vehicle for obtaining data on less prevalent items. Estimates of commodity coverage do not reflect numerous data series relating to economic, environmental, and demographic subjects. The final annual program coverage calculations will never coincide with the current APR reports and they will always be a year behind.

- ! *American Customer Satisfaction (ACSI) Ratings:* The American Customer Satisfaction Survey was not conducted in 2003, therefore there were no measures.
- ! *Data Security:* There were no instances of any impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of any official release in 2003.

#### Current Fiscal Year Performance:

- ! *Reports and Releases:* NASS continues its efforts to sustain a 100 percent target level of on-time reports through continuous staff training and use of computer equipment and technology. In general, the number of reports and information released by NASS will continue to expand to meet the ever-growing demands and challenges associated with data users and the public's need for more and better statistical information.
- ! *Annual Statistics Program Coverage:* Cash receipt data for the 2003 statistical program coverage evaluation will be made available by ERS in 2004. NASS continuously strives to increase program coverage, but expansion of program coverage is limited by appropriated budget resources each fiscal year.
- ! *American Customer Satisfaction (ACSI) Ratings:* NASS intends to use the ACSI for assessing implementation of future quality initiatives. In absence of conducting the ACSI Survey in 2003, NASS continues to conduct its annual Data User Meetings. This year's meeting was held in Chicago, IL., in October 2003. Each participating USDA agency provided a mission overview and summary of changes and new products, followed by an open forum for public comment as well as questions and answers. NASS will continue to provide the leadership role at these annual data users' meetings to discuss customer data needs, service, and to seek their advice on current and emerging issues.

! *Data Security*: NASS will continue to provide employees with security training and maintain up-to-date agency policies and guidance in order to keep employees fully informed on NASS's standard operating procedures.

Program Evaluations: NASS reactivated the Program Review Team in 2002. This agency team was chartered to review and update recommendations from a previous Program Review Team report and to evaluate current survey performance and program coverage to identify areas where NASS is deficient.

The Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics convened in February 2003. The Committee is made up of a cross section of agricultural interests and provides recommendations, feedback, and opinions concerning the NASS program and emerging issues.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE A SAFE FOOD SYSTEM AND A SECURE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION SYSTEM.**

Our nation's prosperity relies upon an abundant and safe food supply. Through research and education, REE strives to protect the health of consumers from harmful microbial or chemical contamination in the food we eat. The aim is to also make our domestic agricultural production system as secure as possible from the effects of pests, diseases, weather extremes, climate changes, and other natural disasters. Critical to this effort are programs to ensure that producers, processors, and consumers understand safe food and handling practices.

Essential pest management practices data are provided for analyzing policy and program consequences for producers and consumers. Comprehensive analyses of farmer practices are made possible by measures of strategies used by growers as alternatives to chemical use.

Objective 2.1: Provide meaningful statistical projections on pest management practices and general agricultural practices data for use in evaluating risk assessments relative to both food safety and food security.

NASS will provide needed data on pest management strategies used by producers and make meaningful data readily available to all who need this data for business and policy decisions. This program will also establish a baseline of agricultural practices related to the potential for microbial contamination of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Target	FY 2003 Actual
2.1.1 Accumulative number of IPM practices used to monitor risk assessment.	24	24	24	24
! Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on post-harvest application related to food safety.	8	9	9	9
! Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on agricultural practices related to food safety.	30	30	30	30

Table 4: Annual Performance Goals and Indicators for Integrated Pest Management and Agricultural Practices

Data Assessment: The data in Table 4 is based on information residing in the Agency's statistical information system managed and maintained by various Headquarters staffs in the Statistics Division; Census and Survey Division; and the Information Technology Division. Sampling information and survey response rates are available by State and summarized at the national level and are reviewed for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.



Analysis of Results: NASS met its performance goal with the release of six chemical use publications which also contributes to attaining goals outlined in objective 4.1. A brief analysis is provided for each of the indicators for this performance goal:

- ! *Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Practices:* The performance goal was met with a total of 24 accumulated IPM practices that have been surveyed to date. The 24 IPM practices identified and listed in last year's annual performance report remained unchanged for 2003. Refer to the 2001 report for further details.
- ! *Post-Harvest Applications:* The performance goal was met with a total of nine accumulated total number of commodities that have been surveyed on post-harvest applications related to food safety. These commodities include apples, potatoes, corn, wheat, soybeans, oats, rice, peanuts, and pears. Pears were added in 2002 and apple data was previously collected in 1997 and was re-surveyed in 2002. Corn and soybean data were collected again in 2003.
- ! *Agricultural Practices:* There was an Agricultural Practices Survey conducted in 2000 and released in 2001 with 30 commodities summarized. The performance goal was met with a total of 30 accumulated total number of commodities that have been surveyed on agricultural practices related for food safety. The 2001 annual performance plan listed and identified the commodities. Refer to it for details as needed.

Current Fiscal Year Performance:

- ! *Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Practices:* Data on the 24 Integrated Pest Management Practices were released to stakeholders and the data user community for crop year 2001 on fruit, vegetables, corn, cotton, potatoes, and soybeans. There was no IPM data activity during 2002 and nothing is planned for 2003 at this time.
- ! *Post-Harvest Applications:* Fresh and process oranges will be surveyed in 2004.
- ! *Agricultural Practices:* This survey is designed to establish a baseline of agricultural practices related to the potential for microbial contamination of fresh fruits and vegetables. Beyond 2000, key food safety issues will be addressed based on the needs of the data user community. Development of the Agricultural Practices Study occurred with direct input of Food and Drug Administration officials, USDA representatives, and industry leaders. There are no plans to conduct another survey cycle at this time.

Program Evaluations: No official evaluations were conducted.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: TO PROVIDE A HEALTHY POPULATION THROUGH IMPROVED NUTRITION.

The REE agencies are key players in conducting research that provides and promotes the scientific basis for optimal health and informed food policy decisions. A critical component of these efforts is providing dietary information to meet the needs of undernourished portions of the population, with emphasis on children and other at-risk populations. The accomplishment of these performance goals supports USDA Objective 2.3: Protect the public health by significantly reducing the prevalence of food borne hazards.

Current Fiscal Year Performance: While there is no specific performance goal or measure established for the objective, NASS provides technical assistance and guidance, as needed, to the REE mission area and other USDA policy officials in providing data and information needed to support this goal at the Departmental level. For example, in FY 2003, NASS worked with Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) Nutrient Data Laboratory, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Pesticide Data Program, and the Florida Department of Citrus as described in the next several paragraphs:

- ! *Nutrient Data Laboratory:* NASS provided continued statistical consultation to ARS's Nutrient Data Laboratory (NDL) which consisted of designing and implementing national level plans for sampling retail foods and beverages for the laboratory's National Food and Nutrient Analysis Program. NASS developed and implemented the following : 1.) sample designs for National Food and Nutrient Analysis Program (NFNAP) for the collection of food samples from retail outlets for nutrient analysis to reflect the most current population statistics in support of the laboratory's Nutrient Data Bank System; 2) nationwide sampling design for the determination of the mean concentration and variability of fluoride in the U.S. food and water supply; 3.) numerous small scale sampling plans for individual foods; 4.) statistical analysis procedures to incorporate knowledge from non-survey data into the National Food and Nutrient Analysis Program (NFNAP); 5.) model based estimates of NFNAP serving-to-serving variability of using special variance sample data. In addition, NASS refined and modified as needed the data handling and statistical procedures previously developed by NASS for the NDL Architecture and Integration Management Nutrient Data Bank System.
  
- ! *AMS Pesticide Data Program:* NASS again provided statistical support to AMS and nine cooperating State governments in their ongoing monitoring of selected commodities at the wholesale level for pesticide residues. NASS selected the sites from which many of the samples originated, computed statistically-defensible national level estimates from the sample data, and produced state-of-the-art graphical displays of the residue distribution in certain pesticide / commodity pairs. NASS also provided statistical advice to AMS on its nascent water-monitoring program for pesticide residues and on its micro-biological monitoring program.
  
- ! *Florida Department of Citrus:* NASS provided support in evaluating the use of very high resolution satellite data for citrus tree counting from 270 miles in space. NASS staff evaluated a commercial source (Digital Globe's QUICKBIRD) of very high resolution imagery for this purpose. The study concluded that it was technically feasible to do reliable tree counting from this imagery but was not yet cost effective as it involved too much expert analyst labor. The Florida Department of Citrus was quite appreciative of this effort as they did not have the in-house expertise to conduct the study but needed it done on a reimbursable basis by NASS.

The NASS program supports Goal 3 through its reimbursable program; there were no appropriated resources associated with this goal in FY 2003. This goal is a component of the overall REE strategic plan.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 4: TO FOSTER AN AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM THAT PROTECTS NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT.**

Statistically sound information relevant to policy and production decisions associated with land use, chemical use and integrated pest management practices on U.S. farms and ranches is critical for the effective stewardship of America's rural resources, the environment, and the health and well-being of farm workers.

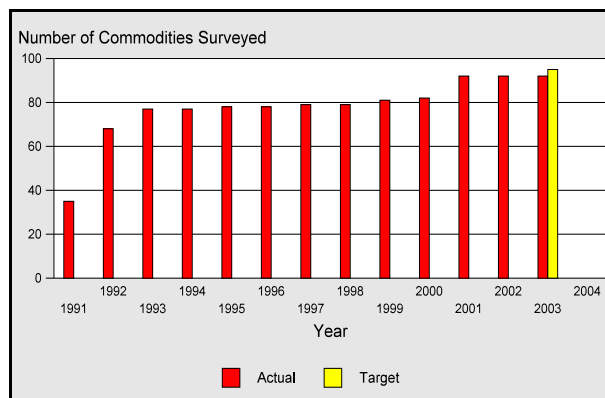
Objective 4.1: Provide statistical data on agricultural chemical use, land productivity, and IPM practices so informed decisions can be made regarding stewardship of America's rural resources and the environment.

Strategies and resources for achieving this performance goal include conducting ongoing surveys to provide and expand needed information concerning quantities of chemicals applied to agricultural commodities; supplying important information on land use and productivity for use in environmental monitoring efforts; supplying important economic information relevant to policy and production decisions associated with chemical use and IPM practices on farms and ranches; and supplying information relevant to measuring the adoption of IPM practices in agriculture.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Target	FY 2003 Actual
4.1.1 Accumulative number of commodities surveyed to meet data needs for policy and economic decisions relating to stewardship of natural resources and the environment.	92	92	95	92
! Accumulative number of nursery and floriculture groups surveyed to meet data needs for policy and economic decisions relating to stewardship of natural resources and the environment.	15	15	15	15

Table 5: Annual Performance Goals and Indicators for Pesticide Use Data

Charts and Tables: NASS sets annual performance targets for the number of commodities surveyed in collecting pesticide data. The FY 2003 actual performance met one of the two FY 2003 targets.



Data Assessment: The data in Chart 1 and Table 5 are based on information managed and maintained by various Headquarters staff in the Environmental, Economic, and Demographics Branch of the Statistics Division, and the Information Technology Division. The number of commodities covered in the surveys are summarized at the State and national levels and are reviewed for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Chart 1: Number of Commodities Surveyed

Analysis of Results: NASS achieved its performance goal with the release of the following publications in 2003 as a result of chemical use data collection efforts included below. Chemical data for 95 crop commodities have been tabulated to date.

- *Agricultural Chemical Usage - 2000 Nursery and Floriculture Summary*
- *Agricultural Chemical Usage - 2002 Field Crops Summary*
- *Agricultural Chemical Usage - 2002 Vegetable summary*
- *Agricultural Chemical Usage - 2002 Hog Facilities*
- *Agricultural Chemical Usage - 2002 Postharvest Applications - Apples and Pears*
- *Agricultural Chemical Usage - 2001 Restricted Use Pesticides Summary*

The following bulleted paragraphs provide a brief analysis for each of the indicators.

- *Commodities Surveyed in Collecting Pesticide Data:* There were a total of 92 accumulated crop commodities that have been surveyed in collecting pesticide data. The data series for reporting the number of commodities was updated to make several corrections to commodities tracked each year. However, the total accumulated number of commodities did not change for 2001 and 2002. In 2003, pesticide data was collected for 33 commodities. All commodities had been surveyed previously. There were no new commodities added to the accumulated total. The target level was set incorrectly in the Annual Performance Plan.

- *Nursery and Floriculture Groups Surveyed:* There were a total of 15 nursery and floriculture groups surveyed to date and remained unchanged for 2003. Refer to 2001 report for details regarding the 15 groups surveyed.

Current Fiscal Year Performance: Plans for 2003 and beyond include continued program expansion to provide coverage for key commodities. Barley information will be added in 2004. In addition to the publication of several documents containing commodity chemical use statistics, data collection has been completed for selected vegetable crops, and multiple field crops. Another floriculture and nursery chemical use survey is underway

Program Evaluation: No evaluation was conducted but program comments are solicited from primary data users, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as a part of the overall NASS program review. In addition, staff are constantly meeting with industry stakeholders, the Office of Pest Management Policy in USDA, other USDA agencies, State governments, universities, and numerous private organizations on issues related to pesticide use data.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 5: TO INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES, AND INDIVIDUALS TO ENHANCE THEIR ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE.**

The fast pace of change in American life and its increasing complexity presents a growing challenge for individuals, families, communities, businesses, and farms of all sizes. Greater economic opportunity and improved quality of life depend on the ability to maximize available resources. The REE agencies develop tools to assist in making the best use of those resources. Particular emphasis is focused on improving the economic viability and well-being of rural America, its people, communities, businesses, and small farms.

Objective 5.1: Provide detailed production, supply, economic, and demographic data, in partnership with State Departments of Agriculture, land-grant colleges and universities, and other cooperators, to enhance national, State, and local information on U.S. agriculture and facilitate locality-based policy and business decisions.

Greater economic opportunity and quality of life is made possible for those most in need through policy and program decisions based on sound statistical data from agricultural censuses and surveys. Annual surveys monitor the economic status of those who operate and work on the nation's farms and ranches and provide needed data for policy analysis. The Bureau of Economic Analysis receives important data for measuring economic activity at the county level. NASS will continue to improve coverage of minority farm operators when conducting the census of agriculture to provide needed demographic data and document the contributions to agricultural production from these farm and ranch operators.

The Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics, whose members represent and are affiliated with industry groups, commodity groups, organizations, universities, corporations, and other data users, are providing valuable input during each five year planning cycle for the census of agriculture. The Committee will be meeting periodically over the next several years to review and discuss content and other relevant issues for planning and conducting the next census of agriculture. There will be a limited number of performance targets established during the planning and re-engineering cycle.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Target	FY 2003 Actual
5.1.1 Number of new and enhanced statistics collected in the census of agriculture needed for evaluating emerging issues in the agricultural sector.	16	16	No target set	-
• Response rate for the 2002 Census of Agriculture is equal to or higher than 1997.	-	-	86%	88%
• Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives.	narrative	narrative	narrative	narrative
• The number of cooperative agreements and MOU's between NASS and outside partners.	167	162	160	168

Table 6: Annual Performance Goals and Indicators for the Census of Agriculture

Data Assessment: The performance data for number of new and enhanced statistics collected in the census of agriculture is prepared in Headquarters offices in Washington, D.C. by the staff of the Census and Survey Division. NASS works closely with USDA's Small Farms Coordination, Office of the Under Secretary for REE, to provide statistical and demographic information, as needed, relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives. Number of cooperative agreements and MOU's between NASS and outside partners are maintained by the Budget and Administrative Staff, Office of the Deputy Administrator for Field Operations.

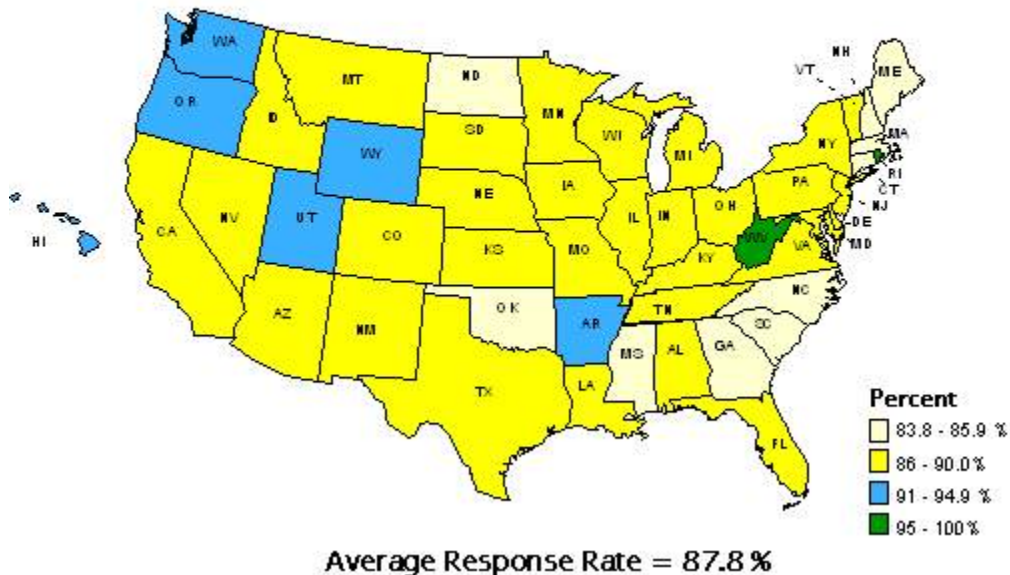
Analysis of Results: NASS met or exceeded each of its 2003 targets for this performance goal. A brief analysis is provided for each of the indicators for this performance goal:

- *New and Enhanced Statistics for the Census of Agriculture:* The quality of the statistics collected for the census of agriculture improved in basic four areas and are identified as: Production, Supply, Economic, and Demographic. Sixteen new and altered statistics were defined. For 2003, no target was needed.
- *Census of Agriculture Response Rate:* The 2002 Census of Agriculture was conducted using a combination of collection methods including mail, telephone, and personal enumeration. More than 2.8 million potential farm operators were contacted with an overall response rate of 88 percent. A contributing factor to the improved response was a widely used toll-free call system which routed callers to a call center. NASS established 4 calling centers which provided consistent and reliable information about "how to report." The operators assisted approximately 250,000 callers with their census report, roughly 100,000 more than the previous census. A large portion of these calls resulted in identifying non-farms (typically nonrespondents). In addition, NASS developed a publicity strategy that targeted groups or regions which typically have lower response rates and/or coverage.

## State Response Rate

### 2002 Census of Agriculture

October 5, 2003



- *Small Farm and Minority Farmer Issues:* NASS continues to evaluate its List Frame updating procedures to ensure coverage of the Nation's small farms and ranches and minority operators of farms and ranches. NASS has become increasingly aware of the large number of refugees who are engaged in farming and agribusiness across the United States. NASS is working with an inter-departmental group and Community Based Organizations to identify farm operators and add them to the List Frame. The NASS List Frame serves as the foundation for the annual NASS survey program and the Census of Agriculture which is conducted every five years.

NASS staff are engaged in collaboration with other USDA agencies and the Office of Outreach, Land-Grant Institutions, and Community Based Organizations to increase the 2002 Census of Agriculture, response rate of small farms and ranches and minority operators of farms and ranches. This effort was highly successful. NASS continues to assist the USDA Office of Outreach and the Farm Service Agency in their efforts to implement the Minority Farm Register, which was recommended in the 1997 Civil Right Action Team (CRAT) report. The register will be a voluntary list of minority farm operators and /or owners and is being created to provide an additional tool for USDA to comply with Section 10708 of the 2002 Farm Bill: Transparency and Accountability for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers.

- *Cooperative Agreements and MOUs:* NASS had a total of 125 memoranda of understanding and 43 cooperative agreements with State Departments of Agriculture, land grant colleges and universities, and other cooperators. These unique State-Federal cooperative agreements are established each year in order to facilitate work to conduct special State (or multi-State) surveys and services in cooperation with State Departments of Agriculture, land-grant colleges and universities, and industry groups by the SSOs. In FY 2003, work included 148 special surveys covering such varied issues as customer service, farm safety and health, pesticide use, county estimates, nursery/horticulture, farm finance, and specialty crops, down 16 from 164 surveys conducted in 2002. The extremely heavy workload of the census of agriculture did not allow as much external survey work to be done.

Survey Type	Number of Surveys
Seeds, Field Crops, Vegetables	27
Fruits and Nuts	13
County Estimates	15
Cropping Practices, Pesticide Use	6
Livestock, Poultry	7
Safety, Health, Disability	4
Nursery and Floriculture	6
Farm Finance, Land Values	13
Miscellaneous	57
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>148</b>

Table 7: Special SSO Surveys Conducted in FY 2003

Current Fiscal Year Performance:

- Census of Agriculture:* In the fall of 2003, the 2002 Census of Agriculture data analysis and review was underway, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Territories (excluding American Samoa). Preliminary census results were released in February 2004, followed by the final U.S. and State releases later in the Spring. Final 2002 Census of Agriculture data at the national, state and county levels will be released on June 3, 2004. That report will provide first time facts about organic crop acreage and sales, production contracts, farm computer and Internet use, plus the broader, full range of traditional census data including land use and ownership; acres irrigated; crop acreage and quantities harvested; livestock and poultry inventories; value of products sold; value of production contracts; participation in Federal farm programs; and, market value of land and buildings. The census of agriculture is currently conducted every five years; the first was conducted in conjunction with the 1840 population census.
- Small Farm and Minority Farmer Issues:* NASS will continue to work closely with USDA's Small Farm Coordination Office in assisting the Department in addressing small and minority farmer issues as they arise.
- Cooperative Agreements and MOUs:* NASS continually works to maintain or increase the number of agreements and MOUs each year with its external cooperators by providing high quality statistical work and services.

Program Evaluation: NASS partnered with the Census Bureau's National Processing System to conclude an evaluation of the "Data Capture History and Post-Analysis". The 2002 census was the first to use automated data capture (ADC) as the primary means of data capture. This evaluation provides an in-depth review of more than 3 years of preparation, research, planning, and production activity.

STRATEGIC GOAL 6: FULLY UTILIZE THE CAPABILITIES OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO PROVIDE TOP QUALITY AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS AND SERVICE.

The unique and complementary capabilities, multiple disciplines, and diverse funding mechanisms of the REE agencies enable the mission area to call on the most appropriate individuals and institutions to address particular problems. REE management seeks to capture the strengths of these complementaries to maximize return on the Federal investment in research, education, extension, and statistics.

This management goal describes how NASS will coordinate its activities to achieve program goals, as well as focus on those activities for which cross-agency participation will yield the most benefit. NASS is committed to ensuring that civil rights concerns are addressed in all aspects of its work: program planning, development, management, and delivery. Each individual has equal opportunity to gain skills and experience that will help him or her contribute to the NASS mission while also pursuing their individual long-range career goals. NASS must also equitably and fairly serve all of its customers, making a special effort to reach historically underserved customers.

On a reimbursable basis NASS lends technical expertise, conducts surveys, performs services and provides statistical consultation to other Federal agencies, State governments, and private organizations. NASS provides support and assistance in the areas of questionnaire and sample design, data collection and editing, analysis of survey results, and training. NASS also provides technical consultation, support, and assistance for international programs under participating agency service agreements. Statistics generated meet special needs not covered by the national agricultural statistics program. In addition, statistical consultation by NASS staff members contributes to improvements in the overall quality and consistency of statistical information produced for the needs of other organizations.

Objective 6.1: Respond to customer needs and provide excellent service.

NASS's customer service pledge is to respond to each individual customer in a courteous and helpful manner; accurately direct customers to the person or agency with the appropriate information; provide complete, accurate, plain language information about NASS programs, products, and services; make it easy to find and order reports; deliver promised information promptly; explain why and/or when NASS cannot meet a customer's request; and deliver services without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or family status.

With the steady increase in demand for agricultural information and the steady decline in the number of commercial farmers, NASS's concern with respondent burden issues has never been more critical. NASS continues to fortify relationships with trade and producer associations at the national and local levels to increase support and publicity of agricultural surveys. NASS provides these associations with news stories and marketing materials to use in communication with their members. NASS has centralized marketing and public relations activities to streamline processes, achieve better quality results, and conserve resources by eliminating duplicate efforts on the part of SSOs. The primary focus has been enhanced, increased communication of survey benefits through the media, both in writing and in person. NASS has prepared several communications packages for SSOs to use when promoting specific surveys to producers and their associations. These packages include electronic presentations, media releases, talking points, brochures, public service announcements, suggested interview questions for reporters, presurvey letters, and other tools to communicate the purpose and, most importantly, benefits of agricultural surveys.

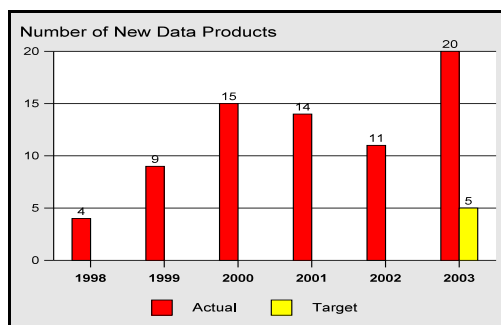


Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Target	FY 2003 Actual
6.1.1 Customer service rating for courtesy and professionalism of NASS personnel in dealing with customers.	85	- <sup>1</sup>	85	Not measured <sup>1</sup>
• Number of new data products and services produced to fulfill customer requests.	14	11	5	20
• American Customer Satisfaction Index measures NASS's customer satisfaction with NASS reports, products, and services.	72	- <sup>1</sup>	72	Not measured <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> American Customer Satisfaction Survey was not conducted

Table 8: Annual Performance Goals and Indicators for Customer Service and New Data Products and Services

Charts: NASS sets annual performance targets for the number of new products and services. The FY 2003 actual performance surpassed the FY 2003 target.



Data Assessment: The data in Chart 2 for new data products are based on Agency information maintained internally in Headquarters offices in Washington, D.C., by the Marketing and Information Services Office (MISO). It is reviewed for consistency, completeness, and accuracy. The American Customer Satisfaction Survey was not conducted in 2003.

Chart 2: Number of New Data Products

Analysis of Results: NASS exceeded its performance goal for new products and services and customer satisfaction. During FY 2003, NASS introduced 20 new data products and services to address additional data needs exceeding its target. A brief analysis is provided for each of the indicators for this performance goal:

- *New Data Products and Services:* Twenty new data products and services included the following:
  - A new potato size and grade table for major potato producing States was published in the January 2003 *Potato Stocks* report. This new data series was added at the request of the potato industry. Size and grade measurements come from potatoes harvested in Potato Objective Yield Survey sample plots. Potatoes are sized and graded according to accepted U.S. fresh grading standards.
  - NASS policy regarding the utilization of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) certified acreage information was updated during the 2003 crop season. NASS reviewed FSA certified acreage information for the October 10 *Crop Production* report and updated results from this review, to planted and harvested acreage for spring planted crops, were published in the October *Crop Production* report. Previously, FSA information was reviewed in late December along with end of year survey information. This policy was changed since FSA certified acreage data are now available nearly two months earlier than in the past. NASS will continue to use FSA certified acreage information to update rice and cotton acreage during the September *Crop Production* report.

- Revisions of previous year peanut acreage, yield, and production estimates are now published in the October *Crop Production* report. NASS changed the timing from the April *Crop Production* report due to the present longer marketing period for peanuts. Additionally, market year average prices for peanuts were moved from the April *Agricultural Prices* report to the August *Agricultural Prices* report.
- The burley tobacco estimation program was redefined in 2003 and NASS no longer forecasts burley tobacco acreage, yield, and production in the December *Crop Production* report. Final production estimates continue to be published for all types of tobacco in the annual *Crop Production* report each January.
- NASS has worked closely with the Economic Research Service (ERS) to evaluate the economic statistics programs and data needs. Integration and expansion of the economic surveys will reduce respondent burden; ensure definitions are consistent; and provide greater detailed information on the state of the economy for the agriculture sector, field crop chemical use, and agricultural production practices. The larger sample size will enable release of data for the top 15 agricultural production States based on cash receipts. NASS has developed enhancements to the existing processing system to facilitate the handling of a larger sample. This will include an electronic tool to review edit results. The enhanced processing system will also capture pertinent information to study editing processes and to evaluate mail vs. face-to-face interview modes on quality and completeness.
- The Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) is USDA's primary vehicle for collecting data about production practices, inputs, farm costs, and financial conditions. This year's release of the *Farm Production Expenditures*, which is a product of the ARMS, had expanded Economic Sales Classes for 2002 and 2001.
- A special report titled *Corn, Soybeans, and Wheat Sold Through Marketing Contracts 2001 Summary* was released February 2003. This report, also a product from ARMS, included information on marketing contracts at the U.S. and Regional levels by Economic Sales Classes and by Farm Production Region. It was developed to help identify changes in the structure of the Nation's grain and oilseed markets.
- In August 2003, the annual *Agricultural Land Values* and *Agricultural Cash Rents* reports were combined into one report, *Agricultural Land Values and Cash Rents*. This allows data users to more easily access these important economic data series.
- Beginning in January 2003, the *Livestock Slaughter* and *Poultry Slaughter* reports were moved to an 8:30 a.m. release time at the request of the industries.
- NASS added a new table to the June 2003 *Chickens and Eggs* report for table egg layers in flocks of 75,000 and above, by Region and U.S. Included in the table are inventory and eggs laid per 100 layers on the reference date of December 1 of the preceding year.
- The weekly *Broiler Hatchery* report now includes Louisiana data separate from the combined States category. The change was made in the May 14, 2003, report.
- Weekly and annual totals, for broiler-type chick eggs set and chicks placed by State and U.S., are now available in *Quick stats* on the NASS website back to 1981.
- A special report, *U.S. Broiler Industry Structure*, was issued November 2002. This report contains a summary of the changes in the structure of the U.S. broiler industry from 1934 to present.
- The monthly *Cold Storage* releases include a new data series for chicken parts. Chicken parts, which were published as a total, are now broken out by type. The new categories are: breasts

and breast meat; drumsticks; leg quarters; thigh and thigh quarters; thigh meat; wings (all products); and paws and feet.

- Color class definitions were changed in the annual *Mink* report for 2002 based on industry requests. Data under the new color class definitions were published for pelt products and females bred to produce kits.
- The monthly *Catfish Processing* report now includes data on fresh catfish fillet exports. This began in April 2003 with the release of January and February data.
- Beginning in April 2003, the monthly *Dairy Products* release now includes data for U.S. sour cream production.
- The monthly *Cattle on Feed* report was modified in February 2003 to exclude calculation and publication of the historical 7-State total. The 7-State data can still be calculated by summing up the totals from the individual States within the monthly *Cattle on Feed* report. U.S. monthly estimates have been available since 1996.
- The *Monthly Hogs and Pigs* report was discontinued due to industry concerns about the consistency of the estimates and the need for those resources to strengthen the quarterly hog estimating program.
- Permanent procedures were developed and implemented, as part of the monthly Agricultural Yield Survey process, that will allow data for changes in harvested areas to be collected and summarized, when warranted by extreme weather events. These procedures were utilized during 2003 to determine potential changes in row crop harvested areas due to drought conditions in five States and flooding in one State. The process is now flexible and can provide data users timely updates to harvested area, resulting in more accurate production forecasts.
- *American Customer Service (ACSI) Ratings*: The American Customer Satisfaction Survey was not conducted in 2002, therefore no performance data was available for analysis.

#### Current Fiscal Year Performance:

- *New Data Products and Services*: NASS will continue to strive to meet the demand for new data products for its customers and to provide outreach materials with details of its statistical programs in step with other USDA agencies. Activities associated with conducting the census of agriculture will contribute to the development of new data products and service over the next several years.
- *American Customer Service (ACSI) Ratings*: As previously discussed in this report, NASS intends to use the ACSI for assessing implementation of future quality initiatives. Plans are currently underway to conduct this survey in FY 2004, if adequate budget resources are available.

Program Evaluations: No program evaluations were conducted.

Objective 6.2: Employ a diversified and technically competent staff, treat employees fairly and with respect, foster leadership, and manage resources efficiently.

NASS envisions itself as the acknowledged statistical leader for those seeking counsel, survey services, or data products regarding agricultural and rural statistics -- a standing achieved by consistently demonstrating sound methodology, effective resource utilization, and a focus on customer service. NASS continually strengthens its technical, managerial, and leadership capabilities of employees who are recognized for their leadership and excellence in USDA as evidenced by the continuous improvements in productivity and efficiency.

The Agency continues to recruit people already possessing many of the skills needed to perform at a high level. The increased specialization that new employees bring to NASS facilitates fresh ideas and thinking about how NASS currently operates. NASS continues to encourage advancing all employees' technical skills through training at a variety of different levels. Employees must be able to function as a team. They must become knowledgeable in a multitude of Agency activities and ongoing training is necessary for employees to adequately perform their work and meet the ever-growing demands of their jobs. Leaders for the future must be coaches, trainers, and networkers. Employees must feel they are respected and that management will listen and respond to employee input.

NASS employees are strengthened by the diversity of their cultures and backgrounds, the enjoyment of a challenging career, and their unsurpassed level of dedication to the Agency. The quality of NASS's agricultural estimates are strengthened by employing, training, and supporting a diverse workforce that fosters creativity, ingenuity, and efficiency in the agricultural statistics program.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Target	FY 2003 Actual
6.2.1 Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce.	72	56	67	69
• Percent of employees who have low/very low morale.	21%	-	No target set	-
• Number of substantiated EEO complaints by NASS employees.	0	0	0	0
• Percent of NASS budget appropriations spent on training and career development for NASS employees.	2.7% <sup>1</sup>	3.1%	3.0%	2.0%

<sup>1</sup> Revised

Table 9: Annual Performance Goals and Indicators for NASS Staff

Charts and Tables: NASS sets annual performance targets for measuring minority recruitment, EEO complaints, employee morale, and training expenditures. The FY 2003 actual performance for the number of substantiated EEO complaints and training expenditures met the FY 2003 targets. The minority recruitment target was met and the organizational climate survey was not conducted, therefore there were no performance indicators.

Year	NASS Employees with Low or Very Low Morale	Target Percent
1997	24%	
1998	22% <sup>1</sup>	
1999	24%	
2000	26% <sup>1</sup>	
2001	21%	
2002	-	
2003	-	No target set

<sup>1</sup> HRME data

Table 10: NASS Employee Morale

Year	Total Number of Formal EEO Complaints Filed	Actual Number of Substantiated EEO Complaints	Target Number of Substantiated EEO Complaints
1996	3	0	
1997	5	0	
1998	10	0	
1999	6	0	
2000	3	0	
2001	5	0	
2002	6	0	
2003	5	0	0

Table 11: Number of Substantiated EEO Complaints

Year	Total Training Costs (Dollars)	NASS Budget (Dollars)	Actual Percent	Target Percent
1996	2,170,500	90,611,089	2.4%	
1997	3,363,005	110,363,949	3.0%	
1998	3,551,673	127,382,714	2.8%	
1999	4,231,224	114,091,733	3.7%	
2000	3,778,911	111,152,374	3.4%	
2001	3,249,213	120,050,268	2.7% <sup>1</sup>	
2002	3,882,321	126,577,295	3.1%	
2003	3,115,405	155,886,812	2.0%	3.0%

<sup>1</sup> Revised

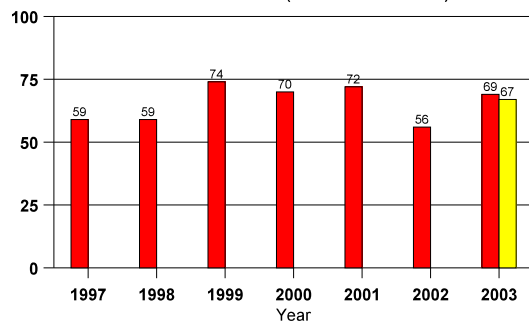
Table 12: Annual Training Budget Expenditures

Data Assessment: Personnel information for the 2003 data is compiled by the NASS Human Resource Services Office and the Director of Civil Rights using the National Finance Center (NFC) Personnel System and other administrative information maintained internally by the Civil Rights Director. Information for the NASS Organizational Climate Survey is maintained internally by NASS.

Analysis of Results: NASS met its performance goal in employing a diversified and technically competent staff and treating employees fairly and with respect. Targets for EEO complaints and training were met or exceeded. There was no information available to measure employee morale. A brief analysis is provided for each of the indicators for this performance goal:

- *Staff Diversity:* Employment and Agency diversity information for FY 2003 was obtained from the NFC. During the past several years, NASS has been addressing any existing underrepresentation within the Agency for the following four most populous occupational series (those having 50 or more employees): GS-1530, Agricultural Statistician; GS-1529, Mathematical Statistician; GS-2210, Information Technology Specialist (previously known as the GS-334, Computer Specialist job series); and GS-1531, Statistical Assistant.

Chart 3 - Women and Minorities Hired (Percent of New Hires)



NASS continued to make strides in recruiting and hiring a diverse group of new employees in the four major job series. Of the 39 new employees hired in FY 2003, 69 percent of the new hires were women and minorities. Under the 2003 USDA Summer Employment Program, NASS hired 39 student assistants of whom 24 were women and minorities, representing 62 percent of the total. In FY 2003, the Agency held a week-long session of the "NASS New Employee Orientation" on November

13-20, 2002 for all new employee recently hired. The NASS Civil Rights Director is always included at these sessions since he makes presentations on a variety of topics dealing with equal employment opportunity and civil rights, such as sexual harassment, affirmative action, the EEO Counseling Program, the EEO complaint process, among others.

Most of the new employees were recruited by State Statisticians in the SSOs through local colleges and universities, with special emphasis placed on recruiting qualified students from the 1890 Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

NASS is planning to continue using internship programs as its primary program for hiring and recruiting a diverse workforce. Additional detailed information on EEO and Civil Rights can be found in the NASS FY 2003 EEO and Civil Rights Accomplishment Report.

- *Employee Morale:* There were no performance indicators for measuring employee morale during FY 2003.
- *Substantiated EEO Complaints:* The actual number of substantiated EEO complaints filed is based on complaints that are reviewed and accepted for formal investigation under the Departmental EEO complaint process and which subsequently result in a finding of discrimination against a NASS management official or employee. There were a total of five individual formal EEO complaints filed by NASS employees in FY 2003. Only one of these complaints was accepted by the USDA Office of Civil Rights for investigation by a contract investigator. The remaining four EEO complaints were still pending acceptance for official investigation or rejection at the USDA Office of Civil Rights at the end of FY 2003. The low number of EEO complaints demonstrates NASS's commitment to Civil Rights.
- *Training:* The total training dollars expended in 2003 was 2.0 percent of NASS's total budget. This was below the target for reasons associated with a significantly higher funding level for the 2002 Census of Agriculture. Also, due to the workload employees, only some training was postponed until after the Census of Agriculture is complete. However, NASS still conducted broad range of training that included several Leadership and technical training in the follow categories: Census Data Collection; Census Analysis; Blaise Programming; County Estimates; File Servers; BRIO software training; SAS Training; Train-the-Trainer; NASDA Supervisory and Data Collection; Executive Training; Executive and Manager Coaching; Leaders, Management and Action Learning Sessions; SSO Team Building; Regional Statistical Assistant Training; Deputy State Statistician Training; New Employee Orientation; Retirement and Pre-Retirement Planning; Security; and Civil Rights. NASS continues to use net conferencing and teleconferencing in an effort to reduce travel and training costs.

Current Fiscal Year Performance: NASS requires employees to use Individual Development Plans (IDPs) to reflect their career goals within the Agency's career paths and develop innovative and flexible training programs to meet individual needs. NASS pays training costs for employees who wish to develop their skills and build experience and versatility through staff mobility. NASS strengthens the technical, managerial, and leadership capabilities of employees by creating a cadre of needed specialists with a series of technical career tracks, aligning training and job opportunities with employees' technical and managerial career goals, developing training programs to align with changing program needs, and striving to employ a diversified and technically competent staff. NASS is planning to conduct civil rights training in coordination with USDA's ongoing efforts along with normally scheduled supervisory and management training in FY 2004.

NASS Headquarters and field office staff will attend and participate in numerous national and State industry and commodity association meetings and conferences throughout FY 2004. NASS will continue to make extensive use of cooperative agreements with the State Departments of Agriculture nationwide and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) in supporting the NASS statistical programs, at both the local and national levels. NASS continues its technical consulting efforts within the Department and other government agencies, as well as internationally with countries in Latin America, including Mexico, Central and South American, and Eastern Europe and China.

- *Staff Diversity:* Most of the new employees are recruited by State Statisticians in the SSOs through local colleges and universities, with special emphasis placed on recruiting qualified students from the 1890 Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- *Employee Morale:* There were no performance indicators for FY 2003. NASS Organizational Climate Surveys are typically administered every 2-3 years. Previous climate surveys were done in 1988, 1994, 1997, 1999 and 2001.
- *Substantiated EEO Complaints:* NASS is committed to Civil Rights activities in the Agency and the Department.
- *Training:* Training will continue to be a high priority in NASS and it is an important component in maintaining its leadership as the premier Agency in agricultural statistics around the world.

Program Evaluations: In FY 2003, NASS, in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Service's Human Resources Division, conducted on-site Human Resources Management Evaluations (HRMEs) involving the Agency's Michigan, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota State Statistical Offices (SSO's). At Headquarters, on-site HRMEs were also conducted within the Agency's Census and Survey Division, Statistics Division, and the Information Technology Division. Each of these on-site evaluations, among other things, reviewed and assessed the status of equal employment opportunity and civil rights at each location.

Objective 6.3: Ensure an effective information resource management system to maximize productive capability and facilitate communication for employees.

Clear and concise communication throughout NASS is essential to the general operation, efficiency, and responsiveness of the Agency. Through use of its information technology and resource management systems, NASS continually strives to promote government efficiency by its employees and maintain information that is easily accessible by its customers. Employee and public confidence in the security of its electronic information systems and processes are also essential for maximizing employee productivity and facilitating communication within NASS and with its customers. In the future, this includes expanding NASS's capabilities for allowing individuals or entities the option to submit information or transact with NASS electronically, when practicable, and to maintain records electronically, when practicable. NASS's use of information technology is a major means of supporting the USDA goals to improve organizational productivity, accountability, and performance, and to ensure that USDA provides fair and equitable service to all customers and upholds the civil rights of its employees. Employee workstations are equipped with connections to the NASS WAN, e-mail, electronic bulletin boards, the Internet, the Intranet, and a host of software applications that have significantly enhanced communications and improved organizational productivity, accountability, and performance.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Target	FY 2003 Actual
6.3.1 Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that the physical environment makes it easy to do their job well.	70%	-	No target set	-
• Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that they are kept informed about issues affecting their jobs.	55%	-	No target set	-
• Accumulated number of new GPEA eGovernment (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.	3	6	10	6

Table 13: Annual Performance Goals and Indicators for GPRA eGovernment Products and Services.

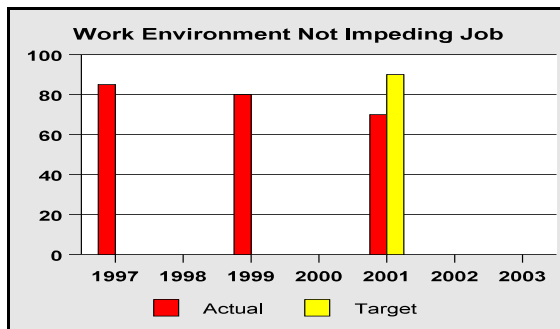
Charts and Tables: NASS sets annual performance targets for tracking employee ratings of their work environment; their opinion for being kept informed about issues affecting their job; and tracking the number of e-Government products and services. The FY 2002 actual performance for zero tolerance for computer security breaches and the targeted number of e-Government products and services met their targets; there were no targets established during 2002 for employee ratings for their physical environment or their opinion about being kept informed about issues that affect their jobs.

Year	Number of NASS Reports and Releases	Due Dates Missed Due to Equipment Failures	Target
1998	425	1	
1999	419	0	
2000	425	0	
2001	481	0	
2002	508	0	
2003	487	0	0

Table 14: Number of Equipment Failures

Data Assessment: The data in Table 16 for the number of report due dates missed due to equipment failure are based on Agency information maintained internally in Headquarters offices in Washington, D.C., by MISO and is reviewed for consistency, completeness, and accuracy. As indicated in Chart 4 and Table 13, there were not any Organizational Climate Survey or HRME data available to report employee ratings. The Organizational Climate Survey is conducted about every 2-3 years.

Chart 4: Employees Work Environment



Analysis of Results: NASS met its performance goal in ensuring an effective information resource management system that maximizes productive capability and facilitates communication for employees. However, there were no results available for evaluating NASS work environment or how well employees are kept informed. A brief analysis is provided for each of the indicators for this performance goal:

- *Physical Work Environment:* There are no performance indicators to measure the physical work environment for FY 2003. As stated previously, indicators are generated from the Organizational Climate Survey when it is conducted.
- *Employees Kept Informed:* There are no performance indicators to measure how well employees were kept informed for FY 2003. As stated previously, indicators are generated from the Organizational Climate Survey when it is conducted.
- *eGovernment Products and Services:* A total of 6 eGovernment products have been implemented in NASS to date. NASS, prior to FY 2003, began collecting Weekly Crop Progress Survey data via the web, Monthly Cold Storage inventory data for extreme operators via email, and Cotton Ginnings Survey data via the web. A web Grape Survey was developed and successfully implemented in NASS's Texas office. A Dairy Products Prices web instrument that captures and transmits data internally between NASS State offices and Headquarters was implemented. Additionally, NASS's Career Opportunities Development Team developed a web survey instrument



for use on NASS's intranet to collect information from NASS employees. In FY 2002, to accelerate implementation of eGovernment products and to support GPEA goals, NASS developed the specifications for a new Electronic Data Reporting (EDR) System that would allow NASS to store questions and produce both paper and Web forms. This system was designed to produce and maintain instruments in an efficient and standardized manner. There were no new web products in FY 2003 as NASS decided not to create any additional eGovernment products on the older system that would require a redesign for the new system.

By October 21, 2003, over 20 surveys were in the EDR System and ready for deployment. NASS had carefully selected the surveys and a deployment plan to adequately test the system while minimizing the risk of respondents having a negative experience. The first implementation dates of these surveys will be in FY 2004.

#### Current Fiscal Year Performance:

- *Physical Work Environment:* Wing 4 of the South Building modernization and renovation was completed for occupancy in 2003. The California SSO completed its move to newly remodeled GSA space in December 2002 in Sacramento, California. The third year for the annual computer replacement schedule was approved to replace the oldest equipment based on the 2003 PC inventory analysis.
- *Employees Kept Informed:* NASS Senior Management plans to use the results of the 2001 Organizational Climate Survey to assess needs for improvements regarding how employees are kept informed. In doing this, Senior Management created the NASS Communications Team in May 2002 who made recommendations and redesigned the NASSnet Intranet Web site and reviewed how information is communicated in the Agency. Continued improvements in the organization have been ongoing.
- *eGovernment Products and Services:* In FY 04, NASS will implement 28 external and 2 internal to USDA Web based surveys. Most of the external surveys are repetitive (weekly, monthly, or quarterly) by design to maximize the respondent's opportunity to use electronic reporting. The external surveys include: 4 peanut stocks surveys, 3 off farm rice stocks surveys, a mushroom, a cucumber, and a sugarcane survey, 4 prices received for crops surveys, 4 dairy product price surveys, 2 fruit and juice storage surveys, agricultural labor surveys, 2 chicken hatchery for broilers surveys, a breeder's pullet placement survey, a catfish processor survey, a bee and honey survey, a mink survey, a catfish processor survey and a livestock slaughter survey. The internal USDA surveys include a USDA Organizational Cultural Survey for 3 agencies and a NASS FY05 Needs Assessment Survey. The cumulative total web products for FY 2004 will be 34.

Program Evaluations: No program evaluations were completed in 2003.

Objective 6.4: Ensure an effective security architecture which does not impede employee access and prevents unauthorized access by both employee and outside entities.

Employee and public confidence in the security of NASS electronic information systems and processes are essential for maximizing employee productivity internal to NASS and with its customers. In the future, this includes expanding NASS's capability for allowing individuals and entities the option of submitting information or transacting with NASS electronically, and to maintain records electronically, when practicable.

NASS collects, processes, and maintains sensitive respondent information. NASS is entrusted with ensuring this information is secure and unavailable to unauthorized access. NASS uses a security architecture to restrict access. NASS employs the latest security techniques through the utilization of enterprise firewalls, routers equipped with firewalls, Departmental intrusion detection at our perimeter, and user accounts and associated passwords for all NASS systems. NASS is implementing an access method requiring strong authentication.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Target	FY 2003 Actual
6.4.1 Departmental security rating <sup>3</sup> for NASS	n/a	Red <sup>1</sup> Green <sup>2</sup>	Green	Red <sup>1</sup> Green <sup>2</sup>
• Number of computer security breaches resulting in disclosure of confidential or loss/modification of sensitive data.	0	0	0	0
• Percent of employees receiving "Security Awareness" training.	n/a	100%	100%	100%

<sup>1</sup>NASS security status rating. <sup>2</sup>NASS security progress rating. <sup>3</sup>USDA Cyber Security instituted a new assessment and rating system during 2002, described in 'Departmental Security Rating' section.

Table 15: Annual Performance Goals and Indicators for Computer Security

Data Assessment: The data in Table 15 for computer security performance measures are based on Agency information maintained internally in Headquarters offices in Washington, D.C., by the NASS Computer Security Officers assigned to the Office of the Director for Information Technology Division. It is reviewed for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS met its performance goal in ensuring an effective security architecture and management system that maximizes productive capability and facilitates communication for employees. There were no computer security breaches resulting in the disclosure of confidential or loss/modification of sensitive data. Computer training was conducted for security awareness. A brief analysis is provided for each of the indicators for this performance goal:

! *Departmental Security Rating:* The USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer, Cyber Security Office, implemented a new Cyber Security Assessment and Rating system in FY 2002. Their system is based on NIST and OMB standards. Each agency completed assessments along with the GISRA reports and were given a numeric rating and color code of Red, Yellow, or Green for that initial assessment. Most agencies, as well as the Department as a whole, received a Red rating for the initial assessment. From that assessment, each agency was required to complete a Plan Of Action with Milestones (POAM). The status of the plan is reported quarterly. The 'status' rating for security is based on the original assessment. If the status is not Green, then the status will remain the same until all action items from the plan have been completed. The current NASS POAM has milestones listed through FY 2004. As long as the milestones for a particular quarter are met then the 'progress' status for that agency is Green. NASS currently has a 'status' rating of Red, and a 'progress' rating of Green.

! *Computer Security Breaches:* During FY 2003 there was one documented attempted computer security breach. However, this attempt did not gain access to confidential or sensitive data. And there was no effect to, or delay of, the 487 national reports published in the 2003 calendar year.

! *Employee Security Training:* NASS has included security discussions at all training schools and plans to continue this policy. NASS has also begun issuing internal Computer Security Policy Memoranda. As each policy is released an email is sent to every employee with a link to the NASS intranet site with the policies listed for review. A binder with paper copies of the policies is maintained in each Branch, Staff, and State office. Also the Computer Security Staff communicates regularly with all staff via email, and a Security Discussion Area in Lotus Notes.

Current Fiscal Year Performance:

! *Departmental Security Rating:* NASS continues to use and follow its POAM and is meeting the milestone target dates. Current fiscal year projects include a stronger Intrusion Detection System (IDS) and implementation of the Virtual Private Network (VPN) solution for all telecommuters. NASS works closely with the Department's Office of Cyber Security to ensure that a strong and compliant security architecture is maintained which minimizes any duplication of services. For example, NASS has taken advantage of Departmental contracts for a software vulnerability patch vendor and intends to utilize formal certification contracts.

! *Computer Security Breaches*: There have been no documented computer security breaches resulting in disclosure of confidential data or the loss/modification of confidential or sensitive data.

! *Employee Security Training*: NASS is continuing to include security discussions at all training schools. NASS participates in the Departmental agreement with the 'GoLearn' Federal training site. When available, NASS intends to participate in a Departmental contract to provide specialized Security Awareness Training by job function, as recommended by NIST.

Program Evaluations: Along with other USDA Agencies, NASS underwent a security audit from the General Accounting Office (GAO) in 2003 and received suggestions for new policies and improvements in FY 2004 and 2005. NASS is participating in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mandated Certification and Accreditation activities in FY 2004.