

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS) FY 2004 and Revised FY 2003 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLANS

Introduction

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements, NASS presents its FY 2004 Annual Performance Plan (APP) which includes updates to the NASS FY 2003 Performance Plan integrated with USDA's Department-wide Annual Performance Plan. NASS also updated and submitted its long-range GPRA strategic plan for FY 2000-2005 in September 2000. This APP reflects changes made in the Agency's revised GPRA Strategic Plan.

This year's APP reflects an update that includes:

- A new indicator for the 2002 Census of Agriculture was added to Goal 5; release of the 2002 Census of Agriculture in February 2004.

Performance Plan, Legislative, and Funding Highlights

The NASS APP serves as a blueprint for program objectives and performance goals. The NASS APP is also closely framed by the six Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area goals outlined as follows:

- To promote an agricultural food and fiber system that is productive and highly competitive in the global economy.
- To promote a safe food system and a secure agricultural production system.
- To provide a healthy population through improved nutrition.
- To foster an agricultural system that protects natural resources and the environment.
- To increase the capacity of communities, families, and individuals to enhance their economic well-being and quality of life.
- Effectively marshal the diverse capabilities and resources of the four REE agencies.

NASS output and outcome-oriented objectives support each REE Goal included in this plan. However, Goal 3 is supported by NASS's reimbursable work, not by appropriated Federal funding. The linkage of the NASS objectives to USDA's Strategic Plan 2000-2005 are outlined in the NASS Linkage of Goals to the Departmental Goals included in the NASS Strategic Plan 2000-2005, and are discussed in this Plan as well. Appendix A outlines the verification and validation components for each of the performance indicators in this plan and describes the data sources, verification methodologies, and any data limitations. This plan was prepared by Federal employees.

Background

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 (ASB). NASS is the primary statistical agency in the Department 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 also responsible for conducting the census of agriculture program that provides comprehensive, county-level 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 the Department and are provided to other agencies in their analyses of programs, policy development, etc., and are also used in the development and monitoring of annual performance measures. Externally, NASS provides the basic agricultural and rural data needs of 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 current annual statistics program and the census of agriculture program are complemented by its statistical research and service program. This component works to improve statistical survey and census methods and to test advanced technology for timely and cost efficient production of high quality agricultural statistics. The performance of NASS research is reflected in the same performance goals and indicators used to evaluate the outcomes of the statistical program for annual agricultural statistics and the census. All appropriated funds, including research, are associated with the goals, objectives, and performance measures for the GPRA program activities in this APP.

NASS FUNDING AND STAFFING LEVELS FOR ANNUAL PERFORMANCE GOALS

G O A L S	FY 2000 Actual		FY 2001 Actual		FY 2002 Targets		FY 2003 Targets		FY 2004 Targets	
	Funding (000)	SYs	Funding (000)	SYs	Funding (000)	SYs	Funding (000)	SYs	Funding (000)	SYs
Goal 1	\$ 63,935	728	\$ 64,486	733	\$ 66,417	740	\$ 71,799	747	\$102,509	882
Goal 2	\$ 3,950	35	\$ 3,950	35	\$ 4,060	35	\$ 4,060	35	\$ 4,060	35
Goal 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goal 4	\$ 4,831	44	\$ 5,631	48	\$ 5,786	48	\$ 10,411	83	\$ 10,411	83
Goal 5	\$ 26,616	220	\$ 26,483	211	\$ 37,440	256	\$ 53,589	373	\$ 44,070	355
Goal 6	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 3,700	11	\$ 25,200	26
Total	\$ 99,333	1027	\$100,550	1027	\$113,703	1079	\$143,659	1249	\$186,250	1381

Overview

The mission of NASS is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U. S. agriculture. NASS provides the basic agricultural and rural data needs of 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 one of America's biggest industries 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 and rural statistics. NASS also performs important reimbursable survey work for other Federal, State, and private organizations as well as provides technical assistance for agricultural statistics programs in both developed and developing countries.

The assessment of NASS's performance is attained from a number of sources, including explanations from data users and customers as to the value and relevance of NASS products and services. For example, NASS statistics contribute to the orderly functioning of commodity markets. Timeliness is easily measured by the percent of pre-announced due dates met, but the degree to which NASS contributes to the outcome of an efficient commodity market can only be based on the judgement of the data user. Historically, these judgements are obtained through periodic Data User Meetings with NASS customers and data users. In addition to the Data User Meetings, NASS conducts customer service surveys using the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) to measure its performance.

Responses are solicited from subject matter experts, such as public and private economists, the media, farmers, ranchers, and other data users. This information will further enhance the delivery of NASS services and desired outcomes specified in the APP. NASS's unique field office structure enables the agency to have "grass roots" connections and contacts with local data users and data providers in the States. Through these contacts, coupled with the industry meetings, conferences, and participation in agricultural exhibitions, the Agency keeps up to date with the ever-changing and increasing need for statistical information regarding agriculture and related issues.

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.

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.

Producers and other data users need objective, reliable, and timely data with which 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. For example, statistical information is needed to provide accurate data on farmers' total cash receipts which is a component for calculating net farm income. USDA policymakers and Congress use this information to make informed decisions and policies that provide an effective safety net for producers and promote a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy.

The achievement of this goal supports USDA Objective 1.1: Provide an effective safety net and promote a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy; Objective 1.2: Expand market opportunities for U.S. agriculture; and Objective 4.1: Expand job opportunities and improve the standard of living in rural communities.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Target	FY 2003 Target	FY 2004 Target
1.1.1 Percent of NASS reports that are complete and contain no data errors.	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%
• Percent of NASS reports released on time	99.8%	99%	100%	100%	100%
• Percent of total National agricultural production included in the NASS annual statistics program.	96%	92%	100%	95%	95%
• Customer satisfaction rating for accuracy and usefulness of report content.	n/a ²	81	n/a ²	81	n/a ²
• Customer satisfaction rating for timeliness of delivery, frequency, and	n/a ²	77	n/a ²	77	n/a ²

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Target	FY 2003 Target	FY 2004 Target
<p>ease of use of NASS reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release. 	0	0	0	0	0

1/ No actual data available until August 2002

2/ No data available

Means and Strategies: These performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources in FY 2004. Increase funding for restoring and modernizing the core survey and estimation program to meet the needs of data users at an acceptable level of precision, quality, and detail. This provides funding to restore sample sizes for greater statistical defensibility and allow NASS to work more closely with respondents to provide service and secure cooperation; provides staff needed to manage surveys, review, and summarize reported data and prepare and disseminate official estimates; and provides funds for research, training, travel supplies, and other direct expenses related to producing quality statistics.

Increase funding for the development of an annual integrated Locality Based Agricultural county Estimates/Small Area estimation program to improve the statistical integrity of the county data series; standardize the data collection, data processing, analysis, review and summarization across States; and use all available technology, including remote sensing, to provide the best possible county estimates. These county estimates are critical to other USDA agencies such as Risk Management Agency (RMA) and Farm Services Agencies in administering federal farm programs established by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. Funding increases were also included to pay for rising data collection costs for survey interviewers and to begin implementation of a national equine survey which will be conducted on a 5-year cycle with the first publication in 2005. Additionally, funding increases for potato size and grade information will fill a critical data need for U. S. potato producers in negotiating price and enhancing market efficiencies which is imperative to the orderly marketing of the annual fall potato crop.

NASS's strategies for achieving these performance goals include evaluating trends and changes in production agriculture and adjusting NASS's statistics program accordingly; conducting the Agricultural Resources Management Study (ARMS), the census of agriculture, and other NASS program surveys to obtain important statistical data for agricultural commodities as well as for economic and environmental information; conduct statistical research to investigate, evaluate, and use the best statistical models and survey methodologies; systematically analyzing each step of data collection, processing, and estimation of production and price statistics to evaluate the quality, accuracy, timeliness, and frequency of NASS reports; using the ASB to assure objective evaluation of survey indications and to provide unbiased official USDA estimates; issuing timely and accurate statistical reports that are useful for the efficient and effective marketing of U.S. agricultural outputs and in formats most useful to data users; and ensuring the statistics program and security procedures protect impartiality and safeguard the confidentiality of individually reported data and official statistics from improper disclosure.

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. REE research and education strive to protect the health of consumers from harmful microbial or chemical contamination in the food we eat. They also aim to 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.

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.

Essential pest management practices data are provided for analyzing policy and program consequences for producers and consumers. Since 1997, IPM information has been collected to measure the use of pesticides and pest management practices of all farms and all phases of production agriculture. Data are collected on pesticides and other chemicals applied to commodities after they leave the farm. The comprehensive analyses of farm practices are made possible by measures of strategies used by growers as alternatives to chemical use.

Under the Department of Health and Human Services/USDA joint initiative to Ensure the Safety of Imported and Domestic Fruits and Vegetables, NASS is also responsible for the collection of food safety information. The accomplishment of these performance goals support USDA Objective 2.3: Protect the public health by significantly reducing the prevalence of food borne hazards.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Target	FY 2003 Target	FY 2004 Target
2.1.1 Accumulative number of IPM practices used to monitor risk assessment.	24	24	24	24	24
• Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on post-harvest application related to food safety.	8	8	9	9	10
• Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on agricultural practices related to food safety.	30	30	30	30	30

Means and Strategies: These performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources in FY 2004. Strategies for achieving these performance goals include conducting surveys to provide needed pest management practices and chemical use data on types and amounts of chemicals applied on crops, livestock, and farmland by producers and associated economic information to evaluate related economic importance; conducting surveys to measure and report post-harvest chemical applications on agricultural commodities; and conduct a survey to establish a baseline for safe handling practices by fruit and vegetable producers and packing sheds. The information and data are readily available to all who need the pest management practices and chemical use information for business and policy decisions.

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.

Objective 3.1: Provide statistical advice, consultation, and services to USDA and State agencies concerned with health, nutrition, and education when seeking new data or the statistical analysis of existing data for policy decisions.

Means and Strategies: The NASS program supports this goal through its reimbursable program; there are no appropriated resources used for this goal. To meet the goal, NASS provides technical assistance and guidance, as needed, to the REE mission area, other USDA policy officials, and others who may request assistance. NASS serves as a reliable source of statistical expertise and survey capabilities and works closely with customers to ensure statistical needs are met.

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

The integrity of the natural resource base is important to maintaining sustainable agricultural production systems and enhancing and preserving environmental quality. REE programs actively protect the Nation's natural resource base by developing and transferring new technologies and farming practices that balance long-term sustainability goals with improved agricultural competitiveness and economic growth.

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.

Statistically sound information relevant to policy and production decisions associated with land use, chemical use and IPM 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. Annual statistical surveys on agricultural pesticide usage began in 1990 for the major field crops and in alternating years for fruits and vegetables. Chemical use surveys have been expanded to include the nursery and floriculture industry for major states where nurseries and greenhouses are located. The nursery and floriculture industry employs a large number of farm workers making it critical to have information available on pesticide usage to accurately determine the safety and exposure risks of pesticide use, and to assist with targeting pesticide training and education programs.

The achievement of this performance goal supports USDA Objective 3.1: Maintain the productive capacity of the natural resource base for future generations; and 3.2: Protect the quality of the environment.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Target	FY 2003 Target	FY 2004 Target
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.	81	92	92	95	96
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	n/a ¹	15	15	15	15

1/ No data available

Means and Strategies: These performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources in FY 2004. Strategies and resources required to achieve this performance goal include conducting the Agricultural Resources Management Study (ARMS) and other ongoing program 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.

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 the census of agriculture and annual 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 continues 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 Agricultural Statistics, whose members represent and are affiliated with industry groups, commodity groups, organizations, universities, corporations, and other data users, provide valuable input to the census of agriculture. The Committee is meeting to review and discuss content and other relevant issues for planning and conducting the 2002 Census of Agriculture.

The number of cooperative agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between NASS and outside partners will be used as an indicator in measuring the Agency's performance for attaining this goal. The achievement of this goal supports USDA Objective 1.1: Provide an effective safety net and promote a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy, Objective 1.2: Expand market opportunities for U.S. agriculture; and Objective 4.1: Expand job opportunities and improve the standard of living in rural communities.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Target	FY 2003 Target	FY 2004 Target
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	16	n/a ¹	n/a ¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response rate for the 2002 Census of Agriculture is equal to or higher than 1997. • Release of the 2002 Census of Agriculture • Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives. • The number of cooperative agreements and MOU's between NASS and outside partners. 	n/a ¹	n/a ¹	n/a ¹	86%	n/a ¹
	n/a ¹ narrative	n/a ¹ narrative	n/a ¹ narrative	n/a ¹ narrative	Feb 2004 narrative
	163	167	160	160	160

1/ No data available

Means and Strategies: The cyclical downward trend of resources in FY 1999, FY 2000, and FY 2001 occurred after completion of the 1997 Census of Agriculture with the funding cycle increasing in FY 2002 and FY 2003. This is typical of the 5-year census cycle and is normally associated with the winding down of the previous census activities and the start-up of the planning phase for the next census of agriculture. For FY 2004, there is \$10.74 million dollar decrease for the census of agriculture which mark's the beginning of the next cyclical downward trend of census resources.

Major activities in FY 2004 include: finalizing analysis, summarizing, and dissemination of the 2002 Census of Agriculture. The scheduled release data is February 5, 2004. Improvement over the prior census cycles in several areas, including: geo-coding of all census questionnaires to allow for expanded small area estimation in areas such as watersheds and congressional districts; interagency cooperation in developing and publishing animal unit (AU) data at the county level; enhanced list maintenance activities between census data collection years to ensure a high level of coverage; and the development of census based official estimates to efficiently combine on-going survey and census data. Base funding allows for the preparation, mailing, data collection, analysis, summary, and the dissemination of the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey (FRIS) and begin preparations for conducting the Census of Horticultural Specialties in FY 2005.

Strategies for achievement of these performance measures include conducting the census of agriculture to provide detailed data at the national, state, county, and local levels on the characteristics of America's agricultural sector; improving coverage of minority farm operators; providing timely assistance to respondents in completing the form; providing training to all employees on census processes, reporting the results of the census in a timely and user-friendly manner to enable decision making concerning localities across the United States; conducting census of agriculture follow-on surveys and other economic surveys to monitor the economic status of those who operate and work the Nation's farms and ranches which will provide needed economic data for sound policy analysis; involving and maintaining partnerships with State Departments of Agriculture, land-grant colleges and universities, other cooperators, local program supporters, and industries for program development and evaluation.

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 focusing 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. NASS must equitably work with all its employees, regardless of their position. Each individual has equal opportunity to gain skills and experience that will help them contribute to the NASS mission while also pursuing their long-range careers goals. NASS must also equitably and fairly serve all of its customers, making a special effort to reach historically underserved customers.

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

NASS's pledge to its customers is to respond to each customer in a courteous and helpful manner; accurately direct customers to the person or agency with the requested 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, when NASS cannot meet the 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.

The achievement of this goal supports USDA Objective 5.1: Ensure that USDA provides fair and equitable service to all customers and upholds the civil rights of its employees, and Objective 5.2: Improve organizational productivity, accountability, and performance.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Target	FY 2003 Target	FY 2004 Target
6.1.1 Customer service rating for courtesy and professionalism of NASS personnel in dealing with customers.	n/a ¹	85	n/a ¹	85	n/a ¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new data products and services produced to fulfill customer requests. 	15	14	8	5	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Customer Satisfaction Index measures NASS's customer satisfaction with NASS reports, products, and services. 	n/a ¹	72	n/a ¹	72	n/a ¹

1/ No data available

Means and Strategies: Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. Strategies for achievement of this goal include meeting the requirements of the September 1993 Executive Order regarding a customer service plan; responding to customer requests within two working days; promoting public and customer awareness of NASS's role in preparing comprehensive statistics on the Nation's agricultural industry; investigating new ways to enhance the dialogue between NASS and data users regarding the importance of existing data series and needs for new data; introducing new products and services and redesigning existing products to meet changing customer expectations; examining the relevancy of statistical products by profiling the content, scope, frequency, and coverage provided compared to user needs in order to improve customer awareness concerning NASS products and services and to facilitate easy access to official NASS data; enhancing NASS publications by adding more information, graphics, map products, geo-referenced files, and remote sensing images; and being responsive to new data needs for specific components of the agricultural economy (e.g., county-level data, watershed data, rural data, data on subgroups in agriculture, environmental data, data on sustainable agriculture).

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 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. NASS continually strengthens its technical, managerial, and leadership capabilities of employees and are recognized for their leadership and excellence in USDA as evidenced by 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 employee's 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.

The achievement of these performance goals supports USDA Objective 5.1: Ensure that USDA provides fair and equitable service to all customers and upholds the civil rights of its employees, and Objective 5.2: Improve organizational productivity, accountability, and performance.

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Target	FY 2003 Target	FY 2004 Target
6.2.1 Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce.	70%	72%	67%	67%	67%
• Percent of employees who have low/very low morale.	26%	21%	n/a ¹	n/a ¹	18%
• Number of substantiated EEO complaints by NASS employees.	0	0	0	0	0
• Percent of NASS budget appropriations spent on training and career development for NASS employees.	3.4%	2.9%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%

1/ Organizational Climate Survey not conducted.

Means and Strategies: Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. Strategies for achievement of this goal include using the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT) Implementation Plan as a guide to identify factors related to quality, quantity, and timeliness for implementation and enforcement of all applicable policies, rules, memorandums, etc., developed as a result of the CRAT report; supporting cooperative programs with 1890 land-grant, Hispanic, Native American, and other minority educational institutions to assist them in training and to help NASS recruit qualified minorities; utilizing and promoting student assistants, cooperative students, stay-in-school and other employment programs that assist in recruitment of highly qualified, diversified, and technically competent staff; maintaining a healthy and safe environment for employees, with modern equipment and comfortable furnishings; making effective use of flexible work schedules and work locations; developing innovative and flexible training programs to meet individual needs; offering and encouraging statistics, computer, and communication skills training; promoting staff knowledge in the full range of agricultural and rural issues; building experiences and versatility through staff mobility; participating in national and international forums where concepts and methodologies are presented; utilizing cooperative agreements, exchange programs, contracts, and other interactive vehicles with academic, professional, and subject matter experts to expand staff capabilities; conducting an organizational climate survey at regular intervals and taking action on issues identified; recognizing outstanding contributions by NASS employees; promoting trust, respect, teamwork, and communication; involving the staff at all levels in program decisions; and training and developing managers to apply leadership practices that treat employees fairly and with respect.

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, and to maintain records electronically, when practicable.

NASS's use of information technology is a major means of supporting the USDA Objective 5.2: Improve organizational productivity, accountability, and performance, and 5.1: Ensure that USDA provides fair and equitable service to all customers and upholds the civil rights of its employees. NASS employee workstations are equipped with connections to the NASS WAN, e-mail, electronic bulletin boards, the Internet and 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 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Target	FY 2003 Target	FY 2004 Target
6.3.1 Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that the physical environment makes it easy to do their job well.	n/a ²	70%	n/a ²	n/a ¹	90%
• Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that they are kept informed about issues affecting their jobs.	n/a ²	55%	n/a ²	n/a ¹	65%
• Accumulated number of new GPEA ¹ e-government (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.	2	3	6	10	20

1/ Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA)

2/ Organizational Climate Survey not conducted.

Means and Strategies: Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. In FY 2004, new funding was requested to initiate work on the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) mandate and the Presidential e-Government initiative which will enable NASS to begin building infrastructure that integrates paper and electronic web enabled instruments. USDA is identified as a partner in 17 of the 24 Presidential initiatives and has developed a strategic plan to further identify 24 multi-agency supporting initiatives for collaborative implementation by USDA agencies. NASS will be serving as the lead agency for two of the Departmental initiatives, Survey Capability and Data Management and has provided some staffing resources to the Department in jump-starting USDA's e-Government Program. NASS developed a bold new 5-year e-Government Tactical Plan that offers the opportunity to fundamentally transform the organization and how NASS conducts its business, leveraging agency investments with other USDA agencies. The plan relies heavily on outsourcing to incorporate and integrate the latest technologies and industry standards. Funding is critical to permit NASS to partner with the private sector to achieve the promise afforded by e-Government.

Strategies for achievement of this goal include: re-engineering NASS business processes for integration of GPEA mandate and e-Government efforts; promoting the use of the Internet for data collection of information using Electronic Data Reporting (EDR) and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) software and report releases; continually monitor and upgrade, as needed, the NASS distributed client/server computing and equipment using leading-edge relational data base technology; implementing security technologies and security system architectures; increasing use of Geographic

Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, and geo-referencing devices; using the USDA communications network to implement new functions such as remote LAN management, video conferencing, optical scanning, document archiving, retrieval systems, GIS, and data sharing; organizing all relevant data in a highly secure integrated data warehouse and transaction data bases which can be accessed and shared through powerful analysis tools (when appropriate, these data bases will support key components of the USDA data architecture); continually monitoring and upgrading all field LAN servers, as needed, to enhance the system’s capacity to handle a high volume of computer-assisted telephone interviews and promote effective and efficient development and release of official statistics; continually monitoring and upgrading all LAN systems to facilitate the migration of any new technology to the USDA technical architecture; work closely with the ARS, Administrative and Financial Management Division, to make sure administrative and financial services to NASS are efficient, effective, and consistent with Departmental standards and guidance.

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, intrusion detection, 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 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Actual	FY 2002 Target	FY 2003 Target	FY 2004 Target
6.4.1 Departmental security rating for NASS.	n/a	n/a	Green	Green	Green
• Number of computer security breaches resulting in disclosure of confidential or loss/modification of sensitive data.	0	0	0	0	0
• Percent of employees receiving “Security Awareness” training.	n/a	n/a	100%	100%	100%

Means and Strategies: Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. NASS enhancements to the cybersecurity architecture has increased protection of market-sensitive data from Internet threats. NASS plans to include security discussions at all training schools to constantly raise awareness with respect to security. NASS continuously enhances its security architecture by adding additional security components such as firewalls at all locations and security features such as strong authentication for remote access. 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 participated in the Department’s acquisition of vulnerability assessment software.

APPENDIX A

VERIFICATION AND VALIDATION

Performance Goal/Indicator	Data Source(s)	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<p>1.1.1 Percent of NASS reports that are complete and contain no data errors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percent of NASS reports released on time. ● Percent of total National agricultural production included in the NASS annual statistics program. ● Customer satisfaction rating for accuracy and usefulness of report content. ● Customer satisfaction rating for timeliness of delivery, frequency, and ease of use of NASS reports. ● Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release. 	<p>Marketing Information and Services Office (MISO) monitors and tracks reports and releases (or improprieties).</p> <p>USDA, ERS farm cash receipt data is used for statistical program coverage.</p> <p>American Customer Satisfaction Survey (ASCI) provides data.</p>	<p>The Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) Calendar is published several months prior to the preceding calendar year. The ASB Calendar contains the times and dates for all NASS releases for the calendar year January through December. The MISO staff compares actual release times with the ASB calendar release dates and times for verification and validation of performance data.</p> <p>ERS data is used in preparing worksheet calculations for comparing total farm cash receipts with cash receipts in NASS annual statistics program.</p> <p>ACSI survey data is prepared by the Federal Consulting Group in partnership with the University of Michigan (with a confidence level of 95%) to measure customer satisfaction rating.</p>	<p>ASCI survey data and results may vary from year to year due to changing customer population (or customer groups) who are surveyed.</p> <p>Final ERS cash receipt data are not available until the following year.</p>
<p>2.1.1 Accumulative number of integrated pest management (IPM) practices used to monitor risk assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on post-harvest application related to food safety. ● Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on agricultural practices related to food safety. 	<p>NASS environmental survey data prepared by the Environmental and Economics Section, Statistics Division.</p>	<p>Accumulative information is listed by commodity and counted for each of the performance measures.</p>	<p>None</p>

Performance Goal/Indicator	Data Source(s)	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accumulative number of greenhouse and horticulture groups surveyed to meet data needs for policy and economic decisions relating to stewardship of natural resources and the environment. 	<p>NASS environmental survey data prepared by the Environmental and Economics Section, Statistics Division.</p>	<p>Accumulative information is listed by commodity and counted for each of the performance measures.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>5.1.1 Number of new and enhanced statistics added to the census of agriculture needed for evaluating emerging issues in the agricultural sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Response rate for the 2002 Census of Agriculture is equal to or higher than 1997. ● Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental initiatives. ● The number of cooperative agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between NASS and outside partners. 	<p>Census and Survey Division staff maintains questionnaire information.</p> <p>Census and Survey Division will calculate the response rate</p> <p>NASS small farms coordinator tracks small farm issues.</p> <p>Headquarters Field Operations maintains agreements and MOUs</p>	<p>Questions (or items) included on the census of agriculture questionnaire are compared with previous census questionnaires for tracking new or enhanced statistics. The content test may have impact on final questions included in the final version of the 2002 Census of Agriculture questionnaire.</p> <p>The census of agriculture response rate is published and documented with the release of the census data.</p> <p>Informal tracking of adhoc requests for small farm information will provide input for this narrative measure.</p> <p>All agreements and MOUs are counted for the entire agency.</p>	<p>This number would not include additional items that could be published due to cross-tabs, such as segmenting the new items across income groups. This number also does not include the additional farm count number that would be published for each new item. Also this does not include any additional information regarding American Indians.</p> <p>Tracking all issues and requests relating to small farms may be incomplete.</p>

Performance Goal/Indicator	Data Source(s)	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<p>6.1.1 Customer service rating for courtesy and professionalism of NASS personnel in dealing with customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of new data products and services produced to fulfill customer requests. ● A Customer Satisfaction Index measures NASS's total customer satisfaction with products and services. 	<p>MISO tracks new data products and services.</p> <p>American Customer Satisfaction Survey (ASCI) provides data.</p>	<p>New products and services introduced by NASS are recorded and maintained by MISO.</p> <p>ACSI survey data is prepared by the Federal Consulting Groups in partnership with the University of Michigan (with a confidence level of 95%) to measure customer service rating.</p>	<p>New products and services introduced in the State Statistical Offices are not included in this measure. Only Headquarters activities are included.</p> <p>ASCI survey data and results may vary from year to year due to changes in the customer population (or customer groups) surveyed.</p>

Performance Goal/Indicator	Data Source(s)	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<p>6.2.1 Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percent of employees who have low/very low morale. ● Number of substantiated EEO complaints by NASS employees. ● Percent of NASS budget appropriations spent on training and career development for NASS employees. 	<p>NASS Organizational Climate Survey and SSO Human Resource Management Evaluation (HRME) Surveys are used.</p> <p>Office of the Administrator maintains EEO related information.</p> <p>Training and Career Development Office maintains annual training cost summaries.</p>	<p>The 1997 and 1999 NASS Organization Climate Surveys have been conducted by Survey Research Center at the University of Maryland and administered to all permanent NASS employees including State employees working in the SSOs. In 1999, the Mann-Whitney nonparametric test was used as a statistical test for making comparisons of ranks from groups being compared in order to provide statements of significance.</p> <p>Human Resource Management Evaluation (HRME) Surveys are conducted on an average of 6-8 State Statistical Offices (SSO) each year. Information tabulated from the HRME can be compared to the NASS Organizational Climate Survey and used to provide feedback to SSO supervisors and managers on the local work environment in the office.</p> <p>The number of EEO complaints reported are based on reports prepared by the NASS Civil Rights Director.</p> <p>An annual training costs report includes all agency costs associated with training and career development of NASS employees. Included are staffing salary costs, travel, tuition, books, training materials and supplies, etc. Data is based on information from the National Finance Center and internal NASS budget calculations and estimates.</p>	<p>Information for new hires are limited to the four primary job series in NASS; GS-1529; GS-1530, GS-1531, and GS-0334.</p> <p>Cooperation rates for the climate survey vary by groups within NASS. Difference in response rates between groups creates a potential nonresponse error that may tend to exaggerate or mute differences between surveys. Information summarized from the HRME's are smaller subgroups of agency employees and may not be representative of employees across the entire Agency.</p> <p>Grievances filed and resolved are not included. Grievances that are not resolved and then moved into the complaint process are included.</p>

Performance Goal/Indicator	Data Source(s)	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<p>6.3.1 Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that the physical work environment is not an impediment for doing their job well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that they are kept informed about issues affecting their jobs. ● Number of computer security breaches resulting in disclosure of confidential data or loss / modification of sensitive data. ● Accumulated number of new GPEA¹ e-government (EDR² and EDI³) products and services implemented. 	<p>NASS Organizational Climate Survey and SSO Human Resource Management Evaluation (HRME) Surveys are used.</p> <p>MISO tracks information relating to security breaches.</p> <p>Data Collection Branch, Census and Survey Division track the number of GPEA e-government products and services</p>	<p>The 1997 and 1999 NASS Organization Climate Surveys have been conducted by Survey Research Center at the University of Maryland and administered to all permanent NASS employees including State employees working in the SSOs. In 1999, the Mann-Whitney nonparametric test was used as a statistical test for making comparisons of ranks from groups being compared in order to provide statements of significance.</p> <p>Human Resource Management Evaluation (HRME) Surveys are conducted on an average of 6-8 State Statistical Offices (SSO) each year. Information tabulated from the HRME is compared to the NASS Organizational Climate Survey and used to provide feedback to SSO supervisors and managers on the local work environment in the office.</p> <p>MISO also tracks data security breaches, if and when they occur.</p> <p>New e-government (EDR and EDI) products and services introduced by NASS are recorded and maintained by Census and Survey Division.</p>	<p>Cooperation rates for the climate survey vary by groups within NASS. Difference in response rates between groups creates a potential nonresponse error that may tend to exaggerate or mute differences between surveys. Information summarized from the HRMEs are smaller subgroups of agency employees and may not be representative of employees across the entire Agency.</p> <p>Only EDR and EDI products and services are reported.</p>

¹ Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPRA)

² Electronic Data Reporting (EDR)

³ Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)

Performance Goal/Indicator	Data Source(s)	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<p>6.4.1 Departmental security rating for NASS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of computer security breaches resulting in disclosure of confidential or loss/modification of sensitive data. ● Percent of employees receiving "Security Awareness" training. 	<p>USDA</p> <p>ITD and MISO tracks information relating to security breaches.</p> <p>Designated NASS Security Officers and TCDO</p>	<p>Rating information maintained by the Department. Ratings are color coded for each of the 3 levels; a red rating being the worst rating, the next higher level is yellow, and a green rating being the best score.</p> <p>ITD and MISO track data security breaches, if and when they occur.</p> <p>NASS Security Officers track training conducted for NASS employees and resource materials used to facilitate training activities. TCDO maintains all formal training conducted in the training data base.</p>	