

**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE**

**FY 2001**

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Issued April 2003

## Introduction

This FY 2001 Annual Performance Report (APR) is presented by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in accordance with Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements. This report supports the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) FY 2001 Annual Performance Report. The Agency updated and finalized its long range strategic plans for FY 2000-2005 in September 2000 in coordination with the USDA Strategic Plan and the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area goals. This FY 2001 APR reflects the goals and objectives in the NASS 2000-2005 Strategic Plan. 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 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 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 the Department 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 important component works to improve statistical survey methods 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

NASS successfully met all its performance goals for FY 2001. Of the 24 performance indicators with measurable results, 75 percent met or exceeded established targets for FY 2001. Most of the targets that were not met were employee focused indicators.

<b>Performance Scorecard for FY 2001</b>			
<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%	exceed
Percent of NASS reports released on time.	100%	99%	not met
Percent of total National agricultural production included in the NASS annual statistics program.	95%	n/a	n/a
Customer satisfaction rating for accuracy and usefulness of report content.	81	81	met
Customer satisfaction rating for timeliness of delivery, frequency, and ease of use of NASS reports.	77	77	met
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

<b>Performance Scorecard for FY 2001</b>			
<b><i>Annual Performance Indicators</i></b>	<b><i>Target</i></b>	<b><i>Actual</i></b>	<b><i>Result</i></b>
Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on post-harvest application related to food safety.	8	8	met
Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on agricultural practices related to food safety.	28	30	exceed
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	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.	16	15	not met
Number of new and enhanced statistics collected in the census of agriculture needed for evaluating emerging issues in the agricultural sector.	16	16	met
Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives.	Narr	Narr	met
The number of cooperative agreements and MOU's between NASS and outside partners.	74	167	exceed
Customer service rating for courtesy and professionalism of NASS personnel in dealing with customers.	85	85	met
Number of new data products and services produced to fulfill customer requests.	7	14	exceed
American Customer Satisfaction Index measures NASS's customer satisfaction with NASS reports, products, and services.	72	72	met
Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce.	66%	72%	exceed
Percent of employees who have low/very low morale.	18%	21%	not met
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%	2.9%	not met
Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that the physical environment makes it easy to do their job well.	90%	70%	not met
Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that they are kept informed about issues affecting their jobs.	65%	55%	not met
Number of computer security breaches resulting in disclosure of confidential data or loss / modification of sensitive data.	0	0	met
Accumulated number of new GPEA eGovernment (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.	3	3	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 400 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:

<b>Annual Performance Goals and Indicators</b>	<b>FY 1999 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2000 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2001 Target</b>	<b>FY 2001 Actual</b>
1.1.1 Percent of NASS reports that are complete and contain no data errors.	99.3%	100.0%	99%	100%
● Percent of NASS reports released on time.	99.8%	99.8%	100%	99.0%
● Percent of total National agricultural production included in the NASS annual statistics program.	90% <sup>1</sup>	96% <sup>1</sup>	95%	n/a <sup>2</sup>
● Customer satisfaction rating for accuracy and usefulness of report content.	n/a <sup>3</sup>	n/a <sup>3</sup>	81	81
● Customer satisfaction rating for timeliness of delivery, frequency, and ease of use of NASS reports.	n/a <sup>3</sup>	n/a <sup>3</sup>	77	77
● Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release.	0	0	0	0

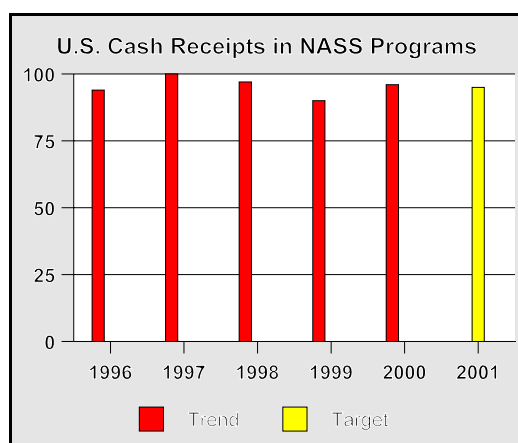
<sup>1</sup>Revised APR data. <sup>2</sup> Data is not available until July 2002. <sup>3</sup> No data available prior to 2001.

**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 FY 2001 actual performance for reports and releases exceeded the FY 2001 target for completeness but not for timeliness. Cash receipts data for 2001 for the commodities covered in the NASS statistical program is not known at this time, therefore the program coverage cannot be calculated. The NASS statistical program coverage target is 95 percent.

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%	100%	481	100%	99%

**Table 2:** NASS Reports and Releases



**Chart 1:** Percent of U.S. Cash Receipts accounted by NASS Statistical Programs

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	207,611	207,443	100%	
1998	195,816 <sup>1</sup>	190,908 <sup>1</sup>	97% <sup>1</sup>	
1999	188,132 <sup>1</sup>	169,297 <sup>1</sup>	90% <sup>1</sup>	
2000	193,695	186,592	96%	
2001	n/a <sup>2</sup>	n/a <sup>2</sup>	n/a <sup>2</sup>	95%

<sup>1</sup> Revised. <sup>2</sup> Data not available until July 2002.

**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 Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) 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 USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) is the source of the data for calculating NASS statistical program coverage using total cash receipts as indicated above in Table 3. Farm cash receipts for 2001 are not available until July 2002.

Customer service ratings were tabulated from the results of the November 2000 American Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Federal Consulting Group in cooperation with the University of Michigan. The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) has been a national indicator of customer evaluations of the quality of good and services available to U.S. residents since 1994. It is the only uniform, cross-industry/government measure of customer satisfaction. It produces indices of satisfaction, its causes and effects, for seven economic sectors, 34 industries, approximately 190 private sector companies, two types of local government, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Internal

Revenue Service and, now, a substantial portion of the Federal government of which NASS is also a contributor to the federal indice. This was NASS's first-ever American Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Data security is also a critical and vital 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 ASB.

**Analysis of Results:** NASS met its performance goal of publishing timely, accurate, and impartial agricultural statistics. As a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist bombings of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, it was unable to attain the 100 percent performance target for releasing reports on time. NASS met its performance target for customer satisfaction for accuracy and usefulness of report content; and for timeliness of delivery, frequency, and ease of use of NASS reports which were based on the results of the ACSI. The ACSI information created a new baseline of results for the GPRA reporting process.

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

- **Reports and Releases:** Of the 481 scheduled releases on the ASB calendar, 476 releases, or 99.0 percent of reports, were released on-time. On September 11, 2001, NASS and the World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB) announced suspension of scheduled reports because of the day's events. NASS suspended reports scheduled for release on September 11, 12, and 13, including the September 12 U.S. Crop Production report. WAOB also suspended release of the World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates report scheduled on September 12. Both agencies released all suspended reports at their normal times September 14. The later release of these reports had very little, if any, impact on the commodity markets. NASS has attained 100 percent on-time performance in 3 out of the last 5 years. The tragic events of September 11 prevented NASS from attaining this performance measure that would have otherwise been realized.

Furthermore, there were no erratas published in 2001. Report errors determined to be "market sensitive" are corrected with 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. Therefore, any "non-market sensitive errors" are not reflected in the annual performance data. Revisions to preliminary data series, forecasts, or official estimates are part of the Agency's standard operating procedures and are not considered as errors.

The ASB calendar is an annual publication listings release dates for all NASS national statistical reports, covering over 120 crops and 45 livestock items. The 2001 calendar was published in the fall of 2000. Several changes in the calendar 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. Beginning in January 2001, a press release on *NASS Statistical Program Monthly Highlights* were issued on or about the first of each month to inform data users and kept the public up-to-date on forthcoming changes in the reports released during the coming month.

- **Annual Statistics Program Coverage:** Chart 1 and Table 3 shows there were no results for 2001 and the performance data will not be available until July 2002. 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 2000, unavailable in the previous report, was 96 percent, 1 point above the target of 95 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. Based on historical data, NASS estimates 96 percent of the total national production to be covered by the NASS statistical program for 2000. NASS program coverage expands to 100 percent during census years conducted every 5 years ie. 1997,

2002, etc. The 1997 Census of Agriculture was the first census conducted by NASS. The census allows for open-ended reporting of all commodities produced, thus providing a vehicle for obtaining data on rarer items. Estimates of commodity coverage do not reflect numerous data series relating to economic, environmental, and demographic subjects. The final program coverage calculations for 2001 are not available until July 2002 and will be updated in the FY 2002 APR. It is expected that coverage for 2002 will be 100 percent. The current year annual program coverage indication will always be a year behind and therefore, will never coincide with the annual APR report.

- **Customer Satisfaction (ACSI) Ratings:** For the FY 2001 survey, three types of customers were specifically chosen as its segment of customers and users of NASS report publications and data. They were paid subscribers, e-mail subscribers, and customer service contacts. The ratings reflect the following proportion of responses by customer type; 15 percent were from paid subscribers, 69 percent were e-mail subscribers, and 16 percent were from customer service contacts. Customer interviews were conducted by telephone on October 2-12, 2000, by professional interviewers of Market Strategies, Inc. working under monitored supervision using computer-assisted-telephone-interviewing (CATI) terminals for the specific questionnaire.

NASS identified three drivers of satisfaction that interfaced with its report publication users. These were: 1) Report Distribution, 2) Report Content, and 3) Customer Service. Two other components that drive satisfaction ratings are the customer's expectations of the overall quality of NASS as an Agency to do business and his/her perception after having had experience of doing business with NASS.

Customer satisfaction rating for report content received a score of 81, with users rating usefulness of NASS reports, with a mean score of 8.4 (on a 1-10 scale), slightly higher than its accuracy score of 8.1. The lowest scoring activity is report distribution at 77. Users rated the timeliness of delivery rather high, at 8.3, but give significantly lower marks for the frequency of reports (7.9) and most critically for the ease of using the reports was 7.6. Thus, while respondents find the content of NASS reports to be very useful, the ease of using the reports was rated significantly lower.

The model demonstrated that Report Distribution is a key area where improvements would be most beneficial and make the greatest impact for improving the overall satisfaction rating.

- **Data Security:** There were no instances of any impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of any official release in 2001.

#### **Current Fiscal Year Performance:**

- **Reports and Releases:** NASS continues its efforts to sustain a 100 percent target level of all of its releases "on-time" as scheduled and maintain a 99 percent performance target of report completeness through continuous staff training and use of computer equipment and technology. In general, the number of reports and information released by NASS continues to grow in order to meet the ever-growing demands and challenges associated with data users and the public's need for more and better information. The number of reports issued annually over the last 4 years has grown, while overall annual appropriated budgets have provided only a limited amount of additional support.
- **Annual Statistics Program Coverage:** Cash receipt data for the 2001 statistical program coverage evaluation will be made available by ERS in July 2002. NASS continuously strives to increase program coverage, but expansion of program coverage is limited by budget resources each fiscal year. Statistical program reductions and proposals are currently being evaluated and considered due to limitations in its appropriated budgets for FY 2002 and FY 2003.
- **Customer Satisfaction (ACSI) Ratings:** Based on information gained from the Customer Satisfaction Survey, NASS plans to review its report distribution, specifically for the ease of using reports. NASS intends to use the ACSI for assessing implementation of future quality initiatives. However, due to unanticipated Agency budget constraints in FY 2002, the next ACSI survey will

not be conducted until FY 2003. The ACSI index and its components are included in the Revised FY 2002 and FY 2003 Annual Performance Plan (APP).

In absence of conducting the ASCI Survey, NASS continued holding its annual Data User Meeting. This year's meeting was held in Chicago, IL., on October 15, 2001, with commodity and agricultural industry representatives to discuss crop and livestock program issues. NASS anticipates continuing these annual data users meetings in order to respond to customer data needs and service in a timely manner, 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:** A NASS Program Review was initiated to achieve targeted data collection savings for the various survey programs. The Agency was challenged with designing program changes that would meet the needs of the data user and industry expectations within its budgeted appropriations. Senior management presented the NASS program and budget priorities to the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics about areas where the program needs to be expanded or reduced, if there were data sets that needed to be improved or else dropped, or how NASS should reduce its program if it had to achieve a 10 percent budget cut in the future. Committee discussion centered on developing a strategy to determine what NASS's core program should be and the resources required to support it. NASS needs to develop criteria for determining which commodities are surveyed and the frequency at which they are surveyed. A set policy will put the Agency in a stronger position to defend program changes with data users.

## **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.

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. In addition, under the Department of Health and Human Services/USDA joint initiative to Ensure the Safety of Imported and Domestic Fruits and Vegetables, NASS is responsible for the collection of food safety information for fruits and vegetables.

### **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 1999 Actual	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Target	FY 2001 Actual
2.1.1 Accumulative number of IPM practices used to monitor risk assessment.	22	24	24	24
● Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on post-harvest application related to food safety.	6	8	8	8
● Accumulative number of commodities surveyed on agricultural practices related to food safety.	n/a <sup>1</sup>	30 <sup>2</sup>	28	30

<sup>1</sup> No data available before 2000 <sup>2</sup> Revised

**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 managed and maintained by various Headquarters staffs in the Environmental, Economic, and Demographics Branch; 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 for providing meaningful statistical projections on pest management practices and general agricultural practices with release of 6 major reports. Each of the targets set for IPM practices, commodities surveyed for post-harvest applications and agricultural practices were met.

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

● **Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Practices:** The performance target was met with a total of 24 IPM practices surveyed to date. They are:

- Tillage to manage pests
- Remove or plow down crop residue
- Clean implements after field work
- Water management practices
- Crop varieties genetically modified to resist insects
- Adjust planting / harvesting dates
- Rotate crops to control pests
- Crop varieties genetically modified to be pathogen / nematode resistant
- Alternate planting locations
- Grow trap crop to control pests
- Scouted for pests
- Records kept to track pests
- Field mapping of weed problems
- Soil analysis to detect pests
- Pheromones to monitor pests
- Weather monitoring
- Crop varieties genetically modified to resist to be herbicide resistant
- Scouting used to make decisions
- Biological pesticides
- Beneficial organisms
- Physical barriers
- Adjust planting methods
- Alternate pesticides
- Pheromones to disrupt mating

- **Post-Harvest Applications:** The performance target was met with a total of eight commodities that have been surveyed on post-harvest applications related to food safety. These commodities include apples, potatoes, corn, wheat, soybeans, oats, rice, and peanuts.
- **Agricultural Practices:** There was an Agricultural Practices Survey conducted in 2000 and released in 2001 with 30 commodities summarized. This target was met with a total of 30 commodities that have been surveyed on agricultural practices related to food safety. These commodities include apples, avocados, broccoli, cabbage, cantaloupe, carrots, cauliflower, celery, sweet cherries, cucumbers, grapefruit, (raisin & table) grapes, honeydew, kiwi fruit, lemons, head lettuce, other lettuce, limes, nectarines, dry onions, oranges, peaches, pears, bells peppers, plums, strawberries, tangerines, tomatoes, and watermelons.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:**

- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Practices:** There is no IPM survey activity planned for 2002 at this time.
- **Post-Harvest Applications:** Apples is expected to be surveyed again in 2002 and pears is expected to be added to the survey program in 2002.
- **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 current plans to conduct another survey.

**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.

**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.**

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** While there is no specific performance 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 work at the Departmental level. For example, in FY 2001, NASS worked with Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) Nutrient Data Laboratory and Food Consumption Survey Group as described below:

- **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 sample designs and data collection procedures for within-store sampling of fresh produce, and provided consultation and training on aggregating nutrient data from different sources in conjunction with the laboratory's Architecture and Integration Management Nutrient Data

Bank System. NASS began developing a sample design of Native American tribes for traditional Native American foods.

- **Food Consumption Survey Group:** NASS provided statistical consultation services on the proper analytical uses of its Continuing Survey and Food Intakes by Individuals database. It has also advised ARS on the proposed combined food-intake survey being planned in cooperation with the National Center on Health Statistics.

The NASS program supports Goal 3 through its reimbursable program; however, there were no appropriated resources associated with this goal in FY 2001 but this is a component of the overall REE strategic plan. NASS does not plan on establishing specific performance measures for this goal in the future.

**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.**

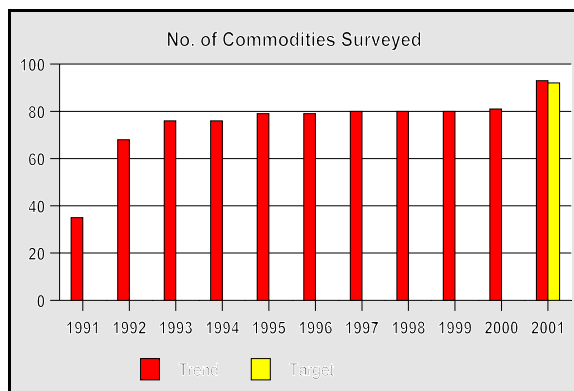
Strategies and resources for achieving this performance goal include conducting ongoing surveys to provide and expand needed information concerning quantities of chemicals applied to agricultural commodities; supplying important information on land use and productivity for use in environmental monitoring 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 1999 Actual	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Target	FY 2001 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.	80 <sup>1</sup>	81 <sup>1</sup>	92	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.	n/a <sup>2</sup>	n/a <sup>2</sup>	16	15

<sup>1</sup> Revised <sup>2</sup> No data reported prior to 2001

**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 2001 actual performance indicators met the FY 2001 target for commodities surveyed and came very close to meeting the target set for nursery and floriculture groups surveyed.



**Chart 2:** Number of Commodities Surveyed

Year	Number of Commodities Surveyed	
	Actual	Target
1991	35	
1992	68	
1993	76	
1994	76	
1995	79	
1996	79	
1997	80	
1998	80	
1999	80	
2000	81	
2001	92	92

**Table 6:** Number of Commodities Surveyed

**Data Assessment:** The data in Chart 2 and Table 6 are based on information residing in the Agency’s statistical information system managed and maintained by various Headquarters staff in the Environmental, Economic, and Demographics Branch, Census and Survey 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 by for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

**Analysis of Results:** NASS met its performance goal to provide statistical data on agricultural chemical use, land productivity and IPM practices with the publication of the following six reports released in 2001 as a result of chemical use data collection efforts included:

- Fruit and Vegetable Agricultural Practices
- Restricted Use Pesticide Summary
- Postharvest Applications - Peanuts, Rice, and Sorghum
- Agricultural Chemical Usage - Sheep & Sheep Facilities
- Agricultural Chemical Usage - Field Crop Summary 2000
- Agricultural Chemical Usage - Vegetable Summary 2000

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. Eleven new crop commodities were surveyed in 2001 which included sugarbeets, artichokes, beets, brussel sprouts, carrots, collards, garlic, mustard greens, turnip greens, kale, and okra.
- **Nursery and Floriculture Groups Surveyed:** There were a total of 15 nursery and floriculture groups surveyed, one subgroup less than the target of 16. This was reduced by one when the bedding and garden plants were combined into one group. The survey groups were broadleaf evergreens, coniferous evergreens, deciduous shade trees, nursery propagation material, floriculture propagation material, deciduous flowering trees, christmas trees, cut cultivated greens, foliage plants potted or hanging, cut flowers, potted or hanging flowering plants, fruit and nut trees,

deciduous shrubs and other environmentals, transplants for commercial production, and garden/bedding plants.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** Plans for 2002 and beyond include continued program expansion to provide coverage for key commodities. In addition to the publication of several documents containing commodity chemical use statistics, data collection has been completed for selected vegetable crops, multiple field crops, and is underway for floriculture and nursery commodities.

NASS has conducted chemical use surveys since 1990 in an effort to assist the Department in addressing concerns expressed in Presidential initiatives over the safety of chemical use on the Nation's food crops. Over the past 10 years, as concern over food safety has been joined by interest in pesticide issues related to worker exposure and water quality, NASS has made every effort to increase program coverage to address known data gaps. Even with no increase in the base budget allocated to pesticide surveys from 1997 to 1999 and slight increases in FY 2001, coverage of commodities has increased steadily as knowledge of environmental issues has increased and survey efficiencies have been realized. Budget constraints impact NASS's ability to maintain user needs.

**Program Evaluation:** No evaluation was conducted but program comments are annually solicited from one of the primary data users, 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. The first annual NASS Environmental Data Users meeting was held in Washington, D.C., on October 10, 2000.

**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, small farms and ranches.

**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 the planning cycle for the 2002 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 1999 Actual	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Target	FY 2001 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.	n/a <sup>1</sup>	16	16	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives.</li> <li>● The number of cooperative agreements and MOU's between NASS and outside partners.</li> </ul>	see narrative	see narrative	see narrative	see narrative
	163 <sup>2</sup>	163 <sup>2</sup>	74	167

<sup>1</sup>No data available before 2000 <sup>2</sup>Revised

**Table 7:** 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 farms and minority farmers issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives. Number of cooperative agreements and MOU's between NASS and outside partners are maintained by the Budget Administration Services Staff, Office of the Deputy Administrator for Field Operations. The information for 1999 and 2000 was revised to correct the historical data which was previously incorrectly tabulated. The target established for FY 2001 now appears to be low based on the recent data revision.

**Analysis of Results:** NASS reached each of its 2001 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 are defined below to address each of these areas.

Improvement to production statistics are divided into two areas. They are data collected for the first time on emerging agricultural commodities and data collected to measure newly adapted production methods. New commodities – for the first time, the 2002 Census of Agriculture will collect data on the following commodities.

There are two new crops being counted. Short rotation woody crops - these crops were first recognized as agriculture by the 1997 rewriting of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) definitions which evolved into the currently used North American Industrial and Classification System (NAICS). While the acreage of these crops was counted as harvested cropland when reported in 1997, they were not separately classified and were counted only as "Other crops" in the last census. To be classified as agriculture, these tree crops must actively be farmed and have a harvest maturity of 10 or fewer years. Data collected will be acres in production for harvest in future years and acres harvested in the census year. Aquatic plants - this crop is a nursery crop and will be classified according to the square feet under glass or other protection and acres in the open. In past censuses, any reported aquatic plants were counted as "Other nursery and greenhouse products."

There are three new livestock types being counted. They include deer, elk, and llamas - these three animals are now grazed and feed in a managed environment by farmers and ranchers and therefore qualify as agriculture. Animals in the wild are not to be counted.

There are two new poultry types being counted. They include emus and ostriches - these two birds will be counted separately. They were classified as "Other poultry" in the past.

There are two new and restructured aquaculture types being counted. They include other food fish - this is a new class which includes all food fish except catfish and trout which are asked separately. In 1997, hybrid striped bass were asked separately but will be combined into this class in 2002. Baitfish, crustaceans, mollusks, ornamental fish, and sport or game fish are five new classes of aquaculture for 2002 and reflect the growing importance of farm raised fish.

For the first time questions will be asked about these production methods and practices. Acres harvested of certified organically produced crops is a question requested for two censuses but was not added until now due to respondent confusion regarding the meaning of the word "organic" and the lack of a national definition of what constituted certified which is now available. Acres covered under Federal or other crop insurance - the inherent risk in farming makes this question a necessity. Production contracts is an entirely new section being added to measure the extent to which contractors have vertically integrated production agriculture through production contracts with growers. This section, while it does add to the length of the census report form, actually simplifies reporting for the respondent, since the form now asks questions that the respondent will personally know and does not ask about the values of sales that are actually made by the contractor. Processed vegetables is a new item. In 2002, data are collected for total harvested acres as well as acres harvested for processing. This will allow harvested vegetable acres to be tabulated in three ways-total, processed, and fresh-market (derived).

Only one item has been added that measures farm supply. It is bushels of on-farm grain storage. Data published on the results of this question will help to identify what counties may have inadequate storage based on responses to this question. This question continues a data series that was last asked on the Census in 1974.

The census has always been a valuable tool to analyze sales, expenses, and net cash return across demographic characteristics. For 2002, both of these areas will expand minimally but the small increase in both areas will combine to yield far greater insight into the condition of agriculture both at a national and county level.

Expanded economic items includes: Net cash return of the operator, net cash return of the contractor, and net cash return of the landlord - by asking for just the value of sales of owned farm products, the amount of money received from contractor(s) and paid to landlord(s), the census will provide three components of net cash return when in the past there was just a total. Of course the total will still exist. In 2002 farmers will not be asked about the business of others, a significant improvement.

For 2002, the Expenditures Section of the census report form was restructured to be more like the Schedule F of the Federal tax return. Also, some expense categories were redefined to be more logically grouped. These two minor changes should make the expense section easier to complete.

Expanded demographic items includes: The number of operators - the 2002 Census abandons a long standing but now dated concept of one farm-one operator. It has long been recognized that many farms are operated by more than one individual but in the past census demographics were only collected for one person. This will change in 2002. The total number of operators for each farm will be collected as well as the demographic characteristics of up to three operators for each farm. Income sources - the report form will ask each household to report the portion of the total operation income that they received. It will also ask the principal operator to report the percent of total household income they derived from this farm operation. Residence and population - operators will be asked if they live on an Indian Reservation and how many persons live in their household. Computer usage and internet access - operators will be asked if they used a computer in their farm business and if they had access to the internet at any time during the census year.

- Small Farms and Minority Farmers Issues:** NASS improved its data collection procedures to ensure that small farms across America are included in the 2002 Census of Agriculture and other surveys which provides invaluable information on the farm topology of small family farms and ranches. This was highlighted in the previous section for New and Enhanced Statistics for the Census of Agriculture. NASS staff assisted the National Office of Outreach in efforts to gain approval for the Minority Farm Register, which was specified in the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT) report, published in February 1997. Specifically, NASS provided assistance with the Privacy Act approval process and in preparing the Information Collection Approval package submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The Minority Farm Register will provide an additional tool to help USDA improve its Outreach and Technical Assistance Program for Socially Disadvantaged and Minority Farmers. NASS conducted a nationwide survey to study childhood injuries and adult occupational health issues on U.S. farms operated by minorities. The study was conducted under contract for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). NASS also conducted a nationwide survey in February 2001 for Penn State University to study the role of women on U.S. farming operations.
- Cooperative Agreements and MOUs:** NASS had a total of 45 cooperative agreements and 122 memorandums of understandings with State Departments of Agriculture, land grant colleges and universities, and other cooperators. These unique State-Federal cooperative agreements are established 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 2001, work included 157 special surveys covering such varied issues as customer service, farm safety and health, pesticide use, county estimates, nursery/horticulture, farm finance, and specialty crops.

Survey Type	Number of Surveys
Seeds, Field Crops, Vegetables	16
Fruits and Nuts	21
County Estimates	10
Cropping Practices, Pesticide Use	7
Livestock, Poultry	5
Safety, Health, Disability	5
Nursery and Floriculture	5
Farm Finance, Land Values	4
Miscellaneous	84
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>157</b>

**Table 9:** Special SSO Surveys Conducted in FY 2001

**Current fiscal Year Performance:**

- Census of Agriculture:** As part of the census planning activities, developmental and production work projects will be entered into a project planner to develop a 2002 Census of Agriculture Plan. Key staff will identify a detailed list of specifications, programs, and test applications needed to prepare all systems for production processing. Schedules will be prepared for each application, along with resource assignments. This will be a new long-range planning tool for the 2002 Census of Agriculture.

Plans for contacting approximately 1.1 million potential farm operators as part of the 2002 Farm Identification Survey are underway. Census questionnaires will be captured using



optical scanning technology and questionnaire images will be available electronically to all of our 45 State Statistical Offices. This will be the first attempt by NASS in using this new technology.

NASS will be working with the National Processing Center (NPC) to develop a print contract for census report forms, transmittal letters, instruction sheets, and envelopes. The contract will include designations for three separate types of packages – fully assembled, folded, and flat. Quality assurance procedures will define the inspection process at both NPC and NASS Headquarters.

A mail out and data collection strategy will be worked out for handling 2.8 million census records. NASS will initiate a series of quarterly meetings and weekly teleconferences to coordinate planning activities and develop processing procedures. Calling centers will be established. Staff will be working with the telecommunications to establish routing procedures for handling incoming calls and logging caller information. This system is being established to handle approximately 150,000 toll-free calls during census processing. All components of the system were in place for the Farm Identification Survey and have been thoroughly tested.

- ***Small Farms and Minority Farmers Issues:*** NASS will continue to work closely with USDA's Small Farm Coordination in assisting the Department to address small farms and minority farmers 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 as it has successfully done in the past. NASS also strives to provide the same level of high quality work and service to its cooperators.

**Program Evaluation:** NASS conducted a content test for the 2002 Census of Agriculture. This consisted of developing a prototype of the 2002 Census of Agriculture report form and testing respondents' comprehension and response to it. A total of 15,000 agricultural operations from across the Nation were involved in this voluntary test and approximately half participated by completing the questionnaire. An extensive number of factors that affected responses were evaluated which included the format and design of the instrument, new content items, changes to questionnaire working, respondent burden, attitudes affecting responses, selected procedural changes and response variability. Two census questionnaires were designed for data collection. Each type was modified to accommodate crop and reporting variations for 13 U.S. regions. For the first time, questionnaires were specifically designed for scanning technology, which added to the complexity of the project.

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

NASS conducts surveys, and lends technical expertise, performs services and statistical consultation to other Federal agencies, State governments, and private organizations on a reimbursable basis. 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 contribute 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 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 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, 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.

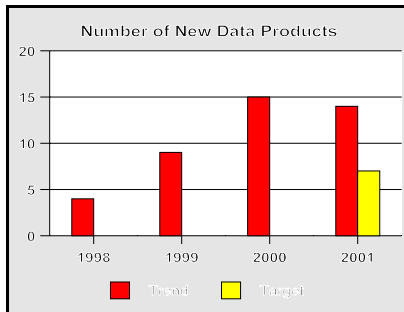
With the steady increase in demand for agricultural information and the steady decline in the number of commercial farmers, NASS’s concern with respondent burden issues has never been more critical. NASS continues to fortify relationships with trade and producer associations at the national and local level to increase their support and publicity of the surveys. NASS provides these associations with news stories and advertisements 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 the SSOs. The primary focus has been enhanced, increased communication of survey benefits through the media, in writing, and in person. NASS prepared several communication packages for the SSOs to use when promoting specific surveys to producers and their associations. These packages include electronic presentations, media releases, talking points, brochures, public service advertisements, suggested interview questions for reporters, presurvey letters, and other tools to communicate the purpose and, most importantly, benefits of agricultural surveys.

<b>Annual Performance Goals and Indicators</b>	<b>FY 1999 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2000 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2001 Target</b>	<b>FY 2001 Actual</b>
6.1.1 Customer service rating for courtesy and professionalism of NASS personnel in dealing with customers.	n/a <sup>1</sup>	n/a <sup>1</sup>	85	85
● Number of new data products and services produced to fulfill customer requests.	9	15	7	14
● American Customer Satisfaction Index measures NASS’s customer satisfaction with NASS reports, products, and services.	n/a <sup>1</sup>	n/a <sup>1</sup>	72	72

<sup>1</sup> No data available before 2000

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

**Charts & Tables:** NASS sets annual performance targets for the number of new products and services. The FY 2001 actual performance met or surpassed the FY 2001 target.



Year	Number of New Data Products	Target
1998	4	
1999	9	
2000	15	
2001	7	14

**Table 11:** Number of New Data Products

**Chart 3:** Number of New Data Products

**Data Assessment:** The data in Chart 3 and Table 11 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. There were no customer service data available to report the percent of data users who were satisfied or very satisfied with NASS service.

**Analysis of Results:** NASS met its performance goal for new products and services and customer satisfaction. During FY 2001, NASS introduced 14 new data products and services to address additional data needs thereby exceeding its target. Customer satisfaction targets were also met. A brief analysis is provided for each of the indicators for this performance goal:

- **Customer Service (ACSI) Ratings:** As previously stated in this report, customer service ratings were tabulated from the results of the November 2000 American Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Federal Consulting Group in cooperation with the University of Michigan.

Of the three activities that drive customer satisfaction: report distribution, report content, and customer service, customer service scored the highest at 85, with similar, high ratings for both courtesy, with a mean score of 8.6 (on a 1-10 scale) and professionalism of 8.5. Despite the high proportion of customers who receive reports via email/internet, 77 percent of the respondents indicate they have interacted at some time with NASS personnel. These respondents clearly rate NASS's customer service very highly.

Perceived quality scores adequately at 80, while customer expectation scores a significant 7 points lower; this suggests that users receive higher quality service from NASS than they expected prior to using the service. However, expectations are slightly (though not statistically significantly) higher than overall satisfaction, and while users rate their overall satisfaction adequately, they rate their level of satisfaction much lower in terms of the extent to which it has fallen short of or exceeded their expectations. One possible contributor to this effect may be that users have an expectation that the report publications will be easier to use than they actually experience after subscribing to the service.

Only 6.8 percent of NASS report publications users indicated that they have complained to NASS within the past year, a very low level of complaints. With so few complainers, it was not possible to analyze the number of complaints or how well they were handled.

Customer loyalty at 79 is significantly higher than the index of 72 for overall satisfaction with NASS report publications and is a result of similar ratings for confidence in NASS and willingness to speak positively about the reports. While users indicate that satisfaction with reports could be higher, nevertheless they are reasonably confident in NASS providing reports and are willing to recommend these publications to others.

- ***New Data Products and Services:*** NASS's first *Monthly Hogs and Pigs* report, released in January 2001, began a series of monthly reports published between the more comprehensive Quarterly Hogs and Pigs reports. The report provided information on the size of the prior month's U.S. pig crop, sows farrowed, pigs per litter, sow and gilt inventory on the first of the month, and sows and gilts bred the prior month.

NASS issued its first *Milkfat Prices* report in May 2001. The report is released every other Friday at 8:30 a.m. The report contains weekly prices and volumes of milkfat purchased for Class II and combined Class II, III, and IV utilization.

NASS provided a service to its data users by providing additional new statistics in several reports during the year. This included data on nitrogen fertilizer supply situation in the spring of 2001. These data were published by State in the Weekly Crop Progress reports on April 2, April 30, and June 4. This special information was needed because of the short supplies and high prices of natural gas, a primary component of many nitrogen fertilizers. Annual forage production in eight States was published for the first time in the January 2000 Crop Production Summary. The forage production includes all types of harvested hay and haylage. Monthly Cold Storage was modified to collect data and turkey parts. The Broiler Hatchery program was expanded from 15-19 States. Publication of this new weekly information began in May 2001.

Two new environmental data products were provided in 2001 when the *Agricultural Chemical Usage Postharvest Applications for Peanuts and Rice* and the *Agricultural Chemical Usage for Sheep and Sheep* facilities were published, containing information on application rates for specific chemical active ingredients and total amounts applied.

In June 2001, NASS released the *Fruit and Vegetable Agricultural Practices* report. This new report provides detailed information on practices related to field environment, agricultural water, organic fertilizers, harvest operations, workers, facility and field packing, and trace back systems in the fresh produce industry. This survey effort was developed in response to a 1997 Presidential Initiative related to the safety of fresh fruit and vegetables.

In June 2001, NASS issued the *U.S. Hog Breeding Structure*, a special report on the structure of the U.S. hog breeding herd. The report contained information on the changes in the makeup of the breeding herd by size of operation and the efficiency of the breeding herd in recent years.

In August 2001, the NASS released the results from the *1999 Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey (AELOS)*. AELOS, which covered the entire U.S., is a follow-on survey to the 1997 Census of Agriculture. The last AELOS report was published in 1988. The publication included assets, expenditures, and debt for farm operations at the U.S., regional, and State levels. The AELOS report also included acres managed by hired managers in 1999. Other highlights included acres owned, value of land and buildings, land use, and types of leases. Demographic information such as age, race, location of residence, and occupation of landlords and operators were also included.

In August 2001, NASS published the first *Nursery Crop Summary*. These production data for 2000 are the first detailed, comprehensive statistics available for nursery crops across 17 leading States.

In September 2001, NASS issued a special cattle report titled *U.S. Cattle Supplies and Disposition*. This report is available on the Internet only, and provides information on current cattle supply, disposition numbers, and trends which have implications for future cattle supplies. This report incorporated data from previous Cattle, Cattle on Feed, and Livestock Slaughter reports with other published import and export information. Information on cattle supplies relevant to the cattle cycle is also included.

NASS provided the *Price Reaction* report to data users via the Internet for the first time. This popular report tracks the market reaction to crop production forecasts and has only been available in a limited-supply, hard copy basis in the past.

In August 2001, a Spanish version of the *Quick Facts-Characteristics of Hispanic Farm Operators* was released. This tri-fold brochure was issued at the request of the Secretary's Hispanic Advisory Council. The colorful quick facts brochure contains tables, text, and charts highlighting information from the 1997 Census of Agriculture on the Hispanic farm community. It was previously released in English in September 2000.

- **Overall American Customer Satisfaction Survey (ACSI) Score:** Overall satisfaction among users of NASS report publications is adequate at 72. This score is equal to the average private sector service provider and slightly higher than the average for a Federal agency. Among the activities measured that drive quality of service and, therefore, satisfaction, customer service scores very well and should be maintained, although it may not be prudent to devote additional resources to an already highly rated activity. The key area for improvement is in the distribution of report publications, which users rate significantly lower than either the customer service of NASS personnel or the content of the reports. Particularly, users give a somewhat lower ratings to the ease of use of reports. Loyalty is strong, seven points higher than the satisfaction index, indicating that users have confidence in NASS and are willing to recommend the reports to others like themselves.

Since this is the first ACSI measurement of customer satisfaction for NASS, it is not possible to do a trend analysis with data from several points in time. Therefore, for this first time study, customers were asked to think about their current satisfaction, and compare that with their satisfaction with the same Agency program 2 years prior. Nearly 40 percent feel that their satisfaction is largely unchanged from 2 years ago, while 20 percent give the highest rating of 9-10 on a 1-10 improvement scale. Only 8 percent feel their satisfaction has declined during that time period.

In analyzing the model for NASS and impact of the effects of each component on subsequent components, of the three activities, report content and report distribution have similar, strong impacts on quality and therefore on overall satisfaction. Customer service, though rated the highest of the activities, has much smaller, almost negligible impact on quality. This may indicate that NASS personnel have a reputation for good customer service and as a result this is largely taken for granted by the users. Report distribution, which scores lowest and has a strong impact on quality, is a prime area for focusing on improvements. Thus, this analysis indicates that NASS should focus more resources in the report distribution area, specifically on the ease of using the reports. This would have the greatest impact on raising the overall ACSI index.

#### **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. Publicity activities associated with conducting the Census of Agriculture in December 2002 will contribute to the development of new products later in the year.
- **Customer Service (ACSI) Ratings:** As previously discussed in this report, NASS intends to use the ACSI for assessing implementation of future quality initiatives. However, due to Agency budget constraints in FY 2002, the next ACSI survey will not be conducted until FY 2003, if funding is available. The ACSI index and its components are included in the Revised FY 2002 and FY 2003 Annual Performance Plan (APP).

**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 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 the technical, managerial, and leadership capabilities of employees who 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 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.

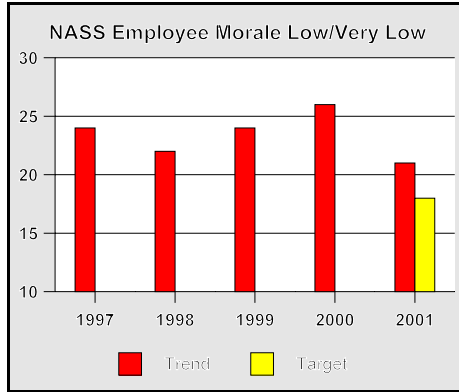
The quality of NASS's agricultural estimates are strengthened by employing, training, and supporting a diverse workforce that fosters creativity, ingenuity, and efficiency in the agricultural statistics program. NASS employees are strengthened by the diversity of their cultures and backgrounds, the enjoyment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

<b>Annual Performance Goals and Indicators</b>	<b>FY 1999 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2000 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2001 Target</b>	<b>FY 2001 Actual</b>
6.2.1 Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce.	74	70	66	72
● Percent of employees who have low/very low morale.	24%	26% <sup>1</sup>	18%	21%
● 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.	3.7%	3.4%	3.0%	2.9%

<sup>1</sup> HRME data

**Table 12:** Annual Performance Goals and Indicators for NASS Staff

**Charts and Tables:** NASS sets annual performance targets for measuring employee morale and EEO complaints. The FY 2001 performance targets were met for recruitment and EEO complaints, but the Agency was not able to meet its desired employee morale or training budget targets.



**Chart 4:** NASS Employee Morale

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%	18%

<sup>1</sup> HRME data

**Table 13:** NASS Employee Morale

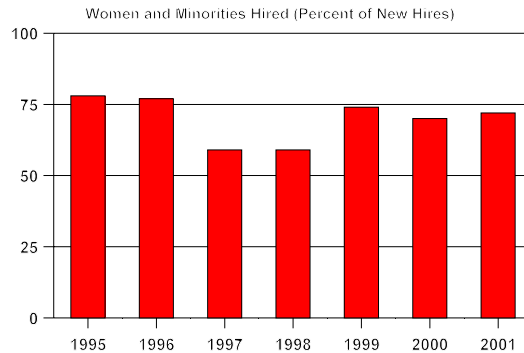
Year	Total Number of Formal EEO Complaints Filed	Actual Number of Substantiated EEO Complaints	Target Number of Substantiated EEO Complaints
1996	3	0	
1997	5	0	
1998	10	0	
1999	6	0	
2000	3	0	
2001	5	0	0

**Table 14:** Number of Substantiated EEO Complaints

Year	Total Training Costs (Dollars)	NASS Budget (Dollars)	Actual Percent	Target Percent
1996	2,170,500	90,000,000	2.4%	
1997	3,363,005	110,000,000	3.1%	
1998	3,551,673	127,000,000	2.8%	
1999	4,231,224	114,000,000	3.7%	
2000	3,778,911	111,000,000	3.4%	
2001	3,249,213	111,500,000	2.9%	3.0%

**Table 15:** Annual Training Budget Expenditures

**Data Assessment:** Personnel information for the 2001 data is compiled by the Human Resources unit of the Budget Administration Services Office (BASO) 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.



**Chart 5:** Percent of New Hires are Women and Minorities

**Analysis of Results:** NASS met its performance goal in employing a diversified, technically competent staff and treating employees fairly and with respect. A brief analysis is provided for each of the indicators for this performance goal:

- Staff Diversity and Recruitment:** Employment and Agency diversity information for FY 2001 was obtained from NFC. During the past several years, NASS has been addressing any existing under-representation 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-334, Computer Specialist; and GS-1531, Statistical Assistant. NASS continued to make strides in recruiting and hiring a diverse group of new employees in the four major job series. Of the 25 new employees hired in FY 2001, 72 percent of the new hires were women and minorities. Under the 2001 USDA Summer Employment Program, NASS hired 13 student assistants of whom 11 were women and minorities, representing 85 percent of the total.

Over the past several years, NASS has found the market for recruiting Statisticians and Computer Specialists to be much more competitive than in the past, but anticipates that changing with the downturn of the economy. To enable the Agency to maintain competitiveness, the NASS Senior Executive Team (SET) continues to offer recruitment and relocation bonuses for certain situations.

- Employee Morale:** The 2001 Organizational Climate Survey indicated employee morale improved in 2001 showing that 21 percent of the employees reported ratings in the low or very low morale category. This was three points below both of the previous surveys conducted in 1997 and 1999. The target of an 18 percent rating is a very aggressive target of achievement and NASS will continue to strive to improve employee morale in the Agency.

NASS conducted a 2001 NASS Leadership Workshop scheduled for April 23-26, 2001, for all NASS supervisors and managers in Headquarters and the State Statistical Offices (SSOs) in the field. This workshop focused on leadership, team building, and managing the Agency's resources and incorporated presentations and hands-on examples in leadership training. In addition, a session with the Resource Management Council discussed managing and setting priorities for the Agency's resources. Participants completed a 360-Degree Leadership Effectiveness Inventory measure prior to the workshop, and results were presented confidentially to employees at the workshop.

- 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 complaints in FY 2001.



One complaint was dismissed by the Department and the remaining four complaints are in various stages of the administrative process.

The FY 2001 annual civil rights performance rating for NASS was completed by the USDA Office of Civil Rights (OCR). NASS had successfully addressed all of the performance indicators under the Agency's control and had demonstrated commitment to achieving civil rights progress during FY 2001. The Office of Civil Rights commended NASS for its thorough and comprehensive efforts made towards achieving its civil rights goals and objectives in FY 2001 and stated it is clearly an example of a progressive and action-oriented Civil Rights program within the Department.

- **Training:** The total training dollars expended in 2001 was 2.9 percent of NASS's total budget. This was only slightly below the 3 percent target and it was accomplished during a tight budget year. Workshops conducted presented a broad range of training that included a Leadership Workshop for managers and supervisors; FFIS Training for the administrative and budget staff; NIOSH Survey Training, Nursery and Floriculture Survey Training, Women on Farms Survey Training, GENESIS System Training and Train-the-Trainer Training for statisticians; ITD System Services Training for computer specialists; and an Orientation Session for new employees with information primarily directed to new statisticians. NASS also is beginning to use net conferencing and teleconferencing in an effort to reduce travel and training costs so that more training can be conducted.

**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 2002.

NASS Headquarters and field office staff will attend and participate in numerous state and national industry and commodity association meetings and conferences throughout FY 2002. 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 Latin America, including Mexico, several Central and South American and Eastern European countries and China.

- **Staff Diversity:** 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. NASS is planning to continue using the USDA/1890 National Scholarship Program and the internship programs as the primary tools for hiring and recruiting a diverse workforce. Additional detailed information on EEO and civil rights can be found in the 2001 NASS Annual EEO and Civil Rights Accomplishment Report.
- **Employee Morale:** NASS Organizational Climate Surveys are typically administered every 2-3 years. Previous climate surveys were done in 1988, 1994, 1997, 1999 and 2001. The next survey is expected to be conducted in 2004 since there will be heavy workload demands due to the processing of the census of agriculture in 2003. Continued improvements in the organization have been ongoing based on survey results and recommendations.
- **Substantiated EEO Complaints:** NASS does not anticipate any substantiated EEO complaints this year.
- **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:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Civil Rights directed all USDA agencies to contract for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights Employment Compliance Reviews. NASS contracted Leon Shead and Company, who completed an Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights Compliance Review Final Report on December 18, 2000. A full report of this document is available upon request.

The objectives of this review were to (1) assess the mission of NASS as it pertains to Civil Rights, (2) conduct a review of NASS's compliance with Civil Rights Laws and USDA nondiscrimination regulations, and (3) assess conditions in the workplace that ensure staff and management adhere to and implement Civil Rights requirements. The time period reviewed was the 3-year period of fiscal years 1997 through 1999 at the NASS Headquarters offices in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and at NASS field offices in Maryland and Texas.

Review methodology included a survey questionnaire provided to all NASS employees and interviews of a sample of Agency employees at the selected locations and included reviewing of official personnel files and training records for a random sample of employees. They also reviewed employee complaint files. This review also covered the Affirmative Employment Program and program elements, the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program, Nine-Point Plan to Improve the Recruitment and Development of Hispanics, the Program for the Employment of People with Disabilities, the Reasonable Accommodation Program, Architectural Barrier Removal Program, and the Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment. The firm also reviewed NASS's monitoring and evaluation system and work environment pertaining to equal opportunity and civil rights employment compliance, including NASS's awards program.

Based on this review, it was concluded that NASS was in compliance with equal opportunity and civil rights employment requirements for the period reviewed. All of the programs reviewed were in compliance and the monitoring and evaluation system and work environment pertaining to equal opportunity and civil rights employment were in compliance. We also found that NASS's handling of employment complaints was in compliance. There were no findings or recommendations which required any follow-up action by NASS.

In FY 2001, NASS, in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Service's Human Resources Division, also conducted on-site Human Resources Management Evaluations involving the Agency's Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, Arkansas, and Alabama State Statistical Offices. Each of these on-site evaluations, among other things, reviewed and assessed the status of equal employment opportunity and civil rights at each location.

An internal evaluation team, OCSET2, was chartered by NASS Senior Management in 2001. The team's task was to analyze the results of the 2001 Organizational Climate Survey and make comparisons, when applicable; assess the Agency's goals and priorities; and make recommendations to NASS Senior Management in FY 2001.

**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.

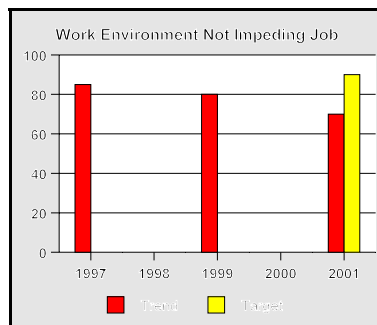
Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 1999 Actual	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Target	FY 2001 Actual
6.3.1 Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that the physical environment makes it easy to do their job well.	80%	n/a	90%	70%
• Percent of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that they are kept informed about issues affecting their jobs.	58%	n/a	65%	55%
• Number of computer security breaches resulting in disclosure of confidential data or loss / modification of sensitive data.	0	0	0	0
• Accumulated number of new GPEA <sup>1</sup> eGovernment (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.	1	2	3	3

**Table 15:** Annual Performance Goals and Indicators for Employees' Physical Work Environment and Communication, Computer Security Breaches, and New 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; the number of computer security breaches due to equipment failures causing a delay in a release; and tracking the number of eGovernment products and services. The FY 2001 actual performance for zero tolerance of computer security breaches and the targeted number of eGovernment products and services was met. Targets established for employee ratings of their physical environment to do their job well and their opinions about being kept informed about issues that affect their jobs did not meet anticipated performance targets.

Year	Number of NASS Reports and Releases	Computer Security Breaches Due to Equipment Failures	Target
1998	425	1	
1999	419	0	
2000	425	0	
2001	481	0	0

**Table 16:** Number of Equipment Failures



**Chart 6:** Employees' Work Environment

Year	Employees Agreeing that Physical Work Environment not Impeding Them	Target	Employees Kept Informed About Issues with Their Jobs	Target
1997	85%		n/a	
1998	n/a		n/a	
1999	80%		58%	
2000	n/a		n/a	
2001	70%	90%	55%	65%

**Table 17:** Employees' Work Environment

**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. It is reviewed for consistency, completeness, and accuracy. The 2001 Organizational Climate Survey was conducted in 2001 which provided indications on the Agency's physical work environment and how well employees are informed.

**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. There were no documented computer security breaches due to equipment failures that resulted in damage to NASS data. Targets for eGovernment products and services were met, however, targets established for employees' physical work environment and keeping employees informed were not met. A brief analysis is provided for each of the indicators for this performance goal:

- **Physical Work Environment:** The 2001 Organizational Climate Survey indicated that 70 percent of the employees agreed that their physical work environment was not impeding them but was 20 points below the target. The OCSET2 analyzed the summary and comments from the 2001 Organizational Climate Survey to identify potential areas for improvement. Based on the Team's analysis of the Climate Survey results and a review of the previous OCSET report, employees' physical environment was not one of five high priority areas that were identified for improvement. Therefore, there were no additional recommendations made by the OCSET2 review team.

In August 2000, approximately 100 employees in the Census and Survey Division and a portion of the Marketing and Information Service Office in Headquarters moved into newly renovated space in Wing 3 of the South Building. This accounted for about a fourth of the Headquarters staff who moved into modern renovated space. There were four State Statistical Offices that relocated into new or remodeled space or office space that was expanded or improved. A new annual computer replacement schedule was approved to replace the oldest equipment based on the 2001 PC inventory analysis. About 400 new PC's were procured and distributed Agency-wide. This equates to about one-third of the NASS staff receiving new workstations.

- **Employees Kept Informed:** The 2001 Organizational Climate Survey indicated that 55 percent of the employees felt they were kept informed about issues affecting their jobs and was 10 points below the targeted 65 percent. While the overall survey results were positive, not all areas showed improvement and some were not at the desired level. The OCSET2 analyzed the summary and comments from the 2001 Organizational Climate Survey and identified Communication and Information Sharing as one of five priority areas needing improvement. The mean response for 2001 was 3.36, identical with 1999, but down from 3.47 in 1997.

The OCSET2 recommendations for making improvements were that senior management should write and circulate a brief summary and highlight decisions made in Senior Executive Team (SET) meetings and other meetings with decisions within a week. The Administrator should host semi-annually or as needed all-staff meetings to discuss pertinent issues affecting staff.

Employees are aware that managers are discussing important issues that will have an impact on their jobs. If decisions are placed on the NASSNet or in an e-mail similar to DAFO Info to all employees within a reasonable time, uncertainty among employees will be reduced. It is not as important for employees to know why a decision was made, but knowing what decisions were actually made is essential. Information sharing during times of dramatic change is even more critical than during stable times.

Keeping all employees informed is one area where our senior managers can demonstrate true "buy in" and support for our Desired Agency Values as developed by OCSET1, the first OCSET Team. While summaries are being written for some Divisions, having them shared with all employees would add consistency to communications throughout NASS. Summaries of decisions should also be published for other groups and teams whose work affects how others do their jobs. OCSET2

also recommends that NASS consider holding semiannual or as needed all-staff meetings in the Jefferson Auditorium each year to discuss current issues affecting people and their jobs.

- **Computer Security Breaches:** Of the 481 national reports published in the 2001 calendar year, there were no documented computer security breaches due to equipment failures resulting in a delay of releasing a scheduled report or disclosure of confidential data or loss / modification of sensitive data in NASS.
- **eGovernment Products and Services:** A total of three eGovernment products have been implemented in NASS to date. The first Electronic Data Reporting (EDR) instrument for the Weekly Crop Progress Survey was implemented in 1999 and incrementally implemented at the State level across the nation. This work was followed by e-mail data collection of cold storage data which focused on large operations in 2000. These operations agreed to e-mail their "in house" inventory files along with the format of the files for NASS to reformat for NASS's use. As a result, the operations were less burdened and NASS Headquarters and States found it not only a convenient method to collect data from "willing" respondents, but the data was more complete and captured changing inventory, particularly for "new" items. The development of a prototype for a standard Web-based data collection method for reporting cotton ginnings data began in 2001. NASS limited the amount of cotton ginning data that were collected using this new electronic methodology to ensure data quality using this new method.

#### **Current Fiscal Year Performance:**

- **Physical Work Environment:** NASS Senior Management plans to use the results of future NASS Organizational Climate Surveys to monitor and assess needs for improvements regarding the physical work environment of employees. Continued improvements in the organization have been ongoing. NASS is working closely with the USDA's Office of Operations on Phase II, Wing 4, of the South Building Modernization in moving the NASS Lockup facilities and Statistics Division staff in 2003. Several State Statistical Offices will be moved to new facilities during the year.
- **Employees Kept Informed:** NASS Senior Management will be adopting many of the OCSET2 recommendations for communications and information sharing, which include making plans to establish a team for addressing NASS Communications; Senior Executive Team (SET) notes will be published and distributed to employees; and an "all-staff" meeting in Headquarters will be conducted on a more regular basis by the Office of the Administrator.
- **Computer Security Breaches:** Implementation of new security technologies and systems and continuous employee training on processing and using NASS systems is paramount in dealing with equipment failure. Procurement of some needed equipment has been delayed until FY 2002 due to budget constraints.
- **eGovernment Products and Services:** Congress has mandated through the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) of 1998 that all Federal agencies are required by October 2003 to allow individuals or entities the option to submit information or transact business with the Agency electronically, when "practicable," and to maintain records electronically, when "practicable." OMB requires that all federal survey collections must specify a GPEA adoption.

NASS is currently developing an eGovernment Tactical Plan that will be integrated with the Department's Strategic eGovernment Planning activities. NASS is investigating the components of an EDR system and reviewing software packages and integration companies for potential outsourcing. This work includes the development of a prototype survey including as much of the process as possible: data flow, security, usability testing, EDR instrument, administrative processes, instructions, architecture, etc. A discovery workshop has been conducted to maximize efficiencies in developing a new EDR "collection" system. A request for funding to purchase, build, or outsource the infrastructure is underway.

**Program Evaluations:** An internal evaluation team, OCSET2, was chartered by NASS Senior Management in 2001. The Team's task was to analyze the results of the 2001 Organizational Climate

Survey and make comparisons, when applicable; assess the Agency's goals and priorities; and, make recommendations to NASS Senior Management in FY 2002. The Team played a vital role in evaluating the questionnaire and providing input for the 2003 survey. The Team continues to build on the foundation of the NASS Core Value System developed by the 1999 Team. This effort provides recommendations consistent with those values that will be important to everyone in making NASS "a great place to work."