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Introduction

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 Annual Performance Report (APR) is presented by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements. This annual report supports the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) FY 2004 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR). This FY 2004 APR reflects the goals and objectives in the NASS 2003-2008 Strategic Plan. The agency has aligned its strategic plan with the goals and objectives in the 2002-2007 USDA Strategic Plan and the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area plans. Only Federal employees were involved in the preparation of this report.

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 (ASB). NASS is the primary statistical Agency in USDA whose mission is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U. S. agriculture. These responsibilities were authorized in the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627). NASS is responsible for conducting the census of agriculture program that provides comprehensive information about the Nation's agriculture every 5 years. NASS's responsibility to conduct the census of agriculture is authorized under Public Law 105-113, the Census of Agriculture Act of 1997 (Title 7 U.S.C. 2204g).

NASS's current official statistics program and the census of agriculture program are complemented by its statistical research and service program. This program works to improve statistical survey methodology and to test advanced technology for timely and cost efficient production of high quality agricultural statistics. Internally, the statistics are used across USDA and are provided to other agencies in their analyses of programs, policy development, etc., as well as in their annual performance measures.

I. Performance Scorecard At-A-Glance

Of the 43 measures included in the Annual Performance Plan (APP), 41 measures were used to measure the Agency's performance in 2004. Of the 41 measures, 36 measures or 88 percent met or exceeded established performance targets, up 14 points from the level of performance achieved in 2003, and up 4 points when compared to performance achievements in 2002. Of the total, 9 targets exceeded performance expectations with only 5 targets that did not fully meet expectations. All of the targets set by the Agency to address progress on the initiatives for the Presidential Management Agenda met or exceeded expectations in 2004.

Exhibit 1: NASS Performance Scorecard At-A-Glance

Performance Scorecard for FY 2004			
<i>Annual Performance Indicators</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Result</i>
STRATEGIC GOAL 1: ENHANCE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS			
Objective 1.1: Agricultural Markets have Unbiased Data to Operate Efficiently with Fair and Equitable Price Discovery.			
Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users (PART Measure)	100%	99.4%	<i>Unmet</i>
Percent of official reports for which an errata must be issued	0	0	<i>Met</i>
Number of Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements	160	175	<i>Exceeded</i>
New products and services produced and tracked to fulfill customer requests	Yes	Yes	<i>Met</i>
Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release	0	0	<i>Met</i>
Percent of key survey point estimates meeting target coefficients of variation (c.v.) (PART Measure)	72%	70%	<i>Unmet</i>
Root mean square error will be reported to data users as a measure of reliability of statistical forecasts and estimates against final totals	21 Reports	21 Reports	<i>Met</i>
Percent of total U.S. agricultural production covered annually by official USDA statistics (PART Measure)	92%	92% Prelim.	<i>Met</i>
Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) (PART Measure)	73	77	<i>Exceeded</i>
The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI (PART Measure)	> 79	82	<i>Met</i>
The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI (PART Measure)	> 85	84	<i>Unmet</i>
Increase in the annual survey development and data collection costs per sample unit compared to the annual rate of inflation as measured by the ECI ² is less than one (PART Measure)	<1	-.16	<i>Exceeded</i>
Performance of information collections in compliance of the PRA at any time during the rating year	95%	100%	<i>Exceeded</i>
Objective 1.2: Support International Economic Development and Trade Capacity Building Through Technical Assistance			
Percent of export value of the target countries where NASS provided technical assistance to improve agricultural statistics systems	28%	21%	<i>Unmet</i>
Objective 1.4: Statistical Data are Available for Risk Management Programs and as a Financial Tool for Decision Making in Agriculture.			
Percent of the 42 county estimate States with statistically defensible survey precision	0	0	<i>Met</i>

Exhibit 1: NASS Performance Scorecard At-A-Glance

Performance Scorecard for FY 2004			
<i>Annual Performance Indicators</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Result</i>
States accounting for 90 percent of the value of sale will be included in the monthly grain price program	>90%	93%	<i>Met</i>
Objective 1.5: Statistical Data Promotes An Efficient and Economically Viable Agricultural Production and Marketing System			
Percent of key survey point estimates of key total expenditure items for which the relative standard error is reported	0	0	<i>Met</i>
Percent of U.S. cash receipts for which State level estimates of key farm production expenditure variables are reported	65% for 15 States	Regional & Nat'l Levels	<i>Unmet</i>
Be responsive to new and emerging agricultural issues at the Federal level in addressing data user needs by providing timely, accurate, and usable statistics on emerging issues	Narrative Only	Narrative Only	<i>Met</i>
STRATEGIC GOAL 2: SUPPORT INCREASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL AMERICA			
Objective 2.1: Provide Statistically Sound Information for Economic and Business Decision-making at the Local Level in Rural Communities			
Develop new List Sampling Frame Strategic Plan	Yes	Yes	<i>Met</i>
Months following the end of the census year when census data are available nationally	14 Months	14 Months	<i>Met</i>
Percent of total U.S. farms and farmland with sales of \$50,000 or more included in census list tabulations based on an independent measure of undercoverage.	No Target Set This Year	-	-
Percent of total U.S. minority operated farms included in census mail list from an independent measure of undercoverage.	No Target Set This Year	-	-
Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives.	Narrative Only	Narrative Only	<i>Met</i>
STRATEGIC GOAL 3: ENHANCE PROTECTION AND SAFETY OF THE NATION'S AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SUPPLY			
Objective 3.2: Chemical Usage Statistics Enable Informed Decisions Using Sound Science in Risk Analysis			
Percent of U.S. production covered by chemical use surveys	95%	96%	<i>Exceeded</i>
STRATEGIC GOAL 5: PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATION'S NATURAL RESOURCE BASE AND ENVIRONMENT			
Objective 5.2: Statistical Data are Available for Improved Management of Soil, Air and Water.			
Percent of crops where acreage targets are met as they relate to the management of natural resources	100%	100%	<i>Met</i>
Number of states with cropland data layer	8	8	<i>Met</i>
Presidential Management Agenda: Improve Human Capital Management			
Percent of NASS budget appropriations spent on training and career development for NASS employees	3%	3.1%	<i>Exceeded</i>

Exhibit 1: NASS Performance Scorecard At-A-Glance

Performance Scorecard for FY 2004			
Annual Performance Indicators	Target	Actual	Result
Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce	55%	56%	<i>Exceeded</i>
Number of substantiated EEO complaints by NASS employees.	0	0	<i>Met</i>
A NASS Workforce Plan in place	Yes	Yes	<i>Met</i>
A NASS Succession Plan in place	Yes	Yes	<i>Met</i>
NASS (or USDA) skills gap analysis conducted	Yes	Yes	<i>Met</i>
Participate in OPM's annual Federal Human Capital Survey (or conduct a NASS Organizational Climate Survey)	No	Yes	<i>Exceeded</i>
Conduct Human Resource Management Evaluations (HRME)	8	8	<i>Met</i>
Presidential Management Agenda: Competitive Sourcing Initiatives			
Complete the Annual FAIR Act Inventory	Yes	Yes	<i>Met</i>
Contribute to the REE long-range competitive sourcing plan	Yes	Yes	<i>Met</i>
Presidential Management Agenda: Improve Financial Management			
Clean financial audit each fiscal year	Yes	Yes	<i>Met</i>
Presidential Management Agenda: Expand Electronic Government			
Accumulated number of new GPEA ¹ e-government (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.	34	39	<i>Exceeded</i>
A NASS eGovernment Tactical Plan in place	Yes	Yes	<i>Met</i>
Departmental security rating for NASS.	Yellow	Yellow	<i>Met</i>
Percent of employees receiving "Security Awareness" training.	100%	100%	<i>Met</i>
Presidential Management Agenda: Establish Budget and Performance Integration			
Integrate NASS budget and performance analyses and processes	Yes	Yes	<i>Met</i>

II. Strategic Goal 1: Enhance Economic Opportunities for Agricultural Producers

Expanding markets for agricultural products is critical to the long-term economic health and prosperity of our food and agricultural sector. Timely, reliable, and useful research, education, and information leading to technological and economic advantage are keys to helping U.S. agriculture remain strong, while expanding international marketing opportunities. U.S. farmers have a wealth of natural resources, cutting edge technologies, and a supporting infrastructure that result in a production capacity beyond domestic needs and expanding into global markets.

Objective 1.1: Agricultural Markets have Unbiased Data to Operate Efficiently with Fair and Equitable Price Discovery.

It is imperative for NASS to deliver high-quality, objective, relevant, timely, and accurate statistics to producers and other data users in order to make sound, informed production and marketing decisions. Official agricultural statistics promote a level playing field in production agriculture with impartial information available to all at a predetermined and publicized date and time. The Agricultural Statistics Board calendar of official reports is released in the preceding calendar year providing data users with the date and time of each report released during the year. This basic unbiased data supplied by NASS throughout the year provides timely and accurate market-sensitive data used by the commodity and agricultural markets to operate efficiently which is essential for maintaining a fair and equitable environment for price discovery. This information is necessary for making informed decisions by public officials and private interests. USDA policymakers and Congress use this information to help them make informed decisions and policies that promote and contribute to a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy.

Exhibit 2: Objective 1.1 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users	99.8%	99.8%	100%	99.4%
Percent of official reports for which an errata must be issued	0%	0%	0%	0%
Number of Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements	162	168	160	175
New products and services produced and tracked to fulfill customer requests.	11	20	Yes	Yes (23)
Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release	0	0	0	0
Percent of key survey point estimates meeting target coefficients of variation (c.v.)	49%	67%	72%	70%
Root mean square error will be reported to data users as a measure of reliability of statistical forecasts and estimates against final totals	20 Reports	20 Reports	21 Reports	21 Reports

Exhibit 2: Objective 1.1 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Percent of total U.S. agricultural production covered annually by official USDA statistics	100%	96%	92%	Prelim. 92%
Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	-	-	75	77
The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	-	>79	82
The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	-	>85	84
Increase in the annual survey development and data collection costs per sample unit compared to the annual rate of inflation as measured by the ECI ² is less than one.	-.56	.38	<1	-.16
Performance of information collections in compliance of the PRA at any time during the rating year	100%	100%	95%	100%

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Marketing and Information Services Office (MISO) maintains the performance data for national reports released, data security, new products and services, and customer satisfaction information; Statistics Division maintains information on statistical program coverage, statistical precision (C.V's) and reliability of information in national reports; Census and Survey Division tracks compliance of Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) and data collection costs and efficiencies. The PRA data are based on information compiled by the Agency's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Clearance Officer for all NASS data collection activities. All information is reviewed by assigned Division staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy. Any revisions to the previous years APR data are footnoted in this report.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met or exceeded most of its targets for the goals in achieving its objective to provide unbiased data for agricultural markets to operate efficiently with fair and equitable price discovery. The following brief analyses are provided for each of the annual performance goals and indicators contributing to the overall success in attaining the desired program results:

Reports and Releases: NASS came very close to fully achieving the 100 percent performance target for releasing reports on-time. The 2004 reports calendar was published in the fall of 2003. This annual publication lists release dates for all USDA national statistical reports, covering over 120 crops and 45 livestock items.

Of the 507 scheduled reports on the 2004 ASB calendar, 99.4 percent of ASB reports were released on-time. There were 3 reports that were delayed and rescheduled due to technical difficulties in 2004. These reports included the January 7, 2004 Poultry Slaughter Report, the April 29, 2004 Chickens and Eggs Statistical Report, and the May 19, 2004 Agricultural Chemical Usage-Field Crop Summary. The delay of the release of these reports had no market impact. There were 3 reports scheduled for release on June 11, 2004 that were released a day

early on June 10, 2004 as USDA and other federal agencies were closed on June 11 as a mark for respect for the passing of former President Ronald W. Reagan the fortieth President of the United States.

Furthermore, there were no erratas published in 2004. Report errors determined to be “market sensitive” are corrected with a publication of an official errata notice. Cosmetic and non-data errors or “non-market sensitive errors” are tracked, documented, and corrected, but an official errata is not published for those reports and they are not included in performance data. Revisions to preliminary data series, forecasts, or estimates are part of the Agency’s standard operating procedures and are not considered errors.

Exhibit 3: Official ASB Reports Released On-Time and Without Erratas

Year	Official ASB Reports Released	ASB Reports Released On-Time	Percent On-time	ASB Reports with Erratas Issued	Percent
2000	425	424	99.8%	0	0%
2001	481	476	99.0%	0	0%
2002	508	507	99.8%	0	0%
2003	487	486	99.8%	0	0%
2004	507	504	99.4%	0	0%

Data Security: There were no instances of any impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of any official release in 2004.

Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements: NASS had a total of 135 memoranda of understanding and 40 cooperative agreements with State Departments of Agriculture, land grant colleges and universities, and other cooperators. These unique State-Federal cooperative agreements are established each year in order to facilitate work for 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 Field Offices. In FY 2004, work included 138 special surveys covering such varied issues as customer service, farm safety and health, pesticide use, county estimates, nursery/horticulture, farm finance, and specialty crops, down 10 from 148 surveys conducted in 2003, and down 26 surveys from 2002. The additional workload in summarizing the census of agriculture required more resources limiting the amount of external survey work that could be done.

New Products and Services: There were 23 new statistical products and services provided to the public in 2004. This does not include a number of additional census publications and statistical series also released during the year. The following is a detailed bulleted listing of new products and services that were prepared to meet new customer and data user needs:

- Sweet rice acreage, yield, and production were included as short grain rice in the Crop Production - 2003 Summary.
- The corn objective yield survey program was expanded by adding samples in Kansas, Missouri, and South Dakota. The soybean objective yield survey program was expanded by adding samples in Arkansas, Kansas, North Dakota, and South Dakota.
- A special report, Licensed Dairy Herds, was issued in February 2004. This report contains the annual average number of dairy operations that were licensed to sell milk during 2002 and 2003, by State and United States. NASS will begin publishing this data series annually in the 2005 February Milk Production report.

- A new annual report, Price Reactions - Livestock Reports, was issued in February 2004. This report contained annual average and monthly cattle and hog price reactions to the USDA-NASS monthly Cattle on Feed and Quarterly Hogs and Pigs reports.
- A special report, Livestock Operations, 2003 Summary, was issued in April 2004. This report contained the operations estimates originally included in each of the respective cattle, hog, and sheep annual reports. Subsequently, this report and the Farms and Land in Farms report will be combined into a new publication titled, Farms, Land in Farms, and Livestock Operations published in January of each year.
- A new table, "Supply and Utilization of Milk, United States," calculating butterfat and nonfat solids was added to the Dairy Products 2003 Summary released in April 2004. The butterfat and solids nonfat equivalence table will replace the "U.S. Supply and Utilization of Whole and Skim Milk" tables beginning with the Dairy Products 2004 Summary in April 2005.
- Monthly U.S. sour cream production was added to the Dairy Products 2003 Summary, released in April 2004.
- The combined U.S. and Canadian Cattle report for July was expanded to include historical data. Combined and individual country data from 2000 to the present were included in this report.
- A new report, Livestock Track Records, issued in September 2004 contained track records of U.S. Livestock and Poultry production. These track records measure the difference between the first and final estimates for cattle, dairy, hogs, sheep, broilers, turkeys, and eggs.
- An updated U.S. Breeding Herd Structure report was released in September 2004. This is an update from the previous version released in September 2002.
- The Agricultural Resources Management Survey (ARMS) program was expanded to permit release of economic data for 15 States. NASS did not create individual State estimates for 2003, but plans to publish estimates for the expanded 15 States in the July 2005 Farm Production Expenditures release. ARMS is conducted through cooperative efforts between NASS and the Economic Research Service (ERS) to provide a comprehensive picture of agricultural business practices, economic well-being, and farm household information.
- NASS and ERS jointly released an on-line query system to allow users to customize tabulations, which meet the rules for disclosure, of the ARMS data.
- An integrated questionnaire version was developed for overlapping samples between the Conservation Effects Assessment Program (CEAP) and the ARMS, which NASS conducts in cooperation with ERS. Besides addressing respondent burden, ERS will explore use of the integrated survey to conduct some longitudinal studies for these overlapping samples.
- A shortened questionnaire version of the ARMS was developed and mailed to one-fourth of the sample in early Spring 2004. This was the first large scale test of a mail questionnaire to collect economic data. Response rates and data quality were similar to results of the personally enumerated shortened version. Based on these findings, all core samples will receive the questionnaire by mail in 2005. This will result in an increase in efficiency and a reduction in respondent burden.
- NASS estimated on-farm and off-farm stocks of dry edible beans, Austrian winter peas, and chickpeas in December 2003 and June 2004. These new stocks items were published in support of the 2002 Farm Bill.
- NASS officially deployed to full production our Electronic Data Reporting (EDR) system in 2004. This system meets the requirements of the Government Paperwork Elimination

Act by providing respondents the ability to electronically complete the data collection process. Many NASS survey instruments are now available to agricultural producers for web data collection. This additional mode of data collection will potentially reduce their reporting burden and automate the data collection process. Plans are to complete the system with the electronic availability of the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

- The 2002 Census of Agriculture was released in the Spring of 2004. Enhancements from prior censuses included for the first time data on demographic information for up to three operators, enhanced data on agricultural activity on American Indian Reservations, acreage of organically produced crops, and information on production contracts used in agriculture.
- Census data releases included expanded capability for querying and downloading data. Internet access provided the capability to download the entire census publication. Also, a query interface was provided to allow data users to search selected items by different geographic levels.
- A pilot project expanded statistics about agricultural activity on American Indian Reservations. This project focused on reservations in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Selected characteristics of farms and farm operators were released for each reservation. Historically, only a single aggregated report was completed for each reservation since individual farm and farm operator characteristics were not collected.
- NASS provided historic links to previous census data. Because of the methodological change to account for all farms in the 2002 census results, it was necessary to provide a bridge of comparable historical links to the 1997 Census of Agriculture. All State and county level data for the 1997 Census of Agriculture were re-tabulated using the current methodology.
- 2002 Census of Agriculture data were used to help prepare the first annual report to Congress on USDA program participation by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. NASS provided census data at the county level on race, ethnicity, and gender for use by the USDA in preparing the report.
- Census of Agriculture for Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- The 2002 Puerto Rico Census of Agriculture was released in February 2004. This was the first time that data for Puerto Rico were released with a comparable reference (January - December) as U.S. statistics. Since the Puerto Rican government identified this as a goal 4 years ago, NASS has been working with the Puerto Rican Planning Board and the Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture to make it a reality. Data products contain information in both Spanish and English.

Statistical Precision: The standards for statistical precision of the estimates are expressed as coefficients of variation (CVs). The CV for a particular estimate is the standard error of the estimate divided by the estimate and is generally expressed as a percentage. The CV is a relative measure of data dispersion and is independent of the units of measurement. The lower the CV of an estimate, the more precise it is in relative terms. One of the major advantages of conducting a probability survey is the ability to compute a measure of precision on the estimate. The ultimate goal of the survey process is to publish estimates which are precise and accurate. The estimate calculated using data from the probability survey is referred to as the survey indication and the number published using all available information is referred to as the estimate. In many instances, other information is available to NASS that can be utilized to improve the reliability of the published estimate. However, by definition, the precision can only be measured by using data from the probability survey so the CV is always calculated using the survey indication.

In 2004, NASS measured statistical precision of estimates was monitored by Statistics Division, tracking a total 2434 CV's with 1705 of the CV's meeting or exceeding the CV targets, or 70 percent. The 2004 performance target of 72 percent was not fully attained. However, this was a 3 percent improvement over the Agency's performance of 67 percent.

Reliability of Statistical Forecasts and Estimates: NASS has a policy of reviewing previously released agricultural commodity estimates when additional data become available. These additional data are examined with the original survey data to determine if the official estimate should be revised. When a revision is in order, the new estimate becomes the official estimate. The last opportunity to review an estimate is after the 5-year census of agriculture. The root mean square error (RMSE) provides an approximation of the variability of the differences between the first and final estimates. Statistical confidence intervals can be computed using the RMSE which give a range of possible final estimates. NASS can report the RMSE and 90 percent confidence intervals in major releases to help data users evaluate performance. Major releases include monthly Crop Production, Crop Production Annual Summary, Non-Citrus Fruits and Nuts Preliminary Summary, Non-Citrus Fruits and Nuts Summary, semi-annual Cattle, January Sheep and Goats, July Sheep, quarterly Hogs and Pigs, Milk Production (February), and annual Poultry-Production and Value Summary.

Root mean square error's are currently reported for major commodities in 21 NASS reports. In 2004, progress was made in expanding the use of the RMSE information in the publication of the July Sheep report as planned. This represents an increase of 1 report for 2004.

Annual Statistics Program Coverage: NASS statistical program coverage is based on cash receipt estimates published by USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) and is used for calculating NASS statistics program coverage percentage in non-census years. 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. For 2004, expected program coverage is 92 percent, however farm cash receipts for 2004 are not available until 2005.

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

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) Study: The ACSI study was conducted in 2004 by the National Quality Research Center at the University of Michigan Business School, CFI Group, and the Federal Consulting Group. The 2004 customer satisfaction index (ACSI) score for the overall group of NASS products and service users is 77 on a scale of 1-100 scale. This score is significantly higher than the aggregate Federal government ACSI score of 72.1 as of the end of 2004. Furthermore, this score is significantly higher than the aggregate private sector score of 74.3 as of the 3rd quarter of 2004. Therefore, NASS is outperforming both the average Federal agency score and the average private sector firm score – a noteworthy accomplishment.

This result indicates that, generally speaking, NASS is successfully interacting with its customers while delivering strong levels of customer satisfaction across various customer groups. Regardless of the type of customer NASS is engaging, NASS tends to deliver about the same high level of customer satisfaction.

Data Security: Data security is a critical component of NASS processing and information dissemination. Any instances of impropriety or the appearance of any impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release is reported to the Chairman and Secretary of the Agricultural Statistics Board. No improprieties were reported or detected in 2004.

Data Collection Costs, Efficiencies and Compliance: The average costs for collecting data per sampled unit provides a measure of agency efficiency in conducting its primary business activity. Annual performance measures for major probability surveys are summarized and monitored for this assessment. The annual percent change in survey costs for the current year compared to the previous year is compared to the annual percentage change in the Employment Cost Index (ECI) for private industry. The ECI measures the price of labor, defined as compensation per employee hour worked. Some fluctuation in unit cost per sample between survey years may occur when methodology or other program changes are introduced.

NASS exceeded its performance target for efficiency of managing annual survey data collection costs per sample unit at an increase rate less than the rate of inflation as measured by the ECI for the last three performance years (2002-2004). In order to meet or exceed the efficiency performance target, the ratio must be less than 1. The ratio for FY 2004 was -.16. During this period, steps were taken to introduce methods of data collection and use existing methods of collection that were more cost effective. For example, Web based data collection was initiated for certain surveys and increased use of mail collection was encouraged where feasible. Also, increased coordination and collaboration of survey collections with new sources of administrative data kept survey costs in check.

The average unit cost per sample for FY 2004 was \$36.46, a slight decrease of 0.6 percent (23 cents) from the previous year while the ECI increased at a 3.9 percent rate. A major survey, the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), relied on new Agricultural Census data to reduce screening of farm operations for certain targeted commodities. ARMS also introduced the mail collection of financial data using an abbreviated questionnaire version for a portion of the sample. Use of available administrative data sources also complemented this effort.

The number of information collections for year 2004 totals 26 to date with all (or 100 percent) collections were in compliance. There were no information collections in violation of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) at any time during the rating year. NASS uses the OMB compliance target level of 95 percent. A log of data collection dockets and schedule for renewal and initial submissions is maintained. Operations Memoranda are issued to agency staff identifying active dockets and instructing users regarding data collection policy. A schedule of new docket submission and clearance procedures is maintained. Attendance at USDA OCIO meetings ensures guidance on rule and procedure changes is followed. Information on compliance status is provided monthly by OMB.

Current Fiscal Year Performance:

Reports and Releases: NASS continues its efforts to sustain a 100 percent target level of on-time reports through continuous staff training and use of computer equipment and technology. In general, the number of reports and information released by NASS will continue to expand to meet the ever-growing demands for new products and services and challenges associated with data users and the public's continual need for more precise and reliable statistical information. There have not been any instances of impropriety regarding data security for 2005.

Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements: These unique MOU's and State-Federal cooperative agreements are maintained in order to facilitate work to conduct special State (or multi-State) surveys and services in cooperation with State Departments of Agriculture, land-grant colleges and universities, and industry groups by the Field Offices. In FY 2005, work will include special surveys covering such varied issues as customer service, farm safety and health, pesticide use, county estimates, nursery/horticulture, farm finance, and specialty crops.

Statistical Precision: The ultimate goal of the survey and estimates process is to publish estimates which are precise and accurate. In FY 2005, NASS is focusing on improving the CV's in the Crops / Grain Stocks estimating series as the next step in its effort to continue to increase the number of successes in meeting or exceeding the CV standards and annual performance targets.

Reliability of Statistical Forecasts and Estimates: NASS can report the RMSE and 90 percent confidence intervals in major releases to help data users evaluate performance. Major releases include monthly Crop Production, Crop Production Annual Summary, Non-Citrus Fruits and Nuts Preliminary Summary, Non-Citrus Fruits and Nuts Summary, semi-annual Cattle, January Sheep and Goats, July Sheep, quarterly Hogs and Pigs, Milk Production (February), and annual Poultry-Production and Value Summary. In FY 2005, NASS is working to include the RMSE and 90 percent confidence intervals in several additional National reports.

Agricultural Statistics Program Coverage: Cash receipt data for the 2004 statistical program coverage evaluation will be made available by ERS in 2005. NASS continuously strives to increase program coverage, but expansion of program coverage is limited by appropriated budget resources each fiscal year.

New Products and Services to Meet Data Users and Customers Needs: NASS continues to keep abreast of information needs through a variety of means, including data user meetings, advisory committees, attending industry meetings, and sponsoring outreach activities. Even though most NASS reports consist of specific data series, improvements to reports and databases are constantly being made in terms of additional data breakouts, improved coverage, and improved timeliness. Special reports or additional categories within existing reports are added to best summarize the constantly changing character of agriculture, within the budget available to the agency.

NASS will continue to conduct its annual Data User Meetings. Data User Meetings were held in Chicago, IL., in October 2004 and Albany, NY., in November 2004. Each participating USDA agency provided a mission overview and summary of changes and new products, followed by an open forum for public comment as well as questions and answers. NASS will continue to provide the leadership role at these annual data users' meetings to discuss customer data needs, service, and to seek their advice on current and emerging issues.

The Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics convened in February 2005. The Committee is made up of a cross section of agricultural interests and provides recommendations, feedback, and opinions concerning the NASS statistical program and emerging agricultural issues.

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) Studies: NASS will continue to provide and maintain its high level of service to all of its data users and customers. There are currently no plans to make any major changes the services provided to data users and customers, therefore NASS does not intend to conduct a study in 2005.

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 both USDA's and NASS's standard operating procedures.

Data Collection Costs, Efficiencies and Compliance: As a new requirement of OMB's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) and evaluation, every federal agency is required to have at least one efficiency performance measure. NASS added an efficiency measure in 2004 for the FY 2006 PART evaluation using the Department of Labor's ECI to measure the rates of change between the survey data collection cost and the ECI. In 2005, NASS continues to manage its resources effectively by keeping survey data collection costs associated with pay and travel costs below the rate of inflation as measured by the ECI. Also for 2005, to-date, there are no information collections in violation of the PRA.

Program Evaluations: The NASS program, including the agricultural estimates and the census of agriculture, underwent a PART assessment for the FY 2006 budget process. The overall program rating was "Moderately Effective." Specifically, the findings gave NASS a perfect score for "program purpose & design" and "program management." The lack of regular independent, external evaluations of the NASS program was the only factor keeping NASS from also receiving a perfect score in "strategic planning." NASS has implemented a plan for an external review following the release of each quinquennial census of agriculture. The "program results" section of the PART indicated the need for improved demonstration of NASS achieving its long-term and annual performance goals. The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) will be used to demonstrate progress in these areas.

Objective 1.2: Support International Economic Development and Trade Capacity Building Through Technical Assistance

The United States carries out a broad range of activities and initiatives that fosters economic growth and trade capacity building in developing countries around the world. Promoting economic development through technology transfer so that developing countries can improve their income and buying power helps expand international trade in agriculture. However, developing countries are concerned that limited technology and poor infrastructure may hinder their ability to compete effectively in global markets.

NASS works with the U.S. Agency for International Development and other Federal agencies supplying technical statistical assistance to improve and expand the country's capacity to produce agricultural statistics and information. Education and technology transfer can help move those methods into developing countries. Economic and statistical research can illuminate the role of and degree to which technology transfer improves incomes and increases trade.

Exhibit 4: Objective 1.2 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Percent of export value of the target countries where NASS provided technical assistance to improve agricultural statistics systems	19%	25%	28%	21%

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The International Programs Office (IPO) is a unit of the Office of the Administrator that coordinates and provides technical assistance to foreign countries and maintains the performance information. All information is reviewed by the IPO staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: The measure compares the export values of all agricultural products for NASS project countries with the total for all countries having greater than \$300 million in agricultural exports per year but lacking reliable agricultural statistics systems. The total excludes many of the EU countries and other selected developed countries. Export values used in the calculations are obtained from the FAOSTAT-Agricultural database.

While NASS continues to provide quality technical assistance for improve agricultural statistical systems in developing countries and those in transition to market economies, the specific performance target to increase the export value was not achieved. NASS has very little control over the outcome measure because all assistance is provided on a reimbursable basis at the request of donors. NASS met its performance goal in providing technical assistance to foreign countries.

In FY2004, NASS provided technical assistance and training to improve agricultural statistics programs in ten countries. Short-term assignments supported work in Brazil, China, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Nepal, Russia, and Ukraine. In addition, NASS coordinated and/or conducted training programs in the U.S. for 219 visitors representing 26 countries. These assistance and training activities promote better quality data and improved access to data from other countries, which allows U.S. analysts to better understand the world supply and demand situation. Improved analysis supports trade and more efficient marketing of U.S. agricultural products.

Current Fiscal Year Performance: In FY2005 to-date, NASS has provided technical assistance to thirteen countries: Belize, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Russia, Southern Sudan and Ukraine. NASS is continuing to coordinate and/or conduct training programs on agricultural statistics for foreign visitors.

Program Evaluations: No formal program evaluations were conducted.

Objective 1.3: Provide the Science-Based Knowledge and Technologies to Generate New or Improved High Quality Products and Processes to Expand Markets for the Agricultural Sector.

Technological progress is increasingly pushing the market for agricultural products in new directions. Biobased technologies promise new opportunities for energy, industrial, and pharmacological markets for U.S. farmers. Key priorities for USDA will be research to support development of new markets and products, including implementation of Title IX of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 FSRIA), the first energy title ever in a farm bill. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

Objective 1.4: Statistical Data are Available for Risk Management Programs and as a Financial Tool for Decision Making in Agriculture.

Agricultural producers, like other business owners, use a variety of tools to manage risks, including crop insurance, credit, direct payments (including countercyclical payments), and marketing alternatives. Today, about three-quarters of the acreage planted to major crops is at least minimally insured and coverage is expanding through the provision of crop insurance to more crops and the development of new types of coverage, such as for livestock and revenue. These programs, along with diversified production, marketing, use of futures and options, and other federal program alternatives allow each producer to customize their risk management strategy. USDA's role is to expand and improve these safety net programs and to provide research and education to help producers better manage their natural and economic risks.

NASS produces and disseminates statistical information that provides U.S. producers with agricultural facts. County and local level statistics and price information help in effectively managing the inherently risky environment of agricultural production. The U.S. production system has to be dynamic to respond to ever changing political, economic, technological, environmental, and consumer-driven market forces. Agricultural production and marketability are constantly affected by such factors as unpredictable weather and growing conditions, disease and pest outbreaks, and consumer purchasing power.

Exhibit 5: Objective 1.4 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users	99.8%	99.8%	100%	99.4%
Percent of official reports for which an errata must be issued	0%	0%	0%	0%
Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release	0	0	0	0
Percent of the 42 county estimate States with statistically defensible survey precision	0	0	0	0
Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	-	-	75	77

Exhibit 5: Objective 1.4 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	-	>79	82
The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	-	>85	84
Increase in the annual survey development and data collection costs per sample unit compared to the annual rate of inflation as measured by the ECI ² is less than one.	-.56	.38	<1	-.16
States accounting for 90 percent of the value of sale will be included in the monthly grain price program	80%	93%	>90%	93%
Performance of information collections in compliance of the PRA at any time during the rating year	100%	100%	95%	100%

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Marketing and Information Services Office (MISO) maintains the performance data for national reports released, data security, new products and services, and customer satisfaction information; Statistics Division maintains information on statistical program coverage, statistical precision (C.V's) and reliability of information in national reports; Census and Survey Division tracks compliance of Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) and data collection costs and efficiencies. The PRA data are based on information compiled by the Agency's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Clearance Officer for all NASS data collection activities. All information is reviewed by assigned Division staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met or exceeded most of its targets for the goals in achieving its objective to make statistical data are available for risk management programs and as a financial tool for decision making in agriculture. The analyses provided in objective 1.1 for each of the annual performance goals and indicators also contributed to the overall success in attaining the desired results for objective 1.4. For the purposes of this report, readers should refer to the analyses previously provided for objective 1.1. However, the following goal and analysis associated with objective 1.4 were not associated with objective 1.1:

County Estimates: This measure, increasing the number of county estimate States with statistically defensible survey precision, is dependent on the county estimates funding initiatives. With sufficient funding, NASS expects to improve response rates on the county estimates surveys to provide sufficient data for calculating statistical variances. This measure recognizes the importance of NASS county yield estimates for FSA program payments. NASS did not receive funding for FY 2004 or for FY 2005 so the targets will remain at 0 percent.

Monthly Grain Price Program: The grain price program was expanded in 2003. Coverage now exceeds the 90 percent of the targeted commodities. There are 14 commodities in the monthly grain price program. Oats is the only commodity where it is unreasonable to hit the 90 percent coverage level. This is because oats is a minor commodity in many states. Therefore, 93 percent coverage (13 out of 14 commodities) is the highest level NASS will obtain.

Current Fiscal Year Performance:

County Estimates: A County Estimates Program Development Team formed in FY 2004 continues their work in FY 2005 towards meeting their goals to gain efficiencies and reduce respondent burden through coordination of end-of-year surveys and use of proven current applications; to develop and implement standards for data collection, editing, analysis, estimation, and publication; and to ensure county level estimates are consistent and defensible.

Monthly Grain Price Program: For FY 2005, the NASS grain price program will cover more than 90 percent of the value of sales on over 90 percent of the commodities.

Program Evaluations: There were no formal program evaluations conducted. The grain price program is evaluated regularly. States were adjusted in 2004 to account for shifting production patterns and areas.

Objective 1.5: Statistical Data Promotes An Efficient and Economically Viable Agricultural Production and Marketing System

Fundamental to the long-term viability of an agricultural producer is his or her ability to manage an efficient operation that realizes a profit. While factors such as market conditions, weather, and plant and animal pests and diseases play roles, it is the efficiency of farm or ranch production systems that ensure economic viability of each operation.

The annual Agricultural Resources Management Survey (ARMS) jointly sponsored with the Economic Research Service (ERS) is USDA's primary vehicle for information on a broad range of issues about the farm sector financial conditions and agricultural resource use. The ARMS provides the most definitive, annual description of the rapidly changing structure of the nation's farms. Without the ARMS, important measures such as farm income, farm operator income, and farm household income would not be available. This program also provides the critical information to analyze the effect government programs such as loan deficiency payments are having on net farm income by size and type of farm. Data from the ARMS survey are the foundation for the body of research that has led to the recognition on the part of decision-makers of the diversity of the farm sector and the differential impact of alternative policies and programs across the farm sector and among farm families.

Each year, a number of new and emerging issues in agriculture are identified. NASS conducts surveys, if funded, to support research and provide timely, accurate, and useful information on these new and emerging agricultural issues in response to requests by Congress, USDA and other Federal agencies, universities, industry, and data users. Examples of surveys and emerging issues are census follow-on surveys, adoption biotechnology, utilization of computer technology by farmers, BSE issues, organic issues, and need for equine statistics, to name a few.

Exhibit 6: Objective 1.5 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users	99.8%	99.8%	100%	99.4%
Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release	0	0	0	0
Percent of key survey point estimates meeting target coefficients of variation (c.v.)	49%	67%	72%	70%
Root mean square error will be reported to data users as a measure of reliability of statistical forecasts and estimates against final totals	20 Reports	20 Reports	21 Reports	21 Reports
Percent of key survey point estimates of key total expenditure items for which the relative standard error is reported	0	0	0	0
Percent of U.S. cash receipts for which State level estimates of key farm production expenditure variables are reported	Regional & Nat'l Levels	Regional & Nat'l Levels	65% for 15 States	Regional & Nat'l Levels
Be responsive to new and emerging agricultural issues at the Federal level in addressing data user needs by providing timely, accurate, and usable statistics on emerging issues	-	-	yes	yes
Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	-	-	75	77
The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	-	>79	82
The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	-	>85	84
Increase in the annual survey development and data collection costs per sample unit compared to the annual rate of inflation as measured by the ECI ² is less than one.	-.56	.38	<1	-.16
Performance of information collections in compliance of the PRA at any time during the rating year	100%	100%	95%	100%

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Marketing and Information Services Office (MISO) maintains the performance data for national reports released, data security, new products and services, and customer satisfaction information; Statistics Division maintains information on statistical program coverage, statistical precision (C.V.'s) and reliability of information in national reports; Census and Survey Division tracks compliance of Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) and data collection costs and efficiencies. The PRA data are based on information compiled by the Agency's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Clearance Officer for all NASS data collection activities. All information is reviewed by assigned Division staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met or exceeded most of its targets for the goals in achieving its objective to provide statistical data that promotes an efficient and economically viable agricultural production and marketing system. The analyses provided in objective 1.1 for each of the annual performance goals and indicators also contributed to the overall success in

attaining the desired results for objective 1.5. For the purposes of this report, readers should refer to the analyses previously provided for objective 1.1. However, the following performance goals and analyses associated with objective 1.5 were not included in objective 1.1 are:

New and Emerging Agricultural Issues: The growth of organic agriculture has led to increased interest in measuring this sector of the industry. The 2002 Farm Bill requires the Secretary of Agriculture to "ensure that segregated data on the production and marketing of organic agricultural products is included in the ongoing baseline of data collection regarding agricultural production and marketing." Subsequent inquiries from both Congress and the industry have validated the usefulness of this data series. NASS has expanded its data collection efforts on the 2007 Census of Agriculture to include an entire section devoted to acreage and inventory of organically produced agriculture commodities. This expanded data at the local level will serve as a future base for data collection activities targeted specifically at organic agriculture.

NASS continues to receive requests for a National Equine survey to measure both on-farm and off-farm equine inventories and associated economic and breed characteristics. Current NASS programs include an estimate of on-farm equine inventories, but do not account for the off-farm inventory. Results from the last National equine survey indicate over one-half of all horses and ponies reside on facilities not classified as a farm.

Key Farm Production Expenditure Variables: The Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) is the source of USDA's farm expenditure estimates. For FY 2004 the sample size was increased so that state level estimates could be made for the 16 production expenditure items. NASS management chose to have two years of data before publishing the estimates at the state level. Only regional and U.S. level estimates were published by NASS for FY 2004, therefore not meeting the original target to provide expenditure items at the State level.

Current Fiscal Year Performance: In July of 2005 NASS will publish state level estimates of the 16 expenditure items for the 15 major states, regional estimates, and U.S. estimates. The 15 major states account for more than 65 percent of farm production expenditures. Also, the relative standard error will be published for all expenditure items. The program is on target to produce the desired results for FY 2005. The program will be reevaluated after FY 2005 to see if coverage can be increased.

Program Evaluations: There were no program evaluations conducted in FY 2004.

III. Strategic Goal 2: Support Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Quality of Life in Rural America

Of the 60 million people who live in Rural America, only 2 million are directly engaged in production agriculture. A diversity of other enterprises, including support services for agriculture, forestry and mining, recreation, and manufacturing, provide most of the jobs and income in Rural America. USDA's role is to enhance the economic opportunities and quality of life for rural residents by providing financial and technical assistance for business and industry, water and waste disposal and other essential community facilities, advanced telecommunications, electric utilities, and housing. Our objective is to ensure that rural residents have equal opportunity to share in the Nation's prosperity and technological advancement.

Objective 2.1: Provide Statistically Sound Information for Economic and Business Decision-making at the Local Level in Rural Communities

The REE mission area promotes the well-being of rural America through research and analysis to better understand the economic, demographic, and environmental forces affecting rural regions and communities and, using that knowledge, to develop strategies that build on local assets. NASS statistical information, particularly the census of agriculture, is designed to enhance National, State, and local information on U.S. Agriculture and facilitate locality-based policy and business decisions. Detailed information from the census of agriculture on production, supply, economic, and demographic data is critical for new businesses in developing local level strategies and plans for successful startup or relocation in rural America. 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 continually works to improve coverage of minority farm operators when conducting the census of agriculture to provide needed demographic data and document the contributions to agricultural production from these farm and ranch operators.

The Advisory Committee on Agricultural Statistics, whose members represent and are affiliated with industry groups, commodity groups, organizations, universities, corporations, and other data users, provide valuable input to the census of agriculture. The Committee is meeting to review and discuss content and other relevant issues for planning and conducting the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

Exhibit 7: Objective 2.1 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Develop new List Sampling Frame Strategic Plan	No	No	Yes	Yes
Months following the end of the census year when census data are available nationally	-	-	14 Months	14 Months
Percent of total U.S. farms and farmland with sales of \$50,000 or more included in census list tabulations based on an independent measure of undercoverage	94.5% farm 99.1% land	-	No Target Set	-

Exhibit 7: Objective 2.1 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Percent of total U.S. minority operated farms included in census mail list from an independent measure of undercoverage	68%	-	No Target Set	-
Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives	Narrative Only	Narrative Only	Narrative Only	Narrative Only
Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	-	-	75	77
The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	-	>79	82
The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	-	>85	84
Performance of information collections in compliance of the PRA at any time during the rating year	100%	100%	95%	100%

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Marketing and Information Services Office (MISO) maintains the performance data for customer satisfaction information; Census and Survey Division administers the census of agriculture program, tracks compliance of Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), and data collection costs and efficiencies. The PRA data are based on information compiled by the Agency's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Clearance Officer for all NASS data collection activities. Policy coordination and maintenance of all information is reviewed by assigned Division staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met or exceeded most of its targets for the goals in achieving its objective to provide statistically sound information for economic and business decision-making at the local level in rural communities. The analyses provided in objective 1.1 for each of the annual performance goals and indicators also contributed to the overall success in attaining the desired results for objective 2.1. For the purposes of this report, readers should refer to the analyses previously provided for objective 1.1. However, the following performance goals and analyses associated with objective 2.1 not included in objective 1.1 are:

List Sampling Frame Strategic Plan: NASS published the "List Frame Five Year Plan 2003 - 2007" in early FY 2004. This plan documented current list frame issues and outlined fourteen Action Items that needed to be addressed to continue to improve the quality of the NASS list frame in support of the NASS survey and census programs.

Census of Agriculture Released: NASS released preliminary national and state data from the 2002 Census of Agriculture on February 3, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. This preliminary data was released 14 months after the initial mailing of the 2002 census questionnaires to over 2 million farmers and ranchers in the U.S. with a due date to return the questionnaire by February 3, 2003. Census 2002 preliminary data included demographic items such as sex of operator, residence on or off the farm, days worked off farm, years present on farm, age group categories, race, and number of

persons living in each household. The preliminary data was released to provide information to the public as soon as possible.

The full census report was released by the Secretary of Agriculture on June 3, 2004. The census of agriculture provides the only source of detailed, comprehensive agricultural facts for every county in America and gives facts on very specialized or small scale agriculture. Subsequent data products included a queryable online data base, State and county profiles, congressional district rankings and profiles, and the Agricultural Atlas. There is a significant difference in the measurements from the 1997 Census of Agriculture to the 2002 Census of Agriculture. For the first time, data for every county and state have been statistically adjusted to account for farms missed or misclassified in the census.

U.S. Farms and Farmland with Sales of \$50,000 or More: The census mail list (CML) for the 2002 Census of Agriculture contained 94.5% of the farms and 99.1% of the farmland for farms with \$50,000 or more in agricultural sales during 2002, based on an independent survey of over 13,000 land segments selected from the NASS area frame. Enumerators visited all segments, identified all farms operating land in each segment, and obtained basic data about those farms. The names and addresses of farms were matched to the census mail list. Farms that did not match were used to estimate the number of farms not represented on the CML for various types, sizes, and demographic groups.

NASS established a strategic goal of 95% coverage of all farms with \$50,000 or more in sales for the 2007 Census of Agriculture. There was no specific performance target established for 2004. The 2007 census mail list coverage measurements will not be available until FY 2008. To help insure that NASS meets this strategic goal, list building activities targeted farms and ranches with potential large values of sales during 2004. Processing of these farms early in the census five-year cycle will help insure their operating arrangements are recorded accurately on the list frame. NASS will start documenting coverage of these farms in our annual coverage evaluation publication starting in 2005.

U.S. Minority Operated Farms: The census mail list (CML) for the 2002 Census of Agriculture contained 68 percent of the minority operated farms, based on an independent survey of over 13,000 land segments selected from the NASS area frame. Enumerators visited all segments, identified all farms operating land in each segment, and obtained basic data about those farms. The names and addresses of farms were matched to the census mail list. Farms that did not match were used to estimate the number of farms not represented on the CML for various types, sizes, and demographic groups. The 2002 area frame data indicated that the CML included 68 percent of all minority operated farms, including female, Hispanic, and all nonwhite racial groups. There was no specific performance target established for 2004.

However, NASS established a strategic goal of 73 percent coverage of minority operated farms for the 2007 Census of Agriculture. NASS Field Offices and Headquarters units started developing plans to improve minority farm coverage and to provide interim measures of progress. The next census mail list minority farm coverage measurement will not be available until FY 2008, based on the 2007 Census of Agriculture data. Tables documenting counts of minority operated farms for each State will be created during FY 2005 to monitor list-building progress.

Small Farms and Minority Farmer Issues: The USDA Office of Small Farms Coordination facilitates coordination of activities related to small farms and ranches that are found in most agencies. The Director represented USDA at various farm conferences and workshops and

coordinated activities of the Departmental Small Farms Coordination Committee. The members of this committee are the designated small farms coordinators from each mission area, individual agencies, the Office of Outreach, the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, and the Office of Civil Rights. This Committee provides a focal point to coordinate small farm policy and programs within USDA and promote awareness, education, and participation of America's small farmers and ranchers in USDA's programs.

During FY 2004, NASS moved aggressively to address the under counting of small and minority farmers and ranchers in the census of agriculture. Since most farmers and ranchers are small, the USDA Office of Small Farms Coordination was tasked with the responsibility of helping NASS look for alternative ways to communicate with minority, community, and faith-based organizations to help them understand the importance of their participation in NASS's demographic surveys and the census of agriculture.

Since the NASS list frame serves as the foundation for the annual survey program and the census of agriculture, small and minority farm and ranch operations are being targeted for list coverage improvement. The Office of Small Farms Coordination established a subcommittee of small farms coordinators to collaborate with NASS and a Hispanic community based organization to identify alternative methods that will reach out to Hispanic/Latino farm and ranch operators. This group will also address the difficulties of adding Black or African American, Asian, and Hmong farm operators to the list frame. NASS established a New Mexico American Indian Project team to improve agriculture census coverage of individual reservations, farm operators and provide improved demographic data on American Indians. Directors of the USDA/NASS Field Offices have taken a leadership role in forming working groups to develop pilot projects to facilitate identification of small and minority farmers and ranchers. These activities will strengthen NASS's efforts to ensure that all small, minority and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranches are included in the 2007 Census of Agriculture, thus providing them an equal opportunity to share in USDA's programs and services.

Current Fiscal Year Performance:

List Frame Activities: One of the Action Items in the plan was to create a List Frame Council comprised of representatives from Headquarters and the Field Offices. The Council was created in early 2004 and has provided valuable guidance to the List Frame Section on list frame issues. The original plan has served as an important document providing guidance and direction to the List Frame Section and to the List Frame Council. Action Items in the plan are still being addressed. The original plan implemented in early FY 2004 has not been updated, revised, or replaced since issuance and a new plan is not anticipated until at least FY 2006.

Census of Agriculture Activities: NASS collected and reviewed comments for the 2007 Census of Agriculture content. Draft versions of the 2007 data collection instrument have been conceptualized and will be tested and finalized during 2005.

Increased efforts at identifying American Indian operators in the Southwest are being explored in order to continue enhancing data on American Indian reservations. The results of this study will be expanded to other areas of the U.S. in an attempt to provide data similar to that released in 2002 for reservations in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

The 2004 measure for the number of months it takes from questionnaire mailout date to the date of first release of data from the census of agriculture will be discontinued until 2008. However,

the measure will be re-established with a target release date in early 2008 for the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

Small Farms and Minority Farmer Issues: NASS will continue to strengthen its efforts to ensure that small, minority and social disadvantaged farmers and ranches are included in the 2007 Census of Agriculture and other statistical products and services, thus providing them an equal opportunity to share in USDA's programs and services.

Program Evaluation: An internal evaluation of the 2002 Census of Agriculture was conducted throughout NASS. These results were compiled and are being incorporated into planning activities for the 2007 census. Data users and customers also provided comment through the NASS Public Website and Federal Register Notice.

Objective 2.2: Provide Science-Based Technology, Products and Information to Facilitate Informed Decisions Affecting the Quality of Life in Rural Areas

If new businesses are to startup in or relocate to rural America, the local rural community must possess the amenities that businesses require and employees desire. These include not only access to such basic needs as clean water, adequate housing, and reliable electricity and telecommunications, but also access to essential needs such as quality education, health care, day care, etc. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

IV. Strategic Goal 3: Enhance Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply

For the Nation to have high quality, affordable, and safe food the production system must be protected at each step from production to consumption. The Department will continue to assess current systems and develop countermeasures against threats to farms and ranches, in coordination with the private sector, other Federal agencies, and State governments. Crop and livestock production systems must be protected from the ravages of diseases, whether domestic or foreign in origin. The food supply must be protected during production, processing, and preparation from contamination by organisms that cause disease in humans. Research programs develop methods of early detection, rapid and accurate assessment, and immediate responses that prevent spread and control harmful agents are essential to an effective U.S. agricultural biosecurity program.

Objective 3.1: Help Monitor and Reduce Foodborne Contaminants Through Science-Based Statistical Information

USDA will improve public health by further reducing the prevalence of food borne hazards from farm to table, striving to become a model for all other public health institutions. 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. REE also aims 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. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

Objective 3.2: Chemical Usage Statistics Enable Informed Decisions Using Sound Science in Risk Analysis

Safeguarding America's animal and plant resources from invasive pests and diseases is essential to enhancing the agricultural trade that underlies much of America's prosperity and to housing, feeding, and clothing our Nation. To keep crop and animal pests and diseases out of the U.S. and to manage those inside our borders, USDA sponsors prevention activities that reduce the number of pest and disease outbreaks and coordinates effective pest and animal disease emergency response systems that reduce the severity of pest and disease outbreaks. USDA partners with Federal and State agencies, industries, and professional organizations to develop and maintain effective emergency response systems to detect, respond to, and eliminate outbreaks of invasive pests and diseases.

NASS publishes chemical usage statistics on the acreage treated with fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, and other pesticides. Each chemical product is classified by its active ingredient. Also postharvest statistics are published to provide data to develop a chemical use data base on pesticides and other chemicals applied to commodities after harvest obtained from storage facilities, processor, and packers and shippers. These data are used for both public education and regulatory decision making purposes. These surveys are part of a continuing program which provides use data to other government agencies to respond effectively to food safety and water-quality issues.

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

Exhibit 8: Objective 3.2 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users	99.8%	99.8%	100%	99.4%
Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release	0	0	0	0
Percent of key survey point estimates meeting target coefficients of variation (c.v.)	49%	67%	72%	70%
Percent of total U.S. agricultural production covered annually by official USDA statistics	100%	96%	92%	92% Prelim.
Percent of U.S. production covered by chemical use surveys	95%	93% ¹	95%	96%
Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	-	-	75	77
The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	-	>79	82

Exhibit 8: Objective 3.2 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	-	>85	84
Increase in the annual survey development and data collection costs per sample unit compared to the annual rate of inflation as measured by the ECI ² is less than one.	-.56	.38	<1	-.16
Performance of information collections in compliance of the PRA at any time during the rating year	100%	100%	95%	100%

Revised

Data Assessment: Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Marketing and Information Services Office (MISO) maintains the performance data for national reports released, data security, new products and services, and customer satisfaction information; Statistics Division maintains information on statistical program coverage, statistical precision (C.V's) and reliability of information in national reports; Census and Survey Division tracks compliance of Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) and data collection costs and efficiencies. The PRA data are based on information compiled by the Agency's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Clearance Officer for all NASS data collection activities. All information is reviewed by assigned Division staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met most of its goals in achieving its objective to provide chemical usage statistics and enable informed decisions using sound science in risk analysis. The analyses provided in objective 1.1 for each of the annual performance goals and indicators also contributed to the overall success in attaining the desired results for objective 3.2. For the purposes of this report, readers should refer to the analyses previously provided for objective 1.1. However, the following performance goals and analyses associated with objective 3.2 were not included in objective 1.1 are:

Chemical Use Surveys: The Fruit Chemical Usage Survey is conducted in alternate years with the Vegetable Chemical Usage Survey. Farm operators were enumerated late in the growing season after the farm operator had indicated that planned applications were completed. The Postharvest Chemical Usage survey is conducted annually. Processors, packers, off-farm storage facilities, etc. are enumerated to obtain pesticide usage data. For all these reports, the chemical use data were not summarized for geographical areas other than those States published in the report

Current Fiscal Year Performance: NASS is working to expand the environmental data series by including an additional breakout that data users, specifically EPA, have requested.

Program Evaluations: Program comments are solicited from primary data users, such as EPA. In addition, staff meet with the Office of Pest Management Policy in USDA, other USDA agencies, other Federal agencies, universities, industry stakeholders, and private organizations on issues related to pesticide use data.

V. Strategic Goal 4: Improve the Nation's Nutrition and Health

USDA promotes America's health through food and nutrition education, guidance, and promotion to the general public and to targeted groups. We teach, inform, and motivate Americans to use this information to improve their diets and physical activity patterns. We expand research and scientific knowledge about public health. By promoting better diets, reaching children early and ensuring access to healthy food, we make a major contribution to the Nation's health. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA goal.

NASS provided continued statistical consultation to the ARS Nutrient Data Laboratory (NDL) which consisted of designing, implementing and analyzing national level plans for sampling retail foods and beverages for the laboratory's National Food and Nutrient Analysis Program (NFNAP). NASS developed and implemented: 1) a revised sample design for NFNAP for the collection of food samples from retail outlets for nutrient analysis to reflect the most current population statistics in support of the laboratory's Nutrient Data Bank System; 2) a nationwide sampling design for the determination of the concentration and variability of fluoride in the U.S. food and water supply; and 3) numerous small scale sampling plans for individual foods. Using mixed model statistical analysis techniques NASS obtained national and regional estimates of the content and variability of fluoride in the U.S. drinking water supply. These results are scheduled for publication in 2005 in the Journal of Food Composition and Analysis. In addition, NASS is providing expert statistical guidance with the design and analysis of a national database for dietary supplements.

VI. Strategic Goal 5: Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment

The management of our natural resources, both public and private, often seems to be a continued balancing act between contrary and competing concerns. While this is often the case, particularly in the short-term, long-term management strategies, combined with adequate knowledge of the complex natural systems, can yield maximum sustainable benefits from our resources that can satisfy most competing concerns. The development of the knowledge base and educational efforts to achieve maximum sustainable benefits from our natural resources on both public and private lands is a goal of REE.

Objective 5.1: Provide Statistical Information to Improve the Management of Forests and Rangelands

USDA has stewardship responsibility for the natural resources on 192 million acres of Federally managed lands. Policies are carried out to ensure sustainable forest and rangeland ecosystems and natural resource amenities that are resilient to natural and human disturbance. We manage our natural resources for a sustainable flow of uses, products, and services for the American public, using science-based criteria for and indicators of sustainable development. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

Objective 5.2: Statistical Data are Available for Improved Management of Soil, Air and Water

Farmers, ranchers, and private forest owners manage more than 70 percent of the Nation's land. These groups are the primary stewards of soil, water, and related resources on those lands. USDA provides a portfolio of services to help owners be good stewards. These services include research, education, and technical assistance; cost share and incentive payments for conservation practices; and rental payments or easements to protect fragile or environmentally important land. USDA develops conservation technology tailored to local conditions based on continuing USDA resource assessments and response to local needs and priorities. USDA will adopt a holistic approach that ensures compatibility of conservation and trade policies and effective coordination of conservation and farm policies.

The Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey (FRIS) conducted by NASS provides information on irrigation practices of farmers and ranchers and how they use water responsibly to produce an abundant food supply. This important information helps industry representatives, leaders, and planners chart the best course for on-farm irrigation in the future. Also information from the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) is used to study water quality issues along with production practices, such as machinery use and crop rotation to help identify tillage systems and crop residue level affecting soil erosion. Cropland Data Layer information provided by NASS, in cooperation with Foreign Agriculture Service and the Farm Service Agency, provides crop specific digital data layers, suitable for use in geographic information systems (GIS) applications used to improve the management of the Nation's natural resources.

Exhibit 9: Objective 5.2 Performance Goals and Indicators

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users	99.8%	99.8%	100%	99.4%
Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release	0	0	0	0
Percent of key survey point estimates meeting target coefficients of variation (c.v.)	49%	67%	72%	70%
Percent of crops where acreage targets are met as they relate to the management of natural resources	50%	60%	100%	100%
Number of states with cropland data layer	7	8	8	8
Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	-	-	75	77
The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	-	>79	82
The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	-	>85	84
Performance of information collections in compliance of the PRA at any time during the rating year	100%	100%	95%	100%

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Marketing and Information Services Office (MISO) maintains the performance data for national reports released, data security, and customer satisfaction information; Statistics Division maintains information on statistical precision (C.V's); Census and Survey Division tracks compliance of Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) and data collection costs and efficiencies. The PRA data are based on information compiled by the Agency's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Clearance Officer for all NASS data collection activities. All information is reviewed by assigned Division staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met most of its goals in achieving its objective to protect and enhance the Nation's natural resource base and environment. The analyses provided in objective 1.1 for each of the annual performance goals and indicators also contributed to the overall success in attaining the desired results for objective 5.2. For the purposes of this report, readers should refer to the analyses previously provided for objective 1.1. However, the following performance goals and analyses associated with objective 5.2 not included in objective 1.1 are:

Management of Natural Resources: The agricultural chemical use estimates in the Agricultural Resources Management Survey (ARMS) refer to on-farm use of commercial fertilizers and pesticides on targeted crops for the 2003 crop year. Targeted crops included barley, corn, fall potatoes, sorghum, and upland cotton. Farm and ranch operators were enumerated late in the growing season after the farm operator had indicated that planned applications were completed. The chemical use data were not summarized for geographical areas other than those States published in this report. For FY 2004, the five ARMS II crops (barley, corn, fall potatoes, sorghum, and upland cotton) each met their acreage target.

Cropland Data Layer: NASS met the FY04 targets for this performance goal. The cropland data layers for the 2003 crop year (including metadata and accuracy statistics) were released in the spring of 2004 for the following eight states and the bootheel of Missouri : Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. This can be verified by visiting the web site, www.nass.usda.gov/research/Cropland/cdorderform.htm

Current Fiscal Year Performance:

Management of Natural Resources: For FY 2005, it is expected that the five ARMS II crops (peanuts, winter wheat, durum wheat, other spring wheat, and soybeans) will also meet their acreage target. However, it should be noted that this coverage depends greatly on the specific crops. For example, oats is a minor commodity in many states, and it will be difficult to obtain appropriate coverage in FY2006.

Cropland Data Layer: Staff are in the process of creating the cropland data layer for these same states covering the 2004 crop year. These data layers will be released to the public in the spring or summer of 2005, following the final release of NASS's county estimates for these states. The malfunction of Landsat 7 in May 2003 has hampered the ability to obtain cloud-free satellite imagery during the growing season since Landsat 5 only passed over the areas once every 16 days. However, alternative imagery sources are being evaluated. In addition, through a cooperative agreement with Towson University, NASS staff are in the process of creating a cropland data layer for the 10-state mid-Atlantic region for the 2002 crop year.

Program Evaluation: No formal program evaluations were conducted. Program comments are solicited from primary data users, such as EPA. In addition, staff meet with the Office of Pest Management Policy in USDA, other USDA agencies, other Federal agencies, universities, industry stakeholders, and private organizations on issues related to pesticide use data.

VII. Presidential Management Initiatives

NASS is working to strengthen USDA's management through execution of the President's Management Agenda (PMA). Better management will result in more efficient program operations that offer improved customer service and more effective stewardship of taxpayer funds. We expect to:

- Ensure NASS has an efficient, high-performing, diverse workforce that is aligned with our mission priorities and works cooperatively with USDA and NASS partners and the private sector.
- Enhance internal controls, data integrity, management information, and program and policy improvements as reflected by an unqualified audit opinion and a reduction of erroneous payments by NASS.
- Implement business processes and information technology needed to make more of our services available to the public electronically.
- Link budget decisions and program priorities more closely with program performance, and begin to recognize the full cost of our programs.

Improve Human Capital Management

The President has identified strategic management of human capital as a means to making government more citizen-centered and creating a high-performing workforce. An REE Mission Area Human Capital Plan has been developed for all of the REE agencies and is aligned with USDA's Human Capital Plan.

NASS envisions itself as the acknowledged statistical leader for those seeking counsel, survey services, or data products regarding agricultural and rural statistics -- a standing achieved by consistently demonstrating sound methodology, effective resource utilization, and a focus on customer service. NASS employees are strengthened by the diversity of their cultures and backgrounds, the enjoyment of a challenging career, and their unsurpassed level of dedication to the Agency. NASS continually strengthens its technical, managerial, and leadership capabilities of employees 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 employee's technical skills through training at a variety of different levels. Employees must be able to function as a team. They must become knowledgeable in a multitude of Agency activities and ongoing training is necessary for employees to adequately perform their work and meet the ever-growing demands of their jobs. Leaders for the future must be coaches, trainers, and networkers. Employees must feel they are respected and that management will listen and respond to employee input.

NASS is committed to ensuring that civil rights concerns are addressed in all aspects of its work, program planning, development, management, and delivery. NASS must equitably work with all its employees, regardless of their position. Each individual has equal opportunity to gain skills and experience that will help them contribute to the NASS mission while also pursuing their long-range careers goals. NASS must also equitably and fairly serve all of its customers, making a special effort to reach historically underserved customers.

The Plan will be a guide for creating innovative human resources solutions to meet the current needs of our customers and our future challenges. NASS has implemented a variety of programs, initiatives, activities, and tools to address the human capital issues related to recruitment, development and retention of the workforce, succession planning, and leadership development. NASS will continuously strive for better and new methods of operation, and publicize best practices and share its lessons learned with other agencies.

Our plans include linking human capital planning activities with our business strategies and plans; communicating our human capital plans to management and employees, using workforce planning and flexible tools to recruit, retain, and reward employees while developing a high-performing, accountable workforce, implementing recommendations developed by the NASS Career Opportunities Development Team, developing succession plans and promoting leadership development, using of competitive sourcing as a management tool, as needed, and ensuring timely resolution employment civil rights complaints.

Exhibit 10: Improve Human Capital Management

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Percent of NASS budget appropriations spent on training and career development for NASS employees	2.2%	2.1%	3.0%	3.1%
Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce	56%	69%	55%	56%
Number of substantiated EEO complaints by NASS employees.	0	0	0	0
A NASS Workforce Plan in place	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
A NASS Succession Plan in place	No	No	Yes	Yes
NASS (or USDA) skills gap analysis conducted	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participate in OPM's annual Federal Human Capital Survey (or conduct a NASS Organizational Climate Survey)	Yes	No	No	Yes
Conduct Human Resource Management Evaluations (HRME)	12	6	8	8

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Office of the Administrator and the Deputy Administrator for Field Operations maintains the performance data associated with

training, personnel, EEO & Civil Rights, strategic and workforce planning and evaluations. All information is reviewed by assigned office staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met or exceeded its targets for the annual performance goals in contributing to the Presidential Management Agenda for improving human capital management. The following brief analyses are provided for each of the performance goals and indicators that contributed to the attaining the desired program results:

Training: The total training dollars expended in 2004 was 3.1 percent of NASS’s total budget. This was above the target for reasons associated with a decrease in the funding level after the 2002 Census of Agriculture. In addition, NASS was able to conduct training that was postponed until after the census of agriculture was complete. All NASS managers, supervisors, and top management participated at the 2004 NASS National Performance Management Conference held in Dallas, Texas, on April 19-23, 2004.

NASS conducted a broad range of training in 2004 that included several Leadership and technical training in the follow categories: Basic Census and Survey Concepts; Agricultural Resource Management Survey; Agricultural Practices, Environmental, and Conservation; Chemical Use; NOISH Childhood and Adult Injury Survey; Basic Estimation and Analysis Concepts; Specialty Livestock Estimation; Specialty Crop Estimation; List Frame/Survey Management System; Blaise Programming; BRIO software training; SAS Training; Train-the-Trainer; Project Management; Executive Training; Executive and Manager Coaching; Leaders, Management and Action Learning Sessions; Field Office Team Building; Regional Statistical Assistant Training; New Employee Orientation; Retirement and Pre-Retirement Planning; Security; and Civil Rights. NASS continues to use net conferencing and teleconferencing in an effort to reduce travel and training costs.

Exhibit 11: Employee Training Expenditures

Year	Training Costs (Dollars)	NASS Budget (Dollars)	Actual Percent
2000	3,805,661	111,152,374	3.4
2001	3,199,000	120,050,268	2.7
2002	2,722,188	126,577,295	2.2 ¹
2003	3,251,807	155,886,812	2.1 ¹
2004	4,569,178	147,649,055	3.1

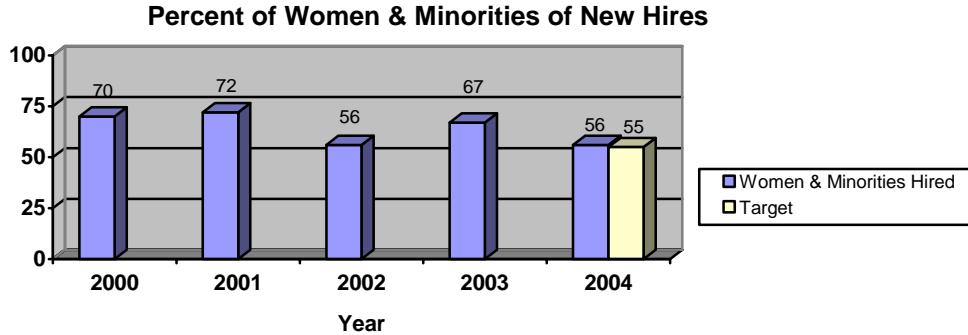
¹ Revised

Recruitment and Staff Diversity: Employment and Agency diversity information for FY 2004 was obtained from the National Finance Center (NFC). During the past several years, NASS has been addressing any existing underrepresentation within the Agency for the following four most populous occupational series (those having 50 or more employees): GS-1530, Agricultural Statistician; GS-1529, Mathematical Statistician; GS-2210, Information Technology Specialist (previously known as the GS-334, Computer Specialist job series); and GS-1531, Statistical Assistant.

NASS continued to make strides in recruiting and hiring a diverse group of new employees in the four major job series. Of the 75 new employees hired in FY 2004, 56 percent of the new hires were women and minorities. NASS exceeded its recruitment target for FY 2004 by 1 percentage

point. Under the 2004 USDA Summer Employment Program, NASS hired 46 student assistants of whom 28 were women and minorities, representing 61 percent of the total.

Chart 1: Diversity of Recruitment



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

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 which subsequently result in a finding of discrimination against a NASS management official or employee. In FY 2004, only one new formal EEO complaint was filed by a NASS employee. However, this complaint was dismissed by the USDA Office of Civil Rights because the Department determined that the allegations were identical to those claims raised by the same complainant in a former complaint, which was previously investigated. No evidence of any discrimination was found. At the end of FY2004, NASS had only one active (open) formal EEO complaint remaining in its inventory. The low number of EEO complaints demonstrate NASS’s commitment to Civil Rights.

Exhibit 12: EEO Complaints

Year	Number of Formal EEO Complaints Filed	Number of Substantiated EEO Complaints
2000	3	0
2001	5	0
2002	6	0
2003	5	0
2004	1	0

In FY 2004, the Agency held two “NASS New Employee Orientation” sessions on December 1-5, 2003 and September 13-17, 2004 for all new employee recently hired. The NASS Civil Rights Director is always included at these sessions since he makes presentations on a variety of topics dealing with equal employment opportunity and civil rights, such as sexual harassment, affirmative action, the EEO Counseling Program, the EEO complaint process, among others. Additional detailed information on EEO and Civil Rights can be found in the NASS FY 2004 EEO and Civil Rights Accomplishment Report.

NASS Workforce Plan: In 2004, NASS updated and reissued its Workforce Plan for FY 2005-2009 and submitted it to the Department for approval on September 30, 2004. NASS completed an analysis of its current workforce covering its recruiting program and workforce diversity, worklife programs and organizational climate, staff attrition due to retirements and separations, training needs and career development. The plan identified seven strategies for future workforce needs to (1) enhance the quality of worklife, (2) train NASS employees to meet agency challenges, (3) outsource services, (4) use NASS succession plans, (5) make the workforce more accountable, (6) recruiting and training a high performing workforce, and (7) implementing the Field Office Organizational Restructuring Team recommendations.

NASS Succession Plan: The NASS Succession Plan was developed in FY 2004 and integrated in the NASS Workforce for FY 2005-2009 with actionable strategies and performance measures that track and identify qualified staff for leadership positions, evaluate COOP plans, and provide supervisory and management training.

Skills Gap Analysis Conducted: NASS conducted an employee skills gap analysis in FY 2004 gathering information from managers, supervisors, and employees. This information is used in identifying and prioritizing employee training and allocating appropriate level of training resources by NASS Senior Executives.

Organizational Climate Survey: NASS employees participated in OPM's Federal Human Capital Survey conducted in FY 2004 for those who received an electronic questionnaire from OPM. As part of the President's Management Agenda, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management distributed governmentwide in October 2004 its second Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) of federal employees.

Human Resource Management Evaluations (HRME): In FY 2004, NASS, in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Service's Human Resources Division, conducted on-site Human Resources Management Evaluations involving the eight NASS Field Offices at the following locations: Sacramento, CA.; Boise, ID., Des Moines, IA., Columbia, MO., Helena, MT., Raleigh, NC., Reynoldsburg, OH., and Austin, TX. Each of these on-site evaluations, among other things, provided a review and assessment of the status of equal employment opportunity and civil rights.

Current Fiscal Year Performance:

Training: 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. 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.

NASS Headquarters and Field Office staff will attend and participate in numerous national and State industry and commodity association meetings and conferences throughout FY 2005. NASS continues its technical consulting efforts within the Department and other government agencies, as well as internationally with countries in Latin America, including Mexico, Central and South American, and Eastern Europe and China.

Recruitment and Staff Diversity: NASS is planning to continue using internship programs as its primary program for hiring and recruiting a diverse workforce.

NASS Workforce Plan: The plan was revised and updated in May 2005.

Organizational Climate Survey: NASS plans on conducting an Organization Climate Survey with all employees with results reported back to employees in June 2005.

Human Resource Management Evaluations (HRME): For FY 2005, eight on-site Human Resources Management Evaluations are planned for Field Offices in Alaska, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Oregon, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington.

Program Evaluation: As previously stated, in FY 2004, in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Service's Human Resources Division, NASS conducted eight on-site Human Resources Management Evaluations (HRME's).

Competitive Sourcing Initiatives

The foundation of competitive sourcing is the annual inventory of federal activities (FAIR Act Inventory), in which USDA agencies identify their functions as either inherently governmental or commercial in nature. The REE Mission Area developed a mission area approach to conduct its annual FAIR Act Inventory which formalized a standardized and documented process for reviewing and coding all of its agency activities. Purpose in having this methodology is to assure consistency within each REE agency and across the mission area. Competitive sourcing will be used as a management tool by the Under Secretary, Agency Administrators and Senior Management, as needed.

Exhibit 13: Competitive Sourcing

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Complete the Annual FAIR Act Inventory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contribute to the REE long-range competitive sourcing plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Office of the Administrator maintains the performance data associated with competitive sourcing. All information is reviewed by assigned office staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met its annual performance goals in contributing to the Presidential Management Agenda for competitive sourcing initiatives. The following brief analyses are provided for each of the performance goals and indicators that contributed to the attaining the desired results:

FAIR Act Inventory: The FAIR Act Inventory was completed using the REE Mission Area guidelines and definitions. All FTE's in NASS were reviewed and updated using the appropriate function and reason codes for commercial activities. The FY 2004 inventory was finalized, approved by the Administrator, and submitted to the Department as requested to meet Departmental and OMB due dates.

Contributions to REE Competitive Sourcing “Green Plan”: The REE Mission Area Green Plan was approved by the REE Under Secretary in June 2004. The purpose of the Green Plan is to lay out strategies in pursuing public-private competition as a tool to help achieve effective and efficient service delivery while executing the REE agencies’ missions in a manner that reflects their unique workforce needs.

In FY 2004, a contract was executed to provide a consultant to assist the REE Competitive Sourcing Working Group in conducting "feasibility reviews" on the REE Green Plan Code 'B' commercial activities. Key objectives were identified with the contractor to support REE on this project and to clarify each step of the process that will take place in conducting these reviews.

Current Fiscal Year Performance: The Green Plan feasibility studies are underway. Phase I of the Feasibility Review will be completed in FY 2005 using a five-step methodology approach in determining the feasibility of conducting public-private competitions of specific REE functional areas. The five steps include identifying activities to consider for competition, establishing criteria to evaluate feasibility, conducting market research and testing criteria, assessing feasibility of competition activities and recommending activities to compete.

Program Evaluations: There were no formal program evaluations completed in FY 2004.

Improve Financial Management

Effectively managing the use of taxpayer dollars is a fundamental Federal responsibility. NASS intends to ensure that all funds spent are properly accounted for to the taxpayers, the Congress, and the GAO. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) works to improve financial management, in partnership with the REE Chief Financial Officer, as a core attribute of our operating culture. The OCFO is leading the efforts to improve management information by helping USDA’s agencies in crafting and accessing useful, timely information, such as monthly financial reports, on-line access to real-time information, and program cost reporting. By enhancing the integrity of financial and administrative data, we will protect corporate assets and conserve scarce resources.

Exhibit 14: Improving Financial Management

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Clean financial audit each fiscal year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Deputy Administrator for Field Operations, Budget Administration Services Office (BASO) processes all financial obligations maintains the performance data associated with managing the Agency’s funds and budget accounts. All information is reviewed by assigned office staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met its annual performance goal in contributing to the Presidential Management Agenda for improving financial management. The following brief analysis is provided of the performance measure that contributed to the attaining the desired results:

Clean Financial Audit: USDA received an unqualified ("clean") audit opinion on its FY 2004 financial statements. This represents the third straight year that USDA has received a clean audit opinion. The quality of NASS data and the ability of NASS to meet the mandated milestone deadlines have a direct bearing on the audit results achieved at the USDA level.

USDA's Performance and Accountability Report (which includes USDA's financial statements) was submitted on time to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of the Treasury, and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on November 15th. By comparison, the FY 2003 financial statements were submitted at the end of January. According to OMB, the "new November 15 deadline represents nearly a 70 percent reduction in time since FY 2001, when the reporting date was March 1."

USDA was one of 22 of the 24 CFO Act agencies that delivered their Performance and Accountability Reports on time. This accomplishment directly supports the President's Management Agenda (PMA) and represents compliance with the FY 2004 deadline set by OMB at the beginning of the administration's first term.

At the highest level within the PMA, Government-wide Initiative 3 (Improved Financial Performance) addresses improved accountability through audited financial reports. The initiative states that "A clean financial audit is a basic prescription for any well-managed organization..." It is further stated that "Without accurate and timely financial information, it is not possible to accomplish the President's agenda to secure the best performance and highest measure of accountability for the American people."

Within NASS, a number of people helped support this process by providing requested audit documentation and answering OIG questions, preparing required reports and schedules, reviewing data, recording transactions in various systems, reconciling data and performing other quality control procedures, preparing descriptive and tabular data, etc. The annual financial statements process is certainly a team effort that involves NASS personnel working together to meet the mandated milestone dates, often involving short deadlines.

Current Fiscal Year Performance:

Clean Financial Audit: For FY 2005, NASS management will continue to provide a high level of oversight in accounting for all funding obligations by preparing high quality data and the ability of NASS to meet the mandated milestone deadlines have a direct bearing on the audit results achieved at the USDA level

Program Evaluations: USDA received an unqualified ("clean") audit opinion on its FY 2004 financial statements.

Expand Electronic Government

Expanding Electronic Government is one of the five key elements in the President's Management Agenda (PMA). NASS has developed eGovernment Tactical Plans that establish how it will transform its core business processes to fulfill the Departmental eGovernment Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives and satisfy its own unique stakeholder demands. Plans include updating the NASS eGovernment Tactical Plan on a regular basis; implementing the NASS 24 eGovernment Initiatives; supporting the launch and refinement of REE mission area and/or agency specific eGovernment Programs; evaluating REE mission area and/or agency-specific environment for implementing

eGovernment. 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. This work will fundamentally transform how USDA and NASS will do business by using innovative electronic solutions that apply the eCommerce principles of "faster, cheaper, better" to public service.

NASS collects, processes and maintains sensitive survey respondent information. NASS is entrusted with ensuring this information is secure and unavailable to unauthorized access. Employee and public confidence in the security of NASS electronic information systems and processes are essential for maximizing employee productivity internally and with its customers. In the future, this includes expanding NASS's capability for allowing individuals and entities the option of submitting information or transacting with NASS electronically, and to maintain records electronically, when practicable. NASS uses a security architecture to restrict access. NASS employs the latest security techniques, such as the utilization of enterprise firewalls, routers equipped with firewalls, intrusion detection, and user accounts and associated passwords for all NASS systems.

Exhibit 15: Expanding Electronic Government

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Accumulated number of new GPEA ¹ e-government (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.	6	6	34	39
A NASS eGovernment Tactical Plan in place	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Departmental security rating for NASS.	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow
Percent of employees receiving "Security Awareness" training.	100%	100%	100%	100%

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Deputy Administrator for Field Operations, Budget Administration Services Office (BASO) processes all financial obligations and maintains the performance data associated with managing the Agency's funds and budget accounts. All information is reviewed by assigned office staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met or exceeded its targets for the annual performance goals in contributing to the Presidential Management Agenda for expanding electronic government. The following brief analyses are provided for each of the performance goals and indicators that contributed to attaining the desired program results:

eGovernment Products and Services: A production-ready electronic data reporting application was developed in FY 2003 and by the end of FY 2004, NASS produced and deployed a total of 39 e-Government products. Prior to FY 2003 NASS began collecting Weekly Crop Progress Survey data via the web, Monthly Cold Storage inventory data for extreme operators via email, and Cotton Ginnings Survey data via the web. A web Grape Survey was developed and successfully implemented in NASS Texas Field Office. A Dairy Products Prices web instrument that captures and transmits data internally between NASS Field Offices and Headquarters was

implemented. Additionally, NASS Career Opportunities Development Team developed a web survey instrument for use on NASS intranet to collect information from NASS employees.

While the new EDR system was being developed in FY 2003, NASS did not develop any new Web products that fiscal year as NASS did not want to create any e-Government products on the older system that would require a redesign for the new system. By October 21, 2003, however, over 20 surveys were in the EDR System and ready for deployment. NASS had carefully selected the surveys and a deployment plan to adequately test the system while minimizing the risk of respondents having a negative experience. The first implementation dates of these surveys were in FY 2004.

In FY 2004, NASS implemented 28 external and 2 internal to USDA Web based surveys. Most of the external surveys are repetitive (weekly, monthly, or quarterly) by design to maximize the respondent's opportunity to use electronic reporting. The external surveys include: 4 peanut stocks surveys, 3 off-farm rice stocks surveys, a mushroom, and a sugarcane survey, 4 prices received for crops surveys, 4 dairy product price surveys, 2 fruit and juice storage surveys, agricultural labor surveys, 2 chicken hatchery for broilers surveys, a breeder's pullet placement survey, a catfish processor survey, a bee and honey survey, a mink survey, a catfish grower survey and a livestock slaughter survey. The internal USDA surveys include a USDA Organizational Cultural Survey for 3 agencies and a NASS FY 2005 Needs Assessment Survey.

eGovernment Tactical Plan: NASS's eGovernment Tactical Plan is updated annually and submitted to the Department upon request.

Security Rating: The USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer, Cyber Security Office, implemented a Cyber Security Assessment and Rating system in FY 2002. Their system is based on NIST and OMB standards. Each agency completed assessments along with the GISRA reports and were given a numeric rating and color code of Red, Yellow, or Green for that initial assessment. Most agencies, as well as the Department as a whole, received a Red rating for the initial assessment. From that assessment, each agency was required to complete a Plan Of Action with Milestones (POAM). The status of the plan is reported quarterly. The 'status' rating for security is based on the original assessment. The current NASS POAM has milestones listed through FY 2005. As long as the milestones for a particular quarter are met then the 'progress' status for that agency is Green. NASS currently has a 'status' rating of Yellow, and a 'progress' rating of Green.

Security Awareness Training: Security Awareness Training was provided to all employees in NASS in FY 2004. NASS used AgLearn Web-based training to provide specialized Security Awareness Training. NASS has included security discussions at major training schools and plans to continue this policy. NASS also issues internal Computer Security Policy Memoranda. As each policy is released an email is sent to every employee with a link to the NASS Intranet site with the policies listed for review. A binder with paper copies of the policies is maintained in each Branch, Staff, and State office. Also the Computer Security Staff communicates regularly with all staff via email, and a Security Discussion Area in Lotus Notes. The Computer Security Staff and the NASS Chief Information Officer (CIO) have shared the Computer Security Direction with all employees electronically and with all managers in person at the NASS Performance Management Conference.

Current Fiscal Year Performance:

eGovernment Products and Services: In FY 2005, NASS will continue to refine the EDR system that accommodates building and administering 39 Web external surveys and will begin developing specifications and possibly prototypes of an EDR system that will accommodate internal Web forms that will foster efficient internal-internal transfer of information via the Web.

The external surveys for FY 2005 will include: 5 prices paid surveys (covering fertilizer, liming, chemicals, feed, fuel, farm machinery, and seed); a trout survey, an ARMS core survey, a catfish feed survey, 3 cucumbers for pickles surveys, a maple syrup survey, an agricultural yield survey, an almonds inquiry, a kiwi fruit survey, a prune survey, a walnut survey, a June crop stocks survey, a quarterly hogs survey, a prices received for grain survey, a cattle on feed survey, a hops survey, turkey hatchery (monthly) and turkey inquiry surveys, milk production (monthly and quarterly) surveys, a September off-farm grain stocks survey, a September Crop Stocks survey, an agricultural identification survey, a macadamia nuts survey, and a papayas survey. The cumulative total web products for FY 2005 will be 70.

eGovernment Tactical Plan: The plan was reviewed and updated in FY 2005.

Security Rating: NASS continues to use and follow its POAM and is meeting the milestone target dates. Current fiscal year projects have included completion of the Certification and Accreditation (C&A) process, an upgrade to Agency firewalls, and additional software protection such as Personal Firewalls, Anti-Spyware, and new Anti-Virus software for all remote access by employees. NASS works closely with the Department's Office of Cyber Security to ensure that a strong and compliant security architecture is maintained which minimizes any duplication of services. For example, NASS has taken advantage of Departmental contracts for formal C&A process.

Security Awareness Training: NASS is continuing to include security discussions at major training schools. NASS participates in the Departmental 'AgLearn' training site and employees are completing the required security training this year through AgLearn.. NASS has included specialized security training according to job function for security specialists and selected IT specialists with prominent security responsibilities within the Agency.

Program Evaluations: No program evaluations were completed in FY 2004. However, along with other USDA Agencies, NASS underwent a security audit from the General Accounting Office (GAO) in 2003 and received suggestions for new policies and improvements in FY 2004 and 2005. These recommendations are included in our POAM and we are continuing to meet the milestones. NASS completed the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mandated Certification and Accreditation activities in January 2005.

Establish Budget and Performance Integration

NASS is committed to improving management to formally integrate our performance in the mission area with budget decisions and to produce performance-based budgets as part of the President's Management Agenda, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department. USDA's strategic plan and the planning efforts in the REE Mission Area and the REE agencies will support the new integration process for the budget and in building a new way of measuring it's desired performance.

NASS performance plans and its integrated budget will show the relationship between program funding levels and expected results. It will identify the relationship between dollars and results and be able to explain any new relationships that were created, as well as comparing these results with previous outcomes or outputs. Budget accounts will be aligned with agency program outcome goals, output targets and resources requested. Program effectiveness will be documented and analyses will show how program outputs and policies affect desired agency outcomes. NASS will systematically apply performance to its budget and will be able to demonstrate how program results will help management make informed budget decisions. By doing this, the overall effect will provide NASS managers with a starting point for monitoring agency performance and present real opportunities to measure costs as well as results.

NASS will explore and find new ways to implement budget and performance integration in an “incremental” fashion since it is unlikely that a comprehensive approach for the entire REE Mission Area would require sweeping changes in the way funding flows to the programs. In the long-term, full budgetary costs should be calculated and charged to accounts and activities with the cost of outputs and programs integrated with performance and budget requests and execution.

Exhibit 16: Integrating Budget and Performance Processes

Annual Performance Goals and Indicators	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
Integrate NASS budget and performance analyses and processes	No Measure	No Measure	Yes	Yes

Data Assessment: Agency performance information in this annual report is maintained internally in the Washington D.C. Headquarters offices. The Office of the Administrator and the Deputy Administrator for Field Operations, Budget Administration Services Office (BASO) processes all financial obligations maintains the performance data associated with managing the Agency’s funds and budget accounts. All information is reviewed by assigned office staff for consistency, completeness, and accuracy.

Analysis of Results: NASS successfully met its target for the annual performance goals in contributing to the Presidential Management Agenda for establishing budget and performance integration. The following brief analysis is provided for the performance measure that contributed to attaining the desired program results:

The NASS program, including the agricultural estimates and the census of agriculture, underwent a PART assessment by OMB for the FY 2006 budget process. The overall program rating was “Moderately Effective.” Specifically, the findings gave NASS a perfect score for “program purpose & design” and “program management.” The lack of a recent independent, external evaluation of the NASS program was the only factor keeping NASS from also receiving a perfect score in “strategic planning.”

Current Fiscal Year Performance: NASS is developing plans for implementation of regularly scheduled external independent evaluations of NASS programs.

Program Evaluations: No formal program evaluations were completed other than the PART assessment of NASS programs.