



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National  
Agricultural  
Statistics  
Service



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# National Agricultural Statistics Service

## FY 2008 and Revised FY 2007 Annual Performance Plans

# USDA



## Introduction

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements, NASS presents its FY 2008 Annual Performance Plan (APP) along with updates and revisions to the NASS FY 2007 Annual Performance Plan. This plan also supports the new goals and objectives in USDA's strategic plans for 2005-10 and NASS's long-range program plans.

## Performance Plan Highlights

The NASS APP serves as a blueprint for attaining program objectives and performance goals. The NASS APP is aligned with the Department's and Research, Education and Economics (REE) Mission Area six goals outlined below and through our strategic objectives, we will strive to:

- Support international economic development and trade capacity building through technical assistance;
- Promote efficient domestic agricultural production and marketing systems for agricultural commodities and products by using sound statistical data;
- Strengthen risk management by using variety of financial tools and providing sound statistical information to help farmers and ranchers in their decision-making process;
- Provide sound statistical information for economic and business decision-making by conducting the census of agriculture to help create opportunities for growth in rural America;
- Provide chemical usage statistics to enable informed decision-making using sound science in risk analysis; and
- Manage and protect America's natural resource base and environment on both public and private lands by working cooperatively with other levels of government and the private sector.

USDA's Goals 1 and 5, Enhance International Competitiveness of American Agriculture and Improve the Nation's Nutrition and Health, are not supported by appropriated funding for NASS. The linkage of the NASS goals and objectives to USDA's Strategic Plan 2005-2010 are outlined in the NASS's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan that is currently being drafted, and are discussed in this annual plan as well. Appendix A outlines the verification and validation components for each of the performance indicators in this plan and describes the data sources, verification methodologies, and any data limitations. This plan was prepared by Federal employees.

## Legislation and Funding

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

NASS's current annual statistics program and the census of agriculture program are complemented by its statistical research and service program. This component works to improve statistical survey and census methods and to test advanced technology for timely and cost efficient production of high quality agricultural statistics. The performance of NASS research is reflected in the same performance goals and

indicators used to evaluate the outcomes of the statistical program for annual agricultural statistics and the census. All appropriated funds, including research, are associated with the goals, objectives, and performance measures for the GPRA program activities in this APP.

### FUNDING AND STAFFING LEVELS FOR ANNUAL PERFORMANCE GOALS

STRATEGIC GOALS	FY 2006 Actual		FY 2007 Targets		FY 2008 Targets	
	Funding (000)	Staff Years	Funding (000)	Staff Years	Funding (000)	Staff Years
Goal 1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goal 2	\$ 104,431	816	\$ 110,004	872	\$ 112,574	872
Goal 3	\$ 28,324	262	\$ 36,249	266	\$ 54,065	266
Goal 4	\$ 2,670	25	-	-	-	-
Goal 5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goal 6	\$ 3,868	32	\$ 1,000	1	\$ 1,060	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 139,293</b>	<b>1,135</b>	<b>\$ 147,253</b>	<b>1,139</b>	<b>\$ 167,699</b>	<b>1,139</b>

### NASS Mission and Overview

The mission of NASS is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U. S. agriculture. NASS provides the basic agricultural and rural data needs of the people of the United States, those working in agriculture, and those living in rural communities by objectively providing important, usable, and accurate statistical information and services needed to make informed decisions. NASS's statistics keep those involved with one of America's biggest industries well-informed, provide the basic information necessary to keep agricultural markets stable and efficient, and help maintain a level playing field for all users of agricultural and rural statistics. NASS also performs important reimbursable survey work for other Federal, State, and private organizations as well as provides technical assistance for agricultural statistics programs in both developed and developing countries.

The assessment of NASS's performance is attained from a number of sources, including explanations from data users and customers as to the value and relevance of NASS products and services. For example, NASS statistics contribute to the orderly functioning of commodity markets. Timeliness is a core activity measured by the percent of pre-announced due dates met, but the degree to which NASS contributes to the outcome of an efficient commodity market can only be based on the judgment of the data user. Historically, these judgments are obtained through periodic Data User Meetings with NASS customers and data users. In addition to the Data User Meetings, NASS conducts customer satisfaction surveys using the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) to objectively measure the overall quality of its public service. This performance can be compared with other Federal agencies and private industry customer satisfaction scores. Responses are solicited from subject matter experts, such as public and private economists, the media, farmers, ranchers, and other data users. This information further enhances the delivery of NASS services and desired outcomes specified in the APP. NASS's unique field office structure enables the agency to have "grass roots" connections and contacts with local data users and data providers in the States. Through these contacts, coupled with the industry meetings, conferences, and participation in agricultural exhibitions, the Agency keeps up-to-date with the ever-changing and increasing need for statistical information regarding agriculture and related issues.

## Strategic Goal 1: Enhance International Competitiveness of American Agriculture

Expanding global markets for agricultural products is critical for the long-term economic health and prosperity of our food and agricultural sector. 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. Expanding global markets will increase demand for agricultural products and contribute directly to economic stability and prosperity for America's farmers.

### Objective 1.1: Expand and Maintain International Export Opportunities

The most effective means of expanding foreign market opportunities is through new trade agreements that increase market access and reduce trade impediments. Greater access to foreign markets requires an aggressive trade policy that lowers tariffs and eliminates distorting subsidies. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

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

The President's 2002 National Security Strategy cites economic development as one of the top three priorities of U.S. foreign policy, joining diplomacy and defense. The strategy recognizes that the root of the national security threat to the U.S. is the lack of economic development. This situation often results in economic and political instability. Activities that support economic development also play an important role in efforts to expand overseas market opportunities for American agriculture. Most future growth in food demand will occur in developing and middle income countries, where population and income are growing relatively rapidly. As incomes increase in these countries, consumers spend a far greater proportion of the extra income on food, relative to consumers in higher-income countries.

USDA deploys its unique resources and expertise in agricultural development activities. 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. can illuminate the role of and degree to which technology transfer improves incomes and increases trade. Through a variety of training, technical assistance, and inter-governmental actions, economic and statistical research activities help to strengthen other countries' agricultural institutions and regulatory systems, encourage participation in and compliance with international norms, and develop understanding of U.S. approaches to agricultural policy and regulatory procedures.

Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Target	FY 2008 Target
Provide technical assistance to improve agricultural statistics in developing and transition countries.	16 countries	11 countries	No Target Set	No Target Set

**Means and Strategies:** These performance measures are supported by reimbursable funding of NASS resources in FY 2008. NASS strategies for achieving these performance goals include providing technical assistance requested by developing and transition countries to help them develop credible statistical processes and systems to collect, analyze, and report statistics needed to monitor agriculture sector performance, to formulate agriculture policies, and to implement agriculture programs; providing quality service to countries that encourage donor agencies to allocate funds for continuation of and initiation of new projects; developing new funding strategies to promote additional support for initiation of new projects; providing NASS International Programs Office (IPO) with technical staff to assist

foreign governments and who participate in international forums where NASS technical capabilities can be demonstrated.

### **Objective 1.3: Improved Sanitary and Phytosanitary System (SPS) to Facilitate Agricultural Trade.**

SPS refers to the protection of human, animal and plant life and health from foreign pests, diseases and contaminants. SPS barriers identifies as trade barriers continues to grow due to the lack of regulatory capacity in various countries and/or through the use of sound science. This growth impedes agricultural trade around the world. In response to these problems, USDA will use its extensive expertise to work closely with other agencies to strengthen regulatory coordination and encouraging the use of sound science in addressing these issues. USDA will work aggressively with its private-sector trading partners and international standards-setting organizations to develop a stronger system of international guidelines. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

## **Strategic Goal 2: Enhance the Competitiveness and Sustainability of Rural and Farm Economies**

An economically prosperous agricultural production sector contributes to the Nation's economic vitality and standard of living. Consumers benefit from efficiently produced and marketed agricultural products that minimize their food costs and maximize their consumption choices. The sector's success depends on the ability to expand into new markets, gain adequate capital, protect itself adequately against financial risk and adjust to changing market conditions. This success also depends on the economic well being of producers and their ability to increase production potentially through increased farm acreage and/or other methods, maintain their farms and equipment, and utilize tools to mitigate risks associated with various aspects of production. There is much diversity in the farm sector driven by diversity in resources, climate, individual preferences, and even lifestyles. The needs, concerns, and opportunities of larger, commercially oriented farms differ from those of smaller, intermediate farms, regardless of location. For these reasons, USDA has a variety of farm related programs designed to enhance the economic opportunities for all agricultural producers while providing individual producers options in terms of what is best for them under their specific situations.

### **Objective 2.1: Expand Domestic Market Opportunities**

Technologies progress is increasingly pushing the market for agricultural products in new directions. Biobased technologies promise new opportunities for energy, industrial and pharmacological markets of U.S. farmers. Key priorities for USDA will be the development and implementation of a model procurement program for biobased products, promotion of the government-wide use of biobased products, research to support development of new markets and products, and collaborating with government officials to support these activities through USDA policies and programs energy policy and other legislation. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

### **Objective 2.2: Provide Statistical Data to Promote Efficient Domestic Agricultural Production and Marketing Systems**

Fundamental to the long-term viability of an agricultural producer is the ability to manage an efficient and profitable operation. USDA activities make this possible through programs that develop and transfer to producers the technology, production practices, and business and marketing tools and information that are the center pieces for an efficient and economically sustainable agricultural sector. To support an efficient marketing environment, efforts are directed toward providing the necessary infrastructure and market information to reduce per unit and overall production costs; improve quality and yields, and improve management and marketing decisions. These USDA programs provide the scientific, marketing, and other

assistance necessary to increase the efficiency and correspondingly, the competitiveness of the agricultural producer.

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 (ASB) 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 on established dates and time 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.

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2005 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2006 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007 Target</b>	<b>FY 2008 Target</b>
Release all Agricultural Statistics Board reports on-time.	99.8%	100%	100%	100%
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
Increase the percent of key survey point estimates meeting statistical precision targets.	72%	69%	70%	70%
Root mean square error will be reported to data users as a measure of reliability of statistical forecasts and estimates against final totals	22 reports	26 reports	28 reports	30 reports
Maximize the percent of total U.S. agricultural production covered annually by official USDA statistics.	92%	93%	100%	92% %
Provide State level farm production expenditure estimates for more States to cover a higher percentage of the U.S. total.	64% for 15 States	(Prelim.) 65% for 15 States	65% for 15 States	65% for 15 States
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	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative
New data products and services produced to fulfill customer requests.	25	41	Yes (No target set)	Yes (No target set)
Improve customer satisfaction as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI).	-	-	>78	-

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2005 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2006 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007 Target</b>	<b>FY 2008 Target</b>
Improve the ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	-	>81	-
Improve the accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	-	>88	-
Keep the annual survey development and data collection costs below the annual rate of employment cost inflation. <sup>1</sup>	2.56	1.33	< 1	< 1
Keep information collections in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)	100%	100%	95%	95%

<sup>1</sup> Employment Cost Index (BLS)

**Means and Strategies:** These performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources. Increase funding in FY 2008 provides for full or partial pay costs, depending on final congressional action, for the annual estimation program.

NASS's strategies for achieving these performance goals include evaluating trends and changes in production agriculture and adjusting NASS's statistics program within available resources; involve and maintain partnerships with State Departments of Agriculture, land-grant colleges and universities, and other cooperators, local program supporters, and industry for program development and evaluation; conduct statistical research to investigate, evaluate, and use the best statistical practices and survey methodologies; systematically analyzing each step of data collection, processing, and estimation of production and price statistics to evaluate the quality, accuracy, timeliness, and frequency of NASS reports; using the ASB to assure objective evaluation of survey indications and to provide unbiased official USDA estimates; issuing timely and accurate statistical reports that are useful for the efficient and effective marketing of U.S. agricultural outputs and in formats most useful to data users; and ensuring the statistics program and security procedures protect impartiality and safeguard the confidentiality of individually reported data and official statistics from improper disclosure.

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

### **Objective 2.3: Provide Statistical Data for Risk Management Programs and Financial Tools to Farmers and Ranchers.**

Agricultural producers are subject to a wide array of natural, financial and market risks. Like other business owners, agricultural producers use a variety of tools to manage these risks, including crop insurance, non-insured crop disaster assistance, credit and direct payments. USDA works diligently to provide financial tools to producers. The Department strives to provide prompt and equitable assistance, direct income payments, disaster assistance and marketing assistance loans to farmers, ranchers and eligible landowners. This assistance helps maintain economic stability in the agricultural sector. When

natural disasters strike, USDA reacts quickly to help affected producers recover from losses and restore their lands to pre-disaster productivity levels.

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. Agricultural production and marketability are constantly affected by such factors as unpredictable weather and growing conditions, disease and pest outbreaks, and consumer purchasing power.

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2005 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2006 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007 Target</b>	<b>FY 2008 Target</b>
Meet national quality and publication standards for county estimates.	-	-	Establish new Nat'l standards	Implement Phase I
Include States accounting for 90 percent of the value of production for the commodities in the monthly field crop price program.	12	12	12	13
Number of crop commodities meeting or exceeding the 90 percent coverage standard				

**Means and Strategies:** Many of the performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources and support objectives in the Department's Strategic Plan by ensuring data are available for Risk Management Programs. NASS county estimates are critical to other USDA agencies such as Risk Management Agency (RMA) insurance programs and Farm Services Agency in administering the federal farm programs established by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. The 2002 Farm Bill instituted a counter-cyclical payment that is determined, in part, by the marketing year average price published by NASS. The Farm Services Agency (FSA) needed NASS to produce several new data series to aid with the program delivery of various pulse crops, specified in the 2002 Farm Bill. To ensure a high level of accuracy for the NASS Prices Received by Farmers program, which produces the market year average prices.

NASS's strategies for achieving these performance goals include evaluating trends and changes in production agriculture and adjusting NASS's statistics program accordingly; conduct statistical research to investigate, evaluate, and use the best statistical practices and survey methodologies; systematically analyzing each step of data collection, processing, and estimation of production and price statistics to evaluate the quality, accuracy, timeliness, and frequency of NASS reports; using the ASB to assure objective evaluation of survey indications and to provide unbiased official USDA estimates; issuing timely and accurate statistical reports that are useful for the efficient and effective marketing of U.S. agricultural outputs and in formats most useful to data users; and ensuring the statistics program and security procedures protect impartiality and safeguard the confidentiality of individually reported data and official statistics from improper disclosure, and provide customer service that meets NASS standards.

### **Strategic Goal 3: Support Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Quality of Life in Rural America**

Rural America, home to one-fifth of the Nation's population, is a collage of people and economic activities. Today, seven out of eight rural counties are dominated by varying mixes of manufacturing, services and other non-farming activities. Of the 65 million people who live in rural America, only 2 million are engaged directly in production agriculture. While farm income is an important source of revenue for some rural families, most rural residents are not dependent on agriculture. Many family farmers rely on local, off-farm employment to supplement their farm income.



### Objective 3.1: Conduct the Census of Agriculture to Create Opportunities for Growth Through Sound Agricultural Decision Making

One of USDA's core missions is ensuring that rural residents enjoy economic opportunities equivalent to those of other Americans. 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 successfully startup or relocation in rural America. The results of the census are reported in a timely and user-friendly manner to enable decision making concerning localities across the U.S. It is important to improve coverage of socially disadvantage farm operators in the census of agriculture and involve and maintain partnerships with State Departments of Agriculture, land-grant colleges and universities, and other cooperators, local program supporters, and industry for program development and evaluation. NASS needs to be responsive to recommendations and feedback received from the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics, USDA Data User meetings, industry meetings, customers and from other outreach activities and provide customer service that meets NASS standards.

Census of Agriculture and Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Target	FY 2008 Target
Census Content Test approved by OMB	June 2005	-	-	-
Content test mailed		Dec. 30, 2005		
Final 2007 Census Report Forms to NPC	-	June 2006		
Census print contract awarded	-	-	Dec. 15, 2006	
Final Census Mail List (CML) file completed	-	-	Sept. 30, 2007	
Mailing of the Census questionnaires completed				Dec. 2007
Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives.	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative
Improve the census list coverage of U.S. farms and farmland with sales of \$50,000 or more.	No Target Set	No Target Set	No Target Set	95% farm 99.5% land
Increase the list coverage of U.S. minority operated farms in the census.	No Target Set	No Target Set	No Target Set	73%

**Means and Strategies:** These performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources. The census of agriculture is a five-year cyclical funded project. FY 2008 funding will be used for many significant data collection and processing activities. The primary share of the funding will be used for the postage and outsourcing of functions associated with mailing out questionnaire packages, logging returned questionnaires, scanning completed questionnaires, capturing data in electronic form, and telephone and personal follow-up to non-respondents. Additionally, NASS staff will be bolstered through the use of creative hiring techniques, such as rehired annuitants and the use of student internships, to help with data editing and analysis. Finally, funds will be available for data collection in Puerto Rico and start-up activities for the census of agriculture in American Samoa, Guan, and the Northern Marianas Island.

NASS's strategies for achieving these performance goals includes planning and preparation to conduct the census of agriculture; systematically analyze each step of data collection and processing of the census of agriculture; use the Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) to assure objective evaluation of the census data to provide unbiased official results; report the results of the census in a timely and user-friendly manner to enable decision making concerning localities across the U.S.; strive to improve coverage of socially disadvantage farm operators in the census of agriculture; accuracy and coverage measures are reported to data users; involve and maintain partnerships with State Departments of Agriculture, land-grant colleges and universities, and other cooperators, local program supporters, and industry for program development and evaluation; ensure that the census program and security procedures safeguard the confidentiality of individual reported data and official statistics from improper disclosure and protect impartiality; be responsive to recommendations and feedback received from the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics, USDA Data User meetings, industry meetings, customers and from other outreach activities, provide customer service that meets NASS standards.

### **Objective 3.2: Improve the Quality of Life through USDA Financing of Quality Housing, Modern Utilities, and Needed Community Facilities**

If new business are to launch in (or relocate to) a rural community, that community must possess amenities that businesses require and employees desire. This included access to such basic needs a clean water, adequate housing, reliable electricity and telecommunications, and such essential needs as quality education, health care, daycare, recreational opportunities and cultural activities. USDA is an important source of credit and technical assistance for developing the economic infrastructure of rural America. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

## **Strategic Goal 4: Enhance Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply**

USDA has unique and critical responsibilities to provide the consumer with a healthy food supply and a secure agricultural production system. This is achieved by ensuring that the Nation's meat, poultry and egg products are safe, wholesome and labeled accurately. This also is achieved by protecting the Nation's agricultural system from pests and disease outbreaks, minimizing production losses, maintaining market viability and promoting responsible environmental stewardship.

### **Objective 4.1: Reduce the Incidence of Foodborne Illnesses Related to Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products in the U.S.**

To reduce the incidence of food-borne illness, USDA is moving toward a more scientific inspection system. A more risk-based approach to verification will allow USDA to allocate inspection resources and carry out regulatory activities on high-risk processes that may require more attention from inspection program personnel. By focusing our resources in a more risk-based manner, USDA expects to identify the establishments and processes that present the greatest public health concerns and thereby have a more

effective impact on improving public health. The Department's food-safety systems, particularly those for meat, poultry and egg products, must be assessed and updated continually. This evaluation process will help maintain consumer confidence and protect them from exposure to foodborne diseases. These systems include activities to track the incidence of pathogens and illness-causing organisms in these products. They are also designed to raise public awareness about food safety, food security and safe food handling. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

#### **Objective 4.2: Provide Chemical Usage Statistics to Enable Informed Decisions Using Sound Science in Risk Analysis**

Safeguarding America's animal and plant resources from invasive pests and diseases ensures the continued prevalence of agricultural trade as the foundation of America's prosperity and its people's existence. The dynamic nature of invasive pests and diseases demands a proactive approach to exclude further outbreaks and manage established pests and diseases. Partnerships with Federal and State agencies, industry and professional organizations provide the framework from which USDA sponsors prevention activities. These activities allow for the coordination of effective pest and animal disease emergency response systems to limit the severity of such outbreaks. USDA has begun phasing in a new measure of the economic damages avoided or mitigated by pest and disease eradication or control efforts.

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.

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2005 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2006 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007 Target</b>	<b>FY 2008 Target</b>
Exceed the 75 percent standard for acres covered by agricultural chemical and pest management statistics for targeted food crops and commodities.	97%	100%	95%	0
	Over 95 percent of the targeted food crops and commodities will meet or exceed the 75 percent coverage standard.			

**Means and Strategies:** These performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources. Due to the continuing resolution and competing needs for available funding, the Fruit Chemical Usage Survey and Post Harvest Chemical Usage Survey were eliminated in 2007. These data collection activities would have resulted in FY 2008 reports and thus will impact the performance measures for this objective in FY 2008. Strategies for achieving these performance goals include evaluating trends and changes in production agriculture and adjusting NASS's chemical statistics program accordingly; conduct statistical research to investigate, evaluate, and use the best statistical practices and survey methodologies; systematically analyzing each step of data collection, processing for conducting surveys to provide needed pest management practices and chemical use data on types and amounts of

chemicals applied on crops, livestock, and farmland by producers and associated economic information to evaluate related economic importance; conducting surveys to measure and report post-harvest chemical applications on agricultural commodities; and conduct surveys to establish a baseline for safe handling practices by fruit and vegetable producers and packing sheds; issuing timely and accurate statistical reports that are useful data are readily available to all who need the pest management practices and chemical use information for business and policy decisions; evaluate the quality, accuracy, timeliness, and frequency of NASS reports; and ensuring the statistics program and security procedures protect impartiality and safeguard the confidentiality of individually reported data and official statistics from improper disclosure, provide customer service that meets NASS standards.

### **Strategic Goal 5: 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.

### **Strategic Goal 6: Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment**

High-quality soils and abundant supplies of clean air and water are the essential building blocks for production agriculture and forestry, many rural economies and all life. America's soils, water supplies and range and forest ecosystems produce the raw materials for food, clothing, shelter, and energy. They also provide the settings for recreation and other activities highly valued by Americans. The Department's activities are designed to help ensure that the Nation's natural resources meet the long-term needs of a dynamic society with an increasing population.

USDA is the steward of 192.5 million acres of National Forests and Grasslands. USDA also provides high-quality, science-based, and site-specific technical assistance to enable good stewardship on the 1.5 billion acres of non-Federal lands in the U.S.

USDA's conservation activities on public and private lands are cooperative efforts with State, Tribal and local Governments, conservation districts, non-governmental organizations, private land managers, and local interests. In the future, USDA will increase its emphasis on cooperative conservation to achieve natural resource and environmental quality goals. This plan will ensure that natural resource use and management decisions are made by the people most affected by the decisions and most knowledgeable about local conditions.

#### **Objective 6.1: Protect Watershed Health to Ensure Clean and Abundant Water**

A healthy watershed is one in which local individuals and organizations, and other interested stakeholders, have defined and are working toward an acceptable balance of economic growth, environmental protection and social activities. Healthy watersheds vary widely, depending on their resource conditions and the values and management objectives of their residents. In locally led watershed planning, people within a watershed assess natural resource conditions, develop proposals and recommendations, implement solutions and measure success. Specific resource concerns that can be addressed best through a watershed approach include water quality and quantity, and wetlands, and other habitat improvement issues. In the next five years, USDA will measure the success of its efforts to improve watershed health by reductions in the potential for losses of sediment, and nutrients from

agricultural operations. Objectives for sediment and nutrient reduction are indicators of the general trend in managing potential agricultural challenges to water quality. As new data on the effects of conservation become available, these objectives may be replaced with more comprehensive indicators of improved watershed health. For the National Forest System, environmental health will be measured by the proportion of fully functioning watersheds. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

### **Objective 6.2: Provide Statistical Data to Support Management of Productive Working Cropland**

High-quality soils support the efficient production of crops for food, fiber and energy. They also provide for the efficient cycling of nutrients and pesticides, help sequester carbon, and contribute to improved water and air quality and wildlife habitat. Soil-quality management focuses on maximizing its function for both agricultural and environmental benefits. Intensively used soils, such as for production of annual crops, are most vulnerable to degradation and damage. By reducing erosion and increasing the organic content of soil, the quality of working cropland is improved. Two-thirds of the Nation's land belongs to farmers, ranchers and other private landowners, USDA provides technical and financial assistance to landowners and land managers to conserve, maintain and improve natural resources on the Nation's private lands. These outcomes help the Nation meet society's demand for improved environmental quality and ultimately benefit society at large.

The Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey 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 the future on on-farm irrigation. 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 help to 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.

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2005 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2006 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007 Target</b>	<b>FY 2008 Target</b>
Exceed the 75 percent standard for acres covered by agricultural chemical use statistics for targeted field crops.	100%	100%	100%	0
Increase the number of States using cropland data layer technology.	8	10	11	11

**Means and Strategies:** These performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources. Due to the continuing resolution and competing needs for available funding, the Field Crops Chemical Usage Survey was eliminated in 2007. These data collection activities would have resulted in FY 2008 reports and thus will impact the performance measures for this objective in FY 2008. Strategies for achieving these performance goals include evaluating trends and changes in production agriculture and adjusting NASS's ARMS and Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey statistics program accordingly; conduct statistical research to investigate, evaluate, and use the best statistical models and survey methodologies; systematically analyzing each step of data collection, processing for conducting surveys to provide needed for the future on on-farm irrigation. 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 help to identify tillage systems and crop residue level affecting soil erosion; Cropland Data Layer provides crop specific digital data layers, suitable for use in geographic

information systems (GIS) applications used to improve the management natural resources; evaluate the quality, accuracy, timeliness, and frequency of NASS reports; and ensuring the statistics program and security procedures protect impartiality and safeguard the confidentiality of individually reported data and official statistics from improper disclosure, provide customer service that meets NASS standards.

### **Objective 6.3: Protect Forests and Grasslands**

Four serious threats pose an increasing risk to the values, goods and services provided by public and private forestland and grassland. These threats are:

- Wildland fire;
- Invasive species;
- Loss of open space; and
- Unmanaged outdoor recreation.

USDA helps landowners and operators address the risks on privately owned land. Most watersheds and landscapes are a wide variety of public land managed by several Federal agencies and private, State, Tribal and local land managers. Thus, USDA must work with land stewards to protect forestland, grassland and grazing land ecosystems.

Healthy, vigorous plant communities on diverse lands protect soil quality, prevent soil erosion, and provide sustainable forage and cover for livestock and wildlife. They also provide fiber and a diverse habitat for wildlife, improve water quality and sequester carbon. Active, science-based management of vegetation is essential to maintaining such healthy, diverse, and resilient ecosystems. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

### **Objective 6.4: Protect and Enhance Wildlife Habitat to Benefit Desired, At-Risk and Declining Species**

The Nation's public and private lands provide habitat for more than 200,000 identified native species. Habitat fragmentation and loss, invasive species and declining resource quality continue to contribute to wildlife declines. Most at-risk species move between public and private lands during their life cycle. Thus, solutions must include cooperative conservation across public and private ownerships and access to USDA programs that assist landowners with restoring, improving and protecting wildlife habitat on their lands. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

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## Supporting the President's Management Agenda

### Overview of Management Initiatives

NASS is working in concert with USDA to strengthen its management through vigorous execution of the President's Management Agenda. Better management will result in more efficient program operations that offer improved customer service and more effective stewardship of taxpayer funds. NASS expects to:

- Ensure an efficient, high-performing, diverse workforce, aligned with mission priorities and working cooperatively with partners and the private sector;
- Enhance internal controls, data integrity, and financial management information and sustain unqualified audit opinion;
- Reduce spending and burden on citizens, partners and employees by simplifying access to the Department's and Agency's information. This enhancement is added by implementing business processes and information technology to make services available electronically;
- Link budget decisions and program priorities more closely with program performance and consider the full cost of programs; and
- Transform IT enterprise infrastructure to be cost effective and ubiquitous across all agencies and geographic regions;

Detailed plans are available for each of the PMAs. Below is a brief summary of NASS's plans.

### Improve Human Capital Management

The President has identified as a priority using the strategic management of human capital to create a high-performing workforce that is more citizen-centered and results-oriented. USDA will manage its human capital according to its Strategic Human Capital Plan. The plan includes implementing initiatives both within the agencies and from a corporate perspective. It focuses on strategic workforce planning, optimizing organizational structures to address current and future challenges, and improving performance management to maximize employee performance.

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

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

The 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, use of competitive sourcing as a management tool, as needed, ensuring timely resolution employment civil rights complaints.

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

<b>Human Capital Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2005 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2006 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007 Target</b>	<b>FY 2008 Target</b>
Percent of NASS budget appropriations spent on training and career development for employees	3.0%	3.1%	3.0%	3.0%
Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the workforce	58%	60%	55%	55%
Number of substantiated EEO complaints by employees.	0	0	0	0
USDA PMA Internal Scorecard for Strategic Management of Human Capital Score for NASS	Green	Green	Green	Green
OPM's Biannual Federal Human Capital Survey Score for NASS	71.7	-	>70	-

**Means and Strategies:** Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. Strategies for achievement of this goal include NASS's plans for maintaining the links among Departmental and agency human capital and annual performance plans; integrating the human capital impacts of such Presidential initiatives as competitive sourcing and eGovernment; using workforce planning and hiring flexibilities to recruit, retain and reward employees while developing a high-performing and accountable workforce; ensuring employment opportunities for all members of the workforce, while implementing programs targeted towards critical occupations with projected skill gaps and underrepresented groups; and ensuring the timely resolution of program and employment civil rights complaints.

### **Implement Competitive Sourcing**

USDA plans to implement competitive sourcing reasonably and rationally to achieve significant cost savings, improved performance and better align the agency's workforce to its mission. This initiative is aimed at improving organizations through efficient and effective competition between public and private sources. The Department will continue to simplify and improve the procedures for evaluating sources. It will also better publicize the activities subject to competition to maximize the benefits of this initiative.



<b>Competitive Sourcing Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2005 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2006 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007 Target</b>	<b>FY 2008 Target</b>
Complete an approved Annual FAIR Act Inventory	yes	yes	yes	yes
USDA PMA Internal Scorecard for Competitive Sourcing Score for NASS	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green

**Means and Strategies:** Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. Strategies for achievement of this initiative include NASS's participation on the REE Competitive Sourcing/A-76 Working Group charged with the responsibility to review all REE activities/functions and to develop recommendations on competitive sourcing opportunities to facilitate decisions on specific studies and actively works with USDA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO). Recommendations are presented to the REE Under Secretary and Agency Administrators for their consideration. The REE Under Secretary notifies the OCFO of specific competitive sourcing studies that REE will pursue annually.

### **Improve Financial Management**

Effectively managing the use of taxpayer dollars is a fundamental Federal responsibility. USDA intends to ensure that all funds spent are accounted for properly to taxpayers, Congress and the Government Accountability Office. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) works to improve financial management, in partnership with the Chief Financial Officers of USDA agencies, as a core attribute of the Department's operating culture. Through efforts to improve financial management, USDA received its first unqualified opinion on its 2002 financial audit. It also received clean opinions in each subsequent audit. OCFO is working closely with USDA agencies to eliminate all material weaknesses.

OCFO will lead efforts to improve management information by helping USDA's agencies craft and access useful, timely information. This information includes monthly financial reports, on-line access to real-time information and program cost reporting. By enhancing the integrity of financial and administrative data, the Department will protect corporate assets and conserve scarce resources.

<b>Financial Management Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2005 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2006 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007 Target</b>	<b>FY 2008 Target</b>
Clean financial audit each fiscal year	yes	yes	yes	yes
USDA PMA Internal Scorecard for Financial Management for NASS	Green	Green	Green	Green

**Means and Strategies:** Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. Strategies for achievement of this initiative, NASS will assist the OCFO in improving financial management in the Department. USDA's plans include maintaining an unqualified opinion on the Department's financial statements; eliminate all material weaknesses and inconsistencies in financial processes; evaluate opportunities to reduce expenses in Department-wide financial processes and solutions, public/private partnerships, and competitive sourcing; modernize outdated core and feeder financial systems that are no longer on a supported architecture; improve financial reporting processes and procedures; provide transparency and accountability to administrative costs; and increase the use of financial information in day-to-day decision making and budget formulation.

## Expand Electronic Government

USDA launched a Department-wide effort in 2001 to improve the methods through which its agencies collectively executed its broad mission objectives. The Department's strategies, published in USDA's eGovernment Strategic Plan in 2002, focus on improving the delivery of its information and services and reducing costs. The plan calls for USDA to provide customers with single points of access to information and services; simplify and unify business processes spanning multiple agencies; establish information and service-delivery standards; and consolidate redundant information technology services and systems through use of shared USDA or Government solutions.

Employee and public confidence in the security of NASS electronic information systems and processes are essential for maximizing employee productivity internal to NASS and with its customers. NASS collects, processes, and maintains sensitive respondent information. NASS is entrusted with ensuring this information is secure and unavailable to unauthorized access. 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 employs the latest security techniques through the utilization of enterprise firewalls, routers equipped with firewalls, intrusion detection, and user accounts and associated passwords for all NASS systems.

<b>Electronic Government Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2005 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2006 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007 Target</b>	<b>FY 2008 Target</b>
Accumulated number of new GPEA <sup>1</sup> e-gov't (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.	82	119	125	130
Percent of employees receiving "Security Awareness" training.	100%	100%	100%	100%
USDA PMA Internal Scorecard for E-Government Score for NASS	Yellow	Green	Green	Green

**Means and Strategies:** Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. Strategies for achievement of this initiative, NASS has developed eGovernment Tactical Plans that establishes 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. NASS enhancements made to the cybersecurity architecture has increased protection of market-sensitive data from Internet threats. NASS plans to include security discussions at all training schools to constantly raise awareness with respect to security and also requires online IT security training each year for all of its employees. NASS continuously enhances its security architecture by adding additional security components such as firewalls at all locations and security features such as strong authentication for remote access. NASS works closely with the Departments Office of Cyber Security to ensure that strong and compliant security architecture is maintained which minimizes any duplication of services.

Additional strategies include re-engineering NASS business processes for integration of GPEA mandate and e-Government efforts; promoting the use of the Internet for data collection of information using Electronic Data Reporting (EDR) and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) software and report releases; continually monitor and upgrade, as needed, the NASS distributed client/server computing and equipment using leading-edge relational data base technology; implementing security technologies and security system architectures; increasing use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, and geo-referencing devices; using the USDA communications network to implement new functions such as remote LAN management, video conferencing, optical scanning, document archiving, retrieval systems, GIS, and data sharing; organizing all relevant data in a highly secure integrated data warehouse and transaction data bases which can be accessed and shared through powerful analysis tools (when appropriate, these data bases will support key components of the USDA data architecture); continually

monitoring and upgrading all field LAN servers, as needed, to enhance the system's capacity to handle a high volume of computer-assisted telephone interviews and promote effective and efficient development and release of official statistics; continually monitoring and upgrading all LAN systems to facilitate the migration of any new technology to the USDA technical architecture; work closely with the ARS, Administrative and Financial Management Division, to make sure administrative and financial services to NASS are efficient, effective, and consistent with Departmental standards and guidance.

### Establish Budget and Performance Integration

USDA continues to improve how it integrates performance information into its budget decisions. Beginning with the FY 2005 President's Budget, the Department integrated budget with performance throughout the budget formulation process. This integration includes the use of OMB's Program Assessment Rating Tools (PART). PART is used to assess and improve program performance so that the Federal Government can achieve better results. USDA program analysts and budget staff are working closely with mission area and NASS representatives to establish budget priorities based on USDA's strategic goals and desired outcomes. The Department continues to improve its performance information annually. USDA's plans include continue using performance information during all stages of the budget formulation process; systematically evaluating programs and integrating the results of those evaluations into the budget decision-making process, for example, relying upon PART assessments in budget formulation; and aligning the budget with the Department's strategic plan to keep the focus on results and effective management.

Budget and Performance Annual Performance Indicators	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Target	FY 2008 Target
Agricultural Statistics Program PART Score	Moderately Effective	-	-	-
USDA PMA Internal Scorecard for Budget and Performance Integration Score for NASS	Green	Green	Green	Green

**Means and Strategies:** Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. Strategies for achievement of this initiative are to continue to improve our performance information and use program evaluations more effectively. Our plans include providing a systematic means to review and evaluate performance information during all stages of the budget process; evaluating and assessing Agricultural Statistics Program (including the census of agriculture) using the OMB's Program Assessment Rating Tools (PART); evaluating programs in a systematic manner and integrating the results of those evaluations into the budget decision-making process; and creating budget line items and cost accounting systems that align with the Department's and Mission Area goals and encourage effective management.

APPENDIX A

VERIFICATION AND VALIDATION

Annual Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<p><i>Objective 1.2</i>  <b>Provide technical assistance to improve agricultural statistics in developing and transition countries.</b></p>	<p>NASS International Program Office (IPO) maintains information on the number of countries assisted by the U. S. and export data associated with each country.</p>	<p>The amount of assisted for each country and the number of foreign visitors are tracked annually.</p>	<p>IPO can only provide narrative description of technical assistance provided to each country</p>
<p><i>Objective 2.2</i>  <b>Release all Agricultural Statistics Board reports on-time.</b>  <hr/> <b>Percent of official reports for which an errata must be issued.</b></p>	<p>Marketing Information and Services Office (MISO) monitors and tracks reports and releases including new data products and services provided.</p>	<p>The Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) Calendar is published several months prior to the preceding calendar year. The ASB Calendar contains the times and dates for all NASS releases for the calendar year January through December. The MISO staff compares actual release times with the ASB calendar release dates and times for verification and validation of performance data.</p>	
<p><b>Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release.</b></p>	<p>The Chairman and Secretary of the Agricultural Statistics Board monitor and is responsible for reporting any irregularities.</p>	<p>The Chairman of the Agricultural Statistics Board provides an annual report of the number of instances.</p>	<p>Electronic intrusion detection is operational.</p>
<p><b>Increase the percent of key survey point estimates meeting statistical precision targets.</b></p>	<p>NASS Policy Standards Memorandum (PSM) 45 provides policy guidelines. Coefficients of variation information are computer generated with survey summaries and indications.</p>	<p>Sampling Branch, Census and Survey Division monitors the C.V. summary tables and tabulates performance information prepared by the Statistical Methods Branch, Statistics Division.</p>	
<p><b>Root mean square error (RMSE) will be reported to data users as a measure of reliability of statistical forecasts and estimates against final totals.</b></p>	<p>Statistics Division identifies and tracks reports with RMSE information reported to data users.</p>	<p>RSME information is published in selected releases.</p>	
<p><b>Maximize the percent of total U.S. agricultural production covered annually by official USDA statistics.</b></p>	<p>USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) farm cash receipt data is used for statistical program coverage.</p>	<p>ERS data is used in preparing worksheet calculations for comparing total farm cash receipts with cash receipts in NASS annual statistics program.</p>	<p>Final ERS cash receipt data are not available until the following year.</p>
<p><b>Provide State level farm production expenditure estimates for more States to cover a higher percentage of the U.S. total.</b></p>	<p>NASS ARMS Survey</p>	<p>State level estimates are published in NASS releases; cash receipts are used to measure coverage.</p>	

Annual Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<p><b>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</b></p>	<p>NASS Data Users, Customers, and Stakeholders</p>	<p>Documented requests for new data</p>	
<p><b>Number of new data products and services produced to fulfill customer requests.</b></p>	<p>Marketing Information and Services Office (MISO) monitors and tracks reports and releases including new data products and services provided.</p>	<p>NASS public announcements are made throughout the year for new data products and services provided.</p>	<p>Annual targets are not set, however, the number of new products and services are documented at the end of the year.</p>
<p><b>Improve customer satisfaction as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI).</b></p>	<p>Performance data is generated from the results of American Customer Satisfaction Survey (ACSI).</p>	<p>ACSI survey data is prepared by the Federal Consulting Group in partnership with the University of Michigan (with a confidence level of 95%) to measure customer satisfaction rating.</p>	<p>ACSI survey data and results may vary from survey to survey due to changing customer population (or customer groups) who are surveyed. Generally, the ACSI surveys will not be conducted annually.</p>
<p><b>Improve the ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI.</b></p>			
<p><b>Keep the annual survey development and data collection costs below the annual rate of employment cost inflation.</b></p>	<p>Salary and data collection costs generated from NASCAR System and the Employment Cost Index (ECI) is data generated by BLS.</p>	<p>Census and Survey Division tracks costs for each major survey included for this performance measure. Information is available periodically throughout the year.</p>	<p>Only major national surveys are currently included in this calculation.</p>
<p><b>Keep information collections in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA).</b></p>	<p>USDA OCIO, OMB, and NASS PRA dockets.</p>	<p>USDA, OMB, and NASS track PRA performance. OMB compliance standard is 95 percent.</p>	
<p><b>Objective 2.3</b> <b>Meet national quality and publication standards for county estimates.</b></p>	<p>NASS county estimates program documentation and systems are managed by the NASS Field Offices (FO's).</p>	<p>Data is extracted from the NASS county estimates system.</p>	<p>A new county estimates system needs to be developed to provide performance data.</p>
<p><b>Include States accounting for 90 percent of the value of production for the commodities in the monthly field crop price program.</b></p>	<p>States in the NASS monthly prices received program.</p>	<p>Value is calculated using the program States in the monthly field crop prices received program</p>	

Annual Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<p><i>Objective 3.1</i>  <b>Census print contract awarded</b></p>	<p>Census and Survey Division, Census Planning Branch.</p>	<p>2007 Census of Agriculture Project Plan.</p>	
<p><b>Final Census Mail List (CML) completed</b></p>	<p>Census and Survey Division, Census Planning Branch.</p>	<p>2007 Census of Agriculture Project Plan.</p>	
<p><b>Mailing of the Census questionnaires completed</b></p>	<p>Census and Survey Division, Census Planning Branch.</p>	<p>2007 Census of Agriculture Project Plan.</p>	
<p><b>Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives.</b></p>	<p>Small Farms Coordinator</p>	<p>Small Farms Coordinator</p>	
<p><b>Improve the census list coverage of U.S. farms and farmland with sales of \$50,000 or more.</b></p>	<p>Census and Survey Division, Census Planning Branch.</p>	<p>2007 Census of Agriculture Project Plan.</p>	
<p><b>Increase the list coverage of U.S. minority operated farms in the census.</b></p>	<p>Census and Survey Division, Census Planning Branch.</p>	<p>2007 Census of Agriculture Project Plan.</p>	
<p><i>Objective 4.2</i>  <b>Exceed the 75 percent standard for acres covered by agricultural chemical and pest management statistics for targeted food crops and commodities.</b></p>	<p>NASS chemical use surveys and acreage statistics and reports.</p>	<p>Data obtained from chemical use surveys to measure coverage.</p>	
<p><i>Objective 6.2</i>  <b>Exceed the 75 percent standard for acres covered by agricultural chemical use statistics for targeted field crops.</b></p>	<p>NASS ARMS II survey data.</p>	<p>Crops to be surveyed are identified each year for ARMS II and calculations are based on survey program completed each year.</p>	
<p><b>Increase the number of States using cropland data layer technology.</b></p>	<p>Research and Development Division's Geospatial Program.</p>	<p>Geospatial data is published by State and made available to the public.</p>	
<p><i>Improve Human Capital Management</i>  <b>Percent of NASS budget appropriations spent on training and career development for NASS employees.</b></p>	<p>Training and Career Development Office maintains annual training cost summaries.</p>	<p>An annual training costs report includes all agency costs associated with training and career development of NASS employees. Included are staffing salary costs, travel, tuition, books, training materials and supplies, etc. Data is based on information from the National Finance Center and internal NASS budget calculations and estimates.</p>	<p>Some of the costs are estimated.</p>
<p><b>Percent of new hires of women and minorities to</b></p>	<p>NFC and NASS Personnel Databases</p>	<p>NASS Human Resources Service Office tracks the</p>	<p>Information for new hires are limited</p>

Annual Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<b>contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce.</b>		number of new hires throughout the year and monitored by the NASS Civil Rights Director.	to the four primary job series in NASS; GS-1529; GS-1530, GS-1531, and GS-0334.
<b>Number of substantiated EEO complaints by NASS employees.</b>	Office of the Administrator maintains EEO related information.	The number of EEO complaints reported is based on reports prepared by the NASS Civil Rights Director.	Grievances filed and resolved are not included. Grievances that are not resolved and then moved into the complaint process are included.
<b>USDA PMA Internal Scorecard for Strategic Management of Human Capital Score</b>	USDA Human Capital Management	Quarterly Internal USDA Scorecard (MITS)	
<b>Participate in OPM's annual Federal Human Capital Survey (or conduct a NASS Organizational Climate Survey).</b>	The Federal Human Capital Survey, Best Places to Work website, and NASS Organizational Climate Surveys.	Information published in the Federal Human Capital Survey, Best Places to Work website, and prior NASS Organizational Climate Surveys (OCS).	Federal Human Capital Survey is conducted once every two years (in the even-numbered years). NASS OCS are conducted periodically when the FHCS is not conducted.
<i>Implement Competitive Sourcing</i> <b>Complete an approved Annual FAIR Act Inventory.</b>	USDA OCFO	All inventories are published by Department/Agency on the Internet.	
<b>NASS PMA Internal Scorecard for Competitive Sourcing Score</b>	REE Competitive Sourcing Working Group.	Publication of a REE long-range competitive sourcing plan for the mission area approved by the Under Secretary for REE.	
<i>Improving Financial Management:</i> <b>Clean financial audit each fiscal year.</b>	USDA OCFO; NASS Budget Administrative Services Office (BASO).	Audit reports.	
<b>NASS PMA Internal Scorecard for Financial Management Score</b>	USDA OCFO; NASS Budget Administrative Services Office (BASO).	Quarterly Internal USDA Scorecard (MITS)	
<i>Expanding Electronic Government</i> <b>Accumulated number of new GPEA<sup>1</sup> e-government (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.</b>	Data Collection Branch, Census and Survey Division, tracks the number of GPEA e-government products and services.	New e-government (EDR and EDI) products and services introduced by NASS are recorded and maintained by Census and Survey Division.	

Annual Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<b>Departmental security rating for NASS.</b>	USDA's Office of the Chief Information Officer.	Rating information maintained by the Department. Ratings are color coded for each of the 3 levels; a red rating being the lowest rating, the next higher level is yellow, and a green rating being the highest score.	
<b>Percent of employees receiving "Security Awareness" training.</b>	Designated NASS Security Officers and TCDO.	NASS Security Officers track training conducted for NASS employees and resource materials used to facilitate training activities. TCDO maintains all formal training conducted in the training data base.	
<b>NASS PMA Internal Scorecard for eGovernment Score</b>	USDA OCIO	Quarterly Internal USDA Scorecard (MITS)	
<i>Establish Budget and Performance Integration</i> <b>Agricultural Statistics Program PART Score</b>	NASS GPRA Coordinator, Budget Administrative Service Office, and OMB.	The OMB PART information is published in the President's Budget and on the OMB/White House website. Internal NASS reports generated for comparing budget and performance indicators periodically throughout the year.	Integration of processes will be made incrementally.
<b>NASS PMA Internal Scorecard for Budget and Performance Integration Score</b>	USDA OCFO, OBPA;	Quarterly Internal USDA Scorecard (MITS)	