
ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 requires all Federal agencies to engage in a strategic planning process that directly aligns resources with results and enhances the accountability of all government endeavors to the American taxpayers who finance them.

This results-oriented process includes the development and implementation of a five-year strategic plan, as well as annual reporting that sets specific, measurable targets for performance at the beginning of each fiscal year and then offers a concrete, data-based assessment at year-end of the success of these endeavors.

This *FY 2004 Performance and Accountability Report* is the year-end progress report of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It reviews the strategic goals and objectives the Department set for itself at the beginning of the fiscal year and compares initial targets to actual performance.

In addition to promoting accountability and enhancing the management of USDA programs, this reporting also helps illuminate the strategic allocation of resources in the future, by directly linking program performance to budgetary decisions.

This report aims to inform the decisions of policymakers who make critical choices that impact USDA programs. It also strives to provide transparency to all Americans who have an interest in the workings of their government and USDA's ability to "manage for results" in performing its many vital public functions.