

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIST (OCE)

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FY 2005 - 2010

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIST

INTRODUCTION

The principal function of the Office of the Chief Economist (OCE) is to provide economic analyses and information to policy officials. OCE serves as the focal point for economic intelligence, analysis, and review related to domestic and international agricultural markets. OCE advises the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretary) on the economic consequences of alternative policy, program and legislative proposals. OCE coordinates cross-mission activities in the areas of sustainable development, agricultural labor, remote sensing, commodity market forecasts and projections and global change issues. Likewise, OCE coordinates research and analysis on energy policy issues and implements statutory energy-related programs. OCE provides guidance on and conducts mandatory review of regulatory risk assessments and cost-benefit analyses for consistency, objectivity, and use of sound science and economics. OCE also coordinates and oversees clearance review of all commodity and aggregate agricultural data used to develop Department of Agriculture (USDA) outlook and situation information, including weather data and analyses, and works to improve the consistency, objectivity, and reliability of USDA's agricultural estimates and forecasts. OCE also maintains expertise to advise the Secretary on the economic consequences of homeland security events and USDA responses.

OCE is organized to directly serve the Office of the Secretary, free from program implementation responsibilities of the Department's mission areas. The Secretary created OCE on October 20, 1994, under the authority of the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, P.L. 103-354. OCE consists of the Chief Economist and Immediate Staff, the Office of Energy Policy and New Uses (OEPNU), the World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB), the Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis (ORACBA), and the Global Change Program Office (GCPO). OCE is a Departmental Staff Office, organizationally housed in Executive Operations, with the Chief Economist reporting directly to the Secretary.

OCE's ability to access and supply critical information depends on working closely with other USDA agencies. Among the primary agencies whose inputs and support OCE coordinates to produce information products and analyses are the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Cooperative, State, Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), Economic Research Service (ERS), Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Forest Service (FS), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). OCE collaborates with these agencies and with all the USDA agencies engaged in issuing regulations and risk assessments.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

OCE, whose operations and activities are directed by the Chief Economist, is comprised of five suboffices: the Chief Economist's Immediate Office, OEPNU, WAOB, ORACBA, and GCPO. The Chief Economist's Immediate Office consists of the Chief Economist and three agricultural staff economists; two coordinating positions: Director, Sustainable Development and Coordinator of Agricultural Labor Affairs; and two secretaries. In OEPNU, a Director manages a staff of three economists and two secretaries. For WAOB, a Chairperson provides leadership over a staff of thirty, comprised predominantly of agricultural commodity analysts and meteorologists. ORACBA consists of a Director, five additional staff analysts to support risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis, and a secretary. GCPO consists of a Director, two staff analysts and a secretary.

When formed in 1994, OCE consisted of the Immediate Staff, WAOB and ORACBA. In FY 1998, OCE assumed responsibilities of the GCPO. GCPO staff coordinate USDA's global change research program, conduct policy analysis on global change issues, coordinate activities with other Federal agencies, represent USDA on U.S. delegations to international climate change discussions, and facilitate communication and outreach to producers and agricultural interest groups, further expanding OCE's significant cross-cutting activity workload to approximately a dozen agencies. Reflecting statutory change, OCE assumed responsibility for OEPNU in FY 1999, previously located in ERS. OEPNU coordinates research and analysis on energy and issues related to agriculture and implements statutory energy-related programs mandated in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

OCE operated on an appropriated budget of \$8.656 million (after rescission) plus \$0.7 million in reimbursements for the GCPO during FY 2004.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

This strategic plan defines OCE's mission and lays out long-term goals and objectives for its implementation. Development of the plan follows the guidelines set by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in Circular A-11.

OCE periodically revises its Strategic Plan to:

- Meet the requirement established by Congress that agencies revise their plans,
- Inform the Congress and other stakeholders about additional responsibilities assigned to OCE by the Secretary and statute, and
- Introduce improvements into the Strategic Plan by drawing on the experience OCE managers have gained during the intervening years as a result of using the Plan as a tool for setting priorities and allocating resources consistent with anticipated resource requirement levels.

To develop this revised plan, the Chief Economist and all other OCE managers reviewed the prior Plan. SES managers for each element of OCE were responsible for reviewing and revising, as required and as appropriate, their organizational goals, objectives, time frames completing key tasks, and performance measures.

This revised OCE Strategic Plan, like the prior Plan, was developed through a review of the following supportive data and analyses: 1) the 1994 USDA Reorganization Act, 2) the responsibilities delegated by the Secretary to OCE, 3) procedures and processes currently followed to meet these responsibilities, 4) various memoranda of the Secretary creating the WAOB, defining activities of the WAOB, creating the Council on Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, assigning GCPO to OCE, and creating the Biobased Products and Bioenergy Coordinating Council, 5) statutes defining USDA responsibilities in the area of agricultural labor, 6) statutes related to USDA responsibilities in the area of energy, 7) statutes under which programs of the Department will operate, including the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, 8) other agencies' strategic plans to foresee their compatibility with and impact on OCE's plan; and 9) recommendations and visions of OCE customers, clients, and employees on how to best meet OCE responsibilities. No external or formal program evaluations were conducted to develop this Plan. Managers and staff reviewed mission, goals, and objectives in the context of their evaluation of current program performance. In addition, OCE interacted with employees to ascertain their views on the plan.

KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS

Achievement of the goals and objectives are contingent on a number of external factors. First, the plan is based on the current baseline budget projections of the Department. If appropriations differ substantially from these projections, achievement of the plan would be affected. Second, much OCE activity involves coordinating information and analysis from a variety of sources. To the extent that other agencies and sources alter their resource commitments to OCE activities, plan achievement would be affected. Third, OCE workload depends partially on legislative and government-wide regulatory activity over which OCE has no control. Likewise, workload is determined by the Secretary, who assigns OCE new responsibilities. Fluctuations in activity in these areas would alter the distribution of resources across plan objectives. Fourth, allocation of OCE resources and achievement of the plan will also depend on developments in agricultural markets, such as weather disasters, animal disease outbreaks or trade developments. If OCE plan achievement is disrupted by the above external factors, OCE will attempt to fulfill plan goals and objectives by reallocating internal resources and seeking partnerships with external entities to leverage OCE resources.

MISSION

The primary mission of OCE is to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on the economic prospects in agricultural markets and the economic implications of policies, programs and economic events affecting U.S. agriculture, rural communities, and forestry; to ensure the public has consistent, objective and reliable agricultural forecasts and projections; to promote effective and efficient rules governing Departmental programs; to coordinate global change program issues and to conduct research on and coordinate energy issues related to agriculture. This mission is carried out through the programs of the Immediate Office of the Chief Economist, OEPNU, WAOB, ORACBA, and GCPO. In its capacity as a staff office and advisor to the Office of the Secretary, OCE provides support to all USDA goals and objectives.

STRATEGIC GOALS

STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 1

Assure the Secretary of Agriculture receives timely, independent and objective economic advice and analysis on critical Departmental program and policy issues. (This goal supports all five strategic goals of USDA.)

Strategic Objective No. 1

Assure that the Office of the Secretary receives sufficient, accurate, reliable and timely briefings, analyses, and reviews to enable the understanding of market developments and the major economic effects of alternative policies and programs and to facilitate decision making.

Outcomes and Performance Measures Briefings, memos, analyses, reviews and other information are timely, keep the Office of the Secretary informed, facilitate effective decisions, and insure that Departmental communications to the public are economically sound. Success is judged based on feedback from the Office of the Secretary and others, including the subcabinet, Executive Office of the President, Department of State and the Department of Labor, and other executive branch agencies, on information products, cross-mission coordination of analysis, and

Departmental representation of issues related to sustainable development, agricultural labor, the domestic and international agricultural and rural economies.

Time Frame for Completion Continuous, as needed, and as requested by the Secretary.

Baseline Data None.

Strategies for Achieving Objective

1. Provide policy and program analysis and advice to the Secretary. Major areas of analyses include international trade agreements, risk-sharing institutions, crop insurance, commodity and conservation programs, sustainable development, global change, agricultural labor, and energy.
2. Brief the Secretary orally and in writing on a regular basis on the economic implications of market developments, legislation, and key events affecting agriculture, forestry, and rural America.
3. Assist the Secretary's communications office in the development of speech text and the use of economic information for speeches of top officials and in press releases.
4. Provide subcabinet officials with economic intelligence relevant to the administration of their program areas and USDA in general.
5. Review Congressional testimony of executive branch officials and Department correspondence for economic content.
6. Represent the Department on U.S. delegations to international discussions of sustainable development, international trade or other issues, as directed, by serving as a source of objective, analytical assessments of the effects of proposals made in international forums that would affect agreements, treaties or other obligations of the Department.
7. Lead and coordinate cross-mission area work on sustainable development, including chairing the USDA Council on Sustainable Development, representing USDA in international multilateral environmental and other related negotiations, and other issues as requested by the Secretary.
8. Serve on the Board of Directors of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.
9. Chair the Capper-Volstead Act Committee.
10. Testify before Congress, as requested. Prepare analyses when requested for Members of Congress, their staffs, and Agriculture and Appropriations Committee staffs on the effects of legislative proposals.
11. Serve as Departmental liaison within the executive branch on sustainable development, agricultural labor markets, and related issues.
12. Respond to economic information needs related to homeland security related events.

STRATEGIC GOAL NO. II

Improve the U.S. agricultural economy by facilitating efficient price discovery in agricultural markets by coordinating the release of comprehensive, consistent, reliable, timely and objective USDA estimates, forecasts, and projections of commodity supply, demand, and prices. (This goal principally supports USDA strategic goal 1, Expanding Economic and Trade Opportunities for U.S. Agricultural Producers. The information is also used to support USDA strategic goal 3, Maintain and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resources and Environment and USDA strategic goal 4, Enhance the Capacity of All Rural Residents, Communities and Businesses to Prosper.)

Strategic Objective No.1

Ensure that the information needs of customers and clients are met with respect to global commodity coverage, frequency of information release, and objectivity of data and analysis.

Outcomes and Performance Measures World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) Reports are issued to the public 12 times annually; lock-up briefings are conducted 12 times annually; Highlights of Agricultural Developments are issued internally daily; Market Development Reports are issued internally weekly; baseline projections are issued to the public twice yearly; crop condition reports are issued internally weekly; and briefings, staff analyses, memoranda are issued and conducted as needed. Their usefulness to customers and clients is judged by OCE managers as indicated by the number of free e-mail and paid subscriptions to the WASDE, number of electronic hits to the OCE home pages, feedback from attendees at data users' conferences, number of attendees at and their feed back from the USDA annual Agricultural Outlook Forum, and feedback from participating agencies, clients and customers.

Time Frame for Completion Continuous.

<u>Baseline data</u> FY 2004:	Number of email subscriptions to WASDE	4,500	
	Outlook Forum held	Yes	
	Number of Outlook Forum Attendees	1,400	
	Average Rating of Forum Attendees (5 pt. Scale)		4.3
	Annual Interagency Review Forum held	Yes	

Strategies to Achieving Objective

1. Coordinate the development and release of consistent, and accurate market-sensitive estimates and forecasts in the monthly WASDE report.
2. Ensure efficient operation of the Interagency Commodity Estimates Committee (ICEC) forecasting process, including conducting an annual review of performance and procedures, and providing feedback to participating agencies.
3. Ensure provision of a broad range of other situation and outlook products, such as briefings, written reports and market updates, data, special analyses, and long-range forecasts.
4. Provide an annual comprehensive situation and outlook forum for agriculture that incorporates the viewpoints of and participation by analysts from USDA, academia, and the private sector.

Strategic Objective No. 2

Ensure accurate and timely monitoring and reporting of the impact of weather and other natural phenomena on crops and agricultural resources to facilitate decision-making by market participants and resource managers.

Outcomes and Performance Measures Weekly weather briefings for Departmental analysts; monthly weather impact assessments; daily *Memorandum for the Secretary*; special analyses and weather-related information; improvements in the National Agricultural Weather Information System (NAWIS); and leadership of the USDA Remote Sensing Coordination Committee. The value of these services to customers is based on feedback from users; degree of implementation of the plan to unify access to meteorological data through the NAWIS; and feedback received on the quality and usefulness of remote sensing assessments done for the executive branch.

Time Frame for Completion Continuous.

<u>Baseline data</u> FY 2004:	Number of weekly weather briefings	52
	U.S. regions participating in NAWIS	3

Strategies for Achieving Objective

1. Issue weather data and assessments, especially early warning of weather impacts, to USDA clients and customers.
2. Coordinate the monitoring and assessment of meteorological and climate information through the Joint Agricultural Weather Facility.
3. Expand meteorological capabilities and databases by establishing a National Agricultural Weather Information System by setting up staff field offices to collect and disseminate agricultural weather data and drawing on resources from USDA agencies, the National Weather Service, National Climatic Data Center, and Regional Climate Centers.
4. Coordinate USDA remote sensing activities, including monitoring, collecting and disseminating information on remote sensing issues, developments, and activities to relevant USDA agencies, represent USDA on matters of remote sensing and communicate the Department's satellite imagery requirements to space agencies, federal data repositories and private industry.

Strategic Objective No. 3

Enhance the ability of OCE to access, safeguard, share, and distribute USDA commodity market information. Increase the ease and speed by which USDA analysts and customers can access and download selected databases and other economic information.

Outcomes and Performance Measures An effective Commodity Market Information System (CMIS) is developed, operated and expanded over time. Data are secure. Success is judged by the number and quality of information products made available through CMIS; the number of hits to the system; instances of reduced time or effort required to access data bases and information products as reported by staff and users; the degree to which the efficiency of information dissemination is increased; absence of security violations; and incidence of positive feedback from end users regarding the quality of USDA's market information system.

Time frame for completion Continuous.

Baseline data FY 2004: CMIS approved by USDA's eBoard in 2004 as part of the Department's enterprise architecture and is in first stages of development.

Strategies for Achieving Objective

1. Make USDA commodity market information available via the Commodity Market Information System (CMIS), a one-stop Department-wide portal website.
2. Improve electronic access and information exchange among USDA analysts and outside organizations.
3. Identify and introduce new Information Technology to improve productivity, lower costs, and ensure security of sensitive market information.
4. Achieve further integration of USDA commodity market information databases and networking of USDA computers.

5. Introduce Knowledge Management concepts to achieve further integration of USDA commodity market data and information.

STRATEGIC GOAL NO. III

Ensure regulations affecting the public are based on sound, objective and appropriate risk assessments and economic analyses. (This goal supports all five strategic goals of USDA.)

Strategic Objective No. 1

Review economically significant regulations primarily intended to affect human health, safety or the environment to ensure that they are based on appropriate risk assessments and economic analyses that can serve as a basis for selecting cost-effective management options for hazards managed by USDA. Review cost-benefit analyses for all Department regulations classified as significant and economically significant.

Outcomes and Performance Measures Regulatory analyses meet requirements of principles, standards and statutes; and timeliness of review and clearance meets Department's requirements. Feedback from agencies, the subcabinet, OMB and the public indicate usefulness of review.

Time Frame for Completion As determined by the USDA Regulatory Work Plan.

Baseline Data FY 2004: Number of regulatory analyses (risk assessments
and cost-benefit analyses) reviewed 57

Strategies for Achieving Objective

1. Review and approve agencies' risk assessments and cost-benefit analyses for supporting regulations.
2. Establish and conduct peer review panels as necessary to ensure proper review.
3. Represent USDA in executive branch development of risk analysis and cost-benefit policies, procedures, and reports.

Strategic Objective No. 2

Provide support for agencies required to conduct risk assessments and cost-benefit analyses by assuring trained and competent analysts are available to complete these analyses. Expand risk assessment research related to agricultural issues through interagency partnerships and collaboration with research institutions.

Outcomes and Performance Measures Regulatory agencies are contacted and informed of needs for risk assessment and cost-benefit analyses; information on available risk assessment resources in USDA or other government sources are made available; information on risk assessments are distributed throughout USDA through the monthly *ORACBA News* (distributed electronically) and 4 to 6 seminars annually (Risk Forums). Quality and timeliness of services is determined based on responses from groups requiring or requesting support and feedback from agencies on the effectiveness of training and information programs.

Time Frame for Completion Continuous.

<u>Baseline Data</u> FY 2004:	Number of ORACBA Newsletters issued	12
	Number of Risk Forums held	5

Strategies for Achieving Objective

1. Coordinate analytical resources for conducting risk assessments in USDA as needed.
2. Develop and support USDA analytical capability by establishing technical work groups, through training courses, special seminars and discussions.
3. Develop information resources for support of USDA risk assessments.

STRATEGIC GOAL NO. IV

Enhance Biobased Product and Energy Opportunities for Agricultural Producers and rural areas. (This goal principally supports USDA strategic goal 1, Expanding Economic and Trade Opportunities for U.S. Agricultural Producers, but also USDA strategic goal 3, Maintain and Enhance the Nation’s Natural Resources and Environment and USDA strategic goal 4, Enhance the Capacity of All Rural Residents, Communities and Businesses to Prosper.)

Strategic Objective No. 1

Promote the increased utilization of biobased products by Federal agencies. (This objective is part of USDA Strategic Objective 1.3, Expand alternative markets for agricultural products and activities).

Outcomes and Performance Measures Increases in procurements by Federal agencies of biobased product through implementation of the Federal Biobased Product Procurement Preference Program (FB4P) and related activities.

Time Frame for Completion Continuous.

Baseline Data FY 2004: Proposed rule on FB4P published. No items yet designated for procurement.

Strategies for Achieving Objective

1. Develop and issue a final rule to establish the Federal Biobased Products Preferred Procurement Program.
2. Develop product information and test data on actual biobased products that can be extrapolated to the item (generic grouping of products) level to support designation rulemaking.
3. Develop and issue a series of rules designating items for preferred procurement by Federal agencies under the program.
4. Develop and operate an electronic information system providing information on the Federal Biobased Products Preferred Procurement Program (FB4P), including information on designated items and their characteristics and a password protected section of the website on which manufacturers and vendors are invited to post product and contact information for products that fall within designated items.
5. Develop and implement a voluntary labeling program for the use of the “U.S.D.A. Certified Biobased Product” label and “logo” for the labeling program.

Strategic Objective No. 2

Increase the use of biodiesel through funding competitively identified grant proposals to conduct national education programs focused on increasing awareness of and the use of biodiesel.

Outcomes and Performance Measures \$1 million per fiscal year is granted to support biodiesel education programs. The biodiesel education programs funded result in increased awareness of biodiesel attributes and increased use of biodiesel fuel, as documented by grant recipients.

Time Frame for Completion Annually during FY 2005 through FY 2007.

Baseline Data FY 2004: \$1 million in funding awarded to begin program in 2004.

Strategies for Achieving Objective

1. Manage continuation grants to two grant recipients that were awarded in 2004.
2. Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of education activities conducted under the grants.
3. Decide whether to continue current grants; if current grants are not continued, conduct a competition for successor grant proposals and select one or more proposals for funding.
4. Evaluate overall effectiveness of the education programs funded under the grants, focusing on new education initiatives undertaken and the success of those initiatives measured in increased consumption of biodiesel.

Strategic Objective No. 3

OEPNU staff, working independently or with Departmental agencies, analyze and develop alternative policies and programs related to energy issues as they relate to agriculture and rural areas. The Secretary is kept apprised of developments in energy markets, energy policy and programs and energy legislation.

Outcomes and Performance Measures Analyzes policies and programs, as needed. The effectiveness of developing, and coordinating with other agencies, analyses, policies and programs developed reflect the objectives is determined by feedback from the Office of the Secretary, the sub-cabinet, Department agencies and cooperating departments, particularly the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency and Congress, and USDA customers.

Time Frame for Completion: Continuous.

Baseline data None.

Strategies for Achieving Objective

1. Coordinate the Department's efforts in developing analyses, policies and programs related to energy, including energy markets and technology and their implications for U.S. agriculture and rural areas.
2. Represent USDA at Congressional hearings, meetings and other forums where these matters are discussed.
3. Lead and coordinate cross-mission work on energy by serving as permanent vice chair of the USDA Bioproduct and Bioenergy Coordinating Committee.

4. Serve as USDA liaison within the executive branch on energy issues.

STRATEGIC GOAL NO. V

Assure the Department's global change programs and activities address the needs of the government and public. (This goal principally supports USDA strategic goal 1, Expanding Economic and Trade Opportunities for U.S. Agricultural Producers and goal and USDA strategic goal 3, Maintain and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resources and Environment.)

Strategic Objective No. 1

Assure that the Secretary of Agriculture receives timely, independent and objective advice and analysis on global change issues, enabling USDA to be active in executive branch global change programs and policies and activities.

Outcomes and Performance Measures Briefings, memos, analyses, reviews and other information, as needed, to ensure the Secretary is informed about global change issues and is prepared to represent the USDA in executive branch decision making on such issues. Organize USDA representation for international activities. The effectiveness of advice and analyses is measured by feedback from the Office of the Secretary and others, including the subcabinet, indicating usefulness in keeping the Secretary informed, in facilitating effective decisions, and ensuring that Departmental communications to the public are technically sound. The extent to which briefings, memos, analyses, reviews other information support successful outcomes in international negotiations and scientific meetings related to global change on issues that potentially affect U.S. agriculture, forestry, and U.S. farm policy as judged by feedback from USDA agencies, other executive branch agencies and USDA customers.

Time Frame for Completion Continuous.

Baseline data None.

Strategies for Achieving Objective

1. Provide policy and program analysis and advice to the Secretary on global change issues and brief the Secretary orally and in writing as appropriate.
2. Assist the Office of Communications in the development of speech text relating to global change issues and provide assistance in the development of speeches of top officials and in press releases.
3. Review Congressional testimony of executive branch officials and Department correspondence on global change issues.
4. Represent the Secretary on U.S. delegations to international negotiations and scientific meeting and serve as a source of objective, analytical assessments of the effects of proposals made in international forums that would affect agreements, treaties or other obligations of the Department.
5. Testify before Congress, as requested. Prepare analyses when requested for Members of Congress and their staffs on the effects of legislative proposals.

Strategic Objective No. 2

Work with Departmental agencies to develop policies and programs related to global change,

ensuring that policies and programs are consistent with the Secretary's objectives.

Outcomes and Performance Measures Policies and programs and analyses are developed through effective coordination of USDA agencies. Climate change considerations are integrated into USDA programs and actions. USDA global change research supports USDA program priorities and addresses key questions relevant to USDA policy makers. The effectiveness of coordination of activities and the extent to which analyses, policies and programs developed reflect the objectives of the Secretary is determined by feedback from the Office of the Secretary, the sub-cabinet, Department agencies and cooperating departments, particularly the Executive Office of the President, Department of State, Department of Commerce, Department of Energy, Department of Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency and by the degree to which coordination supports successful outcomes in international negotiations and scientific meetings related to global change on issues that potentially affect U.S. agriculture, forestry, and U.S. farm policy.

Time Frame for Completion: Continuous.

Baseline data None.

Strategies for Achieving Objective

1. Coordinate the Department's efforts in developing global change related research, policies, and programs that affect agriculture and rural development. Coordinate Department activities related to developing greenhouse gas accounting systems and approaches for the development of markets for environmental goods and services. Represent USDA at hearings, meetings and other forums where these matters are discussed.
2. Lead and coordinate cross-mission work on global change by chairing the USDA Global Change Task Force, representing USDA in the U.S. Climate Change Science Program and U.S. Climate Change Technology Program, and representing USDA in international negotiations and other issues as requested by the Secretary.
3. Serve as USDA liaison within the executive branch on global change issues.

MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Management Initiative No. 1

Assemble a competent and diverse workforce that works together effectively.

Outcomes and Performance Measures Satisfactory performance on OCE annual Civil Rights Performance Plan (developed with Office of Civil Rights). Success in achieving initiative includes progress in making staff more diverse (reflective of professions employed or the general population); frequency, scope and quality of work and training opportunities provided; the incidence of staff concerns and complaints; and the effectiveness with which they are resolved.

Time Frame for Completion Continuous.

Baseline Data FY 2004: No formal EEO complaints in OCE (see OCE Civil Rights self assessment report for more data).

Strategies for Achieving Initiative

1. Ensure job vacancies are publicized so as to reach minority and women candidates.
 - a. Hold supervisors accountable for hiring, training, retaining and promoting minority and women employees and furthering EEO goals.
2. Ensure each employee receives required or needed civil rights training.
3. Encourage and provide training opportunities for all staff to improve performance and advance.
4. Provide staff with challenging work opportunities that utilize skills, increase satisfaction and enable advancement.
5. Resolve staff concerns and complaints quickly and effectively.
6. Increase staff communications so all know projects of one another and know issues and priorities of the Secretary.

Management Initiative No. 2

Provide a physical working environment that enables staff to efficiently fulfill their responsibilities.

Outcomes and Performance Measures Number of work-related accidents and injuries, number of security violations; staff know their continuity of operations responsibilities. Goal is zero for both.

Time Frame for Completion Continuous.

Baseline Data FY 2004: COOP plan in place Physical COOP site under construction.

Strategies for Achieving Objective

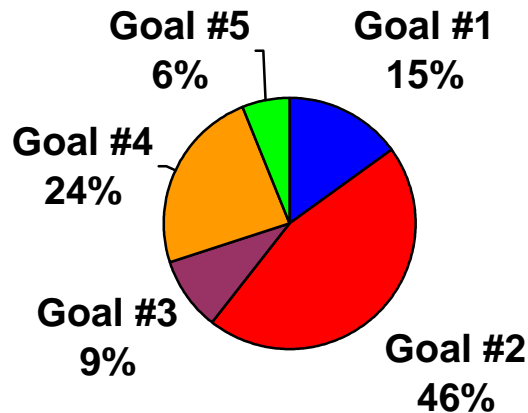
1. Provide the best computers and other equipment as possible.
2. Provide a safe and secure work site.
3. Maintain a continuity of operations plan in the event of a security crisis.

LINKAGE OF GENERAL GOALS TO ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN

OCE's goals and management activities are linked to the budget program activity: Office of the Chief Economist, and to the Department's Strategic and annual Performance Plans. OCE annually, as part of the budget process, develops a Performance Plan linked to this strategic plan and to the Department's Performance Plan. The annual Performance Plan is the fiscal-year blueprint, which lays out what managers and staff are to do and accomplish annually. Thus, it provides more specific outcomes and outcome measures linked to the general goals and objectives of this Strategic Plan.

DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The pie chart below indicates the allocation of OCE appropriated funds for FY 2004, mandatory funding for energy and transfers for global change activities across the 5 Strategic Goals of OCE.



RESOURCES NEEDED

OCE's most important resource is its highly skilled workforce on which accomplishment of the strategic plan depends. In the event that additional resources are available in the out years, top priority would be given to expanding the analysis in the area of energy. In particular, more resources would be made available to support the development of the FB4P to spur the purchase of bioproducts, creating new economic opportunities for farmers and rural residents. If further resources are available, they would be used to more rapidly expand CMIS, the interagency web portal designed to be a one-stop place to acquire all market information on commodities, thus benefiting analysts and business decisions of producers and other. If further resources were made available, they would be directed at acquiring additional meteorological data from rural U.S. sites to enable more comprehensive assessment of the impact of weather and climate on crops. Beneficiaries would be those who previously used the National Weather Service, which has reduced specialized agricultural weather services. With further available resources, OCE would expand short-term commodity analysis and ORACBA activities. In the event of reduced resources, ORACBA activities would be more narrowly focused on regulatory review and other activities would be reduced, especially those related to CMIS and building a long-term capacity for improved Departmental risk analysis. WAOB activities would also be reduced in both the weather and commodity market analysis areas, limiting and slowing the capacity to evaluate and explain emerging events.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

OCE's evaluation process will consist of annual reviews of measured performance based on feedback from clients and customers and the fulfillment of OCE's responsibilities. OCE will seek formal feedback from the public by participating in Users Meetings organized by the Department's economic and statistical agencies. OCE will also solicit feedback formally at the annual Agricultural Outlook Forum attended by OCE customers and clients. OCE will also solicit suggestions for improvements from users of the Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin and the WASDE report. OCE will also organize an annual ICEC program review with participation and feedback by all agencies that participate in the ICEC review process. Also, OCE will solicit feedback from its staff.