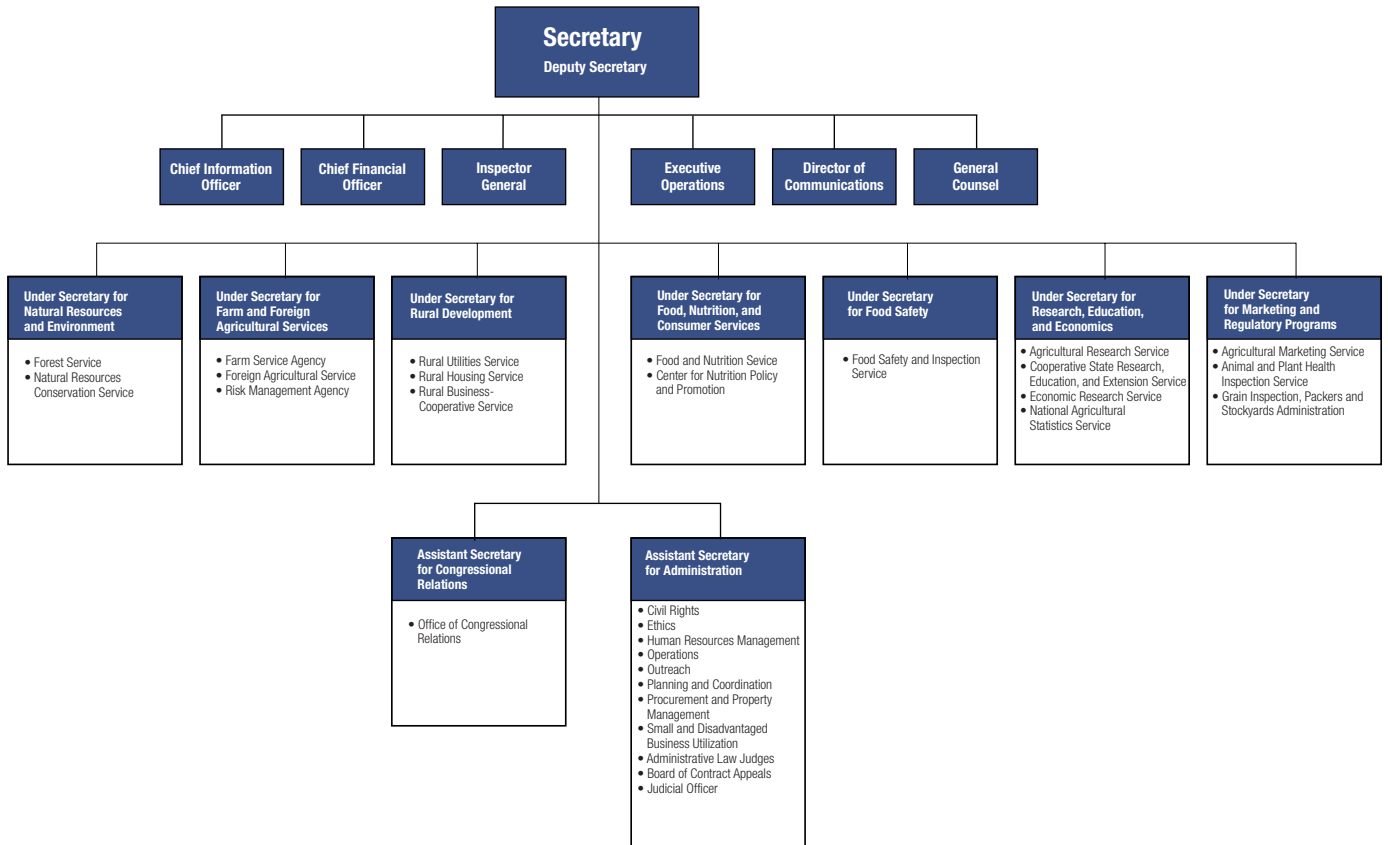


CHAPTER 5

U.S. Department of Agriculture





Departmental Administration

Departmental Administration (DA) provides leadership and guidance in managing USDA's administrative support programs and services effectively, efficiently and fairly. DA staff offices support policy officials throughout the Department. DA also manages the buildings that comprise the headquarters complex, and provides direct customer service to departmental-level employees in the Washington area.

Departmental Administration encompasses the following offices: Office of Civil Rights; Office of Human Resources Management; Office of Procurement and Property Management; Office of Operations; Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization; Office of Ethics; Office of Administrative Law Judges; Office of the Judicial Officer; and the Board of Contract Appeals.

Visit DA's Web site at www.usda.gov/da

Office of Civil Rights

USDA Civil Rights Policy Statement. It is USDA policy to ensure that no person is subjected to prohibited discrimination in USDA employment or in federally assisted or conducted programs or activities administered by USDA based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

The Office of Civil Rights (CR) works in collaboration with the USDA mission areas and their agencies in implementing civil rights laws, regulations, and best practices relating to both employment and program delivery.

Office of Civil Rights Mission Statement. CR's mission is to facilitate the fair and equitable treatment of USDA customers and employees while ensuring the delivery and enforcement of civil rights programs and activities.

Continuous Process Improvement Plan. In FY 2001, CR published the Long-Term Improvement Plan (LTIP). The LTIP is a roadmap for effecting long-term improvements in CR's employment and program functions. It is the result of a comprehensive analysis of civil rights systems, processes, procedures, and staffing needs, levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities, automation needs, and administrative support.

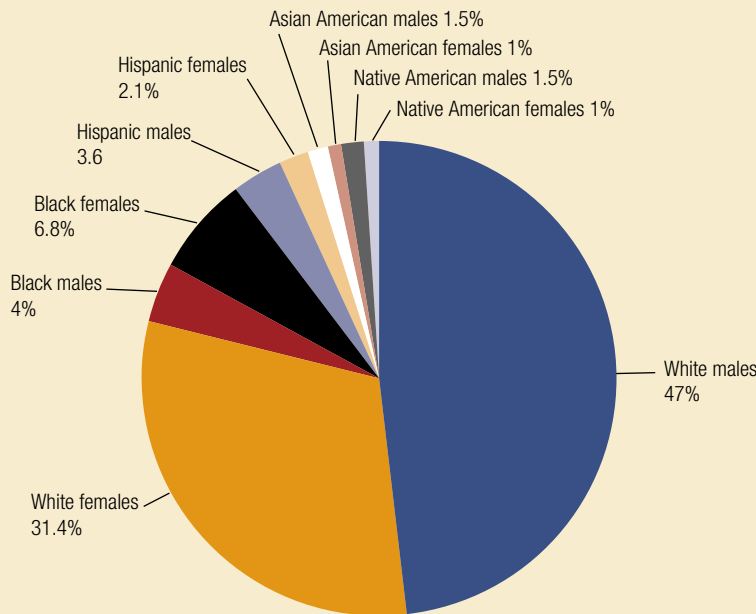
The following are some recent improvements in CR attributable to LTIP:

- Development of an automated complaint tracking system to provide more efficient, accurate tracking and reporting on employment and program complaints.
- Identification of resources and functions needed to support complaint processing.
- Implementation of an online technical resource library to expedite legal research in case processing.
- Institution of a central records management system that ensures the integrity of complaint files and facilitates file retrieval.
- CR employees receiving training in discrimination complaint investigation and adjudication.



The issues facing the modern food and farm system today are so multifaceted and complex that they cannot be solved by any one program or approach. Protecting against plant and animal pests and diseases, or eliminating emerging foodborne pathogens, or overcoming the barriers to producing bioenergy efficiency, or ensuring nutritious food for low-income households, or encouraging cost-effective carbon sequestration on farms and in forests—none of these can be accomplished by any single agency. Increasingly, the technology available to solve many program and policy problems also requires resources from multiple agencies.

Figure 5-1
USDA workplace profile by race and gender group, 2001



Continuing Policy Review. A performance objective of CR is to conduct civil rights impact analyses (CRIAs) of all USDA regulations to assess impacts on underserved customers. Since FY 1999, CR has performed 632 CRIAs, meeting its target of 100 percent review of all new and amended USDA regulations.

Increased Employee Education and Training. During FY 2001, USDA saw an increase in emphasis on civil rights and equal employment opportunity (EEO) training and education. Civil rights, EEO, and sexual harassment training were provided to each of USDA's more than 110,000 employees. Additionally, at the direction of the Secretary, all USDA managers and supervisors received specific diversity training designed to enhance their ability to recruit, retain, train, and manage a diverse workforce.

In FY 2001, a 5-year CR Training Plan was developed for the period FY 2002 to FY 2006. The plan focuses on improving employee skills. Additionally, a USDA pam-

phlet, *Dealing with Workplace Conflict and Concerns: A Guide for Employees*, was distributed to educate employees on approaches to resolving workplace disputes.

Progress in Complaint Resolution. Effective and timely resolution of EEO and program complaints enhances USDA program delivery. The average processing time for EEO cases has been reduced 20 percent since the close of FY 2001, and for program cases the time to process the complaint fell 49 percent.

Equal Employment Opportunity Complaints. CR issued 650 reports of investigation (ROIs) in FY 2001 compared to 315 in FY 2000, a 106-percent increase. The processing time for complaints closed in FY 2001 was 571 days, reflecting a 15.8-percent drop in average days to close EEO complaint cases, compared to FY 1999. Nearly 94 percent of complaint cases closed in FY 2001 constituted cases filed between calendar years 1998 and 2000. The processing time for complaints filed and resolved in FY 2001 was 230 days.

Continuing Progress in Workforce Diversity. Building and maintaining a highly skilled, competent, diverse workforce is an ongoing priority at USDA. The numbers prove the agency's efforts to eliminate under-representation of minorities, women, and persons with disabilities in the workforce are successful. From entry level to top management, USDA's initiatives to recruit and retain a diverse workforce reflect strong commitment and steady progress.

Minorities comprised 20.82 percent of the 2001 USDA permanent workforce, up from 20.07 percent in FY 1999. Employment increases were realized in all diversity groups.

A matter of continuing concern is that the number of permanent employees reporting disabilities continues to decline. In FY 1999, employees with reportable disabilities accounted for 7.9 percent of the permanent USDA workforce. That distribution declined to 7.7 percent in FY 2000, and 7.4 percent in FY 2001. Permanent employees with "targeted" (general-

ly, more severe) disabilities decreased from 1.2 percent in FY 1999 to 1.1 percent in FY 2001. USDA is responding by redoubling its efforts to hire employees with disabilities.

Enforcement. USDA has been strengthening its efforts to ensure accountability for discrimination. The Office of Human Resources Management tracks corrective and disciplinary action taken on matters relating to employment and program discrimination as well as other civil rights-related actions. Between January 1998 and December 2001, 218 civil rights-related corrective and disciplinary actions were taken.

Continuing Vigilance and Commitment. A strong CR program supports USDA's goals. It ensures that customers have full access to all USDA programs and activities, that program and employment complaints are handled fairly and expeditiously, and that the best supervisory and management practices are followed to build and maintain a diverse, competent, highly productive and effective workforce.

Office of Human Resources Management

The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) provides leadership, guidance, and oversight for USDA human resources management programs, establishes human resources management policy, and provides liaison and coordination with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and other central oversight agencies. OHRM programs include employment, recruitment, merit promotion, compensation, classification, position management, employee recognition, employee and executive development, employee assistance, retirement, benefits, workers and unemployment compensation, employee and labor relations, personnel and classified information security, executive resources, safety and health, and organizational development. OHRM also provides staff support for the Secretary's Diversity Advisory Council and seven employee councils, and provides day-to-day operational personnel services for the Office of the Secretary and departmental staff offices.

Human Capital Management Projects: The Department has set an aggressive goal of hiring 9,000 individuals with disabilities over the 5-year period beginning October 1, 2000. USDA has developed a mentoring program with the assistance of the USDA Graduate School. This is a result of the successful pilot conducted by the Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities (SACED) in 2000-2001. Phase I of the Skills Gap Analysis was completed in FY 2002.

USDA has developed an agencywide Career Intern Program, geared to hiring recent college graduates and current employees almost "on the spot." The program should help USDA attract the "best and brightest" for a 2-year intern program with minimal hiring requirements. In FY 2001, USDA hired 8,765 students, representing a 65-percent increase over the 5,320 hired in FY 2000. The increased student hiring is a direct result of outreach at historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges, and other colleges and universities.

Secretary's Diversity Advisory Council: On May 10, 2002, Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman signed the Charter for the Diversity Advisory Council, to provide her with advice on issues raised by the seven USDA employee advisory councils. The Secretary's Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), co-chaired by the Assistant Secretary for Administration and the Associate Assistant Secretary for Administra-



tion, is committed to expanding President Lincoln's vision of the Department of Agriculture as "the People's Department." Seven employee advisory councils comprise the DAC: the African American Employee Advisory Council, American Indian/Alaska Native Employee Advisory Council, Asian American and Pacific Islander Employee Advisory Council, Gay and Lesbian Employee Advisory Council, Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities, Hispanic Advisory Council, and the Women Employees Advisory Council.

Office of Procurement and Property Management

The Office of Procurement and Property Management (OPPM) provides leadership and policy guidance concerning procurement, property management, and energy conservation. OPPM also promotes and establishes USDA policy for alternative fuel vehicles and the purchase of biobased, environmentally preferable, and recycled products.

OPPM is working to simplify and reduce the cost of procurement, and to improve access to information about procurement and property management policy for businesses and other members of the public. The cost of procurement has been reduced by expanding the use of commercial credit cards (purchase cards) and the Purchase Card Management System to make small purchases. OPPM posts USDA procurement and property management policy and procedures on the Departmental Administration Web site, <http://www.usda.gov/da.html>. Businesses interested in selling to USDA may view *Doing Business with USDA* at the Web site.

In October 1998, USDA published in the *Federal Register* *Uniform Procedures for the Acquisition and Transfer of Excess Personal Property*, in accordance with the provisions of Section 923 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. Since then, USDA has transferred excess personal property worth over \$10.6 million to 1994 land-grant institutions (tribal), 1890 land-grant insti-

tutions, and Hispanic-serving institutions.

Hazardous Materials Management Group. The Hazardous Materials Management Group (HMMG) administers USDA's Hazardous Materials Management Program (HMMP) and provides departmental leadership for Resource, Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) compliance. In addition, HMMG develops procedures and guidance in the areas of environmental compliance, pollution prevention, and response under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly referred to as Superfund. The working cost estimate for the environmental cleanup portion of the HMMP exceeds \$4 billion.

The HMMP has been focused for the last several years on environmental cleanup results, prioritization of needs, and integration of budgets and performance. The strategic plan defines two goals: cleaning up and restoring facilities and lands contaminated from releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances and materials, and improving regulatory compliance and reducing environmental contamination through pollution prevention and improvements in management practices.

Office of Operations

The Office of Operations (OO) performs facilities management, physical security, and operational support functions for all USDA activities in the Agriculture headquarters complex, the George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville, MD, and at leased facilities throughout the Washington metropolitan area. OO provides cost-efficient, centralized services, including: information technology management; architect and engineering services; space planning and design; occupational health services; interpreter services for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals; mail, courier, copier and duplicating services; supply and personal property management; accessible technology resources and ergonomic assessment services for employees with disabilities from USDA and other Federal agencies; and forms and publications acquisition and printing services.

South Building Renovation. USDA is currently engaged in a 10-year, multi-phase project to renovate and modernize the South Agriculture Building. Architectural design, engineering, hazardous materials abatement, and construction services are contracted for or directly provided by the Office of Operations. Phase 1 of the renovation, which included a modernized Wing 3 from the basement to the attic, was completed and dedicated at a

ceremony on December 5, 2000. The design for Phase 2 of the renovation in Wing 4 was completed in February 2001 and a construction contract was awarded in June 2001. Most future phases are based on a wing-by-wing approach, with approximately 1 year required to complete each phase.

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) provides departmentwide leadership and oversight for implementing and executing the Small and Small Disadvantaged Business Procurement Preference Programs, including minorities, veterans, and women business programs, as prescribed under Sections 8 and 15 of the Small Business Act of 1958, as amended. OSDBU is USDA's lead agency in providing an integrated focus for the implementation and execution of programs to assist small and special emphasis small businesses in supporting USDA's missions.

OSDBU develops and coordinates technical assistance services designed to eliminate barriers that prevent or severely restrict small business access and participation in USDA program and contract activities. Through partnerships with USDA program offices, professional associations and universities, OSDBU promotes the growth and competitiveness of small and small disadvantaged businesses located in rural America.

OSDBU's goal is to provide quality information, guidance, and technical assistance services to ensure continuous growth in the rate of small business participation in USDA program and contract activities, with increased emphasis on small businesses owned by minorities, women, and veterans.

If you are interested in business opportunities with the Department of Agriculture, visit the Web site at <http://www.usda.gov/osdbu> or call (202) 720-7117 for more details.

Bringing Rural America Venture Opportunities Program (BRAVO): BRAVO partners tribally



Table 5-1.
Where do USDA employees work?

State	Number of employees	State	Number of employees	State	Number of employees
Alabama	1,195	American Samoa	8	United Arab Emirates	1
Alaska	940	Argentina	3	Thailand	1
Arizona	1,755	Australia	3	Turkey	1
Arkansas	1,972	Austria	3	United Kingdom	1
California	7,676	Belgium	5	Ukraine	1
Colorado	2,867	Brazil	4	Venezuela	2
Connecticut	153	Bulgaria	2	Vietnam	1
Delaware	218	Canada	4	Virgin Islands	26
Dist of Columbia	6,672	China	6	Total	88,593
Florida	1,818	Chile	2		
Georgia	2,474	Columbia	2		
Hawaii	450	No. Mariana Islands	7		
Idaho	2,814	Costa Rica	3		
Illinois	1,566	Dominican Republic	3		
Indiana	779	Egypt	1		
Iowa	1,940	FED ST Micronesia	10		
Kansas	1,092	France	9		
Kentucky	1,153	Germany	3		
Louisiana	2,868	Guam	35		
Maine	256	Guatemala	4		
Maryland	3,191	Hong Kong	1		
Massachusetts	341	Indonesia	3		
Michigan	1,166	India	2		
Minnesota	1,807	Italy	1		
Mississippi	1,957	Cote D'Ivoire	1		
Missouri	4,075	Japan	8		
Montana	2,932	Jamaica	2		
Nebraska	1,412	Kenya	1		
Nevada	391	Republic of Korea	4		
New Hampshire	300	Morocco	1		
New Jersey	517	Mexico	19		
New Mexico	1,505	Malaysia	1		
New York	1,121	Nigeria	1		
North Carolina	1,848	Netherlands	2		
North Dakota	805	Nicaragua	2		
Ohio	829	New Zealand	1		
Oklahoma	961	Peru	1		
Oregon	4,621	Pakistan	1		
Pennsylvania	1,529	Poland	2		
Rhode Island	36	Panama	5		
South Carolina	878	Republic of Palau	3		
Tennessee	1,084	Marshall Islands	1		
Texas	3,575	Philippines	1		
Utah	1,657	Puerto Rico	573		
Vermont	267	Russia	4		
Virginia	2,083	Saudi Arabia	1		
Washington	2,302	South Africa	2		
West Virginia	718	Spain	2		
Wisconsin	1,539	Sweden	1		
Wyoming	804	Switzerland	5		

owned 8(a) firms and Alaskan Native small information technology (IT) businesses with experienced Federal contractors in mentor-protégé relationships. The program gives these firms an opportunity to become prime and/or subcontractors for USDA (and other Federal agencies) and furnishes the hands-on experience necessary to compete in the Federal contracting arena. Mentoring and assistance by established IT corporations provides a high level of assurance to USDA and other customer agencies that contract work can be accomplished in a timely and satisfactory manner.

Outreach. The USDA Office of Outreach provides leadership and coordination on outreach issues at the national level to assure that all potential customers have full access to USDA programs and services. Through cooperative efforts, the Office of Outreach and USDA agencies place special emphasis on outreach to the under-served populations. In addition, the Office of Outreach serves as a contact point for those community-based organizations making requests of USDA agencies at the national level.

Office of Ethics

The Office of Ethics was created in 1998 to direct and coordinate the ethics programs within the various mission areas of the Department and to service headquarters staff directly. The Office of Ethics develops departmentwide policies and regulations; provides training to USDA staff on the various rules governing employee conduct, conflicts of interest, and political activity; administers personal financial disclosure reporting by senior staff; and counsels employees on ethics matters. Over the past 3 years, the Office of Ethics has used Internet technology to provide online training modules for USDA staff all over the world. USDA was the first Federal agency to offer financial disclosure reporting through a secure, online Web-based system. In addition to USDA staff, a large and growing number of Federal agencies and the public rely upon the Office of Ethics Web site, located at www.usda.gov/ethics, for ethics training and financial disclosure.

American Indian and Alaska Native Programs

The USDA Tribal Liaison is the primary contact with tribal governments and their members and serves as the principal adviser and representative on USDA programs involving assistance to American Indians and Alaska Natives (with the exception of civil rights activities, which are coordinated by the Office of Civil Rights, and recruitment and employment, which are handled by USDA's Office of Human Resources Management).

The USDA Tribal Liaison also coordinates USDA's activities under Executive Order 13175, which requires Federal agencies to establish meaningful and regular coordination with tribal officials in the development of Federal policies having tribal implications. The Executive Order is designed to strengthen U.S. Government relationships with Indian tribes and reduce the imposition of unwarranted mandates upon tribes. In September 2002, USDA conducted its first comprehensive, departmentwide consultation with the Navajo Nation in Window Rock, AZ.

USDA also has an American Indian/Alaska Native Employee Advisory Council, co-chaired by two senior USDA officials, and consisting of members from Ameri-

can Indian employee groups and all mission areas of the Department.

A comprehensive guide to USDA programs for American Indians and Alaska Natives may be found at <http://www.usda.gov/news/pubs/indians/open.htm>.

Office of the Chief Economist

The Office of the Chief Economist (OCE) advises the Secretary of Agriculture on policies and programs affecting U.S. agriculture and rural areas. This advice includes assessments of USDA program proposals, legislative proposals, and economic developments of importance to agriculture and rural areas. In addition, the Office of the Chief Economist coordinates activities across USDA agencies. These activities are described below. The World Wide Web address for the Office of the Chief Economist is <http://www.usda.gov/oce/>

World Agricultural Outlook Board

The World Agricultural Outlook Board is USDA's focal point for forecasts and projections of global commodity markets. Each month the Board brings together interagency committees of experts to forecast the supply, use, and



prices of major commodities in the United States and abroad. The committees also clear agricultural forecasts published by other USDA agencies. This teamwork ensures that USDA forecasts are objective and consistent.

Because growing-season weather is vital to crop forecasts, specialists from the Board work side by side with weather analysts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to monitor the weather and assess its effect on crops. They provide timely information on potential changes in global production and publish a Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin (<http://www.usda.gov/oce/waob/jawf.htm>). The Board also coordinates departmentwide activity on long-term economic projections, remote sensing, and climate. The Department is one of the largest users of remote sensing in the Federal Government. The Board coordinates remote sensing activities at USDA and chairs the Department's Remote Sensing Coordination Committee. The Board also hosts the Department's Chief Meteorologist, who serves as the principle spokesperson on weather and climate issues, chairs a departmental weather and climate coordinating committee, and serves as president of the World Meteorological Organization's Commission for Agricultural Meteorology. The World Wide Web address for the World Agricultural Outlook Board is <http://www.usda.gov/oce/waob/index.htm>

Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis

The Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis is responsible for coordinating, reviewing, and approving all risk assessments and cost-benefit analyses of mitigation measures associated with major regulations of the Department. Major regulations are economically significant (with an impact of at least \$100 million each year) and have a primary purpose of addressing issues of human health, human safety, or the environment. The Office provides direction to USDA agencies on appropriate methods for these analyses and serves as a focal point on matters relating to risk assessment in interagency reviews. The World Wide Web address for the Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis is <http://www.usda.gov/oce/orac-ba/index.htm>

Agricultural Labor Affairs

The coordinator of agricultural labor affairs is responsible for coordinating USDA's agricultural labor policy. Areas of concern include immigration, the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Worker Program, worker protection standards for pesticide use, farm labor supply, and agricultural employment issues. The World Wide Web address for this office is <http://www.usda.gov/oce/oce/labor-affairs/affairs.htm>

Sustainable Development

OCE's director of sustainable development works to integrate the principals of sustainable development into the Department's policies and programs, ensuring that economic, social, and environmental considerations are balanced in decisionmaking. The director also directs and coordinates the Department's domestic and international policies and programs in sustainable development, including sustainable agriculture, forestry, and rural communities. The World Wide Web address for this office is <http://www.usda.gov/oce/sd/index.htm>. The World Wide Web address for sustainable development activities at USDA is <http://www.usda.gov/sustainable/>

Global Change Program Office

The Global Change Program Office functions as the departmentwide coordinator of agriculture, rural, and forestry-related global change program and policy issues. The Office is responsible for coordinating activities with other Federal agencies, interacting with the legislative branch on climate and other global change issues affecting agriculture and forestry, and representing USDA on U.S. delegations to international climate change discussions. The Office ensures that USDA is a source of objective, analytical assessments of the effects of global change and proposed mitigation strategies, and has a coordinated research program to address the multidisciplinary dimensions of global change. The World Wide Web address for the Global Change Program Office is <http://www.usda.gov/oce/gcpo/index.htm>

Office of Energy Policy and New Uses

The Office of Energy Policy and New Uses provides leadership for development of departmental energy policy and coordination of departmental energy programs and strategies. The Office provides economic analysis on energy policy issues, coordinates USDA energy-related activities within and outside the Department, and studies the feasibility of new uses of agricultural products. The World Wide Web address for the Office of Energy Policy and New Uses is <http://www.usda.gov/oce/oepnu/index.htm>



Office of Inspector General

USDA's Office of Inspector General (OIG), the first civilian OIG in the Federal Government, was established in 1962 and became fully operational in 1963. The Inspector General Act of 1978 expanded and provided specific statutory authorities for the activities of OIG which had previously been carried out under the general authorities of the Secretary of Agriculture. OIG conducts and supervises audits and evaluations, as well as investigations and law enforcement efforts relating to USDA's programs and operations. It provides leadership and coordination and recommends policies for activities that will prevent and detect criminal violations and promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in USDA programs and operations. Furthermore, OIG keeps the Secretary and Congress fully informed of problems and deficiencies related to the administration of USDA programs and operations and of the actions designed to correct such problems and deficiencies.

During the period April 1, 2000, through March 31, 2001, audit and investigative efforts resulted in approximately \$133 million in recoveries, collections, fines, restitutions, claims established, and costs avoided. Further, management agreed to put nearly \$276 million to better use. OIG also identified more than \$22 million in questioned costs that cannot be recovered. Investigative efforts resulted in 417 indictments and 431 convictions.

During the period April 1, 2001, through March 31, 2002, audit and investigative efforts resulted in nearly \$65 million in recoveries, collections, fines, restitutions, claims established, administrative penalties, and costs avoided. Further, management agreed to put approximately \$101 million to better use. OIG also identified more than \$85 million in questioned costs that cannot be recovered. Investigative efforts resulted in 394 indictments and 396 convictions. One highly successful initiative is "Operation Talon," which was designed and implemented by OIG to locate and apprehend fugitives, including offenders

who are current or former food stamp recipients. This nationwide initiative was made possible by legislative changes in welfare reform. As of March 31, 2002, Operation Talon had resulted in about 8,000 arrests of fugitive felons during joint OIG, Federal, State, and local law enforcement operations throughout the country.

The events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent anthrax attacks gave new urgency to the issues of security over USDA's infrastructure and the agricultural economy. OIG continues to redirect its resources toward two fronts—maintaining the integrity of Department programs and helping the Department strengthen its defenses against activities that might threaten Government facili-

ties, production agriculture, and the Nation's food supply. In addition to protecting the food supply, key areas of emphasis include enhancing cybersecurity and ensuring financial integrity in USDA. At the same time, OIG remains vigilant in countering public corruption and workplace violence.

Office of the Chief Information Officer

The Chief Information Officer is the Department's senior information technology official. The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) supports program delivery in USDA by overseeing the management of the Department's information technology (IT) resources.



In accordance with the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 and similar legislation, regulations, and executive orders, OCIO provides long-range-planning guidance, reviews all major technology investments to ensure that they are economical and effective, coordinates interagency Information Resources Management projects, and promotes information exchange and technical interoperability.

OCIO is responsible for managing USDA's eGovernment activities, including: strategic and tactical planning; coordinating inter- and intra-departmental eGovernment functions and budgeting; and information collection and management functions under the Paperwork Reduction Act, Government Paperwork Elimination Act, and related legislation.

OCIO also provides automated data processing (ADP) services to USDA and other Federal agencies through its National Information Technology Center located in Kansas City, MO; and telecommunications services through its Telecommunications Services and Operations in Ft. Collins, CO, and Washington, DC. Direct ADP services are provided to the Office of the Secretary, Office of the General Counsel, Office of Communications, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, and Executive Operations.

OCIO is responsible for ensuring the protection and safety of USDA's information technology resources. Cyber security acts as an enabler for the programs to use highly productive information technology while minimizing security risks. OCIO develops departmental cyber security policies, standards, processes, and procedures; provides guidance and oversight to assist USDA agencies; and ensures compliance with industry best practices, Federal regulation, and legislation.

OCIO has responsibility for the information technology investments of the Service Center Modernization Initiative (SCMI), which is the cornerstone of the overall reorganization and IT modernization effort of the Department. The ultimate goal of the SCMI is to create an en-

vironment of one-stop, quality service for customers of USDA's Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development mission area agencies.

Office of the Chief Financial Officer

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) is responsible for overall financial management activities in USDA and for direct management of 1,750 employees in the OCFO at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC, and the National Finance Center (NFC) in New Orleans, LA. OCFO's duties include accounting and reporting responsibilities for program funds totaling about \$100 billion and management responsibilities for nearly 41 percent of all debt owed to the U.S. Government. A major cross-servicing and operation facility, the NFC processes the payroll for 468,000 individuals of the Federal workforce and administers the Federal Government's \$98 billion Thrift Savings Plan, which is the world's largest retirement plan, with 2.8 million participants. In addition, OCFO administers and manages the Department's Working Capital Fund.

OCFO maintains an integrated departmental accounting and financial management system that provides complete, reliable, consistent, and timely financial information. OCFO is the chief architect of the departmentwide strategic plan and coordinates its distribution to Congress and other external entities. OCFO also leads the Department's efforts to produce auditable financial statements and to comply with congressional mandates related to financial management.

The OCFO coordinates and provides guidance to USDA agencies for the debt management program. As of September 30, 2001, USDA's gross account and loan receivables were \$103.2 billion, down from \$107.5 billion in FY 1996. The credit portfolio includes loans for farm operations, housing, utilities, business cooperatives, and other economic assistance to rural residents and organizations. As of September 30, 2001, USDA's delinquent

receivables were \$6.2 billion, down by about 28 percent from the \$8.8 billion in FY 1996. During FY 2001, USDA collected \$286.8 million of delinquent debt through administrative offset and other tools authorized under the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996. This rate of collection is more than quadrupled the \$63.2 million collected in FY 1996. In FY 2001, \$363 million of delinquent debt was written off. This represents an 80-percent decrease from the \$1.8 billion written off in FY 1996. OCFO's current efforts are focused on providing guidance and assisting USDA agencies in referring eligible debts to the Treasury offset and cross-servicing programs, implementing administrative wage garnishment, and revising debt management regulations.

Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations

Office of Congressional Relations

USDA's Office of Congressional Relations serves as the Department's primary liaison with Members of Congress and their staffs, providing information on the Department's legislative agenda, budget proposals, programs, and policies.

Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (OIA) works closely with the Nation's Governors and State Commissioners of Agriculture, and other State and local elected officials, on various issues relating to their States. OIA is responsible for disseminating information on programs involving the implementation of USDA policies and procedures applicable to the Department's intergovernmental relations.

OIA participates with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations in the overall planning, formulation, and direction of the activities of the Office relating to intergovernmental affairs. OIA serves as the USDA liaison with the White House and other executive branch agencies and departments with respect to intergovernmental affairs.

