



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; annual reporting that sets specific, measurable targets for performance at the beginning of each fiscal year; and a concrete, data-based assessment at year-end of the success of these endeavors.

This Fiscal Year 2008 Performance and Accountability Report is the year-end progress report of the 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. The data used by USDA to measure actual performance are collected using standardized methodology that has been vetted by Federally employed scientists and policymakers and, ultimately, by the undersecretaries of the respective mission areas, all of whom attest to the completeness, reliability, and quality of the data.

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

This report assists policymakers to make informed decisions. It also strives to provide transparency to all Americans interested in the workings of their government and USDA's ability to "manage for results" in performing its many vital public functions.