



**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE**

# **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN**

**FY 2006 and Revised FY 2005**

# USDA



# **NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS) FY 2006 and Revised FY 2005 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLANS**

## **Introduction**

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements, NASS presents its FY 2006 Annual Performance Plan (APP) along with updates and revisions to the NASS FY 2005 Annual Performance Plan. This plan also supports USDA's Department-wide annual performance plans and NASS's long-range strategic plans for FY 2003-2008. These new plans are aligned with the Department's and the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area strategic goals and were used in OMB's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) for the FY 2006 budget and performance integration process.

## **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 five goals and Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area goals as outlined below:

Through our strategic objectives, we will strive to:

- Provide unbiased data and statistical information for agricultural markets to operate efficiently with fair and equitable price discovery;
- Support international economic development by providing technical assistance;
- Provide statistical data for risk management programs and as a financial tool for decision makers in agriculture;
- Promote an efficient and economical viable agricultural production and marketing system with sound statistical data;
- Provide statistically sound based information for economic and business decision making at the local level in rural counties;
- Provide chemical use statistics to enable informed decisions using sound science in risk analysis, and;
- Provide statistical data for improved management of soil, air, and water.

USDA's Goal 4, Improving the Nation's Nutrition and Health, is not supported by appropriated funding for NASS. The linkage of the NASS goals and objectives to USDA's Strategic Plan 2002-2007 and the REE 2003-2008 Strategic Plan are outlined in the NASS's 2003-2008 Strategic Plan, 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.

### **NASS FUNDING AND STAFFING LEVELS FOR ANNUAL PERFORMANCE GOALS**

<b>STRATEGIC GOALS</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>		<b>FY 2005 Targets</b>		<b>FY 2006 Targets</b>	
	<b>Funding (000)</b>	<b>SYs</b>	<b>Funding (000)</b>	<b>SYs</b>	<b>Funding (000)</b>	<b>SYs</b>
Goal 1	\$ 111,775	784	\$113,781	1053	\$ 124,171	1082
Goal 2	\$ 24,530	257	\$ 21,626	228	\$ 28,615	246
Goal 3	\$ 3,535	30	\$ 4,020	33	\$ 3,220	29
Goal 4	\$ 172	1	\$ 172	1	\$ 172	1
Goal 5	\$ 6,151	38	\$ 9,697	51	\$ 6,151	37
<b>Total</b>	\$146,163	1110	\$149,297	1366	\$166,510	1395

### **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 judgement of the data user. Historically, these judgements 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 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS**

Expanding markets for agricultural products is critical to the long-term economic health and prosperity of our food and agricultural sector. The REE Agencies produce and disseminate science-based information to promote market efficiency, to overcome technical barriers to trade, to enhance sales of agricultural products to buyers worldwide, and to adjust to shifting trade opportunities and challenges. New knowledge and technologies fuels the agricultural system and the basic data, analyses, and information needed to enable the system to operate efficiently and effectively. Timely, reliable, and useful research, education, and information leading to technological and economic advantage are keys to helping U.S. agriculture remain strong and expand international marketing opportunities. 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 that can be used in expanding global markets.

### **Objective 1.1: Agricultural Markets have Unbiased Data to Operate Efficiently with Fair and Equitable Price Discovery.**

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 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 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
1.1.1 Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users	99.8%	99.4%	100%	100%
• Percent of official reports for which an errata must be issued	0%	0%	0%	0%
• Number of Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements	168	175	160	160
• Number of new data products and services produced to fulfill customer requests.	20	23	yes	yes
• Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release	0	0	0	0
• Percent of key survey point estimates meeting target coefficients of variation (c.v.)	67%	70%	75%	83%
• Root mean square error will be reported to data users as a measure of reliability of statistical forecasts and estimates against final totals	20 reports	21 reports	23 reports	24 reports
• Percent of U.S. agricultural production covered annually by official USDA statistics	96%	92%	94%	96%
• Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	-	77	-	-
• The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	82	-	-
• The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	84	-	-
• Increase in the annual survey development and data collection costs per sample unit compared to the annual rate of inflation as measured by the ECI <sup>1</sup> is less than one.	.38	-.16	< 1	< 1

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance of information collections in compliance of the PRA at any time during the rating year</li> </ul>	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 for restoring and modernizing the core survey and estimation program to meet the needs of data users at an acceptable level of precision, quality, and detail. This provides funding to restore sample sizes for greater statistically defensible and allow NASS to work more closely with respondents to provide service and secure cooperation; provides staff needed to manage surveys, review, and summarize reported data and prepare and disseminate official estimates; and provides funds for research, training, travel supplies, and other direct expenses related to producing quality statistics.

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 models 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 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.

Strategies for achievement of this goal include meeting the requirements of the September 1993 Executive Order regarding a customer service plan; responding to customer requests within two working days; promoting public and customer awareness of NASS's role in preparing comprehensive statistics on the Nation's agricultural industry; investigating new ways to enhance the dialogue between NASS and data users regarding the importance of existing data series and needs for new data; introducing new products and services and redesigning existing products to meet changing customer expectations; examining the relevancy of statistical products by profiling the content, scope, frequency, and coverage provided compared to user needs in order to improve customer awareness concerning NASS products and services and to facilitate easy access to official NASS data; enhancing NASS publications by adding more information, graphics, map products, geo-referenced files, and remote sensing images; and being responsive to new data needs for specific components of the agricultural economy (e.g., county-level data, watershed data, rural data, data on subgroups in agriculture, environmental data, data on sustainable agriculture).

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

The United States carries out a broad range of activities and initiatives that fosters economic growth and trade capacity building in developing countries around the world. Promoting economic development through technology transfer so that developing countries can improve their income and buying power helps expand international trade in agriculture. However, developing countries are concerned that limited technology and poor infrastructure may hinder their ability to compete effectively in global markets.

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. Economic and statistical research can illuminate the role of and degree to which technology transfer improves incomes and increases trade.

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
1.2.1 Percent of export value of the target countries where NASS provided technical assistance to improve agricultural statistics systems	25%	21%	31%	34%

**Means and Strategies:** These performance measures are supported by reimbursable funding of NASS resources in FY 2006. Provide 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. Provide quality service to countries that encourage donor agencies to allocate funds for continuation of and initiation of new projects. Develop new funding strategies to provide additional support in order to provide quality service to countries for initiation of new projects. Participate in international forums where NASS capabilities can be demonstrated. Provide NASS International Programs Office with technical staff to assist foreign governments.

**Objective 1.3: Provide the Science-Based Knowledge and Technologies to Generate New or Improved High Quality Products and Processes to Expand Markets for the Agricultural Sector.**

Technological progress is increasingly pushing the market for agricultural products in new directions. Biobased technologies promise new opportunities for energy, industrial, and pharmacological markets for U.S. farmers. Key priorities for USDA will be research to support development of new markets and products, including implementation of Title IX of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 FSRIA), the first energy title ever in a farm bill. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

**Objective 1.4: Statistical Data are Available for Risk Management Programs and as a Financial Tool for Decision Making in Agriculture.**

Agricultural producers, like other business owners, use a variety of tools to manage risks, including crop insurance, credit, direct payments (including countercyclical payments), and marketing alternatives. Today, about three-quarters of the acreage planted to major crops is at least minimally insured and coverage is expanding through the provision of crop insurance to more crops and the development of new types of coverage, such as for livestock and revenue. These programs, along with diversified production, marketing, use of futures and options, and other federal program alternatives allow each producer to customize their risk management strategy. USDA's role is to expand and improve these safety net programs and to provide research and education to help producers better manage their natural and economic risks.

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. The U.S. production system has to be dynamic to respond to ever changing political, economic, technological, environmental, and consumer-driven market forces. 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 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
1.4.1 Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users	99.8%	99.4%	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
• Percent of the 42 county estimate States with statistically defensible survey precision	0%	0%	0%	33%
• Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	-	77	-	-
• The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	82	-	-
• The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	84	-	-



<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the annual survey development and data collection costs per sample unit compared to the annual rate of inflation as measured by the ECI<sup>1</sup> is less than one.</li> </ul>	.38	-.16	< 1	< 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States accounting for 90 percent of the value of sale will be included in the monthly grain price program</li> </ul>	93%	93%	>90%	>90%

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

**Means and Strategies:** Many of the performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources and support objective 1.4 of the Department's Strategic Plan by ensuring data are available for Risk Management Programs. Increase funding for the annual integrated Locality Based Agricultural county Estimates/Small Area estimation program to improve the statistical integrity of the county data series. These 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. Funding increases are needed to allow follow-up data collection activities to support the probability design in an initial one-third of the U.S. counties.

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) needs 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.

**Objective 1.5: Statistical Data Promotes An Efficient and Economically Viable Agricultural Production and Marketing System**

Fundamental to the long-term viability of an agricultural producer is his or her ability to manage an efficient operation that realizes a profit. While factors such as market conditions, weather, and plant and animal pests and diseases play roles, it is the efficiency of farm or ranch production systems that ensure economic viability of each operation. In simplest terms, this means producing the right products at low enough costs to realize a profit at market prices. This, not a complex, ever changing, and never ending set of support and disaster payments, is the desire of farmers and ranchers. The

long-range function of USDA is to help farmers and ranchers achieve this goal.

REE sponsors and carries out research and extension programs dedicated to developing and transferring to farmers and ranchers the technology, production practices, and business and marketing tools that are the center pieces for efficient and economically sustainable farms. Efforts are directed toward reducing per unit and overall production costs, increasing production efficiency, improving yields and quality, and improving management and marketing decisions. The overarching objective is to provide the science and technology to keep our farmers and ranchers ahead of everything that could hinder their success.

The annual Agricultural Resources Management Survey (ARMS) jointly sponsored with the Economic Research Service (ERS) is USDA's primary vehicle for information on a broad range of issues about the farm sector financial conditions and agricultural resource use. The ARMS provides the most definitive, annual description of the rapidly changing structure of the nation's farms. While a smaller number of large farms account for a growing proportion of agricultural production, other farms maintain profitability by entering into production and marketing agreements with agri-businesses. The ARMS provides an annual measure of the effect of agri-business is have on farm income through such contracts. Without the ARMS, important measures such as farm income, farm operator income, and farm household income would not be available. This program also provides the critical information to analyze the effect government programs such as loan deficiency payments are having on net farm income by size and type of farm. Equally important, it can be used to evaluate the possible effects of alternative government policies and programs and data are used to formulate indices, cost estimates, and farm economic indicators. Data from the ARMS survey are the foundation for the body of research that has lead to the recognition on the part of decision-makers of the diversity of the farm sector and the differential impact of alternative policies and programs across the farm sector and among farm families.

Each year, a number of new and emerging issues in agriculture are identified. These issues need to be researched and solved using sound facts and information. NASS conducts surveys, if funded, to support this research and provides timely, accurate, and useful information on these new and emerging agricultural issues in response to requests by Congress, USDA and other Federal agencies, universities, industry, and data users. Examples of surveys and emerging issues are census follow-on surveys, adoption biotechnology, utilization of computer technology by farmers, BSE issues, organic issues, and need for equine statistics, to name a few.

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
1.5.1 Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users	99.8%	99.4%	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
• Percent of key survey point estimates				

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
meeting target coefficients of variation (c.v.)	67%	70%	75%	83%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of key survey point estimates of key total expenditure items for which the relative standard error is reported</li> </ul>	0	0	100%	100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of U.S. cash receipts for which State level estimates of key farm production expenditure variables are reported</li> </ul>	0	Regional & Nat'l Levels	65% for 15 States	65% for 15 States
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)</li> </ul>	-	77	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI</li> </ul>	-	82	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI</li> </ul>	-	84	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the annual survey development and data collection costs per sample unit compared to the annual rate of inflation as measured by the ECI<sup>1</sup> is less than one.</li> </ul>	.38	-.16	< 1	< 1

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

**Means and Strategies:** These performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources. 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 2: SUPPORT INCREASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL AMERICA**

Of the 60 million people who live in Rural America, only 2 million are directly engaged in production agriculture. A diversity of other enterprises, including support services for agriculture, forestry and mining, recreation, and manufacturing, provide most of the jobs and income in Rural America. USDA's role is to enhance the economic opportunities and quality of life for rural residents by providing financial and technical assistance for business and industry, water and waste disposal and other essential community facilities, advanced telecommunications, electric utilities, and housing. Our objective is to ensure that rural residents have equal opportunity to share in the Nation's prosperity and technological advancement.

### **Objective 2.1: Provide Statistically Sound Information for Economic and Business Decision-making at the Local Level in Rural Communities**

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.

Conduct the census of agriculture to provide detailed data at the National, State, County, and local levels on the characteristics of America's agricultural sector. 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. 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 statistics 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.

<b>Census of Agriculture and Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
• Census Content Test Approved by OMB	-	-	Mar 2005	-
• Content Test Mailed				Dec. 30, 2005
• Final 2007 Census Report Forms to NPC	-	-	-	Jun 2006

<b>Census of Agriculture and Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide statistical and demographic information relating to small farm and minority farmer issues and other associated Departmental / REE initiatives.</li> </ul>	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)</li> </ul>	-	77	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI</li> </ul>	-	82	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI</li> </ul>	-	84	-	-

**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 2006 is the second year of the 2007 Census of Agriculture cycle. Increases in funding include additional costs for salary and benefits, refreshment of hardware and software including procurement, testing, and implementation of systems. There is an emphasis to carry out census preparations more efficiently by spreading it out over the life of the census cycle and utilizing the benefits for the annual NASS survey program. Funding increases also cover improvements of the mail list of farmers and ranchers is on-going. Census questionnaire content and content field testing and evaluation are also scheduled in FY 2006.

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 2.2: Provide Science-Based Technology, Products and Information to Facilitate Informed Decisions Affecting the Quality of Life in Rural Areas.**

If new businesses are to startup in or relocate to rural America, the local rural community must possess the amenities that businesses require and employees desire. These include not only access to such basic needs as clean water, adequate housing, and reliable electricity and telecommunications,

but also access to essential needs such as quality education, health care, day care, etc. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 3: ENHANCE PROTECTION AND SAFETY OF THE NATION'S AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SUPPLY**

USDA has unique and critical responsibilities to help ensure the safety of the U.S. food and fiber supply chain and the security of the U.S. agricultural production system. The Department will continue to assess current systems and develop countermeasures against threats to farms and ranches, in coordination with the private sector, other Federal agencies, and State governments. Research programs develop methods of early detection, rapid and accurate assessment, and immediate responses that prevent spread and control harmful agents are essential to an effective U.S. agricultural biosecurity program. USDA facilities and operations must also be secure from external and internal threats.

For the Nation to have high quality, affordable, and safe food the production system must be protected at each step from production to consumption. Crop and livestock production systems must be protected from the ravages of diseases, whether domestic or exotic in origin. The food supply must be protected during production, processing, and preparation from contamination by organisms that cause disease in humans. The REE agencies will provide scientific information, technology and education to producers, manufacturers, regulatory agencies, and consumers to support their efforts to provide productive and safe food.

#### **Objective 3.1: Help Monitor and Reduce Foodborne Contaminants Through Science-Based Statistical Information**

USDA will improve public health by further reducing the prevalence of food borne hazards from farm to table, striving to become a model for all other public health institutions. Emerging pathogens and the dynamic nature of food borne hazards mean that our food safety systems must be continually assessed and updated in order to maintain consumer confidence in our food supply. Our Nation's prosperity relies upon an abundant and safe food supply. REE research and education strive to protect the health of consumers from harmful microbial or chemical contamination in the food we eat. REE also aims to make our domestic agricultural production system as secure as possible from the effects of pests, diseases, weather extremes, climate changes, and other natural disasters. Critical to this effort are programs to ensure that producers, processors, and consumers understand safe food and handling practices. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

#### **Objective 3.2: Chemical Usage Statistics Enable Informed Decisions Using Sound Science in Risk Analysis**

Safeguarding America's animal and plant resources from invasive pests and diseases is essential to enhancing the agricultural trade that underlies much of America's prosperity and to housing, feeding, and clothing our Nation. To keep crop and animal pests and diseases out of the U.S. and to manage those inside our borders, USDA sponsors prevention activities that reduce the number of pest and disease outbreaks and coordinates effective pest and animal disease emergency response systems that reduce the severity of pest and disease outbreaks. USDA partners with Federal and State agencies, industries, and professional organizations to develop and maintain effective emergency response systems to detect, respond to, and eliminate outbreaks of invasive pests and diseases. USDA also partners with other nations and Federal agencies in research and operations that proactively prevent such outbreaks.

The integrity of the natural resource base is important to maintaining sustainable agricultural production systems and enhancing and preserving environmental quality. REE programs actively protect the Nation's natural resource base by developing and transferring new technologies and farming practices that balance long-term sustainability goals with improved agricultural competitiveness and economic growth.

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.

Under the Department of Health and Human Services/USDA joint initiative to Ensure the Safety of Imported and Domestic Fruits and Vegetables, NASS is also responsible for the collection of food safety information. The accomplishment of these performance goals support USDA Objective 2.3: Protect the public health by significantly reducing the prevalence of food borne hazards.

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
3.2.1 Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users	99.8%	99.4%	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
• Percent of key survey point estimates meeting target coefficients of variation (c.v.)	67%	72%	75%	83%
• Root mean square error will be reported to data users as a measure of reliability of statistical forecasts and estimates against final totals	20 reports	21 reports	23 reports	24 reports
• Percent of U.S. production covered by	97%	93%	93%	95%

<b>Agricultural Statistics Program Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
chemical use surveys				
• Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	-	77	-	-
• The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	82	-	-
• The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	84	-	-
• Increase in the annual survey development and data collection costs per sample unit compared to the annual rate of inflation as measured by the ECI <sup>1</sup> is less than one.	.38	-.16	< 1	< 1
• Performance of information collections in compliance of the PRA at any time during the rating year	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. 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 4: 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 5: PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATION'S NATURAL RESOURCE BASE AND ENVIRONMENT**

The management of our natural resources, both public and private, often seems to be a continued balancing act between contrary and competing concerns. While this is often the case, particularly in the short-term, longer-term management strategies, combined with adequate knowledge of the complex natural systems, can yield maximum sustainable benefits from our resources that can satisfy most competing concerns. The development of the knowledge base and educational efforts to achieve maximum sustainable benefits from our natural resources on both public and private lands is a goal of REE.

### **Objective 5.1: Provide Statistical Information to Improve the Management of Forests and Rangelands.**

USDA has stewardship responsibility for the natural resources on 192 million acres of Federally managed lands. Policies are carried out to ensure sustainable forest and rangeland ecosystems and natural resource amenities that are resilient to natural and human disturbance. We manage our natural resources for a sustainable flow of uses, products, and services for the American public, using science-based criteria for and indicators of sustainable development. NASS does not devote any appropriated resources to this USDA objective.

### **Objective 5.2: Statistical Data are Available for Improved Management of Soil, Air and Water.**

Farmers, ranchers, and private forest owners manage more than 70 percent of the Nation's land. These groups are the primary stewards of soil, water, and related resources on those lands. USDA provides a portfolio of services to help owners be good stewards. These services include research, education, and technical assistance; cost share and incentive payments for conservation practices; and rental payments or easements to protect fragile or environmentally important land. USDA develops conservation technology tailored to local conditions based on continuing USDA resource assessments and response to local needs and priorities. USDA's field staff works in partnership with local conservation districts, extension universities, Tribal and State staff, and volunteers. USDA plays a key role in protecting property and natural resources on non-Federal lands by increasing preparedness, mitigating hazards, and preventing fires. USDA will adopt a holistic approach that ensures compatibility of conservation and trade policies and effective coordination of conservation and farm policies.

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 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
5.2.1 Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users	99.8%	99.4%	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
• Percent of key survey point estimates meeting target coefficients of variation (c.v.)	67%	70%	75%	83%
• Percent of crops where acreage targets are met as they relate to the management of natural resources	60%	100%	100%	75%
• Number of states with cropland data layer	8	8	8	8
• Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	-	77	-	-
• The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI	-	82	-	-
• The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI	-	84	-	-

**Means and Strategies:** These performance measures are supported by current budgetary and human resources. 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.

## **Presidential Management Initiatives**

NASS is working to strengthen USDA's management through execution of the President's Management Agenda (PMA). Better management will result in more efficient program operations that offer improved customer service and more effective stewardship of taxpayer funds. We expect to:

- Ensure NASS has an efficient, high-performing, diverse workforce that is aligned with our mission priorities and works cooperatively with USDA and NASS partners and the private sector.
- Enhance internal controls, data integrity, management information, and program and policy improvements as reflected by an unqualified audit opinion and a reduction of erroneous.
- Implement business processes and information technology needed to make more of our services available to the public electronically.
- Link budget decisions and program priorities more closely with program performance, and begin to recognize the full cost of our programs.

### **Improve Human Capital Management**

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 employee's 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 President has identified strategic management of human capital as a means to making government more citizen-centered and creating a high-performing workforce. An REE Mission Area Human Capital Plan has been developed for all of the REE agencies and it is aligned with USDA's Human Capital Plan. The REE Human Capital Plan focuses on strategic workforce planning and maximizing employee performance while meeting the challenges of developing a workforce for the future (technologically competent, skilled, responsive, and effective workforce), providing customer service and supporting a broader scope of program responsibilities.

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 goal 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 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
• Percent of NASS budget appropriations spent on training and career development for NASS employees	2.1%	3.1%	3.0%	3.0%
• Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce	69%	56%	55%	55%
• Number of substantiated EEO complaints by NASS employees.	0	0	0	0
• Update the NASS Workforce Plan	no	yes	yes	yes
• Develop a NASS Succession Plan	no	yes	update	update
• NASS (or USDA) skills gap analysis conducted	yes	yes	yes	yes
• Participate in OPM's annual Federal Human Capital Survey (or conduct a NASS Organizational Climate Survey)	no	yes	yes	no

**Means and Strategies:** Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. Strategies for achievement of this goal include using the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT) Implementation Plan as a guide to identify factors related to quality, quantity, and timeliness for implementation and enforcement of all applicable policies, rules, memorandums, etc., developed as a result of the CRAT report; supporting cooperative programs with 1890 land-grant, Hispanic, Native American, and other minority educational institutions to assist them in training and to help NASS recruit qualified minorities; utilizing and promoting student assistants, cooperative students, stay-in-school and other employment programs that assist in recruitment of highly qualified, diversified, and technically competent staff; maintaining a healthy and safe environment for employees, with modern equipment and comfortable furnishings; making effective use of flexible work schedules and work locations; developing innovative and flexible training programs to meet individual needs; offering and encouraging statistics, computer, and communication skills training; promoting staff knowledge in the full range of agricultural and rural issues; building experiences and versatility through staff mobility; participating in national and international forums where concepts and methodologies are presented; utilizing cooperative agreements, exchange programs, contracts, and other interactive vehicles with academic, professional, and subject matter experts to expand staff capabilities; conducting an organizational climate survey at regular intervals and taking action on issues identified; recognizing outstanding contributions by NASS employees; promoting trust, respect, teamwork, and communication; involving the staff at all levels in program decisions; and training and developing managers to apply leadership practices that treat employees fairly and with respect.

**Competitive Sourcing Initiatives**

The foundation of competitive sourcing is the annual inventory of federal activities (FAIR Act Inventory), in which USDA agencies identify their functions as either inherently governmental or commercial in nature. The REE Mission Area developed a mission area approach to conduct its annual FAIR Act Inventory which formalized the process for reviewing and coding all of its agency activities. Purpose in having this methodology is to assure consistency within each REE agency and across the mission area. Competitive sourcing will be used as a management tool by the Under Secretary, Agency Administrators and Senior Management, as needed.

<b>Competitive Sourcing Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
• Complete the Annual FAIR Act Inventory	yes	yes	yes	yes
• Develop and update a long-range competitive sourcing plan	-	yes	update plan	update plan

**Means and Strategies:** Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. NASS fully participates 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. NASS intends to ensure that all funds spent are properly accounted for to the taxpayers, the Congress, and the GAO. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) works to improve financial management, in partnership with the REE Chief Financial Officer, as a core attribute of our operating culture. The OCFO is leading the efforts to improve management information by helping USDA's agencies in crafting and accessing useful, timely information, such as monthly financial reports, on-line access to real-time information, and program cost reporting. By enhancing the integrity of financial and administrative data, we will protect corporate assets and conserve scarce resources.

<b>Financial Management Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
• Clean financial audit each fiscal year	yes	yes	yes	yes

**Means and Strategies:** Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. Assisting the OCFO in maintaining an unqualified audit opinion on USDA Financial Statements, eliminating all material weaknesses, and improving financial reporting procedures and systems.

### Expand Electronic Government

Expanding Electronic Government is one of the five key elements in the President's Management Agenda (PMA). USDA's various eGovernment governance bodies have emphasized and communicated broadly the tenets of the PMA; defining a strategy linked to a fundamentally reformed Capital Planning and Investment Process; leveraging investments; taking a citizen-centered approach; and seeking tangible, measurable results. This will fundamentally transform how USDA will do business by using innovative electronic solutions that apply the eCommerce principles of "faster, cheaper, better" to public service.

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. Our plans include updating the NASS eGovernment Tactical Plan on a regular basis; implementing the 24 eGovernment Initiatives which have been categorized into 5 major categories as outlined in the NASS eGovernment Tactical Plan; supporting the launch and refinement of REE mission area and/or agency specific eGovernment Programs which align with the Departmental eGovernment strategic efforts and enterprisewide collaborative solutions; evaluating REE mission area and/or agency-specific environment for implementing eGovernment by allowing the agencies to anticipate and plan for the future - push thinking beyond current capabilities and old business models. Clear and concise communication throughout NASS is essential to the general operation, efficiency, and responsiveness of the Agency. Through use of its information technology and resource management systems, NASS continually strives to promote government efficiency by its employees and maintain information that is easily accessible by its customers.

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 uses a security architecture to restrict access. 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. NASS is implementing an access method requiring strong authentication.

<b>Electronic Government Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
• Accumulated number of new GPEA <sup>1</sup> e-government (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.	6	39	70	115
• Update NASS eGovernment Tactical Plan	yes	yes	yes	yes
• Departmental security rating for NASS.	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green
• Percent of employees receiving "Security Awareness" training.	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Means and Strategies:** Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. 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. Our plans include updating the NASS eGovernment Tactical Plan on a regular basis; implementing the 24 eGovernment Initiatives which have been categorized into 5 major categories as outlined in the NASS eGovernment Tactical Plan; supporting the launch and refinement of REE mission area and/or agency specific eGovernment Programs which align with the Departmental eGovernment strategic efforts and enterprisewide collaborative solutions; evaluating REE mission area and/or agency-specific environment for implementing eGovernment by allowing the agencies to anticipate and plan for the future - push thinking beyond current capabilities and old business models.

NASS enhancements 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. 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 Department's Office of Cyber Security to ensure that a strong and compliant security architecture is maintained which minimizes any duplication of services. For example, NASS participated in the Department's acquisition of vulnerability assessment software.

USDA is identified as a partner in 17 of the 24 Presidential initiatives and has developed a strategic plan to further identify 24 multi-agency supporting initiatives for collaborative implementation by USDA agencies. NASS will be serving as the lead agency for two of the Departmental initiatives, Survey Capability and Data Management and has provided some staffing resources to the Department in jump-starting USDA's e-Government Program. NASS developed a bold new 5-year e-Government Tactical Plan that offers the opportunity to fundamentally transform the organization and how NASS conducts its business, leveraging agency investments with other USDA agencies. The plan relies heavily on outsourcing to incorporate and integrate the latest technologies and industry standards. Funding is critical to permit NASS to partner with the private sector to achieve the promise afforded by e-Government.

Strategies for achievement of this goal 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**

NASS is committed to improving management to formally integrate our performance in the mission area with budget decisions and to produce performance-based budgets as part of the President's Management Agenda, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department. USDA's strategic plan and the planning efforts in the REE Mission Area and the REE agencies will support the new integration process for the budget and in building a new way of measuring it's desired performance.

NASS performance plans and its integrated budget will show the relationship between program funding levels and expected results. It will identify the relationship between dollars and results and be able to explain any new relationships that were created, as well as comparing these results with previous outcomes or outputs. Budget accounts will be aligned with agency program outcome goals, output targets and resources requested. Program effectiveness will be documented and analyses will show how program outputs and policies affect desired agency outcomes. NASS will systematically apply performance to its budget and will be able to demonstrate how program results will help management make informed budget decisions. By doing this, the overall effect will provide NASS managers with a starting point for monitoring agency performance and present real opportunities to measure costs as well as results.

NASS will explore and find new ways to implement budget and performance integration in an "incremental" fashion since it is unlikely that a comprehensive approach for the entire REE Mission Area would require sweeping changes in the way funding flows to the programs. In the long-term, full budgetary costs should be calculated and charged to accounts and activities with the cost of outputs and programs integrated with performance and budget requests and execution.

<b>Budget and Performance Annual Performance Indicators</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Target</b>	<b>FY 2006 Target</b>
• Integrate NASS budget and performance analyses and processes	-	yes	yes	yes



**Means and Strategies:** Resources necessary to accomplish this goal will be covered through program funding. Over the next few years, we will 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><b><i>Core Measures for Multiple Objectives</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of NASS reports released on the date and time pre-specified to data users.</li> <li>Percent of official reports for which an errata must be issued.</li> </ul>	<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>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of instances of impropriety regarding data security prior to the appointed date and time of an official release.</li> </ul>	<p>The Chairman and Secretary of the Agricultural Statistics Board monitors 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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of key survey point estimates meeting target coefficients of variation (c.v.).</li> </ul>	<p>NASS Policy Standards Memorandum (PSM) 45 provides policy guidelines. Coefficients of variation information is computer generated with survey summaries and indications.</p>	<p>Statistical Methods Branch, Statistics Division reviews C.V. summary tables and tabulates performance information.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of U.S. agricultural production covered annually by official USDA statistics.</li> </ul>	<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>

Annual Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer satisfaction improves as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI).</li> <li>The ease of use, frequency and timely delivery of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI.</li> <li>The accuracy and usefulness of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by ACSI.</li> </ul>	<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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the annual survey development and data collection costs per sample unit compared to the annual rate of inflation as measured by the ECI<sup>2</sup> is less than one.</li> </ul>	<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 the calculation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance of information collections in compliance of the PRA at any time during the rating year.</li> </ul>	<p>USDA OCIO, OMB, and NASS PRA docket.</p>	<p>USDA, OMB, and NASS track PRA performance. OMB compliance standard is 95 percent.</p>	
<p><b>Objective 1.1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of new data products and services produced to fulfill customer requests.</li> </ul>	<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 since customer and data user needs vary each year, however, the number of new products and services are documented at the end of the year.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements.</li> </ul>	<p>Headquarters Field Operations maintains agreements and MOUs</p>	<p>All agreements and MOUs are counted for the entire agency each year</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Root mean square error (RMSE) will be</li> </ul>	<p>Statistics Division identifies and tracks</p>	<p>RSME information is published in selected</p>	

Annual Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
reported to data users as a measure of reliability of statistical forecasts and estimates against final totals.	reports with RMSE information reported to data users.	releases.	
<b>Objective 1.2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of export value of the target countries where NASS provided technical assistance to improve agricultural statistics systems.</li> </ul>	NASS International Program Office (IPO) maintains information on the number of countries assisted by the U. S. and export data associated with each country.	Number of countries assisted at tracked each year and ag exports are calculated for this measure by IPO.	IPO cannot impact this outcome.
<b>Objective 1.4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of the 42 county estimate States with statistically defensible survey precision.</li> <li>States accounting for 90 percent of the value of sale will be included in the monthly grain price program.</li> </ul>	NASS county estimates program documentation and systems are managed by the NASS Field Offices (FO's). States in the NASS monthly prices received program	Data is extracted from the NASS county estimates system. Value is calculated using the program States in the monthly grain prices received program	A new county estimates system needs to be developed to provide performance data.
<b>Objective 1.5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of key survey point estimates of key total expenditure items for which the relative standard error is reported.</li> <li>Percent of U.S. cash receipts for which State level estimates of key farm production expenditure variables are reported.</li> <li>Root mean square error will be reported to data users as a measure of reliability of statistical forecasts and estimates against final totals.</li> </ul>	NASS ARMS Survey NASS ARMS Survey Statistics Division identifies and tracks reports with RMSE information reported to data users.	Calculations are a component of the ARMS Summary Program; information is published in NASS releases. State level estimates are published in NASS releases; cash receipts are used to measure coverage. RSME information is published in selected releases.	
<b>Objective 2.1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Census content test approved by OMB.</li> </ul>	OMB and NASS Clearance Officer.	OMB Clearance Docket.	

Annual Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content test mailed.</li> </ul>	Census and Survey Division, Census Planning Branch.	2007 Census of Agriculture Project Plan.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final 2007 Census Report Forms to the National Processing Center (NPC).</li> </ul>	Census and Survey Division, Census Planning Branch.	2007 Census of Agriculture Project Plan.	
<p><b>Objective 3.2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of U.S. production covered by chemical use surveys.</li> </ul>	NASS chemical use surveys and acreage statistics and reports.	Data obtained from chemical use surveys to measure coverage.	
<p><b>Objective 5.2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of crops where acreage targets are met as they relate to the management of natural resources.</li> </ul>	NASS ARMS II survey data.	Crops to be surveyed are identified each year for ARMS II and calculations are based on survey program completed each year.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of states with cropland data layer.</li> </ul>	Research and Development Division's Geospatial Program.	Geospatial data is published by State and made available to the public.	
<p><b>Improve Human Capital Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of NASS budget appropriations spent on training and career development for NASS employees.</li> </ul>	Training and Career Development Office maintains annual training cost summaries.	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.	Some of the costs are estimated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of new hires of women and minorities to contribute to the diversity of the Agency's workforce.</li> </ul>	NFC Personnel Database	NASS Human Resources Service Office tracks the number of new hires throughout the year.	Information for new hires are limited to the four primary job series in NASS; GS-1529; GS-1530, GS-1531, and GS-0334.

Annual Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of substantiated EEO complaints by NASS employees.</li> </ul>	Office of the Administrator maintains EEO related information.	The number of EEO complaints reported are 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the NASS Workforce Plan.</li> </ul>	USDA Human Capital Plan, REE Human Capital Plan, NASS Workforce Plan	Publication of the NASS Workforce Plan.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an Agency Succession Plan.</li> </ul>	USDA Human Capital Plan, REE Human Capital Plan, NASS Workforce Plan	Publication of the NASS Succession Plan.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NASS (or USDA) skills gap analysis conducted.</li> </ul>	USDA Human Capital Plan, REE Human Capital Plan; NASS Training and Career Development Operations normally conducts annual training needs assessment.	NASS Training Needs Assessment information.	Training needs assessments may vary from year to year in methodology.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in OPM's annual Federal Human Capital Survey (or conduct a NASS Organizational Climate Survey).</li> </ul>	2004 Federal Human Capital Survey and NASS Organizational Climate Surveys.	Information published in the 2004 Federal Human Capital Survey and prior NASS Organizational Climate Surveys.	Federal Human Capital Survey is conducted once every two years (in the even-numbered years).
<p><b>Competitive Sourcing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the Annual FAIR Act Inventory.</li> <li>Contribute to the REE long-range competitive sourcing plan.</li> </ul>	USDA OCFO  REE Competitive Sourcing Working Group.	All inventories are published by Department/Agency on the Internet.  Publication of a REE long-range competitive sourcing plan for the mission area approved by the Under Secretary for REE.	
<p><b>Improving Financial Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean financial audit each fiscal year.</li> </ul>	USDA OCFO; NASS Budget Administrative Services Office (BASO).	Audit reports.	
<p><b>Expanding Electronic Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accumulated number of new GPEA<sup>1</sup> e-</li> </ul>	Data Collection Branch, Census and Survey	New e-government (EDR and EDI) products	

Annual Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Verification/Validation Method	Data Limitations
government (EDR and EDI) products and services implemented.	Division, tracks the number of GPEA e-government products and services.	and services introduced by NASS are recorded and maintained by Census and Survey Division.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update NASS eGovernment Tactical Plan.</li> </ul>	NASS Strategic Plan; IT Investments; budget documents.	Publication of the NASS eGovernment Tactical Plan.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departmental security rating for NASS.</li> </ul>	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.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of employees receiving "Security Awareness" training.</li> </ul>	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.	
<p><b>Establishing Budget and Performance Integration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and implement a new integrated budget and performance system.</li> </ul>	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.