2013 Explanatory Notes
National Agricultural Statistics Service

Contents

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Purpose Statement

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) was established by Secretary's Memorandum No. 1446, Supplement 1, of April 3, 1961, under Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953 and other authorities. The mission of the agency is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.

The statistical data provided by NASS are essential to the public and private sectors for making effective policy, production, and marketing decisions on a wide range of agricultural commodities. Every 5 years the Census of Agriculture provides comprehensive national, State, and county data as well as selected data for Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S., Virgin Islands, and Northern Mariana Islands. The USDA published its first crop report in 1863. NASS' responsibilities are authorized under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627) and the Census of Agriculture Act of 1997, Public Law 105-113 (7 U.S.C. 2204g).

- **Agricultural Estimates Program** – NASS field offices regularly survey thousands of operators of farms, ranches, and agribusinesses who provide information on a confidential basis. These scientifically-designed surveys provide the basis for developing estimates of production, supply, price, and other aspects of the agricultural economy. Official USDA national, State, and county estimates and statistical reports are issued relating to the number of farms and land in farms; acreage, types, and production of farm crops; number of livestock on farms and of livestock products; stocks of agricultural commodities; value and utilization of farm products; prices received and paid by farmers; agricultural chemical use; and on other subjects as needed. The field offices forward the estimates to NASS headquarters where they are combined and released at scheduled times to the press and public through the Agricultural Statistics Board. Annually, NASS publishes approximately 500 agricultural statistical national reports and thousands of additional state statistical reports, covering more than 120 crops and 45 livestock items. These basic and unbiased data are necessary to maintain an orderly association between the consumption, supply, marketing, and input sectors of agriculture.

- **Census of Agriculture –** The Census of Agriculture is taken every 5 years and provides comprehensive data on the agricultural economy, including data on the number of farms, land use, production expenses, value of land and buildings, farm size and characteristics of farm operators, market value of agricultural production sold, acreage of major crops, inventory of livestock and poultry, and farm irrigation practices. Final preparations are underway for the 2012 Census of Agriculture, scheduled to be mailed to the Nation's farmers and ranchers in December 2012.

- **Work Performed for Others** – NASS lends technical expertise and conducts surveys for other Federal agencies, State governments, and private organizations on a reimbursable basis. NASS provides support and assistance with questionnaire and sample design, data collection and editing, analysis of survey results, and training. NASS also provides technical consultation, support, and assistance for international programs under participating agency service agreements.

NASS maintains a central office in Washington, D.C., and a network of 46 field offices, serving all 50 States and Puerto Rico that operate through cooperative agreements with State Departments of Agriculture or universities. In addition, NASS opened a National Operations Center in St. Louis, MO in 2011 that will be fully operational in 2013. As of September 30, 2011, NASS had 1,033 permanent full-time employees, including 431 full-time employees in Washington, D.C., 599 in field offices, and 3 in Puerto Rico.

OIG Report: #50601-15-KC 4/14/08 NASS – Establishments of Average Yields. Final report issued August 2011. NASS has closed out three of the five recommendations.
GAO Report: #GAO-11-37. USDA's Agricultural Chemical Usage Program Management. Final report issued November 2010. NASS prepared a statement of action and has taken several measures to address recommendations in 2011.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Available Funds and Staff Years

(Dollars in thousands)

Item	2010 Actual		2011 Actual		2012 Estimate		2013 Estimate	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
NASS Discretionary Appropriations	$161,830	1,004	$156,761	979	$158,616	1,104	$179,477	1,365
Rescission	-	-	-314	-	-	-	-	-
Adjusted Appropriation	161,830	1,004	156,447	979	158,616	1,104	179,477	1,365
Balance Available, Start of Year	5,037	-	8,043	-	205	-	-	-
Other Adjustments (Net)	214	-	3,950	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	167,081	1,004	168,440	979	158,821	1,104	179,477	1,365
Lapsing Balances	-64	-	-167	-	-	-	-	-
Balance Available, End of Year	-8,043	-	-205	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Obligations, NASS	158,974	1,004	168,068	979	158,821	1,104	179,477	1,365
Obligations under other USDA appropriations:								
Ag. Marketing Service - pesticide work & data on milk prices, export certification, & base month series	379	2	375	2	250	2	250	2
Ag. Research Service - Assistance on food consumption data, & Nutrient Data Laboratory	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - animal health monitoring system	712	3	825	3	600	3	600	3
Economic Research Service - agricultural resource management & small farms data	8,543	34	8,880	39	7,950	39	7,950	39
Foreign Agricultural Service	1,192	-	1,133		875		875	
Farm Service Agency - County Cash Rental Rates & Commodity Prices	8,854	33	6,900	34	6,900	34	6,900	34
Forest Service - grazing fees & woodland owners	62	-	105	-	75	-	75	-
Natural Resources Conservation Service & Farm Service Agency - conservation effects assessment	1,000	4	105	-	-	-	-	-
Risk Management Agency - County estimates	825	4	825	4	825	5	825	5
RMA - Organic prices	1,500	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
World Agricultural Outlook Board - printing & Lock-up support & cotton objective yield	40	-	15	-	15	-	15	-
Other USDA	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other USDA, Appropriations	23,141	85	19,163	82	17,490	83	17,490	83
Total, Agriculture Appropriations	182,115	1,089	187,231	1,061	176,311	1,187	196,967	1,448
Other Federal Funds:								
Dept. of Interior, BLM; Survey Fees	61	-	64		75		75	
National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health	710	3	698	3	700	4	700	4
Dept. of Labor - Agriculture Labor	-	-	1,130	5	650	4	650	4
National Science Foundation - data collection	400	2	360	2	-	-	-	-
National Aeronautics & Space Administration	49	-	34	-	-	-	-	-
Other Countries; Canada, Netherlands	5	-	35	-	35	-	35	-
United Soybean Council	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other Federal	1,264	5	2,321	10	1,460	8	1,460	8
Non-Federal Funds								
State Agencies - survey work	3,301	16	3,277	14	3,000	15	3,000	15
Miscellaneous Contributed Funds for agricultural reports, data, & mailings	77	-	173	-	50	-	50	-
Total, Non-Federal	3,378	16	3,450	14	3,050	15	3,050	15
Total, NASS	186,756	1,110	193,001	1,085	180,821	1,210	201,477	1,471

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Year Summary

Item	2010 Actual			2011 Actual			2012 Estimate1/			2013 Estimate2/		
	Wash. D.C.	Field	Total	Wash. D.C.	Field	Total	Wash. D.C.	Field	Total	Wash. D.C.	Field	Total
SES	10	-	10	9	1	10	9	1	10	9	1	10
SL	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-15	21	17	38	24	18	42	24	18	42	24	18	42
GS-14	58	45	103	56	45	101	60	50	110	60	60	120
GS-13	242	64	306	215	58	273	225	60	285	224	80	304
GS-12	31	153	184	40	182	222	50	185	235	50	195	245
GS-11	23	103	126	31	87	118	45	87	132	50	95	145
GS-10	4		4	6	-	6	6	-	6	6	-	6
GS-9	20	61	81	17	45	62	26	45	71	26	45	71
GS-8	20	38	58	19	24	43	24	24	48	24	24	48
GS-7	16	161	177	17	192	209	17	189	206	17	189	206
GS-6	4	55	59	3	39	42	3	39	42	3	39	42
GS-5	1	22	23	1	13	14	1	13	14	1	13	14
GS-4	1	3	4	2	5	7	3	5	8	3	3	6
Total Permanent Positions	452	722	1,174	441	709	1,150	494	716	1,210	498	762	1,260
Unfilled, End of Year	-10	-75	-85	-10	-107	-117	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Permanent Full-Time Employment, End of Year	442	647	1,089	431	602	1,033	494	716	1,210	498	762	1,260
Staff Years, Estimate	431	679	1,110	468	617	1,085	454	756	1,210	415	1,056	1,471

1/The SES, SL, and GS grades reflect Permanent Full Time positions. The 2012 increase in Staff Years reflects the new National Operations Center showing NASS efficiencies including moving from a cooperative agreement to in-house for the same funding level.

2/The 2013 increase in Staff Years reflects the increased workload during the peak data collection and processing year for the Census of Agriculture.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Motor Vehicle Fleet Data

The 2012 budget estimate for the National Agricultural Statistics Service proposes to maintain the current level of motor vehicles. All passenger motor vehicles of the National Agricultural Statistics Service are located at various field offices and are assigned based on approved program needs and geographic region.

NASS passenger motor vehicles are used for necessary field travel in carrying out the mission of the agency and ensuring accurate data are being reported and collected. Of the 45 State field offices, there are 15 government owned and 30 lease vehicles in 29 states. While all 45 NASS field offices require the use of motor vehicles, it is often cost-effective to acquire vehicles through existing cooperative agreements with the State Departments of Agriculture, through leases from State motor pools, or via rental agreements. Field offices monitor and track vehicle use and costs. Currently, NASS only owns a fleet of 15 vehicles and plans to move from owned to leased as owned vehicles are reported excess. Where possible NASS uses short term rental and shared motor pools.

Changes to the motor vehicle fleet. In 2011, NASS had three vehicles that met the Federal replacement standards however, these planned replacements were delayed.

Replacement of passenger motor vehicles. For 2012 NASS plans to maintain the current level of 45 motor vehicles. For 2012 three vehicles are scheduled for replacement and NASS will maintain the current level of 45 motor vehicles. NASS follows the Federal replacement policy for agency owned vehicles; and maintains vehicles past the minimum Federal replacement criteria of three years 60,000 miles when appropriate. NASS uses appropriated funds to purchase agency owned vehicles when necessary. NASS complies with GSA fleet managers when replacing leased vehicles, ensuring continued program needs.

Impediments to managing the motor vehicle fleet. There are no identified impediments to managing the motor vehicle fleet in the most cost-effective manner.

Size, composition and cost of motor vehicle fleet as of September 30, 2011, are as follows:

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICAL SERVICE
Size, Composition, and Annual Operating Costs of Vehicle Fleet

Fiscal Year	Number of Vehicles by Type *								Annual Operating Costs ($ in 000)
	Sedans and Station	Light Trucks, SUVs, and Vans		Medium Duty Vehicles	Ambu-lances	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles	Total Number of	
		4x2	4x4						
2010	2	42	1	-	-	-	-	45	$371
Change	-	-21	+19	+2	-	-	-	-	-95
2011	2	21	20	2	-	-	-	45	276
Change	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+28
2012	2	21	20	2	-	-	-	45	304
Change	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+30
2013	2	21	20	2	-	-	-	45	334

* Numbers include vehicles owned by the agency and leased from commercial sources or GSA.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Appropriation Language

Salaries and Expenses:

The estimates include appropriation language for this item as follows (new language underscored; deleted matter enclosed in brackets):

For necessary expenses of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, [$158,616,000]$179,477,000, of which up to [$41,639,000]$62,500,000 shall be available until expended for the Census of Agriculture.

Lead-Off Tabular Statement

Appropriations Act, 2012	$158,616,000
Budget Estimate, 2013	179,477,000
Change from 2012 Appropriation	+20,861,000

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Summary of Increases and Decreases
(On basis of appropriation)
(Dollars in thousands)

Item of Change	2010 Actual	2011 Change	2012 Change	2013 Change	2013 Estimated
Agricultural Estimates…….....	$119,922	-$547	-$9,255	0	$110,120
County Estimates Improvement Initiative.	4,000	0	2,857	$3,381	10,238
NOC Efficiencies*……..……	0	0	0	-3,381	-3,381
Subtotal, Agricultural Estimates……	123,922	-547	-6,398	0	116,977
Census of Agriculture.....	37,908	-4,835	8,566	20,861	62,500
Total Available……	161,830	-5,383	2,169	20,861	179,477

*The National Operations Center will be fully operational in 2013 and NASS anticipates operating more efficiently for the Agricultural Estimates program in producing all reports, surveys, and estimates.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Project Statement

(On basis of appropriations)
(Dollars in thousands)

Program	2010 Actual		2011 Actual		2012 Estimate		Change		2013 Estimate	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Discretionary Appropriations:										
Agricultural Estimates.....	$123,922	783	$123,375	749	$116,977	874	-	-	$116,977	874
Census of Agriculture.....	37,908	221	33,073	230	41,639	230	+20,861	+261	62,500	491
Total Adjusted Approp.....	161,830	1,004	156,447	979	158,616	1,104	+20,861	+261	179,477	1,365
Rescission……	-	-	314	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	161,830	1,004	156,761	979	158,616	1,104	+20,861	+261	179,477	1,365
Rescission.....	-	-	-314	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, Start of Year	5,037	-	8,043	-	205	-	-205	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other (Net).....	214	-	3,950	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	167,081	1,004	168,440	979	158,821	1,104	+20,656	+261	179,477	1,365
Lapsing Balances.....	-64	-	-167	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, End of Year.....	-8,043	-	-205	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	158,974	1,004	168,068	979	158,821	1,104	+20,656	+261	179,477	1,365

Project Statement

(On basis of obligations)
(Dollars in thousands)

Program	2010 Actual		2011 Actual		2012 Estimate		Change		2013 Estimate	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Discretionary Obligations:										
Agricultural Estimates.....	$123,858	783	$123,208	749	$116,977	874	-	-	$116,977	874
Census of Agriculture.....	35,116	221	44,860	230	41,844	230	+20,656	+261	62,500	491
Total Obligations.....	158,974	1,004	168,068	979	158,821	1,104	+20,656	+261	179,477	1,365
Lapsing Balances.....	64	-	167	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, End of Year.....	8,043	-	205	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	167,081	1,004	168,440	979	158,821	1,104	+20,656	+261	179,477	1,365
Rescission.....	-	-	314	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, Start of Year....	-5,037	-	-8,043	-	-205	-	+205	-	-	-
Other Adjustments (Net).....	-214	-	-3,950	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	161,830	1,004	156,761	979	158,616	1,104	+20,861	+261	179,477	1,365

Justification of Increases and Decreases

An increase of $383,000 to fund increased pay costs.

This increase will enable NASS to maintain staffing levels, which are critical to achieving the agency's principal goal to assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving. Approximately 64 percent of NASS' budget is in support of personnel compensation. Pay Cost Increases will be offset by a decrease in administrative support costs such as printing, supplies, travel, and training.

The pay costs increase will offset by reductions in the following programs: $282,000 from the Agricultural Estimates Program base funding; $101,000 from the Census of Agriculture base funding.

(1) Agricultural estimates funding stays level from 2012 to 2013 ($116,977,000):

Agricultural Estimates base funding will be used for agricultural statistical reports that contribute directly to the Principle Economic Indicators of the United States, support USDA program delivery, and/ or have specific legislative requirements for release. The data NASS collects in integrated surveys and estimates comprise the Agriculture Estimates program and contribute to those Principle Economic Indicators. NASS publishes over 500 agricultural statistical reports with data at the national, State, and county level, on an annual quarterly, monthly, or weekly basis.

(a) An increase of $282,000 to fund increased pay costs:

A net change of $0 for pay costs. A pay costs increase of $282,000 will be offset by a reduction of $282,000 in the Agricultural Estimates Program as noted in the description at the beginning of this section.

(b) An increase of $3,381,000 to enhance the annual county estimates program in support of agricultural producer safety nets ($6,857,000 available in 2012):

NASS has produced county-level statistics for selected commodities for many years. However, the importance of these data has been magnified in recent years as the Department's programs utilize the information to determine disposition of billions of dollars. The Risk Management Agency relies on NASS annual county estimates to administer crop insurance programs that provide U.S. farmers a safety net ensuring protection against unpredictable growing conditions. Additionally, the Farm Service Agency relies on NASS county level data to administer the Conservation Reserve Program, crop revenue support programs, and emergency assistance payments. The important uses of these data continue to grow.

The County Estimates Survey program was originally designed, administered, and processed at the local NASS Field Office level in support of State cooperative agreements with local governments or universities. As uses of the data have expanded to support USDA administered farm programs, it became apparent that new requirements dictated standards and consistency across all NASS Field Offices. Consequently, NASS began work on developing the infrastructure to support transition to a nationally-administered County Estimates Survey program. Initial work focused on internal processes and tools that support analyses and estimation and has recently shifted toward ensuring consistency in sampling, design, and program execution.

However, to effectively and responsibly meet USDA data needs for critical program delivery, several issues that must be addressed will require new program funding. NASS is implementing a probability-based survey design. To make this sample design effective, NASS will need to increase resources devoted to this program in the following areas:

1) The non-response follow up efforts will require resources to fund phone and field enumerator efforts to contact farmers who do not return their county estimates questionnaires by mail. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) enumerators, who are contracted by NASS, have recently received a 3.6% pay increase, along with a 4.5 cent mileage increase, as directed by the Internal Revenue Service.

2) Further development and enhancement of survey processing and estimation tools is also needed to establish the robust and flexible processing system required for the multitude of crop and production practices data needed to administer USDA programs.

3) NASS must continue to explore and research small area estimation techniques, including geo-spatial information and other external data sources. This is increasingly necessary due to the changing structure of the agriculture community. Using USDA and other external data sources can reduce burden on our Nation's farmers and ranchers.

(c) A decrease of $3,381,000 due to the National Operations Center efficiencies to offset the increase to enhance the county estimates improvement initiative:

In order to offset the vital increase for the county estimates improvement initiative NASS anticipates operating more efficiently because of the new National Operations Center. The NOC will be fully operational in 2013 and anticipates being able to offset the much needed county estimates improvement initiative. NASS has achieved success in several different areas creating efficiencies:

1) $2,700,000 savings due to NOC: NASS designed the National Operations Center to provide an infrastructure for increased telephone data collection capacity in a centralized environment, to centrally locate sampling frame activities and experts, and to improve training of telephone and field interviewers through focused and deliberate delivery of a standardized training protocol. The Frames Maintenance Group at the NOC develops, maintains, and efficiently samples the agency's list sampling frame. They complete record linkage with newly acquired list sources and add newly discovered farm operator names to increase coverage of the frames. They maintain on an ongoing basis to ensure they are current. In addition, the Forms Processing Group at the NOC receives the paper based survey and census questionnaires that are completed and mailed by farmers and ranchers. These forms are checked in to make sure that are not contacted by telephone or field interviewers, the forms are scanned for image retrieval; the data is entered into a centralized database.

2) $681,000 savings due to new centralized virtual environment: NASS Redesigned systems to work in the centralized virtual environment of the NOC to enhance standardization and efficiency. NASS is effectively capturing the economies of scale associated with consolidating functions, where appropriate. In addition, the centralized virtual environment enables NASS to be more flexible, nimbly adapting to the demands of stakeholders and the ever-changing operating environment. Additional benefits include leveraging common metadata throughout NASS processes providing rigor and structure to ensure internal consistency across and within programs. Modular applications reduce the risk of certain software failing to stay current. The new streamlined tools will allow staff to spend more time on statistical analysis rather than moving data from system to system.

(2) An increase of $20,760,000 and 261 staff years for the Census of Agriculture ($41,639,000 base level available in 2012) consisting of:

Census of Agriculture Base ($41,639,000 in 2012 and 230 staff): Base funding for the Census of Agriculture is broken down into five general categories (listed below). Due to the cyclical nature of the Census of Agriculture Program, appropriated funds will shift amongst these five broader categories.

Direction – This portion accounts for the staff and costs associated with planning, administering, and supporting the Census of Agriculture Program including the census and follow-on surveys. Proper planning includes developing timelines, milestones, deliverables, and quality assurance checks. Additional activities include Office of Management and Budget approval, documentation, monitoring systems and procedures, coordinating editing and analysis, and soliciting data user feedback.

Content Determination and Design – This category is accounted for by staff and costs associated with activities that include research, evaluation, and testing the questionnaires for the Census of Agriculture Program, including any follow-on special studies. Also included is development work for mail and electronic instruments and the cost for printing forms.

Mail List Development and Mailout – A component of the Census of Agriculture base is devoted to staff and costs associated with updating, maintaining, and enhancing the list of producers that will receive the Census of Agriculture and Census Follow-on questionnaires. Because of the consistent activities necessary to develop a robust and proficient Census Mail List, and the similar list maintained for the Agricultural Estimates, NASS combined the two lists to more efficiently maintain one list that can be utilized for both programs. A portion of this category includes costs associated with postage for mail packets for the Census of Agriculture and follow-on studies.

Collection and Processing – A significant portion of funds in the Census base are for staff and costs associated with data collection, data processing, data editing, and data analysis. Included in this category are the costs of outsourcing contracts with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) for data collection, and the National Processing Center in Jeffersonville, Indiana for incoming mail receipts. All activities associated with system development and programming are accounted for here.

Publication and Dissemination – The final portion of the Census base is for producing tangible and electronic products for external data users, including the public. This category also includes staff and costs associated with marketing these products and expenses for publicity materials prior data collection. Included in this category are staff and costs associated with customer service and public relations.

(a) An increase of $101,000 to fund increased pay costs:

A net change of $0 for pay costs. A pay costs increase of $101,000 will be offset by a reduction of $101,000 in the Census of Agriculture Program as noted in the description at the beginning of this section.

(b) A net increase of $20,861,000 and 261 staff years for the Census of Agriculture consisting of:

This increase reflects the normal activity levels resulting from the cyclical nature of the 5-year Census of Agriculture program; and will support the increased workload in the peak data collection and processing year of the Census. In addition, the Census of Agriculture directly supports the USDA Strategic Plan Goal 1: Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating, and economically thriving. Data collection for the 2012 Census of Agriculture begins with the mailing of questionnaires to the Nation's farmers and ranchers in December 2012. Without the requested increase in funding, the 2012 Census of Agriculture will be delayed, provide an unacceptable level of coverage, or result in NASS not being able to account for all farms in the United States.

Collection and Processing: The largest portion of the requested increase in funding (estimated $11,061,000) will be used for the outsourcing of all necessary functions associated with mailing and processing the Census of Agriculture. NASS will again utilize the National Processing Center in Jeffersonville, Indiana for the following activities: preparing and assembling questionnaire packages, registering returned packages, scanning returned questionnaires, capturing data in electronic form, and transmitting data to a central database for editing, analysis, and summarization. The estimated size of the census mail list includes 3 million potential farmers and ranchers. Due to this large volume data collection is conducted only once every five years, NASS contracts with the same center which is responsible for the Census Bureau's handling of the Population Census. This facility has the specialized equipment and capacity to handle the questionnaire volume resulting from the Census of Agriculture. This saves significant money for NASS during the four non-production years of the 5-year Census of Agriculture cycle.

However for this cycle, NASS will now centralize incoming and outgoing telephone calling for the Census primarily at the NOC. The Census increased workload will require an additional 261 staff years, much of which will be handled at the NOC with intermittent employees calling to collect Census data. The additional staff is needed to handle the large volume of data received from the Census of Agriculture. It will be necessary for NASS to hire some additional temporary staff in 2013, for data analysis during peak data collection and processing for the Census of Agriculture.

Another significant portion (estimated $5,300,000) will be used for significant increases in data collection costs. In order to achieve an acceptable level of response for every county or county equivalent, in the United States, NASS will contract with NASDA to conduct extensive phone follow-up to mail and web non-respondents. Additionally, NASDA enumerator staff will conduct personal interviews for a small group of farmers and ranchers. NASS limits these more expensive personal enumeration efforts to operations that are critical because of their size or type of specialized agriculture production. NASDA will hire and NASS will train additional enumerator staff specifically for field enumeration to collect census reports from minority and disadvantaged populations such as American Indians, including Reservation level data, and Hispanic producers which historically have been hard to reach and under-represented. NASS intends to expand partnership building with Community Based Organizations in a grass roots effort to promote the importance of being represented by the Census of Agriculture. This funding is necessary to continue the progress made in the 2007 Census of Agriculture when NASS produced key data products regarding Race, Gender, and Ethnicity.

Mail List Development and Mailout: A large portion of the funding (estimated $4,500,000) is associated with the increased expenses for outgoing and return postage for 3 million potential farmers and ranchers on the census mail list. In order to achieve desired response rates while holding down costs, NASS utilizes three separate mailings. NASS uses all means necessary to create an efficient census mail list while taking advantage of USPS discounts available for bulk mailings.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years

(Dollars in Thousands)

	2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Alabama	$1,103	12	$1,069	11	$543	6	$543	6
Alaska	225	2	177	1	91	1	91	1
Arizona	852	10	933	9	362	4	362	4
Arkansas	1,441	16	1,271	15	905	10	905	10
California	2,738	25	2,082	29	2,715	30	2,715	30
Colorado	1,313	15	1,270	13	2,353	26	2,353	26
Delaware	139	1	149	1	91	1	91	1
District of Columbia	105,008	431	110,532	427	103,860	427	103,860	427
Florida	1,335	14	1,363	13	634	7	634	7
Georgia	1,365	13	1,288	12	2,625	29	2,625	29
Hawaii	955	11	836	9	362	4	362	4
Idaho	1,198	13	1,048	10	453	5	453	5
Illinois	1,412	14	1,305	13	815	9	815	9
Indiana	1,508	16	1,533	15	905	10	905	10
Iowa	1,438	17	1,413	15	2,353	26	2,353	26
Kansas	1,315	14	1,277	13	724	8	724	8
Kentucky	1,308	14	1,265	13	2,263	25	2,263	25
Louisiana	937	10	1,145	11	543	6	543	6
Maryland	915	10	906	10	453	5	453	5
Michigan	1,445	17	1,261	16	996	11	996	11
Minnesota	1,422	15	1,312	14	815	9	815	9
Mississippi	1,413	15	1,252	14	815	9	815	9
Missouri	1,140	13	6,661	15	13,500	219	13,500	219
Montana	1,032	12	1,180	13	634	7	634	7
Nebraska	1,313	14	1,307	12	2,444	27	2,444	27
Nevada	288	3	264	3	91	1	91	1
New Hampshire	1,162	13	1,206	13	724	8	724	8
New Jersey	957	10	999	10	453	5	453	5
New Mexico	821	8	801	8	272	3	272	3
New York	1,140	14	1,215	15	905	10	905	10
North Carolina	2,036	15	1,860	14	815	9	815	9
North Dakota	1,039	12	942	11	543	6	543	6
Ohio	1,600	16	1,484	15	905	10	905	10
Oklahoma	1,131	13	1,151	13	724	8	724	8
Oregon	1,225	13	1,058	12	634	7	634	7
Pennsylvania	1,207	14	1,056	12	2,172	24	2,172	24
South Carolina	974	10	977	9	362	4	362	4
South Dakota	1,232	14	1,365	15	634	7	634	7
Tennessee	1,026	13	1,295	14	815	9	815	9
Texas	2,310	22	1,847	21	2,806	31	2,806	31
Utah	816	8	759	8	272	3	272	3
Virginia	998	12	1,003	11	543	6	543	6
Washington	1,642	16	1,534	15	905	10	905	10
West Virginia	533	6	672	6	272	3	272	3
Wisconsin	1,538	16	1,529	17	996	11	996	11
Wyoming	810	10	906	10	543	6	543	6
Puerto Rico	224	2	313	3	181	2	181	2
Undistributed Census of Agriculture	0	0	0	0	0	0	20,656	261
Obligations	158,974	1,004	168,068	979	158,821	1,104	179,477	1,365
Lapsing Balances	64	-	167	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, End of Year	8,043	-	205	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available or Estimate	167,081	1,004	168,440	979	158,821	1,104	179,477	1,365

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Classification by Objects

(Dollars in Thousands)

		2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Estimate	2013 Estimate
Personnel Compensation:					
Washington, D. C.		$27,821	$36,276	$37,576	$39,227
Field		43,691	36,721	37,721	42,856
11	Total personnel compensation	71,512	72,996	75,297	82,083
12	Personnel Benefits	21,435	24,242	26,917	26,284
13	Benefits for former personnel	9	785	550	550
	Total personnel comp. & benefits	92,956	98,023	102,764	108,917
Other Objects:					
21	Travel and transportation of persons	3,061	7,245	2,600	4,000
22	Transportation of things	1,237	766	660	600
23.2	Rental payments to others	102	163	170	190
23.3	Communications, utilities, & misc. charges	5,033	4,247	4,275	4,500
24	Printing and reproduction	684	248	312	350
25.2	Other Services from non-Federal sources	30,337	34,500	28,200	34,000
25.3	Other goods & services from Federal sources	5,676	9,803	8,200	12,758
25.5	Research & Development Contracts	11,960	7,341	6,800	7,400
25.7	Operation & maintenance of equipment	1,525	879	880	1,336
26	Supplies and materials	1,217	1,000	1,136	1,400
31	Equipment	5,179	3,843	2,800	4,000
42	Insurance claims and indemenities	8	8	23	25
43	Interest and dividends	0	1	1	1
	Total other objects	66,018	70,045	56,057	70,560
	Total direct obligations	158,974	168,068	158,821	179,477
Position Data:					
Average Salary, ES positions		$162,029	$162,029	$162,029	$162,029
Average Salary, GS positions		$100,000	$102,000	$93,000	$80,000
Average Grade, GS positions		11.9	11.9	11.4	10.6

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
STATUS OF PROGRAMS

The National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) mission is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. To achieve this, NASS administers USDA's program of collecting and publishing current national, State, and county agricultural statistics. The Census of Agriculture, conducted every 5 years, provides comprehensive, local level data about agricultural communities across America. The statistical data provided by NASS are essential to both the public and private sectors for making effective policy, production, and marketing decisions on a wide range of agricultural commodities.

NASS programs are organized into the following three major areas: (1) agricultural estimates, (2) Census of Agriculture, and (3) work performed for others. Additionally, NASS is currently undertaking an organizational transformation to streamline its business processes. More information on each of these areas follows.

AGRICULTURAL ESTIMATES

Current Activities:

The NASS agricultural statistics program is conducted through 45 field offices serving all 50 States, and a Puerto Rico field office. Scientifically designed surveys of farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, and others provide the basis for developing estimates of production, supply, price, and many other aspects of the agricultural economy. These surveys are supplemented by field observations, objective yield counts and measurements, and other data to provide reliable information. Administrative data available from other USDA agencies and State Departments of Agriculture are also used to produce statistical reports, including monthly livestock and poultry slaughter, egg production, and dairy products reports.

Official USDA national and State reports are issued relating to the number of farms and land in farms; acreage, yield, production, and stocks of grains; production of hay, oilseeds, cotton, potatoes, tobacco, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, nursery, and selected specialty crops; inventories and production of hogs, cattle, sheep and wool, goats and mohair, mink, catfish, trout, poultry, eggs, and dairy products; prices received by farmers for products, prices paid for commodities and services, and related indexes; cold storage inventories; agricultural chemical use; and other related items that affect the agricultural economy. The NASS field offices forward the estimates to Headquarters in Washington, D.C., where they are combined, analyzed, and released at scheduled times to the media and public through free published statistical reports on the NASS Web site, http://www.nass.usda.gov/. Annually, NASS publishes more than 500 national agricultural statistical reports, covering over 120 crop and 45 livestock items, complemented by more than 8,000 additional State reports. These basic and objective data are critical to maintain an orderly association between the consumption, supply, marketing, and input sectors of agriculture.

NASS provides timely and accurate agricultural statistics that are used throughout the agricultural sector to evaluate supplies and determine competitive prices for world marketing of U.S. commodities. These statistics promote a level playing field in production agriculture with impartial information available to everyone at a predetermined and publicized date and time.

Statistical data are also provided on chemical use and biotechnology for use in monitoring and evaluating risk assessment to both food safety and food security. Data on agricultural practices, farm and ranch irrigation practice trends, and the geographic information system cropland data layer provide meaningful information on the Nation's resource base and environment.

NASS continues to keep abreast of information needs through a variety of means, including data user meetings, advisory committees, attending industry meetings, and sponsoring outreach activities. Even though most NASS reports consist of specific data series, improvements to reports and databases are constantly being made in terms of additional data breakouts, improved coverage, and improved timeliness. Special reports or additional categories within existing reports are added to best summarize the constantly changing character of agriculture. The following examples represent 2011 accomplishments.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

New and Expanded Agricultural Statistics published by NASS

- NASS is using USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) data solely to establish national level prices for most livestock and poultry data with the exception of milk prices and milk cows. This approach reduces respondent burden and lowers costs. Poultry prices began using this method during 2010 while livestock prices began in January 2011. Most monthly livestock prices are published at the national level with the exception of milk. An all milk price and fat test are published for selected states and the national level. Fluid grade and manufacturing grade price and fat test are no longer published for individual states or at the national level.

- A special report, *Overview of the United States Cattle Industry*, was released on December 17, 2010. This report provides a periodic review of changes in the United States cattle industry and its impact on cattle supplies and disposition. Additionally, this report gives a brief overview of survey and estimation procedures as well as terminology used in NASS cattle publications.

- *Cattle Death Loss* report was released May 12, 2011. This report was released as a cooperative effort between NASS and the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

- *Overview of the Sheep and Goat Industry* was published in August 2011. This report takes a graphical look at the sheep and goat sector of United States agriculture over the past quarter century (1987-2011) drawing on statistics published from NASS's annual sheep and goat program and the *2007 Census of Agriculture.*

- In August 2011, the USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), in collaboration with NASS, began the Feedlot 2011 study. This national study will take an in-depth look at beef feedlots in the United States and provide the industry with updated critical information last collected 12 years ago during the NAHMS Feedlot 1999 study.

- NASS in conjunction with APHIS plans to conduct a 2012 swine-focused National Animal Health Monitoring NAHMS Study.

- On September 27, 2010, the President signed a bill requiring electronic reporting and a Wednesday release time of 3:00 PM for Dairy Product Prices. Under the law, AMS was given one year to implement these changes. NASS has agreed to continue publication of the weekly Dairy Product Prices report through March 30, 2012.

- NASS will conduct an Organic Production Survey that will include all known farm operators who produce organically certified crops and/or livestock. Some operational level data will be collected to use in classifying each operation for summary purposes. The majority of the questions will involve production data (acres planted, acres harvested, quantity harvested, quantity sold, value of sale, etc.), and marketing practices. NASS will publish summaries in August 2012 at both the State level and for each major organic commodity when possible. Some level data may need to be published on regional or national level due to confidentiality concerns.

- Beginning in 2012, NASS will no longer publish the Grain Stocks Historical Track Records. All information contained in this report is easily accessible through the QuickStats application on the NASS website and will continue to be available on QuickStats making this particular report redundant. NASS will continue to publish the Crop Production Historical Track Records which, in addition to data available in QuickStats, contains comparisons between forecasts and final estimates for acreage, yield, and production.

- For the May winter wheat forecast, only half of the objective yield samples were collected in Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma. This was a change in procedure for Texas and Oklahoma, but not for Kansas. For the June forecast, all objective yield samples were collected in Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma while only half of the samples were collected in the remaining States – Colorado, Illinois, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, and Washington. The full sample was collected in July for all States. These changes will remain in effect for the coming years.

Research and Development

- NASS is examining model-based estimation techniques to improve the statistical reliability of published forecasts/estimates and error measures. Time series techniques are being utilized to model estimates of hogs and pigs as well as labor. Small area estimation techniques are being examined to model county-level estimates of cash rental rates for pastureland, irrigated cropland, and non-irrigated cropland; harvested corn and soybean acreage; and corn and soybean yield. With respect to state-level corn and soybean yields, a Bayesian hierarchical modeling is being researched that incorporates multiple data sources, both current and historical, in addition to including administrative/auxiliary information. NASS has obtained consultants from outside of the agency to assist in developing the methodology for all of these endeavors.

- In May 2011, NASS began a two-year cooperative research agreement with the University of Florida to investigate improvements to the nonresponse and coverage adjustments for the census of agriculture. Improvements to the methodology and calculation procedures for mean squared errors are also included in this research. NASS is examining whether to use a unified framework to adjust census-based estimates for non-response and undercoverage. A capture-recapture methodology is being examined. The outcome of this research will help ensure the tabulations from the census of agriculture are unbiased and not contributing to difference in the number of farms indications obtained from the June Area Survey. Prior to establishing this agreement, NASS had completed a two-year cooperative research agreement with the National Institute of Statistical Sciences (NISS) that closely examined the number of farms indications from the June Area Survey. This research agreement resulted in the implementation of changes to the June Area Survey procedures that resulted in improved area frame farm numbers estimates.

- NASS completed its second 48 state Cropland Data Layer (CDL) in 2011 for the 2010 crop year. The 2010 CDL was produced at a higher resolution of 30 meter pixels verses the 56 meter pixels for the 2009 CDL. The higher resolution improves the accuracies of the classifications and the precision of the acreage estimates that were generated for 41 states and 18 different crops.

- NASS released a new web dissemination portal called CropScape in January 2011. This state-of-the-art portal features a web-service based interactive map visualization, dissemination, and querying system. This portal is readily available to anyone with an internet connection. The completion of the second conterminous National Cropland Data Layer and CropScape fills a data gap critical for research and decision support for conservation, climate change, and water resources. All historical CDL products are served via CropScape.

- The remote sensing yield estimation program expanded in several dimensions in 2011. The corn and soybean regions models proved to be very accurate at the state and region level. New states added for 2011 were South Dakota for corn and soybeans and Wisconsin for corn. Corn yield estimates were generated weekly for the 2011 crop, which show that the remote sensing models were a good early predictor of corn yields.

- NASS continued work on a NASA competitive grant titled “A National Crop Progress Monitoring System Based on NASA Earth Science Results.” NASS working cooperatively with George Mason University developed crop progress field procedures for managing weekly data collection for 10 selected fields in Iowa. Data collection procedures included monitoring crop progress stages via digital GPS cameras, soil moisture meters, and observations regarding crop health. The collected data will be analyzed with satellite imagery to develop a satellite based crop progress monitoring system for the future.

- NASS is researching methods to identify operations for which it is most unlikely to obtain responses in future surveys. Methods to use this information to manage data collection are being evaluated with the goal of collecting more responses, more efficiently. Future research will also evaluate the possible methods of using this information in statistical estimation.

- As part of the operations of the newly opened National Operations Center, quality metrics are being developed to allow monitoring of process productivity and quality. These metrics will ultimately be part of a comprehensive quality control and tracking system for multiple systems at the NOC.

Cyber and Physical Security

- In compliance with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002, NASS successfully re-accredited two of its major systems, and have started work to renew Certification and Accreditation (C&A) on its three remaining systems.

- NASS successfully tested the USDA Remote Access system. This medium will replace the current NASS remote access system. Unlike the current NASS system which requires use of RSA tokens for two-factor authentication, the new portal requires use of the USDA LincPass (smartcard) for two-factor authentication. The new system also ensures remote machines are up-to-date with all required security software before allowing access to the NASS network. NASS is scheduled to implement the system to all its remote users and machines in 2012.

- Implemented a revised Change Management (CM) process ensuring all changes made to IT systems have minimal impact to the NASS operational environment. This process included re-chartering a Configuration Control Board (CCB) responsible for managing the process as well as reviewing and approving all changes before they are made.

- Supported the installation of physical security systems at the NASS National Operations Center ensuring physical access to the facility is controlled and monitored at all times. The system also provides local management the ability to control access to its spaces at any given time.

- Successfully participated at both 2011 Eagle Horizon (Continuity of Operation, COOP), and 2011 National Level Exercise (Disaster Preparedness). Both were Federal requirements and conducted at the national level.

- NASS continues to elevate its users' awareness on the importance of sound security practices and procedures by means of mandatory information security awareness and privacy training. Once again, NASS garnered a 100 percent completion rate in 2011. In addition, system and network administrators with significant security responsibilities were required to complete security-focused courses specific to their field of expertise. NASS also earned a 100 percent completion on this key Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) requirement.

Data Users Meeting

- The 2011 Data Users Meeting was held in Chicago, Illinois on October 17, 2011. The meeting provided an open forum for data users to ask questions about the entire USDA statistics program. From the customer service perspective, the Data Users Meeting provided an excellent opportunity to learn about the data users' concerns and desires for improvements or changes to the statistics and economics programs. The meeting was hosted by NASS in cooperation with the World Agricultural Outlook Board, Economic Research Service, Agriculture Marketing Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, and the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Agriculture and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) Conference in Pittsburgh, PA. On July 25, 2011 a NASS representative gave a talk on NASS micro level data access at a session entitled "The Microdata Revolution". Participants were briefed on procedures for access to micro level data access at NASS. NASS also participated in a post conference session focused on addressing data needs for local foods and rural development issues. The session was sponsored by the AAEA Economics and Statistics Information Retrieval Committee (ESIRC). The committee's purpose is to regularly inform and educate AAEA members about data availability, uses, and needs, as well as to engage in activities related to improving U.S. data systems. The local foods and farm recreational services issues have begun to bring together AAEA members who have roots in areas that have traditionally operated independently—farm production/structure/finance, marketing, and rural development. The

group was updated on NASS data collection related to local foods and local rural development issues, and NASS data access procedures. The session was part of the bigger AAEA conference which attracted over 1,000 people.

Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics

- The Charter for the Advisory Committee on Agricultural Statistics was renewed for another 2 years on May 17, 2010. The Committee is composed of 20 members with professional knowledge regarding the data needs of the food, fiber and rural sector. It provides a direct link with the major agricultural organizations and farm groups which could not be as effectively or efficiently obtained from any other source. The Committee is the primary forum for reconciling the divergent data needs between data user and provider groups. It is also instrumental in helping NASS provide the maximum value from their statistics, within available funding, and to continually improve its products and services.

- The Committee's next meeting in Washington, DC is scheduled for March 29 – 30, 2012. The meeting focus will be to advise NASS on the upcoming 2012 Census of Agriculture; and offer suggestions on the NASS on-going survey program. Also, the Members will attend the Prospective Plantings Lock-up briefing.

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Current Activities:

The Census of Agriculture is conducted every 5 years and provides comprehensive data series at the national, State, and county level. A snapshot of the agriculture economy including the number of farms, farm typology, characteristics of farm operators, land use, production expenses, value of land and buildings, farm size, market value of agricultural production, acreage of hundreds of crops, inventory of livestock and poultry, and extensive farming practices including irrigation, marketing and utilization of government sponsored programs. 2011 was a critical planning year for 2012 Census of Agriculture.

The following examples represent accomplishments during 2011.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

2007 Census of Agriculture:

- During 2011, nine additional fact sheets were issued to coincide with significant events or tradeshows. A total of thirty two fact sheets are now available. These fact sheets were used to keep the Census of Agriculture in the news and to provide materials for field offices in their own public relations activities. They can be found at: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Fact_Sheets/index.asp

- A history of the 2007 Census of Agriculture was released in 2011. This volume of the Census Series details the entire process for the 2007 Census of Agriculture from form development to publication.

- During 2011, NASS released the 2008 Census of Agriculture of American Samoa. This publication provides data on agriculture both for sale and for home consumption. The data for home consumptions reflect the importance of this sector of agriculture, where a majority of households provide a portion of their food needs through agricultural activities that may fall outside the commercial marketplace. This Census of Agriculture is the only source of consistent, comparable data at the island level.

2012 Census of Agriculture

- During 2011, the Census Content Test was conducted. A sample of approximately 30,000 records received the modified Census of Agriculture report form. This content test serves as a dry-run for all the processing steps and

systems utilized during the production phase. Tremendous efforts were put into enhancing the online version of the questionnaire in hopes of soliciting more web responses thus reducing data collection costs.

- NASS completed the forms design and development process in 2011 for the preparations of mail packets in 2012. This included seven regional forms and the Puerto Rico questionnaire. Additional mail materials were developed which included all correspondence letters and instructions to assist respondents in completing their questionnaire.

- During 2011, NASS developed and mailed out a customized report form for the American Indian population in the Southwest. This form is designed to gather more responses from mail mode as compared to field interviews. By designing this customized form for mail, NASS aims to reduce field data collection costs for this historically under-represented population.

- NASS prepared for its marketing campaign which will encourage producers to be represented in the 2012 Census of Agriculture. As part of the overall strategy, NASS is focused on improving coverage of minority operations which includes partnering with Community Based Organizations.

- Critical programming was enhanced and tested. Editing, analysis and imputation programs are being designed to automate and streamline the correction of omitted and erroneous data. The goal is to minimize analyst intervention.

- The initial online reporting instrument was updated to reflect the modified census of agriculture questionnaire. This will allow for thorough functionality and user testing with the goal to improve data quality and reduce burden for online respondents.

- During 2011, NASS finished compiling the maps generated from satellite imagery used to supplement area frame samples. These additional samples will be used by enumerators in all states to collect data designed to improve estimation of under-coverage, particularly for key demographic groups.

- Counting over 2.2 million farms takes a fully implemented and routinely performed list building effort. Beginning in reference year 2009, NASS began developing its Census Mail List. In January 2011, 290,000 operations received a four page questionnaire to screen for agricultural activity. Plans were finalized for the final Ag pre-screener to be mailed out at the end of December, 2011. Approximately 1,250,000 additional operations will be included in the final Ag pre-screener which will be mandatory.

eGovernment

- NASS makes its data available to the public through graphical user interface based query tools that can be downloaded as well as an on-line database called Quick Stats that can be queried directly. The on-line query tool, also called Quick Stats, can be found at the NASS homepage: www.nass.usda.gov . This tool used for accessing Census of Agriculture as well as published NASS survey data can also be found at Data.gov: www.data.gov/tools/961. NASS has shared the methodology and approach for the database structures, metadata composition, and application tools with other government agencies, as well as presented white papers on the topic at technical conferences at home and abroad.

- NASS depends heavily on the electronic media as a vehicle for soliciting input from internal and external resources. In particular, proper census planning requires eliciting responses by advertising an Internet portal to provide the public a forum for data user feedback. These public forums were utilized for the Farm Energy and Chemical Usage Programs.

- NASS continues to use email subscription lists and social media tools such as Twitter, the USDA Blog and USDA YouTube channel to notify the public about all data products available from NASS.

WORK PERFORMED FOR OTHERS

Current Activities:

NASS conducts surveys for and lends technical expertise to other Federal agencies, State governments, and private organizations on a reimbursable basis. NASS provides support and assistance in the areas of questionnaire and sample design, data collection and editing, analysis of survey results, and training. NASS also provides technical consultation, support, and assistance to foreign countries desiring to enhance their statistical programs.

NASS performs services and statistical consultation for other Federal and State agencies and private commodity organizations on a reimbursable basis. Statistics generated meet special needs not covered by the National agricultural statistics program. In addition, statistical consultation by NASS staff members contributes to improvements in the overall quality and consistency of statistical information produced for the needs of other organizations. The following examples represent accomplishments during 2011.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Pesticide and Microbiological Data Program.

The AMS Pesticide Data Program (PDP) is the basis for a broad statistical analysis of pesticide contamination of food commodities intended for human consumption. Each quarter, samples of three (seasonally varying) groups of fresh commodities and one group of processed commodities are collected from a random sample of distribution centers located in key states. These samples are sent to regional laboratories and tested for the presence and level of the most commonly used agricultural pesticides posing a potential risk for human health. The selection of distribution centers from which commodity samples are taken follows the basic systematic probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) sampling technique. The AMS Microbiological Data Program (MDP) is a counterpart to the PDP, focusing on the potential human health risks from contamination of fresh produce by common microbiological agents. Currently, the sampling of distribution centers for selected groups of fresh commodities follows the PPS sampling methodology used for the PDP survey. The Research and Development Division continues to conduct the sample selection procedures for the AMS, in addition to investigating possible improvements to the current sampling methodology.

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Annual Survey of Livestock Mandatory Reporting Transactions.

Under a cooperative agreement with AMS, the Research and Development Division provided statistical services in the design of a sampling plan and estimation strategy for an annual survey of Livestock Mandatory Reporting Transactions. The survey is designed to measure the accuracy of AMS' transaction data set when compared to the standard of actual company records. The particular measures defined and estimated is the overall rate of disagreement by class within cattle, hogs, and lambs, in addition to the average price difference for two major types of transactions.

Agricultural Resources Management Survey (ARMS).

The ARMS is conducted annually in cooperation with the USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS). The survey provides data that enables NASS to publish chemical use statistics and provides ERS the ability to estimate farm income, conduct economic analysis relating to field crop chemical usage, estimate costs associated with producing agricultural commodities, and compile farm business and household financial data. Data collected support both agencies' estimation programs for farm production expenditures. ARMS Phase I target commodities for the 2011crop year were broilers, barley, sorghum for grain, soybeans, and winter wheat, durum wheat, and other spring wheat. Phase II target commodities for the 2011crop year were barley, sorghum for grain for the production practices, cost, and return data. Production Practices Report collected for soybeans, winter wheat, durum wheat, and other spring wheat. The 2010 ARMS Phase III, conducted in the winter of 2011, focused on farm financial data for all types and sizes of farms, in addition to the corn and dairy enterprise production costs as well as organic corn enterprises. Several improvements have been or will be made to the ARMS Phase III. Just recently, the number of groups used in the delete-a-group jackknife methodology was increased from 15 to 30, which will result in a better estimate of the variances associated with the estimates. In the near future, a new multivariate imputation scheme

will replace the current mean imputation methodology that post-stratifies respondents by region, farm type, and total value of production. This new methodology will result in much improved survey estimates and variances.

National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS).

In 2011, NASS conducted three surveys under contract for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) to study health management practices. The survey products were as follows: NAHMS Sheep Study; NAHMS Small Producers Survey; NAHMS Cattle on Feed Survey. Additionally, NASS collected cattle death loss statistics in support of APHIS programs. NASS provided statistical services including questionnaire development, data collection, data keying, and summarization.

United Soybean Board.

NASS has been collaborating with the United Soybean Board (USB) for 8 years by supplying the Board with soybean samples from 11 States involved in our annual Soybean Objective Yield Survey. Compositional analysis of the random samples is made to determine such variables as oil and protein content. These analyses help determine the quality of soybeans produced in the U.S. and how they compare with those grown in other countries. Additionally, the data help USB establish priorities for research, marketing, and education efforts. At the end of the crop season, USB provides analyses back to NASS field offices that can be distributed to Soybean Objective Yield respondents.

County Cash Rents Survey.

Through the 2008 Farm Bill, NASS was directed to conduct an annual Cash Rents survey to establish per acre estimates of county cash rental rates for dry and irrigated cropland and pastureland. Three annual surveys have been conducted providing cash rental rate indications for 2008, 2009, and 2010. Data are published at the county and/or district level for cash rental rates for all counties with 20,000 plus acres of any combination of dry cropland, irrigated cropland or permanent pasture. Data collected support the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) administration of payments for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Farm Safety Survey (NIOSH).

In 2011, NASS conducted a nationwide survey, for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), of approximately 25,000 farm operations that focused on the occurrence of known or suspected injury and illness hazards occurring on farms in the United States. This study will provide information on farm safety issues at the regional and national level. The Farm Safety Survey is a continuation of a series of NIOSH studies conducted by NASS and sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control that focus on the occupational health of farm operators and their families. NASS provided statistical services such as sample selection, questionnaire and computer-assisted telephone instrument development, data collection, data keying, and data editing.

Organic Production and Prices.

In 2010, NASS established an agreement with the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to plan, develop, and test an Organic pilot survey designed to capture production, price, and value of organic commodities in support of RMA's insurance program. The pilot *Organic Production and Price Survey* (OPPS) will be conducted in early 2012 for reference year 2011.

Natural Resource Environmental Indicators.

NASS received funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 2011 to continue development and data collection for a Pilot Study focused on the impact of climate change on agricultural natural resource indicators. The study was patterned after the multi-year Conservation Effects Assessment Program (CEAP) surveys that NASS conducted for NRCS over several years. The 2011 CEAP collected information from farmers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed about their farming and conservation practices on cultivated cropland. NASS collaborated with NRCS and Iowa State University in developing the sample utilizing the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) points. Data collection will continue into 2012.

NASS Review of USDA Agency Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Submissions.

NASS is recognized as USDA's statistical agency and works regularly with OMB staff and agencies on Information Collection Requests (ICRs). NASS assists other USDA agencies in the review of their ICRs prior to OMB submission. In most cases, this involves a thorough review of their survey methodology. In 2011, NASS assisted the following agencies with ICR reviews: Forest Service (FS), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Economic Research Service (ERS).

International Technical Assistance Provided.

NASS provided technical assistance and training to improve agricultural statistics programs in thirteen countries. Short-term assignments supported work in Afghanistan, Armenia, Georgia, Haiti, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Serbia, South Africa, and Tanzania. The technical assistance ranged from basic survey concepts and procedures to complete national Census of Agriculture support. In addition, NASS coordinated and/or conducted training programs in the U.S. for 131 visitors representing 20 countries. These assistance and training activities promote better quality data and improved access to data from other countries, which allows U.S. analysts to better understand the world supply and demand situation. Improved analysis supports trade and more efficient marketing of U.S. agricultural products.

OPERATIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS

During 2011, NASS continued to advance and completed some of the six initiatives which will change the "essential operating conditions" that currently exist within the agency. These changes move NASS toward implementing the best practices of a federal statistical agency and fully delivering on the principles a statistical organization should espouse.

Centralize Local Area Network (LAN) Services.

Servers from 48 locations were consolidated and centralized and the management of the desktops in all locations is now centrally managed. Employees can now log into the NASS network from any physical location, which facilitates sharing staff resources across the agency to operate more efficiently.

Technology Enhancements Relevant to Software Applications and Database Development.

Applications are being generalized and optimized to work in a centralized database environment to provide more effective and efficient survey processing. There are over 25 applications that are being generalized using NASS staff and contractor resources. The initiative enables the organization to be more flexible, have more standardized survey procedures, and improve data analysis and quality.

Implementing Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing.

To facilitate quality and efficiency increases in our data collection program, NASS is integrating Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) into the NASS operational program.

NASS has designed an innovative, thin client Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) solution by leveraging wireless broadband technology and a web-based data collection system. To complete a survey questionnaire for the respondent, a field interviewer accesses NASS' data collection website via the Internet using an Apple iPad2 and 3G technology. The interview is conducted on the iPad through a browser window over the Internet with no data ever residing on the iPad. Currently, this revolutionary approach to CAPI is being successfully implemented across NASS' Field Offices and continues to evolve by incorporating more surveys into the web-based system and staying abreast of new technology to continue to improve the process.

Centralizing Telephoning, Frames Maintenance, Forms Processing, and Training at the National Operations Center (NOC).

NASS has opened a National Operations Center (NOC) that provides an infrastructure for increased telephone data collection capacity in a centralized environment, centralizes sampling frame activities and experts, and improves training of telephone and field interviewers through focused and deliberate delivery of a standardized training protocol. Details in this initiative are provided below. The NOC opened on schedule in the fall of 2011 and is presently staffing to meet its production schedule.

In 2009, NASS embarked on a well-designed plan to transform the business process for collecting, processing, analyzing, and disseminating agricultural statistics. One component of this plan involved the establishment of a centralized data collection and processing center. Working through the General Services Administration the agency selected a site in St. Louis, Missouri that reduces operating costs, increases staff efficiency and improves data quality.

In 2011, the Secretary of Agriculture cut the ribbon on the renovations of the Charles F. Prevedel Federal Building. Construction progressed on scheduled but furniture was delayed by six weeks. Final construction and furniture delivery were complete in early September 2011. Staffing of the new operations center began over the summer as 25 current NASS employees relocated from other NASS locations. All sources job announcements were posted and the number of good quality applicants was overwhelming. Interviews began in late September and by the end of 2011, 28 people were on board.

The National Operations Center is designed to complete a large portion of the Agency's telephone data collection. Construction of the Call Center included 154 calling seats, 18 seats for coaches and supervisors, and a 12 station call monitoring room. The Agency's survey interviewer training is done at the NOC and enhanced training for telephone interviewers began immediately. Currently there are 6 supervisors, 18 coaches, and 86 telephone interviewers on board. Current plans call for the hiring of 250-300 additional intermittent interviewers in order to staff calling operations six days a week and over 15 hours per day.

Another component of the NOC is the Frames Maintenance Group. The agency's list sampling frame is developed, maintained, and efficiently sampled by this group. They complete record linkage with newly acquired list sources and add newly discovered farm operator names to increase coverage of the frames. They perform maintenance on a daily basis to keep the frames as up to date as possible.

Forms Processing Group is also in St. Louis and receives the paper based survey and census questionnaires that are completed and mailed by farmers and ranchers. These forms are checked in to make sure that are not contacted by telephone, scanned for image retrieval, and the data entered into a centralized database.

For 2012, we will continue to select and train well qualified telephone interviewers until we reach full data collection capacity. We will transfer all of the frames maintenance activities from the 47 NASS Field Offices and be completely centralized and standardized. We will also expand the forms processing capacity with new mail processing equipment.

For years beyond, our standardization, training, and scale will allow cost efficiencies while improving data quality. To date, the NOC is a success and performance and capacity will only improve.

Video Teleconferencing.

NASS installed video teleconferencing capabilities in its headquarters and field office locations in 2010. During 2011, Video Teleconferencing provided staff an alternative means for communication, collaboration, and decision making in real time between two or more sites. Numerous meetings and training sessions were conducted throughout the fiscal year. It is projected that over time the initial setup costs, hardware, software, staff time, contracting services, etc. will be offset by travel savings. In order to facilitate "distance" meetings, implement technological capabilities and mitigate the expense of transporting staff physically to various meetings NASS installed video conferencing capabilities in its headquarters and field office locations.

Research and Development.

- In May 2011, NASS completed three separate cooperative agreements with the National Institute of Statistical Sciences. NASS is continuing to conduct additional research in these areas as well as implement the completed research. A more detailed description of the focus of each project follows:

  - ✓ *Multivariate Imputation of Agricultural Resource Management Survey Data* -- The objective of this research is to develop a comprehensive, multivariate imputation scheme for a large, diverse data set of semi-continuous data that produces results reflecting the distribution of agricultural data; that supports both economic modeling and direct estimates; and that provides for an estimable impact of imputation on mean squared error.

  - ✓ *Design and Estimation Methodologies for Estimating the Number of Farms from NASS Sampling Frames* -- NASS uses its area frame both as a stand-alone frame to estimate numbers of farms and a wide variety of commodities, and as a measure of incompleteness for its list surveys -- including the quinquennial census of agriculture. The Agency's area frame estimates of the numbers of farms for 2007 were less than those from its dual-frame 2007 Census of Agriculture, raising the question of how many farms not represented on the Agency's list sampling frames were also missing from its area frame. The challenge is to develop statistical procedures to measure the number of farms missing from both frames and to incorporate these measurements into list sample weights. This research focuses on designing the most effective estimation methodologies to address the issue.

  - ✓ *Statistical Multi-source Predictive Models and Error Estimation in Support of Crop Production Forecasts and Estimates* -- NASS produces multiple forecasts of crop production throughout the growing season and then estimates production at end-of-season or after harvest. Official forecasts and estimates are derived from multiple current and historical sources: surveys and administrative/auxiliary information -- including weather and remotely sensed data -- and data for previous years. Historically the information has been synthesized by a panel of experts in NASS' Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) using these multiple sources, with publication of the resulting official forecasts/estimates. This research examines whether improvements can be made in the ASB's analysis process via increased use of data modeling or through other approaches and how these models or other techniques can be validated during the short time period available for analysts to review the inputs before publication of the time sensitive official estimates.

- NASS continues to evaluate Banff software, written by Statistics Canada, to improve the efficiency of survey data editing within NASS. Significance editing is defined as statistical data editing, selective editing, and outlier detection. This methodology reduces the time and effort spent manually reviewing/correcting survey questionnaires without damaging the quality of the resulting data, and focuses the manual effort on the accuracy of the survey respondents that strongly impact the survey results. NASS Research and Development Division is examining how to incorporate significance editing into the operational survey programs.

- In March 2011, NASS began a three-year cooperative research agreement with Iowa State University that consists of two components. First, to modernize the agency's Area Sampling Frame. Advancement in software and statistical methods and the completion of the 48 state Cropland Data Layer (CDL) provide new opportunities for improved quality and efficiency. Second, to develop new statistical methods to estimate crop acreages for non-major crops where the current regression estimation using the June Agricultural data is inadequate. The research will investigate a model to combine three sources of data, the CDL, June Area Survey, and the Farm Service Agency data.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Summary of Budget and Performance
Statement of Department Goals and Objectives

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) was established by Secretary's Memorandum No. 1446, Supplement 1, of April 3, 1961, under Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953 and other authorities. The mission of the Agency is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. NASS is composed of two major programs (1) Agricultural Statistics and (2) Census of Agriculture.

The agency has six strategic goals and eight objectives that contribute to the Secretary's Strategic goals.

USDA Strategic Goals	Agency Strategic Goals	Agency Objectives	Programs that Contribute	Key Outcomes
USDA Strategic Goal 1: Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving	**Agency Goal 1**: Enhance the Competiveness and Sustainability of Rural and Farm Economies	Objective 1.1: Provide Statistical Data to Promote Efficient Domestic Agricultural Production and Marketing Systems Objective 1.2: Provide Statistical Data for Risk Management and Financial Tools to Farmers and Ranchers	Agricultural Estimates Census of Agriculture	Key Outcome 1: Ensure high quality statistics for stakeholders
	Agency Goal 2: Conduct the Census of Agriculture to Help Create Opportunities for Growth, Through Sound Agricultural Decision Making	Objective 2.1: Provide Statistically Sound Information for Expanding Economic Opportunities by Conducting the Census of Agriculture To Help Create Opportunities for Growth		Key Outcome 2: Ensure data are relevant and useful to stakeholders
USDA Strategic Goal 2: Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources	**Agency Goal 3**: Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment	Objective 3.1: Provide Statistical Data in support of Watershed Health to Ensure Clean and Abundant Water Objective 3.2: Provide Statistical Data to Support Management of Productive Working Cropland.	Agricultural Estimates Census of Agriculture	Key Outcome 3: Ensure timely release of data

USDA Strategic Goals	Agency Strategic Goals	Agency Objectives	Programs that Contribute	Key Outcomes
USDA Strategic Goal 3: Help America promote agricultural production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food security	**Agency Goal 4**: Support International Economic Development and Trade Capacity Building Through Technical Assistance **Agency Goal 5:** Support the Growth of Sustainable Agricultural Production	Objective 4.1: Provide Technical Assistance to Improve Agricultural Statistics in Developing and Transitioning Countries Objective 5.1: Provide a rotational organic agriculture data series	Agricultural Estimates Census of Agriculture	Key Outcome 1: Ensure high quality statistics for stakeholders Key Outcome 2: Ensure data are relevant and useful to stakeholders Key Outcome 3: Ensure timely release of data
USDA Strategic Goal 4: Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious and balanced meals	**Agency Goal 6**: Support a safe U.S. Food Supply and Agricultural Production	Objective 6.1: Provide Chemical Usage Statistics to Enable Informed Decision Making Using Sound Science in Risk Analysis	Agricultural Estimates	

USDA Performance Measure: Increased prosperity of rural communities based on: 1) Annual number of jobs created or saved through strategic investments in business, entrepreneurship, cooperatives, and industry; 2) Annual number of subscribers receiving new or improved broadband telecommunication and services; 3) Millions of kilowatt hours (mkWh) generated in rural America from alternative energy sources, 4) Annual revenue generated from environmental markets including agricultural and forestry-based carbon offsets, wetland banking, conservation banking, and water quality credit trading; 5) annual Economic contribution of recreation on National Forests and Grasslands; 6) Cumulative number of farmers markets established, increasing consumer access to local food.

Key Outcome 1: Ensure high quality statistics for stakeholders.

NASS Long-term Performance Measure: Improve the American Customer Satisfaction Index score for providing timely, accurate, and useful statistical products and service.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outcomes:

- Agricultural Estimates - NASS maintained its ACSI score with one point reduction from 2004 to 2008. The overall NASS score for customer satisfaction was 82%. NASS continually strives to produce quality data by using sound analytical techniques, by using proven methods, and by carefully reviewing the content of all information products. The next ACSI will be conducted in 2013 with the plan of putting it on a five year cycle with the Census.

- Census of Agriculture – With enhanced collaborative efforts from Community Based Organizations NASS improved the coverage of small and disadvantaged operations counted in the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2013 Proposed Resource Level:

- Agricultural Estimates – Procedures have been developed to publish county level livestock estimates and National livestock prices utilizing existing data. This has allowed for these programs to show a budget reduction, while minimizing the impact on data users.

- Census of Agriculture – Preparations to continue a high quality 2012 Census of Agriculture continue. In 2012, NASS will finalize list building efforts by mailing out nearly 1.1 million screening forms in an effort to expand coverage of all farms. This effort minimizes the response burden on individuals not qualifying by the definition of a farm and improves the overall cost and quality of the 2012 Census of Agriculture by eliminating non-farms from the mail list.

Key Outcome 2: Ensure data are relevant and useful to stakeholders.

NASS Long-term Performance Measure: The relevance of the report content of NASS products and services as measured by the ACSI score.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outcome:

- Agricultural Estimates/Census of Agriculture - NASS has kept abreast of information needs through a variety of means, including data user meetings, advisory committees, attendance at industry meetings, and sponsorship of outreach activities. New data series on organic agriculture and energy have recently been implemented based on industry needs. Improvements to reports and data bases like additional data breakouts, improved coverage, and improved timeliness have been made. Special reports or additional categories within existing reports are added to best summarize the constantly changing character of agriculture. With better editing and analysis tools NASS expanded the 2007 census products to include a new Watersheds Report.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2013 Proposed Resource Level:

- Agricultural Estimates - Existing data series will continue on livestock county estimates and prices by utilizing already available data sources in lieu of survey data.

- Census of Agriculture - The 2013 funding supports final data collection and processing for the Census of Agriculture. This includes collecting data to evaluate coverage levels of the 2012 Census of Agriculture and printing mail packages in preparation for the mail out in December 2012.

Key Outcome 3: Ensure timely release of data.

NASS Long-term Performance Measure: Percent of time official reports are released on the date and time pre-specified to data users.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outcome:

- Agricultural Estimates/Census of Agriculture - NASS has met its goal regarding release dates in seven of the past ten years.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2012 Proposed Resource Level:

- Agricultural Estimates/Census of Agriculture - NASS will continue to place a high priority on meeting pre-established release dates.

NASS Efficiency Measure: The increase in the data collection costs per sample unit divided by the annual rate of inflation (measured by the Employment Cost Index) is less than one.

NASS measures timeliness, accuracy, and usefulness. NASS strives to maintain high quality statistics by continually looking to improve, while working to keep costs down when compared to inflation. NASS works to ensure internal policies and procedures continue to support on-time release of over 500 agricultural statistical national reports each year. NASS continually monitors and develops contingency plans to ensure each of the over 500 reports are prepared and released as scheduled. This ensures everyone has equal access to vital sector information. In the rare instance of an unavoidable technical difficulty that results in the delay of a report, NASS is transparent by notifying all stakeholders of the delay and the rescheduled release date and time. NASS constantly looks for opportunities to maximize available data in producing relevant data series. NASS uses the American Customer Satisfaction Index as well as external peer review evaluations to support and measure its goals.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Strategic Goal Funding Matrix

(Dollars in Thousands)

Program / Program Items	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Estimate	Change	2013 Estimate
Department Strategic Goal 1 - Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving					
Agricultural Estimates	$114,858	$115,699	$110,827	0	$110,827
Staff Years	761	738	863	0	863
Census of Agriculture	$35,116	$44,864	$41,844	$20,656	$62,500
Staff Years	230	230	230	261	491
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	$149,974	$160,563	$152,671	$20,656	$173,327
Total Staff Years, Strategic Goal	991	968	1,093	261	1,354
USDA Strategic Goal 2 - Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources					
Agricultural Estimates	$800	$800	$800	0	$800
Staff Years	-	-	-	-	-
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	$800	$800	$800	0	$800
Total Staff Years, Strategic Goal	-	-	-	-	-
USDA Strategic Goal 4 - Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious and balanced meals					
Agricultural Estimates	$8,200	$6,705	$5,350	0	$5,350
Staff Years	13	11	11	-	11
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	$8,200	$6,705	$5,350	0	$5,350
Total Staff Years, Strategic Goal	13	11	11	-	11
Total Costs, All Strategic Goals	$158,974	$168,068	$158,821	$20,656	$179,477
Total FTEs, All Strategic Goals	1,004	979	1,104	261	1,365

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Summary of Budget and Performance

Key Performance Outcomes and Measures

Key outcomes and performance measures under the Department's strategic goals are outlined below:

USDA Strategic Goal 1: Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving.

Key Outcomes:

1. Ensure high quality statistics and data are relevant and useful to stakeholders
2. Ensure timely release of data.
3. Ensure optimal Census coverage.
4. Ensure optimal percent Census response rate.

NASS performance measures are based on its mission to provide timely, accurate, and useful agricultural statistics. Each objective of the USDA Strategic Plan to which NASS contributes has a measure for each of the Investment Criteria: Usefulness (relevance), accuracy (quality), and timeliness (performance). These performance measures can be summarized into 4 generic measures:

Key Performance Measures:

Measure 1: Usefulness.
These performance measures vary by goal, but get to the root of why NASS is considered a leading provider of agricultural statistics. Precision of data are necessary for stakeholders to be able to rely on the data to make day-to-day management decisions and eliminate unnecessary chaos in the market.

Measure 2: Timeliness: Percent of time official reports are released on the date and time pre-specified to data users. Agricultural statistics are at the core of many decisions made in the agriculture sector. If these data are not timely, the disruption and chaos generated would be immeasurable. This performance measure is the same for all of the goals and will be calculated across all NASS reports.

Measure 3: Census: Coverage.
NASS strives to build a census mail list that covers a maximum number of farms and ranches nationwide. NASS devoted tremendous resources to the 2007 census to maximize coverage rates ands strives to maintain or improve upon this for the 2012 census.

Measure 4: Census Response Rate.
NASS mails census questionnaires to over 3 million potential farms and ranches. NASS strives to maximize the response rates using multiple approaches to data collection. Even though response rates are historically trending downward, NASS strives to maintain its completion rate from the 2007 census.

Key Performance Targets:

Performance Measure	2007 Actual	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Target	2013 Target
a. Usefulness - The accuracy, accessibility, relevance, coherence, comparability, and usefulness of NASS official reports and products and services as measured by ACSI [1]	Not Measured	82%	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	84%
b. Timeliness - Percent of time official reports are released on the date and time pre-specified to data users.	100%	99.6%	99.8%	99.8%	99.6%	98%	98%
c. Census Coverage – Percent of United States farms or ranches covered by the census mail list	Not Measured	83.8%	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	83.80%
d. Census Response Rates – Percent of census mail list respondents with a usable report.[2]	Not Measured	85.2%	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	85.2%

1-The American Customer Satisfaction Index is only measured every 3 years. However, the usefulness of NASS reports is monitored annually and efforts are continually made to ensure USDA is meeting the growing data neeeds of its constituents.

2- Response rates on surveys have historically been trending downward. NASS strives to maintain or improve the response rate from the previous Census of Agriculture.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
Full Cost by Department Strategic Goal
(Dollars in thousands)

Department Strategic Goal: Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating, and economically thriving.

Program / Program Items	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Estimate	2013 Estimate
Agricultural Estimates				
Salary expenses	$70,715	$77,147	$80,000	$74,706
Data Ccollection (NASDA)	30,337	26,077	28,000	33,500
Contracts	1,508	741	401	119
Travel/ Transportation	1,952	788	500	500
Printing	237	218	75	75
Hardware/ Software	4,231	4,026	466	466
Postage/ Shipping/ contingencies	1,332	1,856	500	500
Indirect costs	4,546	4,846	885	961
Total Costs	114,858	115,699	110,827	110,827
FTEs	761	738	863	863
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Agricultural Estimates Goal 1	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	84%
Timeliness - Agricultural Estimates Goal 1	99.8%	99.6%	98%	98%
Census of Agriculture				
Salary expenses	20,901	19,864	21,752	33,199
Contracts	3,226	3,958	7,000	10,899
Travel/ Transportation	1,391	6,267	1,061	2,056
Printing	349	30	700	1,000
Hardware/ Software	5,315	9,617	3,280	3,470
Postage/ Shipping/ contingencies	2	362	4,151	6,718
Indirect costs	3,932	4,766	3,900	5,158
Total Costs	35,116	44,864	41,844	62,500
FTEs	230	230	230	491
Performance Measure:				
Coverage - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	83.8%
Response Rates/2 - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	85.2%
Total Costs, Strategic Goal 1	149,974	160,563	152,671	173,327
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal 1	991	968	1,093	1,354

/1-The American Customer Satisfaction Index is only measured every 3 years. However, the usefulness of NASS reports is monitored annually and efforts are continually made to ensure USDA is meeting the growing data neeeds of its constituents.

/2- Response rates on surveys have historically been trending downward. NASS will strive to maintain or improve its' response rate from the previous Census of Agriculture.

Department Strategic Goal: Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

Program / Program Items	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Estimate	2013 Estimate
Agricultural Estimates				
Contracts	$800	$800	$800	$800
Total Costs	800	800	800	800
FTEs	-	-	-	-
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Agricultural Estimates Goal 2	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	84%
Timeliness - Agricultural Estimates Goal 2	100%	100%	98%	98%
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	800	800	800	800
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal	0	0	0	0

Department Strategic Goal: Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious, and balanced meals.

Program / Program Items	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Estimate	2013 Estimate
Agricultural Estimates				
Salary expenses	$1,340	$1,012	$1,012	$1,012
Contracts	4,442	4,040	2,808	2,808
Travel/ Transportation	955	708	662	662
Printing	98	37	68	68
Hardware/ Software	581	401	300	300
Indirect costs	784	507	500	500
Total Costs	8,200	6,705	5,350	5,350
FTEs	13	11	11	11
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Agricultural Estimates Goal 4	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	84%
Timeliness - Agricultural Estimates Goal 4	100%	100%	98%	98%
Total Costs, Strategic Goal 4	8,200	6,705	5,350	5,350
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal 4	13	11	11	11
Agricultural Estimates				
Total Costs, All Strategic Goals	123,858	123,204	116,977	116,977
Total FTEs, All Strategic Goals	774	749	874	874
Census of Agriculture				
Total Costs, All Strategic Goals	35,116	44,864	41,844	62,500
Total FTEs, All Strategic Goals	230	230	230	491
Total Costs, All Strategic Goals	158,974	168,068	158,821	179,477
Total FTEs, All Strategic Goals	1,004	979	1,104	1,365

/1-The American Customer Satisfaction Index is only measured every 3 years. However, the usefulness of NASS reports is monitored annually and efforts are continually made to ensure USDA is meeting the growing data neeeds of its constituents.