2014 Explanatory Notes

National Agricultural Statistics Service

Contents

NATIONAL AGRIULTURAL 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 (COA) 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. The necessity of protecting respondent confidentiality and ensuring the impartiality of official agricultural statistics and universal accessibility at predetermined and publicized dates and times are addressed by having the federal government produce these statistics. 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 preannounced scheduled times to the press and public through the Agricultural Statistics Board. The statistical data provided by NASS enhances the competitiveness and sustainability of rural farm economies by leveling the playing field. All parties have equal access to official statistics. Annually, NASS publishes approximately 400 agricultural statistical national reports and thousands of additional agricultural statistical State reports, covering more than 120 crops and 45 livestock items. These basic and objective data are necessary to maintain an orderly association between the consumption, supply, marketing, and input sectors of agriculture.

- **Census of Agriculture –** The COA 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. The COA data collection is conducted in close cooperation with the Nation's agricultural user groups and farmer organizations. The COA ensures that the list frame used for sampling records for surveys is current and is also utilized for the Agricultural Estimates program as well as the reimbursable program. Results from the 2012 Census of Agriculture are scheduled to be finalized in early 2014.

- **Work Performed for Others** – NASS lends technical expertise and conducts surveys for other Federal agencies, State governments, and private organizations on a reimbursable basis. Through the Reimbursable program, 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. The Census of Agriculture is essential to the Reimbursable Program and provides a current list frame to draw sampling records from which to do client work.

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 the National State Departments of Agriculture or universities. As of September 30, 2012, NASS had 1,052 permanent full-time employees, including 423 full-time employees in Washington, D.C., 629 in field offices including 4 in Puerto Rico.

OIG Report: NASS currently has no open audits with the Office of Inspector General (OIG).
GAO Report: #GAO-11-37 USDA's Agricultural Chemical Use Program Management. NASS submitted a report to GAO in August, 2012 providing documentation on progress for all four recommendations and requesting close out for each. NASS is currently awaiting a response from GAO on the requested close out.

Available Funds and Staff Years (SY)
(Dollars in thousands with rounding to three decimals)

Item	2011 Actual		2012 Actual		2013 Estimate		2014 Estimate	
	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY
Discretionary Appropriations - Salaries & Expenses	$156,761	979	$158,616	946	$159,587	1,104	$159,601	1,084
Rescission	-314	-	-	-	-	-		
Adjusted Appropriation	156,447	979	158,616	946	159,587	1,104	159,601	1,084
Balance Available, Start of Year	8,043	-	205	-	370	-	-	-
Other Adjustments (Net)	3,950	-	11,006	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	168,440	979	169,828	946	159,956	1,104	159,601	1,084
Lapsing Balances	-167	-	-74	-	-	-	-	-
Balance Available, End of Year	-205	-	-370	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Obligations, NASS	168,068	979	169,384	946	159,956	1,104	159,601	1,084
Obligations under other USDA appropriations:								
Ag. Marketing Service - Pesticide work & data on milk prices, export certification, & base month series	375	2	227	2	230	2	230	2
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Animal health monitoring system	825	3	525	2	525	2	525	2
Economic Research Service - Agricultural resource management & small farms data	8,880	39	8,220	32	6,757	40	8,000	40
Foreign Agricultural Service	1,133	-	1,241	5	1,210	5	1,110	5
Farm Service Agency - County Cash Rental Rates & Commodity Prices	6,900	34	6,900	34	6,900	34	6,500	34
Forest Service - Grazing fees & woodland owners	105	-	85	-	65	-	65	-
Natural Resource Conservation Service & Farm Service Agency - Conservation effects assessment	105	-	2,805	10	-	-	-	-
Risk Management Agency - County estimates	825	4	825	3	825	5	825	5
World Agricultural Outlook Board - Lock-up & printing support & cotton objective yield	15	-	15	-	15	-	15	-
Miscellaneous USDA Reimbursements	-	-		-	3	-	-	-
Total, Other USDA	19,163	82	20,843	88	16,531	88	17,271	88
Total, Agriculture Appropriations	187,231	1,061	190,227	1,034	176,487	1,192	176,872	1,172
Other Federal Funds:								
Dept. of Interior, BLM; Survey Fees	64	-	64	-	64	-	64	-
National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health	698	3	843	4	700	4	700	4
Dept. of Labor - Agriculture Labor	1,130	5	1,200	1	1,200	1	900	1
National Science Foundation - data collection	360	2	80	1	80	1	80	1
National Aeronautics & Space Administration	34	-	34	-	34	-	34	-
Other countries: Canada, Netherlands	35	-	-	-	-	-	0	-
United Soybean Council	-	-	40	-	40	-	40	-
Total, Other Federal	2,321	10	2,261	6	2,118	6	1,818	6
Non-Federal Funds								
State Agencies - Survey work	3,277	14	3,432	12	3,300	12	2,860	12
Miscellaneous Reimbursements - Agricultural reports, data, & mailings	173	-	51	-	51	-	51	-
Total, Non-Federal	3,450	14	3,483	12	3,351	12	2,911	12
Total, NASS	193,001	1,085	195,971	1,052	181,956	1,210	181,601	1,190

Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Year Summary

Item	2011 Actual			2012 Actual			2013 Estimate1/			2014 Estimate		
	Wash. D.C.	Field	Total	Wash. D.C.	Field	Total	Wash. D.C.	Field	Total	Wash. D.C.	Field	Total
SES.....	9	1	10	9	1	10	9	1	10	9	1	10
SL.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-15.....	24	18	42	24	18	42	24	18	42	24	18	42
GS-14.....	56	45	101	58	58	116	58	58	116	58	58	116
GS-13.....	215	58	273	224	75	299	224	75	299	224	75	299
GS-12.....	40	182	222	44	177	221	50	167	217	44	167	211
GS-11.....	31	87	118	50	95	145	50	95	145	47	95	142
GS-10.....	6	-	6	6	-	6	6	-	6	6	-	6
GS-9.....	17	45	62	26	55	81	26	54	80	24	54	78
GS-8.....	19	24	43	24	25	49	24	25	49	22	25	47
GS-7.....	17	192	209	17	160	177	17	165	182	15	160	175
GS-6.....	3	39	42	4	39	43	4	39	43	4	39	43
GS-5.....	1	13	14	1	13	14	1	13	14	1	13	14
GS-4.....	2	5	7	3	3	6	3	3	6	3	3	6
Total Perm. Positions.....	441	709	1,150	491	719	1,210	497	713	1,210	482	708	1,190
Unfilled, EOY....	-10	-55	-65	-68	-90	-158	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Perm. Full-Time Employment, EOY.....	431	654	1,085	423	629	1,052	497	713	1,210	482	708	1,190
Staff Year Est.....	431	719	1,150	494	716	1,210	415	795	1,210	482	708	1,190
Intermittent2/…	-	-	-	-	190	190		361	361	-	190	190

1/The SES, SL, and GS grades reflect permanent full time positions, Other Graded Positions reflect Full Time Equivalent Intermittents. The 2012 increase in FTEs reflects the new National Operations Center showing a NASS efficiency in moving from an outgoing cooperative agreement to in-house for the same funding level.

2/NASS began using a large base of intermittent employees at the National Operations Center in 2012.

Motor Vehicle Fleet Data

The 2014 budget estimate for the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) proposes to maintain the current level of motor vehicles.

All passenger motor vehicles operated by NASS are located at various field offices and are assigned based on approved program needs and geographic region. NASS uses its fleet to conduct agricultural statistics programs through its 45 State Statistical Offices that serve all 50 States and Puerto Rico.

The NASS fleet is comprised primarily of sport utility vehicles (SUVs) that allow for passengers and equipment to easily travel to farms, ranches, and fields. Of the 45 State field offices, there are 16 government owned and 29 vehicles leased from General Services Administration (GSA). 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 National 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 16 vehicles and plans to move from owned to lease as owned vehicles are reported excess. Where possible NASS uses short term rental and shared motor pools. The use of common carrier is not feasible. The ability to reach the nation's farms, ranches, and fields is crucial to the NASS mission and for ensuring accurate data are being collected and reported.

Changes to motor vehicle fleet. In 2012, NASS had seven GSA leased vehicles that met the Federal replacement standards and were replaced with GSA leased vehicles.

Replacement of passenger motor vehicles. For 2013 NASS plans to maintain the current level of 45 motor vehicles with three vehicles scheduled for replacement. NASS follows the Federal replacement policy for agency owned vehicles, and maintains vehicles past the minimum Federal replacement criteria of six years or 60,000 miles when appropriate. 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 Annual Operating Costs of Vehicle Fleet

Fiscal Year	Number of Vehicles by Type *								Annual Operating Costs ($ in 000) **
	Sedans and Station Wagons	Light Trucks, SUVs, and Vans		Medium Duty Vehicles	Ambu-lances	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles	Total Number of Vehicles	
		4x2	4x4						
2011	2	21	20	2	-	-	-	45	276
Change	-	-	+1	-1	-	-	-	-	+29
2012	2	21	21	1	-	-	-	45	305
Change	-	-	-1	+1	-	-	-	-	+30
2013	2	21	20	2	-	-	-	45	335
Change	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+34
2014	2	21	20	2	-	-	-	45	369

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

** Excludes acquisiton costs and gains from sale of vehicles as shown in FAST.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Appropriation Language

The estimates include appropriation language for this item as follows:

Salaries and Expenses:

For necessary expenses of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, $159,601,000, of which up to $42,295,000 shall be available until expended for the Census of Agriculture.

Lead-Off Tabular Statement

2013 Estimate	159,587,000
Budget Estimate, 2014	159,601,000
Change in Appropriation	14,000

Summary of Increases and Decreases

(On basis of appropriation)

(Dollars in thousands)

	2011 Actual	2012 Change	2013 Change	2014 Change	2014 Estimate
Discretionary Appropriations:					
Agricultural Estimates	$123,375	-6,398	+$716	-$387	$117,306
Census of Agriculture	33,073	+8,566	+255	+401	42,295
Total, Appropriation or Change	156,447	+2,169	+971	+14	159,601

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Project Statement

Adjusted Appropriations Detail and Staff Years (SY)

(Dollars in thousands with rounding to three decimals)

Program	2011 Actual		2012 Actual		2013 Estimate		Inc. or Dec.		2014 Estimate	
	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY
Discretionary Appropriations:										
Agricultural Estimates.....	$123,375	749	$116,977	716	$117,693	874	-$387	-20	$117,306	854
Census of Agriculture.....	33,073	230	41,639	230	41,894	230	401	-	42,295	230
Total Adjusted Approp.....	156,447	979	158,616	946	159,587	1,104	14	-20	159,601	1,084
Rescissions and										
Transfers (Net).....	+314	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	156,761	979	158,616	946	159,587	1,104	14	-20	159,601	1,084
Rescission.....	-314	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY.....	+8,043	-	+205	-	+370	-	-370	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other (Net).....	+3,950	-	+11,006	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	168,440	979	169,828	946	159,957	1,104	-356	-20	159,601	1,084
Lapsing Balances.....	-167	-	-74	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY.....	-205	-	-370	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	168,068	979	169,384	946	159,957	1,104	-356	-20	159,601	1,084

Project Statement

Obligations Detail and Staff Years (SY)

(Dollars in thousands with rounding to three decimals)

Program	2011 Actual		2012 Actual		2013 Estimate		Inc. or Dec.		2014 Estimate	
	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY
Discretionary Obligations:										
Agricultural Estimates.....	$123,208	749	$116,903	716	$117,693	874	-$387	-20	117,306	854
Census of Agriculture.....	44,860	230	52,481	230	42,264	230	31	-	42,295	230
Total Obligations.....	168,068	979	169,384	946	159,957	1,104	-356	-20	159,601	1,084
Lapsing Balances.....	+167	-	+74	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY.....	+205	-	+370	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	168,440	979	169,828	946	159,957	1,104	-356	-20	159,601	1,084
Rescission.....	+314	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY.....	-8,043	-	-205	-	-370	-	+370	-	-	-
Other Adjustments (Net).....	-3,950	-	-11,006	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	156,761	979	158,616	946	159,587	1,104	14	-20	159,601	1,084

Justification of Increases and Decreases

(1) An increase of $926,000 for pay costs which includes $113,000 for annualization of the fiscal year 2013 pay raise and $813,000 for the anticipated fiscal year 2014 pay raise.

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.

The pay cost increases will be in the following programs: $611,000 from the Agricultural Estimates Program base funding; and $315,000 from the Census of Agriculture base funding.

(2) A net decrease of $387,000 is requested for the Agricultural Estimates Program ($117,693,000 and 874 staff years available in 2013).

Base funding for the Agricultural Estimates program will be used to continue collecting integrated surveys and estimates used for agricultural statistical reports that:

- Directly impact the market,
- Directly contribute to the Federal Principle Economic Indicators of the United States,
- Provide data for which NASS reports are the only publically available sources of information,
- Support USDA program delivery, and
- Have specific legislative requirements for release.

The Agricultural Estimates program is critical because NASS data are essential to both the public and private sectors of the agriculture industry. The important uses of these data continue to grow in the U.S. and the world. Elimination or sharp cutbacks in funding would have immediate and disruptive consequences for U.S. producers, consumers, development entities, market participants in the U.S., and the world agricultural markets according to the USDA Chief Economist. There would be increased potential for volatility in the commodity markets, price discovery mechanisms would be hampered; and policy makers in government, and people involved in making planning, investment, and marketing decisions would have significantly less information for decision makers. Further, the necessity of protecting respondent confidentiality and ensuring the impartiality of official agricultural statistics and universal accessibility at predetermined and publicized dates and times are addressed by having the federal government produce these statistics.

NASS regularly collects and monitors performance information on the timeliness of releases and accuracy of agricultural statistics. The Agricultural Statistics Board tracks the timeliness of the scheduled releases on a daily basis. Releases include root mean square error information to track and provide accuracy of agricultural data released to data users. Internally, the NASS Program Planning Council and the Senior Executive Team meet on a regular basis to review performance information, modify and implement new program changes, and manage allocation of limited program resources. This effort improves performance, responds to feedback from data user and stakeholders needs, and continually pushes the agency to meet program goals. Quarterly reviews are conducted by senior NASS management with our National Association of State Departments of Agriculture partners to monitor performance for its data collection cooperative agreement work.

The NASS reports are the only publically available objective source for these data. Providing market information was one of the USDA key missions when it was created in 1862. Critical market-sensitive data are used by the commodity and agricultural markets to operate efficiently, providing a fair and equitable environment for price discovery in the marketplace. Without a Federal role in responding to the need to have objective data available for the U.S. and world consumer market key market information would be in the hands of a few. Producers and ranchers would be at a disadvantage with those who have resources to pay for information, and potentially expose markets to manipulation. The Federal role is essential to provide objective data without bias to facilitate a more fair market system. Further, the necessity of protecting respondent confidentiality and ensuring the impartiality of official agricultural statistics and

universal accessibility at predetermined and publicized dates and times are addressed by having the federal government produce these statistics.

NASS is the official data collection agency of the USDA. Official statistics are used by the Department to administer and monitor its programs and strategic successes. The statistical data provided by NASS enhances the competitiveness and sustainability of rural farm economies by leveling the playing field. The NASS Annual Performance Report tracks the performance level for timeliness, accuracy and usefulness of NASS data. NASS has a very successful history of releasing data at a predetermined and publicized date and time, ensuring that all parties have equal access to the official statistics. Further, the necessity of protecting respondent confidentiality and ensuring the impartiality of official agricultural statistics and universal accessibility at predetermined and publicized dates and times are addressed by having the Federal Government produce these statistics.

Additionally an independent, external evaluation is periodically completed on the quality and scope of NASS programs. Recommendations of independent outside sources have shown the effectiveness of the Agricultural Statistics Program and have been used to improve data services and products.

Base funding for the Agricultural Estimates Program supports:

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

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.

USDA Strategic Goal 4: Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

Funds will be used for salaries and benefits, travel and transportation, rental payments, communications and utilities, printing and reproduction, goods and services from non-federal and federal sources, research and development, operation and maintenance of equipment, and supplies and materials, and equipment.

A. A decrease of $65,000 to eliminate the Nursery Report.

The Nursery and Christmas Tree Production survey (NCTPS) provides estimates of the numbers of nursery producers, production area, hired workers, sales and inventory by plant category for the 17 largest nursery producing states. This survey has been conducted every three years. NASS proposes to incorporate nursery producers with the Census of Horticulture, as part of the Census of Agriculture follow-on program.

B. A decrease of $322,000 due to National Operations Center efficiencies:

In 2011 NASS consolidated administrative operations in 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 the list sampling 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, scanned for image retrieval, and the data are keyed into a centralized database.

NASS' redesigned its 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, 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.

C. A decrease of 20 staff years from the Information Technology reduction and reinvestment.

NASS recently completed an operational efficiency initiative focused on centralizing and virtualizing its information technology (IT) network. This effort allowed the reduction of 20 staff required to maintain network resources. NASS offered early retirement incentives to reduce IT staffing with a limited amount of selective rehiring for transformational initiatives. These savings are being reinvested in developing enterprise services to improve the timeliness and quality of the products provided to customers.

D. A decrease of $611,000 as an adjustment to the 2013 annualized CR.

The 2014 Agricultural Estimates Program is at a minimum core funding level covering the Federal Principle Economic Indicators.

(3) A net increase of $401,000 for the Census of Agriculture ($41,894,000 available in 2013).

The Census is conducted every 5 years to obtain agricultural statistics for each county, State and the Nation. The Census is the leading source of statistics about the Nation's agricultural production and the only source of consistent, comparable data at the county, State and national levels. The Census is authorized by law under Title 7, U.S. code 2204g and is conducted in close cooperation with the Nation's agricultural user groups and farmer organizations.

Separate State reports display statistics for the entire State and every county or equivalent. The United States Summary provides national data and selected data for each State. Data include number of farms; farm characteristics; livestock, poultry and their products; crops; land use; irrigation; operator characteristics; ownership; income; production expenses; direct marketing; farm labor and migrant workers; agricultural activity on Native American Indian reservations; chemical use; computer use and more. Reports cover the current census, with comparative data for previous census years. An additional report will be provided for Puerto Rico.

Continuation of the Census of Agriculture Program is critical because funding below the base level would result in:

- A data gap for the essential Census of Agriculture.

- Lack of Census of Agriculture data used by public and private decision-makers, including USDA and Congress, to make sound, well-informed, and effective policy, production and marketing decisions. Informed decisions and policies, in turn, promote and contribute to a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy. The Census of Agriculture addresses the need for objective agricultural data for information and decision making. These data are in the interest of the public good, essential to develop agricultural policy information and decision making.

- Lack of Census of Agriculture data that is vital to USDA for the Economic Research Service, Agricultural Research Service, the World Agricultural Outlook Board, Foreign Agricultural Service, Farm Service Agency, Risk Management Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Rural Development.

- Significant deleterious effects on NASS' ability to complete the Census of Agriculture. If the Census of Agriculture is not completed NASS will not have a current list frame for conducting its ongoing surveys in the Agricultural Estimates program, census follow-on surveys, and reimbursable surveys as well. Not having the Census of Agriculture data would negatively affect decisions made by farmers, businesses, and governments.

Base funding for the Census of Agriculture Program is broken down into five general categories listed below followed by census special products and follow-on surveys. Due to the cyclical nature of the Census of Agriculture Program, appropriated funds will shift among these five broader categories over the five years.

Direction: This category includes planning, administration, and support for the Census of Agriculture, follow-on surveys, and special products. Planning encompasses developing timelines, milestones, deliverables, and quality assurance checks. Stakeholder input is solicited to incorporate critical periodic and emerging data needs into the plan.

Content Determination and Design: A NASS research evaluates and tests the questionnaires for the Census of Agriculture, follow-on surveys, and special products. Stakeholder input is solicited to improve the content and design. The Census of Agriculture questionnaire is developed to facilitate NASS capability to survey specific sub-populations without the additional cost of screening for those populations. Survey forms are printed after design development work evaluates the electronic processes that facilitate mailing.

Mail List Development and Mail Out: Because of the consistent activities necessary to develop a robust and proficient census mail list (CML), and the similar list maintained for the Agricultural Estimates, NASS combines the two lists to more efficiently maintain one list that can be utilized for both programs and the NASS reimbursable program. The goal with the CML is to build as complete a list as possible of agricultural places that meet the NASS farm definition. The CML compilation begins with the list used to define sampling populations for NASS surveys conducted for its annual agricultural estimates program. NASS builds and improves the list on an ongoing basis by obtaining information from outside sources. These sources include lists from state and federal government agencies, producer associations, seed growers, pesticide applicators, veterinarians, marketing associations, and a variety of other agriculture related areas. NASS also obtains special commodity lists to address specific list deficiencies. These outside source lists are matched to the NASS list using record linkage programs. Most names on newly acquired lists are already on the NASS list. Records not on the NASS list are treated as potential farms until NASS can confirm their existence as a qualifying farm. Mail out includes assembling, labeling, and postage of the mail packets for the Census of Agriculture and follow-on studies.

Collection and Processing: This category covers all activities associated with system development, programming, and data collection for the Census of Agriculture and census follow-on surveys. The completion of a Census of Agriculture with high coverage of qualifying farm operations is vital as it provides an up-to-date list frame. Activities encompassing processing, editing, and analysis are conducted on the Census of Agriculture returned mail packets. Additionally, outreach now includes Native American Indian, outlying areas, and small or disadvantaged farm operators. NASS outsources some of the data collection and processing in cooperative agreements with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and the Census Bureau's National Processing Center in Jeffersonville, Indiana.

Publication and Dissemination: NASS 2014 activities will focus on this category as part of the census cycle. The Census of Agriculture base includes marketing, disseminating, and producing tangible and electronic products, including special products for external data users. NASS conducts publicity prior to and during data collection to encourage better response rates. Public relations and customer service are important external factor to encourage the continued willingness of farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses to voluntarily provide information on which most of the NASS statistics are based.

Release of the 2012 Census of Agriculture Special Products: Upon completing the collection, processing, and analysis of Census of Agriculture data in 2013, NASS will complete its summary and disclosure processes and prepare the catalog of Census Special Products for release beginning in early 2014. Products including special tabulations will be released at intervals throughout the remainder of 2014.

Congressional Profiles and Rankings: Following each census, reporting farms and ranches are assigned to congressional districts and two products are prepared, district profiles and district rankings. Congressional district profiles provide data on selected farm, economic, and operator characteristics for the farms and ranches assigned to the district. The ranking of congressional districts presents the order of districts from largest to smallest for selected items from the Census of Agriculture. This allows the data user to understand agriculture activity as it relates to Congressional Districts across the Nation. Rankings are provided for farm and operator characteristics, selected value of agricultural products sold, selected livestock and poultry inventories, and selected crops area harvested.

Watershed Publication: The 2012 Census of Agriculture Watershed publication will provide data that supplement the 2012 Census of Agriculture. As a service to agricultural and environmental data users, the 2012 data for 38 individual land characteristics are published at the 6-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) level. For comparison, data from the 2007 Census of Agriculture will also be published in this report.

Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Profiles Tabulation: This product was new to the 2007 Census of Agriculture and came as a result of the Department's focus on supporting socially disadvantaged farms. These profiles provide state and county level farm operator data for women, Hispanic, Native American Indian, Asian American, and Black farmers. The statistics provided in these profiles include number of farms, value of products sold, government payments received, operator and economic characteristics, and production levels for selected crops and livestock commodities.

Specialty Crops Tabulation: The 2012 Census of Agriculture Specialty Crop publication provides data that supplement the 2012 Census of Agriculture. This publication complies with Section 10103 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. As a service to agricultural and economic data users, the 2012 data for specialty crops are published at the U.S. and state-level. A specialty crop is defined by Section 3 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note; Public Law 108-465) as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops (including floriculture).

Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey (Redesigned Follow-on survey): The Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey last conducted for the 2008 growing year, providing one of the most complete and detailed profiles of irrigation in the United States. It supplements basic irrigation data collected from all farm and ranch operators from the Census of Agriculture. Examples of data summarized from this survey include: quantity of water usage, distribution methods, water sources, equipment and energy expenditures, and crops produced using irrigation. This follow-on survey has been conducted in 1979, 1984, 1988, 1994, 1998, 2003, and 2008. There is tremendous demand for the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey data especially because of the 2012 drought in the midsection of the country. These survey results are critical to the country and will affect policy decisions for the next five years.

Census of Aquaculture Follow-on Survey: The Census of Aquaculture was last conducted for the 2005 growing year and provided a comprehensive picture of the aquaculture sector at the State and national level. This census collects detailed information relating to production methods, surface water acres and sources, products, sales, point of first outlets, aquaculture distributed for restoration, conservation, recreational purposes, and farm labor. This follow-on was scheduled for 2011 but was eliminated due to budget reductions. The industry has petitioned NASS to reinstate the census of aquaculture as soon as possible in 2014.

Base funding for the Census of Agriculture Program supports:

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

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.

Funds will be used for salaries and benefits, travel and transportation, rental payments, communications and utilities, printing and reproduction, goods and services from non-federal and federal sources, research and development, operation and maintenance of equipment, supplies and materials, and equipment.

In 2014, NASS will conduct data analysis, editing, list building, create census special products, and conduct two follow-on surveys. The funding change is requested for the following items:

A. An increase of $1,277,000 for four of the Current Industrial Reports (CIR).

In response to USDA needs NASS is proposing to start producing four of approximately forty-seven vital Current Industrial Reports that were formerly compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau through the end of 2011. All the CIR

surveys are part of the U.S. Economic Census Program as is the Census of Agriculture and, as such, are mandatory and required by law.

This request supports estimation requirements for NASS, Economic Research Service (ERS), the World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB), the USDA Chief Economist, and the Census of Agriculture. Private industry uses CIR data to monitor the effect of international trade on domestic production, evaluate the relationship between company and industry performances, market analyses, assess current business conditions, and plan future operations.

The CIR reports NASS will produce are listed below:

1. M311J - Oilseeds, Beans, & Nuts (Primary Processors): This monthly report that covers all establishments crushing or solvent processing vegetable oil bearing materials (oilseeds, beans, nuts, etc.) including establishments using a continuous process that immediately refines the oil.

2. M311K – Fats and Oils (Production, Consumption, & Stocks): This monthly report covers most businesses that produce various edible and inedible fats and oils.

3. M313P – Cotton, Manmade Fiber Staple, & Raw Linters (Consumption, & Stocks, & Spindle Activity): Data are collected weekly for this monthly report covering all manufacturing plants consuming cotton, manmade fiber staple, and raw linters except consumption of uncut top and other longer fibers on the "American" and other new systems for spinning uncut top.

4. MQ311A – Flour Milling Products: This quarterly report provides flour data that are used along with survey data to accurately measure wheat production and stock levels.

B. A decrease of $500,000 eliminating two census special products to offset part of the funding for the four CIRs.

In order to offset the vital increase for four of the CIRs NASS will reduce funding for two of the census special products.

Zip Code Tabulations: The zip code tabulations may be used by regional planning boards, County Commissioners, and others interested in looking at farm level information more narrowly than what county level data provides. Some of the census data is tabulated as aggregate totals produced by farms and populated into QuickStats [*http://quickstats.nass.usda.gov*] available to the public on the internet. Individual farm information is not disclosed (for privacy laws), however the data on the count of farms that produce different products is valuable information for anyone needing statistical farm related data within a particular county.

County Profiles: The County Profiles provide a snapshot of agriculture activity by county. The profile includes number of farms, land in farms, market value of commodities produced, economic and operator characteristics, along with a host of other information that details the importance of agriculture in the specified area. This product also provides a listing of the top crops and livestock within the county and ranks the commodity across the State and U.S. This is one of the cornerstone products of the census of agriculture because of Program's focus on compiling uniform and comprehensive agricultural statistics at the county level.

C. A decrease of $376,000 eliminating the insular area reports for the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and American Samoa to offset part of the funding for the four CIRs.

In order to offset the vital increase for four of the CIRs NASS will eliminate these census reports for outlying areas.

D. A decrease of $315,000 as an adjustment to the 2013 annualized CR.

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
(Dollars in thousands)

State/Territory	2011 Actual		2012 Actual		2013 Estimate		2014 Estimate	
	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY
Alabama	1,795	10	678	8	647	10	652	10
Alaska	224	1	170	1	156	1	157	1
Arizona	1,571	9	725	9	660	11	664	11
Arkansas	2,468	14	903	10	885	12	892	12
California	4,937	29	1,682	25	1,588	30	1,600	30
Colorado	2,244	13	1,333	12	1,298	14	1,309	14
Delaware	224	1	136	1	128	1	129	1
Florida	2,244	13	864	10	814	12	820	12
Georgia	2,020	12	694	10	670	12	675	12
Hawaii	1,571	9	631	6	586	7	590	7
Idaho	1,795	10	1,008	11	975	13	983	13
Illinois	2,244	13	1,136	11	1,122	13	1,131	13
Indiana	2,468	14	1,208	12	1,184	14	1,193	14
Iowa	2,468	14	1,022	11	995	13	1,003	13
Kansas	2,244	13	1,059	12	1,040	14	1,049	14
Kentucky	2,244	13	612	10	573	12	577	12
Louisiana	1,795	10	843	9	790	11	796	11
Maryland	1,795	10	635	6	611	7	616	7
Michigan	2,693	16	1,259	13	1,215	16	1,224	16
Minnesota	2,468	15	1,221	11	1,215	13	1,225	13
Mississippi	2,468	15	863	11	830	13	837	13
Missouri	2,468	15	9,805	86	8,003	100	8,043	100
Montana	2,244	13	871	10	836	12	842	12
Nebraska	2,020	12	1,236	11	1,201	13	1,210	13
Nevada	449	3	226	2	219	2	221	2
New Hampshire	2,244	13	1,087	11	1,064	13	1,073	13
New Jersey	1,795	10	780	7	756	9	762	9
New Mexico	1,346	8	650	6	595	7	599	7
New York	2,468	14	855	11	838	13	845	13
North Carolina	2,468	14	995	10	937	12	945	12
North Dakota	1,795	10	743	7	719	9	724	9
Ohio	2,468	14	895	10	848	12	854	12
Oklahoma	2,244	13	773	9	729	11	734	11
Oregon	2,020	12	906	10	882	12	889	12
Pennsylvania	2,020	12	672	10	649	12	654	12
South Carolina	1,571	9	827	9	780	11	786	11
South Dakota	2,468	14	899	11	883	13	891	13
Tennessee	2,468	14	1,168	13	1,111	15	1,120	15
Texas	3,590	21	1,434	19	1,368	23	1,379	23
Utah	1,346	8	712	9	671	11	676	11
Virginia	1,795	10	582	8	561	10	565	10
Washington	2,468	14	1,479	16	1,392	19	1,403	19
West Virginia	1,122	7	395	6	369	7	371	7
Wisconsin	2,917	17	1,307	12	1,256	14	1,266	14
Wyoming	1,795	10	478	7	444	8	447	8
District of Columbia	74,146	436	120,617	423	114,581	484	113,898	464
Puerto Rico	351	2	306	4	283	3	283	3
Obligations	168,068	979	169,384	946	159,956	1,104	159,601	1,084
Lapsing Balances	+167	-	+74	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	+205	-	+370	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	168,440	979	169,828	946	159,956	1,104	159,601	1,084

Classification by Objects
(Dollars in thousands)

		2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Estimate	2014 Estimate
Personnel Compensation:					
Washington D.C.		$36,276	$34,843	$41,000	$38,000
Field		36,721	30,895	35,000	33,000
11	Total personnel compensation	72,996	65,738	76,000	71,000
12	Personal benefits	24,242	22,780	27,000	25,000
13	Benefits for former personnel	785	1,512	1,500	1,500
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	98,023	90,029	104,500	97,500
Other Objects:					
21	Travel and transportation of persons	7,245	6,743	5,400	5,400
22	Transportation of things	766	2,309	3,400	2,000
23.2	Rental payments to others	163	364	200	200
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	4,247	7,598	7,600	7,600
24	Printing and reproduction	248	209	200	200
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	34,500	26,357	20,000	27,800
25.3	Other goods & services from Federal sources	9,803	16,524	7,400	7,400
25.5	Research and development contracts	7,341	7,470	7,000	7,000
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	879	6,458	1,043	1,488
26	Supplies and materials	1,000	931	1,000	1,000
31	Equipment	3,843	4,380	2,200	2,000
42	Insurance Claims and Indemnities	8	12	12	12
43	Interest and Dividends	1	0	1	1
	Total, Other Objects	70,045	79,355	55,456	62,101
	Total, new obligations	168,068	169,384	159,956	159,601
Position Data:					
Average Salary (dollars), ES Position		$162,029	$166,047	$166,047	$166,047
Average Salary (dollars), GS Position		$100,000	$77,593	$77,593	$77,593
Average Grade, GS Position (Grade.Step)		11.9	11.5	11.5	11.5

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

Status of Programs

The National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) mission is to provide timely, accurate, and useful statistics 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 current activities are organized into the following six major areas: (1) agricultural estimates, (2) census of agriculture (COA), (3) activities covering both agricultural estimates and COA programs, (4) operational transformations to streamline business processes, (5) National Operations Center, and (6) work performed for others. 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: 1) the number of farms and land in farms; 2) acreage, yield, production, and stocks of grains; 3) production of hay, oilseeds, cotton, potatoes, tobacco, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, nursery, and selected specialty crops; 4) inventories and production of hogs, cattle, sheep and wool, goats and mohair, mink, catfish, trout, poultry, eggs, and dairy products; 5) prices received by farmers for products, prices paid for commodities and services, and related indexes; 6) cold storage inventories; 7) agricultural chemical use; and 8) 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 400 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 holding data user meetings, and 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. Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

New and Expanded Agricultural Statistics published by NASS

- During July and August of 2012, NASS conducted a survey on hogs for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS). The information will be used to provide scientifically sound and current information on the health status of the U.S. hog herd. Results are expected to be published in 2014.

- In 2012, NASS centralized publishing the percentage of Objective Yield samples to the National Operations Center (NOC). The data for winter wheat are published in the June, July, and August Crop Production reports; the data for corn and soybeans are published in the October and November reports. This information is useful to analysts reviewing NASS commodity estimates.

- NASS is exploring the possibility of publishing value of production data for forage crops in the annual *Crop Values* report, beginning in February 2013. Although NASS estimates and publishes production information regarding the forage crops, value is currently only published for the entire hay crop. This additional data series would provide industry members with a statistically unbiased estimate of the total value of the U.S. forage crop.

Data Users Meeting

- Chemical Use Program: NASS participated in the 2012 American Phytopathological Society's annual meeting. Each year more than 1,500 of the world's top plant scientists and researchers attend this meeting in order to participate in field trips, workshops, and scientific sessions that highlight the latest research and technological advances in plant pathology. NASS presented its survey plans and current crop rotation schedule to receive feedback from data users and the industry.

Changes in Report Frequencies

- Beginning in 2012 the U.S. and Canadian Hogs report will only be issued twice a year—in February and August. The April and October reports will no longer be issued due to Statistical Canada's discontinuation of those reports.

- The September Rice Stocks report was discontinued in 2012. Reports were and will continue to be issued in January, March, June, August, and October (for California only).

- Beginning in 2012, NASS reduced the frequency of in-season vegetable forecasts from five to one, issued in September. Previously, reports were also issued in January, April, July, September, and October. Also in 2012, NASS eliminated in-season forecasts for a number of noncitrus fruit and nut crops. For most commodities (apples, apricots, cherries, grapes, peaches, pears, and pecans), NASS retained one in-season forecast; other commodities (guavas, olives, prunes, and plums) will only be estimated at the end of the production season. These changes were made to operate within the level of available funds for the Agricultural Estimates program.

USDA's Change in Release Time

- The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB) will begin issuing several major USDA statistical reports at 12:00 p.m. EDT beginning in January 2013. USDA statistical reports affected are: *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates, Acreage, Crop Production, Grain Stocks, Prospective Plantings, and Small Grains Summary.* The time for livestock reports currently released at 3:00 p.m. will not change.
- Between June 8 and July 9, 2012, USDA sought public comment on the release times for several major statistical reports in response to changes in market hours by major commodity exchanges. Stakeholders submitted 147 comments through the NASS online response site and via letter and e-mail.

Research and Development

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

- NASS is researching methods to identify operations for which it is most unlikely to obtain responses in future surveys during data collection. Classification tree models have been developed for several surveys to assign nonresponse propensity scores to survey samples. Methods to use this information in adaptive design strategies 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.

- NASS is evaluating the use of the Computer Audio Recorded Interview (CARI) system developed for the U.S. Census Bureau. NASS has obtained the system code and is currently testing it in the NASS systems environment. The system is intended to improve data quality by allowing evaluation of both data collection instruments and interviewers.

- As part of the operations of the newly opened National Operations Center (NOC), 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.

- NASS continued work on a NASA competitive grant titled "A National Crop Progress Monitoring System Based on NASA Earth Science Results." Work has focused on developing and adapting crop growth models to determine the crop stages. Several vegetation indexes have been developed to improve the models.

- NASS completed its third 48 state Cropland Data Layer (CDL) in 2012 for the 2011 crop year.

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. Fiscal year 2012 was a critical planning year for the 2012 Census of Agriculture.

During FY 2012, NASS's Public Affairs Section developed and began implementing a multi-phase communications plan that will run through the entire 2012 Census of Agriculture from sign up through data release. Key messages with calls to action in each phase include: Sign up to be counted; Raise awareness about the census and build partnerships; The Census is coming; Respond now; and It's not too late to respond. A special target audience is new and beginning farmers, along with an expansion of outreach to minority operations through community based organizations.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

- During 2012, NASS finalized the mail list for the Census of Agriculture. The final agricultural pre-screener survey was collected and processed from approximately 1,250,000 potential farm operations. This successful effort resulted in the addition of over 300,000 likely farms to the census mail list. The improved quality of the census mail list will result in more efficient and timely data collection.

- The online reporting instrument was finalized through exhaustive testing. This will improve data quality and reduce burden for online respondents. NASS is striving to realize cost savings by increasing the number of web responses.

- NASS completed the forms design process in 2012 for the preparations of mail packets. This included all seven zone 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.

- 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.

- During 2012, NASS completed data collection on over 14,000 area segments designed to improve estimation for farming operations not covered on the mail list. Data from these segments are also used to determine under-coverage for a wide range of farming sectors and farmer demographics.

- NASS continued its marketing campaign which encourages 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. The 2012 Census of Agriculture campaign includes public presentations, promotional materials, tradeshow promotions, commodity group and community based organization partnerships, earned media coverage and advertising placements. Preparation and distribution of national news releases, blogs, feature stories, newsletter stories, talking points and tweets for the first four census phases began. Also underway were the creation of similar sample informational materials for use locally by NASS and USDA field offices, state departments of agriculture, industry and community partners, and many others. The 2012 Census of Agriculture campaign included production of special, over-riding materials including PowerPoint presentations, a video about the value of responding to NASS surveys and the census, banners, partner tool kits and a unique website. During 2012 NASS continued the Census of Agriculture marketing campaign with the production of broadcast materials including audio and video public service announcements with state and community agricultural leaders; story packages with interviews for local radio around the country.

Research and Development

- In 2011 and 2012, NASS investigated improvements to the nonresponse and coverage adjustments for the census of agriculture. Improvements to the methodology and calculation procedures for mean squared errors were also included in this research. NASS examined whether to use a unified framework to adjust census-based estimates for non-response and under coverage. A capture-recapture methodology was examined. The expectation is that this research will help ensure the tabulations from the Census of Agriculture are unbiased and also more aligned with the number of farms obtained from the June Area Survey. In December 2012 the National Academy of Sciences convened a panel of experts from outside of the agency to review this methodology.

ACTIVITIES COVERING BOTH AGRICULTURAL ESTIMATES & THE CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

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. All six NASS IT systems now have current Authority to Operate (ATO).

- NASS successfully participated at both 2012 Eagle Horizon (Continuity of Operation, COOP) and 2012 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 training. Once again, NASS garnered a 100 percent completion rate in 2012. 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.

- As required by FISMA, NASS performed annual security assessments on all its systems. The task was completed successfully with minimal identified weaknesses. Plans of Actions and Milestones (POA&M) were created for these weaknesses and are scheduled for remediation in 2013.

Data Users Meeting

- The 2012 Data Users Meeting was held in Chicago, Illinois on October 22, 2012. 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.

Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics

- The Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics met in Washington, DC on March 29 – 30, 2012. The Committee members advised NASS on the upcoming 2012 Census of Agriculture, offered suggestions on the NASS on-going survey program, and provided a direct link with the major agricultural organizations and farm groups which could not be as effectively or efficiently obtained from any other source. Advisory Committee meeting topics included the launch of the NASS National Operations Center, Annual NASS Program Priorities, Computer Assisted Personal Interview Technology Applications, Census of Agriculture Updates, Census Follow-on Survey Plans, and Cultural Transformation Initiatives. As an added bonus, the members attended the Prospective Plantings Lock-up briefing with the Secretary of Agriculture. The Committee presented eleven recommendations at the 2012 meeting which NASS will begin implementing in 2013.

- The Charter for the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics was renewed for another 2 years on June 5, 2012. The Committee advises the Secretary on the conduct of the periodic censuses and surveys of agriculture, other related surveys, and the types of agricultural information to obtain from respondents. The committee also prepares recommendations regarding the content of agriculture reports, and presents the views and needs for data of major suppliers and users of agriculture statistics. 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 Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics also sought nominations for candidates for five Committee vacancies. The candidate slate was presented to the Secretary of Agriculture, who will make the final selections for the new members.

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 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 is used for accessing the Census of Agriculture as well as published NASS survey data and 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 now has another tool, Quick Stats Lite, which queries the Quick Stats database and presents data in a streamlined format that data users had requested. The original Quick Stats (version 1) was permanently retired in November, 2012. Work is underway to make an Application Programming Interface (API) available in 2013 to allow querying of the Quick Stats database directly by users in lieu of using the Quick Stats applications.

- Using our media subscription services, NASS built media lists for every state and certain key commodities and distributed 43 news releases and Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) notices to hundreds of interested media outlets as well as the subscription services provided to individual data users.

- 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.

- In 2012 NASS increased its Twitter following almost 100 percent, to nearly 10,000 followers by sending daily tweets on interesting and timely topics. We hosted our first ever Twitter interview to promote the Census of Agriculture during the sign up period.

- NASS posted 9 blogs on USDA's blog and utilized the department's YouTube channel to post public service announcements to promote the Census and other surveys such as the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP), the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), and the quarterly agricultural surveys.

OPERATIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS

During 2012, NASS completed several operational efficiency initiatives and continued to build on what had been put in place for maximum efficiency. All of these changes moved NASS toward constant improvement for using the best practices of a federal statistical agency and fully delivering on the principles and practices for a statistical organization.

Centralize Local Area Network (LAN) Services.

During 2011 servers from 48 locations were consolidated and centralized. The management of the desktops in all locations is now centralized. Refinements to the system were made in 2012. Employees can now log into the NASS network from any physical location, which facilitates sharing staff resources across the agency to operate more efficiently. Additional server resources have been procured and will be put in place during 2013 to facilitate faster and automatic conversion over to the backup server resources during system maintenance periods and any situations

that may affect the continuity of operations. The virtual desktop model is being added to the NASS lockup environment as an additional tool to be used in any disaster recovery operations.

Technology Enhancements Relevant to Software Applications and Database Development.

Targeted applications continue to be generalized and optimized to provide more effective and efficient survey processing. New application services are Web-based and leverage centralized data bases improving the Agency's continuity of operations capabilities. 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.

During 2012, progress continued on standardizing statistical programs, metadata and automated data collection. Systems were completed or modified to enhance maintenance of the list and sampling frame; upgrade the administrative system for managing enumerators collecting respondent data; add capabilities to manage employee skills and availability; generalize analysis and summary tools; modernize the estimation process, leverage centralized data bases when producing publications; and enhance the usability of data dissemination tools for the public.

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 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 iPad. 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 successfully implemented in 42 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. A major enhancement was added to electronically assign and manage the survey sample. This enhancement broadened the scope of the project by providing remote management tools and the ability to assign records from multiple locations such as the field office, Regional offices and the National Operations Center. The infrastructure was upgraded to expand to five servers and a load balancer to accommodate the increased loads and data requests. The enhanced infrastructure sets the stage for the incorporation of the larger, more complex surveys that are slated for production in FY 2013.

National Operations Center

Current Activities:

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

NASS opened the National Operations Center (NOC) in St. Louis, MO to provide an infrastructure for increased telephone data collection capacity in a centralized environment, to centralize sampling frame activities, and to improve training of telephone and field interviewers through focused and deliberate delivery of a standardized training protocol. The NOC opened on schedule in October 2011 and work continues to reach full production capabilities.

The NOC is designed to complete a large portion of the Agency's telephone data collection. Construction of the calling center at the NOC included 154 calling seats, 18 seats for coaches and supervisors, and a 12 station call monitoring room to enhance quality assurance. The Agency's survey interviewer training is done at the NOC and the enhanced training protocols have proved very efficient in providing new interviewers the skills, knowledge, and

abilities they need to perform at a high level. At the end of 2012, there were 10 supervisors, 29 coaches, and 204 telephone interviewers on board. Current plans call for the hiring of 150-200 additional intermittent interviewers in order to staff calling operations six days a week and over 15 hours per day. In 2012, over 810,000 census telephone calls were completed.

NASS will continue to select and train well qualified telephone interviewers until full data collection capacity is reached. In addition, NASS will continue to improve the training protocols to improve efficiency. As well as design, construct, and equip a new centralized print mail facility to serve NASS needs.

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 and ranch operator names to increase coverage of the frame. They also perform maintenance on a daily basis to keep the frame as up to date as possible. In 2012, the Group completed development activities for the 2012 Census of Agriculture mail list. The completed list included over 3.2 million names of farmers and ranchers. They also updated more than 300,000 records to make sampling, mailing, data collection, and summarization efforts more efficient.

The Forms Processing Group receives the paper based survey and census questionnaires that are completed and mailed by farmers and ranchers. These respondent completed forms are checked in to make sure the respondents are not contacted by telephone. Completed forms are scanned for image retrieval and the data are keyed into a centralized database. In 2012, the Group completed these activities for over 305,000 forms.

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 continue to improve.

Video Teleconferencing.

NASS successfully installed video teleconferencing (VTC) capabilities in its headquarters and field office locations in 2010. During 2012, VTC continued to provide 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. In 2012, NASS expanded the use of "distance" meetings, mitigating the expense of transporting staff physically to various meetings. In 2013, plans are in place to upgrade existing VTC hardware and software

Research and Development.

During year two of a three-year cooperative research agreement with Iowa State University, work has continued on the modernization of the agency's Area Sampling Frame and acreage estimation. Some activities are; 1) development of automatic stratification models and an algorithm to minimize sample variance; 2) methodological and application development to calculate the probabilities of correctly classified pixels in the Cropland Data Layer; 3) exploration of coverage adjustments for the Farm Service Agency data used in the acreage estimation; and 4) development and field testing of GIS tools to collect and delineate fields on the iPads.

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 and 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 is examining how to incorporate significance editing into the operational survey programs. This research will reduce costs associated with editing questionnaires and result in higher data quality due to a consistent automated edit.

NASS completed three separate cooperative agreements with the National Institute of Statistical Sciences in May 2011. During 2012 NASS continued to conduct additional research in these areas as well as implementing the

completed research into the operational environment. 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. The research to adjust the census of agriculture for nonresponse and coverage described earlier in this report was developed on the basis of results from this research project.

- ✓ *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.

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.

New and Expanded Agricultural Statistics published by NASS

On March 30, 2012, NASS issued the last Dairy Products Prices report. The Agricultural Marketing Service took over the collection and dissemination of this information on April 1, 2012.

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

NASS and AMS continue to cooperate in FY 2012 on the AMS Pesticide Data Program (PDP). The 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 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 2012 crop year were soybeans, winter wheat, durum wheat, and other spring wheat. Phase II target commodities for the 2012 crop year were soybeans, winter wheat, durum wheat, and other spring for production practices, cost, and return data. Production Practices Report collected information on winter wheat, durum wheat, and other spring wheat. The 2011 ARMS Phase III, conducted in the winter of 2012, focused on farm financial data for all types and sizes of farms, in addition to the barley and sorghum enterprise production costs. 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.

Agricultural Labor Survey.

In 2011, NASS suspended the Agricultural Labor Survey. However, the information is used by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) in the H-2A program to set the Adverse Effect Wage Rates. In 2012, DOLETA and NASS entered into an agreement where NASS would collect data from producers on number of workers, hours worked and wage rates. During the October 2011 Agricultural Labor Survey, NASS conducted research on memory recall of wage rates from January 2011 to October 2011. Based on the results, NASS and DOLETA determined that data collection was only needed twice a year instead of every four quarters. In 2012, the Agricultural Labor Survey was conducted in April 2012 and data collection started in October of 2012. NASS issued reports from the April data collection efforts in May of 2012 and plans to issue reports in November 2012 for the October data collection efforts. NASS fully expects to continue this agreement with DOLETA in FY2103.

National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS).

In 2012, NASS conducted the Swine Survey under contract for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and NAHMS to study health management practices. This was the fifth time swine have been the target of a study. Thirty-one of the Nation's swine producing states participated in the study. NASS provided statistical services including questionnaire development, data collection, data keying, and summarization.

United Soybean Board (USB).

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 helps 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. Four annual surveys have been conducted providing cash rental rate indications for 2008 through 2012. 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 administration of payments for the Conservation Reserve Program.

Farm Safety Survey (NIOSH).

In 2012, NASS conducted a nationwide survey for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of approximately 50,000 farm operations that focused on injuries to children up to 20 years of age, living on farms, on operated farms and on the occupational health of farm operators 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.

The pilot *Organic Production and Price Survey* (OPPS) was conducted in early 2012 for reference year 2011. The OPPS followed the agreement NASS established in 2010 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.

Natural Resource Environmental Indicators.

NASS received funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 2012 to continue the Conservation Effects Assessment Program surveys. The 2012 CEAP collected information from farmers in Maumee River Watershed in northwestern Ohio and the Boone/Raccoon River Watershed in Iowa about their farming and conservation practices on cultivated cropland. NASS continued collaboration with NRCS and Iowa

State University in developing the sample utilizing the Natural Resources Inventory points. Data collection will continue into 2013.

NASS Review of USDA Agency Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Submissions in 2012.

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 that involve statistical methodology prior to OMB submission. In most cases, this involves a thorough review of their survey methodology. In 2012, NASS assisted the following agencies with ICR reviews: Forest Service, Food and Nutrition Service, Agricultural Marketing Service, Economic Research Service, Risk Management Agency, and the Food Safety Inspection Service.

Survey Marketing and Promotions

During 2012, NASS's Public Affairs Section supported collection of data through strategic communications promoting response to surveys including Conservation Effects Assessment Program surveys, Agriculture Resource Management Survey, and the quarterly agricultural and livestock surveys. Preparation includes distribution of national news releases, blogs, feature stories, talking points, e-mails, and tweets. NASS creates and distributes production story packages with interviews for local radio around the country.

International Technical Assistance Provided.

NASS provided technical assistance and training to improve agricultural statistics programs in fourteen countries. In 2012 short-term assignments supported work in Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Georgia, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Rwanda, Serbia, 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 146 visitors representing 22 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.

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 has two major programs (1) Agricultural Estimates and (2) Census of Agriculture.

NASS has four strategic goals and five objectives that contribute to the Secretary's Strategic goals.

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

NASS Strategic Goals	NASS Objectives	Programs that Contribute	Key Outcomes
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 and financial tools to help farmers and ranchers manage risk.	Agricultural Estimates	Key Outcome 1: Ensure high quality statistics and data are relevant and useful to stakeholders. Key Outcome 2: Ensure timely release of data. Key Outcome 3: Ensure optimal Census coverage.
Goal 2: Create Growth Opportunities in Rural America	Objective 2.1: Provide statistical data on new agricultural markets.	Census of Agriculture	Key Outcome 4: Ensure optimal Census response rate.

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

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outcome:

- Agricultural Estimates - NASS maintained its ACSI score with one point reduction from 2004 to 2008. The overall NASS score for customer satisfaction was 82%. Due to funding reductions the 2012 ACSI measure was delayed. NASS continually strives to produce quality data by using sound methodology, proven methods, and by carefully reviewing the content of all information products.

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

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

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2014 Proposed Resource Level:

- Agricultural Estimates/Census of Agriculture – In 2014 NASS will conduct the vital Federal Principle Economic Indicators at the core level. NASS will continue to respond to stakeholders to provide critical market sensitive data needs as they arise. Currently the Agricultural Estimates program is at a minimum core level covering the Federal Principle Economic Indicators. NASS will produce the following essential reports in 2014: Product Prices, Crop Production, Cattle on Feed, Agricultural Prices, Cotton Ginnings, Grain Stocks, Hogs & Pigs, Cattle, Prospective Plantings, Small Grain Summary, Winter Wheat Seedings & Acreage, and the Quinquennial Census of Agriculture.

- Census of Agriculture – NASS will complete its summary and disclosure processes and prepare the catalog of Census Products for release beginning in February 2014. Products that will be released in 2014 include: Congressional Profiles and Rankings Tabulation; Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Profiles Tabulation; Zip Code Tabulation; and Specialty Crops Tabulation. In addition two follow-on surveys will be completed in 2014: Census of Aquaculture, and Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey.

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

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.**

NASS Strategic Goals	NASS Objectives	Programs that Contribute	Key Outcomes
Goal 3: Help protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment	Objective 3.1: Provide statistical data to support management of productive working cropland.	Agricultural Estimates Census of Agriculture	Key Outcome 1: Ensure high quality statistics and data are relevant and useful to stakeholders. Key Outcome 2: Ensure timely release of data. Key Outcome 3: Ensure optimal Census coverage. Key Outcome 4: Ensure optimal Census response rate.

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

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, recommendation from the Advisory Committee on Agricultural Statistics, attendance at agriculture related events, and outreach activities. New data series on organic agriculture and energy have recently been implemented based on industry needs. Improvements to reports, databases, data breakouts, coverage, and timeliness have been made. Special reports (like the Watershed special tabulation) and additional categories within existing reports were added to better summarize the constantly changing landscape of agriculture.

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

- Agricultural Estimates –The Cropland Data Layer has been expended to all 48 contiguous States.

- 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.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2014 Proposed Resource Level:

- Agricultural Estimates – NASS will complete its fifth 48 state Cropland Data Layer (CDL) in 2014. NASS will continue to be innovative in conducting research, explore geographic information systems, remote sensing, and other scientific and technological advances to enhance the quality, accuracy and consistency of agriculture statistics.

- Census of Agriculture –NASS programs and products generate detailed data that policymakers and producers use in identifying and managing the resource base on which American agriculture depends.

Following release of the 2014 Census of Agriculture, as one of the census special products NASS will issue a Watershed Publication presenting the census data by 6-digit hydrologic unit code (HUC). This valuable tool highlights number of farms, land in farms, cropland harvested, irrigated areas, acres treated with fertilizer and chemicals, selected crop acreage, organic acreage, selected livestock inventory, and many other indicators.

In 2014 NASS will summarize the 2012 Census of Agriculture by 6-digit hydrologic unit code for 38 individual land characteristics and publish results within 4 months after the census is released.

The NASS Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey (FRIS) provides detailed data relating to on-farm irrigation activities. FRIS is a follow-on survey to the census of agriculture, occurring every five years in the year after the census. The data are reported at national, State and watershed levels. They are the only data complete, consistent and accurate enough to use in benchmarking on-farm irrigation measures over time. FRIS data contribute to water-related programs, economic models, legislative initiatives, market analyses, and feasibility studies. The information helps industry representatives, leaders, and planners chart the best course for future on-farm irrigation. There is tremendous demand for the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey data especially because of the 2012 drought in the midsection of the country. These survey results are critical to the country and will affect policy decisions for the next five years.

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

USDA Strategic Goal 4: Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious and balanced meals.

NASS Strategic Goals	NASS Objectives	Programs that Contribute	Key Outcomes
Goal 5: Support a Safe U.S. Food Supply and Agricultural Production	Objective 5.1: Provide chemical usage statistics to enable informed, science-based decisions.	Agricultural Estimates	Key Outcome 1: Ensure high quality statistics and data are relevant and useful to stakeholders. Key Outcome 2: Ensure timely release of data. Key Outcome 3: Ensure optimal Census coverage. Key Outcome 4: Ensure optimal Census response rate.

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 eight of the past eleven years.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2014 Proposed Resource Level:

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

- Agricultural Estimates – NASS will conduct surveys to provide needed information concerning quantities of chemicals applied to agricultural commodities, including livestock and facilities.

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 400 agricultural statistical national reports each year. NASS continually monitors and develops contingency plans to ensure each of the over 400 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.

Strategic Goal Funding Matrix
(Dollars in Thousands)

Program / Program Items	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Estimate	Increase or Decrease	2014 Estimate
Department Strategic Goal 1 - Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving.					
Agricultural Estimates	$115,703	$112,382	$113,172	-387	$113,002
Staff Years	738	709	867	-20	847
Census of Agriculture	44,860	52,481	42,264	-3,379	38,885
Staff Years	230	230	230	-30	200
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	160,563	164,863	155,436	-3,766	151,887
Total Staff Years, Strategic Goal	968	939	1,097	-50	1,047
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	-	800
Staff Years	-	-	-	-	-
Census of Agriculture	-	-	-	+3,504	3,410
Staff Years	-	-	-	+30	30
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	800	800	800	+3,504	4,210
Total Staff Years, Strategic Goal	-	-	-	+30	30
USDA Strategic Goal 4 - Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious and balanced meals.					
Agricultural Estimates	6,705	3,721	3,721	-	3,504
Staff Years	11	7	7	-	7
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	6,705	3,721	3,721	-	3,504
Total Staff Years, Strategic Goal	11	7	7	-	7
Total Costs, All Strategic Goals	168,068	169,384	159,957	-262	159,601
Total FTEs, All Strategic Goals	979	946	1,104	-20	1,084
Lapsing Balances	+167	+74	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	+205	+370	-	-	-
Total, Available	168,440	169,828	159,957	-262	159,601
Rescission	+314	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY	-8,043	-205	-370	370	-
Other Adjustments (Net)	-3,950	-11,006	-	-	-
Total Appropriation	156,761	158,616	159,587	108	159,601

Key Performance Measures and Targets:

NASS performance measures are based on its mission to provide timely, accurate, and useful agricultural statistics. Census coverage and response rates contribute to accuracy and usefulness. 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:

Measure 1. Usefulness – The accessibility, relevance, coherence, comparability, and usefulness of NASS official reports and products and services as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)[A]. These performance measures vary by goal, but get to the root of why NASS is considered the Federal 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 – Percent of United States farms or ranches covered by the census mail list. 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 and continually strives to maintain or improve upon this for the 2012 census.

Measure 4. Census Response Rates – Percent of census mail list respondents returning a usable report.[B] 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.

Performance Measures and Targets	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Target	2014 Target
1. Usefulness – The accessibility, relevance, coherence, comparability, and usefulness of NASS official reports, products, and services as measured by ACSI[A]	82.0%	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	84.0%	Not Measured
2. Timeliness - Percent of time official reports are released on the date and time pre-specified to data users.	99.6%	99.8%	99.8%	99.6%	99.6%	98.0%	98.0%
3. Census Coverage – Percent of United States farms or ranches covered by the census mail list.	83.8%	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	80.0%	Not Measured
4. Census Response Rates – Percent of census mail list respondents with a usable report.[B]	85.2%	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	Not Measured	80.0%	Not Measured

A - The American Customer Satisfaction Index is normally only measured every 3 years. Due to funding reductions the 2012 ACSI measure was delayed. However, the usefulness of NASS reports is monitored annually and efforts are continually made to ensure USDA is meeting the growing data needs of its constituents.

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

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
Full Cost by Strategic Objective
(Dollars in thousands with rounding to three decimals)

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

Program / Program Items	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Estimate	2014 Estimate
Agricultural Estimates				
Salary expenses	$77,151	$63,077	$79,904	$75,830
Data collection (NASDA)	26,077	26,356	20,000	24,100
Contracts	741	700	550	750
Travel/ Transportation	788	858	760	1,700
Printing	218	158	160	600
Hardware/ Software	4,026	9,301	370	2,422
Postage/ Shipping/ contingencies	1,856	2,546	5,546	2,600
Indirect costs	4,846	9,385	5,882	5,000
Total Costs	115,703	112,382	113,172	113,002
FTEs	738	709	867	847
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Agricultural Estimates Goal 1	Not Measured	Not Measured	84.0%	Not Measured
Timeliness - Agricultural Estimates Goal 1	99.6%	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Census of Agriculture				
Salary expenses	19,860	26,390	24,026	18,400
Data collection (NASDA)	-	-	-	3,700
Contracts	3,958	6,000	4,500	3,910
Travel/ Transportation	6,267	7,800	7,640	5,200
Printing	30	30	220	160
Hardware/ Software	9,617	2,541	559	2,605
Postage/ Shipping/ contingencies	362	4,150	4,221	350
Indirect costs	4,766	5,570	1,098	4,560
Total Costs	44,860	52,481	42,264	38,885
FTEs	230	230	230	200
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	Not Measured	Not Measured	84.0%	Not Measured
Timeliness - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	99.6%	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%
Census Coverage - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	Not Measured	Not Measured	80%	Not Measured
Census Response Rates/2 - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	Not Measured	Not Measured	80%	Not Measured
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Costs, Strategic Goal 1	160,563	164,863	155,436	151,887
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal 1	968	939	1,097	1,047

Department 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.

Program / Program Items	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Estimate	2014 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	84.0%	Not Measured
Timeliness - Agricultural Estimates Goal 2	99.6%	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Continued-**Department 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.**

Program / Program Items	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Estimate	2014 Estimate
Census of Agriculture				
Salary expenses	-	-	-	2,700
Data Ccollection (NASDA)	-	-	-	300
Contracts	-	-	-	80
Travel/ Transportation	-	-	-	100
Printing	-	-	-	20
Hardware/ Software	-	-	-	110
Postage/ Shipping/ contingencies	-	-	-	20
Indirect costs	-	-	-	80
Total Costs	-	-	-	3,410
FTEs	-	-	-	30
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Census of Agriculture Goal 2	Not Measured	Not Measured	84%	Not Measured
Timeliness - Census of Agriculture Goal 2	99.6%	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%
Census Coverage - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	Not Measured	Not Measured	80%	Not Measured
Census Response Rates/2 - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	Not Measured	Not Measured	80%	Not Measured
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Costs, Strategic Goal 2	800	800	800	4,210
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal 2	0	0	0	30

Department Strategic Goal 4: Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious and balanced meals.

Program / Program Items	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Estimate	2014 Estimate
Agricultural Estimates				
Salary expenses	1,012	562	570	570
Contracts	4,040	2,241	2,231	2,014
Travel/ Transportation	708	393	400	400
Printing	37	21	20	20
Hardware/ Software	401	223	200	200
Indirect costs	507	281	300	300
Total Costs	6,705	3,721	3,721	3,504
FTEs	11	7	7	7
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Agricultural Estimates Goal 4	Not Measured	Not Measured	84.0%	Not Measured
Timeliness - Agricultural Estimates Goal 4	99.6%	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Costs, Strategic Goal 4	6,705	3,721	3,721	3,504
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal 4	11	7	7	7
Agricultural Estimates				
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	123,208	116,903	117,693	117,306
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal	749	716	874	854
Census of Agriculture				
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	44,860	52,481	42,264	42,295
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal	230	230	230	230
NASS Total				
Total Costs, All Strategic Goals	168,068	169,384	159,957	159,601
Total FTEs, All Strategic Goals	979	946	1,104	1,084

/1 - The American Customer Satisfaction Index is normally only measured every 3 years. Due to funding reductions the 2012 measure was delayed. However, the usefulness of NASS reports is monitored annually and efforts are continually made to ensure USDA is meeting the growing data needs 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.