2015 Explanatory Notes

National Agricultural Statistics Service

Contents

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 is 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, Virgin Islands, and Northern Mariana Islands. 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** – 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. 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. 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.

- **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 will be finalized in May 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 12 Regional field offices, including a National Operations Center in St. Louis, Missouri serving all 50 States that operate through cooperative agreements with the National State Departments of Agriculture or universities. As of September 30, 2013, NASS had 895 permanent full-time employees, including 412 full-time employees in Washington, D.C., 400 in field offices, and 83 in NOC.

OIG Report: NASS submitted a response to the 2012 Office of Inspector General (OIG) pending final audit report.

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.

Statement of Available Funds and Staff Years (SYs)
(Dollars in thousands)

Item	2012 Actual		2013 Actual		2014 Estimate		2015 Estimate	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
Discretionary Appropriations - Salaries & Expenses	$158,616	946	$179,477	979	$161,206	933	$178,999	980
Rescission	-	-	-4,860	-	-	-	-	-
Sequestration	-	-	-7,979	-	-	-	-	-
Adjusted Appropriation	158,616	946	166,638	979	161,206	933	178,999	980
Balance Available, Start of Year	205	-	370	-	146	-	-	-
Other Adjustments (Net)	11,006	-	14,254	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	169,828	946	181,262	979	161,352	933	178,999	980
Lapsing Balances	-74	-	-80	-	-	-	-	-
Balance Available, End of Year	-370	-	-146	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Obligations, NASS	169,384	946	181,036	979	161,352	933	178,999	980
Obligations under other USDA appropriations:								
Ag. Marketing Service - Pesticide work & data on milk prices, export certification, & base month series	227	2	147	1	53	-	230	2
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Animal health monitoring system	525	2	725	3	520	2	525	3
Agriculture Research Service			50		104			
Economic Research Service - Agricultural resource management & small farms data	8,220	32	7,084	33	6,734	33	6,000	33
Foreign Agricultural Service	1,241	5	1,667	8	1,488	6	1,500	8
Farm Service Agency - County Cash Rental Rates & Commodity Prices	6,900	34	6,548	34	6,398	34	6,500	34
Forest Service - Grazing fees & woodland owners	85	-	68	-	88	-	88	-
Natural Resource Conservation Service & Farm Service Agency - Conservation effects assessment	2,805	10	2,280	9	1,000	4	1,000	-
Risk Management Agency - County estimates	825	3	825	4	2,290	13	825	5
World Agricultural Outlook Board - Lock-up & printing support & cotton objective yield	15	-	15	-	15	-	15	-
Miscellaneous USDA Reimbursements	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other USDA	20,843	88	19,412	92	18,690	92	16,683	85
Total, Agriculture Appropriations	190,227	1,034	200,448	1,071	180,042	1,025	195,682	1,065
Other Federal Funds:								
Dept. of Interior, BLM; Survey Fees	64	-	67	-	67	-	67	-
National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health	843	4	-	-	0	-	0	-
Dept. of Labor - Agriculture Labor	1,200	1	1,200	3	1,200	3	1,200	7
National Science Foundation - data collection	80	1	-	1	100	1	100	1
National Aeronautics & Space Administration	34	-	18	-	12	-	10	-
Other countries: Canada, Netherlands	-	-	-	-	0	-	0	-
United Soybean Council	40	-	-	-	40	-	40	-
Total, Other Federal	2,261	6	1,285	4	1,419	4	1,417	8
Non-Federal Funds								
State Agencies - Survey work	3,432	12	2,738	10	2,406	10	2,400	13
Miscellaneous Reimbursements - Agricultural reports, data, & mailings	51	-	0	-	0	-	-	-
Total, Non-Federal	3,483	12	2,738	10	2,406	10	2,400	13
Total, NASS	195,971	1,052	204,472	1,085	183,866	1,039	199,499	1,086

Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Year Summary

Item	2012 Actual			2013 Actual			2014 Estimate			2015 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	26	13	39	26	13	39	26	13	39
GS-14.....	58	58	116	53	51	104	53	51	104	53	51	104
GS-13.....	224	75	299	210	49	259	210	49	259	220	49	269
GS-12.....	44	177	221	47	158	205	47	158	205	47	185	232
GS-11.....	50	95	145	29	41	70	29	41	70	29	41	70
GS-10.....	6	-	6	5	0	5	5	-	5	5	-	5
GS-9.....	26	55	81	22	35	57	22	35	57	22	35	57
GS-8.....	24	25	49	13	23	36	13	23	36	13	33	46
GS-7.....	17	160	177	26	98	124	26	98	124	26	98	124
GS-6.....	4	39	43	3	24	27	3	24	27	3	24	27
GS-5.....	1	13	14	5	9	14	5	9	14	5	9	14
GS-4.....	3	3	6	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3
Total Perm. Positions.....	491	719	1,210	449	505	954	449	505	954	459	542	1,001
Unfilled, EOY..	68	181	249	37	22	59	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent Full-Time Employment, EOY.....	423	538	961	412	483	895	449	505	954	459	542	1,001
Staff Year Est..	423	629	1,052	518	567	1,085	503	536	1,039	503	583	1,086

Motor Vehicle Fleet Data

The 2015 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 12 Regional Statistical Offices that serve all 50 States.

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 12 Regional offices, there are 16 NASS owned and 29 vehicles leased from General Services Administration (GSA). While all 12 NASS Regional offices require the use of motor vehicles, it is often more 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. NASS 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 2013, NASS had sixteen owned vehicles and twenty-nine GSA leased vehicles and made no changes. For 2014 and 2015, NASS plans no changes to the motor vehicle fleet.

Replacement of passenger motor vehicles. For 2014 and 2015, NASS plans to maintain the current level of 45 motor vehicles with five 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						
2012	2	21	21	1	-	-	-	45	305
Change	-	-	-1	+1	-	-	-	-	-101
2013	2	21	20	2	-	-	-	45	204
Change	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+29
2014	2	21	20	2	-	-	-	45	233
Change	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
2015	2	21	20	2	-	-	-	45	245

* 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.

Appropriations Language

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

Salaries and Expenses:

For necessary expenses of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, [$161,206,000] $178,999,000, of which up to [$44,545,000] $48,044,000 shall be available until expended for the Census of Agriculture: Provided, That amounts be made available for the Census of Agriculture may be used to conduct the Current Industrial Report surveys subject to 7 U.S.C. 2204 g(d) and (f).

Lead-Off Tabular Statement

Budget Estimate, 2015	$178,999,000
2014 Enacted	161,206,000
Change in Appropriation	+17,793,000

Summary of Increases and Decreases

(Dollars in thousands)

Program	2012 Actual	2013 Change	2014 Change	2015 Change	2015 Estimate
Discretionary Appropriations:					
Agricultural Estimates	$116,977	-$8,368	+$8,052	+$14,294	$130,955
Census of Agriculture	41,639	+16,390	-13,484	+3,499	48,044
Total, Appropriation or Change	158,616	+8,022	-5,432	+17,793	178,999

Project Statement
Appropriations Detail and Staff Years (SYs)
(Dollars in thousands)

Program	2012 Actual		2013 Actual		2014 Estimate		Inc. or Dec.			2015 Estimate	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount		SYs	Amount	SYs
Discretionary Appropriations:											
Agricultural Estimates....	$116,977	716	$108,609	656	$116,661	703	$14,294	(1)	+47	$130,955	750
Census of Agriculture....	41,639	230	58,029	323	44,545	230	3,499	(2)	-	48,044	230
Total Adjusted Approp.	158,616	946	166,638	979	161,206	933	17,793		47	178,999	980
Rescissions, Transfers, and Seq. (Net).....	-	-	12,840	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	158,616	946	179,477	979	161,206	933	17,793		47	178,999	980
Rescission.....	-	-	-4,860	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Sequestration.....	-	-	-7,979	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY.....	+205	-	370	-	+146	-	-146		-	-	-
Recoveries, Other (Net)....	+11,006	-	14,254	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Total Available.....	169,828	946	181,262	979	161,352	933	17,647		47	178,999	980
Lapsing Balances.....	-74	-	-80	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY.....	-370	-	-146	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	169,384	946	181,036	979	161,352	933	17,647		47	178,999	980

Project Statement
Obligations Detail and Staff Years (SYs)
(Dollars in thousands)

Program	2012 Actual		2013 Actual		2014 Estimate		Inc. or Dec.			2015 Estimate	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount		SYs	Amount	SYs
Discretionary Obligations:											
Agricultural Estimates....	$116,903	716	$108,529	656	$116,661	703	$14,294	(1)	47	$130,955	750
Census of Agriculture....	52,481	230	72,507	323	44,691	230	3,353	(2)	-	48,044	230
Total Obligations.....	169,384	946	181,036	979	161,352	933	17,647		47	178,999	980
Lapsing Balances.....	+74	-	80	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY.....	+370	-	146	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Total Available.....	169,828	946	181,262	979	161,352	933	17,647		47	178,999	980
Rescission.....	-	-	4,860	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Sequestration.....			7,979								
Bal. Available, SOY.....	-205	-	-370	-	-146	-	+146		-	-	-
Other Adjustments (Net)..	-11,006	-	-14,254	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	158,616	946	179,477	979	161,206	933	17,793		47	178,999	980

Justification of Increases and Decreases

Agricultural Estimates Program

(1) A net increase of $14,294,000 and 47 staff years is requested for the Agricultural Estimates Program for a total of $130,955,000 and 750 staff years ($116,661,000 and 703 staff years available in 2014).

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 provides data essential to both the public and private sectors of the agriculture industry.

The NASS reports are mostly 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.

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 all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious, and balanced meals.

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. An increase of $806,000 for pay costs for the Agricultural Estimates Program which includes $211,000 for annualization of the fiscal year 2014 pay raise and $595,000 for the anticipated fiscal year 2015 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.

b. An increase of $6,165,000 for the Decentralized GSA Rent and Security Payments (paid in 2014 from the central appropriations):

USDA proposes in FY 2015 the decentralization of GSA Rental Payments and DHS payments. The amount is the equivalent share of the current GSA Rent and DHS central appropriations based upon current space occupancy across the continental United States. The appropriations request for the central GSA rent account and the DHS payment account has been reduced accordingly.

c. An increase of $2,000,000 and 6 staff years for the Pollinator Health Initiative to respond to the serious problem for agriculture due to the large scale losses of pollinators:

Pollinators are vital to the agricultural industry for producing food for the world's population. A dramatic rise in the number of disappearances of honeybee colonies in North America was noted in late 2006, from 10-15 percent annual colony loss to greater than thirty percent. Named colony collapse disorder (CCD), this occurs when worker bees from a beehive or European honeybee colony abruptly disappear, with minimal mortality evident near the hive and an intact queen and food. European beekeepers observed similar phenomena in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, and initial reports have also come in from Switzerland and Germany, albeit to a lesser degree while the Northern Ireland Assembly received reports of a decline greater than 50%. The mechanisms of CCD and the reasons for its increasing prevalence remain unclear, likely a combination of factors including: infections with Varroa mites and other pathogens and viruses; pesticides, such as the neonicotinoid class; inadequate nutrition and loss of natural forage habitat; genetic factors; and changing beekeeping practices and stress on colonies from transportation.

Colony collapse is significant economically because many agricultural crops worldwide are pollinated by European honey bees. According to the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the worth of global crops with honeybee pollination was estimated to be close to $200 billion in 2005. Shortages of bees in the United States have led to substantial increases in the cost to farmers renting them for pollination services.

Based on Presidential concern, this key government-wide Pollinator Health Initiative is funded by several USDA agencies as well as other departments. USDA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in consultation with other relevant Federal partners, are scaling up efforts to address the decline of honey bee health with a goal of ensuring the recovery of this critical subset of pollinators. NASS supports this *USDA – EPA CCD National Action Plan*, which emphasizes the importance of coordinated action to identify the extent and causal factors in honey bee and pollinator declines.

As part of this effort, the requested funding will allow NASS to focus its resources and expertise as funds permit to expand, as appropriate and feasible, its annual survey of bee keepers to include questions related to colony losses, pests and parasites, management practices, crops pollinated and locations served, as well as estimates of revenues and expenses. Expansion of the loss survey of beehives was strongly encouraged by beekeepers, the National Academy of Sciences, and the USDA Office of the Inspector General. This action will provide improved baseline and annual data to determine the extent of CCD, in addition to providing quantitative information on potential causal factors, essential to the industry.

NASS may supplement with a targeted survey, following feasibility analysis, of small beekeepers (< 5 colonies) and of recipients of pollinator services.

NASS is committed to collaborating with USDA and the other departments on a unified and complementary approach to develop and support the Pollinator Health Initiative. This will allow NASS and its collaborators to address critical information needs at an accelerated pace and guide honey bee management at a national scale.

d. An increase of $2,500,000 and 10 staff years for the Geospatial Improvement Initiative ($800,000 available in 2014):

This new program will enhance the current satellite based agricultural statistics monitoring program. It will research and institute systems to provide satellite based crop condition, soil moisture, crop progress (phenological development of crops), crop yields, and begin research and development to provide data on emissions of greenhouse gasses associated with agriculture at local levels. This will leverage strategic cooperative partnerships with USDA Climate Hubs and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Regional Climatic Centers.

This program is meant to extend the monitoring capabilities of both CropScape and VegScape programs and provide new, objective information that supports both the production of agriculture statistics while extending these products to local levels. This basic statistical information is the foundational information for agricultural, environmental, and climate researchers to have local, factual information on U.S. croplands. Additionally, it is anticipated to be of significant benefit to agricultural researchers to have field level geo-referenced data.

The valuable *CropScape* and its underlying Cropland Data Layer (CDL) are the foundational data for new geospatial layers on specific crop condition, crop progress, soil moisture, crop yield, disaster assessment, crop biomass, land tillage and residue assessment, and ultimately greenhouse gas inventories and carbon sequestration potential of agricultural lands. The scientific development of these layers are in various stages of research, operation, or still only conceptual. NASA scientific grants have been supporting basic research on crop progress and crop condition, however new resources are needed to establish a sustainable remote sensing capacity and to increase the scope and pace of research and development.

The scientific, technological, and methodological capacities now exist for significant improvement to USDA's monitoring and assessment capabilities. Such improvements would expand the NASS remote sensing capacity for timely and accurate statistics in the areas noted above. Longer term, and perhaps more importantly, these GIS data layers would serve the dual purpose of capacity building for a new geospatial intelligence, enabling more accurate, detailed, and systematic greenhouse gas modeling, monitoring, and assessment from national to local scale.

The proposed research and data products will enhance the evaluation of temporal and spatial responses of climate change impact at local levels on crop production. Understanding the impact helps build our capacity to cope and mitigate the effects through genetics and management practices. Inventories of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and sinks are key elements in evaluating sectors, trends, and the efficacy of mitigation strategies and important in potential policy formulations.

The development of this initiative NASS will seek experts to add to our staff and scientists to collaborate with at other research institutions.

The research and products are new and the initial performance measures are to deliver the following accurate and useful products:

- A crop condition qualitative product to the public within two years and weekly during the crop season for the following years.
- A soil moisture data layer product within three years and on a weekly basis thereafter.
- A crop yield model for new crops within four years.
- A cooperative staff shall be assembled within two years to collaborate on research and development with greenhouse gas researchers.

e. A decrease of $1,920,000 and 2 staff years for efficiencies, including support for USDA programs:

Because of the limited funding resources and in order to partially offset the Pollinator Health Initiative and expand the Geospatial Improvement Initiative NASS completed a thorough and comprehensive review of all of its programs. That review consisted of evaluating the entire agricultural statistics program within the following priorities:

- Principal Economic Indicator data;
- Data which directly impact the market;
- Data necessary to implement USDA programs which provide payments to farmers and are used to administer the farm safety net for producers; and
- Data for which there are no other publically available sources of information.

Additionally, NASS reviewed the availability of alternative objective data sources to identify process improvements which could be implemented to maintain data series while reducing costs to the American taxpayers.

Further, NASS found efficiencies with our new restructuring and will redirect the funding to the key government-wide Pollinator Health Initiative and the Geospatial Improvement Initiative to expand the knowledge base on climate change.

f. An increase of $2,600,000 and 22 staff years to restore the Fruit and Vegetable In-Season Reports ($7,341,000 and 40 staff years available in 2014):

NASS restored the annual Fruit and Vegetable program in 2014 to fulfill data users' requests and to provide acreage statistics necessary for conducting the chemical use program. In 2015, NASS will augment the annual Fruit and Vegetable program by providing the in-season forecasts for fruits and nuts. These are needed by industry and include a variety of reports including the monthly *Crop Production* reports, annual *Cherry Production* report (issued in June), and the annual *Cranberries* report (issued in August). For vegetables, NASS will resume publishing in-season forecasts in the September *Vegetables* report. Additionally, NASS will resume publishing a preliminary Annual Summary for all noncitrus fruits and nuts in January. The annual data is required to conduct the fruit and vegetable chemical use surveys.

NASS Regional Offices will collaborate with outside entities in agreements to produce reports containing additional detail for specific crops. NASS will collect data for these forecasts from producers, processors, and others using a series of grower and processor surveys. NASS will also utilize administrative data whenever available to supplement the survey data.

Constituents include fruit growers, processors, brokers, extension specialists, grower associations, commodity councils, State Departments of Agriculture, USDA (and other government) agencies, commodity marketing boards, research specialists, universities, and students. Data in these reports are used to align resources (transportation, storage, processing, etc.) with expected supplies, to project market conditions, to evaluate current conditions potential economic impact, for planning purposes, and for educational and research purposes.

g. An increase of $3,798,000 and 20 staff years to restore the Chemical Use program to the rotation schedule established in 2010 ($3,504,000 and 22 staff years available in 2014):

In 1991, NASS began surveying the use of pesticides and commercial fertilizers in response to data needs for water quality and food safety initiatives. Before the NASS program was instituted, there was very little statistically reliable and readily available information on the amounts and types of chemicals used in agriculture. Consequently, neither USDA nor other concerned parties could respond adequately to questions about agricultural chemical use and its possible effects on the environment. The NASS data series is the only free, publicly available agriculture chemical use information. Proprietary data sources exist, but are extremely costly to access and cannot be disclosed outside the client's purview.

The 2009 Omnibus included funding to reinstate the fruit Chemical Use Survey and the balance of the program was reinstated in 2010.

Due to budget reductions in 2012 the chemical use program crop rotations were changed so that individual crops were surveyed less frequently, and the post harvest chemical use survey was eliminated.

In 2015 NASS will restore the remaining chemical use data series to the 2010 level, including data on major row crops, and fruit and vegetable chemical use data on an alternating year basis. Appropriated funding is necessary for this initiative to ensure equal access to Federal statistics.

The chemical use data collected by NASS have been used in building a database for the USDA Pesticide Data Program. This database is used by the Department to evaluate the safety of the Nation's food supply. Additionally, the implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), in 1996, increased the need for actual, reliable chemical use data. FQPA requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct an accelerated review of tolerance levels for re-registration of pesticide products. Part of the review includes using actual chemical usage data that only growers can provide. The absence of these data has created difficulties for EPA and industry to effectively conduct and analyze these reviews. In the absence of actual data, EPA is often in the position to assume maximum label rates are being applied on all acreage. This has the potential of over-estimating actual pesticide usage.

h. A decrease of $1,655,000 and 9 staff years through suspending lower priority reports to support the Department's higher priority initiatives:

Because of the limited funding resources and in order to partially offset the new Pollinator Health Initiative and expand the Geospatial Improvement Initiative NASS completed a thorough and comprehensive review of all of its programs. That review consisted of evaluating the entire agricultural statistics program within the following priorities:

- Principal Economic Indicator data;
- Data which directly impact the market;
- Data necessary to implement USDA programs which provide payments to farmers and are used to administer the farm safety net for producers; and
- Data for which there are no other publically available sources of information.

Additionally, NASS reviewed the availability of alternative objective data sources to identify process improvements which could be implemented to maintain data series while reducing costs to the American taxpayers. By our objective criteria, the following surveys have been found to be lower priority and can be suspended at this time to help offset the Pollinator Health and Geospatial Improvement initiatives:

- A decrease of $480,000 and 2 staff years to suspend the Catfish and Trout Reports ($480,000 and 3 staff years available in 2014): NASS will suspend the Catfish Processing survey, the Catfish Production Survey, Catfish Feed Deliveries, and the Trout Production Survey in 2015. However, the results of the 2014 Census of Aquaculture will be published in 2015 which will provide an alternate source of data on Catfish and Trout for the 2014 calendar year.

- A decrease of $353,000 and 2 staff years to suspend the Potato Stocks Reports ($353,000 and 2 staff years available in 2014).

- A decrease of $557,000 and 3 staff years to suspend the July Cattle Report ($557,000 and 3 staff years available in 2014).

- A decrease of $80,000 to suspend the June Rice Stocks Report ($80,000 available in 2014): NASS will suspend the June Rice Stocks Report, but continue doing the January, March, and December reports. These reports allow rice farmers and rice mills to track volume and movement of the rice crop from the farm to the processing facilities. Data in the report include rough and milled rice stocks stored on and off the farm as well as stocks by grain length and milled stocks by whole and broken kernels. NASS collects data from rice producers and all known rice storage facilities.

- A decrease of $55,000 to suspend all Hops and Hops Stocks Estimates ($55,000 available in 2014).

- A decrease of $130,000 and 1 staff year to suspend the Mink Report ($130,000 and 1 staff year available in 2014).

Census of Agriculture Program

(2) A net increase of $3,499,000 for the Census of Agriculture (COA) and no staff years ($44,545,000 and 230 staff years available in 2014):

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.

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 that hinders NASS ability to complete the COA.
- 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.
- Lack of Census of Agriculture data that is vital to USDA programs in 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.
- Difficulty producing other NASS reports. 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.

The Census of Agriculture Program is conducted over a five year cycle of activities. Annual and Quinquennial Census of Agriculture special study follow-on surveys are a vital part of the Census of Agriculture Program and include: the annual Current Agricultural Industrial Reports; and the Quinquennial Special Studies: the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey, the Census of Aquaculture, and the Census of Horticulture.

Base funding for the entire Census of Agriculture Program is broken down into five general categories detailed below. Due to the cyclical nature of the Quinquennial Census of Agriculture Program, appropriated funds will shift among these five broader categories over the five year cycle of activities. Research, evaluation and analysis are continually being conducted during the entire cycle of the Quinquennial Census of Agriculture throughout all aspects to ensure data quality and efficiency.

Direction and Planning: This category includes planning, administration, and support for the Census of Agriculture, the annual Current Agricultural Industrial Reports, and the Quinquennial Special Studies. This category encompasses developing timelines, milestones, deliverables, and quality assurance checks associated with the Census Programs. Also included in here is collaboration with USDA, other Governmental, and private sector stakeholders to incorporate critical periodic and emerging data needs into the plan.

Covered by this category are research, evaluation and analysis activities during the entire five year census cycle. During the production year, NASS gathers critical information associated with the population composition, data collection and data processing. This information is used to guide NASS staff in making improvements in areas that lead to enhanced quality of census products, improved efficiency, and reduced respondent burden. Examples include evaluation of approximately 250,000 incoming calls from respondents through the Census Helpline, analysis of remarks captured from over 280,000 reports that came via the Internet reporting instrument and thousands of emails to our customer service unit.

Content Determination and Design: NASS evaluates and tests the questionnaires for all the components of the Census of Agriculture Program. New content solicited from internal and external stakeholders must be tested prior to production in order to ensure all the questions are interpreted correctly by the respondent. Also, cognitive interviews provide vital feedback to questionnaire content and design. The Quinquennial Census of Agriculture questionnaire is developed to facilitate NASS capability to survey specific sub-populations without the additional cost of screening for those populations. This category also includes the cost of printing the questionnaire for all program components.

The information gathered from research, evaluation, and analysis activities has a direct impact on question modification and improved questionnaire design. NASS uses metrics from the census edit system to determine frequency of edit and analyst changes to every item on the census form. This enables NASS to discern which

questions need to be adjusted to more accurately collect data that leads to higher quality data products. During the data collection and processing year of the census cycle, efforts to improve the processes for the next cycle begin. A sample of records that have substantial reporting errors, such as the amount and distribution of farm or ranch land in the land section, is collected.

Research and analysis is then conducted to determine the cause of misreporting so that it can be reduced for the next census. During the 2012 census, approximately 250,000 COA survey respondents called the NASS Helpline. Information from these calls is captured and analyzed to determine which areas of the questionnaire are most troublesome. Text mining software is used to discern common problems. The results from both the reporting error study and the helpline information will be used to provide insight into content and design changes for the 2017 Census of Agriculture questionnaire.

NASS received approximately 280,000 responses from the internet website. Comments from these respondents were captured and will be used to help determine improvements to ease respondent burden and to provide a more user-friendly application. NASS also analyzes common reporting errors from internet collection to enrich the instrument for the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

Mail List Development and Mail Out: Because of the consistent activities necessary to develop a robust and proficient census mail list (CML) for the Census of Agriculture Program, and the similar list maintained for the Agricultural Estimates Program, NASS combines the two lists to more efficiently maintain one list that can be utilized for both programs as well as 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. Along with assembling and labeling the mail packets, postage costs for the mail collection of the Census of Agriculture, Current Agricultural Industrial Reports and Special Studies (follow-on surveys) are covered in this category.

Costs for activities involving the screening of millions of potential farms through the National Agricultural Classification Survey (census screener) are covered under this category. NASS conducts three iterations of this screening survey in the three years prior to census production. This is a more cost effective way for eliminating non-farm respondents with a four page screener rather than including them on the Census Mail List.

Collection and Processing: This category involves all activities associated with system development, programming, and data collection for the components of the Census of Agriculture Program. 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.

Research on data collection techniques to improve response rates are subsumed in this category. NASS routinely conducts research on the effectiveness of various treatments to the selected survey population. Evaluating various correspondence materials and modes of delivery provides NASS with a better understanding of effective interaction with respondents while discovering less expensive and more efficient ways of gathering the critical data needed to inform policy decisions. Research continues to be conducted on the census dual-frame weighting methodology for under-coverage, non-response, and misclassification.

Publication and Dissemination: The Census of Agriculture base includes marketing, disseminating, and producing tangible and electronic products for external data users, USDA, and the public. NASS conducts publicity prior to and during data collection to encourage better response rates. Public relations and customer service are important external factors to encourage the continued willingness of farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses to voluntarily provide information on which most of the NASS statistics are based.

Encompassed in this category is the work and activities surrounding the release of data from the components of the Census of Agriculture Program. This requires staff time for developing publication tables, creating summary and disclosure programs, and reviewing data and data products prior to release.

This category also comprises research into value-added data products and dissemination techniques that respond to data user needs and requests. As an example, NASS examined ways to improve the visual representation of census data which resulted in a new dynamic web-mapping product that will be made available for the 2012 Census of Agriculture data.

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.

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

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. NASS will collaborate with the National Association of the State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) in data collection.

a. An increase of $202,000 for pay costs for the Census of Agriculture Program which includes $53,000 for annualization of the fiscal year 2014 pay raise and $149,000 for the anticipated fiscal year 2015 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.

b. An increase of $3,037,000 for the Decentralized GSA Rent and Security Payments (paid in 2014 from the central appropriations):

USDA proposes in FY 2015 the decentralization of GSA Rental Payments and DHS payments. The amount is the equivalent share of the current GSA Rent and DHS central appropriations based upon current space occupancy across the continental United States. The appropriations request for the central GSA rent account and the DHS payment account have been reduced accordingly.

c. An increase of $1,010,000 and a decrease of 2 staff years for the five general categories of the Census of Agriculture Program base ($44,545,000 and 230 staff years available in 2014):

The base funding with the increases will facilitate the five functions for the Quinquennial Census of Agriculture Program as well as for the following special studies:

Annual COA Special Study: Current Agricultural Industrial Reports (CAIR). At the request of the Chief Economist NASS plans to annually conduct four of the approximately forty-seven vital Current Industrial Reports that were formerly conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau CIR program was cancelled at the end of 2011. These 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.

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

d. An increase of $3,500,000 and 4 staff years for the Quinquennial COA Special Study: Census of Horticultural Specialties ($0 available in 2014):

The Census of Horticultural Specialties was last conducted for the 2009 growing season. The census is a detailed examination of all operations identified from the Census of Agriculture with sales of $10,000 or more. Production and sales data for fresh cut flowers, potted flowering plants, foliage plants, bedding plants, or cut cultivated greens are summarized. This census also collects data regarding expenses, growing area, and hired labor. This historic data series was also conducted in 1970, 1979, 1988, and 1998. NASS proposes to conduct the Census of Horticultural Specialties every five years as funding permits and the next one is scheduled for FY 2020.

e. An increase of $2,500,000 and 4 staff years for the Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land (TOTAL) Survey ($0 available in 2014):

NASS will work in collaboration with ERS to conduct a mandatory survey under the Census of Agriculture to update data on land ownership and farm finance that was last collected in the 1999 Agriculture Economics and Land Ownership Survey (AELOS). NASS has renamed this survey Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land (TOTAL). The TOTAL had been a follow-on survey to the Census of Agriculture every ten years up to the 1999 program. The Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics made the recommendation that this TOTAL survey was the top program to be reinstated to the Census of Agriculture Follow-on Survey program. Data from this new survey would inform policy decisions for USDA programs linked to farm land ownership and rental arrangements, inform research on generational transitions in agriculture, and provide updated parameters for the National Accounts for agriculture that ERS provides the Bureau of Economic Analysis (Department of Commerce).

NASS and ERS have developed a new survey approach using the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) and the June Area Survey across two fiscal years. With this two year methodology NASS will conduct a survey to build the list frame in the first year 2014 and in the second year 2015 NASS will conduct the TOTAL survey based on that list frame. Funding for the first year in 2014 will come from a reimbursable agreement with ERS. The survey results of this two year collaborative effort between NASS and ERS would be available after data summary and analysis in late 2015.

f. A decrease of $6,750,000 and 6 staff years for conducting the surveys conducted in 2014 as part of the normal Census of Agriculture Follow-on process listed below:

- A decrease of $3,000,000 and 2 staff years for conducting the Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey (Redesigned Follow-on survey) in 2014. The Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey provides one of the most complete and detailed profiles of irrigation in the United States and is . It supplements basic irrigation data collected from all farm and ranch operators from the Census of Agriculture. These survey results are critical to the country and will affect policy decisions for the next five years.

- A decrease of $1,500,000 and 2 staff years for conducting the Census of Aquaculture Survey in 2014. The Census of Aquaculture was conducted for the 2005and 2013 growing years 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.

- A decrease of $2,250,000 and 2 staff years for conducting an Organic Survey in 2014. Congress initiated the request for this much requested and needed survey.

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years (SYs)

(Dollars in thousands)

State/Territory	2012 Actual		2013 Actual		2014 Estimate		2015 Estimate	
	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs	Amount	SYs
Alabama	$678	8	$635	6	$263	2	$263	2
Alaska	170	1	171	1	302	2	302	2
Arizona	725	9	551	6	252	3	252	3
Arkansas	903	10	1,070	11	5,526	40	5,526	40
California	1,682	25	1,706	24	5,939	42	5,939	42
Colorado	1,333	12	2,006	19	5,558	39	5,558	41
Delaware	136	1	143	1	150	1	150	1
Florida	864	10	630	7	226	2	226	2
Georgia	694	10	1,706	16	5,812	38	5,812	40
Hawaii	631	6	652	6	218	2	218	2
Idaho	1,008	11	991	10	195	2	195	2
Illinois	1,136	11	658	8	304	2	304	2
Indiana	1,208	12	1,009	9	182	2	182	2
Iowa	1,022	11	1,371	14	5,819	38	5,819	40
Kansas	1,059	12	524	6	172	2	172	2
Kentucky	612	10	1,619	16	5,563	39	5,563	41
Louisiana	843	9	672	7	231	2	231	2
Maryland	635	6	372	3	319	2	319	2
Michigan	1,259	13	1,434	16	5,850	39	5,850	41
Minnesota	1,221	11	802	7	288	2	288	2
Mississippi	863	11	611	7	196	2	196	2
Missouri	9,805	86	9,677	186	8,989	84	8,989	85
Montana	871	10	821	8	202	2	202	2
Nebraska	1,236	11	1,704	17	5,558	41	5,558	41
Nevada	226	2	179	1	288	2	288	2
New Hampshire	1,087	11	770	7	179	2	179	2
New Jersey	780	7	677	6	318	2	318	2
New Mexico	650	6	590	5	237	2	237	2
New York	855	11	831	10	168	2	168	2
North Carolina	995	10	605	5	377	2	377	2
North Dakota	743	7	378	4	319	2	319	2
Ohio	895	10	701	6	223	2	223	2
Oklahoma	773	9	757	6	217	2	217	2
Oregon	906	10	387	7	181	2	181	2
Pennsylvania	672	10	1,391	14	6,085	39	6,085	41
South Carolina	827	9	664	6	222	2	222	2
South Dakota	899	11	764	7	305	2	305	2
Tennessee	1,168	13	889	10	379	4	379	4
Texas	1,434	19	2,239	23	6,164	40	6,164	42
Utah	712	9	728	8	210	2	210	2
Virginia	582	8	576	4	315	2	315	2
Washington	1,479	16	1,709	17	6,201	42	6,201	42
West Virginia	395	6	310	3	186	2	186	2
Wisconsin	1,307	12	1,006	9	227	2	227	2
Wyoming	478	7	565	6	199	2	199	2
District of Columbia	120,617	423	132,667	402	80,238	344	97,885	376
Puerto Rico	306	4	118	2	-	-	-	-
Obligations	169,384	946	181,036	979	161,352	933	178,999	980
Lapsing Balances	+74	-	80	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	+370	-	146	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	169,828	946	181,262	979	161,352	933	178,999	980

Classification by Objects
(Dollars in thousands)

		2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Estimate	2015 Estimate
Personnel Compensation:					
Washington D.C.		$34,843	$37,499	$41,800	$45,800
Field		30,895	31,936	33,200	35,000
11	Total personnel compensation	65,738	69,435	75,000	80,800
12	Personal benefits	22,780	26,740	27,000	29,200
13	Benefits for former personnel	1,512	1,129	1,500	1,500
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	90,029	97,305	103,500	111,500
Other Objects:					
21	Travel and transportation of persons	6,743	7,568	4,200	2,000
22	Transportation of things	2,309	3,273	2,000	2,400
23.1	Rent payments to decentralized GSA & DHS	0	460	803	9,202
23.2	Rental payments to others	364	29	200	200
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	7,598	9,599	9,000	9,000
24	Printing and reproduction	209	213	200	200
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	26,357	33,143	24,500	27,000
25.3	Other goods & services from Federal sources	16,524	17,748	6,800	6,000
25.5	Research and development contracts	7,470	7,149	7,000	7,000
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	6,458	751	800	1,200
26	Supplies and materials	931	784	800	1,284
31	Equipment	4,380	3,010	1,536	2,000
42	Insurance Claims and Indemnities	12	4	12	12
43	Interest and Dividends	0	1	1	1
	Total, Other Objects	79,355	83,731	57,852	67,499
	Total, new obligations	169,384	181,036	161,352	178,999
Position Data:					
Average Salary (dollars), ES Position		$166,047	$166,452	$166,452	$166,452
Average Salary (dollars), GS Position		$77,593	$74,702	$74,702	$74,702
Average Grade, GS Position (Grade.Step)		11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5

Shared Funding Projects
(Dollars in thousands)

	2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Estimate	2015 Estimate
Working Capital Fund:				
Administration:				
Beltsville Service Center	$107	$82	$101	$104
Integrated Procurement Systems	87	105	105	109
Mail and Reproduction Management	137	121	104	97
Procurement Operations	-	1	1	1
Subtotal	331	309	311	310
Communications:				
Creative Media and Broadcast Center	24	36	104	100
Correspondence Management:				
Correspondence Management	14	18	16	19
Finance and Management:				
Controller Operations	471	448	243	243
Financial Systems	527	532	511	505
National Finance Center	150	204	241	321
Subtotal	1,148	1,184	994	1,069
Information Technology:				
International Technology Services	-	14	-	-
National Information Technology Center	1,749	1,515	1,176	1,179
Telecommunications Services	498	349	368	304
Subtotal	2,247	1,879	1,544	1,483
Total, Working Capital Fund	3,765	3,425	2,969	2,981

Shared Funding Projects
(Dollars in thousands)

	2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Estimate	2015 Estimate
Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs:				
1890 USDA Initiatives	$33	$33	$34	$34
Advisory Committee Liaison Services	13	10	12	12
Continuity of Operations Planning	19	23	24	24
E-GOV Initiatives HSPD-12	68	75	77	77
Emergency Operations Center	26	26	27	27
Facility and Infrastructure Review and Assessment	2	5	5	5
Faith-Based Initiatives	4	4	4	4
Federal Biobased Products Preferred Procurement Program	4	4	4	4
Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program	22	22	23	23
Honor Awards	1	1	1	1
Human Resources Transformation (includes Diversity)	18	18	19	19
Intertribal Technical Assistance Network	21	0	0	0
Medical Services	12	16	20	20
Personnel and Document Security	1	12	12	12
Preauthorized Funding	38	39	43	43
Retirement Processor Web Application	6	6	7	7
Sign Language Interpreter	34	43	53	53
TARGET Center	10	10	10	10
USDA 1994 Program	9	9	9	9
Virtual University	23	23	24	24
Visitor Information Center/ People's Garden	9	10	11	11
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs	371	389	417	417
E-Gov:				
Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business	1	1	1	1
Enterprise Human Resources Integration	31	28	26	26
E-Rulemaking	-	-	12	12
E-Training	28	24	32	32
Financial Management Line of Business	1	2	2	2
Geospatial Line of Business	-	1	-	-
Human Resources Mgmt Line of Business	3	3	3	3
Integrated Acquisition Environment - Loans and Grants	13	15	22	22
Integrated Acquisition Environment	6	8	8	8
Total, E-Gov	83	83	105	105
NASS Total	4,219	3,898	3,492	3,503

Status of Programs

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

NASS current activities are organized into the following six major areas: (1) agricultural estimates program, (2) census of agriculture (COA) program, (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 PROGRAM

Current Activities:

The NASS agricultural statistics program is conducted through 12 Regional Field Offices serving all 50 States. 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, 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 close to 400 national agricultural statistical reports, covering over 120 crop and 45 livestock items, complemented by additional State agricultural statistical releases. 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 2013, NASS increased the number of livestock commodity reports from six that have a corresponding data quality measure and methodology report. Currently, there are 9 commodities that have data quality reports on the NASS website. Livestock commodity reports is a general category that includes: Cattle on Feed, Dairy, Fish, Hogs & Pigs, Livestock, and Milk Production, Poultry, Sheep & Goats, and Slaughter reports.

- In February 2013, NASS and ERS issued *Broiler Highlights* from the 2012 Agricultural Resource Management Survey of the U.S. broiler industry. During the first three months of 2012, trained enumerators conducted personal interviews with more than 2,000 broiler growers in the 17 largest broiler-producing states. Farmers provided information about their operating costs and farm-related income. The farmers were also asked about feed, housing, and sales during 2011. Highlights of production practices and resource use that are useful to producers and policy makers can be found within this brief report. http://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/index.asp

Data Users Meeting

Chemical Use Program: NASS participated in the August 11–13, 2013 American Phytopathological Society's annual meeting in Austin, Texas. 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 at the meeting. NASS receives ongoing feedback from data users through the website: http://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Ag_Chem_Use_Feedback_Request/index.php

NASS was the featured speaker at the 15th Annual Southern Peanut Growers Conference July 19-21, 2013 to discuss the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS). This 3-day event provides peanut farmers the opportunity to learn more about the industry and issues affecting ARMS. NASS shared the importance of responding to surveys and asked for feedback from the industry on their data needs. NASS receives ongoing feedback from data users through the website: http://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/index.asp

Changes in Reports Issued

In March, 2013 as a result of the sequestration and budget reduction in the Agricultural Estimates Program appropriation, NASS announced a number of programs for suspension. That list included the following:

- All Catfish and Trout Reports including Catfish Feed Deliveries and Catfish Processing
- July Cattle Report
- Potato Stocks Reports
- All Non-Citrus Fruit, Nut and Vegetable Forecasts and Estimates
- June Rice Stocks Report
- All Hops and Hops Stocks Estimates
- Mink Report
- Milk Production Reports including Production, Disposition and Income

NASS later partially restored milk estimates that were based on administrative data from milk market orders. These estimates included total milk production, but did not include total cows milked or the rate of production per cow. This provided critically important data to the milk industry, while saving the cost of conducting a quarterly milk production survey.

Additionally, as a result of the sequestration and budget reduction in the Commodity Credit Corporation funds the reimbursable agreement on behalf of the Farm Service Agency was reduced, NASS announced further programs for suspension. That list included the following:

- June on- and off-farm stocks for Austrian Winter Peas, Chickpeas, Dry Peas and Lentils
- July acreage forecasts for Austrian Winter Peas, Dry Edible Peas and Lentils

USDA's Change in Release Time

Historically, NASS released new reports during a window of time when the commodity trading was down. At the advent of 24 hour trading this changed. NASS was no longer able to release its reports when the market was closed. NASS solicited input from constituents through the Federal Register and collaborated with the office of the Chief Economist, and the World Agriculture Board to arrive at the new release time judged to be most fair.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB) began issuing several major USDA statistical reports at 12:00 p.m. EDT 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 released at 3:00 p.m. did not change.

To ensure a secure release environment, NASS implemented security new efforts.

Research and Development

- NASS is examining model-based estimation techniques to improve the statistical reliability of published forecasts/estimates and to provide accurate error measures. With respect to state-level corn and soybean yields, a Bayesian hierarchical model that incorporates multiple data sources, including current and historical data, and administrative/auxiliary information is being developed. Time series techniques are being utilized to model estimates of hogs and pigs as well as cattle. Small area estimation techniques were 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. This model transferred from research to development and will be operational in 2014. NASS has worked collaboratively with consultants from outside of the agency to develop the methodology for all of these endeavors.

- 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 misclassification of farm status by field enumerators during the June Survey of segments from the area frame. Capture-recapture methods that use the census mailing list in census years and the list frame in non-census years to adjust the area frame's estimate of the number of farms for misclassification are being developed. Measures of uncertainty for the resulting estimates are being produced.

- NASS is exploring 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 the Crops/Stocks and ARMS surveys to assign nonresponse propensity scores to survey samples. Methods to use this information in adaptive design strategies to manage data collection are being fielded and tested with the goal of collecting response more efficiently. Future research will evaluate methods of using this information in statistical estimation.

- NASS began using the Computer Audio Recorded Interview (CARI) system developed by the Research Triangle Institute for the U.S. Census Bureau. The system is intended to improve data quality by allowing evaluation of both data collection instruments and interviewers. NASS continues to evaluate use of CARI and train enumerators to obtain optimum results.

- George Mason University and NASS completed the work on a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) competitive grant titled "A National Crop Progress Monitoring System Based on NASA Earth Science Results." NASS primarily benefited from the technology development which supports the web portal VegScape. The research showed that the vegetative indices (color gradations) are not sufficient to determine the vegetative and reproductive stages of the crops. The web portal VegScape is most useful to identify the green-up and senescence of the crops.

- NASS completed its fourth 48 state Cropland Data Layer (CDL) in 2013 for the 2012 crop year. Additionally, NASS went back, for historical reference, and processed the 2008 CDL, making five years of CDL available.

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Current Activities:

The Census of Agriculture is conducted every 5 years and provides comprehensive data series at the national, State, and county level. It provides a snapshot of the agriculture economy including the number of farms, 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 2013 consisted of data collection, processing, and analysis for the 2012 Census of Agriculture.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

2012 Census of Agriculture

- Data collection began with the announcement of the census via a postcard or autodial followed by a mailing of three million census forms in December 2012. The data collection strategy included two additional follow up mailings, telephone enumeration, and selected personal interviews. NASS realized a desirable response slightly above 80%. Full release of the census of agriculture will be in fiscal year 2014.

- NASS successfully increased the number of Internet reporting from less than 100,000 five years ago to over 280,000 respondents. This was achieved through great effort with:

    - Increased resources into computing power for the server to enable a larger capacity of online users,
    - More testing with the electronic data reporting in terms of user friendly questions,
    - Enhanced screening questions to determine farm status earlier in the questionnaire,
    - Highlighted online reporting in NASS public messaging that electronic data reporting is quicker, easier, secure, and leads to less mail correspondent burden.

- During 2013, NASS continued the Census of Agriculture communications campaign with tactics such as the production of approximately 40 video and 40 audio public service announcements (PSA) featuring national, State, and community agricultural leaders (including PSAs in English and Spanish); and nationwide radio and TV media outreach featuring interviews with NASS spokespeople.

- A workshop was held with representatives of community based organizations (CBOs) in October 2012 to explain the importance of the census of agriculture to all of those involved in farming, regardless of size. NASS requested the assistance of the CBO leaders to spread the message to respond and to help promote trust among respondents who may be less familiar with NASS. The CBO-NASS handbook "Partnering to Count and Serve U.S. Farmers, A Handbook to Increase Participation" was unveiled.

- As the Census questionnaires were being returned, NASS was in the process of a restructuring its field office structure from 46 State offices to 12 regional offices and 34 two person offices. To enable the timely processing, editing, and analysis of the completed forms without disruption from structural changes in the agency, NASS established a centralized editing group at its National Operations Center (NOC) in St. Louis, Missouri. Existing staff in the Field Offices managed the collection and editing of special cases for the 2012 Census of Agriculture while 80 temporary staff at the NOC were hired to complete the centralized editing and analysis of the Census. This enabled NASS to meet Census of Agriculture goals while also moving forward on the field transition.

- Two workshops were conducted to train field staff on Quinquennial census procedures. The first was in October 2012 and covered final preparations for data collection and processing. The second workshop was held in April, 2013 and covered analysis and dissemination. Both workshops were held at the National Operations Center in St. Louis.

- NASS continues to make a strong effort to improve its online products. All products will be available online shortly after their official release. The on-line query system has been enhanced to allow improved downloads of

customized data. Introduction of internet driven dynamic mapping tools will highlight new products in response to the public requests for visual data presentation.

Census Follow-On Surveys

The content and forms design have been completed for the 2013 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey (FRIS) Special Study (Census Follow-on Survey). NASS solicited input from the irrigation industry, the USDA Water Team members, the Environmental Protection Agency, and ERS. The primary purpose of FRIS is to provide a wide range of irrigation information covering water usage, irrigation practices, irrigation by type, irrigation by crop, expenses, sources of irrigation, purchase of energy for pumping water by power source, and use of recycled or reclaimed water. The initial mail-out was early January 2014.

The content and forms design have been completed for the 2013 Census of Aquaculture Special Study (Census Follow-on Survey). NASS solicited input from the aquaculture industry, National Aquaculture Association, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The census of aquaculture collects detailed information relating to production methods, surface water acres and sources, production, sales, point of first sale outlets, and aquaculture distributed for restoration, conservation, or recreational purposes. The initial mail-out was late December 2013.

Research and Development

NASS revised and is in the process of implementing new weighting methodology for the 2012 Census of Agriculture. The new methodology was reviewed by a panel of outside experts, which was convened by the National Academy of Sciences in December 2012. The capture-recapture methodology suggested by the Committee on National Statistics performs adjustments for nonresponse, under-coverage, and misclassification of farm status. To implement the capture-recapture methodology, the 2012 June Area Survey was utilized as the independent survey and matched to the 2012 Census of Agriculture mail list. Separate models were developed to calculate the various probability components and then the probabilities were combined to form the weights for the in-scope census records. Final weights will be produced upon the completion of data review and analysis. This will be the first time that census estimates will be published with standard errors at the county level.

Research for the Future: Preliminary review of the 2012 reported data began with limited follow-up interviews with producers who may have reported inaccurate data. In addition, comparisons of errors in reported data in the 2007 and 2012 censuses were initiated. The intent of these early evaluations is to assess potential areas for future improvement to the census report form or data collection procedures. The results from these small scale tests will be used as inputs to plans for the pre-2017 Census Content Test.

ACTIVITIES COVERING BOTH AGRICULTURAL ESTIMATES & THE CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

Standardization

NASS is recognized as USDA's statistical agency and works regularly with OMB staff and agencies on Information Collection Requests (ICRs). In addition to evaluating and assuring each NASS survey meets sound statistical methodology guidelines, NASS also assists other USDA agencies in the review of their ICRs. In most cases, this involves a thorough review of their survey methodology. In 2013, NASS assisted the following agencies with ICR reviews: Forest Service, Food and Nutrition Service, Agricultural Marketing Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Farm Services Agency.

NASS places a high priority, as required by the OMB IRC process, on receiving input from both data users and farm operators with regard to improving data collection processes, as well as data timeliness, quality, and usability. Input and suggestions are received from numerous data users through the renewal of the OMB docket process. In addition, our state and regional directors meet with grower's associations and data users from around the country to solicit input on program and policy changes that will strengthen the agricultural industry. NASS also receives input from the Agricultural Advisory Committee, which represents a wide-spectrum of agricultural leaders. NASS is pro-active in incorporating improvements into our programs through the OMB docket process. For example, in 2013, NASS increased the visibility

of our confidentiality and security policies, including a website update, to highlight the importance of safe guarding respondents' data.

Cyber and Physical Security

- In compliance with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002, NASS successfully re-accredited one of its major systems. All six NASS Information Technology systems have current Authority to Operate (ATO).

- 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 2013.

- In addition, system and network administrators with significant security responsibilities were required to complete security-focused courses specific to their field of expertise, and Information Technology Division managers were required to complete role-based security training. NASS also earned a 100 percent completion on both of these key Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) requirements.

- In support of Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-12 and USDA mandates, NASS aggressively deployed use of Personal Identity Verification (PIV) badges, or LincPass for both physical and logical access. NASS will continue to deploy the use of LincPass badges to all its users in FY 2014.

- As required by FISMA and to ensure utmost security, NASS continues to assess its network's perimeter protection. It performed a number of penetration tests on its public facing websites and applications, as well as to its physical network.

Stakeholder Engagement

- **Data Users Meeting**: The 2013 Data Users Meeting was held in Chicago, Illinois on October 21, 2013. The meeting provided an open forum for data users to ask questions and provide feedback about the entire USDA statistics program. 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**: On December 31, 2012, the Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics welcomed back 15 incumbent and 5 newly appointed Committee members. In total, twenty-six candidates applied for consideration to the Committee. The Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics met via a teleconference on April 3, 2013. Items of discussion included the NASS budget and subsequent agricultural estimates program suspensions; status of the NASS reorganization; and a status update on the 2012 Census of Agriculture. No recommendations were forthcoming from this meeting.

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 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. An Application Programming Interface (API) was released in mid-2013 that allows developers to write applications that directly access data in our online Quick Stats database. This should further enhance the usefulness of these data.

- Using our media subscription services, NASS maintained media lists for every state and key commodities and distributed 37 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 2013, NASS increased its Twitter following to nearly 15,000 followers by sending daily tweets on interesting and timely topics. NASS' tweets achieved more than 4.5 million impressions this year. In June, NASS held a crop-weather twitter chat with NASS' Statistics Division Director and USDA's meteorologist.

- NASS had 15 posts on USDA's blog, contributed to several other posts by REE and AMS, and utilized USDA's YouTube channel to post public service announcements to promote the Census and other surveys such as the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS).

- In 2013, NASS transitioned its employee newsletter to a blog format, moving away from the quarterly print edition used previously. The new format allows the agency to better maintain two-way communications between its employees, while also reducing costs by reducing the newsletter design and print costs.

OPERATIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS TO STREAMLINE BUSINESS PROCESSES

During 2013, 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.

Field Office Structure

The National Agricultural Statistics Service has deployed a multifaceted transformation over the past 5 years that focused on making the organization more nimble to respond to data needs in support of American agriculture. The process was driven by focusing Agency resources to review the current business model, organizational structure, infrastructure, and statistical practices. NASS' goal is to transition to a *centralized* structure with *standardized* processes and applications and a business model focused on providing relevant solutions.

In FY 2013, NASS completed the transformation from an organization that operated in a distributed model with large amounts of duplicity within its systems and processes to a centralized organization that has harnessed the benefits of standardized processes and integrated enterprise level systems architecture to offer constituents the opportunity for flexible, needs based solutions with reduced resource requirements.

The advances in infrastructure, adoption of standardized survey processing, and integration of program enhancements based on Agency-driven research positioned NASS to further reduce its staffing level, and consolidate primary Agency functions to 12 regional locations serving all 50 States. The newly established, Regional Field Office structure provides for continued statistical analysis, report preparation, special state statistical products and services in a centralized, streamlined environment. This new structure will also allow the staff in each of the state offices to focus on serving that state, maintaining relationships with producers, and working one-on-one with producers to collect data.

NASS has avoided major programmatic changes based on its investment in the redesign of how and where the organization does business. NASS maintained its core agricultural estimates program and conducted the 2012 Census of Agriculture with 12 percent fewer staff than in 2007 during a comparable workload.

National Operations Center

The National Operations Center facility is located in St. Louis, MO opened on schedule in October 2011 and houses four NASS groups; 1) the National Operations Division, 2) the new Heartland Regional office, 3) the Census Edit Unit as part of the Census and Survey Division working remotely at the NOC but only operational during the data collection,

processing, and analysis year of the census cycle, and 4) a group of Information Technology Division employees working remotely.

Current Activities:

National Operations Division - Centralizing Telephoning, Frames Maintenance Forms Processing and Training

The National Operations Division (NOD), while located in St. Louis, MO, operates independent of the Field Office Division. The NOD provides increased telephone data collection capacity in a centralized environment, centralizes sampling frame activities, consistent training of telephone and field interviewers through focused deliberate delivery of a standardized training protocol. Work at the NOD continues to reach full production capabilities.

The NOD is designed to complete a large portion of the Agency's telephone data collection. The NOD Call Center includes 154 calling seats, 24 seats for coaches and supervisors, and a 12-station call monitoring room to enhance quality assurance. In 2013, nearly 1,679,000 telephone calls were completed by NOD interviewers and over 3,000,000 minutes logged of incoming telephone calls from respondents.

The Agency's interviewer training program is developed at the NOD and enhanced training protocols have proved efficient in providing interviewers the skills, knowledge, and abilities they need to perform at a high level. At the end of 2013, there were 6 supervisors, 29 coaches, and 263 telephone interviewers on board at the NOD. NASS will continue to select and train well qualified telephone interviewers. Current plans call for the hiring of 100 additional intermittent interviewers in order to maintain staff calling operations six days a week, 15 hours per day. In addition, NASS will continue to improve the training protocols to improve standards, efficiency and data quality.

Another component of the NOD is the Frames Maintenance Group. The Agency's national list sampling frame defines a target population for drawing survey samples or conducting a census. This Group's mission is to develop, maintain and allow for efficient sampling of U.S. farms and ranches. 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 2013, the Group updated more than 430,000 records to make sampling, mailing, data collection, and summarization efforts more efficient.

The Forms Processing Group receives the paper-based survey questionnaires that are completed and mailed by farmers and ranchers. These respondent-completed forms are tracked and accounted for to make sure the respondents are not contacted again by telephone. Completed forms are scanned for image retrieval and the data are keyed into a centralized database. In 2013, the Group completed these activities for over 490,000 forms.

The Surveys Development Group supports and develops computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) programs used by the Agency's Call Centers to conduct interviews over the telephone with farmers and ranchers. CATI is a complex process that requires survey sample and call management, scheduling, reporting and call monitoring that requires careful coordination. In 2013, the Group supported over 80 CATI interviewing programs and developed 18 new programs.

During 2013, the NOD expanded its operational footprint by opening its new print and mail facility to serve NASS needs. The print and mail facility is designed to gain greater efficiency in the NOD's operational and production practices. Plans are to continue to acquire new technology, equipment, and capabilities that directly support the NOD's ability to provide a broader and more diverse range of print and mail services.

For years beyond, our standardization, training, and scale will allow cost efficiencies while improving data quality. While difficult to show specific savings NASS was able to operate within budget during the 2013 continuing resolutions and sequester to complete the data collection of the 2012 Census of Agriculture and most of the planned surveys for the Agricultural Estimates.

Quality Management Program

- To help ensure the utility, objectivity, and integrity of the statistical information NASS provides its customers and stakeholders, NASS developed and documented a quality management model. While it will take some time to fully implement the model, NASS has begun work on several components, including the development of a

comprehensive and cohesive Quality Assurance Framework of standards and guidelines. This framework will reflect all the requirements of the OMB's *Standards and Guidelines for Statistical Surveys* in the context of NASS programs, products, and processes.

- NASS developed a quality control system for the Census Edit Review Process to ensure the quality of the Census editing operation and provide training to editors, where needed.

- NASS developed an electronic Quality Control system used by the National Operations Center (NOC) call center to document monitoring sessions and evaluate enumerator performance. Future plans include implementing the system in NASS Data Collection Centers (DCC's).

- NASS is researching better ways to measure and improve its processes, data products, and services. Using data and quality metrics to manage and improve processes and products will help NASS achieve greater efficiencies, shorter cycle times, reduced costs, and improved data quality.

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 2013, 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. NASS completed development work on ten systems and implemented these systems into production.

In March 2013, a paper documenting NASS re-engineering efforts was published in the Journal of Official Statistics, a premier international publication for survey statistics. The paper titled "Consolidation and Standardization of Survey Operations at a Decentralized Federal Statistical Agency" documents the accomplishments of NASS moving from a decentralized to a centralized structure.

Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing

Achievements 2013

Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) was fully implemented in 2013. Project goals were completed six months early. Implementation of the program has generated many efficiency opportunities, reaching far beyond the scope of the original initiative. A white paper, entitled "New Solutions, Challenges and Opportunities: "*CAPI the NASS Way*" is in the Journal of Official Statistics. The program has been recognized by Fed Tech, Forbes and Government Executive magazines, received the 2013 Fierce Government IT innovation award, has been accepted for publication and selected as one of thirty finalists for the 2014 Igniting Innovation awards. It has also been mentioned as a successful use case for mobile technology at a Senate hearing.

Current Activities:

The program has moved into an optimization phase. New features for device management, signal mitigation, remote management of the sample, and maximization of benefits of the program are being explored. This phase provides the foundation for the incorporation of large complex enumerative surveys where NASS will realize additional quality and cost benefits. This phase sets the stage for new innovation such as: adaptive design, propensity scoring, and cognitive testing, real time cost analysis, interactive online training and marketing tools. Leveraged with other efficiency initiatives, CAPI provides limitless opportunities to streamline business processes.

The CAPI program continues to provide inter-department expertise by collaborating with the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Census Bureau in the development and deployment of a 2020 Census Mobile Solution. In addition, the NASS CAPI solution has been shared with mobile technology industry leaders, both Federal and private, through numerous speaking engagements at multiple conferences.

Video Teleconferencing

During 2013, the video teleconferencing (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 2013, NASS continued to expand the use of "distance" meetings, mitigating the expense of transporting staff physically to various meetings. The agency will utilize this resource for staff on-boarding and to deliver training delayed due to budget constraints.

Research and Development

During year three 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 include: 1) development of automatic stratification models and an algorithm to minimize sample variance; 2) trial development of a permanent grid in two states; 3) models developed to combine the Cropland Data Layer with a new variance calculation, June Area Survey estimates, and the adjusting Farm Service Agency data for bias due to under coverage.

NASS, working cooperatively with Iowa State University, built a prototype data collection application to collect data for the June Area Survey. The Geographic Information System tools give the field enumerators the ability to delineate field maps and collect information on the utilization of the land in hand held devices. Testing in the summer of 2013 was designed to determine if the farmer reported acreage is different than GIS calculated acreage.

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 and selective editing. 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 will incorporate significance editing into the operational survey programs in FY 2014. This research will reduce costs associated with manual editing of questionnaires and result in higher data quality due to a consistent automated edit.

WORK PERFORMED FOR OTHERS – REIMBURSABLE PROGRAM

Current Activities:

NASS conducts surveys for and lends technical expertise to other Federal agencies, State governments, and private 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. 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.

External Project Agreements

NASS partners extensively with external state and Federal governmental organizations, universities, and agricultural commodity organizations to provide high quality, rigorous, and standardized statistical consultation. NASS provides statistical services on a fee-for-service basis and fully recovers all costs. Statistically accepted methods, practices, and processes are administered. These procedures have been streamlined and enhanced to provide maximum flexibility and design adaptability. In FY 2013, the review process was established and best practices were drafted for review by Statistical Methodology staff. A variety of agricultural community data needs are requested, which augment the on-going

Federally-funded statistical program. Whether economic, environmental, or opinion-based; external clients collaborate with NASS to effectively conduct longitudinal studies, grant-based research, and surveys. The external project agreement program places NASS in a position to be responsive to the changing needs of data users. NASS continues to strengthen its commitment to external stakeholders by maximizing resources, eliminating duplication, minimizing respondent burden, and leveraging resources which utilize consistent and sound statistical methodology. To date, NASS has worked on more than 390 projects since beginning this process in 2012.

Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Statistics (REGStats)

NASS worked with a USDA interagency team to implement the on-line, searchable, *REGStats* tool. The tool provides public access to summary statistics by race, ethnicity, and gender, on applicants and participants for programs administered by the Farm Service Agency, the Risk Management Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development. Providing *REGStats* met the requirements of Sections 14006 and 14007 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2279-1).

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Pesticide Data Program

NASS and AMS continued collaboration in FY 2013 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 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. The data produced by the PDP are reported in an annual summary by AMS.

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 2013 crop year were soybeans, winter wheat, durum wheat, and other spring wheat. Phase II target commodities for the 2012 crop year were soybeans for production practices, cost, and return data. The 2012 ARMS Phase III, conducted in the winter of 2013, focused on calendar year 2012 farm financial data for all types and sizes of farms, in addition to the soybean enterprise production costs. In 2014 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 is the product of a two year research effort with the National Institutes of Statistical Science and in collaboration with ERS. It 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 2013, DOLETA and NASS renewed their agreement where NASS would collect data from producers on number of

workers, hours worked and wage rates. In 2013, the Agricultural Labor Survey was conducted in April and the report was issued in May, a second survey was conducted in October with the report issued in December.

National Woodland Owner Survey (USDA Forest Service)

In 2013, NASS conducted an official census of forest owners in the United States. It was aimed at increasing understanding of woodland owners who are the critical link between forest and society. The Forest Service mailed approximately 4,000 questionnaires to individuals and private groups that own the woodlands where the USDA Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis program has established forest monitoring plots. NASS conducted telephone follow up for nonresponse surveys on about 665 mailings.

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. Five annual surveys have been conducted providing cash rental rate indications for 2008 through 2013. 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. Survey results can be view at: http://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/index.asp

Natural Resource Environmental Indicators

NASS received funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 2013 to continue the Conservation Effects Assessment Program (CEAP) surveys. The 2013 CEAP collected information from farmers in California Bay Delta Watershed about their farming and conservation practices on cultivated and non-cultivated cropland. NASS continued collaboration with NRCS and Iowa State University in developing the sample utilizing the Natural Resources Inventory points.

Survey Marketing and Promotions

During 2013, NASS 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 included distribution of national news releases, blogs, feature stories, talking points, e-mails, and tweets. NASS created and distributed production story packages with interviews for local radio around the country. NASS Public Affairs conducted a strong public messaging campaign to encourage electronic reporting as quicker, easier, secure, and leading to less mail correspondent burden during the FY 2013 data collection effort for the 2012 Census of Agriculture. This effort contributed to the significantly increased number of survey responses via Internet reporting.

International Technical Assistance Provided

NASS provided technical assistance and training to improve agricultural statistics programs in nine countries. In 2013, short-term assignments supported work in Armenia, Bangladesh, Georgia, Haiti, India, Rwanda, Serbia, Tanzania and Uganda. 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 151 visitors representing 19 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 **Goal 2**: Create Growth Opportunities in Rural America	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. Objective 2.1: Provide statistical data on new agricultural markets.	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:

- In support of Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-12 and USDA mandates, NASS aggressively deployed use of Personal Identity Verification (PIV) badges, or LincPass for both physical and logical access. NASS will continue to deploy the use of LincPass badges to all its users in FY 2014.

- 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.

- NASS began using the Computer Audio Recorded Interview (CARI) system developed by the Research Triangle Institute for the U.S. Census Bureau. The system is intended to improve data quality by allowing evaluation of both data collection instruments and interviewers. NASS continues to evaluate use of CARI and train enumerators to obtain optimum results.

- Data collection began with the announcement of the census via a postcard or autodial followed by a mailing of three million census forms in December 2012. The data collection strategy included two additional follow up mailings, telephone enumeration, and selected personal interviews. NASS realized a desirable response slightly above 80%. Full release of the census of agriculture will be in May 2014.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2015 Proposed Resource Level:

- Agricultural Estimates/Census of Agriculture – In 2015 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 2015: 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. As part of the Presidential Pollinator Health Initiative, the requested funding will allow NASS to focus resources and its expertise to conduct surveys to provide baseline data to estimate the extent of honey bee Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), and quantitative information on potential causes of these significant losses in pollinator populations that will help quantify the extent of honey bee colony CCD and related issues on pollinator health.

- Census of Agriculture – NASS will 1) continue planning and begin preparations for the 2017 Census of Agriculture; 2) restore the chemical use data series to the 2010 level; 3) restore the fruit, vegetables, and nut survey to the 2010 level; 4) continue producing the Current Agricultural Industrial Reports including: 4a) Fats and Oils: Production, Consumption and Stocks, 4b) Fats and Oils: Oilseed Crushings, 4c) Consumption on the Cotton System and Stocks, and 4d) Flour Milling Products; 5) Conduct the quinquennial COA special study Census of Horticulture, and 5) conduct the Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Land (TOTAL) survey which has been a Follow-onto the Census of Agriculture every 10 years up to the 1999 program. Data from this new TOTAL survey will inform policy decisions for USDA programs linked to farm landownership and rental arrangements, inform research on generational transitions in agriculture, and provide updated parameters for the National Accounts at Economic Research Service provides to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (Department of Commerce).

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

- Agricultural Estimates - NASS completed its fourth Cropland Data Layer (CDL) in 2013 for the 2012 crop year. NASS also went back, for historical reference, and processed the 2008 CDL, making five years of CDL available.

- Census of Agriculture - NASS successfully increased the number of COA Internet reporting from less than 100,000 five years ago to over 280,000 respondents. This was achieved through great effort with: 1) Increased resources were put into computing power for the server to enable a larger capacity of online users, 2) More testing with the electronic data reporting in terms of user friendly questions, 3) Enhanced screening questions to determine farm status earlier in the questionnaire, 4) Highlighted online reporting in NASS public messaging that electronic data reporting is quicker, easier, secure, and leads to less mail correspondent burden.

- Census of Agriculture - The NASS Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey provided 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 was 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.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2015 Proposed Resource Level:

- Agricultural Estimates - This geospatial improvement initiative will enhance the current satellite based agricultural statistics monitoring program. It will research and institute systems to provide satellite based crop condition, soil moisture, crop progress (phenological development of crops), crop yields, and begin research and development to provide data on emissions of greenhouse gasses associated with agriculture at local levels. This will leverage strategic cooperative partnerships with USDA Climate Hubs and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Regional Climatic Centers. This program is meant to extend the monitoring capabilities of both CropScape and VegScape programs and provide new, objective information that supports both the production of agriculture statistics while extending these products to local levels. This basic statistical information is the foundational information for agricultural, environmental, and climate researchers to have local, factual information on U.S. croplands. Additionally, it is anticipated to be of significant benefit to agricultural researchers to have field level geo-referenced data.

- 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 - 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 restored the annual Fruit and Vegetable program in 2014 fulfilling data users' requests and to provide acreage statistics necessary when conducting the chemical use program.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2015 Proposed Resource Level:

- In 2015, NASS will augment the annual Fruit and Vegetable program by providing the in-season forecasts for fruits and nuts. These are needed by industry and include a variety of reports including the monthly *Crop Production* reports, annual *Cherry Production* report (issued in June), and the annual *Cranberries* report (issued in August). Additionally, NASS will resume publishing a preliminary Annual Summary for all noncitrus fruits and nuts in January. The annual data is required to conduct the fruit and vegetable chemical use surveys.

  NASS Regional Offices will collaborate with outside entities in agreements to produce reports containing additional detail for specific crops. For vegetables, NASS will resume publishing in-season forecasts in the September *Vegetables* report. NASS will collect data for these forecasts from producers, processors, and others using a series of grower and processor surveys. NASS will also utilize administrative data whenever available to supplement the survey data.

- In 2015 NASS will restore the remaining chemical use data series to the 2010 level, including data on fruit and vegetables, and major row crops on an alternating year basis. Appropriated funding is necessary for this initiative to ensure equal access to Federal statistics.

  The chemical use data collected by NASS have been used in building a database for the USDA Pesticide Data Program. This database is used by the Department to evaluate the safety of the Nation's food supply. Additionally, the implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), in 1996, increased the need for actual, reliable chemical use data. FQPA requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct an accelerated review of tolerance levels for re-registration of pesticide products. Part of the review includes using actual chemical usage data that only growers can provide. The absence of these data has created difficulties for EPA and industry to effectively conduct and analyze these reviews. In the absence of actual data, EPA is often in the position to assume maximum label rates are being applied on all acreage. This has the potential of over-estimating actual pesticide usage.

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	2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Estimate	Increase or Decrease	2015 Estimate
Department Strategic Goal 1 - Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving.					
Agricultural Estimates	$112,383	$104,008	$112,357	8,786	$121,143
Staff Years	709	646	681	-2	679
Census of Agriculture	52,481	72,507	37,942	10,102	48,044
Staff Years	230	323	200	30	230
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	164,864	176,515	150,299	18,888	169,187
Total Staff Years, Strategic Goal	939	969	881	28	909
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	2,500	3,300
Staff Years	-	-	-	10	10
Census of Agriculture	-	-	4,500	-4,500	-
Staff Years	-	-	28	-28	-
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	800	800	5,300	-2,000	3,300
Total Staff Years, Strategic Goal	-	-	28	-18	10
USDA Strategic Goal 4 - Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious and balanced meals.					
Agricultural Estimates	3,721	3,721	3,504	3,008	6,512
Staff Years	7	10	22	39	61
Census of Agriculture	-	-	2,250	-	-
Staff Years	-	-	2	-	-
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	3,721	3,721	5,754	3,008	6,512
Total Staff Years, Strategic Goal	7	10	24	39	61
Total Costs, All Strategic Goals	169,385	181,036	161,353	+19,896	178,999
Total FTEs, All Strategic Goals	946	979	933	49	980
Lapsing Balances	+74	80	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	+370	146	-	-	-
Total, Available	169,829	181,262	161,353	19,896	178,999
Rescission	-	4,860	-	-	-
Sequestration	-	7,979	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY	-205	-370	-	-	-
Other Adjustments (Net)	-11,006	-14,254	-	-	-
Total Appropriation	158,617	179,477	161,353	19,896	178,999

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 2012 census to maximize coverage rates and continually strives to maintain or improve upon this for the 2017 census. As a result NASS successfully increased the number of Internet reporting from less than 100,000 five years ago to over 280,000 respondents. This was achieved through great effort with:

- Increased resources into computing power for the server to enable a larger capacity of online users,
- More testing with the electronic data reporting in terms of user friendly questions,
- Enhanced screening questions to determine farm status earlier in the questionnaire,
- Highlighted online reporting in NASS public messaging that electronic data reporting is quicker, easier, secure, and leads to less mail correspondent burden.

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 Measure	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target
a. Usefulness - The accessibility, relevance, coherence, comparability, and usefulness of NASS official reports and products and services as measured by ACSI. /1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
b. Timeliness - Percent of time official reports are released on the date and time pre-specified to data users.	99.8%	99.8%	99.6%	98.7%	98.8%	98.0%	98.0%
c. Census Coverage – Percent of United States farms or ranches covered by the census mail list.	N/A	N/A	N	N/A	87.7%	N/A	N/A
d. Census Response Rates – Percent of census mail list respondents with a usable report./2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	80.3%	N/A	N/A

/1 - The American Customer Satisfaction Index is normally only measured every 3 years. Due to funding reductions the 2012 ACSI measure was delayed, due to sequestration the 2013 measure was also delayed. However, the usefulness of NASS reports is monitored annually and efforts are continually made to ensure USDA is meeting the

/2- 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.

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	2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Estimate	2015 Estimate
Agricultural Estimates				
Salary expenses	$63,077	$72,709	$75,740	$78,510
Data collection (NASDA)	26,357	20,000	21,800	23,000
Contracts	700	550	750	750
Travel/ Transportation	858	1,160	1,700	900
Printing	158	93	130	130
Hardware/ Software	9,301	370	4,492	2,632
Postage/ Shipping/ contingencies	2,546	5,546	2,645	7,431
Indirect costs	9,385	3,579	5,100	7,000
Total Costs	112,383	104,008	112,357	120,353
FTEs	709	646	681	679
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Agricultural Estimates Goal 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Timeliness - Agricultural Estimates Goal 1	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Census of Agriculture				
Salary expenses	26,390	24,026	23,100	30,990
Data collection (NASDA)	-	13,143	2,500	4,000
Contracts	6,000	5,500	3,710	3,690
Travel/ Transportation	7,800	9,281	2,600	2,300
Printing	30	100	30	30
Hardware/ Software	2,541	559	2,505	1,324
Postage/ Shipping/ contingencies	4,150	12,800	300	370
Indirect costs	5,570	7,098	3,197	5,340
Total Costs	52,481	72,507	37,942	48,044
FTEs	230	323	200	230
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Timeliness - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%
Census Coverage - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	N/A	87.7%	N/A	N/A
Census Response Rates/2 - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	N/A	80.3%	N/A	N/A
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Costs, Strategic Goal 1	164,864	176,515	150,299	168,397
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal 1	939	969	881	909

/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.

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	2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Estimate	2015 Estimate
Agricultural Estimates				
Salary expenses	-	-	-	1,000
Data Ccollection (NASDA)	-	-	-	70
Contracts	800	800	800	1,600
Travel/ Transportation	-	-	-	100
Printing	-	-	-	20
Hardware/ Software	-	-	-	400
Postage/ Shipping/ contingencies	-	-	-	10
Indirect costs	-	-	-	100
Total Costs	800	800	800	3,300
FTEs	-	-	-	10
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Agricultural Estimates Goal 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Timeliness - Agricultural Estimates Goal 2	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Census of Agriculture				
Salary expenses	-	-	2,790	-
Data Ccollection (NASDA)	-	-	1,300	-
Contracts	-	-	80	-
Travel/ Transportation	-	-	100	-
Printing	-	-	20	-
Hardware/ Software	-	-	110	-
Postage/ Shipping/ contingencies	-	-	20	-
Indirect costs	-	-	80	-
Total Costs	-	-	4,500	-
FTEs	-	-	28	-
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Census of Agriculture Goal 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Timeliness - Census of Agriculture Goal 2	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%
Census Coverage - Census of Agriculture Goal 1	N/A	87.7%	N/A	N/A
Census Response Rates/2 - Census of Agriculture Goal 1.	N/A	80.3%	N/A	N/A
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Costs, Strategic Goal 2	800	800	5,300	3,300
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal 2	0	0	28	10

/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.

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

Program / Program Items	2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Estimate	2015 Estimate
Agricultural Estimates				
Salary expenses	562	570	570	1,000
Contracts	2,241	2,231	2,014	4,562
Travel/ Transportation	393	400	400	800
Printing	21	20	20	40
Hardware/ Software	223	200	200	400
Indirect costs	281	300	300	500
Total Costs	3,721	3,721	3,504	7,302
FTEs	7	10	22	61
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Agricultural Estimates Goal 4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Timeliness - Agricultural Estimates Goal 4	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Census of Agriculture				
Salary expenses	-	-	1,250	-
Data collection (NASDA)	-	-	200	-
Contracts	-	-	200	-
Travel/ Transportation	-	-	200	-
Printing	-	-	50	-
Hardware/ Software	-	-	100	-
Postage/ Shipping/ contingencies	-	-	50	-
Indirect costs	-	-	200	-
Total Costs	-	-	2,250	-
FTEs	-	-	2	-
Performance Measure:				
Usefulness/1 - Census of Agriculture Goal 4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Timeliness - Census of Agriculture Goal 4	98.7%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%
Census Coverage - Census of Agriculture Goal 4	N/A	87.7%	N/A	N/A
Census Response Rates/2 - Census of Agriculture Goal 4	N/A	80.3%	N/A	N/A
Cost per measure (unit cost)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Costs, Strategic Goal 4	3,721	3,721	5,754	7,302
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal 4	7	10	24	61
Agricultural Estimates				
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	116,904	108,529	116,661	130,955
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal	716	656	703	750
Census of Agriculture				
Total Costs, Strategic Goal	52,481	72,507	44,692	48,044
Total FTEs, Strategic Goal	230	323	230	230
NASS Total				
Total Costs, All Strategic Goals	169,384	181,036	161,352	178,999
Total FTEs, All Strategic Goals	946	979	933	980

/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.