

2025 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES - NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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PREFACE

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the “Budget” is in regard to the 2025 Budget, unless otherwise noted. All references to years refer to fiscal year, except where specifically noted. The budgetary tables throughout this document show actual amounts for 2022 and 2023, annualized Continuing Resolution levels for 2024, and the President’s Budget request for 2025. Amounts for 2024 estimated levels include: non-enacted amounts such as Full-Time Equivalent levels, fleet levels, information technology investment levels, recovery levels, transfers in and out, balances available end of year, and obligation levels.

Throughout this publication, the “2018 Farm Bill” is used to refer to the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Most programs funded by the 2018 Farm Bill are funded through 2023. Amounts shown in 2024 and 2025 for most Farm Bill programs reflect those confirmed in the baseline.

Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, sequestration is included in the numbers for mandatory programs in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

In tables throughout this document, amounts equal to zero (0) are displayed as dashes (-). Amounts less than 0.5 and greater than zero are rounded and shown as a zero (0). This display treatment is used to prevent the masking of non-zero amounts that do not round up to one (1).

AGENCY-WIDE**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, Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa Islands. 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 (Title 7 U.S. Code 2204g).

Agricultural Estimates Programs (AEP)

In the AEP, NASS annually publishes approximately 450 agricultural statistical national reports and thousands of additional agricultural statistical State reports, covering more than 120 crops, 45 livestock items, and 12 major economic and environmental categories. These releases are complemented by State agricultural statistical releases. These basic and objective data are critical to maintain an orderly association between the consumption, supply, marketing, expenses, and income sectors of agriculture. NASS uses scientifically designed surveys to provide the basis for developing estimates of production, supply price, and other aspects of the agricultural economy. Officially 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 regional 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 economics by leveling the playing field. All parties have equal access to official statistics. NASS regularly surveys thousands of operators of farms, ranches, and agribusiness 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 Programs (COA)

The Census of Agriculture is taken every five 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 Census of Agriculture data collection is conducted in close cooperation with the Nation’s agricultural user group and farmer organizations. The Census of Agriculture 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 survey program. Under the Census of Agriculture appropriation in 2015, NASS started publishing the Current Agricultural Industrial Reports (CAIR). Full release of the 2022 Census of Agriculture will be in 2024, currently scheduled for February 13, 2024.

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., a National Operations Center in St. Louis, Missouri, and a network of 12 regional field offices that serve all 50 States operating through cooperative agreements with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) or universities. As of September 30, 2023, there were 822 permanent full-time employees, including 387 in the headquarters office and 435 in field offices.

OIG AND GAO REPORTS

No audits to report.

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTEs**Table NASS-1. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations	\$190,162	729	\$211,076	733	\$211,076	733	\$195,964	744
Total Discretionary Appropriations	190,162	729	211,076	733	211,076	733	195,964	744
Total Adjusted Appropriation.....	190,162	729	211,076	733	211,076	733	195,964	744
Balance Available, SOY	176	-	182	-	154	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other.....	9,921	-	11,134	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	200,259	729	222,392	733	211,230	733	195,964	744
Balance Available, EOY	-182	-	-154	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations	200,077	729	222,238	733	211,230	733	195,964	744
Other USDA:								
AMS, pesticide cert. and base month	1,236	6	1,046	5	98	3	98	4
ARS, Nutrient Data Laboratory.....	170	-	16	-	19	-	19	-
APHIS.....	531	-	321	-	648	2	648	2
ERS	5,896	39	9,091	39	9,041	39	9,041	39
FAS	650	1	611	1	458	1	458	1
FS	93	-	-	-	83	-	83	-
FSA	6,401	35	6,136	35	6,136	35	3,636	35
NRCS.....	3,000	6	7,049	6	15,565	11	5,549	11
OCIO.....	219	-	86	-	36	-	36	-
WAOB, Lock-up.....	18	-	19	-	19	-	19	-
WCF.....	4,750	6	6,000	6	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous USDA Reimbursable	20	-	200	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other USDA	22,984	93	30,575	92	32,103	91	19,587	92
Total, Agriculture Available	223,243	822	252,967	825	243,333	824	215,551	836
Other Federal Funds:								
American Pecan Council.....	-	-	225	1	241	1	241	1
DHS	-	-	150	1	-	-	-	-
DOI, BLM grazing fees survey	79	1	82	-	82	1	82	1
Health & Human Services	-	-	52	-	-	-	-	-
NASA	-	-	15	-	223	1	-	-
United Soybean Council	-	-	26	-	28	-	-	-
University of Wisconsin.....	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
USGS (RDD)	5	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other Federal	84	1	553	2	577	3	323	2
Non-Federal Funds:								
State Agencies - survey work	3,304	12	3,043	12	2,463	12	2,463	12
Total, Non-Federal	3,304	12	3,043	12	2,463	12	2,463	12
Total Available, NASS.....	226,631	835	256,563	839	246,373	839	218,337	850

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTEs**Table NASS-2. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs**

Item	2022 Actual			2023 Actual			2024 Estimated			2025 Estimated		
	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	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	13	37	24	13	37	24	13	37	24	13	37
GS-14.....	70	59	129	72	59	131	72	59	131	72	59	131
GS-13.....	198	59	257	198	59	257	198	59	257	198	62	260
GS-12.....	30	173	203	30	173	203	30	173	203	30	173	203
GS-11.....	15	22	37	15	22	37	15	22	37	15	22	37
GS-10.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-9.....	15	47	62	15	47	62	15	47	62	15	47	62
GS-8.....	5	35	40	5	35	40	5	35	40	5	35	40
GS-7.....	3	28	31	3	28	31	3	28	31	3	28	31
GS-6.....	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3	3
GS-5.....	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3	3
GS-4.....	-	4	4	-	4	4	-	4	4	-	4	4
GS-3.....	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	2
Total Permanent....	371	449	820	373	449	822	373	449	822	373	452	825
Unfilled, EOY.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Perm. FT EOY	371	449	820	373	449	822	373	449	822	373	452	825
FTE*.....	375	460	835	383	456	839	383	456	839	394	456	850

*Total FTEs are all inclusive of workforce categories including temporary positions.

VEHICLE FLEET**Motor Vehicle Fleet**

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 and 31 statistical offices that serve all 50 States. The NASS fleet is comprised primarily of sport utility vehicles (SUVs) that allow passengers and equipment to travel easily to farms, ranches, fields and trade shows. Among the 12 regional offices and 31 State offices, there are 4 NASS owned vehicles and 45 vehicles leased from General Services Administration (GSA). While all 12 NASS regional offices and 31 State 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 vehicles' use and costs. 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 data are collected and reported accurately.

At the end of 2023, NASS had 49 vehicles; 4 owned and 45 GSA leased vehicles.

Replacement Criteria

NASS retires or replaces vehicles based upon age, utilization, operating costs, and maintenance costs. NASS always replaces vehicles with a more efficient and cost-effective model.

Table NASS-3. Size, Composition, and Annual Costs of Motor Vehicle Fleet

	Sedans and Station Wagons	Vans	SUVs	Light Trucks 4X2	Light Trucks 4X4	Medium Duty Vehicles	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles	Total Vehicles	Annual Operating Costs
2018 End of Year Operating Inventory	1	3	21	-	24	1	-	-	50	\$238,000
2022 End of Year Operating Inventory	1	3	20	-	24	1	-	-	49	247,365
2023 Actual Acquisitions	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	
2023 Actual Disposals	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	
2023 End of Year Operating Inventory	1	3	20	-	24	1	-	-	49	286,178
2024 Planned Acquisitions.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2024 Planned Disposals.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2024 End of Year Operating Inventory	1	3	20	-	24	1	-	-	49	323,376
2025 Planned Acquisitions.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2025 Planned Disposals.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2025 End of Year Operating Inventory	1	3	20	-	24	1	-	-	49	365,384

Note: Number of vehicles by type include vehicles owned by the agency and leased from commercial sources or GSA.

Annual Operating Costs excludes acquisition costs and gains from sale of vehicles as shown in FAST.

Table NASS-4. Statement of Proposed Purchase of Passenger Motor Vehicles

Fiscal Year	Net Active Fleet, SOY	Disposals	Replacements	Additions	Total Acquisitions	Net Active Fleet, EOY
2022.....	49	-	-	-	-	49
2023.....	49	1	1	-	1	49
2024.....	49	-	-	-	-	49
2025.....	49	-	-	-	-	49

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS*Table NASS-5. Shared Funding Projects (thousands of dollars)*

Item	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated	2025 Estimated
Working Capital Fund:				
Administrative Services:				
Material Management Service	\$154	\$134	\$148	\$145
Mail and Reproduction Services	252	242	202	203
Integrated Procurement Systems	63	68	56	-
AskUSDA Contact Center	-	101	234	234
Procurement Operations Services	-	-	-	53
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems	11	12	10	10
Subtotal	479	557	650	646
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center	333	354	321	166
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center	216	229	232	216
Personnel and Document Security	-	39	45	46
Internal Control Support Services	60	50	57	55
Financial Shared Services	938	1,251	1,325	1,261
Subtotal	1,214	1,569	1,659	1,577
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center	8,635	7,979	7,062	6,838
Department Administration Information Technology Office	-	128	142	125
Digital Infrastructure Services Center	3,343	6,666	2,385	2,252
Enterprise Cybersecurity Services	-	369	643	717
Enterprise Data and Analytics Services	-	2,158	407	384
Enterprise Network Services	2,695	2,824	3,208	2,852
Subtotal	14,672	20,125	13,847	13,168
Office of the Executive Secretariat	5	12	12	10
Total, Working Capital Fund	16,704	22,617	16,489	15,567
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Advisory Committee Liaison Services	2	3	3	3
Agency Partnership Outreach	53	60	63	63
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility	-	16	22	22
Medical Services	78	91	98	98
National Capital Region Interpreting Services	18	32	43	43
Office of Customer Experience	73	26	27	27
Personnel and Document Security Program	14	-	-	-
Physical Security	35	37	40	40
Security Detail	38	41	45	45
Security Operations Program	52	56	64	64
TARGET Center	11	13	15	15
Talent Group	-	29	28	28
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services	37	-	-	-
Employee Experience	-	28	31	31
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs	410	432	480	480
E-Gov:				
Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business	1	1	1	1
E-Rulemaking	9	-	6	8
Financial Management Line of Business	1	1	2	2
Geospatial Line of Business	13	13	13	13
Hiring Assessment Tool	2	-	-	-
Human Resources Line of Business	2	2	2	2
Total, E-Gov	28	17	24	26
Agency Total	17,141	23,066	16,993	16,073

ADVERTISING EXPENDITURES

There are no contracts for Advertising Expenditures to report.

ACCOUNT 1: SALARIES AND EXPENSES

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored; deleted matter enclosed in brackets):

- 1 *Salaries and Expenses*
- 2
- 3 For expenses necessary of the National Agricultural Statistics Service [~~\$241,119,000~~]\$195,964,000 of which up
- 4 to [~~\$80,883,000~~]\$48,230,000 shall be available until expended for the Census of Agriculture, *Provided* that
- 5 amounts made available for the Census of Agriculture may be used to conduct Current Industrial Report surveys
- 6 subject to 7 U.S.C. 2204g(d) and (f):*Provided further*, that appropriations hereunder shall be available for the
- 7 Experienced Services Program at the National Agricultural Statistics Service (16 U.S.C. 3851).

Change Description

The first change (line 3 and 4 of paragraph 1) deletes the 2024 appropriation amount and replaces it with the 2025 appropriations amount.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table NASS-6. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)

Item	Amount
Estimate, 2024	\$211,076,000
Change in Appropriation	-15,112,000
Budget Estimate, 2025	<u>195,964,000</u>

PROJECT STATEMENTS

Table NASS-7. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2022		2023		2024		2025		Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs			
Discretionary Appropriations:											
Agricultural Estimates Program.....	\$143,312	499	\$144,663	463	\$144,663	463	\$147,734	514	+\$3,071	+51	(1)
Census of Agriculture Program.....	46,850	230	66,413	270	66,413	270	48,230	230	-18,183	-40	(2)
Subtotal.....	190,162	729	211,076	733	211,076	733	195,964	744	-15,112	+11	
Recoveries, Other	9,921	-	11,134	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY.....	176	-	182	-	154	-	-	-	-154	-	-
Total Available.....	200,259	729	222,392	733	211,230	733	195,964	744	-15,266	+11	
Bal. Available, EOY.....	-182	-	-154	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations.....	<u>200,077</u>	<u>729</u>	<u>222,238</u>	<u>733</u>	<u>211,230</u>	<u>733</u>	<u>195,964</u>	<u>744</u>	<u>-15,266</u>	<u>+11</u>	

Table NASS-8. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2022		2023		2024		2025		Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs		
Discretionary Obligations:										
Agricultural Estimates Program.....	\$143,312	499	\$144,663	463	\$144,663	463	\$147,734	514	+\$3,071	+51
Census of Agriculture Program.....	56,765	230	77,575	270	66,567	270	48,230	230	-18,337	-40
Subtotal Disc Obligations.....	200,077	729	222,238	733	211,230	733	195,964	744	-15,266	+11
Total Obligations.....	200,077	729	222,238	733	211,230	733	195,964	744	-15,266	+11
Census of Agriculture Program.....	182	-	154	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Bal. Available, EOY.....	182	-	154	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	200,259	729	222,392	733	211,230	733	195,964	744	-15,266	+11
Recoveries, Other	-9,921	-	-11,134	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY.....	-176	-	-182	-	-154	-	-	-	+154	-
Total Appropriation.....	<u>190,162</u>	<u>729</u>	<u>211,076</u>	<u>733</u>	<u>211,076</u>	<u>733</u>	<u>195,964</u>	<u>744</u>	<u>-15,112</u>	<u>+11</u>

JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES**Agricultural Estimates Program**

Base funding for AEP provides objective data essential to both the public and private sectors of the agriculture industry. AEP base funding will be used to continue collecting integrated surveys and estimates used for approximately 450 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 publicly available objective sources of information,
- Support USDA program delivery, and
- Have specific legislative requirements for release.

Continuation of the program is critical because:

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 provision of objective data available for the U.S. and world markets, key market information would be in the hands of a few. Individual producers and ranchers would be at a disadvantage compared to those who have resources to pay for information, and markets could be exposed to manipulation.

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, equipment, operation and maintenance of equipment, and supplies and materials.

The NASS AEP is an integrated program; most report costs cannot be itemized as separate costs for a single report. For example, the June Area, Crops, and Objective Yield surveys provide direct estimates or are a component of data collection and estimation for the following publications: June Acreage; Cattle Inventory; Small Grains Summary; Crop Production Summary; Hogs & Pigs Inventory; Sheep Inventory; Farm Production Expenses; Agricultural Land Values; Farms, Land in Farms, and Livestock Operations.

As with base funding, the increases and decreases shown below support the mission, vision, and goals of the agency. The funding changes are requested for the following items:

The numbers and letters of the following listing relates to values in the Change (Chg) Key column of the Project Statement:

- (1) An increase of \$3,071,000 (\$143,663,000 and 514 FTE's available in 2024).

The funding change is requested for the following items:

- A) An increase of \$2,071,000 for pay and employee costs in agricultural estimates programs.

This increase consists of \$1,116,000 in 2025 pay and employee costs, for continuation of the 2024 pay cost increase of 5.2 percent and the 2025 pay cost increase of 2 percent. This increase will allow NASS to continue to meet its objectives. This amount will enable NASS to maintain staffing levels that are critical to achieving the agency's principal goal to assist rural communities in creating prosperity, so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving. Approximately 64 percent of NASS's budget is in support of personnel compensation. Base funding includes support of the NASS Geospatial program which supports USDA disaster response.

- B) An increase of \$1,000,000 for Geospatial program to support USDA contributions to the new NASA GHG Center.

The funding is for contributions/collaboration between the NASS geospatial program and the NASA GHG Center such as collaborating on the development of cover crop and tillage intensity maps as well as other geospatial data layers that are useful for informing climate models and analyses. This includes exploring opportunities to leverage remote sensing data to enhance or augment current sources of agricultural data. Remote sensing is an effective way to gather information on some agricultural practices (till/no till, cover crops, etc.). This approach can be more efficient, more comprehensive, more reliable, and less expensive than surveying farms. USDA will explore increased use of remote sensing to gather data on agricultural

practices, in conjunction with the goal of improving understanding of how those practices affect carbon flows, other environmental variables, and yields.

Census of Agriculture Program

- (2) A decrease of \$18,183,000 and 40 FTE's in salaries and expenses for the census of agriculture programs (\$66,413,000 and 270 FTE's available in 2024).

The funding change is requested for the following items:

- A) An increase of \$1,380,000 for pay and employee costs in the census of agriculture programs.
This increase consists of \$1,380,000 in 2025 pay and employee costs, for continuation of the 2024 pay cost increase of 5.2 percent and the 2025 pay cost increase of 2 percent. This increase will allow NASS to continue to meet its objectives. This amount will enable NASS to maintain staffing levels that are critical to achieving the agency's principal goal to assist rural communities in creating prosperity, so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving. Approximately 64 percent of NASS's budget is in support of personnel compensation.
- B) A decrease of \$16,803,000 and 40 FTE's in the five general categories within the Census of Agriculture.

Base funding for the COA Program supports the fifth year in the five-year funding cycle for conducting the 2022 COA. This decrease reflects the normal activity levels resulting from the cyclical nature of the 5-year COA Program. Continuation of the program is critical because it 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 is conducted every five years to obtain agricultural statistics for each county and State and the Nation.
- The COA 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.

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

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Program: Experienced Services Program, 16 U.S.C. 3851

Current legislative authority to be amended: 2025 Budget Request – Salaries and Expenses

Proposed legislative language (general provision): Provided further, That appropriations hereunder shall be available for the Experienced Services Program at NASS (16 U.S.C. 3851)

Proposal: The reason for this proposed legislative language is that funding has to be authorized, in accordance with the authorizing legislation at 16 U.S.C. 3851(c) 3.

Rationale: The proposed change will achieve the Secretary of Agriculture's requirements set forth in 16 U.S.C. 3851, which specifies that the Secretary shall establish an Experienced Services Program (program) to enter into agreements on behalf of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) with nonprofit private agencies and organizations eligible to receive Cooperative Agreements under the Community Service Senior Opportunities Act (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.). Participants for the program are to provide technical, professional, or administrative services, as applicable, to support the Research Education and Economics (REE) Mission Area, including NASS, and such services include: supporting agricultural research and information; advancing scientific knowledge relating to agriculture; enhancing

access to agricultural information; providing statistical information and research results to farmers, ranchers, agribusiness, and public officials; and assisting research, education, and extension programs in land-grant colleges and universities (as defined in section 3103 of Title 7).

Goal: To use NASS Salaries and Expenses account for the Experienced Service Program

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs

Table NASS-10. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs for Agricultural Estimates (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

State/Territory/Country	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Alabama	\$199	2	\$202	2	\$202	2	\$214	2
Alaska	138	1	143	1	143	1	152	1
Arizona	199	2	203	2	203	2	215	2
Arkansas	210	12	215	12	215	12	227	12
California	2,167	16	2,145	16	2,145	16	2,274	16
Colorado	2,858	23	2,954	23	2,954	23	3,132	23
District of Columbia.....	101,519	179	99,399	143	99,399	143	99,758	194
Florida	289	3	296	3	296	3	313	3
Georgia	2,009	11	1,983	11	1,983	11	2,101	11
Hawaii	238	2	247	2	247	2	262	2
Idaho	238	2	247	2	247	2	262	2
Illinois.....	229	2	234	2	234	2	248	2
Indiana.....	244	2	247	2	247	2	262	2
Iowa	2,139	17	2,165	17	2,165	17	2,295	17
Kansas	197	2	203	2	203	2	215	2
Kentucky	2,389	17	2,406	17	2,406	17	2,551	17
Louisiana.....	210	2	215	2	215	2	227	2
Maryland.....	169	1	180	1	180	1	191	1
Michigan	1,949	20	2,080	20	2,080	20	2,205	20
Minnesota.....	212	2	221	2	221	2	234	2
Mississippi.....	205	2	224	2	224	2	238	2
Missouri.....	11,506	57	14,300	57	14,300	57	15,158	57
Montana.....	387	4	398	4	398	4	422	4
Nebraska.....	2,582	20	2,536	20	2,536	20	2,688	20
Nevada.....	153	1	250	1	250	1	265	1
New Hampshire.....	247	3	390	3	390	3	413	3
New Jersey.....	240	2	247	2	247	2	262	2
New Mexico.....	211	2	224	2	224	2	237	2
New York.....	211	2	224	2	224	2	237	2
North Carolina.....	376	2	390	2	390	2	413	2
North Dakota	215	2	224	2	224	2	238	2
Ohio	185	2	192	2	192	2	203	2
Oklahoma.....	355	3	361	3	361	3	382	3
Oregon.....	229	2	241	2	241	2	255	2
Pennsylvania.....	2,345	22	2,325	22	2,325	22	2,465	22
South Carolina.....	236	2	247	2	247	2	262	2
South Dakota	197	2	205	2	205	2	217	2
Tennessee.....	182	2	202	2	202	2	214	2
Texas	2,326	22	2,343	22	2,343	22	2,484	22
Utah	226	2	231	2	231	2	245	2
Virginia	207	2	215	2	215	2	227	2
Washington.....	2,037	15	2,016	15	2,016	15	2,137	15
West Virginia.....	201	2	208	2	208	2	220	2
Wisconsin.....	218	2	231	2	231	2	245	2
Wyoming.....	233	4	254	4	254	4	269	4
Obligations.....	143,312	499	144,663	463	144,663	463	147,734	514

Table NASS-11. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs for Census of Agriculture (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

State/Territory/Country	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Alabama	\$108	-	\$109	-	\$109	-	\$108	-
Alaska	75	-	77	-	77	-	75	-
Arizona	107	-	109	-	109	-	107	-
Arkansas	114	7	116	-	116	-	114	7
California	1,167	10	1,177	10	1,177	10	1,167	10
Colorado	4,139	10	4,545	10	4,545	10	4,139	10
District of Columbia	31,688	90	50,138	137	39,130	137	23,153	90
Florida	156	-	159	-	159	-	156	-
Georgia	1,081	10	1,095	10	1,095	10	1,081	10
Hawaii	128	-	133	-	133	-	128	-
Idaho	128	-	133	-	133	-	128	-
Illinois	124	-	128	-	128	-	124	-
Indiana	132	-	135	-	135	-	132	-
Iowa	1,152	10	1,166	10	1,166	10	1,152	10
Kansas	106	-	109	-	109	-	106	-
Kentucky	1,503	10	1,606	10	1,606	10	1,503	10
Louisiana	113	-	116	-	116	-	113	-
Michigan	1,050	6	1,120	6	1,120	6	1,050	6
Minnesota	114	-	119	-	119	-	114	-
Mississippi	110	-	121	-	121	-	110	-
Missouri	6,255	30	7,700	30	7,700	30	6,255	30
Montana	208	1	214	1	214	1	208	1
Nebraska	1,390	11	1,403	11	1,403	11	1,390	11
New Jersey	129	-	133	-	133	-	129	-
New Mexico	113	-	120	-	120	-	113	-
New York	113	-	120	-	120	-	113	-
North Carolina	203	-	210	-	210	-	203	-
North Dakota	115	-	121	-	121	-	115	-
Ohio	100	-	103	-	103	-	100	-
Oklahoma	191	-	194	-	194	-	191	-
Oregon	124	-	130	-	130	-	124	-
Pennsylvania	1,263	12	1,337	12	1,337	12	1,263	12
South Carolina	127	-	133	-	133	-	127	-
South Dakota	106	-	110	-	110	-	106	-
Tennessee	98	-	109	-	109	-	98	-
Texas	1,253	10	1,262	10	1,262	10	1,253	10
Utah	122	-	124	-	124	-	122	-
Virginia	112	-	116	-	116	-	112	-
Washington	1,097	13	1,152	13	1,152	13	1,097	13
West Virginia	108	-	112	-	112	-	108	-
Wisconsin	118	-	124	-	124	-	118	-
Wyoming	125	-	137	-	137	-	125	-
Obligations	56,765	230	77,575	270	66,567	270	48,230	230
Bal. Available, EOY	182	-	154	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	56,947	230	77,729	270	66,567	270	48,230	230

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

Table NASS-12. Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)

Item No.	Item	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated	2025 Estimated
Personnel Compensation:					
	Washington D.C.	\$42,308	\$39,308	\$46,293	\$40,564
	Personnel Compensation, Field.....	38,873	36,870	42,558	36,765
11	Total personnel compensation	81,181	76,178	88,851	77,329
12	Personal benefits.....	30,660	30,000	33,430	30,000
13.0	Benefits for former personnel.....	41	-	15	15
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	111,882	106,178	122,296	107,344
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	500	1,600	1,000	1,000
22.0	Transportation of things	1,009	1,500	1,000	1,000
23.1	Rental payments to GSA.....	6,370	6,030	6,650	6,700
23.2	Rental payments to others.....	2,934	7,247	5,000	5,000
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges.....	5,153	3,404	2,596	2,600
24.0	Printing and reproduction	305	383	405	420
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	4,934	3,232	3,000	2,500
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	39,286	44,000	29,000	29,000
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources	4,398	12,072	9,000	9,000
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities	7,917	11,244	8,823	9,000
25.5	Research and development contracts.....	11,000	11,000	11,000	11,000
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment.....	2,134	10,829	8,500	8,500
26.0	Supplies and materials	516	1,043	660	600
31.0	Equipment	1,734	996	900	900
42.0	Insurance Claims and Indemnities	5	1,480	1,400	1,400
	Total, Other Objects.....	88,195	116,060	88,934	88,620
99.9	Total, new obligations	200,077	222,238	211,230	195,964
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3).....	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,100
Information Technology Investments:					
Major Investment 1					
Related Mission Area PPA #1					
11	Internal Labor	\$10,500	\$11,300	\$11,300	\$11,300
	External Labor (Contractors).....	13,591	13,750	34,324	27,567
25.2	Outside Services (Consulting).....	890	959	959	0.890
	Total Major Investment 1	24,981	26,009	46,583	38,868
	Mission Area Non-Major Investment Totals.....	-	-	-	-
	Mission Area Standard Investment Totals	31,523	31,409	31,409	33,388
25.3	Mission Area WCF Transfers.....	14,423	14,487	16,413	17,955
	Total Non-Major Investment	45,946	45,896	47,822	51,343
	Total IT Investments.....	70,927	71,905	94,405	90,211
Cybersecurity					
	Identify	n/a	\$150	\$58	\$59
	Total Cybersecurity.....	-	150	58	59
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	\$194,855	\$199,726	\$205,718	\$211,889
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	\$93,793	\$96,138	\$99,022	\$101,993
¹	Average Grade, GS Position.....	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5

¹ The reason of discrepancy between object class and MAX schedule O is the reimbursable.

STATUS OF PROGRAMS

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (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, which consists of the Agricultural Estimates and the Census of Agriculture programs. The NASS statistical data 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 conducts its survey work through 12 regional field offices (RFOs) and 33 State offices serving all 50 States.

Annually, NASS publishes approximately 450 national agricultural statistical reports, covering over 120 crops, 45 livestock items, and 12 major economic and environmental categories, complemented by additional State agricultural statistical releases. These basic and objective data are critical to maintain an orderly association between the consumption, supply, marketing, expenses, income, and input sectors of agriculture. These statistics promote a level playing field in production agriculture with impartial information available to everyone at a predetermined and publicized date and time.

Agricultural Estimates Program

NASS produced six of USDA's eight principal economic indicator reports: Agricultural Prices, Crop Production, Grain Stocks, Cattle on Feed, Hogs and Pigs, and Acreage. These are broadly used in agribusiness and market analyses, including for decision making by buyers and sellers of agricultural commodities.

Geospatial Program

Remote Sensing for Enhanced Crop Acreage Estimates

NASS uses remote sensing to enhance its crop acreage estimates as a major input in constructing the nation's area sampling frame – the statistical foundation for collecting agricultural estimates with complete coverage of U.S. agriculture. The Cropland Data Layer (CDL) is the agency's core remote sensing product; it provides crop-specific land cover information and serves as the basis of acreage estimates. The CDL shows the type and location of crops planted in a particular season using freely available mid-resolution satellite imagery, such as Landsat 8 and 9 and Copernicus Programme Sentinel 2a and 2b; high-quality ground reference data; and efficient and robust land cover classification software.

Remote Sensing for Yield Assessments

Remotely-sensed, MODIS-based, normalized difference vegetation index-based (NDVI) forecasts of corn and soybean yield are derived at the speculative region, and for states within that region, in parallel with operational survey processes. The results are provided to the Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) for their consideration in producing reports. After the growing season's conclusion, county-level yield estimates for corn and soybeans are generated and further refined by integrating land surface temperature.

Remote Sensing for Disaster Assessments

Geospatial decision-support products were derived and provided for rapid response to assess the impact on agricultural disaster areas from fire and flooding to identify potential crop losses. Hurricanes Nicole in November 2022 and Idalia in September 2023 were assessed for flooding and potential agricultural losses in Florida. In June 2023, a Midwestern Derecho was assessed for widespread destructive winds damaging several forested and agricultural areas, and agricultural infrastructure. In August 2023, an assessment was made of the Hawaiian Wildfires driven by high wind conditions that impacted agricultural lands. All disaster assessment analyses were performed within Google Earth Engine. The geospatial data assessment products were derived from remote sensing satellites such as MODIS, Sentinel-1 Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), and Sentinel-2. National Hurricane Center and Central Pacific Hurricane Center, and NOAA National Weather Service provided wind speed (gust) and tornado track data for the hurricane and derecho events. Hawaiian burned areas were visually confirmed using WorldView-3, WorldView-2, and GeoEye-1 © 2023 Maxar, USG Plus imagery. The disaster assessment reports, maps, crop inundation raster layers, metadata and a methodology report were posted on the NASS website for public dissemination at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Research_and_Science/Disaster-Analysis/index.php. Final reports, excluding in-season crop and pasture hay estimates, were posted on the NASS web site for public use.

Using All Data to Improve Official Statistics

Currently, the NASS Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) receives estimates and information from multiple sources for some of its programs. These include survey estimates, administrative data, remote sensing estimates, and weather information. The ASB combines this information using expert opinion to produce official estimates. NASS initiated

a series of studies to explore the use of all relevant data, including survey, remote sensing, administrative, weather, and precision agriculture data, to produce modeled, early-season estimates of planted acreage.

To support these efforts, in 2023, NASS continued to utilize a high-performance computing environment to automate the collection and integration of these diverse data. The environment was moved from the USDA EDAPT environment to the REE-Azure cloud environment. In 2023, model-based February, March, and June forecasts of acreage planted to corn, and soybeans were produced for the continental United States, and provided to the NASS ASB. As part of the effort to geo-reference farms in the corn and soybean speculative states, farms were added to the NASS list frame, thereby improving its coverage. This was accomplished by adding administrative records from FSA and by identifying non-FSA farmland using a new geospatial product known as Crop Sequence Boundaries (CSBs). The CSBs, were developed collaboratively with the USDA Economic Research Service, and provide agricultural field polygons, including their crop rotation history, for the conterminous U.S. In July 2023, the CSBs were made publicly available for visualization and download on the NASS website. The CSBs serve as a foundation for modeling, improving coverage of the NASS list frame, and facilitating georeferencing of farms. Another geospatial product, the Predictive Cropland Data Layers (PCDLs) were created in March for all states in the conterminous U.S., which is three months earlier than the traditional approach. The PCDLs were used for editing and imputation during the June Area Survey.

In 2024, modeling research will continue by incorporating survey data into models for the corn and soybean speculative states; farms in all U.S. conterminous states will be georeferenced; automation and standardization of data processes will be enhanced and planning for the integration of these new products and processes into the production process will continue.

Census of Agriculture Program

The Census of Agriculture is conducted every 5 years and provides comprehensive data series at the national, State, and county level. A snapshot of the agriculture economy including the number of farms, farm typology, characteristics of farm operators, land use, production expenses, value of land and buildings, farm size, market value of agricultural production, acreage of hundreds of crops, inventory of livestock and poultry, and extensive farming practices including irrigation, marketing and utilization of government sponsored programs. Activity during 2023 consisted of data collection, processing, and analysis for the 2022 Census of Agriculture.

2017 Census of Agriculture

Census of Agriculture Special Tabulations. As a complement to the data provided from the Census of Agriculture, NASS receives requests from the public for a variety of reformulations of available data. In response to data user requests, NASS completed and made public eleven special tabulations that included data on specialty crops, farm economics, farmer demographics, and geographic disbursements of livestock inventories.

2022 Census of Agriculture

- Data collection began with the announcement of the census via a letter instructing respondents to fill out their questionnaire online. This was followed by mailing nearly three million census questionnaires in December and January to those that had not already reported via the Internet. The data collection strategy included two additional follow up mailings, telephone enumeration, and selected personal interviews. Full release of the census of agriculture will be in the spring of 2024.
- NASS made great efforts leading into the census data collection to increase the number of online responses. Over 650,000 respondents utilized the Internet reporting instrument compared to around 450,000 responses five years ago.
- During 2023, NASS continued the Census of Agriculture communications campaign with tactics such as the production of approximately 16 video and 28 audio public service announcements featuring national and state, and community agricultural leaders (including PSAs in English and Spanish); and nationwide radio and TV media outreach featuring interviews with NASS spokespeople. In total, NASS staff conducted over 150 interviews regarding the Census of Agriculture.
- A workshop was held with representatives of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in September 2022 to explain the importance of the census of agriculture to all of those involved in farming, regardless of size. Throughout most of 2023, NASS continued to call on assistance from 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 was updated – “Partnering to Count and Serve U.S. Farmers, A Handbook to Increase Participation”.

- A workshop was conducted to train Regional Field Office staff on census procedures. In March 2023, NASS conducted a training school on editing and analysis of data reported by farmers. This workshop was key to applying standardized procedures to ensure reliable official statistics from the 2022 Census of Agriculture.
- NASS continues to make a strong effort to improve 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.
- Data will be summarized, and disclosure avoidance techniques will be performed for publication in 2024.

Census of Agriculture - Puerto Rico

During 2023, NASS completed data collection from farmers for the agriculture census in Puerto Rico. Census of agriculture data is scheduled to be released in the summer of 2024.

Census of Agriculture - Outlying Areas

NASS is making final preparations to conduct a census of agriculture for each of the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This was a critical year for obtaining lists of farmers and finalizing the questionnaire. Data collection is scheduled to begin in the first half of 2024.

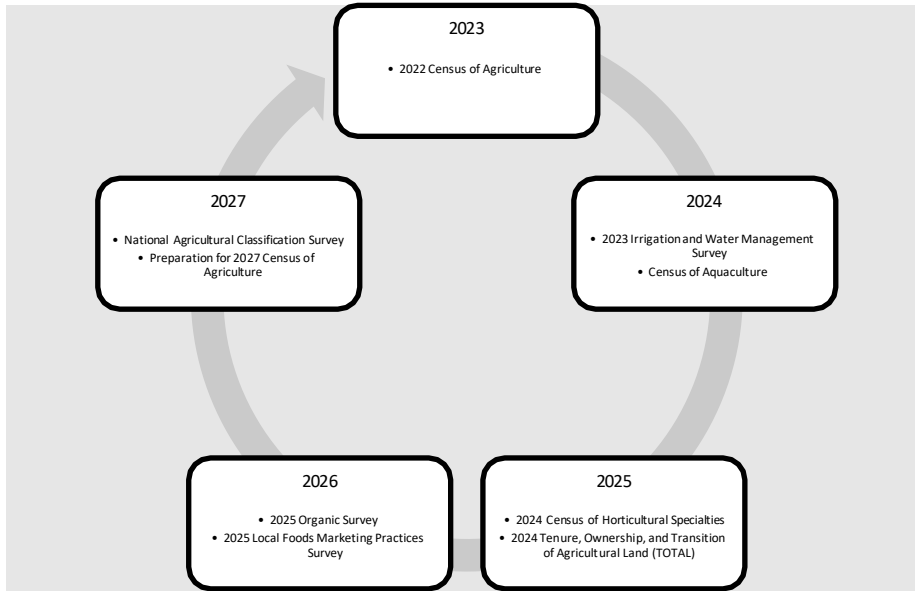
Census Follow-on Surveys

Irrigation and Water management Survey - The content and forms design have been completed for the 2023 Irrigation and Water Management 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 the Irrigation and Water Management survey 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.

Census of Aquaculture - The content and forms design have been completed for the 2023 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.

Census Five Year Plans

Future Census Plans. The chart below shows the planned Census studies for 2024 through 2027. These follow the normal census rotation cycle but are subject to change based on funding and direction provided by policy makers.



Activities Covering Both Agricultural Estimates & The Census of Agriculture

NASS continues to modernize its legacy systems to better align the agencies resources and effectiveness. The three modernization initiatives link to the Agency’s Strategic Plan.

1. Modernization Initiative 1: Customer Centric Data Interface focuses on creating an interface which will provide an opportunity to collect primary-sourced survey data as well as view other harmonized secondary sourced data, allowing respondents to make more informed enterprise-level decisions about their agricultural operation. We will deploy a portal for respondent access to survey information.

NASS has continued its ongoing efforts to modernize its customer interfaces, making responding to surveys and accessing NASS data and reports *faster, friendlier, and easier*. This modernization effort also allows NASS to work more efficiently.

Incremental development and improvements over the next few years will further meet customer expectations, such as: offer additional options for reporting data to NASS, including an upload feature, and providing a customized digital experience designed around the user’s needs and behaviors. Farmers and ranchers will be able to build and save custom homepages to compare their data with other (national, state, county) data.

2. Modernization Initiative 2: Operation Model Re-Imagined focuses on improving the operating model with the goal of providing the same or more output with less inputs.

During 2023, the team successfully worked with business staff leveraging emerging cloud technologies to migrate legacy applications to the cloud. This mitigated security vulnerabilities and ensured the website was available for data collection and dissemination.

Another sub-team looked at formatting for centralized processing. The team identified multiple avenues to make processing/mailing of small or decentralized survey programs more efficient in a hybrid working environment. A new processing method was implemented into production, developed the ability to construct variable data jobs with one mail file. Finally, alternative data collection methods (no mail, pressure sealer only, email only) for some small programs were identified. Improvement efforts on this area are ongoing.

3. Modernization Initiative 3: Improving the Data User’s Experience. The goal and objective of this project is to modernize and improve the NASS agricultural data user experience by creating access to data which allows users to interact with data at their level of comfort. In 2023, NASS has released Milk Production,

Field Crops, and Economics – Farm and Land in Farms landing pages. NASS will continue to develop the interactive, public release interface and improve the customer experience.

USDA Cybersecurity Performance

NASS continues to maintain a high level of security maintaining current Authority To Operate (ATO) on all its Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) systems. The Agency manages risks in accordance with established Federal cybersecurity regulations. In compliance with Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Cybersecurity Information Security Agency (CISA) requirements, NASS has successfully completed implementing multi-factor authentication, as well as the encryption of data at rest and in transit across its environment. NASS continues to make good progress transitioning its information technology in accordance with OMB 22- 09, “*Moving the U.S. Government Toward Zero Trust Cybersecurity Principles*”, ensuring that no actor, system, network, or service operating outside or within the security perimeter is trusted. The Agency also continues to enhance its capabilities to ensure full compliance with Executive Order 14028, “*Improving the Nation’s Cybersecurity*”.

Stakeholder Engagement/Information Technology Projects

NASS X and YouTube

In 2023, NASS increased its X following from 57,542 to 66,546, a 16 percent growth in followers for a net gain of 9,004 followers. The @usda_nass X account team produced 62 posts or replies on accurate, resourceful, and timely topics, including 270 photos or data visualizations, 18 videos, and 222 links. NASS hosted its first #TwitterSpaces in lieu of #StatChat for the Prospective Plantings report, March 31, 2023. Twitter Spaces is a tool on X to have live audio conversations on a topic, which allows up to 13 people to speak, including the host and cohost, at any given time. Anyone can join, listen, and speak in a Space on iOS and Android and listen only on the web. 392 people tuned in live, and the recording had 4,579 views within two hours. NASS livestreamed 21 Agricultural Statistics Board executive briefings on YouTube five minutes after the reports released publicly and cross promoted the links to the videos and executive summaries on X. NASS continued its monthly #StatChat series on X with 21 #StatChats, inviting users to ask questions directly to NASS representatives following crop production, cattle, and hog report releases. The most popular topics by impressions were: A video by Crops Branch Chief Lance Honig explaining how NASS collects data for crop production with 28,167 impressions, #StatChat on prospective plantings report with 24,283 impressions, #AgCensus Respond Now Secretary Vilsack video with 21,287 impressions, Ag Census FAQs with 19,272 impressions, September crop production #StatChat with 18,402 impressions, Respond Now to #AgCensus Secretary’s message with 18,190 impressions, Thanking farmers with turkey data with 15,801 impressions, Join Lance Honig for first @TwitterSpace with 15,297 impressions, and Crop Sequence Boundaries – new geospatial product – with 15,078 impressions.

NASS videos on YouTube received 27.1k views in 2023 and the account gained 594 subscribers for a total of 1.34K. Top viewed videos that were published or streamed in 2023 were September Crop Production and WASDE briefing with 1,100 views from United States, India, United Kingdom, and Japan; August Crop Production and WASDE briefing with 1,069 views from United States and United Kingdom; July Crop Production and WASDE briefing with 831 views.

Agricultural Statistics Board Livestream Report Briefings

NASS has livestreamed the Secretary of Agriculture’s data report briefings since March 2022. Data briefings are streamed on [NASS’s YouTube channel](#) five minutes after NASS reports are released to the public. Livestreaming improves access for the public, increasing transparency and understanding of NASS’s and WAOB’s data and processes. For anyone unable to attend a livestream, a recording is posted to YouTube following the data release. A calendar of the livestream schedule is available at nass.usda.gov/Publications.

Using Email and Text Communications in Data Collection

To expand communication methods with agricultural operators, the agency developed the NASS Enterprise Messaging Outreach (NEMO) system, a custom-built system to facilitate and manage the implementation of electronic messaging through a multi-stage process for message campaign development, approval, validation, and tracking. The NEMO system seamlessly connects via an application programming interface (API) authentication key to a FedRamp compliant infrastructure used by government entities only to securely send electronic communications and leverage better deliverability and scalability. The system is also integrated with NASS’s Survey Management Services (SMS) System to access sample and data collection information in real-time to send reminders only to eligible operations.

In 2023, NASS successfully utilized the NEMO System to send approximately 1.5 million email and 7,500 text reminders to agricultural operations for the 2022 Census of Agriculture. In addition, NASS utilized NEMO to send

electronic reminders for 45 data collections throughout 2023. Using electronic reminders costs less than mailed reminders and promotes earlier responses, reducing the need for more expensive follow-up methods. Email and text reminders contain links that facilitate easier access to NASS web instruments and help encourage operators to complete questionnaires in a timely manner. Agricultural operators are also able to reply to the reminders to easily reach NASS with any questions or issues. In 2023, NASS also prepared its policy and standards documentation to establish a comprehensive set of standards and guidelines for managing electronic communication methods and sending email and text reminders. NASS will continue work on optimizing the agency's communication strategy with other contact methods. Optimizing strategy can improve relationships with agricultural operators and save agency resources. Throughout 2024, NASS will also continue to evaluate the analytics and effectiveness of electronic campaigns to ensure success going forward.

Paradata Analysis for Web Data Collection

NASS utilizes web instruments to provide an easy, low-cost self-reporting option which aims to minimize burden and promote high data quality. As technology is continually evolving, NASS needs to ensure these instruments are optimized. Many factors must be carefully implemented to ensure web surveys are designed to work efficiently and effectively on different devices and browsers, as well as include built-in functionality to streamline the interview process, minimize errors, access help, and print completed questionnaires. To evaluate these factors and gain additional insight into the user experience, NASS began work in 2023 on conducting a web paradata analysis for the 2022 Census of Agriculture which will provide a wealth of information given its size. For example, this analysis will help NASS understand device types used, help access requests, questions with frequent changed answers, where breakoffs occur, and where errors are triggered. In addition, these paradata analyses will help NASS to evaluate questionnaire items that are utilizing non-edited respondent data to minimize respondent burden and study the effectiveness. In 2024, NASS will continue this work and prepare a report of the findings. Issues found from the paradata analysis will inform changes to future instruments to ensure ease and quality in online reporting for the Census of Agriculture as well as NASS survey programs.

NASS Data Collection Systems and Applications

NASS successfully completed the Department mandate of migrating data collection systems and applications to the Cloud Environment. The migration was a complex and collaborative process with USDA's Client Experience Center (CEC), as NASS had to ensure that its systems and applications were fully functional before starting its vital data collections, such as the 2022 Census of Agriculture. This migration is a significant milestone in NASS's efforts to use the most advanced technology to make its data collection systems more adaptable, reliable, and customer oriented.

Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI)

CAPI is a powerful and flexible tool that NASS uses to streamline survey data collection and manage it remotely. It saves costs, optimizes data collection activities, and ensures data security. CAPI uses cloud technology, broadband transmission, and mobile tablets that do not store any data on the hard drive.

NASS uses Mobile Device Management (MDM) platforms to control the tablets that enumerators use for CAPI data collection. MDM allows Regional Field Offices to oversee data collections remotely, making it an essential tool for mission critical data collections. NASS successfully switched more than 2,000 mobile devices to InTune MDM platform, meeting the Department's requirement ahead of schedule. This switch reduced costs, as InTune licenses are cheaper than the previous platform, and improved customer experience and data quality, as InTune requires less technology support services.

Mobile Inventory Management

NASS faced several difficulties in managing its mobility inventory due to the integration of its IT services with OCIO's CEC and the departure of some key experts who changed their work assignments. NASS collaborated with CEC specialists to align the records of Telecom Provider services with CEC's internal records and to update its mobile device inventory. NASS now has established procedures to handle its mobile devices, which will help us maintain this accuracy and optimize our efficiency and cost savings in the future.

Printing Order Tracking Systems (POTS)

NASS collaborated with OC to create a new application for submitting print jobs to GPO, the official printer for USDA. This Department developed application simplifies the process and allows for better tracking and quality control of print jobs, which reduces delays and costs. The application is also available for all USDA agencies, saving them resources and time.

Work Performed For Others – Reimbursable Program***Reimbursable Work for Federal, State, and Private Organizations***

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 NASS programs. 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. To date, NASS has worked on more than 1,403 projects since beginning this centralized process in 2012, which includes about 91 such projects in 2023. NASS relies on the discretion of cooperators to fund these projects; however, the number of projects in 2024 is anticipated to be similar to past years.

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Pesticide Data Program (PDP)

NASS will continue to provide sampling support to AMS and select AMS-PDP samples in 2023. The AMS-PDP Sampling Frame comprises terminal markets and large chain store food distribution centers. The Sampling and Frame Development Section (SFDS) in NASS' Methodology Division compiles the AMS-PDP sampling frame information supplied by State Department of Agriculture agencies prior to selecting the quarterly AMS-PDP samples using a probability-proportional-to-size as well as stratified simple random sample techniques. Working with AMS staff and key customers for PDP data (particularly the Environmental Protection Agency), NASS will develop methodology for estimating quantiles of pesticide levels for key pesticide-produce pairs and eventually implement that methodology. SFDS is also working on a project to analyze representativeness of PDP samples by comparing (for selected fruit and vegetable commodities) Economic Research Service commodity country of origin data.

The AMS-PDP uses samples selected by SFDS to collect data on pesticide residue on commodities most commonly consumed by infants and children. The Environmental Protection Agency relies on sample results to conduct dietary risk assessments and to ensure pesticides residues – if any – are at safe levels. USDA uses the data to ascertain the relationship of pesticide residues to agricultural practices, to enhance USDA's Integrated Pest Management objectives and to work with growers to improve agricultural practices.

Agricultural Resources Management Survey (ARMS)

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 2023 crop year will be wheat (spring, durum, and winter). Phase II target commodities for the 2023 crop year are soybeans, oats, and peanuts for the production practices, cost, and return data (PPCR) and barley for the production practices and return data (PPR). The 2023 ARMS Phase III, will focus on calendar year 2023 farm financial data for all types and sizes of farms.

County Cash Rents Survey

Through the 2018 Farm Bill, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) rental rates are based on soil productivity and county average rental rates. USDA may use the NASS survey estimates relating to dryland cash rental rates when determining annual rental rates. NASS is required to conduct a survey no less than once a year on county average market dryland and irrigated cash rental rates. The 2023 County Cash Rents Survey is designed to collect statistically reliable county or state subdivision estimates of average market dry land and irrigated cash rental rates for cropland and pasture; and at least 20,000 acres cropland and pastureland per county. Data collected supports the Farm Service Agency's administration of payments for CRP.

Chemical Use Program

Chemical Use Data is Useful to Federal Agencies and State and Local Governments

The NASS Chemical Use program provides chemical usage statistics to enable informed, science-based decisions. Through various programs and activities, NASS provides data which other Federal agencies, as well as State and local governments, rely on to protect the U.S. food supply, agricultural production and water quality. NASS' agricultural chemical use database is USDA's official source of statistics about on-farm and post-harvest fertilizer and pesticide use and pest management practices. It encompasses surveys looking at chemical use by producers of fruits, vegetables, field crops, livestock, and other animals and crops. The database also includes post-harvest chemical use, obtained by surveying storage facilities, processors, packers, and shippers.

Chemical Use Database

To create the database, NASS surveys fruit and vegetable producers to determine use of fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, and other pesticides; each chemical produced is classified by its active ingredients. The data collected includes acreage of the targeted commodities grown during the year and treated with chemical applications; the name, amount, and method of application of all chemical products applied; and the operation's pest management practices.

Chemical Use Program

The 2023 Fruit Chemical Use survey is currently being conducted with data collection continuing through January 2024. The Vegetable Chemical Use Survey was last conducted in 2022 and will be conducted again in 2024. Data from the Vegetable Chemical Use Survey was released in July 2023. The chemical and fertilizer use survey is also coordinated in conjunction with ARMS for row crops and other crops.

2024 Conservation Practice Adoption Motivation Survey

In 2022, NASS supported USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with a series of surveys to capture and measure the state of their programs. NASS conducted this survey in 2022, information that was asked for the first time from U.S. producers. The survey data will help NRCS, and the US Agriculture sector understand conservation practice adoption and motivation to better examine key factors to help improve NRCS programs. NASS surveyed producers with two questionnaire versions (cropping practices and livestock practices) in 2022. NASS will resume collecting the Conservation Practice Adoption Motivation Survey (CPAMS) in 2024 related to grazing/pasture and forestry practices.

NRCS conservation programs seek to leverage long-term changes in the use of crop, livestock, grazing/pasture, and forestry practices that conservation resources protect the environment by providing technical and financial assistance to producers/landlords who agree to adopt or install best conservation practices.

For structural practices (e.g., terraces, grassed waterways), NRCS provides technical and financial assistance that covers part of the cost of initial installation. Producers must maintain these practices over their useful life (usually 10-15 years).

For management practices (e.g., no-till, cover crops), NRCS provides technical and financial assistance that covers part of application cost. These practices typically have a one-year useful life. NRCS programs typically provide financial assistance over a period three-five years. Once the contract ends, the producer/landowners have no further obligation to continue applying these annual practices.

What has been difficult for NRCS to track are producers who may have already applied basic conservation practices that received financial assistance for an ongoing maintenance of existing practices. The plan is to measure the producers that are not using NRCS program technical and financial assistance to enhance the function of existing practices through the Conservation Stewardship Program. While NRCS seeks to leverage long-term changes for their programs in conservation behavior, farmers and landowners eventually decide whether to continue or expand adoption without financial assistance. NASS will present to NRCS a method of tracking and monitoring programs in a way that currently does not exist.

2024 National Animal Health Monitoring System Sheep Study

In partnership with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), in 2024, NASS will conduct a Sheep Study (the "Study"). The 2024 NAHMS Sheep Study Phase I takes place in January – February 2024 (with some coordination with December 2023 surveys). The purpose of the study is to describe the following: management and biosecurity practices; antimicrobial stewardship on sheep operations; management practices used to control internal parasites, changes in animal health, nutrition, and management practices in the US sheep industry from 1996 to

current; and provide a serologic bank for future research. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) portion of the Study will include two phases and will have a sample size of 4,940.

Phase one consists of operations that are coordinated with NASS' January Sheep and Goat survey (having 500+ sheep) these operations will receive a presurvey letter and promotional materials in December. The mailing will coincide with the January Sheep and Goat survey mailing. These surveys will be completed via paper, mCATI, and CAPI data collection. The second phase of NASS data collection will target operations not in the January 2024 Sheep Survey and/or have less than 500 head of sheep. These respondents will receive three mailings. The first mailing will consist of a presurvey letter and promotional materials. This mailing will take place during the second week of January. The second mailing, which will take place during the third week of January, will consist of a letter and the questionnaire. The final mailing will be the final week of January and will consist of a pressure sealed reminder. Surveys in the second phase will have the options of responding via PAPI, CASI, CATI, and a small amount of CAPI which will be collected in the field.

A consent form must be obtained from operations (contractors) giving permission to participate in the NAHMS Phase II follow-up which will be conducted by Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) veterinarians. The consent forms are collected digitally, via web, and verbal consent will be collected through phoning. Consent forms, which are incorporated into the questionnaire, will also be collected via surveys that are completed by mail.

2023 Hemp Production, Disposition, and Income Survey

The authority of the agencies to enter into this agreement are described in the 2018 Farm Bill. Data described within are collected, kept confidential, and protected by the parties pursuant to section 1619 of the Food, Conservation, Farm Security and Energy Act of 2008, P.L. 110-246 ("Section 1619"); section 2004 of the Food, Conservation, Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, P.L. 107-171; the Privacy Act of 1974; and the E-Government Act of 2002. Section 11102 of the 2018 Farm Bill states this about hemp: "Data collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service, whether published or unpublished, shall be provided in an aggregate form to the Corporation for the purpose of providing insurance under this subtitle; and kept confidential by the Corporation in the same manner and to the same extent as is required under – section 1770 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (Title 7 U.S.C. 2276); and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 44 U.S.C. 3501)". Other authorities may also apply.

The 2023 Hemp Acreage and Production Survey will be conducted in 2024 and will be the third year for this data series. The publication of the 2023 Hemp Acreage Production and Disposition report will be released in April 2024.

Climate Change

In 2023, NASS served as co-lead (with ERS) of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Quantification Action Area (AA) # 6 team, also known as the Conservation Practices Data Team. This team is comprised of staff from NASS, ERS, ARS and NRCS. The team's objective is to improve the temporal and spatial coverage of national conservation activity data for official USDA GHG Inventory reporting and modeling for the Agriculture and Forestry sector. The research conducted by this team is in response to a top USDA strategic priority to "Combat Climate Change to Support America's Working Lands, Natural Resources, and Communities".

NASS is leading the effort to establish the USDA IRA Conservation Data Team Enclave in the REE CIPSEA Azure Cloud, which is specifically designed for use by the Interagency Conservation Practices Data Team. The USDA IRA Conservation Data Team Enclave will enable team members to collaborate to process and integrate the diverse data sources contributing to the Conservation Practice Data Series.

NASS contributed, in 2023, to a variety of climate related activities across USDA including a White House Interagency Technical Working Group (TWG) on Measurement, Monitoring Reporting and Verification of GHGs for the Agriculture and Forestry sector. The TWG consisted of members from USDA, EPA, NASA, NOAA, USGS, OMB and OSTP. The TWG helped coordinate and accelerate Federal efforts to enhance measurement and monitoring of GHG emissions and removals from the atmosphere. NASS also participated in the AIM for Climate Summit, the REE Climate Research Strategy Team, the USDA Global Change Task Force, and the USDA Climate Adaptation Team.

International Technical Assistance Provided

In 2023, NASS provided technical assistance and training virtually and in-person to improve agricultural statistics programs in five countries: Argentina, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Kenya. The technical assistance ranged from basic survey concepts and procedures to Census of Agriculture methodology. Major accomplishments included training on yield estimation and remote sensing training for Argentina, sampling frame development activities in Kenya and Dominican Republic, editing system improvements and wheat surveys in

Georgia, census of agriculture activities in Kazakhstan; and activities between NASS and the Department of Commerce’s Census Bureau to coordinate population and agriculture censuses in developing 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.

NASS conducted assessments in Ghana and Ethiopia in 2023 as an initial step to developing technical assistance projects. Further activities with these two countries is pending funding. Additionally, in 2023, multi-year funding was obtained to provide technical assistance and training to Ukraine, which will begin in 2024. The agricultural statistics programs in Argentina, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, and Ukraine are funded and continuing. The programs in Dominican Republic and Georgia are expected to continue in 2024. Projects are dependent upon NASS receiving reimbursable funds.

International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS IX)

The International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS) brings together experts from around the world to share research and operational accomplishments, and to explore the latest methodological innovations by countries and development partners. For ICAS IX, NASS and ERS were the main two USDA agencies involved in organizing this conference, which was held May 17-19, 2023, in Washington, DC. ICAS IX was co-organized by USDA and the World Bank, in coordination with the United Nation’s Food and Agricultural Organization and under the aegis of the International Statistical Institute’s Committee on Agricultural Statistics.

AGENCY-WIDE PERFORMANCE

Introduction

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture. Production and supplies of food and fiber, prices paid and received by farmers, farm labor and wages, farm finances, chemical use, and changes in the demographics of U.S. producers are only a few examples.

The purpose of the Summary of Performance section is to provide an update on Performance and Evidence and Evaluation efforts, facilitating compliance with the Government Performance Results Modernization Act (GPRMA) and the Evidence Act of 2018, as well as departmental Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA) leads the Department in performance, evaluation, evidence, and risk management and chairs the Performance, Evaluation, Evidence Committee (PEEC) and the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) committee. Each USDA Mission Area is represented on these committees.

The Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area and the Office of the Chief Scientist are jointly represented through the OCS' Strategic Planning, Program Evaluation, and Enterprise Risk Officer, whose team functions as the coordinating members on USDA's PEEC and ERM committees.

The Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area of the U. S. Department of Agriculture has Federal leadership responsibility for advancing scientific knowledge related to agriculture through research, extension, and education. The mission area office is led by the Under Secretary for the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) and Chief Scientist for USDA, whose responsibilities include oversight of the four agencies that comprise OCS/REE, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Economic Research Service (ERS), and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The National Agriculture Library, National Arboretum, and the Office of the Chief Scientist also fall under this mission area.

The mission of the Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) is to provide strategic coordination of the science that informs the Department's and the Federal government's decisions, policies, and regulations that impact all aspects of U.S. food and agriculture, related landscapes, and communities.

Therefore, REE performance, evaluation, evidence and risk management efforts are coordinated and led by the Office of the Chief Scientist on behalf of the Mission Area. The OCS Strategic Planning, Program Evaluation, and Enterprise Risk Officer leads the Mission Area by chairing two committees: the OCS/REE Performance, Evaluation and Evidence Committee (OCS/REE-PEEC) and the OCS/REE Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Committee. The two Mission Area committees are comprised of REE agency leaders in performance, evaluation, evidence and risk management, as well as the Mission Area's functional and operational leads as necessary.

ALIGNMENT TO USDA 2022 – 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

NASS contributes to Goals 2 and 6 of the Department's Strategic Goals in the current 2022 – 2026 USDA Strategic Plan. Departmental KPIs are performance indicators that are aligned to the Strategic Objectives laid out in the USDA's Strategic Plan.

- Strategic Goal 2: Ensure America's Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous
 - Objective 2.3: Foster Agricultural Innovation

- Strategic Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA
 - Objective 6.3: Promote USDA Operational Excellence Through Better Use of Technology and Shared Solutions

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

A more detailed report of the performance plan can be found at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/performance>. The following table summarizes the results for the Departmental Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for which the NASS is responsible.

Table NASS-13. Key Performance Indicators

Strategic Objective 2.3	Item	2023	2024	2025
Citations of REE Reports	Results	70	-	N/A
Number of Citations of REE Reports	Target	129	134	N/A

This KPI is being retired in 2025.

Table NASS-14. Key Performance Indicators

Strategic Objective 6.3	Item	2023	2024	2025
Error Free Reporting	Results	-	-	-
Error Free Reporting	Target	-	-	>95

This KPI is being introduced in 2025.

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 6.3: Promote USDA Operational Excellence Through Better Use of Technology and Shared Solutions

Error Free Reporting: NASS will continue to make use of a variety of review and validation methods to ensure the reports produced are accurate. In addition to utilizing database queries and various software applications to validate and check the accuracy of data values in a report, NASS employs a multilevel review process from data collection to publication to actively monitor and review data for completeness and accuracy. NASS is committed to producing and disseminating complete and accurate information about agriculture.