

2022 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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***AGENCY-WIDE***

**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The Office of Communications (OC) was established on June 7, 1913, when the Secretary of Agriculture established the Office of Information as a news service to communicate findings and recommendations of USDA’s scientists and specialists to the widest possible audience. Section 7 CFR Subtitle A, delegates authority for public affairs activities from the Secretary to the Director of OC.

As USDA programs expanded to serve new constituencies beyond its original audiences in remote, rural parts of the country, OC has leveraged digital communications tools and channels to better inform and serve the broader public. OC’s mission is to provide leadership, expertise, management, counsel and coordination that result in successful communication strategies and products that serve and engage the public in a timely, fair, equal, transparent, and easily accessible manner while advancing the mission of USDA and priorities of the Administration.

OC is located in Washington, D.C. As of September 30, 2020, there were 39 full-time permanent employees, all stationed in Washington, D.C.

OC did not have any Office of Inspector General or Government Accountability Office evaluation reports during the past year.

**AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTES**

**Table OC-1. Available Funds and FTES (thousands of dollars, FTES)**

Item	2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Enacted	FTE	Budget	FTE
Office of Communications:								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	\$7,500	38	\$7,261	34	\$7,342	36	\$10,509	42
Transfers Out.....	-230		-100					
Total Adjusted Appropriation.....	7,270	38	7,161	34	7,342	36	10,509	42
Balance Available, SOY.....	7,270	38	7,161	34	7,342	36	10,509	42
Total Available.....	7,270	38	7,161	34	7,342	36	10,509	42
Lapsing Balances.....	-48		-186					
Total Obligations.....	7,222	38	6,975	34	7,342	36	10,509	42
Other Funding.....								
Agency Photo Services.....	40	-	40	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations, Office of Communications.....	7,262	38	7,015	34	7,342	36	10,509	42
Working Capital Fund a/								
Creative Media and Broadcast Center (USDA)..	6,109	18	3,619	9	3,707	9	4,172	9
Total, Other USDA.....	6,149	18	3,659	9	3,707	9	4,172	9
Total Available, OC.....	13,371	56	10,634	43	11,049	45	14,681	51

a/ This section includes OC managed Working Capital Fund (WCF) activities. Please refer to the WCF Explanatory Notes for more details about the WCF.

**PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTES**

**Table OC-6. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTES**

Item	2019			2020			2021			2022		
	Actual			Actual			Enacted			Budget		
	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Enacted	D.C.	Field	Total
SES.....	2	-	2	1	-	1	2	-	2	2	-	2
GS-15.....	3	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3
GS-14.....	14	-	14	8	-	8	9	-	9	10	-	10
GS-13.....	13	-	13	9	-	9	9	-	9	11	-	11
GS-12.....	17	-	17	13	-	13	14	-	14	16	-	16
GS-11.....	5	1	6	2	-	2	6	-	6	7	-	7
GS-10.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GS-9.....	4	-	4	3	-	3	2	-	2	2	-	2
GS-8.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GS-7.....	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GS-4.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Permanent.....	59	1	60	39	-	39	45	-	45	51	-	51
Unfilled, EOY.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Perm. FT EOY.....	59	1	60	39	-	39	45	-	45	51	-	51
FTE.....	55	1	56	43	0	43	45		45	51		51

**SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS****Table OC-2. Shared Funding Projects (dollars in thousands)**

Item	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Enacted	2022 Budget
<b>Working Capital Fund:</b>				
Administrative Services:				
Material Management Service.....	17	14	16	4
Mail and Reproduction Services.....	138	159	172	149
Integrated Procurement Systems.....	17	17	20	20
Procurement Operations Services.....	52	51	66	73
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems	1	1	1	1
Subtotal.....	225	242	275	247
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center.....	367	123	224	217
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center.....	21	17	15	15
Financial Management Systems.....	68	49	48	48
Subtotal.....	89	66	63	63
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center.....	152	735	420	423
Department Administration Information Technology	-	665	606	635
Digital Infrastructure Services Center.....	288	534	297	1
Enterprise Network Services.....	73	66	44	46
Subtotal.....	513	2,000	1,367	1,105
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	1,194	2,431	1,929	1,632
<b>Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:</b>				
Agency Partnership Outreach.....	5	6	4	-
Honor Awards.....	-	-	11	-
Medical Services.....	4	3	14	14
Office of Customer Experience.....	2	2	5	5
People's Garden.....	-	-	-	-
Personnel and Document Security Program.....	2	2	2	-
Physical Security.....	-	4	2	-
Security Detail.....	3	3	3	2
Security Operations Program.....	7	4	4	-
TARGET Center.....	1	1	1	-
TARGET Center NCR Interpreting Services.....	-	-	15	14
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services.....	-	4	3	-
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs.....	24	29	64	35
<b>E-Gov:</b>				
Human Resources Line of Business.....	1	-	-	-
Integrated Acquisition Environment.....	-	1	-	-
Total, E-Gov.....	1	1	0	0
Agency Total.....	1,219	2,461	1,993	1,667

**ACCOUNT 1: SALARIES AND EXPENSES**

**LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT**

**Table OC-3. Lead-Off Tabular Statement**

Item	Amount
2021 Enacted.....	\$7,342,000
Change in Appropriation.....	<u>3,167,000</u>
Budget Estimate, 2022.....	<u><u>10,509,000</u></u>

**APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE**

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary, [~~\$46,998,000~~] \$86,773,000 of which not to exceed [~~\$5,101,000~~]\$14,801,000 shall be available for the Immediate Office of the Secretary, of which \$9,098,000 remain available until expended for activities relating to climate change, including coordinating such activities across the Department; not to exceed [~~\$1,324,000~~]\$13,429,000 shall be available for the Office of Homeland Security; not to exceed [~~\$7,002,000~~] \$13,294,000 shall be available for the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement; [of which \$1,500,000 shall be for 7 U.S.C. 2279(c)(5)]; not to exceed \$2,860,000 shall be available for the Office of Tribal Relations; not to exceed [~~\$22,321,000~~]\$27,400,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, of which [~~\$21,440,000~~]\$26,001,000 shall be available for Departmental Administration to provide for necessary expenses for management support services to offices of the Department and for general administration, security, repairs and alterations, and other miscellaneous supplies and expenses not otherwise provided for and necessary for the practical and efficient work of the Department; *Provided*, That funds made available by this Act to an agency in the Administration mission area for salaries and expenses are available to fund up to one administrative support staff for the Office; not to exceed [~~\$3,908,000~~]\$4,480,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs to carry out the programs funded by this Act, including programs involving intergovernmental affairs and liaison within the executive branch; and not to exceed [~~\$7,342,000~~]\$10,509,000 shall be available for the Office of Communications: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to transfer funds appropriated for any office of the Office of the Secretary to any other office of the Office of the Secretary: *Provided further*, That no appropriation for any office shall be increased or decreased by more than 5 percent: *Provided further*, That not to exceed \$22,000 of the amount made available under this paragraph for the immediate Office of the Secretary shall be available for official reception and representation expenses, not otherwise provided for, as determined by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That the amount made available under this heading for Departmental Administration shall be reimbursed from applicable appropriations in this Act for travel expenses incident to the holding of hearings as required by U.S.C. 551-558: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs may be transferred to agencies of the Department of Agriculture funded by this Act to maintain personnel at the agency level [*Provided further*, That no funds made available under this heading for the Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations may be obligated after 30 days from the date of enactment of this Act, unless the Secretary has notified the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses and Congress on the allocation of these funds by USDA agency: *Provided further*, That during any 30 day notification period referenced in section 716 of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall take no action to begin implementation of the action that is subject to section 716 of this Act or make any public announcement of such action in any form.]

The first change adds language for the funding of climate change activities.

The second change eliminates language that puts undo restrictions on the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

The third change adds language that moves the Office of Tribal Relations, that was previously funded under the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

The fourth change eliminates language that puts undo restrictions on the Secretary of Agriculture.

**PROJECT STATEMENT**

**Adjusted Appropriation Detail and FTEs**

**Table OC-4. Project Statement (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2019		2020		2021		Inc. or Dec.	Chg FTE Key	2022		
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Enacted	FTE			Budget	FTE	
Discretionary Appropriations:											
Office of Communications.....	\$7,500	38	\$7,261	34	\$7,342	36	+\$3,167	+6	(1)	\$10,509	42
Transfers Out*:											
Working Capital Fund.....	-230	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer Out.....	-	-	-100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Transfers Out.....	-230	-	-100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	7,270	38	7,161	34							
Lapsing Balances.....	-48	-	-186								
Total Obligations.....	7,222	38	6,975	34	7,342	36	3,167	6	(1)	10,509	42

**PROJECT STATEMENT**

**Table OC-5. Project Statement (thousands of dollars, FTEs)**

Item	2019		2020		2021		Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key FTE	2022		
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Enacted	FTE			Budget	FTE	
Discretionary Obligations:											
Office of Communications.....	\$7,222	38	\$6,975	34	7,342	36	+3,167	(1)	+6	10,509	42
Total Obligations.....	7,222	38	6,975	34	7,342	36				10,509	42
Add back:.....											
Lapsing Balances.....	48	-	186	-	-	-					
Total Available.....	7,270	38	7,161	34	7,342	36	3,167	(1)	6	10,509	42
Less:											
Total Transfers Out.....	230	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	7,500	38	7,261	34	7,342	36	3,167	(1)	6	10,509	42

**JUSTIFICATION OF INCREASES AND DECREASES**

The base funds will allow the Office of Communications (OC) to continue providing the USDA Secretary and senior leadership with communications expertise and counsel, and the continued coordination across USDA agencies to inform the public of USDA programs and policies. Funding will support the USDA’s Press Operations, which in turn supports the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and subcabinet as well as each USDA staff office and agency; digital communications, including USDA.gov and social media channels; photography (including archival and historical requirements); facilitating group visitors such as state farm bureaus and FFA students; editorial and print review activities across the department, including overseeing the overall printing programs of USDA in accordance with Title 44, USC and the Joint Commission on Printing (JCP); and providing program and economic news via the USDA Radio service.

**1.) A net increase of \$3,167,000 and 6 staff years for OC (\$7,342,000 and 6 staff years available in 2021).**

The funding change is requested for the following items:

- A) An increase of \$142,000 for pay costs, which includes \$97,000 for pay inflation and \$45,000 for FERS. This increase will support a 2.7 percent cost of living pay increases for civilian employees, and a 1.1 percent increase to cover the expenses for the mandated increase of USDA’s contribution to FERS. This increase will allow the OC to continue to perform its mission, to provide leadership, expertise,

management, counsel and coordination that result in successful communication strategies and products that serve and engage the public in a timely, fair, equal, transparent, and easily accessible.

Current OC activities include coordination and oversight of all USDA and agency communications efforts; USDA-wide internal communications support for the Secretary, Sub-cabinet, and agencies; content management and administration of intranet.usda.gov; content management of usda.gov; administering department-wide social media channels and coordinating agency social media efforts, including reviewing and approving new channel requests; editorial review of all public USDA and agency reports (except scientific publications under the USDA Scientific Integrity Policy); coordinating USDA-wide printing with GPO and the Joint Congressional Committee on Printing; USDA Radio stories and features highlighting agricultural news and market reports; Photography support including archival responsibilities for USDA and agencies; and serving as public-facing Customer Service role and supporting other “O-offices” through the AskUSDA service.

This critical increase is needed to support and maintain current staffing levels to meet the program demands and statutory requirements imposed on OC. Elimination of the pay cost increase means the OC would not be able to fund approximately 1 FTE and/or would need to significantly cut travel, training, and mission support. Approximately 77 percent of OC’s budget supports personnel compensation and benefits. Failure to receive this increase would prevent us from fully performing our mission, which is necessary to ensure OC can continue support for all areas of the Department.

- B) An increase of \$3,025,000 will enable the transition of USDA.gov and Intranet.USDA.gov business units from the Working Capital Funding source to appropriated funding.

The increase would reflect a consolidation of two Working Capital Fund business lines that comprise Core Communications (USDA.gov and Intranet.USDA.gov) to appropriated funding. Core Communications was created in FY 2012 when the Office of Communication’s appropriated Budget was no longer adequate to support the USDA.gov website and the growing need for digital tools to communicate with USDA’s customers and clients.

In FY 2021, Core Communications took over a second business line to enhance and maintain USDA’s first enterprise-wide intranet, Intranet.usda.gov, which launched on December 16, 2020. The combined Core Communications business groups fund personnel who support USDA.gov and Intranet.USDA.gov including web editors, designers, social media managers and digital analytics, as well as development and hosting costs.

### **GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs**

***Table OC-6. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years (thousands of dollars, staff years (SY))***

State/Territory/Country	2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Actual	FTE	Actual	FTE	Enacted	FTE	Budget	FTE
District of Columbia.....	\$7,125	37	\$6,975	34	\$7,342	36	\$10,509	42
Georgia.....	97	1	-	-				
Obligations.....	7,222	38	6,975	34	7,342	36	10,509	42
Lapsing Balances.....	48	-	186	-	-	-	-	-
Rescinded Balances.....								
Bal. Available, EOY.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available.....	7,270	38	7,161	34	7,342	36	10,509	42

**CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS**

**Table OC-7. Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>2019 Actual</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>	<b>2021 Enacted</b>	<b>2022 Budget</b>
Personnel Compensation:					
	Washington D.C.....	\$4,288	\$4,053	\$4,108	\$4,848
	Personnel Compensation, Field.....	97	-	-	-
11	Total personnel compensation.....	4,385	4,053	4,108	4,848
12	Personal benefits.....	1,347	1,361	1,370	1,591
13.0	Benefits for former personnel.....	2	1	1	1
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	5,734	5,415	5,479	6,440
Other Objects:					
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons.....	92	52	25	65
22.0	Transportation of things.....	1	2	2	2
23.1	Rental payments to GSA.....	3	3	3	3
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges.....	255	174	176	180
24.0	Printing and reproduction.....	11	268	120	20
25	Other contractual services.....	560	532	541	552
25.1	Advisory and assistance services.....	116	176	180	180
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources.....	33	5	5	20
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources.....	204	201	664	2,887
25.5	Research and development contracts.....	19	21	22	25
26.0	Supplies and materials.....	57	21	25	25
31.0	Equipment.....	137	105	100	110
	Total, Other Objects.....	1,488	1,560	1,863	4,069
99.9	Total, New Obligations.....	7,222	6,975	7,342	10,509
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3).....	\$33	\$25	\$14	\$14
Information Technology Investments:					
	Name of Major Investment.....	SO-OC-Public Outreach			
25.3	Mission Area Standard Investment Totals.....	0	\$498	\$233	\$131
Position Data:					
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position.....	\$152,000	\$152,000	\$177,000	\$177,000
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	\$115,000	\$115,000	\$119,000	\$121,000
	Average Grade, GS Position.....	13.6	13.6	13.6	13.7



## **STATUS OF PROGRAMS**

The mission of the Office of Communications (OC) is to provide leadership, expertise, management and coordination, to develop successful communication strategies and products that advance the mission of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and priorities of the government, while serving and engaging the public in a fair, equal, transparent, and easily accessible manner. OC delivers information concerning USDA's programs, policies, and activities to the American people by disseminating information through various media outlets and often directly to farmers, consumers, environmentalists, the business community, and other interest groups. The success of the Department's initiatives is directly supported by effective communication and public education campaigns, making it easier for the public to access information on the Department's programs. OC has also taken on an increasingly important role in coordinating USDA's communications during emergencies or other incidents that potentially affect large segments of the public or industry.

### ***Current Activities***

#### **Creative Media and Broadcast Center (CMBC)**

CMBC is a central USDA resource for high-quality and cost-effective communications products and services. CMBC provides strategic communication planning solutions and tactical development, creation, production, and distribution. CMBC creates and oversees a wide range of communication products, including video and audio, print, exhibits, and web. CMBC provides services to agencies for visitor centers, information campaigns, training, radio and TV public service announcements, webcasts, remote media interviews, and audio and video webinars.

CMBC supports a customer experience approach to the development of communication and training products and provides an essential service creating and disseminating communications for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Sub-Cabinet. CMBC promotes the integrated use of traditional media and social media outreach. CMBC has a role in the USDA's continuity of operations and emergency response communications plans. CMBC production services are provided to headquarters, regional, and local USDA offices, and to other government agencies, upon request.

CMBC's Creative Services business line continues to adapt its capabilities to meet customer's needs while seeking efficiencies. In light of the restrictions due to the global coronavirus pandemic, Creative Services continued to perform field video work for clients consistent with local public health service guidance. In cases where travel was not possible, Creative Services adapted videoconferencing and similar tools to continue meeting client's needs. When possible, services offered still include flying drone video services with a certified operator; portable teleprompters for use outside a studio setting; and remote-controlled cameras to maintain social distancing, reduce crew size and lower client costs.

CMBC also houses the USDA Radio group, who produce between 6-12 Agriculture/Crop/Rural America daily stories Monday through Friday, and a dozen feature stories weekly, distributed to commercial farm radio outlets.

CMBC also includes the USDA Photography group that provides photography services including photojournalism, portraiture, multimedia productions, scientific, and photographic research for internal and external clients. The Photography group also is responsible for periodically transferring USDA photographic assets to the National Archives. Photography provides digital and multimedia content for the Digital Communications Division which is integrated with social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Google, and Instagram. Photography works with OC's Editorial Review to verify photographic quality and subject content, along with copyright and clearances for all images used in publications, ensuring images are supported by key words and metadata for USDA photography used externally, both print and web. Photography also provides imagery for internal and external audiences through USDA's Flickr photo stream web site: [www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/). The group provides photographic training for agency Public Affairs Specialists and supports the Office of the Secretary with press and event photography.

### **Digital Communications Division (DCD)**

The DCD manages and maintains the USDA.gov web portal, ensuring content is available, accessible, and relevant to the Department's diverse stakeholders. DCD coordinates its digital communication efforts with the press office, providing expertise in web communications, online community engagement, and social media tactics. The group also supports agency and program area communications, evaluating web and social media analytics for USDA.gov and agency websites to better understand our users and their access of the Department's information and services.

Analytic trends are incorporated in ongoing communication planning efforts and web content strategies. The DCD team manages the USDA.gov search tool and seeks to optimize web content for search engines. The DCD team manages the Department's official social media assets such as the USDA Twitter, Facebook, Google, Instagram accounts, and the USDA Blog. DCD works collaboratively with agency web and communication teams, and chairs the Web Council within the Department, communicating best practices, Federal and USDA web initiatives, USDA web design and functionality guidance, and the use of emerging tools or technologies. Additionally, DCD ensures collaboration with the Office of the Chief Information Officer, public affairs directors, and program employees, so our web communication and social media programs effectively support the Department's mission. The DCD develops and maintains current policy on the official use of social media, new media, and digital communications, and provides the standards and guidance to all USDA digital efforts.

### **Events, Print and Editorial Review (EPER) Division**

The Printing Services group within EPER remains the Department's central printing authority and liaison with the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) and the Congressional Joint Committee on Printing. The group consults with, advises, instructs, and assists the agency printing specialists, administrative officers, editors, publications writers, and information specialists on the most economical and effective printing methods and procedures. As audience preferences change, USDA is actively exploring expanding services into the digital realm.

The Constituent Affairs group within EPER manages briefings at USDA headquarters with major stakeholders, including national and international delegations. In 2020, this group worked closely with its partner the Office of Congressional Relations' Office of External and Intergovernmental Affairs, creating efficiencies for the farm, trade, consumer associations, natural resources, and environmental groups seeking opportunities to engage with key USDA officials in Washington, D.C., and across the country.

EPER's Editorial Review group provides Departmental oversight for USDA's publishing activities. Providing the final Departmental authorization and clearance of traditional and online publications before going out to the public, the group serves the Department's 8 mission areas and 36 agencies and staff offices and ensures compliance with Federal regulations and USDA Departmental Regulations and guidelines, including photography copywrite reviews.

EPER shares responsibility with Digital Communications for providing strategic planning and oversight for the use of the USDA brand across all media. Implementation of the "One USDA" brand has increased visibility for USDA's wide-ranging products and services. Brand management also ensures that the logo is used only where authorized, providing assurances to the public that the Department stands behind products and services that carry the USDA logo.

During 2020, Events, Print and Editorial Review Division also assumed responsibility for Department internal communications and updating the USDA intranet. This responsibility is shared with OC's Digital Communications group. The groups work together to manage the USDA Office of the Secretary and the OneUSDA outlook mailboxes and all-employee emails and manage and clear content for the USDA intranet.

### **Administration, Budget, and Customer Service (ABCS) Division**

The ABCS group is a central point of contact for external customer service, is responsible for budget formulation, preparation, justification, forecasting, and execution, as well as for coordinating all human resources tasks and providing administrative support to OC. Included in these support services are facilities and property management, oversight of telecommunications services, and the processing of all training, travel, and procurement requests.

The ABCS group represents the USDA Staff offices to the USDA Customer Experience Office, answering 4,920 telephone and written correspondence inquiries and 3,116 incidents questions from the now retired *Ask the Expert* knowledge base system, as well as 597 Ask USDA Information Hotline cases in FY 2020.

## **Press Operations (PO)**

PO provides outreach to media outlets and responds to reporter's questions about the overall mission of the Department as well as the Secretary's priorities. Communication Coordinators work with USDA Agencies and Staff Office communications staff to provide the leadership, expertise, counsel, and coordination needed to develop communications plans and implement strategies vital to the overall formulation and awareness of USDA programs and policies. In addition, PO coordinates public and media communications for the Office of the Secretary and assists USDA mission areas and staff offices in developing plans for effective crafting and dissemination of information.

## **Speechwriting**

The Speechwriting section of OC compiles briefings and drafts speeches, Op-Eds, and other remarks for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, as well as provides message guidance to USDA staff.

## ***Selected Examples of Recent Progress***

### **Administration, Budget, and Customer Service (ABCS) Division**

The Customer Service staff member responded to approximately 8,771 requests for information during FY 2020, to include: 2,113 telephone/hotline requests; 2,807 U.S. and foreign mail requests; 729 direct e-mail requests; 6 telephone and letter requests from Member of Congress; and 3,116 inquiries from self-served information hotline requests.

### **Events, Print and Editorial Review Division**

The USDA Brand gives consistent identity to the Department, increases public recognition of the value and wide range of USDA's products and services, and bring economy of scale to the production of visual information materials. In FY 2020, OC defended the USDA Brand by sending letters of cease-and-desist to stop the inappropriate use of the USDA Brand by a developer, nonprofits, and loan institutions. Additionally, Events, Print and Editorial Review updated the style and branding guides for the agency and adopted a unified common signature lockup for both print and web publications.

EPER's Editorial Review team reviewed and cleared 97 manuscripts and 102 final products in hard copy in a timely manner to meet deadlines of agencies and offices.

EPER's departmental-level Printing Services group completed printing requests for USDA agencies. USDA completed 738 print projects utilizing all printing programs including GPO Express program to ensure the best customer service with the most cost-efficient printing process. Project costs totaled approximately \$1.5 million across all agencies.

### **Creative Media and Broadcast Center (CMBC)**

CMBC supported USDA leadership during the pandemic, delivering timely messages to staff and public, including outreach videos on the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. Coverage and tactics included promotion of the Farmers to Family Food Box program, which delivers relief for farmers unable to sell and families unable to work and buy food. CMBC team traveled to capture essential seasonal images for planned agency programming. CMBC worked with agencies to pivot to on-line presentations that replaced in-person events.

USDA Radio, despite the pandemic and telework requirements, increased the number of news stories produced in FY 2020 by airing 2,523 daily news stories. USDA Radio also produced 572 features – 52 Agriculture USA documentaries, 260 Consumer Time features and 260 Ag Update features. CMBC and USDA Radio also provide technical support and coverage for news conferences with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other top government officials.

### **Digital Communications Division (DCD)**

DCD continued to lead the Department-wide effort to modernize all agency and office websites and social media to conform to the USDA new web standards and guidelines. DCD successfully expanded creative products on the web and social media; incorporated new data analysis and engagement strategies to increase engagement across all USDA social media, email, and web platforms; developed and implemented new technical strategies for social

media live-streaming, supporting all the Department’s major live events throughout the year. DCD continues to provide oversight and coordination of all USDA agency web and social media campaigns and will introduce a set of new Enterprise level tools to support social media and web analytics across all of USDA.

### **Press Operations (PO)**

The Press Operations group arranged interviews with international, national and local media and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, to increase awareness and build support for USDA programs and priorities. This division also organized press for travel for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, and worked with agencies to respond to press inquiries, craft communications plans, and drafted and edited press materials.

### **Speechwriting**

OC’s Speechwriting group prepared speeches, briefings and remarks for use by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and subcabinet and researched and interviewed event planners to ensure that remarks matched up with audience expectations and were appropriate for each audience makeup in terms of topics of interest and including information specific to each audience.