

DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Purpose Statement

Departmental Administration (DA) was established to provide management leadership to ensure that the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) administrative programs, policies, and advice, meet the needs of USDA program organizations and are consistent with laws and mandates. DA's functions include: human resources operations, procurement operations, small and disadvantaged business utilization, and the Office of Operations. The administrative law functions and the Judicial Officer have been placed within DA for administrative purposes.

The majority of DA's functional activities are located in Washington, D.C. As of September 30, 2012, there were 394 full-time permanent employees under DA. These employees were assigned as follows (DA Direct Appropriation, DA Reimbursement, Working Capital Fund (WCF) and the Office of Executive Secretariat):

<u>Location</u>	<u>Full-Time Permanent</u>
Washington, D.C.:	
DA (Direct & Reimbursement)	165
DA WCF	181
Office of Executive Secretariat	<u>21</u>
Subtotal	367
Field Units:	
DA (Direct & Reimbursement)	<u>27</u>
Total	394

Office of Inspector General Reports – On-Going

50703-0001-12	June 2011	Construction Monitoring of Departmental Management's South Building Modernization Project
50099-0001-23	August 2012	USDA's Controls Over Economy Act Transfers and Greenbook Program Charges
91099-0002-21	July 2012	USDA Strike Force Initiative

Government Accountability Office Reports – On-Going

GAO-544182	August 2012	Remanufactured Vehicle Parts
GAO-542208	September 2012	Federal Real Property (Leasing)
GAO-541098	August 2012	Federal Vehicle Fleet Management
GAO-361230	February 2011	Green Buildings - Closed but no final report issued

Government Accountability Office Reports – Closed

GAO-361230	February 2011	Green Buildings - Closed but no final report issued
GAO-542185	September 2011	Federal Real Property – Agency providing information and responding to GAO inquiries - No recommendations for USDA

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Available Funds and Staff Years (SY)

(Dollars in thousands)

Item	2011 Actual		2012 Actual		2013 Estimate		2014 Estimate	
	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations .....	\$29,706	183	\$24,165	175	\$24,313	185	\$26,444	196
Rescission.....	-59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers In.....	2,000	-	2,000	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers Out.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-3,451	-27
Total Available.....	31,647	183	26,165	175	24,313	185	22,993	169
Lapsing Balances.....	-215	-	-132	-	-	-	-	-
Obligations .....	31,432	183	26,033	175	24,313	185	22,993	169
<u>Obligations under other USDA appropriations:</u>								
HR Training/Software.....	2,072	-	3,872	12	4,309	11	3,766	9
Flexible Spending Account.....	2,355	-	1,417	-	1,418	-	1,418	-
Biobased Product.....	-	-	357	-	328	-	328	-
Honor Awards.....	80	-	59	-	73	-	73	-
Drug Testing.....	210	-	178	-	178	-	178	-
Medical Services.....	350	-	350	3	393	3	393	3
Shuttle Services.....	437	-	448	-	450	-	450	-
TARGET Center.....	946	3	901	2	869	2	869	2
Visitor Center/People's Garden.....	1,009	4	805	3	926	2	926	2
Interpreter Service.....	1,234	2	1,127	2	1,142	2	1,142	2
Misc. Reimburse ments.....	200	3	41	-	14	-	14	-
Management Serv. Reimburse ment.....	3,855	28	4,816	40	-	-	-	-
Personnel Details.....	18	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
OSDBU-RD Reimbursement.....	-	-	170	1	-	-	-	-
HR Transformation Programs .....	1,683	12	1,676	14	1,545	9	1,545	9
USDA ONE.....	-	-	433	1	-	-	-	-
OSEC Driver.....	103	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Virtual University.....	1,379	9	2,133	10	1,958	10	1,958	10
Hispanic and Women Farmers Settlement a/.	-	-	7,782	-	4,000	-	-	-
SES Candidate Program.....	1,184	-	295	-	500	-	500	-
Total Other USDA.....	17,115	63	26,860	88	18,103	39	13,560	37
<u>Working Capital Fund b/:</u>								
Administration (USDA).....	37,366	152	35,527	178	40,169	180	45,940	197
Executive Secretariat (USDA).....	3,119	23	3,840	22	3,400	22	3,989	24
Administration (Non-USDA).....	2,295	4	1,513	3	1,482	3	1,394	3
Capital Equipment.....	-	-	-	-	812	-	250	-
Purchase Card Rebate.....	-	-	868	-	-	-	-	-
Total Working Capital Fund.....	42,780	179	41,748	203	45,863	205	51,573	224
Total DA.....	91,327	425	94,641	466	88,279	429	88,126	430

a/ This reimbursement is a pass through settlement. DA receives no funding from it.

b/ This section includes WCF activities managed by DA. Please see WCF Explanatory Notes for details.

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Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Year Summary

Item	2011 Actual			2012 Actual			2013 Estimate			2014 Estimate		
	Wash. D.C.	Field	Total									
SES.....	6	-	6	7	-	7	7	-	7	6	-	6
AL-3.....	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2
AL-2.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
SL.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-15.....	31	1	32	19	-	19	20	-	20	21	-	21
GS-14.....	63	3	66	33	10	43	40	9	49	37	9	46
GS-13.....	37	6	43	32	10	42	37	11	48	34	11	45
GS-12.....	33	-	33	14	1	15	26	1	27	18	1	19
GS-11.....	14	1	15	14	3	17	17	3	20	16	3	19
GS-10.....	8	1	9	4	-	4	4	-	4	4	-	4
GS-9.....	19	-	19	12	-	12	16	-	16	13	-	13
GS-8.....	8	-	8	7	-	7	7	-	7	7	-	7
GS-7.....	8	-	8	7	2	9	7	2	9	7	2	9
GS-6.....	3	-	3	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
GS-5.....	3	-	3	5	-	5	5	-	5	5	-	5
GS-4.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
Ungraded												
Positions.....	5	-	5	5	-	5	5	-	5	5	-	5
Total Perm. Positions.....	243	12	255	165	27	192	197	27	224	179	27	206
Unfilled, EOY.....	9		9									
Total, Perm. Full-Time Employment, EOY....	234	12	246	165	27	192	197	27	224	179	27	206
Staff Year Est.....	234	12	246	236	27	263	197	27	224	179	27	206

Note: This section includes appropriated and reimbursed only; WCF and WCF-Administrative Support Cost staff years are shown in the WCF Explanatory Notes.

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#### MOTOR VEHICLE FLEET DATA

##### SIZE, COMPOSITION AND COST OF MOTOR VEHICLE FLEET

The 2014 budget estimates propose no additional vehicles.

Departmental Administration (DA) uses vehicles to support the mission of providing customer support to the USDA offices in the Washington, D.C. metro area. DA provides mail and courier services, facility management, disposal of excess property, and transportation of forms, publications, and supplies. In addition, DA provides executive chauffeur services to the Office of the Secretary, and other executive staff members at USDA.

The Central Mail Unit supports DA's mission by providing daily scheduled and unscheduled pick-up and delivery service of mail to 18 USDA satellite locations throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, including suburban Maryland and Virginia. Vehicles are also used for scheduled service to Capitol Hill, the Executive Office Buildings, and to the Office of the Federal Register. As needed, vehicles are used for transporting employees to meetings within the local area. The Beltsville Service Center moves excess equipment and furniture between USDA offices and the warehouse, and picks up surplus property for disposal from various other Federal agencies in the Washington metropolitan area; operates a shipping and receiving facility; provides forms and publications acquisition, management, warehousing and worldwide distribution; and general office supply acquisition, warehousing and sales. In addition to providing transportation services to a limited number of Departmental executives attending meetings in the Washington-metro area, DA also provides emergency transportation services as needed.

DA leases sedans and vans from the General Services Administration (GSA) and commercial companies for transporting employees.

Changes to the motor vehicle fleet. No changes are proposed to the fleet.

Replacement of passenger motor vehicles. Departmental Administration will follow GSA regulatory vehicle replacement standards which are three years or 60,000 miles. Vehicle replacement is based on funding priority, program management, vehicle mileage, and vehicle age.

Impediments to managing the motor vehicle fleet. There are no identified impediments to managing the motor vehicle fleet in the most cost-effective manner. A major cost of managing the fleet is the cost of fuel. In the past three years, the cost of gasoline and ethanol has risen dramatically. DA is committed to using E85 as an alternative to gasoline to support the Departments' goal of increasing alternative fuels procurement and requires all newly leased or purchased vehicles to be E85 compatible if available for the vehicle type.

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MOTOR VEHICLE FLEET DATA

Size, composition and cost of agency motor vehicle fleet as of September 30, 2012, are as follows:

Size, Composition, and Annual Cost  
(In thousands of dollars)

Fiscal Year	Number of Vehicles by Type							Total Number of Vehicles	Annual Operating Cost (\$ in '000)
	Sedans and Station Wagons	Light Trucks, SUVs and Vans		Medium Duty Vehicles	Ambulances	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles		
		4X2	4X4						
2011	3	18	6	5	-	-	1	33	\$201
Change	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+\$17
2012	3	18	6	5	-	-	1	33	\$218
Change	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2013	3	18	6	5	-	-	-	33	\$218
Change	-	+4	-4	-	-	-	-	-	+\$18
2014	3	22	2	5	-	-	1	33	\$236

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The estimates include appropriation language for this item as follows:

Salaries and Expenses:

*For Departmental Administration, \$22,993,000, 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 this appropriation shall be reimbursed from applicable appropriations in this Act for travel expenses incident to the holding of hearings as required by 5 U.S.C. 551-558.*

Lead-Off Tabular Statement

2013 Estimate .....	\$24,313,000
Budget Estimate, 2014 .....	22,993,000
Change in Appropriation <u>a/</u> .....	<u><u>-1,320,000</u></u>

Summary of Increases and Decreases

(Dollars in thousands)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2014
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Change a/</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
Discretionary Appropriations :					
Departmental Administration .....	\$29,647	-\$5,482	+\$148	-\$1,320	\$22,993

a/ The FY 2014 change includes the \$3,451,000 transfer of the Office of Ethics to the Office of the General Council made under 7 USC § 6912, the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994. OE is currently part of DA's Office of Human Resources (OHRM). It has been determined that OE's functions are more closely aligned with OGC than they are with OHRM, and that moving the function to OGC will increase OE's efficiency by streamlining its operations .

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Project Statement

Appropriations Detail and Staff Years (SY)

(Dollars in thousands)

Program	<u>2011 Actual</u>		<u>2012 Actual</u>		<u>2013 Estimate</u>		<u>Inc. or Dec.</u>		<u>2014 Estimate</u>		
	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	
Discretionary Appropriations :											
Departmental Administration.....	\$29,647	183	\$24,165	175	\$24,313	185	+\$2,131	(1)	+11	\$26,444	196
Total Adjusted Appropriation....	29,647	183	24,165	175	24,313	185	+2,131		+11	26,444	196
Rescissions and											
Transfers (Net).....	59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	29,706	183	24,165	175	24,313	185	+2,131		+11	26,444	196
Transfers In:											
Biobased Markets Prog.....	2,000	-	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers Out:											
Office of the General Council.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-3,451		-27	-3,451	-27
Rescission.....	-59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	31,647	183	26,165	175	24,313	185	-1,320		-16	22,993	169
Lapsing Balances.....	-215	-	-132	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations .....	31,432	183	26,033	175	24,313	185	-1,320		-16	22,993	169

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Project Statement

Obligations Detail and Staff Years (SY)

(Dollars in thousands)

Program	<u>2011 Actual</u>		<u>2012 Actual</u>		<u>2013 Estimate</u>		<u>Inc. or Dec.</u>		<u>2014 Estimate</u>	
	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY
Discretionary Obligations :										
Departmental Administration.....	\$29,432	183	\$24,033	175	\$24,313	185	-\$1,320	-16	\$22,993	169
Mandatory Obligations :										
Biobased Markets Prog.....	2,000	-	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations .....	31,432	183	26,033	175	24,313	185	-1,320	-16	22,993	169
Lapsing Balances.....	215	-	132	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available.....	31,647	183	26,165	175	24,313	185	-1,320	-16	22,993	169
Transfers In.....	-2,000	-	-2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers Out.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,451	27	3,451	27
Rescission.....	59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriation.....	29,706	183	24,165	175	24,313	185	+2,131	+11	26,444	196

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#### Justification of Increases and Decreases

The base level is necessary to provide management leadership to ensure that the Department's administrative programs, policies, and advice, meet the needs of USDA program organizations and are consistent with laws and mandates. DA's functions include: human resources operations, procurement operations, small and disadvantaged business utilization, and the Office of Operations. The administrative law functions and the Judicial Officer have been placed within DA for administrative purposes.

- (1) A net decrease of \$1,320,000 and 16 staff years (\$24,313,000 and 185 staff years available in 2013) for Departmental Administration
  - (a) An increase of \$207,000 to fund the 2014 pay increase (\$24,000 for annualization of the 2013 pay increase and \$183,000 for the 2014 pay increase) This increase is needed to maintain the current level of staffing to ensure the DA staff offices continue to provide effective policy, services, and coordination, and to ensure that all USDA programs and activities are accessible and accountable.
  - (b) An increase of \$1,924,000 and 11 staff years to restore the office's policy and operational activities This increase would be used for the restoration of staffing and related costs for critical positions across DA offices. These offices include: personnel policy activities and personnel operations, procurement policy and operational activities that support the DA and USDA agencies, real property policy and operations that track and monitor USDA space inventories in the National Capital region and across the continental United States, policy oversight and guidance in the area of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization goals and achievement of planned targets for participation of women and minorities in USDA agencies' programs, and the implementation of Administrative Law judicial functions and oversight under the Administrative Procedure Act. This funding would also enable DA to refresh aging and obsolete information technology equipment that it has not been able to refresh in the 2012 and 2013 budgets. Having modern and accessible IT equipment is critical to sustain DA staff offices' effective support of the Department's programs and activities.
  - (c) A decrease of \$3,451,000 and 27 staff years for the transfer of the Office of Ethics (OE) to the Office of the General Council (OGC) OE is currently part of DA's Office of Human Resources (OHRM). It has been determined that OE's functions are more closely aligned with OGC than they are with OHRM, and that moving the function to OGC will increase OE's efficiency by streamlining its operations. All ethics functions currently performed by the OE will continue under the General Counsel. This realignment will be carried out under 7 USC § 6912, the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994.

The Ethics in Government Act establishes the ethics compliance requirements and infrastructure applicable throughout the Executive Branch. Under regulations implementing the Act, the head of each Executive Branch department or agency must exercise leadership in establishing; maintaining and carrying out the agency's ethics program and make available sufficient resources to ensure the agency's ethics program can be implemented effectively.

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Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years

(Dollars in thousands)

State/Territory	2011 Actual		2012 Actual		2013 Estimate		2014 Estimate	
	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY	Amount	SY
California.....	-	-	\$122	1	\$124	1	\$126	1
Colorado.....	\$98	1	157	1	159	1	162	1
Maryland.....	-	-	714	7	725	7	736	7
Michigan.....	-	-	146	1	148	1	150	1
Minnesota.....	\$102	1	355	3	147	1	149	1
District of Columbia.....	31,232	181	24,407	162	23,010	174	21,670	158
Obligations .....	31,432	183	25,901	175	24,313	185	22,993	169
Lapsing Balances.....	215	-	132	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available.....	31,647	183	26,033	175	24,313	185	22,993	169

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Classification by Objects

(Dollars in thousands)

	2011	2012	2013	2014
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
<b>Personnel Compensation:</b>				
Washington D.C.....	\$18,900	\$13,751	\$15,213	\$13,970
Field.....	200	1,494	1,303	1,323
11 Total personnel compensation.....	19,100	15,245	16,516	15,293
12 Personal benefits.....	5,105	4,435	3,913	3,556
13.0 Benefits for former personnel.....	4	232	-	-
Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	24,209	19,912	20,429	18,849
<b>Other Objects:</b>				
21.0 Travel and transportation of persons.....	168	107	105	102
22.0 Transportation of things.....	1	-	-	-
23.3 Communications , utilities, and misc. charges...	539	294	239	299
24.0 Printing and reproduction.....	204	120	42	102
25.2 Other services from non-Federal sources.....	4,057	2,946	917	917
25.3 Other purchases of goods and services from Federal sources.....	1,813	2,514	2,555	2,628
26.0 Supplies and materials .....	280	70	26	61
31.0 Equipment.....	92	46	-	35
42.0 Insurance claims and indemnities .....	69	15	-	-
43.0 Interest.....	-	9	-	-
Total, Other Objects .....	7,223	6,121	3,884	4,144
99.9 Total, new obligations .....	31,432	26,033	24,313	22,993
<b>Position Data:</b>				
Average Salary (dollars ), ES Position.....	\$166,940	\$161,526	\$161,500	\$161,500
Average Salary (dollars ), GS Position.....	\$98,894	\$92,957	\$95,468	\$96,791
Average Grade, GS Position.....	13.5	13.2	13.3	13.3

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STATUS OF PROGRAM

Current Activities:

Departmental Administration (DA) became part of Departmental Management (DM) pursuant to Secretary's Memorandum 1060-001 effective October 1, 2009. DM provides overall direction, leadership and coordination for the Department's management of human resources, property, procurement, hazardous materials management, facilities management, small and disadvantaged business utilization programs and the regulatory hearing and administrative proceedings conducted by the Administrative Law Judges, and the Judicial Officer. Activities of the offices that comprise DA follow:

The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) leads the Department-wide human resources initiatives to ensure that USDA's programs are staffed with the personnel necessary to meet program objectives. As the leader in the Secretary's Human Resource Transformation initiative, OHRM provides guidance and analysis for the progress made in the Human Resource Transformation goals as established by the Human Resource Transformation Milestones and Metrics Report that is provided to the Secretary on a monthly basis. In order to transform USDA, OHRM develops and administers Departmental principles, policies and objectives related to: organizational development, position classification, training and employee development, leadership development, labor relations, executive resources, recruitment, diversity, mediation and work life programs, enterprise systems management, position management, performance management, strategic human resources management, Human Resource Transformation, non-EO mediation and alternative dispute resolution programs, DM's Freedom of Information Act Program, along with the human resources operations branch for Departmental Administration. These activities support USDA mission area agencies in the accomplishment of their goals and objectives by ensuring that human capital management goals and programs align with and support USDA's missions.

The Office of Operations (OO) is responsible for Department-wide activities relating to facilities management services, security, and operational support for agencies and offices occupying USDA's Headquarters Complex, the George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville, MD, and other USDA-leased facilities in the National Capital Region. OO provides support in the following areas: engineering, architecture, space management, internal energy conservation, recycling, sustainable practices, physical security, occupational safety and health, accessible technology, reasonable accommodation, interpreting services, and business services (e.g., mail, photocopying and duplication, general supply/equipment, excess personal property, forms and publication distribution, and warehouse services). The office also is responsible for the management and oversight of the USDA Visitor's Center, that provides education and outreach to employees and the public.

The Office of Procurement and Property Management (OPPM) provides Department-wide leadership and management in acquisition, asset and property management, environmental stewardship, and employee health and safety. OPPM is an organizational leader delivering service, accountability, and stewardship across DM's priorities. OPPM is also responsible for the Hazardous Materials Management Program and manages the Federal Bio-Preferred Products and Labeling Program.

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) has primary responsibility for leading the implementation of the Department's small business program, providing maximum opportunity for small, small and disadvantaged, HUBZone, women owned, veteran-owned, and service disabled veteran-owned businesses to participate in USDA contracting processes and to fully integrate small business into all aspects of USDA contracting and program activities. OSDBU ensures that the Department implements the Ability One Program (Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act Program) which encourages contracting with nonprofit agencies that employ the blind or severely disabled.

The Office of Administrative Law Judges (OALJ) conducts rule making and adjudicatory hearings throughout the United States in proceedings subject to the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), 5 U.S.C. 554 et seq. The judges render initial decisions and orders that become final decisions of the Secretary if not appealed to the Secretary's Judicial Officer by a party to the proceedings.

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The Office of the Judicial Officer (OJO) issues final decisions in regulatory proceedings of a quasi-judicial nature, including appeals from administrative law judges' initial decisions and reparation proceedings under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act and the Packers and Stockyards Act. Any party to a proceeding may appeal to the Judicial Officer. The Judicial Officer also rules on questions certified by the administrative law judges. The Judicial Officer may grant requests for oral arguments.

#### Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

OHRM implemented numerous strategic human resources initiatives at both the Departmental and mission area levels, addressing HR-related recommendations to improve performance internally and with USDA's customers. Each initiative required significant collaboration with stakeholders both external and internal to the Department. Key accomplishments are: 1) Provided guidance, direction and coordination of the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP) to address large scale budgetary reductions affecting our workforce through the use of the VERA/VSIP authority with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). 2) Established the USDA Plan to increase Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities. USDA became the first Federal Agency to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation. USDA was selected to lead the Federal Committee on Increasing the Employment of People with Disabilities. 3) The One USDA Project team made great strides toward fulfilling its mission "to improve mission delivery through the deployment of an integrated workforce system which facilitates strategic and advisory HR service delivery and streamlined HR transaction execution." 4) As part of the Administration Solutions Project, the Executive Resources Division was consolidated USDA-wide to provide efficiencies and cost savings in order to successfully provide service to the USDA Executive Resource population and 5) Implemented a comprehensive Diversity Road Map which was recognized by OPM as a model program, further defining USDA's strategic focus to cultivate a diverse and inclusive work environment that ensures equality of opportunity and inclusion, including hosting a Hispanic Round Table Discussion centered on strategic partnership, outreach, recruitment and retention of Hispanics at USDA creating and maintaining a workforce that looks like America.

OHRM established the USDA Virtual University (VU) which initiated and implemented the USDA Senior Executive Candidate Development Program to build a cadre of diverse and skilled executive leaders for USDA's Workforce and Succession Planning. Continuing with USDA's efforts regarding work-life balance, VU sponsored telework training for managers and supervisors as well as employees in order to promote broad participation in telework. VU is participating on the President's Management Council's Rotational Assignment Project. This project is facilitated across government agencies by the Office of Management and Budget in order to develop employees for succession management purposes. VU continues to lead the direction of the new Pathways program for student interns. Further explanation of VU, a shared cost program, is available in the Working Capital Fund section of the Explanatory Notes.

In order to communicate the progress of the Human Resource Transformation initiatives to all employees, OHRM publishes *MyUSDA* newsletter from the Secretary. OHRM manages the Secretary's Honor Awards Program that recognizes outstanding performance across USDA. In the area of Labor-Management Relations, OHRM leads the implementation of Executive Order 13622, Creating Labor-Management Forums to Improve Delivery of Government Services by forming the USDA Labor-Management Forum which is made up of leaders from the seven National labor unions. The USDA forum developed an assessment tool and conducted, for the first time in the history of the Department, a survey of over 2,700 labor-management participants in order to establish baselines for measuring future changes in the USDA labor-management climate. The forum developed a comprehensive set of metrics to measure subordinate forum activities in the areas of employee satisfaction and engagement, mission and service delivery and labor-management relationships. The forum engaged employees through their unions pre-decisionally on over 20 important Department-wide initiatives.

The Strategic Human Resources Planning and Accountability branch is ensuring that there is strategic alignment of USDA's people, policies and processes in order to ensure that USDA's human resources decisions are data-driven and contribute to the practice of effective human resources management, consistent with the merit systems principles and in compliance with Federal laws, rules and regulations.

OO conducted weekly allergy clinics and weekly blood pressure clinics. Providing these clinics at the workplace

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reduces the time employees need to be away from work. Several health screenings were provided for employees, including echocardiograms, stroke, osteoporosis, cancer, diabetes, vision acuity and glaucoma. The Health Units also conducted blood screenings to test for cholesterol levels, prostate cancer, ovarian cancer and a variety of other conditions. In total, the three Health Units received 15,269 employee visits, including 3,634 for emergency calls of which seventy-three (73) required emergency transportation to a medical facility and 11,635 for non-emergency health issues. Six Red Cross blood drives were conducted, plus one Armed Forces blood drive at each location. The Medical Officer reviewed medical records for employees who work with toxic substances, applications for disability retirements, requests for reasonable accommodations, employee fitness evaluations, handicapped parking requests, Medical expert case review, and pre-employment.

OPPM strengthened services through administrative solutions. Examples of recent progress include:

- Supported OMB's Campaign to Cut Waste by reducing spending in Management Support Services' contracts by approximately thirty percent, doubling the goal to reduce spending by fifteen percent by the end of 2012.
- Improved procurement quality by certifying 90 percent of GS-1102 contracting professionals, exceeding the FY12 goal of 87percent.
- Exceeded a goal to save \$100 million in administrative and procurement costs, as a result of strategic sourcing efforts. Specific strategic sourcing projects included enterprise software licenses, telecommunications, and consolidated IT help desk services.
- Issued Departmental "Shared First" procurement policy to reduce program costs and time to procure.
- Partnered with OHRM to obtain Direct Hire Authority to provide agency contracting activities with a more flexible, streamlined process for recruiting entry level contracting professionals and to support succession planning activities.
- Led an effort to become an early adopter of the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System, which manages training, education, and certification data for Federal procurement professionals and transitioned 7,000 employees to the new system.
- Successfully launched e-Authentication, reducing help desks calls that involved password re-sets by 85 percent.
- Successfully supported the Department-wide transition to Financial Management Modernization Initiative (FMMI).
- Piloted warrant management functionality in Integrated Acquisition System (IAS) in order to reduce risk and improve integrity in UDSA acquisition processes.
- Promulgated Round 8 final rule designating 13 categories of bio-based products for preferred procurement; published Round 9 to designate 12 categories; on track to meet the goal to increase the number of designated products by 50 percent by February 2013.
- Continued expansion of the bio-based commercial labeling program that was launched in 2011 to increase consumer awareness and encourage commercial growth; received 564 applications and approved 360 products for certification in 2012.
- Disposed of 800 real property assets with an aggregate value of \$15 million (1.1 million square feet) as of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report for 2012. Reduced Department's space footprint by 1.2 million square. On track to meet 3-year goal of saving \$314 million, helping address budget shortfalls while minimizing negative impacts to program delivery.
- Centralized the Real Property Leasing and Warrant Programs to ensure consistency and reduce redundancies.
- Improved real property data quality by conducting quarterly reviews of data in the Corporate Property Accounting Information System (CPAIS), resulting in a 27 percent decrease in data errors.
- Partnered with GSA to implement a fleet management information system (at no cost for the first year) to increase transparency and meet fleet management goals.
- Partnered with Department of Labor to implement the E-Comp System that will allow USDA to file workers' compensation claims electronically as required by the December 31, 2012 deadline.
- Completed fleet card evaluation and will transition to new fleet credit card in 2013 to improve data reliability and work towards meeting the goals to reduce usage of petroleum-based fuels.

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- Completed seven property improvements, including the standardization of the real property disposal process and leasing programs. These improvements will reduce costs, save time, improve data quality and enhance property sharing options.

USDA is actively pursuing environmentally sound practices to advance sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions as established in our Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan (SSPP). These include: (1) improving energy efficiency and renewable energy use performance. In 2011, USDA achieved a 16 percent reduction in energy intensity compared to the 2003 baseline. USDA purchased and consumed renewable energy equivalent to nine percent of the Department's total electricity use; (2) reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from employee travel, contracted waste disposal, and transmission and distribution losses from purchased energy with USDA achieving a five percent reduction in Scope 3 GHG emissions compared to the 2008 base year; (3) reducing USDA potable water use intensity by fourteen percent compared to the 2007 baseline; and 4) establishing a nationwide network of buildings that not only provide waste and recycling data, but also implement waste management best practices. USDA-occupied, Government-owned buildings achieved a forty-five percent waste diversion rate.

OSDBU worked closely with USDA's senior management and contracting offices and actively assisted in the acquisition process by reviewing all planned acquisitions not already set aside for small business competition; and made recommendations for small business set-aside acquisition strategies. In addition to increased accountability for USDA program executives, OSDBU implemented an aggressive outreach program to identify small businesses that offer solutions to USDA program and operational requirements and challenges. This outreach program included advancing small business contracting opportunities in USDA's largest procurement section, food and commodities, by enhancing the competitive posture of small farmer-owned cooperatives, small rural businesses, and producers to successfully compete for government and commercial contracts. While the overall government-wide goal is 23 percent of annual small business prime contract awards, preliminary data shows that in 2012 USDA awarded 53 percent of the Department's prime contracts to small businesses totaling \$2.8 billion. A prime contract is a contract where a single firm responsible for the entire performance and completion of the contract. USDA has also made a concerted effort to direct contracts to Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses which were awarded 2.9 percent of the Department's prime contracts, or \$154 million.

OALJ conducted 203 hearings (including one rulemaking hearing). The hearings, some involving multiple parties, ranged from less than a day to several weeks in duration. OALJ judges issued 223 initial decisions, 69 default decisions, 239 consent decisions and 94 miscellaneous orders and dismissals, for a total of 625 dispositions in 2012. A total of 638 complaints and petitions were filed with the office during 2012.

OJO issued 533 rulings, orders, and decisions in 2012 under statutes administered by the Secretary of Agriculture, as follows: Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act – 5; Animal Welfare Act – 24; Commercial Transportation of Equine for Slaughter Act – 1; Horse Protection Act – 5; Packers and Stockyards Act – 20; Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act – 477; and Plant Variety Protection Act – 1.

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Summary of Budget and Performance  
Statement of Agency Goals and Objectives

Departmental Administration (DA) was established to provide management leadership to ensure that the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) administrative programs, policies, and advice, meet the needs of USDA program organizations and are consistent with laws and mandates. DA’s functions include: human resources operations, procurement operations, small and disadvantaged business utilization, and the Office of Operations. The administrative law functions and the Judicial Officer have been placed within DA for administrative purposes.

DA has one strategic goal and five strategic objectives that support the strategic goals of the Department.

Agency Strategic Goal	Agency Objectives	Programs that Contribute	Key Outcomes
Provide effective policy, services, and coordination; ensure that all USDA programs and activities are accessible and accountable; and transform Departmental Management into a sustainable, high-performing organization.	Provide value-added products, services and solutions to USDA  Provide oversight and ensure timely and accurate reporting to achieve accountability and resource stewardship.	Office of Procurement and Property Management	1: Improve contract performance, ensure high quality services, reduce risks of nonperformance for future procurements, and expand the use of strategic sourcing in order to lower prices and reduce duplication and administrative costs.
	Provide polices and guidance that attract, develop and sustain a talented, diverse and collaborative workforce in USDA.  Provide value-added products, services and solutions to USDA  Provide oversight and ensure timely and accurate reporting to achieve accountability and resource stewardship.	Office of Human Resources Management	2: Transform USDA into a sustainable, high-performing organization that attracts, develops, and sustains a talented, diverse and collaborative workforce.

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**Key Outcome 1:** Improve contract performance, ensure high quality services, reduce risks of nonperformance for future procurements, and expand the use of strategic sourcing in order to lower prices and reduce duplication and administrative costs.

Long-term Performance Measure:

- Measure #1.1: Increase the number of USDA GS-1102 contracting staff with Federal Acquisition Certification Contracting (FAC-C) certifications to 93 percent by the end of 2014.

Key Performance Measure:

Performance Measures	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Actual a/	2013 Target	2014 Target
a. Increase the number of certified GS-1102 Contracting Staff	N/A	60%	72%	84%	90%	90%	93%
b. Dollars (in thousands)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$600	\$600	\$600

a/ 573 of 637 GS-1102 personnel were certified as of the end of FY 2012. This exceeds the original goal of 87 percent set for 2012.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outcome:

In 2012, each USDA contracting activity collaborated with OPPM to examine opportunities for increased efficiencies in procurement opportunities through: 1) realizing procurement efficiencies by minimizing redundant contract actions and by leveraging USDA buying power through strategic sourcing; and 2) leveraging the knowledge and experience of the USDA procurement workforce.

USDA significantly increased its strategic sourcing activities during 2012. This effort started by identifying and categorizing contract spending USDA-wide. The analysis showed the relationship between requirements staff and contracting offices across USDA and provided a starting point for establishing a strategic sourcing team allowing agency managers and contracting offices to work together to find common solutions to shared acquisition needs. In addition, USDA established a Strategic Sourcing Council to establish priorities and strategies for implementing strategic sourcing initiatives made up of senior leaders from all USDA mission areas.

USDA achieved significant IT related Strategic Sourcing cost reductions/ cost avoidances in 2012 by examining and strategically sourcing enterprise-wide licensing, consolidating IT help desk contracts, and consolidating land line accounts into a managed solution. USDA also reduced the costs of doing business by consolidating data centers and updating service level agreements between bureaus.

OPPM began a revision of the procurement policy and guidance system in order to clarify and update Department-wide guidance. OPPM is currently implementing an improved process for the use of contractor performance appraisal in contractor past performance evaluations. An additional communication forum between the Procurement Policy Division and USDA agencies was implemented to better meet the agencies' needs and to improve acquisition guidance. In 2012, OPPM began internal procurement reviews of two USDA buying activities in an effort to ensure high quality and cost effective procurements and to share lessons learned across the Department.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2014 Proposed Resource Level:

USDA's acquisition workforce will continue to participate in necessary and mandatory training in order to meet our goal of a ninety-three percent certified contracting workforce by the end of 2014. Training will be offered for Program/Project Managers, Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR), and for GS-1102 contracting staff to meet the Federal Acquisition Certification program requirements. USDA also plans to provide hands-on web-based (webinar) procurement training for those in the field. Training and system improvements will result in a certified and well-trained acquisition workforce and will reduce the risk of non-performance and poor results in future procurements. USDA acquisition personnel will be better equipped to identify additional contract saving opportunities, avoid unnecessary costs and ensure that past performance evaluations are conducted. OPPM continues to update policy and guidance as

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issues arise and involve USDA agencies' input into policy and guidance decisions.

Further cost savings and avoidances will be realized through the use of strategic sourcing initiatives, better negotiations skills attained through training and improved contract monitoring that will result in savings. Through the USDA strategic sourcing initiative and the efforts of the new Strategic Sourcing Council, we have set a goal for 2013 of saving an additional \$150 million through strategic sourcing projects.

Finally, OPFM will pilot an electronic invoice process by implementing the Department of the Treasury's Internet Payment Platform in two of USDA contracting activities. Anticipated benefits include shorter invoice processing times, quicker payment turnaround for contractors, lower administrative costs, and reduced costs due to late payment interest fees. Lessons learned from the pilot will be evaluated to determine a path forward for implementing electronic invoicing throughout the Department.

**Key Outcome 2:** Transform USDA into a sustainable, high-performing organization that attracts, develops and sustains a talented, diverse and collaborative workforce.

Long-term Performance Measures:

- Measure #2.1: Improve timeliness of accountability for disciplinary actions against USDA
- Measure #2.2: Implement hiring reform and address a changing workplace by setting a target of 80 days to hire
- Measure #2.3: Implement and monitor USDA labor relations program
- Measure #2.4: Implement a Strategic HR Plan and Accountability Plan

Key Performance Measures:

Performance Measures	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Target	2014 Target
a. Improve timeliness of accountability for disciplinary actions against USDA(1)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Set baseline	90%	91%
b. Dollars (in thousands)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$300	\$300
a. Implement hiring reform and address a changing workplace by setting a target of 80 days to hire (2)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Set baseline	95%	96%
b. Dollars (in thousands)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$200	\$200
a. Implement and monitor USDA labor relations program (3)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Set baseline	7 points	7 points
b. Dollars (in thousands)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$500	\$500
a. Implement a Strategic HR Plan and Accountability Plan (4)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Set baseline	100%	100%
b. Dollars (in thousands)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$3,100	\$3,100

(1) Performance will be measured by the percent of assessments that are submitted timely and consistent with the due date outlined in the transmittal letter. The goal will be 80% for initial assessments.

(2) Performance will be measured by the percentage of employees hired within 80 days

(3) Performance will be measured using an internal scoring rubric, which has a total of nine possible points.

The rubric will score the the labor relations forum based on it: written guidance, proper trainomh, pre-decisional involvement and submitted Metrics Report.

(4) Performance will be measured by the Percent of agencies with a Human Capital and Workforce Planning Guidance Report.

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#### Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outcome:

OHRM led USDA in the implementation of the President's Hiring Reform Initiative which overhauled the way Departments and Agencies recruit and hire for Federal jobs. The time to hire was reduced from 103 days to 89 days in 2012. We instituted Department-wide measures of accountability ensuring mission areas were in compliance with Hiring Reform goals and objectives. Goals were established and corrective action was taken when goals were not met. Agencies report hiring data on a monthly basis and guidance was provided in areas where there was no progress. The mandatory length of Job Announcements was reduced, empowering hiring managers to exercise discretion. Job announcements were streamlined to no more than 5 pages. Department-wide announcements are randomly checked for compliance and agencies were notified.

OHRM implemented the Equal Opportunity Accountability Initiative to ensure there is a department-wide awareness of the significance and consequences of employee action or inaction resulting in a finding of liability against USDA. It requires agencies to forward to OHRM copies of settlement agreements, final agency decisions, administrative law judge decisions, and third-party decisions in program, individual, and employee complaints of discrimination in which there is a finding of liability against the USDA. There were 164 cases reviewed in 2012, with 76 findings against USDA employees.

USDA continues to undertake an unprecedented effort to address large scale budgetary reductions affecting our workforce through use of the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP) authority to minimize the impact on the workforce, increase efficiencies and effectively meet associated challenges.

The Executive Resources Division was consolidated at the Department level as part of the Administrative Solutions Project. The consolidation resulted in great efficiencies, customer service and consistency of service.

The Human Resource Transformation Metrics and Milestones monthly has provided an accountability mechanism for the Secretary's initiative to make USDA look like the customers we serve.

Virtual University is in the process of implementing the new Pathways student intern program in response to the new law, The Federal Internship Improvement Act signed by the President in December 2011. The new law requires a complete revamp of the student intern program. OHRM along with the Office of Personnel Management has collaborated so that USDA's student intern program complied with the new laws.

The Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program for 2012 was established with a diverse group of 80 candidates that will provide USDA with the executive leadership necessary for succession planning.

#### Selected Accomplishments Expected at the 2014 Proposed Resource Level:

As OHRM continues to monitor measure and provide guidance on Human Resource transformation goals, USDA will: 1) have a diverse and talented group of leaders who can meet the succession planning needs of USDA on an ongoing basis; 2) hold employees accountable for discrimination actions resulting in liability against USDA in a consistent, fair, and equitable manner; 3) implement a hiring process that enhances recruitment and retention of a highly skilled employee group as well as deal with budgetary cuts to address a changing workforce; 4) develop and monitor the Labor/Management Relations Program to promote cooperation that benefits Labor, the Employee and contribute to the improvement of services provided to the American people by USDA; and 5) develop and implement a consistent Employee Relations Program across USDA.

The benefits to USDA and program participants are as follows: 1) USDA will have a diverse group of individuals who are being developed to fill succession planning needs for senior executives as well as USDA Mission Areas, Agencies, and Staff Offices. This will result in greater diversity among USDA leaders and this greater diversity will reflect the population that USDA serves. A more diverse leadership will have a better understanding of the overall scope of program needs and will better connect with the full range of program participants. 2) USDA senior leaders will have regular networking and education activities so that they maintain their competitive edge for senior leadership positions leading to greater performance in serving the public. 3) Employee satisfaction will increase as a result of development

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of fair and consistent policies and practices for a wide range of activities that will result in providing better performance that will have a positive impact on customer service to USDA program participants, and; 4) USDA agencies will have a regular pipeline of talented and successful employees to meet succession planning needs related to managing and leading human resources programs. These human resources programs are critical to ensure that USDA continues to have the talent that is needed to accomplish its mission effectively and serve its customer needs..

Strategic Goal Funding Matrix

(Dollars in thousands)

	2011	2012	2013		2014
<u>Program/ Program Items</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
<b>Agency Strategic Goal: Provide effective policy, services, and coordination; ensure that all USDA programs and activities are accessible and accountable; and transform Department Management into a sustainable, high performance organization.</b>					
Departmental Administration.....	\$31,647	\$26,615	\$24,313	-1,320	\$22,993
Staff Years.....	183	175	185	-16	169

Full Cost by Department Strategic Goal

(Dollars in thousands)

**Agency Strategic Goal:** Provide effective policy, services, and coordination; ensure that all USDA programs and activities are accessible and accountable; transform Departmental Management into a sustainable, high performance organization.

	2011	2012	2013	2014
<u>Program/ Program Items</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
Salaries and Benefits.....	\$24,209	\$19,912	\$20,429	\$18,849
Administrative costs (direct).....	7,223	6,121	3,884	4,144
Total Costs.....	31,432	26,033	24,313	22,993
FTEs.....	183	175	185	169
Performance Measure:				
1.1 Increase the number of certified GS-1102 Contracting Staff.....	84%	90%	90%	93%
Dollars (in thousands).....	N/A	\$600	\$600	\$600
2.1 Improve timelines of accountability for disciplinary actions against USDA.....	N/A	N/A	90%	91%
Dollars (in thousands).....	N/A	N/A	\$300	\$300
2.2 Implement hiring reform and address a changing workplace by setting a target of 80 days to hire.....	N/A	N/A	95%	96%
Dollars (in thousands).....	N/A	N/A	\$200	\$200
2.3 Implement and monitor USDA labor relations program .....	N/A	N/A	7 points	7 points
Dollars (in thousands).....	N/A	N/A	\$500	\$500
2.4 Implement a Strategic HR Plan and Accountability Plan.....	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
Dollars (in thousands).....	N/A	N/A	\$3,100	\$3,100

## ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Language in the General Provisions of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act permits agencies funded in the Act to finance the activities of selected Committees that advise them from their own funds, subject to the limitation on total obligations for these Committees.

Provided below is a list of those Committees subject to this spending limitation and their funding levels for 2010 - 2012.

<b>USDA ADVISORY COMMITTEES</b>			
Policy Area and Committee Title	2010 Allocation	2011 Allocation	2012 Allocation
<b>FOOD, NUTRITION, AND CONSUMER SERVICES:</b>			
National Advisory Council on Maternal, Infant and Fetal Nutrition.....	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$75,000
FY 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.....	285,000	0	0
<b>FOOD SAFETY:</b>			
National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection.....	67,000	68,000	50,000
National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods. ....	40,000	160,000	200,000
<b>RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS:</b>			
Forestry Research Advisory Council .....	65,000	65,000	0
Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Agriculture .....	286,000	286,000	274,000
Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics .....	35,000	35,000	70,000
USDA/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities .....	23,000	23,000	20,941
<b>MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS:</b>			
National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee .....	24,000	24,000	43,600
General Conference Committee on the National Poultry Improvement Plan.....	10,000	8,500	33,000
Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Disease .....	0	35,000	45,000
National Organic Standards Board .....	190,000	90,000	190,000
Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee .....	70,000	70,000	96,000
Federal Grain Inspection Advisory Committee .....	45,000	47,000	40,000
<b>FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES:</b>			
Edward Madigan Award Advisory Committee .....	0	0	20,000
Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade .....	14,000	18,520	50,550

<b>USDA ADVISORY COMMITTEES</b>			
Policy Area and Committee Title	2010 Allocation	2011 Allocation	2012 Allocation
Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees for Trade .....	84,000	111,120	124,300
Advisory Committee on Emerging Markets .....	25,000	25,000	20,000
Consultative Group on Child Labor and Forced Labor .....	14,000	14,000	0
Dairy Industry Advisory Committee .....	0	100,000	0
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT:</b>			
Agricultural Air Quality Task Force.....	150,000	180,000	150,000
<b>OFFICE OF ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH:</b>			
Native American Advisory Committee. ....	0	0	84,000
Minority Farmer Advisory Committee. ....	0	80,000	101,000
Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers.....	80,000	80,000	112,000
<b>Total Advisory Committees .....</b>	<b>1,557,000</b>	<b>1,570,140</b>	<b>1,799,391</b>
Contingencies/Reserve .....	243,000	229,860	609
<b>TOTAL, ADVISORY COMMITTEES LIMITATION .....</b>	<b>1,800,000</b>	<b>1,800,000</b>	<b>1,800,000</b>

## ADVISORY COMMITTEES

### STATUS OF PROGRAM

From 1983 through 1996, a central appropriation provided for direction and financial support of all authorized USDA Advisory Committee activities other than those included in the Forest Service and those financed from user fees. Beginning in 1997, language in the General Provisions of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act permits agencies funded in the Act to finance the activities of selected committees that advise them from their own funds, subject to a Department-wide limitation on expenditures for those committees. These Explanatory Notes provide information on the activities of committees during 2012.

#### FOOD, NUTRITION, AND CONSUMER SERVICES:

##### National Advisory Council on Maternal, Infant and Fetal Nutrition

The Council studies the operation of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and related programs such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). The Council is composed of 24 members and includes representatives of Federal, State and local governments, the medical field, industry, WIC and CSFP parent participants, and advocacy groups. The Council's expenses are unique to include the cost of lost wages and childcare for low-income parent members.

The annual meeting of the Council was scheduled for July 17-19, 2012, was cancelled. Due to a lack of a quorum it has not been rescheduled at this time.

#### FOOD SAFETY:

##### National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI)

The NACMPI was established in 1971, to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on matters affecting federal and state inspection program activities. It also contributes to USDA's regulatory policy development. The FSIS Administrator serves as the Committee Chair. Recommendations are sent to USDA's Under Secretary for Food Safety for consideration and review and are then sent to the Secretary of Agriculture. The NACMPI charter was reestablished in 2012. Five new members were selected in October for the 2012-2014 term. NACMPI, which is composed of 20 members, who serve two year terms, has contributed discussion and expertise to a wide range of critical food safety issues, most recently discussing the FSIS-proposed poultry inspection modernization plan in March of 2012. NACMPI held one Web conference call on March 3, 2012 to discuss opinions on the FSIS proposed poultry inspection rule. There are no new updates at this time.

NACMPI meeting minutes, transcripts, presentations and final reports can be viewed on the NACMPI Web page at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About FSIS/NACMPI Charter/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About_FSIS/NACMPI_Charter/index.asp).

##### National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF)

The NACMCF was established in 1988 under Departmental Regulation 1043-28. This discretionary Committee reports to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services. The Committee is managed through an interagency food safety partnership between the USDA, Food Safety and Inspection Service; the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service; and the Department of Defense, Defense Logistics Agency. The current charter expired on November 1, 2012; renewal is in process. The Committee membership term expired on May 11, 2012; 22 new appointments are in-process. Concurrent with appointments, terms for 8 recent members will renew for a total of 30 members.

Committee activities are carried out, in part, by subcommittees that focus on specific areas being considered by the full Committee. NACMCF has contributed to a broad range of critical food safety issues including the development of reference documents emphasizing the role of regulatory agencies, industry, and consumers to control specific foodborne pathogens. The NACMCF was instrumental in formulating and standardizing the principles of hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) systems. Committee reports provide current information and scientific advice to Federal food safety agencies and serve as a foundation for regulations and programs aimed at reducing foodborne disease and enhancing public health.

NACMCF held one plenary meeting and four Subcommittee meetings in 2012.

#### Plenary Meeting

- March 28 - Teleconference (Washington, DC)

#### Subcommittee Meetings

- Feb 7, 2012: Study of Microbiological Criteria as Indicators of Process Control or Insanitary Conditions

#### AMS/School Lunch Program (Teleconference)

- Feb 14-17, 2012: Study of Microbiological Criteria as Indicators of Process Control or Insanitary Conditions AMS/School Lunch Program (Pascagoula, MS)
- Feb 23, 2012: Study of Microbiological Criteria as Indicators of Process Control or Insanitary Conditions

#### AMS/School Lunch Program (Teleconference)

- May 8-10, 2012: Control Strategies for Reducing Foodborne Norovirus Infections (Washington, DC)

NACMCF developed one report in 2012

- Title: *Expedited Response to the Questions Posed by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service to Support Ground Beef Purchase for the Federal Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs*, posted on NACMCF website.

NACMCF meeting minutes, transcripts and final reports can be viewed on the NACMCF website at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About\\_FSYS/NACMCF/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About_FSYS/NACMCF/index.asp)

## RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS

### Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Agriculture (AC21)

The AC21 was established by the Secretary to examine the long-term impacts of biotechnology on the U.S. food and agriculture system and USDA, and provide guidance to USDA on pressing individual issues, identified by the Office of the Secretary, related to the application of biotechnology in agriculture. AC21's charter was approved and members were appointed in 2011. Under its Charter, the AC21 can have 20-25 members, who serve two year terms, and past members have included representatives from academia, biotechnology providers, food manufacturers, the grain trade, farmers, the legal profession, and both environmental and consumer organizations, as well as *ex officio* members from five government agencies and departments and a representative from State Departments of Agriculture. The Committee has a total of 23 members including representatives from the biotechnology industry, the organic food industry, farming communities, the seed industry, food manufacturers, State government, consumer and community development groups, the medical profession, and academic researchers. All members are eligible to be reappointed at the time of their terms expiration.

The AC21 has been chartered since 2003, but did not meet in 2009 or 2010. Even though the charter was current, the Committee was placed administratively inactive pending review by the Office of the Secretary. When the AC21 was revived in 2011, the committee Charter was revised to facilitate the timely completion of reports with recommendations. The first meeting under the current charter was held in August 2011. During 2012, the AC21

met four more times in plenary session, charged with considering whether a compensation mechanism might be appropriate to address economic losses to farmers that were caused by the unintended presence of genetically engineered (GE) material, how such a mechanism might work, and what other steps USDA might take to bolster coexistence among different agricultural production systems. Four working groups were also established to frame issues for the full AC21's discussion and those groups cumulatively met 18 times. A report was substantially complete in 2012, and finalized in early 2013. The report, entitled "Enhancing Coexistence: A Report of the AC21 to the Secretary of Agriculture" was presented to Secretary Vilsack on November 19, 2012 and made available to the public shortly thereafter. The report makes five main recommendations, each of which has a number of sub-recommendations; some recommendations will require new funding and some new legal authority to implement. The recommendations address research, stakeholder outreach, crop insurance, USDA germplasm resources, and other areas. Implementation of the AC21's recommendations, many of which call for significant new USDA activities, will require input and/or actions on the part of numerous agencies and offices within a number of USDA mission areas. The AC21 report, minutes from all meetings, plenary transcripts, and meeting handouts are available at: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=AC21Main.xml&contentidonly=true>.

### Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics

The Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics was established on July 16, 1962, in the Department of Commerce, and was chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2, in January 1973. This Committee was moved to USDA in FY 1997 when responsibility for the Census of Agriculture transferred from the Department of Commerce to the Department of Agriculture.

The Committee provides advice to the Secretary of Agriculture and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). It makes recommendations on the conduct of the periodic censuses and surveys of agriculture, other related surveys, and the types of agricultural information obtained from respondents. The Committee also advises on the content and frequency of agricultural reports.

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

The Committee met March 29-30, 2012 in Washington, D.C., and provided the following recommendations to NASS:

- The Advisory Committee commended USDA for accepting or acting on 2011 recommendations and discussions.
- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS continues to work towards increasing participation by all minorities in NASS surveys, the Census of Agriculture, and all USDA programs. NASS should explore and pursue any new, innovative, and effective ways to reach these farmers, ranchers, and producers.
- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS perform a Land Tenure survey as early as possible but no later than 2015. This should be the highest priority "optional" follow-on.
- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS continue to support the Census of Aquaculture as the next follow-on survey to the Census of Agriculture to be conducted in 2014 for the reference year 2013 and to continue the catfish and trout reports.
- The Advisory Committee commends NASS on its significant improvements in efficiency and the use of technology, recognizing that recent budgetary issues have posed significant challenges, but commend the agency for continuing to focus on productive change and encourage it to continue to focus on ways to maintain and improve morale in these tough times.

- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS add a new question to the Agricultural Resource Management Survey, “If you have planted cover crops this year, please indicate the number of acres by species.”
- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS discuss with the Department of Labor the possibility of expanding the existing Farm Labor Survey to include a breakdown of all farm employees, both U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens, to better understand labor challenges in 2012 and beyond. The Committee recommends stressing confidentiality with regard to such questions.
- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS include a brief statement on future censuses and surveys explaining the purpose of the Census of Agriculture and other surveys. It could be above the “Thank you for your cooperation” statement. Possible emphasis could be on the fact that these surveys determine payments to producers for crop and pasture insurance, equipment, disaster payments, and other county payments and practices.
- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS develop an agritourism/local foods follow-on and set it as a priority among any optional follow-on surveys.
- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS merge the nursery and floriculture reports with the horticulture follow-on census if they face future elimination.
- The Advisory Committee recommends that NASS begin to investigate ways/methods to help “close the loop” with producers to help incentivize producers and give them reasons to provide data to NASS (such as providing producers with localized data, or other useful data) to maintain/improve response rates.

For more information on the proceedings of the meeting, please see the following Web site:  
[http://www.nass.usda.gov/About\\_NASS/Advisory\\_Committee\\_on\\_Agriculture\\_Statistics/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/About_NASS/Advisory_Committee_on_Agriculture_Statistics/index.asp)

#### USDA/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

The USDA/HACU Leadership Group, consisting of 8-10 members, is a national body of USDA and Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) leaders appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture and the President of HACU that recommends policies and programs to strengthen USDA partnerships with HSIs and provides leadership and strategic direction on issues related to Hispanic education. The group meets twice annually to advance the program agenda for the Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program (HSINP) office and develop ongoing guidance for the Secretary as it relates to HSIs. In calendar year 2012 the Leadership Group met on March 19th and October 19th. Both meetings were held in Washington, D.C. and hosted at ERS facilities. New Leadership Group initiatives/recommendations included an extension of International Partnership development for HSIs and HSACUs and a twenty-year analysis of the HACU National Internship Programs. The group also continued its strong focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) initiatives and educational programs. Finally, through the Leadership Group’s initiatives, USDA was recognized by the HACU Governing Board as the Outstanding Public Sector Partner of the Year for 2012.

#### MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS:

##### National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee (NWSAC)

The Charter for the Secretary’s National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee (NWSAC) was re-established on March 1, 2011. An aggressive outreach strategy has been in progress to solicit applications for membership and begin meeting on an annual basis in 2013. Fifteen Committee members were selected to represent a broad range of agricultural, environmental, and conservation groups, academia, and other interest groups. Additional outreach is taking place to solicit nominations for five additional Committee members.

According to the Charter, the NWSAC advises the Secretary of Agriculture on policies, program issues and research needs necessary to manage damage caused by depredating wildlife to protect America’s agricultural, industrial, and natural resources and to safeguard public health and safety.

### General Conference Committee of the National Poultry Improvement Plan

The National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP), consisting of 7 members, was started in 1935 and has been a very successful Federal-State-Industry cooperative program for control of specific poultry diseases in the United States. The purpose of the Plan is to allow the application of new technology for the improvement of poultry and poultry products throughout the country. The NPIP is governed by the General Conference Committee, a Federal advisory committee which is the official advisory committee to the Secretary on poultry health. The commercial poultry industry has annual revenue of \$35 billion in the U.S. Recommendations are made at the National Plan Conference (held every other year) by official delegates representing participating flock owners, breeders and hatchery owners from all cooperating States, in accordance with 9CFR Part 147, Subpart E. The General Conference Committee, can, on a limited basis, make an interim approval of a change until such time that the change can be reviewed and voted upon at the National Plan Conference.

Accomplishments of the NPIP-GCC for 2012 at the Biennial Conference were:

- Granted full NPIP approval of the IDEXX MG/MS PCR test, the Applied Biosystems MicroSEQ® Salmonella Species Real-Time PCR assay and Applied Biosystems TaqMan® Salmonella Enteritidis Real-Time PCR assay.
- Several informative presentations were given at the conference including: Salmonella review and laboratory survey, CDC Salmonella update, Industry perspective for mail order hatcheries, ARS-SEPRL Avian Influenza research update, USDA-APHIS Update, and the Future Considerations of NPIP-GCC.

In addition, the Proposed Changes and Program Standards were discussed and voted upon. The new GCC members and alternates were elected into office. Five resolutions were brought forth before the GCC, possible locations were suggested for the next Biennial Conference to be held in 2014, and it was decided that the Official State Agency meeting would be held in conjunction with the next GCC Meeting in June of 2013.

### Advisory Committee on Animal Health

The Advisory Committee on Animal Health (ACAH), consisting of 20 members, advises the Secretary on strategies, policies, and programs to prevent, control, and/or eradicate diseases of national significance.

During 2012, the Committee met November 1-2, 2011 and continued its discussion regarding the Proposed Rule on Traceability for Livestock Moving Interstate. The Committee also deliberated on the combined brucellosis/tuberculosis framework for a new rule currently under consideration. In addition to a recommendation on this topic, the Committee advanced another 12 recommendations for the Secretary's consideration--most of which pertained to animal disease traceability. Other recommendations had to do with the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, foreign animal disease research and vaccines, and other countermeasures for preventing, diagnosing, and controlling a Foot-and-Mouth Disease or other foreign animal disease outbreak. The official report with recommendations from the Committee was tendered to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in March 2012.

The ACAH Subcommittee on Aquatic Animal Health (SAAH) met on September 5 – 6, 2012, and considered topics including Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS), certification programs, Infectious Salmon Anemia, National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP), and the Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory Network. Several Agency (APHIS and Fish and Wildlife) presentations were also shared with the Subcommittee for informational purposes only. The Subcommittee drafted three recommendations on VHS, three priorities for the NAAHP, and the Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory Network. Those recommendations will be finalized and vetted through the parent committee during SAAH's next in-person meeting.

The Committee and its subcommittee have diligently carried out their tasks, steadfastly working on and making practical recommendations, as well as providing useful insights, and representing their stakeholders. APHIS expects that they will continue to serve as critical conduits for agricultural stakeholder input and observations going forward.

### National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)

Title XXI of the 1990 Farm Bill, known as the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA), established the National Organic Program (NOP), a USDA program responsible for implementing and enforcing organic standards and facilitating the work of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), an advisory board to the Secretary of Agriculture. The NOSB is composed of four farmers/growers, two handlers/processors, one retailer, one scientist, three consumer/public interest advocates, three environmentalists, and one certifying agent. Members come from all four U.S. regions and serve rotating five year terms. The NOSB charter was renewed and approved in May 2012 for a period of two years.

The NOSB has sole authority granted through OFPA to recommend additions to or deletions from the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. The NOSB drafts recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture based on needs of the industry, with input from both industry and the public. The Board's main functions are to make recommendations about whether a substance should be allowed or prohibited in organic production or handling, assist in the development of standards for substances to be used in organic production, and advise the Secretary on other aspects of implementing OFPA and the NOP regulations. Five NOSB members' terms expired in January 2012. A broad outreach effort was implemented to solicit nominations to fill the vacancies, yielding a pool of 37 applicants. Secretary Vilsack appointed five new NOSB members during the fall of 2012.

In 2012, during the course of two public meetings, the NOSB deliberated on a variety of topics related to organic agriculture and subsequently made the following recommendations to the Secretary:

#### Sunset 2013 Substances:

The NOSB must review all National List substances every five years and make a recommendation to renew, remove, or change each listing. This process is commonly referred to as "Sunset" review. The NOSB made recommendations for thirty National List substances as part of their Sunset 2013 review.

#### Other Recommendations:

**Animal Welfare:** The NOSB made recommendations to strengthen the animal welfare requirements in organic livestock production. The Board recommended new regulations on physical alterations and livestock living conditions for mammals and birds, and also recommended new language to cover animal handling and transit to slaughter.

**Chlorine materials:** The NOSB voted to amend the annotation for chlorine products used in food handling that is consistent with recent NOP guidance on chlorine use. This change permits use of chlorine up to maximum labeled rates for sanitation of equipment, permits labeled uses in direct contact with products like fruit or vegetables, and restricts the use of chlorine in water as an ingredient to levels not higher than those permitted in drinking water.

**Materials review organizations:** In December 2011, the NOSB recommended that all material review organizations be accredited or formally recognized in a new material review scope. At the May 2012 meeting, the NOSB recommended that the NOP develop guidance materials for material review organizations to promote consistency and uniformity in the short term. Their recommendation outlined a range of criteria and processes that these groups should use when reviewing substances.

**Letter to Secretary Vilsack:** The NOSB voted to send a letter to the Secretary regarding their establishment of a Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) ad hoc Subcommittee. The letter outlined some of the issues this Subcommittee intends to address.

**Research Priorities Framework:** The NOSB recommended a set of criteria for identifying research needs and a process for the NOSB to develop and publish a yearly recommendation on emerging research needs. Topics that the NOSB believes will have the largest long-term impact on growth and integrity of organic agriculture will be a priority.

NOSB Policy and Procedures Manual: The NOSB amended several sections of their Policy and Procedures Manual to clarify and/or include guidance about NOSB member and leadership transitions and Subcommittee transparency via posting of meeting notes.

#### Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee

The Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (Committee), typically consists of 25 members and fulfills its purpose and responsibility of providing recommendations to the Secretary on issues facing the industry as a whole, as well as ways the USDA can tailor its programs to better meet the stakeholder's needs. In the past, these recommendations were related to issues such as food safety, commodities purchasing, Child Nutrition Programs and other Federal feeding programs, agricultural labor, local farming initiatives, and input for the upcoming Farm Bill.

Throughout its existence, the Committee has placed particular emphasis in developing ways to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in USDA's National School Lunch Program as well as for all consumers.

The 2011-2013 Committee charter was reestablished in May 2011, with a call for nominations publicly announced in June 2011. A nomination package was originally sent for consideration and appointment to the office of the Secretary in 2011. No Committee appointments have been made to date, therefore no action or expenditures have occurred for this Committee to date. The committee had membership complications and was therefore administratively inactive. The 2013-2015 Charter re-establishment process is scheduled to begin for this Committee in January 2013.

#### Federal Grain Inspection Advisory Committee

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) Grain Inspection Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) was established under section 21 of the United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA) on September 29, 1981. The Advisory Committee is charged with advising the Secretary on implementing the USGSA and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, or more simply, on implementing GIPSA's grain inspection and weighing programs. The Advisory Committee is comprised of 15 members and 15 alternates who represent all segments of the U.S. grain industry, including producers, processors, handlers, exporters, grain inspection agencies, and scientists related to the policies in the USGSA (7 U.S.C. 71-87k).

The Advisory Committee advises the Secretary on various important issues affecting GIPSA operations and the official grain inspection and weighing system delivery during biannual meetings. In 2012 the Advisory Committee met on December 6-7, 2011, in Portland, Oregon. At this meeting the Advisory Committee addressed international issues; experience to-date on the exceptions program; quality management program; the testing diverter type mechanical sampling systems; new rice sheller implementation; moisture measurement for rice and soybeans; rapid test kit evaluation program; sorghum odor; review of export tonnage fee; and the centralized quality assurance activities.

During this meeting the following resolutions were passed: recommendation that GIPSA continue to hold meetings twice a year to stay abreast of resolutions submitted by committee members; that GIPSA expedite the formation and release of reports from the Quality Assurance Control (QAC) program to the official agencies, and that the development of these QAC reports should incorporate feedback from the official agencies; that GIPSA consider the possibility of confusion and uncertainty for market participants if there were a change in the current market moisture reference (potential changes in the moisture reference should be avoided, the only reference method the Advisory Committee would support for global harmonization would be the one currently utilized in the United States); that the implementation of the 149 MHZ technology for moisture measurement in August 2012 for fall harvest grains, GIPSA should also work with industry to transition from the GAC 2100 to the 149 MHZ technology to aid in stakeholder needs; and that GIPSA perform a comprehensive review of all inspection fees associated with processed commodities and containers, including but not limited to user fees, oversight fees, and fees collected to ensure that the charges are equitable in comparison with these same fees on bulk grain.

## FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES:

### Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade (APAC) and Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees for Trade (ATAC)

Pursuant to Departmental Regulation 1042-68, USDA currently administers the APAC and six ATACs: (1) Animals and Animal Products (32 members); (2) Fruits and Vegetables (18 members); (3) Grains, Feed, and Oilseeds (37 members); (4) Sweeteners and Sweetener Products (23 members); (5) Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts, and Planting Seeds (23 members); and (6) Processed Foods (32 members). The APAC and the ATACs are jointly administered by the USDA and the United States Trade Representative (USTR). The APAC and ATACs were re-chartered in June of 2011 for four years with 16 new members appointed in 2012.

The APAC and ATACs are authorized by sections 135(c)(1) and (2) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (Pub. L. No. 93-618, 19 U.S.C. 2155). Congress established these Committees to ensure that trade policy and trade negotiations objectives adequately reflect private sector U.S. commercial and economic interests. The Committees provide a formal mechanism to ensure liaison between the Federal Government and private sector regarding international agricultural trade matters. Specifically, the Committees provide the Secretary of Agriculture and USTR information and advice on negotiating objectives, bargaining positions and other matters related to the development, implementation, and administration of U.S. agricultural trade policy. The APAC provides policy advice, while the ATACs provide detailed commodity technical advice. The members on the APAC and on the ATACs are important to advancing the Administration's trade agenda to liberalize agricultural trade, expand access for U.S. food and agricultural products in overseas markets, and reduce unfair competition.

All Committee members have demonstrated leadership qualities, commodity expertise, and knowledge of the effects that various trade barriers or absence of trade barriers can have on the commodities they represent. All members are recognized leaders in their field and are able to represent those interests with fairness.

During 2012, the following topics were discussed:

- A range of timely and sensitive agricultural trade issues, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, implementation of the Free Trade Agreements with Korea, Colombia, and Panama, the U.S.-EU High Level Working Group, Russian accession to the WTO and the WTO trade agreement, and enforcement actions affecting the agricultural sector.
- FDA's implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act.
- Numerous issues related to access for various U.S. agricultural products to individual foreign countries.

### Advisory Committee on Emerging Markets

Section 1542(d)(1) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (the Act), as amended, directs the Secretary to make available to emerging markets the expertise of the United States to "identify and carry out specific opportunities and projects," including potential reductions in trade barriers, "in order to develop, maintain, or expand markets for United States agricultural exports." The Act also requires the Secretary to establish an Advisory Committee (Section 1542(d)(1)(F)), composed of 20 members who are representatives of food and rural business sectors of the United States to provide information and advice on developing strategies for providing technical assistance and for enhancing markets for U.S. agricultural products in developing market economies.

The purpose of the Committee is to provide information and advice, based upon the knowledge and expertise of the members, useful to USDA in implementing the Emerging Markets Program (EMP), which assists U.S. entities in developing, maintaining, or expanding exports of U.S. agricultural commodities and products by funding activities that improve emerging markets' food and rural business systems, including reducing potential trade barriers in such markets. The Committee also advises USDA on ways to increase the involvement of the U.S. private sector in

cooperative work with emerging markets in food and rural business systems. One of the principal functions of the Committee is to review qualified proposals submitted to EMP for funding and advice on funding recommendations.

The process to re-establish the Committee's charter will begin in 2013.

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT:

### Agricultural Air Quality Task Force (AAQTF or The Task Force)

The Agricultural Air Quality Task Force (AAQTF) was created in accordance with Section 391 of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on issues related to agricultural air quality. In 1996, Congress found that various studies alleged that agriculture is a source of Particulate Matter (PM) emissions and that many of these studies have often been based on erroneous data. Congress also cited ongoing research by USDA and declared that Federal policy in regard to air pollution be based on sound scientific findings that are subject to adequate peer review and take into account economic feasibility.

The Task Force's mandate is to strengthen and coordinate USDA's air quality research effort and identify cost effective ways for the agriculture industry to improve air quality and meet Federal and local air quality emissions requirements. Chaired by the Chief of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the AAQTF had 25 members for the current 2010-2012 charter that expired December 20, 2012. The charter is currently in the re-establishment process. The AAQTF membership consists of leaders in farming, industry, health, and science. The Task Force also includes representatives from USDA's Forest Service, Agricultural Research Service, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and other regular government employees (RGEs) whose expertise is required.

#### 2012 AAQTF Activities and Recommendations:

Task Force meetings are held two to three times per year at locations around the country in order to observe local and regional agricultural air quality-related issues and to hear from concerned citizens. 2012 meetings were held February 7-8 in Phoenix, AZ and August 1-2 in Syracuse NY. There were four AAQTF subcommittees active in 2012: Bioenergy and Climate Variability; Emerging Issues; Air Quality Standards; and Emissions Quantification, Mitigation and Validation. Subcommittees met throughout 2012 and developed recommendations, and in some cases briefing papers, that were presented at the two face-to-face meetings of the full Task Force.

The following is a summarization of the major recommendations from the 2012 AAQTF:

- As EPA develops a policy on reactive nitrogen, they should keep the applicable Scientific Advisory Board closely involved in the process, fully engage with USDA and agricultural production groups, recognize and implement a regional perspective on this issue, and recognize that current science is inadequate to designate ammonia as a criteria air pollutant.
- The USDA should draft a comprehensive national fire/smoke policy that maintains ecological integrity and reduces the unintended consequences of catastrophic fires resulting from fuel build up.
- When developing the policy on reactive nitrogen, EPA should not include any reference to fires with guidance for high wind events; should go through proper rulemaking to make needed amendments to the Exceptional Events Rule (EER); should promulgate clear implementation procedures for all rules to facilitate regional consistency; must define "area-specific" high wind thresholds rather than using a single threshold for the entire country; should only require environmental analysis and use of related technologies that are commonly available at State/Local/Tribal entities; should clearly provide for and list ALL specific requirements State/Local/Tribal entities must have in their demonstrations to exclude ambient air quality data affected by high winds under the exceptional events rule, and should adopt the existing language of "state of emergency," whether it is national or state declared, as the default for "extreme events" in the United States.
- The AAQTF concurred with official correspondence from the USDA Climate Change Program Office to EPA that requested that EPA adopt a categorical exclusion under the Clean Air Act for biogenic emissions from the bioenergy sector.

- NRCS National Conservation Practices Standards (NCPS) should be listed and named in future EPA regulations where those regulations have the potential to impact agriculture; Agricultural producers and private land owners utilizing the appropriate and designated NCPS should be considered as meeting best available control measures (BACM) and reasonably available control measures (RACM); and EPA should communicate that opinion to USDA-NRCS and allow NRCS to develop the next level of science-based controls.

For additional information on these recommendations and minutes from the meetings, including copies of presentations made before the Task Force, please visit the following Web site:

<http://www.airquality.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/air/taskforce>

## OFFICE OF ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH:

### Minority Farmer Advisory Committee

Under section 14008 of the Food Conservation Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–246), the Secretary established the Committee to provide advice on: (1) the implementation of section 2501 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 which directs the Secretary of Agriculture to provide outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers; (2) methods of maximizing the participation of minority farmers and ranchers in USDA programs; and (3) civil rights activities within the USDA as such activities relate to participants in such programs.

Committee members are appointed according to the following: (1) not less than four socially disadvantage farmers or ranchers (as defined in section 2501 (e) (2) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 ( 7 CFR U.S.C. 2279 (e) (2))); (2) not less than two representatives of nonprofit organizations with a history of working with minority farmers and ranchers; (3) not less than two civil rights professionals; (4) not less than two representatives of institutions of higher education with demonstrated experience working with minority farmers and ranchers; and (5) such other persons as the Secretary considers appropriate.

The charter for the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers, which is comprised of 25 members, was renewed in March 2012 for a term of 2 years. The Committee met during 2012 in New Mexico on November 3 – 4, 2011 during which there was significant stakeholder engagement of minority farmers and ranchers. In July 2012, the Committee submitted recommendations that were the collective outcome of its last two public meetings held in 2011 and again in 2012. All meetings are open to the public and public participation is requested.

This Committee authorized three subcommittees with concentration in the following Program areas:

- Subcommittee 1: Office of Civil Rights
- Subcommittee 2: Farm Services Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Risk Management Agency, Agricultural Marketing Service
- Subcommittee 3: Rural Development, Forest Service, National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

While past meetings have been strategically held in locations that garnered stakeholder participation, future meetings may be held in Washington, D.C., in order to access technology needed for nationwide output to regional facilities. The Office of Outreach and Advocacy (OAO) will consider technological alternatives that enhance public participation through designated sites at strategic regions across the country. While high-technology and teleconference media may not be the most practical means of encouraging greater public participation, these remain viable alternatives through which stakeholders might at least observe. The chief aim will be to encourage greater participation of socially-disadvantaged stakeholders who might more readily attend meetings that are made available in their regions.

### Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

The Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (BFR), which is comprised of 20 members, was established by Section 5 of the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992. The Committee's purpose is to advise the Secretary on ways to develop programs that assist new farmers and ranchers by providing new opportunities. The Committee did not convene an in person meeting during 2012, but was able to meet for several administrative conference calls.

The BFR charter was renewed at the end of 2012 and a call for nominations has been published in the Federal Register. No less than fifty percent of the Committee will be reappointed for the next term and several of the current members have reached advisory committee term limits (6 years) and must take a 2-year hiatus.

The Committee was unable to convene a second meeting in 2012. The last meeting was via teleconference in September 2012.

### OFFICE OF TRIBAL RELATIONS:

#### Council for Native American Farming and Ranching

The Settlement Agreement that resolves *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* approved by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish The Council for Native American Farming and Ranching. The Secretary established the Council pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. App. 2. The settlement agreement remains in force and effect for a period of five years from its approval by the court on April 28, 2011.

By terms of the agreement, the Council consists of 15 members appointed by the Secretary. These individuals have demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities as well as persons who represent a diverse range of experience in different types of production agriculture. In addition to the Native American farmers and ranchers and persons who represent the interest of Native American farmers or ranchers, members shall also include representatives from the following groups: The Farm Service Agency Administrator or his or her delegate; the Senior Advisor to the Secretary, Tribal relations, or his or her delegate; the Assistant Secretary for Civil rights or his or her delegate; the Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs or his or her delegate.

CNAFR made great strides in 2012 as the committee was established and two meetings were held.

Committee members chosen:

- Nominations for the CNAFR had to be sent into the USDA by January 20, 2012
- On May 24, 2012 Secretary Vilsack announced the appointment of members to the CNAFR who will advise him on ways to eliminate barriers to participation for Native American farmers and ranchers

Inaugural and second meeting held:

- CNAFR members held their first meeting at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC August 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>
- The council held a listening session for the public and were provided a background briefing of each agency and mission area
- Council members established a chair and vice-chair to lead the committee and adopted by-laws
- The second meeting was held in conjunction with the Intertribal Agriculture Council's annual conference, the largest gathering of Native American farmers and ranchers, in Las Vegas, NV December 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup>.
- A half day listening session was held which was filled with members from the IAC conference.

- The council was updated on the Keepseagle settlement and discussed recommendations to send to Secretary Vilsack.

For more information about CNAFR such as transcripts, meeting information, and charter information individuals may visit the website at: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=otr-council-native-american-farming-ranching.html>

AUTHORITY AND COMPOSITION OF USDA ADVISORY COMMITTEES IN EXISTENCE BETWEEN  
2012 and 2013

Committee Title	USDA Agency	Authority Statutory (S) or Discretionary (D)	Committee Membership
<b>FOOD, NUTRITION AND CONSUMER SERVICES:</b>			
National Advisory Council on Maternal, Infant and Fetal Nutrition	FNS	S 42 U.S.C. 1786	24
<b>FOOD SAFETY:</b>			
National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection	FSIS	S 21 U.S.C. 454a-4	20
National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods	FSIS	Departmental Regulation 1043-28	30
<b>RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS:</b>			
Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Agriculture	ARS	Departmental Regulation 1043-049	20-25
Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics	NASS	Departmental Regulation 1042-130	20
USDA/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Leadership Group	REE	Memorandum of Agreement dated 10/96	8-10
<b>MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS:</b>			
National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee	APHIS	Departmental Regulation 1043-27	15-20
General Conference Committee of the National Poultry Improvement Plan	APHIS	Departmental Regulation 1043-8	7
Advisory Committee on Animal Health	APHIS	Departmental Regulation 1043-31	20
National Organic Standards Board	AMS	S 7 U.S.C. 6518	15
Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee	AMS	Departmental Regulation 1042-139	25
Federal Grain Inspection Advisory Committee	GIPSA	P. L. 103-156 7 U.S.C. 87i	15

AUTHORITY AND COMPOSITION OF USDA ADVISORY COMMITTEES IN EXISTENCE BETWEEN  
2012 and 2013

Committee Title	USDA Agency	Authority Statutory (S) or Discretionary (D)	Committee Membership
<b>FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES:</b>			
Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade	FAS	Departmental Regulation 1042-68	37
Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees for Trade:			
Animals & Animal Products	FAS	Departmental Regulation 1042-68	32
Fruits and Vegetables	FAS	Departmental Regulation 1042-68	18
Grains, Feed & Oilseeds	FAS	Departmental Regulation 1042-68	37
Sweeteners and Sweetener Products	FAS	Departmental Regulation 1042-68	23
Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts and Planting Seeds	FAS	Departmental Regulation 1042-68	23
Processed Foods	FAS	Departmental Regulation 1042-68	32
Advisory Committee on Emerging Markets	FAS	7 U.S.C. 1421	20
Edward R. Madigan Agricultural Export Excellence Award Board	FAS	P.L. 104-127	6
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT:</b>			
Agricultural Air Quality Task Force	NRCS	7 U.S.C. 5405	25
<b>OFFICE OF ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH:</b>			
Minority Farmer Advisory Committee	OAO	7 CFR U.S.C 2279	15
Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers	OAO	7 U.S.C. 1929	20
<b>OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY:</b>			
Native American Advisory Committee	OSEC	5 U.S.C. App 2	15