

FY 2019 Annual Performance Report/ FY 2021 Annual Performance Plan



United States
Department
of Agriculture



Message from the USDA Performance Improvement Officer

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, as amended in the GPRA Modernization Act (GPRAMA) of 2010, I am pleased to present the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) FY 2019 Annual Performance Report and FY 2021 Annual Performance Plan (APP/R).¹ This report highlights the USDA accomplishments and progress toward achieving the Strategic Objectives articulated in the FY 2018-FY 2022 USDA Strategic Plan, Agency Priority Goals (APG) and Cross Agency Priority Goals. USDA has established performance measures that allow the Department to evaluate and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and activities and ensures the USDA continues to meet its Mission.

This report includes a representation of measures that span across USDA's Mission Area, and the work USDA performs across the Nation and globally for the benefit of the American people.

This report is complete, reliable, and accurate in its description of USDA's results for FY 2019.

Thank you for consideration of our Annual Performance Plan and Report and we appreciate your continued support of our mission.

Erica Navarro

¹ *The 2019 Cuts, Consolidations, and Savings Volume of the President's Budget identifies the lower-priority program activities per the GPRA Modernization Act. The public can access the volume at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget>.*

Table of Contents

About USDA.....	4
FY 2019 Annual Performance Report and FY 2021 Performance Plan.....	6
Progress Towards 2018-2019 Agency Priority Goals.....	7
Strategic Goal 1	
<i>Ensure USDA programs are Delivered</i>	
<i>Efficiently, Effectively, with Integrity and a Focus on Customer Service.....</i>	12
Strategic Goal 2	
<i>Maximize the Ability of American Agricultural</i>	
<i>Producers to Prosper by Feeding and Clothing the World.....</i>	18
Strategic Goal 3	
<i>Promote American Agricultural Products and Exports.....</i>	24
Strategic Goal 4	
<i>Facilitate Rural Prosperity and Economic Development.....</i>	28
Strategic Goal 5	
<i>Strengthen the Stewardship of</i>	
<i>Private Lands Through Technology and Research.....</i>	32
Strategic Goal 6	
<i>Ensure Productive and Sustainable Use of our National Forest System Lands.....</i>	37
Strategic Goal 7	
<i>Provide All Americans Access to a Safe, Nutritious, and Secure Food Supply.....</i>	43
FY 2020 and FY 2021 Agency Priority Goals.....	50
Cross Agency Priority Goals.....	52

About USDA

On May 15, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation to establish the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and, two and a half years later in his final message to Congress, Lincoln called USDA “The People’s Department.”

At that time, about half of all Americans lived on farms, compared with about 2 percent today. But through our work on food, agriculture, economic development, science, natural resource conservation and a host of issues, USDA still fulfills Lincoln's vision - touching the lives of every American, every day.



MISSION STATEMENT

Provide leadership on agriculture, food, natural resources, rural infrastructure, nutrition, and related issues through fact-based, data-driven, and customer-focused decisions.

VISION STATEMENT

“Do right and feed everyone.”

CORE VALUES

We expect and require complete honesty and integrity in all we do.

We make commitments with care and live up to them.

We own up to problems and are always responsive.

We provide service to our customers on time, every time.

We guard, conserve, and preserve USDA resources the taxpayers have entrusted to us.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

USDA regularly consults with external stakeholders, including Congress, USDA’s customers, partners, landowners, policy experts, and industry and consumer groups regarding our programs’ effectiveness. Recent examples include the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity Roundtables and the Back to Our Roots Listening tour. These consultations have been used to validate the strategic goals, objectives, and key performance indicators outlined in the plan.

WHAT WE DO

We have a vision to **provide economic** opportunity through innovation, helping rural America to thrive; to promote agriculture production that better nourishes Americans while also helping feed others throughout the world; and to preserve our Nation's natural resources through conservation, restored forests, improved watersheds, and healthy private working lands.

Our strategic goals serve as a roadmap for the Department to help ensure we achieve our mission and implement our vision.

FY 2019 Annual Performance Report and FY 2021 Performance Plan

The Annual Performance Plan and Report provides information on the Department's progress towards achieving the goals and objectives described in the USDA Strategic Plan FY 2018 – 2022.

The organization of this report is according to USDA's Strategic Plan and the information in the report reflects results available at the end of FY 2019. For purposes of the Annual Performance Report and Plan, the following performance summary uses the Department's key performance indicators (KPI) as a mechanism to gauge progress in achieving its mission.

The data collected and used by the Department to measure performance uses a standardized methodology. This methodology has been vetted by federally employed scientists and policymakers, and, ultimately, the leadership and Undersecretaries of each respective mission area. All attest to the completeness, reliability, and quality of the data.

In FY 2019, USDA had 34 KPIs. In FY 2021, the Department will be tracking 38 KPIs. As noted in the tables that follow, USDA retired 2 KPIs in FY 2019 and started reporting 6 new KPIs in FY 2020.

FY 2019 Summary of Performance by KPI

In FY 2019, USDA was able to meet or exceed half (50%) of its KPIs, as compared to 77% in FY 2018. Nearly a quarter (21%) of KPIs were deemed to "need improvement," meaning they were within 10% range of meeting the intended target. Between FY 2018 and 2019, USDA changed its methodology of evaluating the percent range necessary to categorize meeting a KPI target. As such, the percentage of KPIs that met or exceed their targets in FY 2019 was lower than compared to FY 2018. Approximately another quarter of the KPIs (23%) did not meet their intended target. A small number of KPIs (6%) do not have available data at the time of this report, due to lag times associated with data reporting and processing.

Additionally, USDA made significant progress in reaching its Agency Priority Goals (APG). The modernization of IT has led to improvements in the delivery of critical services to our customers, in addition to internal improvements to oversight and accountability of our programs. Additionally, enhancements made to our programs and systems have improved the customer experience for our nations farmers and ranchers.

Mission area staff responsible for performance management will continue to explore the right balance between a challenging yet feasible target threshold. As precedent data become more readily available (e.g., dashboards), staff will be able to make more informed decisions about manageable targets.

USDA will continue to build upon its success, using the Quarterly Strategic Review (QSR) process to maintain accountability and to articulate resources necessary to successfully reach KPI targets in FY 2021. In addition, the integration of Enterprise Risk Management (ERM), along with evidence-building efforts will improve decision-making surrounding resources and program activity.

Progress Towards 2018-2019 Agency Priority Goals

On October 31, 2019, USDA held the first-ever Impact Expo with employees which highlighted the impact of its customer-focused IT modernization efforts. This event underlined the connection between modernization, customer experience, and USDA's overall impact to the Nation and America's Farmers and Ranchers.

Under the leadership of U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, over the last two and a half years, USDA has made tremendous strides in streamlining and improving customer service and digitizing and modernizing its IT infrastructure for employees and stakeholders alike. USDA's APG, focuses on USDA becoming the most efficient, most effective, and most customer focused department in the federal government, the following section highlights USDA's accomplishments towards meeting its APGs.

Improve the Customer Experience at USDA

Strategic Goal 1: Ensure USDA programs are delivered efficiently, effectively, and with integrity and a focus on customer service.

Objective 1.1: Modernize Information Technology Infrastructure, Facilities, and Support Services to Improve the Customer Experience

Goal Statement: USDA will effectively deliver farm and conservation programs to America's farmers, ranchers and foresters, ultimately increasing their ability to prosper and grow. The Department will enhance the customer experience for farmers, ranchers, and foresters at USDA service centers as well as improve and expand service delivery channels by establishing an effective framework to serve customers in-person and online.

APG Progress Update

Customer Experience (CX) activities are well underway and cut across a wide range of activities. In addition to several cost-cutting activities across Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) this year, each of their agencies have implemented at least 15 agency-level CX initiatives that have helped in institutionalizing a customer-centric culture across FPAC. Several major deliverables were accomplished, and some were partially completed and will be finalized in FY 2020.

The existing goal is now closed out, but an updated CX APG has been proposed and accepted for another 2-year cycle, with significant work underway.

Key Accomplishments

Customer Experience Expo Planning – Supported the Office of the secretary and Secretary's Office of Customer Experience by coordinating the inclusion of 3 FPAC projects from 3 FPAC agencies (NRCS, FSA, and Business Center) in the USDA Impact Expo.

CX Enhancement Committee (CXEC) – Stood up a field-focused Customer Experience Enhancement Committee to provide a mechanism for FPAC employees to discuss and understand their customers' experiences, to identify informational or other needs to better support customers, and to pilot ideas that may enhance our customers' journeys through various internal and external FSA, NRCS, RMA, Business Center, and FPAC-wide processes

and programs. The Committee will help ensure that these ideas and needs (from producers and the field staff directly serving them) are shared.

Business Process Reengineering and Continuous Process Improvement Activities – Considerable work in this area across multiple internal processes continues, intended to also save field and other staff's time, indirectly and directly benefiting customers, and avoiding significant costs by streamlining and optimizing processes to make more field staff time available to serve customers.

Farmers.gov: USDA's Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area launched Farmers.gov, an interactive one-stop website with mobile device capability for producers to fill out forms, apply for disaster assistance, and find the most convenient USDA office locations. Farmers.gov is built around the needs of customers, with farmer-focused content, interactive tools, and a business data dashboard that allows producers more time to focus on their farm and less time filling out antiquated and time intensive paper forms.

- *H-2A Education Tool*: This online Farmers.gov tool helps farmers, ranchers, and producers fill out the required forms faster and more efficiently. The tool contains an interactive checklist with application requirements, fees, forms and a timeline built around a farmer's hiring needs.
- *Farm Loan Discovery Tool*: This new interactive tool on Farmers.gov can help farmers find information on USDA farm loans within minutes. Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will be provided information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The results page also provides easy access to the loan application and additional resources and directs farmers to their nearest USDA Service Center.
- *Disaster Discovery Tool*: This new tool available on Farmers.gov assists agricultural producers to prepare for and recover from impacts of natural disasters. The tool walks producers through five questions to help them identify what USDA disaster assistance programs are available that fit their individual circumstance. A process that historically took nearly a year and a half from when a farmer files a disaster claims to when they receive their payment, now takes less than four months with continuous process improvements expected to continue to minimize the time lag.

Modernize USDA's Information Technology

Strategic Goal 1: Ensure USDA programs are delivered efficiently, effectively, and with integrity and a focus on customer service.

Objective 1.1: Modernize Information Technology Infrastructure, Facilities, and Support Services to Improve the Customer Experience

Goal Statement: Modernize information technology and data analytics capabilities across the Department, resulting in a USDA that is customer-focused, evidence-based, and efficient in the use of American taxpayer's dollars. By September 30, 2019, provide all USDA leadership with one click access to key administrative data allowing the Department to make informed and data driven decisions.

APG Progress Update:

USDA has made progress towards the development of a comprehensive approach to data management that significantly improves data quality and availability for all internal USDA stakeholders. During the past two years USDA has extended to all mission areas analytical and visualization tools that increase manager and employee capabilities to communicate information clearly and efficiently, and support fact-based, data-driven decision-making.

The existing goal is now closed out, but an USDA will continue to improve, enhance, and modernize information technology.

Key Accomplishments

- *Modernize Data Analytics Capability:* In partnership with GSA, USDA developed more than 200 dashboards to provide the latest information to customers and employees. These dashboards have more than 20,000 views monthly. The dashboards not only improve internal decision-making but also maximize the impact of citizen-facing programs across eight mission areas and seven administrative functions. USDA has made over 1,600 internal datasets available publicly and is safeguarding privacy while also making more information available. Accomplishments include:
 - *Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC):* State conservationists have access to a real-time scorecard with more than a dozen key metrics spanning both program outcomes and operational management to help more efficiently administer government resources in support of conservation. Additionally, operational leadership has access to a suite of intelligence tools that provide real-time data on how customers are affected by natural disasters, such as hurricanes and drought.
 - *Rural Development (RD):* State directors have access to workforce data and analysis that better inform manhours spent on loan processing, outreach and other activities. This enables them to manage resources better, allowing USDA to improve delivery of loan services. In addition, enhancements made allow for RD to easily identify patterns regarding borrower delinquency, number and length of delinquencies, and frequency of an individual borrower's delinquency, allowing for greater oversight and customer service.
 - *Natural Resources and Environment (NRE):* The Forest Service (FS) has access to an integrated view of timber sales, fuels treatments, budget, fleet, and human resources data for individual forests, which allows for better management of natural and government resources. Additionally, improved analytics allow for the FS to monitor

- hazardous fuel treatment activities compared to the wildfire risk of the underlying landscape. This allows them to prioritize treatments in the areas that need it most.
- [Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services \(FNCS\)](#): FNCS leadership has visibility into all the waivers granted and can evaluate new waiver requests more effectively by considering the waivers that have been granted by other regional directors.
 - [Research, Education, and Economics \(REE\)](#): Program leadership at research agencies have access to the USDA public policy monitor, which allows them to understand the impact of their research via citations in key public policy literature including the *Federal Register*, the Congressional Research Service, and the Government Accountability Office.
 - [Marketing & Regulatory Programs \(MRP\)](#): Leadership has dashboard access to pest interception data, which allow them to understand the risk to U.S. agriculture from imports and to inform regulatory decisions. It also strengthens MRP's ability to prioritize activities across U.S. ports. Additionally, leaders have access to commodity procurement information, which enables them to better understand their commodity purchases including the commodity, the dollar value, the source location, and the distribution location. While this information was previously available, the dashboard dramatically reduces the time-to-insight.
 - [Food Safety and Inspection Service \(FSIS\)](#): Scientists and operational field leaders across FSIS have access to more timely data around the status of laboratory sampling as well as key public health indicators for every food processing establishment FSIS regulates. Additionally, the Applied Epidemiology Staff at FSIS has access to a view that consolidates information on current disease outbreaks, providing greater clarity to the status of disease outbreaks and their epidemiological impact.
 - [Customer Experience and Voice of the Customer \(COE\)](#): USDA built an online feedback tool which captures – on an interactive executive dashboard – citizen feedback on how the Department is meeting its customers' needs. USDA also deployed the AskUSDA Pilot Contact Center to improve USDA's customer relationship.
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Noteworthy Progress

Strategic Goal 7: Provide all Americans Access to a Safe, Nutritious, and Secure Food Supply

Objective 7.1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

In FY 2019, USDA's [Food Safety and Inspection Service](#) (FSIS) met the annual targets for two KPIs 1) Percentage of establishments that meet pathogen reduction performance standards 2) Percentage of establishments whose Public Health Regulation (PHR) noncompliance rate decreases below the early warning cut point 120 days after receiving an Early Warning Alert (EWA). Additionally, they were able to meet the targets during each quarter for both KPIs. FSIS has been successful in making progress by implementing modernization improvements, developing hiring strategies to improve efficiency and collaborating with Federal partners.

Area for Improvement

Strategic Goal 6: Ensure Productive and Sustainable Use of our National Forest System Lands

Objective 6.3: Mitigate Wildfire Risk

In FY 2019, the [U.S. Forest Service](#) did not meet its targets for two KPIs: 1) Annual acreage of NFS lands where final treatment effectively mitigates wildfire risk (million acres, annually); and 2) Annual acreage treated to reduce or maintain fuel conditions on NFS and non-federal lands. The primary reason for not achieving the targets was that abnormally wet weather affected fuels treatments projects in the South and West. The Forest Service will continue its efforts to achieve its objective for fuel treatments, by continuing to work with partners to define priority landscapes, such as those within the wildland-urban interface and high-risk areas, and implementing treatments using the Good Neighbor Authority with State partners.

Strategic Goal 1: Ensure USDA Programs are Delivered Efficiently, Effectively, with Integrity and a Focus on Customer Service

USDA will modernize and consolidate Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and services, as well as strengthen management and oversight of procurement, property, and finance to ensure our resources are deployed as effectively and efficiently as possible. USDA will create a safe and modern space within which employees can work and feel empowered to find innovative solutions to serve customers' needs and will promote accountability and professional development. USDA will leverage the strength and talent of its employees and reduce regulatory and administrative burdens to allow agencies to focus on our customers. Improved customer service and employee engagement will create a more effective and accessible USDA for all our stakeholders.

Objective 1.1: Modernize Information Technology Infrastructure, Facilities, and Support Services to Improve the Customer Experience

Key Accomplishments

Modernize Information Technology:

Consolidation of Data Centers: USDA has made significant progress in the modernization and consolidation of Information Management. USDA closed 10 of 16 data centers in FY 2019 and closed 4 of 6 data centers in Q1 FY 2020; with plans to close the remaining 2 data centers by Q3 FY 2020. The closure of the Tiered data centers in FY 2019 has a reported cost savings of \$4.8M. As of Q1 FY 2020, there has been \$49.7M in cumulative cost avoidance through USDA's Data Center Optimization Initiative (DCOI) program. The DCOI Strategic Plan target for Tiered Data Center closures was 5 for FY 2019 and is 2 for FY 2020. As the Department consolidates data centers, OCIO has worked to move data center operations to Cloud Services. This initiative will improve the Department's overall security posture, as well as data integrity, reliability, and accessibility. Closure of data centers has reduced USDA's physical footprint aligning to GSA's Reduce the Footprint Policy, and reduced energy consumption and carbon footprint aligning to the EPA's Energy Conservation Policy.

Modernize Facilities:

In FY 2019, USDA completed several physical and technical security; safety and emergency operations; building maintenance and repairs projects to modernize USDA's facilities, including:

- Returned 57,072 square feet of space at Patriots Plaza III to GSA, resulting in an annual cost avoidance of approximately \$2.8 million.
- Replaced lease space at Park Center, resulting in the reduction of 23,920 rentable square feet and an estimated cost avoidance \$1.2 million, with the award of a 15-year lease a Braddock Road Metro Station in Alexandria, Virginia.

Challenges and Risks

Information Technology: Information Technology and its modernization has been identified as one of the top enterprise risks for USDA. Effective use of IT and Information Systems (IS) can

improve the efficiency and efficacy of USDA's mission areas. However, key challenges are present to meeting this goal. These challenges consist of:

- Integration of multiple systems across USDA, as well as non-USDA Agencies;
- Scope, cost, and time of modernizing multiple aging systems at a sustainable pace;
- Ensuring connectivity in our field operations, many are in rural areas where connectivity issue arise due to geographic locations;
- Ensuring that IT is meeting customer needs, and
- IT professionals have the right skills to meet the above requirements.

Facilities: USDA faces challenges with renovating and/or replacing legacy electrical systems, as well as implementing management solutions to more effectively manage its space assets at an enterprise level. The disposal of real property assets can be labor-intensive and take considerable time to come to fruition. USDA is currently in a long-term planning process for future efforts that will reduce USDA's real property portfolio. The changes are contingent on collaboration with GSA, USDA mission areas and agencies, and Departmental leadership, in addition to funding considerations.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

Information Technology: USDA has implemented a new operating model that will make it the best managed agency in the Federal government, a model that is enabling the Department to transition to a facts-based, data-driven, and customer-focused organization. To support this new approach, USDA is migrating IT customer support services to enterprise services managed by the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) by November 1, 2020. This will provide cost-effective, high quality Department-wide helpdesk, desktop, voice, and mobile shared services. OCIO will also finish the consolidation of the 39 USDA data centers to a single data center and back-up, while continuing the transitioning of additional systems and applications to readily available cloud services. Not only will these moves increase the strategic focus of IT leadership and staff in USDA's respective mission areas, but they will also reduce our cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

Facilities: USDA is actively implementing processes and procedures to address its aging infrastructure. Creating priority listing, and ensuring maintenance is performed in a timely fashion. Additionally, the consolidation of space in the National Capital Region (NCR) through USDA's One Neighborhood initiative is a model for USDA and mission/agency collaboration. The One Neighborhood initiative has three primary objectives:

- 1) Improve collaboration within and between agencies through space rationalization;
- 2) Reduce operating costs by recognizing lease and security cost savings; and
- 3) Model the commitment to improve efficiency and effectiveness of space in the NCR.

Support Services: USDA will continue to reduce its real property footprint by continuing to enforce the USDA space utilization policy and identifying opportunities for space consolidation and collocation.

Objective 1.2: Maintain a High-Performing Workforce Through Employee Engagement and Empowerment

Key Accomplishments

SES Candidate Development Program: In 2019, USDA launched a new cohort of the SES Candidate Development Program. USDA received a record number of applications (1,081) with 938 qualified applicants that moved forward to the resume review phase of the selection process. Mission areas across the Department were engaged in each phase of the selection process and facilitated decision-making by the Secretary's Executive Resources Board (ERB). Due to the quality of the applicants and active engagement by mission areas during the selection process, the ERB selected 47 employees to participate in the SES CDP, exceeding the targeted number for the program by nearly 50 percent.

Challenges and Risks

Human capital management is recognized as the number one enterprise risk facing USDA. In addition to retaining current personnel, USDA faces difficulties in hiring. USDA has a reoccurring need to hire seasonal employees, in addition to a large number of existing vacancies in rural communities. The hiring needs of the Department pull existing resources away from employee engagement endeavors, thus negatively affecting retention.

A large portion of USDA's work is supporting rural America, where we face a severe shortage of personnel, due to geographic location and unsuccessful use of traditional government hiring methods. Because of existing hiring rules, USDA cannot hold in-person hiring events to collect resumes and supporting documentation, conduct interviews and provide on-the-spot job offers. Instead, USDA can only conduct recruiting events that encourage individuals to apply via USAJobs, which poses time delays. Given connectivity issues in many parts of rural America, the number of applicants in rural communities where the positions exist is reduced. This affects USDA's ability to hire the right people, at the right time, in the right place. If USDA is not able to address these hiring challenges, the Department will be unable to provide valuable services to farmers and ranchers in rural America.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

USDA is actively working with the Office of Personal Management (OPM), to improve hiring efforts to combat personnel shortages in rural America. Over the last five years, USDA has faced an attrition rate that has outpaced its hiring efforts. To accelerate hiring, USDA requested Direct Hire Authority from OPM targeted primarily at field-based positions, many of which are in rural or hard-to-fill locations. This authority allowed USDA to post 4,837 positions. USDA plans to continue to work with OPM and Congress to explore a permanent solution to meet the needs of rural Americans.

In addition to hiring reform efforts, USDA has established a taskforce lead by the Deputy Secretary to address the human capital concerns facing the agency. Leaders across the Department are collaborating to create an action plan to address concerns, and to improve recruitment, retention, training, and succession planning.

Objective 1.3: Reduce the Regulatory Burden and Streamline Processes

Key Accomplishments

In Fiscal Year 2019, USDA published 13 deregulatory actions and no regulatory actions. Our deregulatory actions (detailed below) resulted in a present value savings of \$2.15 billion, which translates to an annualized savings of \$150.6 million. Since 2017, USDA's deregulatory actions have yielded present value savings of \$2.85 billion, with annualized savings of \$199 million.

Fiscal Year 2019 Completed Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions Department of Agriculture
Plant Pest Regulations; Update of General Provisions
Eliminating Unnecessary Requirements for Hog Carcass Cleaning
Eliminating the Requirement That Livestock Carcasses Be Marked "U.S. Inspected and Passed" at the Time of Inspection When Carcasses Are To Be Further Processed Within the Same Establishment
Scrapie in Sheep and Goats
Branding Requirements for Bovines Imported Into the United States From Mexico
Phytophthora Ramorum; Regulated Areas, Regulated Establishments, and Testing Protocols
Eligibility of Honduras to Export Poultry Products to the United States
Preparation of Uninspected Products Outside of the Hours of Inspectional Supervision
SNAP: Eligibility, Certification and Employment and Training Provisions of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008
Child Nutrition Programs: Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Requirements
Hiring Flexibility Under Professional Standards
National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard
Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations: Revisions to the Administrative Match Requirement

Also, throughout FY 2019, USDA held open its solicitation, "Identifying Regulatory Reform Initiatives" (<https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=USDA-2017-0002>) on the Regulations.gov website. Twelve substantive comments were received during the fiscal year and forwarded to the cognizant USDA agencies for consideration.

Challenges and Risks

USDA has identified its Departmental Regulation (DR) 1512, "Regulatory Decision-making Requirements," as a risk given that it has not been updated since March of 1997.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

To address the risks presented by the age of DR 1512, USDA has undertaken a complete revision of the document. The revision, scheduled for completion within the first half of FY

2020, will overhaul the regulatory management process within USDA in a manner that will maximize process efficiencies and better position USDA to reduce regulatory burdens on the public.

Objective 1.4: Improve Stewardship of Resources and Utilize Data-Driven Analyses to Maximize the Return on Investment

Key Accomplishments

Big Data Architecture: OCIO has implemented and continues to mature its Enterprise Big Data solution. The intent is to collect and process security-related data for the purpose of:

- Conducting Behavioral Analysis,
- Identification of Malicious Data Flow Patterns,
- Performing Deep Packet Inspection and Forensics Analysis,
- Providing Long Term Trend Analysis,
- Establishing Enterprise Security Reports and Service Metrics,
- Achieving a Scalable Data Repository

The Big Data capability enables USDA's Information Security Center (ISC) to proactively and retroactively apply threat intelligence information to analytics designed to detect cybersecurity incidents. The solution assists with the reconstruction of incident timelines, the preservation of forensic artifacts, and ensures the impact of an incident can be accurately assessed. Additionally, it affords security specialists the ability to correlate many data points to support proactive control implementations and informed risk-based decisions.

Budget Execution Data Visualization: To make data-driven decisions, USDA's Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA) created a series of interactive dashboards that track USDA spending and used these data in developing the President's FY 2021 Budget request. In FY 2020, OBPA is automating the data input on which these visualizations are built. This will allow for real-time tracking of USDA obligations.

Challenges and Risks

USDA is actively working to be a data-driven organization, ensuring that leadership and employees have access to the data and analytical tools that support rapid and well-informed decisions. Challenges with program performance arise when data are either not integrated, standardized, or reliable.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

USDA continues to implement a customer-focused approach to its digital services. This requires streamlining navigation of the Department's complex network of online resources to improve the ability to find or access services. Challenges arise when data fail to be shared or integrated among similar programs. To improve in these areas, USDA will continue to create and enhance online service portals such as [Farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov) that are easy-to-use, include additional self-service capabilities, and integrate data for common customers. Providing the best possible customer service on a consistent basis also means ensuring that USDA employees can access the network

anywhere, anytime, regardless of agency, program, or location and that employees have the bandwidth necessary to fully utilize the technology.

FY 2019 Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Historic Actuals			Strategic Targets			FY 19 Status
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY19	FY20	FY21	
Reduce number of Tier 1 data centers across the Department	39	18	6	5	2	NA ¹	Unmet ²
Maintain ranking of the Top 10 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government for large agencies by the Partnership for Public Service	7	16	16	10	10	NA ³	Unmet ⁴
Reduce the Department's overall real property footprint through effective disposal and consolidation efforts (Million Square Feet).	31.9	31.7	31.3	31.3	31.2	31.1	Met
Reduce the Department's total number of fleet vehicles (Thousand) ⁵	29.4	27.7	27.1	27.1	36.5	TBD ⁶	Met

¹ FY 2020 is the last reporting year for this measure.

² Several USDA Mission Area data center owners cited the 35-day government shutdown as an impact to their planned closure dates. In particular, four data center owners requested extensions from Q4 FY2019 into the first two quarters of FY2020.

³ USDA is retiring this measure.

⁴ Although USDA did not meet its FY19 target, the Department will continue to include employee engagement in the performance plans for all members of the Senior Executive Service which require them to consider employee feedback, including from the employee survey, and respond to the results.

⁵ In FY 2020, methodology changed from light duty vehicles to all vehicles.

⁶ Cap has been set by the Secretary, target will not be developed until cap is lifted.

Strategic Goal 2: Maximize the Ability of American Agricultural Producers to Prosper by Feeding and Clothing the World

A strong and prosperous agricultural sector is essential to the well-being of the U.S. economy. America's farmers and ranchers ensure a reliable food supply, support job growth, and promote economic development. To maintain a competitive agricultural sector, USDA will support farmers and ranchers' ability to start and maintain profitable businesses as well as offer financial support to producers affected by natural disasters. Furthermore, USDA's research agencies will continue to introduce high-performance plants, animals, and integrated management options that increase the efficiency of farming practices. Lastly, USDA will also provide tools to producers so that they are well-positioned to secure a share of a growing market for agricultural products.

Objective 2.1: Provide an Effective Financial Safety Net for Farmers and Ranchers to Sustain Economically Viable Agricultural Production and Support Rural Jobs and Economic Growth

Key Accomplishments

Direct and Guaranteed Loans: The Farm Service Agency supports direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans, among other types of loans. In FY 2019, USDA supported \$5.7 billion in direct and guaranteed ownership and operating loans, a five percent increase over the previous year and the third highest level in the programs' history. The 2018 Farm Bill increased the maximum loan limits for operating and farm ownership loans, resulting in a dramatic increase in the average loan size in FY 2019. Although the number of direct and guaranteed loans fell by seven percent in FY 2019 to 32,343, the average size of these loans increased in some categories, causing total loan obligations to increase. There were 87,578 direct loan borrowers and 38,668 guaranteed borrowers at the end of FY 2019, the highest levels since FY 2003. Fiscal Year 2019 obligations of direct farm ownership funds totaled \$1.47 billion, which was the highest level in the program's history

Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (WHIP): The 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program is providing disaster payments to agricultural producers to offset losses from hurricanes and wildfires during 2017. Congress appropriated more than \$3 billion in disaster relief through the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, which includes up to \$2.36 billion for these efforts. USDA's [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) will help producers with recovery of their agricultural operations in at least nine states with hurricane damage and states impacted by wildfire. In response to disasters in 2018 and 2019, Congress appropriated more than \$3 billion additionally in relief funds. Signup for this assistance began on September 9, 2019.

Trade Damage: USDA announced in July 2018 that it will provide \$12 billion to assist farmers in response to trade damage from unjustified retaliation. These efforts are to assist farmers with adjusting to disrupted markets, dealing with surplus commodities, and expanding and developing new markets at home and abroad. In May 2019 USDA announced an additional \$16 billion in line with estimated impacts of tariffs on U.S. agricultural goods and other trade disruptions.

Challenges and Risks

Disasters and economic distress have resulted in higher delinquency rates for producers. On October 1, 2019, 30 states had a higher direct loan delinquency rate compared to the delinquency rate as of October 1, 2018. Whereas, only 17 states had a higher direct loan delinquency rate the previous fiscal year. Recent disasters and trade negotiations have increased the demand for USDA services. The FSA has had difficulty in meeting direct loan processing and loan servicing needs due to the growing demand for credit from more complex entities/operations, particularly driven by the increased loan limits in the 2018 Farm Bill. The average number of days to process direct loan making and servicing requests has increased over the past five years.

Risks to the loan portfolio are increasing. While the national loan delinquency rate has been steady, the rate is rising in some sectors, states, and regions. The Farm Bureau is projecting that agricultural loan delinquencies will rise nationally in 2020 as farm equity declines. FSA loan delinquencies not resolved by the borrower or through loan servicing may result in these programs becoming more costly to the U.S. taxpayer.

As a result of the additional employee time spent on processing loan applications and the reduction in staffing levels, the percentage of loan servicing actions (e.g., chattel inspections of property collateralizing USDA's loans, year-end assessments with borrowers as part of the statutorily-mandated supervised credit role of USDA), continues to decline. These and other factors increase risk in the loan portfolio.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

To gain a more accurate measure of programmatic effectiveness, FSA is proposing a new measure to track the direct loan dollar delinquency rate. The measure reflects the financial integrity and stresses in the farm economy, and the servicing of accounts. Loan servicing is critical to mitigating delinquencies by providing loan restructuring options if the operation has a positive cash flow, which becomes more difficult the longer a loan is delinquent. FSA's new KPI will allow FSA loan officers to examine whether the problem is the applicant, procedures, or their analysis or application of the standards and procedures.

In order to meet challenges presented, the [Risk Management Agency \(RMA\)](#) is working to incorporate program flexibility to provide timely responses to producers after disasters such as hurricanes, such as allowing simplified loss adjustment procedures. Changes in planting and insurance coverage decisions can impact the annual normalized value of risk management, creating unanticipated year-to-year changes.

Objective 2.2: Increase Agricultural Opportunities and Support Economic Growth by Creating New Markets and Supporting a Competitive Agricultural System

Key Accomplishments

Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). ACRSI is a joint FSA and RMA initiative focused on establishing a common commodity reporting. ACRSI is designed to reduce the reporting burden on producers by modernizing and streamlining existing crop information collection activities, thereby eliminating or minimizing duplication of information collected by

USDA agencies. The creation of a USDA data standard allows the producer to report common crop and acreage reporting data once through the reporting channel of their choice.

Precision Agriculture (PrecisionAg): Through ACRSI, USDA is expanding its ability to leverage PrecisionAg data from producers through third-party. This effort will provide key information on the practicality of accepting acreage report data from third-party service providers and viability of processing precision ag data for use in crop reports for FSA farm programs and Federal crop insurance.

Challenges and Risks

As with all federal financial assistance provided to agricultural producers and other stakeholders, there is a risk that the underlying business or project could fail or otherwise not fulfill its objectives. Additionally, there is risk of grant recipient non-compliance.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service supports USDA Market News which provides unbiased, timely, and accurate market information of hundreds of agricultural commodities and their related products, free-of-charge to everyone. While this premier data gives a representative picture of commodity markets and promotes market transparency and fairness, the legacy systems that currently support some of these market news activities are costly and cumbersome to maintain. While USDA is transitioning away from these systems, these systems will need to remain operational while the remaining commodity/location combinations are brought online in the Market Analysis and Reporting Service (MARS) application. Ensuring that the remaining commodity/location combinations migrated to MARS accurately and effectively will require a high degree of complete and accurate requirements along with an aggressive testing cycle. This is scheduled for completion in early 2021.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

USDA has risk management strategies in place to mitigate the potential risks in the awarding of grants and in their administration. To reduce these risks, grant programs have objectives which clearly state the purpose and outcomes of the program and the selection criteria for approving grants is based on these objectives and outcomes. All potential applicants are treated equally and are provided sufficient information about the grant programs through funding opportunity announcements and webinars. USDA assesses grant applications and makes funding decisions according to transparent criteria and a public timetable. USDA reviews grant programs annually to consider Department and Agency priorities and public comments received on the previous year's funding announcement. Conditions of the award are properly documented, and training is provided to all grant recipients. USDA conducts and monitors risk assessments for each grant recipient.

Objective 2.3: Protect Agricultural Health by Preventing and Mitigating the Spread of Agricultural Pests and Disease

Key Accomplishments

Surveillance and Early Detection: Through early detection surveys for plant pests, [Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#) (APHIS) and cooperators conducted a total of 217 commodity- and taxon-based surveys in 50 States and 3 territories. APHIS and State cooperators conducted surveys for 96 percent of the high-risk plant pests and diseases identified as targets for FY 2019,

with the goal of ensuring that newly arrived pests and diseases would be detected before they have a chance to spread. The program exceeded its target in that all (100 percent) new detections were localized at the time of their detection in FY 2019.

Emergency Preparedness and Response: In FY 2019, APHIS worked with State and industry partners to continue to eradicate virulent Newcastle disease (vND), a contagious and fatal viral disease affecting the respiratory, nervous and digestive systems of birds and poultry. The Agency mobilized resources and logistics support for the vND control effort in response to multiple outbreaks in California and one each in Arizona and Utah within 24 hours of determining that a Federal response was needed, helping to prevent additional disease spread and eradicate the disease more quickly. During FY 2019, APHIS identified 473 infected premises. To eliminate the vND virus, a joint APHIS-State Incident Management Team worked to depopulate infected premises and exposed flocks, and to conduct diagnostic testing to identify new or potential infection sources.

Control and Eradication: APHIS conducts ongoing control and eradication activities for a variety of economically significant animal and plant pests and diseases. In FY 2019, APHIS declared the United States free of plum pox virus, one of the most devastating viral diseases of stone fruit in the world, after completing three consecutive years of stone fruit field surveys in eastern New York – the last remaining quarantined area in the United States – with no detections. This effort protects stone fruit production across the United States and helps support export markets that were worth \$5 billion in FY 2018. APHIS, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and industry partners also completed the final year of a three-year post-eradication surveillance monitoring effort for European grapevine moth in 38 participating counties, providing further assurance that eradication efforts were successful.

Challenges and Risks

APHIS is strategically dedicating resources to support both the ongoing animal and plant health program efforts and analysis of future risks in order to ensure the best plans of action are developed and deployed. Throughout FY 2019, African Swine Fever (ASF), a highly contagious and deadly viral disease affecting both domestic and wild pigs of all ages, continued to spread globally. Realizing the changing threat, the Agency continued to conduct swine surveillance for domestic diseases and implemented additional measures to prevent ASF from reaching the United States. APHIS also addressed the risk posed by tomato brown rugose fruit virus, which can cause severe fruit loss in tomatoes and peppers. The virus was first reported in Israel in 2014 and has since been reported in a variety of countries. APHIS issued a Federal Order effective November 2019, imposing restrictions on imports of tomato and pepper seed lots and transplants from all countries where the virus exists as well as restrictions on tomato and pepper fruit imported from Mexico, Canada, Israel, and the Netherlands. APHIS continues to conduct a thorough risk analysis of the fruit pathway.

APHIS also continued to respond to detections of vND in FY 2019. Its initial strategy in the summer and fall of 2018 focused on controlling the disease in backyard flocks to prevent its spread into commercial facilities. While the program's response to this disease made steady progress through the late summer and early winter of 2018, the number of cases began to spike in December 2018 and January 2019. To address this challenge, APHIS worked with California representatives to change the response strategy to further prevent the spread of the disease.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

APHIS will continue to monitor new and emerging agricultural threats and adjust its actions accordingly to prevent and mitigate pest and disease spread. APHIS will also continue to implement actions initiated in FY 2019 to address the threat of ASF and tomato brown rugose virus and control and eradicate vND. For ASF, this includes sampling of high-risk animals as an early warning system; expanding the testing capabilities and testing capacity of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network to ensure diagnostic capacities are in place; collaborating with States, industry and producers to encourage the use of on-farm biosecurity protocols and best practices that will prevent the introduction and spread of the disease in commercial herds, and to develop response plans in case they are needed; restricting imports of pork and pork products from affected countries; and continue engagement with the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection to identify and evaluate risks at ports of entry as the global threat changes. Related to the tomato virus, APHIS is continuing to conduct a risk analysis related to how the virus spreads and determine the most appropriate protective measures. APHIS and State cooperators are also conducting a greenhouse survey to determine if the virus is present in the United States. For vND, APHIS is

- Partnering with California staff to ensure proper enforcement of State and local laws help reduce backyard flock densities
- Collaborating with State and industry partners to encourage the use of biosecurity protocols to control and prevent the spread of the disease; and
- Improving commercial surveillance to ensure early detection of the disease in these establishments.

In addition, the 2018 Farm Bill programs for animal disease preparedness and prevention will provide additional resources for addressing agricultural threats.

FY 2019 Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Historic Actuals			Strategic Targets			FY 19 Status
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY19	FY20	FY21	
Average number of days to process direct loans	31	30	32	30	32	32	Needs Improvement
Percentage of direct and guaranteed loan borrowers who are beginning farmers	NA	55	54.5	53	59.9	59.9	Met
First-year delinquency % rate on new direct loans	NA	6.2	6.1	10	NA ⁷	NA	Met
The annual normalized value of risk protection provided to agricultural producers through the Federal Crop Insurance program (\$ Billion)	74.6	76.8	78.2	77.3	77.6	77.9	Met
Percentage of high-risk plant pests for which early detection surveys are conducted	96	96	96	95	96	96	Met
Number of hours it takes to mobilize resources once it is determined that a Federal emergency response is needed to manage an agricultural outbreak (target of within 24 hours)	24	24	24	24	24	24	Met

New Key Performance Indicators

New KPIs	Targets	
	FY20	FY21
First installment default rate on direct loans	8	8
Direct loan delinquency rate	7	7
Number of USDA Patents Licensed / Number of USDA Patents Granted	TBD	TBD
Number of USDA-supported students trained	TBD	TBD
Citations of USDA reports	TBD	TBD
Recover 83% of graders' time through customer billings (for meat and poultry livestock)	83	83

⁷ Measure will discontinue after FY 2019.

Strategic Goal 3: Promote American Agricultural Products and Exports

Expanding international marketing opportunities for U.S. farmers and exporters is critical to business and income growth across rural America. It is essential for USDA to continue its efforts to promote American agricultural products and exports through promotion activities, development of international standards, removal of trade barriers by monitoring and enforcing existing trade agreements, and negotiation of new trade agreements that benefit the U.S. agricultural economy. USDA will also partner with developing countries to support them along the agricultural market continuum from developing economies to developed economies with promising demand potential. Ultimately, this work will build the foundations for future markets and create long-term international relationships that further advance U.S. agriculture's export.

Objective 3.1: Expand International Marketing Opportunities

Key Achievements

Seafood Expo Global (SEG): USDA had its 18th endorsed USA Pavilion at the recently held 27th edition of SEG, the largest seafood trade show in the world. SEG 2019 welcomed more than 1,900 exhibiting companies from 78 countries and 29,000 buyers during its May 2019 run in Brussels, Belgium. The USA Pavilion, led by the [Foreign Agricultural Service](#) (FAS) office at the American Embassy in the Hague, Netherlands and supported by Trade Services Staff from the FAS Office of Trade Programs, had 43 exhibitors. U.S. exhibitors made over 740 serious business contacts, introduced 92 products in the market, and generated a record 12-month projected sales of over \$1.2 billion.

Export of Beef and Meat Products: USDA's efforts for new market access include: beef and meat products to Morocco potentially worth \$80 million per year; beef and bone meal to Peru valued at \$10 million per year; cattle, goats, and sheep to Turkmenistan valued at \$20 million per year; and blueberries to Vietnam valued at \$1 million per year.

Japan: In FY 2019, APHIS and other Federal agencies, secured an agreement between the United States and Japan that eliminates Japan's longstanding age restrictions on U.S. beef and cattle imports. This agreement, which was a major accomplishment for U.S. cattle producers, allows U.S. products from cattle, regardless of age, to enter Japan for the first time since 2003. This market expansion could increase exports to Japan by \$200 million.

Challenges and Risks

FY 2020 presents both challenges and opportunities for export marketing programs. Program usage typically runs countercyclical to global financial stability. Uncertainties in the global economic environment, especially relating to emerging markets (the primary focus of the Export Credit Guarantee or GSM-102 program) and changes in local interest rates and bank liquidity will create program demand shifts as commercial financing availability changes. USDA will continue to work to bring additional U.S. and foreign financial institutions into the program to expand options for U.S. exporters. Two new U.S. banks were added to the program in FY 2019. Work will also continue to make U.S. exporters aware of GSM-102 program benefits.

The current economics trade environment is making U.S. products less price competitive and may have an adverse impact on exports and trade show projected sales.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

FAS continues to advance U.S. agriculture by selling products around the world and working to protect and preserve agricultural interests. FAS is contemplating expanding the scope of the current trade show KPI. Trade show results are a good measure for high value and intermediate products as a quarter to a third of market development program investment relates to trade show activity. Moreover, trade shows usually take place in the same year as when they generate sales. However, most market development program investment is medium-to-long term in nature. Trade show results are not a good measure for bulk grains, oilseeds and cotton which are often the result of buyer conferences. USDA would like to explore the viability of adding this category of activity results/sales to the current trade show measure.

Over the course of the next 12-24 months, FAS will identify grains, oilseed and cotton buyer events and collect reported on-site and projected sales. Results will be analyzed to determine which events occur with consistent frequency.

Objective 3.2: Prevent or Resolve Barriers to Trade That Hinder U.S. Food and Agricultural Exports

Key Achievements

Soybean Trade: Soybeans are highly concentrated: two land-abundant countries, Brazil and the United States. China accounts for over 60 percent of global soybean imports. Recent [Economic Research Service](#) (ERS) research shows international trade in soybeans began growing when China liberalized imports to meet demand for protein in animal feed and edible oils. A tariff structure favoring imports of soybeans, domestic policies favoring production of cereal grains, and rapid expansion of processing capacity drove China's growth in soybean imports. More flexible U.S. policies facilitated production response by U.S. farmers to supply more soybeans, and Brazil's expansion of output in its inland Cerrado region propelled supply growth in recent years. China imported even more Brazilian soybeans after imposing a 25 percent tariff on U.S. soybeans during 2018. However, the overall volume of China's imports fell for the first time in 15 years. USDA's 10-year projections indicate that China will continue to account for most future growth in global soybean imports even if the tariff remains in place. However, USDA projects slower growth in China's imports than in the previous decade.

Food Coloring: In April 2019, following extensive engagement by USDA and United States Trade Representatives (USTR), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) backed off a plan to ban food colorings commonly used in many processed products including dairy, confectionaries, and beverages. Processed food trade from the U.S. to the UAE were valued at \$380 million in 2018.

Challenges and Risks

In the area of trade policy, the agency strives to create and maintain a level playing field by negotiating and enforcing market-expanding trade agreements. FAS works closely with USTR and other USDA agencies to resolve both tariff or non-tariff barriers that affect the export of food and agricultural products. However, significant challenges remain in this arena

considering recent adverse effects of other countries' tariff and non-tariff barriers. Downward trends to FAS's Trade Preserve KPI demonstrate the reactive nature of this measure.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

USDA is at the negotiating table seeking Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with the United Kingdom (UK) and Japan. The United States and Japan have reaffirmed their shared goal of achieving substantive results on trade. The United States will be prepared to start negotiations as soon as the UK officially leaves the European Union (EU).

Objective 3.3: Build Demand in Developing Countries Through Trade Capacity Building

Key Achievements

International Food Security Assessment: ERS publishes the International Food Security Assessment to inform U.S. policymakers and international donor organizations of the food security situation in 76 low- and middle-income countries. ERS's research found that food security is projected to improve for many developing countries. The report provides projections of food demand and access based on ERS's food security model, which analyzes income and price changes on food security. Given projections for lower food prices and rising incomes, food security for the 76 low and middle-income countries included is expected to improve through 2029.

Challenges and Risks

USDA is in the process of preparing evidence-gathering activities at the program level to better inform capacity building programs. The goal is to gain additional data and information that can be used to strengthen USDA's and its partners' program effectiveness.

We are actively developing metrics for a number of programs and activities that relate to export opportunities.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

USDA will be incorporating evidence building activities for the purpose of strengthening program delivery.

FY 2019 Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Historic Actuals			Strategic Targets			FY 19 Status
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY19	FY20	FY21	
Value of trade preserved through resolution of foreign market access issues such as U.S. export detainment, restrictive SPS & TBT issues, and trade regulations (Billions)	7.8	12.8	2.5	5.5	6-8	8	Unmet ⁸
Value of agricultural exports resulting from participation in foreign agricultural trade shows and trade missions (Billions)	2.35	2.13	2.2	1.75	2.13	2.35	Met

⁸ Expanding export markets for U.S. agriculture continues to face headwinds from the larger trade war.

Strategic Goal 4: Facilitate Rural Prosperity and Economic Development

USDA promotes rural prosperity and economic development by financing investments in rural utilities, housing, and businesses. When rural Americans share the same level of infrastructure services as the country's urban areas, rural communities can make even greater economic contributions with healthy businesses and families. With this aim in mind, USDA will leverage funds, stimulate public-private partnerships, and engage in collaboration to build rural infrastructure including: broadband, community facilities, safe and affordable housing, and health services and facilities. It will also provide capacity building to help underserved communities become thriving communities.

Objective 4.1: Expand Rural Business Opportunity and Rural Quality of Life with Access to Capital; Improved Infrastructure, Broadband Access, and Connectivity; and Support for Workforce Availability

Key Achievements

[Rural Utilities Service \(RUS\)](#)

Infrastructure Loans: During 2019, USDA's Rural Development Agency (RD) approved 12 infrastructure loans for telecommunication investments in rural communities. The total amount obligated in 2019 was \$181.5 million. These projects, upon completion, will deliver new or improved broadband service to over 56,000 businesses and households.

High Speed Internet: In 2019, RUS approved three broadband loans for high speed internet investments in rural areas. The total amount obligated in 2019 was \$47.8 million. These projects, upon completion, will deliver new or improved broadband service to nearly 8,600 subscribers.

Rural eConnectivity Pilot Program (ReConnect): ReConnect offers unique federal financing and funding options in the form of loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in areas of rural America that currently do not have sufficient access to broadband. In 2019, \$7.2 million in ReConnect Program grant funding was provided to Heartland Telecommunications of Iowa to build state-of-the-art fiber optic cable infrastructure in rural Iowa and South Dakota. The funded service areas include 868 households, 17 businesses, and 27 farms spread over 518 square miles. The project will help facilitate new educational and economic opportunities for residents and it will help improve the overall quality of life for people in the community.

Community Connect: In 2019, the Community Connect program received 62 applications and approved 12 projects that will deliver broadband to rural areas currently without high-speed Internet service. The grants totaled nearly \$24.3 million in funding, which will provide broadband service in nine states and are projected to reach a total of over 3,000 subscribers and cover a total of 510 fiber miles.

Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Program: Distance learning projects provide funding for Internet-based educational services in schools and libraries and promote confidence in, and understanding of, the Internet and its benefits to students and young entrepreneurs. Grants through this program are also being utilized to address the nation's need for additional science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) educational resources. In 2019, the program

received 225 applications and 147 applicants were awarded grants. A total of nearly \$46 million was obligated for DLT Grants. Of the awards made, 78 received special emphasis points for projects related to STEM education and opioid addiction treatment and prevention.

Water and Environmental Programs (WEP): WEP has a leading role in providing rural communities with modern, affordable water and waste disposal (WWD) services WEP directs its technical and financial resources to rural communities with the greatest need. This includes rural water and waste systems that are poverty-stricken, face health or sanitary issues, or other obstacles hindering their ability to provide safe and reliable services. In 2019, USDA invested \$1.79 billion in direct and guaranteed loans and grants to help rural communities develop or otherwise improve their WWD facilities. Through its investments, USDA delivered new and improved services to 2.3 million rural residents, exceeding the goal of 2.2 million for the fiscal year.

[Rural Business-Cooperatives Service](#)

B&I Guaranteed Loan Program: The B&I Guaranteed Loan Program provides funding through small or regional scale lenders to ensure rural communities have access to capital. In 2019, RD issued 337 B&I loan guarantees totaling \$1.3 billion assisting 378 rural businesses and creating or saving over 10,000 jobs.

Rural Energy for America Program (REAP): REAP funded 200 projects totaling \$215.1 million with \$42.9 million in budget authority from mandatory funding. Mandatory funds of \$1.87 million supported 21 grants for the REAP's Energy Audit and Renewable Energy Development Assistance Program. The remaining \$41 million of mandatory funds supported 1,306 Renewable Energy System and Energy Efficiency Improvement projects with \$41 million in grants.

Intermediary Relending Program (IRP): The IRP lends money to economic development intermediaries (non-profits and public bodies) who re-lend it to rural businesses (ultimate recipients) that might not otherwise be able to obtain such financing. In 2019, IRP issued 24 loans totaling \$17.7 million to intermediaries to establish and recapitalize revolving loan funds. The IRP financing for 2019 resulted in 238 rural businesses being assisted, thereby creating and saving 1,041 jobs.

Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) Program: In 2019, REDLG issued 41 loans totaling \$48.5 million creating or saving nearly 1,900 jobs. In addition, 37 grants totaling \$10 million were made to qualifying utilities, assisting 33 businesses and creating or saving nearly 1,300 jobs.

Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Program: RBDG provides grants for technical assistance, training, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas. RBDG awarded 540 grants totaling nearly \$46 million in 2019. These grants assisted nearly 8,300 businesses in creating or saving nearly 16,000 jobs.

[Rural Housing Service \(RHS\)](#)

Single Family Housing (SFH) Programs: USDA's Rural Housing Service (RHS), operates/administers a number of SFH programs that provide loans, grants, and guarantees to finance the construction, purchase, and repair of single family homes. The loans enable very low-, low-, and moderate-income individuals and families to live in safe, sanitary, and affordable housing. In 2019, USDA funded \$16 billion through SFH Programs.

Section 502 Single Family Housing Direct (SFHD) Loan Program: Provided funding for nearly 6,200 loans totaling over \$1 billion, to Section 502, a program under SFH. This program allows the Agency to underwrite and service loans for eligible low- and very low-income applicants at market interest rates, but with payment assistance. Payment assistance brings the interest rate down to as low as 1 percent.

Multi-family Housing (MFH) Programs: MFH programs provide loans, grants, and loan guarantees to eligible applicants to finance the preservation/revitalization, development, construction, and purchase of MFH properties in rural areas to enable safe housing for income-challenged individuals and families. In 2019, USDA funded over \$450 million through MFH programs.

Community Facilities Programs (CF): CF programs provide loans, grants, and guarantees to help rural communities build or improve essential community facilities and community infrastructure. In addition, grants for disaster relief, technical assistance and training, and community and economic development support rural communities in building long-term capacity and tackling urgent challenges such as disaster recovery. In 2019, 1,120 grants (\$47.8 million), and 354 loans (\$878.5 million) were obligated through CF programs.

Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) Grant Program: Part of funding from the Community Facilities program, provided support to USDA's goal to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with substance use disorders (including opioid misuse) in high-risk rural communities through prevention, treatment, and recovery projects. Administrator discretionary points were awarded to applications that addressed this Agency goal. In 2019, USDA obligated 34 RCDI grants for \$6.4 million.

Challenges and Risks

Providing broadband in rural communities poses unique challenges. These include: remote, difficult terrain that makes construction and maintenance costlier; fewer potential subscribers per mile of infrastructure to support the cost of service; higher rates of unemployment, poverty and outmigration in the subscriber base. Additionally, the relatively low population densities and incomes can mean fewer potential subscribers, making it difficult to recoup deployment costs. These conditions make it less likely that a private service provider will build out or maintain a broadband network. Broadband infrastructure remains a vital source of capital, to sustain existing rural areas infrastructure and upgrades for high capacity bandwidth needed to maintain the pace of investment in health, education, public safety, and economic growth.

Overall RD delinquencies are very low, the latest quarter indicated a declining percentage and have always been under two percent over one-year delinquent. All lending institutions make investments understanding that risks are part of making and underwriting long term loans, and at times delinquencies do result. Most lending institutions have dedicated departments and staff to address borrowers who face risk challenges that work very closely with troubled borrowers or maximize collections in adverse situations. RD fills a market gap, where traditional lenders will not take those risks and Congress legislates RD to take risk and make investments in needed rural infrastructure to get vital services in rural areas (for example rural Broadband and rural Healthcare). As RD is often the lender of last resort for these investments, RD must have dedicated staff that not only address borrowers who face risk challenges as well as understand the risks associated with and the health of its lending portfolio.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

Specific areas being addressed by the Broadband Program include financing projects to improve telecommunications service in rural areas. Access to high-speed Internet and other quality telecommunications services is essential for a healthy and growing rural economy. Broadband increases educational opportunities, improves availability of healthcare, creates and retains jobs, and enhances continued economic growth. Program outreach efforts focused on identifying rural areas that do not have access to these services. Additionally, USDA is continuing to restructure RD to improve delivery, including Multi-Family Housing, Community Facilities Realignments and the Rural Business Service (RBS) Reorganization.

RD is developing a mission-wide Special Assets Unit (SAU) to more effectively focus expertise and concentrated time to service borrowers with delinquencies over 90 days. The SAU will work to develop standardized risk mitigation experts, processes, legal support and tools designed to capture the highest recovery of debt for the American taxpayer. A key goal of the SAU will also be to develop lessons learned and consistency in maximizing the opportunities to return the borrower to sustainable payments, adjustments to terms and feedback to underwriting insights and considerations. Underwriting feedback will help future loan approvals for the program to increase the loan portfolio success and contribute to stronger delivery of the program.

FY 2019 Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Historic Actuals			Strategic Targets			FY 19 Status
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY19	FY20	FY21	
Health Facilities: Percent of customers who are provided access to new and/or improved essential community facilities	6	9.4	2.45	6.8	6.8	6.8	Unmet ⁹
Number of borrowers' subscribers receiving new and/or improved telecommunication services (thousand)	158	45	68.9	139	118.5	162	Unmet ¹⁰
Percent of RD commercial/infrastructure investments that leverage non-Federal funding	NA	77	83	78	79	80	Met
Percent of RD assistance that went to distressed communities	NA	11	11	12	13	14	Needs Improvement

⁹ Measure was not met this year due to the implementation of strengthened underwriting requirements, increased program funding allocation and a reduction of experienced program staff members.

¹⁰ The demand for funding from the Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program and Broadband Loan Program were greatly reduced due to the significant amount of alternative grant funding available through the USDA's ReConnect Program.

Strategic Goal 5: Strengthen the Stewardship of Private Lands Through Technology and Research

The world population is expected to reach 9.6 billion by 2050. Feeding this population will require adoption of new science and technologies and the implementation of science-based conservation plans to sustainably increase agricultural production. To ensure U.S. private working lands and public agricultural landscapes are conserved, the Department will provide technical and financial assistance using the latest technology and research available. New and improved practices result from fundamental and applied research to understand the complex interactions between human systems and the environment and transferring the resulting knowledge into the hands of producers and land managers through information, tools, and decision support.

Objective 5.1: Enhance Conservation Planning with Science-Based Tools and Information

Key Achievements

NRCS Partners: NRCS' field staff work with state agencies and local partners to deliver conservation technical and financial assistance. During 2019, non-Federal partners contributed an estimated \$106 million of in-kind goods and services and over \$128 million in financial assistance toward addressing local resource concerns. These voluntary arrangements allow NRCS and its partners to get far more conservation on the ground than either entity could accomplish separately.

Agricultural Conservation on Working Lands: In 2019, NRCS released a report on trends from 2004 to present of U.S. adoption of selected agricultural conservation practices that both reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and provide additional environmental benefits. This is the first USDA report to establish a baseline of current adoption rates by crop, region, year, and practice.

Range and Grazing: USDA's NRCS works with the Society for Range Management, American Forage and Grassland Council, and other range and grazing entities to assist in technology development and transfer, and infusion of discipline science into NRCS technical assistance. In 2019, conservation practices were applied to over 26.2 million acres of grazing land.

Grazing Lands Conservation: Grazing lands comprise an economic resource base in all 50 States and provide food, fiber, clean air and water, wildlife habitat, and open space. In 2019, conservationists helped ranchers and farmers understand the basic principles of rangeland and pastureland soil health; installed facilitating practices (such as pipelines, and erosion control structures) as needed; and began the management regimen necessary to conserve, protect, and properly utilize these resources.

International Conservation: Through the International Conservation Program, NRCS provides leadership to strengthen the conservation of natural resources globally. This program helps foreign governments develop and protect their natural resources. NRCS shares scientific information about conserving natural resources with other countries. In 2019, the division arranged for 22 staff members to meet with 98 foreign visitors from 47 countries.

Challenges and Risks

USDA's NRCS is the world leader in delivering science-based conservation planning. The Department has a unique system of more than 3,000 service delivery points that offer technical and financial assistance to producers on their farms, ranches, and woodlands. However, NRCS's technical staff face key hiring and retention issues which if not mitigated may impact their work in assisting clients with the adoption of the latest science and technology that is critical to help sustain economically sound operations. With the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill, NRCS staff will be challenged by developing and implementing new and old programs simultaneously.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

Private-sector investment in natural resources conservation has grown significantly over the last few decades, and NRCS continues to engage with private partners in carrying out conservation planning and activities. It is critical that such investments achieve the conservation outcomes that meet producer and societal expectations.

In 2020, NRCS will continue to develop and streamline its technical tools and assistance by partnering with scientific research institutions and private industry experts to enhance the conservation planning process and results. In addition, program delivery will be streamlined to further focus efforts on the outcomes using a variety of tools and process improvements:

- Increased sharing of best practices and efficiency tools across agency through the NRCS of the Future Innovations effort;
- Continued refinement of tools developed in FY 2020 to better align staff with conservation work; and
- Increased sharing of best practices and efficiency tools across agency through the NRCS of the Future Innovations effort

The 2018 Farm Bill provides some new opportunities for customers as well as field-office streamlining to assist customers.

Objective 5.2: Promote Productive Working Lands

Key Achievements

CTA Customer Assistance: The CTA program is the backbone of the NRCS's conservation delivery system. Many customers begin their relationship with NRCS through requests for assistance that later evolve into a conservation plan that may include cost-share assistance through mandatory programs. In 2019, over 880,000 customers received abbreviated technical assistance, and over 100,000 customers received comprehensive planning assistance. Results from this assistance included: 27.5 million acres covered under written conservation plans; 34.1 million acres treated with conservation practices to improve water quality; 26.9 million acres of grazing and forest lands conservation; 9.4 million acres of wildlife habitat improvement; and 12.8 million acres of conservation applied on the ground to improve soil quality.

Maintain Productive Working Farms and Ranches: NRCS helps maintain soil health, establishing the foundation for productive working farms and ranches. Soil health leads to sustained production of a healthy, and abundant food supply. In 2019, NRCS developed conservation

plans covering 27.1 million acres. In accordance with those plans and utilizing CTA Program support, conservation practices and systems designed to improve soil quality were applied to 5.7 million acres of cropland. Program support also contributed to the owners and managers of grazing and forest lands in applying conservation practices to improve 11.7 million acres.

Eliminate and Reduce Impairments to Water Bodies: USDA helps agricultural producers conserve water and reduce the potential for pollutants to move off-site into water bodies, streams, and rivers. This protects water quality and reduces producers' input costs. Nearly 16.5 million acres of agricultural land had conservation practices applied as designed by the agency to improve off-site water quality. Nearly 361,000 acres had conservation practices applied to improve irrigation water use efficiency, reducing costs to the producer, groundwater withdrawals, and surface runoff.

Challenges and Risks

Stewardship of private working lands and forests conserves natural resources while helping feed the world population and sustaining the health and vitality of rural America. Key challenges facing NRCS include severe weather in some areas causes delays and agency attrition outpaces hiring. The implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill is challenging the workforce who are required to develop and implement new and old programs simultaneously.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

Assistance to customers with working lands will continue to focus on:

Sustainable Land-Based Businesses: NRCS will continue to support the improvement of rural lands through financial and technical assistance which will improve soil conditions and keep sediment and nutrients on the land where they are an asset to the farms. The adoption of soil health and grazing conservation systems directly affects the profit margins of land-based businesses by reducing costs and improving the resilience of the soil, crops, or animal herd.

Offsite Water Quality: NRCS will promote conservation practices on America's working lands for better water quality and help agricultural producers conserve water and reduce runoff transport of pollutants into surrounding water bodies, streams, and rivers. Working with producers will result in 40 million acres of science-based conservation practices going on the ground, such as: drainage water management, water conservation, and nutrient management.

Emerging Natural Resource Issues: NRCS will continue assistance with soil health management, irrigation efficiencies and designing natural resource conservation systems. This will mitigate risk of loss/effects from natural disasters such as drought, fire, and flood.

Private Sector Partnerships: NRCS will continue to leverage the private sector expertise and technology to improve customer service and address emerging challenges and opportunities.

Objective 5.3: Enhance Productive Agricultural Landscapes

Key Achievements

Cropland Assessment: NRCS supports the Agricultural Policy / Environmental eXtender (APEX) model to help simulate land management impacts for small-medium watersheds and *heterogeneous* farms. In 2018-2019, the APEX model was improved in several ways. These improvements will enable better ground evidence-based agency decision-making. Model

improvements include increased capacity to capture the impacts of grazing animals on nutrient and soil dynamics; improved soil carbon modeling capacity; more realistic representations of soil carbon response to tillage impacts; inclusion of the impacts of high temperature stresses on yields; and better capacity to simulate woody crops.

Grazing Lands Assessment: USDA completed the agency's first study on Ecosystem Service Valuation on rangeland in the Central Great Plains. The study monetized 12 ecosystem services that occur to varying degrees with the implementation of NRCS rangeland conservation practices. The study clearly showed that conservation benefits extend beyond the fence line, which has been a key consideration for use of Farm Bill funds on grazing lands.

Cover Crops to Improve Soil Health and Cropland Resiliency: Cover crops provide the ecological services of improving soil health, reducing soil erosion, retaining nutrients onsite, and suppressing weeds. PMCs are leaders in the development of cover crop information to support the use of cover crops and the NRCS soil health campaign. PMCs focus on the adaptation and application of cover crops to support agricultural production. In 2019, PMCs prepared final reports and regional technical notes on evaluations of 58 varieties of commercially available cover crop species at PMCs across the US. This information will help field offices and producers to select appropriate cover crops for their area and cropping systems, therefore increasing the success of soil health efforts.

Decrease Threats to "Candidate" and Threatened and Endangered Species: The creation and restoration of wildlife habitat on private lands is vital to decreasing the threats to species listed as threatened or endangered or having the potential to be listed ("candidate" species). NRCS works with landowners and managers to assist them with wildlife habitat improvement and wetland restoration, providing increased recreational opportunities and vital ecosystem services. Almost 7.3 million acres had conservation practices and systems applied to improve wildlife habitat. Creation, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands, which provide critical wildlife habitat, were implemented on nearly 9,000 acres.

Challenges and Risks

The 2018 Farm Bill maintains an acreage limitation for CRP. The FY 2019 cap remained at 24 million acres but is increased to 24.5 million acres in FY 2020, with further increases in subsequent years to 27 million acres in FY 2023. The Farm Bill added new provisions to CRP which will need to be implemented by the agency. FSA is working to conduct multiple signups beginning early FY 2020.

With a new Farm Bill, NRCS' workforce will be challenged by developing and implementing new and old programs simultaneously. Furthermore, current agency staffing capacity is below levels estimated as necessary to meet work demand.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

Program staff and FSA leadership meet daily to analyze and review Farm Bill policy issues and make recommendations for implementation. Other planned actions include developing tools to partially automate field office work related to inventory assessment and application ranking. In addition, there will be continued development of processes and tools that integrate budget and performance to address resource concerns.

FY 2019 Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Historic Actuals			Strategic Targets			FY 19 Status
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY19	FY20	FY21	
Acreage enrolled in CRP riparian and grass buffers (Cumulative, Million Acres)	1.6	1.5	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	Met
Acreage enrolled in CRP grasslands	NA	0.5	0.92 ¹¹	0.97	NA	NA	Needs Improvement
Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality (Million Acres) - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	3	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.1	Met
Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality (Million Acres) - Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)	5.9	6	5.7	5.9	6	6	Needs Improvement ¹²
Tons of sediment prevented from leaving cropland and entering waterbodies (Million Tons)	4.8	5.3	6.3	5.7	5.7	5.7	Met
Working land protected by conservation easements (Thousand Acres)	60.7	163	178	140	163	163	Met
Contract Implementation Ratio (CIR, %)	NA	87	87	87	87	87	Met
Annual Practice Implementation Rate (PIR, %)	NA	51	55	53	53	53	Met

New Key Performance Indicators

New Measure	Target	
	FY20	FY21
Restored wetland acreage (million acres)	2.34	2.34

¹¹ No signups conducted during FY 2019. FSA is proposing this measure to discontinue after FY 2019

¹² Progress towards soil quality under CTA is delayed due to soils seasonality and disasters delaying implementation of soil health related practices.

Strategic Goal 6: Ensure Productive and Sustainable Use of our National Forest System Lands

The Nation's forests and grasslands are a fundamental part of the American landscape and are a legacy that the USDA Forest Service holds in trust for present and future generations. Forests provide clean air and water, forest and rangeland products, mineral and energy resources, jobs, quality habitat for fish and wildlife, recreational opportunities, and memorable experiences. The Forest Service plays a critical role in making America's forests and grasslands resilient to threats and disturbances while mitigating wildfire risk. The Department also manages the national forests and grasslands to ensure that they are healthy and sustainable – while also allowing rural communities to access and benefit from economic opportunities that our Nation's forests offer. This work is complemented with USDA's research in forestry, ecology, and economics to ensure world-class science guides effective policies and management practices.

Objective 6.1: Contribute to the Economic Health of Rural Communities Through Use and Access Opportunities

Key Achievements

Visitor Satisfaction: In FY 2019, visitor satisfaction was rated at 95 percent, reflecting the result of our continued efforts to provide access to quality landscapes, offer a variety of recreation opportunities and settings, and maintain recreation facilities to acceptable standards.

Recreation.Gov: This website is a collaboration between the Forest Service and 11 other Federal partners (Bureau of Land Management, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, Smithsonian Institute, National Archives, Federal Highway Administration, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Tennessee Valley Agency, and Bureau of Reclamation). Some of these agencies began working on an online reservation system (National Recreation Reservation system) in 1995 and the first iteration of Recreation.gov launched in 2007. The new platform launched on October 1, 2018 and offers a single point of access to comprehensive information about Federal recreation activities. Site services include reservation and trip planning for 100,000 individual sites and activities and 3,500 recreation areas managed by seven Federal agencies. The recently revamped site also offers new and improved features for managers. In FY 2019, Recreation.gov had over 19 million users and 162.9 million-page views and processed over 4.7 million transactions and reservations.

Permitting Process: Online permitting is a key aspect of enhancing the customer experience in the USDA FS for the millions of visitors that come to national forests and grasslands every year. Visitors obtain permits for activities on the revamped Recreation.gov website which simplifies their permitting process. An FY 2019 pilot program demonstrated interest in and demand for online Christmas tree permitting.

Special Use Permits: Special use permits such as energy, utility, and communications infrastructure on national forest system lands support approximately 120,000 private sector jobs and provide critical services to communities. For example, current permits include about 2,700 power line authorizations carrying electricity to 70 million homes. Process improvements reduced the Forest Service permit backlog by 49 percent compared to January 2016.

Bethel Community Forest project: This new 978-acre community forest created in FY 2019, provides multiple benefits including drinking water supply, recreation access, wildlife habitat and revenue for the forest products industry.

Browns Mill Food Forest: This project provides a model for community forests in an urban setting by simultaneously preserving and using land that is culturally and historically significant. This underserved community in Atlanta now has access to outdoor classrooms for educators and students, a gathering place for the community to enjoy forested and stream-side areas, picnic sites, a community garden, and carefully planned nature trails to play and explore in the forest. The city is working towards transforming the seven-acre site into an edible landscape.

Communication Facilities: The FS streamlined the process for considering applications to locate or modify communications facilities on National Forest System (NFS) lands and established uniform and standardized procedures in FY 2019.

Geospatial Data: The FS has collected geospatial data for all designated communications sites nation-wide and is developing an online mapping tool that will be available to the public to aid them in siting future communications uses on NFS lands.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): The FS published a proposed rule to update the agency's NEPA regulations on June 13, 2019. The agency increased efficiency in environmental analysis and decision-making processes by using all available tools, including authorities from the 2018 Omnibus Bill and the 2018 Farm Bill.

Challenges and Risks

Multiple interests in the use of national forest land and resources sometimes lead to conflicts among stakeholders and can present challenges to the agency efforts in how to improve use and access opportunities for rural communities

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

The FS will continue to work in shared stewardship with local communities to identify priorities and trade-offs, and to determine and deliver agreed-upon benefits to the public. Aiding in this effort will be implementation of the NEPA rule, which will streamline the processes to reduce the time and staff effort needed to complete environmental analysis, and Good Neighbor Authority, which allows States to restore watersheds and manage forests on National Forest System lands via agreements or contracts. The agency will also continue to update recreation and permitting tools to maintain our high visitor satisfaction rate, building on pilot programs tested in 2019 that will prepare the FS to expand these online services to more locations.

Objective 6.2: Ensure Lands and Watersheds Are Sustainable, Healthy, and Productive

Key Achievements

Board Feet: In FY 2019, Forest Service sold about 3.3 billion board feet, a volume last attained in 1997. This achievement was made possible using tools authorized or amended in the 2014 Farm Bill, 2018 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, and 2018 Farm Bill including: Good Neighbor Authority (GNA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) insect and disease categorical exclusions, stewardship contracting, and the Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services Program. National forests are typically located near rural communities where forest products industry employment is an important contributor to the local economy. Forest products include timber for fuel, and construction materials, and pulp for paper products.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP): FS conserved a total of 2.8 million acres, including 66,000 acres as a result of this program. The conserved acres include more than 176,000 surface acres of water and 3,300 stream miles. Historically, the FLP leverages more than one dollar for every Federal dollar spent.

State Priority Areas: In FY 2019, the FS restored healthy, resilient landscapes and communities within State priority areas via \$12.5 million in competitive grants to accomplish 49 projects in 31 States and one territory. By addressing threats to forest sustainability, such as damaging wildfires or the spread of insects and disease, these projects also benefit adjacent National Forest System lands, creating healthier, more resilient landscapes overall.

Cooperative Lands: Aerial detection surveys on forested lands were conducted through partnership with State land management agencies, recording approximately 5,000 flight hours and surveying about 500 million acres in FY 2019. The equipment and technical expertise required to conduct these surveys provide job opportunities and economic benefits to rural communities.

Challenges and Risks

The FS currently has a backlog of 80 million acres in need of active management, with 50 million acres at high risk of severe wildfire and/or severe infestation from insects and disease. The backlog presents a challenge to the agency as we prioritize resources to ensure lands and watersheds are sustainable, healthy, and productive.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

The Shared Stewardship strategy brings States, tribes, and other stakeholders together to prioritize cross-boundary investments in managing risk and monitoring landscapes to improve forest conditions. The key components of Shared Stewardship are co-creating mutual priorities to achieve landscape-scale, cross-boundary outcomes. Building on national assessments such as terrestrial condition, wildfire hazard, insect and disease risk, forest inventories, and drinking water and watershed condition, the FS is using science-based decision support frameworks to simulate investment strategies over the short term; between three to five years. Using advanced science tools like this can better inform our decisions and make a bigger difference in the protection of communities and provide for more resilient forests.

The FS timber target for FY 2021 is 4.0 billion board feet, an increase of 18 percent from FY 2018 sales. This increase will allow the agency to continue work towards the President's goals

established in Executive Order 13855 issued on December 21, 2018 that promotes Active Management of America's Forests, Rangelands, and other Federal Lands to Improve Conditions and Reduce Wildfire Risk. To treat those acres at risk, the FS will leverage every tool available, including maximum use of 2018 Omnibus Appropriations and 2018 Farm Bill authorities; continuing to use science-based tools for decision-making; improving processes for the way the agency conduct environmental analysis and decision-making to increase efficiency and reduce costs; and modernizing our forest products delivery processes to become more agile, flexible, and adaptable to better meet market demand and improve forest condition.

Improvements to internal processes that make environmental analysis more effective and timber sale delivery more efficient are increasing our outcomes on the ground. The FS is using 2018 Omnibus and Farm Bills authorities to complement these internal process improvements. For example, the FS is using new categorical exclusions and implementing 20-year stewardship contracts that carry out work over longer periods of time. The use of these new tools together increases efficiencies, provides shared stewardship opportunities, and promotes more active management work on the ground.

Objective 6.3: Mitigate Wildfire Risk

Key Achievements

Emerging Technologies: In FY 2019, the agency coordinated with private industry to identify and pilot several emerging technologies to address hazard risk mapping, adoption of unmanned aerial systems, location tracking for wildland firefighters, risk management for firefighters and the public, and improved wildland fire decision support. These pilot technologies are being assessed to inform the adoption of the most effective technologies that will facilitate improved decision-making to protect the health and safety of both wildland firefighters and the public.

Risk Management Assistance Framework: Utilizing the risk management assistance framework, the Forest Service continues to identify, develop, and implement new decision support tools and products for incident management teams and agency administrators that leverage new research and data analytics. These decision support tools intended to provide real time information to incident command teams to assist in evaluating risk to firefighters, effectiveness of aviation resources, smoke impacts, fire progression, and when to release firefighting resources to an incident. The products and tools being provided and developed are changing annually to reflect the needs of incident management teams and agency administrators as the FS remains committed to using the best available science and data to inform decision makers.

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program: This program provides for immediate emergency post-fire response to manage unacceptable risks to people and resources triggered by the changed conditions to the landscape caused by the fire. In FY 2019, 64 fires across six FS Regions resulted in landscape-level disturbances in need of immediate rehabilitation activities to prevent further degradation. A total of \$10.8 million was spent in FY 2019 on BAER activities to provide for public safety, stabilize soil, and reinforce the structural integrity of infrastructure at risk of post-fire degradation, including the seeding of over 12,300 acres, mulching of 300 acres, storm proofing of 800 miles of roads and trails, and stabilization of 25 cultural resource and hazard mitigation sites.

Challenges and Risks

The wildland fire system is challenged with reliably protecting responders and the public. The amount of fuels on the land, insect infestation, invasive species, disease, and drought, can increase the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

Experts predict increasingly severe wildland fire-related impacts in the future from continued human development in the volatile wildland-urban interface (WUI) where wildland fires pose a greater risk to life and property and often require extensive and costly suppression efforts.

A helicopter crashed on March 27, 2019 during a controlled burn in a remote area of the Sam Houston Ranger District, killing the helitack captain and injuring two others. This tragic incident prompted an aviation stand-down and other follow up that stopped work on prescribed fire during the peak of Region 8's limited prescribed fire season. Region 8 normally produces over half the nationwide target.

In addition, the government shutdown stopped all prescribed burn activity, including planning necessary for prescribed burns. This had a cascading impact on targets because it occurred during the time of year that fire activity is low, and units normally plan for and conduct controlled burns.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

The Agency will continue the Shared Stewardship approach to work across boundaries, using the best available science to ensure hazardous fuels treatments are implemented in high risk areas, to set landscape-scale priorities for targeted treatments in areas with the highest payoffs and increase the number of acres treated overall. The FS has developed a guide and standards to assist teams in conducting credible, objective, fact-based large fire reviews that will help us continuously improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our wildland fire system. The FS and DOI will conduct annual Wildland Fire System Continuous Improvement Reviews. The agency will continue efforts to standardize the composition, staffing, and provision of firefighting resources.

Tree and plant nurseries and their seedbanks are critical to the agency's ability to address reforestation and revegetation needs. With 88 percent of tree planting needs due to wildland fire damage, the agency will continue to plan for and collect seeds in advance of fires that might severely impact local seed sources in FY 2021. This ensures the agency has seeds from the right geographic areas to restore the landscape post-fire.

FY 2019 Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Historic Actuals			Strategic Targets			FY 19 Status
	FY17	FY18	FY 19	FY 19	FY20	FY21	
Percent of customers satisfied with recreation facilities, services, and settings on National Forests	NA	95	95	95	95	95	Met
Timber volume sold (Billion Board feet)	2.9	3.2	3.27 ¹³	3.7	3.7	4	Unmet ¹⁴
Annual acreage of NFS lands where final treatment effectively mitigates wildfire risk (million acres, annually)	0.348	1.04	0.85	1.1	1.1	1.1	Unmet ¹⁵
Annual acreage treated to reduce or maintain fuel conditions on NFS and non-federal lands (million acres, annually)	0.807	3.4	2.9	3.4	3.5	3.5	Unmet ¹⁶

¹³ Lost production due to late receipt of funding authority. Inadequate mill capacity and decreased demand for exported timber increased no-bid sales.

¹⁴ The key challenges in not meeting the target was lost production due to late receipt of funding authority, inadequate mill capacity, and decreased demand for exported timber.

¹⁵ The key challenge in not meeting the target was the unfavorable weather conditions that limited prescribed fire treatments and balancing risk between treating high cost areas within the wildland-urban interface versus lower cost landscape projects.

¹⁶ The key challenge in not meeting the target was unfavorable weather conditions that limited prescribed fire treatments.

Strategic Goal 7: Provide All Americans Access to a Safe, Nutritious, and Secure Food Supply

USDA has critical roles in preventing foodborne illness and protecting public health while also ensuring Americans have access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence. The Department will take several actions to achieve this goal. First, to ensure the food supply is safe the Department will continue to prevent contamination and limit foodborne illness by expanding its modernization of food inspection systems, and USDA's research, education, and extension programs will continue to provide information, tools, and technologies about the causes of foodborne illness and its prevention. Second, USDA will continue to develop partnerships that support best practices in implementing effective programs to ensure that eligible populations have access to programs that support their food needs. This includes research on nutritional quality of American's food and diets, as well continuing to discover the drivers of poor diets and nutritional choices. Lastly, USDA will collaborate with partners and stakeholders on strategies to reduce foodborne illness and childhood obesity and to improve diets. USDA ensures agriculture production incorporates the best available science into its modernization efforts to produce food that is safer, more nutritious, and secure.

Objective 7.1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

Key Achievements

New Swine Inspection System (NSIS): On October 1, 2019, FSIS published a final rule modernizing inspection at market hog slaughter establishments with a goal of protecting public health while allowing for food safety innovations. There are also new requirements that apply to all swine slaughterhouses to demonstrate that they are controlling for pathogens throughout the slaughter system. FSIS has amended the regulations to require that swine slaughter establishments develop written sanitary dressing plans and implement microbial sampling to monitor process control for pathogens that can cause foodborne illness. Under the new system and the traditional systems, FSIS will continue to conduct 100% inspection of animals before slaughter and 100% carcass-by-carcass inspection. Under the NSIS, FSIS offline inspectors will conduct more food safety and humane handling verification tasks to protect the food supply and animal welfare.

Egg Products Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP): Initiatives to modernize operations and inspection systems and finalize deregulatory actions will continue in 2020. These include amending the egg products inspection regulations by requiring official plants that process egg products to develop and implement HACCP systems and Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures and to meet other sanitation requirements consistent with meat and poultry regulations. When the rule becomes final, plants will be required to produce egg products in such a way that the finished product is free of detectable pathogens but will have additional flexibility in their production process. This modernization effort will lead to innovations in the

egg products industry as well as align egg products regulations with the meat and poultry products regulations.

Poultry Campylobacter Performance Standards: In 2019, FSIS proposed revised pathogen reduction performance standards for *Campylobacter* in raw comminuted chicken and turkey products. FSIS also proposed revised pathogen reduction performance standards for *Salmonella* in raw ground beef and new *Salmonella* standards for beef manufacturing trimmings. FSIS will consider comments received on these proposed standards before announcing the final performance standards in the Federal Register.

Public Health Veterinarians (PHV) Initiatives: FSIS has initiated several activities to improve recruitment and retention of PHVs to reduce their vacancy rate. These include increasing opportunity for career advancement by reclassifying the PD and adding supervisory duties; establishing a reassignment list allowing veterinarians to easily move between locations of interest, thereby bolstering job satisfaction and improving job fill rates; conducting PHV seminars; and providing FSIS veterinarians the opportunity to earn continuing education credits.

Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS): FSIS is continuing to use WGS to track illnesses, inform inspection and policy decisions, and enhance its collaborations with other Federal agencies and state governments. WGS is superior to other methods to distinguishing between two or more bacterial isolates. This is useful for identifying the source of an outbreak, among other benefits.

Collaboration: FSIS continues to strengthen its collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to meet its goal to improve coordination of federal food safety efforts and address cross-cutting priorities for food safety data collection, analysis, and use. In recent years, the development of cell-cultured products derived from the stem cells of animals has raised questions about regulatory jurisdiction, food safety controls and labeling of these meat and poultry products. In March 2019, FSIS and FDA released a formal agreement to address the regulatory oversight of human food produced using this new technology. The formal agreement describes the oversight roles and responsibilities for both agencies and how the agencies will collaborate to regulate the development and entry of these products into commerce. This shared regulatory approach will ensure that cell-cultured products derived from the cell lines of livestock and poultry are produced safely and are accurately labeled.

Apprenticeship Program: FSIS is partnering with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Labor to create a pre-apprenticeship program to target separating veterans interested in a career with FSIS.

Chemical Residue: FSIS implemented several changes to enhance the surveillance of the National Residue Program. The changes include modernization of the FSIS residue annual sampling plan, updated residue methodology, testing for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and surveillance of liquid and dry egg products for pesticide residues.

Public Awareness and Help Desks: In 2019, FSIS saw major success in raising awareness of safe food handling guidance, recalls, and information about foodborne illness. FSIS achieved more than 52.7 million weighted impressions from media outreach (90,250,000), web page views (30,513,975), social media engagements (22,113,232), educational material distribution (504,354), app downloads (55,500) and direct conversations with individuals on the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline (80,359) and in the field (1,000+). FSIS saw success with Twitter, where the number of engagements increased by 36.2 percent. FSIS worked with FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to successfully launch an updated FoodSafety.gov website to promote food safety content on the cross-federal, consumer-focused website.

The askFSIS database: In FY 2019, FSIS combined the Small Plant Help Desk function with askFSIS which provides online answers to technical, inspection related questions, to increase efficiency and address customer feedback. askFSIS customers visited the site 644,020 times, conducted 227,369 searches, and viewed 742,097 published answers. The askFSIS customers also submitted 24,099 questions for individual answers. This year, FSIS transitioned IT systems used to manage the Meat and Poultry Hotline, including calls, frequently asked questions, chats and emails, to the new Ask USDA. This is part of USDA's ongoing customer experience improvement project and a key initiative. FSIS received 25 percent more calls than in FY 2018. More than 3.7 million answers about food safety questions were viewed through FSIS' frequently asked questions database.

Challenges and Risks

A key challenge has been FSIS' ability to provide 50 percent funding for State meat and poultry inspection programs. If left unmitigated, several States (that have highlighted the low reimbursement rate relative to their increased share of costs over time) may drop the program, which then would require FSIS to provide inspection coverage for those State establishments.

Another challenge is FSIS' statutory restrictions on billing for overtime which limits flexibility in scheduling and job redesign that would improve work-life balance for inspection personnel and retention of inspection personnel. Changes in statutory restrictions will allow for ease of scheduling and possible restructuring of jobs while remaining cost neutral for industry.

Lastly, recruitment and retention of employees, particularly veterinarians and other front-line positions, continues to be a challenge to the Agency. FSIS' commitment to its mission of protecting public health is dependent upon attracting and retaining a qualified and competent workforce. More than 85 percent of FSIS' employees, including all inspectors, are in mission critical occupations.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

The President's FY 2021 Budget requests a change to the current overtime/holiday billing policy to allow for FSIS to charge fees for inspection of establishments outside of their scheduled shifts. Currently the establishments are billed for services provided outside of their approved hours of inspection only when the inspector is also in an overtime status. This makes it difficult for FSIS to employ part-time employees or provide flexible schedules to employees while still collecting fees for services provided as requested by the plant. This proposal when coupled with the funding and authorities provided in the FY2020 Appropriations will address the challenges cited above.

FSIS proposes to mitigate recruitment and retention by utilizing direct hire authority to fill in-plant veterinarian positions. FSIS will implement the Inspector Pre-Apprenticeship Program to increase awareness and experience in the food safety work environment. Lastly, FSIS will continue to provide recruitment incentives to veterinarians who choose to join FSIS, develop a plan to offer retention incentives to this target population, and introduce a Student Loan Repayment Program to help alleviate those burdened by outstanding student loan debt.

Objective 7.2: Provide Access to Safe and Nutritious Food for Low-Income People While Supporting a Pathway to Self-Sufficiency

Key Achievements

Online Purchasing Pilot: SNAP successfully launched online purchasing in the pilot areas of New York with three retailer chains in April 2019. The pilot uses technology to improve customer service and food access so that SNAP participants can shop for food using the internet like all other consumers. Additional States will implement this technology in FY 2020.

Grants to Improve Program Access and Eligibility Determination: A total of \$5 million in Process and Technology Improvement Grants is awarded annually to local and State SNAP agencies and community partners. FY 2019 projects focused on efforts to streamline program administration, improve customer service, maintain the highest integrity, and protect the program and American taxpayer dollars.

Site Visits: Provided robust technical assistance site visits to three State agencies (CO, IN, ND) to help them improve their performance directly certifying children for free school meals based on SNAP participation.

Success Stories: USDA's [Food Nutrition Service](#) (FNS) released four videos that document SNAP recipients' powerful success stories as they pursue and find their path to employment and a better life.

Improving Outcomes with Work:

Commodity Purchase: SNAP worked with the [Agricultural Marketing Service](#) (AMS) led to spending of over \$1.1B on commodity purchases and related costs for USDA's Trade Mitigation Food Purchase and Distribution Program. This made over 28,000 truckloads of offerings comprised of 26 commodity groups from over 100 domestic agricultural vendors available to The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) state and local agencies.

Child Nutrition Programs: FNS issued guidance providing flexibility to food used in FNS Child Nutrition Programs. This new guidance affords menu planners greater flexibility to incorporate nutritious and tasty food items into reimbursable meals, such as vegetable flour pastas, tempeh, surimi, popcorn, and beef jerky

Challenges and Risks

Challenges include data availability, data quality from States, lag, and antiquated systems for reporting. FNS is also balancing competing workload priorities such as Farm Bill Implementation, potential reauthorization for child nutrition programs and associated technical assistance. Further, the Farm Bill contained many provisions related to SNAP Employment and Training programs that were required to be implemented in FY 2020. States will be focusing on making program and systems changes which may have a slight impact on their participation numbers. Ensuring states meet the WIC Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) mandate of statewide implementation by 10/1/2020 remains a challenge.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

Through its FY 2020 SNAP to Skills initiative, SNAP will provide targeted technical assistance to help States increase participation and engagement in the SNAP E&T programs. While many States have expanded their programs in recent years, too many of them are facing challenges with low participation or high drop-off rates. This new project will support 7 States to carefully assess and diagnose participation issues and begin to implement solutions to address them.

In additions, FNS will continue to provide extensive technical assistance to WIC State agencies to ensure they meet the electronic benefit transfer (EBT) mandate of statewide implementation of 10/1/2020, per the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) of 2010. Furthermore, FNS will continue to collaborate internally with AMS on implementation of round two of the USDA Trade Mitigation Food Purchase and Distribution Programs and continue its implementation of Farm Bill provision.

Objective 7.3: Support and Encourage Healthy Dietary Choices Through Data-Driven, Flexible, Customer-Focused Approaches

Key Achievements

Summer Feeding Programs: FNS awarded a three-year cooperative agreement to implement a demonstration project to develop and test methods of providing access to food for low-income children living in rural areas during the summer months when schools are not in session. Approximately 10,500 children who are eligible to receive free or reduced-price school meals were invited to participate in the demonstration, and 4,000 enrolled through an active consent process.

WIC Breastfeeding Support. Learn Together. Grow Together: The Program's national breastfeeding campaign. The goal of the campaign is to equip WIC moms with the information, resources and support they need to successfully breastfeed. In FY 2019, new features added to the campaign website, including Spanish translation of all campaign posters and three tip sheets, a new "About the campaign" webpage, and a devoted page for "Social Media" within the Staff area of the website. FNS also awarded a \$5 million cooperative agreement to support the implementation and evaluation of the national Breastfeeding Promotion Campaign in up to eight WIC State agencies.

Peer Counseling: The WIC Peer Counseling Program provides mother-to-mother support and addresses the barriers to breastfeeding that WIC mothers face. WIC State agencies continue to implement plans that institutionalize breastfeeding peer counseling as a core service in WIC. In FY 2019, FNS awarded nearly \$60 million in grants for breastfeeding peer counseling. As a

requirement of receiving WIC peer counseling funds, WIC State and local agencies must adhere to the peer counseling model and training protocols provided by WIC.

National WIC Breastfeeding Week: A Secretary Proclamation declaring National WIC Breastfeeding Week August 1-7, 2019, highlighted the important role that peer counselors play in WIC breastfeeding promotion and support.

Grant Support for Farm to School: USDA provided an all-time high of grant funds to support farm to school activities and increased the use of technology in school meal programs, to include:

- More than \$9 million in USDA Farm to School Program grants, supporting 126 selected projects across 42 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These projects are expected to serve more than 3.2 million students in over 5,400 schools;
- \$7.7 million in FY 2019 Administrative Review and Training (ART) Grants to 7 State agencies;
- \$13 million in FY 2019 Child Nutrition Technology Innovation Grants (TIGs) to 13 State agencies to encourage innovative technology solutions that improve program accountability and efficiencies at both the state and local levels.

Farm to School Census: FNS launched the 2019 Farm to School Census to measure the scope, reach, and overall impact of farm to school efforts across the nation. The Census will survey all public, private, and charter School Food Authorities (SFAs) operating the National School Lunch Program in all 50 states, as well as Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and Washington D.C.

Child Nutrition Sharing Site: In collaboration with the Institute of Child Nutrition, launched the new Child Nutrition Sharing Site, giving child nutrition professionals a means of sharing effective state- and allied organization-developed resources, including resources to support NSLP/SBP participation and program operations.

Challenges and Risks

Challenges include data availability, data quality from States, lag, and systems for reporting are antiquated. FNS is also balancing competing workload priorities: such as Farm Bill Implementation, potential reauthorization for child nutrition programs and associated technical assistance.

Planned Actions and Risk Mitigation

In FY 2019, FNS launched new dashboards to inform long-term strategies for managing Agency operations and provide nutrition assistance benefits. Additionally, FNS will work to maintain Farm to School grantee satisfaction with FNS support and technical assistance while doubling the size of the grant program.

FNS will continue to support Child Nutrition Program operators with the release of 10 new tools and training resources to support meal pattern implementation, and the release of 15 translated Spanish-language resources, to include resources supporting nutrition education, nutrition policy guidance, and nutrition technical assistance in meal pattern implementation. In addition, FNS plans to continue technical assistance for Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

FY 2019 Key Performance Indicators

KPI	Historic Actuals			Strategic Targets			FY 19 Status
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY19	FY20	FY21	
Percentage of establishments that meet pathogen reduction performance standards	77	71	84	72	87	90	Met
Percentage of establishments whose Public Health Regulation (PHR) noncompliance rate decreases below the early warning cut point 120 days after receiving an Early Warning Alert (EWA)	73	73.7	74	73	74	74	Met
Percentage of American households with consistent, dependable access to food	88.2	88.9	NA ¹⁷	87.9	89	89.2	NA
Percentage of SNAP Employment & Training participants engaged in education and skills-based training	NA	25.5	NA ¹⁸	NA	29.5	31.5	NA
Annual percentage of eligible children participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	54.5	57.8	56.5	59	59	59	Needs Improvement
Annual percentage of eligible children participating in the School Breakfast Program (SBP)	30.1	30.1	29.6	30	31	31	Needs Improvement

¹⁷ This measure has a one-year lag.

¹⁸ Data is not available, yet it is currently being finalized.

FY 2020 & FY 2021 Agency Priority Goals

USDA will continue to use Agency Priority Goals (APG) to focus and monitor performance where the Department needs to drive significant progress and change. USDA has identified five APGs for the FY 2020-2021 cycle. The following descriptions contain the goal statements for each of USDA's FY 2020 APGs:

Improve Customer Experience and Operational Efficiency

Strategic Goal 1: Ensure USDA programs are delivered efficiently, effectively, and with integrity and a focus on customer service.

Objective 1.1: Modernize Information Technology Infrastructure, Facilities, and Support Services to Improve the Customer Experience

Goal Statement: Enhance the customer experience for farmers, ranchers, and foresters through operational efficiencies and expansion of service delivery channels. By September 30, 2021, USDA modernization and technology efforts will improve customer experiences by avoiding at least \$50 million in costs annually, associated with enhancements to acreage reporting, applications and eligibility forms, self-service capabilities, and other process improvements.

Reduce Consumer Risk from Regulated Products through Modernization

Strategic Goal 7: Provide all Americans access to a safe, nutritious and secure food supply.

Objective 7.1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

Goal Statement: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will reduce consumer risk from FSIS-regulated products by systematically controlling and preventing hazards through the use of modernized systems, policies, and scientific approaches. By September 30, 2021, the Department intends to propose or implement eight modernization initiatives.

Reduce Animal Diseases

Strategic Goal 2: Maximize the ability of American agricultural producers to prosper by feeding and clothing the world.

Objective 2.3: Protect agricultural health by preventing and mitigating the spread of agricultural pests and diseases.

Goal Statement: To effectively control the spread of animal diseases, USDA supports animal health professionals and other agency partners who use identification technology to quickly trace potentially diseased animals. By September 30, 2021, at least 55 percent of all USDA approved identification tags distributed for cattle will be electronic Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags.

Connect Rural America through Innovative Solutions

Strategic Goal 4: Facilitate rural prosperity and economic development

Objective 4.1: Expand rural business opportunity and rural quality of life with access to capital; improved infrastructure, broadband access and connectivity; and support for workforce availability

Goal Statement: Create and implement innovative solutions to rural connectivity by expanding broadband infrastructure and services. By September 30, 2021, rural broadband investments will leverage over \$250 million in non-federal funding through new program rules that encourage more private sector investment, enabling the deployment of innovative solutions and cutting-edge technologies to support precision agriculture, distance learning, and telemedicine.

Increase Utilization of Agricultural Research

Strategic Goal 1: Ensure USDA programs are delivered efficiently, effectively, and with integrity and a focus on customer service.

Objective 1.4: Improve stewardship of resources and utilize data-driven analyses to maximize the return on investment

Goal Statement: Increase the utilization of Departmental research results into real world technology improvements to USDA customers, producers, and industry. By September 30, 2021, USDA will develop data-driven methods to measure the impact of research in sustainable agricultural intensification; agricultural climate adaptation; food and nutrition translation; and value-added innovations.

Cross-Agency Priority Goals

CAP Goals are used by leadership to accelerate progress on a limited number of Presidential priority areas where implementation requires active collaboration among multiple agencies. Long-term in nature, CAP Goals drive cross-government collaboration to tackle government-wide management challenges affecting most agencies. USDA currently contributes and supports all CAP goals by providing data, oversight, and resources both globally and domestically to solve agricultural problems and co-led Modernize IT to Increase Productivity and Security. For further discussion of USDA's contribution to these goals, please see [Performance.gov](https://www.performance.gov).

CAP Goals fall into four categories: key drivers of transformation, cross-cutting priority areas, functional priority areas and mission priority areas.

Key Drivers of Transformation:

Goal No.	Goal
1	Modernize IT to Increase Productivity and Security
2	Leveraging Data as a Strategic Asset
3	Developing a Workforce for the 21st Century

Cross-Cutting Priority Areas:

Goal No.	Goal
4	Improving Customer Experience with Federal Services
5	Sharing Quality Services
6	Shifting from Low-Value to High-Value Work

Functional Priority Areas:

Goal No.	Goal
7	Category Management
8	Results-Oriented Accountability for Grants
9	Getting Payments Right
10	Improving Outcomes
11	Improve Management of Major Acquisitions

Mission Priority Areas:

Goal No.	Goal
12	Modernizing the Infrastructure Permitting Process
13	Security Clearance, Suitability, and Credentialing Reform
14	Improve Transfer of Federally Funded Technologies from Lab-to-Market
