

2010 Explanatory Notes
Departmental Administration

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DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Purpose Statement

Departmental Administration (DA) was established to provide management leadership to ensure that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) administrative programs, policies, advice, and counsel meet the needs of USDA program organizations, consistent with laws and mandates; and to provide safe and efficient facilities and services to customers. DA's functions include human resources management, financial management of appropriated and non-appropriated funds, management of information technology systems, procurement and property management, emergency preparedness and other security activities, hazardous materials management, government ethics, facilities management, small business utilization programs, and other management programs, such as audit compliance and Department-wide compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The administrative law functions and the Judicial Officer have been placed within DA for administrative purposes.

The majority of DA's functional activities are located in Washington, D.C. As of September 30, 2008, there were 422 full-time permanent employees under DA. These employees were assigned as follows (includes DA Direct, DA Reimbursement, and Working Capital Fund including the Office of Executive Secretariat):

<u>Location</u>	<u>Full-Time Permanent</u>
Washington, D.C.:	
DA (Direct & Reimbursement)	230
DA WCF	143
Office of the Executive Secretariat	<u>24</u>
Subtotal	397
Field Units:	
DA (Direct & Reimbursement)	<u>25</u>
Total	422

GAO Reports Issued:

GAO-07-441	March 2007	Freedom of Information Act: Processing Trends Show Importance of Improvement Plans
GAO-09-178	February 2009	Veterinarian Workforce: Actions Are Needed to Ensure Sufficient Capacity for Protecting Public and Animal Health

GAO On-Going Reviews:

JC 120759	Review of Cost Reimbursement in Federal Contracts
JC 351166	Medical Care and Benefits for Deployed Federal Civilians
JC 450686	Conversions of Non-career to Career Positions
JC 197034	Restoring Leave of Military Reservists

OIG Reports Issued:

11099-44-FM	August 2005	Purchase Card Management System Controls Need Strengthening
89017-01-HY	February 2007	Office of Procurement and Property Management Review of Acquisition Planning and Processing
50601-2-HY	August 2005	Management Oversight of Federal Employees' Compensation Act Operations within the USDA
50009-13-AT	March 2002	Oversight and Security of Biological Agents at Laboratories Operated by the USDA: Policies & Inventories Are Needed To Manage Biosecurity

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

OIG On-Going Reviews:

50601-14-AT Effectiveness and Enforcement of Suspension and Debarment Regulations in the USDA
 4430-3 Oversight of USDA's Workers' Compensation Program Based on Departmental Regulation
 4430-3

Available Funds and Staff Years
2008 Actual and Estimated 2009 and 2010

Item	2008 Actual		2009 Estimated		2010 Estimated	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Direct Appropriation:						
Departmental Administration....	\$23,144,000	152	\$27,011,000	153	\$43,319,000	208
Rescission.....	-162,008	--	--	--	--	--
Transfer from OCE.....	--	--	+810,000	--	--	--
Transfer from CCC.....	--	--	+2,000,000	--	+2,000,000	--
Ag. Buildings & Facilities.....	196,252,000	75	244,244,000	75	346,182,000	75
Rescission.....	-1,373,764	--	--	--	--	--
Carryover.....	+5,773,130	--	-66,419,000	--	-44,000,00	--
Recoveries.....	+3,578,955	--	--	--	--	--
Unoblig. Bal. EOY.....	+66,419,182	--	+45,419,00	--	--	--
Recovery Act.....	--	--	+24,000,000	--	--	--
Hazardous Materials Mgmt.....	4,886,000	7	5,100,000	7	5,125,000	7
Rescission.....	-34,202	--	--	--	--	--
Carryover.....	+2,431,707	--	--	--	--	--
Recoveries.....	+987,233	--	+3,431,000	--	--	--
Unobligated Bal, EOY.....	-3,431,494	--	--	--	--	--
Total Direct.....	298,470,739	234	285,596,000	235	352,626,000	290

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION
Available Funds and Staff Years
2008 Actual and Estimated 2009 and 2010

Item	2008 Actual		2009 Estimated		2010 Estimated	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
<u>Obligations under other</u>						
<u>USDA appropriations:</u>						
<u>Departmental Administration:</u>						
Radiation Safety.....	1,072,623	9	1,087,000	9	1,087,000	9
Homeland Security Activities...	12,558,856	24	8,764,000	25	8,775,000	25
HR Training/Software.....	2,692,686	--	1,072,000	--	1,072,000	--
Flexible Spending Acct.....	2,065,064	--	2,000,000	--	2,000,000	--
Biobased Products	421,910	--	424,000	--	424,000	--
OHCM Auditors.....	366,864	2	536,000	2	349,000	2
Honor Awards.....	75,150	--	80,000	--	80,000	--
Drug Testing.....	85,014	--	100,000	--	100,000	--
Shuttle Services.....	386,075	--	386,000	--	386,000	--
TARGET Center.....	922,910	4	927,000	5	927,000	5
Visitor Center.....	198,269	1	268,000	2	268,000	2
Operations Center.....	2,204,179	5	2,205,000	6	2,205,000	6
Interpreter Service.....	861,664	2	865,000	2	865,000	2
IT Support Services.....	233,774	1	237,000	--	246,000	--
Misc. Reimbursements.....	455,266	3	299,000	1	293,000	1
Overseas Deployment.....	6,407,238	32	--	--	--	--
FSA Settlement Costs.....	633,493	--	3,500,000	--	3,500,000	--
Ethics.....	1,268,450	10	211,000	2	216,000	2
Personnel Details.....	217,712	3	137,000	1	139,000	1
OSEC Driver.....	104,361	1	105,000	1	109,000	1
WCF Admin. Support Cost.....	5,416,578	27	5,417,000	36	5,417,000	36
Subtotal, DA Reimb.....	38,648,136	124	28,620,000	92	28,458,000	92
<u>Ag. Buildings & Facilities:</u>						
Other Building Services.....	4,434,471	--	2,600,000	--	2,600,000	--
Total Reimbursements.....	43,082,607	124	31,220,000	92	31,058,000	92
<u>Working Capital Fund a/:</u>						
Administration Activities.....	40,067,151	134	43,103,000	174	43,571,000	174
Executive Secretariat.....	2,773,792	22	3,100,000	24	3,308,000	24
Administration (Non-USDA)....	1,356,088	--	1,537,000	--	1,522,000	--
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	44,197,031	156	47,740,000	198	48,401,000	198
Total Departmental Administration	385,750,377	514	364,556,000	525	432,085,000	580

a/ This section only includes WCF activities managed by DA. Please refer to the WCF Explanatory Notes for more details about the WCF.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Year Summary
2008 Actual and Estimated 2009 and 2010

Grade	2008			2009			2010		
	Wash DC	Field	Total	Wash DC	Field	Total	Wash DC	Field	Total
Senior Executive Service	7	--	7	7	--	7	7	--	7
AL-3	2	--	2	2	--	2	2	--	2
AL-2	1	--	1	1	--	1	1	--	1
SL-1	1	--	1	1	--	1	1	--	1
GS-15	33	--	33	33	--	33	33	44	77
GS-14	65	5	70	63	3	66	63	3	66
GS-13	62	6	68	60	3	63	60	3	63
GS-12	20	7	27	17	1	18	28	1	29
GS-11	7	5	12	7	1	8	7	1	8
GS-10	10	--	10	10	--	10	10	--	10
GS-9	17	1	18	13	--	13	13	--	13
GS-8	10	1	11	7	1	8	7	1	8
GS-7	10	--	10	9	--	9	9	--	9
GS-6	2	--	2	1	--	1	1	--	1
GS-5	3	--	3	1	--	1	1	--	1
Ungraded Pos.	4	--	4	4	--	4	4	--	4
Total Permanent Positions	254	25	279	236	9	245	247	53	300
Unfilled Positions end-of-year	-24	--	-24	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total, Permanent Full-time Employment, end-of-year	230	25	255	236	9	245	247	53	300
Staff Year Estimate	251	25	276	236	9	245	247	53	300

Note: This chart includes DA Direct and DA Reimbursement positions. For WCF financed positions, please refer to the WCF Explanatory Notes for more details.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

MOTOR VEHICLE FLEET DATA

SIZE, COMPOSITION AND COST OF MOTOR VEHICLE FLEET

The 2010 Budget Estimates propose no additional purchases of vehicles.

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

The Central Mail Unit supports DA's mission by providing daily scheduled and unscheduled pick-up and delivery service of mail to 18 USDA satellite locations throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, including suburban Maryland and Virginia. Vehicles are also used for scheduled service to Capitol Hill, the Executive Office Buildings, and to the Office of the Federal Register. As needed, vehicles are used for transporting employees to special conferences and/or meetings within the local area. The Centralized Excess Property Operations moves excess equipment and furniture between USDA offices and the warehouse. This service removes excess furniture and equipment from offices that no longer need it, and provides excess furniture to those offices that have a need. In addition to providing transportation services to a limited number of Departmental executives attending meetings in the Washington-metro area, DA also provides emergency transportation services if needed. DA has a full size truck on hand for moving large equipment items between buildings and meeting snow removal needs for the headquarters offices. DA owns an SUV used for transporting equipment and building supplies between the headquarters buildings, and snow removal.

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

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

Replacement of passenger motor vehicles. Departmental Administration will replace the commercially-leased vehicles every three to five years depending on the mileage of the vehicle. The GSA-leased vehicles are replaced based on the GSA regulations.

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

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

MOTOR VEHICLE FLEET DATA

Size, composition and cost of agency motor vehicle fleet as of April 1, 2009, are as follows:

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

Fiscal Year	Number of Vehicles by Type							Total Number of Vehicles	Annual Operating Cost (\$ in thous)
	Sedans and Station Wagons	Light Trucks, SUVs and Vans		Medium Duty Vehicles	Ambulances	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles		
		4X2	4X4						
FY 2007	6	5	11	8	0	0	0	30	\$162
Change from 2007	0	0	0	-2	0	0	+2	0	\$14
FY 2008	6	5	11	6	0	0	2	30	\$176
Change from 2008	0	0	0	-1	0	0	+1	0	\$19
FY 2009	6	5	11	5	0	0	3	30	\$195
Change from 2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$10
FY 2010	6	5	11	5	0	0	3	30	\$205

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Appropriation Language

For Departmental Administration, [\$27,011,000] \$43,319,000, to provide for necessary expenses for management support services to offices of the Department and for general administration, security, repairs and alterations, and other miscellaneous supplies and expenses not otherwise provided for and necessary for the practical and efficient work of the Department: *Provided*, That this appropriation shall be reimbursed from applicable appropriations in this Act for travel expenses incident to the

- 1 holding of hearings as required by 5 U.S.C. 551-558: *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated, \$13,000,000 is for stabilization and reconstruction activities to be carried out under the authority provided by title XIV of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3101 et seq) and other applicable laws. (Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2009.)

The first change in language is for the purpose of including support for the continued participation of USDA personnel in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) that are providing policy advice, technical assistance, and related support to reconstruction activities underway in the rural areas of Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as support USDA personnel serving as ministry advisors in Iraq. This language is necessary so that the funds appropriated for this account may be used for these activities to provide stability to these efforts and facilitate long-term planning and enhance transparency. The funding is requested under DA because DA provides payroll and related administrative functions for USDA employees serving in the PRTs and as ministry advisors.

Lead-off Tabular Statement

Appropriations Act, 2009		\$27,011,000
Budget Estimate, 2010		<u>43,319,000</u>
Increase in Appropriation		<u>+16,308,000</u>
Adjustments in 2009:		
Appropriations Act, 2009	\$27,011,000	
Transfer from Office of the Chief Economist <u>a/</u>	<u>+810,000</u>	
Adjusted base for 2009		27,821,000
Budget Estimate, 2010		<u>43,319,000</u>
Increase over adjusted 2009		<u>+15,498,000</u>

a/ The Office of the Chief Economist will transfer \$810,000 for the Biobased Markets Program authorized pursuant to the 1994 Reorganization Act (P.L. 103-354, October 13, 1994.)

Summary of Increases and Decreases
(On basis of adjusted appropriation)

<u>Item of Change</u>	2009 <u>Estimated</u>	<u>Pay Costs</u>	Program <u>Changes</u>	2010 <u>Estimated</u>
Departmental Administration	\$27,821,000	+\$498,000	+\$15,000,000	\$43,319,000

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Project Statement

(On basis of adjusted appropriation)

	<u>2008 Actual</u>		<u>2009 Estimated</u>		<u>Increase or Decrease</u>	<u>2010 Estimate</u>	
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff Years</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff Years</u>		<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff Years</u>
Departmental Administration.....	\$22,854,413	152	\$27,821,000	153	+\$15,498,000	\$43,319,000	208
Unobligated Balance.....	+127,579	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total Available or Estimate.....	22,981,992	152	27,821,000	153	+15,498,000	43,319,000	208
Rescission.....	+162,008	--	--	--			
Transfer from the Office of the Chief Economist.....	--	--	-810,000	--			
Total, Appropriation.....	<u>23,144,000</u>	<u>152</u>	<u>27,011,000</u>	<u>153</u>			

Justifications for Increases and Decreases

(1) A total increase of \$15,498,000 and 55 staff years for Departmental Administration (\$27,821,000 available in 2009) consisting of:

a) An increase of \$498,000 to fund increased pay costs.

These funds are necessary to maintain staffing levels to continue administrative support services to Department Headquarters and on-going programs in human resources management, financial management of appropriated and non-appropriated funds, management of information technology systems, procurement and property management, emergency preparedness and other security activities, hazardous materials management, government ethics, facilities management, small business utilization programs, other management programs, such as audit compliance and Department-wide compliance with FOIA, and administrative law functions. DA is a labor intensive staff office with little ability to absorb pay cost increases without holding a large number of positions vacant for the entire year. These vacancies adversely affect DA's ability in providing management and leadership needed to ensure that USDA administrative programs, policies, advice, and counsel meet the needs of USDA program organizations.

b) An increase of \$2,000,000 and 11 staff years to support Real Property and Human Capital efforts in the Department.

This increase will provide additional staff to develop and implement improvements in human capital and real property strategic planning and management. These resources are necessary as the Department looks to reduce its annual operating costs in the management of its diverse portfolio of real property, consisting of approximately 193 million acres of land, 79 million square feet of owned and leased space, and spending of approximately \$350 million on leases and space assignments annually. The Department will annually reduce these costs by \$1 million in 2010. A cost reduction of approximately \$55 million is expected by 2019. The human capital efforts supported by this funding will include workforce diversity and succession planning. The requested funding will allow the Department to more thoroughly focus on efforts to modernize the USDA workforce. These efforts will help USDA become a more diverse workplace and will strengthen the workforce that is critical to the efficient and effective delivery of the Department's programs and benefits.

- c) An increase of \$13,000,000 and 44 staff years for stabilization and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan and Iraq.

These funds will be used to support the continued participation of USDA personnel in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) that are providing policy advice, technical assistance, and related support to reconstruction activities underway in the rural areas of Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as support USDA personnel serving as ministry advisors in Iraq. USDA advisors serving in the PRTs provide a range of technical expertise in support of agricultural and rural development activities, offer advice to non-governmental organizations, and assist local authorities in setting agricultural priorities. USDA PRT advisors in Afghanistan have contributed to the training of Afghan veterinarians in detection and treatment of diseases, rehabilitation of a university laboratory for agricultural teaching, development of post-harvest storage facilities, installation of windmills to pump water for irrigation and livestock, and the mentoring of provincial directors of agriculture and agricultural extension to help improve services to farmers. In Iraq, PRT members have helped establish farmer organizations, invigorate agricultural extension, rebuild institutional capacity to clean and maintain irrigation canals, and reestablish veterinary infrastructure to foster animal health.

Providing a dedicated source of funding specifically for these activities would provide stability to these efforts and facilitate long-term planning and enhance transparency. The funding is requested under Departmental Administration because DA provides payroll and related administrative functions for USDA employees serving in the PRTs and as ministry advisors.

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
2008 Actual and Estimated 2009 and 2010

	2008		2009		2010	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
District of Columbia	\$22,581,480	150	\$27,533,114	151	\$43,023,882	206
California	272,933	2	287,886	2	295,118	2
Subtotal, Available or Estimate.....	22,854,413	152	27,821,000	153	43,319,000	208
Unobligated balance	+127,579					
Total, Available or Estimate.....	22,981,992	152	27,821,000	153	43,319,000	208

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Classification by Objects
2008 Actual and Estimated 2009 and 2010

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Personnel Compensation:			
Washington, D.C.	\$14,984,687	\$17,857,000	\$18,374,000
Field.....	200,091	212,000	7,080,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
11 Total personnel compensation.....	15,184,778	18,069,000	25,454,000
12 Personnel benefits	3,533,146	4,545,000	6,398,000
Total pers. comp. & benefits	18,717,924	22,614,000	31,852,000
Other Objects:			
21 Travel and transportation of persons.....	58,133	158,000	577,000
22 Transportation of things	3,499	61,000	68,000
23.3 Communications, utilities, and misc. charges.....	441,049	404,000	489,000
24 Printing and reproduction.....	223,685	234,000	187,000
25.2 Other services	1,755,528	1,831,000	7,757,000
25.3 Purchases of goods and services from Government Accounts.....	1,196,178	1,966,000	1,651,000
26 Supplies and materials	203,748	293,000	337,000
31 Equipment.....	154,727	260,000	401,000
42 Insurance Claims and Indemnities	52,960	--	--
43 Interest	46,982	--	--
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total other objects	4,136,489	5,207,000	11,467,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total direct obligations.....	22,854,413	27,821,000	43,319,000
<u>Position Data:</u>			
Average Salary, ES positions	\$165,509	\$170,309	\$174,907
Average Salary, GS positions	\$96,733	\$115,595	\$120,546
Average Grade, GS positions	13.5	14.5	14.6

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

STATUS OF PROGRAM

Current Activities:

Departmental Administration (DA) provides overall direction, leadership and coordination for the Department's management of human resources, ethics, property, procurement, emergency preparedness and physical security, hazardous materials management, facilities management, small and disadvantaged business utilization programs and the regulatory hearing and administrative proceedings conducted by the Administrative Law Judges, and the Judicial Officer.

The Office of Management Services (OMS) provides executive leadership in administrative policies and operations that cut across the DA staff offices' activities functional lines. OMS manages strategic planning, budget, and financial activities; oversees DA's Freedom of Information Act Program; and investigates allegations of executive misconduct; and serves as the DA's internal Government Accountability Office and Office of Inspector General liaison. OMS also provides strategic leadership within DA for the implementation of government-wide electronic solutions and maintains IT infrastructure to support its customers.

The Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) leads the Department-wide human capital initiatives to ensure that USDA's programs are staffed with the personnel necessary to meet program objectives. OHCM administers the Department's human resources accountability system ensuring that human capital goals and programs align with and support the USDA mission; that human capital planning is guided by a data driven process that measures results toward goal achievement; and that managers and human resource practitioners are held accountable for their human capital decisions and actions.

The Office of Ethics (OE) manages the Department-wide ethics program and provides responsive counseling and advice to all USDA employees; administers personal financial disclosure requirements on covered staff; and provides training to USDA staff on various rules governing employee ethical conduct, conflicts of interest, and political activity.

The Office of Security Services (OSS) provides Department-wide leadership in policy, oversight, and guidance relating to personnel, physical, and document security ensuring a safe and secure work environment for USDA employees and carries out government-wide activities pertaining to emergency programs and continuity of operations and continuity of government. OSS provides security management of USDA's Headquarters facilities in the National Capital Region and around the clock operations center support to USDA emergency response and program operations Nationwide.

The Office of Operations (OO) is responsible for Department-wide activities relating to facilities management services and operational support in the areas of engineering and architecture, space, internal energy conservation, recycling, occupational safety and health, assessable technology, reasonable accommodations, and interpreting services. OO provides services for USDA agencies and staff offices occupying USDA's Headquarters, the George Washington Carver Center, and USDA leased facilities in the National Capital Region.

The Office of Procurement and Property Management (OPPM) provides Department-wide leadership in policy, oversight, and guidance relating to acquisition and procurement, real and personal property, and environmental programs. OPPM is also responsible for hazardous material management and the radiation safety programs, and procuring goods and services supporting the Secretary and the Departmental staff offices. OPPM manages the Department's BioPreferred Program and facilitates the access and use of biobased products by USDA agencies and offices.

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

The Office of Administrative Law Judges (OALJ) conducts rule making and adjudicatory hearings throughout the United States in proceedings subject to the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), 5 U.S.C. 554 et seq. The Judges render initial decisions and orders that become final decisions of the Secretary unless appealed to the Secretary's Judicial Officer by a party to the proceedings.

The Office of the Judicial Officer (OJO) serves as the Department's final deciding officer in appeals of regulatory proceedings that are quasi-judicial in nature.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress:

The Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) implemented numerous strategic human capital initiatives at both the Departmental and mission area levels. Each initiative required significant collaboration with stakeholders both external and internal to the Department. Key accomplishments are: 1) Development of a strategic Human Capital Plan that established five strategic goals; 2) Implemented a comprehensive USDA Human Capital Accountability Program and conducted 19 compliance reviews in FY 2008; 3) Continued progress and success in closing occupational competency gaps throughout USDA. Gap closure was achieved on all 20 mission critical occupations; 4) Led efforts that resulted in USDA achieving the best average hiring timelines for both General Schedule (GS) employees and Senior Executive Service (SES) of any Cabinet level agency (25 days for GS and 30 days for SES); 5) A USDA-wide Performance Management Program was developed focusing on performance plans, balanced-credible measures, employee involvement in development of performance plans, training of supervisors and employees, and supervisory performance plans holding supervisors accountable for aligning employee performance plans with organizational goals; 6) Improved the use of human resource hiring flexibilities for employee appointments throughout USDA; 7) Received a "green" status rating for the President's Management Agenda Human Capital initiatives for each quarter of FY 2008; 8) Obtained provisional certification of the USDA SES performance management system with several of the performance plans being used as models for other Federal agencies; and 9) Implemented a cutting edge SES Candidate Development Program (SES CDP) for GS 14/15 employees from throughout the Federal Government.

The Office of Ethics (OE) centralized all ethics services previously provided by the mission areas and agencies into one USDA Ethics Program, pursuant to the Secretary's Decision Memorandum 1030-065, dated February 1, 2008. The centralization resulted in a Headquarters Office and four Branch Offices ensuring: (1) direct program accountability to the Designated Agency Ethics Official, whom is directly responsible for all aspects of the USDA Ethics Program, including the selection, training, and supervision of all USDA ethics personnel; (2) greater continuity of services and uniformity of advice; and (3) a higher standard of ethics advice available to USDA employees. During FY 2008, OE received an Ethics Program Award, as well as an additional Ethics Training Award from the U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE). The Ethics Program Award acknowledged the Department's focus on government ethics as demonstrated by its decision to centralize its program in order to provide more-effective and higher quality service. The Ethics Training Award was for OE's development of ethics training focused on the Combined Federal Campaign. In FY 2008, OE also developed a new "Self-Help" walk-through guide dealing with acceptance of gifts from non-Federal sources covering costs for travel and accommodations for Federal employees. OE worked with OGE in finalizing and sending to the Federal Register a supplemental ethics regulation for employees of Rural Development. OE also worked with the Office of the General Counsel in finalizing an Ethics Issuance addressing Science Ethics Issues. In FY 2008, OE conducted an instructor-based training

for political appointees, approximately every six weeks, on subjects such as post government employment and political activities.

The Office of Security Services (OSS) conducted 10 security assessments which resulted in implementation of security countermeasures at those facilities to mitigate their risks and performed 12 security design reviews for newly planned and renovated facilities. OSS also began implementation of the Enterprise Physical Access Control System (ePACS) to meet the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 ID card (LincPass) interoperability and initiated the migration of USDA facilities into the system. This centralized access control system allows USDA to avoid recurring expenses (maintenance, certification and accreditation, software licenses, PACS updates, etc.) formerly incurred by other USDA agencies.

In support of the Presidential e-Government initiative, e-Clearance, agencies continued to electronically process over 95 percent of background investigations for public trust and National security positions. OSS successfully implemented a secure on-line personnel security database that tracks agency investigative requests, provides the real-time status of pending clearance actions, and enables uploading of security clearance data into the Clearance Verification System managed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), a key requirement of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. OSS represents USDA's personnel security interests within the Joint Security Reform initiative spearheaded by the Director of National Intelligence and OPM and is developing a Plan of Action and Milestones to implement various reform requirements, including e-adjudications, electronic delivery of investigations, and new investigative requirements.

OSS obtained accreditation for its secure facilities that enable updated classified communications for senior executives. The USDA Operations Center continued to improve the Department's capability to alert and inform employees, in real time, on weather and other local emergencies and warnings. USDA continued to receive requests for demonstrations of and information on the USDA Computer Emergency Notification System (CENS) and the other communications capabilities as the emergency management community faces additional demands for rapid, reliable emergency notification in campus-like complexes.

The Office of Procurement and Property Management (OPPM) took over responsibility for the BioPreferred (Biobased Markets Program) during fiscal year 2008. OPPM created a BioPreferred Strategic Management Plan for FY 2009-2012 and finalized an Interim Final Rule to update the Guidelines in designating Biobased Products for Federal Procurement. The Biobased Program held a successful BioPreferred Showcase and Training Conference in conjunction with the General Services Administration Expo, April 22-24, 2008. USDA held a public meeting to discuss the 2008 Farm Bill implications of the Voluntary Labeling Program on July 22, 2008 in the Department's Jefferson Auditorium in Washington, DC. The Bio-Based staff were recognized as a 2008 White House "Closing the Circle Award Winner" for supporting the Federal Green Purchasing initiatives. OPPM also completed all required actions in the USDA Sustainable Buildings Implementation Plan that included conducting sustainability assessments of buildings and developing criteria and mechanisms for reporting agency progress. USDA updated its Renewable Energy Guidance to incorporate Department of Energy (DOE) requirements and developed Water Conservation Guidance based on DOE guidance. USDA updated its Facilities' Energy Departmental Regulation to incorporate Energy Independence and Security Act and E.O. 13423 requirements and revised its Green Purchasing Affirmative Procurement Program and Agriculture Acquisition Regulation Advisory #83, Acquisition Strategy and Review Procedures, to include additional green product categories. The Department formulated and posted online green purchasing training for purchase card holders and procurement officials and incorporated electronic stewardship goals – to reduce the environmental and energy impacts of electronic product acquisition, operation, maintenance, and disposition – into its Departmental Regulation on End User Workstation Standards. Finally, DA, in conjunction with the Office of the Chief Information Officer, issued a memorandum requiring its organizational elements to enable ENERGY STAR energy conservation features on all USDA workstations.

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization worked closely with USDA's senior management and contracting offices and actively assisted in the acquisition process by reviewing all planned acquisitions not already set aside for small business competition; and made recommendations for small business set-aside acquisition strategies. In addition to increased accountability for USDA program executives, OSDBU implemented an aggressive outreach program to identify small businesses that offer solutions to USDA program and operational requirements and challenges. While the overall government-wide goal is 23 percent of annual small business prime contract awards, USDA awarded over 54 percent of the Department's prime contracts to small businesses, totaling \$2.7 billion. USDA agencies made a concerted effort to direct contracts to Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) with an increased number of prime contract awards to these firms over the preceding year. Overall, during FY 2008, USDA provided \$107 million of its contracting dollars or 2.08 percent to SDVOSBs. Also during FY 2008, information technology contracting actions with SDVOSBs represented \$54.3 million or 6.2 percent of overall USDA information technology contracting expenditures. During FY 2007, USDA provided \$116 million or 2.52 percent to SDVOSBs. USDA exceeded its Department-wide IT goal of 5 percent. USDA provided \$48.6 million or 5.84 percent of USDA's total IT contracting portfolio to SDVOSBs. A significant portion of USDA's percentage change is attributed to USDA's increased spending in the food commodity area, an area where there are very few SDVOSBs.

The Office of Administrative Law Judges (OALJ) conducted 17 hearings (including several rulemaking hearings). The hearings ranged from less than a day to multiple weeks, depending on the case. OALJ judges issued 33 initial decisions, 55 default decisions, 143 consent decisions and 7 other miscellaneous decisions, for a total of 238 decisions during the year. Approximately 200 complaints and petitions were filed with the office during the fiscal year. So far in FY 2009, filings and decisions are proceeding at approximately the same pace.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Summary of Budget and Performance
Statement of Goals and Objectives

DA has one strategic goal and five strategic objectives that contribute to all of the Department's Strategic Goals.

Agency Strategic Goal	Agency Objectives	Programs that Contribute	Key Outcome
<p>Goal 1: Provide USDA leadership with the administrative tools, services, infrastructure, and policy framework to support their public service missions.</p>	<p><u>Objective 1:</u> Ensure USDA has a diverse, ethical, results-oriented workforce able to meet mission priorities and work cooperatively with USDA partners and the private sector.</p>	<p>OHCM, OE, OMS</p>	<p><u>Key Outcome 1:</u> USDA programs will be staffed with personnel trained to meet program objectives through the use of effective, timely and uniform human resources management. Headquarters organizations will receive effective and timely human resources management support. Employees will be trained and held accountable for compliance with Government Standards of Conduct.</p>
	<p><u>Objective 2:</u> Ensure USDA has a trained acquisition workforce with the procurement policies and systems needed to ensure responsiveness, high quality, cost-effectiveness, and accountability using an increasingly diverse vendor pool and range of products.</p>	<p>OPPM, OMS, OSDBU</p>	<p><u>Key Outcome 2:</u> Mechanisms will be established to provide advantageous pricing for selected products and services and a new Integrated Acquisitions System will be fully deployed. Participation of small and disadvantaged businesses will increase. USDA vehicle fleet usage will reduce petroleum and bio-based products will be promoted.</p>
	<p><u>Objective 3:</u> Promote the efficient and economical use of USDA's resources to support customers, promote organizational productivity and ensure accountability.</p>	<p>OPPM, OO, OMS</p>	<p><u>Key Outcome 3:</u> USDA Headquarters will have the facilities, goods and services needed to successfully carryout programs. Personal property will be integrated into the Corporate Property Automated Information System. CPAIS will be utilized to meet the needs of several Executive Orders and the Energy policy Act of 2005.</p>

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

Agency Strategic Goal	Agency Objectives	Programs that Contribute	Key Outcome
Goal 1: Provide USDA leadership with the administrative tools, services, infrastructure, and policy framework to support their public service missions.	<u>Objective 4:</u> Provide the policies, technical guidance, and operating environment that enhance the safety and security of USDA personnel, information and facilities, and the continuity of its vital programs and operations.	OMS, OSS	<u>Key Outcome 4:</u> USDA will have a safe, secure, and productive work environment nationwide. Security information will be handled in the correct manner and USDA personnel will have the appropriate level of security clearances. USDA Continuity of Operations plans will be reviewed and regularly updated.
	<u>Objective 5:</u> Provide formal adjudicative support.	OMS, OALJ, OJO	<u>Key Outcome 5:</u> USDA Administrative law proceedings will be handled quickly and fairly.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2010 Proposed Resource Level:

Strategic Objective 1: Ensure USDA has a diverse, ethical, results-oriented workforce able to meet mission priorities and work cooperatively with USDA partners and the private sector.

DA will improve Headquarters human resources services by continuing to survey its customers and stakeholders to ensure improvement is sustained and new problems are addressed rapidly. DA delivers on its Department-wide responsibilities through the issuance of HR policy, management of strategic programs, and delivery of direct operational services such as those in support of the Office of the Secretary and the USDA Executive Resources Program. This additional staff is needed to support operational services, process the large number of administrative grievances that by regulation are elevated from the agency level to DA, investigate Office of Inspector General Hotline Complaints, and provide policy and program oversight to the Department's Telework Program. DA will continue to provide ethics advice and counseling to USDA employees and meet timeliness requirements for financial disclosure filings.

Strategic Objective 2: Ensure USDA has a trained acquisition workforce with the procurement policies and systems needed to ensure responsiveness, high quality, cost-effective, and accountability using an increasingly diverse vendor pool and range of products and services.

DA's Integrated Acquisition System is in "steady state" and processes up to \$2 billion in procurements using this system. USDA will continue to be a leader in the Federal Government in achieving small business program contracting goals. DA will promote energy efficiency and procurement of biofuels, as well as other E.O. 13423 requirements such as energy conservation and green procurement by participating on the USDA Sustainable Operations Council's working groups, issuing policy and guidance, and carrying out awareness and outreach activities. To increase biofuels usage, DA will identify specific geographic locations that have both a significant number of E85 fleet vehicles and accessible E85 fueling sites. Working with agency fleet personnel, DA will initiate a targeted educational, promotional, and tracking campaign to significantly increase E85 use at those locations.

Strategic Objective 3: Promote the efficient and economical use of USDA's resources to support customers, promote organizational productivity and ensure accountability.

DA will focus its program improvement efforts on the services which are most important to the customers, reduce or eliminate services that do not meet customer needs, meet timeliness requirements for audit compliance and FOIA, support USDA's goal to improve financial operations, and ensure IT investments are

adequately analyzed and properly approved. DA will support USDA's participation in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams that are providing policy advice and technical assistance to reconstruction efforts in the rural areas of Afghanistan and Iraq.

The USDA Real Property Asset Management Program will be evaluated on a quarterly basis to ensure adherence to E.O. 13327, Federal Real Property Asset Management. DA will continue to host monthly Real Property Council/Real Property Working Group meetings to develop and/or update guidance, policies and procedures to facilitate the success of USDA's asset management program, with special emphasis on a complete and accurate inventory, disposal of unneeded Federal properties, integrated energy management report for real property assets, planning for sustainable design and construction of new or updated assets, management of the leasing program, and establishment of measureable baselines and targets for acquisition, utilization, leasing, and disposal of real property assets.

Strategic Objective 4: Provide the policies, technical guidance, and operating environment that enhance the safety and security of USDA personnel, information and facilities, and the continuity of its vital programs.

DA's Continuity of Operations Program (COOP) staff will continue reviewing agency and staff office COOP programs to enhance USDA's ability to execute and sustain operations during a COOP event. An expanded contingency exercise will be conducted to ensure USDA preparedness in the event of a COOP activation. DA will conduct physical security assessments of the USDA agencies COOP Level 4 Emergency Relocation Facilities as agency funding and resources allow. DA will ensure that the USDA Crisis Action Team is trained in the Enterprise Contingency Program Planning System, that the system has up-to-date COOP data, and that it can track emergency actions effectively. Acquisition of new Intel communications capabilities will allow USDA to communicate securely with other Federal Departments and agencies during emergency events.

Strategic Objective 5: Provide formal adjudicative support.

The Office of Administrative Law Judges and the Judicial Officer will continue administrative law activities in support of USDA programs. These activities involve hearing cases, conducting rulemaking proceedings, and issuing decisions and rulings.

Summary of Budget and Performance Key Performance Outcomes and Measures

Goal 1: Provide USDA leadership with the administrative tools, services, infrastructure, and policy framework to support their public service mission.

Key Outcome 1: USDA programs will be staffed with personnel trained to meet program objectives through the use of effective, timely and uniform human resources. USDA develops and promulgates USDA-wide policy on all human resources functional areas; spearheads new Department-wide initiatives such as leadership succession and workforce planning, and occupational competency assessments; provides Department-wide direction, guidance, and compliance relating to employee and labor relations, grievance appeals, misconduct, performance management, and Senior Executive Service; develops and executes accountability and audit systems; and provides oversight to major enterprise IT deployments such as electronic official personnel folder, EmpowHR, and USDA Time and Attendance System(s) affecting over 100,000 employees that will reap major financial, accountability, and efficiency benefits for all of USDA. USDA will continue to work closely with mission area personnel officers in identifying systematic and mission-centric approaches to program development to ensure the adoption and seamless implementation of Department-wide HR strategies. Employees will be trained and held accountable for compliance with Government Standards of Conduct.

Key Outcome 2: Mechanisms will be established to provide advantageous pricing for selected products and services and a new Integrated Acquisitions System will be fully deployed. Participation of small and

disadvantaged businesses will increase. USDA vehicle fleet will reduce petroleum use and biobased products will be promoted.

Key Outcome 3: Personal property will be integrated into the Corporate Property Automated Information System (CPAIS) during the third quarter of FY 2009. The real property component was fully implemented in May 2004. CPAIS will be utilized to meet the needs of several Executive Orders and the Energy Policy Act of 2005, including the alternative fuel vehicle reporting requirements, energy conservation and green procurement, asset capital improvements and disposals.

Key Outcome 4: USDA will have a safe, secure, and productive work environment nationwide. Security information will be handled in the correct manner and USDA personnel will have the appropriate level of security clearances. USDA Continuity of Operations plans will be reviewed and regularly updated.

Key Outcome 5: USDA Administrative law proceedings will be handled quickly and fairly.

Key Performance Measures:

- Performance Measure 1.1 Progress in implementing USDA Enterprise Human Resources Information System.
- Performance Measure 1.2 Improvement in Headquarters human resources services.
- Performance Measure 4.1 Percent compliance with required standards for classifying, declassifying, and safeguarding National security information and facilities.
- Performance Measure 4.2 Percent of National Continuity Policy Implementation.

Key Performance Targets:

<u>Performance Measure</u>	<u>2005 Actual</u>	<u>2006 Actual</u>	<u>2007 Actual</u>	<u>2008 Actual</u>	<u>2009 Target</u>	<u>2010 Target</u>
Performance Measure 1.1: Progress in implementing USDA Enterprise Human Resources Information System. a. Units	Established Staff Unit	Set Milestones	Developed Business Case	Request for Proposal	Reassess Options	Study Proposals
Performance Measure 1.2: Improvement of Headquarters human resources services. a. Units	N/A	Set Baseline Part I	Set Baseline Part II	5%	5%	5%
Performance Measure 4.1: Percent compliance with required standards for classifying, declassifying, & safeguarding National security information & facilities. a. Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	70%	80%	90%
Performance Measure 4.2: Percent National Continuity Policy Implementation. a. Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	Set Baseline	30%	70%

Departmental Administration
Full Cost by Agency Strategic Objective

Program Items	Dollars in thousands		
	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Strategic Goal 1: Ensure USDA has a diverse, ethical, results-oriented workforce able to meet mission priorities and work cooperatively with USDA partners and the private sector.			
Salaries & Benefits	\$7,534	\$10,384	\$10,829
Administrative Costs (Direct)	1,399	1,695	1,449
Human Capital Initiative	0	0	1,000
Total Costs	8,933	12,079	13,278
FTEs	63	62	67
Performance Measure: Improvement of Headquarters human resources services.			
BY Performance	5%	5%	5%
Strategic Goal 2: Ensure USDA has a trained acquisition workforce with the procurement policies and systems needed to ensure responsiveness, high quality, cost-effectiveness, and accountability using an increasingly diverse vendor pool and range of products.			
Salaries & Benefits	\$3,866	\$4,246	\$4,351
Administrative Costs (Direct)	929	913	911
Total Costs	4,795	5,159	5,262
FTEs	29	29	29
Performance Measure: Percent compliance with Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program.			
BY Performance	N/A	25%	100%
Strategic Goal 3: Promote the efficient and economical use of USDA's resources to support customers, promote organizational productivity and ensure accountability.			
Salaries & Benefits	\$3,953	\$4,370	\$4,395
Administrative Costs (Direct)	1,033	1,775	1,857
Asset Management Initiative	0	0	14,000
Total Costs	4,986	6,145	20,252
FTEs	34	34	84
Performance Measure: Percent development of the USDA Real Property Asset Mgmt Plan & percent expanded functionality of CPAIS.			
BY Performance	85%	100%	100%
Strategic Goal 4: Provide the policies, technical guidance, and operating environment that enhance the safety and security of USDA personnel, information and facilities, and the continuity of its vital programs and operations.			
Salaries & Benefits	\$1,582	\$1,651	\$1,669
Administrative Costs (Direct)	501	564	588
Total Costs	2,083	2,215	2,257
FTEs	12	12	12
Performance Measure: Percent National Continuity Policy Implementation.			
BY Performance	Set Baseline	30%	70%
Strategic Goal 5: Provide formal adjudicative support.			
Salaries & Benefits	\$1,783	\$1,963	\$2,030
Administrative Costs (Direct)	274	260	240
Total Costs	2,057	2,223	2,270
FTEs	14	16	16
Performance Measure: Number of Admin. Law Cases disposed.			
BY Performance	238	238	238
Unit Cost	\$9	\$9	\$10
Total for All Strategic Goals	\$22,854	\$27,821	\$43,319
FTEs	152	153	208

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

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

Provided below is a list of those committees subject to this spending limitation and their funding levels for fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

USDA ADVISORY COMMITTEES		
Policy Area and Committee Title	2008 Actual	2009 Estimate
FOOD, NUTRITION, AND CONSUMER SERVICES:		
National Advisory Council on Maternal, Infant and Fetal Nutrition	\$48,200	\$50,000
FY 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.....	275,000	285,000
FOOD SAFETY:		
National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection	54,447	67,000
National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods	40,000	40,000
RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS:		
Forestry Research Advisory Council	25,573	65,000
Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21 st Century Agriculture.....	268,895	286,000
Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics	35,000	35,000
USDA/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities	18,467	23,000
MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS:		
Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases	10,943	28,000
General Conference Committee on the National Poultry Improvement Plan.....	20,999	10,000
National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee	23,979	24,000
National Organic Standards Board	190,000	190,000
Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee	45,101	70,000
Federal Grain Inspection Advisory Committee	39,949	45,000
FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES:		
Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade	3,000	14,000
Ag. Tech. Adv. Comm. For Trade in:		
Animals & Animal Products.....	7,646	14,000
Fruits and Vegetables	7,646	14,000
Grains, Feed, and Oilseeds	7,646	14,000

USDA ADVISORY COMMITTEES		
USDA ADVISORY COMMITTEES		
Policy Area and Committee Title	2008 Actual	2009 Estimate
Sweeteners and Sweetener Products.....	7,646	14,000
Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts, and Planting Seeds.....	7,646	14,000
Processed Foods	7,646	14,000
Advisory Committee on Emerging Markets	10,731	25,000
Edward R. Madigan Agricultural Export Excellence Award Board	15,000	0
Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers.....	69,695	80,000
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT:		
Task Force on Agricultural Air Quality Research	137,000	150,000
Total Advisory Committees	1,377,855	1,571,000
Contingencies/Reserve	422,145	229,000
TOTAL, ADVISORY COMMITTEES LIMITATION.....	1,800,000	1,800,000

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

STATUS OF PROGRAM

From fiscal year (FY) 1983 through FY 1996, a central appropriation provided for direction and financial support of all authorized USDA Advisory Committee activities other than those included in the Forest Service and those financed from user fees. Beginning in FY 1997, language in the General Provisions of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act permits agencies funded in the Act to finance the activities of selected committees that advise them from their own funds, subject to a Department-wide limitation on expenditures for those committees. These Explanatory Notes provide information on the activities of committees during FY 2008 and planned activities for FY 2009.

FOOD, NUTRITION, AND CONSUMER SERVICES:National Advisory Council on Maternal, Infant and Fetal Nutrition

The Council studies the operation of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and related programs such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and makes recommendations to the programs for how they may be improved as deemed appropriate. The Council is composed of 24 members and includes representatives of Federal, State and local governments, the medical field, industry, WIC and CSFP parent participants, and advocacy groups.

The Council met in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia on July 22-24, 2008. A total of 25 individuals attended the meeting, including 12 Council members, the general public, and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) staff. The Council was briefed by FNS staff on current issues pertaining to WIC and CSFP. The Council worked on recommendations for WIC and CSFP.

FY 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee

Public law directs the Secretaries of the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services to issue jointly at least every five years a report entitled Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA). The USDA has the lead for managing the development of the 2010 DGA. The thirteen member 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) was appointed by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services. Nominations were solicited through the publication of a Federal Register notice that outlined specific specialty areas, which included but were not limited to, the prevention of chronic diseases (e.g., cancer, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and osteoporosis), energy balance (including physical activity), epidemiology, food safety and technology, general medicine, gerontology, nutrient bioavailability, nutrition biochemistry and physiology, nutrition education, pediatrics, public health, and evidence review methodology. The DGAC was established for the single, time-limited task of reviewing the current (2005) edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in order to determine if, on the basis of current scientific and medical knowledge, revision was warranted.

The first DGAC meeting was held October 30 and 31, 2008. At this meeting, smaller Subcommittees were formed so that Committee members with expertise in particular areas could maximize their reviews of the most current evidence-based scientific literature on diet-related topics, e.g., nutrient adequacy and physical activity, between public meetings. Scientific literature on the topics can be obtained in many ways, including USDA's Nutrition Evidence Library. These Subcommittees will conduct evidence-based reviews of nutrition and medical science related to diet and physical activity in order to promote health and reduce chronic disease risk. The next meeting is scheduled for January 29 and 30, 2009.

FOOD SAFETY:

National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI)

Congress established the NACMPI in 1971 under authority of the Federal Meat and Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act. Both acts require the Secretary of Agriculture to consult with an advisory committee before issuing product standards and labeling changes or any matters affecting Federal and State program activities.

The current charter was approved on July 25, 2007 and will expire on July 24, 2009. The agency published a Federal Register Notice on September 12, 2006 (Docket No. FSIS-2006-0019) requesting nominations for membership on the Committee. Seventy-two applications were received and reviewed. Seventeen Committee members were selected to serve a 2-year term which will also expire on April 9, 2009. The composition of the Committee for this term is more diverse than in past years and includes members representing the Hispanic, African American, and Native American communities.

The Committee met on February 5-6, 2008. The Committee reviewed and discussed the planned public health-based slaughter inspection system for young chickens and how a similar approach could be used for inspection in processing and other slaughter establishments. Both issues will be presented to the full Committee. The Committee broke up into Subcommittees to deliberate on these issues and provided the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) with reports of their recommendations and suggestions.

The Committee also held a meeting on August 27-28, 2008. The Committee reviewed and discussed international equivalence relating to audits associated with determinations of a country's status, equivalence criteria, and the reinspection system for imported products. The issues were presented to the full Committee. The Committee broke up into Subcommittees to deliberate on these issues and provided FSIS with reports of their recommendations and suggestions.

Information about the NACMPI, meeting transcripts, and reports can be viewed on the FSIS Web site at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About_FSIS/NACMPI/index.asp.

National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF)

The NACMCF was established under Departmental Regulation 1043-28, and is co-sponsored by FSIS, the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Department of the Defense Veterinary Service Activity. The NACMCF was re-chartered on June 5, 2008 for a two-year term. The current NACMCF membership term runs through March 23, 2009. FSIS has solicited nominations for the 2009-2011 NACMCF membership term and appointments to this Committee will be made by the Secretary of Agriculture. The Committee consists of 30 members.

The activities of NACMCF are carried out, in part by Subcommittees that are focused on specific areas being considered by the full Committee. During FY 2008, NACMCF held one plenary meeting on September 26, 2008 in Washington, DC; the work of the two active Subcommittees was discussed. These groups include the Subcommittee on Determination of the most Appropriate Technologies for the FSIS to Adopt in Performing Routine and Baseline Microbiological Analyses and the Subcommittee on Parameters for Inoculated Pack/Challenge Protocols.

The NACMCF held a number of Subcommittee meetings in Washington, D.C. during FY 2008. During FY 2008 one past final report of the Committee, "Response to the Questions Posed by the Food and Drug Administration and the National Marine Fisheries Service Regarding Determination of Cooking Parameters for Safe Seafood for Consumers" was published in the Journal of Food Protection and posted on the FSIS Web site. A second past final report, "Assessment of Food as a Source of Exposure to Mycobacterium avium subspecies paratuberculosis (MAP)" is being formatted for publication. Ongoing Subcommittee work includes two issues: determination of the

most appropriate technologies for the FSIS to adopt in performing routine and baseline microbiological analyses, and parameters for inoculated pack/challenge protocols.

Upcoming work charges for this Committee include the topics of control strategies for reducing foodborne norovirus infections and the study of microbiological criteria as indicators of process control or insanitary conditions.

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

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS:

Forestry Research Advisory Council (FRAC)

The FRAC was authorized for the purpose of providing the Secretary of Agriculture with recommendations and advice on regional and national planning for forestry research supported by the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program administered by the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The Council also provides advice related to the Forest Service Research Program, authorized by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Act of 1978. The Council is comprised of up to 20 members appointed by the Secretary and drawn from Federal, State, university, industry, and non-governmental organizations.

For 2008, FRAC provided the Secretary with the following recommendations:

FRAC recognizes that the Agriculture and Food Research Institute (AFRI), formerly the National Research Initiative has made significant contributions to the science of natural resource management. In the past year, between \$6 and \$16 million was awarded to fund grant proposals pertinent to forest and natural resource science. However, upon examining the awards list, FRAC notes a lack of a coherent, coordinated research strategy to address pressing issues. One issue of particular importance is the decline of sustainable forest productivity research capacity, given the likely increased demand for fiber and information on environmental impacts associated with the production of forest-based fuels and other bio-products. An integrated approach would be more effective in addressing this and other forest science issues. FRAC recommend that the AFRI form an Integrated Natural Resource Management Project for this purpose. Stakeholders for this project can be drawn from a number of sources, such as the American Forest & Paper Association, National Association of University Forest Resource Programs, National Association of State Foresters, and State and regional organizations concerned with the potential economic opportunities and environmental impacts associated with increased fiber utilization for forest-based biofuels and other bio-based products. These stakeholder groups should be enlisted to identify a qualified pool of scientists to review requests for applications (RFAs) and make up proposal pre-screening and scientific review panels.

FRAC, through its Applied Research Partnerships, reviewed several research initiatives involving partnerships among Federal, State, private and non-governmental organizations scientists. Partnerships can result in more effective delivery, relevance, and timeliness of science findings, as well as increased application of research results to forest planning and management. Broad-based partnerships, when established at the earliest project planning stages, facilitate participation of forest managers and other stakeholders in the development and prioritization of research questions. Such an approach builds increased ownership of the research and results among all parties. We recommend that USDA Forest Service, Rural Development, and NIFA undertake a study of how to increase the emphasis on partnership formation to influence the successful application of research results. We believe that the effectiveness of the competitive grant component of Federal research can be greatly enhanced by improving our understanding of successful models of stakeholder involvement in all stages of the scientific process.

Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture (AC21)

The AC21 was established by the Secretary to examine the long-term impacts of biotechnology on the U.S. food and agriculture system and USDA, and provide guidance to USDA on pressing individual issues, identified by the Office of the Secretary, related to the application of biotechnology in agriculture.

The AC21 currently has 20 members, including representatives from academia, biotechnology providers, food manufacturers, the grain trade, farmers, the legal profession, and both environmental and consumer organizations, plus ex officio members from five government agencies and departments and a representative from State Departments of Agriculture. The Committee met four times in FY 2008. The AC21 completed a paper entitled: "What issues should USDA consider regarding coexistence among diverse agricultural systems in a dynamic, evolving, and complex marketplace?" and presented it to the Office of the Secretary at its March 5-6, 2008, plenary meeting. The Committee is nearing completion of another paper relating to government oversight of transgenic animals, focusing on food animals for food and non-food issues. The precise charge is the following: "Genetically engineered (GE) food animals are being developed in the U.S. and abroad for food and non-food uses. What regulatory issues should the U.S. government consider with regard to the potential development and commercialization of these animals and the products produced from them? Since USDA's legal authorities extend beyond regulation to research, education and marketing, what issues pertaining to GE animals will USDA need to consider when exercising these authorities? How might the views of different stakeholders be obtained and considered?"

The current Committee Charter is currently undergoing the renewal process. In accordance with that Charter, which established a yearly process for requesting nominations for a portion of the Committee membership, a Federal Register notice announcing a request for nominations for the Committee was published on November 21, 2008. The Secretary has decided that a pool of potential nominees should be collected through that process but that selection of new Committee members, including a new Chair, await the arrival of the incoming Administration.

Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics

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

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

The Committee is composed of 25 members with professional knowledge regarding the data needs of the food, fiber and rural sector. It provides a direct link with the major agricultural organizations and farm groups which could not be as effectively or efficiently obtained from any other source. The Committee is the primary forum for reconciling the divergent data needs between data user and provider groups. It is also instrumental in helping NASS provide the maximum value from their statistics, within available funding, and to continually improve its products and services.

One meeting was held in Louisville, Kentucky on February 25-27, 2008. The meeting focus was to advise NASS on the follow-on surveys for the 2007 Census of Agriculture; and offer suggestions on the NASS on-going survey program.

The first day was devoted to the Census of Agriculture and planned follow-on activities. It also included a tour of the National Processing Center, a Department of Commerce facility which NASS contracts for mailing and data capture. Bob Bass, Director of the Census Survey Division, discussed electronic data reporting and how this was the first year that NASS allowed producers to complete their Census report over the Web.

The second day included an update on the Data Enclave, which was presented by representatives of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). NORC is an institution that can manage access to data needs of statistical agencies. They discussed how they are maintaining confidentiality and data management. NASS provides Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) data to NORC and the University Researchers that contact NASS to do research with ARMS data in turn work with NORC. There were also topics on USDA Data Center Consolidation Proposal, Status of NASS Programs, Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey, Energy Survey, Agricultural Resource Management Survey Subcommittee Working Group, and County Estimates.

For more information on the proceedings of the meeting, please see the following Web site:
http://www.nass.usda.gov/About_NASS/Advisory_Committee_on_Agriculture_Statistics/index.asp.

The Committee will next meet in Washington, DC on February 23-25, 2009. The purpose of this meeting is to advise NASS on the 2012 Census of Agriculture data needs and offer suggestions on the on-going NASS survey program.

USDA/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

The Secretary of Agriculture signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with HACU, to ensure that the Hispanic community equitably participates in USDA education and employment programs, resources, and services. The Secretary of Agriculture appointed a national body, the Leadership Group, to ensure the fulfillment of the objectives set forth in the MOU. The Leadership Group, consisting of 12 members, serves as the lead advisory group to the Secretary, on issues relating to Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Hispanic higher education.

The USDA-HACU Leadership Group has focused on the improvement of representation of Hispanics in the USDA workforce through increasing participation of Hispanic Americans, Hispanic-serving school districts, HSIs, and other educational institutions in USDA employment, education programs, and services. Seeking to be a responsive driving force behind the President's Hispanic Nine-Point Plan, and in promoting successful recruitment, retention and promotion practices, the Leadership Group recommends strategies, and identifies initiatives and mechanisms to successfully implement a strategic human capital approach to improve Hispanic representation.

The HACU National Internship Program, Public Service Leaders Scholarship Program, the E. (Kika) de la Garza Fellowship Program, and the newly established ambassador programs, have been utilized to close the academic achievement gap among Hispanic Americans, while engaging the Hispanic community with Federal employment opportunities.

The Leadership Group met April 11, 2008 in Washington, D.C. and October 18, 2008 in Denver, CO to discuss:

- The Farm Bill and Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs);
- The 2008 Food, Conservation and Energy Act;
- Effectively marketing USDA as an employer of choice to students;
- Transitioning to a new Administration;
- Creating partnerships to engage Hispanics and minorities in science related fields;
- Leveraging resources by creating effective educational partnerships, especially to promote science to students;
- Program objectives for the HSI National Program;
- Objectives and outcomes of the USDA-HSI Grants Program; and
- Creating new partnerships with Hispanic Serving School Districts.

A strategic plan has been developed for the USDA-HSI National Program covering each of the five geographic regions covered by the USDA-HSI liaison officers. The strategic plan is in concert with the USDA Strategic Plan and USDA Human Capital Plan. The performance plans of each staff member of the HSI National Program are linked to these Departmental plans and identify individual goals and targets. Customers are surveyed and results are measured to determine that activities are producing desired results and program targets are met. Internal goals have been set to ensure that the program meets the program objectives identified above.

MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS:

National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee

The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee (NWSAC) advises the Secretary on policies, issues, and research needs to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS) Program. The 20 members represent a broad range of agricultural, environmental, and conservation groups, academia, and other interest groups.

The Committee met August 5-7, 2008, in Riverdale, Maryland. The discussion topics included: WS programmatic safety review, international capacity building, North American Rabies Management Plan, WS Disease Surveillance and Rabies programs, long-term improvement in reducing wildlife damage due to the efforts of WS, aerial operations program, best management practices for trapping, development of a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Pest Management Association, the expansion of invasive species and wildlife disease work, and emergency management response.

The Committee passed 15 recommendations for the Secretary of Agriculture to consider:

- Confer with the Secretary of the Interior to obtain any proposed plans for revised National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents on the management of double-crested cormorants, the issuance of new deprecation orders or extensions of existing orders, the endorsement of international management of double-crested cormorants, and WS' role in these plans;
- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 wild bird surveillance funding remains sufficient to maintain the early detection activities and capabilities of WS, State, and Tribal cooperators;
- WS' unique expertise in international capacity building on behalf of the USDA continues to be considered a critical outreach responsibility of WS;
- Continue to expedite WS investigation, research and field trials of oral rabies vaccines (ORVs) that are currently approved by Canada and/or the European Union. NWSAC further recommended the Secretary assist making these ORV options available in a timely manner to the WS Rabies Management Program to enhance and improve rabies management and emergency response;
- WS should make their expertise available to First Nations, Alaskan and other Native communities for the protection of traditional cultural and subsistence agriculture, livestock and wildlife food resources, including wolf management;
- Sustain research directed toward methodologies of disease control and population reduction of feral swine;
- Seek new Federal funding for additional coordinators for airport safety;
- Reaffirm support for sustained funding for research and management efforts to prevent establishment of, reduce, and where possible, eliminate injurious, vertebrate invasive species that negatively impact wildlife, aquaculture, agriculture, forestry and human health;
- Seek new funds to continue and enhance the WS Research Program to develop new tools and methodologies to limit adverse effects of increasing populations of depredating wildlife species on aquaculture, agriculture, forestry and human health;
- Seek new funding to support the replacement of 25 percent of all traps not meeting the Best Management Practices (BMP) standards each of the next four years to expeditiously achieve the goals of the BMP: animal welfare, efficiency, selectivity, practicality, and safety;
- Direct WS to prioritize goals and operations used to control wildlife depredation of aquaculture, agriculture, forestry and safeguarding public health and safety. NWSAC further recommends the Secretary support future budget initiatives and mandates for WS without redirection of existing resources and vigorously resist any attempts to reduce the agency's budget recommendations or force redirections, which do not contain new funding;
- Support the WS initiative to secure the planning and construction of an approximate 25,000 sq. ft. Biosafety Level 3 laboratory and diagnostics facility at the National Wildlife Research Center. Additional needs after construction include adequate increases in research staff to develop sampling and diagnostic research methods

for wildlife disease surveillance that will allow WS to better address disease risks and implement control measures at the wildlife, agriculture and human health interface, and support emergency diagnostic and surge capacity needs;

- Request WS to create educational materials regarding impact on Wildlife Disease and Rabies Management Programs posed by intentional importation and human translocation of wildlife, feral dogs and cats;
- Seek new funding from Congress to add new positions within the agency charged with being a resource on the use of livestock guarding animals as a non-lethal method of livestock protection; and
- Continue to support the use of approved toxicants for predator control, which are used by the WS Research Program.

General Conference Committee of the National Poultry Improvement Plan

The purpose of the General Conference Committee of the National Poultry Improvement Plan Committee, consisting of seven members, is to maintain and ensure industry involvement in the advice to Federal administration in matters pertaining to poultry health and to the administration of the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP). The Committee represents cooperating State agencies and poultry industry members and serves as a liaison between the poultry industry members as well as between the poultry industry and the USDA on matters pertaining to poultry health.

The General Conference Committee (GCC) convened the official State delegates to the 39th Biennial Conference of the NPIP, June 4-7, 2008, in Portland, Maine. The GCC held a pre-conference meeting and met jointly with the NPIP Technical Committee prior to the opening session of the Conference. The following topics were covered during the meeting:

- The availability of avian Mycoplasma testing reagents and antigens and the use of Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay as a confirmatory assay for plate tests;
- Notifiable Avian Influenza (AI);
- Molecular assay validation;
- An overview of the progress and development of administrative rulemaking relative to compartmentalization within APHIS;
- The proposal approved by the State delegates of the 38th Biennial Conference held in Portland, Oregon, July, 2006, that would establish a U.S. compartmentalized classification for primary breeders as a means to protect this segment from export restrictions as a result of notifiable AI and Canada's compartmentalization Pilot Project.
- The status of the NPIP "on-line" Web-based database was discussed;
- Salmonella enteritidis and the need for research in detection methods; and
- A proposal was made for the establishment of an official program for Mycoplasma Iowae for primary turkey breeding flocks.

The GCC then assisted in conducting the 39th Biennial Conference of the NPIP. The GCC passed the following resolutions: 1) avian Mycoplasma testing issues, 2) Salmonella enteritidis research needs, 3) Compartmentalization of notifiable AI for primary breeders, and 4) Sufficient funding for surveillance and indemnity of the NPIP Low Pathogenicity AI Program.

Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases

The Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases (FAPD) Committee advises the Secretary on issues regarding the prevention, suppression, control, and/or eradication of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease or other destructive foreign animal diseases should such a disease enter the United States. Committee duties involve advising and counseling on policy and regulatory action with regard to dealing with an outbreak, changing practices in the

production and marketing of animals, the importation of animals and animal products, and the handling and treatment of unusual or suspicious animal or poultry problems.

The Committee of 17 members did not meet in FY 2008 due to scheduling conflicts.

National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)

The NOSB was established to provide recommendations to the Secretary on implementing the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, which authorizes a National Organic Program (NOP) for the production and handling of organically produced foods. The NOSB is composed of four farmers/growers, two handlers/processors, one retailer, one scientist, three consumer/public interest advocates, three environmentalists, and one certifying agent. Members come from all four U.S. regions and serve rotating 5 year terms.

The NOSB has assisted in the development of the NOP regulations, including the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List). They have reviewed and continue reviewing substances for use in organic production and advise the Secretary on different aspects of implementing the NOP.

There were no vacancies to fill on the NOSB in FY 2009, so there was no solicitation for candidates in FY 2008. The terms of 5 NOSB members will expire January 23, 2010: one environmentalist, two farmers, one handler, and one retailer. Consequently, the Secretary will need to process those appointments during FY 2009. The NOP will begin seeking candidates for nomination to the NOSB in the early spring of 2009 from all United States organic producers and handlers, and other organizations representing the organic industry and community. The appointed persons will begin their service on January 24, 2010.

In FY 2008, at the November 2007 and May 2008 public meetings, the NOSB completed the remaining work related to the sunset review of substances on the National List (13 substances that were set to expire on November 4, 2008). The NOSB reviewed, evaluated, and recommended that the Secretary renew all 13 of the exemptions and prohibitions on the National List. The NOSB also extended the expiration of one substance to October 2010. The dockets for the National List materials were successfully moved through the rulemaking process to meet their respective sunset and expiration deadlines. In addition, the NOSB reviewed, evaluated, and recommended the addition of 3 materials petitioned for listing on the National List CFR §205.601 for use in crops, 1 material petitioned for listing on CFR §205.603 for use in livestock, 1 material petitioned for listing on CFR §205.605 as a nonsynthetic for use in handling, and 4 materials petitioned for listing in CFR §205.606 as commercially unavailable as organic or whose organic supply is inconsistent and fragile. Dockets for the National List materials are moving through the rulemaking process now as appropriate.

At the November 2007 NOSB and May 2008 public meetings, the NOSB held a one-day Organic Aquaculture Symposium and invited 12 leading scientific and environmental experts to address the range of scientific information regarding the use and management of marine fish meal and oil and open cage net pens. This was held to help the NOSB better understand the controversial proposals to allow up to 25 percent of the fish feed be sourced from wild-caught fish meal and oil for a transitional period to allow the nascent industry to start and whether to allow open cage net pens in oceans at all. Other recommendations included: practices and considerations for certification of crops for research, as well criteria for considering temporary research variances by certified operations engaged in research; guidance to assist certifying agents (ACAs) in evaluating commercial availability claims by certified handlers regarding the use of non-organic agricultural ingredients at less than 5 percent in processed organic products; and standardized certificates used by ACAs.

During FY 2009, the NOSB will review, evaluate, and make recommendations on the outstanding issues of fish feed, open cage net pens, the origin of aquatic animals, and proposed standards for bivalves and mollusks. The NOSB also plans to complete its review and to make recommendations regarding the proposed standards made by the Pet Food Task Force for organic pet food. As always, the NOSB will continue its review and evaluation of petitioned and sunseting substances to determine whether such substances should be included or

continued for use in organic production and handling. The NOSB has held one public meeting in November 2008 in Washington, D.C., and is scheduling a second public meeting for May 2009.

Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee

Under four 2-year charters that spanned 2001 to 2009, the Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee met multiple times to fulfill its purpose of providing recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture on ways the USDA can tailor its programs to better meet the industry's needs. Meetings took place on February 7-8, 2008 and September 8, 2008, both in the Washington, D.C. area.

In May 2007, Secretary Johanns re-charted the Committee for 2 more years. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) subsequently asked industry for nominations of individuals to be on the Committee, received nominations for 56 individuals, and then, once USDA selected 25 individuals representing diverse interests in the produce industry, AMS conducted its first meeting under the new charter in January 2007. In addition to scheduling the next and final meeting under the current charter for February 24-25, 2009, AMS has prepared a re-charter package that is currently in USDA approval channels. If approved by the Secretary, the Committee will exist for another two years and AMS will request nominations of industry members to be on the Committee.

Since its inception, the Committee has developed 56 recommendations related to issues such as grading and certification services, marketing orders, Market News, crop insurance, labor and immigration, pesticides, and nutrition. Throughout its existence, the Committee has placed particular emphasis in developing ways to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in USDA's National School Lunch Program.

Federal Grain Inspection Advisory Committee

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) Grain Inspection Advisory Committee was established under Section 20 of the United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA) on September 29, 1981. The Committee is charged with advising the GIPSA Administrator on implementing the USGSA and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, or, more simply, on implementing the agency's grain inspection and weighing programs. The Committee is comprised of 15 members and 15 alternates who represent all segments of the U.S. grain industry, including producers, processors, handlers, exporters, grain inspection agencies, and scientists related to the policies in Section 20 of USGSA (7 U.S.C. 74).

The Committee advises GIPSA on various important issues affecting agency operations and the official grain inspection and weighing system. In FY 2008, the Committee met on November 28-29, 2007, in Denver, Colorado, and May 13-14, 2008, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. At the November meeting, the Committee addressed the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) customer survey, agency finances, inspection and weighing fees, an overview of FGIS' international programs, and an overview of soybean and ethanol standards. At the May meeting the Committee addressed FGIS initiatives-FGISonline, which is a system to input all certificates on line instead of paper copies, international affairs activities, inspector training, and agency finances.

At these meetings, the Committee offered the Administrator advice and recommendations for addressing these issues and others that affect service delivery.

The Committee met in Kansas City, Missouri in December 2008. The following topics were discussed: Review of 2008 Operations: Domestic and Export Operations; International Trade and Outreach Issues; FGIS Technical Training Programs; Video Railcar Stowage Exams; Sorghum Odor Line Evaluation; Overview of Research Activities; Use of Contractors for Export Services: Pilot Project Summary and Next Steps; Quality Management Program for the Official System; and Agency Financial Update.

FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES:

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

Pursuant to Departmental Regulation 1042-68, USDA currently administers the APAC and six ATACs: (1) Animals and Animal Products; (2) Fruits and Vegetables; (3) Grains, Feed, and Oilseeds; (4) Sweeteners and Sweetener Products; (5) Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts, and Planting Seeds; and (6) Processed Foods. The APAC and ATACs were re-chartered in May of 2007 for four years. Appointment and re-appointment of members was completed early in FY 2008.

Congress established these Committees in 1974 to ensure that trade policy and trade negotiations objectives adequately reflect private sector U.S. commercial and economic interests. The Committees provide the Secretary of Agriculture and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) information and advice on negotiating objectives, bargaining positions and other matters related to the development, implementation, and administration of U.S. agricultural trade policy. The members on the APAC and on the ATACs are important to advancing the Administration's aggressive trade agenda to liberalize agricultural trade, expand access for U.S. food and agricultural products in overseas markets, and reduce unfair competition.

A balanced representation is sought for the Committees, but there is no legal requirement stating that Committee membership is composed of exact numbers from each sector of an industry. Representation on the re-chartered Committees is similar to the previous Committees. On those Committees, the representation is as follows: 38 members on the APAC, 31 members on the Animals and Animal Products ATAC, 31 members on the Fruit and Vegetables ATAC, 35 members on the Grains, Feed and Oilseeds ATAC, 25 members on the Sweeteners ATAC, 24 members on the Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts, and Planting Seeds ATAC, and 33 members on the Processed Foods ATAC.

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

The APAC and the ATACs are jointly chartered by the USDA and the USTR. The Committees provide a formal mechanism to ensure liaison between the Federal Government and private sector regarding international agricultural trade matters. The APAC provides policy advice, while the ATACs provide detailed commodity technical advice.

During FY 2008, the APAC and six ATACs each met once. All meetings were held in Washington, D.C. The Committees discussed the status of Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and bilateral and regional trade agreements with the Panama, Central America and the Dominican Republic, and South Korea. Members also provided advice on the negotiations with several countries in the process of acceding to the WTO. During the meetings, Committee members provided formal recommendations in the form of "resolutions" and numerous recommendations orally. The recommendations in all cases are fully considered by USTR and USDA negotiators in the course of pursuing free trade agreements, WTO accessions and resolving trade disputes. A full report of Committee activities is available in the Federal Advisory Committee Act database at <http://www.fido.gov/facadatabase/default.asp>.

The Administration continues to receive crucial advice from the Advisory Committees on a variety of issues. The APAC and ATACs will be called upon frequently in FY 2009 for issues related to the WTO DDA negotiations, WTO Accession negotiations with several countries, ongoing WTO agreement implementation and monitoring issues, trade issues with China, Mexico, and other nations; sanitary and phytosanitary access issues for U.S. products, and continuing regional and bilateral agreements.

Advisory Committee on Emerging Markets

The Advisory Committee on Emerging Markets (EMPAC) is composed of representatives from the private sector experienced in agribusiness and management, with interest and/or experience in exports and similar overseas operations. The primary mission of the Committee is to make recommendations on policies and programs, which will enhance agricultural exports to emerging markets through the use of Emerging Markets Program (EMP) authority. Specifically, Committee members review, from a business perspective, qualified proposals submitted to the program for funding assistance, principally from the private sector. This review is done prior to obtaining policy level approval and funding commitments from the agency. Committee reviews of proposals balance private sector perspectives with government views, an important consideration since the program emphasizes involvement by private industry.

Mandated by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990, as amended, the members operate under a Federal charter and are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture for 2-year terms.

The Committee consists of 18 members from both private industry and academia representing a cross-section of the agricultural industry, geographic and ethnic diversity. Sectoral expertise among members encompasses fields such as agricultural policy and economics; banking and finance; marketing; production and processing of food and feed; livestock and genetics; farm cooperatives and agribusiness management; transport, storage and handling, among others. The Committee's charter expired on October 25, 2008. The reauthorization process for the Advisory Committee is underway in the Department.

Frequency of meetings varies, depending upon the issues to be considered and the range and importance of activities under consideration by the Foreign Agricultural Service at any given time. The Committee last convened on September 10, 2008, in Washington, D.C. and reviewed applications to the EMP from the private sector in FY 2009. EMP funds of approximately \$12,000 per year are used to reimburse the costs of the EMPAC travel expenses. The Committee's recommendations play an important role in the agency's funding decisions.

Edward R. Madigan Agricultural Export Excellence Award Board

Section 261 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 ("the Fair Act") authorized the establishment of the Edward R. Madigan Agricultural Excellence Award to honor those who substantially encourage entrepreneurial efforts in the food and agriculture sector for advancing United States agricultural exports. The Board, consisting of 6 members, will hold meetings to accept and review all nominations for the award and make recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture based on their review.

On September 4, 2007, Secretary Johanns signed the Reestablishing Charter for the Edward R. Madigan United States Agricultural Export Excellence Board of Evaluators. On November 9, 2007 a Federal Register Notice was published announcing the re-establishment of the Board of Evaluators. On July 18, 2008 a Federal Register Notice was published seeking Board nominations however an insufficient number of nominations were received to re-establish a Board of Evaluators. Until such time as a Board is established, no awards can be made. It is anticipated that once a Board is established, that 6-12, awards could be presented annually.

Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

The Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers was established by Section 5 of the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992 (P. L. 102-554). The Committee's purpose is to advise the Secretary on the administration of the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) beginning farmer programs and methods to increase participation between Federal and State programs to provide joint financing to beginning farmers and ranchers, along with other methods of creating new farming or ranching opportunities. The duration of the Committee is indefinite. The Committee first met in 1999.

As required by law, members include representatives from USDA's FSA; State beginning farmer programs; commercial lenders; private nonprofit organizations with active beginning farmer programs; USDA's NIFA; community colleges; and other entities or persons providing lending or technical assistance for qualified beginning farmers or ranchers. Several farmers and ranchers were also appointed to serve.

The Committee, consisting of 20 members, held its ninth meeting on July 9-10, 2008, in Washington, DC. Highlights from the meeting include:

- A presentation was given on a Farmland Access, Succession, Tenure and Stewardship Project and the pressing issues facing U.S. agriculture today. Comments were provided concerning provisions outlined in the 2008 Farm Bill benefiting beginning farmers and ranchers. A discussion was held regarding solutions to help beginning farmers and ranchers succeed;
- Several current members gave brief presentations. The topics included the Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers; the New Immigrant Farming Initiatives, and the Innovative Opportunities for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers);
- Updates were provided to members concerning their 2007 recommendations. Some of the recommendations were addressed in the 2008 Farm Bill. There were 7 titles of the Farm Bill that have provisions assisting beginning farmers and ranchers. Another title requires the Secretary to establish an Office of Advocacy and Outreach. Under that Office, the Secretary is required to establish a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Group. The Group will be responsible to coordinate implementation of small farm and beginning farmer and rancher policies and programs;
- One recommendation from 2007 requested the Secretary to encourage beginning farmers and ranchers to serve as County Committee members. As a result of this recommendation, the FSA Administrator sent a Memorandum to all FSA State Executive Directors on May 7, 2008, and a Notice to all State and County Offices on May 14, 2008, encouraging them to provide outreach to beginning farmers and beginning farmer groups concerning the County Committee election process; and
- The Committee developed 19 recommendations at this year's meeting. They addressed issues relating to value-added projects, conservation, energy, and loan programs.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT:

Task Force on Agricultural Air Quality Research

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

The Task Force's mandate is to strengthen and coordinate USDA's air quality research effort and identify cost effective ways for the agriculture industry to improve air quality and meet Federal and local air quality emissions requirements.

Chaired by the Chief of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the AAQTF has 29 members and consists of leaders in farming, industry, health, and science. The Task Force also includes representatives from USDA's Forest Service, Agricultural Research Service, NIFA, and Economic Research Service. Membership in the Task Force is for a two year period with the current Task Force having begun their duties in the fall of 2006.

Task Force meetings are held twice a year at locations around the country in order to witness regional agricultural air quality related concerns in various places nationally and to hear from concerned citizens about the impacts of air quality issues, concerns and regulations. The 2006—2008 Task Force held meetings in the following locations:

- Washington, D.C.: November 28-30, 2006;
- San Diego, CA: May 9-11, 2007;
- Indianapolis, IA: October 3-5, 2007; and
- Salt Lake City, UT: May 13-16, 2008.

Recommendations from the Task Force: At the first meeting of the 2006—2008 Task Force, the Chair established five Committees that would be charged with reviewing issues that would be presented to the full Task Force during the current charter. The five Committees are:

- Animal Feeding Operations;
- Emerging Issues;
- Greenhouse Gas and Volatile Organic Compound;
- Internal Combustion Engines and Alternative Fuels; and
- Particulate Matter and Ozone.

These Committees have been actively engaged in reviewing issues and presenting them to the full Task Force. Following these discussions, recommendations have been generated by the Task Force for submission to the Secretary for consideration. Recommendations that have been submitted for consideration to date include the following:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should establish a process for AAQTF review of critical documents and data associated with the National Air Emissions Monitoring Study (NAEMS);
- EPA should establish a Scientific Independent Peer Review and Advisory Panel to review the first six months of data from the NAEMS study and conduct semi-annual meetings of this panel to review field data collected to date;
- USDA should convene a workgroup of university and government scientists to establish minimum standards for protocols on measurement, monitoring, and verification of agricultural Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reductions and Carbon (C) sequestration;
- USDA should establish a national network of on-farm soil measurements for C stocks to complement existing models and experimental data to develop a national inventory and baseline for soil C markets;
- EPA should review its Emission Factor Uncertainty Assessment and examine the implications of this assessment, particularly for agricultural operations;
- EPA should examine the validity, accuracy, and completeness of the baseline data used for agriculturally-related emission estimates; and
- USDA should lead research efforts focusing on agronomic and field strategies to minimize GHG emissions associated with biofuel crop production.

For additional information on these recommendations and minutes from the meetings, including copies of presentations made before the Task Force, please visit the following Web site:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/AAQTF/documents>