

Departments

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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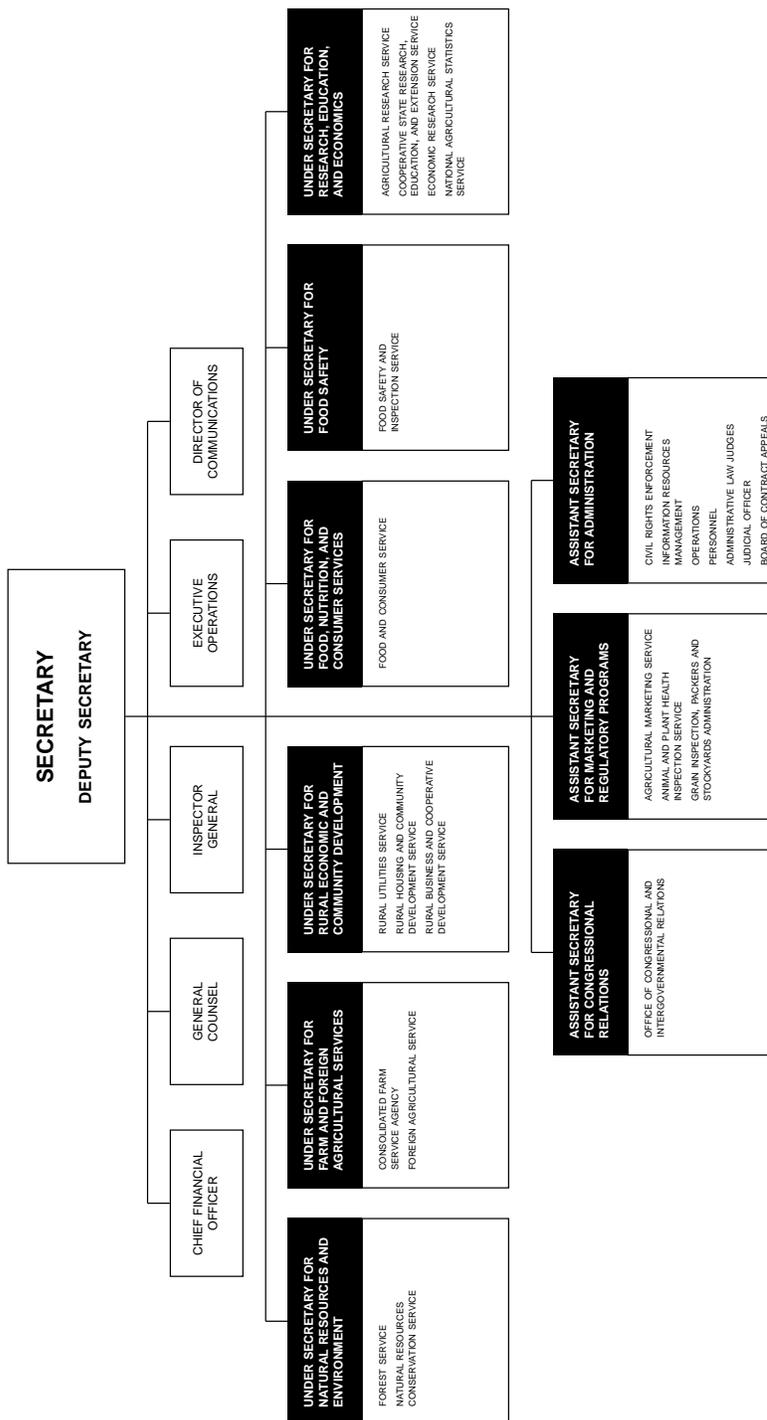
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[For the Department of Agriculture statement of organization, see the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 7, Part 2]

The Department of Agriculture works to improve and maintain farm income and to develop and expand markets abroad for agricultural products. The Department helps to curb and to cure poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. It works to enhance the environment and to maintain our production capacity by helping landowners protect the soil, water, forests, and other natural resources. Rural development, credit, and conservation programs are key resources for carrying out national growth policies. Department research findings directly or indirectly benefit all Americans. The Department, through inspection and grading services, safeguards and ensures standards of quality in the daily food supply.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



The Department of Agriculture (USDA) was created by act of May 15, 1862 (7 U.S.C. 2201), and was administered by a Commissioner of Agriculture until 1889 (5 U.S.C. 511, 514, 516). By act of February 9, 1889 (7 U.S.C. 2202, 2208, 2212), the powers and duties of the Department were enlarged. The Department was made the eighth executive department in the Federal Government, and the Commissioner became the Secretary of Agriculture. The Department was reorganized under the

Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6901 note).

In carrying out its work in the program mission areas, USDA relies on the support of departmental administration staff, as well as the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Communications, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, Office of Inspector General, and the Office of the General Counsel.

Rural Economic and Community Development

The rural development mission of USDA is to help rural Americans improve the quality of their lives. To do so, it has fostered a new relationship among Government, industry, and communities. Rural development work is focused in three organizations reporting to the Under Secretary for Rural Economic and Community Development:

The Rural Housing and Community Development Service (RHCDS) includes the rural housing programs of the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), as well as the rural community loan programs of the Rural Development Administration (RDA) and the Rural Electrification Administration (REA).

The Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service (RBCDS) includes the Agricultural Development Service, business development programs of RDA and REA and the Alternate Agriculture Research and Commercialization Center.

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) combines the telephone and electric programs of REA with the water and sewer programs of RDA.

Rural Housing and Community Development Service

[For the Rural Housing and Community Development Service statement of organization, see the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 7, Part 2003]

In 1994, the Rural Housing and Community Development Service redefined the way it does business. It became the lender of first opportunity

instead of a lender of last resort. RHCDS also streamlined the way it does business, both directly with its borrowers and internally with its own employees.

RHCDS provides loans to rural residents who are unable to get credit from commercial sources at reasonable rates and terms and who have a reasonable chance for success.

The Service operates under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921) and title V of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1471).

RHCDS guarantees loans made by commercial lenders for modest rural housing. The agency also makes direct loans to low-income rural residents.

Rural residents may apply for these loans at approximately 1,750 local offices and 258 district offices.

RHCDS provides financial and management assistance through the following types of loans:

Operating Loans RHCDS guarantees loans made by commercial lenders and provides some direct loans. Operating loan funds may be used to acquire needed resources, to make improved use of their land and labor resources, and to make adjustments necessary for successful rural enterprises. Funds may be advanced to pay for equipment and home operating needs; refinance chattel debts; provide operating credit to fish farmers; carry out forestry purposes; and

develop income-producing, nonfarm enterprises.

For loans made directly by the Administration, the interest rate is set periodically, based on the Federal Government's cost of borrowing. For loans made by other lenders and guaranteed by the Administration, the interest rate is negotiated between the lender and the borrower. Loans may be repaid over 1 to 7 years. RHCDS also provides interest assistance by subsidizing the rate on guaranteed loans up to 4 percent, depending on borrower needs. Other reliable agricultural credit sources are encouraged to support as much of the essential needs of loan applicants as possible with the balance supplied from operating loan funds of the agency. Operating loan borrowers are expected to refinance their operating loans and return to conventional credit when able to do so.

Youth Project Loans The Service makes loans to individual rural residents who are at least 10 but not more than 20 years old to establish and operate income-producing enterprises of modest size, either on the farm or in other locations. The interest rate is determined by formula, periodically, based on the cost of Government borrowing. Repayment terms depend upon the type of project for which the loan is made. This program is designed to help 4-H Clubs, Future Farmers of America, and other youth group members finance their agricultural or nonagricultural projects.

Emergency Loans Emergency loans are made to eligible rural residents/enterprises for losses arising from natural disasters.

Each loan is scheduled for repayment as rapidly as feasible, in annual installments, consistent with the borrower's reasonable ability to pay. The schedule varies according to the purpose of the loan.

The interest rate for emergency loans offsetting actual losses is 4.5 percent. Loans are limited to \$500,000 or 80 percent of actual losses, less any insurance protection.

Loans to Indian Tribes Loans to Indian tribes and tribal corporations are made for the acquisition of lands within the

reservation. Loans are made for up to 40 years. The interest rate is set periodically, based on the cost of Government borrowing.

Guaranteed Rural Housing Loan Program Under the Guaranteed Rural Housing Loan Program, RHCDS guarantees loans made by commercial lenders to moderate-income rural residents. Eligible applicants have sufficient income and acceptable credit, but lack the downpayment to secure a loan without help. RHCDS provides up to 100-percent financing for eligible borrowers and guarantees participating lenders against most losses.

Direct Rural Housing Loans Section 502 loans are made to low-income families for housing in rural areas. Loans can be made to build, purchase, repair, and refinance homes. The maximum term can be 38 years, and the loan may be for 100 percent of the appraised value. The basic interest rate is determined periodically, based on the cost of money. Borrowers may qualify for annual subsidy on the loan, which can reduce the interest rate to as low as 1 percent. Cosigners on promissory notes may be permitted for applicants who are deficient in repayment ability.

Builders may obtain from the Service "conditional commitments" that are assurances to a builder or seller that if their houses meet agency lending requirements, then the agency may make loans to qualified applicants to buy the houses.

An owner-occupant may obtain a section 504 loan of up to \$15,000, or, in the case of senior citizens, a grant of up to \$5,000 to remove hazards to the health and safety of the family. These loans, available to very low-income families, are made at 1-percent interest.

Loans are made to private, nonprofit corporations, consumer cooperatives, State or local public agencies, and individuals or organizations operating on a profit or limited profit basis to provide rental or cooperative housing in rural areas for persons of low and moderate income. Maximum term is 50 years. Rental assistance may be available to help defray rent paid by low-income families.

Loans repayable in 2 years are authorized to nonprofit organizations to purchase and develop land for resale as homesites for persons of low-to-moderate income.

Loans and grants are also authorized for housing for farm laborers. Housing the Homeless RHCDS offers single-family housing inventory property to nonprofit organizations or public bodies for transitional housing for the homeless. Qualifying organizations may lease nonprogram property if they can show a documented need in the community for the type of housing use proposed and the financial ability to meet proposed housing costs.

Community Program Loans Direct and guaranteed loans are authorized to public and quasi-public bodies, nonprofit associations, and certain Indian tribes for essential community facilities, such as fire and rescue and health care. Necessary related equipment may also be purchased.

The interest rate is set quarterly for direct loans and is based on yields of municipal bonds. Guaranteed loans bear an interest rate negotiated by the lender and the borrower. Rural Housing guarantees a lender against losses up to 90 percent of principal and interest.

Community facility loans may be made in towns populated up to 20,000.

Nondiscrimination in employment and occupancy is required.

For further information, contact the Information Staff, Rural Housing and Community Development Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-4323.

Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service

The Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service (RBCDS) was created to direct financial and technical assistance to areas of special needs in rural America. It will focus on underdeveloped communities, the Northwest Timber Initiative and water in Alaskan villages. Through its community and business loan and grant programs it extends financial assistance for water and waste disposal loans.

RBCDS promotes economic development in rural communities by

financing needed facilities, assisting business development and rural cooperatives, and developing effective national strategies for rural economic development.

RBCDS was authorized by title XXIII of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2006f *et seq.*), and was officially established within the Department of Agriculture by Secretary's Memorandum 1020-34 dated December 31, 1991. RBCDS operates its loan and grant programs principally under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 *et seq.*).

The Service provides financial assistance through the following types of loans and grants:

Business and Industry Loans The Service is authorized to make or guarantee loans to public, private, or cooperative associations organized for profit or nonprofit; to certain Indian tribes or tribal groups; or to individuals for the purpose of improving, developing, or financing business, industry, and employment and improving the economic and environmental climate in rural communities.

The purpose is to develop business enterprises in rural areas and cities with populations of less than 50,000, with priority to applications for projects in open country and rural communities and towns with populations of 25,000 and smaller.

Private lenders initiate, process, close, service, and supervise guaranteed loans; the Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service guarantees a lender against loss up to 90 percent of principal and interest. Interest rates are determined between borrower and lender.

Intermediary Relending Program Loans Loans are made to nonprofit corporations, public agencies, Indian tribes, or cooperatives to establish revolving loan funds from which the borrower, in turn, makes loans to finance businesses or community development projects. Entities that receive loans from RBCDS are referred

to as “intermediaries” and entities that receive loans from intermediaries are referred to as “ultimate recipients.” Loans to intermediaries may be up to \$2,000,000, to be repaid over a 30-year period at 1-percent interest. Loans to ultimate recipients must not exceed \$150,000. The term and interest rate to ultimate recipients are set by the intermediary. Ultimate recipients must not be located in a city with a population of 25,000 or more.

Empowerment Program The Program develops and maintains programs to identify Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, AmeriCorps, and other Presidential initiatives to support rural development through the selection of areas of greatest need. The Program works with other USDA agencies, other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and private organizations and universities in a combined effort to develop and promote comprehensive community and economic development in rural America.

Industrial Development Grants Grants are available to finance and facilitate development of small and emerging private business enterprises in rural areas or cities populated up to 50,000, with priority to applications for projects in open country, rural communities and towns of 25,000 and smaller, and economically distressed communities. Industrial Development Grants include grants made to third-party lenders to establish revolving loan programs.

Eligibility is limited to public bodies and private, nonprofit corporations. Public bodies include incorporated towns and villages, boroughs, townships, counties, States, authorities, districts, and Indian tribal groups in rural areas.

Funds may be used to finance and develop small and emerging private business enterprises. Costs that may be paid from grant funds include the acquisition and development of land and the construction of buildings, plants, equipment, access streets and roads, parking areas, utility and service extensions, refinancing, fees, technical assistance, startup operating costs, and working capital.

Rural Development Strategy Assistance RBCDS provides assistance to rural communities in developing effective, long-term strategies for community and economic development. RBCDS staff works on a national and local basis to develop and implement creative strategies that involve partnerships between RBCDS and other agencies, both public and private, to enhance the economic competitiveness of rural communities. This assures that RBCDS and other public programs work closely in creating sustainable development over the long term.

In addition to its other programs, RBCDS provides administrative services to the State Rural Development Councils (SRDC’s). This service is a secretarial support function only.

The SRDC’s operate under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 2204b. The goals are to improve rural development program coordination among Federal agencies; to undertake active partnerships with States, localities, and the private sector; and to improve the effectiveness of Federal rural development efforts by adopting a strategic and comprehensive approach to rural development.

SRDC’s review rural development needs and available resources and develop a strategic plan to execute their goals. The Executive Director, who serves at the pleasure of SRDC leadership, supports the membership in implementing the SRDC strategic State plan. Typical implementation efforts involve the resolution of intergovernmental and intragovernmental barriers for effective rural programs. Issues identified by the SRDC’s which cannot be solved at the State level are advanced to the national level for consideration.

Federal members from 11 executive departments, 5 independent agencies, and 2 White House bodies are represented on the national and State levels. At the State level, SRDC members include representatives from Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, along with the private sector— both profit and nonprofit.

Cooperative Services Under provisions of Public Law 103-211, Agricultural Cooperative Service programs were united with the RBCDS. The new Cooperative Services Program helps farmers and rural communities to become self-reliant through the use of cooperative organizations. Studies are conducted to support cooperatives that market farm products, purchase production supplies, and perform related business services. These studies concentrate on the financial, organizational, legal, social, and economic aspects of cooperative activity.

Technical assistance and research is provided to improve cooperative performance in organizing new cooperatives, merging existing cooperatives, changing the business structure, and developing strategies for growth. Applied research is conducted to give farmers and rural communities expert assistance pertaining to their cooperatives.

Cooperative Services also collects and publishes statistics regarding the role and scope of cooperative activity in U.S. agriculture. Its monthly magazine, *Farmer Cooperatives*, reports current developments and research for cooperative management and leadership. Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization Center The Center provides and monitors financial assistance for the development and commercialization of new nonfood and nonfeed products from agricultural/forestry commodities. The Center promotes new and alternative uses for agricultural materials. It also expands market opportunities through development of value-added industrial products and promotes environmentally friendly products.

For further information, contact the Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service, Room 5405-S, Department of Agriculture, Fourteenth Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250-0320. Phone, 202-690-2394.

Rural Utilities Service

[For the Rural Utilities Service statement of organization, see the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 7, Part 1700]

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is involved in providing access to the information superhighway in rural America, awarding grants to electric and telephone utilities in 10 states to create local revolving loan funds for rural economic development projects. The funds provide rural water and sewer projects, community facilities, and industrial parks to spur economic development and job opportunities.

RUS is a credit agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that assists rural electric and telephone utilities in obtaining financing. The assistance includes direct and Federal Financing Bank (FFB) funded loans and shared security arrangements that permit the borrowers to obtain financing from other lenders without a guarantee.

A total of 1,098 rural electric and 1,029 rural telephone utilities in 47 States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia have received these loans, loan guarantees, or other assistance to construct, expand, and improve rural electric and telephone systems.

RUS was established by Executive Order 7037 of May 11, 1935, as part of a general program of unemployment relief. It was given statutory authority by the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, as amended (7 U.S.C. 901-950b). Its Administrator is appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Electric Program The Rural Electrification Act of 1936, as amended (7 U.S.C. 901-950b), authorized RUS, then the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), as a lending agency with responsibility for developing a program to provide and improve electric service to persons in rural areas, as defined by the Bureau of the Census.

The act requires that preference be given to nonprofit and cooperative associations and to public bodies. With RUS' assistance, rural electric utilities have obtained financing to construct electric generating plants and transmission and distribution lines to

provide initial and continued reliable electric service.

Telephone Program In 1949, RUS (then REA) was authorized to make loans to provide telephone service in rural areas. Congress directed that the rural telephone program be conducted to "assure the availability of adequate telephone service to the widest practicable number of rural users of such service." About 75 percent of the telephone systems financed by the agency are commercial companies, and about 25 percent are subscriber-owned cooperatives.

Loans Loans are made in accordance with the act and are subject to the provisions of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1991. By law, RUS direct loans are made or insured at a municipal rate, but not greater than 7 percent. In cases of hardship, the Administrator may approve loans at an interest rate of 5 percent.

RUS also obtains funds from the Federal Financing Bank (FFB), which it lends to borrowers, mostly for large-scale electric and telephone facilities at an interest rate equal to the cost of money paid by FFB, plus one-eighth of 1 percent. FFB is located within the Department of the Treasury.

Supplemental Financing A 1973 statement of congressional policy—not part of the law—said, in part, "...that rural electric and telephone systems should be encouraged and assisted in developing their resources and ability to achieve the financial strength needed to enable them to satisfy their credit needs from their own financial organizations and other sources at reasonable rates and terms consistent with the loan applicant's ability to pay and achievement of the act's objectives."

When RUS approves electric loans, it requires most borrowers to obtain 30 percent of their loan needs from nonagency sources without an agency guarantee. These nonagency sources include the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, which is owned by electric cooperatives and the National Bank for Cooperatives.

Telephone borrowers obtain supplemental financing from the Rural

Telephone Bank (RTB), an agency of the United States that was established in 1971. Loans are made to telephone systems able to meet RTB's requirements. Bank loans are made for the same purposes as loans made by RUS but bear interest at a rate consistent with the Bank's cost of money. Effective in fiscal year 1988, the budget act changed the method of determining Bank interest rates.

The Rural Telephone Bank is managed by a 13-member board of directors. The Administrator serves as Governor of the Bank until conversion to private ownership, control, and operation. This will take place when 51 percent of the Class A stock issued to the United States and outstanding at any time after September 30, 1995, has been fully redeemed and retired. The Bank board holds at least four regularly scheduled meetings a year. Activities of RTB are carried out by RUS employees and the Office of the General Counsel of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants Grants may be made for 100 percent of project costs to assist rural communities experiencing a significant decline in quantity or quality of drinking water. Grants can be made to rural cities or towns with populations not exceeding the State's nonmetropolitan median household income requirement. The maximum grant is \$500,000 when the significant decline in quantity or quality of water occurred within 2 years, or \$75,000, to make emergency repairs and replacement of facilities on existing systems.

Technical Assistance and Training Grants Grants are available for nonprofit organizations to provide rural water and waste system officials with technical assistance and training on a wide range of issues relating to the delivery of water and waste service to rural residents. Legislation requires that at least 1 percent and not more than 2 percent of the funds appropriated for water and waste disposal grants be set aside for these grants.

Solid Waste Management Grants
Grants are available for nonprofit organizations and public bodies to provide technical assistance and training to rural areas and towns populated up to 10,000 to reduce or eliminate pollution of water resources and improve planning and management of solid waste facilities.

Rural Water Circuit Rider Technical Assistance Program Since 1980, the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) has provided, by contract, technical assistance to rural water systems. Circuit riders assist rural water systems with day-to-day operational, financial, and management problems. Currently there are 52 circuit riders that cover the 48 continental United States. The assistance may be requested by rural water systems or by RUS. When circuit riders are not working on specific requests, they call on rural water systems to offer assistance. The Association reports monthly to the national office. The program complements loan "supervision" responsibilities.

Rural Development Effective in fiscal year 1988, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act established a rural development program to provide interest-free loans and grants to electric and telephone borrowers to promote rural economic development and job creation projects. The program has financed such projects as business incubators, startups and expansions, community development, studies, and a variety of initiatives at the local level.

The Rural Economic Development Act of 1990 established other programs to promote economic and community development, including a Distance Learning and Medical Link Grant Program, and gave borrowers authority to defer RUS loan payments to make investments in rural development. Borrowers previously had been given authority to invest their own funds in rural development projects.

For further information, contact the Legislative and Public Affairs Staff, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-1255.

Marketing and Regulatory Programs

This mission area—formerly composed of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and Packers and Stockyards Administration (P&SA)—was divided into two mission areas:

Food safety is now managed by the Under Secretary for Food Safety. Included in the 1994 reorganization are the entire operational and support structure of FSIS, plus those units from AMS and APHIS with responsibility for assuring the safety of food products.

The remaining units of AMS and APHIS report to the Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs. In addition, two areas of responsibility delegated to FGIS and P&SA comprise the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA). This

unit reports to the Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs.

Agricultural Marketing Service

The Agricultural Marketing Service was established by the Secretary of Agriculture on April 2, 1972, under the authority of Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953 (5 U.S.C. app.) and other authorities. The Service administers standardization, grading, inspection, certification, market news, marketing orders, and research, promotion, and regulatory programs.

Market News The Service provides current, unbiased information to producers, processors, distributors, and others to assist them in the orderly marketing and distribution of farm commodities. Information is collected on supplies, demand, prices, movement, location, quality, condition, and other market data on farm products in specific

markets and marketing areas. The data is disseminated nationally via a modern satellite system and is shared with several countries. The Service also assists countries in developing their own marketing information systems. Standardization, Grading, and Classing Grade standards have been established for nearly 240 agricultural commodities to help buyers and sellers trade on agreed-upon quality levels. Standards are developed with the benefit of views from those in the industries directly affected and others interested. The Service also participates in developing international standards to facilitate trade.

Grading and classing services are provided to certify the grade and quality of products. These grading services are provided to buyers and sellers of live cattle, swine, sheep, meat, poultry, eggs, rabbits, fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, peanuts, dairy products, and tobacco.

Classing services are provided to buyers and sellers of cotton and cotton products. These services are mainly voluntary and are provided upon request and for a fee. The Service also is responsible for the certification of turpentine and other naval stores products, and the testing of seed.

Laboratory Testing The Service provides scientific and laboratory support to its commodity programs relating to testing of microbiological and chemical factors in food products through grading, certification, acceptance, and regulatory programs; processing and finishing tests for cotton fiber and yarn; testing of peanuts for aflatoxin, and testing of imported flue-cured and burley tobacco for pesticide residues, and testing seeds for germination and purity. The agency also carries out quality assurance and safety oversight activities with respect to the Service's commodity division laboratory and testing activities relating to milk market administrators, resident grading programs, and State and private laboratory programs.

The Service also administers the Pesticide Data Program which, in cooperation with States, samples and analyzes fresh fruits and vegetables for

pesticide residues. It shares residue test results with the Environmental Protection Agency and other public agencies.

Food Quality Assurance Under a Governmentwide quality assurance program, AMS is responsible for the development and revision of specifications used by Federal agencies in procuring food for military and civilian uses. The Service coordinates and approves certification programs designed to ensure that purchased products conform to the specification requirements.

Section 32 Programs Under section 32 of the act of August 24, 1935, as amended (7 U.S.C. 612c), 30 percent of customs receipts collected during each calendar year are automatically appropriated for expanding outlets for various commodities. Portions of these funds are transferred to the Food and Nutrition Service of USDA and to the Department of Commerce. Remaining funds are used to purchase commodities for the National School Lunch Program and other feeding programs, for diversion to other outlets, and for administering agreement and order programs.

Regulatory Programs The Service administers several regulatory programs designed collectively to protect producers, handlers, and consumers of agricultural commodities from financial loss or personal injury resulting from careless, deceptive, or fraudulent marketing practices. Such regulatory programs encourage fair trading practices in the marketing of fruits and vegetables, require truth in seed labeling and in advertising.

Under the Egg Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 1031-1056), the Service provides mandatory inspection for wholesomeness in all plants processing liquid, dried, or frozen egg products, and controls the disposition of restricted shell eggs—eggs that are a potential health hazard.

Marketing Agreements and Orders These programs, under authority of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (7 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*), help to establish and maintain orderly marketing

conditions for certain commodities. Milk marketing orders establish minimum prices that handlers or distributors are required to pay producers. Programs for fruits, vegetables, and related specialty crops like nuts and spearmint oil help stabilize supplies and market prices. In some cases, they also authorize research and market development activities, including advertising supported by assessments that handlers pay. Through orderly marketing, adjusting the supply to demand, and avoiding unreasonable fluctuations during the marketing season, the income of producers is increased by normal market forces, and consumer interests are protected through quality and quantity control.

Federal marketing orders originate with a request from a producer group to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary can conduct hearings and referenda based on the producer group's proposal for a marketing order. Producer and handler assessments finance their operations.

In carrying out the Government role, the Service ensures that persons interested in the development and operation of the programs have a fair hearing and that each marketing order works according to Federal law and established rules and guidelines. Plant Variety Protection Program Under authority of the Plant Variety Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 2321 *et seq.*), the Service administers a program that provides for the issuance of "certificates of plant variety protection." These certificates afford developers of novel varieties of sexually reproduced plants exclusive rights to sell, reproduce, import, or export such varieties, or use them in the production of hybrids or different varieties for a period of 18 years.

Research and Promotion Programs The Service monitors certain industry-sponsored research, promotion, and information programs authorized by Federal laws. These programs provide farmers with a means to finance and operate various research, promotion, and information activities for cotton, potatoes, eggs, milk and dairy products,

beef, pork, wool, mohair, honey, watermelon, limes, mushrooms, soybeans, and fresh cut flowers.

Transportation Programs The Service is also responsible for the development of an efficient transportation system for rural America that begins at the farm gate, moves agricultural and other rural products through the Nation's highways, railroads, airports, and waterways, and into the domestic and international marketplace. To accomplish this, AMS conducts economic studies and analyses of these systems, and represents agricultural and rural transportation interests in policy and regulatory forums. To provide direct assistance to the transportation community, AMS supplies research and technical information to producers, producer groups, shippers, exporters, rural communities, carriers, governmental agencies, and universities.

The Service carries out responsibilities of USDA's former Office of Transportation under the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1281), the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621), the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (7 U.S.C. 1691), the Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 1921 note), the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs Act (7 U.S.C. 4401), and the Cooperative Marketing Act of 1926 (7 U.S.C. 451-457).

Organic Standards Under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 501-522), the Service assists a National Organic Standards Board in developing national organic standards.

Other Programs Other marketing service activities include financial grants to States for marketing improvement projects. The agency also has responsibility for the conduct of studies of the facilities and methods used in the physical distribution of food and other farm products; for research designed to improve the handling of all agricultural products as they move from farm to consumers; and for increasing marketing efficiency by developing improved operating methods, facilities, and equipment for processing, handling, and

distributing dairy, poultry, and meat products.

The Agricultural Marketing Service manages the Pesticide Recordkeeping Program in coordination with the National Agricultural Statistics Service and the Environmental Protection Agency. The Service has developed educational programs and assists State agencies in inspecting applicator records.

Field Organization Programs and activities in the field are carried out through a variety of different types of organizations reporting to their respective Washington components.

For further information, contact the Information Staff, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-8999.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[For the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service statement of organization, see the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 7, Part 371]

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service was reestablished by the Secretary of Agriculture on March 14, 1977, pursuant to authority contained in 5 U.S.C. 301 and Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953 (5 U.S.C. app.).

The Service was established to conduct regulatory and control programs to protect and improve animal and plant health for the benefit of man and the environment. In cooperation with State governments, the agency administers Federal laws and regulations pertaining to animal and plant health and quarantine, humane treatment of animals, and the control and eradication of pests and diseases. Regulations to prevent the introduction or interstate spread of certain animal or plant pests or diseases are also enforced by the Service. It also carries out research and operational activities to reduce crop and livestock depredations caused by birds, rodents, and predators.

Plant Protection and Quarantine Programs Plant protection officials are responsible for programs to control or eradicate plant pests and diseases. These programs are carried out in cooperation

with the States involved, other Federal agencies, farmers, and private organizations. Pest control programs use a single tool or a combination of pest control techniques, both chemical and nonchemical, which are both effective and safe.

Agricultural quarantine inspection officials administer Federal regulations that prohibit or restrict the entry of foreign pests and plants, plant products, animal products and byproducts, and other materials that may harbor pests or diseases. Inspection service is maintained at all major ocean, air, border, and interior ports of entry in the continental United States and in Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Bahamas, and Bermuda. Services also are provided on a regular or on-call basis at some 500 outlying ports and military installations throughout the country.

Other responsibilities include the inspection and certification of domestic commodities for export, regulation of the import and export of endangered plant species, and ensuring that imported seed is free of noxious weeds.

Veterinary Services Animal health officials are responsible for determining the existence and extent of outbreaks of communicable diseases and pests affecting livestock and poultry. They organize and conduct control eradication and certification programs in cooperation with industry and State officials.

Service officials assess risk relating to animal diseases and preharvest food safety. They maintain food inspection and quarantine service at designated ports of entry for imported animals and birds and are responsible for the health certification of livestock and poultry exported to other countries.

Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care The Service administers Federal laws concerned with the humane care and handling of all warm-blooded animals bought, sold, and transported—including common carriers—in commerce and used or intended for use as pets at the wholesale level, or used or intended for use in exhibitions or for research purposes. The agency also

enforces the Horse Protection Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1821 note), which prohibits the soring of horses at shows and sales.

International Services Service officials represent the APHIS agenda in the international arena. This includes conduct of cooperative plant and animal pest and disease control, eradication, and surveillance programs in foreign countries. These programs provide a first line of defense for the United States against threats such as screwworm, medfly, foot-and-mouth disease, and other exotic diseases and pests. Service officials provide international representation concerning sanitary and phytosanitary technical trade issues, and manage programs for overseas preclearance of commodities, passengers, and U.S. military activities.

Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection Service officials are responsible for the regulation of genetically engineered organisms and products that present a plant pest risk. Regulation is carried out through a permit system. The Service also administers a Federal law intended to ensure that all veterinary biological products, whether developed by conventional or new biotechnological procedures, used in the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of animal disease are safe, pure, potent, and effective. This responsibility is met by regulating firms that manufacture veterinary biological products subject to the act. This includes licensing the manufacturing establishment and its products; inspecting production facilities and production methods; and testing products under a surveillance program.

Animal Damage Control Animal damage control officials cooperate with States, counties, local communities, and agricultural producer groups to reduce crop and livestock depredations caused by birds, rodents, and predators. The officials conduct research into predator-prey relationships, new control methods, and more efficient and safe uses of present methods such as toxicants, repellants and attractants, biological controls, scare devices, and habitat

alteration. Using methods and techniques that are biologically sound, environmentally acceptable, and economically feasible, they participate in efforts to educate and advise farmers and ranchers on proper uses of control methods and techniques; they suppress serious nuisances and threats to public health and safety caused by birds, rodents, and other wildlife in urban and rural communities; and they work with airport managers to reduce risks of bird strikes.

For further information, contact Legislative and Public Affairs, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-2511.

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) comprises the former Federal Grain Inspection Service and the former Packers and Stockyards Administration. The primary task of GIPSA is to carry out the provisions of the United States Grain Standards Act (7 U.S.C. 71 *et seq.*), the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921, as amended (7 U.S.C. 181-229), the Truth in Lending and Fair Credit Billing Acts (15 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (15 U.S.C. 1691 *et seq.*) with respect to firms subject to GIPSA. GIPSA also administers the provisions of section 1324 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1631), certifying State central filing systems for notification of liens against farm products and ensures integrity in the inspection, weighing, and handling of U.S. grain. An Administrator, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, heads the agency.

GIPSA is responsible for establishing official U.S. standards for grain and other assigned commodities, and for administering a nationwide official inspection and weighing system. GIPSA may, in response to formal application, authorize private and State agencies to perform official services under the authority contained in the act.

Three of GIPSA's four grain inspection divisions are located in Washington, DC;

the fourth is located in Kansas City, MO. Most employees work in field offices around the Nation.

Inspection The United States Grain Standards Act requires, with some exceptions, all U.S. export grain be officially inspected. At export port locations, inspection is performed by GIPSA or by State agencies that have been delegated export inspection authority by the Administrator. For domestic grain, marketed at inland locations, the Administrator designates private and State agencies to provide official inspection services upon request. Both export and domestic services are provided on a fee basis.

To ensure that the official U.S. grain standards are applied uniformly nationwide, GIPSA's field offices provide oversight, guidance, and assistance to non-Federal agencies performing inspection activities, both at export and inland inspection points.

Buyers and sellers may request appeal inspections of original inspection results, first from a field office and then, if desired, from GIPSA's Board of Appeals and Review. GIPSA maintains a quality control program to monitor the national inspection system and to ensure that all field locations accurately and uniformly apply the U.S. grain standards.

Weighing Official weighing of U.S. export grain is performed at port locations by GIPSA or by State agencies that have been delegated export weighing authority by the Administrator. For domestic grain marketed at inland locations, the weighing services may be provided by GIPSA or by designated private or State agencies. Weighing services are provided on a fee basis, upon request.

As with inspection activities, GIPSA field offices provide oversight, guidance, and assistance to non-Federal agencies performing official weighing services. With the support of the Association of American Railroads and user fees, it conducts a railroad track scale-testing program which includes an annual testing service for all State and railroad company-owned master scales. GIPSA is the only entity, public or private, which

connects all railroad track scales to the national standards.

Standardization GIPSA is responsible for establishing, maintaining, and, as needed, revising official U.S. standards. Such standards exist for corn, wheat, rye, oats, barley, flaxseed, sorghum, soybeans, triticale, sunflower seed, canola, and mixed grain. GIPSA is authorized to perform applied research to develop methods of improving accuracy and uniformity in grading grain.

It is also responsible for standardization and inspection activities for rice, dry beans, peas, lentils, hay, straw, hops, and related processed grain commodities under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621). Although standards no longer exist for hay, straw, and hops, GIPSA maintains inspection procedures for and retains authority to inspect these commodities.

Compliance GIPSA's compliance activities ensure accurate and uniform implementation of the act, applicable provisions of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, and related regulations—including designating States and private agencies to carry out official inspection and weighing functions and monitoring, and overseeing and reviewing the operations of such agencies to ensure adequate performance.

GIPSA administers a registration program for all firms that export grain from the United States. In conjunction with the Office of the Inspector General, it carries out a program for investigating reported violations, and initiates followup and corrective actions when appropriate. The total compliance program ensures the integrity of the national inspection and weighing system.

Packers and Stockyards Activities The Packers and Stockyards Act is an antitrust, trade practice, and financial protection law. Its principal purpose is to maintain effective competition and fair trade practices in the marketing of livestock, meat, and poultry for the protection of livestock and poultry producers. Members of the livestock, poultry, and meat industries are also protected against unfair or monopolistic

practices of competitors. The act also protects consumers against unfair business practices in the marketing of meats and poultry and against restrictions of competition that could unduly affect meat and poultry prices.

The provisions of the Packers and Stockyards Act are enforced by investigations of violations of the act with emphasis on payment protection; detecting instances of commercial bribery, fraud in livestock marketing, and false weighing; requiring adequate bond coverage for commission firms, dealers, and packers; and the surveillance of marketing methods at public markets and in geographical market areas of the country.

For further information, contact the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-0219.

Food Safety and Inspection Service

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) was established by the Secretary of Agriculture on June 17, 1981, pursuant to authority contained in 5 U.S.C. 301 and Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953 (5 U.S.C. app.). At that time, the Service was delegated authority for regulating the meat and poultry industry to ensure that meat and poultry, and meat and poultry products moving in interstate and foreign commerce were safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled. Under the Secretary's Memorandum No. 1010-1, dated October 23, 1994, the Service's authority was extended to include the inspection of egg products.

Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products Inspection Federal meat and poultry inspection is mandatory for the following animals and birds used for human food: cattle, calves, swine, goats, sheep, lambs, horses (and other equines), chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, and guineas. The work includes inspection of each animal or bird at slaughter, and inspection of processed products during various stages of production. Under the Egg Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 1031-1056), the Service conducts mandatory, continuous inspection of the production of liquid, dried, and frozen

egg products, to ensure that egg products are safe, wholesome, unadulterated, and accurately labeled. The Service tests samples of egg products, and meat and poultry products for microbial and chemical contaminants to monitor trends for enforcement purposes.

Facilities and equipment are approved by FSIS before inspection is granted, and each product label must be approved by the agency before products can be sold. The agency monitors meat and poultry products in storage, distribution, and retail channels; and takes necessary compliance actions to perfect the public, including detention of products, voluntary product recalls, court-sized seizures of products, administrative withdrawal of inspection, and referral for criminal prosecution. The Service also conducts State programs for the inspection of meat and poultry products sold in intrastate commerce.

The Service monitors livestock upon arrival at federally inspected facilities to ensure compliance with the Humane Slaughter Act (7 U.S.C. 1901-1906); conducts voluntary reimbursed inspection for rabbits, other domestic food animals, and certain egg products not covered by the inspection law (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627); and ensures that inedible egg products and inedible products from meat or poultry, such as offal rendered for animal feed, are properly identified and isolated from edible products (21 U.S.C. 1031-1056 and 7 U.S.C. 1624, respectively).

The Service conducts a toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline (800-535-4555; in the Washington metropolitan area, 202-720-3333) to answer questions about labeling and safe handling of meat and poultry, meat and poultry products, and egg products. The hotline is also accessible (on the same extension) by TDD.

For further information, contact the Director of Information and Legislative Affairs, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-7943.

Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services

This mission area of USDA ensures access to nutritious, healthful diets for all Americans. It coordinates USDA's consumer education and outreach activities, encourage consumer involvement in USDA policymaking, and ensures that USDA adequately addresses consumer concerns and interests.

It concentrates on the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), eliminating the use of paper coupons while providing the recipient with a plastic card and personal identification number that functions like money. At the grocery check-out counter, no money and no Food Stamps change hands. All accounting is done electronically.

Under the USDA reorganization legislation, a center for nutrition policy and education was created underscoring the Department's commitment to nutrition and nutrition education.

Food and Consumer Service

[For the Food and Consumer Service statement of organization, see the *Federal Register* of June 6, 1970, 35 FR 8835]

The Food and Consumer Service is the agency of the Department that administers the programs to make food assistance available to people who need it. These programs are operated in cooperation with States and local governments.

The Service, formerly the Food and Nutrition Service, was established on August 8, 1969, by the Secretary of Agriculture, under authority of 5 U.S.C. 301 and Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953 (5 U.S.C. app.).

Food Stamps The Food Stamp Program provides food coupons through State and local welfare agencies to needy persons to increase their food purchasing power. The coupons are used by program participants to buy food in any retail store that has been approved by the Food and Consumer Service to accept and redeem the food coupons.

Special Nutrition Programs The Service administers several programs designed to improve the nutrition of children,

particularly those from low-income families. Principal among these is the National School Lunch Program, which provides financial assistance to public and nonprofit private schools of high school grade and under, in operating nonprofit school lunch programs.

The School Breakfast Program provides cash assistance to State educational agencies to help schools in operating nonprofit breakfast programs meeting established nutritional standards. It is especially important in improving the diets of needy children who may receive breakfast free or at reduced prices.

The Summer Food Service Program for Children helps various organizations get nutritious meals to needy preschool and school-aged children during the summer months or during vacations in areas operating under a continuous school calendar.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program is a companion activity that helps to get nutritious meals to preschool and school-age children in child care facilities and to functionally impaired adults in facilities that provide nonresidential care for such individuals.

The Special Milk Program for Children, which is administered in schools, institutions, and split-session kindergartens that do not participate in any other Federal food program, is designed to help child nutrition by paying a share of the cost of increased servings of fluid milk made to children.

Food Distribution The Food Distribution Program makes foods available to eligible recipients. Foods purchased by the Department are made available principally to children in school lunch and breakfast programs, in summer camps and child care centers, and to the nutrition program for the elderly. Also, commodities are distributed to needy families through food banks, charitable institutions, and local government agencies.

The program on Indian reservations provides Indians on or near reservations with access to a wide range of donated

foods, including meat, fruit, vegetables, and dairy and grain products.

Supplemental Food Programs The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children—the WIC Program—provides specified nutritious food supplements, nutrition education, and health care referrals to pregnant women, breastfeeding women up to 12 months post partum, non-breastfeeding women up to 6 months post partum, and children up to 5 years of age. Participants are determined by competent professionals (physicians, nutritionists, nurses, and other health officials) to be at nutritional risk because of nutritionally related medical conditions or inadequate nutrition.

Cash grants are made available to participating State health departments or comparable State agencies, or recognized Indian tribes, bands, or groups. The State agencies distribute funds to the local agencies, and the funds are used to provide foods for WIC recipients and to pay specified administrative and clinical costs.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program This program provides supplemental foods and nutrition education to low-income infants and children; pregnant, post partum, and breastfeeding women; and elderly persons who are vulnerable to malnutrition and reside in approved project areas. The Department purchases foods for distribution through State agencies.

Nutrition Education and Training Under this program funds are granted to the States for the development and dissemination of nutrition information and materials to children and for in-service training of food service and teaching personnel.

No person may be discriminated against—in the operation of any of the programs administered by the Food and Nutrition Service—because of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, or handicap.

For further information, contact the Public Information Officer, Food and Consumer Service, Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, VA 22302. Phone, 703-305-2276.

Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services

Through the Consolidated Farm Service Agency (CFSA), this mission area administers farm commodity, crop insurance, and resource conservation programs for farmers, and makes loans through a network of State and county offices. CFSA programs are directed at agricultural producers or, in the case of loans, at those with farming experience.

On October 13, 1994, the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 was enacted to streamline USDA and deliver programs and services to the public more efficiently. The new CFSA unifies most of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, most of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, the farm loan section of the Farmers Home Administration, and the administrative service section of the Foreign Agricultural Service.

Consolidated Farm Service Agency

CFSA administers commodity and related land use programs designed for voluntary production adjustment, resource protection, and price, market, and farm income stabilization.

In each State, operations are supervised by a State committee of three or five members appointed by the Secretary. A State Executive Director, appointed by the Secretary, and staff carry on day-to-day operations of the State office. The State Director of the Agricultural Extension Service is an *ex officio* member of the State committee.

In each of approximately 3,000 agricultural counties, a county committee of three farmer members is responsible for local administration. A county executive director, with other necessary staff, is employed to carry on day-to-day operations of the county office.

Commodity Programs CFSA administers the Commodity Credit Corporation's commodity stabilization programs for wheat, corn, cotton (upland and extra long staple), seed cotton, soybeans and minor oilseeds, peanuts, rice, tobacco, milk, wool, mohair, barley, oats, sugarbeets, sugarcane, grain sorghum, rye, and honey. Commodity stabilization is achieved through commodity loans, purchases, and payments to eligible producers.

For most commodities, loans and payments are made directly to producers on the unprocessed commodity through CFSA's county offices. Some commodities are also purchased from producers. Price support loans, payments, and purchases also can be made available through cooperative marketing associations. The price of milk is stabilized through purchases of processed dairy products: butter, American-type cheese, and nonfat dry milk. Price stabilization programs for tobacco and peanuts are carried out through loans to producer associations that, in turn, make program benefits available to producers. Tobacco producers must contribute to a fund to assure that the tobacco program operates at no net cost to taxpayers, other than administrative costs. For burley and flue-cured tobaccos, purchasers contribute equally with producers. These contributions are in addition to budget deficit assessments also being paid by producers and purchasers. Stabilization of sugarbeet and sugarcane prices is carried out through loans to sugar processors, who in turn make program benefits available to producers.

Loans to producers can either be "recourse" —allowing producers to repay their loans at principal plus interest—or "nonrecourse". Nonrecourse loans enable the producer to forfeit or deliver the commodity to the Commodity Credit Corporation with settlement based on the quantity and quality of goods delivered if the market price falls below the loan rate.

Loan deficiency payments are available to producers who agree to forgo a nonrecourse loan. The loan rate, as determined by the Commodity Credit

Corporation, is higher than the market rate.

Eligibility for commodity loans, purchases, and payments is, in most cases, conditional upon participation in acreage reduction, paid-land diversion, payment-in-kind, allotment, or quota programs in effect for the particular crop.

Under the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, payments are limited to an annual ceiling of \$125,000 per person on the total payments of upland cotton, extra long staple cotton, wheat, rice, and feed grain programs for the 1991 through 1995 crops.

The act greatly expanded flexibility for participating farmers to shift program crop plantings, as well as options for oilseeds and industrial and experimental crops.

Emergency Assistance Such programs offered to farmers in emergency-designated areas may include any or all of the following:

- furnishing cost-sharing assistance for feed purchases, purchasing fuel to burn spines off prickly pear cactus, or making available Corporation-owned feed grains at reduced prices to eligible producers who have suffered a substantial loss of their normal livestock feed production due to a natural disaster, and in some instances, donations of feed grains;

- cost-sharing with farmers who carry out emergency conservation practices to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disaster; and

- allowing haying and grazing on acreage diverted to conserving uses under the commodity programs or long-term land retirement program on a county-by-county basis, as needed, in the event of a natural disaster.

Grain Reserve Program The Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 reauthorized the Grain Reserve Program for farmer-owned wheat, corn, grain sorghum, oats, and barley. When entry into the Reserve is authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture, producers may enter into a contract extending their 9-month loan for an additional 27 months and receive quarterly storage payments.

Loans may be repaid at any time. Interest may be charged when prices exceed 105 percent of the target; however, storage payments cease when prices exceed 95 percent of the target price.

Dairy Refund Payment Program The Dairy Refund Payment Program provides producers refunds of the reductions in the price received for milk during a calendar year. Reductions in price are required by law for all milk produced in the United States and marketed commercially in calendar years 1991 to 1995.

Indemnity Program The Dairy Indemnity Payment Program provides indemnity payments to dairy farmers whose milk has been removed from the commercial market because it contained residues of chemicals or toxic substances, including nuclear radiation or fallout.

National Security CFSA is responsible for national security emergency preparedness plans and programs relating to food production, conservation, and stabilization; food processing, storage, and wholesale distribution; livestock and poultry feed, seed, and the domestic distribution of fertilizer; and farm equipment and repair parts.

CFSA also provides services relating to expansion of productive capacity, materials, and facilities under the Defense Production Act of 1950, as amended (50 U.S.C. 2061); plans for management, control, and allocation of water to be used for agricultural production and food processing; consolidates all claims for material, labor, equipment, supplies, and services needed to support the national security emergency responsibilities of USDA; and guarantees payments or makes loans, as needed, for the continuation of food and agriculture activities in a national security emergency.

Financial management and budget support, and financial risk assessments and analyses are provided by CFSA for the General Sales Manager of the Foreign Agricultural Service in administering Commodity Credit Corporation export credit sales and

guarantee programs and Food for Peace programs.

To carry out the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 3501), the Department assigned CFSA the primary responsibility of collecting information through a reporting system involving all States and most counties. The agency assesses penalties on late filed information and refusals to file. The Administrator rules on appeals resulting from penalties assessed for violations of the act.

Conservation Programs CFSA conservation programs help preserve and improve the wealth and promise of America's farmlands.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) targets the most fragile farmland by encouraging farmers to stop growing crops on cropland designated by soil conservationists and plant a permanent vegetative cover instead. In return, the farmer receives an annual rental payment.

The Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) is a joint effort by agricultural producers, Federal and State agencies, and other groups to restore and protect the Nation's land and water resources and preserve the environment. Cost-sharing is provided to ranchers/farmers to encourage them to carry out conservation and environmental protection practices on agricultural land that result in long-term public benefits.

Producers who plant agricultural commodities on highly erodible land without an approved conservation plan or system, or wetland converted after December 23, 1985, will be considered ineligible for USDA program benefits. In addition, producers who convert wetland after December 28, 1990, will be ineligible for USDA benefits until the wetland is restored. Other provisions of the 1990 law are designed to discourage farming practices that may have adverse environmental impacts.

For further information, contact the Public Affairs Staff, Consolidated Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, DC 20013. Phone, 202-720-5237.

Commodity Credit Corporation

The Commodity Credit Corporation was organized October 17, 1933, pursuant to Executive Order 6340 of October 16, 1933, under the laws of the State of Delaware, as an agency of the United States. From October 17, 1933, to July 1, 1939, the Corporation was managed and operated in close affiliation with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. On July 1, 1939, the agency was transferred to the Department of Agriculture by the President's Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1939 (5 U.S.C. app.). Approval of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act on June 29, 1948 (15 U.S.C. 714), subsequently amended, established the Corporation, effective July 1, 1948, as an agency and instrumentality of the United States under a permanent Federal charter.

The Corporation stabilizes, supports, and protects farm income and prices, assists in maintaining balanced and adequate supplies of agricultural commodities and their products, and facilitates the orderly distribution of commodities.

The Corporation is managed by a Board of Directors, subject to the general supervision and direction of the Secretary of Agriculture, who is an *ex officio* Director and Chairman of the Board. The Board consists of seven members (in addition to the Secretary of Agriculture), who are appointed by the President of the United States.

The Corporation is capitalized at \$100 million and has statutory authority to borrow up to \$30 billion from the U.S. Treasury. It utilizes the personnel and facilities of the Consolidated Farm Service Agency and, in certain foreign assistance operations, the Foreign Agricultural Service to carry out its activities.

A commodity office in Kansas City, MO, has specific responsibilities for the acquisition, handling, storage, and disposal of commodities and products held by the Corporation.

Commodity Stabilization Loan, purchase, and/or payment programs of the Corporation are administered by CFSA for wheat, corn, upland and extra-

long staple cotton, peanuts, rice, tobacco, milk, honey, barley, oats, grain sorghum, rye, soybeans and minor oilseeds, sugarbeets, and sugarcane.

Commodities acquired under the stabilization program are disposed of through domestic and export sales, commodity certificate exchanges, transfers to other Government agencies, and donations for domestic and foreign welfare use. The Corporation also is authorized to exchange surplus agricultural commodities it has acquired by the Corporation for strategic and other materials and services produced abroad.

Foreign Assistance Under Public Law 480, the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1691), the Corporation carries out assigned foreign assistance activities, such as guaranteeing the credit sale of U.S. agricultural commodities abroad. Major emphasis is also being directed toward meeting the needs of developing nations under the Food for Peace Act of 1966 (7 U.S.C. 1691), which further amends the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954. Under these authorities, agricultural commodities are supplied and exported to combat hunger and malnutrition and to encourage economic development in the developing countries. In addition, the Corporation supplies commodities under the Food for Progress Program to provide assistance to developing democracies.

The Corporation encourages U.S. financial institutions to provide financing to developing countries under the Export Credit Guarantee Programs administered by the Foreign Agricultural Service.

For further information, contact the Public Affairs Staff, Commodity Credit Corporation, Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, DC 20013. Phone, 202-720-5237. For information about Commodity Credit Corporation export programs, contact the Information Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, Department of Agriculture. Phone, 202-720-3448.

Federal Crop Insurance Corporation

The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) is a Government-owned corporation within the Consolidated

Farm Service Agency (CFSA). The purpose of FCIC is to promote the national welfare by improving the economic stability of agriculture through a sound system of crop insurance.

The manager of FCIC is also the Deputy Administrator for Risk Management, Consolidated Farm Service Agency. The manager is responsible for directing a widely used and actuarially sound crop insurance program; providing an alternate form of coverage for crops that are currently not insurable and evaluating new insurance products. The manager also serves as a member of the FCIC Board of Directors and acts as facilitator for board activities.

Federal crop insurance protects against unavoidable production losses due to adverse weather and other named perils. The protection does not extend to crop losses resulting from neglect, poor farming practices, or theft, and does not insure against financial losses resulting from low prices.

FCIC was established on February 16, 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1501). On October 13, 1994, the Federal Crop Insurance Reform Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 1501 note) significantly changed the way in which government assists producers suffering a major crop loss. A major objective of the reform was to replace the uncertainty of previous ad hoc disaster assistance with the predictability of crop insurance protection.

Under the new insurance program, producers must purchase at least the catastrophic level (CAT) of crop insurance of economic significance to participate in USDA price support and production adjustment programs, certain USDA farm loans and the Conservation Reserve Program. CAT coverage provides pre-acre return similar to the coverage under most previous ad hoc disaster programs. The coverage is fully subsidized by the Federal Government apart from a nominal processing fee paid by the producer. In order to give producers more service options, catastrophic insurance coverage may be obtained from either commercial insurance agents or local USDA offices.

Producers may purchase additional insurance coverage providing greater

protection. This additional coverage is only available through commercial insurance companies and agents. To participate at higher levels of coverage, FCIC has provided additional money and policy incentives.

For crops that are not yet insurable, a provision of the Crop Insurance Act establishes a Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). In the event of a catastrophic crop loss, NAP provides benefits that are similar to those provided by catastrophic crop insurance. Payments are triggered when area losses for the crop exceed 35 percent, and individual crop losses exceed 50 percent of the expected yield. Producers do not have to participate in the NAP program in order to be eligible for other USDA farm programs or loans. The NAP program is administered through local USDA offices.

FCIC's mission is carried out by employees of the Consolidated Farm Service Agency and commercial insurance companies and their agents.

Farm Loans

The Consolidated Farm Service Agency has direct and guaranteed loan programs to help farmers who are temporarily unable to obtain private, commercial credit. In many cases, these are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for commercial credit. In other cases, these are farmers who have suffered financial setbacks from natural disasters, or who have limited resources with which to establish and maintain profitable farming operations.

Farmers who qualify obtain their credit needs through the use of loan guarantees, where a local agricultural lender makes and services the loan, and CFSA guarantees the loan up to a maximum of 90 percent. CFSA also has the responsibility of approving all loan guarantees and providing monitoring and oversight of lenders' activities.

For those unable to qualify for a loan guarantee from a commercial lender, CFSA also makes direct loans. These loans are made and serviced by a CFSA official, who provides credit counseling

and supervision to its direct borrowers by assessing and evaluating all aspects of the farming operation.

Unlike the commodity loans, CFSA administers several types of loans which can only be approved for those who have repayment ability, and the loans must be fully secured and are not "nonrecourse." These include farm ownership loans, farm ownership downpayment loans, farm operating loans, emergency loss loans, and rural youth loans.

CFSA's mission is to provide supervised credit. This means that CFSA should be identifying each individual borrower's specific strengths and weaknesses in farm production and management, then providing information on alternatives and other options to address the weaknesses and achieve maximum productivity. Supervised credit makes the difference between success and failure for many farm credit customers.

To help them retain ownership of their farms, CFSA provides certain loan servicing benefits to borrowers whose accounts are delinquent due to circumstances beyond their control, such as:

- reamortization, restructuring, and/or deferral of loans;
- rescheduling at the limited resource (lower interest) rate;
- acceptance of conservation easements on environmentally sensitive land in exchange for writedown of debt; and

—writing down the debt to its net recovery value.

If none of these options results in a feasible farming operation, customers are offered the opportunity to purchase their debt at its net recovery value. If this is not possible, other options include the following:

—conveyance of the property to CFSA and then leasing it back with an option to purchase;

—debt settlement based on ability to pay; (The collateral securing the loan may be retained if its market value is paid.) and

—in extreme cases, where a successful operation cannot be developed, CFSA helps the borrower to retain the homestead and up to 10 acres of land.

If not leased or purchased by their former owners, farms that come into CFSA ownership are sold at market value, with a preference to beginning and minority farmers. Beginning farmers must have been in the business less than 10 years and meet certain other requirements concerning land ownership and management ability.

The eventual goal of CFSA's farm credit programs is to graduate its customers to commercial credit. Once a farmer is able to obtain credit from the commercial lending sector, the Agency's mission of providing temporary, supervised credit is successfully completed.

For further information, contact the Manager, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-254-8460.

Foreign Agricultural Service

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) has primary responsibility for USDA's overseas market information, access, and development programs. It also administers USDA's export assistance and foreign food assistance programs. The Service carries out its tasks through its network of agricultural counselors, attachés, and trade officers stationed overseas and its U.S.-based team of analysts, marketing specialists, negotiators, and other professionals.

The Foreign Agricultural Service maintains a worldwide agricultural intelligence and reporting system through its attaché service. This service consists of a team of professional agriculturalists posted in more than 75 countries around the world. They represent the Department of Agriculture and provide information and data on foreign government agricultural policies, analyses of supply and demand conditions, commercial trade relationships, and market opportunities.

They report on more than 100 farm commodities, weather, economic factors, and related subjects that affect agriculture and agricultural trade.

At FAS in Washington, DC, agricultural economists and marketing specialists analyze these and other reports. These analyses are supplemented by accumulated background information and by the Crop Condition Assessment system, which analyzes Landsat satellite, weather, and other data.

To improve access for U.S. farm products abroad, FAS' international trade policy specialists coordinate and direct USDA's responsibilities in international trade agreement programs and negotiations. They maintain an ongoing effort to reduce foreign trade barriers and practices that discourage the export of U.S. farm products.

To follow foreign governmental actions that affect the market for U.S. agricultural commodities, FAS relies on its agricultural counselors and attachés. In Washington, a staff of international trade specialists analyzes the trade policies and practices of foreign governments to ensure conduct in conformance with international treaty obligations. During international negotiations, FAS provides staff and support for U.S. agricultural representation.

The Service has a continuing market development program to create, service, and expand commercial export markets for U.S. agricultural products. It carries out programs with nonprofit commodity groups called Cooperators, trade associations, and State agriculture departments and their regional associations. It manages market opportunity referral services and organizes trade fairs and sales teams.

The Service's Office of the General Sales Manager also oversees agricultural functions under the Public Law 480 Food for Peace Program, title I (7 U.S.C. 1701); section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1431); the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) Export Credit Guarantee Programs; several other export assistance programs;

and direct sales of Corporation-owned surplus commodities.

The Commodity Credit Corporation Export Credit Guarantee (GSM-102) and the Intermediate Export Credit Guarantee (GSM-103) Programs encourage the development or expansion of overseas markets for U.S. agricultural commodities by providing guarantees on private financing of U.S. exports to foreign buyers purchasing on credit terms.

The foreign buyer contracts for the purchase of U.S. commodities on a deferred-payment basis of 3 years or less under GSM-102, or between 3 and 10 years under GSM-103. The foreign buyer's bank issues a letter of credit to guarantee payment to the U.S. exporter or an assignee U.S. lending institution. To receive the payment guarantee, the exporter registers the sale with CCC prior to export and pays a guarantee fee. The payment guarantee is implemented only if the foreign bank fails to pay the exporter or the assignee U.S. lending institution.

The Corporation considers coverage on sales of any U.S. agricultural commodity that has the potential of expanding U.S. export markets. A U.S. exporter, private foreign buyer, or foreign government may submit requests that may result in authorized guarantee coverage.

Several export assistance programs are designed to counter or offset the adverse effects from competitors' unfair trade practices on U.S. agriculture. These programs include the Export Enhancement Program (EEP) and the Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP).

Under EEP, USDA provides Corporation-owned commodities or cash as export bonuses to make U.S. commodities more competitive in the world marketplace. The DEIP and EEP programs are similar, but DEIP is restricted to dairy products.

The Foreign Agricultural Service is also responsible for sales of Corporation-owned surplus commodities to private trade, foreign government, and nonprofit organizations. Direct sales may be negotiated on a case-by-case basis and on a cash or credit basis. The only

criteria for financing direct sales are a 3-year maximum credit plan and the arrangement of suitable payment terms.

Another program authorized by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 is the Market Promotion Program, formerly known as Targeted Export Assistance (TEA). The Market Promotion Program provides assistance in the form of cash or commodities to trade promotion organizations to help fund their market development activities overseas, particularly in those markets where the United States encounters unfair trade practices by foreign competitors or importers.

The Service helps other USDA agencies, U.S. universities, and others enhance America's agricultural competitiveness globally; and increases income and food availability in developing nations by mobilizing expertise for agriculturally led economic growth.

The Service's programs enhance U.S. agriculture's competitiveness by providing U.S. agriculturalists and scientists with linkages to world resources. These linkages often produce new germplasm and technologies that can be vital to improving our current agricultural base and producing new and alternative products. They also foster relationships and understandings that result in trade opportunities and strengthened strategic and political ties.

The Service is a link between the technical expertise of the U.S. agricultural community and Third World nations. By sharing agricultural knowledge with less-developed nations, the United States provides tools to help build stable economies and a more prosperous world. In the process, less-developed nations overcome the barriers of hunger and poverty and gain the economic means to buy needed goods and services in the world marketplace.

Also, it manages programs to exchange visits, germplasm, and technologies between U.S. and international scientists; supports collaborative research projects of mutual interest to the United States and other nations; taps the U.S. agricultural community to provide technical assistance and professional development and training programs to assist economic development in lower income nations; serves as U.S. liaison with international organizations; and organizes overseas trade and investment missions.

These activities serve the needs of other USDA agencies, the Agency for International Development, other public and private institutions, foreign nations, development banks, and the U.S. university and agricultural communities.

For further information, contact the Information Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-1000. Phone, 202-720-7115.

Research, Education, and Economics

This mission area's main focus is to create, apply, and transfer knowledge and technology to provide affordable food and fiber, ensure foods safety and nutrition, and support rural development and natural resource needs of people by conducting integrated national and international research, information, education, and statistical programs and services that are in the national interest.

Agricultural Research Service

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) provides access to agricultural information and develops new knowledge and technology needed to solve technical agricultural problems of broad scope and high national priority. The goal is to ensure adequate availability of high quality, safe food, and other agricultural products—to meet the nutritional needs of the American

consumer, sustain a viable and competitive food and agricultural economy, enhance the quality of life and economic opportunity for rural citizens and society as a whole, and maintain a quality environment and natural resource base.

All administrative and management responsibilities of the four Research, Education, and Economic agencies—Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), Economic Research Service (ERS), and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)—are administered by the ARS Administrative and Financial

Management Unit headquartered in Washington, DC.

Research activities are carried out at 114 domestic locations (including Puerto Rico) and 2 overseas locations. Much of this research is conducted in cooperation with partners in State universities and experiment stations, other Federal agencies, and private organizations. A national program staff, headquartered in Beltsville, MD, is the focal point in the overall planning and coordination of ARS' research programs. Day-to-day management of the respective programs for specific field locations is assigned to eight area offices.

Area Offices—Agricultural Research Service

Office	Address
BELTSVILLE AREA—Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, National Arboretum, Washington, DC	Bldg. 003, Beltsville Agricultural Research Ctr. W., Beltsville, MD 20705
MIDSOUTH AREA—Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee	P.O. Box 225, Stoneville, MS 38776
MIDWEST AREA—Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin	1815 N. University St., Peoria, IL 61804
NORTHERN PLAINS AREA—Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming	Suite 150, 1201 Oakridge Rd., Fort Collins, CO 80525-5562
NORTH ATLANTIC AREA—Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia	600 E. Mermaid Ln., Philadelphia, PA 19118
PACIFIC WEST AREA—Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington	800 Buchanan St., Albany, CA 94710
SOUTH ATLANTIC AREA—Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Virgin Islands, Virginia	P.O. Box 5677, Athens, GA 30613
SOUTHERN PLAINS AREA—Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas	Suite 230, 7607 Eastmark Dr., College Station, TX 77840

The National Agricultural Library (NAL), administered by ARS, provides information services over a broad range of agricultural interests to a wide cross-section of users, from research scientists to the general public. The Library assists its users through a variety of specialized information centers. Its staff utilizes advanced information technologies to generate new information products, creating an electronic library as it improves access to the knowledge stored in its multimedia collection of more than 2 million items.

Information is made available through loans, photocopies, reference services,

and literature searches. A subject profiling system for selective searches of agricultural data bases is available for USDA scientists. Citations to the agricultural literature are stored in the AGRICultural OnLine Access (AGRICOLA) data base, available through online computer systems and on compact disc. The Library also distributes in the United States the AGRIS data base of citations to the agricultural literature prepared by centers in various parts of the world and coordinated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

For further information, contact the Information Staff, Agricultural Research Service, Department of Agriculture, 6303 Ivy Lane, Room 450, Greenbelt, MD 20770. Phone, 301-344-2340.

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) expands the research and higher education functions of the former Cooperative State Research Service and the education and outreach functions of the former Extension Service. The result is better customer service and an enhanced ability to respond to national priorities.

CSREES links the research and education resources and activities of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and works with the following institutions: land-grant institutions in each State, territory, and the District of Columbia; more than 130 colleges of agriculture; 59 agricultural experiment stations; 57 cooperative extension services; 63 schools of forestry; sixteen 1890 historically Black land-grant institutions and Tuskegee University; 27 colleges of veterinary medicine; 42 schools and colleges of family and consumer services; twenty-nine 1994 Native American land-grant institutions; and 127 Hispanic-serving institutions, including 81 members and 45 associate members of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.

In cooperation with its partners and customers, CSREES provides the focus to advance a global system of research, extension, and higher education in the food and agricultural sciences and related environmental and human sciences to benefit people, communities, and the Nation.

The CSREES mission emphasizes partnerships with the public and private sectors to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources. CSREES programs increase and provide access to scientific knowledge; strengthen the capabilities of land-grant and other institutions in research, extension, and higher education; increase access to and use of improved communication and network systems; and promote informed decisionmaking by producers, families, and social conditions in the United States and globally. These conditions include improved agricultural and other

economic enterprises; safer, cleaner water, food, and air; enhanced stewardship and management of natural resources; healthier, more responsible and more productive individuals, families, and communities; and a stable, secure, diverse, and affordable national food supply.

CSREES' research, extension, and education leadership is provided through programs in Plant and Animal Production, Protection, and Processing; Natural Resources and Environment; Rural, Economic, and Social Development; Families, 4-H, and Nutrition; Partnerships; Competitive Research Grants and Awards Management; Science and Education Resources Development; and Communications, Technology, and Distance Education.

The CSREES partnership with the land-grant universities and their representatives is critical to the effective shared planning, delivery, and accountability for research, higher education, and extension programs.

CSREES is a recognized leader in the design, organization, and application of advanced communication technologies and in meeting the growing demand for enhanced distance education capabilities. CSREES provides essential community access to research and education knowledge and connects the private citizen to other Federal Government information.

CSREES also provides support and assistance for the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences, the National Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisory Board, and the Committee of Nine (for regional programs).

For further information, contact the Communications, Information, and Distance Education Office, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-0906. Internet: CSREES@reeusda.gov. Phone, 202-720-3029. Fax, 202-690-0289. TDD, 702-690-1899.

Economic Research Service

The mission of the Economic Research Service (ERS) is to provide economic and other social science information and

analysis for public and private decisions on agriculture, food natural resources, and rural America. ERS produces such information for use by the general public and to help the executive and legislative branches develop, administer, and evaluate agricultural and rural policies and programs. ERS produces economic information through a program of research and analysis on: domestic and international agricultural developments; statistical indicators of food and consumer issues and concerns, including nutrition education and food assistance, food safety regulation, determinants of consumer demand for quality and safety, and food marketing trends and developments; agricultural resource and environmental issues; and the effect of public and private actions and policies on national rural and agricultural conditions, including the transformation of the rural economy, the financial performance of the farm sector, and the implications of changing farm credit and financial market structures.

For further information, contact the Information Services Division, Economics Research Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20005-4788. Phone, 202-219-0515.

Office of Energy and New Uses The Office of Energy and New Uses serves as the focal point for all energy-related matters within the Department. The Office is responsible for developing and coordinating all USDA energy policies; reviewing and evaluating all USDA energy and energy-related programs; evaluating the economics of new non-food uses for agricultural crops; serving as economic liaison on new uses issues; and providing liaison with the Department of Energy and other Federal agencies and departments on energy activities that may affect agriculture and rural America. A major component of this responsibility for the coordination and evaluation of the departmental Biofuels Program. The Office also represents the Department in meetings with agriculture, industry, and consumer groups to discuss effects of departmental energy policies, programs, and proposals on the agricultural sector and rural economy.

For further information, contact the Information Services Division, Economic Research Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20005-4788. Phone, 202-219-0515.

National Agricultural Statistics Service

The National Agricultural Statistics Service prepares estimates and reports on production, supply, price, and other items necessary for the orderly operation of the U.S. agricultural economy.

The reports include statistics on field crops, fruits and vegetables, dairy, cattle, hogs, sheep, poultry, aquaculture, and related commodities or processed products. Other estimates concern farm numbers, farm production expenditures, agricultural chemical use, prices received by farmers for products sold, prices paid for commodities and services, indexes of prices received and paid, parity prices, farm employment, and farm wage rates.

The Service prepares these estimates through a complex system of sample surveys of producers, processors, buyers, and others associated with agriculture. Information is gathered by mail, telephone, personal interviews, and field visits.

The 45 State-Federal offices, serving all 50 States, and the national office prepare weekly, monthly, annual, and other periodic reports for free distribution to the news media, Congress, and survey respondents. The reports are available to others on a subscription basis. Information on crop and livestock products appears in about 400 reports issued annually. Cooperative agreements with State agencies also permit preparation and publication of estimates of individual crops and livestock by counties in most States.

The Service performs reimbursable survey work and statistical consulting services for other Federal and State agencies and provides technical assistance for developing agricultural data systems in other countries.

Economics Management Staff

The Economics Management Staff provides management services to the National Agricultural Statistics Service,

the Economic Research Service, the World Agricultural Outlook Board, the Economic Analysis Staff, and the Office of Energy. These services include budget, financial management, personnel and related programs, administrative services,

information, equal opportunity and civil rights, and general management assistance.

For further information, contact the Information Division, Economics Management Staff, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20005-4789. Phone, 202-219-0504.

Natural Resources and Environment

This mission area is responsible for fostering sound stewardship of 75 percent of the Nation's total land area. Ecosystems underpin the operating philosophy of the service in order to maximize stewardship of our natural resources. The ecosystem approach ensures that products, values, services, and uses desired by people are produced in ways that sustain healthy, productive ecosystems.

Forest Service

[For the Forest Service statement of organization, see the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 36, Part 200.1]

The Forest Service was created by the Transfer Act of February 1, 1905 (16 U.S.C. 472), which transferred the Federal forest reserves and the responsibility for their management from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. The forest reserves were established by the President from the public domain under authority of the Creative Act of March 3, 1891 (26 Stat. 1103). The protection and development of the reserves (which became the national forests in 1907) are governed by the Organic Act of June 4, 1897, as amended (16 U.S.C. 473-478); the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of June 12, 1960 (16 U.S.C. 528-531); the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1601-1610); and the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (90 Stat. 2947). The Weeks Law of March 1, 1911, as amended (16 U.S.C. 480), allowed the Government to purchase and exchange land for national forests. Objectives The Forest Service has the Federal responsibility for national

leadership in forestry. As set forth in law, its mission is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable, multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people. To accomplish this goal, it has adopted objectives which include:

- advocating a conservation ethic in promoting the health, productivity, diversity, and beauty of forests and associated lands;
- listening to people and responding to their diverse needs in making decisions;
- protecting and managing the national forests and grasslands to best demonstrate the sustainable, multiple-use management concept;
- providing technical and financial assistance to State and private forest landowners, encouraging them toward active stewardship and quality land management in meeting their specific objectives;
- providing technical and financial assistance to cities and communities to improve their natural environment by planting trees and caring for their forests;
- providing international technical assistance and scientific exchanges to sustain and enhance global resources and to encourage quality land management;
- assisting States and communities in using the forests wisely to promote rural economic development and a quality rural environment;
- developing and providing scientific and technical knowledge, improving our capability to protect, manage, and use forests and rangelands; and
- providing work, training, and education to the unemployed,

underemployed, elderly, youth, and the disadvantaged.

National Forest System The Service manages 155 national forests, 20 national grasslands, and 8 land utilization projects on over 191 million acres in 44 States, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico under the principles of multiple-use and sustained yield. The Nation's tremendous need for wood and paper products is balanced with the other vital, renewable resources or benefits that the national forests and grasslands provide: recreation and natural beauty, wildlife habitat, livestock forage, and water supplies. The guiding principle is the greatest good to the greatest number in the long run.

These lands are protected as much as possible from wildfire, epidemics of disease and insect pests, erosion, floods, and water and air pollution. Burned areas get emergency seeding treatment to prevent massive erosion and stream siltation. Roads and trails are built where needed to allow for closely regulated timber harvesting and to give the public access to outdoor recreation areas and provide scenic drives and hikes. Picnic, camping, water-sport, skiing, and other areas are provided with facilities for public convenience and enjoyment. Timber harvesting methods are used that will protect the land and streams, assure rapid renewal of the forest, provide food and cover for wildlife and fish, and have minimum impact on scenic and recreation values. Local communities benefit from the logging and milling activities. These lands also provide needed oil, gas, and minerals. Rangelands are improved for millions of livestock and game animals. The national forests provide a refuge for many species of endangered birds, animals, and fish. Some 34.6 million acres are set aside as wilderness and 175,000 acres as primitive areas where timber will not be harvested.

Cooperation With the States The Service provides national leadership and financial and technical assistance to non-Federal forest landowners, operators, processors of forest products, and urban forestry interests. Through its cooperative State and private forestry

programs, the Service protects and improves the quality of air, water, soil, and open space and encourages uses of natural resources on non-Federal lands that best meet the needs of the Nation, while protecting the environment.

Cooperative programs are carried out through the State foresters or equivalent State officials, who receive grant funding under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2101). Cooperators at the State and local levels provide the delivery system for most State and private forestry programs.

Grant funds and technical assistance are available for rural forestry assistance, forestry incentives, insect and disease control, urban forestry assistance, rural fire prevention and control, organization management assistance, State forest resource planning, and technology implementation.

The Service also cooperates with the Soil Conservation Service, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, and other USDA agencies in providing leadership and technical assistance for the forestry aspects of conservation programs.

State and private forestry also is responsible for ensuring that the Service and its cooperators keep abreast of the best knowledge and technology in carrying out its programs, and helping to develop technology transfer plans for implementing research results for a broad range of potential users.

Forest Research The Service performs basic and applied research to develop the scientific information and technology needed to protect, manage, use, and sustain the natural resources of the Nation's 1.6 billion acres of forests and rangelands. This research is conducted through a network of eight forest experiment stations, a Forest Products Laboratory, and the International Institute of Tropical Forestry, including research work units at 77 project locations throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Pacific Trust Islands. Under the authority of the McSweeney-McNary Act of May 22, 1928, as amended and supplemented (45 Stat. 699), research is often performed in cooperation with many of the State

agricultural colleges. The Forest Research Service's strategy focuses on three major program components: understanding the structure and functions of forest and range ecosystems; understanding how people perceive and value the protection, management, and use of natural resources; and determining which protection, management, and utilization practices are most suitable for sustainable production and use of the world's natural resources.

International Forestry In response to the U.S. commitment to support natural resource conservation around the world, Congress established the International Forestry Division within the USDA's Forest Service. Its mandate is to provide assistance that promotes sustainable development and global environmental stability, particularly in key countries important in global climate change. This mandate includes a national goal for sustainable management of all forests by the year 2000, investigating research topics with implications for global forest management, or actually sharing resource management experience with colleagues around the world.

Responsibility for global stewardship is shared by the entire Forest Service. The Forest Service's Office of International Forestry mobilizes support of all Forest Service units—Research, National Forest System, State and Private Forestry, Administration, and Programs and Legislation—to work with other governmental agencies,

nongovernmental groups, and international organizations in four major international areas: strategic planning and policy development, training and technical assistance, research and scientific exchange, and disaster relief.

Human Resource Programs The Service operates the Youth Conservation Corps and the Volunteers in the National Forests programs and participates with the Department of Labor on several human resource programs that involve the Nation's citizens, both young and old, in forestry-related activities. Included in these programs are the Job Corps and the Senior Community Service

Employment Program. These programs annually accomplish millions of dollars worth of conservation work, while providing participants with such benefits as training, paid employment, and meaningful outdoor experience.

Field Offices—Forest Service

		Address
National Forest System Regions¹—Regional Forester		
1. Northern	Federal Bldg. (P.O. Box 7669), Missoula, MT 59807	
2. Rocky Mountain	740 Simms St. (P.O. Box 25127), Lakewood, CO 80225	
3. Southwestern	517 Gold Ave. SW., Albuquerque, NM 87102	
4. Intermountain	324 25th St., Ogden, UT 84401	
5. Pacific Southwest	630 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111	
6. Pacific Northwest	333 SW. 1st Ave. (P.O. Box 3623), Portland, OR 97208	
8. Southern	1720 Peachtree Rd. NW., Atlanta, GA 30367	
9. Eastern	310 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53203	
10. Alaska	Federal Office Bldg. (P.O. Box 21628), Juneau, AK 99802	
Forest and Range Experiment Stations—Director		
Intermountain	324 25th St., Ogden, UT 84401	
North Central	1992 Folwell Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108	
Northeastern	Suite 200, 100 Matson Ford Rd. (P.O. Box 6775), Radnor, PA 19087-4585	
Pacific Northwest	333 SW. 1st Ave. (P.O. Box 3890), Portland, OR 97208	
Pacific Southwest	1960 Addison St. (P.O. Box 245), Berkeley, CA 94701	
Rocky Mountain	240 W. Prospect Ave., Fort Collins, CO 80526	
Southeastern	200 Weaver Blvd. (P.O. Box 2860), Asheville, NC 28804	
Southern	701 Loyola Ave., U.S. Postal Service Bldg., New Orleans, LA 70113	
Forest Products Laboratory	1 Gifford Pinchot Dr., Madison, WI 53705	
State and Private Forestry Areas²—Director		
Northeastern	370 Reed Rd., Broomall, PA 19008	
International Institute of Tropical Forestry	Guadecanal St. (Call Box 25000), Rio Piedras, PR 00928	

¹ There is no Region 7.

² In Regions 1 through 6, 8, and 10, State and private forestry activities are directed from regional headquarters.

For further information, contact the Public Affairs Office, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090. Phone, 202-720-3760.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

[For the Natural Resources Conservation Service statement of organization, see the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 7, Parts 600 and 601]

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly the Soil Conservation Service, has national responsibility for helping America's

farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners develop and carry out voluntary efforts to conserve and protect our natural resources. NRCS is the technical delivery arm for conservation of the United States Department of Agriculture.

NRCS key programs are as follows:
Conservation Technical Assistance This is the foundation program of NRCS. Under this program, the agency provides technical assistance to land users and units of government for the purpose of sustaining agricultural productivity and protecting and enhancing the natural resource base. This assistance is based on the voluntary cooperation of private landowners and involves comprehensive approaches to reduce soil erosion, improve soil and water quantity and quality, improve and conserve wetlands, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, improve air quality, improve pasture and range condition, reduce upstream flooding, and improve woodlands. Every year, more than 1 million land users receive these technical services, which are channeled through nearly 3,000 conservation districts across the United States and its territories.

Natural Resources Inventory The Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) is a report issued every 5 years on how well the Nation is sustaining natural resources on non-Federal land. This report contains the most comprehensive and statistically reliable data of its kind in the world. The NRI provides data on the kind and amount of soil, water, vegetation, and related resources; the effects of current land use and management practices on the present and future supply and condition of soil, water, and vegetation; and the changes and trends in the use, extent, and condition of these resources. NRI data and analytical software are available to the public on CD-ROM.

National Cooperative Soil Survey The National Cooperative Soil Survey provides the public with local information on the uses and capabilities of their soils. The published soil survey for a county or other designated area includes maps and interpretations that

are the foundation for farm planning and other private land use decisions as well as for resource planning and policy by local, State, and Federal Governments.

The surveys are conducted cooperatively with other Federal, State, and local agencies and land grant universities. NRCS is the national and world leader in soil classification and soil mapping, and is now expanding its work in soil quality.

Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting Program This program collects snowpack moisture data and forecasts seasonal water supplies for streams that derive most of their water from snowmelt. It helps farm operators, rural communities, and municipalities manage water resources through water supply forecasts. It also provides hydrometeorological data for regulating reservoir storage and managing streamflow. The Snow Supply Program is conducted in 11 Western States and Alaska.

Plant Materials Program At 26 plant materials centers across the country, NRCS tests, selects, and ensures the commercial availability of new and improved conservation plants for erosion reduction, wetland restoration, water quality improvement, streambank and riparian area protection, coastal dune stabilization, biomass production, carbon sequestration, and other needs. The Plant Materials Program is a cooperative effort with conservation districts, other Federal and State agencies, commercial businesses, and seed and nursery associations.

River Basin Surveys and Investigations This program involves NRCS with Federal, State, and local agencies in river basin surveys and investigations, flood hazard analysis, and floodplain management assistance. It addresses a variety of natural resource concerns—water quality, water conservation, wetlands protection, agricultural drought, rural development, municipal and industrial water needs, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Public Law 83-566 Small Watersheds Program The Small Watersheds Program helps local sponsoring groups

to voluntarily plan and install watershed protection projects on private lands. These projects include flood prevention, water quality improvement, soil erosion and sediment reduction, rural and municipal water supply, irrigation water management, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, and wetlands restoration. NRCS helps local community groups, government entities, and private landowners working together using an integrated, comprehensive watershed approach to natural resource planning. Public Law 78-534 Flood Prevention Program This program applies to 11 specific flood prevention projects covering about 35 million acres in 11 States. It provides help in flood prevention, water management, and reduction and erosion sedimentation. It also can help in developing recreational facilities and improving fish and wildlife habitat.

Emergency Watershed Protection Program This program provides emergency assistance to safeguard lives and property in jeopardy due to sudden watershed impairment by natural disasters. Emergency work includes quickly establishing a protective plant cover on denuded land and stream banks; opening dangerously restricted channels; and repairing diversions and levees. An emergency area need not be declared a national disaster area to be eligible for help under this program. Great Plains Conservation Program This program (GPCP) helps bring about long-term solutions to natural resource problems in the 10 Great Plains States. It is aimed at total conservation treatment of entire farms or ranches. Program participation is voluntary and provides technical assistance and a long-term cost-share contract between the participant and NRCS. GPCP has been effective in addressing the needs of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and the needs of American Indian farmers and ranchers. In addition to providing significant erosion and sediment reduction benefits, the program addresses problems related to water quality, wildlife habitat protection, and other environmental concerns.

Resource Conservation and Development Program This program (RC&D) is a locally driven program—an opportunity for civic-oriented groups to work together sharing knowledge and resources in solving common problems facing their region. The program offers aid in balancing the environmental, economic, and social needs of an area. A USDA coordinator helps each designated RC&D council plan, develop, and carry out programs for resource conservation, water management, community development, and environmental enhancement.

Rural Abandoned Mine Program This program (RAMP) helps protect people and the environment from the adverse effects of past coal-mining practices and promotes the development of the soil and water resources on unreclaimed mine land. It provides technical and financial assistance to land users who voluntarily enter into 5-to-10-year contracts for the reclamation of eligible land and water.

Wetlands Reserve Program Under this program, USDA purchases easements from agricultural land owners who voluntarily agree to restore and protect wetlands. NRCS employees help these owners develop plans to retire critical wetland habitat for crop production. The primary objectives are to preserve and restore wetlands, improve wildlife habitat, and protect migratory waterfowl.

Water Bank Program NRCS helps landowners protect, improve, or restore wetlands by identifying eligible lands, helping owners develop conservation plans, and implementing necessary land treatments. Through 10-year rental agreements between USDA and landowners, the Water Bank Program protects important nesting, breeding, and feeding areas for migratory waterfowl. Other benefits of the program include water conservation, erosion control, flood control, and landscape beautification.

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program This voluntary incentive program supports the Nation's commitment to water quality in the Colorado River, which provides water to

more than 18 million people in parts of seven Western States and Mexico. NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to control salt loading in the Colorado River from both natural and human-caused sources. Among the remedies used are management practices to prevent irrigation-induced erosion. Forestry Incentives Program This program helps to increase the Nation's supply of products from nonindustrial private forest lands. This also ensures more effective use of existing forest lands and, over time, helps to prevent shortages and price increases for forest products. The program shares the cost

incurred by landowners for tree planting and timberstand improvement.

Farms-For-The-Future Program This program guarantees USDA loans and subsidizes interest on State loans to purchase agricultural land or development rights to preserve vital farmland resources for future generations. The money also can be reinvested by the States to generate earnings for future farmland protection efforts.

For further information, contact the Office of Public Affairs, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, DC 20013. Phone, 202-720-3210.

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Program Director, Evening and Saturday	RONALD MACNAB
Program Director, Government Audit Training Institute	DONALD SMULAND
Program Director, International Training	JANE BURKE
Program Director, International Visitor and Exchange	LILY PARSONS
Director of Administration	WILLIAM CAPEZIO
Registrar	CAROLYN NELSON

The Graduate School, U.S. Department of Agriculture, is a continuing education school offering career-related training to adults. It is self-supporting and does not receive direct appropriated funds from Congress or the Department of Agriculture. Fees charged individuals and Government agencies are nominal. Courses are planned with the assistance of Government professionals and specialists. The faculty is mostly part-time and is drawn from throughout Government and the community at large. They are selected because of their professional and specialized knowledge

and experience and thus bring a practicality and experience to their classrooms. Faculty holding regular Government positions take annual leave or leave without pay when teaching during their normal work hours. The school does not grant degrees but does provide planned sequences of courses leading to certificates of accomplishment in a number of occupational and career fields important to government. Training areas include management, auditing, computer science, communications, foreign language, procurement, financial management, and others.

The Graduate School's objective is to improve Government services by providing needed continuing education and training opportunities for Government employees and agencies. The Graduate School, administered by a Director and governed by a General Administration Board appointed by the

Secretary of Agriculture, was established by the Secretary of Agriculture on September 2, 1921, pursuant to act of May 15, 1862 (7 U.S.C. 2201); joint resolution of April 12, 1892 (27 Stat. 395); and the Deficiencies Appropriation Act of March 3, 1901 (20 U.S.C. 91).

For further information, contact the Information Office, Graduate School, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 129, 600 Maryland Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20024. Phone, 202-401-9129.

Sources of Information

Consumer Activities Educational, organizational, and financial assistance is offered to consumers and their families in such fields as rural housing and farm operating programs, improved nutrition, family living and recreation, food stamp, school lunch, donated foods, and other food programs. Phone, 202-447-2791.

Contracts and Small Business Activities Contact the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-7117.

Employment Most jobs in the Department are in the competitive service and are filled by applicants who have established eligibility under an appropriate examination administered by the Office of Personnel Management or Department Special Examining Units.

General employment inquiries may be sent to the Recruitment and Employment Division, Office of Personnel, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-5626.

Persons interested in employment in the Food and Nutrition Service should contact the Regional Offices located in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, San Francisco, and Robbinsville, NJ, or the national headquarters in Alexandria, VA. Phone, 703-305-2351.

Persons interested in employment in the Office of the Inspector General should contact the USDA Office of Personnel, Room 31-W, Administration Building, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-5781.

In addition, all Forest Service field units listed on page 141 will accept employment applications.

Environment Educational, organizational, technical, and financial assistance is offered to local citizens, their organizations and communities in such fields as watershed protection, flood prevention, soil and water conservation practices to reduce erosion and sedimentation, community water and waste disposal systems, safe use of pesticides, and the development of pesticide alternatives.

Contact the nearest county Extension agent or USDA office, or write to the Office of Public Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, for information on consumer activities and the environment, as previously described. Phone, 202-720-2791.

Films Motion pictures on a variety of agricultural subjects are available for loan through various State Extension Service film libraries. Contact the Video and Teleconference Division, Office of Public Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, for a listing of cooperating film libraries. Phone, 202-720-6072.

Color filmstrips and slide sets on a variety of subjects are available for purchase. For a listing of titles and prices, contact the Photography Division, Office of Public Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-6633.

Whistleblower Hotline Persons wishing to register complaints of alleged improprieties concerning the Department

should contact one of the Regional Offices or the Inspector General's "Whistleblower Hotline"—outside Washington, DC, phone toll-free, 800-424-9121; within the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, phone, 202-690-1622, or 202-690-1202 (TDD).

Reading Rooms Located at each USDA agency; addresses indicated in text.

Speakers Contact the nearest Department of Agriculture office or county Extension agent. In the District of Columbia, contact the Office of Public Liaison, Office of Public Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-2798.

For further information concerning the Department of Agriculture, contact the Office of Public Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Phone, 202-720-2791.