

USDA



**FY 2024 Annual Performance Plan
FY 2022 Annual Performance Report**

U.S. Department of Agriculture

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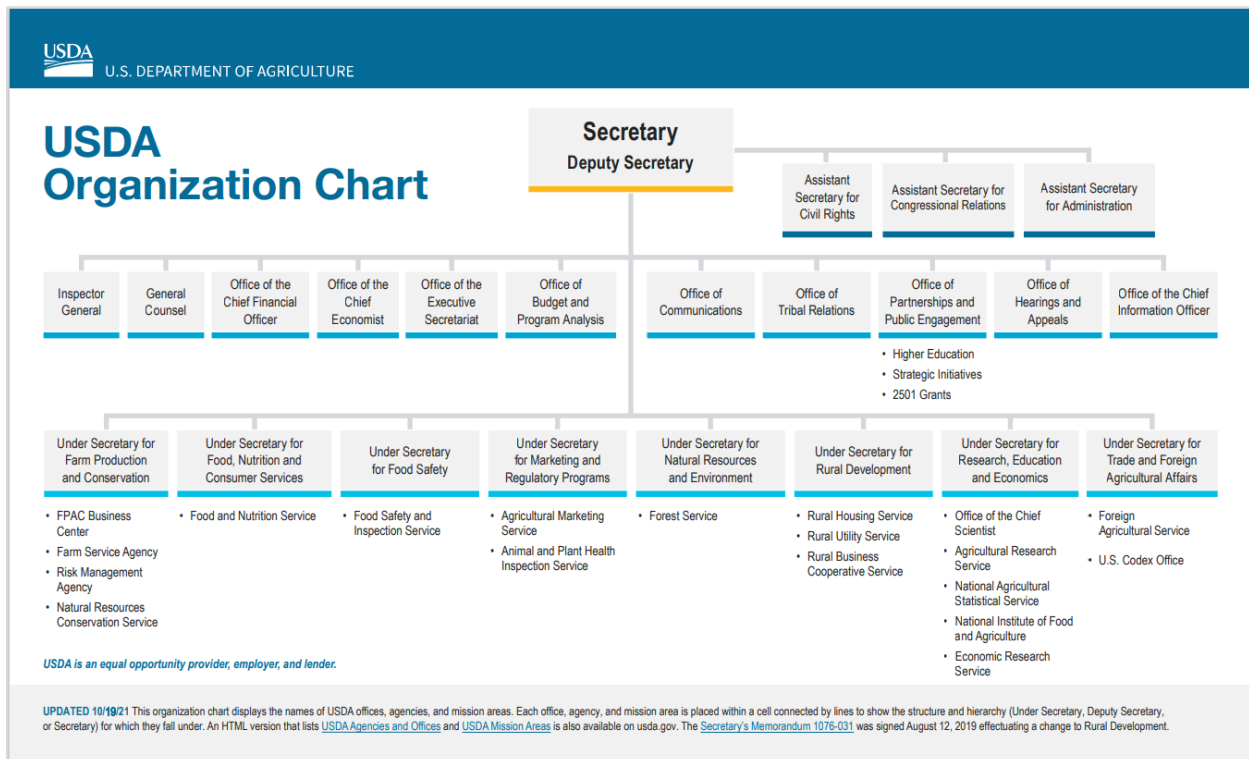
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About the U.S. Department of Agriculture

On May 15, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation to establish the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA or the Department). Two and a half years later in his final message to Congress, Lincoln called USDA “The People’s Department.” At that time, about half of all Americans lived on farms, compared with about two percent today. But through its work on food, agriculture, economic development, science, natural resource conservation, and a host of other issues, USDA continues to fulfill Lincoln's vision—serving millions of Americans every day.

The agriculture and food industry contributes \$1.1 trillion to the U.S. domestic product and represents nearly 11% of total U.S. employment. Furthermore, USDA over the years has gained more authorities to expand its support not only in agriculture but the support infrastructure that give all producers better access to market and its surrounding communities and natural resources to also thrive.

Today, USDA is comprised of 29 agencies organized under eight Mission Areas and 16 Staff Offices. The department employs nearly 100,000 persons who serve the American people at more than 6,000 locations across the country and abroad (see USDA Organization Chart).



Mission, Vision, and Core Values

USDA Mission: To serve all Americans by providing effective, innovative, science-based public policy leadership in agriculture, food and nutrition, natural resource protection and management, rural development, and related issues with a commitment to deliverable equitable and climate-smart opportunities that inspire and help America thrive.

USDA Vision: An equitable and climate-smart food and agriculture economy that protects and improves the health, nutrition, and quality of life of all Americans; yields healthy land, forests, and clean water; helps rural America thrive; and feeds the world.

USDA Core Values

- *Respect and Dignity:* We treat all people with courtesy and respect, and we value the inherent dignity of every individual.
- *Equity and Inclusion:* We seek to end discrimination in all forms, wherever it exists, and expand services and opportunities to underserved people and communities across America, starting with our workforce.
- *Trust and Integrity:* We act in a manner that is deserving of the public's trust and with the utmost integrity in everything we do as public servants.
- *Service and Results:* We listen to our internal and external customers and actively incorporate their ideas on how to best reach our diverse customers and deliver service that significantly and positively impacts the lives of all Americans.
- *Science Leadership:* We base our decisions and policy on science and data that are reliable, timely, relevant, and free from political interference.

Executive Summary of Performance

Background

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, as amended by the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA or the Department) is pleased to present the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Annual Performance Plan and FY 2022 Annual Performance Report. This document provides an overview of the Department's FY 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan, performance progress for FY 2022, and achievements anticipated in FY 2024.

The Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA) leads USDA in Performance, Evaluation, Evidence, and Risk Management and chairs the USDA Performance, Evidence, Evaluation, and Risk Committee. All Mission Areas and Departmental Administration are represented on the committee, as well as other key evaluation partners. The broad representation facilitates buy-in across the Department, augments technical expertise, and creates a greater diversity of perspectives. Additionally, OBPA has a close partnership with the Chief Data Officer and Statistical Official, which provides insight and advisement on data access, data quality, and statistical methods.

The data collected and used by the Department to measure performance use a standardized methodology. This methodology has been vetted by federally employed scientists and policymakers. With this, USDA attests to the completeness, reliability, and quality of the data.

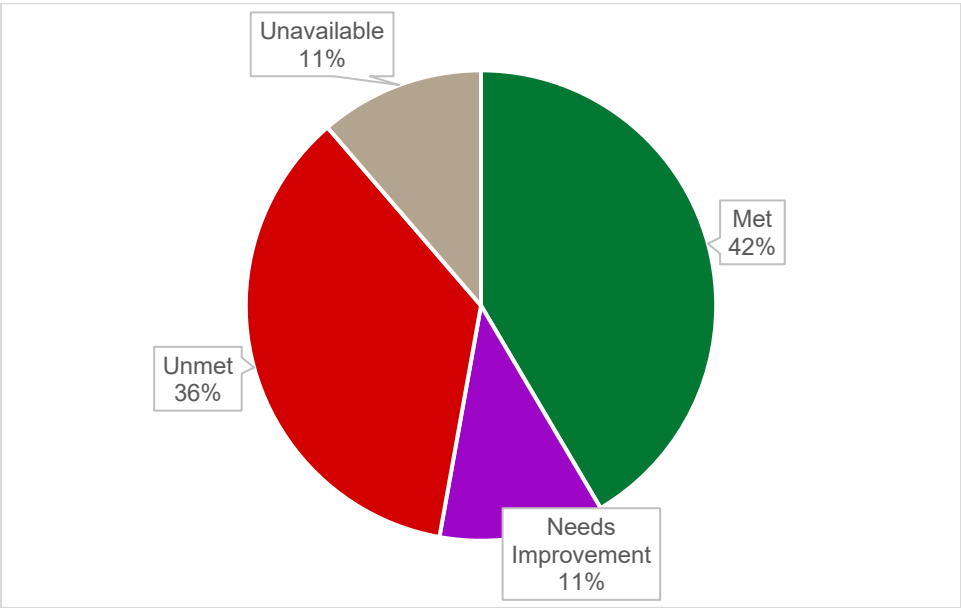
Performance

The FY 2024 Annual Performance Plan and FY 2022 Annual Performance Report use the following terms in discussing past and future performance:

- *Strategic Goal:* The highest-level statement of aim or purpose that is included in the Strategic Plan. The strategic goals articulate the broad categories of action that the Department will take to advance its mission.
- *Strategic Objective:* This document's 21 strategic objectives are the primary unit for strategic analysis and decision-making. Strategic objectives state the outcomes or management impacts the Department is trying to achieve.
- *Performance Indicator:* A key performance measure used to track progress toward achieving a strategic objective. The Department measures and monitors the trend for these indicators. Performance indicator status results are determined by the following standard:
 - **Met:** Within 100% or more of target
 - **Needs Improvement:** Within 10% of target
 - **Unmet:** Greater than 10% below target
- *Target:* A quantifiable level of achievement that is planned for a measure of strategic objective progress.
- *Baseline:* A performance indicator's level over one or more time periods to assess the appropriate level for future performance targets.

In FY 2022, USDA met or exceeded the target for 22 out of 53 (42%) performance metrics. 6 of the 53 (11%) performance metrics were deemed to "need improvement," meaning they were within 10% range of meeting the set target. 19 of the 53 (36%) performance metrics were more

than 10% below target, designating them as “unmet.” 6 of the 53 (11%) performance metrics do not have available data at the time of this report, due to lag times associated with data reporting and processing.



USDA will continue to pursue challenging yet feasible target thresholds for its performance measures. As precedent data become more readily available, staff will be able to make more informed decisions about manageable targets. USDA will continue to build on its success, using the Quarterly Strategic Review process to maintain accountability and to articulate resources necessary to successfully reach performance metric targets and strategic goals. In addition, the integration of Enterprise Risk Management, along with increased capacity for evidence building, will improve decision-making surrounding resources and program activities.

Supplemental Funding

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, legislation like the American Rescue Plan (ARP), and the transformational and historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) have provided critical investments to address the challenges of climate change to the nation’s food and agriculture systems and rebuild the nation’s foundational needs from the bottom up and the middle out. Through the ARP, USDA is helping producers get back on their feet; creating more and better markets for local and regional food producers; and supporting those most vulnerable to food insecurity. BIL has supported investments in climate, energy, and the environment in rural America through the expansion of high-speed broadband to create jobs, help farmers use precision agriculture technologies, expand access to health care and educational services, and create economic opportunities for millions across the country. IRA invests in new and existing USDA programs that help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners adopt climate-smart practices, support the transition to clean energy in rural America, and provide assistance to underserved farmers, ranchers, and foresters. USDA delivers on these investments to confront challenges in the future of agriculture.

FY 2022 – 2026 Strategic Goals and Objectives

The [USDA FY 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan](#) guides the work of USDA to ensure that the Department’s efforts best serve the American public. As part of its vision to make USDA the most efficient, most effective, and most customer-focused department in the Federal government, the

Department has established six strategic goals for FYs 2022 to 2026 and three Agency Priority Goals to achieve them.

In FY 2022, USDA continued to use its three Agency Priority Goals (APG) to focus and monitor performance where the Department needed to drive significant progress and change. The means used to verify and validate measured values, the sources of data, the level of accuracy required for the intended use of the data, and limitations to the data at the required level of accuracy are described and documented for each Agency Priority Goal on <http://www.performance.gov/>.

Commitment to Customer Experience

USDA is committed to empowering, enabling, and engaging USDA customers and employees in a human-centered approach to innovation in order to deliver consistently exceptional service to customers. The need for improved customer experience in government is both mandated by policy and the need to provide customers with efficient and effective services.

The Office of Customer Experience (OCX) at USDA works to address complex challenges across programs and services that may impact the experiences of our customers and employees. A good customer experience will increase trust in government, the likelihood to use products and services, and improve services at decreased costs. More information on OCX key initiatives can be found at [Office of Customer Experience \(OCX\) | USDA](#).

USDA’s commitment to providing high-quality customer experiences is also reflected in the three Agency Priority Goals and high-impact services provided by five of USDA’s eight mission areas. More information on these programs can be found at [USDA | Performance.gov](#).

Finally, USDA recognizes that meeting the needs of its customers also involves addressing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). USDA established an Equity Commission to ensure that none of its customers are ignored or left behind and that all have an equal chance of success and prosperity. Recognizing the role of a healthy and inclusive organizational culture and the need to build an organization that reflects the communities that the agencies and programs serve, USDA is looking inward to understand what it will take to build an organization that centers DEIA. More information on the equity commission and DEIA initiatives can be found at [Equity | USDA](#).

Cross-Agency Priority Goals

GPRAMA requires Cross-Agency Priority Goals to be addressed in the Annual Performance Report. Please refer to <https://www.performance.gov> for the Department’s contributions and progress toward those goals, where applicable.

Lower-Priority Program Activities

The President’s Budget identifies lower-priority program activities where applicable, as required under GPRAMA [31 U.S. Code § 1115\(b\)\(10\)](#). The public can access the volume at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget>.

Strategic Goal 1: Combat Climate Change to Support America’s Working Lands, Natural Resources, and Communities

Objective 1.1 Use Climate-Smart Management and Sound Science to Enhance the Health and Productivity of Agricultural Lands

Objective 1.2 Lead Efforts to Adapt to the Consequences of Climate Change in Agriculture and Forestry

Objective 1.3 Restore, Protect, and Conserve Watersheds to Ensure Clean, Abundant, and Continuous Provision of Water Resources

Objective 1.4 Increase Carbon Sequestration, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Create Economic Opportunities (and Develop Low-Carbon Energy Solutions)

Strategic Goal 2: Ensure America’s Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous

Objective 2.1 Protect Plant and Animal Health by Minimizing Major Diseases, Pests, and Wildlife Conflicts

Agency Priority Goal Monitor Antimicrobial Resistance in Animal Health Pathogens through the National Animal Health Laboratory Network

Establish a surveillance program within the National Animal Health Laboratory Network to monitor antimicrobial resistance (AMR) profiles in animal pathogen to enhance the Nation’s early detection of, response to, and recovery from animal health emergencies. By September 2023, USDA will establish a long-term AMR surveillance program with at least 30 laboratories participating annually.

Objective 2.2 Build Resilient Food Systems, Infrastructure, and Supply Chain

Objective 2.3 Foster Agricultural Innovation

Strategic Goal 3: Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers

Objective 3.1 Foster Sustainable Economic Growth by Promoting Innovation, Building Resilience to Climate Change, and Expanding Renewable Energy

Objective 3.2 Expand Markets for Emerging Technologies, Sustainable Products, and Novel Products

Objective 3.3 Expand All Producers’ Access to Global Markets Through Negotiation and Enforcement of Trade Agreements

Objective 3.4 Expand International Marketing Opportunities and Build Demand in Developing Countries through Delivery of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

Strategic Goal 4: Make Safe, Nutritious Food Available to All Americans

Objective 4.1 Increase Food Security Through Assistance and Access to Nutritious and Affordable Food

Objective 4.2 Encourage Healthy Dietary Choices Through Data-Driven, Flexible, Customer-Focused Approaches

Objective 4.3 Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

Strategic Goal 5: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities

Objective 5.1 Improve Rural and Tribal Community Infrastructure, Including Affordable E-Connectivity, Cornerstone Community Facilities, Sustainable and Reliable Power, and Clean and Safe Water and Sewer Systems

Agency Priority Goal Ensure All Americans have Access to High-speed, Affordable Broadband

By September 30, 2023, the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce will expand affordable and reliable access to broadband service by funding projects, which, when completed, will provide at least 550,000 households with reliable and affordable access to high quality internet service. This will be achieved through investment in broadband infrastructure and related activities, accompanied by outreach and technical assistance, in coordination with applicable Federal agencies, to promote American household accessibility to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet service.

Objective 5.2 Boost the Financial Security of Rural and Tribal Communities Through Access to Affordable Housing

Objective 5.3 Increase Capacity, Sustainability, and Economic Vitality in Rural and Tribal Communities

Objective 5.4 Promote Environmental Justice by Maximizing Sustainable and Green Economic Development in Rural and Tribal Communities

Strategic Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that’s Proud to Represent USDA

Objective 6.1 Foster a Culture of Civil Rights, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Transparency, and Accountability

Objective 6.2 Establish a Customer-Centric, Inclusive, High-Performing Workforce that is Representative of America and the Communities We Serve

Agency Priority Goal Enhance Customer Experience and Improve Trust

Enhance the customer experience of USDA’s high impact services by listening and learning to USDA’s diverse customer base – including farmers, scientists, children, families, ranchers, foresters, and state governments – to create a consistent and comprehensive Department wide view of the public’s trust. By September 2023, USDA will equip the High Impact Service Providers and their workforce with the resources necessary to establish innovative and human-centered solutions.

Objective 6.3 Promote USDA Operational Excellence Through Better Use of Technology and Shared Solutions

Goal 1: Combat Climate Change to Support America’s Working Lands, Natural Resources, and Communities

Climate change poses a significant risk to agriculture, forests, and grasslands across the United States and the communities that support and depend on them. The Nation’s agricultural lands, forests, and private working lands require conservation and restoration efforts to strengthen their resilience to drought, invasive species, and wildfire. The Department must lead with investments in science, research, and climate-smart solutions. These investments will mitigate the impacts of climate change, increase adaptation to climate change, generate new income opportunities, and build generational wealth in disadvantaged communities.

Agriculture can lead the fight on climate using climate-smart agriculture, forestry, and renewable energy practices that sequester carbon, reduce emissions, improve adaptation, and increase market opportunities for all producers. USDA is working to develop and implement a comprehensive climate-smart strategy that is centered on voluntary incentives and meeting the needs of its diverse producers, landowners, and communities. Additionally, it will provide a host of new tools to deploy important conservation practices and the research essential to inform them.

Objective 1.1: Use Climate-Smart Management and Sound Science to Enhance the Health and Productivity of Agricultural Lands

USDA is developing and will implement a comprehensive strategy to incentivize climate-smart decision-making by all agricultural and forest producers, landowners, and communities. The Department will build on its progress to integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation into programs and services as it works to support farmers; ranchers; forest landowners; partners; and urban, rural, and Tribal communities in tackling climate change. By increasing the sustainability of the nation’s forests, rangelands, and crop and livestock systems through the deployment of climate-smart and environmentally smart management, Americans will see improvements in the condition of these resources, the development of healthy ecosystems, and vibrant, resilient communities.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

Cropland with Applied Soil Health Management System Practices (Thousand Acres)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	---	225	225	225	225
Actual	---	---	---	---	313	294	N/A	N/A

Cropland on Which at Least One Conservation Practice was Applied to Improve Soil Quality Under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (Million Acres)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
Actual	3.0	3.1	3.4	3.9	3.4	3.3	N/A	N/A

Cropland with Conservation Applied to Improve Soil Quality through Conservation Technical Assistance (Million Acres)¹

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	5.9	5.9	5.9	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	N/A
Actual	5.9	6.0	5.7	6.4	3.6	3.4	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

The measure “Cropland Conservation Applied to Improve Soil Quality through Conservation Technical Assistance” is an aggregation of work in three programs: Environmental Quality Incentives (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship (CSP), and the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA). It represents the unique footprint of soil health management systems on cropland achieved through the practices of cover crops, reduced or no-till, and conservation crop rotation. Beginning in FY 2024, the NRCS will split this measure into two separate measures for the CTA program and the EQUIP program to better reflect the work. The two measures following this measure will replace this measure in FY 2024.

“Cropland on Which at least One Conservation Practice was Applied to Improve Soil Quality under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program,” (herein referred to as EQIP) has been a staple performance measure for many years. NRCS uses this information as a national indicator of the agency’s progress related to soil quality. Performance in this area is exceeding expectations and NRCS expects to meet the year-end target.

“Cropland with Conservation Applied to Improve Soil Quality through Conservation Technical Assistance,” herein referred to as CTA, will likely not meet its FY 2022 target. NRCS is re-evaluating the measure and targets to accommodate changes in how producers use the program and limitations around collecting implementation data when contact with producers is limited. While all plans for developing soil quality systems are written under the CTA program, it is difficult to identify producers who may have implemented practices without financial assistance from

¹ Beginning in FY 2024, NRCS will split this measure into two separate measures for the CTA-GEN program and the EQUIP program to better reflect the work. The two measures following this measure will replace this measure in FY 2024.

NRCS. NRCS does not require producers to report activities funded through non-NRCS mechanisms.

Cropland with Conservation Applied to Improve Soil Quality through Conservation Technical Assistance (Million Acres)²

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	11.3
Actual	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	N/A

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

CTA is primarily used for Conservation Planning and not implementation, which is done through programs such as EQIP and CSP. NRCS is adjusting the planning threshold for soil quality related resource concerns. NRCS will update the CTA goal to reflect the role of CTA more accurately within the agency delivery system and target resource concerns.

The applicable practice list was updated to align with Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) assessments and includes all practices that have positive impacts on cropland for the soil quality resource concerns: organic matter depletion, aggregate instability and/or soil organism habitat loss or degradation health.

Eligible conservation practices are:

- Conservation Cover
- Conservation Crop Rotation
- Residue and Tillage Management, No Till
- Amending Soil Properties with Gypsum
- Controlled Traffic Farming
- Cover Crop
- Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till
- Forest Farming
- Wildlife Habitat Planting
- Mulching
- Forage Harvest Management
- Pasture and Hayland Planting
- Prescribed Grazing
- Drainage Water Management
- Nutrient Management
- Tree/Shrub Establishment

² Beginning in FY 2024, NRCS will use this measure instead of the joint CTA/EQIP measure.

Cropland with Conservation Applied to Reduce Soil Erosion and Improve Soil Quality through Environmental Quality Incentives (Million Acres)³

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3.1
Actual	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	N/A

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

When updates are made to the CTA measure, the EQIP measure will be updated as well. Eligible conservation practices are found in the listing above. Cropland is the only eligible land use. The applicable practice list was updated to align with CART assessments and includes all practices that have positive impacts on cropland for the soil quality resource concerns: organic matter depletion, aggregate instability and/or soil organism habitat loss or degradation health.

Working Lands Protected by Conservation Easements (Thousand Acres)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	107	101	140	163	163	163	129	129
Actual	60.7	163	178	167	145	167	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Landowners are backing out of agreements in some states, potentially due to higher land values and/or better opportunities with other programs. Additionally, normal day-to-day issues such as boundary discrepancies, staffing, and weather can affect the timeline for closings. Most conservation easements, therefore, close in Q3 and Q4.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

NRCS proposes to lower future KPI targets to 129 acres due to rising land values. Over the past three years, acres from closed easements have declined 17,500 acres per year on average, from 191,000 acres in FY 2019 to 146,000 acres in FY 2021.

The 2018 Farm Bill provided level funding for Agricultural Conservation Easement Program easements annually throughout the life of the bill. At the same time, though, land prices nationally have increased. As a result, the number of easements and easement acres protected with that funding drops annually.

Landowners are also canceling existing agreements or failing to pursue new agreements in some states due to higher land values leading to sales outside conservation and/or better opportunities with other programs. Additionally, normal day-to-day issues such as boundary discrepancies,

³ Beginning in FY 2024, NRCS will use this measure instead of the joint CRA/EQIP measure.

staffing, and weather can affect the timeline for closings. Thus, most conservation easements close in Q3 and Q4, which makes setting annual targets challenging.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)

Acres Enrolled in Conservation Reserve Program Riparian and Grass Buffers (Million Acres)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	1.7	1.6	1.43	1.41	1.46	1.56	1.56	1.61
Actual	1.6	1.53	1.43	1.36	1.42	1.37	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

FSA did not meet the FY 2022 target. FSA recognizes the declining enrollment year-over-year is attributed to producers deciding to increase production to meet demands of the global food supply chain. Furthermore, the reduction of rental rates in the 2018 Farm Bill were not conducive to entice producers to enroll land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). While the target was not met, FSA did re-enroll more expiring buffers in FY 2022 than in FY 2021 (61 percent versus 53 percent re-enrolled in FY 2021).

FSA implemented a series of changes to increase enrollment in the CRP. These changes include a Climate Smart Incentive of up to 10 percent based on the cover of the practice; a 10 percent inflationary factor, reinstating the upward adjustment to the Soil Rental Rates based on soil productivity, and a water quality incentive increase from 10 to 20 percent for certain continuous signup practices.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

FSA will continue outreach for enrollment in FY 2024; however, due to farm bill changes and current farm economy it is difficult to forecast enrollment and progress for FY 2024. Furthermore, increasing crop prices reduces producer interest in CRP enrollment.

FOREST SERVICE (FS)

Percentage of National Forest System Landscape Ecosystems Improved, Maintained, or Recovering Due to Management Actions⁴

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	42%	42%	35%	38%	38%
Actual	---	---	---	32%	33%	29%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Despite a 4 percent decrease in this KPI from FY 2021, this still represents a significant amount of work improving ecological conditions across National Forest System lands. Challenges in FY 2022 include recently identified data gaps, decreases in invasive species treatments, staffing shortages, and contracting difficulties. Additionally, the prescribed fire pause had a negative impact on the Terrestrial Condition Assessment (TCA) KPI. A key part of restoration that USDA manages is returning the function of ecological processes to the landscapes. A major ecological process for restoration is fire. Returning appropriate fire to the landscape has a significant positive impact on the TCA KPI. Therefore, the pause limited the amount of improvement from management activities in FY 2022.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

In FY 2024, progress on the TCA KPI can be made by allowing for more time for complete implementation of restoration projects due to recent investments. It will also allow for staff in new roles to develop the skills, knowledge, and experience to expand the capacity of the agency. As more landscape-scale active management is planned, implemented, and completed with resources and capacity from BIL and IRA, this KPI will be able to meet future targets. Restoration work, especially when done at scale, takes time to complete and see the investment outcomes as various activities move through planning, contracting, and implementation phases prior to being completed. Through focused work in priority areas and greater support for landscape-scale work through agency programs (e.g., selection and funding for the next group of Collaborative Forest Land Restoration Project projects), the percent of landscapes improved, maintained, and recovering should continue to improve.

⁴ KPI is aligned to Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funded programmatic outcomes.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIST

Percent Increase in Number of Stakeholders Supported through Climate Hubs Capacity-Building Activities

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	---	---	2.5%	5%	5%
Actual	---	---	---	---	---	0.5%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

The USDA Climate Hubs develop and deliver science-based, region-specific information and tools to agricultural and natural resource managers to reduce risk and build resilience. OCE hosts the Climate Hubs Executive Secretariat and coordinates with Agricultural Research Service (ARS), FS, and NRCS to fully support this objective through stakeholder engagement, outreach, and education. Despite a 0.46 percent increase in number stakeholders reached, it is not insignificant that the Climate Hubs reached 25,905 stakeholders in FY 2022. Progress in FY 2022 include Hub staff leadership and authorship of the Fifth National Climate Assessment, expansion of climate-smart tools into new geographic and underserved areas, and enhanced multimedia material that promote climate-smart practices. Major products that helped achieve an increase in stakeholders supported through capacity-building activities in FY 2022 include: a soil health documentary film, 12 new videos that enhance the Hubs’ work in priority areas like carbon sequestration and drought, a new climate change educational module developed for Alaska, and climate conversations reaching over 800 NRCS staff. The National Office has also facilitated capacity-building activities through organizations like ARS Long-term Agroecosystem Research network, Treasury’s Financial Literacy and Education Commission, Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Climate National Academies, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s Carbon Monitoring Program. These accomplishments and number of stakeholders reached are not reflective of the late influx of additional of support to the Climate Hubs program, which will most likely be realized in later fiscal years through additional fellows and projects.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

As a unique cross-agency program, the USDA Climate Hubs will continue to translate climate science into action across diverse audiences including farmers, ranchers, foresters, youth, extension, Tribes, rural communities, and agency staff. Progress will be made through the Climate Hubs’ three workstreams: science and data synthesis, tool and technology development and implementation, and outreach, convening, and training. Additional staff through fellows (funded by ARS and FS) will bolster the work of the Climate Hubs in each region, as well as additional support in Alaska and Hawai’i. New university and Cooperative Extension capacity through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Climate Hubs-Extension partnership grants will support delivery of climate-smart, community-driven solutions, and reach underserved communities.

Objective 1.2: Lead Efforts to Adapt to the Consequences of Climate Change in Agriculture and Forestry

All farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners are on the front lines of climate change, facing changes in temperature and precipitation patterns and more frequent and intense events such as floods, drought, hurricanes, and wildfires. More than ever, their planning efforts and decision-making need to account for the impacts of climate change. Climate adaptation on the part of USDA will ensure that climate change thinking is integrated throughout USDA’s mission, programs, operations, and management. USDA will continue to be a leader in the delivery of climate-smart science, research, and conservation practices, including through the USDA [Climate Hubs](#).

USDA manages about 20 percent of the Nation’s forests and nearly 10 percent of the Nation’s rangelands. These forests and grasslands are essential to the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the country. However, these lands are suffering increasingly adverse impacts from severe wildfires, insect and disease infestations, human influences, and extreme weather events, inhibiting their ability to provide and sustain critical natural resources and recreation opportunities for the public. USDA’s ongoing objective is to improve forest and grassland conditions to make them more resilient to extreme events; share stewardship responsibilities with neighboring private landowners, Tribes, and governments; be responsive to public needs; and ensure they are sustainable, healthy, and productive so future generations can continue to use and enjoy them.

Strategic objective 1.2 has been designated as a focus area for improvement.

FOREST SERVICE

Private Forest Acres Protected Through the Forest Legacy Program

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	69,000	64,000	64,000
Actual	----	----	----	----	----	54,378	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

This is a new KPI for FY 2022. Barriers to progress early in the fiscal year included the timing of grant awards and limited capacity of available review appraisers. However, the program was able to increase its staffing (including appraisal support) and state support to address project implementation challenges and to increase the pace of implementation.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

The FS intends to continue increasing resources to partner states, fully implement the agency’s staffing plan, and adapt its programs to increase the pace of land acquisitions. Barriers to progress include timing of appropriations, staff tenure, and availability of staff with key technical capacity. In addition, filling and maintaining review appraiser staff positions continues to be a challenge.

Annual accomplishments are often from funds allocated in prior years, as these projects usually take several years to complete. The Forest Legacy Program received funding from IRA, which is

being planned and will result in additional grant awards. Target acres will increase in future years to reflect IRA funding.

Number of High-Priority Areas Where Treatments Have Occurred to Reduce Wildfire Risk to Communities (Number of Firesheds Annually)⁵

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	---	N/A	3	1	1
Actual	---	---	---	---	N/A	3	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

This new KPI represents the number of priority firesheds treated to reduce the risk of wildfire to communities. Firesheds are large geographic areas (approximately 250,000 acres) containing landscapes with a similar wildfire risk to developed areas. Priority firesheds present an even higher wildfire risk to structures. In FY 2022, to be included in this KPI, 30 percent of a fireshed had to be treated to a level that reduced the wildfire risk, which usually requires multiple years of treatments. This KPI analyzes the fuels mitigated measure (“Acreage of National Forest System Lands Where Final Treatment Effectively Mitigates Wildfire Risk” (FP-FUELS-MIT-NFS)) and reflects the number of acres treated since the start of this measure in 2017. These accomplishments reflect all funding sources including annual appropriations, BIL, and Disaster Supplemental funding.

Changes in this KPI will be slow since it takes many years to complete enough treatments to modify 30 percent of a fireshed. Frequently, vegetation will need time to recover and grow before the next phase of treatments can occur. For example, an area where a timber sale has occurred would need time for the grasses, forbs, and brush to regrow to provide sufficient fuel for a prescribed burn.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

In addition to the priority firesheds associated with the 10-year Wildfire Crisis Strategy, the agency will also work closely with regions to identify additional high priority firesheds associated with State Forest Action Plans, Shared Stewardship agreements, and regional wildfire risk assessments. As the regions continue their work in the high priority firesheds, it is important to note this work requires several years of treatments to fully mitigate uncharacteristic wildfire risk. Therefore, as many field units are ramping up to the pace and scale needed, it will take time (likely years) to accumulate enough treated acres to fully modify 30 percent of a fireshed to low risk of wildfire. The BIL and IRA funding is being used to focus on the most critical firesheds and treat the area as quickly as possible. The funds will allow the agency to treat the highest priority and high-cost acres. These funds will allow the agency to increase the amount of planning, surveying, and contracting staff to complete requirements before the groundwork can begin.

⁵ Fireshed is a term similar to watershed. It refers to a geographic region with a similar risk of wildfire to adjacent communities. Reducing hazardous fuels within parts of the fireshed may reduce the overall risk to the adjacent community.

This KPI will continue to evolve to ensure it is an outcome-based measure that identifies when the wildfire risk is significantly reduced. The science suggests up to 30 percent of the fireshed may require multiple years of treatment to reduce the wildfire risk. Once this level is achieved, the agency will continue to periodically treat the area to maintain low risk and will shift focus to other high priority firesheds.

In FY 2023, the agency is developing a workgroup to determine the business rules needed to advance this outcome-based measure. Additionally, the agency is evaluating all vegetation disturbances, including past wildfires, to determine if the vegetation has been modified sufficiently to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire. These areas will be added as they are identified, which may increase the number of firesheds modified by 30 percent.

Acres Treated to Reduce or Maintain Fuel Conditions on National Forest System and Non-Federal Lands (Million Acres, Annually)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	2.2	3	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.7	4.0	4.2
Actual	2.7	3.4	2.9	2.65	3.67	3.2	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

In FY 2022, FS treated 3.2 million acres or 87 percent of the national fiscal year target. Five regions exceeded their target, one region accomplished 98 percent, two regions accomplished more than 80 percent, and the final region accomplished 70 percent of their target. These accomplishments reflect all funding sources including annual appropriations, BIL, and Disaster Supplemental funding. When the agency initiated a national pause on prescribed burning, many regions were able to pivot to mechanical treatments using various contract types and authorities to complete other planned fuels treatments. Additionally, favorable weather and the strategic use of resources allowed some regions to prescribe burn earlier, under more favorable conditions, thereby treating hundreds of thousands of acres. Finally, acres treated from wildfires that met planned objectives were significantly lower for this fiscal year relative to previous years.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

FS will continue to work closely with the regional offices to achieve the right level of support to maintain current levels of risk, maintaining investments and maximizing opportunities to reduce wildfire risk in the highest priority firesheds. Specifically, the regions will continue to build agreements and contracts in anticipation of ongoing and sustained higher funding. The agency will focus the greatest amount of funding toward Wildfire Crisis Priority Landscapes which will utilize BIL and IRA funding to ramp-up. These landscapes represent the most complex and often most expensive acres to treat. As a result, increases in treated acres will take time. Future increases in acres treated are expected in outyears. Additionally, as new employees are hired and trained, the regions expect to see increased efficiencies and work completed, leading to additional acres treated.

In addition, the BIL and IRA funding will be used to treat the highest priority firesheds associated with the 10-year Wildfire Crisis Strategy while most of the annually appropriated hazardous fuels funding will be prioritized to maintain the acres classified as low risk.

Acres of National Forest System Lands Where Final Treatment Effectively Mitigates Wildfire Risk (Million Acres, Annually)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	0.74	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.6	1.7
Actual	0.348	1.04	0.851	0.81	1.28	1.1	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Mitigated accomplishments are approximately 35 percent of all hazardous fuels treatments, meaning about a third of all treatments are a final or maintenance treatment and are primarily accomplished through prescribed fire. These accomplishments reflect all funding sources including annual appropriations, BIL, and Disaster Supplemental funding. Early in calendar year 2022, significant prescribed fire treatments were initiated, but unfortunate weather events pushed several prescribed fires out of containment resulting in devastating wildfires. FS initiated a pause on all prescribed fires to assess protocols around prescribed fire implementation and to establish clear and more effective guidelines for prescribed fire use and initiation. Although this impacted the use of prescribed fire for reducing wildfire risk through the late spring and summer and reduced the final number of "mitigated" acres, FS deemed it an important and necessary trade-off to ensure public safety in the future and to strengthen the standards of the program overall. Other challenges like rising diesel and other fixed costs align with all hazardous fuel’s treatments and risks.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

FS will continue to work closely with the regional offices to achieve the right level of support to maintain current levels of risk while also maintaining investments and maximizing opportunities to reduce wildfire risk. Specifically, the regions will continue to build agreements and contracts in anticipation of ongoing and sustained higher funding. The agency will focus the greatest amount of funding toward National Priority Landscapes, which will continue to utilize BIL and IRA funding to ramp-up. These landscapes represent the most complex and often most expensive acres to treat. As a result, increases in treated acres will take time. Future increases of acres mitigated will occur slowly; however, due to the complexity of these landscapes, they are expected to take 10 years. Additionally, as new employees are hired and trained, the regions expect to see increased efficiencies and work completed leading to additional acres treated.

Timber Volume Sold (Billion Board Feet)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	2.9	3.4	3.7	3.7	4.0	3.4	3.4	3.4
Actual	2.9	3.2	3.27	3.21	2.8	2.9	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Over the past several years, the agency has targeted selling between 20 to 25 percent of the yearly total in Q3. FS is below that average performance in FY 2022.

Wildfires, on a nearly year-round basis, continue to divert resources from planning and timber sale preparation. Some markets are also indicating they are saturated with salvage timber sales or are dealing with ongoing litigation. Budget timing and flat allocations have also made strategic investments in resources difficult. While hiring has been a challenge, progress is being achieved in position offers and placement through collective hiring efforts. Still, multiple positions remain vacant through Q4 of FY 2022 as the agency waits for offers to go out and staff to be onboarded.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

FS field staff continue looking for ways to work with partners, as well as the use of multiple contracting types and other authorities to get more work done at a larger scale. Additional support to provide training to employees and support options for efficiencies will be a key focus leading into FY 2024. In FY 2024, headquarters staff will continue working with the field on the development of a 5-year strategic plan of action that outlines expectations and outcomes for future planning and accomplishments.

Budget allocations earlier in the year would allow for strategic investments and accomplishments. An emphasis on employee recruitment and position hiring will need to be a continued focus into FY 2024 to ensure a full work force is available to meet the agencies objectives.

Number of Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Publications

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1100
Actual	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

While currently tracked as an internal performance measure, FS, in conjunction with the Department, has decided to elevate this measure to a KPI using it as a proxy for the agency’s research investments and outputs. FS Research and Development (R&D) conducts foundational research related to forest and grassland health, forest soils, air quality, hydrology, ecology, and silviculture. Additionally, FS R&D provides science to inform natural resource management for

climate-resilient landscapes. This authoritative scientific information about the Nation’s forests and rangelands is central to understanding climate impacts, including uncharacteristically severe wildfire, and informs investments in climate mitigation and adaptation by the agency and its partners and cooperators.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

This KPI will be formally used starting in FY 2024 and enumerates the number of peer-reviewed scholarly publications that are the result of material support from FS R&D, and on which selection for publication is based on formal peer review and an independent editorial decision. The definition of peer-reviewed scholarly publications is as written in the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) memo of August 25, 2022 on the subject of “Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research,” which reads, “Such scholarly publications always include peer-reviewed research articles or final manuscripts published in scholarly journals, and may include peer-reviewed book chapters, editorials, and peer-reviewed conference proceedings published in other scholarly outlets that result from federally funded research.”

Objective 1.3: Restore, Protect, and Conserve Watersheds to Ensure Clean, Abundant, and Continuous Provision of Water Resources

The Nation’s forests and grasslands that provide clean and available water are a fundamental part of the American landscape and legacy that the FS holds in trust for future and present generations. These lands, along with the millions of acres of well-managed, privately held forests and grasslands, provide clean air and water, forest and rangeland products, mineral and energy resources, jobs, and quality habitat for fish and wildlife. Productive agricultural landscapes, including clean and available water, healthy wetlands, streams and rivers, and abundant fish and wildlife, underlie robust tourism and recreational activities.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Tons of Sediment Prevented from Leaving Cropland and Entering Water Bodies (Million Tons)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	4.6	4.6	5.7	5.7	5.7	6	6	6
Actual	4.8	5.3	6.3	8.2	8.1	8.3	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Progress for soil sediment being retained is exceeding expectations. NRCS sees no barriers to meeting the FY 2022 goals and expects to meet this goal in FY 2022. NRCS has had a sustained and successful soil health campaign. Included in that are increases in cover crops and conservation tillage and related practices, resulting in less soil loss. This was recently documented in the Conservation Effects Assessment Project II report released earlier in 2022, and these KPI results show continued progress.⁶

⁶ [Microsoft Word - CEAP National Report BENSON FINAL 12 19 21.docx \(usda.gov\)](#)

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

NRCS has had a sustained and successful soil health campaign and will continue to utilize the effective methodology under this KPI. However, new Farm Bill requirements may pose risks to progress in FY 2024.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Total National Acres in Grassed Waterways (Millions of Acres)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	0.11	0.12	0.125
Actual	----	----	----	----	0.11	.107	N/A	N/A

Total National Acres in Contour Grass Strips, Contour Grass Strips in Terraces, and Prairie Strips (Million Acres)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	0.062	0.073	.080
Actual	----	----	----	----	.060	.0595	N/A	N/A

Acres of Restored Wetlands (Million Acres)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	1.9	1.9	2.34	2.41	2.34	2.64	2.76	2.96
Actual	1.9	2.3	2.34	2.35	2.36	2.39	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

The agency expected increased enrollment in FY 2022 due to the changes implemented in FY 2021 that included an increase in the water quality incentive from 10 to 20 percent as well as a new Climate Smart Incentive of up to 10 percent for certain practices. FSA fell short of meeting FY 2022 targets by less than 10 percent. FSA recognizes the declining enrollment year-over-year is attributed to producers deciding to increase production to meet demands of the global food supply chain. Furthermore, the reduction of rental rates in the 2018 Farm Bill were not conducive to entice producers to enroll land in CRP. Nonetheless, interest in maintaining enrolled wetlands remains strong, with over 91 percent of expiring wetland acres re-enrolled in FY 2022.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

FSA will continue outreach for enrollment in FY 2024; however, due to Farm Bill changes and current farm economy it is difficult to forecast enrollment and progress for FY 2024. Increasing crop prices reduces producer interest in CRP enrollment. FSA expectation is lowered due to unknown Farm Bill changes.

FOREST SERVICE

Number of Watersheds Moved to Improved Condition Class or Sustained in Condition Class 1⁷

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	19	14	15	N/A	15	16	21
Actual	---	16	8	9	N/A ⁸	12	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Completion of watershed restoration plans requires that several projects be implemented over a period of a few years; projects implemented this fiscal year will contribute to watersheds completed in future years. Additional funding from both the BIL and appropriated funds have increased the interest and participation of some units that had been, in the past, slow to adopt Watershed Condition Framework (WCF) projects. Delays in budget allocations to the field, particularly the BIL funds, however, greatly limited the ability of the units to get contracts issued to implement watershed restoration projects. In addition, the program’s regularly appropriated funds were reduced in several regions, so BIL funds served as a replacement to those regular funds as opposed to adding to regular appropriations. Due to these circumstances, the accomplishment of 12 watersheds maintained or moved to an improved condition was lower than anticipated.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

If available, increased project funding in FY 2024 from BIL and IRA may be used to address the backlog of essential restoration projects in priority watersheds and increase the number of watersheds maintained or moved to an improved condition in FY 2024 and future years. If anticipated funding increases in FY 2023 and FY 2024 do not materialize, progress will be reduced and slowdowns in contracting staff will inhibit projects being accomplished.

⁷ National Assessments of national forest and grassland watershed conditions rate 47% either as “Functioning at Risk” or “Impaired Function”. To improve their conditions and increase climate change resiliency, these watersheds require substantial restoration work. Specifically, using a mix of funding, the agency will complete essential projects outlined in the Watershed Condition Framework (WCF) Watershed Restoration Action Plans (WRAPs).

⁸ This performance metric was developed in 2010 as the agency’s first nationally consistent outcome performance measure to demonstrate accomplishments in watershed restoration. For FY 2021, watershed restoration was not a Departmental key performance indicator, and no target was established.

Objective 1.4: Increase Carbon Sequestration, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Create Economic Opportunities (and Develop Low-Carbon Energy Solutions)

The Biden-Harris Administration has called for a whole-of-government approach to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and USDA has a critical role to play to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. The Department will leverage its partnerships with agriculture, forestry, rural communities, Tribes, cooperatives, and businesses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture, sequester forest carbon, decarbonize rural electricity, and invest in renewable fuels production and renewable electricity generation.

Based on the best available science and strategies, increasing carbon sequestration and reducing greenhouse gas emissions will contribute to a lower national emissions footprint. USDA will continue to analyze the economic costs and benefits of these conservation practices during implementation.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Percentage of Items in a Contract that are Certified During the Life of a Contract

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	Baseline	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%
Actual	---	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

This is an annual measure. The Contract Implementation Ratio (CIR) was adopted as a USDA KPI and is used in the NRCS Operations Scorecard/Performance Report. CIR is a measure of how effective NRCS has been at “getting conservation on the ground”. In FY 2022, more than 92 percent of all completed contracts have had all scheduled practices certified as completed. After including the 13 percent of contracts that were either cancelled or terminated, the final goal of 87 (within .1) percent was still obtained.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

CIR is the percentage of contract items in a contract that are certified during the life of the contract. The ratio is computed for each individual contract as the percent of practices applied out of total practices agreed to upon obligation. The CIR is calculated for each individual contract using the 3rd Year CIR. NRCS has been meeting its target of 87 percent for the past years. This indicator falls in line with creating economic opportunities to track the number of contracts and acres for conservation. However, new Farm Bill requirements may pose risks to progress in FY 2024.

Percentage of Timeliness of Practice Certifications or Timely Modification of Past Scheduled Practices to Reflect a New Future Schedule Date

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	Baseline	53%	53%	53%	53%	53%	53%
Actual	---	43%	55%	43%	68%	65.6%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

The target is based on FY 2018 and FY 2019 data. NRCS is compiling data to ensure stability in new methodologies before making any adjustments. This KPI is used in the NRCS Operations Scorecard/Performance Report.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

NRCS plans to review this target with leadership with the new methodologies now in place when looking at a new possible target for FY 2024. New Farm Bill requirements may pose risks to progress in FY 2024.

OFFICE OF PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Percent Change in Scope 1 and Scope 2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent)^{9, 10}

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	---	---	21% decrease	22% decrease	23% decrease
Actual	23.2%	23.4%	28.7%	31.8%	21.3%	TBD	N/A	N/A

Baseline and targets are preliminary and subject to change based on White House policy direction. The baseline year is FY 2008.

Progress Made in FY 2022

In FY 2022, USDA initiated several priority actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by increasing facilities energy and water efficiency, implementing renewable energy projects, utilizing performance contracts, designing and building net-zero emissions buildings, and beginning zero-emission vehicles acquisition planning to replace internal-combustion engine-based vehicles. USDA expects to achieve the following targets in FY 2022:

⁹ Scope one carbon emissions are direct greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the activity of an organization. Scope two carbon emissions are indirect greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the electricity an organization consumes. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, [Scope 1 and Scope 2 Inventory Guidance | US EPA](#). Accessed August 29, 2022.

¹⁰ Numerator: a count of all practices certified within the target quarter. Denominator: a count of all practices that are expected to have been certified as of a given end-of-quarter timeframe.

- 20 percent in carbon pollution-free electricity
- 50 percent reduction in energy use intensity when compared to the 2003 base year, and
- 38 percent reduction in water use when compared to the 2007 base year.

The GHG emissions for FY 2022 will be reported on January 31, 2023, and approved by the Department of Energy (DOE) and OMB later in 2023. The actual percent change in Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions will be provided as soon as it is approved in 2023.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

USDA plans to increase priority sustainability actions to achieving the 65 percent reduction in scope 1 and scope 2 GHG emissions goals by 2030 from 2008 levels as required by Executive Order (EO) 14057, *Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability*. Implementation guidance is in final review by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ and DOE will be coming out with specific guidance and working with agencies in setting GHG reduction targets to meet the EO goals. The FY 2024 target will be updated once those targets are set.

Total Number of Departmental Fleet Vehicles

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	Baseline	28.8	27.1	36.5	36.5	39.1	39.1	39.1
Actual	29.4	27.7	27.1	37.9	37.1	39.7	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

In FY 2022, USDA had an increase in the Vehicle Inventory. The original vehicle cap of 36.5 is being re-evaluated as agencies establish and document a structured vehicle allocation methodology to determine the appropriate size and number of motor vehicles.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

USDA will remain resolute with efforts to continue carrying out right-sizing and right-typing acquisition strategies to identify and eliminate inefficient vehicles and replace them, as needed.

Goal 2: Ensure America’s Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous

A strong and prosperous agricultural sector is essential to the well-being of the U.S. economy. America’s farmers and ranchers ensure a reliable food supply, support job growth, and promote economic development. To maintain an equitable and competitive agricultural sector, USDA will safeguard animal and plant health, support farmers and ranchers’ ability to start and maintain profitable cooperatives and businesses and offer financial support to all producers affected by natural disasters. Additionally, USDA’s research agencies will continue to introduce high-performance plants and animals and offer integrated management options to increase the efficiency of farming practices.

Objective 2.1: Protect Plant and Animal Health by Minimizing Major Diseases, Pests, and Wildlife Conflicts

The impacts of pests, diseases, and wildlife conflicts on agricultural production, commerce, and trade can be immense. USDA must balance keeping American agriculture safe while expanding access to new agricultural markets across the globe. Domestically, USDA conducts emergency response activities that minimize threats and their impacts on agricultural industries, adapting to changes in agricultural risk by adjusting available resources to address these threats. Concurrently, the Department embarks on collaborative research to develop pest-resistant strains of crops and new animal-disease vaccines, expedites the approval of new treatments, and develops strategies to prevent and mitigate damage related to conflicts with wildlife.

To reduce the risk of unsafe agricultural products entering the U.S., USDA incorporates mitigation strategies into international agreements and movement protocols. USDA works with its partners to conduct monitoring and surveillance efforts throughout the country to quickly detect and implement response efforts to foreign pests and diseases that may have evaded prevention measures. This rapid response results in minimal impact to U.S. producers and disruptions to trade and contributes to the protection of American agriculture.

By employing effective prevention and mitigation tactics, USDA will reduce the impact of agricultural pests and diseases, as well as wildlife damage, to ensure that U.S. farms and ranches remain healthy and productive.

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS)

Number of Zoonotic and Agricultural Diseases Sampled in Wildlife

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	16	17	18
Actual	----	----	----	----	15	16	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

APHIS monitors for diseases that have the potential to spread from wildlife to farmed livestock, or even humans, and serves as an early warning system for outbreaks of foreign animal diseases. In FY 2022, APHIS increased the number of wildlife diseases it samples by adding bovine viral diarrhea virus (BVDV) in white-tailed deer. This project is helping APHIS understand the prevalence of BVDV in white-tailed deer in the southeastern United States and gauge the potential risks to livestock. APHIS' wild bird surveillance for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) provided an early warning for the 2022 outbreak of the disease by detecting the Eurasian highly pathogenic H5N1 strain in wild ducks prior to spillover to domestic poultry. APHIS' continued surveillance found HPAI in 78 avian species in 42 States and the District of Columbia, contributing to the agency's understanding of potential wildlife reservoirs for HPAI. The program conducted the first phase of a multi-year project to sample for SARS-CoV-2 in white-tailed deer. The goal of this project is to understand the status of the disease in free-ranging wildlife and gauge the potential for novel virus variants to emerge and potentially spill back into the human population.

In addition to routine wildlife pathogen surveillance work, APHIS is responding to ongoing emergency outbreaks which requires substantial time investment from existing staff. For example, APHIS conducted sampling in feral swine in four high-risk states for African swine fever (ASF) in response to the ongoing ASF outbreak in the Caribbean and is responding to an outbreak of HPAI in 42 States (as of July 2022). While the agency met its target for this year, some non-emergency activities were delayed to focus on priorities related to emergencies.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

In FY 2024, APHIS will develop methods and procedures to sample for new zoonotic or agriculturally significant diseases in wildlife. APHIS currently reports on 16 diseases in wildlife populations, including African swine fever, avian influenza, chronic wasting disease, rabies variants, and SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). APHIS will add new sampling methods based on those diseases that pose the highest risk to agricultural health or human health, in the case of zoonotic diseases.

Responses to large foreign animal disease outbreaks, such as the current response to HPAI and ASF require significant agency resources and could continue to impact APHIS programs' ability to carry out non-emergency related work.

Number of Priority Pests for Which Climate Sustainability Maps Have Been Completed

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	14	24	32
Actual	----	----	----	----	6	16	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

APHIS is developing climate suitability maps for high-risk plant pests to support early detection efforts. APHIS develops the maps using a modeling framework that predicts the changing suitability of an area for pest or disease occurrence based on the likelihood of three favorable conditions specific to the pest or the disease occurring. The maps will help guide state

cooperators' efforts to determine where to conduct surveys. APHIS completed maps for 10 high-risk pests in FY 2022, exceeding the target by two. The maps help predict where pests with a potential to damage specialty crops, forest resources, and ornamental trees may establish themselves based on suitable climate conditions. APHIS produces the maps to help state partners determine which pests to target for survey in their state. During FY 2022, APHIS worked to improve the maps and the website that houses them based on customer feedback. For example, APHIS chose standardized color scales that are intuitive and 508-compliant and added mouseover definitions to legend items on interactive maps. APHIS also improved the website by adding a landing page with information on the goals of the mapping project, how to use the maps, and an easy-to-use menu to access the maps and modeling methods for each pest.

During FY 2022, APHIS evaluated ways to improve modeling for islands and other areas outside the continental United States, including by enhancing server capacity to produce finer-scale data. Supply chain issues initially impacted the delivery of the new server, but it was delivered in spring 2022. The agency will be able to provide more accurate predictions for smaller areas, like island territories, thanks to the finer-scale data and resolution. APHIS is processing these models and will be able to update maps for U.S. territories such as Guam and the Northern Marianas.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

APHIS plans to complete a total of 32 maps by the end of FY 2024 and will determine which pests to prioritize based on continuing analysis of the risks. APHIS will continue to work with state partners and other map users to improve the usefulness of the maps, including providing a user guide that illustrates how the maps can inform survey planning.

APHIS customizes each pest model, and some models require more time than others due to data gaps and variability in pest biology. For example, plant pathogens have complex life cycles that are difficult to incorporate into climate suitability models; therefore, the agency plans to develop a framework for addressing some of these challenges. Additionally, the maps include varying levels of uncertainty about pest establishment. APHIS continues to evaluate how users interpret the maps and how to improve communication so that they can be accurately applied.

Objective 2.2: Build Resilient Food Systems, Infrastructure, and Supply Chain

USDA works to ensure that the food system is fair, resilient, competitive, and distributed. The pursuit of innovative production methodologies and new markets, both at home and abroad, help to ensure these goals are met. In response to the increased demand for local and regional foods caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, USDA will prioritize investments that strengthen these markets and bolster food supply chain resilience for the future. Investing in local and regional food systems will further enhance the profitability of those who grow, harvest, process, and prepare the Nation's food. Further, USDA will continue to advance opportunities in new markets abroad to better enable U.S. agriculture to access and sustain market growth.

By transforming the food system's infrastructure and strengthening critical supply chains, USDA will increase resilience against threats and disturbances and provide local and regional food systems with economic opportunities and security.

Strategic objective 2.2 has been designated as an area making noteworthy progress.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE (AMS)

Percentage of Graders’ Time Recovered Through Customer Billing (Poultry Livestock)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	83%	83%	87%	87%	87%
Actual	---	---	---	95%	94.5%	94%	N/A	N/A

Percentage of Graders’ Time Recovered Through Customer Billing (Meat Livestock)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	83%	83%	87%	87%	87%
Actual	---	---	---	93%	94.9%	94.4%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

The KPI for tracking the recovery of employee time vs. billable time helps to ensure that appropriate staffing levels are maintained to meet service requests. A consistently high number may indicate that current employees are working overtime or service requests have increased significantly. AMS uses this to gauge the adequacy of staffing levels and adjust hiring plans to ensure the appropriate recovery of expenses while minimizing potential increases in fees. Staffing levels of Grader employees continue to be a challenge.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

AMS’s Livestock & Poultry program has a hiring plan in place. AMS Livestock & Poultry staff conduct routine analyses of upcoming retirements and departures and adjust recruitment efforts accordingly throughout the year. Currently, the program offers hiring bonuses for select locations that are hard to fill and a retention bonus program. Risks to progress include challenges with staff retention and continued staffing and supply chain challenges related to COVID-19.

Objective 2.3: Foster Agricultural Innovation

The future of U.S. agriculture, including plant and animal agriculture, forestry, and aquaculture, depends on continuous investments in scientific research and innovation to support technological progress, production efficiencies, and environmental stewardship. Investing in climate-smart agriculture will spur innovative approaches for minimizing the environmental footprint of agriculture while increasing the overall sustainability of agriculture, in part through increased yields. New technologies and system designs are needed to produce higher-value goods from agricultural products, emerging crops, livestock, and forest feedstocks. This will help to generate new markets, establish new domestic supply chains, and create more jobs and economic opportunities. Increasing productivity has significant social and economic benefits for society.

USDA will prioritize innovation to meet the needs of its stakeholders and build infrastructure for the challenges of today and tomorrow, with emphasis on continuous improvement. USDA will take proactive steps to ensure that data, evaluation, and learning opportunities are central to agriculture initiatives across the Department and Nation.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SCIENTIST – RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS

Number of Citations of REE Reports (Quarterly)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	119	122	126	129	134
Actual	---	---	---	134	82	95	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

In FY 2022, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) made significant progress in releasing its new data dissemination platform. The new platform will make it easier for data users to find, interact, and consume NASS data. This will have an impact on users being able to locate the data they need for use in support of public policy. Currently, a Dairy Landing Page has been released to target audiences for testing and feedback. An Economics landing page is in development and will be released in FY 2023.

NASS historically tracked this KPI manually but is now fully utilizing a dashboard for its KPI reporting. This eliminated the need for a human to manually do the searches and forward them on to internal stakeholders for their awareness.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

NASS will continue releasing new product themed landing pages through FY 2023 and FY 2024 to impact this metric. The Census of Agriculture will also be released in early calendar year 2024 which provides many updated data points that are not available from annual programs.

NASS is working with a third-party to identify citations in peer-reviewed research articles using a machine learning model. This may be a mature and fruitful novel KPI by FY 2024.

Percent of USDA Patents Licensed per Patents Issued (Annual)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	25%	35%	35%	35%	35%
Actual	---	---	---	26%	50%	55%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

There are no quarterly updates as this information is collected on an annual basis and the percentage is calculated using prior year data. The KPI for FY 2022 is 55 percent based on FY 2021 data.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

The purpose of this KPI is to approximate the extent to which ARS-funded research led to innovations in the food and agriculture space by tracking patents and licenses associated with ARS-funded research. Advancements in machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) offer new methods for assessing the path from USDA-funded research to market-based solutions. USDA, led by OBPA and REE, is exploring opportunities to expand on NASS’s pilot (see prior KPI discussion) to develop a new KPI that draws on both citation and patent data.

Goal 3: Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers

Expanding international marketing opportunities for U.S. farmers and exporters is critical to fostering business and income growth across rural America. USDA promotes American agricultural products and exports by expanding overseas markets, developing international standards, removing trade barriers by monitoring and enforcing existing trade agreements, and negotiating trade agreements that benefit the U.S. agricultural economy. USDA provides tools to domestic producers so that they are well-positioned to secure a share of the growing global market for agricultural products. USDA also works with developing countries to grow their economies and facilitate trade, developing markets of the future for all USDA’s producers.

Objective 3.1: Foster Sustainable Economic Growth by Promoting Innovation, Building Resilience to Climate Change, and Expanding Renewable Energy

The world population is expected to reach 9.6 billion by 2050. Feeding this population will require U.S. producers to adopt new technologies and scientific approaches to sustainably increase agricultural production. To ensure U.S. private working lands and public landscapes are conserved and managed for future generations, the Department will provide technical and financial assistance using the latest technology and research available. Fundamental and applied research will explore the complex interactions between human systems and the environment. This knowledge can then be shared with producers and land managers through resources, tools, and decision support, leading to enhanced adoption of climate-smart practices.

USDA is implementing a climate-smart strategy that will be integrated into Departmental programs and services beginning in FY 2022. This strategy will offer voluntary incentives to producers, landowners, and communities while being considerate of their needs as USDA works with them to address the causes and consequences of climate change. USDA will continue to play a crucial role in supporting America’s rural prosperity by providing a strong safety net for America’s farmers and ranchers. In addition, the Department will continue to improve program delivery and customer experience. By helping industry connect with consumers through grants and market development programs, USDA will foster new market opportunities while improving food access and market transparency. As a result, these programs and services will benefit industry stakeholders throughout the food supply chain.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Percentage of Direct and Guaranteed Loan Borrowers Who Are Beginning Farmers

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	Baseline	53.0	59.9	59.9	59.9%	59.9%	59.9%
Actual	---	55.0	54.5	58.6	59.9	60.9%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Lending to beginning farmers is a priority and continues to represent about 60 percent of direct loan borrowers. To expand participation even further FSA gauges outreach and participation by newer producers, forecasting obligations and tracking actual dollars loaned for budget planning and funds management, prioritizing regular technical assistance to borrowers, and designing policy and customer experience changes.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

The Farm Loan Program (FLP) is expanding its data analytics capabilities to track progress and identify gaps for lending to beginning farmers. Continued implementation of automation plans is needed to improve employee loan making/servicing and provide risk management tools for customers. FLP is using its loan making and servicing flexibilities to assist producers who have cash flow challenges.

The supplemental program funding of \$3.1 billion provided in Section 22006 of IRA will impact delinquency-related KPIs beginning in FY 2023. Enacted on August 16, 2022, the statute authorizes payments and loan modifications for distressed direct and guaranteed borrowers, including those who are delinquent on their loans.

First Installment Delinquency Rate on Direct Loans

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	8%	8%	9%	9%	9%
Actual	---	---	---	9.9%	13.8%	8.4%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

The FY 2022 end year rate is higher than pre-pandemic rates in the 6-7 percent range but is an improvement compared to 9.9 percent in FY 2020 when macroeconomic stresses began to impact loan demand and portfolio health. The FY 2021 rate of 13.8 percent was an anomaly due to ARP Section 1005 related delinquencies.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

As part of its internal control regime, FLP implemented credit quality reviews of farm loan officers in FY 2021 for compliance with loan making and servicing directives, and these reviews will continue. With allowance for exceptions due to natural or economic disasters, loans should not become delinquent in the first year. Realistic cash flow projections and forecasted commodity/livestock prices are factors inspected in credit quality reviews.

In FY 2023-2024, FLP is implementing the following risk management tools:

- Data modeling to identify the statistically significant traits of direct loan borrowers who default or restructure, which FLP plans to use to better target technical assistance to new and existing borrowers.

Peer-to-peer financial analysis of producers with similar geographic and operational characteristics, which will be used by loan officers and customers. A data share agreement with

an agricultural services company executed in FY 2022 provides a significant farmer/rancher pool for peer analysis.

Direct Loan Delinquency Rate

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Actual	---	---	---	4.3%	4.7%	4.5%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

The overall delinquency rate generally follows a harvest season pattern and was 4.5 percent a year ago. It continues to be modest, although higher in some states.

FLP’s mission is to assist those who are unable to obtain commercial credit and, therefore, the applicant and borrower pool credit risk is higher. These producers feel the impacts of economic setbacks and natural disasters more acutely because they typically do not have a significant safety net of equity or other financial resources.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

Flexibilities for FLP loan making and servicing are being provided to the extent that statute and regulations allow for producers experiencing cash flow challenges. Automated risk management tools for customers are being planned.

RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY (RMA)

Improper Payment Rate for All Categories of Payments

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	2.09%	2.26%	2.58%
Actual	----	----	----	----	1.41%	2.58%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

RMA reported an error rate of 2.58 percent for FY 2022. The reported error rate was slightly higher than the estimated target rate due, in part, to the improper dollars associated with administrative type errors. The improper dollars resulting from certification errors were smaller than the improper dollars associated with administrative type errors, which RMA has not seen in previous years. The reduced certification errors are likely the result of RMA and industry focused efforts on procedural requirements. RMA will continue to focus on reducing improper payments by implementing the activities delineated in the FY 2022 Corrective Action Plan.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

RMA utilizes KPI data from the prior year to add areas of focus for the upcoming year’s compliance review cycle. Focusing on prior year’s root causes of errors helps to ensure the agency addresses any deficiencies so that errors are less likely to be repeated. The adoption of new products and insurance options presents additional opportunities for errors and improper payments.

Annual Normalized Value of Risk Protection Provided to Agricultural Producers through the Federal Crop Insurance Program (Billions of Dollars)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	\$63.6	\$64.0	\$77.3	\$77.6	\$77.9	\$78.2	\$78.5	\$78.8
Actual	\$74.6	\$76.8	\$78.2	\$84.1	\$87.9	94.4	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Improved coverage for specialty crop producers through expansion (over 80 counties, 13 crops), made improvements to Whole Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm insurance, and continued efforts to expand the Production and Revenue History program to additional specialty crops.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

RMA utilizes KPI data from the prior year to add areas of focus for the upcoming year’s outreach efforts. RMA has identified two challenges to address in FY 2024 -- training agents and farmers about new coverage to maximize participation. Ad hoc disaster assistance has been provided each year from 2017 through 2021. Farmers may consider reducing their crop insurance coverage if they believe similar types of assistance will continue in the future.

Objective 3.2: Expand Markets for Emerging Technologies, Sustainable Products, and Novel Products

USDA links U.S. agriculture to the world by promoting agricultural exports, which are vital to the American agricultural sector. USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) conducts export promotion activities, which help U.S. food and agricultural exporters take advantage of market opportunities. These opportunities are created by removing barriers to U.S. exports and by building trade capacity to increase demand for exports, including developing foreign markets for U.S. climate-smart agricultural products. USDA administers trade programs and activities, working in partnership with private-sector associations, land-grant universities, State and regional trade groups, U.S. food and agricultural exporters, and U.S. and foreign financial institutions. In addition, USDA’s Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) manages and provides oversight for international science and technology collaborations, which are critical to protecting and promoting USDA R&D provide the foundation upon which domestic and international markets grow.

External factors play a role in expanding international marketing opportunities. These factors include environmental conditions, such as variability in domestic and overseas crop production, natural disasters, disease outbreaks, pest infestations, and food contamination. Furthermore, important trading partners are considering criteria and preferences related to the greenhouse gas performance of agricultural commodities and products. USDA can help respond to this demand by preparing domestic producers to meet these new market opportunities.

FOREST SERVICE

Progress Made in FY 2022

Forest Service International Programs and Trade Compliance promotes sustainable forest management globally and brings important technologies and innovations back to the United States. The program represents the interests of the entire U.S. forestry community and its stakeholders through international engagement. Effective forest management at the global level is necessary to protect U.S. trade interests, such as the ability of domestic timber producers to compete equally to ensure the sustainability of critical domestic and global natural resources, and to support climate change mitigation and climate resilience. International Programs provide technical assistance to other countries to combat illegal logging, which costs the United States forest products industry \$1 billion annually in lost export opportunities and depressed wood prices. International Programs and Trade Compliance also improves the management of forest invasive species, which annually cause \$4.2 billion in loss and damage in the forest products industry, by supporting collaborative work to control and prevent invasions.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

The agency will continue implementation of the above programs including supporting enforcement of the Lacey Act, protecting the United States against invasive species, as well as conserving habitat for migratory species.

Objective 3.3: Expand All Producers' Access to Global Markets Through Negotiation and Enforcement of Trade Agreements

Agricultural exports are crucial to the economic viability of U.S. farmers and ranchers. USDA strives to ensure that U.S. exporters can sell safe, wholesome food and agricultural products around the world. Supporting a rules-based global trading system, USDA negotiates, monitors, and enforces trade agreements to ensure global market opportunities for U.S. agriculture. USDA administers programs to support the expansion of global market access and uses its market development programs to support the trade-policy efforts of industry partners. The Department also works with other government Agencies, trade associations, and organizations to maintain and establish transparent, science-based standards for U.S. agricultural products. To maintain a level playing field for exporters, USDA provides technical and scientific expertise to successfully address barriers to trade, such as tariffs, food safety, and animal and plant health issues. Through its monitoring and enforcement efforts, the Department will also ensure the realization of anticipated benefits when new agreements are implemented.

USDA relies on its worldwide network of agricultural representatives and partnerships with private-sector stakeholders to monitor foreign trade and regulatory actions that may affect exports. Removing existing barriers while preventing new ones from materializing will directly help U.S. producers thrive. USDA works to ensure that the same rules apply to countries worldwide through international standard setting, and that scientific principles are the basis for international standards and international trade decisions.

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

Value of Trade Preserved Through Resolution of Foreign Market Access Issues (Billion Dollars)¹¹

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	\$4.10	\$4.00	\$5.50	\$6.00	\$6.10	\$6.10	\$5.70	\$5.70
Actual	\$7.50	\$12.75	\$2.47	\$7.67	\$5.89	\$1.77	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Following more than 20 years of engagement, FAS and APHIS, supported by the U.S. potato industry, gained market access for U.S. potatoes beyond the 26-kilometer zone on the southern side of the U.S.-Mexico border. This achievement creates opportunities for as much as \$200 million in sales over the next five years. FAS also leveraged high-level engagement with Vietnam to secure most-favored nation tariff rates for corn, wheat, and frozen pork, making more than \$200 million of U.S. products more competitive in Vietnam’s market. USDA and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) concluded beef safeguard negotiations under the U.S. – Japan Trade Agreement, creating opportunities for \$150 million more in beef exports to Japan and reducing the probability of higher tariffs being imposed on U.S. beef. FAS actions to defend U.S. dairy interests against a Colombian safeguard investigation preserved a \$125 million market. Following nearly 20 years of coordinated efforts by FAS, APHIS, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and USTR, USDA opened the market in India to U.S. pork exports.

The pandemic continued to limit travel opportunities to meet with foreign trading partners and resolve trade restrictions. As the effects of the pandemic continue to lessen, there will likely be greater opportunity for direct engagement with trading partners aimed at expanding market access.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

This performance indicator measures the value of trade preserved through the resolution of foreign market access issues, such as U.S. export detainment, issues related to sanitary and phytosanitary concerns, technical barriers to trade, and trade regulations. In FY 2024, FAS plans to identify and develop market opportunities and more diverse export markets through an economic global market review, more robust foreign engagement, and cooperative multilateral economic and trade forums. FAS is committed to monitoring and enforcing existing trade agreements, including addressing unfair trade practices, facilitating trade, and ensuring that trading partners meet their commitments.

Political and economic headwinds from the pandemic; supply chain disruptions; animal, plant and human disease outbreaks and their effects on the economy; and the war in Ukraine will continue to impact world agricultural markets.

¹¹ Foreign market access issues include U.S. export detainment, sanitary/phytosanitary concerns, technical barriers to trade, and trade regulations.

Objective 3.4: Expand International Marketing Opportunities and Build Demand in Developing Countries Through Delivery of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

USDA advances global competitiveness through the delivery of market development programs, technical assistance, and trade capacity building. These programs support the development of export markets and adherence to a rules-based trading system. USDA administers programs to build the capacity of developing countries to integrate into the global economy and become full trading partners with the United States. USDA works with these countries to move them along the agricultural market spectrum from developing to developed economies with promising demand potential. The Department’s market development programs assist U.S. exporters in increasing awareness and demand for their products worldwide. USDA also partners with domestic agricultural industries, foreign governments, and agricultural scientists, as well as overseas farmers, cooperatives, and businesses, to expand international marketing opportunities. Harnessing its extensive network of technical and scientific expertise, USDA successfully administers and implements these programs globally to the benefit of U.S. farmers and ranchers.

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

Value of Agricultural Exports Resulting from Participation in USDA-Endorsed Foreign Agricultural Trade Shows and Trade Missions (Billion Dollars)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	\$1.56	\$1.78	\$1.75	\$2.13	\$1.75	\$2.13	\$2.15	\$2.20
Actual	\$2.35	\$2.13	\$2.20	\$1.16	\$0.119	\$2.3	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Trade missions and many trade shows made a return to in-person events in 2022, resulting in significant increases in the projected 12-month sales over 2020 and 2021. COVID-19 levels in Asia, however, continue to hinder performance of trade missions and shows.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

FAS will work to maintain progress achieved in many regions and work to regain ground in Asia in FY 2024 should COVID-19 infection rates and policies be favorable. Virtual events will remain an important tool for FAS as long as zero tolerance policies for COVID-19 and any other external factors keep markets closed to in-person events.

Goal 4: Make Safe, Nutritious Food Available to All Americans

USDA plays a critical role in preventing foodborne illness and protecting public health, while also ensuring Americans have access to healthy foods and beverages and nutrition education that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence. While keeping the food supply safe, USDA must also reduce food insecurity and prioritize nutrition insecurity, which emphasizes providing Americans not just calories, but calories that matter for their health and well-being.

To ensure the food supply is safe, the Department will continue to enhance its food inspection system with the goal of reducing illness from meat, poultry, and egg products and drive compliance with food safety regulations. At the same time, USDA’s research, education, and extension programs will continue to provide science, information, tools, and technologies to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness. USDA will also continue to foster partnerships that support best practices in implementing effective programs to ensure that eligible populations have access to programs that support their nutrition needs.

Objective 4.1: Increase Food Security Through Assistance and Access to Nutritious and Affordable Food

USDA is committed to ensuring that every American has access to nutritious and affordable foods. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is responsible for administering Federal domestic nutrition assistance programs while linking scientific research to the nutrition needs of consumers. The Department strives to make benefits accessible to those eligible to participate in nutrition assistance programs, such as the [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children](#) (WIC) and the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP). FNS has been the lead agency in advancing USDA’s commitment to nutrition security. Nutrition security means all Americans have consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, affordable foods essential to optimal health and well-being. USDA’s approach to tackling food and nutrition insecurity aims to recognize all Americans are not maintaining an active, healthy life that is consistent with Federal recommendations; and emphasize taking an equity lens to USDA efforts. This is a mission that no single agency can meet independently, that is why USDA is engaging with all its partners and stakeholders on ways to increase nutrition security. Together, USDA and its partners and stakeholders can make progress that will change lives and ensure a healthier, more prosperous future for Americans.

USDA seeks to ensure that nutrition assistance programs positively impact the communities they serve. The Department will use all available opportunities, including new communication mechanisms, to serve customers innovatively, offer flexibility to partners, and administer programs as effectively as possible to serve targeted populations.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Percentage of American Households with Consistent, Dependable Access to Food

	CY 2017	CY 2018	CY 2019	CY 2020	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023	CY 2024
Target	88%	87.7%	87.9%	89%	89.2%	89.3%	89.4%	89.5%
Actual	88.2%	88.9%	89.5%	89.5%	89.9%	TBD ¹²	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

FNS created a Nutrition Security Promotion Plan to enhance nutrition education and improve access to nutrition resources. The plan includes information received through stakeholder listening sessions and through environmental scans of existing regional and national outreach efforts to identify and bridge gaps. The plan will be used as a guide to strengthen FNS’s ability to conduct a potential four-year (FY 2023-2026) Nutrition Security Initiative and Outreach Campaign. FNS continues to review [Pandemic electronic benefits transfer \(EBT\)](#) school plans and childcare plans submitted by states with new plans approved each week. FNS released Summer 2022 guidance, Q&As, and State plan templates. Awarded more than \$39 million in the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Reach and Resiliency round one to 38 TEFAP State agencies for a variety of unique and impactful projects, each tailored to the specific needs of the requesting State, with the goal of expanding TEFAP's reach into remote, rural, tribal, and/or low-income areas that are underserved by the program. Round two of the TEFAP Reach and Resiliency Grants RFA were released in December 2023 and will remain open until March 6, 2023. FNS released and has promoted a robust suite of consumer resources in Spanish, including the MyPlate Quiz and tip sheets. The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) released and has promoted Dietary Guidelines (DGA) health professional resources in Spanish, including all charts/tables in the DGA publication for the first time ever.

FNS also created a new Nutrition Education Branch within SNAP which will coordinate nutrition security efforts and further expand the collaboration with States, local service providers, and public health partners. SNAP-Ed is a comprehensive nutrition education program celebrating 30 years of teaching people how to stretch their SNAP dollars, shop for and cook healthy meals, and stay physically active. SNAP-Ed is developing the [National Program Evaluation and Reporting System \(N-PEARS\)](#) which will streamline reporting and improve data collection and visualization. SNAP-Ed is also creating new resources to help States and implementing agencies with the adoption of N-PEARS, and it is revamping its [SNAP-Ed Connection website](#) which serves as a clearinghouse of evidence-based interventions and will host State webpages featuring data and outcomes sharing.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

FNS plans to carry out the following activities in FY 2024:

- Publish studies evaluating implementation of COVID-19 waivers in both the child nutrition programs and WIC.

¹² CY 2022 rates are anticipated in fall 2023.

- Conduct a study to test the feasibility of preparing healthy meals on a budget (using foods purchased from nutrition program retailers) that does not exceed the value of the Thrifty Food Plan.
- Continue to convene the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) Food Package Review Workgroup at least quarterly to provide a forum for discussion on how the FDPIR Food Package can be improved to better meet the needs of participants. FDPIR provides USDA Foods to income-eligible households living on Indian reservations, and to American Indian households residing in approved areas near reservations or in Oklahoma. FNS will also provide additional support for FDPIR nutrition education, with funding to support FDPIR in developing and implementing nutrition education and promotion initiatives effectively.

Risks to progress in FY 2024 include rising food costs and inflation, the ability of FNS programs to reach and target specific underserved populations, and the fluctuation of food security resulting from societal and economic conditions.

Annual Average Monthly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation Rate¹³

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	82.1%	82.2%	82.3%
Actual	82%	82%	82%	78%	N/A ¹⁴	TBD ¹⁵	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

FNS has collaborated with eligible businesses considering integration of online SNAP to increase participation from 46 to 147 participating banners. FNS actively provided technical assistance to over 300 additional retailer banners interested in implementing online purchasing.

FNS implemented retailer focused activities to increase retailer compliance; SNAP distributed several notices reminding SNAP authorized retailers of program rules. FNS worked with a non-profit partner to launch the online ecommerce platform, with services for farmers and markets expected to launch in FY 2023, once development and certifications are completed. FNS provided technical assistance to the three states involved in eligibility system upgrades.

FNS published a grant solicitation for a non-profit to provide hands-on technical assistance to retailers interested in pursuing online SNAP. The grant award will be announced in January 2023.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

FNS plans to carry out the following activities in FY 2024:

¹³ SNAP Average Monthly Participation Rate is a new KPI for FNS, starting in FY 2022.
¹⁴ FNS will not have SNAP Participation Rate for FY 2021 because the collection of SNAP Quality Control data was waived due to the pandemic. This data is used in the numerator of the participation rate.
¹⁵ FY 2022 participation rates will likely be available in approximately 2 years.

- In 2023, the National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, FNS' grantee, will provide low-cost access to the e-commerce platform for SNAP authorized farmers. The agency will continue to implement SNAP technology/online shopping initiatives as outlined by the President's Executive Order on Customer Experience.
- FNS will complete three guidance, technical assistance-related documents, webinars, or similar actions to raise awareness of public charge and non-citizen eligibility for SNAP.

SNAP participation rates, like Food Security measures, fluctuate. The program is designed to expand during a slow economy and contract when times are good.

Objective 4.2: Encourage Healthy Dietary Choices through Data-Driven, Flexible, Customer-Focused Approaches

USDA shapes programs and policies and develops knowledge resources to promote healthy eating at individual, family, household, and community levels. The Department further uses these tools to promote fruit and vegetable consumption and other healthy eating behaviors through public-private partnerships and cutting-edge technologies. The Department is also working to improve access to healthful, locally produced food in underserved communities through a multifaceted strategy focused on food production, distribution, and both traditional and non-traditional retail options.

The Department is committed to working collaboratively with other Federal agencies, State partners, and other interested stakeholders on an array of strategies to advance nutrition security. For example, through the WIC program, USDA encourages participating mothers to breastfeed their infants by strengthening breastfeeding policy and program activities and is working on a comprehensive revision to the WIC food packages to align with the latest nutrition science. USDA will also work to ensure that schools and childcare providers have the resources and flexibility to serve top-quality, healthy, and appealing meals.

USDA, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, kicked off the process to develop the 2025 edition of the Dietary Guidelines, which included a 30-day public comment period on the topics and questions to be examined in the process and a call for nominations to the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. USDA aims to appoint the Committee in FY 2023. In terms of other successes, at the request of end users, USDA created a page with resources in Spanish.

The CNPP launched new MyPlate tools and resources to help consumers make healthy eating choices. Shop Simple with MyPlate, a web app, was developed to accompany the updated Thrifty Food Plan and helps consumers choose and prepare healthy foods on a budget. MiPlato, the Spanish language version of MyPlate.gov, was created to house MyPlate Spanish language materials and makes finding these resources easier for consumers.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Annual Average Monthly Participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (in millions)¹⁶

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	6.3	6.4	6.5
Actual	7.3	6.8	6.4	----	----	TBD ¹⁷	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

FNS has sought to revise the WIC food packages through a proposed rule, with an opportunity for public comment following publication. Given the extensive reach and impact of the WIC food packages, FNS is taking expedient and thoughtful action to propose changes that are strongly rooted in the latest nutrition science and are best positioned to significantly improve nutrition security, while also considering WIC state agency operations and implementation. The proposed rulemaking also considers USDA’s commitment to advancing equity and to ensuring that programmatic changes are developed carefully using this lens. The rule is expected to publish in November 2022. In FY 2022, FNS has also actively engaged in creating and promoting policies to advance online shopping in WIC through rulemaking, expected to publish in FY 2023, which will address key regulatory barriers to online ordering in the WIC program. This rule will also allow FNS to modernize WIC vendor regulations that do not reflect current technology and facilitate the Program’s transition to electronic benefit transfer (EBT).

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

FNS plans to carry out the following activities in FY 2024:

- FNS is investing in WIC outreach and modernizing the program, demonstrating the commitment to [nutrition security](#) and improving health through WIC by connecting families to program benefits. With funding provided through ARP for outreach, innovation, and program modernization in WIC, FNS will implement a national WIC public health outreach campaign to leverage innovative strategies to reach more WIC-eligible individuals and increase public awareness of the health and nutrition benefits of the program.
- In support of WIC modernization and innovation, FNS will also pilot and test community-based outreach and engagement strategies to increase WIC participation and retention. A [Cooperative Agreement of up to \\$20 million](#) will be awarded to test new ways of reaching potential and current WIC participants, with sub-grants provided to WIC state and local agencies, community organizations, and other nonprofits.
- FNS also seeks to transform WIC business practices and implement technology tools that will improve and streamline the participant experience, partnering with the U.S. Digital Service (USDS) and developing grant opportunities to support efforts aimed at improving

¹⁶ The Annual Average Monthly Participation is a new KPI for FNS, starting in FY 2022.

¹⁷ Actuals for FY 2022 will be available, at the earliest, in April 2023.

the WIC participant experience through technology, as evidenced by increasing participant enrollment and retention while improving equity.

- FNS also strives to use the funding to support a diverse WIC workforce and will continue working with the NIFA to develop and implement a national strategy for WIC that will provide workforce development and advancement pipelines to support WIC staff and ensure skilled and culturally relevant care for WIC families.

Understanding how to partner and work with federal partners and states to promote digital equity is an important consideration to this work. As FNS continues to promote access through the development of new technologies for service delivery, FNS is considering how to ensure the new technologies can reach all eligible populations without creating barriers to access or exasperating inequities.

Annual Percentage of Eligible Children Participating in the National School Lunch Program

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%
Actual	58%	58%	57%	43%	N/A ¹⁸	60%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Since October 1, 2022, Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Team Nutrition conducted 395 trainings with over 9,000 attendees. Team Nutrition also conducted 31 webinars with over 27,630 attendees including a new Meal Talk Webinar series. CNP has sought to publish additional resources and training tools for CNP operators to improve knowledge and skills in meeting the meal pattern requirements. As part of a series on how to credit meal components, CNP-Team Nutrition developed three crediting tip sheets “Crediting Fruits in Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet, Crediting Vegetables in Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet”, and “Crediting Milk in Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheet.” CNP-Team Nutrition released the “Best Practices for Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast.” CNP Team Nutrition worked collaboratively with the Institute of Child Nutrition to develop two additional sodium reduction training worksheets, titled (1) Writing Specifications That Limit Sodium and (2) Cooperative Purchasing Groups.

In February 2022, CNP published the final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium*, which intends to give schools time to transition from current, pandemic operations, toward more nutritious meals. CNP hosted three webinars and updates two guidance resources to support implementation of the rule. Following publication of the transitional standards rule, CNP began working towards a new rulemaking to further align school nutrition standards with the goals of the latest Dietary Guidelines. To develop these proposed standards, CNP relied on input from key stakeholders. Throughout 2022, CNP and External Government Affairs held over 25 listening sessions with State agencies, school food authorities, advocacy organizations, Tribal stakeholders, professional associations, food manufacturers, and other

¹⁸ FY 2022 actual was 60%, including children receiving lunch through the Seamless Summer Option (which most schools used to provide school meals during SY 21-22). No rate is available for FY 2021 as we do not have complete data due to waivers in place during SY 20-21.

Federal agencies. CNP also considered the over 8,000 public comments submitted in response to the transitional standards rule.

CNP sought to publish the Streamlining Program Requirements and Improving Integrity in the Summer Food Service Program Final Rule but needed to move the publication date to late summer/early fall 2022 because of competing priorities, including the school meal nutrition standards rules, technical assistance for the Hill on the development of legislation, and development and implementation of waivers and other technical assistance for States and program operators.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

FNS plans to carry out the following activities in FY 2024:

- In FY 2024, CNP expects to publish a final rule to further align school meal nutrition standards with the goals of the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans in early calendar year 2024. Upon publication, CNP will conduct webinars for State agencies, school food authorities, and other partners, and will provide overviews of the final rule’s content at conferences. CNP will also release guidance resources to support implementation of the final rule.
- Following a proposed rule published in FY 2023, CNP expects to publish a final rule regarding the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) participation threshold in spring 2024. The intention of this rulemaking is to propose changes that would expand access to CEP and provide greater flexibility to states and schools that want to contribute additional state and local funds to provide no-cost meals to students.

Annual Percentage of Eligible Children Participating in the School Breakfast Program

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	30%	30%	31%	31%	31%	31%	31%
Actual	---	30%	29.6%	24%	N/A ¹⁹	31%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

FNS released the “Best Tips for Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast” publication for school nutrition professionals. This training guide for school nutrition professionals presents how to identify sources of added sugars and specific ways to reduce the number of added sugars in school breakfast meals. FNS is on track to successfully complete its school breakfast initiatives.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

Similar to the School Meals section above, in FY 2024, CNP expects to publish a final rule to further align school mean standards:

¹⁹ FY 2022 actual was 31%, including children receiving breakfast through the Seamless Summer Option (which most schools used to provide school meals during SY 21-22). No rate is available for FY 2021 as we do not have complete data due to waivers in place during SY 20-21.

- In FY 2024, CNP expects to publish a final rule to further align school meal nutrition standards with the goals of the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans in early calendar year 2024. Upon publication, CNP will conduct webinars for state agencies, school food authorities, and other partners, and will provide overviews of the final rule’s content at conferences. CNP will also release guidance resources to support implementation of the final rule.
- Following a proposed rule published in FY 2023, CNP expects to publish a final rule to eliminate the CEP participation threshold in spring 2024. The final rule will expand access to CEP and provide flexibility to states and schools that want to contribute additional state and local funds to provide no-cost meals to students.

Objective 4.3: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health

The U.S. food supply is one of the safest in the world due to the efforts of USDA’s FSIS. This agency is committed to protecting public health by preventing illness from meat, poultry, and egg products. FSIS accomplishes this by ensuring that domestic and imported meat, poultry and egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled. Thousands of inspectors across the Nation work to achieve this mission every day by verifying industry compliance with U.S. food safety laws and regulations.

USDA will continue to invest in innovation of its inspection strategies, policies, and scientific approaches so that fewer people in the U.S. become ill from foodborne pathogens. The Department is committed to reducing *Salmonella* illnesses associated with poultry products and is developing a stronger, more comprehensive approach to protecting consumers. USDA is also strengthening ongoing collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders to enhance and promote food safety. USDA works with international partners and standards-setting organizations (e.g., the Codex Alimentarius Commission) to develop science-based international food safety standards, which will help ensure the safety of imported foods.

Strategic objective 4.3 has been designated as an area making noteworthy progress.

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

Reduction in the Proportion of Poultry Samples with Salmonella Serotypes Commonly Associated with Human Illness

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	2% reduction	4% reduction	6% reduction
Actual	----	----	----	----	----	3% reduction	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

FSIS met its target for FY 2022, with a 3 percent reduction in *Salmonella* serotypes commonly associated with human illness (Enteritidis, Infantis, and Typhimurium). While the KPI is a measure of the agency’s own performance, it is related to the broader initiative to develop a regulatory framework for a new strategy to control *Salmonella* in poultry products and more effectively reduce foodborne *Salmonella* infections linked to them. To date, FSIS has undertaken information-gathering and discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, researchers, and

scientists. Also, to help inform future policies, FSIS is gathering scientific evidence through the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods, a risk profile, two quantitative risk assessments, and expansion of exploratory sampling for young chicken carcasses.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

In FY 2023, FSIS published a proposed framework for a new strategy to reduce *Salmonella* illnesses attributable to poultry. The framework under consideration includes requiring that incoming flocks be tested for *Salmonella* before entering the establishment, enhancing establishment process control monitoring and FSIS verification, and implementing an enforceable final product standard. FSIS solicited public comment on the proposal at a public meeting and in writing. The agency will continue to engage with stakeholders as it refines the proposed strategy based on public comment; recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods; and ongoing risk assessments, data collection, and analysis. FSIS intends to publish proposed rules and policies implementing the revised strategy in 2023, with the goal of finalizing any rules by mid-2024.

Goal 5: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities

Rural America provides the Nation’s food and energy resources, produces the fiber for goods and manufacturing, contributes more than 35 percent of the Nation’s military members, and operates about 80 percent of the Nation’s critical infrastructure lifelines. Unfortunately, it is also where the country’s majority of underserved communities and persistently poor families reside and where repeat disaster losses and climate change risks occur. It is also home to the country’s fastest aging population and the majority of the Nation’s aging infrastructure. USDA is taking bold action to promote rural prosperity and economic development by providing technical assistance and financing investments in rural water, electric, broadband, housing, community facilities, local and regional food systems, and rural businesses and cooperatives. USDA will leverage funds, stimulate private-public partnerships, and collaborate with communities to increase economic opportunities in underserved communities and build rural infrastructure. This includes working with Federal partners and various stakeholder groups to help rural and Tribal communities thrive.

Objective 5.1: Improve Rural and Tribal Community Infrastructure, Including Affordable E-Connectivity, Cornerstone Community Facilities, Sustainable and Reliable Power, and Clean and Safe Water and Sewer Systems

USDA is committed to building infrastructure in rural and Tribal America so people can be safe and healthy, with the opportunity to drive local and global economies no matter where they live. In rural and Tribal communities, broadband provides access to jobs, banking, and markets for farmers and small businesses. USDA will work to bring affordable, reliable broadband to rural people where they are — in their homes, communities, and businesses — to reach areas without sufficient access and move the Nation towards 100 percent high-speed coverage for all Americans. The Biden-Harris Administration has prioritized the development of broadband infrastructure to strengthen education, health care, public services, and economic opportunity throughout rural America. USDA will further promote healthy communities and the sustainable growth and diversification of local rural and Tribal economies, as well as increased capacity to participate successfully in regional, National, and global economies, through investment in health care, education, and other community facilities.

These efforts rely on bedrock investments in sustainable, reliable power and clean water and sewer systems. USDA’s historic work to electrify the Nation continues through voluntary investments and risk management that will help cut a path to fight climate change while maintaining the vitality of rural electric cooperatives. Under the leadership of the Biden-Harris administration, USDA will upgrade power infrastructure, improve access to clean drinking water and sewer systems, and invest in strategic rural infrastructure to make these communities economically viable and livable, investing in the people who need it most.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT (RD)

Number of Households with Potential Access to Rural Development-Funded New and/or Improved E-Connectivity Services

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	200,000	250,000	250,000
Actual	----	----	----	----	----	134,804	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

While this KPI did not meet the FY 2022 target, Rural Utilities Service (RUS) received a record number of ReConnect applications. RUS was able to make e-connectivity awards that benefited 134,804 households. General barriers to meeting this target are delays in funding announcements, high level of applications that need to be reviewed, and length of time required to conduct environmental reviews.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

RD expects to continue to collaborate with the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on the joint Agency Priority Goal (APG) to ensure the further deployment of BIL funds and annual appropriations. A funding Notice for Round 4 of ReConnect was published August 4, 2022. RD also expects to deploy technical assistance grants via cooperative agreements to support communities of need. Risks to progress include dependency on partnership with NTIA and potential staffing need to conduct environmental reviews on incoming applications.

Objective 5.2: Boost the Financial Security of Rural and Tribal Communities through Access to Affordable Housing

Access to affordable and safe housing is at the foundation of strong communities, healthy families, and vibrant economies. USDA is committed to ensuring that people living in rural and Tribal communities have equitable and affordable access to housing. The Department is on the frontlines of the affordable housing crisis and is committed to ensuring access to housing security in rural and Tribal communities. This commitment includes not only the building, repairing, and preserving of housing, but also reducing barriers to accessing housing and maintaining housing security. During the COVID-19 pandemic, USDA has worked to reduce foreclosures and evictions across rural America. Under President Biden’s ARP, USDA was provided with funding to provide re-financing opportunities to distressed homeowners, as well as vital rental assistance to rent-overburdened tenants.

As USDA works to address rural housing challenges, RD will improve delivery of its housing programs and resources by embedding key Departmental priorities such as climate and equity in these programs. This includes continuing to identify opportunities to make housing more accessible, expanding outreach into underserved rural and Tribal communities, and committing to creating more sustainable and energy efficient housing. In doing so, RD will help keep families

in rural America financially secure in their homes, especially in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Number of Underserved, Socially Disadvantaged, and Vulnerable Rural and Tribal Communities Engaged in Field-Based Programs

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	460	230	230
Actual	----	----	----	----	----	425	N/A	N/A

Investment in Underserved, Socially Disadvantaged, and Vulnerable Rural and Tribal Communities in Field-Based Programs (Million Dollars)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	\$12	\$60	\$60
Actual	----	----	----	----	----	\$165.8	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Ensuring that all eligible areas, entities, and residents have equitable access to RD programs and can benefit from RD-funded projects is vital to the future economic growth and prosperity of the United States. As such, RD is leveraging its extensive field network, data and strategic investments resources to initiate the Equity Project. The goal for Phase 1 of the Equity Project is to engage 460 equity communities on RD’s list of equity project communities and make \$12 million in new investments. Equity communities are rural and tribal communities that are underserved and socially disadvantaged.

The Equity Project has exceeded expectations in terms of program funds invested in the targeted communities. The KPI target of \$12 million has been met, but reaching the 460 communities will be difficult. Deployment of the Equity Project is dependent on onboarding State Directors (SDs), and while they are now mostly onboard, many SDs did not join RD until Q3. This and delays in staffing support may prove challenging in ultimately reaching all 460 communities.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

There are three phases of the Equity Project: (1) Engagement, (2) Technical Assistance (TA), and (3) Investment. RD is focused on the Engagement phase, but all three phases will be fully implemented by FY 2024. RD plans to add new communities for the field to engage each year. RD will also leverage the Rural Partners Network (RPN) for seeking partners to provide TA. RD

will, on its own and with partners, invest in equity communities. RD has incorporated funding requests in the FY 2024 budget draft for staff to deliver programs.

Continued engagement to all 8,000 census tracts identified in the project will be at risk without additional field staff to do the engagement and deliver RD's programs to other rural areas. Phase 2 is at risk since delivering effective TA requires continued investment in field staffing, and this is challenge across the board for RD and not just with the Equity Project.

Objective 5.3: Increase Capacity, Sustainability, and Economic Vitality in Rural and Tribal Communities

USDA works to increase prosperity in rural communities and for the people who call these communities their home. The Department believes that local and Tribal governments and nonprofit organizations are critical to the success of their communities. Beyond infrastructure, these entities are on the front line of local community and economic development, and their effectiveness is a determining factor in the well-being of their communities. Similarly, businesses and cooperatives play a critical role in sustaining and growing local economies in rural and Tribal areas. However, too many local partners struggle to access Federal resources and develop public-private partnerships. USDA seeks to provide resources that help these local efforts have the expertise and staffing needed to tackle hard local problems. Capacity building resources include effective technical assistance, strategic use of information technology, regular and meaningful stakeholder engagement, and improved customer experience. USDA programs prioritize access to capital and financing for businesses and cooperatives in rural and Tribal communities to create jobs, grow the tax base, and cultivate a diverse, equitable economy.

In the spirit of building back better, this Administration will prioritize economic development and growth in rural America by making it central to USDA's mission. The proposed Rural Partnership Program in President Biden's American Jobs Plan will help rural regions, including Tribal Nations, build on their unique assets and realize their vision for inclusive community and economic development. This program will empower rural regions by supporting locally led planning and capacity-building efforts and by providing flexible funding to meet critical needs.

The Department will harness its vast resources to target underserved communities and those who have been marginalized to help them realize their full potential. Through funding, technical assistance, and focused capacity-building initiatives, USDA will bolster the ability of rural and Tribal areas to thrive, ensuring sustainable growth that builds generational wealth and enriches communities.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Percentage of Rural Development Assistance Directed to Distressed Communities²⁰

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	Baseline	12%	13%	14%	25%	30%	30%
Actual	---	11%	11%	12.5%	12.3%	21%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

In FY 2022, RD made a concerted effort to ensure National Office and Field Staff had the tools and resources to identify and track Distressed Communities. RD set a very ambitious goal for engaging and investing in these communities. However, RD did not meet the FY 2022 target for this KPI. Some challenges that impacted RD’s ability to meet the target were limited staffing to fully engage Distressed Communities and limited grant funding.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

The FY 2024 budget prioritizes staffing to support this KPI and RD is seeking changes in the Farm Bill that would provide RD flexibility to offer TA that matches customer need and support strategic engagement. Risks to progress in FY 2024 largely focus on not getting additional resources for staff and TA via the FY 2023 and FY 2024 Budgets or Farm Bill. There is also a risk to participation in our loan programs due to an increasing trend in interest rates, cost of construction materials and supply chain challenges. These challenges make it more costly for program participants to afford loans and make needed investments. Potential participants may seek more affordable financing, reduce the scope of projects or delay making investments.

Percentage of Rural Development Commercial and Infrastructure Investments that Leverage Non-Federal Funding²¹

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	Baseline	78%	79%	80%	81%	81%	N/A
Actual	---	77%	83%	62%	91%	68%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

RD continues to be largely successful in leveraging RD funds with non-Federal funding partners. When RD partners with other funders, the overall investment has a larger impact on the communities served. Due to competing government funds, such as COVID-19 recovery funds or

²⁰ Measured at the zip code level.
²¹ This measure will be retired in FY 2023.

the upcoming BIL funds, it is and will continue to be more difficult to deploy our funds or to find other funders to partner with when other options are available to them.

Percentage of Rural Development Commercial and Infrastructure Investments that Leverage Non-Federal Funding²²

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	40%
Actual	---	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

For FY 2024, RD proposes to revise this KPI to focus on distressed and socially vulnerable communities. This KPI has traditionally incentivized work towards larger projects and communities that can attract more investment. This makes it harder for underserved communities – without the resources to attract lender investment or apply for multiple sources of funding – to receive investment. By modifying the KPI, RD is placing an emphasis on staff to seek out funding partners who can make projects more affordable through the blending of RD funds with other state, local or philanthropic funding.

RD will use EIG’s [Distressed Communities Index](#) (zip code level) and CDC’s [Socially Vulnerable Index](#) (census tract level) to track investments in underserved communities.

Objective 5.4: Promote Environmental Justice by Maximizing Sustainable and Green Economic Development in Rural and Tribal Communities

Rural and Tribal communities are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change and other stressors, such as negative health impacts from air and water pollution and disruptions to critical food systems. For the many rural Americans whose livelihoods are dependent on the agriculture, forestry, and outdoor recreation industries, the threat of climate change is particularly dire, and these communities are often limited in their ability to adapt due to economic or social constraints. Growth in green jobs is critical for enhancing the sustainable economic growth of these communities.

USDA is committed to making meaningful investments in rural America that will help pave the way for clean, renewable energy infrastructure and production and energy efficiency improvements that will create new job and market opportunities. The Department will continue to leverage existing partnerships with rural and Tribal communities to understand the most critical climate vulnerabilities and risks, identify barriers to adaptation, and develop solutions that promote environmental justice and address the causes of climate change. In alignment with the Biden-Harris Administration’s focus on equity, USDA will strive to ensure that programs and resources intended to mitigate the effects of climate change are distributed equitably and are accessible to those most in need.

²² This measure is being revised for FY 2024.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Percentage of 25 Priority Geographies Hard-Hit by Declines in Coal Production and Consumption that are Served by Rural Development Programs

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	7%	8%	N/A
Actual	----	----	----	----	----	7%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

RD has made progress toward meeting its targets under this KPI. Feedback from the field, however, suggests that this KPI’s geographical coverage is too narrowly defined. It includes only the top 25 most impacted regions in the US, limiting RD’s ability to measure the full impact of its efforts. Therefore, RD will expand this KPI in FY 2024.

Percentage of 70 Priority Geographies Hard-Hit by Declines in Coal Production and Consumption that are Served by Rural Development Programs

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	19%
Actual	---	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

For FY 2024, RD proposes to expand the metric from the top 25 priority communities to the top 70 communities, as defined by the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization (IWG). The larger IWG list is inclusive of rural communities in other states that also need to make the transition from coal. By including them in the metric, the metric fully reflects the breadth of RD’s impact across rural territories and the availability of federal resources to these rural, coal-mining communities. RD anticipates that sustaining the current level of engagement and increasing engagement with additional communities will require more field staff.

FOREST SERVICE

Percentage of Customers Satisfied with Recreation Facilities, Services, and Settings in National Forests

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	98%	98%
Actual	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	TBD	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Customer satisfaction levels for FS recreation users in FY 2021 remained high, continuing the trend over the past several years. Data collection for FY 2022 is still on-going and visitor satisfaction levels will be available in spring 2023. Performance in this area can be attributed to the ability of FS to hire more staff to support these programs and address deferred maintenance projects. The strong public interest in outdoor recreation is another contributing factor.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

Continued investment in deferred maintenance needs through the Great American Outdoors Act and additional investments in areas with high visitor use will continue to support positive outcomes. Investments in customer service through platforms, such as Recreation.gov, will make FS facilities easier to find and facilitate trip planning to match recreation and visitor needs with the appropriate resources.

High levels of visitor satisfaction will likely continue, thanks to the recent hiring of new staff to support recreational programs, investments in deferred maintenance, and continued public interest in outdoor recreation. The targets for FY 2023 and FY 2024 of 98 percent, however, are likely not achievable at the current resource levels.

Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA

USDA is committed to reaching new heights by recruiting, onboarding, supporting, and retaining a diverse and talented workforce and cultivating a workplace environment that is collaborative, service-oriented, mission-centered, healthy, inclusive, and welcoming. This includes leaders and staff who work together to build a culture that welcomes, respects, and supports everyone in reaching their highest potential by ensuring equal opportunity compliance, providing proactive civil rights, and championing USDA's zero-tolerance policy for unlawful discrimination and sexual harassment for all employees. USDA believes this focus on organizational culture will enable it to build the USDA back better as a premier organization and model employer that lives by its values.

As the landscape of talent continues to evolve, it is imperative that USDA seek to continuously find ways to attract talent that represents the diversity of America. The COVID-19 pandemic has also catapulted leaders to rethink and reimagine where and how the Department works. In the coming years, USDA will build on best practices for a hybrid work environment and continue to evaluate the future of work at USDA. As such, the Department is committed to being a learning organization that tolerates risk-taking, explores the untested and unknown, and nurtures innovative ideas at all levels of the organization. USDA will prioritize learning and training throughout the employee experience.

Objective 6.1: Foster a Culture of Civil Rights, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Transparency, and Accountability

USDA is committed to the values of equity and inclusion, rooted in justice and equal opportunity for its employees and those it serves. Under the leadership of the Biden-Harris Administration, the Department is taking bold, historic action to root out generations of systemic racism, deeply integrate equity into decision-making and policymaking, and build equitable systems and programming for all Americans. USDA has established an independent [Equity Commission](#) to examine USDA programs and services and make recommendations as to how the Department can advance equity by reducing barriers to access for historically underserved communities. The Department also launched its inaugural Racial Justice and Equity Internal Working Group to review internal systems and processes and identify inequities, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

Understanding how USDA both advances and inhibits equity and opportunity for its existing and potential customers requires employees at every level to listen carefully to and meaningfully engage customers; build relationships with a diverse set of stakeholders and partners; take a critical look at the data; and examine the design, implementation, and impact of programs and systems throughout the Department. From equitable contracting and procurement decisions to the implementation of staffing plans including diverse recruiting, hiring, training, rewarding, and promoting, there are opportunities for equity throughout. As USDA strengthens the culture and support for its workforce, it has a responsibility to attract and invest in the next generation of agricultural leaders through a premier internship experience. USDA leaders will make time and space for internal review and reflection so that the Department can build an organization, culture, and workforce with the necessary skills and tools to ensure knowledge management, efficiency, and inclusion.

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (OHRM)

Period of Time (Days) Between Request Hiring Validation Date (SF-52 Approved Date) and New Hire Actual Start Date (Entry on Duty Date) (Percentage hired within 80 days)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	---	---	60%	60%	70%
Actual	---	---	---	---	22%	33%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Congress, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) have tasked USDA’s agency-level human resources staff with many competing hiring initiatives. Even so, agencies have been able to adapt, improve, and progress toward the time-to-hire targets.

OHRM continues to make progress towards the 80-day federal-wide target, despite staffing shortages. Of special note, the actual number of days between the request for hiring and the start date for BIL positions at USDA is 65 days, significantly lower than the government-wide number of 84 days.

As OHRM and agencies continue to add human resources staff to address these hiring initiatives and increase focus on strategic human capital management, USDA expects to see continued improvement in reaching these goals.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

As USDA progresses towards the 80-day hiring goal, OHRM plans to focus on increasing the use rate of Delegated Examining hiring certificates by 10 percent. OHRM will also focus on increasing percentages of Veterans and persons with disabilities (targeted and non-targeted) in the workforce through recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies.

Objective 6.2: Establish a Customer-Centric, Inclusive, High-Performing Workforce that is Representative of America and the Communities We Serve

The Department strives to make USDA a great place to work for everyone, with a focus on restoring the confidence and morale of the workforce following the COVID-19 pandemic. Through their mission delivery, engaged and empowered employees will find creative solutions to unexpected challenges; they will bring innovation to their customer service delivery; they will display curiosity and collaboration across agency and Mission Area lines; they will celebrate each other’s thoughts and experiences; and they will serve as ambassadors to recruit and retain a talented workforce that will ensure USDA’s continued future success and evolution.

To maintain a high-performing, customer-centric workforce, USDA will continue to foster a work environment that maximizes employee performance, which is directly tied to an individual’s level of empowerment and engagement. Through mutual respect and collaboration, USDA leadership will make the Department a safe, fair, and rewarding workplace for all employees. USDA

leadership want USDA staff to be passionate and engaged, carrying out the important work every day that will help move the Nation forward.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SCIENTIST – RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS

Number of Agriculture and Food Research Initiative-Supported Undergraduate, Graduate, and Post-Doctoral Students (Annual)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	---	---	---	1,423	2,495	3,831	4,222	4,392
Actual	---	---	---	1,167	4,462	N/A	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

NIFA refined the methodology used to estimate the annual target for this KPI in FY 2022. The established methodology takes the 3-year average of the estimated number of students that will be supported by AFRI programs as indicated in grant proposals submitted in the baseline years. This methodology is documented and reproducible. The actual for FY 2022 is not available yet.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

NIFA is expanding the range of analytical tools available to its staff to facilitate comprehensive portfolio and data analyses. These investments will allow NIFA to improve data collection standards and promote data-driven decision making. Additionally, NIFA is working to strengthen the agency’s analytical capabilities which will enable NIFA to evaluate the performance of its grant programs, ensure equitable practices, and effectively communicate the full impact of NIFA funding to its stakeholders.

NIFA will continue to analyze the data provided by grantees in final reports to determine the best source to obtain and collate actual data for students supported on an annual basis. If NIFA identifies that this data is not consistently provided and/or easily accessible, they will implement new methods to collect this data to ensure accuracy and reproducibility.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Average Number of Days to Process Direct Loans

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	Baseline	31	30	32	32	34	34	33
Actual	31	30	32	34	36	31	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

The FY 2022 end-year result more closely resembles the rate in recent years. The FY 2021 rate of 36 days was an anomaly, primarily due to the workload to implement ARP Section 1005.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

Beginning in August 2022 and carrying through 2023, the loan application process is being streamlined, as per Executive Order on Customer Experience (December 2021), and automated. These improvements will provide loan applicants with increased credit access, transparency, and accountability. Manual, paper-based and inefficient processes hinder program delivery and customer service. High-speed internet will be needed for customers to use online loan application, loan repayment, and risk management features, which is an impediment in some rural communities.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Percentage of OneRD Customers Whose Application Processing Time Does Not Exceed 30 Days²³

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	45%	55%	65%
Actual	----	----	----	----	----	38%	N/A	N/A

Percentage of OneRD Program Customer (Lender) Satisfaction Survey Ratings of 4 or Above

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	----	----	----	----	----	60%	65%	70%
Actual	----	----	----	----	----	47%	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

Progress has been made in both processing times and customer satisfaction but delays in environmental reviews and insufficient staffing resulted in a setback in meeting the FY 2022 target. A key barrier was lack of funding to meet demand for Business and Industry (B&I) Loan guarantees. The change to the OneRD approach has increased demand for the program. Funds were exhausted by 3rd quarter, frustrating customers. RD lacks the staff to meet customer expectations. One issue raised by customers is the time it takes for RD to complete environmental

²³ Receipt to Conditional Commitment.

reviews and a perceived higher level of documentation in reaction to recent State Internal Reviews. OneRD system automation is still unfunded.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

The FY 2024 budget prioritizes more funding for the B&I program, and there will be continued training to support staff in implementing OneRD Guarantees. OneRD Guarantee success is dependent on a number of factors, including increases in funding requested for B&I Guarantees to address demand, increases in funding to support adequate staff for program delivery, and Technology Office funding to develop OneRD system platform that would automate current manual and time-demanding processes.

Objective 6.3: Promote USDA Operational Excellence Through Better Use of Technology and Shared Solutions

The Department strives to fully leverage modern human-centered design, data, technology, and digital services to provide its internal and external customers with easy-to-navigate online tools to increase access to critical programs and services. Enterprise-wide shared technology and data services will help increase the Department’s capacity to make data-driven policy decisions, track progress, and support evidence-building within USDA’s research and statistical agencies, while also increasing data shared with external researchers. Increasing shared services and modernizing legacy IT systems will move the Department towards a future where customer-facing programs are seamlessly integrated with back-end IT that can be continually modified in response to changing customer needs.

USDA is making better use of data and enabling advanced analytics, such as geospatial modeling, to improve the delivery of services and programs. The Department’s enterprise data and analytics platform is bringing data together from across different parts of the organization to support cross-cutting analytics. The capabilities of data scientists and analysts have been expanded with the development of a data science workbench, which enables advanced analytics needed for more sophisticated insights.

Cybersecurity is a foundational shared service and represents a core component of improving digital service delivery and internal systems by ensuring secure, reliable access to USDA products and services.

OFFICE OF PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Reduction in the Department’s Overall Real Property Footprint through Effective Disposal and Consolidation Efforts (Million Square Feet)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target	Baseline	31.6	31.5	31.2	31.1	31.0	30.8	30.0
Actual	31.9	31.7	31.3	31.2	31.1	TBD	N/A	N/A

Progress Made in FY 2022

This is an annual measure. The final numbers will be available after FY 2022 closes in February 2023.

Plans for Progress in FY 2024

Over the next three years, USDA has the potential to reduce its footprint by approximately 1 million square feet. This represents a cost avoidance of approximately \$20 million annually or \$200 million over the course of a 10-year lease in rental expenses.

There is tremendous opportunity for USDA to achieve cost savings by optimizing office space usage. Since March 2020, USDA has operated under a maximum telework posture in which position-eligible employees teleworked part- or full-time in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. By all accounts, employees demonstrated their ability to successfully deliver the USDA mission from a telework or remote work environment thereby offering the Department new opportunities for cost avoidance.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMS	Agricultural Marketing Service
APG	Agency Priority Goal
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
ARP	American Rescue Plan
ARS	Agricultural Research Service
ASF	African Swine Fever
BIL	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
BVDV	Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus
CEP	Community Eligibility Provision
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CIR	Contract Implementation Ratio
CNP	Child Nutrition Program
CNPP	Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
CSP	Conservation Stewardship Program
CTA	Conservation Technical Assistance
DOE	Department of Energy
EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Service
FDPIR	Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service
FS	Forest Service
FLP	Farm Loan Program
FSA	Farm Service Agency
FSIS	Food Safety and Inspection Service
FY	Fiscal Year
GPRAMA	GPRM Modernization Act of 2010
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
IRA	Inflation Reduction Act
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NASS	National Agricultural Statistics Service
NIFA	National Institute of Food and Agriculture
N-PEARS	National Program Evaluation and Reporting System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
OBPA	Office of Budget and Program Analysis
OCE	Office of Chief Economist
OCS	Office of Chief Scientist
RMA	Risk Management Agency
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TEFAP	The Emergency Food Assistance Program
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USTR	U.S. Trade Representative
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children