

2025 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIST

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PREFACE

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the “Budget” is in regard to the 2025 Budget, unless otherwise noted. All references to years refer to fiscal year, except where specifically noted. The budgetary tables throughout this document show actual amounts for 2022 and 2023, annualized Continuing Resolution levels for 2024, and the President’s Budget request for 2025. Amounts for 2024 estimated levels include: non-enacted amounts such as Full-Time Equivalent levels, fleet levels, information technology investment levels, recovery levels, transfers in and out, balances available end of year, and obligation levels.

Throughout this publication, the “2018 Farm Bill” is used to refer to the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Most programs funded by the 2018 Farm Bill are funded through 2023. Amounts shown in 2024 and 2025 for most Farm Bill programs reflect those confirmed in the baseline.

Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, sequestration is included in the numbers for mandatory programs in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

In tables throughout this document, amounts equal to zero (0) are displayed as dashes (-). Amounts less than 0.5 and greater than zero are rounded and shown as a zero (0). This display treatment is used to prevent the masking of non-zero amounts that do not round up to one (1).

AGENCY-WIDE**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The Office of the Chief Economist (OCE) was created by the Secretary of Agriculture on October 20, 1994, under the authority of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, Public Law 103-354. OCE advises the Secretary of Agriculture on the economic implications of changes in Department policies and programs, proposed legislation, and market conditions, by providing unbiased information and data-driven analyses of current and emerging issues impacting agriculture and rural America.

OCE provides economic expertise, analysis, and coordination on a wide range of Departmental activities and initiatives. The office provides economic analysis to inform development of agricultural policy and key U.S. trade initiatives and serves as a focal point for the Nation’s agricultural economic intelligence and the commodity outlook for U.S. and world agriculture. OCE is responsible for coordinating economic analyses and reviewing Department decisions involving policies and programs that have substantial economic implications. The office also coordinates the Department’s analysis of issues and activities involving agricultural labor, pest management, pesticides, biotechnology, and related topics, climate change, renewable energy, bioenergy, biobased products and markets, sustainable development, biotechnology, and food loss and waste.

OCE is responsible for coordinating interagency development of the Department’s agricultural commodity short-term forecasts and long-term projections. OCE’s World Agricultural Outlook Board prepares the monthly World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates report, which is a Principal Federal Economic Indicator and is the most widely used source for domestic and global commodity market estimates and forecasts, as measured by the number of downloads on the OCE website. It underpins management information used across the Department for budgeting, policy development, and program evaluations and is also the anchor for other Departmental and private sector commodity forecasts. OCE also coordinates, reviews, and clears all commodity and aggregate agricultural and food-related data used to develop outlook and situation material within the Department.

OCE reviews and clears all regulatory impact and risk analyses of economically significant major rules in the Department to ensure that they are based on objective, appropriate, and sound economic and risk analyses. OCE also assists agencies in complying with Executive Orders and OMB guidance on regulatory analysis.

OCE also coordinates USDA’s global change research program and conducts policy analysis on climate change, renewable energy, biobased products, and environmental markets. OCE supports the development of technical guidelines that provide science-based methods to quantify the greenhouse gas and other environmental service benefits from renewable energy production and use, resource conservation, and land management activities. This work will enable farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners to participate in emerging carbon markets, USDA’s Climate Smart Partnership Initiative, and other environmental services markets. OCE coordinates activities with

other Federal agencies on climate change research and policy efforts; represents USDA domestically and internationally in discussions of climate risks and vulnerabilities; oversees Department-wide efforts to address risks and build resilience to climate variability and change; and facilitates communication and outreach to producers and agricultural interest groups on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In addition, the Office is responsible for the development and coordination of Departmental policy and services related to pest management, pesticides, biotechnology, and related topics. It coordinates research, extension, and education activities regarding the development, availability, and use of economically and environmentally sound pest management tools and practices. The Office assists other agencies of the Department in fulfilling their responsibilities related to pest management or pesticides, as well as ensuring coordination of interagency activities with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, and other Federal and state agencies. The Office also administers multiple pesticide usage surveys to collect data for the purpose of informing risk assessment modeling and mitigation.

OCE Headquarters is located in Washington, D.C. As of September 30, 2023, there were 61 full time permanent employees.

OIG AND GAO REPORTS

OCE did not have any Office of Inspector General or Government Accountability Office evaluation reports during the past year.

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTEs

Table OCE-1. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations.....	\$27,199	60	\$27,881	65	\$28,181	65	\$31,504	68
Balance Available, SOY	455	-	368	-	148	-	-	-
Total Available.....	27,654	60	28,249	65	28,329	65	31,504	68
Lapsing Balances	-392	-	-231	-	-	-	-	-
Balance Available, EOY	-368	-	-148	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations	26,894	60	27,870	65	28,329	65	31,504	68
Other USDA:								
Annual Outlook Forum.....	210	-	266	-	270	-	275	-
NASA/ USGCRP.....	363	-	433	-	433	-	433	-
Environmental Markets.....	700	-	700	-	700	-	700	-
Climate Hubs Coordinator.....	293	-	282	-	303	-	309	-
Payment for Staff Details.....	-	-	39	-	101	-	-	-
WASDE Support.....	130	-	313	-	375	-	383	-
Cooperative Research Support.....	150	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kinetic Data Purchase.....	130	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fertilizer Review.....	-	-	19	-	-	-	-	-
Future Leaders Program Support.....	-	-	48	-	48	-	50	-
Total Obligations, Other funding.....	1,976	-	2,100	-	2,230	-	2,150	-
Total Obligations, OCE.....	28,870	60	29,970	65	30,559	65	33,654	68
Total, Agriculture Available.....	29,630	60	30,349	65	30,559	65	33,654	68
Other Federal Funds:								
EPA, GHG Support.....	-	-	355	-	355	-	355	-
Total, Other Federal.....	-	-	355	-	355	-	355	-
Total Available, OCE.....	29,630	60	30,704	65	30,914	65	34,009	68

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTES

Table OCE-2. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs

Item	2022 Actual			2023 Actual			2024 Estimated			2025 Estimated		
	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total	D.C.	Field	Total
SES.....	6	-	6	6	-	6	6	-	6	6	-	6
SL.....	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2
GS-15.....	30	-	30	28	-	28	28	-	28	28	-	28
GS-14.....	16	-	16	14	-	14	14	-	14	17	-	17
GS-13.....	3	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3
GS-12.....	4	-	4	4	-	4	4	-	4	4	-	4
GS-11.....	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	-	2	2	-	2
GS-9.....	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
GS-7.....	2	-	2	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
Total Permanent.....	64	-	64	61	-	61	61	-	61	64	-	64
Total Perm. FT EOY.....	64	-	64	61	-	61	61	-	61	64	-	64
FTE*.....	60	-	60	65	-	65	65	-	65	68	-	68

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS

Table OCE-3. Shared Funding Projects (thousands of dollars)

Item	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated	2025 Estimated
Working Capital Fund:				
Administrative Services:				
AskUSDA Contact Center.....	-	\$2	\$4	\$4
Material Management Service.....	\$18	17	19	18
Mail and Reproduction Services.....	86	66	39	38
Integrated Procurement Systems.....	12	13	12	-
Procurement Operations Services.....	24	31	39	49
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems.....	1	1	1	1
Subtotal.....	141	130	114	110
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center.....	7	154	24	35
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center.....	15	17	18	17
Financial Shared Systems.....	29	32	34	32
Internal Control Support Services.....	-	-	13	11
Personnel and Document Security.....	-	3	3	3
Subtotal.....	44	52	68	63
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center.....	420	345	322	306
Department Administration Information Technology Office.....	263	265	207	237
Digital Infrastructure Services Center.....	65	60	40	37
Enterprise Cybersecurity Services.....	-	18	31	34
Enterprise Data and Analytics Services.....	-	166	17	17
Enterprise Network Services.....	29	33	36	38
Subtotal.....	777	887	653	669
Correspondence Management Services.....	-	-	-	-
Office of the Executive Secretariat.....	42	92	96	93
Total, Working Capital Fund.....	1,011	1,315	955	970
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Personnel and Document Security.....	2	-	-	-
Advisory Committee Liaison Services.....	-	-	-	-
Agency Partnership Outreach.....	4	4	5	5
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.....	-	1	2	2
Medical Service.....	14	17	18	18
National Capital Region Interpreting Services.....	3	5	7	7
Office of Customer Experience.....	5	2	2	2
Physical Security.....	3	3	3	3
Security Detail.....	3	3	3	3
Security Operations.....	4	4	5	5
Talent Group.....	-	2	2	2

Item	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated	2025 Estimated
TARGET Center.....	1	1	1	1
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services	3	-	-	-
Employee Experience.....	-	2	2	2
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs	42	44	50	50
E-Gov:				
E-Rulemaking.....	2	-	2	-
Geospatial Line of Business	13	13	13	13
Total, E-Gov	15	13	15	13
Agency Total	1,068	1,372	1,020	1,033

ACCOUNT I: SALARIES AND EXPENSES

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored; deleted matter enclosed in brackets):

Salaries and Expenses

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Chief Economist, [~~\$28,181,000~~]\$31,504,000, of which \$8,000,000 shall be for grants or cooperative agreements for policy research under 7 U.S.C. 3155[: *Provided*, that of the amounts made available under this heading, \$500,000 shall be available to carry out section 224 of subtitle A of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6924), as amended by section 12504 of Public Law 115–334].

Change Description

This change (line 5 of paragraph 1) deletes language for the Food Loss and Waste Program to allow for greater flexibility in the administration of the account.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table OCE-4. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)

Item	Amount
Estimate, 2024	\$28,181,000
Change in Appropriation	+ 3,323,000
Budget Estimate, 2025	<u>31,504,000</u>

PROJECT STATEMENTS

Table OCE-5. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2022		2023		2024		2025		Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Chg Dec.	Key
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs			
Discretionary Appropriations:											
OCE.....	\$26,699	59	\$27,381	64	\$27,681	64	\$31,004	67	+\$3,323	+3	(1)
Food Loss & Waste Liaison .	500	1	500	1	500	1	500	1	-	-	
Subtotal	<u>27,199</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>27,881</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>28,181</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>31,504</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>+3,323</u>	<u>+3</u>	
Total Adjusted Approp	27,199	60	27,881	65	28,181	65	31,504	68	+3,323	+3	
Add back:											
Transfers In and Out,	-	-	300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Appropriation	<u>27,199</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>28,181</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>28,181</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>31,504</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>+3,323</u>	<u>+3</u>	
Transfers Out											
Working Capital Funds	-	-	-300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Transfers Out	-	-	-300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Bal. Available, SOY	<u>455</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>368</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>148</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-148</u>	<u>-</u>	
Total Available.....	<u>27,654</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>28,249</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>28,329</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>31,504</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>+3,175</u>	<u>+3</u>	
Lapsing Balances	-392	-	-231	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Bal. Available, EOY	-368	-	-148	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Obligations	<u>26,894</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>27,870</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>28,329</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>31,504</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>+3,175</u>	<u>+3</u>	

Note: The details associated with Supplemental appropriations provided to the Office of the Secretary, but implemented in this account, is found in the USDA Budget Summary, and is not reflected above.

Table OCE-6. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2022		2023		2024		2025		FTE Inc. or Dec.	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Inc. or Dec.	Dec.
Discretionary Obligations:										
OCE.....	\$26,307	59	\$27,150	64	\$27,681	64	\$31,004	67	+\$3,323	+3
Food Loss & Waste Liaison	500	1	500	1	500	1	500	1	-	-
Subtotal Disc Obligations	26,807	60	27,650	65	28,181	65	31,504	68	+3,323	+3
Mandatory Obligations:										
Mult Crop & Pesticide Use Survey.....	87	-	220	-	148	-	-	-	-148	-
Subtotal Mand Obligations	87	-	220	-	148	-	-	-	-148	-
Total Obligations	26,894	60	27,870	65	28,329	65	31,504	68	+3,175	+3
Add back:										
Lapsing Balances	392	-	231	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balances Available, EOY:										
Mult Crop & Pesticide Use Survey.....	368	-	148	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Bal. Available, EOY.....	368	-	148	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	27,654	60	28,249	65	28,329	65	31,504	68	+3,175	+3
Less:										
Total Transfers Out.....	-	-	300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY	-455	-	-368	-	-148	-	-	-	+148	-
Total Appropriation	27,199	60	28,181	65	28,181	65	31,504	68	+3,323	+3

Note: The details associated with Supplemental appropriations provided to the Office of the Secretary, but implemented in this account, is found in the USDA Budget Summary, and is not reflected above.

JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES

Office of the Chief Economist

Base funds will allow OCE to continue providing economic expertise, analysis, and coordination on a wide range of Departmental activities and initiatives, as well as advising the Secretary of Agriculture on the economic implications of Department policies, programs, and proposed legislations through data-driven analyses of current and emerging issues impacting agriculture and rural America.

The numbers and letters of the following listing relates to values in the Change (Chg) Key column of the Project Statement:

- (1) An increase of \$3,323,000 and 3 FTE (\$28,181,000 and 65 FTE available in 2024).

The funding change is requested for the following items:

- A) An increase of \$323,000 in salaries and expenses for the Office of the Chief Economist.

This increase will support an annualization of the 2024 5.2 percent Cost of Living pay increase and the 2025 2.0 percent Cost of Living pay increase. The funding will support mandated federal pay increases. If this funding is not provided OCE will have to cut its contract and cooperative research agreement portfolios in order to cover the higher payroll costs and prevent a Reduction in Force. Cutting contracts and agreements would have significant impacts on the mission of OCE and its ability to meet Congressional and Departmental priorities for economic expertise and analysis.

- B) An increase of \$3,000,000 and 3 FTEs for Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Assessment Program.

For climate change and bioeconomy related economic, environmental, and policy analysis. Specifically, OCE will invest in efforts to quantify lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions from biofuels, including sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), through the OCE Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Assessment Program. If this funding is not provided, OCE would be forced to delay new modeling and analytic capabilities needed to create market opportunities for biomass feedstocks. Increasingly, markets for biofuels and biobased products are driven by their life cycle greenhouse gas assessments. It is important to ensure the tools used to quantify these values are based on the latest data and up to date modeling. In the absence of funding, life cycle greenhouse gas values for biofuels and SAF will have greater uncertainties and be based on less timely analysis, creating gaps in the Department’s ability to quantify the greenhouse gas and other environmental benefits of on-farm conservation and biomass energy development.

This funding will also be used to expand OCE’s analytic support to Mission Areas on new topics relating to programs to develop and expand the bioeconomy, efforts to address greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy, and on emerging issues around climate smart commodity marketing claims. This funding will ensure that OCE has staff and capacity to support both the Administration’s and the Department’s climate efforts.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTEs

Table OCE-7. Geographic Breakdown of Discretionary Obligations and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

State/Territory/Country	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
District of Columbia	\$26,807	60	\$27,650	65	\$28,181	65	\$31,504	68
Lapsing Balances	392	-	231	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	27,199	60	27,881	65	28,181	65	31,504	68

Table OCE-8. Geographic Breakdown of Mandatory Obligations and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

State/Territory/Country	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Actual	FTEs	Actual	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs	Estimated	FTEs
District of Columbia	\$87	-	\$220	-	\$148	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	368	-	148	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	455	-	368	-	148	-	-	-

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

Table OCE-9. Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)

Item No.	Item	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Estimated	2025 Estimated
	Personnel Compensation:				
	Washington D.C.	\$8,517	\$9,753	\$10,434	\$11,558
	Personnel Compensation, Field.....				
11	Total personnel compensation.....	8,517	9,753	10,434	11,558
12	Personal benefits.....	3,139	3,623	3,789	3,951
13.0	Benefits for former personnel.....	-	-	10	75
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits.....	11,656	13,376	14,233	15,584
	Other Objects:				
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	100	293	293	293
23.3	Comm, utilities, and misc. charges.....	134	73	73	73
24.0	Printing and reproduction	6	16	16	16
25	Other contractual services	2,125	1,611	1,417	2,324
25.1	Advisory and assistance services.....	2,292	2,048	1,844	2,761
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	9,968	9,671	9,671	9,671
25.5	Research and development contracts.....	100	140	140	140
26.0	Supplies and materials	109	156	156	156
31.0	Equipment.....				
	Total, Other Objects	15,238	14,494	14,096	15,920
99.9	Total, new obligations	26,894	27,870	28,329	31,504
	DHS Building Security (included in 25.3)	\$13	\$12	\$12	\$13
	Information Technology Investments:				
	Major Investment 1				
	Mission Area Non-Major Investment Totals				
	Mission Area Standard Investment Totals.....	218	169	180	191
25.3	Mission Area WCF Transfers.....	1,066	1,086	1,113	1,140
	Total Non-Major Investment	1,284	1,255	1,293	1,331
	Total IT Investments	1,284	1,255	1,293	1,331
	Position Data:				
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	\$183,000	\$187,575	\$187,575	\$187,575
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position.....	\$150,678	\$154,445	\$159,078	\$159,078
	Average Grade, GS Position.....	14.6	14.7	14.7	14.7

STATUS OF PROGRAMS

The Office of the Chief Economist (OCE) is the focal point for economic and policy-related research and analysis for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. OCE aims to inform public and private decision-makers by providing unbiased information and data-driven analyses of current and emerging issues impacting agriculture. OCE provides economic expertise and coordination on a wide range of Departmental activities and initiatives.

Current Activities

OCE's Immediate Office (IO) staff provide policy and program analyses and advice to the Secretary on major issues affecting agriculture and rural America. The IO staff focus on agricultural policy, including analyses of alternative farm programs, conservation, and crop insurance options; trade initiatives and disputes; developments in agricultural commodity markets, such as the effects of global weather and changes in production and trade patterns; economic issues related to plant and animal diseases; sustainable agriculture; food loss and waste; and agricultural labor issues.

The World Agricultural Outlook Board's (WAOB) primary mission is to provide reliable and objective economic forecasts for farmers and other participants in the food and fiber system. Key WAOB activities are coordinating USDA forecasts of domestic and international agriculture; providing economic analysis related to global commodity markets; monitoring markets and agricultural weather; and disseminating relevant information.

OCE clears all USDA economically significant regulations for their regulatory impact analyses. OCE's Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis (ORACBA) reviews and approves statutorily required risk assessments for all major proposed USDA regulations. ORACBA is a focal point for Departmental activities related to risk analysis, including inter-Departmental activities; regulatory reviews to ensure science-based regulations; and the integration of economic analysis and risk assessment.

The Office of Energy and Environmental Policy (OEEP) serves as a focal point for the Department's energy, environmental markets, and climate change research, mitigation and adaptation planning and policy development. OEEP works to improve understanding of the complex interactions between agriculture systems and the environment, and to transfer the resulting knowledge to producers and land managers through information, tools, and decision support. In the energy area, OEEP analyzes and evaluates existing and proposed policies and strategies. In the climate variability and change area, OEEP coordinates analysis, long range planning, research, and response strategies to climate change. In the environmental markets area, OEEP establishes uniform guidelines for the development of science-based methods to measure the ecosystem services benefits from conservation and land management activities. OEEP carries out USDA responsibilities under the Global Climate Change Prevention Act of 1990, and coordinates USDA's contributions to the quadrennial U.S. National Climate Assessments, as required under the 1990 Global Change Research Act.

The Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP) leads the development and coordination of Departmental policy on pest management and pesticides, provides Departmental coordination on agricultural biotechnology, and ensures coordination of interagency activities with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and other Federal and State agencies. OPMP collects data on individual growers' pest management practices to improve the information available to EPA on the potential benefits of specific pesticides.

Selected Examples of Recent Progress***Immediate Office of the Chief Economist (IO)***

Provided economic and policy analysis in support of the following key initiatives:

Agricultural Policy and Monitoring of Agricultural Markets

Provided significant rapid-response economic analyses and assessments of many policy proposals and regulatory actions, enabling USDA to quickly provide support and greater regulatory certainty to the agricultural and rural sectors, programs for underserved producers, and new actions to increase transparency and decrease discrimination and anti-competitive practices in agriculture, focusing on the livestock sector.

Provided timely analysis of various economic conditions to inform Administration officials about impacts on the agricultural and rural sectors, including sources of supply side food price inflation, effects of animal disease outbreaks such as High Path Avian Influenza on poultry and egg prices, and impacts of state level animal welfare measures such as California's Proposition 12.

Provided economic context and analysis on weather impacts and disasters and potential disasters for USDA leadership and Congress, including drought-induced impacts (e.g., historically low Mississippi River impacts). OCE also served on USDA's Multi-Agency Coordination group (ongoing). These efforts ensured that USDA decision-makers had timely, accurate economic information for decision making during disaster response and the potential provision of financial assistance.

Led research and fostered high priority research conducted by others, increasing the knowledge base to inform the design and ensure impactful outcomes of future policy decisions (ongoing).

Global and Domestic Food Security

The Chief Economist currently serves as Chair of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), an international platform housed within the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to enhance food market transparency and policy response for food security.

OCE actively monitors global agricultural commodity markets. OCE's mission is to provide the Secretary with timely economic analysis related to supply chain disruptions and to flag emerging signs of market stress, using data-driven methods. The Chief Economist represented USDA in many inter-agency meetings, including supply chain disruptions and the impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on food and fertilizer supplies and global food security.

OCE also assisted the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Office of Policy Support by providing economic expertise and insights on domestic food assistance programs and food security. This year OCE provided feedback on FNS's analysis and report on adjusting the Thrifty Food Plan for Alaska and Hawaii and early guidance on economically significant rules affecting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and child nutrition programs. OCE also worked to develop new knowledge on these topics to inform policymaking through cooperative agreements with academic institutions.

Sustainable Development Activities

Provided significant leadership in the development and promotion of a unified USDA/U.S. position on sustainable agricultural development and food system transformation. This ensured, for example, that the UN-agreed set of indicators for sustainable agricultural production are balanced and science based; also, that the U.S. position on the need for a balanced multi-objective approach to food systems transformation is reflected in the approaches embraced by One Planet Network's Sustainable Food Systems Programme and UN Food Systems Summit.

Led USDA efforts to develop and convey USDA policy positions on deforestation-mitigation policy.

Served as the USDA co-lead on the Coalition of Action on Sustainable Productivity Growth for Food Security and Resource Conservation (SPG Coalition), a voluntary coalition of action whose members aim to accelerate the transition to more sustainable food systems. Helped grow the Coalition to 120 members, including 22 countries, the European Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN), and many research organizations and private sector groups. Spearheaded a major output for the Coalition in 2023, the *SPG Coalition 2023 Compendium of Actions and Lessons Learned*.

Food Loss and Waste (FLW)

OCE coordinated food loss and waste (FLW) reduction efforts within USDA and through the interagency collaboration with the EPA and FDA, supporting efforts such as the "2030 Champions" effort which engages U.S. companies to pledge to reduce food loss and waste in their supply chains by 50 percent by 2030.

OCE led the development of new investments in FLW activities made possible with American Rescue Plan Act funding. This included a \$30 million investment in USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP) Compost and Food Waste Reduction program over 3 years, a \$25 million investment in the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Community Food Projects (CFP), NIFA's Food and Agriculture Service-Learning Program (FASLP), and FLW efforts in collaboration with the National 4-H Council and the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program. OCE also invested in research to improve the measurement of FLW.

OCE led outreach efforts to promote awareness of FLW and spur innovations, including conceptualizing and hosting two roundtables that highlighted actions taken domestically and internationally that resulted in significant reductions in food loss and waste; made numerous presentations, many of which raised awareness of the liability protections afforded under the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, including language reflecting amendments

passed in 2023; and prepared a constant stream of outreach materials (blogs, newsletters, etc.) including translations to other languages to increase accessibility. These efforts are aimed at expanding successful food recovery and FLW reduction models and serve as a resource for entities engaged in FLW reduction and food recovery.

World Trade Organization (WTO) and Trade Policy Support

OCE supported the maintenance of a U.S. position of leadership in the WTO via timely and accurate reporting of U.S. domestic support for agriculture. OCE developed the annual domestic support notification to the WTO and provided analysis of new programs to Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). The domestic support notification is required to demonstrate U.S. compliance with WTO commitments. OCE represented USDA in numerous interagency meetings on multilateral and bilateral trade issues, including WTO and bilateral trade negotiations and other enforcement actions, including economic analysis and guidance on several WTO/Free Trade Agreement disputes or potential disputes.

OCE worked with FAS to shape the conversation in the Committee for Agriculture of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) by providing the U.S. perspective and direction on policy discussions and research papers under development by the OECD.

Crop Insurance

The Chief Economist, as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), presided over quarterly public board meetings during 2023 (ongoing). The FCIC meets four times a year and on an ad-hoc basis, as needed. The FCIC Board of Directors approved several products to improve the risk management safety net on a wide variety of farms in 2023. Announcements of new and or improved products in 2023 include:

- New crop insurance products for agricultural producers who use fully enclosed controlled environments; for cow-calf producers, (weaned Calf Risk Protection); and expanded availability of enterprise units to crops where they were previously unavailable, giving agricultural producers greater options to manage their risk.
- Changes to the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) and Micro Farm insurance plans to increase access and participation.

Agricultural Labor Activities

Ensured USDA interests were represented in Department of Labor rules impacting the H-2A program and assisted in the development of the Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program. This program will improve farmworker working conditions and farmworker rights.

Analytical Assistance to Congress, Executive Office of the President, and Other Federal Agencies

OCE conducted and spurred research to inform future analytical needs for policy support (by Congress and others), including Farm Bill debates and ex-post evaluation of policy impacts. OCE regularly provided technical assistance to Congress and provided economic analysis for retaliatory tariffs on U.S. agricultural exports. It also provided regular technical assistance to the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA), National Economic Council (NEC), and National Security Agency (NSA) on economic events of concern. And finally, OCE identified and developed new data sources to support analytical needs across OCE and USDA on the agricultural and rural sector.

World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB)

Agricultural Supply and Demand Monitoring and Reporting

Published the monthly World Agricultural Supply and Demand (WASDE) reports, a Principal Federal Economic Indicator report, providing USDA's official world and U.S. supply and utilization estimates and forecasts for grains, oilseeds, and cotton, and official estimates and forecasts for U.S. sugar, red meat, poultry, eggs, and milk. The WASDE report is downloaded between 1.5 million and 2 million times each year. After each WASDE release the accompanying Secretary Briefing presentations are posted on the OCE website for public use, ensuring fair and equitable access to the information.

Cleared all USDA/Economic Research Service Commodity Outlook reports for public release on schedule following the WASDE release (ongoing activity).

Represented the United States on FAO's Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) information group, including information sharing and monthly participation in commodity outlook sessions intended to support food market transparency and encourage coordination of policy action in response to market uncertainty.

USDA Baseline Projections

Managed the development of the USDA interagency 10-year baseline economic projections and cleared the estimates for publication and release. The projections provide timely insight and strategic planning information for the President's Budget, agricultural producers, other agribusinesses, and policy officials.

USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum

Led all aspects of the 2023 Agricultural Outlook Forum (AOF). The 2023 Forum, "Seeds of Growth through Innovation," was the first held in-person since 2020 (prior to the pandemic), and the first fully hybrid AOF with all in-person sessions livestreamed for a virtual audience. Attendance included more than 1,500 in person attendees, along with over 4,000 virtual attendees, making it one of the most widely attended AOF's ever. The Forum is a unique event where key stakeholders in the U.S. and around the world come together every year to discuss current and emerging topics and trends in the sector. It facilitates information sharing among stakeholders and generates transparency that supports well-functioning open markets. The Chief Economist provided a keynote speech on the state of the U.S. agricultural economy. The two-day program included 30 sessions on issues affecting rural America and agriculture, including a food price and farm income outlook, U.S. trade and the global marketplace, new frontiers in agriculture, managing risk and ensuring sustainability, the rural economy, and commodity outlooks.

Agricultural Weather Monitoring and Analysis

Meteorologists collaborated closely with the WOAB and FAS analysts, Economic Research Service (ERS), and other partner agencies to provide crop weather impact analyses in support of 12 Monthly WASDE Reports. Also, collaborated with the National Weather Service (NWS) to prepare and publish 52 *Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletins* (WWCB), issue 260 *Daily U.S. Agricultural Weather Highlights*, and to provide authorship for or contribute to 52 weekly *U.S. Drought Monitors* (USDM).

Leveraging 7 U.S. Code § 3155 (Agricultural and Food Policy Centers), partnered with the National Drought Mitigation Center to improve drought services to the American public and provide support for other OCE mandates, including Farm Bill priorities and obtaining metrics to determine the economic impacts of drought. Deliverables included historical U.S. Drought Monitor statistics in Tribal lands.

Provided leadership in support of several White House led or supported activities, including the National Drought Resilience Partnership, the Interagency Working Group on Western Drought, and the Interagency Council for Advancing Meteorological Services. Provided timely information for decisionmakers on drought; and served as an expert source to numerous news outlets on the impacts of extreme weather events on agriculture.

The Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis (ORACBA)

Risk Analysis Leadership and Consultation

Reviewed over 100 interagency rules and guidance documents in E.O 12866 interagency clearance ensuring that USDA's interests were represented in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) interagency reviews.

Provided guidance to USDA agencies developing risk assessments and economic analyses related to environmental health and safety. Provided guidance and consultation to USDA and other Federal agencies on risk assessments for dietary contaminants, pesticides, foodborne pathogens, endangered species, plant and animal pests, and environmental contaminants (ongoing).

ORACBA participated in the Interagency Risk Assessment Consortium (IRAC) to enhance communication and coordination among agencies with food safety responsibilities. It collaborated with USDA agencies on trends in *Salmonella infantis* prevalence. and New Mexico State University on research into withdrawal times from perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) exposure. ORACBA participated in several departmental and interagency working groups on per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). It also participated in the International Food Safety Regulatory Economics working group preparations for a behavioral economics conference in April.

ORACBA collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on research examining the connection between Salmonella serovar infections in humans and detections in poultry at slaughterhouses.

Risk Communication and Outreach

ORACBA participated in the EPA-USDA-FDA Interagency Risk Communication Working Group examining PFAS contamination keeping USDA apprised of new developments in EPA regulatory, and other actions, and prepared for further engagement (ongoing). Provided guidance to the USDA, FDA and EPA interagency PFAS working group on the inappropriateness of using drinking water maximum contaminant levels to estimate PFAS risk in foods. ORACBA also disseminated 16 newsletters informing Departmental subscribers of risk assessment and economic/regulatory analyses educational opportunities on emerging issues and techniques.

Risk Assessment Education and Training

ORACBA sponsored four Science, Policy, and Risk seminars. Topics included a discussion of possible approaches to assessing the risk from different Salmonella serovars; a discussion of new methods to assess the lag time between insect establishment and detection and implications for pest risk; presentation of empirical analysis of the behavior of Women Infant and Children (WIC) children aging out of the program; and a feedback session on risk assessors' unmet needs in the Department.

Developed and conducted a new regulatory economics course in partnership with the Society of Benefit Cost Analysis, Joint Institute of Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, and George Washington University's Regulatory Studies Center.

The Office of Energy and Environmental Policy (OEEP)

Climate Change Policy and Program Support

Improving Measurement, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification of Agricultural Greenhouse Gases: The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) included \$300 million to carry out a program to quantify carbon sequestration and carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide emissions. OEEP staff developed the framework that would be adopted by the Department for seven work areas under this initiative, leading efforts on the Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Assessment Program of USDA for national reporting.

Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities: OEEP established the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Learning Network to generate key lessons-learned on establishing markets for climate-smart commodities from all 141 projects. OEEP developed data collection requirements for the awardees that will enable long-term tracking and analysis of outcomes for the Partnerships projects.

OEEP/NRCS Climate Smart Technology Workshops: OEEP hosted a series of climate-smart workshops with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to determine options to improve climate-smart outcomes of NRCS practice standards.

Federal Strategy for Advancing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Monitoring and Measurement for the Agriculture and Forest Sectors: OEEP served as co-chair of the Technical Working Group tasked with developing the Federal Strategy for Advancing GHG and Monitoring Measurement for the Agriculture and Forest Sectors and served as its primary author.

Farm, Ranch, and Forest land Greenhouse Gas Methods Report: OEEP published for public comment, the 2023 update to *Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Agriculture and Forestry: Methods for Entity-Scale Inventory* (the GHG methods report). This report has been categorized as a highly influential scientific assessment by OMB.

OEEP published a major report, *Marginal Abatement Cost Curves for Greenhouse Gas Mitigation on U.S. Farm and Ranches*. The report provides estimates of the costs of greenhouse gas mitigation that would occur on working U.S. farms and ranches for specific suites of technologies and practices.

Environmental Markets

Growing Climate Solutions Act: OEEP staff worked with the Office of the Secretary (OSEC) on plans for implementation of the Growing Climate Solutions Act (GCSA), part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of

2023. OEEP prepared the first major deliverable under the Act, a *General Assessment: Greenhouse Gas Technical Assistance Provider and Third-Party Verifier Program*.

OEEP provided significant leadership and technical support on several White House initiatives promoting ecosystem services, nature, and conservation:

- America the Beautiful: OEEP led USDA’s technical engagement in America the Beautiful and development of the American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas.
- National Nature Assessment: OEEP represented USDA on the Federal Steering Committee (FSC) for the National Nature Assessment (NNA). The NNA will assess the status, observed trends, and future projections of America's lands, waters, wildlife, biodiversity and ecosystems and the benefits they provide, including connections to the economy, public health, equity, climate mitigation and adaptation, and national security.

Adaptation Planning and Implementation

Managed two Government Accountability Office (GAO) engagements related to climate resilience. OEEP will fulfill the GAO recommendation from the first engagement, to analyze options for how USDA can enhance the climate resilience of agricultural producers, as it revises USDA’s Climate Adaptation Plan in 2024.

In October 2022, OEEP prepared and released the first progress report to USDA’s 2021 Climate Adaptation Plan. During 2023 OEEP developed a framework for tracking implementation progress of USDA’s agency-level climate adaptation plans, which was used to report on Department-wide progress to the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and OMB in July 2023.

International Climate Change

27th UN Climate Change Conference (COP27): In November 2022, OEEP coordinated with FAS and the State Department on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris Agreement negotiations with implications for agriculture and forestry and supported the Secretary’s participation in COP27 events.

Collaboration Platform on Agriculture: USDA and European Commission’s Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) co-hosted the Collaboration Platform on Agriculture (CPA) Stakeholder Session in Belgium to enhance coordination between USDA and the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Climate Change Science

The Fifth U.S. National Climate Assessment (NCA5) completed four Agency reviews during 2024, including clearance and public comment. OEEP coordinated the submission of over 1500 USDA comments during that time.

Energy Policy and the Bioeconomy

OEEP is finalizing a *Bioindicators Report* for the 2019–2021 period. This report provides valuable data for non-traditional markets for crops (i.e., not using crops for feed or food).

OEEP made significant analytic contributions under the Bioeconomy Executive Order. These include:

- Co-led with NIFA and the Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS) the development of a plan to build resilience in the domestic biomass supply chain, which is expected to be released in 2024.
- Co-led the development of the Food and Agriculture Innovation of the Bold Goals for U.S. Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing report.
- OEEP and OMB developed a report that recommends revisions to economic data classifications to better track bioeconomic activity.

OEEP consulted with EPA on its Set Rule, published in June 2023, establishing new biofuel mandates and participated in an interagency workgroup for GHG lifecycle analysis for sustainable aviation fuels (SAF). As part of these efforts, OEEP provided Argonne National Laboratories with updates to a clean transportation fuel model.

The Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP)

Pesticide Risk Assessment and Regulatory Analysis

Worked with EPA on the registration and reevaluation of pesticide active ingredients; reviewed 57 pesticide regulatory actions. Most outcomes still pending, but input led to re-consideration of several impactful restrictions and informed EPA's consideration of benefits to growers for multiple pesticide cases (phosphine and metal phosphides; carbaryl, 1,3-D, methomyl, etc.).

Ongoing Impactful cases: 1) 11 rodenticide active ingredients, several of which have critical agricultural importance. And 2) Metamitron Section 18: OPMP worked to provide a pathway for an emergency approval of the herbicide metamitron for use in sugar beets in Colorado and Nebraska to control herbicide-resistant weeds, for which it received EPA concurrence for 2024.

EPA Information Requests: Provided feedback on occupational mitigation for 4 organophosphate insecticides, provided early feedback for 3 other organophosphate insecticides awaiting proposed interim registration review decisions (PID), all outcomes to grower benefit. Provided information on mitigation outcomes for the fungicides chlorothalonil, mancozeb, all critical needs for agriculture.

OPMP analyzed and provided recommendations on several biological evaluations and biological opinions (Enlist, methomyl, carbaryl, inpyrfluxam, fluazaindolizine, and others) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation process, resulting in changes to the actions more beneficial to growers.

OPMP commented on EPA guidance and rules on product performance data requirements and the Worker Protection Standard, and a Notice of Intent to Cancel Chlorpyrifos, as described in EPA's regulatory processes for rulemaking under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Comments ensured grower perspectives are considered in EPA decision making.

Agricultural Biotechnology

Led ongoing USDA Biotechnology Coordinating Group (BCG) meetings and, through the BCG, coordinated the development of a new biotechnology and climate change webpage, drafted animal biotechnology webpage, and updated the biotechnology glossary.

Coordinated significant USDA input into the Executive Order on the Bioeconomy and required reports including the Bold Goals for Biotechnology Manufacturing report and input into the International Engagement Strategy. Hosted monthly meetings between Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Biotechnology Regulatory Services (APHIS/BRS) and EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) on herbicide-tolerant biotechnology issues.

Coordinated USDA comments on the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Math (NASEM) Committee on Heritable Genetic Modification in Food Animals, to advocate for inclusion of appropriate expertise in livestock breeding and risk assessment and risk management of animal biotechnologies. Provided comments on EPA's plant-incorporated protectants (PIPs) rule which provided for additional flexibility around certain biotech registration pathways. Hosted monthly meetings between USDA APHIS, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM).

Federal Leadership in Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Convened four meetings of the Federal IPM Coordinating Committee (FIPMCC), coordinating 10 Federal agencies to promote IPM strategies. Maintained IPM and FIPMCC webpages that house the National Roadmap for IPM. Worked closely with Regional IPM Centers to prioritize Pest Management Strategic Plans (PMSP) for specialty crops. Recently, a new PMSP on pine tree nursery in the Southeastern states was published. Also represented FIPMCC on the National Invasive Species Council.

Departmental Coordination on Pest Management Policy

Collaborated across USDA on activities and services, including Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area activities for development, availability, regulation, and use of sound pest management tools and practices. Provided research advice for emerging pests and diseases and pest management needs for specialty crops.

Interagency and International Collaboration

OPMP engaged in ongoing discussions on the management of topical livestock pesticides, providing detailed comments on an EPA-FDA jurisdictional white paper published in February of 2023. Co-led EPA's Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC) workgroup on resistance management issues, helping EPA account for

resistance costs and benefits as part of regulatory decisions. Provided technical support to address international trade issue related to pesticide maximum residue limits (MRLs).

Through a U.S. government interagency process with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), FDA, and EPA under oversight of the White House, OPMP provided input on the development of an antimicrobial resistance (AMR) concept note, a critical step in creating a framework to improve assessments of potential risks to human and animal health.

OPMP reestablished OCE as part of the interagency review process for US EPA Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) reviews. OPMP and ORACBA are now included in the IRIS interagency science consultation process and are currently coordinating review on three proposed EPA Draft IRIS Toxicological Reviews.

OPMP collaborated with EPA, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as part of the FIFRA-ESA Interagency Working Group. Provided comments on EPA's proposed strategies to comply with ESA, including their ESA Workplan, Vulnerable Species Pilot, and Herbicide Strategy, emphasizing practicality for growers. Partnered with FWS to prepare for the expected listing of the monarch butterfly under ESA.

AGENCY-WIDE PERFORMANCE

Introduction

The Office of the Chief Economist (OCE) is the focal point for economic and policy-related research and analysis for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. OCE aims to inform public and private decision makers by providing unbiased information and data-driven analyses of current and emerging issues impacting agriculture.

Alignment to USDA 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan

OCE contributes to Goal 1 of the Department’s Strategic Goals in the current 2022 – 2026 USDA Strategic Plan. Departmental KPIs are performance indicators that are aligned to the Strategic Objectives laid out in the USDA’s Strategic Plan.

- 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

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

A more detailed report of the performance plan can be found at <https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/performance>. The following table summarizes the results for the Departmental Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for which OCE is responsible.

Table OCE-10. KPI-Climate Hubs

Strategic Objective 1.1	Item	2023	2024	2025
Climate Outreach and Education	Results	1%	-	-
Percent Increase in Number of Stakeholders Supported through Climate Hubs Capacity-Building Activities	Target	5%	5%	5%

Expected Performance Progress Towards the Achievement of Strategic Objectives:

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

As an interagency program, the USDA Climate Hubs continue to translate climate science into action for diverse internal and external audiences. Progress will be made through the Climate Hubs’ three workstreams: science and data synthesis, tool and technology development, and outreach, convening, and training. The Climate Hubs aim to maintain a 5 percent increase from 2021 engagements (25,786 people) in the number of people supported through capacity-building activities. Capacity building in the context of the Climate Hubs includes sharing information that enhances climate literacy, climate change adaptation and mitigation practices, and builds climate resilience. These activities include in-person or virtual workshops, demonstrations, trainings, online tutorials, webinars, and videos, as well as youth engagements and curriculum development. The work of the Climate Hubs will increase throughout the U.S. due to three new investments. The Agricultural Research Service and Forest Service have provided funding for increasing capacity through fellowships which will broaden the work of the Climate Hubs. Additionally, increased staff capacity due to IRA funding via NRCS will enhance USDA Climate Hub engagements on climate change mitigation practices. Lastly, new capacity through the NIFA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Climate Hubs-Extension partnership grants will support delivery of climate-smart, community-driven solutions, and reach underserved communities across the nation. Each new effort takes time to train new staff and establish projects prior to effective engagements.