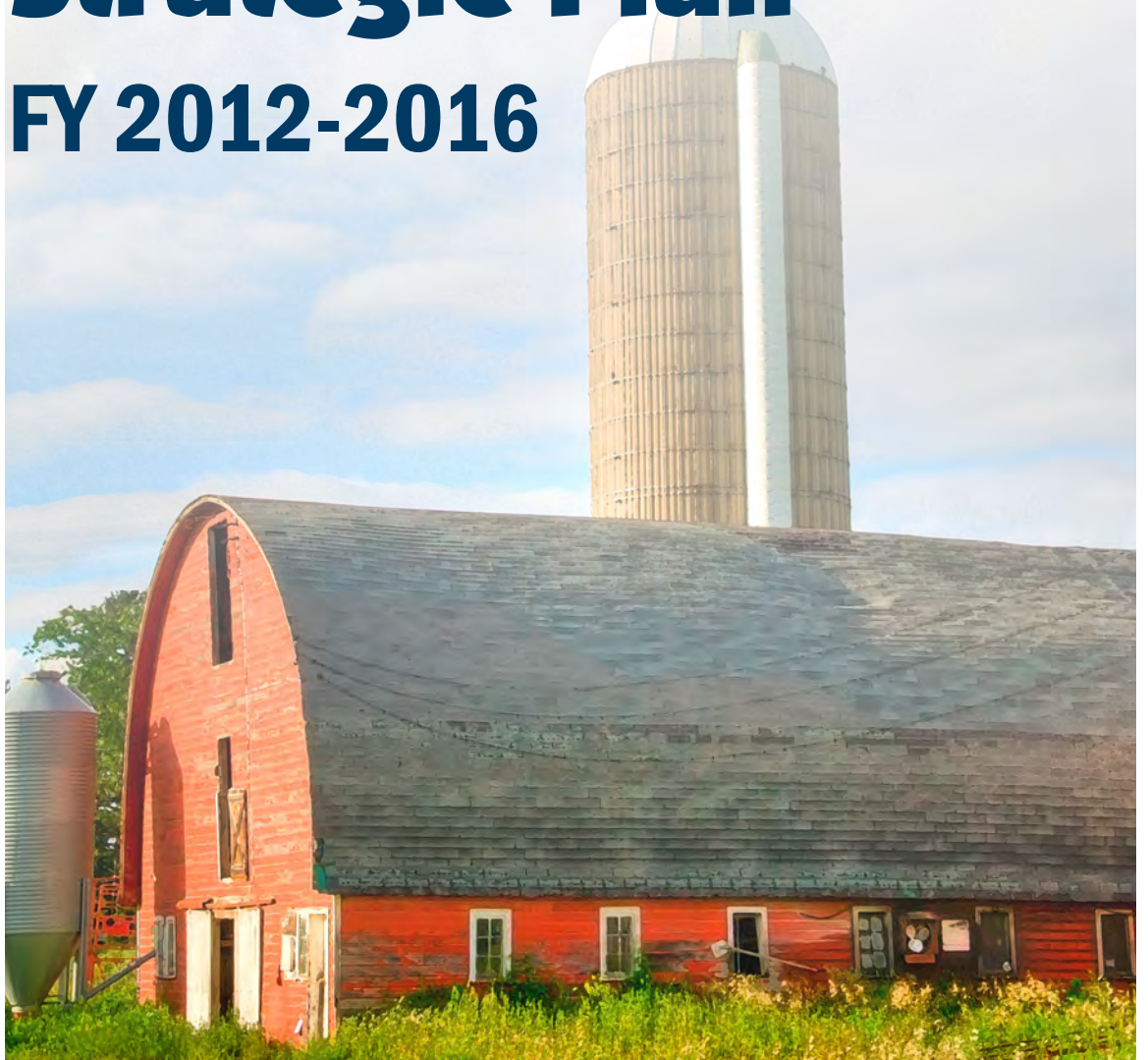




# Strategic Plan

## FY 2012-2016



## Message from the Administrator

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to delivering the highest level of customer service, helping to ensure a strong safety net for America's farmers and ranchers. In order to accomplish our mission, we must modernize FSA operations and instill a culture of continuous improvement. FSA must keep pace with complex new programs and the changing dynamics in agriculture. We take pride in having incredible field level employees who have set a high bar for service and



customer care, and our customer base has come to rely on localized and personal service. Yet, the Agency faces an impending wave of retirements at a time when our field offices anchor many small communities struggling to survive. These challenges are taking place in a budgetary environment that grows more difficult by the day.

Information technology (IT) modernization is an important investment, which will allow us to do our jobs better and more efficiently. Developing a modern, reliable IT infrastructure will eliminate manual calculations, duplicative time consuming processes, make work less burdensome, and result in an even higher level of service to our customers.

This strategic plan represents a dynamic process within FSA to ensure the best results for America. Through this process the Agency is able to continually assess the quality of its services to the public. This close attention to performance outcomes and results will allow FSA to better support its customers.

*Bruce Nelson*

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# Strategic Plan Overview

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) traces its roots back to 1935 when President Franklin Roosevelt established the Farm Security Administration. The Agency's name has changed many times over the years and its mission has evolved. Today, FSA plays a crucial role in supporting rural prosperity, improving the environment, eliminating hunger, and contributing to national security by helping to ensure a safe and abundant food supply.

To assist the country in addressing today's challenges, FSA will:

- Provide a financial safety net for America's farmers and ranchers to sustain economically viable agricultural production (Goal 1);
- Increase stewardship of America's natural resources while enhancing the environment (Goal 2);
- Ensure commodities are procured and distributed effectively and efficiently to increase food security (Goal 3);
- Transform and modernize the Farm Service Agency (Goal 4).

The first three goals address the Agency's major programmatic policies and cover the programs and services that FSA provides. Goal 4 emphasizes the strategic importance of transforming and modernizing Agency operations. Additionally, Goal 2 contributes significantly to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agency Priority Goal of protecting and enhancing water quality and quantity, and watershed health across landscapes.

Performance measures will track progress in attaining objectives and overarching strategic goals. Measures specify baseline information and long-term performance targets. Strategies and means describe the actions necessary to accomplish the strategic goals. The external factors highlight the potential risks and challenges that may impact the accomplishment of goals and objectives.

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to deliver timely, effective programs and services to America's farmers and ranchers to support them in sustaining our Nation's vibrant agricultural economy, as well as to provide first-rate support for domestic and international food aid efforts.

## **Vision Statement**

We shall transform into a more diverse and innovative Agency.





# Core Values

- **Quality Service** – Providing fair, equitable, and quality service to our customers.
- **Continuous Improvement** - Improving the delivery of quality, accessible programs.
- **Inclusiveness** – Respecting the individual differences and diversity of our workforce and our customers.
- **Fiscal Stewardship** – Being good stewards of taxpayers’ dollars.
- **Teamwork** - Working together to ensure delivery of effective and efficient programs.
- **Transparency** – Making the Agency’s operations more open so that the public can learn how FSA delivers its programs.



## Strategic Goal 1:

**Provide a financial safety net for America's farmers and ranchers to sustain economically viable agricultural production**

FSA provides programs and services that support the economic stability of farmers and ranchers. The Agency works closely with other USDA agencies to accomplish USDA's strategic goal of assisting rural communities.

America needs rural communities where people want to live and raise families and where the children have economic opportunities and bright futures. FSA works to ensure that American farmers and ranchers are prosperous and competitive by providing farmers and ranchers access to capital, helping them manage risks, supporting them in times of economic distress or disaster, and working hard to expand economic opportunities.

Over the next 5 years, FSA will provide access to capital (Objective 1.1), support economic viability (Objective 1.2), protect the interest of commodity owners (Objective 1.3), and develop opportunities for non-traditional income streams (Objective 1.4).

### **Objective 1.1 Provide Access to Capital**

FSA's loan programs provide access to credit for farmers and ranchers who are temporarily unable to obtain financing from a commercial source at reasonable rates and terms. Through direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans, FSA assists tens of thousands of family farmers each year in starting and maintaining profitable farm businesses. FSA loan funds may be used to pay normal operating or family living expenses; make capital improvements; refinance certain debts; and purchase farmland, livestock, equipment, feed and other materials essential to farm and ranch operations. FSA services extend beyond the typical loan by offering customers ongoing consultation, advice, and creative ways to make their farm businesses thrive. FSA is the lender of first opportunity because it provides agricultural producers who need assistance an entry into agriculture production.

While FSA is committed to all farmers and ranchers, it also focuses on the



credit needs of beginning, minority, and women farmers. Farmers and ranchers from these groups typically operate smaller farms, have less equity, or lack a sufficient credit or production history. Each year, FSA targets a portion of its lending and focuses its outreach on these groups. As a result, over the past 10 years, FSA credit assistance provided to these farmers has increased dramatically. In FY 2010, more than 50 percent of all loans were issued to beginning, minority, and women farmers. This translates into greater than \$1.975 billion in loan assistance. By comparison, in FY 2000 total lending to the targeted groups was \$995 million.

As demonstrated by the tremendous upsurge in loan activity in recent years, FSA's loan programs are also an integral part of USDA's economic safety net. Price weaknesses in the livestock sector, adverse weather conditions, and heightened risk sensitivity in the commercial lending sector, resulted in greatly increased demand for FSA loans. The number of direct and guaranteed loan applications increased

from just over 35,000 in FY 2007 to more than 48,200 in FY 2010. Loan obligations in FY 2010 totaled more than \$5.27 billion - the highest level since 1985. Looking forward, demand for FSA credit assistance is expected to remain quite strong.

Additionally, FSA's farm storage loan programs provide low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. This on-farm storage allows producers flexibility in timing when to sell their crops.

Over the next 5 years, FSA will increase lending to beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers (Pillar 1), increase analytics capability (Pillar 2), improve loan servicing and processing, (Pillar 3) and expand marketing opportunities through on-farm storage (Pillar 4).

### **Pillar 1: Increase Lending to Beginning Farmers and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers**

Credit availability can be particularly challenging for beginning farmers, women, and minorities. Therefore,





both direct and guaranteed loan funds are targeted, by statute, to ensure credit is available for these groups. However, funding availability and needs shift during the crop year due to the appropriations made by Congress and the varying growing seasons. In response, FSA has adopted policies and procedures to ensure that, within the flexibility available, funds can be transferred and obligated to meet the needs of these farmers and ranchers.

### **Pillar 2: Increase Analytics Capability**

FSA is continuously improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Farm Loan Programs (FLP) through information technology initiatives. FLP applications are now entirely Web based to ensure consistency, centralize system upgrade and maintenance, and reduce hardware costs. Both the Guaranteed Loan System (GLS) and the Direct Loan System (DLS) are being continuously updated to expand on existing capabilities. In addition, a centralized FLP Data Mart currently under development will further improve reporting and analytical capabilities.

With the emphasis on organic and non-traditional or specialty enterprises, FSA also utilizes resources available from land grant universities and their networks of trained agricultural specialists. These specialists are often called upon by borrowers and local FSA loan officers to assist in both the latest production practices and in developing accurate farm business plans.

### **Pillar 3: Improve Loan Servicing and Processing**

As timely implementation of agricultural operations is a key to success, FSA has decreased processing times on both direct and guaranteed loans. While FSA continues its efforts to reduce processing times further, the extensive analysis required on many operations that are unable to get credit elsewhere, coupled with the continued high volume of loan activity could limit the reduction possible.

FSA will continue to emphasize timely and accurate delinquency loan servicing, as it facilitates essential loan making activities for operations in financial distress. However, to provide



stewardship of limited taxpayer funds, FSA must also continue to complete regular loan servicing activities, including chattel inspections, security instrument servicing, and ensuring proper disposition of collateral.

#### **Pillar 4: Expand Marketing Opportunities through On-farm Storage**

FSA encourages the construction of on-farm storage to allow producers to expand their marketing opportunities. The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program helps to ensure producers have adequate capacity for commodities produced by providing low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade permanently affixed farm storage and handling facilities. Eligible commodities include the major feed grains, oilseeds, peanuts, pulse crops, hay, biomass commodities, and cold storage facilities for fruits and vegetables.

### **Objective 1.1 Strategies**

- Improve the effectiveness of outreach efforts to minority, women, and beginning farmers by expanding efforts to partner with other Federal, State, and local agencies, tribal governments, and non-governmental organizations that serve these targeted populations.
- Enhance existing partnerships with land grant universities and other educational organizations.
- Expand the capabilities of the farm business plan management information system, including implementation of a risk management tool that will allow for comprehensive portfolio risk analysis of the direct loan program.
- Improve the GLS user interface to increase productivity.



- Develop the FLP Data Mart that will house data for all of the FLP systems.
- Partner with educational institutions to evaluate business plans for non-traditional operations and develop a knowledge bank for specialty enterprises.

## Objective 1.2 Support Economic Viability

The economic vitality and quality of life in rural America, and the U.S. economy at large, depends on a financially healthy agricultural system. To help maintain economic stability in the agricultural sector, FSA provides prompt and equitable assistance through income support payments, disaster assistance, and marketing assistance loans to eligible farmers, ranchers and landowners.

Various income support options provide producers the flexibility of selecting the program that best fits their needs. For example, marketing assistance loans provide producers

interim financing at harvest time to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows; facilitating more orderly marketing of commodities throughout the year. Alternatively, benefits can also be taken directly as a loan deficiency payment, which are cash payments equal to the difference between the loan rate and loan repayment.

When natural disasters strike, FSA reacts quickly to help affected producers recover from losses and restore their lands. Disaster assistance programs, which are available for crops and livestock, provide financial assistance to farm operations affected by drought, flood, hurricanes, and other natural disasters. These programs represent a significant part of USDA's farm safety net.





To accomplish this objective, FSA will increase awareness of risk management programs (Pillar 1) and maximize participation in commodity and price support programs (Pillar 2).

### **Pillar 1 - Increase Awareness of Risk Management Programs**

FSA will partner with the Risk Management Agency, Cooperative Extension System, and others to educate farmers and ranchers about the benefits of insuring crops against disaster or market-related income losses. The 2008 Farm Bill provided FSA a more robust set of risk management tools and standing disaster assistance programs that allow producers to be proactive in protecting their farm enterprises. These programs help ensure that America maintains a viable and productive agricultural sector.

### **Pillar 2 - Maximize Participation in Commodity and Price Support Programs**

Participation in commodity and price support programs provides economic stability and reduces short-term income volatility. The Direct and Counter-

Cyclical Payment Program and the Average Crop Revenue Election program are two of the primary programs for helping farmers mitigate market losses. As discussed in Goal 4, FSA is undertaking a major effort to streamline program delivery, which will have a significant impact on the Agency's ability to accomplish this goal and improve customer service.

### **Objective 1.2 Strategies**

- Expand program outreach efforts to increase awareness and promote usage of risk management tools.
- Improve communication of eligibility requirements for supplemental agricultural disaster assistance programs.
- Improve Web site and utilization of social media tools to increase understanding and participation in program benefits.
- Promote and encourage increased customer use of e-filing.





- Increase customer satisfaction by streamlining the acreage reporting process across USDA.
- Provide personalized customer service to ensure that producers understand and effectively use program benefits.

### **Objective 1.3 Protect the Interests of Commodity Owners**

FSA protects the interests of commodity owners through administration of the U.S. Warehouse Act (USWA) and by enforcing licensing requirements for commodity storage facilities. The USWA provides depositors of agricultural commodities in Federally-licensed warehouses with reliable protection from loss, establishes a uniform regulatory system for storage of agricultural products, and establishes the warehouse receipt as a negotiable document of title.

The protection and safety of the Nation's food production is a constant concern for producers and the industries

that transport, store, process, and deliver food products to the public. FSA establishes guidelines to protect the interests of commodity owners, monitors USDA approved and licensed warehouse programs to maintain adequate storage facilities, and conducts warehouse examinations to reduce product losses.

To accomplish this objective, FSA will ensure the integrity of approved and licensed agricultural warehouses (Pillar 1), improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of warehouse examinations (Pillar 2), and establish a food security plan requirement (Pillar 3).

#### **Pillar 1- Ensure the Integrity of Approved and Licensed Agricultural Warehouses**

FSA conducts warehouse examinations to ensure the safekeeping and integrity of commodities in storage. FSA also reviews and analyzes warehouse operators' financial statements in an effort to maintain stability of warehouse operations. These actions help ensure adequate, financially stable, storage facilities for commodity owners' crops,





and assist in earlier detection and mitigation of potential warehouse violations.

### **Pillar 2- Improve the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Warehouse Examinations**

FSA inspects over 2,300 warehouses annually. Ideally, the Agency would increase the frequency of warehouse inspections. However, fiscal resources limit the Agency's ability to increase the number of warehouse inspectors. To address this challenge, FSA will develop methodologies for assigning risk categories based on inspection findings to improve warehouse examinations as well as implement alternative examination processes. FSA will also partner with States to ensure the States' warehouse examiners are appropriately trained to examine agricultural storage facilities.


### **Pillar 3- Establish a Food Security Plan Requirement**

FSA will require approved and licensed agricultural warehouses to conduct a facility vulnerability assessment and implement a security plan that includes

measures to protect commodities handled and stored at their facilities. The purpose of the food security plan is to assist the agricultural warehouse industry in deterring potential agro terrorism, being prepared for disasters or other emergencies, and ensuring the safety of our Nation's food supply.

### **Objective 1.3 Strategies**

- Partner with States to ensure State examiners are appropriately trained to examine Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) agricultural storage facilities.
- Develop a methodology for assigning risk categories based on inspection findings.
- Incorporate the security plan review within the annual warehouse examinations.
- Coordinate outreach efforts with appropriate State personnel.
- Provide oversight to protect the producer when commodities are in storage or under loan.



### **Objective 1.4: Develop Opportunities for Non-traditional Income Streams**

FSA is creating opportunities by leveraging partnerships, existing programs, and information resources to support the development of new and innovative markets for environmental services. Agro-tourism, recreation, and other environmental services are creating additional income streams for producers. To achieve this objective, FSA will enhance development of an economically and environmentally viable biomass production sector (Pillar 1), increase development of infrastructure to support renewable energy (Pillar 2), and increase biomass supply by supporting production and utilization of sustainable biomass (Pillar 3).

### **Pillar 1 - Enhance Development of an Economically and Environmentally Viable Biomass Production Sector**

FSA promotes rural America's role in renewable energy production by making it economically feasible for farmers, ranchers, and other rural small businesses to invest in alternative energy production. The 2008 Farm Bill authorized the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), which has the potential to provide new economic opportunities for farmers and help the Nation in its search for a more sustainable and secure energy future. BCAP helps farmers, ranchers, and landowners establish, raise, harvest, and deliver biomass feedstock to facilities to produce heat, power, advanced biofuels, and biobased products.

## **Pillar 2 - Increase Development of Infrastructure to Support Renewable Energy**

FSA will partner with the biomass industry and agricultural producers to develop economically and environmentally sustainable production of biomass crops that will help support a viable renewable energy industry. The development of significant quantities of biomass crops and subsidies for the collection, harvest, storage, and transportation of renewable biomass will assist the fledgling biomass industry during the start up phase. This infusion of BCAP resources will assist in improving the development of infrastructure that will improve the cost effectiveness of renewable fuels as compared to fossil fuels. BCAP will reduce risks and increase financial incentives for greater investment in the biomass industry.

## **Pillar 3 - Increase Biomass Supply by Supporting Production and Utilization of Sustainable Biomass**

FSA will facilitate increased biomass supply by supporting production and utilization of sustainable biomass. FSA will provide financial assistance to owners and operators of agricultural and non-industrial private forest land who wish to establish, produce, and deliver biomass feedstock.







## Objective 1.4 Strategies

- Develop innovative outreach to new customers (biomass conversion facilities, eligible material owners, forest landowners).
- Expand outreach to educate customers on potential biomass opportunities, including conversions from traditional usages and utilization of less productive soil for biomass production.
- Coordinate with external agencies and organizations to maximize program efficiencies.
- Partner with external stakeholders to develop certification for biomass production in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- Provide additional education and training to staff on agricultural energy programs.

## External Risk Factors

Many external factors influence accomplishment of this strategic goal, including natural and economic forces, widespread or prolonged natural disasters, animal and plant pest and disease outbreaks, and international food contamination. Additionally, as the U.S. agricultural sector continues to change, with farms becoming larger and increasingly dependent on technology, entry into farming is more capital intensive than ever before. These factors result in significant barriers and challenges for the groups that the FSA farm loan programs are intended to assist.

# Strategic Goal 1 - Performance Measures

**SDA - Socially Disadvantaged Farmer**

**DCP - Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program**

**ACRE - Average Crop Revenue Election**

<b>DIRECT Lending to SDA Farmers</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>FY-10 Baseline</b>	<b>FY-16 Target</b>
Percentage of SDA farmers receiving financial assistance through the FSA Direct Loan program. The denominator is the total number of all farm operators identified as a minority or female farmer in the 2007 Census of Agriculture having \$10,000 or more in gross sales. The numerator is the total number of racial and ethnic minorities, and women currently in the FSA direct loan portfolio as of 9/30/2010.	10.70%	10.70%
<b>GUARANTEED Lending to SDA Farmers</b>		
Percentage of SDA farmers receiving agricultural credit through FSA's guaranteed loan program. The denominator is the total number of all farm operators identified as a minority or female farmer in the 2007 Census of Agriculture having \$10,000 or more in gross sales. The numerator is the total number of racial and ethnic minorities, and women currently in the FSA guaranteed loan portfolio as of 9/30/2010.	2.20%	2.70%
<b>DIRECT Average Loan Processing Time</b>		
Average number of days to process direct loans, from date of application receipt until first disposition (approved/withdrawn/rejected)	31 days	31 days
<b>GUARANTEED Average Loan Processing Time</b>		
Average number of days to process guaranteed loans, from date of application receipt until first disposition (approved/withdrawn/rejected).	10 days	10 days
<b>Average Days Between Warehouse Examinations</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>FY-11 Baseline</b>	<b>FY-16 Target</b>
The average number of days between subsequent warehouse examinations at USWA licensed warehouses and warehouses with CCC storage agreement storing CCC-interest commodities.	355 days	355 days
<b>Percentage of Base Acres Enrolled in DCP/ACRE Combined</b>		
Percentage of base acres annually enrolled in DCP or ACRE. The denominator is the total number of base acres in the 49 states that have farms with base acres. The numerator is the total number of base acres enrolled annually in DCP or ACRE.	95.65 %	94 %



## Strategic Goal 2:

### Increase Stewardship of America's Natural Resources while Enhancing the Environment

Through its conservation and environmental programs, FSA plays an important role in helping protect and restore America's farms, ranches, and grasslands while making them more resilient to threats and enhancing natural resources. This process carries enormous potential impacts on drinking water, greenhouse gas emissions, climate, wildlife, recreation, community health and prosperity.

Restoring and protecting ecosystems will ensure the Nation's lands are resilient to threats and impacts from a changing climate. It also provides sustainable benefits to ecosystems, food, fiber, and timber and non-timber products. FSA will work with private landowners and managers to restore vegetative cover, rehabilitate streams and other water bodies, transition marginal or highly erosive lands to sustainable production levels, and apply conservation measures to enhance and maintain the quality of soil, water, and related natural resources.

Over the next 5 years, FSA will increase resource stewardship opportunities on

private lands (Objective 2.1); target natural resource needs to maximize benefits (Objective 2.2); and lead efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change (Objective 2.3).

#### **Objective 2.1 - Increase Resource Stewardship Opportunities on Private Lands**

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is America's premier voluntary conservation effort to protect and restore fragile natural resources. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance for 10 to 15 years. The long-term time frame ensures that investments in environmental benefits accrue over a longer period. At the end of FY 2010, there were 31.3 million acres under CRP contract.

FSA partners with States, national non-profit groups, other Federal



agencies, and agricultural producers to increase national resource stewardship opportunities, protect drinking water, preserve grasslands, and enhance wildlife habitat. Conservation plans developed with technical assistance from partners at State forestry agencies, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the private sector help reduce soil erosion and subsequent sedimentation. In FY 2010, FSA enrolled 185,000 acres for wetland restoration and more than 74,000 acres of conservation buffers.

FSA is also committed to longer-term environmental restoration and protection efforts. In FY 2010, FSA completed the cleanup of contaminated groundwater at a former grain storage facility in Waverly, Nebraska, and it was officially removed from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund list. Progress toward the cleanup of four more sites is ongoing.

### **Pillar 1 - Increase the Amount of Acreage of Wetlands Restored, Constructed, Protected, and Created**

Wetlands serve many critical functions, they serve as filters to improve water quality, provide water storage to reduce flooding, recharge groundwater supplies, and provide habitat and food sources for wildlife. Constructed wetlands have the potential to significantly reduce nitrogen loadings from drained agricultural land in a cost-effective manner. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) estimates that FSA wetland restoration efforts in the Prairie Pothole region have increased annual water fowl migration by over 2 million birds.

FSA works with EPA, Army Corp of Engineers, USFWS, and State regulatory agencies to develop processes that will reduce regulatory barriers to enrollment in CRP. FSA will utilize, where appropriate, constructed wetland to address water quality issues associated with excessive nutrients.



## **Pillar 2 - Prevent and Reduce Soil Erosion**

Soil erosion continues to be a serious problem as approximately 1.7 billion tons of soil erodes each year from cropland. Close to 100 million acres of cropland is eroding above the level (generally 5 tons/acre/year) that will maintain the long term productive capacity of the land. EPA has determined that erosion (sediment) is the leading cause of water impairment of our Nation's rivers and streams. This sediment alone is harmful to aquatic ecosystems, but the chemicals bound to those particles may also cause impairment when released to the environment.

CRP reduces soil erosion by an estimated 400 million tons per year. CRP's general sign-up targets highly erodible land and provides greater weights for selection on offers with inherent erodibility. The most cost-effective means to address impacts associated with erosion for many highly erodible acres is through conversion of the land to permanent vegetation.

## **Pillar 3 - Combat Invasive Species**

Invasive (non-native) species have significant economic and environmental impacts. An analysis completed in 2004 estimated that invasive plant species cause an estimated \$40 billion per year in economic damage. In many parts of the Western United States, invasive species have significantly altered the ecosystem.

FSA will work with private landowners and program participants to ensure that producers combat noxious and invasive species and fully comply with the President's executive order on invasive species. FSA will use improved technology (remote sensing) and other means to improve producers' compliance. Early detection and systematic control of noxious weeds is a cost-effective means to reduce the overall costs for invasive species control. This approach will reduce producers and land managers costs and enhance the long-term productive capacity of the land.

#### **Pillar 4 - Increase Acreage of Riparian Buffers and Filterstrips**

One of the most effective means to protect rivers and streams is through the use of vegetative barriers of grass (filterstrips) and trees (riparian buffers) that are adjacent to streams. Buffers capture and trap sediment, nutrients, and pathogens, preventing them from entering streams; lower water temperatures; improve aquatic species' habitat; and help reduce the impact of floods.

FSA works with producers, government agencies, and private partners to expand the use of buffers to address water quality and wildlife concerns. FSA also partners with cities and rural communities to promote the use of buffers to protect drinking water supplies and reduce treatment costs.

#### **Pillar 5 - Partner with State and Tribal Governments to Promote Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and other Resource Stewardship Opportunities**

CREP helps agricultural producers

protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. The program is a partnership among producers, Federal agencies, tribal and State governments, and in some cases private groups. There are currently 44 CREP agreements, representing a \$4.1 billion Federal, State, and private commitment of resources.

#### **Pillar 6 - Increase the amount of acres of grassland protected**

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program for landowners to protect, restore and, enhance grasslands. FSA, NRCS, and the Forest Service implement GRP to conserve vulnerable grasslands from conversion to cropland or other uses, in part, by helping maintain viable ranching operations. GRP emphasizes support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under threat of conversion to cropping, urban development, and other activities that threaten grassland resources. GRP has enrollments in all 50 states and



Puerto Rico. GRP received 2,330 new applications and reached its statutory spending cap of \$40.5 million in FY 2009. Enrollment currently stands at over 750,000 acres.

- Encourage the use of new technologies, such as bioreactors, constructed wetlands and other means to reduce nutrient loadings associated with tile and surface drainage.

## Objective 2.1 Strategies

- Partner with external agencies to support program compliance.
- Educate customers on program participation requirements.
- Expand outreach to identify what landscapes are best for wetland restoration and construction.
- Increase partnership opportunities to leverage private funding for technical assistance and outreach.
- Partner with States and other organizations to assist in resource stewardship.
- Eliminate barriers to timely implementation of conservation practices.

## Objective 2.2 - Target Natural Resource Needs to Maximize Benefits

FSA conservation programs have had a significant impact on protecting our Nation's natural resources. Land retirement and protection programs provide the long term means to protect soil, water, wildlife, and air quality resources, while providing or enhancing economic opportunities in rural America. For example, in South Dakota, CRP has greatly contributed to the increase in pheasant populations over the past 20 years. This population rebound has significantly increased the amount of pheasant hunting within the state, which is estimated to annually generate over \$150 million in economic activity in rural towns across South Dakota. At the same time, soil erosion has been reduced by over





95 percent and the amount of sediment and nutrients has also been significantly reduced. A recent study showed that CRP has reduced phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment loading by 123,000,000 pounds, 612,000,000 pounds per year, and 220,000,000 million tons, respectively.

### **Pillar 1 - Develop and Implement Measures to Conserve Surface and Ground Water Supplies**

The Nation's demands for surface and groundwater continue to grow. Expanding populations, greater variability in climate, and other factors are placing increased demand on water resources. Land conservation programs help improve the amount and availability of water and conserve water resources. Land use changes from cropland to vegetative cover or wetlands increases the recharge of groundwater resources, reduces peak runoff, and improves the total availability of water for public use.

FSA will work with State and private partners to encourage the development of voluntary programs to encourage the

conservation of water resources. FSA will encourage full CRP enrollment to maximize the impacts of improved hydrology through land use changes. Expansion of CREPs and other initiatives to conserve water in water short regions will be developed.

### **Pillar 2 - Develop and Implement Measures to Enhance Water Quality**

FSA programs have improved water quality by targeting the most environmentally sensitive land (flood plains, wetlands, highly erodible lands, and others) for land retirement and other enhancements. Through partnerships with States, non-governmental organizations, and producers, FSA will continue its efforts to improve water quality.

### **Pillar 3 - Implement Measures to Develop and Enhance Wildlife Habitat**

FSA conservation programs provide for the creation of native ecosystems that provide habitat for a number of wildlife species. In addition, in some CREPs, States have acquired long



term conservation easements to protect important habitats.

FSA works with USFWS, State fish and wildlife agencies, environmental groups, and producer groups to address the protection of critical habitats. To date, over 2 million acres of wetlands have been protected, many of which are located in the Prairie Pothole region that is a vital breeding area for much of the central flyway water fowl. FSA will work with conservation partners to further expand the use of State areas for wildlife enhancement and to explore other CRP conservation initiatives that will protect and restore critical habitats.

The Upland Bird Habitat initiative helps producers to plant ground covers, shrubs, and grasses that provide appropriate habitat conditions for common upland birds, such as sage grouse and northern bobwhite quail. Studies show that these conservation practices have increased the population of upland bird species. Similarly, the Duck Habitat initiative has helped increase duck populations by an

estimated 60,000 birds annually and will restore 100,000 wetland acres.

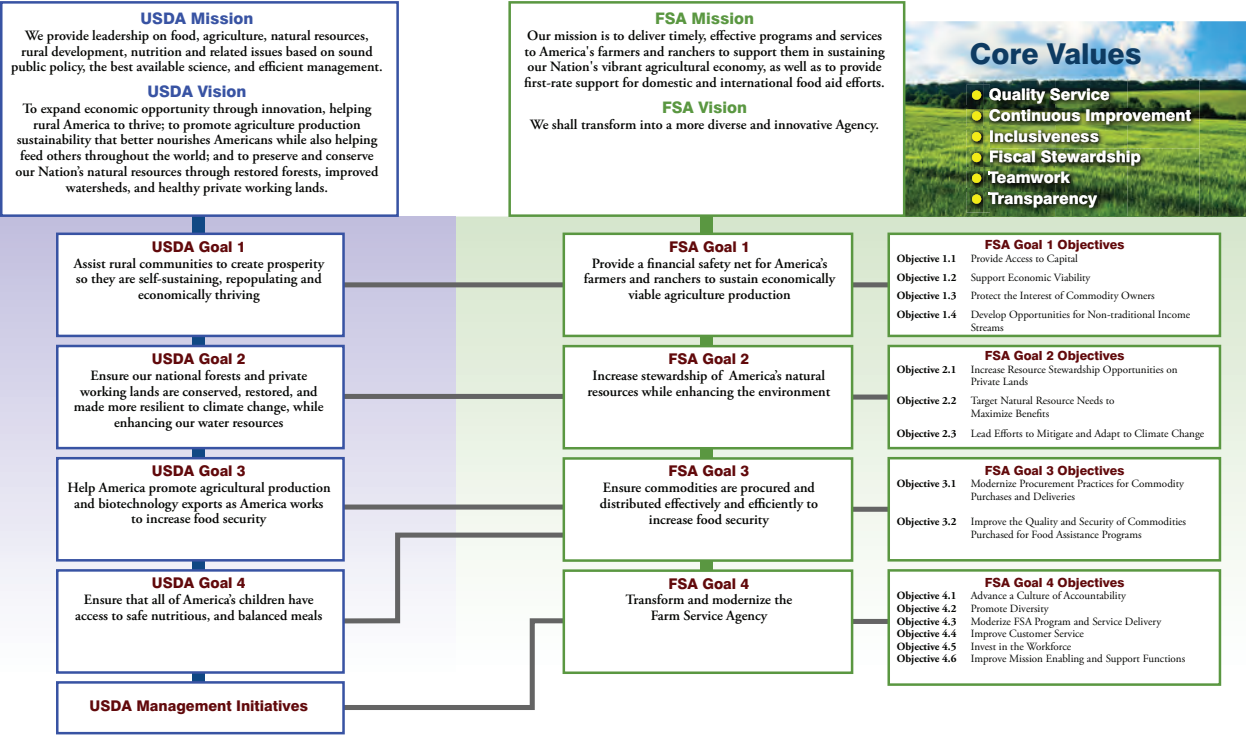
#### **Pillar 4 - Support Timely Restoration of Habitats Impacted by Natural Disasters**

Natural disasters, such as hurricanes, tornados, floods, and wildfires, can have significant adverse impacts on the environment and the long term productivity of American agriculture production and ecosystems. Through emergency assistance programs, FSA helps producers restore agricultural and non-industrial private forestland damaged by natural disasters.

#### **Pillar 5 - Support Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation**

FSA develops important wildlife habitat and provides opportunities for expanded public use of outdoor recreation. FSA also provides grants to states for providing expanded access for outdoor recreation. Supporting outdoor recreation access on private lands will perpetuate billions of dollars in rural economic development, protect American jobs, and enrich the quality of life for millions of Americans.

# Strategic Plan Framework



This chart is also available as a separate file, [FSA Strategic Framework-web.pdf](#).

## Objective 2.2 Strategies

- Implement a continuous signup initiative for water conservation.
- Partner with EPA to protect public drinking water supplies.
- Develop innovative and cost effective treatment systems to address contamination issues with CCC grain bin and FLP sites.
- Ensure enrollment of critical wildlife habitats through full enrollment of continuous signup CREP, State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) and CRP general signup.
- Partner with external agencies and organizations to identify critical habitat.
- Promote incentives for tree planting practices under CRP.
- Educate CRP participants on appropriate land usage that supports outdoor recreational opportunities.

- Partner with States on CREP projects to develop public access easements.

## Objective 2.3 - Lead Efforts to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change

With close to 32 million acres enrolled in the CRP, it is one of the largest voluntary programs to sequester greenhouse gases on private land. Close to 50 million metric tons of carbon dioxide are sequestered in the soil carbon and above ground vegetation that occur when cropland is converted to long term vegetation. Over the next 5 years, FSA will implement measures to increase the sequestration of greenhouse gases (pillar 1) and adjust planting specifications to respond to climate change (pillar 2).





### **Pillar 1 - Implement Measures to Increase the Sequestration of Greenhouse Gases**

The Agency will work with producers to educate them about the amount of greenhouse gases that are sequestered by land use changes. FSA will partner with other Federal and State agencies to develop processes to assist producers in determining greenhouse gas impacts of proposed land use changes.

### **Pillar 2 - Adjust Planting Specifications to Respond to Climate Change**

The long term impacts of climate change will impact the viability of various plant species. Changes in precipitation, growing season, and other factors will impact which species will be best suited for certain sites. Many new plantings (especially tree plantings) will likely have a projected lifespan of 50+ years. Ensuring the long term viability of the stand in light of expected impacts from climate change will be vital. FSA will work with NRCS, FS, and others to ensure that planting requirements are best suited for the long term.

### **Objective 2.3 Strategies**

- Promote planting of trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs.
- Collaborate with conservation partners to develop planting and management specifications that are adaptive to climate change.
- Provide financial incentives to mitigate the upfront cost of establishing the practice.
- Educate producers on the impact of climate change.
- Partner with external agencies to expedite technical assistance.

### **External Risk Factors**

Factors affecting FSA's ability to achieve its Goal 2 include: extreme weather; climate fluctuation or environmental change beyond the natural range of variability that affects ecological productivity and resilience; renewal of expiring CRP contracts; and non-compliance with program provisions that may reduce program effectiveness.



## Strategic Goal 2 - Performance Measures

Number of Acres Enrolled in Conservation Programs		
Description	FY-10 Baseline	FY-16 Target
This measure reflects the number of acres enrolled each fiscal year in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).	31.1 million acres	32 million acres
Metric Tons of CO <sub>2</sub> Sequestered		
The annual net reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent). These reductions are obtained from carbon sequestration, reduced fuel use, and reduce nitrous oxide emissions avoided from not applying fertilizer.	52 million metric tons (MMT)	52 million metric tons (MMT)

## Strategic Goal 3:

### Ensure Commodities Are Procured and Distributed Effectively and Efficiently to Increase Food Security

More than 800 million people worldwide suffer from hunger and malnutrition. The U.S. provides more than 50 percent of the total worldwide food assistance to combat hunger. USDA's domestic and international food assistance programs play a critical role in this effort. FSA supports the USDA strategic objective to ensure U.S. agricultural resources contribute to enhanced global food security (USDA Objective 3.1). FSA procures and distributes commodities for programs like the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and the Child Nutrition Program. In FY 2009, FSA procured and distributed over \$1.6 billion of commodities for domestic and international food assistance programs.

FSA is committed to streamlining its internal processes so that food continues to reach recipients on time and according to contract specifications. FSA is also committed to improving packaging requirements to reduce commodity losses associated with multiple handlings through rigorous distribution systems in lesser developed countries.

FSA is committed to increasing the transparency of its procurement practices and efficiencies in the distribution of food assistance. FSA will achieve these goals by strengthening the integrity of commodity procurement contract vehicles, such as Request for Proposals (RFPs) and Request for Quotes (RFQs). In addition, FSA will continue to identify and implement industry best practices to ensure food aid quality and security.

Over the next 5 years, FSA will modernize procurement practices for commodity purchases and deliveries (Objective 3.1) and improve the quality and security of commodities purchased for food assistance programs (Objective 3.2).

#### **Objective 3.1 - Modernize Procurement Practices for Commodity Purchases and Deliveries**

The number of individuals fed is impacted by the cost of commodities and transportation. As budget



constraints play a major role in the amount of commodities purchased, FSA can help reduce hunger by becoming more efficient in procurement practices. FSA seeks to maximize the use of program dollars to provide commodities to as many needy recipients as allowed. The Agency works within the parameters of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, the standards of the Food and Drug Administration, and all other regulations as necessary. The standards of food security must be of the highest quality.

Over the next 5 years, FSA will improve procurement processes (pillar 1), promote competition for domestic and international food aid contracts (pillar 2), and maintain the capability to complete independent government estimates accurately (pillar 3).

### **Pillar 1 – Improve Procurement Processes**

To promote transparency and accountability in its procurement practices, FSA will improve all phases of procurement processes by improving its acquisition planning, contract formation and contract administration.

Specifically, FSA is striving to better meet the needs of recipients and program agencies through the use of “Best Value” contracting, obtaining what is needed, where it’s needed, and when it’s needed. RFPs and RFQs will be utilized as the contract vehicle.

### **Pillar 2- Promote Competition for Domestic and International Food Aid Contracts**

FSA will reduce the cost to feed recipients by promoting competition for domestic and international food aid contracts. FSA will improve its outreach efforts to encourage non-traditional vendors to submit proposals, casting a wider net for competition. Increasing the vendor base will also reduce program risks by providing greater commodity production capacity during times of high demand and emergencies.





### **Pillar 3 – Maintain Capability to Complete Independent Government Estimates (IGEs)**

Conducting accurate IGEs is an essential component of ensuring FSA is efficiently utilizing taxpayer resources by confirming that the Government receives exactly what was specified, at a reasonable cost. Employing talented personnel and systems to effectively perform this task will contribute to lowering the average cost to feed recipients.

#### **Objective 3.1 Strategies**

- Utilize RFPs as the primary solicitation method.
- Award contracts based on enhanced evaluation criteria.
- Employ resources more efficiently through increased usage of long term contracts.
- Ensure adequate levels of personnel to perform IGEs within specified time limits.
- Emphasize set aside programs to increase participation.

### **Objective 3.2 - Improve the Quality and Security of Commodities Purchased for Food Assistance Programs**

FSA ensures the safety and security of commodities purchased for domestic and international food aid programs. It is FSA's responsibility to maintain the quality and security of food purchased for shipment and delivery to distribution. Contracting specifications are in place to ensure that commodities are not adversely altered. The Agency monitors the nutritional value, shelf life, and stability of commodities accepted and delivered for distribution. To make certain the quality and security of commodities purchased meets applicable standards, the Agency will continue to focus on shipment and delivery of domestic and international food assistance (pillar 1) and improve food quality and security procedures (pillar 2).

### **Pillar 1 - Focus on Shipment and Delivery of Domestic and International Food Assistance**

There are numerous challenges in delivering international food aid, including natural disasters, civil unrest, cultural differences, and production limitations. Typically, food aid is delivered to countries with immature infrastructures and traditional commercial packaging methods are often not sufficient to prevent damage or spoilage. Therefore, unique packaging requirements are necessary to meet these challenges. Commodities procured for domestic feeding programs utilize commercial packaging. However, FSA continues to identify and specify industry best practices for commodity manufacturing and packaging to ensure food aid quality and security for both domestic and international food aid programs.

### **Pillar 2 – Improve Food Quality and Security Procedures**

FSA employs industry best practices to minimize the risks related to food safety and food insecurity. For example, industry best practices for sampling and testing commodities at manufacturing facilities will be incorporated into all FSA procurement contracts.

Transportation conveyances must now be secured with tamper resistant, tamper evident seals to ensure the contents have not been compromised. In addition, a port licensing agreement is being developed so FSA can require stevedores to provide a heightened level of quality and safety for commodities at U.S. ports. FSA also works closely with the Food and Nutrition Service and the Food and Drug Administration to strengthen “hold and recall” procedures for suspect commodities in domestic feeding programs.







## Objective 3.2 Strategies

- Establish port licensing agreements for U.S. Load Port Authorities.
- Establish a research and development budget to design and implement more innovative packaging requirements for non-commercial international and price support commodities.
- Partner with academic institutions, private entities and other government agencies to improve the packaging requirements and the delivery of commodities.
- Re-establish a Sampling & Testing Protocol Policy to determine compliance with contract requirements associated with non-commercial commodities for international food aid assistance.
- Implement the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) effectively.
- Facilitate domestic commodity “hold and recall” procedures as necessary.

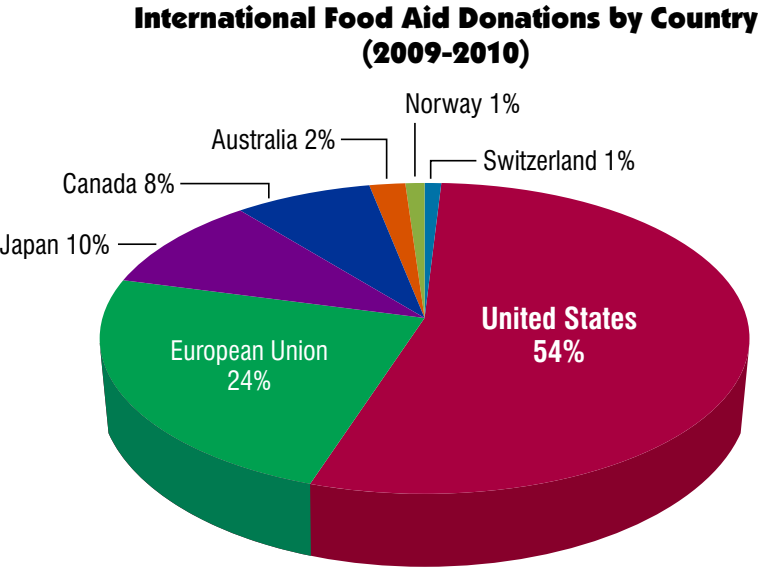
- Implement procedures for non-commercial international commodities that do not meet contract specifications.

## External Risk Factors

Many external factors influence the accomplishment of this strategic goal, including: availability and security of international transport services and a lack of collaboration between the public and private sectors that play a large role in food safety, security, and emergency preparedness. Other factors might include natural disasters, political/civil unrest, scientific acceptance of new production technologies, and country infrastructure.

# Strategic Goal 3 - Performance Measures

International Shipping Loss Rates		
Description	2008 Baseline	FY-16 Target
The losses are represented as a percentage of the total quantity shipped	0.4 %	0.25 %



- Half of the world’s food aid comes from the United States
- All U.S. food aid commodities are procured by FSA

Source: Food Aid Convention

## Strategic Goal 4:

### Transform and modernize the Farm Service Agency

FSA faces extraordinary challenges over the next 5 years. To meet these challenges, the Agency will transform and modernize the way it does business, resulting in more efficient, effective operations and improved service delivery.

FSA is transforming its systems and applications into a set of enterprise services and eliminating legacy systems, servers, and duplicative data environments. Additionally, with a significant number of retirements looming, the Agency must recruit and retain new employees to continue its service capabilities. Achieving the goal of transforming and modernizing key systems, business processes, and support activities will facilitate mission success and enhance the accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness of service delivery.

Specifically, FSA will advance a culture of accountability (Objective 4.1); promote diversity (Objective 4.2); modernize program and service delivery (Objective 4.3); improve customer service (Objective 4.4); invest in the

workforce (Objective 4.5); and improve mission enabling and support functions (Objective 4.6).

#### Objective 4.1 – Advance a Culture of Accountability

FSA is committed to achieving its mission, goals, and objectives and will systematically review and evaluate programs and activities and measure results. This objective will be accomplished through a robust accountability system that includes continuous feedback to ensure that managers and employees understand, support, and contribute to strategic accountability, planning, and implementation.

#### Objective 4.1 Strategies

- Educate employees and promote employee ownership of the Agency's strategic and operational goals.
- Develop performance measures and targets for each State tied to FSA's Strategic and Operational Plans.

- Link employee performance plans to the Agency's strategic and operational goals.
- Provide managers the support necessary to achieve strategic goals.

## Objective 4.2 - Promote Diversity

FSA leadership has established diversity as one of its top priorities. The Agency is firmly committed to the elimination of any and all forms of disparate or discriminatory treatment affecting our customers, clients, and employees based on consideration of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status and sexual orientation. Overall, the Agency's strategy is to seek, encourage, and facilitate full participation of all farmers and ranchers in its available programs through outreach efforts. FSA seeks to become an employer of choice that recruits, retains, rewards and promotes a diverse workforce based on merit and fairness. FSA will become a strong promoter of entrepreneurship for minority, women-owned, and small businesses that are

capable of growing and expanding.

To be successful, all employees must be committed to making the Agency a model in the Federal Government for respecting the civil rights of its employees and customers. FSA will ensure equal opportunity and civil rights through a comprehensive approach.





## Objective 4.2 Strategies

- Promote diversity in the workplace.
- Improve our knowledge of cultural and rural differences.
- Improve outreach efforts to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.
- Promote awareness of emotional intelligence.
- Provide more effective conflict resolution training to the workforce.
- Promote the use of alternative dispute resolution to address complaints.

## Objective 4.3 - Modernize Program and Service Delivery

Modernizing service delivery systems will allow FSA to respond more promptly to customer demands and meet future challenges. The “Modernize and Innovate the Delivery of Agriculture Systems” (MIDAS) initiative is an essential element of FSA’s broader enterprise-wide IT

modernization. Over the next 5 years, FSA will modernize IT systems (Pillar 1), enhance information integrity (Pillar 2), and optimize business efficiencies (Pillar 3).

### Pillar 1 - Modernize Information Technology Systems

The modernization effort is comprised of many initiatives, including data warehousing, commodity inventory system improvements, enhanced program application delivery, and financial management systems. MIDAS, in coordination with other IT modernization initiatives, will provide highly reliable and available capabilities to users and decrease the time to deliver new capabilities. These enterprise services will be used across FSA to provide seamless connectivity to mission critical information and improve access-control security.

### Pillar 2 - Enhance Information Integrity

Improved systems will enable decision makers to quickly access program and financial management data to ensure strategic decisions are based on valid



data. Providing a one-stop shop for data delivery will increase business analytics, improve management reporting and query capability, and provisioning of external reports required by oversight agencies. Increased online access will enhance customer self-sufficiency and usability, thus reducing field office trips, transaction processing, data entry, and paperwork.

### **Pillar 3 - Optimize Business Efficiencies**

To accomplish the transformation requires a new way of looking at program delivery. By following a disciplined business process development methodology, FSA will deliver business results that address many of the key program delivery challenges. This will lead to measurable improvements in business performance and will enable our talented workforce to deliver programs more efficiently.

### **Objective 4.3 Strategies**

- Migrate to and leverage integrated Web based solutions.
- Increase security for customers' personal and financial information.
- Ensure the integrity of posted county price data.
- Modernize reporting capabilities to increase the usefulness and availability of data.
- Increase use of technology to support enterprise wide knowledge management.
- Streamline customer reporting and program application processes.
- Expand the customer's ability to apply for assistance, track programs, and update farming operation information online.
- Standardize program development processes.
- Provide fully integrated geospatial solutions.
- Streamline the disaster designation process and utilize GIS to identify disaster areas quicker and more accurately.



## **Objective 4.4 – Improve Customer Service**

Customer service is the core of what the Agency does. The modernization initiatives discussed in Objective 4.3 will improve the Agency's customer service capabilities and allow the Agency to use analytics to evaluate the consistency of customer service. The Agency's goal is to provide consistently outstanding customer service. To ensure equal access to all our programs, the Agency will work to expand its footprint in traditionally underserved areas. FSA will expand service delivery capabilities (Pillar 1) increase awareness of FSA programs and services (Pillar 2) and improve customer service (Pillar 3).

### **Pillar 1 - Expand Service Delivery Capabilities**

FSA will continue to offer services at its local county offices; however, program and service delivery systems must expand beyond the traditional walk-in local offices. FSA will ensure that customers are aware of e-services available and that these services are easy to use.

### **Pillar 2 – Increase Awareness of FSA Programs and Services**

To promote fair and equitable treatment of all customers, it is important that FSA increase awareness of its programs and services to all potential customers. This will be accomplished by providing more customer outreach and education. Since many customers use the Agency's Web site to gain knowledge about programs and services, the Web site will be improved to ensure it meets customer needs.

### **Pillar 3 – Improve Customer Service**

FSA values its customers and wants to ensure that the best customer service experience is being provided to farmers and ranchers. Soliciting customer input is essential to improving service delivery systems. FSA will review and improve business processes to ensure we are effectively delivering our programs and services.

## Objective 4.4 Strategies

- Promote e-initiatives through outreach.
- Expand service delivery channels beyond the walk-in local offices.
- Investigate new technologies for improving service delivery.
- Improve outreach and program education.
- Improve the Agency's Web site.
- Provide tools to producers for decision making.
- Provide customer service training to employees who interact with customers.
- Work with other USDA Agencies to improve customer service.
- Cross train employees on FSA programs and other USDA programs to better serve our customers and potential customers.

## Objective 4.5 – Invest in the Workforce

FSA employs over 15,000 Federal and county employees. As the Agency anticipates the retirement of more than 25 percent of its workforce over the next 5 years, it is important that the FSA strategically manage its workforce.

The Office of Personnel Management periodically surveys employees. FSA has historically ranked below the average of other Federal agencies for employee satisfaction. The Agency wants its current and future employees to know that it is committed to improving its performance. We will encourage retention through professional development, supporting training for leadership, and career development opportunities. FSA will also enhance the workforce through recruitment and retention of talented individuals, with attention to increasing diversity.

To improve workforce management, FSA will improve succession planning (Pillar 1), improve employee



development programs (Pillar 2), improve recruiting and retention (Pillar 3), and improve employee recognition programs (Pillar 4).

### **Pillar 1 - Improve Succession Planning**

To have a good succession plan, FSA must identify existing competencies and determine what competencies and skills will be needed in the future to carry out the Agency's mission and accomplish goals. A key element in succession planning is transferring knowledge from individuals who will be leaving to those that will remain or follow. One aspect of this is to document job information for those who will perform that function in the future. FSA will identify and prioritize those processes that are most critical and/or the highest risk from a business standpoint, and ensure that these processes are documented.

### **Pillar 2 - Improve Employee Development Programs**

To become a high performing Agency requires investment in the workforce and an understanding of customer

and stakeholder needs. The Agency recognizes that in order to continue to provide our customers first-rate service we must invest in employee development. To increase the return on employee investment, FSA will develop strategies, processes, and plans that provide for the continued growth and development of employees. This increases the current value of FSA's employees and can have a positive impact on retention.

### **Pillar 3 - Improve Recruiting and Retention**

FSA's ability to recruit, develop, and retain a well qualified and diverse workforce to execute its mission depends on a fully integrated workforce management program. FSA will engage managers in developing appropriate strategies to ensure the Agency hires and retains people with the right skills to excel in meeting current and future challenges.



## Pillar 4 - Improve Employee Recognition

Over the last few years, budget limitations have reduced the resources available for FSA's employee recognition programs. This has no doubt contributed to the employee satisfaction levels on the recent employee viewpoint survey. As money is not the only factor in employee morale, increasing non-monetary employee recognition can have a dramatic impact. An effective employee recognition program enhances retention and contributes to employee satisfaction and is critical to FSA's transformation and modernization.



## Objective 4.5 Strategies

- Conduct a workforce skills assessment.
- Develop initiatives to promote career progression.
- Provide opportunities for knowledge transfer prior to the departure of key personnel.
- Increase employees' understanding of FSA's mission and operations.
- Improve the on-boarding processes for new hires.
- Promote knowledge sharing through e-initiatives.
- Create innovative solutions for the development and delivery of training.
- Evaluate existing and develop new strategies for the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce.
- Develop new and expand current non-financial employee recognition programs.



## Objective 4.6 - Improve Mission Enabling and Support Functions

With increasingly tight budgets and expanding responsibilities, FSA must ensure resources are used more effectively and efficiently. The Agency must maintain effective financial controls so that program dollars achieve the outcome for which they were intended. FSA will strengthen its financial management by improving internal controls.



## Objective 4.6 Strategies

- Improve internal controls.
- Evaluate opportunities to increase efficiencies in Agency wide financial processes and solutions.
- Ensure transparency and accountability of administrative costs.
- Increase the use of financial information in day-to-day decision making.
- Improve real property management.
- Improve acquisition process.

## External Risk Factors

Many external factors influence the outcome of this strategic goal including resource availability to pursue many of these initiatives, the availability of qualified candidates and their desire to relocate, and customers desire to use social media and other electronic forms of communication.

## Strategic Goal 4 - Performance Measures

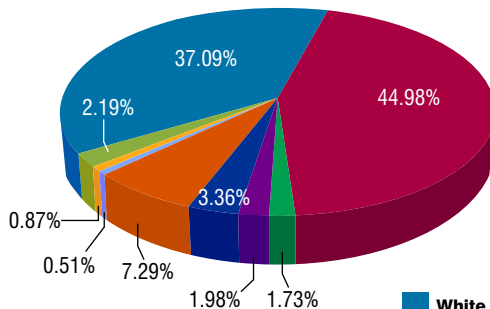
### Agency Index Score on the Partnership for Public Service, Best Place to Work Survey

Description	FY-10 Baseline	FY-16 Target
The <i>Best Places to Work</i> rankings are the most comprehensive and authoritative rating and analysis of employee satisfaction and commitment in the Federal Government	60.1 %	67 %

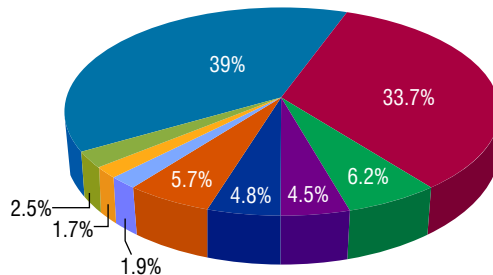
### Farm Programs Applications Accessible from the Web

This measure reflects the number of Farm Programs eligible customers may apply for via the internet	5 %	100 %
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**FY 2010 FSA Federal Employees**



**Civilian Labor Force**



## Appendix A: Program Evaluations

FSA used several tools in developing the strategic plan, including:

- Program evaluations
- Advisory committees
- Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Government Accountability Office (GAO)

Program Evaluations Used to Develop the Strategic Plan				
Goal	Evaluation/Analyses	Brief Description	What was the Effect	Date
All Goals	USDA Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility Civil Rights Assessment Report	USDA directed an assessment team to conduct an Independent Assessment of the USDA Delivery of Technical and Financial Assistance to all Americans. The team examined USDA's program delivery at State and local levels.	The Final Report identifies 10 key areas for Department-wide change that are needed to assist in transforming the Department. These changes enhance the key elements of structure, accountability, incentives and penalties, cultural transformation, performance management, and other essential tools and measures of success. The report also provided a number of recommendations on how to make FSA programs more accessible to socially disadvantaged groups.	2011
	Bearing Point Third Party report to Congress: Delivery of Legislated Mandated Farm Benefit Programs	Bearing Point was retained to develop the third party report required by Congress. The report examined stabilization and modernization initiatives.	Modernization will bring significant benefits such as improvements in cost efficiency, producer access, fraud mitigation, staff efficiency, and morale.	2009

### Program Evaluations Used to Develop the Strategic Plan

Goal	Evaluation/Analyses	Brief Description	What was the Effect	Date
Goal 1	USDA Office of Inspector General's Report on Temporary Domestic Storage Site for Foreign Food Assistance	Audit of the Farm Service Agency's administration of its port examination process	Port facilities are not consistently examined. Corrective Action On Examination Failures Not Ensured.	2008
	GAO Beginning Farmers and Ranchers report	Report focused on coordination of USDA activities affecting beginning farmers and ranchers	Congress provided mandatory funding for the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program.	2007
	USDA OIG Report on Socially Disadvantaged Borrowers Foreclosures	The objective of the audit was to determine whether the Department's decisions to implement foreclosure proceedings with respect to socially disadvantaged borrowers were consistent and in conformity with the applicable laws and regulations governing loan foreclosures	The review disclosed that the Department's foreclosure and restructure processes were generally consistent and in conformity with applicable laws and regulations, and that socially disadvantaged and non-socially disadvantaged borrowers were treated consistently when their loans were restructured or foreclosed.	2009
	USDA OIG Report on FSA Farm Loan Security	The audit objective was to assess FSA's control and oversight of loan collateral to ensure that its operating loans were adequately secured.	The OIG recommended that FSA remind field offices to document shortages of loan collateral found during farm visits and properly follow post-approval procedures. Additionally it was recommended that FSA (1) ensure appropriate enforcement actions are implemented upon discovery of unauthorized loan collateral dispositions; (2) design and implement a system to record all unauthorized dispositions found and, in the interim, instruct county offices to maintain manual logs; (3) strengthen the oversight review processes to ensure post-approvals of unauthorized dispositions are identified and evaluated; and (4) establish controls to ensure the performance of required loan collateral inspections, borrower assessments, and yearend analyses.	2009

Program Evaluations Used to Develop the Strategic Plan				
Goal	Evaluation/Analyses	Brief Description	What was the Effect	Date
Goal 2	USDA OIG Report on Emergency Disaster assistance for 2008 floods: Emergency Conservation Programs	The audit objective was to assess the effectiveness of FSA's management of the ECP and the adequacy of its program integrity.	FSA needs to strengthen its onsite inspection procedures and preparing estimates of the repair and restoration work to be performed. The Agency also needs to strengthen its controls over application and disbursement.	2009
Goal 3	GAO Changes to Federal Agencies' Procedures Could Reduce Risk of School Children Consuming Recalled Food	GAO was asked to determine how Federal agencies (1) notified states and schools about food recalls, (2) advised states and schools about disposal and reimbursement of recalled food, and (3) ensured that recalls were being carried out effectively. To do this, GAO reviewed and analyzed relevant documents and interviewed Federal and State officials, as well as officials from 23 school districts that had experience with at least one of 4 recent cases involving the safety of food in the school lunch program.	USDA did not always ensure that states and schools received timely and complete notification about suspect food products provided to schools through the federal commodity program.	2009
Goal 4	Agriculture Needs to Strengthen Management Practices for Stabilizing and Modernizing Its Farm Program Delivery Systems	The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently experienced significant problems with its information technology (IT) systems that support the delivery of benefits programs to farmers (farm program delivery systems).	Develop specific plans for consistently tracking users' reported problems and clearly defining roles and responsibilities for Information Technology Services and the Farm Service Agency's chief information officer to fully assess USDA's investment in MIDAS, including: establishing effective and reliable cost estimates using industry best practices, including using key information such as business requirements to develop the estimates; and establishing a realistic and reliable implementation schedule for MIDAS that is based on complete business requirements.	2008



## Appendix B: Strategic Consultations

FSA regularly consults with external stakeholders, including FSA's customers, partners landowners, policy experts, and industry and community based organizations regarding our programs' effectiveness. While many of the consultations were not conducted expressly for the development of FSA's Strategic Plan, they did impact strategic goals, objectives, strategies, and targets. Additionally, the Strategic Plan was developed in accordance with guidance from the Office of Management and budget (OMB) and the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

With the full support of its senior leadership, FSA regularly consults with stakeholders and seeks validation of all goals, objectives and performance measures from employees and the public.

Strategic Consultations			
Goal	Date	Who	Purpose
Goal 1	Annually	Farm Loan Chiefs Conference Participants	Discuss Farm Loan Programs issues and concerns.
	Annually	Warehouse Examiners Conference Participants	Discuss U.S. Warehouse Act issues.
	Monthly	Emergency Preparedness Board	Identify and discuss homeland security concerns to include food security concerns.
Goal 1 & 2	August 2010-Jan 2011	Tribal Consultations	Obtain stakeholder input on how to most effectively implement the Highly Fractionated Land Loan Program, the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program.

Strategic Consultations			
Goal	Date	Who	Purpose
Goal 3	Annually (most recently April 2011)	International Food Aid Conference Participants	Annual conference jointly hosted by FSA and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) brings together individuals involved in food-assistance activities, across United States and throughout the world.
	On-going	Food Aid Policy Council	FSA along with USDA ,FAS, OMB, USAID, State Department officials discuss food aid concerns.
	Semi-annually	Food Aid Consultative Group	Industry experts discuss current food aid issues and concerns.
Goal 4	On-going	Labor Management Forums	Union leadership and management identify and address workforce concerns.
All Goals	On-going	Various Employee Associations Conferences	Address programmatic and workforce concerns.
	On-going	National Food and Agriculture Council	Facilitate effective and efficient coordination of agricultural programs.



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