

**USDA Programs: What Do We Know
About Their Effectiveness in
Improving the Viability of Small Farms?**

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Contents

Acknowledgements and Contact Information	ii
Summary Abstract	1
Introduction	2
Methodology	3
Summary of Results and Recommendations	5
Results of Program Reviews	6
Financing Businesses and New Enterprises	
(1) Direct and Guaranteed Operating and Ownership Loans	6
(2) Intermediary Relending Program Loans	8
(3) Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program	9
(4) Rural Business Enterprise Grants	11
(5) Rural Business Opportunity Grants	12
(6) Rural Cooperative Development Grants	14
Marketing Assistance	
(7) Federal–State Marketing Improvement Program	16
(8) Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grants	18
Research, Information, and New Technologies	
(9) Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas	20
(10) Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems/ National Research Initiative	22
(11) Pest Management Alternatives Program	25
(12) Small Farm Program	26
(13) Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program	28
Community Development	
(14) Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program	31
(15) Resource Conservation and Development	33
(16) Rural Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Program	36
Conservation and Resource Management	
(17) Conservation Reserve Program	38
(18) Environmental Quality Incentives Program	40
(19) Farmland Protection Program	42
Appendix A: Sample Email Correspondence Sent to Program Administrator	44
Appendix B: List of Program Administrators and Staff Persons Contacted	45
Appendix C: List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	46
References and Endnotes	48

Summary Abstract

Many USDA programs have the potential to enhance the economic well-being of small farms, but little is known about whether this potential is being realized. A survey was done of 19 programs, utilizing Web searches, a variety of documents, and communications with USDA program managers, to assess whether a program is intended to provide support to small farms, whether an evaluation has been done to assess its impact, and what the evaluation showed. Sixteen of the 19 programs either explicitly or more ambiguously intend to assist small farms through grants, direct payments, loans, or technical assistance. Only two of the programs have been formally evaluated as to the extent of support given to small farms, and an external review provides some information about another program. No evaluations have actually measured the effectiveness of the programs in fulfilling the objective of enhancing small farm viability. We recommend that more attention be given to evaluation of these programs, including simple reporting by each program of the number and total value of awards given each year to small farms and organizations that provide support for small farms. We believe that Congress should appropriate funds for more formal evaluations of key programs to determine their effectiveness. We also strongly support increased funding for USDA's Small Farm Program so that it can provide more oversight of and internal advocacy for evaluation activities.

Introduction

It is well known that slightly over 90 percent of all the farms in the U.S. are small (defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as farms with “less than \$250,000 gross receipts annually on which day-to-day labor and management are provided by the farmer and/or the farm family that owns the production or owns, or leases, the productive assets”¹). Those 1.9 million farms² account for 68 percent of the land owned by farmers and 33 percent of the dollar value of production³. In fact, small farms produce a significant share of some specific commodities, including hay, soybeans, and wheat, but only 11 percent of vegetable, fruit, and nursery products.⁴ Many small farmers have been trying to increase their incomes by diversifying their operations, but nearly half of federal farm support goes to large farms.

Concerned that farm payments were not being targeted effectively to aid the survival of small farms, Congress asked the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) to examine this issue. The agency’s 2001 report^a states:

“In 1999 (the latest year for which data were available), large farms—the 7 percent of farms nationwide with gross agricultural sales of \$250,000 or more—received about 45 percent of the payments. The 17 percent of farms that are medium-sized (gross sales between \$50,000 and \$249,999) received 41 percent of the payments. The remaining 14 percent of the payments was shared by the 76 percent of farms that are small (gross sales under \$50,000). . . . Small farms substantially outnumber medium and large farms, but because payments are generally based on volume of production, the average payment of small farms that received payments was much less. In 1999, these small farms, on average, received payments of about \$4,141. In contrast, large farms received payments averaging about \$64,737, while medium-sized farms received average payments of about \$21,943.”⁵

These payments are of some help to the smallest farms, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) also funds an array of programs (with a much smaller total appropriation than the commodity programs) that are meant to assist small farms in making the transition into value-added activities and to improve their overall economic well-being.

While the USDA’s National Commission on Small Farms made a number of useful policy recommendations in its 1998 report, *A Time to Act*, the group admitted that:

“The time constraint placed upon the Commission did not allow for the conduct of any original research or analysis of the effects of USDA’s current programs, practices and policies on the Nation’s small farms.”⁶

We believe that as more attention is given to the plight of and need to protect this sector, and as advocates propose program changes and legislative improvements, it would be helpful to know more about the effects of present programs.

Therefore, we designed a study that asked three questions:

- (1) Does the program intend (either explicitly or implicitly) to support small farms?
- (2) Has an evaluation been done of the program’s effect on small farms?
- (3) If an evaluation has been done, what does it show as to the effectiveness of the program?

^a In this report, the GAO has distinguished between small and medium-sized farms, both falling under the USDA’s definition.

Methodology

USDA programs that have the potential to enhance the economic viability of small farms (with the exception of crop insurance programs) were the focus of the study. The programs were identified using the following four documents:

- *Building Better Rural Places* (2001), a directory of federal funding programs published by USDA agencies and the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute⁷;
- *Federal Funding Sources for Rural Areas: Fiscal Year 2002*, compiled by the Rural Information Center of the National Agricultural Library⁸;
- *A Time to Act: A Report of the National Commission on Small Farms* (1998), published by USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)⁹; and
- *Making Changes: Turning Local Visions into National Solutions* (2001), from the Agriculture Policy Project of the Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy¹⁰.

The 19 programs chosen for study, while not intended to be comprehensive, were those mentioned most frequently in the above sources as having the potential to support small farms. They provide grants, direct payments, loans, or technical and information assistance.

The question of whether USDA programs are serving the needs of small farms had arisen in the Wallace Center's Agriculture Policy Project (WAGPOL), a 5-year effort (1997–2001) to engage people at the local, regional, and national levels in the development of long-term, proactive policies for food and agricultural systems. We had discovered also over the course of the Project that the question might be difficult to answer because so few programs seemed to have been evaluated.

The Internet was used to find information about these 19 programs, specifically information that could address the three questions listed in the prior section. Sources included USDA program webpages, the *Federal Register* (e.g., for Requests for Proposals [RFPs]), reports from USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS), GAO reports, Web-based documents available from program beneficiaries, and other information (mostly) available on the Web. During this process it became evident that there were reports required of the USDA program beneficiaries that are not available online. To identify these documents, email correspondence was sent to the administrator of each of the 19 programs, asking whether these reports were publicly available, and for information on the evaluation of the program. A typical email message appears in Appendix A. Information on the individuals contacted at the USDA, and whether replies were received, is provided in Appendix B.

In the results section (see page 7), each of the programs is described (as drawn mainly from the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* and the funding guide, *Building Better Rural Places*), and the three research questions are addressed. If any type of evaluation was identified, details that pertain to small farms are included, but no assessment is made in this study to address the fairness or the comprehensiveness of the evaluation. The programs are grouped in the five categories already developed in *Building Better Rural Places*, and arranged in alphabetical order within each category. (Recent changes in two program names are noted, though the programs are identified by the names used in the two sources just mentioned.)

A summary of findings from the reviews of the 19 programs, and several policy recommendations, are provided in the section that immediately follows.

We point out that much of the material in the report was collected in 2002, with some exceptions as indicated. While some program details have not been thoroughly updated, we believe that the information

remains accurate in the main, and we anticipate that the findings are still of value to those working on small farms issues.

Of related interest, the Center for Rural Affairs (in Nebraska) and Iowa State University Extension, with funding from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University, are currently undertaking a 2-year research project to analyze four programs (Value-Added Producer Grants, Rural Business Enterprise and Rural Business Opportunity Grants, and the National Research Initiative). The investigators will propose policy and administrative changes to direct more funding to beginning and mid-sized farmers.¹¹

Summary of Results and Recommendations

(1) Do the programs intend to support small farms?

The 19 programs are housed within 7 USDA agencies or offices. Eight of the 19 programs explicitly intend to assist small farms, either exclusively or in part. One of these programs, the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS), had its funding folded into the National Research Initiative (NRI) grants program in fiscal year (FY) 2002, and two of the programs, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Federal–State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP), became less focused on small producers in FY 2002. A further 8 of the 19 programs do not explicitly intend to assist small producers, but use related and more ambiguous language that implies they do, such as “independent producers,” “small businesses,” “socially disadvantaged farmers,” or “family farms.” Three of the 19 programs are not intended to help small farms, but may do so inadvertently. The 19 programs provide grants (11), direct payments (3), loans (2, with all Farm Service Agency loans counted as a single program), or technical and information assistance (3 exclusively, although some programs provide this alongside financial assistance).

(2) Do the programs in actual fact support small farms?

From the lists of beneficiaries provided for the programs and from other sources, it is clear that most of the programs in some way assist small farms. Yet collated statistics measuring the extent of the assistance are sparse: In most cases program administrators do not collect data on the spatial or financial size of the farms that benefit. Overall, there are few data collected that assess the assistance given to small farms relative to large farms, and to agricultural relative to non-agricultural activities. There are two exceptions, which are programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA): the Direct and Guaranteed Operating and Ownership Loans program and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The extent of support given by these programs to small farms has been evaluated by the Economic Research Service (ERS).

(3) How effective are the programs in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

Although evaluations of some of the programs do exist, none have assessed the effectiveness of the programs in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms. Nor are such evaluations a requirement of the legislation that defines each program. In only one case was an external evaluation found—for one division of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension (SARE) program. The SARE evaluation did not focus on the small farm question per se, but dealt with the issue in part. Thus, overall, it is not known how effective the programs are in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms.

Based on the findings, we recommend the following:

1. Simple evaluations to be done on all programs to understand what total and proportionate awards/loans and other forms of support are going to small farms;
2. Funding appropriated to undertake formal evaluations of some of the key programs, especially the value-added and market development grants programs, to see how effective they are, and most importantly, to use as the basis for improving those that are not as effective; and
3. More funding to the USDA Small Farm Program so that it can oversee the programs investigated in this study, as well as others, and advocate for more evaluation and attention to small farm issues within them.

Results of Program Reviews

FINANCING BUSINESSES AND NEW ENTERPRISES

(1) Direct and Guaranteed Operating and Ownership Loans

There are four types of loans provided by the Farm Service Agency: Direct Farm Ownership Loans (FO), Direct Farm Operating Loans (OL), Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loans (GO), and Guaranteed Farm Operating Loans (OG).

Mission Area, Agency:	Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS), Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Legislation:	Authorized by Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act of 1972, as amended. ¹²
Aim of program:	Direct loans exist to provide temporary financing and assistance to ‘family’ farms until they are able to qualify for private-sector resources. For FO and OL funds, “Emphasis is placed on assisting beginning, minority, and other limited-resource family sized farms ...” ¹³ Maximum loan amount is \$200,000. FO funds can be used to purchase land, construct buildings or other improvements, and for soil and water conservation improvements. OL funds can be used to purchase livestock, poultry, feed, and equipment; for soil and water conservation; and to refinance indebtedness (with limitations). (The law defines a ‘family sized’ farm as one that can operate and manage itself.) Guaranteed loans are to “help family farmers obtain commercial credit to establish or maintain a family farm or ranch.” ¹⁴ A guaranteed loan must always be considered before a direct loan can be provided.
Type of assistance:	Direct and guaranteed loans. ¹⁵
Eligible groups:	For direct loans, owners (or those becoming owners) of ‘family sized’ farms who are unable to obtain credit through commercial sources; and for FO, owners who have operated a farm or ranch for at least 3 years, and for OL, at least 10 years. Certain portions of available funds are allocated to minority farmers, and beginning farmers (if the applicant for beginner loans is a business entity, all members must be related to each other). Applicants must operate their farms in an environmentally sound manner. For guaranteed loans, the recipient must be a farm owner or operator. ¹⁶
Evaluation of program:	No reports are required from loan recipients. The ERS has conducted an evaluation of the size of farms receiving assistance (see below).
Assistance given/projects completed:	There were 14,023 direct operating (OL) and 11,444 guaranteed operating (OG) loans made in FY 2001. ¹⁷ There were 2,085 direct ownership (FO) and 3,488 guaranteed ownership (GO) loans made in FY 2001. ¹⁸

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, because these types of farms tend to have more limited resources, which means that often they are unable to obtain loans and credit from commercial sources.

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

A member of the FSA staff told us that data on farm size “is not data that we collect from our applicants.”¹⁹ However, the ERS has done analysis on this subject. First, based on the 1997 Agricultural Resource Management Study (known as ARMS), the ERS identified the proportion of loans made to small farms. According to the ERS report:

“FSA farm loan programs are an important source of credit to small family farms. The 1997 [ARMS survey] indicates that 89 percent of FSA direct program borrowers and 82 percent of guaranteed program borrowers would be considered small farms under the National Commission on Small Farms’ definition (a farm with less than \$250,000 in total annual farm sales)... Direct and guaranteed FSA borrowers equaled about 17 percent of [small family farms (\$10,000–250,000 in sales)] in 1997. In many counties, such as those in New England and the Delta, over one in four small family farms received at least some credit directly from FSA farm loan programs.... Most FSA borrowers reported total annual sales between \$10,000 and \$100,000. Relative to the overall farm population, far fewer FSA borrowers reported sales under \$10,000. This is consistent with the mission of the FSA programs, which is to serve farm operations large enough to support the financial needs of a family. Those pursuing farming as a hobby or as a lifestyle are not targeted for service by the programs.”²⁰

Second, the ERS has also calculated how much money is loaned to racial and ethnic minority farmers targeted as “socially disadvantaged” (SDA). (Minority farmers are more likely to be in the ‘limited-resource’ farm category.²¹) In FY 1999, \$296 million was lent to all SDA groups, about 8 percent of all FSA loans. According to the ERS, minorities represented almost 7 percent of all FSA direct loan recipients in 1999, and 3 percent of guaranteed loan recipients (4 percent of all farmers are minorities). Nationally, minorities have received 9 percent of all direct loans since 1993.²² Apparently, loans to beginner farmers are also increasing, with 18 percent of annual lending volume going to these applicants in 1999.²³ Of special note, though, some black farmer groups still consider the USDA to be discriminatory in its lending practices. The context of the ERS research was charges that the FSA had been racially discriminatory in its allocation of loans, particularly in the South.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

According to the ERS analysis described above, loans contribute to the economic well-being of many small farms with annual sales between \$10,000 and \$250,000, but not less than \$10,000. However, the ERS states also that FSA direct and guaranteed loans go to just 7 percent of all farms in the U.S.²⁴ There has been no evaluation on the significance of the loans vis-à-vis other sources of income, and no evaluation that has included interviews of farmers to determine how effective the loans are in enhancing their economic well-being.

(2) Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) Loans

Mission Area, Agency, Program:	Rural Development (RD), Rural Business–Cooperative Service (RBS), Business Programs
Legislation:	Authorized by Food Security Act of 1985, Section 1323, as amended. ²⁵
Aim of program:	To provide loans to individuals and businesses that are unable to obtain conventional financing, as a means of fostering rural development. ²⁶
Type of assistance:	Direct loans. ²⁷
Eligible groups:	Non-profit corporations, public agencies, Native American tribes, and cooperatives, which act as intermediaries by loaning the money in turn to individuals, non-profits, and businesses located in areas with populations under 25,000. Final recipients of loans cannot be agricultural producers, although processors and marketing entities can be considered. ²⁸
Evaluation of program:	Intermediaries are required to submit reports on lending activity, income and expenses, financial condition and progress, and an annual budget. ²⁹ No external evaluation on the impact of the program on small farms has been carried out, although in 1999 the GAO assessed the lending patterns and financial condition of the program. ³⁰ As a result of a “small farms initiative,” RBS kept annual statistics for 3 years on how many loans and how much total funding from this program has been directed to small farms, but these data are no longer available. ³¹
Assistance given/projects completed:	In FY 2003, 61 loans were approved. During FY 1997–2003, 399 loans were approved. ³²

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, though implicitly. While agricultural producers cannot apply, the loans are intended for smaller businesses that are generally less able to obtain conventional financing. This class of business could include agricultural ventures, such as cooperatives.

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

Annual reports from Business Programs for FY 2001, 2002, and 2003 are available online from RBS. The reports provide partial listings of IRP loan recipients (some with one-line descriptions of funded activities), and caseload totals by state.³³ Based on this information, none of the organizations named as loan recipients (37 total) during the 3-year period appear to be agriculture-related.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

No evaluation could be found that addresses this question. (As noted above, RBS had gathered data, but they are no longer available.) Thus, there is no information available on whether these grants are effective for small farms.

(3) Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (OASDFR) Competitive Grants Program

Office:	Assistant Secretary for Administration, Office of Outreach
Legislation:	Authorized by Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Section 2501(a), Public Law 101-624, as amended by Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Sections 10707–10708, Public Law 107-171. ³⁴
Aim of program:	“To reverse the decline of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers across the [U.S.]. The intended outcome is to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to own and operate their own farms and ranches, participate in agricultural programs, and thus allow them to become an integral part of the agricultural community and strengthen the rural economy.” ³⁵
Type of assistance:	Project grants. ³⁶
Eligible groups:	Land-grant universities/colleges and other community-based institutions. ³⁷
Evaluation of program:	Performance and progress reports must be submitted, including an evaluation of the activities carried out under the program (the RFA for FY 2002 states that “proposals need to incorporate a project evaluation component that will permit a qualitative and quantitative assessment of expected project impacts”). ³⁸ ³⁹ No external evaluation of the program could be found.
Assistance given/projects completed:	In FY 2001, 27 grants were awarded, and in FY 2002, 30 grants. The FY 2001 awards assisted over 8,686 producers in 22 states, with outreach to more than 107,566 rural constituents. ⁴⁰ The USDA announced 34 grant awards (to 20 universities/colleges and 11 non-profits) in 2003. ⁴¹

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, though implicitly. According to the Request for Applications (RFA) for FY 2002, the intended beneficiaries are “socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.”⁴² Socially disadvantaged (SDA) producers are historically small (with low income as well as small acreage),⁴³ and the grants are used to fund what is called the ‘Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program [or Project]’ (also called the ‘Section 2501’ program) at the land-grant universities and colleges and other community-based institutions.

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

A listing of Section 2501 grant recipients during FY1994–2000, comprising 24 land-grant institutions and 3 community-based organizations, is available online from the Office of Outreach.⁴⁴ For the most part, the land-grants have few details about the program on their own websites. For example, the College of Agriculture at Fort Valley State University (Georgia) states that its Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project “provides service for socially disadvantaged farmers in 23 counties ...”⁴⁵ The focus of the program at Kentucky State University is “to provide assistance to small family farmers and limited resource farmers ... through outreach efforts ...” (such as notifying farmers of USDA programs available to them, and developing alternative farming enterprises).⁴⁶ As stated in a 1996 conference presentation, “the overall goal of the project” at Tuskegee University (Alabama) “is to directly improve the farm income and economic well-being of borrowers, socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers, through increasing their production and financial management skills.”⁴⁷ Some outreach activities and program accomplishments are described in the presentation.

A listing of 28 OASDFR grant recipients selected in 2001 is provided in a USDA report citing Departmental accomplishments in assisting the nation's small farmers and ranchers.⁴⁸ The grantees include 19 universities/colleges and 9 community-based groups. According to this publication, "Most 2501 project participants are typically small scale, traditional crop producers."⁴⁹ The document provides examples of the kinds of support provided to SDA producers by project staff (e.g., help in applying for FSA or commercial bank loans, and in developing financial and production plans; training in farm management; and help in growing alternative crops).

According to a workshop presentation in January 2004, an analysis by CSREES found that the largest proportion of grants made in FY 2002–2003 was directed to support for African-American farmers (53 percent), and to the Southern region (46 percent). The farm sizes of those targeted was not reported.⁵⁰

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

No evaluation could be found that addresses this question, though it is not known whether an internal evaluation has been carried out (the program administrator could not be reached in 2002; see Appendix B). The periodic reports that the grant recipients are required to submit are not available on the program's webpages.

Thus, while it is known that project grants are awarded to organizations that support socially disadvantaged farmers, it is not known how effective the grants are in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms.

(4) Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG)

Mission Area, Agency, Program:	Rural Development (RD), Rural Business–Cooperative Service (RBS), Business Programs
Legislation:	Authorized by Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act of 1972, Section 310B, as amended. ⁵¹
Aim of program:	“To facilitate the development of small and emerging private business, industry, and related employment for improving the economy in rural communities.” ⁵² There is a general emphasis on job creation.
Type of assistance:	Project grants. ⁵³
Eligible groups:	Public bodies and non-profit corporations outside cities of 50,000 or more. These entities then disperse the grant monies to small and emerging private businesses (i.e., grants are not made directly to the business). Agricultural producers are not eligible, but the grants can be used for processing and marketing ventures. ⁵⁴
Evaluation of program:	Grant recipients are required to submit periodic reports. ⁵⁵ No external evaluation of the program has been done. As a result of a “small farms initiative,” RBS kept annual statistics for 3 years on how many grants and how much total funding from this program has been directed to small farms, but these data are no longer available. ⁵⁶
Assistance given/projects completed:	In FY 2002, 457 grants were awarded, and in FY 2003, 515 grants. A total of 3,029 grants were awarded during FY 1997–2003. ⁵⁷

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, though implicitly. While the grants cannot be awarded directly to agricultural producers, the RBEG program *does* explicitly support “small and emerging” businesses, which could be agricultural ventures.⁵⁸

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

The USDA releases a list of grant recipients and their activities when the grants are allocated. However, the lists tend to be mixed with the RBOG grants and IRP loan awards (see elsewhere in the results section), so the RBEG grant awards can be difficult to differentiate. Still, it appears that 3 out of 37 grants designated in the first round of grant selections in FY 2002 went to agriculture-related ventures.⁵⁹

Annual reports from Business Programs for FY 2001, 2002, and 2003 are available online from RBS. The reports provide partial listings of RBEG grant recipients (some with one-line descriptions of projects funded), and caseload totals by state.⁶⁰ Only 1 out of 161 organizations named as grant recipients during the 3-year period mentions an agricultural venture (i.e., a viticulture project in FY 2001).⁶¹

There is no collated information available on the extent of support given by the RBEG program to agriculture, or the size of farms that receive support.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

No evaluation could be found that addresses this question. (As noted above, RBS had gathered data, but they are no longer available.) Thus, the effectiveness of the RBEG program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms is unknown.

(5) Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG)

Mission Area, Agency, Program:	Rural Development (RD), Rural Business–Cooperative Service (RBS), Business Programs
Legislation:	Authorized by Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Section 741, Public Law 104-127. ⁶²
Aim of program:	“To promote sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs.” ⁶³
Type of assistance:	Project grants. ⁶⁴
Eligible groups:	“Grants may be made to public bodies, non-profit corporations, Indian tribes on Federal or State reservations or other Federally recognized tribal groups, and cooperatives with members that are primarily rural residents and that conduct activities for the mutual benefit of the members.” ⁶⁵
Evaluation of program:	“Grantees must provide a financial report and performance activity report quarterly while the project is in process, and a project evaluation report within 1 year after the project is completed.” ⁶⁶ No external evaluation of the program has been done. As a result of a “small farms initiative,” RBS kept annual statistics for 3 years on how many grants and how much total funding from this program has been directed to small farms, but these data are no longer available. ⁶⁷
Assistance given/projects completed:	According to RBS financial data, 39 grant awards were made in FY 2000 (the first year of funding), 207 awards in FY 2001, 89 awards in FY 2002, and 52 awards in FY 2003 (see below). ⁶⁸

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

No, according to the notice inviting applications for FY 2002 grants.⁶⁹

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

Periodic news releases provide partial listings of grant recipients when the awards are allocated. However, the lists tend to be mixed with the RBEG grants and IRP loan awards (see elsewhere in the results section), so the RBOG grant awards can be difficult to differentiate. Among one group of RBOG grants awarded for FY 2002, only 1 out of 20 recipients is an agricultural organization or mentions an agriculture-related project.⁷⁰

Annual reports from Business Programs for FY 2001, 2002, and 2003 are available online from the program’s webpages. The reports provide partial listings of RBOG grant recipients (some with one-line descriptions of projects funded), and caseload totals by state.⁷¹ Only 5 out of 107 entities named as grantees during the 3-year period are agricultural organizations or mention an agricultural venture (one of these is a Michigan group known to include small-scale producers as members).⁷²

Thus, it appears that some grant support from the RBOG program goes to agricultural projects. Yet there is no collated information available on the extent of support provided to agriculture, or the size of the farms that receive support.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

No evaluation could be found that addresses this question. (As noted above, RBS had gathered data, but they are no longer available.) Thus, the effectiveness of the RBOG program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms is unknown.

(6) Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RCDG)

Mission Area, Agency, Program:	Rural Development, Rural Business–Cooperative Service (RBS), Cooperative Services
Legislation:	Authorized by Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act of 1972, Section 210B(f) through (h); amended by Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Public Law 104-127; further amended by Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Public Law 107-171. ⁷³
Aim of program:	To improve economic conditions in rural areas by promoting the development of new cooperatives and/or improvement of existing cooperatives. ⁷⁴
Type of assistance:	Project grants. ⁷⁵ The program is administered through USDA Rural Development State offices acting on behalf of RBS. ⁷⁶
Eligible groups:	Non-profit corporations and institutions of higher education. ⁷⁷
Evaluation of program:	Grant recipients are required to submit periodic reports. ⁷⁸ No external evaluation of the program could be found.
Assistance given/projects completed:	In FY 2001, 21 grants were awarded ⁷⁹ , and 41 grants were awarded during FY 2002–2003 (see below).

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, explicitly. The notice inviting preapplications for FY 2002 announced the availability of “approximately \$5.3 million” in competing RCDG funds. It states: “Of this amount, approximately \$1.5 million will be reserved for preapplications which focus on assistance to small, minority producers through their cooperative businesses.”⁸⁰ The same language was used in the FY 2000 and 2001 notices.⁸¹ Many cooperatives state that they exist to aid small-scale producers.

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

RBS has provided lists of grant recipients (including their activities) on its webpages, which show that some grants are awarded to farm, as opposed to non-farm, cooperatives. Among a listing of 21 grantees for FY 2003, 4 appeared to be involved in agriculture (of these, one is a producers group and one serves “family farms”).⁸² According to the brief descriptions contained in a listing of FY 2002 recipients, 6 out of 20 awards were for agriculture-related cooperatives.⁸³ The Kentucky Center for Cooperative Development, for example, received a grant to “[continue] efforts to improve existing farmer cooperatives,” and Kansas State University received a grant to “[p]rovide educational and technical assistance in the development of new agricultural cooperatives.”

Many of the recipients have websites providing information about what they do. A review of six of these websites in 2002 showed that some small producers have benefited. The Federation of Southern Cooperatives (Alabama), for example, has a membership that includes 12,000 black farm families who individually own small acreage.⁸⁴ (This organization received an RCDG grant in FY 2003 also.⁸⁵) The Northwest Cooperative Development Center, a grantee in FY 2001⁸⁶, is identified as a “Success Story” by RBS.⁸⁷ The Center’s website listed 9 projects underway in 2001, 3 of which mention support for small farms.⁸⁸

Still, there appears to be no available analysis detailing the proportion of the grants that go to agricultural cooperatives, or the size of the farms they support.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

No evaluation could be found that addresses this question, though it is not known whether an internal evaluation has been carried out. The periodic reports that the grant recipients are required to submit are not available online, but two USDA-required progress reports were sent to us in 2002 by two grant recipients. Both contain information on how the grants were actually used, but were brief and contained minimal information that could be useful for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. Thus, although it is known that some grants are awarded to organizations that support small farms, the effectiveness of the RCDG program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms is unknown.

MARKETING ASSISTANCE

(7) Federal–State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP)

Mission Area, Agency:	Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
Legislation:	Authorized by Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, Section 204(b). ⁸⁹
Aim of program:	To improve the marketing system or identify new market opportunities for food and other agricultural products at the state and local levels through marketing research and service activities. ⁹⁰
Type of assistance:	Project grants. ⁹¹
Eligible groups:	State Departments of Agriculture or other appropriate State agencies (federal funds must be matched). Producers are able to apply for funds from the State agencies. ⁹²
Evaluation of program:	Grantees must submit 6-month progress reports, annual financial reports, and annual narrative reports of activities and project accomplishments. ⁹³ Final reports are also required, and must provide information on whether the problem was addressed, the results and conclusions of the project, and the benefits that were derived from the project. No external evaluation of the program could be found.
Assistance given/projects completed:	In FY 2004, 27 projects were funded. A total of 168 awards were made during FY 1999–2004 (see below).

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, explicitly. But this shifted in FY 2002 away from a strong emphasis on small producers in FY 1999–2001. For FY 1999, the notice inviting applications was clear in the program’s support for small farms, stating:

“While all proposals which fall within the FSMIP guidelines will be considered, States are encouraged to submit proposals which address the ‘marketing’ issues and concerns identified in the report of the National Commission on Small Farms, including projects aimed at ... ‘developing direct marketing strategies and initiatives that primarily benefit small farms...’⁹⁴

For FY 2000 and 2001, the notice inviting applications states:

“While all proposals which fall within the FSMIP guidelines will be considered, States are encouraged to submit proposals in the following areas, which correspond with ongoing National initiatives in support of: (1) Small farms—to increase the base of marketing research and marketing services of particular importance to small-scale, limited-resource farmers and rural agribusinesses, with emphasis on projects aimed at identifying and improving producers’ abilities to participate in alternative domestic and export markets.”

The other two priority areas in FY 2000 and 2001 were direct marketing and sustainable agriculture.^{95 96}

For FY 2002 and 2003, however, the priority areas for funding included ‘global economy,’ ‘consumer-driven agriculture,’ ‘agricultural diversity,’ and technical innovation,’ none of which mentioned (or implied) an emphasis on small-scale producers.⁹⁷ (In FY 2003, an additional fifth priority area, ‘transportation and

distribution,’ mentioned them in this way: “... assisting small and medium scale producers overcome barriers to accessing new or expanded markets...”⁹⁸)

For FY 2004, the priority areas for funding are ‘market analysis,’ ‘transportation and distribution,’ ‘competitiveness and new markets,’ and ‘quality and variety.’⁹⁹ Small farms are not mentioned in any of the four areas, although there is reference to improving local and regional (as well as national and global) food systems under the area of ‘transportation and marketing.’

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

Consistent with the shifts over time in the priority areas for funding, the grants awarded by the FSMIP have varied in their support of small producers. No published analysis of the size of the beneficiaries of FSMIP grants is available, but a look at the list of grantees as published on the program’s webpages suggests that the proportion of funds going to support ‘small-scale’ producers has fallen since FY 1999–2000:

In 1999, 6 out of 25 projects (24 percent) cited support for small-scale or limited-resource producers; a further 6 went to direct/local marketing projects, and 3 to organic or “sustainable” projects.

In 2000, 9 out of 26 projects (35 percent) went to support small or limited-resource producers; a further 5 went to direct/local marketing projects and 1 to an organic project.

In 2001, 7 out of 34 projects (21 percent) went to small-scale producers; a further 6 went to direct/local marketing projects, and 1 to an organic project.

In 2002, 5 out of 28 projects (18 percent) went to small-scale or limited-resource producers; additional grants went to a direct/local marketing project and 2 organic projects.

In 2003, 1 out of 28 projects (4 percent) went to small-scale producers; a further 3 went to direct/local marketing projects, and 1 to an organic project.

In 2004, none of the 27 projects cited support for small-scale producers (though 1 mentioned assistance to immigrant farmers selling locally); a further 5 went to direct/local marketing projects, and 2 to organic projects.¹⁰⁰

Some additional grants awarded during this 6-year period went to support ‘family farmers,’ hormone-free meat producers, and small-scale food processors.

The USDA Advisory Committee on Small Farms^b, in a report released in 2003, had urged the Department to use the FSMIP to “[develop] direct marketing strategies and initiatives that *primarily* benefit small farms.”¹⁰¹ [Emphasis added.] Regarding the effectiveness of the program, the Committee’s report states: “The presumption is that this program benefits small farms ... but hard data are needed to determine if this assumption is correct.” The group proposed that the USDA set guidelines for funding the State programs, and make use of a budget analysis similar to one developed by the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).¹⁰²

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

According to the FSMP staff officer, whom we contacted in 2002, there are no evaluations that address this question.^{103 104} Thus, it is not possible to state whether the program has enhanced the economic well-being of small farms.

^b The Advisory Committee on Small Farms (in existence from 1999 to 2001) was established to continue the work of the National Commission on Small Farms. Its purpose was to assist the USDA in developing national policies, practices, and programs to address the needs of small farms and ranches, and implement the 8 policy goals and 146 recommendations issued in the Commission’s final report, *A Time to Act*.

(8) Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grant (VADG) Program

The program name was changed officially to ‘Value-Added Producer Grant’ (VAPG) Program in 2004.¹⁰⁵ Formerly, it was known also as the ‘Value-Added Development Grant’ Program.¹⁰⁶

Mission Area, Agency, Program:	Rural Development (RD), Rural Business–Cooperative Service (RBS), Cooperative Services
Legislation:	Authorized by Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000, Section 231, Public Law 106-224; amended by Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Section 6401, Public Law 107-171 (known as 2002 Farm Bill). ¹⁰⁷
Aim of program:	“To help independent agricultural producers enter into value-added activities.” ¹⁰⁸ Funded activities must be “directly related to the processing and/or marketing of a value-added product.” ¹⁰⁹ Grants are intended for planning activities (such as feasibility studies and development of business plans) or for working capital by start-up businesses. ¹¹⁰
Type of assistance:	Project grants.
Eligible groups:	Independent producers and farmer/rancher cooperatives. In FY 2002, commodity groups and majority-controlled producer groups became eligible. ¹¹¹ In FY 2004, up to 10 percent of program funds could be awarded to “majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.” ¹¹² Projects from producer groups, cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures must address an emerging market (defined as new to applicant). ¹¹³ Also starting in FY 2004, applicability to small farms is 1 of 11 general scoring criteria. (Applicants gain points for meeting the definition of a ‘small farm’—i.e., having average annual gross sales of \$250,000 or less over the prior 3 fiscal years—and are required to submit sales data.) ¹¹⁴
Evaluation of program:	For FY 2002 and 2003 awards, grantees were required to submit semi-annual performance reports to compare achievements with stated objectives. Upon completion of a stated objective, recipients must deliver the results to the relevant state office. ¹¹⁵ For FY 2004 awards, final project performance reports are required also. ¹¹⁶ No external evaluation of the program could be found.
Assistance given/projects completed:	A total of 62 grants were awarded in FY 2001 (the first year of funding), 231 grants in FY 2002, and 184 grants in FY 2003 (see below). ¹¹⁷ Awards for FY 2004, for an estimated 78 grants, are to be announced in October 2004. ¹¹⁸

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, though implicitly, since the VADG is intended for ‘independent producers.’¹¹⁹

In support of farmers who practice alternative agriculture (who tend to be small), “hard-won” language was adopted in the 2002 Farm Bill to qualify how an item is grown or raised (e.g., grass-fed, free range, organic, etc.) as value-added.¹²⁰ The title now defines value-added as: “... produced in a manner that enhances the value of the agricultural commodity or product...”¹²¹ However, the inclusion of commodity groups and majority-controlled producer groups in the 2002 Farm Bill language for the VADG suggests also a shift to favor larger producers.¹²² In FY 2004 (as noted above), majority-controlled producer groups are limited to 10 percent of funding, and projects that assist small farms receive a boost in the competition process.

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

Lists of grant recipients and their activities for FY 2001–2003 are available on the program’s webpages. In these documents, few of the brief project descriptions mention support for small farms (although as illustrated below, additional projects include direct farm-to-consumer marketing and other activities more common to small-scale operations).

In 2001, 1 out of 62 awards (2 percent) went to projects citing support for small-scale producers; additional awards went to a direct/local marketing project and 3 organic projects.

In 2002, 3 out of 231 awards (1 percent) went to projects citing support for small-scale producers, or involving farmers’ groups or businesses known to include small-scale producers as members or owners (though producer size is not mentioned in the project description itself); a further 4 awards went to direct/local marketing projects, and 11 to organic projects.

In 2003, 8 out of 184 awards (4 percent) went to projects citing benefit to small-scale producers, or involving farmers’ groups or businesses known to include small-scale producers as members or owners (though producer size is not mentioned in the project description itself); a further 3 awards went to direct/local marketing projects, and 18 to organic projects.

Some additional projects funded during the 3-year period focused on value-added activities with ‘sustainably’ grown products, or ‘natural’ products such as antibiotic-free or pasture-raised livestock.

There is no available analysis detailing the proportion of the VADG grants that supports small-scale agricultural enterprises. However, as noted above, in 2004 RBS began to collect data on the farm size of program applicants, which will help to answer this question.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

No evaluation could be found that addresses this question, though it is not known whether an internal evaluation has been carried out (the program administrator did not respond to a query in 2002). Thus, while it is known that some grants provide support to small farms, it is not known how effective the VADG program is in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms.

RESEARCH, INFORMATION, AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

(9) Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)

Mission Area, Agency, Program:	Rural Development (RD), Rural Business–Cooperative Service (RBS), Cooperative Services
Legislation:	Authorized by Food Security Act of 1985. ¹²³
Aim of program:	ATTRA is the “National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service,” operated by the private nonprofit National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) through a cooperative agreement with RBS. ¹²⁴ ATTRA was established in 1987 and has been administered by the USDA since 1996. ^{125 126}
Type of assistance:	Publications and information dissemination. ATTRA specializes in responding to questions on specific sustainable enterprises or practices. Staff will research a question, summarize findings in writing, and compile supporting literature, as appropriate, to accompany the report, which a caller receives by mail. “In addition to providing customized research, ATTRA offers three types of prepared materials which are often updated: Information Packages, Current Topics in Sustainable Agriculture, and Resource Lists.” ¹²⁷ There are also two newsletters, a funding guide, and other publications. ¹²⁸
Eligible groups:	“The project serves farmers, ranchers, Cooperative Extension agents, and others interested in reducing chemical inputs, conserving soils and water, and/or diversifying their agriculture operations.” ¹²⁹ “ATTRA cannot handle requests for conventional agricultural information or requests by home gardeners and other people not actually involved in or serving commercial agriculture.” ¹³⁰
Evaluation of program:	An external evaluation designed to measure client satisfaction was conducted in 2001. The evaluation indicates that clients, 63 percent of whom were farmers/producers, were very satisfied with the service they received when calling ATTRA for assistance (satisfaction was ranked as 9 or higher for a number of attributes on a 0 to 10 scale, where 10 indicated being completely satisfied). The evaluation describes various client attributes, including farm size, in acreage. ¹³¹ Because the evaluation did not include information about farms’ gross revenue, it is not possible to know what percentage of the farms served are small farms.
Assistance given/projects completed:	More than 200 publications are currently available. Requests for ATTRA publications and other information increased from 2,900 requests in 1987 to more than 30,000 in 2003. ¹³² Since 1993, <i>ATTRAnews</i> has been issued 2–4 times per year. ¹³³ In 1999, the newsletter was sent to more than 8,500 farmers and information providers. ¹³⁴

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, implicitly, since small farms deal with alternative agricultural methods and enterprises.

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

Small farms use ATTRA’s resources, and assuming that a large percentage of those evaluated in 2001 fall in this sector, they are very satisfied.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

Because the evaluation (see table above) did not request information on farm sales and because responses as to the effectiveness of the program were not elicited in the evaluation, it is not possible to judge the program's effectiveness in supporting economic well-being. It is effective in its objective of disseminating information that farmers need.

**(10) Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS)/
National Research Initiative (NRI)**

The IFAFS program has been subsumed, in effect, into the National Research Initiative (NRI) (a major competitive research grants program for agriculture, also administered by CSREES^{135 136}). The agency was prohibited from implementing a competition for IFAFS in FY 2002, as a result of the agricultural appropriations bill (Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2002, Public Law 107-76).¹³⁷ The 2002 Farm Bill had reauthorized and increased funding for the IFAFS program, but the appropriations bill continued to prohibit the USDA from implementing it. However, the spending bill allows the Department to use 20 percent of funding opportunities in the NRI to carry out a grants program under the same terms and conditions as those provided for IFAFS.¹³⁸ The new program emphasis must reflect two of the four goals of the IFAFS program that have not been funded in recent years: improving farm profitability and small and mid-sized farm viability, and enhancing rural development. In 2004, CSREES established a new program area for the NRI called “Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms and Rural Communities,”¹³⁹ and has issued a funding request for FY 2004 and 2005.¹⁴⁰

(Information in the table below and the following section refers to the IFAFS program. An external evaluation of the NRI’s prior support for small farms is discussed also in the section following the table.)

Mission Area, Agency:	Research, Education, and Economics (REE), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)
Legislation:	Authorized by Agricultural Research, Education, and Extension Reform Act of 1998, Section 401, Public Law 105-185, 7 U.S.C. 7621. ^{141 142} Reauthorized by Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Public Law 107-171 (known as 2002 Farm Bill).
Aim of program:	“To fund competitive research, education, and extension grants to address critical and emerging agriculture issues.” ¹⁴³ Awards are given in six priority areas: (1) Agriculture genome; (2) Food safety, food technology, and human nutrition; (3) New and alternative uses and production of agricultural commodities and products; (4) Agricultural biotechnology; (5) Natural resource management, including precision agriculture; and (6) Farm efficiency and profitability, including the viability and competitiveness of small- and medium-sized dairy, livestock, crop and other commodity operations. ^{144 145}
Type of assistance:	Project grants. Normally awarded for a period of up to 3-4 years.
Eligible groups:	“State Agricultural Experiment Stations, U.S. colleges/universities, other U.S. research institutions and organizations, Federal agencies, private organizations or corporations, and individuals.” ¹⁴⁶
Evaluation of program:	Annual progress reports, and, at the end of the project, a final technical report, are required. ¹⁴⁷ There is no external evaluation of the IFAFS program. (See below regarding an external evaluation of a “small farm initiative” in the NRI grants program.)
Assistance given/projects completed:	In FY 2000 (the first year of funding), 26 grants were awarded, and in FY 2001, 25 projects (see also below).

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes. The wording of the RFP for FY 2001 clearly indicates the intention for the IFAFS program to help small farms, stating that it “holds great opportunity to bring the agricultural knowledge system to bear on issues impacting small and mid-sized producers and land managers, thus enabling improvements in quality of life

and community.”¹⁴⁸ (Similar language was used earlier in a clarification from CSREES regarding the FY 2000 proposals.)¹⁴⁹ It continues: “IFAFS is distinct from other CSREES programs because of its priority on integration of research, extension, and education; [and] its consideration of the concerns of small and mid-sized operations ...”¹⁵⁰

Two research priority areas in particular seek to assist small- and mid-scale producers: ‘Natural resource management’ and ‘Farm efficiency and profitability.’ For the latter area, the RFP for 2001 states: “All proposals submitted to this program area will undergo a peer review in which the efficiency and profitability of small and medium-sized farms is the most important criterion... Applicants with a strong track record of working with owners and managers of small and medium-sized farms are encouraged to apply.”¹⁵¹

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

In 2002, information on the IFAFS awards, available on the program’s webpages, included the priority research areas under which the awards were made in FY 2000 and 2001.¹⁵² Four out of 26 projects funded in FY 2000 mentioned small (and/or mid-sized) farms as beneficiaries, most notably under the sub-category of ‘Critical and emerging pest management challenges.’ For the awards made in FY 2001, 6 out of 25 projects mentioned in their proposals their applicability to small farms. Four of these were in the sub-category ‘Alternative natural resource management practices,’ two in ‘Animal manure management,’ and one in ‘Application of geospatial technologies.’ A much more significant overall category for small farms was ‘Farm efficiency and profitability.’ For the FY 2000 and 2001 awards, all projects funded in this category related to small farm issues. Projects included the development of new marketing channels for small producers, initiatives to improve farm profitability, support of new farmers, linking farms with school food programs, and education and technical assistance for small farmers.

A progress report released in 2003 by the USDA also cites the IFAFS awards made under the ‘Farm efficiency and profitability’ component. According to this source, 19 projects funded in FY 2000 and 15 projects in FY 2001 were targeted to small and mid-sized farms.¹⁵³ The awards focused on market development, ‘whole farm’ approaches, and alternative enterprises to improve profitability. (Since the aim of this publication was to compile the Department’s accomplishments in serving small farmers and ranchers, awards in other priority areas were not mentioned.)

In 2004, 36 progress reports on projects (18 awarded in FY 2000 and 18 in FY 2001) said to benefit small farm are available on the CSREES webpages, in a section on grant programs assisting small farms.¹⁵⁴ (These consist of annual progress updates from the USDA’s Current Research Information System, or CRIS, database. The project type is identified as “Other Grants,” without mention of either IFAFS or the priority research area of funding.) For this study, one-half of the 36 available reports were examined. Of 7 reports from the FY 2000 projects, 5 of them mentioned (or implied) their applicability to small farms. For the FY 2001 projects, 11 reports were examined and 10 of them mentioned (or implied) support for small producers.

Thus, while it is clear that some of the IFAFS awards are intended to assist small farms, there appears to be no information available on the size of the farms that receive support.

Of related interest, an external review of NRI-funded proposals that fell under a “special small farm initiative” (which no longer exists) was released in 2001 by the Center of Rural Affairs in Nebraska. The analysis of 59 proposals (of 61 awarded in 1998 and 1999) found only a modest number to be strongly relevant to small farms. Only 22 percent that were designated by NRI staff as fully relevant to small farms were also deemed so by the Center’s team of reviewers, and another 24 percent had the “potential” to be relevant.¹⁵⁵

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

The progress reports from the CRIS database (see above) include the project objectives and an impact statement. The reports offer some impacts (e.g., use of websites, new farmers' market days, building new organizational networks); however, since most of the projects are not completed (many extend into 2005), there tends to be brief reporting also on what the impacts are expected to be.

According to the IFAFS manager (contacted in 2002), no external evaluation had been carried out because the projects were incomplete. Specifically, the manager told us:

“The IFAFS program supported projects beginning in FY 2000 and FY 2001, so it is unlikely that even the earliest projects, which usually run for 3 years, are completed. Accordingly, there is no overall impact analysis of the program that I can share with you at this time.”¹⁵⁶

(11) Pest Management Alternatives Program (PMAP)

Mission Area, Agency, Program:	Research, Education, and Economics (REE), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), Special Research Grants Program
Legislation:	Legislative authority for ‘special research grants’ such as PMAP is found in Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grants Act of August 4, 1965, Public Law 89-106, Section 2, 7 U.S.C. 450i(c)(1)(A), as amended. PMAP was established primarily in response to the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) of 1996, Public Law 104-170. ^{157 158}
Aim of program:	To fund research that “[helps] farmers respond to the environmental and regulatory issues confronting agriculture.” ¹⁵⁹ The grants “support research that provides farmers with replacement technologies for pesticides that are under consideration for regulatory action by EPA and for which producers do not have effective alternatives.” ¹⁶⁰
Type of assistance:	Special research grants. ¹⁶¹
Eligible groups:	“State agricultural experimental stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, federal agencies, private organizations or corporations, or individuals.” ¹⁶²
Evaluation of program:	FY 2004 grantees must submit a midterm progress report, final technical report, and a nontechnical summary of accomplishments and potential impact. ¹⁶³ The program was evaluated at a special workshop in May 1999. ¹⁶⁴ No evaluation has been carried out that considers the impacts on small farms.
Assistance given/projects completed:	Between 1996 and 1999, PMAP funded 82 projects in 20 states. ¹⁶⁵ A selection of 36 project awards made in FY 1999–2004 is available on the program’s webpages (see below). ¹⁶⁶

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

No.

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

According to the administrator of PMAP, whom we contacted in 2002:

“PMAP is primarily focused on alternatives to conventional pest management practices affected by FQPA in a variety of situations. The results of some agricultural-oriented projects will most certainly have impacts on all sizes of farms, but I don’t recall any evaluation focused on small or mid-sized farms.”¹⁶⁷

Progress reports for 36 PMAP projects awarded in FY 1999–2004 are available online.¹⁶⁸ (These consist of annual progress updates from the CRIS database; the project type is identified as “Special Grant” without specific mention of PMAP.) For this study, 12 of the available reports were examined. While a number of the projects may provide benefits for small-scale operations, only 2 out of these 12 cited (or implied) support for small farms (i.e., alternative herbicides or technologies for weed management for ‘small acreage’ crops).

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

According to the PMAP administrator (contacted in 2002), it is not known how PMAP supports the economic well-being and survival of small farms.¹⁶⁹

(12) Small Farm Program (SFP)

Mission Area, Agency, Unit:	Research, Education, and Economics (REE), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), Economic and Community Systems
Legislation:	<p>The SFP has no legislative mandate. It is instead a line item in the Agriculture and Related Agencies Appropriation Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-122).</p> <p>The Act increased by \$1 million each of the formula extension fund appropriations for the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions under Section 3(c) of the Smith-Lever Act [7 U.S.C. 343(c)] and Section 1444 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3221), respectively. The legislative history of that appropriation indicated that Congress provided the additional \$2 million “to stress the need to expand efforts in providing assistance to the small or part time farmer, ... [including] the urban gardener as well.”¹⁷⁰ Accordingly, the Extension Service, in its October 24, 1975, allocation letter for FY 1976 formula funds, made a separate line item allocation to each institution, based on the applicable formulas, for its share of the \$2 million increase that was restricted to use for small and part-time farmers and urban gardening.¹⁷¹</p>
Aim of program:	“To improve the income levels and economic viability of small farm enterprises in partnership with the land-grant university system, and public and private sectors, by encouraging research, extension, and education programs that meet the needs of small farmers and ranchers.” ¹⁷²
Type of assistance:	Technical assistance and information, specifically a Small Farm Program toll-free number for inquiries, a Small Farm electronic mailing group, a national conference and additional regional conferences, a newsletter, and “Small Farm Resource Guide” and other publications. CSREES staff work closely with a small farm program coordinator network in the USDA, the land-grant university system, and community-based organizations. ¹⁷³
Eligible groups:	Small farms.
Evaluation of program:	Not carried out in terms of quality of assistance. No external evaluation could be found.
Assistance given/projects completed:	Since 1996, the SFP has coordinated a national conference held every 3 years (the latest in 2002 ¹⁷⁴) “to promote successful programs for small producers that can be replicated nationwide.” ¹⁷⁵ The 2002 conference drew more than 560 participants. ¹⁷⁶ At least 16 issues of <i>Small Farm Digest</i> newsletter were published during 1997–2003. ¹⁷⁷ In 1999, the readership was over 15,000. ¹⁷⁸ In 2000–2001, the SFP’s toll-free hotline handled an average of 15 calls per day. ¹⁷⁹

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, explicitly.

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

It would be assumed so, but there are no statistics available on the amount and type of support provided.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

According to the National Program Leader for Small Farms, whom we contacted in 2002, the closest thing to an evaluation of the SFP is the 1998 publication, *A Time to Act: A Report of the National Commission on Small*

Farms.¹⁸⁰ The SFP has also produced a document called *Small Farms: Success Stories/Impacts*, a series of case studies on the impact of small farm projects on small-scale producers in 12 states, collected through 1995. But the document does not specify the funding sources for the projects.¹⁸¹ There is no evaluation of the utility of the SFP itself.

Of note, the National Commission on Small Farms' 1998 report had recommended that the (then new) Office of Outreach "should evaluate the performance and impact of programs that serve small farms. The evaluations should be used to measure the effectiveness of projects in serving the needs of small farm operators."¹⁸² The Commission urged the Office of Outreach, along with the Office of Communications and CSREES, to "develop means of determining effectiveness through focus groups and other measures," and to include impact assessments as part of program and project implementation.¹⁸³ A progress report on the extent of the USDA's success in achieving the Commission's recommendations states that, as of January 2001, the Office was in the midst of reorganization, and the recommendation had not been implemented but would proceed once "Outreach staffing plans have been completed."¹⁸⁴

(13) Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program

Mission Area, Agency:	Research, Education, and Economics (REE), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)
Legislation:	Authorized by National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act Amendments of 1985, Public Law 99-198, Sections 1461–1471 (7 U.S.C. 4701–4710); Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Section 1621 (7 U.S.C. 5811). ¹⁸⁵
Aim of program:	To provide grants “to advance farming systems that are profitable, environmentally sound and good for communities.” ¹⁸⁶
Type of assistance:	Project grants, allocated by four regional offices (Northeast, North Central, Southern, and Western). There are three main grant programs offered in all regions: Research and Education (R&E) grants (involving scientists, producers, and others in an interdisciplinary approach); Professional Development Program (PDP) grants (to train agricultural educators via workshops, tours, etc.); and Producer Grants (for on-farm research or demonstration projects). ¹⁸⁷ Additional special grants are available in some regions. For instance, the Northeast Region introduced a Partnership Grant for “on-farm research and demonstration projects for agricultural professionals who work directly with farmers.” ¹⁸⁸ Through its regions or national office, SARE provides support also for additional initiatives including publications and conferences, the Sustainable Agriculture Network (“the national outreach arm of SARE” ¹⁸⁹), and the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center at the National Agricultural Library ¹⁹⁰ .
Eligible groups:	“Land-grant colleges or universities, other universities, State agricultural experiment stations, State cooperative extension services, nonprofit organizations, and individuals with demonstrable expertise, or Federal or State governmental entities.” ¹⁹¹
Evaluation of program:	SARE states that it is very ‘outcome oriented.’ ¹⁹² ¹⁹³ Grant recipients are required to submit an evaluation component as a condition of receiving funds. Internally, SARE follows the projects and has listed various accomplishments on its webpages (see below). There is also one external evaluation, of the North Central Region PDP grant program (see below).
Assistance given/projects completed:	First awards were made in 1988. ¹⁹⁴ By FY 2001, some 1,600 projects had been funded. ¹⁹⁵ By August 2004, a total of 2,697 projects were entered in SARE’s national database of projects.

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes. As stated in the FY 2004 Call for Preproposals for R&E grants from the Southern Region: “Specifically, a major goal [of SARE] is to strengthen the family farm system of agriculture, a system characterized by small- and moderate-sized farms that are principally owner-operated.”¹⁹⁶

In addition to the broad objectives of the program, the four SARE regions set their own priority areas for funding, which have included explicit focus on support for small farms. The Southern Region addresses the research needs of limited-resource and small-acreage farmers in its Producer Grants program¹⁹⁷ and R&E grants. The 2002 and 2004 R&E grant solicitations identify ‘limited-resource farmers’ as one of five priority areas for funding (along with organic farming systems, marketing/economic development, and other areas).¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁹ For the 2004 R&E grants, the Call for Preproposals states also: “In all priority areas, special consideration will be given to proposals that address issues of small farm survival.”²⁰⁰

The North Central Region's Professional Development Program (PDP) grants have emphasized support for socially disadvantaged producers. The 2002 Call for Proposals states that specific outcomes of PDP should be: "programming geared to small farmers, and traditionally underrepresented groups."²⁰¹ And for FY 2004, "serving socially disadvantaged audiences" is one of five priority areas for project funding.²⁰²

Moreover, a portion of the SARE program grants are capped at relatively low levels (e.g., \$10,000)²⁰³ which would be too small to be of much use to large farms, and pertain to activities, such as organic farming, that are more prevalent amongst small than large farms.

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

According to the USDA's 2003 progress report: "All four SARE regions are funding a large proportion of projects that benefit small farmers."²⁰⁴ (It cites "a major professional development project for small farm experts," a multi-year project in the Northeast Region.)

A database consisting of annual and final reports from SARE-funded projects is available on the program's website. It appears that about a quarter of the 2,697 projects currently entered in the database mention their applicability to small farms.²⁰⁵

However, according to the program administrator (contacted in 2002), SARE does not collect statistics on the farm size of project recipients.²⁰⁶

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

SARE produces annual updates ("Project Highlights," 1996–2004) describing notable projects from the regions, some of which mention how program funds have benefited smaller producers.²⁰⁷ Also available at the website, *Ten Years of SARE* features farmers selling their produce directly to schools in Hartford, Connecticut; small dairies converting to organic in Vermont; and small-scale orchards gaining value by integrating livestock in Washington State.²⁰⁸

Notably, too, there is an evaluation of the North Central Region SARE Producer Grant Program (PGP) in the mid-1990s, conducted by the ANRECS Center for Evaluative Studies at Michigan State University (see details below).²⁰⁹ But there is no comprehensive evaluation of the SARE program in its entirety in terms of its effectiveness in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms. According to SARE's Associate Director (contacted in 2002): "To my knowledge none of the other regions has attempted to evaluate the impact SARE has had on certain economic or environmental indicators."²¹⁰

The evaluation of the North Central Region PGP surveyed 256 applicants (including non-recipients) to the program during the 1992–1996 period (the first 5 years of operation), and reported several findings of relevance to farm size. For example, on grant recipients:

"The large variations in farm sizes show that the Producer Grant program is not biased towards either larger or smaller producers, but awards grants across farm sizes."²¹¹

"We also did not detect any bias toward larger or smaller producers in terms of the value of their annual gross sales."²¹²

Also, the report found: "Non-recipients expressed dismay about the apparent bias in funding allocations toward large farms, and toward certain types of farm operations." The following comment is representative of several made by survey respondents:

“I would like to see more grants applied to small [and] medium farm operations. It seems to me ... that the land grant colleges are working more for the super-sized farm operations rather than the family farms which the land grant colleges were first established to work for.”²¹³

The evaluation found also that few producers document the social, economic, and environmental impacts of their grant in their final reports to SARE. It states: “Economic performance indicators were especially lacking in producers’ final reports,” an unexpected omission since “they are used by the majority of farmers to decide about adoption or rejection of the tested technology...”²¹⁴

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

(14) Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP)

Mission Area, Agency:	Research, Education, and Economics (REE), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)
Legislation:	Food Stamp Act of 1977, Section 25, as amended; Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Section 401, Public Law 104-127; reauthorized by Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Section 4125, Public Law 107-171 (known as 2002 Farm Bill). ^{215 216}
Aim of program:	Community Food Projects are designed to support projects that “meet the food needs of low-income people; increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own needs; and promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues. Other objectives of the program are to: (1) develop linkages between two or more sectors of the food system; (2) support the development of entrepreneurial projects; (3) develop innovative linkages between the for-profit and non-profit food sectors; and (4) encourage long-term planning activities and multi-system, inter-agency collaboration.” ²¹⁷
Type of assistance:	Project grants.
Eligible groups:	Private non-profit entities for projects that benefit low-income people. Applicants “are encouraged to seek and create partnerships among public, private non-profit, and private for-profit organizations or firms.” ²¹⁸
Evaluation of program:	Grantees are required to submit annual progress reports and final summary progress reports. ²¹⁹ The 1996 Farm Bill called for an evaluation of the success of projects funded. CFP staff at the USDA drafted a program evaluation during 2001, but the 2002 Farm Bill deleted the requirement for an evaluation. The draft report was never released. ²²⁰
Assistance given/projects completed:	According to the USDA, a total of 104 grants were made during FY 1996–2001. ²²¹ The nonprofit Community Food Security Coalition, in its report on the impacts of funded projects (see below), states that 166 grants were awarded during FY 1996–2003. Approximately \$4.6 million is available for FY 2004. ²²²

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, explicitly. As specified in the RFP for FY 2001, one of the two eligible groups consists of those who are experienced with “community food work, particularly concerning small and medium-size farms, including the provision of food to people in low-income communities and the development of new markets for low-income communities for agricultural producers.”²²³ (The other eligible applicants are those with job training and business development experience in food-related activities in low-income communities.) The RFA for FY 2004 designates the same eligibility requirement.²²⁴

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

In 2002, a list of grantees for FY 1996–2001 was available on the program’s webpages, alongside the intended purpose of the funds, plus their annual reports. An examination of these documents for this study showed that a little over half of the grants funded projects involving commercial farmers. Eleven out of 19 projects (58 percent) funded in FY 2001 involved farms and farmers in some way, 9 out of 16 (56 percent) did likewise in FY 2000, 13 out of 21 (62 percent) in FY 1999, 9 out of 18 (50 percent) in FY 1998, 10 out of 18 (56 percent) in FY 1997, and 8 out of 13 (62 percent) in FY 1996.²²⁵

At the present time, annual report summaries for FY 2003 (consisting of reports from a portion of the grants awarded during FY 2000–2002) are available on the program’s webpages.²²⁶ Based on a review of these reports, 3 out of 5 projects (60 percent) funded in FY 2000 involved farmers in direct or local marketing activities, with 3 out of 6 (50 percent) in FY 2001, and 14 out of 16 (88 percent) in FY 2002.²²⁷

Among the FY 2000 grantees, none of the 5 project summaries mentioned small farmers, though 1 involved immigrant farmers.

For FY 2001, 1 out of the 6 project summaries mentioned minority farmers, and 1 dealt with organic farming.

For FY 2002, 5 out of the 16 summaries mentioned small or low-income farmers; a further 2 involved beginning (including immigrant) farmers.²²⁸

The USDA’s 2003 progress report states that 84 projects funded by the CFPCGP during FY 1996–2001 “directly benefited small farmers.”²²⁹ (The report cites a handful of examples including higher incomes for pork producers in Missouri, and training for Hispanic farmworkers-turned-farmers in California.)

In summary, many of the Community Food Projects grant awards have clearly focused on or involved small-scale farmers. It appears also that more awards were provided for farming-related projects in FY 2002, compared to prior years. (The rest, as in other years, have gone to youth-training programs or school/community garden initiatives.) Overall, however, there is no collated analysis on the proportion of program funding that goes to support farms, or the size of these farms.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

There is plenty of information in the annual summaries from the grantees on how the funding was used. In addition, the Community Food Security Coalition has published *A Guide to Community Food Projects*, which deals with the effect of the CFPCGP on the recipient’s community, including how the project has benefited farmers.²³⁰ This gives general “success stories” in terms of the impacts of the projects on low-income communities and farmers, but does not comprehensively address whether the program is effective at boosting the farms’ economic well-being and survival.

(15) Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

Mission Area, Agency:	Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Legislation:	Basic program authority is provided by Food and Agriculture Act of 1962, Section 102, Public Law 87-703; reauthorized by Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-127); received permanent authorization in Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Public Law 107-171 (known as 2002 Farm Bill). ^{231 232} The RC&D program began in 1962 as a USDA pilot effort of conservation and development activities in depressed rural areas. ²³³
Aim of program:	To provide “technical assistance to local communities (multi-county areas known as ‘RC&D areas’) to improve their economies, natural resources, and living standards, by coordinating conservation, and rural development assistance” available from USDA and other federal, state, and local sources. ²³⁴ Projects relate to land conservation, water management, environmental enhancement, and community development, and are administered by RC&D Councils (mostly non-profits) comprising local volunteers. ^{235 236}
Type of assistance:	Technical assistance (not grants or loans). ²³⁷
Eligible groups:	“State and local governments and non-profit groups eligible to carry out resource development in multi-jurisdictional areas.” ²³⁸
Evaluation of program:	Periodic inspections and reports are required. ²³⁹ In 2002, in response to a request for information, the administrator of the program stated that internal data collection evaluates the program in terms of projects completed, businesses created, businesses expanded, jobs created, streams improved, wildlife habitat improved, new job skills learned, and number of economically and socially disadvantaged people assisted. ²⁴⁰ A review of the RC&D program, as mandated by the 2002 Farm Bill, is currently underway and due to be completed by the end of 2004, with a report to Congress by June 30, 2005. ²⁴¹
Assistance given/projects completed:	By 2003, 375 RC&D areas were designated. ²⁴² As of September 30, 2001, completed projects totaled 52,241. ²⁴³ In FY 2003, nearly 4,300 projects were completed. ²⁴⁴

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, though implicitly. According to the program administrator (contacted in 2002):

“The focus of RC&D Councils is not necessarily individual small farms, unless that is specifically adopted as a priority in individual councils’ area plans. Each council through local public involvement processes does the setting of priorities.”²⁴⁵

However, it is worth noting that the NRCS states that it is committed to a policy to support small farmers, a policy given legislative authority by the Small or Limited Resource Farmers Initiative (Section 622 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987).²⁴⁶ The policy falls in line with overall USDA policy on small farms, as set out by Departmental Regulation 9700-1. NRCS directive 410, point 410.3(b), states: “It is NRCS policy to: (1) [d]evelop and support financial assistance, technical assistance and outreach programs and initiatives that focus on the special needs of small farms, especially those that enhance stewardship of natural resources and help small farm owners and operators develop alternative enterprises, value-added products, and collaborative marketing efforts.” Point 410.3(b)(3) states that it is NRCS policy to “[c]onsider the special needs of and specific effects on small farms when developing and implementing incentive programs and processes.”²⁴⁷

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

No overall data are available to summarize the proportion of assistance that goes to projects that support small farms. It is clear, however, that some assistance goes to this sector. When contacted in 2002, the program administrator stated:

“I do know a number of RC&Ds are trying to develop new markets for farmers, develop alternative enterprises, and create new jobs and businesses in communities so farmers and farm families have nearby sources of off-farm income.”²⁴⁸

Likewise, the 2000 document, *Meeting the Challenge of A Time to Act*, states: “Several [RC&D] areas are actively assisting small producers with value-added strategies for farm and timber products, and some are providing entrepreneurial development training.²⁴⁹ And the NRCS fact sheet on small farmers states: “Many Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D) are working with local community based organizations to improve market opportunities and support for small farmers. These projects focus on bringing farmers and the greater community together to work toward common objectives.”²⁵⁰

In 2002, a review of RC&D Council websites for this study (40 in all, along with the website of the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils or NARC&DC^c) revealed that small farms were mentioned in only 3 projects. Most notable was the Beginner Farmer project of the South New Hampshire RC&D ²⁵¹ Noted as a “success story,” the project, encompassing over 80 farm families, has provided a forum for the circulation of technical information and education to small-scale beginning farmers in southern New Hampshire. One of the aims of the South New Hampshire RC&D is to “increase small and beginning farmers’ success in agriculture.”²⁵²

The second project was supported by the Cawaco RC&D in Alabama, which has also stated that one of its goals is to assist small farms. There, NRCS worked with the University of Birmingham to help small fish farmers develop “alternative aquaculture.”²⁵³

The third project involving small farms was “Project Grow,” part of the Giziibii (Minnesota) RC&D, which helped seven Ojibwa Nations prepare a grant proposal to fund a small farm project.²⁵⁴ Also, the Pembina Trail RC&D in Minnesota cited projects supporting organic farmers.²⁵⁵

In addition, a booklet compiled by NARC&DC describes 45 “success stories” from past and ongoing projects by local RC&D councils, in terms of the progress made towards implementing Farm Bill 2002 programs in conservation and rural development. In this source, at least 20 projects are related to agriculture in some way (e.g., grazing management, establishing riparian buffers on farmland, marketing poultry litter). However, only 3 cite support for small-scale farmers (including ‘small acreage’ farmers, and underserved and minority producers), and 1 mentions support for a direct farm-marketing effort.²⁵⁶

The information provided in the councils’ websites and by NARC&DC has tended to focus on what has been done to combat resource depletion, a focus emphasized by the mission statements of the different RC&Ds, so it is possible that other projects have helped small farms but did not say so directly.

^c The NARC&DC was established in 1988 to assist and represent the 375 local RC&D Councils.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

No evaluation could be found that addresses this question, either in terms of an overall assessment of what proportion or value of the assistance goes to small farms (see above), or in terms of its effectiveness for the small farms that have received assistance. In a personal communication in 2002, the program's administrator said that the size of farms receiving assistance was not included as part of their internal evaluation data.²⁵⁷ Thus, although it is known that some assistance goes to small farms, it is not known how effective the RC&Ds are in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms.

(16) Rural Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) Program

Mission Area, Office:	Rural Development (RD), Office of Community Development (OCD)
Legislation:	Round I of EZs and ECs was authorized by Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1993, Section 13301 (Public Law 103-66); Round II by Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, Title IX, subtitle F (Public Law 105-34); and Round III by Community Renewal Relief Act of 2000, Title I, subtitle A (Public Law 106-554). ^{258 259}
Aim of program:	To support long-term economic development in economically impoverished zones via the creation of “Empowerment Zones” and “Enterprise Communities.” There is a specific focus on job creation—the legislation allows a general business tax credit for contributions to selected community development corporations to provide employment of, and business opportunities for, low-income individuals who are residents of the operational area of the community. ^{260 261} The rural program seeks to “enhance the quality of local decision making processes and build local leadership and organizational capacity...” ²⁶²
Type of assistance:	Project grants.
Eligible groups:	For the Round I Rural EZs and ECs, census tracts with a maximum population of 30,000 and area up to 1,000 square miles, and experiencing high levels of poverty (20–35 percent), unemployment, and general distress.
Evaluation of program:	Regular progress reports (annual reports, funding reports, benchmark reports) are required by each EZ and EC, and by the Office of Community Development. These are available online, although in 2002, some recent reports (e.g., 2001) were missing. Several evaluations of the program have been carried out, though not in terms of the impacts on small farms. In the late 1990s, the GAO produced several reports evaluating the EZ/EC program, but they do not factor in farming as an enterprise (see below). ^{263 264 265 266}
Assistance given/projects completed:	In Round I, 3 rural EZs and 30 rural ECs were selected ²⁶⁷ and began implementing their 10-year strategic plans in 1995 ²⁶⁸ . In Round II, 5 new rural EZs, and in January 2002 (Round III), 2 new rural EZs, were selected. ²⁶⁹

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

No. According to the administrator of the program (contacted in 2002):

“The EZ/EC program is not designed to fund farmers, although some may benefit indirectly from it. It is geared to helping rural communities, regardless of whether their economies are or are not agriculturally dependent. Farmers cannot directly apply for EZ/EC grants. If your intent is to list USDA-funded programs that directly improve the economic well-being of small and mid-sized farms, this is probably not one of the programs you would include in your compilation.”²⁷⁰

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

Information on how the funds were used (including executive summaries from recent annual reports) is available for 57 EZs and ECs (from Rounds I, II, and III) on the program’s webpages.²⁷¹ Funding for agricultural purposes in the EZ/ECs is unusual—most funds go to projects such as manufacturing, crime prevention, housing, and community outreach. Exceptions include the Alternative Crop Fund for small farmers in the Kentucky Highlands (mentioned in the 1999–2003 annual report summaries); support for

sweet potato farmers in the Mississippi Delta (cited in the 2002 Mid-Delta EZ benchmark summary report); and a project to improve local farms with conservation tillage, geographic information systems, and other means (cited in the 2003 Southwest Georgia United EZ annual report summary).

Information on the successes of the EZs and ECs in the 1990s is included also in *What Works! in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities* (Volume II), an undated report from the USDA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It describes a single agriculture-related project, the Kentucky Highlands EZ (mentioned above): “Tobacco farmers find an alternative crop.”²⁷² (This document reports on about 50 rural EZ/ECs, as well as urban EZ/ECs.) In a subsequent volume of *What Works!*, none of the 37 rural EZ/EC projects profiled mention agriculture-related efforts in a significant way.²⁷³

Thus, while the reports from the program show some funding support for agriculture, they do not mention the farm sizes of the producers receiving assistance, and the exact way that the farmers used the funds is unclear.

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

It is known that a small proportion of EZ/EC financial support goes to agriculture-related activities, and likely that it mainly supports small farms. But, as indicated above, it appears unlikely that EZ/ECs play a large role in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms. According to the program’s administrator, no evaluation has been carried out that addresses this question.

In the program evaluations that have been carried out, farms are rarely mentioned. A GAO report issued in 1997 reviewed selected aspects of the rural EZ/EC program. Specifically, the report examined (1) the federal funding levels of the rural EZ/EC program over the 10-year life of the program, (2) the status of the implementation of the program, (3) the difficulties that the communities have encountered in implementing their plans, and (4) the USDA’s oversight of the program.²⁷⁴ The report did not mention farms or farming. A subsequent GAO report evaluated how the urban and rural EZ program was working, in terms of (1) the progress made by the federal EZs in implementing the program, (2) the steps taken by the two responsible federal agencies—HUD and USDA—to monitor and evaluate the existing zones’ progress, and (3) the status of steps to designate the second group of EZs. Again, the report did not mention farms or farming.²⁷⁵

CONSERVATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

(17) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Mission Area, Agency:	Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS), Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Legislation:	Authorized by Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Public Law 101-624; Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Public Law 104-127. ²⁷⁶ Reauthorized by Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Public Law 107-171.
Aim of program:	To provide assistance to commodity crop farmers who voluntarily convert farmland with high erosion rates and other environmentally sensitive land to permanent vegetative cover. ²⁷⁷ The general aim is to “protect the Nation’s long-term capability to produce food and fiber; to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve water quality, and create a better habitat for wildlife.” ²⁷⁸
Type of assistance:	Direct payments in the form of annual rental payments provided by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) for a 10- to 15-year period. Payments are based on the “relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dry land cash rent or the cash rent equivalent.” ²⁷⁹ The program also provides cost-share assistance to establish approved cover on eligible cropland.
Eligible groups:	Any individual or entity that owns or operates farmland. A producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the close of the sign-up period (with exceptions). ²⁸⁰
Evaluation of program:	No reports are required from the recipients, but they are subject to audit by the USDA Office of Inspector General. ²⁸¹ The FSA produces a wide range of data on the program, such as acres enrolled, rental payments, number of contracts, and number of farms, but does not factor in farm size. ²⁸² The GAO, based on interviews with State Technical Committee members, evaluated the program. The 2002 report assessed how the effectiveness of the CRP (along with other federal farmland conservation programs such as the EQIP and FPP) on the environment varied with farm size (see below). ²⁸³
Assistance given/projects completed:	As of June 2004, 34.8 million acres on 391,000 farms (in all 50 states) were enrolled in the CRP. ²⁸⁴

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, implicitly and in part. Commodity crop producers include small farmers, though the payments are made across farm sizes.

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

The ERS has data addressing this question. In 1999, the ERS estimated that the share of CRP payments (along with those made through the Wetland Reserve Program [WRP]) to small farms (i.e., with annual sales less than \$250,000) was around 55 percent, representing over 80 percent of the acreage in the CRP and WRP.²⁸⁵ The ERS made a more detailed study in 1998 as part of the 1998 Agricultural Resource Management Study (ARMS). The survey assessed all government payments to farms, but singled out the CRP for particular analysis. In 1998, a total of 180,840 small farms received CRP payments, relative to 24,967 large and non-

family farms. For small farms^d, average CRP payment per farm was \$355 (limited resource), \$1,179 (retirement), \$348 (residential/lifestyle), \$491 (farming as main occupation, low sales), and \$781 (farming as main occupation, high sales).²⁸⁶

CRP payments for 'limited resource' and 'retirement' farms formed a significant percentage of their income (49.2 percent and 75.3 percent, respectively). The proportion was also significant for small farms classified as 'residential/lifestyle' (35.1 percent) and 'farming as main occupation, low sales' (17.3 percent),²⁸⁷ but less so for 'farming as main occupation, high sales' small farms (6.1 percent).²⁸⁸ As indicated by the low percentage for 'high sales' small farms, in general, as farm sales increase, the proportion of income from the CRP declines. The share of income from the CRP to large and very large family farms was 3.9 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively.²⁸⁹

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

The data described above suggest that CRP payments are an important source of income for all the small farms that receive payments (with the exception of 'high-sales' small farms), and in terms of proportional acreage, the CRP is more significant to small than to large farms. At the same time, the vast majority of small farms receive no CRP payments. Thus, in an overall sense, the effectiveness of the program in supporting the economic well-being of small farms is unclear. According to a CRP staff person (contacted in 2002), the FSA has no information that evaluates the significance of the program in supporting small farms.²⁹⁰

The 2002 GAO evaluation (see table above) found that 66 percent of State Technical Committee members^e surveyed viewed federal conservation programs as a whole (including the CRP) to be effective in helping small farms^f address environmental problems. This is the same percentage scored for large farms, but less than medium-sized farms (which scored 80 percent).²⁹¹ According to the GAO: "These results may be explained by conservation programs' historical focus on medium-size operations."²⁹² Fifty-nine percent of members felt the CRP specifically was somewhat or very positive for the local rural economy.²⁹³ Though providing useful insights, these findings do not factor in the specific economic effects on small farms, and do not evaluate the program from the farmer's perspective.

^d The ERS classifies small farms (with annual sales less than \$250,000) into five sub-groups based on occupation of the operator and sales class of the farm.

^e State Technical Committees advise NRCS State conservationists on implementing NRCS-administered conservation programs in each state. The committees include representatives from federal, state, local, and tribal governments; agricultural producer, agribusiness, and non-profit groups; and universities.

^f In this report, the GAO has distinguished between small farms (annual sales less than \$100,000), medium-sized farms (annual sales of \$100,000–\$500,000), and large farms (annual sales greater than \$500,000).

(18) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Mission Area, Agency:	Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Legislation:	Authorized by Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Section 334, Public Law 104-127, as amended. ²⁹⁴ Reauthorized by Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Public Law 107-171 (known as 2002 Farm Bill).
Aim of program:	“[T]o provide a single, voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers to address significant natural resource needs.” ²⁹⁵ “The program provides technical, education, and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.” ²⁹⁶ The program is unique in that it focuses on livestock—50 percent of all contracts must be given to livestock producers. ²⁹⁷
Type of assistance:	Direct payments for specific use via cost-sharing or incentives payments, funded by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), for a 5- to 10-year contract. ²⁹⁸
Eligible groups:	“Individual/family farmers and ranchers who face serious threats to soil, water, and related natural resources, or who need assistance with complying with Federal and State environment laws. A participant may be an owner, landlord, operator, or tenant of eligible agricultural lands.” ²⁹⁹
Evaluation of program:	No reports are required, although participants must complete an annual status review. They also may be subject to random audits. ³⁰⁰ There is a summary of accomplishments for each state on the NRCS website. The program has been evaluated by the GAO, which interviewed State Technical Committee members. The focus was the effectiveness of all NRCS programs at addressing environmental concerns, including how effectiveness varied by farm size (see below). ³⁰¹ Also, the ERS has analyzed EQIP data, but by conservation practice, region, and land classification, not by farm size. ³⁰²
Assistance given/projects completed:	In 1998, 655 approved state ‘priority areas’ were funded, out of 1,300 applications received (the 2002 Farm Bill removed the priority area designation). In terms of individual contracts, farmers’ applications for participation in EQIP have exceeded available funding each year. “In the 1997–2000 period, farmers submitted nearly 250,000 applications for EQIP contracts. Of these applications, only about one-third were accepted.... The contracts covered nearly 35 million acres of farmland.” ³⁰³

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, explicitly. According to federal funding guidelines, “limited resource producers, small-scale producers, producers of minority groups, Federally recognized Indian tribal governments, Alaska natives, and Pacific Islanders are encouraged to apply.”³⁰⁴ There is also an added incentive in the 2002 Farm Bill for small farms: “Limited-resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for up to 90 percent cost-sharing” of the expense of structural conservation practices, compared with 75 percent for other farms.³⁰⁵ In addition, the original legislation clearly favored smaller-scale farmers because the maximum cost-share amount was set at \$50,000 per contract, an amount too small to be of much assistance to large farms.

It is noteworthy, however, that the 2002 Farm Bill has shifted the program focus to include larger farms. According to the program administrator (contacted in 2002):

“EQIP is designed to address natural resource problems regardless of farm size... The new farm bill has opened a new window for large operations with the maximum cost share amount being raised from

\$50,000 per contract (the last farm bill) to \$450,000 per individual or entity this farm bill. The new farm bill also allows large animal operations to now participate in the program.”³⁰⁶

Small farm advocates, who argue that CAFOs (i.e., concentrated animal feeding operations)^g have forced small farms out of business, have heavily criticized this move and argue that supporting them by providing funds for environmental clean-ups of livestock waste will only perpetuate this trend.³⁰⁷ The change also appears to contradict a recommendation issued in 1998 by the National Commission on Small Farms, which urged the NRCS to “exercise restraint in approving exceptions” to the previous restriction on CAFOs.³⁰⁸

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

The number and value of contracts is listed for each state in “2001 Program Year State Summaries” currently available on the program’s webpages.³⁰⁹ The names of recipients are not listed. The administrator of the program, whom we contacted in 2002, said that the NRCS has no specific data on the farm size of EQIP recipients.”³¹⁰

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

The “2001 Program Year State Summaries” provide no evaluation of the program’s impacts on small farms, and, the program administrator was not aware of any evaluation of the program.³¹¹ Of note, the 2000 document, *Meeting the Challenge of A Time to Act*, states that during 1999 the NRCS conducted an internal evaluation review of EQIP, and the result was to recommend “further study [of] the impact that program policies may have on small-scale and limited-resource producers.”³¹² However, the program administrator told us that he was not aware of any such study.³¹³

In the 2002 evaluation by the GAO (see table above), 68 percent of State Technical Committee members believed that NRCS programs as a whole (including EQIP, CRP, the Farmland Protection Program or FPP, and others) were moderately to extremely effective in addressing the environmental problems of “small confined animal feeding operations”; 54 percent said they were similarly effective in assisting “large confined animal feeding operations.”³¹⁴ About 78 percent of the members said they felt EQIP was somewhat or very positive for the local rural economy.³¹⁵ (Additional results from the GAO evaluation are reported in the sections on the CRP and the FPP.)

^g Livestock operations with more than 1,000 animal units that are confined for 45 or more days per year.

(19) Farmland Protection Program (FPP)

The Farmland Protection Program was rescinded in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (or 2002 Farm Bill) and replaced by the ‘Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program’ (FRPP). The name change was made to distinguish it from the repealed program and to better describe the types of land to be protected, rather than to shift the program’s purpose.^{316 317} Funding for the new program was upgraded from \$35 million to \$1 billion.³¹⁸ Information on administrative, eligibility, and other changes in the FRPP are provided in the ‘Final Rule’ issued in May 2003³¹⁹ and the RFA for FY 2004³²⁰, and available from the program’s webpages³²¹.

(Information in the table below and the following section refers specifically to the FPP prior to 2003.)

Mission Area, Agency:	Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Legislation:	Authorized by Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Section 388 (Public Law 104-127). ³²²
Aim of program:	“To purchase conservation easements or other interests on lands to limit conversion to non-agricultural uses of farmland with prime, unique, or other productive soils.” ³²³ “The goal is to protect between 170,000 and 340,000 acres of farmland.” ³²⁴
Type of assistance:	Direct payments for specified use. ³²⁵ The program provides matching funds (up to 50 percent) for the purchase price of conservation easements.
Eligible groups:	Any local or State agency, county or groups of counties, municipality, town or township, soil and water conservation district, or Indian tribe or tribal organization, that has productive farmland and is part of (or has a pending offer for) a protection program that protects topsoil by limiting conversion to non-agricultural uses of land. ³²⁶ Program criteria stipulate that the farmland to be protected must be threatened by development, yet located near agricultural infrastructure and markets to ensure future viability.
Evaluation of program:	“Annual reports on the status of the easements acquired will be prepared by NRCS.” ³²⁷ Summary reports for 18 states for 2001, and 15 states for 2002, are available on the program’s webpages (see below). ³²⁸ The ERS has done some analysis of the FPP, but most of its work on farmland protection evaluates the success of the state-run programs, and does not factor in small farms as such. ³²⁹ In recent years the GAO has also assessed the program. In one study the focus was on conservation, not small farm survival. ³³⁰ In another, as for the CRP and EQIP, the GAO interviewed State Technical Committee members and focused on the effectiveness of NRCS programs in addressing environmental concerns. This included how effectiveness varies by farm size (for all NRCS programs together, including EQIP, CRP, and others) and how the program affects the rural economy (for NRCS programs separately). ³³¹
Assistance given/projects completed:	In FY 2001, USDA entered into cooperative agreements with over 52 entities to protect over 34,000 acres of farmland. ³³² Through 2002, the program has protected over 170,000 acres on 890 farms in 35 states. ^{333 334}

Summary of information obtained (and missing) on key questions:

(1) Does the program intend to support small farms?

Yes, though implicitly. According to the RFP for FY 2002, small farms are in no way prioritized over any other farms.³³⁵ However, it has been pointed out that farms that are threatened by urban development tend to be close to urban areas—and farms in metropolitan areas tend to be smaller.^{336 337}

(2) Does the program in actual fact support small farms?

The state summaries for the FPP for 2001 (18 total) and 2002 (15 total) list the accomplishments of the state programs by county, and in terms of acres of protected land and numbers of farms enrolled.³³⁸ Farms with small acreage are featured as examples in several states (e.g., Delaware, Maryland, New York, and North Carolina), as are large-acreage ranches (e.g., a 10,000-acre ranch in Colorado). However, no list of recipients of FPP grants could be located, so even a general evaluation of whether the program funds mainly serve small versus large farms is not possible. The program manager of the FPP, whom we contacted in 2002, indicated there were no such data available.³³⁹

(3) How effective is the program in supporting the economic well-being and survival of small farms?

Research by the ERS shows that the federal FPP provides only a tiny proportion (around 3 percent) of the funding of farmland conservation easements. A 2001 report states: “[C]urrent efforts [of the FPP] are only a small fraction of the \$130 billion cost of easements to protect all urban-influenced cropland.”³⁴⁰ According to a report issued in 2000 by the GAO:

“Officials we spoke with during our site visits described federal programs for preserving farmland and open space as limited in their usefulness because of funding constraints. While some states have used the federal funding to leverage other public and private funds, the federal funding is insufficient to satisfy the demand. In 1996, the Congress authorized \$35 million for the Farmland Protection Program for 6 years, but demand for the funds was so high that they were all obligated by the third year.”³⁴¹

This situation will change given the steep increase in funding given to the program in the 2002 Farm Bill, with implications for the protection of small farms. In another recent GAO study (see table above), 53 percent of State Technical Committee members said they felt the FPP was somewhat or very positive for the local rural economy.³⁴² (The results from the rest of the GAO evaluation are reported in the prior sections on the CRP and EQIP).

The program administrator (contacted in 2002) was not aware of any specific evaluation on the impacts of the FPP on small farms.³⁴³ Thus, although it is known that some assistance goes to small farms, it is not known how effective the FPP is in supporting their economic well-being and survival.

Appendix A: Sample Email Correspondence Sent to Program Administrator

Dear [name]:

I am writing to you about a short paper I am in the process of preparing. In the paper, I am attempting to bring together information on many of the USDA-funded programs intended (amongst other things) to improve the economic well-being of small farms. The paper is being written on an independent, voluntary basis in association with Kate Clancy, Managing Director of the Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy at Winrock International.

Thus far I have brought together a list of the programs of interest, which include [program name], a program that I believe you administer. I was thus hoping you could spare a moment to address a question I have about this program.

At the moment I am simply trying to gather together all the publicly available information on the programs. I have obtained information about the program from your website. However, I was wondering whether any more detailed information about the recipients of [program name] grants is available (i.e., whether they are small or large farms), or whether there is any material that has evaluated the grants in terms of helping small farms. If any such information is available in the public domain, it would be very helpful to me if you could let me know where I could find it. (Note: I am not asking for information that would need to be cleared by the FOIA).

Your response would be very much appreciated.

Many thanks--

Sincerely,

Corinna Hawkes

Appendix B: List of Program Administrators and Staff Persons Contacted

USDA agency/office	Program	Person contacted	Position	Reply received
Rural Business– Cooperative Service	All programs (#2,4,5,6,8, and 9)	John Rosso	Administrator, Rural Business–Cooperative Service	Yes
	IRP, RBEG, RBOG	William E. (Bill) Hagy	Deputy Administrator, Business Programs	Yes
Office of Community Development	Rural EZ/EC	Luis Luna	Deputy Administrator, Office of Community Development	Yes
Office of Outreach	OASDFR	--*	--	--
Farm Service Agency	Loans	Ann Smith	Staff person	Yes
	CRP	John Carter	Staff person, Conservation and Environmental Programs Division	Yes
Agricultural Marketing Service	FSMIP	Janise Zygmont	Staff officer, FSMIP	Yes
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service	CFPCGP	Liz Tuckermanty	Program Administrator	Yes
	SARE	Kim Kroll	Associate Director	Yes
	PMAP	Monte Johnson	Program Administrator	Yes
	IFAFS	Deborah Sheely	Director of Integrated Programs, Competitive Programs Unit	Yes
	SFP	Denis Ebodaghe	National Program Leader	Yes
Natural Resources Conservation Service	RC&D	Joan Comanor	Director, Resource Conservation and Community Development Division	Yes
	EQIP	Edward Brzostek	Program Administrator	Yes
	FPP	Denise Coleman	Program Manager	Yes

*Despite several phone calls to the office and a review of the webpages, it could not be determined who was in charge of this program. Consequently, no e-mail message was sent.

Appendix C: List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Table 1: USDA Mission Areas, Agencies, and Divisions

AMS	Agricultural Marketing Service
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
CCC	Commodity Credit Corporation
CSREES	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
ERS	Economic Research Service
FFAS	Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
FSA	Farm Service Agency
MRP	Marketing and Regulatory Programs
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRE	Natural Resources and Environment
OCD	Office of Community Development
RBS	Rural Business–Cooperative Service
RD	Rural Development
REE	Research, Education, and Economics
TM	Transportation and Marketing

Table 2: USDA Programs

ATTRA	Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas
CFPCGP	Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
EZ/EC	Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Program
FO	Direct Farm Ownership Loans
FPP	Farmland Protection Program
FRPP	Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program
FSMIP	Federal–State Marketing Improvement Program
GO	Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loans
IFAFS	Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems
IRP	Intermediary Relending Program
NRI	National Research Initiative
OASDFR	Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers
OG	Guaranteed Farm Operating Loans
OL	Direct Farm Operating Loans
PMAP	Pest Management Alternatives Program
RBEG	Rural Business Enterprise Grants
RBOG	Rural Business Opportunity Grants
RC&D	Resource Conservation and Development
RCDG	Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program
SARE	Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program
SFP	Small Farm Program

VADG	Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grant Program
VAPG	Value-Added Producer Grant Program
WRP	Wetlands Reserve Program

Table 3: Other Terms

ARMS	Agricultural Resource Management Study
CAFO	concentrated animal feeding operation
CRA	Center for Rural Affairs
CFDA	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
GAO	U.S. General Accounting Office ^h
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FQPA	Food Quality Protection Act
FY	fiscal year
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
NCAT	National Center for Appropriate Technology
NMSU	New Mexico State University
PDP	Professional Development Program (SARE grants)
R&E	Research and Education (SARE grants)
RFA	Request for Applications
RFP	Request for Proposals
SDA	Socially Disadvantaged

^h The GAO's legal name was changed to the Government Accountability Office, effective July 7, 2004.

References and Endnotes

Some of the websites provided below were first viewed in 2002. For all websites, those URLs that are no longer active in August 2004 are noted.

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- ³ *Ibid.*, page v.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, page 7.
- ⁵ U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), June 2001, *Farm Programs: Information on Recipients of Federal Payments* (Washington, DC), GAO-01-606, page 2, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d01606.pdf> (viewed Aug. 4, 2004).
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- ⁷ Margaret Krome (editor), January 2001, *Building Better Rural Places: Federal Programs for Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry, Conservation and Community Development* (Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture; East Troy, WI: Michael Fields Agricultural Institute), available from Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, <http://www.attra.org/guide/> (viewed Aug. 4, 2004).
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- ¹⁰ Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy at Winrock International, May 2001, *Making Changes: Turning Local Visions into National Solutions: Agricultural and Rural Development Policy Recommendations from the Agriculture Policy Project* (Arlington, VA), <http://www.winrock.org/wallacecenter/makingchanges.pdf> (viewed Aug. 4, 2004).
- ¹¹ Kim Leval, Senior Federal Agriculture Policy Analyst, Center for Rural Affairs, Personal communication (July 8, 2004). [For more information, contact Jon Bailey, Center for Rural Affairs, email jonb@crfa.org, or Kim Leval, email kimleval@qwest.net.]
- ¹² “Direct Farm Ownership and Operating Loans,” pages 54–55 (<http://www.attra.org/guide/dfool.htm>) and “Guaranteed Farm Ownership and Operating Loans,” pages 56–57 (<http://www.attra.org/guide/gfool.htm>) in *Building Better Rural Places* (previously cited in reference #7).
- ¹³ “Direct Farm Ownership and Operating Loans,” pages 54–55 (<http://www.attra.org/guide/dfool.htm>) in *Building Better Rural Places* (previously cited in reference #7).
- ¹⁴ “Guaranteed Farm Ownership and Operating Loans,” pages 56–57 (<http://www.attra.org/guide/gfool.htm>) in *Building Better Rural Places* (previously cited in reference #7).
- ¹⁵ “Direct Farm Ownership and Operating Loans,” *Building Better Rural Places* (previously cited in reference #12).
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), January 2004, “10.406, Farm Operating Loans,” *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* (Washington, DC), <http://www.cfda.gov> (viewed Aug. 4, 2004). [Note: The following source states that the numbers cited for the Direct Operating (OL) and Guaranteed Operating (OG) loans made in FY 2001 correspond instead to FY 2000 loan totals: USDA, January

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²⁴ Steve Koenig and Charles Dodson, November 1999, previously cited in reference #22.

²⁵ “Intermediary Relending Loan Program (IRP),” pages 58–59 (<http://www.attra.org/guide/irp.htm>) in *Building Better Rural Places* (previously cited in reference #7).

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