

GAO



June 1989

Food and Agriculture

Bibliography of GAO Documents January 1985 - December 1988

GAO-89-139163

Foreword

Food, agriculture, and nutrition are important issues in public policy decisionmaking. Decreasing federal government's regulatory role, increasing food prices, balancing interactive domestic and foreign agricultural and other economic systems—all represent important national concerns.

This bibliography includes information on U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) documents released between January 1985 and December 1988 that directly or indirectly relate to food, agriculture and/or nutrition. Two previous GAO food bibliographies (GAO/RCED-85-82, December 1984 and GAO/RCED-81-73, April 1981) included documents released between January 1981 thru December 1984, and January 1977 thru December 1980, respectively. Although the Resources Community, and Economic Development Division (RCED) is GAO's lead division for reviews of food, agriculture, and nutrition, a broad interrelationship exists between the agricultural area and other areas of interest addressed by GAO such as environment, health, energy, transportation, and natural resources. This bibliography, therefore, includes information on documents issued by other GAO divisions and offices that have linkages to food, agriculture, and nutrition issues.

This bibliography should be useful for general information and research purposes and for understanding issues in the agricultural area that are being addressed by GAO. Questions regarding its contents should be directed to Sandra V. Hill, RCED, 3rd Floor Mezzanine, 300 12th Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20250, (202) 475-4880. Readers interested in ordering individual documents in the agriculture or other areas, or in requesting bibliographic searches on a specific topic, should call GAO Document Handling and Information Service (202) 275-6241. The cards included in this book also may be used to order documents.

John W. Harman, Director
Food and Agriculture Issues
Resources, Community, and
Economic Development Division

Introduction

This Food bibliography contains citations and abstracts of relevant documents released by GAO from January 1985 through December 1988. It updates the previous bibliography (GAO/RCED-85-82), which included documents released from January 1981 through December 1984. Included are references to reports, speeches, testimonies, and other GAO documents. This bibliography can be used for a variety of purposes, including in-depth research into a specific topic, searching for a particular document, maintaining current awareness, and general information.

How To Use The Bibliography

The bibliography is organized into two sections: an INDEX SECTION (yellow pages) and a CITATION SECTION (white pages).

The INDEX SECTION is the key for locating references to related documents cited in this bibliography. The section is comprised of four separate indexes that classify information according to:

Subject

Agency or organization

(Includes both Federal agencies and nongovernmental corporate bodies)

Congressional affiliation

(Includes entries under relevant congressional committees and individual Representatives and Senators)

Document number

(Includes entries arranged by report number and by B-number and date)

Reference from the index entries to the corresponding citations is provided by a unique six-digit accession number assigned to each citation. This accession number should also be used to request copies of the actual document described in the citation.

A sample entry is shown at the beginning of each index and at the beginning of the Citation Section.

The CITATION SECTION consists of brief descriptions of the documents and often includes an informative abstract. Some or all of the following information is in each citation, as appropriate:

- **Title/Subtitle**
- **Type, date, and pagination**
- **Author or witness**
- **GAO issue areas**
- **Agencies or organizations concerned**
- **Congressional Committees, Members of Congress, or agencies to whom the document is specifically relevant**
- **Law and/or related statutory or regulatory authority on which the document is based**
- **GAO contact**

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Citation Section

Sample Entry

Accession Number — 131105

Title/Subtitle (Testimony Titles Are Bracketed) — **Vehicle Emissions: EPA Program To Assist Leaded-Gasoline Producers Needs Prompt Improvement.** Document Date
RCED-86-182; B-223554. August 6, 1986.

Document Report Number — Released September 24, 1986. 26 pp. plus 1 appendix (3 pp.). *Report to Rep.* Pagination

Type of Document — John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-80FS, March 12, 1986, Accession Number 129585. Addressee

Author

GAO Issue Area — Issue Area: Environment: Adequacy of Federal and State Efforts To Regulate Toxic Air Pollutants (6805). Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. GAO Contact

Budget Function (Code Numbers in Parentheses) — Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0). Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency. Agency/Organization Concerned

Congressional Relevance

Legislative Authority — Authority: Clean Air Act. Administrative Procedure Act. 50 Fed. Reg. 13116. 45 Fed. Reg. 59812. P.L. 99-198.

Abstract — Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed: (1) certain Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) management controls over its Lead Rights Banking Program; and (2) the program's legal basis.

Findings/Conclusions — Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that EPA: (1) controls the program primarily through its reviews of participants' reports; (2) has not established a requirement to verify the reported data; (3) received erroneous information

126027

[Government-Owned Surplus Dairy Products Held in Inventory]. RCED-85-43; B-211447. January 7, 1985.

Released January 14, 1985. 2 pp. plus 2 enclosures (11 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Mary Rose Oakar; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-84-72, December 20, 1983, Accession Number 123144; RCED-85-132, September 18, 1985, Accession Number 127937; and RCED-86-11, December 5, 1985, Accession Number 128619.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture (6500).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Mary Rose Oakar.

Authority: Dairy Production Stabilization Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-180).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO updated information contained in an earlier report concerning the surplus of government-owned dairy products held in inventory. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) dairy inventory decreased from about 3 billion pounds on September 23, 1983, to about 2.6 billion pounds on September 21, 1984; (2) disposition of dairy products through sales and food programs increased by about 8 percent during fiscal year 1984, while USDA purchases decreased by about 31 percent; (3) although the dairy inventory has decreased, USDA now has a larger quantity of older dairy products on hand; and (4) USDA claims that spoilage is minimal, but the condition of the products is uncertain because USDA has not reinspected many of the stored commodities since they were purchased.

126136

Potential Impacts of Tighter Forest Service Log Export Restrictions. RCED-85-17; B-215907. January 28, 1985.

Released January 31, 1985. 23 pp. plus 5 appendices (11 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Sen. James A. McClure, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Improving the Efficiency, Economy, and

Cost-Effectiveness of Management of U.S. Forests (6512).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Forest Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations; *Sen.* James A. McClure; *Sen.* Mark O. Hatfield.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1968 (82 Stat. 966). Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970 (84 Stat. 1817). Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 1974 (P.L. 93-120). 36 C.F.R. 223.10. H.R. 639 (97th Cong.). H.R. 7255 (96th Cong.). H. Rept. 96-1147. S. Rept. 98-184.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO: (1) reviewed the potential impacts of tighter Forest Service log export restrictions in the Western United States; and (2) determined the volume and potential impacts of banning third-party substitution.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, according to the Service, the acquisition of national forest timber from authorized purchasers by firms which were ineligible for direct timber purchases approximated 2 percent of all national forest timber harvested in the western United States. GAO also found that, if the Service banned third-party substitution: (1) some companies could acquire national forest timber at lower prices because of decreased demand and competition, and the lower prices would result in less government revenues; and (2) the ban could disrupt traditional log markets and business practices and force some companies to change their operations or go out of business. In addition GAO found that: (1) the Service reported that it could not enforce a ban on this practice without additional authority and staff; and (2) about 100 million board feet of national forest timber is used as replacement for private timber exported annually, but a GAO review of timber sales contract files for three national forests in Idaho did not disclose that any timber substitution occurred in those forests.

126211

Clearer EPA Superfund Program Policies Should Improve Cleanup Efforts. RCED-85-54; B-217374.

February 6, 1985.

Released February 13, 1985. 17 pp.

Report to Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce,

Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to RCED-86-204, August 15, 1986, Accession Number 131178.

Issue Area: Environment: Assessing EPA's Initial Efforts To Address Problems Posed by Past Hazardous Waste Disposal Practices (6801).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works; *Rep.* James J. Florio.

Authority: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980. Water Pollution Control Act. Executive Order 12316.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined the types of removal actions taken by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at hazardous waste sites under its Superfund program and whether existing legislation allows for more comprehensive cleanup of contamination by the removal program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) from December 1980 to February 1984, EPA finished immediate removal actions at 165 hazardous waste sites, spending an average of about \$302,000 per action; (2) the types and extent of immediate removal actions taken varied in terms of cost, type of response required, and degree of EPA contribution to long-term site cleanup; (3) actions ranged from complete removal of hazardous substances from non-priority sites to stabilization of hazards at priority sites for future remedial action; and (4) EPA generally addressed subsurface contamination problems under the remedial program because their solution required extensive study, but surface hazards were often amenable to complete cleanup. GAO also found that: (1) current EPA policy on immediate removals at priority sites has often led to the containment or stabilization of surface waste problems, such as leaking containers, but threats to the public and the environment and

increased overall cleanup costs continue; and (2) EPA chose to limit the scope of its removal actions in order to ensure that funds would be available for the most pressing hazardous waste problems posed at priority sites.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, EPA, should include in the revisions to the national contingency plan a requirement that removal actions eliminate surface hazardous substances to the extent possible to reduce recurring threats, avoid repeated actions, minimize Superfund expenditures, and contribute to the permanent remedy of national priority list hazardous waste sites.

126219

Department of Agriculture and Producer Costs To Operate the Tobacco Program. RCED-85-30; B-213761. February 8, 1985. 24 pp. plus 3 appendices (4 pp.). *Report to Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.* Refer to RCED-83-132, September 18, 1985, Accession Number 127937; and RCED-85-167, September 18, 1985, Accession Number 128030.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Enhancing the Effectiveness of CCC Assistance to Commodities Other Than Wheat and Feed Grains (6504).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Tobacco and Peanuts Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Production, Marketing, and Stabilization of Prices Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations; *Sen.*

Thomas F. Eagleton; *Sen.* Mark O. Hatfield.

Authority: Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1281 et seq.). Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). NoNet Cost Tobacco Program Act of 1982 (7 U.S.C. 1445 et seq.). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq.). Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983. P.L. 98-59. P.L. 98-180.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on: (1) whether the tobacco program operated at no net cost to the government; (2) whether assessments against tobacco producers were sufficient to meet possible losses in stored tobacco purchased with Department of Agriculture (USDA) loans; (3) the extent to which active tobacco farmers have purchased allotments or quotas and whether leasing has diminished; (4) alleged voting irregularities in a 1982 referendum in North Carolina that approved a tobacco price-support program; and (5) the actual value of tobacco stored by producer associations and the percentage of that tobacco expected to deteriorate over the next 5 years.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) because the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) did not recover full interest costs on loans to tobacco producer associations, the tobacco price-support program operated at a loss to the government; (2) the No Net Cost Tobacco Program Act did not require CCC to change its procedures for charging interest; (3) the 1982 crop assessment against producer associations was apparently adequate to cover crop year 1982 program costs; (4) if CCC changes its procedures for charging interest, crop assessments would have to increase; (5) quotas totalling between 1 and 2 percent of 1983 tobacco marketing quotas were sold; and (6) leasing of marketing quotas decreased in crop year 1983. In addition, GAO also found that: (1) a USDA investigation into a tobacco referendum in five North Carolina counties disclosed that some voters in the referendum were ineligible, but the total number of ineligible voters was not large enough to affect the results of the referendum; (2) as of December 31, 1983, producer associations stored about 734 million pounds of flue-cured tobacco, valued at about \$1.7 billion, and about 189 million pounds of burley tobacco, valued at \$544 million, under the USDA price-support program; and (3) the extent to which stored tobacco may deteriorate could not be determined.

Recommendation To Congress: If Congress wishes to ensure that no costs

to the taxpayer will result from CCC interest computation practices for the tobacco program, the No Net Cost Tobacco Program Act of 1982 should be amended to require that the amount of payments on principal and interest that the tobacco producer associations pay CCC on tobacco price-support loans must equal the amount of payments on principal and interest that CCC pays the Treasury for borrowed funds.

126252

Information on Delinquent Borrowers in Farmers Home Administration Major Farmer Loan Programs. RCED-85-71; B-217648. February 6, 1985. 2 pp. plus 3 enclosures (34 pp.). *Report to Sen. Edward Zorinsky, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.* Refer to RCED-87-13BR, November 12, 1986, Accession Number 131584; RCED-86-57BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128977; and RCED-87-79BR, March 11, 1987, Accession Number 132473.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Appropriateness of FmHA Credit Programs and Their Effectiveness in Assisting Farm Financial Needs (6510).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen.* Edward Zorinsky.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on delinquent Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) borrowers as part of an ongoing review of FmHA farm property management.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO provided an oral briefing on delinquent borrowers in November 1984. This report contains data on the status of the delinquent borrowers for the 5-year loan programs as of June 30, 1984. GAO also provided information showing historical FmHA data on delinquent borrowers for the five farmer loan programs covering the period from 1975 through 1984. GAO collected these data as part of the ongoing farmer loan program review.

26383

Participants Are Satisfied With Mandatory Meal Programs in HUD Projects. RCED-85-67; B-217752.

March 5, 1985. 8 pp. plus 6 appendices (36 pp.). *Report to Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan; Sen. Donald W. Riegle; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.*

Area: Housing and Community Development: Other Issue Area Work (3791).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen. Donald W. Riegle; Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan.*

Authority: Housing Act of 1959.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined mandatory meal programs in Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing projects which serve the elderly and the handicapped to determine: (1) how many projects provide meal services; (2) how many require mandatory participation; (3) whether the HUD mandatory meal program has worked well; (4) whether complaints can best be resolved through legislation or regulation; and (5) whether projects could economically run a voluntary meal program and, if so, what the minimum size would be.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that 512 of the 930 projects surveyed had meal services, but only 98 required resident participation as a condition of occupancy. GAO also found that managers of projects that have mandatory meal programs believe that mandatory participation: (1) ensures that their elderly residents receive nutritional benefits and have an opportunity to socialize; (2) alerts management to possible problems; and (3) was the only cost-effective way to operate a program that relies almost entirely on revenue from meal purchases. GAO found that: (1) projects that operate voluntary meal programs generally experience more than a 10-percent variation in participation, and mandatory meal program managers generally believe that their budgets could not cover the loss that would result from such inconsistent participation; and (2) although about 70 percent of the mandatory meal program participants reported that they were satisfied with their program, some participants were dissatisfied with

certain aspects of the program, such as the cost or the taste of the meals, and others preferred to eat alone. In addition, GAO found that, since most of the problems which it identified were matters of residents' personal preferences, legislative or regulatory action was not warranted.

126412

Information on the Department of Agriculture's Commodity Exchange Contracts for the 1983 Payment-In-Kind Program. RCED-85-62; B-213707. March 11, 1985. 3 pp. plus 3 appendices (26 pp.). *Report to Rep. Glenn L. English, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.* Refer to RCED-84-137, September 25, 1984, Accession Number 125653.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of the PIK Program in Achieving Commodity Credit Corporation Objectives (6501).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; Rep. Glenn L. English.*

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) actions in providing commodities to producers participating in the 1983 Payment-in-Kind (PIK) Program by exchanges of commodities between the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and the grain industry.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the PIK Program limited the production of five commodities by reducing the number of acres planted in those crops. As a condition of participation, producers agreed to take prescribed portions of acreage out of production and to receive, as compensation, a portion of the commodity they otherwise would have planted and harvested. Payments could be made either from the CCC inventory or producer-owned commodities used as collateral for previous CCC loans. In order to meet its payment obligations to producers, USDA

needed to relocate some commodities to make them locally available to the producers. Therefore, USDA exchanged CCC-owned commodities held at warehouses in surplus counties with privately owned commodities held at warehouses in deficit counties. This exchange was conducted through a series of 10 public bid invitations which resulted in 1,259 contract awards to 237 contractors to exchange CCC-owned grain with corresponding contractor-owned commodities. The contracts called for USDA to provide about 433.7 million bushels of grain to contractors and for the contractors to provide about 377.2 million bushels to USDA for use in the PIK Program. The exchanges cost CCC approximately \$191.6 million.

126469

The GAO Review, Volume 20, Issue 1, Winter 1985. 1985. 56 pp. Harry S. Havens, Editor; Carol A. Codori, Assistant Editor. Citations to individual articles appear elsewhere in the April 1985 issue of GAO Documents.

Contact: Office of the Comptroller General.

Abstract: This quarterly publication is prepared primarily for GAO staff use. Articles in this issue cover such topics as: (1) program evaluation; (2) taxing hazardous waste; (3) the potential for a federal consolidated financial system; (4) commercializing Landsat and weather satellites; (5) measuring the government's borrowing costs; (6) the GAO resident instructor program; (7) the duties of the Office of the General Counsel; and (8) legislative developments.

126481

[The Department of Agriculture's Animal Welfare Program]. March 8, 1985. 9 pp. *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.*

Authority: Animal Welfare Act of 1970 (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) activities under the 1970 Animal Welfare Act, which authorizes a program that is designed to ensure the humane care and treatment of certain warm-blooded animals. GAO noted that USDA has not established criteria for the amount and type of training needed by animal welfare inspectors. Further, neither the act nor USDA have specified a required inspection frequency. The average inspection frequency in the six states GAO visited varied greatly. If Congress decides to continue funding the program, GAO believes it should require USDA to make an overall assessment of the program. The assessment should include: (1) a review of the program's results achieved to date; (2) development of criteria for the number of inspections needed to ensure compliance and for the amount and type of training needed by inspectors; and (3) a review of the adequacy of program guidance given to inspectors.

126574

Federal Insurance Program for Grain Warehouse Depositors--Issues and Information. RCED-85-39; B-217659. March 1, 1985.

Released April 1, 1985. 13 pp. plus 8 appendices (32 pp.). *Report to Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: More Effective Operation of U.S. Food/Fiber Markets (6507).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza.*

Authority: Truth in Lending Act.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO studied issues relating to the possible establishment of a federal deposit insurance program for grain warehouses comparable to that operated for banks by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), including the costs and problems attendant to such a program, existing state and private insurance programs for grain deposits,

and existing federal regulatory programs for warehouses.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, among those who would be most affected by a similar program for the grain industry, there is limited support for such a program. GAO found that those individuals were concerned with: (1) the potentially high cost of such a program; (2) the expansion of regulatory requirements that such a program would entail; (3) uncertainty about the extent of coverage; (4) the potential that such a program would encourage unscrupulous practices in the industry; (5) the potential impact of such a program on existing state and private insurance programs; (6) whether or not such a program would be mandatory; (7) coverage limitations; (8) methods that would be used to finance and administer such a program; and (9) whether such a program would be justified. GAO estimated that, depending on program features, a deposit insurance program might cost from \$41 million to \$71 million annually, which would equate to from 0.5 to 0.7 cent per bushel of grain marketed. In addition, GAO found that: (1) the only provisions for financial compensation for depositors were several state indemnity funds, private insurance policies and, in 29 states, state bonding requirements for grain warehouses and merchandisers; (2) state bonding requirements and indemnity funds differed significantly between states; and (3) very little private insurance was available to grain depositors.

126661

Report on the Implementation of the Farm Credit Act Amendments of 1980. GGD-85-32; B-204456. April 8, 1985. 43 pp. plus 5 appendices (24 pp.). *Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.* Refer to GGD-83-26, May 7, 1983, Accession Number 120737.

Issue Area: Financial Services and Markets: Other Issue Area Work (4591).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Other General Government (806.0).

Organization Concerned: Farm Credit Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Farm Credit Act of 1971 (P.L. 92-181; 85 Stat. 583). Farm Credit Act Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-592; 94 Stat. 3437). P.L. 93-32.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the legislative objectives of the Farm Credit Act Amendments of 1980, including: (1) increasing agricultural cooperatives' exports financed by the Farm Credit

System; (2) increasing non-System financial institutions' availability of funds; (3) helping young, beginning, or small farmers; and (4) maintaining utility cooperatives' eligibility to borrow from the System.

Findings/Conclusions: The System has provided over \$2 billion in agricultural export financing since lending began in April 1982, and cooperatives have been able to sell in new markets. While agricultural exports of U.S. products declined between 1982 and 1983, the market share of agricultural cooperatives was maintained. However, GAO could not obtain any data on increased profitability for farmers of exporting cooperatives. In addition, the changed eligibility requirements did not result in greater utilization of discounting services offered by the System, and the amount of loans discounted annually has remained constant. Many banks did not need additional funds for agricultural loans because of increased bank liquidity and weak farm loan demand. Furthermore, some banks were not aware of the program, and others viewed the System as a competitor. GAO found that the System has not increased credit to young, beginning, or small farmers or ranchers since the passage of the amendments. Neither the amendments nor the legislative history provide direction on specific forms of financial assistance Congress intended the System to provide this group of borrowers. The full impact of the change in eligibility requirements remains unclear, but GAO found that some rural electric utility cooperatives are now eligible to borrow from the System due to the change.

126718

[General Accounting Office's Overview of the Food Stamp Program]. April 17, 1985. 8 pp. plus 1 attachment (1 p.). *Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.*

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee.*

Authority: Deficit Reduction Act of 198

Abstract: GAO discussed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Stamp Program's integrity and administration. Program errors continue to cause about \$1 billion in overpayments to households that have been declared ineligible or that have received more than they are entitled to. Congress made changes in the program to encourage and facilitate program improvement, although some concerns still remain, including: (1) tightening the food stamp sanction system by changing the error-rate target; (2) the need to automate wage matching and provide for better follow-up; (3) efforts to collect food stamp overpayments; (4) monthly reporting by food stamp households; and (5) reducing losses in the physical delivery of program benefits. GAO found that: (1) redefining a separate household as a single household would help reduce program abuse; (2) individualized income deductions would simplify benefit determinations; and (3) providing states with specified amounts of money could enable them to redesign and simplify program procedures to suit particular needs. GAO found that: (1) the program's standardized benefits equaled food costs only where a household's composition matched the model household; (2) an individualized benefit system could better meet the nutritional needs of participating households; and (3) USDA and other agencies should propose consistent requirements for interrelationships with other domestic food assistance programs.

126737

An Overview of the Emergency Situation in Ethiopia. NSIAD-85-70; B-217978. April 12, 1985. 5 pp. Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-25, March 4, 1986, Accession Number 129221.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591); Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; United Nations; Ethiopia.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the emergency situation in Ethiopia as part of an

overall review of U.S. famine relief to Africa.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that firm statistics concerning the number of people at risk of starvation were difficult to establish and that the number could double if the next harvest failed. GAO found that, although improvements had been made in increasing the port capacity for scheduling and offloading operations, the increased capacity might not offset difficulties in moving food inland from the ports. GAO also found that, while there was plenty of food to distribute, there was a shortage of distribution vehicles due to inoperability and availability. Despite the improvements, the transportation situation needs more and continued attention. GAO noted that the United Nations Assistant Secretary General for relief operations improved donor coordination and fulfilled an important role as the main interface with the host government. GAO found that there were long delays in the delivery of U.S. food due to the establishment of appropriate controls to ensure that the food would get to the intended recipients. GAO noted that the situation in Ethiopia presented some special difficulties for U.S. officials charged with program oversight because of the size of the monitoring task and travel constraints within the host country.

126750

Quality Control Error Rates for the Food Stamp Program. RCED-85-98; B-217883. April 12, 1985. 8 pp. plus 6 appendices (29 pp.). Report to Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to Testimony, April 16, 1986, Accession Number 129643; RCED-86-195, September 19, 1986, Accession Number 131045; HRD-86-117BR, August 29, 1986, Accession Number 131120; RCED-87-4, October 30, 1986, Accession Number 131473; and RCED-88-12, October 22, 1987, Accession Number 134233.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Stamp Loss Measurement, Recovery, and Deterrence (6516).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information for use in the reauthorization of the Food Stamp Program and focused on the extent of the errors that states made when determining households' eligibility and benefit levels.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and states developed error rates for food stamp overissuances, underissuances, and improper denials or terminations; (2) FNS used the error rates as a basis for assessing financial penalties against states with high overissue rates and for providing incentive funding for states with underissue rates; and (3) based state sanctions on the official error rate developed during state quality control processes, which could amount to \$6,697,300. GAO found that: (1) the nationwide overissuance rate has declined and the underissuance and denials or termination rates have remained stable; and (2) these trends occurred for both the official and the state-reported error rates.

126760

Homelessness: A Complex Problem and the Federal Response. HRD-85-40; B-217620. April 9, 1985.

Released April 22, 1985. 58 pp. plus 4 appendices (30 pp.). Report to Rep. Ted S. Weiss, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to RCED-88-63, December 8, 1987, Accession Number 134578.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessment of Recent Changes in the Poverty Population (5019).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0); Health: Health Care Services (551.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Social Services (506.0); Veterans Benefits and Services: Other Veterans Benefits and Services (705.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Housing and Urban Development; Federal Emergency Management Agency; Department of Defense; Department of Agriculture; Veterans Administration; ACTION;

Department of Health and Human Services: Federal Interagency Task Force on Food and Shelter.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee; Rep. Ted S. Weiss.*

Authority: Emergency Jobs Appropriations Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-8). Social Security Disability Benefits Reform Act (P.L. 98-460). Housing and Urban-Rural Recovery Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-181). Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. P.L. 96-265. P.L. 98-94. District of Columbia Overnight Shelter Act. *Hodge v. Ginsberg*, 303 S.E.2d 245 (W. Va. 1983).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO identified trends in poverty for the homeless population, factors affecting these trends, and federal programs providing services to the homeless.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that homelessness was increasing, and service providers have increased their services in response to the increased need for food and shelter. Since 1980, the number of shelters for the homeless has increased by 66 percent nationally. More mentally ill, minorities, women, children, and youth in their mid-30's are now among the homeless. Factors which have contributed to the rise in homelessness have included increased unemployment, the deinstitutionalization of mentally ill persons, increases in personal crises, cuts in public assistance programs, a decline in the low-income housing supply, and alcohol and drug abuse. Cities, counties, and volunteer organizations, with aid from the states and the federal government, have expanded the supply of shelter beds. Federal aid to state and local governments has come from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, and Housing and Urban Development, and the Veterans Administration and ACTION. The Federal Interagency Task Force on Food and Shelter acts as a broker between the federal government and the private sector to identify available federal facilities or resources. However, long-term solutions are needed if the problems of homelessness are to be resolved.

126782

Food Bibliography. RCED-85-82. April 1985. 257 pp. by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic

Development Division. Refer to CED-81-73, April 1981, Accession Number 115134.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Abstract: This bibliography includes information on documents directly or indirectly related to food, agriculture, and/or nutrition that have been released by GAO between January 1981 and December 1984. The documents included are representative of the broad interrelationship which exists between the food area and other issue areas of concern to GAO such as health, transportation, energy, defense, and international affairs.

126791

[Proposed Agricultural Efficiency and Equity Act of 1985]. April 24, 1985. 13 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture.*

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982. Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. H.R. 1912 (99th Cong.). H.R. 4565 (98th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO discussed proposed legislation that would change the manner in which the Department of Agriculture (USDA) computes the acreage bases and program yields which are used to compute the payments for farm program participants. GAO found that inflated bases existed because the Secretary had stated that acreage bases would be determined by averaging the previous 2 years plantings and including the acres which were considered planted but were not because of natural disasters. As a result, participants who had not planted a crop but wanted to retain their base were given full credit as if they had planted their base for that year. The legislation would provide that the sum of the crop acreage base could not exceed the farm acreage base, and that a yield determination would use actual production evidence as its assignment basis. GAO believes that consideration should be given to using:

(1) planted acres for harvest instead of harvested acres since farm program payments are made on the basis of planted acres for harvest, and farmers currently report planted acres to USDA; and (2) a weighted average calculation, which would use the total number of acres planted for harvest to determine program yields.

126802

Analysis of Certain Aspects of the Proposed Agricultural Efficiency and Equity Act of 1985. RCED-85-118; B-217740. April 24, 1985. 3 pp. plus 2 appendices (12 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Berkley W. Bedell; Rep. Ronald C. Marlenee; Rep. Pat Roberts; Rep. Charles W. Stenholm; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Improving the Effectiveness of CCC Wheat and Feed Grain Assistance (6503).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep. Charles W. Stenholm; Rep. Pat Roberts; Rep. Ronald C. Marlenee; Rep. Berkley W. Bedell.*

Authority: Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. H.R. 4565 (98th Cong.). H.R. 1912 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed certain aspects of the proposed Agricultural Efficiency and Equity Act of 1985, which would change the way the Department of Agriculture (USDA) determines the acreage bases and yields assigned to producers under various farm programs.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that a 1982 USDA decision to set base acreages to give producers the highest possible base for each crop has resulted in inflated acreage bases. The proposed act would: (1) limit acreage bases to reflect croplands actually planted; and (2) revise the yield formula to reflect actual production. In addition, GAO estimated that, if the proposed act had been in effect in 1983: (1) total base acreage in the areas reviewed would have been reduced by about 12.5 percent; (2) wheat and feed grain yields would not have been significantly affected, but cotton and rice yields would have decreased significantly; and (3) program payments for the areas reviewed would have been reduced by 16 percent.

126821

The United States' Response to the Ethiopian Food Crisis. NSIAD-85-65; B-217932. April 8, 1985.

Released May 1, 1985. 3 pp. plus 2 appendices (21 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Byron L. Dorgan; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-25, March 4, 1986, Accession Number 129221.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591); Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291); Foreign Economic Assistance: Increasing the Effectiveness of U.S. Humanitarian Assistance Programs (6203).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0); International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0); Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of State; National Security Council; Agency for International Development; Ethiopia; Catholic Relief Services; United States International Development Cooperation Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Byron L. Dorgan.

Authority: P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO described U.S. knowledge of Ethiopia's need for massive food aid and the adequacy of the U.S. response to the crisis.

Findings/Conclusions: The United States knew that acute malnutrition and serious drought conditions existed in the northern provinces of Ethiopia in 1982. However, the severity of the food needs in the rest of Ethiopia was unclear until the spring of 1984. Despite strained relations between the U.S. and Ethiopian governments and delays incurred in the initial U.S. response, the United States has provided, overall, more drought and famine relief assistance to Ethiopia than any other government or international organization. During fiscal years 1983 and 1984, the Agency for International Development (AID) approved 11 requests for emergency food assistance for Ethiopia from four private voluntary and international organizations. GAO found that a time lapse occurred in filling a 1982 Catholic Relief Service request for food aid because of concerns about the ability of Ethiopia and private voluntary organizations to carry out a food program that would reach all hungry Ethiopians, but the need for food

and the relatively small amount requested by the organization raised legitimate questions as to the reasonableness of the delays in approving the requests. The basic problems which impact on the program include: (1) extremely poor relations between the United States and Ethiopia; (2) a lack of AID presence in the country; (3) government restrictions on the movement of foreigners in Ethiopia; and (4) hostilities between Ethiopia and rebels.

126842

Overview and Perspectives on the Food Stamp Program. RCED-85-109; B-217977. April 17, 1985. 63 pp. plus 5 appendices (16 pp.). *Report* to Congress; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to Testimony, April 16, 1986, Accession Number 129643.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Stamp Loss Measurement, Recovery, and Deterrence (6516).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service: Food Stamp Division; President's Task Force on Food Assistance; President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1964. Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2014(d)). Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Food Stamp and Commodity Distribution Amendments of 1981. Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982. Deficit Reduction Act of 1984. Social Security Act. Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973. Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980. Executive Order 12291. H.R. 5151 (98th Cong.). H.R. 5054 (98th Cong.). H.R. 5473 (98th Cong.). S. 884 (97th Cong.). S. 1279 (98th Cong.). S. 1727 (98th Cong.). S. 2607 (98th Cong.). S. 2352 (97th Cong.). H. Rept. 96-788. H. Rept. 98-782.

Abstract: GAO reviewed five major Food Stamp Program issues, including: (1) program accountability and integrity; (2) program simplification; (3) nutritional adequacy of the program; (4) the interrelationship of the program with other food assistance programs; and (5)

program coverage and eligibility requirements.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that program errors continued to sap program resources, causing about \$1 billion in overissued benefits. GAO found that, in spite of legislative and related administrative measures, substantial amounts of over- and underissuances of program benefits continued to occur. GAO has previously reported that different administrative rules, funding systems, and operating procedures have resulted in program inefficiencies and losses. GAO noted that the rapid growth of food assistance programs has created a need to examine and consider the interrelationships and overall effectiveness in providing food assistance.

126866

Issues Affecting Appropriations for the African Development Foundation. NSIAD-85-62; B-217887.

May 7, 1985. 7 pp. plus 4 appendices (25 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Robert W. Kasten, Jr., Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Improving the U.S. Oversight and Management of Its Participation in International Organizations (6202).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: African Development Foundation.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Sen.* Robert W. Kasten, Jr.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO evaluated the operations and activities of the African Development Foundation (ADF) to determine its management capability and its capacity to efficiently use additional funding.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, although ADF authorizing legislation was passed in 1980, its Board of Directors was not nominated until 1983. ADF operations began in fiscal year (FY) 1984, but its first president and vice president resigned because of internal conflict. ADF efforts were hampered by a lack of: (1) sufficient full-time staff; (2) procedures and controls; (3) a long-term

strategy for program direction; (4) a plan for coordination with other development efforts in Africa; and (5) an advisory council. GAO found that ADF has made progress in establishing an organizational structure to manage a modest program of assistance in Africa, but should not significantly expand its program as planned. As of November 1984, the 5-year program plan had not been completed, and several related program policy issues needed to be addressed as part of the formal planning process. Furthermore, the projects funded in FY 1984 had not been implemented, and their viability had not been demonstrated. Because ADF has projected doubling its budget each year through FY 1990, GAO believes that an analysis of those projections is important in answering questions concerning its capability to utilize more funds.

127002

The Department of Agriculture's Animal Welfare Program. RCED-85-8; B-217624. May 16, 1985. 44 pp. plus 5 appendices (20 pp.). *Report to Sen. Thad Cochran, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Congress; *Sen. Thad Cochran.*

Authority: Animal Welfare Act of 1970 (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO studied the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) activities under the Animal Welfare Act, which authorizes USDA to inspect the premises of animal dealers, research facilities, exhibitors, and carriers to ensure the humane care and treatment of animals.

GAO focused on: (1) training and guidance given to USDA inspectors; (2) frequency and scheduling of inspections; (3) corrective actions that USDA takes when it discovers violations; (4) inspection monitoring and statistics; and (5) allocation of available funding.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) many of the inspectors and regional officials interviewed thought that training was inadequate; (2) the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), which is responsible for animal inspections, did not have a formal scheduling system for inspections; (3) USDA did not inspect many facilities during 1983 because of funding constraints and inadequate staff resources; and (4) while APHIS offices generally complied with policies governing timely corrective actions, there were instances where APHIS did not reinspect violators or failed to properly process corrective actions. GAO also found that: (1) while APHIS has delegated inspection quality assurance functions to its area offices, it has not specified a system or procedure for carrying out such functions; (2) inspection statistics compiled by APHIS for management activities and its annual report were not consistent with statistics maintained by its area offices; and (3) the APHIS fund allocation process led to a wide variance in inspection frequencies among area offices.

Recommendation To Congress: If Congress decides to continue funding the Animal Welfare Program, it should consider requiring the Secretary of Agriculture to recover more of the cost of the program from licensees, taking into account what the impact of any increases might be on them.

127017

[Internal Control Improvements in the USDA Centralized Payroll System]. AFMD-85-39; B-218842. May 22, 1985. 4 pp. *Report to John J. Franke, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Agriculture; by Frederick D. Wolf, Director, Accounting and Financial Management Division. Refer to AFMD-87-32FS, March 20, 1987, Accession Number 132716.*

Issue Area: Financial Management Standards and Initiatives: Federal Accounting Systems' Compliance With GAO and Other Requirements (7004).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0); Financial Management and Information

Systems: Accounting Systems in Operation (998.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Office of Operations and Finance: National Finance Center.

Authority: Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982.

Abstract: GAO reviewed accounting operations at the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Finance Center to evaluate several systems' compliance with GAO accounting principles and standards.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the Center was taking corrective actions to address problems uncovered by a USDA Office of the Inspector General audit; (2) individual computer programmers had control over too many aspects of a payroll processing system; (3) controls over programmer access to computer programs and payroll files were inadequate and did not preclude the possibility of fraudulent or unauthorized program changes; (4) internal controls over record counts were inadequate, which could cause incorrect data processing; and (5) the Center should act aggressively to rectify identified problems because it provided payroll services to agencies other than USDA.

127097

Controls Over Export Sales Reporting and Futures Trading Ensure Fairness, Integrity, and Pricing Efficiency in U.S. Grain Marketing. RCED-85-20; B-207522. April 9, 1985.

Released April 11, 1985. 86 pp. plus 4 appendices (19 pp.). *Report to Rep. Jamie L. Whitten, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to RCED-88-30, November 10, 1987, Accession Number 134460.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: More Effective Operation of U.S. Food/Fiber Markets (6507).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations; *Rep. Jamie L. Whitten.*

Authority: Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973. Agricultural Act of 1970 (7 U.S.C. 612c-3). Commodity Futures Trading Commission Act of 1974

P.L. 93-463; 88 Stat. 1389). Commodity Exchange Act (Futures).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO examined certain controls designed to help ensure that grain trading is done fairly and that the financial and economic integrity of the marketplace is protected. GAO also investigated how efficiently information about grain export sales by U.S. exporters was transformed into changes in grain prices.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that current controls established by the Department of Agriculture, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, and private industry over export sales reporting and certain aspects of futures trading help ensure fairness and soundness in the U.S. grain marketing system. However, continued rapid expansion in grain marketing and related futures markets needs monitoring to ensure that regulatory staffs keep up with the work load. The examination of the relationship between grain futures prices and export sales produced little information to indicate that the grain markets were inefficient in transforming reported sales information into price changes.

127098

Decisionmaking Process for Farm Program Policies Needs To Be Improved. RCED-85-81; B-215490. June 4, 1985. 16 pp. plus 1 appendix (3 pp.). *Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture;* by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Improving the Effectiveness of CCC Wheat and Feed Grain Assistance (6503).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.*

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982. Debt Collection Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-365). Claims Collection Act (P.L. 89-508). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter

Act (P.L. 80-89). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938. 7 C.F.R. 770.6.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service's (ASCS) policy decision to defer the repayment of certain commodity advance deficiency payments.

Findings/Conclusions: ASCS revised the refund policy to: (1) correct a problem it encountered in administering farm commodity programs at county offices; and (2) provide an additional enrollment incentive for the 1984 corn program. GAO found that: (1) ASCS made the decision to revise the policy without a prior review by the Department of Agriculture (USDA); (2) there was little programmatic analysis to support the decision to revise the policy; (3) one county office sent premature demand letters to producers for refunds of 1983 advance commodity deficiency payments prior to the end of the marketing year; and (4) ASCS did not analyze the extent to which the revised collection policy was expected to increase program participation. GAO also found that: (1) the revised policy caused the government to incur additional interest costs because it did not notify producers that interest would be charged during the deferral period; and (2) organizational units within ASCS should have fully addressed and resolved the issues surrounding the deferral decision prior to deciding on a policy revision. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Administrator, ASCS, to issue administrative notices to ASCS handbooks to reinforce the need for staff compliance with existing procedures requiring that policy decisions be fully documented, analyzed, reviewed, and approved by affected organizational units within ASCS prior to implementation. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Administrator, ASCS, to amend ASCS handbooks to specifically require that policy and program changes having potential legal constraints or impacts be fully reviewed and approved by the USDA Office of General Counsel prior to implementation. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Administrator, ASCS, to issue an administrative notice to ASCS handbooks to reinforce the need for staff compliance with existing procedures requiring that Office of General Counsel memorandums on the legal aspects of a policy or program accompany Commodity Credit Corporation dockets and board memorandums.

127184

[GAO Review of the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children]. June 17, 1985. 8 pp. *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition Subcommittee.*

Abstract: GAO discussed the Department of Agriculture's Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which provides supplemental foods and nutrition counseling to pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children up to 5 years of age who meet specific income criteria. GAO found that WIC benefits were not routinely being targeted on a priority basis to eligible individuals who were the most vulnerable and would stand to benefit most from the program. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has not emphasized targeting as a major policy objective and states are not required to target available funds. A case sampling showed that less than half of clinic participants were in the most vulnerable groups. WIC program resources could be used more effectively if nutritional risk criteria were more uniformly and stringently applied, income eligibility procedures were strengthened, and WIC funding patterns and practices were changed. GAO determined that FNS: (1) lets each state agency establish and apply its own eligibility criteria; (2) varies in the amount of evidence it requires to establish risk conditions; and (3) has not established specific guidance for documenting and verifying applicants' reported income and family size. Finally, funding practices have led to management and spending pressures that have worked against targeting and orderly, effective case-load management.

127195

Transportation of Public Law 480 Commodities--Efforts Needed To Eliminate Unnecessary Costs. NSIAD-85-74; B-199688. June 18, 1985. 38 pp. plus 3 appendices (19 pp.). *Report to Elizabeth H. Dole, Secretary, Department of Transportation;* John R. Block,

Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to RCED-87-100, May 7, 1987, Accession Number 132884.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Appropriateness of U.S. Role in Export Promotion and Financing and Efficiency of Administration of Export Assistance Programs (6303).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1); Transportation: Water Transportation (403.0); International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Transportation; Maritime Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480; 7 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.). Cargo Preference Act (Merchant Marine) (46 U.S.C. 1241(b)). Merchant Marine Act, 1936.

Abstract: GAO assessed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) and the Maritime Administration's (MARAD) management of the expenditure of U.S. funds for ocean transportation of agricultural commodities.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found significant problems that indicate that USDA may be paying higher ocean freight differentials than necessary. USDA control over the bidding and negotiation process for ocean transportation contracts was inadequate because foreign countries: (1) used closed bids which could be submitted late or were based on knowledge of submitted bids; (2) could negotiate with any preferred vessel owner, which did not ensure the lowest possible rates; and (3) could serve as vessel brokers, which could lead to favoritism in rate negotiations. USDA did not consistently follow the standard provision for calculating differentials, or applied the standard in a manner that reduced costs to foreign countries at the expense of higher USDA payments. GAO also found that MARAD did not verify data used in

calculating guideline rates because it assumed that vessels returned to the United States without cargo. However, vessels may carry cargo on the return voyage, which allows them the potential to earn excessive profits. Additionally, since MARAD has not prepared guidelines for liners because of the difficulty in separating revenues, it did not know whether transportation rates for liners represented cost plus a reasonable profit.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should require publicly opened transportation offers. The offered transportation rates must be firm and nonnegotiable, and awards should be consistent with open, competitive, and responsive bid procedures. USDA should provide an observer for transportation bid openings, as it does for commodity bids. The Secretary of Agriculture should establish a clear policy to minimize USDA transportation expenditures, consistent with cargo preference requirements. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), to revise and implement program regulations on the basis of this policy. FAS should emphasize cost reductions in the problem areas identified by GAO, including: (1) computation of ocean freight differentials; (2) allocation of cargo; (3) shipment on the basis of lowest landed cost; (4) requirement for demurrage and despatch; and (5) elimination of unnecessarily restrictive tender terms. The Secretary of Transportation should direct the Administrator, MARAD, to devise and institute a method for assessing whether transportation rates for liners represent cost plus a reasonable profit. Also, vessel owners should be required to have their independent accountants semiannually certify that vessel costs and operating data are accurate. The Secretary of Agriculture should issue regulations requiring certification that nonliner U.S. flag vessels do not scrap or carry cargo on a return voyage. The regulations should also provide that the guideline rate will be recalculated and the transportation rate adjusted if a vessel obtains backhaul cargo or is scrapped or sold overseas.

127340

Summary of GAO Reports Issued Since 1981 Pertaining to Farm Bill Legislation. RCED-85-87; B-201660. July 5, 1985. 185 pp. *Report* to Sen. Richard G. Lugar, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman,

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Rep. Dante B. Fascell, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0); International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Commerce; Department of State.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations; Rep. Dante B. Fascell; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza; Sen. Jesse A. Helms; Sen. Richard G. Lugar.

Authority: Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: GAO summarized and updated GAO reports issued since 1981 on topics that are addressed by the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 and related subjects to assist members of Congress in their deliberations on renewal, modification, and extension of the act.

127351

[Female-Headed Families in Poverty]. July 9, 1985. 23 pp. plus 1 attachment (3 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee; by Joseph F. Delfico, Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-85-92, August 27, 1985, Accession Number 127971.

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Organization Concerned: Social Security Administration: Office of Family Assistance.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee. .

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Job Training Partnership Act.

Abstract: GAO discussed the poverty status of women and children, especially those living in families headed by single

women. GAO found that: (1) the number of female-headed families in poverty was substantial and increasing; (2) female-headed families accounted for over one-third of all people in poverty; (3) marital breakups and out-of-wedlock births were prime causes of the increase in female-headed families; (4) a number of federal programs, some in conjunction with states, provided cash, food, medical, and employment assistance to needy families; (5) a number of states operated work incentive (WIN) demonstration projects as supplements to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) programs; (6) federal agencies were evaluating the effectiveness of the projects; (7) some WIN projects had a positive effect on the employment and earnings of female heads of households; and (8) the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Family Assistance (OFA) has not adequately monitored or evaluated state AFDC programs; (9) an administration proposal would cut federal funding for state WIN projects, require AFDC recipients to participate in employment-related activities, and impose financial penalties on states for failure to achieve high participation; (10) the proposal could create funding problems because states rely on WIN funds to provide support services; and (11) OFA poorly documented the proposal because it relied on studies that were not rigorously evaluated or applicable nationwide.

127377

[Improvements Needed in General Automated Data Processing Controls at the National Finance Center]. AFMD-85-38; B-218842. July 12, 1985. 9 pp. plus 1 enclosure (3 pp.). *Report* to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Frederick D. Wolf, Director, Accounting and Financial Management Division. Refer to AFMD-87-3, June 23, 1987, Accession Number 133285; and AFMD-87-32FS, March 20, 1987, Accession Number 132716.

Issue Area: Financial Management Standards and Initiatives: Federal Accounting Systems' Compliance With GAO and Other Requirements (7004).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0); Financial Management and Information Systems: Accounting Systems in Operation (998.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture:

Office of Operations and Finance: National Finance Center.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982. Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a(b)). OMB Circular A-71, Transmittal Memo No. 1. Fed. Property Management Reg. 101-35.3. FIPS Publication 38. FIPS Publication 87.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the adequacy of selected general automated data processing (ADP) controls at the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Finance Center (NFC).

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) NFC did not have a formal disaster recovery and backup processing plan to ensure continued operations of its financial and personnel systems; (2) computer program documentation for the payroll/personnel billings and collections, and miscellaneous payments systems was not current or complete, which hindered system maintenance; (3) NFC programmers did most of the testing on their own program changes; and (4) some NFC personnel had unrestricted access to both data files containing payroll, financial, personnel, and other sensitive information and the programs used to perform the necessary functions of paying employees and collecting for services. GAO found that stronger ADP controls are essential at NFC because of the large volume of personnel and financial transactions processed annually and because of statutory requirements of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the NFC Director to report quarterly to the Assistant Secretary for Administration on the status of efforts to develop and implement contingency plans consistent with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-71, Federal Property Management Regulation 101-35.3 requirements, and Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) guidelines to ensure prompt recovery and restoration of NFC operations in case of a disaster or other unexpected events. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the NFC

Director to report quarterly to the Assistant Secretary for Administration on the status of efforts to develop and implement program documentation standards and procedures consistent with FIPS guidelines. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the NFC Director to report quarterly to the Assistant Secretary for Administration on the status of efforts to develop and implement a system certification schedule for all NFC systems, consistent with OMB Circular A-71, which would include review of the adequacy of program documentation. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the NFC Director to report quarterly to the Assistant Secretary for Administration on the status of efforts to develop and implement independent testing standards and procedures for both program changes and new programs. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the NFC Director to report quarterly to the Assistant Secretary for Administration on the status of efforts to develop and implement procedures that would allow programmers access to production programs only when circumstances warrant and on a controlled basis.

127405

An Evaluation of the 1981 AFDC Changes: Final Report. PEMD-85-4; B-214752. July 2, 1985. 125 pp. plus 6 appendices (42 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means; Rep. John J. Duncan, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Ways and Means; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PEMD-84-6, April 2, 1984, Accession Number 123783; and HRD-87-34, January 29, 1987, Accession Number 132098.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Improving the Evaluation of Cost Containment Strategies (7205).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Ways and Means; *Rep.* John J. Duncan; *Rep.* Daniel Rostenkowski.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35).

Deficit Reduction Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-369).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO evaluated changes that the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 made to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program to: (1) estimate the effect of the changes on the national AFDC case load and outlays; (2) determine whether the changes in the treatment of earned income influenced the work effort of either the cases that the act removed from AFDC or the cases that remained; and (3) ascertain the economic well-being of affected AFDC families.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that state welfare offices administered AFDC, and the Social Security Administration provided partial funding, but eligibility and payment standards varied greatly from state to state. Most of the recipients affected were working and able to remain independent of welfare, but because the act's effects were concentrated on working AFDC recipients, the total case load changed little. However, earners whose grants had been reduced and who were in AFDC a year later experienced substantial real-income losses, including the loss of earnings plus AFDC and food stamps. Those whose AFDC grants were reduced but not terminated, received an increase in food-stamp benefits. GAO found that wage levels and employment opportunities were at least as important as program incentives for enabling AFDC recipients to gain independence from welfare.

127447

National Toxicology Program: Efforts To Improve Oversight of Contractors Testing Chemicals. HRD-85-66; B-211085. June 28, 1985. Released July 23, 1985. 32 pp. plus 2 appendices (2 pp.). *Report to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee;* by Richard L. Fogel, Director, Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Other Issue Area Work (5291).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Health Research (552.0).

Organization Concerned: National Institutes of Health: National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; Rep. John D. Dingell.*

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the National Toxicology Program (NTP) to: (1) assess the adequacy of oversight of NTP contract research activities; and (2) respond to concerns raised by a former NTP contractor.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that NTP has improved contract management activities by: (1) assuming oversight responsibilities that it formerly contracted for; (2) relocating and consolidating NTP personnel in one location; (3) beginning the development of a project management handbook; (4) implementing an automated data management system; and (5) contracting for reviews of pathology test results. GAO also found that: (1) NTP monitored contracts by conducting annual program reviews and site visits; (2) contractors were generally responsive to NTP quality concerns; (3) NTP was taking action to disqualify five laboratories because of concern over contract performance; and (4) 2 of the 30 live animal tests reviewed had been compromised. In addition, GAO found that: (1) NTP did not act prejudicially against the former contractor, but terminated that contract and five others for poor performance; (2) NTP did not assign terminated pathology work to the quality assurance contractor that recommended contract termination; and (3) NTP was taking actions to prevent quality assurance contractors from also doing pathology support work.

127525

Effects and Administration of the 1984 Milk Diversion Program. RCED-85-126; B-211447. July 29, 1985. 46 pp. plus 5 appendices (22 pp.). *Report to Congress;* by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to RCED-85-132, September 18, 1985, Accession Number 127937; and RCED-88-157, May 31, 1988, Accession Number 135965.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Government Dairy Programs (6502).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies*

Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.

Authority: Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983. Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (7 U.S.C. 608(c)(18)). Agricultural Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C. 624). Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-253). Dairy Production Stabilization Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-180).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) temporary milk diversion program to: (1) determine how milk producers decided whether to participate; (2) estimate the program's effect on milk production and government dairy purchases; and (3) evaluate USDA administration of the program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the program tended to attract producers that decreased production after the selected base period and not to attract producers that increased production; (2) while program participants agreed to reduce production by 9.4 billion pounds during the program, 2.2 billion pounds of the reduction occurred before the program's inception; (3) USDA paid a total of \$955 million to program participants, of which \$220 million was attributable to the reductions that occurred before the program's inception; and (4) production could increase from 1 to 3 percent after the program's expiration. In addition, GAO found that USDA has had difficulty administering the program because: (1) program participants could circumvent their agreements with USDA by selling milk outside normal marketing channels or crediting other individuals with milk sales; and (2) cows certified for slaughter or export under the program could be resold to nonparticipants because dairy cows usually bear no permanent identifying marks and tracking them through marketing channels is impractical. **Recommendation To Congress:** If it reestablishes the program, Congress should select a base period to avoid paying participants for marketing reductions made prior to the program.

127526

The U.S. Economic Assistance Program for Egypt Poses a Management Challenge for AID. NSIAD-85-109; B-217660. July 31, 1985. 48 pp. plus 3 appendices (13 pp.). *Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development;* by

Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to ID-77-33, September 15, 1977, Accession Number 103513; ID-79-23, May 31, 1979, Accession Number 109530; ID-81-19, March 16, 1981, Accession Number 114721; and NSIAD-84-108, July 9, 1984, Accession Number 124604.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of State; Arab Republic of Egypt.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs: Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations: European Affairs Subcommittee.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. International Security Assistance Act of 1978 (P.L. 96-384). P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Agency for International Development's (AID) progress in assisting Egypt in developing its economy, including: (1) the conditions and constraints of establishing and administering the Economic Support Fund (ESF); and (2) the advantages and disadvantages of the current mode of providing ESF assistance and the possible alternative ways of disbursing this assistance.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) economic development progress has been somewhat limited by program conditions over which AID had little control; and (2) some actions taken to support the political purpose of the program may not be of optimal value in working toward the longer-term economic development goal. GAO found that AID had difficulty influencing Egypt to quicken its pace in making economic policy reforms because: (1) AID lacked overall program funding leverage; and (2) Egypt was concerned that moving too quickly might be politically destabilizing. GAO also found that the large size of the project portfolio has: (1) made it difficult to administer the program; (2) challenged Egypt's ability to effectively absorb large amounts of

assistance; and (3) resulted in a large amount of obligated but undisbursed funds. GAO noted that AID could use nonproject program approaches such as cash transfers, sector grants, and commodity imports as alternative modes for some of the project assistance, but AID needed to objectively and thoroughly assess the various modes to determine the best mix for accomplishing program goals in Egypt. **Recommendation To Agencies:** To support AID continuing program design efforts and assist the Government of Egypt in its economic development, including any needed policy reform, the Administrator, AID, should direct the Near East Bureau and the mission to perform the analyses necessary to provide in-depth knowledge of Egypt's development sectors and the policies that affect these sectors. To support AID continuing program design efforts and assist the Government of Egypt in its economic development, including any needed policy reform, the Administrator, AID, should direct the Near East Bureau and the mission to assess the development efforts agreed to and undertaken by the Government of Egypt in response to the provision of recently authorized cash transfers.

127546

Farmers Home Administration County Supervisors' and Farmers' Views on the New Coordinated Financial Statements. RCED-85-84; B-219299. July 29, 1985. 2 pp. plus 3 appendices (35 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Quentin N. Burdick, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Appropriateness of FmHA Credit Programs and Their Effectiveness in Assisting Farm Financial Needs (6510).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Commerce and Housing Credit: Other Advancement of Commerce (376.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Sen.* Quentin N. Burdick.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the: (1) Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA) use of

Coordinated Financial Statements (CFS); (2) FmHA county supervisors' and borrowing farmers' views on CFS complexity and usefulness; (3) impact on loan applications; and (4) adequacy of FmHA county supervisor and farmer training instructional booklets.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) FmHA selected CFS to replace the Farm and Home Plan (F&HP) which it used to gather financial and production data for operating loans; (2) the complete financial position of a borrower or loan applicant was not readily apparent with F&HP; and (3) CFS would result in sounder loans, lower delinquencies, and more creditworthy applicants for commercial loans. GAO found that: (1) most supervisors said that CFS were more effective in monitoring farmer performance and helping to improve farmer efficiency, but 80 percent of the farmers said that CFS were difficult to prepare; and (2) CFS were more complex and required over twice the amount of time spent with each farmer preparing the F&HP.

127602

[Information on the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's 1986 Standard Reinsurance Agreement]. RCED-85-155; B-209866. July 26, 1985.

Released August 6, 1985. 4 pp. plus 2 appendices (20 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Ed Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to Testimony, September 23, 1986, Accession Number 131061.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; *Rep.* Ed Jones.

Authority: Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's (FCIC) 1986 standard reinsurance agreement with insurance companies, focusing on: (1) how the agreement will work; (2) how

the agreement compares with prior agreements; and (3) the overall financial condition of FCIC.

Findings/Conclusions: Under the reinsurance program, FCIC enters into agreements with private insurance companies to protect the companies from losses on crop insurance policies. As the reinsurer, FCIC is liable for most underwriting losses but receives most underwriting gains. While the 1986 agreement is similar to previous agreements, GAO found significant differences, including: (1) a new requirement that companies must insure any eligible farmer's crop, provided the company insures the same crop elsewhere in the state in which the farmer is located; (2) provisions allowing companies to relinquish up to 95 percent of their crop insurance liabilities and high-risk premiums to FCIC provided the total is not more than 10 percent of the company's total business; (3) provisions allowing companies that operate in a limited geographic area to exchange local business with FCIC for an equivalent amount of business in a different geographical area; (4) an increase in the maximum share of underwriting gains and losses companies can realize; and (5) a change in the way FCIC reimburses companies for expenses incurred in the sale of crop insurance. In addition, GAO found that: (1) the financial situation of FCIC has deteriorated since 1980 because of low premiums and weather problems for certain insured crops; and (2) in order to meet its obligations for fiscal year 1985, FCIC will need an additional \$113 million and will need to replace \$50 million from its administrative fund that it transferred to its program fund.

127622

Financial and Management Improvements Needed in the Food for Development Program. NSIAD-85-105; B-217782. August 7, 1985. 35 pp. plus 4 appendices (16 pp.). *Report* to Rep. George E. Brown, Jr.; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591); Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations; *Rep.* George E. Brown, Jr. .

Authority: Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480; 7 U.S.C. 1691 et seq.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food for Development Program, which the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 authorized. Under the program, the United States provides food aid to developing countries. If recipients sell the provided commodities and use the local currency proceeds to pay for agreed agricultural or rural development or health or family planning activities, the repayment obligations of the host country are forgiven. GAO evaluated title III programs in Bangladesh, Bolivia, and Senegal, focusing on procedures to forgive repayments, implementation of development projects, and adoption of policy reforms by the recipient countries. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that program funds: (1) are not always deposited in special accounts or are commingled with other sources of recipient country revenue; (2) were disbursed in excess of amounts budgeted, used to cover shortages in projects sponsored by other donors, or used for other questionable purposes; and (3) were sometimes insufficient for timely project implementation. GAO also found that the Agency for International Development (AID) is hampered in project monitoring because: (1) program agreements do not specify discrete elements of projects which are eligible for support; (2) many recipient countries have difficulty with project implementation because of a lack of experienced administrative personnel; and (3) in countries which also receive other forms of U.S. and other donor assistance, project implementation and monitoring problems can be more severe because of the additional administrative burden imposed on AID missions and recipient governments. In addition, GAO found that: (1) project implementation can be hampered by recipient country

policies that inhibit or influence local economies; (2) in Bolivia, planned agricultural and social changes were precluded by political and economic changes; (3) in Senegal, while some improvements were made to regional development organizations and farmer cooperatives, little progress was achieved in resource conservation or commodity marketing and pricing reforms; and (4) in Bangladesh, the program has helped to implement agricultural reforms.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, AID, should direct the missions to work with host countries to establish systems which properly account for receipts and disbursements of title III local currencies. Special accounts should be a central mechanism of such systems. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct that deliberations on approving title III agreements and annual commodity deliveries ensure that adequate accounting systems are in place or are being developed before approval is granted. The Administrator, AID, should direct that title III proposals describe the extent to which: (1) recipient countries can adequately implement, manage, and staff additional development activities and, if recipients lack effective institutions and adequate and trained personnel, proposals should describe how title III will specifically overcome these impediments; and (2) AID missions can adequately monitor additional project implementation activities. The Administrator, AID, should direct that requests for title III funds to support other donors' projects identify discrete activities which will receive title III support, and how local currency expenditures and project implementation will be monitored. Expenditures should be traceable to specific project activities. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct that, before approval of annual commodity deliveries: (1) progress is being achieved in implementing development projects; or (2) evidence shows that problems hampering implementation are being addressed. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct that before approving annual commodity deliveries, either: (1) progress is being achieved in adopting agreed policy reform; or (2) evidence shows that problems hampering progress are being addressed.

127646

The Role of Marketing Orders in Establishing and Maintaining Orderly Marketing Conditions. RCED-85-57; B-217949. July 31, 1985. 61 pp. plus 6 appendices (37 pp.).

Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to RCED-88-9, March 21, 1988, Accession Number 135347.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: More Effective Operation of U.S. Food/Fiber Markets (6507).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Marketing Service; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.

Authority: Agricultural Adjustment Act (P.L. 73-10). Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (7 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Tax Reform Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-155). Executive Order 12291. P.L. 80-305. P.L. 83-690. P.L. 87-703. P.L. 91-292. *United States v. Rock Royal Cooperative, Inc.*, 307 U.S. 533 (1939).

Abstract: GAO reviewed 9 marketing orders covering 11 agricultural commodities to: (1) address controversies surrounding the marketing order program and the effect of each individual type of marketing order tool on commodity supplies; (2) determine emerging trends in the use of marketing orders; and (3) assess the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) administration of the marketing order program. Under the program, AMS helps commodity producers collectively work out solutions to supply and demand problems that individual producers are unable to resolve.

Findings/Conclusions: Critics of marketing orders contend that: (1) economic efficiency is enhanced when commodity prices and availability are determined in competitive markets; and (2) marketing orders undermine efficiency by artificially and excessively raising commodity prices higher than a free market would allow. Proponents of marketing orders argue that they reduce supply imbalances for perishable commodities in markets that are volatile if unregulated. GAO found that: (1) the marketing orders for hops and spearmint oil restrict new growers from entering the marketplace, and the marketing order for lemons typically results in waste; (2) while most marketing orders regulate the entry of products into the market, both producers and consumers benefit from the restrictions; (3) controls governing the quality of commodities encourage producers to improve products and

assure consumers that their products meet minimum quality standards; (4) for 10 of the 11 commodities studied, competitive forces are sufficient to limit price increases; and (5) the current trend in marketing order operations is a shift from controlling supply to enhancing demand using a mixture of research, development, and advertising tools. In addition, GAO found that: (1) AMS plays a limited role in industry education; (2) the program operations manual for marketing orders has not been updated since 1966 and does not address the shift to marketing orders designed to enhance demand; and (3) AMS has no criteria to measure marketing system performance. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Administrator, AMS, to develop and apply criteria for measuring the performance of individual marketing orders and make the results available so that Department of Agriculture (USDA) decisionmakers and other interested parties can appropriately judge the merits and shortcomings of marketing orders. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, AMS, to update and keep current the operations manual for marketing orders. The manual should: (1) incorporate the criteria for measuring the program's principal objective of creating and maintaining orderly marketing; (2) incorporate legislative and administrative policy and guideline changes, including 1982 and 1983 marketing order guidelines; and (3) focus on ways to develop market-oriented programs that can improve the quality and variety of available products.

127669

The Foreign Fishing Observer Program: Management Improvements Needed.

RCED-85-110; B-215901. August 12, 1985.

Released August 19, 1985. 27 pp. plus 4 appendices (37 pp.). *Report to Rep. John B. Breaux, Chairman, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Don Young, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0).

Organization Concerned: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: National Marine Fisheries Service; Department of Commerce; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries; *House* Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation; Congress; *Rep. Don Young; Rep. John B. Breaux.*

Authority: Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-265). American Fisheries Promotion Act (P.L. 96-561). P.L. 97-453. OMB Circular A-76.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) management of the Foreign Fishing Observer Program, including: (1) the process the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) follows to develop program costs for budgeting and billing purposes; (2) the issue of health and safety conditions on foreign fishing vessels; (3) the use of observer-generated information; and (4) the use of contract observers in the Northwest and Alaska program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) NMFS used an advance estimated billing process, based on the anticipated level of foreign fishing, planned level of observer coverage, and established cost factors; (2) the billing process has restricted NMFS from pursuing its planned level of observer coverage until sufficient funds have been collected and become available for obligation. GAO found that: (1) with a sufficient amount of working capital, NMFS could pursue its planned program level and implement a billing system based on actual costs; (2) NMFS should establish sanctions for foreign fishing vessels considered inadequate for the placement of an observer; (3) NMFS should set health and safety standards to judge the adequacy of foreign fishing vessels; and (4) NMFS considered information obtained by observers on foreigners' compliance with fishing laws and regulations valuable to ensure that all information needs were being met. GAO also found that: (1) adjustments to the training program curriculum could be made by adopting a standard training

curriculum and instructional procedures for those elements of biological data that NMFS believes should be presented to all observers; and (2) NMFS used contract observers in the Northwest and Alaska regional programs, rather than federal employees, because agency personnel ceilings would not permit it to hire enough federal employees.

Recommendation To Congress: Congress should amend the Magnuson Act to authorize sanctions against inadequate foreign fishing vessels.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Commerce should request legislative authority to: (1) provide sufficient working capital to capitalize the Foreign Fishing Observer Fund; (2) to permit NMFS to pursue a full-coverage program from the beginning of each fiscal year; and (3) use a billing system based on actual costs. If the Observer Fund is provided working capital, the Administrator, NOAA, should: (1) implement a billing system based on actual costs; and (2) develop an information package on the billing process and procedures that would be responsive to most of the questions raised by the foreign fishing interests about their observer fee bills and program costs. The Administrator, NOAA, should: (1) establish a time frame for NMFS to develop appropriate criteria to judge the adequacy of safety and health conditions on foreign fishing vessels that want to fish in the U.S. fishery conservation zone; and (2) provide the basis for imposing sanctions against such vessels for inadequate safety or health conditions.

127745

Federal Price Support for Honey Should Be Phased Out. RCED-85-107; B-214502. August 19, 1985. 40 pp. plus 2 appendices (2 pp.). *Report to Congress*; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Enhancing the Effectiveness of CCC Assistance to Commodities Other Than Wheat and Feed Grains (6504).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1446 et seq.). Trade Act of 1974. Agricultural Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C.

624). Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1301(a)). P.L. 98-590. S. 501 (99th Cong.). S. 616 (99th Cong.). S. 1257 (98th Cong.). S. 2124 (97th Cong.). H.R. 3762 (98th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) mandatory honey price-support program to: (1) evaluate the need for the program; (2) determine who participated in the program; (3) determine why program costs and government inventories were increasing; and (4) evaluate USDA program administration.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that bee pollination is critical to certain seed and fruit crops, and the crop producers view the cost of pollination as a production cost. Producers believe that pollination service would be cost-effective even if the price rose as a result of price-support reduction or elimination. However, elimination of the program would force some beekeepers out of business. GAO found that comparatively few beekeepers participate in the honey price-support program, and the participants forfeit large quantities of honey to the government under the loan program. GAO found that the costs of the program have increased due to inflation, artificially high support prices, and the costs of managing honey inventories. Most of the honey which is forfeited due to defaulted loans is distributed through government donation programs. The cost of managing honey inventories increased from practically nothing to about \$31 million for the 1980-83 period, and overall program costs were about \$164 million for that period. GAO found that USDA program administration is not adequate because USDA: (1) did not collect sufficient wholesale price data or honey production data for computing the support price; (2) does not properly ensure that the producers meet the eligibility requirements for loans; and (3) does not perform tests on honey used for loan collateral to ensure that the honey is not imported or adulterated. GAO believes that the mandatory honey price-support program is no longer needed. **Recommendation To Congress:** Congress should pass legislation to repeal the mandatory honey price-support program, 7 U.S.C. 1446(b). If Congress repeals the mandatory program, it should consider directing the Secretary of Agriculture to use his existing discretionary authority under 7 U.S.C. 1447 to provide price support to honey producers and to reduce this support incrementally over a period of time to ensure an orderly phaseout of the program and minimize the undue adverse impact on the beekeeping industry.

127767

AID Recognizes Need To Improve the Foreign Economic Assistance Planning and Programming Process. NSIAD-85-110; B-217738. August 28, 1985. 32 pp. plus 1 appendix (4 pp.). *Report to M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, Agency for International Development*; by Bill W. Thurman, (for Frank C. Conahan, Director), National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Agency for International Development's (AID) foreign economic assistance planning and programming process to determine whether opportunities exist for AID to streamline and improve the process. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) an AID task force recommended that AID devote more time to policy, strategy, and program supervision and less time to project design and review; and (2) AID will not implement the recommendation until it completes an experiment designed to test new procedures. Most AID missions submit an annual country development strategy statement, and AID uses this statement to evaluate mission budgets and project proposals. AID regulations require missions to obtain strategy approval before submitting annual budgets. GAO found that: (1) less than half of the full strategy statements it reviewed resulted in approval before the deadline for annual budget submissions; (2) a number of missions have operated indefinitely without approved strategies; (3) AID has limited flexibility to adjust mission budget proposals, which makes missions reluctant to reject or modify project proposals or submit alternative proposals; and (4) AID usually addresses programming decisions in the project review cycle, rather than in its budget process. In addition, GAO found that: (1)

AID headquarters project reviews rarely raise new issues and frequently contain details more appropriately addressed by project identification documents; and (2) some AID missions do not have sufficient staff resources or technical expertise to review and approve project identification documents.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, AID, should implement the approved task force recommendation that country development strategy statements remain in effect for up to 4 years unless changing conditions necessitate a new strategy. The Administrator, AID, should encourage missions to submit alternative project proposals, particularly when missions are expanding activities, to give AID flexibility in making programming decisions. The Administrator, AID, should request missions to provide sufficient information to enable AID to assess a project's consistency with approved strategies. The Administrator, AID, should ensure that annual budget submission review results are promptly communicated to missions for guidance and use in subsequent project design and development. The Administrator, AID, should apply the successful project review components of the Asia Bureau experiment to other regional bureaus and missions on a case-by-case basis, while recognizing the varying capabilities of missions to exercise increased project approval authority.

127769

Surface Coal Mining Operations in Two Oklahoma Counties Raise Questions About Prime Farmland Reclamation and Bond Adequacy.
RCED-85-147; B-219275. August 8, 1985.

Released August 13, 1985. 15 pp. plus 6 appendices (8 pp.). *Report to Rep. Michael L. Synar, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.* Refer to RCED-86-221, September 22, 1986, Accession Number 131387; and Testimony, June 26, 1986, Accession Number 130212.

Issue Area: Natural Resources Management: Adequacy of States' Surface Mining Inspection and Enforcement and Office of Surface Mining Monitoring of States' Use of Mine Reclamation Funds (6902); Environment: Other Issue Area Work (6891).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement; Oklahoma: Department of Mines.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Government Operations: Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee; Rep. Michael L. Synar.*

Authority: Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-87). Mining Lands Reclamation Act (Oklahoma).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed: (1) the bonding system for reclamation of strip-mined land in Oklahoma and other selected states; (2) the issuance of permits by states to operators who have violated strip mining laws; (3) whether mined farmland was being reclaimed; and (4) whether the amount of performance bonds is sufficient to cover reclamation costs should the operator fail to reclaim the land.

Findings/Conclusions: GAG found that: (1) the land under 54 of the 58 mine permits contained some prime soil, but none of it was permitted as prime farmland because, on the basis of landowner statements, farming had not occurred for 5 of the 10 years after the passage of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA); (2) out of the 58 mine permits issued, 3 crop history records showed that the land had been cropped in 5 of the 10 preceding years and was, therefore, prime farmland; and (3) state officials did not attempt to verify local crop history records because it was too time-consuming. GAO also found that: (1) 19 abandoned sites had been involved in bond forfeiture proceedings since the enactment of SMCRA; however, no reclamation occurred on 12 of the 19 abandoned sites; (2) the Oklahoma Department of Mines (ODOM) increased bond amounts on newly issued permits and on some older permitted areas in order to prevent future reclamation problems; and (3) the ODOM policy of not approving bond releases in order to ensure future bond adequacy delayed bond releases and created financial hardships for mine operators.

127795

Uses of Saltonstall/Kennedy Fisheries Development Funds.
RCED-85-145; B-219467. August 30, 1985.

Released September 3, 1985. 32 pp. plus 8 appendices (32 pp.). *Report to Rep.*

John B. Breaux, Chairman, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Don Young, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0).

Organization Concerned: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: National Marine Fisheries Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Don Young; Rep. John B. Breaux.*

Authority: Saltonstall-Kennedy Act (Fishery Products). Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801). American Fisheries Promotion Act (P.L. 96-561; 15 U.S.C. 713c-3).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO discussed the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) use of Saltonstall/Kennedy (S/K) fisheries development funds, focusing on the activities of the S/K Grants Program and the Fisheries Development Program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) NMFS uses S/K funds to support fisheries development activities under both programs; (2) the S/K Grants Program funds fisheries development grant projects through development foundations, private industry, universities, and state and local governments, which address issues of immediate concern to the industry; and (3) the Fisheries Development Program conducts fisheries research and development at NMFS in-house laboratories and focuses on long-term basic research. GAO also obtained information on the functions and costs of the fisheries development foundations which represent the fishing industry in seven geographic areas. NMFS officials stated that the research programs were complementary and provided useful results to the fishing industry, but industry representatives generally viewed grant projects as useful than the projects carried out at in-house

laboratories. Analysis of questionnaire responses showed that the more familiar a respondent was with a program's projects, the more likely that respondent was to state that a program provided useful results.

127850

[Processing Time for Farmers Home Administration's Operating Loans in Minnesota During Fiscal Year 1984]. RCED-85-142; B-219568. August 26, 1985. 13 pp. *Report to Rep. Douglas K. Bereuter*; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Appropriateness of FmHA Credit Programs and Their Effectiveness in Assisting Farm Financial Needs (6510). **Contact:** Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep. Douglas K. Bereuter.*

Authority: Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (P.L. 87-128). P.L. 98-258.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the processing time for the Farmer's Home Administration's (FmHA) fiscal year 1984 operating loans in Minnesota to determine: (1) the criteria for timely loan processing; (2) the actual processing time and the reasons for the length of time between the various processing steps; (3) the effects of any delays on the farmers; and (4) alternatives available for improving the process.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO reviewed: (1) the organizational structure responsible for the FmHA farm program loans; (2) the two types of operating loans available; (3) the eligibility requirements for operating loan applicants; and (4) the five steps in the operating loan process. GAO found that: (1) FmHA had no formal criteria for timely loan processing; (2) the average operating loan processing time in Minnesota was 72 days; (3) incomplete farmer documentation, heavy work loads during the peak loan season, financial viability assessments of marginally creditworthy applicants, and special processing problems contributed to the time needed for processing loans; (4) about 3 percent of the loans were not closed or approved before planting time due to FmHA funding delays; and (5) FmHA files contained no record of letters, visits, or telephone calls complaining of adverse

effects on borrowers due to the FmHA loan processing time requirements. During the GAO review, Congress introduced legislation requiring FmHA to hire additional personnel and urging it to use other means to expedite the loan application process. FmHA also implemented additional loan funding and staff increases and encouraged state governments and Farm Credit System lenders to help in the processing of 1985 loan applications. GAO, therefore, terminated any further study on operating loan processes because of these actions affecting the relevance of its 1984 program study and because of the lack of both FmHA loan processing time criteria and evidence of adverse effect on borrowers in 1984.

127852

The Department of Agriculture's 1983 Payment-in-Kind Program--A Review of Its Costs, Benefits, and Key Program Provisions. RCED-85-60; B-213707. August 29, 1985.

Released September 4, 1985. 11 pp. plus 9 appendices (99 pp.). *Report to Rep. George E. Brown, Jr.; Rep. Pat Roberts; by F. Kevin Boland, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Improving the Effectiveness of CCC Wheat and Feed Grain Assistance (6503). **Contact:** Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep. Pat Roberts; Rep. George E. Brown, Jr.*

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Payment-in-Kind (PIK) program, focusing on the costs, benefits, and key provisions of the program. The program, aimed at reducing production, paid farmers not to grow certain crops such as corn, grain sorghum, wheat, rice, and cotton, and paid the farmers a prescribed percentage of crops they would have grown instead of cash.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the cost of the PIK program was about \$10 billion and the largest cost element, the commodities, was used to make payments to participating farmers. The distribution of these payments was proportional to the amount of land taken out of production. Analysis indicated that participation rates varied and, when farmers received direct payments for land that was taken out of

production or when they anticipated that commodity price deficiency payments would be substantial, participation was high. Two options were available to farmers who participated in the program, including: (1) whole-base PIK, which placed a farm's entire base acreage in the program; and (2) regular PIK, which placed 10 to 30 percent of a farm's base in the program. GAO found that: (1) 93 percent of the soil and 94 percent of the water conserved on the farms participating in the program was attributable to the decreased planting resulting from the program; (2) participation in the PIK program significantly exceeded original USDA expectations and resulted in underestimates in the amount of commodities needed to meet PIK payment obligations, but USDA was able to meet the payments through purchase of commodities from farmers; and (3) the overall objective of the program was to reduce production, but USDA set no specific objectives for the level of participation and production control.

127863

Can More Be Done To Assist Sahelian Governments To Plan and Manage Their Economic Development? NSIAD-85-87; B-217703. September 6, 1985. 25 pp. plus 3 appendices (8 pp.). *Staff Study* by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-83-36, September 8, 1983, Accession Number 122300; NSIAD-85-19, November 5, 1984, Accession Number 125547; ID-78-18, March 29, 1978, Accession Number 105430; ID-79-9, March 29, 1979, Accession Number 108897; ID-78-54, December 29, 1978, Accession Number 108304; ID-80-29, June 11, 1980, Accession Number 112534; and NSIAD-86-103BR, April 15, 1986, Accession Number 129657.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591); International Affairs: Improvement of the Impact of U.S. Development Assistance Through More Efficient and Economical Administration and Management (0630).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of State; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Club du

Sahel; Coordination and Development in Africa Group.

Authority: P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: GAO studied the capability of the Sahel Governments of West Africa to plan and manage development efforts in their countries and to administer and coordinate donor assistance. The study was conducted to aid in addressing the issue of whether the Agency for International Development (AID) should provide more of its funds to strengthen the governments' management capabilities.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the governments have made little progress in reaching their economic development goals despite more than \$13 billion in donor assistance since 1974; and (2) the Sahelians' weakness in management capability, aggravated by the multiplicity of donors working in each country, the complex administrative requirements accompanying their assistance, and the constraints to effective coordination of all the sources of assistance, is an important factor in their slow economic development and needs to be strengthened. GAO believes that it is important that donors attempt to: (1) improve host governments' capability to plan and manage their countries' economic development process; (2) coordinate assistance programs among donors, especially at the country level; and (3) minimize the administrative burden of donor programs on the governments. GAO also believes that: (1) while AID has done some work in this area, its current efforts must adequately consider the capabilities of the governments to improve their management skills with programs and projects aimed at meeting human needs; and (2) AID should continue to promote better coordination among donors and take the lead in coordination efforts in those areas, such as agriculture, where it is a key donor.

127885

Compendium of GAO Reports Pertaining to Public Law 480 From July 1973 Through August 1985. NSIAD-85-96. September 13, 1985. 57 pp. *Staff Study* by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591); Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agency for International Development; Department of State; Department of the Treasury.

Authority: Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480). Merchant Marine Act, 1936. Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. Cargo Preference Act (Merchant Marine).

Abstract: GAO submitted a staff study on matters relating to the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act.

Findings/Conclusions: This staff study covered the legislative history of the act, budget formulation and administration, and historical trends of the World Food Program. It also provided a chronological list of GAO reports which relate to the act, including abstracts of these reports and their recommendations.

127935

[Internal Control Improvements Needed in Agriculture's Miscellaneous Payments System]. AFMD-85-66; B-218842. September 19, 1985. 12 pp. plus 1 enclosure (3 pp.). *Report* to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Frederick D. Wolf, Director, Accounting and Financial Management Division. Refer to AFMD-83-37, February 7, 1983, Accession Number 120520.

Issue Area: Financial Management Standards and Initiatives: Federal Accounting Systems' Compliance With GAO and Other Requirements (7004).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0); Financial Management and Information Systems: Accounting Systems in Operation (998.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Office of Operations and Finance: National Finance Center; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Accounting and Auditing Act (31 U.S.C. 3512(a)(3)). Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982. Prompt Payment Act (31 U.S.C. 3901). OMB Circular A-125. 31 U.S.C. 3528.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Finance Center's (NFC) miscellaneous payments system to assess the: (1) adequacy of internal controls for ensuring the accuracy and reliability of payment transaction processing; and (2) controls for ensuring the system's compliance with Comptroller General (CG) requirements pertinent to payment systems.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) key internal control objectives for the system were not being met because field agency and NFC internal control techniques were inadequate or not used; (2) internal control weaknesses significantly increased the system's vulnerability to transaction data errors and unauthorized payment transactions; and (3) transaction data errors could undermine the system's effectiveness in complying with CG standards for accuracy in processing and financial reporting. GAO also found that: (1) control improvements were needed at the field-certifying-officer level to ensure the accuracy of system transaction data; (2) improvements were needed in NFC data entry activities to ensure the accuracy of data processed; (3) NFC needs to discontinue bypassing a system designed to ensure proper reporting; (4) NFC needs to increase the scope of its payment transaction audits to better ensure that undetected errors are identified; (5) NFC needs to better control sensitive codes used by the system to assist in ensuring that only authorized transactions are processed; and (6) NFC needs to update internal procedures for the payments system.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should instruct the Assistant Secretary for Administration to direct the Director, Office of Finance and Management, to reemphasize to USDA agencies' field certifying officers the importance of their responsibility for ensuring the accuracy and reliability of miscellaneous payments data provided to NFC for processing, consistent with the statutory requirements prescribed for certifying officers. The Secretary of Agriculture should instruct the Assistant Secretary for Administration to direct the Director, Office of Finance and Management, to establish a procedure for periodically analyzing reasons for system edit rejections by source so that appropriate actions to obtain

improvements can be initiated. The Secretary of Agriculture should instruct the Assistant Secretary for Administration to direct the Director, Office of Finance and Management, to increase the number of essential miscellaneous payments system data fields for which rekeying is performed by data entry clerks to ensure accuracy, at least on a selective transaction basis. The Secretary of Agriculture should instruct the Assistant Secretary for Administration to direct the Director, Office of Finance and Management, to require that audits of miscellaneous payment vouchers include verification of critical transaction data fields to field supporting documentation.

127937

Overview of the Dairy Surplus Issue--Policy Options for Congressional Consideration.

RCED-85-132; B-220107. September 18, 1985. 55 pp. *Report to Congress*; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General). Refer to RCED-85-30, February 8, 1985, Accession Number 126219; CED-80-88, July 21, 1980, Accession Number 113006; RCED-84-58, March 14, 1984, Accession Number 123706; RCED-85-126, July 29, 1985, Accession Number 127525; CED-82-79, May 18, 1982, Accession Number 118412; RCED-85-43, January 7, 1985, Accession Number 126027; RCED-84-72, December 20, 1983, Accession Number 123144; RCED-84-24, October 9, 1983, Accession Number 122885; and RCED-88-9, March 21, 1988, Accession Number 135347.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Government Dairy Programs (6502).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.

Authority: Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (7 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). Agricultural Adjustment

Act of 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1301). Agricultural Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C. 624). Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113). Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-180). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-8). P.L. 98-92. P.L. 99-88. S. 501 (99th Cong.). S. 616 (99th Cong.). H.R. 2000 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: To assist Congress in its consideration of various legislative proposals to revise dairy policies, GAO summarized its work on dairy-related issues over the last 6 years, discussed the magnitude and nature of the dairy surplus problem, and analyzed several policy options for dealing with the problem.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that government dairy product purchases and inventories have increased sharply from 1979 through 1983 and the Department of Agriculture expects this trend to continue. In addition, the nation's milk consumption has not kept pace with production, and the potential for significant increases in farm productivity is great due to technological advances. Therefore, GAO believes that, unless the government adopts policies that will reduce economic incentives attracting resources into dairy farming, burdensome surpluses of federally purchased dairy products and high government costs will likely continue. GAO analyzed nine policy options and their potential consequences in terms of six specific goals that could help ensure that an adequate supply of milk is met in an efficient manner. The goals related to automatic adjustment of price levels, accommodation of changes in production costs, maintenance of production patterns, avoidance of excessive government costs, program cost visibility, and market determination of price and farm income. GAO found that: (1) the use of a supply-demand adjuster or a moving-average price would meet five of these goals; (2) deregulation of the dairy industry would meet most of the goals but would result in substantial industry instability; (3) using a dairy parity index and placing marketing quotas would not meet three of the goals; and (4) four other options would not meet two of the goals and only partially meet from one to four other goals.

Recommendation To Congress: To avoid reverting to a parity formula required by the Agricultural Act of 1949, which would result in increasing the current support price from \$11.60 to \$16.22 a hundredweight, legislation will be needed to revise or replace the present dairy price-support program. In

deliberating on such legislation, Congress may wish to give consideration to either the supply-demand adjuster or moving-average price option.

127971

Evidence Is Insufficient To Support the Administration's Proposed Changes to AFDC Work Programs. HRD-85-92; B-219521. August 27, 1985.

Released September 26, 1985. 7 pp. plus 1 appendix (22 pp.). *Report to Rep. Ted S. Weiss, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee*; by Edward A. Densmore, (for Richard L. Fogel, Director), Human Resources Division. Refer to Testimony, July 9, 1985, Accession Number 127351; and HRD-87-51BR, February 19, 1987, Accession Number 132472.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessment of Recent Changes in the Poverty Population (5019).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Social Services (506.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Training and Employment (504.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Other Labor Services (505.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Labor.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee; *Rep.* Ted S. Weiss.

Authority: Job Training Partnership Act.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reported on the first phase of its review of poverty among female heads of families, focusing on: (1) work programs aimed at poor women with families who receive assistance under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC); and (2) the Administration's proposal to change AFDC work programs in fiscal year 1986.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) many poor female-headed families rely extensively on AFDC for cash income; (2) the purchasing power of AFDC benefits declined by an estimated 33 percent from 1970 to 1984; and (3) the Administration has proposed a

mandatory work program for AFDC recipients for 1986, with participation goals and penalties for states that do not achieve them. GAO also found that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): (1) still does not have adequate information on whether AFDC work programs are effective in moving recipients to unsubsidized jobs, reducing welfare costs, or meeting other goals; and (2) has not addressed problems that have hampered AFDC work program implementation and have limited program participation. In addition, GAO found that, under the proposal: (1) states would pay a greater share of work program costs and would be required to maintain higher levels of program participation; (2) reduced federal funding could cause some states with successful AFDC work programs to change or curtail their activities; (3) reduced federal funding could preclude states from meeting the proposed participation requirements; and (4) it could be more difficult for states to provide assistance under the Job Training Partnership Act to women with severe employability problems. GAO also found that some of the data sources used by the administration to document and support the proposal were outdated, not rigorously evaluated, not applicable to the AFDC population, or not nationally representative.

127972

Current Issues in U.S. Participation in the Multilateral Trading System. NSIAD-85-118; B-217817. September 23, 1985.

Released September 26, 1985. 96 pp. plus 3 appendices (16 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Charles McC. Mathias, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: International Economic Policy, Oceans, and Environmental Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General. Refer to Testimony, September 26, 1985, Accession Number 127993; Testimony, April 15, 1986, Accession Number 129673; Testimony, July 17, 1986, Accession Number 130410; RCED-87-35BR, October 9, 1986, Accession Number 131505; T-NSIAD-87-15, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132431; and T-NSIAD-87-9, March 12, 1987, Accession Number 132395.

Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Effectiveness of U.S. Efforts To Secure a Fairer and More Open World Trading System (6301).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of State; Department of Commerce; Department of Agriculture; Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: International Economic Policy, Oceans, and Environmental Subcommittee; Sen. Charles McC. Mathias.

Authority: Trade Act of 1974. Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. Agricultural Adjustment Act. Trade and Tariff Act of 1984. Communications Act of 1934. Communications Satellite Act of 1962. Clean Air Act. P.L. 83-480. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO analyzed the international trading system and U.S. participation in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and described problems with: (1) trading in the wheat, telecommunications, and steel sectors; (2) the rules of GATT; and (3) member nations' compliance with GATT provisions.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that government intervention in domestic economies is widespread within the United States and other countries with which the United States trades. Government influence in wheat trade is significant and influences both the price and supply of wheat. GAO found that, because of a GATT agreement that domestic policy priorities should take precedence over international discipline, GATT has not established a clear trade regime for agriculture, leading to a significant trade distortion for wheat. In the telecommunications field, barriers imposed to protect privacy and national security have restricted market access, as have government monopolies and market reserve policies. Although telecommunications trade is growing, significant segments of the industry face a wide range of barriers restricting access to markets, and GATT has just begun discussion of trade liberalization in the services area. In steel trade, developed and developing countries have used a number of domestic support and protection mechanisms, and import restrictions have placed almost all exporters of steel to the United States and Europe under some form of import restriction. GAO found that GATT: (1) has been largely ineffective in limiting these restrictions or in enforcing criteria for applying the restrictions; and (2) objectives which promote free trade are consonant with U.S. trade policy objectives, but GATT has frequently been unable to control government

actions or to settle disputes between trading partners.

127993

[United States Participation in the Multilateral Trading System]. September 26, 1985. 7 pp. plus 3 appendices (22 pp.). *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: International Economic Policy, Oceans, and Environmental Subcommittee; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-85-118, September 23, 1985, Accession Number 127972.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: International Economic Policy, Oceans, and Environmental Subcommittee.

Authority: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: GAO discussed U.S. participation in the multilateral trading system, focusing on: (1) comparative trading practices of the United States and its major trading partners; (2) reasons for alleged widespread variance from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade's (GATT) principles and rules; (3) the possibility of extending GATT coverage to services; and (4) whether support of GATT continues to be in the U.S. interest. GAO found that, although the GATT system has been weakened by participation in bilateral understandings and the undertaking of unilateral actions that violate the central GATT principle of nondiscrimination, multilateralism and the principles contained in GATT serve the United States' interest. GAO believes that, as the world's largest importer, the United States has a significant stake in GATT and should support such endeavors as the newly created GATT committee on trade in agriculture and a new round of trade talks to include agricultural and manufactured goods and service trade. Imbalances in fundamental economic policies are threatening the multilateral trading system, but there is no workable alternative system. Therefore, GAO believes that it is essential that fundamental problems, such as the U.S. budget deficit, are addressed directly rather than sacrificing the multilateral trading system to the U.S. trade deficit.

128030

Losses in the Department of Agriculture's Tobacco Program. RCED-85-167; B-213761. September 18, 1985. 3 pp. plus 1 appendix (13 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum; by Ralph V. Carlone, (for J. Dexter Peach, Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-85-30, February 8, 1985, Accession Number 126219.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Enhancing the Effectiveness of CCC Assistance to Commodities Other Than Wheat and Feed Grains (6504).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* Howard M. Metzenbaum.

Authority: NoNet Cost Tobacco Program Act of 1982.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided pricing and cost information on flue-cured tobacco under the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) tobacco program. Specifically, GAO estimated: (1) the losses that USDA could incur on 1976 through 1981 tobacco crops; (2) the total inventory price reduction resulting from USDA-approved discount sale terms; (3) the total price reduction on actual tobacco sales under the discount sale terms; and (4) interest costs incurred by USDA on the 1982 flue-cured tobacco crop.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) USDA stands to lose money on the 1976 through 1981 flue-cured tobacco crops under loan; (2) the actual losses will not be known until all of the old tobacco is sold, but the total price of the tobacco inventory was reduced by \$326 million from the regular sales price under the discount terms; (3) USDA is incurring both interest costs and storage charges on the old tobacco; and (4) USDA has sold about 11 percent of the 1976 through 1981 flue-cured tobacco inventory at about \$35 million below its regular sales price. In addition, GAO found that USDA has lost about \$16 million in interest costs on loans made on the 1982 flue-cured crop under the No Net Cost Tobacco Program.

128031

1983 Payment-in-Kind Program Overview: Its Design, Impact, and Cost. RCED-85-89; B-211462. September 25, 1985. 75 pp. plus 5 appendices (50 pp.). *Report* to

Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to RCED-84-137, September 25, 1984, Accession Number 125653; RCED-86-137, August 11, 1986, Accession Number 130661; and PEMD-88-8, April 21, 1988, Accession Number 135746.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Improving the Effectiveness of CCC Wheat and Feed Grain Assistance (6503).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Budget; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Budget; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq.). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-253). 7 C.F.R. 770.6. P.L. 98-63. H.R. 7439 (97th Cong.). S. 3074 (97th Cong.). S. 36 (98th Cong.). H.R. 1360 (98th Cong.). B-211462-O.M. (1983).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) 1983 Payment-In-Kind (PIK) program to determine the: (1) design and justification of key 1983 PIK program provisions; (2) program's impact and cost; (3) distribution of payments to farmers; and (4) effectiveness of the acquisition and delivery of commodities to farmers.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the USDA determination that the \$50,000 payment limitation per farmer did not apply to PIK commodity payments was incorrect and inconsistent with applicable statutory requirements; (2) USDA did not establish specific, quantified goals for the program; (3) the program reduced production and surplus stock levels and increased farmers' net cash incomes; (4) 15.75 million acres of cropland were taken out of production as a result of PIK; and (5) the 1983 farm programs reduced production of five PIK commodities by about 18 percent, reduced government and private stock levels by about 35 percent, and increased farmers' net cash incomes by about \$9 billion. The PIK program cost the

government between \$9.8 and \$10.9 billion, which represents the cost of storage compensation and diversion payments made to farmers, distribution costs for the commodities, and the potential lost interest payments on loans made to farmers that participated in the PIK program.

Recommendation To Agencies: To better evaluate the results of production control programs, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Administrator of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to establish quantified goals specifying what these future programs are to accomplish each year. This will facilitate better evaluations of program results as well as determinations about overall program effectiveness by providing criteria by which a program's effectiveness can be measured against its costs.

128096

[The Agricultural Export Enhancement Program]. October 8, 1985. 8 pp. plus 1 attachment (1 p.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to *Testimony*, April 10, 1986, Accession Number 129594; and *Testimony*, April 16, 1986, Accession Number 129643.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Senate* Committee on the Judiciary: Administrative Practice and Procedure Subcommittee; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin; *Sen.* Charles E. Grassley.

Abstract: GAO discussed whether the Agricultural Export Enhancement Program could achieve its objectives to: (1) increase U.S. farm product exports; and (2) encourage negotiations with trading partners on agricultural problems. The program was established with \$2 billion in surplus Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) agricultural commodities, which CCC used to export sales of U.S. agricultural commodities in targeted markets. CCC recently issued initiatives that targeted wheat or wh

our to several countries, but only two initiatives for Egypt resulted in sales. GAO found that: (1) the targeting aspect of the program limits activity, since the subjects of initiatives are to be competitors who subsidize their exports; (2) the targeting aspect could cause additional U.S. commercial customers to leave the program as discriminatory; (3) the initiatives have only involved wheat and wheat flour, and the potential use of the program for other commodities is limited; (4) the Department of Agriculture estimates that most of the additional sales will consist of CCC commodities, and direct impacts on commercial markets and farm incomes will be slight; (5) if a subsidy collapses, the resulting market share would revert to European Community suppliers; (6) though countervailing subsidies may be used to bring subsidizing competitors to negotiations, foreign actions to offset U.S. export subsidies or to find new markets will raise the cost of competitor export subsidies, and may not be efficient to bring about the desired negotiations; and (7) cargo preference requirements would increase program costs and undermine program objectives.

6037

Used To Foster Optimal Use of Resources in the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). RCED-85-105; B-176994. September 27, 1985. 85 pp. plus 6 appendices (14 pp.). *Report to John D. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture*; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfaction of Nutritional and Health Concerns by Food Assistance Programs (518).

Subject: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Statute Function: Income Security: Training Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.*

Authority: Child Nutrition Act. Emergency Jobs Appropriations Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-8). 7 C.F.R. 245.7. P.L. 92-433. P.L. 93-150. P.L. 93-326.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) operates. GAO attempted to determine how to obtain the maximum benefit from the use of WIC resources, focusing on: (1) the extent to which state and local WIC agencies attempt to target WIC benefits on the basis of need; (2) FNS procedures for targeting WIC benefits; (3) state and local WIC agencies' verification of applicants' eligibility for benefits; (4) the impact of FNS and state agency fund allocation procedures on state and local program operations and benefits targeting; and (5) opportunities to improve targeting, fund allocation, and eligibility determination procedures to maximize the beneficial impact of WIC resources.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) while WIC benefits targeting is important because WIC is not an open-ended entitlement and some eligible beneficiaries may not be served, FNS has not emphasized targeting as a major policy objective, encouraged states to emphasize targeting, or assessed targeting performance in its evaluations of state and local program administration; (2) WIC agencies are only required to target benefits when they reach the highest participation level that available funds will support; (3) in states with no targeting programs, fewer than half of the WIC beneficiaries were in the eligible groups considered most needy; and (4) FNS allows state WIC agencies to establish their own nutritional risk eligibility criteria and does not require uniform nutritional risk criteria. GAO also found that: (1) FNS has not established uniform guidance for documenting and verifying applicants' income and family size; (2) state and local procedures for documentation and verification of income eligibility are not always sufficient to ensure that only eligible individuals receive benefits; and (3) state and local agencies rarely verify the accuracy of unsupported income information provided by WIC applicants. In addition, GAO found that: (1) variable funding actions have caused instability in program growth; and (2) this instability, combined with FNS changes in funding allocation formulas and the FNS legal obligation to recover and reallocate unspent WIC funds in any given fiscal year, has created pressures against targeting and effective case-load management at the state and local level.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should: (1) require FNS to emphasize targeting as a major policy objective and guiding principle to be followed by state and local WIC agencies in managing their programs; and (2) provide technical assistance to state and local WIC agencies in developing approaches for targeted outreach and effective referral arrangements designed to increase the number of especially vulnerable individuals available to the program on a continual basis. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to: (1) include targeting performance as an area for examination in state agency management evaluations of the WIC program; (2) encourage states to consider targeting performance as a basis for evaluating the overall performance of sponsoring local agencies; and (3) use actual targeting and potential for targeting as a basis for selecting additional sponsoring local agencies. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to undertake and support appropriate targeting initiatives and demonstration projects aimed at developing and testing a variety of targeting tools and strategies that can be used by state and local WIC agencies. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to seek the advice and assistance of experts in the field of nutrition and related health sciences in evaluating the role of dietary assessment in WIC, particularly as it relates to assessing nutritional risk, and work with those at the forefront of nutrition research to develop dietary screening and assessment techniques appropriate for use in the WIC certification process. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to consult with medical authorities and competent professional bodies in and out of government, including such organizations as the World Health Organization, the Department of Health and Human Services, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, in developing uniform standards of risk for use in assessing those conditions, apart from dietary inadequacy, most commonly used to certify WIC applicants and recertify WIC participants. This should include, but not be limited to, standards for diagnosing such conditions as anemia, abnormal growth pattern, including obesity/underweight, chronic infections, adolescent pregnancy, smoking, and use of alcohol, caffeine, and other potentially harmful substances. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to issue additional policy guidance on the need for full

documentation of all nutritional risk conditions used as a basis for WIC certifications, where this would be feasible. FNS should routinely check the extent of such documentation as part of its evaluations of state and local WIC programs. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to promulgate regulations requiring documentation of the sources and amounts of WIC applicant-reported income and family size. Copies of applicant-provided income documentation, such as pay stubs, voluntarily provided tax records, and unemployment compensation checks, should be retained in each case file or, when this is not feasible, should be described in detail in the case file. To document family size, documents such as federal or state income tax returns, employee benefit policies, health or life insurance policies, court or church records, or, in the absence of these, applicant affidavits would seem acceptable. For applicants who could be accepted as income-eligible for WIC on the basis of reported participation in some other qualifying benefit program, evidence of current participation should be required. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to focus greater attention on the income eligibility determination component of the WIC certification process through specific coverage of this aspect during the management evaluations periodically conducted by FNS regional offices. In addition to assessing state agency policies and procedures in this area, the management evaluations should include the examination of a sample of local agency casefiles to test for compliance with federal and state requirements and to review the accuracy and reliability of income eligibility determinations. The Secretary of Agriculture should submit, for congressional consideration, proposed legislation to eliminate the existing statutory requirement that the Secretary reallocate WIC program funds periodically if it is determined that a state agency is unable to spend its allocation within a given program year. The Secretary of Agriculture should study the extent to which WIC state agencies should be permitted to carry over unexpended grant funds from one program year to the next, and propose legislation to authorize such carryover of funds as may be deemed appropriate. The proposed legislation should also authorize the Secretary to recover and reallocate WIC funds when projected underexpenditures exceed the allowable carryover, or in other circumstances where such action may be deemed appropriate. The Secretary of

Agriculture should require FNS to require WIC state and local agencies to include in their monthly reports of participation data information showing the detailed categorical composition and priority risk composition of their participant case loads. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to require WIC state agencies to routinely include information on the planned categorical and priority risk composition of participant case loads in expenditure plans submitted to FNS, and use these data, in combination with reported data on actual case load and priority risk composition, to negotiate workable targeting objectives with the states and monitor and assess states' targeting performance. The Secretary of Agriculture should require FNS to explicitly recognize WIC program targeting achievements, with proper notice and sufficient leadtime to states, in the assessment of state agency performance and decide on funding allocations that could lead to more effective resource management and provide tangible incentives for states to improve their targeting performance.

128115

Financial Condition of American Agriculture. RCED-86-9; B-220507. October 10, 1985. 7 pp. plus 3 appendices (105 pp.). *Report to Congress*; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to RCED-86-57BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128977; RCED-86-126BR, March 18, 1986, Accession Number 129615; RCED-86-191BR, September 3, 1986, Accession Number 130884; Testimony, September 25, 1986, Accession Number 131080; RCED-87-144, September 10, 1987, Accession Number 133880; RCED-88-26BR, October 20, 1987, Accession Number 134251; RCED-87-149BR, July 17, 1987, Accession Number 133488; T-RCED-87-29, June 3, 1987, Accession Number 133247; and RCED-89-33BR, October 18, 1988, Accession Number 137080.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Farmers Home Administration; Farm Credit Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the financial condition of American agriculture to

assess: (1) the trends in the economic environment surrounding the farm sector; (2) farmers' financial condition; and (3) the performance of financial institutions serving agriculture.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the financial condition of farmers has deteriorated rapidly since 1980; (2) the most severe financial problems are occurring in the grain- and red-meat-producing areas of the Midwest; (3) farmers borrowed to expand and produce for an apparently insatiable market; and (4) as U.S. agricultural products became relatively more costly, foreign countries began expanding their own agricultural production. GAO also found that: (1) much gross farm income has been absorbed by land and equipment expenses; (2) farmers bought land at real interest rates that were near or below zero in anticipation of rapid land appreciation, but when interest rates rose and crop prices fell, farm assets, primarily real estate, began to depreciate; (3) farmers' abilities to meet debt payments began to deteriorate as gross income levelled off and real interest rates rose; (4) the three largest institutional lenders have experienced varying degrees of financial stress, depending on their concentration in farm loans and the financial condition of their borrowers; and (5) the agricultural situation will continue to deteriorate until farm production costs fall low enough to be commensurate with sustainable levels of farm income.

128167

Farm Credit Administration's Liquidation of Production Credit Associations. GGD-86-5; B-114806. October 18, 1985. 48 pp. plus 2 appendices (21 pp.). *Report to Sen. Mark O. Hatfield; Sen. James A. McClure; Sen. Bob Packwood; Rep. Les AuCoin; Rep. Mike Lowry; Rep. Denny Smith; Rep. Robert F. Smith; Rep. Allen B. Swift*; by William J. Anderson, Director, General Government Division.

Issue Area: Financial Services and Markets: Other Issue Area Work (4591).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Farm Credit Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep. Allen B. Swift; Rep. Robert F. Smith; Rep. Denny Smith; Rep. Mike Lowry; Rep. Les AuCoin; Sen. Bob Packwood; Sen. James A. McClure; Sen. Mark O. Hatfield.*

Authority: Farm Credit Act of 1933 (12 U.S.C. 1131i). Farm Credit Act of 1971

(12 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.). 12 C.F.R. 611.1130. P.L. 95-598. P.L. 87-343. H. Rept. 87-1112. 75 Stat. 758.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed: (1) the criteria and procedures used to liquidate production credit associations; (2) whether the Farm Credit Administration (FCA) was meeting the credit needs of creditworthy borrowers formerly served by the liquidated associations; and (3) the appropriateness and implications of using funds from an FCA revolving fund to financially assist production credit associations.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) FCA had general criteria for determining whether a production credit association should be liquidated, but the application of criteria involved subjective judgments based on an association's ability to comply with the loan agreement it had with its intermediate credit bank and its ability to meet its financial responsibilities under the terms of the agreement; (2) the liquidation procedures FCA used were similar to those used by other financial regulators and, although they do not involve the courts or court-appointed creditor committees, FCA procedures are similar to the procedures used to liquidate any business; (3) credit service to creditworthy farmers continued with minimal disruption, although some farmers experienced delays in receiving loan approval; (4) the credit needs of those who had used the services of the failed associations were being adequately met by nearby associations; and (5) the FCA decision not to use revolving funds to provide aid to failed associations was proper because of the other forms of assistance that were available, the minimal disruption that resulted because of the failed associations, the doubtful financial viability of the associations, and the undesirable incentives that might be created if the fund were used to rescue poorly managed institutions.

128213

Agriculture's Second-Year Implementation of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act. RCED-86-20; B-216946. October 24, 1985. 37 pp. plus 2 appendices (10 pp.). *Report to John R. Block, Secretary, Department of Agriculture;* by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-84-138, June 21, 1984, Accession Number 124477; CED-80-67, February 19, 1980, Accession Number 111697; CED-81-116, June

19, 1981, Accession Number 115857; and AFMD-86-41, September 30, 1986, Accession Number 131332.

Issue Area: Internal Control and Financial Management System Audits: Effectiveness of Federal Agencies in Implementing the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (7401).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Government Operations; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.*

Authority: Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 (31 U.S.C. 3512). *Accounting and Auditing Act. OMB Circular A-123.*

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) second-year implementation of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 (FMFIA) to assess: (1) improvements in internal controls and the process used to evaluate and correct control weaknesses; (2) the status of major accounting systems and evaluations; and (3) the accuracy and completeness of the Secretary's annual report on internal controls and accounting systems.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) although USDA has been correcting known internal control problems and has been improving its system for evaluating and correcting internal control weaknesses, it needs to strengthen techniques for measuring and reducing program vulnerability and monitoring the effectiveness of corrective actions; (2) four USDA agencies have not yet implemented an internal control program consistent with Office of Management and Budget and departmental guidelines; (3) in some instances, reported corrective actions did not correct the problem or were misleading because the action only partially solved the problem; and (4) the methods used by managers to examine program risk were not yielding consistent and reliable results. GAO also found that: (1) most large systems had not been examined using evaluation techniques to test systems in operation; (2) several large systems are undergoing

a redesign which will take several years to correct long-standing deficiencies; and (3) the Secretary accurately reported that complete assurance could not be given that USDA was meeting FMFIA requirements because of the large number of uncorrected internal control and accounting weaknesses.

Recommendation To Agencies: To improve the Department's internal controls, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Assistant Secretary for Administration to revise the Department's internal control directive to include requirements for: (1) following up to confirm the effectiveness of corrective actions; and (2) reporting on the status of corrective actions. To improve the USDA internal control program, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Assistant Secretary for Administration to revise the internal control guidelines to include minimum standards for: (1) field locations in the vulnerability assessments and documenting the process; (2) conducting internal control reviews and alternative approaches, including specifying the conditions under which alternatives are acceptable; and (3) using existing automatic data processing guidance. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Assistant Secretary for Administration to: (1) review major system development efforts to help ensure that efforts are successful; (2) address GAO principles, standards, and related requirements; (3) meet established time frames for completion; (4) develop minimum acceptable standards for system evaluation, and provide system reviewers with guidance on how to perform such evaluations and ensure their quality; and (5) sufficiently test accounting systems in operation to determine conformance with the Comptroller General's principles, standards, and related requirements.

128230

Preliminary Analysis of the Financial Condition of the Farm Credit System. GGD-86-13BR; B-220507. October 4, 1985. 55 pp. *Briefing Report to Various Members;* by Craig A. Simmons, Associate Director, General Government Division. Refer to GGD-86-35BR, December 23, 1985, Accession Number 128788; GGD-86-150BR, September 18, 1986, Accession Number 131016; *Testimony,* November 21, 1985, Accession Number 128471; and GGD-87-51, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132605.

Issue Area: Financial Services and Markets: Risks Faced by Institutions and Market Members Resulting From Changes in the Regulatory and Economic Environment and How Regulators Deal With Them (4502).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Farm Credit Administration; Federal Land Banks.

Congressional Relevance: .ps 8

Abstract: In response to congressional requests, GAO provided an assessment of the financial condition of the farm credit system as of June 30, 1985, and a projection of what the system's financial condition might be under two sets of assumptions by June 30, 1986.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the profitability of the system has declined since 1982, and problem loans continue to mount; however, allowances for loan losses were adequate to absorb all bad loans that were charged off during the 12-month period ending June 30, 1985, and adjusted capital continued its 4-year upward trend. GAO found that: (1) during the first half of 1985, the quality of the Federal Land Banks' loan portfolio deteriorated, and continued deterioration in these loans may require banks to significantly increase their allowance for loan losses; (2) based on historical trends, future earnings will not be sufficient to cover the necessary provision for loan losses, and increases in the allowance for loan losses will require a reduction in the earned surplus accounts; (3) increased earnings trends are unlikely because the cost of borrowed funds may increase and the interest rates charged system borrowers may have reached a point where the lending rates are no longer competitive; and (4) if current trends continue through June 1986, the system will have to use its earned surplus to increase its allowance for loan losses. GAO believes that the ability of the system to weather these difficulties without external assistance will depend on the ability of its adjusted capital to absorb losses and how much longer the decline in earnings will last.

128244

U.S. Security and Military

Assistance: Programs and Related Activities: An Update. NSIAD-85-158; B-207575. September 30, 1985.

Released October 30, 1985. 2 pp. plus 7 appendices (95 pp.). *Report* to Sen.

William Proxmire, Vice Chairman, Joint Economic Committee: International Trade, Finance and Security Economics Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan,

Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to ID-82-40, June 1, 1982, Accession Number 118830; and NSIAD-89-78FS, December 28, 1988, Accession Number 137733.

Issue Area: Security and International Relations: Other Issue Area Work (6191).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Military Assistance (152.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Department of State; Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *Joint Economic Committee:* International Trade, Finance and Security Economics Subcommittee; *Sen. William Proxmire.*

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed information on the annual costs for security and military assistance during fiscal years (FY) 1982 through 1985.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) agencies had changed some of the data presented in an earlier report; (2) in FY 1985, all new foreign military sales (FMS) loans were put on-budget; (3) the shift to on-budget direct loans accurately reflected the total borrowing for foreign military assistance and provided greater flexibility to issue concessional interest rate loans; (4) the largest recipients of FMS loans have increasingly had their loan repayments waived or forgiven; (5) the government has made almost \$1.7 billion in payments due to nonpayment on scheduled guaranteed loans; and (6) various steps have been taken to provide low concessional interest rates and military assistance on a grant, no-cost basis.

128281

[Evaluation of Poverty Indicators - Methodological Issues]. October 31, 1985. 17 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PEMD-87-7BR, October 24, 1986, Accession Number 131509.

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service:* Census and Population Subcommittee.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO discussed the development of a methodology for evaluating proposed changes to poverty indicators and thresholds. GAO found that: (1) the valuation method for medical benefits assigned an average benefit level to all program participants, and the extensive and expensive services provided to those who were in the terminal period of their lives were credited to the well-being of all participants; (2) the market-value technique may overvalue the worth of a benefit; (3) the cell-matching procedure, used to tabulate the expenditures of selected groups, may risk selectivity bias by exaggerating larger or smaller expenditures; and (4) underreporting income may lead to considerable error in the poverty rates. GAO also found that: (1) there has been little direct, in-depth technical analysis of the three methods for valuation of noncash benefits, even though a wide array of technical concerns have been raised about them; (2) the Bureau of the Census has made little effort to test its methods; (3) the differences in valuation rates depend on what factors are included in the estimation procedures; (4) most of the larger differences between poverty reduction estimates were accounted for by the inclusion of medical transfers; (5) the Bureau's published work on valuing noncash benefits did not directly address the concerns it had had since 1982, or earlier; (6) the work done on the Survey of Income and Program Participation has been devoted to achieving comprehensiveness and quality with respect to data on cash income and program participation; and (7) further empirical analysis and greater information distribution are needed to confirm the extent to which problems have not been critiqued in detail.

128298

Information on the Forest Service' Efforts to Control the Spread of t⁺ Western Spruce Budworm in the Carson National Forest . RCED-86-8 B-220729. October 30, 1985.

Released November 4, 1985. 5 pp. *Report* to Sen. Pete V. Domenici; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Improving the Efficiency, Economy, and Cost-Effectiveness of Management of U.S. Forests (6512).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Forest Service.
Congressional Relevance: *Sen. Pete V. Domenici.*

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the Forest Service's efforts to prevent and suppress the spread of the western spruce budworm in the Red River Canyon area of the Carson National Forest. GAO also studied how the public influenced the Forest Service's decision to initiate a budworm suppression program in the area.

Findings/Conclusions: The western spruce budworm is a common pest to conifer and spruce trees, and the Carson National Forest has experienced a number of major budworm infestations since 1922 and, by 1984, budworm outbreaks had defoliated about 67 percent of the mixed conifer and spruce trees in the Forest. GAO found that the Forest Service uses chemical and biological pesticides to control budworms, but agreed in 1984 to a legal settlement that restricted its use of aerially-applied pesticides in the Forest. GAO also found that, under the current suppression program, the Forest Service: (1) injected a number of trees with a chemical pesticide; (2) sprayed a number of trees with a biological pesticide; (3) aerially sprayed the biological pesticide over about 25,880 acres of federal, state, and private land; and (4) plans to make aerial applications of the biological pesticide in 1986 and 1988 and, if necessary, in 1987 and 1989. The Forest Service initiated the program to maintain tourism, recreational opportunities, and the natural state of wilderness areas. In addition, GAO found that the Forest Service's decision was influenced by: (1) state concerns that recreational values in the area would degrade, causing a detrimental effect on state and local tax revenues; (2) congressional concerns that it undertake a suppression program; (3) local legislation that encouraged a suppression program; and (4) local concerns over tourism income for small businesses, the scenic quality of the area, and depressed property values.

128352

Examples of USDA's Application of the \$50,000 Payment Limitation. RCED-86-29FS; B-220837. October 18, 1985.

Released October 22, 1985. 2 pp. plus 1 appendix (7 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer

to RCED-87-81BR, March 19, 1987, Accession Number 132591; and RCED-87-120BR, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132663.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Government Dairy Programs (6502).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Jesse A. Helms.*

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed how the Department of Agriculture applied the \$50,000 payment limitation to potential problem farmers, specifically where: (1) farmers were receiving more than \$50,000 in total payments; (2) individuals or other entities were receiving payments, but were not actually farming the land; and (3) more than one individual or other entity was receiving payments on the same farm.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) where a farmer owned or jointly owned four farms, the farmer could receive up to \$50,000 on the one farm he had 100-percent ownership in, and an additional \$25,000 for his 50-percent ownership on the three corporate entities; (2) as long as individuals, partnerships, or corporations have an interest in a particular farm, they are entitled to farm program payments; (3) under current farm program regulations, individuals residing in foreign countries can receive farm program payments as long as they have been determined to have a land-owning interest in a particular farm; and (4) an individual cannot receive more than \$50,000 in total farm program payments if he is receiving payments on other farm interests.

128365

[Protest of DLA Rejection of Bid for Supply of Asparagus]. B-219648. November 5, 1985. 4 pp. *Decision* re: Triple D Orchards, Inc.; by Seymour Efros, (for Harry R. Van Cleve, General Counsel), Office of the General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Triple D Orchards, Inc.; Defense Logistics Agency; Defense Personnel Support Center.

Authority: F.A.R. 52.214-13. B-214354 (1984). B-210265 (1983). B-181717 (1974).

Abstract: A firm protested the rejection of its telegraphic bid as nonresponsive under a Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) solicitation for the supply of canned asparagus, contending that, since it was the low bidder, DLA should have awarded it the contract. DLA rejected the bid because it did not contain an express certification or representation that the bidder was a small business and would provide products produced by a small business. GAO held that the: (1) protester's failure to certify its size status did not affect the bid's responsiveness; (2) bid was nonresponsive because it did not certify that the protester would supply end products manufactured by a small business; and (3) protester could not cure its nonresponsive bid after bid opening. Accordingly, the protest was denied.

128383

Biotechnology: The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Biotechnology Research Efforts. RCED-86-39BR; B-220899. October 25, 1985. 3 pp. plus 11 appendices (74 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Don Fuqua, Chairman, House Committee on Science and Technology; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-59, March 25, 1986, Accession Number 129699; Testimony, May 8, 1986, Accession Number 129809; RCED-86-187, August 8, 1986, Accession Number 130990; Testimony, December 4, 1985, Accession Number 128550; RCED-88-64BR, December 14, 1987, Accession Number 134828; and RCED-89-1, January 19, 1989, Accession Number 137742.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of U.S. Food/Agriculture Products in Satisfying Safety, Quality, and Dietary Needs (6508); Environment: Evaluation of the Federal Pesticide Regulatory Process' Capability To Protect Public Health and the Environment From Unreasonable Risks (6806); Science and Technology Policy and Programs: Other Issue Area Work (9391).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Research Service; Department of Agriculture: Cooperative State Research Service; Department of Agriculture: Science and

Education Administration: Office of Grants and Program Systems.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Science and Technology; *Rep.* Don Fuqua.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reported on the extent of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) biotechnology research efforts at USDA research facilities and USDA-funded facilities at state agriculture experiment stations and universities.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that USDA is partially or wholly funding 778 biotechnology research projects at a cost of \$40.5 million. State agricultural experiment stations and veterinary colleges reported that: (1) they conducted 495 USDA-funded projects during fiscal year (FY) 1984; (2) they used a variety of biotechnology techniques in the research; (3) recombinant DNA was used in 54 percent of the projects; (4) 18 percent of the projects were expected to involve the deliberate release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment; and (5) scientists anticipated no problems from the planned releases or expected that any problems arising from the experiments would be controllable. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) reported that it was conducting 183 biotechnology research projects with an estimated FY 1985 cost of \$26.4 million; however, it did not identify the biotechnology research techniques used or specify which projects were expected to result in the deliberate release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment. The USDA Office of Grants and Program Systems reported that it funded 145 biotechnology research projects at a cost of \$4.8 million in FY 1984. GAO found that: (1) 45 of these projects duplicated state agricultural experiment station and ARS projects; (2) recombinant DNA was the prevalent technique used; and (3) 4 of the projects are expected to involve a deliberate release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment.

128471

[**The Financial Condition of the Farm Credit System and Guidelines for Considering a Rescue Package**]. November 21, 1985. 16 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs: Economic Stabilization Subcommittee; by Craig A. Simmons, Associate Director, General Government Division. Refer to GGD-86-13BR, October 4, 1985, Accession Number 128230; and GGD-

84-34, March 29, 1984, Accession Number 123950.

Contact: General Government Division. **Organization Concerned:** Farm Credit Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs: Economic Stabilization Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO discussed the financial condition of the Farm Credit System, focusing on whether and how federal assistance should be provided. GAO found that: (1) the System's difficulties stemmed from the deterioration in the quality of its loan portfolio; (2) by June 1985, 17 percent of federal land bank loans were adversely classified; (3) consolidated System records showed that the amount of nonaccrual loans had reached \$2.7 billion; (4) the System was forced to set aside a large portion of its earnings to cover future charge-offs of bad loans; and (5) the System increased the interest rates it charged to reverse the decline in income. GAO noted that System officials expressed concern about the competitiveness of its interest rates and the effect that the rates had on its better borrowers. However, GAO found that, despite the negative financial indicators, the System had \$7.5 billion in earned surplus and reserves available to absorb losses. GAO also found that there are some essential areas considered in a rescue of the Farm Credit System, including: (1) timely definition of the rescue's objectives and the national interest; (2) clear and unambiguous goals and objectives; (3) protection of the government's financial interests; (4) concessions from those with a financial stake in the rescue; and (5) a program administration and oversight mechanism. GAO concluded that, with no reversal in the current rates of deterioration in the quality of the System's loans, its capital will eventually disappear.

128550

[**Review of the Department of Agriculture's Role in Regulating Biotechnology**]. December 4, 1985. 12 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Science and Technology: Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-39BR, October 25, 1985, Accession Number 128383.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; National Institutes of Health.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Science and Technology: Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO discussed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) role in regulating biotechnology to determine: (1) how the programs relate to decisionmaking concerning the deliberate release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment; and (2) the relationship between USDA and other federal agencies with biotechnology responsibilities. GAO found that: (1) USDA funded 778 biotechnology research projects during 1984 and 1985; (2) 87 of the projects were expected to involve the deliberate release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment; (3) USDA has taken an active role in developing and overseeing the new biotechnologies; (4) USDA has adopted National Institutes of Health guidelines and has established an internal policy requiring compliance with these policies in order to receive USDA research funds; (5) USDA officials have expressed confidence in their ability to regulate the new biotechnologies; (6) many USDA agencies are responsible for biotechnology regulation, but their specific roles have not been clearly defined; (7) USDA decisionmaking in biotechnology is influenced by other agency involvement; (8) USDA wants to proceed carefully in this area because of expected legal challenges; (9) there are many instances of interaction between USDA and other agencies and, while there have been disagreements, the agencies seem to be able to resolve problems; and (10) USDA has not been very effective in explaining to the public its views on biotechnology and the regulatory role it will play.

128558

Agriculture Overview: U.S. Food/Agriculture in a Volatile World Economy. RCED-86-3BR; B-220851. November 6, 1985. 40 pp. plus 1 appendix (6 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Congress; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-35BR, October 9, 1986, Accession Number 131505; RCED-87-100, May 7, 1987, Accession Number 132884; and T-RCED-88-56, June 28, 1988, Accession Number 137557.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: More Effective Operation of U.S. Food/Fiber Markets (6507).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Agricultural Adjustment Act.

Abstract: GAO reported on issues relevant to the development of U.S. food and agriculture policies, including: (1) the current state of the U.S. agricultural industry; (2) current trends in agriculture; and (3) potential future concerns.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the agricultural sector: (1) accounts for 10 percent of the nation's gross national product and work force and helps to offset a growing U.S. trade deficit; (2) provides an important world development tool by helping to ensure adequate and reliable sources of food throughout the world; (3) has become more capital-intensive and technologically advanced and more dependent on the nonagricultural sector of the economy for production inputs; and (4) is highly sensitive to such broader economic problems as inflation rates and interest costs. GAO also found that, in the last 50 years, the government has assisted farmers with programs that provide price supports, research and development credits, marketing programs, and policies designed to support rural development.

However, a number of programs are becoming costly and counterproductive because they: (1) provide high support prices in weak markets, which increases program costs and stimulates agricultural production in competing countries; (2) sometimes promote competing objectives; and (3) are based on production levels that result in a majority of large farmers receiving the highest level of support. GAO also identified a number of issues to be considered in the formulation of agricultural policy, including: (1) structural changes in the agricultural sector; (2) farm credit problems and their implications; (3) the impact of technological changes on agricultural production; and (4) the balance between efforts to promote agricultural production and resource conservation.

28572

Protest of Forest Service Rejection of Low Bid for Provision of Cafeteria Services]. B-220163. December 9, 1985. 5 pp. *Decision* re: Daniel R. Hinkle; by Harry R. Van Derve, General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Forest Service.

Authority: 54 Comp. Gen. 271. 55 Comp. Gen. 587. F.A.R. 28.101-4. F.A.R. 52.208-1. B-189848 (1977). B-206353 (1982). B-213094 (1983).

Abstract: An individual protested the Forest Service's rejection of his low bid for cafeteria services as nonresponsive because the bid guarantee was defective. GAO held that: (1) the protester should have questioned erroneous information that the agency provided; (2) the protester was not prejudiced by the erroneous advice since other errors were present in the guarantee that were not the result of the advice; and (3) the protester could not amend the defective bid guarantee after bid opening. Accordingly, the protest was denied.

128618

Chemical Inventory: Environmental Protection Agency's Proposed Inventory Update. RCED-86-47FS; B-203051. December 4, 1985.

Released December 17, 1985. 2 pp. plus 2 appendices (16 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; by Hugh J. Wessinger, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-63, February 10, 1986, Accession Number 129286.

Issue Area: Environment: Other Issue Area Work (6891).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; *Rep.* James J. Florio.

Authority: Toxic Substances Control Act.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed approach for updating its chemical substance inventory as authorized by the Toxic Substances Control Act.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that EPA proposed to exempt: (1) four categories of chemicals from the inventory update in an effort to focus the inventory on the chemicals for which it is most likely to need information; (2) large manufacturers from reporting on any chemical manufactured in quantities less than 10,000 pounds

annually; and (3) small manufacturers, which are generally exempt from most reporting requirements under the act. In addition, EPA plans to add an exemption override to the final rule that will require manufacturers to report on certain chemicals that have been of regulatory concern, even if those chemicals fall into one of the exempted categories. Although many of the users interviewed agreed with the proposed exemptions, some raised concerns as to whether chemicals that have been designated as hazardous or will be designated as acutely toxic air pollutants should be exempt from the inventory update. EPA officials stated that it would be better for EPA to use a separate data-gathering rule to obtain all necessary information on those hazardous chemicals. However, EPA has not decided whether or how to gather these data. GAO believes that: (1) the update would provide an opportunity to obtain information on those substances that EPA has designated or plans to designate as hazardous; and (2) the inventory can serve as a reference for identifying the production location for chemicals which are currently exempt from the inventory update that become involved in emergency or accident situations.

128619

Food Inventories: Inventory Management of Federally Owned and Donated Surplus Foods. RCED-86-11; B-219014. December 5, 1985.

Released December 10, 1985. 60 pp. plus 6 appendices (19 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton; Sen. John Heinz; Rep. William F. Clinger, Jr.; Sen. Thad Cochran, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Rep. William H. Gray, III; Rep. Mary Rose Oaker; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to CED-82-79, May 18, 1982, Accession Number 118412; RCED-84-58, March 14, 1984, Accession Number 123706; and RCED-85-43, January 7, 1985, Accession Number 126027.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Government Dairy Programs (6502).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Appropriations:

Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House Committee on Agriculture*; *Senate Committee on Appropriations*;

Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry*; *Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee*; *Rep. Mary Rose Oaker*; *Rep. William H. Gray, III*; *Rep. William F. Clinger, Jr.*; *Sen. John Heinz*; *Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton*; *Sen. Thad Cochran*.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-8). Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 (31 U.S.C. 3512). P.L. 98-92. P.L. 99-88.

Abstract: In response to several congressional requests, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture (USDA), California, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and New York inventory management systems to determine whether: (1) the systems ensured that USDA-owned products and special distribution program products provided to the states were properly controlled; and (2) USDA minimized transportation and storage costs.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that USDA: (1) maintains a computerized perpetual inventory record of dairy products stored in each warehouse; (2) periodically reconciles its book inventory with physical inventories; (3) has procedures to account for the products shipped into and out of the warehouses; and (4) inspects the warehouses and products periodically to ensure that the products are properly cared for. GAO determined that: (1) USDA perpetual inventory records agreed with those maintained by all 88 warehouses it sampled; (2) examinations made by USDA personnel at 6 warehouses it visited conformed to USDA procedures; and (3) nearly all of the 470 warehouses USDA used in 1984 were examined by USDA personnel twice a year, as required. GAO found that USDA generally shipped products to and from the closest locations and used warehouses charging lower storage rates. GAO also found that the inventory management systems the four states used did not always ensure that products donated for the emergency food assistance program were properly accounted for and managed. For other USDA food assistance programs, such as the School Lunch Program, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requires on-site periodic evaluations of the states' inventory control practices. For the

Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), however, FNS does not require its regional offices to periodically evaluate the state programs. GAO found that the resulting reports did not present enough information for management to judge whether the states' systems were adequate.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to require FNS regional offices to periodically evaluate and report on the states' inventory management systems to provide management with the information needed to determine whether the systems provide control over the receipt, disposal, and inventory of products at both the state and local levels. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to require FNS regional offices to review the monthly inventory reports submitted to them by the states to ensure that data on TEFAP are reported and that inventory levels are related to normal usage.

128712

Cross Compliance: USDA Could Reduce Crop Production by Requiring Cross Compliance. RCED-86-64BR; B-217740. December 11, 1985. 3 pp. plus 2 appendices (14 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Improving the Effectiveness of CCC Wheat and Feed Grain Assistance (6503).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture*; *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry*; *Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza*; *Sen. Jesse A. Helms*.

Authority: Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided a summary of its analysis of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) current production control programs and the use of a cross-compliance requirement to increase program effectiveness.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) production control programs that USDA has used since 1982 permit farmers who enroll one or more crops to offset part or all of their decreased production of enrolled crops by increasing their plantings of unenrolled crops on the same farm; (2) one way to alleviate this condition would be to include a cross-compliance feature in the programs; and (3) this feature has not been used because of congressional concern that it would limit farmers' flexibility to decide how much of each program crop to plant and deter them from joining the program. GAO also found that one approach to cross-compliance would: (1) allow farmers to join the acreage reduction program of their choice; (2) limit their planting of other program crops to their base acreage on previously grown crops; (3) pay them program benefits, such as price-support payments and deficiency payments, only for those programs that they join; and (4) have reduced the number of acres planted to program crops in 1984 by 7.4 million. GAO interviewed 25 farmers and 19 stated that they would participate in production control programs if the cross-compliance requirement were used. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service officials stated the cross-compliance would not be difficult to administer and would be more effective in reducing the number of acres planted to program crops than current programs.

128763

Status of Farmers Home Administration Efforts To Install Office Automation. IMTEC-86-1BR; B-220242. October 4, 1985. 55 pp. *Briefing Report* to Rep. Berkley W. Bedell, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Howard G. Rhile, Jr., Associate Director, Information Management and Technology Division. Refer to IMTEC-87-12, February 20, 1987, Accession Number 132351.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Information Management and Technology Division.

Budget Function: Automatic Data Processing (990.1).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration; Department of Agriculture: Office of Operations and Finance: Kansas City Computer Center, KS.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture; Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Rep.* Berkley W. Bedell.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the tests the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) conducted on a prototype of its field office automation system to evaluate: (1) the adequacy of the tests; (2) the appropriateness, conditions, and terms of its solicitation and resulting contract; and (3) the extent to which the Kansas City Computer Center (KCCC) can handle the work load expected from the thousands of field offices.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that FmHA is accomplishing two of its three objectives, obtaining experience on its training program and making refinements to the office automation software; however, its approach to measuring selected benefits will yield little useful information because of its use of subjective measurement data. The test does not appear useful for either providing information on the adequacy of the production training program and software or the extent that the production system will improve FmHA mission performance in the system's intended environment. Since the application software was not completely developed for the prototype test, it could not be evaluated for effectiveness, efficiency, or ease of use. FmHA does not have detailed plans to obtain information to validate the anticipated benefits of the planned system; however, GAO believes that FmHA could benefit from system tests to validate training, software, and mission performance as the various system components are phased in. GAO also found that the contract for the production system: (1) does not obligate the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to procure a specified number of computers on a set schedule; (2) does not restrict USDA from modifying the contract to meet its needs; and (3) provides no recourse for nonperformance. KCCC appears to have adequate capacity to handle the field office work load until it replaces its computers; however, it needs to begin monitoring key systems components to ensure that it has the capacity to handle the field office work load.

128765

Central America Aid: Status of the Trade Credit Insurance Program. NSIAD-86-29FS; B-221422. December 31, 1985. 10 pp. *Fact Sheet* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National

Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-209, September 8, 1986, Accession Number 131044.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201); International Trade and Commercial Policy: Appropriateness of U.S. Role in Export Promotion and Financing and Efficiency of Administration of Export Assistance Programs (6303).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0); International Affairs: International Financial Programs (155.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Export-Import Bank of the United States; Belize; Republic of Guatemala; Republic of Costa Rica; Republic of Honduras; Republic of El Salvador; Republic of Panama.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* Patrick J. Leahy.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. P.L. 98-173.

Abstract: GAO reported on the use, control, and funding of the Trade Credit Insurance Program, which the Agency for International Development (AID) and the Export-Import Bank (Eximbank) jointly administer to guarantee repayment of U.S. commercial credit to finance Central American imports of U.S. goods and services.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) as of December 1985, less than 9 percent of the \$300 million credit-guarantee ceiling established for the program had been committed; (2) AID and Eximbank attributed the limited program use to start-up difficulties, bank procedures, limited demand, and private-sector reluctance to incur the debt; (3) AID and Eximbank only had data on the specific products imported under the program in Honduras; (4) in Honduras, most of the items imported were being used to produce goods for domestic consumption, but some were ineligible consumer goods; (5) AID has relied on host-country central banks to control the program's use and has sought to avoid complex procedures which could impede program implementation; (6) although AID designed the program to be self-sustaining, it set aside \$60 million in fiscal year (FY) 1985 for a bad-debt reserve, but reprogrammed \$50 million for other purposes; and (7) for FY 1986,

AID requested \$40 million for the bad-debt reserve, but planned to reprogram a portion of the amount for other purposes late in FY 1986. GAO has not reached any conclusions about the need for reserve program funds.

128773

The 'Marketing' in Marketing Orders. 1985. 4 pp. by Andrew F. Finkel, Evaluator, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. In *The GAO Review*, Vol. 20, Issue 4, Fall 1985, pp. 20-23.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601.

Abstract: This article discusses marketing orders, which are food marketing plans designed by farmers and marketers in a particular industry. Once the industry votes them in and the Department of Agriculture approves them, they are issued as federal regulations. A GAO evaluation found that: (1) a few marketing orders restrict new-farmer entry or have the potential to produce waste and higher prices; (2) the actions taken by many orders can lead to more orderly markets in the long run; and (3) the trend is toward orders that focus on improving long-term demand which will benefit farmers and consumers. Marketing orders allow individual farmers and marketers to work together to ensure that: (1) products offered to consumers are of the desired quality; and (2) consumers have adequate information about those products to make educated purchase decisions.

128788

Farm Credit System: GAO's Analysis of the Farm Credit System's Third Quarter Financial Condition. GGD-86-35BR; B-220507. December 23, 1985. 43 pp. *Briefing Report* to Various Members; by Craig A. Simmons, Associate Director, General Government Division. Refer to GGD-86-13BR, October 4, 1985, Accession Number 128230; GGD-86-150BR, September 18, 1986, Accession Number 131016; and GGD-87-51, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132605.

Issue Area: Financial Services and Markets: Risks Faced by Institutions and Market Members Resulting From Changes in the Regulatory and

Economic Environment and How Regulators Deal With Them (4502).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Farm Credit Administration.

Congressional Relevance: .ps 8

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided an assessment of the financial condition of the Farm Credit System as of September 30, 1985, to show how the system's third quarter financial performance related to previous projections.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) third-quarter financial data reflected a significant decline in the profitability of the system and a significant deterioration in the quality of its loan portfolio, but past reporting inaccuracies may have distorted the results; (2) deterioration in loan quality appeared to have been a major factor in contributing to the system's \$800 million loss for the 12-month period ending September 30, 1985; (3) a large provision for loan losses had a great effect on third-quarter earnings; (4) a large chargeoff of bad loans, combined with a net operating loss, resulted in the system's earned surplus decreasing by nearly \$1 billion in the 3-month period; (5) the system's net losses and reduction in earned surplus would have been larger had the institutions maintained the loan losses account at the same level as the ratio of the allowance to nonaccrual loans that existed on June 30, 1985; and (6) the loss of interest income associated with an increased amount of nonaccrual loans and the increased risk premium that investors are now requiring on system securities also adversely affected the system's profitability.

128793

Child Support: States' Implementation of the 1984 Child Support Enforcement Amendments. HRD-86-40BR; B-221078. December 24, 1985.

Released January 7, 1986. 17 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Harold E. Ford, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; by Edward A. Densmore, (for Joseph F. Delfico, Associate Director), Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-87-11, October 3, 1986, Accession Number 131507; and HRD-87-37, April 30, 1987, Accession Number 132806.

Issue Area: Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and

Local Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services: Office of Child Support Enforcement.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; *Rep.* Harold E. Ford.

Authority: Social Security Act. Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984 (P.L. 98-378).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO conducted a telephone survey of the 50 states and the District of Columbia to determine the extent to which they had implemented 10 mandatory practices in the Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984. GAO also obtained information from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Support Enforcement on federal approval of states' requests for implementation delays and exemptions.

Findings/Conclusions: The Child Support Enforcement Program is a federally administered, state-run program established to require absent parents to support their children and, as a result, to reduce Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program spending. In 1984, Congress enacted amendments to improve the program's ability to: (1) mandate proven collection techniques; (2) ensure that services will be available to non-AFDC families; and (3) strengthen interstate child support enforcement. The amendments required that the states implement 10 mandatory practices by October 1, 1985, unless they were granted a delay to allow for enactment of the needed legislation or were exempted from enacting one or more of the requirements. The mandatory practices are: (1) income withholding; (2) tracking and monitoring of withheld support payments; (3) expedited state processes; (4) state income tax refund offset; (5) liens on real and personal property; (6) posting securities; (7) paternity statutes; (8) reporting overdue payments to credit agencies; (9) notice to AFDC recipients of amounts collected; and (10) an application fee for non-AFDC clients. GAO found that: (1) none of the 10 practices were fully implemented by all the states; (2) more than half of the states had fully implemented 8 practices; (3) 4 states had implemented all of the practices; (4) 2 states had implemented all but 1 of the practices; (5) 44 states and the District of Columbia had fully

implemented some of the practices; (6) 10 states were granted exemptions; and (7) 5 states were granted delays for 1 or more of the practices.

128936

Food and Drug Administration: Interstate Milk Shippers Program. HRD-86-54FS; B-221473. December 20, 1985.

Released January 21, 1986. 8 pp. *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Cardiss R. Collins; by David P. Baine, Associate Director, Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Cardiss R. Collins.

Authority: Public Health Service Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) actions, as part of the Interstate Milk Shippers Program, to identify and correct weaknesses related to milk pasteurization.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) testing procedures appear to have kept pace with the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance revisions, but additional inspection guidance is needed for bulk milk haulers; (2) there are testing methods for detecting and measuring coliform and other bacteria, but not for identifying phosphatase and antibiotics at levels lower than the current Ordinance standards; (3) there is no technology that allows plants to consistently produce pasteurized milk at levels significantly lower than the Ordinance provides; (4) FDA actions are underway or planned in fiscal year (FY) 1986 to address weaknesses in dairy plants related to milk pasteurization that are intended to help ensure that milk production, processing, and distribution controls are sufficient to preclude future disease outbreaks; (5) FDA plans to report on the status of its initiatives in December 1986; and (6) state program evaluations, which were postponed, will be reinstated in FY 1987.

128973

Hazardous Waste: Status of Private Party Efforts To Clean Up

Hazardous Waste Sites. RCED-86-65FS; B-221269. December 27, 1985. Released January 28, 1986. 2 pp. plus 2 appendices (7 pp.). *Fact Sheet to Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee*; by Hugh J. Wessinger, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-123, May 6, 1986, Accession Number 130081.

Issue Area: Environment: Assessing EPA's Cleanup of the Worst Abandoned Hazardous Waste Sites (6803).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee*; *Rep. James J. Florio.*

Authority: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) compliance monitoring of responsible-party settlements for cleanup at priority hazardous waste sites and prepared a fact sheet summarizing its findings.

Findings/Conclusions: EPA has the authority to compel parties responsible for hazardous site conditions to either perform cleanups themselves or reimburse the government for cleaning up the site. GAO: (1) obtained information on the number, type, and status of responsible-party cleanup activities at sites which were designated as the nation's worst; (2) obtained from EPA the estimated value of settlements reached and the estimated amount spent at those sites; and (3) verified responsible-party activities performed in EPA Regions I, II, and V that were included in the review. GAO also summarized the nature, extent, and value of responsible-party activities performed at priority sites and provided information on the 73 settlements where the responsible party agreed to begin work, showing the purpose, status, and estimated value of the planned action and the estimated amount spent to date.

128976

**Farmers Home Administration:
Financial and General
Characteristics of Farmer Loan**

Program Borrowers. RCED-86-62BR; B-221106. January 2, 1986.

Released January 30, 1986. 50 pp. *Briefing Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry*; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to Testimony, January 30, 1986, Accession Number 128980; RCED-86-57BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128977; AFMD-86-39, May 23, 1986, Accession Number 130138; RCED-87-13BR, November 12, 1986, Accession Number 131584; Testimony, March 11, 1987, Accession Number 132380; RCED-88-4, November 30, 1987, Accession Number 134552; RCED-86-88, June 13, 1986, Accession Number 130161; RCED-87-79BR, March 11, 1987, Accession Number 132473; and RCED-89-3, November 22, 1988, Accession Number 137369.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Appropriateness of FmHA Credit Programs and Their Effectiveness in Assisting Farm Financial Needs (6510).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry*; *Sen. Jesse A. Helms.*

Authority: Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the current financial condition of Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) borrowers and the farm loan portfolio, as shown by the Farmer Program Management Information System.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the average borrower had a debt-to-asset ratio of 83 percent; (2) 20 percent of the borrowers were technically insolvent and an additional 31 percent of the borrowers were having extreme financial problems; (3) in the first half of 1985, FmHA made new loans to 7,213 technically insolvent borrowers and 12,047 borrowers having extreme financial problems; (4) while the average borrower had a yearly negative cash flow, 15 percent had a positive cash flow; (5) because FmHA revised its servicing policy in 1982 to allow borrowers to obtain additional farm loans without considering the borrowers' ability to repay prior debts, it made loans to many farmers who had limited repayment ability; (6) as of June 30, 1985, borrowers owed a total of \$8.1 billion, of which borrowers in extreme financial difficulty

or technical insolvency owed \$5.1 billion; and (7) in November 1985, FmHA revised its servicing policy to provide additional credit only to borrowers who were current on their loan payments.

128977

Farmers Home Administration: An Overview of Farmer Program Debt, Delinquencies, and Loan Losses. RCED-86-57BR; B-221105. January 2, 1986.

Released January 30, 1986. 3 pp. plus 9 appendices (124 pp.). *Briefing Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry*; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-9, October 10, 1985, Accession Number 128115; RCED-85-71, February 6, 1985, Accession Number 126252; RCED-86-62BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128976; Testimony, January 30, 1986, Accession Number 128980; AFMD-86-39, May 23, 1986, Accession Number 130138; RCED-87-13BR, November 12, 1986, Accession Number 131584; RCED-86-88, June 13, 1986, Accession Number 130161; RCED-87-79BR, March 11, 1987, Accession Number 132473; and RCED-88-134BR, May 20, 1988, Accession Number 135865.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Appropriateness of FmHA Credit Programs and Their Effectiveness in Assisting Farm Financial Needs (6510).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry*; *Sen. Jesse A. Helms.*

Authority: Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (P.L. 87-128). P.L. 98-258.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on: (1) the total farm debt and the Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA) portion of that debt; (2) the total number of loans, borrowers, and loan amounts for each major FmHA farmer program; and (3) delinquencies and loan losses occurring in these programs.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) total farm debt from all lenders more than doubled between 1975 and 1984, growing from about \$91 billion to over \$212 billion; (2) over this same period, FmHA farm debt increased over 400 percent, growing from about \$5 billion to almost \$26 billion; and (3) as of June 30,

1985, the FmHA major farmer program direct loan portfolio was almost \$28 billion and consisted of 270,058 borrowers with 757,219 loans. GAO also found that: (1) delinquent payments on FmHA major farmer program direct loans increased from \$164 million in 1976 to \$6 billion in 1985; (2) almost \$4 billion of the 1985 delinquencies are in the emergency disaster loan program; (3) the \$6.4-billion direct loan delinquency represents nonpayment of principal and interest due on almost half of the total direct loan portfolio; (4) delinquent amounts would be much higher if FmHA had not made about 45,000 borrowers current during 1985 through rescheduling, reamortization, and debt waivers; (5) about 75 percent of the 1985 direct loan delinquent amount is owed by borrowers who have not made a payment in over 3 years and probably will not be able to do so; (6) for the past 10 fiscal years, annual loan losses in the major farmer programs have grown from \$24 million to over \$335 million for direct loans and from \$963,000 to over \$19 million for guaranteed loans; and (7) total annual loan losses increased over 400 percent between 1982 and 1985, with the greatest loan losses in the emergency disaster and economic emergency programs.

128980

[The Financial Condition of the Farmers Home Administration's Loan Portfolio and Its Borrowers]. January 30, 1986. 10 pp. plus 14 attachments (15 pp.). *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-62BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128976; and RCED-86-57BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128977.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Abstract: GAO discussed farmers' growing reliance on Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) resources, focusing on: (1) the FmHA portion of the total farm debt; (2) the total number of loans and borrowers; (3) the loan amounts for each FmHA farmer program; and (4) delinquencies and loan losses occurring in farmer programs. GAO found that: (1) the FmHA

outstanding farm loan portfolio increased from \$6 billion in 1978 to almost \$28 billion in 1985; (2) FmHA has made new loans to insolvent borrowers; (3) about half of the FmHA farm loan portfolio is in jeopardy of default; (4) \$4 billion of the 1985 loan delinquencies were concentrated in the emergency disaster program; (5) total annual farm loan losses increased 400 percent between 1982 and 1985; and (6) the average borrower has a debt-to-asset ratio of 83 percent with a net cash shortfall of \$56,000. GAO also found that FmHA helped to bring about 45,000 borrowers current during fiscal year 1985 through rescheduling, reamortization, and debt waivers.

128985

[USDA Collection of Excess Advance Deficiency Payments on 1983 Corn and Grain Sorghum Crops]. B-216550. January 29, 1986. 12 pp. *Decision re:* Department of Agriculture; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.
Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-253; 96 Stat. 763). Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). Claims Collection Act (31 U.S.C. 3711 et seq.). 7 C.F.R. 713. 4 C.F.R. 101.2(b). 4 C.F.R. 102. 4 C.F.R. 104.2. 7 C.F.R. 1.52. 7 C.F.R. 1403. 7 C.F.R. 1402(d). 64 Comp. Gen. 142. 50 Fed. Reg. 1892. 49 Fed. Reg. 8889. P.L. 98-258. P.L. 97-365. S. Rept. 97-504. 5 U.S.C. 5514. 7 U.S.C. 1301 et seq. 98 Stat. 130. 96 Stat. 1749.

Abstract: The Department of Agriculture (USDA) requested an opinion on the propriety of deferring the collection of debts that arose as a result of overpayments made in advance to farmers participating in agricultural programs. GAO noted that: (1) if advance payments exceeded actual deficiency payments, participating farmers were required to refund the excess amounts to USDA; (2) USDA revised its instructions which prohibited local offices from demanding payments, assessing interest, or taking any action other than offset to collect advance deficiency payments; (3) local offices were to recover advance payments owed by those farmers who did not participate; and (4) farmers who did not participate in the 1984 crop programs were sent demand notices and assessed interest on the first day their debts were past due. GAO held that: (1) the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act does not preclude USDA from choosing the best method to collect debts; (2) the

unpaid refunds constituted delinquent debts; (3) USDA could accept installment payments, but had to obtain written repayment agreements and assess interest; (4) it was not clear that USDA evaluated the financial condition of debtors when it decided to collect debts through administrative offset; (5) the interest assessment policies USDA followed were not entirely consistent with Federal Claims Collection Standards; and (6) even though USDA failed to send appropriate notices which advised debtors of their liability for interest charges, it was legally entitled to recover interest assessments on those debts. Accordingly, USDA policies governing the collection of debts arising from advance deficiency payments did not violate the act.

129128

African Development Bank: A More Independent Evaluation System Is Needed. NSIAD-86-48; B-221618. February 21, 1986. 5 pp. plus 3 appendices (20 pp.). *Report* to James A. Baker, III, Secretary, Department of the Treasury; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: International Financial Programs (155.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Treasury; African Development Bank; Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations.

Authority: P.L. 97-35. P.L. 94-302.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the African Development Bank's (AFDB) progress in establishing an independent program and project evaluation system as a means of informing member governments and management of its efficiency and effectiveness in meeting its objectives.

Findings/Conclusions: The United States has political, strategic, economic, and humanitarian interests in Africa which it pursues in part through participation

in AFDB. U.S. objectives focus on improving AFDB operations with an effective evaluation system which would: (1) examine ongoing and completed projects and operations; (2) apprise management, governing bodies, and member governments of project results; and (3) apply experience gained to new projects and to AFDB policies and procedures revision. The Agency for International Development's 1982 study showed the need for a more comprehensive and independent evaluation system. GAO found that, since 1980, the AFDB evaluation division has: (1) better defined its role and operating procedures; (2) developed a more comprehensive system encompassing ongoing and completed activities; (3) improved its evaluation data collection; and (4) more widely disseminated the results of its work. GAO also found that, because the evaluation division is not an independent department, it: (1) does not have full control over the use of its staff, which has been used for nonevaluation purposes, resulting in delays in evaluation completion; (2) lacks a direct line of reporting to the Board of Executive Directors, causing delays and a lack of objectivity in the reports; and (3) has not exercised control over or developed an evaluation report recommendation follow-up system to keep the AFDB Board and management apprised of the effect of evaluation results on operations.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of the Treasury should instruct the U.S. Executive Director, AFDB, to propose that AFDB management and the Board of Executive Directors: (1) as an interim measure, establish the evaluation division as a central evaluation unit under the President, but with a direct line of reporting to the Board; and (2) consider the eventual establishment of a fully independent evaluation unit attached directly to the Board.

129157

Resource Management: Information on the Coastal Zone Management Program. RCED-86-89FS; B-221960. February 13, 1986. 2 pp. plus 5 appendices (11 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Walter B. Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries; by John H. Luke, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to CED-80-103, June 25, 1980, Accession Number 112643; and GGD-76-107,

December 10, 1976, Accession Number 100233.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Water Resources (301.0).

Organization Concerned: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries; *Rep.* Walter B. Jones.

Authority: Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Coastal Zone Management Program, focusing on: (1) federal program objectives; (2) the status of state programs; (3) the results of previous program studies; (4) program benefits cited by state officials; and (5) concerns raised by federal and state program officials.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, under the program, NOAA has provided about \$291 million to participating states to promote the wise use and protection of coastal resources. Most eligible states have received federal approval for their program plans. GAO noted that: (1) past studies, including its own, have indicated the need for improvements in program management; (2) more recent studies have assessed whether federal funding for the program should continue and whether the program's results can be meaningfully evaluated; and (3) some state officials expressed concern about the degree of federal program control and direction.

129175

Acid Rain: Federal Research Into Effects on Waters and Forests. RCED-86-7; B-220896. December 17, 1985.

Released February 20, 1986. 53 pp. *Report* to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-85-13, December 11, 1984, Accession Number 125835; and RCED-87-89, April 29, 1987, Accession Number 133051.

Issue Area: Environment: Other Issue Area Work (6891).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency; Acid Precipitation Task Force.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; *Rep.* John D. Dingell.

Authority: Acid Precipitation Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-294).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO: (1) discussed the status and future direction of the National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program's research to determine acid rain's effects on lakes, streams, and forests; and (2) provided information on funding the program's research effort.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) research directed at identifying the adverse effects of acid rain on lakes and streams included 81 projects at the end of fiscal year (FY) 1985; (2) initial task force analyses of research results indicate that certain lakes in the eastern states are acidic; (3) survey results on the condition of western lakes and eastern streams are not expected until late 1986; (4) a study of which eastern watersheds will protect waters from future acidification is due to be completed in December 1986; (5) estimates of fish population losses based on existing state agency data show that 400 to 500 Adirondack lakes can no longer sustain certain fish species; (6) the full extent of fish losses that can be attributed to acid deposition and the conditions under which such losses occur are not fully known; (7) a second phase of the water survey to determine the presence or absence of fish in acidic lakes will begin in the spring of 1986; (8) research directed at identifying the adverse effects of acid deposition on forests included 17 projects at the end of FY 1985; (9) it is estimated that the extent of forest decline and acid rain's role in forest change will not be known for 5 or more years; and (10) acid deposition research funding has increased from \$29 million in FY 1984 to \$65 million in FY 1985, and about 51 percent of this funding is slated for work on water and forest research.

129221

Famine in Africa: Improving Emergency Food Relief Programs. NSIAD-86-25; B-217978. March 4, 1986. 7 pp. plus 3 appendices (46 pp.). *Report* to M. Peter McPherson,

Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-85-70, April 12, 1985, Accession Number 126737; NSIAD-85-65, April 8, 1985, Accession Number 126821; and NSIAD-86-56, April 3, 1986, Accession Number 129566.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591); Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Somali Democratic Republic.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Agency for International Development's (AID) fiscal year 1984 emergency food program for drought-stricken Africa to determine program results and to evaluate program management.

Findings/Conclusions: AID provided emergency food to cooperating sponsors in each country, who then distributed the food to the needy. As of December 1984, the sponsors had: (1) distributed 68 percent of the food; (2) not distributed 22 percent; (3) reported the status as unknown for 9 percent; (4) lost 1 percent; and (5) distributed 56 percent to the neediest people. GAO found several factors limiting AID emergency food distribution: (1) difficult terrain; (2) inefficient transportation networks; (3) limited government capabilities for assessing food needs; and (4) variances in the missions' planning and monitoring of emergency food distribution. GAO also found that: (1) there was a direct relationship between the amount of planning and monitoring and the extent to which the food reached the most

needy people; (2) the success of emergency programs depends on whether emergency food arrives when it is most needed and can be transported to drought-affected areas; (3) food delivery during rainy seasons can delay or preclude the delivery of significant quantities; and (4) the arrival of large quantities of food shortly before a harvest could significantly limit program success. GAO noted widespread problems in the AID program in Somalia because the government did not follow procedures in selling and auctioning wheat and other commodities, resulting in loss of funds for local development projects.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, AID, in order to improve the prospects for emergency food to reach those most seriously affected by famine, should require missions to review and approve cooperating sponsors' plans for distributing emergency food prior to its arrival. Missions should ensure that distribution plans specify the: (1) geographic areas or categories of people that will receive aid; (2) amount each area or group will receive; and (3) transportation and distribution networks to be used. The Administrator, AID, in order to improve the prospects for emergency food to reach those most seriously affected by famine, should require missions to submit emergency food requests as early as possible and, where appropriate, should encourage missions to submit partial requests based on preliminary estimates of cereal needs, and follow up with supplemental requests once needs are better known. The Administrator, AID, in order to improve the prospects for emergency food to reach those most seriously affected by famine, should strengthen AID Handbook 9 standards for monitoring emergency food. Such standards should specify the extent and type of monitoring needed to ensure proper accounting for commodities sold or distributed free, including visits to storage facilities, regional and local distribution sites, and villages. The Administrator, AID, should direct the AID Inspector General (IG) to review Public Law 480 food programs in Somalia; this would provide additional information on the results of title I and II food programs and identify needed improvements.

129223

[Humanitarian Assistance to the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance]. March 5, 1986. 7 pp. plus 1 attachment (1 p.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Foreign

Affairs: Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to Testimony, May 8, 1986, Accession Number 129822.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of State: Bureau of Inter-American Affairs: Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office; Republic of Nicaragua.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs: Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO discussed the adequacy of the Department of State's procedures and controls for ensuring that the \$27 million in humanitarian funds are being used for intended purposes. GAO found that: (1) State does not have the necessary controls to ensure that the funds are spent for the purposes intended because those charged with administering the program are unable to verify the expenditures made or observe the end use of the procured items; (2) the Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office (NHAO) intended to set up operations in Nicaragua, but diplomatic sensitivities prevented it from doing so; (3) the control over NHAO funds varied significantly depending on whether purchases were made in the United States or in the region; (4) NHAO has established procedures for administering procurements and making payments for purchases from U.S. suppliers, which allow it to control and oversee the types of goods and services being purchased and the prices paid; and (5) NHAO receives invoices and receipts to support almost all purchases made outside of the United States, but it has difficulty establishing the reasonableness of prices and cannot verify actual delivery or receipt of the procured items. GAO also found that: (1) despite the deficient controls over expenditures outside the United States, an increasing proportion of the assistance funds is being spent in the region; (2) due to the diplomatic sensitivities of the countries involved, deliveries of goods purchased in the United States could not take place; (3) if delivery problems continue, most funds are likely to be spent in the region; and (4) State has intensified its efforts to reverse the problems of delivering U.S. goods to Nicaragua.

129270

Food Inspections: FDA Should Rely More on State Agencies. HRD-86-2; B-211342. February 18, 1986.

Released March 10, 1986. 12 pp. plus 6 appendices (17 pp.). *Report* to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-84-65, August 30, 1984, Accession Number 125068; and RCED-88-135, August 10, 1988, Accession Number 136890.

Issue Area: Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; Rep. John D. Dingell.*

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed whether the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) could rely more on state agencies to inspect the sanitation conditions of the food manufacturing establishments in its current inventory.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO noted that FDA does not specify the frequency with which food sanitation inspections should be conducted, but selects establishments for inspection based on products produced, the potential health risk involved, and the industry's inspection history. GAO found that: (1) 57 out of 69 food establishments in the FDA active inventory were routinely inspected by state agencies on an average of every 7 months; (2) over half of the establishments had 10 percent or less interstate sales; and (3) of the 57 firms sampled, 23 had one or more routine inspections where serious sanitation problems were noted. GAO also found that: (1) FDA justified keeping 69 establishments in its inventory because they had a large volume of business, produced products that had the potential for sanitation problems, or were subject

to consumer complaints and labelling problems involving food and color additives; (2) where seriously unsanitary conditions are noted, state agencies inspect such establishments twice as frequently as other establishments; (3) consumer complaints could be forwarded to state agencies for follow-up procedures; and (4) in view of the states' significant roles in regulating the condition of food manufacturers, FDA inspections of most of the establishments are not warranted.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to review the current inventory and determine the establishments that should be removed, considering state inspection frequency, policies, results, interstate commerce, and sales volume. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, in conjunction with state inspection agencies, to begin developing a strategy for future inspection of establishments with a history of serious or very serious sanitation problems to help ensure that these establishments are in compliance with applicable food laws and regulations. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to consider the current level and allocation of inspection resources devoted to the food sanitation programs and make appropriate adjustments, recognizing the reduced inventory and extent of inspection coverage needed to adequately monitor food manufacturing establishments.

129286

Chemical Data: EPA's Data Collection Practices and Procedures on Chemicals. RCED-86-63; B-203051. February 10, 1986.

Released March 12, 1986. 6 pp. plus 5 appendices (31 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. James J. Florio, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-47FS, December 4, 1985, Accession Number 128618; RCED-85-75, March 26, 1985, Accession Number 126837; RCED-85-2, February 22, 1985, Accession Number 126618; and RCED-85-166, September 5, 1985, Accession Number 128069.

Issue Area: Environment: Other Issue Area Work (6891).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee; House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. James J. Florio; Rep. Henry A. Waxman.*

Authority: Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.). Toxic Substances Control Act (15 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.). Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.). Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.). Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980. Clean Water Act of 1977.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) data collection procedures and practices for toxic emissions and hazardous substances, specifically: (1) the types of data that EPA collects to support its regulatory decisions; and (2) EPA verification efforts to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data it collects.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) EPA makes decisions on the extent to which data are collected on an individual chemical or substance basis and, to a large degree, bases decisions on the judgment of its staff; (2) although EPA has broad authority to obtain data it deems necessary to help identify and regulate chemicals manufactured in the United States, it generally does not attempt to obtain data on every individual hazardous substance; (3) to a large extent, EPA relies on available sources, such as published literature and state files, to provide the data it needs; (4) EPA only verifies data to a limited extent to ensure that it is accurate; (5) EPA focuses its efforts on those chemicals for which it has the greatest need for current information and those under regulation or being considered for regulation; and (6) the extent of EPA verification efforts varies depending on where data are obtained and for what purposes. GAO also found that: (1) EPA does not verify data obtained from literature searches and other available sources because it believes that the sources are reliable and accurate enough to identify and screen substances for assessment; (2) once substances are

identified as potentially hazardous, EPA reviews the data for reasonableness and completeness; and (3) EPA may also conduct a limited number of on-site emission tests to obtain additional data, but these tests depend on the tradeoffs between costs and benefits.

129302

Social Security: Pension Data Useful for Detecting Supplemental Security Payment Errors. HRD-86-32; B-221797. March 12, 1986. 6 pp. plus 3 appendices (7 pp.). *Report to Otis R. Bowen, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; by Richard L. Fogel, Director, Human Resources Division.*

Issue Area: Income Security: Reducing Erroneous Payments Through Computer-Assisted Techniques While Preserving Individual Privacy Rights (5015); Privacy: Controlling and Managing Computer Techniques Such as Computer Profiling and Computer Matching To Ensure That Privacy and Due Process Rights of Individuals Are Protected (9002).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0); Health: Health Care Services (551.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Social Security Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Ways and Means; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Finance.

Authority: Social Security Act. Deficit Reduction Act of 1984.

Abstract: GAO evaluated the Social Security Administration's (SSA) computerized employment pension income data base to determine its potential usefulness in detecting payment errors in the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program. **Findings/Conclusions:** Based on its sample results, GAO estimated that, in December 1983: (1) 35,112 SSI cases received pension incomes; and (2) SSA overpaid 6,292 cases a total of \$427,200 because it computed benefit payments using incorrect pension income information. At a 95-percent level of statistical confidence, the number of SSI cases receiving unreported or underreported pension incomes could range from 4,915 to 8,053, and the monthly overpayment amounts could

range from \$266,400 to \$588,000. SSA data showed that: (1) most of the cases involved pension-related overpayments that had been occurring for extended periods, some exceeding 10 years; and (2) the 62 overpayment sample cases had accumulated about \$170,000 in overpayments. GAO estimated that accumulated overpayments for such SSI cases in December 1983 could total \$17.2 million.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Acting Commissioner of Social Security to perform a computer match patterned after a GAO pilot test and consider subsequent periodic matches of the entire SSI benefit file and the W-2P pension file to identify potential overpayment cases. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Acting Commissioner of Social Security to investigate and resolve, in accordance with existing agency policies and procedures, the cases identified. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Acting Commissioner of Social Security to comply with all applicable privacy and due process regulations. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Acting Commissioner of Social Security to attempt to determine what caused the payment errors and whether corrective actions can be taken to prevent their recurrence.

129355

Benefit Overpayments: Recoveries Could Be Increased in the Food Stamp and AFDC Programs. RCED-86-17; B-205033. March 14, 1986. 58 pp. plus 5 appendices (25 pp.). *Report to Congress; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to CED-77-112, July 18, 1977, Accession Number 103050; HRD-78-117, May 25, 1978, Accession Number 106201; HRD-80-80, July 18, 1980, Accession Number 113049; HRD-82-9, January 14, 1982, Accession Number 117300; RCED-83-40, February 4, 1983, Accession Number 120537; RCED-86-195, September 19, 1986, Accession Number 131045; and Testimony, April 16, 1986, Accession Number 129643.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Stamp Loss Measurement, Recovery, and Deterrence (6516).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services; Social Security Administration: Office of Family Assistance; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Budget; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Budget; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; Congress.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982. Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2022(b)). Deficit Reduction Act of 1984. Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 602(a)(22)). Food Security Act. H.R. 2100 (99th Cong.). H.R. 3128 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Food Stamp and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) programs to: (1) examine how state and local collection offices use such collection methods as recoupment to recover overpayment claims; and (2) identify specific actions that would increase collections. The programs are operated by the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Family Assistance (OFA), respectively.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the procedures used to collect food stamp overpayment claims are generally more restrictive than those used for AFDC claims regarding when states may use recoupment; (2) while recoupment is an effective collection technique, applicable law prohibits the use of recoupment to collect overpayments caused by agency errors; (3) overpayments caused by agency errors accounted for about 34 percent of claims against Food Stamp program participants; and (4) USDA has estimated that the use of recoupment in the Food Stamp program could increase collections by \$1.4 million each month. GAO also found that: (1) in many cases, overpayment recipients leave the program before claims against them are fully paid and do not repay their claims; (2) if FNS gave participants only 10 days to respond to payment demand letters, instead of 30, it could increase collections by 8 percent in the offices

GAO visited; and (3) FNS could also increase collections by giving priority processing to claims against current participants and improving systems used to identify former participants who reenter the programs with outstanding claims. In addition, GAO found that: (1) claims against households no longer participating in the Food Stamp program totalled \$135 million in 1984, and FNS was not receiving payments on \$85 million of those claims; and (2) one possible way to improve collections on those claims would be to offset federal income tax refunds against participants' outstanding claims.

Recommendation To Congress: To improve the effectiveness of states' collection operations, Congress should amend the Food Stamp Act of 1977 to authorize states to pursue mandatory recoupment of overpayments that were caused by agency errors, as is done in the AFDC program. This can be done by amending the first sentence of section 13(b)(2)(A) by striking out "and claims arising from an error of the state agency." To further improve the efficiency and results of collection operations, Congress should amend the Food Stamp Act of 1977 to eliminate the requirement that states offer installment payments as an option in recovering overpayments from participants. This can be done by amending the first sentence of section 13(b)(1)(A) by striking out "in accordance with a schedule determined by the Secretary." Such a change would not preclude states from allowing lump sum repayments or using installments when a household is no longer participating in the program or supplementing recoupment with any additional payments the participant might wish to make. To improve collections of overpaid benefits, maximize the use of recoupment, and improve consistency between the AFDC and Food Stamp programs, Congress should amend the Food Stamp Act of 1977 to require a maximum 10-day period for participants to respond to payment demand letters. Such a change can be accomplished by changing the word "thirty" to "ten" in the second sentence of section 13(b)(1)(A). If the 2-year test of tax refund offsets specified by the Deficit Reduction Act of 1984 proves that such offsets are feasible, Congress should consider specifically authorizing states to submit unpaid claims against former AFDC and Food Stamp recipients for collection using offsets of federal income tax refunds through procedures similar to those employed under the Deficit Reduction Act. To initially test the cost-effectiveness of the procedure, states

should be allowed to use the procedure, on a voluntary basis, closely monitored by the responsible federal program agencies to ensure that adequate data are developed to evaluate the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of using it on a programwide basis.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Administrator, OFA, to specify that recoupment be used to recover overpayments from all participants receiving program benefits. This recommendation would not preclude installment payments being used in the AFDC program to supplement recoupment or lump sum payments to collect overpayment claims. To improve the timeliness of state collection actions, the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services should direct the Administrators, FNS and OFA, respectively, to require priority processing of claims involving current participants by establishing time-period criteria that would require prompt collection action on such claims. To improve the timeliness of state collection actions, the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services should direct the Administrators, FNS and OFA, respectively, to evaluate the operations of states' systems used to start collection action on cases involving former participants with outstanding claims who reenter the programs; identify reasons why such cases are not always identified at the time of application; and assist the states to improve their operations to remedy any such problems. The Secretary of Agriculture should require states to initiate collection action on food stamp claims involving participants awaiting administrative disqualification hearings.

129383

[Question Concerning Interest Rates Under FmHA Loan Programs]. B-215635. March 19, 1986. 8 pp. *Decision* re: Farmers Home Administration; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.
Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Authority: Rural Housing Amendments of 1983 (P.L. 98-181; 97 Stat. 1240). Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1471 et seq.). 7 C.F.R. 1944.456. 7 C.F.R. 1944.462(a). 7 C.F.R. 1944.451. 7 C.F.R. 1944.40(c). 53 Comp. Gen. 422. P.L. 98-473. S. Rept. 98-142. S. Rept. 98-566. 98 Stat. 1837.

Abstract: The Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) requested a decision concerning the continued status of and interest rates to be charged under its two rural housing loan programs. GAO held that, in 1983, Congress enacted legislation that: (1) removed FmHA statutory authority to establish interest rates; (2) continued FmHA authority to make loans; (3) was not intended to terminate the programs or to authorize FmHA to give interest-free loans; and (4) limited eligibility for loans to individuals. GAO found that FmHA: (1) should amend its regulations to reflect the eligibility limitations; and (2) has the authority to establish appropriate interest rates for the loan programs.

129425

[Question Concerning CCC Obligation To Compensate Sugar Beet Growers]. B-118622. February 19, 1986.

Released March 26, 1986. 3 pp. *Letter* to Rep. Hank Brown; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.
Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Great Western Sugar Co.
Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Hank Brown.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98; 7 U.S.C. 1446(h); 95 Stat. 1213). Agricultural Act of 1949 (P.L. 81-439; 7 U.S.C. 1421(e); 63 Stat. 1052). 7 C.F.R. 1435.114(b). Cong. Rec. [131] H12249.

Abstract: GAO commented on whether the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) was legally obligated to compensate Colorado sugar beet growers who were not paid in accordance with price-support agreements for the 1984 crop. GAO noted that: (1) where price-support programs are carried out through purchases, loans, or payments to processors, the Secretary of Agriculture should ensure that producers of the commodity have received or will receive maximum benefits from the price supports; (2) a processor for the 1984 sugar beet crop certified that it had paid or would pay all producers the rates required under price-support loan regulations; and (3) even though the processor obtained loans from CCC for the 1984 crop year, it filed for bankruptcy, leaving substantial amounts on its contracts with sugar beet growers unpaid. GAO found that, since the nonpayment occurred because of

bankruptcy, CCC was required, under new legislation, to pay producers the difference between the maximum benefits owed and the amounts the processor had already paid.

129552

School Meal Program: Options for Improving the Verification of Student Eligibility. RCED-86-122BR; B-222207. March 17, 1986.

Released April 9, 1986. 76 pp. plus 6 appendices (11 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. William F. Goodling; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to CED-81-81, March 9, 1981, Accession Number 114634; HRD-85-22, March 1, 1985, Accession Number 126333; and RCED-84-132, March 30, 1984, Accession Number 123779.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* William F. Goodling.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35). School Lunch Act. Child Nutrition Act.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO: (1) examined the impact that the documentation and verification requirements in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 had on school meal program error rates in the 1984 to 1985 school year; (2) evaluated procedures that school food authorities used to document and verify applicants' eligibility for school meal benefits; and (3) identified alternatives to the current documentation and verification procedures.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, for a student to qualify for a free meal, an adult member of the household must submit an application to the local school food authority, which then determines the student's eligibility for program benefits. The eligibility determination process relies on the applicants' declarations, rather than documentation originating from third parties. Because many applicants did not substantiate the incomes declared on their applications, the average error rate for the 1984-1985 school year was 29 percent. Although the school districts generally adhered to

the verification regulations and procedures by verifying applications and making accurate determinations, most errors remained undetected and uncorrected because regulations required eligibility information to be verified for only a small sample of applications. GAO identified four options that could be used to reduce erroneous participation in the school meal programs, including: (1) requiring documentation with all applications; (2) requiring income documentation with non-food-stamp applications only; (3) expanding verification efforts at school districts with high error rates; and (4) strengthening verification procedures by using wage matching. The options could reduce the participant error rate in the programs, which would result in savings to the federal government, but they could also produce higher administrative costs for the school food authorities and place an administrative burden on some applicants. GAO believes that further studies of the inherent advantages and disadvantages of each option are needed.

129566

Famine in Africa: Improving U.S. Response Time for Emergency Relief. NSIAD-86-56; B-217978. April 3, 1986. 4 pp. plus 1 appendix (9 pp.). *Report* to Julia Chang Bloch, Assistant Administrator, Agency for International Development; by Joseph E. Kelley, Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-25, March 4, 1986, Accession Number 129221; and NSIAD-88-96FS, February 25, 1988, Accession Number 135106.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate*

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: GAO commented on the time it took federal agencies to approve emergency food requests, obtain the commodities, and start loading them for shipment to African countries during the 1985 emergency.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) in 1985 it took an average of 110 days to approve emergency food program requests, obtain commodities, and arrange shipping, which was somewhat less than the time required in 1984; (2) requests were approved considerably more quickly in 1985; and (3) commodities were obtained in about the same amount of time in both years but, in 1985, they remained at U.S. ports considerably longer before shipment. GAO also found that: (1) February and March 1985 approvals averaged 21 days, compared with about 2 months for 1984; (2) commodities were obtained in about 58 days during both years; and (3) in 1985, commodities waited for loading and shipment an average of 31 days compared with an average of 14 days in 1984. Although the African drought and the demand for emergency food aid appear to have lessened, GAO believes that: (1) the Agency for International Development (AID) and Department of Agriculture (USDA) should continue to give priority attention to seeking and testing ways to shorten the time for obtaining and shipping emergency program commodities; and (2) such efforts could be facilitated by more systematic coordination and collaboration with the private voluntary and industry organizations involved in the process.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Assistant Administrator, AID, should ensure that appropriate attention continues to be given to finding ways to shorten the timeframe for procuring and shipping emergency food commodities to famine-stricken countries. One way to accomplish this may be the assignment of specific responsibility to an agency official at a sufficiently high level to generate the necessary cooperation and support. This official could obtain the views of government, private organization, and industry officials and monitor the testing and implementation of measures to shorten the time required to provide emergency commodities.

129587

Imported Wines: Identifying and Removing Wines Contaminated

With Diethylene Glycol. RCED-86-112; B-222128. March 4, 1986.

Released April 11, 1986. 15 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Frank Horton; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to Testimony, May 28, 1986, Accession Number 129938; and RCED-86-214FS, August 29, 1986, Accession Number 131182.

Issue Area: Environment: Evaluation of the Federal Pesticide Regulatory Process' Capability To Protect Public Health and the Environment From Unreasonable Risks (6806); Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of U.S. Food/Agriculture Products in Satisfying Safety, Quality, and Dietary Needs (6508).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; Food and Drug Administration; Department of the Treasury.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Treasury-Postal Service and General Government Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works; *Rep.* Frank Horton.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. Alcohol Administration Act. Internal Revenue Code (IRC). *Brown-Forman Distillers Corp. v. Mathews*, 435 F. Supp. 5 (W.D. Ky. 1976).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed federal agency actions in dealing with the contamination of imported wines with the industrial chemical diethylene glycol (DEG), particularly with Austrian wines where the contamination was more significant.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that both the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) may regulate and prohibit the marketing of contaminated or mislabeled imported wines; however, neither BATF nor FDA routinely test imported wines for the presence of toxic substances or contaminants. In an effort to have all Austrian wines currently being marketed in the United States tested for DEG, BATF required that importers and

wholesalers have samples of all Austrian wines under their control tested in private laboratories, but the success of the testing is unknown since BATF did not identify which importers and wholesalers sold and distributed Austrian wines, or which Austrian wines were currently being marketed in the United States. BATF tests of wines from 70 countries indicated that DEG was only found in Austrian, West German, and Italian wines and in varying amounts. However, unlike the Austrian wines, BATF did not stop the German and Italian wines at entry ports or properly test them for DEG. Although BATF was authorized to halt any sales of wines containing DEG, it relied on importers and wholesalers to remove contaminated wines from the market, but did not verify that the wines were removed or require reports on removal actions. In addition, it did not seek an FDA assessment to determine what amount of DEG would represent a significant health risk. GAO believes that the government needs to provide an appropriate degree of assurance that wines with DEG in amounts representing a risk will be identified and removed from the market.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of the Treasury should direct the Director, BATF, to: (1) consult with the Commissioner, FDA, to determine whether the actions taken by BATF in sampling, testing, and having wines contaminated with the industrial chemical DEG removed from the marketplace were adequate to protect public health and safety and take whatever action is warranted as a result of these consultations; and (2) use the results of such consultations to develop appropriate policies and procedures for working with FDA regarding any future contamination of alcoholic beverages. The Director, BATF, should report to the appropriate oversight committees, as well as to the House Committee on Government Operations, on the results of these consultations and any actions taken.

129594

[The Agricultural Export Enhancement Program and Agricultural Foreign Market Development Programs]. April 10, 1986. 35 pp. plus 8 attachments (10 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Associate Director, National Security and International

Affairs Division. Refer to Testimony, October 8, 1985, Accession Number 128096.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on the Judiciary: Administrative Practice and Procedure Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture and Forestry; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin; *Sen.* Charles E. Grassley. **Authority:** Food Security Act. Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480). General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700. Food Security Improvements Act of 1986.

Abstract: GAO discussed its assessment of the Agricultural Export Enhancement Program and the progress the program is making in achieving its objectives to increase U.S. exports and encourage the European community to begin serious bilateral and multilateral negotiations on agricultural trade problems. GAO found that: (1) isolating and assessing the impact of the program is a difficult task; and (2) any impact the program might have would be reinforced by the declining value of the dollar and the 1985 Farm Security Act, which provides for the lowering of loan rates. GAO also found that both changes are expected to: (1) result in increased competitiveness of U.S. agricultural products and higher U.S. exports; and (2) raise the costs of the European community's agricultural subsidy or restitution program, which would reduce its export subsidies. An increase in U.S. exports or any movement toward negotiations with the European community cannot be primarily attributed to the Agricultural Export Enhancement Program.

129615

Farm Finance: Farm Debt, Government Payments, and Options To Relieve Financial Stress. RCED-86-126BR; B-220507. March 18, 1986. 88 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Bill Bradley; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-9, October 10, 1985, Accession Number 128115.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service.
Congressional Relevance: *Sen. Bill Bradley.*

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on: (1) the nature of current farm debt; (2) the distribution of federal farm program direct payments to financially stressed farms; and (3) alternatives for reducing excessive farm debt.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) outstanding farm debt currently totals more than \$200 billion, divided about equally between real estate loans and other loans; (2) about \$74 billion in 1984 debt was held by farms with debt-to-asset ratios of 40 percent or more; (3) more than 50 percent of this amount was held by farms receiving direct farm program payments; and (4) lenders reported about \$25.7 billion in delinquent or nonperforming farm loans at the end of fiscal year 1985. GAO also found that: (1) direct federal farm payments totalled \$3.3 billion in 1984, of which commercial farms received 91 percent; (2) commercial farms with high debt-to-asset ratios received about \$1.2 billion; (3) average payments were higher for farms with high debt-to-asset ratios; (4) about 43 percent of commercial farms received direct payments; and (5) without federal direct payments, many commercial farms would have negative cash flow. In addition, GAO found that alternatives for reducing excessive farm debt include, in order of increasing cost: (1) a federal loan guarantee with a 10-percent principal write-down by lenders; (2) an interest rate buy-down ranging from 1.60 to 2.86 percentage points; (3) a holding company that would buy farm land and other assets and lease them to farmers; and (4) a federal discharge of debt for farms with negative cash flows.

129637

Foreign Assistance: How the Funds Are Spent. NSIAD-86-73; B-222050. March 7, 1986.

Released April 15, 1986. 3 pp. plus 4 appendices (32 pp.). *Report to Rep. David R. Obey, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division.*

Issue Area: Security and International Relations: Effective, Economical

Management of U.S. Security Assistance to Countries and Adequacy of Consideration of Regional Impact of U.S. Aid (6102).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Military Assistance (152.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Export-Import Bank of the United States; Asian Development Bank; Inter-American Development Bank; African Development Bank; United Nations: Development Program; United Nations: Children's Fund; Department of Defense; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Rep. David R. Obey.*

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed fiscal year 1984 foreign assistance program outlays to determine how funds were actually spent and who benefited from the program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the Agency for International Development (AID) disbursed significant portions of its assistance funds in the United States to a variety of entities, which directly benefited the U.S. economy, the recipient organizations, and the recipient countries involved; (2) AID paid over 75 percent of its disbursements in 9 states and the District of Columbia; (3) the Export-Import Bank paid almost all of its disbursements to U.S. suppliers of materials and services; (4) the World Bank and other multilateral development banks procured less than 10 percent of their goods and services from U.S. sources; (5) the United Nations (UN) Development Program paid about 23 percent of its disbursements to U.S. suppliers; and (6) the UN Children's Fund expended about \$47.9 million in the United States, compared to the \$53 million in voluntary contributions it collected in the United States. GAO also found that: (1) it could not identify funding sources for foreign military sales (FMS) contractor payments because FMS loan and Military Assistance Program funds are commingled in individual trust funds for each recipient nation; (2) companies in 10 states received about 84.1 percent of FMS contract awards; and (3) the top 10 FMS contractors received about 59 percent of FMS contract awards.

129641

Noncash Benefits: An Evaluation of the Census Bureau's Measurement Conference. PEMD-86-8BR; B-222373. April 17, 1986. 43 pp. plus 3 appendices (22 pp.). *Briefing Report to Rep. William D. Ford, Chairman, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service; Rep. Robert Garcia, Chairman, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; Rep. James V. Hansen, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PEMD-87-7BR, October 24, 1986, Accession Number 131509; HRD-88-9, November 4, 1987, Accession Number 134669; and PEMD-87-23, September 30, 1987, Accession Number 134297.*

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Improving the Evaluation of Cost Containment Strategies (7205).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service; Rep. James V. Hansen; Rep. Robert Garcia; Rep. William D. Ford.*

Abstract: In response to congressional requests, GAO reported on its assessment of a Census Bureau conference on the measurement of noncash benefits.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that four topics were discussed, including: (1) concerns about the Bureau's methods for valuing noncash benefits; (2) suggested solutions to some of those concerns; (3) general measurement principles; and (4) suggestions for future research. The conference focused principally on conceptual issues and devoted less attention to operational and computational considerations surrounding the measurement of income. Over half of the 104 attendees representing an array of government and other public and private sector organizations were economists. GAO found that 45 of the participants made major contributions and half of them were experts in general noncash benefits or in the statistical definition of income.

GAO believes that the conference discussion may underrepresent the views of some concerned groups. The breadth of opinions expressed in conference discussions represents a lower boundary on the diversity of views that may actually exist.

129643

[USDA and Other Proposals To Reduce Food Stamp Program Expenditures]. April 16, 1986. 13 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-85-109, April 17, 1985, Accession Number 126842; RCED-84-155, April 25, 1984, Accession Number 124028; RCED-85-98, April 12, 1985, Accession Number 126750; RCED-86-17, March 14, 1986, Accession Number 129355; *Testimony*, March 15, 1984, Accession Number 123639; *Testimony*, April 25, 1984, Accession Number 123992; and *Testimony*, October 8, 1985, Accession Number 128096.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee. .

Authority: Food Security Act. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982. Food Stamp Act of 1977. H.R. 5151 (98th Cong.). H.R. 2621 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO discussed its reports offering alternative or additional approaches for saving Food Stamp program money. The Department of Agriculture's (USDA) quality control system measures the types and extent of errors that states make when determining Food Stamp program eligibility. USDA proposed that states with error rates exceeding the 5-percent limit be sanctioned an amount equal to the overissuances. GAO supports the concept of error-rate sanctions because they give states financial incentives to reduce program errors; however, the most significant obstacle to error-rate enforcement is the accuracy of the quality control system and the reliability of the error rates it produces. USDA assessed 26 states a total of \$56 million on the basis of their quality control error rates; however, Congress placed a 3-

month moratorium on the sanctions and called for an evaluation of the quality control system. Food stamp legislation requires states to recover all benefit overissuances by deducting an amount from the monthly benefits otherwise due the participant. This recoupment process is effective only if collection action is taken soon after the overpayment is identified, since participants leave the program and make recoupment impossible. GAO has recommended that: (1) Congress amend the Food Stamp Act to provide for mandatory recoupment of all overissuances; and (2) USDA require priority processing of claims involving current participants with time-period criteria that would require prompt collection action. Tests are being conducted on the feasibility of federal tax refund offsets to improve recoveries from former participants.

129657

Agency for International Development's 1978 and 1986 Programs for Jamaica, Kenya, and Senegal. NSIAD-86-103BR; B-222750. April 15, 1986. 3 pp. plus 3 appendices (27 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Nancy L. Kassebaum, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: African Affairs Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-85-87, September 6, 1985, Accession Number 127863.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Improving the U.S. Oversight and Management of Its Participation in International Organizations (6202).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations: African Affairs Subcommittee; *Sen.* Nancy L. Kassebaum.

Authority: P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reported on Agency for International Development (AID) programs in Jamaica, Kenya, and Senegal, focusing on: (1) how the current mix of projects compares with AID programs in those countries 10 years ago; (2) how much of the current total aid is going to recipient governments either directly or indirectly; and (3) the

content of projects intended to encourage private-sector development.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that current objectives for Senegal and Kenya do not differ significantly from fiscal year (FY) 1978. However, objectives for Jamaica have changed in response to economic problems experienced since 1980. In FY 1978, AID provided Jamaica with \$11 million in economic support assistance, but neither Kenya nor Senegal received this type of assistance. In contrast, AID is providing Jamaica with \$59 million, Kenya with \$14 million, and Senegal with \$11 million in economic support funds for FY 1986. These funds are conditional upon agreements with recipient governments to institute specific economic reforms, many of which are aimed at reducing government regulation of the private sector and stimulating its growth. Public Law 83-480 assistance to these countries for FY 1986 is significantly greater than it was for 1978 and is conditional on government reforms in the agricultural sector. GAO also found that some FY 1986 development assistance projects are intended to enhance private-sector growth. GAO identified 2 of 4 FY 1986 projects in Kenya, 2 of 4 in Senegal, and 10 of 16 in Jamaica that included an emphasis on private-sector development in support of private voluntary organizations. For all three countries, proposed FY 1987 programs reflect a continuing emphasis on promoting private-sector growth through development projects and policy dialogue with recipient governments.

129673

[U.S. Participation in the Multilateral Trading System and Related Agricultural Trade Policy Issues]. April 15, 1986. 11 pp. plus 1 attachment (1 p.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-85-118, September 23, 1985, Accession Number 127972.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture. .

Authority: Food Security Act. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: GAO discussed agricultural trade issues and related matters. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) system provides guidelines and settles conflicts between GATT parties. Multilateral efforts, such as trade negotiations, have not only lowered tariffs, but attempted to better define and establish discipline for trade policy actions, such as government procurement, subsidies, and the imposition of product standards. The GATT subsidies code prohibits export subsidies on nonprimary products without qualification, but retains complex standards for determining the acceptability of export subsidies on such primary products as agricultural goods. Market accessibility for agricultural goods is more restricted than for other kinds of products because of unbound tariffs and nontariff measures. GAO believes that: (1) more effective limitations on export subsidies would curtail market participation by noncompetitive suppliers; (2) the decline in the dollar and in loan roles should lead to an increase in U.S. agricultural exports and create circumstances that encourage U.S. trading partners to negotiate; and (3) the United States maintains restrictive trade practices similar to those which it is trying to have other countries remove, U.S. policymakers cannot focus exclusively on its competitors' restrictive trade practices.

129696

Hunger Counties: Methodological Review of a Report by the Physician Task Force on Hunger. PEMD-86-7BR; B-222232. March 18, 1986. 37 pp. plus 6 appendices (11 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Bill Emerson, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. E. Thomas Coleman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Planning, Conduct, Reporting, and Use of Executive Branch Evaluations (7206); Food and Agriculture: Satisfaction of Nutritional and Health Concerns by Food Assistance Programs (6518).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Physician Task Force on Hunger in America; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service: Food Stamp Division.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Rep.* E. Thomas Coleman; *Rep.* Bill Emerson.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO evaluated a Physician Task Force on Hunger in America report, which included a list of the 150 U.S. counties with the highest incidence of hunger, to determine: (1) its technical soundness; (2) the strength of its conclusions; and (3) the data and methods used as identifiers. **Findings/Conclusions:** The task force undertook the study in an attempt to: (1) document the distribution of counties with the worst poverty and poorest food stamp participation; (2) quantify the hunger gap in the counties by comparing the need of the nation's poorest families and the food stamp assistance actually provided to them; and (3) establish a basis for analyzing barriers to more effective program use. GAO found that the task force: (1) designated counties high in poverty and low in food stamp participation as hunger counties; (2) estimated the number of county residents eligible for food stamps based on Census Bureau poverty data; (3) used a standard method of measuring the incidence of poverty in U.S. counties; (4) compared monthly participation in the program with annual eligibility, resulting in serious inaccuracies; (5) did not report on the level of food stamp participation in the low-poverty counties; and (6) combined the poverty and food stamp participation indicators to estimate hunger distribution in U.S. counties. GAO expressed doubts about the overall method used in determining geographic distribution of hunger because the participation indicator: (1) did not account for assets in the definition of eligibility; (2) used a relative, rather than an absolute indicator; (3) inconsistently combined monthly and yearly data; and (4) needed to be adjusted for changes between 1979 and 1984. GAO noted that the indirect measurement of hunger through indicators of poverty and food stamp participation may not present an accurate picture of the geographic distribution of hunger problems.

129699

Biotechnology: Agriculture's Regulatory System Needs

Clarification. RCED-86-59; B-222146. March 25, 1986. 64 pp. plus 2

appendices (6 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Don Fuqua, Chairman, House Committee on Science and Technology; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General). Refer to RCED-86-39BR, October 25, 1985, Accession Number 128383; CED-82-7, December 4, 1981, Accession Number 116986; and Testimony, May 8, 1986, Accession Number 129809.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of U.S. Food/Agriculture Products in Satisfying Safety, Quality, and Dietary Needs (6508); Environment: Evaluation of the Federal Pesticide Regulatory Process' Capability To Protect Public Health and the Environment From Unreasonable Risks (6806); Science and Technology Policy and Programs: Other Issue Area Work (9391).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Agriculture Recombinant DNA Research Committee; Department of Agriculture; Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Science, Space, and Technology; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *House* Committee on Science and Technology; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep.* Don Fuqua.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 262). Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 651 et seq.). Toxic Substances Control Act (15 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.). Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136). Plant Quarantine Act (7 U.S.C. 151 et seq.). Plant Pest Act (7 U.S.C. 150aa). Virus, Serum and Toxin Act (21 U.S.C. 151 et seq.). Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National). Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.). P.L. 99-198. 49 Fed. Reg. 50856. 50 Fed. Reg. 29367.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department

of Agriculture's (USDA): (1) programs and activities relating to biotechnology; (2) decisionmaking concerning the release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment; and (3) relationship with other federal agencies involved in biotechnology.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) USDA has not formulated a well-defined regulatory structure to approve requests for the deliberate release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment; (2) oversight of biotechnology programs is handled by agencies within USDA that have other responsibilities and were established before the emergence of new biotechnologies; (3) the USDA Agriculture Recombinant DNA Research Committee (ARRC) lacks the authority and direction to effectively act as the focal point for biotechnology matters; and (4) USDA has not communicated to Congress and the public the benefits and risks of biotechnology, as well as its plans to minimize those risks. GAO also found that USDA has been hesitant to develop a well-defined regulatory structure because: (1) it does not want to impose cumbersome regulations that might stifle growth; (2) the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has been examining biotechnology regulation and coordinating the actions of many federal agencies; and (3) several lawsuits filed by opponents of biotechnology have created some anxiety. USDA has recently set up a general framework for biotechnology regulation, but it still needs to establish: (1) detailed procedures concerning responsibility for a wide range of research and product development; (2) ARRC authority and duties; and (3) improved communications with Congress and the public for more informed discussion and a lessening of fears.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Assistant Secretaries for Marketing and Inspection Services and Science and Education to work together to develop a formalized, well-defined regulatory structure over biotechnology, particularly with regard to deliberate releases of genetically engineered organisms into the environment. Such a structure should be sufficiently detailed to minimize questions about who in USDA is responsible for decisions in particular areas and flexible enough to encompass the wide range of biotechnological research and product development expected. It could, if deemed appropriate, incorporate a fully developed National Biological Impact Assessment Program and recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid guidelines geared

specifically toward agriculture. Further, it should clearly identify the regulatory procedures for handling requests to license biotechnology products and approve the deliberate release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Assistant Secretaries for Marketing and Inspection Services and Science and Education to work together to provide the USDA coordinating committee, currently ARRC, with the authority, prestige, and sense of direction it needs to effectively act as the USDA focal point for biotechnology. The committee should have the power to resolve differences that may arise with regard to biotechnology within USDA and to act on behalf of USDA in resolving differences between USDA and other federal agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health, Environmental Protection Agency, or Food and Drug Administration. The committee should be constituted as it is now with representatives from various agencies within and outside USDA. The various representatives should be able and willing to commit high priority to their committee responsibilities. The Secretary of Agriculture should look for, and take advantage of, opportunities to improve and increase the communication of USDA views on biotechnology, both in terms of the benefits to be derived and the risks that must be considered and managed. In this regard, the Secretary should consider a variety of approaches for doing this, including brochures, newsletters, public conferences and debates, and a Yearbook of Agriculture devoted to biotechnology. The purpose of all such communication should be to foster a more open, frank, and informed discussion about USDA views on biotechnology and how USDA will address the related risks.

129809

[GAO Reviews of USDA Biotechnology Research Efforts and Regulatory Programs and Activities]. May 8, 1986. 7 pp. *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-39BR, October 25, 1985, Accession Number 128383; and RCED-86-59, March 25, 1986, Accession Number 129699.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Agriculture Recombinant DNA Research Committee.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; *Rep.* Don Fuqua.

Abstract: GAO discussed its two reports on the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) biotechnology research efforts and regulatory programs and activities. GAO noted that: (1) USDA sponsored 778 biotechnology projects in fiscal years 1984 and 1985 at an annual cost of \$40.5 million; and (2) 87 of the projects were expected to involve the deliberate release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment. GAO also noted that USDA: (1) has not provided its Agriculture Recombinant DNA Research Committee (ARRC) with the authority or direction it needs to serve as the USDA focal point for biotechnology matters; (2) needs to completely develop a formal, well-defined regulatory mechanism for biotechnology; (3) should make ARRC or its successor responsible for all biotechnology matters, including representing USDA in interagency biotechnology efforts; and (4) needs to better inform Congress and the public about the expected benefits and potential risks of biotechnology research.

129822

[Humanitarian Assistance to the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance]. May 8, 1986. 4 pp. plus 1 attachment (1 p.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to *Testimony*, March 3, 1986, Accession Number 129223.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of State: Bureau of Inter-American Affairs: Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs: Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO discussed the Department of State's Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office's (NHAO) procedures for ensuring that funds authorized for humanitarian assistance to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance were used as intended. GAO

found that NHAO: (1) generally exercised adequate control over the disposition of funds to U.S. suppliers; (2) could not assess the validity of receipts totalling \$13.3 million; (3) was unable to check on many suppliers; (4) had difficulty establishing the reasonableness of prices; and (5) could not verify the actual delivery or receipt of items. GAO also found that NHAO did not have any documentation of brokers' payments to suppliers because: (1) there was no bank account exclusively for the receipt of NHAO payments; (2) payments were not mirror images of NHAO payments to brokers; and (3) NHAO makes block fund transfers to Central America, where they are disaggregated and individual suppliers are paid, often in cash. NHAO is continuing its efforts to obtain statements from suppliers when they receive payments. GAO recommended that NHAO ensure that brokers maintain separate accounts for humanitarian assistance program funds.

129938

[Federal Actions in Dealing With Contaminated Imported Wines].

May 28, 1986. 12 pp. plus 4 appendices (8 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Government Operations: Commerce, Consumer and Monetary Affairs Subcommittee; by Hugh J. Wessinger, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-112, March 4, 1986, Accession Number 129587.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Commerce, Consumer and Monetary Affairs Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO discussed Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) actions in dealing with imported wines contaminated with the industrial chemical diethylene glycol (DEG), a highly toxic substance used in industrial applications. In 1985, after DEG was found in some Austrian, West German, and Italian wines, the Bureau began testing those wines. Although FDA is responsible for preventing the importation of contaminated food and beverages and for testing samples of domestic and imported products, it does not usually test imported alcoholic beverages for contaminants. Standard BATF tests only determine ingredient

levels and verify labelling accuracy. BATF initiated a DEG testing effort because it could conduct the testing more quickly than FDA; subsequently, FDA referred DEG testing to BATF. BATF held all shipments of Austrian wines for testing and asked wholesalers and importers of Austrian wines to have private laboratories test samples of their imported wines. However, BATF success in testing all Austrian wines is unknown because it did not identify which importers and wholesalers sold and distributed Austrian wines, or which Austrian wines they marketed in the United States. BATF relied on importers and wholesalers to remove all contaminated wines from the market, but it did not routinely review their actions or require them to report on their actions. GAO concluded that: (1) because BATF did not identify those importers actively importing Austrian wines, it could not assess compliance with the testing and reporting requirement; (2) BATF did not maintain and disseminate a current master list of all contaminated wines; and (3) gaps and inconsistencies in BATF recordkeeping may have hampered its ability to ensure that it identified all contaminated wines and to monitor the actions of importers in removing those wines from the market. GAO believes that the government needs to provide an appropriate degree of assurance that it will identify and remove from the market wines with DEG in amounts representing a significant risk to health.

129999

Pesticides: EPA's Formidable Task To Assess and Regulate Their Risks. RCED-86-125; B-203051. April 18, 1986.

Released May 27, 1986. 120 pp. plus 8 appendices (14 pp.). *Report* to Sen. David Durenberger, Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; Sen. Max S. Baucus, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to CED-80-32, February 15, 1980, Accession Number 111866; RED-76-42, December 4, 1975, Accession Number 096904; HRD-82-3, December 11, 1981, Accession Number 117047; Testimony, February 14, 1978, Accession Number 105119; T-RCED-87-21, April 30, 1987, Accession Number 132820; RCED-87-142, September 30, 1987, Accession Number

134133; and T-RCED-87-27, June 8, 1987, Accession Number 133153.

Issue Area: Environment: Evaluation of the Federal Pesticide Regulatory Process' Capability To Protect Public Health and the Environment From Unreasonable Risks (6806); Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned:

Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works: Superfund and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; Congress; Sen. Max S. Baucus; Sen. David Durenberger.

Authority: Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136 et seq.). Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 551 et seq.). 40 C.F.R. 158. P.L. 88-136. H.R. 4364 (99th Cong.). S. 2215 (99th Cong.). S. Rept. 95-1188. Birth Defect Prevention Act (California). 31 U.S.C. 9701.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) assessment and regulation process for the health and environmental effects of pesticides.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO noted that EPA: (1) has not received test and evaluation data on the adverse health and environmental effects of most of the currently registered pesticide products; (2) may conduct a special review to determine the risks and benefits of potentially hazardous pesticides to decide if regulatory action to cancel or restrict the pesticides is needed; and (3) is responsible for determining the maximum amount of pesticide residue that can be safely left in foods, the risks

f the inert ingredients that propel, stabilize, or stabilize the active ingredients, and the cancer-causing potential of pesticides. GAO found that EPA: (1) will continue its reassessment and reregistration efforts into the next century because of the magnitude and complexity of the tasks involved; (2) is implementing changes to speed up its special review process; (3) is experiencing difficulty in obtaining test data on the effects of some inert ingredients; and (4) has encountered legal inconsistencies with respect to the allowable uses of cancer-causing pesticides in variable situations.

Recommendation To Congress: Congress may wish to consider the advantages and disadvantages of alternatives for accelerating reregistration. Among some possible alternatives, Congress may wish to consider: (1) shifting the burden to industry to identify and submit data missing from EPA files or no longer valid or adequate by contemporary scientific standards; (2) setting reasonable deadlines for the generation and review of health and environmental tests for older pesticides on the market; and (3) providing EPA with additional resources to expedite the pace of reassessing older pesticides and reviewing the volume of industry-submitted health and environmental studies that EPA expects to receive in the coming years as a result of its efforts to call in needed data. User fees under consideration by EPA might be one method of funding the additional resources. Congress may wish to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the following alternatives for regulating carcinogenic food-use pesticides: (1) amending the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (FDC) and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) to prohibit the setting of tolerances and all food uses of carcinogenic pesticides, in raw agricultural commodities and as food and feed additives, to require EPA to revoke the existing tolerances for carcinogenic pesticide residues, and to cancel the pesticide registration of these pesticides; and (2) amending FDC to lift the Delaney Clause's ban on carcinogens as it relates to pesticides, and instead specify that either a risk-benefit or minimal-risk approach be used for setting tolerances for all food uses of carcinogenic pesticides. Congress may wish to consider the following alternatives to ensure that EPA continues efforts to carry out its proposals to tighten up conditioned registrations of new pesticides: (1) requiring EPA, in its FIFRA-mandated annual report to Congress, to include information on the status of registrants'

compliance with the conditions imposed for each of the conditional registrations of new pesticides granted during preceding years; and (2) amending FIFRA to limit conditional registrations of new pesticide active ingredients without complete testing by defining "in the public interest" in a restrictive or limited manner. Congress may wish to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the following alternatives for accelerating the special review process: (1) providing EPA with additional resources to allow it to more quickly review studies and data related to on going special reviews, and to meet future increases in the special review work load anticipated by EPA; and (2) setting deadlines for completion of special reviews, or for some or all of the special review phases, which recognize the complexities of special reviews, and the resource requirements necessary to meet such deadlines. The first alternative should be considered in conjunction with the other GAO suggestion on resources for accelerating pesticide reregistration.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, EPA, should cancel registrations of those products whose labels are not in compliance with registration standard requirements. Should the Administrator determine that statutory authority is needed to more efficiently implement label requirements, the Administrator should develop and submit to Congress the appropriate legislative language to achieve this objective. The Administrator, EPA, should conduct a pilot test to determine whether registrants can successfully review existing data to identify and replace inadequate or invalid studies and the EPA ability to successfully oversee registrant data submissions. Further, the Administrator should consider the results of the pilot study in determining whether and how to accelerate reregistration by further shifting the burden to industry to fill gaps in tests on existing pesticides. The Administrator, EPA, should discontinue reregistering individual pesticide products, by amending current policies and procedures, until EPA has received and reviewed all data and completely reassessed the pesticides. Should the Administrator determine that congressional direction on the requirements for reregistering pesticide products would be desirable, the Administrator should seek such clarification and direction from Congress. The Administrator, EPA, should develop and publish a policy concerning tolerance setting for

carcinogenic pesticides, including criteria on how it decides whether to grant or deny such tolerances, and allow for public comment. The Administrator, EPA, should examine means to more readily obtain health and environmental effects test data on inerts. This should include examining an easing of the FIFRA confidentiality provision and requesting from Congress any such additional authority needed to achieve this objective. This action may facilitate sharing the cost of generating data among pesticide registrants of inerts, while also providing some degree of continued protection of trade secrets of pesticide formulations. The Administrator, EPA, should: (1) review outstanding conditional registrations of new pesticide active ingredients; (2) determine what progress is being made by registrants to develop and submit the required health and environmental effects test data; and (3) take appropriate action, such as suspending or cancelling the pesticide registration, in those cases where the registrant has not made reasonable progress to comply with the conditions imposed on the conditional registrations.

130021

Sudan: Conditions on U.S. Economic Aid. NSIAD-86-137FS; B-211263. June 2, 1986. 2 pp. plus 2 appendices (13 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Howard Wolpe, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Africa Subcommittee; by Joseph E. Kelley, Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; International Monetary Fund; Democratic Republic of the Sudan.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Africa Subcommittee; Rep. Howard Wolpe.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the conditions of the U.S. Economic Support Fund program for the Sudan, focusing on balance-of-payments assistance.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO noted that assistance to Sudan was: (1) in the form of cash transfers and commodity import financing, which included allocations for petroleum imports; and (2) conditional on the Sudan's compliance with the International Monetary Fund arrangement. GAO found that the Sudan achieved limited progress in: (1) complying with the Agency for International Development's conditions for assistance to the private sector; (2) managing public sector companies or phasing out inefficient enterprises; (3) increasing the generation and management of foreign exchange; and (4) increasing the generation of domestic revenue. GAO also found that the Sudan achieved considerable progress in improving the management of public utilities.

130110

U.S. Grain Exports: Concerns About Quality. RCED-86-134; B-223024. May 19, 1986.

Released June 2, 1986. 3 pp. plus 4 appendices (45 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Byron L. Dorgan; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to CED-80-15, November 30, 1979, Accession Number 110981; RED-76-71, February 12, 1976, Accession Number 098299; Testimony, August 5, 1986, Accession Number 130598; Testimony, September 30, 1986, Accession Number 131129; RCED-87-35BR, October 9, 1986, Accession Number 131505; and RCED-87-100, May 7, 1987, Accession Number 132884.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Grain Inspection Service; Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Byron L. Dorgan.

Authority: Grain Standards Act (7 U.S.C. 71). H.R. 455 (99th Cong.). H.R. 1206 (99th Cong.). S. 1121 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO investigated U.S. grain export practices, focusing on: (1) the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) system for receiving foreign complaints about the quality of exported grain; (2) the Federal Grain Inspection Service's (FGIS) surveys about the practice of

removing grain dust from stored grain for safety reasons, then adding it back to the grain before export; (3) the amount of dockage, or easily removed waste material, in U.S. grain shipments; and (4) FGIS disposition of previous GAO recommendations relating to grain quality.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) USDA received more foreign complaints about U.S. grain shipments in 1985 than in previous years; (2) the USDA complaint system may not accurately portray the export system because foreign grain purchasers do not always use the system and FGIS can do little to resolve their disputes with U.S. exporters; (3) FGIS has found that the number of grain elevators that add dust to grain shipments has increased; (4) the amount of dust added is relatively small compared to the overall amount of grain shipped; (5) many grain elevator operators benefit from a law that allows them to round the amount of reported dockage in a shipment to the next lowest half-percent; and (6) FGIS had not implemented a number of previous GAO recommendations designed to improve the quality of exported grain, including changing the dockage reporting requirement.

130114

[Question Concerning Transfer of USDA Funds]. B-222686. June 11, 1986. 6 pp. *Letter* to Sen. Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary: Administrative Practice and Procedure Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Research Service; Department of Agriculture: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on the Judiciary: Administrative Practice and Procedure Subcommittee; *Sen.* Charles E. Grassley. **Authority:** 49 Fed. Reg. 41268. P.L. 97-46. P.L. 97-98. H.R. 4416 (97th Cong.). S. Rept. 98-566. H. Rept. 99-211. Cong. Rec. [127] H7556. 7 U.S.C. 147 et seq. 21 U.S.C. 114b. 95 Stat. 953. 95 Stat. 1272.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO commented on whether the Secretary of Agriculture had the authority to transfer appropriated funds from one agricultural service to another. GAO reviewed statutory provisions and the legislative history on issues involving appropriated funds transfers

and determined that the Secretary of Agriculture had the authority to transfer funds for emergency purposes from one service to another to pay claims for economic loss.

130134

[Question Concerning Legality of Florida Proposal for Meat Inspectors]. B-218923. May 28, 1986. Released June 9, 1986. 3 pp. *Letter* to Sen. Lawton Chiles; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel. **Organization Concerned:** Department of Agriculture; Florida: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* Lawton Chiles.

Authority: Talmadge-Aiken Act (7 U.S.C. 450). Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 661). Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 454). Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 (31 U.S.C. 6505). B-163450 (1976).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO commented on the legality of a Florida Department of Agriculture proposal to cross-utilize federal and state meat inspectors. GAO noted that: (1) states may legally assist in federal meat and poultry inspections; (2) an hour-for-hour exchange of services would balance out any costs federal or state governments incur; and (3) both the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and states agriculture departments would benefit from the exchange because they would avoid the expense of sending their inspectors to other geographical areas. GAO determined that USDA was authorized to implement the proposal.

130152

Debt Restructuring Activities During the 1984-85 Farm Credit Crisis. RCED-86-148BR; B-222815. May 16, 1986. 68 pp. plus 4

appendices (10 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary: Administrative Practice and Procedure Subcommittee; *Rep.* Cooper Evans; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Appropriateness of FmHA Credit Programs and Their Effectiveness in Assisting Farm Financial Needs (6510). **Contact:** Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on the Judiciary; Administrative Practice and Procedure Subcommittee; *Rep.* Cooper Evans; *Sen.* Charles E. Grassley.

Abstract: In response to congressional requests, GAO reported on the Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA) debt restructuring activities with private lenders during the farm credit crisis of 1984 and 1985.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, during the farm credit crisis, FmHA helped farmers by: (1) making direct loans to new borrowers who could not get necessary credit elsewhere; and (2) offering loan guarantees to private lenders for loans made to family farmers who did not participate in FmHA programs and who were generally having financial difficulty and might not qualify for the loans without federal guarantees. GAO also found that FmHA: (1) used farm operating and ownership loans to assist private lenders to help farmers restructure their debt; (2) helped 45,000 of its 270,000 existing borrowers restructure their FmHA debt in fiscal year 1985 through reamortization, rescheduling, and debt waivers; and (3) provided debt restructuring assistance through regular and debt adjustment program guaranteed loans and direct loans.

130161

Farmers Home Administration: Federally Acquired Farm Property Presents a Management Challenge. RCED-86-88; B-221072. June 13, 1986. 64 pp. plus 7 appendices (12 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Thad Cochran, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Sen. Edward Zorinsky; Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton; Sen. David L. Boren; Sen. Alan J. Dixon; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-62BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128976; RCED-86-57BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128977; RCED-87-13BR, November 12, 1986, Accession Number 131584; and RCED-88-4, November 30, 1987, Accession Number 134552.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Appropriateness of FmHA Credit Programs and Their Effectiveness in Assisting Farm Financial Needs (6510).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Budget; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Budget; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Sen.* Alan J. Dixon; *Sen.* David L. Boren; *Sen.* Thomas F. Eagleton; *Sen.* Edward Zorinsky; *Sen.* Thad Cochran.

Authority: Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.). Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). 7 C.F.R. 1955. 49 Fed. Reg. 47007. 50 Fed. Reg. 45739. 50 Fed. Reg. 23917. H.R. 2100 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined the increase in the number of farms that the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) acquired as a result of loan foreclosures and other actions, specifically: (1) why the increase occurred; (2) the financial impact on the government; and (3) how well FmHA is managing the properties.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the increase in the number of farms that failed is due to poor farming and financial practices or personal problems, but future failures may be related to economic factors; (2) FmHA lost revenues from acquiring the inventory properties due to undersecured loans and bad loan-servicing policies; and (3) FmHA allotted only a minimal amount of funds to manage the inventory properties in 1985, but will increase its management expenditures to maintain property values and result in higher sales income in the future.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FmHA, to intensify the selling efforts for inventory property through more extensive use of advertising. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FmHA, to issue a policy directive to FmHA state personnel stating that, when suitable property is not sold within a specified time, perhaps 1 year, because of a lack of eligible buyers or economic conditions, it should be reclassified as surplus property. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FmHA, to issue a policy directive to FmHA state personnel

stating that farm real estate in inventory should neither be leased nor operated for the production of surplus agricultural commodities.

130205

Nonagricultural Pesticides: Risks and Regulation. RCED-86-97; B-203051. April 18, 1986.

Released May 19, 1986. 52 pp. plus 6 appendices (8 pp.). *Report* to Sen. David Durenberger, Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; Sen. Max S. Baucus, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Environment: Evaluation of the Federal Pesticide Regulatory Process' Capability To Protect Public Health and the Environment From Unreasonable Risks (6806); Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency; Federal Trade Commission.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; Congress; *Sen.* Max S. Baucus; *Sen.* David Durenberger.

Authority: Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (P.L. 80-104). Trade Commission Act. 49 Fed. Reg. 42892. P.L. 92-516.

Abstract: In response to congressional requests, GAO reported on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) efforts to determine the: (1) risks associated with the use of nonagricultural pesticides; (2) extent of

public information concerning such risks; and (3) requirements for professional pesticide applicators to protect the public from misuse.

Findings/Conclusions: The chronic health risks associated with nonagricultural pesticides are uncertain because EPA has not reassessed them in accordance with current standards. GAO found that EPA: (1) as of September 30, 1985, had done preliminary assessments on 18 of the 50 chemicals and found that, for 17, it did not have enough chronic toxicity data to complete the assessments; and (2) does not plan to require chronic toxicity testing of all nonagricultural chemicals because it believes that exposure to some pesticides is not significant enough to cause chronic effects in humans, regardless of their toxicity. Environmental groups believe that pesticide labels should state that chronic health risks have not been fully assessed, so that the public can make better choices about pesticide use. However, industry representatives oppose public disclosure because they fear adverse economic effects. The Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act authorizes EPA to take enforcement action against pesticide manufacturers' claims that pesticides are safe, but EPA has taken few such actions. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), under its authorizing legislation, can act against distributor and applicator claims, but FTC believes that EPA is better able to handle such claims, because of its expertise and specific legislative authority.

Recommendation To Congress: Because it may be several decades before EPA assesses the chronic health risks of nonagricultural pesticides, Congress may wish to consider whether pesticide labels should state that EPA has not assessed the pesticides' chronic health risks in accordance with current standards. Congress may wish to consider whether: (1) the public should be notified when public places are treated with pesticides; and (2) the federal government should have a role in ensuring that the public is notified.

Recommendation To Agencies: If the Administrator, EPA, does not have the resources to act against unacceptable safety claims by pesticide distributors, he should inform Congress, so it can decide whether to authorize additional resources, or grant EPA relief from this enforcement responsibility. The Administrator, EPA, should seek an arrangement between EPA and FTC for controlling unacceptable safety claims by professional pesticide applicators. If additional resources are needed, Congress should be so informed. The

Administrator, EPA, should: (1) encourage states that do not have unrestricted pesticide applicator control programs to institute such programs; and (2) develop a model pesticide applicator control program for voluntary use by the states.

130234

Farm Payments and Loans: Consistency Needed in USDA Crop Yield Estimates. RCED-86-118; B-222985. May 29, 1986. 45 pp. plus 2 appendices (10 pp.). *Report to Rep. Berkley W. Bedell, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0); Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service; Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.; Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. Berkley W. Bedell.*

Authority: Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98; 95 Stat. 1213). Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the methods used by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), and the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) to estimate crop yields. The review identified: (1) the impact of differences in estimated yields the agencies used; and (2) possible improvements to the yield estimation process.

Findings/Conclusions: ASCS, FCIC, and FmHA make payments and loans to farmers who enroll in their programs.

Since the agencies' programs have different purposes, farmers enroll their cropland in more than one program. However, because each agency independently develops an estimated yield, the same cropland parcel can receive three different yield estimates. With no consistent basis for loan and payment calculations, farmers' payments under one agency's programs can be overstated or understated when compared with the payments calculated using another agency's yield estimates. GAO estimated how each agency's payments to individual farmers for their 1984 crops would have differed if the other agencies' estimated yields had been used to calculate the payment amounts. GAO found that the impact of different yield estimates was significant for many of the sampled farmers. GAO also determined that some of the principal factors in calculating a yield estimate for a specific parcel of cropland include: (1) the number of years included in the base period; (2) the type and extent of adjustments to actual yield data that would be permitted; and (3) the cost of the estimates. GAO believes that: (1) a long base period is desirable because it will better reflect a cropland unit's historical capacity; and (2) agencies should use an adjusted single-yield estimate in their benefit calculations. GAO concluded that most farmers and Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials favor a single-yield estimate for all department programs.

Recommendation To Agencies: To ensure an equitable distribution of benefits to the producers participating in ASCS, FCIC, and FmHA programs, and to eliminate the duplicate costs incurred in estimating multiple crop yields for the same cropland, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrators, ASCS and FmHA, and the Manager, FCIC, to jointly develop one method for estimating a single-crop yield that is consistent with each agency's objectives, and to use the crop yields resulting from this method when determining the level of loans and payments to producers participating in ASCS, FCIC, and FmHA programs. To ensure an equitable distribution of benefits to the producers participating in ASCS, FCIC, and FmHA programs, and to eliminate the duplicate costs incurred in estimating multiple-crop yields for the same cropland, the Secretary of Agriculture should seek any required legislative change to permit using the yield estimate resulting from the method jointly developed when calculating the amount of loans and payments for producers enrolled in ASCS programs. To ensure an equitable distribution of

benefits to the producers participating in ASCS, FCIC, and FmHA programs, and to eliminate the duplicate costs incurred in estimating multiple-crop yields for the same cropland, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrators, ASCS and FmHA, and the Manager, FCIC, to give primary consideration to basing the yield estimation method on the actual historical production from each specific cropland unit.

130275

Rural Cooperatives: Information on Two Rural Electrification Administration Proposals. RCED-86-101; B-222848. May 30, 1986. 7 pp. plus 5 appendices (26 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to B-195437.2, September 17, 1986, Accession Number 131180; and RCED-87-74, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132531.

Issue Area: Energy: Other Issue Area Work (6491).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Rural Electrification Administration; National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen. Jesse A. Helms*.

Authority: OMB Circular A-119.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO obtained information on: (1) the advantages and disadvantages of the Rural Electrification Administration's (REA) engineering standards proposal; and (2) the basis for and potential impacts of the REA proposal to revise its loan approval criteria.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) advantages of REA performing its standards-setting function included lower facilities construction costs, greater security for REA loans, and increased efficiency for materials and equipment manufacturers; (2) one disadvantage was that the government, rather than the consumer, would bear the cost of the standards-setting function; (3) three out of five private organizations surveyed were unwilling to develop and maintain engineering standards for rural utility cooperatives; (4) revised loan approval criteria would

provide a better measure of the amount of funds a cooperative has to meet its financing needs; (5) approximately 70 percent of the REA electric distribution cooperatives would not qualify initially for loan advances under the proposed criteria; (6) REA estimated that many cooperatives would again be eligible for loans within a year; and (7) the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association believes many cooperatives would permanently lose their eligibility for REA funds and turn to non-REA financing of construction projects.

130470

Needs-Based Programs: Eligibility and Benefit Factors. HRD-86-107FS; B-223232. July 9, 1986.

Released July 21, 1986. 53 pp. *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Mickey Leland, Chairman, House Select Committee on Hunger; Rep. Marge Roukema, Ranking Minority Member, House Select Committee on Hunger; Rep. Harold E. Ford, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; Rep. Carroll A. Campbell, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Bill Emerson, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-87-110FS, July 29, 1987, Accession Number 133660; and RCED-87-99, June 10, 1987, Accession Number 133215.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Social Security Administration; Department of Labor; Department of Health and Human Services; Veterans Administration; Department of the Treasury; Department of the Interior; Department of Energy; Department of Education; Department of Agriculture; Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic

Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; *House* Select Committee on Hunger; *House* Select Committee on Hunger; *Rep. Bill Emerson*; *Rep. Leon E. Panetta*; *Rep. Carroll A. Campbell*; *Rep. Harold E. Ford*; *Rep. Marge Roukema*; *Rep. Mickey Leland*.

Abstract: In response to congressional requests, GAO provided eligibility and benefit determination information for 54 of the largest needs-based federal benefit programs that collectively comprised the public welfare system in fiscal year (FY) 1983.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO noted that needs-based programs provide cash and in-kind benefits to low-income, needy, and distressed individuals who do not financially contribute to the programs. GAO provided: (1) a list of 95 needs-based programs active in FY 1983; (2) tables showing the eligibility and benefit factors for 54 of the larger programs; and (3) descriptions of the 54 programs. GAO also grouped the programs for comparative purposes into the following classifications: (1) cash assistance; (2) education; (3) food; (4) housing; (5) medical; and (6) service.

130487

Tax Administration: Information Returns Should Increase Proper Reporting of Farm Income. GGD-86-69; B-221406. July 22, 1986. 27 pp. plus 5 appendices (11 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Bob Packwood, Chairman, Joint Committee on Taxation; Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski, Vice Chairman, Joint Committee on Taxation; by William J. Anderson, Director, General Government Division.

Issue Area: Tax Policy and Administration: Effectiveness of IRS' Use of Available Tax-Related Information and Compliance Tools To Reduce Major Pockets of Unreported Legal Source Income (4601).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Tax Administration (803.1); Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Internal Revenue Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Treasury-

Postal Service and General Government Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Ways and Means; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Finance; *Joint* Committee on Taxation; *Rep.* Daniel Rostenkowski; *Sen.* Bob Packwood.

Authority: Internal Revenue Code (IRC). IRS Ruling 80-22.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO studied the need to improve taxpayer compliance in reporting taxable commodity credit loan and crop insurance income, specifically ways in which the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) could better detect unreported income.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, in 1982: (1) 7 percent of crop loan and insurance income recipients failed to file federal income tax returns; (2) 77 percent of the taxpayers whose returns GAO reviewed failed to properly report their income; (3) computer matching of information returns with tax returns should help IRS to determine whether income was properly reported and the applicable taxes were assessed; and (4) IRS should improve its forms, filing instructions, and computer programs.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Commissioner of Internal Revenue should clarify instructions and forms concerning commodity credit loan and crop insurance income so that taxpayers and IRS can more efficiently and effectively use information returns. The Commissioner of Internal Revenue should incorporate commodity credit loan and crop insurance income into the IRS document matching program.

130520

Energy Regulation: Hydropower Impacts on Fish Should Be Adequately Considered. RCED-86-99; B-222655. May 20, 1986.

Released July 22, 1986. 26 pp. *Report* to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Energy: Other Issue Area Work (6491).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Energy: Energy Information, Policy, and Regulation (276.0).

Organization Concerned: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Energy

and Water Development Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce; *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Energy and Water Development Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; *Rep.* John D. Dingell.

Authority: Department of Energy Organization Act. Federal Power Act. Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978. Energy Security Act. Crude Oil Windfall Profit Tax Act of 1980. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed: (1) the adequacy of the 30-day period that agencies are given to request a hearing after the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issues an order authorizing the construction and operation of a hydroelectric project; and (2) the FERC role in determining whether fish-protection measures are working properly.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) federal and state fish and wildlife officials often did not receive FERC orders until 2 weeks after issuance; (2) when these delays occurred, officials selectively responded to the projects with the largest impacts and interrupted their operations to prepare timely requests for hearings; (3) about one-third of the 30-day period is used for printing, distribution, and mailing processes; and (4) although the Federal Power Act (FPA) allows FERC 30 days to respond to the construction of a hydroelectric project, FERC could increase available response time by reducing processing and mailing time. GAO also found that: (1) FERC inspectors do not have the expertise to determine how well fish-protection measures were working; and (2) although FERC relies on state agencies to perform this function, it does not have formal working agreements with state agencies and, therefore, it is difficult to determine the extent to which fish protection measures are working.

Recommendation To Agencies: To ensure that federal and state fish and wildlife agencies in the Northwest have sufficient time to review and respond to FERC orders on hydroelectric projects, the Chairman, FERC, should have the Director, Office of Hydropower Licensing, implement alternatives which would allow interested parties more time within the 30-day period. Such alternatives might include: (1) expediting the processing and mailing of orders impacting the Northwest; (2) accepting a rehearing request if postmarked within 30 days of issuance; and (3) designating

its Portland, Oregon office as the official receiving point for such requests. To fulfill its responsibilities under FPA for protecting fish, the Chairman, FERC, should have the Director, Office of Hydropower Licensing, enter into written working agreements with fish and wildlife agencies in those states with significant fish populations potentially impacted by hydroelectric dams. These agreements should specify: (1) to what extent FERC will rely on the agencies to ensure that fish-protection measures are working properly; and (2) how FERC and the agencies will coordinate their respective activities, including inspections and sharing reports, analyses, and other pertinent data.

130598

[The General Accounting Office's Review of Concerns About Quality in U.S. Grain Exports]. August 5, 1986. 10 pp. plus 2 attachments (2 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee; by William E. Gahr, Associate Director Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-134, May 19, 1986, Accession Number 130110; RED-76-71, February 12, 1976, Accession Number 098299; and CED-80-15, November 30, 1979, Accession Number 110981.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee.

Authority: H.R. 4714 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO discussed recent actions within the U.S. grain industry and the Department of Agriculture to change the way in which the United States market its grain overseas. The Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) has determined that a number of grain elevators extract dust and dockage from airborne grain as it leaves the elevator, then add the dust or dockage back as it is loaded onto vessels for shipment overseas. FGIS surveys showed that

either clean wheat was downgraded with dirtier wheat or a substantial amount of dirtier wheat was upgraded by the time it reached the export point. The current rounding rule, which allows a certain percentage of dust or dockage to go unreported, benefits the wheat seller, which receives wheat prices for dockage in the wheat being sold, while the buyer gets less wheat for what he paid. Because of an increasing number of foreign buyers' complaints about grain quality, the industry and FGIS need to: (1) improve the uniformity of grain quality; (2) conduct research on the need for restricting certain blending practices; and (3) design and oversee grain standards to ensure the competitiveness of U.S. grain relative to the grain of other exporting countries.

130661

Farm Programs: An Analysis of Two Production Control Options. RCED-86-137; B-213707. August 11, 1986. 5 pp. plus 3 appendices (24 pp.). *Report to Richard E. Lyng, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-85-89, September 25, 1985, Accession Number 128031.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Missouri Valley Research Associates.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982. Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-344). B-211462-O.M. (1983).

Abstract: Because the problem of large crop surpluses and depressed commodity prices continues to be part of the U.S. farm agenda, GAO completed a comparative analysis of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Payment-in-Kind program (PIK) and an alternative program design for use in future farm policy and program decisions, using a private contractor's state-of-the-art policy simulation model.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO noted that the alternative program: (1) covered the same basic commodities as PIK; (2) would include only cash payments and

would have an annual limit of \$50,000 for each participating farmer; (3) would require legislative authority to enable USDA to pay farmers cash for taking land out of production; and (4) did not take into consideration the possible overall societal impact on consumers, U.S. export sales, and rural economies. GAO found that, for 1983 through 1986, the alternative program, as compared to PIK, would have resulted in: (1) \$3.7 billion less in government farm program costs; (2) 47.4 million fewer acres planted in program crops; (3) a 23-percent reduction in commodity inventory levels; and (4) a \$6.2-billion increase in farmers' net cash income. GAO believes that the results of the analysis underscored the need for USDA to analyze and review program alternatives before committing to major program changes like PIK.

130712

Tax Policy: Economic Effects of Selected Current Tax Provisions on Agriculture. GGD-86-126BR; B-220507. August 11, 1986. 2 pp. plus 2 appendices (13 pp.). *Briefing Report to Sen. Bill Bradley; by Johnny C. Finch, Senior Associate Director, General Government Division. Refer to RCED-87-99, June 10, 1987, Accession Number 133215.*

Issue Area: Tax Policy and Administration: Achievement of Objectives of Specific Tax Expenditures Provisions and Related Administrative Problems for IRS (4603); Food and Agriculture: Relevance of Policies and Programs Developed Decades Ago To Improve the Marketing of Food (6523).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Tax Administration (803.1).

Congressional Relevance: *Sen. Bill Bradley.*

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on how current tax law affects the agricultural sector, specifically: (1) the distribution of farms and income; (2) farm profits and losses claimed by individual taxpayers; (3) the economic effects of selected tax provisions; and (4) the amount and distribution of nonfarm income reported by taxpayers filing a Schedule F Form.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) in 1984, the number of farms was approximately 2.3 million; (2) 60 percent of U.S. farms were small farms with annual sales of less than \$20,000; (3) 4.6 percent of all farms had annual sales of \$250,000 and accounted for almost half of the gross cash farm income; (4) in 1983, 2.7 million taxpayers reported

farm income and losses and net farm losses exceeded net farm profits by approximately \$9.3 billion; (5) under current tax laws, favorable taxation of farm capital has contributed to greater farm output and lower farm prices; (6) proposed tax reform legislation would result in less farm output and higher farm prices; and (7) 90 percent of the 2.7 million individuals who reported farm income and losses in 1982 had nonfarm incomes of \$50,000 or less, while 35 percent had nonfarm incomes of \$10,000 or less.

130736

Tax Policy: How Tax Incentives Encourage Soil and Water Conservation Investments. GGD-86-116FS; B-222902. August 13, 1986. 3 pp. plus 6 appendices (37 pp.). *Fact Sheet to Sen. Bob Packwood, Chairman, Joint Committee on Taxation; by Johnny C. Finch, Senior Associate Director, General Government Division.*

Issue Area: Tax Policy and Administration: Achievement of Objectives of Specific Tax Expenditures Provisions and Related Administrative Problems for IRS (4603).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Tax Administration (803.1); Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Joint Committee on Taxation; Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski; Sen. Bob Packwood.*

Authority: Internal Revenue Code (IRC).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO analyzed the effect of soil and water conservation tax incentives to determine whether they are adequate to encourage farm landowners to invest in conservation efforts.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) 68 percent of the landowners who owned 63 percent of the farmland did not invest in conservation measures from 1980 through 1984; (2) 58 percent of the landowners did not invest in conservation measures because they felt that erosion was not a problem on their land; (3) for some landowners who believed that their land was eroding, governmental financial assistance was an important factor in their decision to make conservation investments; (4) those landowners who invested in soil conservation measures, as compared to those who did not, were likely to own more farmland and have greater farm income; and (5) landowners believed that

the present tax deduction and government cost-sharing programs were responsible for 52 percent of the soil conservation expenditures and 44 percent of the conservation measures. GAO also found that: (1) regardless of the availability of government financial incentives, landowners would have implemented 37 percent of the soil conservation expenditures and 42 percent of the conservation measures; and (2) the combination of the tax deduction with cost-sharing payments encouraged the largest total expenditure in conservation measures.

130780

Food and Drug Administration: Six Former HHS Employees' Involvement in Aspartame's Approval. HRD-86-109BR; B-223552. July 22, 1986.

Released August 21, 1986. 12 pp. plus 2 appendices (5 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum; by David P. Baine, Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-87-46, June 18, 1987, Accession Number 133460.

Issue Area: Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; G.D. Searle and Co.; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Justice.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum.

Authority: Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (18 U.S.C. 207). 5 C.F.R. 727. 5 C.F.R. 737.5(b)(5).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) process for approving the artificial sweetener aspartame. GAO obtained information on six former Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) employees, specifically: (1) their contacts with the product's manufacturer while employed by HHS and with FDA after they left their government positions; and (2) their involvement in the FDA aspartame approval process.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) all but one of the employees were involved in the approval of aspartame and four had contacts with the product's manufacturer before they left HHS; (2) all six employees had contacts with FDA after they left it; and (3) aspartame

matters discussed between the former HHS employees and FDA were permissible. GAO believes that the four HHS employees who had contact with the product's manufacturer did so as part of their government duties.

130884

Farm Finance: Financial Condition of American Agriculture as of December 31, 1985. RCED-86-191BR; B-220507. September 3, 1986. 83 pp. *Briefing Report* to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-9, October 10, 1985, Accession Number 128115; Testimony, September 25, 1986, Accession Number 131080; RCED-87-144, September 10, 1987, Accession Number 133880; RCED-88-26BR, October 20, 1987, Accession Number 134251; and RCED-89-33BR, October 18, 1988, Accession Number 137080.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza; Sen. Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Farm Credit Amendments Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-205).

Abstract: GAO presented information on the financial condition of American agriculture as of December 31, 1985. **Findings/Conclusions:** After analyzing the economic environment, farmers' financial positions, and the performance of the financial institutions serving agriculture in 1985, GAO concluded that adverse economic and financial conditions facing agriculture continued in 1985. GAO found that: (1) the rate of production increased faster than the rate of U.S. consumption; (2) U.S. agricultural exports declined in both volume and value as a result of strong foreign competition, large production gains in previous importing countries, a weak world economy, and high real interest rates; (3) the value of farm assets declined by 9.9 percent; (4) although

farmland values declined nationally by more than 12 percent, farmland values in 18 states declined from 13 percent to more than 20 percent; (5) the rates of return on farmers' assets and equity remained negative; (6) farmers' farm incomes declined by 6.7 percent, while their nonfarm incomes increased; (7) five major lenders held \$167.6 billion of the \$210 billion in outstanding farm debt; (8) there was a declining share of the total debt for major lenders and an increase in the debt owed to the Farmers Home Administration and the Commodity Credit Corporation; (9) agricultural bank failures increased; (10) four of the major lending institutions had nonperforming or delinquent loans totalling \$33.7 billion, an increase of \$4.3 billion from 1984; and (11) commercial banks involved in agriculture experienced financial stress.

130957

AID Management: Effort To Improve Cash Management and the Payment Process at AID. NSIAD-86-36; B-217738. January 16, 1986. 6 pp. plus 1 appendix (15 pp.). *Report* to R.T. Rollis, Jr., Assistant to the Administrator for Management, Agency for International Development; by Joseph E. Kelley, Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-84-47, February 28, 1984, Accession Number 123533.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291); Financial Management Standards and Initiatives: Other Issue Area Work (7091).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Government Operations; House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Agency for International Development's (AID) efforts to improve management procedures relating to cash management and the payment process.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that AID has made progress in improving cash management practices for certain programs and activities, including the Commodity Import Program (CIP), the Egyptian decentralization program, and advances to contractors and grantees. GAO believes that AID can further improve its decentralization program disbursements and overseas cash-advance management by: (1) avoiding premature disbursement of funds for the decentralization program; and (2) ensuring that cash advances are limited to those needed to cover immediate disbursement needs. GAO also found that: (1) when AID uses bank letters to reimburse contractors and grantees for carrying out agency programs and activities, agency officials do not have the opportunity to review vouchers and supporting documents before the bank pays the recipients; and (2) the AID headquarters policy guidance recognizes the agency's increased vulnerability to making improper payments through bank letters and discourages use of this financing procedure.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Assistant to the Administrator for Management, AID, should instruct the mission in Egypt to make additional improvements in cash management for the Basic Village Services project, particularly to: (1) further reduce the number of days it takes the Egyptian central government and governorates to transfer funds to the village councils; and (2) improve controls to ensure that projects are fully planned and ready for contracting before AID disburses funds. The Assistant to the Administrator for Management, AID, should instruct AID missions in Indonesia, Niger, and India to review outstanding cash advances at least quarterly to determine whether the advances are excessive and should be reduced or eliminated. The mission in India should be instructed to include justification in project files for cash advance requests. The Assistant to the Administrator for Management, AID, should have headquarters officials monitor efforts by these missions to improve the payment process. If necessary, these officials should help the mission in India develop a sampling method for inspecting large projects and change the handbook requirements to accommodate this inspection method.

130977

Welfare Simplification: Projects To Coordinate Services for Low-Income Families. HRD-86-124FS; B-222701. August 29, 1986.

Released September 8, 1986. 3 pp. plus 2 appendices (58 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Bill Emerson, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Carroll A. Campbell, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; Rep. Harold E. Ford, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; Rep. Marge Roukema, Ranking Minority Member, House Select Committee on Hunger; Rep. Mickey Leland, Chairman, House Select Committee on Hunger; by Daniel M. Brier, (for Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director), Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-87-110FS, July 29, 1987, Accession Number 133660.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; House Select Committee on Hunger; Rep. Bill Emerson; Rep. Leon E. Panetta; Rep. Carroll A. Campbell; Rep. Harold E. Ford; Rep. Marge Roukema; Rep. Mickey Leland.

Authority: Deficit Reduction Act of 1984.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided: (1) an inventory of service integration demonstration projects completed during the period 1970 through 1985; and (2) a bibliography of literature on service integration.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO focused its work on service integration projects for low-income families generally eligible for programs such as Aid to Families With Dependent Children, Medicaid, Food Stamp, and Section 8 Housing. GAO excluded from its listings information on

projects related to certain target groups such as American Indians, the mentally and physically impaired, and the elderly, and to specific educational, employment, and training programs. Projects included in the listings received funding between 1970 and 1985. GAO found that, of 50 completed service integration projects: (1) state, county, or city agencies sponsored 33; (2) associations, private organizations, and universities sponsored 17; (3) 9 were statewide operations; (4) 20 operated in a multicounty area; (5) 10 operated in one county; and (6) 11 operated in urban areas.

130978

Welfare Simplification: Service Integration Demonstrations Under the 1984 Deficit Reduction Act. HRD-86-125BR; B-222701. August 29, 1986.

Released September 8, 1986. 13 pp. plus 2 appendices (8 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Carroll A. Campbell, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; by Daniel M. Brier, (for Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director), Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; House Select Committee on Hunger; House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; Rep. Carroll A. Campbell. **Authority:** Deficit Reduction Act of 1984. Social Security Act. Older Americans Act of 1965.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) funding and monitoring of integration demonstration projects in five states. The demonstration projects will develop ways to ensure that an applicant for services under one program has access to available services under other programs by eliminating programmatic fragmentation. GAO reported specifically on: (1) funding arrangements for the projects; (2)

whether certain requirements HHS placed on the states exceeded statutory mandates; and (3) possible federal obstructions to the development of integrated service projects.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) since Congress appropriated no funds for the projects for fiscal years (FY) 1985 and 1986, HHS used discretionary funds totalling \$553,771 for the first-year planning phase; (2) as of July 1986, HHS had awarded grants totalling \$2.4 million to the five states for projects beyond the planning phase; (3) HHS was authorized to require that states receiving funding demonstrate how their integrated service delivery systems could increase clients' social and economic self-sufficiency; (4) four of the five states expressed concerns about identifying and measuring self-sufficiency changes in clients as a result of the projects; (5) HHS will award a contract in 1987 to assist states in developing evaluation designs and in evaluating the projects' results; (6) state officials said they had to make major changes to their plans in FY 1985 without sufficient time to adequately study client needs and identify all desired outcomes for client target groups because HHS did not clearly communicate and emphasize the self-sufficiency requirement until 4 months before the plans were considered for continued funding; and (7) although states may request federal program waivers, they believe it would be a difficult and time-consuming process.

130990

Biotechnology: Analysis of Federally Funded Research. RCED-86-187; B-223522. August 8, 1986. Released September 11, 1986. 7 pp. plus 7 appendices (29 pp.). *Report* to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-39BR, October 25, 1985, Accession Number 128383; and RCED-88-27, June 13, 1988, Accession Number 136284.

Issue Area: Science and Technology Policy and Programs: Other Issue Area Work (9391).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: General Science, Space, and Technology: General Science and Basic Research (251.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Research Service; Environmental Protection

Agency; Food and Drug Administration; National Institutes of Health; National Science Foundation; Department of Agriculture: Cooperative State Research Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; *Rep.* John D. Dingell. **Authority:** Agricultural Experiment Stations Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO analyzed data on federal support for biotechnology research in fiscal year 1985 at five federal agencies, specifically the amount of money obligated and the number of projects funded for: (1) agencywide activity for research and development; (2) biotechnology-related research; and (3) biotechnology risk assessment research. GAO also analyzed the agencies' definitions of biotechnology.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) each agency defined biotechnology differently; (2) the agencies undertook biotechnology research to understand biological processes and phenomena, to devise, apply, or improve products and processes, or to develop information to assess potential risks with new products and processes; and (3) a small number of the projects involved direct risk assessment. The Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Research Service received \$470 million for 2,300 research and development (R&D) projects and \$24.5 million for 150 biotechnology research projects, of which between 4 and 27 were for risk assessment research. The USDA Cooperative State Research Service received \$284 million for 12,250 R&D projects and \$48.4 million for 750 biotechnology research projects, of which 22 were for risk assessment research. The Environmental Protection Agency received \$320 million for R&D projects and \$1.5 million for 19 biotechnology research projects, all of which involved risk assessment research. The Food and Drug Administration received \$82 million for R&D projects and \$2.6 million for 17 biotechnology research projects, of which only 1 involved risk assessment research. The National Institutes of Health received \$4.8 billion for 30,000 R&D projects and \$1.8 billion for 62 biotechnology research projects, of which 5 involved risk assessment research. The National Science Foundation received \$1.3 billion for 14,157 R&D projects and \$81 million for 1,621 to 1,773 biotechnology research projects, of which 8 to 225 involved risk assessment.

131016

Farm Credit System: Analysis of Financial Condition. GGD-86-150F B-220507. September 18, 1986. 8 pp. plus 4 appendices (48 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Ed Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by William J. Anderson, Assistant Comptroller General, General Government Division. Refer to GGD 86-13BR, October 4, 1985, Accession Number 128230; GGD-86-35BR, December 23, 1985, Accession Number 128788; and GGD-87-51, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132605.

Issue Area: Financial Services and Markets: Risks Faced by Institutions and Market Members Resulting From Changes in the Regulatory and Economic Environment and How Regulators Deal With Them (4502).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Farm Credit Administration: Federal Farm Credit Board.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; *Rep.* Ed Jones.

Authority: Farm Credit Amendments Act of 1985.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided an overview of the important issues facing the farm credit system, specifically: (1) an assessment of internal problems that may have contributed to the system's financial problems; (2) a periodic assessment of the financial condition of the system; and (3) a projection of its condition for the next 12 months.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO concluded that: (1) the effects of problem loans on high borrowing costs and the probability that these conditions will continue raise serious questions about the viability of the system; (2) losses similar to those the system incurred in 1985 will continue in the future unless the agricultural economy improves or the system can borrow and lend money at more competitive rates; (3) private or federal assistance could be needed by the end of 1986, since the system's unallocated surplus may be exhausted by then; and (4) previous management decisions to fund the system's activities with long-term, fixed-rate bonds are preventing the system from maintaining reasonable debt service expenses.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Chairman of the Federal Farm Credit Board should require the banks in the system to develop and collectively implement a plan to reduce the interest rate exposure of the system. The plan should consider all assets and liabilities systemwide, not the financial position of the individual banks.

131044

Foreign Aid: Questions on the Central American Regional Program Need To Be Resolved. NSIAD-86-209; B-221422. September 8, 1986. 39 pp. plus 3 appendices (4 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-29FS, December 31, 1985, Accession Number 128765; NSIAD-85-82, July 3, 1985, Accession Number 127396; NSIAD-84-71, March 8, 1984, Accession Number 124071; and ID-83-50, July 22, 1983, Accession Number 121930.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development: Regional Office for Central America and Panama; National Bipartisan Commission on Central America; Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Sen.* Patrick J. Leahy.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO discussed the evolution, status, and viability of the Agency for International Development's (AID) regional economic assistance programs for Central America.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) according to AID views, studies, and funding actions, extensive regional programs may not be viable; (2) Central American economic and political conditions were not conducive to regional assistance programs, in part because those countries were focusing on domestic issues; and (3) fundamental policy questions on the priority of

regional assistance and the need to maintain the AID Regional Office for Central America and Panama (ROCAP) remained unanswered. GAO also found that: (1) AID obligations and expenditures for regional programs were less than planned, primarily due to cancellations or delays in major economic assistance projects the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America recommended; and (2) AID has used over half of its regional program funds for projects its Washington office, rather than ROCAP, managed; and (3) ROCAP is currently taking actions to improve coordination with the bilateral missions to enhance the impact of its existing projects and to better complement AID bilateral programs. GAO believes that the success of ROCAP programs to promote economic growth will depend in part on host country economic and political conditions, and external source flows and credit arrangements.

Recommendation To Agencies: To resolve the long-standing controversy over regional programs and ROCAP, and in view of overall U.S. budget deficit reduction goals, the Administrator, AID, should examine the priority and role of regional assistance in Central America and the need to maintain ROCAP.

131045

Food Stamp Program: Refinements Needed To Improve Accuracy of Quality Control Error Rates. RCED-86-195; B-217883. September 19, 1986. 58 pp. *Report* to Sen. William V. Roth, Jr., Chairman, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-17, March 14, 1986, Accession Number 129355; RCED-85-98, April 12, 1985, Accession Number 126750; RCED-87-4, October 30, 1986, Accession Number 131473; RCED-88-10, October 22, 1987, Accession Number 134232; and RCED-88-12, October 22, 1987, Accession Number 134233.

Issue Area: Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and Local Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014); Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Stamp Loss Measurement, Recovery, and Deterrence (6516).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Sen.* William V. Roth, Jr. .

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977. Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-248).

Abstract: GAO discussed the reliability of the Food Stamp Program's error rates, which served as the basis for sanctions that the Department of Agriculture (USDA) assessed against states for excessive errors they made in determining fiscal year 1984 program eligibility and benefit levels.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) in the three states it evaluated, the federal and state quality control reviews (QCR) were generally adequate, but the QCR process could have been improved; (2) USDA and the three states properly conducted QCR of cases representative of the overall food stamp case load; (3) a USDA regulation required states to drop cases from the QCR process that they could have completed; (4) the dropped cases were about twice as error-prone as completed cases and, if completed, would have increased error rates in all three states and sanctions in two of the three states; and (5) in computing the official error rates, USDA made statistical and mathematical mistakes for 13 of the 25 states.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), to revise food stamp regulations to require states to obtain, at the time of application and recertification, authorization for release of information for possible use by quality control reviewers seeking to verify participants' eligibility for benefits. The Secretary of Agriculture should change food stamp regulations governing the QCR process to eliminate the requirement that states drop cases in which personal interviews are not held, and add a requirement that states use collateral or case record data to review cases in which personal interviews are precluded because participants died,

moved out of state, could not be located, did not cooperate, or were institutionalized participants. In the case of institutionalized participants, states should first contact the institution to determine whether the participant can be interviewed. The Secretary of Agriculture should change food stamp regulations governing the QCR process to require states to include in the error rate any case in which the review of basic program eligibility requirements shows that the participant was ineligible for the program. The Secretary of Agriculture should change food stamp regulations governing the QCR process to require states to attempt to complete reviews of participants who are under investigation for suspected fraud or have pending administrative fraud hearings. The Secretary of Agriculture should change food stamp regulations governing the QCR process to specify that FNS regional offices have the authority to require states to complete reviews of cases for which the region believes sufficient information has been obtained or can be obtained to complete a review. The Secretary of Agriculture should consider augmenting this authority by asking Congress for authority to assess states for the costs the federal government incurs when completing reviews of cases dropped by states. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to annually review the error-rate calculations made for the states to ensure that official Food Stamp Program error rates are based on the appropriate statistical and mathematical procedures, and give regions the assistance needed to correct any mistakes found. Special attention should be given to the states with stratified quality control samples because most of the calculation mistakes GAO found were concentrated in these states.

131061

[Preliminary Results of GAO's Review of the Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance Program]. September 23, 1986. 26 pp. plus 3 appendices (4 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-84-65, March 14, 1984, Accession Number 123688; and RCED-85-155, July 26, 1985, Accession Number 127602.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee.

Authority: Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365). Food Security Act. H. Rept. 99-271.

Abstract: GAO discussed the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's (FCIC) implementation of the expanded crop insurance program that the Crop Insurance Act of 1980 called for, to determine whether: (1) FCIC based management decisions on complete, accurate, and timely information; and (2) the FCIC supporting analyses were adequate. Although FCIC expanded its insurance coverage to cover 40 crops in 3,000 counties, it experienced serious financial difficulties and had to suspend insurance payments to farmers. Because FCIC did not document the bases for its forecasts and based the forecasts on managers' judgment and existing program goals, FCIC indemnities exceeded its premium income by \$877 million. In addition, FCIC did not determine the impact of its proposal to provide crop insurance through private, reinsured companies based on either farmer program participation or the program's actuarial soundness. Although gains and losses on reinsured-company-sold crop insurance are to be shared by FCIC and the companies, FCIC negotiated standard reinsurance agreement provisions that favored reinsured companies and adversely affected its ability to establish a reserve for unforeseen losses. FCIC has taken a number of actions that should enhance the insurance program's soundness, including development of a new computerized model for establishing premium rates. The model replaces the FCIC system of guaranteeing yields based on area averages with a system based on a farmer's own production history, called the Actual Production History Program (APH). However, until APH is fully implemented, FCIC will continue to use management judgment to fix premium rates.

131080

[Financial Condition of American Agriculture]. September 25, 1986. 8 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs: General Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate

Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-191BR, September 3, 1986, Accession Number 130884; and RCED-86-9, October 10, 1985, Accession Number 128115.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Farmers Home Administration; Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service; Farm Credit Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs: General Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Authority: Farm Credit Amendments Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-205).

Abstract: GAO discussed: (1) the agricultural economic environment; (2) farmers' financial position; and (3) the performance of agricultural financial institutions. GAO found that: (1) in 1985 the agricultural industry faced adverse economic conditions due to increased production and decreased exports; (2) exports declined due to strong competition, importing countries' production gains, a weak world economy, and high real interest rates; (3) in 1986, more key farm commodities will be produced than will be consumed in the United States and their price is expected to decline further; (4) 1986 exports declined 15 percent, while imports rose 10 percent; (5) farmers' financial positions did not improve in 1985; and (6) farm income declined in 1985 due to low prices. GAO also found that: (1) farmers who were financially sound owed 33.7 percent of 1985 farm debt; (2) farm employment declined by over 4 percent; (3) five major lenders held \$210 billion in farm debt; (4) the total debt owed to all major nonfederal lenders declined, but the debt owed to the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) and the Commodity Credit Corporation increased; (5) lenders with a high portfolio concentration in agriculture continued to exhibit financial stress; (6) the Farm Credit System (FCS) had a \$2.7-billion net loss in 1985 and reported a rising trend in farm loan charge-offs and in property acquired through foreclosures; (7) Congress restructured the Farm Credit Administration, established a mechanism for FCS to use its available resources to provide financial assistance to member institutions, and gave the Treasury authority to invest appropriated funds in FCS; and (8) in the first 6 months of 1986, FCS lost \$968 million.

131120

Managing Welfare: Issues and Alternatives for Reforming Quality Control Systems. HRD-86-117BR; B-219254. August 29, 1986.

Released September 25, 1986. 53 pp. plus 1 appendix (5 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. William V. Roth, Jr., Chairman, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; by Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to RCED-85-98, April 12, 1985, Accession Number 126750.

Issue Area: Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and Local Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Product Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0); Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Sen. William V. Roth, Jr.*

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982. Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982. Food Security Act. Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985. Deficit Reduction Act of 1984. Social Security Act. Tax Reform Act of 1976. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. H.R. 1279 (99th Cong.). H.R. 2621 (99th Cong.). S. 616 (99th Cong.). S. 335 (99th Cong.). S. 1362 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the quality control systems states use to administer the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Medicaid, and Food Stamp programs.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the administration established comprehensive quality control systems for AFDC in 1973, and for Medicaid and Food Stamps in 1978; (2) by 1984, error rates for all three programs had dropped to nearly half the original rates; (3) erroneous payments in the AFDC and Food Stamp programs still amounted to about \$2 billion annually; (4) beginning in 1981, states became subject to withholding of federal funds, if their excess payments exceeded legislated error-rate thresholds; and (5) for fiscal years 1981 through 1988, the administration estimates that such disallowances cumulatively may total about \$2.5 billion for the three programs. GAO also discussed several factors that could affect both the design

and effectiveness of welfare quality control systems.

131125

Food and Drug Administration: Laboratory Analysis of Product Samples Needs To Be More Timely. HRD-86-102; B-224625. September 30, 1986. 38 pp. plus 8 appendices (18 pp.). *Report* to Otis R. Bowen, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; by Richard L. Fogel, Assistant Comptroller General, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-83-24, April 5, 1983, Accession Number 121021; HRD-84-61, September 26, 1984, Accession Number 125315; HRD-88-21, December 4, 1987, Accession Number 134773; and B-164031(2), September 14, 1972, Accession Number 093453.

Issue Area: Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Appropriations; *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301). B-164031 (1972).

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) field laboratories, focusing on: (1) their timeliness in processing product samples to determine if they were violative; and (2) measures FDA could implement to improve this process.

Findings/Conclusions: FDA district office investigators collect and ship samples to laboratories for analysis and classification as: (1) compliance samples, which FDA believes are possibly violative; or (2) surveillance samples, collected to obtain safety and other data. To achieve its consumer protection responsibilities, FDA must quickly identify and remove known or suspected violative products from the market. GAO found that FDA: (1) has not given its laboratories sufficient guidance on how quickly they should process such

products; (2) does not monitor or evaluate field performance in meeting processing-time guidelines; and (3) has not given the laboratories guidance on managing the flow of samples into inventory or adequately controlling inventory size. Since laboratory documentation requirements add to sample processing time, FDA has allowed abbreviated reports of sample test results in some cases. However, many field laboratories have not used the abbreviated report. GAO previously proposed that Congress consider giving FDA broader detention authority to help keep violative products off the market. FDA believes that the detention period should be the 30 days after sample collection, which would require a shortening of the laboratory processing time to allow time for the necessary legal actions to seize the violative products.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to establish time-frame guidelines for field laboratories' processing of all samples, consistent with the four sample processing priority designators used by the laboratories. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to establish procedures that require district offices' investigations and laboratory branches to coordinate and schedule the collection of surveillance samples. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to establish procedures that require the investigations branch to collect surveillance samples in accordance with the collection schedule developed with the laboratory branch, unless an emergency should arise. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to establish procedures that require laboratory directors to continue to prepare schedules for receipt of surveillance samples tested for other districts, and require these districts to follow the prepared schedules, unless agreements on deviations from the schedules are reached with the laboratory. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to establish procedures that require laboratory directors to determine an approximate inventory size that will permit the processing of samples within the time-frame guidelines established by FDA. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to establish a policy that prohibits the dumping of product samples into the laboratory's inventory. The Secretary of

Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to assess the simplified analytical documentation practices used by various FDA laboratories, including eliminating detailed step-by-step descriptions of the analyses performed on nonvolatile samples, and determine their applicability to all FDA laboratories. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to define the universe of samples that should be covered by abbreviated reporting. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to develop a standardized abbreviated form and implement its use as FDA policy on a laboratorywide basis. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to change the laboratory management system sample priority classifications to those used by the laboratories in setting processing priorities to: (1) enable laboratory managers to better schedule the testing of samples; and (2) give laboratory managers greater monitoring capability over laboratory performance. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to evaluate field laboratory performance in meeting the time-frame guidelines.

131129

[**Issues Effecting U.S. Agricultural Competitiveness in World Markets**]. September 30, 1986. 8 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-134, May 19, 1986, Accession Number 130110; and CED-80-15, November 30, 1979, Accession Number 110981.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee.

Authority: Food Security Act.

Abstract: GAO discussed issues affecting U.S. agriculture. GAO noted that: (1) to increase foreign demand for U.S. agricultural products, the United States must lower commodity price-support levels, expand export credit programs, rely more on export subsidies, lower the dollar's value, and reduce production

costs; (2) some critics believe that U.S. competitors will increase export subsidies or lower export prices to protect their markets against decreased U.S. price-support levels; (3) critics are still uncertain about whether relying on countertrade arrangements, using long-term bilateral sales agreements, emphasizing the export of processed products, improving market development and promotion efforts, or improving the quality of U.S. grain shipments will help U.S. agricultural exports; (4) proposed legislation would toughen U.S. grain standards to improve the quality of grain shipments; and (5) the Department of Agriculture (USDA) needs to better respond to changes in the world food economy to improve U.S. competitiveness. GAO believes that USDA should: (1) take into account macroeconomic and international variables; (2) design policies with maximum flexibility to adjust to changing environments; and (3) be prepared to accept with substantial world market instability. GAO: (1) is addressing world production trends; (2) plans to identify factors that impact foreign demand for agricultural products, determine how U.S. exporters target demand, and evaluate mechanisms that ensure successful sales; (3) is determining why agricultural imports are increasing and how imports impact the agricultural industry and the economy; and (4) plans to continue work on U.S. grain quality standards.

131131

[**The Export Enhancement Program, U.S. Foreign Agricultural Market Development Programs, Commodity Credit Corporation Export Credit Guarantee Programs, and Long Term Bilateral Grain Agreements and Countertrade**]. September 30, 1986. 40 pp. plus 7 attachments (20 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-87-90BR, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132735.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate*

Committee on the Judiciary: Administrative Practice and Procedure Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin; *Sen.* Charles E. Grassley.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Food Security Improvements Act of 1986. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act. Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Foreign Assistance Act of 1974. Strategic and Critical Materials Stock Piling Act. P.L. 80-89. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: GAO discussed: (1) the status of the export enhancement program (EEP); (2) U.S. foreign market development efforts; (3) agricultural export credit programs; and (4) long-term grain agreements and countertrade. GAO noted that: (1) EEP is affecting the European Community by increasing competition, lowering agricultural commodity prices, increasing restitution, and contributing to additional dissent with Europe over the farm program's direction and costs; (2) EEP has increased U.S. agricultural exports in some targeted countries; (3) EEP has provided no immediate relief to U.S. farmers; and (4) broadening EEP to other markets might increase competition, place pressure on Europe and further antagonize non-subsidizing exporters. GAO also noted that: (1) the Department of Agriculture approved assistance programs for 10 commodities that met certain criteria established by the Foreign Agricultural Service; (2) it is difficult to accurately determine the effect that export credit programs have on agricultural exports because commodity costs and political factors also affect sales; and (3) some bank officials, cooperators, and exporters said that they would not have been able to make a number of sales if export credit programs had not been available. In addition, GAO noted that: (1) 25 percent of international trade in wheat is conducted under bilateral grain agreements; (2) all of the major grain-exporting nations have employed long-term agreements; (3) at least 19 nations have imported grain under long-term agreements; (4) there are 26 long-term agreements in effect; (5) about 10 percent of all international trade is countertrade, which saves scarce foreign exchange, circumvents trade problems if a nation has an inconvertible currency, ensures access to supply, may be used to dispose of an excess supply of

agricultural or other commodities, and to enhance market development; and (6) countertrade is inefficient, costly, and risky.

131182

Pesticides: FDA's Investigation of Imported Apple Juice Concentrate. RCED-86-214FS; B-223906. August 29, 1986.

Released September 29, 1986. 11 pp. *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Frank Horton; by Hugh J. Wessinger, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-112, March 4, 1986, Accession Number 129587.

Issue Area: Environment: Evaluation of the Federal Pesticide Regulatory Process' Capability To Protect Public Health and the Environment From Unreasonable Risks (6806); Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Frank Horton.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on: (1) the volume of apple juice concentrate the United States imports; and (2) the methodology and testing results of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) special investigation on these concentrates.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) apple juice concentrate comprises nearly all of the apple juice imports entering the United States; (2) the volume of apple juice concentrate imports increased fivefold between 1980 and 1985; (3) between March and May 1985, FDA district offices sampled each shipment of imported apple juice concentrate for mercury and daminozide, in addition to their regular tests, since there were allegations that these chemicals were present in the concentrate; (4) most samples tested contained no detectable chemical residues; (5) samples containing the chemicals had levels well below the allowable levels; (6) FDA believes that imported apple juice and apple juice concentrate are safe; and (7) FDA added distilled water to its samples so that it could test the samples on a consistent basis and in the form in which they are normally consumed.

131183

Food and Drug Administration: Resources for Division of Scientific Investigations Have Been Reduced. HRD-86-136FS; B-224063. August 28, 1986.

Released September 29, 1986. 8 pp. *Fact Sheet* to Sen. John Heinz, Chairman, Senate Special Committee on Aging; by Daniel W. Blades, (for David P. Baine, Associate Director), Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-88-100, September 12, 1988, Accession Number 137030.

Issue Area: Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration: Center for Drugs and Biologics: Division of Scientific Investigations.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Special Committee on Aging; Sen. John Heinz.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-177). Drug Price Competition and Patent Term Restoration Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-417).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO obtained information on the activities of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Division of Scientific Investigations (DSI), specifically whether: (1) there have been major reductions in the DSI work force since 1981; (2) FDA filled vacant positions in DSI; (3) travel funds have been reduced; and (4) the location of the DSI office away from FDA headquarters has affected its program activities.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) since 1981, FDA has reduced the DSI staff by 19 percent, from 37 to 30 employees, although DSI responsibilities increased; (2) FDA has a vacant medical officer position in DSI that it will advertise in eight major medical journals in the near future; (3) FDA reduced travel expenditures by 28 percent between 1983 and 1986; (4) the number of inspections involving headquarters participation declined by 25 percent in 1986; and (5) the location of the DSI office away from the FDA office has resulted in decreased efficiency due to a lack of accessibility to the headquarters.

131277

Drug Regulation: FDA's Computer Systems Need To Be Better Managed. IMTEC-86-32; B-223076. September 5, 1986.

Released October 9, 1986. 42 pp. plus 3 appendices (18 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Ted S. Weiss, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations:

Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee; by Daniel C. White, (for Warren G. Reed, Director), Information Management and Technology Division. Refer to HRD-80-64, May 28, 1980, Accession Number 112450; HRD-82-16, November 23, 1981, Accession Number 117126; and HRD-82-37, March 8, 1982, Accession Number 117703.

Issue Area: Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205); Information Management and Technology: Income Security Systems (7114).

Contact: Information Management and Technology Division.

Budget Function: Health: Prevention and Control of Health Problems (551.2).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee; Senate Special Committee on Aging; Rep. Ted S. Weiss.

Authority: Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980. Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. OMB Circular A-130. F.I.R.M.R. 201-20.003.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) management and use of drug information to determine whether its primary drug information systems were: (1) accurate and complete; and (2) useful to reviewers in facilitating the evaluation of new drug applications. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that, despite some improvement since 1983: (1) the three principal FDA drug information systems are inaccurate and one is incomplete; (2) these systems are not useful to most FDA drug reviewers because they are unreliable and do not meet user needs in facilitating the evaluation of new drug applications; and (3) these systems' inadequacies and other information management deficiencies may result in delays in identifying unsafe drugs that are already on the

market and in the approval and marketing of new drugs that are unsafe, ineffective, or both. GAO believes that FDA difficulties with its drug information systems will continue because the agency has not effectively managed its information resources.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Health and Human Services, through the Assistant Secretary of Management and Budget, should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to develop and implement precise instructions for the receipt, processing, and input of adverse drug reaction (ADR) reports, particularly in the area of document control, to ensure that reports are entered into the system. The Secretary of Health and Human Services, through the Assistant Secretary of Management and Budget, should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to develop and implement specific criteria for the timely entry of new drug application status and assignment information into the New Drug Evaluation/Management Information System. The Secretary of Health and Human Services, through the Assistant Secretary of Management and Budget, should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to evaluate the Astro-IV System to determine its role in FDA, specifically to assess whether it is to be used in the drug review process or as an administrative tool supporting other programs. Only if the agency decides to use the system for drug reviews should it correct the system inaccuracies identified in this report. The agency should cease spending resources to upgrade the system's accessibility and utility for drug reviewers until this evaluation is completed. The Secretary of Health and Human Services, through the Assistant Secretary of Management and Budget, should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to monitor the reliability of data in all three systems by periodically testing data input procedures and system output. The Secretary of Health and Human Services, through the Assistant Secretary of Management and Budget, should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to implement standard drug terminology to enhance the integration of drug information systems. The Secretary of Health and Human Services, through the Assistant Secretary of Management and Budget, should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to identify and document reviewers' and managers' automation needs through a rational assessment and development process and develop systems that directly support the review and analysis of drug applications and the monitoring of

approved drugs. As part of the assessment and development process, FDA should evaluate: (1) the existing systems and determine if it would be more cost-beneficial to enhance, replace, or scrap them; and (2) the use of up-to-date technology to enhance data base integrity and to solve paper-volume, handling, and storage problems. The Secretary of Health and Human Services, through the Assistant Secretary of Management and Budget, should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to prepare long-range automatic data processing (ADP) plans to assist in: (1) identifying the automated technology and information systems the Center for Drugs and Biologics needs to carry out its mission; and (2) justifying resulting budget requests.

131361

The Nation's Water: Key Unanswered Questions About the Quality of Rivers and Streams.

PEMD-86-6; B-221558. September 19, 1986.

Released October 20, 1986. 118 pp. plus 6 appendices (41 pp.). *Report* to Rep. James L. Oberstar, Chairman, House Committee on Public Works and Transportation: Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PEMD-87-4A, December 17, 1986, Accession Number 131802; PEMD-87-4B, December 17, 1986, Accession Number 131803; and RCED-89-38, January 6, 1989, Accession Number 137701.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Intended and Unintended Effects of Operational Systems and Technologies (7201); Environment: Assessing How Water Pollution Facilities Are Reducing Pollutants From the Nation's Waters (6804).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Public Works and Transportation; *House* Committee on Public Works and Transportation: Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate*

Committee on Environment and Public Works; *Rep.* James L. Oberstar.

Authority: Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (Federal). Clean Water Act of 1977. Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National). H.R. 8 (99th Cong.). S. 1128 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO reviewed and combined the findings of several studies on issues affecting national water quality policies and assessed the technical strength of their methodologies, focusing on: (1) the present condition of the nation's water quality; (2) how the water quality has changed over time; (3) what pollution sources degrade water quality; and (4) the effect of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Construction Grants Program on water quality.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) some of the nation's water is of fair, good quality, while other water remains polluted; (2) pollution control efforts have reduced the discharge of conventional water pollutants from sources of focused pollution; (3) there was no change in water quality for most of the rivers examined; (4) the water quality in many rivers and streams has remained the same despite population and economic growth; (5) sources of diffused water pollution may degrade more stream-miles than sources of focused pollution; and (6) although the Construction Grants Program has reduced the discharge of pollutants from wastewater treatment plants, there is no data on its effect on in-stream pollutants. GAO also found that the effect on water quality is difficult to determine due to: (1) the absence of any analysis of a national sample of projects funded by the program; (2) the lack of data and analysis directly linking the funding of construction grants to in-stream water quality; and (3) the lack of information and analysis to rule out explanations for changes in water quality associated with non-point-source and point-source pollution.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, EPA, should perform methodologically sound research that will allow a comparison of the cost-effectiveness of the Construction Grants Program with other abatement possibilities, such as industrial point-source control and non-point-source abatement programs. The Administrator, EPA, should encourage the states to use multiple measures of standardized objective data in preparing information for future section 305(b) States' Evaluation of Progress reports. The states might identify the sources of critical data, indicating, for example, whether their data were derived from

objective physical, chemical, or biological measures, subjective judgments by experts, or a combination of these.

131469

Caribbean Basin Initiative: Need for More Reliable Data on Business Activity Resulting From the Initiative. NSIAD-86-201BR; B-223841. August 29, 1986.

Released September 15, 1986. 6 pp. plus 4 appendices (29 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. J.J. Pickle, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means: Oversight Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to T-NSIAD-87-2, December 10, 1986, Accession Number 131759; NSIAD-87-58FS, December 8, 1986, Accession Number 131807; and NSIAD-88-177, July 12, 1988, Accession Number 136305.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce; Department of Commerce: International Trade Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Ways and Means: Oversight Subcommittee; *Rep. J.J. Pickle.*

Authority: Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (19 U.S.C. 2701).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO surveyed 285 new businesses in the Caribbean Basin region regarding their operations in Central America and the Caribbean, specifically: (1) how the Department of Commerce developed its list of businesses; (2) the data Commerce obtained on the businesses; and (3) the results of GAO conversations with some of the businesses.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the Commerce list is not a reliable indicator of business investments made as a result of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) and is useless in measuring the program's effectiveness; (2) the list lacked information on business addresses, phone numbers, and commencement of operation dates; (3) publicized information on successful ventures could inform and encourage potential investors; (4) Commerce's data

should differentiate among proposed and actual investments, new firms opened and expanded due to CBI trade provisions, and new business activities indirectly related to CBI, to lessen the risk of misinterpreted or misrepresented information; (5) some firms on the list were not related to CBI trade provisions; and (6) 37 of the 106 firms contacted said CBI had greatly influenced their decisions to establish operations in the Caribbean Basin, while 39 said CBI had not been a factor in their decisions. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Commerce should ensure that the planned 1986 survey of CBI-related business activity develops reliable data. At a minimum, the data should be: (1) screened to avoid double-counting of firms and to exclude firms that have no relationship to CBI; (2) verified to ensure completeness and accuracy; and (3) analyzed to determine each business' operational status and relationship to CBI.

131473

Food Stamp Program: Statistical Validity of Agriculture's Payment Error-Rate Estimates. RCED-87-4; B-217883. October 30, 1986. 3 pp. plus 6 appendices (25 pp.). *Report* to Robert E. Leard, Administrator, Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-195, September 19, 1986, Accession Number 131045; RCED-85-98, April 12, 1985, Accession Number 126750; RCED-88-10, October 22, 1987, Accession Number 134232; and RCED-88-12, October 22, 1987, Accession Number 134233.

Issue Area: Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and Local Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014); Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Stamp Loss Measurement, Recovery, and Deterrence (6516).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on

Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs.

Authority: Food Security Act. Food Stamp Act of 1977. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982. H.R. 2621 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the quality control (QC) system that the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) used to set fiscal year 1984 error rates in Food Stamp Program benefit payments and to assess sanctions against states for their errors.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO noted that FNS annually estimates each state's food stamp payment error rate in a two-step process, using statistically selected FNS and state case samples. FNS: (1) computes a regressed error rate based on a review of its subsample of the state's sample; (2) adjusts the regressed error rate upward if the state did not complete the number of sample case reviews prescribed in its approved quality control review plan; and (3) determines the state's sanction from the resulting number, which is the official error rate. A sanction involves reducing the federally funded share of a state's administrative costs by a predetermined percentage tied to a target error rate. GAO found that, overall, FNS statistical policies for estimating the regressed and official error rates generally conformed with accepted statistical theory. GAO believes that, because small changes in the official error rates could affect sanction amounts, FNS should use the soundest practical statistical methods in developing the payment error-rate estimates.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, FNS, should amend FNS policy and guidance to require that an acceptable expected minimum-stratum sample size be established when approving a state's sampling plan. The Administrator, FNS, should amend FNS policy and guidance to require the routine calculation of the sampling error of payment error-rate estimates. In conjunction with actions taken in response to studies that the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Academy of Sciences are conducting on food stamp error rates and sanctions, the Administrator, FNS, should amend FNS policy and guidance to eliminate the assumption that cases for which reviews have not been completed have the same error rate as completed cases. In conjunction with actions taken in response to studies that USDA and the

National Academy of Sciences are conducting on food stamp error rates and sanctions, the Administrator, FNS, should amend FNS policy and guidance to require that the standard deviation of the regressed payment error rate, instead of the standard deviation from the state samples, be used in calculating the adjusted, or official, error rate.

131493

Seafood Marketing: Opportunities To Improve the U.S. Position.

RCED-87-11BR; B-218659. October 22, 1986.

Released October 22, 1986. 46 pp. plus 1 appendix (12 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Ted Stevens; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Ted Stevens.

Authority: Fisheries Co-operative Marketing Act (15 U.S.C. 521 et seq.). Fishery Products Act (Kennedy-Saltonstall) (15 U.S.C. 713c-3). Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.). American Fisheries Promotion Act (15 U.S.C. 1511(b)). Export Trading Company Act of 1982 (15 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.). Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (7 U.S.C. 612c). Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (7 U.S.C. 601). Potato Research and Promotion Act. Meat Inspection Act. Poultry Products Inspection Act. Cooperative Marketing Association Act. P.L. 89-688. P.L. 98-623. P.L. 83-480. Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1979. H.R. 2935 (99th Cong.). H.R. 1989 (99th Cong.). S. 2138 (99th Cong.). S. 2824 (92nd Cong.). S. Rept. 92-435. 46 U.S.C. 12108.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on: (1) how the U.S. seafood industry markets its products; (2) the federal role in assisting the U.S. seafood industry's efforts to become more competitive in domestic and foreign markets; and (3) options and issues for improving U.S. seafood competitiveness.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the U.S. seafood industry is more concerned with production than marketing and is composed of many

independent producers with little industry integration; (2) many of the U.S. industry's competitors have successfully used marketing techniques to increase sales; (3) some U.S. seafood industry components are beginning to successfully use marketing techniques; and (4) the U.S. seafood industry has yet to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy. GAO also found that: (1) agencies from the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce are coordinating efforts to improve their seafood marketing programs; (2) closer coordination would improve U.S. seafood competitiveness; and (3) Agriculture is responsible for a number of programs designed to enable industry groups to work together on product marketing. In addition, GAO found that the U.S. seafood industry could: (1) work within the current federal framework to improve competitiveness, which would be beneficial because the current agencies complement each other organizationally, but would be disadvantageous because the coordinated agency activities do not address product quality, an important element of any seafood marketing approach; or (2) attempt to obtain government assistance to apply traditionally successful agricultural marketing techniques to the seafood industry, which would be beneficial because it could lower the government's costs, but would be disadvantageous because the seafood industry has traditionally not displayed the same cooperation as other agricultural sectors.

131505

U.S. Agricultural Exports: Factors Affecting Competitiveness in World Markets. RCED-87-35BR; B-224873.

October 9, 1986.

Released November 3, 1986. 44 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Gary W. Hart; Sen. Thomas R. Harkin; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to NSIAD-85-118, September 23, 1985, Accession Number 127972; RCED-86-3BR, November 6, 1985, Accession Number 128558; RCED-86-134, May 19, 1986, Accession Number 130110; and RCED-87-100, May 7, 1987, Accession Number 132884.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Gary W. Hart; Sen. Thomas R. Harkin.

Authority: Food Security Act. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO addressed the issues of: (1) declining U.S. agricultural exports; and (2) waning U.S. competitiveness in the world agricultural market. GAO defined competitiveness as the ability to sell U.S. products in the world market at a level sufficient to sustain the U.S. market share.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO identified a number of factors that affect U.S. agricultural competitiveness, including public policy factors, economic factors, and natural resource constraints. Public policy factors affecting competitiveness include: (1) trade and countertrade agreements, some of which inhibit trade; (2) price supports and other subsidies that increase the market price of U.S. products; (3) government organizations, especially in non-market economies, that control and restrict agricultural trade; (4) such nontariff trade barriers as quality or safety standards, or quotas; (5) levies or duties imposed to protect countries' domestic industries; (6) restrictive international credit policies; and (7) sales moratoria or embargoes. Economic factors affecting competitiveness include: (1) a decreasing U.S. edge in production and distribution costs; (2) productivity increases in other exporting countries; (3) a growing perception in other countries that U.S. products are substandard; (4) fluctuations in the growth rate of the world economy; (5) exchange rate fluctuations; and (6) world population increases, which positively affect U.S. competitiveness. Natural resource factors affecting competitiveness include: (1) increasing climatic variability across the world; and (2) the amount of arable land and available water. GAO noted that it is difficult to make trade comparisons among different countries because many countries have different accounting standards, policies, and practices.

131507

Child Support: States' Progress in Implementing the 1984

Amendments. HRD-87-11; B-221078. October 3, 1986.

Released November 3, 1986. 47 pp. plus 5 appendices (17 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Harold E. Ford, Chairman, House

Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; by Richard L. Fogel, Assistant Comptroller General, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-86-40BR, December 24, 1985, Accession Number 128793; and HRD-87-37, April 30, 1987, Accession Number 132806.

Issue Area: Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and Local Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; *Rep.* Harold E. Ford.

Authority: Social Security Act. Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984 (P.L. 98-378).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO surveyed states' progress in implementing 14 selected provisions of the Child Support Enforcement Amendments to determine: (1) whether states enacted required legislation before the implementation of certain provisions; (2) the expected enactment and implementation dates; and (3) the causes of any delays in provision implementation.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the number of states that had fully implemented the provisions requiring state legislation ranged from 3 for the wage-withholding and state-tax-refund-offset provisions, to 45 for permitting the establishment of paternity until at least a child's 18th birthday. Most of the states had already implemented the six provisions that did not require state legislation. In addition, GAO found that state officials had concerns about the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Support Enforcement's oversight of states' implementation because: (1) there were communications problems between the Office and the states regarding statutory requirements; (2) the Office did not verify whether states possessed and used required procedures, resulting in unreliable implementation reports from the states; and (3) the Office was not maintaining complete records of states' revised implementation dates, which hampered adequate implementation time-frame monitoring. Most of the states believed that the amendments would: (1) have a positive effect on enforcement nationwide; and (2) help

more in collecting and enforcing support payments than in establishing paternity, locating absent parents, obtaining support orders, or enforcing interstate cases.

131508

Foreign Aid: Improvement Needed in Loan Reporting and Administration. NSIAD-87-2; B-220840. October 23, 1986.

Released November 3, 1986. 65 pp. plus 6 appendices (47 pp.). *Report* to Sen. David L. Boren; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-10, October 30, 1985, Accession Number 128543; ID-76-80, January 5, 1978, Accession Number 104614; and ID-79-14, March 29, 1979, Accession Number 108988.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of the Treasury; Department of State.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations; *Sen.* David L. Boren.

Authority: Mutual Security Act, 1953. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Arms Export Control Act. International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1978. International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1981. Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act. Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982. Export-Import Bank Act of 1945. P.L. 94-330. P.L. 91-619. P.L. 83-480. OMB Circular A-123. B-177988 (1973). B-133283 (1974).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reported on economic and military loan and grant aid to foreign countries, focusing on the Agency for International Development's (AID) loan management and reporting.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO noted that: (1) AID did not adequately consider current income levels or future economic prospects of recipients in establishing loan interest rates and repayment periods; (2) recipients of minimum loan terms did not strictly meet statutory

criteria; (3) AID provided minimum interest rates to countries with significantly different per-capita incomes; (4) AID accelerated only one country's loan repayments, and did not accelerate loan repayments for some countries with highly developed economies; (5) a number of loan recipients rescheduled their loans, sometimes repetitively, to avoid being in default and cut off from further aid; (6) in 1985, AID provided new loans to several countries at the same time that they rescheduled the old loans; (7) AID had not determined the collectibility or realizable value of loans in its portfolio, and had written off few loans; (8) loan data AID and other agencies independently submitted to Congress provided much useful information, but reports had varying formats and classifications which hindered program analysis and, in some respects, the information presented was incomplete and misleading; and (9) Congress may not be fully aware of how debt reschedulings have prevented loan defaults and allowed countries to receive further aid, since AID ceased publishing annual program summaries, including financial statements, of its loan operations in 1979.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, AID, should initiate negotiations with countries which received concessional loans from predecessor agencies, or which have achieved high economic development, and seek agreements on early repayment. The Administrator, AID, should describe, in the annual report to Congress on foreign assistance, the efforts made to accelerate loan repayments pursuant to requirements of section 127 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The Administrator, AID, should revise AID manual orders to make clear that no Foreign Assistance Act loan, except from the private sector revolving fund, whether to a public or private borrower, may be written off. The Chairman, Development Coordination Committee (DCC), should provide more information in reporting debt rescheduling activities to Congress, specifically: (1) notifications of proposed reschedulings should state clearly why the rescheduling is necessary and in the U.S. interest; and (2) reports of completed official debt reschedulings should present a more complete picture of how agreements affect U.S. financial interests, including how much and how many times debts owed to U.S. agencies have been rescheduled and the prospects for collecting rescheduled receivables. The Secretary of State should provide more information in reporting debt

rescheduling activities to Congress, specifically: (1) notifications of proposed reschedulings should state clearly why the rescheduling is necessary and in the U.S. interest; and (2) reports of completed official debt reschedulings should present a more complete picture of how agreements affect U.S. financial interests, including how much and how many times debts owed to U.S. agencies have been rescheduled and the prospects for collecting rescheduled receivables. The Secretary of the Treasury should provide more information in reporting debt rescheduling activities to Congress, specifically: (1) notifications of proposed reschedulings should state clearly why the rescheduling is necessary and in the U.S. interest; and (2) reports of completed official debt reschedulings should present a more complete picture of how agreements affect U.S. financial interests, including how much and how many times debts owed to U.S. agencies have been rescheduled and the prospects for collecting rescheduled receivables. Pursuant to the requirements of section 634 of the act, the Administrator, AID, as DCC Chairman, should revise the annual congressional report and accompanying annexes as may be necessary to show clearly the amounts of foreign assistance loan authorizations, disbursements, rescheduled debt, repayments, and balances outstanding, by program and country. Pursuant to the requirements of section 634 of the act, the Administrator, AID, as DCC Chairman, should define the status of repayments, including applicability of aid cut-off sanctions and collectibility of non-current loans, by country. Pursuant to the requirements of section 634 of the act, the Administrator, AID, as DCC Chairman, should disclose the reasons for any significant shortfalls in repayments of billed loan principal and interest for the preceding year. Pursuant to the requirements of section 634 of the act, the Administrator, AID, as DCC Chairman, should ensure consistency with the underlying agency loan records. Pursuant to the requirements of section 634 of the act, the Administrator, AID, as DCC Chairman, should meet the required February 1 reporting deadline. The Administrator, AID, should revise the U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants Report to provide certain information and ensure that the data reported in this book is consistent with other loan records and reports submitted to Congress by other executive agencies. The Administrator, AID, should prepare and submit to Congress an annual loan program summary, consisting of financial statements, program data, and loan information by country, which

adequately discloses the condition and collectibility of loan receivables and operating results of AID lending activity.

131509

Noncash Benefits: Initial Results Show Valuation Methods Differentially Affect the Poor. PEMD-87-7BR; B-222373. October 24, 1986.

Released October 31, 1986. 26 pp. plus 3 appendices (15 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. James V. Hansen, Ranking Member, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; Rep. Robert Garcia, Chairman, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; Rep. William D. Ford, Chairman, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service; by Eleanor Chelinsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PEMD-86-8BR, March 17, 1986, Accession Number 129641; Testimony, October 31, 1985, Accession Number 128281; Testimony, April 17, 1986, Accession Number 129661; HRD-88-9, November 4, 1987, Accession Number 134669; and PEMD-87-23, September 30, 1987, Accession Number 134297.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Improving the Evaluation of Cost Containment Strategies (7205).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Federal Employee Retirement and Disability (602.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Post Office and Civil Service; *Rep.* James V. Hansen; *Rep.* Robert Garcia; *Rep.* William D. Ford.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined the alternative methods to value noncash benefits of total federal support for the poor to determine whether: (1) the conceptual, operational, or computational aspects of the methods distort the estimates of poverty derived from them; and (2) if there are such factors, how big their influence is on poverty estimates.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that when medical benefits were added to food and housing benefits under the recipient-value and poverty-budget-share methods, persons with incomes just below the poverty line were moved just over the line; however, under the market-value method, persons with

incomes well below the poverty line were moved up well over the line. Each of the technical issues influenced the poverty rate, including that: (1) the nonsharability of medical benefits inappropriately showed many individuals as not poor, because the procedures allocated the medical benefits of enrollees to the entire family, even though not all members were covered; (2) the basis for calculating and assigning the market value for Medicare and Medicaid inappropriately showed that many individuals were moved out of the poverty range; (3) computing an average benefit level to individuals enrolled in medical programs inappropriately showed many individuals as not poor; and (4) misreporting food stamp reciprocity and amounts showed that the current method underestimated poverty by about 1.4 million individuals. The conceptual and technical aspects affected some subgroups more than others, such as single female heads of households, while none of the issues affected persons in married-couple families. GAO believes that its study shows that adequate information exists to both interpret proposed methods for cashing out in-kind benefits and make future decisions about which method should be used to represent poverty.

131521

Federal Disaster Assistance: Relief to 1985 Virginia Flood Victims--Process and Alternatives. RCED-87-21BR; B-224719. October 3, 1986.

Released November 4, 1986. 32 pp. *Briefing Report* to Sen. Paul Trible; by John H. Luke, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Housing and Community Development: Other Issue Area Work (6791).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Community and Regional Development: Disaster Relief and Insurance (453.0).

Organization Concerned: Small Business Administration; Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* Paul Trible.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the adequacy and timeliness of federal disaster assistance provided to Virginia victims of a November 1985 flood, specifically: (1) the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) public assistance; (2) the Small Business Administration's

(SBA) disaster loans; (3) the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program; (4) the FEMA Temporary Housing Assistance Program; and (5) the Federal Highway Administration's highway repairs.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) FEMA promptly disbursed funds for the National Flood Insurance program, having paid 88 percent of the claims by March 1986; (2) FEMA quickly resolved concerns involving temporary housing assistance and highway repairs; (3) SBA approved 1,361 home loans, totalling \$21.4 million, by April 1986; (4) SBA rejected loans to 370 applicants for lack of repayment ability or poor credit history; and (5) SBA approved 360 business loans and rejected 149 applications as of April 1986. GAO identified alternatives to improve the timeliness of SBA and FEMA assistance, including: (1) increased staffing to eliminate the SBA loan processing backlog; (2) increased assistance to applicants to ensure prompt and complete application information; (3) more use of the provision allowing advances to home-loan applicants; (4) revised inspection forms to reduce the loan-review processing time; (5) immediate consideration for those applicants whose incomes are less than the prescribed levels; and (6) merging verification and inspection functions within FEMA.

131527

Food Stamp Program: Restoration of Improperly Denied or Terminated Benefits. RCED-87-51; B-217883. October 30, 1986. 3 pp. plus 2 appendices (6 pp.). *Report to Robert E. Leard, Administrator, Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service;* by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-84-94, May 30, 1984, Accession Number 124296; RCED-88-12, October 22, 1987, Accession Number 134233; RCED-87-80BR, April 2, 1987, Accession Number 132900; PEMD-88-21, July 5, 1988, Accession Number 136251; and RCED-89-4, October 21, 1988, Accession Number 137168.

Issue Area: Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and Local Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014); Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Stamp Loss Measurement, Recovery, and Deterrence (6516).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; Illinois: Department of Public Aid.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1964.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined: (1) how federal and state administrative practices affect the participation of persons eligible for Food Stamp Program benefits; and (2) a problem in Illinois' procedures relating to the restoration of food stamp benefits to persons whose benefits were improperly denied or terminated.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, although states are responsible for local administration and daily program operation, the federal government finances about 50 percent of the states' administrative expenses. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requires that states continually monitor and report on: (1) how well they have administered the Food Stamp Program; and (2) errors they make in determining eligibility for program benefits. GAO also found that, in Illinois: (1) a local office of the state Department of Public Aid did not evaluate the cases of participants that the state found were improperly denied food stamps or terminated from the program, or restore those benefits, where appropriate; (2) the state did not establish a procedure to ensure that local offices restored the benefits, where appropriate; (3) of the 115 cases that Illinois had denied or terminated, 26 had no state review; (4) although the state usually transmitted letters regarding improperly denied or terminated cases to local offices, it did not keep a record of the transmittals; and (5) the FNS evaluations of Illinois' program operations did not detect that the local offices were not properly evaluating and restoring the benefits or instruct Illinois to include a procedure in its policies to ensure that the local offices complied with state directives.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, FNS, should instruct Illinois to evaluate the cases and, where appropriate, restore benefits for the 26 households listed in the report that had benefits improperly denied or terminated. The Administrator, FNS,

should instruct Illinois to establish a policy and implement a procedure to ensure that benefits are restored, where appropriate, in all such cases.

131543

The Philippines: Distribution and Oversight of U.S. Development and Food Assistance. NSIAD-87-24; B-224047. November 7, 1986. 4 pp. plus 4 appendices (25 pp.). *Report to Rep. Charles E. Schumer;* by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-108BR, May 2, 1986, Accession Number 129797; and ID-82-25, May 27, 1982, Accession Number 118499.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Republic of the Philippines; Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Charles E. Schumer.

Authority: P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed U.S. development and food assistance provided to the Philippines during fiscal years (FY) 1980 through 1985, specifically: (1) governmental and nongovernmental organizations involved in distributing U.S. assistance and the amounts each distributed; (2) the organizations' target populations; and (3) the potential for channeling greater amounts of aid through private organizations. GAO also examined how well the Agency for International Development (AID) managed its programs in the Philippines and reviewed allegations AID received regarding program fund misuse.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the U.S. government provided \$386.2 million in development and food assistance to the Philippines between FY 1980 and FY 1985, 65 percent of which Philippine government agencies distributed and 35 percent of which private voluntary organizations distributed; (2) the rural poor were the main recipients of program funds; (3) government agencies used the funds to improve their ability to achieve

development objectives; (4) private organizations used the funds on small-scale projects to reach specific target groups; (5) although AID is managing the programs according to project accounting controls, it inadequately monitors the private organization projects; and (6) AID received only five allegations concerning the misuse of its funds between January 1984 and October 1985 and closed its investigations of three of the allegations without taking action.

131581

Land Management: Forest Planning Costs at the Boise and Clearwater National Forests in Idaho. RCED-87-28FS; B-224944. October 31, 1986. Released November 10, 1986. 15 pp. *Fact Sheet* to Sen. James A. McClure, Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Forest Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; *Sen. James A. McClure*.

Authority: Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974. Forest Management Act. Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on forest planning costs for fiscal years (FY) 1981 through 1985 for the Boise and Clearwater National Forests in Idaho, and allocated the costs to the pertinent federal laws and regulations governing the planning process.

Findings/Conclusions: The Forest Service accounting system does not show the actual total cost of preparing land management plans because it: (1) does not include the cost of staff outside the land management planning unit who are directly involved in developing the plan; and (2) includes the cost of some staff who perform non-forest-plan activities. GAO estimated the costs and found that: (1) the Boise National Forest used \$2.5 million out of its total FY 1981 through 1985 expenditures of \$82.2 million to develop its forest plan; (2) the Clearwater National Forest spent \$2.1

million out of a total of \$93.7 million in the same time period for plan development; (3) the Boise and the Clearwater National Forest staffs estimated that 75 percent and 86 percent, respectively, of their planning costs were attributable to the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; and (4) the Clearwater draft plan is now under revision and is scheduled for completion by the end of 1986, while the Boise plan is still under development.

131584

Farmers Home Administration: Loan-Servicing Efforts Focus on Continually Delinquent Borrowers. RCED-87-13BR; B-224797. November 12, 1986. 63 pp. plus 11 appendices (14 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Jesse A. Helms, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-85-71, February 6, 1985, Accession Number 126252; RCED-86-57BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128977; RCED-86-62BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128976; RCED-86-88, June 13, 1986, Accession Number 130161; and RCED-87-79BR, March 11, 1987, Accession Number 132473.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Appropriateness of FmHA Credit Programs and Their Effectiveness in Assisting Farm Financial Needs (6510).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen. Jesse A. Helms*.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on: (1) the extent to which Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) borrowers are continually delinquent on their farm loans; and (2) the implementation of the FmHA November 1985 revised loan-servicing regulations for delinquent farm borrowers.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) of the 261,000 total FmHA farm borrowers, 50,033 were continually delinquent and 34,600 accounted for 78 percent of the \$6.8 billion in delinquent payments owed as of June 30, 1986; (2) of the 50,033 delinquent borrowers, 8,043 had discontinued or were discontinuing farming as of July 1986 and 41,983 were

still actively farming; (3) 25,441 of the delinquent borrowers who were actively farming had not made a loan payment on at least one loan since 1983 or earlier and 1,364 had never made a payment on any of their FmHA loans; (4) 63 percent of the total delinquent amounts owed by the 41,983 active delinquent borrowers was for emergency disaster loans; (5) FmHA had sent about 2,500 loan-servicing notices to farm borrowers with loan defaults in Missouri who accounted for \$147.5 million in delinquent payments; (6) of 191 Missouri borrowers studied, 22 had loan defaults resolved through FmHA servicing actions, 15 had resolved loan defaults on their own, and 68 had liquidated or were liquidating their farm operations; (7) the majority of the 14,649 farmers who became FmHA direct-loan borrowers from June 1985 to June 1986 were financially stressed, having an average debt-to-asset ratio of 70.6 percent, while all other existing FmHA farm borrowers had an average debt-to-asset ratio of 88.6 percent; and (8) the Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service stated that farmers with debt-to-asset ratios above 70 percent generally have problems meeting their interest and principal repayments, resulting in many of the farms becoming insolvent.

131603

Welfare Simplification: Thirty-Two States' Views on Coordinating Services for Low-Income Families. HRD-87-6FS; B-222701. October 30, 1986.

Released November 13, 1986. 19 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Mickey Leland, Chairman, House Select Committee on Hunger; Rep. Harold E. Ford, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; Rep. Marge Roukema, Ranking Minority Member, House Select Committee on Hunger; Rep. Carroll A. Campbell, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Bill Emerson, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-87-110FS, July 29, 1987, Accession Number 133660.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; *House* Select Committee on Hunger; *Rep.* Bill Emerson; *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta; *Rep.* Carroll A. Campbell; *Rep.* Harold E. Ford; *Rep.* Marge Roukema; *Rep.* Mickey Leland.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on states' responses to selected questions on the unification of human services programs to: (1) allow access to and use of benefits by all clients; (2) improve effectiveness of service delivery; and (3) achieve efficient use of human services resources.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, of the 32 states that responded to the questionnaire: (1) 31 would like to achieve more service integration; (2) 19 have started at least one service integration demonstration project since January 1, 1983; (3) 11 have considered legislation related to service integration since January 1, 1985; (4) most offer service integration for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Food Stamp, and Medicaid programs; (5) most indicated that certain desirable outcomes, such as increased client use of benefits and decreased federal and state administrative costs, could result from more service integration; (6) most indicated that the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services have already encouraged or will encourage service integration to some extent; (7) only 1 stated that the Department of Housing and Urban Development has encouraged or will encourage integration beyond a moderate extent; and (8) 25 believe that eligible families may not be receiving benefits due to transportation difficulties, while 21 believe it is due to lack of local outreach services.

131729

Pesticides: Better Sampling and Enforcement Needed on Imported Food. RCED-86-219; B-222128. September 26, 1986.

Released December 3, 1986. 48 pp. plus 6 appendices (7 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Frank Horton, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Government Operations; by Neal P. Curtin, (for J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to T-RCED-87-21, April 30, 1987, Accession Number 132820; T-RCED-88-12, December 14, 1987, Accession Number 134620; T-RCED-88-40, May 10, 1988, Accession Number 135754; RCED-88-149BR, May 10, 1988, Accession Number 135821; and IMTEC-88-42, September 30, 1988, Accession Number 137077.

Issue Area: Environment: Evaluation of the Federal Pesticide Regulatory Process' Capability To Protect Public Health and the Environment From Unreasonable Risks (6806); Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of U.S. Food/Agriculture Products in Satisfying Safety, Quality, and Dietary Needs (6508).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of the Treasury.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Commerce, Consumer and Monetary Affairs Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce; *House* Committee on Government Operations; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works: Superfund and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Labor and Human Resources; *Rep.* Frank Horton.

Authority: Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136 et seq.). Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.).

Egg Products Inspection Law (21 U.S.C. 1031 et seq.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) efforts to protect the public from exposure to illegal pesticide residues in imported food.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the FDA pesticide monitoring program provides limited protection against public exposure to illegal residues in food; (2) FDA samples less than 1 percent of 1 million imported food shipments annually; (3) FDA inspectors at various ports of entry decide the extent to which they apply sample criteria; and (4) FDA uses five multi-residue tests that individually detect many pesticides on a single sample; however, FDA laboratories normally use only one method for each sample. GAO also found that: (1) although FDA policy requires importers to maintain all sampled shipments intact until FDA determines that the product is residue-free, FDA permits importers to release the majority of sampled shipments to U.S. markets before they spoil; (2) of 164 adulterated samples, 73 were not recovered before public consumption; and (3) there were only eight documented cases where FDA assessed importers damages when adulterated food reached the marketplace.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to: (1) redirect resources away from highly sampled commodities with low violation rates to provide coverage of a wide range of imported commodities and importing countries, using a comprehensive monitoring summary to assist in the analysis; and (2) improve monitoring of importers and commodities with histories of pesticide violations by continuing follow-up sampling and certification requirements through successive growing seasons. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to assess the relative merits of the alternative means to obtain information on actual foreign pesticide use, including current legislative and regulatory authority, and: (1) require U.S. pesticide manufacturers who export pesticide chemicals to foreign countries to report the pesticides and quantities sold overseas; (2) require importers of food to certify which pesticides were used during production; and (3) develop cooperative agreements with foreign countries for the exchange of information on pesticide usage in food

production. As better information becomes available on foreign pesticide uses, the Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to test imported food for the pesticides used or suspected of being used on imported foods. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to recommend to Customs that liquidated damages be assessed for all shipments found to contain illegal pesticide residues if the shipment is not recovered. This assessment should apply whether the shipment was sampled under surveillance or compliance. The Secretary of the Treasury should direct the Commissioner of Customs to assess and collect liquidated damages from importers in all cases when FDA determines that imported food has been adulterated with illegal pesticide residues and the food is not recovered.

131730

Pesticides: Need To Enhance FDA's Ability To Protect the Public From Illegal Residues. RCED-87-7; B-219498. October 27, 1986.

Released December 3, 1986. 58 pp. *Report* to Sen. Max S. Baucus, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; Sen. David Durenberger, Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to T-RCED-87-21, April 30, 1987, Accession Number 132820; HRD-88-21, December 4, 1987, Accession Number 134773; T-RCED-88-12, December 14, 1987, Accession Number 134620; and RCED-88-135, August 10, 1988, Accession Number 136890.

Issue Area: Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205); **Environment:** Evaluation of the Federal Pesticide Regulatory Process' Capability To Protect Public Health and the Environment From Unreasonable Risks (6806).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0); Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Education and Labor; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Labor and Human Resources; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works: Toxic Substances and Environmental Oversight Subcommittee; Congress; *Sen.* Max S. Baucus; *Sen.* David Durenberger.

Authority: Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq). Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 136 et seq). Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq). Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq). Criminal Fine Enforcement Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-596). Egg Products Inspection Law (21 U.S.C. 1031 et seq).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) activities to protect the public from exposure to illegal pesticide residues in the domestic food supply under the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, specifically its: (1) monitoring of the nation's domestic food supply for illegal residues; and (2) efforts to prevent food containing illegal residues from reaching the market. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO noted that, since FDA could not monitor all food that might contain illegal pesticide residues, it designed its monitoring program to selectively spot-check a very small amount of domestically produced food and remove food that it found to contain illegal residues. GAO found that the FDA pesticide monitoring program has two major shortcomings because FDA does not: (1) regularly test food for a large number of pesticides that might be present in food, including a number of pesticides that, according to FDA, require continuous or periodic monitoring because they are known as potential health hazards and are likely to be used; (2) prevent the marketing of most of the food that contains illegal pesticide residues; and (3) penalize growers who market food with illegal pesticide residues when FDA is unable to remove it from the market.

Recommendation To Congress: In view of the difficulties that FDA faces in trying to use existing authorities to prevent the marketing of domestic food containing illegal pesticide residues and the need to

provide a strong deterrent against such shipments, Congress may wish to give FDA legislative authority to assess civil penalties against growers of such food when it is not removed from the marketplace.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct the Commissioner, FDA, to establish specific criteria for the level of testing that is required for continuous and periodic monitoring and require FDA laboratories to test in accordance with such criteria.

131807

Caribbean Basin Initiative: Legislative and Agency Actions Relating to the CBI. NSIAD-87-58FS; B-225332. December 8, 1986.

Released December 15, 1986. 3 pp. plus 1 appendix (8 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. J.J. Pickle, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means: Oversight Subcommittee; by Joseph E. Kelley, Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-201BR, August 29, 1986, Accession Number 131469; and NSIAD-88-177, July 12, 1988, Accession Number 136305.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce: United States Travel and Tourism Administration; Department of Commerce: International Trade Administration; Agency for International Development; Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Ways and Means: Oversight Subcommittee; *Rep.* J.J. Pickle.

Authority: Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (19 U.S.C. 2701). Tax Reform Act of 1986. P.L. 99-591.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on legislation and agency rules, regulations, and decisions enacted to constrain the effectiveness of the 1983 Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) legislation. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO noted that Congress enacted CBI to: (1) permit the United States to import eligible products

from designated countries in Central America and the Caribbean duty free; and (2) promote economic and political stability by attracting foreign and domestic investment in these countries. GAO found that the Tax Reform Act of 1986: (1) restricted duty-free imports of ethanol from CBI countries; (2) would bar the International Trade Administration from funding activities such as trade shows and seminars which convey the advantages of relocating U.S. businesses overseas; (3) would direct the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration to promote travel only to the U.S. and its possessions, preventing the agency from funding policy studies or technical assistance which could benefit the tourism industry in the Caribbean Basin; (4) would restrict Agency for International Development (AID) funding of activities involving foreign agricultural exports which could compete with U.S. production; and (5) would restrict AID-funded activities to promote the export of certain manufactured items in direct competition with U.S. production.

131999

National Forests: Estimated Costs and Results of Alternative Silvicultural Treatments. RCED-87-61FS; B-225882. December 30, 1986.

Released January 14, 1987. 25 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. James H. Weaver, Chairman, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: General Oversight, Northwest Power, and Forest Management Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to CED-81-46, April 17, 1981, Accession Number 115126.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Forest Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: General Oversight, Northwest Power, and Forest Management Subcommittee; *Rep.* James H. Weaver.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed per-acre cost information on the Forest Service's use of herbicides and alternative treatment methods for site preparation, release, and thinning activities for six forests in the Pacific Northwest.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO noted that cost comparisons between each forest may be inaccurate and limit the usefulness of the data because costs vary due to the different physical characteristics of each forest. GAO found that: (1) the Siuslaw National Forest significantly reduced its herbicide program in fiscal year 1983, and used manual or mechanical methods on land on which it would normally have used herbicides; (2) the Forest Service accounting system did not separate out its administrative costs; and (3) manual or mechanical applications normally require more follow-up treatments and ultimately realize less timber growth and harvest levels than herbicide applications, but the cost data for those treatments were not available.

132040

[Federal Benefit Programs for the Elderly--Over 40 Percent of the Federal Budget: A Complex Maze]. 1986. 9 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.). *Speech* before the Gerontological Society; by Louise N. Roy-O'Connell, Field Operations Division: Regional Office (Detroit).

Contact: Field Operations Division: Regional Office (Detroit).

Organization Concerned: Gerontological Society.

Abstract: GAO discussed the inventory it compiled of federal benefit programs for the elderly and noted that: (1) there are over 90 programs relating to the elderly, representing over 40 percent of the federal budget; (2) these programs consist of needs-based or insurance-based programs under the general categories of medical, cash, services, food, and housing; (3) 30 percent of Americans receive benefits from these programs; and (4) federal obligations for programs related to the elderly total over \$370 billion annually and will remain at about 44 percent of national budget obligations through fiscal year 1987. GAO also discussed problems with the verification procedures agencies use to determine eligibility for program benefits, specifically: (1) differences among programs in defining income and resources; (2) state and local agency requirements which add to the caseworker's load; (3) differences among the programs in staff and resources available for verification work; and (4) frequency of verification requirements, particularly for those elements subject to frequent change, such as income and family composition. GAO found a great variation among agencies in the types and quality of verification data they collected and suggested that if they

would accept client verification data from each other, it could result in savings in time and money for the agencies and their clients.

132044

Grain Shipments: Agriculture Can Reduce Costs by Increased Use of Negotiated Rail Rates. RCED-87-42; B-221673. January 21, 1987.

Released January 27, 1987. 52 pp. plus 2 appendices (2 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Byron L. Dorgan; Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Neal P. Curtin, (for J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Credit and Rural Electrification Subcommittee; *Rep.* Byron L. Dorgan.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1445(e)(f)). Food Security Act. Staggers Rail Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-448). Interstate Commerce Act, Part 1. P.L. 81-439. P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the methods that the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) used to ship government grain by rail, focusing on: (1) the extent to which USDA negotiated rate and service concessions with railroads, in comparison with private grain shippers and other government agencies; (2) savings that resulted from negotiations; (3) constraints that kept USDA from negotiating more often; and (4) methods private shippers and government agencies used to increase their negotiating effectiveness.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) ASCS negotiated rate and service

concessions for 10 percent of its 1985 rail grain shipments; (2) ASCS negotiated larger shipments more often because they provided railroads with greater incentive to negotiate; (3) the private sector negotiated rates for 57 percent of its shipments in mid-1985; (4) of the seven shipments GAO reviewed, ASCS saved an average of 29 percent over published tariff rates, while private-sector shippers saved 17 percent; (5) although ASCS experienced negotiating constraints that included the inability to predict shipment volumes, lack of personnel, lack of bargaining leverage, lack of adequate notice of grain shipments, and lack of data on other shippers' contract rates, it could deal with those constraints through management actions; (6) in response to deregulation, private shippers strengthened their transportation planning systems to improve negotiating leverage, automated their development of traffic pattern information, rail rates, and carrier costs, and developed negotiating and marketing expertise; (7) ASCS negotiated shipments on a shipment-by-shipment basis, and did not automate transportation management functions, provide formal training to its transportation specialists, or use outside expertise to supplement staff skills; and (8) ASCS did not have a written policy to specify when its transportation specialists should negotiate or a system for tracking negotiations and monitoring its transportation specialists' performance.

Recommendation To Agencies: To increase the negotiating effectiveness of ASCS and to take better advantage of potential cost savings and service benefits, the Secretary, USDA, should direct the Administrator, ASCS, to develop a written policy setting forth ASCS goals and strategy for managing rail shipments in the current deregulated environment. The policy should: (1) include a plan for maximizing ASCS negotiating leverage, incorporating factors such as using business in competitive areas to achieve rate concessions in low-volume, noncompetitive areas, selecting grain elevators with storage and loading facilities suited to larger, multiple-car loading, and concentrating shipments among railroads to achieve optimum rates and service; and (2) incorporate criteria prescribing when negotiations should be pursued and providing guidance on how they should be conducted. Management should establish periodic performance goals, based on the policy. To help implement the new rail negotiation policy, the Secretary, USDA, should also require that the

Administrator, ASCS, develop and enhance an automated management information system to provide information needed by transportation specialists to effectively negotiate rail rates. The system should include data on the ASCS traffic base, including the number of rail shipments, shipment origins and destinations, volume and cost of rail shipments, and number of negotiated and nonnegotiated shipments. This information should also be used to evaluate negotiating performance and monitor performance goals. To help implement the new rail negotiation policy, the Secretary, USDA, should require that the Administrator, ASCS, develop and enhance ASCS negotiating expertise. Existing expertise should be enhanced by: (1) establishing a training program for ASCS transportation specialists to augment negotiating skills; and (2) determining what additional business-related expertise is needed and obtaining it through use of consultants and collaboration with private sector shippers.

132045

Commodity Futures Trading: Preliminary Information on the Viability of the Cattle Futures Markets. RCED-87-83; B-226079. January 16, 1987. 9 pp. *Report to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.* Refer to RCED-88-30, November 10, 1987, Accession Number 134460; and RCED-88-78BR, March 25, 1988, Accession Number 135397.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Relevance of Policies and Programs Developed Decades Ago To Improve the Marketing of Food (6523); Financial Services and Markets: Other Issue Area Work (4591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza; Sen. Patrick J. Leahy.*

Authority: Futures Trading Act of 1986.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided preliminary

information on its study of the cattle futures markets.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the cattle industry has suffered serious financial stress in recent years because of high interest rates, low cattle prices, and declining land values; (2) although the price of cattle today is twice what it was 20 to 30 years ago, the decline in the dollar's purchasing power has more than offset this price increase; (3) the Chicago Mercantile Exchange created the live cattle futures market in 1964, as a response to unstable prices and narrow profit margins; and (4) many within the cattle industry are uncertain of how to use the market or what its impact is on prices. GAO also found that: (1) the structure of the cattle industry has changed dramatically over the years; (2) 75 percent of the nation's beef cows live in herds of less than 200; (3) agricultural futures market mechanisms evolved primarily in response to unstable cash markets with wide price swings resulting from a glut of low-priced commodities at harvest time and high-priced commodities after harvest; and (4) there have been charges within the cattle industry that the cattle futures markets exert downward pressure on cattle prices.

132074

Foreign Aid: Potential for Diversion of Economic Support Funds to Unauthorized Use. NSIAD-87-70; B-225870. January 14, 1987. 4 pp. plus 3 appendices (21 pp.). *Report to Rep. Lee H. Hamilton, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division.* Refer to NSIAD-88-182, June 29, 1988, Accession Number 136209.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee; Rep. Lee H. Hamilton.*

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed Economic

Support Fund (ESF) programs to determine whether: (1) recipient countries had diverted any of the funds to military use; and (2) the Agency for International Development's (AID) program controls leave open the possibility for diversion to unauthorized purposes.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) AID reported only one possible diversion of funds to military use, which involved jeeps that Somalia imported in 1984 under a commodity import program and which a private concern later resold to the military; and (2) measures such as control provisions in grant agreements, payment verification procedures, program audits and evaluations, as well as AID reviews of recipient government reports and monitoring procedures, prevented unauthorized diversion of funds. GAO also found that there is a potential for possible funds diversion because: (1) accounting for cash transfers that the recipient government has commingled with other revenues is nearly impossible; (2) providing cash assistance frees up other resources for military expenses; (3) AID relies on recordkeeping by recipient country institutions that have administrative weaknesses, and must monitor projects and commodities at remote locations and large numbers of sites; and (4) AID has problems implementing the controls it places over the economic assistance programs and in ensuring the recipients' compliance with the controls.

132080

Data Processing: Status of Agriculture's Electronic Dissemination of Information System. IMTEC-87-7FS; B-225251. January 5, 1987.

Released January 30, 1987. 5 pp. plus 2 appendices (16 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Glenn L. English, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; by Howard G. Rhile, Jr., Associate Director, Information Management and Technology Division.

Issue Area: Information Management and Technology: Other Issue Area Work (7191); Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Information Management and Technology Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Martin Marietta Corp.: Data Systems.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations:

Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; *Rep.* Glenn L. English.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on: (1) the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Electronic Dissemination of Information System; and (2) the contractor's performance in operating the system.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the contractor met the required deadlines for providing the system and most services to the public and to USDA users; (2) the system was operational by July 1985; (3) although the contractor experienced delays in providing data to users during the first operating year, it improved the quality of its service by correcting technical data entry and administrative data entry problems; (4) the contractor did not sell or provide data to anyone other than system users, or enhance or change data provided to public users; (5) six of the nine users believed their user fees were reasonable, while three believed the charges were too high; (6) the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) network collects and disseminates market prices for a large variety of agricultural commodities across the country to public users, agribusiness establishments, newswire services, publishing companies, and agricultural information retailers; (7) the USDA system distributes all agricultural information and reports that it collects from participating agencies to public and government users; and (8) since AMS personnel saw the system as a possible alternative to replacing the network, they have coordinated with USDA in placing its information in the system as well as in their network.

132098

Work and Welfare: Current AFDC Work Programs and Implications for Federal Policy. HRD-87-34; B-219521. January 29, 1987. 128 pp. plus 4 appendices (31 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Ted S. Weiss, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee; by Richard L. Fogel, Assistant Comptroller General, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-84-68, August 9, 1984, Accession Number 125079; PEMD-85-4, July 2, 1985, Accession Number 127405; HRD-82-55, June 21, 1982, Accession Number 118870; HRD-88-9, November 4, 1987, Accession Number 134669; T-HRD-87-12, April 30, 1987, Accession Number 132961; T-HRD-87-9, February 23, 1987,

Accession Number 132960; HRD-87-51BR, February 19, 1987, Accession Number 132472; and HRD-88-33FS, January 5, 1988, Accession Number 134944.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessment of Recent Changes in the Poverty Population (5019).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources Subcommittee; *Rep.* Ted S. Weiss.

Authority: Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973. Job Training Partnership Act. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982. Social Security Act. Emergency Jobs Appropriations Act of 1983. Deficit Reduction Act of 1984.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on employment-related programs for applicants and recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the states' division of work program responsibilities between AFDC offices and employment agencies resulted in duplication of staffs and services; (2) federal regulations for the various program options sometimes conflicted, making coordination difficult; (3) in 1985, work programs reached a minority of adult AFDC recipients, an estimated 22 percent in states with work incentives programs (WIN); and (4) WIN assisted participants primarily in job search and immediate placement, rather than skills improvement. GAO also found that, of the 61 programs it surveyed: (1) 59 offered child care assistance to their participants, but half spent less than 6.4 percent of their 1985 budgets for this purpose; (2) sixty provided transportation assistance, with the median program spending 6.9 percent of its budget; (3) most participants ended up with low-paying or part-time jobs, and less than 48 percent of the participants left AFDC after finding work; and (4) economic conditions and problems participants faced in making the transition from welfare to work limited positive results. GAO noted that, with few federal reporting requirements or standard definitions, programs collected the data they chose, making

comparisons difficult. GAO believes that, in deliberating legislative proposals to change work program policy, Congress should develop a coherent, streamlined federal work program policy that would preserve some of the more desirable features of the programs begun in the past 5 years.

132141

Canadian Timber: Cost and Pricing Data for Timber Harvested in British Columbia. RCED-87-55FS; B-225881. December 30, 1986. 26 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Fact Sheet* to Sen. James Abdnor, Vice Chairman, Joint Economic Committee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Canada.

Congressional Relevance: *Joint Economic Committee; Sen. James Abdnor.*

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the costs and prices of timber Canada sold from government-owned lands in British Columbia between 1981 and 1985, to assist the evaluation of U.S. timber harvest pricing and regulation.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the coastal regions' average stumpage prices were higher and the volumes they harvested were lower than in the interior region; and (2) in 1985, the coastal region harvested 2.9 billion board feet at an average stumpage price of \$24.08 per thousand board feet, while the interior region harvested 8.6 billion board feet at an average stumpage price of \$5.36 per thousand board feet. GAO also summarized 1981 to 1984 data on: (1) road costs incurred to harvest timber; (2) timber harvesting costs; (3) utilization ratios of harvested timber; (4) lumber manufacturing costs; and (5) sizes of timber put into sawmills.

132351

Data Processing: USDA Needs To Better Manage Field-Office Computer Purchases. IMTEC-87-12; B-220242. February 20, 1987. 5 pp. plus 4 appendices (23 pp.). *Report* to Rep. George E. Brown, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations,

Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Daniel C. White, (for Warren G. Reed, Director), Information Management and Technology Division. Refer to IMTEC-86-1BR, October 4, 1985, Accession Number 128763.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591); Information Management and Technology: Other Issue Area Work (7191).

Contact: Information Management and Technology Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Soil Conservation Service; Farmers Home Administration; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; Rep. George E. Brown, Jr. .*

Authority: OMB Circular A-130. OMB Circular A-71. USDA Reg. 3100-2.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the acquisition and use of field-office computer systems by the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), focusing on: (1) whether USDA, SCS, and FmHA are pursuing the feasibility of sharing computer resources for collocated field offices; (2) whether SCS and FmHA are pursuing the feasibility of using smaller, less expensive computers than originally planned for their field offices; (3) whether SCS is employing a cost-effective approach to acquiring applications software for its field-office computers; (4) what SCS has done to show whether field-office automation will improve service to farmers and other land users; and (5) the FmHA assessment of interfacing its field-office computers with states' automated lien systems.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) SCS and FmHA are considering conducting a sharing test, but will independently acquire computers for collocated offices; (2) SCS and FmHA are considering the use of smaller, less expensive computers for field offices not located in the same city; (3) SCS could save an estimated \$13.7 million by acquiring smaller computers available under the current contract; (4) FmHA determined that the smaller computers available under the current contract would not meet its needs; (5) SCS is not cost-effectively acquiring applications software for its field-office computers, since it is allowing its state offices and other units to independently develop

some software that could duplicate efforts; (6) SCS plans to evaluate the impact of field-office automation on service to farmers and other land users in the spring of 1987; and (7) FmHA has not determined whether its computer systems can interface with states' automated systems to determine whether the same equipment or crops are being used as collateral for more than one loan, but will evaluate this possibility after it installs all of its field-office systems.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct that SCS and FmHA delay acquisition of additional computer systems for offices located in the same building, city, or town until the sharing study is completed. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct that SCS defer ordering computer systems for its field offices requiring a one-workstation system until it determines whether these offices can use smaller, less expensive microcomputers available under the contract. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct that SCS review software-development efforts of its field offices and maintain a current inventory of planned and existing software applications to help ensure that duplication of software development is avoided. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct that SCS prepare and implement a plan to evaluate the benefits attributable to field-office automation.

132352

Emergency Assistance: Operation of USDA's Livestock Feed Programs. RCED-87-59; B-225200. March 6, 1987. 6 pp. plus 7 appendices (36 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Thomas A. Daschle; Rep. Byron L. Dorgan; Rep. Richard H. Stallings; Rep. Pat Williams; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep. Pat Williams; Rep. Richard H. Stallings; Rep. Byron L. Dorgan; Sen. Thomas A. Daschle.*

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). H.R. 4455 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) emergency livestock feed assistance programs to determine: (1) whether the Emergency Feed Assistance Program (EFAP) was effective in providing a timely response to emergency conditions in Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota during 1985 and 1986; (2) the comparative benefits of the Emergency Feed Assistance Program and the Emergency Feed Program (EFP); and (3) the rationale USDA used to select specific emergency programs to respond to particular disaster conditions. GAO also reviewed legislation that proposed to consolidate and improve the various emergency livestock feed programs.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) few livestock producers took advantage of EFAP benefits because the grain was not located near the areas that needed it the most and was too costly to transport; (2) USDA should have revised the program benefits sooner to provide more assistance and grain to producers; and (3) in selecting emergency feed assistance, USDA considered the amount of territory affected and the estimated loss. GAO also found that, under EFAP, USDA: (1) provided Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)-owned grain to producers at prescribed prices; (2) limited the available feed to corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, and wheat; (3) provided assistance only for herds that were the producers' primary breeding stock and offspring; (4) needed more time to transport and store grain if the CCC-owned grain was not located in or near the disaster areas; and (5) limited benefits to disasters caused by drought or excessive moisture. GAO found that, under EFP: (1) USDA reimbursed eligible livestock producers for up to 50 percent of the cost of feed that they purchased from commercial sources; (2) producers purchased partial reimbursement for mixed feed, liquid supplements, and hay; (3) USDA provided assistance for all eligible livestock; (4) USDA provided timely assistance as long as feed was commercially available; and (5) USDA benefits covered floods, droughts, fires, hurricanes, earthquakes, storms, and other natural disasters. GAO believes that Congress should clarify or add alternative language to the proposed legislation to better accomplish its objectives.

132380

[The Status of FmHA Farm Loan Portfolio and Farm Loan-Making

Criteria and Policies]. T-RCED-87-6. March 11, 1987. 11 pp. plus 2 enclosures (7 pp.). *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-62BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128976.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Abstract: GAO discussed the Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA): (1) farm loan portfolio; and (2) proposed changes to improve its lending policies and their potential impact on FmHA borrowers' ability to qualify for future farm loans. GAO found that: (1) due to rapidly deteriorating financial conditions, more farmers sought assistance from FmHA because private lenders rejected their financing requests; (2) the FmHA farm debt in its five major farmer programs increased about 370 percent after 1977; (3) although the number of borrowers and loans decreased, the outstanding principal increased about \$100 million; (4) one reason for the poor condition of the FmHA farm loan portfolio was the FmHA policy decision to help farmers stay in business with the hope that the farm economy would improve; (5) FmHA introduced a credit scoring system to help determine financial eligibility for its farm loan programs; and (6) half of the borrowers who received new farm loans in 1986 would not have qualified under the FmHA-proposed credit scoring system due to negative cash flow, technical insolvency, unpaid outstanding loans, or declining equity. GAO plans to further document the potential impact of the FmHA-revised credit scoring system and determine whether FmHA loan-servicing actions actually help borrowers return to profitability, or merely forestall financial failure while increasing the borrowers' debt loads, reducing their equity, and increasing potential future losses to the government.

132395

[The Export Enhancement Program, U.S. Foreign Agricultural Market Development Cooperator Program, Long-Term Bilateral Grain Agreements and

Countertrade, Alternative Agricultural Trade Legislation Proposals]. T-NSIAD-87-9. March 12, 1987. 41 pp. *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Domestic and Foreign Marketing and Product Promotion Subcommittee; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-85-118, September 23, 1985, Accession Number 127972.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service; International Monetary Fund.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Domestic and Foreign Marketing and Product Promotion Subcommittee; *Rep.* George E. Brown, Jr.; *Sen.* Charles E. Grassley; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin.

Authority: Food Security Act. Food Security Improvements Act of 1986. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act. S. 490 (100th Cong.). S. 512 (100th Cong.). H.R. 3 (100th Cong.). S. 310 (100th Cong.). General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: GAO discussed the Export Enhancement Program (EEP), the Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program, and bilateral grain agreements and countertrade. GAO noted that EEP increases U.S. exports, regains the lost U.S. market share, and disposes of surplus U.S. wheat and other agricultural commodities, but: (1) EEP sales represented only 3 percent of total U.S. agricultural exports; and (2) U.S. exports not targeted under EEP decreased significantly in the 1986 crop year because of increased production and limited availability of foreign currency. GAO found that: (1) although there was little evidence that EEP sales directly displaced European sales for the 1986 crop year, EEP could lower European export volume or prices; (2) EEP was designed to be budget-neutral, but there

were examples where individual EEP sales could result in higher government outlays; (3) cooperator programs are geared to increasing consumer and commercial uses of U.S. agricultural products and developing long-term markets; and (4) bilateral grain agreements and countertrade were used extensively in countries where the government attempted to maintain and expand market share, but these agreements declined as a result of a buyer's market. GAO concluded that more emphasis on market development, coordination of existing and newly established programs, and new markets and value-added commodities are positive responses to increasing foreign competition.

132424

[Comments on Whether USDA Implementation of Section of Food Security Act Violates Applicable Laws]. B-223857. February 27, 1987.

Released March 17, 1987. 9 pp. *Letter* to Rep. Glenn L. English, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Acting Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; *Rep.* Glenn L. English.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198; 99 Stat. 1354). Prompt Payment Act (31 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.). Antideficiency Act (31 U.S.C. 1341(a)(1)). Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1446(d)). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 713 et seq.). Urgent Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1986 (P.L. 99-349; 100 Stat. 210). 62 Comp. Gen. 673. 64 Comp. Gen. 32. 64 Comp. Gen. 835. 63 Comp. Gen. 517. 63 Comp. Gen. 285. 28 Comp. Gen. 163. 65 Comp. Gen. 4. 55 Comp. Gen. 768. F.A.R. 12.5. F.A.R. 49.000. F.A.R. 32.702. H. Rept. 99-447. H. Rept. 99-301. OMB Circular A-125. B-192573 (1979). 7 U.S.C. 612c.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO commented on whether the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) actions in implementing section 104 of the Food Security Act violated the Prompt Payment Act or any other applicable laws. GAO noted that: (1) USDA implemented a program through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)

to purchase a total of 400 million pounds of red meat to minimize the adverse effect of the milk production termination program on beef, pork, and lamb producers; and (2) CCC was unable to make timely payments on some of the contracts it entered into with meat suppliers. GAO determined that CCC violated: (1) the Prompt Payment Act by refusing to pay any interest on its late payments to contractors after funds became available; and (2) the Antideficiency Act by entering into new contracts with suppliers or requiring and accepting deliveries on existing contracts when its borrowing authority was depleted and no other funds were available to pay the contractors.

132431

[The Export Enhancement Program, U.S. Foreign Agricultural Market Development Cooperator Program, Long-Term Bilateral Grain Agreements and Countertrade, Alternative Agricultural Trade Legislation Proposals]. T-NSIAD-87-15. March 17, 1987. 40 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-85-118, September 23, 1985, Accession Number 127972.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service; International Monetary Fund.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen.* Charles E. Grassley; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin.

Authority: Food Security Act. Food Security Improvements Act of 1986. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act. S. 490 (100th Cong.). S. 512 (100th Cong.). H.R. 3 (100th Cong.). S. 310 (100th Cong.). General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: GAO discussed the Export Enhancement Program (EEP), the Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program, and bilateral long-term grain agreements and countertrade. GAO

noted that EEP is a means of increasing U.S. exports, regaining the lost U.S. market share, and disposing of surplus U.S. wheat and other agricultural commodities, but: (1) in fiscal year 1986, EEP sales represented only 3 percent of the value of total U.S. agricultural exports; and (2) U.S. exports not targeted under EEP decreased significantly in the 1986 crop year because of increased production and limited availability of foreign currency. GAO found that: (1) although there was little evidence that EEP sales directly displaced European sales for the 1986 crop year, EEP could hurt these countries if it lowered their export volume or prices; (2) EEP was designed to be budget neutral, but there were examples where individual EEP sales could result in higher government outlays; (3) cooperator programs are geared to increasing consumer and commercial uses of U.S. agricultural products and to developing long-term markets rather than achieving immediate sales; and (4) long-term bilateral grain agreements and countertrade were used extensively in countries where the government attempted to maintain and expand their market share, but these agreements declined as a result of a buyer's market. GAO concluded that more emphasis on market development, coordination of existing and newly established programs, and new markets and value-added commodities are positive responses to increasing foreign competition.

132471

Hazardous Waste: Uncertainties of Existing Data. PEMD-87-11BR; B-223825. February 18, 1987.

Released March 23, 1987. 30 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Michael L. Synar, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Intended and Unintended Effects of Operational Systems and Technologies (7201); Environment: Assessing EPA's Efforts To Protect Public Health and the Environment by Controlling Hazardous Waste From Generation To Disposal (6802).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned:
Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee; *Rep.* Michael L. Synar.

Authority: Solid and Hazardous Waste Amendments of 1984. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976. Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980. 45 Fed. Reg. 33084.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO addressed the issue of whether future treatment, storage, and disposal capacities will be quantitatively adequate to manage the volume of hazardous wastes being generated. Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, after reviewing approximately 90 studies and documents, there were significant data gaps, methodological problems, and other issues that precluded it from: (1) relying upon available information to provide estimates of the total volume of hazardous waste; and (2) determining whether future treatment, storage, and disposal capacity will adequately meet the volume of hazardous waste generated. GAO concluded that a variety of uncertainties could severely constrain the planning and management of future hazardous waste production, including: (1) the amount of hazardous waste that Superfund sites will produce; (2) the effect of the proposed law on the land disposal of some wastes; and (3) legislative requirements for groundwater monitoring and financial responsibility. GAO believes that Congress should address certain methodological issues, including the definition of hazardous waste, the scope of waste estimates, and the design of studies, to ensure that it will have the information base it needs to plan for hazardous waste management.

132472

Welfare: Issues To Consider in Assessing Proposals for Reform.

HRD-87-51BR; B-225966. February 19, 1987.

Released March 23, 1987. 27 pp. plus 3 appendices (7 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. William V. Roth, Jr.; by Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-86-14, October 17, 1985, Accession Number 127971; HRD-85-92, August 27, 1985, Accession Number 128233; HRD-87-34, January 29, 1987, Accession Number 132098; RCED-87-189, September 1, 1987, Accession Number 133857; and HRD-88-9, November 4, 1987, Accession Number 134669.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Well Welfare Programs or Projects Encourage and Assist Recipients To Obtain Work and Become Self-Sufficient (5017).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* William V. Roth, Jr. .

Authority: Social Security Act. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed information on: (1) major welfare system design issues; and (2) the sources and income levels of families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits. Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) researchers generally evaluated the welfare system by determining whether benefits lifted recipients to the poverty line, but there were problems in determining welfare family income; (2) variations within welfare programs caused recipients in similar circumstances to receive different benefit amounts; (3) service integration could reduce complexity and improve recipient access to programs, eliminate needless bureaucracy, and reduce administrative costs; and (4) although some program funding created incentives for states to shift benefit costs to the federal government, funding arrangements often led to an inequitable distribution of federal funds. GAO also found that: (1) the system had features that reduced incentives for recipients to work; (2) some state work programs had encouraging results, but the long-term prospects of the programs remained uncertain; and (3) concerns about welfare's impact on family stability stemmed largely from AFDC, since most states elected not to provide AFDC to two-parent families when the principal wage earner was unemployed.

132473

Farmers Home Administration: Information on Agricultural Credit Provided to Indians on 14 Reservations.

RCED-87-79BR; B-226061. March 11, 1987.

Released March 24, 1987. 49 pp. plus 2 appendices (3 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. John Melcher; Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-85-71, February 6, 1985, Accession Number 126252; RCED-86-57BR, January 2, 1986, Accession

Number 128977; RCED-86-62BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128976; and RCED-87-13BR, November 12, 1986, Accession Number 131584.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Fulfilling the Farmers Home Administration's Mission in an Era of Financial Stress in the Agricultural Sector (6521).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration; Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Select Committee on Indian Affairs; *Sen.* John Melcher.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) and Indian Tribal Land Acquisition Program (ITLAP) loans to Indians located on 14 reservations, specifically: (1) statistics on past, current, and predicted losses of land that Indian borrowers pledged as security; (2) options available to help Indians avoid the loss of reservation land; (3) historical information on ITLAP use and tribal interest in its future use; and (4) the working relationship between FmHA and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in issuing, servicing, and foreclosing on farm loans to Indians and their views on shifting FmHA functions to BIA.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, as of July 1986: (1) 370 borrowers on 12 of the 14 reservations had pledged 351,166 acres to FmHA as loan security; (2) the loans were worth nearly \$49 million in unpaid principal and interest; (3) 144 of the 370 borrowers were either in the process of or were predicted to be at risk of foreclosure or voluntary conveyance and could lose 132,068 acres of reservation land; and (4) the potential loss of land ranged from a low of zero percent on one reservation to a high of 75 percent on another. GAO noted that there were options available to help Indians avoid the loss of reservation land, such as interest rate adjustment and the revision of loan repayment schedules; however, once a borrower fell significantly behind in payments, there were very few options to help him avoid collateral loss, since FmHA did not have special options for Indian borrowers. GAO also found that: (1) 10 of the 14 tribes participated in ITLAP, which authorized FmHA to make loans to tribes and tribal corporations to purchase land within their reservations, and borrowed about \$52 million to purchase 621,281 acres; (2) tribes valued

ITLAP as a means to expand their tribally owned land base, and 12 of the 14 tribes would use it in the future; (3) FmHA state and county offices and BIA agency offices established working agreements to assist them in dealing with Indian borrowers; and (4) both FmHA and BIA expressed negative views about shifting FmHA functions to BIA.

132477

International Trade: Observations on the Operations of the International Trade Commission. NSIAD-87-80; B-226098. February 25, 1987. 7 pp. plus 4 appendices (42 pp.). *Report to Commissioners, United States International Trade Commission*; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to AFMD-83-93, July 20, 1983, Accession Number 121911; and NSIAD-88-58BR, December 30, 1987, Accession Number 134943.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Analysis of U.S. Import Relief Laws as a Means for Dealing With Competition From Imports and the Need for Industrial Adjustment (6304).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: United States International Trade Commission.

Authority: Tariff Act of 1930. Trade Act of 1974. Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 (31 U.S.C. 3512). Budget and Accounting Procedures Act of 1950. Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act. OMB Circular A-73. 31 U.S.C. 9701.

Abstract: GAO evaluated the International Trade Commission's (ITC) operations, identifying problems with ITC programmatic, administrative, and information resource management activities and its internal evaluations. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that ITC uses incomplete and unverified questionnaire data, since: (1) the questionnaires may contain format weaknesses; (2) the questionnaire response rates are low and respondents do not answer some questions; (3) its investigative field work is limited; and (4) its investigative reports do not contain summaries and generally do not set forth the scope and methodology of the investigations. GAO also found internal administrative control weaknesses in ITC handling of: (1)

classified security information and confidential business information; (2) procurement activities; (3) property management; and (4) extended lunch periods. GAO noted that ITC: (1) could eliminate, combine, or decrease the frequency of some recurring reports so that it issues only reports that the government or private industry need; and (2) has never regularly audited its financial and program activities. In addition, GAO found that ITC has: (1) a fragmented organizational structure for managing its information resources functions; (2) not yet established an overall comprehensive information resource management (IRM) plan; (3) not placed the senior IRM official and other key executives on its Information Systems Planning Committee; and (4) not adequately documented its need for microcomputers.

132519

[Costs and Other Information on USDA's Commodity Certificates]. T-RCED-87-10. March 26, 1987. 10 pp. *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198).

Abstract: GAO discussed the Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) use of commodity certificates in lieu of cash payments under commodity price-support loan programs and the cost of issuing certificates instead of cash. Farmers who receive certificates may exchange them for their crops or cash, or sell them to other farmers, grain companies, or any other interested buyers. The cost of these certificates depends on how they are used and the market conditions. Although certificates can affect the budget, the greatest impact is on price-support loan outlays, the measure of dollars loaned to farmers less cash repayments. When certificates are exchanged for commodities, the outlays rise. However, they reduce short-run storage costs when they are exchanged for CCC-owned inventory, farmer-owned reserve loan collateral, or regular collateral the farmers would

have forfeited to CCC. Substitution of certificates for cash payments can shift outlays from one year to the next. This may lessen the usefulness to Congress of the budget and its reported outlay amounts. Farmers can take out loans and immediately exchange certificates for the loan crops at posted county prices. This allows them to obtain the full return from the loan program because they avoid storage costs. Certificates also give grain companies greater access to CCC-owned grain at market prices and in commodity exchanges that are worth more to them than the established prices. Because of these benefits, farmers and others are willing to buy certificates at premiums.

132535

Farm Payments: Cost and Other Information on USDA's Commodity Certificates. RCED-87-117BR; B-226558. March 26, 1987. 66 pp. plus 2 appendices (11 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Jesse A. Helms; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to AFMD-87-44, July 17, 1987, Accession Number 133463; RCED-88-84BR, February 29, 1988, Accession Number 135161; RCED-88-142BR, June 2, 1988, Accession Number 135979; NSIAD-88-183, May 24, 1988, Accession Number 136113; and RCED-89-47BR, February 15, 1989, Accession Number 137985.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen. Jesse A. Helms*; *Sen. Patrick J. Leahy*.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. P.L. 99-591.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's use of commodity certificates and the costs of issuing the certificates in lieu of cash payments. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) issued about \$5.5 billion in commodity certificates to farm program

participants in lieu of cash payments; (2) as of January 1987, participants had exchanged \$3 billion in certificates for crops under price-support loans and, as a result, increased net loan outlays by \$3.1 billion; (3) although the increase in CCC outlays resulted from the certificates' effect on CCC loan programs, the certificates also reduced government inventory and loan stocks, as well as related storage, transportation, and handling costs; (4) farmers who exchanged certificates for grain realized benefits by marketing the grain at higher prices than the exchanged values; and (5) commodity certificates also created easier access to CCC-owned grain at market prices.

132551

Foreign Aid: Information on U.S. International Food Assistance Programs. NSIAD-87-94BR; B-226348. March 27, 1987. 3 pp. plus 3 appendices (32 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Jesse A. Helms; by Joseph E. Kelley, Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522); Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954. Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Cargo Preference Act (Merchant Marine).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined Food for Peace Program issues, including: (1) self-help measures; (2) use of local currency; (3) multiyear commodity commitments; (4) shipments on a fiscal year basis; (5) commodity availability for multiyear commitments; and (6) private-sector participation in preparing guidelines for the local currency private-sector lending program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) negotiations of self-help measures did not significantly delay or jeopardize concessional sales in the countries it examined; (2) there was no evidence that local governments used self-help measures to expand their involvement in

agricultural markets; (3) neither Pakistan nor the Philippines used program funds to increase employment for general government functions or activities; (4) the Agency for International Development (AID) identified instances where countries either failed to deposit local currency into a special account, as agreed, or did not sell the commodities to generate local currency; (5) AID, recipient governments, and most of the responsible U.S. agencies viewed multiyear food aid commitments as a helpful tool for implementing policy reforms; (6) AID felt that an annual shipping requirement was generally detrimental and considerably reduced the program's leverage for policy reform; and (7) private-sector organizations were generally pleased with their role in preparing guidelines for the local currency private-sector lending program.

132552

Rural Housing: Impact of Refinancing and Selling FmHA Section 502 Homeownership Loans. RCED-87-54; B-214747. March 31, 1987. 6 pp. plus 4 appendices (9 pp.). *Report* to Sen. William Proxmire, Chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; Rep. Fernand J. St Germain, Chairman, House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Housing and Community Development: Delivery of Rural Housing Assistance (6705).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Budget; House Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs; Senate Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; Congress; Rep. Fernand J. St Germain; Sen. William Proxmire.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-509).

Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1441 et seq.).

Abstract: GAO reported on the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA) plan to sell rural homeownership loans, and compared the impact on revenues of selling or refinancing the loans.

Findings/Conclusions: The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 requires the Secretary of Agriculture to sell loans to the public to reduce fiscal year 1987 federal outlays by over \$1.7 billion. GAO noted that the Housing Act of 1949 provides an alternative to selling the loans because it requires that USDA request financially able borrowers to refinance their loans with available private credit. GAO found that: (1) FmHA would achieve greater savings by refinancing the loans because it would receive the total amount of the outstanding principal; and (2) since loan sales would necessitate discounting the loan amounts in order to market them to the public, revenues would decrease. **Recommendation To Congress:** In order to maximize revenues, Congress may wish to consider amending the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 to: (1) specify that revenue proceeds from refinancing section 502 loans be counted toward reducing federal outlays as required by the law; and (2) instruct the Secretary of Agriculture to give priority to refinancing these loans in meeting the targeted outlay reduction.

132556

[Agricultural Trade Legislation: Title VI, H.R. 3]. T-NSIAD-87-24. March 31, 1987. 12 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture.

Authority: Food Security Act. Food Security Improvements Act of 1986. Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act. P.L. 83-480. H.R. 3 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO discussed Title VI of the Trade and International Economic Policy Reform Act of 1987, which would significantly restructure and reorient the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) management of agricultural trade. GAO believes that: (1) designating USDA as lead agency for agricultural trade and

trade policy matters is unnecessary; (2) transferring the International Economic Division and the World Outlook Board to the Foreign Agricultural Service is undesirable; (3) separating responsibility for trade and domestic commodity programs between two Under Secretaries severs a natural link between international and domestic programs; (4) creating two additional Assistant Secretary positions conflicts with the objective of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the decisionmaking process; (5) establishing a General Sales Manager's Office is unnecessary; and (6) establishing an office to monitor and report on trade practices of foreign competitors is unnecessary. GAO stated that it supports the: (1) establishment of an office responsible for developing effective agricultural trade strategies; (2) declaration of a policy concerning food aid and market development; and (3) establishment of an office responsible for food aid policy. GAO questioned the proposed: (1) use of surplus commodities by cooperators for projects designed to expand markets for U.S. agricultural commodities; (2) instructions for targeting traditional customers under the Export Enhancement Program; and (3) barter provisions of the act.

132557

[Farm Reorganizations and Payments to Foreign Owners of U.S. Cropland]. T-RCED-87-11. April 1, 1987. 13 pp. plus 2 appendices (12 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-81BR, March 19, 1987, Accession Number 132591.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee.* . Food Security Act. P.L. 99-591.

Abstract: GAO discussed the impact of farm reorganizations on Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm payments and the \$50,000-per-person payment limitation. GAO found that: (1) there was an increasing trend in reorganizations from 1984 through 1986, which resulted in an additional \$328 million in program costs and added almost 9,000 new persons to USDA

payment rolls; (2) the dramatic increase in the number of persons receiving direct payments of \$40,000 in 1985 was an incentive to many farmers to reorganize their operations when they met the payment limit; (3) as more farmers met the payment limit, the number of new persons receiving payments in succeeding years increased due to high per-unit payment rates and crop yields; and (4) although farm program payments to foreign owners of U.S. cropland were relatively small, USDA expects that the overall payments for the 1986 program will be higher. GAO also found that USDA had problems implementing the payment limitation because county offices inconsistently applied the regulations that governed payments to farmers and did not document reorganization plans. GAO believes that USDA could improve the effectiveness of payment limitations and tighten the provision that allows individuals to form partnerships that qualify for separate payments by limiting payments to persons who are actively engaged in farming.

132567

International Trade: Review of Effectiveness of FAS Cooperator Market Development Program. NSIAD-87-89; B-226269. March 17, 1987. 48 pp. plus 3 appendices (5 pp.). *Report* to Rep. George E. Brown, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta; by Bill W. Thurman, (for Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General), National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to ID-75-40, April 11, 1975, Accession Number 097061; RCED-87-100, May 7, 1987, Accession Number 132884; NSIAD-88-183, May 24, 1988, Accession Number 136113; T-NSIAD-88-41, July 27, 1988, Accession Number 136535; and NSIAD-89-73, February 23, 1989, Accession Number 138025.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Effectiveness of U.S. Efforts To Secure a Fairer and More Open World Trading System (6301); Food and Agriculture: More Effective Operation of U.S. Food/Fiber Markets (6507).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Government Operations; House Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Domestic and Foreign Marketing and Product Promotion Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta; Rep. George E. Brown, Jr. .*

Authority: Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1951 (P.L. 83-480). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98; 7 U.S.C. 1736m).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the effectiveness of the cooperator programs that the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) implemented to develop, maintain, and expand foreign markets for U.S. agricultural commodities.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that FAS has: (1) allowed cooperators to implement numerous and varied long-term programs and has placed few restrictions on the funding a cooperator can receive for a program; (2) not established criteria to help cooperators focus on opportunities for market development or expansion; (3) not critically assessed program results; (4) failed to evaluate programs sufficiently to determine which market development activities were effective or which need refinement or termination; (5) established guidelines that encouraged, but did not require, cooperators to contribute annual amounts equal to FAS funds; and (6) defined cash, goods, and services contributions inaccurately, conveying the impression that cooperators participated more fully in financing marketing activities than they actually did.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FAS, to clarify the cooperator program goal of developing, maintaining, or expanding U.S. markets. In doing so, FAS should consider establishing limits on total funding levels and time frames for individual cooperator programs and whether the preponderance of federal funds should be devoted to market maintenance or market development activities. In this connection, FAS should keep the appropriate congressional committees informed of, and seek their support for,

its progress in clarifying the program goal. The Administrator, FAS, should also consider establishing a transition program whereby FAS and cooperators equally share initial market development costs and, depending on the criteria established pursuant to the first recommendation, determine if and when cooperators will assume the larger share of program costs, and eventually assume total responsibility for specific market development activities. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FAS, to continue efforts to measure program results to help determine the usefulness of activities under the cooperator programs. An area where efforts should be focused is the measurement of short-term performance against program objectives. For example, if a program is undertaken to raise consumer awareness about a certain U.S. agricultural product, it would be appropriate to measure the change in consumer attitudes when the program is completed. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FAS, to revise guidelines to define all program contributions based on the source of contribution, rather than on the type of asset contributed. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FAS, to determine the extent to which the program is receiving improper, inflated, or misleading reports on cooperator contributions and, if significant, to use its various reviews to enforce compliance with FAS criteria.

132591

Farm Programs: Payments and Loans to Foreign Owners of U.S. Cropland. RCED-87-81BR; B-225236. March 19, 1987.

Released April 3, 1987. 55 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Leon E. Panetta; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-29FS, October 18, 1985, Accession Number 128352; RCED-88-37BR, November 4, 1987, Accession Number 134336; and T-RCED-87-11, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132557.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Leon E. Panetta.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978. Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq.). H.R. 4519 (99th Cong.). S. 2310 (99th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the extent of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) farm program payments and loans to foreign individuals and entities that owned U.S. cropland.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) USDA estimated that farm program costs would reach \$72 billion for a 3-year period ending in 1988, with a large part of the funds going to producers for taking cropland out of production; (2) the total payments to foreign owners of U.S. cropland totalled \$7.73 million, or about 0.4 percent of the total payments made in the counties studied; (3) the median payment to foreign individuals and entities was \$8,472, while foreign corporations received a median payment of \$12,862; (4) foreign owners took out price-support loans of about \$12.3 million; (5) Congress introduced two bills to prevent foreigners from receiving farm program payments and loans, but took no action on either bill; and (6) GAO draft legislation could adversely affect some U.S. producers who share foreign-owned rented farms, but would not affect foreign owners who rent their U.S. farms to producers.

132593

U.S. Fishing Fees: Implications of Increases on Japan and the Merits of Other Fee Systems. RCED-87-86BR; B-215905. March 19, 1987.

Released April 3, 1987. 44 pp. plus 2 appendices (2 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Don Young, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Gerry E. Studds, Chairman, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; by John H. Luke, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0).

Organization Concerned: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Japan.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries: Fisheries, Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee; Rep. Don Young; Rep. Gerry E. Studds.

Authority: Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the effect of U.S. fishing fees on Japan.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) fishery legislation extended U.S. authority to regulate and manage fishery resources in fishery conservation zones (FCZ) and gave priority to U.S. fishermen to fish within 200 miles of the U.S. coast; (2) the legislation limited foreign fishing in FCZ to those species that U.S. fishermen did not fully harvest; (3) foreign fishing decreased substantially as U.S. fishing increased under joint ventures; (4) Japan's total fish supply has increased primarily because of larger sardine catches in Japanese waters; (5) Japanese fishing in U.S. waters has declined because of reduced U.S. allocations, not increased U.S. fishing fees; and (6) the Department of Commerce decided not to pursue an auction fee system because decreased fishing made an alternative system unnecessary.

132596

Anti-Deficiency Act: Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service Violates the Anti-Deficiency Act. AFMD-87-20; B-221204. March 17, 1987. 7 pp. plus 1 appendix (4 pp.). *Report* to

Sen. John C. Stennis, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Sen. John H. Glenn, Chairman, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Rep. Jamie L. Whitten, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations; Rep. Jack Brooks, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations; by Frederick D. Wolf, Director, Accounting and Financial Management Division. Refer to AFMD-88-30, January 27, 1988, Accession Number 135131; and AFMD-88-16, March 18, 1988, Accession Number 135344.

Issue Area: Internal Control and Financial Management System Audits: Adequacy of Federal Agency Accounting

Systems' Support of Management of Agency Programs and Operations (7402).
Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Financial Management and Information Systems: Accounting Systems in Operation (998.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Appropriations; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations; *Rep.* Jack Brooks; *Rep.* Jamie L. Whitten; *Sen.* John H. Glenn; *Sen.* John C. Stennis.

Authority: Antideficiency Act (31 U.S.C. 1341). P.L. 97-370. U.S. Const. art. I, sec 9. OMB Circular A-34.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) accounting system to determine the system's effectiveness in complying with the Antideficiency Act.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the FNS Child Nutrition Programs: (1) have violated the Antideficiency Act because, since fiscal year (FY) 1983, FNS has paid for program-sponsored meals in September of each fiscal year with funds from the subsequent year's

appropriation without the authority to do so; and (2) had a cumulative deficiency of at least \$109.6 million as of September 30, 1985. GAO noted that it informed FNS of the violation, but FNS did not: (1) report the deficiency, as the act required; (2) act to correct the problem; (3) determine the exact amount of the cumulative shortfall at the end of FY 1986; or (4) request a supplemental appropriation to eliminate the shortfall.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct FNS to report a deficiency violation, as required by the Antideficiency Act, to Congress and the President. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct FNS to determine the amount of the deficiency as of the end of FY 1986 and request, through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), a supplemental appropriation from Congress to eliminate it. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct FNS to change its practice of paying for meals, provided through the Child Nutrition Programs in September of each fiscal year with funds from the subsequent year's appropriation, so that obligations for meals served in September will be charged to the pertinent appropriation account of the expiring fiscal year.

132603

Small Business Act: Agriculture's Disadvantaged Business Advocate Not Reporting to Proper Management Level. GGD-87-45; B-222903.3. April 6, 1987. 3 pp. plus 1 appendix (4 pp.). *Report* to Richard E. Lyng, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Civil Procurement and Property Management: Other Issue Area Work (4991).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0); Procurement - Other Than Defense (990.4).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Small Business; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Small Business.

Authority: Small Business Act. 7 C.F.R. 225(i)(1).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) to determine its compliance with the Small Business Act.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, although the act required the OSDBU Director to report directly to the Secretary of Agriculture or his deputy, the Director was reporting to the Assistant Secretary for Administration, in violation of the act. Although USDA deemed the Assistant Secretary for Administration to be the Deputy Secretary, this did not fulfill the requirements of the act, since USDA had no statutory authority to deem one of its officials to be another official.

Recommendation To Agencies: To bring USDA into compliance with Section 15(k)(3) of the Small Business Act, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Director, OSDBU, to be responsible only to and report directly to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary.

132605

Farm Credit: Actions Needed on Major Management Issues. GGD-87-51; B-220507. April 1, 1987. 71 pp. plus 5 appendices (38 pp.). *Report* to

Rep. Ed Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to GGD-86-150BR, September 18, 1986, Accession Number 131016; CED-80-12, January 25, 1980, Accession Number 111400; RCED-86-191BR, September 3, 1986, Accession Number 130884; GGD-86-13BR, October 4, 1985, Accession Number 128230; GGD-86-35BR, December 23, 1985, Accession Number 128788; and T-GGD-87-11, April 7, 1987, Accession Number 132607.

Issue Area: General Management Reviews: GGD-Assessing Whether Agencies Have the Necessary Management To Ensure Effective Service Delivery and Safeguarding of Public Resources (7301); Financial Services and Markets: Other Issue Area Work (4591); Financial Services and Markets: Risks Faced by Institutions and Market Members Resulting From Changes in the Regulatory and Economic Environment and How Regulators Deal With Them (4502).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Farm Credit Administration: Farm Credit Banks.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; *Rep.* Ed Jones.

Authority: Farm Credit Act of 1933. Farm Credit Amendments Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-205). Farm Credit Act of 1971. Farm Credit Act of 1953.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided an overview of the issues confronting the Farm Credit System, focusing on internal problems that have contributed to the system's financial problems.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO noted that: (1) the system's loan portfolio quality deteriorated significantly during 1985, and its surplus declined by almost half; (2) the system incurred an operating loss of over \$1.9 billion in 1986; and (3) the Farm Credit Administration believes that the system's problems will continue. GAO found that these problems resulted from: (1) decreasing agricultural income; (2) falling land values; (3) a steep decline in market interest rates; (4) poor management practices and decisions; and (5) a complex and decentralized organizational structure, consisting of hundreds of separate and distinct legal entities. GAO believes that, to overcome

its problems, the system needs to: (1) develop an organizational structure that would establish management accountability and responsibility for systemwide actions; (2) lend at competitive interest rates, while generating sufficient income to arrest its financial deterioration; (3) create an effective credit management process; and (4) retain investor and borrower support. GAO also believes that, as long as the system's debt continues to be the joint liability of all of its components, it must establish a centralized source of accountability to promulgate binding uniform standards of business conduct.

132607

[Options for Dealing With Farm Credit System Problems]. T-GGD-87-11. April 7, 1987. 28 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General. Refer to GGD-84-34, March 29, 1984, Accession Number 123950; and GGD-87-51, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132605.

Contact: General Government Division.
Organization Concerned: Farm Credit Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee.

Authority: Farm Credit Act of 1971. Farm Credit Amendments Act of 1985.

Abstract: GAO discussed the federal rescue of the Farm Credit System and suggested an approach to stabilizing the system in the short run while developing long-term policies, since failure or default of the System's obligations would seriously disrupt the flow of credit to the agricultural sector and pose risks to other federal lending institutions. GAO found that: (1) the system's situation has continued to deteriorate; (2) economic influences have clearly damaged the system's fiscal posture; (3) financial management decisions were made on optimistic economic expectations that failed to materialize; and (4) the system's decentralized organizational structure made it difficult to adjust policies. GAO believes that the system should establish a federal control board to: (1) control decisionmaking and certain management practices; (2) provide quarterly reports to Congress; (3) submit a plan with appropriate implementing legislation to work out the system's problems at the end of an 18-month period; (4) review and comment on the quarterly reports and implementation plan; (5) establish a

reserve to ensure debt repayment and underwrite losses; (6) review the system's restructuring and report its recommendations to Congress; and (7) exercise control over the terms and conditions of debt issuances, as well as strategies for asset management and liability maturities. GAO believes that this approach would lessen the rate of deterioration and offer time and flexibility to address long-term issues in a non-crisis atmosphere.

132663

Farm Payments: Farm Reorganizations and Their Impact on USDA Program Costs. RCED-87-120BR; B-225866. April 1, 1987.

Released April 14, 1987. 37 pp. plus 4 appendices (26 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Leon E. Panetta; Rep. Dan Glickman; Rep. Byron L. Dorgan; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-29FS, October 18, 1985, Accession Number 128352; RCED-87-176, July 20, 1987, Accession Number 133489; T-RCED-87-40, July 21, 1987, Accession Number 133503; RCED-87-144, September 10, 1987, Accession Number 133880; RCED-88-42BR, October 9, 1987, Accession Number 134210; and RCED-87-99, June 10, 1987, Accession Number 133215.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta; *Rep.* Dan Glickman; *Rep.* Byron L. Dorgan.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949. Food Security Act. P.L. 99-591.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on farm reorganizations related to the \$50,000 statutory limitation on direct payments under the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) crop subsidy and acreage reduction programs.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the number of producers that USDA paid under its crop programs increased by 49 percent from 1984 to 1986; (2) USDA estimated that total payments subject to the limitation could increase to almost \$8.8 billion for crop year 1986; (3) the number of new producers that

resulted from farm reorganizations involving producers near the payment limit increased from about 1,400 in 1984 to almost 5,700 in 1986; (4) cumulative payments to new producers from 1984 to 1986 totalled about \$328 million; (5) continuation of this trend over the 1987 to 1989 crop years could result in 22,300 new producers, and cumulative payments to those producers could total about \$1.23 billion; and (6) annual costs for payments to new producers could be almost \$900 million by 1989, and cumulative costs of new producers from 1984 to 1989 could be as high as \$2.3 billion.

132732

International Trade: Implementation of the Agricultural Export Enhancement Program. NSIAD-87-74BR; B-226083. March 17, 1987.

Released April 22, 1987. 12 pp. plus 6 appendices (36 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Charles E. Grassley; Rep. George E. Brown, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; Sen. Thomas R. Harkin, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to RCED-87-100, May 7, 1987, Accession Number 132884; NSIAD-88-183, May 24, 1988, Accession Number 136113; and NSIAD-88-194, June 10, 1988, Accession Number 136186.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Effectiveness of U.S. Efforts To Secure a Fairer and More Open World Trading System (6301); Food and Agriculture: More Effective Operation of U.S. Food/Fiber Markets (6507).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; *Rep.* George E. Brown, Jr.; *Sen.* Charles E. Grassley; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin.

Authority: Food Security Act. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30,

1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO assessed the implementation of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Export Enhancement Program (EEP) and its effectiveness in: (1) increasing U.S. agricultural exports; and (2) encouraging negotiations on agriculture trade problems with U.S. trading partners. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) although wheat exports increased for several EEP-targeted markets, decreased exports to other markets offset them; (2) the EEP design restricted its effectiveness in increasing U.S. exports; (3) although EEP appeared to increase selected U.S. agricultural exports, there was doubt that the markets would sustain the gains without major changes in the market and the European Community's subsidy policies; (4) because EEP has increased the European Community's Common Agriculture Policy's financial cost through increased subsidies, it has contributed to the inclusion of agricultural subsidies in multilateral trade negotiations; (5) although broadening EEP to other markets would eliminate discrimination charges and increase competition, it would antagonize non-subsidizing exporters; and (6) although EEP may have some effect in encouraging the European Community to negotiate, more fundamental changes are needed to restore equilibrium, since it does not increase world demand in periods of overproduction and surplus.

132735

International Trade: Alternative Trading Practices for International Grain Trade. NSIAD-87-90BR; B-226268. March 17, 1987.

Released April 22, 1987. 36 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. George E. Brown, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-85-121, September 26, 1985, Accession Number 128054; NSIAD-87-181BR, June 30, 1987, Accession Number 133375; T-NSIAD-87-39, July 1, 1987, Accession Number 133877; Testimony, September 30, 1986, Accession Number 131131; and RCED-87-100, May 7, 1987, Accession Number 132884.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Effectiveness of U.S. Efforts To Secure a Fairer and More Open World Trading System (6301); Food

and Agriculture: More Effective Operation of U.S. Food/Fiber Markets (6507).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Rep.* George E. Brown, Jr. .

Authority: Food Security Act. Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480). General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO: (1) provided information concerning the nature, extent, and structure of long-term bilateral grain agreements and countertrade; (2) listed the advantages and disadvantages of employing such policy trading tools; and (3) analyzed and compared selected U.S. and foreign experiences with these agreements and countertrade in the international grain market.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) countries whose governments are directly involved in agricultural production and marketing are the most extensive users of long-term bilateral grain agreements; (2) three principal U.S. grain competitors have government-affiliated enterprises that play a major role in their grain trade; and (3) despite a slight decline since 1985, due to an oversupply of grain in the world market, major U.S. competitors' use of long-term bilateral grain agreements remains an important aspect of international grain trade. Although the United States has opposed such agreements because they represent a significant non-competitive trade practice, it entered into agreements with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. GAO also found that: (1) from 1976 to 1981, minimum grain quantities under these agreements represented less than 10 percent of total U.S. grain exports; (2) since 1981, the percentage increased, but this occurred during a period of overall decline in U.S. grain exports; and (3) due largely to Soviet purchases, bilateral grain exports under these agreements reached 19 percent of total grain exports. The Department of Agriculture informed GAO that it has not initiated any pilot barter projects because of: (1) a requirement that it initiate the barter with a less-developed country with limited foreign exchange and a U.S.-

required strategic mineral; (2) a lack of coordination between involved agencies; and (3) problems in identifying the appropriate combination of eligible countries and acceptable commodities.

132744

[Farm Reorganizations and Their Impact on USDA Payments]. T-RCED-87-19. April 22, 1987. 17 pp. plus 2 appendices (12 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Cotton, Rice, and Sugar Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Cotton, Rice, and Sugar Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO discussed its ongoing review of farm reorganizations related to the statutory payment limitation and their impact on Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm payments. GAO found that: (1) from 1984 through 1986, farm reorganizations increased as persons neared or met the payment limit; (2) the addition of new persons eligible to receive payments under the program increased its cost; (3) the continued increase in reorganizations could add 22,000 new persons to the payment program by 1989; (4) methods of reorganization include forming corporations or renting farmland for cash; and (5) administrative problems at the state and county level have resulted in reorganizations of questionable validity. GAO believes there are several options to improve the effectiveness of the payment limitation provision, including: (1) tightening the provision permitting individuals to form corporations, limited partnerships, or trusts that qualify for separate payments, without precluding farmers from establishing such entities for purposes of tax or estate planning; and (2) redefining what constitutes a person, to limit payments to persons actively engaged in farming. GAO also believes that USDA will have to develop clear and precise regulations and guidance to ensure effective implementation of proposed legislation at the local level.

132794

[Results of GAO's Review of the Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance Program].

T-RCED-87-18. April 29, 1987. 18 pp. plus 4 appendices (4 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to AFMD-86-58, September 19, 1986, Accession Number 131042; RCED-88-7, November 20, 1987, Accession Number 134459; RCED-89-10, October 19, 1988, Accession Number 137167; and RCED-89-19, December 15, 1988, Accession Number 137575.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee.

Authority: Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO discussed the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's (FCIC) crop loss adjustment activities, focusing on sample claims adjusted by reinsurance companies and FCIC. GAO noted that FCIC: (1) was not properly managing the loss adjustment process of reinsured companies; and (2) had inadequate oversight and control over such companies. GAO found that reinsurance companies: (1) did not adjust 95 percent of the sample claims in accordance with FCIC policies and procedures; (2) should not have paid 31 percent of the \$9.4 million in claims; (3) may have intentionally overpaid claimants; and (4) made incorrect determinations of production guarantees, actual production, payment amounts, and program eligibility. GAO also found that FCIC: (1) improperly adjusted 62 percent of the sample claims; and (2) overpaid 1 percent of the claims. GAO concluded that FCIC should: (1) systematically review the content and implementation of the reinsurance companies' loss adjustment quality control programs; (2) establish better internal controls over claims payment data received from the reinsurance companies by verifying the information submitted in support of claims; (3) establish a systematic process for determining when and what administrative actions should be taken against reinsurance companies based on the results of compliance reviews; and (4) establish a systematic process for determining whether overpayments that

compliance reviews identified are repaid to the federal government.

132820

[Federal Regulation of Pesticide Residues in Food]. T-RCED-87-21.

April 30, 1987. 21 pp. plus 6 attachments (9 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-219, September 26, 1986, Accession Number 131729; RCED-87-7, October 7, 1986, Accession Number 131730; RCED-76-42, December 4, 1975, Accession Number 096904; and RCED-86-125, April 18, 1986, Accession Number 129999.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Authority: Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

Abstract: GAO discussed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) regulation of pesticide residues in food. FDA is responsible for testing domestic and imported foods for pesticide residues to ensure compliance with EPA residue tolerances. The United States consumes an estimated 290 billion pounds of food each year, of which it imports about 43 billion pounds. GAO found that FDA: (1) cannot detect many pesticides; (2) lacks adequate information on pesticides used on imported crops; (3) does not test all imported foods on a regular basis; (4) generally does not test for pesticides that it cannot detect by the multiresidue method; (5) is unable to prevent the marketing of most adulterated foods because they move very quickly through the marketplace due to their perishability; and (6) is not authorized to issue civil penalties against growers and producers of adulterated foods. GAO also found that EPA: (1) lacks the data for determining safe residue limits and the health hazards of inert pesticides in groundwater; (2) plans to reassess tolerances for 390 older pesticides, but cannot ensure that established residue limits adequately protect health; and (3)

has not set tolerance levels for inert pesticide ingredients. GAO believes that the uncertain health risks associated with chemical residues in food underlie the importance of effective food monitoring programs.

132853

Foreign Aid: Impact of Overseas Private Investment Corporation Activities on U.S. Employment. NSIAD-87-109; B-225077. May 5, 1987. 55 pp. plus 4 appendices (23 pp.). *Report* to Congress; by Frank C. Conahan, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General). Refer to ID-77-49, July 26, 1977, Accession Number 102864; ID-81-21, February 27, 1981, Accession Number 115839; B-173240, July 16, 1973, Accession Number 096142; and T-NSIAD-88-37, July 6, 1988, Accession Number 136242.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291); International Trade and Commercial Policy: Government's Role With Respect to Exchange Rates, International Capital Flow, and Foreign Direct Investment (6306).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Overseas Private Investment Corporation; Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations; Congress.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Foreign Assistance Act of 1969. Overseas Private Investment Corporation Amendments Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-204; 22 U.S.C. 2191).

Abstract: In compliance with a legislative requirement, GAO determined the impact of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation's (OPIC) activities on employment in the United States.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that OPIC: (1) approved projects that it should have expected would have negative impacts on U.S. trade and potentially negative impacts on U.S.

employment; (2) continued to assist some projects despite their negative impacts on trade and employment; (3) did not ensure that its procedures provided adequate project screening and monitoring to prevent significant adverse effects from OPIC-assisted investments; (4) used a methodology for computing the economic impact of its projects that led to overly optimistic reports to Congress concerning direct economic benefits; (5) did not routinely consult such organizations as labor unions and trade associations before approving projects; (6) did not adequately document job loss data when it evaluated proposed projects and monitored ongoing projects; and (7) has not determined the appropriateness of and circumstances for discontinuing assistance to projects whose operations have adverse effects on the U.S. economy.

Recommendation To Agencies: The President, OPIC, in consultation with the Administrator of the Agency for International Development (AID) should develop formal policies and a comprehensive system for screening and monitoring the economic effects on the United States of OPIC-assisted projects, including a methodology that more clearly and accurately: (1) estimates the direct economic effects on the United States of projects being considered for OPIC assistance; and (2) calculates the actual effects of ongoing projects on the economy of the United States. The President, OPIC, in consultation with the Administrator, AID, should, in annual reports to Congress concerning the effects of OPIC-assisted projects on the U.S. economy, report: (1) without offsetting alternatives, the aggregate results of the operations of projects expected to have positive direct impacts on U.S. trade and employment separately from the aggregate results of those expected to have negative direct impacts; (2) separately the economic effects on the United States of any alternatives and assumptions that were considered and analyzed as part of the project approval process; and (3) separately the effect on trade and employment of project construction and start-up procurement. The President, OPIC, in consultation with the Administrator, AID, should determine the appropriateness and circumstances for including in future assistance arrangements, authority to discontinue assistance to projects whose operations are found to have adverse impacts on the U.S. economy. The President, OPIC, in consultation with the Administrator, AID, should establish a documentation system for screening and monitoring

that will record actions taken, help ensure the accuracy of results obtained, and be useful in performing future screening and monitoring analysis. The President, OPIC, in consultation with the Administrator, AID, should assess the adequacy of staff resources devoted to the screening and monitoring processes. The President, OPIC, in consultation with the Administrator, AID, should provide for selection verification of monitoring data and improved use of monitoring results through formal feedback to the screening process.

132884

Agricultural Competitiveness: An Overview of the Challenge To Enhance Exports. RCED-87-100; B-226288. May 7, 1987. 51 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Report to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E. (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.* Refer to RCED-86-3BR, November 6, 1985, Accession Number 128558; RCED-87-35BR, October 9, 1986, Accession Number 131505; ID-80-1, October 26, 1979, Accession Number 110696; NSIAD-87-74BR, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132732; NSIAD-87-90BR, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132735; NSIAD-87-89, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132567; RCED-86-134, May 19, 1986, Accession Number 130110; NSIAD-85-74, June 18, 1985, Accession Number 127195; and NSIAD-88-55, December 21, 1987, Accession Number 134687.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep. E. (Kika) De La Garza; Sen. Patrick J. Leahy.*

Authority: Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. Food Security Act. Futures Trading Act of 1986. Merchant Marine Act, 1936. P.L. 98-412. P.L. 83-480. General Agreement on Tariffs and

Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: GAO reviewed issues affecting U.S. agricultural exports, focusing on: (1) the growth and decline in U.S. agricultural exports; (2) factors affecting the competitiveness of international trade; and (3) the consequences of a declining world market.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) in fiscal year 1982, U.S. agricultural exports began a downward trend that resulted from changing global macroeconomic conditions, domestic farm programs, and international trade policy decisions; (2) foreign competition intensified as global agricultural production increased and world trade declined; (3) high price-support levels contributed to declining exports because foreign competitors used the support levels as a basis for pricing their exports and setting production levels; and (4) past agricultural policies failed to recognize international supply and demand factors and lacked the flexibility to adjust to changes in economic or environmental conditions. Options for increasing the demand for U.S. farm exports include: (1) assisting countries with limited hard currency reserves through barter and countertrade arrangements; (2) increasing the use of long-term bilateral sales agreements; (3) emphasizing the export of processed food products; and (4) improving the quality of U.S. grain shipments.

132900

Food Stamp Program: Trends in Program Applications, Participation, and Denials. RCED-87-80BR; B-217883. April 2, 1987.

Released May 11, 1987. 24 pp. plus 2 appendices (3 pp.). *Briefing Report to Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.* Refer to RCED-87-51, October 30, 1986, Accession Number 131527; RCED-87-189, September 1, 1987, Accession Number 133857; RCED-88-12, October 22, 1987, Accession Number 134233; PEMD-88-21, July 5, 1988, Accession Number 136251; RCED-88-156, July 14, 1988, Accession Number 136380; and RCED-89-4, October 21, 1988, Accession Number 137168.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfaction of Nutritional and Health Concerns by Food Assistance Programs (6518); Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and Local

Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reported on trends in the: (1) number of households applying for food stamp benefits; (2) number of applications approved and denied; (3) number of households participating in the Food Stamp Program; and (4) percentage of households experiencing improper denial or termination of food stamp benefits.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, from fiscal years (FY) 1983 through 1985, the number of households: (1) applying for food stamps nationwide declined from about 16.8 million to about 12.6 million; (2) receiving benefits declined from about 13.7 million to about 10 million; and (3) denied benefits declined from about 3.1 million to about 2.6 million. GAO also found that: (1) from FY 1983 through 1985, the total estimated number of households participating in the program nationwide declined from about 13.7 million to about 12.8 million; (2) during this period, program participation increased in 11 states and decreased in 29 states; (3) from FY 1980 through 1985, the percentage of households that experienced improper denial or termination of benefits declined from about 4 percent to about 3 percent; and (4) on a state-by-state basis, this percentage ranged from 0 percent to over 11 percent.

132960

[Current AFDC Work Programs and Implications for Federal Policy]. T-HRD-87-9. February 23, 1987. 11 pp. *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Finance: Social Security and Family Policy Subcommittee; by Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-87-34, January 29, 1987, Accession Number 132098.

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Finance: Social Security and Family Policy Subcommittee.

Authority: Job Training Partnership Act.

Abstract: GAO discussed work programs for Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC) beneficiaries. GAO noted that: (1) its audit work focused on state-administered work incentive programs; (2) AFDC work programs served only about 22 percent of AFDC recipients in 1985; (3) an unknown proportion of work incentive participants received no services other than orientation or assessment; (4) current work programs underserve women with children under 6 years of age, and recipients who need education or training to obtain jobs; (5) most states are spreading AFDC resources thinly to serve the largest possible population, rather than providing more intensive services to fewer recipients; (6) states relied on other sources of funding to provide such support services as child care, transportation, or counseling; and (7) overall, work programs appear to exclude those recipients most in need of assistance. GAO believes that: (1) while a number of federal and state agencies administer the regular Work Incentive Program, only the Department of Health and Human Services and state welfare agencies administer the demonstration projects that it studied; (2) the administrative division results in duplication and inefficiency and adversely affects work programs; (3) the different work programs receive disparate federal funding; and (4) states vary greatly in their dependence on federal funding.

132961

[Findings on Current AFDC Work Programs and Implications for Pending Legislation]. T-HRD-87-12. April 30, 1987. 16 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Education and Labor; by Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-87-34, January 29, 1987, Accession Number 132098.

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Organization Concerned: Health Care Financing Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Education and Labor.

Authority: Social Security Act. Job Training Partnership Act. H.R. 30 (100th Cong.). H.R. 1720 (100th Cong.). H.R. 1696 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO discussed the current Aid to Families with Dependent Children

(AFDC) work programs and their implications for pending legislation. GAO believes that: (1) the current multiplicity of program authorizations results in a division of responsibility and duplication of effort between state agencies, complex and conflicting regulations, and unintentional incentives created by disparate funding levels; (2) AFDC work programs are serving a minority of the AFDC case load and are concentrating on beneficiaries who least need assistance; and (3) current programs provide low-cost job search services helpful to participants who are job-ready, but do little to resolve the employment problems of those with little education or work experience. GAO also believes that Congress should consider legislation that: (1) encourages states to target AFDC work programs and services at the remedial educational and vocational training level to a more needy clientele; (2) encourages the provision of support services during and after participation in a work program and provides for performance standards that reflect gains in employability and the potential for jobs found that lead to self-sufficiency; (3) consolidates the current multiplicity of AFDC work programs into one comprehensive program; and (4) requires the collection of standardized information about program participants, activities, and outcomes.

132966

[Inspection Activities of the Food Safety and Inspection Service]. T-GGD-87-15. May 15, 1987. 8 pp. *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs: Oversight of Government Management Subcommittee; by Brian L. Usilaner, Associate Director, General Government Division. Refer to CED-81-118, July 30, 1981, Accession Number 115988.

Contact: General Government Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs: Oversight of Government Management Subcommittee.

Authority: Poultry Products Inspection Act. Executive Order 12552. OMB Bull. 86-8.

Abstract: GAO discussed the Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS) productivity and quality management in its poultry inspection functions, focusing on FSIS assessment of: (1) its inspectors' performance; and (2) poultry plants' compliance with federal laws and

regulations. GAO noted that: (1) FSIS inspectors visually inspect all slaughtered poultry; (2) FSIS believes that its inspection approach is inadequate to detect potentially hazardous compounds and biological agents; (3) the FSIS work force is decreasing, while its inspection burden is increasing; (4) FSIS could improve its quality measurement if it established baseline objective data on inspectors' quality, timeliness, and efficiency; and (5) FSIS is attempting to develop indicators of plant performance.

133072

Worker Protection: Notifying Workers at Risk of Occupational Disease. HRD-87-90BR; B-227196. May 11, 1987.

Released May 29, 1987. 23 pp. *Briefing Report* to Rep. Paul B. Henry, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Education and Labor: Health and Safety Subcommittee; by William J. Gainer, Associate Director, Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Employment and Education (5300).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Education and Training of Health Care Work Force (553.0).

Organization Concerned: Occupational Safety and Health Administration; Public Health Service: Centers for Disease Control; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Education and Labor: Health and Safety Subcommittee; *Rep.* James M. Jeffords; *Rep.* Thomas E. Petri; *Rep.* Cass Ballenger; *Rep.* Rod Chandler; *Rep.* Paul B. Henry. **Authority:** Privacy Act of 1974. Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. H.R. 1309 (99th Cong.). H.R. 162 (100th Cong.). S. 2050 (99th Cong.). S. 79 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on legislative proposals to establish a federal health risk notification program for workers exposed to hazardous substances, focusing on: (1) the federal government's difficulties in carrying out risk notification; (2) the potential benefits and disadvantages to workers of risk notification; and (3) the possibility of expanding the Department of Labor's hazard communication standard.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) several National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) pilot programs showed that identifying and notifying individual

workers that they might be at risk of occupational disease were feasible; (2) the proposed legislation would establish a risk assessment board to determine which employee populations were at risk of work-related diseases; (3) there are no comprehensive cost estimates for implementing the legislation's notification program; (4) NIOSH estimates that the federal government could spend \$25 million annually to notify 300,000 workers, implement the legislation's other provisions, and improve methods for identifying and treating workers at risk; and (5) the legislation's indirect costs could be substantial if notified workers initiate a large number of lawsuits and compensation claims. GAO also found that: (1) the principal benefit to workers of notification is the possibility of quicker and improved medical treatment; (2) industry representatives contend that federal, state, and private programs provide workers with adequate information on workplace hazards; (3) supporters of the notification concept believe that current regulations cover only workers in certain industries who are exposed to a hazard; and (4) expansion of the hazard communication standard as an alternative to the legislation may advance the legislation's goal of disease prevention, but the expansion proposal does not include many of the legislation's key features and would not achieve many of its other goals.

133104

Tax Policy: Selected Tax Provisions Affecting the Hard Minerals Mining and Timber Industries. GGD-87-77FS; B-226646. June 3, 1987. 2 pp. plus 4 appendices (24 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Sen. John Melcher; by Jennie S. Stathis, Associate Director, General Government Division.

Issue Area: Tax Policy and Administration: Achievement of Objectives of Specific Tax Expenditures Provisions and Related Administrative Problems for IRS (4603); Food and Agriculture: Relevance of Policies and Programs Developed Decades Ago To Improve the Marketing of Food (6523).

Contact: General Government Division.

Budget Function: General Government: Tax Administration (803.1).

Organization Concerned: Internal Revenue Service; Forest Service; Department of the Interior: Bureau of Mines.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* John Melcher.

Authority: Tax Reform Act of 1986.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed how the Tax Reform Act of 1986 affected the mining and timber industries.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, although certain provisions for mining exploration and development and tax credit for reforestation expenses remained unchanged, the act: (1) repealed the capital gains treatment of income and the investment tax credit, which raised the tax rate on capital and the cost of acquiring capital; (2) increased the tax burden on the industries; and (3) reduced corporate tax rates.

133153

[Federal Reregistration of Pesticides and Reassessment of Tolerances Will Extend Into the 21st Century]. T-RCED-87-27. June 8, 1987. 17 pp. plus 4 attachments (5 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; by Hugh J. Wessinger, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-125, April 18, 1986, Accession Number 129999.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee.

Authority: Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

Abstract: GAO discussed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulation of pesticides. GAO noted that: (1) EPA has not carried out its congressional mandate to completely reassess the risks of all registered pesticides; (2) until EPA completes its reassessment, it cannot ensure that the public and the environment are protected from dangerous pesticides; (3) EPA registers pesticides and sets tolerances for food pesticide content; (4) after initial delays in the reassessment, Congress authorized EPA to determine the safety of pesticide chemicals, rather than individual pesticide products; (5) EPA reassessment efforts have included a telephone program to gather missing information on pesticide effects, an initiative to develop a regulatory position on each pesticide chemical, and an informal review process to review existing pesticide registrations in the

face of new evidence regarding product safety; (6) EPA has only issued two final pesticide registrations; (7) EPA only recently began to assess the effects of pesticide inert ingredients; and (8) EPA resource limitations and the large volume of chemicals to be assessed could delay the reassessment effort's completion by more than 30 years.

133177

Welfare Eligibility: Deficit Reduction Act Income Verification Issues. HRD-87-79FS; B-226802. May 26, 1987.

Released June 11, 1987. 4 pp. plus 5 appendices (89 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Sen. William S. Cohen, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs: Oversight of Government Management Subcommittee; by Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to Testimony, September 16, 1986, Accession Number 130997; and T-PEMD-87-1, June 23, 1987, Accession Number 133268.

Issue Area: Income Security: Reducing Erroneous Payments Through Computer-Assisted Techniques While Preserving Individual Privacy Rights (5015); Privacy: Other Issue Area Work (9091); Tax Policy and Administration: Other Issue Area Work (4691).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Social Security Administration; Internal Revenue Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs: Oversight of Government Management Subcommittee; *Sen. William S. Cohen.*

Authority: Deficit Reduction Act of 1984.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reported on federal and state agencies' efforts to implement the data exchange provisions of the Deficit Reduction Act of 1984, focusing on: (1) coordination, resource, and procedural problems related to providing and using federal data; (2) the states' ability to effectively use, control, verify, and keep confidential large amounts of data; and (3) the need for federal and state oversight.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, of the 53 jurisdictions that responded to its questionnaire: (1) 38 indicated that the development and operation of income verification systems would require additional funding, and 16 of those were not sure that the funding would be available; (2) most jurisdictions indicated that they planned to have a

system in place by September 30, 1986; (3) 14 states had misinterpreted the time frame for processing income data from the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); (4) a majority of the states felt that the start-up and operating costs would exceed any program cost benefits; (5) several states questioned the value of using tax information to match against welfare benefit files because of duplication and the age of federal data; (6) although most of the states indicated that they would be able to meet the guidelines for safeguarding federal tax data, 44 said that they would have to change an existing system or create a new one to meet IRS safeguards, and 37 said they would need to take similar action to meet SSA requirements; and (7) as of January 6, 1987, 50 jurisdictions had signed data access agreements with IRS and 41 with SSA.

133203

Food Stamp Program: Results of the Simplified Application Demonstration Project. RCED-87-102; B-217883. June 11, 1987. 4 pp. plus 4 appendices (13 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-85BR, February 11, 1988, Accession Number 135262.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016); Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen. Jesse A. Helms;* *Sen. Patrick J. Leahy.*

Authority: Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO analyzed the design and implementation of the Food Stamp Program's Simplified Application Demonstration Project, which Congress authorized to reduce administrative

costs and errors in program eligibility and benefit determinations.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the project: (1) simplified eligibility determinations by deeming applicants eligible if they were already eligible for certain other federal assistance programs; (2) procedures varied by state and county; and (3) resulted in program cost increases of \$15.8 million in Illinois and \$200,000 in Oklahoma because increases in benefit costs exceeded the savings in administrative errors and costs.

133204

Farm Finance: Minnesota and North Dakota Assistance Programs Available to Farmers. RCED-87-143FS; B-226921. June 9, 1987. 58 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Ed Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture:

Effectiveness of Efforts To Meet Agricultural Credit Needs (6520).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Minnesota; North Dakota.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; *Rep. Ed Jones.*

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on state agricultural financial assistance programs and farmers' property protection measures in North Dakota and Minnesota.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) Minnesota's assistance programs include financial assistance in restructuring debt, subsidized interest rates, deferral of interest due, and state loan guarantees; (2) Minnesota's property protection measures can delay foreclosure and repossession actions and allow farmers to maintain a security interest in farm production after foreclosure; (3) North Dakota's assistance programs include direct loans, financial assistance in restructuring debt, deferral of interest due, and a state-supported linked deposit system; (4) North Dakota's property protection measures include foreclosure relief during periods of depressed farm prices and other measures to delay foreclosure and prevent undue hardship; and (5) the

states enacted most of the financial assistance measures in 1986 in response to the farm crisis, but many of North Dakota's property protection measures dated back to the 19th century.

133213

School Lunch Program: Evaluation of Alternatives to Commodity Donations. RCED-87-113; B-222207. June 11, 1987.

Released June 16, 1987. 5 pp. plus 6 appendices (27 pp.). *Report to Rep. William F. Goodling; Rep. William D. Ford; Sen. James A. McClure; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep. William D. Ford; Rep. William F. Goodling; Sen. James A. McClure.*

Authority: School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.). P.L. 96-528. P.L. 98-151.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined a Department of Agriculture (USDA) demonstration project that tested the distribution of cash payments and commodity letters of credit (CLOC) in lieu of donated USDA commodities at selected school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Specifically, GAO determined the: (1) appropriateness of the project methodology USDA used; (2) reliability of data supporting the project's findings; and (3) cost-effectiveness of implementing procedures.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO noted that the final USDA reports of the demonstration project: (1) compared the cash, CLOC, and commodity systems in areas of interest related to the project, such as operating costs, student participation, and the nutritional value of school lunches; and (2) indicated that there were no or minor differences in the ways that the three systems affected the areas of interest. GAO found that: (1) the methodology that USDA used to select school districts to participate in the demonstration project limited the validity of the study results and did not provide for highly confident statistical generalizations; (2) USDA may have

overstated labor and storage costs for cash and CLOC participants; and (3) the USDA decision to distribute commodities to cash and CLOC participants made a year of the project's data unusable and caused a 1-year extension of the project. GAO concluded that, since the project had limitations and weaknesses, USDA should use any nationwide generalization of the project's results with caution.

133215

Farm Payments: Implications of Targeting Farm Income Supports. RCED-87-99; B-224624. June 10, 1987. 64 pp. plus 4 appendices (18 pp.). *Report to Sen. Jesse A. Helms; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.* Refer to RCED-87-120BR, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132663; HRD-86-107FS, July 9, 1986, Accession Number 130470; GGD-86-126BR, August 11, 1986, Accession Number 130712; RCED-87-144, September 10, 1987, Accession Number 133880; and RCED-88-78BR, March 25, 1988, Accession Number 135397.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen. Jesse A. Helms.*

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (52 Stat. 31). Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-86; 87 Stat. 221). Food Security Act. Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO analyzed possible ways to target a greater share of direct income-support payments to farmers in the greatest financial need, focusing on the potential effects of general targeting options with identified agricultural policy objectives.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the option of reducing the current annual payment limit: (1) could potentially reduce income support to higher-income farms; (2) would not provide more income support to lower-income farms, but could provide a

greater share of payments to this group; (3) could lower program costs and result in smaller agricultural surpluses; and (4) would likely decrease government control over the supply of program crops. The option of applying lower crop payment rates to large-sized farms and higher payment rates to smaller farms: (1) would direct more income support to low-income farms and reduce that paid to higher-income farms; (2) could make an overall loss of family farms less likely; (3) could reduce agricultural surpluses; (4) would not lead to more efficient program crop production; and (5) would decrease federal government control over the supply of program crops. The option of applying payment rates that decline as production volume on each farm increases would result in effects similar to those from applying different payment rates, with the effect of the options depending largely on the specific payment rates. The option of making payments to farmers based on a financial means test: (1) would provide more income support to low-income farmers and reduce income support to higher-income farmers; (2) could increase incentives for relatively high-cost, inefficient agricultural production; (3) would not achieve better federal government supply control; and (4) would be difficult to administer.

133247

[Issues Surrounding a Secondary Market for Agricultural Real Estate Loans]. T-RCED-87-29. June 3, 1987. 18 pp. plus 2 appendices (11 pp.). *Testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.* Refer to RCED-86-9, October 10, 1985, Accession Number 128115; RCED-87-172FS, July 2, 1987, Accession Number 133377; and RCED-87-149BR, July 17, 1987, Accession Number 133488.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; Rep. Richard Lehman.*

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO discussed its work involving a secondary market for agricultural real estate loans. GAO noted that the benefits of a secondary market include: (1) enhanced liquidity of financial instruments; (2) more moderate

cyclical flows of capital; (3) improved regional flows of capital; (4) reduced regional differences in interest rates; and (5) regional portfolio diversification. GAO also noted that: (1) existing secondary agricultural loan markets are primarily regional and handle a relatively low volume of loans; (2) while the Farm Credit System (FCS) is generally a primary lender, it causes economic effects similar to a secondary market in that it enhances liquidity, reduces the effects of cyclical capital flows, and has enhanced regional capital flow and reduced regional interest-rate differences; and (3) a number of legislative proposals would create a national secondary market entity. GAO believes that any such legislative proposal should: (1) recognize that direct federal involvement in a secondary agricultural loan market would probably be necessary; (2) allow for the impact of a secondary market entity on FCS lenders and borrowers; (3) consider the possibility of establishing FCS as a national secondary market; and (4) determine reasonable eligibility criteria for potential secondary-market loans.

133375

International Trade:**Implementation of 1985 Food Security Act Barter Provisions.**

NSIAD-87-181BR; B-226268. June 30, 1987. 5 pp. *Briefing Report to Rep. Byron L. Dorgan*; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-177BR, August 4, 1986, Accession Number 130631; and NSIAD-87-90BR, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132735.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Effectiveness of U.S. Efforts To Secure a Fairer and More Open World Trading System (6301); Food and Agriculture: More Effective Operation of U.S. Food/Fiber Markets (2507).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Stat Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Energy.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Byron L. Dorgan.

Authority: Food Security Act. Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1986. Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1987.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO investigated the Department of Agriculture's (USDA)

failure to implement the mandated pilot barter program. The 1985 Food Security Act requires USDA to complete, by September 30, 1987, barter agreements with at least two countries to trade surplus agricultural commodities for strategic materials for the national stockpile.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) USDA did not take any implementation action because of the administration's proposed reductions in stockpile requirements and conclusion that the stockpile had excess quantities of strategic materials; (2) USDA and Department of Energy (DOE) officials believe that reimbursement and accounting issues cause inter-departmental problems, but do not expect them to prevent completion of the barter deals; (3) USDA would price its commodities at world market prices and would not expect to recoup acquisition and storage costs in order to prevent impairment of its ability to conclude barter transactions; (4) the previous inter-agency working group on barter was disbanded, since its work was completed and deemed unnecessary unless current efforts proved otherwise; (5) although some government officials believe that barter deals are difficult to implement, USDA stated that it is not resisting the program's mandated provisions and expects to comply with the provisions before the September 1987 deadline; and (6) although USDA is actively pursuing a barter arrangement with DOE for petroleum, bid invitation structuring and inter-agency payment terms may delay implementation past the deadline.

133377

Farm Finance: Legislative Proposals for Secondary Markets for Farm Real Estate Loans. RCED-87-172FS; B-220507. July 2, 1987. 34 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Fact Sheet to Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza*, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to T-RCED-87-29, June 3, 1987, Accession Number 133247; RCED-88-55FS, November 5, 1987, Accession Number 134360; and RCED-87-149BR, July 17, 1987, Accession Number 133488.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Efforts To Meet Agricultural Credit Needs (6520).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Housing and Urban Development: Federal National Mortgage Association; Department of Housing and Urban Development: Government National Mortgage Association; Farm Credit Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Rep.* Richard Lehman; *Rep.* E (Kika) De La Garza.

Authority: Securities Act of 1933. Securities and Exchange Act of 1934. Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1922 et seq.). Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2001 et seq.). S. 234 (100th Cong.). H.R. 497 (100th Cong.). H.R. 575 (100th Cong.). S. 427 (100th Cong.). S. 848 (100th Cong.). H.R. 2179 (100th Cong.). S. 1172 (100th Cong.). H.R. 2435 (100th Cong.). S. 1219 (100th Cong.). 12 U.S.C. 2151.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on nine legislative proposals to create an active secondary market for agricultural real estate loans.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the proposals would all require some level of government involvement; (2) three proposals would vest the responsibility of creating a secondary market with the Secretary of Agriculture, while the other six proposals would establish a federally chartered corporation as the secondary market institution; (3) of those six proposals, four would create the corporation within the Farm Credit System; (4) the government could incur direct financial liability, including initial funding, appropriated funds for stock purchases, or guarantees for loans and mortgage-backed securities traded in the market; and (5) although many of the proposals disclaim any government guarantee on the securities traded in the market, concern might remain over the government's implied backing resulting from the federal charter.

133460

Food and Drug Administration: Food Additive Approval Process Followed for Aspartame. HRD-87-46; B-223552. June 18, 1987.

Released July 17, 1987. 75 pp. plus 7 appendices (23 pp.). *Report to Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum*; by Milton J. Socolar, Acting Comptroller General. Refer to HRD-86-109BR, July 22, 1986, Accession Number 130780.

Issue Area: Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and

Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition; G.D. Searle and Co.; Monsanto Co.; NutraSweet Co.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* Howard M. Metzenbaum.

Authority: Food Additives Amendment of 1958 (P.L. 85-929; 21 U.S.C. 348(c)(5)). Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. 21 C.F.R. 10.55.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition's (CFSAN) process for approving aspartame, specifically its: (1) review of the scientific issues raised concerning the aspartame studies; and (2) monitoring of current safety concerns.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the: (1) firm that developed aspartame submitted nearly 170 studies supporting its safety; and (2) studies that CFSAN considered crucial for approval met FDA requirements. GAO also found that CFSAN: (1) adequately followed its food additive approval process by reviewing all of the manufacturer's aspartame studies, holding a public board of inquiry to discuss safety issues, and forming an advisory panel; (2) had an outside group of pathologists review the crucial studies; and (3) used the studies to establish a safe level for long-term consumption before approving aspartame for marketing. In addition, GAO found that: (1) there was no evidence of pressure on the former FDA Commissioner to approve aspartame after a board of inquiry revoked a 1974 approval and decided that additional research was necessary; (2) three members of an advisory panel did not believe that the studies conclusively showed that aspartame would not cause brain tumors; (3) 12 of the 69 scientists responding to its questionnaire expressed major concerns about aspartame safety; and (4) there are over 70 completed, ongoing, and planned studies of aspartame effects on neurological behavior, children, and pregnant women. GAO believes that CFSAN research and monitoring of adverse aspartame reactions should provide a basis for determining the need for any future regulatory actions.

133488

Farm Finance: Secondary Markets for Agricultural Real Estate Loans. RCED-87-149BR; B-220507. July 17,

1987. 58 pp. plus 2 appendices (5 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Richard Lehman; by William E. Gahr, (for Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to T-RCED-87-29, June 3, 1987, Accession Number 133247; RCED-87-172FS, July 2, 1987, Accession Number 133377; RCED-86-9, October 10, 1985, Accession Number 128115; and RCED-88-55FS, November 5, 1987, Accession Number 134360.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Efforts To Meet Agricultural Credit Needs (6520).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Richard Lehman.

Authority: Farm Credit Act of 1971 (12 U.S.C. 2001 et seq.). H.R. 497 (100th Cong.). H.R. 575 (100th Cong.). H.R. 2179 (100th Cong.). H.R. 2435 (100th Cong.). S. 234 (100th Cong.). S. 427 (100th Cong.). S. 848 (100th Cong.). S. 1172 (100th Cong.). S. 1219 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on: (1) secondary investment markets; (2) existing agricultural real estate secondary markets; (3) legislative proposals for a national secondary market for agricultural real estate loans; and (4) the potential effects of a national secondary market.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that:

(1) generally, a secondary market transaction occurs when an original lender sells a loan to an investor, usually for a fraction of its face value; (2) the stock exchanges and the home mortgage secondary market are the most widely recognized and best-developed secondary markets; (3) there is no organized national secondary market for agricultural real estate loans; (4) there are several organized regional secondary markets, operating primarily in heavily agricultural states; and (5) the Farm Credit System (FCS) performs some secondary market functions, but is usually a primary lender. GAO also found that: (1) 9 bills have been introduced in the 100th Congress that would create a national secondary market for farm real estate loans; (2) the proposals would all require government involvement, ranging from the creation of a federal chartered corporation either within or independent of FCS, to vesting the Secretary of Agriculture with the responsibility for creating a secondary market; and (3) the proposals would

cause the government to incur liability ranging from providing initial funding for the market to loan and mortgage guarantees. In addition, GAO found that key issues surrounding the creation of a national secondary market include: (1) the necessary degree of federal involvement; (2) the impact of the market on FCS and other lenders; (3) whether FCS should be empowered as the secondary market; (4) whether a national secondary market could coexist with FCS; and (5) the loans that should be eligible for trading in a secondary market.

133489

Farm Payments: Basic Changes Needed To Avoid Abuse of the \$50,000 Payment Limit. RCED-87-176; B-225866. July 20, 1987. 48 pp. plus 7 appendices (30 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Byron L. Dorgan; Rep. Dan Glickman; Rep. Leon E. Panetta; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-120BR, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132663; T-RCED-87-40, July 21, 1987, Accession Number 133503; RCED-87-190, September 11, 1987, Accession Number 133876; RCED-87-144, September 10, 1987, Accession Number 133880; RCED-88-37BR, November 4, 1987, Accession Number 134336; and RCED-88-42BR, October 9, 1987, Accession Number 134210.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Credit and Rural Electrification Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress; *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta; *Rep.* Dan Glickman; *Rep.* Byron L. Dorgan.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949. Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Agriculture and Consumer Protection

Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-86). 7 C.F.R. 795. P.L. 99-591.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the: (1) Department of Agriculture's (USDA) administration of the \$50,000 limit on direct agricultural support payments; and (2) impact on farm programs of individuals who reorganize their farming operations to qualify for additional payments.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) if the current trend in reorganizations continues through 1989, 31,300 additional persons could receive payments, which would increase total program costs by \$2.3 billion; (2) USDA improperly approved 20 percent of the new recipients for program payments; (3) the USDA Inspector General's detailed review of 225 cases showed actual overpayments of \$15.7 million from 1981 through 1986; (4) although USDA proposed changes that would eliminate most existing ways to avoid the payment limitation, the proposal did not include regulations and guidelines necessary to ensure proper implementation at the county office level; and (5) current Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) guidelines to county and state officials, training of those officials, and internal controls over their activities are not adequate.

Recommendation To Congress: Congress should enact legislation to limit payments to legal entities and attribute their payments to the individual limits of the entities' owners. The USDA proposal includes legislation that would remove the existing legislative restrictions on how corporations are treated for payment limitation purposes, and authorize ASCS to determine the payment limit for a legal entity on the basis of the number of its members actively engaged in its farming operations. If Congress decides not to adopt the legislation proposed by USDA, Congress should, at a minimum, remove the existing legislative restriction that requires a corporation to be considered as a separate person for payment limitation purposes as long as no stockholder owns or controls more than 50 percent of its stock, and the same two or more stockholders do not own more than 50 percent of two or more corporations. If left in place, this restriction will allow producers to continue to reorganize under the corporate rules in a manner that avoids the limit, and will prevent ASCS from making changes necessary to reduce avoidance of the payment limit.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, ASCS, to make the following changes in the payment

limitation provisions: (1) ensure that implementing regulations and guidance to its county offices specify the extent of contributions necessary to determine if a member of a legal entity is actively engaged in the entity's farming operation; (2) change its rules to limit payments through attribution to members of a legal entity who are not now persons for payment limitation purposes; and (3) change its rules to require that a person who leases land make a substantive contribution of owned land or equipment, and personal labor or active management, in addition to capital for the farming operation that includes leased land. If Congress does not adopt the USDA legislative proposal, ASCS should be required to: (1) implement changes included in the USDA proposal to make the payment limitation rules for minor children, custom farming, and substantive change more restrictive; and (2) change its rules to require that a person in a lease situation, other than a landowner, make a substantive contribution of owned land or equipment, and personal labor or active management, in addition to capital. The Secretary of Agriculture should also direct the Administrator, ASCS, to improve ASCS guidance to state and county offices by describing: (1) how much equipment or land must change ownership to justify the approval of a new person for payment limitation purposes; (2) how to value contributions by members of a joint operation to determine if those contributions are commensurate with their share of the payments; and (3) the type of information and documentation needed to apply specific rules and verify that farm operations were carried out as planned. The Secretary of Agriculture should also direct the Administrator, ASCS, to revise the ASCS management review system so that reviewing officials select the determinations to be reviewed, analyze these determinations to identify the emerging trends in errors and methods of reorganization, and disseminate information about needed changes identified by this analysis on a systematic and continuing basis. ASCS headquarters officials should be responsible for disseminating the results of these analyses to ensure uniformity and consistency. The Secretary of Agriculture should also direct the Administrator, ASCS, to establish a training program for ASCS state and county officials involved in person determinations that: (1) identifies who should be trained and how much training they should receive; (2) sets out an approach to making and reviewing person determinations; and (3) provides

standardized training materials for use by state officials in training county officials.

133503

[Farm Reorganizations and Their Impact on USDA Payments]. T-RCED-87-40. July 21, 1987. 17 pp. plus 2 appendices (11 pp.). *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; by John W. Harman, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-120BR, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132663; and RCED-87-176, July 21, 1987, Accession Number 133489.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee.

Authority: Food Security Act.

Abstract: GAO discussed the scope and cost of farm reorganizations and problems with the \$50,000-per-person payment limitation. GAO found that: (1) between 1984 and 1986, there was an increasing trend in reorganizations that may have been related to the payment limit; (2) reorganizations added almost 9,000 new persons to Department of Agriculture (USDA) payment rolls, at a cost of \$2.3 billion; (3) as more persons neared or met the payment limit, the number of new persons created in the following years increased; and (4) evidence from state and local officials, farmers who reorganized, and other sources supports the conclusion that the intent of some reorganizations was to avoid the payment limit. GAO believes that the trend in reorganizations will continue because: (1) there is a significant economic benefit for each person added to a farming operation; (2) in the future, additional persons on existing operations may continue to reach the payment limit because of high program payments and increased crop yields; and (3) in 1986, about 38,000 persons at the limit could realize an economic benefit by reorganizing. GAO also believes that: (1) USDA proposals to tighten payment limitations could discourage many reorganizations specifically designed to avoid the limit because they would remove the incentive to incorporate or add investors not actually engaged in farming; and (2) if

Congress changes the existing law to implement these proposals, USDA will need to improve its guidance, training, and internal controls for person determinations.

133522

Crop Insurance: Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Needs To Improve Decision-Making. RCED-87-77; B-209886. July 23, 1987. 92 pp. plus 2 appendices (9 pp.). *Report to Rep. Ed Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; Rep. Terry L. Bruce; Rep. Dan Glickman; Rep. Sid Morrison; Rep. Timothy J. Penny; Rep. Charles W. Stenholm; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to AFMD-86-58, September 19, 1986, Accession Number 131042; RCED-83-114, March 9, 1983, Accession Number 120809; RCED-84-65, March 14, 1984, Accession Number 123688; and RCED-83-55, January 13, 1985, Accession Number 120321.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Community and Regional Development: Disaster Relief and Insurance (453.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress; *Rep. Charles W. Stenholm; Rep. Timothy J. Penny; Rep. Sid Morrison; Rep. Dan Glickman; Rep. Terry L. Bruce; Rep. Ed Jones.*

Authority: Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365). Food Security Act. Antideficiency Act (31 U.S.C. 1341). H. Rept. 96-430. H. Rept. 97-313. H. Rept. 97-800. H. Rept. 99-271. H.R. 2303 (100th Cong.). S. Rept. 96-254. S. 2851 (99th

Cong.). OMB Circular A-76. B-218812 (1987). 7 U.S.C. 2257.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's (FCIC) financial viability and operations to determine whether it based key management decisions on complete and accurate data, specifically those decisions affecting: (1) forecasts of income and indemnities FCIC used in budget requests; (2) a proposal to rely on reinsurance rather than both reinsurance and direct insurance; (3) rates of payments to, and gains and losses shared with, private companies selling crop insurance; and (4) actions to improve the Federal Crop Insurance Program's actuarial soundness.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) FCIC reliance on judgmental decisions and program goals, rather than program experience, to support its forecasts of premium income and indemnities has produced unreliable forecasts in its annual budgets; (2) although FCIC initially forecast premium income of \$700 million for 1987, its income never exceeded \$440 million; (3) FCIC analyses supporting its proposal to terminate master marketer sales and to rely on reinsurance were neither accurate nor complete, since they did not determine the impact on expanding insurance availability to farmers or the program's actuarial soundness; (4) because it relied on prior-year compensation levels to develop the 1986 percent-of-premium rate for compensating reinsured companies, FCIC established rates that were above its own costs; (5) FCIC agreed to new gain- and loss-sharing provisions with reinsured companies even though it had data showing that prior revisions had tilted the sharing of gains and losses in the companies' favor; and (6) the new revisions will be substantially more costly and will adversely affect FCIC ability to establish a reserve for unforeseen losses. GAO also found that FCIC had adequate bases for the actions it took to: (1) develop a computerized model to establish the premium rates it charges farmers for six major crops; and (2) base the development of insurance offers on farmers' actual production histories rather than the average production of all farmers in designated areas.

Recommendation To Congress: In view of congressional concern over the administration's move toward an all-reinsurance program, Congress should consider what the proper balance of sales to be handled through reinsured companies and master marketers should be and, if necessary, amend the Federal

Crop Insurance Act of 1980 to specify the system or systems FCIC should use to deliver crop insurance to farmers. Congress should consider the actions taken by FCIC which continue to tilt the sharing of gains and losses in favor of the reinsured companies and, if necessary, amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 to provide more specific guidance on how FCIC and reinsured companies should share in gains and losses.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Manager, FCIC, to develop a computerized model to forecast premium income and indemnities. The model should be developed so that, to the extent feasible, objective and quantitative data can be used to make the forecasts. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Manager, FCIC, to either: (1) base reinsured companies' compensation rates on the costs FCIC covers on the insurance policies it sells directly to farmers, as required by section 508(e) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980; or (2) propose legislation to amend the act to allow FCIC to continue to establish the compensation rates through negotiation with the reinsured companies. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Board of Directors and Managers, FCIC, to either: (1) revise subsequent reinsurance agreements by deleting the provision requiring FCIC to reimburse the reinsured companies for state premium taxes; or (2) propose legislation authorizing FCIC to reimburse reinsured companies for such taxes.

133523

Farm Programs: 1985 Payments -- Crop Loans by State. RCED-87-155FS; B-227597. July 22, 1987. 19 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Fact Sheet* to Sen. Lawton Chiles, Chairman, Senate Committee on Budget; by William E. Gahr, (for Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director), Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-144, September 10, 1987, Accession Number 133880.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Budget; *Sen. Lawton Chiles.*

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on farm price and income support payments and crop loans in 1985.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO detailed the distribution of: (1) payments and crop loans, by region and state; (2) payments, by crop and size of payment; and (3) crop loans, by crop and size of loan. GAO found that: (1) nationally, 980,000 producers received almost \$6.3 billion in payments; (2) about 462,000 producers took out loans totalling about \$15.2 billion; (3) Texas producers received almost \$700 million in payments, more than for any other state; (4) Iowa's \$2.4 billion in loans was the most of any of the states; (5) about 804,000 producers received less than \$10,000 in payments; (6) about 15,000 producers received \$50,000 or more; (7) about 294,000 producers took out loans of less than \$25,000; and (8) about 68,000 producers took out loans of \$200,000 or more.

133604

Alternative Fuels: Feasibility of Expanding the Fuel Ethanol Industry Using Surplus Grain.

RCED-87-106BR; B-222735. June 30, 1987.

Released August 3, 1987. 60 pp. plus 3 appendices (13 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. J. James Exon; by Flora H. Milans, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-84-1, June 6, 1984, Accession Number 124476.

Issue Area: Energy: Assessing Whether the DOE R&D Program Will Result in Developing Needed Alternative Energy Technologies To Meet Future Energy Demand (6410).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Energy: Energy Conservation (272.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Department of Energy.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Edward Zorinsky; Sen. J. James Exon.

Authority: Energy Tax Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-618). Windfall Profit Tax Act (Crude Oil) (P.L. 96-223). Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-499). Energy Security Act (P.L. 96-294). Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act. Surplus Agricultural Commodities Disposal Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-358). Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Agricultural Act of 1949. P.L. 96-438.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined the feasibility of using surplus federally owned grain to

further the development of the ethanol industry, focusing on financing concepts that would allow producers and developers to use surplus grain as either: (1) collateral to obtain financing from lending institutions to either construct new ethanol plants or expand existing facilities; or (2) a free feedstock to produce ethanol, which could induce lending institutions to finance the construction or expansion of ethanol plants or facilities.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) declining ethanol prices and weakened demand for fuel ethanol threaten the economic viability of many ethanol producers; (2) federal and state government incentives had a significant role in expanding the industry and in marketing fuel ethanol; (3) surplus grain inventories are large enough to support the financing concepts; (4) producers, developers, and lenders are skeptical about the concepts' usefulness for expanding the industry, given the decreased demand for fuel ethanol; and (5) most producers and developers believe that the financing concepts are feasible, and one-half are willing to participate. GAO also found that: (1) lenders are not interested in the grain-as-collateral concept but are somewhat interested in the grain-feedstock concept; (2) lenders are unwilling to participate in the grain-as-collateral concept if the grain will only be used to produce ethanol in the case of a loan default; (3) the Department of Agriculture has the authority to use surplus federal grain for ethanol, but there are legal restrictions to its use; (4) use of surplus grain to finance additional fuel ethanol plants would not significantly reduce existing surplus inventories and could potentially reduce excise tax revenues; and (5) expansion of the fuel ethanol industry could affect others outside the industry, such as oil companies, farmers, and consumers.

133660

Welfare Simplification: States' Views on Coordinating Services for Low-Income Families. HRD-87-110FS; B-222701. July 29, 1987.

Released August 11, 1987. 60 pp. plus 3 appendices (34 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Mickey Leland, Chairman, House Select Committee on Hunger; Rep. Marge Roukema, Ranking Minority Member, House Select Committee on Hunger; Rep. Bill Emerson, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on

Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Hank Brown, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; Rep. Thomas J. Downey, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; by Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-86-107FS, July 9, 1986, Accession Number 130470; HRD-86-124FS, August 29, 1986, Accession Number 130977; HRD-87-6FS, October 30, 1986, Accession Number 131603; T-HRD-87-19, August 5, 1987, Accession Number 133883; and RCED-89-4, October 21, 1988, Accession Number 137168.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Agriculture; Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; House Select Committee on Hunger; Rep. Bill Emerson; Rep. Leon E. Panetta; Rep. Hank Brown; Rep. Thomas J. Downey; Rep. Marge Roukema; Rep. Mickey Leland.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO summarized states' responses to selected questions on efforts to integrate services under six human resources programs which provide benefits to low-income families.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) 23 states have integrated all their service delivery units for the Food Stamp, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and Medicaid programs; (2) 48 states would like to achieve more service integration; (3) 38 states have started at least one service integration project; (4) 14 states have considered legislation related to service integration; (5) nearly all of the states indicated favorable outcomes from more service integration; (6) most states indicated that most of the obstacles to service integration were at

the federal level; (7) among the obstacles states frequently cited were too many regulations and differing financial requirements among programs; (8) 20 states plan to increase integration of their programs, while 18 plan to increase the number of delivery units offering integrated services; and (9) the states indicated that eligible families may not receive benefits because of transportation difficulties, lack of local services, and insufficient funds for limited-funding programs.

133715

Foreign Aid: Accountability and Control Over U.S. Assistance to Indonesia. NSIAD-87-187; B-226281. August 19, 1987. 9 pp. plus 7 appendices (38 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Stephen J. Solarz, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Republic of Indonesia.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs: Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee; *Rep.* Stephen J. Solarz.

Authority: Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 (31 U.S.C. 3512(b)). P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the accountability and controls over U.S. assistance to Indonesia.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the Agency for International Development (AID) mission did not provide adequate oversight over the Food for Peace Program; (2) Indonesia did not submit audited reports of commodity sales receipts and expenditures; (3) self-help measure progress reports were generally late, incomplete, and did not cover all projects; (4) Indonesia spent an average of 75 percent of the agreed-upon amounts for self-help projects from 1982 through 1985, leaving \$26 million

unaccounted for in the equivalent local currency; (5) the mission did not include the food programs in its assessments under the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act; (7) the mission did not monitor most self-help projects and incorrectly calculated their required funding levels, resulting in a shortfall of about \$700,000 in equivalent local currency; (8) the mission performed limited oversight of the internal controls of the two voluntary organizations that operated the title II program; and (9) although there was no evidence of major misuse or diversions of development assistance funds, the mission did not inventory or monitor other AID-financed development assistance items.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, AID, should direct the mission director to: (1) negotiate specific and measurable P.L. 83-480 title I requirements with Indonesia, to include quantifiable baseline information, specific time frames, and detailed budget information; (2) implement the terms of U.S.-Indonesian agreements by requiring Indonesia to submit the required audited reports on sales proceeds and receipts and to improve the content and timely submissions of its progress reports; (3) reconcile discrepancies in title I expenditures for 1982 through 1985 with the Indonesian government and ensure that agreed-upon local currency amounts are spent as intended; (4) consider requiring the Indonesian government to establish a separate P.L. 83-480 local currency account for future agreements; (5) evaluate the adequacy of private voluntary organizations' control under title II programs; and (6) develop procedures with specific criteria for monitoring major AID-financed development assistance items.

133817

International Trade: Commodity Credit Corporation's Refunds of Export Guarantee Fees. NSIAD-87-185; B-227616. August 19, 1987.

Released August 28, 1987. 4 pp. plus 1 appendix (7 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Pete Wilson; Sen. Alan Cranston; Rep. Bill Lowery; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-88-194, June 10, 1988, Accession Number 136186; and T-NSIAD-89-2, October 6, 1988, Accession Number 137063.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Effectiveness of U.S. Efforts To Secure a Fairer and More Open World Trading System (6301); Food and Agriculture: More Effective

Operation of U.S. Food/Fiber Markets (6507).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service; Department of Agriculture; Gold Coast Investments of San Diego, CA.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Domestic and Foreign Marketing and Product Promotion Subcommittee; *Rep.* Bill Lowery; *Sen.* Alan Cranston; *Sen.* Pete Wilson.

Authority: Food Security Act. P.L. 80-806.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) export credit guarantee fee refund policies and procedures to determine why it failed to refund a firm over \$270,000 in failed export sales.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the CCC denial of the firm's refund request was consistent with its policy to retain guarantee fees when exporters did not have a firm sale at the time they obtained coverage; (2) CCC determined that the firm had obtained coverage in anticipation of a later sale, since the firm could not demonstrate that it had a firm export sale; (3) although CCC claimed to have informed the exporter that a firm sale was required and that the fees were nonrefundable, CCC could not ensure that the exporter understood those policies when it applied for coverage; (4) CCC incurred financial risk, since the guarantee never became effective; and (5) it was not clear that CCC provided adequate information to the exporter.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the General Sales Manager, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), to amend the credit guarantee program regulations to: (1) clarify the circumstances that must exist for users to obtain credit guarantee application approvals, including the need for and definition of a firm sale; (2)

provide that users must have a firm sale to be considered for a guarantee fee refund should an export sale not be consummated; and (3) require that program users acknowledge their understanding of the application requirements and refund policy on the guarantee applications.

133849

[Comments on Decision Concerning State's Liability for Food Stamps Lost in Mail]. B-212222. September 3, 1987. 3 pp. *Letter* to Richard K. Willard, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice: Civil Division; by Robert H. Hunter, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel.

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.
Organization Concerned: Department of Justice: Civil Division; Arkansas.

Authority: Debt Collection Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-365; 31 U.S.C. 3701(c); 96 Stat. 1749). Claims Collection Act. 4 C.F.R. 102. *Pennsylvania v. United States*, 781 F.2d 334 (3rd Cir. 1986). *Commonwealth Edison v. Nuclear Regulatory Commission*, 819 F.2d 750 (7th Cir. 1987). *West Virginia v. United States*, 107 S. Ct. 703 (1987). B-212222 (1986).

Abstract: GAO commented on a court decision concerning a state's liability for food stamps lost in the mail. GAO noted that the court affirmed the state's liability and concluded that the federal government could not assess interest against the state's debt. GAO disagreed with the court's decision and recommended a rehearing or appeal.

133876

Farm Payments: USDA's Proposed Changes to the \$50,000 Payment Limit Could Be Improved. RCED-87-190; B-225866. September 11, 1987. 4 pp. plus 4 appendices (12 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Silvio O. Conte; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-176, July 20, 1987, Accession Number 133489.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep. Silvio O. Conte.*

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949. Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-86). Food Security Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) report to Congress on the \$50,000-per-person payment limitation on farm program direct payments.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) USDA proposed to limit total payments to any individual to \$50,000 regardless of whether the individual owned or shared ownership of a farm; (2) the proposal would not achieve the desired effect, since it would allow an individual with no farming interest to own a number of lands and still qualify for payment; and (3) total payments would increase as more and more investors with no active participation in farming would qualify for payments.

133877

[Uses and Limitations of Countertrade]. T-NSIAD-87-39. July 1, 1987. 17 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs: International Economic Policy and Trade Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Arms Control and International Security and Science Subcommittee; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-87-90BR, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132735.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Office of the U.S. Trade Representative; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs: Arms Control and International Security and Science Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs: International Economic Policy and Trade Subcommittee.

Authority: Food Security Act. Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1986. Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1987. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: GAO discussed the different aspects of countertrade in the world trading system. GAO found that: (1) countertrade and other trading practices are viewed as marketing tools to help gain sales; (2) the United States generally views countertrade as contrary

to open and free trading, but does not oppose U.S. business participation in countertrade unless the action could have a negative impact on national security; (3) although the current pilot barter program will barter surplus commodities for strategic and other materials for the national stockpile, initiating discussions with foreign governments for bartering agreements is difficult because of interdepartmental disagreements over reimbursement and accounting procedures; (4) although countertrade can balance exports with imports, countries do not gain because they forego foreign exchange earnings; and (5) while countertrade does not appear to offer many benefits for developed countries, it is usually better to make an export sale through countertrade than not to export at all.

133880

Farm Programs: Analysis of Options for Targeting Payments and Crop Loans. RCED-87-144; B-225236. September 10, 1987. 65 pp. plus 4 appendices (24 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Lawton Chiles, Chairman, Senate Committee on Budget; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-191BR, September 3, 1986, Accession Number 130884; RCED-86-9, October 10, 1985, Accession Number 128115; RCED-87-120BR, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132663; RCED-87-176, July 20, 1987, Accession Number 133489; RCED-87-99, June 10, 1987, Accession Number 133215; RCED-87-155FS, July 22, 1987, Accession Number 133523; and RCED-88-78BR, March 25, 1988, Accession Number 135397.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Budget; *Sen. Lawton Chiles.*

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (52 Stat. 31). Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 221). Food Security Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined the various options for targeting farm price and income stabilization programs, including:

(1) redistributing payments from financially sound to financially stressed farmers; (2) lowering the statutory payment limit; and (3) limiting crop loans.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) based on two different models, the first option would decrease farm payments from 10 to 45 percent and increase cash flow for many farmers; (2) lowering the payment limit would reduce federal spending, but could significantly reduce some financially stressed farms' income and net worth; and (3) limiting farm loans would not severely impact the farm sector, but would not necessarily lead to budget savings, depending on loan repayment rates.

133883

[Integration of Services for Low-Income Families]. T-HRD-87-19. August 5, 1987. 18 pp. *Testimony* before the House Select Committee on Hunger; by Joseph F. Delfico, Senior Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-87-110FS, July 29, 1987, Accession Number 133660.

Contact: Human Resources Division.
Congressional Relevance: *House* Select Committee on Hunger. .

Authority: Food Security Act. H.R. 1720 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO discussed its investigation of the status of integration of services for low-income families and states' views on actions needed to enhance such integration. GAO surveyed states' views on four types of service integration applicable to a variety of public assistance programs, including: (1) collocation of delivery units; (2) coapplication; (3) coeligibility determinations; and (4) single case managers. GAO noted that: (1) states reported substantial integration among the Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medicaid, Food Stamp, and Emergency Assistance to Needy Families with Children programs, and lesser integration of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance and Section 8 Housing Assistance programs; (2) program differences and coordination problems at the federal level present obstacles to greater service integration; and (3) states believe that such actions as combining and simplifying program administration procedures, improving coordination among federal and legislative committees, and increasing funding for service integration can greatly enhance service integration. GAO suggested that actions which focus on target groups, analyze program

differences, and identify options for standardizing or eliminating such differences can greatly enhance state service integration efforts.

134077

Health Risk Analysis: Technical Adequacy in Three Selected Cases. PEMD-87-14; B-227612. September 30, 1987. 89 pp. plus 8 appendices (69 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Robert A. Roe, Chairman, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to RCED-84-62, April 6, 1984, Accession Number 123970; RCED-88-27, June 13, 1988, Accession Number 136284; and RCED-88-101, August 16, 1988, Accession Number 136581.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Methodological Quality of Front-End Evaluation Information Supporting Regulatory Decision-Making (7202).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: General Science, Space, and Technology: General Science and Basic Research (251.0); Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0); Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration; Occupational Safety and Health Administration; Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Science, Space, and Technology; *Rep.* Robert A. Roe.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-596). Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7411(a)(1)(C)). *Monsanto v. Kennedy*, 613 F.2d 947 (D.C. Cir. 1979). Industrial Union Department, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations v. American Petroleum Institute, 448 U.S. 607 (1980). *American Textile Manufacturers Institute v. Donovan*, 452 U.S. 490 (1981).

Abstract: GAO evaluated the risk analysis processes used by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to identify possible weaknesses and strengths in the processes.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) risk assessment work generally met acceptable technical and scientific criteria; (2) FDA and OSHA did a

credible job of reviewing and evaluating available evidence on a hazard; and (3) problems in risk assessment were primarily related to data availability. GAO also found that: (1) there were significant problems in risk management work; (2) FDA and EPA poorly documented the development and evaluation of risk management options and decisionmaking processes; (3) the extent and quality of risk management guidelines varied greatly between and within the agencies; and (4) none of the agencies conducted follow-up evaluations of the regulations to determine if they were achieving the intended risk reduction effects.

134121

Hazardous Waste: Controls Over Injection Well Disposal Operations Protect Drinking Water. RCED-87-170; B-227690. August 28, 1987.

Released October 13, 1987. 48 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Report* to Rep. Michael L. Synar, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations:

Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-44, December 17, 1987, Accession Number 134840; and RCED-88-101, August 16, 1988, Accession Number 136581.

Issue Area: Environment: Assessing Federal and State Efforts To Prevent Groundwater Contamination (6816).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Government Operations: Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *Rep.* Michael L. Synar.

Authority: Safe Drinking Water Act. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program, to assess: (1) the extent to which hazardous waste has contaminated underground sources of drinking water; and (2) EPA and state

oversight of underground injection of hazardous waste.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) although there are few confirmed cases of drinking-water contamination, because the contamination is hard to detect, there could be more; (2) monitoring wells have a limited usefulness for large underground areas; (3) neither EPA nor the states require sampling or testing of groundwater immediately above injected waste; (4) EPA did not perform periodic well inspections to ensure compliance with regulations in two states for which it had direct responsibility; (5) 1984 legislation mandated the banning of injection well disposal of hazardous wastes as of August 1988, unless operators could demonstrate that the hazardous waste would not migrate; and (6) EPA believes that most wells currently in operation should pass a demonstration of no migration, meet the more stringent controls, and continue to operate.

Recommendation To Agencies: To ensure that the regulatory oversight functions built into the UIC program for hazardous waste injection wells are in fact being performed in states for which EPA bears direct responsibility, the Administrator, EPA, should strengthen the program's oversight functions by requiring that EPA headquarters annually evaluate each regional office operating a UIC program, to ensure, at a minimum, that the program's regulatory oversight functions are being performed. To ensure that the regulatory oversight functions built into the UIC program for hazardous waste injection wells are in fact being performed in states for which EPA bears direct responsibility, the Administrator, EPA, should strengthen the program's oversight functions by reemphasizing to EPA regions with direct UIC program responsibility that they are to perform and document periodic inspections and report noncompliance incidents to EPA headquarters, as required by UIC regulations.

134133

Imported Meat and Livestock: Chemical Residue Detection and the Issue of Labeling. RCED-87-142; B-224753. September 30, 1987. 97 pp. plus 3 appendices (9 pp.). *Report to Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources,*

Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-125, April 18, 1986, Accession Number 129999; and T-RCED-88-67, September 27, 1988, Accession Number 136905.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Relevance of Policies and Programs Developed Decades Ago To Improve the Marketing of Food (6523).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1); Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food Safety and Inspection Service; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Government Operations; House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza; Sen. Patrick J. Leahy.*

Authority: Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.). Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Tariff Act of 1930. 19 C.F.R. 12.24. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700. 19 U.S.C. 1304.

Abstract: GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) effectiveness in detecting prohibited chemical residues and foreign matter in imported meat items and live animals.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) although the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) developed an annual plan in 1986 which included 406 chemicals for consideration and 100 for testing, it lacked detailed, current information on the chemicals used abroad; (2) FSIS plans to require foreign countries that want to export meat to the United States to submit an annual residue testing plan to USDA; (3) because FSIS met its 1986 testing quotas by May 1, 1986, it did not test meat imported after that date for the full range of residues; (4) FSIS did not always remove from the U.S. food market the remainder of lots that showed chemical violations; (5) in 1986, about 60 percent of imported live

animals came from Mexico, which has been ineligible to export meat to the United States since 1984 because of chemical residues; (6) FSIS does not have current information to adequately test for chemicals used in Mexico; and (7) mandating quality control reports and country-of-origin labelling of meat could result in increased food costs and may constitute a nontariff trade barrier.

Recommendation To Agencies: To develop an import residue testing plan that is sensitive to conditions regarding chemical use in foreign countries, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FSIS, to implement a continuous, systematic effort to identify and evaluate chemicals in use abroad that are not used in the United States. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FSIS, to systematically assess the status of methods for detecting harmful chemicals in processed meat and muscle tissue to provide a basis for deciding on the additional research needed to develop more effective methods. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FSIS, to determine whether live animals entering the United States present unacceptable risk to consumers. Such a risk assessment should consider: (1) the source of live animals (country of origin and location within country); (2) livestock production and marketing practices in pertinent foreign countries, including controls over and use of animal drugs and other chemicals; (3) residue testing results from domestic plants where the imported animals are likely to have been slaughtered and whether those results are different from those at plants that do not slaughter imported animals; and (4) if appropriate, special test programs to determine whether imported animals have unacceptable chemical residues. If such a risk assessment indicates an unacceptable risk for any country, FSIS should take steps to ban live animal imports from that country until the foreign government can provide assurance that animals for export to the United States are free of prohibited residues. If chemical use in foreign countries is identified, FSIS should: (1) evaluate the chemicals to determine which ones pose a potential hazard; (2) develop methods for their detection if methods are lacking; and (3) include them in the import plan for testing. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FSIS, to update risk profiles of countries eligible to export meat products to the United States to better ensure the safety of imported meat.

134210

Farm Payments: Analysis of Proposals To Amend the \$50,000 Payment Limit. RCED-88-42BR; B-225866. October 9, 1987. 35 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Silvio O. Conte; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-120BR, April 1, 1987, Accession Number 132663; and RCED-87-176, July 20, 1987, Accession Number 133489.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524). **Contact:** Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. **Budget Function:** Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0). **Organization Concerned:** Department of Agriculture. **Congressional Relevance:** *Rep. Silvio O. Conte.*

Authority: Food Security Act. P.L. 99-591. H.R. 3042 (100th Cong.). **Abstract:** In response to a congressional request, GAO: (1) analyzed two proposals to amend the current \$50,000-per-person payment limitation provisions of the Food Security Act; and (2) compared these proposals with existing legislation and regulations to determine if they would prevent certain types of farm reorganizations.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the proposed legislation: (1) targets those reorganizations which, in effect, circumvent the payment limitation by adding new persons to farming operations and allowing each to qualify for up to \$50,000; and (2) would prevent the type of program abuses previously reported. GAO also found that the alternative proposal would: (1) close some loopholes in existing laws and regulations but would prevent the Department of Agriculture from administratively closing others; and (2) double the existing payment limits. GAO noted that Congress is rewriting the alternative proposal, which could significantly alter the results of its analysis.

134212

Surplus Commodities: Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program's Operations and Continuance. RCED-88-11; B-229092. October 19, 1987. Released October 23, 1987. 5 pp. plus 4 appendices (18 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee

on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517). **Contact:** Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. **Budget Function:** Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0). **Organization Concerned:** Department of Agriculture. **Congressional Relevance:** *House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta.*

Authority: Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-8). Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), focusing on the views of Georgia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania regarding the: (1) appropriateness of the method for allocating commodities and funds among states; and (2) potential effects of the program's continuation on the states.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) since USDA uses a different method to allocate commodities than the states use to request them, the amount differs from what the states can effectively use; (2) USDA did not always distribute administrative funds to states in a timely manner; (3) state costs for operating TEFAP increased because of new USDA regulations for monitoring, recordkeeping, and other administrative functions; (4) the new regulations requiring states to match each federal dollar they use solely for state-level activities will further increase their operating costs; and (5) states believe that they require a permanent program with sufficient funding and minimal regulatory changes to implement TEFAP systematically.

134219

[Food Stamp Program Eligibility Determination]. T-RCED-88-7. October 22, 1987. 11 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Senate Committee on

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; by John W. Harman, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. **Organization Concerned:** Department of Agriculture; National Academy of Sciences. **Congressional Relevance:** *House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee.* **Abstract:** GAO discussed on the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Stamp Program, specifically: (1) the extent to which states are improperly denying or terminating eligible persons; (2) USDA procedures for penalizing states when they fail to review the required number of eligibility determinations; and (3) the National Academy of Sciences' recommendations for resolving the backlog of outstanding food stamp sanctions for states' certification errors. GAO found that: (1) 5 million households either had their applications for food stamps denied or their participation in the program terminated; (2) 3 percent of these food stamp denials were improper; (3) USDA adjustments to states' error rates were not effective, since they resulted in penalties for only one state; and (4) the National Academy of Sciences' recommendations could reduce total sanctions from 138 to 43, the number of sanctioned states from 49 to 25, and total liabilities from \$508 million to \$300 million.

134221

Farm Programs: USDA's Wheat Poll--The Results Are Not Reliable. RCED-88-6; B-226449. October 23, 1987. 6 pp. plus 8 appendices (31 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Lane Evans; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524). **Contact:** Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. **Budget Function:** Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep.* Lane Evans.
Authority: Food Security Act. 18 U.S.C. 1913.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service's (ASCS) design and implementation of its 1986 wheat poll to measure producers' reactions to the wheat production control program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) ASCS complied with the Food Security Act requirement to conduct the poll by July 1, 1986; (2) although ASCS mailed ballots to all wheat producers, it included a question asking whether they were in the target group; (3) the poll results were unreliable, since ASCS did not verify whether the respondents correctly placed themselves inside or outside the target group; and (4) ASCS did not apply the act's legal definition of the target group to the years 1981 through 1985, since it believed the definition applied only to programs after 1986.

Recommendation To Agencies: To ensure that the results from any future poll or referendum that the Secretary of Agriculture may be required to conduct are reliable, the Secretary should direct the Administrator, ASCS, to modify the ASCS Handbook Commodity Referendums to require that appropriate verification is made of the producers in the target group. The Administrator could: (1) determine which producers are in the target group prior to distributing the ballots and indicate it on each ballot; and (2) verify whether or not producers are in the target group for only those producers who return ballots. To ensure that the results from any future poll or referendum that the Secretary of Agriculture may be required to conduct are reliable, the Secretary should direct the Administrator, ASCS, to modify the ASCS Handbook Commodity Referendums to include policies and procedures to overcome the weaknesses identified in the administration of the wheat poll. The Handbook should include procedures that would: (1) treat producers and their spouses in noncommunity property states the same

as those in community property states in any national poll or referendum; (2) minimize the possibility that producers with multiple-county farm operations would receive and cast more than one ballot in a national poll or referendum; and (3) require that the letter transmitting a ballot and the ballot be designed in accordance with accepted principles for conducting mail surveys and tested prior to distribution to ensure that the questions on the ballot are clear and unbiased.

134230

Supplemental Food Program: Using Cost Saving Methods Could Increase Participation. RCED-88-35BR; B-176994. October 9, 1987.

Released October 27, 1987. 14 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Thomas R. Harkin, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-183BR, July 25, 1988, Accession Number 136444.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin.

Authority: P.L. 92-433.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO estimated the number of additional participants states could add to the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) if they purchased infant formula at less than retail cost.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO estimated that: (1) nationwide, states could serve 221,400 to 630,200 additional eligible WIC participants with savings achieved if they purchased formula at the reduced rates that six states already use; and (2) if states used 10 to 20 percent of the savings to cover administrative costs, they could add from 177,100 to 567,700 participants, respectively. GAO noted that Congress is considering legislation

to allow states to use these savings to cover increases in administrative costs.

134232

Food Stamp Program: Error Rate Adjustments and Sanctions. RCED-88-10; B-217883. October 22, 1987.

Released October 27, 1987. 8 pp. plus 5 appendices (16 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-4, October 30, 1986, Accession Number 131473; and RCED-86-195, September 19, 1986, Accession Number 131045.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016); Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition Subcommittee; *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) procedures for adjusting states' Food Stamp Program error rates to account for uncompleted state quality control reviews.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) adjustments for uncompleted case reviews were relatively small for 1984 and 1985; (2) only one state suffered an increased sanction because of an error-rate adjustment; (3) adjustments may vary for states with similar review completion rates; (4) some states with similar completion rates received

different adjustments; (5) the variations occurred because FNS considered regressed error rates and error-rate standard deviations in determining adjustments; and (6) FNS followed its usual rulemaking process in setting the adjustment procedure.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to devise a sanction process that separates financial penalties for uncompleted reviews from financial penalties for exceeding the target error rate. An alternative for doing so could entail a graduated sanction based on the extent to which states do not complete the prescribed number of reviews.

134233

Food Stamp Program: Evaluation of Improper Denial or Termination Error Rates. RCED-88-12; B-217883. October 22, 1987.

Released October 27, 1987. 30 pp. plus 3 appendices (10 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-80BR, April 2, 1987, Accession Number 132900; RCED-85-98, April 12, 1985, Accession Number 126750; RCED-84-155, April 25, 1984, Accession Number 124028; RCED-87-4, October 30, 1986, Accession Number 131473; RCED-87-51, October 30, 1986, Accession Number 131527; RCED-86-195, September 19, 1986, Accession Number 131045; RCED-88-85BR, February 11, 1988, Accession Number 135262; and RCED-89-4, October 21, 1988, Accession Number 137168.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016); Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; Department of Agriculture; Maryland; Illinois.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; *House*

Select Committee on Hunger; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Finance: Social Security and Family Policy Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Labor and Human Resources; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta. **Authority:** Food Stamp Act of 1977. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO assessed the accuracy of Maryland's and Illinois's reporting of improper denial or termination error rates under the Food Stamp Program for fiscal year (FY) 1985.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) Illinois and Maryland detected 40 and 15 percent, respectively, of the improper denials or terminations that it found; (2) projected error rates were 22.5 percent for Illinois and 12.4 percent for Maryland, rather than 9.1 and 2.2 percent, respectively, as the states reported; (3) 42 percent of the households that the states improperly denied or terminated from the program lost benefits as a result of the errors; (4) the Department of Agriculture (USDA) did not routinely validate the states' reported error rates; (5) incorrect eligibility determinations, inadequate documentation of the basis for denial or termination, and failure to allow the prescribed time for the application process were three common errors local offices made when deciding to deny or terminate benefits; and (6) the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) only validated reported error rates if states were potentially eligible to receive enhanced funding.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to annually review a sample of each state's quality control reviews of denials or terminations and adjust states' reported denial or termination error rates accordingly. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to examine alternatives to encourage states to reduce improper denial or termination error rates, including seeking authority to hold states financially liable for their improper denials or terminations. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct

the Administrator, FNS, to monitor states' quality control review practices to ensure that the appropriate cases are reviewed and the required number of reviews are completed on time.

134234

Food Stamp Program: National Academy of Sciences' Recommendations on the Sanctions Backlog. RCED-88-36BR; B-217883. October 21, 1987.

Released October 27, 1987. 21 pp. plus 3 appendices (4 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Thomas R. Harkin, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517); Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and Local Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; National Academy of Sciences.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO examined the effect of certain National Academy of Sciences recommendations for handling the backlog of outstanding food stamp sanctions the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has levied against states.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) states have paid only 5 of the 138 sanctions FNS has levied against them since fiscal year 1981; and (2) the Academy's proposal for handling the sanction backlog uses the same criteria as FNS to calculate the sanction amount, but different criteria to determine whether to sanction a state. GAO also found that the Academy recommendations would decrease the: (1) total sanctions assessed from 138 to 43; (2) total sanction liabilities from about \$508 million to \$300 million; and (3)

Number of states sanctioned from 49 to 25.

134251

Farm Finance: Financial Condition of American Agriculture as of December 31, 1986. RCED-88-26BR; B-220507. October 20, 1987. 90 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-9, October 10, 1985, Accession Number 128115; RCED-86-191BR, September 3, 1986, Accession Number 130884; RCED-88-84BR, February 29, 1988, Accession Number 135161; and RCED-89-33BR, October 18, 1988, Accession Number 137080.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service; Farmers Home Administration; Farm Credit Administration; Farm Credit Banks.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep.* E (Kika) De La Garza; *Sen.* Patrick J. Leahy.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the financial condition of American agriculture as of December 31, 1986.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, in 1986: (1) adverse economic conditions continued to affect the agricultural sector; (2) the agricultural industry produced an increased surplus in many key commodities; (3) agricultural exports declined; (4) the value of total farm assets declined by an estimated 8 percent; (5) net farm cash income increased by about 10 percent from 1985; (6) many farmers continued to maintain high debt-to-asset ratios; (7) farm lenders continued to exhibit financial stress because of the declining quality of their loan portfolios; (8) farm prices and the value of the dollar declined; and (9) federal outlays for agricultural assistance increased by about 23 percent over 1985.

134297

Noncash Benefits: Methodological Review of Experimental Valuation Methods Indicates Many Problems Remain. PEMD-87-23; B-222373.

September 30, 1987.

Released November 2, 1987. 61 pp. plus 7 appendices (56 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Mervyn M. Dymally, Chairman, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; Rep. William D. Ford, Chairman, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service; Rep. Constance Morella, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PEMD-86-8BR, April 17, 1986, Accession Number 129641; PEMD-87-7BR, October 24, 1986, Accession Number 131509; and T-PEMD-88-1, March 22, 1988, Accession 135338.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Improving the Evaluation of Cost Containment Strategies (7205).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Federal Employee Retirement and Disability (602.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census; Department of Commerce.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Post Office and Civil Service; *Rep.* Constance Morella; *Rep.* Mervyn M. Dymally; *Rep.* William D. Ford.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO: (1) developed a general approach for assessing future proposed methods to change poverty indicators; and (2) applied its approach to one method the Census Bureau used to place cash value on noncash benefits.

Findings/Conclusions: The GAO assessment approach: (1) identified specific concerns within each method; (2) examined these concerns using indicators, such as changes in the poverty rate; and (3) combined the results of these steps to form a final judgement. GAO applied this approach to the Bureau's market-value method and found that: (1) the Bureau's conceptual choices as to which benefits to include in the definition of income could affect the poverty rate by as much as 4.7 percent; (2) the Bureau's methodological choices in carrying out poverty calculations influenced the method's validity and the accuracy of its

benefit values; and (3) overestimation of data quality problems caused flaws resulting in fluctuations in the poverty rate.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Commerce should direct the Director of the Census Bureau to conduct a more comprehensive examination of the problems with the Bureau's valuation methods, especially those involving medical benefits, giving full consideration to the assessment approach GAO developed. The Bureau should fully disclose in its publications the magnitude of the effects of these problems.

134298

Agricultural Trade: Trends in Imports of Fruits, Vegetables, and Other Agricultural Products. RCED-87-177FS; B-220851. September 29, 1987.

Released November 2, 1987. 44 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Leon E. Panetta; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-149BR, May 10, 1988, Accession Number 135821; and PEMD-89-3, October 21, 1988, Accession Number 137107.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522); International Trade and Commercial Policy: Competitiveness of U.S. Agricultural Exports and Responsiveness of Government Programs and Policies To Changes (6305).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the recent rise in fruit and vegetable imports and its effect on American farmers and food manufacturers.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the U.S. agricultural trade balance has declined each year for the past 5 years, with a rise in agricultural imports contributing to this decline; (2) fruits and vegetables comprised almost a quarter of competitive imports in 1986, with almost a quarter of these coming from Mexico and 16 percent from Europe; (3) fruit imports quadrupled from 1975 through 1986; (4) vegetable

imports almost tripled from 1975 through 1986; and (5) a steady rise in U.S. foreign capital investments in the food industry accompanied the rising trend of agricultural imports. GAO also found that the total U.S. agricultural trade balance with: (1) Mexico declined from a positive \$1.4 billion in 1980 to a negative \$944 million in 1986; (2) Canada declined from a positive \$839 million in 1981 to a negative \$463 million in 1986; (3) South American countries remained negative from 1980 through 1986; (4) Europe declined steadily from 1981 to 1985; (5) Oceania remained at a fairly consistent negative level from 1980 through 1986; (6) Asia remained positive from 1980 through 1986, although trending downward; and (7) Africa remained relatively stable from 1980 through 1986.

134336

Farm Payments: Payments to Entities Exempt From the \$50,000 Limit and to Foreign Addresses. RCED-88-37BR; B-225866. November 4, 1987. 27 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Silvio O. Conte; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-81BR, March 19, 1987, Accession Number 132591; and RCED-87-176, July 20, 1987, Accession Number 133489.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Silvio O. Conte.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed payments the Department of Agriculture (USDA) made under 1984 through 1986 farm programs to entities exempt from the \$50,000 payment limit and to persons living outside of the United States. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) the number of entities exempt from the \$50,000 payment limit increased from 106 in 1984 to 152 in 1986; (2) farming operations on state-owned lands account for most of the exemptions; (3) 21 entities with exempt status actually received payments in excess of \$50,000 in at least one year; (4) these excess

payments totalled \$10.6 million during the 3-year period; and (5) USDA granted over 15 percent of the 1986 exemptions to entities that did not qualify. GAO also found that: (1) the number of producers receiving payments at foreign addresses ranged from 159 in 1984 to 259 in 1986; (2) over 87 percent of foreign payments went to Canada; and (3) USDA paid \$22 million to foreign addresses from 1984 through 1986.

134360

Farm Finance: Provisions for Secondary Markets for Farm Real Estate Loans in H.R. 3030. RCED-88-55FS; B-220507. November 5, 1987. 15 pp. plus 2 appendices (3 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Richard Lehman; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-172FS, July 2, 1987, Accession Number 133377; and RCED-87-149BR, July 17, 1987, Accession Number 133488.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Efforts To Meet Agricultural Credit Needs (6520).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Richard Lehman.

Authority: Securities Act of 1933.

Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Investment Company Act of 1940.

Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1922 et seq.).

H. Rept. 100-295. H.R. 3030 (100th Cong.). 12 U.S.C. 2241 et seq.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the proposed Agricultural Credit Act of 1987, focusing on its: (1) creation of a secondary market for agricultural mortgage loans; (2) improvement of existing secondary market operations for Farmers Home Administration (FmHA)-guaranteed loans; and (3) creation of a secondary market program exclusively for Farm Credit System (FCS) loans.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the proposed legislation would establish the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation to: (1) certify agricultural mortgage marketing facilities; (2) provide secondary marketing arrangements for farm real estate mortgages to increase the availability of long-term agricultural credit at a stable interest rate; (3) provide greater liquidity

and lending capacity to lenders for agricultural real estate; and (4) provide for new lending to facilitate capital market investments in long-term agricultural funding. GAO also found that the proposed legislation would: (1) allow the Secretary of Agriculture to guarantee pool certificates backed by FmHA-guaranteed loans; (2) attract a larger universe of potential buyers through the addition of a formal mechanism to aggregate loans and sell government-guaranteed loan pools; and (3) authorize FCS banks to issue securities backed by pooled loans, excluding long-term agricultural loans.

134434

International Trade: FAS Management of Livestock Cooperator Program. NSIAD-88-24; B-226269. October 26, 1987. 8 pp. plus 2 appendices (20 pp.). *Report* to Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Rep. Edward R. Madigan, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Effectiveness of U.S. Efforts To Secure a Fairer and More Open World Trading System (6301); Food and Agriculture: More Effective Operation of U.S. Food/Fiber Markets (6507).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service; Holstein-Friesian Association of America; Brown Swiss Cattle Breeders Association; National Association of Swine Records; American Jersey Cattle Club.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Domestic and Foreign Marketing and Product Promotion Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on

Governmental Affairs; *Rep.* Edward R. Madigan; *Rep.* E (Kika) De La Garza.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined livestock cooperator activities under the Foreign Agricultural Service's (FAS) Cooperator Market Development Program to determine whether non-profit cooperators were distributing trade leads in a timely manner to other livestock exporters.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) although FAS knew of problems with certain livestock cooperators, it did not initiate actions to alleviate the conditions that permitted conflicts of interest and unfair competition; (2) FAS proposed a conflict-of-interest provision to amend program guidelines, but did not act expeditiously to prevent some livestock cooperators from entering into contracts with their subsidiaries; and (3) existing guidelines did not address distribution of trade leads, receipt of commissions, operation of for-profit subsidiaries, or restrictive trade standards.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FAS, in finalizing and implementing the proposed conflict-of-interest provision as a regulation to: (1) include a requirement for cooperators to certify that their activities under the program will comply with the regulation and applicable FAS guidelines and agreements; and (2) set out procedures for handling cases of cooperator noncompliance, including possible corrective actions to be taken by cooperators and the potential sanctions to be levied by FAS, such as withholding of funding or being declared ineligible for participation in the program.

134436

National Forests: Timber Utilization Policy Needs To Be Reexamined. RCED-88-31; B-229084. November 17, 1987. 4 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Report* to F. Dale Robertson, Chief, Forest Service; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Forest Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural

Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Interior and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Forest Management Act. Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960. Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974.

Abstract: GAO examined the Forest Service's compliance with a timber utilization policy requiring that timber be offered for sale at its full tract value. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) 39 percent of 657 timber sales recorded in fiscal years (FY) 1985 and 1986 for 17 national forests in Montana and Idaho were advertised at amounts lower than GAO calculations of the tracts' values; (2) the total difference between the tract value and the advertised minimum bid price for these sales was about \$16 million; (3) the Service did not make the required calculations to determine tract value; (4) personnel believed that the utilization policy was no longer relevant and that sale below the full tract value was justifiable on certain bases; and (5) regions did not follow requirements to calculate the cost of removing saleable but uneconomical trees for silvicultural treatment purposes and to subtract those costs from the tract value.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Chief, Forest Service, should reconsider the relevance of the timber utilization policy under present conditions. Depending on the outcome of this analysis, policies and procedures should be updated or compliance with the manual's provisions should be enforced.

134459

Crop Insurance: Overpayment of Claims by Private Companies Costs the Government Millions. RCED-88-7; B-209866. November 20, 1987. 47 pp. plus 6 appendices (29 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Ed Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to T-RCED-87-18, April 29, 1987, Accession Number 132794; RCED-89-10, October 19, 1988, Accession Number 137167; and RCED-89-19, December 15, 1988, Accession Number 137575.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep.* Ed Jones.

Authority: Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO examined the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's (FCIC) oversight and control of the loss adjustment practices of private reinsured companies.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that reinsured companies: (1) did not adjust 95 percent of 134 sample claims in accordance with FCIC policies and procedures; (2) should not have paid about 31 percent of the \$9.4 million in claims; (3) may have intentionally overpaid claimants; and (4) made incorrect determinations of production guarantees, actual production, payment amounts, and program eligibility. GAO also found that FCIC: (1) improperly adjusted 62 percent of 37 sample claims; and (2) overpaid about 1 percent of those claims. In addition, GAO found that FCIC: (1) did not properly manage the loss adjustment processes of reinsured companies; (2) had inadequate oversight and control over such companies; and (3) did not screen reinsured claims for obvious errors, but recently began to systematically review the operations of reinsured companies.

Recommendation To Agencies: In order to improve the quality of loss adjustment practices of reinsured companies, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to develop and publish the guidelines now in process for improving the quality of the loss adjustment activities of reinsured companies and the associated training programs for their loss adjusters. In doing this, the Manager should require that reinsured companies pattern their loss adjustment programs, including loss adjuster training and supervisory quality

control reviews, after the more comprehensive and rigorous programs now used by FCIC for claims it adjusts on policies sold by master marketers. In order for FCIC to acquire the needed financial and programmatic oversight and control over the loss adjustment activities of reinsured companies, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to implement a comprehensive and systematic monitoring and evaluation program by its compliance division to ensure that the uniform standards set forth by FCIC are being followed. The FCIC evaluation of the effectiveness of company activities should include readjusting a sample of claims to determine whether loss adjustments are being performed accurately. In order for FCIC to acquire the needed financial and programmatic oversight and control over the loss adjustment activities of reinsured companies, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to require reinsured companies to submit documentation to FCIC in support of each payment request at the time the request for payment is made to help ensure that payments by FCIC are accurate and justified. FCIC should then verify the information submitted using a statistical sampling approach. In order for FCIC to acquire the needed financial and programmatic oversight and control over the loss adjustment activities of reinsured companies, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to establish internal controls, such as a computerized audit or screening, over reinsured claims prior to payment to ensure that the claims do not contain obvious errors. These controls would be similar to the controls FCIC now has on master marketer claims. In order for FCIC to acquire the needed financial and programmatic oversight and control over the loss adjustment activities of reinsured companies, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to establish guidelines for determining when and what administrative actions to take against reinsured companies that do not follow FCIC standards or that continue to adjust claims improperly. In order for FCIC to acquire the needed financial and programmatic oversight and control over the loss adjustment activities of reinsured companies, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to establish a systematic process for determining whether identified overpaid claims have been repaid to FCIC, with interest where appropriate. In order for FCIC to acquire the needed financial and programmatic oversight and control over the loss adjustment

activities of reinsured companies, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to require repayment by reinsured companies of the \$3 million in overpaid claims found, in accordance with the terms of the reinsurance agreements. In order for FCIC to acquire the needed financial and programmatic oversight and control over the loss adjustment activities of reinsured companies, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to determine how much of the \$17.9 million in payments where drought is shown as a cause of loss on irrigated farms is erroneous and pursue collection of that amount.

134460

Commodity Futures Trading: Purpose, Use, Impact, and Regulation of Cattle Futures Markets. RCED-88-30; B-226079. November 10, 1987. 122 pp. plus 5 appendices (14 pp.). *Report to Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.* Refer to RCED-87-83, January 16, 1987, Accession Number 132045; GGD-86-26, May 15, 1986, Accession Number 129896; RCED-85-20, April 9, 1985, Accession Number 127097; CED-78-153, September 26, 1978, Accession Number 107043; and RCED-88-78BR, March 25, 1988, Accession Number 135397.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522); Financial Services and Markets: Other Issue Area Work (4591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Commodity Futures Trading Commission; Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Packers and Stockyards Administration; Department of Justice; Federal Trade Commission.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,

and Forestry; *Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza; Sen. Patrick J. Leahy.*

Authority: Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921. Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Futures Trading Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-641). Commodity Futures Trading Commission Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-463). Commodity Exchange Act (Futures). *General Foods Corp. v. Brannan*, 170 F.2d 220 (7th Cir. 1948).

Abstract: Pursuant to a legislative requirement, GAO investigated cattle futures markets and their impact on cash market prices for cattle, particularly the: (1) cattle markets' reaction to the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Dairy Termination Program; (2) effect on cattle prices of meatpackers' forward contracting; (3) effectiveness of the system for delivering cattle under live cattle futures contracts; and (4) effectiveness of public and private regulation of the cattle futures markets.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) while cattle futures markets need some improvements and more research, they are serving their economic purpose of enhancing price discovery and facilitating risk-shifting; (2) there was no evidence to indicate that cattle prices were lower than they would be without futures markets; (3) trading in cattle futures is more prevalent in the feeding and meatpacking segments of the cattle industry than in the ranching segment; (4) a USDA announcement of its Dairy Termination Program produced a greater-than-expected drop in cash and futures prices for cattle, because USDA failed to anticipate the announcement's effect or coordinate with Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) officials; (5) meatpackers procured about 9 percent of their cattle through forward contracts, with no adverse price effects on the cash or futures markets; and (6) although problems exist with the delivery system and the grading of delivered cattle, commodities exchanges are developing better delivery and settlement mechanisms.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Chairman, CFTC, should use the special call procedure more frequently, particularly with regard to futures markets, such as those for cattle, that are the focus of considerable interest and attention. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct USDA futures-traded commodity program officials to discuss and coordinate their plans with appropriate CFTC officials. This would ensure a greater degree of sensitivity among program officials to the possible effects that the programs they are implementing or modifying might have

on related commodity markets. The Secretary of Agriculture should ensure that the Packers and Stockyards Administration (P&SA) monitors closely the increasing level of concentration in the U.S. meatpacking industry, to determine its impact on cattle markets, and take any actions necessary to ensure a continued fair, open, and competitive marketplace. Such actions might involve seeking information and advice from, and coordinating with, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Justice, and to the extent necessary, CFTC.

134490

Grain Inspection: Evaluation of USDA Study on Wheat Protein Measurement. RCED-88-50; B-229219. November 19, 1987.

Released November 25, 1987. 4 pp. plus 2 appendices (5 pp.). *Report to Sen. Kent Conrad, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Research and General Legislation Subcommittee*; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Research and General Legislation Subcommittee*; *Sen. Kent Conrad*.

Authority: United States Grain Standards Act of 1976.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO analyzed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Federal Grain Inspection Service's (FGIS) study which resulted in a change in the way FGIS conducts wheat protein measurement. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) FGIS used appropriate statistical techniques and sampling methods in its study; (2) FGIS compared wheat protein content measurements using two methods, the Kjeldahl chemical process and the Near-Infrared Reflectance (NIR) method; (3) FGIS concluded that its NIR instruments had become biased in the direction of overstating the protein content of hard red spring wheat; (4) to correct the bias, FGIS adjusted its instruments so that they would measure the protein content of hard red spring wheat at 0.2 percent less than before the

adjustment; and (5) FGIS initiated a study to recalibrate its instruments. GAO also found that FGIS plans to improve the accuracy of wheat protein measurement by: (1) standardizing grain coarseness by retrofitting grinders; (2) standardizing the time elapsed between grinding the wheat sample and placing it in the NIR instrument; and (3) recalibrating its NIR instruments on an annual basis. In addition, GAO found that, although FGIS has the authority to test wheat for protein content, no federal agency is responsible for routinely ensuring that wheat protein measurements by other entities, such as grain merchandisers, are accurate.

134532

Welfare: Analysis of Proposals To Control Federal Welfare Administrative Costs. HRD-88-23; B-220102. November 16, 1987.

Released December 1, 1987. 10 pp. plus 6 appendices (6 pp.). *Report to Sen. Pete V. Domenici, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Budget*; by Daniel M. Brier, (for Franklin Frazier, Associate Director), Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and Local Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate Committee on Budget*; *Sen. Pete V. Domenici*.

Authority: Immigration Reform and Control Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO analyzed the President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control's (Grace Commission) recommendations and the administration's fiscal years 1986, 1987, and 1988 budget requests concerning federal costs to administer the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Medicaid, and Food Stamp programs, focusing on: (1) growth in administrative costs; (2) existing state processes whereby administrative costs are separately accounted for and allocated among the three programs; (3) higher-than-normal federal cost-sharing rates for certain administrative activities; and (4) effects of federal program changes and uncontrollable economic conditions on administrative costs.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) each of the four proposals would control federal cost growth; (2) only the Grace Commission's proposal and the administration's 1986 budget proposal would eliminate the need to allocate costs among the three programs; (3) each proposal would eliminate federal cost-sharing and shift greater financial responsibility to the states; and (4) all of the proposals would provide an open-ended reimbursement, in which the federal government shared in administrative cost increases that resulted from mandatory federal program changes and case-load increases due to unfavorable economic conditions.

134552

Farmers Home Administration: Problems and Issues Facing the Emergency Loan Program. RCED-88-4; B-227691. November 30, 1987.

Released December 7, 1987. 55 pp. plus 7 appendices (16 pp.). *Report to Sen. Thad Cochran, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee*; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-62BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128976; RCED-86-88, June 13, 1986, Accession Number 130161; and RCED-88-211BR, August 15, 1988, Accession Number 136568.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Appropriateness of FmHA Credit Programs and Their Effectiveness in Assisting Farm Financial Needs (6510).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee*; *Sen. Thad Cochran*.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (P.L. 87-128). Disaster Relief Act (P.L. 91-606). 50 Fed. Reg. 45739. P.L. 94-68. P.L. 100-71. P.L. 92-385. P.L. 93-237. P.L. 93-24. *Coleman v. Block*, 580 F. Supp. 194 (D.N.D. 1984). *Coleman v. Lyng*, 663 F. Supp. 1315 (D.N.D. 1987).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA) emergency loan program to: (1) document program changes over the past several years; (2) determine why the program's delinquency rate is so high;

and (3) identify the potential loss that FmHA may incur and the alternatives to deal with uncollectible debts.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the program's expansion to include emergency annual production and major adjustment loans increased the amount of emergency loans from \$735 million in 1975 to \$5.1 billion in 1981; (2) the value of delinquent loans increased from \$937 million in 1981 to \$4.1 billion in 1986; (3) borrowers became delinquent because of such external elements as weather, poor farm economy, and unsound farming and financial practices; (4) expanded loan program features and a liberal continuation policy that permitted additional loans to delinquent borrowers enabled borrowers to accumulate large delinquent debts; and (5) FmHA could lose about \$7.8 billion of its \$28-billion farm loan portfolio. GAO also found that FmHA: (1) phased out its emergency annual production and major adjustment loans and terminated its continuation policy; (2) issued new loan-servicing regulations; (3) plans to bring all delinquent accounts current through debt restructuring; and (4) will restrict loan eligibility to borrowers for whom federal crop insurance is not available.

134578

Homelessness: Implementation of Food and Shelter Programs Under the McKinney Act. RCED-88-63; B-229004. December 8, 1987. 39 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Report to Congress*; by J. Dexter Peach, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General). Refer to HRD-85-40, April 9, 1985, Accession Number 126760; T-RCED-88-16, January 26, 1988, Accession Number 134881; PEMD-88-24, August 3, 1988, Accession Number 136729; and HRD-89-38, January 26, 1989, Accession Number 137802.

Issue Area: Housing and Community Development: Other Issue Area Work (6791).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0); Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Social Services (506.0).

Organization Concerned: Federal Emergency Management Agency; Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Congressional Relevance: Congress.

Authority: Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77). Urgent Relief for the

Homeless Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-71). P.L. 99-591. H. Rept. 100-10.

Abstract: Pursuant to a legislative requirement, GAO evaluated the: (1) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) purchase of goods and services prior to implementation of the Homeless Assistance Act; (2) status of actions HUD and FEMA are taking pursuant to the act; and (3) issues concerning the act that may warrant more detailed consideration.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the agencies had not yet disbursed funds appropriated pursuant to the act; (2) FEMA allocated 50 percent of its earlier 1987 appropriations for food; and (3) the HUD localities receiving Emergency Shelter Grants Program funds planned to spend 50 percent of their funds for shelter operations and maintenance. GAO also found that, although the act required that: (1) FEMA disburse Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds by October 11, 1987, no appreciable disbursement would be likely before December 1987; and (2) HUD issue implementation requirements for its new Supplemental Assistance Program by August 21, 1987, HUD did not issue them until October 19, 1987. GAO noted several issues concerning the distribution and use of the act's funds, including: (1) HUD funding of capital improvements to shelters that religious organizations operate; (2) HUD and FEMA attempts to target programs to the required segments of the homeless population; (3) the accuracy of HUD and FEMA funds distribution formulas in measuring the need for funds in a given area; and (4) the use of federal funds as matching funds.

134620

[H.R. 3504: Pesticide Monitoring Improvements Act]. T-RCED-88-12. December 14, 1987. 8 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee; by Hugh J. Wessinger, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-219, September 26, 1986, Accession Number 131729; RCED-87-7, October 27, 1986, Accession Number 131730; and IMTEC-88-42, September 30, 1988, Accession Number 137077.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Health and the Environment Subcommittee.

Authority: H.R. 3504 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: GAO discussed proposed legislation which would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to periodically monitor imported foods for pesticide contamination. GAO found that FDA: (1) did not periodically sample foods imported from countries that regularly exported to the United States; (2) has not conducted an overall analysis to determine what gaps exist in its monitoring and sampling procedures; and (3) lacks adequate information about the types of pesticides foreign countries use on foods. GAO believes that FDA should: (1) require importers to identify the pesticides used on food they import into the United States; and (2) exchange information with foreign countries on pesticides. GAO also believes that the proposed legislation would enhance FDA's ability to monitor imported foods for pesticide violations.

134644

Occupational Safety & Health: Federal Costs Incurred in Developing Field Sanitation Standard. HRD-88-15FS; B-229593. November 27, 1987.

Released December 16, 1987. 16 pp. *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Ronald C. Marlenee; by Lawrence Horinko, (for Janet L. Shikle, Associate Director), Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Employment and Education: Assessing Whether Department of Labor Worker Protection Programs Adequately Ensure Safe and Healthful Workplaces and Fair Compensation (5312).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Other Labor Services (505.0).

Organization Concerned: Occupational Safety and Health Administration; Department of Justice.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Ronald C. Marlenee.

Authority: Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. *Farmworker Justice Fund, Inc. v. Secretary of Labor*, 811 F.2d 613 (D.C. Cir. 1987). *International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, United Automobile Workers, et al. v. Donovan*, 756 F.2d 162 (D.C. Cir. 1985).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the development of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) field sanitation standard for agricultural employers, focusing on: (1) OSHA personnel costs; (2) costs of studies federal agencies and contractors conducted; (3) federal legal costs; (4) costs of printing the standard's draft and final versions; (5) estimated compliance costs; and (6) estimated enforcement costs. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) neither OSHA nor other involved federal agencies compiled actual cost data relating to the standard; (2) OSHA and the other involved agencies estimated that costs for legal proceedings, public hearings, printing, and contract services totalled about \$626,000; and (3) OSHA officials plan to determine enforcement costs after completion of inspection activities for fiscal years 1987 and 1988. GAO also found that available data indicated that: (1) at least 27 OSHA staff members worked on the standard for varying amounts of time, with estimated costs exceeding \$200,000; (2) study costs totalled \$289,960; (3) public hearing costs totalled \$93,434; (4) Departments of Labor and Justice legal costs totalled \$174,935 and \$29,929, respectively; (5) printing expenses totalled \$37,750; and (6) estimated compliance costs would total about \$50 million.

134669

Welfare: Income and Relative Poverty Status of AFDC Families. HRD-88-9; B-225966. November 4, 1987.

Released December 18, 1987. 40 pp. plus 4 appendices (22 pp.). *Report to Sen. William V. Roth, Jr.; by Edward A. Densmore, (for Richard L. Fogel, Assistant Comptroller General), Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-87-51BR, February 19, 1987, Accession Number 132472; HRD-81-6, November 14, 1980, Accession Number 113975; PEMD-84-6, April 2, 1984, Accession Number 123783; HRD-87-34, January 29, 1987, Accession Number 132098; PEMD-86-8BR, April 17, 1986, Accession Number 129641; PEMD-87-7BR, October 24, 1986, Accession Number 131509; RCED-88-85BR, February 11, 1988, Accession Number 135262; and HRD-88-78, May 11, 1988, Accession Number 136107.*

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Well Welfare Programs or Projects Encourage and Assist Recipients To Obtain Work and Become Self-Sufficient (5017).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Family Support Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen. William V. Roth, Jr. .*

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO examined: (1) incomes of recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits; (2) major programs and other sources of AFDC recipients' incomes and how this income affected total incomes; (3) how AFDC recipient incomes compared with the poverty line, other welfare recipient incomes, and nonwelfare family incomes; and (4) welfare policy implications of these results.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that 2- to 4-member AFDC families had monthly incomes: (1) averaging \$819 at market value and \$646 at recipient value; (2) consisting mostly of welfare benefits and affected by such factors as geography, availability of housing assistance, and earnings; and (3) rarely exceeding the poverty line. GAO also found that: (1) 9 of 10 AFDC families participated in at least 2 other federal welfare programs; (2) welfare benefits comprised at least 90 percent of AFDC family income; (3) nonwelfare income sources included Social Security, veterans' benefits, alimony, and child support; (4) AFDC families typically had lower incomes than those of other welfare groups and of nonwelfare, single-parent families; and (5) there is limited information on incomes of AFDC families living with persons not receiving AFDC.

134687

Food Aid: Improving Economic and Market Development Impact in African Countries. NSIAD-88-55; B-217782. December 21, 1987. 44 pp. plus 2 appendices (15 pp.). *Report to Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-87-173, July 16, 1987, Accession Number 133462; RCED-87-100, May 7, 1987, Accession Number 132884; and NSIAD-88-96FS, February 25, 1988, Accession Number 135106.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522); Foreign

Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Republic of Ghana; Republic of Kenya; Agency for International Development; Democratic Republic of Madagascar; Republic of Senegal.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture; . House Select Committee on Hunger; House Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.*

Authority: Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480). Agricultural Act of 1949. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. H.R. 3 (100th Cong.). S. 659 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined the economic and market development impact of Public Law 83-480 food aid to four African countries.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) U.S. agricultural and foreign policy interests, weak agreement provisions, and recipient governments' failure to fully implement some agreement provisions weakened developmental benefits; (2) long-term impact on the economy was difficult to measure; (3) self-help measures should be more measurable and better focused on economic development objectives; and (4) the Agency for International Development's (AID) missions have not fully complied with requirements for monitoring and reporting on recipient governments' implementation of the programs. GAO also found that food programs have provided humanitarian assistance, but inadequate private voluntary organization (PVO) management limited efforts to alleviate malnutrition and poverty. In addition, GAO found that: (1) AID mission staff have other duties which they perceive as having a higher priority; (2) economic problems have precluded the African countries from progressing to the point of financing imports on commercial terms; and (3) improvements in AID planning and oversight could enhance both programs' benefits.

Recommendation To Congress: If Congress concludes that local currencies should be used to some extent to support

community and rural development projects which do not include a direct feeding component, it should direct that such use be made. Congress should also include safeguards to ensure that traditional humanitarian feeding programs receive priority in the use of available resources. Congress should further consider amending sections 202, 206, and 207 of Title II, making the provisions expressly applicable to cooperatives as well as PVO.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, AID, should improve oversight of the Title I programs by ensuring, during the Washington review of draft Title I agreements, that they: (1) include specific and measurable self-help measures which directly contribute to economic development; (2) specify local currency uses; and (3) include time frames for routine progress consultations with recipient governments. The Administrator, AID, should improve oversight of the Title I programs by increasing missions' attention to the oversight of the program, such as reallocating existing mission staff, funding monitoring activities with Title I-generated local currencies, and using short-term consultants to evaluate self-help measure implementation and local currency projects. The Administrator, AID, should improve oversight of the Title I programs by ensuring that missions: (1) verify and document recipient-government implementation of self-help and local currency provisions; (2) submit well-documented, interim and annual analyses of recipient governments' implementation of self-help programs; and (3) define the specific duties of, and the relationships between, offices and individuals responsible for program design and monitoring, including mission controllers. The Administrator, AID, should improve oversight of PVO Title II programs through assisting PVO to improve their operational plans and comply with operational plan guidance by: (1) providing them with technical assistance in preparing plans; (2) circulating to missions and PVO copies of plans that comply with operational plan guidance; (3) providing PVO with more specific criteria and a format for reporting financial information; and (4) requiring missions to be more actively involved in reviewing plans, providing them with a format for evaluating the plans' adherence to guidance and requiring mission analyses prior to AID, Washington's approval. The Administrator, AID, should improve oversight of PVO Title II programs through clarifying mission oversight responsibilities, including: (1) requiring

them to submit analyses of PVO annual reports on their progress toward operational plan objectives and to review management of PVO programs periodically; (2) specifying data that missions would routinely request from PVO to document the scope and results of projects; and (3) defining mission responsibilities for monitoring PVO use of grant funds and achievements of benefits. The Administrator, AID, should include in the field manual for Title II sales projects a requirement that missions review and approve PVO sales agreements with local buyers and periodically review local currency deposits and uses. The Administrator, AID, should assess a sample of Title II local currency projects in fiscal year 1988 to ensure that sales are being properly administered and local currencies are being used as intended.

134789

[Comments on DOL Expenditure for Farm Wage Survey]. B-223833. November 5, 1987.

Released January 12, 1988. 5 pp. *Letter* to Rep. Augustus F. Hawkins, Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel. **Organization Concerned:** Employment and Training Administration; Department of Labor; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Education and Labor; *Rep.* William D. Ford; *Rep.* Augustus F. Hawkins.

Authority: Job Training Partnership Act (P.L. 97-300; 29 U.S.C. 1501; 96 Stat. 1324). Department of Labor Appropriation Act, 1984 (P.L. 98-139; 97 Stat. 871). Economy Act (31 U.S.C. 1535). Employment Service Act. Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1152(a)(14)). Social Security Act. 31 Comp. Gen. 83. 63 Comp. Gen. 422. 55 Comp. Gen. 307. S. Rept. 98-247. H. Rept. 98-357. International Union, United Automobile Workers v. Donovan, 756 F.2d 855 (D.C. Cir. 1984). 7 U.S.C. 1622.

Abstract: GAO commented on an interagency agreement between the Departments of Labor (DOL) and Agriculture (USDA) regarding funding for a farm wage survey. GAO found that: (1) DOL and USDA properly agreed that DOL would fund the survey; and (2) the agencies violated the Economy Act by failing to deobligate unexpended budget balances by the end of a fiscal year.

134790

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Released January 12, 1988. 5 pp. *Letter* to Rep. William D. Ford; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

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134879

Crop Insurance: Conflict-of-Interest Problems Involving an FCIC Official. RCED-88-24; B-209866. December 18, 1987. 7 pp. plus 7 appendices (30 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Ronald C. Marlenee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511). **Contact:** Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Community and Regional Development: Disaster Relief and Insurance (453.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.; Department of Agriculture; Crop Hail Insurance Actuarial Association; Department of Agriculture: Office of the General Counsel.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep.* Ronald C. Marlenee. **Authority:** Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980. 18 U.S.C. 208.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined an individual's action as a Director and manager of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) to determine whether any potential conflict of interest existed between his private business interests and FCIC responsibilities.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the individual's voting record and actions during his tenure with FCIC appeared to be in violation of conflict-of-interest laws, since he: (1) favored three motions to change the standard sales and service agreements with reinsured companies to the benefit of the firm that employed him; (2) accepted \$2,400 for participating in two conferences that his employer sponsored with other organizations; and (3) received periodic cost-of-living increases from his firm's retirement annuity plan. GAO also found that: (1) upon his appointment to the FCIC board, the member sold the stock he owned in a brokerage firm doing business with reinsured companies; and (2) although the Department of Agriculture provided the member with written guidance on how to avoid conflict-of-interest situations, it did not grant him a waiver.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct Mr. Fosse to abstain from participating in FCIC matters affecting the Crop Hail Insurance Actuarial Association unless and until the Secretary grants him a waiver of 18 U.S.C. 208 prohibitions.

134943

International Trade: International Trade Commission's Agricultural Unfair Trade Investigations. NSIAD-88-58BR; B-226098. December 30, 1987.

Released February 3, 1988. 3 pp. plus 4 appendices (9 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Pete Wilson; Sen. Jesse A. Helms; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-87-80, February 25, 1987, Accession Number 132477.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Analysis of U.S. Import Relief Laws as a Means for Dealing With Competition From Imports and the Need for Industrial Adjustment (6304); International Trade and Commercial Policy: Competitiveness of U.S. Agricultural Exports and Responsiveness of Government Programs and Policies To Changes (6305); International Trade and Commercial Policy: Effectiveness of U.S. Efforts To Secure a Fairer and More Open World Trading System (6301).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0); Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: United States International Trade Commission; Department of Commerce.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* Pete Wilson; *Sen.* Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Trade Agreements Act of 1979 (19 U.S.C. 2501 et seq.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the International Trade Commission's (ITC) disposition of its antidumping and countervailing duty investigations of agricultural imports to determine whether: (1) ITC appropriately applied its requirements to agricultural growers and harvesters; and (2) the documentation requirements disadvantaged agricultural interests in the investigations.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that ITC: (1) terminated 6 of 29 cases GAO analyzed because it found no indication of material injury to the domestic agricultural industry due to the imports; (2) still had 2 cases pending; (3) terminated 3 cases due to Department of Commerce findings and actions; (4) reached preliminary affirmative injury determinations in 18 cases, of which it reached a final determination of injury in 8 cases; (5) excluded 14 cases because they did not involve growers or harvesters; (6) had no questionnaire problems that impeded its ability to reach determinations; and (7) used information from many sources, making it too difficult to ascertain what information led to each determination.

134944

Work and Welfare: Analysis of AFDC Employment Programs in Four States. HRD-88-33FS; B-219521. January 5, 1988.

Released February 3, 1988. 95 pp. plus 3 appendices (13 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Sen. Bob Packwood, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Finance;

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance; by Franklin Frazier, Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-87-34, January 29, 1987, Accession Number 132098.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Finance; *Sen.* Bob Packwood; *Sen.* Lloyd Bentsen.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Job Training Partnership Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed four states' Work Incentive (WIN) Programs, specifically the: (1) Massachusetts Employment and Training Choices (ET) Program; (2) Michigan Opportunity and Skills Training (MOST) Program; (3) the Texas Employment Services Program; and (4) Oregon JOBS Program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) Massachusetts and Michigan provided multiple services and had more funding available, while Texas and Oregon each provided only one primary service because of budget constraints; (2) approximately 30 percent of the Massachusetts, Michigan, and Texas Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) cases were participants in the WIN programs; (3) only Massachusetts had formal priorities to serve specific AFDC groups; (4) in all four states, staff used interviews to assess needs and make assignments; (5) although all the states provided employment-related activities, Texas and Oregon emphasized job search, while Massachusetts and Michigan emphasized education and training; (6) all four programs used the services of other agencies; and (7) Massachusetts offered child care assistance, while the other states urged participants to find child care on their own. GAO also found that: (1) Oregon averages 75 participants per caseworker, while the other states average over 250; (2) Texas had the fewest caseworkers with college degrees; (3) Oregon and Massachusetts used caseworkers with WIN backgrounds; and (4) Texas and Massachusetts calculated that they placed approximately 37 percent of their participants.

135105

Federally Owned Dairy Products: Inventories and Distributions, Fiscal Years 1982-88. RCED-88-108FS; B-230435. February 23, 1988. Released February 25, 1988. 26 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Mickey Leland, Chairman, House Select Committee on Hunger; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Select Committee on Hunger; *Rep.* Mickey Leland.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949. Food Security Act. Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983. School Lunch Act. Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. Agricultural Act of 1956.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the Department of Agriculture's (USDA): (1) inventory of dairy products; and (2) distribution of those products through various sales and donations programs. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that USDA: (1) dairy product purchases declined from 14 billion pounds in 1982 to 5 billion pounds in 1987 and were projected at 7 billion pounds for 1988; (2) dairy product inventories declined from 1.2 billion pounds in 1982 to 993 million pounds in 1987 and were projected at 558 million pounds for 1988; and (3) year-end uncommitted inventories for Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) distributions declined between 1982 and 1987, and were projected to be zero at the end of 1988. GAO also found that USDA: (1) increased total dairy product distributions under its sales and donations programs between 1982 and 1987, but projected a decline in 1988; (2) projected that all dairy product donations under TEFAP would end after April 1988; and (3) projected that it would continue its export sales of dairy products and its donations under its major distribution programs in 1988.

135106

Food Aid: Integration With Economic Assistance Programs in

Four African Countries. NSIAD-88-96FS; B-217782. February 25, 1988. 3 pp. plus 2 appendices (9 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by Nancy R. Kingsbury, Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-56, April 3, 1986, Accession Number 129566.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522); Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Department of Agriculture; Republic of Ghana; Republic of Senegal; Republic of Kenya; Democratic Republic of Madagascar.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Rep.* E (Kika) De La Garza.

Authority: Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided supplemental information on the economic and market development impact of Food for Peace Program assistance to African countries, focusing on: (1) integration of such assistance with Economic Support Fund and other foreign economic development assistance; and (2) pre-positioning of food commodities in Africa to meet critical needs.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) Agency for International Development (AID) and other federal guidance encourages integration of food and non-food assistance; and (2) AID integrates food assistance with its overall development strategy for each country. GAO also found that: (1) in Ghana, AID integrated some resources, but Ghana's reluctance to develop a formal food assistance policy constrained integration; (2) while the overall objectives of the AID policy in Kenya were consistent with its development strategy, integration of resources was not apparent and other donors were willing to provide assistance on a less restrictive basis; (3) in Madagascar, the AID strategy was closely linked with government efforts to increase rice production, but AID did not effectively integrate food and economic assistance; and (4) AID effectively integrated

resources in Senegal to help the government stimulate agricultural production and reduce its role in the agricultural sector. In addition, GAO found that AID: (1) pre-positioned some commodities at U.S. ports for Sudan, but anticipated requirements decreased; (2) obtained mixed results from trilateral arrangements under which AID provided commodities to one country for delivery to another country; and (3) preferred not to purchase commodities in advance of formal requests for assistance, because of the risk of buying unused commodities.

135161

Farm Programs: An Overview of Price and Income Support, and Storage Programs. RCED-88-84BR; B-225236. February 29, 1988. 55 pp. plus 3 appendices (8 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. William V. Alexander; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-26BR, October 20, 1987, Accession Number 134251; RCED-87-117BR, March 26, 1987, Accession Number 132535; and RCED-88-144FS, April 22, 1988, Accession Number 135675.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* William V. Alexander.

Authority: Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA): (1) farm price and income support programs; and (2) agricultural commodities storage program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) USDA estimated that net cash outlays for commodity price and income support programs would exceed \$23 billion in fiscal year (FY) 1987; (2) nonrecourse commodity loans, the direct purchase of farm commodities, and deficiency payments accounted for most of the programs' net cash outlays; (3) corn, wheat, dairy products, and upland cotton accounted for most of the commodity net cash outlays; and (4) most support program outlays went to

farmers, although some went to commercial processors of farm commodities. GAO also found that USDA: (1) estimated that net cash outlays for its storage programs would exceed \$2 billion for FY 1987; and (2) implemented a special barge storage program in 1986 for the corn harvest, at an additional cost of \$44.8 million.

135210

Welfare: Expert Panels' Insights on Major Reform Proposals. HRD-88-59; B-225966. February 3, 1988.

Released March 4, 1988. 4 pp. plus 3 appendices (62 pp.). *Report* to Sen. John H. Glenn, Chairman, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; by Franklin Frazier, Associate Director, Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: National Academy of Public Administration; Federation for Community Planning.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Sen.* John H. Glenn.

Authority: H.R. 1720 (100th Cong.). S. 1511 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO convened two panels of experts to obtain their insights on four welfare reform issues, including: (1) case management; (2) contracts between welfare recipients and agencies; (3) services coordination; and (4) target populations.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the panels: (1) supported the case management concept of using a single case manager to help welfare recipients achieve self-sufficiency; (2) did not support the concept of binding agreements between the agency and recipient, and related sanctions, since sanctions had never worked in the past; (3) agreed that existing welfare programs needed better coordination and integration; (4) suggested that state and local agencies had greater flexibility to adapt program plans and incentives to their needs; and (5) supported the idea of greater targeting of services to specific populations and tailoring of certain benefits and services for them. In addition, the panels suggested: (1) mandating a basic program of welfare-to-work services and incentives for states to

develop more comprehensive services; (2) setting goals and performance measures for each state's work program to account for program characteristics, job opportunities, and resources; (3) developing program performance measures in terms of quality, numbers, and job placement duration; and (4) extending the support periods for transportation and medical services after a recipient has taken a job and left the welfare rolls.

135262

Food Stamp Program: Participation by AFDC Households. RCED-88-85BR; B-217883. February 11, 1988.

Released March 14, 1988. 25 pp. plus 5 appendices (9 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; Sen. Thomas R. Harkin, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan, Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance: Social Security and Family Policy Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Thomas J. Downey, Acting Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to HRD-88-9, November 4, 1987, Accession Number 134669; RCED-88-12, October 22, 1987, Accession Number 134233; and RCED-87-102, June 11, 1987, Accession Number 133203.

Issue Area: Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and Local Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014); Food and Agriculture: Satisfaction of Nutritional and Health Concerns by Food Assistance Programs (6518).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; Department of Health and Human Services: Family Services Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; *House*

Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Finance: Social Security and Family Policy Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Senate* Committee on Labor and Human Resources; *Rep.* Thomas J. Downey; *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta; *Sen.* Daniel P. Moynihan; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin; *Sen.* Patrick J. Leahy; *Sen.* Edward M. Kennedy.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the: (1) percentage of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipient households also receiving Food Stamp Program benefits, both nationally and for each state; and (2) reasons why AFDC households in some states do not have higher food stamp participation rates.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) although the two programs were designed to assist many of the same low-income households, their eligibility standards differed considerably; (2) the Food Stamp Program limited eligibility to those with a gross monthly income of 130 percent of the poverty level, while states determined their own AFDC eligibility standards; (3) nationally, 83.4 percent of all AFDC households participated in the Food Stamp Program; (4) the participation rate for households composed of only AFDC recipients was 93.7 percent, while the participation rate for AFDC households that included at least one member who did not receive AFDC benefits was 66.1 percent; (5) almost all AFDC-only households met program eligibility requirements, while some AFDC-mixed households were not eligible because of a household member's income; (6) states' improper benefits denials and terminations prevented some eligible households from participating; and (7) 1.9 percent of eligible AFDC-only households did not apply for food stamps, while 5.8 percent of eligible AFDC-mixed households did not participate because they did not apply or because their applications were denied.

135289

Groundwater Standards: States Need More Information From EPA. PEMD-88-6; B-228844. March 16, 1988. 8 pp. plus 7 appendices (35 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Max S. Baucus,

Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Hazardous Waste and Toxic Substances Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PEMD-88-5, February 2, 1988, Accession Number 134964; and PEMD-89-1, December 20, 1988, Accession Number 137714.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Intended and Unintended Effects of Government Actions in Physical System Areas (7203); Environment: Assessing Federal and State Efforts To Prevent Groundwater Contamination (6816).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned:

Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works; *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works: Hazardous Waste and Toxic Substances Subcommittee; *Sen.* Max S. Baucus.

Authority: P.L. 99-339.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO described: (1) information in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) documents about groundwater contaminants that is available to states for setting groundwater standards; and (2) existing drinking water standards. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) 41 of the 57 states and territories set their own numerical or narrative standards for groundwater contaminants, since there were no federal standards; (2) many states believed that a lack of information constrained their standard-setting efforts; (3) EPA is revising 20 of the 22 standards it issued before 1987 for individual contaminants and is reviewing 63 other contaminants for possible regulation; and (4) although there were 247 EPA documents that dealt fairly well with 83 contaminants, there was a substantial gap between what was available and what states needed to develop standards. GAO believes that, although Congress did not give EPA general authority to set groundwater standards, providing the

information states need to establish their own standards would be consistent with current EPA goals and efforts. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Administrator, EPA, should establish a criteria document program for groundwater contaminants. The groundwater contaminants addressed should be those that pose the greatest risks.

135290

Food Assistance: Practices of the European Community and Selected Member Nations. RCED-88-102; B-230189. March 15, 1988. 42 pp. plus 2 appendices (2 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-181BR, June 23, 1988, Accession Number 136164.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: French Republic; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Federal Republic of Germany; Ireland; European Economic Community.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen.* Patrick J. Leahy.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined the food assistance programs of the European Community and four of its members, focusing on their program operation and use of agricultural surpluses.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) both the European Community and individual member nations sponsor food assistance programs; (2) the program's primary aims are to assist the needy and reduce agricultural surpluses; (3) the Community requires members to participate in 4 of its 10 programs; (4) the programs supplement each member's national welfare program and dispose of about 1 percent of Community surpluses annually; (5) the six programs currently in operation cost the Community about \$227 million annually; and (6) from 1981 to 1986, the Community provided nearly \$3.17 billion worth of edible grains, skim milk powder, and butter oils to developing nations. GAO also found that:

(1) the four countries it visited had few national food assistance programs because they generally provided cash benefits to the needy through social assistance programs; (2) these countries did not set specific benefit amounts for food but expected recipients to determine how to allot their benefits; and (3) the Community's food assistance programs were small in comparison to U.S. programs because of national sensitivities about stigmatizing recipients.

135338

[Evaluation of Poverty Indicators]. T-PEMD-88-1. March 22, 1988. 17 pp. plus 1 appendix (16 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee; by Lois-ellin Datta, Associate Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PEMD-87-23, September 30, 1987, Accession Number 134297.

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Post Office and Civil Service: Census and Population Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO discussed the Census Bureau's experimental methods for valuing noncash benefits as part of measuring poverty in the United States, specifically whether it assigned a cash value to a benefit based on: (1) what it would cost to buy the benefit (the market value method); (2) what it was worth to the recipient (the recipient value method); or (3) what percentage of its budget a poor family would spend on the benefit (the poverty budget share method). GAO found that: (1) both the market value and recipient value methods revealed substantial conceptual and methodological problems, especially for valuing medical care; (2) the market value method underestimated the extent of poverty, affected the poverty rates of subgroups in varying ways, disrupted the poverty gap distribution, and assigned high benefit levels compared to its composite analysis; and (3) the recipient value method was likely to reclassify blacks, the elderly, persons in families headed by women, unrelated individuals, single women, and Hispanics as poor when medical benefits were decreased beyond 10 percent and as nonpoor when they increased beyond 10 percent. GAO believes that further empirical analysis and more data are needed to confirm the

extent of the problems and to identify problems not critiqued.

135347

Milk Marketing Orders: Options for Change. RCED-88-9; B-227742.

March 21, 1988. 71 pp. plus 8 appendices (23 pp.). *Report to Congress*; by J. Dexter Peach, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General). Refer to CED-80-88, July 21, 1980, Accession Number 113006; RCED-85-57, July 31, 1985, Accession Number 127646; RCED-85-132, September 18, 1985, Accession Number 127937; and T-RCED-88-41, May 11, 1988, Accession Number 135766.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Relevance of Policies and Programs Developed Decades Ago To Improve the Marketing of Food (6523).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Marketing Service; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress.

Authority: Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.). Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (7 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Food Security Act.

Abstract: GAO reviewed several aspects of federal milk-pricing policies to determine how: (1) the milk marketing order program affects the U.S. dairy surplus problem; (2) to change the program to reduce incentives for milk production; and (3) such changes would affect the surplus and the program's ability to meet dairy policy goals.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) because dairy market conditions changed, the milk marketing order pricing policies no longer applied; (2) the federal milk marketing system contributed to a milk surplus and benefited producers in some regions of the country at the expense of others; and (3) recent legislation provided that increases in production that resulted in annual federal dairy purchases of over 5

billion pounds would trigger a downward adjustment in the support price. GAO also found that: (1) the two basic strategies for changing milk marketing orders were controlling production and lessening government influence on milk prices; (2) the production control system would limit the quantity of milk that producers, singly and in total, could market at a given price, but could increase consumer prices, create windfalls for current producers, bar entry for new producers, and impact production in the long run; (3) the options for reducing government influence would include establishing more basing points and eliminating grade A and distance differentials, allocations, compensatory payments and order-pricing provisions, while retaining supervision; and (4) eliminating pricing provisions would lessen the likelihood that the support price supply-demand adjuster would trigger price reductions in the future.

Recommendation To Congress: Congress may wish to consider establishing the goal of decreasing the federal role in milk pricing; working with the Department of Agriculture to develop and adopt legislation necessary to accomplish that goal; and directing the Secretary of Agriculture to: (1) monitor the conditions in the industry that result from changes to pricing policies; and (2) act, if necessary, to help the industry adjust.

135394

Animal Welfare Program: Federal Regulation Relating to the Transportation of Dogs. RCED-88-100; B-217624. March 21, 1988.

Released March 28, 1988. 6 pp. plus 5 appendices (17 pp.). *Report to Rep. Manuel Lujan, Jr.*; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Manuel Lujan, Jr. .

Authority: Animal Welfare Act of 1970 (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO examined the Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS)

regulation of the transportation of dogs for sale in the wholesale pet trade, focusing on APHIS: (1) responsibilities for regulating dog transport; (2) plans to revise its regulations; and (3) views on state governments' and private organizations' monitoring roles.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that APHIS: (1) regulates transportation standards and minimum age and health certification requirements for transporting dogs; (2) inspects registered carriers' and intermediate handlers' vehicles and records for compliance with these regulations; (3) inspects licensed dealers' privately owned vehicles for cleanliness and safety conditions; and (4) plans to require these dealers to comply with minimum age and health certification requirements. GAO also found that: (1) about 24 states have animal welfare legislation, but generally do not monitor dog transport, since APHIS has this responsibility and there are regulation and enforcement uniformity problems among states; (2) local anticruelty laws provide some local humane societies with enforcement power; and (3) APHIS believes that industry self-regulation offers the greatest potential for improving dog transport.

135397

Agricultural Marketing: Farmers' Marketing Practices and Programs To Teach Alternative Practices.

RCED-88-78BR; B-214420.2. March 25, 1988. 41 pp. plus 3 appendices (7 pp.). *Briefing Report to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture*; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-99, June 10, 1987, Accession Number 133215; RCED-87-144, September 10, 1987, Accession Number 133880; RCED-87-83, January 16, 1987, Accession Number 132045; RCED-88-30, November 10, 1987, Accession Number 134460; and RCED-84-91, June 7, 1984, Accession Number 124425.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Relevance of Policies and Programs Developed Decades Ago To Improve the Marketing of Food (6523).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep.* E (Kika) De La Garza; *Sen.* Patrick J. Leahy.

Authority: Futures Trading Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-641). Food Security Act. Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

Abstract: Pursuant to a legislative requirement, GAO studied: (1) farmers' use of three advanced marketing techniques, specifically cash-forward contracting, hedging in the futures market, and trading in agricultural options; and (2) educational programs in advanced agricultural marketing techniques.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) although producers could use advanced marketing techniques to ensure commodity prices at a future date, they face such risks as lost opportunities if prices rise, added option premium expenses, and potential liability for failure to deliver the contract product quantity; (2) producers participating in government price-support programs had little interest in marketing techniques; (3) futures contracts required standard quantities that some small- and medium-sized farms were capable of producing; (4) studies showed that only 5 to 13 percent of the total producers used futures contracts to market their products, while most producers used cash-forward contracting agreements; and (5) although studies showed the number of producers that could effectively use advanced marketing techniques, they indicated that futures trading provided fewer benefits to smaller producers. GAO also found that: (1) advanced marketing education programs provided practical knowledge to producers and encouraged them to implement that knowledge; (2) between May 1986 and April 1987, 25,000 individuals attended advanced marketing programs, and producers represented 82 percent of those attending; and (3) many of the entities that provided formal education workshops used alternative methods, such as home-study courses, videotapes, and marketing clubs, and provided marketing information through newspapers, radio, television, and other sources.

135515

Health and Nutrition: Collection of Vital Statistical Data on Hispanics. HRD-88-68BR; B-230485. March 18, 1988.

Released April 11, 1988. 12 pp. plus 4 appendices (15 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Tony Coelho, House of Representatives; Majority Whip; Rep. Albert G. Bustamante, Chairman, House Hispanic Caucus; Rep. Mickey Leland, Chairman, House Select Committee on Hunger; by Janet L. Shikles, Associate Director, Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Other Issue Area Work (5291).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Health: Health Research (552.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; Health Resources and Services Administration: National Center for Health Statistics; Department of Health and Human Services; House of Representatives: Majority Whip. **Congressional Relevance:** *House* Hispanic Caucus; *House* Select Committee on Hunger; *Rep.* Tony Coelho; *Rep.* Albert G. Bustamante; *Rep.* Mickey Leland.

Authority: Food Security Act. Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined the sampling plans of four national surveys, specifically their health and nutrition data on Hispanics.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the surveys included too few minority group members to allow separate nationally projectable estimates of their health or nutritional condition; (2) to overcome this lack of data, two of the surveys oversampled Hispanics, and one plan was considering the use of oversampling in its survey; (3) although the Department of Health and Human Services' Vital Statistics Program's new standard birth and death registration forms included an Hispanic identifier, states were not required to use it; (4) the Vital Statistics Program provided training materials, technical assistance, and funding to states to help in the use of the forms and the production of data; and (5) 4 of the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service's 13 programs produced national data on Hispanic participation, 3 programs had studies underway to aggregate Hispanic data, and the other 6 did not plan to compile participation data.

135544

[Comments on USDA Obligation Actions]. B-228838. March 2, 1988. Released April 13, 1988. 5 pp. *Letter* to Rep. Jamie L. Whitten, Chairman,

House Committee on Appropriations; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel. **Organization Concerned:** Department of Agriculture: National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations; *Rep.* Jamie L. Whitten.

Authority: Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 683). P.L. 100-71. H. Rept. 100-28. International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implementation Workers v. Donovan, 746 F.2d 855 (D.C. Cir. 1984). B-200769 (1980). 101 Stat. 426.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO commented on whether the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) failure to obligate \$9.65 million in appropriated funds constituted an improper impoundment. GAO found that the failure to obligate the \$9.65 million resulted from USDA officials' ineffective efforts and lack of time to find the proper department to conduct an investigative survey of agricultural production and did not constitute an unlawful impoundment or rescission of funds.

135546

[Comments on CCC Funding Authority for FY 1988]. B-229958. March 10, 1988.

Released April 13, 1988. 5 pp. *Letter* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel. **Organization Concerned:** Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen.* Patrick J. Leahy.

Authority: Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq.). 35 Comp. Gen. 306. 50 Comp. Gen. 863. P.L. 100-202. P.L. 87-155. P.L. 100-203. H. Rept. 100-498. H.R. 277 (98th Cong.). *Morf v. Bingaman*, 293 U.S. 407 (1935). B-160998 (1973). B-175155 (1979). 15 U.S.C. 713a. 31 U.S.C. 1301. 101 Stat. 1329.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO discussed the status of the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) fiscal year (FY) 1988 funding authority. GAO noted that: (1) the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 did not limit

or nullify CCC appropriations or expand their availability; and (2) if CCC exhausts its FY 1988 available budget authority for payments to farmers and Congress does not appropriate supplemental funds, CCC would have to suspend the payments.

135587

Tongass National Forest: Timber Provision of the Alaska Lands Act Needs Clarification. RCED-88-54; B-206534. April 11, 1988.

Released April 19, 1988. 44 pp. plus 10 appendices (17 pp.). *Report* to Sen. William Proxmire; Sen. Ted Stevens; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-84-96, June 28, 1984, Accession Number 124538; AFMD-87-33, April 21, 1987, Accession Number 132739; and T-RCED-88-44, May 26, 1988, Accession Number 135971.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Forest Service: Tongass National Forest, AK.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress; *Sen.* Ted Stevens; *Sen.* William Proxmire.

Authority: Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. Timber Contract Payment Modification Act (Federal) (P.L. 98-478; 98 Stat. 2213). 6 Comp. Gen. 619. 5 Comp. Gen. 508. 31 U.S.C. 1301(a). 41 U.S.C. 5.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Forest Service's management of its timber sales program in the Tongass National Forest, focusing on: (1) Tongass Timber Supply Fund expenditures; (2) the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) and the timber industry's opinions regarding the Service's use of funds; (3) the effectiveness of the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act's timber supply and funding provisions in maintaining timber industry employment; (4) the economic basis of the Service's policies in the Tongass Land Management Plan; and (5) a

comparison of the government's costs for growing and selling timber with timber sales revenues.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) Tongass timber industry employment declined from about 2,700 jobs in 1980 to 1,420 jobs in 1986; (2) neither the act nor the land management plan provided the Service with the flexibility it needed to deal with reduced demand; (3) contrary to timber industry perceptions and interpretations, Congress passed the act to protect the timber industry from the effects of designated wilderness areas, not to guarantee protection against timber market fluctuations; (4) during 1986, the Service incurred costs of about \$25.4 million and received revenues of \$3.3 million; (5) the Service properly spent about \$30 million from the Tongass Timber Supply Fund for construction of administrative roads and facilities which had a substantial connection with the fund's purposes; and (6) the Service lacks authority to use the fund to pay for firms' road-building costs.

Recommendation To Congress: To provide the Forest Service with more flexibility for supplying timber under varying market conditions, Congress should revise the 4.5 billion board-feet-per-decade timber supply provision of Section 705(a) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. In making this revision, the timber supply provision should be revised so that the amount supplied would be based on the anticipated demand for timber and on the data currently being formulated by the Forest Service as part of its land management planning process rather than on a rigid per-decade requirement.

135675

Farm Programs: Price and Income Support Programs for Fiscal Years 1987-89. RCED-88-144FS; B-225236.

April 22, 1988. 16 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. William V. Alexander; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-84BR, February 29, 1988, Accession Number 135161; and RCED-89-33BR, October 18, 1988, Accession Number 137080.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service;

Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* William V. Alexander.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) net cash outlays for commodity price and income support programs for 1987 through 1989.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) USDA net cash outlays for commodity price and income support programs in 1987 totalled about \$22.4 billion; (2) USDA estimated an additional \$34.8 billion for combined 1988 and 1989 net cash outlays for the program; (3) non-recurring commodity loans, direct purchase of farm commodities, and cash payments totalled \$18.9 billion in 1987, while combined 1988 and 1989 estimated outlays were \$25.4 billion; and (4) corn, wheat, dairy products, and upland cotton accounted for most of the commodity net cash outlays during the period. GAO also found that: (1) although most support programs continued to provide nonrecoverable cash payments, recoverable loan programs accounted for about \$12 billion in cash outlays in 1987 and an estimated \$13 billion in 1988 and 1989; (2) Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service administrative expenses totalled \$1.1 billion in 1987 and were estimated at \$6.1 billion for 1988 and 1989; (3) most support program outlays continued to go to farmers, including \$19.8 billion in 1987 and an estimated \$25.2 billion in 1988 and 1989; and (4) nonfarmers and other recipients received about \$3.8 billion in 1987 and were expected to receive an estimated \$6.1 billion in 1988 and 1989.

135727

Food Marketing: Frozen Pizza Cheese--Representative of Broader Food Labeling Issues. RCED-88-70; B-228955. March 31, 1988.

Released May 5, 1988. 37 pp. plus 4 appendices (10 pp.). *Report* to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to MWD-75-19, January 29, 1975, Accession Number 097111; CED-78-7, December 8, 1977, Accession Number 104244; CED-78-75, March 22, 1978, Accession Number 105410; CED-78-170, September 8, 1978, Accession Number 107041; CED-78-169, November 30, 1978,

Accession Number 107979; CED-80-44, February 4, 1980, Accession Number 111456; CED-80-89, April 21, 1980, Accession Number 112117; CED-80-68, April 30, 1980, Accession Number 112195; CED-81-27, November 7, 1980, Accession Number 113759; CED-81-138, August 19, 1981, Accession Number 116170; and CED-82-12, January 8, 1982, Accession Number 117260.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Relevance of Policies and Programs Developed Decades Ago To Improve the Marketing of Food (6523); Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0); Health: Consumer and Occupational Health and Safety (554.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture; *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation: Consumer Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress; *Rep.* John D. Dingell.

Authority: Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 551 et seq.). Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 457(c)). 21 C.F.R. 101.9(c)(6). 21 C.F.R. 101.3(e). 21 C.F.R. 102.5(c). 21 C.F.R. 133.118. 9 C.F.R. 319.600. 9 C.F.R. 319.180. H.R. 3545 (100th Cong.). H.R. 3232 (100th Cong.). H.R. 2891 (100th Cong.). H.R. 3502 (100th Cong.). S. 1433 (100th Cong.). S. 2145 (100th Cong.). Community Nutrition Institute v. Block, 749 F.2d 50 (D.C. Cir. 1984). Grocery Manufacturers of America v. Joseph Gerace, Commissioner, New York Department of Agriculture and Markets, 474 U.S. 820 (1985). U.S. Const. art. IV.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on: (1) regulatory issues concerning the labelling of frozen pizzas whose toppings include a manufactured cheese analog; and (2) related concerns about food labelling issues.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the Department of Agriculture (USDA), unlike the Food and Drug

Administration (FDA), does not require disclosure of cheese analog on frozen pizzas; (2) USDA withdrew its proposed labelling requirement for cheese analog because opponents successfully argued that it would be costly and unnecessary; (3) controversies concerning the nutritional value of cheese analog hindered attempts to require labelling; and (4) there are no common criteria for determining the relative nutritional values of manufactured and natural foods. GAO also found that: (1) federal labelling legislation and regulations have not kept pace with the increase in manufactured food products; (2) in 1986, the industry introduced about 3,400 new manufactured food products; (3) FDA believes that the nutritional standards developed years ago are too rigid; and (4) although labelling legislation could alleviate the controversy over cheese analog, it would not resolve underlying food labelling issues.

Recommendation To Congress: Congress may wish to bring together government, industry, and consumer interests in order to review and rewrite the basic authority for food information. Ways of doing so include establishing a congressional commission, recommending a presidential commission, or directing an interagency task force. As a preparatory step, Congress may wish to hold hearings to more fully determine the extent of current regulatory activity, agency structures that administer the regulatory process, industry and consumer responses to and reliance on the process, and agency activities or plans to improve the process.

135746

USDA's Commodity Program: The Accuracy of Budget Forecasts. PEMD-88-8; B-230337. April 21, 1988. Released May 9, 1988. 77 pp. plus 7 appendices (43 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Glenn L. English, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PAD-78-84, October 1978, Accession Number 108556; PEMD-87-6A, December 31, 1986, Accession Number 131847; PEMD-88-3, December 29, 1987, Accession Number 134959; AFMD-85-35 and AFMD-85-35A, February 1985, Accession Number 126342; RCED-85-89, September 25, 1985, Accession Number 128031; and PAD-79-17, January 1979, Accession Number 108554.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Planning, Conduct,

Reporting, and Use of Executive Branch Evaluations (7206); Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; *Rep.* Glenn L. English.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-177). 51 Fed. Reg. 2847.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the accuracy of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) commodity program budget forecasts for 1972 through 1986 to determine the reasons for errors.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the USDA commodity programs' budget estimates: (1) were substantially incorrect in most years, with absolute errors totalling \$64.1 billion and averaging about \$4.3 billion annually; and (2) underestimated actual budget levels by an average of \$3.1 billion annually. GAO also found that USDA: (1) developed its budget estimates using estimates for individual farm commodities for supply and demand, farmer participation, and market price forecasts; (2) did not document how it used such macroeconomic forecasts; (3) did not systematically attempt to identify the source of forecasting errors or implement a structured quality control program for those factors which were controllable; and (4) did not inform Congress about its estimates' limitations. In addition, GAO found that consistent problems in USDA management of forecasting processes included: (1) limited or no evaluation of forecasting methods to determine accuracy; (2) poor or nonexistent data management and recordkeeping regarding input data and their use; (3) poor or nonexistent documentation of analysts' forecast production methods; and (4) decentralized managerial accountability that weakened problem identification and solution.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should assign management responsibility for coordinating the forecasting program

and for establishing a structured quality control program to a specific organization. USDA should establish an ongoing evaluation program that ensures that forecasters regularly perform studies of forecast accuracy to determine what caused errors and to relate the errors to the components of the forecasting processes, so that resources can be allocated for improvement. USDA should ensure that the forecasting process and its results are documented and that forecast results include explanations of the limitations of the data, including forecast ranges based on historical error rates, alternative program implementation strategies, and alternative assumptions regarding supply and demand.

135754

[Trends and Impacts of Fruit and Vegetable Imports]. T-RCED-88-40. May 10, 1988. 12 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-219, September 26, 1986, Accession Number 131729; and RCED-88-149BR, May 10, 1988, Accession Number 135821.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO discussed U.S. fruit and vegetable imports. GAO noted that: (1) fruit imports rose from \$482 million in 1980 to \$1.6 billion in 1987; (2) vegetable imports rose from \$738 million in 1980 to about \$1.6 billion in 1986; (3) imported fruit's share rose from 26 percent in 1980 to over 33 percent in 1986; and (4) the imported processed vegetable market share doubled during the same time period, while the market share of imported fresh vegetables remained relatively constant. GAO also noted that factors behind the import increases included: (1) lower production costs in some foreign countries; (2) the rise in the exchange rate against the currencies of export countries; (3) foreign government actions, such as producer and export subsidies; (4) natural disturbances to domestic production; (5) increased agricultural globalization; and (6) demographic and social changes causing increased U.S. consumer demand for fresh and frozen produce. In addition,

GAO noted that the import increases: (1) were generally advantageous to consumers, distributors, and some processors; (2) were detrimental to some producers and processors, depending on market maturity and timing; and (3) have raised health and safety concerns regarding imported product integrity.

135766

[Options for Changing Milk Marketing Orders]. T-RCED-88-41. May 11, 1988. 9 pp. *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-9, March 21, 1988, Accession Number 135347.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Authority: Food Security Act.

Abstract: GAO discussed the current and future impact of the federal milk marketing order system on dairy programs. GAO noted that the system: (1) established a uniform pricing system; (2) encouraged farmers to produce grade A milk; (3) made it profitable to transport milk from surplus to deficit areas; (4) discouraged milk shipments from one surplus area to another; and (5) fostered local production of milk. GAO also noted that: (1) the pricing provisions contributed to excess production of milk and treated some producers unfavorably; and (2) technological advancements have the potential of significantly increasing milk output while reducing production costs. In addition, GAO noted that lessened government influence on milk prices could decrease the growing dairy surplus by: (1) establishing new basing points in various regions to minimize the influence on regional production patterns; (2) removing down-allocation and compensatory payment provisions to make reconstituted milk competitive; and (3) eliminating the grade A and distance differentials in federal orders. GAO believes that Congress may wish to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to: (1) monitor the conditions that result from pricing policy changes; and (2) if necessary, help the industry to adjust.

135812

[Fighting Groundwater Contamination: State Activities to

Date and the Need for More Information From EPA]. T-PEMD-88-7. May 17, 1988. 39 pp. *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Water Resources, Transportation, and Infrastructure Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Water Resources, Transportation, and Infrastructure Subcommittee; *Sen.* Max S. Baucus.

Authority: Clean Water Act of 1977.

Abstract: GAO discussed states' efforts to protect groundwater resources and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) efforts to help states establish technical standards for groundwater protection. GAO questioned 50 states and 7 territories and found that: (1) most states indicated that underground storage tanks were a significant source of water contamination; (2) 22 of 57 respondents had groundwater protection plans, while 33 had not developed sufficient groundwater standards; (3) few respondents had numeric standards specifying quantitative levels of allowable contaminants, while 38 respondents had narrative standards; and (4) states and territories with numeric standards relied primarily on federal drinking water standards because they lacked procedures for establishing their own standards. GAO also found that EPA: (1) had inadequate information on contaminants and did not provide any information specific to groundwater contaminants; and (2) awarded about \$14 million in grants to states in fiscal years 1985 and 1986 to assist them in designing and implementing groundwater protection programs. GAO believes that EPA should establish a criteria document program specifically for groundwater contaminants.

135820

Sub-Saharan Africa: Factors Affecting Export Capabilities. NSIAD-88-145; B-229422. May 4, 1988. 46 pp. plus 4 appendices (18 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Howard Wolpe, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Africa Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller

General, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Conduct of Foreign Affairs (153.0).

Organization Concerned: Japan; European Economic Community; Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs: Africa Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Rep.* Howard Wolpe.

Authority: Agricultural Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C. 624). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. Agricultural Act of 1956 (7 U.S.C. 1854). Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2413). General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700. H.R. 2017 (100th Cong.). S. 1000 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed Sub-Saharan African trade between the United States, the European Economic Community (EEC), and Japan to identify: (1) principal U.S., EEC, and Japanese imports from the region; (2) key restrictions that affect importations from the region; (3) EEC and Japanese trade practices aimed at reducing trade barriers to regional exports; and (4) U.S. efforts to reduce barriers and increase regional exports.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) in 1985, 94 percent of regional exports were primarily commodities, including petroleum, minerals, metals, and agricultural products; (2) most countries in the region were vulnerable to commodity market fluctuations, since they relied on two or three commodities for their export earnings; (3) 81 percent of regional exports are to industrialized market economies, with very little trade within the region; (4) most regional exports enter U.S., EEC, and Japanese industrial markets with little or no duty, since they provide special preferential tariff treatment to developing countries; (5) nontariff trade barriers have affected many nonpetroleum exports, such as quotas that cover agricultural products and higher tariffs that exclude some textiles and apparel, which could discourage countries in the region from developing these potentially competitive industries; (6) U.S. requirements for

obtaining trade preferences, such as health requirements and customs regulations, adversely affect regional export ability; (7) 17 countries had 70 percent or more of their total eligible exports excluded from duty-free treatment because exporters did not or improperly prepared trade preference documentation; (8) in 1986, the U.S. government appointed a task force to end hunger in Africa that included increasing U.S.-regional trade; and (9) although the Agency for International Development (AID) received no new funds to implement the initiative, it received a \$500 million appropriation for regional development and has funded some training on export laws and regulations.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, AID, should expand its efforts to provide more training and seminars to better inform exporters of U.S. requirements.

135821

Agricultural Trade: Causes and Impacts of Increased Fruit and Vegetable Imports. RCED-88-149BR; B-220851.2. May 10, 1988. 60 pp. plus 2 appendices (5 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Leon E. Panetta; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-219, September 26, 1986, Accession Number 131729; RCED-87-177FS, September 29, 1987, Accession Number 134298; and T-RCED-88-40, May 10, 1988, Accession Number 135754.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522); International Trade and Commercial Policy: Competitiveness of U.S. Agricultural Exports and Responsiveness of Government Programs and Policies To Changes (6305).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta.

Authority: Tariff Act of 1930. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information regarding the extent, causes, and impact of the rise in fruit and vegetable imports.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, from 1980 through 1986: (1) vegetable imports rose from \$738 million to \$1.6 billion; (2) fruit imports rose from \$482 million to \$1.6 billion; (3) fruit import shares rose from 26 percent to 33 percent; (4) vegetable import shares rose from 5 percent to 7 percent; and (5) frozen concentrated orange juice, fresh and frozen broccoli, fresh and processed tomatoes, and table grapes accounted for about half of the rise in fruit and vegetable imports. GAO also found that economic and demographic developments influencing the rise in fruit and vegetable imports included: (1) lower production costs abroad; (2) the rise in the dollar's exchange rate against the currencies of export countries; (3) foreign government actions, such as production subsidies; (4) reduced domestic crops due to bad weather and crop disease; (5) increased agricultural globalization; and (6) demographic and lifestyle changes causing increased U.S. consumer demand for fresh and frozen produce. In addition, GAO found that the import increases: (1) generally benefited consumers and distributors; (2) were disadvantageous to some domestic producers and processors; and (3) have raised health and safety concerns regarding product integrity.

135865

Farmers Home Administration: Farm Program Debt, Delinquencies, and Loan Losses as of June 30, 1987. RCED-88-134BR; B-221105. May 20, 1988. 97 pp. plus 5 appendices (29 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Kent Conrad; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-57BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128977; and RCED-89-3, November 22, 1988, Accession Number 137369.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Fulfilling the Farmers Home Administration's Mission in an Era of Financial Stress in the Agricultural Sector (6521).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* Kent Conrad.

Authority: Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (P.L. 87-128).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the Farmers Home Administration's

(FmHA) farm loan program, specifically the: (1) total state and national farm debt and the FmHA portion of the debt; (2) total number of loans, borrowers, and loan amounts for each major FmHA program; and (3) program loan delinquencies and losses.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the FmHA loan portfolio was at risk because of continued delinquent loans and losses; (2) total farm debt from all lenders grew from \$104 billion to over \$210 billion between 1976 and 1985; (3) over the same period, FmHA farm debt increased from an estimated \$5.5 billion to about \$26.6 billion; (4) total farm debt decreased in 1986 to about \$189.6 billion, while FmHA farm debt decreased slightly to about \$26.6 billion; (5) as of June 1987, the FmHA direct loan portfolio for its major farm program was over \$26 billion and consisted of 242,266 borrowers with 688,393 loans; and (6) delinquent loans in the FmHA major farm program rose from \$164 million in 1976 to \$7 billion in 1987. GAO also found that: (1) about 83,000 borrowers were delinquent in principal and interest payments on loans with an outstanding total principal of \$13.3 billion; (2) about 33,000 borrowers have not made loan payments in over 3 years; (3) from 1978 through 1987, FmHA annual loan losses increased from about \$41 million to over \$1.1 billion for direct loans and from \$277,000 to over \$78 million for guaranteed loans; and (4) for the past 10 years, the greatest cumulative loan losses were in the emergency disaster and economic emergency programs.

135882

National Forests: Computing the 25-Percent Sharing Formula for Forest Service Timber Receipts. RCED-88-139BR; B-230949. May 9, 1988.

Released May 25, 1988. 14 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Steven D. Symms; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to AFMD-87-33, April 21, 1987, Accession Number 132739.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Forest Service; Bureau of Land Management.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. Steven D. Symms.

Authority: Forest Management Act. Payment in Lieu of Taxes Act of 1976.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO compared fiscal year 1986 payments at 13 national forests under the current method for sharing timber receipts with payments under four alternative methods to determine: (1) the impact of such changes on local revenues; and (2) how the changes would affect the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Act of 1976.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the administration's proposal would have reduced payments by \$13.4 million; and (2) alternative proposals would have reduced payments by \$8 million, based on sharing timber receipts only, by \$4.5 million, based on shared timber receipts and road construction credit, and by \$3.5 million, based on shared timber receipts and reforestation. GAO also found that: (1) nationally, the alternatives would have reduced payments by \$67 million, based on timber receipts only, by \$37 million, based on timber receipts plus road construction credits, and by \$29 million, based on timber receipts plus reforestation deposits; and (2) administration's proposal would have reduced 34 counties' combined PILT and the 25-percent timber payments from \$12.8 million to \$7.9 million.

135929

Welfare: Summary of Administrative Problems Discussed in Past GAO Reports. HRD-88-29BR; B-225966. November 27, 1987.

Released May 31, 1988. 22 pp. plus 1 appendix (5 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. John H. Glenn, Chairman, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; by Franklin Frazier, Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refers to numerous GAO reports on welfare.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Well Welfare Programs or Projects Encourage and Assist Recipients To Obtain Work and Become Self-Sufficient (5017).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Agriculture; Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Congressional Relevance: Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; Sen. John H. Glenn.

Authority: Job Training Partnership Act. Rural Housing Amendments of 1983. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Social Security Act. Deficit Reduction Act of 1984.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO: (1) summarized the administrative problems it discussed in past reports on public assistance programs; and (2) provided questions for Congress to consider concerning welfare reform proposals.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the problems included: (1) overlapping of legislative and oversight responsibilities and a lack of consistency in terminology and definitions between programs; (2) differing legislation, rules, and operations, and a lack of agreement between state agencies which impeded program coordination; (3) inadequate program monitoring, evaluation, and quality control; (4) inadequate data collection and reporting by states to federal agencies; (5) staffing shortages at federal, state, and local levels; (6) insufficient guidelines for safeguarding privacy of personal data; and (7) insufficient or inconsistent state funding.

135947

Agricultural Trade Negotiations: Initial Phase of the Uruguay Round. NSIAD-88-144BR; B-230527. May 5, 1988.

Released May 25, 1988. 5 pp. plus 5 appendices (32 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Competitiveness of U.S. Agricultural Exports and Responsiveness of Government Programs and Policies To Changes (6305); Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade; Department of Agriculture; Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture; Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza; Sen. Patrick J. Leahy.

Authority: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947,

Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the multilateral trade negotiations regarding the liberalization of agricultural trade, focusing on the: (1) structure of the negotiation process; (2) reactions to the U.S. proposal and those of other major participants; and (3) progress made to date.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the Department of Agriculture and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative jointly proposed: (1) eliminating all agricultural subsidies over a 10-year period; (2) permitting payments to farmers that would not affect pricing or production and bona fide foreign and domestic food aid; (3) coordinating worldwide health and sanitary regulations to prevent their use as non-tariff barriers; and (4) using the producer-subsidy-equivalent concept to measure the aggregate support that countries provide to their agricultural producers. GAO also found that other participants in the negotiations proposed: (1) a gradual reduction in agricultural support; (2) short-term emergency measures to reduce dairy and sugar surpluses; (3) a reduction in market access restrictions and improved rules on market access; and (4) a reduction in export subsidies. GAO noted that, while some commodity and farm groups believed that the U.S. proposal was a good negotiating strategy, others believed that it was unrealistic for European countries to dismantle their domestic support programs and eliminate all trade-distorting policies.

135958

Food Stamp Program: Progress and Problems in Using 75-Percent Funding for Automation. RCED-88-58; B-217883. April 28, 1988.

Released June 2, 1988. 38 pp. plus 4 appendices (28 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Jesse A. Helms; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016); Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Congress; *Sen.* Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-249). Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). Deficit Reduction Act of 1984. H. Rept. 96-788.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Food Stamp Program to determine: (1) what state information retrieval systems FNS had approved for 75-percent funding from fiscal year (FY) 1981 through FY 1986; and (2) whether the approved systems or projects complied with legislative mandates and met general functional requirements.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) FNS approved 51 requests from 33 states from FY 1981 to 1986, totalling \$66 million; (2) FNS policy and approval of requests from 17 state agencies differed from requirements; (3) FNS policy allowed funding for all planning, design, development, or installation of the systems at the 75-percent level when the system was the state's initial attempt, or an upgrade or modification of existing systems for the Food Stamp Program; (4) USDA regulations allowed 75-percent funding to develop automated program systems that did not achieve integration with the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program, as mandated; (5) FNS approved funding for systems not expressly permitted in USDA regulations because it believed that they would eventually become part of the total automated system; and (6) there were no requirements for documenting system compliance.

Recommendation To Congress: Since 1980, USDA has used 75-percent federal matching funds to automate the Food Stamp Program in a manner allowed by the act but which departed significantly from what was envisioned in the legislative history. Congress may wish to consider expressing its current position

on the manner in which 75-percent funding is being used.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to monitor and enforce regulations requiring that automated systems approved for 75-percent funding be for total Food Stamp Program certification or issuance, reconciliation, and reporting systems only. To help ensure that the Food Stamp Program's automated systems development approved for 75-percent federal funding meets the requirements set forth in USDA regulations, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to: (1) amend Service Handbook 151, ADP Advance Planning Document Handbook for state agencies, to direct that state agency requests for 75-percent funding fully describe in their planning documents how the required program functional standards will be incorporated into the proposed automated Food Stamp Program system; (2) amend Service Handbook 103 to direct regional Food Stamp Program personnel to document their determination that each of the required program functional standards are met prior to approving requests for 75-percent funding; and (3) direct regional office personnel to implement the state agency request file records control system described in Service Handbook 103 to maintain a planning document control log and numbering system for related amendments and correspondence pertaining to each state agency's request for federal funding.

135965

Dairy Termination Program: A Perspective on Its Participants and Milk Production. RCED-88-157; B-211447. May 31, 1988. 7 pp. plus 3 appendices (5 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Jesse A. Helms; Sen. Pete Wilson; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-85-126, July 29, 1985, Accession Number 127525.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* Pete Wilson; *Sen.* Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Food Security Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on

the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Dairy Termination Program, specifically: (1) milk production under the program; and (2) the results of a questionnaire sent to dairy farmers who bid on the program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) although milk production levelled off during the program, total production did not decrease because nonparticipating farmers increased their production during the period; and (2) federal purchases of dairy products decreased in 1986 and 1987 as a result of decreased production and an increased demand for dairy products. GAO also found that: (1) 40 percent of the program participants who responded to its questionnaire believed that the program would have little or no effect on milk production at the end of 5 years; (2) 26 percent of the participants planned to return to dairy production after the end of the program; (3) 26 percent indicated that they would probably have quit dairy operations without the program; and (4) about 69 percent of the unsuccessful bidders under the program indicated that they would definitely bid on another program.

135977

Welfare Reform: Projected Effects of Requiring AFDC for Unemployed Parents Nationwide. HRD-88-88BR; B-231220. May 23, 1988.

Released June 6, 1988. 22 pp. plus 2 appendices (4 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Hank Brown, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; by Franklin Frazier, Associate Director, Human Resources Division.

Issue Area: Income Security (5000).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security (600.0).

Organization Concerned: Congressional Budget Office; Department of Health and Human Services; Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Ways and Means: Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Subcommittee; *Rep.* Hank Brown.

Authority: H.R. 1720 (100th Cong.). S. 1511 (100th Cong.). H.R. 1831 (100th Cong.). S. 862 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed: (1) available estimates of the cost of requiring states to adopt the optional Aid to Families with Dependent Children for Unemployed Parents Program (AFDC-

UP); and (2) research on the effects of AFDC-UP on families.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) it could not determine the reliability of the cost estimates it reviewed because they used different assumptions; (2) the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO) and the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) 3-year AFDC-UP estimates were \$945 million and \$961 million, respectively, under one legislative proposal and \$915 million and \$1.09 billion under two other identical bills; (3) the HHS estimate included an increase of 20,000 single-parent AFDC families, since it believed that the expanded welfare programs would increase case loads in related programs, while CBO included only 2-parent families; (4) the HHS estimate of AFDC-UP and Medicaid costs were lower than the CBO estimate due to offsetting differences in benefits and inflation rates; (5) a private consulting firm estimated a \$187-million increase in federal and state benefit costs and an increase of 52,000 cases; (6) the differences in the three estimates were due to the bills' differing provisions, the estimating periods, and the programs studied; and (7) the data it reviewed on the effects of AFDC-UP on family stability were sparse and irrelevant to the proposed legislation.

135979

Farm Payments: Benefits and Costs of Trading in USDA Commodity Certificates. RCED-88-142BR; B-226558. June 2, 1988. 43 pp. plus 4 appendices (21 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Jesse A. Helms; *Rep.* Virginia Smith; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-117BR, March 26, 1987, Accession Number 132535; and RCED-89-47BR, February 15, 1989, Accession Number 137985.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Virginia Smith; *Sen.* Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed reported abuses in the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Payment-in-Kind (PIK) Certificate Program to determine: (1) the volume of grain involved in long-distance transactions, in which commodity certificate holders exploited differing market values; (2) the monetary benefits gained from such transactions; (3) how the benefits were distributed; and (4) the cost to the government.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) about 260 million bushels of grain were involved in the transactions; (2) producers gained between \$43.2 million and \$64.5 million from the transactions; (3) warehouse operators, brokers, and producers received between \$18.6 million and \$26.9 million; (4) producers paid between \$26 million and \$39.1 million for the use of grain located in distant warehouses; and (5) the government's net cost from the transactions was between \$131 million and \$148 million. GAO noted that: (1) the government's costs were not the same as the benefits to producers; and (2) most producers gained substantially through long-distance transactions.

136027

Rangeland Management: More Emphasis Needed on Declining and Overstocked Grazing Allotments. RCED-88-80; B-204997. June 10, 1988.

Released June 10, 1988. 52 pp. plus 4 appendices (18 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Morris K. Udall, Chairman, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; *Rep.* Bruce F. Vento, Chairman, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to CED-77-88, July 5, 1977, Accession Number 102457; CED-80-82, July 16, 1980, Accession Number 112911; RCED-83-23, October 14, 1982, Accession Number 119847; and T-RCED-88-58, August 2, 1988, Accession Number 136459.

Issue Area: Natural Resources Management: Effectiveness of Programs Designed To Promote and Regulate the Development, Rehabilitation, and Management of Public Rangelands (6913).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Interior; Bureau of Land Management; Department of Agriculture; Forest Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: Public Lands Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; *Rep.* John F. Seiberling; *Rep.* Bruce F. Vento; *Rep.* Morris K. Udall.

Authority: Grazing Act. Forest Reserve Act (General). Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960. Land Policy and Management Act. Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978.

Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National). Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO examined the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) and the Forest Service's range management programs to determine: (1) their progress in improving range conditions; (2) whether they based grazing levels on recent and accurate rangeland assessments; (3) whether they used range improvement funds on the most beneficial projects; (4) the adequacy of their range condition inventory and monitoring systems; and (5) the success of the Experimental Stewardship Program (ESP).

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) BLM and the Service lacked reliable, current information on conditions and trends for much rangeland; (2) the most recent reports showed that over 50 percent of the rangelands were in either poor or fair condition and about 8 percent were in declining condition; (3) about 19 percent of the grazing allotments were overstocked and subject to further deterioration, but the agencies did not adjust authorized livestock grazing levels in 75 percent of these cases; (4) many range managers cited insufficient data as a reason for not scheduling grazing reductions; (5) livestock carrying capacity assessments were often old and outdated; (6) neither agency focused management attention or resources on declining or overstocked

allotments; and (7) 66 percent of BLM and 27 percent of Service grazing allotments did not have management plans and many of the existing plans were over 10 years old.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior should direct the Chief of the Forest Service and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to focus management priority on completing new livestock carrying capacity assessments for grazing allotments that their range managers believe are overstocked and that therefore have the greatest potential for range deterioration. The assessments, when completed, should be used to adjust permit levels accordingly. As a start, responsible range managers should be asked to identify all allotments that they believe are currently overstocked or in declining condition. The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior should direct the Chief of the Forest Service and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to better focus range improvement funding on allotments with declining range conditions and on overstocked allotments where range improvements can negate or limit the need to reduce the number of permitted livestock. A first step in this process would be to establish uniform, formal criteria that give priority to funding range improvements on allotments that are either declining or overstocked. The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior should direct the Chief of the Forest Service and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to: (1) identify those grazing allotments that their range managers believe are declining and overstocked; and (2) concentrate management priority on monitoring and developing current allotment management plans for these allotments. The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior should direct the Chief of the Forest Service and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to not initiate any new ESP projects until it can be demonstrated that range conditions and permittee stewardship have improved under the present ESP projects. The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior should direct the Chief of the Forest Service and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to ensure that range monitoring information is gathered and assessed for ESP allotments in the program.

136056

Food Stamp Program: Sanction Estimates Based on Assumed Error-

Rate Thresholds. RCED-88-178FS; B-217883. June 2, 1988.

Released June 14, 1988. 33 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Fact Sheet* to Rep. Bill Emerson, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; Sen. Thomas R. Harkin, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517); Income Security: Efficiency and Economy of Federal, State, and Local Agencies in Managing Welfare Program Operations (5014).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; *Rep.* Bill Emerson; *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1977. Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) management of the Food Stamp Program to determine the effects of raising or lowering the legislated target error-rate threshold that FNS uses to determine whether it should sanction a state for benefit overpayments.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) FNS sanctioned 44 states in 1986 under the 5-percent error-rate threshold; (2) if FNS had applied a 2-percent threshold, it would have sanctioned 53 states (the 50 states plus the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam); (3) if FNS had applied an 11-percent threshold, it would have sanctioned 4 states; and (4) if FNS had applied 1986 sanctions to combined error rates, it would have sanctioned 53 states at the 2-percent level and 17 at the 11-percent level. In addition, GAO found

that: (1) in 1986, food stamp benefits totalled about \$10.6 billion, with the FNS share of state administrative costs totalling about \$947 million; and (2) the estimated state overpayment of food stamp benefits in 1986 totalled about \$850 million, resulting in sanctions of \$217 million.

136077

California Dairy: Production, Sales, and Product Disposition. RCED-88-180FS; B-227742. June 15, 1988. 30 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Fact Sheet* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: California.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen. Patrick J. Leahy.*

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information regarding California's: (1) milk production; (2) milk production costs and economic returns; (3) grade-A milk pricing system; and (4) manufacture and disposition of butter, nonfat dry milk, and cheese.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that California: (1) increased its milk production from 10.6 percent of all U.S.-produced milk in 1980 to 12.6 percent in 1987; (2) had higher average inventories of dairy cows per farm and average milk yield per cow than the country as a whole; (3) had higher production costs for concentrates, forage, hired labor, and interest than other regions; (4) had lower expenses for overhead, taxes, insurance, and capital replacement than most other regions and substantially greater residual returns; and (5) experienced increased cheese production and fluctuating cheese, butter, and nonfat dry milk sales to the Department of Agriculture (USDA) between 1982 and 1987. GAO also found that: (1) the federal milk marketing order system, which sets forth acceptable marketing practices, terms and conditions of sale, and prices, does not cover California; and (2) unlike USDA, California uses marketing quotas and weighted formulas to determine grade-A milk prices.

136107

Welfare: Relationships and Incomes in Households With AFDC Recipients and Others. HRD-88-78; B-225966. May 11, 1988.

Released June 20, 1988. 4 pp. plus 4 appendices (17 pp.). *Report* to Sen. William V. Roth, Jr.; by Franklin Frazier, Associate Director, Human Resources Division. Refer to HRD-88-9, November 4, 1987, Accession Number 134669.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Well Welfare Programs or Projects Encourage and Assist Recipients To Obtain Work and Become Self-Sufficient (5017).

Contact: Human Resources Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Other Income Security (609.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen. William V. Roth, Jr. .*

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO analyzed Census Bureau data on households composed of both Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients and persons not receiving AFDC to determine: (1) whether household members not receiving AFDC were related to AFDC recipients and, if so, how; and (2) the incomes of the AFDC recipients and the non-AFDC household members.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) 63 percent of all AFDC households consisted solely of AFDC recipients; (2) 32 percent consisted of AFDC recipients and their relatives; and (3) 5 percent included one or more unrelated persons. GAO also found that: (1) about one-half of the households with recipients and nonrecipients consisted of two generations, with an AFDC mother as the head of the household; (2) 75 percent of these AFDC mothers were age 25 or over, and 32 percent were over age 39; (3) in 86 percent of the two-generation households, the residence was in the name of the AFDC recipient; and (4) most of the persons not on AFDC were children of the AFDC family head. GAO also found that: (1) slightly less than one-half of the households consisted of three generations, with young mothers living with their parents; (2) 53 percent of these AFDC mothers were under age 25, and 40 percent were under age 21; (3) the residence was in the name of the AFDC recipient in less than a fourth of these households; and (4) most of the non-AFDC relatives were parents or siblings of the AFDC family head. In addition, GAO found that: (1)

nonrecipients in the three-generation households generally had a higher per-capita income than recipients; and (2) two-generation AFDC households averaged higher per-capita incomes than either the three-generation households or households consisting solely of AFDC recipients.

136113

Agricultural Trade: Review of Targeted Export Assistance Program. NSIAD-88-183; B-226269.

May 24, 1988. 43 pp. plus 3 appendices (6 pp.). *Report* to Rep. George E. Brown, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; Rep. Leon E. Panetta; Rep. Charles E. Schumer; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-87-89, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132567; NSIAD-87-74BR, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132732; RCED-87-117BR, March 26, 1987, Accession Number 132535; and T-NSIAD-88-41, July 27, 1988, Accession Number 136535.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Competitiveness of U.S. Agricultural Exports and Responsiveness of Government Programs and Policies To Changes (6305); Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Domestic and Foreign Marketing and Product Promotion Subcommittee; *Rep. Charles E. Schumer;*

Rep. Leon E. Panetta; Rep. George E. Brown, Jr. .

Authority: Food Security Act. Food Security Improvements Act of 1986. Trade Act of 1974. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-480). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Department of Agriculture's Targeted Export Assistance (TEA) program, focusing on the: (1) program's management, including the Foreign Agricultural Service's (FAS) documentation of its participant eligibility and funding allocation decisions; and (2) adequacy of the FAS evaluation process, how evaluations affect present and future funding allocations, and the commodities, activities, and geographical markets receiving TEA funds.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) FAS did not provide sufficient documentation for funding decisions, making it difficult to assess whether FAS applied funding criteria equitably and consistently; (2) FAS did not adequately solicit TEA applications at the onset of the program, which gave former or current participants in the Cooperator Market Development Program an advantage in applying for TEA funds; (3) FAS based most of its decisions on the TEA applications and not on the more detailed activity plans; (4) some TEA applications did not contain the necessary data for FAS to conduct in-depth marketing analyses of the proposed commodities and countries; (5) some participants did not have the opportunity to review TEA guideline changes; and (6) the tripling of TEA funding in the program's last 2 years would exacerbate management problems. GAO also found that: (1) contribution level and form requirements varied among participants, but FAS did not document the reasons for these variations; (2) participants did not adequately document the identities of third-party contributors and the methods used to derive their contribution levels; and (3) FAS did not closely monitor the nonprofit trade associations' administration of brand-identified promotion, resulting in some potential TEA participants not receiving timely program information. In addition, GAO found that FAS did not provide formal written guidelines on evaluation content, focus, cost, or characteristics of an acceptable third-party evaluator.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FAS, to: (1) document the funding allocation decision process to

clearly show how funding criteria were applied and prioritized and the basis for those decisions; (2) base the funding allocation decisions, not only on the applications and TEA proposals, but also on the activity plans; (3) conduct ongoing, in-depth marketing analyses for all TEA commodities and their countries or regions of promotion to ensure that TEA funds are allocated for those commodities and markets with the greatest potential for successful market development; and (4) provide all TEA participants with an opportunity to review and comment on proposed TEA guideline additions and changes, including a written record of any such proceedings. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FAS, to: (1) document in writing the basis for the form and level of contributions for each TEA participant; (2) define the importance of third-party contributions in the funding decision process and more closely enforce the FAS guideline that the participants document the method by which third-party contributions are derived and the identities of the parties involved; and (3) more closely monitor TEA funds allocated for brand-identified promotion to ensure that all eligible private firms receive timely information about the program and have an opportunity to apply for TEA funds. To help in the establishment of the new FAS Marketing Programs Division's Program Evaluation Section, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FAS, to: (1) develop specific criteria to be included in the TEA guidelines for evaluating the TEA program; (2) require that the TEA evaluations be completed to coincide with the FAS application approval and funding allocation process; and (3) implement a formal system of internal controls for collecting, tracking, and documenting the progress and results of the TEA evaluations, including their impact on funding allocation decisions.

136134

[Sugar Program: Issues Related to Imports of Sugar-Containing Products]. T-RCED-88-48. June 22, 1988. 8 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Cotton, Rice, and Sugar Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: United States Customs Service.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Agriculture: Cotton, Rice, and Sugar Subcommittee.

Authority: Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986.

Abstract: GAO discussed issues relating to U.S. sugar imports and administrative controls over sugar imports. GAO noted that, in 1986: (1) 1.75 million tons of raw and refined sugar entered U.S. commerce via the commodity import quota and 550,000 tons entered through nonquota sugar programs; (2) 265,000 to 307,000 tons of sugar may have displaced domestic sugar by entering the United States in sugar-containing products classified under 46 tariff categories; (3) the amount of sugar in these products was more than double that in 1982; and (4) foreign trade zones (FTZ) imported about 40,000 tons of sugar in blended products. GAO also noted that some businesses have resourcefully circumvented the quota system and its administrative controls by: (1) reclassifying products under nonquota tariff classifications; (2) taking advantage of the Customs Services' inadequate monitoring of sugar entering FTZ; and (3) blending sugar into imported products, exporting the products, and then repurchasing and reimporting the products. In addition, GAO noted that: (1) Customs implemented improvements in its enforcement of the sugar program; and (2) extending import restrictions and rewriting tariff schedule descriptions to eliminate loopholes could limit imports of sugar-containing products.

136164

Food Assistance: A Swedish Case Study. RCED-88-181BR; B-230189. June 23, 1988. 18 pp. plus 3 appendices (3 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-102, March 15, 1988, Accession Number 135290.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Kingdom of Sweden.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen. Patrick J. Leahy.*

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on Sweden's food assistance programs to determine: (1) the type of programs it has and how they operate; (2) whether it uses its agricultural surpluses in food assistance programs to reduce welfare costs; and (3) whether it uses any surplus disposal techniques that do not improve the nutrition of its citizens.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) Swedish local governments provide some food assistance to the general population and the needy, such as school lunches for all children and subsidized meal services for the elderly; (2) Sweden prefers to aid the needy through financial assistance because it believes that such aid does not stigmatize recipients as food distribution might; (3) Sweden disposes of its food surpluses primarily through subsidized export sales and contributions to international food aid programs; and (4) because Sweden does not have a large agricultural surplus, it is generally successful in eliminating its surplus each year through subsidizing consumer and institutional purchases of surplus food.

136186

International Trade: Commodity Credit Corporation's Export Credit Guarantee Programs. NSIAD-88-194; B-227616. June 10, 1988.

Released June 17, 1988. 34 pp. plus 2 appendices (13 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. George E. Brown, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; Rep. Charles E. Schumer; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-87-185, August 19, 1987, Accession Number 133817; NSIAD-87-74BR, March 17, 1987, Accession Number 132732; T-NSIAD-89-2, October 6, 1988, Accession Number 137063; and T-NSIAD-89-9, March 1, 1989, Accession Number 138034.

Issue Area: International Trade and Commercial Policy: Competitiveness of U.S. Agricultural Exports and Responsiveness of Government Programs and Policies To Changes (6305); Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Domestic and Foreign Marketing and Product Promotion Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. Charles E. Schumer; Rep. George E. Brown, Jr.; *Sen. Patrick J. Leahy.*

Authority: Food Security Act. Cargo Preference Act (Merchant Marine) (46 U.S.C. 1241(b)). Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (P.L. 80-806).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Foreign Agricultural Service's (FAS) management of the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) export credit guarantee programs, focusing on the programs' efficiency and effectiveness.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that CCC: (1) failed to adequately enforce program regulations requiring exporters to include payment schedules with their export reports; (2) submitted inaccurate reports to Congress and rescheduled foreign debt guarantees without knowledge of the actual amounts outstanding; (3) lacked sufficient controls to ensure the purchase of U.S. agricultural commodities through its export guarantee programs; and (4) did not establish a procedure to verify that agricultural products arrived at the specified countries.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the General Sales Manager, FAS, to enforce compliance with the requirement that exporters must submit complete reports of exports to ensure the accurate accounting of outstanding guarantees. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the General Sales Manager, FAS, to design, develop, test, and implement internal controls, including random on-site verifications, to ensure that loan guarantees are used to obtain U.S. agricultural commodities.

The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the General Sales Manager, FAS, to clarify program regulations with specific definitions for a U.S. agricultural commodity and a firm sale and require acknowledgement of these requirements on guarantee applications. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the General Sales Manager, FAS, to provide timely and accurate decisions on document revisions requested by exporters or their assignees.

136209

Foreign Aid: Improving the Impact and Control of Economic Support Funds. NSIAD-88-182; B-225870.

June 29, 1988. 48 pp. plus 3 appendices (11 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Lee H. Hamilton, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-157, August 25, 1986, Accession Number 130786; NSIAD-87-70, January 14, 1987, Accession Number 132074; NSIAD-85-82, July 3, 1985, Accession Number 127396; and NSIAD-88-209, September 26, 1988, Accession Number 136912.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Adequacy of Accountability and Controls Over Foreign Economic Assistance (6204).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Military Assistance (152.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs: Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations; Rep. Lee H. Hamilton.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982. P.L. 100-202.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Agency for International Development's (AID) efforts to: (1) promote economic policy reform through the Economic Support Fund (ESF) program; and (2) control ESF cash transfer funds.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that AID: (1) relied on cash transfers to encourage economic policy reforms and

to address balance-of-payments problems; (2) did not establish sufficient criteria to guide its policy reform efforts; (3) has had mixed success in encouraging policy reforms; (4) encountered problems in its efforts to implement separate accounting for cash transfers, since recipients continued commingling program funds with foreign exchange accounts; (5) failed to require separate accounting for certain ESF grants and projects because it did not consider them cash transfers; and (6) did not verify that recipients complied with its requirement to keep records on separate account disbursement or ensure that they used the funds for authorized purposes.

Recommendation To Agencies: To improve the prospects for successful policy reform efforts and facilitate measuring progress, the Administrator, AID, should require that each internal AID program document justifying cash transfer programs seeking policy reform to: (1) clearly state the specific economic policy reforms that cash transfer is intended to encourage; (2) specify the anticipated time frames or milestones for achieving these reforms; and (3) state the anticipated impacts of the reforms on economic development. Wherever country circumstances render it practical, AID should also include such details in grant agreements. To ensure that AID implementation of separate accounting is consistent with congressional intent, the Administrator, AID, should describe how AID will maintain accountability in cash transfer programs when it cannot avoid commingling cash transfers with other foreign exchange. To ensure that AID implementation of separate accounting is consistent with congressional intent, the Administrator, AID, should require recipients to maintain all ESF cash grants, not just those termed cash transfers, in separate accounts. To ensure that AID implementation of separate accounting is consistent with congressional intent, the Administrator, AID, should ensure that all separate cash transfer accounts be independently audited once every 3 years.

136218

Public Rangelands: Some Riparian Areas Restored but Widespread Improvement Will Be Slow. RCED-88-105; B-230548. June 30, 1988. 54 pp. plus 4 appendices (31 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Morris K. Udall, Chairman, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; Rep. Bruce F. Vento, Chairman, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; National Parks and Public Lands

Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to T-RCED-88-58, August 2, 1988, Accession Number 136459.

Issue Area: Natural Resources Management: Effectiveness of the Set-Aside of Special Areas on Federal Lands (6914).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation and Land Management (302.0).

Organization Concerned: Bureau of Land Management; Department of Agriculture; Department of the Interior; Forest Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Interior Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; *Rep.* Bruce F. Vento; *Rep.* Morris K. Udall.

Authority: Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901). Land Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. 1712 et seq.). Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604). Grazing Act (43 U.S.C. 315m).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO discussed federal efforts to restore degraded riparian areas on public rangelands and the extent of areas still needing improvement.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO reviewed 22 public rangelands in 10 western states, and found that: (1) the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service successfully restored a number of degraded riparian areas through improved livestock management, which allowed vegetation to grow; (2) BLM and the Forest Service either temporarily restricted grazing in degraded areas or built fences to keep livestock away from the areas until vegetation improved; (3) although many ranchers opposed the restoration efforts, others realized the benefits to their operations; and (4) restoration of the riparian areas required specific knowledge and skills of wildlife and fisheries biologists, hydrologists, range conservationists, and soil scientists. GAO also found that, although there are still large areas that need restoration, future efforts could be hampered by: (1) shortages of skilled staff due to the agencies' budgetary restraints; (2) opposition from ranchers;

and (3) a lack of cohesive management support from BLM and the Forest Service.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture should direct the Director, BLM, and the Chief, U.S. Forest Service, to review the staffing support provided to riparian improvement efforts in the context of all program activities, and determine whether appropriate staffing levels are being provided. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture should, as part of their annual budget submissions, report on the extent of riparian improvement that can be expected with the level of staff they recommend. With respect to the commitment to achieve broader riparian improvement, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture should direct the Director, BLM, and the Chief, U.S. Forest Service to reemphasize and reiterate the agencies' commitment. As part of this effort, the Director and the Chief should: (1) establish finite, measurable goals in terms of miles of riparian areas to be targeted for restoration; (2) annually measure and document the specific progress being made to achieve those goals; and (3) document and justify instances where restoration steps needed to achieve established goals are seriously thwarted or rejected.

136251

Food Stamps: Examination of Program Data and Analysis of Nonparticipation. PEMD-88-21; B-227721. July 5, 1988. 62 pp. plus 11 appendices (89 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Bill Emerson, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to RCED-87-51, October 30, 1986, Accession Number 131527; RCED-87-80BR, April 2, 1987, Accession Number 132900; and RCED-89-4, October 21, 1988, Accession Number 137168.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Planning, Conduct, Reporting, and Use of Executive Branch Evaluations (7206); Food and Agriculture: Satisfaction of Nutritional and Health Concerns by Food Assistance Programs (6518).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Rep.* Bill Emerson.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) data on its Food Stamp Program to determine: (1) the current level of operations in recent years; and (2) state variations in application, participation, and termination counts and rates. GAO also reviewed published studies regarding reasons for nonparticipation in the Food Stamp Program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) reporting variations among states and data quality problems prohibited accurate analyses and estimation of the numbers of applications and terminations under the program; (2) monthly household participation increased from 5.6 million in 1979 to 7.9 million in 1982 and then gradually declined to 7.2 million in 1986; and (3) data quality problems precluded meaningful analysis of variations among or within states of application, participation, and termination rates. GAO also found that available research studies on program nonparticipation: (1) did not base participation rates on FNS data; (2) contained fairly old data; and (3) cited lack of knowledge and program administrative procedures as major impediments to program participation. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should direct FNS to estimate the number of people eligible for the Food Stamp Program for 1 month during each year and to determine the monthly termination rates for 1 month during each year from state case files.

136252

Crop Insurance: Participation in and Costs Associated With the Federal Program. RCED-88-171BR; B-209886. July 6, 1988. 50 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Paul S. Sarbanes; Sen. Joseph R. Biden; Sen. David L. Boren; Sen. Quentin N. Burdick; Sen. George J. Mitchell; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-84-120, March 16, 1984, Accession Number 123967; and

RCED-88-211BR, August 15, 1988, Accession Number 136568.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Community and Regional Development: Disaster Relief and Insurance (453.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Sen.* George J. Mitchell; *Sen.* Quentin N. Burdick; *Sen.* David L. Boren; *Sen.* Joseph R. Biden; *Sen.* Paul S. Sarbanes.

Authority: Crop Insurance Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's (FCIC) crop insurance programs to determine: (1) the level of farmer participation in the programs; (2) why participation rates varied; and (3) insurance experts' reasons for the low participation rates and suggestions to increase the rates. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO reviewed crop insurance programs in 10 states, and found that: (1) participation rates among the states varied from 2.9 percent to 44.9 percent; (2) some crops had 60-percent participation, while others were not insured at all; (3) fluctuations in weather patterns, program promotion and education efforts influenced participation rates among both states and crops; (4) crop insurance experts cited crop diversification, the condition of the farm economy, and insurance agent problems as reasons for low participation rates; (5) crop insurance premiums and cash flow also varied considerably among states and crops; and (6) there were no comprehensive, nationwide studies to determine the reasons for low program participation. **Recommendation To Agencies:** The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to: (1) increase the emphasis on educating farmers and insurance agents about crop insurance on a regional or state basis with priority given to areas that FCIC has already identified as likely to increase participation with more education; and (2) conduct a statistically sound, nationwide study to determine which of

the major factors influencing participation could or should be addressed and obtain information on the kinds of changes needed to achieve more participation and the costs of such changes to the government and farmers.

136284

Biotechnology: Managing the Risks of Field Testing Genetically Engineered Organisms. RCED-88-27; B-223522. June 13, 1988.

Released July 12, 1988. 66 pp. plus 7 appendices (41 pp.). *Report* to Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to PEMD-87-14, September 30, 1987, Accession Number 134077; and RCED-86-187, August 8, 1986, Accession Number 130990.

Issue Area: Science and Technology Policy and Programs: Other Issue Area Work (9391).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0); Natural Resources and Environment: Other Natural Resources (306.0); Health: Health Research (552.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Environmental Protection Agency; Food and Drug Administration; Department of Agriculture: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Energy and Commerce: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee; *Rep.* John D. Dingell.

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (National). Virus, Serum and Toxin Act. Plant Pest Act. Plant Quarantine Act. Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Toxic Substances Control Act. Public Health Service Act. 7 C.F.R. 340.1. 9 C.F.R. 101.2(w). 21 C.F.R. 600. Foundation on Economic Trends v. Johnson, 661 F. Supp. 107 (D.D.C. 1986).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed federal risk management of genetically engineered organisms intended for agricultural and health uses in the environment, focusing on Department of Agriculture (USDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) policies.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) because no laws specifically regulate genetically engineered organisms, the

agencies apply existing laws based on product usage; (2) although USDA, EPA, and FDA generally used a case-by-case approach in reviewing proposed field tests, USDA and EPA exempted certain categories of organisms from regulatory review; (3) the agencies perform prerelease reviews to determine whether to allow field tests and what controls to impose; (4) the agencies' advisory groups reflect a wide range of relevant disciplines; (5) agency approvals are contingent upon specific field conditions, generally require plans to mitigate unexpected harm, and have the authority to terminate an experiment, if necessary; and (6) methods to control the dispersal and impact of microorganisms require minimizing risk while maximizing field test usefulness.

Recommendation To Agencies: To ensure that microorganisms formed by the transfer of "well-characterized noncoding regulatory sequences" of genetic material from plant pests to nonplant pests receive review prior to release, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to revoke the exemption for such organisms in regulations governing genetically engineered plant pests. To ensure effective regulatory coverage of genetically engineered microorganisms, the Administrator, EPA, should make all microorganisms covered by the Toxic Substances Control Act subject to either the premanufacture notice or "significant new use" rule regulations prescribed by section 5 of the act. To avoid overregulation of lower-risk organisms that could result from this action, EPA could revise section 5 regulations to establish a multilevel review system with less-stringent requirements for organisms believed to be of relatively lower risk.

136298

Financial Audit: Commodity Credit Corporation's Financial Statements for 1987 and 1986. AFMD-88-47; B-202690. July 7, 1988. 40 pp. *Report to Congress*; by Frederick D. Wolf, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General). Refer to AFMD-87-43, June 22, 1987, Accession Number 133266.

Issue Area: Financial Statement Audits of Government Entities (7500).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Financial Management and Information Systems: Regulatory Accounting Rules and Financial Reporting (998.6).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit

Corporation; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation: Kansas City Management Office; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation: Office of the Controller.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Government Operations; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Governmental Affairs; Congress.

Authority: Accounting and Auditing Act. Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982. 31 U.S.C. 9105. 15 U.S.C. 713a-11.

Abstract: GAO reported on the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC): (1) financial statements for the years ended September 30, 1987 and 1986; and (2) system of internal accounting controls and compliance with laws and regulations.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that CCC: (1) did not include in its financial statements an allowance for the uncollectible portion of \$15 billion in outstanding loans to countries experiencing financial difficulties; (2) had estimated cumulative losses ranging from \$5 billion to \$8 billion on those loans as of September 30, 1987; (3) did not have a reserve for losses associated with \$5 billion in outstanding guaranteed loans to foreign countries; (4) during 1987, instituted a new automated system which transferred the responsibility for recording and reconciling loan disbursements and repayment receipts from its Kansas City Management Office to local county offices; and (5) did not adequately control conversion to that system, resulting in unreconciled differences in receipts and disbursements. GAO also found that: (1) except for their failure to establish an allowance for estimated loan losses and a reserve for guaranteed loan losses, the financial statements presented fairly the financial position of CCC as of September 30, 1987 and 1986, and the results of its operations and the changes in its financial position for the years then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a consistent basis; and (2) internal accounting controls and procedures had several weaknesses that were not material to the CCC financial statements.

Recommendation To Agencies: CCC should give prompt attention to controls over conversions to new automated systems. The Chairman of the Board of Directors, CCC, should direct the

Controller, CCC, and the Director of the Kansas City Management Office to ensure that local offices are provided with a monthly listing of unreconciled differences between internal and external sources. The Chairman of the Board of Directors, CCC, should direct the Controller, CCC, and the Director of the Kansas City Management Office to ensure that local offices' efforts are monitored to resolve the differences in a timely manner. The Chairman of the Board of Directors, CCC, should direct the Controller, CCC, and the Director of the Kansas City Management Office to ensure that consideration is given to suspending further conversions to automated systems until problems associated with current implementation efforts are resolved and CCC accounts are accurate and current.

136305

Caribbean Basin Initiative: Impact on Selected Countries. NSIAD-88-177; B-225332. July 12, 1988. 48 pp. plus 4 appendices (23 pp.). *Report to Sen. Christopher J. Dodd, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: Western Hemisphere and Peace Corps Affairs Subcommittee*; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-86-201BR, August 29, 1986, Accession Number 131469; NSIAD-87-58FS, December 8, 1986, Accession Number 131807; NSIAD-86-157, August 25, 1986, Accession Number 130786; ID-83-45, April 19, 1983, Accession Number 121152; and NSIAD-85-82, July 3, 1985, Accession Number 127396.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Belize; Republic of Haiti; Dominican Republic; State of Grenada; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Commonwealth of Dominica.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Foreign Relations: Western Hemisphere and Peace Corps Affairs Subcommittee; *Sen. Christopher J. Dodd.*

Authority: Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (P.L. 98-67). Tax Reform Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-514). Foreign Assistance and Related Programs Appropriation Act, 1987. Trade Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-618). Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Caribbean Basin Initiative's (CBI) impact on selected countries, focusing on: (1) its contributions toward alleviating debt-servicing problems, creating lasting employment opportunities, and fostering broadly based economic growth; (2) executive branch or congressional actions which worked against CBI; and (3) the Agency for International Development's (AID) promotion of CBI. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found that: (1) CBI fostered some trade and investment opportunities, but not to the extent of generating broadly based economic growth, alleviating debt-servicing problems, or creating lasting employment; (2) a congressionally mandated sugar import quota negatively affected some CBI countries; (3) although increased citrus production and tourism both have potential for helping CBI countries, AID has discouraged missions from providing assistance and funding in these areas; (4) AID CBI-related projects involved skilled employment training, medium- and long-term credit availability, export and investment promotion services, and policy reforms; and (5) factors constraining the effectiveness of AID efforts included a lack of infrastructure, political instability, limited labor and resource bases, and underdeveloped private sectors.

136308

Sugar Program: Issues Related to Imports of Sugar-Containing Products. RCED-88-146; B-230319. June 22, 1988. 10 pp. plus 11 appendices (65 pp.). *Report to Rep. Jerry Huckaby, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Cotton, Rice, and Sugar Subcommittee; Rep. Arlan Stangeland, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture: Cotton, Rice, and Sugar Subcommittee; by Brian P. Crowley, Senior Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to NSIAD-89-85, February 7, 1989, Accession Number 137932.*

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Adjusting to the Changing World Agriculture Market and Reestablishing U.S. Competitiveness (6522).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Import-Export Issues (352.1).

Organization Concerned: United States Customs Service; Department of Commerce: Industry and Trade Administration: Foreign-Trade Zones Board.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Agriculture: Cotton, Rice, and Sugar Subcommittee; Rep. Arlan Stangeland; Rep. Jerry Huckaby.*

Authority: Food Security Act. Agricultural Adjustment Act (7 U.S.C. 624). Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed certain aspects of the U.S. sugar program to determine: (1) the amount of sugar in imports that displaces domestic sugar; (2) the increase in such sugar imports since implementation of the sugar import quota system; (3) the amount of sugar in sugar-containing product imports that enters U.S. commerce from foreign trade zones (FTZ) and through ports of entry; (4) whether Customs Service controls over such imports were adequate to ensure compliance with regulations; and (5) administrative options available to the President to limit the importation of sugar-containing products.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) between 265,000 tons to 307,000 tons of sugar may have displaced domestic sugar in 1986; (2) the sugar entered the United States in sugar-containing products under 46 tariff categories; (3) in addition, over 1.7 million tons of raw and refined sugar entered the United States under the 1986 commodity sugar program quota; (4) the United States consumed slightly less than 8 million tons of domestic sugar in 1986; (5) the amount of sugar-containing imports in 1986 more than doubled that in 1982; (6) increases in some products were greater due to tariff classifications; (7) blended products produced in FTZ and imported through various ports of entry contained about 40,000 tons of sugar; and (8) Customs did not always enforce its laws and regulations or paperwork controls at some FTZ. GAO believes that: (1) although Customs took some actions to improve its administration of sugar allocations and other enforcement mandates, monitoring the implementation of improvement actions could help ensure proper entry of sugar imports; and (2) the President could limit sugar-containing product imports by extending import restrictions and submitting a legislative proposal to rewrite tariff schedule descriptions.

136368

Foreign Aid: Issues Concerning AID's Private-Sector Revolving Fund. NSIAD-88-185; B-230725. July 18, 1988. 28 pp. plus 2 appendices (12 pp.). *Report to Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division.*

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Effectiveness of Structure of U.S. Bilateral Economic Assistance Programs With Country and Regional Focuses To Accomplish International Objectives (6201).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development; Agency for International Development: Bureau for Private Enterprise.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Foreign Affairs; House Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Senate Committee on Appropriations: Foreign Operations Subcommittee; Sen. Daniel K. Inouye.*

Authority: International Security and Development Assistance Authorizations Act of 1983. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Antideficiency Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the operations of the Agency for International Development's (AID) Private-Sector Revolving Fund, specifically, its: (1) financial management; (2) funding levels; and (3) management and monitoring of field projects.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the fund had several financial management weaknesses, including: (1) a data base that was inadequate for accurately projecting cash flow and additional appropriations requirements; (2) a lack of complete and audited financial statements to ensure the integrity of its annual reports; (3) no loss reserve account; and (4) inadequate procedures for converting loan reflows of principal, interest, and fees into U.S. securities. GAO also found that: (1) the \$8.5 million AID requested for its fiscal year 1989 appropriation would exceed its requirements; (2) staff limitations affected the quality of field mission

project management and monitoring; (3) AID could not effectively operate a larger program; and (4) AID did not have an overall risk policy for the fund that defined the balance between projects' credit worthiness and AID developmental goals. In addition, GAO found that AID took several actions to address the fund's financial difficulties, including: (1) revising cash flow projections; (2) preparing financial statements; (3) establishing a loss reserve account; (4) strengthening reflow investment procedures; and (5) hiring a financial consultant.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, AID, should provide sufficient resources for strengthening the management and monitoring of revolving fund projects by adding fund staff and increasing the direct involvement of its field missions in project management. The Administrator should also provide for annual audited revolving fund financial statements. The Administrator, AID, should establish a fund policy on maximum collateral requirements for local banks. The policy should: (1) establish a ceiling on banks' collateral requirements as a condition for fund loans and guarantees; (2) identify options for encouraging bank lending based on project performance and cash flow, instead of collateral-based lending; and (3) define, as part of an overall policy of what constitutes acceptable risk, the loss rates necessary and acceptable for balancing developmental goals and the objective of ensuring that revenue exceeds losses to retain revolving fund capital.

136380

Food Stamp Program: Reporting of Application Activities Could Be Improved. RCED-88-156; B-217883. July 14, 1988.

Released July 21, 1988. 30 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Report* to Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-80BR, April 2, 1987, Accession Number 132900.

Issue Area: Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016); Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Appropriations: Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta.

Authority: Social Security Act.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO assessed the reliability of the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) statistics on households applying for, approved for, and denied food stamp benefits, focusing on: (1) FNS instructions and requirements regarding states' reports on application, approval, and denial information; (2) the definitions and procedures states used to aggregate, record, and report application information; (3) the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and states' oversight of recordkeeping and reporting practices; and (4) how states and USDA used application information.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) states used different definitions of what constituted an application in its reports to FNS, since FNS instructions through 1986 failed to specifically define reporting procedures; (2) a 1987 FNS revision of its report format helped it to obtain additional details but did not solve the problem of inconsistent state application definitions; (3) additional instructions FNS issued in 1988 helped to clarify reporting requirements, but did not fully address all variations among states; (4) within their automated or manual recordkeeping systems, states generally had procedures to ensure information accuracy according to their own definitions; (5) states primarily used the information to monitor local office food stamp application work loads and ensure prompt application processing; (6) FNS did not assess reported information for accuracy or use it for budgeting and program planning, although it did informally use some data in policy development; (7) FNS did not automate states' reported data until 1987; and (8) FNS lacked plans for monitoring and using reported information to assess states' performance.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, as part of its oversight, to provide clear and understandable definitions for reporting food stamp application information and guidance, to ensure that states report the information according to FNS requirements. To ensure that states are accurately reporting the food stamp application information, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to develop specific plans and written procedures for: (1) monitoring the states' application information to ensure that it is reported according to FNS requirements; and (2) using the reported information to evaluate state performance.

136444

Supplemental Food Program: Savings From Food Purchases Could Increase WIC Participation. RCED-88-183BR; B-176994. July 25, 1988.

Released August 1, 1988. 16 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Thomas R. Harkin, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; by John W. Harman, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-35BR, October 9, 1987, Accession Number 134230.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Effectiveness of Food Assistance Eligibility and Benefit Certification Procedures (6517).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Housing Assistance and Other Income Supplements (604.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee; *Sen.* Thomas R. Harkin.

Authority: Child Nutrition Act. P.L. 100-237.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the number of additional eligible participants that states could serve through the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) if they adopted competitive bidding or rebate methods to purchase food items other than infant formula.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO reviewed Maryland and Ohio cost-savings methods and found that: (1) if Maryland's reported savings of 2 percent were duplicated nationally, this would equal about \$18.5 million in savings, which could finance about 46,000 additional WIC participants; and (2) Ohio's reported 14-percent savings rate, which would equal about \$129.4 million nationally could finance about 321,900 additional participants. GAO also found that the two states: (1) provided food to WIC participants through retail purchase and home delivery; and (2) had contracted for the home delivery portion of their distribution systems, which is where potential savings existed.

136459

[Management of Public Rangelands by the Bureau of Land Management]. T-RCED-88-58.

August 2, 1988. 6 pp. plus 2 attachments (8 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee; by James Duffus, III, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-80, June 10, 1988, Accession Number 136027; and RCED-88-105, June 30, 1988, Accession Number 136218.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Bureau of Land Management.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs: National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee.

Authority: Grazing Act. Land Policy and Management Act.

Abstract: GAO discussed how the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered public rangelands. GAO found that: (1) although Congress mandated that BLM manage rangelands for the benefit of all and to ensure their future maintenance, much rangeland remains in unsatisfactory condition; (2) almost 60 percent of the grazing allotments were in only poor or fair condition and the riparian areas were worse; (3) the primary cause of rangeland and riparian degradation was poorly managed livestock grazing, since livestock tend to congregate in riparian areas, eat most of the vegetation, and trample streambanks; (4) BLM has done little to reduce authorized grazing levels in overgrazed areas and has not established appropriate grazing levels; (5) BLM staff believe that neither BLM

management nor the ranchers would support their efforts to improve riparian areas; and (6) BLM reduced staffing levels for those specialist positions needed to achieve range management goals. GAO believes that BLM needs to: (1) establish finite goals for riparian-area restoration; and (2) annually measure the progress made to achieve those goals.

136568

Crop Insurance: Program Has Merit, but FCIC Should Study Ways to Increase Participation. RCED-88-211BR; B-209866. August 15, 1988. 9 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 p.).

Briefing Report to Sen. John Melcher, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Production and Stabilization of Prices Subcommittee; by John W. Harman, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to PAD-80-39, June 16, 1980, Accession Number 112776; RCED-88-4, November 30, 1987, Accession Number 134552; and RCED-88-171BR, July 6, 1988, Accession Number 136252.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Community and Regional Development: Disaster Relief and Insurance (453.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Agricultural Production and Stabilization of Prices Subcommittee; *Sen.* John Melcher.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's (FCIC) Federal Crop Insurance Program, focusing on: (1) the merits of crop insurance; and (2) steps that FCIC could take to help increase participation in the program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) crop insurance is the most efficient and equitable method for providing federal disaster assistance to farmers; (2) the 1987 participation level was only about one-half of the planned 50-percent level; and (3) FCIC should conduct a nationwide study to determine which of the major factors influencing participation it could and should address.

136599

Budget Issues: USDA's Commodity Certificates Should Be Recognized in Budget Totals. AFMD-88-27; B-227245. August 16, 1988. 10 pp. plus 6 appendices (27 pp.). *Report* to Rep. William H. Gray, III, Chairman, House Committee on Budget; Rep. Butler Derrick, Chairman, House Committee on Budget: Budget Process Task Force; by James L. Kirkman, (for Frederick D. Wolf, Director), Accounting and Financial Management Division. Refer to AFMD-87-44, July 17, 1987, Accession Number 133463.

Issue Area: Financial Management Standards and Initiatives: Federal Legislative Processes (7015).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Financial Management and Information Systems (998.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Office of Management and Budget.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Budget: Budget Process Task Force; *House* Committee on Budget; *Rep.* Butler Derrick; *Rep.* William H. Gray, III.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined the current budget treatment of the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) commodity certificates to: (1) determine if CCC should treat the certificates as cash for budget purposes; and (2) develop alternative budget reporting methods. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO evaluated three budget reporting methods for commodity certificates, and found that: (1) continuing to treat certificate issuances as noncash transactions, excluding them from the budget authority and outlay totals and including a supplementary table would involve no change, but would not ensure systematic congressional review; (2) treating the certificates as cash transactions and including them in the total budget authority and outlay totals would ensure congressional review of their use, but would add noncash amounts to a cash-based total; and (3) establishing new terms and totals for the use of noncash assets to finance government programs would provide Congress with more information regarding the use of commodity certificates, but could initially reduce understanding of budget information.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Director of the Office of Management and Budget should include the use of commodity certificates in budget totals reviewed by Congress by developing a new set of noncash-based terms and totals, or by treating the issuance of commodity certificates as if they were cash. The Director should also consider these approaches for applicability to the other programs with authority to use noncash asset financing and should consult on the matter with congressional budget and appropriations committees.

136653

[Comments on USDA Interpretation of Food Security Act Wetlands Provision]. B-231065. August 10, 1988.

Released August 26, 1988. 6 pp. *Letter to Sen. Kent Conrad*; by Milton J. Socolar, (for Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General).

Contact: Office of the General Counsel.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen. Kent Conrad.*

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198; 99 Stat. 1354). 7 C.F.R. 12.5(d)(1)(v). 51 Fed. Reg. 33490. 52 Fed. Reg. 35200. H.R. 2100 (99th Cong.). H. Rept. 99-271. H. Rept. 99-447. S. Rept. 99-145.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO commented on the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) interpretation of the Food Security Act's wetlands provision. GAO noted that: (1) under the act, the draining or filling of wetlands and converted wetlands, which were cultivated naturally before the act's passage, could cause program participants to lose federal farm benefits; and (2) a congressional committee report urging restraint in applying a provision allowing program participation when agricultural production would have a minimal effect on wetlands was not binding on USDA.

136890

Seafood Safety: Seriousness of Problems and Efforts to Protect Consumers. RCED-88-135; B-230836/001. August 10, 1988.

Released September 27, 1988. 65 pp. plus 6 appendices (12 pp.). *Report to Rep. D. Douglas Barnard*, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Commerce, Consumer and Monetary Affairs Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-7, October 27, 1986, Accession

Number 131730; HRD-86-2, February 18, 1986, Accession Number 129270; HRD-84-36, June 14, 1984, Accession Number 124646; and HRD-84-61, September 26, 1984, Accession Number 125315.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591); Science and Technology Policy and Programs: Other Issue Area Work (9391); Federal Health Programs-Direct Delivery: Effectiveness of FDA in Monitoring the Marketplace, Detecting Violations, Ensuring Compliance, and Coordinating With Other Agencies (5205).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Health: Prevention and Control of Health Problems (551.2).

Organization Concerned: Public Health Service: Centers for Disease Control; Food and Drug Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Government Operations: Commerce, Consumer and Monetary Affairs Subcommittee; Rep. D. Douglas Barnard.*

Authority: Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301). Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3371). Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251). Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 1401). Fair Packaging and Labeling Act. S. 1813 (100th Cong.). H.R. 1483 (100th Cong.).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the nature, extent, and seriousness of consumer-related problems with seafood, focusing on: (1) the safety of seafood for human consumption; (2) misrepresentation in seafood packaging; and (3) government programs addressing the issue.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) data on food-related illnesses between 1978 and 1984 showed that about 5 percent were seafood cases; (2) in 1986, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reported that, although 29 percent of 6,528 seafood samples it analyzed did not comply with federal regulations for contaminants and proper labelling, they did not pose a direct threat to human health; (3) although the seafood industry is not subject to mandatory federal inspections, federal and state agencies conducted safety-related inspections, data gathering, and research activities in an effort to monitor seafood; and (4) although experts believed that seafood safety problems did not require major federal program changes, they emphasized the need to improve tests for microbiological pathogens and increased research on chemical contamination and human illness. GAO believes that,

although there is no compelling reason to implement a comprehensive, mandatory federal seafood inspection program, there is a need for: (1) continued support for the development of the seafood surveillance model, research on chemical contaminants, and tests of shellfish-growing waters; and (2) increased public awareness of the risks associated with eating raw shellfish.

136905

[Country of Origin Labeling Requirements for Imported Meat and Other Food Products]. T-RCED-88-67. September 27, 1988. 8 pp.

Testimony before the House Committee on Ways and Means: Trade Subcommittee; by John W. Harman, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-87-142, September 30, 1987, Accession Number 134133.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House Committee on Ways and Means: Trade Subcommittee.*

Authority: Food Security Act. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: GAO discussed the merits of extending country-of-origin labelling requirements for imported meat and other food products beyond current requirements. GAO found that: (1) extending country-of-origin labelling could violate U.S. trade obligations under international trade regulations which prohibit regulations to protect domestic products; (2) most imported meats did not pose health problems because the Department of Agriculture inspected them before their entry into domestic commerce; (3) compliance with extended requirements would result in additional expenses for the food industry, the federal government, and ultimately consumers; (4) the estimated costs to food processors and manufacturers in the first year of extended labelling would total from \$18.2 million to \$27.6 million and compliance costs would total from \$750,000 to \$1.2 million; and (5) extended labelling would require development of new regulations and expanded enforcement efforts. GAO believes that there is insufficient evidence to justify the cost of implementing, monitoring, and enforcing such a requirement.

136912

Foreign Aid: Better Management of Commodity Import Programs Could Improve Development Impact.

NSIAD-88-209; B-225870. September 26, 1988. 38 pp. plus 1 appendix (6 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Lee H. Hamilton, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-88-182, June 29, 1988, Accession Number 136209; and NSIAD-84-47, February 29, 1984, Accession Number 123533.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Adequacy of Accountability and Controls Over Foreign Economic Assistance (6204).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Military Assistance (152.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs: Europe and the Middle East Subcommittee; *Rep.* Lee H. Hamilton.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Agency for International Development's (AID) commodity import programs (CIP) in Egypt, Pakistan, Zambia, and Zaire to assess how these programs could achieve greater development impact.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) CIP have helped sustain economic production in countries experiencing foreign exchange shortages; (2) the Egypt and Pakistan CIP, which supplied commodities to public sector activities at subsidized prices, contradicted the AID goal of encouraging governments to eliminate subsidies; (3) in Zaire and Zambia, AID missions programmed local currencies to support specific development activities; (4) AID officials in Pakistan believed that emphasizing programming of local currency would reduce their leverage in economic policy reform discussions, and they minimized local currency deposit requirements; and (5) as of January 1987, Egypt accumulated about \$325 million in local currencies generated from commodity sales, instead of programming those funds to support development. GAO also found that: (1) in Pakistan, Egypt, and Zambia, AID did not ensure that funds were used for the intended purposes; (2) AID accounting systems for monitoring

commodity arrival, disposition, and end use operated on a country-by-country basis and did not consistently account for imported commodities; and (3) when end-use checks showed that commodities were idle or not fully used, AID did not resolve these problems before approving further transactions, and the problems recurred.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Administrator, AID, should require missions to independently verify, on a sample basis, host government reports on the uses of local currencies. The Administrator, AID, should develop with Egypt a plan to liquidate accumulations of local currency funds and program future generation for development at a pace more commensurate with the rate that funds are deposited. To ensure that AID can adequately account for the arrival and disposition of CIP commodities, the Administrator, AID, should require that arrival accounting systems provide a clear link between CIP obligations, commodity receipts, and local currency deposits for all import transactions. To ensure that AID can adequately account for the arrival and disposition of CIP commodities, the Administrator, AID, should specify the extent to which missions should conduct end-use checks and a minimum level of expected coverage. To ensure that AID can adequately account for the arrival and disposition of CIP commodities, the Administrator, AID, should require missions to resolve problems of underused commodities before approving financing of additional transactions by the importer.

136936

Children's Programs: A Comparative Evaluation Framework and Five Illustrations.

PEMD-88-28BR; B-231255. August 31, 1988.

Released September 30, 1988. 21 pp. plus 6 appendices (56 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Daniel R. Coats, Ranking Minority Member, House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Improving Policy Information, Prioritization, and Design in Human Service Programs (7204); Food and Agriculture: Satisfaction of Nutritional and Health Concerns by Food Assistance Programs (6518); Income Security: Assessing How Adequately and Equitably Federally Supported Programs Meet the Needs of Families With Children, Teenage Parents, and the Homeless (5016); Administration of

Justice: Obstacles Congress and Agencies Should Address in Coordinating Law Enforcement Resources (4701).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Social Services (506.0); Health: Health Care Services (551.0); Administration of Justice: Criminal Justice Assistance (754.0); Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education (501.0); Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Congressional Relevance: *House* Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families; *Rep.* Daniel R. Coats.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO developed a framework of general criteria for ensuring comprehensive review of federal programs' operations and effectiveness and applied it to five federal programs.

Findings/Conclusions: The GAO framework: (1) consists of a program description component and a set of 10 general evaluation criteria; (2) assesses the need for a program, its implementation, and its effect; (3) describes the problem the program is to address, its purpose and goals, operations, administrative structure, and funding; and (4) applies to programs with multiple, broad goals that allow substantial flexibility in structure and content. GAO found that the framework: (1) successfully captured the types of issues raised in program reviews; (2) required both policymaking and technical expertise in order to set the purpose of the review, collect and review the relevant evidence, and use the results to judge the program's merits; and (3) provided a way to review the results of research on existing programs, assess proposed program changes, and compare programs with different scopes, purposes, and goals.

136987

[Price Changes in Selected Agricultural Commodities and Foods]. T-RCED-89-1. October 5, 1988. 4 pp. plus 1 attachment (10 pp.). *Testimony* before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; by John Harman, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-89-46FS, October 31, 1988, Accession Number 137199.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Abstract: GAO reviewed price changes in selected agricultural commodities and foods during 1988. GAO found that: (1) between June 1 and August 31, 1988, food prices generally increased more at the farm, processor, and retail levels than they did during the same period in 1987; (2) prices of many of the monitored food items began to increase prior to the drought, with the January to August 1988 increase being greater than the January to August 1987 increase; (3) prices increased at all levels of the food marketing system during 1988; and (4) agricultural commodity price changes had a limited impact on retail food prices, since they comprised a small portion of retail food costs.

137063

[Commodity Credit Corporation's Export Credit Guarantee Programs]. T-NSIAD-89-2. October 6, 1988. 5 pp. *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Tobacco and Peanuts Subcommittee; by Allan I. Mendelowitz, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refer to NSIAD-87-185, August 19, 1987, Accession Number 133817; and NSIAD-88-194, June 10, 1988, Accession Number 136186.

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Tobacco and Peanuts Subcommittee.

Abstract: GAO discussed the Foreign Agricultural Service's (FAS) administration of the Commodity Credit Corporation's Export Credit Guarantee and Intermediate Export Credit Guarantee programs. GAO noted that FAS: (1) did not adequately manage the programs and lacked clear program regulations for defining U.S. agricultural commodities and their eligibility under the programs; (2) issued a notice clarifying commodity eligibility and changed its policy regarding the export of imported agricultural products, but did not solicit comments regarding its impact on program users; (3) did not plan to include the policy change in its program regulations; and (4) lacked procedures for ensuring that export reports complied with its requirements regarding accuracy and completeness. GAO believes that the FAS management

approach, which relies on industry self-regulation, precludes: (1) adequate enforcement of compliance; and (2) accurate accounting for outstanding guarantees.

137080

Farm Finance: Financial Condition of American Agriculture as of December 31, 1987. RCED-89-33BR; B-220507. October 18, 1988. 91 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; by John W. Harman, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-9, October 10, 1985, Accession Number 128115; RCED-86-191BR, September 3, 1986, Accession Number 130884; RCED-88-26BR, October 20, 1987, Accession Number 134251; and RCED-88-144FS, April 22, 1988, Accession Number 135675.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Farmers Home Administration; Farm Credit Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture; *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep. E (Kika) De La Garza*; *Sen. Patrick J. Leahy*.

Authority: P.L. 100-387.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the financial condition of American agriculture as of December 31, 1987. **Findings/Conclusions:** GAO found improvements in the farm sector, including: (1) increases in agricultural products' values, volumes, and exports; (2) increases in the value of total farm assets and gross farm income, as well as more favorable income and debt levels; and (3) less total outstanding farm debt and fewer nonperforming and delinquent farm loans. GAO also found that: (1) federal outlays to support the farm sector continued at a very high level in 1987; and (2) the severe 1988 drought had a significant effect on certain agricultural segments and could prolong financial stress for many farmers.

137107

The H-2A Program: Protections for U.S. Farmworkers. PEMD-89-3; B-222748. October 21, 1988. 92 pp. plus 6 appendices (28 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Augustus F. Hawkins, Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor; Rep. James M. Jeffords, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Education and Labor; Rep. William D. Ford, Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor: Task Force on Immigration; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to RCED-87-177FS, September 29, 1987, Accession Number 134298; and PEMD-88-13BR, March 10, 1988, Accession Number 135244.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Improving Policy Information, Prioritization, and Design in Human Service Programs (7204); Employment and Education: Assessing Whether Department of Labor Worker Protection Programs Adequately Ensure Safe and Healthful Workplaces and Fair Compensation (5312); Immigration (0081).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services: Other Labor Services (505.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Labor; Department of Agriculture; Employment and Training Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Education and Labor: Task Force on Immigration; *House* Committee on Education and Labor; *House* Committee on Education and Labor; *Rep. William D. Ford*; *Rep. James M. Jeffords*; *Rep. Augustus F. Hawkins*.

Authority: Immigration and Nationality Act. Immigration Reform and Control Act. P.L. 82-414. American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations v. Brock, 835 F.2d 912 (D.C. Cir. 1987).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the: (1) wage and nonwage protection that the Department of Labor's (DOL) regulations afford U.S. farmworkers under the H-2A Program that allows for the admission of foreign agricultural workers; and (2) quality of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) surveys DOL used to set minimum wages and to certify a shortage of U.S. workers.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) USDA never measured the precision of the annual hourly wage rate estimates that DOL used to set statewide

minimum wages; (2) there may be unacceptably large error margins for at least three regions of the country; (3) the USDA surveys measured a general farm wage that was lower than the average U.S. wage for workers employed in the same crop activities as H-2A workers; and (4) the technical quality of the 15 wage surveys conducted during 1987 varied because of the inconsistent counting of undocumented workers, low response rates, unsystematically compiled employer lists, analytical miscalculations, inadequate survey quality indicators, poor interview schedule quality, and inadequate monitoring. GAO also found that: (1) since DOL determined the prevailing wage only with regard to the most common unit of payment, differing payment units could result in inaccuracies; (2) wage minimums based solely on prevailing wages would not grant relevant protections because the presence of foreign workers would depress the prevailing wages; (3) DOL set an adverse-effect wage rate as a minimum wage to offset wage depression and generally indexed it to a large-scale wage survey; and (4) because the legislative mandate was so broad, DOL could interpret adverse effect in several ways. In addition, GAO found that: (1) DOL practices provided weak protection for U.S. workers; (2) some growers preferred foreign workers because they could recruit more selectively; (3) DOL referred few U.S. workers at the wages and working conditions offered; and (4) government welfare and unemployment benefits were not a critical factor, since the potentially employable among those collecting the benefits constituted only a small part of the needed labor force.

Recommendation To Agencies: To ensure that the wage minimums set by DOL to protect U.S. workers from the adverse effects of the H-2A program are reasonably accurate, the Secretary of Labor should: (1) negotiate with USDA to provide routine analysis of error margins surrounding the wage estimates on which statewide minimum hourly wage rates are based and improve the survey as necessary to maintain reasonably small margins of error around such estimates; (2) provide greater oversight and guidance to the state agencies conducting the prevailing wage surveys, including revising the survey handbook and forms to improve consistency of procedures and ability to monitor quality of implementation; and (3) consider converting units of payment to a common base to ensure that prevailing wage findings are calculated on the largest possible number of workers surveyed. To improve the

prevailing wage surveys, the Secretary of Labor should: (1) provide guidance on handling discrepancies, since the handbook directs interviewers to verify employer supplied information with employee-supplied data; (2) remove the present cells for average hourly earnings, based on combining information from several interviewed workers, unless required for other than verification of employer data, and supplement interview records with forms that record individual wage information from workers and any calculations performed by the interviewer; (3) revise the survey summary form to better alert ETA regional and national offices of problems that reduce the quality of the survey; (4) confer with state officials about the problems affecting quality for particular surveys and, if necessary, provide or facilitate training or technical aid; and (5) be especially watchful that mail surveys are adequate and, if not, provide guidance on ways to increase response rates or, alternatively, require other methods of data collection. The Secretary of Labor should improve worker protections under the current law by finding means to incorporate referred workers' accounts of reasons for not being hired or being fired.

137141

Commodity Certificates: Backlog of 200,000 Unreconciled Certificates Affects Financial Reporting. RCED-89-14; B-226558. October 25, 1988. 9 pp. plus 2 appendices (3 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Dan Glickman, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Comparing Effectiveness of Price-Support Programs With Viability of Market-Oriented Alternatives (6524).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service; Department of Agriculture: Commodity Credit Corporation; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service: Commodity Office, Kansas City, MO.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee; *Rep.* Dan Glickman.

Authority: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-203). Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982. Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198). OMB Circular A-123.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO investigated: (1) the size of the backlog in redeemed commodity certificates that the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) has not reconciled to issuance records; (2) ASCS plans for resolving the backlog; and (3) the extent to which the Department of Agriculture has achieved a mandated \$230 million reduction in storage, transportation, and handling expenditures for fiscal years 1988 and 1989.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the ASCS Kansas City Management Office, which is responsible for issuing and redeeming certificates: (1) reported that the backlog of redeemed certificates with unresolved exceptions increased from over 170,000 in January 1988 to over 204,000 in April 1988 and is expected to increase to about 320,000 by October 1988; (2) assigned 11 personnel to research and correct unreconciled certificates; (3) concentrated on unmatched redeemed certificates because of the large backlog in that category; (4) did not keep detailed records on the number of exceptions occurring each month, but estimated that it corrected about 25,000 each month; and (5) did not have a plan to resolve the increasing backlog, but outlined eight proposed backlog reduction plans as part of its year-end closing plan, which included developing software, writing off low-dollar-value exceptions, and assigning priorities to certain categories of exceptions. GAO also found that ASCS: (1) has not identified the root cause of the backlog to minimize the occurrence of future exceptions; (2) did not report that a material weakness existed in this area in its 1987 Financial Integrity Act report; and (3) projected a \$610 million reduction in storage, transportation, and handling expenditures due to a significantly lower volume of government-owned grain.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, ASCS, to develop a plan to address the remaining backlog of certificates with unresolved exceptions that ensures the accountability for commodity certificates and reduces the potential that undetected fraud could be occurring. This plan should: (1) clearly establish priorities so that high dollar value certificates are researched and corrected first regardless of the

exception category; (2) be as specific as possible with regard to the methods that will be used, the resources to be allocated, and a schedule for completion; and (3) include steps to identify and correct the root causes of the exceptions to minimize the number of exceptions that may occur in the future. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, ASCS, to report in its Financial Integrity Act statement that a material weakness exists and provide an assessment detailing: (1) the impact of the backlog of certificates with unresolved exceptions on its financial statement; and (2) management's plans to correct the problem.

137161

Safeguarding Our Children's Health. 1988. 5 pp. by Sheila M. Smythe, Chief Health Policy Advisor, Human Resources Division. In *The GAO Journal*, No. 3, Fall 1988, pp. 26-30. Refer to HRD-87-137, September 30, 1987, Accession Number 134246; *The GAO Journal*, No. 3, Fall 1988, pp. 31-34, Accession Number 137162; and *The GAO Journal*, No. 3, Fall 1988, pp. 35-39, Accession Number 137163.

Contact: Office of the Comptroller General.

Abstract: This article discusses the problem of inadequate health care for many American children, and possible solutions. Despite large-scale federal health measures, such as Medicaid, many children: (1) do not receive prenatal or neonatal care; (2) receive inadequate or no immunizations; (3) do not have health insurance; and (4) lack adequate food and proper nutrition. Possible solutions to these problems include: (1) making all pregnant women in poverty eligible for Medicaid; (2) encouraging states to loosen Medicaid eligibility requirements and reduce the amount of paperwork required to enroll in the program; (3) reestablishing schools as places for immunizations; (4) guaranteeing minimum levels of health insurance coverage through a private sector-government initiative; and (5) improving nutritional programs. Although such improvements may increase federal expenditures, the benefits may actually save taxpayers money in the long run.

137167

Crop Insurance: FCIC Needs to Improve Its Oversight of Reinsured Companies. RCED-89-10; B-209866. October 19, 1988.

Released October 28, 1988. 6 pp. plus 4 appendices (21 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Ed Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; Rep. Glenn L. English, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to T-RCED-87-18, April 29, 1987, Accession Number 132794; and RCED-88-7, November 20, 1988, Accession Number 134459.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.; Department of Agriculture.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; *Rep.* Glenn L. English; *Rep.* Ed Jones.

Authority: Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-365).

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO evaluated certain Department of Agriculture Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) oversight activities over private companies that insure farmers against crop losses from natural disasters.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) FCIC is considering ways to expand the scope of its oversight reviews, since many of its reviews were limited because of its desire to cover as many companies as possible; (2) many of the reviews were not statistically valid for drawing reliable conclusions about the quality of a company's overall adjustment practices because of the manner in which FCIC selected its samples and the limited size of the selected sample; and (3) FCIC did not establish basic criteria for determining reinsured companies' acceptable loss adjustment performance. **Recommendation To Agencies:** To improve the effectiveness of FCIC oversight of the loss adjustment activities of reinsured companies and to provide a better basis for judging the overall performance of individual companies, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to emphasize the use of statistically valid random sampling techniques and

appropriate sample sizes, where it is cost beneficial, in selecting claims for review. To improve the effectiveness of FCIC oversight of the loss adjustment activities of reinsured companies and to provide a better basis for judging the overall performance of individual companies, the Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to develop criteria to use in evaluating the results of compliance reviews and for determining the acceptability of a company's loss adjustment performance. The criteria should explicitly state when FCIC will suspend a company's operations and the circumstances under which FCIC will assume a company's loss adjustment function.

137168

Food Stamp Program: Administrative Hindrances to Participation. RCED-89-4; B-217883. October 21, 1988.

Released October 28, 1988. 41 pp. plus 10 appendices (27 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to HRD-87-110FS, July 29, 1987, Accession Number 133660; PEMD-88-21, July 5, 1988, Accession Number 136251; RCED-88-12, October 22, 1987, Accession Number 134233; RCED-87-51, October 30, 1986, Accession Number 131527; and RCED-87-80BR, April 2, 1987, Accession Number 132900.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfaction of Nutritional and Health Concerns by Food Assistance Programs (6518).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Rep.* Leon E. Panetta.

Authority: Homeless Assistance Act. 7 C.F.R. 273.10(c)(2)(i).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed whether federal regulations and certain state and local practices and procedures discourage or prevent eligible persons from participating in the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Food Stamp Program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that some local offices: (1) had limited office hours and restrictive interviewing schedules; (2) required households to complete screening forms before providing them food stamp applications and interviews; (3) did not encourage applicants to file partial applications to establish filing dates; (4) did not consider applicants for expedited benefits or did not provide expedited benefits on time; (5) denied applications prematurely; and (6) did not help applicants obtain the documents they needed to complete their applications. GAO also found that some states: (1) inappropriately terminated households' food stamp benefits when they terminated their public assistance benefits; (2) transferred clients from one project area to another, causing benefit interruptions; and (3) terminated food stamp benefits on the basis of unverified allegations of changes in household circumstances. In addition, GAO found that households with the same income could receive more food stamps in some states than others because FNS regulations permit two methods for states to calculate a household's monthly income.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to identify administrative hindrances to food stamp participation in its annual operations reviews of each state, focusing on hindrances identified in this report, and assist states in overcoming these hindrances by sharing this information with all states. The Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FNS, to determine the extent to which some households are treated inequitably by the different methods used to calculate monthly income, and determine whether it would be beneficial to adopt a uniform policy for calculating monthly income.

137199

Food Prices: Changes Occurring in the Prices of Selected Food Products. RCED-89-46FS; B-233203. October 31, 1988. 52 pp. plus 1 appendix (1 pp.). *Fact Sheet* to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Rep. Byron L. Dorgan; by John Harman, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to T-RCED-89-1, October 31, 1988, Accession Number 136987.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Other Issue Area Work (6591).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Agricultural Research and Services (352.0).

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; *Rep.* Byron L. Dorgan; *Sen.* Patrick J. Leahy.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO provided information on the effect of the 1988 drought on changes in food prices at the farm, processor, and retail levels for eight selected food products.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) between June 1 and August 31, 1988, food prices generally increased more at the farm, processor, and retail levels than they did in the same period in 1987; (2) prices for the selected food items began to increase prior to the drought; (3) food processing and marketing costs were also significant; and (4) the value of farm commodities used in foods consumed at home averaged 30 percent of the retail price, processing costs averaged 31 percent, and retailing 23 percent.

137338

Transition Series: Agriculture Issues. OCG-89-12TR; B-158195. November 1988. 36 pp. *Report* to Congress; Secretary-designate, Department of Agriculture; by Charles A. Bowsler, Comptroller General. This is part of Transition Series on Issues Facing New Administration, November 1988, Accession Number 137326. Refers to numerous reports on agricultural issues.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture (6500).
Contact: Office of the Comptroller General.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Congressional Relevance: Congress. **Authority:** Food Security Act. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Oct. 30, 1947, Multilateral, 61 Stat. 5(6), T.I.A.S. No. 1700.

Abstract: GAO presented its views on Department of Agriculture (USDA) program issues facing the new administration.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that the new administration will need to: (1) prevent the accumulation of unneeded grain surpluses and minimize costly grain stock acquisition, storage, and disposal; (2) create alternative production controls that retain USDA

influence over crop production but allow farmers more flexibility to respond to market opportunities; (3) ease the administrative burden on the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to make farm programs more effective; (4) implement revised farm loan criteria to minimize loan defaults and help farmers to become financially sound through time limits and measurable financial improvement and to graduate to alternative credit sources; (5) develop a long-term strategy to curtail dairy product surpluses; (6) exercise better control over private companies selling and servicing crop insurance; (7) either eliminate competing disaster assistance programs or permit the receipt of program benefits only upon participation in the crop insurance program, to prevent further deterioration of the program's financial condition; (8) develop strategies for increasing exports, increase the flexibility of federal policies to enhance international competitiveness, and improve management control over export programs, to improve U.S. export performance; and (9) improve the effectiveness and accuracy of the food stamp sanction system and resolve unpaid sanctions owed to the federal government.

137369

Farmers Home Administration: Farm Loan Programs Have Become a Continuous Source of Subsidized Credit. RCED-89-3; B-227691. November 22, 1988. 40 pp. plus 4 appendices (5 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Jesse A. Helms; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-86-62BR, January 2, 1986, Accession Number 128976; and RCED-88-134BR, May 20, 1988, Accession Number 135865.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Fulfilling the Farmers Home Administration's Mission in an Era of Financial Stress in the Agricultural Sector (6521).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture (350.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Farmers Home Administration.

Congressional Relevance: *Sen.* Jesse A. Helms.

Authority: Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (P.L. 87-128). Farmers' Home Administration Act of 1946 (P.L.

79-731). 50 Fed. Reg. 45739. P.L. 100-233. P.L. 100-71. P.L. 98-258. *Coleman v. Lyng*, 663 F. Supp. 1315 (D.N.D. 1987).

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA) farm loan graduation policies and procedures to determine: (1) whether FmHA followed legislative mandates to graduate successful borrowers; (2) the extent to which FmHA was a long-term source of credit; and (3) the amount of government interest rate subsidy and financial advantage FmHA borrowers received.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) many FmHA borrowers did not graduate to other credit sources because they lacked financial capability and few lenders expressed interest in refinancing their debts; (2) some FmHA county offices did not comply with all aspects of the graduation review process; (3) FmHA lacked a clear operational definition of graduation, preventing consistent policy and practice application; (4) FmHA could not monitor or judge the success of its graduated borrowers, since it did not maintain reliable information on the results of its graduation efforts; (5) many FmHA borrowers have remained in the loan programs for extended periods due to the depressed agricultural market and the lack of definition of the FmHA role as a temporary credit source; and (6) FmHA borrowers received loans that no other lender would provide and significant interest-rate subsidies at government expense.

Recommendation To Agencies: To help ensure that FmHA borrowers with potential for graduation to non-FmHA financing are identified and graduated when their economic conditions permit, the Secretary of Agriculture should direct the Administrator, FmHA, to: (1) develop and convey to all FmHA units a precise operational definition of graduation and emphasize the importance of uniform application of that definition; (2) monitor county office compliance with graduation requirements; and (3) collect and summarize accurate data on results of the borrower graduation process and distribute such results to all appropriate management levels so that FmHA is kept informed of the progress made in graduating borrowers to non-FmHA sources of credit.

137513

Food Stamps: Reasons for Nonparticipation. PEMD-89-5BR; B-227721. December 8, 1988. 26 pp. plus 4 appendices (8 pp.). *Briefing Report* to Rep. Bill Emerson,

Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PEMD-88-21, July 5, 1988, Accession Number 136251.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Planning, Conduct, Reporting, and Use of Executive Branch Evaluations (7206); Food and Agriculture: Satisfaction of Nutritional and Health Concerns by Food Assistance Programs (6518).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Income Security: Food and Nutrition Assistance (605.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition Subcommittee; *Rep.* Bill Emerson.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO: (1) determined the reported reasons why eligible households did not participate in the Food Stamp Program; and (2) compared nonparticipation reasons cited by families in 1979 with those cited in 1986.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that, in 1979 and 1986, respectively: (1) 46.1 percent and 43.8 percent of eligible families participated in the program; (2) 53.8 percent and 50.7 percent of eligible nonparticipants did not apply for benefits, citing ineligibility due to income, assets, or other program requirements; (3) 73.9 percent and 82.8 percent of eligible nonparticipants who thought they were eligible did not attempt to obtain stamps, citing their belief that they did not need them, administrative obstacles, and physical access problems; and (4) 61 percent of eligible nonparticipants who attempted to obtain food stamps were declared ineligible.

137557

[Opportunities to Improve U.S. Food/Agricultural Exports Through Improved Marketing Techniques]. T-RCED-88-56. June 28, 1988. 17 pp. plus 3 attachments (15 pp.). *Testimony* before the House Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee; by John W. Harman, Associate Director, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to

RCED-86-3BR, November 6, 1985, Accession Number 128558.

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Agriculture: Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee.

Authority: Food Security Act (P.L. 99-198).

Abstract: GAO reviewed public and private marketing mechanisms to enhance opportunities for the United States to improve its food and agricultural sales in foreign markets. GAO found that U.S. exporters needed to: (1) develop effective, long-term marketing strategies; (2) design positive product images; (3) improve distribution systems; (4) develop competitive pricing and credit policies; and (5) conduct promotional activities in targeted markets. GAO also found that an explicit U.S. food and agricultural marketing strategy has not evolved because: (1) U.S. farm policy has historically encouraged production over marketing; (2) many U.S. firms believe that the U.S. market is large enough to accept all of their products; (3) most domestic U.S. high-value product exporters lack the interest and experience to compete successfully with foreign traders; and (4) many small and mid-size firms do not market their products abroad. In addition, GAO found that: (1) many foreign competitors use strategic marketing practices to target and capture market shares; and (2) although the federal government and states have made progress in assisting private industry in promoting agricultural exports, public and private officials need to pool their resources in developing new ideas and effectively applying strategic marketing principles in the world marketplace.

137575

Crop Insurance: FCIC Should Strengthen Actual Production History Program Controls. RCED-89-19; B-209866. December 15, 1988. Released December 21, 1988. 8 pp. plus 4 appendices (16 pp.). *Report* to Rep. Ed Jones, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; Rep. Glenn L. English, Chairman, House Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; by J. Dexter Peach, Assistant Comptroller General,

Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division. Refer to RCED-88-7, November 20, 1987, Accession Number 134459; and T-RCED-87-18, April 29, 1987, Accession Number 132794.

Issue Area: Food and Agriculture: Satisfying U.S. Rural Development and Rural Infrastructure Objectives (6511).

Contact: Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division.

Budget Function: Agriculture: Farm Income Stabilization (351.0).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Department of Agriculture: Federal Crop Insurance Corp.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Government Operations: Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; *House* Committee on Agriculture: Conservation, Credit, and Rural Development Subcommittee; *Rep.* Glenn L. English; *Rep.* Ed Jones.

Abstract: Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation's (FCIC) implementation of its Actual Production History (APH) Program, focusing on whether FCIC had adequate controls to ensure the accuracy of farmers' production guarantees.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that FCIC: (1) reinsured private companies under the APH program to insure farmers' crop production, based on individual farmers' certifications of production history; (2) found in a 1987 review of companies that 37 percent of policies had inaccurate production guarantees, primarily due to overstated or understated production histories; (3) clarified its guidance to insurance companies for implementing the APH program, but did not change its policies or require farmers to provide actual production records during policy writing; (4) primarily relied on insurance companies to verify farmers' certifications of production history; (5) required insurance companies to sample policies and determine production guarantee accuracy but did not require the companies to report the results of those checks; (6) required verification of guarantee accuracy only if the guarantee appeared to be unreasonable, and lacked criteria for establishing guarantee reasonableness; and (7) lacked guidance for interpreting the significance of the results of sample checks or for taking action if the samples revealed frequent or widespread problems.

Recommendation To Agencies: The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to require reinsured

companies to report to FCIC the results of APH guarantee reviews that are conducted in connection with the current sampling requirements. This should include reporting the type and frequency of errors found during the reviews. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to establish criteria for interpreting the significance of the frequency of errors found during the required sampling of APH guarantees and for deciding the actions that should be taken if tolerances for acceptable levels of errors are exceeded. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to require that all APH guarantees be verified at the time of loss. Verifications should include reviewing the supporting documentation for certified production data as well as for the calculation of the guarantee. The Secretary of Agriculture should require the Manager, FCIC, to monitor the frequency of certification-related errors and reduce reliance on the certification process if such errors do not decrease. The latter could be achieved by significantly tightening the current sampling procedures. For example, rather than sampling all production guarantees that are twice the local average, as is currently the procedure, FCIC could review all guarantees that are some determined percentage less than twice the local average. Additionally, FCIC could add sampling criteria that would require review of all guarantees that could result in potential losses above an established monetary amount. Such criteria would help ensure that production guarantees for potentially large insurance claims are supported. A final alternative might be to completely eliminate the certification feature of the APH program and require all farmers to provide production data at the time a policy is written.

137655

Patronage Refunds: Rural Telephone Bank's and Other Cooperatives' Methods to Refund Earnings. AFMD-89-27; B-159292. December 30, 1988. 4 pp. plus 1 appendix (2 pp.). *Report to Rep.* Bill Grant; by Frederick D. Wolf, Director, Accounting and Financial Management Division. Refer to T-AFMD-87-19, July 23, 1987, Accession Number 133567.

Issue Area: Financial Statement Audits of Government Entities: Audits of Government Corporations and Pension Plans (7505).

Contact: Accounting and Financial Management Division.

Budget Function: Financial Management and Information Systems: Regulatory Accounting Rules and Financial Reporting (998.6).

Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture: Rural Electrification Administration: Rural Telephone Bank.

Congressional Relevance: *Rep.* Bill Grant.

Authority: Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 901 et seq.). Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-203). Government Corporation Control Act.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO determined whether the Rural Electrification Act specified a method that the Rural Telephone Bank (RTB) should use to refund any earnings to its class B stockholders.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the act stipulated that RTB set aside for patronage refunds, any annual earnings remaining after payment of operating expenses and dividends on class A and class C stock; (2) although RTB staff proposed an amendment that would permit periodic redemption of class B stock for cash prior to the retirement of class A stock, the board of directors did not adopt it; and (3) the most prevalent refund practice for other member-owned cooperatives was to issue cash refunds over periods ranging from 1 to 15 years after the year net income was earned, based on the percentage of interest that each stockholder paid during the period the earnings accumulated. GAO believes that, unless Congress amends the act: (1) no authority exists for RTB to pay cash dividends to class B stockholders; and (2) RTB can not redeem class B stock for cash prior to the redemption of all government-owned class A stock.

137686

Foreign Aid: Problems and Issues Affecting Economic Assistance. NSIAD-89-61BR; B-225870. December 30, 1988.

Released January 11, 1989. 5 pp. plus 6 appendices (35 pp.). *Briefing Report to Rep.* Lee H. Hamilton, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; by Frank C. Conahan, Assistant Comptroller General, National Security and International Affairs Division. Refers to numerous GAO reports regarding foreign economic assistance.

Issue Area: Foreign Economic Assistance: Other Issue Area Work (6291).

Contact: National Security and International Affairs Division.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151.0).

Organization Concerned: Agency for International Development.

Congressional Relevance: *House* Committee on Foreign Affairs; Congress; *Rep.* Lee H. Hamilton.

Authority: Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. P.L. 83-480.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO identified key issues and problems relating to the U.S. foreign economic assistance program.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that U.S. bilateral assistance programs had been undermined due to: (1) recipients' inability to provide agreed funding and recurrent cost financing; (2) U.S. failure to effectively use Economic Support Fund and food aid to achieve economic development and policy reforms overseas; (3) recipients' inability to service existing debt and borrow new funds; (4) unsuccessful efforts by the Agency for International Development (AID) to provide viable economic alternatives to narcotics crops in order to reduce narcotics cultivation through crop substitution and area development; (5) the impacts of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) on recipients which would likely increase their demands for assistance; and (6) recipients' inadequate financial management and accounting procedures over cash transfers and local currency to ensure that assistance is used for intended purposes. GAO believes that Congress should: (1) structure U.S. bilateral assistance according to the recipient's capability to support projects; (2) strengthen efforts to encourage economic policy reform by clarifying specific reform objectives and establishing time frames for completion; (3) focus AID programs on more manageable units by decreasing the total number of countries in which AID missions are located; (4) develop an overall debt relief policy; and (5) determine whether AID should play a greater role in efforts to reduce narcotics.

137714

Groundwater Protection: The Use of Drinking Water Standards by the States. PEMD-89-1; B-228844. December 20, 1988.

Released January 19, 1989. 10 pp. plus 7 appendices (38 pp.). *Report* to Sen. Max S. Baucus, Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works: Hazardous Waste and Toxic Substances Subcommittee; by Eleanor Chelimsky, Assistant Comptroller General, Program

Evaluation and Methodology Division. Refer to PEMD-88-5, February 2, 1988, Accession Number 134964; and PEMD-88-6, March 16, 1988, Accession Number 135289.

Issue Area: Program Evaluation and Methodology: Intended and Unintended Effects of Government Actions in Physical System Areas (7203).

Contact: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division.

Budget Function: Natural Resources and Environment: Pollution Control and Abatement (304.0).

Organization Concerned: Environmental Protection Agency.

Congressional Relevance: *Senate* Committee on Environment and Public Works: Hazardous Waste and Toxic Substances Subcommittee; *Sen.* Max S. Baucus.

Authority: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976. Safe Drinking Water Act. Clean Water Act of 1977.

Abstract: In response to a congressional request, GAO examined whether Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) drinking water standards were appropriate for use as groundwater standards, specifically: (1) whether states relied on EPA standards when setting numeric groundwater standards; (2) states' use of existing numeric groundwater standards in their groundwater protection programs; (3) the potential for groundwater quality degradation using drinking water standards; and (4) how drinking water standards compared to guidelines for protecting uses of groundwater for such purposes as irrigation, livestock watering, and aquatic life.

Findings/Conclusions: GAO found that: (1) the 25 states that had numeric groundwater standards relied largely on EPA maximum contaminant levels (MCL); (2) most of the states would probably use EPA drinking water MCL as the indicators of the level and substances to regulate; (3) states focused on eight regulatory activities in making their groundwater protection decisions, including licensing surface discharges, requiring designs for waste disposal facilities, and containing or cleaning up hazardous waste sites; (4) 92 percent of the areas tested would meet the standards if states adopted MCL as groundwater protection standards and 43 percent met a limit associated with a one-in-one-million excess cancer risk for one or more of 13 carcinogens; (5) adopting any of the standards would potentially allow for degradation of groundwater resources, since the standards would allow contaminants to increase to the maximum allowable

concentrations; and (6) although MCL would protect livestock and irrigation usage, they were less stringent than the aquatic life guidelines, and only 66.9 percent of the areas tested would meet MCL for aquatic life.

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