

Part 404 – Compliance – Internal and External

Subpart F – Program Evaluations

404.50 General

NRCS will complete program evaluations through a series of Agency actions that target specific programmatic areas. Examples of Agency actions include: O&E studies, customer satisfaction surveys, external audits, external independent studies, and other actions generating supporting documentation. When considered cumulatively, these actions equal components of a program evaluation. Periodically these actions will be collectively analyzed to produce a Comprehensive Program Evaluation, along with findings and recommendations for action.

404.51 Authorities

The authorities for program evaluations include the following:

- (1) Resource Conservation Act of 1977;
- (2) Food Security Act of 1985;
- (3) Food and Agricultural Conservation Act of 1990;
- (4) Government Performance and Result Act of 1993;
- (5) Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996; and
- (6) Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

404.51 Policy

A. Requests for a comprehensive program evaluation must be submitted to the Director, OMOD, by July 1 of each year.

B. Comprehensive program evaluations will be included as part of the National Review Schedule.

C. Selection of programs to be evaluated will be based on the following:

- (1) Requests from the Chief.
- (2) Requests by Congress, the White House, Office of Management and Budget, the Department, or others.
- (3) Requests from the Agency National Leadership Team.
- (4) Extent to which any program is under consideration for changes in legislation or funding level.
- (5) Changes in Presidential and Secretarial Initiatives.
- (6) Changes in regulations.
- (7) Potential proposal for program reduction or elimination.
- (8) Proposals for creation of new programs.
- (9) Previous program evaluation reports.
- (10) Availability of resources.
- (11) Other relevant information.

D. Results of comprehensive program evaluations are presented to Agency Leadership in a formal report.

404.53 Roles and Responsibilities

- A. The Chief is responsible for:
 - Approving comprehensive program evaluations.
- B. RCs are responsible for:
 - Performing program evaluation responsibilities delegated by the Chief.
- C. The Deputy Chief, SPA is responsible for:
 - (1) Developing policy for program evaluations.
 - (2) Developing the National Review Schedule as part of the National Business Plan.
- D. Deputy Chiefs are responsible for:
 - (1) Cooperating in program evaluations.
 - (2) Identifying actions to be taken in response to evaluation recommendations.
 - (3) Communicating to the Deputy Chief, SPA, those reports or results of internal or external actions that target analysis of specific programmatic areas.
- E. The Director, OMOD, is responsible for:
 - (1) Providing technical leadership and conducting comprehensive program evaluations.
 - (2) Coordinating the schedule for comprehensive program evaluations.
 - (3) Analyzing all review report findings and reporting major issues or concerns to Agency Leadership.
 - (4) Monitoring and reporting to Agency Leadership implementation of final actions.