
Overview of ARS

*With Special Attention to
National Program Assessment*

Prepared for
*Assessing the Benefits of ARS R&D within an Economic Framework
Preliminary Results Workshop
March 10-11, 2008*

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Associate Administrator
National Programs

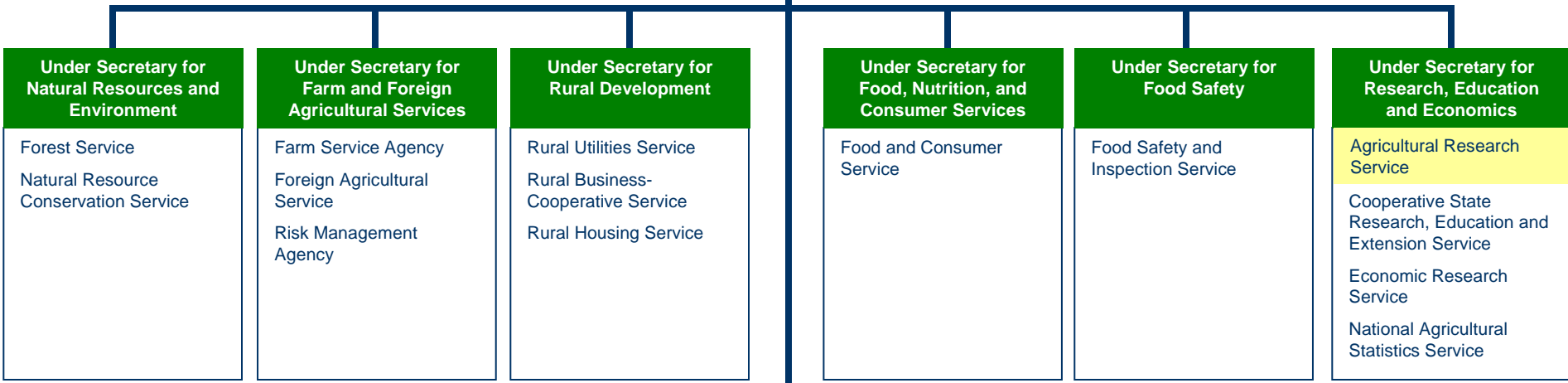
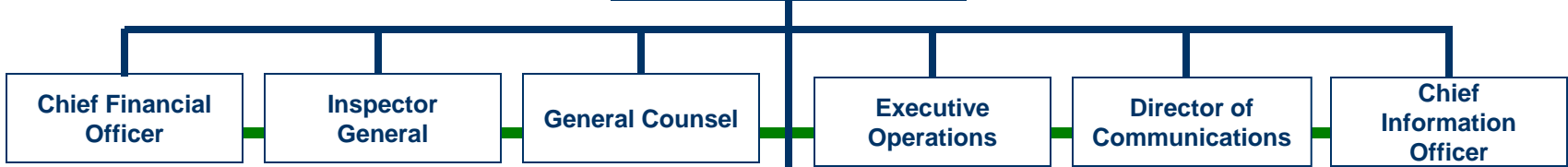




**ARS is the
in-house science
research arm
of USDA**



**Secretary
Deputy Secretary**



Research, Education, and Economics

Gale Buchanan

Under-Secretary

Merle Pierson

Deputy Under-Secretary

ARS

CSREES

ERS

NASS

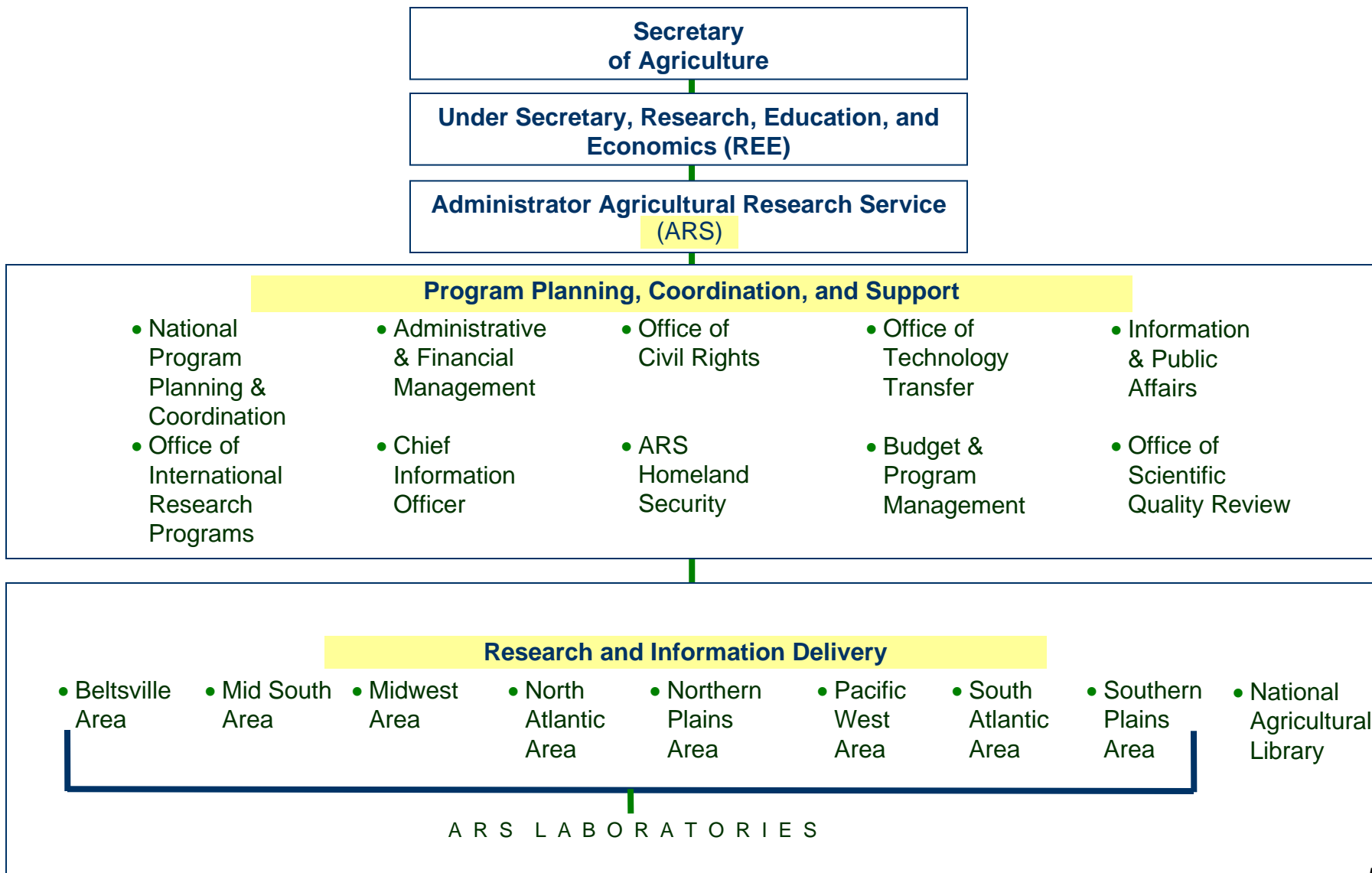


ARS Profile

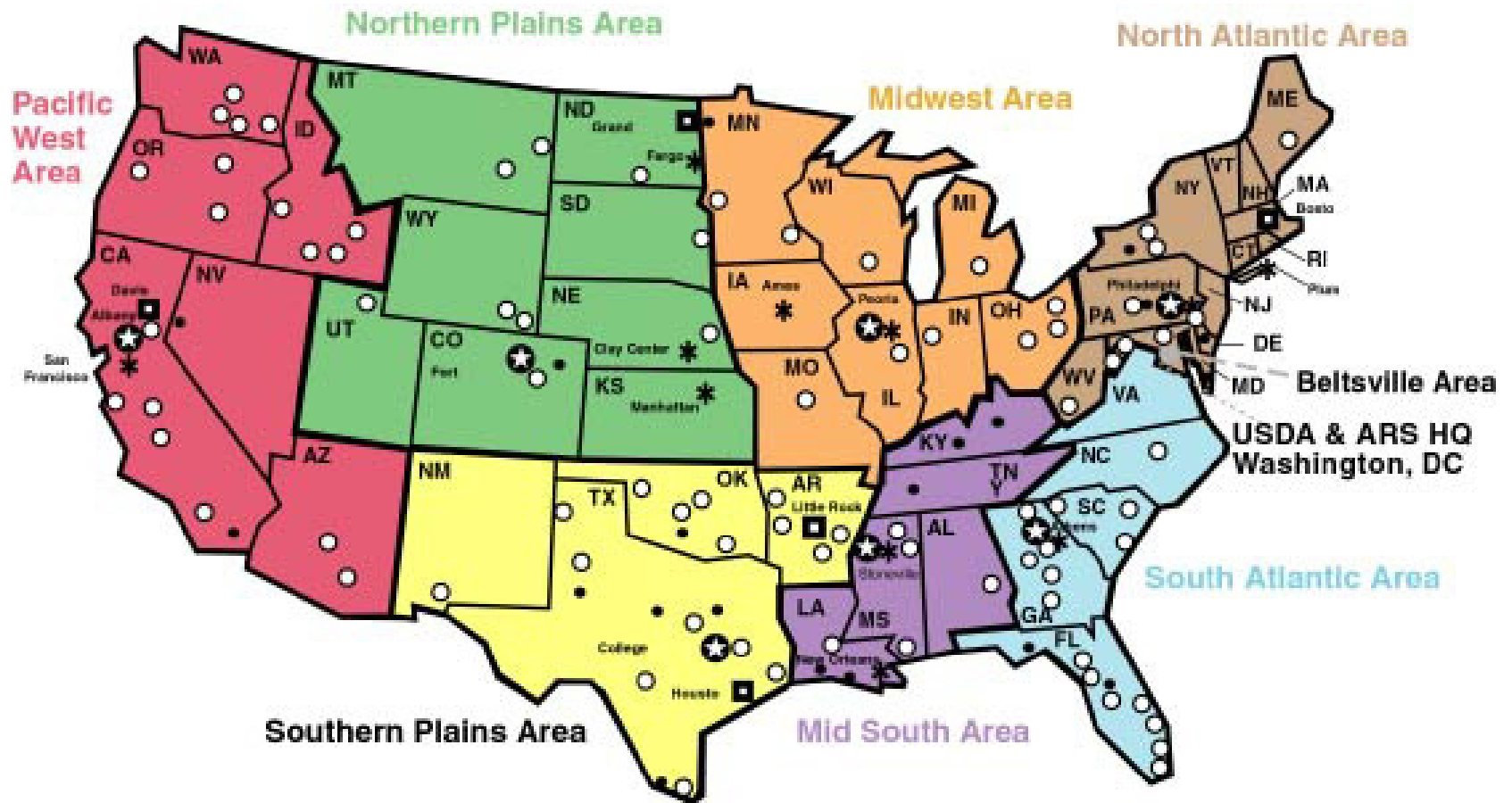
- In-house science research arm of USDA
- Farm-to-table research scope
- Information and technology transfer
- Administration and stakeholder priority setting process
- National Programs
- 1,200+ projects
- 2,500+ scientists and post docs
- 6,500 + other employees
- 100+ laboratories
- \$1.1 billion annual budget
- Partnerships with universities and industry
- International collaborations



ARS Organization



ARS Locations



- ⊙ Area
- * Research Centers
- ▣ Human Nutrition Centers
- Research Locations
- Research Worksites





ARS National Programs

Animal Production

- Food Animal Production
- Animal Health
- Arthropod Pests of Animals and Humans
- Aquaculture

Natural Resources

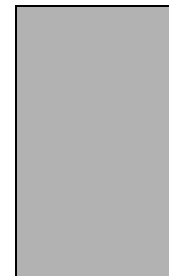
- Water Quality & Management
- Soil Resource Management
- Air Quality
- Global Change
- Rangeland, Pasture & Forages
- Manure & Byproduct Utilization
- Integrated Agricultural Systems
- Bioenergy & Energy Alternatives

Crop Production

- Plant, Microbial & Insect Germplasm Conservation & Development
- Plant Biological & Molecular Processes
- Plant Diseases
- Crop Protection & Quarantine
- Crop Production
- Methyl Bromide Alternatives

Human Nutrition

- Human Nutrition
- Food Safety (animal & plant products)
- New Uses, Quality & Marketability of Plant & Animal Products



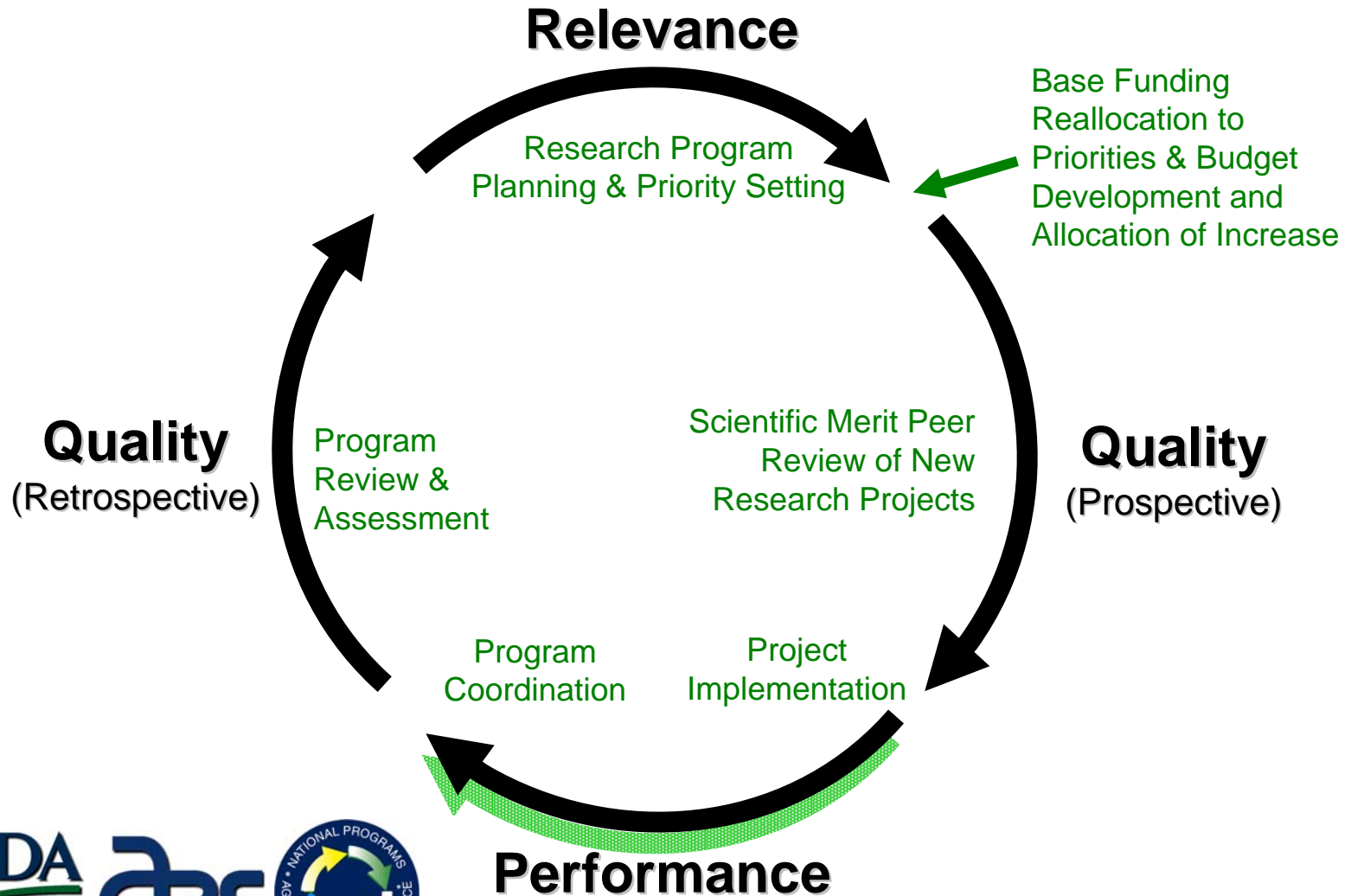
ARS National Programs

- Collectively, these represent the total program scope and mission of ARS
- Each National Program (NP) consists of multiple projects throughout the U.S. that contribute in a coordinated and complementary way to the achievement of NP objectives
- Each NP and its contributing projects have a 5-year duration before being reviewed, updated, new priorities determined, and new objectives defined for the next 5-year cycle
- These 5-year cycles are staggered such that 20% of the NPs and their projects are renewed each year
- Each National Program is made up of components that are closely related: viral research in the animal health NP.



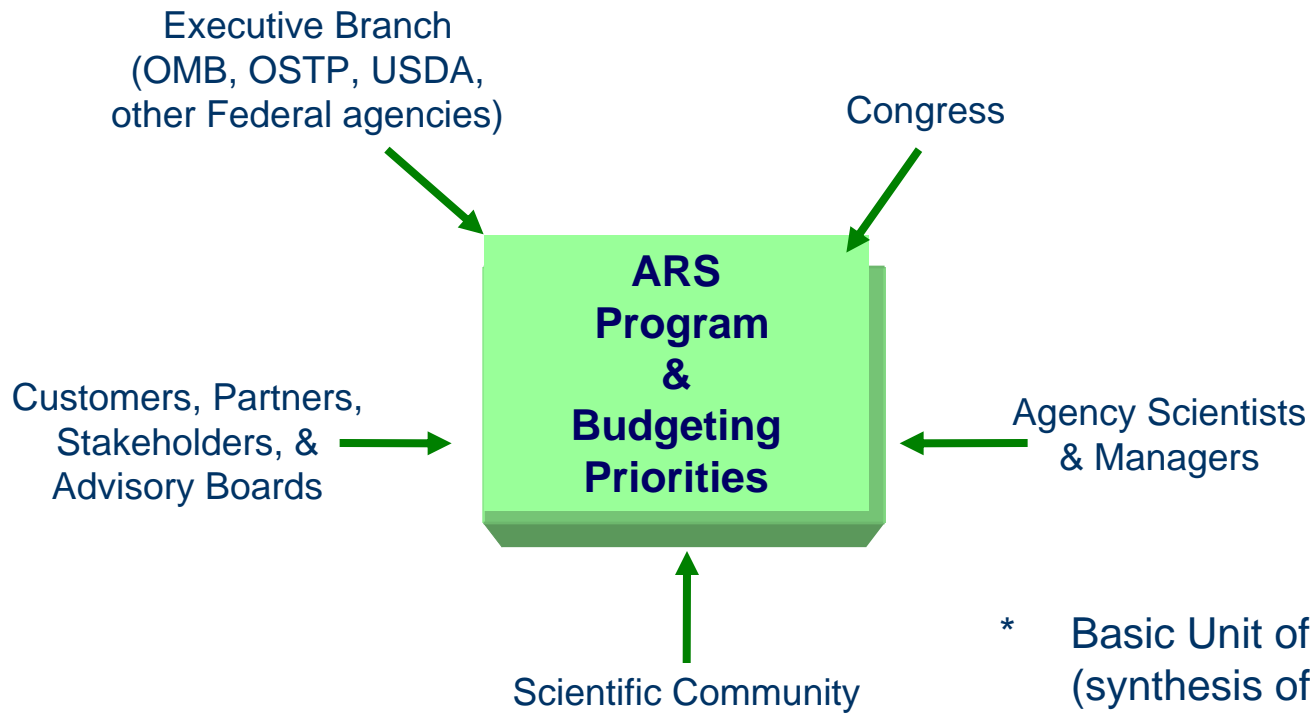
OMB Research & Development Investment Criteria

ARS National Program Cycle



Performance

Sources of Input to ARS Research Program Planning and Priority Setting Process*



* Basic Unit of relevance planning (synthesis of inputs to determine priorities) is a National Program each of which is made up of multiple research projects that contribute in a coordinated and complementary way to achievement of 5-year objectives



Information & Technology Transfer

- Scientific publications, conferences, workshops, field days
- Public germplasm releases
- National Agricultural Library - Departmental resource for agricultural and related information.
- Office of Technology Transfer - CRADAs, patents, and licensing with industry and other partners.
- Information Staff - ARS public affairs, Ag Research Magazine, news releases, exhibits, web page.



The Assessment Evaluates.....

- **Research Goals**

“Did the research address goals define by customers, stakeholders and the Action Plan?”

- **Research Objectives**

“Did the research program meet the objectives identified in the Action Plan?”

- **Research Products**

“Did the research create new knowledge and/or technologies that were broadly disseminated?”

- **Research Outcomes**

“Did the research achieve the projected outcomes and/or impacts?”



Who Assesses the Programs?

- Each National Program is assessed by an External Assessment Review Panel of knowledgeable customers and stakeholders.
- Panel Chairs are disclosed publicly.
- Panel members are diverse in expertise, affiliations, and geographic locations with minimal conflicts of interest.



The Assessment Report

- The product of the panel review is a written report on the quality of the program's accomplishments. Upon completion of the Assessment, panel members are asked to evaluate each Program component identified in the Action Plan using the following criteria. The results are included in the written report submitted by the Panel Chair.
 - High-Quality
“Significant benefit, influence, and/or progress toward”
 - Medium-Quality
“Moderate benefit, influence, and/or progress toward”
 - Low-Quality
“Little or no benefit, influence, and/or progress toward”



ARS Responsibilities

- Associate Administrator/NP Assessment Coordinator has primary responsibility for planning and facilitating National Program Assessments.
- National Program Leaders are responsible for preparation of the Accomplishment Report and for providing an overview of the NP to the external Panel.
- Area Directors/Center/Lab Directors/Research Leaders are responsible for coordinating response to data call and for providing feedback to their units on panel results and recommendations as appropriate.
- Scientists are responsible for providing significant research and/or technology transfer accomplishments for incorporation into the NP Accomplishment Report.



Panel Chair and Panelists

- Participate in the Assessment Program Orientation (via teleconference)
- Decide on the number of panelists needed and select*
- Read and assess the Accomplishment Report against the Action Plan
- Participate in a teleconference to discuss the Accomplishment Report (held 1-2 weeks after submission of the report to entire panel)
- Attend the panel meeting in Beltsville.
- Prepare a written report on the quality of each component and/or problem of the National Program. (due 30 days of the panel meeting)*
- Attend the next Customer/Stakeholder Workshop to present the Panel results.*



Vision for Economic Impact Assessment

Should be an integral part of program management, both

- *a priori* to help make smart and strategic resource allocation decisions, and
- *ex poste* to help assess and then communicate the appropriateness of resource allocation decisions and assess and communicate what was delivered in exchange for the taxpayer dollars

