State of South Carolina
Department of Agriculture

Accountability Report
2008-2009

Accountability Report Transmittal Form

Agency Name: South Carolina Department of Agriculture

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I - Executive Summary

1. **South Carolina Department of Agriculture Purpose, Mission, Vision, Values**

   Purpose
   The South Carolina Department of Agriculture exists to ensure the viability of agriculture in the state.

   Mission
   Our mission is to promote and nurture the growth and development of South Carolina's agriculture industry and its related businesses while assuring the safety and security of the buying public.

   Vision
   Our shared vision is for the state economy to grow and prosper providing everyone, producers and consumers, opportunities to enjoy the fruits of agriculture.

   Values
   Our core values include a commitment to integrity, diversity, inclusiveness, fairness, excellence, accessibility, protection, accountability and growth.

2. **Major achievements from past year**
   - Through a unique partnership with the Office of State Treasurer, the Department formed the Consolidated Human Resources Management Office, improving the level of human resources services for the agency while decreasing costs. Consolidating the offices reflected a savings of nearly $44,000 for the SCDA. The Consolidated Human Resources office is located on the 5th Floor of the Wade Hampton Building.

   - The Waste Pesticide Recovery Program collected and disposed of 246,746 pounds of unwanted, out-of-date waste pesticides. Farmers and landowners were relieved of the risk of maintaining these pesticides. The risk of pesticides entering the environment was lowered by collecting and disposing of them in a safe and proper manner.

   - The Grading and Inspection Service used grant funds acquired from U.S.D.A. to implement a Food Safety Audit program that provides incentives for firms to receive first time food safety audits. The Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices Food Verification program is a FDA/USDA developed program taught by Department trained personnel. Fifteen firms were provided the audits in this fiscal year and funds remain to audit at least fifteen more firms in the new fiscal year.

   - The Department along with its partners, Clemson University, the Sea Grant Consortium, and USDA-NRCS brought a new online Internet marketing program. MarketMaker provides Internet marketing opportunities for producers and processors. The site was populated with 15,962 farmers, small processors and other businesses. The site went live in February, 2009. From February to the end of June the Web site received 654,947 hits and had 19,660 users.

- An evaluation of the Dairy Stabilization Program this year revealed that it has helped to stabilize a declining industry. The low point in production and value was 2006. In 2007, production increased almost 16% and the farm gate value increased $25 million. This was maintained into 2008. Compared to the low point in 2006, an additional $50 million of revenue was generated in this industry in the two-year period mentioned above.

- The agency participated in various activities in preparation for the SC Enterprise Information System (SCEIS) HR/Payroll system which will be implemented in December 2009.

- The Department Web site created in FY08, www.agriculture.sc.gov, was designed to address the needs of external and internal audiences - customers and stakeholders as well as staff. The Web site improves online services for producers and consumers and provides enhanced channels of communication to assure the safety of the buying public. The Web site averages almost 2 million hits and 1.2 million pages viewed per month.

- In FY09, the Certified SC Grown Web site was updated and revamped to provide greater access to information about producers and their products. This Web site averages about 1 million hits and 629,000 pages viewed a month.

- In addition, to continue the momentum of buying South Carolina products, the Department launched the third phase of the Certified SC branding and marketing campaign. The new marketing initiative, Palmettovore, employed viral social networking with Facebook and Twitter to encourage South Carolinians to purchase and consume produce and products grown and processed in South Carolina. By the end of the FY, over 3,300 fans were following the Certified SC program including Palmettovore and Fresh on the Menu on Facebook and over 2,100 followers were tracking on Twitter.

- The Finance Section saved over $2,000 on forms & paper supplies by using the SC Enterprise Information System for financial and material management functions which was designed to be paperless.

- Department staff has been working diligently to cut costs without cutting public services. In total, the Administration Services Division saved the Department over $110,000 in FY09 by making good business decisions. (See page 26.)

- Information Technology conducted two in-house Excel training classes for staff instead of using local technology vendors. Forty participants were trained with a saving of $4,000 by teaching Excel I and Excel II with our own Information Technology personnel.

- Laboratory Services was able to significantly increase the number of chemical residue analyses without increasing man-hours because of a new less expensive, more efficient extraction method developed by our own SCDA lab director in cooperation with the University of South Carolina. That new extraction method is now being considered for use by other State Departments of Agriculture as well as the Food and Drug Administration.

- Through a unique private-public partnership, the Department has created a solution for the new State Farmers Market, reducing the state's costs by over $20 million. The new South Carolina State Farmers Market will be located in Lexington County. Ground was broken in

FY09 and construction is progressing. The new market is scheduled to open in the Spring of 2010.

3. **Key strategic goals for the present and future years**
   - Effectively manage agency operations and workforce
   - Protect producers and consumers
   - Promote agriculture and agribusiness expansion and development
   - Provide public awareness, promotion, and publicity of South Carolina agricultural products

4. **Your key strategic challenges**
   - Establishing agricultural marketing opportunities which support the state's economy, particularly in rural communities, during an economic downturn
   - Maximizing safety and protection of goods and services offered for sale to the public
   - Professional development for staff with limited funding
   - Maintaining the integrity of programs and services
   - Loss of institutional knowledge and information due to retirement and natural attrition
   - Enforcing over 30 laws mandated in the SC Code of Laws

5. **How the accountability report is used to improve organizational performance**
   Senior leaders collaborate with staff to prepare information for their respective area for the accountability report. In doing so, they are documenting improvements and performance measures. From this documentation, the accountability report is created. The report serves to monitor the Department's progress and identify gaps in performance. In addition, the accountability report is a valuable self-assessment tool in determining how well the Department focuses on the agency mission.

II – Organizational Profile

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) is mandated by 37 separate South Carolina laws related to:

- fostering agribusiness through marketing and promotion
- protecting the citizens of the state by ensuring proper weights and measures, grading and inspection of the state's agriculture products, and laboratory analysis of food, feed, seeds, cosmetics, and petroleum products

Originally created by an Act of the General Assembly on December 23, 1879, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture continues to provide programs and services affecting all the people of the Palmetto State – *producers and consumers*. The SCDA is charged with supporting the efforts of the state's second largest industry – agriculture. While the Department of Agriculture focuses on agribusiness, the agency also touches the lives of every citizen of the state through its programs and services.

The Department's role is crucial in promoting and safeguarding agribusiness, the #1 driver of South Carolina's economy with an annual impact of $34 billion and employing nearly 200,000 people. Cash receipts for crops and livestock total about $2 billion but the ripple affect goes far beyond the farm gate. Billions of dollars are generated in revenue, taxes, and jobs, particularly for the rural communities of the state. Agriculture and forestry, the state's agribusiness sector, is the largest driver of South Carolina's economy with a $34 billion impact employing about 200,000 people in the state.

Even in a slow economy, agriculture is the base for many other businesses in the state. However, the activities of the Department also impact and influence many other industries in the state.

1. **Main products and services and the primary delivery methods**
   Many of the Department's activities are related to commerce – developing, expanding, and protecting the integrity of agricultural commerce in our state and providing the highest quality consumer service with regards to food protection and value.

   - Broad-based marketing programs to increase consumer awareness and product demand for South Carolina agricultural products at local, national, and international levels.

   - SC Certified Roadside Market Program, the official roadside market program in the state, and the Small Farms Program which includes about 90 local community-based farmers markets across the state, an increase of 15 markets in only one year.

   - The Certified South Carolina marketing and branding program has grown to 688 members, an increase of 238 members in the last FY.

   - Fresh on the Menu, phase two of the branding and marketing program designed to encourage chefs to serve 25% of their menu with SC grown products in season, has grown to over 230 restaurants in the state since February 2008.

   - Three state farmers markets continue to have a significant impact of hundreds of millions of dollars on the state's economy, particularly in rural areas.

   - The SCDA works cooperatively with the US Department of Agriculture to provide commodity Grading, Inspection, and Market News Services. Though continuing to mail the Market News reports through traditional distribution methods, Market News has reduced the cost of printing and mailing by issuing daily audio recordings on the agency Web site.

   - The *Market Bulletin*, a valuable resource for farmers and non-farmers, includes millions of dollars in ads in each issue. Subscriptions to the 96-year-old publication are available online as well as in print and advertisers may submit their own ads through the SCDA's Web site. This feature has contributed to a significant increase in the number of ads published in each issue of the *Market Bulletin*.

   - Consumer Services inspectors check scales and measuring devices throughout the state for accuracy. They make sure that a pound weighs a pound and a gallon is really a gallon.

   - Laboratory technicians through testing and analysis ensure that the ingredients listed on packages are actually the ingredients in the packages. Livestock owners want assurance that the feed bag marked "no animal protein" actually contains no animal protein. Farmers and gardeners want to make sure that their seeds germinate properly. And, consumers want to know that the gasoline they pump into their cars is free of water or any other contaminates.

Currently, the Department serves producers who earn their livelihood on approximately 26,900 farms spreading over 4.9 million acres of farmland in the state. Year to year, the number of farms is increasing while the amount of farmland remains the same. The trend is towards smaller farms with greater value per acre.

Nationally, South Carolina ranks near the top in the production of several agricultural commodities – 2nd in flue-cured tobacco, 3rd in all tobacco, 6th in peanuts, 7th in cucumbers, 8th in peaches, cantaloupes, fresh market cucumbers and sweet potatoes, and 9th in watermelons and turkeys raised.

The Department of Agriculture, a relatively small agency with a $4.3 million general fund budget (which is down over $2 million from the previous year) has very large responsibilities to both producers and consumers regarding the safety, security, and marketing of agricultural products, both fresh and processed. The 130-year-old agency is dedicated to promoting and heightening the public's awareness of South Carolina's agriculture commodities and the farmers who produce them.

2. **Key customers**
   - Consumers – everyone who consumes or uses agricultural products
   - Producers – everyone who grows or produces agricultural commodities
   - Processors/Manufacturers – anyone who prepares, treats, or converts raw agricultural products
   - Wholesalers, Retailers, and Direct Marketers – everyone who sells raw agricultural products or value-added agricultural products
   - Local, state, and federal government officials and representatives
   - Agriculture Commission of SC members
   - Commodity Boards and Associations members
   - Representatives of existing, expanding, and developing agribusinesses
   - Electronic and print media representatives
   - Supermarket representatives
   - Fuel retailers and distributors

3. **Key stakeholders**
   (Everyone who has an interest in the industry of agriculture)
   - Consumers (men, women, and children) are the ultimate stakeholders
   - Taxpayers
   - Legislators
   - Others who have an interest in the industry of agriculture
     - Farm owners and operators of livestock and crops
     - Nursery men and women, greenhouse growers, and floriculture
     - Fertilizer, agrichemical and seed dealers
     - Farm equipment dealers
     - Forest landowners
     - Grain dealers
     - Produce shippers and handlers
     - Specialty producers and processors
     - Dairy producers, processors, shippers, and handlers
     - Agricultural educators, students, and researchers
     - Public and private agricultural partners
     - Land grant university and 1890 program representatives
     - Farm workers and migrant labor

4. **Key suppliers and partners**
   Suppliers
   - Vendors who are eligible to bid on state contracts, small suppliers, information technology vendors, Federal government grantor, printing companies, ad and PR agency
   - Kelly Registration Systems
   - Interactive Design and Development (IDD)

Partners
- SC Advocates for Agriculture
- South Carolina Farm Bureau
- Palmetto AgriBusiness Council (PABC)
- Palmetto Institute
- Clemson University
- State and Federal agencies
- Private individuals and organizations

5. **Operating Locations**
   - SCDA Headquarters, *State Capitol Complex, Wade Hampton Bldg., 5th Floor Columbia*
   - Columbia State Farmers Market, *1001 Bluff Road, Columbia*
   - Greenville State Farmers Market, *1354 Rutherford Road, Greenville*
   - Laboratory and Consumer Services, *1101 Williams Street, Columbia*
   - Metrology Laboratory, *237 Catawba Street, Columbia*
   - Pee Dee State Farmers Market, *2513 Lucas Street, Florence*

   SCDA employs graders, inspectors, and market news specialists who are located throughout the state in cooperative programs with the federal government. The Laboratory and Consumer Services facility along with the Metrology Laboratory are scheduled to be moved to a new State Farmers Market in Lexington County by the Spring of 2010.

6. **Number of Employees**
   At the end of FY 08-09, the SCDA included 130 classified employees and 1 unclassified full-time employee and 17 part-time employees. The Agency Vacancy Rate was 13.8% for the past fiscal year.

7. **The regulatory environment under which the SCDA operates**
   Department of Agriculture operations are authorized by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 46 Section 10 to Section 260. The Department oversees and enforces over thirty laws for the State of South Carolina. Certain activities of the Department are regulated by the EPA, OSHA, and other federal agencies. The Department also holds cooperative agreements to perform work for a number of federal agencies including the USDA and the FDA.
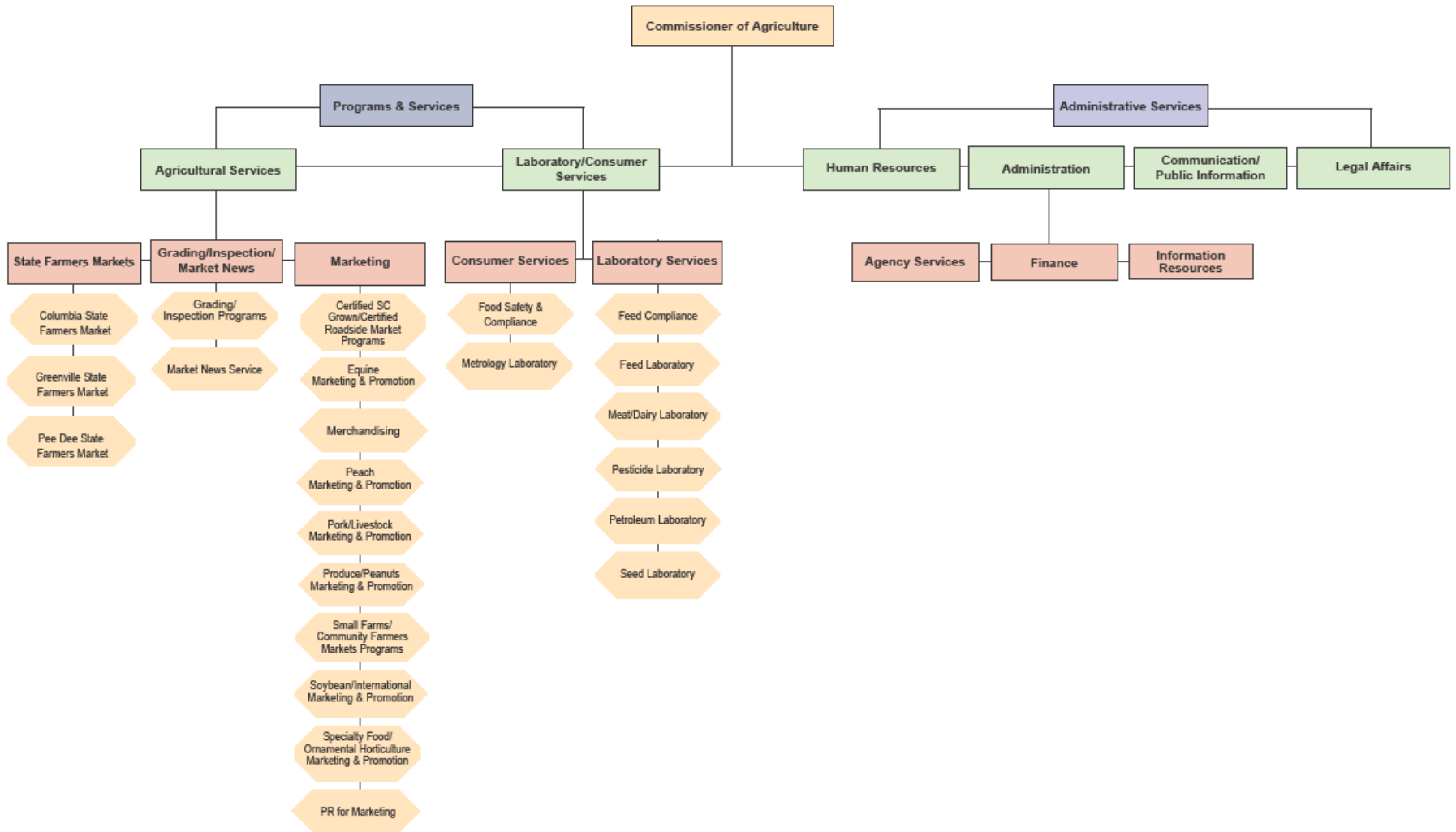
8. **Performance improvement system**
   During fiscal year 08-09, the SCDA was 100% compliant in administering its Employee Performance Management System program.

9. **Organizational structure (Chart 1.1)**

Chart 1.1

South Carolina Department of Agriculture
Organizational Chart

- Commissioner of Agriculture
  - Programs & Services
    - Agricultural Services
      - State Farmers Markets
        - Columbia State Farmers Market
        - Greenville State Farmers Market
        - Pee Dee State Farmers Market
      - Grading/Inspection/ Market News
        - Grading/ Inspection Programs
        - Market News Service
      - Marketing
        - Certified SC Grown/Certified Roadside Market Programs
        - Equine Marketing & Promotion
        - Merchandising
        - Peach Marketing & Promotion
        - Pork/Livestock Marketing & Promotion
        - Produce/Peanuts Marketing & Promotion
        - Small Farms/ Community Farmers Markets Programs
        - Soybean/International Marketing & Promotion
        - Specialty Food/ Ornamental Horticulture Marketing & Promotion
        - PR for Marketing
    - Laboratory/Consumer Services
      - Consumer Services
        - Food Safety & Compliance
        - Metrology Laboratory
      - Laboratory Services
        - Feed Compliance
        - Feed Laboratory
        - Meat/Dairy Laboratory
        - Pesticide Laboratory
        - Petroleum Laboratory
        - Seed Laboratory
  - Administrative Services
    - Human Resources
    - Administration
      - Agency Services
      - Finance
      - Information Resources
    - Communication/ Public Information
    - Legal Affairs

10. Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures (Chart 1.2)

Major Budget Categories	FY 07-08 Actual Expenditures		FY 08-09 Actual Expenditures		FY 08-09 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Services	5,475,543	2,665,182	5,315,714	2,193,612	5,260,099	2,145,278
Other Operating	6,554,635	2,971,505	6,551,802	1,991,793	5,597,474	1,316,935
Special Items			467,688		3,000,000	
Permanent Improvements	785,267		5,608,607			
Case Services						
Distributions to Subdivisions						
Fringe Benefits	1,764,639	853,639	1,795,880	724,759	1,830,981	833,976
Non-recurring	5,324,195	5,324,195	75,804	75,804		
Total	19,904,279	11,814,521	19,815,495	4,985,968	15,688,554	4,296,189

Sources of Funds	07-08 Actual Expenditures	08-09 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills		
Capital Reserve Funds		
Bonds		

Chart 1.3

Major Program Areas

Program Number and Title	Major Program Area Purpose (Brief)	FY 07-08 Budget Expenditures		FY 08-09 Budget Expenditures		Key Cross References for Financial Results*
I Administrative Services	Provides executive leadership, support, policy development and review, financial services, information technology, facilities management, and other administrative services	**State:** **Federal:** **Other:** **Total:**	1,219,947 -0- 4,448 1,224,395	**State:** **Federal:** **Other:** **Total:**	878,347 -0- 5,000 883,247	pgs. 26-31
			% of Total Budget: 6.2%	**% of Total Budget:**	4.4%	
II Laboratory Services	Protects consumers from unsafe, ineffective, or fraudulent goods that may be offered for public sale; assures that goods meet acceptable standards of quality; monitors labeling; registers animal and pet foods, frozen desserts, gasoline, and antifreeze; issues licenses for butterfat testers and milk samplers and weighmen; grants permits to salvage food operations; issues two to three thousand licenses, permits and registrations; provides assistance regarding food safety and security in the event of a natural disaster or an accidental or international emergency related to Homeland Security.	**State:** **Federal:** **Other:** **Total:**	1,400,930 -0- 171,759 1,572,689	**State:** **Federal:** **Other:** **Total:**	899,342 -0- 779,429 1,678,771	pgs. 31-35
			% of Total Budget: 7.9%	**% of Total Budget:**	8.4%	
III Consumer Services	Draws samples for analysis in the SCDA's laboratories; protects the people of the state, farmers and non-farmers, from fraud by ensuring the accuracy of weights and measures; provides grading and inspecting of poultry products; inspects food and cosmetic manufacturing and storage facilities; assures farmers that they receive full and prompt payment for the products they produce and that their stored cotton and grain crops are protected in warehouse facilities; inspects gas pumps, grocery store scales, vehicle tank meters, and liquid petroleum gas measuring devices; collects official samples of petroleum, produce, meat and feeds for laboratory analysis; licenses, bonds and audits warehouses and dealers; inspects storage facilities for sanitation compliance.	**State:** **Federal:** **Other:** **Total:**	408,158 -0- 1,083,363 1,491,521	**State:** **Federal:** **Other:** **Total:**	596,222 -0- 875,383 1,471,605	pgs. 36-38
		% of Total Budget: 7.5%		**% of Total Budget:** 7.5%		

IV Agricultural Services	Develops and implements broad-based marketing programs; provides programs and services designed to increase consumer awareness and product demand for quality South Carolina agricultural commodities; strives to improve the economic vitality of business and individuals in the industry of agriculture; encourages expansion and development of existing industries that use South Carolina agricultural commodities, both fresh and processed, to increase the marketability of locally-grown products; provides quality grade standards and up-to-date first-hand market news to the allied industry through a cooperative agreement with the USDA; oversees and operates the three state farmers markets; domestic and international marketing assistance; certifies roadside markets; promotes specialty crops and specialty products; assists small farmer and provides support for organically grown certification; promotes the green industry (nursery, greenhouse, landscape, etc.); authorizes individual farmers and farmers' markets to be able to accept coupons from those who are nutritionally at risk to buy fresh, unprepared produce issued in the WIC and Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Programs; serves as a liaison to commodity boards, associations, and the state's Ag Commission; publishes the *Market Bulletin* which is designed as a vehicle for farmers and non-farmers to buy and sell agricultural and agricultural-related items, as a resource for economic stability especially in rural areas.	State: 2,607,651 Federal: 65,995 Other: 5,067,927 Total: 7,741,573 % of Total Budget: 38.9%	State: 1,811,494 Federal: 397,968 Other: 6,092,019 Total: 8,301,481 % of Total Budget: 41.9%	pgs. 38-48
V	Employer Contributions	**State:** 853,639 **Federal:** -0- **Other:** 911,000 **Total:** 1,764,639 **% of Total Budget:** 8.9%	**State:** 724,759 **Federal:** 905 **Other:** 1,070,216 **Total:** 1,795,880 **% of Total Budget:** 9.1%	

Below: List any programs not included above and show the remainder of expenditures by source of funds.

N/A

Remainder of Expenditures:	**State:** 5,324,195	**State:** 75,804
Supplemental Appropriations	**Federal:** -0-	**Federal:** -0-
Permanent Improvements	**Other:** 785,267	**Other:** 5,608,607
	Total: 6,109,462	**Total:** 5,684,411
	% of Total Budget: 27.1%	**% of Total Budget:** 28.7%

* Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 - Business Results. These References provide a chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document.

Section III – Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence Standards

Category I – Senior Leadership, Governance, and Social Responsibility
 1. How do senior leaders set, deploy, and ensure two-way communication for: a) short and long term organizational direction and organizational priorities, b) performance expectations, c) organizational values, and d) ethical behavior.
   Under the leadership of the Commissioner of Agriculture, the leadership team continues to focus on the mission of growing the business of agriculture in the state and protecting the buying public from deceptive business practices in the marketplace. This focus has instilled a sense of pride in staff and those served by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture.

   Regular and frequent communication between senior staff serves as an important part of leadership in the Department of Agriculture. Division Directors meet regularly with their staff to keep employees informed of agency issues. Long-term, under the leadership of the Commissioner, current and prospective programs, new initiatives, and new and innovative ideas for future direction continue to be examined and action taken accordingly.

   The Commissioner and his leadership team value partnerships with customers and stakeholders, fostering a free exchange of ideas that are used in evaluating the agency's programs and services. Employees are committed to enhancing the lives of our taxpaying citizens, providing them a satisfactory return on their investment.

   Over time, an internal system encompassing policies, processes and people has been developed and expanded. Management activities are directed by the Commissioner of Agriculture with a good business sense, objectivity and integrity.

   Managers and supervisors are encouraged to make decisions that define expectations, grant power, and verify performance.

   Senior staff and/or their designated apprentice liaisons gather monthly at the "Tuesdays @ 10" meetings to discuss team activities related to everything from promotion and publicity efforts to resolution of external and internal issues and problems. Through face-to-face discussions with managers and other staff, through written guidelines and policies, through EPMS links to program performance standards, and through development of effective modules, managers set clear performance expectations, goals, and objectives for employees.

   Agency leadership communicates social responsibility and ethical expectations through individual evaluations and discussions, policies and procedures, and employee participation in professional organizations. As a state agency serving the people of South Carolina, the rights and privileges of the citizens are ensured. While the agency complies with the Freedom of Information Act, the Department also maintains the privacy of those served. For instance, the result of official samples that are taken by inspectors for analysis by the laboratory technicians is public information. Those samples that are submitted by private parties are considered private information. The Department of Agriculture ensures that rights and privileges are maintained.

   In addition to maintaining the rights and privileges of citizens, the human rights of employees are also respected. However, irresponsible and unethical behavior that may bring harm to the agency, community, its people, or the environment is not tolerated. Employee performance is directly enhanced by the attention to the details involving their benefits. Employees have a vested interest in what the agency does and how it is run. When employees perceive that they are a valuable asset, productivity increases.

Professional development is offered whenever feasible. Managers and supervisors are active in professional organizations that foster their continued growth in knowledge and expertise in their fields of specialty. Employees, especially lab scientists, chemists and technicians, are encouraged and supported in outside professional activities that contribute to their growth and professional competence. Employees are also encouraged to present a professional attitude at all times with a commitment to the agency and the public it serves.

2. How do senior leaders establish and promote a focus on customers and other stakeholders?
Every South Carolinian is a customer and stakeholder of agriculture, including SCDA employees. In reality, they are their own customers. They are constantly in touch with the public, assisting with agribusiness development and expansion, product testing and analysis, and providing reasonable assurances for the consumer.

3. How does the organization address the current and potential impact on the public of its programs, services, facilities and operations, including associated risks?
The agency receives excellent feedback on programs and services from the agricultural community, commodity boards and associations, and consumers. Testing and inspection error rates provide vital information concerning safety and risk to consumers. Also, the Department in cooperation with Clemson University, the Palmetto AgriBusiness Council, Farm Bureau and market research companies are continuing to work to develop formulas that provide the return on investment for the Department's marketing and branding program. In addition, surveys are performed to see how well programs are working. The Department also receives about 10 to 20 information requests each day through the Web site on a variety of subjects that may or may not be the responsibility of the agency. However, the Department serves as a clearinghouse and forwards those questions to the responsible agency or parties, if they are not pertinent to the agency's programs and services.

4. How do senior leaders maintain fiscal, legal, and regulatory accountability?
Department staff is committed to the concept of fiscal responsibility. Many problems cannot be solved by money alone. Leadership is providing fresh approaches and creativity in addressing issues in a cost-effective way. Particularly in the realm of regulatory responsibility, staff is instructed to treat customers fairly and with understanding. The Department's General Counsel deals with complaints, lawsuits or other legal and regulatory issues to ensure accountability. In addition, the General Counsel serves as the central contact for Freedom of Information requests.

5. What performance measures do senior leaders regularly review to inform them on needed actions? (See Category 7 for actual results.)
- Tests on feeds, seeds, foods, cosmetic and petroleum products to assure product protection
- Partnerships with stakeholders to promote agriculture in South Carolina
- Buying and selling of the state's agricultural commodities both fresh and processed
- Food sanitation inspections at locations under SCDA regulatory authority
- Market and economic research on the effectiveness of the agency's strategic marketing and branding campaign
- Growth and development of the State Farmers Markets
- Efficiency and effectiveness provided by new technology

6. How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness, the effectiveness of management throughout the organization including the head of the organization, and the governance board/policy making body? How do their personal actions reflect a commitment to organizational values?

Senior leaders use their division sessions, the EPMS and other meetings with staff as a discovery mechanism for employee feedback. These discussions are used to help managers determine if they are adequately directing employees and to help them identify activities that may be barriers to the performance of individual employees and of the agency as a whole. In addition, these discussions often set realistic expectations and allow the managers to modify or change priorities. In normal budget years, employees are recognized for their efforts through an Employee Appreciation Day and an Employee Recognition Day. Senior leaders serve as the model for the agency's commitment to core values.

7. How do senior leaders promote and personally participate in succession planning and the development of future organizational leaders?

Senior leaders know that the success of the agency depends greatly on the availability of competent people. With a significant staff turnover in the last few years due to natural attrition and retirement and the anticipation of a critical shortage of middle and senior leaders within the workforce, succession planning has been a priority. To ensure that there are successors to drive the programs and services, senior leaders are empowered to hire and train managers that may be able to succeed them in a leadership role in the future. Senior leaders are actively involved in mentoring, training and cross-training, and they periodically review the responsibilities of their staff to determine backups for each of their positions. This is important because it often takes years of grooming to develop effective senior managers.

8. How do senior leaders create an environment for performance improvement and the accomplishment of strategic objectives?

Senior leaders are constantly looking for ways to improve the performance of employees. The EPMS system is one way supervisors work with employees to identify improvements and deficiencies whether they are related to poor performance of skills or tasks or whether it is a behavioral problem that disrupts the workplace. Each employee is individually assessed and an improvement plan is created for those individuals.

9. How do senior leaders create an environment for organizational and workforce learning?

The agency actively supports and strengthens communities through employee involvement in civic clubs and various other community-oriented groups or committees. Staff is encouraged to be involved in programs that will provide awareness of SC agriculture and of the SCDA's programs and services. Staff worked collaboratively on various projects in FY09 to assist the community.

10. How do senior leaders communicate with, engage, empower, and motivate the entire workforce throughout the organization? How do senior leaders take an active role in reward and recognition processes to reinforce high performance throughout the organization?

Senior leaders encourage employee motivation throughout the agency. They focus more on performance, but they are also spending more time getting each employee aimed properly so the employee understands what he or she is to accomplish – his or her goals and objectives. Employees are empowered to make decisions that affect their own work. Improvement requires creativity, challenging themselves, and learning from their mistakes.

10. *How do senior leaders actively support and strengthen the communities in which your organization operates?*
    Senior leaders support the efforts of employee involvement in urban and rural communities through individual and collective activities. By working collectively to keep agriculture a viable industry in the state, the agency is also strengthening local communities. On an individual level, senior leadership encourages employees to be involved in community activities that will provide awareness of South Carolina agriculture and of the agency's programs and services.

Category 2 – Strategic Planning
The agency continues to evaluate strategic planning processes which involve the assessment of customer needs and the design of agency programs and services. The strategic plan provides a basis for business decisions, resource allocation and management and helps the agency focus on priorities. As part of the strategic planning process, leadership meets with agribusiness partners to determine goals and objectives for agribusiness in South Carolina. Those activities are then compiled into an action plan with activities that focus on the agency's mission.

1. *What is your Strategic Planning process, including key participants, and how does it address;*
   a. your organizations' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
   b. financial, regulatory, societal and other potential risks;
   c. shifts in technology, regulatory, societal and other potential risks, and customer preferences;
   e. organizational continuity in emergencies; and
   f. your ability to execute the strategic plan;

   The weaknesses of the agency are balanced by its strengths. Every problem presents an opportunity. Salaries are generally lower in state government than in the private sector making it difficult, but not impossible, to retain qualified employees. However, through a comprehensive analysis involving the Human Resource office, the agency has been able to upgrade position descriptions and better align employees with their abilities. Staff reductions through natural attrition and retirement increased in the past few years, but with succession planning the agency has been able to blend the experience of veteran employees with the enthusiasm of novice employees. In addition, the agency has previously collected minimal fees or no fees for certain licenses, permits, etc. Fees are now being collected to offset some of the costs involved in providing those special services. Also, laws enforced by the Department, policies and procedures, and rules and regulations that are outdated continue to be updated.

   Modest financial support for food and feed protection initiatives has been achieved by way of federal grants. The agency received about $7,500 from the FDA for monitoring BSE (mad cow disease) at sites in the state's feed distribution chain and an additional $11,200 from USDA for the Market News Service.

   In keeping with the strategic goal of effectively managing agency operations and workforce, the agency consolidated its Human Resource office which provides more efficient and effective services to the agency and its employees. This has also resulted in some cost savings for the agency.

   The agency also continues to incorporate new technology and computer systems to enhance work performance and customer service. Customers are now able to renew licenses and registrations online with a credit card. They can also submit ads and subscribe to print and electronic versions of the *Market Bulletin* online.

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A laboratory information management system, market vendor rental system, and the new Web site have been deployed to allow the agency to be more efficient and effective.

In the past, the Department has been remarkably resilient during periods when there was a void in leadership. However, plans continue to be developed for organizational continuity in case of a loss in senior leadership or an operational emergency. Emergency systems have been developed at the laboratories, farmers markets, and other facilities in addition to the main headquarters.

Each division within the Department maintains correspondence, calendars, and written and/or verbal reports. Ongoing analysis of the reports and information provided by each division allows senior leaders to monitor the status of the various activities and administrative responsibilities of the Department.

2. *How do your strategic objectives address the strategic challenges you identified in your Executive Summary?*

- Establishing agricultural marketing opportunities which support the state's economy, particularly in rural communities, during an economic downturn
  In order to provide agricultural marketing opportunities which support the state's economy, particularly in rural communities, the agency continues to grow and develop the branding and marketing program. In addition, the agency is continuously working with other public and private individuals and organizations to collaborate on strategic goals and objectives for agribusiness.

- Maximizing safety and protection of goods and services offered for sale to the public
  To maximize the safety and protection of goods and services offered for sale to the public, the agency continues to work closely with public and private partners to establish and formalize working agreements. In addition, the agency continues to build trust and integrity by providing prompt and accurate information to the public and other stakeholders. For example, the SCDA Web site links to federal government recall notices so that the consuming public has access to information as soon as it is available.

- Professional development for staff with limited funding
  Professional development for staff has improved significantly. However, one of the principal challenges is providing professional development for staff on a limited budget. Even with limited resources, agency staff received nearly 2,000 hours of training and professional development in FY09. The training included supervisory skills training, technology training, food/feed safety and security training, weights and measures training, analytical sciences workshops to name a few. Some activities were extremely technical. Some activities involved leadership training. All activities focused on the goal of producing a highly trained professional staff.

- Maintaining the integrity of programs and services
  To maintain the integrity of the agency's programs and services, senior leaders periodically review the business results as they relate to the initial action plans. Also, feedback from those served provides valuable insight. The downturn in the economy has created a significant reduction in the agency's budget. Like other agencies, the agency is dealing with those financial issues as they arise. Finding ways to do the same with less is difficult, but essential for the Department's programs and services to be effective.

- <u>Loss of institutional knowledge and information due to retirement and natural attrition</u>
  The replacement of experienced staff due to retirement and natural attrition has been intensified in the past few years, but with workforce planning, the agency has been able to blend the experience of seasoned staff with the enthusiasm of new employees.

- <u>Enforcing over 30 laws mandated in the SC Code of Laws</u>
  Enforcing the laws mandated in the SC Code of Laws continues to be simplified with new technology and alternative funding from fees. Also, updating the laws with modern standards assists in enforcement.

3. *How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives, and how do you allocate resources to ensure the accomplishment of your action plans?*
   Senior leaders periodically discuss activities with staff, individually and collectively, to track progress in various programs and services. Financial and human resources are allocated according to adherence to the Department's mission. Our goal is to ensure that our programs and services grow agribusiness commerce while assuring the safety and security of the buying public.

1. *How do you communicate and deploy your strategic objectives, action plans and related performance measures?*
   The accountability report is used as a self-assessment tool for ensuring that the agency remains in line with its mission. Each division develops goals and objectives based on the overall mission of the agency. The agency's mission is also communicated when planning strategies with partners.

2. *How do you measure progress on your action plans?*
   Each division measures progress and tracks opportunities for improvement through action plans, meetings, and discussions. Measures include workload and workflow as well as customer satisfaction.

3. *How do you evaluate and improve your strategic planning process?*
   Evaluating and improving strategic planning is an ongoing process. The process of developing an accountability report shows where progress is being made and where improvements are needed.

4. *If the agency's strategic plan is available to the public through the agency's Internet homepage, please provide a Web site address for that plan.*
   The agency's Strategic Plan is not currently posted.

Chart 1.4

Strategic Planning Chart

Program Number and Title	Supported Agency Strategic Planning Goal/ Objective	Related FY 08-09 Key Agency Action Plan/Initiatives	Key Cross References Performance Measures
I Administrative Services	Effectively manage agency operations and workforce.	Effectively manage financial resources to ensure financial well being. Create a work environment that promotes performance and employee satisfaction. Evaluate programs and services to ensure customer needs are met. Evaluate employee performance and provide materials and technological needs to be successful. Use available technology and aggressively seek new technology to improve office operations. Provide progressive leadership with a clear focus that actively guides the agency. Provide recognition to those employees for their effort. Develop a well trained and diverse workforce. Encourage staff to contribute ideas to means and methods of improving the workplace and the operation of the agency.	pgs. 26-31
II Laboratory and Consumer Services	Protect producers and consumers	Enforce all applicable laws regarding proper warehouse receipting, storage and payment for agricultural commodities. Ensure the accuracy of weights and other measurements. Work with public and private organizations to solve issues related to protection and safety. Perform food sanitation inspections at all locations under SCDA regulatory authority. Perform tests on feed, seed, food, and petroleum products to assure acceptable quality. Grant permits to salvage food operations. Inspect and grade appropriate agricultural products for domestic and international markets.	pgs. 31-38
IV Agricultural Services	Promote agriculture and agribusiness Provide public awareness, promotion, and publicity of SC agriculture	Expand Certified SC Grown, the agency's comprehensive branding and marketing strategy targeted to consumers within the state designed to build brand awareness of SC's agricultural products. Encourage new and existing business which use traditional and non-traditional agricultural products or which service and supply agriculture. Search for new products and look for new value-added ways to use the state's products. Provide assistance to small farmers. Support the growth and development of local farmers markets to encourage those nutritionally at-risk to buy locally grown products. Manage three regional State Farmers Markets in Columbia, Greenville, and Florence efficiently and effectively. Market local farm products to consumers and assist farmers through the Certified Roadside Market Program.	pgs. 31-48

Strategic Planning Chart

IV Agricultural Services (continued)		Support expansion and development of local, regional, national, and international markets for South Carolina agricultural products.	pgs. 38-48
		Encourage buying and selling of the state's agriculture products both fresh and processed through the Certified SC Grown Program	
		Develop partnerships with stakeholders to promote agriculture in South Carolina.	
		Provide consumers with information on selection, preparation, and nutrition of South Carolina agricultural products through electronic and print media.	
		Provide an agency publication that allows farmers and non-farmers to buy or sell farm-related items and that features timely information regarding agricultural issues and events.	
		Collect and disseminate market news information to all segments of the produce and livestock industries and to consumers through various print and electronic means.	

Category 3 – Customer Focus

1. *How do you determine who your customers are and what their key requirements are?*
   By virtue of our mission, our customers are producers and consumers, virtually everyone in the state. Producers need immediate access to markets and marketing information, and consumers need access to information about buying and using agricultural products. The more accessible the information, the more satisfied are our customers.

2. *How do you keep your listening and learning methods current with changing customer/business needs and expectations?*
   The agency continually seeks input from customers on how to improve processes. The agency's Web site has been rebuilt with a new, easier to remember location (www.agriculture.sc.gov) to provide current information about agriculture, agricultural events, and other valuable and useful information. In addition, the Web site was constructed for access by everyone. Two new compatible Web sites for the branding and marketing were also developed last FY to complement the agency's Web site. Department staff listens and learns from viewer remarks through those Web sites as well. Also, the Department has changed communication methods. Using social networking systems like Twitter and Facebook, the Department is able to quickly communicate with its customer base.

3. *What are your key customer access mechanisms, and how do these access mechanisms enable customers to seek information, conduct business, and make complaints?*
   The agency uses information from customers and stakeholders to keep services or programs relevant and provide for continuous improvement by surveying customers and evaluating their feedback. Surveys and evaluations of meetings and events provide valuable information for future planning. In addition, staff frequently visits customers for face-to-face comments. For instance, the Department has a Merchandiser who visits retailers to ensure that they display the materials for the agency's branding and marketing campaign. If the retailer is not displaying the materials, the reason is determined and a solution is developed and implemented that is agreeable to all parties.

4. How *do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and use this information to improve?*
The agency continues to train employees on how to communicate effectively with customers. Any customer complaint receives individual attention and follow-up. Also, the new Web site features a complaint/suggestion area where the agency receives approximately 75 to 100 requests for information or complaints.

4. *How do you use information and feedback from customers/stakeholders to keep services and programs relevant and provide for continuous improvement?*
Trade shows and agency events, the Certified Roadside Market and Certified SC Grown, and other general marketing program participant numbers and comments help evaluate success. Widely accepted activities show relevance and the need for continued support.

5. *How do you build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer and stakeholder groups.*
The agency builds positive relationships with internal (employees) and external (stakeholders) customers. Relationships are strengthened by listening and responding quickly and appropriately.

To meet the needs of our internal customers (employees), human resources staff maintains an open door policy which allows managers and employees' access to have their issues heard and their questions answered in a timely manner. HR staff is in constant contact with employees to keep them up-to-date on information that directly affects their work and benefits.

To meet the needs of our external customers (stakeholders), Department staff work closely with public and private partners to develop key strategies that will benefit all constituencies.

Category 4 – Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

1. *How do you decide which operations, processes and systems to measure for tracking financial and operational performance, including progress relative to strategic objectives and action plans?*
Factors affecting marketing of SC agricultural products make it difficult to measure. Effectiveness of that program area is measured by an analysis of communications with the public and media and the quality as well as the quantity of information provided. Public perception of the Department's role is important to the overall effectiveness of the agency.

Effectiveness of HR programs is measured by both internal and external audits of employee records and personnel transactions. Employee satisfaction is also taken into consideration in the decision making process concerning program improvements and delivery of services.

2. *How do you select, collect, align, and integrate data/information for analysis to provide effective support for decision and innovation throughout your organization?*
The agency benchmarks with other state and federal agencies whenever possible. Many programs are subject to audits to ensure financial effectiveness and procedure compliance. For instance, the pesticide test results from the SCDA Chemical Residue Laboratory are comparable to the U.S.D.A. Pesticide Data Program test results that are performed each year. Data shows that the U.S. food supply is safe and farmers are doing a good job in complying with pesticide residue laws.

3. *What are your key measures, how do you review them, and how do you keep them current with organizational service needs and directions?*
Data analysis is used in a number of ways to support effective decision-making and assess performance. For example, market research determined that 90% of those surveyed would prefer South Carolina locally grown produce over that from out of state, but 68% of them couldn't identify South Carolina products from the competition. These findings gave direction to the Department's branding and marketing campaign. More research is needed to determine how well the campaign has been received.

4. *How do you select and use key comparative data and information to support operational and strategic decision-making and innovation?*
The decision-making process is based, in part, on data and information collected. However, decision-making is also based on input from stakeholders and customers. For example, the Department continues to build on a strategic plan developed with like-minded partners for the future of agribusiness in keeping with the agency's mission.

5. *How do you ensure data integrity, timeliness, accuracy, security and availability for decision-making?*
Comparative data is selected based on benchmarks relevant to the agency's mission. Participation in national organizations such as the National Association of State Department's of Agriculture, Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Southern United States Trade Association also provides information for comparison purposes. In addition, much of the data collected at the SCDA is compared with data from other states. For instance, our chemical laboratory testing data is collected along with data from other states by the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure a safe food supply.

6. *How do you translate organizational performance review findings into priorities for continuous improvement?*
Program areas that do not measure up to their intended objectives are identified and evaluated. These reviews are used to identify the next best opportunity for improvement. Those that do measure up to their intended objectives are given priority. For instance, the SCDA's Certified Roadside Markets were validated because of the specific requirements needed to participate in the Certified SC Grown program. With that in mind and to avoid duplication of programs, the Farm Bureau's roadside market program was incorporated into the SCDA's Certified Roadside Market program in FY09. Merging the public and private programs is less confusing for roadside marketers and gives them additional sources of information and marketing support. This is a program that measures up to its intended objectives.

6. *How do you collect, transfer, and maintain organizational and employee knowledge assets? How do you identify and share best practices?*
Staff continues to listen and learn from our customers, monitors their perceptions gathered at the front line, and builds positive relationships with the entire customer base. The agency focuses on a broad base of customers through a variety of print and electronic means. Through the agency Web site and through the media and personal contacts, the public is provided accurate up-to-date verbal and written information. The agency staff now receives about 20 information requests daily through the Web site, but they also perform end-of-event evaluations and online surveys to ensure constant contact with constituents.

However, not all knowledge is learned from outside sources. Lessons of experience are also shared among staff through meetings and one-on-one information sharing impromptu gatherings. After action meetings or debriefings help identify, analyze and capture experiences, what worked

well and what needs improvement. For instance, an after action review of the State Fair activities help prepare for the next year's event.

Category 5 – Workforce Focus

1. How does Management organize and measure work to enable your workforce to:

1) develop to their full potential, aligned with the organization's objectives, strategies, and action plans;

Managers and supervisors encourage employees to organize their work according to an action plan which follows the agency's goals and objectives. They realize that enabling the workforce to develop to their full potential is essential to effective management. Conventional employment development – isolated events in which employees put in a predetermined amount of seat time are being revised to become a "process" in which employees meet performance objectives within a certain timeline. Ample time is provided for feedback, reflection and attention to specific areas in which improvements may be made.

Career path development tracks have been formalized in our Seed Laboratory and State Farmers Markets areas. On-going opportunities for on-the-job and professional development training provide motivation and are strongly encouraged. An Employee Awards and Recognition Luncheon to present service awards and recognize other achievements was held and recognition in group meetings is encouraged.

2) promote cooperation, initiative, empowerment, teamwork, innovation, and your organizational culture?

In order to promote cooperation, provide a forum for new employees, and encourage teamwork, a "Tuesdays @ 10" meeting was established last FY. The meeting is now held on the first Tuesday of the month and includes all employees that have something to contribute or learn. Each participant is allowed time to speak or ask questions. The meeting has become a valuable tool in highlighting the open organizational culture of the agency.

2. How do you achieve effective communication and knowledge/skill/best practice sharing across departments, jobs, and locations?

To assist employees in remaining knowledgeable about their benefits, a benefits meeting was held to inform employees about the important changes to their benefit options and address any questions they had regarding their benefits. Employees were encouraged to meet one on one with HR personnel to discuss their benefits and use the MyBenefits tool offered through EIP to review and update their benefit information.

Maintaining an electronic personnel file on all employees that is available to all HR personnel means employee information is readily available to answer questions and fulfill requests from managers and supervisors regarding their employees. Having all HR information in one central location helps HR remain consistent in the information it provides.

Knowledge and best practices are shared through senior management, departmental, and open format meetings open to all staff. The open format used for the "Tuesdays @ 10" meetings encourages decision making and exchanges of knowledge and ideas down the chain of command supporting innovative bottom up processes. An employee newsletter keeps staff informed of pertinent issues within the organization. An Intranet site, AgNet, now available to all staff at any time, anywhere, provides a place for posting all departmental policies, and forms and is a way to communicate updates of employee issues.

The goal for the upcoming FY is to include photos of staff in the online agency directory that is visible only to staff so that employees will know faces as well as names.

3. *How does management recruit, hire, place, and retain new employees? Describe any barriers that you may encounter.*
   The first step for SCDA leadership in succession planning is workforce assessment. While the state government population continues to age with the majority of workers ranging from 50-54 years, the average age of an SCDA employee remains at 47 years which means that they will probably be in a workforce environment for about another 17 to 19 years providing a wide field from which to select future leadership. However, about 30% of the Department's employee base will be eligible to retire within the next 5 years resulting in a younger more energetic workforce. If managed properly, the new workforce will provide a solid base from which to cultivate future leadership growth.

   Senior leadership also realizes the importance of differentiating between high-performing and high-potential employees. High performers give the agency an immediate return on investment and can be counted on to exceed performance expectations on a consistent basis. High potentials produce outstanding results consistently, are models of the agency's values, have the potential to move up within a certain time frame, and have the drive to take on greater responsibility. From the high potentials, senior leaders are able to identify internal talent that may be ready to step into specific roles if a key contributor or member of the executive team gave a two-week notice.

   Senior leaders also use EPMS to ensure that they are training the right individuals for the leadership roles of the future. The entire succession planning process provides a platform for determining those who may be ready to step up to the plate.

   Having identified the right individuals for leadership roles of the future, senior leadership works to groom those individuals and deepen the bench strength in all the critical areas of the agency. The focus is on the high potential employees and how to develop and retain them, especially with no real financial incentives due to the reduction in the state's budget. The average pay rate at the SCDA is $34,900 which has remained the same for the past three years. Leadership development at the SCDA is an ongoing, long-term process of investing in the talents of the organization.

4. *How do you assess your workforce capability and capacity needs, including skills, competencies, and staffing needs?*
   Supervisors and department heads assess staffing needs and evaluate workforce capability. Many of our inspector positions require specific certification that is constantly being monitored and supervisors monitor to ensure that certification is kept current. As retirees leave our workforce, more expert staff is hired to fill those positions. The institutional knowledge is captured from the retirees relevant to these transitions enabling new employee's access to this knowledge. Cross-training is stressed and is critical to many of our positions.

5. *How does your workforce performance management system, including feedback to and from individual members of the workforce, support high performance work and contribute to the achievement of your action plans?*
   The agency continues to use the EPMS process to communicate with and keep employees up-to-date about their roles and responsibilities within the agency and how their work performance assists in attaining agency goals and maintaining its high standard of good customer service.

High performance is evaluated and supported with the use of clear, obtainable and measurable success criteria which means employee performance is evaluated more objectively. Since ongoing communication between supervisor and employee is encouraged throughout the evaluation period, performance issues, good and/or bad, can be addressed in a timely manner.

6. *How does your development and learning system for leaders address the following:*
   a. development of personal leadership attributes;
   b. development of organizational knowledge;
   c. ethical practices;
   d. your core competencies, strategic challenges, and accomplishment of action plans?

The SCDA provides supervisory training classes for all supervisors and creates an environment for organizational knowledge through staff meetings. The SCDA leadership encourages employees to use professional ethical practices involving fiscal responsibility and accountability, non-descriminiation and privacy, equal opportunities and other ethical issues and phenomena which may arise out of specific functional areas of the agency or in relation to key customers and stakeholders.

Action Plans for FY09 were requested by the agency head. Each division reported their plans. Each report was analyzed for cost/benefit, staffing requirements, and relevance to the overall agency plan.

Employees are encouraged to remain up-to-date on all issues related to their area of work. Employees are also encouraged to take advantage of learning opportunities that will add value to their position and their personal growth and development. HR staff participated in various types of training programs this past fiscal year. Employees are expected to exhibit good professional ethical practices at all times.

7. *How do you identify and address key developmental training needs for your workforce, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation, and safety training?*
All supervisors are required to attend Supervisory Skills Classes and all employees are offered computer training and professional certification. The Laboratory Division is also staffed with trained scientists and technicians to minimize risk. The agency has two employees who serve in the ESF-15 Public Information function and four employees who serve on the SERT team in the ESF-11 Food Safety function who are responsible when a statewide emergency arises. Several employees are certified in First Aid/CPR enabling each division to have someone trained to assist with any in-house emergency.

Supervisors are encouraged to use the training section of the EPMS document to help their employees develop a training plan for each new evaluation cycle. This tool is useful in helping to identify employee job interest, skill gaps, skills needed for advancement/succession planning and employee development.

8. *How do you encourage on-the-job use of new knowledge and skills?*
Employees are encouraged to share information they've learned in training sessions via either a verbal or written report. Information learned is incorporated into employees' daily workflow wherever applicable. Employees are also encouraged to cross-train with others so that the workflow will continue in the event of an absence or vacancy in the area.

9. *How does employee training contribute to the achievement of your action plans?*
One way is by helping to achieve a higher standard for employees work processes. Many Department employees are required to retain a professional license, so new training is vital. Training requirements are now incorporated as an objective into EPMS planning stages. In addition, when employees stay abreast on HR issues, they are better able to perform their job duties, provide accurate information and meet customer needs in a timely and professional manner.

10. *How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your workforce and leader training and development systems?*
Surveys are conducted after initial new training and feedback from participants is compiled and reviewed. Exit interviews are also conducted for those leaving the agency's workforce to compile information that may assist in workforce development for the future. That type of information is a subjective point-of-view and, in actuality, may not be valid, but it does give leadership a point of reference from which to inquire.

Internal and external audits are conducted to ensure we are in compliance with rules and regulations and that transactions are being processed correctly. We also use the aids of reports and employee satisfaction/feedback to assess the effectiveness of training and programs.

11. *How do you motivate your workforce to develop and utilize their full potential?*
Ongoing opportunities for further professional development training can provide motivation to employees. Computer training and many in house-opportunities are given. An Employee Appreciation luncheon is given for all employees along with Service Awards and Special Recognition Awards. A new Workforce Progression Plan has also been implemented which gives employees the chance to move up.

Employees are free to work independently with limited supervision and are encouraged to take initiative and offer ideas on process improvement. Supervisors provide guidance and direction, as needed, and maintain an open door policy in which the employee is encouraged to speak freely and ask for assistance as needed. Allowing an employee to know that the work they perform is appreciated and that they are contributing to the success of the agency is important in motivating employees to continue their high level of performance in a time where monetary rewards are limited due to the current budget situation.

12. *What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to obtain information on workforce?*
Informal conversations and meetings, behavioral observations, EPMS reviews, customer satisfaction and position descriptions.

III. Category 6 – Process Management
1. *What are your key processes that produce, create or add value for your customers and your organization, and how do they contribute to success?*
Standardization and communication of agency HR policies and procedures are ongoing. Supervisors are encouraged to consult with HR and to follow agency policies and procedures when addressing employee issues. Doing so helps the agency maintain consistency in handling employee issues and ensures employees are treated fairly.

2. *How do you incorporate organizational knowledge, new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, cost controls, and other efficiency and effectiveness factors into process design and delivery?*

The agency works collectively and collaboratively with internal and external processes to effectively and efficiently provide the best possible products for constituents. In preparation for implementation of the new SCEIS HR/Payroll system in December 2009, Human Resources attended several SCEIS HR/Payroll meetings and completed various agency readiness activities. The new HR/Payroll system will give managers, supervisors and employees 24/7 internet access to real time employee data as well as allow employees to view pay stubs and update their personal and checking account information. We are in the process of identifying how implementation of the new system will impact our agency processes and our employee technology and training needs. Communication strategies for delivering information to employees has been discussed and information is being provided to employees as it becomes available. HR personnel will attend several training classes as we move closer to implementation of the new system. HR will also receive training on how to train managers, supervisors and employees to use the system.

3. *How does your day-to-day operation of these processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?*

Implementation of the SCEIS system will allow human resources and payroll processes to become more aligned and to reduce time spent in keying data into multiple systems. This new system will allow the Human Resources office to become a paperless operation. It will also allow for better customer service and accuracy in information provided and help to identity and address issues as they arise.

4. *What are your key support processes, and how do you improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?*

Key support processes include Administration, Information Technology, Human Resources, Procurement, Finance, Budget, Legal and Governmental Affairs, and Communications and Public Information. With a shrinking workforce, technology is a critical component in improving agency performance.

HR's key support processes include Office of Human Resources, Employee Insurance Program, South Carolina Retirement Systems, State Human Affairs Commission, State Accident Fund, Administration, Finance, Information Technology, Budget, Procurement and Communications and Public Information. These agencies and departments help provide policy interpretation, audit services and compliance with rules and regulations.

Also, communication through Marketing and Public Information channels between state and federal government and other State Departments of Agriculture is critical in food safety issues. For instance, when the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) suspected salmonella in tomatoes in FY09, it was imperative to communicate quickly with other states to ensure that the state's $32 million (cash receipts) commercial tomato market remained stable in South Carolina. Ultimately, the contamination was not in tomatoes at all. It was found in peppers from Mexico. By that time, the damage had been done to commercial tomato operations around the U.S., but having communicated closely with the federal government and other tomato-producing states, the SCDA was able to promote South Carolina's tomatoes as safe for consumption and the marketing window of opportunity was able to remain open.

III. Category 7 – Key Results

The SCDA is comprised of **Administrative Services**, **Agricultural Services**, and **Laboratory and Consumer Services**. The performance level of customer satisfaction in each area is measured differently. Our business results are similar to those of Departments of Agriculture in other states with comparable programs and services.

<u>Administrative Services</u>
Administrative Services includes Administration, Human Resources, Legal and Governmental Affairs, and Communications and Public Information.

> **Administration** includes **Agency Services**, **Finance**, and **Information Technology** (**IT**) which provide executive leadership, policy development and review, financial services, information technology, facilities management, and other support services.
>
> Administration has been working diligently to cut costs without cutting public services. This fiscal year, Agency Services saved $68,850, a $40,850 savings over the last fiscal year simply by leasing vehicles for Consumer Services inspectors rather than paying travel mileage for use of personal vehicles. By negotiating with vendors, the Department saved $26,500 for a new mass comparator which calibrates weights and scales in the Metrology Laboratory. The agency also saved $8,700 in promotional material costs by performing bidding and production services in-house rather than using the services of an advertising agency. Also, Information Resources made a simple adjustment like refilling ink cartridges instead of buying new ones to realize an additional $1,800 savings. The volume of individual disbursement requests was reduced by 100 this past FY09 from 702 in FY08 and increased financial rebates to the state by maintaining a high usage of a Visa Procurement Card. The use of a remote check processing machine now allows the agency to make significantly large deposits electronically, saving time and travel costs. The agency also has online access giving immediate bank confirmation. The savings acquired by this investment was $2,000 this past fiscal year and $300 in FY08. The equipment which was acquired in May 2008 has helped in workflow issues, employee time, travel and greater efficiency and accountability within the agency. The agency initiated the SC Enterprise Information System (SCEIS) for financial and material management functions. When fully implemented, this system is expected to provide a comprehensive platform for managing the state's financial resources. The Department saved over $2,000 this past fiscal year, $1,400 more than last fiscal year. In total, the Administration Service Division saved the Department over $110,000 in FY09 by making good business decisions.
>
> > **Agency Services** has the sole responsibility for administering the requirements of the South Carolina Procurement Code in the acquisition of goods, services, telecommunications, and information technology by the issuance of purchase orders. A procedure manual is strictly followed, and all agency employees are urged to plan ahead to obtain goods and services in a timely manner. Agency Services also oversees the management of all of the agency's resources such as supplies, space management, fleet management, inventory, and telephone services as well as the mailroom which is responsible for receiving and sending all mail, including express mail and freight services.
> >
> > **Finance Services** which includes payroll, auditing, and budgeting, is required to promptly process all receipts of revenue and expenditures of the agency and maintain proper records of these transactions consistent with state laws, regulations, and objectives of the agency and generally accepted accounting principles.

Finance Services is required to promptly process all receipts of revenue and expenditures of the department and maintain accounting records of these transactions consistent with state laws, regulations, and objectives of the Department and generally accepted accounting principles. Finance Services requires at least five working days to complete all transactions. The staff focuses on paying vendors in a timely manner and on depositing incoming checks in a reasonable time frame. The employees of Finance Services have various job functions and are able to work with limited supervision.

Information Technology (IT) is an area of Support Services designed to keep the computer resources of the SCDA in line with the technology of other state agencies and private industry in order to provide an efficient work environment. The current computer network includes an 84 user LAN and an AS/400 being phased out. IT services are also provided to approximately 20 stand-alone personal computer users. Users are located at six sites across the state. The service provided include the writing and maintaining of custom software for in-house use, the purchase of pre-packaged software, purchase of hardware, user training, and maintenance in the form of in-house repairs and maintenance agreements.

New projects addressed by IT during FY09 include:

Implementation of several cost saving activities:
- Recycle and refill ink cartridges to cut cost by more than half
- Order remanufactured toner cartridges to cut costs by more than half
- Eliminated several desktop inkjet printers and networked users to laser printer
- Repaired mobile printers instead of ordering new printers which only costs less than half the price of a new printer
- Encouraged double-sided printing when possible to cut back on paper usage
- Advised reduction in printing unnecessary documents such as emails
- Offered online *Market Bulletin* subscription which would reduce printing costs
- Increased online subscriber payment adoption rate by eliminating convenience fees
- Provided more extensive troubleshooting over the phone to cut down on travel
- Implementation phase of incorporating the Commodity Boards' Web sites into the existing www.agriculture.sc.gov Web site
- Researching remote access software in preparation for the relocation of the Farmers Market to cut down on travel costs
- Plans to implement VOIP (Voice Over IP) at the New Farmers Market to cut down on wiring expenses
- Future implementation of new SCEIS module for payroll
- Assessment program soon to be implemented for commodities and grain dealers
- Compared pricing on Tablet PCs for the best price to cut cost by more than half
- Used replaced Tablet PCs in other divisions within the agency to eliminate the need for purchasing
- Purchased power inverters for Consumer Services in place of the more costly car adapters
- Columbia Farmers Market and Laboratory will soon be in one location to eliminate MPLS lines that are currently in place
- Changed the replacement cycle of PCs to eliminate the purchase of desktops for this fiscal year

Implementation of the following programs:
- Kelly Registration Systems software which includes:
  - Metrology Laboratory Payments
  - Farmer's Market Vendor Rentals
  - New Certified SC Grown Web site with SQL database
  - New Fresh on the Menu Web site with SQL database
- New Palmettovore Web site

Final preparation for the following programs:
- Laboratory Information Management System (developed by Accelerated
- Technology Laboratories)
- Grain Dealers Guaranty Fund Program

In the development phase for the following software:
- Kelly Registration Systems software which includes:
  - Commodity Assessments
  - Poultry Inspections
  - Fruit and Vegetable Inspections
  - Laboratory Stop Orders

Purchase of the following hardware:
- Replaced a network printer
- Replaced 23 Tablet PCs

Software and hardware support were maintained for the following during FY09:
- 900 COBOL programs involving 370,000 lines of code
- 84 Users supported for LAN and AS/400 environment
- 20 Users supported on stand-alone PCs
- 120 Users supported for email and Internet access
- 120 Users supported for hardware and software maintenance
- 4 100 Mhz 24 port Ethernet hubs maintained
- 4 10 base-T 12 port Ethernet hubs maintained
- 2 10 base-T 5 port Ethernet hubs maintained
- 1 10 base-T 8 port Ethernet hub maintained
- 33 network printers maintained
- 12 stand alone printers maintained
- 8 print server boxes maintained
- 13 on-line user accounts to FDS maintained
- 7 on-line user's accounts to CG maintained
- 3 on-line user accounts to Dept. of Insurance maintained
- 3 on-line user's accounts to HR maintained

Efficiency Measures:
- 100% Real time access to Internet services for 84 users
- 100% Access for network office services for 84 users
- 100% Access for email services for 84 users
- Access for AS/400 computer applications

Effectiveness Measures:
- 100% Real time access to Internet services for 84 users
- 100% Access for network office services for 84 users
- 100% Access for email services for 84 users
- 100% Access for AS/400 computer applications

Human Resources

The office of **Human Resources** is responsible for managing a comprehensive human resources program including functional areas such as employment and recruitment, classification and compensation, employee and employer relations, benefits administration, policy development and compliance, time and attendance, and Affirmative Action. The Human Resource office is also responsible for ensuring that all SCDA personnel practices are in compliance with state and federal regulations

Due to retirement and natural attrition, the Human Resources office was temporarily without an HR staff. Senior leadership took this opportunity to restructure the HR office, improve the level of HR services and increase its cost savings. On June 26, 2008, the SCDA partnered with the Office of State Treasurer to form the first Constitutional Office state government Consolidated Human Resources Office to manage the HR functions for both agencies. The HR manager for the Office of State Treasurer, who retained her status as an STO (State Treasurer's Office) employee was relocated from the first floor of the Wade Hampton Building to the SCDA offices on the 5th floor. A second HR manager was hired as an employee of SCDA to assist with managing the HR programs for both agencies.

In the year since the transition to the Consolidated HR office, the agency has experienced a significant increase in the level of HR services provided to the agency and its employees. Through the Consolidated HR Office knowledgeable HR staff, the image of the HR office and staff has improved; communication with employees improved; employees are kept up to date on important HR issues that directly affect them; there is noted improvement in employee satisfaction; improvement in HR programs compliance with state and federal HR rules and regulations; improved efficiency and accuracy in delivery of HR services; and improvement in managers, supervisors and employees knowledge of HR issues just to name a few achievements.

The HR office has also been successful in working with the SCEIS HR/Payroll team in getting the agency prepared for implementation of the new HR/Payroll system in December. Implementation of the new HR/Payroll system has the potential to reduce the amount of time the HR staff spends on administrative functions thus allowing them more time to focus on strategic planning and workforce planning activities.

Legal and Governmental Affairs

The office of **Legal Affairs** consists of an attorney who specializes in agricultural legal issues and provides general legal advice and statutory interpretations to the Commissioner and staff. The attorney also serves as a general South Carolina agricultural legal resource for the various commodity boards, legislators, citizens and other agency counsels.   The agency's attorney continues to review and update over thirty laws under the authority of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. This includes analysis and comparison to other state and federal laws. The attorney also meets with groups to address possible legislative solutions to problems affecting their industries. Satisfaction with the laws currently in effect and the administration of those laws are measured by the number of complaints or lawsuits filed.

The attorney works with undergraduate and law school students to complete a wide variety of tasks such as monitoring legislative changes, responding to requests for information from citizens and assisting staff members in their programming efforts through the Department.

In addition, students have been or are participating in internship programs through the office of Legal Affairs. The SCDA supported a USC undergraduate student, school garden interns, and a pro bono intern with the Charleston School of Law. Some students are specifically interested in the legal profession. Others are interested in learning more about agriculture policy.

In cooperation with the office of **Governmental Affairs**, Legal Affairs is involved in the implementation of any new legislation falling under the authority of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. New legislation and statutory amendments are also considered for the purpose of making the operation of the agency more efficient. Legislative amendments also allow for improvements in laboratory analysis techniques, and consumer safety services for the general public, private entities, and other groups. In addition, the agency's attorney has been involved with the legal issues associated with the coordination and planning of the new State Farmers Market in Columbia.

Public Information
The office of **Public Information** (PI) is the support arm of the SCDA that plans, develops and directs a comprehensive informational and public awareness program for the agency. This office is essential to the key strategic goal of providing public awareness, promotion, and publicity of South Carolina agriculture and the state agency that oversees agriculture's well-being. PI provides information to the public through print and electronic means, serves as managing editor of the *Market Bulletin*, maintains the agency Web sites, oversees agency-wide media relations, provides publicity for special promotions and projects, provides support for partners and allies in the industry of agriculture, and serves in the communications arm of emergency preparedness and recovery.

The SCDA Web site in only one year has been quite popular to the citizens of South Carolina and the world. PI continues to manage the site's content through a Content Management System. The site has averaged about 14,500 unique visitors and about one million hits per month.

The SCDA branding and marketing Web site (www.certifiedscgrown.com) has been redesigned and redeployed with a new look and feel consistent with the agency's branding and marketing campaign. The entire Web site uses dynamic pages generated from a database-driven content management system. Secure online editors allow staff to create, edit, and manage the Web site content and navigational menus. A database of farmers markets, roadside markets, Certified SC program members, specialty food producers, etc. are available on the site and linked to the SCDA Web site (www.agriculture.sc.gov). The site has averaged about 2,200 unique visitors and about 760,000 hits per month and serves over 500 members in the Certified SC program.

PI has also proactively distributed about 120 news releases communicating key messages to media outlets statewide. Those releases produced favorable, free media coverage for the agency and for agriculture in the state, but they also provided information regarding recalls on food products that were issued throughout the fiscal year to alert consumers. **Figure 7.1** shows a spike in media coverage after the SCDA stepped up efforts to promote
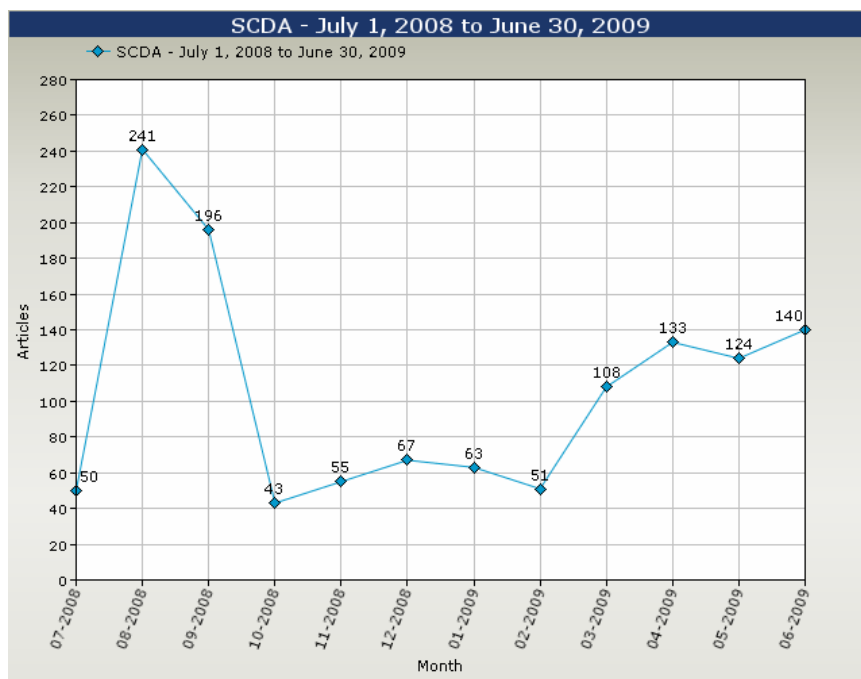

Figure 7.1

Certified South Carolina tomatoes in the aftermath of a premature FDA warning about salmonella in tomatoes. In the end, the salmonella originated with peppers from Mexico. Other media coverage during that time was related to Farmers Market Month. Within the new Web site, consumers can now also keep abreast of late-breaking news regarding FDA and USDA consumer recalls and other alerts.

Laboratory and Consumer Services Business Results

The **Laboratory Services and Consumer Services Divisions** of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture were restructured during the last fiscal year. The two divisions operate as one and are directed and managed by an Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture. This manager in turn reports to the Commissioner of Agriculture. There is a focused and unified effort by these two groups to fulfill and comply with their legislated charge. Each unit is dependent on the other to complete tasks as required by state regulation.

Laboratory Services

The **Laboratory Services** program area supports certain regulatory functions assigned to the Commissioner of Agriculture by state law. The Laboratory is structured to provide chemical, physical and biological analytical and testing capabilities necessary to administer and enforce laws and regulations governing the production, storage, handling and sale of products. Those products include food for human consumption and animal feeds, seed sold for agriculture and gardening, and petroleum products sold for heating or automotive uses.

For FY 09, Division leadership consisted of a Laboratory Director, Chief Seed Analyst, Seed Chemical Lab Coordinator, and Registration Officer plus five Section Supervisors who perform bench work in addition to supervising other scientists and technicians. This cadre of leaders has scientific educational credentials in their respective fields of work as well as years of professional experience that they draw from in carrying out their technical and managerial duties.

All Division managers and supervisors are active in professional scientific organizations that foster their continued growth in knowledge and expertise in their fields of specialty. Lab scientists and supervisors and technicians are likewise encouraged and supported in outside professional activities that contribute to their growth and professional competence.

To ensure consumer protection, the Laboratory receives samples and analyzes products from the public food supply to detect adulteration, confirms conformance to standards of identity and quality and assures consumers are protected from fraudulent or unsafe food products. The efficiency of the Laboratory Division's testing and analytical effort is reflected in number of analyses tested annually. **(Figures 7.2 and 7.3)**

Comparison of the # of Analyses Performed by Fiscal Year

	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09
Food Analyses	11,866	11,010	9,635	11,775	12,269	11,208
Feed Analyses	7,142	4,254	5,467	6,005	4,846	5,193
Seed Analyses	24,882	22,144	20,796	16,710	15,459	14,428
Petroleum Analyses	15,093	19,476	16,840	19,748	16,464	22,330
Total Analyses by FY	**58,983**	**56,884**	**52,738**	**54,238**	**49,038**	**53,159**

Figure 7.2

Laboratory Division Workload by Fiscal Year

Legend:
- Registration Transactions
- Petroleum Samples
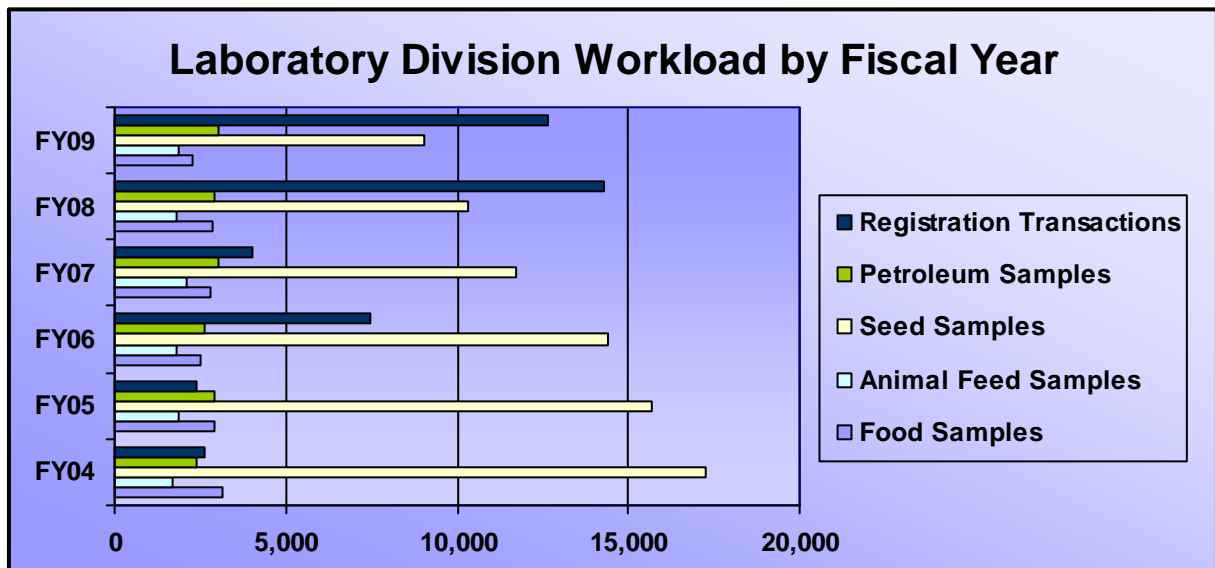- Seed Samples
- Animal Feed Samples
- Food Samples

Figure 7.3

In accordance with the mission of the SCDA to ensure the safety and security of the buying public, the objectives of Laboratory Services Division programs are:

1. To receive samples and analyze products from the public food supply to detect adulteration, confirm conformance to standards of identity and quality and assure consumers are protected from fraudulent or unsafe food products.

2. To regularly request samples of commercial animal feed and pet foods from the state's markets for analysis of nutritional and medicinal ingredients for conformance to label guarantees and standards of quality. A Feed Control Officer provides a more complete regulatory function for enforcing the state's Commercial Feed Law. Feed mill inspections are a part of our feed regulatory functions. This capacity is supported partially by a contract with the US Food and Drug Administration for conducting GMP inspections of medicated feed mills and BSE inspections. BSE refers to "bovine spongiform encephalopathy", a disease more commonly known as "mad cow" disease. This disease can be transmitted through feeding tissue from a diseased animal to other animals of the same species making feed regulation a barrier to spreading of the disease and the consequential threat to the entire beef industry.

3. To provide seed analysis services to consumers, certifying agencies, seed companies, seed producers, and in support of regulatory surveillance and enforcement under the state's Seed and Noxious Weed Law.

4. To regularly receive sample gasolines, diesel fuels, kerosenes, and heating fuels from channels of commerce and test them for conformance to quality standards, label representations and safety. State law requires that petroleum products offered for sale meet standards set by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

5. To administer product registrations required by law including animal and pet foods, frozen desserts, gasolines, antifreezes, and to issue licenses and permits to certain special services and businesses. Licenses or permits are issued for frozen desserts, butterfat testers, samplers and weighers and salvagers.

A legislative proviso allows for an annually renewable Commercial Feed Registration with a registration fee of $15.00 per product registered. Registrants have the option to register on-line or they may register directly with SCDA Registrations Office. Approximately 9,597 products are currently registered with our office.

The outcome of the Laboratory division's work can be assessed by reviewing compliance records for each of the program areas.

Violation Rates by Program Over 6-FY Period (percent)						
	FY04	**FY05**	**FY06**	**FY07**	**FY08**	**FY09**
Food	7.36	9.2	8.9	10.6	11.6	9.8
Pesticide Residue	2.47	1.05	1.3	1.6	3.2	1.4
Feed	19.5	12.1	13.8	8.5	11.0	12.5
Seed	6.3	4.6	3.3	4.8	5.4	2.0
Petroleum	3.15	6.3	4.4	4.29	3.1	10.1

Figure 7.4

Food Laboratory
Figure 7.5

The meat and dairy program's non-compliance rate is 9.8% range with excess fat in ground meats being the most frequent type of violation. The non-compliance rate was in the 6-8% range last FY. Ensuring the accuracy of fat content on ground meat labels is one example of how the SCDA assures consumers that they are getting what they pay for. If consumers are paying more for 15% lean, they want to know that the label is accurate. **(Figure 7.5)**

Pesticide residue violations are mostly technical in nature and do not represent a significant food safety threat. It is rare that these technical violations necessitate any enforcement action. The pattern of pesticide residue violations observed in our Laboratory mirrors the pattern of violations found nationwide in USDA's Pesticide Data Program (PDP). Pesticide residue tests on fruits and vegetables are performed in compliance with the state and federal food safety laws. Twelve hundred seventy-nine (1279) official and submitted samples were screened for chemical residues in FY09, 409 more samples than in FY08. The reason for the increase in samples that the laboratory was able to analyze without increasing man-hours was because of a new less expensive, more efficient extraction method. The "South Carolina method" also known throughout the U.S. as the "Sherry Garris" was developed by our own SCDA lab director, Sherry Garris, in cooperation with the University of South Carolina. That new extraction method is now being considered for use by other State Departments of Agriculture as well as the Food and Drug Administration.

The official samples were randomly drawn from supermarkets and farmers markets throughout the state as part of a "Market Basket Survey" to comply with the state's Food Safety Laws.

Testing is performed at no charge to South Carolina Residents. The Laboratory also tests soil and plant tissue submitted by Clemson Extension agents who request herbicide and pesticide screens.

A total of 4,362 analyses were performed on the 1,279 samples of produce, feed, soil, and miscellaneous animal and plant material. That was 1,477 more analyses performed on 409 more samples than last FY08 and 1,836 more analyses on 456 more samples than in FY07.

The SCDA is capable of detecting 120 pesticides in a wide range of foods down to the part per million (ppm) and in some cases down to a part per billion (ppb). One part per million is a very small amount. It's like 1 inch in 16,000 miles or 1 drop in 80 liters. And a part per billion is even smaller. It's like 1 second of time in approximately 31.7 years.

The national PDP includes tests on 85 different commodities in the U.S. food supply for pesticide residues for more than 440 different pesticides. By comparison, the SCDA performs tests on the same or more than the number of PDP commodities. In fact, the SCDA Laboratory tests all commodities provided from the market basket sampling to ensure a safe food supply. Because our Laboratory tests for pesticide residue, the SCDA was able to show that over 98% of the fruits and vegetables we tested in FY09 were below tolerance levels. So, the bottom line is that our Laboratory shows that growers here in South Carolina are doing a great job.

Animal feed violations occurred at 12.5% which is similar to years past. This rate is typical for feed products both in the SCDA's experience and that of other states. **(Figure 7.6)**

Seed Lab violations (approx. 2%) are considerably lower than in previous years. A more aggressive sampling protocol has been employed to include a better cross section of establishments offering seed for sale in South Carolina. **(Figure 7.7)**

At 10.1% petroleum violations, while higher than previous years, continue to reflect the rates observed nationally where petroleum laws are in force. Based on these violation rates, South Carolina consumers can be confident that petroleum products they buy in the state meet ASTM standards and are fairly labeled. **(Figure 7.8)**

The General Accounting Office (GAO) has performed a study that reflects violation rates as much as 30% in other states. Petroleum violations include octane, flashpoint, and sediment or other impurities. Our state's statistics show that South Carolina petroleum marketers work hard to ensure compliance with national standards.

Feed Laboratory
Figure 7.6

Seed Laboratory
Figure 7.7

Petroleum Laboratory
Figure 7.8

To provide the necessary infrastructure for an early warning system that identifies potentially hazardous foods and enables health officials to assess risks and analyze trends, the Electronic Laboratory Exchange Network (eLEXNET) continues to be applied in Laboratory Services. eLEXNET is a seamless, integrated, Web-based information network that allows health officials at multiple government agencies engaged in food safety activities to compare, share and coordinate laboratory analysis findings. eLEXNET is the data capture and communication system for the Food Emergency Response Network (FERN). This system will help the Laboratory to be more responsive to intentional or unintentional emergency food situations.

The strategic thrust of the Laboratory Services Division is to meet regulatory responsibilities faithfully while minimizing disruption of regulated businesses. There is a conscious effort to assist businesses in meeting their regulatory requirements where such assistance contributes to an orderly marketplace. The Seed and Noxious Weed Law is particularly noteworthy in this regard. The Laboratory is required by law to provide free seed testing service to farmers, gardeners and commercial seed producers and merchants. Approximately 84% of seed testing capacity is devoted to such services while the balance is taken up by testing for official regulatory purposes. Efforts to maintain high quality of the different products regulated by the Laboratory in light of an ever changing marketplace can be seen by the increased resources dedicated to biofuels testing, information management, and improvement in registration capabilities.

Consumer Services

The performance level of the **Consumer Services** program is determined by the satisfaction of consumers that are well-protected. The Consumer Services Division directly enforces nine laws and assists the Laboratory Division in the enforcement of several other laws by drawing official samples of petroleum fuels, animal feeds, seeds, produce, and ground meats:

The laws enforced include:
- Weights and Measures Law – Section 39-9-10
- Gasoline, Lubricating Oils and Other Petroleum Products Law – Section 39-41-5
- Food and Cosmetic Act – Section 39-25-10
- Egg Law – Section 39-39-110
- Public Weighmaster Law – Section 39-11-10
- Dealers and Handlers of Agricultural Products – Section 46-41-10
- Grain Producers Guaranty Fund – Section 46-41-200
- Grain Dealer Guaranty Fund – Section 46-40-10
- State Warehouse System Law – Section 39-22-10

Weights and Measures

Consumer Services' inspectors check commercial weighing and measuring devices for accuracy and inspect packaged goods to ensure correct net content statements. The Division's **Metrology Lab** maintains the state standards for mass, length and volume and provides calibration services to the public and private sector with traceability to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). **Figure 7.9** shows the number of inspections and calibrations performed by Consumer Services during the past five fiscal years.

Comparison of Firms Visited, Dispensers and Scales Inspected/Calibrated by the SCDA Metrology Lab
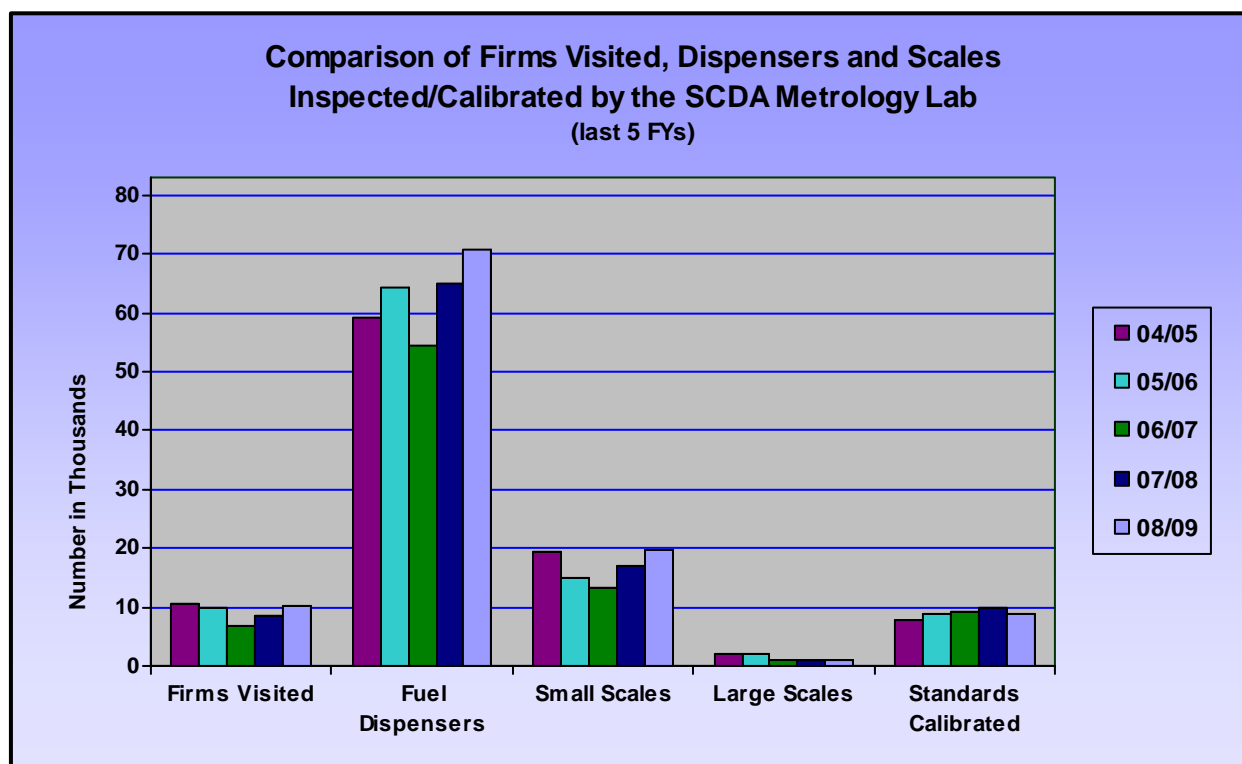**(last 5 FYs)**

Figure 7.9

Consumer Services inspection visits increased in FY09 and the number of fuel dispensers inspected increased 16% during that same period. The number of small scales calibrated remained about the same and the number of large scales inspected has remained approximately the same for the last three years. **(Figure 7.10)**

Weights and Measures
Figure 7.10

The number of firms visited and the number of dispensers and small scales inspected dropped during FY07. Field inspectors now have computers and are more adept at using that technology, so by FY09 the number of inspections had increased substantially. Also, a large amount of data that had not previously been a part of our database is now being captured. In addition, Consumer Services was reorganized and one of the weights and measures field specialist positions that had been vacant was filled further increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of Consumer Services inspections.

Unfortunately, the number of firms and devices to be inspected continues to increase. For example, in 1996, the SCDA had 30 inspectors who checked 45,000 fuel dispensers at service stations. Today, the SCDA has 20 inspectors and over 66,000 fuel dispensers to inspect. Experience has shown that when weights and measures areas are left unregulated, compliance tends to deteriorate, creating unfair competitive situations and loss of equity in the marketplace. Under these conditions, everyone loses except the unethical business operator. New computer technology has allowed the collection of more data that gives greater detail into inspection results and helps maximize available human resources. However, most of the inspections procedures cannot be shortened, and more personnel are needed to keep up with growth. **Figure 7.11** shows the percentage of weighing or measuring devices found incorrect.
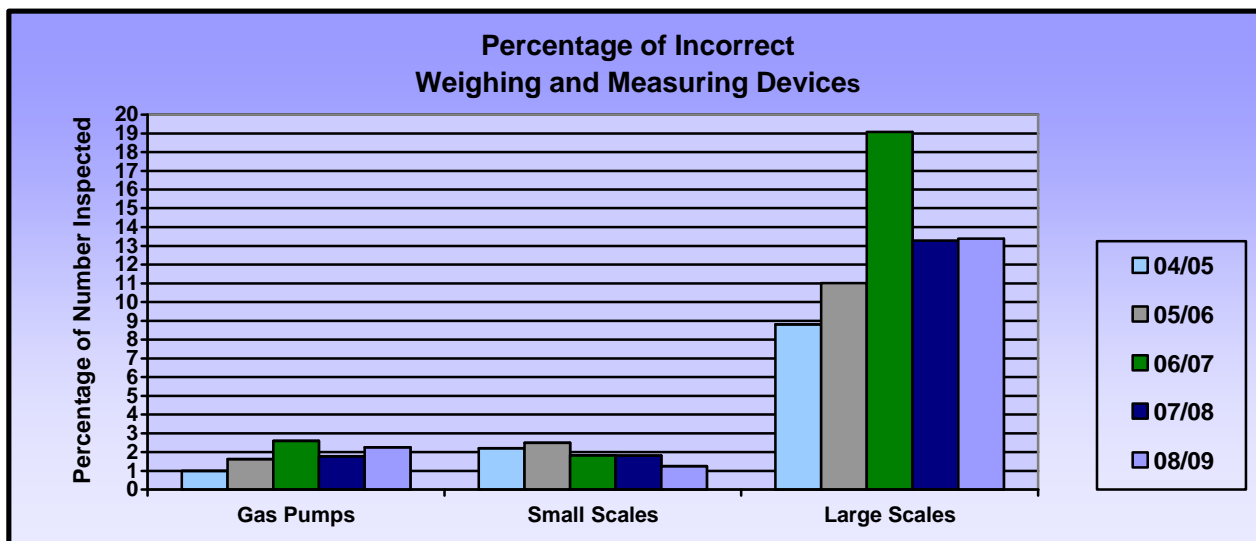

Figure 7.11

When inspecting firms that have weighing or measuring devices, our inspectors also randomly draw samples of gasoline, diesel, kerosene, animal feeds, seeds, produce, and ground meats for analysis by the Department's chemical laboratory for the enforcement of other laws.

Food Manufacturers and Warehouse Inspections

The Consumer Services Division's Food Safety and Compliance Section inspects food manufacturers and food warehouses to ensure that food products are manufactured and stored under safe and sanitary conditions. Some of these inspections are performed under contract with the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Persons that weigh bulk commodities and issue weight certificates must be licensed as Public Weighmasters. **Figure 7.12** shows a comparison of the number of food manufacturers and warehouses inspected and the number of licenses issued to public weighmasters during the last five fiscal years.
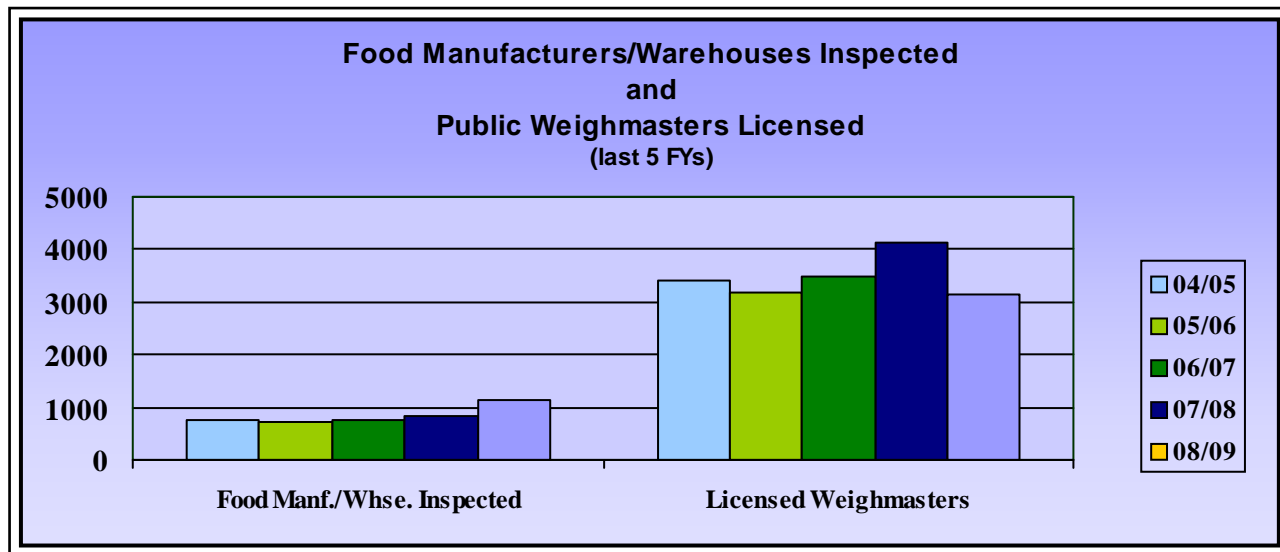
Food Manufacturers/Warehouses Inspected and Public Weighmasters Licensed
(last 5 FYs)

Legend: 04/05, 05/06, 06/07, 07/08, 08/09

Categories: Food Manf./Whse. Inspected, Licensed Weighmasters

Figure 7.12

Licensing, Bonding, Auditing

Consumer Services also licenses, bonds, and audits dealers and handlers of agricultural products to ensure that the producer receives payment for his crop. Also, warehouses that store cotton or grain and issue warehouse receipts for those commodities are licensed, bonded, and audited. Three guaranty funds are administered by the Division to provide payment to the grain producer, licensed dealer and handler of grain, or the holder of a warehouse receipt should a licensed grain dealer or a licensed warehouse go bankrupt or commit fraud. During the fiscal year, Division personnel performed 214 audits on the 106 licensed Dealers and Handlers and 27 licensed warehouses**.**

Agricultural Services Business Results

The Agricultural Services Division includes those services that the SCDA renders to the agricultural sector. Ag Services includes three segments: **Marketing, State Farmers Markets,** and **Grading and Inspections**. To better coordinate the Department's marketing message, Public Relations for Marketing and the *Market Bulletin* sections were placed in this division and supervised by the Marketing Director.

In addition, the Agricultural Services Division handles several special projects including the **Waste Pesticide Recovery Program**, the **Renewable Energy Program** and the **Dairy Stabilization Program**.

The Waste Pesticide Recovery Program was set up to provide opportunities for farmers and landowners to properly and legally dispose of unwanted and unused pesticides. Funds from the state and from EPA were used to run the program. A vendor was selected through the state procurement process to collect and dispose of these pesticides. Twelve collection sites were chosen and collections ran for eighteen days. The Department collected and disposed of 246,746 pounds of unwanted and unused pesticides. Farmers and landowners were relieved of the risk of maintaining these pesticides. The risk of pesticides entering the environment was lowered by collecting and disposing of them in a proper manner.

The Renewable Energy Program continues to monitor and evaluate ongoing projects previously approved. Many of these renewable energy research and demonstration projects are multi-year.

The Dairy Stabilization Program which began in 2005 and is now fully implemented has reported dramatic success in helping stabilize a declining industry. Since 2004 the industry had declined in production and value each year to a low in 2006 of 278,000,000 pounds worth $42,350,000. The first assistance from the program was received in 2006. Since that time, the production and value of the industry has grown. In 2007 production increased to 322,000,000 pounds worth $67,309,000 and in 2008 production was 319,000,000 pounds worth $67,940,000. This represents more than $50,000,000 of additional revenue generated in state to supply the dairy processing needs of the industry.

Marketing

The Division of Marketing had an active year in FY09. The Certified South Carolina branding program continues to be the centerpiece of marketing efforts for agriculture in South Carolina.

The Certified South Carolina campaign is a comprehensive media effort designed to encourage consumers to buy agricultural products grown and processed in the state. Different commodities are being phased in as the program expands the marketing and educational strategies. (Certified SC Grown Logo **Figure 7.13**)

Figure 7.13

In FY09, the overall campaign included 43 magazine advertisements focusing on the South Carolina audience/circulation with an overall readership of 4.5 million. In addition, outdoor boards were placed throughout the state making 190 million impressions with the branding slogan and message. Television was a large component of the marketing effort with media purchases to cover the entire state via network stations and cable. Overall impressions totaled 33 million for the commercials encouraging consumers to support local agriculture. Radio coverage exceeded 16 million impressions via coverage at various sporting events and promotional pieces for plant and flower shows and for other State Farmers Market promotions. The message was leveraged in the print media with widespread coverage of the Certified SC Grown program and what it means to our state, local communities, individual farmers and consumers throughout the state.

Staff continues to work with the retail, wholesale, roadside market, and foodservice buying community to support the overall effort and to get the message, logo, and slogan in front of consumers. Point of purchase materials were present in over 500 retail food stores in South Carolina this season. There are now over 500 producer members of the Certified SC Grown/Product program.

There continues to be a huge opportunity to expand the sales of local agricultural products to a consuming public that is hungry for products grown here. Work will continue in an effort to capture market share and to create market opportunity and enhance the rural economies throughout the state.

Major marketing efforts of Certified South Carolina and the Marketing Division in general in FY09:

- Statewide television campaign

- Statewide outdoor media

- Statewide magazine coverage

- Statewide press coverage in print media

- Radio coverage for major Plant and Flower show events attended by over 100,000 visitors in Greenville, Florence, and Columbia.**(Figure 7.14)**

Midlands Plant and Flower Festival
Columbia State Farmers Market
Figure 7.14

- Radio promotion during USC, Clemson, SC State, and The Citadel football games including a SC Grown 'Player of the Week' for each school and a feature advertisement each week reminding consumers to ask for South Carolina agricultural products

- Charleston Food and Wine Festival allowed the SCDA to again feature South Carolina products in an "Iron Chef" cooking format. Attendance was up from 100,000 the previous year and this venue was the starting point for taking the Fresh on the Menu concept statewide this year. **(Figure 7.15)**

- Participated in the Hilton Head Food and Wine Festival to promote Fresh on the Menu efforts with local restaurants.

- State Fair was attended by over a half million visitors this year. Certified South Carolina was the main theme in the exhibit and all of the commodity groups participated in the huge consumer event and tied the new logo into marketing efforts.

Nathan Thurston, Jasmine Porch, Kiawah Island
Charleston Food and Wine Festival
Figure 7.15

- Produce Marketing Association (PMA) Food Show was held in Orlando, FL. Over 18,000 individuals attended this show. Buyers from all major US food retail corporations, many wholesalers, and all national food service purveyors attend this show each year. South Carolina exhibited to promote products from the state and to develop buyer contacts for sales opportunities by South Carolina producers and companies.

In addition, four individual shippers and a commodity association joined forces with the Department to showcase much of what the state has to offer in terms of commercial product.

- Southeast Produce Council Food Show was held in Tampa, FL. Attended by most major Southeastern based retailers, wholesalers, and foodservice companies, this event is a smaller version of PMA that provides more exposure to the local audience. Over 1000 were in attendance at this event.

- Eastern Produce Council Event was held in East Orange, New Jersey, and was attended by over 125 buyers representing the greater New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania region and over 13 million consumers. This meeting provides South Carolina with the opportunity to showcase fresh market agriculture in South Carolina and the purchasing opportunities that abound in the state. This region consumes a huge amount of the fresh product produced in SC.

- Many of the Department's marketing specialists attended or conducted various events promoting South Carolina agriculture throughout the year. Some are consumer events. Some are buying events. All are designed to create marketing opportunities for South Carolina producers. Attendance may range from 20 people to 20,000 people, but all are equally important in promoting a diverse agricultural community.

- Roadside marketing and community-based marketing opportunities continue to be promoted by staff throughout the state. With approximately 136 certified roadside markets and over 80 community-based markets in communities throughout the state, a unique opportunity is created to tie in the branding message at venues that often specialize in local production. The SCDA continues to be involved in helping to set up and promote both the use of food vouchers through the federally-funded WIC and Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Programs and the use of EBT cards to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables at many markets. This creates opportunities for more consumers to enjoy a healthier lifestyle while supporting South Carolina agriculture. In addition, the SCDA joined forces with the Department of Commerce and Department of Corrections to provide Roadside Market facilities for up to 50 qualifying producers and townships in our states most distressed and needy counties. **(Figure 7.16)**

Certified Roadside Market Program
Figure 7.16

- General stakeholder response is an important part of marketing efforts by staff each year. In FY09 staff fielded thousands of calls from consumers and other stakeholders. From questions as simple as "Where can I buy SC Watermelons?" to opportunities as detailed as starting or relocating a company in South Carolina using local agricultural products and labor. Staff worked responsively each day to provide assistance to stakeholders in the state and beyond the borders.

- Staff operates as a team in domestic and international marketing and goes the extra mile to ensure that all calls are handled promptly and effectively for those in need.

- Fresh on the Menu was taken statewide in FY09. There are now over 200 participating restaurants located throughout the state. Interest from the foodservice community continues to grow. **(Fresh on the Menu Logo Figure 7.17)**

Figure 7.17

Figure 7.18

- Introduced the new concept of Palmettovore in FY09 as a viral media campaign to reach across generations via Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks with a message of healthy eating and support for local agricultural products. **(Palmettovore Logo Figure 7.18)**

- Through mainstream media, new communication venues such as the Web formats, Facebook, Twitter, and other dedicated Web-sites, the SCDA continues to expand marketing efforts to reach consumers of all ages. The merchandising program was taken statewide and introduced in over 500 retail food stores in the state. Provided Certified SC program signage or a combination of the retailer's private signage with the campaign message.**(Figure 7.19)**

SCDA Retail Merchandising Program
Figure 7.19

- The New Produce Stand program is in development stage as a joint effort with Commerce and Corrections. Major placement activity will occur in FY10. **(Figure 7.20)**

- The 96-year-old *Market Bulletin* is published twice a month for producers and consumers as a resource for buying and selling agricultural items. The *Market Bulletin* also includes information designed to encourage buying and selling of the state's locally grown products through the "Certified South Carolina" Program, news for farmers and gardeners, and hundreds of agricultural events, seminars, and workshops.

Produce Stand Program
Figure 7.20

Over 20,000 subscribe to the *Market Bulletin*. **(Figure 7.21)** Staff continues to aggressively promote the *Bulletin* through other publications and partnerships with other organizations at no cost to the agency. The increase in subscriptions can be attributed to the inclusion of renewals and subscriptions in the integrated, interactive part of the agency Web site. The new process allows subscribers to view the publication online and saves staff time with data entry.
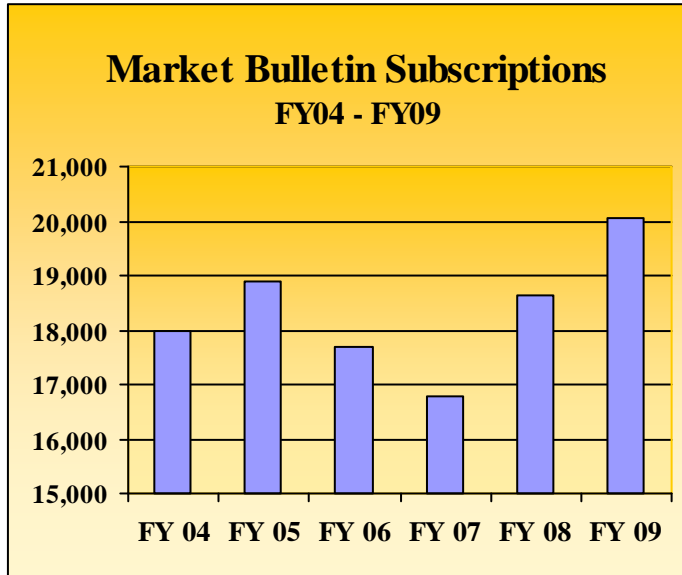

Figure 7.21

Similar to the agricultural publications in Louisiana and Mississippi, the *Market Bulletin* is also published twice a month and the subscription fee is $10 per year for either the print or the electronic version.

Advertisers can now enter their own ads through the agency Web site portal and after in-house approval the ad is electronically posted for the next issue.

With the implementation of the electronic subscription process, subscribers can now renew or subscribe online with a credit card.

About 17,000 ads were published during the last fiscal year, 3,000 more than the previous year. **(Figure 7.22)** The increase in ads can be attributed to the ease in placing an ad. Advertisers can enter the ad themselves online.

Through the *Market Bulletin*, farmers are able to sell their farm equipment which enables them to buy new equipment. Farmers are also provided a vehicle in which they can sell their livestock and crops. In addition, non-farmers find plants, flowers, seeds, and other items of interest to them.
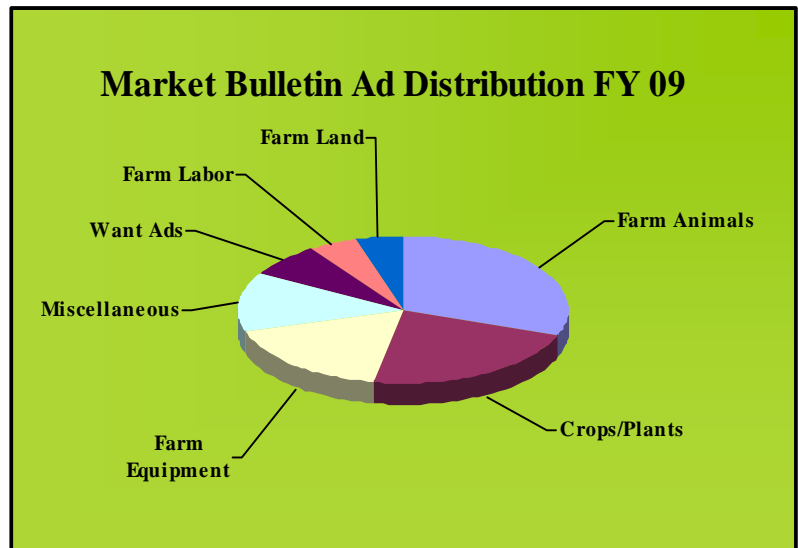

Figure 7.22

The largest segment of ads in FY09 was farm animals including cattle, goats, sheep, llamas, hogs, horses, poultry, and rabbits. The second largest number of ads was crops and plants due mainly to the large number of hay ads received through the Hay Exchange. The SCDA created the Hay Exchange on the Web site for livestock owners to have easy access especially during times of drought and they are taking advantage of this free service. Farm equipment provided the third largest number of ads demonstrating that farmers are either selling their old farm equipment to buy new or they are getting out of the business.

Ranked 7th in the list of categories for the number of ads is farm land. Over the past year the number of farm land ads submitted to the *Market Bulletin* increased while the total value of farm land sold in the *Bulletin* decreased from $7.7 million FY08 to $6.0 million in FY09. Although advertisements were up for farm land, the value of that land sold decreased. The *Market Bulletin* has long been a resource for economic stability, especially in rural communities.

Other Marketing Activities:

Smoothie Night
Figure 7.23

- **Commissioner's School for Agriculture** – Last July 17-23, 2008, forty-four students participated in the weeklong 5th Annual Commissioner's School for Agriculture academic summer program held on the Clemson University campus. All participants were rising high school Juniors and Seniors. The overall goal of the program is to expose students to educational and career opportunities in the Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resource industries. The Department's Marketing staff were specifically involved in the Smoothie Night **(Figure 7.23)** event where students were challenged to create a smoothie product made from Certified SC Grown products, and then devise a marketing scheme for that product. All teams were judged by a panel and an award was presented to the top product. Other academic programming events were held throughout the week, including an Etiquette Dinner to help prepare students for job interviews and business entertainment. In March, all of the previous participants were invited to a Reunion in Columbia where they visited the General Assembly, Harbison Forest, Rawl's produce farm, the General Assembly, SC Department of Agriculture as well as the State Veterinarian's office.

- **School Gardens Program** – Grants were awarded to five different elementary school garden programs throughout South Carolina from December 2008- June 30, 2009. The SCDA will be pursuing subsequent grant funding and hoping to award additional school garden grants in the 2009-2010 growing season. Through the grant program, a new quarterly electronic newsletter has been started and currently being distributed statewide.

- **Healthy Carolina Farmers Market** – One of the agency's interns initiated a partnership between the University of South Carolina Healthy Carolina and the SCDA in opening a community-based farmers market on the main campus in Columbia. The market strives to introduce college students to the benefits of eating fresh fruits and vegetables, while also appreciating the local farmers produce and overall agricultural production in South Carolina, which is the second leading industry in this state.

The Marketing Section of the Agricultural Services Division continues to provide effective constituent services to all of those who need assistance. Whether it is locating a product, selling a product, facilitating marketing meetings, promoting South Carolina at a food or consumer event, or working with established commodity groups and associations to provide educational or promotional opportunities, the SCDA continues to serve the state effectively while encouraging folks to "Buy South Carolina…Nothing's Fresher…Nothing's Finer".

Grading and Inspection and Market News Service
The **Grading and Inspection** and **Market News Service** programs provide quality grade standards and up-to-date market news through cooperative agreements with USDA.

Grading and Inspections

Fruit, vegetable, and peanut grading and inspection services are provided at shipping points, receiving locations, and terminal markets to specify grade, count, weight, and other factors important to quality determination. Official certificates of grade are issued by inspectors to verify grade factors. The SCDA issued 7,475 certificates in FY09, up from 5,979 in FY08.

Another service provided by SCDA is Grain Inspection. Grain inspection works with growers of local grain, processors and elevators to assure all grain meets the proper requirements in accordance to the U.S. Grain Standard Act and South Carolina Uniform Grain Grading Act.

The Grading and Inspection Service works with producers, brokers, receivers, food processors, and export marketers to inspect and certify the quality as it moves through normal marketing channels. The SCDA implemented a Food Safety Audit program that provides incentives for 30 firms to receive first time audits. The Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices Food Verification Program is a FDA/USDA developed program taught by SCDA trained personnel.

Egg Grading
Figure 7.24

Grading for poultry, shell eggs and the inspection of egg products and meals-ready-to-eat (MRE) are provided at shipping points, packing houses, and processing facilities by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture Poultry and Egg Programs throughout the State of South Carolina. This grading is upon request by individual firms and government agencies. **(Figure 7.24)**

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture Poultry and Egg Programs has 25 employees which are licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Services after receiving at least 160 hours of supervised classroom and on the job training.

Additional training is required for each commodity. Upon completion of training, a licensee will be under the supervision of the Federal and State supervisors in official U.S.D.A. facilities and other approved fee locations.

Certification is made to assure graded products meet the requirements to be shipped throughout the United States and exported to foreign countries. SCDA graders and inspectors strictly follow specifications for the military, USDA school lunch programs, chain stores, and other institutional and government agencies.

In FY09, there were three shell egg plants, three poultry plants, one MRE plant and one egg products plant with USDA resident grading services provided by SCDA employees. Additionally, numerous fee inspections were performed at U.S.D.A. approved locations throughout the State of South Carolina.

As a result, there were 39,169,740 dozens of shell eggs graded, 42,595,903 pounds of poultry graded, and 9,781,606 pounds of MRE's inspected and 9,703,855 pounds of egg products.

Market News Service
Market News Service collects, analyzes and distributes price, volume and other market information from shippers, wholesalers, brokers, dealers, and market vendors to all segments of the grain, produce, and livestock industries. The information is distributed through printed reports, telephone recordings, daily radio programs, newspapers and the Internet. In recent years the Internet has become the preferred method of dissemination.

According to Federal Market News staff, during the 2008 fiscal year, Livestock, Grain, and Fruit & Vegetable Market News released 125,000 reports nationally which were viewed over 56 million times through the Internet. South Carolina is doing its share by releasing 45 reports per week on the USDA system. The SCDA Market News office also provides three daily voice reports and two weekly PDF style summary reports on the SCDA Web site.

State Farmers Markets
The SCDA operates farmers markets in Columbia, Greenville and Florence. These markets provide facilities for farmers to conduct direct sales of fresh produce to both consumers and major food distributors. Supermarket chains, independent groceries, restaurants, and industrial food handlers are served by the vendors at these markets. The service area of the markets extends beyond the boundaries of the state, supplying produce through the eastern United States and into Canada.

Columbia State Farmers Market
The Columbia State Farmers Market is considered to be the second largest farmers market in the Southeast based on volume of produce sold and distributed. **(Figure 7.25)** Typically, annual sales at the market exceed $250 million. The market has operated on its current site since the early 1950's. It is now scheduled to be closed in early 2010, and will reopen at a new location on Highway 321 in Lexington County.

The relocation of the Columbia State Farmers market will mark a major change in the dynamics of the market. Many aspects of the market are being privatized and much of the relocation is being privately financed. A number of wholesale vendors have purchased property at the new site and are constructing their own facilities. Private investors are building retail and wholesale units available to be rented to both annual and seasonal tenants.

Columbia State Farmers Market
Figure 7.25

The SCDA will be operating farmer and produce sheds designed to serve the State's farmers. In 2008-2009, over 300 South Carolina farmers used the Columbia market. Farmers from all areas of the state bring produce to the market. Watermelons, tomatoes, cantaloupes and peaches constitute the bulk of the produce sold. However, farmers bring a full array of produce grown in the state to the market.

In recent years, programs have been implemented to provide better information on the users of the market so that trace-back of products can be conducted. Additionally, the Market has taken steps to insure that all non-farmers selling on the market have proper business licenses and that they are registered with the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

The Columbia State Farmers Market employees seventeen people, three are part-time. It operates every day of the year with the exception of Christmas and Thanksgiving days. Numerous private sector jobs are supplied at the market, but many of these are seasonal in nature.

Greenville State Farmers Market
Figure 7.26

Greenville State Farmers Market
The Greenville State Farmers Market relies on wholesale food distributors as the mainstay of operation income. Retail sales provide the majority of point of service contacts. Farmers from the Piedmont region and the adjoining areas of Georgia and North Carolina bring in seasonal fruit and vegetable crops for delivery and direct sales. Consumer interest in the market's facilities has increased in recent years to a point that traffic often exceeds capacity. **(Figure 7.26)**

Strategic challenges identified at the Greenville market are: aging facilities and infrastructure; insufficient space; declining ability to meet industry facility standards for food sanitation and safety; along with the need for electronic security measures.
Horticultural crops have taken a strong portion of upstate agricultural emphasis and are an extremely important element in the product mix at the Greenville facility. Seasonal promotional events bring thousands of consumers to the market.

This market operates 362 days a years. It is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. A staff of two full-time and two part-time employees operate the facility.

Pee Dee State Farmers Market
The Pee Dee State Farmers Market, which is located in Florence, provides space for daily sales by farmers and long-term leases to wholesale and retail operations. It is a major venue for the sale of horticultural products and draws consumers from a broad geographic area. Spring and fall plant and flower festivals are a main draw for the market and help promote year-round business. **(Figure 7.27)**

Pee Dee State Farmers Market
Figure 7.27

Operated by a staff of five, only one is part-time. The market is closed on Sundays and at nights. The only warehouse building at the market is leased to the Harvest Hope Food Bank which operates a regional distribution center from the facility. Harvest hope serves people in need with surplus food products.

During the spring and summer months, the stall space at the market is fully utilized. A waiting list for space is maintained in case space becomes available. Market revenues are stable, but the lack of additional space limits the possibilities of increasing revenues. In 2009, a new retail building was completed and opened for business. This facility provides a controlled environment for year-round retail sales operations. The building is located at the front of the market and provides a new venue to attract customers to the Pee Dee Farmers Market.

Partnerships

Alliances and partnerships with other public and private organizations continue to be developed and nourished to utilize all available resources in a cooperative effort. These alliances have proven beneficial to providing information to the citizens of the state at a significant cost reduction in taxpayer dollars. The agency continues to work with the SC Advocates for Agriculture, a non-profit organization assists the SCDA in marketing and promoting South Carolina agricultural products and the overall industry of agriculture within in South Carolina. The office has also provided promotion and publicity for the Ag Commission of South Carolina and various commodity boards.

Staff supports the SC Food Policy Council, which meets on a quarterly basis to develop policy recommendations for the SCDA as well as other entities involved in the food production system in South Carolina. The Policy Council hears pertinent presentations, provides a forum for networking and discussion, and provides an annual report to the Commissioner of Agriculture regarding suggestions and improvements for food production and the agency's programming events. An important secondary effect of the Council has been the opportunity to build relationships with other state agencies and organizations, especially grant partnerships.

Emergency Preparedness

A Livestock Emergency section has been included on the agency Web site to provide information for livestock owners on evacuation sites, information on how to evacuate livestock, and links to the South Carolina Emergency Management Division. A link to the National Animal Identification Program was also established to provide information to livestock owners about the nationwide effort to locate and identify livestock in case of a nationwide animal disease emergency. Staff also participated in exercises to prepare for potential emergency events such as catastrophic zoonotic disease outbreaks, nuclear disasters, and hurricanes.

During real hurricane and other emergency events, SC Department of Agriculture staff support three ESF functions in the SC Emergency Operations Center. Laboratory and Consumer Services staff work in ESF 11 (Food and Water). ESF 11 is responsible for identifying, securing and arranging for coordinating the transport of food and water assistance to affected areas in cooperation with the USDA Food and Nutrition Services. Public Information staff work 8-hour shifts in ESF 15 (Public Information) which is responsible for coordinating emergency public warning and information systems. Our equine specialist works in ESF 17 (Animal Protection) which is responsible for coordinating all animal response and relief activities. She provides emergency equine stabling sites within the state. In addition, SCDA staff is also deeply involved in emergency recovery and agroterrorism planning.