

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner



House Legislative Oversight Committee
Economic Development, Transportation, and Natural Resources Subcommittee
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Agency Successes



- Growth, popularity, and recognition of the brands under Certified SC umbrella
- The Metrology Department's national ranking
- SC Farm Aid development and execution

Agency Challenges

- Increasing retail traffic at the State Farmers Market
- Employee recruitment and retention due to being one of the lower paying state agencies
- Balancing communications with a wide variety of consumers, customers, and target audiences



Legislative Audit Council Recommendations and Implementations

- *SCDA should charge an admission fee or parking fee for special events hosted at the Farmers Market.*
 - Parking fee for the Plant and Flower Shows implemented in spring 2016.
 - Met with vocal resistance from the public and attendance suffered.
 - Vendor rates were successfully raised instead at the 2017 spring show.
- *Install a functioning surveillance system at the gatehouse and consider any other necessary locations.*
 - The security system at the gate house has been repaired and is serviceable.
 - Determining the need for retaining the security company currently under contract in order to save ~\$50K per year.

Legislative Audit Council Recommendations and Implementations cont.

- *SCDA should obtain all funds due to it per the agreement between the agency and the restaurant and ensure timely payments are made going forward.*
 - The tenant is current on rent and is paying quarterly.
 - New tea room and retail outlet featuring Certified South Carolina specialty food products.
 - Discussing ways to better meet the needs of the middle to lower-income and SNAP recipients that make up much of the demographics in the surrounding area.
 - Other space in building is fully leased to DNR, who is current on rent.

Agency Emerging Issues

- More federal work under cooperative agreement, particularly related to the Food Safety and Modernization Act (FSMA)
- The evaluation and implementation of technology products and services
- Implementation of information security policies
- The construction and opening of a new metrology laboratory



Programs and Objectives- Administrative Services

- 1.1.1 Inventory and establish a replacement schedule for all agency IT equipment
- 1.2.5 Coach supervisors through introductory and advanced training, writing personal development plans for subordinates, and implementation of progressive discipline policy
- 1.3.2 Ensure compliance with procurement code, enhance procedural knowledge, and diversify vendor pool
- 1.4.2 Complete Farm Aid application processing, review and disbursements by 1 October 2016

Programs and Objectives- Consumer Protection

- 2.1.1 Lead implementation plans for federal regulatory mandates such as FSMA, MFRPS, AFRPS, and COOL
- 2.2.3 Design and build a new metrology laboratory to meet the NIST requirements for Echelon I metrology lab environments
- 2.3.1 Procure and deploy new large mass vehicles to provide service to large scale firms
- 2.4.5 Analyze official and submitted samples and communicate results within five business days

Programs and Objectives-

Marketing Services-Marketing and Promotions

- 3.1.1 Increase program membership participation and brand recognition by 5%
- 3.1.4 Conduct participant evaluation at all events to determine effectiveness and utilization
- 4.1.1 Meet with 10 current companies annually to encourage them to use more SC agricultural products in their business processes
- 4.3.2 Respond to 100 percent of website information requests within two business days

Programs and Objectives- Marketing Services-Commodity Boards

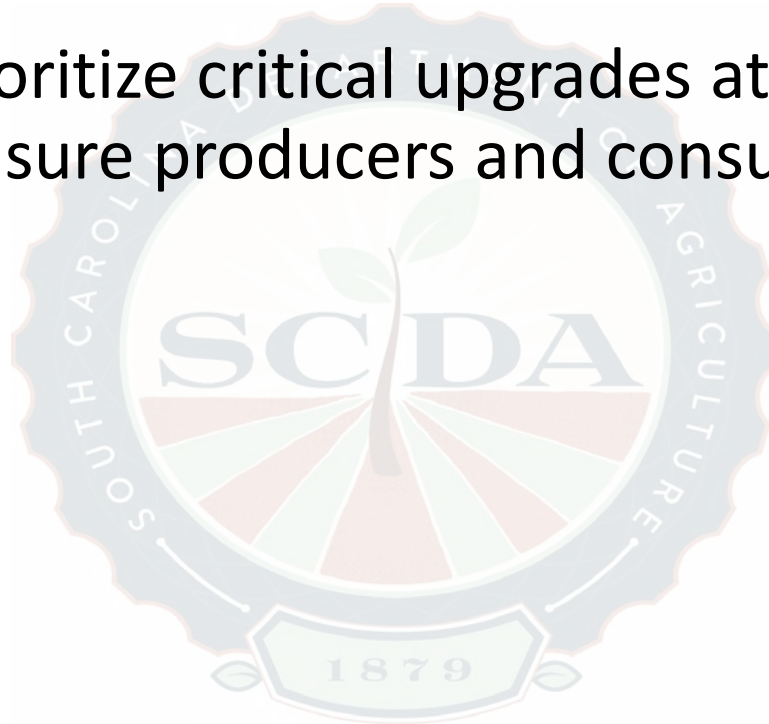
- 3.2.1 Use merchandising and commodity-specific promotions to increase sales of SC products by 5% in retail food outlets and food service venues
- 3.2.2 Fund research of new technologies, science, and best management practices for production, packaging, and processing



Programs and Objectives-

Marketing Services-Market Services

- 3.3.1 Identify and prioritize critical upgrades at all 3 State Farmers Markets (SFM) to ensure producers and consumers have safe and clean facilities



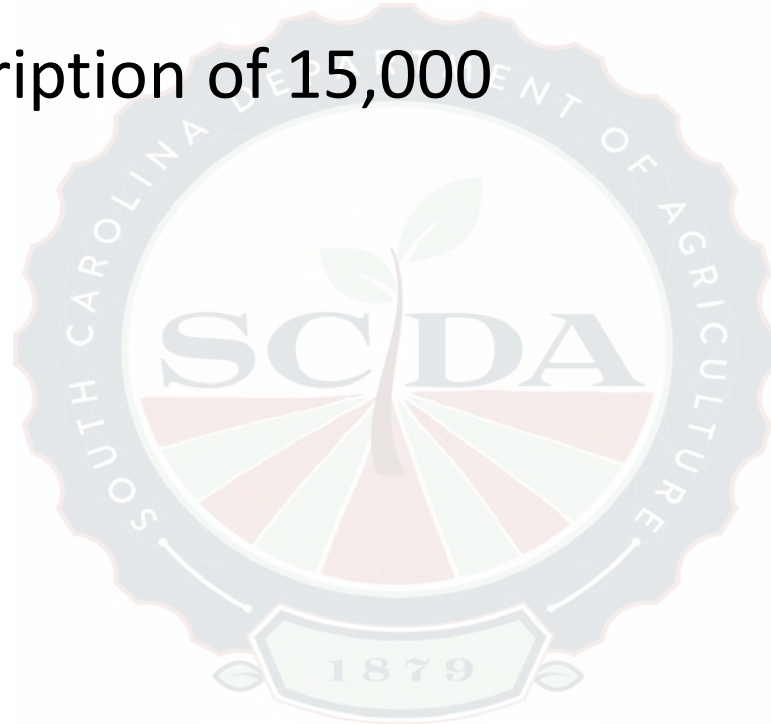
Programs and Objectives-

Marketing Services-Inspection Services

- 3.3.3 In conjunction with Clemson University Extension, update producer Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) training and outreach efforts to increase certification by 5%
- 3.4.1 Make weekly visits to six livestock auctions and daily visits to produce wholesalers to record price, volume and other market information
- 3.4.3 Perform grading and inspection at all statewide peanut buying points and contracted grain and commodity buying points

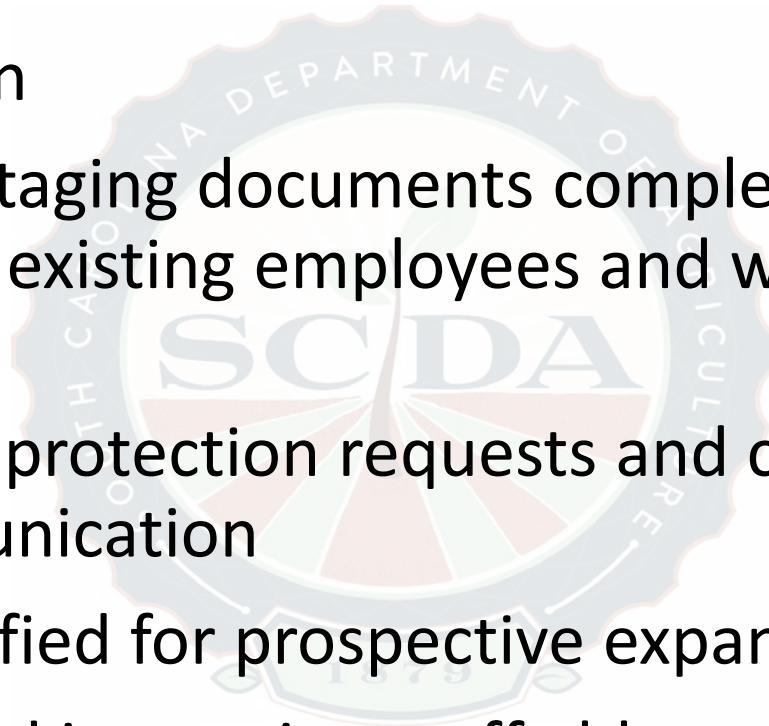
Programs and Objectives- Marketing Services-Market Bulletin

- 4.4.1 Maintain subscription of 15,000



Examples of Performance Measures

- CSC brand recognition
- Percent of planning staging documents completed within 2 months of the calendar year for existing employees and within 1 month of hiring new employees
- Percent of consumer protection requests and complaints with same-day follow-up communication
- Agribusinesses identified for prospective expansion or new projects
- Percent of grading and inspection staff able to provide full service to customers without restrictions



Agency Resource Use

- Agency objectives were changed in 2017 to become better aligned with divisions and to better portray and track invested resources.
- Employee breakdown
 - Allotted 136 FTE slots but have approximately 125 FTE employees
 - Over the course of a full year, have 20-130 temporary employees
 - 4 temporary grant and 9 time-limited employees
- Seasonal temporary employees for peanut inspections
 - Number fluctuates each year with the acres planted and demand from buying points

Agency Resource Use cont.

- Reclassifying Poultry and Egg inspectors as time-limited instead of FTE
 - Funding source is not guaranteed and has ebbed and flowed over the last couple of years as the workload of processing plants changes.
- ~60% of FTEs and 95% of temporary employees are funded by other funds.

Strategic Plan

To ensure the South Carolina agribusiness industry has a \$50 billion economic impact by the year 2020, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture will:

- Strategic Goal 1

Be the face of and lead the voice of the South Carolina agriculture industry.

- Strategic Goal 2

Own the food space in South Carolina.

- Strategic Goal 3

Build a creative, cohesive team environment within SCDA.

- Strategic Goal 4

Enhance public trust in SCDA and the industry we regulate.

