

May 8, 2003

**TO:** All NASS Employees

**FROM:** R. Ronald Bosecker /s/  
Administrator

**SUBJECT:** REE FY 2003 Competitive Sourcing Studies Scheduled to Begin May 8

As a follow on to Under Secretary Joseph Jen's April 2 message on competitive sourcing to all Research, Education, and Economics (REE) employees, I wanted you to know that NASS will not start any competitive sourcing studies in FY 2003. The FY 2004 plan has not yet been developed. However, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) will begin several competitive sourcing studies in FY 2003. These activities are located at Ames, Iowa and Beltsville Area (BA)/National Agricultural Library (NAL) in the Washington D.C. area.

The work functions under study at Ames, Iowa are the facilities operations and maintenance services supporting several of the ARS research laboratories. Functions under study at the Beltsville Area include the facilities operations and maintenance services, the research farming services, and the security services. These studies are scheduled to begin May 8, 2003, and normally take about 18 months to complete. No other studies in the REE mission area are scheduled at this time.

Competitive Sourcing is a major initiative of the President's Management Agenda and is one of several management tools that Federal agencies can use to find the most cost effective ways to carry out agency functions that are commercial in nature. It is important to note that the objective of competitive sourcing is to increase organizational efficiency, not to replace Federal workers with private-sector contractors. Previous experience with these public-private competitions in other government agencies show that the in-house workers are successful in winning a significant proportion of these competitions. When they do win these competitions, it is because they provide the best service for the best price. As a result, the agency as well as the American taxpayer benefit.

I recognize you may feel some apprehension about these studies beginning in the mission area and the potential outcomes. To this end, an REE Competitive Sourcing website address has been established at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/initiatives/a-76/>. This REE website provides a Communications Plan with key actions and times required to conduct the studies as well as some of the commonly asked questions about competitive sourcing. If you have additional questions, please contact our NASS coordinator, Rick Schuchardt, Office of the Administrator, at 720-7737.

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