

Farm Credit Administration  
Office of Inspector General

# STRATEGIC PLAN

Fiscal Years  
2020-2024

Revised September 2021

FCAOIG

Farm Credit Administration  
Office of Inspector General

# Table of Contents

<b>Message from the Inspector General</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Background</b> .....	<b>2</b>
The Farm Credit System .....	2
The Farm Credit Administration.....	2
The Office of Inspector General .....	2
<b>Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Goal 1: Promote Economy and Efficiency .....	5
Goal 2: Prevent and Detect Fraud, Waste, and Abuse.....	6
Goal 3: Strengthen Internal and External Relationships .....	7
<b>Key Factors Affecting the Strategic Outlook</b> .....	<b>8</b>
The Farm Credit System .....	8
The FCA Environment .....	8
Budget Challenges .....	8
<b>Want to Learn More About</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Our Recent Work? .....	9
Our Plans for Future Work? .....	9
Our Budget? .....	9
How to Report Fraud, Waste, or Abuse? .....	9

*Cover: Photograph of Iowa farm, courtesy of Mike Duffy.*

## Message from the Inspector General

I am very pleased to present the Farm Credit Administration (FCA or Agency) Office of Inspector General's (OIG) *Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2020-2024*. This document outlines the vision, mission, values, goals, objectives, and performance measures of our office in carrying out our responsibilities under the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (IG Act). To ensure its continued relevance, the OIG will revise this document as appropriate to reflect changes in conditions and OIG operations.

Our office will continue to focus on its independent oversight role by:

- Protecting the Agency from fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement;
- Finding more efficient and effective ways to improve the Agency's programs, processes, and operations;
- Communicating problems and recommendations to FCA senior leadership and Congress;
- Strengthening our relationship with FCA through education and other outreach efforts; and
- Participating in the Inspector General (IG) community.

Since 1989, the OIG has successfully assisted the Agency in fulfilling its oversight mission to ensure a safe and sound Farm Credit System (System) and the future of agriculture and rural America. I am honored to be a part of a larger community that protects, strengthens, and adds value to government programs and operations.



Wendy R. Laguarda  
Inspector General



## Background

### **The Farm Credit System**

First established in 1916, the System is a nationwide network of borrow-owned cooperative financial institutions and service organizations. A government-sponsored enterprise, the System is designed to better the income and well-being of farmers, ranchers, and rural America by providing a safe and reliable source of credit and related financial services. The System also includes the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation (Farmer Mac), a stockholder-owned, federally chartered instrumentality that provides a secondary market for agricultural real estate mortgage loans, rural housing loans, and rural utility cooperative loans.

### **The Farm Credit Administration**

FCA is an independent federal agency responsible for ensuring that the System remains a dependable source of credit for agriculture and rural America. Authorized by the Farm Credit Act of 1971, as amended, FCA ensures the safety and soundness of System institutions by issuing policies and regulations, and by regularly examining System institutions to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations. FCA is overseen by a three-person board, members of which are appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Chair of the Board, who also serves as the Agency's Chief Executive Officer, is designated by the President and serves in that role until the end of the Chair's term.

### **The Office of Inspector General**

Established in January 1989 pursuant to the IG Act, the OIG provides oversight that promotes economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in FCA programs and operations. Located within the Agency, the OIG is led by the IG who, while appointed by the FCA Board, is endowed with statutory authorities that ensure that the OIG's mission is performed with independence and objectivity. The OIG carries out its oversight activities in accordance with the IG Act and professional standards established by the Government Accountability Office and the IG community.

While the OIG employs a variety of tools to ensure comprehensive oversight of the Agency, its activities generally fall within one of the following categories.

#### **Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations**

The OIG conducts audits, inspections, and evaluations to provide FCA, Congress, and the public with timely, useful, and reliable information on significant issues. These reviews of FCA programs and operations are the primary vehicles by which the OIG develops recommendations to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in Agency programs and prevent waste and mismanagement.

## **Investigations**

OIG investigative activities, whether undertaken proactively or in response to a complaint, endeavor to prevent and detect fraud and abuse in Agency programs. In support of this function, the OIG maintains a hotline enabling FCA employees and members of the public, through multiple avenues, to confidentially report suspected wrongdoing. When appropriate, the OIG coordinates with the Department of Justice and other Federal, State, and local law enforcement authorities to ensure that violations of law, rule, or regulation are thoroughly investigated and prosecuted.

## **Outreach**

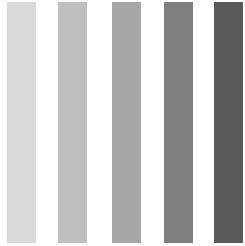
To effectively fulfill its oversight responsibilities, the OIG must engage with Congressional oversight committees, FCA leadership and staff, and other stakeholders. Outreach to these parties ensures that the OIG remains attuned to potential issues facing the Agency and establishes open lines of communication by which the OIG can convey the results of its work. OIG outreach methods include providing educational and explanatory material, issuing public reports, and conducting briefings. Ongoing efforts include, among other things, the issuance of a quarterly intra-agency newsletter—*The dIG: Harvesting Change*—which seeks to inform FCA employees about the OIG, including its mission and operations.

## **The Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency**

The IG also serves as a member of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE). Composed of the federal Inspectors General and certain other federal officials, CIGIE was established to address cross-agency issues of integrity, economy, and effectiveness and to improve the professionalism and effectiveness of OIG personnel. OIG staff regularly participate in CIGIE committees and initiatives.



## Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals

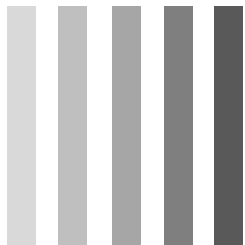
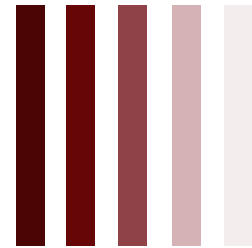


### Vision

Harvesting Change

### Mission

To provide independent oversight to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, and prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in Farm Credit Administration programs and operations

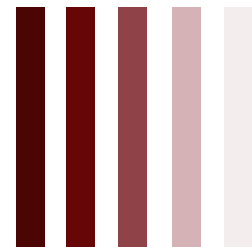


### Values

Objectivity, Integrity, Relevance, and Respect

### Goals

Promote Economy and Efficiency  
Prevent and Detect Fraud, Waste, and Abuse  
Strengthen Internal and External Relationships



## Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

### Goal 1: Promote Economy and Efficiency

It is an OIG priority to promote economy and efficiency in the administration of FCA programs and operations. This statutory responsibility fuels all aspects of the OIG's oversight work and is the focus of our audit, inspection, and evaluation functions. Reports developed through these processes help FCA leadership identify deficiencies and advance the Agency's future. For other stakeholders and the public, these reports bring an extra dimension of transparency to FCA. To be impactful, OIG audits, inspections, and evaluations must adhere to the highest standards of integrity and objectivity. The OIG strives to meet these standards by conducting thorough, risk-based reviews through a staff equipped with the requisite knowledge, skills, and experience.

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<b>1.1 Execute value-added audits, inspections, and evaluations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Annually develop an oversight agenda based on Agency mission, risk, activities, and management.</b></li><li>• <b>Complete products in an average time of six months.</b></li><li>• <b>At least annually, complete a quality assurance review to ensure compliance with professional standards and office policies and procedures.</b></li></ul>
<b>1.2 Produce impactful products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Make recommendations, as necessary, to management and monthly track recommendation status until closure.</b></li></ul>
<b>1.3 Ensure we have a diverse, professional, and highly skilled workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Comply with mandatory training requirements and maintain professional certifications.</b></li><li>• <b>Promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.</b></li></ul>

## Goal 2: Prevent and Detect Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Detecting and deterring fraud, waste, and abuse are responsibilities of the utmost importance to the OIG. Left unchecked, violations of law, rule, and regulation, mismanagement, and abuses of authority—beyond the initial harm imposed—serve to undermine confidence in FCA. By promptly investigating alleged violations and mismanagement in a thorough and objective manner, the OIG enables the Agency to timely correct problems and avoid future issues. Toward this end, the OIG seeks to educate FCA employees on how to identify and report fraud, waste, and abuse and to ensure that they feel safe from retaliation.

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<p><b>2.1 Address potential matters of wrongdoing and misconduct with proficiency, independence, and due professional care</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Initially evaluate all FCA OIG hotline calls, emails, and other submissions within two business days of receipt.</b></li> <li>• <b>Monthly track the status of allegations and investigations to ensure timely actions.</b></li> <li>• <b>Perform or undergo annual reviews to ensure investigative activities are conducted in accordance with quality standards and internal policies and procedures.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>2.2 Provide an independent mechanism to report fraud, waste, and abuse</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maintain a hotline from a source independent of the Agency.</b></li> <li>• <b>Promote awareness of hotline avenues.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>2.3 Educate employees and contractors on fraud and whistleblower rights and protections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>At least twice annually, educate employees on fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and whistleblower protections.</b></li> </ul>



## Goal 3: Strengthen Internal and External Relationships

The OIG must stay attuned to the needs, challenges, and interests of FCA leadership, employees, and other stakeholders to ensure that our work is relevant and impactful. Toward this end, the OIG maintains open lines of communication with all interested parties, allowing us to react swiftly and appropriately to potential issues relating to Agency programs and operations. Similarly, clear communication enables FCA management and the Congress to address problems identified by the OIG. Collaboration with others in the oversight community, including other federal OIGs, is also invaluable. Many of the challenges faced by FCA cut across the federal government and merit a coordinated response.

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	
<b>3.1 Listen to and understand the needs, challenges, and interests of our stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Monthly track reviews of relevant existing or proposed legislation and regulations.</b></li> <li>• <b>Quarterly conduct a confidential survey of Farm Credit System institutions on the effectiveness of the Agency’s examination program.</b></li> <li>• <b>Annually conduct at least four outreach initiatives with employees.</b></li> </ul>
<b>3.2 Report to and fully inform the FCA Board and Congress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Issue the OIG Semiannual Report to Congress within 30 days of the end of each reporting period.</b></li> <li>• <b>At least annually brief Congressional oversight committees on OIG activities.</b></li> <li>• <b>Post all audit, inspection, and evaluation reports within three business days of issuance to the FCA Board.</b></li> <li>• <b>At least quarterly, brief FCA Board members on OIG activities.</b></li> </ul>
<b>3.3 Participate in and engage with the IG community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Monthly participate in CIGIE committees, work groups, or initiatives.</b></li> </ul>

## **Key Factors Affecting the Strategic Outlook**

### **The Farm Credit System**

The environment in which System institutions exist is continually changing. Legislation affecting the System or its status as a government-sponsored enterprise, such as the Farm Bill, impact the way FCA regulates. The agricultural economy and trade and immigration laws have a direct effect on farmers and ranchers which, in turn, affect the health and operations of the System. Accordingly, the OIG will continue to review FCA's oversight role to ensure that it keeps the System safe and sound as it navigates through challenging and ever-changing conditions.

### **The FCA Environment**

Governance changes within FCA and its Congressional oversight committees may necessitate adjustment of the OIG's oversight agenda. The OIG endeavors to respond to all Congressional requests and statutory requirements, so shifting priorities of FCA's oversight committees will affect OIG goals and resource allocations. Changes to the FCA Board and senior leadership may impact Agency priorities, personnel, and organization, requiring the OIG to adjust its oversight to address new risk factors.

### **Budget Challenges**

While the OIG exercises independence in formulating its budget, our office faces constraints similar to those of FCA and other federal agencies. As a model for effective and efficient government, the OIG will continue to use a prudent mix of its core competencies and external resources to fulfill its mission.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been felt in all aspects of American life, and FCA is no exception. In response to the pandemic, the Agency has adjusted its operations and oversight of System institutions, including by directing most of the workforce to telework and suspending on-site examinations. In carrying out its oversight, the OIG must account for these and related results of the pandemic.

## Want to Learn More About...

### **Our Recent Work?**

The OIG publishes reports of audits, inspections, evaluations, and other reviews on our [reports page](#) and on [Oversight.gov](#), which hosts reports from OIGs government-wide. Additionally, the OIG's Semiannual Report to Congress provides a comprehensive view of the office's recent oversight activities.

### **Our Plans for Future Work?**

The OIG annually publishes an Audit, Inspection, and Evaluation Plan describing reviews that the OIG intends to undertake in the next fiscal years. Throughout the year, OIG responds to emerging issues and makes any necessary changes to the plan.

### **Our Budget?**

The OIG annually publishes budget allocations describing the office's expected resource requirements and planned activities for the upcoming fiscal years.

### **How to Report Fraud, Waste, or Abuse?**

The [OIG Hotline](#) accepts tips and complaints about fraud, waste, or abuse related to FCA programs and operations.



Farm Credit Administration  
Office of Inspector General

## **REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE, & MISMANAGEMENT**

**Phone: (800) 437-7322 (Toll-Free)  
(703) 883-4316**

**Fax: (703) 883-4059**

**Email: [fca-ig-hotline@rcn.com](mailto:fca-ig-hotline@rcn.com)**

**Mail: 1501 Farm Credit Drive  
McLean, VA 22102-5090**

To learn more about reporting wrongdoing to the OIG, please visit our website at <https://www.fca.gov/about/inspector-general>.