



1997 Report of the Secretary of Agriculture

A Change for the Better

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Foreword

by Dan Glickman, Secretary of Agriculture

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided meaningful help to those involved in production agriculture--as well as the millions of other people who benefit from our wide range of programs.

The Department made significant strides in advancing the fight against hunger, taking America's conservation efforts to new levels, modernizing and improving food safety, and creating a new day for civil rights at USDA.

We increased trade, enhanced opportunities for family farmers, used new and older tools for the wise stewardship of the land, fed more hungry children and families, made food recovery a national priority, set a sweeping civil rights agenda for the Department and began to implement it, raised consumer confidence in the safety of our food, created jobs in rural America, made scientific discoveries that help farmers and all Americans, and protected American crops and livestock from disease and pests. Through its programs for consumers, producers, the environment, and rural America, USDA affects your life every day.

This report highlights our accomplishments as a Department during 1997, and provides specific activities in which USDA had a real and positive impact on people's lives.

USDA Agencies and Acronyms

- **AMS** - [Agricultural Marketing Service](#)
- **ARS** - [Agricultural Research Service](#)
- **APHIS** - [Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#)
- **CNPP** - Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
- **CSREES** - [Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service](#)
- **ERS** - [Economic Research Service](#)

- [**FAS - Foreign Agricultural Service**](#)
- [**FNS - Food and Nutrition Service**](#)
- [**FS - Forest Service**](#)
- [**FSA - Farm Service Agency**](#)
- [**FSIS - Food Safety and Inspection Service**](#)
- [**GIPSA - Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration**](#)
- [**NASS - National Agricultural Statistics Service**](#)
- [**NRCS - Natural Resources Conservation Service**](#)
- [**RBS - Rural Business - Cooperative Service**](#)
- [**RHS - Rural Housing Service**](#)
- [**RMA - Risk Management**](#)
- [**RUS - Rural Utilities Service**](#)



Logo

1997 Annual Report of the Secretary of Agriculture

A Change for the Better

USDA--Year at a Glance

Here is a brief rundown of some key USDA accomplishments in 1997:

Increased Production, Trade, and Opportunities for Family Farmers

- Helped ensure that U.S. agricultural exports reached \$57.3 billion, the second highest ever. New markets for U.S. agricultural products were opened around the world, including rice to Honduras, pork to Venezuela, grapes to China, and tomatoes to Japan. The export surplus remained a robust \$21.5 billion.
- Worked with farmers to ensure strong harvests in 1997. The wheat crop, featuring record yields in winter wheat, was the largest overall wheat crop of the 1990's. The corn crop was the third largest ever, and soybean yields were at a record high.
- Enrolled 17 million acres of America's most environmentally sensitive lands for protection in the CRP.
- Extended the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to build on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) efforts and combine them with the goals and funding of State governments.
- Provided direct operating and farm ownership loans totaling \$233 million to 4,247 beginning farmers--a 20-percent increase over fiscal year (FY) 1996.
- Responded to natural disasters, including blizzards, droughts, flooding, and tornadoes, with emergency relief and funding.
- Approved expansion of Crop Revenue Coverage (CRC), a privately developed revenue insurance product, for corn, cotton, grain sorghum, and wheat. CRC is now available on almost 90 percent of the corn, wheat, cotton, soybean, and grain sorghum acres in the United States.

Provided More Tools for the Wise Stewardship of the Land

- Accepted over 23,000 contracts, totaling \$171 million, providing cost-share assistance for conservation enhancements as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- Announced the new National Conservation Buffer Initiative to help landowners install 2 million miles of conservation buffers by the year 2002.
- Sponsored the Lake Tahoe Summit to improve Federal, State, and tribal agencies' ability to coordinate programs that protect the environment.

Fed More Children and Families and Made Food Recovery a National Priority

- Hosted the first National Food Recovery and Gleaning Summit to bring together public interest groups, the private sector, farmers, and others to discuss hunger and food recovery. Summit participants set a national goal of increasing food recovery by 33 percent.
- Reached full funding for WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), assisting 7.5 million mothers and their young children with healthful food and nutrition advice.
- Obtained rebates for WIC State agencies on infant formula through cooperative bidding, permitting 1.6 million additional participants and \$1.2 billion in savings.

Proposed Food Safety Regulations That Will Better Protect the Public Health

- Required all federally inspected meat and poultry processing plants to implement the first two elements of the new Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point inspection system to reduce human exposure to meat- and poultry-borne pathogens.
- Promoted efforts to address food safety risks on the farm and during transportation and distribution.
- Intensified research efforts into foodborne pathogens such as *Salmonella* and *E. coli*.
- Developed a mixture of microorganisms that, when added to feed for young chickens, prevent *Salmonella* from thriving. This technology, called competitive exclusion, represents another important tool to assure a safe food supply for U.S. and export markets.
- Unveiled “Fight BAC,” a new national food safety education campaign developed and supported by a public-private partnership of industry, government, and consumer groups.
- Proposed Food Safety legislation that would authorize civil penalties for violations rather than relying on closing plants.

Created Jobs and Economic Revitalization in Rural Communities

- Provided more than \$2.6 billion in loans, loan guarantees, or grants in rural housing and issued rental assistance to 40,000 rural, low-income households.
- Financed the start-up or expansion of 1,183 rural businesses or cooperatives, creating or preserving more than 53,000 jobs.
- Provided more than \$1.3 billion in loans and grants for 1,125 rural water or wastewater projects that serve 8.5 million people.
- Made a down payment on an information superhighway for rural America by loaning \$380 million for 79 rural telecommunications projects providing service to 211,000 rural households and businesses, to make advanced telecommunications services such as the Internet available to more rural families.
- Provided almost \$17 million in loans and grants for distance learning and telemedicine projects, to expand educational and medical opportunities to America’s rural communities.
- Invested more than \$60 million in the Nation’s 3 rural Empowerment Zones and 33 rural Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC), creating or saving over 7,000 jobs. More than 700,000 rural citizens now receive additional services in the EZ/EC’s as a result of USDA loans, grants, and

programs.

Invested in the Future Through Research, Education, and Economics

- Developed highly specific and sensitive antibodies for detecting *E. coli*. New commercial diagnostic tests based upon this technology detect the *E. coli* of greatest concern--the pathogenic 0157:H7 serotype that can be fatal. Previous tests for identifying *E. coli* 0157:H7 and related pathogens were generally regarded as lacking adequate specificity.
- Built a machine that kills *Salmonella* on raw poultry surfaces, where *Salmonella* contamination of raw poultry is most likely to be found.
- Estimated food losses by retailers, food service establishments, and consumers at 96 billion pounds or 26 percent of the edible food supply.
- Awarded more than \$1.4 million in grants to 13 Hispanic-serving institutions for programs to attract and retain students to work in the Nation's food and agricultural scientific and professional workforce.
- Made almost \$2 million in grant awards to 29 tribal colleges under the new Tribal Colleges Extension Program. The awards will support training and education in a wide variety of areas, including production agriculture, business management, community and family development, 4-H and youth leadership, natural resources and conservation, nutrition, diet, and health.
- Analyzed the effects of climate change and the possible implications of climate change mitigation policies. These analyses showed that there is considerable ability for the agricultural sector to adapt to climate change.
- Released 59 new varieties and 89 new germplasm lines of agricultural and horticultural crops for use by farmers, ranchers, and home gardeners. These new varieties and germplasm lines will aid in increasing U.S. agriculture's worldwide competitiveness.

Promoted Quality and Fair Trade Through Marketing and Regulatory Services

- Proposed the first Federal regulations governing national organic agriculture standards. These rules strengthen one of the fastest growing segments of the agriculture economy, and will expand market opportunities for small and medium-sized farmers.
- Worked quickly to control newly established pests such as the Asian longhorned beetle and Karnal bunt, and to reduce the incidence of animal diseases such as brucellosis and tuberculosis.
- Hosted 10 farmers markets with vendors from 7 States at USDA in Washington, DC, and helped establish another 23 farmers markets in coordination with the U.S. Departments of Energy, Transportation, and Labor.
- Awarded 47 percent of Agricultural Marketing Service purchase awards to small business firms (of the \$285 million obligated for Federal meat and fish purchases), exceeding the Government's goal of 20 percent.
- Resolved unjustified trade barriers with 16 countries. These efforts were worth \$7 billion in agricultural exports.
- Prompted the Surface Transportation Board to take unprecedented emergency action to alleviate problems of agricultural shippers.

- Pilot-tested a project to find ways for farmers to sell directly to school districts in Georgia; these direct sales methods emphasized small and limited-resource farmers' access to direct sales outlets.
- Proposed regulatory reform for milk marketing orders.

Set a Sweeping Civil Rights Agenda for the Department

As indicators of Secretary Glickman's commitment to eradicating the vestiges of discrimination at USDA and ensuring equal opportunity for all, USDA achieved the following civil rights accomplishments in 1997:

- Restaffed the civil rights enforcement unit and began work on the backlog of discrimination complaints--resolving 187 program discrimination complaints, including 11 major settlements.
- Initiated new foreclosure and lending policies at USDA to help assure that no one will lose his or her farm because of discrimination.
- Provided direct operating loans totaling \$65 million to 1,927 socially disadvantaged farmers and direct farm ownership loans totaling \$15.5 million to 184 socially disadvantaged farmers, exceeding by 176 percent the targeted allocation that Congress had set.
- Increased minority representation on Farm Service Agency (FSA) State committees by 10 percent over the past year--46 percent of the 222 FSA State committee members are now women and minorities.
- Established an Office of Outreach to reach customers that USDA has not traditionally served.
- Provided \$4.5 million from the Fund for Rural America for outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers.
- Created the Small Farms Commission to address the critical needs of small and socially disadvantaged farmers.
- Increased direct farm ownership and farm operating loans made to minority and women farmers from \$46.5 million to \$81 million (a 74-percent increase), between FY 1993 and FY 1997.
- Established the new division of civil rights in the Office of the General Counsel. This office is charged with providing legal counsel and guidance to the Department on civil rights issues.
- Hosted two procurement conferences targeting American Indian and Alaska Native Corporations, resulting in an increase in contract awards to American Indian firms.

Provided Administrative and Executive Support to the Department

- Developed regulations and initiated a Welfare-to-Work Program, for taking people off the welfare rolls and putting them on USDA's employment rolls. Exceeding the Departmental goal of 100, USDA hired 126 employees under this program in FY 1997.
- Established a Nursing Mothers Room, to provide employees who are nursing mothers the privacy to express their breast milk at work, and thus allow them to return to work earlier after delivery.
- Successfully bid against other Federal and private data processing centers to provide data processing for the Federal Aviation Administration.
- Established a Department-level Year 2000 (Y2K) Project Team to ensure that the Department's hundreds of information systems will be capable of handling the challenge of the year 2000 date

change.

- Appointed the first Chief Information Officer for USDA. The Office of the Chief Information Officer oversees the design, acquisition, maintenance, use, and disposal of information technology by USDA agencies, and monitors the performance of the Department's information technology programs.

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VOLUME 63 NO3— May-June 2004

We Honor Our Award-Winning USDA Achievers

by Charlene Baker
RD Human Resources Staff

USDA honored a number of its employees, for their outstanding achievements, at its 58th Annual Honor Awards Ceremony, which took place June 25 at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, DC.

Cecilia Matthews, USDA's incentive awards program manager with the Office of Human Resources Management and coordinator of the Ceremony, said that USDA honor awards were awarded to 102 recipients, including 32 individuals and 70 groups.

147 nominations, which included 50 individuals and 97 groups, had been submitted earlier to the USDA Honor Awards Evaluation Committee. That group, chaired by **Alma Hobbs**, special assistant for diversity and outreach in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, was composed of Hobbs and five individuals selected from within USDA and from elsewhere in the federal government. The six-member Committee had reviewed those nominations in April and had then made its recommendations to Secretary **Ann M. Veneman**.

At the ceremony Veneman delivered the keynote address. "In many ways, these awards are USDA's 'time capsule,' a reflection of the body of work we are building, and the times in which we live," she noted. Veneman then singled out **Danny Woodyard**, a staff attorney in the Office of the General Counsel's field office in Little Rock, Ark., who--while serving as a Lt. Col. in a U.S. Army Reserve Unit in Baghdad--helped to rebuild Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture and helped select the Ministry's new leadership.

LaWuan Waring, USDA's incentive awards assistant with OHRM, said that the highest USDA honor awards are the Plow Awards. Three individuals and four groups received Plow Awards this year. Those recipients have that particular annotation by their respective names in the lists that follow.

In addition to the 102 USDA honor award presentations, USDA's awards program noted the Department's 24 Presidential Rank Award recipients for 2003, the USDA recipients of major awards sponsored by external organizations, and the 521 Departmental employees across the country who

have 40 or more years of federal service. Of those, 19 have 50 or more years of federal service. Within that group, and for at least the fourth year in a row, the USDA employee with the longest years of federal service is reported to be **Harold "Bruno" Mangum**, currently a program specialist with the Farm Service Agency's state office in Raleigh, N.C., who, at press time, has 68 years of federal service--and all of it is with USDA.

The 32 Individuals receiving USDA honor Awards included:

For Enhancing Economic Opportunities for Agricultural Producers: **Larry Heatherly** [Plow Award] (Agricultural Research Service), Stoneville, Ms.; **Donald Martin** (National Agricultural Statistics Service), Honolulu, Hawaii; and **Mitchell Morehart**, (Economic Research Service), Washington, DC; *For Supporting Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Quality of Life in Rural Areas:* **Thomas Birkett** (NASS), Washington, DC; **Terry Klopfenstein** (Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and the University of Nebraska), Lincoln, Neb.; **Ambrose McGuire** (Rural Housing Service), Des Moines, Iowa; **Dave Paul** (Risk Management Agency), Spokane, Wash.; **Marilyn Smith** (CSREES and the University of Nevada), Elko, Nev.; and **Michael Taylor** (RHS), Alexandria, La.; *For Enhancing Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply:* **John Huntley** (National Association of State Departments of Agriculture), Albany, N.Y.; and **William Lyons** (California Department of Food and Agriculture), Sacramento, Calif.; *For Improving the Nation's Nutrition and Health:* **Eliot Herman** [Plow Award] (ARS), St. Louis, Mo.; **Patti Mitchell** (Food and Nutrition Service), Alexandria, Va.; and **Judith Stern** (CSREES and the University of California), Davis, Calif.; *For Protecting and Enhancing the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment:* **James Doolittle** (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Newtown Square, Pa.; **Helen Flach** (NRCS), Davis, Calif.; **Jeff Goebel** (NRCS), Beltsville, Md.; **Hal Gordon** (NRCS), Portland, Ore.; **Robbie LeValley** (Colorado State University), Delta, Colo.; and **Lena Ma** (CSREES and the University of Florida), Gainesville, Fla.; *For Supporting the President's Management Agenda and Civil Rights:* **John Cooper** [Plow Award] (RHS), Raleigh, N.C.; **Carl Butler** (Agricultural Marketing Service), Memphis, Tenn.; **Karen Citizen-Wilcox** (Office of Inspector General), Atlanta, Ga.; **Jane Kohlman** (Forest Service), Madison, Wis.; **Thomas Mills** (FS), Washington, DC; **Irene Seastrum** (Farm Service Agency), Washington, DC; and **Douglas Wolfe** (OIG), Beltsville, Md.; *For Heroism and Emergency Response:* **Thomas Ackerman** (OIG), East Lansing, Mich.; **George Aldaya** (FSA), Kansas City, Mo.; **William Coats** (AMS), Washington, DC; **Mark Hopko** (OIG), Lakewood, Colo.; and **Mary Kennedy** (Montana Conservation Corps), Helena, Mont.



Larry Heatherly
Donald Martin
Mitchell Morehart
Thomas Birkett
Terry Klopfenstein



Ambrose McGuire
Dave Paul
Marilyn Smith
Michael Taylor
John Huntley



William Lyons
Eliot Herman
Patti Mitchell
Judith Stern
James Doolittle



Helen Flach
Jeff Goebel
Hal Gordon
Robbie LeValley
Lena Ma



John Cooper
Carl Butler
Karen Citizen-Wilcox
Jane Kohlman
Thomas Mills



Irene Seastrum
Douglas Wolfe
Thomas Ackerman
George Aldaya
William Coats



Mark Hopko
Mary Kennedy

The 70 Groups--which include over 955 Group members--receiving USDA honor awards included:

For Enhancing Economic Opportunities for Agricultural Producers: the Audit, Review, and Compliance Branch (AMS), Washington, DC, **James Riva**, Group Leader; the Biotechnology Team (Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration), Washington, DC, **David Shipman**, Group Leader; the California Marketing Order Program Team (AMS), Fresno, Calif., **Kurt Kimmel**, Group Leader; the "Fantesk" Research Unit (ARS), Peoria, Ill., **George Fanta**, Group Leader; the Market Analysis Program Team (ERS), Washington, DC, **Joy Harwood**, Group Leader; the Ministerial Conference and EXPO on Agricultural Science and Technology (Foreign Agricultural Service), Washington, DC, **Christian Foster**, Group Leader; the North Dakota Sham Farm Operations Investigative Group (OIG), Bismarck, N.D., **Paul Ward**, Group Leader; the United States Embassy Mexico City North American Free Trade Agreement Team (FAS), Mexico City, Mexico, **William Brant**, Group Leader; the United States Rice Genome Consortia (CSREES and the University of Arizona), Tucson, Ariz., **Rod Wing**,

Group Leader; and the Wheat-Based Bioproducts Group (ARS), Albany, Calif., **Gregory Glenn** and **William Orts**, Group Leaders; *For Supporting Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Quality of Life in Rural Areas*: the Pohnpei Field Office [Plow Award] (NRCS), Pohnpei, Micronesia, **Philip Giles** and **Jed Johnson**, Group Leaders; the American Growers Resolution Team (RMA), Kansas City, Mo., and Washington, DC, **Denise Hoffman** and **Michael Hand**, Group Leaders; the Hawaii Fruit Fly Area-Wide Pest Management Core Team (ARS), Hilo, Hawaii, **Roger Vargas**, Group Leader; the Lower Hamakua Ditch Watershed Implementation Team (NRCS), Honolulu, Hawaii, **Douglas Toews**, Group Leader; and the Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship (CSREES and the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station/Cornell University), Geneva, N.Y., **Olga Padilla-Zakour**, Group Leader; *For Enhancing Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply*: the Food Safety Incident Response Group [Plow Award] (Food Safety and Inspection Service), Washington, DC and Chicago, Ill., **Vella Holmes** and **Paul Wolseley**, Group Leaders; the Canadian Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy Response Team (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service), Washington, DC, **Peter Fernandez**, Group Leader; the Carcass Inspection Systems Team (ARS), Ames, Iowa, **Thomas Casey**, Group Leader; the Department of Homeland Security Reorganization Transition Planning Group (APHIS), Washington, DC, **Ric Dunkle**, Group Leader; the Exotic Newcastle Disease Eradication Project (APHIS), Washington, DC, **Ron DeHaven**, Group Leader; the Federal Register Notice Rule Change and Implementation Group (APHIS), Riverdale, Md., **Rebecca Bech**, Group Leader; the Food Safety Mobile Team (FSIS), Beltsville, Md., **Susan Conley**, Group Leader; the Food Safety Regulatory Essentials Team (FSIS), Washington, DC, **Bobby Palesano**, Group Leader; the Memorandum of Agreement Development and Implementation Team (FSIS), Washington, DC, **Laurie Lindsay**, Group Leader; the Operational Rations Inspection Management Team (AMS), Washington, DC, **Terry Bane**, Group Leader; the Oversight of Production Process and Recall at ConAgra Plant Audit Team (OIG), Kansas City, Mo., **Dennis Gannon**, Group Leader; and the Security Analysis System for United States Agriculture (ERS), Washington, DC, **Paul Chan**, Group Leader; *For Improving the Nation's Nutrition and Health*: the Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program 2002-2003 (FNS), Alexandria, Va., **Peter Murano**, Group Leader; the One Public Face Website Development Team (FNS), Alexandria, Va., **Ronald Johnson**, Group Leader; and the USDA Food Security Measurement Team (ERS), Washington, DC, **Mark Nord**, Group Leader; *For Protecting and Enhancing the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment*: the Protozoan Parasite Epidemiology Team [Plow Award] (ARS), Beltsville, Md., **Ronald Fayer**, Group Leader; the Airport Training Committee (APHIS), Morris Plains, N.J., and New Market, Md., **Janet Bucknall** and **Alton Dunaway**, Group Leaders; the Animal Waste Management Team (ERS), Washington, DC, and Beltsville, Md., **Noel Gollehon** (ERS) and **Daniel Meyer** (NRCS), Group Leaders; the Ecological Area-Wide Management (TEAM) of Leafy Spurge (ARS), Sidney, Mont., **Gerald Anderson**, Group Leader; the Florida Automated Weather Network (CSREES and the University of Florida), Tavares, Fla., **John Jackson**, Group Leader; the Hayman Fire Restoration Team (FS), Colorado Springs, Colo., **Brent Botts**, Group Leader; the Master Tree Farmer/Master Wildlifer Programs (CSREES and Clemson University), Clemson, S.C., **George Kessler**, Group Leader; the North Carolina Phosphorus Loss Assessment Team (NRCS), Raleigh, N.C., **John Havlin**, Group Leader; the Resource Conservation and Development Coordinators (NRCS), Emmett, Idaho, **Russel Manwaring**, Group Leader; the Rhode Island Eelgrass Restoration Partnership (NRCS), Emmett, Idaho, **Andrew Lipsky**, Group Leader; the Saltcedar Biological Control Research Team (ARS), Albany, Calif., and Temple, Texas, **Raymond Carruthers** and **Jack DeLoach**, Group Leaders; the Shasta County Conservation Partnership (NRCS), Redding, Calif., **Robert Bailey**, Group Leader; the SmarTech Development Team (NRCS), Fort Worth, Texas, **Arnold King**, Group Leader; the Southeast Region American Indian Initiative Workgroup (NRCS), Atlanta, Ga., **Charles Adams**, Group Leader; the Sustainable Coffee Production Team (NRCS), Atlanta, Ga., **Charles**

Adams, Group Leader; and the Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus Team (CSREES and the University of Florida), Quincy, Fla., **Joseph Funderburk**, Group Leader; *For Supporting the President's Management Agenda and Civil Rights*: the Emergency Loan Streamlining Taskforce (FSA), Washington, DC, **Michael Hinton**, Group Leader; the Emergency Preparedness and Programs Branch (FSA), Washington, DC, **Lynn Tjeerdsma**, Group Leader; Extension en Espanol (CSREES and Texas A&M University), College Station, Texas, **William Watson**, Group Leader; the Farm Loan Program Chief Mentoring Project (FSA), Washington, DC, **Almeda Cole**, Group Leader; the Food Aid Request Entry System (FSA), Kansas City, Mo., **Ethel Bowers**, Group Leader; the Hazard and Flood Compliance Team (RHS), St. Louis, Mo., **Thomas Morris**, Group Leader; the Labor-Management Agreement Implementation (FSIS), Washington, DC, **Cheryl Dunham** and **Jonathan Theodule**, Group Leaders; the Mentoring Program (CSREES), Washington, DC, **Gladys Vaughn**, Group Leader; the National Employee Development Team (FNS), Alexandria, Va., **Geoff Gay**, Group Leader; the RadioSource.net Land-Grant Internet Audio Project (CSREES and the University of Florida), Gainesville, Fla., **Ashley Wood**, Group Leader; the Small Business Capacity Building Team (Departmental Administration, the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization), Washington, DC, **James House**, Group Leader; the Streamlining and Cost Savings Initiative Team (NRCS), Fort Worth, Texas, **Humberto Hernandez**, Group Leader; the Travel Card Audit Team (OIG), Washington, DC, **Richard Davis** and **Jane Bannon**, Group Leaders; the Water and Waste Grant Eligibility Audit Team (OIG), Kansas City, Mo., **Dennis Gannon**, Group Leader; and the Zone 2--District Conservationists and Tribal Resource Conservationists (NRCS), Stillwater, Okla., **Mark Habiger**, Group Leader; *For Heroism and Emergency Response*: the Space Shuttle--107 Columbia Recovery Mission Group [Plow Award], (FS), Zavalla, Texas, **James Sowell**, Group Leader; the Afghanistan and Iraq Agriculture Reconstruction Team (FAS), Washington, DC, **Lee Schatz**, Group Leader; the Exotic Newcastle Disease Research Response Team (ARS), Athens, Ga., **David Suarez**, Group Leader; the Glen Pittsenbarger Rescue Team (FS), Marlinton, W.Va., **David Buck** and **Edward Burton**, Group Leaders; the Mountain Area Safety Task Force (FS), San Bernardino, Calif., **Gene Zimmerman**, Group Leader; the Old Fire--Highway 18 Defense Group (FS), Big Bear, Calif., **Randall Clauson**, Group Leader; Preclearance Programs (APHIS), Riverdale, Md., **David Reeves**, Group Leader; the Ralstonia Incident Response Team (APHIS), Riverdale, Md., **Matthew Royer**, Group Leader; and the Wildlife Services Hurricane Isabel Relief Team (APHIS), Annapolis, Md., **Stephen Kendrot**, Group Leader. •

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VOLUME 63 NO3— May-June 2004

USDA news

USDA's Employee News Publication-For You & About You!

"Forward Challenge" Tested The Strength Of USDA's COOP Plan

Aflatoxin, Fumes, White Powder—They Just Kept On Coming

by Ron Hall
Office of Communications

A suicide terrorist attack with chemicals is thwarted at a subway station in Washington, DC. Two large water tankers are stolen from a secured parking compound at a water treatment facility, resulting in a police-issued all-points bulletin. The "Star Blast" computer virus is infecting many government computers. A light plane carrying a chemical warfare substance crashes into a popular theme park in Orlando, Fla. And both the secretary of agriculture and the secretary of health and human services, on their way to an emergency meeting at the White House, are killed in a traffic accident when a tour bus runs a red light, hitting their limo.

Those were just a few of the "injects," or simulated problems to be dealt with, in the playing field for "Exercise Forward Challenge 2004," a governmentwide emergency operations exercise that took place in May.

According to **Freeman Walker**, acting chief of the Continuity of Operations Planning Staff in the Office of Procurement and Property Management, over 45 federal departments and agencies were players in Forward Challenge, held on May 12-13. At USDA 118 employees participated in the exercise.

"This was a governmentwide exercise designed to test the Continuity of Operations--or COOP--Plans for those participating federal departments and agencies, including our own COOP Plan here at USDA," he explained. "The idea was for agencies to test how they would carry out their own previously defined 'essential functions'--at an emergency relocation facility."

"That's because some emergency or disaster, either natural or human-caused, would have made the normal work location not available or otherwise uninhabitable."



Events are literally a hectic blur around Freeman Walker (left, pointing finger), acting chief of the Continuity of Operations Planning Staff in OPPM, as he coordinates an all-hands briefing of a roomful of USDA's "Crisis Action Team" members. This activity was one of many which constituted USDA's recent participation in "Exercise Forward Challenge."

--Photo by Ron Hall

Len Benning, an emergency management program specialist in the Continuity of Operations Planning Staff, noted that USDA had tested its COOP Plan in the past--most recently during "Exercise Bright Future" held in February.

"But in this most recent operation," he said, "we tested how effectively our USDA employees--who have been designated to deploy when the COOP Plan is activated--were, in fact, able to deploy to USDA's emergency relocation facility in Elkins, West Virginia--and then set up shop there, carry out the essential USDA functions to which they had been tasked, and effectively communicate the status of their efforts."



It's all business in the elbow-to-elbow environs of USDA's "Emergency Operations Center" in Elkins, W.Va., as several members of the Department's Crisis Action Team (CAT) methodically respond to some of the many 'injects' of "Exercise Forward Challenge." They include (L to R) Office of Procurement and Property Management CAT member David Shea, Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services CAT member Pam Phillips (back to camera), Food Safety CAT member Yvonne Davis, Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services CAT member Lynn Tjeerdsma (on phone), and FFAS CAT member Rob Huttenlocker.
--Photo by Ron Hall

emitting fumes, contaminating the local water supply, and affecting several acres of crops; white powder has been discovered in the mailroom of the Rural Development facility in St. Louis; and USDA's plan for its 'order of succession' needs to be implemented due to the death of the secretary of agriculture.

Tom Comi, chief COOP consultant to the Continuity of Operations Planning Staff, said USDA employees designated as COOP "Crisis Action Team" (CAT) members immediately deployed to Elkins, following the activation of USDA's COOP Plan, as part of the exercise.

"Their job," he explained, "is to respond to problems and activities occurring within their respective areas of responsibility. They'd coordinate the gathering of information about those events, coordinate the development of responses to resolve those events, and coordinate the communication to USDA senior officials about how the problems are being resolved."

Dave Sloan, the information technology specialist in the Continuity of Operations Planning Staff, recounted that during the exercise the CAT members worked in shifts, normally hunched over their

Most of the 118 USDA employees, who were designated to deploy, left Washington, DC and relocated to Elkins, relying on the facility which is normally the Forest Service's headquarters building of the Monongahela National Forest.

Klaus Werner, a COOP consultant to the Continuity of Operations Planning Staff, pointed out that the scenario for Exercise Forward Challenge involved a specific threat to the Washington, DC area and a failed terrorist attack. At the same time, USDA employees involved in the exercise dealt with 'exercise injects' that were specific to USDA's mission.

Such 'USDA-specific exercise injects' included: school children in Mexico City have become ill after eating products made with corn that was grown in the U.S.--and that may have been purposely tainted with aflatoxin; a group calling itself "Government Interference in Free Trade" is sending messages threatening to interfere with food, water, and feed supplies, to include targeting Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service labs and quarantine facilities; an explosion in Chicago is affecting food supplies in that area; three tractor-trailers have crashed--possibly intentionally--in the vicinity of USDA's labs in Ames, Iowa,

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Dave Sloan, the information technology specialist in the Continuity of Operations Planning Staff, recounted that during the exercise the CAT members worked in shifts, normally hunched over their

laptops, elbow-to-elbow in a room designated as the COOP Emergency Operations Center, as they grappled with the exercise injects they were provided. "Those injects kept being updated, which required additional strategies for resolving the brushfires that kept cropping up," he recalled.

Emergency management program specialist **Cynthia Powell** added that CAT members provided periodic updates to a "journal of activities" designed to reflect an up-to-the-minute status of each event being dealt with. "I kept the official journal up-to-date," she explained. "And I also projected a scrolling image of the journal onto a wall in the 'bullpen room,' where most CAT members were working--so that they could keep up with developments from other mission areas, as needed."

Staff secretary **Mikaell Carter** added that CAT members also conducted daily update briefings by videoconference for USDA subcabinet officials situated at another location.

So, any "lessons learned?" "Yes," Walker replied. "We were able to validate that our current COOP Plan and procedures work. USDA employees are able to deploy to their emergency relocation facilities, continue to perform their essential functions under emergency conditions, and effectively communicate both internally and with other federal departments and agencies."

"Lessons learned from Forward Challenge will help us refine our COOP planning--and be better prepared for future exercises or COOP emergencies." •

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USDA news

USDA's Employee News Publication-For You & About You!

One of the lessons learned in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 is the need to properly guard against intentional as well as unintentional threats to the nation's food supply and be prepared to respond if they happen.

President **George W. Bush** initiated the development of a National Incident Management System (NIMS), which is now in place.

The centerpiece of NIMS is the Incident Command System (ICS), which was originally developed in 1970 by the Forest Service to deal with wildfires. ICS, simply put, is a cooperative effort that gives responders at all levels of government one unified structure in which to operate. Jurisdictional barriers are overcome in order to deal with threats or an incident. The basic principle is that every disaster is local, even though it might be national in scale.

The ICS is so effective that five Forest Service ICS teams were in place the morning of September 12, 2001--three in New York City and two at the Pentagon.

I had the opportunity about three weeks later to visit some of the Forest Service teams who were in New York City, and I think that the deputy chief of the fire department in New York City said it best when he told me, "I never could have imagined that we, the Fire Department of New York, would be working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture." But he went on to say, "We could not have handled this situation without you."

Forest Service ICS teams also were called into action during the recovery of the Space Shuttle Columbia.

Yet ICS is not limited to the Forest Service. That is why USDA's Homeland Security Office has worked the past year and a half to develop ICS training for employees, which you can find at www.golearn.gov. Not only will this training enhance our emergency response and support capabilities, but it will also strengthen our homeland security at the federal, state, and local levels. Every employee is essential to building the kind of coordinated and prepared workforce that is so critical to USDA's prevention and



[Biography](#)

response network.

Ongoing training in our response mechanisms will enhance our ability to help carry out USDA functions as we deal with critical issues and potential threats to our food and agriculture supply. Employee ICS training will make USDA a better and more effective department. Thanks in advance for strengthening your personal readiness on behalf of USDA and the public we serve. •

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Notes from USDA Headquarters

As farmers continued planting what USDA economists expect will be another record crop of corn and soybeans, Secretary Ann M. Veneman in May told a tele-news conference of other noteworthy developments in the agricultural economy. In early June, USDA released the 2002 agriculture census results, began increased surveillance of the nation's cowherd for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), and pressed new homeownership initiatives.



As an area farmer (right) looks on approvingly, Secretary Ann M. Veneman (center) and Agricultural Marketing Service Administrator A.J. Yates officially open--for its ninth season--USDA's farmers market on June 4. Farmers from states including Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia sell fresh fruits and vegetables, baked goods, fresh-cut flowers, and more. The market--located at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC--is open to USDA employees and the public and runs every Friday until October 29. --Photo by Alice Welch

Historic Time For Agriculture: "The farm economy is exceptionally strong. The trade picture is very bright and the safety net for producers is firmly and fully in place," Secretary Veneman told reporters in May. USDA analysts are currently predicting record crops of corn, soybeans, rice, and almonds. In addition the forecast of agricultural exports has been raised to \$61.5 billion, ten percent of which comes from purchases by China. If realized this amount would surpass the previous export record set in 1996 of \$60 billion.

Producers are also benefiting at this time from record high prices. "Strong markets and improved financial health span most of the farm economy today both for crops and livestock. In fact, we now expect sales of farm products this year to top a record \$215 billion," Veneman said.

Despite interruptions in beef and poultry trade due to animal disease worries, the livestock sector is experiencing continued growth, and record production and prices are likely. Dairy farmers are receiving record-breaking prices for milk and "next year we may also have record cattle prices, broiler production, and pork exports," she said.

Veneman said the health of today's farm economy clearly underscores the importance of exports to our agricultural industry. Trade is helping more and more farmers' income to be from the marketplace.

Trade is also benefiting our rural communities. Export sales now support 900,000 jobs, 40 percent of which are in rural areas.

2002 Census Of Agriculture: Half of America's farms and ranches have Internet access and nearly 39 percent report using a computer for their farm business, according to new data released from the 2002 Census of Agriculture.

"These data illustrate the importance of the eGovernment initiatives being implemented by USDA," said Secretary Veneman. "We are making more information available to farmers and ranchers through the Internet and helping to provide broadband access to rural communities. To date, this administration has provided over \$253 million in broadband loans for rural areas."

Conducted every five years by the National Agricultural Statistics Service, the census of agriculture attempts to survey every agricultural operator in America through the mail, by telephone, or personal interview. Data represent all agricultural operations, defined as any place, which sold or normally would have sold more than \$1,000 worth of agricultural products during the census year.

Highlights of the agriculture census include:

- The top five states in value of agricultural products sold are California (\$25.7 billion), Texas (\$14.1 billion), Iowa (\$12.3 billion), Nebraska (\$9.7 billion), and Kansas (\$8.7 billion).
- Ninety percent of farms are operated by an individual or family. The number of corporate farms declined by 18.4 percent from 1997 to 2002, which reverses a trend that has continued without interruption since 1974.
- Direct sales to consumers through farmers markets and other venues increased 37 percent from 1997, totaling \$812.2 million in 2002.
- The value of organic commodities reached \$392.8 million in 2002.
- The estimated market value of land and buildings on the Nation's farms rose 24 percent from 1997 to 2002.
- The average age of principal farm or ranch operators was 55.3-years-old compared to 54-years-old in 1997. But, for the first time, NASS collected information about more than one operator on the same farm. Results showed an average age of second operators at 49.4-years-old and third operators at 41.9-years-old. For more information go to: www.usda.gov/nass/

BSE Surveillance: On June 1, results of BSE tests from the enhanced surveillance program began to be posted on the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's website. Under the program, using statistically geographic modeling, sampling some 268,000 animals will allow for the detection of BSE at a rate of 1 positive in 10 million adult cattle with a 99 percent confidence level. In other words, the enhanced program could detect BSE even if there were only five positive animals in the entire country.

Homeownership Achievements: In Little Rock, Ark., Sacramento, Calif., and Kennett Square, Pa., Secretary Veneman visited with families who have participated in the Rural Development self-help housing program and highlighted President **George W. Bush's** commitment to increasing minority homeownership by 5.5 million by 2010. USDA Rural Development programs are an important part of this initiative. In the past three years, nearly \$13 billion has been provided through USDA programs to

help more than 188,000 families buy or make improvements to their homes.

While 50 percent of current participants are minorities, USDA is pledging to increase participants by 10 percent to help meet the President's goal. "We are making progress," Veneman said. "So far this year we have provided 5,100 new homeownership loans to minorities in America." •

--***Patricia Klintberg***

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USDA news

USDA's Employee News Publication-For You & About You!

Volume 63 No. 3 — May-June 2004

USDA Spotlights Its "Unsung Heroes"

by Ron Hall, Office of Communications

USDA recognized 10 employees as "Unsung Heroes" during its recent observance of Public Service Recognition Week.

According to **Otis Thompson**, a retired USDA public affairs specialist who then served for 13 years as executive director of the Organization of Professional Employees, U.S. Department of Agriculture (OPEDA) until he retired from that position in May 2004, the purpose of the "Unsung Hero" designation is to identify those employees who have been "unusually dedicated and efficient and had a positive attitude."

He noted that nominees as "Unsung Heroes" are based on actual "hands-on" activities rather than on supervisory or managerial efforts. "However," he added, "all USDA employees were eligible to be nominated."

The idea for an "Unsung Heroes" contest was developed in 1987 by a group of six representatives of professional organizations in the Department. In addition to OPEDA, current sponsoring groups include the Association of Technical & Supervisory Professionals, USDA's Employee Services & Recreation Association, the National Association of Federal Veterinarians, and the USDA Chapter of the Senior Executive Association.

This is the 17th year of the contest, which was conducted USDA-wide. Thompson said that following a Departmentwide solicitation, 26 employees were nominated by fellow USDA employees. The final selection was made in April by a team of USDA officials. Related photos can be found at www.usda.gov/opeda.

USDA's "Unsung Heroes" for 2004 include:

1. **Bill Beverley**, head of the Utilities Services Section at the Agricultural Research Service's



Beltsville (Md.) Agricultural Research Center (BARC), who oversaw three capital construction projects that replaced or upgraded BARC's water production plant, wastewater treatment plants, and central heating plants--while ensuring there was no disruption of service or negative effect on the agricultural research conducted at BARC.

2. **Marie Buchanan**, the national program outreach manager for the Risk Management Agency, who has administered over 200 cooperative agreements and other outreach activities for RMA over the past two years--to ensure that small and limited resource, women, and other historically underserved farmers and ranchers are provided an equal opportunity to participate in RMA programs and activities.
3. **Rondi Hammond**, an equal employment opportunity specialist with the Office of Civil Rights, who processed allegations of discrimination at the Department while using a good knowledge base in the complaint area, applying a personality designed to lend confidence and calm to the complainants, and displaying a high level of empathy without losing her objectivity or professionalism.
4. **Frank Lee**, deputy administrator for commodity and marketing programs in the Foreign Agricultural Service, who employed within his area of responsibility 35 Student Cooperative Education Program employees, seven Student Temporary Employment Program interns, and 18 Summer Interns all during his three-year tenure in that position to date; assigned a graduate from USDA's 1890 Scholar program to a permanent position as an agricultural marketing specialist; and provided support for employee development through short-term and long-term detail opportunities.
5. **Virginia Lewis**, the National Asian and Pacific Islander (AA/PI) Program Manager for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, who was one of the founders of the Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO), an employee organization in NRCS; initiated and coordinated the first AA/PI Strategic Plan for the agency in 1999; and recommended and then assisted in establishing an AA/PI liaison officer for NRCS at California Polytechnic Institute in Pomona, Calif., in 2000.
6. **Joe Realdine**, the regional import supervisor for the Food Safety and Inspection Service's Northeast Region, based in Philadelphia, who uncovered unsafe and unsanitary conditions in a meat and poultry processing plant in Linden, N.J., and documented the infractions. This led to the withdrawing of the grant of inspection at that plant, to ensure public health. This case is currently being used as a training module for new FSIS enforcement investigation and analysis officers.
7. **Doris Roach**, an equal employment opportunity specialist with the Forest Service, who has been dependable, has performed well under pressure, has served as a gentle coach, a co-worker, and a team player, and has been diligently conscientious, all with a high sense of integrity and ethics.
8. **Susan Scarcia**, an enforcement investigation and analysis officer at FSIS's District Office in Philadelphia, who was a member of FSIS's first Consumer Safety Officer Class in 2002 and who monitors lab results on meat and poultry samples. If there are presumptive positive findings for Listeria monocytogenes, *E.coli*0157:H7, or salmonella, she ensures that the meat or poultry product is placed on hold, or can be located quickly, and then provides the District's recall officer with information within two hours.
9. **Steve Shelor**, the assistant director for program delivery and outreach with the Civil Rights Staff in the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, who has maintained a steady calm and provided a great deal of stability in the flow of work and in the workforce, with knowledge, dedication, and professionalism, in helping to achieve voluntary compliance with civil rights laws and Departmental regulations.

10. **Sam Vang**, a soil conservationist with NRCS at the USDA Service Center in Fresno, Calif., who collaborated with several community-based organizations--including the Khmer Society, the Lao Family Community Inc. of Fresno, and the Agape Refugee Ministry and Services (ARMS), a faith-based organization--to plan, initiate, and implement a USDA-focused outreach educational program on behalf of Hmong, Laotian, Cambodian, and other Southeast Asian ethnic groups and families in the area. •

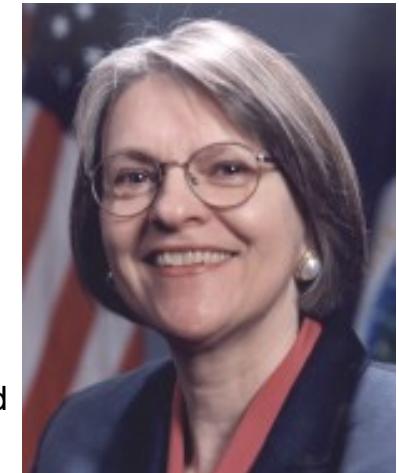
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VOLUME 63 NO.3— March-April 2004**More About:****Nancy Bryson**

Nancy Bryson, USDA's point person on all legal matters, grew up in Hancock, Mass., population about 700. Founded in 1762, textile mills were once the biggest employer but farming has also been historically important. Today the community remains a favored residence for cows and skiers drawn to Hancock's proximity to the mountains. Tourists also frequent the town's Shaker Village.

"When I was growing up, social life revolved around the school and the church and organizations like the Ladies Auxiliary, the American Legion, and for the kids, 4-H. I learned to cook and sew. My specialties were cinnamon rolls and goulash. My three brothers liked the cinnamon rolls but preferred my mother's goulash," she said.



Bryson's career path was also born in Hancock. "I became an attorney because of my 10th grade social studies teacher. We had a project on the rise and fall of the Roman Empire and my assignment was to explain both sides of the prominent theories for its demise. So I got through the presentation and my teacher said, 'You know, you would be a very good lawyer.' And I seized on the idea. From that day on, I just decided well OK, I am going to be a lawyer. I had no idea what this would involve. But as it turned out, it was a very good choice for me," she said, "because much of the training a lawyer experiences in school and applies in the practice of law, is to analyze facts, identify pros and cons, and find solutions. All investigations involve many disparate pieces of information and the job of a lawyer is to synthesize them into a story that makes sense and supports your advocacy position."

Bryson earned a degree in history from Boston University and a Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown University. She spent the early part of her career as a government lawyer at the Department of Justice where she handled both civil and criminal environmental matters. She then became a partner in the Washington law firm of Crowell & Moring, LLC, where she practiced environmental and natural resources law and was co-chair of the firm's biotechnology practice. She was sworn in as General Counsel of USDA on April 1, 2002.

"When you are in private practice you have the luxury of being expert in a relatively small number of areas, but being General Counsel means, as the name implies, that you are generally responsible for a whole range of issues," she said. "This is a huge challenge. A typical day can involve issues relating to

the Forest Service, Rural Development, antitrust issues in agriculture, country of origin labeling, BSE, biotechnology, international agricultural disputes, and so on."

Bryson said the job is doable only because of the fine career lawyers on her staff. "We have some absolutely fabulous career lawyers who are just remarkable public servants. They are absolutely tireless. They know their stuff from A to Z and they make it possible for people like me to come into this job and function. Without them it would be impossible," she said.

Last Book Read: "*The Secret Life of Bees*," by **Sue Monk Kidd**

Last Movie Seen: "*The Lavender Hill Mob*," with **Alec Guinness**

Hobbies: Cooking, gardening, needlepoint, reading, piano, traveling

Favorite Weekend Breakfast: Pancakes

Major accomplishment: "My children, **Sam** and **Alex**."

Priority in the Months Ahead: "Educating everyone on what it means to say 'OGC signed off on this'."

--**Patricia Klintberg**

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[Picture caption]



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Contacts, Questions to ron.hall@usda.gov

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VOLUME 63 NO.2— March-April 2004

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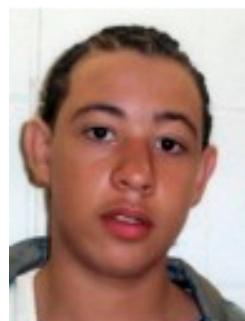
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Sex: Male

Eyes: Brown

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VOLUME 63 NO.2— March-April 2004

USDA's Employee News Publication-For You & About You!

USDA Strengthens Another Form Of Its Emergency Planning From Grab And Go Kits To COOP

by Ron Hall
Office of Communications

“Be Prepared” is more than just the motto of the Boy Scouts. In fact, in the “post-9/11” America of today, it takes on a unique relevance within government offices, including at USDA.

And **Jim Redington** wants USDA’s employees to be tuned in to all that that concept entails, these days, at the Department.

Redington is USDA’s director of emergency programs, located within the Office of Operations. It’s his job to ensure that the Department has emergency programs in place to enhance the safety of USDA personnel and property, both at headquarters and field locations.

To support that goal, OO has created a website--www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared. “We’re trying,” he explained, “to include on that website any material that educates USDA employees on measures they can take to ensure their safety in an emergency--whether the emergency is nature-driven or caused by humans.”

One of the sections on the main page of that website lists various emergency preparedness-related memos sent to USDA employees. The most recent memo, dated Feb. 13, 2004, is titled “Employee Emergency Response Information Memo to All Employees.”

That memo describes the purpose and contents of the “USDA Employee Emergency Response Guide,” dated January 2004. According to the memo, the guide “outlines all USDA Headquarters emergency information including emergency contact numbers, the USDA Incident Command Structure, communication tools we use to keep employees informed during emergencies, what to do during various types of incidents, shelter-in-place guidance, and recommendations for preparing a personal Grab and Go Kit with emergency supplies.”

While acknowledging that the guide contains some specific information that only applies to USDA employees in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, it points out that, “the general guidelines are

applicable throughout the U.S. for most USDA facilities. USDA field offices are welcome to tailor the contents to fit their unique local situations and emergency plans.”

The memo then advises that, “We encourage you to become familiar with the contents of the guide and to keep a copy readily available in your [USDA] work area.”

The 28-page “USDA Employee Emergency Response Guide” is accessible from the main page of that website. As noted above, one of its sections describes a concept known as “shelter-in-place.” **Mike O’Connor**, OO’s “Be Prepared” webmaster, explained that this is a “protective action” in which employees don’t run out of their USDA office--during an emergency or crisis situation--but rather remain in the “sheltered environment” of their building.

“It’s a concept,” he said, “that’s designed to protect employees from external hazards--such as accidental or intentional chemical releases, severe weather, or civil unrest--and thereby minimize their chance of injury, while also providing time to allow preparations for a safe evacuation from the building, as appropriate.”

The guide also describes the purpose of what is called a “Grab and Go” kit, also called a “personal survival” kit. “Whatever you want to call it,” O’Connor said, “it’s a personal emergency kit which employees should have at the ready in their offices, in case they have to shelter-in-place for an extended period of time--usually not to exceed eight hours.”

Accordingly, as delineated in the guide, a useful--and creative--Grab and Go kit might include obvious items such as toiletries, changes of clothes, an employee’s medications as appropriate, water, and non-perishable foil-wrapped food such as snack bars, plus such items as lightweight paper masks to provide added protection from dust that may be generated in an explosion, light/glow sticks--especially in the absence of a flashlight--to carry in case one has to walk in the dark, and a metal whistle that can be blown to attract attention if the employee is trapped and unable to move.

“Those are examples of some items that employees might never have thought about for use in an emergency--so this is the time to think about it,” O’Connor advised.

Another section in the guide deals with suspicious packages and letters received in a USDA office. “We hasten to underscore that nobody except trained bomb disposal personnel should attempt to examine or move a suspicious package or suspected bomb,” Redington emphasized. “Nonetheless, the guide lists some possible characteristics of suspicious packages or letters.”

They include excessive postage, handwritten or poorly typed addresses, no return address, a city or state in the postmark that doesn’t match the return address, incorrect titles, a title without a name, misspellings of common words, markings such as “Personal” or “Confidential” in a package sent to a USDA office instead of to a home, a lopsided or an uneven envelope, excessive weight, and oily stains or odors.

Yet another section in the guide provides guidance on what a USDA employee should do if he/she receives a bomb threat via telephone. “Keep your wits about you,” Redington affirmed, “and try to get answers from the caller to such questions as ‘When is the bomb going to explode, or when is the

chemical set to release?' 'Where is it now?' 'What does it look like?' 'Did you place it there yourself?' and 'Why?'"

The guide then provides factors to look for in the bomb threat caller's voice, such as whether he/she is calm, laughing, has a lisp, has a voice which is raspy, nasal, soft, loud, or stuttering, and whether there are background noises that might offer clues to the bomb threat caller's whereabouts, such as street noises, music, factory sounds, animal sounds, or the sounds of machinery.

Another USDA website, www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared/fieldtelephones.htm, provides emergency field telephone numbers to three different "Megacenters" around the country for use by USDA employees, depending on their field office location.

Redington is also responsible for oversight of USDA's Operations Center, located in the Department's South Building in Washington, DC. It was recently revamped, and now provides the capability to alert USDA field locations about natural or human-caused disasters in their vicinity, as appropriate. In turn, it also serves as a site for field offices to contact for guidance related to those disasters. "It's staffed 24/7," he emphasized, "and the toll-free number to reach it is 1-877-677-2369, or TTY 1-800-877-8339."

The Operations Center also provides support to the Department's Continuity of Operations (COOP) staff. That staff oversees the activation of USDA's COOP Plan. This is a form of contingency planning designed to ensure that USDA's essential functions are not disrupted and are continued--even from an emergency alternate location--in the event of localized acts of nature, accidents, and technological and/or attack-related emergencies. The [December 1999](#) issue of the **USDA News** carried a story about USDA's COOP Plan.

Now, about that Boy Scout "Be Prepared" motto noted earlier: Redington pointed out that USDA's "Be Prepared" website includes this sentence: "The phrase 'Be Prepared' is used with the kind permission of the Boy Scouts of America."

"Hey, I used to be a Boy Scout--and I want to make sure we give original credit where original credit is due," he quipped. •

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VOLUME 63 NO.2— March-April 2004

USDA's Employee News Publication-For You & About You!

We Can Now Pursue Education Programs Online**This Is NOT Your Father's Training Program**

by Ron Hall
Office of Communications

First there was “training.” Now there is a Departmentwide “learning management system,” which takes training to the next level by being more all-encompassing and by providing more options and services for its users.

This is the concept behind USDA’s new “Agriculture Learning Service” or “AgLearn,” which was formally launched by the Department on March 29, for use by USDA employees.

Cindy Bezz, USDA’s “eLearning” project manager located within the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and a cross-agency team implemented USDA’s AgLearn Service. She explained that “eLearning” is one of the various initiatives which come under the general category of “eGovernment” or “eGov.” “In turn,” she said, “eGovernment is defined as the exchange of products, information, and services through an electronic medium such as the Internet or e-mail.”

The [April-June 2003](#) issue of the **USDA News** carried a story on eGovernment at USDA.

USDA’s eGovernment efforts are focused on three general audiences: USDA’s customers, USDA’s partners in public and private sector organizations, and USDA’s employees. Bezz emphasized that eLearning is a key feature of those eGovernment efforts focused on USDA employees, among others.

She explained that eLearning is a method in which employees can search for training opportunities, register for training courses, and track their progress in completing curricula online--while, at the same time, trainers and managers can track the progress of those efforts online.

“AgLearn is more about managing training and career development rather than just taking ‘online training’,” Bezz pointed out.

She said that AgLearn is specifically designed to provide one-stop services for delivering, scheduling, and managing “learning events” nationwide for USDA employees at headquarters and field offices.

"Our AgLearn services," she explained, "give employees the ability to search for, and then sign up for, online and classroom training events--and then also maintain their own training records."

Ultimately, she said, AgLearn will allow a USDA employee to make a request for, get the approval of, and then pay for a course all without paper.

Chris Niedermayer, associate chief information officer for eGovernment within OCIO, explained that, at present, approximately 7,400 headquarters and field office employees from ten USDA program agencies and two staff offices are included in the initial phase of AgLearn. In December 2003 individual agencies made the determination about which of its employees would participate in Phase One. Then in March 2004 the training officers for those participating agencies notified their employees that AgLearn is now available to them, and the employees were subsequently provided with AgLearn student IDs and passwords.

"The USDA training officers involved in Phase One have taken on a lot of responsibility in rolling out AgLearn to their employees and communicating and marketing that service within their agencies," Bezz underscored. "They have received training about implementing AgLearn and are the first point of contact about AgLearn for their employees."

USDA employees who are in Phase One will have access to 30 free online courses that are available on a governmentwide basis through the Office of Personnel Management's Government Online Learning Center, also known as "GoLearn." These free courses include general administrative topics, such as communication skills, that are of interest to all federal employees. Also, USDA agencies can purchase "Business and Information Technology" courses for their employees to access on AgLearn.

The Department's own Office of Homeland Security has developed a new introductory course, on the emergency response management system at USDA, which is now available on AgLearn as well as on GoLearn. According to **Greg Power**, the emergency response training coordinator for the Department's Office of Homeland Security, by this autumn additional related courses will have been developed and made available on AgLearn.

An online course on cyber security awareness is also to be tested soon and made available for USDA employees through AgLearn.

"More USDA employees are to be added to AgLearn in increments throughout this spring and summer," Bezz pointed out. "And in the future we'll have courses which help USDA employees in their career planning."

"AgLearn," affirmed Niedermayer, "is expected to be made available--to all USDA employees around the country and around the world who have Internet access--by October 1 of this year." •

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USDA *news*

USDA's Employee News Publication-For You & About You!

In the President's 2002 State of the Union Address, he asked all Americans to dedicate at least two years or 4,000 hours over the course of their lifetime in service to others.

April 18-24 marked National Volunteer Week and it was noted that about 60 million Americans volunteer every year through charitable organizations, but that means millions more of us need to do more. To help, President **George W. Bush** created the USA Freedom Corps and the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to help Americans answer this "call to service" by providing meaningful opportunities to serve, both at home and abroad.

There are many opportunities for all of us, no matter our age, to volunteer and help those in need. USDA has a longstanding record of providing volunteer opportunities and supporting volunteer initiatives by our employees. I commend the employees at the Agricultural Marketing Service for organizing a volunteer fair in April for USDA employees in Washington, D.C. to learn about opportunities in the area.

One outstanding example is the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Earth Team. Volunteering has been integral to America's soil and water conservation movement since the 1930s. But in 1981, building on that volunteer concept, Congress gave NRCS the authority to use volunteers to implement the agency's mission.

At that time, the Earth Team had 327 volunteers who donated 29,000 hours. By 2003, the Earth Team totaled 43,834 volunteers giving over 1 million hours of their time, talent, and energy to help NRCS establish conservation practices on the land. NRCS estimates the value of their time at \$16.6 million or 483 staff years. For more ideas on where and how to volunteer visit www.usafreedomcorps.gov/.

[Biography](#)

Volunteering is an investment in the future. That's why my Leaders of Tomorrow Initiative, which began in 2002, focuses on exposing future leaders to the opportunities in the food and agriculture sector through real-world experiences.

The youngest Leaders of Tomorrow are asked to display in pictures and words answers to questions about agriculture. Their work is displayed in the portico of the Jamie Whitten Building in Washington, D.C., and on the web at www.usda.gov/leadersoftomorrow

I also invite high school and college students to accompany me on speaking engagements and meetings with farmers and the press. This helps them build their own leadership skills while learning about the issues of the day.

This initiative is just the beginning of what I hope will be a growing program to encourage mentorship, career development, and community service.

Each of us has talents, abilities, and resources that can help someone in need. By sharing our compassion through acts of kindness, we can make America a better place--one heart at a time. •

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Notes from USDA Headquarters

In addition to celebrating National Agriculture Day in March and Earth Day in April, Secretary Ann M. Veneman also celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Women, Infants, and Children Program, met with Iraqis dedicated to improving their agriculture sector, and, along with Chief Information Officer Scott Charbo, officially launched the new Web-based “Customer Statement” for agricultural producers.

Iraqi Delegation: During the one-year anniversary week of the beginning of the end of **Saddam Hussein's** regime, a six-member Democracy Delegation from Iraq met with Secretary Veneman to discuss the state of that nation's agriculture and to thank America for liberating Iraq.

"Iraq is really the birthplace of much of modern agriculture," Veneman said, in introducing the delegation to the press. "It is the home of the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers, and what we learned [from the delegation] is what happened in so many of these regions--how Saddam Hussein cut off water supplies, destroyed irrigation systems, brought in animals that ate the productive crops," she said.

In remarks delivered through a translator, leader of the delegation **Sayyed Qizwini** acknowledged the former regime put seeds in canals to block water from reaching the farmers. Hussein took the first portion of production for "special animals" and if this was not turned over, the farmer was put in jail.

"He gave us flour mixed with sand, and children were quite hungry. Children would walk to school barefooted. That was Saddam Hussein," he said. During this period technology completely bypassed the farmers of Iraq. Qizwini said, until the invasion "we had no idea what a computer was like, I had no idea that people could sell [crops] at the world market price." Qizwini also related that Saddam Hussein "before my own eyes killed my father and brother. This is Saddam Hussein and this is how we lived with him. So let's be objective. And let's be brave and let us say to the USA, God bless you America, and God bless your president and your people who made such a sacrifice for the sake of humanity."

Veneman also pointed out that Saddam Hussein not only killed over one million people, "he killed over one million plants and trees, and that is the agriculture that needs to be rebuilt. The momentum that's building a free and democratic Iraq is being reflected in the Middle East and beyond, and it's a force of



Secretary Ann M. Veneman (2nd from left) visits with the Iraqi Democracy Delegation at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC, in March. The delegation was led by Sayyed Qizwini (2nd from right), president of the University for Humanitarian Scientific and Religious Studies in Iraq.
--Photo by Alice Welch

positive change that stands to benefit Iraqis and people all around the world.” •

WIC 30th Anniversary: From a pilot project launched in Pineville, Ky., in 1974, WIC has become a multi-billion dollar program with a proven record for delivering real results. “It always amazes people when I tell them that we run the WIC program and that nearly 47 percent of children born into American families today are born into WIC households,” Secretary Veneman said on the occasion of the program’s 30th anniversary. The Food and Nutrition Service and 88 agencies at the state, tribal, and territorial levels administer it, with services through 46,000 authorized retailers and 10,000 clinic sites. “WIC has become a program that serves as a model for others in integrating nutrition assistance and with nutrition education in a powerful and effective way,” she said. •

April 15: More Americans were able to keep more of their money this year because of the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003. In a speech to producers in Rome, Ga., Secretary Veneman said, “As a result of last year’s tax cut, a married couple with one child on a rural residence farm with income of \$60,000 would save nearly \$1,200 in taxes in 2004, or 24 percent over prior law. And a married couple with two children on an intermediate-sized farm with \$45,000 in income and a farm machinery purchase of \$50,000 would save about \$4,500 or 100 percent over prior law.

“Thanks to President Bush’s tax relief agenda, today more than 105 million people have lower income taxes; more than 23 million small businesses have tax savings to invest in equipment, facilities, and workers; more than 33 million married couples are benefiting from marriage penalty relief; and more than 26 million farmers are benefiting from the doubling of the Child Tax Credit,” she said. •

Rural Public TV Awarded \$14 Million: While visiting a local IRS office in Rome, Ga., the Secretary also announced that 18 rural public television stations in 16 states will receive \$14 million to assist in the conversion from analog to digital broadcasting, a requirement of the Federal Communications Commission. Congress recommended that a portion of the distance learning/telemedicine funds in the current fiscal year support this transition effort. Through the USDA distance learning/telemedicine program, the Bush Administration has invested over \$90 million, since 2001, to enhance access to rural education and health care technology. •

Earth Day: In recognition of the 35th Annual Earth Day, Secretary Veneman announced \$221.5 million in investments to 44 states for rural water and wastewater loans and grants to assist rural communities’ environmental and safe water drinking needs. As many as 122,500 households and businesses are expected to benefit. She also reported that the stewardship efforts of farmers and ranchers have produced a net increase of 131,400 acres of wetlands during 1997-2002, according to the most recent National Resources Inventory (NRI). The NRI said the most increases occurred in the Corn Belt and Delta States where producers have created, maintained, or enhanced wetlands through the Wetlands

Reserve Program, the Conservation Reserve Program, and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.●

--**Patricia Klintberg**

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Employees
make these things
happen

**Food, Nutrition, and
Consumer Services**

Using Creativity To Promote National Nutrition Month

It was “Divine Divas” versus “Extraordinary Gentlemen” in the big Feud; both the winners and the losers received some healthy fruits and veggies; and they all--presumably--are living happily ever after.

But of course we’re talking about the results of the “Nutrition Feud Game Show.” That was one of the more creative activities which USDA employees participated in, as they commemorated National Nutrition Month across the country in March.

According to **Roberto Salazar**, administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service, National Nutrition Month was a good time to spotlight the new employee wellness initiative which the Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services mission area launched one month earlier in February. It’s called “FNCS Employees Eat Smart. Play Hard,” and it’s an effort to promote healthy eating and active lifestyles consistent with the President’s “HealthierUS Initiative.” The [June 2002](#) issue of the **USDA News** carried a story about “HealthierUS” at the Department.

“The theme for National Nutrition Month--‘Eat Smart. Stay Healthy’--was similar to our mission area’s theme,” said **Alberta Frost**, director of FNS’s Office of Analysis, Nutrition, and Evaluation. “It helped us to be creative as we provided support, information, and encouragement to motivate our employees to engage in healthy behaviors.”

For instance, at FNCS’s headquarters office in Alexandria, Va., employees participated in a “Nutrition Expo” to commemorate the month. **Ebony Horry**, an FNS staff nutritionist, was the coordinator for the Nutrition Expo. She said that one of the more popular events was the “Nutrition Feud Game Show.”

“We patterned it after the ‘Family Feud’ TV show,” explained **Judy Wilson**, director of FNS’s Nutrition Services Staff. “We had two teams of three persons each, which battled it out as they tried to guess the most popular answers to a series of questions about nutrition and physical activity.” Those teams consisted of three female managers--dubbed the “Divine Divas”--pitted against three male managers--dubbed the “Extraordinary Gentlemen.”

As a sample question, the teams coped with “If you were on a diet, what dessert would you order when eating out?” The “Gentlemen” team was the first to reach 300 points, and won a basket of fruits and vegetables. The prize for the “Divas” team was a small bag of fruits and vegetables plus a small salad.

Wilson also pointed out that a “Milk Taste Challenge” was included among the various other Nutrition Expo events which focused on food tasting, physical activity demonstrations, and nutrition exhibits.

“Employees were encouraged to see if they could tell the difference between two-percent, one-percent, and fat-free milk,” she explained. “We found that most employees who normally drink higher-fat milk couldn’t ‘taste’ the difference between the three choices. By contrast, those employees who normally drink fat-free milk were more likely to ‘taste’ the difference.”

FNCS invited the Agricultural Marketing Service to host a number of exhibits at the Expo. AMS home economist **Betsy Crosby** said that AMS’s exhibits included several open packages of “Meals Ready to Eat”—the same as those currently used by U.S. military personnel stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan--plus an “egg candling” demonstration.

“We showed how our AMS egg graders look through egg shells without breaking them, as they try to find blood spots, cracks in shells, and other defects,” she explained. “Our graders then make sure those eggs are pulled from the packaging line in the egg processing plant.”

Employees in FNS’s Southwest Region, headquartered in Dallas, used March to kick off its partnership with the Pro Rodeo Cowboys Association in Nacogdoches, Texas to promote good nutrition and an active lifestyle for children. **Rebecca Lucero**, an executive assistant in that regional office, said nearly 1,000 elementary school students from throughout Nacogdoches County came to Kids’ Day at the Rodeo on March 25.

“They saw cowboy demonstrations and received lessons on nutrition--as they learned about the importance of healthy eating and active living,” she said.

Employees in FNS’s Mountain Plains Region, headquartered in Denver, used National Nutrition Month to talk about good nutrition to audiences at a senior citizens center and a preschool. Regional Nutrition Director **Stella Nash** talked about “What Should I Eat to Remain Healthy?” to a seniors group in Denver. “You could see the light bulbs come on over their heads,” she recounted later, “as they grasped the idea of ‘serving sizes’ versus ‘portion sizes’.”

Gina O’Brian, a Special Nutrition Programs nutritionist at the Regional Office, taught two Greeley, Colo., preschool classes about nutrition. In her lesson, children were given a Food Guide Pyramid placemat and various food items in order to show how those foods fit in the Pyramid to make a balanced diet.

“For the top of the Pyramid, the children were each given a chocolate kiss, and the lesson was on



As the sign above indicates, these are the “Divine Divas”—FNS Contract Management Branch Chief Patsy Palmer, FNS WIC Program Director Pat Daniels, and FNS Nutrition Services Staff Director Judy Wilson (L to R)—who are smiling graciously in defeat at the hands of the “Extraordinary Gentlemen” at the “Nutrition Feud Game Show.”
--Photo by Jean Altman

'moderation,'" O'Brian said. But one young boy handed back his chocolate. "I've already had some chocolate today," he told her. "So you can have mine."

Lesson learned! •

--**Marcus Brownrigg**

Natural Resources and Environment

We're Helping A Unique Fish And Aquaculture Center—At A High School

"We just planted the seed and got the ball rolling," explained **Lewis Kearney**, the Forest Service's Rural Community Assistance Program coordinator for the Cherokee National Forest in northeastern Tennessee. He was referring to a state-of-the-art fish and aquaculture enterprise run by students at a vocational high school in Johnson County, Tenn.

Kearney had earlier collaborated with **Roy Settle**, coordinator of USDA's Appalachian Resource Conservation and Development Council based in Johnson City, Tenn., to use a \$7,000 Forest Service Economic Recovery grant to study the feasibility of building a fish-raising facility--as an expansion of a small hydroponics greenhouse begun at the high school in the 1980s.

"Then it took on a life of its own," Kearney observed. "It has since bloomed into a million-dollar, high-tech, energy-efficient aquaculture business."

"This is one of a kind in the country," he then emphasized. "We see it as a model of sustainable energy and educational opportunity."

Kearney noted that the enterprise--jump-started by Forest Service seed money--today consists of four greenhouses, including a geothermally heated and cooled aquacenter. "Here, fish and plants literally feed each other, while students are learning about aquaculture and how to run a farming business," he advised.

He described the facility as a 9,000-square-foot multi-crop center--where the students are raising up to 200,000 fish in raceways that have water garden plants floating on the water, and hydroponic tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers growing alongside.

"Seedlings grow in racks on rolling tables over the fish tanks, while hanging baskets of ferns overhead are fed by fishwater," he recounted. "Hydroponic lettuce grows directly over the fish. The lettuce takes up fertilizer from the fishwater, and the fish benefit from oxygen that the



"This definitely looks state-of-the-art, and we've been happy to help jump-start it, Harvey," affirms USDA's Appalachian Resource Conservation and Development Council coordinator Roy Settle (left)--as teacher Harvey Burniston (right) agrees. Settle is referring to their present location, a fish and aquaculture center run by students--such as Mark Holland (2nd from left)--at a vocational high school in Johnson City, Tenn. Lewis Kearney (2nd from right), FS Rural Community Assistance Program coordinator for the Cherokee National Forest, collaborated with

plants release back into the water."

Settle to provide seed money from USDA for the unique undertaking.
--Photo by Jeanne Eastham

Kearney added that the geothermal heating and cooling system--donated by the Tennessee Valley Authority--keeps things humming, while saving energy and dollars.

Settle explained that some 200 pounds of vegetables grown in the center--each week--supply local schools and restaurants. Sales of fish and plants provide dependable income to support the program itself and its teaching assistants.

"USDA is right there at the table, too," he emphasized. "When we cater annual meetings and other events in the area, we work with the school to purchase its produce. That makes good sense--and it supports the program."

Settle noted that the hands-on workers behind this enterprise are the students of FFA--formerly called the Future Farmers of America--at the high school. "They're the ones," he said, "who raise the fish, clean the tanks, help operate the business, provide tours to visitors, and learn about alternative agriculture, energy efficiency, business operations, public relations, and options for a brighter future."

"In the meantime, USDA's Appalachian Resource Conservation and Development Council provides supplies, training, and workshops."

Settle added the project has helped students gain self-esteem and confidence. "Plus, before," he said, "barely 60 students took ag classes--and now half the school is enrolled, including an equal number of males and females."

"This is a community that was once dependent on Forest Service forest products for income," Kearney observed. "Now it has a more diversified palette of economic options for its youth--and USDA helped to make that a reality."

--**Mary Carr**

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VOLUME 63 NO.2— March-April 2004**More About:
J.B. Penn**

J.B. Penn is a son of the South. A native of Lynn, Ark., where his mother and 100-year-old grandmother continue to live independently, the cadence of his speech gives him away. So does his name. When he was born, the fashion for naming children was to give them two first names like **Joe Bob**, or just plain initials like **J.R.** and **J.B.**, a custom that must have caused heartburn among those who give standardized tests.

So how did J.B., initials only, end up as our under secretary for farm and foreign agricultural services? Fittingly, it was economics of a personal nature.

"I originally wanted to be a lawyer, but could only get a scholarship in agriculture. And my Dad, who was a farmer and a livestock trader, said that would probably be a good thing to do and I did. And after I got into agriculture I looked around at all the various fields--and economics was the only one that had any great appeal to me," Penn said.



One of his first jobs was at USDA in the 1970s when he was deputy administrator for economics with the Economics and Statistics Service, essentially managing what is now the Economic Research Service. He was part of a team that produced a then-seminal work called "*The Structure of Agriculture*," which among other things showed that even back then, farm programs were skewed to benefit large farms.

After 20 years in the private sector, J.B. was tapped by Secretary Ann M. Veneman to become part of her subcabinet. And here, in his first year, he again played a key role in producing a decisive work that describes agriculture today: "*Food and Agricultural Policy--Taking Stock for the New Century*."

"We've had this focus on farms and policy that assumes every farm is the same. And one of the things we tried to do with '*Food and Agricultural Policy*' was to look at just how diverse agriculture really is and point out that this policy--that we talk about in Farm Bills--is really oriented to only about 25 percent of agriculture. And we've got another 75 percent that is not addressed by this policy. And then that whole 100 percent sits in rural America. And we were trying to make the point that all of this needs to be addressed," he said.

In addition to the book, which remains a blueprint for agricultural policy, Penn said, "We have accomplished so much in three years' time, it's amazing. We got the Farm Bill and got that implemented quickly; we got a supplemental assistance package piled on right after that, we've completed seven new trade agreements since I've been here, and we got the Doha Round on trade launched and back on track again."

Penn credits these accomplishments to Secretary Veneman's policy team and dedicated career professionals. "Secretary Veneman has done a good job of making sure that we operate as a team. She has insisted that we all be present once a week for subcabinet staff. That's been a really good experience.

"And the second group is the career people. I have an extremely high regard for them. Most around here work hard, try to do a good job, are very conscientious--we certainly saw that after the BSE incident when people worked through the Christmas holidays, they worked weekends, they traveled at a moment's notice. People are pretty dedicated," he said.

Last Book Read: "*Theodore Rex*," by **Edmund Morris**

Last Movie Seen: "The last movie I saw, I can tell you, was on an airplane with the sound off."--"*Under The Tuscan Sun*"

Hobbies: Reading

Favorite Weekend Breakfast: "That's probably brunch somewhere where there is a wide variety of food, you know: smoked fish, shrimp, mimosas...."

Priorities in the Months Ahead: "We want to reopen markets that have been closed because of BSE and AI [avian influenza]. That's a top priority. We want to continue the smooth operation of the farm programs and we want to focus on getting stronger sanitary and phytosanitary regulations [international animal and plant health standards] in all the trade agreements because people are now not adhering to sound science. It's very, very disruptive and we have to do something about it."

--**Patricia Klintberg**

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USDA-Sponsored Calendar Highlights

• **May 3-9**

Public Service Recognition Week
USDA headquarters and field offices
(202) 690-4750 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)

• **Month of May**

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
USDA headquarters and field offices
(202) 720-7314 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY)

• **June 23-26**

2004 Ag in the Classroom National Conference
Albuquerque, N.M.
(202) 720-7925 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)

• **June 25**

USDA Honor Awards Ceremony
Washington, DC
(202) 690-0266 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)



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D.O.B. 5-16-1987 **Sex:** Female
Hair: Lt. Brown **Eyes:** Green
Height: 5 ft. 10 in. **Weight:** 200 lbs.

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

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USDA's FY 2005 Proposed Budget Emphasizes Key Priorities, Programs

by Ron Hall, Office of Communications

"The 2005 budget is a responsible budget, and it funds key priorities and programs here at USDA by focusing funds on the key areas for USDA--including food and agriculture defense, BSE-related activities, and a record level of support for farm conservation programs, food safety, and nutrition programs."

That was the main message from Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** as she unveiled USDA's proposed budget for FY 2005 at a press conference on February 2. She highlighted several items of importance in the Department's proposed budget, which she said provides unprecedented funding for a food and nutrition 'safety net,' expands agricultural trade, expands housing for rural citizens, invests in America's rural sector, strengthens forest health and firefighting capabilities, and improves USDA's program delivery and customer service.

"As you know, we are in a time of fiscal constraint," she advised, and then emphasized that the Department's budget proposal for FY 2005 "focuses and maintains resources in order to meet our strategic goals."

Highlights of the FY 2005 budget proposal include the following items: safeguarding America's homeland and protecting the food supply, activities related to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) or 'mad cow disease,' an unprecedented level of farm bill conservation funding, record funding for a food and nutrition 'safety net,' expanding agricultural trade and supporting international food assistance programs, providing housing opportunities and investment in rural America, healthy forests, improving Departmental services and systems, and civil rights.

Veneman noted that the proposed budget supports the Department's strategic plan and is consistent with the USDA policy book titled "Food and Agricultural Policy: Taking Stock for the New Century," which USDA released in 2001.

USDA's FY 2005 proposed budget calls for nearly \$81.8 billion in spending, an increase of more than \$4.0 billion over the Department's currently estimated spending for FY 2004 of over \$77.7 billion.

USDA's budget proposes a federal staffing level for FY 2005 of 99,048 full-time equivalent positions, or federal staff years. This is a decrease of 2,621 federal staff years from the currently estimated FY 2004 federal staff year level of 101,669.

Agencies that reflect proposed increases in federal staff years for FY 2005 include the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (an increase of 228 federal staff years, to total 6,534 federal staff years), the Farm Service Agency (100, to total 6,017), the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (82, to total 1,375), the Food and Nutrition Service (77, to total 1,749), the Food Safety and Inspection Service (72, to total 9,900), the Risk Management Agency (30, to total 598), and the Office of the General Counsel (15, to total 353).

Agencies with proposed decreases in federal staff years include the Natural Resources Conservation Service (a decrease of 2,032 federal staff years, to total 11,538 federal staff years) and the Forest Service (1,217, to total 34,883). Regarding the federal staff year figure for NRCS, the decrease is caused primarily by the elimination of funding earmarked by the Congress for specific projects, and also because funds are not proposed for NRCS's Emergency Watershed Protection Program for 2005.

In addition, the temporary full-time non-federal county staff years of FSA are projected to decrease by 1,067--since the workload associated with implementing the commodity and farm income provisions of the farm bill is expected to continue to decline--for a total of 10,284 non-federal staff years for FY 2005.

These federal staff year estimates are all subject to adjustments to reflect the final outcome of budget negotiations, and such unpredictable factors as natural disasters and other emergencies.

Highlights of USDA's FY 2005 budget proposal, thought to be of particular interest to employees, include:

- \$137 million--an increase of \$18 million--to upgrade technology in county office service centers. This provides for the continued replacement of aging business and technology systems with a Common Computing Environment (CCE) in those offices. That will allow the service center agencies (Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development) to share data among themselves and their customers and to streamline business processes. Implementation of the CCE began in 1998 and most of its major hardware and software components are in place. This item also includes the continued incorporation of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data into the Department's agricultural digital mapping project--which makes possible the electronic analysis of soils and land-use data. This analysis, which previously took days or weeks of mapping by hand, now takes only minutes through GIS--and customers will be able to access this USDA information about their land over the Internet, rather than by visiting an agency office. This is all designed to increase the ability of USDA customers to interact with USDA staffers over the Internet, so as to save time and money.
- increased funding of \$5.6 million, in the Office of the Chief Information Officer, to improve the Department's cyber security--through certifying and accrediting USDA systems, improving a Departmentwide Information Survivability program to minimize disruptions caused by malicious intrusions or national catastrophes, and implementing an automated risk management system--

and to establish a Security Operations Center.

- \$22 million--an increase of \$4 million--on efforts to strengthen civil rights and equal treatment under USDA programs. This includes an increase of \$2 million to process allegations of discrimination in a more timely manner, plus an increase of \$1 million to improve tracking and analysis of allegations of discrimination.
- \$381 million for a new “Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative” to: enhance monitoring and surveillance of pests and diseases in plants and animals, conduct research on emerging animal diseases, increase the availability of vaccines for animals, establish a system to track select disease agents of plants, expand the unified Federal-State Diagnostic Network to all 50 states, and complete the National Centers for Animal Health in Ames, Iowa.

For more details on USDA’s proposed staffing levels, as well as additional details on other aspects of USDA’s proposed budget for FY 2005, click on <http://www.usda.gov/budget>

USDA’s proposed budget for FY 2005 was transmitted to Congress on February 2. •

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USDA news

USDA's Employee News Publication-For You & About You!

Here's A 'Behind The Scenes' Look At The 2002 Ag Census

Our First One, From Start To Finish

by Janet Allen, NASS Marketing Section staff

On February 3 USDA announced the availability of preliminary state and national demographic data for all 50 states, plus final data for Puerto Rico, from the 2002 Census of Agriculture.

Now here's "the rest of the story" about how USDA employees made it possible.

According to **Jay Johnson**, executive assistant to the administrator of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, the census of agriculture is currently conducted every five years. "The first one was conducted in conjunction with the 1840 population census," he noted.

Its purpose, he added, is to gather facts about farms and ranches in every county in the nation--to provide a complete statistical portrait of local and national agriculture.

"The census of agriculture is NASS's largest information-gathering project for agriculture," Johnson affirmed.

Kent Hoover, chief of NASS's Census Planning Branch, said that the 1997 Census of Agriculture--the most recent agriculture census until now--was conducted as a joint effort between NASS and the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

"The Census Bureau started with the planning for the 1997 Census of Agriculture and then that mission was transferred to USDA," he explained. "The 1997 ag census was then conducted and completed by NASS." The [March 1997](#) issue of the **USDA News** carried a story about NASS's preparation for that census of



"Just like it says here, principal operators of farms or ranches who are American Indians increased by 19.4 percent from 1997 to 2002," affirms NASS survey statistician Ginger Harris (left). She and NASS agricultural statistician Jorge Garcia-Pratts are reviewing the contents of preliminary state and national demographic data contained in the 2002 Census of Agriculture document she is holding.
--Photo by Janet Allen

agriculture.

"So this means that the 2002 Census of Agriculture was the first time that NASS conducted the census of agriculture from start to finish," Hoover noted.

According to **Steve Sakry**, NASS census administrator, data collection for the 2002 Census of Agriculture began in December 2002 with an initial mailout--from Jeffersonville, Ind.--of almost three million report forms designed to reach all farms and ranches across the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

Ray Garibay, NASS's state statistician for Washington, based in Olympia, noted that NASS has the advantage of a network of 46 field offices which have the local presence and knowledge to assist with the collection and review of census information, as well as with public relations.

According to Garibay, 'enumerators'--who are the 'interviewers' for both NASS surveys and the agriculture census--were critical to the census' success. "For the first time, enumerators across America played a key role in publicizing the 2002 Census of Agriculture to local audiences," he explained.

The enumerators worked with farm and non-farm community organizations and businesses to reach their customers and members with the ag census message through such communications tools as posters, ads, articles, and presentations. They also answered over 200,000 calls to NASS's toll-free helpline from farmers and ranchers needing assistance with their ag census report forms, and made follow-up calls and personal visits to producers who had not yet responded to the ag census by mail.

Garibay clarified that enumerators are actually employees of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture under contract with NASS. "That lends credibility when they ask farmers and ranchers for information," he advised.

Even as late reports were still coming in, staff in every NASS state office across the country began editing and analyzing the reports from agricultural producers to correct anomalies and prepare local and state summaries. Meanwhile, NASS's headquarters personnel in Washington, DC were programming and adjusting the automated systems that process all the numbers and prepare the actual tables for publication. And that all continues in preparation for the final county-level reports due in June 2004.

"We believe the state and national preliminary numbers provide a good basis for our data users to get a 'first look'--or preview--of what's to come," Hoover said. "Now we'll continue focusing on the county-level summaries and all the many detailed statistics available in the complete ag census results."



"We'll all be studying these track lines for additional ag census trends," notes Janet Allen (right), head of NASS's Marketing Section, as she and NASS statistical assistants Vivian Howard (left) and Sheila Hall confer on some preliminary state and national demographic data from the 2002 Census of Agriculture.

--Photo by Ron Hall

Sarah Hoffman, head of NASS's Environmental and Demographics Section, said that the preliminary state and national demographic data on the 2002 Census of Agriculture include gender, race, and ethnicity of operators, residence on or off the farm, days worked off farm, years present on farm, age

group categories, and the number of persons living in each household.

Preliminary results show that:

- The average age of American agricultural producers in 2002 was 55.3 years old. This was one year older than the comparable figure from the 1997 ag census.
- 27.2 percent of all agricultural producers were women in 2002. This marks the first measurement of all women involved in day-to-day farming and ranching decisions.
- Principal operators of farms or ranches who are of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin increased by 50.8 percent from 1997 to 2002, with figures of 33,450 in 1997 and 50,443 in 2002.
- Black principal operators of farms or ranches increased by 8.8 percent (26,785 versus 29,145) from 1997 to 2002, and American Indian principal operators increased by 19.4 percent (12,911 versus 15,417) during that same period.
- Ninety percent of America's agricultural operations are still run by individuals or families, and most are still small farms. More specifically, the majority of farms and ranches--59 percent--had less than \$10,000 in sales of agricultural products in 2002.

Hoover noted that the final 2002 Census of Agriculture data at the national, state, and county levels are to be released in June 2004.

"That report," he emphasized, "will present first-time facts about organic crop acreage and sales, production contracts, and farm computer and Internet use. It will also provide the broader, full range of traditional census data that includes land use and ownership, acres irrigated, crop acreage and quantities harvested, livestock and poultry inventories, value of products sold, participation in federal farm programs, and the market value of land and buildings."

"So stay tuned," he quipped.♦

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In his February 2002 budget submission to Congress, President **George W. Bush** outlined a management agenda for making government more focused on citizens and results, which includes expanding 'Electronic Government'--or 'eGovernment.' eGovernment uses improved Internet-based technology to make it easier for citizens and businesses to interact with the government, save taxpayer dollars, and streamline citizen-to-government communications.

USDA has been working hard to focus our technology efforts so that this Department of roughly 110,000 employees runs much more efficiently and is more responsive to the needs of American agriculture.

[Biography](#)

Scott Charbo, USDA's Chief Information Officer, has coordinated our efforts across the Department. And we are starting to see tangible results. For instance, you have probably noticed a new look to the USDA website, <http://www.usda.gov> This is the first phase in efforts to make the website more powerful and improve access to USDA information and science. The new look will be followed by improved functionality. We will continue adding features for users, culminating in August with the launch of 'MyUSDA.gov' to provide a customized version of the USDA homepage for individual users based on their unique needs.

Other features include a "customer statement" to put a whole range of USDA services and programs into a single report at the fingertips of agricultural producers. For instance, farmers will be able to view their contracts in various conservation programs, payments under commodity programs, and information on loans and crop insurance. Farmers and ranchers will even be able to cross-reference that data with interactive maps of their operations using geographic information systems--or GIS--technology with overlays for roads, soil types, water, and other geographic features.

Producers will have quick and easy access in a single gateway to the volumes and volumes of maps and geospatial data generated by USDA. Instead of traveling to a county office, farmers and ranchers

will be able to log on from a computer to apply for loan deficiency payments over the Internet.

To support these new programs, USDA is making several changes to upgrade systems behind the scenes, including: high-speed networks nationwide to increase data capacity to meet the Department's increasing needs; a web authentication, or privacy, system to allow customers to access information and submit forms securely; improved e-mail service for employees; a content management system to improve the ability to update websites and other information; and, this year, USDA will put into place a cutting-edge tracking system to better manage civil rights cases and data.

I appreciate all the efforts throughout the Department to get us where we are today. If we continue to work together, we will provide better service to our customers and provide you, our employees, with the tools you need to do your job. •

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Notes from USDA Headquarters

*As the New Year began, the investigation of a BSE-positive cow slaughtered in Washington State in December overshadowed nearly all other events. Countless numbers of employees returned to work, canceling long-held vacation plans, all in order to reassure the public of the safety of America's food supply. While daily briefings and updates were held until the investigation's conclusion on February 9, Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** also launched USDA's new website, unveiled President **George W. Bush's** proposed FY 2005 budget for USDA, celebrated the 75th birthday of Dr. **Martin Luther King Jr.** and Black History Month, and spelled out USDA's intention to focus on America's obesity crisis in the months ahead.*

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: Secretary Veneman and USDA employees observed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s actual 75th birthday on January 15. Here are excerpts of the Secretary's speech: "Today we remember a man who contributed so much to Black History and who also changed world history."

"In 2001, the Harris polling company asked Americans who their heroes were. Out of all the public figures in human history, Martin Luther King Jr. ranked second, behind **Jesus Christ**.

"Dr. King lived the qualities he preached. They are qualities that too often are in short supply in our world: the qualities of equality, justice, courage, compassion, non-violence, and love.

"Dr. King lived a life of service, guided by a verse that he often quoted from the Book of Mark: 'Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your servant and whosoever among you will be the first, shall be the servant of all.' He reminded us time after time that everyone can serve in some way, no matter our background or our station in life.

"It is one of the many ideals of Dr. King that deserve celebration, not just on his birthday but every day, and not just in this country, but all around the world. In fact, according to the King Center in Atlanta, there will be programs commemorating the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. in more than 100 nations. President Bush has said: 'There is still a need for us to hear the words of Martin Luther King, to make



Secretary Ann M. Veneman (center) and Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Vernon Parker (left) show their appreciation to Okianer Christian Dark, a professor of law at Howard University in Washington, DC, for her keynote address at USDA headquarters in observance of Black History Month.

--Photo by Alice Welch

sure the hope of America extends its reach into every neighborhood across this land'."

Top Agricultural Research Service Scientists Named:

Secretary Veneman named **Nelson Cox**, a USDA microbiologist at Athens, Ga., as the Agricultural Research Service Distinguished Senior Research Scientist of the Year for 2003. The announcement was made January 22.

Cox, based at ARS's Poultry Microbiological Safety Research Unit in Athens, is being honored for poultry research accomplishments including developing technology to reduce foodborne pathogens in broiler chickens.

"During his 32-year career with ARS, Dr. Cox's innovative research had helped to improve the safety of poultry that has benefited both consumers and the poultry industry," Veneman said.

For information about other ARS scientists who were also recognized go to:

<http://www.usda.gov/Newsroom/0032.04.html>

National Food Check-Out Day:

In 2004, the 37th day of the year fell on February 5, National Food Check-Out Day. Secretary Veneman issued a proclamation reminding Americans that the average consumer earns enough income to pay for all the food consumed in one year in only 37 calendar days.

80th Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum:

Nearly 1,400 people gathered to hear what USDA experts had to say about subjects ranging from trade to farm programs to nutrition to conservation. Secretary Veneman's keynote address focused on "Ensuring a Healthy Food Supply" because of the increasing focus on diet and health issues in America, and the potential impact of these trends on the food system.

"We cannot address these topics without discussing overweight and obesity, which are reaching crisis proportions, not only in the United States, but in countries all around the world," she said. Citing figures from the Centers for Disease Control, Veneman said that the cost of treating health ailments linked to obesity cost our economy \$117 billion in the year 2000--\$61 billion in direct medical costs and \$56 billion in lost productivity.

Despite advances in consumer education like the Dietary Guidelines, the Food Guide Pyramid, and mandatory nutrition labeling--to say nothing of the multitude of diet books on the market--"Americans have grown fatter," she said.

"We have seen over the last 20 years that many Americans have made changes to match what they believe is consistent with good dietary advice: increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and grains,

and decrease consumption of fats and cholesterol.

"Despite those good intentions, what Americans have actually done, according to a recent Centers for Disease Control report, is to increases their intake of calories," Veneman said.

With the food guidance symbol under review and the new Dietary Guidelines set for release in 2005, USDA aims to help Americans understand how they can make changes in their own diets to obtain better health, including a healthy weight.

To that end the Secretary announced that USDA will host a scientific conference in October with other federal agencies as partners, to specifically examine obesity prevention. •

--***Patricia Klintberg***

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Employees
make these things
happen

We're Providing School Supplies To Students In Sierra Leone

During a recent trip to consult with the Sierra Leone government in order to set up nutrition assistance programs, Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services **Eric Bost** had an opportunity to visit a school in Freetown in that country. While visiting the school, he saw many children sharing school supplies. He watched as four children passed one pencil and one pad of paper between them as they worked on their class assignments.

This gave him an idea. After witnessing this, Bost immediately made a commitment to the head teacher to provide each of the 1,100 students, at the primary school he visited, with a composition book and a pencil. A primary school is equivalent to an American Kindergarten through grade 12 school.

Upon his return to the U.S., Bost shared his experience and goal with the senior leadership in the Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services mission area. FNCS employees heard about the goal and asked how they could help.

Soon employees at the headquarters office in Alexandria, Va., and regional offices all joined forces to collect the 1,100 composition books and pencils.

For instance, at the Food and Nutrition Service's Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta, employees coordinated this particular drive with their other donation activities. "We set up a 'composition book and pencil drop-box,' in addition to our food and clothing drive for the homeless, plus other drives we were working on for our troops in Iraq," explained **Margo Hester**, that office's human resources liaison. "By doing it in this fashion we gave everyone the option to participate in a charitable activity of their choice."

Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services



"Kids need people to encourage them--and I think that these school supplies just might be the tools that those students need," affirms Sara Jones (right), secretary to the deputy regional administrator of FNS's Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta. She and Jane Monahan (left), director of the WIC Program for that office, were among the participants who provided composition books and pencils--at their own expense--that they then shipped out on behalf of students at a primary school in Sierra Leone.

--Photo by Steve Watson

Monique Hatten, human resources liaison at FNS's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office in Robbinsville, N.J., explained that, "An e-mail was sent to all staff asking for their support. I answered the questions and collected the materials as they were turned in."

At one point, she said, the composition books were hard to find, and employees tried looking in various stores and searching on the Internet. "Then, one of our employees found a way that we could order the composition books directly from the company," Hatten noted.

Lois Jarema, a supply technician with FNS's Northeast Regional Office in Boston, emphasized that, "The one thing that mattered the most to me about this donation drive was that it was all about the kids."

At FNCS's headquarters office employees collected composition books and pencils and also coordinated the gathering of donations from the participating regional and headquarters offices. "Our game plan was to compile all of the notebooks and pencils in one place so that we could send them out in a single shipment," affirmed Bost.

Teronica Nixon, administrative assistant in the Office of the FNS Administrator, explained that once all the school supplies were received, work began with the U.S. Embassy in Sierra Leone to arrange shipping of the materials and to assure that no USDA funds were to be used in the shipping process. "The process has been somewhat complicated, but our goal to meet Mr. Bost's commitment has guided us to making sure this is done effectively and efficiently," she advised.

According to FNS Associate Administrator for Regional Operations **Jerome Lindsay**, Sierra Leone spends the equivalent of \$1 per child per year on education.

"This initiative may not have a dramatic impact on Sierra Leone's education system," he observed. "But at least in this one school, it will."

"Monumental changes begin with small steps." •

--Marcus Brownrigg

Rural Development

Temporary Farm Worker Program Eases The Burden, With RD's Help

If you own or operate a dairy farm in Vermont, you know that getting a day off is next to impossible. But a Rural Development specialist in the state is helping to ease that burden and give you a break--literally.

He helped to set up a temporary service of trained farmhands to provide temporary labor--and thereby let farmers take some time off.

According to **Mike Dolce**, a business program and cooperative specialist based at the RD local office in Rutland, Vt., the idea originated with **Rick LaVitre**, an Extension dairy specialist at the University of Vermont. "Rick was visiting Ireland," Dolce recounted, "and was introduced to what is called the Irish Farm Relief Service. Rick thought that a similar service, modified to accommodate American agricultural practices, was needed in Vermont."

Dolce and LaVitre subsequently teamed up to make that happen. "When Rick approached me on this project, I immediately recognized the need for this type of temp service, and knew that, in Rural Development, we could be instrumental in pulling it all together," said Dolce. "I was in the position to facilitate the process and to provide funding and technical assistance."

Accordingly, the two worked with a small group of farmers to assess the need and feasibility of such a service. They had surveys sent to farmers throughout the state.

The results confirmed their belief: a service that could provide temporary farm labor was needed--and would be supported and used. "We ultimately determined," Dolce said, "that, with the right type of startup assistance, a farmer-owned and governed organization could ultimately take it from there and operate it independently as a sustainable service."

Startup funding for a pilot program in selected counties--called the 'Vermont Farm Labor Service Cooperative'--came from a \$22,000 Rural Business Opportunity Grant from Rural Development, a \$59,000 grant from the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, and \$25,000 from the Vermont Legislature.

RD--in the form of Dolce--was there to help the co-op incorporate. He also assisted in the development of its bylaws and board policies, assisted with membership development, and served as an advisor at its monthly board meetings.



"So, how does it feel, guys, participating in what's probably the only program like this in the country?" quips Mike Dolce (right), a business program and cooperative specialist based at the Rural Development local office in Rutland, Vt. He is referring to a program in which RD helped to create a farmer-owned co-op that offers temporary labor to farmers in Vermont--so they can literally take a break. Dolce is standing in the barn at a dairy farm in Cornwall, Vt., where the farm owners are on a weekend camping trip. The co-op provided Arlyn Foote (2nd from left), a retired dairy farmer, to take care of the milking, feeding, and breeding chores on the farm while the owners were away. Co-op Manager Paul Seiler (left) and Co-op Board President Bill Goddard (2nd from right) were also present.

"For a one-time membership fee of \$50 a farmer can join the cooperative and use this service to find temporary help--that is trained and experienced in what is needed to tackle chores on a farm, plus be well-versed in modern farm technologies, and who can step in at a moment's notice--and all with no supervision," Dolce explained.

The co-op currently charges a going rate, for the services of the temporary farm laborers, of about \$15 to \$25 per hour. "The rate is based on the degree of skills needed from the temporary worker," Dolce clarified.

"We worked with University of Vermont Extension and the Board of the Vermont Farm Labor Service Cooperative to get this pilot project off the ground," said RD's Vermont State Director **Jolinda LaClair**. "This program supports RD's emphasis on assisting small farms and strengthening the Vermont farm economy."

Dolce acknowledged that similar programs do exist, in some places in the country, in which groups in the private sector offer temporary labor to farmers. "But this is an effort by farmers in the U.S. to collectively address a common labor problem shared by most farmers--and to do so in a proactive manner under a farmer-owned and controlled cooperative structure."

"And to my knowledge," he affirmed, "this particular initiative, involving Rural Development helping to create a farmer-owned co-op which offers temporary labor to both dairy and non-dairy farmers, is the only one existing in the U.S."

The program is now no longer a pilot, and both RD and University of Vermont Extension currently offer less hands-on assistance and instead play more of an advisory role to the co-op. Future goals include having branch offices across the state, working with the Vermont Department of Employment and Training.

"Without question, substantial challenges still confront the cooperative in bringing it to the next level--which is to develop a sustainable service cooperative for the long haul," Dolce advised.

"But I'm confident that the co-op members will meet the task before them--and I look forward to continuing my work with them." •

--**Carolyn Lawrence**

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VOLUME 63 NO. 1— January-February 2004**More About:****Bill Hawks**

Before **Bill Hawks** became under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs he spent most of his career as a full-time farmer growing nearly every commodity you can think of except, perhaps, endive. He learned at his father's knee, growing up on a small dairy farm, near Hernando, Miss., where the family also raised a few pigs and chickens and grew cotton. "We had a very diverse operation," he said.

He used that green thumb to help pay for college, growing fresh vegetables: peas, butter beans, snap beans, and squash. After earning undergraduate and graduate degrees in agricultural economics at Mississippi State University, plans to go on for a Ph.D. were forgotten after Hawks experienced "a life-changing event."



He got married. Then he and his bride started their own dairy, continued growing vegetables, and got a loan from Hawks' father to buy the first tractor. That was in the early 1970s when Hawks also began renting land to grow row crops.

Over time the Hawks operation grew to 12,000 acres in three counties in northern Mississippi. Like many farmers, as Hawks' operation expanded so did his involvement with various farm organizations. "It was a natural evolution to move into the political arena," he said. But his service as a Mississippi State Senator from 1994-1999 meant the operation had to be scaled back to the 7,700 acres of soybeans, wheat, and corn still flourishing today. Still Hawks managed, along the way, to operate and own an agricultural aerial application service as well as a recreational airport and part of a farm management company. "I just never could keep a job," he quipped.

That is until he was tapped to be under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs. "Before coming to Washington, I didn't know really what I would find. The MRP mission area budget was about the same as the general fund budget of the state of Mississippi. But the people, the career people, are dedicated, hard-working, and that is the thing that has made the transition much easier. It's all about the people," he said.

Last Book Read: "*The Rising Tide*," (about the Mississippi Delta region) by **John M. Barry**

Last Movie Seen: “*Something’s Gotta Give,*” with Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton

Hobbies: “Work. Well, I don’t play golf and I don’t fish, so I’d have to say travel and driving through the countryside.”

Favorite Weekend Breakfast: Scrambled eggs with cheese, grits, and hot sauce

Priorities in the Months Ahead: “I serve at the pleasure of the President of the United States and the President has told us ‘to continue to do our job.’ We are going to continue to run this mission area--marketing and regulatory programs--as efficiently and as effectively as we can.” •

--***Patricia Klintberg***

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**USDA-Sponsored
Calendar Highlights**

• Month of March

Women's History Month

USDA headquarters offices and field offices.

(202) 720-7314 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY)

• Month of March

National Nutrition Month

USDA headquarters offices and field offices

(703) 305-2298 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)

• May 11-14

[CYFAR](#) (Children, Youth, & Families at Risk) 2004 Conference

Seattle, Washington.

(202) 720-5075 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)

<http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/cyfar/cyfar.htm>



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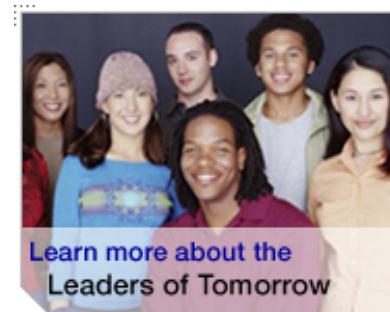
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About USDA

Welcome From the Secretary



In 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln founded the U.S. Department of Agriculture, he called it the "people's Department." In Lincoln's day, 58 percent of the people were farmers who needed good seeds and information to grow their crops. Today, USDA continues Lincoln's legacy by serving all Americans. USDA remains committed to helping America's farmers and ranchers. But we also do much more....

- USDA leads the Federal anti-hunger effort with the Food Stamp, School Lunch, School Breakfast, and the WIC Programs.
- USDA is the steward of our nation's 192 million acres of national forests and rangelands.
- USDA is the country's largest conservation agency, encouraging voluntary efforts to protect soil, water, and wildlife on the 70 percent of America's lands that are in private hands.
- USDA brings housing, modern telecommunications, and safe drinking water to rural America.
- USDA is responsible for the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products.
- USDA is a research leader in everything from human nutrition to new crop technologies that allow us to grow more food and fiber using less water and pesticides.
- USDA helps ensure open markets for U.S. agricultural products and provides food aid to needy people overseas.

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**Faith-Based and Community Initiatives**



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Newsroom

In the News[More ▶](#)**[USDA Awards \\$3.8 Million In Water Quality Grants](#)**

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced today that 10 grants totaling more than \$3.8 million have been awarded for research, education, and extension projects to improve the quantity and quality of water resources across the country.

[Over \\$13 million in USDA Rural Development Grants](#)**[Selected To Spur Economic Growth In 34 States - \\$2.1](#)****[Million to Support Renewable/Biomass Energy Proposals](#)**

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced the approval of 97 value-added agricultural product market development grants in 34 states, totaling over \$13.1 million. The grants will help farmers and ranchers increase their economic opportunities through the development of new products and markets for agriculturally based products.

[Officials Inaugurate Food Safety Institute Of The Americas](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Jim Moseley and Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elsa Murano, along with elected officials and dignitaries from throughout the Western Hemisphere, today inaugurated the Food Safety Institute of the Americas (FSIA) here to develop and promote effective food safety education and training programs throughout the Americas.

[Bush Administration Officials: Federal Land Managers Set Record-Level Accomplishments Of President's Healthy Forests Initiative](#)

Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James L. Connaughton, Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey and Interior Assistant Secretary Lynn Scarlett today announced that federal land management agencies have surpassed all of their hazardous fuels treatment targets for 2004 under the President's Healthy Forests Initiative.

[Secretary Veneman Announces The HealthierUS School Challenge - Kicks Off National School Lunch Week - Oct. 10-16](#)

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today launched the HealthierUS School Challenge to help encourage schools and parents to continue promoting healthy lifestyles for children.

Reports

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Agencies & Offices

USDA Agencies

[Agricultural Marketing Service \(AMS\)](#)

AMS facilitates the strategic marketing of agricultural products in domestic and international markets while ensuring fair trading practices and promoting a competitive and efficient marketplace. AMS constantly works to develop new marketing services to increase customer satisfaction.

[Agricultural Research Service \(ARS\)](#)

ARS is USDA's principal in-house research agency. ARS leads America towards a better future through agricultural research and information.

[Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(APHIS\)](#)

APHIS protects and promotes agricultural health by administering the Animal Welfare Act and carrying out wildlife damage management activities.

[Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion \(CNPP\)](#)

CNPP works to improve the health and well-being of Americans by developing and promoting dietary guidance that links scientific research to the nutrition needs of consumers.

[Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service \(CSREES\)](#)

In partnership with land-grant universities, and other public and private organizations, CSREES provides the focus to advance a global system of extramural research, extension, and higher education in the food and agricultural sciences.

[Economic Research Service \(ERS\)](#)

ERS is USDA's principal social science research agency. Each year, ERS communicates research results and socioeconomic indicators via briefings, analyses for policymakers and their staffs, market analysis updates, and major reports.

[Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#)

FSA aids farmers and ranchers as it works to stabilize income through its efforts to conserve resources, provide credit and relieve operations from the effects of disaster.

[Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\)](#)

FNS increases food security and reduces hunger in partnership with cooperating organizations by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthy diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.

[Food Safety and Inspection Service \(FSIS\)](#)

FSIS enhances public health and well-being by protecting the public from foodborne illness and ensuring that the nation's meat, poultry and egg products are safe, wholesome, and correctly packaged.

Related Topics

- [USDA Agencies and Offices](#)
- [USDA Mission Areas](#)

See Also

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Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)

FAS works to improve foreign market access for U.S. products. This USDA agency operates programs designed to build new markets and improve the competitive position of U.S. agriculture in the global marketplace.

Forest Service (FS)

FS sustains the health, diversity and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)

GIPSA facilitates the marketing of livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds, and related agricultural products. It also promotes fair and competitive trading practices for the overall benefit of consumers and American agriculture. GIPSA ensures open and competitive markets for livestock, poultry, and meat by investigating and monitoring industry trade practices.

National Agricultural Library (NAL)

NAL ensures and enhances access to agricultural information for a better quality of life.

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

NASS serves the basic agricultural and rural data needs of the country by providing objective, important and accurate statistical information and services to farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses and public officials. This data is vital to monitoring the ever-changing agricultural sector and carrying out farm policy.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

NRCS provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment.

Risk Management Agency (RMA)

RMA helps to ensure that farmers have the financial tools necessary to manage their agricultural risks. RMA provides coverage through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, which promotes national welfare by improving the economic stability of agriculture.

Rural Development (RD)

RD helps rural areas to develop and grow by offering Federal assistance that improves quality of life. RD targets communities in need and then empowers them with financial and technical resources.

USDA Offices

Civil Rights (CR)

CR ensures compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies for USDA customers and employees regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or family status, political beliefs, parental status, protected genetic information, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

Departmental Administration (DA)

DA provides central administrative management support to Department officials and coordinates administrative programs and services.

National Appeals Division (NAD)

NAD conducts impartial administrative appeal hearings of adverse program decisions made by USDA and reviews of determinations issued by NAD hearing officers when requested by a party to the appeal.

Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA)

OBPA provides centralized coordination and direction for the Department's budget, legislative and regulatory functions. It also provides analysis and evaluation to support the implementation of critical policies. OBPA administers the Department's budgetary functions and develops and presents budget-related matters to Congress, the news media, and the public.

Office of the Chief Economist (OCE)

OCE advises the Secretary on the economic situation in agricultural markets and the economic implications of policies and programs affecting American agriculture and rural communities. OCE serves as the focal point for economic intelligence and analysis related to agricultural markets and for risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis related to Departmental regulations affecting food and agriculture.

Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)

OCFO shapes an environment for USDA officials eliciting the high-quality financial performance needed to make and implement effective policy, management, stewardship, and program decisions.

Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)

OCIO has the primary responsibility for the supervision and coordination of the design, acquisition, maintenance, use, and disposal of information technology by USDA agencies. OCIO's strategically acquires and uses information technology resources to improve the quality, timeliness and cost-effectiveness of USDA services.

Office of Communications (OC)

OC is USDA's central source of public information. The office provides centralized information services using the latest, most effective and efficient technology and standards for communication. It also provides the leadership, coordination, expertise, and counsel needed to develop the strategies, products, and services that are used to describe USDA initiatives, programs, and functions to the public.

Office of Congressional Relations (OCR)

OCR serves as the USDA's liaison with Congress. OCR works closely with members and staffs of various House and Senate Committees to communicate the USDA's legislative agenda and budget proposals.

Office of the Executive Secretariat (OES)

OES ensures that all Department officials are included in the correspondence drafting and policy-making process through a managed clearance and control system. Keeping policy officials informed of executive documents enhances the Secretary's ability to review sound and thought out policy recommendations before making final decisions.

Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

OIG investigates allegations of crime against the Department's program, and promotes the economy and efficiency of its operations.

Office of the General Counsel (OGC)

The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) is an independent legal agency that provides legal advice and services to the Secretary of Agriculture and to all other officials and agencies of the Department with respect to all USDA programs and activities.



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Help

Help Guide

USDA.gov is your access point to all USDA agencies and offices, and your information source for Department news and services. This Web site helps users find what they need quickly and easily. Should you be experiencing any difficulty, please refer to these resources to find your answers.

Technical Issues

If you are having technical difficulties, please refer to our technology requirements to ensure your system meets the minimum requirements. If your problems are not resolved, please contact our Webmaster for further assistance.

- [Technology Requirements](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

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If you need assistance while performing searches on our site, please refer to our search tips.

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Other Helpful Resources

Refer to these additional resources if you are still experiencing problems finding what you need.

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If you would like to submit comments or questions to the Secretary, or provide general feedback on the Web site, please do so on the feedback page. Make sure you fill in your email address if you would like a response.

- [Go to Feedback Form](#)

Ask the Expert

If you have specific USDA questions you would like an expert to respond to, please submit an Ask the Expert form. Please remember that an email address is required for a response.

- [Go to Ask the Expert Form](#)

Directories

To find contact information for USDA agencies, offices, and personnel, please use one of the following directories.

- [USDA Phone Directory \(Washington DC Area\)](#)
- [USDA Email Directory](#)
- [USDA Organizational Phone Directory \(PDF\)](#)
- [USDA Agency and Office Information Directory \(PDF\)](#)
- [Federal Phone Directory](#)
- [USDA Service Center Locations](#)

Location

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., USDA's Postal Service mailing address is: U.S. Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. Washington, DC 20250.

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En Las Noticias

[VENEMAN LANZA NUEVO SITIO WEB EN ESPAÑOL](#)

En reconocimiento del Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana, la Secretaria del Departamento de Agricultura, Ann M. Veneman, lanzó el día de hoy un nuevo sitio Web en español, www.usda.gov/EnEspanol, como parte de la labor continua que viene desempeñando el Departamento de Agricultura de EE.UU. por incrementar el acceso a los programas del USDA entre los hispanos.

[USDA CREA REGISTRO VOLUNTARIO PARA ALCANZAR A PRODUCTORES MINORITARIOS](#)

La Secretaria de Agricultura Ann M. Veneman anunció hoy que los agricultores y rancheros minoritarios pueden ahora participar en un registro voluntario para recibir información del USDA.



[VENEMAN Y DERBEZ FIRMAN ACUERDO PARA PROMOVER PROGRAMAS DE NUTRICIÓN](#)

La Secretaria de Agricultura Ann M. Veneman y Luis Ernesto Derbez Bautista, Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores de México, firmaron este día un acuerdo para promover programas disponibles de asistencia nutricional a personas calificadas de nacionalidad mexicana que viven en los Estados Unidos.

[La Administración Bush Anuncia Esfuerzo Para Crear Empleos Rurales](#)

La secretaria de Agricultura, Ann M. Veneman, y el administrador de la Agencia Federal para el Desarrollo de la Pequeña Empresa, Héctor V. Barreto, anunciaron hoy un esfuerzo para estimular el desarrollo y empleos en el sector de los negocios rurales, proveyendo mayor acceso a fondos de inversión de capital de riesgo.

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Pautas de Seguridad para los Procesadores de Alimentos



[Desarrollo Rural](#)

Compromiso de Cinco Estrellas para ampliar la propiedad de viviendas en las minorías rurales



[El Programa Nacional de Almuerzos Escolares](#)

Proporciona los almuerzos libres, equilibrados, nutritivos o bajos del costo.



[Pautas de Inocuidad y Seguridad](#)

(PDF)
La información del transporte de la Distribución



[Ciencia Para Niños](#)

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Sobre USDA

Bienvenido

Cuando en 1862 el Presidente Abraham Lincoln fundó el Departamento de Agricultura de EE.UU., lo llamó el "Departamento del pueblo". En los tiempos de Lincoln, 48 por ciento de las personas eran granjeros que necesitaban buenas semillas y la información necesaria para hacer crecer sus cultivos. Hoy día, el USDA desea continuar con el legado de Lincoln prestando sus servicios a todos los estadounidenses.

El USDA continúa comprometido con los granjeros y rancheros de Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, ahora también se ocupa de muchas otras tareas...

- El USDA dirige campañas a nivel federal para acabar con el hambre por medio de los programas de Cupones para Alimentos, Almuerzos Escolares, Desayunos Escolares y WIC.
- El USDA supervisa los 192 millones de acres de parques nacionales y praderas de nuestro país.
- El USDA es la agencia de conservación más importante del país, promoviendo campañas de voluntarios para la protección del suelo, el agua y la vida silvestre en un 70 por ciento de las tierras estadounidenses que se encuentran en manos privadas.
- El USDA brinda viviendas, telecomunicaciones modernas y agua potable a los sectores rurales de nuestro país.
- El USDA es responsable de la seguridad de los productos derivados de la carne de res, la carne de pollo y los huevos.
- El USDA es líder en la investigación de temas que van desde la nutrición humana hasta las nuevas tecnologías de cosecha, las cuales facilitan el cultivo de alimentos y fibras con una menor cantidad de agua y pesticidas.
- El USDA ayuda a garantizar mercados abiertos para los productos agropecuarios de la nación y provee ayuda alimenticia a las personas necesitadas en otros países.

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La Secretaria de Agricultura Ann M. Veneman anunció hoy que los agricultores y rancheros minoritarios pueden ahora participar en un registro voluntario para recibir información del USDA.

VENEMAN Y DERBEZ FIRMAN ACUERDO PARA PROMOVER PROGRAMAS DE NUTRICIÓN

La Secretaria de Agricultura Ann M. Veneman y Luis Ernesto Derbez Bautista, Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores de México, firmaron este día un acuerdo para promover programas disponibles de asistencia nutricional a personas calificadas de nacionalidad mexicana que viven en los Estados Unidos.

Actualización sobre BSE - 5 de enero de 2004

USDA tomó la decisión de sacrificar todos los becerros de la instalación en Sunnyside, Washington, entre los cuales se encuentra el becerro parido por la vaca infectada por BSE antes de llevarla al matadero en Diciembre. Hay aproximadamente 450 cabezas de ganado en la instalación y las operaciones continuarán esta semana, pero muy probablemente dependerán de las condiciones del tiempo en el área de Sunnyside. Los becerros serán transportados a un matadero que actualmente no está en uso.

Actualización sobre BSE - 2 de enero de 2004

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Pautas de Seguridad para los Procesadores de Alimentos

USDA confirmó que 81 de los 82 animales listados en el certificado de salud canadiense que incluye el número de etiqueta de identificación de la vaca índice ingresaron a Estados Unidos por Oroville, WA el 4 de septiembre de 2001. Uno de los 82 fue encontrado en una instalación lechera de Mattawa, WA, que ahora se encuentra bajo una orden de suspensión estatal.

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La vaca lechera promedio produce más de 18,000 libras de leche por año.



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Comuníquese Con Nosotros

Con sede central en Washington, D.C., la dirección de correo de Servicio Postal del USDA es:

Departamento de Agricultura de EE.UU.
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Para enviarle un correo electrónico a la Secretaria Ann M. Veneman o por cuestiones relacionadas con el Departamento de Agricultura, o el sitio Web del USDA.gov, seleccione un tema general, indique su dirección de correo electrónico para recibir una respuesta, y envíe sus preguntas/comentarios.

Correo Electrónico: (**requerido**)

Comentarios/Preguntas:

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Los Programas

Los Programas



[Programas de Asistencia Nutricional](#)

El Programa de Cupones para Alimentos es el pilar fundamental de los programas de asistencia alimenticia del USDA. Se inició en 1961 como un programa piloto y se transformó en un programa permanente en 1964. El programa emite asignaciones mensuales de cupones que se pueden cambiar por alimentos en las tiendas o proporciona beneficios mediante la transferencia electrónica de beneficios (EBT, por sus siglas en inglés). La elegibilidad y las asignaciones se basan en el tamaño familiar, en el ingreso y los bienes de la familia, entre otros factores.

[Bienvenido al Programa de Desayunos Escolares](#)

El Programa de Desayunos Escolares (SBP, por sus siglas en inglés) es un programa de comidas con asistencia federal implementado en escuelas e instituciones. Proporciona desayunos nutritivamente balanceados gratuitos o de bajo costo para los niños cada día de clases.

[¿En qué puede beneficiarlo el CACFP?](#)

El CACFP desempeña un papel vital ya que mejora la calidad del cuidado diurno y lo hace más accesible para muchas familias de bajos recursos.

[Acerca de SFSP](#)

En su comunidad ¿hay niños que durante este verano pasarán hambre? Los niños de las comunidades de bajos recursos son elegibles para recibir comidas gratis o a precios reducidos durante el año escolar a través de los Programas Nacionales de Almuerzos y Desayunos Escolares. Pero esos programas finalizan cuando termina el año escolar durante el verano. El Programa de Servicios de Alimentos de Verano del Departamento de Agricultura de EE.UU. (USDA, por sus siglas en inglés) ayuda a combatir el hambre durante ese período.

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Pautas de Seguridad para los Procesadores de Alimentos

Respuesta en Situaciones de Desastre

Actualizaciones de Respuesta en Situaciones de Desastre and Preguntas Frecuentes sobre Situaciones de Desastre y el Servicio de Alimentos y Nutrición (FNS, por sus siglas en inglés)

Acerca de FDP

Esta página proporciona una descripción general y la historia de los Programas de Distribución de Alimentos (FDP, por sus siglas en inglés) e incluye vínculos a una gran cantidad de información acerca de las operaciones de los FDP, como por ejemplo Preguntas Frecuentes, reglamentos de los programas, Comunicados del Registro Federal, descripciones y hojas de datos de los programas, siglas y abreviaturas usadas frecuentemente en los programas, listas de contactos para los Organismos de Distribución Estatal y Organizaciones de Tribus Indígenas (SDA e ITO, respectivamente, por sus siglas en inglés), etc.

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Las Informaciones



[Programa Especial de Leche - Hoja de datos](#)

El Programa Especial de Leche ofrece leche a los niños en las escuelas, instituciones de cuidado infantil y campamentos elegibles que no participan en otros programas federales de servicios de nutrición infantil.

[Datos sobre Asistencia Nutricional](#)

El Servicio de Alimentos y Nutrición (FNS, por sus siglas en inglés) administra los programas de asistencia nutricional del Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos. Durante tres décadas, desde su creación en 1969, el FNS ha dirigido la lucha de los Estados Unidos contra el hambre y ha ofrecido una buena nutrición a través de programas de gran integridad administrados por asociaciones estatales y locales. La misión del Servicio de Alimentos y Nutrición es reducir el hambre y la incertidumbre sobre la carencia de alimentos garantizando un mejor acceso a los alimentos, una dieta sana y una educación alimenticia para niños y familias necesitadas.

[Programa de Almuerzos Escolares - Hoja de Datos](#)

El Programa Nacional de Almuerzos Escolares (NSLP, por sus siglas en inglés) es un programa federal de asistencia alimenticia implementado en escuelas públicas y privadas sin fines de lucro y en instituciones residenciales de atención infantil. Proporciona almuerzos nutritivos balanceados gratuitos o de bajo costo para los niños cada día de clases.

[Información de la Seguridad del alimento Para Consumidores](#)

Para mayor información en inglés y castellano (o español) llame a la Línea de Información sobre Carnes y Aves del USDA al 1-888-674-6854 (1-888-MPHotline); para las personas con problemas de audición (TTY): 1-800-256-7072.

[Programas de Difusión sobre Inocuidad Alimentaria](#)

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Pautas de Seguridad para los Procesadores de Alimentos

Información y materiales educativos de Thermy™ (campaña nacional de difusión dirigida al consumidor con el propósito de promover el uso de termómetros para alimentos) y de La Alianza para la Educación sobre la Seguridad de los Alimentos y su campaña para combatir las BACterias! (Fight BAC!®)

Recursos sobre Calidad del Agua

Aprenda más acerca de recursos de agua y cómo obtener ayuda.

- [Las Publicaciones rurales del Desarrollo](#)
- [Localice las Propiedades en venta](#)

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En Las Noticias**En Las Noticias**

Noticias Libran No. sp0391.04

Contacto en el Departamento de Agricultura: Ed Loyd (202)720-4623

 [Impresión](#)**VENEMAN LANZA NUEVO SITIO WEB EN ESPAÑOL**

MIAMI, 16 de septiembre del 2004 -En reconocimiento del Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana, la Secretaria del Departamento de Agricultura, Ann M. Veneman, lanzó el día de hoy un nuevo sitio Web en español, www.usda.gov/EnEspanol, como parte de la labor continua que viene desempeñando el Departamento de Agricultura de EE.UU. por incrementar el acceso a los programas del USDA entre los hispanos.

"El sitio Web es una herramienta nueva encaminada a ayudar a un mayor número de personas a acceder a los programas y servicios del USDA," dijo Veneman. "Los consumidores pueden utilizar el sitio Web para buscar información sobre asistencia nutricional hasta programas de vivienda propia o conservación."

En reconocimiento de la riqueza de la cultura hispana que prospera en Estados Unidos y de los diversos aportes realizados por los hispano-americanos a los Estados Unidos, el Presidente Bush ha designado el período comprendido entre el 15 de septiembre y el 15 de octubre como el "Mes Nacional de Herencia Hispana."

Por vez primera, USDA "EnEspañol" reúne los materiales en inglés del sitio Web en un marco bilingüe. Además de un aspecto nuevo y una navegación más sencilla, el sitio Web ofrece información comprensiva acerca de cómo acceder a los programas de Alimentos y Nutrición, sugerencias con relación a la seguridad de los alimentos, programas de conservación, así como programas del Servicio de la Vivienda Rural.

En el 2000, la Oficina de Censos informó que la población hispana ascendía a más de 35 millones, lo que equivaldría al 13

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Pautas de Seguridad para los Procesadores de Alimentos

por ciento aproximadamente de la población total. El crecimiento dinámico de las poblaciones hispanas en las áreas rurales brinda energía e ideas nuevas que pueden impulsar el crecimiento y la prosperidad en gran medida. El USDA proporciona asistencia nutricional, financiamiento para la adquisición de viviendas, servicios comunitarios y oportunidades para las pequeñas empresas en zonas rurales por todo el país, con la finalidad de ayudar a los hispanos en estas zonas a montar nuevos negocios, adquirir su primera vivienda y reforzar sus raíces en las comunidades locales.

Por ejemplo, a fin de alcanzar la meta del Presidente Bush de ayudar a 5.5 millones de familias de grupos minoritarios a tener vivienda propia para el 2010, el USDA ha simplificado el proceso de adquisición de viviendas, ha contratado a prestamistas minoritarios y ha establecido un esfuerzo cooperativo a fin de mejorar la situación económica de las colonias hispanas a lo largo de la frontera sudoeste del país. Hasta la fecha, 32,894 familias han logrado su sueño de tener vivienda propia gracias a los programas del USDA. De dichas familias, 27,273 son propietarias de una vivienda por vez primera, y el 20 por ciento de estos propietarios nuevos pertenecen a grupos minoritarios.

El Presidente Bush ha declarado nuevamente elegibles a los inmigrantes legales para que participen en el Programa de Cupones para Alimentos. La estipulación, hecha ley como parte del Proyecto de la Ley Agrícola 2002, ha beneficiado ya a casi 400,000 familias hispanas. Para asegurar que las personas elegibles para la asistencia nutricional sepan de dichos programas y servicios importantes, el USDA ofrece materiales tanto en inglés como en español, y se ha asociado con diversas organizaciones comunitarias para poder llegar a una amplia gama de comunidades migratorias.

A fin de reforzar esta labor, la Secretaria Veneman firmó un acuerdo de asociación el mes de julio pasado con el Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores de México, Luis Derbez, mediante el cual se utilizará los 45 consulados mexicanos en EE.UU. para informar a los mexicanos elegibles que residen en Estados Unidos de América acerca de la asistencia nutricional disponible en el país.

La proclamación del Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana realizada por el Presidente puede hallarse en:
www.whitehouse.gov/news.

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Farm income for 2003 was a record \$68.6 billion! Up \$17.9 billion from 2002.



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29 de Diciembre de 2003

[Actualizacion BSE \(Encefalopatia Espongiforme Bovina\) -29 de diciembre de 2003](#)

23 de Diciembre de 2003

[USDA Revela Un Diagnóstico Preliminar de Encefalopatía Espongiforme Bovina](#)

25 de Diciembre de 2003

[Actualizacion de USDA sobre BSE 28 de diciembre de 2003](#)

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[Implementación de la Iniciativa de Bosques Saludables La Ley de Rehabilitación de Bosques Saludables Proporciona Herramientas Nuevas para Proteger y Rehabilitar Nuestras Tierras](#)

2 de Octubre de 2003

[VENEMAN ELOGIA EL CRECIMIENTO DE LAS EMPRESAS PERTENECIENTES A MINORÍAS COMO ELEMENTO VITAL PARA LA PROSPERIDAD Y EL DESARROLLO ECONÓMICO PERMANENTES Celebra el Mes de la Herencia Hispana con visitas a Texas, New Mexico y Arizona](#)

30 de Julio de 2003

[El Departamento De Agricultura De Los Estados Unidos Firma Un Memorándum De Entendimiento Con México](#)**Las Noticias Liberan**

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16 de Junio de 2003

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30 de Mayo de 2003

[Dorr Alaba Los Esfuerzos Por Brindar Viviendas Asequibles En Las Colonias Fronterizas De Los Estados Unidos De Norteamerica Otorga \\$1 million de dolares en cheques para el desarrollo de tecnologia de informacion](#)

25 de Marzo de 2003

[Veneman Anuncia El Comienzo De Los Beneficios De Cupones Para Alimentos Para Los Nuevos Inmigrantes Legales Calificados A Partir Del 1Ro De Abril](#)

24 de Enero de 2003

[eneman Anuncia Los Becarios Del Servicio Publico Como Parte De La Iniciativa "Los Lideres Del Manana"](#)

15 de Enero de 2003

[El Presidente Bush Propone Apoyo A Nivel Récord Para Los Programas De Nutrición De Mujeres, Bebés Y Niños Pedido de \\$4,8 Mil Millones Fortalece la Iniciativa HealthierUS para Mejorar la Salud y Prevenir la Enfermedad](#)

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Noticias Libera No. sp0455.03

Contacto en el Departamento de Agricultura: Ed Loyd (202) 720-4623

 [Impresión](#)**Actualización sobre BSE - 31 de diciembre de 2003**

WASHINGTON, 31 de Diciembre de 2003 - USDA continúa colaborando con los funcionarios canadienses para verificar el rastreo de procedencia del animal Índice. Los expedientes indican que el animal tenía aproximadamente 6 ½ años de edad al llevarlo al matadero. USDA está colaborando con Canadá para realizar pruebas de ADN para verificar que se haya identificado al animal correcto. Se espera que se comenzarán a realizar pruebas de ADN esta noche, y los resultados podrían estar ya disponibles la semana que viene.

La Secretaría ha convocado a un equipo de expertos internacionales para revisar nuestra investigación y hacer recomendaciones nacionales. Realizarán esa revisión después de haberse completado la investigación epidemiológica de la única vaca que ha resultado positiva a BSE en los Estados Unidos. El equipo será parecido al grupo que realizó una revisión de esa índole en el Canadá. El mismo estará bajo la dirección del Dr. Ulrich Kihm, el antiguo Funcionario en Jefe de Veterinaria de Suiza, quien actualmente es dueño de la compañía consultora Safe Foods Solutions, Inc. Además del Dr. Kihm, las siguientes personas se han comprometido tentativamente a asistir a USDA: William Hueston, Director del Centro de Salud Animal y Seguridad de los Alimentos de la Universidad de Minnesota; Dagmar Heim, directora del programa de control de BSE en la Oficina Federal de Veterinaria Suiza; y Stuart MacDiarmid, un experto en BSE del gobierno de Nueva Zelanda. Esperamos con mucho interés recibir la revisión de ese grupo de las operaciones que estamos realizando actualmente, así como sus recomendaciones de cómo podemos continuar a edificar un programa ya muy sólido para evitar que BSE se arraigue en los Estados Unidos.

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Pautas de Seguridad para los Procesadores de Alimentos

El 30 de diciembre de 2003, la Secretaria de Agricultura Ann Veneman anunciò medidas adicionales para fortalecer los sistemas de protección de EE.UU. contra la Encefalopatìa Espóngiforme Bovina, o BSE, y proteger mejor la salud pùblica. Las políticas fortaleceràn aún más las protecciones contra BSE al eliminar ciertos animales, así como material y tejidos de riesgo específico de la cadena alimenticia humana; requiriendo controles de procesamiento adicionales para las instalaciones que utilicen mètodes avanzados de recuperaciòn de la carne (AMR, por sus siglas en anglès); suspendiendo la carne de ganado que haya sido seleccionado para realizar pruebas de vigilancia de BSE hasta que los resultados de las pruebas se confirmen como negativos, y prohibiendo el uso de màquinas golpeadoras por inyeccìon neumàtica para aturdir el ganado. La Secretaria tambièn anunciò que USDA comenzarà la puesta en pràctica inmediata de un sistema nacional verificable de identificaciòn de animales. Dicho sistema ha estado en desarrollo por más de un año y medio para lograr uniformidad, consistencia y eficacia en todo el sistema nacional.

En la mañana del 25 de diciembre, el laboratorio de referencia mundial de BSE ubicado en Weybridge, Inglaterra, confirmò el diagnòstico preliminar de BSE hecho por USDA el 23 de diciembre en una vaca lechera que no era ambulatoria y que habìa sido llevada al matadero el 9 de diciembre en Verns Moses Lake Meats en el Estado de Washington.

Cuando USDA hizo el diagnòstico preliminar el 23 de diciembre, el Servicio de Seguridad e Inspecciòn de los Alimentos (FSIS) de USDA ordenò un retiro del mercado de Clase II de la producciòn total de ese dìa en esa instalaciòn. El retiro del mercado se clasificò como Clase II debido a la probabilidad extremadamente baja de que la carne de res retirada del mercado estuviera infectada con el agente que causa BSE.

La manada de ganado de donde provino el animal afectado se encuentra bajo cuarentena del Estado de Washington. Aunque USDA no ha tomado ninguna decisiòn relacionada con la disposiciòn de esta manada, cualquier cabeza de ganado que muera en la granja serà sometida a una prueba de BSE.

El Servicio de Inspecciòn Sanitaria Animal y Vegetal (APHIS) ha determinado la informaciòn siguiente a travès de su investigaciòn de rastreo de procedencia:

- El certificado de salud canadiense, que tiene fecha del 28 de agosto de 2001, lista 82 nùmeros de etiquetas de identificaciòn de cabezas de ganado que eran parte de una manada que se separò en Alberta, Canadà. Uno de esos nùmeros de etiqueta de identificaciòn concuerda con el nùmero de la vaca positiva a BSE. Como se mencionò anteriormente, USDA y Canadà estàn colaborando para confirmar la identificaciòn de esta vaca a travès de pruebas de ADN. Nueve de las 82 pertenecen a la manada índice en el estado de Washington. Actualmente, USDA tiene informaciòn que sugiere que sólo 81 de los 82 animales cruzaron la frontera rumbo a los Estados Unidos. No obstante, como

USDA no puede excluir la posibilidad de que todos los animales hayan ingresado en los Estados Unidos, està examinando expedientes de importaciòn/exportaciòn, así como expedientes de granjas, para encontrar las 72 cabezas de ganado restantes.

· La vaca positiva parì tres becerros mientras estaba en los Estados Unidos. El primero naciò muerto. El segundo, una novilla de un año, se encuentra bajo una orden de suspensiòn en la granja ïndice. El tercero, un becerro, se encuentra en un grupo de becerros en otra instalaciòn que tambièn està bajo una orden de suspensiòn. Las òrdenes de suspensiòn no se emitieron debido a que BSE sea contagioso o se propague de alguna manera directamente de animal a animal. Se emitieron para garantizar que USDA mantenga control sobre dònde se encuentran todos los animales que son importantes, o de otro modo relevantes, para la investigaciòn.

El Servicio de Seguridad e Inspecciòn de los Alimentos (FSIS) de USDA tambièn realizarà las siguientes acciones:

· Animales no ambulatorios. Vigente inmediatamente, USDA prohibirà que cualquier cabeza de ganado no ambulatorio se incluya en la cadena de alimentaciòn humana. USDA continuarà su programa de vigilancia de BSE.

· Suspensiòn de productos. Los inspectores del Servicio de Seguridad e Inspecciòn de los Alimentos de USDA ya no marcaràn las cabezas de ganado sometidas a prueba bajo el programa de vigilancia de BSE como “inspeccionadas y aprobadas” hasta que reciban confirmaciòn de que los resultados de las pruebas de BSE en los animales son efectivamente negativos. Esta nueva polìtica se promulgarà en forma de una regla interpretativa que se publicarà en el Registro Federal.

Para evitar la introducciòn al mercado de carnes y productos derivados de carne adulterados, el personal del programa de inspecciòn de FSIS realiza inspecciones ante y postmortem del ganado que se lleva al matadero en los Estados Unidos. Como parte de la inspecciòn antemortem, el personal de FSIS busca señales de enfermedad, incluyendo señales de trastornos del sistema nervioso central. Los animales que demuestren señales de enfermedad sistèmica, incluyendo los que demuestren señales de trastornos neurològicos, se eliminan. Nunca se ha permitido el uso de la carne de animales eliminados para consumo humano.

· Material de riesgo especìfico. Con vigencia inmediata por su publicaciòn en el Registro Federal, USDA mejorarà sus reglamentos, declarando como materiales de riesgo especìfico el cràneo, el cerebro, los ganglios del trigèmino, los ojos, la espina vertebral, la mèdula espinal y los ganglios radiculares dorsales de ganado mayor de 30 meses de edad, así como el intestino delgado de ganado de cualquier edad, prohibiendo así su uso en el suministro de alimentos para consumo humano. Las amigdalas de todo ganado ya se consideran inconsuimibles y, por lo tanto, no ingresan al suministro de alimentos. Estas mejoras concuerdan con las acciones tomadas por el Canadà despùes del descubrimiento de BSE en mayo.

En una regla provisional final, FSIS requerirà que los mataderos de ganado sujetos a inspecció por entidades federales desarrollen, pongan en pràctica y mantengan procedimientos para remover, segregar y desechar estos materiales de riesgo específico de manera que no puedan ingresar en la cadena de alimentaciòn. Las plantas tambièn deben poner esa informaciòn a la disposiciòn inmediata para ser revisada por personal de inspecció de FSIS. FSIS tambièn ha elaborado procedimientos para verificar la edad aproximada del ganado llevado al matadero en instalaciones oficiales. Las plantas inspeccionadas por el estado deben tener en pie procedimientos equivalentes.

· Mètodes avanzados de recuperaciòn de la carne (AMR)
Cuando se opera debidamente, AMR es una tecnologia industrial que remueve tejido muscular de los huesos de cadàveres de reses usando alta presiòn, sin incorporar material òseo. El producto de AMR puede empacarse como “carne.” FSIS ya tenia reglamentos en pie que prohibian que se incluyera la mèdula espinal en los productos empacados como “carne.” El reglamento, que entrara en vigor al publicarse en el Registro Federal, amplia esa prohibiciòn para incluir los ganglios radiculares dorsales, los cuales son grupos de cèlulas del sistema nervioso conectados a la mèdula espinal a lo largo de la columna vertebral, ademàs de los tejidos de la mèdula espinal. Como es el caso con la mèdula espinal, los ganglios radiculares dorsales tambièn pueden contener la infecció por BSE si el animal està infectado. Ademàs, debido a que la columna vertebral y el cràneo de ganado de 30 meses de edad y mayor se consideran inconsuables, no pueden procesarse por AMR.

En marzo de 2003, FSIS comenzò un programa de muestreo reglamentario de rutina de la carne producida con sistemas AMR para garantizar que no hubiera tejido de la mèdula espinal presente en el producto. En una nueva regla provisional final anunciada hoy, las instalaciones deben garantizar el control del proceso mediante pruebas de verificaciòn para garantizar que el producto no contenga ni mèdula espinal ni ganglios radiculares dorsales.

· Golpeado por inyecció neumàtica. Para garantizar que no se incrusten porciones del cerebro en el tejido del cadàver de un animal como consecuencia de aturdir humanamente el ganado durante el proceso de matanza, FSIS publicará un reglamento para prohibir la pràctica de golpeado por inyecció neumàtica.

· Carne mecànicamente separada. USDA prohibirà el uso de carne mecànicamente separada en la producciòn de alimentos para el consumo humano.

Los consumidores que tengan otras preguntas relacionadas con la seguridad de los alimentos pueden llamar gratuitamente a la Línea Directa de USDA para Informaciòn sobre Carnes y Aves al 1-888-MPHotline. La linea directa està disponible en inglés y español y està abierta de 10 a.m. a 4 p.m. (Hora del Este), de lunes a viernes. Hay mensajes grabados relacionados con la seguridad de los alimentos disponibles las 24 horas del dia.

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VENEMAN ANUNCIA MEDIDAS ADICIONALES DE PROTECCIÓN CONTRA BSE

WASHINGTON, 30 de Diciembre de 2003 - La Secretaria de Agricultura Ann M. Veneman anunció hoy medidas adicionales para fortalecer los sistemas de protección de EE.UU. contra la Encefalopatía Espongiforme Bovina, o BSE, y proteger mejor la salud pública.

“Durante más de una década, los Estados Unidos han tenido un programa agresivo de vigilancia, detección y respuesta a BSE,” dijo Veneman. “Aunque confiamos que Estados Unidos tiene las medidas de protección y barreras necesarias para proteger la salud pública, estas acciones adicionales fortalecerán aún más nuestros sistemas de protección.”

Veneman dijo que las políticas anunciadas el día de hoy se han estado contemplando desde hace muchos meses, especialmente desde el hallazgo de un caso de BSE en el Canadá en mayo de 2003. Las políticas fortalecerán aún más las protecciones contra BSE eliminando ciertos animales, así como materiales y tejidos de riesgo específico de la cadena de alimentación humana; requiriendo controles adicionales de procesamiento para las instalaciones que utilizan métodos avanzados de recuperación de la carne (AMR, por sus siglas en inglés); suspendiendo la carne de ganado que haya sido sometido a pruebas de BSE hasta que se confirme que el resultado de dicha prueba fue negativo; y prohibiendo el golpeado por inyección neumática para aturdir ganado.

Aunque mucho ganado en los Estados Unidos puede identificarse mediante una variedad de sistemas, la Secretaria también anunció que USDA comenzará la puesta en práctica

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inmediata de un sistema nacional verificable de identificaciòn de animales. Dicho sistema ha estado en desarrollo por mès de un año y medio para lograr uniformidad, consistencia y eficacia en todo el sistema nacional.

“Durante el pasado año y medio, USDA ha colaborado con socios a nivel federal y estatal, así como en la industria, para adoptar las pautas de un sistema nacional verificable de identificaciòn de animales para ayudar a mejorar la rapidez y la exactitud de nuestra respuesta a los brotes de enfermedades en muchas especies distintas de animales,” dijo Veneman. “He solicitado que el Funcionario en Jefe de Informàtica de USDA acelere el desarrollo de la arquitectura tecnològica para que la puesta en pràctica de este sistema sea la prioridad mès alta.”

“Estos son pasos iniciales que USDA darà para mejorar nuestro sistema de protecciòn,” dijo Veneman. “Nombrarè un panel internacional de científicos expertos para que realicen una revisiòn objetiva de nuestras acciones de respuesta, e identifiquen àreas de posibles mejoras adicionales.”

Específicamente, USDA realizarà las siguientes acciones:

Animales no ambulatorios. Vigente inmediatamente, USDA prohibirà que cualquier cabeza de ganado no ambulatorio se incluya en la cadena de alimentaciòn humana. USDA continuarà su programa de vigilancia de BSE.

Suspensiòn de productos. Los inspectores del Servicio de Seguridad e Inspecciòn de los Alimentos (FSIS por sus siglas en inglés) de USDA ya no marcaràn las cabezas de ganado sometidas a pruebas de BSE como “inspeccionadas y aprobadas” hasta que reciban confirmaciòn de que los resultados de las pruebas de BSE en los animales son efectivamente negativos. Esta nueva polìtica se promulgarà en forma de una regla interpretativa que se publicarà en el Registro Federal.

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no ingresan al suministro de alimentos. Estas mejoras concuerdan con las acciones tomadas por el Canadà despuès del descubrimiento de BSE en mayo.

En una regla provisional final, FSIS requerirà que los mataderos de ganado sujetos a inspeccìon por entidades federales desarrollen, pongan en pràctica y mantengan procedimientos para remover, segregar y desechar estos materiales de riesgo específico de manera que no puedan ingresar en la cadena de alimentaciòn. Las plantas tambièn deben poner esa informaciòn a la disposiciòn inmediata para ser revisada por personal de inspeccìon de FSIS. FSIS tambièn ha elaborado procedimientos para verificar la edad aproximada del ganado llevado al matadero en instalaciones oficiales. Las plantas inspeccionadas por el estado deben tener en pie procedimientos equivalentes.

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En marzo de 2003, FSIS comenzò un programa de muestreo reglamentario de rutina de la carne producida con sistemas AMR para garantizar que no hubiera tejido de la mèdula espinal presente en el producto. En una nueva regla provisional final anunciada hoy, las instalaciones deben garantizar el control del proceso mediante pruebas de verificaciòn para garantizar que el producto no contenga ni mèdula espinal ni ganglios radiculares dorsales.

Golpeado por inyeccìon neumàtica. Para garantizar que no se incrusten porciones del cerebro en el tejido del cadàver del animal como consecuencia de aturdir humanamente el ganado durante el proceso de matanza, FSIS publicarà un reglamento para prohibir la pràctica de golpeado por inyeccìon neumàtica.

Carne mecànicamente separada. USDA prohibirà el uso de carne mecànicamente separada en la producciòn de alimentos para el consumo humano. El 23 de diciembre, Veneman informò que la prueba de BSE realizada en una vaca del estado de Washington habia resultado positiva. Se està realizando una investigaciòn ràpida y exhaustiva para rastrear la manada de origen del animal, la cual se cree que se encuentra en Alberta, Canadà, así como para rastrear animales adicionales que hayan

ingresado a los Estados Unidos. (Para ver la actualización más reciente de esta investigación, visite www.usda.gov).

Durante más de una década, los Estados Unidos han tenido un programa agresivo de vigilancia, detección y respuesta a BSE. Estados Unidos ha realizado pruebas de detección de BSE en más de 20,000 cabezas de ganado durante cada uno de los dos últimos años, lo que representa 47 veces el estándar internacional recomendado.

Desde 1989, USDA ha prohibido la importación de rumiantes vivos y de la mayoría de los productos derivados de rumiantes provenientes del Reino Unido y de otros países donde existe BSE.

En 1997, FDA prohibió el uso de la mayoría de las proteínas de mamíferos, el conducto principal de propagación si la enfermedad existiera en Estados Unidos, en la fabricación de alimentos para animales destinados para el consumo de ganado y otros rumiantes.

Un análisis independiente realizado en la universidad de Harvard en el 2001 y nuevamente en el 2002 demuestra que el riesgo de propagación de BSE en Estados Unidos es bajo y que cualquier posible propagación hubiera sido eliminada por los controles que ya tenemos en pie.

Para obtener más información, visite www.usda.gov.

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Actualización sobre BSE - 30 de diciembre de 2003

WASHINGTON, 30 de Diciembre de 2003 - La Secretaría de Agricultura Ann Veneman anunció medidas adicionales para fortalecer los sistemas de protección de EE.UU. contra al Encefalopatía Espongiforme Bovina, o BSE, y proteger mejor la salud pública. Las políticas fortalecerán aún más las protecciones contra BSE al eliminar ciertos animales, así como material y tejidos de riesgo específico de la cadena alimenticia humana; requiriendo controles de procesamiento adicionales para las instalaciones que utilicen métodos avanzados de recuperación de la carne (AMR, por sus siglas en inglés); suspendiendo la carne de ganado que haya sido seleccionado para realizar pruebas de vigilancia de BSE hasta que los resultados de las pruebas se confirmen como negativos, y prohibiendo el uso de máquinas golpeadoras por inyección neumática para aturdir el ganado. La Secretaría también anunció que USDA comenzará la puesta en práctica inmediata de un sistema nacional verificable de identificación de animales. Dicho sistema ha estado en desarrollo por más de un año y medio para lograr uniformidad, consistencia y eficacia en todo el sistema nacional.

USDA continúa colaborando con los funcionarios canadienses para verificar el rastreo de procedencia del animal índice. Los expedientes indican que el animal tenía aproximadamente 6 ½ años de edad al llevarlo al matadero. USDA está colaborando con Canadá para realizar pruebas de ADN para verificar que se haya identificado al animal correcto. La edad del animal es muy importante. Es posible que haya nacido antes de poner en práctica las prohibiciones de alimentos en América del Norte en agosto de 1997. Las prohibiciones de alimentos prohíben que se incluya proteína de rumiantes en los alimentos destinados para

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consumo por otros rumiantes. Esta práctica se ha identificado una y otra vez como la forma principal de propagaciòn de BSE.

En la mañana del 25 de diciembre, el laboratorio de referencia mundial de BSE ubicado en Weybridge, Inglaterra, confirmò el diagnòstico preliminar de BSE hecho por USDA el 23 de diciembre en una vaca lechera que no era ambulatorio y que habìa sido llevada al matadero el 9 de diciembre en Verns Moses Lake Meats en el Estado de Washington.

Cuando USDA hizo el diagnòstico preliminar el 23 de diciembre, el Servicio de Inspecciòn de Seguridad de los Alimentos (FSIS) de USDA ordenò un retiro del mercado de Clase II de la producciòn total de ese dìa en esa instalaciòn. El retiro del mercado se clasificò como Clase II debido a la probabilidad extremadamente baja de que la carne de res retirada del mercado estuviera infectada con el agente que causa BSE.

La manada de ganado de donde provino el animal afectado se encuentra bajo cuarentena del Estado de Washington. Aunque USDA no ha tomado ninguna decisiòn relacionada con la disposiciòn de esta manada, cualquier cabeza de ganado que muera en la granja serà sometida a una prueba de BSE.

El Servicio de Inspecciòn Sanitaria Animal y Vegetal (APHIS) ha determinado la informaciòn siguiente a travès de su investigaciòn de rastreo de procedencia:

- Hay un certificado de salud que indica que 82 cabezas de ganado (incluyendo la vaca positiva) fueron autorizadas para transporte a los Estados Unidos. USDA se encuentra actualmente en el proceso de verificar el nùmero preciso que ingresò a EE.UU. y dònde se encuentra cada animal. La informaciòn inicial del Canadà sugiere que sòlo 74 de las 82 cabezas de ganado del certificado de salud fueron transportadas a los Estados Unidos. No obstante, como USDA no puede excluir la posibilidad de que las otras ocho tambièn hayan atravesado la frontera, està examinando expedientes de importaciòn/exportaciòn, así como expedientes de granjas, para encontrar las 81 cabezas de ganado restantes.

- La vaca positiva parì tres becerros mientras estaba en Estados Unidos. El primero naciò muerto. El segundo, una novilla de un año, se encuentra bajo una orden de suspensiòn en la granja ïndice. El tercero, un becerro, se encuentra en un grupo de becerros en otra instalaciòn que tambièn està bajo una orden de suspensiòn. Las órdenes de suspensiòn no se emitieron debido a que BSE sea contagioso o se propague de alguna manera directamente de animal a animal. Se emitieron para garantizar que USDA mantenga control sobre dònde se encuentran todos los animales que son importantes, o de otro modo relevantes, para la investigaciòn.

El Servicio de Inspecciòn de Seguridad de los Alimentos (FSIS) de USDA tambièn realizarà las siguientes acciones:

- **Animales de no ambulatorios.** Vigente inmediatamente,

USDA prohibirà que cualquier cabeza de ganado no ambulatorio se incluya en la cadena de alimentaciòn humana. USDA continuà su programa de vigilancia de BSE.

• **Suspensiòn de productos.** Los inspectores del Servicio Inspecciòn de Seguridad de los Alimentos de USDA ya no marcaràn las cabezas de ganado sometidas a prueba bajo el programa de vigilancia de BSE como “inspeccionadas y aprobadas” hasta que reciban confirmaciòn de que los resultados de las pruebas de BSE en los animales son efectivamente negativos. Esta nueva polìtica se promulgarà en forma de una regla interpretativa que se publicarà en el Registro Federal.

Para evitar la introducciòn al mercado de carnes y productos derivados de carne adulterados, el personal del programa de inspecciòn de FSIS realiza inspecciones ante y postmortem del ganado que se lleva al matadero en los Estados Unidos. Como parte de la inspecciòn antemortem, el personal de FSIS busca señales de enfermedad, incluyendo señales de trastornos del sistema nervioso central. Los animales que demuestren señales de enfermedad sistèmica, incluyendo los que demuestren señales de trastornos neurològicos, se eliminan. Nunca se ha permitido el uso de la carne de animales eliminados para consumo humano.

• **Material de riesgo específcico.** Con vigencia inmediata por su publicaciòn en el Registro Federal, USDA mejorará sus reglamentos, declarando como materiales de riesgo específcico el cràneo, el cerebro, los ganglios del trigèmino, los ojos, la espina vertebral, la mèdula espinal y los ganglios radiculares dorsales de ganado mayor de 30 meses de edad, así como el intestino delgado de ganado de cualquier edad, prohibiendo así su uso en el suministro de alimentos para consumo humano. Las amigdalas de todo ganado ya se consideran inconsumibles y, por lo tanto, no ingresan al suministro de alimentos. Estas mejoras concuerdan con las acciones tomadas por el Canadà despuès del descubrimiento de BSE en mayo.

En una regla provisional final, FSIS requerirà que los mataderos de ganado sujetos a inspecciòn por entidades federales desarrollen, pongan en pràctica y mantengan procedimientos para remover, segregar y desechar estos materiales de riesgo específcico de manera que no puedan ingresar en la cadena de alimentaciòn. Las plantas tambièn deben poner esa informaciòn a la disposiciòn inmediata para ser revisada por personal de inspecciòn de FSIS. FSIS tambièn ha elaborado procedimientos para verificar la edad aproximada del ganado llevado al matadero en instalaciones oficiales. Las plantas inspeccionadas por el estado deben tener en pie procedimientos equivalentes.

• **Mètodes avanzados de recuperaciòn de la carne (AMR)**
Cuando se opera debidamente, AMR es una tecnologìa industrial que remueve tejido muscular de los huesos de cadàveres de reses usando alta presiòn, sin incorporar material òseo. El producto de AMR puede empacarse como “carne.” FSIS ya tenia reglamentos en pie que prohibian que se incluyera la mèdula espinal en los productos empacados como “carne.” El reglamento, que entrará en vigor al publicarse en el Registro Federal, amplia esa

prohibiciòn para incluir los ganglios radiculares dorsales, los cuales son grupos de cèlulas del sistema nervioso conectados a la mèdula espinal a lo largo de la columna vertebral, ademàs de los tejidos de la mèdula espinal. Como es el caso con la mèdula espinal, los ganglios radiculares dorsales tambièn pueden contener la infeccìon por BSE si el animal està infectado. Ademàs, debido a que la columna vertebral y el cràneo de ganado de 30 meses de edad y mayor se consideran inconsuables, no pueden procesarse por AMR.

En marzo de 2003, FSIS comenzò un programa de muestreo reglamentario de rutina de la carne producida con sistemas AMR para garantizar que no hubiera tejido de la mèdula espinal presente en el producto. En una nueva regla provisional final anunciada hoy, las instalaciones deben garantizar el control del proceso mediante pruebas de verificaciòn para garantizar que el producto no contenga ni mèdula espinal ni ganglios radiculares dorsales.

• **Golpeado por inyeccìon neumàtica.** Para garantizar que no se incrusten porciones del cerebro en el tejido del cadàver del animal como consecuencia de aturdir humanamente el ganado durante el proceso de matanza, FSIS publicarà un reglamento para prohibir la pràctica de golpeado por inyeccìon neumàtica.

• **Carne mecànicamente separada.** USDA prohibirà el uso de carne mecànicamente separada en la producciòn de alimentos para el consumo humano.

Los consumidores que tengan otras preguntas relacionadas con la seguridad de los alimentos pueden llamar gratuitamente a la Línea Directa de USDA para Informaciòn sobre Carnes y Aves al 1-888-MPHotline. La linea directa està disponible en inglès y español y està abierta de 10 a.m. a 4 p.m. (Hora del Este), de lunes a viernes. Hay mensajes grabados relacionados con la seguridad de los alimentos disponibles las 24 horas del dia.

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Noticias Libran No. sp0448.03

Contacto en el Departamento de Agricultura: Ed Loyd (202) 720-4623

 [Impresión](#)**Actualización BSE (Encefalopatía Espongiforme Bovina)**

WASHINGTON, 29 de Diciembre de 2003 - Continúa la colaboración entre el Departamento de Agricultura y los funcionarios canadienses para confirmar el rastro del animal índice. La información obtenida del dueño corresponde con el expediente canadiense, que sugiere que el animal tenía cerca de 6 ½ años de edad en el momento de la matanza. El Departamento de Agricultura junto con el gobierno canadiense llevan a cabo pruebas de ADN (DNA) para confirmar que se ha identificado al animal preciso. La edad del animal es muy importante. La res habría nacido antes de la implementación de las restricciones de forraje en América del Norte, mismas que fueron adoptadas en agosto de 1997. Las restricciones prohíben que se incluyan proteínas de rumiantes en el forraje de otros rumiantes. Esta práctica ha sido identificada repetidamente como el método principal de transmisión de la BSE.

En la mañana del 25 de diciembre, el laboratorio de referencia universal en Weybridge, Reino Unido, confirmó el diagnóstico preliminar del 23 de diciembre de BSE obtenido por el Departamento de Agricultura de una sola vaca no ambulatoria, que había sido sacrificada el 9 de diciembre en Vern's Moses Lake Meats en el estado de Washington.

Inmediatamente que se llevó a cabo el diagnóstico preliminar del Departamento de Agricultura el 23 de diciembre, el Servicio de Seguridad e Inspección de los Alimentos del Departamento de Agricultura emitió una orden para un retiro del mercado Clase II de toda la producción en esa instalación durante ese día. El retiro del mercado se clasificó como Clase II debido a la factibilidad tan pequeña de que la carne que se estaba retirando del mercado pudiera contener el agente infeccioso que produce BSE.

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El animal afectado vino de un rebaño que se encuentra sometido a una cuarentena estatal en Washington. A pesar de que el Departamento de Agricultura no ha tomado ninguna decisión respecto a la disposición final de este rebaño, se analizará en busca de BSE a cualquier res que forma parte del mismo, y que pudiera morir en la granja.

El Servicio de Inspección Sanitaria Animal y Vegetal del Departamento de Agricultura (APHIS) ha obtenido la siguiente información adicional después de una investigación de rastreo:

· El Departamento de Agricultura sigue rastreando las otras 73 cabezas de ganado que arribaron en el mismo embarque.

Además, el Departamento de Agricultura ha identificado otro embarque de 8 vacas proveniente del mismo rebaño de Canadá, a las cuales les está siguiendo el rastro.

· Durante su estancia en Estados Unidos, esa vaca tuvo tres becerros. Uno de ellos nació y murió casi inmediatamente. Otro de ellos permanece en el rebaño del estado de Washington, mismo al que la vaca índice había pertenecido más recientemente. Ese rebaño se encuentra sometido a una orden de contención implantada por el estado de Washington; repetimos, no con el propósito de detener la propagación de la enfermedad, ya que la BSE no es contagiosa, si no para prevenir que las investigaciones de rastreo y seguimiento se compliquen aún más. El Departamento de Agricultura no ha decidido aún cual sería la disposición final adecuada de estos animales.

· El tercer becerro de la vaca índice – el becerro macho que nació más recientemente – actualmente está mezclado con un rebaño de cerca de 460 becerros machos, todos ellos de cerca de 30 días de edad. Ese grupo de becerros sigue sometido a la “orden de suspensión” mientras no se concluya la investigación epidemiológica del Departamento de Agricultura. El contagio de BSE de la madre a los becerros es muy poco frecuente, si es que llegase a suceder.

El Servicio de Seguridad e Inspección de los Alimentos (FSIS) del Departamento de Agricultura ha obtenido la información siguiente:

· Desde el descubrimiento de la BSE, FSIS ha trabajado incansablemente para proteger la salud del público. Por exceso de precaución se emitió una orden de retiro del mercado después de que se recibió el informe de que una vaca había sido presuntamente confirmada como portadora de BSE. A pesar de que el Departamento de Agricultura tiene plena confianza en la seguridad de estos productos cárnicos, el Departamento verifica, y seguirá verificando la distribución y el control de todos los productos relativos a este retiro del mercado.

· He aquí un resumen breve de la situación actual de los cárnicos incluidos en el retiro del mercado por BSE del 23 de diciembre de 2003. Los productos cárnicos se enviaron de Verns Moses Lake a Midway Meats el 11 de diciembre. Todos los tejidos del sistema nervioso central, cerebro, médula espinal y el

íleo distal se eliminaron en la instalaciòn de Verns durante la matanza, que se llevò a cabo el 9 de diciembre de 2003. Estos son los tejidos en donde es mès factible encontrar el agente BSE. Ya que la carne de Verns no contenà materiales de alto riesgo, todos los càrnicos que se retiraron del mercado no representan riesgo alguno para los consumidores.

· FSIS està confirmando que se ha informado a los consumidores de los productos retirados, y que saben como se debe manejar el producto.

· FSIS encontrò que los càrnicos se distribuyeron a 42 ubicaciones de Interstate Meats y Willamette Valley Meats. La gran mayorìa de estos càrnicos – 80% a lo menos – se distribuyeron en tiendas de Oregon y Washington.

· FSIS està verificando que estos 42 distribuidores han cumplido con su compromiso de informar a sus clientes.

· Durante la supervisiòn de todo este proceso, FSIS ha encontrado que todas las compaÒias que hubieran recibido estos càrnicos han informado a sus clientes de manera dinàmica.

APHIS y FSIS prosiguen sus investigaciones y colaboran estrechamente con las agencias estatales y federales. A medida que se disponga de nueva informaciòn, ésta se publicarà en www.usda.gov.

Los consumidores que tengan otras preguntas relacionadas con la seguridad de los alimentos pueden llamar gratuitamente a la Línea Directa de USDA para Informaciòn sobre Carnes y Aves al 1-888-MPHotline. La linea directa està disponible en inglès y espaÑol y està abierta de 10 a.m. a 4 p.m. (Hora del Este), de lunes a viernes. Hay mensajes grabados relacionados con la seguridad de los alimentos disponibles las 24 horas del dìa.

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Noticias Libera No. sp0432.03

Alisa Harrison (202) 720-4623
Julie Quick (202) 720-4623

[Impresión](#)
USDA REVELA UN DIAGNÒSTICO PRELIMINAR DE ENCEFALOPATÌA ESPONGIFORME BOVINA

WASHINGTON, 23 de Diciembre de 2003 - La Secretaria de Agricultura, Ann M. Veneman, anunciò hoy que el Departamento de Agricultura de EE.UU. diagnosticò positivamente un presunto caso de encefalopatìa espongiforme bovina (BSE, por sus siglas en inglés) en una vaca adulta de raza Holstein en el estado de Washington.

A pesar de este hallazgo, tenemos confianza en la seguridad de nuestro suministro de carne de res," dijo Veneman. "El riesgo que BSE representa para la salud humana es extremadamente bajo."

Debido a que el animal era non-ambulatorio en el matadero, el 9 de diciembre se tomaron muestras como parte del sistema de vigilancia específica contra BSE de USDA. Las muestras se enviaron al Laboratorio Nacional de Servicios Veterinarios de USDA en Ames, Iowa. Se obtuvieron resultados positivos tanto por histología (un examen visual de los tejidos cerebrales usando un microscopio) como por inmunohistoquímica (el patròn de oro entre las pruebas de BSE que detecta priones mediante una tècnica de tinción). Los resultados de las pruebas se entregaron el 22 de diciembre y fueron sometidos a prueba nuevamente el 23 de diciembre.

USDA ha iniciado una investigaciòn epidemiològica completa en colaboraciòn con contrapartes del estado, salud pùblica y la industria privada para determinar dònde se originò la enfermedad. USDA tambièn colaborarà con la Administraciòn de Alimentos y Drogas a medida que realiza investigaciones de los alimentos para animales, el conducto principal de propagaciòn de

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BSE.

Esta investigaciòn ha comenzado, a la vez que la muestra se ha enviado al laboratorio de referencia mundial en Inglaterra para obtener confirmaciòn final. USDA tomarà acciòn de conformidad con el plan de respuesta a BSE, el cual se elaborò con aportes considerables de las partes interesadas a nivel federal, estatal y de la industria privada.

BSE es una enfermedad neurològica progresiva del ganado, la cual siempre tiene resultados fatales. Pertenece a una familia de enfermedades conocidas como encefalopatìas espongiformes contagiosas. Esta familia de enfermedades tambièn incluye una enfermedad humana, la variante de la Enfermedad de Creutzfeldt-Jakob (vCJD), la cual se cree que es ocasionada por el consumo de tejidos del sistema nervioso, como el cerebro y la mèdula espinal, de ganado afectado por BSE.

USDA ha determinado que la vaca proviene de una granja en el Estado de Washington y, como parte del plan de respuesta de USDA, la granja ha sido colocada bajo cuarentena. Despuès de llevar el animal a la matanza, la carne fue enviada a procesar y el Servicio de Inspecciòn de Seguridad de los Alimentos de USDA està trabajando para determinar la disposiciòn final de los productos derivados del animal.

Para obtener mès informaciòn, visite www.usda.gov

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Noticias Libera No. sp0445.03

Contacto en el Departamento de Agricultura: Ed Loyd (202) 720-4623

[Impresión](#)**Actualización de USDA sobre BSE 28 de diciembre de 2003**

Washington, 28 de Diciembre de 2003 - En la mañana del 25 de diciembre, el laboratorio de referencia mundial de BSE ubicado en Weybridge, Inglaterra, confirmó el diagnóstico preliminar de BSE hecho por USDA el 23 de diciembre en una vaca lechera que era non-ambulatorio y que había sido llevada al matadero el 9 de diciembre en Verns Moses Lake Meats en el Estado de Washington.

Cuando USDA hizo el diagnóstico preliminar el 23 de diciembre, el Servicio de Inspección de Seguridad de los Alimentos (FSIS) de USDA ordenó un retiro del mercado de Clase II de la producción total de ese día en esa instalación. El retiro del mercado se clasificó como Clase II debido a la probabilidad extremadamente baja de que la carne de res retirada del mercado estuviera infectada con el agente que causa BSE.

La manada de ganado de donde provino el animal afectado se encuentra bajo cuarentena del Estado de Washington. Aunque USDA no ha tomado ninguna decisión relacionada con la disposición de esta manada, cualquier cabeza de ganado que muera en la granja será sometida a una prueba de BSE.

El Servicio de Inspección de Salud Animal y Vegetal (APHIS) ha determinado la información siguiente a través de su investigación de rastreo de procedencia:

- La línea de investigación principal de USDA sugiere que es probable que el animal afectado ingresó a los Estados Unidos como parte de un grupo de 74 vacas lecheras importadas en el 2001 desde el Canadá a través de Eastport, ID. Los funcionarios canadienses están participando activamente en los esfuerzos de rastreo de la manada de procedencia de este animal.

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· Existen algunas discrepancias en el historial del animal en cuestión. La información inicial obtenida del propietario de la manada índice indica que este animal tenía de 4 a 4 ½ años de edad; mientras que el expediente canadiense indica que nació en abril de 1997, lo que significa que tenía 6 ½ años de edad. USDA está colaborando con Canadá para determinar la edad correcta del animal en cuestión y está iniciando pruebas de ADN para verificar que se haya identificado el animal correcto.

· El grupo de animales importados del Canadá en el 2001 consiste completamente en vacas lecheras que ingresaron al país hace aproximadamente 2 ½ años. Es probable que la mayoría de ellas todavía estén vivas. Además, debido a los registros mantenidos sobre las vacas lecheras, USDA confía que el paradero de la mayoría de ellas, tal vez todas, podrá rastrearse dentro de los próximos 3 ó 4 días. Es importante notar que no existen pruebas científicas que sugieran que la leche y los productos lácteos son portadores del agente que causa BSE.

· USDA está trabajando para rastrear el paradero de todos los animales del cargamento en cuestión. Debe recalcarse que no existe nada que sugiera que ninguno de los otros animales del grupo estaba afectado por BSE. De hecho, aun en el Reino Unido, donde se ha suscitado la incidencia más alta de esta enfermedad, la experiencia ha indicado que normalmente únicamente uno o dos animales dentro de una manada afectada tienen probabilidades de tener BSE.

· La vaca recientemente había parido un becerro (lo que condujo a las complicaciones que resultaron en su eliminación de la manada), el cual fue vendido a una instalación en Sunnyside, WA. Como el becerro no fue identificado por etiqueta, es probable que todos los becerros menores de 30 días de edad en dicha instalación de Sunnyside sean sacrificados.

· La vaca en cuestión había parido otros dos becerros mientras estaba en la manada índice de Washington. Uno murió al nacer poco después de la compra inicial de la vaca por la granja índice. El otro, una novilla de un año, permanece en la manada índice, donde está bajo cuarentena del estado.

Como parte de esta investigación, APHIS y FSIS continúan colaborando de cerca con nuestros colegas en el estado y en otras agencias federales. La información se publicará en www.usda.gov a medida que esté disponible.

Los consumidores que tengan otras preguntas relacionadas con la seguridad de los alimentos pueden llamar gratuitamente a la Línea Directa de USDA para Información sobre Carnes y Aves al 1-888-MPHotline. La línea directa está disponible en inglés y español y está abierta de 10 a.m. a 4 p.m. (Hora del Este), de lunes a viernes. Hay mensajes grabados relacionados con la seguridad de los alimentos disponibles las 24 horas del día.

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Noticias Liberen No. sp0405.03

Contacto en el Departamento de Agricultura: Ed Loyd (202) 720-4623

Embajada de México: Alfonso Nieto (202) 728-1650

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Implementación de la Iniciativa de Bosques Saludables

La Ley de Rehabilitación de Bosques Saludables Proporciona Herramientas Nuevas para Proteger y Rehabilitar Nuestras Tierras

“Les he remitido una Iniciativa de Incendios Saludables (Healthy Forests Initiative), para contribuir a prevenir los incendios catastróficos que asolan las comunidades, matan la vida silvestre y queman millones de acres de bosques preciados. Los insto a que aprueben estas medidas, por el bien de tanto nuestro medio ambiente como nuestra economía”.

- Presidente George W. Bush, 28 de enero de 2003

Antecedentes: La peor temporada de incendios de los últimos 50 años

- Aproximadamente 190 millones de acres de tierras públicas enfrentan un peligro elevado de incendios forestales severos. En 2000 y 2002, Estados Unidos experimentó dos de nuestras peores temporadas de incendios forestales de los últimos 50 años.
- En la temporada de incendios del año pasado, 88,458 incendios quemaron aproximadamente 7 millones de acres, destruyeron más de 800 estructuras y cobraron las vidas de 23 bomberos.
- Nuevo México, Oregon, Colorado y Arizona tuvieron los peores incendios de la historia moderna en 2002, y California experimentó su peor temporada de incendios forestales en el 2003. En tan solo California, más de 739,000 acres quemaron más de 3,600 casas, 22 civiles

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Pautas de Seguridad para los Procesadores de Alimentos

murieron como resultado de los incendios y contener los incendios costó \$250 millones.

La Iniciativa de Bosques Saludables

El Presidente presentó su Iniciativa de Bosques Saludables (Healthy Forests Initiative) en agosto del 2002 en el punto más álgido de la peor temporada de incendios que ha experimentado la nación en su historia. Trágicamente, los peligros y las pérdidas relacionadas con los incendios catastróficos se prolongaron hasta el 2003. Con la ayuda del Congreso y por medio de medidas administrativas, se inició el trabajo de aclareo y rehabilitación de alta prioridad. Al aprobar la Ley de Rehabilitación de Bosques Saludables (Healthy Forests Restoration Act), el Congreso ha proporcionado al poder ejecutivo herramientas adicionales necesarias para implementar plenamente la Healthy Forests Initiative del Presidente.

Healthy Forests Restoration Act de 2003

El 21 de noviembre de 2003, miembros de ambos partidos en el Congreso se comprometieron firmemente a reducir la amenaza de incendios incontrolados catastróficos a las comunidades y rehabilitar los bosques y las zonas de pastoreo de la nación al aprobar HR 1904, la Healthy Forests Restoration Act de 2003. La ley proporciona herramientas nuevas y otorga poderes adicionales para restaurar más acres más rápidamente:

- Aumenta la participación pública en el desarrollo de proyectos de bosques saludables de alta prioridad;
- Reduce la complejidad de los análisis ambientales;
- Proporciona un proceso de apelaciones más eficaz que fomenta la participación pública oportuna en la planificación de proyectos; y
- Instruye a los tribunales a los que se solicita que detengan los proyectos que sopesen los efectos a corto plazo de implementar los proyectos y los beneficios a largo plazo de los bosques rehabilitados.

Mejoras administrativas en vigor

Con el liderazgo del Presidente Bush, las agencias federales de administración de tierras han implementado varias iniciativas administrativas para ayudar a acelerar los proyectos que tienen como objetivo restaurar la salud de los bosques y las zonas de pastoreo, entre ellos:

- Nuevos procedimientos, dispuestos por la Ley de Política Ambiental Nacional (National Environmental Policy Act o NEPA), para permitir los proyectos prioritarios de reducción de elementos combustibles y rehabilitación de bosques por medio de la colaboración con los gobiernos estatales, locales y tribales, y las partes interesadas para avanzar más rápidamente. El Servicio Forestal (Forest Service) ha implementado por lo menos 46 proyectos de

alta prioridad utilizando procedimientos nuevos, y la Oficina de Administraciòn de Tierras (Bureau of Land Management) actualmente està implementando mès de 20 proyectos.

- Mejoras en las normas de apelaciones administrativas de las agencias para fomentar participaciòn pùblica oportuna y mès significativa para acelerar las apelaciones de los proyectos de bosques saludables. Hasta la fecha, el Forest Service ha iniciado aproximadamente 166 proyectos conforme a las normas modificadas de apelaciòn y sòlo se han reportado nueve apelaciones.
- Orientaciòn a las agencias federales para que hagan consultas conforme a la Ley de Especies en Peligro de Extinciòn (Endangered Species Act o ESA) que sean mès oportunas y representen mejor los beneficios a largo plazo a las especies amenazadas o en peligro de extinciòn, y propongan nuevas normas conforme a ESA para acelerar las consultas para los proyectos de bosques saludables que probablemente no perjudiquen a las especies amenazadas o en peligro de extinciòn, o sus hàbitats.
- Orientaciòn del Concilio sobre Calidad Ambiental (Council on Environmental Quality) para mejorar las evaluaciones ambientales para proyectos prioritarios de bosques saludables. Los departamentos de Agricultura y el Interior han implementado esta orientaciòn al preparar evaluaciones para 15 proyectos piloto de tratamiento de materiales combustibles. Hasta ahora, las agencias han concluido evaluaciones utilizando procesos mejorados en 13 de los 15 proyectos piloto.
- Nuevas normas conforme a ESA, completadas por el Servicio de Pez y Vida Silvestre (Fish & Wildlife Service), que se espera aceleren significativamente la planificaciòn, revisiòn e implementaciòn de actividades conforme al Plan Nacional para Incendios (National Fire Plan).

Ley de contrataciòn de servicios de resguardo

- En diciembre de 2002, el Congreso constituyò en ley una propuesta del gobierno del Presidente Bush que otorga mayores poderes de contrataciòn de servicios de resguardo, que permite que las agencias federales suscriban contratos a largo plazo (de hasta 10 años) con pequeñas empresas, comunidades y organizaciones sin fines de lucro para reducir el riesgo de incendios incontrolados y mejorar la salud de los bosques.
- La nueva autoridad permite que los contratistas, grupos comunitarios y otros retengan la madera como parte de pago por sus servicios, a la vez que mejoran las condiciones ambientales y cumplen con las normas ambientales aplicables.
- Los contratos a largo plazo promueven una sociedad pùblico-privada para rehabilitar los bosques y las zonas de pastoreo al ofrecer a los contratistas el incentivo de invertir en equipo e instalaciones necesarias para utilizar productivamente el material de la aclareo para hacer

productos útiles de madera o para producir energía de biomasa, todo esto ahorràndoles dinero a los contribuyentes.

- El Forest Service y la Bureau of Land Management han aprobado contratos de servicios de resguardo utilizando la nueva autoridad solicitada por el Presidente y otorgada por el Congreso. Los contratos de servicio de resguardo aumentaràn a medida que se implemente el trabajo conforme a NEPA en el 2004.

Mejor coordinaciòn

En el 2003, los departamentos del Interior y Agricultura formaron el Concilio Interinstitucional de Liderazgo sobre los Incendios Forestales (Interagency Wildland Fire Leadership Council) para implementar aun mès el National Fire Plan y combatir los incendios forestales mès eficazmente. El concilio proporciona una estructura administrativa coordinada y expedita para todos los aspectos de la política de incendios forestales e integra las actividades federales para combatir los incendios con los gobiernos estatales, tribales y locales, entre ellas, la restauraciòn y rehabilitaciòn de tierras.

Se ha realizado una cantidad r  cord de trabajo de restauraci n y eliminaci n de elementos combustibles

En el 2002, las agencias federales de administraciòn de tierras restauraron 2.25 millones de acres, un r  cord y un incremento de un mill n de acres comparado con los niveles del a o fiscal 2000.

- En el 2003, las agencias ya han superado ese r  cord al restaurar 2.6 millones de acres.
- La zona lim trofe entre los bosques y las ciudades, y las tierras p blicas y privadas que representan un peligro para las comunidades son objetivos primordiales. Se ha invertido casi 65 por ciento del dinero para la rehabilitaciòn forestal en ello.
- Entre el 2001 y el 2003, las agencias federales aumentaron nuestra rehabilitaciòn de tierras en zonas lim tropes de 775,000 acres a 1,600,000 acres, lo cual representa m s del doble de acres tratados en zonas lim tropes.
- De 2001 a 2003, las agencias trajeron un total de 7 millones de acres. Para fines del a o fiscal 2004, ese total llegar  a casi 9.5 millones de acres.
- La financiaci n hacia la reducci n de peligrosos elementos combustibles es el triple de lo que fue en el a o 2000, \$546 millones han sido designados este a o para proyectos federales, estatales, tribales y privados. Futura financiaci n ser a otorgada seg n los resultados del programa y las eficiencias logradas con esta ley, la nueva autoridad de contrataci n de servicios de resguardo, y otras mejoras administrativas al programa.

Para obtener más información acerca de la Healthy Forests Restoration Act de 2003 y la Healthy Forests Initiative, sírvase consultar <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/hfi/> o <http://www.doi.gov/hfi/newhfi/>

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VENEMAN ELOGIA EL CRECIMIENTO DE LAS EMPRESAS PERTENECIENTES A MINORIAS COMO ELEMENTO VITAL PARA LA PROSPERIDAD Y EL DESARROLLO ECONOMICO PERMANENTES

Celebra el Mes de la Herencia Hispana con visitas a Texas, New Mexico y Arizona

PHOENIX, 2 de octubre de 2003 - La Secretaria de Agricultura, Ann M. Veneman, celebró hoy el Mes de la Herencia Hispana resaltando la importancia de las empresas pertenecientes a mujeres y a minorías al dirigirse a los asistentes a la Convención Anual de la Cámara Hispana de Comercio (USHCC).

“Las empresas pertenecientes a mujeres y a minorías son fundamentales para generar prosperidad económica,” afirmó Veneman durante un discurso dirigido a las Mujeres Empresarias Hispanas de la USHCC. “Garantizarles el acceso a los mercados y los recursos que necesitan para alcanzar el éxito constituye un importante punto central para la Administración Bush.”

Veneman presentó una carta del Presidente Bush que describe los esfuerzos de su Administración para promover el espíritu empresarial.

“El espíritu empresarial de nuestros ciudadanos genera crecimiento y prosperidad económica,” escribió el Presidente Bush. “Al acelerar los recortes de los impuestos, aumentar los incentivos a las inversiones, cancelar el impuesto sobre las sucesiones, racionalizar las regulaciones y limitar los juicios frívolos, mi plan económico se propone ayudar a cada empresa con los recursos que necesita para desarrollarse, crecer y

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La Secretaria de Agricultura, Ann M. Veneman, celebró hoy el Mes de la Herencia Hispana resaltando la importancia de las empresas pertenecientes a mujeres y a minorías al dirigirse a los asistentes a la Convención Anual de la Cámara Hispana de Comercio (USHCC). "Las empresas pertenecientes a mujeres y a minorías son fundamentales para generar prosperidad económica," afirmó Veneman durante un discurso dirigido a las Mujeres Empresarias Hispanas de la USHCC. "Garantizarles el acceso a los mercados y los recursos que necesitan para alcanzar el éxito constituye un importante punto central para la Administración Bush." Veneman presentó una carta del Presidente Bush que describe los esfuerzos de su Administración para promover el espíritu empresarial. En la Casa Blanca

Photo by USDA

triunfar."

Como parte de los esfuerzos del Presidente, el Departamento de Agricultura de EE.UU. (USDA) creará o resguardará aproximadamente 350.000 puestos de trabajo durante este año. Los programas del USDA ayudan a los hispanos que viven en las zonas rurales a abrir nuevas empresas, comprar su primera vivienda y afianzar sus raíces en las comunidades locales. Segùn Veneman, esto incluye 52.000 puestos de trabajo gracias a inversiones en el àrea de la vivienda,

casi 204.000 puestos de trabajo en el sector de servicios pùblicos e inversiones en infraestructura para la comunidad y más de 92.000 puestos de trabajo provenientes de inversiones empresariales.

USDA tambièn està trabajando para implementar la Iniciativa del Presidente para la Adquisiciòn de Viviendas por parte de las minorías, cuyo objetivo es terminar con la brecha que existe en la adquisiciòn de viviendas por parte de las minorías, aumentando la cantidad de propietarios provenientes de este grupo en 5.5 millones para el año 2010. Si bien el ìndice general de propietarios de viviendas ha alcanzado el 68 por ciento, sólo el 48 por ciento de la población de origen hispano es dueña de su vivienda.

USDA ha respondido simplificando el proceso de compra de viviendas, reclutando prestamistas para las minorías y promoviendo activamente el asesoramiento crediticio y la educación para la compra de viviendas. El Fondo para el Pago Inicial del Sueño Americano del Presidente proporcionará \$200 millones en subsidios para ayudar con el pago inicial y los costos de cierre a quienes compran su primera vivienda, se espera que 40.000 familias de grupos minoritarios se beneficiaràn anualmente de esta iniciativa. La Administraciòn Bush ha invertido más de \$8 billones en viviendas rurales.

Veneman tambièn declarò que USDA se ha dedicado activamente a crear trabajos a travès de la actividad comercial,

expandiendo las oportunidades de mercado para los productores agricultores. Uno de cada tres acres de productos se exportan, generando un cuarto de los ingresos agrícolas. En general, las exportaciones de EE.UU. emplean a 12 millones de estadounidenses en trabajos que pagan, en promedio, entre el 13 y el 18 por ciento más que otras industrias.

Las exportaciones de EE.UU. dentro del Tratado de Libre Comercio para Norteamérica (NAFTA) se han duplicado en los últimos 10 años y la Administración Bush está aumentando ese éxito a través de la negociación de acuerdos de comercio adicionales. Las negociaciones actuales incluyen acuerdos bilaterales y regionales en América Latina, así como la creación del Área de Libre Comercio para las Américas, que integraría el Hemisferio Occidental formando un bloque comercial único para generar mayores oportunidades para las empresas estadounidenses.

Las palabras de Veneman en la Cámara Hispana de Comercio de EE.UU. coronaron una gira de dos días a través de Texas, New Mexico y Arizona, el 1 y 2 de octubre, para celebrar el Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana. Durante su viaje, Veneman participó en eventos que pusieron de relieve los esfuerzos de USDA por suministrar mejores viviendas, infraestructura y oportunidades económicas a las comunidades rurales de la frontera sudoeste, y también se reunió con rancheros, granjeros y líderes empresarios y comunitarios hispanos.

Para mayor información sobre la iniciativa del Presidente, visite <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>. Si desea información adicional sobre los programas y los servicios de USDA, visite <http://www.usda.gov>, o en <http://www.usda.gov/spanish/index.html> (en español).

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EL DEPARTAMENTO DE AGRICULTURA DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS FIRMA UN MEMORÁNDUM DE ENTENDIMIENTO CON MÉXICO

Washington, 30 de Julio de 2003 - La Secretaría de Agricultura Ann M. Veneman ha firmado hoy un Memorándum de Entendimiento con la Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT) de México, con el fin de establecer grupos de trabajo bilaterales permanentes para la cooperación en biotecnología, recursos hídricos, recursos forestales, desarrollo rural sostenible y servicios ambientales. En representación de México firmó el Secretario de SEMARNAT, Víctor Lichtinger.

Es para mí un placer formalizar la relación entre el Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA por sus siglas en inglés) y la Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales de México con la firma del presente Memorándum de Entendimiento," afirmó Veneman. "Mediante el Memorándum de Entendimiento se solidifica nuestro compromiso a trabajar conjuntamente en sectores concretos que son prioridades ambientales tanto para México como para los Estados Unidos."

Actualmente, el Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA por sus siglas en inglés) colabora con México en unos 30 proyectos de investigación, en sectores tales como biotecnología y seguridad de la biotecnología, gestión de incendios y protección contra incendios forestales y reducción de gases de efecto invernadero mediante el aumento del carbono del suelo. El Memorándum de Entendimiento ofrece un mecanismo para ampliar los proyectos de investigación.

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agraria celebrada el mes pasado, los delegados de todo el mundo reconocieron que la calidad y disponibilidad del agua que merecen una atención especial," declaró Veneman. "Al establecer una relación de trabajo más estrecha con el principal organismo medioambiental de México, podremos trabajar en colaboración en la mejora de las técnicas de riego y de la ordenación de cuencas y en la investigación dirigida a la obtención de plantas resistentes a la sequía."

Desde la entrada en vigor del Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte, en 1994, el comercio agrícola entre los Estados Unidos y México, en ambas direcciones, ha registrado un aumento de más del 100 por ciento, hasta alcanzar la cifra de 12.800 millones de dólares en 2002. Este incremento del comercio agrícola también ha dado por resultado la ampliación de los intercambios científicos y técnicos entre los dos países, al mismo tiempo que ha establecido una red de contactos entre las instituciones de investigación de los Estados Unidos y de México. El presente Memorándum de Entendimiento es una manera de contribuir a formalizar estas relaciones.

Para más información sobre el presente Memorándum de Entendimiento entre los Estados Unidos y México así como sobre otras actividades USDA en materia de cooperación e intercambio técnico entre gobiernos, pueden consultar con la oficina de International Cooperation and Development (Cooperación y Desarrollo Internacional) del Foreign Agricultural Service (Servicio Exterior de Agricultura) del USDA, en el teléfono (202) 690-0776 o por internet, <http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/exchange.html>.

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 [Impresión](#)**Disfrute del 4 de Julio Practicando la Inocuidad Alimentaria**

WASHINGTON, 2 de Julio del 2003 - La celebración del 4 de julio, con sus fuegos artificiales y el olor de las hamburguesas a la parrilla, se puede sentir en el ambiente.

Para una celebración sana, el Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA, por sus siglas en inglés) desea recordar a los consumidores que deben seguir cuatro pasos simples pero muy importantes para la seguridad alimentaria:

- **Limpiar**- Lávese las manos a menudo y lave las superficies de su cocina.
- **Separar** – Separe carnes y aves crudas de las comidas cocidas o alimentos listos para el consumo, de esta manera se previene la contaminación cruzada.
- **Cocinar** – Cocine los alimentos hasta alcanzar la temperatura interna adecuada utilizando un termómetro para alimentos. Cocine las hamburguesas hasta alcanzar una temperatura de 160 °F (71.11 °C) y ave molida hasta 165 °F (73.88 °C).
- **Enfriar** - Refrigere o congele rápidamente. Mantenga la comida en una nevera portátil incluyendo una fuente de enfriamiento; puede usar bloques de gel congelados. No saquen los alimentos hasta la hora de servir. Las carnes y aves ya preparadas o sobrantes deberán volver a guardarse en la nevera portátil o llevarse al refrigerador o congelador dentro de las dos horas siguientes a haber las cocinado o en una hora cuando la temperatura esté sobre 90 °F (32.22 °C).

Para cocinar a la parrilla, muchos consumidores tienen la opción de escoger entre carne molida o hamburguesas que hayan

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sido irradiadas o no. La irradiaciòn es un proceso que puede matar bacterias dañinas como son *E. coli* O157:H7, *Salmonella* y *Campylobacter*.

“La irradiaciòn de los alimentos ha sido completamente investigada y la Administraciòn de Drogas y Alimentos (FDA, por sus siglas en inglès) la ha aprobado para las carnes, aves y otros alimentos. Igualmente es patrocinada por muchos grupos de expertos” dijo la Dra. Elsa Murano, subsecretaria de seguridad alimentaria. “La irradiaciòn es un paso mès para lograr la seguridad de las carnes y aves, pero no garantiza la esterilizaciòn del producto y no debe reemplazar el manejo adecuado de los alimentos. Por eso, los consumidores siempre deben recordar y seguir los cuatro pasos bàsicos para manejar los alimentos adecuadamente.”

Los paquetes de las carnes y aves que han sido tratados con irradiaciòn llevan la etiqueta con el emblema de radura, un círculo roto con una imagen parecida a una flor en su interior.

Cuando todo el contenido del paquete ha sido irradiado, èste debe de incluir, en la etiqueta, el emblema de radura acompañado por la frase “Irradiado” o “Tratado con Irradiaciòn” (“Treated by Irradiation”). Si un producto contiene ingredientes que han sido irradiados, èstos deberàn ser incluidos en la lista de ingredientes.

Los niòos menores de 10 años de edad tiene una mayor incidencia de intoxicaciòn alimentaria por *Salmonella*, *Listeria* y *E. coli* O157:H7, que grupos de otras edades. Niòos mès jòvenes, mujeres embarazadas, personas de edad avanzada y personas con el sistema inmunològico dèbil tienen el riesgo mès alto de enfermarse con bacterias dañinas. Estos grupos de alto riesgo son los que obtienen mayor beneficio de la manipulaciòn adecuada y segura de los alimentos. Informaciòn adicional sobre la manipulaciòn adecuada de los alimentos se puede encontrar en nuestra pàgina electrònica: www.fsis.usda.gov.

Para mayor informaciòn (inglès y español) sobre la seguridad de las carnes, aves y sus productos derivados, llame gratis a la Línea de Informaciòn Sobre Carnes y Aves del USDA al **1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854)**; para personas con dificultades auditivas (TTY) 1-800-256-7072. El personal de la lìnea de informaciòn està conformado por expertos en la seguridad alimentaria, quienes contestan las llamadas de lunes a viernes desde las 10 a.m. hasta las 4 p.m., hora del este. Utilizando un telèfono de tonos se pueden escuchar mensajes grabados sobre la seguridad de los alimentos durante las 24 horas del dia. La informaciòn tambièn puede ser obtenida visitando nuestra pàgina electrònica: www.fsis.usda.gov. Mensajes electrònicos (e-mails) pueden ser enviados a MPHotline.fsis@usda.gov.

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USDA Y HUD ANUNCIAN INICIATIVA PARA LA REGIÓN FRONTERIZA

WASHINGTON, 16 de Junio, 2003 - Los Secretarios de Agricultura Ann M. Veneman y de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano Mel Martinez han firmado hoy un memorando de acuerdo para realizar un esfuerzo cooperativo para mejorar las condiciones económicas y de vivienda en la zona fronteriza del sudoeste de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica.

“Este es un paso importante en el esfuerzo de la Administración Bush para disminuir las diferencias en lo que a propiedad de viviendas se refiere en relación a las minorías,” expresó Veneman. “La propiedad de la vivienda favorece el desarrollo de comunidades estables y prósperas, estándares de vida más altos y una sociedad mejor para todos.”

“El acuerdo de hoy, entre el Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano y el Departamento de Agricultura, es un paso más de la Administración Bush para ayudar a un mayor número de familias, especialmente minorías, a alcanzar el sueño de la casa propia,” expresó Martinez. “Al celebrar el Mes Nacional de la Propiedad de Viviendas, debemos recordar que casi el 70 por ciento de los hogares norteamericanos son propietarios pero menos de la mitad de las familias Afro-americanas e Hispanas tienen su casa propia. Ser propietario de una vivienda, fortalece a las familias y a las comunidades.

El acuerdo de USDA/HUD (por sus siglas en inglés), fue firmado durante la Cumbre Nacional de Viviendas Rurales, una conferencia realizada por la Oficina de Desarrollo Rural del USDA. La Cumbre fue convocada para adelantar la Iniciativa de Presidente Bush sobre Propiedad de Vivienda para Minorías,

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cuya meta es ayudar a cinco millones y medio de familias minoritarias a lograr el sueño de su casa propia para el 2010.

A través de este acuerdo USDA y HUD trabajarán de manera coordinada para llevar programas y servicios a la zona fronteriza, incluyendo las comunidades llamadas "Colonias," para mejorar el acceso a la ayuda y aumentar la efectividad de los programas. La cooperación puede incluir mercadeo compartido de programas, entrenamiento compartido del personal y preparación conjunta de materiales educativos. Personal de ambos departamentos trabajará en conjunto en uno o más de un proyecto piloto para evaluar si esta cooperación puede mejorar fundamentalmente las condiciones en las "Colonias" y áreas más pobladas por campesinos migratorios de ingresos bajos.

Otras actividades conjuntas de USDA y HUD incluirán el intercambio de información sobre vivienda, comunidad, condiciones económicas y el trabajar juntos en proyectos de investigación relacionados con la zona fronteriza del sudoeste.

La Iniciativa de Propiedad de Vivienda para Minorías es parte de la agenda del Presidente Bush cuyo objetivo es derribar las barreras de la propiedad de vivienda, brindando ayuda para el depósito, aumentando la disponibilidad de viviendas asequibles, incrementando el apoyo a los programas de auto-ayuda para vivienda y simplificando el proceso de compra de una vivienda y aumentando la educación.

La Oficina de Desarrollo Rural del USDA está trabajando para doblar el número de minorías participantes en el programa de auto-ayuda para la vivienda. USDA se ha comprometido a incrementar la participación de minorías en un 10 por ciento con el fin de contribuir al alcance de la meta del Presidente. Desde junio del 2003, los programas de vivienda unifamiliar del USDA han contribuido con más de 1.8 mil millones de dólares destinados a 18.410 garantías de préstamos para la compra de viviendas y más de 504 millones de dólares destinados a 6.700 préstamos directos para vivienda en el año fiscal 2003, para ayudar a norteamericanos de ingresos bajos o moderados de áreas rurales. Estas inversiones contribuirán a la creación de 25.000 puestos de trabajo en el campo de la construcción.

Además, el Sub-secretario de Desarrollo Rural del USDA Thomas C. Dorr y el Presidente de la Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC por sus siglas en inglés), Donald Powell, han firmado un acuerdo de cooperación entre ambas entidades. Por este acuerdo, la FDIC entrenará a los empleados del USDA para brindar el curso "Money Smart" a los candidatos para la compra de viviendas. "Money Smart" es un curso diseñado para ayudar a los adultos fuera del ámbito financiero, a incrementar sus habilidades en el manejo del dinero, crear relaciones bancarias positivas y lograr el sueño de su casa propia.

La misión de la Oficina de Desarrollo Rural del USDA es brindar programas que favorezcan el incremento de las oportunidades económicas y mejoren la calidad de vida de los residentes rurales. Como entidad de capital de riesgo, la Oficina

de Desarrollo Rural provee liquidez, patrimonio neto y ayuda tècnica para el financiamiento y crecimiento en la propiedad de vivienda, desarrollo comercial e infraestructura tecnològica y comunitaria. Para mès informaciòn sobre programas rurales visite la oficina local de Desarrollo Rural del USDA o la pàgina web del USDA <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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DORR ALABA LOS ESFUERZOS POR BRINDAR VIVIENDAS ASEQUIBLES EN LAS COLONIAS FRONTERIZAS DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DE NORTEAMÉRICA

Otorga \$1 millón de dólares en cheques para el desarrollo de tecnología de información

ANTHONY, N.M., 30 de Mayo, 2003 - El Sub-secretario de Agricultura para Desarrollo Rural, Thomas C. Dorr se reunió con el Congresista Stevan Pearce y las autoridades estatales y locales para la vivienda, en casa de la familia de Luis García para darles la bienvenida y entregarles las llaves de su nueva casa financiada por el departamento de Desarrollo Rural del Ministerio de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica (USDA por sus siglas en inglés).

“Hoy, celebramos con la familia García la realización del sueño de su casa propia,” expresó Dorr. “El hogar es el lugar donde la familia García puede crecer, capitalizar la propiedad y afianzar los valores familiares para las generaciones venideras. Es una oportunidad para mejorar la calidad de vida y una inversión para el futuro.”

Las autoridades visitaron las comunidades del sudeste de Nuevo México para destacar la importancia del trabajo cooperativo, para ayudar a más familias de Nuevo México a lograr el sueño de su casa propia y apoyar proyectos de viviendas asequibles y seguras en comunidades conocidas como Colonias, ubicadas a lo largo de la frontera entre México y los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica. Por intermedio del programa de auto-ayuda para la vivienda del departamento de Desarrollo Rural de USDA, la familia García trabajó con otras familias de la

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comunidad para construir su casa propia. El programa de auto-ayuda enseña a las familias habilidades laborales adicionales y les permite capitalizarse desde el comienzo.

Dorr expresò que la administraciòn Bush està trabajando para brindar mès oportunidades de vivienda a las minorías y familias de ingresos mès bajos a travès de las iniciativas y programas de los departamentos de Desarrollo Rural de USDA y de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano (HUD por sus siglas en anglès). El Presidente Bush ha establecido un objetivo nacional para incrementar el nùmero de propietarios de minorías por lo menos a 5.5 millones para el fin de esta dècada.

La Asociaciòn de Propietarios de Nuevo Mèxico incluye: La Fundaciòn Empresarial; Fannie Mae; La Autoridad para el Financiamiento de Vivienda de Nuevo Mèxico (MFA por sus siglas en anglès) y el Ministerio de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano de los Estados Unidos de Norteamèrica (HUD por sus siglas en anglès).

La familia Garcìa tomarà posesiòn inmediata de su casa nueva, adquirida por intermedio del programa de auto-ayuda del departamento de Desarrollo Rural de USDA. Este programa innovador, permite a las familias de ingresos bajos eliminar una parte del costo de la construcciòn de la casa al participar personalmente en la construcciòn de la misma.

Durante su visita a Nuevo Mèxico Dorr otorgò \$1 millòn de dòlares en cheques a lìderes de las Reservas de Navajos Ramah Band y de la ciudad de Mountainair. La reserva de Navajos de Ramah Band utilizarà \$607.600 en subvenciones para hacer accesible la conexiòn de banda ancha a los residentes de la reserva por medio de la tecnologìa de microonda. La ciudad de Mountainair utilizarà \$444.488 en subvenciones para brindar tecnologìa Internet inalàmbrica de alta velocidad a organizaciones comunitarias tales como el departamento de policìa, el departamento de bomberos voluntarios y de rescate, el centro para personas de la tercera edad, la biblioteca pùblica, clìnicas mèdicas y escuelas elementales y secundarias. USDA anunciò el 16 de mayo del 2003, el otorgamiento de \$20 millones de dòlares en subvenciones para banda ancha incluyendo \$1.7 millones para Nuevo Mèxico.

La misiòn del departamento de Desarrollo Rural de USDA es brindar programas que favorezcan el crecimiento econòmico y mejoren la calidad de vida de los residentes rurales. Como entidad de capital de riesgo, el departamento de Desarrollo Rural provee un aumento del capital, liquidez y ayuda tècnica para financiar y fomentar el crecimiento en la adquisiciòn de propiedades, desarrollo empresarial e infraestructura comunitaria y tecnològica crìtica. Para mès informaciòn sobre programas rurales, dirijase a la oficina local del departamento de Desarrollo Rural de USDA o al sitio web de USDA en Internet <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>.

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VENEMAN ANUNCIA EL COMIENZO DE LOS BENEFICIOS DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS PARA LOS NUEVOS INMIGRANTES LEGALES CALIFICADOS A PARTIR DEL 1RO DE ABRIL

WASHINGTON, 25 de Marzo del 2003 - La Secretaría de Agricultura Ann M. Veneman anunció hoy que los beneficios del Programa de Cupones para Alimentos para los inmigrantes legales calificados serán efectivos a partir del 1ro de abril.

“El Presidente Bush está comprometido a asegurar que aquellos elegibles para recibir cupones para alimentos puedan obtener los beneficios disponibles,” dijo Veneman. “Este es un paso importante en el esfuerzo continuo por mejorar el acceso para las familias de bajos ingresos y en restaurar la justicia e igualdad para los inmigrantes legales.”

El Presidente Bush hizo un llamado para la extensión de los beneficios en la propuesta del año fiscal 2003. La propuesta, la cual formó parte de la Ley Agrícola del año 2002, restaura la elegibilidad de los cupones para alimentos a muchos inmigrantes legales quienes previamente habían perdido la elegibilidad. A partir del 1ro de abril del 2003, inmigrantes que hayan vivido en los EE.UU. por 5 años como extranjeros calificados, y que sean elegibles, tendrán los beneficios de cupones para alimentos restaurados.

Durante los próximos seis meses, el Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA por sus siglas en inglés) trabajará para comunicar los cambios de la elegibilidad a través de una variedad de actividades publicitarias, incluyendo anuncios en español por la radio. Los anuncios de un minuto en la radio, titulados “Fuente de Salud” y “Camino al Éxito” serán transmitidos al aire diariamente en el Hispanic Radio Network

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(red hispana, HRN por sus siglas en inglés). Los oficiales del USDA también se presentarán en el programa de “Bienvenidos a América” del HRN para discutir los cambios en la reglamentación. Los anuncios y las presentaciones en la radio son parte de la campaña de Cupones para Alimentos: Nuestra Salud, Nuestra Fuerza, la cual incluye el alcance de diversos grupos de inmigrantes, ancianos y la clase laboral.

“Los cupones para alimentos están mejorando la nutrición de las familias de bajos ingresos a través del país,” dijo el Subsecretario de Alimentos, Nutrición y Servicios al Consumidor del USDA, Eric Bost. “Nosotros estamos comprometidos a educar a los inmigrantes legales, ancianos, y otros acerca del Programa de Cupones para Alimentos y los beneficios que puedan ser disponibles para ellos.”

El Programa de Cupones para Alimentos está administrado por el Servicio de Alimentos y Nutrición del USDA. El Programa de Cupones para Alimentos es la fundación de los programas federales de asistencia nutricional, y provee un apoyo crucial a las familias necesitadas y a aquellos en transición de la asistencia pública a la fuerza laboral. El programa permite que las familias de bajos ingresos compren alimentos nutritivos con cupones y tarjetas electrónicas de transferencias (EBT por sus siglas en inglés) Los participantes de los cupones para alimentos usan sus beneficios para comprar alimentos elegibles en tiendas de alimentos autorizadas.

Más información acerca del Programa de Cupones para Alimentos, incluyendo las provisiones de la Ley Agrícola del año 2002, se encuentra disponible en la página <http://www.fns.usda.gov>.

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VENEMAN ANUNCIA LOS BECARIOS DEL SERVICIO PÚBLICO COMO PARTE DE LA INICIATIVA “LOS LÍDERES DEL MAÑANA”

WASHINGTON, 24 de Enero, 2003 - La Secretaria de Agricultura Ann M. Veneman ha anunciado la clase inaugural de los Becarios del Servicio Público del Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA por sus siglas en inglés). Este programa está diseñado para promover el servicio público y para crear acceso a la educación superior para los estudiantes de pregrado y posgrado.

“Estos estudiantes representan nuestros líderes del mañana”, dijo Veneman. “USDA está invirtiendo en la construcción de la fuerza laboral del futuro con mujeres y hombres talentosos dedicados al servicio público y a la agricultura como profesión”.

El Programa de los Becarios del Servicio Público para el año 2002 incorpora la meta de la iniciativa “Los Líderes del Mañana” de la Secretaria Veneman, que busca inspirar la siguiente generación de líderes motivándolos a participar en las actividades de la comunidad, carreras en el servicio público, y el aprender sobre agricultura.

Bajo un programa piloto, nueve estudiantes universitarios y cinco estudiantes de posgrado fueron seleccionados según su rendimiento académico, sus habilidades de liderazgo, y su compromiso al servicio público. Los 14 Becarios del Servicio Público representan universidades de cinco estados y el Distrito Federal de EE.UU. Los becarios son:

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TEXAS

Vanessa Estrada de la Universidad de Texas en San Antonio
Dalia Lovera de la Universidad de Texas en Houston (el campus de Brownsville)

Los Becarios del Servicio Público del año 2002 se convertirán en empleados permanentes del USDA después de obtener sus títulos. Hasta entonces, trabajarán como empleados internados del USDA y recibirán una beca para pagar su matrícula, libros, el uso de una computadora, el servicio de un mentor, asesoría en el desarrollo de sus carreras, y entrenamiento en las cualidades del liderazgo.

Siete agencias del USDA son patrocinadores de las becas. Estos incluyen el Servicio Nacional de Estadísticas Agrícolas; el Servicio de Alimento y Nutrición; el Servicio de Investigación Agrícola; el Servicio Agrícola del Exterior; el Servicio de Conservación de Recursos Naturales; el Servicio Estatal Cooperativo de Investigación, Educación e Instrucción; y la Agencia de Servicio al Granjero.

La Secretaría se reunió con los becarios a principios del mes de enero. Se puede obtener más información (solamente en inglés) sobre la iniciativa "Los Líderes del Mañana" en Internet

en <http://www.usda.gov/leadersoftomorrow/>

Aviso para Reporteros: Fotos de los Becarios del Servicio Público del año 2002 están disponibles en el Centro de Fotografía del USDA, teléfono (202) 720-6633.

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Agriculture

Spotlights**[USDA Releases Voluntary Security Guidance For Agricultural And Food Transporters](#)**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture today released a new voluntary security guidance document for truck transporters of agricultural and food products to bolster national security and safeguard public health.

[eLDPs - Loan Deficiency Payments Go Online](#)

The Farm Service Agency's new electronic Loan Deficiency Payment Service (eLDP) is an Internet-based service allowing producers to request LDPs online and, in most cases, receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours.

**[October is CO-OP Month](#)**

Cooperatives celebrate their commitment to community - a core cooperative principle - as part of their annual CO-OP Month observances.

[USDA Drought-Related Programs](#)

During 2003, drought remained entrenched across much of the western half of the U.S. and in the northern and western Corn Belt, but did not spread nationwide.

[USDA Service Center Forms](#)

You can search, fill out and print any of the public forms available or save your forms online and submit them to the appropriate USDA Service Center.

**[Access the USDA Customer Statement](#)**

The USDA Customer Statement is part of this effort and brings to the farmer and rancher unprecedented online access to their business activities with USDA 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Features**Reports**

- [Agency Reports Schedule/Calendar](#)

Publications

- [Publications on Managing Risk on Farm Operations](#)
- [AgExporter Magazine](#)

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- [Agricultural Outlook Forum 2005](#)

Related Topics

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Education and Outreach

Spotlights

**[Keep Informed - Sign Up For Food Safety](#)****[Email Updates](#)**

The Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS) new email subscription service notifies you when pages you select are updated. Stay up to date on food safety news and information. Sign up now!

**[Leaders of Tomorrow](#)**

Teaches by example and participation. Inclusive of children of all ages, the initiative seeks to inspire the next generation of leaders by including them in real-world experiences.

[Office of Native American Programs](#)

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman is committed to serving Tribal organizations as well as our Nation's farmers, ranchers, and consumers. USDA's Director of Native American Programs is working to ensure that relevant programs and policies are efficient, easy to understand, and accessible to Native American constituents.

[1890 Scholars Program](#)

The National Scholars Program is a major effort of the United States Department of Agriculture and the eighteen 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions, to award scholarships to students to attend one of the eighteen universities and study agriculture, food, or natural resource sciences.

[Faith Based Community Initiatives](#)

The purpose of the center is to coordinate programs for faith-based and other grassroots organizations to improve services directed at reducing poverty and helping people in need.

Features

Reports

- [Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Rural Cooperative Research Reports](#)

Publications

- [Food Safety PSA's](#)
- [Food Safety Publications](#)

Events

Related Topics

- [Agricultural Library](#)
- [Careers and Jobs](#)
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- [Data and Statistics](#)
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- [Youth Resources](#)

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- [Access America for Seniors](#)
- [FoodSafety.gov](#)
- [Science.gov](#)
- [Small Farms @ USDA](#)

- [Agricultural Outlook Forum 2005](#)
- [National Obesity Prevention Conference - Sponsored by USDA - October 25-27, 2004](#)

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Food and Nutrition

Spotlights

**[Keep Informed - Sign Up For Food Safety](#)****[Email Updates](#)**

The Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS) new email subscription service notifies you when pages you select are updated. Stay up to date on food safety news and information. Sign up now!

**[The Interactive Healthy Eating Index and Physical Activity Tool](#)**

This online dietary assessment tool provides information on your diet quality, related nutrition messages and links to nutrient information.

[The National Integrated Food Safety Initiative](#)

The purpose of the National Integrated Food Safety Initiative is to support competitive projects that address priority issues in food safety that are best solved using an integrated approach. Integrated food safety programs in CSREES support multi-state, multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary, and multi-functional research, extension, and education activities.

[Food Safety Mobile](#)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is embarking on an exciting and dynamic educational campaign designed to reach millions of consumers with food safety messages.

Features

Reports

- [Recall Information Center](#)

Publications

- [Get Moving...For the Fun and Health of it!](#)
- [The Food Safety Educators](#)

Events

- [Agricultural Outlook Forum 2005](#)
- [National Obesity Prevention Conference - Sponsored by USDA - October 25-27, 2004](#)

Related Topics

- [Dietary Health](#)
- [Food Assistance](#)
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- [Food Labeling and Packaging](#)
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- [5aday.gov](#)
- [FoodSafety.gov](#)
- [HealthierUS.gov](#)



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Laws and Regulations

Spotlights

[USDA Sets Hearing On Proposed Amendments To Central Milk Marketing Order](#)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) today announced that it will hold a public hearing to consider proposals amending the Central Federal Milk Marketing Order. The hearing will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 18, at the Hilton Kansas City Airport, 8801 NW 112th St., Kansas City, MO 64153.



[Revised Pizza Q's & A's to Address the Names of Non-Traditional Pizza-Like Products and Pizzas with Modified Cheeses](#)

Questions address the names of non-traditional pizza-like products and pizzas with modified cheeses.

Features

Reports

- [Commodity Acceptability Progress Reports](#)

Publications

- [Active Technical Service Category List](#)

Related Topics

- [Biotechnology](#)
- [Commodity Standards and Grades](#)
- [Farm Bill](#)
- [Food Distribution](#)
- [Food Labeling and Packaging](#)
- [Homeland Security](#)
- [Organic Certification](#)
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- [Administrative Law Judges](#)
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Marketing and Trade

Spotlights

[Foreign Agricultural Service's U.S. Trade Internet System](#)

This system reports United States international trade statistics on Agricultural, Fish, Forest and Textile Products from the inception of the Harmonized coding system in 1989 to the present.

[Quick Stats: Agricultural Statistics Data Base](#)

Get U.S., State, and County level agricultural statistics for many commodities and data series. Quick Stats offers the ability to query by commodity, state(s) and year(s). The query dataset can be downloaded for easy use in your database or spreadsheet.

[Emerging Markets Program](#)

Working to "develop, maintain, or expand markets for United States agricultural exports" in emerging markets, to improve the effectiveness of food and rural business systems in emerging markets, and to increase prospects for U.S. trade and investments in these countries.

[State Marketing Profiles](#)

The state marketing profiles are broken down into categories and the information is delivered state by state.

Features

Reports

- [Current World Production, Market and Trade Reports](#)
- [Current and Historical Commodity Price Reports](#)

Publications

- [AgExporter Magazine](#)

Related Topics

- [Data and Statistics](#)
- [Exporting Goods](#)
- [Homeland Security](#)
- [Importing Goods](#)
- [Marketing Assistance](#)
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Natural Resources and Environment

Spotlights

**[Volcano Cam](#)**

Current Mount St. Helens news & info.

[Get Fit with US](#)

Outdoor recreation is good for your physical and mental health. No matter where you live recreation opportunities are nearby, offering a variety of fun activities.

[Conservation Innovation Grants](#)

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production.

**[Access the USDA Customer Statement](#)**

The USDA Customer Statement brings to the farmer and rancher un-precedented online access to their business activities with USDA 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[Earth Team Volunteers](#)

NRCS needs people who are willing to commit their time and talent to conserving and protecting soil, water, and wildlife for their community and everyone in it. Volunteer today!

Features

Reports

- [Maps, Imagery and Data Resources](#)
- [Forest Inventory and Analysis](#)
- [Rural Cooperative Research Reports](#)

Publications

- [U.S. Forest Facts and Figures \(PDF\)](#)
- [NRCS This Week](#)

Events

- [National Obesity Prevention Conference - Sponsored by USDA - October 25-27, 2004](#)

Related Topics

- [Backyard Conservation](#)
- [Conservation](#)
- [Cooperative Business, Research & Extension Services](#)
- [Data and Statistics](#)
- [Disaster and Drought Assistance](#)
- [Energy](#)
- [Fire Safety and Management](#)
- [Forest and Forestry](#)
- [Homeland Security](#)
- [Recreational Activities](#)
- [Recycling and Waste Management](#)
- [View USDA Customer Statement](#)
- [Wildlife](#)

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- [Clearskies](#)
- [EarthDay.gov](#)
- [Forest Service](#)
- [Natural Resources Conservation Science](#)



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Research and Science

Spotlights



[Science for the 21st Century Food and Agricultural Sector](#)

The food, agricultural, resource, and rural issues demanding public sector attention evolve over time. But recent shifts in the relative importance of issues have been particularly dramatic as a result of rapid changes in the way farm and food businesses are organized, the relentless influence of communication, information, and transportation technologies in shrinking the globe, and the rise of consumers' influence in an increasingly affluent and global economy.

[Human Nutrition Research](#)

Useful online information about human nutrition, especially nutrition research.

Features

Reports

- [Research and Development](#)
- [World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates Report](#)

Publications

- [Agricultural Research](#)
- [Agricultural Statistics](#)

Events

- [National Obesity Prevention Conference - Sponsored by USDA](#)
- [Agricultural Conferences, Meetings, Seminars Calendar](#)

Related Topics

- [Agricultural Library](#)
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- [Cooperative Business, Research & Extension Services](#)
- [Economic Research](#)
- [Homeland Security](#)
- [International Research](#)
- [National Arboretum](#)
- [Plant Health](#)
- [Research Grants and Agreements](#)
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- [Science.gov](#)



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Rural and Community Development

Spotlights



[October is CO-OP Month](#)

Cooperatives celebrate their commitment to community - a core cooperative principle - as part of their annual CO-OP Month observances.



[President Bush's Broadband Initiative](#)

Rural Broadband Loan and Loan Guarantee Program.

[Rural Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Projects:](#)

Information to assist farmers, ranchers, and small businesses in making decisions about developing and building rural renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

[The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children or WIC:](#)

Serves to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, & children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to health care.

Features

Reports

- [Active Food Recall Cases](#)
- [Rural Cooperative Research Reports](#)

Publications

- [Rural Cooperatives Magazine](#)

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- [National Obesity Prevention Conference - Sponsored by USDA](#)

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Travel and Recreation

Spotlights

[Find National Forests and Grasslands](#)

Find a forest or grassland by Map, Name or State. And check out Recreation.Gov, your one-stop source for finding recreational opportunities on federal lands.

[Outdoor Safety](#)

Whether you're roughing it in a tent or planning a family outing to a national forest, there are many ways to make sure your experience is fun and safe.

[Traveling With Your Pet](#)

Dogs, cats, and most other warm-blooded animals transported in commerce are protected by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

Features

Publications

- [Don't Forget Your Checklist - Pack the "Essentials" and be prepared for minor injuries, sudden weather changes or delays.](#)

Events

- [Passport in Time Monthly Calendar - Passport in Time is a volunteer archaeology and historic preservation program of the USDA Forest Service \(FS\).](#)

Related Topics

- [Gardening](#)
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USDA Employee Services

Spotlights

[USDA Combined Federal Campaign Kick-Off \(PDF\)](#)

Join us Oct. 7th, 10:00AM until Noon, for the kick-off event for this years CFC. The kick-off will be held on the patio of the Jamie L Whitten Bldg.

**[USDA Launches "AgLearn" To Provide Online Training For Employees](#)**

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the launch of the Agriculture Learning (AgLearn) Service, designed to provide one-stop services for delivering, scheduling and managing learning events nationwide for USDA employees. "USDA is committed to unleashing the fuller potential of information technology for our employees and customers," Veneman said.

**[NFC...Serving Our Customers With Pride](#)**

The Customer Briefing is held twice a year in order to provide our customers with the status of our projects, plans, and initiatives, as well as receive feedback about improvements or additions the agencies would like added to our products.

[Work Life Program](#)

Learn more about USDA's work life program and telecommuting.

[USDA Directives](#)

This resource is an online repository of all USDA Departmental Regulations, Notices, Manuals, and Secretary Memoranda.

[Be Prepared](#)

Learn how to be safe.

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- [National Obesity Prevention Conference - Sponsored by USDA](#)
- [USDA Employee Services and Recreation Association](#)

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- [FirstGov.gov](#)
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You are here: [Home](#)**In the News**[More](#)**[USDA Awards \\$1.1 Million For Research On Food Assistance And Nutrition Programs](#)**

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced \$1.1 million in grant and cooperative agreement awards for research on food assistance and nutrition programs in seven states and the District of Columbia.

[Classical Chinese Garden Slated For The Nation's Capital](#)

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman this morning signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Yang Jiechi, ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the United States, for the construction of a classical Chinese garden at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.

[Over \\$13 million in USDA Rural Development Grants Selected To Spur Economic Growth In 34 States - \\$2.1 Million to Support Renewable/Biomass Energy Proposals](#)**[Bush Administration Officials: Federal Land Managers Set Record-Level Accomplishments Of President's Healthy Forests Initiative](#)****[Secretary Veneman Announces The HealthierUS School Challenge - Kicks Off National School Lunch Week - Oct. 10-16](#)****Spotlights**[More](#)**[USDA Results Agenda](#)**

Progress report on the President's Management Initiatives (PDF).

**[CO-OP Month](#)**

Celebrating community during October.

**[Healthy Forests Initiative](#)**

Improving the health of our forests and rangelands.

**[USDA eGov](#)**

Making USDA, electronically available any place, any time.

THREAT ADVISORY

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- [National Obesity Prevention Conference - Sponsored by USDA \(Oct 25-27, 2004\)](#)
- [Educational Symposia on the Care and Maintenance of Exotic Cats - Bridgeton, Mo. \(Oct 27, 2004\)](#)



[Learn more about the Healthy Forests Initiative](#)



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Oct 14, 2004 [Classical Chinese Garden Slated For The Nation's Capital](#)

Oct 13, 2004 [USDA Awards \\$3.8 Million In Water Quality Grants](#)

Oct 13, 2004 [Over \\$13 Million In USDA Rural Development Grants Selected To Spur Economic Growth in 34 States, \\$2.1 Million to Support Renewable/Biomass Energy Proposals](#)

Oct 13, 2004 [Officials Inaugurate Food Safety Institute of the Americas](#)

Oct 12, 2004 [Veneman Announces Purchase of 20 Million Pounds of Sweet Potatoes For USDA Food Programs](#)

Oct 12, 2004 [Bush Administration Officials: Federal Land Managers Set Record-Level Accomplishments of President's Healthy Forests Initiative - Agencies More Than Tripled Hazardous Fuel Reduction Efforts from 2000](#)

Oct 7, 2004 [USDA Awards \\$24.6 Million in Rural Development Grants for Education and Medical Service](#)

Oct 7, 2004 [Secretary Veneman Announces The HealthierUS School Challenge - Kicks Off National School Lunch Week - Oct. 10-16](#)

Oct 6, 2004 [Bovine Genome Sequenced; Database Now Online](#)

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Newsroom

News Release

Release No. 0442.04

Contact:

Nancy McNiff (202) 694-5106
Julie Quick (202) 720-4623 [Printable version](#)**USDA AWARDS \$1.1 MILLION FOR RESEARCH ON FOOD ASSISTANCE AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS**

WASHINGTON, Oct. 14, 2004 - Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced \$1.1 million in grant and cooperative agreement awards for research on food assistance and nutrition programs in seven states and the District of Columbia. "USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs help ensure that all Americans have access to nutritious, healthful diets," said Veneman. "This research will help evaluate and meet the changing nutritional needs of our nation's most vulnerable families and individuals."

The goal of the research is to examine, evaluate and enhance USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs. The grants and cooperative agreements will fund projects in California, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee, and Virginia. The projects will examine a number of program-related issues:

- Long-term costs to the nation associated with children being overweight;
- Role of food stamps following welfare reform;
- Relationship between Food Stamp Program participation and the prevalence of obesity;
- Effects of household food security on physical and mental health of mothers and young children;
- Potential uses of behavioral economics concepts for improving the diets of food assistance program participants;
- Feasibility of nutrition education intervention programs in food stores serving low-income consumers;
- Effect of income volatility on Food Stamp Program participation of the working poor;
- Impact of state-level policy changes on Food Stamp Program participation; and
- Evaluation of options to simplify Food Stamp Program eligibility determination.

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See Also

- [Food Nutrition Assistance Funding](#)

All of the research projects are competitively awarded by the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP), administered by USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS). FANRP studies and evaluates the performance of, and issues related to, the Food Stamp Program, WIC, and Child Nutrition Programs.

The following is a complete list of award recipients.

Further information can be accessed on the web at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodNutritionAssistance/Funding> or from program contact Vic Oliveira (202) 694-5434, email: victoro@ers.usda.gov.

Research Funding Opportunities: Fiscal 2004 FANRP Awards

Future Costs of Childhood Obesity: Estimates and Implications Matthew Davis University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI

This study will develop national estimates of the long-term costs of children being overweight. Such estimates will be useful in informing decisions regarding investments in programs for overweight prevention and treatment, as well as related research initiatives. This project will develop novel probabilistic models for estimating long-term direct costs (health care) and indirect costs (missed school, missed work, disability) related to children being overweight. The project will analyze data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) for the years 2000-2002 for children aged 10-18 in age- and sex-specific body mass index (BMI) categories, combined with corresponding MEPS-linked National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) data for adults aged 19-35. These data will be supplemented by data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) and the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Grant: \$150,000

The Role of Food Stamps in the Post-Reform Safety Net: The Three-City Study Robert Moffitt Johns Hopkins University. Baltimore, MD

This study will examine participation in the Food Stamp Program and the Temporary

Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program and the well-being of low-income families during the first recession since welfare reform. The study will use a combination of longitudinal survey data from the Three-City Study (Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio) and program administrative data.

Cooperative Research Agreement: \$200,000

An Examination of the Effects of Food Stamps on Obesity Charles Baum Middle Tennessee State University. Murfreesboro, TN

This study will examine the causal relationship between Food Stamp Program participation and the prevalence of obesity by applying advanced econometric techniques to the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Special attention will be given to control for the potential bias from unobserved heterogeneity among the characteristics of program participants and nonparticipants. Cooperative Research Agreement: \$120,000

Food Security, Obesity, and Mental Health in Mothers and Preschool Children Robert Whitaker Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. Princeton, NJ

This project will use data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study to examine the relationships among household food security, the obesity status of mothers and their preschool children, and the mental health of mothers and the prevalence of children's behavioral issues. Household food insecurity may cause mothers and young children to experience worse health due to poor nutrition and stress associated with uncertainty about obtaining an adequate supply of food. Assistance Type Cooperative Agreement: \$150,000

An Exploration of Potential Uses of Behavioral Economics Concepts for Improving the Diets of Food Assistance Program Participants David Just Cornell University. Ithaca, NY

This project will examine the potential applicability of behavioral

economics and food psychology concepts to strategies for improving the diets of food assistance program participants. The project will include a critical review of the literature, generation of experimental hypotheses, development of experimental protocols, and small-scale experiments. Cooperative Research Agreement: \$100,000

A Feasibility Study of Nutrition Education Intervention in Food Stores Serving the Low Income Joel Gittelsohn Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. Baltimore, MD

This project will develop a methodology to evaluate a food-store-based nutrition intervention program for low-income consumers. The intervention will increase the availability of healthful food choices in participating stores and promote those foods at the point of purchase. The feasibility study will develop and field-test reliable and valid methods for assessing program impacts on food store sales, as well as relevant consumer attitudes and behaviors. In addition, the project will assess the costs and benefits of running the program for the stores involved. Grant: \$100,000

Income Volatility and Its Effect on Food Stamp Participation of the Working Poor Mary Farrell Lewin Group. Falls Church, VA

This study will examine the effect of short-term and long-term earnings volatility on the Food Stamp Program participation decisions of the working poor, a group that has had low levels of program participation. The study will analyze data from the 1996 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) matched to administrative data on earnings records from the Social Security Administration. Assistance Type Cooperative Agreement: \$100,000

How Are State Food Stamp and TANF Policy Choices Affecting Food Stamp Participation Caroline Ratcliffe The Urban Institute. Washington, DC

Food Stamp Program participation rates fell sharply in the mid- to late-1990s. In response, new policy options were made available for State administrators to improve accessibility. This project will quantify Food Stamp Program State-level policy changes made between 1996 and 2003 and, using data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), estimate the relative impacts of Food Stamp Program policies, cash welfare policies, and economic and demographic characteristics on Food Stamp Program participation. Assistance Type Cooperative Agreement: \$100,000

Integrating Food Stamp Program Rules and Processes With Other Public Assistance Programs Thomas MacCurdy The SPHERE Institute. Burlingame, CA

The 2002 Farm Act provided increased flexibility in Food Stamp Program eligibility determination and provided options to administrators to align Food Stamp Program eligibility criteria with other public assistance programs. This project will extend an existing simulation model to evaluate tradeoffs associated with options to simplify Food Stamp Program eligibility determination. Special emphasis will be placed on the impacts of using eligibility based on other public assistance programs. Assistance Type Cooperative Agreement: \$100,000



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News Release

Release No. 0443.04
 Contact:
 Alfredo Flores 301-504-1627
 Julie Quick (202) 720-4623

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CLASSICAL CHINESE GARDEN SLATED FOR THE NATION'S CAPITAL

WASHINGTON, Oct. 14, 2004 - Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman this morning signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Yang Jiechi, ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the United States, for the construction of a classical Chinese garden at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.

"This Chinese garden will be a wonderful addition to the world-class display gardens already at the Arboretum," Veneman said. "The new garden will deepen the American people's understanding of Chinese garden culture, and provide research opportunities to study Chinese plants and flowers. Upon completion this will be the finest Chinese garden outside of China."

The MOU is between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State Forestry Administration of the People's Republic of China, which will cooperatively construct the garden as a gift from the Chinese people to the American people. The Chinese partner will donate all main structures, rockeries, furniture, and art objects. It will stand as a symbol of friendship between the two countries.

The 8-12-acre Jiangnan-style garden will be based on a conceptual original design developed by a joint team of designers from China and the United States. While the details are still being developed, one area of the garden will include a small pond and traditional Chinese buildings with Ming and Ching-style hardwood furniture, calligraphy and painting scrolls on the walls, and a traditional boat house adjacent to a 1.3-acre lake.

A second area will include a two-story teahouse style structure that will be used as an exhibition hall. The third area will comprise a Peony Pavilion overlooking the garden; and a Fragrance Pavilion, which will also house authentic Chinese goldfish. The fourth area will be a Whispering Pavilion, which will include a Chinese white pagoda.

The U.S. National Arboretum covers 446 acres in northeast Washington, D.C. It was established by an act of Congress in

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See Also

- [U.S. National Arboretum](#)

1927 to conduct research, provide education, and conserve and display trees, shrubs, flowers and other plants to enhance the environment.

The Agricultural Research Service operates the U.S. National Arboretum. For more information about the arboretum, visit <http://www.usna.usda.gov>.

Scientific contact: Thomas S. Elias, Director, U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C., phone (202) 245-4539, fax (202) 245-4574, eliast@ars.usda.gov.



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Helping American agriculture market livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds, and related agricultural products, and promoting fair and competitive trading practices.



Marketing and Regulatory Programs

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

MRP Agencies

AMS

The
Agricultural
Marketing
Service

administers programs that facilitate the efficient, fair marketing of U.S. agricultural products, including food, fiber, and specialty crops. AMS helps make sure the U.S. marketing system remains world class.

Marketing and Regulatory Programs facilitate the domestic and international marketing of U.S. agricultural products and ensure the health and care of animals and plants while improving competitiveness and the economy for the overall benefit of both consumers and American agriculture.

MRP LEADERSHIP



APHIS

William "Bill" Hawks
Under Secretary for
Marketing and Regulatory
Programs

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**Dr. Charles
"Chuck" Lambert**
Deputy Under Secretary,
Marketing and Regulatory
Programs

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protects America's animal and plant resources by: safeguarding resources from exotic invasive pests and diseases, monitoring and managing agricultural pests and diseases existing in the United States, resolving and managing trade issues related to animal or plant health, and ensuring the humane care and treatment of animals.

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facilitates the marketing of livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds, and related agricultural products and promotes fair and competitive trading practices for the overall benefit of consumers and American agriculture.

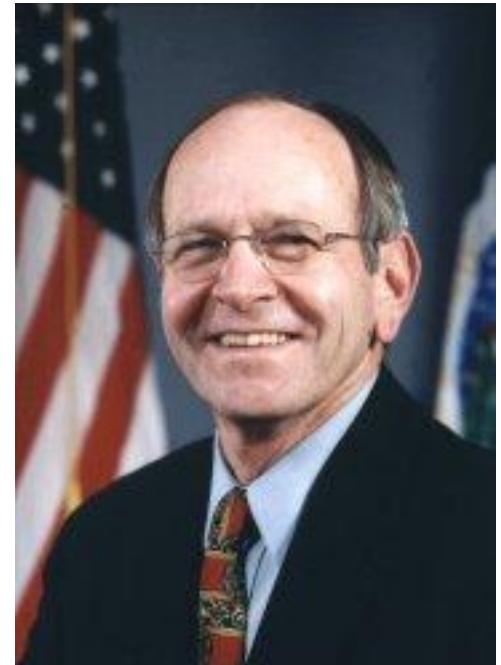
Biographical Sketch

William T. "Bill" Hawks Under Secretary, Marketing and Regulatory Programs

William T. Hawks was sworn in as the under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs by Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman on May 24, 2001.

He graduated from Mississippi State University in 1968 with a bachelors of science degree in agricultural economics. He then went on to obtain his masters degree from Mississippi State in agricultural economics in 1970.

Prior to his appointment as Under Secretary, Hawks was the managing partner of Hawks Farming. At different times throughout his career, he operated a dairy farm, grew vegetables for fresh consumption, had a beef cow herd, and grew cotton, corn, wheat, and soybeans on land in northern Mississippi.



In December of 1994, Hawks was elected to the Mississippi State Senate, representing his native DeSoto County. During his five years as a state senator, he was a leader on the committees with jurisdiction over agriculture and the environment.

During the early 1990s, the Hawks owned and managed Northwest Mississippi Flying Service, Incorporated, an agricultural aerial application service, and also owned and operated a recreational airport.

In the late 1980s, Hawks was a part owner in a professional farm management company, Sunbelt Land and Timber Company, Incorporated.

Hawks started farming after finishing graduate school by owning and operating a dairy in DeSoto County. In the early 1970's, he began to lease acreage from neighbors to get started in a row crop operation, often doing custom work for others. Over the years, this has evolved into the multi-faceted operation in place today.

Throughout his career, he has been very active in many agricultural boards and committees such as American Farm Bureau Federation, American Soybean Association, and many active state and local organizations.

From 1968 to 1970, Hawks served in the Army Reserve. Then from 1970 to 1972, he served in the Army National Guard. Following that, Mr. Hawks served in the Air National Guard from 1972 until 1980.

Hawks was born on November 22, 1944 near Oxford, Mississippi.

Statement of Mr. William T. Hawks

Before the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee

Confirmation hearing

May 16, 2001

9:00 a.m.

Chairman Lugar, Ranking Member Harkin, and members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs at the United States Department of Agriculture. I would like to begin by thanking President George W. Bush for the privilege of being nominated to this position of public service, and I thank Senator Thad Cochran and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott for supporting my nomination. I am pleased to be joined today by my wife Diane, and our two children: Jennifer Hawks, and T. A. Hawks. I would like to especially thank my wife Diane for all her assistance throughout this nomination process.

I was born and raised on a dairy and row crop farm in northern Mississippi. I worked my way through college and completed a Masters degree in Agricultural Economics from Mississippi State University.

I returned home in 1970, to serve in the Army Reserve and to start my family farm. In the past, I have spent many long days milking dairy cows, growing cotton, winter wheat, corn, and soybeans. I have had to supplement my farm income during low price periods through leasing my equipment for custom harvesting. So you can see, I have weathered both good times and bad in farming.

While operating our family farm, I took the time to participate in the local USDA farm committees. For a number of years, I served as Chairman of the DeSoto County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee and as a local Soil and Water Conservation District commissioner. Through my involvement with these committees, I learned the very complex workings of USDA agencies.

I was actively engaged in representing Mississippi agriculture through my participation in commodity organizations. I have held leadership positions with both the National Corn Growers and the American Soybean Association. If confirmed, I will utilize my experiences with these organizations to uphold the high standards of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Most recently, I have served the people of Mississippi as a State Senator. While in the Mississippi Senate, I served on both the Agriculture Committee and the Environmental Committee. If confirmed, my knowledge of the legislative process will be very beneficial as the United States Department of Agriculture communicates with the Congress and other interested parties.

I understand the many challenging issues that I will confront in this position, if confirmed. One issue in particular is Foot and Mouth disease. As each of you know, this disease is the center of attention for the

livestock industry and the American public. It is my understanding that the President's budget has requested additional funding for inspection personnel at some of our ports. It is important that we continue to monitor this international situation to prevent its introduction onto American soil. If confirmed, I will uphold the current laws and regulations that are at USDA's disposal and work with you to ensure we keep Foot and Mouth Disease out. One of my top priorities will be in keeping our safeguards strong and in using our resources wisely.

If confirmed, I will also be involved with the review of agricultural market concentration. I believe that we in USDA must work diligently to guard against anti-competitive practices within the agriculture industry. As a family farmer, I have a strong understanding and appreciation for needing a competitive agriculture that supports all farmers. The United States Department of Agriculture serves as a helping hand to rural America and especially to production agriculture.

If confirmed, I pledge to work with members of this Committee and their staff, as well as leaders in the agricultural industry. I am confident that my educational and professional experiences have prepared me for this undersecretary position at the United States Department of Agriculture. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to any questions that you may have for me.

Biographical Sketch

Dr. Charles "Chuck" Lambert

Deputy Under Secretary, Marketing and Regulatory Programs

Dr. Charles "Chuck" Lambert was appointed Deputy Under Secretary for USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs mission area by Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman on December 2, 2002.

Lambert brings a wealth of legislative, policy development, trade, and marketing experience to his new position. He served for more than 15 years in various positions with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), most recently as chief economist for that organization. In that position, Lambert conducted economic analyses on a wide range of proposed policy changes and market factors impacting the beef industry. For example, as the U.S. member of a five-country economic analysis team (which also included representatives from Australia, Canada, Korea, and New Zealand), Lambert evaluated the potential impact on the Korean beef industry of opening that market.

While working at NCBA, Lambert managed the policy division of that organization's international markets and live cattle marketing committees, as well as the U.S./Mexico cross border working group. He became extremely familiar with issues pertaining to industry structure and market conduct and performance--including futures, packer concentration, captive supplies, country-of-origin labeling, and price reporting. Lambert managed a number of important anti-dumping and countervailing duties cases affecting the beef industry; he also worked on ongoing initiatives to resolve disputes and promote trade with the European Union.

Lambert served on the USDA/USTR Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade, chaired the Meat Industry Trade Policy Council, and was an active member of the Agriculture for Trade Promotion Authority and the Agriculture for China PNTR coalitions. As a member of the Seattle Round Agricultural Coalition, he participated in the 1999 Seattle Round WTO negotiations. In 2000, he took part in the Cairns Group Ministerial in Banff, Canada. Lambert also participated in several "Five Nation" conferences involving beef industry leaders from Australia, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, and the United States.

Lambert was raised on a dryland wheat, sorghum, and cow-calf operation in west central Kansas. He graduated in 1969 from Kansas State University with a bachelor of science degree in animal science. He also received a masters degree in animal science with a minor in agricultural economics from that institution. Following graduation and active-duty service with the National Guard, Lambert worked on the family operation until 1979. He received his Ph.D. in economics with a specialization in agricultural policy and international trade from Kansas State University in 1987.

Lambert has been a member and active participant in a number of professional economic organizations and economic research institutes throughout his career. He has been affiliated with the American Agricultural Economics Association and the Central and Western Agricultural Economics Association. Lambert was also a member of USDA's cost of production standards review board and NCBA's standardized performance analysis initiative, as well as that organization's beef demand analysis think tank.

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Making Our Mark

A Legacy for Marketing and Regulatory Programs

We have identified several broad goals and objectives that will be the guideposts for the MRP management team during this Administration, while also providing flexibility for growth and development. Under the leadership of Under Secretary Bill Hawks, the staff of MRP will:

- **Build Broader Bridges.** We will increase cooperation and strategic partnerships with States, Foreign Governments, Congressional Offices, industry groups, schools, agricultural scientific groups and other organizations directly and indirectly affected by our services. Increased cooperation with these groups will ensure that our policies and programs are developed through appropriate consultation with the people who are affected by them. We will also work to enhance our partnership with other USDA mission areas as well as with other Federal agencies outside USDA.
- **Move More Product.** We will facilitate trade through aggressive and creative resolution of sanitary, phytosanitary, biotechnology, grain inspection, commodity grading and other international trading issues. Expanded domestic and international market opportunities for U.S. agriculture products (including value-enhanced products and products of biotechnology), will yield enormous dividends not only for the farm economy but also for national and world economies. We will work closely with Foreign Agriculture Service, U.S. Trade Representative and other international bodies and foreign governments to provide the technical support necessary so that the United States can aggressively pursue new markets.
- **Invest in Infrastructure.** Agriculture that is healthy, both biologically and economically, is marketable agriculture. We will invest in the best scientific and technological infrastructure, which will increase producers' profit margins, ensure continued international market access for U.S. producers and ensure high-quality, reasonably priced products for US consumers. We will invest in stronger border security, pest and disease surveillance and monitoring, bricks and mortar such as National Veterinary Science Lab in Ames, increased market news on export markets, improvements in e-Government, enhanced investigations of anti-competitive market practices and greater support for biotechnology.
- **Grow Our People.** We will make a concerted effort to recruit, recognize and reward accomplishment and inspire current and future leaders within MRP. We will make MRP a place where the best and brightest want to be - including promising men and women in diverse fields that include not only agriculture but also journalism, accounting, economics, etc...

- **Sell Agriculture as a Profession.** We will creatively market the missions of USDA and the MRP agencies and the vital role that agriculture plays in every American's life. Such an effort will help ensure vital public and congressional support for current programs as well as future needs. It would also assist us in our efforts to recruit and retain the highest-caliber workforce.
-

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Photos from recent MRP agency events

Here are some pictures from Mr. Hawk's recent trip to Alaska from June 11-14, 2003. Mr. Hawks, Special Assistant Kimberly Smith and AMS Deputy Administrator for Livestock and Seed Programs Barry Carpenter travels to Juneau Anchorage, Kodiak and Sitka. Issues discussed were Country of Origin Labeling, Section 32 purchases of Salmon and other USDA projects in Alaska



Kimberly Smith, Mr. Hawks, Barry Carpenter



Matt Moir, plan manager for Alaska Pacific Processors in a discussion with Mr. Hawks



Mr. Hawks, Matt Moir, Barry Carpenter, Kimberly Smith





Mr. Hawks and Dan Ogg, State Legislator for Kodiak



Dan Ogg and Mr. Hawks



Mr. Hawks, Dan Ogg, and Kimberly Smith



Barry Carpenter and Mr. Hawks amidst the beautiful Alaskan scenery.

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- The operating system and web browser you use to view pages;
- The date and time you access our web site;
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The GIPSA toll-free telephone hotline for reporting violations and abuses in the grain, livestock, meat, and poultry industries.

1-800-998-3447

The USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration maintains this toll-free telephone number for reporting violations and abuses in the grain, livestock, meat, and poultry industries.

The hotline is available to all interested parties who wish to provide information on possible violations of the United States Grain Standards Act, the Agricultural Marketing Act, or the Packers and Stockyards Act.

The toll free number provides a direct and easy way for producers and others to access GIPSA's regulatory resources. Callers will reach a voicemail system that will tape their messages. The Agency will respond as quickly as possible to reports of violations.

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 Mycotoxin Reference Book	PDF		
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 Official United States Standards for Beans, Peas, and Lentils	View	Order	
 Official United States Standards for Grain	View	Order	
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Trade Practices. A major objective of GIPSA's Packers and Stockyards Programs (P&SP) is to maintain fair trade practices in the marketing of livestock. To determine if unfair or deceptive practices in violation of the [Packers and Stockyards Act](#) (the Act) and the [Regulations](#) issued thereunder are occurring in the procurement of livestock, P&SP conducts livestock procurement investigations of slaughtering packers, dealers, and order buyers. These investigations include examining the firm's entire operation for possible violations of the Act, and reviewing payment practices, price manipulation, weight manipulation of livestock or carcasses, manipulation of carcass grades, commercial bribery, misrepresentation of source, condition, or quality, or other unfair and deceptive practices.

P&SP obtains special procurement information from the Nation's top 15 steer and heifer slaughter firms annually. This information is related to livestock purchased through contracts, packer feeding arrangements, or marketing agreement/formula priced-type transactions on a monthly basis. P&SP closely monitors the overall percentage and use of these cattle by the Nation's meat packers.

Many hog slaughterers in the United States are using electronic carcass evaluation devices to purchase hogs on a carcass merit basis. P&SP conducts semiannual investigations at hog slaughtering plants using these devices to ensure the accuracy of the devices, proper formula application and accounting, and the proper application of the devices.

P&SP's mission in the area of accurate weights consists of two elements that affect the integrity of subject transactions: (1) the accuracy of the scales used for weighing livestock, meat, and poultry, and (2) the proper and honest operation of scales to ensure that the weight on which a transaction is based

is accurate. The major emphases in the enforcement of this program are the monitoring of scale tests and the detection of improper and fraudulent use of subject scales. P&SP conducts training schools for test agencies with the National Conference on Weights and Measures National Training Program certified instructors.

P&SP continues its in-depth analysis of larger poultry firms for indications of discriminatory treatment of poultry growers, although many of its investigations are conducted as a result of specific grower complaints.

Financial Protection. Payment protection for the sellers of livestock is an integral part of the Act and of extreme importance to PS&P. To ensure compliance with the financial and payment protection provisions of the Act, P&SP audits and investigates the regulated industry.

Market agencies that sell livestock on a commission basis are required to establish and maintain, for the benefit of livestock sellers, a Custodial Account For Shippers' Proceeds bank account. ([See Custodial Account Instructions](#)) In FY 1991, P&SP implemented a compliance and surveillance program designed to audit each of these accounts at least once every 3 years.

Payment protection is provided directly under the Act by statutory requirement of full and prompt payment, by packer bonding requirements, and by the [packer trust](#) provisions. Prompt payment is a significant element of the financial protection afforded producers under the Act and is an integral part of the packer trust which provides protection to producers who fail to receive payment from meat packers. In 1988, the Act was amended to include a statutory [poultry trust](#) provision giving payment protection to live poultry growers and sellers.

Competition. One of the major responsibilities under the Act is to assure open competitive marketing conditions for livestock and meat. Various producer organizations have voiced concerns about enforcement in this area, which was the major topic of discussion and review by the USDA Advisory Committee on Agricultural Concentration established in 1996. To maintain a competitive and fair marketing system, buyers of livestock must actively compete in the procurement of livestock. The marketers of meat must also actively compete while selling their products.

P&SP has undertaken several initiatives to increase enforcement activities in the area of anticompetitive practices involving the Nation's major meat

packers. In 1996, a major investigation of fed cattle procurement practices in Kansas was completed. The investigation examined over 15,000 purchase transactions and 2 million head of cattle. The results, which were released in March 1996, did not disclose any anticompetitive practices. Supply and demand factors appear to have been the primary causes of price declines in the spring of 1995. PS&P conducted a major cattle procurement investigation in Texas examined over 37,000 purchase transactions and over 6 million head of cattle sold during 1995 and 1996. A major slaughter hog procurement investigation was also initiated during 1996. This investigation will examine approximately 50,000 purchase transactions and over 2.5 million head of slaughter hogs.

P&SP completed a major, congressionally mandated study of concentration in the red meatpacking industry. The study defined relevant cattle and hog procurement markets; examined price determination in procurement of fed cattle; examined the role and effects of concentration on prices paid for fed cattle; analyzed trends in vertical coordination in hog production; examined hog procurement patterns in the eastern Corn Belt; and critically reviewed research literature relating to the structure and performance of the meatpacking industry.

The P&S Programs places a high priority on investigating all complaints and further developing information received about the failure of livestock dealers, market agencies, or packers to compete for the purchase of livestock.

Clear Title. [Section 1324 of the Food Security Act of 1985](#) permits States to establish central filing systems to notify potential buyers, commission merchants, and selling agents of security interests (liens) against farm products. The Secretary of Agriculture is responsible for proscribing regulations to aid States in implementing and managing central filing systems and for certifying such systems that comply with the Act. GIPSA administers the program, commonly known as the "Clear Title" program. For more information, see:

- [Part 205 - Clear Title Regulations -- Protection for Purchasers of Farm Products](#)
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The Federal Grain Inspection Service of USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration provides inspection, weighing, and related services on grains, pulses, oilseeds, and processed and graded commodities. The services provided include the following:

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International Outreach Programs

GIPSA personnel participate in a variety of international assistance programs at the request of U.S. exporters, international importers and end users of U.S. grains and oilseeds, as well as other USDA agencies, USDA Cooperator organizations, and other governments. GIPSA international services include:

- Resolving [grain quality and weight discrepancies](#) by working with international governments and grain industry representatives.
- Helping other countries develop domestic grain and commodity standards and marketing infrastructures.
- Training international inspectors in U.S. inspection methods and procedures.
- Aiding importers in developing quality specifications.
- Presenting grain marketing and grain grading seminars around the world.
- Conducting [collaborative studies and surveys](#) to collect market information.
- Providing consulting services on technical issues.

These activities are typically funded through various programs administered by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service or Farm Service Agency, USDA Cooperators, GIPSA, or by the private sector on a cost recovery basis.

Educational Programs

GIPSA provides educational briefings about the U.S. grain market and national inspection system to international trade teams and government representatives. In addition, the Agency can arrange visits to GIPSA field offices, onsite laboratories at export grain elevators, and the Agency's Technical Services Division (TSD) in Kansas City, Missouri. At TSD, delegations can take part in technical training on analytical testing procedures and grain inspection methods and procedures. For more information, visit the [Technical Training](#) page on our website.

Briefings are tailored to address individual group's interests and concerns. Presentations include explanations of GIPSA's various services, the Agency's use of the latest technology to provide grain traders with accurate and reliable inspection and weighing information and, for importers or potential importers new to the U.S. grain market, information on contracting for the quality they

desire.

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For More Information

For more information about international outreach and educational programs, contact GIPSA's Office of International Affairs telephone at 202-720-0226.



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Seeking public comment on how USDA can best facilitate the marketing of grains, oilseeds, fruits, vegetables, and nuts in today's evolving marketplace.

Comment period CLOSED midnight, April 16, 2001.
(See [Federal Register notice](#).)

Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR)

- The ANPR ([PDF version](#)) ([HTML version](#))
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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS
ADMINISTRATION**

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