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## **EPA Administrator promises partnership & science-based regs**

**By Jon H. Harsch**

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U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson told the dinner session at USDA's annual Outlook conference Thursday that she's not afraid to use EPA's considerable regulatory authority when needed – but that she's working to achieve a mutually beneficial partnership with the farm sector. That's why she asked USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack to give her an opportunity to address Outlook's 1,750 attendees.

Jackson is determined to clean up the nation's air, water and toxic waste sites – and she expects to have more funds to carry this EPA responsibility. Just hours after the White House announced President Obama's budget proposal, Jackson said "Today is a good day for EPA. The President introduced the budget for EPA that begins to make up for the fact that over the last eight years EPA was cut drastically, about 27 percent, the second largest cut across federal government. So this budget today, the proposed budget for 2010 is actually the largest budget in real dollars that EPA has ever seen."

Jackson also said that even with adequate funds and ample authority, EPA "cannot be successful without a viable and steady partnership" with agricultural stakeholders.

After years of neglect, Jackson said "We do have incredible challenges ahead of us. . . We find ourselves as a country in the year 2009 without basic air pollution controls and with a pending crisis for human health." Listing water issues, wetlands issues, jurisdictional issues, and toxics, she warned that "When EPA doesn't do its job correctly or effectively, the result is something as basic as dirtier air and the result is something as basic as water that either isn't safe or isn't plentiful and so therefore human health and our economy suffer."

Jackson said that the agricultural community knows that "clean water is not only important for drinking, for your family's health, but it is the lifeblood quite literally, of your industry." She said she expects that just as she has formed a partnership with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, that EPA and agricultural stakeholders will work in partnership "because you care as human beings, as a parent or as a member of society, but also because your business depends on it."

Jackson called EPA's role in protecting human health and the environment "an awesome responsibility" which she said "needs to be tempered with compassion, with a listening

ear and a willingness to hear from all stakeholders and to make sure that EPA is always seen as having an open mind and an open dialogue even when we know that we may be ultimately going to disagree.”

Jackson, like Vilsack, was an adopted child born in Pennsylvania. She grew up in New Orleans, graduated with a *summa cum laude* chemical engineering degree from Tulane University, then earned her master’s in chemical engineering from Princeton University. After 16 years working for U.S. EPA, Jackson served as New Jersey Commissioner of Environmental Protection before President Obama picked her to head the EPA

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