



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I want to thank you for your continued support of the actions the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has undertaken to focus on our customers and improve the implementation of our programs. On September 7, 2017, I notified Congress of our intention to take additional actions to improve customer service and create a more streamlined and efficient USDA. I want to provide a status update on the implementation of those actions, as well as more information on two of the proposals.

Since the announcement we have received and carefully considered feedback from the public, other Federal agencies, and Congress on our proposals. This includes the 94 public comments received from the notice published in the Federal Register; public feedback during meetings and other events; and discussions within the Administration. In general, the proposals received significant support from a variety of stakeholders.

While this included support for our plans to improve coordination on trade and international activities by realigning the Codex Alimentarius program in USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service to the Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs mission area, there have been some stakeholders who have expressed concerns. Additionally, industry has raised questions about the movement of Warehouse Act functions into the new fair trade practice program area that I announced as part of the merging of the Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration into the Agricultural Marketing Service. We believe that these two areas merit further discussion given issues raised by stakeholders, and USDA will continue to examine those issues before moving forward with those two pieces of the realignment.

Going forward, we will continue to work with Congress and our stakeholders and employees as we endeavor to make USDA the best-managed, most customer-responsive agency in the U.S. Government. Thank you for your support in achieving that goal. A similar letter will be sent to Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow. If you have any further questions, please have a member of your staff contact the Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "S" and "P" being particularly large and stylized.

Sonny Perdue
Secretary