

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM  
November 14, 2017

**Improving Customer Service and Efficiency**

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to realign a number of offices within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in order to improve customer engagement, maximize efficiency, and improve agency collaboration.

2. AUTHORITY

Actions ordered under this memorandum are taken in accordance with Executive Order 13781, "Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch," using the authority of the Secretary to reorganize the Department under section 4(a) of Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953 (5 U.S.C. App.; 7 U.S.C. 2201 note).

3. ACTIONS ORDERED

a. Enterprise Solutions for Mission Support Activities to Improve Customer Service

(1) There is established in each mission area a consolidated business center that will provide mission area wide enterprise solutions for information technology, financial management, human resources, procurement, property management, and related business and administrative processes.

(2) Each mission area will have one Chief Information Officer (CIO).

b. Partnerships to Improve Customer Engagement

(1) There is established within the Office of the Secretary an office to be known as the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE). OPPE will be headed by the Director of OPPE, who will report directly to the Secretary and who will be a noncareer member of the Senior Executive Service.

(2) The Director of OPPE is delegated the following authorities and offices for supervision:

(a) The Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO). OAO, previously established within the Office of the Secretary, is transferred to the supervision of the Director of OPPE, and will be headed by a Director appointed from among the competitive service. The Director of OPPE is delegated authority for the performance and oversight of the following functions within the Department, which are further delegated to the Director of OAO:

1. Ensure that small farms and ranchers, beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and military veteran farmers and ranchers have access to, and equitable participation in, programs and services of the Department;
2. Oversee the Advisory Committee for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers;
3. Oversee the operations of the Office of Small Farms Coordination;
4. Administer the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program (the 2501 grant program);
5. Oversee the Minority Farmers Advisory Committee;
6. Administer the low-income migrant and seasonal farmworker grants program;
7. Consult with appropriate entities regarding integration of farmworker interests into Department programs, including assisting farmworkers in becoming agricultural producers or landowners, and research, program improvements, and agricultural education opportunities for low-income and migrant seasonal farmworkers;
8. Administer the grants program under section 14204 of FCEA (7 U.S.C. 2008q-1) to improve the supply, stability, safety, and training of the agricultural labor force;
9. Administer and coordinate a Department-wide outreach program in collaboration with USDA agencies;
10. Administer the Receipt for Service initiative, including the authority to coordinate Department policy for the issuance of receipts;
11. Provide strategic planning and performance measurements, coordinate outreach activities, monitor goals and objectives, and

evaluate Department programs and activities involving small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and military veteran farmers and ranchers;

12. Administer the USDA/1994 Land Grant Institutions (Tribal Colleges) Programs;
  13. Administer the USDA/1890 Liaison Officers Program;
  14. Administer the Hispanic Serving Institutions National Program, including through the use of cooperative agreements under 7 U.S.C. 3318(b);
  15. Serve as a lead agency in carrying out higher education student internship programs (7 U.S.C. 2279c);
  16. Outreach to Asian-American and Pacific Islanders.
- (b) The Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) (7 U.S.C. 6921). The Director of OPPE is delegated the authorities at 7 C.F.R. § 2.38, which are further delegated to the Director of OTR.
  - (c) Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison (7 U.S.C. § 6919).
  - (d) The Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.
  - (e) The Women in Agriculture initiative.
  - (f) Serve as the Department lead for strategic planning and coordinating youth outreach activities of USDA agencies' programs (including, but not limited to, 4-H, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math programs), information and cyber technology student programs, Future Farmers of America (FFA) activities, summer high school internships, and youth gardening programs); development of program evaluation metrics and consistent messaging for youth outreach activities; and monitoring goals and objectives. This provision does not include competitive grant programs administered by the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), or any youth employment opportunity programs such as Pathways or Job Corps.
- (3) The delegations of authority to OAO in Secretary's Memorandum 1076-015 and any other delegations inconsistent with this memorandum are rescinded.

c. Rural Development Innovation

- (1) There is established a Rural Development Innovation Center that will report to



the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development.

- (2) The Rural Development Innovation Center will evaluate the impacts of the business, housing, and utilities programs provided by the Department. Through such evaluation, USDA will be better informed as to where additional investments will be most impactful when it comes to Rural Development program delivery.
  - (3) The Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development is directed to consolidate existing functions among the Rural Development organization as needed to perform the work of the Center.
- d. Improving Industry Engagement and Customer Focus
- (1) The Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) is hereby eliminated as a standalone agency.
  - (2) There is established within the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) the Deputy Administrator for Fair Trade Practices. The Fair Trade Practices program area will be comprised of the following AMS programs: Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act Program, the Country of Origin Labeling Program, and the Bioengineered Labeling Program. The Packers and Stockyards Program formerly part of GIPSA and the Warehouse Act functions formerly part of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) will be transferred to AMS and included in the Fair Trade Practices program area.
  - (2) There is established in AMS a Deputy Administrator for Federal Grain Inspection Service. The grain inspection activities formerly part of GIPSA are to be included in the new program area.
  - (3) In order to carry out these changes:
    - (a) The Administrator, AMS, is delegated the authorities at 7 C.F.R. § 2.81.
    - (b) The delegations to the Administrator, GIPSA, at 7 C.F.R. § 2.81 are revoked.
    - (c) The Administrator, AMS, is delegated the authority to administer the U.S. Warehouse Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 241–273), and perform compliance examinations for FSA programs.
    - (d) The delegations of authority to the Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services at 7 C.F.R. § 2.16(a)(1)(xvi) and to the Administrator, Farm Service Agency at 7 C.F.R. § 2.42(a)(18) are revoked.

e. Consolidating Commodity Procurement

- (4) There is established in AMS a Deputy Administrator for Commodity Procurement. In order to consolidate commodity procurement across the Department, the International Commodity Procurement program of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) is transferred to and merged into the domestic Commodity Procurement Program AMS.
  - (a) The Administrator, AMS, is hereby delegated the authorities at 7 C.F.R. § 2.42 related to commodity procurement.
  - (b) The delegations to the Administrator, FSA, at 7 C.F.R. § 2.42 related to commodity procurement are revoked.

f. Focusing Nutrition Efforts

- (1) The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) are closely intertwined and serve a similar mission.
- (2) CNPP is eliminated as a standalone agency.
- (3) There is established within FNS a Deputy Administrator for Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion that will carry out the programs of CNPP.
- (4) The FNS Office of the Chief Communications Officer is transferred to the supervision of the Deputy Administrator for Policy Support.
- (5) The Office of Nutrition Marketing and Communications within CNPP is transferred to the supervision of the Office of the Chief Communications Officer.

g. Office of Pest Management Policy

- (1) The Office of Pest Management Policy is transferred from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to the Office of the Chief Economist.
- (2) In order to carry out this change:
  - (a) The Director, Office of Pest Management Policy, through the Chief Economist, is delegated the authority to coordinate USDA policy relative to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 136 et seq.) and to coordinate the Department's Integrated Pest Management Programs and the Pesticide Assessment Program (7 U.S.C. 136-136y) (7 U.S.C. 7653).

- (b) The delegations of authority to the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics at 7 C.F.R. § 2.21(a)(1)(iii) and to the Administrator, ARS at 7 C.F.R. § 2.65(a)(1) are revoked.

h. Improving Codex Coordination

- (1) The U.S. Codex Office is hereby transferred from the Food Safety and Inspection Service to the Office of the Under Secretary for Trade and Agricultural Affairs.

4. INCIDENTAL TRANSFERS

The Assistant Secretary for Administration and the Chief Financial Officer are authorized to approve such transfers of funds, personnel, employment authority, space, records, property, and incidentals as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this Memorandum.

5. EXISTING DIRECTIVES

Prior delegations of authority, administrative regulations, and other directives not inconsistent with the provisions of this Memorandum shall remain in full force and effect.

6. EFFECTIVE DATE AND TERMINATION

This Memorandum is effective upon signature and will remain in effect for one year from the effective date, or until such earlier time as the Department's published delegations of authority have been revised to incorporate the provisions of this Memorandum.



Sonny Perdue  
Secretary of Agriculture