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USDA TO RUN AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, June 20--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will run 42 different AmeriCorps projects that are designed to fight hunger and improve nutrition, preserve national forests and improve community environmental quality, promote rural development and increase rural water delivery, and boost ongoing flood-relief efforts in the Midwest.

The USDA program, funded in part by a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), will be the largest single federal agency component of the President's national service initiative.

"President Clinton has made it clear to members of his Cabinet that national service is one of his top priorities, and I am especially pleased that USDA will be playing a key role in the AmeriCorps program," said Espy. "The USDA projects will fulfill the President's vision that national service bring together citizens of varied backgrounds to perform services vital to their communities."

Espy announced that beginning this September, USDA will place 1,200 AmeriCorps national service participants throughout urban and rural America. The participants in these projects will be placed in 32 states, representing every region of the country.

AmeriCorps is President Clinton's national service initiative that allows diverse groups of Americans to earn college or vocational school scholarships while performing critical service to meet human, environmental, public safety, and educational needs. Participants in the program will work for a year earning a stipend of at least \$7,500, and then receive an educational voucher worth \$4,725.

Americans 17 years of age or older may apply for the USDA programs by calling 1-800-880-4183.

"Grounded in the mainstream values of community, responsibility, and opportunity, national service makes sense because it meets multiple ends," Espy said. "It is good for the participants who benefit from their increased ability to attend college or vocational school, good for the communities which benefit from their service and good for the country which benefits from a renewed civic spirit. Moreover, the program is good for USDA because it gives us new ways to boost our mission areas of fighting hunger, protecting the environment and rebuilding rural America."

CNCS is an independent federal corporation created by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Its purpose is to administer national service programs and provide funding on a competitive basis for national service programs that address the nation's education, human, public safety and environmental needs.

Under provisions that are unique to that Act, federal agencies are empowered to compete against each other in a competitive grant process to obtain funds from CNCS. The White House announced today that, as a result of the first year of this process, CNCS had awarded USDA 1,200 AmeriCorps slots and \$2.6 million in operating funds. Funds for the Department's program will also be provided from existing USDA programs and from non-profit organizations that serve as partners at individual sites.

The USDA AmeriCorps projects reflect a new emphasis on cooperation among USDA agencies. USDA's Agricultural Research Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Food and Nutrition Service, Forest Service, Rural Development Administration, Rural Electrification Administration, and Soil Conservation Service will play significant roles in managing this program.

The Anti-Hunger projects will be at five sites--two rural and three urban--with high levels of hunger and poverty. The projects will work to reduce the number of citizens suffering from hunger and improve the nutritional content of family diets. This program has been designed, and is to run, as a unique partnership between USDA, youth service corps and local anti-hunger groups.

The environmental projects will occur at 32 rural and urban sites in 21 states. The goals of the projects are to help solve local environmental problems, protect local watersheds, repair and upgrade community facilities, promote sustainable agriculture, conduct environmental education seminars, and preserve and restore national forests.

The rural development projects will engage generally older participants, who are college graduates and professional school graduates, in work in 10 pilot regions throughout America. Participants are to help communities protect watersheds, improve housing, promote economic development, boost sustainable agriculture, and aid the Clinton Administration's Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community initiative. Special disaster-relief projects will also be run in the eight Midwest states most impacted by last summer's record flooding.

**USDA AMERICORPS SITES
(To start operation September 1994)**

**ANTI-HUNGER -
#1 Vermont, state-wide
#2 District of Columbia**

- #3 Milwaukee, Wis.
- #4 Mississippi Delta, Miss.
- #5 Los Angeles, Calif.

PUBLIC LANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT -

- #6 Western Kansas
- #7 Western Oklahoma
- #8 Texas Coast
- #9 Atlanta, Ga.
- #10 Boston, Mass.
- #11 East St. Louis, Ill.
- #12 New Jersey, state-wide
- #13 District of Columbia
- #14 Chicago, Ill.
- #15 Portland, Ore.
- #16 San Bernadino National Forrest, Southern California
- #17 Six Rivers National Forrest, Northern California
- #18 Olympic National Forest Washington State
- #19 Rogue River National Forest, Southern Oregon
- #20 Arizona, state-wide national forests
- #21 Bienville National Forrest, Miss.
- #22 Green Mountain National Forest, Vt.
- #23 White Mountain National Forest, N.H.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT -

- #24 New England (Maine, Vermont, Northwestern New York)
- #25 Appalachia (Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia)
- #26 South Carolina, state-wide
- #27 Mississippi Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi)
- #28 Great Lakes (Michigan, Ohio)
- #29 Minnesota, state-wide
- #30 Texas Colonias
- #31 Four Corners (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah)
- #32 Pacific Northwest (Oregon, Washington)
- #33 California, state-wide

FLOOD RELIEF -

- #34 Illinois
- #35 Iowa
- #36 Kansas
- #37 Minnesota
- #38 Missouri
- #39 Nebraska
- #40 North Dakota
- #41 South Dakota
- #42 Wisconsin

Call Joel Berg at (202) 720-6350 for information on specific sites.

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USDA TO USE VEGETABLE-BASED INK FOR ALL PRINTING

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2 -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy told members of the American Soybean Association meeting in Denver yesterday that all printing ordered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture will be done with vegetable-based ink.

Soybean oil is a major source of vegetable-based inks.

Espy told the association's annual meeting that all USDA ordered printing -- which amounts to some \$26 million annually -- would be done with ink derived from agricultural products. Prior to today's action, only in-house printing had been done with vegetable-based ink. Espy's announcement expands the use of vegetable-based ink to all contract printing.

"I have been one of soy-ink's biggest fans for years," Espy told the group, adding: "I'm enthusiastic about alternative uses in agriculture and soybeans seem to be one of the most promising commodities on the horizon. They can be used in paints and varnishes, fatty acids, resins and plastics."

Vegetable oils are gaining popularity over petroleum in the manufacture of printing inks in the United States because they are derived from a domestically produced and renewable resource.

Soybean oil has emerged as a reliable resource for making printing inks. Linseed oil, a vegetable oil which is derived from flax, has been used in making inks for decades. Inks produced from other vegetable oils are in the experimental stage.

Espy said that from now on petroleum-based inks can be used for USDA printing jobs only when vegetable-based inks cannot be supplied in time to meet delivery dates.

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NEWS RELEASE

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USDA SUCCESSFULLY ENTERS THE YEAR 2000; EXPECTS NORMAL OPERATIONS ON MONDAY

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2, 2000 - USDA's Chief Information Officer Anne Reed reported today that USDA has successfully transitioned into the Year 2000. However, for all systems and the programs that depend on them, the final test will come as business operations resume on Monday and clients begin to access services and benefits for the first time in the year 2000.

At the end of the first weekend in the New Year, forty percent of USDA's 343 mission critical systems declared a full and successful transition into the Year 2000. The remaining systems won't be able to be tested until business operations begin on Monday. For example, the federal government funds food stamp and child nutrition programs, but each state administers its own programs. USDA can verify that the systems are operational, but the states will need to experience normal business processing in order to complete validation.

"Seventy-one percent of the department's highest priority systems which impact health and safety, financial systems, or economic stability - are up and running without incident," said Reed. "Validation of the remaining systems will continue as agencies resume normal business operations, serving their clientele."

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Services' (AMS) Market News Information System (MNIS) provides timely, unbiased market information to buyers and sellers of fruits, vegetables and other agricultural commodities. The MNIS has been fully tested and is expected to operate normally Monday. AMS' tracking of commodity shipments will resume Monday. USDA has received no reports of disruptions to the nation's port activities.

The Animal & Plant Health Inspection Services' Export Certification Program maintains computerized summaries of foreign countries' phytosanitary import requirements for agricultural products which are used by federal and state export certification officials to issue phytosanitary export certificates. The ECS is operational and anticipates normal operations when business resumes on Monday.

The Food and Nutrition Services' internal Food Stamp Program systems are operational. A complete program status will be available early in the week as states and territories report. Guam elected to use its contingency, paper-based stamps for its food stamp program and no interruptions to benefits are anticipated.

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No disruptions to the Food Safety Inspection Services' ability to ensure safe meat, poultry, and egg products have been reported. FSIS has eight mission critical systems; initial testing has been completed on the four highest priority systems and testing on the remaining four will be completed in the coming week.

FSIS's Performance Based Inspection System uses inspection results to determine future meat processing plant inspections. As of today, the FSIS's computers are tested and operational, allowing inspections to continue.

Fire and Aviation Management plays a vital role in the management of wildland fires and other natural disasters such as hurricanes and tornadoes. This system successfully transitioned to Year 2000 and is now operational, with one minor glitch involving weather data transmissions to the National Weather Service. Those transmissions are being accomplished manually until the system can be repaired tonight.

Rural Development provides services to rural residents through computer systems that provide accounting and servicing for housing loans to individuals, loans that provide multi-unit housing, as well as water and waste, community facility and business loans. The systems also support loan making and servicing for Rural Telephone and Electric programs. The systems supporting these programs successfully became operational on January 2, 2000.

Chief Financial Officer Sally Thompson said, "Employees can expect their paychecks to arrive as they normally would. "The National Finance Center systems support 2.5 million retirement accounts for the Thrift Savings Board and the payroll operations for over 100 Federal agencies and 450,000 employees:

"All systems at the Center were shut down for the rollover and were successfully restarted on Saturday," Thompson said. Normal business operations were resumed and customers were encouraged to access services as data interface validation continues, with the first payroll scheduled for processing on Thursday, January 6, 2000.

"The Department's successful transition to the New Year is the result of a tremendous amount of work throughout USDA and in partnership with the private sector," said Reed. "We will continue to monitor USDA systems as business operations resume and we complete validation of data interfaces for service delivery.

"We've advised USDA employees and customers that we will be open for business as usual on Monday, January 3, 2000," Reed said.

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Release No. 0351.95

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USDA ANNOUNCES ITS HOME PAGE ON THE INTERNET

EDWARDSVILLE, Ill., April 24, 1995--Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman announced today the establishment of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's home page on the world wide web of the Internet.

"As I testified in my confirmation hearing," Glickman said, "I am committed to making information on agriculture available to the American people in as many ways as possible. USDA's home page on the Internet represents the newest medium we have for disseminating information. I am excited about the potential it holds for us as we continue to reinvent USDA through the farm bill and National Performance Review activities."

USDA's home page contains information about the Department's missions and agencies and provides access to current news and information issued by USDA. Within the home page are links to other sources of information, including more in-depth information about certain programs and agencies.

The Internet is the massive world-wide network of computers, comprised of thousands of smaller regional networks scattered throughout the globe and linking together over half a million databases. On any given day it connects roughly 20 million users in over 50 countries.

The world wide web is a multi-media linking system for finding and accessing Internet resources. A home page is the screen each world wide web site prepares to appear on the computer when a user accesses that site.

The world wide web allows the user to explore a topic of interest from many different angles and with varying degrees of specificity through the links that are established. By clicking on highlighted words or phrases, the user can jump from one source of information to another.

Persons with access to the world wide web can reach USDA's home page through its universal resource locator: <http://www.usda.gov/>

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Release No.0392.95

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GLICKMAN PRESENTS CLINTON ADMINISTRATION FARM BILL GUIDELINES

Administration Will Fight For Farmers and Rural America During Farm Bill Debate

WASHINGTON, May 10, 1995--Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today presented the Clinton Administration's recommendations for the 1995 farm bill pledging to make needed reforms while maintaining a safety net for farmers, rural America, and the millions who depend on USDA's nutrition and feeding programs.

"The Clinton Administration comes to the farm bill debate with two overriding goals -- to empower, not encumber U.S. agriculture and to sustain rural America," Glickman said. "We are not going to abandon rural America or the American consumer. We are working to ensure the American farmer is treated fairly in trade abroad. We are committed to doing the same at home. As we brought our trade partners to the table in the name of the American farmer, we will roll up our sleeves and work with Congress during the upcoming farm bill debate.

"In April, I attended six regional rural forums and joined President Clinton at the National Rural Conference to listen to Americans from across the country. Our actions will reflect their common sense. This farm bill must sustain and prepare rural America to meet the challenges of the next century.

"Our farm bill recommendations are designed to sustain the farm and food programs that have produced history's most abundant, most affordable, and most wholesome food supply," Glickman said. "The farm bill recommendations maintain a level of investment we believe critical to sustaining our food and fiber system, especially given the dramatic spending reductions agriculture has absorbed over the last decade."

Glickman said the administration's farm bill recommendations signal an evolution of the relationship between the federal government and America's producers and everyone else served by USDA.

"We want to loosen the constraints of current policies," Glickman said. "As new opportunities present themselves, America's producers should be able to take advantage of those opportunities. Farm program restrictions and regulations should not stand in the way. Farmers must be able to make more of their own decisions and have more flexibility. State and local officials must have more authority to target conservation programs and rural development efforts. The USDA must continue its commitment to broaden and open new export markets. Research dollars must be targeted to ensure that American agriculture continues to be equipped with the best scientific base possible for the next century, particularly in the area of value-added products."

Some of the recommendations in the Clinton Administration's farm bill guidelines include:

COMMODITY AND MARKETING PROGRAMS

- Planting Flexibility. Increase planting flexibility by combining all crop bases into a Total Acreage Base with deficiency payments determined as they are in current programs. Program participants would not be allowed to increase any crop base. The percentage of the base producers could plant to permitted alternative crops would be gradually

increased from the current 15 percent to 100 percent. To achieve needed reductions in outlays, the percentage of nonpayment acres could be increased.

Conservation Farm Option. Permit producers in priority environment areas to receive assured commodity program payments in exchange for producing under a whole-farm conservation plan that can also be used to meet the requirements of other Federal or State natural resource statutes or programs.

- The Peanut Program. The program should be converted to a no-net-cost program.
- Farm Credit. Improve programs to reduce loan loss potential while assuring that socially disadvantaged groups, beginning farmers and needy, but economically viable, family farmers have access to credit assistance.
- Targeting Program Payments to Farmers. Apply a means test, excluding payments to individuals who earn \$100,000 or more per year in off-farm income, to target payments to those who depend on farm income to earn a living.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Investing in Rural Economies. Ensure that adequate financial resources are available in under-served areas by helping to capitalize Community Development Financial Institutions, expand credit availability through the Federal Home Loan Bank System, establish one-stop shops for rural capital and credit needs modeled on the Small Business Administration's one-stop shops, and form an interagency working group to make specific recommendations for legislative changes.
- Improving the Information Infrastructure for Rural America. Develop and complement a modern and affordable information infrastructure in rural America through public/private partnerships, an infusion of largely private capital, and effective coordination of policy. Rural America should be assured access to a national information infrastructure be built, run, and maintained by the private sector, with state and federal governments playing key roles in telecommunications policy, regulation, and procurement. Provide for use of universal service funds to equip rural schools and hospitals with telecommunications devices and services.
- Targeting Programs to Those Areas of Greatest Need. Target a high proportion of rural community development assistance through a series of initiatives directed at chronically economically distressed communities and those facing economic disruptions. The Rural Performance Partnership Initiative proposed in the fiscal year 1996 budget would better coordinate rural development efforts.
- Developing Business Activity. Initiate efforts to extend business development activities in rural areas through funding, research, and training as well as efforts to build on new uses of agricultural products and value-added processing.

CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMS

- Conservation Reserve Program Reauthorization. Reauthorize this highly beneficial program and allow USDA to proceed along the lines announced in December 1994 to permit additional program enrollments through the year 2000 that result in a CRP that contains the most environmentally sensitive lands. Encourage state and local interests to participate in

setting land-enrollment priorities and offer matching funds to help realize those priorities. Permit economic use of CRP acres, under certain circumstances, for a reduced rental rate.

- Wetlands Reserve Program. Amend this innovative, popular program by giving the Secretary flexibility in the timing of compensation payments and the authority to work with other agencies to ensure management efficiency, broadening eligible land to include critical environmentally sensitive areas associated with wetlands, and encouraging state and local interest through matching funds.
- Coordinated Conservation Assistance. Improve performance of the many conservation programs conducted by state and federal agencies through a coordinated assistance initiative that provides for: a simplified set of conservation technical and financial assistance tools; state and local conservation efforts supported by better national and regional guidance and planning, and site-specific conservation plans for farms or ranches developed in full cooperation with the producer.
- Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. Establish a private grazing lands conservation initiative as a coordinated technical and educational assistance effort to support the conservation efforts of private landowners.
- National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation. Create a foundation to foster effective, functional partnerships between government and the private sector, and to expand the ability of the Natural Resources Conservation Service to accomplish its mission and to develop innovative, long-term solutions to natural resource problems.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Emerging Markets. Refocus agricultural technical assistance and cooperation activities on emerging markets and link them to USDA's other export programs.
- Export Credit Guarantees. Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) export credit guarantees should target higher-credit-risk emerging markets that are undertaking economic policy reforms in conjunction with international financial institutions, and should encourage export of high-value products by dropping the 100 percent domestic content requirement.
- P.L. 480 Foreign Food Assistance Programs. Make the Title I program a more effective tool for market development through more flexible credit terms and increasing the variety of available U.S. commodities to establish long-term trading relationships. Increase Title III administrative funds for private voluntary organizations, cooperatives and international organizations. Authorize the Food Security Wheat Reserve to include a wider range of basic food commodities.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

- Food Stamp Program Reform. Redesign and reform the program to ensure improved program integrity, modernized program delivery, increased state flexibility, nutritional security, response to economic need, and demands for personal responsibility.
- Commodity Program Consolidation. Consolidate USDA's commodity distribution programs while expanding state flexibility to target assistance and streamlining administrative and procurement processes. This will save money, avoid confusion, and better serve the public.
- Enhance Nutrition Education. Increase emphasis on nutrition for the

general population, integrate nutrition education into all domestic food assistance programs, and work with States to implement nutrition promotion activities.

RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS

- Agricultural Research Facilities. Authorize a new Agriculture Research Facilities Study Commission and create a competitive grant program to support facility construction at 1862 and 1890 land grant universities to ensure adequate federal research facilities in an era of tightening budgets.
- Research, Education and Economics Policy Council. Establish a council to help improve linkages between USDA's agricultural research activities and related decision making and operations of the USDA action agencies dependent on Research, Education and Economics' research and education programs.
- National Research and Education Priorities. Federal research activities should evolve to reflect new national research priorities. Research should focus on: enhancing economic opportunity; protecting natural resources and the environment; having a healthier, better-educated citizenry; reducing risk for consumers and farmers, and enhancing global competitiveness.
- Agricultural Research and Education Partnerships. Strengthen Federal-State-local partnerships for USDA's research and education programs by establishing a competitively awarded matching grant program for applied research.

FOOD SAFETY

- Meat and Poultry Food Safety Reform. Meat and poultry food safety reform should be considered independent of the Farm Bill. However, reform must include the core principles of the Pathogen Reduction Act of 1994. The on-going reform efforts of the Pathogen Reduction/HACCP rule making process and other administrative actions should emphasize the modernization and enhancement of the inspection system.
- Pesticide Regulation. Modernize procedures for setting tolerance levels for pesticide residue, food safety considerations for children, registration procedures of minor-use pesticides, incentives for reduced-risk pesticides, and registration renewal procedures.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The written materials from the news conference may be accessed through AgNewsFax by calling (202) 690-3944 from a fax machine. Follow the voice prompts to receive the desired information. Written materials also will be available on the Internet after 10 a.m. through the USDA Home Page on the World Wide Web. URL is <http://www.usda.gov/>

Audio excerpts will be available after 5:00 p.m. EDT, by calling the USDA Radio Newslines at (202) 488-8358.

Photos of the press conference and the release will be available on Presslink, a member/subscriber electronic media bulletin board.

Release No. 0095.96

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Statement

by Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman
House Approval of 1995 Farm Bill Legislation
February 29, 1996

"Today's passage of the Farm Bill represents some improvement over the earlier version passed by the House Agriculture Committee -- particularly in the areas of conservation and exports, which are similar to the provisions approved by the Senate.

"The President and I both believe that new farm legislation is urgently needed for producers to make sound planting decisions. I would caution that the time constraints for new legislation created by Congress should not be used as an excuse for sending an incomplete piece of legislation to the President. And, this bill does fall short of what the President and I think should be in a farm bill -- such as provisions for nutrition, research, and rural development.

"In addition, the legislation, as passed by the House, would directly challenge the safety net that farm programs currently offer. And instead, producers would receive fixed annual payments, regardless of market conditions and with no requirement that farmers actually use their land for normal agricultural purposes in order to receive payments. The legislation in most cases also excludes new farmers from receiving these payments, thereby erecting barriers for young people who want to enter production agriculture.

"The Conference Committee must make improvements in both the Senate and the House bills before I can recommend the President sign the legislation."

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NOTE: USDA news release and media advisories are available on the Internet. Access the USDA Home Page on the World Wide Web at <http://www.usda.gov>

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Release No. 0261.93

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ESPY CALLS FY 1994 USDA BUDGET A CLEAR COMMITMENT TO RURAL AMERICA

WASHINGTON, April 8--The proposed USDA fiscal year 1994 budget demonstrates President Clinton's clear commitment to economic revitalization for rural America, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy said today in making the budget proposals public.

"While we all must contribute to deficit reduction, this budget clearly provides rural American families the basic tools to enhance their communities and the quality of their lives," Espy said.

"While we streamline and reform the U.S. Department of Agriculture to better provide services, we must also work hard to help rural communities meet the challenge of the next century. In only seven years, we will greet the new century and some in America still do not have running water in their homes. This must change.

"We provide increases for housing (\$800 million), health and fire and rescue services (\$375 million), telecommunications (\$50 million), water and sewer services (\$370 million), and small business investment (\$200 million).

"There are changes in farm programs," Espy added. "But overall they maintain their current structure and will continue to do so until we revisit the farm bill in 1995. One aspect of reform includes the creation of the Farmer Service Agency or one-stop shopping for farmers participating in the myriad of USDA programs. This reform should cut red tape for the farmer and cut costs to the American taxpayer.

"The budget also responds to the need of all Americans by providing 200

additional meat inspectors for \$10 million and an additional \$8 million to fund our new pathogen reduction strategy. We aim to rely on sound science to ensure that our meat supply remains the safest in the world."

Some of the other highlights in the budget include:

--An overall \$900 million in savings.

--\$350 million increase for the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children to serve an additional 400,000 participants.

--Three-percent reduction in administrative costs for a \$70 million savings in fiscal year 1994 and a savings of \$800 million through 1997.

--A \$10 million increase to develop sound policies to better manage forests.

--\$370.3 million to enroll 450,000 acres in a nationwide Wetlands Reserve Program.

"The budget proposal treats farmers and rural America fairly. It provides economic stimulus initiatives to renew hope in hometowns all across America. And it holds out hope to some of the neediest in our country," Espy said.

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Release No. 0575.93

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ESPY ANNOUNCES EMERGENCY FUNDS AND PROGRAM CHANGES FOR FARMERS

DES MOINES, Iowa, July 14--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced several program changes to assist farmers experiencing disasters and joined President Clinton in making a request to Congress for up to \$900 million for immediate emergency agriculture assistance and \$45 million for cleanup. This is part of the president's nearly \$2.5 billion emergency package.

"I've been in the region four times in less than three weeks and the situation is not getting any better. People need help and they need it now," said Espy, who was touring disaster sites in Iowa today with the president.

Today's visit to Iowa marked the fourth stop to the flooded midwest area by Espy who has been working to bring assistance to the farmers and communities affected by the disaster as quickly as possible. The agriculture announcements today are in addition to those announced July 6 including program changes and funds for disaster assistance (USDA release no. 0545.93).

The assistance for farmers will be at the same level provided to victims of other recent disasters such as Hurricane Andrew. The farm assistance portion of the request to Congress includes:

\$600 million for immediate disaster assistance to farmers. This would be in addition to the \$100 million already appropriated and released by the president. The assistance would be provided at the same level that was provided to victims of other recent disasters such as Hurricane Andrew;

an additional \$300 million in contingency funding which would be made available by the president if necessary; and

the president is asking Congress for authority to use funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation if the disaster funds requested are not sufficient to cover all the disaster payments.

The request to Congress will also ask for \$45 million for USDA programs for cleanup activities including debris removal and restoration of farmland.

The breakdown for cleanup funds includes:

\$20 million for the Emergency Conservation Program of the Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service. This money would be used for debris removal and grading and shaping of farmland.

\$25 million for the Emergency Watershed Program of the Soil Conservation Service. The SCS would use these funds to work with local communities in providing technical assistance and cost sharing for actions needed to open and restore water courses and protect homes, businesses, schools, road crossings and agricultural land.

The program changes announced by Espy today that do not need Congressional approval include:

The USDA is in the process of amending the Farmer-Owned Reserve regulations to allow producers to enter the FOR who did not meet the earlier deadline of April 30. Producers with warehouse-stored FOR loans would be allowed to rotate warehouse loan collateral with farm-stored new crop production.

Regulations are being amended to allow producers in disaster areas with 1992 wheat or feedgrain loans that mature in June, July or August the opportunity to request an extension of such loans to Sept. 30. Producers in disaster affected areas with 1992 soybean loans that mature in June, July or August would be given the opportunity to request a delay of settlement of such loans until Sept. 30.

The ASCS has been directed to expeditiously handle requests in disaster affected areas for release of Conservation Reserve Program acreage for emergency haying and grazing on a county-by-county basis. This will allow producers who utilize their CRP acreage for haying or grazing to sell or rent for unrestricted use. The annual CRP payment will be reduced by 50 percent for the acreage hayed or grazed.

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Release No. 0054.98

Fact Sheet

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S FY 1999 BUDGET:
ENSURING A SAFE, AMPLE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD SUPPLY

The President's FY 1999 budget demonstrates the Administration's continuing commitment to providing Americans with a safe and nutritious food supply. It includes an additional \$101 million to broaden the President's National Food Safety Initiative. These funds will be used to enhance food safety inspections, expand cutting-edge research, and increase foodborne disease surveillance.

The budget also acknowledges the continuing role the federal government plays in the fight against hunger, with a strong commitment to USDA's critical nutrition programs.

The spending plan:

Provides an additional \$11 million for the Food Safety and Inspection Service to expand consumer education efforts, develop voluntary measures to reduce contamination at the farm level, and help states adopt the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems.

Proposes \$26 million to support critically needed food safety research and education. These funds include an additional \$14 million to design effective pre- and post-harvest control programs -- and an increase of \$3 million for competitive grants to study food handling practices of vulnerable population groups and develop ways to prevent or eliminate food contamination. An increase of \$5 million is requested for extension food safety education targeted to consumers.

Broadens the scope of the Pesticide Data Program to include microbiological testing of fruits and vegetables, providing an additional \$6.3 million to generate a baseline of data needed to assess contamination risks.

Provides \$2 million to develop training workshops for local school food service professionals about the latest safe food handling practices and provide food safety educational materials to all school food authorities.

Restores \$535 million to the Food Stamp Program to provide benefits to an estimated 730,000 legal immigrants.

Fully funds the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program for an anticipated 7.5 million participants. The budget requests a \$149 million increase in the program level for WIC and an additional \$20 million contingency reserve for unexpected increases in food costs.

Provides \$20 million for a new community-based food recovery and gleaning program.

Proposes an additional \$3 million, a increase of 25 percent, to expand the WIC Farmers' Markets Program to additional states.

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NOTE: USDA news releases and media advisories are available on the Internet.

Access the USDA Home Page on the World Wide Web at <http://www.usda.gov>

Release No. 0053.98

Fact Sheet

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S FY 1999 BUDGET:
EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
FOR FAMILY FARMERS AND RURAL AMERICA

The President's FY 1999 budget would improve the quality of life for rural Americans by expanding economic opportunities in rural communities and helping rural businesses better compete in the global marketplace. Through financial and technical assistance for individuals, local communities, and rural businesses, the budget promotes a strong American farm economy.

The budget also reflects the President's commitment to a safety net for American farmers. Income support, farm credit, risk management, and other programs will help ensure the long-term economic vitality of American agricultural producers. The budget further promotes economic opportunity by developing and protecting expanded export markets for domestic producers.

Rural communities and American farmers would benefit from the budget's proposals to:

Fully fund the crop insurance program at nearly \$2.7 billion, expanding crop revenue coverage to protect against lower prices and production losses. If Congress acts quickly, the crop insurance program, USDA's primary means of helping farmers survive crop loss (or low prices), will be on solid financial ground.

Provide \$40 million for the Food Genome Initiative that will stimulate improved productivity and biodiversity.

Nearly double funds for direct farm ownership loans to \$85 million, reaching more than 1,000 people. The budget proposes an increase to \$500 million for direct farm operating loans, which will support loans to 12,000 producers, 40 percent of whom will benefit from limited resource rates.

Increase the farm ownership loan guarantee program to \$425 million, up from \$400 million in FY 1998.

Provide \$1 billion in direct home ownership loans, allowing more than 20,000 low-income rural Americans to become homeowners.

Help provide cleaner water supplies with \$1.3 billion in loans and grants for water and waste disposal systems, an increase of \$66 million over last year.

Fund a \$1 billion business and industry loan program expected to create more than 38,000 jobs in rural communities.

Provide funding for five new rural Enterprise Zones that will stimulate economic growth and a higher quality of life. A powerful influx of federal resources to assist local efforts can revitalize depressed areas.

Trade

Allocate \$6.4 billion for USDA's trade and export promotion activities, including \$4.6 billion for export credit guarantees to protect American agricultural sales in Asia and other areas experiencing economic instability.

Provides up to \$320 million for the Export Enhancement Program (EEP),

an increase of \$170 million from the FY 1998 level. EEP, one of two USDA export subsidy programs, enhances American agricultural competitiveness in overseas markets with subsidized sales.

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NOTE: USDA news releases and media advisories are available on the Internet. Access the USDA Home Page on the World Wide Web at <http://www.usda.gov>

GLICKMAN UNVEILS FY2000 BUDGET, CROP INSURANCE REFORM PROPOSALS

Release No. 0039.99

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GLICKMAN UNVEILS FY2000 BUDGET, CROP INSURANCE REFORM PROPOSALS

Touts new investments to assist farmers, preserve farmland, enhance food safety, and fight hunger

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1, 1999 Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today unveiled the Clinton Administration's proposed USDA budget for fiscal year 2000, praising its new investments to help farmers, preserve farmland, enhance food safety, and fight hunger. The budget recommends \$55.2 billion in spending, a 13 percent reduction from 1993.

"The President's budget invests in the future," said Glickman. "It expands assistance to farmers, preserves farmland and open spaces, intensifies our fight against foodborne illness, and helps feed America's hungry. And it does all this with significantly less money and less staff than we had at the start of this Administration."

Glickman also released a specific proposal to improve the federal crop insurance program. The proposal would significantly increase crop coverage, providing a more meaningful level of relief. It would also increase incentives for higher-level coverage, extend coverage to livestock and multi-year disasters, and provide better information and service to farmers.

"Last year the President used his veto power to win for farmers 40 percent more in relief than Congress originally intended," said Glickman. "That relief included a \$400 million downpayment on crop insurance reform and we want to build on it. We have a specific proposal for a more proactive, preventive approach to farm risk management. We want to work with Congress on the details and the funding, but we want it to happen this year."

Glickman highlighted a number of new initiatives in the budget proposal, including

Expanding assistance to farmers

The budget funds \$3 billion in farm loans, \$183 million more than in 1999. These funds will assist over 31,000 American farmers.

The budget proposal would expand research and development of new tools to help farmers manage risk. There is also funding for additional risk management education and outreach efforts for farmers.

Preserving farmland, forests and urban open space

The budget contains \$268 million to protect productive farmland, preserve forests and urban open space, and support smart growth as part of the President's Lands Legacy Initiative.

The Conservation Reserve Program will be expanded from about 30.3 million enrolled acres at the end of fiscal 1998 to about 34.4 million enrolled acres by 2000.

Further improving the safety of our food supply

The budget significantly increases funding for the President's National Food Safety Initiative and supports expansion of the science-based, meat and poultry inspection system to approximately 3,000 very small plants. The proposal would also enhance emergency response coordination with the states and allow the hiring of 250 new Consumer Safety Officers to conduct testing and inspections.

An increase of \$6.2 million in the Pesticide Data Program will fund microbiological testing of fruits and vegetables. This testing will provide a baseline to assess the risks of contamination in the U.S. food supply, helping USDA and other agencies respond more quickly and effectively to food safety threats.

Funding for USDA food safety research is increased by one-third.

Expanding efforts to fight hunger

There are \$10 billion in the budget for child nutrition programs, expanding meals for children in child care and after-school programs. A \$13 million pilot program to evaluate providing school breakfasts to all children is also funded.

The proposal contains nearly \$16 million in new funds to further empower communities to help reduce hunger through gleaning and food recovery. Funds will provide financial and technical assistance to non-profit organizations and collaborative efforts fighting hunger in American communities.

The budget provides food stamp assistance for 20.1 million people, including 15,000 legal immigrants who entered the U.S. before August 22, 1996 and have since reached age 65. The budget also continues USDA's aggressive efforts to fight food stamp errors and fraud and implement the Electronic Benefits Transfer system. And a new \$8 million initiative will improve payment accuracy in the food stamp and child nutrition programs.

USDA will expand the WIC Farmers' Markets program to four additional states and tribal organizations, improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables for WIC participants.

Protecting our natural resources

A \$126 million increase in funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program will expand financial, technical, and educational assistance to help landowners enhance soil and water conservation.

The proposal boosts the Administration's efforts to combat the threat of global climate change, increasing funding for climate change research by \$34 million. An additional \$16 million is included to fund the development of new technologies to help predict and adapt agricultural production to global climate change.

Growing the rural economy and expanding homeownership

The budget proposes \$11 billion, an increase of \$800 million, for direct loans, loan guarantees, grants, and technical assistance to improve the quality of life and economic welfare of rural Americans.

Under the President's National Homeownership Initiative, an additional 50,000 American families will be able to obtain rural homeownership loans from USDA in 2000.

The budget includes \$1.5 billion, a \$156 million increase, for loans and grants to provide over one million rural Americans with safe, affordable drinking water under the President's Water 2000 Initiative.

Investing more in research for the future

The budget contains substantial investments in research, including \$200 million for National Research Initiative competitive research grants. An additional \$120 million, the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems, will fund competitive research and education grants to address critical emerging issues related to food production, natural resources, and enhanced economic viability of small farmers.

The budget provides \$20 million for expanded nutrition research, focusing particularly on preventing cancer, heart disease, and bone loss. Additional funding is included to construct new nutrition research labs in Davis, California and Beltsville, Maryland.

Continuing vital USDA reforms

The new budget continues Secretary Glickman's commitment to civil rights, adding funding for the Office of Civil Rights to process cases in a timely manner and for the Office of Outreach to ensure that all customers share access to USDA services.

The proposal continues the Department's historic streamlining and restructuring, which are reducing field offices by more than 30 percent, while improving customer service. And the budget improves financial management controls and creates a unified system for information technology management.

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Release No. 0058.96

Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623

Statement

by
Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman
on Senate Approval of 1995 Farm Bill Legislation
February 7, 1996

"Today's passage of S.1541 by the U.S. Senate is a step in the right direction. I want to take this opportunity to express personally my appreciation to Majority Leader Dole, Minority Leader Daschle, Chairman Lugar, Ranking Member Leahy and Minority Whip Ford for all their hard work on this bill.

"S.1541 does not address all the concerns of the Clinton Administration. I remain concerned that the bill will continue to provide payments when market conditions are good and that it does not provide as strong a safety net for family farmers as we would like. However, the amendments adopted to the base bill are significant improvements and a good place to begin negotiations as the bill goes to conference.

"Throughout the process, the President and I have stressed certain priorities that must be met in the Farm Bill legislation, including: an adequate safety net for producers, meeting investment needs in rural America and permitting farmers greater flexibility to plant for the market rather than the government, a provision of the bill that we have consistently supported.

"We believe this bill begins to address those needs through the inclusion of the "Fund for Rural America," the continuation of permanent law and the funding for nutrition and conservation programs. The Senate bill also includes research, trade, rural development, and credit titles that were proposed by the Clinton Administration last year, and are critical to the competitiveness of U.S. agriculture in the international marketplace.

While today's action is a step in the right direction, the bill still does not fully address all of the Administration's concerns. I urge the House to take up the Farm Bill as soon as possible and make additional improvements, so we can get a final bill enacted and end the uncertainty for American agriculture."

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Statement by Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman on the President's Request for Supplemental Agriculture Funding - February 26, 1999

Release No. 0073.99

Statement

by

Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman
on the President's Request for Supplemental Agriculture Funding - February 26,
1999

"I applaud the President's leadership in once again meeting the needs of America's farmers and ranchers by asking for these emergency funds .

"These are tough times in farm country. Prices are plunging and a lot of farmers and ranchers are facing a cash flow squeeze this year. That is why the demand for USDA's farm lending programs has increased dramatically this year to 4 times the normal rate. As a result, we have already exhausted the money in some of our loan accounts and project that the others will run out of money over the next few weeks.

"Of this request, \$109.6 million will enable USDA to provide an additional \$1.1 billion in financing to farmers and ranchers through approximately 10,000 direct and guaranteed loans so farmers can cover their operating costs, finance their farms and equipment, and refinance their existing debt.

"With the additional \$42.8 million, USDA will be able to support temporary staff in its county Farm Service Agency offices to meet the overwhelming demand for services resulting from the current slump in the farm economy.

"I am ready to work with Congress to make sure it quickly approves the President's request, so our farmers have the credit they need to do their spring planting."

#

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ESPY SAYS USDA PROGRAMS CAN HELP LEAD COUNTRY IN NEW DIRECTION

WASHINGTON, April 20--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy said today the president's economic plan represents real change which gives rural America a shot in the arm and a chance to share fully in the economic revitalization of the Nation.

Testifying before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's FY 1994 budget proposals, Espy said he intends to be a loud and persistent voice for rural America. "Rural revitalization will be one of my top priorities," he said. "USDA programs can help lead in turning the country to a new direction."

As part of the rural development initiative in the economic plan, USDA is requesting significant increases for loans and grants for community facilities and rural businesses. These programs will provide jobs and services for families in small towns, Espy said. Among them are proposals to provide thousands of families access to clean water and sanitary waste disposal, and to provide 108,000 housing units, a 27 percent increase over last year. Also under the plan, health care facilities would be built and expanded, and fire and rescue services would be enhanced all across rural America.

Another major proposal is the creation of "one-stop shopping" for farmers. Espy said a single Farm Service Agency will be created from current USDA agencies serving farmers at the county and regional level. "The proposal would improve service for farmers while reducing staff needs and administrative overhead at the USDA national, state and local levels," Espy said.

Espy also said that in order to reduce the deficit, a number of programs will be targeted for reductions. Those changes include:

- making Rural Electrification Administration loans at Treasury rates while preserving loans for truly needy borrowers;
- charging meat and poultry inspection fees to cover all overtime work beyond the first scheduled shift;
- eliminating lower priority economic and agricultural research;
- targeting foreign agriculture market development activities where trade prospects are most promising;
- reducing direct farm credit but increasing subsidized guarantees;

--beginning with 1994 crops, limiting income support payments to those farmers making less than \$100,000 in off-farm income;

--limiting wool and mohair direct support payments to \$50,000 per person; and

--eliminating honey program subsidies beginning in FY 1994.

--reforming the crop insurance program.

Espy said he will dedicate himself and USDA to being a positive force in improving the economic health of America, particularly rural America. "I intend to work hard to ensure that people living in rural America have access to the basic services which other areas of the country take for granted," he said. "I will seek to reach out to all USDA constituents and become an honest broker for their responsible concerns."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Full text of Espy's testimony (release no. 0293.93) is available from USDA's News Division, Rm. 404A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone (202) 720-9120.



NEWS RELEASE

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Release 0376.00
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PRESIDENT CLINTON SIGNS FARM SPENDING BILL

Glickman praises needed assistance for farmers, but again urges 1996 farm bill rewrite

WASHINGTON, October 28, 2000 -- President Clinton today signed into law the farm spending bill for this fiscal year. The measure provides approximately \$3.5 billion in disaster assistance for America's farmers and ranchers, who have been forced to contend with drought, floods, fires, and low prices this year, including \$1.3 billion for crop loss payments, \$667 million for dairy market loss payments, \$450 million for livestock assistance and \$158 million for apple and cranberry growers.

"This assistance is sorely needed and we will be working hard to distribute it quickly," said Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman. "I know these funds will help prevent some small and medium size family farmers from going out of business."

At the same time, Glickman reiterated his strong desire to see a major rewrite of the 1996 farm bill "to provide farmers with a stronger and more reliable safety net instead of ad hoc disaster payments."

The appropriations bill also contains provisions sought by the Clinton-Gore Administration to help tens of thousands of the working poor. The measure relaxes restrictions on car ownership, so that people can access reliable transportation to get to work without sacrificing their food stamp benefits. There is also additional funding for food stamps outreach to help ensure that those eligible for the program are aware of the nutritional benefits available to them. The bill also includes funds to assist families using food stamps with high rent and utility expenses.

Glickman remained dismayed because, "Congress has again failed to honor the President's repeated requests to restore food stamps for legal immigrants, and to provide funding for farmland protection efforts."

The bill fully funds President Clinton's Food Safety Initiative, which has revolutionized inspections and helped significantly decrease foodborne illnesses, while continuing to fund expanded food safety research. The measure permits USDA to greatly expand its already substantial investment in rural America, increasing total rural development loan and grant funding by \$2 billion to \$13.2 billion. It also contains \$24 million in development funding for Native American communities, that have not shared in our nation's prosperity.

Glickman expressed his concern about a provision which takes away a USDA Under Secretary's duties managing our National Forests and Conservation Programs.

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GLICKMAN SETS CLEAR PRIORITIES IN FY 1999 BUDGET

Release No. 0051.98

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GLICKMAN SETS CLEAR PRIORITIES IN FY 1999 BUDGET

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2, 1998 -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today released the Administration's proposed fiscal year 1999 budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The \$54.3 billion spending plan reflects President Clinton's commitment to balancing the budget and streamlining government, while continuing to provide better services to farmers and low income Americans.

"This spending plan allows us to continue our efforts to ensure a safe food supply, combat hunger in America, protect our natural resources, strengthen the safety net for farmers, and provide economic opportunities for rural Americans," Glickman said. "This budget has all the right stuff and we will work hard to get it passed."

From initiatives to bring safe drinking water and the prospect of home ownership to millions of rural Americans to a far-reaching food safety initiative, the plan is a commitment to meet the most pressing needs of USDA's customers.

The proposed budget continues to reflect the success of the Administration's move toward more efficient government. It is 14 percent lower than the Department's 1993 budget of \$63.1 billion, a result of USDA's success in streamlining its operations, cutting its workforce by 20,000 FTEs through 1997, the strong economy, and USDA program reforms.

Highlights of the FY99 budget proposal include:

- Building upon the President's Interagency Food Safety Initiative with \$46 million in additional funding. The proposal includes \$11 million for the Food Safety and Inspection Service to continue to implement USDA's new state-of-the-art meat and poultry inspection system (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points system or HACCP), expand consumer education, and work with farms on voluntary measures to reduce contamination. Also included is an additional \$28 million for research and education efforts and an additional \$6.3 million to broaden the scope of the Pesticide Data Program for microbiological testing of fruits and vegetables.
- Almost double the amount of direct farm ownership loans -- with 18 percent of the loans targeted to socially disadvantaged farmers.
- Full funding of the crop insurance program.
- Nearly \$6.4 billion for the Department's international programs and activities, including \$4.6 billion for the Commodity Credit Corporation export credit guarantee programs.
- A proposal to restore food stamp benefits to legal immigrant families with either children, elderly, or disabled persons -- an estimated 730,000 additional recipients, at a cost of \$535 million.
- An increase of \$149 million for WIC, the special supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children, for a total program level of \$4.16 billion. This total amount will provide nutritional assistance for an estimated 7.5 million eligible women, infants, and children.

- A major commitment to food recovery and gleaning -- \$20 million for a new community-based grant program to help make sure food that might otherwise go to waste instead helps meet the needs of those Americans still fighting hunger.

- An increase of about \$150 million for a total of \$250 million to carry out the recommendations of the USDA Civil Rights Action Team report.

- An increase of more than \$450 million -- for a total of \$10.4 billion -- for rural development direct loans, loan guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

- Nearly \$2 million to continue to put in place the recommendations of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Agricultural Concentration, including increased monitoring and enforcement of antitrust and regulatory policies.

- An increase of \$37 million for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in its \$1.3 billion budget, a plan that continues to support locally led conservation efforts. That includes a \$20 million bonus fund that will be an incentive to encourage states to achieve higher levels of non-federal contributions toward conservation efforts.

- The NRCS budget also includes an increase of \$100 million -- to \$300 million -- for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

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NOTE: USDA news releases and media advisories are available on the Internet. Access the USDA Home Page on the World Wide Web at <http://www.usda.gov>

Release No. 0734.94

Jim Loftus (202) 720-4623

Statement

by

**SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE MIKE ESPY
ON THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSAGE OF USDA'S REORGANIZATION MEASURE**

September 28, 1994

The following statement was released today by Secretary Mike Espy:

"Passage of USDA's reorganization measure by the U.S. House of Representatives marks another major step toward reforming a department created in the last century and giving it the ability to better serve Americans into the next century. It is clear that the Clinton Administration and Congress have worked together to create the momentum necessary to make real change and reinvent government that serves better without waste. The U.S. Senate passed a similar measure on April 13, and we look forward to final passage in the near future.

"Under reorganization, we will streamline and reinvigorate the department inside and outside of Washington. We will reduce the number of agencies, cut red tape, make programs more user friendly and place a greater emphasis on food safety, nutrition and rural development. Field offices across the nation operated by various USDA agencies will be combined to reduce overhead and personnel costs and to provide one-stop service for the department's customers. Programs for farmers, long-bound by red tape, will be consolidated into one agency cutting out the bureaucracy.

"I want to thank and applaud Chairman de la Garza, Ranking Minority Member Pat Roberts and all members of the Agriculture Committee as well as the leadership and every member of the House of Representatives for moving this reform effort forward."

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Release No. 0308.94
Jim Loftus (202) 720-4623

STATEMENT

by

**SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE MIKE ESPY
ON THE U.S. SENATE'S PASSAGE OF USDA'S REORGANIZATION MEASURE**

April 13, 1994

The following statement was released today from Marrakech, Morocco, by Secretary Mike Espy who is attending the signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade:

"The U.S. Senate today took another step to cut away some of the red tape tied around the federal government by passing the Department of Agriculture's reorganization plan. This reorganization plan breaks an old bureaucratic mold and reshapes the department to better serve the public and reduce federal spending.

"The Clinton Administration is dedicated to reinventing the federal government so it is more efficient and streamlined. This reorganization plan takes a USDA created in the 19th Century and brings it into the 21st Century.

"I want to thank and applaud Senators Leahy and Lugar for their leadership on moving this bill through the Senate on a fast and deliberate pace."

#

Release No. 0201.94

Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

Statement

by

**SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE MIKE ESPY
ON THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION
AND FORESTRY'S MARKUP OF USDA'S REORGANIZATION MEASURE**

March 9, 1994

"The Senate's action means that for the first time since its inception by President Abraham Lincoln over 100 years ago, we are moving toward a significant reorganization of the Department of Agriculture that will downsize its structure, make its mission more responsive to its constituencies and save the American taxpayer real dollars.

"On behalf of President Clinton and Vice President Gore, I applaud Senators Leahy and Lugar for their leadership in moving this measure forward. This markup, and the recent markup in the House of Representatives subcommittee, demonstrates to the American public that reinventing government and streamlining are not just slogans but a concrete effort to change the way the government does business."

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Release No. 0458.94

Jim Loftus (202) 720-4623

Statement

by

**DEPUTY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE RICHARD ROMINGER
ON THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE'S PASSAGE
OF USDA'S REORGANIZATION MEASURE**

June 17, 1994

"The House Agriculture Committee last night completed an important step in the historic reorganization of USDA when it voted to pass Secretary Mike Espy's reorganization plan.

"The plan will give this department, conceived in the last century, the tools and the reinvigoration to deal with the problems of the next century.

"The Clinton Administration is committed to reinventing the federal government so it is streamlined and more efficient. USDA's reorganization will allow the department to reduce federal spending and better serve the American public.

"The Secretary has asked me to extend his thanks to Chairman "Kika" de la Garza, Subcommittee Chairman Charlie Stenholm and all members of the committee who helped to move this important package forward."

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Release No. 0736.94

Ali Webb (202) 720-4623

Statement

by

Vice President Al Gore

on the U.S. House of Representatives Passage of USDA's
Reorganization Measure

September 28, 1994

"The USDA reorganization bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives today marks an historic step by the Clinton Administration to make the department an example of results-driven government, rather than a bureaucracy out of control. The reinvention of USDA, a department that touches the lives of all Americans, will mean better customer and taxpayer satisfaction.

"I want to applaud Secretary Espy for his leadership in implementing National Performance Review standards and the hard work of the House Agriculture Chairman de la Garza and his colleagues. We look forward to final passage of the bill and the start of a new era at USDA, where government will truly cost less and work better."

#

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ESPY BEGINS IMPLEMENTATION OF HISTORIC USDA REORGANIZATION

WASHINGTON, Oct. 20--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today signed orders which begin the implementation of the historic reorganization of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The legislation which President Clinton signed into law on October 13 mandated certain provisions, but gave the Secretary broad latitude in many aspects of reorganization. The orders signed today represent the first set of decisions necessary to begin implementation.

"I have asked the employees and the public to join me in celebrating today the beginning of a new era for the Agriculture Department," Espy said. "Through this reorganization we will save taxpayers \$3.6 billion and improve service to our many diverse customers. I am proud of this legacy of change which has been the cornerstone of my work here at USDA."

Reorganization of USDA will also eliminate 14 USDA agencies, close 1,100 field offices, and reduce staff by up to 11,000.

The orders establish the organizational structure for USDA and designate the agencies and functions which are assigned to each position.

Espy announced the following appointments:

Richard Rominger, Deputy Secretary
Bob Nash, Under Secretary, Rural Economic and Community Development
Eugene Moos, Under Secretary, Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
Ellen Haas, Under Secretary, Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
James Lyons, Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment
R.D. Plowman, Acting Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics
Michael Taylor, Acting Under Secretary, Food Safety
Patricia Jensen, Acting Assistant Secretary, Marketing and Regulatory Programs
Fred Slabach, Assistant Secretary, Congressional Relations
Wardell C. Townsend, Jr., Assistant Secretary, Administration
Anthony Williams, Chief Financial Officer
Roger C. Viadero, Inspector General
James Gilliland, General Counsel
Ali Webb, Director, Communications
Stephen B. Dewhurst, Director, Budget and Program Analysis
Keith Collins, Acting Chief Economist
Fred Young, Acting Director, National Appeals Division.

Remarks

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

**Remarks Prepared for Delivery
to USDA Employees
by
Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy
September 7, 1993**

Introduction

Thank you for coming out this afternoon. I also want to welcome employees across the country who are watching by satellite.

I want to extend greetings from the President and Vice-President who this morning announced their reinventing government initiative. I'm here to talk about how we want to reinvent USDA.

Today, we must take our place in history - and I want to make no mistake about it - history is being made today. We the people of USDA are going to be the first in the ranks of a new kind of government that is vastly different from the old order. This is not just another President and another Secretary of Agriculture making promises.

Etched in the marble on the building behind us are the words of another President committed to change - Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's vision of service created the Department of Agriculture over 130 years ago.

His quote, permanently etched on our building - reads "No other human occupation opens so wide a field for the profitable and agreeable combination of labor with cultivated thought as Agriculture."

Lincoln's words are as true today as they were when they were first uttered.

Ours is a very wide field. Our missions include production agriculture, but also the health and nutrition of our people, the safety of our food supply, the care and nurturing of our environment, the quality of life in rural communities, and research, education, and economics.

Because we are such an integral part American life - Lincoln referred to USDA as "the peoples" department."

So as I see it, my first duty is to the people of this country - and I and the President and Vice-President have committed to them better service at less cost. My next duty is to you, the people of USDA. After all, you are the ones who will be most affected by the changes we are proposing. At the same time, you are the people upon whom our success depends.

The People's Department

As Abraham Lincoln said, this is supposed to be the peoples' Department. And we have to return it to the people. That means making some decisions about what we really need, and what we don't need.

In the peoples department, we don't need 43 separate agencies and staff offices when thirty can do the job as well and save us over \$1 billion in five years.

In the peoples' department, we don't need to spend \$500,000 on a yearbook that nobody reads.

In the peoples' department, we don't need to spend \$35 million a year in awards and bonuses - at a time when tax payers are being asked to pay more for less in service.

In the peoples' department, we don't need to spend \$20 million a year on administrative costs, by having 17 separate offices performing the same functions - just for the sake of being separate.

In the people's department, we don't need entire county ASCS office which serves on 15 farmers.

Ridicule

Those are just a few reasons why this Department - the peoples' department - is the object of so much ridicule - almost on a daily basis.

Those are just a few reasons why USDA has become the Rodney Dangerfield of the government - in the minds of many, no matter what we do, we can't get any respect.

When the public thinks of a department that represents everything that's wrong with government, it is us - USDA. When the press wants to find an example of a bureaucracy out of control - it is us - USDA.

Ross Perot keeps asking why we have this Department of Agriculture, with this huge \$62 billion budget, when only 2% of the people are farmers.

Well, as usual, there is a lot that Ross Perot doesn't know. And I'm going to educate him today.

But if we are honest with ourselves - we have to admit that - Ross Perot aside -much of the criticism we have received is correct.

Imperative for change

So we have to change. The people whom we serve have lost faith in our ability to get the job done.

They believe that we are wasteful. They believe that we are bogged down in too much red tape. They believe we have too many people doing too many things that don't make good sense - and they think we do it too many times.

The people are demanding a government that works better and costs less.

Employee input

And those of you who work at USDA, and employees at other agencies, are demanding change as well.

Over the past few weeks, our own internal National Performance Review Team has been getting input from employees throughout the Department. That team, headed by Dr. Alma Hobbs, is here today - and I want to acknowledge their presence.

They will make their recommendations on how to reinvent the Department in the next few weeks. They will propose that we streamline unnecessary rules and regulations that we oftentimes impose on ourselves. They will make recommendations on how to improve our human resources management system. They will make recommendations on how to empower you to get your jobs done.

Over 8,000 USDA employees responded to the internal questionnaire that our team prepared. Hundreds more of you phoned in and wrote letters, and participated in various forums and focus groups.

You shared your ideas on restructuring. You commented on moving us from a loosely connected collection of 43 separate agencies into a real TEAM USDA.

You shared your suggestions on moving us from 43 separate agencies, that can't communicate with each other electronically, and oftentimes won't communicate with each other verbally, into a real TEAM USDA.

Many of your ideas and suggestions are included in our plans to restructure the Department.

Retreat

Deputy Secretary Rominger, who also deserves tremendous credit for

bringing us to this point, and our entire subcabinet met extensively with the administrators and key staff from the 43 offices and agencies.

After we received your suggestions, the subcabinet and I spent some time in Annapolis.

We discussed how to streamline this department. We talked about how to define and focus its missions. And we debated how to best deploy our resources so we can best serve the taxpayers who are our customers.

Restructuring details

We believe this restructuring plan will help move this department from being the object of ridicule, to being the object of praise.

We have organized around six basic missions. We will consolidate many administrative functions. At the headquarters level, here in Washington, we will move from 43 agencies and staff offices down to 30.

Administrative services will be consolidated to reduce 14 separate support staffs into six administrative units.

At the field level, through collocation and office closings, we plan to reduce the number of field offices from 3,700 to 2485.

We envision a streamlined USDA - organized to perform the six primary missions of this department.

1) Improve service to farmers

Everyone knows about our mission to serve agriculture, to improve farm income.

We will do this by creating three agencies under the leadership of the Under Secretary for Farm and International Trade Services.

This plan will simplify and improve our service to farmers by creating a new single agency, the Farm Service Agency.

The new FSA will provide commodity price and income support, farm loans, and crop insurance.

We want to provide our farmers with one stop shopping. Merged into the Farm Service Agency will be the ASCS, the farmer programs currently under FmHa, and the FCIC.

To better help our farmers capture their share of the world market - we will combine the FAS and OICD into a new International Trade Service Agency.

Lastly, the National Appeals Division will combine appeals divisions of the FmHa and ASCS.

2) Make rural development a priority

The second mission of this Department is to promote rural development. I don't have to tell you how important rural America is to America. We have a mission to improve the quality of life in rural America, and by focusing our resources we do it.

We envision three agencies under the Under Secretary for Rural Economic and Community Development.

The Rural Utilities Service will combine the telephone and electric programs of REA and the water and sewer programs of the RDA.

The Rural Community Development Service will combine FmHa rural housing programs and RDA and REA rural community loan programs.

And the new Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service will include the business development programs that are now at RDA, REA, the Agricultural Cooperative Service and the Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization Center.

3) Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services

This Department's third mission is to feed those in our country who need help. And we all know that 1 of every 10 people rely on the food stamps that we provide. Our mission is to ensure that 24 million school children receive a healthy lunch.

When people talk about the \$62 billion budget of the Department of Agriculture, and wonder why we spend so much money when there are fewer farmers - they need to understand that 54% of our budget is spent on these food and nutrition programs.

By elevating this mission, and making the current Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services the Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, we will enhance the public's knowledge of what we are about at USDA.

We will create a Food and Consumer Service by combining the FNS with the Office of Consumer Advisor. Secondly, the renamed Nutrition Research and Education Service will focus our goal of merging nutritional education with our food delivery programs.

4) Emphasis on Conservation Programs

Our fourth mission is conservation. Again, people think USDA and they think farmers. That's important. But 3 of every ten employees we have work for the Forest Service - preserving and conserving our natural resources.

Through the national forests we manage, USDA is the largest providers of recreation in this country. How many people know that?

There will be two agencies under the Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.

A new Natural Resources and Conservation Service will be established by combining the SCS and the ASCS conservation cost share programs.

The Forest Service, for now, will stay the same.

5) Ensuring Food Quality and Safety

Our fifth mission is to ensure the quality and safety of food.

We think we can fulfill this mission with our current structure - even though we have already significantly moved to change the way we inspect and regulate to maintain and heighten the safety and quality of our food supply.

6) Research and Economics

The sixth and final programmatic mission of this Department is to perform the research, the economic analysis, and enhance the education that is vital to farmers and rural America.

USDA has traditionally been committed to strong research and education programs.

We will enhance them by creating three agencies under the Assistant Secretary for Research and Economics.

First, the Agricultural Research and Education Service will combine the present Agricultural Research Service, the Extension Service, the Cooperative State Research Service, and the National Agricultural Library.

Second, the new Agricultural Economics Service combines the Economics Research Service and the Office of Energy.

Lastly, the National Agricultural Statistics Service and the Economics Management Staff will also report to the Assistant Secretary for Research and Economics.

Those are the six programmatic missions, and the structure that we believes organizes us best to serve our customers and accomplish those missions.

Administrative services/ support services

The support functions will also be enhanced.

We now have a Chief Financial Officer to direct the financial management of the Department - and get us on the same page there.

And there will be a Chief Economist to advise the Secretary on economic issues important to our missions.

We will have a new Assistant Secretary for Communications - and the new Office of Communications will play a stronger role in delivering information to all of our customers - internal as well as external.

We have already made several changes under the Assistant Secretary for Administration - creating a new office of Civil Rights Enforcement from the old Office of Advocacy and Enterprise, demonstrating my commitment to ensuring equal opportunity and improving civil rights in this department.

When we say the peoples' department, we mean all of the people. And the peoples' department would not have to spend the \$16 million we spend now processing EEO complaints, which come in at a rate of 55 each month, from employees who believe they have been discriminated against.

We can do better than that.

Cost savings

All of these changes represent real cost savings for the tax payers who pay our bills.

Through these headquarters and field restructuring, we can save \$ 2.3 billion over the next five years - and we believe improve the service we deliver.

We can save \$20 million annually by consolidating administrative staffs.

We can save \$69 million by eliminating unnecessary office space.

We can save \$10 million by just more efficiently managing our motor vehicle fleet.

These are real savings - and we owe it to the people who pay our bills to achieve them and more.

Impact on employees

And yes, we can save, and should save, by reducing the number of employees that we have now doing the same thing.

Everyone here knows that we have to reduce the number of employees throughout federal government - and at USDA.

A significant portion of the \$1.3 billion in savings has to come from staff reductions, at least 7500, over the next five years.

Clearly, when we combine agencies, and consolidate administrative functions, close field offices and collocate others, we won't need as many employees.

That's just a fact of life.

Everything we do must be held up to the light of the 21st Century. Programs, policies, and yes, people.

Work to mitigate the impact

But I will assure you this.

I am going to use every avenue that the President and Vice-President makes available to try and achieve these reductions through attrition and retirements.

I'm supportive of the early buyout options being pursued by the President.

Committed to workforce diversity

And, even though we have to downsize - or rightsize - I want you to know that I remain committed to our goals of workforce diversity.

The American people demand a government that works better and costs less - and also a government that is truly representative of our diverse population.

So our workforce diversity goals cannot suffer while we reduce the overall size of this Department.

Empower employees

When this restructuring is done, when we reinvent USDA, this will be a better place to work for all of our employees.

A key element of the National Performance Review report the Vice President released this morning - one of the four pillars on which it is based - is that we empower employees to get the job done.

We simply don't need as many people telling you what to do, or watching you do what you do.

We just need to remove some of the layers of bureaucracy. We need to change this culture which stifles initiative and punishes creativity. We need to empower our front line employees to do what you are trained to do because you know best how to do it.

As the Vice-President said this morning, we have good employees trapped in bad systems.

Conclusion

Finally, it's important for you and I to note and remember that reinventing government does not end here today when I step away from this podium and you return to your offices.

Reinventing and reorganizing the Department of Agriculture will be an ongoing process, a process within which we must continue to look for waste; where we must constantly work to improve; and most of all, within which we must constantly strive to better our services to the American public in the most efficient manner possible.

When we walk away today, we must leave with the thought of why we were here on this lawn and why it was necessary to go through this reinventing process.

The changes we announce today are not simply change for the sake of change. It is change -- mandated by the American public -- brought on by years -- decades -- of satisfaction with the status quo, of a government that has not kept pace with the hands of times.

I firmly believe if we stay vigilant and if we strive to constantly improve our mission and most important of all, if we don't lose sight of why we are here -- to serve the American people and to build a secure foundation upon which future generations can build and develop - we can create a Department that every single American will be proud of and proud to support.

Dawn of a new century

You know, the plan presented by the President and the Vice President and by me here today is a five year plan. Five years takes us right up to the precipice of a new century -- the twenty first century.

New centuries are met with excitement and hope for what the future holds and the opportunities and challenges that awaits a nation in the next 100 years.

At the dawn of the 20th century, less than 40 years after President Lincoln uttered the remarks carved above me, there were untold challenges and opportunities. Challenges that you and your predecessors met and exceeded.

Challenges like improving agricultural production, challenges and opportunities in feeding hungry children right here in America and around the world. Opportunities to light the homes of Americans who knew only darkness every time the sun set.

With this new century upon us in a mere six years let us walk away today and use this plan to reinvent government at the Department of agriculture as the basis for those challenges and opportunities for this next century.

As I end, it was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said that "human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Even a superficial look at history reveals that no social advance - and I might add parenthetically no governmental advance - rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals."

"Without persistent effort, time itself becomes an ally of the insurgent and primitive forces of irrational emotionalism and social destruction." He said, "this is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action."

So you the employees and people of USDA must choose, as I have chosen, to commit yourselves individually and collectively to the greater good of the country. And I believe strongly that we can all grow individually and together if we are willing to accept the growing pains that must come.

Like the values of caring and sharing that farm families are known for, we will meet the demands and challenges of our time.

Thank you.

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United States Department of Agriculture

Reinventing Government: The National Performance Review

TEAM USDA SUMMARY

On March 3, 1993, President Bill Clinton directed Vice-President Al Gore to lead the efforts of his administration to change the way the United States government performs its work. Vice President Gore pulled together career government employees, and consulted with the best private sector minds to form the National Performance Review Team. The goal of "reinventing government," as outlined by Vice President Gore in his meeting with USDA employees, is no less than a complete change in the way we think about the relationship between the federal government and the American people. The National Performance Review Team report issued today (September 7) outlines how the Clinton Administration will go about creating a government which works better and costs less, while cutting waste and reducing bureaucracy. The report proposed a reorganization of USDA to better accomplish its missions, streamline its field service, and improve service to its customers.

FOCUS ON THE SIX MISSIONS

During his confirmation hearings, then Secretary-designate Mike Espy promised that USDA would respond to the call for change with restructuring of the headquarters, followed by a streamlining of the field structure.

Today, Secretary Espy joined the President in announcing that USDA would be restructured along six mission lines to create a streamlined and revitalized department.

At the headquarters level, the number of separate USDA agencies and offices will be reduced from 43 to 30. Administrative services will be consolidated to reduce 14 support staffs into 6 administrative units reporting to corresponding Under and Assistant Secretaries. Within each subcabinet area, management support services such as civil rights, procurement and personnel, will be consolidated to achieve more efficient operations and savings.

When fully implemented, the restructuring will realize an anticipated annual savings of \$43 million and a decrease in headquarters staffing by about seven percent.

THE PROCESS OF REINVENTING USDA

While the National Performance Review Team (NPRT)--including USDA employees--worked on the sweeping federal reviews, two USDA teams also were at work.

The internal USDA Performance Review Team will make its final report by the end of September based on input from 8,000 USDA employees as well as personal and group interviews and meetings.

The second team, under Deputy Secretary Richard Rominger and the Assistant and Under Secretaries, met with the key staff of the 43 offices and agencies. Their goal was to learn firsthand about each organization--what they do, why they do it, how they get it done and how much it costs.

From those meetings and the preliminary data gathering of the internal USDA Performance Review team, Secretary Espy convened his subcabinet. After two days of discussion, the headquarters restructuring began to take the shape of the plan announced today.

CREATING THE NEW USDA

The Secretary established several key principles that the proposal to restructure USDA must meet.

First, the new structure of USDA must improve the delivery of service to its customers. Second, any plan must remain consistent with the mandated missions of USDA. Third, the new USDA should make the department a better place for employees. Fourth, the new structure must save the taxpayers' money.

Both the USDA headquarters and field structure reflect the Secretary's strong desire to provide improved customer service. While the headquarters restructuring focuses on combining similar functions to create efficiency and better service, the field reorganization focuses on creating one-stop shopping for USDA's customers.

The new field structure will streamline the current ASCS, FmHA and SCS county offices to create new USDA Service Centers. Through collocation, common service and computer areas, the Secretary's plan will reduce the number of USDA field offices from 3,700 to 2,485.

BETTER SERVICE FOR FARMERS

Under the Under Secretary for Farm and International Trade Services, USDA will meet Secretary's Espy's goals of improving farm income, simplifying and improving service to farmers and ranchers. A new single agency, the Farm Service Agency, will provide commodity price and income support, farm loans and crop insurance.

Merged into the new Farm Service Agency will be the current Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, the farmer programs currently located in Farmers Home Administration and the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation. The conservation cost-share programs from ASCS will be transferred to a new conservation agency.

The integration of domestic and international farm programs will continue to be managed by the Under Secretary. The new International Trade Service will combine the current Foreign Agricultural Service with the Office of International Cooperation and Development.

The third new organization reporting to the Under Secretary for Farm and International Trade Services will be the National Appeals Division. This division will combine the appeals divisions of the current FmHA farmer programs and ASCS.

MAKING RURAL DEVELOPMENT A PRIORITY

To promote the President's rural agenda, Secretary Espy will focus rural development work in three new organizations reporting to the Under Secretary for Rural Economic and Community Development.

The Rural Utilities Service will combine the telephone and electric programs of the current Rural Electrification Administration with the water and sewer programs of the Rural Development Administration.

The Rural Community Development Service will include FmHA rural housing programs as well as RDA and REA rural community loan programs.

The Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service will include the RDA and REA business development programs, the current Agricultural Cooperative Service and the Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization Center.

ELEVATING FOOD, NUTRITION AND CONSUMER SERVICES

To reflect the importance of USDA's food and nutrition programs and related federal outlays, the Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services will be elevated to the Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services.

A newly created Food and Consumer Service would combine the current Food and Nutrition Service with the Office of the Consumer Advisor.

The renamed Nutrition Research and Education Service (from the current Human Nutrition Information Service) will focus on the Secretary's goal of merging nutritional education with USDA food delivery programs.

NEW EMPHASIS ON CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

A comprehensive program of conservation will be the primary responsibility of the new Natural Resources Conservation Service, formed from the current Soil Conservation Service combined with ASCS conservation cost-share programs.

The Forest Service, although remaining a separate agency, is now undergoing significant internal review.

The Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment will also administer the Office of Agricultural Environmental Quality which will provide guidance on pesticides, water quality and other environmental issues.

ENSURING FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY

While the structure of three agencies under the Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Inspection Services--the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Food Safety and Inspection Service--will remain unchanged, emphasis will be placed on aggressive regulatory actions to maintain and heighten the safety and quality of the food supply. One of the Secretary's primary goals is reforming meat and poultry inspection.

The Federal Grain Inspection Service will be combined with the Packers and Stockyards Administration to produce savings and keep the focus of each organization on its current mission.

RESEARCH AND ECONOMICS COMBINED

USDA's traditional commitment to strong research and education programs will be enhanced through the combination of the Agricultural Research Service, the Cooperative State Research Service, the Extension Service and the National Agricultural Library into the new Agricultural Research and Education Service.

The new Agricultural Economics Service will combine the current Economics Research Service and the Office of Energy.

Also reporting to the new Assistant Secretary for Research and Economics will be the National Agricultural Statistics Service and the Economics Management Staff.

STRONGER EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

A newly configured support team for the Secretary will include a Chief Economist, the Office of Budget and Program Analysis and the Office of the Executive Secretariat. Under the Chief Economist will be the Economic Analysis Staff and the World Outlook Board.

TIGHTER FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

The Chief Financial Officer will direct and oversee the financial management of the Department. The Office of Finance and Management will report directly to the CFO.

ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

To reflect the importance of one of the Department's historical missions, information dissemination, the Secretary proposes to raise the Director of Public Affairs to the new Assistant Secretary for Communications.

The new Office of Communications will play a stronger departmental role in delivering timely and accurate information to USDA customers.

BROADEN GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

To broaden the role of Congressional Relations to include all levels of government, the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs will be transferred from the Office of Public Affairs to the new Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations.

The Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs will have responsibility for creating strong relationships with Congress, state and local governments as well as with Native Americans and Alaska Native tribes.

COMMITMENT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN ADMINISTRATION

While the functions under the Assistant Secretary for Administration remain unchanged, the office dealing with Equal Opportunity and Advocacy is being strengthened and reorganized to reflect the Secretary's commitment to equal opportunity and fair treatment. As part of that reorganization, a new Office of Employee Disputes Resolution has been created to provide a more effective process for settling employee grievances.

In addition, the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization will report directly to the Assistant Secretary for Administration.

THE ONE-STOP SERVICE CENTER

Sharing of resources among the agencies of USDA is the primary thrust of the Secretary's new field plan. Consolidating field offices to provide better service is the goal of the new USDA Service Centers.

Providing customer access to all USDA programs in one "Service Center" will generate both cost savings and a more efficient delivery of services. Each new center will serve customers from areas ranging from one to six counties.

Under the Espy plan, each state will be assigned an optimum number of

USDA Service Centers to handle the field duties of the old ASCS, FmHA and SCS. Other USDA field offices are expected to be consolidated within the new USDA Service Centers.

Creating the new 2,485 Service Centers will result in the closing of 282 ASCS and 423 SCS offices, with the remaining 510 ASCS, SCS and FmHA offices moving to the new USDA Service Centers.

Bringing the field operations under one roof will help achieve the Secretary's goal of creating a "Team USDA" spirit among all employees. Sharing space, services and equipment will lower overhead costs while creating one-stop shopping for farmers and ranchers.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES

The new USDA will provide a better level of services at a lower cost through a more efficient use of resources. The Secretary hopes to realize \$1.3 billion in savings and a total staff reduction of 7,500 employees over the next five years, by implementing the new headquarters and field structures, with improved program service and delivery.

The Secretary has joined the President in an all out war against unnecessary spending. Some of the areas already identified include paring down USDA's current \$26 million publications budget, eliminating unnecessary office space, changing how USDA manages its motor vehicle fleet and applying new technology aggressively.

As a first step, the Secretary has pledged to achieve the necessary staff reductions over the next five years through attrition and retirements. He remains firmly committed to a diverse workforce. The Secretary supports the retirement options being pursued by the President, including government-wide buy-out authority.

HOW TO GET THERE FROM HERE

Some of the reforms outlined can be achieved using the Secretary's administrative powers; but others will require Congressional action or Executive Order. The Secretary has directed the General Counsel's office to formulate a legislative package to enact the new USDA structure.

Simultaneously, the Deputy Secretary is moving toward the implementation of all reorganization steps within the Secretary's authority at both headquarters and in the field.

Later in the month, the Secretary will report on the work of the internal USDA National Performance Review Team and release the complete plan for the USDA Service Centers.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (PROPOSED HEADQUARTERS ORGANIZATION)

September 7, 1993

SECRETARY

DEPUTY SECRETARY

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Office of Finance & Management

GENERAL COUNSEL

INSPECTOR GENERAL

EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS

Chief Economist

Office of Budget & Program Analysis

Office of Executive Secretariat

UNDER SECRETARY FOR FARM & INTERNATIONAL TRADE SERVICES

Farm Service Agency

International Trade Service

National Appeals Division

UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Rural Business & Cooperative Development Service

Rural Community Development Service

Rural Utilities Service

UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOOD, NUTRITION & CONSUMER SERVICES

Food & Consumer Service

Nutrition Research & Education Service

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

Forest Service

Natural Resources Conservation Service

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR MARKETING & INSPECTION SERVICES

Agricultural Marketing Service

Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service

Food Safety & Inspection Service

Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR RESEARCH & ECONOMICS

Agricultural Economics Service

Agricultural Research & Education Service

National Agricultural Statistics Service

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR COMMUNICATIONS

Office of Communications

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS

Office of Congressional & Intergovernmental Relations

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION

Advocacy & Enterprise

Information Resources Management

Operations

Personnel

Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization

Administrative Law Judges/Judicial Officer

Board of Contract Appeals

**QUESTIONS? Call 1-800-292-7294 or write to the USDA Office of Communications,
Ag Box 1311, Washington, DC 20250-1311.**

Jim Loftus (202) 720-4623
Martha Cashion (202) 720-3310

USDA CLOSES FIELD OFFICES TO SAVE DOLLARS AND STREAMLINE OPERATIONS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced the closing of 1,274 field offices to save money, reduce staff and improve service to customers of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"My dream of seeing an improved, streamlined USDA is becoming a reality," Espy said. "This field phase of reorganization, together with the headquarters restructuring announced earlier, will save the taxpayers some \$3.6 billion over the next five years, reduce staff by up to 11,000, and eliminate 14 USDA agencies. These changes will result in a government which is more responsive to its customers. I am proud to leave a legacy of change at USDA."

President Clinton said, "With the closure of field offices around the country, we are showing a true commitment to streamline government and make it work better and cost less. We are making a USDA that makes more sense for the customer and the taxpayer. I am proud of the USDA reorganization because it shows that, with a lot of hard work, government can be changed to do a much better job with fewer dollars."

Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont said, "Dick Lugar and I forged a bipartisan consensus to save the taxpayers \$3.6 billion. We and Mike Espy knew it was time for change and fought to make it happen. We will now have a better, more efficient USDA. It is now time for the rest of the government to step up to the plate."

Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana said, "As many of you may know, the deliberative process of these reforms has involved three years, two administrations, and many other voices. Now it is time for action. As incoming chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I commend Secretary Espy for proceeding with USDA reorganization. These reforms are an important example of how government can be more efficient and responsive to farmers and all citizens."

Since Espy took office, approximately 152 offices have already closed. An additional 1,122 offices are slated to be closed. These actions are part of government-wide downsizing and the historic reorganization of USDA which was proposed by Espy and signed into law by President Clinton on Oct. 13, 1994.

Of the total closures announced today, 1,070 county-based field offices will shut their doors and transfer their functions to USDA field service centers. The field service centers will provide service in one location for

customers of USDA's Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Other agencies such as the Rural Housing and Community Development Service may also be collocated in the field service centers. Before reorganization, customers had to go to as many as four different offices to participate in the programs run by the agencies which were then known as Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, and Rural Development Administration.

In addition to the restructuring of the county-based field office structure, other USDA agencies with offices throughout the country are closing offices and consolidating functions. At least 52 offices have shut their doors since January 1993; another 52 are being considered for possible closure by USDA. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Forest Service are streamlining their regional structures by going from nine regions to seven and consolidating administrative functions.

USDA agencies are also streamlining processes which affect customers. For example, based on reviews by a task force set up in February 1993, the Farm Service Agency has taken more than 30 actions to slash the paperwork burden to farmers and improve the agency's efficiency. More improvements will occur soon. The task force has identified more than 200 actions for improvement which will be implemented as regulations are updated. When fully implemented, the changes will save about 2.5 million hours annually of farmers' time in dealing with farm program issues.

These changes are a common sense approach to making farm program participation less complicated and burdensome, with more decision-making given to operating personnel. While most of the changes individually will not cause great notice, taken as a whole they represent a fundamental shift in farm program administration. When combined with USDA's reorganization and field office consolidation, the full impact of a more streamlined, farmer-friendly delivery system will emerge.

In addition to these actions, USDA will also be improving service to customers through the InfoShare program. InfoShare will fundamentally change the way USDA operates. Rather than operating as separate and uncoordinated agencies, USDA agencies will share integrated technology and will serve customers as a single coordinated entity.

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Release No. 0753.93

Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623
Tom Amontree
Mary Dixon

ESPY ANNOUNCES PLAN TO REDUCE BUREAUCRACY/IMPROVE SERVICES AT USDA

(Reorganization cuts number of agencies from 43 to 30)

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today unveiled his \$2.3 billion cost-savings USDA reorganization plan and gave a charge to U.S. Department of Agriculture employees to help reduce the bureaucracy and eliminate waste and duplication.

Savings above the \$2.3 billion are expected as additional reinventing government proposals announced today are adopted by the department.

The USDA reorganization plan will cut the number of agencies from 43 to 30, eliminate 7,500 employees over five years and put into place an organization to streamline and better deliver services. Of the \$2.3 billion in savings, \$1.3 billion will be saved through staff reductions and another \$1 billion will be saved through such cost cuts for travel, office space and supplies.

"Today, we have unveiled a plan designed to crack open the bureaucratic mold, improve the delivery of service and save money," said Espy.

"The Department of Agriculture has not kept pace with the needs of its constituencies and has not been responsible to the American taxpayer. The changes we are announcing will transform the department into a farmer-friendly, taxpayer-friendly model for responsible government."

Espy, who joined President Clinton and Vice President Gore for the reinventing government announcement at The White House, later addressed USDA employees about specific changes planned for the department.

Said Espy, "President Lincoln created USDA to meet the needs of our country in the 19th Century. President Clinton is recreating the department to meet the needs of the 21st Century and beyond."

The reorganization plan includes creating a Farm Service Agency that will cut red tape for the farmer and the creation of three new rural

development agencies that will eliminate duplication and overlapping functions that now plague the current organization.

The Farm Service Agency will mean one-stop shopping for the farmer by consolidating into one office the field programs that are now divided among four different agencies. The FSA will be housed in USDA Service Centers, enabling USDA employees in charge of different programs to work together in shared space and with a shared computer system. The number of field offices will be cut from 3,700 to 2,485.

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In addition, red tape will be further cut for the farmer by creating the National Appeals Division, which currently is divided into two agencies; and there will be a renewed emphasis on trade by the creation of the International Trade Service, which will eliminate and streamline the functions of two current agencies, the Foreign Agricultural Service and the Office of International Cooperation and Development.

While the current rural development agencies at USDA have unclear, outdated and overlapping functions, the new organization will end duplication and place a renewed emphasis on economic development, revitalization and the creation of jobs in America's dying rural communities.

The plan calls for eliminating the Rural Electric Administration, the Rural Development Administration and the Farmers Home Administration. While the three current agencies will cease to exist, many of their needed programs and functions will be retained while duplication will be eliminated in the new structure.

The plan's rural development structure calls for the creation of the Rural Utilities Service that will include telephone/electric programs and water/sewer programs; the Rural Community Development Service that will include housing and community loan programs; and the Business Development Service that will focus on business development.

Some of the savings anticipated by the reorganization include:

*Approximately \$43 million is expected to be saved in five years due to staff cuts in Washington alone.

*The 7,500 staff reduction is expected to save \$400 million annually.

*By consolidating the administrative staffs of all the agencies, \$20 million is expected to be saved.

***The elimination of the USDA Yearbook will save \$500,000 annually.**

***By cutting the number of agencies from 43 to 30, the department is expected to save \$1 million in the first year due to a cut in agency administrators.**

***Saving \$10 million by reforming management of the motor vehicle fleet.**

***Approximately, \$1 million is expected to be saved with the elimination of unnecessary travel to conferences and meetings.**

***With reform of the department's awards ceremonies, \$200,000 is expected to be saved annually.**

***Approximately, \$69 million is expected to be saved through the elimination of unnecessary office space.**

***Approximately, \$6.2 million is expected to be saved by collecting user fees, instead of using taxpayers money, for grading programs such as grading ketchup and pickles.**

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***By creating the Info Share System, a computer network that will allow computers in the field to talk to each other, \$10 million is expected to be saved by cutting down on the use of paper.**

***Currently, the USDA has an abundance of telephone outlets that are being paid for but not used. Espy has called for their immediate shut-down, saving \$2 million.**

"Many of the savings are obtained through simple common sense. They are savings that are long overdue," Espy said.

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Release No. 0319.93

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ESPY DICE QUE EL NUEVO DEPARTAMENTO DE AGRICULTURA APOYARA COMPLETAMENTE DERECHOS DE OPORTUNIDAD IGUAL

WASHINGTON, 27 de abril--El Secretario de Agricultura Mike Espy anunció hoy que como parte de sus esfuerzos para rehacer el Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA, sigla en ingl,s), el ejercer toda la autoridad que tiene en su cargo para apoyar los derechos civiles y de Oportunidad Igual de Empleo en el USDA.

Esta declaración coincide con la publicación de la nueva proclamación de la política del Departamento en cuanto a los derechos civiles e Oportunidad Igual de Empleo.

El reporte de la Comisión de Oportunidad Igual de Empleo de 1992, clasificó al USDA en último lugar entre las agencias federales en respecto al empleo de minorías y en lugar promedio en el empleo de mujeres. "Podemos y mejoraremos la forma en que en el pasado hemos contratado a empleados", dijo Espy.

"El elemento principal de rehacer el gobierno en este departamento es la creación de un ambiente de trabajo participatorio que permita a todos los empleados del Equipo del USDA ejercer sus potenciales totalmente, aumentando su productividad, y dando por terminada las actividades que desperdician los recursos humanos," dijo Espy. "Para lograr estas metas, USDA har todo lo posible por tener una fuerza de trabajo diversa, asegurando la oportunidad igual, respetando los derechos civiles, terminando con la discriminación, y creando un ambiente de trabajo libre de acosamientos que est n basados en sexo u orientación sexual.

"El Presidente Clinton y su administración entienden que este gobierno solamente puede funcionar propiamente si sus empleados son juzgados solamente por lo bien que sirven a los ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos," continuó Espy.

El Secretario Espy ordenó a todos los subsecretarios y supervisores que distribuyan su nueva proclamación antes de Mayo 7, a todos y cada unos de los empleados de USDA, en el rea de Washington y en las oficinas sucursales en

todos los 50 estados.

La proclamación dice claramente que USDA se compromete a apoyar los derechos civiles y de Oportunidad Igual de Empleo con acciones concretas que enfocan responsabilidad y resultados, no en el proceso. "Yo sé, que muchos empleados, en todos los niveles, están absolutamente comprometidos a las metas que aseguran oportunidad igual para todos en la variedad de empleos y programas.

- continua -

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Sin embargo, muchos también creen que las proclamaciones de Oportunidad Igual en el pasado, mientras que eran sinceras, no hacían cumplir las acciones de seguimiento necesarias que los mandatos de políticas importantes requieren," Espy dijo en su declaración de política.

La proclamación también incluye los siguientes mandatos:

--Los gerentes y supervisores serán evaluados por sus logros en Oportunidad Igual y derechos civiles. El éxito en esta área vital será un factor importante en la evaluación del trabajo de cada empleado. Esto será considerado para competir en premios monetarios y para responsabilidades futuras.

--USDA mejorar la habilidad de las oficinas de derechos civiles y de Oportunidad Igual para que logren las obligaciones de sus cargos a tiempo y con alta calidad. El sistema de quejas actual para Oportunidad Igual de Empleos será menos difícil y menos malentendida. Las unidades estarán diseñadas para aumentar--no disminuir-- la eficacia de las agencias para las cuales estas oficinas están asignadas.

--USDA crear un ambiente en el cual los empleados y los supervisores podrán discutir preocupaciones francamente sin miedo de castigo o retaliación. El departamento trabajará para terminar con la creencia que cuando una persona se queja de falta de Oportunidad Igual de Empleo, esto le afectará negativamente su carrera. El departamento no tolerará que ninguna persona se exprese abiertamente en forma racista o sexista en el lugar de trabajo.

--USDA eliminar la discriminación en los sistemas de información de sus programas. Se comunicará con grupos que históricamente han sido ignorados, y sistemáticamente asegurará que se les incluya cuando se ejecutan las funciones del departamento. El departamento se comunicará de tal manera que cualquier persona que pregunte o participe en los programas de USDA comprendan como los programas los beneficiará.

--"Esta política es más que una sincera declaración de intento. Es un compromiso personal de tomar las acciones necesarias para asegurar su implementación. Cada empleado, en todos los niveles, serán personalmente responsables por sus acciones de asegurar la oportunidad igual y de promover los derechos civiles," dijo Espy en su declaración de política.

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