

Release No. 0288.95

Statement

by Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman
to USDA Employees
Washington, D.C.
Friday, March 31, 1995

First of all, I want to give special recognition to the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Rich Rominger, who has done an extraordinary job at running this Department for the last three months and who will continue to be my partner and your partner in the Department of Agriculture. He deserves special recognition for what he has done. He has not only had to deal with the substantive aspects of the Department, but he's put up with my frustrations for the last three months as well. I appreciate that very much.

As many of you know, I served in the Congress for the last 18 years, but unfortunately, my constituents had other career objectives for me in mind in November of last year.

Now, we have a job to do--to make sure that the folks of this country know that we are on their side, that we are their advocates, and that we do understand that the taxpayers foot the bills. We are taxpayers as well, and we are going to do our best to serve the people as honestly and as productively as possible.

I determined not to have a formal swearing-in this room as has sometimes been done in the past. I determined that this meeting with employees would be the prime event, although we will also have a ceremonial event at the White House, either with the President or the Vice President. But I wanted to get down to work. I didn't want to spend the time or money for a public ceremony. But it was important to me to meet with you as soon as I got on the job, because I hope that we can work together from the very beginning during extremely important but also very difficult times.

As Rich Rominger has said, this is a transition period in agriculture, and it is also a period driven by tight budgets and extraordinarily difficult fiscal policy facing this country. At the same time, the work we do is critically important.

I would like you to hear Congressman de la Garza, former Chairman of the House Agriculture committee, tell his story of how long a nuclear submarine can stay underwater. The answer is--as long as there is enough food for the people in the submarine.

Because water and energy were boundless, but food was the limiting factor.

We have a story to tell about the significance and importance of producing food and fiber and, of course, the consumer side of that story as well.

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This is "the People's Department." USDA was founded by Abraham Lincoln to be a people's department--a department for all the people. I have met a lot of people--farmers, parents, environmentalists, rural residents, taxpayer groups, and elderly citizens around the country. A lot of folks don't know what we do, or they don't know that this is their department. And I think that is true of Government generally. So our job is to continue the process that President Clinton promised, to bring Government back to the people and to bring USDA back to the people. We have made a lot of progress in the last 2 years. We have succeeded because USDA is not just a department for the people but of the people. We have succeeded because of the work done by people in

this room and throughout the country who work for this Department.

When the President asked me to be Secretary, he asked me to do only one thing, to fulfill just one criterion, and that was to be an advocate for agriculture. He said that with the change in demographics in America (and as Deputy Rominger has said, more and more people do not live in rural areas) it is more important than ever for the Secretary to be a strong advocate for agricultural interests.

So I have determined to practice advocacy agriculture for our farmers, our ranchers, our consumers, and for the U.S. Department of Agriculture as well. It is my hope to be an active, loud, sometimes obnoxious voice, both within the White House and throughout the country, for the needs of agriculture and rural America--because there are a lot of loud, obnoxious voices out there on the other side. And it is our job to try to keep that in balance.

I am the new Secretary of Agriculture, but it is all of you and the other USDA employees throughout the country who are really the Department of Agriculture. As you know, agriculture is more than farming. It is food and fiber, it is toothpaste and medicine, it is writing ink and fuel filters, it is plastic and baby diapers.

USDA went beyond the farm gate in 1938, when Congress directed Secretary Henry Wallace to establish four regional laboratories. The Agricultural Adjustment Act directed the labs to conduct research and develop new uses for farm commodities and products, and some astounding things came out of these laboratories.

One was penicillin. During World War II, USDA was asked to find a rapid way to develop penicillin to meet the war's urgent medical needs. USDA scientists in Illinois discovered a more productive mold on cantaloupe which provided the basis for the modern antibiotics industry.

Another issue is xanthan gum. Anyone who uses salad dressing, cake mix, toothpaste, fruit drinks, pudding, pie filling or dairy-whipped topping owes it to USDA. All of these products contain xanthan gum, a USDA discovery.

Superslurper (I didn't know what this was until I got into this business), a corn starch-based polymer that can absorb 1,400 times its weight in water, was developed by USDA scientists in 1974. The powdery material is found in disposable diapers, batteries, body powders, fuel filters for gas tanks, and medical cold packs.

USDA developed permanent press cotton and cotton-blend clothing. In the 1940's and 1950's, the textile industry invented fibers to make permanent press fabrics. Customers moved away from cotton, which was, of course, bad news for cotton farmers. So USDA scientists in New Orleans developed chemical treatments and processes to give cotton wrinkle resistance as well.

The list is endless. USDA scientists have also developed biodegradable plastic from corn starch, printers ink based on 100 percent soybean oil, frozen concentrated milk for people who can't get to the supermarket often. I just read that latex gloves, tennis shoes, and baby pacifiers may some day be made from wildflowers. And I hope they can figure out something to make out of sunflowers as well.

You don't have to be a scientist to make a contribution at USDA. Every one of you here does something that touches the life of every American. Everyone who eats food, wears clothes, lives in a house, or visits a national forest benefits from what you do. And you also make sure that no child goes hungry.

But I think it is important to look at the future. Like every other

part of government, we are going to have to do more with less. Like everyone else, we will have to take our fair share of cuts to reduce the Federal deficit, although I think it is important to recognize that over the last decade, we have taken our fair share of those cuts. We will scrutinize our programs and continue what is effective and reform and change what is not.

While I firmly believe that our farm programs are a great success story, we should not be locked blindly into the status quo on every program that is within the operation of this department. We are not starting with the idea that we must dismantle what we have.

A lot of people are asking questions about the future of agriculture. The Department of Agriculture has been a source of strength throughout this Nation's history, and it must continue to be strong. But we can be strong and lean, as well.

With respect to reorganization, we have already begun to slim down through reorganization. We have set a standard for the entire rest of the Federal Government. This agency is always used as the model for what can be done. Streamlining was in at USDA before streamlining was in anywhere else.

As you know, we have streamlined Washington Headquarters by going from 43 agencies to 29. We plan to save \$4.1 billion by 1999, not from farm program cuts, but from administrative reductions. We have already eliminated a lot of positions, as many of you know. I know that this has been difficult in many respects. And we will continue to down-size sensibly and compassionately through attrition and through buyouts.

In terms of diversity, we will continue to make gains in diversity. We will continue the gains we have made. Much progress has been made in the last two years to insure equal opportunity for all. Our Nation's motto tells us that we are "e pluribus unum," one from many. We are committed to a department at USDA as diverse as the Nation that we serve.

I thought for a minute I might talk about some of the people at USDA. You always hear about Glickman or Rominger or some of the sub-Cabinet people. But I think stories about some of the folks who tend not to be in the news all the time is very important, and there are a lot of real success stories. Let me mention a few.

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Linda Garcia, Associate Director of Sonoma County Cooperative Extension, wanted to get California's flood victims coping information fast. She knew her Midwest colleagues had been through the flood of 1993, so she got someone to send her a box of materials by express mail. She had a disaster handbook from Wisconsin sent to her home, since the roof of her office was leaking. She quickly got copies to more than 20 regional and county offices in California. She included her home phone number. She is still getting telephone calls.

Tim King, a forester with the Soil Conservation Service in Idaho, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, spent many hours working to salvage timber and find tree seedlings to replant areas that were burned when a firestorm swept through several counties in Idaho and Washington State.

Shirley Ihnen, a personnel clerk with the former Farmers Home Administration in Indianapolis, developed an educational program on farm safety for youth in Indiana which she presented at schools, 4-H clubs, FFA and county and state fairs.

Elba Quintero, an entomologist with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in Harlingen, Texas, traveled throughout the State of Texas making presentations to dispel myths and educate the public about the African honeybee, the so-called "killer bee."

Galton Hulin, County Supervisor for the former Farmers Home in New Iberia, Louisiana, had his home and office destroyed by Hurricane Andrew, but he didn't complain. He didn't stop working. He worked out of his truck assessing damage and providing assistance to people in need.

These are just examples of tens of thousands of people who work at USDA, people who understand that they are in fact the people's department and go beyond the call of duty and beyond their job descriptions to work for people of this country.

I want to hear these kinds of stories. I will have an Internet address. I am going to have to learn how to use the computer before it will have much value to me, but I will do my best. I urge you to use Internet, E-mail, interoffice mail, fax, or any other method, not only to let me know about these kinds of stories, but also to let me know what you think is right and wrong about the Department of Agriculture.

The Congress expects me to do my best in leading and managing this department. Senator Lugar, Senator Leahy, Congressman Roberts, and Congressman de la Garza--who all have a real interest in making sure the department runs well--have given me the directive, and they are going to be watching to see how we do in managing this department and serving people. The only way I am going to be able to do that is to know what is on your minds. So you really should take me up on this offer, whether it is by walking through the building or sending an E-mail or fax or whatever else, to let me know what I need to know to help the place run better.

The last two elections have made it pretty clear that Americans have lost some of their what I call blind faith that their system of government works. The President and his Cabinet are working hard to restore that faith. Those of you here today who can make the difference in people's lives. One positive contact with a citizen on one important issue that is on their mind can make that kind of difference. The way you work and the results you get show that government really can work, that government can improve the lives of average people.

There is a need for strong agriculture in America. I am convinced that the ultimate strength of America is as much dependent upon our stability and production of food as it is on any weapons system produced by the military industrial complex. Both are important for a strong America. But American agriculture is a national asset, as important as a defense system, or a high-tech factory, or a financial institution, or a school or a communications network. And it is a national asset often taken for granted.

American agriculture is the foundation that supports our economy, our society, our productivity and our security. Too often, the accomplishments of our food and fiber system go unnoticed, partly because farmers and ranchers of this country work hard, are productive, do their work and are not the kind of people to go out and boast about what they do.

I will do everything I can to try to tell the story to the American people and to the world about the importance and significance of agriculture, and how much its spinoff and related activities do for this country. I will need your support and I will need your help and, working together, we can leave this century with a strong agriculture and prepare to enter the next millennium even stronger.

Thank you very much. I look forward to working with you.

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GLICKMAN REVIEWS USDA ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 1995

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20, 1995--Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today said the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under the Clinton Administration, has implemented policies over the past year that have improved rural America and helped the American public.

During this season, Americans young and old pause to reflect on the past year and determine goals for the year ahead. We at USDA are no different, Glickman said. So, as we end 1995 and look to 1996, I am pleased to share with you some of USDAs successes. We will build on these successes in the coming year as we work with Congress on writing and passing a new farm bill.

Over the past year, we've achieved significant progress toward expanding economic opportunities, enhancing the healthful, safe, and affordable U.S. food supply, providing sensible management of our natural resources, and ensuring good government for the American taxpayer, Glickman said. Highlights of 1995 successes are:

EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

U.S. agriculture exports hit record levels. Boosted mainly by a large surge in sales of bulk commodities, exports reached an all-time high of \$54.1 billion in fiscal year 1995 -- \$10.6 billion over fiscal 1994's level of \$43.5 billion. FY 1996 exports are expected to be even greater, reaching yet another record of \$58 billion. Agriculture contributes a \$24 billion trade surplus to the U.S. balance of trade. U.S. agricultural exports support roughly 768,000 jobs both on and off the farm. Nearly 23 percent of agricultural Gross Domestic Product is now earned from the export market.

USDA established a special action team to focus resources and attention on the growing use by foreign countries of technical barriers to trade. Many of these barriers take the form of sanitary and phytosanitary regulations imposed by governments simply to impede imports. An agreement with Korea resolved one such problem and will enable U.S. exports of meat and other products to increase by at least \$240 million annually in the near term and by up to \$1 billion by 1999. The agreement resolved a World Trade Organization complaint filed by the U.S. red meat industry against Korean shelf life regulations.

Through negotiations with animal and plant health officials in foreign countries, USDA obtained new markets for American agricultural products estimated to be worth \$34 million annually.

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The President's Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative, in its second year, greatly expanded the distribution of targeted assistance for impacted timber communities. A total of \$218,508,000 in assistance, ranging from jobs in the woods initiatives to business loans and grants, was utilized by seven federal agencies working in cooperation with state and local people through the community economic revitalization teams (CERTs). In addition to the development of an effective targeting system, the high level of cooperation between three levels of government indicates that the CERT approach is a good government model to consider

using in other regions. The three states, California, Oregon, and Washington have all requested a two-year extension of the initiative. After the first full year operating under the President's forest plan in the Pacific Northwest, the Forest Service exceeded its planned offer of timber by nearly 10 percent. The President's plan succeeded in ending legal gridlock and creating an environmentally responsible framework for sustainable forest management in some of the most pristine areas of the United States -- and the world.

b The Administration has designated 30 rural enterprise communities and three rural empowerment zones have signed Memoranda of Understanding allowing federal funds to begin flowing into the communities. The designations provide special consideration for various federal programs and other assistance, including social service block grants, new tax exempt facility bonds and tax incentives for employment. The three rural Empowerment Zones are Kentucky Highlands, Mid-Delta in Mississippi, and Rio Grande Valley in Texas. USDA is providing technical assistance as well as funding to help the EZEC's achieve their development goals.

b USDA focused attention on competition in some sectors vital to American producers. Studies were either completed or underway in 1995 to examine competition in areas such as the railroad and meat packing industries. USDA aggressively pursued enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act including filing an administrative complaint against IBP, Inc. charging the company with unjustly discriminatory practices and giving an unreasonable preference.

b The Administration is committed to improving daily life in rural America. For example, in FY '95 USDA funded Distance Learning/Medical Link projects in 300 educational facilities that were used by 150,000 students and in 100 medical facilities that were better able to treat 60,000 patients. In 1995 USDA also financed over 1,000 water and waste disposal projects in low income rural areas providing service to 835,380 rural residents, including \$23 million in projects in the Colonias -- providing first time service to many residents in this economically distressed area along the Mexican border. And, in FY 95, USDA assisted more than 90,000 families and individuals purchase or rent housing. Through USDA's rural economic and community development programs, more than 80,000 jobs were created or saved in 1995.

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b The Forest Service exceeded its FY 95 salvage timber sale target by nearly twenty percent in implementing the 1995 Rescission Act timber salvage sale provisions. By the beginning of November 95, the FS had offered 1.851 billion board feet for sale nationally, exceeding the original goal of 1.57 billion board feet.

b USDA signed its 500th Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with an industry partner, demonstrating USDA's leadership in government efforts to accelerate the flow of public research to the private sector for commercial development and broad public benefit. The 500th CRADA was with the Mycotech Corporation, of Butte, Montana, and pertains to the development of a biological alternative to chemical insecticides for control of the silverleaf whitefly, a devastating insect pest of food and fiber crops in the southern United States. This biocontrol agent is now in commercial production and is being tested by field application on private farms.

HEALTHY, SAFE AND AFFORDABLE FOOD SUPPLY

- p USDA took significant steps to take advantage of the latest science and technology to ensure the continued safety of the U.S. food supply. In early 1995, USDA proposed significant reform of the meat and poultry inspection system through the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and the Pathogen Reduction proposed rule. USDA conducted extensive dialogue on the proposal with government, industry, producer, and consumer groups, and is currently working to issue a final rule to reform the meat and poultry inspection system and improve food safety.
- p USDA launched a comprehensive plan to aggressively fight food stamp fraud, including a 13-point anti-fraud legislative proposal and administrative actions such as Operation Checkout, a cooperative effort of the Food and Consumer Service and the Inspector General's office to identify and remove unauthorized stores from the program through ongoing retailer "sweeps" in cities across the nation. More than 1,400 stores across the country have been removed so far.
- p The School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children final rule was published updating the nutrition standards for the meals served to 25 million children in 92,000 schools across the country. Beginning in the 1996 school year, school meals will meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and are expected to be more appealing to children.
- p The first roundtable on gleaning and food rescue hosted by USDA brought leaders and representatives from the public, private industry and the federal government together to exchange information, expand networks, and enhance systems for using rescued food to feed hungry Americans.

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SENSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- p In 1995, USDA met a 10 year objective to work with farmers of highly erodible cropland to implement the most successful soil erosion reduction program in the nation's history. As a result, the nation's 100 million acres of highly erodible land is now protected from excessive erosion. And, annual erosion savings are expected to average 1 billion tons a year.
- p The most recent sign-up of The Conservation Reserve Program was targeted toward the most environmentally-sensitive land. The popularity of the program was demonstrated when, in the most recent sign-up in September of 1995, more than two-and-one-half times as many acres were bid than could be accepted under current law.
- p After a meeting with representatives of the Quincy Library Group in mid-November, USDA pledged a \$4.7 million funding package to improve forest health and reduce fire risk on national forest lands in the QLG area. The pledge is in addition to the funding the forests anticipate receiving for these activities in FY 1996. This community-based organization is concerned with the health and fire hazards of their surrounding national forests, and serves as an excellent example of a local community working with the Forest Service in making suggestions about resource management and expanding economic opportunities.
- Members of the Forest Service's Americorps team in 1995 constructed or maintained 682 miles of trails, protected 2,599 acres of wildlife habitat, improved 668 acres of timber stand, built or rehabilitated 446 campground sites, improved 760 acres of fisheries habitat, restored fire-damaged areas by planting 93,500 willow cuttings, and provided conservation education to 88,373 students in grades K-12.

GOOD GOVERNMENT

- p President Clinton's reorganization of USDA will achieve a savings of \$4.1 billion by 1999 through a number of actions, including: reducing staff by 13,000; reducing the number of agencies from 43 to 29; replacing 3,700 field office locations with 2,536 Service Centers; and consolidating administrative management functions. Staff year reductions and the savings resulting from those reductions are ahead of schedule, with USDA already down by 10,000 staff years since 1993 for a savings of more than \$900 million.
- p USDA has eased the regulatory burden on stakeholders by eliminating more than 1,700 pages and reinventing more than 1,300 pages of federal code.
- p Following enactment of landmark crop insurance reform legislation in October of 1994, farmers participated in record numbers in the risk management effort with nearly 80 percent of farm program acreage covered by the basic catastrophic plan. A total of 2.5 million individual policies were in place for the 1995 crop, up from about 800,000 a year earlier. Due to the wet weather in the spring of 1995, USDA made a number of changes to the crop insurance program to make it more responsive to farmers' needs. Because of the poor weather conditions of 1995, indemnities paid to producers are estimated to be \$1.6 billion.

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USDA ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 1996

Release No. 0644.96

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GLICKMAN HIGHLIGHTS USDA ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 1996

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19, 1996--Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today recapped the past year's accomplishments as the U.S. Department of Agriculture prepared to implement new policies in conservation, farm, and food assistance programs ordered by last year's sweeping legislative changes.

"This is the season for reflecting on the past year as we set goals for the year ahead," Glickman said. "We've seen dramatic expansion of economic and trade opportunities. We also have revolutionized and modernized a 90-year-old meat and poultry inspection system; we've strengthened wetlands and environmental protections and enhanced conservation practices to safeguard U.S. farmland and natural resources. Most producers now, for the first time, have the security of crop insurance protection, and investments in agricultural research are paying dividends for Americans."

Glickman added, "We've updated the Dietary Guidelines for Americans to reflect current nutrition science, and we're continuing to implement the most comprehensive nutrition education program in USDA history."

The Administration was successful in negotiating a Farm Bill that strengthened conservation and environmental programs, set aside additional funds for rural development and agricultural research programs, reauthorized nutrition programs for another two years, and provided farmers the flexibility they need to plant for the market, rather than government farm programs.

EXPANDING ECONOMIC AND TRADE OPPORTUNITIES

U.S. agricultural exports set new records in FY96 at \$59.8 billion, posting more than a 50-percent increase over 1991 and double the level of 10 years ago. Agriculture products are the most significant contributors to the U.S. balance of trade, with a positive net trade surplus of an estimated \$27.4 billion. In 1996, U.S. agricultural exports supported 1 million jobs both on and off the farm, one-third of them in rural areas.

USDA has helped open new markets and expand existing markets and now exports apples and cherries to China and Japan -- estimated to be worth about \$110 million annually. USDA successfully rolled back a proposal that would have effectively closed the Russian poultry market, preserving approximately \$700 million in exports.

USDA enrolled nearly 99 percent of eligible producers in the new Farm Bill in just 60 days. The number of farm loans increased in FY96, and loan obligations to beginning farmers increased more than 56 percent.

USDA is working to bring foreign sales opportunities home for American farmers and exporters, especially small and medium-sized firms and cooperatives. USDA expanded its outreach and information efforts to educate U.S. businesses about the tremendous potential of the international marketplace. The goal of this effort is to provide marketing know-how and expertise at the grassroots level. A key component is the location of export advisors at the state level -- at the California, Colorado, and Oregon State Departments of Agriculture and the Iowa State Office of USDA's Farm Service Agency.

In 1996, USDA carefully monitored the first year of the Uruguay Round agreement to ensure implementation of the negotiated agricultural trade benefits. USDA helped negotiate a bilateral agricultural trade agreement with Israel that creates new market opportunities for a variety of dairy, livestock, and horticultural products. USDA also worked with the U.S. Trade Representative's office to resolve trade issues with a number of countries to maintain and expand important markets for U.S. agriculture.

USDA continues to refine and expand all of its export programs and services to meet changing demands of the international marketplace and keep pace with the competition. In 1996, USDA launched a new export credit guarantee program designed to help expand exports of processed and other high-value products.

USDA helped launch new risk management tools, filling the gaps in the farm safety net the Farm Bill left. USDA expanded the crop insurance tools available to farmers as part of the Administration's commitment to maintain a safety net for producers. In July, USDA announced the creation of the Income Protection and the Crop Revenue Coverage programs. The IP and the CRC are designed to help farmers protect against both price and yield losses. In December, USDA again expanded IP and CRC coverage and approved the Revenue Assurance program, a new insurance plan that also provides protection against revenue loss due to low prices, yields, or a combination of the two.

The Clinton Administration's Water 2000 initiative provided nearly \$70 million in loans and grants which bring clean, safe, running water to more than 145,000 rural Americans and about 50,000 households. In total, almost \$700 million in loans and \$400 million in grants were provided in 1996 for water and waste disposal projects.

The department continues to aggressively fight concentration in railroad and meat packing industries. From January 1995 to the present, 86 decisions and orders have been issued under the Packers and Stockyards Act against 170 individuals and firms. In addition to assessing civil penalties totaling more than \$443,000, these orders contained 230 cease and desist provisions which involved mostly unfair and anticompetitive trade practices. USDA announced new price reporting initiatives to provide information about market forces affecting livestock prices.

More than \$54 million went to 3 rural empowerment zones and 30 enterprise communities in the past year through USDA loans and grants that fund economic opportunity and services to the community. USDA also delivered 733 pieces of computer equipment valued at nearly \$1.5 million to schools and nonprofits in these areas and helped connect the schools and communities to the World Wide Web.

USDA-sponsored research continues to help U.S. agricultural products compete in world markets and farmers, ranchers, exporters, and businesses improve their productivity and increase their economic viability by bringing new products to the marketplace, such as Z-Trim, an all-natural, high-fiber fat replacer.

USDA worked with private sector partners in more than 650 instances to develop technologies that were transferred to private industry for commercialization. Products currently available as a result of this effort include BioSave, a natural protection for fruit rot; ASPIRE, a biological control against post-harvest diseases of apples and pears; BioVector-355, Devour, and VectorMC, products based on a method to control pests in a variety of settings from citrus groves to golf courses.

ENSURING A HEALTHY, SAFE, AFFORDABLE FOOD SUPPLY

The President announced the most substantive overhaul of the country's meat and poultry inspection system in 90 years. Based on science, the food safety strategy is designed to reduce the risk of illness from bacterial contamination of meat and poultry products. The overhaul changes the inspection system from command-and-control supervision of industry to a performance-based system. The new strategy requires implementation of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system, called HACCP which tests for bacteria -- like E. coli 0157:H7.

In his radio address during Thanksgiving, President Clinton directed federal agencies to follow USDA's lead by practicing and promoting gleaning and food recovery. USDA issued A Citizen's Guide to Food Recovery, available in hard copy and on the World Wide Web at www.usda.gov, to help individuals and communities get involved. Information on food recovery is also available by calling USDA's food recovery hotline at 1-800-GLEAN-IT.

Members of USDA's AmeriCorps program recovered over 1,000 tons of excess food which provided an estimated 1.3 million meals. AmeriCorps members in the program recruited over 1,600 non-compensated community volunteers who helped pick, collect, and distribute the excess food.

Thanks to USDA, more Americans are shopping at farmers' markets, providing new opportunities for small farmers across the country. USDA's 1996 Farmers' Markets Survey Report found that nearly a million consumers visit farmers' markets, resulting in sales of approximately \$1.1 billion annually. The number of farmers' markets has increased nearly 40 percent since 1994, a roster of which were included in the 1996 edition of the National Farmers' Market Directory, a state-by-state listing of near \$140 million in food stamp and WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program benefits are redeemed at authorized farmers' markets.

USDA's School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children went into effect in September, ensuring that school meals meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This initiative will improve children's health, increase life expectancy, and result in long-term savings for taxpayers of between \$4.4 billion and \$26.5 billion over 20 years.

In 1996, Team Nutrition brought more than 15,000 schools into the program, reaching more than 8.5 million children through state-of-the-art curricula and at home. Team Nutrition, the most sweeping nutrition education effort in the department's history, provides technical assistance to schools to help ensure they meet the Dietary Guidelines.

Participation in the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children has expanded nearly 30 percent, from 5.7 million in at the start of FY93 to 7.4 million at the end of FY96. President Clinton's goal is for all women, infants, and children who are eligible for WIC benefits to get them.

SENSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The 1996 Farm Bill expanded the department's conservation tool kit by creating new programs such as the Environmental Quality Improvement Program, or EQIP; the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, or WHIP; and the Farmland Protection Program. The Farm Bill also enabled USDA to refocus existing conservation programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program, or CRP, and the Wetlands Reserve Program. The conservation steps taken in 1996 establish USDA as the government's leading conservation organization.

USDA has proposed new policies for the CRP to expand the types of land covered by the CRP and target the most environmentally sensitive cropland to approved conservation uses for 10 years.

During 1996, USDA enrolled approximately 99,000 acres of high-quality wetlands and associated lands beneficial to waterfowl and other migratory birds in the Wetlands Reserve Program, a voluntary program that offers landowners financial incentives to restore wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal agricultural land.

USDA has begun implementation of a new wildlife habitat restoration program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, or WHIP. It provides technical and cost-share assistance to landowners to develop improved wildlife habitat, under 10-year contracts, with total cost-share amounts not to exceed \$10,000 per contract.

Under the Farmland Protection Program, USDA gave \$14.5 million to 18 states to help keep productive farmland in use, protecting at least 50,000 acres of valuable farmland on 103 farms in 18 states. Through leveraging with state and local funds, the \$14.5 million will make about \$55 million available to protect the best U.S. farmland. Total funding for this program is \$35 million over 6 years.

Congress accepted USDA's proposed new Environmental Quality Incentive Program, or EQIP, in the 1996 Farm Bill. USDA may provide cost share assistance for up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices on farms and ranches, such as grassed waterways, filter strips, manure management facilities, capping abandoned wells and wildlife habitat enhancement. Total cost-share and incentive payments are limited to \$10,000 per person per year and \$50,000 for the length of a contract.

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT AND SAVING MONEY

USDA's annual appropriations bill reflected Administration priorities and was the first one completed in 1996. Because of this, USDA avoided the disruption caused by the government shutdown.

To combat food stamp fraud, USDA proposed a comprehensive 13-point anti-fraud legislative proposal attacking retailer trafficking, strengthening authorization controls and allowing for stiffer penalties. Congress accepted the components of the proposal, with 22 sweeps in 14 cities across the country.

Thirteen states are already saving taxpayer dollars as they deliver food stamps to recipients through electronic benefits transfer, or EBT. Almost 15 percent of food stamp benefits are now delivered through EBT, and another 24 states are working to implement EBT.

USDA reinvented its single family rural housing direct loan program, moving from a costly, inefficient system to a program using state-of-the-art technology, re Loan Origination and Servicing expects to save taxpayers \$250 million over 5 years and an additional \$100 million per year thereafter. DLOS was recently awarded Vice President Gore's Hammer Award for government reinvention.

The massive reorganization of USDA has reduced its number of agencies from 43 to 30 and reduced staff years by 13,500. Projections indicate savings of more than \$4 billion by 1999. The department has closed or co-located a total of 830 offices in 715 counties in the past year.

USDA has reduced red tape, eliminating 80,000 pages of forms and 61,183 internal management regulations -- a 51 percent reduction.

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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 BUILDING A LEGACY FOR CONSUMERS AND FARMERS WITH 1997

Release No. 0450.97

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GLICKMAN BUILDING A LEGACY FOR CONSUMERS AND FARMERS WITH 1997
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19, 1997--Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today revisited the many accomplishments of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) during 1997.

Looking back on a busy year, Agriculture Secretary Glickman recounted the Department's accomplishments, specifically advancing the war on hunger, taking America's conservation efforts to new levels, working to modernize and improve food safety, and creating a new day for civil rights at USDA.

Secretary Glickman said, "The public often perceives USDA as an agency that only serves a small number of people working on America's farms. Production agriculture is and will always be the heart of what we do at USDA, but what this Department has done during 1997 shows that the work we do affects every American -- on and off the farm -- every day. I am proud of the service that USDA has given our nation this year."

The milestones for the past year include:

-increasing production, trade, and opportunities for family farmers, USDA:

Efforts ensured that U.S. agriculture exports maintained near record levels of \$57.4 billion, the second highest rate ever. New markets for U.S. agriculture products were opened around the world, including rice to Honduras, pork to Venezuela, grapes to China, and tomatoes to Japan. In addition, the export surplus remained a robust \$21.6 billion.

Worked with farmers to ensure strong harvests in 1997. The wheat crop featured record yields in winter wheat, and was the largest overall wheat crop in the 1990s. The corn crop was the third largest ever, and soybean yields were at a record high.

Net farm income remains at near record levels with cash receipts totaling almost \$200 billion.

Proposed the first federal regulations governing national organic agriculture standards. These rules strengthen one of the fastest growing segments of the agriculture economy. These standards will greatly expand market opportunities for America's small and medium-sized farmers.

Provided direct operating and farm ownership loans totaling \$233 million to 4,247 beginning farmers -- a 20 percent increase over FY 1996.

The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) approved the expansion of Crop Revenue Coverage (CRC), a privately developed revenue insurance product, for corn, cotton, grain sorghum and wheat. CRC is now available on almost 90 percent of the corn, wheat, cotton, soybeans, and grain sorghum acres in the U.S.

Responded to natural disasters, including blizzards, droughts,

flooding, and tornados, with emergency relief and funding.

Hosted 10 farmers' markets with vendors from seven states at USDA in Washington. Facilitated the establishment of an additional 23 farmers markets' in coordination with the Department of Energy, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Transportation.

-providing more tools for the wise stewardship of the land -- making CRP more environmentally sensitive and sound, and other conservation commitments, USDA:

Enrolled nearly 17 million acres of America's most environmentally sensitive lands for protection in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Started the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to build on CRP efforts and combine them with the goals and funding of state governments. The program was first established in Maryland targeting an additional 100,000 acres. Many additional states have applied to participate in CREP.

Accepted over 23,000 contracts, totaling \$171 million, providing cost-share assistance for conservation enhancements as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Announced the new National Conservation Buffer Initiative which will help landowners install 2 million miles of conservation buffers by the year 2002.

Sponsored the Lake Tahoe Summit, as part of President Clinton's commitment to this national treasure. The Summit improved environmental protection coordination between Federal, state, and tribal agencies.

-feeding more children and families, through making food recovery a national priority, and strongly supporting the WIC program, USDA:

Reached full funding for WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children), assisting 7.5 million mothers and their young children with healthy food and nutritional advice.

Obtained rebates for WIC state agencies on infant formula through cooperative bidding permitting 1.6 million additional participants and \$1.2 billion in savings.

Hosted the first National Food Recovery and Gleaning Summit to bring together public interest groups, the private sector, farmers and others, to discuss hunger and food recovery. Summit participants set a national goal of increasing food recovery by 33 percent. As part of a commitment at the Summit, the National Restaurant Association created a guide for food recovery which has been distributed to restaurants nationwide.

-setting a sweeping civil rights agenda for the Department, USDA:

Restaffed the civil rights enforcement unit and began work on the backlog of discrimination complaints -- resolving 141 complaints, including 11 major settlements.

Initiated new foreclosure and lending policies at USDA in an effort to assure that no one will lose their farm because of discrimination.

Provided direct operating loans totaling \$65 million to 1,927 socially disadvantaged farmers and direct farm ownership loans totaling \$15.5

million to 184 SDA farmers, exceeding the targeted allocation Congress set by 176 percent.

Increased the minority representation on FSA state committees by 10 percent over the past year -- 46 percent of the 222 FSA state committee members are now women and minorities.

Established the Office of Outreach to coordinate and provide leadership in delivering programs and services to USDA customers, particularly those groups who have been historically underserved.

Provided \$4.5 million from the Fund for Rural America for outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers.

Created the Small Farmers Commission to address the critical needs of small and socially disadvantaged farmers.

Established a new division of civil rights in the Office of the General Counsel. This office is charged with providing legal counsel and guidance to the Department on civil rights issues.

-raising consumer confidence with proposed food safety legislation that would work from farm to table, USDA:

Required all federally inspected meat and poultry processing plants to implement the first two elements of the new Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point inspection system to reduce human exposure to meat and poultry-borne pathogens.

Intensified research efforts into foodborne pathogens such as salmonella and E.coli.

Developed new micro-organisms that when added to feed for young chickens prevents salmonella from thriving. This technology, called "competitive exclusion" represents another important tool to assure a safe food supply for U.S. and export markets.

Unveiled "Fight Bac," a new national food safety education campaign, developed and supported by a public-private partnership of industry, government and consumer groups.

-creating jobs and economic revitalization in rural communities and making a downpayment on an information superhighway for rural America, USDA:

Invested more than \$60 million in the nation's three rural Empowerment Zones and 33 rural Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC), creating or saving over 7,000 jobs. More than 700,000 rural citizens now receive additional services in the EZ/ECs due to USDA loans, grants and programs.

Provided more than \$2.6 billion in loans, loan guarantees, or grants in rural housing and issued rental assistance to 40,000 rural, low-income households.

Financed the start-up or expansion of 1,183 rural business or cooperatives, creating or preserving more than 53,000 jobs.

Provided \$1.3 billion in loans and grants for 1,125 rural water or wastewater projects that serve 8.5 million people.

Loaned \$380 million for 79 rural telecommunications projects providing service to 211,000 rural households and businesses. These enhancements are making advanced telecommunications projects such as the Internet available to more rural families than ever before.

Provided almost \$17 million in loans and grants for distance learning and telemedicine projects, to expand educational and medical opportunities to America's rural communities.

Glickman said, "Looking back on 1997, I am proud of the work we've done. USDA has given the American people some rather significant gifts -- safer food, a stronger anti-hunger effort, a sustainable path for agriculture's future, and a core commitment to civil rights ensuring dignity for all of our customers and employees. I am proud of the work of the people's department in 1997. And on behalf of the USDA family, I want to wish all of you and your families a joyous holiday season."

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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>

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ROMINGER SWORN IN AS DEPUTY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, May 12--Richard E. Rominger was sworn in today as deputy secretary of agriculture, the number two position at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced.

As deputy secretary, Rominger assists the secretary in supervising the activities of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one of the largest and most diverse departments in federal government. The USDA's mission includes management of traditional farm programs, domestic food assistance, research and education, agricultural marketing, meat and poultry inspection, forestry and rural development.

"I am delighted to have Rich Rominger as my senior partner as we work to redirect and reinvest the resources of this department into an agency that is both farmer-friendly and taxpayer-friendly," Espy said. "His experience in agriculture, both personal and governmental, will be a tremendous asset to USDA."

Rominger is a family farmer who works with his family to raise alfalfa, beans, corn, rice, wheat and other crops in California. He served in government as director of the California Department of Food and Agriculture from 1977 to 1982. During that period, he served terms as president of the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture and the Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association. He also was on the board of directors for the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

Rominger has been on the board of directors of American Farmland Trust since 1986. He is active in a number of professional agricultural organizations concerned with soil and water policy, education, research and development and marketing.

He was selected Agriculturalist of the Year at the California State Fair in 1992, and throughout his career he has received numerous other awards including the Distinguished Service Award for the California Farm Bureau Federation in 1991.

Born July 1, 1927, in Woodland, Calif., Rominger received a Bachelor of Science Degree in plant science from the University of California at Davis in 1949. He was married in 1951 to the former Evelyne Rowe. They have four children, Richard S., Charles A., Ruth E. and Bruce J.

Release No. 0975.94

Media Advisory

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PRESIDENT CLINTON NOMINATES GLICKMAN AS SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

Washington, Dec. 28--Excerpts from today's White House announcement of Dan Glickman, U.S. Representative from Kansas, as Agriculture Secretary designate will be available on satellite from 3:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern time. Satellite coordinates are: Galaxy C-7, Transponder 7; audio 6.2 and 6.8; downlink frequency 3840.

A biography and statement from Secretary designate Glickman is available on USDA's AgNewsFax. A photo will be available on Press Link after 2:00 p.m.

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Backgrounder

Tom Amontree or Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623
Issued: May 3, 1993

MIKE ESPY AT USDA: THE FIRST 100 DAYS

In his first 100 days as the 25th U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Espy has moved quickly on a wide number of issues. He has begun overhauling the nation's meat inspection system, restructuring the U.S. Department of Agriculture to make it farmer- and taxpayer-friendly, exploring new avenues of world trade, pushing a national service initiative and fostering cooperation among agricultural and environmental interests.

OVERHAULING FOOD SAFETY: Less than 48 hours after taking office, Espy flew to Washington state to deal head-on with the E. Coli outbreak, a major food-related health hazard in the Northwest. This was followed immediately by a request to President Clinton for 160 new meat inspectors and stepped up enforcement of USDA's zero-tolerance contamination policy. Espy also announced a two-track meat safety strategy to improve the inspection process.

REINVENTING USDA: Stating he wants USDA to be hands-on and farmer-friendly, Espy informed USDA employees on Feb. 11 that he has an open-door policy and wants to hear from them. (USDA Release No. 0121.93) He held an employee meeting the following day and invited staff to tour his office and meet his assistants.

--On April 7 Espy was joined by Vice President Al Gore for a USDA Town Hall meeting during which employees in Washington, D.C., and around the nation shared their ideas, aired their complaints and offered suggestions for reinventing USDA.

--Espy has called for "a new attitude" as he reorganizes and reinvents USDA--starting in Washington. He has advocated consolidating and modernizing field operations in order to help farmers quickly obtain USDA information and services. In addition, Espy is working with career employees to restructure and streamline the agency's public information operation.

--On April 22 Espy released a statement emphasizing USDA's commitment to backing civil rights and EEO with concrete actions that focus on accountability and results. (USDA Release No. 0309.93)

HANDS ON, FARMER FRIENDLY: Espy has traveled across America meeting with a variety of farm groups, rural development advocates, consumer and industry representatives, whistle-blowers and concerned taxpayers, gathering a diverse and a wide-range of ideas to make USDA more efficient and farmer-friendly.

--On Feb. 22 Espy announced an end to the policy that penalizes corn farmers trying to obtain reduced loan rates for low test-weight corn. (USDA Release No. 0138.93)

--On March 5 Espy suspended foreclosure actions by USDA's Farmers Home Administration which had not yet been referred to a court, pending review. (USDA Release No. 0177.93)

--On March 15 Espy increased the Farmer-Owned Reserve to its maximum 900 million bushels. (USDA Release No. 0191.93).

--On March 25 Espy released \$455 million for rural housing loans ahead of schedule to meet demand and boost the economy. (USDA Release No. 0222.93).

--On April 9 Espy announced new disaster assistance for corn producers whose harvests were of low quality due to natural disasters in 1992. (USDA Release No. 0270.93).

AGRICULTURAL TRADE: Secretary Espy has worked with President Clinton, U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor and other inter-agency team members to help preserve the integrity of credit guarantee sales in states of the former Soviet Union, and to expedite commodity shipments, expand market access and encourage market reforms. Other actions in the international trade arena include:

--Espy is working to speed up a successful GATT agreement, encourage EC ratification of the Blair House agreement, and an extension of fast-track procedures for consideration of the GATT and NAFTA agreements.

--Market-opening initiatives, including a recent meeting to urge Japan to open its markets to U.S. apples, are underway with the EC, Korea, Japan and other nations.

--Since taking office, Espy has sent over 1 million tons of U.S. food assistance overseas to international programs, struggling democracies and developing nations.

NATIONAL SERVICE: Secretary Espy has made USDA one of the leaders among federal agencies in supporting the Clinton Administration's national service initiative:

--In a major address at Howard University in Washington, D.C., on March 2, Espy outlined the rationale for a national service initiative, challenged its critics and compared it to the civil rights movement. (USDA Release No. 0165.93).

--USDA-affiliated Extension agencies have conducted a comprehensive survey of service opportunities in counties across America, identified thousands of potential projects and submitted more than 30 proposals for a

"Summer of Service" initiative.

"FARMER-FRIENDLY" ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: Espy quickly established that sound environmental policy and prosperous agriculture were not mutually-exclusive issues.

--Espy is working closely with the vice president, the EPA administrator and the secretary of the interior to ensure that those in agriculture are at the bargaining table during environmental policy debates. He was a principal participant at the Forest Conference. He worked to extend the phase-out period for methyl bromide, and he supported an exemption for ethanol from the BTU tax.

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ESPY CITES USDA ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING FIRST YEAR OF CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21 -- A year after taking office, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy said the U.S. Department of Agriculture has become more responsive to the needs of American farmers and consumers under the Clinton Administration, and has effected numerous savings that will cut American taxpayer costs.

"The past year has not been business as usual at USDA," Espy said. "We have made significant progress toward our goals of increased farm income, improved service to farmers, help for rural communities, expansion of trade, and an even safer and more nutritious food supply for all Americans."

Espy said the Administration's first-year accomplishments at USDA include:

Trade -- Under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the United States for the first time ever obtained permanent access to the rice markets of Japan and Korea. This historic opening will help lower other trade barriers while putting more money in the pockets of American farmers.

Also under GATT, subsidies will be lowered worldwide, creating a more level playing field that American agricultural producers have sought for years. As the most efficient producers in the world, they will be able to take advantage of trade barrier reduction to expand sales and benefit rural America.

Passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is expected to result in an increase of \$2.6 billion in U.S. agricultural exports to Mexico and generate 56,000 new jobs for U.S. citizens by the year 2008.

In addition, after a long series of negotiations, China agreed in 1993 to import U.S. apples for the first time.

Budget/Reorganization -- Espy has begun to cut the waste from USDA with an eye toward reinventing the current system to better serve the needs of farmers and ranchers, consumers, rural residents and the American taxpayer.

Espy has proposed to Congress a plan to streamline USDA that will reduce the number of agencies from 43 to 30, reduce the staff by 7,500 positions, and close or consolidate about 1,200 field offices. The proposed actions will result in projected savings to the American taxpayer of over \$2 billion. (House and Senate hearings have been held and a House markup is scheduled for Feb. 8.)

Administrative reorganization efforts at USDA resulted in millions of dollars in savings including \$146 million through staff reductions.

Some other first-year savings were: \$6.7 million through reform of the employee bonus and award system; \$90 million through reforming the loan program of the Rural Electrification Administration; \$389,000 by streamlining the telephone and computer networks; and \$500,000 by eliminating the Yearbook of Agriculture.

In addition, the Administration will save \$726 million over the next five years by phasing out the wool and mohair price support system and the honey support program.

Food/Consumer Safety -- After the tragic E. coli outbreak in the Pacific Northwest in the dawning hours of the Administration, Espy quickly concluded that meat and poultry could no longer be inspected in 1993 as it was in 1933.

Espy moved quickly to implement major policy changes, including tough enforcement of meat and poultry inspection regulations, initiation of unannounced plant reviews, stricter product handling requirements, better consumer information and the beginning of a science-based inspection system.

Food Stamp Reform/Nutrition Improvements -- Several steps were taken to reduce fraud and errors in the food stamp program, which will benefit both program participants and the American taxpayer. For example, during FY 1993, intentional program violations collections increased by more than 9 percent from the year before. Additional actions included:

The Administration's food stamp reform bill, which became law as the Mickey Leland Hunger Relief Act, included several provisions that increase the penalties for people and stores that traffic in exchanging food stamps for cash.

More than \$8 million was collected in 1993 through a tax recovery system which allows the government to deduct over-issued food stamp benefits from tax refunds of people no longer on the program. The Administration is moving forward with plans to promote a national system of electronic benefits transfer (EBT), which replaces food stamps with an ATM-like plastic card. Six states now have EBT systems--Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Minnesota, Ohio and Iowa. (Only Maryland's system is statewide.) Thirty other states are moving toward the EBT program, which will cut down on paperwork, costs and fraud.

The Administration has doubled the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables in the school lunch program and has moved toward developing a program to reduce fat.

Environment/Natural Resources -- The Clinton Administration has made coordination and cooperation among agencies a key component of environmental policy, and USDA has taken a leadership role in natural resources protection and environmental concerns as they relate to American agriculture.

As part of the Administration's wetlands policy, USDA's Soil Conservation Service was named the lead federal agency for delineating wetlands on agricultural lands. This action will provide more certainty for farmers and provide more effective coordination among federal agencies with wetlands protection responsibilities.

The Administration is committed to reducing the use of pesticides and to promoting sustainable agriculture. Under USDA's leadership, the administration has intensified efforts to reduce the use of higher-risk pesticides and to promote integrated pest management, including biological and cultural control systems and other sustainable agricultural practices.

Rural Development -- Revitalization of Rural America has been a USDA key priority in the past year. Under the Administration's recently announced Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities program, Espy will designate three empowerment zones and 30 enterprise communities in rural areas. This program will bring together all segments in an area to revitalize communities and create jobs.

Flood Disaster Response -- When disastrous floods struck the Midwest this year, the Administration's response was quick and on target. The federal government worked hand-in-hand with state and local agencies to bring disaster relief in record time to farmers, other residents and local communities in the stricken area. We put major farm program changes in place to help farmers impacted by the floods and excessive rainfall stay in the business of farming.

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