



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service

Washington, DC  
20250

February 10, 2012

Dear Stakeholder:

It's been almost a year since I became APHIS' Administrator, and I continue to be energized by the breadth and depth of issues that come to my attention on a daily basis. APHIS is truly a unique Agency with activities that are of interest to a wide and diverse range of stakeholders. But one seemingly universal question among stakeholders these days is how will the Agency address its current fiscal challenges and what will this mean for the customers we serve?

In this era of shrinking budgets, Federal Agencies are facing hard choices about the delivery of important services and APHIS is no exception. As you may be aware, some decisions have already been made with respect to our programs, and we anticipate more difficult choices will be required in the future. This means that it will be more important than ever for APHIS to understand its stakeholders concerns and priorities.

To that end, I want to invite you to attend a stakeholder meeting in USDA's Jefferson Auditorium on Monday, February 27, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. At that meeting, APHIS' Associate Administrator Kevin Shea and I will talk more about the Agency's budget, process improvement efforts and modernization initiatives. We also want to hear your thoughts on partnerships and the Agency's critical services. I want to encourage all interested stakeholders to attend. For those who can't attend in person, we are planning a live Webcast of the meeting. For more details, please visit our Stakeholder Information page at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/stakeholders/>

In addition to our upcoming stakeholder meeting, we've also launched a stakeholder survey to get more indepth feedback from stakeholders about those APHIS services you find most valuable and to get your thoughts about how we can enhance existing partnerships and build new ones to maximize our effectiveness and efficiency. We'll share our overarching findings later this spring. The survey questions are accessible from the Stakeholder Information page listed above.

In the interest of maintaining good communication, I also want to make sure everyone is aware that APHIS' headquarters offices in Washington, DC and Riverdale, MD will be switching from traditional phone service to Voice Over Internet Protocol or VOIP at the beginning of March. This means most employees and offices will be getting new phone numbers. Until the end of February, you can reach employees by calling either their old number or their new number.



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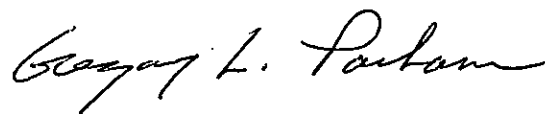
Stakeholder

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To ensure a smooth transition, we've asked employees to list their new phone numbers in the signature lines of their emails, and in late February, we'll be updating the Contact Us page on the APHIS Web site. In addition, the USDA Phone Directory, which is also available from APHIS' Contact Us page, will have an updated listing of employees phone numbers available in March.

VOIP is just one example of how we're finding creative ways to maximize our resources. I am personally of the belief that challenging times force us to think outside the box and come up with innovative solutions that can actually strengthen our service. That being said, some of the decisions we are going to face in the year ahead will not have such easy answers. I look forward to meeting with you and hearing your thoughts and ideas about how APHIS can best serve its many stakeholders within the framework of our current budget realities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gregory L. Parham".

Gregory L. Parham  
Administrator  
202-720-3668 (old number)  
202-799-7017 (new number)