

From: [Kevin Shea APHIS Administrator](#)
Subject: APHIS' 50th Anniversary
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A Message from APHIS Administrator Kevin Shea

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APHIS Colleagues,

Less than two years from now, on April 2, 2022, APHIS turns 50. Do you know how APHIS came into existence? How APHIS became APHIS? A few things happened to bring us together into one Agency.

In response to concerns about the competing demands of research and regulatory enforcement, USDA removed the animal and plant health regulatory functions from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in 1971 to form the Animal and Plant Health Service (APHS). In 1972, USDA moved the meat and poultry inspection functions of the Consumer and Marketing Service (now the Agricultural Marketing Service) to APHS, adding the “I” to APHIS’ name. The organizational realignment grouped functions that rely on similar professional disciplines (e.g., veterinary expertise, inspection, and quarantine). Then, in 1977, USDA transferred the meat and poultry inspection functions to our sister Agency, the Food Safety and Quality Service (now USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service).

Since the beginning, APHIS focused on protecting the health of U.S. agricultural resources, partnering with State, Federal, and industry cooperators to maintain an effective pest- and disease-fighting infrastructure. And in the almost 50 years since our inception, the critical work we do every day and all we have accomplished has helped to feed and clothe the world and kept America’s economy thriving. If you just think about the numbers of what we do – it’s staggering. We protect 900 million acres of U.S. farmland. We make it possible for \$137 billion in U.S. agricultural exports to move around the world. And we keep 21.6 million Americans employed in U.S. agriculture, food, and related industries.

The APHIS of today is many things to many people. To consumers, we are protectors of a healthy and abundant food supply. To farmers and producers, we are defenders of their products and their livelihoods. To the vulnerable animals covered by the AWA and the Horse Protection Act, we are guardians of basic animal welfare protections. And to others, we are partners in responsibly managing wildlife conflicts—carrying out work that protects property, endangered species, and even the safety of the traveling public at our Nation’s airports.

I’ve always believed that APHIS’ strength is our people – we are an Agency filled with extremely hard-working, caring, and engaged employees. We are resilient. We are talented. We are creative, effective and we get things done. Together, we share a history and a community of accomplishments. Together, we can be proud because, together, we are APHIS.

And now, as we approach our 50th birthday, I want to recognize and celebrate our history and celebrate this great Agency. Beginning today and culminating in April 2022, we will be sharing messages and hosting activities to reflect on our achievements, think about who we are as Agency, and honor our community past and present. You can find a lot of information on the [APHIS 50th Anniversary page](#), including a look at APHIS back when it began and ways you can get involved in the celebration.

I hope everyone will learn something about APHIS and our accomplishments, and most importantly, that each of us gains a greater appreciation for the work we do and all we've done in the past 50 years.

I am proud to be APHIS' Administrator. I am proud of our employees and our accomplishments. I thank each of you for what you do every day – for APHIS and the American people.

Kevin Shea
APHIS Administrator