



# REMARKS

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs  
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Remarks as Prepared for Administrator Dr. Gregory Parham  
38th National Dialogue on Blacks in Higher Education  
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education  
(NAFEO)

(WASHINGTON, D.C., Mar. 28, 2012) Hello. I am pleased to be here today representing USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).]

I know firsthand how important it is to have a fair, impartial USDA that embraces diversity and provides equal access and opportunity for everyone. And it is imperative that we encourage Black Americans to continue being involved in agriculture.

Blacks have made significant contributions to agriculture. Just one example—but a significant one—Black farmers pioneered the concept of crop rotation in the United States.

Nearly 8 percent of APHIS' 8,415 employees are African American, and they have made profound and enduring contributions to the success of our mission. And to perpetuate that success, we take part in a variety of programs designed to foster diversity and attract minority students to careers in agricultural fields.

For example, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) provides resources, opportunities, and advocacy to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), students, and alumni. TMCF awards scholarships each semester. APHIS has been a sponsor of the TMCF's Annual Conference since 2006 and in May of 2007, APHIS hired a Thurgood Marshall Scholar.

Since 2002, APHIS has partnered with universities and colleges across the country to support AgDiscovery, a summer outreach program that helps teenagers learn about careers in plant and animal science, wildlife management, and agribusiness.

This year, 17 universities from across the United States will participate in AgDiscovery. Of the 17 participating universities, 11 are HBCUs. Over a period of several weeks, these schools will host approximately 240 students that will learn about the agricultural sciences from professors, practicing veterinarians, and APHIS professionals.

USDA is also proud to of its internship programs. This summer, the Department has committed to hiring 7,000 paid interns and APHIS is looking forward to being a part of that. The USDA/1890 Scholarship Program was designed to strengthen the long-term partnership between USDA and 1890 Land Grant Universities and Tuskegee University. In 2011, APHIS had 13 scholarship students pursuing degrees in agriculture and related disciplines at 8 of these 1890 Universities. I'm happy to say that two of those students have now become permanent full-time employees.

APHIS also offers its own internships to help us attract a diverse array of individuals to agriculture. For example, the Saul T. Wilson, Jr., Scholarship Program provides undergraduate and veterinary students with the opportunity for paid internships at APHIS during academic breaks. For those in non-veterinary fields of study, the Daniel E. Salmon Scholarship Program offers paid employment at APHIS during academic breaks to undergraduate and graduate students. Upon graduation, both programs offer students the possibility of conversion to a permanent APHIS appointment.

In 2011, APHIS was pleased to invest in the Wildlife Initiative Student Career Education Internship Program at Lincoln University and Tuskegee University. The funds we provided assisted two students with tuition and summer internship opportunities.

To build capacity and ensure diversity in the veterinary technologist field, APHIS provided funding to both Florida A&M University and Fort Valley State University for their Veterinary Technician Programs.

APHIS has benefited directly from its outreach to minority students. But, much more importantly, *agriculture* as a whole has benefited.

I'm truly pleased to have had this opportunity to describe APHIS' efforts to recruit more African Americans to our Agency. Now I'd like to ask for your help in meeting this goal.

As you look to your future, I encourage you to consider the wide variety of exciting jobs that exist in agriculture—particularly at APHIS.

Thank you.