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APHIS Administrator Announces Several Senior Leadership Changes

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Dear Partners and Stakeholders:

I want to share with you several changes taking place in important APHIS leadership positions. Each of these individuals is taking on a role where their extensive background and familiarity with the offices that they are transitioning into will allow them to contribute effectively from day one, drawing on years of relevant experience and insight.

Ms. Bernadette Juarez will return to Animal Care (AC) as the Deputy Administrator, following six years as the Deputy Administrator for Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS). She previously held the same AC leadership role from 2016-2019, after serving as the Director of APHIS Investigative and Enforcement Services and before that as an attorney with USDA's Office of the General Counsel. Her established engagement with AC stakeholders and familiarity with program priorities will be a valuable asset as she resumes this leadership role.

Dr. Donna Lalli will return to BRS as the Deputy Administrator, where she began her APHIS career as a biotechnologist and Chief of Staff. Most recently, she served as Associate Administrator and previously as Associate Deputy Administrator in Wildlife Services. Dr. Lalli's scientific background—including three years as the APHIS Science Advisor and a detail at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy—will greatly support the program's continued success.

Ms. Sarah Helming is rejoining the Office of the Administrator (OA) as an Associate Administrator. She has previously served as AC Deputy Administrator and Deputy Administrator for Emergency and Regulatory Compliance Services. In addition, she has several years of experience as the OA Chief of Staff and has held roles in International Services, Veterinary Services, and Legislative and Public Affairs. Ms. Helming has a broad background across many APHIS program areas, which will be instrumental in engaging with partners and stakeholders, supporting the Department's priorities, and strengthening cross-program coordination.

All changes will be effective on July 27, 2025.

I want to express my appreciation for everything these leaders have done in their current and previous positions, and for their willingness to serve in roles where the Agency needs them most. Their leadership will help ensure continuity, strengthen program delivery, and enhance service to our stakeholders. Please join me in wishing them continued success as they take on these important roles.

Mike Watson
APHIS Administrator

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