



Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service

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Administrator

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Dear Stakeholders:

As you all are aware, last June Secretary Vilsack asked our then APHIS Administrator, Dr. Greg Parham, to serve as USDA's Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration. Last week, on June 12, Dr. Parham took the Oath of Office to permanently serve in this position. While USDA is fortunate to benefit from Greg's leadership and expertise, his departure is a big loss for APHIS, although he will continue to work with APHIS to carry out USDA's goals.

Dr. Parham's departure leaves a vacancy here at APHIS, and Secretary Vilsack has asked me to be the next Administrator. To say that this is an honor would be a gross understatement. I am deeply committed to the noble mission of this Agency, and I believe APHIS is as crucial to our country as it has ever been. Although I've met with many of you in the past year and recently spoke about the Agency's strategic priorities at our April Stakeholder Meeting, I wanted to take a moment to share my vision and goals for the Agency going forward.

As we move ahead, I see two overarching tenets guiding the direction of the Agency. One is that healthy and profitable agriculture is good for America because it means feeding and clothing the world and providing a base that allows the rest of our economy to thrive. The second is that Government's role is to do collectively what no one of us can do for ourselves. In keeping with these core tenets, I believe APHIS should constantly strive to improve and deliver our services in a way that is cheaper, faster, and more effective for American agriculture, farmers and ranchers, taxpayers and all those we serve and affect. I also believe we should use high quality hard analysis to drive our decisions. By that I mean setting clear objectives, identifying how we will know if we are meeting the objectives, and then honestly measuring our progress so we can make adjustments if needed.

From a business standpoint, we need to identify more non-regulatory solutions. Those who have heard me speak before know this is a critical area of focus for APHIS. It is extraordinarily difficult to gain approval for new regulations today, and this is not likely to change anytime soon. While APHIS will continue to have a regulatory role, it won't be the only—or in some cases even the primary—way we contribute to animal and plant health and animal welfare. And the reality is these new approaches are likely to allow greater flexibility for both APHIS and industry.

Along these same lines, we need to think differently about technology and the electronic resources available to our customers. This is something I've heard a lot about from stakeholders. The first impression many customers form of APHIS comes when you search our Web site or apply for a license or permit. We want to make that first impression a consistently positive one and that means we need to make it easier and faster for you to find and get what you need.

In addition to these overarching priorities, I want to share 10 specific goals that I believe APHIS can achieve on behalf of American agriculture over the next several years.

1. Complete our more than 30-year effort to eradicate boll weevil from the United States.
2. Complete our much shorter but no less impressive effort to eradicate the European grapevine moth from California.
3. Establish a fully functioning and effective national feral swine control program.
4. Reduce by at least half the number of detections of the cruel and inhumane practice of horse soring in the Tennessee walking horse industry.
5. Fully implement a functioning animal disease traceability program that proves its traceback value after a disease detection.
6. Ensure that our sterile screwworm rearing facility in Panama is operating well and providing complete assurance that we will maintain the barrier established at the Darien Gap.
7. Fulfill the promise of our business process improvements for veterinary biologics and biotechnology and meet or exceed the goals we set to safely move important new technology to market faster.
8. Prevent citrus greening disease from causing damage in California.
9. Implement an effect multi-national system that reduces the threat of tree pests arriving from Asia and other parts of the world.
10. Eliminate all remaining BSE barriers to export markets.

Of course these are just some of the many things we will strive to accomplish; I have no doubt that we're also going to face challenges we can't predict. And in many ways, preventing bad things from happening is probably more important than solving those problems we're already aware of. For example, we must keep the United States free from foreign animal diseases like foot-and-mouth disease and classical swine fever, which could have a devastating impact on domestic and export markets.

As we look to develop a plan for the future, I'm committed to doing all we can at APHIS to ensure the health, marketability, and profitability of your industries. By working closely with you and listening to you, we can not only plan ahead but provide assistance

when and where you need it most. I do want to emphasize that I certainly cannot accomplish these goals alone; only through the great work of APHIS' talented employees – working in tandem with you as partners – will that happen.

I've said it before, but it's worth repeating: I have an open door policy and I'm interested in hearing your perspective on those issues that matter to you most. I look forward to working with all of our many and diverse stakeholders in the months and years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Shea".

Kevin Shea  
APHIS Administrator