



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Washington, DC
20250

March 12, 2013

Dear Stakeholder:

Last winter, APHIS hosted an open meeting with stakeholders to provide an update about Agency activities and solicit feedback on our programs and services. The meeting proved to be a valuable forum for both sharing and receiving information, so we're hosting a similar event again this spring. I hope you can join our APHIS management team on April 11, from 10 a.m. to noon in room 107A of USDA's Whitten Building for a discussion about the Agency's budget, program restructuring and cross-Agency strategic priorities.

As you're well aware, this is a unique time for all Federal agencies, including APHIS. We're facing a number of new and evolving challenges, such as decreasing budgets, fewer available resources, and the ability to successfully balance science, policy and public opinion. As we plan for how to position APHIS to meet these and other challenges, our commitment to our animal and plant health mission remains firm. With this in mind, we're looking at ways to improve our business strategies and program delivery methods to enhance our overall effectiveness. It's important that as we initiate these discussions, our stakeholders are a part of the conversation. At our April meeting, we're particularly interested in hearing your perspective on:

- **Public and private partnerships**, such as disease management and eradication programs that benefit from state and industry contributions.
- **Non-regulatory solutions**, such as compliance and education programs that can be used, when appropriate, to achieve results without the need for rulemaking.
- **New technology** that encourages commerce or enhances APHIS' ability to protect American agriculture.
- **Customer service** improvements that make it easier for stakeholders to do business with APHIS.

These are just examples, and we'll provide greater context at our April meeting, but we believe many additional opportunities exist under these four broad priorities.



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We also think our customers are in a good position to identify opportunities and provide recommendations about where we may be able to make strides in these areas. You can share your thoughts in person at the meeting or by emailing partnerships@aphis.usda.gov.

We're also planning a live Webcast of the meeting for anyone who is unable to attend in person. Along with the Webcast, we'll be making an audio line available for remote participants who would like to ask a question or make a comment. Additional meeting details, including registration information is available at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/stakeholders/>.

We look forward to meeting with you and seeing many of you in person on April 11th.

Sincerely,

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

Kevin Shea
Acting Administrator