



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

June 18, 2009

Dear Departmental Administration and Staff Office Employees,

The difficult choices many families in this country face due to our struggling economy remind me every day how important it is to take the utmost care in spending the American taxpayer's dollars.

When I came to USDA, I promised President Obama that I would work to make USDA more efficient and responsive to the people it serves. To help accomplish this goal, I have asked Assistant Secretary of Departmental Administration Pearlle Reed to embark on a transformation project to reduce fragmentation, eliminate stove piping, increase efficiency and avoid unnecessary costs.

The transformation will involve the Departmental Staff Offices which include the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Office of Homeland Security, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Departmental Administration, the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, the Office of Executive Secretariat and the Office of Advocacy and Outreach. The success of this transformation will be dependant upon the collaboration and alignment of these offices and your willingness to be flexible through this process.

While this presents us with great challenges, it also provides us with great opportunities to transform USDA into a model organization. For all of us, this means opening our minds and demonstrating a willingness to explore new and better ways for us to do our business.

This change will not negatively impact your pay grades and there will not be a reduction in workforce. During the past several years, USDA has seen a flat budget while its provision of services has continued to grow. This transformation is a tremendous opportunity for USDA to decrease redundancy, increase efficiency, improve employee morale and make better use of its resources.

The specifics of the transformation are still being determined and the necessary approvals and formal notifications are pending. As things progress, you will be kept apprised of changes that impact processes and working relationships.

USDA is an Every Day, Every Way department and the work we do here touches the life of every American. We all have a responsibility to make sure that our programs serve all of the people who need them and that they are managed in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions because we want you to understand why this is important and need your support in order to be successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Vilsack", written over a circular stamp.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture