



# Fact Sheet:



## Marketing and Regulatory Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Blueprint for Stronger Service is key to building a modern and efficient service organization that is closely in tune with the long-term vitality of rural America and the success of American agriculture. The plan takes a realistic view of the needs of American agriculture in a challenging budget climate, and lays out USDA's plans to modernize and accelerate service delivery while improving the customer experience through use of innovative technologies and business solutions. Ultimately, these improvements will help producers and businesses continue to drive America's economy and respond to 21st century agricultural challenges.

USDA is proud of our work and partnership with America's farmers, ranchers and rural communities. Today, American agriculture is a bright spot in the nation's economy, with record income and exports. Over three years as USDA has made record investments in rural America, unemployment in rural America has fallen faster than in other parts of the country. During that same time, USDA has also looked closely at the way it does business. A Blueprint for Stronger Service helps to preserve this success and the USDA investments that helped to make them possible in the long term.

Over the past three years, USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Mission Area has worked hard to do more with less. To manage current and future budget challenges, and to ensure critical investments in rural America continue, MRP took a variety of steps to cut costs and improve services, including:

- Cut travel, supplies and cell phone budgets;
- APHIS is dramatically reducing times for programmatic processes and procedures, cutting wait time by 20 to 76 percent and enhancing business competitiveness, by:
  - Streamlining risk assessment and rulemaking processes for imported animal and plant products;
  - Reducing length and variability of time it takes to make determinations on petitions for nonregulated status for genetically engineered plants; and
  - Streamlining the enforcement process against those who jeopardize plant and animal health and animal welfare to focus on the most serious violators and resolve typical cases in substantially less time.
- The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) has implemented a quality management program, reducing the number of field offices while preserving the sampling, inspection, and testing services requested by customers.
- Over the past three years, the Agricultural Marketing Service streamlined its management structure by 28 percent reduction and increased the employee-to-supervisor ratio, with no reduction in service delivery to internal and external customers.

A Blueprint for Stronger Service details a list of recommendations: 133 recommendations affirm processes already in place, 27 serve as initial improvements, and others are aimed at longer-term improvements. The initial improvement recommendations include the following:

- Consolidate more than 700 cell phone plans into about 10;

- Standardize civil rights training and purchases of cyber security products;
- Ensure more efficient and effective service to our employees by moving toward more centralized civil rights, human resource, procurement, and property management functions, creating millions of dollars in efficiencies without sacrificing the quality of our work.

Budget reductions, staff attrition and increased workload also necessitated a review of USDA facilities, offices and lab operations across the country. As part of the Blueprint for Stronger Service, APHIS has strategically identified offices for closure based on changing programmatic strategy, the potential for gained efficiencies, or a combination of both. Therefore, MRP plans:

- To close 15 APHIS offices in 11 states and 5 APHIS offices in 5 foreign countries. No other MRP agencies are affected. More than 560 APHIS offices remain throughout the United States and 55 remain throughout the world. In many cases, offices recommended for closures are an example of how APHIS is retooling existing operations and consolidating certain functions. For example, veterinarians and animal health technicians will continue to take samples, inspect animals, and issue necessary documentation; however, they may report to supervisors in consolidated offices in adjacent states.

The list below details the states and corresponding cities and counties where APHIS offices will be closed.

1. Arizona: Tempe, Maricopa County
2. California: Moss Landing, Monterey County
3. Florida: Gainesville, Alachua County; Ft. Myers, Lee County
4. Georgia: Forest Park, Clayton County
5. Indiana: Indianapolis, Marion County; West Lafayette, Tippecanoe County
6. Louisiana: Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge County
7. Maryland: Annapolis, Anne Arundel County; Jessup, Howard County
8. Mississippi: Gulfport, Harrison County
9. Ohio: Bowling Green, Wood County
10. Oregon: Salem, Marion County
11. Texas: San Saba, San Saba County; Olney, Young County

The list below details the countries where APHIS offices will be closed.

1. Rangoon, Burma
2. Phnom Penh, Cambodia
3. Bogota, Colombia
4. Jakarta, Indonesia
5. Vientiane, Laos

As we move forward, USDA will continue to find ways to modernize its services, improve the customer experience, and ensure a successful, sustainable future for rural America.