



Fact Sheet:



Food Safety

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 Food Safety 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, Food Safety took a variety of steps to cut costs and improve services, including:

- Cut travel, printing, and supplies budgets;
- In 2011, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) introduced a comprehensive data analytics system in domestic meat and poultry establishments, strengthening FSIS' data infrastructure and empowering FSIS inspectors to stay ahead of food safety threats. Many processes, such as export certification, will be automated, saving time and money;
- When livestock producers in rural areas found it cost prohibitive to transport livestock long distances to the closest inspected slaughter facility, FSIS worked with processors to reduce federal regulatory complexity for approving mobile slaughter units, which allow small processors to benefit from mobile slaughter, lowering processing costs, reducing stress on animals, and reducing capital investment; and
- Improved lab supply management and sampling efficiencies to save more than \$750,000.

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, Food Safety plans:

- To consolidate 15 district offices into 10, reducing the number of district offices by 5. In many cases, improved technology and work-share agreements have reduced the need for these brick and mortar facilities. Food Safety aims to complete the office closures in phases by the end of fiscal year 2013.

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

1. Kansas: Lawrence, Douglas County
2. Maryland: Beltsville, Prince George's County
3. Minnesota: Minneapolis, Hennepin County
4. New York: Albany, Albany County
5. Wisconsin: Madison, Dane County

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.