

## ■ Reorganizing “the People’s Department”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is undergoing a historic reorganization to improve coordination among USDA’s broad range of programs and Agencies. This reorganization was authorized by the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-354), signed into law October 13, 1994. This reorganization, which is underway across the country, affects headquarters and field structures. It will reduce the number of organizational units, save a projected \$4.1 billion over 5 years, and reduce staff by more than 13,000 over 5 years.

In addition to combining program operations, USDA closed or consolidated some 1,100 farm service field offices to provide “one-stop shopping” for customers participating in various USDA farm programs. Savings are being achieved through consolidating administrative services within mission areas. The goal of this reorganization is to cut costs to the taxpayers while improving service to USDA customers.

The new USDA organizational structure includes six Under Secretary positions and three Assistant Secretary positions. Each of these officials has overall responsibility for a key mission area of the Department and supervises the work of the Agencies reporting to him or her. Programs of the various mission areas are described in the following chapters.

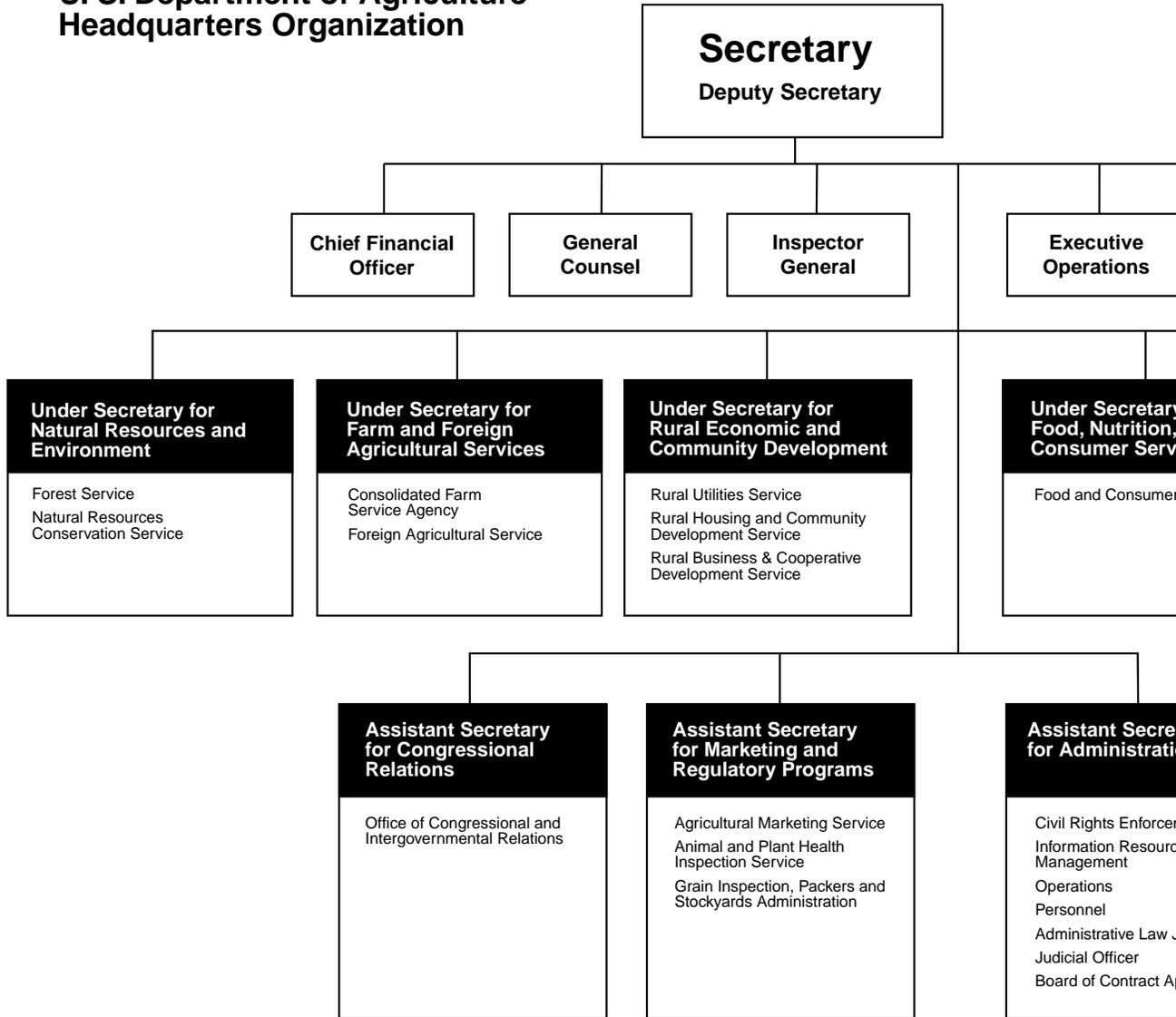
These major structural changes are leading to a new, streamlined USDA:

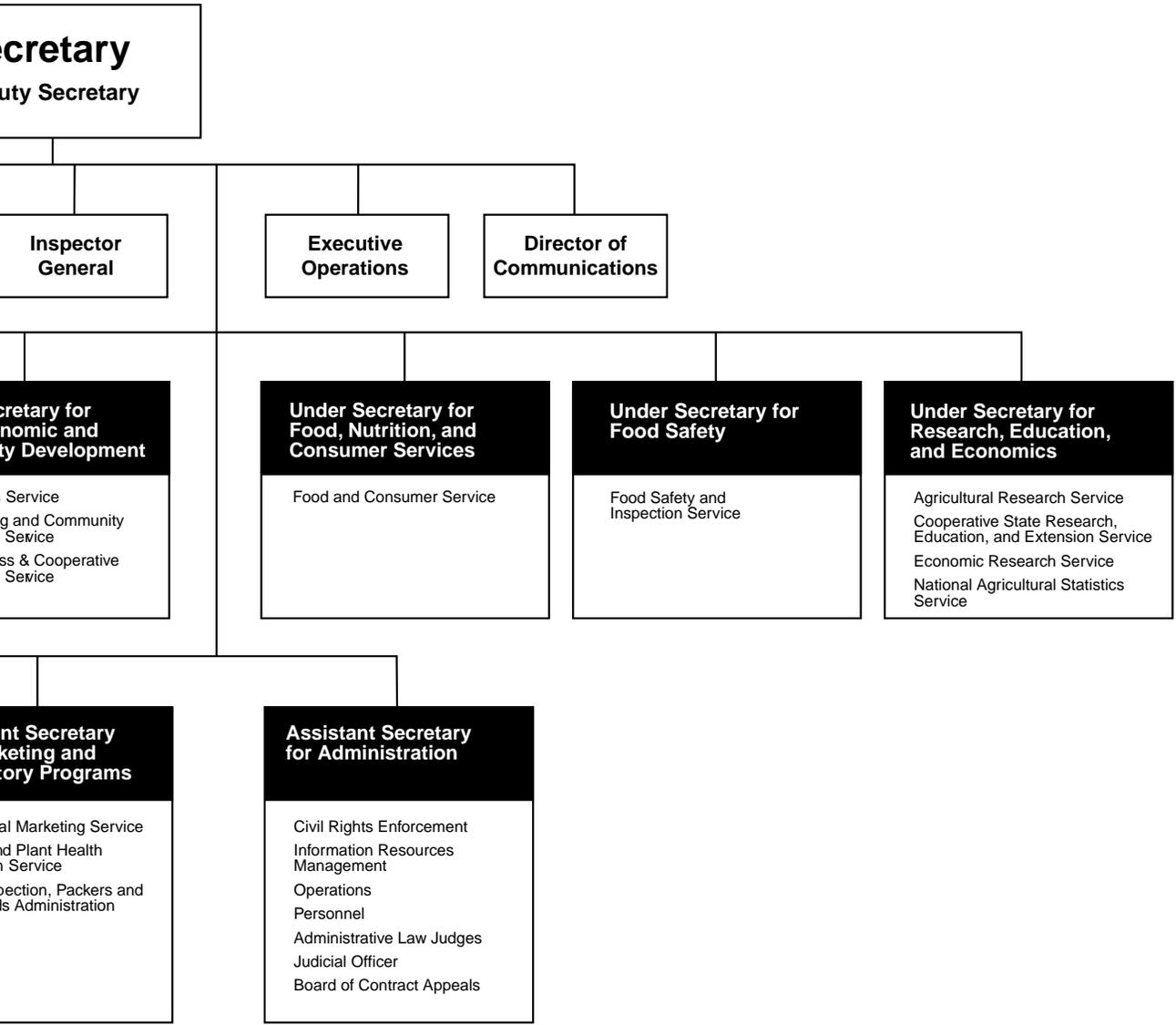
- Reduction and collocation of over 1,100 farm service agency field offices to provide one-stop service for customers of USDA’s farm programs. Offices are combining or sharing space, equipment, and support personnel to reduce overhead expenses and provide one-stop service.
- Combining farmer programs in a new Consolidated Farm Service Agency (CFSA), which incorporates the functions of the previous Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, and the farm-lending activities of the former Farmers Home Administration (FmHA). CFSA is charged with administering commodity price and income support programs, crop insurance, farm lending, the Agricultural Conservation Program, and the Conservation Reserve Program. This agency will operate out of combined field offices to provide one-stop service for USDA customers.
- Elevating USDA’s food safety activities by establishing an Under Secretary for Food Safety. All USDA activities related to food safety—including functions previously performed by the Agricultural Marketing Service under the

Egg Products Inspection Act and the salmonella enteritidis and pathogen reduction activities previously performed by the Agricultural Plant Health Inspection Service—report to this official. Food safety activities are thus separated from USDA's marketing activities.

- Focusing rural development work in three new agencies reporting to the Under Secretary for Rural Economic and Community Development. The Rural Utilities Service combines the telephone and electric programs of the former Rural Electrification Administration (REA) with the water and sewer programs of the former Rural Development Administration (RDA). The Rural Housing and Community Development Service combines FmHA housing programs with RDA and REA rural community loan programs. The Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service combines the former Agricultural Cooperative Service, the Alternative Agricultural Commercialization Center, and the business development programs of RDA and REA.
- Establishing the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which administers all agriculture-related conservation programs except those assigned to the new CFSA. NRCS has authority for the following key conservation cost-share programs: the Wetlands Reserve Program, Water Bank Program, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act Program, Forestry Incentives Program, Great Plains Conservation Program, and Farms for the Future Program.
- Establishing a Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service that combines the former Extension Service with the former Cooperative State Research Service. The National Agricultural Library is incorporated into the Agricultural Research Service.
- Establishing a Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration which combines the responsibilities of the former Federal Grain Inspection Service and the Packers and Stockyards Administration.
- Consolidating administrative staffs to provide central personnel and administrative functions for all agencies and offices reporting to the subcabinet official for the mission area.
- Establishing an independent appeals process that replaces the separate administrative appeal procedures of FmHA and ASCS with an independent process through a new National Appeals Division reporting directly to the Secretary.
- Establishing an Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis to review major regulations and provide cost/benefit evaluations.

# U. S. Department of Agriculture Headquarters Organization





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