

# 12. Marketing and Regulatory Programs

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## ■ Agricultural Marketing Service

When you visit the grocery store, you know you'll find an abundance and variety of top-quality produce, meats, and dairy products. If you're like most people, you probably don't give a second thought to the marketing system that brings that food from the farm to your table. Yet, this state-of-the-art marketing system makes it possible to pick and choose from a variety of products, available all year around, tailored to meet the demands of today's lifestyles. Millions of people—from grower to retailer—make this marketing system work. Buyers, traders, scientists, factory workers, transportation experts, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, advertising firms—in addition to the Nation's farmers—all help create a marketing system that is unsurpassed by any in the world. And USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) helps make sure the U.S. marketing system remains world-class.

### Services to Promote Quality: Grading, Quality Standards, and Certification

Wherever or whenever you shop, you expect good, uniform quality and reasonable prices for the food you purchase. AMS quality grade standards, grading, and laboratory services are voluntary tools that industry can use to help promote quality, and to communicate that quality to consumers. Industry pays for these services and they are voluntary, so their widespread use by industry indicates they are valuable tools in helping market their products.

USDA quality grade marks are usually seen on beef, lamb, chicken, turkey, butter, and eggs. For many other products, such as fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, the grade mark isn't always visible on the retail product. In these commodities, the grading service is used by wholesalers, and the final retail packaging may not include the grade mark. However, quality grades are widely used—even if they are not prominently displayed—as a “language” among traders. They make business transactions easier whether they are local or made over long distances. Consumers, as well as those involved in the marketing of agricultural products, benefit from the greater efficiency permitted by the availability and application of grade standards.

Grading is based on standards, and standards are based on measurable attributes that describe the value and utility of the product. Beef quality standards, for instance, are based on attributes such as marbling (the amount of fat interspersed with lean meat), color, firmness, texture, and age of the animal, for each grade. In turn, these factors are a good indication of tenderness, juiciness, and flavor of the meat—all characteristics important to consumers. Prime, Choice, and Select are all grades familiar to consumers of beef.

Standards for each product describe the entire range of quality for a product, and the number of grades varies by commodity. There are eight grades for beef, and three each for chickens, eggs, and turkeys. On the other hand, there are 45 grades for cotton, and more than 300 fruit, vegetable, and specialty product standards.

■ **Facts about grading:**

*From October 1995 through September 1996, USDA graded 35 percent of the shell eggs and 95 percent of the butter produced in the United States. Ninety-one billion pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables and more than 13 billion pounds of processed fruits and vegetables received a USDA grade mark. Nearly all of the meat industry requests AMS grading services: USDA grades were applied to 82 percent of all beef, 86 percent of all lambs, 18 percent of all veal and calves, 71 percent of all turkeys, and 49 percent of all chickens and other poultry marketed in this country. USDA also graded more than 98 percent of the cotton and 97 percent of the tobacco produced in the United States.*

The food testing side of the AMS program has 11 “user fee” laboratories performing numerous microbiological, chemical, and physical analyses on a host of food and fiber commodities, including processed dairy products, meat, poultry, egg products, and fruits and vegetables. This testing supports AMS purchases for the National School Lunch Program and other domestic feeding programs, troop ration specifications for the Department of Defense, foreign government food contract purchases, laboratory quality control and assurance programs, and testing for aflatoxin in peanut products.

In addition to grading and laboratory services, USDA provides certification services, for a fee, that facilitate ordering and purchase of products used by large-volume buyers. Certification assures buyers that the products they purchase will meet the terms of their contracts—with respect to quality, processing, size, packaging, and delivery. If a large buyer—such as a school district, hospital, prison, or the military—orders huge volumes of a particular product such as catsup or processed turkey or chicken, it wants to be sure that the delivered product meets certain needs. Too much money is involved to risk getting tomato soup when you need catsup, and meals can’t be postponed while the mistake gets corrected. Graders review and accept agricultural products to make sure they meet specifications set by private-sector purchasers. They also certify food items purchased for Federal feeding programs.

AMS has developed quality assurance (QA) services that include Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and International Organization of Standardization (ISO)-based programs. These programs ensure and document that companies’ operations are in compliance with provisions of contracts and/or their own standards and procedures. QA services are voluntary, hourly-fee-based, and value-added. HACCP concepts and procedures have been recommended by the National Academy of Sciences for application in the food industry, and ISO procedures are becoming an international norm for some processes.

## Spreading the News

Farmers, shippers, wholesalers, and retailers across the country rely on AMS Market News for up-to-the-minute information on commodity prices and shipments. Market News helps industry make the daily critical decisions about where and when to sell, and what price to expect. Because this information is made so widely available, farmers and those who market agricultural products are better able to compete, ensuring consumers a stable and reasonably priced food supply.

AMS Market News reporters generate approximately 700 reports each day, collected from more than 100 U.S. locations. Reports cover local, regional, national, and international markets for dairy, livestock, meat, poultry, grain, fruit, vegetables, tobacco, cotton, and specialty products. Weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, and annual reports track the longer-range performance of cotton, dairy products, poultry and eggs, fruits, vegetables, specialty crops, livestock, meat, grain, floral products, feeds, wool, and tobacco. Periodically, AMS issues special reports on such commodities as olive oil, pecans, peanuts, and honey.

USDA's commodity market information in Market News is easily accessible—via newspapers, television, and radio; printed reports mailed or faxed directly to the user; telephone recorders; electronic access through the Market News Communication System, the Market News Bulletin Board, and the Internet; and by direct contact with USDA reporters.

## Buying Food: Helping Farmers, School Children, and Needy Persons

AMS serves both farmers and those in need of nutrition assistance through its commodity procurement programs. By purchasing wholesome, high-quality food products that are in abundance, AMS helps provide stable markets for producers. The Nation's food assistance programs benefit from these purchases, because these foods go to low-income individuals who might otherwise be unable to afford them.

Some of the programs and groups that typically receive USDA-purchased food include: children in the National School Lunch, Summer Camp, and School Breakfast Programs; Native Americans participating in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations; older Americans through the Nutrition Program for the Elderly; and low-income and homeless persons through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program. In addition, USDA helps provide disaster relief by making emergency purchases of commodities for distribution to disaster victims.

Once USDA determines that a purchase is appropriate, AMS publicly invites bids, and makes sure that the food it purchases meets quality and nutrition standards. Often, AMS specifies that foods be low in fat, sugar, and sodium. By policy, AMS only purchases products that are 100 percent domestic in origin.

## Pesticides: Information and Records

Many Americans are concerned about the use and potential negative effects of agricultural pesticides. Recognizing this concern, AMS began coordinating a Pesticide Data Program (PDP) in 1991. Through agreements with nine States, AMS collects and analyzes samples of fresh and processed produce and grain for potential

pesticide residues. In 1996, dairy commodities were added to the program. The PDP generates objective data that support government decisions, while also serving to keep the public informed about the safety of the Nation's food supply. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) uses PDP data to support pesticide reregistration and special review decisions, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) uses PDP data to enforce EPA-established tolerances and FDA guidelines for food safety.

In addition to the PDP, AMS also has the primary responsibility for the Pesticide Recordkeeping Program. This program requires all certified private applicators of federally restricted-use pesticides to maintain records of all applications. These records will support collection of data to help analyze agricultural pesticide use, but will also be helpful to health care professionals when treating individuals who may have been exposed to an agricultural chemical. AMS strives to provide outreach and educational support to States and private applicators to broaden their understanding and participation in the program.

### Helping Farmers Promote Their Products

"The Touch...the Feel of Cotton...the Fabric of Our Lives," "Beef...It's What's for Dinner," "Milk—Where's your mustache?", "Think Flowers" If you've watched television or read magazines lately, you've probably heard or read these slogans and others for a host of agricultural commodities. All of these promotional campaigns are part of the Research and Promotion Programs that AMS oversees.

Federal research and promotion programs, each authorized by separate legislation, are designed to improve farmers' incomes through promotion of their products. The programs are all fully funded by industry assessments. Board members are nominated by industry and appointed officially by the Secretary of Agriculture. AMS oversees the activities of the boards or councils and approves budgets, in order to assure compliance with the legislation.

Currently, there are research and promotion programs for beef, pork, cotton, cut flowers and greens, dairy products, eggs, fluid milk, honey, mushrooms, potatoes, soybeans, and watermelons.

But, while advertising is one part of these programs, product research and development is also a major focus. Wrinkle-resistant cotton and low-cholesterol, low-fat dairy products are just two examples of how these programs have benefitted consumers and expanded markets for producers.

New generic commodity promotion, research, and information legislation was enacted as part of the 1996 Farm Bill to make Federal promotion and research programs available to more commodities.

- *Facts about marketing: The national Fluid Milk Processors Promotion program began its "Milk—Where's your mustache?" campaign in 1995, featuring photographs of famous personalities wearing "milk mustaches." The board estimates that 147 million consumers have already been reached by this promotion*

## Marketing Orders: Solving Producers' Marketing Problems

Marketing agreements and orders help dairy, fruit, vegetable, and peanut producers come together to work at solving marketing problems they cannot solve individually. Marketing orders are flexible tools that can be tailored to the needs of local market conditions for producing and selling. But they are also legal instruments that have the force of law, with USDA ensuring an appropriate balance between the interests of producers looking for a fair price and consumers who expect an adequate, quality supply at a reasonable price.

Federal milk marketing orders, for example, establish minimum prices that milk handlers or dealers must pay to producers for milk, depending on how that milk will be used—whether fluid milk or cheese. Federal milk orders help build more stable marketing conditions by operating at the first level of trade, where milk leaves the farm and enters the marketing system. They are flexible in order to cope with market changes. They assure that consumers will have a steady supply of fresh milk at all times.

Marketing agreements and orders also help provide stable markets for fruit, vegetable, and specialty crops like nuts and raisins, to the benefit of producers and consumers. They help farmers produce for a market, rather than having to market whatever happens to be produced. A marketing order may help an industry smooth the flow of crops moving to market, to alleviate seasonal shortages and gluts. In addition, marketing orders help maintain the quality of produce being marketed; standardize packages or containers; and authorize advertising, research, and market development. Each program is tailored to the individual industry's marketing needs.

## Ensuring Fair Trade in the Market

AMS also administers several programs that ensure fair trade practices among buyers and sellers of agricultural products.

The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) program promotes fair trading in the fresh and frozen fruit and vegetable industry. Through PACA, buyers and sellers are required to live up to the terms of their contracts, and procedures are available for resolving disputes outside the civil court system.

Fruit and vegetable buyers and sellers need this assurance because of the highly perishable nature of their products. Trading in produce is considerably different than trading for a car, a computer, or even grain. When a vegetable grower doesn't get paid, the product usually can't be reclaimed before it spoils—or before it has already been consumed.

Although PACA was initiated to protect producers, it benefits consumers and the entire produce industry. Over the past decade, AMS has handled nearly 40,000 PACA complaints, not just from growers, but also from grower-agents, grower-shippers, brokers, wholesalers, retailers, and processors. PACA is funded by license fees paid by industry, but the bottom line is that fair trade and resolved disputes mean businesses of any size can operate in a better trade environment and consumers can get a wider choice of reasonably priced, high-quality fruits and vegetables.

The Federal Seed Act (FSA) protects everyone who buys seed by prohibiting false labeling and advertising of seed in interstate commerce. The FSA also complements State seed laws by prohibiting the shipment of seed containing excessive

noxious weed seeds. Labels for agricultural seed must state such information as the kinds and percentage of seed in the container, percentages of foreign matter and weed seeds, germination percentage and the date tested, and the name and address of the shipper. USDA also tests seed for seedsmen and seed buyers on a fee-for-service basis to determine quality.

The Plant Variety Protection Act provides patent-like protection to breeders of plants that reproduce both sexually, that is, through seeds, and through tubers. Developers of new plant varieties can apply for certificates of protection. This protection enables the breeder to market the variety exclusively for 20 years and, in so doing, creates an incentive for investment in the development of new plant varieties. Since 1970, AMS' Plant Variety Protection Office has issued more than 3,000 certificates of protection.

The Agricultural Fair Practices Act allows farmers to file complaints with USDA if a processor refuses to deal with them because they are members of a producers' bargaining or marketing association. The Act makes it unlawful for handlers to coerce, intimidate, or discriminate against producers because they belong to such groups. USDA helps to institute court proceedings when farmers' rights are found to be so violated.

## Organic Certification

AMS is responsible for implementing an organic certification program, which was authorized by the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) as part of the 1990 Farm Bill. The OFPA requires that all agricultural products labeled as organic be produced and handled according to national standards and that organic production and handling practices be certified by a State or private certifying agent accredited by USDA. AMS also would evaluate foreign certification programs to determine that imported organic agricultural products are produced and handled under equivalent standards.

The goals of the national organic certification program are to

- Establish national standards governing the marketing of certain products as organically produced,
- Assure consumers that organically grown products meet uniform standards, and
- Facilitate interstate commerce in fresh and processed food that is organically produced.

The OFPA also established the National Organic Standards Board, which was first appointed in January 1992, to provide AMS with recommendations for the national program and specifically to review substances that may be used in the production and handling of organic food.

## Direct Marketing and Wholesale Market Development

AMS continually seeks ways to help farmers and marketers improve the U.S. food marketing system. For example, AMS' Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) provides matching funds to State Departments of Agriculture to conduct research that will help develop or improve local marketing systems. The aim of the program is to reduce costs or expand markets for producers, ultimately benefiting

consumers through lower food costs and more food choices. Projects include research on innovative marketing techniques, taking those research findings into the marketplace to “test market” the results, and developing State expertise in providing service to marketers of agricultural products. In FY 1996, the FSMIP program funded 21 projects in 21 States for \$1.2 million.

The Wholesale and Alternative Markets Program (W&AM) works to improve the handling, processing, packaging, storage, and distribution of agricultural products. AMS researchers work with local governments and food industry groups to develop modern, efficient, wholesale food distribution centers and farmers’ markets. In FY 1996, W&AM initiated eight market studies, completed nine, and continued work on five other long-term projects.

■ *Fact about farmers’ markets: USDA defines a farmers’ market as a group of farmers and vendors leasing or renting space in a common facility on a temporary basis, with an emphasis on the sale of fresh farm products, crafts, and other locally produced items. USDA estimates there are currently 2,410 farmers’ markets in the U.S.*

## Moving U.S. Agricultural Products to Consumers

An efficient transportation system allows consumers access to a wide variety of agricultural products and commodities produced beyond their own localities.

AMS, through its Transportation and Marketing Division, conducts research on the availability and costs of transportation services for U.S. agricultural producers by addressing policy issues which affect movement of agricultural products by railroads, trucks, inland barges, and ocean-going vessels. AMS staff also provide technical assistance to agricultural shippers who are marketing their products in domestic or international markets. Agricultural producers, producer groups, shippers, exporters, rural communities, carriers, and consumers benefit from the analyses, technical assistance, and information provided by AMS transportation staff.

## Produce Locally, Think Globally

To remain competitive in today’s world, American agriculture has become more global, and AMS has striven to be a strong partner in expanding markets for U.S. agricultural products.

The AMS role in the international marketing of U.S. commodities centers on its quality grading and certification programs, which are user-funded. Grading involves determining whether a product meets a set of quality standards. Certification ensures that contract specifications have been met—in other words, that the buyer receives the product in the condition and quantity described by the terms of the contract. AMS commodity graders frequently support other USDA agencies involved in export assistance, including the Farm Service Agency and the Foreign Agricultural Service.

U.S. companies often request certification services when exporting to a country that has specific import requirements. Certification services provided by AMS help avoid rejection of shipments or delay in delivery once the product reaches its foreign destination. Delays lead to product deterioration and, ultimately, affect the image

of U.S. quality. AMS' Quality Systems Certification Program, a user-funded service for the meat industry, provides independent, third-party verification of a supplier's documented quality management system. The program was developed to promote world-class quality and to improve the international competitiveness of U.S. livestock and meat.

AMS also provides laboratory testing for exporters of domestic food commodities on a fee basis in keeping with sanitary and phytosanitary requirements of foreign countries. To date, this service has been requested by exporters of products destined for Japan, South Korea, and other Pacific Rim countries, South Africa, several European Union countries, and countries of the former Soviet Union.

For selected fruits, vegetables, nuts (including peanuts), and specialty crops, the grading of imports is mandatory. For the most part, however, firms importing agricultural products into the United States use grading services voluntarily. AMS graders are also often asked to demonstrate commodity quality to foreign firms and governments.

In addition to export grading and certification services, AMS market news offices provide information on sales and prices of both imports and exports. Today, U.S. market participants can receive market information on livestock and meat from Venezuela, New Zealand, Japan and other Pacific Rim markets, Poland, Mexico, Canada, and Australia; fruits and vegetables from France, Great Britain, Bulgaria, Poland, Mexico, New Zealand, and Canada; ornamentals from Germany, France, and Mexico; and a host of products from Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Russia.

AMS participates in a number of international forums that aim to facilitate world agricultural trade and avoid potential trade barriers. Technical assistance has been provided to countries in Eastern and Central Europe, and elsewhere around the globe, to improve their marketing systems. With improved transportation, distribution, and marketing information systems, these countries will become better customers for U.S. food and fiber products.

Whether at home or abroad, AMS strives to help U.S. agriculture market its abundant, high-quality products. And AMS will continue to work to help U.S. agriculture market its products in growing world markets, while assuring U.S. consumers an abundant supply of high-quality, wholesome food at reasonable prices.

## ■ Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service: Protecting Agricultural Health and Productivity

**W**hy are the farmers and ranchers of the United States able to produce so much food for the tables of America's consumers?

Of course, there's no simple answer. But one key to this plentiful supply of food can be summed up in a single phrase: "Healthy crops and livestock."

And this is no accident. America's agricultural health is a result of a team effort—good husbandry by farmers and ranchers plus an organized effort to control and eradicate pests and disease and to prevent the entry of devastating foreign plagues.

Just like frosts, floods, and droughts, pests and diseases can wreak havoc on agricultural productivity, depressing farm incomes and driving up food costs for con-

sumers in the process. While we may not be able to prevent weather-related disasters, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) plays a vital role in protecting our country's agricultural health. The result is a more abundant, higher quality, and cheaper food supply than is found anywhere else in the world.

Agriculture is an important sector in our economy, and APHIS helps to ensure that it remains healthy and strong. With the advent of free trade initiatives, a global network of countries has agreed that valid agricultural health concerns—not politics, not economics—are the only acceptable basis for trade restrictions. In this environment, our country's agricultural health infrastructure will be our farmers' ally in seeking new export markets.

## Excluding Foreign Pests and Diseases

### **Agricultural Quarantine Inspection**

Agriculture, America's biggest industry and its largest employer, is under constant threat of attack. The enemies are countless and often microscopic, and they gain access to our country in surprising ways. Their potential allies are every traveler entering the United States and every American business importing agricultural products from other countries.

Many passengers entering the United States don't realize that one piece of fruit packed in a suitcase has the potential to cause millions of dollars in damage to U.S. agriculture. Forbidden fruits and vegetables can carry a whole range of plant diseases and pests. Oranges, for example, can introduce diseases like citrus canker or pests like the Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly).

Similarly, sausages and other meat products from many countries can contain animal disease organisms that can live for many months and even survive processing. Meat scraps from abroad could end up in garbage that is fed to swine. If the meat came from animals infected with a disease, such as African swine fever, hog cholera, or foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), it easily could be passed to domestic swine, and a serious epidemic could result.

Agricultural quarantine inspection is the first line of defense against foreign pests and diseases. Seven days a week, approximately 1,300 APHIS inspectors are on duty at international airports, seaports, and border stations to inspect passengers and baggage for plant and animal products that could be harboring pests or disease organisms. These APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) inspectors check millions of passengers and their baggage each year for plant or animal pests and diseases that might harm U.S. agriculture. They also inspect ship cargoes, rail and truck freight, and mail from foreign countries.

The following table provides selected inspection and interception data:

	FY1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Ships Inspected	52,119	53,374	47,887	53,270	55,205	52,974
Aircraft Inspected	356,915	378,643	378,634	451,342	401,741	410,318
Passengers and Crew Inspected	53,999,523	58,103,711	56,920,156	62,548,979	65,645,734	66,119,960
Interceptions of Plant Material	1,527,922	1,723,004	1,474,569	1,442,214	1,583,687	1,567,886
Interceptions of Pests	56,213	54,831	51,829	54,831	58,032	48,483
Interceptions of Meat/Poultry Products	205,407	246,878	224,340	281,230	223,392	264,001
Baggage Civil Penalties-Number	-29,089	29,700	27,137	22,164	21,813	20,716
Baggage Civil PenaltiesAmount of Fines	\$1,299,270	\$1,537,590	\$1,407,000	\$1,186,310	\$1,098,220	\$1,080,000

- *From high-tech to a keen nose, APHIS uses a variety of means to exclude foreign pests and protect American agriculture. PPQ inspectors augment visual inspection with some 75 x-ray units that help check passenger baggage and mail for prohibited agricultural materials. They also have enlisted trained detector dogs and their keen sense of smell to help sniff out prohibited fruit and meat. On leashes and under the constant supervision of their handlers, the friendly beagles in USDA's "Beagle Brigade" have checked the baggage of passengers arriving from overseas for the past 10 years.*
- *Currently, APHIS has about 50 canine teams at 21 airports, including 19 of America's 20 busiest international airports. Dogs also are used at three post offices. In addition to their actual function, the Beagle Brigade serves as an effective symbol of the need to protect American agriculture and the Nation's food supply from foreign pests. The Beagle Brigade program was responsible for approximately 60,000 seizures of prohibited agriculture products in FY 1994.*
- *From Taffy at Los Angeles to Abbott in Miami, the Beagle Brigade spans the United States. At Los Angeles International Airport, beagle Taffy is 3 years old and was trained at John F. Kennedy International Airport, NY. Her favorite treats are rawhide treats, and she likes looking for apples and oranges. In FY 1995 Taffy worked 690 flights and made 490 seizures. Her hobbies are playing with colleagues, especially fellow USDA detector dog Kojak, and her best trick is shaking hands.*
- *Abbott (nicknamed "The Little Prince of PPQ") is 5 years old and works at Miami International Airport. His favorite smells are beef and pork, and in 1995 he worked 815 flights and made 1,315 seizures. Abbott's proudest moments include finding 30 pounds of pork and a 25-pound ham.*

## Preclearance—Checking at the Source

In addition to domestic exclusion efforts, APHIS' International Services (IS) has a corps of experts stationed overseas, as well as APHIS officers on temporary duty, to bolster the Nation's defenses against exotic pests and diseases. Often it is more practical and effective to check and monitor commodities for pests or diseases at the source through preclearance programs. APHIS has special arrangements with a number of countries for preclearance programs, which are summarized in the following table.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Commodities</i>
Argentina	Apples & pears
Australia	Apples, nashi pears, pears, grapes
Belgium	Bulbs
Brazil	Mangoes (hot water treatment)
Chile	Stonefruit, berries, grapes, cut flowers, fruits & vegetables
Colombia	Mangoes (hot water treatment)
Costa Rica	Mangoes (hot water treatment), papaya
Ecuador	Mangoes (hot water treatment), melons (free zone)
France	Apples
Great Britain	Bulbs
Guatemala	Mangoes (hot water treatment)
Haiti	Mangoes (hot water treatment)
Ireland	Bulbs
Israel	Bulbs
Jamaica	Ugli fruit, cut flowers, papaya, & 28 other commodities
Japan	Sand pears, Unshu oranges, Fuji apples
Korea	Sand pears, mandarin oranges
Mexico	Mangoes (hot water treatment), citrus (fumigation or from free zone), apples, peaches
New Zealand	Apples, pears, Nashi pears
The Netherlands	Bulbs
Nicaragua	Mangoes (hot water treatment)
Peru	Mangoes (hot water treatment)
Scotland	Bulbs
South Africa	Apples, pears, plums, grapes
Spain	Lemons, clementines, Valencia oranges
Taiwan	Mangoes (hot water treatment)
Turkey	Bulbs
Venezuela	Mangoes (hot water treatment)

## **International Programs**

Through direct overseas contacts, IS employees gather and exchange information on plant and animal health; work to strengthen national, regional, and international agricultural health organizations; and cooperate in international programs against certain pests and diseases that directly threaten American agriculture. Two of the latter are the MOSCAMED program—which combats Medfly infestations in Mexico and Guatemala—and a program to eradicate screwworms, a parasitic insect of warm-blooded animals. Screwworm flies lay their eggs on the edge of open wounds, and the developing larvae feed on the living flesh of the host. Left untreated, the infestation can be fatal.

Screwworms were eradicated from the United States through the use of the sterile insect technique. With this method, millions of screwworm flies are reared in captivity, sterilized, and then released over infested areas to mate with native fertile flies. Eggs produced through such matings do not hatch, and the insect literally breeds itself out of existence.

To provide further protection to U.S. livestock, starting in 1972, eradication efforts were moved southward from the U.S.-Mexico border, with the eventual goal of establishing a barrier of sterile flies across the Isthmus of Panama. To date, screwworms have been eradicated from Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. Eradication efforts continue in Nicaragua and Costa Rica. An agreement has been signed to start an eradication program and construct a new rearing facility in Panama. Currently a production plant at Tuxtla-Gutierrez in Chiapas in southern Mexico can produce up to 500 million sterile flies weekly.

IS also works to prevent foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) from entering Mexico, Central America, and Panama and works with Colombia to eliminate FMD from the northern part of that country.

## **Coping with Invasions**

If, despite our best efforts, foreign pests or diseases do manage to slip past our border defenses, APHIS conducts appropriate control and eradication measures. Examples include Mediterranean fruit fly eradication projects in California in the early 1990's and outbreaks of exotic Newcastle disease in pet birds in several States during the 1980's.

APHIS has a special cadre of people who deal with introductions of exotic plant pests. Known as "Rapid Response Teams," these groups have been mobilized on several occasions to combat costly infestations of Medflies.

Early detection of exotic animal diseases by alert livestock producers and practicing veterinarians who contact specially trained State and Federal veterinarians is the key to their quick detection and elimination. More than 300 such trained veterinarians are located throughout the United States to investigate suspected foreign diseases. Within 24 hours of diagnosis, one of two specially trained task forces in APHIS' Veterinary Services can be mobilized at the site of an outbreak to implement the measures necessary to eradicate the disease.

Currently, APHIS officials are actively working to prevent the entry of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)—sometimes referred to as "mad cow disease." This disease has had a serious impact on the British livestock industry. BSE has never

been diagnosed in the United States. Since 1989, APHIS has restricted the importation of live ruminants and ruminant products—including animal feed made with ruminant protein—from Great Britain and other countries where BSE is known to exist. In addition, APHIS has conducted a BSE surveillance program since 1989. Specialists have examined brain specimens from more than 3,300 cattle and have found no evidence of BSE.

### **Import-Export Regulations**

APHIS is responsible for enforcing regulations governing the import and export of plants and animals and certain agricultural products.

Import requirements depend on both the product and the country of origin. Plants and plant materials usually must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by an official of the exporting country. Livestock and poultry must be accompanied by a health certificate, also issued by an official of the exporting country. Animal products, such as meats and hides, are restricted if they originate in countries that have a different disease status than the United States.

APHIS regulates the importation of animals that enter the country through land ports along the borders with Mexico and Canada. Imports of livestock and poultry from other countries must be quarantined at one of four animal import centers: Newburgh, NY; Miami, FL; Los Angeles, CA; and Honolulu, HI. A special high-security animal import center at Key West, FL, provides a safe means of importing animals from countries where foot-and-mouth disease exists.

Personally owned pet birds can enter through one of six USDA-operated bird quarantine facilities: New York, NY; Miami, FL; San Ysidro, CA; Hidalgo, TX; Los Angeles, CA; and Honolulu, HI.

Pet birds from Canada can enter without quarantine because Canada's animal disease programs and import rules are similar to those of the United States. Commercial shipments of pet birds can enter through one of 60 privately owned, APHIS-supervised quarantine facilities.

APHIS cooperates with the U.S. Department of the Interior in carrying out provisions of the Endangered Species Act that deal with imports and exports of endangered plant, animal, or bird species. APHIS inspectors at ports of entry are trained to identify these species and to notify Interior of any species protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) found during inspection. Also, at many ports, APHIS officers inspect and sample seed imported from foreign countries to ensure that it is accurately labeled and free of noxious weeds.

APHIS also maintains 14 plant introduction stations, the largest of which is at Miami, FL, for commercial importation of plant materials. Smaller stations are at Orlando, FL; San Juan, PR; JFK International Airport, Jamaica, NY; Hoboken, NJ; Houston, El Paso, and Los Indios (Brownsville), TX; Nogales, AZ; San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, CA; Seattle, WA; and Honolulu, HI.

To facilitate agricultural exports, APHIS officials certify the health of both plants and animals that are shipped to foreign countries. APHIS assures that U.S. plants and plant products meet the plant quarantine import requirements of foreign countries. This assurance is in the form of a phytosanitary certificate, issued by APHIS or its

State cooperators. During FY 1994, 271,000 phytosanitary certificates were issued for exports of plants and plant products worth \$23 billion.

As with their counterparts in PPQ who deal with plant material exports, APHIS' Veterinary Services (VS) officials and its National Center for Import and Export provide health certification for animals and animal products designated for export. Examinations and tests—usually done by USDA-accredited veterinarians—cover both U.S. export health requirements and the frequently complex import requirements of the receiving nation. A VS veterinarian endorses export health certificates after all tests and other requirements have been met. Then a final examination is conducted by a VS veterinarian at the port of export before the livestock or poultry leave the country. During 1994, livestock exports increased by 30 percent over the previous year.

In addition to certifying to the health of agricultural exports, APHIS officials mount a proactive approach to the marketing of U.S. crops and livestock overseas. In 1996, for instance, APHIS and Food Safety and Inspection Service officials coordinated negotiations to avert a Russian embargo on U.S. poultry exports worth \$600 million a year. On the plant side, efforts by APHIS and Foreign Agricultural Service officials helped maintain U.S. wheat exports after the March 1996 discovery of an outbreak of Karnal bunt, a fungal disease of wheat, in Arizona. The United States is the world's leading wheat exporter, accounting for one-third of world wheat exports. U.S. wheat exports in calendar 1995 were valued at \$5.5 billion.

## Domestic Plant Health Programs

In most cases, plant pest problems are handled by individual farmers, ranchers, other property owners, and their State or local governments. However, when an insect, weed, or disease poses a particularly serious threat to a major crop, the Nation's forests, or other plant resources, APHIS may join in the control work.

Most pests and weeds that are targets of APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine programs are not native to America. They gained entry into this country through commercial trade channels, international travelers, or other means.

When pests are new to this country, control techniques may not be available. In any case, PPQ applies interstate quarantines and takes other steps to prevent spread until effective control measures can be developed.

In many cases, foreign pests are only minor problems in their native lands because they are kept in check by native parasites, predators, and diseases. Since many of these natural enemies may not exist in the United States, one of PPQ's control techniques—in cooperation with USDA's Agricultural Research Service—is the importation, rearing, and release of parasites and other biological control organisms.

## Biocontrol—Nature's Way

In its classical sense, biological control means using predators, parasites, and pathogens to combat plant pests. Predators and parasites include insects, mites, and nematodes that naturally attack a target pest. Pathogens include bacteria, viruses, or fungi that cause diseases specifically injurious to a target pest.

Biological control was first put to broad, practical use in the United States in the 1880's. At that time, California citrus groves were being devastated by an exotic insect, the cottony-cushion scale. A USDA scout working in Australia found the

vedalia beetle feeding on the scale insect. The beetle, part of the lady beetle family, was successfully introduced into California and other citrus-growing regions and has kept the scale insect from causing economic damage ever since.

To coordinate the important search for new and better biocontrol opportunities, a National Biological Control Institute was established in APHIS in 1989. The Institute's mission is to promote, facilitate, and provide leadership for biological control. Its main job is to compile and release technical information and coordinate the work needed to find, identify, and augment or distribute new biological control agents.

The Institute relies on scientists from ARS and elsewhere to identify potentially useful biological control agents. These agents are carefully screened at quarantine centers before being put to use.

Various agencies have successfully cooperated on biocontrol projects. For example, several decades ago, ARS scientists found six species of stingless wasps in Europe that keep alfalfa weevils in check. In 1980, APHIS took on the job of establishing these beneficial wasps across the land. Between 1980 and 1989, APHIS and its cooperators raised and distributed about 17 million wasps, and today there are beneficial wasps within reach of virtually every alfalfa field in the country. It's estimated that the benefits of the alfalfa weevil biocontrol program amount to about \$88 million per year, representing a return of about \$87 for each \$1 spent on the project.

Other APHIS biocontrol programs currently underway in cooperation with State agencies include efforts against the cereal leaf beetle, sweet potato whitefly, Russian wheat aphid, Colorado potato beetle, euonymus scale, brown citrus aphid, leafy spurge, diffuse and spotted knapweed, and common crupina. Promising biocontrol agents for other pests are being tested at PPQ biocontrol labs located at Mission, TX, Niles, MI, and Bozeman, MT.

### **“Deliver Us from Weevil”—Boll Weevil Eradication**

One major domestic program PPQ is coordinating is the effort to eradicate boll weevils from the United States. The boll weevil entered this country from Mexico in the late 1890's and soon became a major pest of cotton. It has caused an estimated \$12 billion in losses to the Nation's economy. In 1973, it was estimated that insecticides applied to control boll weevils accounted for about one-third of the total applied to agricultural crops in the United States.

The success of a 1971-73 cooperative boll weevil eradication experiment in portions of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama involving Federal and State agencies and grower associations led to two 3-year demonstration projects. One was an eradication trial in North Carolina and Virginia; the second was an optimum pest management trial in Mississippi. The eradication trial was a success in 1980, and the program has undergone regular, incremental expansion since that time.

The current boll weevil eradication effort judiciously applies pesticides based on the number of adult weevils trapped around cotton fields. The traps contain a pheromone (insect attractant) and a small amount of insecticide that kills all captured weevils. In eradication program areas, one to three traps are placed per acre and are checked weekly. Pesticides are applied only to fields that reach a predetermined number of trapped weevils. This selective use of pesticides results in fields requiring

minimal pesticide applications—sometimes none—during the growing season. After several seasons, the weevils are eradicated within the defined program area, eliminating any further need to spray for this pest. As an indirect benefit of eliminating the boll weevil, growers are able to maintain beneficial insects that help control many secondary pests. This further reduces the amount of pesticide used each season to produce the cotton crop.

The table below shows the progress in eradicating boll weevils from U.S. cotton-growing areas.

	<i>States involved</i>	<i>Eradication Acres</i>	<i>Weevil-free Acres</i>
1983	VA/NC/SC	160,000	35,000
1985	+CA/AZ	1,400,000	95,000
1987	+GA/FL/AL	450,000	1,500,000
1994	+MS/TN/TX	550,000	2,000,000
1996	Same	1,200,000	4,600,000

In the cooperative boll weevil eradication program, APHIS supplies equipment, technical and administrative support, and a portion of program funds. Grower assessments and/or State appropriations finance the great majority of the program—70 percent or more.

The success of the program has brought a resurgence of cotton production and supporting industries. Planting intentions reported by the National Cotton Council indicated more than a 13.5-percent increase in cotton acreage in 1995 compared with 1994.

**Witchweed—A Success Story**

Witchweed is a parasitic plant that attaches itself to the roots of crops such as corn, sorghum, sugar cane, and other members of the grass family, robbing them of water and vital nutrients. Each plant can produce up to 500,000 seeds per year, and the seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to 15 years, germinating only when they come into contact with the root of a host plant.

Witchweed was introduced into the Carolinas from Africa in the mid-1950’s. When the parasite first struck, corn plants mysteriously withered and died. A student visiting from India recognized the weed and told U.S. agricultural experts what it was.

Over the course of an eradication effort that began in 1974, some 450,000 acres have been infested. The eradication program was based on surveillance to locate infested fields, quarantines to prevent spread, and a combination of herbicides and germination stimulants to actually eradicate the weed.

At the beginning of FY 1995, with fewer than 28,000 infested acres remaining, APHIS turned operation of the program over to North Carolina to complete eradication there, but continues to help finish the eradication effort in South Carolina. By late 1996, the infested area was reduced to less than 10,000 acres.

## **Grasshoppers and IPM**

APHIS was the lead Agency in a cooperative Integrated Pest Management (IPM) initiative for grasshopper control in the Western United States. This IPM project, which began in 1987 and closed down in 1994, was aimed at finding better and more acceptable ways of preventing grasshopper damage, while protecting the environment. Activities included developing means to predict and manage grasshopper outbreaks, developing biological control alternatives that minimize the use of chemicals, and integrating proven control techniques into guidelines for APHIS rangeland grasshopper programs.

All this information was integrated into a computer-based decisionmaking program called “HOPPER.” HOPPER is a user-friendly software package that facilitates grasshopper predictions, selection and timing of control options, compilation of weather data, and analysis of the economics of range management practices. An example of how HOPPER is used was provided by a Logan County, CO, official in August 1996. He wrote: “I was recently asked to utilize the district’s resources to help ranchers save grass pasture obviously threatened by grasshoppers.” Using the HOPPER computer model (previously downloaded from the Internet), he estimated the return and decided on the best treatment method.

“We discovered that we would spend \$4 per acre in an effort to save \$1.50 per acre of grass. The ranchers quickly realized they could purchase hay to replace lost forage and save money. The program showed us we would also have very little effect on next year’s population. It also showed us that we should initiate any control effort sooner in the year than we have done in the past.”

Other domestic PPQ programs include a quarantine program to prevent the artificial spread of the European gypsy moth from infested areas in the Northeastern United States through movement of outdoor household goods and other articles, quarantines to prevent the spread of imported fire ants through movement of plant nursery material from infested areas, and releasing irradiated sterile pink bollworm moths to keep this insect out of cotton in California’s San Joaquin Valley.

## **Domestic Animal Health Programs**

Protecting the health of the Nation’s livestock and poultry industries is the responsibility of the APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) program. VS veterinary medical officers and animal health technicians work with their counterparts in the States and with livestock producers to carry out cooperative programs to control and eradicate certain animal diseases. The decision to begin a nationwide campaign against a domestic animal disease is based on a number of factors, the most important of which is: “Are producers and the livestock industry a leading force in the campaign?”

This organized effort against livestock diseases began in 1884 when Congress created a special Agency within USDA to combat bovine pleuropneumonia—a dreaded cattle disease that was crippling exports as well as taking a heavy toll on domestic cattle. Within 8 years, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia had been eradicated and this campaign set the pattern for subsequent animal disease control and eradication programs.

To date, 13 serious livestock and poultry diseases have been eradicated from the United States. They are:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Disease</i>
1892	Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia
1929	Foot-and-mouth disease
1929	Fowl plague
1934	Glanders
1942	Dourine
1943	Texas cattle fever
1959	Vesicular exanthema (VE)
1959 & 66	Screwworms (southeast & southwest)
1971	Venezuelan equine encephalitis
1973	Sheep scabies
1974	Exotic Newcastle disease
1978	Hog cholera
1985	Lethal avian influenza

Current VS disease eradication programs include cooperative State-Federal efforts directed at cattle and swine brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis, and pseudorabies in swine. The following table shows the status of States in these programs.

<i>Swine State</i>	<i>Cattle</i>		<i>Swine</i>	<i>Cattle</i>
	<i>Brucellosis*</i>	<i>Brucellosis**</i>	<i>TB***</i>	<i>Pseudorabies****</i>
AL	Class A	Stage 2	Free	Stage 4
AK	Free	Free	Free	Free
AZ	Free	Free	Free	Free
AR	Class A	Stage 2	Free	Stage 4
CA	Class A	Free	M-A	Stage 3
CO	Free	Free	Free	Free
CT	Free	Free	Free	Free
DE	Free	Free	Free	Free
FL	Class A	Stage 2	Free	Stage 3
GA	Class A	Free	Free	Stage 3
HI	Free	Free	Free	Stage 3
ID	Free	Free	Free	Free
IL	Free	Free	Free	Stage 3
IN	Free	Free	Free	Stage 2/3
IA	Class A	Free	Free	Stage 2/3
KS	Class A	Free	Free	Stage 3
KY	Class A	Free	Free	Stage 4
LA	Free	Stage 2	Free	Stage 3
ME	Free	Free	Free	Free
MD	Free	Free	Free	Free
MA	Free	Free	Free	Stage 3
MI	Free	Free	Free	Free
MN	Free	Free	Free	Stage 2/3

continued

<i>State</i>	<i>Cattle Brucellosis*</i>	<i>Swine Brucellosis**</i>	<i>Cattle TB***</i>	<i>Swine Pseudorabies****</i>
MS	Class A	Free	Free	Stage 3
MO	Class A	Free	Free	Stage 3
MT	Free	Free	Free	Free
NE	Free	Free	Free	Stage 2/3
NV	Free	Free	Free	Free
NH	Free	Free	Free	Stage 4
NJ	Free	Free	Free	Stage 3
NM	Free	Free	M-A	Free
NY	Free	Free	Free	Free
NC	Free	Free	M-A	Stage 2/3
ND	Free	Free	Free	Free
OH	Free	Free	Free	Stage 3
OK	Class A	Stage 2	M-A	Stage 4
OR	Free	Free	Free	Free
PA	Free	Free	M-A	Stage 3
PR	Free	Free	M-A	Free
RI	Free	Free	Free	Stage 4
SC	Free	Stage 2	Free	Free
SD	Class A	Free	Free	Stage 4
TN	Free	Free	Free	Stage 4
TX	Class A	Stage 2	M-A	Stage 3
UT	Free	Free	Free	Free
VT	Free	Free	Free	Free
VI	Free	Free	Free	Stage 4
VA	Free	Free	M-A	Free
WA	Free	Free	Free	Free
WV	Free	Free	Free	Free
WI	Free	Free	Free	Stage 3/4
WY	Free	Free	Free	Free

\* Class A (less than .25 percent herd infection rate) or Class Free

\*\* Stage 1, 2 or Free

\*\*\* Modified Accredited (M-A) or Accredited Free (Free)

\*\*\*\* Stage 1, 2, 3, 4 or Free

Disease control and eradication measures include quarantines to stop the movement of possibly infected or exposed animals, testing and examination to detect infection, destruction of infected (sometimes exposed) animals to prevent further disease spread, treatment to eliminate parasites, vaccination in some cases, and cleaning and disinfection of contaminated premises. In addition to the programs listed above, APHIS also cooperates with the States in a Voluntary Flock Certification Program to combat scrapie in sheep and goats. By October 1996, 302 sheep and goat flocks had been enrolled in the certification program. A current listing of enrolled flocks, by State and by breed, is available on the World Wide Web (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/scrapie/status.html>).

APHIS animal health programs are carried out by a field force of about 250 veterinarians and 360 lay inspectors working out of area offices (usually located in State

capitals). Laboratory support for these programs is supplied by APHIS' National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) at Ames, IA, and Plum Island, NY, which are centers of excellence in the diagnostic sciences and an integral part of APHIS' animal health programs.

Under the Virus-Serum-Toxin Act of 1913, APHIS enforces regulations to assure that animal vaccines and other veterinary biologics are safe, pure, potent, and effective. Veterinary biologics are products designed to diagnose, prevent, or treat animal diseases. They are used to protect or diagnose disease in a variety of domestic animals, including farm animals, household pets, poultry, fish, and fur bearers.

In contrast to animal medicines, drugs, or chemicals—all of which are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration—veterinary biologics are derivatives of living organisms. Unlike some pharmaceutical products, most biologics leave no chemical residues in animals. Furthermore, most disease organisms do not develop resistance to the immune response produced by a veterinary biologic.

Veterinarians and other professionals in the APHIS VS Center for Veterinary Biologics regulate and license all veterinary biologics as well as the facilities where they are produced. They also inspect and monitor the production of veterinary biologics, including both genetically engineered products and products produced by conventional means. Necessary tests of veterinary biologics are conducted at the APHIS National Veterinary Services Laboratories at Ames, Iowa.

APHIS also regulates the licensing and production of genetically engineered vaccines and other veterinary biologics. These products range from diagnostic kits for feline leukemia virus to genetically engineered vaccines to prevent pseudorabies, a serious disease affecting swine. With the pseudorabies vaccines, tests kits have been developed to distinguish between infected animals and those vaccinated with genetically engineered vaccines.

Since the first vaccine was licensed in 1979, a total of 63 genetically engineered biologics have been licensed; all but 12 are still being produced.

More than a half-century ago, there were perhaps a half a dozen animal vaccines and other biologics available to farmers. Now there are 2,341 active product licenses and 120 licensed manufacturers.

## Monitoring Plant and Animal Pests and Diseases

In order to combat plant pests and animal diseases, it's important to know their number and where they are located.

To monitor plant pests, APHIS works with the States in a project called the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey, which started in 1982 as a pilot project. Survey data on weeds, insects, and plant diseases and pests is entered into a nationwide database, the National Agricultural Pest Information System (NAPIS). This database can be accessed from anywhere in the country by persons with an authorized account.

By accessing NAPIS, users can retrieve the latest data on pests. NAPIS data can assist with forecasting, early pest warning, quicker and more precise delimiting efforts, and better planning for plant pest eradication or control efforts. Survey data—which can reflect the absence as well as the presence of pests—also helps U.S. exports, assuring foreign countries that our commodities are free of specific pests and diseases.

There are more than a million records in the NAPIS database. Approximately 200 Federal and State agencies use NAPIS. NAPIS contains survey data files as well as text and graphics files. The data can be downloaded and analyzed with geographic information systems (GIS) to provide graphic representation of information. For example, locations of pine shoot beetle detections can be shown graphically, as well as where and how often surveys have been conducted for the beetle. This information is used by the State and Federal agencies regulating this pest.

Describing animal health and management in the United States is the goal of the APHIS National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS). This program, which is conducted by APHIS' Veterinary Services, began in 1983.

NAHMS compiles statistics and information from existing data bases and gathers new data through short- and long-term targeted studies to present a baseline picture of animal agriculture. This information then can be used to predict trends and improve animal production efficiency and food quality. NAHMS provides statistically sound data concerning U.S. livestock and poultry diseases and disease conditions, along with their costs and associated production practices. By the end of 1996, NAHMS had conducted seven national studies on U.S. animal populations: swine (2), dairy (2), beef cow/calf, beef feedlot, and sheep. Sentinel monitoring of morbidity and mortality in beef feedlots and Marek's disease in broiler operations were among NAHMS' short-term projects.

Information from NAHMS aids a broad group of users throughout agriculture. For instance, baseline animal health and management data from NAHMS national studies are helping analysts identify associations between Salmonella and cattle management. NAHMS data are also helping researchers evaluate management practices that contribute to the occurrence of Johne's disease and digital dermatitis in cattle. State and national officials, industry groups, and producers apply NAHMS data and information in educational programs and in setting research priorities.

NAHMS information is available through the WorldWide Web:  
*<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah>*

## Regulating Biotechnology in Agriculture

Scientists use agricultural biotechnology with a variety of laboratory techniques, such as genetic engineering, to improve plants, animals, and micro-organisms. Recent discoveries have led to virus-resistant crops such as cucumbers, tomatoes, and potatoes; to better vaccines and diagnostic kits used for diseases of horses, chickens, and swine; and even to new and improved varieties of commercial flowers.

Since 1987, APHIS' role in agricultural biotechnology has been to manage and oversee regulations to ensure the safe and rapid development of the products of biotechnology. Applicants under APHIS' effective regulations and practical guidelines can safely test—outside of the physical containment of the laboratory—genetically engineered organisms.

APHIS officials issue permits or acknowledge notification for the importation, interstate movement, or field testing of genetically engineered plants, microorganisms, and invertebrates that are developed from components from plant pathogenic material.

Since 1987, APHIS has issued more than 2,400 release permits and notifications at more than 9,600 sites in the United States, and no environmental problems have resulted from these field tests. The biotechnology regulations also provide for an exemption process once it has been established that a genetically engineered product does not present a plant pest risk. Under this process, applicants can petition APHIS for a determination of nonregulated status for specific genetically engineered products. To date, 23 engineered plant lines have been proven safe and no longer need to be regulated by APHIS. The most recent of these—in September 1996—was a genetically engineered virus-resistant papaya developed by Cornell University.

Besides the papaya, crops deregulated include:

- Five tomato lines for delayed ripening,
- Four cotton lines, one for insect resistance and four for herbicide tolerance,
- Two soybean lines for herbicide tolerance,
- One rapeseed line for increased production of laurate,
- Two squash lines for disease resistance,
- Two potato lines for insect resistance, and
- Six corn lines, three for herbicide tolerance and three for insect resistance.

APHIS biotechnology personnel meet with regulatory officials from other nations on a regular basis to foster regulatory harmonization. These discussions are intended to help ensure that requirements imposed by other countries are as consistent as possible with U.S. requirements and that our trading partners are kept informed of biotechnology regulatory developments.

Information about APHIS' biotechnology regulations, current submissions, and new issues and events can be seen on the WorldWide Web:

*<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/new/ab.html>*

## Controlling Wildlife Damage

The mission of APHIS' Animal Damage Control (ADC) program is to provide Federal leadership in managing problems caused by wildlife. Wildlife is a significant public resource that is greatly valued by the American public. But by its very nature, wildlife also can damage agricultural and industrial resources, pose risks to human health and safety, and affect other natural resources. ADC helps solve problems that occur when human activity and wildlife are in conflict with one another. In doing so, ADC attempts to develop and use wildlife management strategies that are biologically, environmentally, and socially sound.

The need for effective and environmentally sound wildlife damage management is rising dramatically. There are several reasons for this. Increasing suburban development intrudes upon traditional wildlife habitats. Population explosions of some adaptable wildlife species, such as coyotes and deer, pose increasing risks to human activities. At the same time, advances in science and technology are providing alternative methods for solving wildlife problems.

APHIS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC), the world's only research facility devoted entirely to developing methods for managing wildlife damage, accounts for about one-fourth of ADC's budget. In existence since the 1920's, NWRC has an integrated, multidisciplinary research program that is uniquely suited to provide scientific information and solutions to wildlife damage problems.

A few examples of current NWRC projects include:

- Developing chemosensory repellants and attractants for birds and mammals,
- Finding methods to reduce threats to human safety when birds collide with airplanes,
- Finding ways to control the brown tree snake in Guam,
- Engineering an immunocontraceptive vaccine and delivery system to help resolve problems caused by wildlife overpopulation,
- Reducing bird damage to fish hatcheries and cereal crops,
- Studying coyote biology and behavior to develop techniques for protecting livestock from these predators, and
- Looking at ways to solve wildlife problems in urban areas involving such things as deer in backyards, raccoons in gardens, squirrels in attics, and geese on golf courses.

More than half of U.S. farmers experience economic loss from animal damage. In 1994, sheep and goat producers lost an estimated \$17.7 million due to predation. In 1995, cattle producers' losses to predators were worth \$39.6 million. Coyotes alone caused \$11.5 million in sheep losses and \$21.8 million in cattle losses nationwide. A survey in 1993 showed that wildlife caused \$92 million in losses to corn producers in the top 10 corn-producing States.

Additionally, beavers in the Southeastern United States cause an estimated \$100 million in damage each year to public and private property, while Mississippi catfish farmers lose nearly \$6 million worth of fingerlings to fish-eating birds. During 1 year in Pennsylvania, white-tailed deer caused crop losses totaling \$30 million. Overall, bird populations cause an estimated annual loss to U.S. agriculture of \$100 million. In 1994, the annual dollar loss to agriculture in the United States from wildlife was about \$600 million.

## Humane Care of Animals

A number of local, State, and Federal laws deal with the humane treatment and care of animals.

An important Federal law in this area is the Animal Welfare Act, which regulates the care and treatment of animals that are used for research or exhibition or are sold as pets at the wholesale level. This Act, which APHIS administers, does not cover retail pet stores. The Act also specifically excludes animals raised for food or fiber (including fur-bearing animals). USDA has long had a concern for the health and well-being of animals. The first Federal humane law, which mandated feed and water for farm animals being transported by barge or rail, was passed in 1873. In 1966, responding to complaints about suffering and neglected dogs and cats supplied to research institutions and focusing on the problem of "petnapping," Congress passed the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act.

Four years later, a much more comprehensive piece of legislation—the Animal Welfare Act—was enacted. This law expanded coverage to most other warmblooded animals used in research, to animals in zoos and circuses and marine mammals in sea life shows and exhibits, and to animals sold in the wholesale pet trade. The law does not cover retail pet shops, game ranches, livestock shows, rodeos, State or county fairs, or dog and cat shows.

- *APHIS deals with a wide variety of wildlife problems, ranging from coyote attacks on lambs to protecting endangered species from predation by other wildlife. Here are a few examples of Animal Damage Control efforts:*
  - *A farmer in Washington requested ADC assistance after thousands of Canada geese congregated on his 43-acre field of carrots and began eating his crop, which had a potential market value of more than \$7,000 an acre. Noise-making devices and other scare tactics recommended by ADC were successful in frightening the geese and keeping them out of his field.*
  - *A mountain lion that killed a dog and attacked another dog and a mule in Colorado was captured by an ADC specialist and officials from the Colorado Division of Wildlife. The lion was released unharmed in a remote site about 165 miles from the community where the attacks occurred.*
  - *In 1991, a plane carrying 350 passengers aborted takeoff at JFK International Airport after gulls were drawn into one of its engines. Although no one was seriously injured, the aircraft lost its brakes and 10 tires in the accident. Between 1988 and 1990, there were an average of 170 bird strikes against airplanes per year at that airport. After ADC became involved in managing bird populations at the airport in 1990, laughing gull strikes were reduced by 66 percent in 1991, and by 89 percent in 1992 compared with the previous 2-year period.*
  - *Livestock guarding dogs, predator-proof fencing, and the "Electronic Guard" (a device developed by ADC that combines a flashing strobe light and a siren to scare coyotes) are examples of nonlethal ways to minimize damage from predators.*
  - *ADC helps protect many threatened or endangered species from predation, including the California least tern and light-footed clapper rail, the San Joaquin kit fox, the Aleutian Canada goose, the Louisiana pearlshell (mussel), and two species of endangered sea turtles.*
  - *In 1995, ADC cooperated with Texas officials to help combat a rabies epidemic in the southern part of that State. ADC-developed coyote baits laced with a genetically engineered rabies vaccine approved by APHIS for use in the project were dropped over a 14,400-square-mile area stretching from Maverick County, at the Mexican border, to Calhoun County, on the Gulf Coast. The goal of the project is to create a buffer zone of immunized coyotes to help prevent the further spread of canine rabies across Texas into more heavily populated areas.*

The Animal Welfare Act has been amended three times. A 1976 amendment extended the scope of the Act to include care and treatment while animals are being transported via common carriers. It also outlawed animal fighting ventures, such as dog or cock fights, unless specifically allowed by State law.

A 1985 amendment focused on research animals. It called for establishment of special committees at every research facility to oversee animal use and for regulations to provide for exercise of dogs and the psychological well-being of nonhuman primates.

In 1993, the Act was further amended to help prevent the use of lost and stolen pets in research by giving pet owners more time to find their pets and by requiring more documentation from dealers who sell animals to researchers. Under the newest regulations, pounds and animal shelters must hold dogs and cats for at least 5 days, including a Saturday, before releasing them to dealers.

The table below shows some animal welfare statistics for fiscal 1996.

Animals used in research	1,345,739
Registered research facilities	1,264
Licensed animal dealers	4,075
Licensed and registered exhibitors	2,098
Compliance inspections	14,778

Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care officials within APHIS enforce the Animal Welfare Act through a system of licensing and registration of regulated businesses. Inspectors check to make sure that licensees and registrants are complying with the standards for proper care and handling of animals covered by the Act.

If violations are noted, inspectors set deadlines for correcting the situation. In extreme situations, APHIS can seize and take custody of animals whose safety is in imminent danger. If the problem isn't corrected, the person responsible may be charged with a violation and prosecuted through civil procedures. Penalties include fines, suspension or revocation of licenses, and cease-and-desist orders to prevent future violations. The table below summarizes penalties over the past 4 fiscal years.

	1993	1994	1995	1996
Fines imposed	\$165,250	\$345,900	\$451,725	\$1,050,590
License revocations, suspensions, and refusals	13	23	19	29

Examples of enforcement actions by APHIS during 1996 are:

- A Pennsylvania animal dealer was fined \$51,250 and had his license suspended because of Animal Welfare Act violations in the areas of recordkeeping, veterinary care, housing, storage, sanitation, identification, and treatment.
- A Florida dolphin exhibitor was fined \$10,000 and had his license suspended because of Animal Welfare Act violations. His four remaining dolphins were transferred to other organizations better equipped to handle these mammals.
- A university in New York agreed to the issuance of a consent decision and an order to pay a civil penalty of \$450,000, all but \$25,000 of which must be either used to improve housing for its nonhuman primates, at its premises or elsewhere, or donated to a nonprofit sanctuary for nonhuman primates.

As part of its outreach activities, APHIS' Animal Care home page on the Internet's WorldWide Web includes a "missing and found pets" page (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/reac/anlost.html>) that lets people advertise missing or found cats and dogs. The service, which includes photos, also helps research institutions check to make sure they do not accept lost or stolen animals.

APHIS also enforces the Horse Protection Act, which prohibits the cruel practice of "soring" show horses. The primary enforcement tool is inspection of horses at shows by APHIS personnel and by "Designated Qualified Persons" who are licensed by industry organizations and certified and monitored by APHIS.

## Aquaculture

APHIS provides services to the aquaculture industry in a number of areas. Aquaculture is the fastest growing segment of U.S. agriculture, surpassing in value most domestic fruit, vegetable, and nut crops. Between 1980 and 1990, the industry experienced a 400-percent increase in growth; it is now estimated to be worth approximately \$1.5 billion. The aquaculture industry provides about 300,000 jobs nationwide.

Current APHIS services include licensing of fish vaccines and other biologics under the Virus-Serum-Toxin Act, controlling birds and damage-causing animals, and providing health certification services for exports. APHIS is currently working to expand its aquatic animal health activities, its underlying authority to support industry efforts to increase exports of aquacultural products around the world, its coordination of interstate regulation, and its protection of the industry from the entry of animal pests and diseases. Examples include:

- European Union (EU) animal health negotiators have been extremely concerned that U.S. aquatic health regulations are not equivalent to those of the EU; the main concern is that the United States does not have a single Federal Agency with legal authority to monitor, prevent, and control outbreaks of aquatic animal disease. Currently, U.S. responsibility in this area is divided among four Federal departments (Agriculture, Interior, Commerce, and Health and Human Services) and the 50 States. APHIS is working with the Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture's Task Force on Aquatic Animal Health to clarify Federal Agency roles, avoid duplication of authority, and achieve adequate protection of U.S. aquatic animals, both wild and cultivated.

- APHIS has produced a video about health certification procedures for the export of aquacultural products. The goal of the video—which uses the example of exporting trout eggs from Washington State to Chile—is to give animal health and natural resource officials and aquacultural producers a model of how to implement an aquatic health protocol for exporting products.
- APHIS' Animal Damage Control program placed three wildlife biologists in Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi to assist aquaculture producers with bird predation problems. These biologists are helping develop new methods for controlling fish-eating birds, providing onsite assistance to aquaculture producers experiencing predation problems, and developing management plans for fish-eating bird species in the three States.
- APHIS/Veterinary Services' Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health completed an overview of the U.S. aquaculture industry, including study of trends in farm size, geographic distribution of aquatic species, and description of the industry's diversity. During 1997, APHIS will work with USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service on a comprehensive national study of the U.S. catfish industry.

While APHIS is authorized to prevent the introduction and dissemination of pests and diseases that can harm U.S. livestock and crops, it has no statutory authority to take similar actions to protect the aquaculture industry from foreign pests and diseases. Such deficiencies are already having serious consequences. For example, recent outbreaks of Taura Syndrome Virus in Texas and Hawaii have caused millions of dollars in losses to shrimp producers in those States. This disease is thought to have been introduced via shrimp products imported from South America. In the absence of specific legal authority, APHIS officials have been providing technical assistance to the extent possible to the producers affected by this outbreak, with efforts to control and prevent spread of the disease being very limited. APHIS is therefore exploring the best ways to achieve a coordinated Federal regulatory program to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic plants, animals, and organisms that could harm commercial aquaculture production.

## ■ Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) facilitates the marketing of livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds, and related agricultural products and promotes fair and competitive trading practices for the overall benefit of consumers and American agriculture.

GIPSA, like its sister agencies in USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs, is working to ensure a productive and competitive global marketplace for U.S. agricultural products. GIPSA's Packers and Stockyards Programs ensure open and competitive markets for livestock, meat, and poultry. The Federal Grain Inspection Program provides the U.S. grain market with Federal quality standards and a uniform system for applying them.

## Federal Grain Inspection Program

Through its Federal Grain Inspection Program, GIPSA facilitates the marketing of grain, oilseeds, pulses, rice, and related commodities. This program serves American agriculture by providing descriptions (grades) and testing methodologies for measuring the quality and quantity of grain, rice, edible beans, and related commodities. GIPSA also provides a wide range of inspection and weighing services, on a fee basis, through the official grain inspection and weighing system, a unique partnership of Federal, State, and private laboratories. In FY 1996, the official system performed over 2.3 million inspections on 250 million metric tons of grain and related commodities.

Specifically, under the U.S. Grain Standards Act, and those provisions of the Agricultural Marketing Act (AMA) of 1946 that relate to inspection of rice, pulses, lentils, and processed grain products, GIPSA:

- Establishes official U.S. grading standards and testing procedures for eight grains (barley, corn, oats, rye, sorghum, triticale, wheat, and mixed grain), four oilseeds (canola, flaxseed, soybeans, and sunflower seed), rice, lentils, dry peas, and a variety of edible beans.
- Provides American agriculture and customers of U.S. grain around the world with a national inspection and weighing system that applies the official grading and testing standards and procedures in a uniform, accurate, and impartial manner.
- Inspects and weighs exported grain and oilseeds. Domestic and imported grain and oilseed shipments, and crops with standards under the AMA, are inspected and weighed upon request.
- Monitors grain handling practices to prevent the deceptive use of the grading standards and official inspection and weighing results, and the degradation of grain quality through the introduction of foreign material, dockage, or other nongrain material to grain.

By serving as an impartial third party, GIPSA and the official grain inspection and weighing system ensure that the Official U.S. Standards for Grain are applied and that weights are recorded fairly and accurately. In this way, GIPSA advances the orderly and efficient marketing and effective distribution of U.S. grain and other assigned commodities from the Nation's farms to destinations around the world.

## Packers and Stockyards Programs

GIPSA's Packers and Stockyards Programs administers the Packers and Stockyards (P&S) Act of 1921. The purpose of the P&S Act, which has been amended to keep pace with changes in the industry, is to assure fair competition and fair trade practices, safeguard farmers and ranchers, and protect consumers and members of the livestock, meat, and poultry industries from unfair business practices that can unduly affect meat and poultry distribution and prices.

## **Payment Protection**

The P&S Act requires prompt payment for livestock purchased by dealers, market agencies, and packers whose operations are subject to the Act. Pursuant to this requirement, subject firms must pay for livestock before the close of the next business day following the purchase and transfer of possession. In addition, the Act establishes specific payment delivery requirements for livestock purchased for slaughter. Also, packers, market agencies, and dealers operating in commerce are required to file a surety bond or its equivalent. At the beginning of FY 1997, bonds totaling \$625 million were in place to cover the livestock purchases of packers, market agencies, and dealers.

GIPSA also emphasizes custodial account investigations as a means of payment protection for consignors of livestock. All market agencies selling on a commission basis are required to establish and maintain a separate bank account designated as “Custodial Account for Shippers’ Proceeds,” to be used for deposits from livestock purchasers and disbursements to consignors of livestock. The custodial audit program has been very successful in protecting funds due livestock sellers.

## **Packer and Poultry Trust Activities**

If a meat packer fails to pay for livestock or a live poultry dealer for live poultry, then receivables, inventories, and proceeds derived from such purchases in cash sales or by poultry growing arrangement become trust assets by operation of law. These assets are held by the meat packer or live poultry dealer for the benefit of all unpaid cash sellers and/or poultry growers. Cash sellers of livestock and poultry growers are legally in a priority payment position in bankruptcy or in claims against trust assets in the event of business failure.

## **Open Competition**

Competition for livestock, either in direct trading or at public markets, should be open and free of restrictions. Any practice, agreement, or understanding that excludes potential buyers from bidding in open competition would be considered a restraint on competition. Practices resulting in the lessening of competition for producers’ livestock include apportioning of territories, price agreements or arrangements not to compete, and payoffs or kickbacks to buyers. GIPSA staff members immediately investigate any practice that indicates a possible restriction of competition.

## **Scales & Weighing Activities**

GIPSA’s Scales and Weighing program is concerned with two different elements that affect the integrity of transactions: (1) the accuracy of scales used for weighing livestock, meat, and poultry, and (2) the proper and honest operation of scales to assure that the weight on which a transaction is based is accurate.

The major emphasis in the Scales and Weighing program is on detection of improper and fraudulent use of scales. An investigative program uses several different procedures to determine whether weighing activity is proper and honest. Agency investigators routinely visit livestock auction markets, buying stations, and packing plants for the purpose of checkweighing livestock, carcasses, and live poultry, along with examining weight records and equipment.

## **Fair Treatment for Poultry Growers**

GIPSA carries out enforcement of the trade practice provisions of the P&S Act relating to live poultry dealers. Its investigative program extensively examines the records of poultry integrators to determine the existence of any unfair, unjustly discriminatory, or deceptive practices in its dealings with poultry growers and sellers. Complaints alleging unfair termination of growing contracts are investigated on a priority basis.

## **Carcass Merit Purchasing**

GIPSA monitors the use of electronic evaluation devices by hog slaughterers who purchase hogs on a carcass merit basis, in order to ensure that the electronic measuring is accurate and properly applied and that the producer receives an accurate accounting of the sale.

## **Analysis of Structural Change**

GIPSA examines structural changes in the livestock, meat packing, and poultry industries, and analyzes the competitive implications of these structural changes. The analyses assist in enforcing the P&S Act and in addressing public policy issues relating to the livestock and meat industries.

## **Clear Title**

The Clear Title provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 permit States to establish central filing systems to inform parties about liens on farm products. The purpose of this program is to remove an obstruction to interstate commerce in farm products. GIPSA certifies when a State's central filing system complies with the Act.

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