



THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D. C.
20250-0100

September 18, 2002

Dear friends and colleagues:

At the end of August, I was diagnosed with a very early and treatable form of breast cancer. It is 98% curable and my doctors expect a complete recovery following treatment. I fully expect to perform the responsibilities of my position during treatment.

This week I will begin that treatment, which will include a lumpectomy, followed by six weeks of radiation. While I will not be able to travel for several weeks, I am extremely confident that our very capable subcabinet will ably substitute.

The form of the cancer, Ductal Carcinoma In Situ (DCIS), is very small in size and localized. This cancer could not have been detected without a mammogram, which only highlights the importance of preventive screening for early detection.

The month of October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and particularly during this time, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of regular check-ups and mammograms. Early detection can make a significant difference in your life. There is a great deal of information available regarding breast cancer and I encourage you and your families to learn more about this important health issue.

While being diagnosed with cancer is not easy news to accept, I am grateful that it was not more serious and that with appropriate treatment, a full recovery is expected.

I am also very thankful for the support of my family, friends, and colleagues and appreciate your continued thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann M. Veneman".

Ann M. Veneman