



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

October 13, 2026

THE HONORABLE AMY KLOBUCHAR
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ranking Member Klobuchar,

Thank you for your August 30, 2026, letter, cosigned by your colleagues, expressing concerns about the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) restructuring at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). As the Department has noted publicly, this modernization effort is part of a Department-wide initiative to streamline operations, consolidate support functions, and align our workforce and facilities with available financial resources to continue delivering our core mission of advancing American agriculture and supporting rural communities. This approach has been phased, iterative, and centered on maintaining service, consistent with commitments made in our June 17, 2026, announcement.

The Department fully recognizes the critical role that the World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) play in providing transparent, high-quality market intelligence to producers, businesses, and global partners. In line with our commitment to preserve essential national coordination functions in Washington, D.C., the WASDE team will remain in the National Capital Region, where analysts continue close collaboration with interagency partners and USDA's Office of the Chief Economist.

At the same time, Kansas City has long served as the designated technical backup location for WASDE operations. The Department has evaluated this capacity and confirmed that, if ever needed, WASDE responsibilities could be performed in Kansas City without disruption to quality or timeliness. Maintaining both the Washington-based core operations and Kansas City technical capacity helps safeguard one of USDA's most consequential analytical products and strengthens continuity-of-operations planning across the agency.

The Department's employees working on Food for Peace have the same rights, protections, and benefits as any USDA staff member. This alignment ensures consistency with Federal personnel policies, strengthens workforce stability, and reinforces unified program management. As noted in the June 17 announcement, establishing an operational support hub in Kansas City reflects the Department's goal of bringing program functions and staffing closer to the

communities at the center of American agriculture. The commodities we provide reflect this regional connection: wheat is largely from Kansas, Oklahoma, Idaho, and Washington; rice is largely from Texas and Louisiana; sorghum is largely from Texas and Kansas; and soybeans are largely from Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, and Nebraska. Since announcing the modernization effort, USDA has received 598 applications for newly posted Kansas City positions. This early momentum demonstrates the availability of a robust talent pipeline and interest in regional locations, while also supporting continuity for core program operations.

The FAS restructuring remains a phased effort conducted in close consultation with affected staff. The Department is committed to providing clarity, support, and resources throughout the transition to ensure FAS continues delivering world-class assistance, trade support, and market intelligence for years to come.

Thank you for your engagement on this important matter. The Department welcomes continued dialogue as USDA's modernization efforts progress. If you have additional questions or comments, please have a member of your staff contact USDA's Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095 or ocr@usda.gov. We have sent a copy of this letter to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Stephen Alexander Vaden".

Stephen Alexander Vaden
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture