



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

February 2007

Dear Colleague:

We are pleased to present the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) resource *American Indians and Alaska Natives: A Guide to USDA Programs*, which has been compiled by the USDA Office of Native American Programs for your use. I hope you will find this information helpful in identifying programs that fit your needs.

USDA delivers a variety of program benefits to Native Americans and Alaska Natives and their communities through the programs of its component agencies. In addition to the traditional assistance and loans offered farmers through USDA's Farm Service Agency, the Department provides a wide range of other benefits. A few examples are as follows:

- USDA Rural Development's Housing Preservation Grant Program makes grants to Native American tribes, nonprofit organizations, and local governments for renovation of low-income multifamily rental units and repairs to private homes. Rural Development also maintains a special Web site for American Indian and Alaska Native customers and has increased funding for tribal colleges and for a number of rural business concerns.
- To help build a long-term partnership with tribal governments, USDA's Forest Service is creating a National Tribal Leaders Committee that will provide agency and tribal officials with a forum for discussion of policy and strategic direction.
- USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service has assisted tribes in creating 26 Tribal Conservation Districts to help conserve natural resources on tribal lands.

I encourage you to learn more about USDA and its programs by perusing the *Guide* and by visiting the USDA Web site (<http://www.usda.gov>). If you have questions or concerns, please contact the USDA Office of Native American Programs (202-690-1615) or the USDA Office of External and Intergovernmental Affairs (202-720-6643).

Thank you for your interest in USDA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Johanns".

Mike Johanns  
Secretary