



Message from the Secretary

Our Nation's food and agricultural system is influenced by many of the same forces that shape America's economy as a whole—globalization of markets, advances in technology, new delivery systems, and modern science. Driven by these and other forces, the farm and food sector operates in a highly competitive marketplace that must continuously respond to changing consumer demand for high quality, nutritious, and convenient food and agricultural products.

USDA's Strategic Plan is an important tool to assist one of the Federal Government's most diverse and complex agencies in planning and responding effectively to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The foundation for the Plan is the Bush Administration book, "Food and Agricultural Policy: Taking Stock for the New Century." That publication provides a comprehensive examination of the changing food system and articulates a long-term view of the policies needed both to build upon past accomplishments and to ensure continued success in the future.



The Strategic Plan identifies key policy and management objectives that will be integrated with USDA's budget priorities and that provide accountability through a series of annual performance plans. This Plan differs from the Strategic Plan for FY 2002-2007 in that we have addressed separately our international and domestic efforts to enhance the competitiveness of American agriculture. It also focuses more on establishing a competitive and stable rural farm policy, and adds more key outcomes and actionable strategies. Central to the plan is effective management of the Department's resources in an effort to best deliver its multifaceted programs.

USDA is strongly committed to strategic planning and to the goals and strategies outlined in this Plan. Within this framework, we intend to continue to improve by remaining flexible and open to new opportunities and change. As such, this Strategic Plan is a dynamic, working document that will evolve in response to changes not only in the farm and food sector, but throughout the many mission areas for which the Department has responsibility.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Johanns".

Mike Johanns
Secretary of Agriculture