

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

March 17, 2003

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM 1800-1

**DEPARTMENT-WIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL
INTERAGENCY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

1 INTRODUCTION

One of USDA's highest priorities is the protection of American agriculture and the food, fiber and forestry infrastructures. To ensure that USDA can respond effectively to any type of disaster, the Department is implementing the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS). The implementation of this system will enhance USDA's effectiveness in responding to a wide range of emergencies, including natural disasters, as well as accidental or deliberate incidents that may threaten the U.S. food supply, critical infrastructure, or economy.

Used successfully for decades by the Forest Service and other emergency response agencies, the NIIMS model enables a wide range of emergency management agencies to work together effectively to mobilize maximum resources in support of common goals. Adoption of the model will facilitate interagency and interdepartmental synergy by linking USDA agencies internally and—through the Federal Response Plan—with other departments. Use of NIIMS will also strengthen USDA's response capabilities in the wider national system of Federal, State, and local emergency response resources.

2 ACTIONS ORDERED

It is ordered hereby that:

- a The National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) be implemented across all USDA agencies;
- b Mission areas and agencies transition from their current use of contingency-specific organizational approaches to the standard USDA NIIMS model;

- c Appropriate management structures be established to implement NIIMS, at the Department level and in the agencies; and
- d USDA Homeland Security Staff take leadership in implementing NIIMS Department-wide, including any training programs required.

3 DELEGATIONS

The Homeland Security Staff (HSS) is responsible for coordinating NIIMS throughout USDA. HSS will work with agencies to implement a NIIMS model and system and will coordinate an aggressive and proactive training program to ensure USDA develops a sound baseline of knowledge and proficiency. HSS will also develop a productive, systematic, and institutionalized program for Incident Command System (ICS) qualification. HSS will establish a USDA Multi-agency Coordinating Group (MAC) that will be responsible for coordinating implementation of NIIMS within the agencies.

4 EXISTING DIRECTIVES

Prior delegations of authority, administrative regulations, and other directives not inconsistent with the provisions of this Memorandum shall remain in full force and effect.

HSS will ensure that appropriate references and information about NIIMS are included in relevant manuals, handbooks and other primary policy and guidance documents for emerging response.

4 TERMINATION

This Memorandum shall remain in effect for 1-year, or until such earlier time as the Department's published regulations have been revised to incorporate the provisions of this Memorandum.

/s/

Ann M. Veneman
Secretary