

About the
**U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
(USDA)**



The United States
Department of Agriculture
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Introduction

About the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

One of the **LARGEST** Federal departments in the executive branch of government

With responsibility for 17 separate agencies, USDA is 1 of the biggest departments in the whole Federal Government. The Secretary of Agriculture reports directly to, and advises the President on, agricultural issues and policies.

The following are names and descriptions of several USDA agencies. Match the names of the agencies in the top boxes to their descriptions below. One of the puzzles has already been solved.

MIX-N-MATCH PUZZLE

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

Forest Service

Food and
Nutrition Service

Farm Service
Agency

1

Ensures the health of America's natural resources and the environment through good land management

2

Manages nutrition assistance programs to end hunger and improve the health of Americans

3

Safeguards the health of animals and plants and facilitates safe foreign trade in U.S. agricultural products

4

Administers credit, conservation, disaster, and emergency-assistance programs for farmers and ranchers

5

Ensures that meat, poultry, and egg products are safe, wholesome, and properly labeled and packaged

ANSWERS: Back page

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)



- What percentage of the U.S. population is made up of farmers?
- What percentage of the U.S. gross national product comes from agriculture?
- What types of goods does agriculture provide for people?
- What U.S. State has the biggest share of national agricultural production?

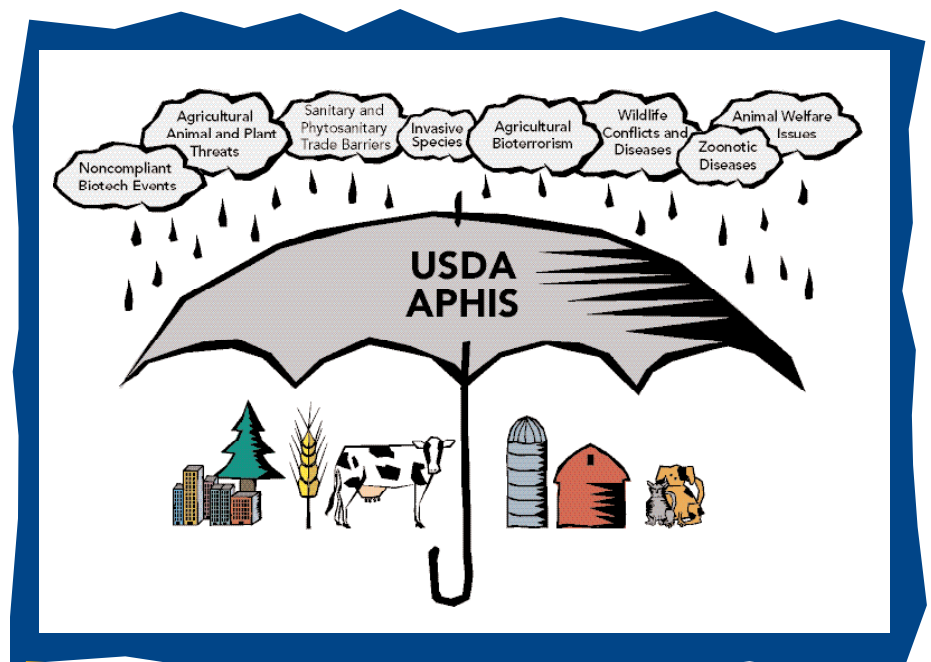


In 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln founded USDA, he called it “the people's department.” In Lincoln's day, 48 percent of Americans were farmers, and they needed good seeds and information to grow their crops. Today, USDA continues Lincoln's legacy by serving all Americans.

The Department continues to aid farmers, but it also serves consumers through its food-assistance and food-inspection programs. Using an encyclopedia or other reference material, answer the above questions to learn about U.S. agriculture and its importance to the Nation's economy.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS)

APHIS is a Federal agency within USDA. APHIS exists to protect agricultural crops from foreign pests and diseases. APHIS is like a big umbrella: it protects crops from animal and plant pests and diseases that could limit production and damage export markets. APHIS also guards against agricultural bioterrorism, promotes the humane treatment of animals, monitors invasive species and diseases of wildlife and livestock, and works to minimize conflicts between humans and wildlife.

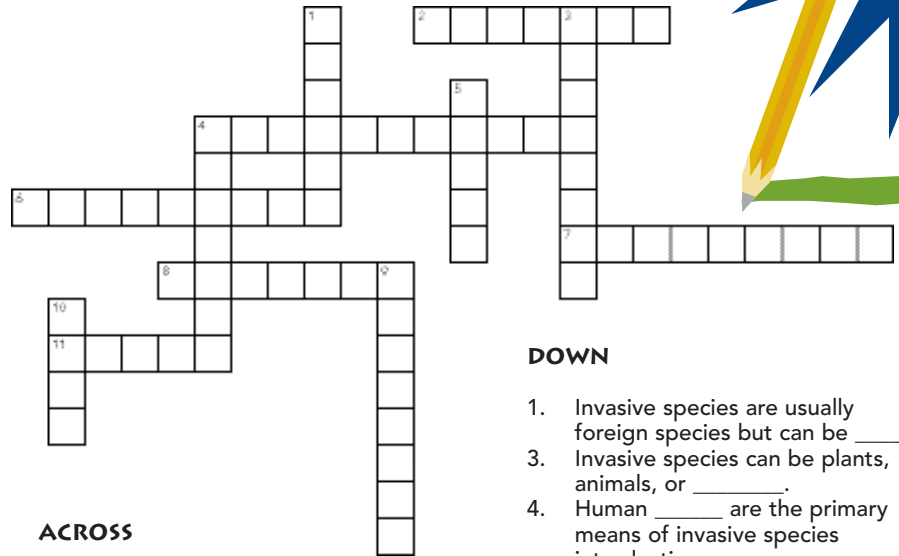


What do you think would happen if APHIS did not exist?

APHIS' PRIMARY MISSION IS ...

... to protect U.S. agriculture from diseases and pests, many of which are species that come here from abroad. These invasive species are plants, animals, or disease pathogens that, once established, are difficult to get rid of and cause economic or environmental harm. Most invasive species come here in connection with human actions like travel and trade. Controlling invasive species is a tough job that requires the cooperation of all three levels of government—Federal, State, and local. Exclusion (preventing the entry) of invasives is the most effective means of protecting America against them. With its State and local partners, APHIS is currently working to control or eradicate several invasive species across the country, including giant African snails and giant hogweed. To learn more about invasive species or the work APHIS does with them, fill in the blanks of the crossword puzzle.

APHIS CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- Generally introduced to new areas where natural controls are absent, invasive species ____ reproduce.
- Resources that APHIS protects
- Another word for exotic
- Most effective means of protecting against invasive species
- Large invasive weed being managed by APHIS
- Acronym for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

DOWN

- Invasive species are usually foreign species but can be ____.
- Invasive species can be plants, animals, or ____.
- Human ____ are the primary means of invasive species introductions.
- Government agency partnering with APHIS to manage invasive species
- Invasive species are one of the most costly and ____ environmental problems.
- The Plant Protection Act, the Animal Health Protection Act, and the Federal Seed Act are examples of ____ that give APHIS authority to respond to invasive species.

ANSWERS

MIX-N-MATCH PUZZLE

Forest Service

Food and Nutrition Service

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Farm Service Agency

Food Safety and Inspection Service

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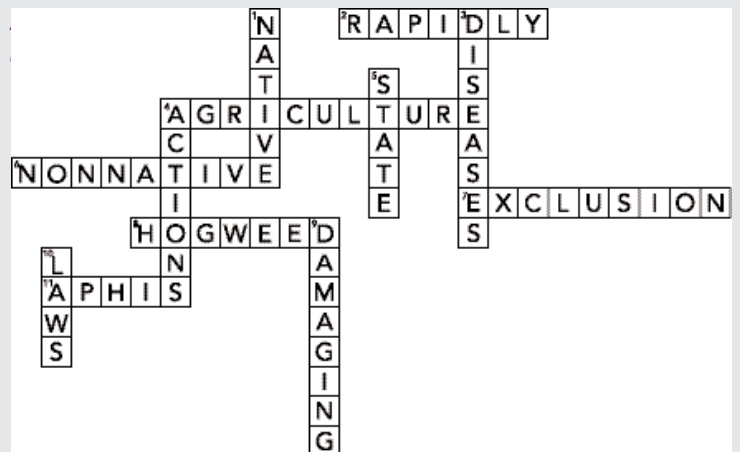
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What percentage of the U.S. population is made up of farmers?
Less than 2 percent

What percentage of the U.S. gross national product comes from agriculture?
20 percent

What types of goods does agriculture provide for people?
Food, clothing, and shelter

What U.S. State has the biggest share of national agricultural production?
California



What do you think would happen if APHIS did not exist?

Without APHIS protecting America's animal and plant resources from agricultural pests and diseases, threats to our food supply and to our Nation's economy would be enormous. Plant and animal pests and disease threats could cost billions of dollars in lost domestic and international markets and have a huge impact on U.S. consumers.