

**USDA ANNOUNCES 2009 AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK FORUM
DISTINGUISHED PLENARY SPEAKERS**

WASHINGTON, Oct. 29, 2008 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the distinguished plenary panelists for its 85th annual Agricultural Outlook Forum, "Global Agriculture & Rural America in Transition," Feb. 26-27, 2009, to be held at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Va.

Sara Wyant, President, Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc., will moderate the panel titled "Food & Energy: Expectations & Realities." Speakers will include: Michael Mack, CEO, Syngenta International AG; Chris Policinski, President and CEO, Land O'Lakes, Inc.; Daniel Yergin, Chairman, Cambridge Energy Research Associates, Inc.; and Catherine Ann Bertini, Professor at Syracuse University, and Senior Fellow at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

"USDA's 2009 Agricultural Outlook Forum will explore the future of U.S. and global agriculture from market, scientific, and policy perspectives," said Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer. "I'm pleased that our distinguished speakers have agreed to share their visions based on diverse experiences and backgrounds with the agricultural community at large."

The Forum's keynote address will be given by the Secretary of Agriculture followed by a distinguished guest speaker who will be selected in the future. USDA's Chief Economist Joseph Glauber will deliver the domestic agricultural economic outlook.

In 2009, commodity and food prices, renewable energy, rural America, scientific advances, and global policy and trade issues will be featured in the breakout sessions. Session topics include animal and human health issues, multi-lateral negotiations, transportation, markets for environmental services, conservation, and the future of bees as pollinators in America. The Forum's traditional supply and demand outlooks will focus on the major commodities, and the National Agriculture Statistics Service will discuss the results of a newly released Census of Agriculture.

USDA has hosted this annual event since 1923 to provide farmers and ranchers, government, and agribusinesses with sound information for decision-making. Attendees will include members of farm organizations, food and fiber firms, academia, foreign governments, business consultants, and the news media.

For a program preview and registration, please go to: www.usda.gov/oce/forum. To receive periodic Forum updates, please send an e-mail to: agforum@oce.usda.gov. Registration is \$350 until Jan. 23, 2009, and \$375 thereafter. Plenary speeches will be Webcast after 3:30 p.m. EST on Feb. 26, with speech and PowerPoint presentations posted online at the end of each day's sessions.