



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service

Washington, DC  
20250

August 8, 2012

Dear Stakeholder:

I want to take this opportunity to thank the more than 220 stakeholders who responded to the survey we conducted earlier this year seeking feedback on APHIS' critical services and opportunities for enhanced partnerships. We heard from a broad range of stakeholders addressing all of APHIS' programs and we are pleased to share a summary of the responses.

As you might expect, we saw some common themes emerge among the comments, and we have captured that feedback in a document available on our Web site at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/stakeholders>. You will notice the majority of comments we received address animal health and animal welfare. Given the diverse nature of our stakeholders, you'll also notice that some of the comments represent opposing viewpoints, and we've made every effort to include multiple perspectives in our summary. In addition to this document, APHIS' leaders and employees have received a detailed breakdown of the comments.

As expected we received interesting and relevant feedback and we've challenged our senior managers to look at ways to address your suggestions for improvements and consider opportunities for partnerships. Because of APHIS' regulatory responsibilities, it isn't possible to act on every suggestion, but we appreciate your perspective and understand your intent.

In other cases, we're already acting on your advice. For example, we received numerous comments related to improving the Web site. APHIS is beginning an extensive redesign to make it easier to find the information you need via the Internet. We also heard comments about the importance of having a robust animal disease surveillance program. As part of our business process improvement (BPI) initiative, we're evaluating surveillance activities for several key disease-based programs to ensure a coordinated and strategic national approach. Another recurring theme addressed obtaining documentation to import and export agricultural products. We have another BPI project underway looking at ways to improve customer service relating to the issuance of phytosanitary certificates.

I share these examples because I want you to know that in some instances we're thinking along the same lines and actions are already underway to respond to your comments. But there's always more we can do to enhance customer service, and your feedback gives us insights and perspectives that we might not have otherwise seen. I hope you'll take a few minutes to read through the summary document and see what your fellow stakeholders had to say about APHIS.

Sincerely,

Kevin Shea  
APHIS' Acting Administrator



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