

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

June 3, 2011

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION 1070-001

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Policy Statement on Climate Change Adaptation

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Departmental Regulation is to implement sections of Executive Order (E.O.) 13514 related to climate change adaptation planning, consistent with the 2010-2015 USDA Strategic Plan and guidance from the Council on Environmental Quality and the Federal Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force.

While the scope, severity, and pace of future climate change impacts are difficult to predict, it is clear that potential changes could have important impacts on USDA's ability to fulfill its core mission. Through adaptation planning, USDA will identify how climate change is likely to affect its ability to achieve its mission, operations, and policy and program objectives. Climate change adaptation is a critical complement to mitigation; both are required to address the causes and consequences of climate change. Through adaptation planning, USDA will develop, prioritize, implement, and evaluate actions to minimize climate risks and exploit new opportunities that climate change may bring. By integrating climate change adaptation strategies into USDA's programs and operations, USDA better ensures that taxpayer resources are invested wisely and that USDA services and operations remain effective in current and future climate conditions. Through climate adaptation planning, USDA is taking a leadership role in ensuring the vision of a resilient, healthy, and prosperous Nation in the face of a changing climate.

USDA will continue to coordinate with other Departments and Federal government efforts on climate change adaptation issues that cut across agency jurisdictions, including areas where national adaptation plans are being or have been developed, and will identify a process for sharing climate change adaptation planning information throughout the Department and with the public.

2. Actions Ordered

This policy establishes a USDA-wide directive to integrate climate change adaptation planning and actions into USDA programs, policies, and operations.

- a. The Climate Change Program Office (CCPO), located within the Office of the Chief Economist shall, with the full support and participation of USDA agencies and offices, develop a USDA Climate Change Adaptation Plan by June 4, 2012, that will be updated as appropriate in accordance with Council of Environmental Quality guidance for submission of Strategic Sustainability Performance Plans. CCPO will issue guidance to agencies in order to complete the Plan, as well as the following required interim deliverables:
 - (1) By June 3, 2011, responses to questions regarding how climate change will affect an agency's mission, programs, and operations;
 - (2) By September 30, 2011, preliminary analysis of USDA vulnerabilities to climate change;
 - (3) By September 30, 2011, priority climate change adaptation actions that USDA agencies and offices will implement in FY 2012, contingent on resource availability; and
 - (4) By March 2012, final high-level analysis of USDA vulnerabilities to climate change.

- b. Each USDA agency and office shall:
 - (1) Analyze how climate change may affect the ability of the agency or office to achieve its mission and its policy, program, and operational objectives by reviewing existing programs, operations, policies, and authorities to:
 - (a) identify potential impacts of climate change on the agency's or office's areas of responsibility;
 - (b) prioritize, implement, and mainstream response actions, contingent on the availability of resources; and
 - (c) continuously assess and improve the capacity to adapt to current and future changes in the climate.
 - (2) Identify to the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, under the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, as part of the annual budget process areas where budget adjustments would be necessary in order to carry out the actions identified under this Departmental Regulation and include this information on the Global Change Cross-Cut that is compiled each year;
 - (3) Identify, as appropriate, for USDA's Office of the General Counsel areas where legal analysis is needed to carry out actions identified under this Departmental Regulation; and
 - (4) Coordinate actions with USDA's Global Change Task Force, as appropriate.

- c. USDA agencies and offices shall consider potential climate change impacts when undertaking long-term planning exercises, setting priorities for scientific research and

3. Effective Date and Termination

The provisions of this Departmental Regulation are effective immediately and will remain in effect until superseded or revoked.

THOMAS J. VILSACK
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE