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Our mission is to conduct research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority and provide information access and dissemination to:

- ensure high-quality, safe food, and other agricultural products
- assess the nutrition needs of Americans
- sustain a competitive agricultural economy
- enhance the natural resource base and the environment, and
- provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole.

With Special Collaboration From:

Agricultural Marketing Service
Food and Nutrition Service
Forest Service
Rural Development



United States Department of Agriculture

Honoring the Hispanic Heritage Month

presents

“Conquering Challenges To Leadership”

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

1:00 p.m.

Jefferson Auditorium

Agenda

Welcome

Mr. Richard Regan
USDA Hispanic Special Emphasis Program Manager
Office of Workplace Diversity and Inclusion
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

Opening Remarks/
Introduction of Panelists

Ms. Itzel Sclopis
Deputy Director
Office of Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity
Agricultural Research Service

Panel Discussion

Enrique Gómez
Food and Nutrition Service

Sonia Jiménez
Agricultural Marketing Service

Norma Valdés
Rural Development

Fernando Vega
Agricultural Research Service

Closing

Ms. Itzel Sclopis



E. Enrique Gómez
Associate Administrator
Management, Technology and
Finance
Food and Nutrition Service

Enrique Gómez serves as the Associate Administrator for Management, Technology and Finance for the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). He is responsible for managing the accounting and financial management, human resources, administrative services, and information technology functions for the agency. This includes a FY 2009 budget totaling \$60.1 billion.

Mr. Gómez has served as Acting Administrator for the FNS from October 2008 to April 2009 and was responsible for administering the 15 federal nutrition assistance programs. He has also served as the Deputy Administrator for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer for the FNS. Mr. Gómez has over 32 years of professional experience with the Federal government.



Sonia N. Jiménez
Branch Chief
Research and Promotion
Agricultural Marketing Service

Sonia Jiménez is the Chief of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Fruit and Vegetable Programs' Research and Promotion Branch.

She first joined USDA as a Marketing Specialist in the Marketing Order and the Research and Promotion Branches of the AMS. She has also served as Agricultural Marketing Specialist for the Foreign Agricultural Service.

Prior to becoming a civil servant with the USDA, Ms. Jiménez worked as Director of Syndicated Programs for a private market research and consulting firm in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She has 19 years of experience with the United States Government.

Ms. Jiménez holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico.



Norma Valdés
Chief
Human Resources Programs
Branch
Rural Development

Norma Valdés became the Chief of the Human Resources Programs Branch of Rural Development (RD) in 2006. She is responsible for directing and coordinating all new or revised policies and programs within Human Resources.

Ms. Valdés previously served as a Human Resources Specialist in the Human Resources Programs Branch for RD, where she was responsible for the Senior Executive Service and Schedule C Programs. She was instrumental in RD receiving a “green” rating in the Strategic Management of Human Capital initiatives. Ms. Valdés served on a USDA Committee whose main focus was to implement environmental initiatives to get the Department to “green.” The Committee received the USDA Secretary’s Honor Award.

Ms. Valdés began her federal career as a secretary with the Federal Bureau of Prisons. During her tenure at the Bureau, she received the “Director’s Award for Staff Member of the Year for Professional Excellence.”



Fernando E. Vega
Research Entomologist
Sustainable Perennial Crops
Laboratory
Agricultural Research Service

Dr. Fernando Vega worked at the USDA European Biological Control Laboratory in Montpellier, France before joining the Department's Agricultural Research Service, Sustainable Perennial Crops Laboratory. He has international experience in more than 25 countries, and is currently conducting research on biological methods to control the coffee berry borer (most destructive pest of coffee throughout the world).

Dr. Vega has a U.S. patent, more than 120 publications, and is co-editor of *Insect-Fungal Associations: Ecology and Evolution* published by Oxford University Press. He has a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Puerto Rico and his Master's and Ph.D. from the University of Maryland in College Park.

“Conquering Challenges To Leadership” Panel Discussion

Planning Committee

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If you have additional questions for the panelists, please e-mail them to one of the above Committee members by October 9, 2009.

On behalf of the sponsoring agencies, thank you for attending today's program!!