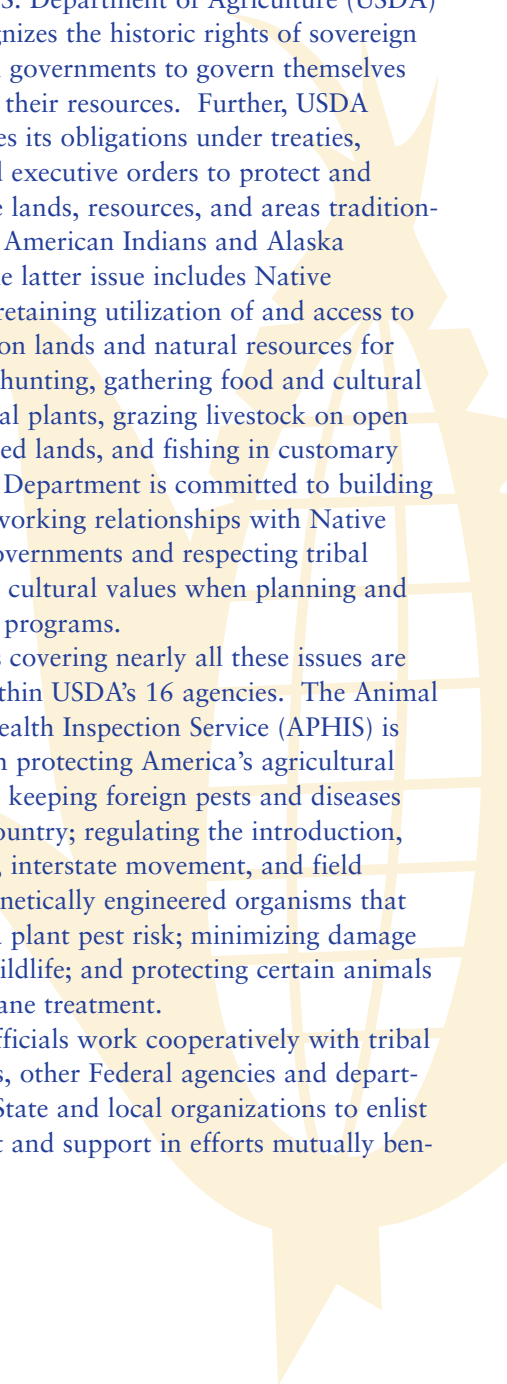


Partnerships Across Nations



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognizes the historic rights of sovereign tribal governments to govern themselves and manage their resources. Further, USDA acknowledges its obligations under treaties, statutes, and executive orders to protect and maintain the lands, resources, and areas traditionally used by American Indians and Alaska Natives. The latter issue includes Native Americans' retaining utilization of and access to off-reservation lands and natural resources for purposes of hunting, gathering food and cultural and medicinal plants, grazing livestock on open and unclaimed lands, and fishing in customary places. The Department is committed to building day-to-day working relationships with Native American governments and respecting tribal heritage and cultural values when planning and initiating its programs.

Programs covering nearly all these issues are managed within USDA's 16 agencies. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is charged with protecting America's agricultural resources by keeping foreign pests and diseases out of the country; regulating the introduction, importation, interstate movement, and field release of genetically engineered organisms that could pose a plant pest risk; minimizing damage caused by wildlife; and protecting certain animals from inhumane treatment.

APHIS officials work cooperatively with tribal governments, other Federal agencies and departments, and State and local organizations to enlist their interest and support in efforts mutually ben-

eficial to all parties involved. Program specialists maintain contacts to better consult with Native American leaders relative to tribal concerns and issues. Managers and program coordinators within the agency consider the impact of agency decisions on tribes and consult with tribal governments to ensure that tribal rights, issues, and concerns are factored in during rulemaking and the development of projects, programs, and policies.

APHIS Native American Working Group (ANAWG)

In April 1994, the President directed all Federal agencies to improve program delivery to Native Americans in the now more than 560 federally recognized tribes. APHIS responded to this directive by establishing the ANAWG, which is made up of representatives from all APHIS program areas. The group advises the agency's top management about ways to enhance program delivery and accessibility to tribes, intertribal committees, and related organizations, such as the Intertribal Agriculture Council, the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, and the Intertribal Bison Cooperative. The ANAWG also facilitates the coordination of active partnerships with tribal governments by providing assistance and advice to the various agency program areas. In addition, ANAWG representatives work with their program leaders to be sure that Native American needs are taken into account when new strategic plans for APHIS programs are developed.

The ANAWG functions under the direction of the leader of APHIS, the agency's Administrator. The Administrator retains authority for establishing agency policy relating to all APHIS activities and programs of interest to Native Americans.

APHIS Program Areas

APHIS promotes the health of animal and plant resources; regulates the introduction and movement of genetically engineered materials; protects agricultural and natural resources, property, and human health and safety; protects and enhances ecosystems; works to maximize America's share in world agricultural trade; and promotes animal welfare. Fair and safe agricultural trade standards and practices are ensured through APHIS' cooperation with customers and stakeholders. APHIS also develops biologically sound pest and disease exclusion, detection, and control programs and promotes international standards and globally recognized certification systems, ensuring an abundance of agricultural commodities for U.S. consumers.

APHIS maintains a highly motivated and capable team of diverse individuals who share leadership within an agency community that cares about the professional and personal lives of others. Through shared leadership, APHIS anticipates and responds to issues involving

- animal and plant health,
- agricultural biotechnology,
- wildlife damage,
- global economics,
- environmental protection, and
- animal care and welfare.

Animal and Plant Health

APHIS specialists provide technical assistance to tribal, State, and local governments in plant and animal pest and disease detection and control programs. APHIS veterinarians administer national programs to protect U.S. livestock and poultry resources and provide technical assistance and vital support to tribal, State, and local cooperators to eradicate and control livestock and poultry pests and diseases. APHIS specialists also conduct surveillance and detection programs to further safeguard the Nation's agricultural resources. In support of all field programs, APHIS scientists conduct methods-development and research activities.

Agricultural Biotechnology

Using the authority granted by the Plant Protection Act of 2000, APHIS personnel work to protect America's agriculture by ensuring the safe importation, interstate movement, and field release of genetically engineered organisms such as plants, insects, and micro-organisms. Our scientists analyze the potential effects on plant health of introducing genetically engineered organisms into the environment and regulate the release and movement of these organisms. APHIS ensures compliance through inspections, strong educational and outreach efforts, and comprehensive investigations.

Wildlife Damage

APHIS provides Federal leadership and expertise to help solve problems that occur when human activity and wildlife are in conflict with one another. Program goals include providing high-quality wildlife services that protect agriculture,

wildlife, and other natural resources, property, and human health and safety. APHIS wildlife management personnel can provide assistance to significantly reduce damage caused by wildlife while also protecting threatened and endangered species. The agency's wildlife personnel develop and use effective, flexible methods that are biologically, environmentally, and socially sound. In addition to our traditional agricultural protection programs, APHIS' wildlife management work includes providing assistance in aviation safety, wildlife disease surveillance and emergency response, and rabies management in wildlife.

Global Economics

APHIS works closely with other countries to facilitate agricultural trade. To accomplish this, we incorporate international standards and marketing concerns in our domestic agricultural programs. To reduce the threat of pests and diseases from overseas, APHIS scientists seek international cooperation and coordination to develop animal and plant pest- and disease-eradication programs abroad and find new solutions to pest and disease problems. We also help importers by inspecting and treating some commodities in foreign countries before the commodities are sent to the United States.

Environmental Protection

APHIS ensures that its programs comply with applicable environmental laws, regulate and license veterinary biological products, and issue notifications and permits for genetically engineered organisms. All employees are encouraged to exercise environmental responsibility and develop and implement systems based on environ-

mentally sound decisionmaking. Our scientists analyze the potential effects of introducing genetically engineered organisms into the environment and issue notifications and permits to regulate the release and movement of these organisms. APHIS promotes programs using biological control methods to limit damage to crops caused by plant pests and diseases while lessening the public's dependence on pesticides.

Animal Care and Welfare

APHIS administers the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), a law that ensures humane conditions for many warmblooded animals being transported by common carriers or being used in research or teaching, for exhibition, and in the wholesale pet trade. APHIS inspectors enforce the mandates of the AWA through unannounced inspections and penalties when necessary. The agency also enforces the Horse Protection Act to prevent the cruel practice of "soring" to train gaited horses, such as the Tennessee walking horse.

The following lists tabulate some of APHIS' most prominent ongoing programs:

Animal and Plant Health Programs

- Cattle and swine brucellosis
- Bovine tuberculosis
- Pseudorabies in swine
- Scrapie in sheep and goats
- Import/Export of animals, plants, and products
- Grasshopper, gypsy moth, imported fire ant, sudden oak death, boll weevil, Asian-long horned beetle, and emerald ash borer
- Integrated pest management
- Exotic fruit flies
- Phytosanitary certification for plants and plant products

Biotechnology Programs

- Authorization and oversight of introductions of regulated genetically engineered organisms
- Evaluation of petitions to grant nonregulated status to certain genetically engineered organisms

Wildlife Management Programs

- Protection of agricultural resources, including livestock and aquaculture
- Protection of natural resources, including threatened and endangered wildlife species
- Protection of property and facilities from wildlife damage
- Protection of public health and safety from threats caused by wildlife
- Identification of new and improvement of existing methodologies to resolve wildlife damage and conflicts (research)
- Targeted disease surveillance (e.g., avian influenza) in wild animals.

Environmental Programs

- Biological control of plant pests and diseases
- Compliance with environmental statutes
- Biotechnology regulation

Animal Welfare

- Care of pets during transport and warmblooded animals at zoos
- Protection of gaited horses
- Inspection of animal dealers and research facilities

International Work

- Preclearance of foreign commodities
- U.S. agricultural exports
- International pest and disease surveillance and control

APHIS Change Agenda

APHIS employees have identified themselves as “change agents.” We are continually striving to make changes to more effectively serve farmers, ranchers, and other Americans nationwide. We care about providing quality service and support to our stakeholders and cooperators. To meet new needs in the global marketplace, we develop and manage information as an agency resource to address agency needs. The goal is to improve program delivery, for all segments of the population, through the development and communication of scientific, technical, and administrative information.

Valuing People

We value diversity in our workforce. APHIS promotes and facilitates continual learning as a business strategy needed to exceed our customers’ expectations and survive and thrive in the accelerated change-environment of the 21st century. Continual learning and empowerment give APHIS employees the tools to understand, refine, and better participate in building partnerships nationwide with stakeholders and on a government-to-government basis with American Indian Tribes. Since 1995, we have demonstrated the importance we place on this subject in APHIS directive 1040.1, “Relationships With Native Americans and Tribal Governments.” This document explains to all employees the agency’s policy concerning American Indians.

Getting in Touch With Us

This leaflet is part of an information package that explains how readers can contact the particular APHIS programs of interest for more specific information. To receive additional information, write to

Office of the Administrator
USDA-APHIS
Room 312-E, Jamie L. Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

or contact your local APHIS office. And please visit the Native American Working Group's Web site at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/anawg> for more details.

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