

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

June 15, 2015

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION 1070-001

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

1. Purpose

This Departmental Regulation provides guidance on the establishment and periodic revision of a USDA Climate Change Adaptation Plan. It is consistent with guidance from the Council on Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience, and guidance from the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), for the implementation of Executive Order (E.O.) 13653, and, where applicable, E.O. 13677.

While the scope, severity, and pace of future climate change impacts are difficult to predict, these potential changes have important impacts on USDA's ability to fulfill its core mission. Through adaptation planning and implementation, 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 under 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.

2. Actions Ordered:

This policy establishes a USDA directive to integrate climate change adaptation planning, implementing actions, and performance metrics into USDA programs, policies, and operations in accordance with executive orders and additional guidance from CEQ.

- a. The Climate Change Program Office (CCPO), located within the Office of the Chief Economist, with the full support and participation of USDA agencies and offices, shall:

- (1) Develop a USDA Climate Change Adaptation Plan that will be updated as appropriate in accordance with CEQ guidance, and for submission with the Departmental Strategic Sustainability Performance Plans.
 - (2) Issue guidance in accordance with CEQ to agencies to complete or update their Adaptation Plans, as well as required interim deliverables.
 - (3) Identify and provide regular updates to performance metrics that track progress in accomplishing performance goals included in the USDA Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan (SSPP).
- b. Each USDA agency and office, in developing agency-specific contributions, 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 and authorities to:
 - (a) Identify potential impacts of climate change on the agency's or office's areas of responsibility;
 - (b) Prioritize, implement, and integrate response actions into agency operation, contingent on the availability of resources;
 - (c) Continuously assess and improve the capacity to adapt to current and future changes in the climate; and
 - (d) Prepare contributions to the Department's Climate Change Adaptation Plan.
 - (2) Identify as appropriate, key performance measures to evaluate progress in climate change adaptation in the annual Departmental and agency budget material, to include measures in the *Summary of Budget and Performance* section of the explanatory notes, submitted as part of the Congressional justification
 - (a) Identify, to the extent possible, the costs associated with the accomplishment of agency performance measures and provide accessible information to producers; and
 - (b) Identify returns to agency end-users for adaptation actions in terms of a list of expected accomplishments.
 - (3) Identify, as part of the annual budget process, to the Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA), areas where budget adjustments would be necessary to carry out actions identified under this Departmental Regulation. Agencies will communicate these adjustments to OBPA, and include this information on the Global Change Cross-Cut that is compiled each year;

- (4) 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
- (5) Coordinate actions with USDA's Global Change Task Force, as appropriate.
- c. Each USDA agency and office with responsibilities for direct international development programs and investments as defined by E.O. 13677 shall:
 - (1) Incorporate climate-resilience into their decision-making;
 - (2) Report and track progress in achieving E.O. 13677 requirements, including an estimation of the proportion of each USDA agency's direct international development programs and investments for which climate-risk assessments have been conducted, as well as an estimation of the proportion of the programs and investments for which climate risk was identified and acted upon.
- d. USDA agencies and offices shall consider potential climate change impacts when undertaking long-term planning exercises, setting priorities for scientific research and investigations, developing performance metrics, and making decisions affecting agency resources, programs, and operations.

3. Effective Date and Termination

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

This policy supersedes and replaces Departmental Regulation 1070-001, issued June 3, 2011.

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THOMAS J. VILSACK
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE