



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

**TO:** Deputy Under and Acting Deputy Under Secretaries  
Deputy Assistant and Acting Deputy Assistant Secretaries  
Office of the General Counsel  
Office of the Chief Financial Officer  
Office of Budget and Program Analysis  
Office of Human Resource Management  
Office of the Chief Information Officer

JUN 23 2017

**FROM:** Michael L. Young  
Acting Deputy Secretary

**SUBJECT:** Establishment of the Modernizing USDA Commission

The purpose of this memo is to notify you of the establishment of the Department's Modernizing USDA Commission, and the process the Department will be using to develop the USDA Reform Plan. The basis of our Reform Plan will be the organizational realignment announced by the Secretary on May 11, 2017, and its focus on improving the USDA customer experience.

As you know, on March 13, 2017, the President issued an Executive Order designed to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the Executive Branch. The Executive Order directs the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to propose a plan to reorganize governmental functions and eliminate unnecessary agencies, components of agencies, and agency programs. On April 12, 2017, the OMB Director issued M-17-22, "Comprehensive Plan for Reforming the Federal Government and Reducing the Federal Civilian Workforce." The memorandum provides guidance on fulfilling the requirements of the Hiring Freeze Presidential Memorandum and the Reorganization Executive Order and aligns those initiatives with the Federal budget and performance planning process. The memorandum specifically requires that agencies: (1) take immediate actions to achieve near-term workforce reductions and cost savings, including planning for funding levels in the President's FY 2018 Budget Blueprint; (2) submit to OMB a plan to maximize employee performance and a high-level draft of the Agency Reform Plan by June 30, 2017; and (3) submit an Agency Reform Plan to OMB in September 2017, as part of the agency's FY 2019 budget submission to OMB that includes long-term workforce reductions. The Department will be expected to regularly report progress on implementation of the USDA Reform Plan.

OMB is directed to submit a proposed plan to reorganize the Executive Branch to the President in December. The proposal is to include recommendations to eliminate unnecessary agencies, components of agencies, and agency programs, and to merge functions; and will provide recommendations for necessary legislation and administrative measures to achieve the proposed reorganization. It is expected that elements of USDA's Reform Plan will be part of a larger,

Government-wide reform plan scheduled to be released in February 2018 along with the FY 2019 President's Budget.

In order to assist in developing the USDA Reform Plan and to facilitate the sharing of information and ideas among the mission areas, the Secretary has created the Modernizing USDA Commission. He has asked the Associate Director of OBPA, Donald Bice, to be the Senior Accountable Official for Reform and coordinate the activities of the Commission. The Modernizing USDA Commission will help drive within agencies the need to focus on the interaction each USDA customer has with the Department to improve the customer experience. The Commission will also provide an opportunity for senior officials in the Department to learn from breakthroughs achieved elsewhere and to help solve complex challenges through collaboration. This includes reviewing crosscutting reform ideas received from the public and employees.

The Modernizing USDA Commission members are expected to work closely within their organizations to align proposals that are moving forward as part of other initiatives (e.g. Regulatory Reform Task Force, Farm Bill, and Infrastructure) with the overall USDA reform efforts to ensure consistency. Further, the expectation is that each of the mission area members and administrative service communities (e.g. CIO Council; CFO Council; Civil Rights Directors, and the Mission Area Human Resource Directors) would establish their own working group to consider reform ideas and submit them as part of the FY 2019 budget process. In order to ensure coordination of these various groups, the head of each mission area will be responsible for providing to the Senior Accountable Official for Reform a roster of all members constituting the committees and tasks forces noted above and identification of the principal point of contact for each such group so that we can ensure consistency in metrics and policy guidance.

The Modernizing USDA Commission membership includes:

- Office of the Secretary representatives;
- the Assistant to the Secretary for RD
- the Acting General Counsel;
- the Deputy Under Secretary for REE;
- the Deputy Assistant Secretary for DA;
- the Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation;
- the Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs;
- the Acting Deputy Under Secretary for FNCS;
- the Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety;
- the Acting Deputy Under Secretary for MRP;
- the Acting Deputy Under Secretary for NRE;
- the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights;
- the Acting Deputy Chief Financial Officer;
- the Director of the Office of Human Resource Management;
- the Chief Information Officer; and
- the Director of OBPA.



The timing and process for identifying reform proposals and developing the USDA Reform Plan will be tied to the FY 2019 budget process. The FY 2019 Chapter 11 budget data call will include a specific reform exhibit. Agencies, through their mission areas, will be asked to:

- rank and prioritize programs;
- analyze their organizational program delivery structure and field structure to determine whether it needs to be updated with a focus on improving the customer experience;
- analyze and identify appropriate staffing levels based on workload data to ensure the customer experience is maximized; and
- identify reform proposals in the four categories identified in OMB's guidance memo (eliminate activities; restructure or merge; improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness; and workforce management).

The Secretary is committed to improving the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of the Department and making it the best run agency in the Federal government. With that comes a need to focus on how each of our individual agency's customers interact with us as we serve them. Modernizing USDA and continuing reform efforts will not be easy, but we have outstanding men and women working at USDA who are committed to providing leadership on agriculture, food, natural resources, rural infrastructure, nutrition, and related issues through facts-based, data-driven, and customer-focused decisions. With their help and yours we will work to meet the Secretary's commitment to do right and feed everyone.

cc: Heidi Green, OSEC  
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