

■ Office of Inspector General

USDA's Office of Inspector General (OIG), the first civilian OIG in the Federal Government, was established in 1962 and became fully operational in 1963. It was created after a well-knit agricultural fraud scheme showed that better coordination between audit and investigative organizations was needed, and it has evolved into its current structure through successive changes in legislation and leadership.

OIG conducts and supervises audits and investigations relating to USDA's programs and operations. It provides leadership and coordination and recommends policies for activities that will prevent and detect fraud and abuse and promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in USDA programs and operations. Furthermore, OIG keeps the Secretary and Congress fully informed of problems and deficiencies relating to administration of USDA programs and operations, and the actions designed to correct such problems and deficiencies.

During the period April 1, 1996, through March 31, 1997, audit and investigative efforts resulted in approximately \$101.5 million in recoveries, collections, fines, restitutions, claims established, administrative penalties, and costs avoided. Management agreed to put an additional \$278.2 million to better use. OIG also identified \$935 million in questioned costs that cannot be recovered. Investigative efforts resulted in 846 indictments and 753 convictions.