

Agriculture

America's farm economy is a vital source of strength for our Nation, as well as a leading supplier of food for the entire world. The President's priorities for the agricultural sector include promoting agricultural production and trade, protecting animal and plant health, working to ensure food safety, promoting conservation, fostering strong rural communities, and fighting hunger in America and abroad. In the post-September 11 world, he has also taken unprecedented steps to protect the agricultural industry and food supply from the threat of biological attack.

Since 2001, President Bush has:

- Expanded the financial safety net for farming and ranching families through the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002;
- Strongly supported the largest increase in conservation funding in U.S. history by signing the 2002 Farm Bill;
- Helped increase agriculture exports by 17% from \$51 billion in 2000 to \$60 billion in 2003;
- Protected farmers and ranchers from unfair trade practices by increasing the total number of full-time employees dedicated to compliance and enforcement at the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) by 32% to 37;
- Restored Food Stamp eligibility for legal immigrants residing in this country for five years; and
- Signed the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act to help the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) serve more children by allowing direct certification for children who live in families that qualify for other assistance programs such as Medicaid, and allowing private and faith-based organizations to participate in feeding programs. Also, USDA is providing grants to help increase awareness of the Food Stamp Program for low-income households.

The President's FY 2005 Budget builds on the successes of the last three years. It includes:

- \$381 million -- a \$302 million increase, the largest increase ever -- to protect the agricultural industry and food supply from terrorist attacks and quickly respond to food contamination or plant and animal diseases and infestations. USDA will work with HHS and DHS to increase laboratory capacity, research, and monitoring and surveillance;
- Over \$3.9 billion for USDA to deliver conservation programs authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill. This amount includes almost \$2 billion for the Conservation Reserve Program, \$1 billion for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, \$295 million for the Wetlands Reserve Program, and \$209 million for the new Conservation Security Program. These programs provide financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to install

- conservation measures on their operations to protect, restore, and enhance natural resources;
- Increasing efforts to reduce hunger and malnutrition and to improve literacy and primary education as part of the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. In 2004, this program is expected to reach 1.25 million women and children, with increases in the FY 2005 Budget of \$25 million to feed an estimated 1.88 million;
 - An increase of \$47 million for testing and surveillance, research, and development of an animal identification system which helps protect the food supply from Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), also known as "mad cow disease." It also includes an increase of \$8.3 million at FDA to enhance enforcement of Federal regulations designed to prevent the introduction or spread of BSE;
 - An increase of \$13 million (10%) for the Foreign Agricultural Service, which together with USTR bears the responsibility for negotiating and monitoring international trade agreements and facilitating market development;
 - \$95 million for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to continue investigations against suspected violators of commodity trading laws. CFTC regulates commodities futures markets, detects and prosecutes investor fraud schemes, and monitors the markets in order to prevent illegal price manipulations;
 - \$58 million as part of the Healthy Forests Initiative to reduce dense undergrowth that can lead to unnaturally large and destructive fires; and
 - \$685 million for the Forest Service's wildland fire suppression activities and improvements in fire suppression management, including cost containment measures. Together with the Healthy Forests Initiative, these provide the beginning of a long-term solution to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires and the damage and disruptions they cause.

For Other Information About the President's Accomplishments and Proposals:

FY 2005 Budget

Department of Agriculture: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2005/agriculture.html>

Environment

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/environment/>

Trade

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/internationaltrade/>