Assuring the Security of the Food and Agriculture System

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Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, homeland security has become an even more important priority for USDA. The Department has been working to ensure that programs are protecting the farm and food sector, as well as consumers, from not just unintentional threats, but intentional acts that might impact the food supply.

The best way to deal with threats to the nation’s food supply and agricultural infrastructure is to prevent and deter intentional or unintentional introduction of plant and animal diseases...

Ann M. Veneman
Food and Agriculture Security

Shortly after the events of September 11, USDA formed a Homeland Security Council within the Department chaired by Deputy Secretary Jim Moseley.
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- Identify critical points
- Develop tests and monitor at those points,
- Prepare responses in case measurements fall outside of acceptable limits
To ensure that we are taking the right steps to protect the food supply, we first needed to understand its vulnerabilities and the threats posed by terrorists, so USDA conducted vulnerability assessments for domestic and imported food and conducted threat assessments to ensure the security of the food.

Jim Moseley
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• National Pathogen Inventory
  - Electronic, Encrypted, Firewalls
  - All Pathogens
  - Geographic Location
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- Detection
  - Rapid
  - Sensitive
  - Selective
  - On Site
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- Network of Regional Laboratories
- Support for State Laboratories
- Communication Network
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USDA has provided states with additional resources for bioterrorism prevention, implemented aggressive new security protocols, dramatically stepped up laboratory renovations, increased vital research, conducted planning exercises, and increased educational activities.

USDA will continue its vigilance for rapid detection of animal and crop disease outbreaks and pest infestations.
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USDA … will continue to assess current systems and develop countermeasures against threats to farms and ranches, in coordination with the private sector, other Federal agencies, and State governments. Research programs are essential to an effective U.S. agricultural biosecurity program to develop methods of early detection, rapid and accurate assessment, and immediate responses that prevent spread and control harmful agents.

USDA Strategic Plan for 2003-2007