



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

APR 07 2011

**Office of the  
Assistant Secretary  
for Administration**

1400 Independence  
Avenue SW

Washington, DC  
20250-0103

Dear USDA Employees:

Last night, President Obama and Vice President Biden had a productive meeting with congressional leaders to narrow and clarify the issues that are still outstanding to avoid a government shutdown. The President and Secretary Vilsack remain confident that we should absolutely be able to reach an agreement to avert a shutdown, but we are working to ensure that we are prepared for all possible scenarios.

Agency operational plans are still being finalized, but in the event of a government shutdown most USDA activities would be suspended or significantly reduced and most USDA employees would be furloughed. However, certain USDA activities would continue because they are related to law enforcement, the protection of life and property, or are financed through available funding (such as user fees). These include:

- Meat, poultry and egg inspection services.
- Grain and other commodity inspection, weighing and grading services funded by user fees.
- Inspections for import and export activities to prevent the introduction and dissemination of pests into and out of the U.S.
- Forest Service law enforcement and fire suppression efforts.
- In addition, funds have been made available to continue the Women, Infants and Children and Child Nutrition programs through June, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program has sufficient funding to allow benefits to continue through May.

Most other USDA activities would not continue during a government shutdown. These activities include:

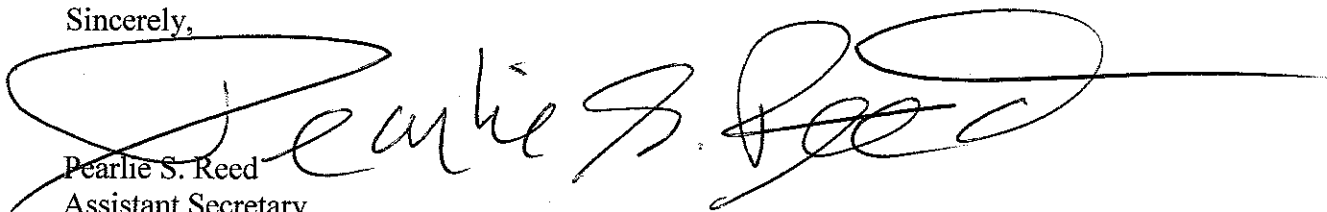
- Farm loans and other farm payments.
- Provision of conservation technical and financial assistance.
- Provision of new rural development loans and grants for housing, community facilities, utilities and businesses.
- Agricultural export credit and other agricultural trade development and monitoring activities.
- National Forest System recreation sites across the U.S. would be closed to the public.

- Market news reports, NASS statistics, and other agricultural economic and statistical reports and projections would be discontinued.
- Investigation of packers and stockyards related to fraudulent and anti-competitive activities.
- Assistance for the control of most plant and animal pests and diseases would be discontinued.
- Research facilities would be closed except for the care of animals and plants. Most departmental management, administrative and oversight functions, including civil rights, human resources, financial management, audit, legal and information technology activities would be discontinued or severely curtailed.

As we move forward, I know that there will be more questions about how a possible government shutdown will affect our lives, our work and our nation. Please look to your supervisors for answers as we finalize operational plans, and check your e-mail for additional updates. Be patient, and know that we will do our best to continue to communicate with you about the evolving situation.

Finally, know that Secretary Vilsack and I believe in USDA's ability to meet this challenge, and that we are proud of the work that USDA employees do each day to serve the American people.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pearlle S. Reed". The signature is written over a horizontal line that extends across the page.

Pearlle S. Reed  
Assistant Secretary  
for Administration Pearlle Reed