



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Fiscal Years 2023–2027  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**





## A Message from the Administrator

2022 marked APHIS' 50th anniversary. For half a century, APHIS has been securing the health of America's agricultural resources—protecting 900 million acres of farmland, facilitating the movement of \$177 billion worth of U.S. agricultural goods, and keeping 21.6 million Americans employed in agriculture-related industries. Our work feeds and clothes the world and grows the economy.

Looking back over the past 50 years, we can be proud of what we've accomplished. We've eradicated plant and animal diseases, saving millions of acres of land and countless plants and animals from devastating loss. We've pioneered new technology, making our work to safeguard agricultural health, ensure animal welfare, and manage wildlife conflict more efficient. We've been on the front lines when plant, animal, or all-hazards emergencies arose. Along the way, we've faced unforeseen challenges. In addition to pest and disease outbreaks, there's been globalization, bioterrorism, natural disasters, climate change, and a global pandemic.

As we embark on the next 50 years, it's vital that we anticipate the challenges of the future. That's why in May 2021, I convened the APHIS Next 50 Years/ Strategic Planning Initiative. The Initiative was led by two teams, the Strategic Planning Working Group and the Strategic Foresight Team. By scanning literature, reviewing past conversations with stakeholders, and leaning on program expertise, the teams identified 10 trends with the potential to impact APHIS in the next 20 to 30 years. This glimpse into the future informed our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and helped us identify actions we can take now to prepare for the future. You'll find that information in the boxes labeled "Preparing for Our Future." In the coming years, this plan will guide our work and help us meet the needs of our stakeholders, our customers, and the American public. Over the next 5 years, we will monitor and measure progress towards our plan goals and objectives.

APHIS' strength is our people. Time and again—when faced with tremendous challenges—the APHIS workforce has used its scientific expertise, business acumen, and policy knowledge to find a solution. As we look ahead and strive to be a global leader in agricultural health, we will continue to cultivate a talented, diverse, and public service-focused workforce where employees are supported, valued, and engaged.

The best way to honor our past is to continue looking towards our future. With that in mind, I am pleased to present our Strategic Plan for fiscal years (FY) 2023–2027.

Sincerely,

**Kevin Shea, Administrator**

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

# Healthy Plants, Healthy Animals, Healthy People



## Mission

Protecting the health, welfare, and value of our Nation's plants, animals, and natural resources.



## Core Values

- Integrity and Trust
- Accountability
- Public Service
- Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Accessibility
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Commitment
- Innovation and Creativity





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## Vision

**A global leader that uses innovative and proven solutions to ensure the health of plants, animals, the environment, and people.**



## Stakeholders

**We consult with and engage a wide range of stakeholders to ensure our strategies and programs are effective. Our stakeholders include people whose activities we regulate, such as animal and plant importers and exporters, livestock producers, growers, biotechnology developers, trading partners, scientists and researchers, and those who are subject to Animal Welfare Act and Horse Protection Act requirements. They are State officials, Tribal partners, government regulators, and cooperators who help us carry out our mission. They are people and organizations dealing with wildlife conflicts, travelers, and members of the public who are seeking services or information from us.**

# Future Trends

The United States—including the agriculture community—has faced many changes over the past 50 years. The world is constantly transforming, and as a result, we expect to face more changes over the next 20 to 30 years. Uncertainties are expected, as is the accelerating pace of change. To better prepare for the future and these uncertainties, APHIS has incorporated strategic foresight into its strategic planning process. APHIS scanned the literature, revisited past conversations with stakeholders, and leaned on program expertise to identify and analyze trends. Ten trends, with the greatest potential to impact the Agency, are featured here in the strategic plan. These trends have influenced the plan's goals and objectives. They were also considered in the development of tactics so that we can better prepare in the next 5 years to meet these future challenges.

1



## Security threats

are on the rise and risk mitigation measures across all environments will increase and frequently change.

2



## Climate change threats

continue to mount and expand in scope, intensity, and variety.

3



## Political, geographical, and economic division

continues in the country, decreasing trust in government programs.

4



## Data analytics

increasingly support decision and policy making as a result of big data availability, ongoing requirements, and expectations around accessible evidence.

5



**Scientific and technological advances**

provide new opportunities and challenges.

8



**Global health threats**

are increasing, with greater and more frequent impacts, requiring coordinated response from public and private entities.

6



**Stakeholder networks and cooperators**

are shifting because of changing production practices and new opportunities and risks.

9



**Globalization**

is escalating demands for the enforcement of phytosanitary and zoosanitary standards, causing unintended consequences, such as supply chain disruptions.

7



**Perceptions of animal welfare and wildlife**

are evolving, increasing pressure on related government activities.

10



**Changing workforce**

needs flexible skillsets to quickly adapt; employees must continually acquire new skills throughout their career.





## **Strategic Goal 1**

Protect agriculture from plant and animal diseases and pests





American agriculture faces many threats, including foreign and domestic diseases and pests, biological events resulting from emerging infectious disease threats, risks associated with biotechnology, and threats of terror posed by groups seeking to use biological weapons. These diseases, pests, and biological events have the potential to impact agricultural production, trade, and the economy.

To protect agriculture, it is critical to identify threats early so APHIS can take the necessary actions to prevent entry and avoid prolonged damage. Our focus is to ensure that all Americans have consistent access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food. Because these threats are ever-changing, APHIS must adjust its strategies for identifying diseases and pests and applying appropriate mitigation measures.

By working collaboratively with Federal, State, and Tribal partners and stakeholders, APHIS can rapidly respond to an agricultural disease or pest outbreak. APHIS actively engages other Federal, State, and local governments; Tribal Nations; and industry to advance their emergency preparedness and response capabilities. If a pest or disease is established in the country, APHIS works with its partners and stakeholders to eradicate or manage the pest or

disease to minimize its impact on the economy.

APHIS will continue to ensure the availability, safety, purity, potency, and effectiveness of veterinary biologics and provide oversight of genetically engineered organisms. We will continue to conduct diagnostic laboratory activities and provide technology development to support plant protection programs. The Agency will continue to investigate alleged violations of APHIS-administered laws and issue enforcement actions.

Below are examples of tactics for achieving the objectives under this strategic goal.

### **Objective 1: Prevent plant and animal diseases and pests from entering the country**

- Perform enhanced, robust inspection of people and things entering the United States that pose a disease or pest threat
- Provide support for surveillance, control, and containment of African swine fever (ASF) in the Caribbean and prepare for a potential domestic incursion
- Develop, maintain, and improve commodity or disease surveillance plans, ensuring the plans include units across APHIS and State and Federal partners, as appropriate
- Focus investigative and enforcement resources on the most serious violations that pose the greatest risk to American agriculture
- Manage diseases and pests established in other countries by working with our foreign counterparts and local communities within these countries

### **Objective 2: Manage plant and animal diseases and pests established in the country**

- Analyze outbreak data to develop the most effective methods for preventing and mitigating future outbreaks, complete risk analyses to improve control and eradication efforts, and advance innovative solutions to control and eradicate diseases
- Utilize program review and pest risk analysis to clarify strategy and improve the effectiveness of the *Phytophthora ramorum* program
- Expand the use of performance measures, risk-based approaches, and analyses to create a more integrated and strategic national surveillance approach for plants
- Continue conducting field-level surveillance for animal diseases and plant pests and diseases of concern

### **Objective 3: Ensure effective emergency preparedness and response**

- Develop an adequate number of highly trained core responders
- Coordinate, deliver, and document National Incident Management System and Incident Command System training for APHIS Incident Management Teams and volunteers
- Develop and bring to production more depopulation and disposal options
- Provide enhanced learning opportunities to ensure emergency responders can quickly assess risks and opportunities in emergency situations and integrate emergency

response efforts into business services delivery

- Improve communication with stakeholders and trading partners during disease and pest outbreaks and proactively engage Tribes
- Engage government and industry partners in preparedness exercises
- Improve employee understanding and implementation of the APHIS Emergency Mobilization Guide and the Mandatory Mobilization Plan
- Improve the country's ability to recover after animal and plant health incidents and outbreaks
- Provide leadership in collaboration with Federal, State, local, Tribal, and Territorial agencies for creating comprehensive wildlife disease surveillance and emergency response capabilities and capacity
- Partner with local and urban farmers to teach them how to recognize and mitigate plant pests; partner with citizen scientists, non-profit organizations, and non-government organizations to find invasive pests
- Continue to ensure personnel are highly trained in areas of animal diseases, plant pests and diseases, and all-hazard response and develop more personnel capacity to address emergency tour-of-duty response requests

#### **Objective 4: Ensure the availability, safety, purity, potency, and effectiveness of veterinary biologics**

- Improve transparency in the licensure process with the public and industry

- Provide guidance and instructions to regulated industry to enhance communication and relationship building
- Expand use of alternative inspection processes, as well as onsite inspections
- Conduct public outreach on how testing and assurance of safety, purity, potency, and effectiveness of veterinary biologics contributes to animal health and food safety, and how testing and assurance are performed to maximize safety

#### **Objective 5: Ensure the development of safe agricultural biotechnology products using a science-based regulatory framework**



- Conduct efficient risk-based permit review and issuance for organisms developed using genetic engineering to ensure they are safely contained or confined during movement or release
- Use plain language to clearly communicate APHIS regulations, expectations, and guidance to stakeholders, particularly those working with modified non-plant organisms potentially subject to APHIS regulations; help stake-

holders understand regulations through outreach, workshops, toolkits, and other means

- Work with the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to increase coordination and harmonization of regulatory oversight for biotechnology products within each agency's existing statutory framework

#### **Objective 6: Ensure timely and accurate diagnostic and other laboratory support and services**

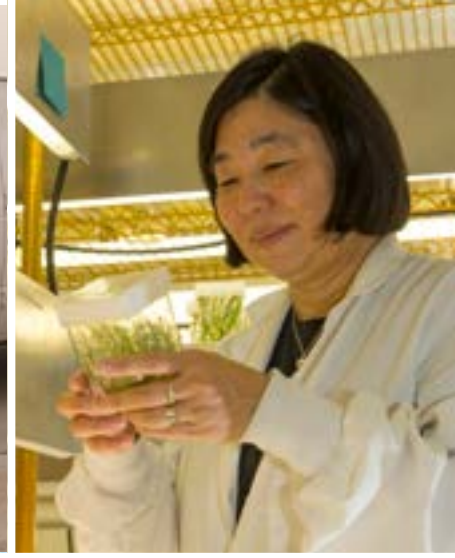
- Emphasize the practice of scientific discovery and method improvement with collaborations, developmental projects, and scholarships
- Implement the VS Laboratory Approval Guidance to deliver an effective and clear approval process
- Support both national and international laboratory networks by performing reference laboratory duties and partnering with them in animal and plant diagnostics
- Expand the use of molecular diagnostics to support plant health

## Preparing for Our Future

Below are examples of actions we will take now and in the near future to prepare for the challenges and opportunities presented by the future trends:

- Develop and implement a plan to monitor, maintain, and update medical clearance information to ensure adequate personnel are available for emergency responses (Trend 1)
- Coordinate unified responses to inquiries of assistance regarding biosafety and security, promote information sharing, and develop strategies and policies specific to biosafety and security (Trend 1)
- Advance methods development and other solutions to reduce the use of methyl bromide (Trends 1 and 3)
- In partnership with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and the National Plant Board, develop a unified strategy for the spotted lanternfly program and a plan to implement the strategy (Trends 1, 8, and 9)
- Expand the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank and leverage the National Veterinary Stockpile to ensure our ability to identify criticalities, collaborate with various partners and the public, and ready our employees to respond to emergency outbreaks (Trends 4, 5, and 9)
- Oversee the relocation and stand up of APHIS' Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory from Plum Island, NY, to the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility in Manhattan, KS, to ensure diagnostic efforts are collaborative, advanced, and accurate to address new and emerging threats to animal health (Trend 9)





## Strategic Goal 2

Cultivate a talented, diverse, and public service-focused workforce where employees are supported, valued, and engaged



Of the estimated 2.2 million Federal employees, 43 percent are ages 50 and older. For APHIS, that percentage is slightly higher, at 46 percent. Over the next 5 years, APHIS will use recruitment and knowledge transfer strategies to transfer institutional knowledge and ensure we maintain a sustainable, diverse workforce as workers leave the Agency. APHIS will implement strategies to retain employees, including investing in developmental opportunities to build talent from within.

APHIS will provide an environment where employees are safe, supported, valued, and engaged in the shared mission and direction of the Agency. The Agency will encourage changes that support employee creativity and innovation, work-life balance, and family-friendly policies to foster employee engagement.

APHIS will explore ways to reshape its workforce to better meet the service delivery needs of the American public now and in the future. APHIS will continue to look for new ways to deliver our services efficiently and effectively, in the face of a new fiscal reality.

Below are examples of tactics for achieving the objectives under this strategic goal.

### Objective 1: Recruit new talent

- Fully implement the APHIS Recruitment Plan to strategically recruit new talent
- Build and strengthen partnerships with universities and colleges to identify graduates to recruit, provide internships, and help educate the next generation of APHIS employees
- Offer remote duty designations to broaden the pool of candidates

### Objective 2: Empower and engage employees

- Establish APHIS-wide and program-specific employee engagement strategies
- Innovate workforce development to provide employees with greater career opportunities, including increasing career ladder opportunities and re-evaluating existing ladders for support positions
- Provide training and other learning opportunities for employees to acquire new skills throughout their careers
- Encourage and support participation in APHIS leadership training, mentoring, and coaching programs
- Implement succession planning for technical positions
- Create opportunities for cross training employees
- Facilitate collaborative relationships with bargaining units

- Launch the Veterinary Services (VS) Career Guide and other programs to empower functional leadership and development while mentoring employees and providing career field advice

### Objective 3: Improve equity and inclusion

- Partner with USDA Mission Areas to grow internships and expand employment opportunities to diverse populations
- Expand AgDiscovery by engaging alumni to conduct outreach at schools
- Partner with community organizations to promote internships and employment opportunities to diverse populations
- Provide employees with training on unconscious bias

### Objective 4: Deliver outstanding services to the public



- Modernize and streamline Agency regulations and issue more flexible regulations
- Consider non-regulatory solutions for emerging issues
- Ensure Agency services are efficient, effective, accessible, and equitable to all



- Serve as good stewards of public resources, setting goals and priorities using science and evidence based decision-making and strategic and foresight planning
- Protect and promote U.S. agriculture and natural resources by ensuring Agency activities are environmentally sound and within acceptable animal welfare standards
- Increase messaging that focuses on the new work environment, managing risk, building capabilities, and identifying best safety practices
- Use current Office of Property and Environmental Management guidance for calculating space needs in the hybrid environment and reimagine space use to maximize information sharing, relationship building, and collaboration
- Seek stakeholder feedback on public-facing systems and implement improvements based on that feedback
- Build a cybersecurity risk management program/system to capture and manage cybersecurity risk across the mission area
- Enhance the Customer Service and Investment Review Boards' ability to anticipate IT needs and implement solutions
- Use mapping technology for remote surveillance of regulated activities
- Develop IT strategy and infrastructure recommendations, as well as a roadmap for IT data systems and integration and data acquisition and storage applications

### **Objective 5: Promote safety and wellness**

- Identify employee wellness needs, recalibrate wellness programs for the hybrid workforce, and identify work/life flexibilities
- Enhance safety training for staff in different work settings

### **Objective 6: Create sustainable and cost-effective IT solutions**

- Engage business partners in collaborative investment reviews and deliver effective investment reporting

## **Preparing for Our Future**

Below are examples of actions we will take now and in the near future to prepare for the challenges and opportunities presented by the future trends:

- Promote a secure workforce by creating a safety recognition program (Trend 1)
- Modernize data management strategies (Trend 4)
- Identify and implement technological improvements to enhance remote and hybrid work environments (Trends 5 and 10)
- Establish and implement a strategic human capital plan and develop a modernized, structured, and systemic approach to recruitment (Trend 10)
- Improve the customer experience, particularly for digital services and IT enterprise systems (Trend 4)





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## **Strategic Goal 3**

Reduce the impacts of zoonotic and emerging diseases and climate change



Seventy-five percent of emerging infectious diseases affecting humans are zoonotic, meaning they move between animals and people. There has been a surge in outbreaks of zoonotic diseases over the past 2 decades. Often, we were unaware of the potential threat until we started seeing illness and death in people. Early detection and response to zoonotic and emerging diseases while still in animals is essential in limiting or preventing human outbreaks. APHIS will strengthen its ability to prevent, detect, report, and respond to emerging and zoonotic diseases.

Working collaboratively with other Federal agencies, APHIS will build an early warning system to alert public health partners so steps can be taken sooner to prevent or limit the next zoonotic disease outbreak. As a result of these efforts, we will safeguard animal health, prevent disease transmission between animals and people, and minimize potential impacts to the food supply.

At the same time, we recognize that climate change presents a threat to our ability to fully achieve our mission and advance our strategic goals. We don't anticipate needing to modify our regulatory authority; however, we do expect that new regulations and policies, as well as non-regulatory approaches, may

be required. APHIS will incorporate mitigation and management strategies including predictive modeling tools into its programs to reduce and adapt to the effects of climate change and build resilience in the Agency for the benefit of our employees, partners, and stakeholders.

Below are examples of tactics for achieving the objectives under this strategic goal.

### **Objective 1: Strengthen prevention, surveillance, monitoring, and response to emerging and zoonotic diseases**

- Implement operational plans and procedures for zoonotic disease engagement, investigation, and response; antimicrobial resistance; global health security; and associated outreach and education using a One Health approach
- Develop, implement, and coordinate One Health activities, strategies and policies, and response
- Enhance capacity to detect zoonotic and emerging diseases such as SARS-CoV-2 by increasing surveillance in wildlife and building diagnostic capacity for testing wildlife samples
- Analyze surveillance data to improve program effectiveness and efficiency
- Develop methods to increase public awareness of how APHIS responds to emerging and zoonotic diseases

### **Objective 2: Strengthen pathway analysis and targeting of plant and animal products that pose a threat to people, animals, and the environment**

- Strengthen efforts to mitigate risks from imported plant and animal products
- Support developing models of animal and product movement
- Increase personnel with specialized skill sets to better evaluate trade risks and effective mitigations
- Use results of pathways analyses to identify risk “hotspots” for wildlife disease incursions and promote wildlife disease surveillance efforts in susceptible animal populations
- Lead the Tuberculosis (TB) Initiative to solve complex problems with zoonotic TB
- Implement the National List of Reportable Animal Diseases

### **Objective 3: Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change**

- Implement and regularly update the APHIS [Climate Change Adaption Plan](#), which considers challenges related to climate change and describes actions we can take to mitigate its impacts
- Incorporate climate change scenarios when evaluating the plant pest risk associated with biotechnology products
- Work with Federal partners to develop clear, efficient, predictable, and risk-based regulatory pathways for safely bringing microbial and other new products that help address

climate change to market, and help developers of such products navigate our regulatory system

- Address increased pest resilience due to climate change using risk-based approaches and data analytics
- Work with partners on predictive modeling to identify trends and future scenarios for pest movements and risks based on climate change impacts on ranges, lifecycles, and habitats
- Consider climate change when assessing pest risk pathways and the pest risk of commodities presented for market access
- Prioritize environmentally friendly mitigations for plant pest and disease response
- Implement strategies to respond to the movement of vectors (organisms, such as insects, that can transmit disease to other organisms) from warmer climates, addressing the transmission potential for vector-borne disease spread
- Maximize support for Executive Order 14057: Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability and Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad

## Preparing for Our Future

Below are examples of actions we will take now and in the near future to prepare for the challenges and opportunities presented by the future trends:

- Invest in novel eradication strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change (Trend 2)
- Target pest populations as climate change impacts distribution patterns and behaviors and address increased pest resilience (Trends 2, 4, and 9)
- Enhance monitoring and surveillance to identify areas of expanding human-wildlife conflicts resulting from range shifting and expansion, habitat loss, and extreme climate events (Trends 2 and 7)
- Build a robust surveillance system to mitigate risks presented by zoonotic diseases, including SARS-CoV-2 and other new or emerging disease (Trend 9)
- Identify and prioritize global health threats emerging at the wildlife-domestic animal-human interface and develop monitoring and response capacity (Trend 9)





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## **Strategic Goal 4**

Maintain and expand the safe trade of agricultural products nationally and internationally

APHIS plays an important role in facilitating the safe trade of agricultural products. We ensure that U.S. farmers and exporters can sell their products around the world, facilitating the movement of more than \$170 billion in U.S. agricultural goods. The Agency's efforts include:

- Keeping U.S. agricultural industries free from pests and diseases,
- Certifying that U.S. agricultural and food products shipped to markets abroad meet the importing countries' entry requirements,
- Partnering with other countries to develop international standards,
- Removing trade barriers by monitoring and enforcing existing trade agreements, and
- Negotiating trade agreements that benefit the U.S. agricultural economy.

APHIS also builds regulatory capacity in developing countries to facilitate trade and develop future markets. Helping other countries strengthen their capacity allows them to participate in the safe trade of agricultural products.

With the growing complexity of the global supply chain network, the need to manage risks associated with trade, both import and export, have never been greater. There is a need for new intervention policies, tools, and strategies to mitigate these risks.

Below are examples of tactics for achieving the objectives under this strategic goal.

### **Objective 1: Facilitate safe agricultural trade through the effective management of sanitary and phytosanitary issues**

- Conduct plant and animal health negotiations with other countries during technical bilateral meetings, using science and international standards to resolve trade issues. These negotiations result in protocols that both countries agree will sufficiently minimize the pest or animal disease risk of an imported or exported agricultural product.
- Monitor trends across many platforms, information resources, and stakeholder inputs to advance APHIS programs and issues
- Monitor and scan for the emergence of new scientific findings and threats
- Establish the Joint Agency Group to support the U.S.- Canada Coordinated Phytosanitary Mitigation Framework and develop an action plan to implement the framework
- Implement the joint U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)-APHIS Strategic Plan, which will guide program activities and set mission priorities over the next 5 years

### **Objective 2: Maintain and expand the Agency's leadership role through international standard setting and collaboration**

- Strengthen collaboration with other standard-setting organizations especially the World Organisation of Animal Health and the International Plant Protection Convention
- Promote engagement, collaboration, and harmonization of agricultural biotechnology regulation with trading partners, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and other international and regional organizations

- Advance trade harmonization by suggesting and supporting International and Regional standard setting activities for sea containers, e-commerce and e-phyto

### **Objective 3: Create safe export opportunities**

- Develop scientifically-sound risk identification and risk analyses for U.S. sanitary and phytosanitary exports to support trade in safe animals, plants, and animal plant products and by-products
- Support development of climate-smart commodities to ensure access to international markets for low-carbon goods and carbon capture
- Communicate to international stakeholders about APHIS' processes and share outcomes of biotechnology product evaluations
- Work with trade agencies on technical aspects of trade in biotechnology products
- Work with the regulatory authorities of U.S. trading partners to further harmonize regulatory frameworks for biotechnology products

### **Objective 4: Anticipate and communicate supply chain issues to domestic stakeholders and trading partners**

- Analyze and forecast trade and economic trends related to agricultural trade activities
- Acquire data from and share data with international organizations to support global agricultural trade





## Preparing for Our Future

Below are examples of actions we will take now and in the near future to prepare for the challenges and opportunities presented by the future trends:

- Leverage science and technology to deliver healthy agricultural products around the world (Trend 5)
- Sustain market access and growth through a trade agenda that is worker- and market-oriented and science- and rules-based (Trends 5 and 8)
- Maintain direct contact with foreign quarantine inspectors and local importers and exporters to anticipate and communicate supply chain issues to domestic stakeholders and trading partners (Trend 8)
- Expand and diversify export markets (Trend 8)





## **Strategic Goal 5**

Manage wildlife damage and threats to agriculture, natural resources, property, and people





APHIS provides expertise to resolve conflicts between people and wildlife. Using an integrated approach, the Agency facilitates coexistence to protect agriculture, natural resources (including threatened and endangered species), property and infrastructure, and public health and safety. In the United States, wildlife is managed based on the Public Trust Doctrine. It is a public resource held in trust and managed by the government for present and future generations. Wildlife Services focuses on science-based wildlife damage management. This includes protecting resources, health, and safety from damage or other problems caused by or related to the presence of wildlife. It is an integral part of the wildlife management profession and is essential to conserving our Nation's wildlife resources.

Each year, APHIS responds to hundreds of thousands of requests from farmers, ranchers, and others for help with reducing the impact of predators on their animals. The cattle, sheep, and goat industries alone report \$232 million in livestock losses to predation, annually. APHIS assisted 23,461 livestock producers in protecting their livestock from predators through the use of integrated damage management methods

and tools. APHIS also helps protect the aviation community across the Nation to reduce wildlife hazards to aviation. In 2022, APHIS assisted 813 civil and military airports worldwide, including about 75 percent of all U.S. commercial passenger airports, to reduce or avoid wildlife strike hazards to protect people and aircraft. In addition, we help natural resource agencies protect threatened and endangered species and public health agencies distribute millions of oral rabies vaccine baits to reduce rabies in wildlife and prevent disease spread to people, livestock, and pets.

Below are examples of tactics for achieving the objectives under this strategic goal.

### **Objective 1: Strengthen wildlife disease prevention, surveillance, and response**

- Enhance coordination and collaboration in research and management to prevent the spread of key terrestrial rabies variants in wild carnivores while working toward eliminating rabies in carnivores in North America
- Enhance coordination and implement surveillance for avian influenza in wild birds in all four migratory bird flyways
- Improve coordination of laboratory submissions, referrals, and reporting of highly pathogenic avian influenza to stakeholders, industry, and the public
- Identify areas at high risk for foreign animal disease introduction across the geographic range of feral swine and develop processes and protocols to best

target these areas for operational activities and feral swine sampling, including expanding activities to include feral swine that are currently not accessible

### **Objective 2: Research and implement new and improved tools to enhance integrated wildlife damage management programs**

- Implement science-based and non-lethal (where feasible) methods and new technology to mitigate wildlife damage and reduce threats posed by diseases to agriculture (including livestock and aquaculture), property, human health and safety, and natural resources

### **Objective 3: Protect public health and safety by managing negative human/wildlife interactions**

- Expand and improve collaborative efforts to enhance public safety within the aviation community through science-based assistance by investigating methods and addressing wildlife hazards that meet continuing demands for safe air operations of civil and military partners, the aviation industry, and the traveling public

### **Objective 4: Reduce damage from invasive species and protect resources, critical habitats, and species of concern**

- Decrease damage caused by feral swine to agricultural, livestock, property, ecological, and human health and safety. Prevent establishment of new populations by

monitoring in areas where they are likely to be found but their presence hasn't been confirmed

- Prevent escape of brown tree snakes from Guam and decrease tree snake populations near military and civilian ports of exit to safeguard health and human safety and protect infrastructure and natural resources on neighboring islands and the U.S. mainland
- Continue strengthening partnerships and providing training and technical advice to Western Pacific neighbors to improve inspections of aircraft, vessels, and cargo arriving from Guam
- Detect and remove invasive nutria to protect the Chesapeake

Bay and other critical coastal and inland wetland habitats

### **Objective 5: Strengthen and expand partnerships at the national level**

- Increase partnerships with local, State, and Federal entities and universities to increasingly leverage disease surveillance and research opportunities associated with existing wildlife damage management activities
- Provide outreach to Federal, State, Tribal, and international partners and the public about APHIS' role in reducing conflicts between people and wildlife, detecting and controlling wildlife diseases, and protecting natural resources

- Working with State and Federal partners to provide Federal leadership to industry, organizations and natural resource agencies for an effective, ecologically sound, and socially responsible integrated wildlife damage management program that is responsive to a changing world
- Build and expand coalitions of producers, industry, and government agencies at multiple levels to collaboratively resolve wildlife conflicts negatively impacting livestock and agriculture production

## **Preparing for Our Future**

Below are examples of actions we will take now and in the near future to prepare for the challenges and opportunities presented by the future trends:

- Implement an expanded Non-Lethal Initiative Program to include beaver damage management and expand use and recommendations of the integrated management approach to protect agriculture, human safety, and other resources (Trend 1)
- Enhance collaborative efforts to identify and address invasive species in island habitats (Trends 1 and 6)
- Seek opportunities to conduct opportunistic sampling techniques to better understand changes in pest and animal disease vector home ranges (Trend 4)
- Continue to emphasize the development of species-specific methods (Trend 5)
- Develop and implement biological and science-based standards to perform disease surveillance rather than rely on pre-existing administrative boundaries (Trend 6)





## **Strategic Goal 6**

Promote the welfare of animals



APHIS ensures the humane treatment of animals covered by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), works to eliminate soring and promote fair competition at events covered by the Horse Protection Act (HPA), and provides national leadership on the safety and well-being of pets and other animals in disasters. Annually, APHIS conducts over 10,000 inspections of approximately 8,000 licensed or registered facilities and inspects over 1,500 horses at shows and other events.

APHIS is amending the AWA regulations and developing bird standards to ensure their humane care and treatment. These standards would govern humane care, treatment, and transportation.

The following are examples of tactics for achieving the objectives under the strategic goal.

### **Objective 1: Ensure the humane treatment of animals covered by the AWA**

- Conduct inspections to ensure substantial compliance with the AWA
- Update and enhance regulations to improve animal welfare

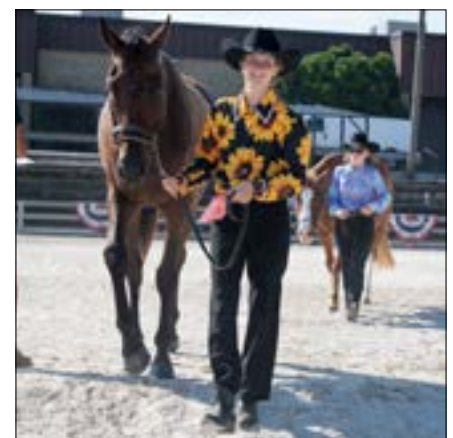
- Provide outreach and education to promote compliance and best practices
- Use data-driven decision-making and analysis to make effective use of resources
- Move more quickly to confiscate animals at extreme risk, as authorized
- Streamline enforcement review for critical cases and improve AWA enforcement timeliness
- Increase AWA inspections by five percent over FY 2022
- Implement the final rule to establish new regulations and standards governing the humane handling, care, treatment, and transportation of birds covered by the AWA including distributing educational literature on the bird rule
- Increase the usage of the self-service customer portal to 25 percent through enhanced marketing, education, and awareness to internal and external stakeholders
- Strengthen partnerships with State agencies to increase the speed and effectiveness of enforcement actions

### **Objective 2: Eliminate soring and promote fair competition at events covered by the HPA**

- Support a strong focus on enforcement
- Increase the number of HPA events attended by 50 percent over FY 2022
- Continue ongoing outreach efforts targeting both competitors and event attendees

### **Objective 3: Assist stakeholders with planning and preparedness to ensure the safety and welfare of animals during disasters**

- Provide outreach and education to stakeholders to promote compliance and best practices
- Strengthen partnerships with industry groups, State, Federal, and Tribal entities
- Engage with emergency response partners at the local, State, and Federal levels to ensure the safety and welfare of animals is considered in exercises, planning activities, and disaster response operations, inclusive of sheltering operations
- Use evidence based trend analysis to facilitate conversations with partners and potential partners to on potential preparedness and response strategies
- Monitor trends and issues with the potential to have significant impact on current and future efforts to ensure animal welfare in emergency response situations







## Preparing for Our Future

Below, are examples of the actions we will take right now and in the near future to prepare for the challenges and opportunities presented by the future trends:

- Implement contingency planning regulations to minimize negative impacts on animal welfare from a multitude of threats, mitigate potential risks to human health resulting from exposure to zoonotic diseases, and evaluate their effectiveness (Trends 1, 2, and 9)
- Promote and advance good animal welfare through enforcing and advancing science-based regulations, outreach, and education (Trends 5 and 7)
- Use cutting-edge technology from recent advances in science in conjunction with veterinary evaluations to detect soring in horses (Trends 5 and 7)



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