
Secretary Rollins Announces New Priorities for Research and Development in 2026



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USDA <usda@public.govdelivery.com>

To

<natalie@mustreadalaska.com>

Date

2025-12-30 12:33

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Office of Communications | press@usda.gov

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(Washington, D.C., December 30, 2025) – Today, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins, signed a [Secretary's Memorandum](#) (PDF, 135 KB) that puts forth a focused effort to establish new priorities for future research and development activities funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to strengthen U.S. Agriculture for farmers and consumers.

The American farm economy suffered under failed Biden-Harris Administration policies that drove up inflation, created a weak trade agenda that resulted in no new trade deals for American commodities, and propagated crippling overregulation. Further, misguided policies focused on DEI and environmental justice in agricultural research, extension, and education programs diverted resources away from solving actual programs that American farmers and ranchers are facing.

Since January, the Trump Administration has been working nonstop to strengthen the farm safety net, create new export opportunities for American commodities, lower the cost of critical agricultural inputs, and root out DEI from all USDA programs. However, strategic investments in agricultural research and development will help American farmers and ranchers increase profitability while continuing to provide consumers with the safest, most abundant, and most affordable food and fiber supply in the world for decades to come.

"When he created the People's Department and the land-grant university system in 1862, President Lincoln had a vision for American agriculture rooted in agricultural innovation and education. Since that time, research coming from USDA and our colleges of agriculture have successfully helped American farmers and ranchers address countless challenges," **said Secretary Brooke Rollins**. "The priorities we are announcing today further reiterates President Trump's commitment to put Farmers First and provides our agricultural researchers with a strategic roadmap to help keep our producers at the forefront of productivity."

New Research and Development Priorities:

Moving forward, new research and development activities funded by USDA will be focused on projects that address one or more of the following priorities that put Farmers First:

1. **Increasing Profitability of Farmers and Ranchers:** While research to increase productivity has allowed American farmers and ranchers to provide the safest, most abundant, and most affordable food and fiber supply, the volatility in profitability of American agriculture leads to significant uncertainty for producers. Research and development that results in increased profitability—such as reducing inputs or increasing mechanization and automation—will benefit American farmers and ranchers.
2. **Expanding Markets and Creating New Uses of U.S. Agricultural Products:** With many producers experiencing record yields this growing season, it is more important than ever to ensure USDA is expanding markets and creating new uses for these American-grown commodities. Research and development that seeks to open new markets—such as generating science and data to resolve longstanding sanitary and phytosanitary trade barriers—or expand the utilization of these commodities in novel biobased products and bioenergy (including biofuels) will result in increased demand.
3. **Protecting the Integrity of American Agriculture from Invasive Species:** The resurgence of New World Screwworm in Mexico, continued westward expansion of the Spotted Lanternfly, persistence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in poultry flocks, and decimation of our domestic citrus industry due to citrus greening are just a few examples of how invasive pests and diseases threaten American agriculture and natural resources. Research and development focused on new and effective methods for preventing, detecting, controlling, and eradicating these threats is a top priority for USDA and the security of U.S. agriculture.
4. **Promoting Soil Health to Regenerate Long-Term Productivity of Land:** American farmers and ranchers are the original conservationists

as no one stewards their land more than those whose entire livelihood, and that of their successive generations, depend on it. Research and development that promotes soil health practices, increases water-use efficiency, and reduces inputs will ensure farms and ranches remain productive for generations to come.

5. **Improving Human Health through Precision Nutrition and Food Quality:** Substantial and increasingly robust evidence shows that a healthy diet can help people achieve and maintain good health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases throughout all stages of life. Rigorous research on precision nutrition is needed to better understand how healthy dietary patterns impact people at the individual level with the goal of more targeted nutritional recommendations to encourage healthy choices, healthy outcomes, and healthy families. Additionally, research and development on increasing the nutritional content and quality of foods will lead to increased demand for American agricultural products.

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