

FARM SECURITY IS NATIONAL SECURITY



NATIONAL FARM SECURITY ACTION PLAN

Agriculture is foundational to our nation. Our Founders saw agriculture as the essential pursuit to the cultivation of republican ideals. Americans, after all, must eat. Today, threats to American agriculture not only expose us to risks of shortages, foreign dependencies, and higher prices but they also strike at one of the most essential pillars of the American republic.

Defending access to American abundance and preserving the American experiment is the essence of agriculture security. **And it is why farm security is national security.**

The food and agriculture sector is designated as critical infrastructure. National Security Memorandum (NSM)-16 and NSM-22 make it national policy to defend food and agriculture systems against terror attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies. This vital sector is a known target for terrorists and malicious actors. Intelligence gathered by American forces in Afghanistan shortly after the 9/11 attacks uncovered documents involving U.S. agriculture along with al-Qaeda training manuals specifically targeting agriculture. The food and agriculture sector entails vast open space and distances, interconnected “just in time” networks, transboundary movement of products, and dependence on new technology that creates a tempting, target-rich environment for malicious actors.



NATIONAL FARM SECURITY ACTION PLAN

Today, agriculture, food, and related trades employ more than one in ten American workers and contribute over \$1.5 trillion to our annual Gross Domestic Product. These trades collectively enable the United States to out-produce, out-compete, and out-innovate our rivals across the globe. Because that dominance is earned and not assured, it is critical we continuously adapt our approach to American agriculture security and elevate it to the top echelon of national security priorities.

This is especially critical in light of emerging challenges and threats, including threats from both state and transnational criminal actors. Countries around the world, including our adversaries, have attacked agriculture supply chains, conducted malicious cyberoperations against food processors, imported illicit food products, created unfair trade practices, purchased our farmland, stolen our intellectual property, forced technology transfers, smuggled potential bioterrorism agents, developed potential tools for agroterrorism, and monopolized agricultural markets—in turn transforming our nation’s growing reliance on key foreign food and agricultural inputs into an urgent strategic vulnerability.

We are ending that now by promulgating this Action Plan, which comprises the next pillar of the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) *Make Agriculture Great Again initiative*, which seeks to protect our borders, enhances the farm safety net and domestic agricultural production, and improves outcomes for American consumers.



NATIONAL FARM SECURITY ACTION PLAN

This *National Farm Security Action Plan* enables USDA to begin its work alongside other Cabinet officials, Congress, and State, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments to address the imperative for agriculture security in America. This Action Plan serves as the launching point for USDA to work in further unison with governors, state legislators, and other partners to fully integrate agriculture into the broader national security enterprise over the coming months and years. Together, we can and must protect and expand the resilience and durability of the U.S. food supply.

More broadly, this bold Action Plan articulates key activities that will:

- **Promote Agricultural and Economic Prosperity** through securing our nation's farmland, identifying gaps in the supply chain and other security vulnerabilities.
- **Defend the Foundations of Agriculture and Food** by enhancing research security and evaluating all USDA programs to ensure they put America First.
- **Strengthen Domestic Agricultural Productivity** through safeguarding plant and animal health, protecting critical infrastructure, and promoting American agricultural products in the U.S. and abroad.

Promote Agricultural and Economic Prosperity

Promoting agricultural and economic prosperity reaffirms the America First policy agenda, which prioritizes domestic security and economic self-sufficiency. This includes prioritizing domestic agricultural production by securing stronger, more collaborative partnerships, and incentivizing domestic economic growth by strategically removing foreign impediments.

1. Secure and Protect American Farmland

Land owned by foreign nationals—particularly those from countries of concern (as defined in 15 CFR 231.102) or other foreign adversaries—is a potential threat to national security and future economic prosperity. USDA will ensure transparency of foreign U.S. agricultural land ownership and pursue robust and overdue updates to data collection, reporting, and analysis.

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978 (AFIDA) requires foreign investors who acquire, transfer, or hold an interest in U.S. agricultural land to report such holdings and transactions to the Secretary of Agriculture. In January 2024, the Government Accountability Office published a report on foreign investments in U.S. agricultural land, which provided recommendations for enhancing efforts to collect, track, and share key information to identify national security risks.

- **Action:** To ensure the security of American farmland, USDA will aggressively implement reforms to the AFIDA process. These reforms include creating an online filing system for enhanced AFIDA reports (including geospatial information and purpose of the land purchase) to facilitate timely sharing of filings with the public and increasing the civil penalty imposed for late and knowingly false filings.
- **Action:** USDA will work alongside State and Congressional partners where applicable to take swift legislative or executive action to end the direct or indirect purchase or control of American farmland by nationals from countries of concern or other foreign adversaries.
- **Action:** USDA will sign a joint Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Treasury as chair of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to ensure regular coordination with the Secretary, or designee, related to CFIUS reviews concerning covered foreign transactions that involve farmland, agricultural businesses, agriculture biotechnology, or the agriculture industry.

- **Action:** USDA has launched a new [online portal](#) for farmers, ranchers, and others to report possible false or failed reporting and compliance with respect to AFIDA. Further, the portal will receive and review claims of adversarial foreign influence on federal, state, and local policymakers with respect to purchases of U.S. farmland and business dealings in other facets of U.S. agricultural supply chains. Submissions may be accepted anonymously or contact information may be provided for appropriate follow-up by USDA.



2. Enhance Agricultural Supply Chain Resilience

The production of key agricultural inputs and materials and transportation of American agricultural commodities around the world rely on components produced in other countries, including some countries of concern or other foreign adversaries, creating strategic dependencies and placing American agriculture at a disadvantage.

Reliance on other countries for inputs to give American consumers access to the safest, most abundant, and most affordable food supply in the world can threaten our domestic security and independence. By analyzing and identifying supply chain gaps and other security vulnerabilities, USDA can help refocus domestic investment into key manufacturing sectors and identify non-adversarial partners to work with when domestic production is not available. Importation of commodities and other agricultural products could introduce dangerous pathogens harmful to animal or human health and devastate U.S. industry if they neglect or disregard USDA safety and import requirements.

- **Action:** To understand where American agriculture may have significant risks and security vulnerabilities in the supply chain, USDA will collaborate with Federal partners to create a list of critical agricultural inputs and materials (including fertilizers, chemicals, minerals, vitamins, components of military defense systems such as nitrocellulose and natural rubber, and other materials) required for successful agricultural production and critical infrastructure security and resilience. USDA will also engage with the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Energy to assist with the identification and inclusion of important inputs in their respective critical mineral lists.
- **Action:** USDA will conduct regular assessments to identify risks and security vulnerabilities to the food and agriculture critical infrastructure sector, including vulnerabilities associated with storage and transportation of agricultural products. Such assessments will include cross-sector crisis simulation and wartime scenario planning exercises related to agriculture to ensure USDA is well equipped to respond if an emergency strikes.
- **Action:** USDA will review and modernize import restrictions to prevent the spread of dangerous biochemicals and biological agents from entering the country. This includes enforcement against responsible actors throughout the supply chain, including, for example, logistics providers, customs brokers, and other trade intermediaries. USDA will work with other federal partners including U.S. Customs and Border Protection to strengthen our nation's borders against entry of restricted goods that could carry animal disease, plant pests, and biological pathogens that can be weaponized against the American public.

3. U.S. Nutrition Safety Net Must be Protected from Fraud, Abuse, and Foreign Adversaries

Programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) should be preserved for truly needy individuals legally in the United States, safeguarding them from fraud, abuse, and foreign adversaries while respecting the generosity of the American taxpayer. Vulnerabilities in the SNAP payment system are a persistent target of transnational criminals and gangs. Law enforcement has identified a troubling trend of transnational criminal organizations (TCO) stealing from the poor and the American taxpayer by such means as cloning point of sale devices and card skimming. The proceeds often are used by the TCOs to fund their criminal activity.

- **Action:** In alignment with President Trump's Executive Order 14218, Ending Taxpayer Subsidization of Open Borders, USDA will ensure all relevant programs comply with associated laws, regulations, and Executive Orders; implement strengthened enforcement measures; clarify expectations for both States and authorized retailers to mitigate benefit trafficking and other types of fraud; and improve the integrity of application processes.
- **Action:** In partnership with USDA's Office of Inspector General and other federal agencies, ensure no funds across USDA's 16 nutrition programs are being used to fund activities related to terrorism or criminal activity.
- **Action:** The USDA will disqualify authorized retailers that are complicit in SNAP fraud or otherwise demonstrate a lack of responsible business behavior to transact SNAP benefits. USDA will also enhance its work with Federal and local law enforcement to combat SNAP retail fraud, including benefit trafficking and card skimming and cloning.



Defend the Foundations of Agriculture and Food

Agricultural research, development, and innovation are the cornerstones of U.S. dominance in the global agricultural sector. This research enterprise reaches far beyond traditional applications of agricultural production but also directly and indirectly supports the defense industrial base, energy production, land management, and technological adaptation.

Furthermore, technological evolution is affecting all critical infrastructure sectors. While these advancements broadly support U.S. agriculture, they bring with them certain risks, including access to unsecure data collection and data access by adversarial foreign entities, interruption of services enabled by cyber tools, and potential for agroterrorism.

4. Enhance Research Security

Securing our agricultural research enterprise from foreign influence, intellectual property theft, forced technology transfers, and agroterrorism threats will ensure taxpayer funds going toward science, technology, and innovation put American farmers and ranchers first and advance U.S. business innovation.

- **Action:** The USDA will institute a new process to make certain all research funded by USDA provides value to American farmers, ranchers, producers, or foresters. This new process will guarantee staff time and taxpayer funds have a direct benefit to those we serve, prevent collaboration with countries of concern or other foreign adversaries, and promote American leadership in innovation and ingenuity.
- **Action:** To protect American investments in agricultural research, USDA will continue taking steps to implement National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 and reinforce Executive Order 14292, *Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research*, and enhance research security, including a requirement that entities receiving USDA funding certify key participants are not owned or controlled by foreign adversaries, are not party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program or similar program that could result in technology or information transfer, and contemporaneously disclose gifts and contracts received from countries of concern or other foreign adversaries.

5. Evaluate USDA Programs to Ensure America First Policies

American farmers and businesses are at a disadvantage when USDA programs support other countries, including countries of concern or other foreign adversaries.

While most programs at USDA directly support American farmers and ranchers, some programs have a history of supporting other countries and adversarial interests. For example, the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs across the entire Federal government have long been used by foreign adversaries to access research and development funding, while gaining foreign investment or control in pre-revenue start-ups.

Additionally, the USDA BioPreferred® Program allows companies in foreign countries—even those from countries of concern or other foreign adversaries—to be placed in the BioPreferred® Program Catalog for the mandatory federal purchasing and voluntary labeling initiatives.

- **Action:** USDA will review these programs and prevent people and entities from countries of concern or other foreign adversaries from taking advantage of them, including by enhancing due diligence for SBIR and STTR applications and revoking BioPreferred® Certification to entities located in these countries.
- **Action:** USDA will continue to review, identify, and subsequently eliminate all agreements—both funded and unfunded—going to people and entities from countries of concern or other foreign adversaries as well as other arrangements with foreign entities that are no longer aligned with USDA’s mission. Upon completion of this review USDA will conduct regular assessments to identify risks in programming and take necessary actions to prioritize American farmers and businesses while balancing international collaboration with the right partners.
- **Action:** Unless statutorily required and/or strategically approved by USDA leadership, all USDA funding will immediately be prioritized to be conducted in America using American-made technology, research, and innovation including but not limited to drones, biotechnology, and biomanufacturing.
- **Action:** USDA will review the scale and scope of all security clearances across USDA and ensure all employees have undergone proper vetting for the work they are carrying out.

Strengthen Domestic Agricultural Productivity

The Trump Administration has prioritized increased agricultural productivity through risk-informed resilience planning as a key tool to move resources, expertise, and ownership back to States and local communities. These communities support American agriculture, and our farmers, ranchers, owners, and operators are directly affected by resilience and preparedness policies.

6. Safeguard Plant and Animal Health

Unintentional or intentional agricultural biosecurity threats—such as invasive species, foreign animal diseases, and pathogens—pose a serious risk to the resilience of American agriculture and the food supply.

Agencies across USDA are tasked with researching and responding to threats to plant and animal health, including the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Forest Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Agricultural Research Service. In addition, other Federal agencies are important partners in this space.

- **Action:** USDA will work with Federal and SLTT partners to strengthen our ability to respond to agricultural biosecurity threats and prioritize programs essential to safeguarding American agriculture by preventing, detecting, and mitigating agricultural biosecurity threats.
- **Action:** USDA will partner with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and other Federal research agencies to ensure agricultural projects they fund promote military readiness, protect U.S. plants and animals, and enhance agricultural security.
- **Action:** Research funded by USDA will focus on protecting plant and animal health through the development of vaccines, therapeutics, and other innovations to mitigate or eradicate priority plant and animal diseases such as citrus greening, rusts, blights, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, African Swine Fever, and Foot and Mouth Disease methods to control or eradicate invasive pests such as New World Screwworm and Spotted Lanternfly.



7. Protect Critical Infrastructure

Attacks on agricultural companies, including cybersecurity threats, can disrupt essential operations and cause significant losses.

As a designated Federal Sector Risk Management Agency, USDA routinely interacts with other Federal partners, such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and privately owned and operated businesses throughout the food and agricultural community. One of the most critically important pieces of this public-private relationship is making sure agriculture is not overlooked by the law enforcement, defense, and national security communities and stakeholders who protect our nation from threats at home and abroad.

- **Action:** USDA will work with private companies and the Food and Ag-Information Sharing and Analysis Center to ensure companies, regardless of size, have access to available resources to protect their operations from cybersecurity and ransomware attacks.
- **Action:** USDA will continue working with the intelligence and law enforcement communities to identify liaisons with whom USDA may directly work so that agricultural stakeholders will have both a voice and an advocate in agricultural security.
- **Action:** USDA will support the development of a 21st century agro-defense workforce, which will create new American jobs in leading multi-disciplinary industries and secure the agriculture sector here at home. This includes encouraging higher education programs that prepare an American workforce to tackle emerging challenges to food and agriculture security. Also, this will ensure focus by security professionals and researchers on this vital sector and the unique threats arising from inherent characteristics of today's agriculture industry such as interconnected global networks, dependence on foreign production and labor, security implications of emerging technology, and advances in biotechnology and implications for animal and plant health.

