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USDA Names New Leadership of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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Agency Remains Committed to Mission Delivery and Continuity of Service to U.S. Agriculture

(Washington, D.C., January 12, 2026) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced important leadership changes within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Dr. Michael Watson, APHIS Administrator, will retire at the end of January after decades of distinguished service, and Dr. Rosemary Sifford, Deputy Administrator for Veterinary Services and U.S. Chief Veterinary Officer, has recently retired from federal service after a similarly notable career. Beginning on February 1, 2026, Ms. Kelly Moore will serve as Acting Administrator and effective immediately, Dr. Alan Huddleston will serve as the Acting U.S. Chief Veterinary Officer. Additionally, to ensure continuity during this transition, APHIS Veterinary Services Associate Deputy Administrator Dr. Adis Dijab will continue to provide operational oversight of Veterinary Services. APHIS operations continue uninterrupted, guided by science-based policies, strong stakeholder engagement, and experienced acting leaders to ensure program continuity. APHIS remains steadfast in its mission to protect the health, welfare, and value of our Nation's plants, animals, and natural resources—continuing to deliver solutions and essential services that safeguard U.S. agriculture and support stakeholders nationwide.

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