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USDA Official Meets With Business Leaders in Milwaukee to Discuss Job Creation, Economic Growth and Rural Revitalization

MILWAUKEE—Dec. 9, 2011—U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics (REE) Catherine Woteki met with business leaders today to explore ways federal, state and local officials can work together to spur innovation and create jobs in Wisconsin. The meeting was part of a series of White House Business Council Roundtable events being held across the country to give government leaders the opportunity to hear directly from businesses.

"President Obama and USDA are committed to creating good-paying jobs that will help businesses and the communities they serve here in Wisconsin," said Woteki. "Today, Milwaukee business leaders provided me with valuable input and innovative ideas on how to grow the economy, which I will take back to Washington."

The roundtable also served as an opportunity to educate participants about USDA programs and other resources across the federal government that can help rebuild and revitalize rural American communities. Today's meeting was hosted by the American Pasteurization Company.

The Research, Education and Economics (REE) mission area at USDA oversees four agencies and their services to American agriculture: the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Economic Research Service (ERS), and National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS). The National Agriculture Library and National Arboretum also fall under this mission area. Woteki also serves as USDA's Chief Scientist.

USDA and the Obama Administration support the commitment of research, science delivery and economic analysis to inform federal programs, policy and marketing decisions related to food and agriculture, within government and in the private sector. The Obama Administration, with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, has also worked tirelessly to strengthen rural America, implement the Farm Bill, maintain a strong farm safety net, and create opportunities for America's farmers and ranchers. U.S. agriculture is currently experiencing one of its best years in decades thanks to the productivity, resiliency, and resourcefulness of our producers. Today, net farm income is at record levels while debt has been cut in half since the 1980s. Overall, American agriculture supports 1 in 12 jobs in the United States and provides American consumers with 86 percent of the food we consume, while maintaining affordability and choice. The Obama Administration has aggressively worked to expand export opportunities and reduce barriers to trade, helping to push agricultural exports to record levels in 2011 and beyond. Strong agricultural exports are a positive contribution to the U.S. trade balance, support more than 1 million American jobs and boost economic growth.

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