

How U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Operations are Impacted by the Government Shutdown

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The government shutdown on October 1, 2013 will have a mixed impact on the operations of the **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)**. According to the USDA's contingency plan, some activities will cease to operate during the shutdown and others will continue as normal. Generally, inspections will continue for meat, poultry, and grain products because the programs are either funded by fees or necessary for human health. However, the USDA website is offline and important statistical reports on crop estimates and export sales will not be issued during the shutdown. Below is a list of the services within USDA that are important to our clients, and what can be expected of those services during the shutdown.

Agricultural Marketing Service

- The Agricultural Marketing Service will continue to fully operate programs that are funded by user fees. These programs will remain fully staffed during the shutdown:
- Dairy Grading, Milk Market Administration, Specialty Crops Inspection, Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, Cattle Futures, Meat Grading, Tobacco Inspection, Seed Inspection Trust, Quality Assessment Division, Poultry Grading, Laboratory Services, Plant Variety Protection Program, Commodity Purchase Service, Research & Promotion Programs
- The following programs or units will cease to operate due to employee furloughs:
- Country of Origin Labeling Program, Federal Seed, Market News, Marketing Agreements & Orders, National Organic Standards Program, Pesticide Data Program, Pesticide Recordkeeping, Shell Egg Surveillance, Standardization, Transportation & Market Development, Specialty Crop Block Grant Administration, Payment to States, Compliance Direct, Market News Support Unit, Regulatory Review Staff

Farm Service Agency

- All offices will be closed except in the case of emergencies and natural disasters.

Food Safety and Inspection Service

- Inspections will continue for meat, poultry and egg products. Only 13% of employees in the Food Safety and Inspection Service will be on furlough.

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)

- Slightly less than half of the FAS officers are supposed to remain on the job, but the details are complicated because federal employees in foreign countries may not be allowed to be on furlough due to local laws.

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

- Grain, rice, and commodity inspections and weighing will continue because they are funded by user fees. The staff will be slightly reduced because other parts of the Administration (compliance, standardization, methods development) are funded by appropriation.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

- All activities are suspended during the shutdown except those necessary for the protection of life and property.

Research, Education, and Economics

- This area of USDA includes the Agriculture Research Service, the Economic Research Service (ERS), the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.
- The following activities will not operate during the shutdown:
- Market news reports, NASS statistics, and other agricultural economic and statistical reports and projections
- Research facilities, except for the care of plants and animals to preserve research projects
- Provisions of new grants or processing of payments for existing grants to support research, education, and extension
- ERS Commodity Outlook Reports, Data Products, research reports, staff analysis, and projections
- Monthly crop estimates, due on October 11, may be delayed if the shutdown continues.

Risk Management Agency

- All employees will be placed on furlough.

Rural Development Service

- Only 53 of 4,730 employees will be exempted from furloughs.

We will continue to monitor developments with USDA operations for our clients as the shutdown continues. Information about Food & Drug Administration (FDA) operations during the shutdown is available [here](#) and information about Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) operations during the shutdown is available [here](#).

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