



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 9, 2025

THE HONORABLE AMY KLOBUCHAR
Unites States Senate
425 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar,

Thank you for your letter dated May 28, 2026, cosigned by your Senate colleagues, regarding organizational improvements planned for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). I appreciate the opportunity to detail the changes the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making to modernize the food safety inspection system to ensure it remains the strongest and most resilient food safety system in the world.

On April 23, 2026, the Department announced a reorganization of the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to update operations, streamline support functions, and better align the agency with the Nation's agricultural landscape. At its heart, FSIS is a field-based public health agency, and this reorganization reflects that reality. The frontline inspection workforce, which represents 85 percent of FSIS employees, currently operates across more than 6,800 regulated establishments around the country; and this core of services will not change. All food safety inspection activities and public health protections will continue without interruption. The FSIS reorganization does not include any reduction in force, and all employees will retain positions within the agency.

The Department's FSIS reorganization is an investment in the team members who carry out the food safety mission every day. With this announcement, FSIS will establish the National Food Safety Center in Iowa to house the agency's first centralized, in-person training facility in more than 15 years. This Center will provide inspectors and support staff with access to cutting-edge instruction in inspection methods, data analytics, leadership training, and the core skills required to do this work at the highest level.

Centralizing these capabilities in the Midwest, which is closer to stakeholder establishments, also allows for an administrative and support operations hub for FSIS, rather than forcing the workforce to rotate to Washington to prepare and advance careers over generations. Iowa will also be home to FSIS resource management and IT support teams, bringing these functions closer to the field staff they collaborate with daily. Recruitment and retention for these critical, highly competitive roles is anticipated to improve through this move.

The agency is also investing in its science capabilities through the establishment of a Science Center in Athens, Georgia. FSIS will build on its existing Eastern Field Services Laboratory and expand its

capabilities in microbiology, chemistry, and epidemiology. These changes strengthen scientific capacity in locations with direct access to top-tier academic institutions and a robust public health workforce, including its proximity to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention headquarters in Atlanta.

Not unlike a Senator's office framework, a core Washington FSIS staff will be present in D.C., while key positions engaging directly with stakeholders and team members supporting their work will be located in the field. Approximately 100 FSIS positions will remain in the National Capital Region, specifically to support Congressional engagement, policy development, and coordination with Federal partners, including the Food and Drug Administration and State and local agencies. These positions are not subject to relocation and will allow for continued seamless interagency coordination and outbreak response. The FSIS staff responsible for rapid interagency communication during multistate outbreak events will also continue to operate from Washington.

On workforce communications, FSIS provided face-to-face notification to employees whose positions are affected by the relocation. Employees have been informed of the timeline, the specific locations involved, and the resources available to support the transition. The Department is managing this process in a manner consistent with applicable Federal laws, rules, and regulations and remains committed to treating employees fairly throughout. The agency has taken great care to ensure transitions are completed without interruption to its critical functions.

The FSIS reorganization is critical to USDA's commitment to align its workforce and resources with its stakeholders. FSIS has a strong record in fulfilling its mission to the highest degree of accuracy, and this will continue uninterrupted under this Administration's leadership. By establishing the National Food Safety Center as a central hub for operations and expanding scientific capabilities in Georgia, FSIS is strengthening its ability to protect public health and ensure the safety of the Nation's food supply. The Department remains committed to its employees and the American people and values the perspective of all stakeholders to ensure FSIS is best positioned to fulfill its mission.

If you have additional questions, please check out FSIS' reorganization website¹ or have a member of your staff contact USDA's Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095 or ocr@usda.gov. A copy of this letter has been sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,



Stephen Alexander Vaden
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture

¹ FSIS Reorganization website, available at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/about-fsis/reorganization>.