

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

May 1, 2015

Dear Employees,

This first Friday, I'd like to take a moment to recognize the dedicated employees of the Agricultural Marketing Service for their creativity in developing the first Process Verified Program claim for non-GMO/GE food products.

Today's label-conscious consumers often rely on labels to get information about their food. At the same time, producers use verified labels and claims to help distinguish their products in the marketplace.

When a producer or industry stakeholder has a standard they want to consistently meet, AMS works with them to develop an auditing solution to verify that claim. Through the Process Verified Program, AMS assures consumers that marketing claims made by food companies have been verified by an independent third-party. These voluntary tools allow businesses to differentiate themselves from their competition. Annually, AMS grades, audits, certifies and/or inspects over \$150 billion worth of agricultural products, ensuring the quality of domestic goods and helping American farms and businesses export goods to over 100 different countries.

Recently, a leading global company asked AMS to help verify that the corn and soybeans it uses in its products are not genetically engineered so that the company could label the products as such. AMS worked with the company to develop testing and verification processes to verify the non-GE claim.

While the Process Verified Program itself is not a new program, this is the first non-GMO/GE claim verified through USDA. It will be announced soon, and other companies are already lining up to take advantage of this service.

This is a great example of AMS employees working in partnership with stakeholders to respond creatively and adapt to changes in the market, monitor trends and consumer demands, and develop solutions that meet industry and consumer needs. The ability to continuously meet industry and consumer needs is a testament to the dedication and innovative nature of AMS employees and their commitment to helping American agriculture remain competitive in a global marketplace.

Please join me this first Friday in recognizing the employees at the Agricultural Marketing Service for their innovative spirit and dedicated service. Their work is a great example of a modern USDA that is constantly striving to deliver more modern and efficient service to our customers.

Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

Tom Vilsack