



## **Message from Secretary Vilsack about USDA 150th**

In 2012, USDA will commemorate and celebrate the 150th anniversary of our founding in 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln signed into law an act of Congress establishing the United States Department of Agriculture.

Two and one-half years later, in what would be his final annual message to the Congress, Lincoln called USDA "The People's Department." At that time, about half of all Americans lived on farms, compared with about 2 percent today. But through our work on food, agriculture, economic development, science, natural resource conservation and a host of issues, USDA still fulfills Lincoln's vision - touching the lives of every American, every day.

As we commemorate 150 years of accomplishments, USDA is learning from past experiences and looking to the future. In the years to come, we must help address the changing needs of agriculture and rural America. We must continue to help provide a safe, ample food supply for our nation and the world. To meet those goals, we are working to make USDA a more modern and effective service provider and to deliver the best possible results for all of the American people.

Over the course of the year, I hope that Americans will acknowledge and join in our commemoration of 150 years of USDA. It is a great time to learn about our contributions to the strength and health of this nation, and to see how we can continue to partner with Americans working to provide a better life for their families.

Thanks for joining us in this celebration,  
Secretary Vilsack