

**Hi I'm Craig Morris, Deputy Administrator for the Livestock and Seed Program.**

**On behalf of Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and the Agricultural Marketing Service welcome to the 17th Annual Livestock and Seed Program Commodity Procurement Industry Conference.**

**I'm glad you've taken time to join us today. This year we're taking advantage of a new video conferencing technology to host this important forum.**

**I'll think you'll find this new format even more conducive to your busy schedules and certainly more cost effective during these challenging economic times.**

**First of all I want to thank those of you who currently participate in a purchase program. You do a great deal to make it successful.**

**At the same time welcome to those of you who are joining us for the first time. It means you're interested in our program and I hope this video will answer your questions. We look forward to your participation.**

**As many of you know our successes over the past year didn't come without its challenges. Still it allowed us to make some significant changes that now only enhance the integrity of the purchase program and the services we provide.**

**During this conference we'll cover all of those changes. But in the meantime I'd like to briefly touch on two. First, the Web-Based**

**Supply Chain Management System, and second, the new Animal Welfare Requirement which became effective on January 1.**

**At last year's industry conference in Kansas City we talked about the Web-Based Supply Chain Management software.**

**At that time we were just developing the system. Now to update USDA plans to fully transition to the new system at the end of this year.**

**This is important to know because it will replace our current software, The Process Commodity Inventory Management System better known as PCIMS.**

**As we move closer to the launch date we'll contact many of you to help us test this new system. At the same time we'll evaluate our options for training our contractors and subcontractors so that the transition is as smooth as possible.**

**As for the animal welfare requirements a special thank you to all of our contractors and subcontractors for the job well done. By acting quickly to submit your animal welfare plans we were able to meet the needs of our recipient agencies without a hitch.**

**To-date we've conducted 38 animal welfare audits and I'm happy to report a 97% compliance rating. Again welcome to the conference.**

**While we hope it meets your needs I encourage you to provide feedback on this new format at the end of our presentation.**

**I'll now turn it over to (Bill Sessions) to give you an overview of the program. Thank you and again welcome.**