

**Washington State Department of Agriculture
Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025**

Vision – *The future we work to achieve*

Agriculture thrives across Washington, contributing to the health of the state’s people, environment, and economy.

Mission – *How we serve the people of Washington*

Through service, regulation, and advocacy, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) supports the viability and vitality of agriculture while protecting consumers, public health, and the environment.

Our Values – *Agencywide values linked to the work we do*

- Environmental justice
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Continuous improvement
- Collaborative and respectful partnerships and relationships
- Consistent, effective, and transparent regulation
- Fiscal responsibility and transparency

Our Principles– *The nature of what we do*

- Serve, regulate, advocate
- Use science and data to inform decisions
- Pursue practical, reasonable solutions
- Anticipate the future, Innovation
- Meet statutory commitments
- Act with integrity, consistency, transparency and respect
- Anticipate future growth

What we believe

WSDA fosters an environment where you can celebrate your individuality—and where you can explore the shared ideas and experiences that connect us all. Our community is strengthened by the diverse perspectives, interests, and identities of all.

WSDA is committed to advancing equity and environmental justice. We believe diversity drives innovation, so we continue to build a culture where differences are respected and valued. WSDA's commitment to equity is rooted in our fundamental belief that engaging with unfamiliar ideas, perspectives, cultures, and people creates the conditions for meaningful growth and change. WSDA is working to engage the community to inform our work and to integrate inclusive, equitable policies and procedures in all that we do. For WSDA, environmental justice means fair treatment, and that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies. We commit to continuous improvement resulting in the equitable distribution of environmental, economic and social benefits across Washington State’s diverse geographies and people.

Goal 1 – Support and engage our communities, customers, and employees. (Administrative Services)

- Leverage technology solutions that support a modern, mobile workforce to allow us to be more adaptive and responsive to communities, customers, and employees. Provide secure and sustainable infrastructure and operational support to help WSDA conduct our work.
- Work with Washington’s agriculture industry to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops within our state.
- We support WSDA customers by providing coordination, guidance, and consulting services to support operational effectiveness and efficiency, and to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Be a great place for employees to work and engage.
 - Support and encourage employees to report safety hazards, incidents, and violations through active accident reporting and the annual statewide safety survey. Enterprise Risk Services Management staff continuously visit and assess field and administrative worksites and provide feedback to managers and employees. This encourages responsibility for personal safety at their workplace, as well as for themselves, through collaborative feedback, support, and actionable results.
- Protect public health and support a viable and vital agricultural economy in Washington State by efficiently responding to threats, disasters, and emergencies impacting animal health and agricultural critical infrastructure and supporting agricultural recovery from emergencies through mitigation, response, and planning.
 - Work closely with internal and external partners within the animal and agricultural sector to plan, train, and exercise on responding to natural, terrorist, or biological emergencies impacting animal health and agricultural assets.
 - Coordinate state response and recovery actions during natural or man-made disasters and animal health emergencies to protect the state's agriculture.
 - Provide technical assistance and subject matter expertise to industry partners, local jurisdictions, and state partners on planning and training for animal health/agricultural/food supply chain emergencies, including foreign animal disease outbreaks, dangerous plant or pest infestations, food and feed illness outbreaks, radiological releases, and bioterrorism attacks.
- Support the agency in meeting statutory requirements through administrative policies, rulemaking, and public records disclosure.
 - The Administrative Regulations Program works primarily with internal stakeholders to provide guidance and support in order to ensure compliance with state laws and rules which directly or indirectly supports our communities, stakeholders, customers, and employees.

Goal 2 – Protect animal health, respond to reportable diseases, promote asset protection, and ensure division regulations are met. (Animal Services)

- Compliance - Supports division programs by monitoring, auditing, and investigating noncompliance with regulations. Educates stakeholders to reduce enforcement actions.
- Livestock Identification - Provides ownership inspections of livestock in the state. Develops alternative ownership transaction methods to capture movements of livestock.

- Animal Health - Conducts active surveillance and respond to disease outbreaks. Engages stakeholders through education and outreach. Promotes planning and preparedness to ensure continuity of business.
- Animal Disease Traceability - Enhances the ability to track animals from birth to slaughter by building infrastructure at points of commingling. Increases the use of 840 RFID. Enhances electronic sharing of animal disease traceability data.

Goal 3 – Support fruit, vegetable, grain, seed, and hemp producers by testing, inspecting, auditing and certifying products. **(Commodity Inspection)**

- Grain Inspection - Provides inspection, testing and weighing services under the U.S. Grain Standards Act and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) regulation standards. Through partnership and collaboration with USDA Federal Grain Inspection Service and stakeholders, the program strives to maintain the "gold standard" while advocating for industry needs and ensuring orderly commerce for grain, dry peas, dry beans, lentils and similar commodities sold in or from Washington.
- Hemp Program - Serves Washington's hemp producers by navigating the evolving regulatory foundation, seeking input, providing official inspection and testing services, and partnering with USDA to support the growth and sustainability of hemp and facilitate movement of Washington grown hemp to market.
- Fruit and Vegetable Inspection - Works collaboratively with industry stakeholders, industry representatives, USDA AMS and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services to provide timely, accurate and relevant testing, treatment verification, auditing and inspection services to expedite the movement of agricultural commodities into the fresh and processing markets.
- Seed Program - Provides accurate, timely and high quality seed analysis and certification through seed testing, phytosanitary inspection, regulatory inspection, and official seed sampling, while continually seeking input from stakeholders and striving to improve methods and technologies to expedite the movement of Washington-grown seed to market.
- Warehouse Audit - Works with stakeholders to protect industry growers by educating, conducting audits and communicating with industry impacted by the movement of grain commodities.

Goal 4: Serve consumers and stakeholders in the state of Washington by assuring the availability, safety, and integrity of the state's human and animal food supply. **(Food Safety and Consumer Services)**

- Animal Feed - Supports food and feed safety by inspecting commercial feed manufacturers for safe manufacturing practices. Supports feed integrity by verifying the accuracy of certain product label claims.
- Food Assistance - Supports food availability by providing food and funding to food banks and food pantries.
- Food and Produce Safety - Supports food safety by inspecting food manufacturing and other kinds of food facilities for safe manufacturing practices and produce safety by inspecting produce for safe production and handling practices.
- Food Safety and Consumer Services Laboratory - Supports food and feed safety by conducting laboratory analyses for pathogens and other contaminants.
- Organic - Supports food integrity by verifying the validity of organic production, processing, and handling claims. Verifies the organic validity of certain input materials.

Goal 5: Protect the public interest, health, and welfare of the people of Washington by providing cost-efficient and effective regulation of pesticides, dairy nutrients, and fertilizers. **(Pesticide Management)**

- Pesticide Compliance - Enforces federal and state regulations relating to the storage, distribution, transportation, disposal and use of pesticides. Operates in an efficient, effective and appropriate manner, maintaining a balanced approach to enforcement of pesticide laws and rules. Investigates pesticide complaints and conducts routine inspections, with field staff based at several locations throughout the state to protect human health, property, and the environment.
- Registration Services - Reviews and registers pesticide and fertilizer labels, and licenses bulk fertilizer distributors to support a healthy and safe food supply by assuring that all pesticides and fertilizers are safe when used as directed and do not pose any unreasonable risk to people or the environment.
- Fertilizer, Tonnage and Compliance - Samples and analyzes fertilizer products, inspect fertilizer facilities and bulk fertilizer secondary containment to ensure that fertilizers distributed in Washington are not adulterated by heavy metals, that product labels provide accurate information about their ingredients and plant food guarantees for consumer protection, and to protect human health and the environment.
- Pesticide Licensing and Recertification - Provides initial and continued certification of pesticide applicators, consultants, dealer managers, and pest inspectors to protect human health and the environment for Washington agriculture and citizens.
- Technical Education and Services - Provides quality technical services and education to agricultural producers and their employees about pesticide laws and rules, and coordinates pesticide waste disposal to promote the safe production of food, a safe working environment and to support the vitality and health of Washington agriculture.
- Dairy Nutrient Management - Serves the dairy industry by providing technical assistance and compliance inspections, and enforcing nutrient management and water quality laws to sustain a healthy industry and protect the environment.

Goal 6 – Protect the State’s resources by preventing the establishment of high-risk invasive insects, terrestrial insects and snails, plant diseases, and noxious weeds through detection, identification, inspection, eradication, and outreach. (Plant Protection)

- Pest Program - Detects and controls harmful invasive organisms and provides pest-free verification through surveys and diagnostic services to protect trade opportunities.
- Plant Services - Licenses and inspects horticultural producers to ensure consumer protection and identify pest and disease threats to the producers and growers of the state. Provides inspection and certification required for commodity exports.
- Weights and Measures - Inspects and certifies measuring devices used in commerce to ensure consumers are receiving what they pay for and businesses are not losing revenue based on erroneous measuring devices.
- Chemistry and Hop Laboratory - Provides diagnostic service to the WSDA Pesticide Management Division for residue monitoring and human exposure investigations. Provides diagnostic support to the Liquor and Cannabis Board for residue and potency testing. Surveys and certifies the annual hop harvest to support grower contracts and export documents.
- Agricultural Investigation - Monitors and facilitates contract agreements and disputes between bonded dealers and growers. Provides investigation services, mediation, and bond recovery.

Goal 7 – Promoting and developing Washington’s food and farming industry by helping Washington food and agriculture companies be more successful in local and international markets. (Business and Marketing Support)

- International Marketing - Provides export resources and assistance, connects Washington food and agriculture exporters with qualified foreign buyers, promotes Washington food and agriculture internationally, and collaborates with industry to advocate for global market access.
- Regional Markets - Works to strengthen the economic viability of small and direct marketing farms and increase availability of healthy, locally grown Washington foods, including in school meals. Provides educational outreach, publications, peer-to-peer centered technical assistance and trainings, and regulatory guidance to help farmers access markets that fit their scale and products. Takes a systems approach to developing vibrant regional food economies, working with buyers, processors, distributors, and marketers of Washington agricultural products along the local value chain from producer to plate.

What we do

WSDA carries out a wide range of activities, but the department does not deal with every aspect of agriculture in our state. Rather, WSDA focuses on a few specific (but far-reaching) areas, doing some of what the agricultural industry, cooperative extension, and other agencies cannot do. WSDA also performs functions needed to support the agency as a whole.

The areas WSDA focuses on are connected. The first three areas relate to agricultural production and also overlap on public health concerns. WSDA’s work in those areas supports marketable agricultural products, which supports work in the fourth area, helping to facilitate the movement of those products in foreign and domestic markets. The fifth area provides the framework that allows WSDA to accomplish its work in the other four areas.

A portion of WSDA’s scope of work is defined by its specific statutory assignments and authorities and by its general responsibilities as a state agency. This scope is underscored by funding sources dedicated to specific activities.

FOCUS OF WORK

- 1. Food and feed safety, integrity, and availability.**
- 2. Safe and legal distribution, use, and disposal of pesticides, fertilizers, and nutrients.**
- 3. Plant and animal health protection from selected plant and animal pests and diseases.**
- 4. Support of marketplace equity and access to markets.**
- 5. Internal agency support, organizational resources, planning, and management.**

Our Structure

The director of the Department of Agriculture is a cabinet-level position appointed by and reporting to the governor. Currently, WSDA is organized into six divisions, plus the Director’s Office and Administrative Services.

WSDA is headquartered in Olympia, but department employees work in every county of the state. Their work takes them to farms, ranches, processing plants, warehouses, and ports. They inspect animals, commodities, nurseries, dairies and trucks. They process permit applications in offices and process samples in laboratories. About 73 percent of WSDA’s roughly 760 regular employees work from field offices and satellite locations across the state. WSDA also employs about 260 seasonal employees, mostly for pest trapping and seasonal inspections.