



Forest Service

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<https://www.fs.usda.gov/cherokee/>

News Release

USDA Launches AskUSDA to Improve and Streamline Customer Experience

(Washington, D.C., November 23, 2020) – Today, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the official launch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) AskUSDA Contact Center program. The AskUSDA Contact Center will serve as the “one front door” for phone, chat, and web inquires, transforming how the public interacts with USDA and providing an enhanced experience for the public.

“Part of our work here at USDA to be the most efficient, effective, and customer-focused agency in the federal government is to ensure our customers and Americans across the country can easily get support from our Department and answers to their questions,” **said Secretary Perdue**. “The AskUSDA Contact Center will act as one, centralized front door, ensuring good customer service is given to everyone who interacts with USDA.”

The public can contact AskUSDA by phone at (833) ONE-USDA with representatives available 9:00am-5:30pm EST weekdays. The website (<https://ask.usda.gov/>) is available 24/7 and includes live chat agents available 10:00am-6:00pm EST on weekdays. Inquiries can also be sent via email at any time to askusda@usda.gov.

Prior to the creation and implementation of AskUSDA, members of the public had to navigate dozens of phone numbers and had no chat function or online platform for self-service, creating frustrations and inefficiencies. AskUSDA was created to make USDA more responsive to the public by providing a single destination for phone, chat, and web inquiries. Whether it’s talking to a USDA representative via phone, chatting with a live agent on our website, or communicating with USDA via e-mail, the public will have streamlined access.

The launch of AskUSDA delivers a centralized contact center that offers customer service and consistent information for the public. With over 29 agencies and offices, USDA’s mission impacts every single person in the U.S. and hundreds of millions around the globe. AskUSDA assures that farmers, researchers, travelers, parents, and more have efficient access to the information and resources they need.

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AskUSDA is set up to handle common questions across programs that service a variety of audiences. For example, customers who may have basic questions about USDA's nutrition services can be assisted across phone, e-mail, and web chat by trained AskUSDA representatives, and customers who may have complicated questions about loan programs can be quickly connected to agency experts. AskUSDA also hosts over five thousand articles for a self-service option to help with more common questions such as food safety inquiries or pet-travel guidance.

Over the course of its pilot program, AskUSDA successfully assisted with over 93,000 citizen inquiries, and the AskUSDA website resulted in over 1.4 million knowledge article page views. USDA looks forward to continuing to implement this enhanced best in class contact center across the Department.

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