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**Subject:** FW: Secretary Kicks Off USDA for All Seasons Campaign

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**Sent:** Friday, June 21, 2013 11:03 AM  
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**Subject:** Secretary Kicks Off USDA for All Seasons Campaign

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## Secretary Kicks Off USDA for All Seasons Campaign

*Summer highlights include healthy eating tips, abundant activities on national forests*

WASHINGTON, June 21, 2013-- U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today marked the first day of summer by launching the "USDA for All Seasons" – an effort to help Americans stay healthy and safe throughout the year by using USDA programs and information.

"Every day, USDA provides assistance to millions of Americans across a wide variety of areas, and the 'USDA for All Seasons' effort is designed to expand access to helpful information from the Department," Secretary Vilsack said. "This summer we'll help folks safely enjoy the great outdoors, provide useful grilling and food safety tips, help parents ensure good nutrition for their kids once school is out, and much more."

Through "USDA for All Seasons," USDA agencies will showcase seasonal information and resources that play a key role in advancing the Obama Administration's goal of improving the health and well-being of all Americans. Currently, America spends \$2 trillion on crisis medical health care, and obesity and physical inactivity are major risk factors for chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Examples of USDA agencies contributing to this health agenda include:

- **Enjoying the great outdoors:** The Forest Service manages 193 million acres of public lands with thousands of recreational facilities for people to hike, camp, bike and enjoy the great outdoors. While 98 percent of these facilities are already free to the public, the Forest Service also offers a series of "fee free" days throughout the year for facilities such as campgrounds that do charge for admission.
- **Protecting our National Forests:** The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service continues to alert Americans about the risk of moving firewood. More outdoor enthusiasts know that firewood can harbor invasive pests and diseases that could jeopardize our forests and trees. They are leaving firewood behind or purchasing only certified, treated and labeled firewood. Learn how to leave hungry pests behind at APHIS' website on the invasive species threat.
- **Keeping shelves stocked with local produce:** The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps farmers in rural and urban areas grow fresh fruits and vegetables through conservation tools like the seasonal high tunnel. In the past three years, NRCS has helped construct more than 7,200 of these plastic-wrapped, metal-framed structures that lengthen growing seasons and send locally grown produce, especially summer favorites – such as tomatoes, squash and cucumbers – to nearby consumers.
- **Ensuring healthy meals for our kids over the summer:** The Food and Nutrition Service kicked off an awareness campaign this month to promote the Summer Food Service Program and other initiatives across the country to feed low-income children during summer when school is out. Each summer, millions of families struggle to provide their children with nutritious meals when schools close. This summer, USDA's goal is to serve 5 million more meals to children at risk for hunger so they can return to school in the fall healthy and ready to learn.
- **Providing safe grilling tips:** The Food Safety and Inspection Service is reminding barbecuers that following safe food handling steps is the key to making cookouts safe and healthy. Learn more at: <http://blogs.usda.gov/2013/05/23/keeping-bacteria-at-bay->

[on-your-grilling-day/](#)

- **Helping our children make healthy choices:** The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion launched [MyPlate Kids' Place](#) in March, a new website offering a fun place for young consumers to play while learning how to eat healthy and be active. ChooseMyPlate.gov reflects recommendations from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and supports the goals of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign, a comprehensive initiative dedicated to reversing the current trend of childhood obesity.
- **Expanding the reach of local and regional markets:** USDA once again kicked off its Washington, DC farmers market as a place-for communities—rural and urban, farmer and consumer—to come together. The USDA Farmers Market stands as a symbol of USDA's continued effort to expand nationwide access to healthy, locally-grown foods. This effort has already led to an increase of 67 percent in the number of farmers' markets since 2008, with more than 7,800 [farmers markets](#) in operation today.

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