COVID Vaccination Requirement Update

USDA Team,

The Deputy Secretary provided an important update while answering some of your most pressing questions related to COVID policies, workplace safety and return to the physical workplace on September 8. We are committed to continuing to share relevant and timely updates and ensuring your safety as developments occur.

On September 9, the President outlined a plan to rid the nation of the horrible COVID pandemic. The President believes the federal workforce should lead the effort, and – in that vein – has ordered all federal employees and contractors to be vaccinated against COVID. We realize this is a significant step, and understand it is critical to help contain the global pandemic, reduce infection rates and keep everyone safe.

The Delta variant is significantly more contagious than earlier strains of the coronavirus and now accounts for over 99 percent of all new cases in the country. Also, 97 percent of counties in the country are classified as having high or substantial COVID transmission. As the science about the COVID pandemic evolves, the number one priority is protecting the health and wellbeing of our employees, contractors, and visitors at USDA.

As federal employees and as part of the USDA community, it is an honor and privilege for each of us to serve. Public service comes with the tremendous and noble responsibility to provide leadership in the workplace and in our communities. Together, we need to fight the pandemic and – take collective actions to stop this dangerous virus from spreading through all of our communities.

We are awaiting guidance from the White House on how to implement this new risk mitigation policy and will share more details as soon as we have them.

Thank you for your continued patience, dedication to our mission and more importantly for your tireless commitment to public service and public good. We will continue to communicate what we know in a timely way and ask that you send any concerns or questions to your pandemic coordinator or to futureofwork@usda.gov.

Secretary Vilsack and Deputy Secretary Bronaugh

*To the extent this policy may constitute a change in a condition of employment for bargaining unit employees, agencies/offices will implement it in accordance with the terms of their current labor agreement and 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71.*