



# Department of Agriculture (USDA)

## Timeline of Attacks

- **February 13, 2025:** Secretary Brooke Rollins was [sworn](#) into office. She welcomed the integration of DOGE into the USDA and immediately initiated mass layoffs across the agency.
- **February 18, 2025:** The USDA admitted to [accidentally firing](#) several employees tasked with managing the federal response to the H5N1 avian flu outbreak.
- **February 20, 2025:** The USDA initiated [widespread layoffs](#), including “many hundreds of staff at critical scientific subagencies” and 2,000 [Forest Service](#) employees.
- **March 12, 2025:** The USDA [eliminated](#) two critical food safety advisory committees: the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods and the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection.
- **March 13, 2025:** The USDA [canceled \\$1 billion](#) in funding for programs that assisted local schools and food banks in sourcing products from their own communities.
- **March 14, 2025:** Investigative reporting [revealed](#) that hundreds of USDA sites were listed on DOGE’s “Wall of Receipts,” signaling they were targeted for termination.
- **April 10, 2025:** 12,000 USDA employees [accepted](#) resignation offers; notably, 10% of these departures occurred within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
- **May 1, 2025:** New regulations [required](#) DOGE approval for over one-third of USDA farm-loan dollars—totaling at least \$1.7 billion.
- **May 4, 2025:** Total resignations at the USDA [reached](#) 15,000, or 15% of the total staff. This included 555 departures from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).
- **June 11, 2025:** The USDA Forest Service Chief stated that the agency had [lost](#) 4,200 employees to paid leave and 600 employees to early retirements.
- **August 13, 2025:** The USDA [terminated](#) union contracts for over 8,000 employees within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Food Safety and Inspection Service.
- **September 30, 2025:** Approximately 1,200 employees from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) [resigned](#) after accepting DOGE buyouts.

## Impacts on Capacity

DOGE’s assault on USDA has effectively eliminated the agency’s capacity to maintain national food security and rural infrastructure. The removal of technical staff responsible for irrigation engineering, invasive disease mitigation, and rural housing assistance has [created a backlog](#) of critical projects that experts indicate may remain



stalled indefinitely. As the remaining workforce faces unmanageable caseloads, the collapse of these support systems threatens the viability of America's food supply.

The [mass firing](#) of federal avian flu response personnel leaves America's poultry supply defenseless against an emerging public health threat. And while USDA later scrambled to rehire these essential experts, the initial purge occurred at a moment of heightened vulnerability.

## Material Harms

DOGE's attacks on USDA is an attack on America's physical health. The loss of hundreds of inspectors at entry points increases the probability of a [catastrophic](#) invasive species breach. Additionally, this bottlenecking of the national supply chain raises concerns of a port-to-table failure, as perishable food imports rot in transit due to processing delays.

In addition to supply chain issues, the USDA canceled direct food assistance programs to the tune of [over \\$1 billion](#). In March, the agency announced they were scrapping [\\$660 million](#) for the Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program. The program helped schools and child care facilities provide better nutrition for their students by working with local producers to buy fresh food. Affected communities [called](#) the cuts "devastating" and a "slap in the face." Without these funds, schools are forced to buy from national corporations and often cannot afford fresh, healthy food for children. The agency cuts also [targeted](#) the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program, which supported food banks.

At the Forest Service, the dramatic cuts to probationary employees forced firefighters to take on the duties of support staff. The agency simultaneously stated it did not have "enough capacity to meet the needs of the continuing wildfire crisis." While USDA leadership [publicly claimed](#) to be ready for wildfire season, remaining firefighters speaking with reporters said employees were "[worried](#)" and described the loss of institutional knowledge as "[crippling](#)."

Rural communities that helped elect Trump to office are [suffering](#) the most from DOGE-controlled USDA. Agency cuts have stopped the flow of rural development funds to isolated communities. As a result, programs that helped transport families to medical appointments or repaired homes for the elderly were "[forced to stop community outreach](#)."

USDA's dereliction of duty has also harmed the public's financial health. DOGE's assault on avian flu response personnel has already been linked to rising egg prices, a trend that [stands](#) to impact grocery costs more generally.



## **Notable Names**

### ***DOGE Agents***

- **Gavin Kliger**
- **Joshua Fox**