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Schafer Outlines President's Ag 2009 Budget

Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer on Monday released details of President Bush's FY2009 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) budget.

"The President's agriculture budget supports his commitment to increase the competitiveness of agriculture, ensure the safety of the food supply and provide nutrition and housing assistance to those most in need," said Schafer. "This budget aims to enhance those programs with a proven track record for achieving results and reflects the President's goal to keep spending under control to reduce the deficit."

Total USDA expenditures are estimated at \$95 billion in FY2009, which is approximately the same level as FY2008. Roughly 76 percent of expenditures, or \$72 billion in 2009, will be for mandatory programs that provide services required by law, which include many of the nutrition assistance, commodity, export promotion and conservation programs.

USDA's discretionary programs account for the remaining 24 percent of expenditures, or \$23 billion in 2009. Discretionary programs include the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program; rural development loans and grants; research and education; soil and water conservation technical assistance; management of national forests; and domestic marketing assistance.

The President's 2009 budget is based on the provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill and reflects the administration's proposals for changes. Enactment of a Farm Bill will affect some of the estimates in the 2009 budget.