



Chairman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
**Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration
and Related Agencies**
Hearing: USDA Inspector General Oversight
Date: March 12, 2019

The Subcommittee will come to order.

Good afternoon.

I want to welcome everyone to today's hearing, especially our witnesses, Ms. Fong, Mr. Harden, and Ms. Coffey. Thank you for appearing before us again.

I have an abiding interest in your work and what you do. We must do everything that we can to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse, and mismanagement.

And we must do all we can to assure that all of the USDA programs over which this subcommittee has oversight are operated with the best possible efficiencies – in order to create the best possible outcome for those who use the agency.

I was particularly pleased to see your annual plan for fiscal year 2019 focuses on many of the concerns of this Subcommittee. From enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act, to food safety threats, to oversight of disaster assistance programs, we rely on you to conduct audits and investigations to ensure the programs we fund are run efficiently and that issues are addressed in a timely manner.

While I am glad you have an active oversight profile, I do have concerns about the number of recommendations that remain open, and the agencies' efforts to close them out. Based on your last Semiannual Report, there are recommendations pending final agency actions going back to 2005! We'd like to hear your thoughts on how to incentivize the agencies to act.

So today, I'd like to hear more about your plans to conduct adequate oversight of USDA programs as well as the challenges you face in ensuring agreed-upon recommendations are implemented.

In addition, I want to ensure that civil rights issues are getting thoughtful and appropriate attention throughout the USDA.

I look forward to discussing that with you as well as other important issues and thank you, again, to you and all OIG staff for all you do.