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SUBJECT: APHIS Needs to Establish Better Controls Over Information Systems

This is a synopsis of a Fast Report on the subject that we issued to the agency. Due to the sensitive nature of the information disclosed in that Fast Report, we are unable to provide public access or post the full version on the internet.

During audit fieldwork, we determined that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) implemented a database system in 2006 without ensuring that Federal information systems security requirements were met. Specifically, we found that APHIS' Information Technology Division (ITD) was not aware that another APHIS division implemented the database and could not ensure it met the Federal information systems security requirements for certification and accreditation (C&A).^{1,2} The database system contains sensitive and Personally Identifiable Information, as well as information obtained from other agencies and departments.

In response to our Fast Report, dated April 14, 2011, APHIS ITD officials stated they had already notified the Department of Agriculture's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) regarding the existence of the database system, and would work with the OCIO to complete the C&A process. APHIS also agreed to review all APHIS servers, using network scanning tools available, to develop a complete inventory of systems and identify any unauthorized systems, by

¹ *Federal Information Processing Standards Publication 200, Minimum Security Requirements for Federal Information and Information Systems*, dated March 2006.

² Certification is a comprehensive assessment of a system's security features and safeguards to establish whether it meets specified security requirements, and accreditation is the formal declaration by a designated accrediting authority that the system is approved to operate using a prescribed set of safeguards, Departmental Manual 3555-001, dated October 18, 2005.

April 30, 2011. APHIS' ITD will also direct the program units to report all servers and systems that have not been previously identified, by June 30, 2011.

This issue, along with any others identified, will be compiled into a final report at the conclusion of our audit.