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***Strategic Plan***  
***2024-2028***

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham  
State of New Mexico

Cabinet Secretary Jeff M. Witte  
New Mexico Department of Agriculture

New Mexico State University Board of Regents

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is produced by the Director/Secretary’s Office

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## VISION

NMDA benefits the public by promoting the viability, safety, resilience, and advancement of agriculture and affiliated industries while honoring the heritage and diversity of New Mexico agriculture.

## MISSION

NMDA promotes a fair marketplace, food protection, marketing, and economic development; supports the beneficial use and conservation of natural resources; and works cooperatively with the public and private sectors.



# FOREWORD



New Mexico's Department of Agriculture is woven into the fabric of our state, having been established as a priority by our constitutional framers in 1910. That constitution was approved by New Mexicans in 1911 and the state government in 1912, along with our statehood. This established a strong relationship between this statewide regulatory body and the state's land-grant higher education institution by giving oversight of this state-level department to the Board of Regents of what is now New Mexico State University (NMSU).

While this structure is not entirely unique among state agriculture departments, this uncommon approach emphasizes the importance of its collaboration with our state's premier agricultural research and outreach university. In this capacity, our Board of Regents serves as the state's board of agriculture; and we understand the pivotal role the agriculture industry plays in New Mexico's economy. We also understand how important the work of NMDA is to supporting and achieving the strategic goals of NMSU – particularly when it comes to our goal of amplifying outreach and extension.

NMDA is part of the everyday lives of all New Mexicans, ensuring the safety and quality of the agricultural products we consume – from the fuel in our vehicles to the foods we eat. As regents, we look forward to continuing our shared mission to serve the people of New Mexico and our agricultural community.

*Ammu Devasthali, Chair, NMSU's Board of Regents*



New Mexico agriculture is a dynamic and important component of our state economy and identity. To ensure the department of agriculture is focused on serving the needs of our unique agriculture and all citizens of New Mexico, we submit this iteration of our strategic plan for the next five years.

Through the input from external stakeholders and internal staff, this plan – with its mission, vision, goals, and objectives – provides the direction for all activities and programs for NMDA. Outreach and public education continue to be a theme for all aspects of agriculture. Strong and effective consumer protection programs also play a key role in the success of growing our agriculture economy as does domestic and international trade. An additional emphasis from stakeholders is the opportunities and challenges of climate-smart agriculture practices.

This plan will serve to guide NMDA as we endeavor to prepare New Mexico agriculture for the coming opportunities. We are an agency that touches every citizen in our state every day. We do not take that responsibility lightly, and we appreciate the opportunity.

Thank you for your support!

*Jeff M. Witte, Director/Secretary, NMDA*







## Strategic Plan Overview

In the fall of 2023, NMDA engaged a broad set of stakeholders to create its strategic plan for the next five years. This facilitated process involved internal participants from the ranks of NMDA's workforce as well as members from the agricultural community (farming, ranching, and food processing) and regulated industries with an emphasis on those most affected by NMDA's mandates and work in the state. The collective output from this group makes up the strategic plan before you.

NMDA's Strategic Plan for 2024-2028 includes four overarching Priority Areas with associated Goals and Objectives. The sections labeled "Key Indicators" appear throughout the plan to help you visualize what NMDA staff members do on a regular basis in order for the department to meet its service-oriented mission.

NMDA, a constitutive agency organized under the NMSU Board of Regents, also incorporates the NMSU Strategic Plan, LEADS 2025 into an operational approach. That plan consists of four goals, including "amplifying outreach and extension." As part of the university system, NMDA contributes to this goal by consistently providing a wide variety of services in communities across the state. NMDA also furthers NMSU's outreach and extension goal by maintaining a public presence on behalf of New Mexico agriculture.



## The History of New Mexico Department of Agriculture

*"There shall be a department of agriculture which shall be under the control of the board of regents of  
[New Mexico State University]..."*

*New Mexico Constitution, Article XV, Agriculture and Conservation,  
Section 1. [Department of agriculture]*

The original New Mexico Constitution, ratified in 1911 and the basis for statehood in 1912, created the state department of agriculture. In 1955 New Mexico State University's Board of Regents unified a number of regulatory services and the individuals responsible for administering them under a single administrative organization: the New Mexico Department of Agriculture.

Today NMDA is a producer-consumer service and regulatory department responsible for various statutes legislated since its inception. NMDA's mandate has changed over the years in response to growth in population, the needs of agribusiness, and technological advancements. NMDA remains committed to serving its constituents by periodically reviewing statutes and fee structures, as well as offering compliance assistance and education in an effort to maintain a safe and secure food supply, promote a fair marketplace, and secure our natural resources. We also remain committed to expanding value-added agriculture in local, state, national, and international markets.

Since 1978, the director of NMDA has served as the secretary of agriculture on the Governor's Cabinet. As such, the director/secretary is the official representative of New Mexico agriculture to state and federal government. NMDA's relationship with NMSU means the board of regents serves as the state board of agriculture, thus solidifying the importance of agriculture to both the university and the state.

NMDA has been directed by a short list of long-tenured leaders. Dallas Rierson was the first director of NMDA, having served from 1955 to 1971. Dr. William P. Stephens was appointed in 1972 and served until 1988. Frank A. DuBois was named in 1988 and retired from the post in 2003. Dr. I. Miley Gonzalez was appointed later that same year and served until his retirement in 2010. The NMSU Board of Regents appointed Jeff M. Witte in May 2011.





# Natural Resources Stewardship

## STRATEGIC GOAL

Promote agricultural resilience through responsible use, management, and conservation of natural resources.



## OBJECTIVES

- Through 2028 build local capacity for implementation of conservation.
- Through 2028 increase accessibility of state and federal conservation funding for producers and soil and water conservation districts.
- Through 2028 support agriculture in building climate resiliency.
- Through 2028 promote natural resource management under principles of multiple use and sustained yield across ownership boundaries.
- Through 2028 advocate for the needs of agriculture through policy analyses and collaborative processes.
- Through 2028 proactively seek collaborative solutions to wildlife impacts on natural resources and agricultural production.
- By 2028 maximize conservation impact of Land of Enchantment Legacy Funds allocated to NMDA.

## KEY INDICATORS

- Serve on boards, commissions, and task forces to support agricultural resilience as requested or required.
- Work with the state’s 47 soil and water districts in support of their activities.
- Implement the healthy soil program to help farmers, ranchers, and land managers to improve their soil health through grants, soil assessments, education, promotion, outreach, and research.
- Coordinate statewide efforts for noxious weed management through cooperative weed management areas and other strategic partnerships.
- Establish statewide noxious weed mapping and monitoring program.
- Track and review proposed federal actions and management decisions (e.g., endangered species, land-use planning, natural resource management) to ensure that decision makers rely on sound science and consider potential economic impacts.
- Support research and practices that boost agricultural resilience.
- Leverage state funding to capture federal funding for conservation projects and programs.





# Food and Feed Protection

## STRATEGIC GOAL

Ensure a safe and secure food supply.

## OBJECTIVES

- Through 2028 identify and provide resources for food protection, which includes food safety, food defense, and food security.
- By 2025 develop and maintain a strategy to evaluate the feasibility of advanced testing needs and increase testing capacity in all laboratories.
- Through 2028 provide laboratory support to public and private entities.
- By 2025 implement a multiyear training and exercise plan based on risk assessments to evaluate capability challenges.
- Through 2028 maintain a strong preparedness program via emergency planning, organizing, exercising, training, and evaluating.

## KEY INDICATORS

- Routine inspections of food and feed to reduce animal and human health incidents and protect food supply and security.
- Effective coordination of the response to all hazard events that impact agriculture.
- Number of trainings and exercise programs for public and private entities.
- Number of outreach and events concerning food and feed protection topics.
- Testing capacity for surveillance and diagnoses of livestock and companion animal diseases.
- Evidence of analyses of commodities, animal feed, and pet food to verify the integrity of ingredients, accuracy of label guarantees, and absence of contaminants or residue.
- Number of voluntary audits to verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored in a way to minimize risk of microbial food safety hazards.





# Regulatory Compliance and Consumer Protection

## STRATEGIC GOAL

Achieve regulatory compliance through cooperative relationships with industries, agencies, and the public to ensure consumer and environmental protection while supporting an equitable marketplace.

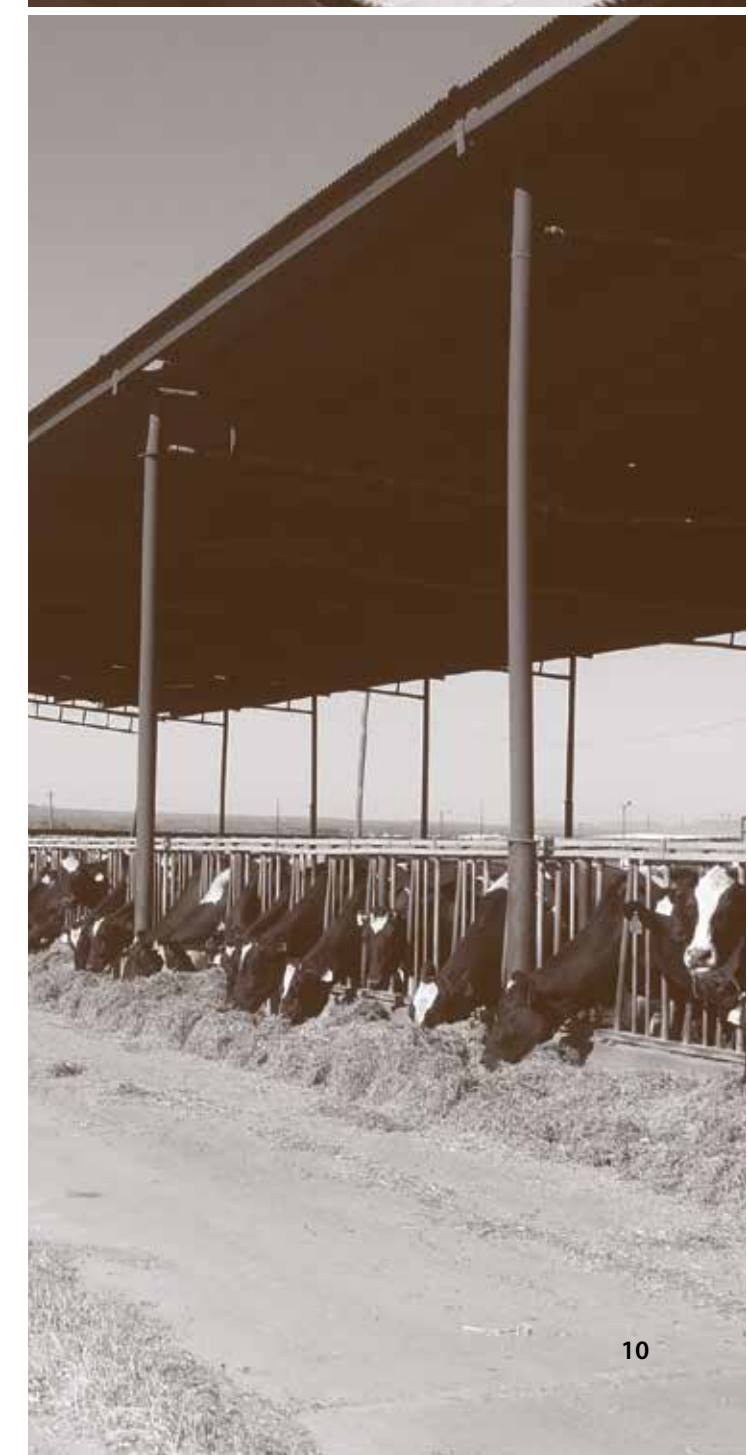


## OBJECTIVES

- Through 2028 maintain inspection and sampling efforts toward statutory obligations.
- Through 2028 provide consumer and industry protection through timely development and consistent administration of programs.
- Through 2028 maintain and expand stakeholder relationships for the purpose of supporting regulatory efforts through outreach and education.
- By 2028 develop media and outreach material to increase consumer awareness.
- Through 2028 the laboratories will continue to obtain and maintain required accreditations and quality systems in support of the regulatory program's calibration, inspection, sampling, and enforcement needs.

## KEY INDICATORS

- Routine and for-cause inspections to fulfill statutory obligations.
- Sample and analysis in support of inspection activities.
- Compliance assistance – maintain and develop stakeholder relationships.
- Ongoing review of programmatic processes and standard operating procedures.
- Consumer education through media and outreach materials and by participating and hosting events.
- Conduct commodity grading services.





# ***Marketplace and Economic Development***

## **STRATEGIC GOAL**

Expand domestic and global marketing opportunities and support affiliate industry groups that sustain agriculture through strategic advocacy, education, marketing, and economic development initiatives.



## **OBJECTIVES**

- By 2026 NMDA will implement a strategy for supporting agriculture economic development.
- By 2028 NMDA will continue to support year-round agricultural production and processing within New Mexico through value-chain coordination and create more value-added opportunities.
- By 2025 encourage and support research, technology, marketing, nutrition, safety, climate resilience, and sustainability.
- By 2025 gather and provide timely information with the potential to drive industry/stakeholder decisions to help shape policy and rural economic development.
- By 2025 promote the value of New Mexico agriculture with emphasis on targeted advocacy and outreach opportunities.
- Through 2028 continue support for the development and strengthening of strategic value chains for New Mexico agricultural products to help create sustainability.
- By 2028 expand trade opportunities and support communities that sustain agriculture through targeted and impactful marketing programs.

## **KEY INDICATORS**

- Number of producers, manufacturers, and supported agribusinesses.
- Number of active members in our logo programs.
- Number of promotional activities and events completed.
- Number of digital marketing impressions.
- Number of value-chain coordination and strategic partners supported.
- Amount of dollars funded and number of proposals and projects initiated.
- Number of unique advocacy and outreach initiatives.
- Dissemination of data and facts related to New Mexico agriculture.







## NMDA DIRECTOR'S OFFICE



## NMDA DIVISION'S



*Office of the Director/Secretary:* Provides overall leadership and establishes policy for the operation of the department; serves as liaison between agricultural producers and state and federal agencies.

*Budget and Support Services:* Reviews and administers budgeting, financial reporting, accounting systems, vehicles, inventory, purchasing, and building functions. Provides direct support to the department for sponsored programs in budgeting and accounting for grant and restricted-fund awards.

*Governmental and Legislative Affairs:* Acts as liaison among NMDA, legislative officials, and various agricultural/economic development organizations throughout the state. Tracks bills affecting NMDA and/or the agricultural industry during sessions of the New Mexico Legislature.

*Human Resources:* Manages all personnel matters and provides coordination for the functions associated with staffing, compensation, employee relations, training, and development.

*Industry and Agency Programs:* Coordinates interaction with agricultural and industry organizations, as well as state and federal government agencies, affiliated with department programs. Addresses emerging issues of importance to the agricultural industry in New Mexico.

*Information Technology and Communications:* Oversees all phases of information technology, including policies and procedures associated with computer applications. Provides application development, implementation, and support for personal computers, servers, and mobile devices.

*Public Affairs:* Gathers, produces, and provides information about NMDA and the state's agricultural industry to the public through traditional and social media, as well as outreach events.



*Agricultural and Environmental Services (AES)* includes the Pesticide Management Program, which administers pesticide-use laws through product review and registration; applicator competency testing and licensing; and inspections of licensed facilities for compliance with state and federal regulations. The Entomology and Nursery Industries Program conducts pest-detection surveys, enforces state and federal plant pest quarantines to prevent the establishment of new pests of economic concern; collaborates with federal and state agencies to facilitate the trade of live plants and products; licenses and inspects businesses engaged in the production or sale of live plants to ensure plant quality; and licenses and inspects hemp farms for compliance with state and federal laws.

*Agricultural Production Services (APS)* combines the department's human food and animal feed programs. Through a cooperative agreement with Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Produce Safety Program inspects produce farms for compliance with the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act's Produce Safety Rule. In cooperation with the Southwest Border Food Protection and Emergency Preparedness Center (The Center), APS also trains owners and operators to meet rule requirements. The Agricultural Biosecurity Program works closely with the Center to train first responders in, as well as to respond to, the food and agricultural component of emergency events. The program's quarterly "Food Safety Update" brings together local, state, and federal food safety officials to discuss current events as well as cultivate interdepartmental relationships. *The Dairy Program* inspects and permits dairy farms, dairy processing facilities, and milk sampler/haulers; monitors raw milk quality from all dairy farms and samples milk products from all dairy processing facilities to ensure they meet Pasteurized Milk Ordinance standards; and samples and analyzes various cheese products to ensure food safety. The Feed, Seed, and Fertilizer Program regulates the distribution of feed, seed, and fertilizer through product registration and inspections.



*Agricultural Programs and Resources (APR)* provides technical and administrative resources and planning assistance to soil and water conservation districts and the agricultural industry. APR monitors, investigates, analyzes, and disseminates information to shape policy decisions affecting the viability of agriculture and the sustainability of New Mexico's natural resources. APR administers the Healthy Soil Program to help farmers and ranchers improve their soil health through periodic assessment and on-the-ground projects, as well as related education efforts. APR also administers the Agricultural Workforce Development Act, which provides students with hands-on internships at farms, ranches, and other agribusinesses across the state. APR administers the Acequia and Community Ditch Fund to provide financial assistance for acequia and community ditch systems. This assistance helps develop hydrological studies, acquire technical and legal research, and other services necessary to conserve and protect water.

*Laboratories* supports other divisions of NMDA; each laboratory also offers its services to industry and the general public on a fee-for-service basis. The State Chemist Laboratory provides support to the APS and AES in the analyses of feed, fertilizer, and pesticides. The Metrology Laboratory provides calibration support for both weights and test measures to the Standards and Consumer Services Division. The Petroleum Laboratory provides petroleum sample analyses to the Standards and Consumer Services Division. The State Seed Laboratory provides various seed testing services to the APS and the AES divisions.

*Marketing and Development* works to identify new (and expand existing) domestic and international markets for New Mexico agricultural commodities, livestock, and processed foods; designs and implements promotions of local commodities such as green chile, onions, and pecans; develops the state's production of specialty crops; inspects produce for quality standards; reports market news and agricultural statistics; licenses produce brokers and packers; and provides USDA-backed organic inspection and certification to farmers, ranchers, and food processors.



*Standards and Consumer Services* includes the Consumer Services Program, which provides weighmaster licensing and inspection of weighing and measuring devices, packaged commodities, eggs, and dairy products. *Consumer Services* performs inspections and registrations in accordance with the New Mexico Chile Advertising Act and conducts Country of Origin Labeling inspections under United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service. *The Petroleum Standards Program* inspects petroleum measuring devices (i.e., fuel pumps) and the quality of the petroleum products (gasoline, diesel, etc.) they dispense.

*Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS)* is the state's only full-service veterinary diagnostic laboratory. VDS delivers the most accurate diagnostic results in a timely fashion. Working with veterinarians, livestock producers, pet owners, and regulatory agencies, VDS incorporates state-of-the-art instruments to provide precise answers. VDS functions under ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation, which certifies that VDS is able to produce precise, accurate test data. VDS is part of USDA's National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), which works to detect biological threats to the nation's food animals in order to protect animal and public health, as well as the U.S. food supply. NAHLN lists VDS as a Level 2 laboratory based on its high capability and capacity.

**“Agriculture is the  
foundation of any society;  
for without agriculture,  
life itself is not sustainable.  
We embrace this  
responsibility to keep it so.”**

***Jeff M. Witte,  
New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture***





## **NMDA CONTACTS**

New Mexico Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Director/Secretary  
MSC 3189, P.O. Box 30005  
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8005

Director/Secretary, 575-646-5063

Deputy Director, 575-646-5063

Agricultural Biosecurity, 575-646-7243

Budget and Support Services, 575-646-3007

Governmental and Legislative Affairs, 575-646-7002

Human Resources, 575-646-3702

Industry and Agency Programs, 575-646-8955

Public Affairs, 575-646-2804

Agricultural and Environmental Services, 575-646-2220

Entomology and Nursery Industries, 575-646-3207

Pesticide Management, 575-646-2134

Agricultural Production Services, 505-383-9299

1101 Camino de Salud, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102

Agricultural Biosecurity, 505-383-9299

Dairy, 505-841-9425

Feed, Seed, and Fertilizer, 575-646-3107

Produce Safety, 575-646-1809

Agricultural Programs and Resources, 575-646-2642

Laboratories, 575-646-1551

State Chemist Laboratory, 575-646-3318

State Seed Laboratory, 575-646-3407

Metrology Laboratory, 575-646-4759

Petroleum Laboratory, 575-646-6731

Marketing and Development, 575-646-4929

Peanut Grading Station, 575-356-8393

721 East Lime Street, Portales, NM 88130

Standards and Consumer Services, 575-646-1616

Consumer Services, 575-646-1616

Petroleum Standards, 575-646-1616

Veterinary Diagnostic Services, 505-383-9299

1101 Camino de Salud, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102



**AGRICULTURE**  
*is our Culture.*



# Board of Agriculture



Ammu Devasthali  
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Christopher Saucedo  
Vice Chair



Garrett Moseley  
Secretary/Treasurer,  
Student Regent



Dina Chacón-Reitzel  
Member

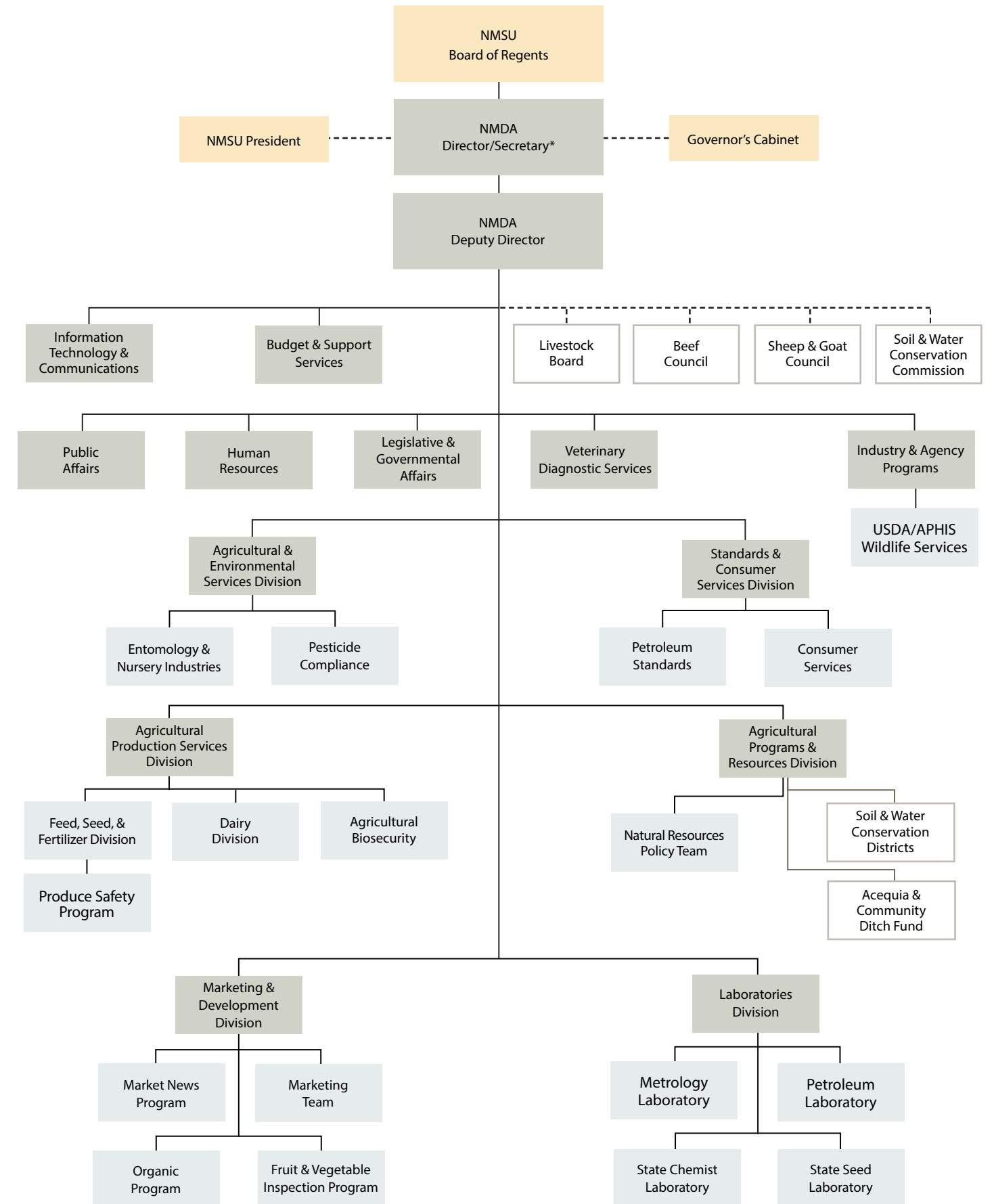


Debbie Romero  
Member

\* NMSU's Board of Regents also serves as the New Mexico Board of Agriculture

76-1-2. Powers and authority of board of regents. In addition to all other powers and authority that the board of regents of New Mexico state university may have in other areas, the board of regents of New Mexico state university, relative to the New Mexico department of agriculture, has power and authority to: A. administer and enforce all laws of this state over which the board of regents or its agents have been granted jurisdiction and authority; B. adopt rules of procedure for the adoption of regulations; C. adopt, and file in accordance with the State Rules Act [Chapter 14, Article 4 NMSA 1978], regulations as may be necessary to carry out its duties; D. administer or enforce, through the department of agriculture, all regulations adopted by the board of regents.

## NMDA Organizational Chart



\* The Director/Secretary is the only political/exempt appointee in the department (appointed by the NMSU Board of Regents)





# NMDA



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