# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# UnderSecretary for food safety, Department of agriculture

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry |
| Agency Mission | To provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition and related issues based on public policy, the best available science and effective management; to provide economic opportunity through innovation, helping rural America to thrive; to promote agriculture production that better nourishes Americans while also helping feed others throughout the world; and to preserve our nation’s natural resources through conservation, restored forests, improved watersheds and healthy private working lands. |
| Position Overview | The secretary shall delegate to the undersecretary for food safety those functions and duties under the department’s jurisdiction that are primarily related to food safety. |
| Compensation | Level III $165,300 (5 U.S.C. § 5314)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Deputy Secretary and Secretary[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | In fiscal 2016, the undersecretary for food safety received a budget authority of $1.025 billion.[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Assists the secretary in providing policy direction and leadership to ensure that the nation’s commercial supply of meat, poultry and egg products is safe, wholesome and properly labeled and packaged
* Chairs the U.S. Codex Steering Committees, which provide guidance on U.S. delegations to the Codex Alimentarius Commission[[4]](#endnote-4)
* Oversees the policies and programs of the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), which:
	+ Serves as USDA’s public health regulatory agency responsible for ensuring that the commercial supply of meat, poultry and processed egg products moving in interstate commerce or exported to other countries is safe, secure, wholesome and correctly labeled and packaged
	+ Aims to protect the public health by significantly reducing the prevalence of foodborne hazards associated with consumption of meat, poultry and egg products
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Master’s in a public health-related field
* Subject matter expertise on public health issues
* Extensive management experience
* Political experience, either for a legislative body or an executive branch (preferred)
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| Competencies | * Ability to build relationships with relevant stakeholders (essential)
* Ability to project an inspiring vision for the agency that all employees can easily grasp
* Strong communication and interpersonal skills
* Excellent leadership skills
* Ability to work under high pressure
* Excellent negotiation skills
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Brian Ronholm (2016 to 2017): Deputy Undersecretary for Food and Safety, Department of Agriculture; House of Representatives Agriculture Appropriations Associate; Policy Analyst, Akin Gump Strauss Haur and Feld Legislative [[5]](#endnote-5) |
| Elisabeth Hagen (2010 to 2013): Chief Medical Officer, Department of Agriculture; Director of Human Health Sciences, Department of Agriculture; Attending Physician of Infectious Disease in Virginia[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| Richard Allen Raymond (2005 to 2009): Director, [Nebraska](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nebraska) Department of Health and Human Services Regulation & Licensure; Chief Medical Officer, State of Nebraska; practiced medicine in rural Nebraska for 17 years[[7]](#endnote-7) |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-organization-chart.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.obpa.usda.gov/budsum/fy16budsum.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.linkedin.com/ [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. http://health.usnews.com/doctors/elisabeth-hagen-196163 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/18/AR2005111801305.html [↑](#endnote-ref-7)