# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# UnderSecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, 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 to help rural America to thrive; to promote agricultural 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 undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs assists the secretary in providing policy direction and leadership to facilitate domestic and international marketing of U.S. agricultural products, and ensures the health and welfare of animals and plants. Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) benefit consumers and producers of American agriculture by providing the basic infrastructure for making the American agricultural market more competitive. MRP agencies are also active participants in setting national and international standards. |
| 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 | The undersecretary directly oversees a staff of about seven to 10 MRP employees. The administrators of the three MRP agencies—the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)—report directly to the undersecretary. In fiscal 2016, the undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs managed a budget of $2.4 billion.[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Assists the secretary in providing policy direction and leadership to facilitate domestic and international marketing of U.S. agricultural products, and ensures the health and welfare of animals and plants
* Manages AMS, APHIS and GIPSA, the agencies that are active participants in setting national and international standards:
* Administers programs that facilitate the efficient and fair marketing of U.S. agricultural products, including food, fiber and specialty crops
* Improves agricultural productivity and competitiveness and contributes to the national economy and public health
* Facilitates the marketing of livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds and related agricultural products
* Promotes fair and competitive trading practices for the overall benefit of consumers and American agriculture[[4]](#endnote-4)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Extensive experience with production agriculture, given that the rules and regulations promulgated by this mission area directly affect the agricultural commodity markets
* Prior agency experience (beneficial)
* Master’s degree, or a bachelor’s degree paired with extensive experience in agriculture
* Familiarity with budgeting processes
* Knowledge of Spanish or Mandarin (a plus)
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| Competencies | * Strong communication and interpersonal skills
* Excellent leadership and delegation abilities
* Ability to form relationships with relevant stakeholders
* Media training and public-speaking skills
* Ability to work under high pressure
* Ability to handle sensitive matters
* Energy for frequent travel
* Excellent negotiation skills
* Ability to work in a matrixed agency
* Ability to work across party lines
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Edward M. Avalos (2009 to 2017): Director, Commodity Credit Corporation, Department of Agriculture, Barack Obama Administration; Marketing and Development Division Director, Agriculture Department, State of New Mexico; Marketing Director, Marketing and Promotion Division, Agriculture Department, State of Texas[[5]](#endnote-5) |
| Bruce I. Knight (2006 to 2009): Chief of Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA; Vice President of Public Policy, the National Corn Growers Association; Government Relations Representative, National Corn Growers Association[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| William T. Hawks (2001 to 2005): District I Representative; Mississippi House of Representatives; Managing Partner, Hawks Farming[[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. Leadership Directories: https://lo.bvdep.com/PeopleDocument.asp?PersonId=-1&LDIPeopleId=412796&Save=1 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.linkedin.com/in/bruce-knight-08442212/ [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.cals.msstate.edu/alumni/fellow.asp [↑](#endnote-ref-7)