

## **Caribbean Area NRCS: Proud to Celebrate USDA's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!**

**May 15, 2012 – San Juan, PR** – Today the staff of the Caribbean Area Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) joins our colleagues across the United States in celebrating the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 150 years of work on behalf of agriculture, rural America and people throughout the country and world.



*"The Caribbean has a rich and vibrant agricultural tradition,"* said NRCS Caribbean Area Director, Edwin Almodóvar. *"We are proud of our farmers, partners and the relationships we have built over these magnificent years."*

On May 15, 1862, in the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed an act of Congress into law establishing the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Two and one-half years later in what would be his final annual message to Congress, Lincoln called USDA "The People's Department." At that time, about half of all Americans lived on farms, compared with about 2 percent today. Since then, USDA has helped support the tremendous growth and success of American agriculture, drive economic growth, conserve natural resources, and build stronger communities and a stronger nation.

At today's Anniversary event held in Washington, DC, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack said: *"For 150 years, USDA has supported our nation's economic prosperity and touched the lives of generations of Americans. I'm proud of the USDA employees who carry out President Lincoln's legacy throughout the country and around the world, making USDA a truly 'Every Day, Every Way' department. Whether improving domestic and international access to food, promoting nutrition and safety of our food supply, conserving our natural resources, advancing agricultural exports, or developing the rural economy, USDA helps Americans to lead better lives."*

Please visit USDA's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary website at [www.usda.gov/USDA150](http://www.usda.gov/USDA150) to find out more about our history and the year-long celebration. You can also sign-up to receive historical USDA factoids and photos delivered right to your inbox. For more information on NRCS in the Caribbean Area, please visit [www.pr.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.pr.nrcs.usda.gov).

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