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Historical Agriculture Secretary Timeline

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Historical Agriculture Secretary Timeline



Mike Johanns

Mike Johanns was sworn in as the 28th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on January 21, 2005. Secretary Johanns' strong agricultural roots stretch back to his childhood. He was born in Iowa and grew up doing chores on his family's dairy farm. As the son of a dairy farmer, he developed a deep respect for the land and the people who work it. He still describes himself as "a farmer's son with an intense passion for agriculture." That passion has been evident during Johanns' tenure as Secretary of Agriculture. Days after he took office, he began working with U.S. trading partners to reopen their markets to U.S. beef. Nearly 119 countries had closed their markets after a single finding of a BSE-infected cow in the U.S. in 2003. Within his first year, Johanns convinced nearly half that number to reopen their markets.



Ann Veneman

Veneman was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate and sworn in as the 27th U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on January 20, 2001. A lawyer and daughter of peach farmers, Veneman served as California's agriculture secretary from 1995 to 1999. From 1991 to 1993, Veneman was Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. From 1989 to 1991, Veneman served as Deputy Undersecretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs. She joined the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service in 1986 and served as Associate Administrator until 1989. Veneman was actively involved in the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations, NAFTA, and the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement. Raised in Modesto, California, Veneman earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California at Davis, and a master's degree in public policy from the University of California at Berkeley, and a juris doctorate degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law.



Daniel Glickman

Glickman was sworn in as the 26th U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on March 30, 1995. Prior to his confirmation, Glickman served in the United States House of Representatives for 18 years where he represented Kansas' 4th Congressional District. Glickman brought to

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Cattle Feeding

Cattle Processing

Feeder Cattle

Stocker Cattle

Beef Retail

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Stocker Cattle Forum

Cattle Preconditioning

Cattle Marketing
Symposium

Cattle Identification Center

BVD Resources

Risk Management Center

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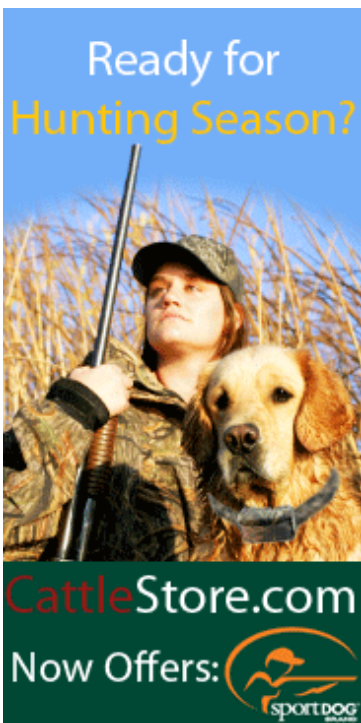
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the Cabinet post experience as a member of the House Agriculture Committee, including six years as chairman of the Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and its predecessor, the Subcommittee on Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains. He contributed to the Farm Bills of 1977, 1981, 1985 and 1990. Prior to being elected to Congress in 1976, Glickman served as President of the Wichita, Kansas, School Board; was a partner in the law firm of Sargent, Klenda and Glickman; and served as a trial attorney for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Glickman received his B.A. in history from the University of Michigan and his law degree from the George Washington University. He served until January 19, 2001.



Michael Espy

Born in Yazoo, Mississippi, on November 30, 1953, Espy graduated from Howard University in 1975 and received a law degree from Santa Clara Law School, California, in 1978. Then, he joined the Central Mississippi Legal Services as managing attorney. From 1980 to 1984, he served as assistant secretary for public lands in Mississippi. In 1984 and 1985, he was assistant attorney general for consumer protection in Mississippi. Espy was first elected to Congress in 1986 and served on the Agriculture and Budget Committees. Within these committees, he served on several task forces, including the Natural Resources' Community and Economic Development, the Lower Mississippi Delta Caucus, and the Select Committee on Hunger's Domestic Hunger Task Force. Espy was appointed Secretary of Agriculture on January 22, 1993, and is the first person of African American descent to hold the office. He served until December 31, 1994.



Edward Madigan

Born in Lincoln, Illinois, on January 13, 1936, he graduated from Lincoln College in Illinois in 1956. Between 1955 to 1973, he owned and operated the Yellow Lincoln Cab Company. From 1966 to 1972, he was a member of the Illinois House of Representatives. In 1972, he was elected to the U.S. Congress where he served on the Energy and Commerce Committees. He served as the ranking Republican on the Agricultural Committee from 1983 to 1991. In 1986, Madigan was chosen as Chief Deputy Whip of the Republican Party. Madigan was appointed as the Secretary of Agriculture and assumed office on March 12, 1991. Madigan died December 7, 1994.



Clayton Yeutter

Born in Eustis, Nebraska, December 10, 1930, he earned his B.S. in animal husbandry from the University of Nebraska in 1952, and served in the Air Force for five years. He earned his law degree in 1963, and in 1966, his Ph.D. in agricultural economics, from the University of Nebraska. Yeutter started his career in agriculture as a farmer and a cattle feeder in 1957. From 1960 to 1966 he served on the staff of the University of Nebraska. From 1966 to 1968 he was a member of the Nebraska governor's staff. In 1968 and 1970, he headed the University of Nebraska's mission to Colombia. In 1970 and 1971, he was the USDA Administrator for Consumer and Marketing Service and, on January 24, 1973, he became Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Consumer Services. On March 13, 1974 he was appointed Assistant Secretary for International Affairs and Commodity Programs and remained in that position until June 19, 1975. Between 1975-1977 he served as deputy special trade representative. From 1977 to 1978 Yeutter was a senior partner in the Nebraska law firm of Nelson, Harding, Yeutter, & Leonard. In 1978 he became president of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. In July 1985 President Reagan appointed Yeutter U.S. Trade Representative. On February 16, 1989, Yeutter was sworn in as the Secretary of Agriculture, serving until March 1, 1991. Yeutter later served as Chairman of the Republican National Committee.



Richard Lyng

Born in San Francisco on June 29, 1918. He graduated from Notre Dame University in 1940. He was president of the Ed J. Lyng Company, a family seed and bean production and processing firm from 1949 to 1967. In 1967, he was appointed the chief deputy director of the California State Department of Agriculture. From March 3, 1969, to January 23, 1973, Lyng was the USDA Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Consumer Services. From 1973 to 1979, he served as President of the American Meat Institute. From February 5, 1981, until January 18, 1985, he served as USDA Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. In 1985 Lyng along with William Lesher formed Lyng and Lesher Inc., an agricultural consulting firm in Washington D.C. On February 22, 1986, he was appointed Secretary of Agriculture, serving until January 20, 1989.



John Block

Born on February 15, 1935, in Gilson, Illinois. In 1957, he graduated from West Point, and served three years in the Army. In 1960, he returned to his family farm during which it expanded from 312 to 3000 acres. In 1977, he was appointed Secretary of Agriculture for the State of Illinois. From January 23, 1981 to February 14, 1986 he served as Secretary of Agriculture. After leaving USDA, Block became the president of the National - American Wholesale Grocers' Association based in Washington D.C.



Robert Bergland

Bergland was born in Roseau, Minnesota, on July 22, 1938. He studied agriculture at the University of Minnesota in a two year program. Bergland owns a 600 acre farm in Minnesota. He worked in USDA for Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (1963 - 1968). In 1970, he was elected to his first of four terms in Congress as a representative from Minnesota. In Congress he served on the House Committee on Agriculture's subcommittees for Conservation and Credit, and Livestock, Grains, Dairy, and Poultry. He served as Secretary of Agriculture from January 23, 1977, to January 20, 1981.



John Knebel

Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on October 4, 1936. A West Point graduate, he received his Master's at Creighton University, and his LLB at American University (1965). In 1969, he became the Assistant Counsel for the Committee on Agriculture in the House of Representatives. From 1973 to 1975, Knebel was the General Counsel for USDA, after which he briefly returned to his law practice. On December 19, 1975, he was chosen as Under Secretary; the following year (November 4, 1976), he became the Secretary of Agriculture and served until January 20, 1977. Then, he again returned to practicing law, with Brownstein, Zesdman, Shomev, and Chase. He is the president of the American Mining Congress.



Earl Butz

Born in Albion, Indiana, on July 3, 1909. He earned his bachelor's (1932) and doctorate (1937) degrees at Purdue University. He taught there for several years and was head of the Agricultural Economics Department. In 1943 he was a research economist for the Brookings

Institute. From 1954 to 1957, he was Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Foreign Agriculture in USDA. He returned to Purdue to become Dean of Continuing Education and Vice President of Purdue's Research Foundation. On December 2, 1971 he was appointed Secretary of Agriculture and served until October 4, 1976, then returned to Purdue.



Clifford Hardin

Born on October 9, 1915, near Kingstown, Indiana. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Agriculture in 1937, his masters in Agricultural Economics (1937), and his Ph.D. (1941) - all from Purdue. He later taught agricultural economics at the University of Wisconsin, and in 1944 he moved to Michigan State. In 1947 Hardin began to work with a number of overseas projects, including postwar food in Colombia and Japan. In 1954, Hardin became the Chancellor of the University of Nebraska. On January 21, 1969, Hardin left the post at Nebraska to become the Secretary of Agriculture and served until November 17, 1971. In 1971 he joined the Purina Corporation.



Orville Freeman

Born on May 9, 1918, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1940, then received his law degree there in 1946 after serving as a Marine officer in World War II. Freeman practiced law in Minneapolis and participated in Minneapolis municipal affairs. He was elected Governor of Minnesota in 1954 and served three terms. In 1961, he was chosen by President Kennedy as Secretary of Agriculture. He served as Secretary from January 21, 1961, until January 20, 1969, at which time he joined EDP Technology International, Inc., as president. In 1981, he became chairman of the board of the Business International Corporation. Today, Freeman is a law partner in the firm of Popham, Schnobrich, Kaufman and Dotz.



Ezra Benson

Born August 4, 1899, at Whitney, Franklin County, Idaho. He attended Utah State Agricultural College and graduated from Brigham Young University. He received a Master of Science in agricultural economics from Iowa State College, then took additional graduate work at the University of California. He was a farmer, teacher, missionary, agricultural extension worker in Idaho, and served as director of the Farm Foundation. He was active in cooperative organizations, and served as executive secretary of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. He was a member of the Council of Twelve, for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, at the time he was appointed Secretary of Agriculture. He was Secretary from January 21, 1953, to January 20, 1961. Benson died on May 30, 1994, after serving as leader of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



Charles Brannan

Born in Denver, Colorado, on August 23, 1903. He attended Regis College and graduated from the University of Denver Law School. He was part-owner of a ranch in Colorado. In 1935, Brannan joined the Resettlement Administration as an attorney and later served in the Farm Security Administration. On June 21, 1944, he became Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, then Secretary of Agriculture on June 2, 1948. He remained in office until January 20, 1953. After 1953, he was engaged in private law practice and served as general counsel for the National Farmers Union. Brannan died on July 2, 1992 from a heart ailment.



Clinton Anderson

Born on October 23, 1895, in Centerville, Turner County, South Dakota. He received his education at Dakota Wesleyan University and the University of Michigan, and later moved to New Mexico. He was an insurance executive, newspaperman and editor, and operated two farms. He was a president of Rotary International. He served as a member of the House of Representatives from January 3, 1941, to June 30, 1945. Anderson was Secretary of Agriculture from June 30, 1945, to May 10, 1948. On January 3, 1949, he was sworn in as a U.S. Senator from New Mexico.



Claude Wickard

Born in Carroll County, Indiana, on February 28, 1893. He graduated from Purdue University, specializing in animal husbandry, and returned to farming. He was selected as a Master Farmer in 1927. He was a member of the Indiana State Senate. During the 1930's he worked in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. On March 1, 1940, he became Under Secretary, and on September 5, of the same year, was appointed Secretary of Agriculture. On June 29, 1945, he was appointed Administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration, holding the position until 1953. Then, he returned to farming until his death.



Henry Wallace

Born near Orient, Iowa, on October 7, 1888. He graduated from Iowa State College. He then went to work on the family paper, Wallace's Farmer, and on developing hybrid corn. When his father became Secretary of Agriculture, he inherited the editing of the paper. He was Secretary of the Agriculture from March 4, 1933, until September 4, 1940. After serving as Vice President of the United States, he became Secretary of Commerce. Wallace was a candidate for the Presidency in 1948 on the Progressive ticket. After an unsuccessful bid for the White House, he retired to his farm in New York. There, he conducted genetics research. Wallace died on November 18, 1965.



Arthur Hyde

Born in Princeton, Missouri, on July 12, 1877. He graduated from the University of Michigan and the law school of the State University of Iowa. He was a lawyer, businessman, and insurance executive. He was elected Governor of Missouri in 1920. Hyde served as Secretary of Agriculture from March 6, 1929, to March 4, 1933. He returned to private law practice in Trenton, Missouri, and died October 17, 1947.



William Jardine

Born in Malad Valley, Oneida County, Idaho, on January 16, 1879. He graduated from Utah State Agricultural College and took graduate courses at the University of Illinois. He taught at Utah State Agricultural College and Kansas State Agricultural College. He became dean of agriculture, director of the agricultural experiment station, and finally president of Kansas State Agricultural College. He served as Secretary of Agriculture from March 5 1925, until March 4, 1929. Jardine was later United States Minister to Egypt and president of the University of Wichita, Kansas. Jardine died on January 17, 1955.



Howard Gore

Born October 12, 1877, in Clarksburg, West Virginia. He received the degree of bachelor of arts in agriculture from the University of West Virginia. He directed the operation of several farms in West Virginia and became known as a breeder of fine cattle and hogs. He worked in the Bureau of Animal Industry and the Packers and Stockyards Administration. He was appointed as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture on September 17, 1923. He became Acting Secretary when Henry C. Wallace died, October 25, 1924. Gore was designated as Secretary of Agriculture on November 22, 1924, remaining in the position until March 4, 1925, when he became Governor of West Virginia. Later he was Commissioner of Agriculture for West Virginia and was director of several banks in the State. He returned to the Federal service and worked in the Farm Security Administration. Gore died on June 20, 1947.



Henry Wallace

Born in Rock Island, Illinois, on May 11, 1866, and grew up on the family farm in Iowa. He graduated from Iowa State College with the degree of bachelor of science in agriculture. Later he taught dairying there. He became interested in agricultural journalism and joined the staff of the family paper which was to be called Wallaces' Farmer. He became its editor in 1916 when his father died. Henry C. Wallace became Secretary of Agriculture on March 5, 1921, and served until his death in office on October 25, 1924.



Edwin Meredith

Born on December 23, 1876, Avoca, Polk County, in Iowa. After studying at Highland Park College in Des Moines, he became an agricultural journalist. He founded Successful Farming and Better Homes and Gardens. He participated in Iowa politics and served in various business and governmental positions. Meredith was Secretary of Agriculture from February 2, 1920, to March 4, 1921. He then resumed his career in journalism. Meredith died on June 17, 1928.



David Houston

Born in Monroe, Union County, North Carolina, on February 17, 1866. He received the degree of bachelor of arts from the College of South Carolina and remained for a year of graduate study. He continued his graduate study at Harvard University and received a master of arts in political science. He taught political science at the University of Texas and became dean of the faculty. He was president of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas and the University of Texas, and chancellor of Washington University at St. Louis. Houston served as Secretary of Agriculture from March 6, 1913, to February 2, 1920, when he became Secretary of the Treasury. Later he was president of Bell Telephone Securities Co., and a vice president of American Telephone & Telegraph Co. For a number of years he was president of Mutual Life Insurance Co., of New York. Houston died on September 2, 1940.



James Wilson

Born on August 16, 1835, in Ayrshire, Scotland. He attended Iowa (now Grinnell) College. He engaged in farming, devoting special attention to livestock feeding, and raising purebred animals. He was elected to Iowa House of Representatives and became its speaker. This prepared Wilson for membership in the United States House of Representatives, 1873-77 and 1883-85. He taught at Iowa Agricultural College and was director of the

experiment station. Wilson was Secretary of Agriculture from March 6, 1897, to March 5, 1913, the longest term of any Cabinet member and the only one to serve under three Presidents. He wrote for various farm journals and was editor of the Agricultural Digest. Wilson died August 26, 1920.



Julius Morton

Born in Adams, Jefferson County, New York, on April 22, 1832. After attending the University of Michigan, he moved to Nebraska Territory. For a number of years he edited the Nebraska City News and farmed a quarter-section adjacent to Nebraska City. He served as a member of the Territorial legislature, as Territorial secretary, and as Acting Governor. He was repeatedly a candidate for Governor and Senator. He was Secretary of Agriculture from March 7, 1893 to March 5, 1897.



Jeremiah Rusk

Born in Malta, Morgan County, Ohio, on June 17, 1830. In addition to farming, he held local and State positions and engaged in several business undertakings. He served in the Wisconsin State Assembly, was a member of the United States House of Representatives, 1871-77, and had three terms as Governor of Wisconsin. He was Secretary of Agriculture from March 6, 1889, to March 6, 1893. Rusk died on November 21, 1893.



Norman Coleman

Born near Richfield Springs, New York, on May 16, 1827. He received a law degree from the University of Louisville and moved to Indiana to practice. Later he was elected to the Missouri State Legislature and became Lieutenant Governor of the State. In 1865, he founded Coleman's Rural World. He was active in State, regional, and national agricultural organizations. He became Commissioner of Agriculture on April 3, 1885, and served as the first Secretary of the Department of Agriculture from February 15, 1889 to March 6, 1889. Coleman died November 3, 1911.

Source: USDA.gov

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