

## **USDA congratulates DHS for timely Food Support processing**

Recognizing the increasing demand for Food Support, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently congratulated DHS for the state's timely processing of applications. Since 2005, the USDA has monitored all states on processing time performance. Minnesota has consistently ranked near the top with more than 90 percent of applications processed within 30 days.

In its letter to Commissioner Cal Ludeman, the USDA stated: "Minnesota staff are to be commended for the exemplary performance during the last four reporting periods. We are aware of the challenges the state has been facing with rising caseloads and budget cuts, and the decision the state has had to make to ensure applications are processed in a timely manner."

The average number of Food Support recipients has risen from 266,100 in 2007 to 280,000 in 2008 to 315,500 in 2009. During the last four reporting periods, July 2008 to September 2009, referenced in the letter, staff processed 95 percent or more Food Support applications in 30 days or fewer.

"There has been a phenomenal increase in demand for Food Support in the last few years," said Children and Family Services Assistant Commissioner Chuck Johnson. "Minnesota's 87 counties with the support of DHS staff deserve much praise for rising to the challenge and processing so many applications quickly to help Minnesotans get help when they are struggling and need it most."