

The Role of Auditors at the Office of Inspector General

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ANGELA: Hello, I'm Angela Eng with the Department of Agriculture's Office of Inspector General. I'm here with Brett Siefers, Assistant Director to the Office of Audit. He's been kind enough to join us today and tell us a little bit about the role of audit and the Office of Inspector General. First, the role of inspector general is to prevent fraud waste, and abuse. Can you tell me what that means in the context of the Department of Agriculture?

BRETT: I think what we do for the USDA as the Inspector General is very critical for Americans across the country. We go into many situations where we are auditing various programs that the Department has and doing our best to make sure those programs are delivered without the misuse of funds and that the funds that have been appropriated by Congress are going to the people who need it most.

ANGELA: How did you become an auditor with USDA OIG?

BRETT: I was actually recruited in my senior year at the college that I went to in Western Maryland called Frostburg State University. I was very fortunate to have folks from the Office of Audit come up to the campus, interview me, and then I was offered a position as an auditor with the Office of Inspector General.

ANGELA: How does your work affect the average American citizen?

BRETT: One thing I can think of immediately is at the grocery store. I think people often associate the Department of Agriculture with helping farmers, but the USDA also inspects most of the raw meat and poultry products that we consume every day and I've done a lot of work to make sure that those food products are safe.

ANGELA: What is the most meaningful audit that you've ever worked on?

BRETT: The one I'm most proud of is the one where we went to slaughterhouses all over the country, making sure that cattle used for food were not adulterated with mad cow disease. We had a large team on a nationwide audit that went into plants to make sure that the USDA had proper safeguards in place to prevent contaminated beef from ending up in the grocery store.

ANGELA: For new graduates thinking of enjoying the IG community, what can they look forward to?

BRETT: Well, Angela, I would say that joining the IG community is going to provide folks a level of satisfaction that's unsurpassed from anything else they can do—whether in the private sector, or across the federal government. I really think that this job is an opportunity for auditors to positively impact the American people to improve the lives of everyone across the country and make sure that USDA programs are being delivered as best they can.

ANGELA: Thanks so much for joining us today and telling us about your work. For more information about the Department of Agriculture's Office of Inspector General, please visit us at www.usda.gov/oig, or find us on Twitter at OIG USDA.