



STATE-TRIBAL COLLABORATION ACT
2025 AGENCY REPORT

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STATE-TRIBAL COLLABORATION ACT 2025 AGENCY REPORT

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) looks forward to continuing to work with its tribal partners through formal service solicitations and increased outreach efforts.

II. AGENCY OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

A. Mission Statement

NMDA promotes a fair marketplace, food protection, marketing, and economic development; supports the beneficial use and conservation of natural resources; and works cooperatively with the public and private sectors.

B. Agency Overview

New Mexico's food and agriculture industry continues to be an economic driver across the state and is one of the most diverse in the nation. As such, NMDA is responsible for various laws, regulations, and programs that protect the consumer, enhance food safety, and provide unique and creative marketing programs to assist New Mexico's producers and processors (Table 1). NMDA operates under the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Board of Regents and serves on the NMSU President's Cabinet, Vice President's Council, and Administrative Council.

The Director of NMDA also serves as the Secretary of Agriculture on the Governor's Cabinet. The Director/Secretary is the agriculture industry's official representative to the state and federal government. This unique role as a Cabinet-level agency and member of the NMSU community allows NMDA to combine regulatory functions with research and extension initiatives with colleges across the university.

For transparency and accountability to its constituents, NMDA uses performance-based budgeting within the NMSU system and publishes a biennial report posted on the NMDA website: www.nmdeptag.nmsu.edu. NMDA advocates for and promotes New Mexico's agricultural industries through approaches that use the latest science, technology, and economic strategies. NMDA collaborates with over fifty-five state and national boards, commissions, and organizations by providing technical assistance, finalizing marketing and promotion assistance, and providing regulatory oversight and service.

C. Additional Tribal Collaboration/Consultation Policy

None

III. DIVISIONS & PROGRAMS THAT COLLABORATE WITH NPTs

Table 1. NMDA's division/industry programs and their primary areas of responsibility

DIVISION/PROGRAMS	PRIMARY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY
Agricultural and Environmental Services (AES) Division	Provide nursery plant inspections, permits, licensing, invasive plant pest surveys, plant pest eradication, and consumer protection services related to pesticides, exports of raw agricultural products, THC compliance in hemp, and plant pests.
Agricultural Programs and Resources (APR) Division	Provide analytical services to stakeholders regarding state and federal environmental regulations and natural resource issues. Assist soil and water conservation districts. Administer natural resources-related grant programs.
Agricultural and Production Services (APS) Division	Provide inspections, licenses, and consumer protection services related to dairy, feed, seed, fertilizer, and produce. Advise and administer programs related to agricultural biosecurity.
Laboratory Division	Provide analysis services related to petroleum, metrology, feed, seed, fertilizer, and pesticides.
Marketing and Development (MD) Division	Develop national and international marketing programs for state agricultural businesses, the organic certification program, and fruit and vegetable inspections.
Standards and Consumer Services (SCS) Division	Provide inspections, licenses, registers, and consumer protection services related to weights and measures, petroleum, and other consumer items.
Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS) Division	Provide diagnostic services related to livestock, domestic animals, and wildlife.
Industry and Agency Programs	Provide liaison services between agricultural industries and state agencies.
Legislative and Governmental Affairs	Provide support for agricultural-related legislation.

IV. AGENCY EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT POLICY (11-18-4.C (1)(3))

- A. This past year, NMDA continued the outreach initiative between NMDA and all New Mexico tribes, pueblos, and nations. The Tribal Liaison actively participated in Tribal

Liaison meetings coordinated by the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD).

- B. NMDA provided tribes and pueblos with contact information linking them to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) disaster assistance and recovery programs.
- C. The Director/Secretary and Government Affairs Manager participated in the annual tribal summit, which allowed us to interact with our tribal partners while providing education on the services and opportunities available through NMDA.
- D. NMDA's AES Division continued to address tribal members' questions regarding pesticide-related testing, certification, and licensing procedures with the EPA, upon request.
- E. NMDA's MD division maintains a longstanding relationship with Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI), continually working with their leadership to develop new markets and enhance existing ones. This past year, the division continued efforts to collaborate with NAPI staff to develop their international and domestic marketing programs. We also funded and supported multiple grants supporting locally produced and processed foods from New Mexico Pueblos and Tribes. The Department and affiliated industry groups have used the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque for food and agricultural events/meetings.
- F. NMDA's SCS Division conducted inspections at the request of Tribal governments, supporting consumer protection and ensuring equity.
- G. NMDA's SCS Division achieved a Memorandum of Agreement with the Pueblo of Zuni, which enabled staff to perform livestock scale and retail device inspections, benefiting local ranchers, retailers, and consumers.
- H. NMDA's VDS Division has a longstanding working relationship with veterinarians serving our tribal partners' animal population. VDS continues to collaborate with numerous tribal entities to diagnose diseases that affect livestock, pets, and wildlife.
- I. In fiscal year 2025 (FY25), NMDA's APR Division implemented the first year of agency funding from New Mexico's Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund (LOE fund). NMDA has two grant programs supported by the LOE Fund open to pueblos, tribes and nations as eligible applicants: the Healthy Soil Program and Noxious Weeds Management Program. In FY25, NMDA awarded Santa Clara Pueblo a noxious weeds management grant to implement the Pueblo's Invasive Plant Species Management Plan.

To improve outreach accessibility, APR staff attended various tribal events around the state to offer information about NMDA's programs via formal presentations and tabling with written materials. In FY25, these events included:

- Pueblo of Santa Clara Farm Day (July 11, 2024): Tabling for NMDA's Healthy Soil Program and Agricultural Workforce Development Program.
- Indian Affairs Department Bi-Weekly Tribal Leader Call (July 16, 2024): Sharing information about NMDA grant opportunities.
- Intertribal Agriculture Council's Southwest Regional Summit (September 24–25), 2024: Presenting information on NMDA's noxious weed program.
- New Mexico Recycling Coalition and Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Inc.'s Sustainable Food & Tribal Recycling Training, Pueblo of Santa Ana

(September 25, 2024): Staff presented a PowerPoint about the Healthy Soil Program. The event was co-hosted by the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Inc., whose membership includes the pueblos of San Idelfonso, Pojoaque, Ohkay Owingeh, Nambe, Santa Clara, Tesuque, Picuris, and Taos.

- American Indian Day at New Mexico Legislature (February 7, 2025): Tabling for NMDA's Healthy Soil Program.

V. CURRENT AND PLANNED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR NATIVE COMMUNITIES (11-18-4.C (5))

NMDA will continue outreach to ensure collaboration and access to NMDA programs and resources.

Agricultural Programs and Resources Division

Pueblo: Santa Clara Pueblo
Interaction: NMDA awarded Santa Clara Pueblo noxious weeds management grant funding to implement the Pueblo's Invasive Plant Species Management Plan.
Type: Grant Funding
Contact: Penny Hudson and Daniel Denipah, Santa Clara Pueblo
Date: September 3, 2024-June 30, 2025 (Grant Period)

Pueblo: Statewide Outreach
Interaction: NMDA APR Staff conducted program outreach at tribal events throughout the state, including Pueblo of Santa Clara Farm Day, Indian Affairs Department Bi-Weekly Tribal Leader Call, Intertribal Agriculture Council's Southwest Regional Summit, New Mexico Recycling Coalition and Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Inc.'s Sustainable Food & Tribal Recycling Training, and American Indian Day at the New Mexico Legislature.
Type: Virtual and In-Person
Date: Ongoing throughout 2025-2026

Marketing and Development Division

Pueblo: Jemez Pueblo, Isleta Pueblo, and Zuni Pueblo
Interaction: Center of Southwest Culture, Inc. staff and NMDA-MD staff met regarding their USDA AMS Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) grant project, food safety efforts, and more
Type: E-mail, Phone, In-Person
Contact: Emma Dewey, Arturo Sandoval, Michael Venticinque, Noemi Davilla, Kateri Zuni, Jose Castro, Tiana Suazo, and Talal Saint-Lot, Center of Southwest Culture, Inc.
Date: Ongoing throughout 2024-2025

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
Interaction: Mr. Nevins and NMDA-MD staff met regarding their proposed 2025 SCBGP project and the wrap-up of their previously funded project.
Type: E-mail, Zoom, In-Person
Contact: Raphael Nevins, Healthy Futures Inc.
Date: Ongoing throughout 2024-2025

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
Interaction: Ms. John and the NMDA Fruits and Vegetables (F&V) supervisor met with Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI). Staff assisted in correctly scoring the “Sprouts” and “Enlarged Lenticels” defects.
Type: Virtual
Contact: Dineh John
Date: Ongoing throughout 2024-2025

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
Interaction: Ms. John and the NMDA F&V supervisor met with NAPI. An unofficial potato grading course was discussed. As potato harvest time approaches, NMDA F&V staff will set a date for an unofficial training, tentatively scheduled for September/October 2025.
Type: Virtual
Contact: Dineh John
Date: May 2025

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
Interaction: NMDA MD staff met with NAPI regarding export/trade opportunities through the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA). Provided technical market servicing for commodities, specifically potatoes and pinto beans. “Get Your Fix” promotional materials were supplied to NAPI to market fresh green chile.
Type: Virtual and In-Person
Contact: Vincent Cowboy and Rae Degroat, Tania Johnson, NAPI
Date: Ongoing throughout 2024-2025

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
Interaction: Mary Ben and NMDA MD staff met regarding their SCBGP project progress and invoicing. NMDA’s contract advertising firm filmed Bidii Baby Foods for an upcoming TV campaign. NMDA staff coordinated these efforts with Mary and Zachariah Ben.
Type: Virtual
Contact: Mary Ben and Zachariah Ben, Bidii Baby Foods
Date: Ongoing throughout 2024-2025

Pueblo: ALL
Interaction: Mr. Stimmel, Ms. Restivo, and NMDA MD staff met regarding their proposed

USDA AMS Resilient Foods Systems Infrastructure Program (RFSI) project.
 Type: Virtual, Phone, and In-Person
 Contact: Mr. William Stimmel and Ms. Norma Restivo, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
 Date: Ongoing throughout 2024-2025

Pueblo: ALL
 Interaction: Through a perspective Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) project, NMDA MD staff worked with multiple grant project partners and supporters including “Native Farmer and Rancher Program” American Indian Business Enterprise Center (AIBE)/Arrowhead Center at New Mexico State University, and the Native American Agriculture Fund that is helping to mentor and train Native American Farmers to create value-added products for improved profitability on their farms.

Type: Virtual, Phone, and In-Person
 Contact: Ms. Rachael Ryan of Backyard Farms
 Date: Ongoing throughout 2024-2025

Pueblo: Santa Clara
 Interaction: NMDA-MD staff attended the Santa Clara Pueblo Farm Day and set up a booth for Logo Program outreach and awareness

Type: In-Person
 Contact: Charlene Carr, Southern Pueblo Extension Agriculture/4H Agent
 Date: 7/11/2024

Pueblo: ALL
 Interaction: NMDA-MD staff, in coordination with Arrowhead Center and the Native American Agricultural Fund, presented the New Mexico GWT/TTT Logo Program to Native American farmers and ranchers.

Type: Zoom Meeting
 Contact: Hashem Aliedah, Graduate Assistant, Arrowhead Center, and Rachael Ryan, Backyard Farms
 Date: 8/28/2024

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
 Interaction: NMDA-MD staff processed the Logo Program membership for Flavors of the Hogan and continues to provide regular updates about program benefits and NMDA/WUSATA opportunities, including meeting with James and Joyce Skeet at the 2025 Inaugural NM Local Food Summit.

Type: In-person and email
 Contact: James and Joyce Skeet
 Date: 9/5/2024, 5/28/2025 - Ongoing

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
 Interaction: NMDA-MD staff met Chef Liz McKenzie with Prickly Foods LLC at AgriFuture 2024, introduced her to the Logo Program and processed Prickly Foods LLC Logo Program membership. Chef McKenzie was a panelist/speaker at AgriFuture for value-added food processing in New Mexico. Staff continue to provide regular updates about program benefits and NMDA/WUSATA opportunities. Staff also

visited their booth at the Rail Yards Market ABQ and supplied them with Logo Program promotional items.

Type: In-person, phone and email
Contact: Chef Liz McKenzie and Will Thompson
Date: 10/15/2024, 6/15/2025- Ongoing

Pueblo: Laguna Pueblo and Red Lake Chippewa Heritage
Interaction: NMDA-MD staff met Michael Ray, Director of the American Indian Program at NMSU, at NMSU Day at the Capitol. The Logo Program was introduced and explained. Mr. Ray asked for and received more information to share with those who might benefit from the program.

Type: In-person and email
Contact: Michael Ray
Date: 1/31/2025

Pueblo: San Felipe
Interaction: NMDA-MD staff met P. LaShon Sandoval Cate with Just Peachy Biscochitos LLC at the SW Chocolate & Coffee Fest. Ms. Sandoval Cate was informed about the Logo Program, and her subsequent application is being processed.

Type: In-person, phone, and email
Contact: P. LaShon Sandoval Cate
Date: 4/5/2025 - Ongoing

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
Type: RJs Legacy Farm
Interaction: Staff conducted a Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Site Visit and provided information about the Logo Program.

Type: In-person, phone and email
Contact: Betsy Yazzie, Chili Yazzie
Date: 4/15/2025

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
Interaction: NMDA-MD staff conducted an LFPA Site Visit to Tyler Farm and C&T Farm and provided information about the Logo Program.

Type: In-person, phone and email
Contact: Thomas and Joanne Tyler
Date: 4/15/2025

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
Interaction: Staff visited Bidi Baby Foods, toured their farm, and provided updates on the Logo Program and promotional materials.

Type: In-person, phone and email
Contact: Zachariah and Mary Ben
Date: 4/15/2025- Ongoing

Tribe/Nation: Navajo
Interaction: Staff conducted an LFPA Site Visit to Navajo Agricultural Products Industries (NAPI), participated in a farm tour (including the NAPI Region 2 Store), provided Logo Program updates and promotional materials, and informed Ms. Johnson and Mr. Cowboy of upcoming international trade opportunities.

Type: In-person
Contact: Tania K. Johnson, Dave Zeller, Roselyn Yazzie, and Vincent Cowboy
Date: 4/16/2025- Ongoing

Tribe/Nation: Navajo

Interaction: Staff contacted Mr. Vince Cowboy with NAPI regarding dry bean sales opportunities through a New Mexico-based Indian importer/distributor.

Type: Phone
Contact: Vincent Cowboy
Date: 5/26/2025

Tribe/Nation: Navajo

Interaction: Staff visited with NAPI CEO Dave Zeller about a venture capital investment group's interest in building an organic fertilizer manufacturing plant in the state. NAPI fits the investment group's criteria regarding the concentration of organic agriculture acreage.

Type: Phone
Contact: Dave Zeller
Date: 06/17/2025

Pueblo: San Felipe

Interaction: Staff invited Mr. Bryce Townsend to meet the USDA Secretary of Agriculture during her visit to New Mexico for the Western Governors' Conference in Santa Fe. Mr. Townsend participated in the farm visits and met with Secretary Brooke Rollins.

Type: Phone and In-person
Contact: Bryce Townsend
Date: 6/20/2025

Veterinary Diagnostic Services Division

Pueblo: ALL

Interaction: NMDA's VDS Division provided services for 337 cases for our tribal partners this past year.

Type: Laboratory
Contact: Dr. Kelly Upshaw, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Date: Throughout 2024-2025

Standards and Consumer Services Division

Pueblo: Zuni

Interaction: Memorandum of Agreement was achieved, which enabled NMDA's SCS staff to perform livestock scale and retail device inspections, benefiting local ranchers, retailers, and consumers. The Memorandum also allowed for the inspection of retail fuel pumps for accuracy to support farmers in the marketplace.

Type: Weights and Measures
Date: August 2023 (agreement), June 2025 (inspection)

Pueblo: Santa Ana

Interaction: Inspected a vineyard scale for the Pueblo of Santa Ana, which supports consumer protection and ensures equity.

Type: In-Person

Date: June 2025

Pueblo: Laguna

Interaction: Livestock scale inspection for the cattle association

Type: In Person

Date: July 2024

Tribe/Nation: Ramah, Navajo Nation

Interaction: Retail fuel pumps were inspected for accuracy to ensure fairness in the marketplace for both buyers and sellers.

Type: In Person

Date: June 2025

Table 2. General tribal support and related statistics

PUEBLO/TRIBE/NATION	SUPPORT TYPE	NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES	NMDA PROGRAM AREA
Santa Ana	Weights and Measures	1 Inspection	SCS
Zuni	Weights and Measures	1 Inspection	SCS
Laguna	Weights and Measures	1 Inspection	SCS
Navajo Nation, Ramah	Weights and Measures	1 Inspection	SCS
Navajo Nation	Diagnostic Testing	337 Specimens	VDS
Total Tribal Support		341	

Table 1. General tribal support and related statistics

PUEBLO/TRIBE/NATION	NUMBER OF CONTACTS	NMDA PROGRAM AREA
Isleta	4	MD
Jemez	2	MD
Laguna	1	MD
Navajo Nation	15	MD
San Felipe	2	MD
Santa Ana	1	SCS
Santa Clara	1	APR
Zuni	1	SCS

Zuni	4	MD
Laguna	1	SCS
Navajo Nation, Ramah	1	SCS
All NM Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations	337	VDS
Total Tribal Contact	370	

VI. FY TOP ACCOMPLISHMENTS RELATED TO NPTs

1) The NMDA's Marketing & Development Division engaged with New Mexico tribes to support agricultural growth and economic development. Key activities included:

- Facilitating export and trade opportunities through the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA).
- Supporting local and regional marketing and promotion efforts through the Grown with Tradition® and Taste the Tradition® buy local logo programs.
- Facilitating access to federal and state grant programs and programs connected to the New Mexico Food Initiative (i.e., Regional Farm to Foodbank).
- Providing technical services for agricultural commodity grading, focusing on potatoes.

2) AES had no interaction with NPTs in FY24/25

3) APR had no tribal grantees for the Healthy Soil Program in FY 24/25

VII. FUTURE FY GOALS/OBJECTIVES RELATED TO NPTs

- The AES Division will continue to address tribal members' questions regarding pesticide-related testing, certification, and licensing procedures with the EPA upon request.
- The APR Division will improve outreach and partnerships with tribes, nations and pueblos for NMDA's Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund programs, specifically the Healthy Soil Project and the Noxious Weeds Management Program.
- NMDA's VDS Division will continue to provide veterinary diagnostic services to our tribal partners and participate in Lay Vaccinator Training, if asked.

VIII. TRAINING AND EMPLOYEE NOTIFICATION (11-18-4 (4)(6))

All NMDA upper management and other employees who communicate regularly with Indian nations, tribes, or pueblos actively participate in cultural training when available.

NMDA's tribal liaison and other NMDA staff regularly attend scheduled Tribal Liaison meetings with IAD.

NMDA notifies employees of the State Tribal Collaborations Act provisions and policy as an ongoing agenda item during its monthly leadership meetings. We also email employees regarding IAD/State Personnel Office training opportunities.

IX. KEY NAMES AND CONTACT INFORMATION (11-18-4.C (2))

Jeff M. Witte, Director/Secretary
Les Owen, Deputy Director

Brad Lewis, Division Director, Agricultural and Environmental Services
Max Henkels, Division Director, Agricultural and Program Resources
Dustin Cox, Division Director, Agricultural Production Services
Jason New, Division Director, Marketing and Development
Roxanne Chepsongol, Division Director, Standards and Consumer Services
Tim Darden, Division Director, Laboratory Division
Dustin Cox, Acting Division Director, Veterinary Diagnostic Services
Candie Sweetser, Government Affairs Manager/Tribal Liaison

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