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## JOHANNIS, PAWAR DISCUSS TRADE ISSUES AND ANNOUNCE THIRD MEETING OF U.S.-INDIA KNOWLEDGE INITIATIVE BOARD

WASHINGTON, June 7, 2006—Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns and Indian Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar met today to discuss bilateral trade issues and areas of cooperation and progress in the ongoing partnership of the U.S.-India Agricultural Knowledge Initiative (AKI).

"India and the United States share a strong commitment to democratic principles," said Johanns. "Strengthening our partnership will benefit the economic, strategic and agricultural interests of both our countries for many years to come, as India assumes an increasingly important leadership role across Asia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

"I am confident that the Agricultural Knowledge Initiative will contribute tremendously to launching the second green revolution in our country," said Pawar. "Our objective is to bring about a transformation in our rural economy by making agriculture a sustainable and profitable venture, especially for our rainfed, arid and dryland areas."

During their visit, Johanns and Minister Pawar also spoke to members of the U.S.-India Agricultural Knowledge Initiative board at their third meeting. Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, winner of the Nobel Prize for leading the Green Revolution of the 1960s and honorary advisor for the board, also addressed the board regarding the continuing importance of sustainable agricultural practices to maintain a secure food supply. He emphasized the crucial role biotechnology will play in ensuring food security, and was pleased that the Board had identified it as one of the four priority areas.

The board announced the selection of 12 Fellows for the Borlaug Fellowships, and stated that 12 Cochran Fellows would be selected by the end of 2006. Two biotechnology workshops and a joint workshop on water management were also slated for the next three months. These would identify joint research programs and collaborations in these areas. The National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges will be inviting proposals from American universities to partner with Indian agricultural universities for specific projects.

The U.S.-India Agricultural Knowledge Initiative, which was created in November 2005 to revitalize agricultural collaboration between the two countries, focuses on university capacity building, food processing and marketing, biotechnology and water management. The Board will achieve its initiative goals by raising agricultural productivity through technology transfer, including biotechnology; expanding U.S.-India trade and investment by policy and regulatory capacity building; ensuring a key role for the Indian and U.S. private sectors; and re-invigorating the U.S.-India university-to-university partnerships.

The Board is made up of 16 members taken from academia, government and the private sector. Board co-chairs are A. Ellen Terpstra, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, and Dr. Mangala Rai, Secretary of India's Department of Agricultural Research and Education and Director General of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research.

For more information about the Initiative, contact the FAS International Cooperation and Development program area at (202) 690-0776.

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