

Tom Vilsack Bio

As president and CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC), Tom Vilsack provides strategic leadership and oversight of USDEC's global promotional and research activities, regulatory affairs and trade policy initiatives. This includes working with industry leaders to develop a long-term vision for growth and consumer trust in U.S. dairy.

Vilsack joined USDEC in January 2017 after serving eight years as the Nation's 30th Secretary of Agriculture. As leader of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Vilsack worked hard to strengthen the American agricultural economy, build vibrant rural communities and create new markets for the tremendous innovation of rural America. In eight years at the Department, Vilsack fought to put Americans back to work and create an economy built to last. Under his leadership, USDA supported America's farmers, ranchers and growers who are driving the rural economy forward, provided food assistance to millions of Americans, carried out record conservation efforts, made record investments in our rural communities and helped provide a safe, sufficient and nutritious food supply for the American people.

Vilsack was the longest-serving member of President Obama's original Cabinet. Prior to his appointment, he served two terms as the Governor of Iowa, in the Iowa State Senate and as the mayor of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Vilsack received his bachelor's degree from Hamilton College and his law degree from Albany Law School in New York. He is also the recipient of 10 honorary doctorate degrees. Vilsack has been honored for his public service and work to advance American agriculture by various organizations. Most notably, the Borlaug Medallion from the World Food Prize Foundation, The Gene White Lifetime Achievement Award from Global Child Nutrition Foundation, the Congressional Hunger Center Leadership Award, and by the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition for his commitment to international development.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Vilsack was born into an orphanage and adopted in 1951. After graduating from law school, Vilsack moved to Mt. Pleasant Iowa, his wife Christie's hometown, where he practiced law for 25 years. Vilsack remains currently licensed to practice law in Iowa. The Vilsacks have two adult sons and two daughters-in-law—Doug, married to Janet; and Jess, married to Kate. They also have four grandchildren: Jake, Ella, Caroline and Cassin.