



HR Broadcast

NEW FEATURE ON THE WEB

The Human Resources Division has put together what we hope you'll find to be a useful tool in helping you manage and respond to actions, activities and information related to a variety of HR-related functional areas. For example, what type of personnel actions do I need to remember to initiate each month?, when does the annual reminder on "use or lose" annual leave come out?, when are those financial disclosures reports due? The HR Calendar provides you with this and lots more information! The Calendar will be kept up-to-date as information changes and will be available on our website for easy access by all our customers. We hope you will find this helpful!!

Be sure and check the calendar for the months of April, May, and June!!!

Coming in the July Issue:

- ❖ **Processing Helpful Hints**
- ❖ **Performance awards/QSI's**
- ❖ **And much more**

Performance Management Updates

Performance Management Web Page and Plan Library

What do Critical elements, alignment, strategic goals and performance appraisals have in common? Do you know how you are going to align your employee's performance plans to the goals and objectives of your agency? Check out our revamped [Performance Management Page](#). This reference page is broken into 3 sections:

- **Performance Management System Directives & Guides**
- **Performance Alignment/Measurement References**
- **Sample Performance Plan Library.**

There, you will find practical answers and guidance to all of your questions concerning performance management. One of the most recent additions, the [Sample Performance Plan Library](#), contains a collection of updated performance plans for various positions within MRP.

Performance Management Training now Online!!!

We now offer an on-line performance management training course titled: "Writing Multi- Level Performance Plans" via [AgLearn](#). This course is intended to educate MRP supervisors, managers, and employees on alignment of performance standards and for APHIS, the new 4-level performance appraisal program. The online training course does not have to be completed in one sitting, but can be completed in multiple sessions at your convenience.

The course contains two modules:

- **Module 1 - Overview of Performance Management**
- **Module 2 - Developing Performance Plans.**

The first module introduces the concept of performance management as a process that involves Agency employees in improving organizational effectiveness towards the accomplishment of Agency mission and goals. The module also discusses performance plans, which are the documents that describe performance expectations.

The second module presents an eight-step process for developing employee performance plans that are aligned with and support organizational goals. Each step of the process is discussed in detail. At the end of each step, an exercise is included that allows students to create their own performance plans.

How to access the Training via AgLearn

From the [AgLearn](#) main page:

1. Click on the "Catalog" tab
2. Under the "Subject Area Menu" select "Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service"
3. Under the "Items" menu scroll down and select "Writing Multi-Level Performance Plans."

For AgLearn assistance, please contact the AgLearn Administrator for your respective program.

*Remember: The requirement is **100%** of employees have at least one element that is aligned with organizational goals, focuses on results, and has credible measures – **by June 30, 2006!**

ELECTRONIC TRANSFER ACCOUNTS (ETA)

All USDA employees are required to receive government payments, including salary payments, via some form of electronic funds payment. To assist recipients of Federal funds who do not have, or may not qualify for, a checking or savings account, the U.S. Department of the Treasury created the Electronic Transfer Account (ETA). ETAs allow for receipt of Federal payment through an electronic mechanism and can be opened at participating Federally-insured banks, savings and loan institutions, or credit unions.

Once an ETA is open, the employee is enrolled in Direct Deposit. With Direct Deposit, the Government will deposit payments automatically into the ETA. Only the employee will have access to the ETA and the payment will be safely housed until the employee needs to use it. Employees do not need to withdraw the money all at once. They can withdraw enough to cover expenses and the remainder of the money remains in the ETA until the employee uses it.

Anyone wanting more information on ETAs can access the following web address www.eta-find.gov/ETAfactsPage2.cfm

The National Finance Center (NFC) is still working on reprogramming issues related to the annual pay adjustment for employees on retained pay. No implementation date or pay period has been given by NFC. These adjustments, when made, will be retroactive to January 8, 2006.

Additional Improvements to PEARS

As part of its continuing efforts to improve processes, systems and products, the Human Resources Division has taken additional steps to further refine the applicant assessment and referral process through the [Prospective Employee Application Rating System](#) (PEARS). These refinements include improvements to job analysis development procedures as well as the weighting options available for the multiple choice/multiple answer (MAMC) questions.

The two improvements, which are outlined below, will provide selecting officials and subject matter experts with increased opportunity to influence the landscape of the selection certificate. In addition, they will help ensure a clear correlation between the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the position and the knowledge, skills and abilities possessed by the best qualified applicants.

1. As selecting officials are aware, it is critical for subject matter experts to be engaged in the development of job analyses to draw relevant and accurate relationships between the position description and the questions selected for use in the vacancy announcement. To ensure that those relationships are identified, subject matter experts are asked to briefly describe the major job duties associated with their desired KSA/competency groupings. To this end, Human Resources has amended the job analysis table housed within the individual question libraries to include a column entitled “major duties.” (Please refer to the sample job analysis table below.) Completion of the “major duties” column will help to ensure a direct correlation between the applicable position description and representative KSAs/competencies associated with that position.

<i>Representative KSA/Competency</i>	<i>Importance/ % time</i>	<i>Major Duties</i>	<i>Q's from KSA/C subset</i>
1. General veterinary skills and accomplishments	Importance: H % of time: 30	•Establishes and implements broad statewide poultry disease and eradication policies and programs in addition to advising on the formulation, organization, and implementation of national and international poultry disease programs.	1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 15
2. Communication skills – interpersonal, verbal, and written	Importance: H % of time: 25	•Creates and maintains good working relationships with State officials, poultry industry officials, university faculty, and other public and private organizations for acceptance in meeting established program goals and results.	18, 21, 23
3. Ability to prioritize work, meet deadlines, lead others, and manage programs	Importance: M % of time: 15	•Provides direction and guidance to laboratory support programs and personnel concerning poultry health issues.	32, 33
4. Ability to diagnose and treat abnormal animal, livestock, bird, and poultry conditions and contagious diseases	Importance: H % of time: 30	•Provides authoritative veterinary medical expertise on the uniform and accurate application of national standards for the detection, diagnosis and disposition of health problems of poultry.	41, 59, 60

2. The second change involves the weighting options for the multiple choice/multiple answer questions. They have been changed to include a *Very High* (VH) and *Not Applicable* (NA) option next to each answer choice. The addition of the VH and NA levels will provide the selecting official with additional flexibility in terms of discerning the relative value of an applicant's answer choice thereby further differentiating the well-qualified from the qualified.

Please feel free to contact your servicing HR Specialist for further information regarding PEARS

Q: What if I want to change or update my answers to the vacancy questions?

A: You may change or update your answers to the vacancy questions as long as the announcement remains open. After an announcement closes, which is midnight EST/EDT on the closing date, it is not possible to alter your responses.

If, however, the announcement is still open you can change your responses through the PEARS website <https://jobs.quickhire.com/scripts/aphis.exe> . There are two ways to access the answers you have completed.

1. If you have already submitted your application, (you clicked on the "Finished" button at the end of the application process), you may change the answers previously submitted by logging in and selecting the "View my application status" option. This will show a list of vacancies to which you have applied. Scroll down to the application on which you want to update your answers and click on the "View" button next to the announcement number. (Reminder: if the position is closed, no "View" button will appear.) Clicking on the "View" button will take you to the vacancy announcement, where you will scroll to the bottom of the announcement and click on the "Apply to this Vacancy" button. This option will reveal all of your previously completed answers. Make all the changes you like, and be certain to click on "Save" and/or "Finished" once you have completed your changes.
2. If you have not completed the application process, (you have not clicked on the "Finished" button at the end of the application process) you may access your previously completed answers by accessing the full vacancy announcement either through USA Jobs or the PEARS website. Once you have logged in to the PEARS website and have arrived at the full vacancy announcement, scroll to the bottom and select "Apply to this Vacancy." This will direct you to your previously completed answers. Make your changes, and click on "Save" and/or "Finished" to save them. Be certain to click on the "Finished" button at the end of the questions or your application will not be submitted, and you will not receive consideration for the position.



If you have additional questions about any of the information above, or other questions related to applying through PEARS, contact your staffing service provider.



Position designations drive the level of background investigations of

positions for federal appointments and contractors. *Personnel Security Bulletin #06-04: Position Designation Advisory* provides direction and advice for managers, contracting officer representatives (CORs), and HR specialists responsible for these designations. To make certain appropriate background investigations are carried out, managers and supervisors must work with the HR Specialists in Classification and/or CORs to make sure employee and contractor positions have proper position designations. *Personnel Security Bulletin #06-04* and other relevant personnel security information can be found at: <http://www.usda.gov/da/pdsd/bulletins.htm>

ID Badge Requests through use of AD-1197 form - Effective March 6,

2006, the AD-1197 form for Personal Identity Verification (PIV) Request for USDA Credentials was revised by USDA as the official form to determine eligibility for the issuance of USDA Identification (I.D.) Badges. Inasmuch as the information continues to be used to identity proof and register applicants as part of the Personal Identity Verification process it now serves as the official ID Badge Request form. The revised form and instructions for use are found at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/forms/adforms.html> as well as on the MRPBS, HR's New Employee Orientation and Personnel Security web links. Further information including a login to the USDA HSPD-12 Training Site can be found at: <http://hspd12.usda.gov/>



ON THE HORIZON - Electronic Processing of National Agency Checks with Inquiries (SF-85 NACIs)

In recent months the MRPBS HR Personnel Security Office joined USDA's Personnel and Document Security Division (PDSO) in fully implementing OPM's e-Government initiative, "Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing" e-QIP, for all public trust and national security investigation requests (SF-85P and SF-86, respectively).

On the horizon is the final phase of the e-QIP implementation which involves the SF-85 electronic processing of NACIs. Over the next several months the Personnel Security Office, together with PDSO and OPM, will begin working with AMS, APHIS, and GIPSA program offices to transition the SF-85 NACI submissions through e-QIP. e-QIP allows applicants to electronically enter, update, and transmit their personal investigative data over a secure Internet connection to the HR Personnel Security Office for review and approval.

New Specific Timelines & Requirements Set for e-QIP

Submissions – Background Investigation requirements under the Department's Personnel Security Bulletin #06-05 advises agencies of timeliness in submitting documents under e-QIP procedures. Most important is the Department will begin rejecting background investigations when the authorization signatures on the forms are older than 30 days, required attachments/forms are not included, or incomplete packets are forwarded for processing. Employees and program offices are being tasked to pay particular attention to these new time requirements. In particular the Personnel Security Office is required to submit to OPM all supporting documentation within **14 calendar days** of employee's completion and submission of the on-line e-QIP questionnaire.

