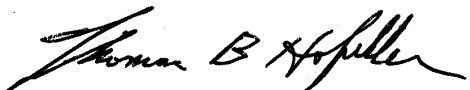


For: FAS and RMA Employees

**61st Annual Secretary’s Honor Awards Program**

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

The Secretary’s Honor Award is the most prestigious Departmental award presented by the Secretary of Agriculture. The categories for 2008 reflect the goals of the USDA Strategic Plan for FY’s 2005 through 2010. The USDA Strategic Plan focuses on the Department’s major programmatic goals and objectives along with other management initiatives. In addition to the categories that reflect the goals of the USDA Strategic Plan, there is an award category for heroism and emergency response recognizing USDA employees who perform acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty.

This year, the Honor Awards include a new category that focuses on management initiatives that support sustainable practices for energy efficiency. The definition of and criteria for this new category, titled, “Strengthening Federal Environment, Energy, and Transportation Management”, are included on AD-495.

**B Purpose**

This notice informs all FAS and RMA offices of the opportunity to submit AD-495’s for the 61st Secretary’s Honor Awards Program. All AD-495’s **must** be submitted by 5 p.m. e.t. on **Monday, June 16, 2008.**

**C Equal Opportunity/Workforce Diversity Policy**

In keeping with the Secretary’s initiative to promote equal opportunity in employment and programs, agencies are encouraged to consider AD-495’s from **all** segments of the workforce. **All** nominees are eligible for the same level of recognition.

It is the Department’s policy and practice to prohibit discrimination against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, national origin, or sexual orientation.

<p><b>Disposal Date</b></p> <p>August 1, 2008</p>	<p><b>Distribution</b></p> <p>All FAS and RMA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices</p>
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## 2 Criteria

### A Nominations

Each Under/Assistant Secretary may submit a maximum of 4 nominations. Group nominations should be limited to a maximum of 35 employees. It is important to include only individuals who have **significantly** contributed to the group's accomplishments.

### B Nominations Allocation

The Under Secretary's office has requested the following to be forwarded to his office for consideration:

- **RMA - 1 primary and 2 alternate nominations**
- **FAS - 1 primary and 2 alternate nominations.**

### C Categories

Award categories and descriptions can be found at <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/usdasp.htm>. Individual strategic goals are found as follows:

- Enhancing International Competitiveness of American Agriculture at <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-03.pdf>
- Enhancing the Competitiveness and Sustainability of Rural Farm Economies at <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-04.pdf>
- Supporting Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Quality of Life in Rural America at <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-05.pdf>
- Enhancing Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply at <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-06.pdf>
- Improving the Nation's Nutrition and Health at <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-06.pdf>
- Protecting and Enhancing the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment at <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-08.pdf>
- Supporting the President's Management Agenda and Civil Rights at <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-09.pdf>
- Heroism and Emergency Response description on AD-495
- Strengthening Federal Environment, Energy, and Transportation Management description on AD-495.

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### 2 Criteria (Continued)

#### C Categories (Continued)

Offices should review highly successful programs and management improvements to identify potential nominees for awards. Consideration should also be given to nominating those who have earned recognition through receiving an Administrator's Award, outstanding performance ratings, promotions, cash awards, or special awards within or outside USDA.

#### D Evaluation Period

Contributions **must** have been made, or the results realized, within the **past 3 years**. Heroic acts should have occurred within the **past year**.

#### E Eligibility

Employees at **all** grade levels and private citizens are eligible to receive these awards.

### 3 Nominations

#### A Completing AD-495

Each nomination packet will consist of a completed AD-495 and photographs. AD-495 is available at [http://www.ocio.usda.gov/forms/ocio\\_forms.html](http://www.ocio.usda.gov/forms/ocio_forms.html).

**Note:** Read and comply with the instructions on AD-495, page 1.

#### B Nomination Content (Narrative)

All nominations **must** clearly describe:

- the significance of the contribution being recognized
- how the quality of performance substantially exceeds normal job expectations
- the measurable or nonmeasurable benefits achieved, or both.

Nominations shall contain adequate background information to establish the context and scope of each nominee's contribution.

**Note:** Every word **must** be spelled out throughout the narrative. Do **not** use acronyms or abbreviations.

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### 3 Nominations (Continued)

#### C Photographs

Photographs of individuals or groups are **required**. AD-495 lists photographic requirements for both digital and traditional photos.

**Note:** Scanned photographs are **not** acceptable.

#### D Submitting Nomination Packets

Submit nomination packets to Stephanie S. Brown, HRD, Employee Program Branch by either of the following:

- e-mail to **stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov**
- FAX to 202-205-9140.

Nomination packets **must** be received by HRD by **5 p.m. e.t. on June 16, 2008**.

### 4 Reviewing Committee

#### A Committee

HRD will establish committees within RMA and FAS to review their nomination packets.

#### B Committee Members

Committee members shall:

- review all the nominations from their agency based on AD-495 and category description criteria
- select nominations to be forwarded for the Under Secretary's endorsement for the 61st Secretary's Honor Award.

### 5 Contact Information

#### A Contact

If there are questions or additional information is needed, contact Stephanie S. Brown by either of the following:

- e-mail to **stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-401-0694.