

FFAS
HANDBOOK

Employee Recognition Program

For All FAS, FSA,
and RMA Offices

SHORT REFERENCE

7-PM
(Revision 7)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

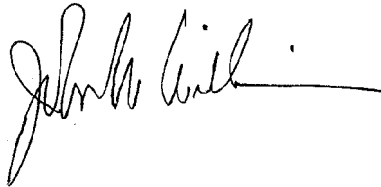
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

**Employee Recognition Program
7-PM (Revision 7)**

Amendment 1

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



Amendment Transmittal

A

**Reason for
Revision**

7-PM has been revised to include the current Employee Recognition Programs of FAS, FSA, and RMA.

B

**Obsolete
Material**

The following directives are obsolete:

- 7-PM (Rev. 6)
 - 3 FASR 45
 - 3 FASR 53
 - FCIC 4451 (M4-P2-C 451)
 - FCIC 4531 (M4-P2-C 531-SC1).
-

Table of Contents

Page No.

Part 1 Basic Provisions

1	Overview	1-1
2	Authority and Coverage	1-2
3	Program and Handbook Responsibilities and Related Handbooks	1-3
4-19	(Reserved)	

Part 2 Employee Recognition Program Responsibilities

20	FSA, FAS, and RMA Administrators' Responsibilities	2-1
21	HRD Responsibilities	2-3
22	ERPM's Responsibilities	2-4
23	Field Office Responsibilities	2-6
24	Employee Recognition Committees	2-8
25	Supervisor's and Employee's Responsibilities	2-9
26-29	(Reserved)	

Part 3 Employee Suggestion Program

30	Overview	3-1
31	Employee Suggestion Program Responsibilities and Procedures	3-5
32	Adoption of Employee Suggestion	3-11
33	Nonadoption of Employee Suggestion	3-12

Exhibits

1	Reports, Forms, Abbreviations and Redelegations of Authority
2	Definitions of Terms Used in This Handbook
3	(Reserved)
4	FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program
5	FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program
6	RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program
7	(Reserved)
8	Eligibility for Awards

Part 1 Basic Provisions

1 Overview

**A
Handbook
Purpose and
Organization**

This handbook prescribes the FAS, FSA, and RMA Employee Recognition Program policies, principles, and procedures.

Parts 1 through 3 provide the policies, principles, and procedures that are common to all 3 agencies.

Exhibits 4 through 6 provide the policies, principles, and procedures that are specific to each agency:

- FAS, reissued each year (Exhibit 4)
- FSA (Exhibit 5)
- RMA, reissued each year (Exhibit 6).

Where exclusive representation exists, bargaining may be requested to the extent allowed by applicable statutes. Where contract language already addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

**B
Objective**

Employee Recognition Programs in FFAS are established for the purpose of improving FFAS operations and recognizing employees through the medium of monetary, nonmonetary, and honorary recognition.

Recognition under this program is designed to:

- motivate employees to participate in increasing productivity and improving Government operations and services
 - recognize employees individually for their adopted suggestions, superior accomplishments, or other personal efforts that contributed to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement in FFAS operations
 - recognize and reward employees individually or in groups who perform special acts or services in the public interest in connection with, or related to, their employment in FFAS.
-

2 Authority and Coverage

A

Sources of Authority

The following contain the regulatory basis for administering the FFAS Employee Recognition Programs:

- 5 U.S.C. 45
 - 5 U.S.C. 53
 - 5 CFR Part 451
 - 5 CFR Part 531
 - Departmental guidelines, including AD-1097, "The Guide for Employee Recognition"
 - other provisions of law and executive orders.
-

B

Coverage

See Exhibit 8 for a table showing who is eligible for what awards.

- FAS, FSA, and RMA employees and FSA State and COC members are eligible for recognition according to Exhibit 8.
- Former employees and estates of deceased employees are eligible for awards up to 2 years after the employee's last day as a USDA employee. To receive the award, the following criteria apply:
 - the suggestion or performance recommendation must have been made while the individual was a USDA employee
 - payment to the estate of a deceased employee must be made within 1 year after the employee's death.
- The fact that an employee is retiring is **not** a proper basis for consideration for awards under the Employee Recognition Program.
- Honorary awards may be granted to private citizens or organizations for significant contributions that benefit FAS, FSA, and RMA. These include medals, certificates, plaques, or other items that can be displayed or worn.

Private citizens and organizations may **not** receive any monetary recognition.

3 Program and Handbook Responsibilities and Related Handbooks

A

Re Delegations of Authority

FAS, FSA, and RMA Administrators redelegate responsibility for their Employee Recognition Programs to PMBAB through DAM and the Director, HRD.

B

Handbook Responsibility

The office responsible for this handbook is HRD, PMBAB. Prior instructions in addition to or contrary to this handbook should be cleared through HRD, PMBAB.

C

Related Handbooks

The following handbooks relate to the Employee Recognition Program.

IF the material concerns...	THEN see...
approved abbreviations	1-CM.
delegations of authority	3-PM.
performance management system	5-PM.
County Office processing	115-FI.

4-19 (Reserved)

Part 2 Employee Recognition Program Responsibilities**20 FSA, FAS, and RMA Administrators' Responsibilities**

A**Support and Enhance Goals**

The Administrator of each Agency (FAS, FSA, and RMA) is responsible for establishing and administering the Employee Recognition Program to support and enhance the following goals:

- encourage all employees to actively improve Government operations
 - promptly recognize and reward, based on merit, individuals and groups for:
 - suggestions
 - inventions
 - superior performance
 - special acts and services
 - other personal efforts that substantially exceed normal standards of expectations.
-

B**Leadership and Training of Workforce**

The Administrator is responsible for:

- giving personal leadership to the Employee Recognition Program
 - seeking to gain maximum benefits for the Government through improved employee motivation and productivity
 - training employees on how awards are earned
 - training supervisors and managers on how to effectively use forms of employee recognition.
-

Continued on the next page

20 FSA, FAS, and RMA Administrators' Responsibilities (Continued)

**C
Program
Administration**

The Administrator shall:

- ensure equity and credibility by reviewing program results to ensure that:
 - awards and recognition are granted equitably, based on merit
 - if merited, action is taken to grant awards
 - information is made available on individuals who have received awards
 - provide resources or means, such as allocating adequate budget, staffing, and support services, to ensure prompt action on all employee recognition activities.
-

21 HRD Responsibilities

A

General Program Management

HRD shall ensure that the general supervision and direction of the Employee Recognition Programs are directed through PMBAB to ERPM.

B

Providing Guidance to Employees

HRD shall ensure that:

- **new employees** are informed of the appropriate Employee Recognition Program to include, at a minimum, access to this handbook and an explanation of FAS, FSA, and RMA policy on granting awards
 - **all employees** periodically receive further guidance on how to:
 - think creatively and develop suggestions to improve productivity and services
 - write suggestions clearly and succinctly
 - estimate and describe the benefits to the Government from suggestions
 - **supervisors and managers** receive training, support services, and appropriate written materials explaining their roles in achieving maximum individual and organizational productivity through:
 - encouraging more effective performance and employee ideas for improvement
 - taking a positive approach to suggestions through prompt, fair, and courteous responses
 - being fair and objective when recommending or granting recognition
 - considering wider application within FFAS and throughout Government of suggestions and other acts for which employees receive awards.
-

22 ERPM's Responsibilities

A

**ERPM
Responsibilities**

ERPM and staff are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the FFAS Employee Recognition Programs. ERPM shall:

- establish, maintain, and ensure adherence to program directives and standards
- determine which procedures should be in this handbook
- ensure, through review, discussion with the Department and other clearances, that program guidelines are:
 - necessary
 - understandable
 - accurate
 - complete
 - in conformance with laws, executive orders, regulations, and USDA, FAS, FSA, and RMA policies and procedures

Continued on the next page

22 ERPM's Responsibilities (Continued)

A**ERPM
Responsibilities
(Continued)**

- identify program changes needed to ensure consistency of the awards program
- provide guidance and counseling on the Employee Recognition Program to ERC, ESC, and personnel at all levels throughout FAS, FSA, and RMA

Note: ERPM and staff shall provide guidance:

- orally or in writing
 - as the result of a request
 - if program weakness indicates the need for it.
- review or coordinate reviews of performance award recommendations and employee suggestions
 - solicit nominations for competitive awards
- Note:** Review nominations to ensure that documentation is complete and fully meets the award criteria.
- take appropriate action to ensure award cases are processed
 - act as FFAS liaison for employee recognition with other organizations and Government agencies.
-

23 Field Office Responsibilities

A

Field Office Directors

SED's and equivalent office heads, including heads of Overseas Posts, are responsible for ensuring that award recommendations or nominations are:

- in conformance to this handbook
 - consistent with established policies and approved procedures
 - appropriate for the contribution being recognized.
-

B

Designation of ERC

To ensure continuity and consistency of the Employee Recognition Program, an ERC shall be designated for each Field Office. This employee shall be responsible for handling all promotional activities and necessary administrative work for the:

- Employee Recognition Program
- Employee Suggestion Program.

This responsibility shall be an official duty of the designated employee.

C

ERC Responsibilities

ERC's shall:

- maintain copies of all contributions initiated in their offices to prepare any required reports requested by ERPM or the Department
 - maintain copies of contributions received for evaluation
 - publicize awards
 - coordinate all employee recognition activities for the office
 - promptly submit competitive award nominations.
-

Continued on the next page

23 Field Office Responsibilities (Continued)

D

**Designation of
ESC**

Directors at the National Office level shall designate ESC who is normally at the Deputy Director or equivalent level.

E

**ESC
Responsibilities**

ESC's shall:

- receive suggestions from ERPM for evaluation by their Division
 - coordinate the evaluations to ensure that the specialist handling the subject matter gives prompt, objective, and fair evaluation
 - obtain any necessary input from other offices
 - ensure that interim and final replies are prepared for appropriate signatures within established timeframes
 - follow up on implementation of adopted suggestions and advise ERPM of effective date.
-

24 Employee Recognition Committees

A

Designation

SED's and equivalent office heads may establish an employee recognition committee to review award nominations. The committee meets as needed. The committee shall include the following members, as appropriate:

- recommending officials
- Equal Opportunity/Civil Rights representative
- Union representative
- ERPM, ERC, ESC, or designee.

If the Approving Official is not present during the committee meetings, the committee shall forward their recommendations to the Approving Official for final review.

B

Responsibilities

The scope and responsibilities of committees may vary, depending upon the needs of the office. The committee's responsibilities may include:

- meeting at least biannually to administer the Employee Recognition Program
 - reviewing and assessing the operation of the recognition program
 - ensuring that recognition is based on consistently-applied guidelines
 - ensuring the nondiscriminatory and equitable distribution of employee recognition
 - ensuring recognition is issued in a timely manner
 - submitting written analysis and recommendations for improvement to SED or equivalent office head.
-

25 Supervisor's and Employee's Responsibilities

A**Supervisor's
Responsibilities**

Supervisors at all levels are expected to give attention to the economy and effectiveness of programs which they supervise. Accordingly, they shall:

- actively assist in promoting and operating the Employee Recognition Program
- fully understand the purpose and operation of the program, and know the available awards and the criteria and procedures for obtaining them
- orient new employees about the benefits of the program
- actively encourage employees to submit their ideas for improvement and assist them in writing their ideas and/or specific suggestions
- identify and recommend awards for employees who perform duties or make contributions which meet the standards for formal recognition
- promptly evaluate all ideas and award recommendations received from employees or other supervisors
- maintain confidentiality of award nominations during the processing stage.

Note: Recommending individuals shall not discuss award recommendations with nominees until the award has been approved.

B**Employee's
Responsibility**

Employees are urged to submit any ideas or suggestions that they may have for simplifying or improving FAS, FSA, and RMA operations.

26-29 (Reserved)

Part 3 Employee Suggestion Program

30 Overview

A

Purpose

The intent of the Employee Suggestion Program is to encourage employee participation to increase the quantity and quality of suggestions by:

- promptly acting on Employee Suggestions
 - recognizing and rewarding employees whose suggestions are adopted.
-

B

**Acceptable
Employee
Suggestions**

The Employee Suggestion must:

- be a constructive idea
- be submitted in writing
- contribute to the economy, efficiency, or effectiveness of Government operations.

Job-related Employee Suggestions may be considered for recognition if the suggestion is:

- outside the employee's job responsibility or authority to implement
 - within employee's job responsibility, but is so superior that it warrants special recognition.
-

Continued on the next page

30 Overview

C
Unacceptable
Employee
Suggestions

The following are **not** considered Employee Suggestions:

- ideas that fail to identify a specific problem
- merely calling attention to a problem.

Employee services or benefits, working conditions, building and grounds, and housekeeping should be handled through routine administrative procedures.

The Employee Suggestion Program should **not** be used for the following types of suggestions:

- services and benefits to employee, such as vending machines, cafeteria services, rest room facilities, parking facilities, or holidays
- working conditions, such as air conditioning, decorations, furniture, or mirrors
- routine maintenance of building, grounds, and parking lots, such as repairing, cleaning, replacing, painting, or adjusting
- normal or routine safety practices, such as normal protective devices, removing obstructions, or installing warning and traffic signs
- obvious errors in directives and regulations
- indefinite or incomplete suggestions that do not identify a specific problem or offer improvements.

Continued on the next page

30 Overview (Continued)

D

**Duplicate
Employee
Suggestions**

Do **not** give more than 1 individual monetary award for the same Employee Suggestion.

- If 2 employees submit identical Employee Suggestions, the employee's suggestion with the **earliest submission date** may be granted a monetary award if the suggestion is adopted.
- If an employee submits a suggestion that is a duplicate of a previously submitted Employee Suggestion, notify the employee that the suggestion is not acceptable.

Only the employee who first submits an Employee Suggestion has a right to claim any monetary award for that suggestion for 2 years from the date the suggestion was formally not adopted.

Continued on the next page

30 Overview (Continued)

E

**Approval Level
for Adopted or
Not Adopted
Employee
Suggestions**

If an Employee Suggestion:

- affects only the operation of the office, the following individuals are the lowest office level with authority to adopt or not adopt an Employee Suggestion:
 - National Office Division Directors
 - Kansas City Directors
 - SED's and APFO Director
 - FAS Field Office heads
 - RMA RO and RCO Division Directors

 - is beyond that office's authority, the Employee Suggestion, along with comments, must be forwarded to the appropriate office for evaluation.
-

F

**Suggestion
Month**

July has been designated Employee Suggestion Month.

G

**Employee
Recognition**

Offices should recognize the employee submitting the greatest number of adopted Employee Suggestions each year.

31 Employee Suggestion Program Responsibilities and Procedures

**A
Employee's
Responsibilities**

Employees shall:

- submit Employee Suggestion in writing
- use AD-287 if possible
- submit Employee Suggestion using bond paper when AD-287 is not available
- present each idea as a separate Employee Suggestion
- ensure the following issues are addressed in the Employee Suggestion:
 - what is the present method
 - what are the disadvantages to the present method
 - what is the proposed method
 - what are the advantages or estimated savings.

Employees should submit Employee Suggestions through supervisory channels but may submit them to the following:

- immediate supervisor, branch, or section chief
- ESC
- State, Field Office, or office director
- ERPM, HRD
- Deputy Administrator
- Administrator.

Continued on the next page

31 Employee Suggestion Program Responsibilities and Procedures (Continued)

B**Originating
Office****Responsibilities**

The immediate supervisor shall:

- promptly acknowledge in writing all Employee Suggestions received
- evaluate the Employee Suggestion within 14 calendar days and do either of the following:
 - adopt or formally not adopt the Employee Suggestion if it is within the supervisor's authority to do so
 - forward the Employee Suggestion to ESC with comments and recommendation if it is outside the supervisor's authority to adopt or not adopt

Note: Place information on back of AD-287, if used, or comment on cover memorandum to ESC.

- notify ESC of:
 - all Employee Suggestions received
 - action taken
 - supervisor's evaluation of the Employee Suggestion and appraisal of possible benefits.

Continued on the next page

31 Employee Suggestion Program Responsibilities and Procedures (Continued)

**C
ESC
Responsibilities**

ESC'c shall:

- record all Employee Suggestions received
- maintain case files for 2 years from date of final action
- handle Employee Suggestions as a high priority
- coordinate efforts for a prompt evaluation of Employee Suggestions received for action by:
 - determining whether an Employee Suggestion is a duplicate
 - promptly acknowledging receipt and status of Employee Suggestion to suggester
- maintaining necessary controls to ensure that final action for the organizational level is taken within 14 calendar days
- refer Employee Suggestions to ERPM that:
 - have merit but cannot be adopted by initiating office
 - initiating office cannot evaluate or judge merit
 - should be acted on by higher authority or another office.

The appropriate office shall notify the suggester of the final decision. The office responsible for the final evaluation shall prepare a reply for the approval and signature of the individual having authority to adopt or not adopt an Employee Suggestion at that organizational level.

Continued on the next page

31 Employee Suggestion Program Responsibilities and Procedures (Continued)

**D
FFAS ERPM
Responsibilities**

FFAS ERPM will:

- record and acknowledge all Employee Suggestions received for evaluation in the National Office
- determine whether Employee Suggestion is a duplicate
- refer Employee Suggestions to appropriate office for evaluation and action
- coordinate action if approval of USDA or other departments or agencies is required
- review all final replies by the National Office for appropriateness and do either of the following:
 - send replies to the Deputy Administrator for signature
 - return the reply to the National Office for necessary revisions.

Continued on the next page

31 Employee Suggestion Program Responsibilities and Procedures (Continued)

E**Evaluating
Office****Responsibilities**

The evaluator shall:

- give Employee Suggestions high priority by:
 - providing a fair, accurate, and prompt evaluation
 - completing the evaluation and providing final reply within 14 calendar days of receipt of the Employee Suggestion
 - preparing an interim reply to suggester and advising when final decision is expected if evaluation is not completed within 15 calendar days
- determine whether Employee Suggestion is a duplicate
- determine whether proposal is currently under consideration by management; if so, the Employee Suggestion shall not be adopted and the suggester is advised of the reason
- prepare final reply to suggester for appropriate official's signature:
 - National Office evaluators shall prepare replies for signature of their Deputy Administrator as follows:
 - all final replies shall be cleared through ERPM before being signed by the Deputy Administrator
 - interim replies shall be signed by the division director and a copy sent to ERPM
 - the **yellow subject copy** of the final reply along with the original suggestion and evaluator's documentation **will be forwarded** to the ERPM's office for filing
 - Field Office evaluators shall prepare replies for signature of office director
- determine whether adopted Employee Suggestions merit monetary recognition.

Continued on the next page

31 Employee Suggestion Program Responsibilities and Procedures (Continued)

**F
Wider
Application of an
Employee
Suggestion**

Employee Suggestions that require evaluation at the Departmental level must be referred through FFAS, HRD directly to the appropriate Departmental staff office.

An Employee Suggestion that applies to another agency shall be sent to that agency for review before FFAS takes final action.

If a Department other than USDA is responsible for the decision, send the Employee Suggestion to FFAS, HRD for referral to the Department.

32 Adoption of Employee Suggestion

A
Evaluating
Office
Responsibilities

Do the following when evaluating office responsibility.

IF the Employee Suggestion results in...	THEN the head of the office shall consider granting a...
measurable benefits to the Government	monetary award based on the appraised value of the Employee Suggestion and the eligibility of the suggester.
nonmeasurable benefits to the Government	nonmonetary award. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESC shall prepare AD-287-2. • If the award amount is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within the authority delegated to the office, the head of the office shall sign on the "Approved By" line • greater than the authority delegated to the office, the head of the office shall sign on the "Recommended By" line.

33 Nonadoption of Employee Suggestion

A

Suggester Outside Nonadopting Office

For a suggester outside of the nonadopting office, the authorized official shall:

- prepare a memorandum to the suggester from the appropriate Deputy Administrator's signature, listing the reasons for not adopting the Employee Suggestion
 - include copies of the memorandum and the suggestion for ESC and ERPM.
-

B

Suggester in Same Nonadopting Office

For a suggester in the same nonadopting office, the authorized official shall:

- list reasons for nonadoption on reverse side of AD-287
- Note:** If a letter is used instead of AD-287, list the reasons on reverse of letter, at the bottom or side margin. Discuss reasons with the employee and date the Employee Suggestion.
- distribute a copy of AD-287 or suggestion letter with reasons for nonadoption to:
 - employee
 - ESC
 - **do not** send a copy of AD-287 or the suggestion letter to ERPM.
-

Continued on the next page

33 Nonadoption of Employee Suggestion (Continued)

C

**Reconsidering
Employee
Suggestion Not
Adopted**

Employees have the right to request reconsideration of any decision not to adopt an Employee Suggestion.

The employee shall:

- make these requests in writing, giving the reasons for disagreement with the determination
- send to the appropriate Deputy Administrator.

The reviewing official shall send:

- a copy of each reconsideration request to the employee's ESC and ERPM
- copies of replies to reconsideration requests to ESC and ERPM.

If, within **2 years** after the date an Employee Suggestion is formally not adopted, that Employee Suggestion is adopted or any supplementary beneficial action **traceable** to the Employee Suggestion is taken, the originator or any official or supervisor may request that the case be reconsidered for an award. The requests shall be submitted within 90 calendar days from the date of the adoption or action.

Management's decision not to adopt a reconsidered Employee Suggestion is not grievable.

Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority

Reports None

Forms This table lists all forms referenced in this handbook.

Number	Title	Display Reference	Reference
AD-141A	Certificate of Appreciation		Ex. 6
AD-287	Employee Suggestion		31-33
AD-287-2	Recommendation and Approval of Awards	Ex. 6	32, Ex. 4-6
AD-435	Performance Appraisal		Ex. 4
AD-435A	Performance Plan, Progress Review and Appraisal Worksheet		Ex. 4
AD-435B	Performance Plan, Progress Review and Appraisal Worksheet (Continuation)		Ex. 4
AD-1097	The Guide for Employee Recognition		2

Continued on the next page

Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority (Continued)

Abbreviations Not Listed in 1-CM The following abbreviations are not listed in 1-CM.

Approved Abbreviation	Term	Reference
CO	non-Federal County Office employees	Ex. 5
ERC	Employee Recognition Coordinator	22-24, Ex. 2, 4
ERPM	Employee Recognition Program Manager	21-24, 31, Ex. 2
ESC	Employee Suggestion Coordinator	22-24, 31
FMS	Financial Management Staff, RMA	Ex. 6
FSN	Foreign Service National	Ex. 4, 8
GS	General Schedule	Ex. 4-6
GM	General Merit	Ex. 4, 6
MSI	Meritorious Service Increase	Ex. 4, 8
OPF	Official Personnel Folder	Ex. 2, 6
PMBAB	Performance Management, Benefits and Awards Branch, HRD	3, 21
PSC	Personal Services Contractor	Ex. 4, 8
QSI	Quality Step Increase	Ex. 2, 4-6, 8
R&D	Research and Development, RMA	Ex. 6
SES	Senior Executive Service	Ex. 4, 5, 8
SPO	Servicing Personnel Office	Ex. 6
TOA	Time Off Award	Ex. 2, 8
WGI	wage grade increase	Ex. 4

Redelegations of Authority FAS, FAS, and RMA Administrators redelegate responsibility for their Employee Recognition Programs to PMBAB through the Director, HRD.

Definitions of Terms Used in This Handbook

Contribution A contribution is any suggestion, monetary award, QSI, or honorary nomination initiated or received by an employee.

Field Office The following are considered Field Offices:

- FSA State Offices
- District and County Offices
- the Kansas City, St. Louis, and Salt Lake City Offices
- FAS Overseas Posts
- RMA RO and RCO's.

Measurable Benefits Measurable benefits are benefits to the Government that can be measured in terms of dollars saved or costs avoided.

Nonmeasurable Benefits Nonmeasurable benefits are benefits to the Government that cannot be measured in terms of dollars saved or costs avoided.

Nonmonetary Awards Nonmonetary awards are medals, certificates, plaques, citations, badges, or other similar items that have an award or honor connotation.

Performance Bonus A performance bonus is a one-time, lump sum cash award that can be given when the employee's summary rating of record shows that overall performance is at least at the "Superior" level of competence.

Quality Step Increases (QSI's) QSI is an increase in an employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the grade of his or her position to the next higher step of that grade which can be given when the employee's summary rating of record is at the "Outstanding" level of competence.

Recommending Individual Any employee may be a recommending individual for all awards except awards on an employee's performance appraisal (QSI's and Performance Bonuses). For QSI's and Performance Bonuses, the employee's rater is the recommending individual.

Definitions of Terms Used in This Handbook (Continued)

**Reviewing
Official**

A reviewing official is ERPM or ERC in the office holding the employee OPF's.

**Superior
Accomplishment
Awards**

Superior Accomplish Awards are monetary or nonmonetary awards given in recognition for specific contributions resulting in measurable benefits or savings and/or nonmeasurable benefits to the Government. Eligible contributions include 1 of the following:

- a superior contribution either within or outside of job responsibilities
- a scientific achievement
- an act of heroism.

An Extra Effort Award is an example of a monetary superior accomplishment award.

**Time Off Award
(TOA)**

TOA is an excused absence granted to an employee without charge to leave or loss of pay.

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program



United States
Department of
Agriculture

September 10, 2001

Farm and Foreign
Agricultural
Services

Foreign
Agricultural
Service

1400 Independence
Ave, SW
Stop 1001
Washington, DC
20250-1001

TO: All FAS Employees

FROM: Mary Chambliss
Acting Administrator

SUBJECT: The Foreign Agricultural Service 2001 Employee Recognition Program

The Fiscal Year 2001 Performance Appraisal cycle ends on September 30, 2001. The attached guidelines outlines the performance and honorary segments (Parts A and B) of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) 2001 Employee Recognition Program procedures. Part A of this guidance is intended to reflect the Contract between AFSCME and FAS and the Administrator's extension of Division/Unit Level administered awards to all Agency employees.

Part A: The FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program Performance Awards

The attachments (Exhibits A-G) outline the performance awards procedures.

Nominations for performance awards are due with accompanying performance evaluations to the ERC by Friday, October 19, 2001. It is critical that **evaluations are received by October 19, 2001.** Late nominations will affect the Agency's ability to meet mandatory award pay outs, if any. The ERC must ensure that the evaluations are provided to Human Resources Division by **Friday, October 26, 2001.**

Part B: The FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program Honorary Awards

The attachments (Exhibits H-N) outline the FAS 2000 Honorary Awards Program procedures.

Nominations for Honorary Awards are due by **Friday, November 9, 2001.** **All nominations must be submitted on Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards," and must go through the appropriate Deputy Administrator or the Associate Administrator-designee to reach the ERC (Exhibit G).**

If you require additional information or clarification on any aspect of the FAS Employee Recognition Program or the Honorary Awards procedure, please contact Stephen Crisp at 418-8975 or Cheryl Fuller at 418-8973.

Attachments

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

**PART A: THE FAS 2001 EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM
PERFORMANCE AWARDS**

1. **PURPOSE:** To announce the FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program to all employees. The program will recognize the special, superior, or outstanding work accomplishments of FAS employees.

Employee Recognition is an integral part of supervision and management in FAS. It is used to reward employee initiatives and resourcefulness and to recognize employees who consistently respond to the needs of the Agency. It is important that supervisors and managers conduct periodic reviews to identify those employees whose contributions are worthy of recognition. Employees performing beyond position requirements are the keys to making FAS programs more effective. Supervisors and managers have a major responsibility to ensure effective use of the recognition program by recommending awards appropriate to the employees' accomplishments.

2. **RECOGNITION PROGRAM COMPONENTS:** The FAS Employee Recognition Program consists of two components; Agency-wide administered awards, and Division/Unit level administered awards.

- a. Agency-wide administered awards consist of:

- (1) Civil Service performance awards are based on the employee's performance appraisal (lump sum performance bonuses and quality step increases (QSIs)). These awards are given in December of each year.

- (2) Foreign Service performance awards shall be administered in accordance with the precepts contained in Article 25 of the Contract between AFSA and FAS. In sum, Selection Boards are charged with preparing a "Performance Award List," by class, based on the most recent rating period. The Performance Awards list will rank order only those individuals not ranked as promotable by the Selection Boards.

An individual recommended, but not receiving a promotion, and who is eligible for a Meritorious Step Increase (MSI) will be allowed to elect and receive the MSI or three shares of the Foreign Service bargaining unit awards pool, but not both. These awards are given in December of each year.

- b. Division/Unit level administered awards consist of Extra Effort (formerly Special Act or Service) and Spot Cash awards, and non monetary awards such as Time Off awards and Certificates. These awards may be given at any time during the year.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 1

3. **AGENCY-WIDE ADMINISTERED AWARDS:** Part A- Performance Awards include descriptions of the awards available under this part of the FAS Recognition Program.

These awards are based on the employee's performance appraisal and the employee must have been on the rolls as of September 30, 2001, to be eligible in this rating cycle. The awards system will be administered in a manner that is fair and equitable, and which does not favor one group over another, such as by organization, by personnel system (e.g., Foreign Service/Civil Service), by grade, by job series or by prohibited categories such as age, sex, race or national origin. The procedures for completing these appraisals are as follows:

- a. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to provide a write-up of not more than one page which provides an overall assessment of the employee's capabilities, as indicated by his/her performance during the rating year. Likewise, employees are strongly encouraged to submit a statement of accomplishments of not more than one page.

Both the supervisory assessment and the employee's statement of accomplishments if completed, will be included with the appraisal package. During the rating process, managers **MUST** pay specific attention to the roles that **ALL** employees play in the successful implementation of Agency initiatives.

- b. Using the write-ups, a draft rating should be prepared by the supervisor and forwarded up through the chain of command to the Program area's Pay Pool Manager (Deputy Administrator).
- c. The Deputy Administrator shall serve as the reviewer for all outstanding ratings.
- d. The Pay Pool Manager will review all the ratings from his/her Program Area for consistency and will discuss ratings that may need to be adjusted with the supervisor concerned. At this point, the supervisor will be asked to strengthen the write-up to justify the rating or the rating will be lowered. During their reviews, Pay Pool Managers will ensure that ratings are being given equitably across grade levels. After approval by the Pay Pool Manager, supervisors must finalize the ratings and discuss them with the employees concerned.
- e. The Pay Pool Manager will then forward statistics by grade level on the distribution of ratings in his/her Program Area to the ERC *through the Program Area representative* by October 12, 2001, who will collate the statistical information and forward it, with recommendations, to the Administrator for information.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A-2

It is strongly recommended that supervisors begin this process immediately, so that the draft rating review process can be completed in a timely manner.

Employees with a rating of record of "Superior" or better are eligible for performance based monetary awards. After concurrence by the Deputy Administrator, supervisors finalize the ratings, discuss them with the employees concerned, and submit them to the pay pool managers. *The Performance Appraisal* and awards form, AD-287-2, must be included in the package submitted to ERC if the rating is "Superior" or better, since these employees may be eligible for performance-based monetary awards:

- a. QSI: An increase in an employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the grade to the next higher step. To be eligible, the employee must have received a rating of "Outstanding." (Exhibit A).
- b. Performance Bonus: A one-time, lump sum monetary award. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Administrator will establish a pool of money to recognize employees with Performance Bonuses. The dollar value of each award will be determined according to the procedures set forth in (Exhibit B).

- 4. **DIVISION/UNIT LEVEL ADMINISTERED AWARDS**: Exhibits C through E are descriptions of the various awards available under this part of the FAS Employee Recognition Program. The amount of each of these awards is based on measurable and/or non-measurable benefits realized by the Agency as a result of the employee's contribution (see Exhibit F). At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Administrator through the Deputy Administrator will allocate funds to each Division/Unit head for recognizing employees with Extra Effort and Spot Cash awards.

The amount given to each Division/Unit head will be based upon the total number of Division/Unit employees. Managers are encouraged to recognize team members whose performance contributed to the attainment of GPRA targets during the awards cycle.

Although not taken from the allocated funds, Time-Off awards are also administered at the Division/Unit level.

- a. Extra Effort Award: A one-time, lump sum monetary award used for recognizing substantial employee contributions. (Exhibit C)
- b. Spot Cash Award: A one-time, lump sum monetary award that enables the employee to be recognized immediately for his/her contribution. (Exhibit D)
- c. Time-Off Award: An excused absence without charge to leave or loss of pay. (Exhibit E)

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A-3

- d. Non monetary awards. Division/Unit heads are encouraged to issue certificates of accomplishment or appreciation to honor employees for their efforts throughout the year.
5. **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION DOCUMENTATION:** Please use Form AD-287-2, Recommendation and Approval of Awards, dated July 1994 or later. Forms dated earlier are laid out differently. Please ensure that block 11 is completed if a certificate will be given. All forms can be retrieved from the FASTNET (Forms). (CITATIONS ARE NOT REQUIRED FOR PERFORMANCE BONUS AWARDS). This information is necessary to complete the certificate which will be presented to the recipient. See (Exhibit G) for details on how to complete Form AD-287-2.
6. **MULTIPLE AWARDS:** Employees may receive more than one monetary type of award, as long as the basis for each award is different. For example, an employee may receive an Extra Effort Award for a short-term accomplishment (such as a special project), a Performance Bonus Award based on sustained superior performance, and an honorary award for a third outstanding contribution.
7. **STUDENT EMPLOYEES (CO-OP AND STAY-IN-SCHOOL):** If employed by FAS, students are eligible for all awards except a QSI. If the student's appointment is part-time, the bonus pay, if any, would be prorated accordingly. If the student is serving with the government under a contract (either personal or through a college or university), the language of the contract will determine eligibility for award recognition. If awards are not mentioned in the contract, then the student is not eligible for cash awards.
8. **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM ASSISTANCE:** The Human Resources Division, Performance Management, Benefits and Awards Branch, provides Employee Recognition Program advice and guidance to managers, supervisors, and employees. Please contact Stephen Crisp at 418-8975 or Cheryl Fuller at 418-8973, or FAX 418-9118 should you need further details or information.

Nominations for performance awards are due with accompanying performance evaluations to the FAS Employee Recognition Committee (ERC) by October 26, 2001.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 4
EXHIBIT A

QUALITY STEP INCREASE (QSI)

DESCRIPTION:	An increase in an employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the grade to the next higher step of that grade.
ELIGIBILITY:	GM and GS employees (except Schedule C employees grade GS-13 and above) and Schedule B employees (excluding Student employees).
REQUIRED LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE:	The current performance appraisal rating must have a summary rating of "Outstanding."
RESTRICTIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Employees in step 10 of their grade gain no benefit from QSI's. They should be recommended for Performance Bonuses, instead.● An employee may not receive more than one QSI in any 52-week period. However, if an employee has received a QSI within the preceding 52 weeks, the effective date of the currently recommended QSI will be pushed back to conform with the waiting period.
BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEE:	Provides a long-term recognition of the employee's accomplishments and contributions to the support of USDA and FAS missions. Employee is motivated to repeat high-quality performance to earn further recognition. NOTE: Employees rated as "Outstanding" must be given the opportunity to elect to receive a QSI or a performance bonus. If the employee rated "Outstanding" elects to receive the performance bonus (which will be indicated by their initials next to the appropriate block on the awards form), he/she will be paid three shares (see Exhibit B).

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 5

**NOMINATION
PROCEDURES:**

Submit Form AD-435, "Performance Appraisal," Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated July 1994 or later), and a justification (either the accomplishments that accompanied the employee's rating or a separate write-up) through the Deputy Administrator to ERC.

NOTE: When recommending an employee for a QSI, consideration should be given to:

- a. Any upcoming promotion (which may cancel out the benefits of the QSI).
- b. A QSI which puts the employee into step 4 or step 7. A QSI does not normally affect the waiting period for a within grade increase (WGI). However, if an employee receives a QSI to step 4 or 7, the employee's next WGI will be delayed by a year.
- c. Whether the employee is on a temporary promotion. If so, the employee may lose the benefit of the QSI upon return to lower grade, unless the temporary promotion can be used for pay setting purposes.

Exhibit A-1 provides information regarding the long-term value of a QSI. Employees are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Division to discuss their specific considerations prior to making the election between a QSI or performance bonus.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

				Part A- 6
EXHIBIT A-1				
LONG-TERM VALUE OF A QSI				
GS	5 YEARS	10 YEARS	15 YEARS	
3	\$ 2,590	\$ 5,180	\$7,760	
4	\$ 2,910	\$ 5,820	\$8,730	
5	\$ 3,255	\$ 6,510	\$9,765	
6	\$ 3,625	\$ 7,250	\$10,875	
7	\$ 4,030	\$ 8,060	\$12,090	
8	\$ 4,465	\$ 8,930	\$13,395	
9	\$ 4,930	\$ 9,860	\$14,790	
10	\$ 5,430	\$10,860	\$16,290	
11	\$ 5,965	\$11,930	\$17,895	
12	\$ 7,015	\$14,300	\$21,315	
13	\$ 8,500	\$17,000	\$25,500	
14	\$10,045	\$20,090	\$30,135	
15	\$11,815	\$23,630	\$35,445	

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 7
EXHIBIT B

PERFORMANCE BONUS AWARDS

DESCRIPTION: A one-time, lump sum monetary award based on an overall above fully successful performance.

ELIGIBILITY: GM and GS employees (excluding Schedule C employees GS-13 and above), WG, Schedule B and Student employees.

REQUIRED LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE: The current performance appraisal rating must have a summary rating of "Superior" or better.

AWARD AMOUNT: This will be determined by use of the following procedure:

Step One: employee will be allocated a number of "shares" - three shares for an Outstanding rating, two shares for a "High Superior" rating, and one share for a "Superior" rating.

NOTE: A "High Superior" rating is a Superior rating with at least 75 percent of the rating points in the "exceeds fully successful" category. A "Superior" rating is a Superior rating that does not meet this criteria.

Employees on a part-time appointments will receive a prorated share comparable to the percentage of time worked. (i.e., 20 hours per week would be equivalent to 50 percent of each qualifying share).

Step Two: the total number of shares will be divided into the awards pool established by the Administrator. This will determine the dollar value of each share.

Step Three: the dollar value of the employee's award will be calculated depending upon whether the employee is entitled to one, two, or three shares.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 8
EXHIBIT B-1

**BENEFITS TO
THE EMPLOYEE:**

- An immediate substantial lump sum monetary award
- May be granted to those at the top of their pay range or whose salary has reached the statutory limit
- Permits public presentation involving recipient, coworkers, Recommending Individual, and Approving Official, thus providing additional recognition and preserving credibility of recognition program.
- Employee is motivated to repeat high-quality performance to earn further reward and recognition.

**NOMINATION
PROCEDURES:**

Submit Form AD-435, "Performance Appraisal," Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated July 1994 or later), and a justification (of at least one paragraph), *including forms AD-435A and 435b, "Standards and Elements"* through the Deputy Administrator to Program Area representative to the ERC.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A-9
EXHIBIT C

EXTRA EFFORT AWARDS
(formerly Special Act or Service Awards)

DESCRIPTION: A one-time, lump sum monetary award based on measurable and/or non-measurable benefits realized by the agency that may be given at any time throughout the year. These include awards for suggestions, inventions, and special acts or service.

ELIGIBILITY: All employees, except Schedule C employees, GS-13 and above.

RECOMMENDED AWARD AMOUNT: Amounts should be based on the impact of the employee's accomplishment. (See Exhibit F)

APPROPRIATE USE: When an employee or group of employees perform(s) substantially beyond expectations on a specific assignment or aspects of an assignment or job function.

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEE:

- An almost immediate substantial lump sum monetary payment.
- May be granted to those at the top of their pay range or whose salary has reached the statutory limit.
- Permits public presentation involving recipient, coworkers, Recommending Individual, and Approving Official, thus providing additional recognition and preserving credibility of recognition program.
- Employee is motivated to repeat high-quality performance to earn further reward and recognition.

NOMINATION PROCEDURE: Submit Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated July 1994 or later), and a justification (at least one paragraph in length) through required supervisory channels to your Division/Unit head.

NOTE: If award is for a Schedule C employee, GS-12 or below, the Administrator must be the Recommending Official and the Deputy Under Secretary must be the Approving Official.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 10
EXHIBIT D

SPOT CASH AWARDS

DESCRIPTION:	A one-time, lump sum monetary award based on measurable and/or non-measurable benefits realized by the agency that may be given throughout the year.
ELIGIBILITY:	All employees, except Schedule C employees grade GS-13 and above and SES employees.
LIMITATION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Minimum Awards are \$25 NET● Maximum Awards are \$250● Maximum Awards total is \$500 in a 12-month period.● Increments of award amounts are \$25 only (\$25, \$50, \$75, etc.).
RECOMMENDED AWARD AMOUNT:	Amounts should be based on the impact of the employee's accomplishment
APPROPRIATE USE:	When an employee performs beyond expectations on an assignment.
BENEFITS TO THE EMPLOYEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● An immediate lump sum monetary award which gives the employee the full amount of the award (i.e., taxes are not deducted)● May be granted to those at the top of their pay range or whose salary has reached the statutory limit● Permits public presentation involving recipient, coworkers, Recommending Individual, and Approving Official, thus providing additional recognition and preserving credibility of recognition program● Employee is motivated to repeat high-quality performance to earn further reward and recognition.
NOMINATION PROCEDURES:	Submit Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated July 1994 or later), to your Division/Unit head <i>with a copy to ERC Program Area representative.</i>

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 11
EXHIBIT E

TIME-OFF AWARDS

DESCRIPTION:	An excused absence without charge to leave or loss of pay based on measurable and/or non-measurable benefits realized by the agency which may be given throughout the year.
ELIGIBILITY:	All employees, except Schedule C employees grade GS-13 and above and SES employees.
RECOMMENDED AWARD AMOUNT:	Amounts should be based on the impact of the employee's accomplishment. (See Exhibit F)
RESTRICTION:	A maximum of 40 hours time-off may be given per award and an employee may not be granted more than 80 hours in a leave year.
APPROPRIATE USE:	When an employee or group of employees perform(s) substantially beyond expectations on a specific assignment or aspects of an assignment or job function.
BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● An immediate addition to the employee's leave balance● May be granted to those at the top of their pay range or whose salary has reached the statutory limit● Permits public presentation involving recipient, coworkers, Recommending Individual, and Approving Official, thus providing additional recognition and preserving credibility of recognition program● Employee is motivated to repeat high-quality performance to earn further reward and recognition.
NOMINATION PROCEDURE:	Submit Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated July 1994 or later), and a justification to your Division/Unit head <i>with a copy to ERC Program Area representative.</i>

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 12
EXHIBIT F

Scale of Awards for Intangible Benefits

Value of Benefit	Extent of Application			
	Limited	Extended	Broad	General
	Affects functions, mission, or personnel of the following.			
	An Office	Several Offices	All Offices	Department-wide or in the Public Interest
Moderate Moderate change or modification of operating procedures meeting minimum standard for cash award; simple modification of methods; limited service to the public.	\$25-\$200 1-5 hours	\$200-\$350 5-10 hours	\$350-\$600 10-15 hours	\$600-\$1,100 15-20 hours
Substantial Substantial change or modification of an operating procedure. An important improvement to value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public.	\$200-\$350 5-10 hours	\$350-\$600 10-15 hours	\$600-\$1,100 15-20 hours	\$1,100-\$2,500 20-25 hours
High Major improvement, usually affecting major problems; major change in methods, or procedures.	\$350-\$600 10-15 hours	\$600-\$1,100 15-20 hours	\$1,100-\$2,500 20-25 hours	\$2,500-\$5,000 25-30 hours
Exceptional Initiation of a new principle or major program. Superior improvement to the quality of a critical activity, program, or service to the public.	\$600-\$1,100 15-20 hours	\$1,100-\$2,500 20-25 hours	\$2,500-\$5,000 25-30 hours	\$5,000-\$10,000 30-40 hours

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 13
EXHIBIT G

**CHECKLIST FOR COMPLETION OF FORM AD-287-2,
"RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL OF AWARDS"**

For blocks 1 through 6, if recommending a group, attach a sheet listing the information asked for in each of these blocks for all employees involved.

Block # 1 (AGENCY):

Enter employee's agency (i.e., FAS, State Department, etc.).

Block #2 (NAME OF EMPLOYEE):

Enter employee's name. **Name must be listed as it should appear on the certificate (i.e., name used should be in official records such as payroll).**

Block # 3 (SOCIAL SECURITY NO.):

Enter employee's correct Social Security Number (SSN) here. If SSN is not known, leave blank and HRD will complete.

Block # 4 (POSITION TITLE):

Enter employee's current position title.

Block #5 (PAY PLAN-SERIES/GRADE/STEP):

Enter employee's pay plan, series, grade and step (i.e., GS-303/7/1), if known. HRD will verify any information put in this block.

Block # 6 (ORGANIZATION AND LOCATION):

Enter employee's current Branch and Division followed by their physical location. You may use abbreviations due to lack of space (i.e., OFSTS, ITP, Washington, D.C.)

Block # 7 (PERIOD COVERED FOR AWARD):

Enter the beginning and ending dates of the contribution for which the employee is being recommended (i.e., 10/1/00 to 9/30/01).

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 14
EXHIBIT G-1

Block # 8 (ACCOUNTING CODE):

Enter the accounting code of the office of the Recommending Individual. If not known, contact the Secretary of that office. The award cannot be processed without this number entered correctly (*refer to FY 2001 Coding Manual*).

Block # 9 (IF AWARD APPROVED, MAIL CHECK TO):

Leave blank.

Block # 10 (LIST AWARDS OR QSI'S IN THE PAST 52 WEEKS):

Complete if known. HRD will verify any information here.

Block # 11 (CITATION):

Enter citation exactly as you wish it to appear on the certificate. Please ensure that the citation does not exceed 25 words and is appropriate for public recognition. **Citations are not required for Performance Bonuses.**

If recommending employee for an Extra Effort, Spot Cash or Time of award (individual or group), complete blocks 12 to 15. If not, skip to block 16.

Block # 12 (TYPE OF RECOGNITION RECOMMENDED):

Check the appropriate box.

Block # 13 (NO. OF PERSONS):

If recommending an individual, put "1." If recommending a group, put the total number in the group (i.e., "12").

Block # 14 (TOTAL AWARD):

Enter the value of the award, either in dollars or (for a Time Off Award) in hours. The amount entered here should be based on the table at Exhibit F. If recommending a group, put the overall value of the award and attach a sheet showing how much each individual should receive.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 15
EXHIBIT G-2

Block #15 (TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT/HOURS BASED ON):

If you are aware of a dollar amount that the Government has saved because of the contribution, check "Measurable Benefits Scale" and enter it in the "Estimated First Year Savings" block.

Block #15 (TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT/HOURS BASED ON):

If you are aware of a dollar amount that the Government has saved because of the contribution, check "Measurable Benefits Scale" and enter it in the "Estimated First Year Savings" block. If a dollar savings amount is not available, check "Non-measurable Benefits Scale," and complete the "Value of Benefits" and "Application" blocks per Exhibit F.

If recommending employee for a Performance Bonus Award or for a QSI, complete blocks 16 to 19. If not, skip to block 20.

Block # 16 (TYPE OF RECOGNITION RECOMMENDED):

Check the appropriate box.

Block # 17 (DATE OF LAST PROMOTION):

Complete only if recommending for a QSI and if known. HRD will verify any information put in this block.

Block # 18 (DATE OF LAST WITHIN-GRADE INCREASE):

Complete only if recommending a QSI and if known. HRD will verify any information put in this block.

Block # 19 (AMOUNT RECOMMENDED FOR PERFORMANCE BONUS AWARD):

Leave blank. For QSI's, this does not apply. For Performance Bonuses, this amount will be calculated according to Exhibit B.

Block # 20 (RECOMMENDING INDIVIDUAL):

Sign and date here, and type your title.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part A- 16
EXHIBIT G-3

Block # 21 (REVIEWING OFFICIAL):

If submitting an Agency-wide administered award, your Deputy Administrator/Staff Director should sign here. If submitting a Division/Unit level administered award, leave blank. **The Deputy Administrator shall serve as the reviewer for all outstanding ratings.**

Block # 22 (APPROVING OFFICIAL):

If submitting an Agency-wide administered award, the Administrator will approve. If submitting a Division/Unit level-administered award, the Division/Unit Director will approve.

Do not complete any more blocks.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B: THE FAS 2001 EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM HONORARY AWARDS

1. **PURPOSE:** To announce the FAS 2001 Honorary Awards Program to all employees. The program will recognize Federal career service, and special, superior, or outstanding work accomplishments of FAS employees.
2. **NOMINATION DUE DATE:** All nominations must be submitted on Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards," and must go through one of the Deputy Administrators to reach the Employee Recognition Committee (ERC) by November 9, 2001.
3. **MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISORY REVIEW:** Employee recognition is an integral part of supervision and management in FAS. It is used to reward employee initiative and resourcefulness and to recognize employees who consistently respond to the needs of the Agency. It is important that supervisors and managers conduct periodic reviews to identify those employees whose contributions are worthy of recognition. Employees performing beyond position requirements are the key to making FAS programs more effective. Supervisors and managers have a major responsibility to ensure effective use of the recognition program by recommending awards appropriate to the employees' accomplishments.

4. **ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES**

Employee Recognition Documentation: Exhibits A through G are descriptions of the various Administrator's Award categories included in the Honorary Awards Program. The employee's most recent performance appraisal must be attached to the nomination and support the conclusion that performance, as described, clearly exceeds the "Fully Successful" level.

Multiple Awards: Employees may receive more than one type of honorary award, as long as the basis for each award is different. For example, an employee may receive a Civil Rights Award for accomplishments in this area and a Secretarial Award for accomplishments in this area.

Overseas Post Awards Reports: Nominations for FAS employees overseas will be considered at the same time as will the nominations for Washington assigned employees. Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) and Personal Services Contract (PSC) employees may be recognized in the FAS Honorary Awards Program (except that PSC's may not receive length of service awards). All Heads of Post will submit an annual awards report, via fax, to Kim Jones, HRD, at (202) 418-8979, listing all awards granted during 2001, for inclusion in the 2001 Awards

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Part B- 1

Booklet. This report should be sent to HRD by **October 19, 2001**. Please include the following information in your report:

- Full name of Recipient (please identify last name)
- Grade, Title, and Gender
- Type/Title of award and amount (if any)
- Citation or Certificate Narration

Length of service award recipients for this year (Calendar Year 2001) and the upcoming year should be included in this report.

Student Employees (Co-op and Stay-in-school): These employees are eligible for honorary awards.

5 **ADMINISTRATOR'S AWARD RECOGNITION**: FAS has various Administrator's Awards to recognize the special achievements of employees. These awards are the Agency's most prestigious. Nominations are ranked by the FAS ERC and submitted for approval to the FAS Administrator. These awards do not include a monetary award. Award categories include:

- a. **The Civil Rights Award**: The FAS Multi-Year Affirmative Employment Program Plan gives significant emphasis to recognition of employee accomplishment in civil rights. Supervisors and managers are required to carefully review employee accomplishments in civil rights and to recommend appropriate awards. (Part B- Exhibit H)
- b. **The Administrative Support Excellence Award**: For employees in the administrative support, program assistant and clerical support series or employees whose principle duties and responsibilities are administrative support in nature. This includes FSNs employees whose principle duties and responsibilities are administrative support in nature. (Part B- Exhibit I)
- c. **The Export Expansion Award**: Recognizes groups or individuals for outstanding market development activity. Groups or individuals may be recognized in areas such as a trade show, buying mission, sales team, and for performance resulting in a new market and agricultural trade office activity. (Part B- Exhibit J)
- d. **The Reporting Excellence Award**: Recognizes field officers/offices reporting that effectively supports FAS' role as a provider of basic foreign market intelligence, facilitates the decision making process, advances program development, and enhances policy implementation. An employee or group may be nominated by anyone familiar with their reporting. (Part B- Exhibit K)

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B- 2

- e. The International Honor Award: Recognizes FAS employees and representatives of other Government agencies, universities, and the private sector who made significant contributions to Agency programs in development. (Part B- Exhibit L)
 - f. The Excellence in Communications Award: This honorary award recognizes employees who have demonstrated outstanding communication skills, either written (letters, speeches, memoranda, press releases, publications, electronic format etc.) or verbal (presentations, speeches, etc.). The demonstrated skills reflect favorably on FAS and enhance the agency's ability to accomplish its mission. (Part B- Exhibit M).
 - g. Trade Policy Teamwork Award: Recognizes a group of FAS employees, other USDA employees, and/or other government employees for outstanding teamwork in pursuit of FAS' market access goals. (Part B- Exhibit N)
 - h. The Partnership Award: Recognizes a group or individual, regardless of status (whether union or management) whose accomplishment(s) is/are considered by the FAS Partnership Council as the most outstanding in the Agency fostering the principles of Partnership as identified in Executive Order 12871.
 - i. Administrator's Special Award: In addition to the above awards, the Administrator has available the Administrator's Special Award, which he may present at his discretion.
 - j. Supervisory/Managerial Award: Recognizes supervisors and managers at all organizational levels whose accomplishments and performance are judged as the most outstanding and who demonstrate the greatest combination of skills in managing both people and activities through interactive team building.
6. **LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARDS**: Employees completing 10, 20, 30, 35, 40, and 50 years of Federal service, projected through December 31, 2001, are eligible to receive a Length of Service Award. This information is automatically computed for employees payrolled through the National Finance Center (NFC). For employees not payrolled through the NFC, please submit the information (employee name and years of service) to Stephen Crisp at fax (202) 418-9118. If you do not wish to have a Length of Service award published in the FAS Awards Booklet, and/or do not wish to receive a certificate or award item, please contact Mr. Crisp at (202) 418-8975.
7. **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM ASSISTANCE**: The Human Resources Division, Performance Management Benefits and Awards Branch, provides Employee Recognition Program advice and guidance to managers, supervisors, and employees. Please contact Stephen Crisp at 418-8975 or Cheryl Fuller at 418-8973, FAX 418-9118 should you need further details or information.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B- 3
EXHIBIT H

CIVIL RIGHTS AWARD

DESCRIPTION: An honorary award granted annually to FAS employee(s) at all organizational levels recognizing the valuable contributions and commitments made in the support of the USDA's and FAS' civil rights objectives.

ELIGIBILITY: All employees.

REQUIRED LEVEL

OF PERFORMANCE: The employee's most recent performance appraisal must support the conclusion that performance, as described, clearly exceeds the "Fully Successful" level.

CRITERIA: Outstanding accomplishment of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities such as:

- Involvement or participation in professional organization, task groups or committees, and programs directly affecting the recruitment, training, and advancement of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in USDA and/or FAS.
- Active involvement in expanding, promoting, or enforcing the legal status and civil rights of employees.
- Personal involvement with social issues impacting women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.
- Establishment of a positive work environment regarding equality in the office. Improves the opportunities or strengthens the performance of employees by facilitating the development of projects or programs which improve the quality of worklife.
- Planning or supporting special interest programs and activities which would enrich cultural understanding of diverse groups by attending and encouraging participation of employees.
Demonstrated intolerance of inappropriate comments or presentations in the workplace.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

**PART B- 4
EXHIBIT H-1**

APPROPRIATE

USE: When an employee(s) performs substantially beyond expectations on a specific assignment or aspects of an assignment or job function.

**BENEFITS TO
EMPLOYEE:**

Provides public recognition to the employee's accomplishment and contribution to the support of USDA and FAS missions, thus providing additional recognition and preserving credibility of the awards program.

Documents the employee's support of the civil rights objectives of USDA and FAS.

Employee is motivated to repeat high-quality performance to earn further recognition.

**NOMINATION
PROCEDURES:**

Submit performance appraisal form, Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated 7/94 or later), and a justification (not-to-exceed one page) through required supervisory channels to one of the Deputy Administrators or the Associate Administrator.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B- 5
EXHIBIT I

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT EXCELLENCE AWARD

DESCRIPTION: An honorary award granted annually to employees in the administrative support series or employees whose principal duties and responsibilities are administrative support in nature.

REQUIRED LEVEL

OF PERFORMANCE: The employee's most recent performance appraisal must support the conclusion that performance, as described, clearly exceeds the "Fully Successful" level.

CRITERIA: Employee has demonstrated high-quality performance of the technical responsibilities for his or her position and at a level that has substantially exceeded the performance standards of the position.

BENEFITS TO

EMPLOYEE: Provides public recognition to the employee's accomplishment and contribution to the support of the FAS mission, thus providing additional recognition and preserving credibility of the awards program.

Employee is motivated to repeat high-quality performance to earn further recognition.

NOMINATION

PROCEDURE: Submit performance appraisal form, Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated 7/94 or later), and a justification (not-to-exceed one page) through required supervisory channels to one of the Deputy Administrators or the

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B-6
EXHIBIT J

EXPORT EXPANSION AWARD

DESCRIPTION: An honorary award granted to employees whose duties and responsibilities include market and trade development. It recognizes exceptional market and trade development activity by either a group or an individual.

ELIGIBILITY: All Employees.

REQUIRED LEVEL

OF PERFORMANCE: The employee's most recent performance appraisal must support the conclusion that performance, as described, clearly exceeds the "Fully Successful" level.

CRITERIA: Exceptional accomplishment(s) of objectives and application of program resources beyond normal expectation resulting in new or expanded product markets and increased market expansion activity.

a. Trade Shows

- Exceptional organization and management;
- Maximum introduction of new products to market; and
- Exceptional sales results (actual sales consummated, not anticipated or projected).

b. Buying Missions or Sales Teams

- Nonsolicited reports of success from members;
- Documented purchases or sales made;
- New products purchased or sold;
- New products purchased or introduced into foreign markets; and
- Exceptional organization and management of teams.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B- 7
EXHIBIT J-1

- c. **Market Access**
 - Exceptional determination of new market opportunities or strategies resulting in new or improved market(s) for U.S. product(s).
 - Exceptional efforts to support reduction/removal of trade barriers resulting in increased or new imports of U.S. product(s) into a market.
- d. **Export Credit and Subsidy Programs:**
 - Exceptional support in the development and operation of export credit programs establishing new market(s) for U.S. product(s), maintaining market(s) and/or expanding market(s).
 - Exceptional support in the development and operation of subsidy programs to effectively meet subsidized competition from EC and others.

APPROPRIATE

USE:

When an employee or group of employees perform(s) substantially beyond expectations on a specific assignment or aspects of an assignment or job function.

**BENEFITS TO
EMPLOYEE:**

Provides public recognition of the employee's accomplishment and contribution to the support of the FAS mission, thus providing additional recognition and preserving credibility of the awards program.

Documents the employee(s) skill in market and trade development which contributes to career advancement potential.

Employee is motivated to repeat high-quality performance to earn further recognition.

**NOMINATION
PROCEDURE:**

Submit performance appraisal form, Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated 7/94 or later), and a justification (not-to-exceed one page) through required supervisory channels to one of the Deputy Administrators or the Associate Administrator.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B- 8
EXHIBIT K

REPORTING EXCELLENCE AWARD

DESCRIPTION: An honorary award granted annually to overseas personnel to recognize outstanding reporting, to encourage continuing team efforts to excel in all areas of agricultural and economic reporting, and to highlight the significant importance of quality scheduled and unscheduled reporting. Overall excellence in interpretive and analytical reporting is vital to the mission of FAS. The award recognizes reporting that effectively supports FAS' role as a provider of basic foreign market intelligence, facilitates the decision-making process, advances program development, and enhances policy implementation.

ELIGIBILITY: All officers and offices, including FSNs-only offices, are eligible to compete for the award. Anyone familiar with reporting for a particular post may submit a nomination. Field Office Heads should consider FSNs-only posts for nomination.

REQUIRED LEVEL

OF PERFORMANCE: The employee's most recent performance appraisal must support the conclusion that performance, as described, clearly exceeds the "Fully Successful" level.

CRITERIA: Criteria for the award reflect outstanding accomplishment of objectives beyond normal expectations resulting in quality reports, scheduled and unscheduled, which have improved and enhanced FAS' and USDA's market intelligence base, decision-making process, program development efforts, and policy implementation. The differences in nature and level of difficulty in reporting among the various field offices will be considered in the selection process. The award will recognize officers and offices that meet and exceed the criteria below as well as recognize offices/officers who have raised the level of their reporting performance over previous years.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B- 9
EXHIBIT K-1

Total Program Performance:

- demonstrated awareness of priorities;
- effective allocation of resources between scheduled reporting, special requests, and voluntaries;
- demonstrated flexibility to adjust alert reporting to reflect changing FAS/W needs and opportunities;
- consistent submission of reports on a timely basis;
- all reports are succinct, logical, and accurate; and
- reports reflect establishment and maintenance of a broad cadre of well-informed sources.

RELEVANCE:

- Reporting is pertinent to USDA policy initiatives and objectives as well as to FAS programs;
- reports reflect perceptiveness to end-user needs;
- reports are incisive and predictive identifying, explaining, and projecting trends; and
- they demonstrate a profound understanding of market dynamics, U.S. and international market interaction, and U.S. interests and policies.

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEE:

Provides public recognition of the employee's accomplishment and contribution to the support of the FAS mission, thus providing additional recognition and preserving credibility of the awards program.

Documents the employee(s) skill in reporting which contributes to career advancement potential.

Employee is motivated to repeat high-quality performance to earn further recognition.

NOMINATION PROCEDURE:

Submit performance appraisal form, Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated 7/94 or later), and justification (not-to-exceed one page) through required supervisory channels to one of the Deputy Administrators or the Associate Administrator.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B- 10
EXHIBIT L

INTERNATIONAL HONOR AWARD

DESCRIPTION: An honorary award granted annually to FAS employees and representatives of other Government agencies, universities, and the private sector who made significant contributions to Agency programs in international development.

ELIGIBILITY: All employees.

Individuals/groups employed in the following categories who have made significant contributions to the development, conduct and/or evaluations of Agency programs, demonstrating initiative in improving the quality, efficiency, and economy of Agency activities:

- Other Federal and USDA employees
- University community
- Private sector
- Foreign representatives
- Legislative Branch

CRITERIA: FAS employees may be considered for the International Honor Award for performance in the following categories:

- Support and operations
- Program Operations
- Management
- Technical Advisors
- Special Challenges
- Civil Rights

NOMINATION

PROCEDURES: Submit performance appraisal form, Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated 7/94 or later), and a one-page justification through required supervisory channels to one of the Deputy Administrators or the Associate Administrator.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B- 11
EXHIBIT M

EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

DESCRIPTION:	An honorary award granted annually to FAS employees at any organizational level whose accomplishments and performance in the area of communications are judged as outstanding, and who have demonstrated exceptional skill in the presentation (written or verbal) of information, ideas, opinions, or analyses that support the mission, values, and policies of FAS.
ELIGIBILITY:	Employees at any grade level, permanent, temporary or part-time.
REQUIRED LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE:	The employee's most recent performance appraisal must support the conclusion that performance, as described, clearly exceeds the "Fully Successful" level.
CRITERIA:	Criteria for the award include accomplishment of objectives beyond normal expectations resulting in improved understanding, clarity, and effectiveness of the FAS message as it relates to the mission, policies, decision making processes, program development efforts or quality of work life. The differences in expectations at varying grade levels will be appropriately considered.
RELEVANCE:	Presentation of information reflects understanding of the issue, agency policies and practices, and usefulness to end-users.
BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEES:	Provides public recognition of the employee's accomplishment and contribution in support of the FAS mission, and provides incentive for all employees to improve their communications skills.
NOMINATION PROCEDURE:	Submit performance appraisal form, Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (dated 7/94 or later), and a justification through supervisory channels to one of the Deputy Administrators or the Associate Administrator. Upon recommendation to the Employee Recognition Committee, the Administrator may choose one or more of those nominated.

Continued on the next page

FAS 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

PART B- 12
EXHIBIT N

TRADE POLICY TEAMWORK AWARD

DESCRIPTION:	An honorary award granted to groups of employees from FAS, other USDA agencies, and/or other federal agencies, who collaborate to retain or expand market access for agricultural products, including efforts to strengthen the global trading system or develop international standards.
ELIGIBILITY:	Groups consisting of any FAS employee(s) and employee(s) of other USDA agencies and/or other federal agencies who have made substantial contributions to the resolution of trade issues or the development of international trade rules and standards for agricultural products.
CRITERIA:	Exceptional teamwork in the pursuit or accomplishment of negotiating objectives in support of the Market Access goals of FAS, as outlined in the FAS Strategic Plan.
APPROPRIATE USE:	To recognize groups of employees from FAS, other USDA agencies, and/or other federal agencies who demonstrate the ability and willingness to coordinate effectively and work collaboratively as a team to focus resources on maintaining or expanding market opportunities for U.S. agricultural exporters. The award is to recognize effective communication and teamwork rather than the accomplishment of a particular objective by an individual. It is applicable to all trade policy issues, but particularly to the growing number of crosscutting issues which require the input of specialists from various parts of FAS or from other agencies which may or may not have market access as part of their own strategic goals.
BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEES:	<p>For FAS employees: provides public recognition of critical team building and communication skills. Employees are encouraged to develop and use these skills, particularly with regard to issues which cut across lines of responsibility.</p> <p>For employees of other agencies: provides public recognition for work done in pursuit of the FAS mission. Encourages additional contributions to help meet FAS goals and further coordination with FAS on issues which cut across lines of responsibility.</p>
NOMINATION PROCEDURES:	Submit Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation for Approval of Awards" (dated 7/94 or later), and a one-page justification through required supervisory channels to one of the Deputy Administrators or the Associate Administrator-designee.

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program

FSA EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) employee recognition program is designed to fairly and equitably recognize and reward individuals and groups for excellence in service. The program acknowledges contributions that lead to achievement of organizational, team, and individual results. Timely recognition provides a source of motivation for continued excellence.

2. BACKGROUND

Consistency is the basic principle of the employee recognition program. The issuance of awards at all organizational levels must be carried out with consistent application of the appropriate guidelines and policy. The following guiding principles promote an effective employee recognition program:

- Issuance of employee recognition must be based on consistently applied guidelines;
- Approval authorities must be consistently delegated to the lowest practical levels;
- Outstanding accomplishments must be consistently recognized in a timely manner;
- Approved employee recognition must be consistently publicized to a wide audience.

This policy signifies a culture change from annual performance rating based awards to on-going, contemporary recognition of teams and individuals for noteworthy contributions and/or achievements.

The basic objective of the Employee Recognition Program is to recognize individual employees and groups of employees that further the agency's guiding principles outlined in its strategic plan:

- Continue to improve and deliver high quality products and services to customers in a professional, consistent, and timely manner.
- Ensure fair and equal access and participation in our programs.
- Conduct business with honesty and integrity.
- Care for and protect the environment and promote responsible stewardship of natural resources.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

- Be innovative and resourceful in the procurement and deployment of information technology and use available technology effectively.
- Respect the individual differences and diversity of our workforce.

See 6(e) below for how to write justifications to meet this goal.

3. LEGAL AUTHORITIES THAT GOVERN EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

- Chapter 45, Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.) provides authority to establish employee recognition program (5 U.S.C. 4503); and Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 451.
- The Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (FEPCA), Public Law 101-509, provides Federal agencies authority to grant employees time-off from duty, without loss of pay or charge to leave, as an employee recognition.
- Regulatory requirements for Quality Step Increases are found in 5 CFR Part 531.
- Regulatory requirements for Senior Executive Service Recognition are found in 5 U.S.C. 5384, 5 U.S.C. 4502 through 4503, and 5 U.S.C. 4507.

4. COVERAGE

This program covers all FSA employees. For the purpose of this policy, FSA CO employees are included.

Political appointees at the GS-13 level and above (e.g., Executive Schedule, noncareer Senior Executive Service (SES), Schedule C employees) are excluded.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Administrator, FSA is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the program supports the Department's mission, goals, and objectives
- Ensuring equity in the distribution of recognition
- Ensuring that employees are informed of recognition policies and procedures
- Providing periodic training on the effective use of the recognition program
- Conducting annual reviews to ensure the effective use of the program
- Emphasizing the importance of teamwork through recognition of groups
- Incorporating funding for recognition into agency budget planning

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

- Emphasizing nonmonetary recognition for specific achievements
- Ensuring that employee recognition is publicized
- Delegating recognition program authority and funding to the lowest level consistent with the Secretary's policies and guidelines
- Eliminating unnecessary levels of review to ensure timely processing of recognition
- Encouraging innovation for nonmonetary recognition at the local level.

Supervisors and Managers are responsible for:

- Recognizing employees for specific achievements
- Ensuring equity in the distribution of recognition
- Considering input as appropriate from co-workers, customers, or other sources such as unions and employee organizations when making recognition decisions
- Recognizing contributions in a timely manner
- Emphasizing the importance of teamwork through recognition of groups
- Emphasizing nonmonetary recognition for specific achievements
- Promoting the recognition program by encouraging employee participation, arranging for appropriate presentations, and periodically publicizing recognition activities
- Allowing those recognized to choose the type of recognition they receive, when choices are possible
- Reviewing nominations to ensure that recognition is linked to the contribution and the amount accurately reflects the value of the contribution rather than grade level or other nonmerit factors.

Nominating Officials are responsible for:

- Actively seeking out exceptional achievements worthy of recognition
- Developing employee recognition nominations in a nondiscriminatory manner
- Accurately documenting the exceptional achievements of others and insuring the appropriate guidelines are applied to all nominations.

Designated Approving Officials are responsible for:

- Providing support to employees, supervisors, and managers
- Reviewing employee initiated awards for compliance to stated criteria and certifying funds availability.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

6. POLICY

a. Overview

There are many different types of employee recognition available. Recognition may be given for a specific outstanding accomplishment such as a superior contribution on a short-term assignment or project, an act of heroism, scientific achievement, major discovery or significant cost savings. The following types of awards are covered by this policy:

- Cash
- Certificates – Merit and Appreciation
- Gift Certificates
- Keepsakes Items
- Letters of Commendation
- Quality Step Increase
- Thank You Cards and Letters
- Time Off
- U.S. Savings Bonds
- Length of Service
- Agency Honor Awards
- Department and Federal Honor Awards
- External Awards.

Exhibit I describes each of the recognition categories in detail.

b. Delegation of Authority for Employee Recognition

Exhibit II, Employee Recognition Maximum Delegation of Authority, describes the employee recognition approval limitations, as authorized by USDA.

Further limitation of authority for employee recognition approval is within the area of responsibility of State Executive Directors, Division Directors, and equivalent positions. Delegating authority and responsibility to the lowest level is encouraged.

Exhibit III, Employee Recognition Delegation Worksheet, should be used in assigning delegations of authority within the appropriate area of responsibility.

c. Program Funding

Appropriate levels of funding for agency employee recognition programs will ensure the availability of resources critical to the motivation of employees and recognition of outstanding accomplishments.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

d. Recommendation and Approval of Recognition

All FSA employees should be considered for reward, based on work accomplishments, without regard to grade level, or other nonmerit factors. Review and approval requirements are determined by various organizational units within FSA, as documented in the local Employee Recognition Delegation Worksheet (Exhibit III).

All employees are delegated authority to develop award nominations involving co-workers or employees, with the exception of Quality Step Increases (QSI's).

A subordinate may nominate a supervisor or higher level official for an award. The nomination must be evaluated and approved by an individual equivalent to, or higher than, the recipient.

When nominating an employee for a time off award, the nomination should be routed through the recipient's supervisor as a courtesy.

When determining the type and amount of recognition, information from telephone contacts and feedback from co-workers can be considered.

In determining appropriate levels of monetary (except QSI's) and nonmonetary recognition, the following criteria must be applied:

Moderate Contribution Level: Moderate change or modification of operating procedures meeting minimum standard for cash award, simple modification of methods, or limited service to the public, which affect the functions, mission, or employees of a specific work unit (e.g., easing a backlog or completing a project of short duration).

Recognition: Certificate, or up to \$500.00, or 1 to 24 hours of time off.

Substantial Contribution Level: Substantial change or modification of an operating procedure. An important improvement to value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public, which affect several divisions, offices, States, or counties.

Recognition: \$501.00 - \$2,000.00, or 25 to 40 hours of time off.

High Contribution Level: Major improvement, usually affecting major problems; major changes in methods, or procedures, which affect all divisions or field offices.

Recognition: \$2,001.00 - \$5,000.00.

Exceptional Contribution Level: Initiation of a new principle or major program. Superior improvement to the quality of a critical activity, program, or service to the public, which affect Department-wide or in the public interest throughout the United States.

Recognition: \$5,001.00 - \$10,000.00.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Rating officials are the only authorized persons who may nominate their employees for QSI's. Approval must be obtained as defined in Exhibit III.

Whenever possible, employees may be allowed to choose the type of recognition they receive.

e. Documentation

Nomination and approval of awards must be documented on Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards".

All award justifications must detail how the awardee(s) was engaged in furthering at least one of the agency's strategic goals. This can be done by specifically addressing one or more of the outcomes for a goal and showing how the awardee(s) accomplishments supports achievement of that outcome:

Goal # 1. Provide farm income support and natural disaster assistance to eligible producers, cooperatives, and associations to help improve the economic stability and viability of the agricultural sector, and to help ensure the production of an adequate and reasonably priced supply of food and fiber.

Outcomes:

- Improve economic stability of program participants.
- Provide timely and effective services.
- Provide timely and effective administrative support services to agency program managers and specialists.

Goal # 2. Assist agricultural producers and landowners achieve a high level of stewardship of soil, water, air, and wildlife resources on America's farmland and ranches while protecting the human and natural environment.

Outcomes:

- Reduce soil erosion.
- Reduce sedimentation in streams and lakes.
- Improve water quality.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

- Establish wildlife habitat.
- Restore farmland damaged by natural disasters.
- Protect public health by reducing groundwater contamination.
- Provide timely and effective administrative support services to agency program managers and specialists.

Goal # 3. Assist eligible individuals and families in becoming successful farmers and ranchers.

Outcomes:

- Improve economic viability of farmers and ranchers.
- Reduce losses in direct loan programs.
- Timely response to loan making and servicing requests.
- Maximum financial and technical assistance to underserved groups to aid them in establishing and maintaining profitable farming operations.
- Provide timely and effective administrative support services to agency program managers and specialists.

Goal # 4. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of FSA's commodity acquisition, procurement, storage, and distribution activities to support domestic and international food assistance programs and administer the U. S. Warehouse Act (USWA).

Outcomes:

- Increase the self-sufficiency of USWA examination operations.
- Purchase high quality commodities.
- Deliver the highest possible level of customer service.
- Provide timely and effective administrative support services to agency program managers and specialists.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Goal # 5. Provide effective management, program, and administrative support services, and information technology processes.

Outcomes:

- Improve customer service delivery to program managers, customers, and the public.
- Improve organizational performance and productivity of financial management systems and reporting, procurement, informational technology investments, and human resource services.
- Provide timely and effective administrative support services to agency executives, program managers, and the general public.
- Provide timely and effective administrative support services to agency program managers and specialists.

Goal # 6. To ensure equal access and treatment in program delivery and employment, provide a diverse workforce free of discrimination, and ensure equal opportunity for minority, women-owned, and small disadvantaged businesses.

Outcomes:

- Reduce under-representation of women, minority groups, and disabled in Agency employment, occupational categories, and grade levels.
- Deliver Agency programs in full compliance with applicable civil rights laws, and Departmental goals, policies, and procedures.
- Meet or exceed Departmentally established goals for acquisition of products and services from minority, women-owned, and small disadvantaged businesses.
- Establish baselines and additional metrics for measurement of the Agency's progress in meeting its civil rights and equal opportunity goals.

When the value of the award is \$500 or less, or time off awards of 10 hours or less, only a brief description of the accomplishment is necessary.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

For awards greater than \$500, or time off awards greater than 10 hours, Exhibit IV outlines helpful hints for preparing a justification.

Nominating and approving officials are responsible for insuring that dual recognition for the same accomplishment does not occur. However, the combination of two awards (e.g., a plaque may be given in conjunction with a cash award) cannot exceed the total value of the approved award.

f. Team Recognition

Employees working as a team may be recognized when team contributions and results exceed expectations. In addition to the guidelines and delegations of authority, the following guidelines apply to teams:

- Team recognition may be issued only when a strong interdependence exists among team member tasks and team outcomes;
- Clear goals for the team was established in advance of team performance and evaluation of accomplishments;
- Team recognition must be distributed to individual team members equitably (i.e., based on individual performance within the team) rather than equally (i.e., all team members receive equal amounts).

Teams of interagency employees may be nominated for employee recognition. Recognition requiring a higher level approval must be jointly reviewed and approved by appropriate personnel from each agency included in the nomination. Team members that are private citizens may be included in the team award; however, they may only receive keepsakes, letters of commendation, certificates of appreciation, or thank you letters/cards.

g. Awards to Private Citizens

Private citizens who contribute to the mission of FSA or to USDA's mission as a whole may receive recognition for those efforts. Volunteers, State agency employees, and other mission-related partners are eligible on the same basis as other private citizens.

Private citizens may receive thank you letters/notes, letters of commendation, or keepsakes. They are not eligible to receive other types of recognition.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

h. Publicity

Publicizing exceptional accomplishments establishes performance benchmarks for the workforce and promotes accountability in the utilization of agency resources.

Public recognition and communication of exceptional individual and team contributions is encouraged. If public recognition is chosen, the communication should describe the contribution and the award issued.

Local newspapers and similar sources may be contacted when the award is significant enough to warrant this level of recognition.

i. Employee Recognition Committee

The State Executive Directors and office heads may consider establishing an Employee Recognition Committee. Membership of this committee should include a diverse cross-section of employees, including Union representation in locations with Bargaining Units.

Following are examples of the roles of the Committee:

- Ensuring that employee recognition is based on consistently applied guidelines;
- Ensuring nondiscriminatory employee recognition distribution;
- Ensuring recognition is issued in a timely manner.

The committee should not be used for routine approval of individual or team award nominations. However, to support employee involvement in the employee recognition decision process, the Committee may be used as a source of input for high-level or large dollar value nominations.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Exhibit I. Award Categories

Cash Awards

All FSA employees, Federal and CO, are eligible to receive cash awards.

Cash awards may range from \$50 to \$10,000, depending on the contribution level. Whenever possible, cash awards less than \$500 will be issued immediately and taxes will be added to the award amount.

Certificates, Letters of Commendation, and Thank You Notes

All FSA employees are eligible to receive Certificates of Appreciation, Certificates of Merit, Letters of Commendation, and Thank You Notes. Certificates of Appreciation or Certificates of Merit may also be awarded to non-FSA individuals and organizations.

All employees are encouraged to write letters of thanks, appreciation, and commendation for individuals when they believe a contribution to be significant. When a contribution warrants additional recognition, a letter of commendation from a higher organizational level may be requested.

Gift Certificates

All FSA employees are eligible to receive gift certificates.

Gift certificates are items that can be redeemed for merchandise or services at a particular place of business, a group of businesses, or a retail location (this includes chain stores, restaurants, and shopping centers). The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) considers gift certificates to be taxable fringe benefits that must be taxed on the fair market value. The face value of the gift certificate would be considered the fair market value, and tax withholding will be based on that amount. A gift certificate cannot be converted to a cash payment.

Keepsakes

All FSA employees, Federal and CO, are eligible to receive keepsakes. Private citizens who contribute to the mission of USDA or the Federal government as a whole may also receive keepsakes. State agencies, and other mission-related partners are eligible on the same basis as other private citizens. When appropriate, concurrence from the non-FSA employer should be gained prior to issuing recognition. Keepsake items emphasize symbolic recognition of significant contributions and public recognition. Items presented as honorary awards must meet all the following criteria:

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Exhibit I. Award Categories (Continued)

- Be something that the recipient could reasonably be expected to value, but not something that conveys a sense of monetary value;
- Have a lasting trophy value;
- Clearly symbolize the employer-employee relationship in some fashion;
- Take an appropriate form to be purchased with public funds and to be use in the public sector.

Keepsakes can include such items as paperweights, key chains, clocks, plaques, jackets, T-shirts, coffee mugs, pen and pencil sets, etc. Presenters of awards should be particularly sensitive to public perceptions that could arise from granting expensive, keepsake items. Offices are cautioned not to give "personal gifts" to employees. Keepsake awards should normally meet the following criteria:

- be of an honorary nature;
- be able to be worn, displayed, or used in the recipients work environment; and include the Department or FSA seal or logo. The Department or agency name, or logo, should be clearly visible on the keepsake and must be permanently affixed. A peel-off sticker showing the agency name or logo is not adequate.

No more than \$250 may be spent on any one item. The cost of customizing the item must be included in the total cost.

Quality Step Increases

General Schedule (GS) and CO employees may receive one Quality Step Increase (QSI) in a 52-week period. Wage Grade (WG) employees are not eligible for QSI's.

A QSI Award is an additional within-grade increase granted for high quality performance of assigned duties and responsibilities sustained over a period of time. The recommending supervisor must prepare a justification that specifically describes:

- the actual result(s) achieved and its linkage to established targets;
- how the employee substantially exceeded the generic performance standards (include a copy of the performance plan) and any specific, expected work results, communicated to the employee by the supervisor; and
- how the employee's performance has been sustained at such a high level throughout the performance appraisal period.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Exhibit I. Award Categories (Continued)

The supervisor must also certify that the high level of accomplishments is expected to continue.

QSI's are not appropriate when it is known an employee is in step 10 of the pay range or when it is known that the employee is about to receive a promotion or vacate a position within 60 days. A QSI may be appropriate if the employee is moving to a similar position at the same grade level and performance is expected to continue at the same level of effectiveness.

Since QSI's are in addition to within grade increases, an employee who receives a quality increase does not start a new waiting period to meet the time requirements for a regular within grade increase. The time the employee served in the previous pay step (before the QSI was effective) will count toward the total waiting period for the next within grade increase.

When the QSI places the employee into a step at which the waiting period becomes longer (e.g., at step 4 the waiting period becomes 104 weeks, and at step 7 the waiting period becomes 156 weeks), the waiting period for the next within-grade increase is extended by 52 weeks; however, the employee receives the benefit of the QSI during this period.

Time Off Awards

All FSA employees, except Senior Executive Service employees, are eligible for time off awards. Private employees are not eligible for time-off awards.

A full-time employee may be granted up to 80 hours of time off during a leave year. A part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty may be granted up to the average number of hours worked in a pay period or the employee's scheduled tour of duty. Awards are in full-hour increments.

The amount of time off that can be granted for a single contribution is one-half the maximum that may be granted during the leave year.

A time off award must be scheduled and used within 1 year after the effective date of the award; any unused time off is forfeited. The award is effective the first full pay period following approval. Before using any time off, the supervisor must concur with the requested dates.

A time off award will not convert to a cash payment under any circumstances.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Exhibit I. Award Categories (Continued)

U.S. Savings Bonds

All FSA employees are eligible to receive U.S. Savings Bonds.

U.S. Savings Bonds must be purchased in the employee's name.

The amount of the award should be equal to the purchase price of the bond.

The IRS considers U.S. Savings bonds to be taxable fringe benefits that must be taxed on their fair market value. The face value of a savings bond generally is the purchase price of the bond. For example, if a \$200 bond is purchased for \$100, tax withholding must be based on \$100.

Length of Service Awards

Length of Service Awards are given to recognize an employee's Federal and CO service. Employees should be recognized with the presentation of a certificate and a keepsake award. Employees should be recognized at 5 years of service and each 5-year increment thereafter. In computing eligibility, employees shall receive credit for total Federal and CO service, including civilian and all honorable military service.

State Executive Directors should work together to insure that length of service awards are applied consistently within their area of responsibility. Recognition should be timely, as close to the anniversary date as possible.

Employees should have a choice in selecting keepsake items. The estimated value will be consistent with the following chart:

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Dollar Value</u>
5	\$25 – 50
10	\$51 – 75
15	\$76 – 100
20	\$101 – 125
25	\$126 – 150
30	\$151 – 200
35+	\$201 – 250

Presentation of the certificate and keepsake award may be in front of the employee's work group.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Exhibit I. Award Categories (Continued)

FSA Administrator's Honor Awards

FSA Administrator's Honor Awards provide recognition to FSA employees and our partners. Administrator's honor awards are the most prestigious recognition that can be granted by FSA for career accomplishments, exceptional support of FSA's mission, or for heroism.

Department Honor Awards

Departmental Honor Awards provide recognition to employees of the Department and our partners. Honor awards are the most prestigious recognition that can be granted by the Department for career accomplishments, exceptional support of the departmental mission, or for heroism.

Other Federal and External Honor Awards

These awards are sponsored by other federal agencies or organizations or are co-sponsored with the Department. These awards may include, but are not limited to, the GEICO Public Service Award, the Roger W. Jones Award, the William T. Pecora Award, and the WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) Award. The Department will disseminate award criteria including the sponsor, the due dates, and other pertinent information, through Agency Human Resources Management Divisions, when awards are announced.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Exhibit II. Employee Recognition Maximum Delegation of Authority

This chart describes approval limitations as authorized by USDA. State Executive Directors and office heads, or equivalent, should use Exhibit III to define the delegations within their area of responsibilities.

**EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM RECOGNITION CATEGORY
MAXIMUM AUTHORITY ALLOWED BY USDA POLICY**

<u>Cash</u>	\$500 \$501 - \$10,000	Nomination and Approval by Designated Approving Official (No higher level review is required.) Approval With One Higher Level of Review
<u>Quality Step Increase</u>		Approval With One Higher Level of Review
<u>Thank-you Card or Letter and Certificates</u>		Nomination and Approval by All Employees (No higher level review required.)
<u>Keepsake Items</u> (\$250 max)		Nomination and Approval by All Employees (No higher level review required.)
<u>U.S. Savings Bonds</u> 250 Purchase Amount		Nomination and Approval by All Employees (No higher level review required.)
<u>Gift Certificates</u> (\$100 max)		Nomination and Approval by All Employees (No higher level review required.)
<u>Time-Off</u>	10 Hours* 40 Hours*	Nomination and Approval by a Manager or Supervisor (No higher level review required.) Approval With One Higher Level of Review

* Further limitations apply to part-time and intermittent employees.

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Exhibit III. Employee Recognition Delegation Worksheet

This is to be used by State Executive Directors and office heads, or equivalent, to define delegations within their area of responsibility

RECOGNITION CATEGORY	APPROVAL LEVEL REQUIRED*
-----------------------------	---------------------------------

Cash	_____
------	-------

Gift Certificates	_____
-------------------	-------

Keepsake Items	_____
----------------	-------

Quality Step Increase	_____
-----------------------	-------

Thank You Cards, Letters, and/or Certificates	_____
---	-------

Time -Off	_____
-----------	-------

U.S. Savings Bonds	_____
--------------------	-------

*At a minimum designated approving officials must be identified by title.

Effective Date:	_____
-----------------	-------

Area of Coverage:	_____
-------------------	-------

Signature (Authorized Official):	_____
----------------------------------	-------

Continued on the next page

FSA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Exhibit IV. Justification Outline

Following is step-by-step outline that describes the sections and verbage to justify an award.

During the period of (give time of performance), (give name of individual or group), (give explanation of accomplishment).

This exceeded expectations as identified in the current performance plan by:

- Improving quality.
- Timely completion of the project.
- Increasing productivity.
- Overcoming adverse obstacles or working under unusual circumstances.
- Using unusual creativity.
- Saving the Government time and/or money.
- Increasing program effectiveness.

As a result:

- Project acceptance.
- Savings in time, money, and/or material.
- More efficiency.
- Effectiveness.
- Technological advancement.
- Productivity increase.
- Improved levels of cooperation that will result in...

Therefore, we propose an award of (amount/hours).

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program

 United States
Department of
Agriculture

Risk
Management
Agency

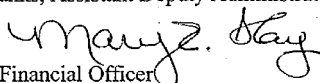
Financial Management
Staff

Washington, DC
20250

ACTION MEMORANDUM

August 24, 2001

TO: Eric Edgington, Acting Director, External Affairs Staff
William Buchanan, Director, Civil Rights and Community Outreach Staff
Don Stonecypher, Director, Program Support Staff
Garland Westmoreland, Deputy Administrator, Risk Compliance
Marian Jenkins, Acting Deputy Administrator, Insurance Services
Tim Witt, Deputy Administrator, Research and Development
Larry Piatz, Assistant Deputy Administrator, Risk Compliance
Jacqueline Blanks, Assistant Deputy Administrator, Research and Development

FROM: Mary E. Slay 
Acting Chief Financial Officer

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 Performance/Recognition Awards

PURPOSE:

We have reserved \$300,000 in the Office of the Administrator's budget to cover the cost of FY 2001 Performance/Recognition Awards for Risk Management Agency (RMA) employees. Followings are the allotments and procedures for approving recommendations for awards:

Office of the Administrator:	\$ 26,370
Research and Development:	\$ 90,830
Insurance Services:	\$114,270
Risk Compliance:	\$ 61,530
Presidential Award:	\$ 7,000
Total:	\$300,000

PROCEDURES/DEADLINES:

The Assistant Deputy Administrators for Research and Development, Insurance Services, and Risk Compliance should work with the directors of their cost centers to identify employees whose performance this rating period they believe warrants recognition. The Assistant Deputy Administrator

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

FY 2001 PERFORMANCE/RECOGNITION AWARDS

2

in consultation with the Deputy Administrator should develop recommendations for how the funds allotted to their unit should be distributed. The directors of External Affairs Staff, Civil Rights and Program Support Staff should do likewise and provide their recommendations to the Acting Administrator. Your award list of names and amounts should be provided to me by September 6, 2001. The lists will be reviewed by the Acting Administrator to ensure award guidelines and procedures are followed. If adjustments are necessary, you will be so advised.

An employee may receive recognition for no more than two awards. The two awards may be in the form of a cash award and a time-off award or a quality step increase (QSI) and a time-off award. No employee may receive two monetary awards such as a cash award and a QSI.

AUTHORITY TO APPROVE AWARDS:

The same delegation of authorities for approving awards for last fiscal year will be used. These are:

Up to \$1,000 -	Division/Office Directors
1,001 to 2, 500 -	Deputy Administrators
\$2,500 + -	Acting Administrator

The cash award forms must be approved and fully authorized on or before September 30, 2001 in order to charge cost to this fiscal year. You should use accounting code 1010101000041 on all documents.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

Cash Award form (AD-287-2 – Recommendation and Approval of Awards) must include the following supporting documentation:

- 1) Performance Award - A copy of the employee's performance rating and a **detailed** justification that explains why the employee is deserving of an award.
- 2) Quality Step Increase - A copy of the employee's performance rating and a **detailed** justification that explains why the employee is deserving of an award.
- 3) Superior Accomplishment Award – A **detailed** justification explaining why the employee is deserving of an award.

Now that RMA is operating under a Pass/Fail Rating System, it is likely that most employees will receive a Pass rating but not all of those employees will likely receive an award. Therefore, the

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

FY 2001 PERFORMANCE/RECOGNITION AWARDS

3

justifications must differentiate why some employees with a Pass rating are receiving an award while others are not. The plaques/certificates for presentation to employees receiving awards are to be prepared by the secretary in the office where the recommendation originated.

SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS TO FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT STAFF:

For Headquarters, IS/Regional Offices, and RC/Compliance Offices, the approved award forms with supporting documentation should be submitted to Michelle Wert of the Financial Management Staff (FMS) by September 18, 2001. The FMS will ensure the allotments are not exceeded, documents are properly prepared and funds correctly entered in the financial system. These documents will be submitted to Human Resources Division in Washington, D.C. on or before September 28, 2001.

The Assistant Deputy Administrator for R&D should forward the cash award forms and attachments for R&D employees to the Personnel Office in Kansas City on or before September 28, 2001. The Assistant Deputy Administrator for R&D will provide FMS a complete list of the awards forwarded to the KC-Personnel Office.

Attached is a copy the RMA Awards Program. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Michelle Wert at (202) 720-8710.

Attachment

cc: Acting Administrator
Stephen Crisp, FSA/HRD
Financial Management Staff File

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

**Risk Management Agency
Awards Program**

1 Introduction

These instructions supplement the Department's "Employee Guide to Recognition" and cover all Risk Management Agency (RMA) employees.

2 Purpose of Program

The RMA Awards Program is designed to encourage employees to participate in increasing productivity and improving Government operations by recognizing and rewarding employees in a timely manner. Awards can be given for specific special acts during the fiscal year or a result of overall performance throughout the fiscal year.

3 Definitions

A) Quality Step Increase (QSI)

An increase in an employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the grade of his or her position to the next higher step of that grade which can be given when the employee's summary rating of record is at the "Outstanding" level of competence.

B) Performance Bonus

A one-time, lump sum cash award which can be given when the employee's summary rating of record shows that overall performance is at least at the "Superior" level of competence.

C) Superior Accomplishment Awards

Monetary or non-monetary awards given in recognition for specific contributions resulting in measurable benefits or savings and/or nonmeasurable benefits to the Government. Eligible contributions include:

- A superior contribution either within or outside of job responsibilities;
- A scientific achievement; or
- An act of heroism.

An Extra Effort Award is an example of a monetary superior accomplishment award.

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

D) Nonmonetary Awards

Medals, certificates, plaques, citations, badges, or other similar items that have an award or honor connotation.

E) Measurable Benefits

Benefits to the Government that can be measured in terms of dollars saved or costs avoided.

F) Nonmeasurable Benefits

Benefits to the Government which cannot be measured in terms of dollars saved or costs avoided.

G) Recommending Individual

Any employee may be a recommending individual for all awards except awards based on an employee's performance appraisal (QSI's and Performance Bonuses). For QSI's and Performance Bonuses, the employee's rater is the recommending individual.

4 Coverage

A) USDA Employees

This program applies to all RMA employees and RMA recognition of employees of other USDA Agencies. Former employees are eligible for monetary awards for contributions made while employed by the Department.

B) Non-USDA Employees

- All Federal employees are eligible for monetary and non-monetary awards for contributions which benefit the Department.
- Non-federal employees are not eligible for monetary awards, but may be granted non-monetary awards for contributions which benefit the Department.

C) Schedule C Employees

Schedule C employees in grades equivalent to GS-13 and above are not eligible for awards under this program.

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

5 Responsibility for the Program

A) Agency Administrator

The Agency Administrator is responsible for ensuring that the normal management review and control processes of RMA are used to identify programs and operational areas with superior work results. Units and individuals whose contributions have contributed significantly to noteworthy achievements should be considered for honorary or monetary awards. This process should not prevent supervisors from submitting other award recommendations on their own initiative. In addition, approving officials shall ensure that no embarrassment comes to the Department or RMA as a result of an award to any individual or unit.

B) Supervisors and Managers

It is the responsibility of supervisors and managers at all levels to actively participate in and support the Awards Program through:

- Use of awards as an integral part of supervision and management;
- Ensure that all subordinate personnel, including other supervisors, are recommended promptly for recognition when any action by an individual or group of employees in connection with or related to their official employment meets the criteria established in this program;
- Ensure that, in qualifying and selecting employees for promotion, due weight is given to recognition granted under the Federal Incentive Awards Program;
- Encourage subordinate employees to exercise their responsibility for improving productivity, efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of Government operations and assisting them in developing their ideas;
- Promptly evaluating, or referring for evaluation, any suggestions or recommendations forwarded to them; and
- Identification of program or operational areas that achieve superior results may warrant recognition, identify employees who have made a special contribution to these results and consider them for appropriate recognition.

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

C) Director, Human Resources Division (HRD)/Director, Kansas City Management Office-Personnel Division (KCMO-PD)

These individuals are the Administrator's delegated representatives, responsible for overall administration of the Agency's Awards Program for their serviced employees. KCMO-PD is the Servicing Personnel Office (SPO) for employees in Kansas City. HRD is the SPO for all other employees. Their responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Review of all recommendations for adequacy and accuracy, as necessary to determine that submissions comply with the criteria established in the procedure;
- Technical guidance in administering the overall Awards Program;
- Training material advice, and staff assistance in preparing award nominations and making arrangements related to RMA/USDA's Honor Awards Ceremonies;
- Material (announcements, posters) to promote the Program;
- Evaluation of the Program on an annual basis to determine strengths and weaknesses; improve procedures and set program objectives; and
- Timely process monetary awards and other special agency award programs.

6 Criteria and Types of Awards

All monetary award nominations must be submitted on Form AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards" (See Exhibit 1), accompanied by documentation describing the contribution and how it exceeded job requirements and/or benefited the Government.

A QSI's

A QSI may be granted to GS and GM employees, but not to stay-in-school and co-op employees. When recommending an employee for a QSI, consideration should be given to the following:

- If the employee has received a QSI within the preceding 52 weeks (an employee is ineligible for a second QSI until 52 weeks have past).
- Any upcoming promotion (which may cancel out the benefits of the QSI).
- Any upcoming within grade increase (WGI) which puts the employee into step 4 or 7 (these steps have longer waiting periods than the step immediately preceding them and a QSI will delay receipt of the WGI).

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

- If the employee is on a temporary promotion (the benefits of a QSI might be lost when the temporary promotion ends).
- If the employee is in step 10 (in which case, a QSI is of no benefit to the employee).

B Performance Bonuses

A Performance Bonus may be granted to employees with "Superior" or better ratings. No more than one Performance Award may be granted within a 52 week period. Performance must have been sustained for a minimum of six months.

C Superior Accomplishment Awards

1. Extra Effort Awards

To recognize performance which has exceeded job requirements. For example, a particular project or assignment which involved overcoming unusual difficulties, performance of assigned duties with special effort or innovation that resulted in significant economies or other highly desirable benefits, or research or exemplary or courageous handling of an emergency situation related to official employment. Documentation should describe the contribution within 90 days of the act. The documentation should also denote measurable and/or nonmeasurable benefits to the Government. An individual or group is eligible to receive an Extra Effort Award.

2. Suggestions

Cash awards for adopted suggestions will be awarded to any employee whose idea directly contributed to Government efficiency, effectiveness, or productivity.

3. Special RMA Award Programs

Special award programs may be established to meet special needs of the Agency. The SPO should be contacted for further information. Areas in which special awards may be given are:

- (a) Civil Rights/Equal Employment Opportunity (CR/EEO).** Give recognition to supervisors, employees, and units who have made significant efforts toward fostering equal employment opportunity within RMA and USDA by contributing actively to CR/EEO goals.
- (b) Occupational Safety and Health.** Give recognition to all employees who make significant contributions in preventing accidents and promoting the safety and health program.

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

D Honor Awards

Annually, HRD will request nominations for the Department's Honor Awards Program which recognize those employees whose careers have been marked with singular and/or sustained excellence in service to the public. These awards are normally presented at an annual ceremony in June.

E Participation in External Awards

RMA will participate in non-Government awards when invited to officially submit nominations. HRD will issue announcements of such awards and instruct offices on nominating procedures when such announcements are received from outside sources.

F Awards to Private Citizens

RMA may honor private citizens or organizations with Certificates of Appreciation to commend them officially for beneficial contributions they have made to the public service. All nominations for such awards shall be forwarded to HRD/KCMO-PD. Certificates of Appreciation will be signed by the Administrator.

G Career Awards

Full-time and part-time employees will be recognized by granting 10, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 50-year career service awards on the basis of their service to the Government. These awards will be distributed as soon as possible after June 1 of each year. The recognition includes a certificate and pin in the form of the Federal Civilian Service emblem. Temporary employees may be recognized upon notification from the appropriate Office that such employees meet the required criterion. All career award certificates will be signed by the Administrator with presentations by the appropriate Division Director.

7 Award Amount

A Extra Effort Awards

Special act, suggestion and invention award amounts are based on benefits realized by the Government. If the benefits are measurable, then the award should be approximately 3 percent of the first year savings. If the benefits are nonmeasurable, use the guideline chart in Exhibit 2 to determine the amount of the award.

B Quality Step Increases

Advances the employee one step without regard to established waiting period.

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

C Performance Bonuses

Will not exceed 3 percent of the employee's base salary. The following ranges shall be used when recommending award amounts:

- One to two percent for a summary rating of "Superior."
- Three percent for a summary rating of "Outstanding."

8 Authority to Approve Awards

A The Administrator

The Administrator may pay monetary awards to and incur necessary expenses for the honorary recognition of an employee who, by their superior accomplishment, and/or other personal effort, contributes to the efficiency, economy or other improvement in Government operations or performs a special act or service in the public interest in connection with or related to official employment.

B Delegated Authority Below The Administrator

The Administrator delegates authority to approve/disapprove monetary awards for accomplishments and contributions is as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Up to \$1,000 | - Division/Office Directors |
| Up to \$2,500 | - Deputy Administrators |

Approving Officials must complete block 23 (Approving Official (signature)) on Form AD-287-2. The signature date of block 23 determines the fiscal year to which the award is charged. Funds Control must be reviewed and accounting code (Document Control Number) with the correct fiscal year completed prior to submission to the Approving Official. The Approving Official is responsible for ensuring that the correct accounting code is on the Form AD-287-2 before it is forwarded for processing.

All awards must be signed by two officials of the agency. Therefore, if one of the officials listed above as an Approving Official is recommending an award the award must be signed by another official who is at a higher level in the agency.

9 Preparation of Preliminary Forms, Letters of Approval and Certificates of Merit

A The recommending individual

The recommending individual will ensure that the AD-287-2, "Recommendation and Approval of Awards," (See Exhibit 1) for approved monetary awards is completed accurately with all necessary signatures.

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

B Letters and Certificates of Approval

The Approving Official will prepare a letter that briefly describes who recommended the award and why it was given, and also congratulates the employee(s) on their performance. Certificates of Merit and/or Appreciation will also be prepared.

C Submission of Documents

All approved awards must be submitted to the SPO for final processing. Documents should be submitted as follows:

- AD-287-2, if award is monetary, and;
- Award documentation (letter and certificate for all awards, plus, for QSI's and Performance Bonuses, a copy of the employee's rating and performance plan).

10 Confidentiality of Award Nominations

Supervisors and management officials should not discuss monetary or honorary award recommendations with nominees until the award has been approved. The documentation for these types of awards should be considered privileged information, and generally made available to those involved in the decision process and certain other officials, such as Funds Control, on a need to know basis.

11 Presentation of Awards

The recommending individual should arrange an appropriate ceremony. It is recommended that awards be presented as soon as possible, even though the award money may not have been received. Prudence should be exercised in the expenditure of funds for award ceremonies. Receptions are permitted for such awards as the Presidential Letter of Commendation and USDA's Honor Awards. All requests for funds in conjunction with receptions should be forwarded to the SPO for approval.

12 Disapproved Awards

When awards are not approved, the Approving Official shall prepare a letter to the recommending individual stating the reason for not approving the recommendation. A Copy of the recommendation and the letter of non-approval of any awards shall be mailed to the SPO.

13 Certificates of Appreciation

A Approval and Issuance

All of the officials named in Part 8 of this procedure may sign and issue Form AD-141A, "Certificate of Appreciation," to their subordinate employees. Such certificates shall be awarded only to employees who have clearly shown evidence of some special achievement.

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

B Distribution

- Present original certificate to the recipient; and
- Submit a copy of certificate, with brief supporting justification, to the SPO to be filed in the recipient's Employee Performance Folder.

14 Records

Each Division/Office shall maintain records of all suggestions, QSI's, Performance Bonuses and Special Achievement recommendations, and Certificates of Appreciation received from or issued to employees within their area of jurisdiction in accordance with the Privacy Act.

15 Recognized Employee Organization

Where exclusive representation exists, this program does not apply until bargaining takes place. Where contract language addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

16 Time Off Awards

The provisions of Notice PM-1952 are valid for fiscal year 1999.

17 Questions

Questions about this program should be addressed to HRD at (202) 418-8975 or (202) 418-8973.

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Exhibit 1

Example of an Award Nomination

Following is an example of AD-287-2 for an Extra Effort Award.

It is the policy of the Department to ensure that consideration for awards is made without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, disability or other nonmerit factors.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RECOMMENDATION & APPROVAL OF AWARDS

CASE NO. (Personnel Use Only)

NOTE: For group awards, attach list of group members. Show data in Items 2 - 9, and award amount for each payee.

1. AGENCY FSA		2. NAME OF EMPLOYEE (Last, first, middle initial) DOE, JOHN X.		5. PAY PLAN, SERIES / GRADE / STEP GS-7/4	
3. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. 123-45-6789		4. POSITION TITLE SECRETARY		8. ACCOUNTING CODE for Federal Employees only (enter your office's code)	
6. ORGANIZATION AND LOCATION X DIV, DAFF		7. PERIOD COVERED FOR AWARD (mm, dd, yy) From: 4/1/97 To: 4/3/97			
9. IF AWARD APPROVED, MAIL CHECK TO: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SALARY CHECK ADDRESS <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify address: →)					

10. LIST AWARDS OR GS'S IN THE PAST 52 WEEKS (Specify type of award, amount received, and effective date.)
(list previous awards)

11. CITATION: SUMMARIZE EMPLOYEE'S CONTRIBUTION IN 25 WORDS OR LESS. (This language will appear on the employee's certificate.)
EMPLOYEE IS BEING RECOGNIZED FOR: EXCEPTIONAL SKILL AND ENERGY IN COMPLETING THE QUARTERLY PRODUCTION REPORTS.

COMPLETE THE APPROPRIATE AWARD SECTION

12. TYPE OF RECOGNITION RECOMMENDED (check one)					
<input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION OR INVENTION *		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXTRA EFFORT AWARD *		<input type="checkbox"/> SPOT AWARD	
<input type="checkbox"/> KEEPSAKE AWARD		<input type="checkbox"/> GAINSHARING AWARD		<input type="checkbox"/> TIME OFF AWARD **	
<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER *					
* Attach a description of the contribution or patent notification being recognized and the resulting benefits to the Government. ** Attach a description if the contribution exceeds the moderate benefits.					
13. NO. OF PERSONS 1		14. TOTAL AWARD (Give dollar amount / hours, or value of item) \$300		15. TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT/HOURS BASED ON: (Check appropriate box) →	
				ESTIMATED FIRST YEAR SAVINGS	
				<input type="checkbox"/> MEASURABLE BENEFITS SCALE \$	
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NONMEASURABLE BENEFITS SCALE SUBSTANTIAL GENERAL	

16. TYPE OF RECOGNITION RECOMMENDED (check one)		
<input type="checkbox"/> PERFORMANCE BONUS AWARD *		<input type="checkbox"/> QUALITY STEP INCREASE *
Certification: I certify, by my signature in the Recommendation & Approval section below, that the employee's position description and the performance standards for the position were thoroughly reviewed prior to submission of this recommendation; that the employee's performance is outstanding; and that the performance is characteristic and is expected to continue in the future.		
* Attach a copy of employee's latest performance rating of record. Also, attach a justification statement, if required.		
17. DATE OF LAST PROMOTION	18. DATE OF LAST WITHIN GRADE INCREASE	19. AMOUNT RECOMMENDED FOR PERFORMANCE BONUS AWARD \$

RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL

20. RECOMMENDING INDIVIDUAL (Signature) /s/		DATE 4/5/97	21. REVIEWING OFFICIAL (Signature) /s/		DATE 4/7/97
TITLE: DIRECTOR, X DIV			TITLE:		
22. APPROVING OFFICIAL (Signature & Title) /s/ DAFF					

PERSONNEL USE ONLY

22. AGENCY CODE / POI	24. DATE EFFECTIVE	QUALITY STEP INCREASE →	25. TO: Grade & Step	26. NEW SALARY	27. RATE	28. PAY RATE DETERMINANT CODE
I certify that the proposed action is in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements			29. PERSONNEL OFFICIAL (Signature & Title)		DATE PROCESSED	

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1985-429-204 Form AD-287-2 (7/94)

Continued on the next page

RMA 2001 Employee Recognition Program (Continued)

Exhibit 2

Scale of Awards for Nonmeasurable Benefits

Value of Benefit	Extent of Application			
	Limited	Extended	Broad	General
	Affects functions, mission, or employees of the following:			
	A Division or Office	Several Divisions or Offices	All Divisions or Offices	Department-wide or in the Public Interest Throughout US
Moderate means moderate change or modification of operating procedures meeting minimum standard for cash award, simple modification of methods, or limited service to the public.	\$50 to \$100	\$100 to \$200	\$200 to \$500	\$500 to \$1,000
Substantial means substantial change or modification of an operating procedure. An important improvement to value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public.	\$100 to \$200	\$200 to \$500	\$500 to \$1,000	\$1,000 to \$2,000
High means major improvement, usually affecting major problems, major change in methods, or procedures.	\$200 to \$500	\$500 to \$1,000	\$1,000 to \$2,000	\$2,000 to \$3,000
Exceptional means initiation of a new principle or major program. Superior improvement to the quality of a critical activity, program, or service to the public.	\$500 to \$1,000	\$1,000 to \$2,000	\$2,000 to \$3,000	\$3,000 to \$5,000

Eligibility for Awards

Employee Category	QSI	Monetary Award (Performance Bonus or Extra Effort)	Quick Track Award	TOA	Non- monetary Award	Suggestion Award	Language Award	Career Service Award
Federal Employees <u>1/</u> : Permanent Appointment Temporary Appointment	Y N	Y Y	Y Y	Y Y	Y Y	Y Y	N N	Y Y
County Office Employees <u>1/</u> : Permanent Appointment Temporary Appointment	Y N	Y Y	Y Y	Y Y	Y Y	Y Y	N N	Y Y <u>2/</u>
Committee Members	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Foreign Service Officers and Secretaries	N <u>3/ 4/</u>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y <u>5/</u>	Y
FSN's and PSC' <u>sg/</u>	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y <u>7/</u>
SES	N <u>8/</u>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Schedule C Employees	Y	Y	Y <u>9/</u>	Y <u>9/</u>	Y	Y <u>10/</u>	N	Y
WG, WL, WS Pay Plan	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Consultants & Contract Employees	N	Y <u>11/</u>	Y <u>11/</u>	N	N	Y <u>11/</u>	N	N
Reemployed Annuitants	N <u>12/</u>	N <u>11/</u>	Y <u>11/</u>	Y	Y	Y <u>11/</u>	N	Y
Retirees	N	Y <u>13/</u>	Y <u>13/</u>	N	Y	Y <u>13/</u>	N	N
Private Citizens	N	N	N	N	Y	Y <u>14/</u>	N	N

Continued on the next page

Eligibility for Awards (Continued)

- 1/ Tour of duty includes full-time, part-time, and intermittent.
 - 2/ Time worked under this type of appointment will be counted toward creditable service.
 - 3/ Eligible for MSI.
 - 4/ Excluding Senior Foreign Service.
 - 5/ If qualified.
 - 6/ PSC's must have appropriate award language in their contracts.
 - 7/ FSN's only.
 - 8/ Eligible for Pay Rate Adjustment.
 - 9/ Not during a Presidential Election Period (June of the election year to January of the following year).
 - 10/ If monetary, see note 9.
 - 11/ If definition of employee is met under 5 USC 2105.
 - 12/ Normally reemployed on a temporary basis; however, performance awards may be granted to those serving on an unlimited appointment under an OPM exception.
 - 13/ For contributions made while an employee.
 - 14/ Honorary only.
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