



EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY

My USDA

A Progress Report for Employees on USDA's Cultural Transformation

July 2011
Volume I, Issue 7

USDA's CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION ACTION ITEMS

- LEADERSHIP
- RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
- TALENT MANAGEMENT
- EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT
- CUSTOMER FOCUS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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A Message from USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack

Cultural Transformation (CT) is the process of creating a workplace where all employees and customers are treated with dignity and respect, and provided the opportunity for success.



email it to collaborate@usda.gov.

This issue of MyUSDA has a couple of important articles describing the generosity and compassion of USDA employees.

On page six you can read about USDA employees holding blood drives for the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP), and they have more drives scheduled. ASBP provides much-needed blood and blood platelets to active duty servicemen and women and their dependents. They are always in need of donors, and I am proud to be working with so many people who are, literally, giving a piece of themselves to the service of our country.

On page 12, there's information about the third annual "Feds Feed Families" food drive. The summer months are typically lean for needy families. Children who are out of school for the summer don't have access to school breakfasts and lunches, so the need increases this time of the year.

In 2010, USDA employees donated more food to the "Feds Feed Families" campaign than any other de-

partment in the Federal Government. We hope to do that again this year, and our goal is to collect and donate 500,000 pounds of food.

As you may have read in a recent email from Max Finberg, USDA's Director of the Center for Faith-Based & Neighborhood Partnerships and the Chairperson of the "[Feds Feed Families](#)" initiative, more than 1,600 USDA offices nationwide have already registered their own food drives, and it's not too late to join them. If your office wants to set up a food drive, please go to the [USDA Feeds Families website](#) to sign-up and get started.

The Office of Personnel Management announced that any employee who makes a one-time donation of 250 pounds or more will become a member of the 2011 Feds Feed Families Hall of Fame. If you've reached this level, just take a picture of yourself with your donation and

Your generosity is appreciated, and the Department will acknowledge extraordinary teamwork by recognizing every office that collects over a thousand pounds of food before the end of the summer. And, the top ten offices that raise the most pounds of food as well as the top ten offices that raise the most pounds of food per employee at the end of both July and August will also receive recognition.

USDA employees are once again demonstrating the importance of caring for one another. Keep up the good work—and your good works. You can contact the staff of My USDA via email at MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov. And please be sure to visit the [USDA Cultural Transformation Website](#).



What is USDA Food and Nutrition Service Administrator Audrey Rowe challenging us to do?

Go to p.12 for news on the third annual "Feds Feed Families" initiative.

ARS Employees' Two Cents Pays Huge Dividends

Written By Tara T. Weaver-Missick
ARS Information Staff, Beltsville, MD

The old adage, "a penny for your thoughts," is gaining new meaning in USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). In May 2010, ARS launched its *Your Two Cents* (Y2C) feedback program and website to give its employees an active role in transforming the agency. The website allows employees to submit ideas and comments, anonymously if they choose, on topics aimed at improving ARS. "It is an uncensored, direct line to ARS leadership, designed to engage employees and ARS leaders, getting them to interact with each other," says Sharon Drumm, ARS Cultural Transformation Coordinator. Drumm says, Y2C is an important initiative, because it allows ARS leadership to tap into employee insight from across the organization.

A Y2C response team—consisting of ARS' two associate administrators and other senior leaders—responds within 15 business days of submission; while a Y2C focus group, composed of a mix of ARS staff-level positions, reviews feedback and responses. "We make sure responses are relevant," says focus group member Perry Rainosek (an ARS Administrative Officer in Houston, TX). "We look for trends in postings. If we see the same concern repeatedly from multiple employees, we offer recommendations for implementing changes across the agency."

Y2C has had immense success—

resulting in attention and improvements in a variety of areas including business process improvements.

ARS Research Entomologist Don Weber (Beltsville, MD) submitted an idea on changing a policy on e-mail filters and spam mail. His concern was that ARS scientists were not getting legitimate e-mails from potential collaborators. "Unsolicited inquiries are critical for scientists. We get ideas from unexpected sources," he says. His research deals with insect pheromones, and "you can imagine what happens with those e-mails!" Weber says it took time, but change did happen. Change, he says, that would have been more difficult to effect without this mechanism.

ARS is undergoing a renaissance. Rainosek says, "We've seen a rise in tools that promote employees and their contributions, including the development

of *ARS and You*, the newsletter that highlights employees' professional achievements and their role in helping ARS customers and stakeholders."

This month ARS will be launching its 'Review, Refresh, Reform' (R³) cultural transformation website. "The look and feel of the site is a departure from our more structured sites," notes Drumm. "It addresses cultural transformation action areas in a creative, interactive way." It features resources to help employees implement cultural transformation initiatives, and offers opportunities for employees to learn about one another and share ideas.

ARS Administrator Ed Knipling says, "ARS employees are our most valuable resource, and are making a personal investment in the agency's mission."

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Research Service
The in-house research arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Enter Keywords

Your TWO CENTS
A Continuous Improvement Initiative

SHARE Best Practices | Action Items | Need More Input | Y2C User Agreement | Resources | Penny Saver News

INVEST IN ARS

SHARE IDEAS
Share your ideas, best practices and innovations for your work, your office & your organization.* Put your two cents out there for Agency leaders (and all of ARS if you choose!) and tune back in for discussion and appropriate actions in the coming months.

VIEW IDEAS

Y2C BIRTHDAY!

ARS has established an interactive website for employees to help improve the Agency.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? MESSAGES FROM USDA EMPLOYEES

June 6, 2011 marked the beginning of my second summer interning at USDA in the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) Policy Division. With my 2010 summer's worth of experience as well as a year of college now under my belt, I was more than excited to come back to OHRM, ready to face some new challenges and hit the ground running. Little did I know, the coming "changes" many were referencing last summer were finally here and implemented, and I was met head-on with what I perceived to be an enhanced and improved USDA.

Last summer, as a matter of fact, OHRM was much smaller, with a few key members in each section/division, such as ethics, policy, diversity and more. However, this year the organization has expanded dramatically overall. This astonishing growth in employee numbers showed the dedication USDA has to increasing its workforce in a diverse, productive, and meaningful way.



Nazuk Kochhar

It was upon my return that I was introduced to what is called the "Cultural Transformation." I've personally witnessed great strides and results of the transformation, not only in the development of a diverse workplace or the MyUSDA newsletter, but also in the success of projects and ideas which have been carried out by diverse and strongly led groups of individuals. Even me. For example, I had the wonderful opportunity to work with my OHRM colleagues to

champion the Secretary's Honor Awards Program. As a student intern with aspirations of someday being a member of the USDA community, seeing employees across the Department being recognized as the best of the best, and organizing their recognition was extremely fulfilling and inspirational. It was proof to me that the Department truly values the work its employees perform, and that the Department's workforce is very dedicated to their work and puts a great deal of heart into all that they do.

My experiences as an intern have been enriching and eye-opening, from commuting to networking with bright, influential, and innovative thinkers. This experience has offered me new perspective and awareness about the Federal government and the general functioning of a large, influential body like Agriculture. This opportunity provided me great understanding and knowledge through the honing of communication, organizational, strategic skills and more from an exceptional mentor.

Through these experiences and accounts, my thoughts on the USDA as a potential long-term employer are positive and optimistic. I am interested to find out what is next because they are demonstrating that the goals they have set are being achieved. I am sold. Thank you Secretary Vilsack, OHRM, and my USDA family.

Nazuk Kochhar

Share your pride in USDA with a message to fellow employees.

What do *you* think?

Send an email to MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov and let us know.

Feedback from USDA Risk Management Agency employee Tracy Ankersen:

I was curious about the poem you placed in the June issue of *MyUSDA* ("What Is a Farmer?") I was curious about the author, so I found it online. It looks like it was an excerpt from Dan Valentine's "What is a Farmer?"

Editor's Note: Thanks, Tracy!

If you'd like to share feedback about the Cultural Transformation, telework, diversity, "Feds Feed Families," or any other aspect of worklife at USDA, send an email to:
MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov
or visit USDA's [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community website if you have access to USDA Connect.

National Forests in FL Celebrate "All Cultures Day"

Story by Haven Cook, Dispersed Recreation Specialist

Photos by Susan Blake, Public Affairs Specialist

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - Personnel from the three National Forests in Florida, the Apalachicola, Ocala, and Osceola, joined together on May 18, 2011, to celebrate the array of cultures which make up the diverse workforce of the forests. Organized by the forests' Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC), the event was held at the historic Mission San Luis, an archeological site in the heart of Tallahassee steeped in the history of Spanish influence in Florida.

Long before the Spanish built missions on the California coast, the Spanish had a network of missions and outposts across Florida. And long before the first cowboy roped cattle in the American west, cowboys were herding Spanish cattle over the Florida landscape. Mission San Luis was one of the few places in Florida's history where Spaniards and the native Apalachee Indians coexisted in harmony for three generations, intermarrying and developing a colonial culture that combined traditions from both cultures. Thus, the Mission was selected as an appropriate venue for a day devoted to valuing diversity.

In the weeks leading up to the event, employees were recruited to decorate a table with items from the country of their heritage. These tables became the centerpiece for the "All Cultures" theme. Employees mixed, chatted, and listened to the day's program. Featured tables represented cultures from all corners of



Mike Bodziak and Aaron Edwards from the Apalachicola National Forest arrive first to share fellowship at the Africa table.

the world. The Italy table featured bottles of gourmet pasta, Italian cookbooks, and ravioli-making machines. At the Africa table, employees learned stories behind Bambara masks and Dogon statues. At the France table, art lovers could get their impressionist fix viewing travel postcards of Monet's paintings. Other tables featured Cuba, Poland, Japan, Russia, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, Dominican Republic, and China as well as American Women, military Veterans, and People with Disabilities.

The MAC devised a system of assigning attendees to tables, creating a mix of cultures at each table. This meant almost everyone met and talked with somebody they didn't know, adding to the uniqueness of the event. The seating system allowed the large group to be divided into three smaller groups as they toured the Mission's buildings; the old fort, church, Spanish house and, central to the Apalachee culture, the imposing Council House, where meetings, games and celebrations occurred.

After touring the Mission and interacting with Mission volunteers in period dress, the employees enjoyed a catered lunch. The program included Dr. Bonnie McEwan, Director of the Mission, who spoke on the archeological importance of the site. Guest speaker Cornelius Brownlee of the Florida Commission on Human Rights, gave a short presentation on

diversity. For the employees of the National Forests in Florida, it was a day of cohesiveness; experiencing together the value of cultures living in harmony.



National Forests in Florida employees and volunteers observe a Native American presentation in the Council House, one of the many structures located on Mission San Luis.



National Forests in Florida employees and volunteers gather for a group photo after a day of fellowship and diversity. 105 people attended the event from the three National Forests in Florida.

Multicultural Advisory Committee



The Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) organized the All Cultures Day event. From Left to Right, Rhonda Kimbrough, Tonee Davis, Jeff Fillion, Reya Williams, Toni Addison, Jayson Thompson, Louvonnia Henderson, Nicole Proctor, and Dan Mc Keaque. Not shown Chandra Roberts.

AmeriCorps Volunteers



From L to R, AmeriCorps volunteers Heather Grames, Chris Emmons, & Paul Wheelhouse along with Volunteer Program Coordinator Katie LaJeunesse. The three volunteers are instrumental in furthering National Forests in Florida missions such as environmental education and community outreach.

USDA SIGNS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT

USDA Assistant Secretary for Administration Pearlie S. Reed has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Blacks in Government (BIG) President J. David Reeves. The MOU establishes a formal partnership between USDA and BIG that will assist the Department in the recruitment, hiring, and retention of African Americans. USDA has established similar partnerships with several other national employee organizations.

The MOUs provide a framework for identifying mutual issues and concerns that will allow stakeholders to develop and implement solutions. The ultimate goals are to ensure equality of opportunity, access to employment and career enhancement opportunities, and improved quality of work life for all USDA employees.

This photo from the signing ceremony includes J. David Reeves, President of BIG (seated left); Assistant Secretary for Administration Pearlie S. Reed (seated right); Deputy Chief of Staff Carole Jett (left); Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration Robin Heard (center); and USDA BIG Chapter representative Star Bryant (right).



USDA EMPLOYEES HOLD BLOOD DRIVES FOR US ARMED FORCES

USDA employees have been taking advantage of an opportunity to provide important and immediate help to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who are fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. Recently, USDA hosted two blood drives for the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) at USDA Headquarters and at the George Washington Carver Center.

ASBP ensures that blood and blood platelets are available to on-duty members of the armed forces who need it. They also supply to dependents of U.S. servicemen and women. ASBP provides blood and platelets to all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, collecting between 50-100 units per week. At least two patients are helped as a result of each unit collected.

If you're in the Washington, DC, area, please mark your calendars so you can participate in an upcoming USDA blood drive for ASBP.

October 5th – 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Whitten Patio, Washington, D.C.

November 9th – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the USDA George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville, MD.



For an inspiring and informative video on the work accomplished by the ASBP, watch <http://www.youtube.com/militaryblood#p/u/6/YnSPN3L3SUo>



MyUSDA Column

Diversity & Disabilities

By Alison Levy
USDA Disability Employment Program Manager

A cornerstone of our USDA Cultural Transformation effort is to increase employment of individuals with disabilities. This column includes information, resources, and success stories from throughout USDA that are being shared to support this initiative.

The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)

Every fall, Federal agencies send their recruiters to more than 300 participating colleges and universities throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico to interview and rate students with disabilities who are interested in interning for Federal service. In early December each year, a fresh round of 2,000+ students is posted to the **free** web-based database: www.wrp.gov. Managers are encouraged to hire WRP students early before they are hired by the competition.

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) Summer Internship Program

AAPD is a national, non-profit organization, which places students with disabilities into summer internships and fellowships in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit: www.aapd.com or contact your USDA agency Disability Employment Program Manager.

Hiring student interns with disabilities into permanent opportunities helps USDA agencies meet three Executive Orders:

- ◆ Shortening hiring timelines required through hiring reform;
- ◆ Hiring individuals with disabilities; and,
- ◆ Hiring veterans.

In addition, we achieve three national USDA initiatives:

- ◆ Cultural Transformation;
- ◆ Diversity Roadmap;
- ◆ Plan for Increasing Employment of Individuals with Disabilities.

USDA establishes a winning workforce when hiring student interns with disabilities. Managers gain an excellent source of support with specific projects while students gain valuable work experience. As part of our USDA Cultural Transformation, Secretary Vilsack is strongly encouraging and monitoring the employment of student interns with disabilities throughout the Department. If you have questions, success stories, or anything else to share regarding Disability Employment, contact me at alison.levy@dm.usda.gov.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT The Spotlight's on YOU!

Lenise Lago has been a Deputy Regional Forester for the US Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest Region, but starting August 1, 2011, she'll be the Forest Service's new Deputy Chief for Business Operations in Washington, D.C.

The Georgia native, who received her Master of Forestry at the University of Georgia, worked in private industry for a number of years but decided she wanted more. "I ended up in public service, which wasn't entirely intentional," she says. "But it turned out to be the exact thing I was looking for. Here, the issues really matter to people in a way that they don't in private industry. They don't have that sense of a higher purpose, and I wouldn't trade places with any of them. I love serving the public and helping employees meet customer expectations despite tight budgets."

Lago says she's excited about her new position because it includes business operations, human resources, acquisition, Civil Rights, and other functions that impact every single FS employee. "These things touch everybody, and any improvements that can be made will serve everyone," says Lago.

So what does Lago enjoy most about working for USDA's Forest Service? "What inspires me and makes me want to do my best is the commitment from Forest Service employees everywhere I go. Their dedication to the land and the communities that depend on National Forests is humbling. When I consider the opportunity to do some good on their behalf and better enable them to get out and serve the public, that's a good reason to go to work each day."



Lenise Lago has been named the new Deputy Chief for Business Operations at the USDA's Forest Service.

TELEWORK AT USDA

By Work/Life & Wellness Manager **Mika Cross** and Work/Life and Wellness Student Intern **Oeshae Morgan**

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will soon be featured in a Telework case study alongside USDA's Telework Program on the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government website under its Commuter Connections section. When published, you can find the case study using the following link:

<http://www.mwcog.org/commuter2/commuter/teleworking/TeleworkingCaseStudies.html>

Highlights of the case study include an overview of APHIS' telework program, which has significantly evolved over the past 21 years since it launched its pilot program in 1990. The study describes how APHIS is continuing to align with the Department's Telework Program and the new Telework Enhancement Act, assuming that all employees and positions are eligible for telework, unless duties require an employee to be physically present at a worksite or performance/conduct issues prevent them from participating.

The top three tips APHIS cites for successfully expanding its current Telework Program include:

1. Involving upper management/executive teams early on to enlist support for the program
2. Collaborating across the Agency and among various programs to re-write the policy
3. Ensuring Unions were kept up to date on the status of policy and eligibility determinations

APHIS also describes the challenges confronted while expanding its program, such as determining final language of the policy and identifying work positions that are eligible for telework. To learn more about what APHIS is doing to successfully meet the Department's aggressive telework participation goals of 40% by the end of Fiscal Year 2011, visit the APHIS Telework website at the following link: http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/publications/teleworks/prog_introduction.shtml

Get to know your Telework Coordinators at USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP):

Tara L. Green (Coker) serves as the APHIS Telework Program Coordinator and can be reached by phone at (301) 734-3819 and by email at tara.l.green@aphis.usda.gov.



Tara L. Green (Coker)

Crystal Sutherlin serves as the Telework Program Coordinator for AMS. Crystal can be reached at (202) 720-2939 or by email at crystal.sutherlin@ams.usda.gov

Terri Henry works as your friendly Telework Program Coordinator at GIPSA. You can find out more about GIPSA's Telework by phone at (202) 205-8281 or via email at terri.l.henry@usda.gov.

Are you interested in learning more about USDA's Telework Program and other top Work/Life and Wellness initiatives? Be sure to subscribe to our Work/Life and Wellness listserv to stay in the know! Send an email to telework@dm.usda.gov or connect with our [Work/Life and Wellness](#) if you have a USDA Connect account!

Don't Miss the "Making the Telework Grade Webcast: Meeting the Telework Enhancement Act Requirements"

MAKING THE TELEWORK GRADE WEBCAST:
 Meeting the Telework Enhancement Act Requirements



Mark your calendars to join USDA's Telework Program Manager, Ms. Mika Cross online as she participates as a panelist for the Telework Exchange's free webinar scheduled for July 19th from 1-2pm EST. During this webcast, Mika will share insights about how USDA so quickly met the requirements of the Telework Enhancement Act and will discuss the challenges and best practices that USDA's

Telework Coordinators have collectively shared in implementing widespread adoption of the Department's newly expanded Telework Program. To register for this free event, visit the following website: <http://www.teleworkexchange.com/events/webcast/events-detail/956>

The USDA Events/Exhibits Team



The USDA Events and Exhibits (E-E) Team plans for the future, determining what is expected when USDA agencies and offices participate in conferences, special events, and conventions. Launched in February 2011 under the USDA Office of Communication, Brand, Events, Exhibits, and Editorial Review Division (BEEERD), the E-E Team includes representatives from throughout the Department involved in public affairs, outreach, and program areas that conduct workshops and exhibits for the general public and targeted community groups.

For years, each USDA agency or office made its own event and exhibit decisions. Often when USDA staffers arrived at a large national conference, they would be surprised to see one or two other USDA exhibits. That should no longer be the case. The E-E Team has established an action plan with the "One USDA" goal for placement of all events on SharePoint, opening lines of communication on all upcoming events so that co-location and collaboration become the norm.

The ultimate goal of full coordination at all events with One USDA branding as the signature serves as the E-E Team vision. "Under the leadership of Shirley Harrington-Watson, we are confident all USDA will see the benefits of collaborative work and future coordination of the USDA presence at conferences and in exhibit halls across America," said the BEEERD Director Carolyn OConnor.

Recently, the E-E Team finalized a joint recognition which occurred on April 28th in celebration of *Earth Day* and *Take Your Daughter/Son to Work Day* with participation from the *Farmers Market* and the *People's Garden*. USDA agencies and offices provided some 30 exhibits for the general public and the many students coming to USDA. There were demonstration projects at the exhibit area in the Whitten Building Patio, a special masters' garden event with 120 volunteers working in the People's Garden, and the Discovery Zone Food Safety truck stationed on Jefferson Drive for tours. With "*Invent the Future - A Billion Acts of Green*" as the combined theme for this USDA Day, more than 500 students, employees and general public visitors enjoyed learning about USDA and Earth Day.

We hope this is the first of many collaborative events highlighting One USDA. The E-E Team is working to eliminate waste and duplication through joint participation and collaboration.

News from the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) Labor Relations Program

The USDA Labor-Management Forum (LMF) is involving USDA employees in the review of Departmental Regulations and Policies. As a representative of LMF unions, Maria Cysstrunk, an employee with Rural Development in St. Louis, MO, and member of AFGE Local 3354, worked with management on the revision of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Departmental Regulation. Several changes are being considered to make the EAP more responsive to employees in need of help with productivity and behavioral issues that might affect their work performance or conduct. The re-worked regulation should be published within the next couple of months after all changes have been finalized and reviews completed.

On May 18, 2011, the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations (Council) met to review preliminary progress reports received from agencies concerning their establishment of labor-management forum metrics and in implementing their collective bargaining (b)(1) pilot projects. As part of this discussion, the Council received a Metrics Workgroup report reviewing the use of metrics developed by agencies to evaluate the performance of their labor-management forums. While several of the reports submitted provided good examples of practices for measuring mission focused metrics, the Workgroup highlighted the submissions of a handful of agencies for special consideration. Of the eleven (b)(1) pilot metric submissions received by the Council, the USDA's (b)(1) pilot program was singled out as providing a good example of best practices that other forums should look to for guidance when developing their mission focused metrics. The USDA's (b)(1) pilot program involves the implementation of an "electronic office" for tracking legal documents and is being conducted between the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) and its labor union partner AFGE Local 1106. OGC and Local 1106 are working together to improve the ability of the Department to accomplish its mission.

USDA-NRCS Partners with the Alpha Kappa Alpha National Sorority to Improve Recruitment Among Women and Minorities



Missouri NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Operations Drenda Williams (right) talks with Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority members about careers in agriculture at a conference in Columbus, Ohio. Ms. Williams' work was part of a concerted outreach effort with AKA, a partner organization in USDA's Cultural Transformation Initiative, to recruit women and minorities to USDA.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) served as the lead agency under a new USDA-wide partnership with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, (AKA), in keeping with Secretary Vilsack's transformation efforts. Founded in 1908, AKA is the oldest Greek-lettered organization established by African-American, college-educated women. It has 260,000 members in graduate and undergraduate programs in the U.S. and other countries.

Along with employees from Departmental Management and the Forest Service, NRCS participated in eight AKA regional conferences this spring. USDA employees set up booths, collected resumes and talked to more than 10,000 participants about USDA's mission, student internships and employment opportunities in the various sub agencies.

The conferences were held in Birmingham, AL., Wichita, KS., Albuquerque, NM., Lex-

ington, KY., Atlantic City, NJ., Richmond, VA., Hollywood, FL., Seattle, WA., and Columbus, OH.

Drenda Williams, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations, Missouri NRCS and an AKA member, participated in the Columbus conference. She handed out business cards, recruitment brochures and answered a wide variety of questions ranging from the general ("How do you apply for a federal job?") to the very specific ("What job opportunities are available in sociology?").

Williams was happy she participated. "Many folks did not know about USDA and what we do as a department or agency," she said. "The partnership between USDA and AKA is an outstanding opportunity for cultural transformation. (This event) helps to broaden our conservation partnership and diversify and strengthen our workforce."

MyUSDA Publication Schedule (for the remaining fiscal year)

- ◆ August MyUSDA, Thursday, August 11, 2011—deadline for submissions August 3, 2011
- ◆ September MyUSDA, Thursday September 8, 2011—deadline for submissions August 31, 2011

Guidance on Submissions to MyUSDA

Submissions to MyUSDA should indicate progress that you, your agency, or your mission area has achieved toward implementing the Secretary's Cultural Transformation (CT) Initiative. Submissions may be in the form of a traditional article with a byline (with accompanying photos strongly preferred), a first-person account (describing a personal work-related experience relating to CT progress), or a "brief" (just a few sentences describing a successful Cultural Transformation event, group, initiative or activity...or some other relevant worklife issue) The ideal submission is a great picture with about 75-150 words to go along with it.

Email submissions or further inquiries to MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov.

USDA Welcomes the First 15 Wallace-Carver Interns

By Verna Daniels

On June 20th, USDA welcomed the first 15 Wallace-Carver Interns for their summer internships. These young leaders will be assigned to various USDA research centers and offices for 8 weeks over the summer. Secretary Thomas Vilsack announced the creation of the Wallace-Carver Internship Program in October 2010 at the World Food Prize event in Des Moines, Iowa. The World Food Prize was created to honor Dr. Norman Borlaug, who is known for his work on sustainability. Early in his career, Dr. Borlaug was a student intern for the USDA Forest Service. It was Dr. Borlaug's dream that the World Food Prize might one day come to be seen as the "Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture."

This new USDA internship program—named for Henry A. Wallace and George Washington Carver, two leaders in agriculture science and policy who made significant strides toward ending hunger in the 20th century—seeks to educate, inspire, and train the next generation of agricultural leaders. Internship placement is specifically designed around the students' education and research, prior work and travel experience, and personal and professional interests. Interns are encouraged to align their passions with their learning agenda.

USDA's Cultural Transformation Taskforce has placed a special emphasis on recruitment and retention of talented and mission-critical employees. One of the best ways to recruit new talent and support USDA's succession and workforce planning efforts is through student internships. The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) coordinates operation of the program, monitoring and evaluating the program against accountability measures and success. This includes conducting regular, formal evaluations of the program and providing ongoing recommendations for improvement.

Wallace-Carver interns will explore many issues—from gardening to bacterial resistance—while at USDA. During orientation week, interns participated in leadership training workshops and toured Agricultural Research Service (ARS) facilities, as well as the National Agricultural Library and the National Arboretum.

On Monday, June 20, incoming interns met with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Agriculture to discuss their views and collaborate on the task at hand—working to eliminate hunger and poverty throughout the world. Secretary Vilsack reminded the Wallace-Carver interns of their humanitarian commitment to improve quality of life and moral obligation to analyze agricultural and economic policy; assist in the management of food, nutrition, and rural development programs; and partner with the United States Department of Agriculture and the World Food Prize Foundation to help end hunger around the world.

UPCOMING SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM OBSERVANCES

September is Hispanic Heritage Month.
The USDA Observance is scheduled for
Thursday September 15, 2011 in the Jefferson
Auditorium, Washington, DC at 10am.

October is National Disability Employment
Awareness Month.
The USDA Observance is scheduled for
Wednesday October 5, 2011 in the Jefferson
Auditorium, Washington, DC at 10am.

If you're in DC, add these to your calendar!

*If you haven't read previous issues of MyUSDA, here's
your chance!*

[MyUSDA Issue 1](#)

[MyUSDA Issue 2](#)

[MyUSDA Issue 3](#)

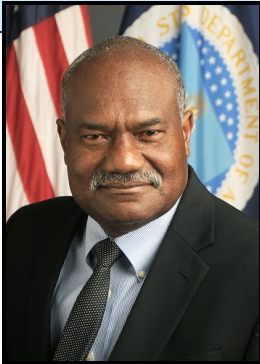
[MyUSDA Special Issue—Summary Progress](#)

[MyUSDA Issue 4](#)

[MyUSDA Issue 5](#)

[MyUSDA Issue 6](#)

USDA FEEDS FAMILIES



**A Message From Pearlle S. Reed
Assistant Secretary for Administration**

This summer, USDA is participating in the 3rd annual government-wide Feds Feed Families Food Drive. This effort started on June 1st and will continue through August 31st. Each USDA office is collecting non-perishable, nutritious food and sharing it with food banks to help feed families in local communities who are depending on this assistance during tough economic times. During the summer months, children are particularly vulnerable because the support system they depend on through schools is not available. USDA's Summer Food Service Program helps fill that gap, but it can't reach everyone who is hungry. Our efforts will help millions of Americans across the country who turn to food banks and food pantries for emergency food assistance over the summer. Food banks have reported record numbers of families, children, individuals, and first-time visitors seeking food assistance. This food drive comes at a critical time when donations are tapering off and will help nourish those struggling with hunger in communities across the country.

Last year, you showed everyone in the Federal government how much you care about making sure that children and families are fed by donating 465,000 pounds of perishable and non-perishable food, including over 90,000 pounds of fresh produce grown at the People's Gardens. Your contributions topped all other Federal Agencies in donations

This year, the need to feed hungry families and children continues. Our goal has been raised to meet these needs by donating nearly 500,000 pounds, including 100,000 pounds of fresh produce from the People's Garden. It's time to step up to this year's challenge and participate in this important and meaningful effort. Your donations go directly to families and children in need in your community. For a list of the most wanted items, go to this link: <http://www.fedsfeedfamilies.gov/mostwantedlist.pdf>. You can track our progress at this web site: <http://www.fedsfeedfamilies.gov/>. Please take time to make a difference by contributing your non-perishable food items to your local office before August 31st.

**CHAMPION OF USDA'S FEDS
FEED FAMILIES INITIATIVE
LEADS BY EXAMPLE**



Toby S. Osherson is USDA's Deputy White House Liaison, and he is also a Champion of [USDA's Feds Feeds Families](#) campaign. He's shown here with the 1,100 pounds of food that he personally donated to this year's campaign!

Last year, USDA employees proved to be the most generous in the Federal government when it came to food donations, and Toby is determined that the 2011 Feds Feed Families campaign will prove it once again.

UPCOMING FEDS FEED FAMILIES EVENTS

Wednesday, July 27th 11:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m.

Whitten Patio

**Contact: Marissa Duswalt at
Marissa.Duswalt@osec.usda.gov**

Friday, August 12th

USDA Farmers Market

**Contact: Katie Yocum at
Katie.Yocum@usda.gov**

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service Administrator Audrey Rowe challenges employees to step up and donate to Feds Feed Families with this poster.



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If you have ideas for future articles, contact us at MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov

If you'd like to share your feedback about Feds Feed Families, the Cultural Transformation, telework, diversity, or any other aspect of worklife at USDA, send an email to: MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov or visit USDA's [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community website if you have access to USDA Connect.



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