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Policies and Procedures

Title: Foreign Gifts and Decorations

Number: 468.4

Date: November 15, 2012

Originating Office: Administrative and Financial Management
Science Ethics Branch (SEB), USDA Office of Ethics (OE)

This Replaces: P&P 468.4 dated 2/15/2008

Distribution: REE Headquarters, Areas, and Field Locations

This P&P contains revised information and step-by-step procedures for the receipt, retention, or disposal of foreign gifts and decorations. Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act minimal value has been increased from \$335 to \$350 or less for the 3-year period 2011 – 2013.

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1. References

- Information on disposal of gifts of money, see P&P 326.0
- Information on delegations of authority to approve travel, see P&P 340.0
- Information on acceptance of travel funds from outside sources, see P&P 341.2
- Information on the disposal of gifts and decorations through appropriate property management officials, see Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR), Part 101-49 and Agriculture Property Management Regulations (APMR), Part 104-49.
- Information on gift acceptance and conflict of interest considerations, see the guide Standards of Ethical Conduct of Employees of the Executive Branch.

2. Authorities

- Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act of 1966, as amended
- United States Code (U.S.C.) 5701-5709,
- U.S.C., Subchapter IV, 7342,
- 41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 101-49,
- Executive Order (E.O.) 11609,
- E.O. 12674, as modified by E.O. 12731, and
- Title III of the Ethics Reform Act of 1989

3. Policy

REE expects all employees to comply with the provisions of the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act of 1966, as amended, and the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch.

4. Acceptance of Gifts and Decorations

Gift Acceptance

Employees may accept a gift of the following:

- Minimal value of \$350.00 or less; and
- More than minimal value when the gift is for educational advancement or medical treatment, or when it appears that refusing the gift might cause offense or embarrassment, or adversely affect the foreign relations of the United States

Note: A gift exceeding the minimal value is considered to be property of the United States and must be disposed of following the guidelines of this P&P.

Decoration Acceptance

Employees may accept, retain, and wear foreign decorations presented in recognition of active field service in time of combat operations or awarded for other outstanding or unusually meritorious performance, after receiving their Agency Administrator's approval and the concurrence of the Administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

Without this approval, the decoration becomes the property of the United States and must be turned over to the Area Property Management Officer/Property Management Officer (APMO/PMO) who forwards it to the Department's Procurement and Property Management Branch located in the Property Management Division.

5. Procedures

The following chart reflects the procedures required for the acceptance of foreign gifts and foreign decorations.

Acceptance of Foreign Gifts other than Travel or Travel Expenses

Responsible Person	Action
Recipient	<p>Within 60 days of a foreign gift , notify your Location Administrative Officer (LAO) or your PMO and the Science Ethics Branch (SEB) within the USDA Office of Ethics (OE) with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your name and position• Brief description of the gift and circumstances justifying acceptance

7. Glossary

APMO. Area Property Management Officer

CFR. Code of Federal Regulations

Decoration. An order, device, medal, badge, insignia, emblem, or award presented by or received from a foreign government.

Employee. All REE employees, experts, or consultants under contract with the United States, their spouses, and blood in-law relations who are residents of the employee's household.

Foreign Government. Any unit of foreign governmental authority, including any foreign national, State, local, and municipal government. Any international or multinational organization whose membership is composed of any unit of foreign government; and any agency or representative of any such unit or organization.

Gift. A souvenir, mark of courtesy, or award (other than a decoration) presented by, or received from, a foreign government.

GSA. General Services Administration.

LAO. Location Administrative Officer

Minimal Value. Retail value in the United States at the time of acceptance as set by GSA.

PMO. Property Management Officer.

USC. United States Code.

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Date