

**LABOR-MANAGEMENT
FORUM CO-CHAIR
DEBRA S. ARNOLD**

“Any time a Departmental Regulation can be identified that will help strengthen policies and procedures at the agency level, a 'work group' will be established to develop new or revised guidance. Pre-decisional involvement (PDI) is crucial to the process in order for labor and management to work together effectively. A union representative serves on all work groups and provides valuable input at the early stages.

I would like to see this forum set the standards and establish 'best practices' for all agencies at USDA in establishing an effective, collaborative working relationship between labor and management. This initiative would be directly in line with President Obama's Executive Order 13522 that agencies should include union involvement at the earliest possible level.”



Debra S. Arnold
Co-Chair,
Labor-
Management
Forum

President,
AFSCME Local
3870

Rural
Development

William P. Milton, Jr.
Co-Chair,
Labor-Management
Forum

Chief Human Capital
Officer,
USDA



“Our collaboration efforts as a result of EO 13522 are critical to USDA accomplishing our mission because it directly impacts employee morale and productivity. We support pre-decisional involvement (PDI) because it gives a voice to the people who perform the mission of the Department every day. They, more than anybody, are in a unique position to provide advice and guidance as it pertains to the work we accomplish. You don't want somebody in an ivory tower who knows nothing about the work making the decisions.

That's why PDI is so important. It gives us valuable input, and it saves us money by reducing costs associated with grievances, arbitration, and resources. Conflicts and litigation lead to the loss of valuable time that is better spent toward the job and the mission.

This is the most attention that I have seen any administration give toward building labor-management relations during my 31 years of dealing directly and indirectly with this issue. This administration has accomplished more in the past two years than in the previous 29 years put together. “

**LABOR-MANAGEMENT
FORUM CO-CHAIR
WILLIAM P. MILTON, JR.**

**USDA
LABOR-
MANAGEMENT
FORUM**

BULLETIN

May 2011

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The responsibility of the USDA Labor-Management Forum is to oversee Presidential Executive Order 13522 that directs Federal agencies to actively partner with employee labor organizations and to engage the national unions in pre-decisional involvement (PDI) on Department-wide issues.



USDA IS AN EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER
AND EMPLOYER

USDA LABOR-MANAGEMENT FORUM

WHAT IS THE USDA LABOR-MANAGEMENT FORUM?

In December 2009, President Obama signed Executive Order 13522 (EO), which ushered in a new era of federal labor-management collaboration. Since the signing of the EO, the Department of Agriculture and the unions that represent employees within the Department have been working on developing the structure needed to ensure that the voice and concerns of workers in the Department are heard in the decision-making process.

The most important way in which this is being accomplished is through the establishment of the USDA Labor-Management Forum (Forum). The intent of the Bulletin is to share the work of the Forum with all USDA employees. In this issue, we introduce you to the Forum, its role, and its members. Future Bulletin issues will feature the work that is being accomplished by the Forum.

FORUM ROLE

In its early meetings during the first half of 2010, the Forum outlined its objectives and operating procedures and created a charter for the Forum. As described in the Charter, the role of the forum is to:

- Provide compliance oversight for the implementation of the Executive Order throughout the Department to Mission Areas, Agencies and Offices;
- Develop guidance and supply problem-solving assistance for subordinate forums/committees/councils;
- Conduct pre-decisional involvement (PDI) for Department-wide initiatives that impact conditions of employment;
- Model collaborative behaviors; and
- Communicate issues undertaken and decisions made by the USDA Forum with their constituents.

FORUM MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the forum is intended to represent the variety of labor unions and mission areas within the Department. Thus, each of the seven

national labor organizations entitled to act as exclusive bargaining agents of USDA employees, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration, the nine Deputy Administrators for Management, the Office of General Counsel, the National Appeals Division, and the Department's Labor Relations Officer are represented on the Forum. Forum members and their representational functions are listed below.

Union:

Melissa Baumann - NFFE
Ron Thatcher - NFFE
Sharon Cooney-Smith - AFGE
Stan Painter - AFGE
Ina Fells - AFSCME
Debra Arnold - AFSCME
Luke Chesek - NTEU
Patricia Maggi - NTEU
Sharon Church - NAPPQOSE
Sarah Rehberg - NAAE
Henry Schmick - AFSA
Susan Johnson - AFSA

Management:

Robin Heard - Deputy Asst. Secy. for Administration
William P. Milton, Jr. - Chief Human Capital Officer
James Bradley - Research Education & Economics
Ralph Linden - Office of the General Counsel
Chuck Myers - Natural Resources & the Environment
Joanne Munno - Marketing & Regulatory Programs
Steven Placek - National Appeals Division
Mark Rucker - Food, Nutrition and Consumer Svcs.
Eloris Speight - Natural Resources & the Environment
Philip Short - Farm & Foreign Agricultural Service
Anthony Thompson - Food Safety
Clyde Thompson - Rural Development
Richard Swenson - Departmental Management
Ronald S. James - Labor Relations Officer