

ACTION BY: Field Office Supervisors

INFORMATION FOR: Agricultural Commodity Grader Trainees

Grading Proficiency Required for Promotion to GS-9

I PURPOSE

This Instruction states the proficiency requirements for promotion of Agricultural Commodity Grader trainees to the GS-9 journeyman level.

II GENERAL

A Experience has shown that the predominant workload throughout the Agency involves wheat grading. It is, therefore, imperative that employees at the GS-9 journeyman level be proficient in grading wheat, to insure that program needs are met and to maximize utilization of personnel.

B In view of the above requirement, it is FGIS policy that training of employees at the GS-5 and GS-7 levels be planned in such a way as to insure that GS-9 graders can meet the requirements set forth in this Instruction.

III PROFICIENCY IN FOUR OR MORE AREAS

A Before a trainee can be promoted to the GS-9 journeyman level, he must be proficient in grading four or more graded commodities (grains, rice, pulses, etc.), or be proficient in grading three graded commodities and in all of the weighing operations. The following guidelines apply:

1 One of the graded commodities will be wheat of all classes. The trainee's Field Office Supervisor (FOS) is responsible for determining when the trainee has reached full proficiency in the grading of wheat, and for documenting the proficiency by entering the rating "Satisfactory" or "Very Good" in the appropriate rating block on Form GR-363, Progress Report--On-the-Job Training.

2 The other graded commodities should be those which are predominant in the circuit in which the trainee is located. Reaching journeyman level proficiency in grain weighing will substitute for one of these graded commodities if the field office in which the trainee is located has weighing responsibilities. The trainee's FOS is responsible for determining when the trainee has reached full proficiency in these skills and for documenting the proficiency by entering the rating "Satisfactory" or "Very Good" in the appropriate rating block on Form GR-363.

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MANUAL MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS:
New Instruction. File in the
Manual.

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(III)

B In addition, before a trainee can be considered as qualified for promotion to GS-9 journeyman level, his proficiency in grading these commodities will be verified by the Board of Appeals and Review (BAR). Upon request, the BAR will send a Proficiency Evaluation on each commodity to the FOS who will administer it to the trainee.

C Proficiency in grain weighing will be verified by the Weighing Division. Upon request, the Weighing Division will furnish a Proficiency Evaluation to the FOS who will administer it to the trainee.

IV HOW TO REQUEST PROFICIENCY EVALUATIONS

Proficiency Evaluations may be requested singly, all at once, or in any combination. The FOS shall request one or more Proficiency Evaluations (PE's) by entering the request under "Comments" in the current evaluation signature block of the trainee's Form GR-363, and shall forward a copy of Form GR-363 to Headquarters at the end of the current rating period. Examples of the wording of the request are:

Corn PE requested

Corn and soybeans PE's requested

Wheat, milled rice, rough rice, and brown rice for processing PE's requested

Weighing PE requested

V WHEN TO REQUEST PROFICIENCY EVALUATIONS

A trainee may take one or more of the Proficiency Evaluations at any time during his apprenticeship at the GS-5 or GS-7 level. Supervisors and trainees are cautioned to be positive that a trainee can successfully pass a Proficiency Evaluation before it is requested. Otherwise, the BAR and Weighing Division will be unnecessarily overworked and the trainee's morale could suffer. Should a trainee fail a Proficiency Evaluation, only one more attempt at the same Proficiency Evaluation during the following 4-month period will be allowed. Failures will be monitored very closely. If it appears that supervisors are chronically premature in recommending Proficiency Evaluations, a more restrictive approach may have to be adopted.

VI PROFICIENCY MUST BE MAINTAINED

Supervisors are also cautioned to assure that once a trainee has passed a Proficiency Evaluation, he must maintain proficiency in the skill. Remember, a trainee is expected to be currently proficient in four skills at the time of promotion to GS-9.

VII DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

A When a trainee successfully completes one or more Proficiency Evaluations, the BAR or the Weighing Division will send a Proficiency Evaluation Scoresheet to the FOS. The scoresheets should be stapled to the trainee's Form GR-363 as part of the permanent record.

B The scoresheets showing proficiency in the four skills must accompany the original Form GR-363 when it is submitted to initiate the trainee's promotion to GS-9.

Lee Malone

Acting Assistant Deputy Administrator
Program Operations