



EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY

USDA's Cultural Transformation Action Items

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

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MyUSDA

A Progress Report for Employees on USDA's Cultural Transformation

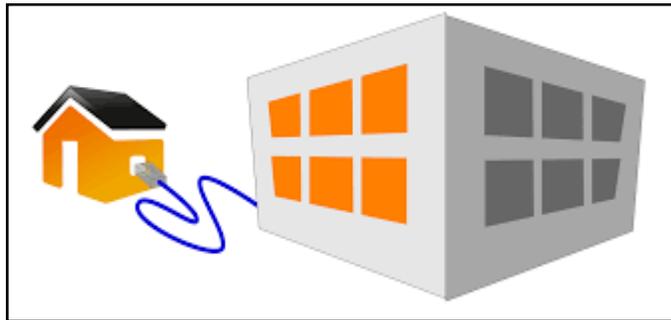
Volume 6, Issue 5

February 2016

USDA Ranked 8th Nationally in Telework

An analysis of more than 40,000 companies places USDA 8th in the nation in telecommute-friendly jobs in 2016. That is a rise from 36th place in 2015.

The rankings were determined by FlexJobs, the leading job search site specializing in professional telecommuting, part-time, freelance, and flexible jobs. Results were published in the January 27, 2016, issue of Forbes Magazine.



FlexJobs finds that USDA leads a number of corporate organizations in telework participation, including Aetna (#11), American Express (#20), Apple (#47), and General Electric (#61).

Two other federal departments joined USDA in the top 100: the U.S. Department of Transportation (#37) and the U.S. Department of the Interior (#100).

The list is a compilation of the 100 companies reporting the most work-from-home jobs in 2015. Organizations were ranked by their number of remote job postings.

FlexJobs reports a 36% increase in the number of teleworking jobs overall, particularly in the fields of computer/IT, health/medical, sales, administrative, customer service, education/training, and marketing. Popular jobs included writer, engineer, marketing manager, development director, and recruiter.

The top ten teleworking organizations were LiveOps, TeleTech, Amazon, Sutherland Global Services, United Health Group, Dell, IBM, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Working Solutions, and Humana.

—The Editors

To view the January 21, 2016, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service Event, click on

http://origin-qps.onstreammedia.com/origin/usda/%5BInbox%5D/DM/012116/012116_OCAPSFINAL.mp4

You can contact MyUSDA by emailing MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov. And be sure to visit the [USDA Cultural Transformation Website](#).

USDA Supports Minority Farmers

By Julie MacSwain, Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA employees from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in

Minnesota partnered to support and participate in the 11th Immigrant and Minority Farmers Conference (IMFC) at the University of Minnesota Continuing Education Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. About 300 people participated in the event held January 30-31, 2016.

Since its inception, the IMFC has brought people together from several cultures. During the conference, presentations were translated into five different languages, and participants traveled from as far away as California for the event.



Keynote speakers included May Lee (pictured right), who arrived in the U.S. in 1981. She worked hard to learn English and finish school in 1996. Lee enrolled in the Minnesota Food Association (MFA) farmer training program and, after graduation, became the first Hmong farmer in Minnesota to be certified Organic. "Determination, work-ethic development and family bond are important," said Lee. She and her family donate over 10,000 pounds of produce each year to local community organizations.



Having translators present ensured that every participant could fully participate. "Having the ability to translate the presentations into several languages definitely made this special for those in attendance," said Tou Pha, a biologist for NRCS in Minnesota, and the state's NRCS Asian Pacific Islander Special Emphasis Manager.

Workshops included: Cover Crops, Soil Health, and Organic Farming.

Farmers and USDA employees take an opportunity to network at the 11th Immigrant and Minority Farmers Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota.

FNS Employees Are Getting "Fiscally Fit"

By Susan M. Siemietkowski, Food and Nutrition Service

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) hosted an interesting and very educational workshop

called "Getting Fiscally Fit" on February 4, 2016. The session was planned in response to positive feedback from employees regarding the "Fit in 15" series on personal finance held last year. The interactive session included employees at FNS headquarters along with regional and remote employees across the country.

Topics included the basic principles of cash management; roadblocks to financial success; accumulating wealth; and, the importance of having a financial blueprint.

These events are intended to provide information and strategies on creating and sustaining wellness and Work/Life balance.

FNS welcomes feedback from its employees on the type of programs they find worthwhile. Please share your thoughts and ideas with Susan.Siemietkowski@fns.usda.gov.



AMS Uses Online Marketing for Recruitment

By Shayla Mae Bailey, Agricultural Marketing Service

It's not an easy feat to grab the attention of modern college students. Between text messages, SnapChat, and a whole host of other social media right at their fingertips, their attention is often divided and limited. That's why my agency, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) retooled its 2016 recruitment efforts to leverage Facebook and Twitter to reach more college and recent graduate applicants in the digital world.

Using the Department's Facebook page, we create a public event where we post key information about each recruiting event. The Facebook event format provides all the vitals – time, date, location – as well as space for a summary. Within that summary, we provide links to the open positions and directions to the venue, as well as tip sheets on how to best navigate USAJobs.gov.

Once we post a Facebook event page, we tweet 1-2 times per day to promote the recruiting event and drive traffic to the Facebook page. The tweets range in tone, with some using eye-catching “we're hiring” language and others using ag-specific language. We also use the same hashtag – #JoinAMS – for all of our recruitment tweets. This makes it easier for students to find and follow all of our recruitment events, and also helps us track our results.

And the results are... Typically within the first 30 minutes or less of adding the Facebook event, our event has 1,000 impressions (views of the event in people's news feeds). On average our events have over 5,000 impressions each, with our lowest reaching 3,600. Each corresponding tweet we send reaches well beyond our own 17,000 followers—especially since we also include the school or state's twitter handle in our tweets, leveraging their sea of followers at the same time. This can yield over 100,000 impressions, depending on the venue.

We're still measuring and perfecting this new recruitment approach, but so far our efforts have generated buzz, gotten a lot of shares and retweets, and brought more applicants to our recruitment events.

RMA Expands Employee Engagement to Increase Productivity

By Kathryn Quillen, Risk Management Agency

The Risk Management Agency's (RMA) Product Management office in Kansas City has successfully instituted a “cross section team” approach for implementing various provisions of the Farm Bill. This collaborative approach has enabled employees to participate in roles outside of their regular duties as Team Leaders and for managers to participate as Team Champions.

Tasks and responsibilities have been developed and assigned with the intent for each employee to actively participate on a given team. This affords employees an opportunity to expand their engagement activities with fulfilling the goals of the Agency's mission. As a result of this collaborative effort, employees and managers have been more involved in the work of RMA and provided a platform to provide meaningful input. This has increased employee engagement and helped move Farm Bill items forward to completion in a more efficient and timely manner.

Upcoming at USDA

Women's History Month Observance Thursday, March 10, 2016

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Jefferson Auditorium in Washington, DC

View recordings from many of USDA's Special Observances at

<http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/observances.htm>.

Employees receive one hour of diversity training for each USDA Special Observance attended.

Six USDA Agencies Partner for Successful Student Recruitment

By Karen Comfort, Agricultural Marketing Service

In December, recruiters for the Agricultural Marketing Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights participated in an on-site recruitment event for recent graduates at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez.

Together, the six USDA agencies and offices that participated in the event were recruiting for 56 different positions in 30 different locations across the country. More than 510 highly qualified recent graduates applied for the 56 positions through the USDA Pathways Recent Graduates Program, which offers pathways for students and recent graduates to become civil servants, work with USDA, and fulfill our nation's needs in the agricultural sector. It is anticipated that all vacant positions will be filled thanks to the successful recruitment event.

In addition to offering employment and meaningful training and career development opportunities to qualified recent graduates, the Pathway Program enables the Department to recruit among under-represented segments of America's population. By doing this, we will continue to be the People's Department, providing quality services to all.

FSIS Offers Employees Guidance on Writing Strong Resumes

By Joseph Abbott, Food Safety Inspection Service

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is offering voluntary one-day workshops for current field employees to provide guidance on how to write a resume and apply for jobs through USAJobs.gov.

Participants focus on the skills necessary to understand the process of building a resume, identifying accomplishments, learning how to use a position description to develop or modify a resume, engaging in a hands-on computer session to set up USAJobs accounts, and building resumes with the assistance of instructors from the FSIS Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training Center for Learning, and staff from the FSIS Office of Human Resources. Workshops are scheduled at central sites (typically colleges and universities) across the country serving specific areas within each district. Employee registration for the workshops begins approximately six weeks prior to each event. More than 20 sessions have been scheduled since January, and some FSIS District Managers are requesting additional sessions within their districts due to the turnout.

OPEDA Seeks Unsung Heroes

By Dana Manning, Organization of Professional Employees of the USDA

Since 1985, the Organization of Professional Employees of the U.S.



Department of Agriculture (OPEDA) in partnership with the USDA and Departmental Management, has hosted the **Unsung Hero Award Program** to honor and recognize USDA employees.

You can take advantage of this unique opportunity to recognize one of the many unsung heroes in your area. Award nominations may be submitted through midnight **Thursday, March 31, 2016**, to the OPEDA office. The nomination form can be found at www.OPEDA.org. This year's program will be held Tuesday, May 3, 2016, at 11:00 a.m., on the Whitten Patio with a lunch reception to follow.

Even more exciting news from OPEDA! We are now accepting scholarship applications for the 2016-2017 school year through June 30, 2016. OPEDA members in good standing and their family members (broadly defined) attending college are eligible to apply. This year OPEDA will be awarding two scholarships of \$1,500 each. The two scholarships honor John W. Peterson and Steven "Tom" Stefani for their exemplary service to OPEDA, the USDA, and our country. Visit OPEDA's website for more information http://opeda.org/Scholarship_OPEDA.html.

Employee Engagement at USDA

By Dawanna James-Holly, National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Over the past few years, USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has engaged in community service projects in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's message that, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What Are You Doing for Others?" NIFA's African American Special Emphasis Committee is one of several groups that support NIFA's development towards cultural transformation. In the spirit of the President's "United We Serve initiative," this year volunteers worked in partnership with the Greater Washington Urban League to conduct direct service.

NIFA led a toiletry drive in which four boxes were collected representing each of the Agency's institutes. Donations included shower gels, lotion, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, shampoo, conditioners, socks and wash cloths. Each of the uniquely decorated boxes was sorted and added to care packages distributed to Washington, DC area homeless shelters.

Volunteers were busy in January taking donations, assembling care packages, preparing peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in the community kitchen, and writing inspirational messages. Some employees generously donated their vehicles to deliver blankets and other items to street bound and homeless individuals.

The NIFA African American Special Emphasis Program's "MLK Day of Service" team includes (clockwise from center):

Dr. Dawanna James-Holly (Chair), Ms. Paulette Helman (Member), Dr. Bonita Williams (Member), Ms. Desiree Abrams (Member), Mrs. Angela Holloman (Member), Mr. James Jeter (GWUL), Dr. Ahlshia Shipley (Member), Mrs. Paularie Knox (Member), Mrs. Cecilia Johnson (AASEP President), Ms. Tekila Gray (Member), and, Ms. Margie Wise (Member).



FNCS Nutrition Council Hosts Food Sovereignty Seminar

By Susan M. Siemietkowski, Food and Nutrition Service

Lakota Values

- Prayer
- Respect
- Caring and Compassion
 - Honesty and Truth
- Generosity and Caring
 - Humility
 - Wisdom

The Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS) Nutrition Council hosted a recent seminar on Food Sovereignty. Led by Dr. Wanda Agnew with the United Tribes Technical College, the January 26th seminar focused on addressing issues using culturally relevant educational tools. She also stressed the need to train the next generation of Tribal members to help operate Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs in the future.

Dr. Agnew's 44 years of public health dietitian/nutrition experience includes stints with the Indian Health Service, Tribal WIC and USDA Tribal Land Grant Programs. The session, which included remote employees who took part virtually, underscored the FNCS commitment to healthy eating and diversity as well as the importance of Secretary Vilsack's Cultural Transformation mission to increase employee development and customer service/community service outreach.

Limited Resource Farmers Benefit from APHIS Program

By Dr. Dale Nolte, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) National Feral Swine Damage Manage-

ment Program was established in 2014 to ensure Limited Resource Farmers were aware of USDA's efforts to reduce problems with feral swine. Program leaders wanted to understand the farmers' attitudes and develop approaches to best work with them.

The Program collaborated with Tuskegee University to incorporate Extension Agents from 1890 Universities into program activities through Tuskegee University. Thirteen schools have participated so far, working directly with limited resource farmers, explaining the program, and describing concerns associated with feral swine.

Dr. Saul Wilson, emeritus professor at Tuskegee University, was instrumental in developing relationships and maintaining enthusiasm to implement the program. Previously, Dr. Wilson had worked for USDA/APHIS and made significant contributions on several APHIS animal disease campaigns. APHIS continues to provide internships/scholarships in his name. By chance, a recipient of a "Saul Wilson" scholarship is working with the Feral Swine Program. Dr. Wilson recently announced that he was retiring from his official duties, but will continue to provide advice and guidance.

Dr. Dale Nolte, Feral Swine Program Manager, said, "We were very fortunate that Saul took an interest in the Feral Swine Program and decided to not only assist with developing the mechanism to reach out to limited resource farmers, but also played a key role in encouraging other 1890 schools to participate. I appreciate his perspective and expect to maintain our friendship."



Dr. Saul Wilson (seated) and Dr. Dale Nolte finalize plans for the Feral Swine Program to continue working with limited resource farmers after Dr. Wilson's retirement.

Assistant Secretary for Administration Dr. Gregory Parham added, "It is fitting that Dr. Wilson finished his professional career in support of USDA and I wish him well in retirement."

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey—USDA's Response

USDA's response to the [2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey \(FEVS\)](#) provides employees with the opportunity to influence change in their agencies by submitting feedback about their work environment, leadership and many other aspects of the organization.

USDA's results also give leaders unique insight into workforce issues and trends, while helping them to identify problem areas and maintain positive aspects of the Department.

Our ability to make positive changes depends on your response. In 2015, 66% of USDA employees responded to the survey!

That's 20,624 responses out of 31,135 employees surveyed. Several agencies and mission areas responded at an even higher rate (see box right.)

USDA's results are broken down by agency, and topics covered include employee engagement and satisfaction, work/life flexibility, and inclusiveness.

USDA's overall response rate to the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey was 66%. The agencies and mission areas below responded at an even higher rate! Our goal for 2016 is 70%!

- * 93%—National Appeals Division
- * 91%—Office of the Chief Economist
- * 86%—Office of the General Counsel
- * 83%—Office of the Asst. Sec. for Civil Rights
- * 82%—Farm and Foreign Agriculture Services
- * 79%—Food Nutrition and Consumer Services
- * 77%—Food Safety and Inspection Service
- * 77%—Office of Budget & Program Analysis
- * 76%—Rural Development
- * 76%—Departmental Management
- * 76%—Office of Communications
- * 72%—Research Education and Economics
- * 71%—Marketing and Regulatory Programs
- * 67%—Office of the Secretary

If you'd like to share your feedback about Cultural Transformation, telework, diversity, or any other aspect of work/life 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 Connections](#).



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

Submit Your Article to MyUSDA

The monthly deadline for submissions is the end of the first week of each month.

Guidance on Submissions to MyUSDA

Submissions to MyUSDA should indicate progress that you, your agency, or your mission area have achieved toward implementing the Secretary's Cultural Transformation (CT) Initiative. The ideal submission includes photos or graphics along with a brief description of the event. The ideal word count for articles is 150-200. All submissions are subject to editing and Departmental review.

Submissions may be in the form of a traditional article with a byline, a first-person account, or any work-related activity, event, or observance demonstrating the Secretary's Cultural Transformation Action Items: Leadership; Recruitment & Retention; Talent Management; Employee Development; and, Customer Focus & Community Outreach.

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