



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 5, Issue 7

June 2015

Farm Service Agency Employees Improve Lives Around the World

By Avery Edghill, FSA

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) partners regularly with USDA to bring sustainable development and advance human dignity globally. Recently, the FSA Deputy Administrator for Management's Acquisition Management Division (AMD) seized the moment when asked to collaborate with Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services and USAID.

AMD is working with the Tanzania Economic Growth Office to provide acquisition support services for the "Feed the Future" initiative. This initiative creates sustained economic growth in developing countries, through the creation of infrastructure, natural resource management, agricultural growth, and private sector development. Tanzania is the largest country in East Africa and is one of the world's largest maize (corn) exporter.

The AMD team of volunteers is providing expertise to the initiative for all phases of the acquisition lifecycle and is helping to improve economic conditions for current and future generations of Tanzanians. The team includes Shawn Hedgspeth, Banchiamlak Gizachew, Angela Garcia, Brian Carter, Erin Lindsey and Cheryl Copeland. For these employees, the partnership provides a unique and enriching opportunity for employee development while allowing them to perform critical work tied directly to FSA's mission. They are able to experience firsthand the global impact of the work they do every day.



"This has been the experience of a lifetime for me! I am proud to say that my training and experience from AMD has been integral in providing me with the skills to help make this mission a success. In addition to assisting in improving the economic conditions of Tanzania, I have also been fortunate enough to have time to travel and explore. I have built some great relationships and made some new friendships that I hope will endure beyond my time here." – Brian Carter, pictured above, making new friends.

Pictured right, a local vendor readies his produce for sale.



Nutrition Council Educates Employees

By Susan Siemietkowski, FNS

The Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services (FNCS) Nutrition Council held a seminar entitled, *“Taking the Mystery out of the Regulation Process: Child and Adult Care Food Plan Meal Pattern Proposed Rule and Nutrition Initiatives.”* It was open to all employees via live meeting. Sessions such as this support Cultural Transformation’s “Employee Development” pillar which provides training opportunities for staff as well as CT’s “Customer Service and Community Outreach” pillar which helps employees better understand FNCS programs and the people they serve. Below, Laura Carroll explains the regulatory process (left) and Andrea Farmer responds to questions from participants.

The annual meeting of the Nutrition Council will be July 21-22. All employees are invited (webinar for ROs). There will be speakers from all nutrition-related programs in FNCS as well as many outstanding outside speakers. Food trends, childhood obesity and sodium reduction are among the topics to be covered. Additional details will be provided soon.



NRCS Employee Honored at USDA LGBT Pride Event



USDA GLOBE (an affinity organization for Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT) employees and allies,) has presented its 2015 Shining Star Award to Meghan Walter.

Meghan is the national LGBT Special Emphasis Program Manager for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

USDA GLOBE Vice-President Billy Cox presented the award at the 2015 USDA LGBT Pride Observance in Washington, D.C. earlier this month.

“Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the Shining Star award. I am honored and humbled to accept this year’s award. It means a lot coming from my peers, because that is why I became an ally – to support my peers in high school in a small Iowa community.

“I promise to continue to be a champion for LGBT employees and customers at USDA for the entirety of my career. Thank you again. This was the coolest, proudest day of my career.”

—Meghan Walter, NRCS

Employees Drive Culture Change Leading to \$1.4 Billion in Savings

In an article published by *Federal News Radio* on June 4th, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack highlighted the work of employees across the Department on the Blueprint for Stronger Service effort. He noted that the successes that have been achieved over the last three years are due to the ideas and buy-in from employees.

The Secretary indicated that this initiative has resulted in changes that saved \$1.4 B for USDA. He also stated that the project has sparked creativity. For more information, [see the article at this link](#).

OPM Cybersecurity Incident Update

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is encouraging Federal employees to find out more about the recent cybersecurity breach impacting U.S. Government workers around the country.

Please visit the following links to the OPM announcement and Frequently Asked Questions if you would like additional information:

<http://www.opm.gov/news/latest-news/announcements/>

<http://www.opm.gov/news/latest-news/announcements/frequently-asked-questions/>

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

UPCOMING USDA SPECIAL OBSERVANCE

Women's Equality Day
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2015

The observance begins at 10:00 a.m. (EDT) at the Jefferson Auditorium, Washington, DC. Employees receive one hour of diversity training for attending USDA Special Observances.

You can view recordings of recent [USDA Special Observances by visiting here](#).

AMS Employee Receives Food Safety Award

By Lorenzo Tribbett, AMS

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) employee Jennifer Dougherty—Team Lead of AMS' Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Program—has been honored with the Specialty Crop, Aquaculture, Livestock Enterprise (SCALE) award at the Food Safety Conference held in Raymond, Mississippi.

Jennifer shared the award (pictured right) with Mississippi Department of Agriculture Auditor Kevin Riggins.

They were honored in recognition of their exceptional leadership, tireless efforts, and devoted service when working with Mississippi growers in providing on-farm food safety and GAPs training and outreach.

The Mississippi Association of Cooperatives and Alcorn State University Small Farm & Agribusiness Center presented the award.

GAPs are practices under U.S. Food and Drug Administration guidelines that apply to the growing, packing, and handling of fruits and vegetables in the safest manner possible to minimize the risks of food-borne illnesses.

GAPs audits are important to farmers because many buyers, traders, and retailers require that their suppliers have a GAPs certificate.

GAPs training and outreach is part of AMS' continued USDA Strikeforce Initiative efforts to provide GAPs certification to small, disadvantaged producers to help them gain market access for their products.



Organization of Professional Employees of the USDA Accepting Scholarship Applications

By Dana Manning, OPEDA

OPEDA will be accepting scholarship applications for the 2015-2016 School Year through July 31st, 2015.

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 awarded are in honor of John W. Peterson and Steven "Tom" Stefani for their exemplary service to OPEDA, the USDA, and our country.

We encourage you to visit OPEDA's website for more information about membership and scholarship opportunities.

http://opeda.org/Scholarship_OPEDA.html



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 some aspect of 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.