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USDA's FY 2004 Proposed Budget Emphasizes Key Priorities

by Ron Hall
Office of Communications

"The 2004 budget is a responsible budget and it funds key priorities and programs here at USDA."

That was Secretary **Ann M. Veneman's** main message when she unveiled USDA's proposed budget for FY 2004 at a press conference on February 3. She highlighted several items of importance in the Department's proposed budget, which she said provides unprecedented funding for a food and nutrition 'safety net,' provides resources to continue to expand agricultural trade, increases the amount of money for housing for rural citizens, invests in America's rural sector, strengthens forest health and firefighting capabilities, and improves USDA's program delivery and customer service.

"Because of fiscal realities, this is a constrained budget," she advised. "But it focuses and maintains resources in order to meet our strategic goals."

Key priorities reflected in the proposed budget include: ensuring a safe and wholesome food supply, safeguarding America's homeland, continued implementation and diligent administration of the 2002 Farm Bill, and providing historic increases for conservation funding and protecting natural resources.

Veneman noted that the proposed budget supports the Department's overall strategic plan as well as the goals outlined in a policy book, titled "Food and Agricultural Policy: Taking Stock for the New Century," which USDA released in the summer of 2001. "Both are designed to enhance economic opportunities in agriculture as well as rural areas, protect the nation's food supply, improve the nation's nutrition and health, and protect and enhance the nation's natural resources and environment," she said.

USDA's FY 2004 proposed budget calls for $74.0 billion in spending, an increase of nearly $1.4 billion over the Department's currently estimated spending for FY 2003 of over $72.6 billion.

Veneman emphasized that the proposed budget for USDA supports the continued implementation of the 2002 Farm Bill. "We have made good progress so far in implementing the Farm Bill," she said, "and we could not have done it without the tremendous effort and hard work of our staff who are here in Washington, all of our field staff, including our county service centers that are all throughout the country—and we want to again say 'thank you' to all of our employees around the country for everything that they've done."

She also said that, on the

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Alan Harvey *(left), a program technician with the FSA county office in Milam County, Texas, and* ***Darvin Collins*** *(center), FSA county executive director for Houston County, Texas, trudge through thick underbrush in Nacogdoches County, Texas. They were two of the many volunteers searching for debris from the Columbia space shuttle. That particular piece of geography is typical of the rugged terrain with which search steams had to cope. USDA employees played a key role in the debris recovery efforts. Note* ***Brenda Carlson's*** *story below.*
—PHOTO BY BRENDA CARLSON

How USDA Employees Helped In The Aftermath Of The Shuttle Tragedy

by Brenda Carlson
FSA Public Affairs Staff
FSA State Office
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The day the Columbia Space Shuttle disintegrated upon reentry over Texas will be long remembered, particularly by USDA employees caught up in the horrific search for human remains and the Shuttle itself. Like the assassination of President **John F. Kennedy** and more recently the events of September 11, February 1, 2003 has etched itself into the minds of Americans. Most of us will be able to recount where we were and what we were doing when the fate of the Columbia was realized.

With that in mind, shortly after the disaster, employees of more than 74 federal and state agencies throughout the United States, as well as volunteers, descended upon eastern Texas and northwestern Louisiana, searching its waters, swamps, piney woods, and remote countryside to assist in the effort to search for and recover shuttle debris and human remains. USDA employees played a key role in that effort.

A number of USDA employees offered their expertise in using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology, as part of the recovery efforts in the approximately 33,000-square mile debris field. According to **Alan Harvey**, a Farm Service Agency program

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Ann M. Veneman *Secretary of Agriculture*

In mid-February, I was honored to open the ceremony celebrating Black History Month. Pausing to take stock of the contributions of African Americans gives us all an opportunity to pay tribute and deepen our collective knowledge.

President **George W. Bush** has called Black History Month a time of learning for us all. Black History Month was established through the efforts of Dr. **Carter G. Woodson**, and this year's theme is based on the book, "The Souls of Black Folk," written a century ago by **W.E.B. DuBois**.

Both Dr. Woodson and Dr. DuBois received Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University, the first two African Americans to achieve that distinction. Both men were instrumental in founding organizations, the NAACP and the Study of Afro-American Life and History, that in time would play major roles in the lives of African Americans, and indeed all Americans, and these are roles that still continue today.

As we celebrate Black History Month, here at USDA we are also acutely aware that today's actions are tomorrow's history.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the 1890's Outstanding Scholars Program. USDA awards advanced scholarships for students' college education and provides support for 1890's institutions. The students agree to participate in USDA's summer intern program and work at USDA for a period of time. It's a win-win partnership.

Recognizing the unique role of these institutions, President Bush has proposed funding increases for support to Historically Black Colleges and Universities so that our close relationship may continue and keep us moving in the right direction.

As well, we continue to celebrate the life of **George Washington Carver** at the George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville, Md., the home of our agricultural research mission. We honor his memory at the Center every October and we also maintain the Carver Gardens, where visitors can see living examples of the many fruits and vegetables with which Dr. Carver experimented.

As we look to the future we hope for the speedy confirmation of **Vernon Parker** to be USDA's assistant secretary for civil rights, a new office created by the 2002 Farm Bill. Mr. Parker has a distinguished career in adminsitrative law, serving in government, and the private sector. He also has served as pastor at his church and helped bring people together to advance a stronger sense of community and giving.

I am proud that USDA has been, and will continue to be, a player in promoting and protecting the history and heritage of African Americans and all Americans. ■

USDA's FY 2004 Proposed Budget...continued from pg. 1

homeland security front, USDA plans to transfer $247 million to the recently created Department of Homeland Security, to conduct agricultural quarantine inspection activities at U.S. borders and to operate the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in New York. In addition, 2,690 staff years will be transferred from USDA to DHS, including 2,684 from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

USDA's budget proposes a federal staffing level for FY 2004 of 98,003 full-time equivalent positions, or federal staff years, which is about one percent less than the currently estimated figure for FY 2003. The staffing levels for most agencies for FY 2004 are proposed to increase or stay the same, compared to their currently estimated FY 2003 federal staff year levels.

For more details on USDA's proposed staffing levels, as well as additional details on other aspects of USDA's proposed budget for FY 2004, click on **www.usda.gov/budget**

Highlights of USDA's FY 2004 budget proposal, thought to be of particular interest to employees, include:

■ $178 million—an increase of nearly $45 million—to upgrade technology in USDA's county office service centers. Most of that increase will be used to provide Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies to those offices, which will allow farmers and ranchers more access to satellite mapping and planting information. Currently, many of those maps are in pen and ink form in the county offices, and are not available on computers.

■ Funding of $800,000 for the new position of assistant secretary for civil rights.

■ Nearly $47 million in new funding to strengthen laboratory security measures, conduct research on emerging animal diseases, develop new vaccines, create new biosecurity database systems, and continue development of the unified federal-state diagnostic network for identifying and responding to high-risk pathogens—all in support of the Department's homeland security and agricultural protection programs.

■ A newly established centralized fund of $6.6 million to support particular cross-cutting trade issues, compliance monitoring, dispute resolution, and biotechnology activities within the Department.

USDA's proposed budget for FY 2004 was transmitted to Congress on February 3. ■

*"Our GPS equipment will let us cut through all this terrain—figuratively speaking—and exactly pinpoint shuttle debris sites," affirms FSA GPS specialist **Bryan Crook** (kneeling, wearing GPS backpack). He, along with **Darvin Collins** (left, back to camera), FSA county executive director for Houston County, Texas, and **John Raney** (far right), FSA county executive director for Cherokee County, Texas, are working with local Texas law enforcement officials to plot a strategy for searching for and recovering shuttle debris in Nacogdoches County, Texas. Note **Brenda Carlson's** story on page 1.—**PHOTO BY BRENDA CARLSON***

News *from USDA Headquarters*

*Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** (center) is joined by Interior Secretary **Gale Norton** (left) and EPA Administrator **Christie Todd Whitman** as they meet the press at USDA headquarters on Feb. 3 to discuss President **George W. Bush's** $30.4 billion budget proposal for FY 2004 for programs for conservation and the environment in those combined agencies.—**Photo by Alice Welch***

*The New Year began with a nod to the past then quickly accelerated to focus on the future as Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** revealed key parts of President **George W. Bush's** proposed budget for FY 2004 which includes record spending for important farm conservation measures, food safety protections, and nutrition and food assistance programs.*

*In February the Secretary outlined key priorities for agriculture at the 79th annual Agricultural Outlook Forum, and USDA employees paused to celebrate the richness of African-American history during Black History Month and the lives of former Agriculture Secretaries **Richard Lyng** and **Orville Freeman**, both of whom passed away. In March, Secretary Veneman took to the airwaves telling farm broadcasters and print media about the benefits to farm families of President Bush's economic growth plan.*

Mid-Term Review: On Jan. 7, Secretary Veneman released a review of the most significant food and agricultural policy achievements of the first two years of the Bush Administration including: progress on trade, rapid implementation of the 2002 Farm Bill, increased measures to protect agriculture against terrorist threats, unprecedented funding for food and nutrition programs, and new actions to strengthen food safety systems.

Proposed Budget Unveiled: Prior to formally unveiling in early February the President's proposed budget for FY 2004 for USDA, Secretary Veneman visited a clinic for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, where she announced the President would ask Congress for a record $4.8 billion in WIC program funding, a $43 million increase above a year ago. According to the latest figures, the WIC program achieved an all-time record of over 7.64 million participants in October 2002. The President's new budget will allow local WIC programs, like the one the Secretary visited in New York, to provide benefits to nearly 8 million low-income mothers and children.

The Secretary reiterated this commitment to the food programs during the first ever USDA-sponsored National Nutrition Education Conference. With reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act before Congress this year, Veneman outlined administration principles that include providing financial support to schools that promote good nutrition and partnerships at the federal, state, and local levels to an audience of leading nutrition authorities.

Other key areas of growth in the President's budget include continued emphasis on farm bill implementation. This includes providing historic increases for conservation funding and protecting natural resources at $3.9 billion.

Encouraging Rural Economic Growth: Following the President's State of the Union address on Jan. 28, where he urged the continued promotion of economic growth, the Secretary was able to showcase USDA efforts to expand the reach of rural citizens through the availability of broadband technology. In a live web cast with Under Secretary for Rural Development **Tom Dorr** and Rural Utilities Service Administrator **Hilda Gay Legg** and various community centers in Kansas, Virginia, and Mississippi, Veneman announced the immediate availability of $1.4 billion in loans and loan guarantees to rural telecommunications providers.

In March, Veneman released figures prepared by USDA's Office of the Chief Economist that for the first time calculate the benefits to rural farm families of the President's economic growth plan which essentially speeds up tax cuts already on the books. According to OCE, the proposal would save farm families $4 billion this year alone.

79th Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum: USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board once again hosted another successful Agricultural Outlook Forum. After Chief Economist **Keith Collins** and Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services **J.B. Penn** briefed the audience on the domestic and international outlook for the farm economy, Veneman outlined key priorities for agriculture in the months ahead. They include:

- Applying technology to its fullest potential, advancing alternative uses for agricultural products, and adopting a forward looking regulatory system that ensures the integrity of technology advancements in food and agriculture;
- Strengthening the nation's food safety systems and ensuring the protection of the food supply against potential bioterrorist threats;
- Improving and expanding risk management tools for producers to better prepare the agriculture sector when it faces difficult and challenging times; and
- Continuing to expand and open new international markets and working harder to educate all involved about the perils to agriculture if progress is not made in this area.

Black History Month: *(please see the Secretary's Column in this issue)* During ceremonies at USDA headquarters Secretary Veneman formally recognized **Vernon Parker**, who was in attendance, as President Bush's nominee to be the new assistant secretary for civil rights.

Forest Service To Collaborate With New York City Firefighters: Due to the quality of help the Forest Service provided New York City in the aftermath of 9/11, the City of New York asked the agency to begin incident management team training with its Fire Department. In appreciation for the Department's help in the recovery efforts, the Secretary was presented with a touching memorial from the World Trade Center *(see photo, page 8)*.

Faith-Based And Community Initiatives Center Launched: At the fourth White House Conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the Secretary told the audience of nonprofit and church members of opportunities to work with USDA Rural Development housing programs and Food and Nutrition Service feeding programs. President Bush launched the Center in December 2002.

For complete information on all these subjects go to **www.usda.gov**
—*Patricia Klintberg*

Employees *make these things happen*

Natural Resources and Environment

It Was A Banner Year For Conservation Volunteers

"Record-breaking" is the phrase Natural Resources Conservation Service staffers are using to describe the year that NRCS's Earth Team volunteers had during FY 2002. That's because Earth Team volunteers contributed more than one million hours of service to conservation activities nationally.

According to **Michele Eginoire**, NRCS's national volunteer coordinator based in Ankeny, Iowa, the National Earth Team Status Report for FY 2002 showed a 19 percent increase—over the previous year's figures—in the number of volunteers, a 17 percent increase in the number of volunteer hours, and a five percent increase in the number of NRCS offices relying on volunteer services.

In addition, she pointed out that, for FY 2002, the total value of volunteer time was more than $17 million, based on the $16.05 per hour rate established by nationally recognized volunteer organizations. "The total amount which NRCS invested nationally in the Earth Team is approximately $199,000," Eginoire said. "So this gives NRCS a return on its investment equal to about $86 for every $1 spent."

"Since the Earth Team began in 1982," she added, "the number of volunteers has gone from 327 to more than 38,000, and the number of hours donated has jumped from 29,100 to 1,089,100."

Norm Klopfenstein, NRCS's Earth Team marketing specialist based at the agency's state office in Columbia, Mo., explained that the Earth Team is NRCS's volunteer support system for those who are interested in conserving America's natural resources, while at the same time helping to keep federal costs down.

The volunteers do "hands-on" work on the land—such as work on conservation projects including streambank restoration and erosion control; clean-up of rivers, streams, and lakes; providing conservation-related technical assistance to landowners; and conducting conservation education, both indoors and outdoors, for students. "While volunteers in other federal programs—such as those helping the National Park Service—work on public lands, Earth Team volunteers work almost solely on private lands," he pointed out.

Volunteers also work in NRCS offices to provide clerical assistance, write computer programs and organize computer data, and prepare newsletters.

"Our Earth Team Volunteer Program is a typical example of the President's USA Freedom Corps," Eginoire added.

—Fred Jacobs

*The 8,700 employees of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service have been named People of the Year in Service to American Agriculture by "Progressive Farmer" magazine. Calling APHIS "agriculture's crucial line of defense" in a world of pests, disease, and terror, the article quotes APHIS Administrator **Bobby Acord**, **John Clifford**, associate deputy administrator of the agency's National Animal Health Policy and Programs, and **Jane Levy**, a senior staff officer in the agency's Port Operations Staff, who handles calls from port-of-entry inspectors seeking guidance on APHIS procedures for handling food products coming into the U.S. This is the first time in the magazine's 117-year history that it has honored a federal agency for service. For a copy of the article go to **www.progressivefarmer.com**.*

—Illustration by Ralph A. Mark, Jr.; Courtesy of "Progressive Farmer"

We're A Key Part In The Bicentennial Of Lewis And Clark

by Jane Knowlton
FS Public Affairs Staff

The legendary expedition of **Meriwether Lewis** and **William Clark** from 1803 to 1806 to explore lands west of the Mississippi River is one of our nation's greatest stories.

It's also a USDA story.

As Lewis and Clark journeyed forth to the Pacific Ocean, exploring the uncharted West in the process, their experiences yielded discovery, adventure, mapping the unknown, scientific exploration, establishing trade and cultural exchanges—and were marked by great courage and perseverance.

Both the Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are participating in the 21-member federal consortium observing the nationwide Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration from 2003 to 2006. According to **Kristen Nelson**, FS's National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Coordinator, specialists from those two agencies are working in cooperation with other federal departments, states, tribes, local communities, and the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial during the next four years to promote educational, cultural, and interpretive opportunities for citizens and visitors.

"We want to help people learn more about the natural, historical, and cultural resources that are part of the Lewis and Clark story," she underscored.

Margaret Gorski, FS's National Bicentennial Field Coordinator who is based in the agency's Northern Regional Office in Missoula, Mont., pointed out that Lewis and Clark's journey crossed through or passed by areas that would become 16 Forest Service-administered national forests and grasslands. In addition, nearly 1,000 miles of the 3,700-mile Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail either cross, or are in view of, lands managed by the Forest Service, especially in South Dakota, Montana, and Idaho. "So, as people visit these historic areas," Gorski said, "we'll be promoting stewardship of the land."

NRCS public affairs specialist **Suzanne Pender** pointed out that Lewis and Clark had specific instructions from President **Thomas Jefferson** to report on factors of the land that would show its potential for agricultural uses.

"President Jefferson wanted the explorers to describe '...the soil & face of the country, its growth and vegetable productions, especially those not of the United States...'," she said. "Essentially, Lewis and Clark conducted the first soil surveys of the American West—and NRCS soil scientists follow in their footsteps today, using some of the same descriptive terms."

She added that the commemoration provides an opportunity for NRCS to reach new audiences and provide information on NRCS conservation activities throughout the 'trail states.' "Many of NRCS's Resource Conservation and Development Councils have developed local Lewis and Clark programs and activities, and our web site will be continuously updated with educational information," Pender said.

The commemoration kicked off in mid-January at Monticello—Jefferson's historic home—in Charlottesville, Va. Gorski noted that the Monticello event highlighted Jefferson's Jan. 18, 1803 confidential letter to Congress in which he asked for $2,500 to fund an expedition to

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Editor's Roundup *USDA's people in the news*

In this issue we are catching you up with Who's Who at USDA. They include the following officials, in alphabetical order:

Nancy Bryson, USDA's General Counsel, came to USDA from the DC law firm of Crowell & Moring where she focused on natural resources, administrative law, and biotechnology. Prior to entering private practice she served first as a trial attorney and then as assistant chief of the Justice Department's Environmental Defense Section from 1979-84…

Jim Butler, now deputy under secretary for farm and foreign agricultural services, served as deputy under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs since September 2001…

Chief Information Officer **Scott Charbo**, responsible for the overall management of USDA's information resources and IT assets, came to the job after a short stint as director of the Office of Business and Program Integration at the Farm Service Agency. Before joining USDA, Charbo was president of mPower3, Inc., a subsidiary of ConAgra Foods…

Risk Management Agency Administrator **Ross Davidson** came to USDA from the insurance giant United Services Automobile Association (USAA) based in San Antonio. He also has been a financial officer at Tesoro Petroleum and at Zapata Corp., an offshore oilfield services enterprise in Houston…

Phyllis Fong is USDA's Inspector General. Prior to joining USDA, Fong was Inspector General at the Small Business Administration and earlier had served as SBA's Assistant Inspector General…

Floyd Gaibler returns to USDA as deputy under secretary for farm and foreign agricultural services. Gaibler has more than 27 years of experience working on agricultural concerns, nine of those for USDA in the 1980's. He was an executive with the Agricultural Retailers Association, the International Dairy Foods Association, and the National Cheese Institute/American Butter Institute…

Arthur Garcia, administrator of the Rural Housing Service, came to USDA from the banking industry where he concentrated on serving small businesses. He has also taught finance at the College of Santa Fe, Webster University, and the University of Phoenix…

Eric Hentges is director of the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. He brings 20 years of experience in human nutrition research...

Mike Kelly is USDA's Deputy General Counsel and has worked in the Office of the General Counsel since 1973, and also served as USDA's ethics counselor from 1975 until the Office of Ethics was created as a separate office in 1998. During his tenure in OGC he served as associate general counsel for legislation, litigation, and general law from 1975 to 2002…

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the Pacific Ocean.

She explained that Charlottesville is the first of 15 American communities selected by the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial as sites for national heritage "signature events" during the bicentennial.

FS employees unveiled an exhibit, on the University of Virginia campus in Charlottesville, titled "The Legacy of Lewis & Clark: Enduring Stories and Dynamic Landscapes." "Through our exhibit," Nelson said, "we invite viewers to explore the dynamic landscapes of our national forests and grasslands, plus the unique plants and wildlife—and cultural traditions—as seen 200 years ago by Lewis and Clark."

NRCS also unveiled an exhibit at that site titled "A Garden...Or A Desert?" "As our exhibit describes," explained **Stan Anderson**, a soil survey editor at the NRCS Soil Survey Center in Lincoln, Neb., "at the time of Lewis and Clark's exploration, there was concern that the farmland in this country might not be enough to sustain a growing America. In fact, French explorers from the Northwest had described this country as a garden, while Spanish adventurers in the Southwest had described a desert."

"That's why," he added, "in 1805 Lewis and Clark sent to President Jefferson samples of soils, minerals, and plants they had collected along their journey thus far—to help him gauge the potential of these new lands for agricultural purposes."

"The exhibit," said NRCS graphic designer **Bob Gresh**, who designed it, "includes antique soil survey equipment identical to that used by Lewis and Clark, along with some of their notes, photographs documenting NRCS soil scientists examining the soil on the grounds of Monticello last summer, and reproductions of Lewis and Clark-themed paintings."

Additional Lewis and Clark bicentennial events planned by FS employees can be found at **www.lewisandclark200.gov**; NRCS's bicentennial events can be found at **www.nrcs.usda. gov/feature/lewisandclark/index.html**.

"Lewis and Clark's epic journey increased our knowledge of our nation's natural resources and helped us gain a better understanding of America's native cultures," observed Nelson. "In the Forest Service and NRCS, we're looking forward to greeting visitors and sharing our missions with them—in the spirit of those two explorers." ■

***Maureen McBrien** (right), deputy director for recreation, lands, minerals, heritage, and wilderness for the FS Northern Region, who is based in Missoula, Mont., reviews with a visitor to the agency's Lewis and Clark exhibit some of the locations where the westward journey of those two explorers crossed into what are now FS-administered national forests and grasslands.*
—Photo by Suzanne Pender

Charles "Chuck" Lambert, the deputy under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs, comes to USDA after serving more than 15 years with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, most recently as its chief economist…

Garry McKee, administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service, has a strong background in public health issues having served as director and cabinet secretary of the Wyoming Department of Health and chief of Oklahoma's Public Health Lab…

John Rosso, an expert in energy related matters, heads the Rural Business-Cooperative Service. He is the former president and CEO of J. Rosso and Co., which became the parent company of 34 diversified corporations including real estate, insurance, development, construction, deep well drilling, and alternate energy retail stores…

Ellen Terpstra, administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service, was president of the USA Rice Federation prior to coming to USDA. She also has served as president of the U.S. Apple Association and worked for the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative…

For complete information on the current administration at USDA click on ***www.usda.gov/welcome***

—Patricia Klintberg

Duane Smith affirmed he has long since spent the $9,300 he won at a local fishing tournament, so what remains with him now are his memories of that event. What stands out in his mind is how unique and unusual the whole activity was.

Smith, a Food Safety and Inspection Service processed foods inspector and the inspector in charge at a processed foods plant in Fayetteville, Ark., took first prize at the Busch Big Bass Tournament held on Beaver Lake in northwest Arkansas. "People win fishing tournaments around the country all the time," he acknowledged. "But this particular activity had some unique twists to it."

For instance, he noted, professional bass fishing tournaments generally are limited to 300 participants, or 600 when there are two participants per boat. But he was one of 920 competitors—and this was a non-profit competition designed for amateur fishers. "And with 920 people competing, that made for a lot of fish—in any tournament," he quipped.

Second, according to **John Paschal**—a fellow FSIS processed foods inspector and the inspector in charge at a different processed foods plant, also in Fayetteville—during a typical bass fishing tournament the participants all begin the contest by leaving the shore from the same spot. But in this contest the competitors could launch their motorized fishing boats from any of the 20-plus public fishing ramps, located around the parameters of Beaver Lake.

"The reason was to get those 920 participants out in the water, away from each other and busy fishing—presumably at their own favorite fishing spots—as quickly as possible," he explained.

Third, Smith pointed out that, unlike most amateur tournaments, which operate under an 'honor system,' the winner of this tournament had to take a lie detector test. "That was done because of the size of the winning purse," he said.

Accordingly, he was asked such questions as "Did you make sure to not begin fishing until the official starting time of 7 a.m.?" "Were you, in fact, the one who caught that fish?" "Did you abide by all appropriate Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission and U.S. Coast Guard regulations?" and "Did you use live bait?"

"That last one is a particular 'no-no'," Smith advised. A fish is more likely to bite at live bait, he explained, so the contest requires participants to use artificial lures—in order to display their prowess as a fisher. "In other words, you have to finesse that li'l rascal," he quipped.

Smith said he landed his prize-winning bass after a two-minute struggle—"which seemed like two hours," he recounted. "After I finally pulled the bass into my 16-foot boat," he laughed, "I was so happy I almost kissed that fish."

—Ron Hall

Two Giants In Agriculture Pass Away

Secretary **Richard E. Lyng** passed away on February 1. Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** called him "a visionary leader in agriculture who worked passionately on behalf of this nation's farmers and ranchers. He was a friend, a mentor and person of great integrity whose insight, candor, and wisdom will be sorely missed."

Lyng was born in San Francisco on June 29, 1918. He graduated from Notre Dame University in 1940 and was president of the Ed J. Lyng Company, a family seed and bean production and processing firm, from 1949 to 1967. In 1967, he was appointed the chief deputy director of the California State Department of Agriculture.

From March 3, 1969, to January 23, 1973, Lyng was the USDA assistant secretary for marketing and consumer services. From 1973 to 1979, he served as president of the American Meat Institute. From February 5, 1981, until January 18, 1985, he served as USDA's Deputy Secretary. In 1985 Lyng, along with **William Lesher**, formed Lyng and Lesher Inc., an agricultural consulting firm in Washington DC. On February 22, 1986, he was appointed Secretary, serving until January 20, 1989.

"Secretary Lyng shared many friends and colleagues and touched the lives of so many people. Today while we mourn his loss, we also celebrate a remarkable man and an inspiring life journey," Veneman said.

Orville Freeman, Secretary of Agriculture to President **John F. Kennedy** and President **Lyndon Johnson**, also died in February. A native of Minnesota, he was born on May 9, 1918. He graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1940. He also received his law degree at Minnesota in 1946 after serving as a Marine officer in World War II. Freeman practiced law in Minneapolis and participated in Minneapolis municipal affairs. He was elected Governor of Minnesota in 1954 and served three terms.

"Secretary Freeman will be long remembered for his dedicated service to our country as a three-term Governor of Minnesota and for his stewardship of the Department of Agriculture for nearly all of the 1960's. He was a friend of the American farmer and made a significant impact on the entire food and agriculture system during his leadership at the Department," Veneman said.

—Patricia Klintberg

Shuttle...continued from pg. 1

technician in the county office in Milam County, Texas, GPS technology allows the user to hone in on a particular geographical area with great precision.

"As searchers located shuttle debris," he explained, "we used GPS to log the coordinates of those location sites. This enabled law enforcement and NASA recovery teams to pinpoint the exact location of the wreckage for collection."

Harvey added that, when mapped collectively, those coordinates paint a picture of the flight path and debris field—and will eventually help National Aeronautics and Space Administration specialists to decipher the chain of events of the shuttle disaster, as it unfolded over the continental United States.

"Because debris sites are 'geo-referenced'," noted **Bryan Crook**, a GPS specialist with FSA's state office in College Station, Texas, "we've been technologically interacting with all agencies involved in this activity. This has made for a more efficient search and recovery effort."

He pointed out that FSA normally uses GPS to map cropland and ranchland, thereby providing agricultural producers with accurate field measurements.

Crook led a team of four FSA employees certified to use GPS technology. Prior to joining the search and recovery effort, he worked behind the scenes at USDA service centers located within the search area to set up computer mapping programs.

Valerie Cardwell, a Natural Resources Conservation Service district conservationist at USDA's San Augustine, Texas service center, and **Debra Hamilton**, an FSA program technician at that same location, coordinated with Crook at that service center. "Those computer mapping programs," Cardwell explained, "have been allowing searchers to call in debris coordinates to the FSA office—within the appropriate USDA service center—to identify the owners and/or operators of the land on which debris has been found. Appropriate officials then follow up to get permission to enter that land and then pick up the shuttle debris."

Holly Morgan, a timber management assistant on the Forest Service's Catahoula Ranger District in Bentley, La., noted that debris from the space shuttle fell, in part, on the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas and the Kisatchie National Forest in Louisiana. She said that FS personnel were on the scene at the beginning, organizing local volunteers to begin the search and recovery efforts. FS then ultimately committed literally thousands of agency personnel to the recovery efforts, generally organized in teams and crews.

"Our Forest Service crews are trained to fight wildland fires in national forests and other lands, and are used to working under harsh conditions," she noted. "They've been welcomed as replacements to the local police, firefighters, and other volunteers—who have been performing so exceptionally under adverse conditions in the thick undergrowth and swampy waters that are part of the recovery area."

Secretary **Ann M. Veneman**, noting that this quick responsiveness by FS employees is similar to their timeliness onsite at the World Trade Center in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, said, "These are the kind of responses that we see from the training that our people in the Forest Service have."

George Custer, FS incident commander of the interagency Blue Team, who is based on the Ocala National Forest in central Florida, explained that, as one aspect of its assistance, FS personnel set up incident command posts and employed search grids to systematically, meticulously, and efficiently search territory for debris. "We're on the ground, walking in close formation, looking for Columbia material," he said. In addition, FS has helicopters on site providing aerial reconnaissance of open areas.

"Our camps have been established with caterers, showers, and a commissary," said **Terry Stolz**, acting branch chief for disaster and emergency operations in FS's Fire and Aviation Management. "Crews have faced wet and cold conditions—but they've received visits from several astronauts, which is helping to keep morale up."

Frank Beum, a district ranger based with the New Castle Ranger District on the George Washington-Jefferson National Forests in western Virginia, added that NASA had asked area farmers and ranchers to be on the lookout, during their spring plowing, for anything that may have fallen from the sky on Feb. 1. "Ground foliage will be sprouting eventually, of course," he observed, "and that'll make it that much harder to notice shuttle debris on the ground."

Steve Weaver, FS's operations section chief for the interagency Red Team, who is based in the agency's Southern Regional Office in Atlanta, emphasized the role played by concerned local citizens as they have stepped up to help with the recovery efforts. In particular, Weaver referred to the eastern Texas community of Hemphill, where local volunteers from that town of 1,100 provided hearty meals daily for the 2,000-plus search and recovery workers in that local area.

Grace Sheffey, disaster coordinator for the Food and Nutrition Service, said that FNS provided surplus agricultural commodities to Salvation Army workers in several counties in Texas to feed persons involved in the recovery efforts. "Otherwise," she pointed out, "those workers in remote areas wouldn't have had access to suitable nourishment during the recovery efforts—because commercial eating establishments were simply too far away to be useful."

"Our residents have really come together over this event," noted **Lloyd Ford**, FSA county executive director for Polk County, Texas and a resident of Hemphill. He said that participating in a mission like this—for both USDA employees and others—"will have a positive, long-lasting effect on our community." ■

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*Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** (center) is presented a piece of steel, recovered from the World Trade Center in New York City, by Fire Department of New York Chief **Frank Carruthers** (left), as FDNY Commissioner **Nicholas Scoppetta** looks on. The inscription reads "Presented to Ann M. Veneman, Secretary of Agriculture, for your support in our time of need"—a reference to the assistance provided by USDA to that city in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001. An integral part of USDA's assistance was the coordination of operations, planning, and logistics on-site, provided by several Forest Service Incident Management Teams. Because of the success of that assistance, on Jan. 15 USDA and FDNY entered into an agreement in which FS specialists will use its Incident Management Teams as a model to train more than 60 FDNY firefighters on how to better respond to large-scale emergencies such as natural disasters and terrorist incidents.—**Photo by Bill Tarpenning***

Help Us Find

Daniel Borje Santiago

Missing: **7-12-2002** From: **Honolulu, HI**
D.O.B. **6-01-1995** Sex: **Male**
Hair: **Black** Eyes: **Brown**
Height: **4 ft. 1 in.** Weight: **70 lbs.**

If you have information, please call
1-800-843-5678

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

USDA-Sponsored Calendar Highlights

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  USDA headquarters and field offices
  (202) 720-7314 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY)
- **Month of March**
  National Nutrition Month
  USDA headquarters and field offices
  (703) 305-2298 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)
- **May 14-16**
  CYFAR (Children, Youth, & Families at Risk) 2003 Conference
  Minneapolis, Minn.
  (202) 720-5075 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)

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