

# USDA NEWS

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## USDA's Budget For FY 2001 Is Signed Into Law

by Ron Hall, Office of Communications

**I**t was preceded by six government-wide short-term funding bills or "continuing resolutions"—the most in recent memory to precede a USDA funding bill—but USDA's appropriation for FY 2001 was ultimately signed into law on October 28, 28 days into the new fiscal year. What follows are some highlights thought to be of particular interest to USDA employees.

Steve Dewhurst, director of the Office of Budget & Program Analysis, said that USDA's FY 2001 budget provides nearly \$77.7 billion in budget authority for the Department. That figure includes a \$4.4 billion appropriation for the Forest Service which, for budget purposes, is part of the "Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations," which was signed into law on October 11.

The \$77.7 billion funding, the end product of congressional conference committee efforts and negotiations with executive branch budget officials, compared to \$76.7 billion in budget authority originally passed by the House of Representatives, \$77.3 billion in budget authority originally passed by the Senate, and nearly \$79.5 billion in budget authority requested by the Clinton Administration as part of its FY 2001 governmentwide budget proposal.

The original budget proposal for USDA called for a federal staffing level for FY 2001 of 100,501 full-time equivalent positions, or federal staff years. That would have represented an increase of 2,346 federal staff years from the FY 2000 staff year ceiling which was estimated on February 7 to be at 98,155.

As detailed in a story in the January-February 2000 issue of the *USDA News*, 14 USDA agencies or staff offices reflected proposed increases in federal staff years and 3 reflected proposed decreases from FY 2000 federal staff year levels.

However, based on the funding figure

*continued on pg. 3...*



"That's the page where one of the thieves used a razor blade to cut out NAL's pinhole property markings—and thereby desecrate that ancient book," observes OIG's Jim Knorr (center), as he and OIG's Dorothy Wortham (left) confer with NAL's Susan Fugate on the condition of four rare books on medicinal plants from the rare book collection at the National Agricultural Library. The problem is that for awhile those books weren't at NAL—since they had been stolen. And they weren't just 'rare books,' they were 'old, rare books'—each dating back to the 1500s. That's why Fugate is wearing white gloves as she carefully handles them. Knorr was the case agent in OIG's successful effort to recover the stolen books and track down 'the perps,' a k a 'perpetrators.' Note the story on page 6.—PHOTO BY BRIAN HAASER

## It's A "New Look" For USDA's Five-Year Strategic Plan

### Cutting Across Jurisdictional Lines

by Ron Hall, Office of Communications

**W**e're now eleven months into the new millennium, and people are still making—or possibly revising—their individualized "new looks" for the millennium, based on new approaches such as "work out more often" or, on an opposite track, "eat more foods that I like rather than foods that are good for me."

One might say that USDA's latest Strategic Plan has also taken on a "new look," starting with 2000.

First, some background. The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 required federal departments and agencies to evaluate their performance in terms of *outcomes*—spelled "results"—instead of concentrating on *output*, such as through the number of widgets made or the amount of dollars spent.

"The 'Results Act,' as it is known, has ushered in a whole new way of measuring performance in the federal government," affirmed Matt Faulkner, the performance management team leader with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer who served as project manager of the Departmentwide Planning Team, which developed USDA's latest Strategic Plan.

"The key point in this whole procedure," he added, "is that we in the federal government are all being asked to provide satisfactory

*continued on pg. 2...*

# Secretary Dan Glickman



During the year that ended on September 30, USDA distributed a record \$28 billion in direct payments to help farmers and ranchers weather these difficult economic times. USDA assistance was responsible for about half of U.S. net farm income for the year. Had it not been for our support, farm income would have plunged to its lowest level since 1984 and thousands of farmers undoubtedly would have been forced out of business.

With the new fiscal year, our support continues. We have begun issuing Conservation Reserve Program payments worth a total of \$1.4 billion. And USDA's appropria-

tion for FY 2001, which President Bill Clinton signed into law on October 28, includes more than \$3 billion in disaster relief and crop loss payments, including livestock assistance, support for dairy producers, and money to help compensate Florida growers who were devastated by citrus canker.

We are proud of our efforts to help farmers. During farm economy slumps like this one, we consider it our obligation to do whatever possible to help the men and women of American agriculture. But ideally, farmers should not have to rely on emergency government payments to make it through the year. They ought to be able to thrive on their own, earning a living wage for their hard work, but supported by a strong farm safety net during lean times.

Emergency assistance is not the best public policy approach. It is more damage

control than anything else. It throws money at the problem instead of crafting solutions to the problem.

As we prepare to write the next farm bill, we have a chance to correct the flaws in the nation's farm policy. We have a chance—and, I believe, a responsibility—to build the safety net that our farmers need and deserve.

What I want to see is a safety net that provides countercyclical assistance, which is targeted to those farmers who need it most. It should also feature a strong conservation component, as well as investment in rural development, support for farm cooperatives, incentives for the production of bioenergy, and more. The next Administration, the next Secretary of Agriculture, and the 107th Congress must make strengthening the farm safety net a top priority. ❖

A "New Look"...continued from pg. 1

answers to the question "What are the taxpayers getting for the money they spend on the federal government?"

To accomplish the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act, the law set up a timetable for implementation of its provisions. The law was passed in 1993, but it gave federal departments and agencies four years—until September 30, 1997—to develop five-year 'strategic plans' which show specifically how they plan to accomplish their intended "results" or "outcomes." Those five-year strategic plans went into effect in FY 1997—and were supposed to accomplish their goals five years later in 2002.

The June-July 1997 issue of the **USDA News** carried a story about the Department's preparation for the Government Performance and Results Act and strategic plans.

Faulkner said strategic plans had—and still have—a direct impact on USDA employees at headquarters and field locations and at agricultural posts overseas. "Strategic plans weren't intended to merely meet a legislative requirement and then be relegated to an office shelf," he observed. "The intent of the law was that strategic plans would be used as a management tool, resulting in program and management accountability."

USDA had submitted its first five-year Strategic Plan, as required, in 1997, to cover the period of fiscal years 1997 to 2002.

"But then we took another look at our approach and determined that we wanted to restructure our five-year Strategic Plan around five overall USDA goals that often cross jurisdictional lines within the Department," he advised. Up to that point, he explained, the USDA-wide Strategic Plan consisted of taking the individual agency-specific strategic plans from each USDA program agency and staff office and, in effect, binding them together in one big tome.

Accordingly, starting in January 1999 USDA personnel involved in this process began preparing the Department's revised Strategic Plan. Faulkner described this as a "corporate management approach to strategic planning." A new component of this approach was the creation of a Department-wide Planning Team, which included representatives from each USDA mission area and staff office. The Planning Team ultimately developed five goals.

"The efforts of all USDA program agencies and offices—and, in turn, the efforts of all USDA employees—were to be aimed at accomplishing at least one if not more of those goals," he noted.

Those five goals were:

- 1 Expand Economic and Trade Opportunities for U.S. Agricultural Producers.
- 2 Promote Health by Providing Access to Safe, Affordable, and Nutritious Food.

3 Maintain and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resources and Environment.

4 Enhance the Capacity of All Rural Residents, Communities, and Businesses to Prosper.

5 Operate an Efficient, Effective, and Discrimination-Free Organization.

OCFO program analyst **Cathy Cronin**, who served as a member of the Department-wide Planning Team, noted that USDA's latest five-year Strategic Plan is a 103-page document, compared to the 525 pages of its predecessor. "Instead of the approach of our previous Strategic Plan, which consisted of 30 different agency plans put together in a binder," she added, "the new Strategic Plan is more simplified, is written in plain language, and more clearly reflects a 'one-USDA' approach to performance management."

Secretary **Dan Glickman** emphasized that point in the transmittal letter dated September 29, 2000 which he sent to President **Bill Clinton**, along with a copy of USDA's Five-Year Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2000-2005. In it he noted that "the work of USDA often cuts across jurisdictional lines—both within USDA and among Federal agencies."

Faulkner pointed out that the Department's latest Strategic Plan is accessible on USDA's web site at [www.usda.gov/ocfo](http://www.usda.gov/ocfo)

"USDA's Strategic Plan," Faulkner affirmed, "should be a management tool to help you do your job." ❖

## Here's A New, Quick Route To Cutting Red Tape At USDA

"Everything is now in place to receive and process waiver requests from employees, and we're ready to rock 'n roll with it!"

**Bob Whiting**, deputy director of the Office of Human Resources Management, was describing the fact that the Department recently officially activated its plan that allows USDA employees to make requests to get in-house rules waived. In addition, USDA recently activated its USDA "Internal Rule Waiver Website," [www.usda.gov/waivers](http://www.usda.gov/waivers)

Secretary **Dan Glickman** announced the formal activation of the Department's "streamlined waiver request process" in a memorandum dated September 20, 2000 and titled "Waivers of Internal Department of Agriculture Rules," which was mailed to all USDA employees along with the Statement of Leave and Earnings for Pay Period No. 19.

"If you have an idea about how to 'cut red tape,' let us hear it. Tell us about it by using the new USDA Internal Rule Waiver Website," Glickman encouraged in his memorandum.

## Administrative



Earlier, the April-May 2000 issue of the *USDA News* carried a story about the Department's plans for its in-house waiver request process.

Whiting, who serves as the Department's Waiver Coordinator, noted that the in-house waiver request process applies to internal rules, which are defined as internal Department regulations, processes, policies, and procedures that relate to providing USDA programs and services to the public. "This new waiver request process," he advised, "does *not* apply to laws, treaties, Executive Orders, negotiated labor agreements, civil rights protections, governmentwide regulations, or any other requirements and practices required by law."

"This waiver request process," he added, "applies only to internal USDA rules not codified in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations."

"And waiver requests that would have a detrimental effect on USDA's mission or its customers will be routinely disapproved."

OHRM personnel systems analyst **Jeff Shen** explained that the difference between this newly-activated waiver request process and the Department's long-existing employee suggestion programs is that "suggestion programs are to be used when employees have suggestions or ideas to *modify or create* Department regulations—*not* waive them."

Shen noted that USDA's Internal Rule Waiver Website includes a definition of a waiver, the waiver process which is outlined in detail in Secretary's Memorandum 2570-1, waiver procedures, a request form, and agency/staff office points of contact.

"We're giving every USDA employee the opportunity to be more empowered by helping make our internal processes more expedient, efficient, and effective in delivering our programs and services to our customers," Whiting affirmed. ❖

*USDA's Budget...continued from pg. 1*  
passed into law, Dewhurst projected that the federal staff years for most USDA agencies would basically remain at FY 2000 levels.

### Of Particular Interest

OBPA Associate Director **Larry Wachs** noted that USDA's final budget for FY 2001 includes these items thought to be of particular interest to employees:

❶ It provides an estimated \$4.2 billion in disaster assistance for America's farmers and ranchers for recent weather-related crop losses and market losses. For budget purposes, this \$4.2 billion figure is separate from USDA's FY 2001 budget figure of \$77.7 billion.

❷ It provides \$1.8 billion to implement the National Fire Plan—which outlines the Department's plans for immediate and short-term activities to help rehabilitate those areas affected by wildfires during FY 2000—and to assist rural communities in recovering from those fires.

❸ It continues a prohibition against USDA agencies using budget funds to acquire new information technology systems or significant upgrades, as determined by the Office of the Chief Information Officer, without the approval of the Chief Information Officer and the concurrence of USDA's Executive

Information Technology Investment Review Board.

❹ It provides nearly \$60 million—a decrease from the \$75 million requested—for the implementation of USDA's "common computing environment." As part of the Department's field office modernization plan for its county-based agencies (the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development), all USDA Service Center agency offices around the country are to have a "common computing environment" allowing efficient e-mail, records transfer, and streamlined business processes for better customer service.

❺ It continues a prohibition on the use of available funds to implement the Support Services Bureau, which was to be created as part of USDA's "administrative convergence" initiative. As part of that initiative, three administrative structures that once provided support in the areas of human resources, financial management, information technology, civil rights, and management services for the Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services mission area, the Rural Development mission area, and NRCS were to be combined into one new structure, the Support Services Bureau, and was to be effective October 1, 1999.

❻ It allows USDA more flexibility in hiring employees, for support services for overseas operations, through the use of Personal Service Agreements.

❼ It provides nearly \$64 million, nearly double the FY 2000 level, in earmarked development funding, through USDA's Rural Development Programs, for American Indian communities.

❽ It continues the prohibition of non-reimbursable employee details for more than 30 days.

❾ It urges USDA's Secretary to use ethanol, biodiesel, and other alternative fuels to the maximum extent practicable to meet the Department's fuel needs.

❿ It provides \$74.2 million for construction and renovation of Agricultural Research Service labs. This includes \$9 million for the first phase of a joint ARS/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service modernization effort of facilities located in Ames, Iowa, and \$13.3 million for continuing modernization efforts at the Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center in Maryland.

⓫ It provides the \$26 million USDA requested for continued renovation of the South Building at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC. ❖



## Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services

### This Fund Is A First

"We're trying to develop 'inventors' in our agency who can help us all provide better service to our customers—and now we've got a fund set up to aid in that effort."

Peter Kant was describing an internal "venture capital fund" which the Food and Nutrition Service established on October 1. Money in the fund is designed to help implementation—agency-wide—such creative and innovative, employee-developed 'good government-type' initiatives. Kant, FNS executive quality manager, heads up the effort to encourage those initiatives within FNS.

He explained that in January 1999 FNS began an effort titled "Leadership 2000 and Beyond." "It focuses on such workplace tools as Total Quality Management or TQM, customer service, professional development, and employee-led innovations," he explained, "to help us manage our workload better while improving programs and service delivery."

That last item, "employee-led innovations," is the goal of a program contained within the overall umbrella of "Leadership 2000 and Beyond," and is called "License to Improve."

"Under 'License to Improve' we ask FNS employees to come up with ideas that address an urgent challenge within the agency, improve customer service, deliver quality programs, achieve measurable results, demonstrate a cross-functional approach to problem-solving, and have a positive effect on employees," Kant noted.

"A unique benefit to the 'License to Improve' program," he added, "is that if an employee comes up with an idea which meets those criteria, then he/she is empowered to work with his/her supervisor to implement that idea in his/her own FNS office, without further review or approval by senior officials."

But FNS then went one step further. "Sometimes an employee comes up with an idea that not only works in that employee's own office, but would benefit the agency as a whole if it were implemented across-the-board, agency-wide," Kant pointed out.

So, under the mantle of its "Leadership 2000 and Beyond" effort, FNS established an internal venture capital fund to help implement those ideas agency-wide. He noted that costs that might be associated with that implementation, such as printing documents, computer equipment or

## Employees make these things...

# HAPPEN!

software, and travel, would be paid for from this fund. "To the best of my knowledge, this is the first and only fund like this in USDA," he affirmed.

FNS also set up an Innovations Board, composed of seven employees from its headquarters, region, and field offices, to review those "License to Improve" projects that have been submitted for consideration for implementation agency-wide.

Patricia Dombroski, chief of FNS's New York City Office and member of the Innovations Board, said that the seven-member Innovations Board has held two informal conference call meetings thus far this fiscal year, and then is scheduled to hold its first official monthly meeting in late November.

"It is scheduled to review 17 submissions," she recounted. The submissions came from teams of FNS employees in such locations as Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Concord, N.H., Denver, Robbinsville, N.J., and San Francisco.

Rebecca Martinez, FNS food stamp program specialist in the agency's regional office in Denver and the union partner to the Innovations Board, added that the proposals submitted dealt with such issues as translating FNS food stamp retailer guides into Korean and Spanish, for use by grocery store owners who handle food stamps; creating community liaisons of FNS employees to work with school officials to more easily administer FNS's Summer Food Service Program; and publishing, on the USDA home page, proposed changes to FNS regulations for review and comment right on the home page.

FNS quality coordinators Cecilia Fitzgerald and Jeff Greenfield, who staff the "Leadership 2000 and Beyond" effort, will notify those employees of the status of their submissions.

"FNS employees now have an unprecedented opportunity to markedly build upon our previous level of service, so as to serve our customers even better," Kant emphasized.

—MARTHA NEWTON



## Food Safety

### Inspectors & PCs: It's A Match

USDA employees around the country may take it for granted that they rely on personal computers and/or laptops in their offices to carry out their component of USDA's mission. But meat, poultry, and egg products inspectors in the Food Safety and Inspection Service have been a work force that traditionally has not used computers.

So that's why it was significant when FSIS recently completed the nationwide implementation of its "Field Automation and Information Management" initiative, or FAIM, by delivering a PC to David Hatch, an inspector at a meat plant in Cedar City, Utah, during the first week in October.

"We're *not* referring to him as the 'last inspector' to receive a computer at a work station, because this is now an ongoing effort," affirmed Peter Kuhmerker, director of FSIS's FAIM Division.

Hatch's computer was one of more than 4,000 that have been delivered to FSIS employees—to include meat and poultry inspectors, egg products inspectors, circuit supervisors, import inspectors, and compliance officers—in federally inspected meat and poultry plants nationwide. In addition, 5,500 FSIS employees have been trained to use the computers and associated software applications as part of the agency's FAIM initiative.

Kuhmerker said the initiative began in 1996 "to enhance productivity, quality, and service for both inspection and administrative



Now that he is back in his office in Lawrence, Kan., after having conducted a compliance review at a local meat distribution facility, and now that he has removed his standard-issue freezer coat and hard hat, FSIS compliance officer Steven Deines is entering findings from his compliance review, by plugging into his newly-acquired laptop—compliments of FSIS's "FAIM" initiative.—PHOTO BY RANDY ROBERTSON

processes which our employees conduct in federally inspected establishments.”

So, in addition to receiving 4,000+ computers nationwide, FSIS employees were provided four days of computer training at the FSIS Training Center, affiliated with Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. **Jan Leder**, an FSIS supervisory veterinary medical officer based in West Point, Miss., was one of the participants in the training.

“We’ve used the computers to access various USDA web sites and to assist us with HACCP implementation and training” he said. “HACCP,” or “Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points,” is the new, science-based inspection system FSIS implemented in meat and poultry plants nationwide.

**Marcia Endersby**, an FSIS supervisory veterinary medical officer based in Guymon, Okla., noted that examples of FAIM’s benefits to FSIS inspectors include giving them faster access to laboratory results from testing tissue samples taken from meat and poultry carcasses, in order to detect excessive levels of chemicals in those carcasses. “Previously,” she said, “those lab results would take five to seven days to reach the inspector, but now they are communicated overnight by e-mail, and inspectors and managers can access them on their office computers, the next day.”

Endersby added that under FAIM, inspectors now have immediate access to FSIS technical references, directives, manuals, and over 100 electronic forms. This has eliminated the need for inspectors to file and search through thousands of paper documents.

Plus, they are able to perform electronic text retrieval. “This enables them to search for specific text and phrases related to meat and poultry inspection,” Leder said.

FAIM has not only benefited FSIS’s inspectors, but state-employed inspectors as well. In the past 20 months, 73 percent of state meat and poultry inspectors have begun participation in the FAIM program. Specifically, 1,000 FAIM computers have been delivered to state inspection programs, and 1,000 state inspectors have received training at the FSIS Training Center in College Station.

According to Kuhmerker, state inspectors have the same hardware, software, training, telecommunications, and technical support as do FSIS inspectors. “This is contributing to a more uniform nationwide meat and poultry inspection program,” he emphasized.

Part of the success of FSIS’s FAIM initiative is due to a ‘one-stop phone number’ known as FAIMHELP. This toll-free phone number is staffed by the same contract personnel who

are instructors at the FSIS training center.

“The FAIMHELP office is open 16 hours a day, five days a week,” noted Kuhmerker. “Through FAIMHELP we can assist both FSIS inspectors and state-employed inspectors with nearly any problem—hardware, software, telecommunications, and maintenance.” He added that inspectors can also request assistance through e-mail or fax.

“We were committed to making our FAIM initiative a success, plus bringing it in on schedule,” Kuhmerker underscored. “And we did.”

—**SHASHUNGA CLAYTON**



## Research, Education, and Economics

### ARS’s Cool MOOVes

It’s fire-engine red, with a line of cows sporting sunglasses and mooing about how “**UDDERLY AWESOME**” agricultural research is. This is definitely not your typical government product.

“It” is a combination book cover and poster that staffers with the Agricultural Research Service recently developed to promote the value of agricultural research in general and ARS’s own agricultural research in particular.

The brainchild of ARS public affairs specialist **Dianne Odland** and ARS graphics designer **Andrea Krieg**, the outside of the 13” by 24” document, which features 11 cows in various expressive stages of gossipy animation, doubles as a book cover—generally for middle school students—and a poster for teachers. The inside explains how ag research relates to everyday life and features “Research AG-tivities,” which are numerous ideas for class projects, from developing an agricultural careers booklet to planning an Earth Day exhibit that shows how agricultural research helps the environment.

Odland, who initiated the idea for the book cover and developed the content, directs some of ARS’s outreach activities. “On behalf of ARS, each year I exhibit at several major student/teacher conferences—from K through 12 plus at the college level—and I’m always looking for unique ideas to communicate the importance of ARS’s agricultural research,” she explained. “Helping kids realize that ARS research is exciting and cool—not dry and academic—is also part of my goal.”

Hence the cows.

Krieg is the one who made the cows come alive. “The concepts started coming together



*It seems like everybody wants to take a picture of the “**UDDERLY AWESOME**” book covers that ARS’s **Monica Williams** (left) is displaying to a student attendee at the recent FFA conference in Louisville, Ky.*

—**PHOTO BY DIANNE ODLAND**

with the priceless expressions of the gossiping cows on the book cover,” she recounted. “But there was also a lot of detailed, technical computer work to translate those ideas into a design on paper.”

At the end of October Odland and ARS outreach assistant **Monica Williams** traveled to Louisville, Ky, to attend the annual conference of FFA (formerly called the Future Farmers of America), for the first distribution of ARS’s new book cover. They affirmed that the book covers were a big hit there.

“Lots of conference handouts end up in the trash before the event is over,” Williams advised. “But we knew we had a winner when the teachers started asking for bulk copies to accommodate each student in their classes, and the students wanted extra copies for their friends.”

“FFA advisors even asked for copies to use as prizes in the dairy judging contest.”

Odland emphasized that promoting ag literacy is an important component of outreach. “Many kids, and even some adults, think that food comes from the grocery store as the point of origin,” she observed. “They have no clue of the production, processing, marketing, and distribution steps, in both the food and fiber system—let alone the research involved.”

“So, through products such as this book cover and our Sci4Kids web site at [www.ars.usda.gov/is/kids](http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/kids) we hope to increase awareness and help kids realize that *our* ag research is wired right into *their* everyday lives.”

—**HEIDI BOWERS**



**Colien Hefferan** was selected as the administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service. She succeeded **Charles Laughlin**, who

served in that position from June 1999 until October 2000, when he resigned for health reasons.

From August 1996 until her selection in October 2000, Hefferan served as the associate administrator for CSREES. Within that time she also served as CSREES's acting administrator from March 1998 until June 1999. The November-December 1996 issue of the *USDA News* carried her complete biographical sketch, following her selection to the position of CSREES associate administrator. ❖



**Roger Breeze** was selected as the associate administrator for special research programs in the Agricultural Research Service. This is a newly-created position in ARS to develop

interagency research programs across the federal government to counter terrorist threats against U.S. agriculture and the U.S. food supply system. The position also manages non-proliferation research programs with scientists in Kazakhstan and Russia who were formerly engaged in biological weapons research, as these programs involve agriculture and food safety-related research beneficial to the U.S. and the cooperating country.

From 1996 until his selection, Breeze served as the director of ARS's South Atlantic Area, based in Athens, Ga. The February 1997 issue of the *USDA News* carried his complete biographical sketch, following his selection to that position. ❖



**JoAnn Waterfield** was selected as deputy administrator of the packers and stockyards programs in the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. She succeeded **Harold Davis**, who served in that position from September 1997 until June 1999,

when he retired following 36 years of service with USDA.

From 1991 until her selection in September 2000, Waterfield worked as an attorney with the Trade Practices Division in the Of-

## Editor's Roundup

### USDA people in the news

ice of the General Counsel. In that position she litigated proceedings to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921, as amended, as well as the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act. From 1985-90 she served as the supervisor of the Juvenile Drug Testing Unit in Washington, DC's Pretrial Services Agency.

A native of Stratford, N.J., Waterfield holds a B.A. degree in justice from American University in Washington, DC, and a J.D. degree from the University of Maryland. ❖



**Frank Lee** was selected as the deputy administrator for commodity and marketing programs with the Foreign Agricultural Service. He succeeded **Jim Parker**, who served

in that position from January 1996 to January 2000, when he retired following over 26 years of service with FAS.

From August 1998 until his selection, Lee served as the agricultural minister counselor for FAS in Mexico, based in Mexico City. He was the agricultural counselor for FAS in Spain, based in Madrid, from 1994-98. From 1989-94 he was the agricultural counselor for FAS in Egypt, based in Cairo. The October 1989 issue of the *USDA News* carried his complete biographical sketch, following his selection to that position. ❖



**Agents and auditors** with the Office of Inspector General spend a lot of time guarding against fraud, waste, and abuse in such USDA programs as food stamps and farm loans. But recently, as **Jim Knorr** can at-

test to firsthand, OIG was instrumental in the recovery of stolen rare books.

Knorr, a senior special agent with OIG Investigations in its Mid-Atlantic Region, based

in Beltsville, Md., worked as the case agent in the theft of several books on medicinal plants. The books had been stolen from the rare book collection at the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville.

And there was a reason those books were housed in that section, which affords the highest levels of security and environmental controls at NAL. It's because the books had been printed in the mid-1500s.

"The three rare books were written in Latin," Knorr explained. The oldest book, printed in 1561, was titled "Historia Plantarum," the second book's title was also in Latin, and the third book was printed in London in 1572.

**Dan Lech**, head of NAL's Collection Management Section, had gotten the first indication about the book theft when he received a phone call from a book store owner in Baltimore. "I was advised that two men were trying to sell three rare books, on medicinal plants, that were printed in the 1500s—and which had markings showing that they were the property of NAL," he recounted. He said that personnel at several book shops, where the men were trying to make a sale, "very wisely remained noncommittal but took down phone numbers of the would-be sellers, in case their initial suspicions proved to be well-founded."

So Lech initiated an inventory search, discovered that some books were missing, and then contacted OIG.

Knorr said that one of his first moves was to give his cell phone number to the book store owners who had been approached. "I wanted those owners to give my number to the men with the books," he explained. "Then I'd pretend that I was a rare book dealer—and wanted to make a purchase."

In the meantime, Knorr interviewed **Susan Fugate**, head of NAL Special Collections, and NAL librarian **Lynn Stewart**. They advised that electrical contractors from the private sector had recently done some work in that section of NAL.

"The NAL staffers advised me that the contractors had been escorted and monitored by NAL staff while they were inside that rare book secured area," Knorr noted. "And my own observation was that the particular area is a locked, caged section that has very limited access to NAL personnel."

Then came a surprising new development. Knorr said that the men with the rare books had maintained, to some book store owners, that they had found the books while

cleaning out someone's residence. But when the owners saw NAL's pinhole property markings on the books, they told the men that they thought the books might be stolen.

"So one morning," Knorr said, "about a month after the approximate date of the theft, a book store owner found two of the rare books in her book drop when she opened her shop."

"We speculated that the men got scared about having two of the books, so decided to get rid of them right away."

Fugate said the market value of the two recovered books was about \$2,500 to \$3,500, and \$5,000 to \$11,000, respectively.

But Knorr was still closing in on his prey. He had obtained photos of the electrical contractors who had done some work at NAL, showed the photos to the book store owners, and made some tentative matches.

Then he and OIG special agent **Dorothy Wortham** met with one of the suspects and interviewed him. "He gave us just enough additional details so that we could fill in some remaining gaps," Wortham affirmed. "So by

now we had recovered the rest of the stolen property—which included a fourth book as well. Plus, we had already arrested an earlier suspect—and now we knew we had our second thief, sitting there in front of us."

Knorr soon obtained a warrant for the arrest of the second suspect, went to the suspect's residence in Baltimore, and knocked on the door. As he waited for a response, an accompanying police officer yelled, "There he goes, out the back door!"

OIG special agent-in-charge **Brian Haaser**, who participated in the arrest, started chasing after the suspect. "Then I yelled 'STOP!', using my best 'Alpha voice,'" he quipped, "and the suspect stopped."

Both men were charged in federal court with criminal theft of government property. One has pled guilty and is awaiting sentencing, and the other is awaiting trial.

The moral of this story?

"There will *never* be any overdue library books in my household—*ever!*" Knorr laughed. ♦

## Letters

**Dear Sec. Glickman,**

USDA has a new regulation that requires that the meat, which the Department buys for lunches in American schools, be completely free of salmonella. It appears that one result of this new regulation is that there hasn't been enough meat which satisfies that new requirement. So, many schools aren't getting their normal supply of meat, plus the meat that satisfies the new standards costs USDA much more than it did last year.

I work for the Food Safety and Inspection Service. I'm wondering how should one respond to the general public when questions are asked about this decrease in meat available for the school lunch program?

**Norman Garton**  
Nevada, Mo.

**Dear Norman,**

*Thanks for your letter concerning USDA's purchase of ground meat products for the National School Lunch Program.*

*On June 23, 2000, the Department issued new quality and safety requirements for raw ground beef products purchased for distribution to schools and other federal food and nutrition programs. The new requirements are designed to enhance the quality and safety of ground beef products by including pathogen intervention and testing requirements. While purchases will continue under the new requirements for this school year, we're continuously assessing the specification and contractual requirements for raw ground beef products to determine where improvements can be made or if changes are appropriate.*

*Currently, contracts have been awarded for over three-quarters (78 percent) of the ground beef that USDA had been anticipating purchasing by this time. Although the first several invitations issued to suppliers resulted in contracts for less than half the quantities sought, more recent invitations have allowed purchases beyond what was requested. Beef purchased by USDA during the current quarter totals 65.7 million pounds at a cost of approximately \$103.6 million. Recent ground beef purchases for this school year, with the additional safety attributes, cost approximately \$0.20 more per pound than ground beef purchased last year.*

*Purchases are continuing on a weekly basis, and participation by suppliers has dramatically increased compared to initial offerings. At the current pace, we anticipate meeting all of our recipients' needs for ground beef products.*

*I appreciate your interest and the information you provided.*

**Dan Glickman**  
Secretary

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<b>Ron Hall</b>	Editor
<b>Heather Curlett</b>	Art Director
<b>Cedric Drake</b>	Printing and Distribution Coordinator
<b>Charles Hobbs</b>	Home Page Coordinator
<b>Gayle Turner</b>	Home Page Assistant

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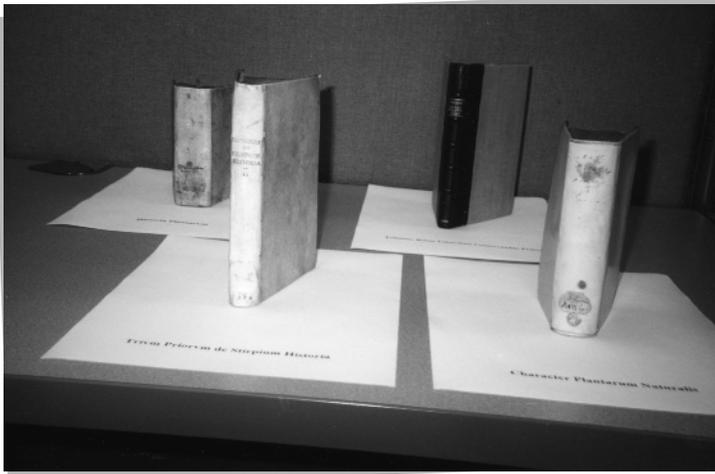
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If these four books could talk, they'd probably be exclaiming—in Latin—"Verily and forsooth, we're humbly and eternally grateful to no longer be suffering the slings and arrows of thievery at the cruel hands of knaves." Huh?! Well, roughly translated, it's a reference to the fact that these four rare books on medicinal plants were recently stolen from the National Agricultural Library. OIG's **Jim Knorr** was the case agent in that agency's successful recovery of those rare books, which date back to the 1500s. Plus, OIG agents arrested the thieves, one of whom is currently residing in the—what's the Latin word for "slammer"? Note the story on page 6.—**PHOTO BY JIM KNORR**



HELP US FIND

### **Kahleed Lindsay**

Missing: 07-21-00

From: Philadelphia, PA

D.O.B. 10-01-91

Sex: Male

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Brown

Height: 3 ft.

Weight: 60 lbs.

If you have information, please call

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