

USDANEWS

VOLUME 59 NO. 8 – DECEMBER 2000

When We Leave USDA, Our Federal Records Don't Go With Us

by Ron Hall, Office of Communications

The impending change in Administrations will invariably include staffing turnovers. Personnel will be departing the federal government, including USDA—but their federal office records are to remain behind.

That's the gist of the message that **Bette Fugitt** provided at a series of "transitional seminars" that the Department recently held in Washington, DC. Fugitt is USDA's Records Officer in the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

According to **Lula Fogle**, a personnel management specialist in the Office of Human Resources Management, USDA conducted the "transitional seminars" as an aid to non-career-status personnel at all grade levels who anticipate leaving the Department during the change in Administrations. The seminars included such topics as "Ethics/Post Employment," "Financial Disclosure Statements," "Records Retention," "Unemployment/Leave," and "Health/Life/Thrift Savings/Retirement."

Fogle said that the seminars were held from December 5-14 for affected personnel based at USDA headquarters offices, plus personnel participating by teleconference from USDA field locations.

Fugitt addressed the group on the subject of "Records Retention" and later recapped that subject. She said that "federal records" are defined by law as all documentary materials—regardless of physical form—that (1) are made or received by an agency of the U.S. Government under federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business, and (2) are preserved, or appropriate for preservation, as evidence of agency activities or because of the value of the information they contain.

"Cutting to the chase here," she explained, "federal records are essentially those documents
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"Once we remove the shrink wrap and get the tree set up, then everyone else can appreciate how special we feel this tree is," affirms FS's Chris Nacarrato, a member of the Pike Hot Shot Crew, whose mission is fighting wildfires. But Nacarrato's mission on this occasion is to help deliver this year's Capitol Holiday Tree to the Nation's Capital. The Colorado Blue Spruce, which came from the Pike and San Isabel National Forests in Colorado, represents the 37th Capitol Holiday Tree to grace the lawn of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC. Note Maria Beltran's story on page 4. —PHOTO BY STEVE TAPIA

Five USDA Messengers Get High Visibility At The Macy's Parade

"Did We Luck Out, Or What?!"

by Ron Hall, Office of Communications

Most of us have heard that ancient joke which goes "Scuse me, could you tell me how I get to Carnegie Hall?" Answer: "Practice, practice, practice."

Okay, here's a new version: "Scuse me, could you tell me how I get in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade?" Answer: "Contact **Holly McPeak**, 'cause now she knows all the angles!"

Alright, maybe the two jokes don't exactly mesh. But the overall message of the second version is accurate, and now here's the story behind the story on how McPeak was able to get five USDA 'celebrity characters' to appear in the 74th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City on November 23.

McPeak is a public affairs specialist with the Food Safety and Inspection Service. She

had recently talked with **Eva Cuevas**, director of the Design Center in the Office of Communications. "Eva had suggested to me that it would be neat if some of USDA's 'celebrity characters' could march in New York's Thanksgiving Day Parade, sponsored annually by Macy's Department Store."

"It then struck me that that would be a prime venue to spotlight several USDA 'celebrity characters' who could participate in the parade as 'walking characters' to convey particular messages for the Department."

Those 'celebrity characters' or 'educational messengers,' which are all trademarked, include **Thermi**, **BAC**, **Power Panther**, **Woodsy Owl**, and **Smokey Bear**.

FSIS created **Thermi**, who encourages consumers to use food thermometers to ensure that foods are cooked to safe internal temperatures. **Thermi's** message is "It's Safe to Bite When the Temperature Is Right!"

"Fight **BAC**" is a partnership of a number of organizations, including FSIS. Its symbol is **BAC**, an ugly green bacteria, and its purpose is to educate the public about safe food handling
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Secretary Dan Glickman



In this, my last column to appear in the USDA News, I want to talk about an aspect of USDA's work that, I believe, is a matter of the utmost moral urgency.

We live on a planet where 800 million people are chronically hungry and malnourished. And if we don't tackle this problem now, the global hunger crisis will only worsen over the next half century, as the world population increases by a staggering three billion. We are facing a monumental challenge that demands resources and commitment from the scientific community, the non-profit community, governments, the private sector, and ordinary citizens around the world.

I am very proud of the government's record on international hunger. Over the last two years, the United States has shipped over 16 million metric tons of food to more than 80 countries around the world. That's more than three times the level of the previous two years. Whenever there was a crisis overseas, we were there with the humanitarian food aid needed to help people get by. We were there when the Russian economy collapsed. We were there for Kosovar refugees. We were there this year when a devastating drought threatened the Horn of Africa.

Unfortunately, not every nation has been as generous. The United States by itself accounted for nearly two-thirds of world food assistance last year. While we are more than happy to do our share, this is not a burden we can carry alone. I hope

that the rest of the developed world steps up and shows greater leadership when it comes to international food aid.

Peace and security depend on a healthy food supply. Some of the bloodiest conflicts in human history have been over shortages of food.

Last October 16 was World Food Day, an annual opportunity to shine the spotlight on the international hunger issue. I had the honor of speaking on that day at a ceremony honoring the scientists who had won the 2000 World Food Prize. But it is not enough to focus on this crisis one day out of every 365. It is my hope that, in the intensity of our commitment, we can make every day World Food Day. If we do, if we approach this issue with the vigilance it deserves, we can—in our lifetimes—make real progress toward eliminating the scourge of world hunger. ♦

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dling and preparation to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness. Its message is "Fight BAC! Keep Food Safe from Bacteria."

The Food and Nutrition Service created Power Panther, a purple panther wearing a T-shirt who encourages youngsters to make healthy food choices and be physically active. Its message is "Eat Smart. Play Hard."

The Forest Service created the 29-year-old Woodsy Owl, as well as the 56-year-old Smokey Bear. Woodsy Owl inspires kids to care for the environment with the message "Lend a Hand—Care for the Land!" Smokey's message is "Remember, Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires." Smokey's giant helium-filled balloon previously appeared in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

"So, once I got this idea in my head," McPeak recounted, "and made three phone calls to Macy's, I finally heard someone say 'Hello, Macy's Annual Events, can I help you?'"

"And now it was my chance to convince Macy's to consider including USDA's five costumed characters as walkers in its parade."

McPeak quickly made her pitch to Macy's Creative Director. There was a slight silence—and then the individual said "Well, I've always liked Smokey Bear—so if you send me pictures of all the characters, I'll take a look."

"And, by the way," he continued, "there's a participation fee of \$500—one fee for all the characters—plus we require professional actors to wear the costumes and be able to

walk the entire route unassisted, and *you'd* have to arrange for that, but *we'll* send you instructions, plus a contract—if we agree to the participation."

McPeak thanked him, hung up, and said to herself, "\$500?!" But then she assessed the visibility of all five USDA characters, with their respective USDA messages, in front of two million spectators lining the 2.5-mile parade route, plus more than 60 million television viewers worldwide. And then she said to herself, "That amount of publicity and exposure is priceless."

Armed with that conclusion, the next day McPeak scrambled to track down digital images of the five USDA characters, which she then e-mailed to Macy's. Then, on October 13, three days after her initial phone contact, she received a call from the store's Creative Director. "He said that he *would* like the five USDA costumed characters to walk the parade route," she affirmed, "and that now it was time for me to get the contract signed and provide the participation fee."

McPeak then shifted into higher gear, as she faxed copies of the contract, for signature, to appropriate personnel in the USDA agencies represented in this effort, and made arrangements for FSIS to pay the participation fee for the five characters.

While FSIS administrative officer **Mary Sirk** immediately processed the contract, McPeak tackled the next requirement, which was to track down 8" x 10" color photos of the

five USDA characters, as part of the contract. In the process she interacted with **Alice Welch**, a visual information specialist with OC's Photography Center, and Photography Center Director **Bill Tarpenning**.

"It turns out that Bill's family has a tradition in which they attend an **Arlo Guthrie** concert in New York during Thanksgiving weekend nearly every year," McPeak recounted. "So Bill said that, as long as he was headed in that direction anyway, he'd be happy to take some photos of USDA's five 'celebrity characters' walking in the parade."

"Did we luck out, or what?!" she laughed.

McPeak's next contact was to a company of professional actors to wear the five appropriate costumes, plus coordinate the logistics of getting them at the proper spot at 7:30 a.m., in costume and ready to start walking.

McPeak quipped that her next move was to "tell absolutely everyone I know" to be watching the parade at precisely 10:15 a.m., when three of the five-member 'USDA celebrity character entourage' was scheduled to walk by the TV cameras.

"Then I—and the rest of the viewing public—were able to see about 30 long seconds of our USDA characters, live on TV."

So, what might be the next stop for these five USDA 'celebrity characters'?

"You know, the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade is in Washington, DC next March," McPeak said. "Maybe I'll march in it, wearing the Therny costume!" ♦

Now It's Even Easier For Lenders To Confirm Your Employment

USDA offices around the country routinely receive thousands of letters, faxes, and phone calls from lenders making legitimate requests for employment and salary verification about USDA employees who have applied for some type of a loan.

In October 1997 USDA initiated a new 'automated employment verification process' which meant that the lenders got that employment and salary information literally in minutes, instead of the several days it used to take. Plus, under that new system, USDA's various personnel offices were no longer tied up by responding to those requests.

And now the Department has streamlined that process even further by creating a link to a recently developed web site to aid in the completion of that 'information swap.'

According to **Cheryl Ruf**, a computer specialist in the Office of Human Resources Management, for the last three years all requests for salary and employment verification have been directed to a computerized system, called "The Work Number for Everyone" system. It is being administered by the

Administrative



TALX Corporation, a St. Louis-based provider of automated communications.

"The information provided by the automated system has been taken from personnel and payroll records maintained at the National Finance Center in New Orleans," she said. "This has eliminated the need for multiple offices and personnel to receive and process requests."

In addition, she added, lenders, property managers, and others who need to verify the employment status of any USDA employee anywhere in the country have been receiving a full verification in minutes.

Ruf emphasized that the automated employment verification process has security features which ensure that the information is released only to those who have proper authorization. "This system gives employees

control over who can obtain their employment and salary information," she underscored, "while also speeding up the loan approval process."

"Plus, for the last three years, this system has shifted the cost of employment verification from the employing organization—in other words, the Department—to the lender, thereby saving USDA time and money."

The October 1997 issue of the **USDA News** carried a story about USDA's new automated employment verification process.

"Now, with the web site, it's even better because in this new system it's easier to point and click on words on a computer screen," she explained. "Under the old system—which is still available as an option—the user had to respond to a voice response system, which some employees found rather cumbersome."

The web site is www.nfc.usda.gov

Move to the block titled "QuickStarts," then scroll to the line which reads "TALX: The Work Number for Everyone" and click on it.

"Under this new system," she laughed, "your biggest worry will be 'now what am I gonna do with all this free time on my hands?'" ❖

Our Federal Records...continued from pg. 1

ments which protect the legal, financial, and other interests of the federal government and its citizenry; and/or assist Departmental officials—and their successors—to make informed policy and program judgments; and/or provide the information required by Congress and others for oversight of the Department's activities."

"With all that in mind," she advised, "all correspondence, memos, case files, photographs, maps, motion pictures, tape recordings, data sets, and computer tapes and disks in an employee's custody need to be measured against that definition—to ascertain whether they qualify as 'federal records.'"

Fugitt pointed out that the essential qualifying characteristics relate to evidence and information contained in the source document—and not its physical form or format.

"We federal employees need to keep in mind that official federal records belong to the federal government, not to any individual," she advised. "Accordingly, unauthorized destruction or removal of official records is illegal and may be the basis for prosecution."

Fugitt noted that, in contrast to federal records, "nonrecord materials" and "personal

records" may be removed or destroyed by an employee at any time.

Nonrecord materials include such items as transmittal letters and memoranda, as well as extra reference or convenience copies of documents.

Personal records include such items as papers accumulated by an employee before entering federal service; private materials in the office that were not created or received in the course of transacting federal business; and work-related personal papers that are not used in the transaction of federal business.

Fugitt advised that, to avoid even the appearance of impropriety, all personal materials should be maintained separately from official files.

She also noted that word processing and electronic mail have changed the nature of recordkeeping in the federal government—and that the aforementioned requirements for retention apply to electronic documents as well.

"The days of thinking that records are only something you can hold in your hand, like a piece of paper, are long past," Fugitt advised. "Therefore, our colleagues at USDA need to recognize that when they delete an electronic document, they may be destroying the

only copy of that document—so be aware of the ramifications of decisions you make concerning disposition of electronic records."

She said that OCIO has created a web site to provide additional guidance on this issue. It is www.ocio.usda.gov/irm/records/index.html

In addition, the National Archives and Records Administration has published a 14-page booklet, titled "Documenting Your Public Service" and dated October 2000, concerning this subject. The February 1997 issue of the **USDA News** also carried a story on this issue.

"The great value in archiving federal records," affirmed **Barbara LaCour**, chief of OCIO's Information Management Division, "is they ensure that each of us in the federal government in general—and, of course, also here in USDA—can reconstruct the evolution of our program and administrative decisions without relying on word-of-mouth; they give our successors a written rationale for actions we've taken; and they leave an enduring record that reflects the special contributions each of us has made."

"So I strongly advise not removing or destroying them—unless you're sure that you're legally correct in doing so." ❖



Natural Resources and Environment

37th Tree Graces Capitol This Year

"It's the best preserved tree, very green, very moist—and it's as freshly a cut tree as I have seen."

Michael Burchard, the forest land surveyor on the Pike and San Isabel National Forests, based in Pueblo, Colo., was talking about the 2000 Capitol Holiday Tree, which is now lit and ready for viewing on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol that faces the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC.

This year's tree, which came from Woodland Park, Colo., on the Pike and San Isabel NFs, is a 77-year-old, 10,435-lb., 65-foot-tall Colorado Blue Spruce, noted **Robby Cox**, a forestry technician on the Pike and San Isabel NFs.

This Capitol Holiday Tree has a narrow pyramidal shape and a cone-shaped crown, according to **Jeff Hovermale**, a forestry technician on the Pike and San Isabel NFs. "As Colorado Blue Spruces become older," he pointed out, "they often take on a more irregular appearance."

Steve Segin, an archaeologist on the Pike and San Isabel NFs, who served as the public affairs officer for this year's Capitol Holiday Tree project, added that each year one of this country's 155 national forests provides the Capitol Holiday Tree.

According to **Beverly Carroll**, an FS program analyst and national coordinator for the Capitol Holiday Tree, this is the 37th Capitol Holiday Tree. "Of those, 31 have been donated to Congress by the Forest Service, with the support of state and local communities, for use as the Capitol Tree," she said.

Tim Grantham, a lands forester on the Pike and San Isabel NFs, said, "We were able to use a climate-controlled environment to preserve the tree from such elements as the wind, during the tree's journey on an extended trailer. Plus, we set up an irrigation watering system to preserve the tree further."

He noted that the secret was "shrink wrap." "We heat-bonded the seams of the shrink wrap, which created a seamless structure—and that shrink wrap completely encased the tree," Grantham said.

"This is the first time that the Forest Service has ever used this shrink wrap process in the delivery of the Capitol Tree."

Employees make these things...

HAPPEN!

According to **Bill Nelson**, a district ranger on the Pike and San Isabel NFs, serving as the co-chairman of the Capitol Holiday Tree project, the Capitol Holiday Tree arrived in Washington, DC, on December 4. He added that the tree's journey and related activities were funded through sponsors and donations.

Steve Tapia, a wildlife biologist on the Pike and San Isabel NFs, also noted that this year's tree is decorated with over 4,000 ornaments made by children throughout the state of Colorado. "One youngster in particular, **Elusha Young**, was an orphan from Russia, and was adopted by a family in Woodland Park," Tapia said. "He won an ornament contest based on the design of his creation—and it now hangs on the tree."

Carroll pointed out that the Capitol Holiday Tree—also called the "People's Tree"—is not to be confused with the National Christmas Tree, which is a tree growing on the Ellipse behind the White House.

The 2000 Capitol Holiday Tree, which was formally lit on December 12, will be lit each evening throughout the December holiday season.

—**Maria Beltran**



FS's **Jeff Hovermale** (center) joins in a celebratory dance, performed by the Pueblo Friendship Pow Wow Council from Pueblo, Colo. This activity took place in Walsenburg, Colo.—one of the many celebration stops made by this year's Capitol Holiday Tree, along its journey to the Nation's Capital.—**PHOTO**

BY **ANNE UYTENHOVE**



Research, Education, and Economics

Cotton & Soybeans, Go For It!

Since time immemorial songwriters have been penning tunes about people on the rebound from interpersonal relationships. And the term "rebound" might be the way to describe the final tally of U.S. agricultural exports for FY 2000, as they hit nearly \$51 billion, up 3.5 percent from the over \$49 billion figure for FY 1999.

Those statistics were compiled by agricultural economists from the Economic Research Service, and are contained in ERS's monthly report titled "U.S. Agricultural Trade Update," dated November 29.

According to **Carol Whitton**, leader of ERS's Trade Data and Analysis Team, FY 2000 saw gains in exports of U.S. cotton and soybeans. "But the year also saw offsetting declines in exports of U.S. corn, wheat, rice, and tobacco," she advised.

She noted that world cotton consumption outpaced production, thereby boosting U.S. exports of cotton. "U.S. markets in Turkey, Southeast Asia, and Latin America accounted for most of the gains," Whitton said. Likewise, the volume of soybeans shipped abroad was up 13 percent, or three million tons, from 1999, largely on sales to China.

ERS agricultural economist **Andy Jerardo** explained that exports of U.S. corn declined the most among bulk commodities, compared to 1999 levels, as shipments to Mexico and Asia plunged. "China had a surge in its own exports of corn, and that accounted for much of the reduced U.S. sales of corn to Asia," he pointed out. Shipments of U.S. wheat to Russia, Asia, and South America were all significantly lower in 2000.

Whitton noted that the top three export markets for U.S. agricultural products during FY 2000 were Japan, Canada, and Mexico. "Together, they accounted for \$23.2 billion—or 46 percent—of this country's total agricultural export earnings in 2000," she affirmed. The next largest blocks of U.S. agricultural exports went to East Asian markets—specifically, South Korea, Taiwan, and China—at a level of \$7.3 billion. The 15 countries of the European Union constituted the third largest block of countries receiving U.S. agricultural exports, at a level of \$6.4 billion.

Jerardo said that the U.S. agricultural trade surplus at the end of FY 2000 stood at \$12

billion, which was \$175 million more than at the end of FY 1999. "The largest U.S. agricultural imports came from Canada and Mexico," he noted, "and those two countries accounted for 35 percent of all U.S. agricultural imports."

"Fruits and vegetables constituted the biggest amount of agricultural imports to the U.S. during FY 2000," he added, "and that continues a historical trend."

—Ron Hall



Research, Education, and Economics

We Help Spotlight 'The Prairie'

A multi-panel exhibition about the North American prairie—from its unique mix of flora and fauna to its huge agricultural output—opened on November 18 at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. The exhibit itself, as well as the four farmers spotlighted in the exhibit, all received financial assistance from USDA.

The exhibit, titled "Listening to the Prairie: Farming in Nature's Image," depicts the evolution of that region known as the North American prairie, which refers not only to a geographic region but also to the type of grassland natural to that region. Prairie regions are classified as tallgrass—which is taller than seven feet—shortgrass—which is less than six inches tall—and mixed grass. Prairies are not fixed regions, but shift over time and in reaction to the weather.

The Agricultural Research Service, the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, the Forest Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service cofunded the exhibit, along with the Kellogg Foundation. Jill Auburn, CSREES's national program leader for sustainable agriculture research and education and director of CSREES's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, served as a technical advisor to the museum exhibit team. But in addition, the four farmers and ranchers featured by name in the exhibit—hailing from Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota—all received SARE grants.

"With help, in part, from the SARE grants," she noted, "those producers have diversified their crops and livestock to minimize crop pests and weather market fluctuations, and

reduced their reliance on chemical pesticides—so they now sell their crops directly to their customers for more premium prices."

"Those four progressive prairie farming and ranching families, featured in the museum exhibit, have found innovative ways to manage their farms and ranches and earn profits in ways that enhance the fragile ecosystem and in tune with the needs of their communities."

Auburn added that, as part of their farm management efforts, they also safeguard drinking water, preserve streams and rivers, and offer havens for wildlife and native plants through such practices as rotating crops, planting buffer strips around streams, and using cover crops to lessen erosion.

Among other grants, SARE offers funding directly to farmers and ranchers to run on-site research and demonstration experiments. Producer grants typically run between \$500 and \$15,000.

Auburn noted that prairie farmers and ranchers make up a large part of the breadbasket that supplies much of the U.S.—and the world—with commodities like corn, soybeans, wheat, and livestock. "One American farmer feeds 143 people," she affirmed.

The exhibition explores the human history of the grasslands, starting from the first crops grown on the prairie 4,000 years ago. It also features an interactive shopping cart filled with everyday products—including hand lotions, household cleaners, shoe polish, and paint brushes—that contain ingredients from the prairie.

NRCS range management specialist Dennis Thompson added that the prairie remains home to many one-of-a-kind plants and animals, which are detailed in the exhibition. "Many waterfowl depend on prairie grasslands for breeding and wintering during migration," he explained. "Plus, milkweed and other native prairie flowers attract monarch butterflies—which is one of only a few butterflies to migrate thousands of miles."

"Prairie grass that once fed bison is now grown as livestock forage and to make renewable fuels," he said. "Native prairie grasses don't have to be planted every year, they require little or no fertilizer, and they are tolerant of drought."

Auburn noted that the "Listening to the Prairie: Farming in Nature's Image" exhibit is scheduled to run through March 2001 and will then travel to 20 libraries across the country.

—Valerie Berton



"The four farmers and ranchers depicted by name in these panels each received SARE grants to help them diversify their crops and livestock, try alternative marketing strategies, and minimize crop pests," notes CSREES's Jill Auburn (right), as she and Ann Carey, NRCS senior policy analyst for global natural resources issues, examine part of the "Listening to the Prairie: Farming in Nature's Image" exhibit at the National Museum of Natural History.—PHOTO BY KEN HAMMOND

The **USDA News** is published by the Office of Communications, the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This employee news publication, which is prepared by, for, and about this Department's employees, is distributed to USDA's 99,400 federal employees—full-time, part-time, and temporary—by order of the Secretary of Agriculture. Mailing address is Rm. 430-A Whitten Bldg.; OC, USDA; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-1350.

To update your mailing address or change the quantity of **USDA News** copies received in your USDA office, please contact your agency's mailing/distribution specialist.

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Bill Clay was selected as the deputy administrator for wildlife services in the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. He succeeded **Bobby Acord**, who served

in that position from March 1990 until August 1999, when he became the associate administrator for APHIS.

From 1997 until his recent selection, Clay served as APHIS's associate deputy administrator for wildlife services. He was director of the Wildlife Services Operational Support Staff in APHIS's Riverdale, Md., office from 1990-97. From 1989-90 he served as APHIS's wildlife services state director for North Dakota, based in Bismarck. He was the assistant to the state director for APHIS wildlife services in Texas, based in San Antonio, from 1986-89.

Clay worked as a soil conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Seguin, Texas, from 1982-86. From 1979-82 he was an urban wildlife damage control specialist with the Texas State Wildlife Services Program, based in San Antonio. He worked as an assistant driller on an offshore oil rig off the coast of Brazil in 1978, after having worked as an assistant driller on an oil rig in southern Iran from 1975-77.

A native of San Antonio, Clay holds a B.S. degree in wildlife management from Texas Tech University. ❖



Dan Kugler was selected as the deputy administrator for economic and community systems in the Cooperative State, Research, Education, and Extension Service. He succeeded **Bob Koopman**, who served in that

position from March 1997 until July 1999,

Editor's Roundup

USDA people in the news

when he became the chief economist at the U.S. International Trade Commission.

From July 1999 until his recent selection, Kugler served as the acting deputy administrator for economic and community systems with CSREES. In addition, from 1995 until August 2000 he was the section leader for processing, engineering and technology in CSREES's Plant and Animal Systems Unit, where he focused on such areas as biobased products, agricultural engineering, small farms, food safety and science, and farm safety. He served as the deputy administrator for special programs in the [then] Cooperative State Research Service from 1992-94, after having been its assistant deputy administrator for special programs from 1986-92.

From 1985-86 Kugler worked as an agricultural economist in the Policy Branch of the Economic Research Service at its headquarters office in Washington, DC, where he concentrated on soil depletion economics and policy. He was an agricultural economist, first in ERS's River Basins Branch and then in its Resource Systems Branch in East Lansing, Mich., from 1976-84. From 1971-74 he served as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in Maimana, Afghanistan, where he concentrated on math and science training for teachers in the northwestern part of that country.

A native of Rochester, N.Y., Kugler holds a B.S. degree in physics, an M.S. degree in re-

source development, and a Ph.D. degree in agricultural economics, all from Michigan State University ❖



Karl Narang was selected as the director of the Agricultural Research Service's South Atlantic Area, based in Athens, Ga. He succeeded **Roger Breeze**, who served in

that position from March 1996 until October 1999, when he became ARS's associate administrator for special research programs.

From 1995 until his recent selection, Narang served as the national program leader of ARS's National Program Staff, based in Beltsville, Md. In that capacity he directed ARS research on pests of animals and humans, animal parasites, and bees and pollination. In addition, he was co-leader of ARS national research programs concerning animal health. He was the research leader of the Insect Genetics and Biochemistry Research Unit in ARS's Biosciences Research Laboratory in Fargo, N.D., from 1990-95. From 1985-90 he worked as a research geneticist with the ARS [then] Insects Affecting Man and Animals Research Laboratory in Gainesville, Fla.

Narang served on the faculty at the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida from 1980-85. From 1972-79 he served on the faculty of the Department of Animal Biology at the University of Brasilia, Brazil, and subsequently was chair of that Department. He served as the senior geneticist with the World Health Organization's genetics project in New Delhi, India in 1971.

A native of Punjab, India, Narang holds an M.S. degree and a Ph.D. degree, both in genetics and both from the University of Illinois. ❖

2000's Winners Of Presidential Rank Awards At USDA

USDA has saluted its latest Presidential Rank Award winners—14 career Senior Executive Service managers. All were honored for their leadership and management activities during the three-year period that ended in FY 2000.

The purpose of the Presidential Rank Award Program is to recognize and reward

career SES members who have demonstrated exceptional performance over an extended period of time.

Barbara Holland, a personnel management specialist in the Office of Human Resources Management, said that there are two categories of Presidential Rank Awards. The "Distinguished Executive" Award is given to no more than one percent of career senior executives for sustained, extraordinary accomplishments in carrying out federal goals and policies. These winners receive an award

equal to 35 percent of their base pay, paid for by the recipient's agency. The "Meritorious Executive" Award is limited to no more than five percent of career SES members and is given for sustained accomplishment. These winners receive an award equal to 20 percent of their base pay.

Governmentwide, 53 career employees received "Distinguished Executive" Awards and 287 received "Meritorious Executive" Awards for the three-year period ending in FY 2000. The Presidential Rank Award Program, which

has been in existence since 1980, is coordinated by the Office of Personnel Management.

USDA's Presidential Rank Award winners for 2000 at the "Distinguished Executive" level were:

① **Thomas Army**, director of the Agricultural Research Service's Mid South Area, based in Stoneville, Miss., for exemplary leadership and outstanding management of the Mid South Area of ARS—the world's largest agricultural research organization. He had previously received a "Meritorious Executive" Award for 1986.

② **Colien Hefferan**, associate administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, for exemplary leadership and outstanding management of CSREES—USDA's link to America's universities.

USDA's Presidential Rank Award winners for 2000 at the "Meritorious Executive" level were:

① **Margot Anderson**, [then] director of USDA's Global Change Program Office (currently deputy director of the Office of Policy with the U.S. Department of Energy), for her direction of USDA's Global Change Office, making it a focal point for climate change issues for USDA at a time when the Department was being encouraged to develop programmatic strategies to address climate change issues and provide additional leadership in international climate change activities.

② **Thomas Elias**, director of USDA's National Arboretum in Washington, DC, for outstanding management of the ARS-administered National Arboretum, the only federal facility to conduct research, provide education, and conserve and display trees, shrubs, flowers, and other plants to enhance the environment.

③ **Leonard Hardy**, deputy administrator for operations and management in the Rural Development mission area, for dynamic leadership in evaluating and certifying as Year 2000 compliant the 14 mission-critical systems and the 21 non-mission-critical systems of the Rural Development mission area, all in support of the 700,000 borrowers which Rural Development serves.

④ **Floyd Horn**, administrator of ARS, for outstanding leadership of ARS, the largest and most diverse public sector mission oriented, centrally directed agricultural research organization in the world. He had previously received a "Meritorious Executive" Award for 1991.

⑤ **Peter Roussopoulos**, director of the Forest Service's Southern Research Station, based in Asheville, N.C., for establishing a record of significant contributions to the scientific management of the nation's forest resources.

⑥ **Edward Scarbrough**, the first U.S. Manager for the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), Food Safety and Inspection Service, for outstanding leadership and innovative approach to implementing changes to effectively address U.S. trade policies, focus on science, and revamp the planning process of Codex to ensure continued coordination of international food standards, to protect the health of consumers, and to facilitate fair practices in food trade.

⑦ **David Shipman**, deputy administrator of the federal grain inspection program in the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, for outstanding leadership and management of the Nation's grain inspection and weighing system, a system that promotes the fair and efficient marketing of more than \$60 billion of U.S. grain and oilseeds annually.

⑧ **Paul Thompson**, director of FSIS's Technical Service Center in Omaha, Neb., for sustained vision and outstanding leadership in developing, and then being named the founding director of, the FSIS Technical Service Center, which is the primary information resource for government and industry personnel dealing with the production of safe meat, poultry, and egg products nationwide, as well as a resource for government and industry constituents worldwide.

⑨ **Eleanor Towns**, regional forester of FS's Southwestern Region, based in Albuquerque, N.M., for exceptional performance in managing and directing activities in the 20 million acres of National Forests and 260,000 acres of National Grasslands in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma.

⑩ **Lawrence Wachs**, associate director of the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, for continually demonstrating outstanding skill, innovation, dedication, and integrity in developing and presenting, to Congress, the President's USDA budget, one of the most complicated and diverse resource acquisition and allocation programs in the federal government. He also received a "Distinguished Executive" Award for 1997 and a "Meritorious Executive" Award for 1984.

⑪ **Kaye Wachsmuth**, deputy administrator for the Office of Public Health and Science in FSIS, for exemplary contributions to the creation of a public health and science based approach to food safety.

⑫ **Thomas Weber**, deputy chief for programs in the Natural Resources Conservation Service, for meeting challenges, making change, and achieving outstanding results in several key leadership positions within NRCS. ❖



T. ARMY



C. HEFFERAN



M. ANDERSON



T. ELIAS



L. HARDY



F. HORN



P. ROUSSOPOULOS



E. SCARBROUGH



D. SHIPMAN



P. THOMPSON



E. TOWNS



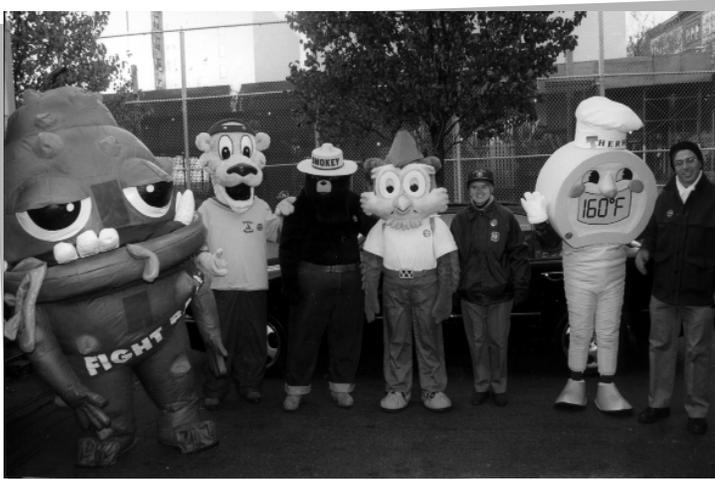
L. WACHS



K. WACHSMUTH



T. WEBER



"Okay, all you five USDA 'celebrity characters,' it's time to line up, stand up straight, and smile—or whatever—for the camera, before the parade begins. That includes all five of you—BAC, Power Panther, Smokey Bear, Woodsy Owl, and Thermi!" Those were the marching orders—literally—to these five USDA 'celebrity characters,' as they got ready to participate in the 74th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. By participating, they helped spread their 'USDA messages.' Note the story on what it took to get them in the parade, on page 1.—PHOTO BY BILL TARPENNING



HELP US FIND

Rosemary Helen Al-Arifi

Missing: 08-15-00 From: Terre Haute, Ind.
 D.O.B. 04-11-90 Sex: Female
 Hair: Brown Eyes: Brown
 Height: 4 ft Weight: 50 lbs.

If you have information, please call

1-800-843-5678

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

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