

USDA *news*

USDA's Employee News Publication—For You & About You!

How We're Helping Protect America's Food And Agriculture Infrastructure

We Want To Enhance Security 'From Farm To Table'

by Ron Hall
Office of Communications

USDA recently completed its draft of a plan to further protect America's food and agriculture systems located across the country. That draft plan is now being reviewed by USDA's partners, in this endeavor, that are in the private sector, at the state level, and at the local level.

What follows is a story about how USDA employees, at headquarters and field locations, tackled the drafting of that plan.

According to **Jeremy Stump**, director of USDA's Homeland Security Office, this initiative at USDA is the Department's contribution to a governmentwide effort to develop a "nationwide infrastructure protection plan." "Our plan here at USDA," he explained, "is called our 'Sector Specific Plan,' and it will ultimately become a vital part of the overall governmentwide plan."

"The plan," he added, "is designed to protect our country's food and agriculture systems—or 'infrastructure'—from any acts of terrorism. That's why it's so important, and that's why we need to be prepared."

In April 2004 USDA's Homeland Security Office launched this ini-

tiative by requesting that each USDA agency identify 'agency coordinators,' and that those individuals compile the information—appropriate to their mission area—that would be needed to create the Department's Sector Specific Plan on this subject. "We had to give them a short turnaround time in order to keep this project moving on schedule, in order to meet the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive-7," acknowledged **Sheryl Maddux**, deputy director of USDA's Homeland Security Office.

"This was a huge responsibility for those agency coordinators—a 30-hour-per-week project for six weeks running," noted Homeland Security Office program analyst **Diane DiPietro**. "And this was in addition to all of their normal daily responsibilities."

"But they came through with a great effort which exceeded our expectations," affirmed Stump.

For instance, **Nancy Gaston**, a nutritionist with the Food and Nutrition Service and FNS's agency coordinator for this undertaking, said that her first step was to look at her agency's mission and then determine what, within that mission, would apply to the 'farm to table' issues that needed to be part of USDA's Sector Specific Plan. "We concluded," she said, "that, for FNS, this included 'disaster nutrition assistance' plus food safety issues associated with the domestic nutrition assistance programs that FNS is responsible for."

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"About this grain sample under my hand: after you put the grain through the grain shaker—as you have correctly done here—you should have a workable grain sample to actually grade," advises GIPSA's **Roy Shepherd** (right). He is training staffers with the Uganda Bureau of Standards—at their lab in Kampala, Uganda—on the proper use of several pieces of grain inspection equipment. That equipment, provided by GIPSA in a project with FAS, is part of an initiative to help three East Africa countries develop a uniform grain inspection system that provides reliable and fast grain inspection services and ensures consistent standards of grain quality. Note **Byron Reilly's** story on page 4.—**PHOTO BY JENNIFER MAURER**

It's A Unique Ethics Issue—And We're Applying 'Preventive Maintenance'

Our Approach: Be Proactive, Not Reactive

by Ellen Pearson
Office of Ethics

Recent stories in the news have been focusing on the following situation: A federal employee has official duties that bring him/her into a close working relationship with an organization—such as a university or a non-profit group—which receives federal money. But, what if that federal employee's official interaction with that organization crosses the line so

that he/she becomes an advocate for that organization more than for his/her federal agency? And when does "close" become "too close?" Finally, does this create an ethics problem for that federal employee?

"We're wrestling with that issue every day, here at USDA," acknowledged **Ray Sheehan**, director of USDA's Office of Ethics. "But, because of some steps the Department's ethics program has taken, we think we're engaging in 'preventive maintenance'—and we're hoping to head off some ethics problems that have already cropped up in other federal departments."

He said one specific area of interaction that recently has posed heightened concerns

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Mike Johanns *Secretary of Agriculture*

Dear Fellow Employees, Part of my job is to have a vision for the future of agriculture—a vision that results in programs and policies that support today's farmers, ranchers, and rural residents as well as the next generation.

Although the current Farm Bill does not expire until 2007, the policies that will replace it are already a hot topic of discussion. That's why I've asked America's farmers and ranchers to tell us how our farm policy is working and how we can make it better. Starting in July, we are conducting a series of Farm Bill Forums throughout the nation. We want to provide the opportunity for the entire agricultural community to have a say in the policy-making process.

I do not begin this discussion with preconceived notions about the outcome, but I do believe it is important to provide some structure to guide the debate. To help us determine the best course for a new Farm Bill, I've asked our stakeholders to answer six questions that I believe get to the heart of farm policy.

- ❶ How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?
- ❷ How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competi-

tiveness and our country's ability to effectively compete in global markets?

- ❸ How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?
- ❹ How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?
- ❺ How can federal rural and farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas?
- ❻ How should agricultural product development, marketing, and research-related issues be addressed in the next Farm Bill?

Comments may be submitted electronically via the Internet at the USDA Farm Bill Forums web page: www.usda.gov/farmbill or by sending an email to FarmBill@usda.gov.

We will use the feedback we receive to help us determine the best course for a new Farm Bill. In addition to addressing the six questions, we will also hold specialized listening sessions on other important programs authorized by the Farm Bill such as food assistance and education.

We will be calling on many of you in the days ahead for assistance in making a success out of this great opportunity for public discourse about the future of farm policy. I thank you in advance for your assistance and look forward to meeting many of you at the Farm Bill Forums. ■

How We're Helping...continued from pg. 1

Dave Lewis, deputy administrator for compliance and analysis in the Agricultural Marketing Service, added that—as noted in USDA's Sector Specific Plan—AMS is working with FNS, the Food Safety and Inspection Service, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to provide training to USDA employees in field locations across the country, as well as food industry personnel, on food security principles and practices.

As a third example, **Denise Spencer**, a senior staff officer in the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, explained that the Marketing and Regulatory Programs mission area's involvement in the 'farm to table' issues is primarily at the 'farm' level. "At that level," she pointed out, "our interest focused on such issues as safeguarding livestock from intentional exposure to livestock diseases, safeguarding crops in the field from being deliberately contaminated with plant diseases, and protecting harvested grains from intentional contamination in the grain silos."

In June 2004 the Department's Homeland Security Office consolidated the various submissions into a 200-page draft, and forwarded it to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

"The next step," DiPietro explained, "is that we are now relying on the Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Councils, in a joint working group, to review the draft report and recommend improvements to its format and con-

tent. That working group will also develop templates for the state-level departments of agriculture to use in designing their own food and agriculture Sector Specific Plans. That helps us to enhance security 'from farm to table,' as we all keep saying."

"The USDA plan," she added, "is an overarching federal plan that looks at the country as a whole. But we want to make sure that we include state-specific plans as well—so that, for instance, Ohio's plan will be unique to Ohio."

"We want to make sure," emphasized Stump, "that, in the process, our agency coordinators—whose research and writing constituted USDA's draft plan—have continued input into USDA's Sector Specific Plan format and content, as well as into the State template."

"In other words, the process has not ended for the agency coordinators."

On May 18 the Department recognized the contributions of those agency coordinators by presenting them with 'Grab and Go' bags. Maddux explained that the bags, or kits, include emergency supplies such as a flashlight, a ready-to-eat meal, emergency contact lists, and tips from a USDA website—www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared—which educates USDA employees on measures they can take to ensure their safety in an emergency—whether the emergency is nature-driven or caused by humans.

"We told them," Stump quipped, "that we sure hope they don't ever have to use those 'Grab and Go' bags." ■



"I'm new to the ethics arena at USDA, so this conference—and this ice cream—are working just fine for me," quips **Barbara Keys** (right), an OCFO ethics assistant with the National Finance Center in New Orleans. She and Office of Ethics senior ethics specialist **Suzanne Meyer** are participating in an "ice cream social" during a break in USDA's recent annual Ethics Conference in Washington, DC. Note the issue that received a particular focus at this year's conference—and why—as described in **Ellen Pearson's** story on page 1.—PHOTO BY ELLEN PEARSON

Notes *from USDA Headquarters*

Secretary **Mike Johanns** has accelerated his travel schedule, visiting nine states in the past two months and stopping at USDA field offices whenever possible to meet employees. Like his penchant for calling farmers and ranchers when he travels, the Secretary likes to meet with employees to express his appreciation and “to find out what’s really going on.”

Meantime, the challenging issue of BSE, passage of the United States-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and an announcement that USDA will conduct Farm Bill Forums dominated events. Yet we also celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Rural Development mission area and 500 million consumer hits on **MyPyramid.gov**.

The Personal Touch: In addition to stops at state and county offices in Minnesota, Tennessee, Idaho, Washington, Illinois, and Iowa, Secretary Johanns had a chance to meet with USDA plant personnel during a visit to the E.A. Miller Processing Plant in Hyrum, Utah. The purpose of the visit was to see firsthand the impact the closed Canadian border is having on the beef industry. At the Miller plant, 66 workers have been let go because the number of cattle being processed has dropped about 20 percent. An appeal of the court decision keeping the Canadian border closed to beef trade is scheduled in July.

In Arkansas, the Secretary shared a brown bag lunch with regional USDA employees in Little Rock. The guest of the Farm Service Agency’s Arkansas State Executive Director **Dotson Collins**, Johanns thanked the employees for their long hours of work and the dedication they have shown, often without recognition. He also visited a family farm in Lonoke County to see a typical rice

and cotton operation.

Rural Development: On May 11, USDA marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment in 1935 of the Resettlement Administration and the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), precursors of today’s Rural Development.

“In 70 years, the quality of life in rural America has dramatically improved due in large part to the massive effort by USDA to bring economic opportunity, affordable housing, and electric, telephone, community water, and wastewater infrastructure to rural communities across the nation,” Secretary Johanns said. “President **Bush** has now challenged us to bring telecommunications technologies, like broadband, with the same dedication to rural communities by 2007.”

Concerned initially with emergency relief during the crisis of the Great Depression, the Resettlement Administration made small loans to help farmers get through tough times, built and managed migrant worker camps, constructed rural water projects, purchased land for conservation purposes, resettled displaced farmers on new land, and even built entire model communities from the ground up. Later, out of this eclectic mix of programs grew the Farm Security Administration, the Farmers Home Administration, and today’s USDA Rural Development.

At the same time, the REA assumed the mission of electrifying the countryside. Approximately 10 percent of America’s farms had electricity in 1930 and progress was slow. In 1949, REA added a telephone program. Bringing modern infrastructure to rural areas is one of the greatest public policy success stories of the last century.

Food Aid: USDA will purchase \$91 million of food aid under the McGovern-Dole Food for Education



Secretary **Mike Johanns** (left) visits with **Laura Pommier**, a Farm Service Agency program technician in the agency’s state office in St. Paul, Minn., in late April. This is one of several visits he has made to USDA state and county offices across the country recently to meet employees.—**PHOTO BY ALICE WELCH**

and Child Nutrition Program, which will feed more than 3.4 million children in 15 developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. In addition, USDA donated 500,000 metric tons of wheat from the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust as part of President Bush’s Hunger Initiative to address emergency food needs in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

MyPyramid.gov: USDA’s new web-based interactive food guidance system reached a new milestone in early June with 500 million consumer hits. “We are thrilled by the public’s overwhelming response to **MyPyramid.gov**, especially as the average visitor spends 20 to 30 minutes viewing the food guidance system,” the Secretary said. “The on-line interactive tools allow us to reach a broader spectrum of Americans than ever before to assist them in developing a healthier lifestyle that balances nutrition and exercise.”

Beef Checkoff: On May 23, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985. “I am extremely pleased that the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the lower courts’ decisions and ruled in favor of the Beef

Checkoff Program,” said Secretary Johanns. “This is certainly a win for the many producers who recognize the power of pooled resources. As this administration has always contended, USDA regards such programs, when properly administered, as effective tools for market enhancement.”

BSE: On June 24, USDA confirmed a second case of BSE in a Texas cow. The animal was first tested and then incinerated in Nov. 2004. The retest occurred as part of an Office of Inspector General investigation into USDA’s BSE testing procedures. Secretary Johanns announced that if another BSE rapid screening test results in inconclusive findings, USDA will run both an IHC and Western blot confirmatory test. If results from either confirmatory test are positive, the sample will be considered positive for BSE. “I am encouraged that our interlocking safeguards are working exactly as intended. This animal was blocked from entering the food supply because of the firewalls we have in place. Americans have every reason to continue to be confident in the safety of our beef.”

—**PATRICIA KLINTBERG**

Employees *make these things happen*

Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services

“Everyone’s Getting Older”— Here’s Help In Preparing For It

Juliet McBride has served as the elder care coordinator for the Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services mission area since October 2003. Early in her tenure she learned firsthand about the importance of planning for the future care not only of herself but also of her parents.

“Four days after I took on the elder care program,” she recounted, “I unexpectedly became a caregiver for my father.”

She cared for him during the last six months of his life—putting into practice ideas she had learned in her new position. In the process she got an idea of the services she wanted to help make available to USDA employees in general and to FFAS mission area employees in particular.

The result? The first annual Conference on Aging sponsored by the Farm Service Agency but open to all USDA employees, held on May 10 at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC. The one-day conference was titled “Everyone’s Getting Older: Know Your Entitlements and Put Your Wishes in Place.”

“Our theme,” McBride explained, “was that USDA employees should think deeply—now—about the issues surrounding elder care for themselves and for their aging relatives.”

She advised that by the time most people enter their mid-forties, they normally have the responsibility for taking care—that is, for being a “caregiver”—of at least one elderly family member. “And many Americans,” she pointed out, “have no basic planning documents in place.”

She added that the lack of such planning can often lead to such alternatives as reliance on a guardian or a conservator, to take care of one’s self or one’s elderly family member.

Those are legal processes that are undertaken (1) when a person can no longer make or communicate safe or sound decisions about his/her person and/or property, or (2) when that individual has become susceptible to fraud. According to specialists in this field those alternatives are generally used only as a last resort. Furthermore, those specialists feel that, if and when the elderly person’s situation reaches that point, those alternatives can be time consuming and invasive.

Attendees dealt with a variety of aging-related legal issues such as whether one can choose how to die, advance directives available as part of end-of-life planning, durable powers of attorney, and living wills.

They also dealt with financial planning; benefits available under Medicare, Medicaid, and Medigap—and who is and isn’t eligible for those programs; long term care insurance; and the discounts and benefits available for individuals 50 and over who join AARP—formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons.

Focusing on these issues is not new at USDA. **Marge Adams**, USDA’s work/life policy program manager, has served in that position since September 1998. “Part of my ‘marketing strategy’ on this general issue,” she explained, “has been to form a partnership with the work/life program managers—at USDA’s mission areas, program agencies, and staff offices—to provide information to their employees through such initiatives as Elder Care Fairs, local area networks, and ‘e-mail blasts’.”

In addition, the Oct.-Dec. 2002 issue of the **USDA News** carried a story on the federal government’s Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program, while the November 1989 issue of the **USDA News** carried a story about the Department’s Elder Care training program and USDA employee sup-

port groups for employee caregivers.

“But,” Adams emphasized, “to my knowledge this is the first time that a USDA agency has initiated a conference—designed for its employees—on this overall issue of aging and caregiving and all their ramifications.”

McBride said that office heads at FSA and Risk Management Agency field locations are being counted on to have their own field-level elder care coordinators, with an active, viable program to offer to their field employees.

FSA secretary **Janice Watkins** is currently a caregiver for her mother, and for eight years had been a caregiver for her mother-in-law.

“There is a *lot* involved in being a caregiver,” she underscored. “Often the individual doesn’t plan ahead—so suddenly it’s up to relatives or friends to step in and make decisions instead.”

“I’d like to have had my oldest daughter going to this conference,” she quipped, “to help prepare her for someday assisting me and my husband.”

—**REBECCA JEWSBURY**



“My parents are elderly—and these pamphlets will help me better understand all the options, benefits and complexities of various long term care programs,” affirms **Steph Savage** (right), an FSA management information technology instructor, during a break in FSA’s recent first annual Conference on Aging.—**PHOTO BY KEN HAMMOND**

Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services/Marketing and Regulatory Programs

We’re Helping Ensure The Grain Is Safe In East Africa

“This was a big deal. It really helps those three countries build up their trade capacity, and also ensures that the food grain they receive as food aid is inspected satisfactorily to make sure it’s safe.”

Jennifer Maurer, an international program specialist in the Foreign Agricultural Service, was referring to recent developments in the East African countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Specifically, USDA specialists have been providing on-site assistance to help those countries have a uniform grain inspection sys-

tem that ensures consistent standards of grain quality—whether the grain is imported, exported, or received in the form of food aid.

“That’s significant,” she added, “because, by supporting the development and ‘harmonization’ of grain standards, and by promoting reliable and fast grain inspection services in those three countries, USDA is helping to promote fair and competitive regional trade practices for the overall benefit of consumers in the three countries. Plus, we’re laying the groundwork for further trade partnerships between U.S. agribusinesses and East Africa.”

Maurer pointed out that this effort is a direct outcome of a larger USDA-USAID project—titled “Enhancing Transportation Management and Harmonizing Standards to Foster U.S. Agricultural Trade Opportunities”—which FAS implemented in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda from 2000-2004.

“And this USDA ‘grain testing and inspection equipment initiative’ is the first such effort like this in Sub-Saharan Africa,” she emphasized.

So, how did this particular development happen?

Brian McKee, a grain marketing specialist with the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, was the first GIPSA em-

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



Drew DeBerry is the deputy chief of staff for Secretary **Mike Johanns**.

From 2001 until his appointment to this position DeBerry served as USDA's White House Liaison. Before joining USDA he served on the presidential transition team during 2001. During 2000 he was based in Austin, Texas as the director of the National Farm and Ranch Coalition for the 2000 Bush Campaign.

From 1999-2000 DeBerry worked as an agricultural assistant, based in Austin and Lubbock, to Texas State Senator **Robert Duncan (R)**.

Mike Torrey, the previous deputy chief of staff, is now the principal of Michael Torrey Associates, a government relations and consulting firm based in Washington, DC. ■



Beth Johnson is the deputy chief of staff, concurrently serving as the chief assistant to

Deputy Secretary **Chuck Conner**.

From 2002 until her appointment to this position Johnson served as a senior advisor to [then] Secretary **Ann Veneman** and subsequently to Secretary **Mike Johanns**—and is continuing those senior advisory responsibilities for him. Before rejoining USDA, from 1998-2002 she served as a supervisor and subsequently as a vice president in the Washington, DC office of Fleishman-Hillard, Inc., a public relations consulting firm. She worked as a professional staff member for the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry from 1995-98, concentrating on nutrition, farm credit, and livestock.

From 1993-95 Johnson was an advisor on food policy matters at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, based in Washington, DC. She worked as a nutritionist at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration during 1992, after having coordinated consumer nutrition education projects and activities for The KBL Group, Inc., from 1989-92. She began her career with USDA as an Agricultural Research Service research dietitian in Beltsville, Md., in 1989.

This is a newly-created position. ■



Ed Loyd is USDA's press secretary.

From February 2005 until his appointment to this position

Loyd served as acting press secretary for the Department. He was a deputy press secretary for USDA from 2003-2005. In addition, since March 2003 he has been serving as the Department's Hispanic spokesperson.

During 2000 Loyd served as the Columbus, Ohio-based executive director of the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs. He worked as the deputy clerk of courts for Hamilton County, Ohio, from 1999-2000. From 1996-98 he was an administrative aide in the Ohio Senate, based in Columbus.

Alisa Harrison, the previous press secretary for USDA, held that position from November 2001 until her resignation in March 2005. ■



Dana York is the associate chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

From October 2001 until her selection for this position York served as the director

of NRCS's Operations Management and Oversight Division. She was a special assistant to the chief of NRCS, focusing on workload analysis, from 1999-2001.

From 1998-99 York served as NRCS's deputy state conservationist for Ohio, based in Columbus. She was the acting operations partnership liaison at the agency's [then] Regional Office in Atlanta during 1998. From 1988-94 she served in various leadership positions in NRCS's Tennessee State Office in Nashville. She worked as a district conservationist in three different county offices in Tennessee from 1984-88. She began her full-time career with NRCS as a soil conservationist in the agency's field office in Carthage, Tenn., in 1979.

Tom Weber, the previous associate chief of NRCS, retired from that position with 32 years of service, all with NRCS. ■



Carol Maczka is the assistant administrator of the Office of Food Defense and Emergency Response in the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

From January 2003 until her se-

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ployee to work with FAS on this project. "Beginning in 2000," he said, "I conducted a 'sector assessment' to review the currently existing grain inspection methods in those three countries." Then in 2001 he led 'study tours' of grain inspection officials from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, as they visited GIPSA grain testing and inspection facilities in the U.S.

In 2002 GIPSA compliance officer **Joey McNeil** conducted progress evaluations on-site in those three countries.

In addition, McNeil knew that GIPSA's field office in Baltimore was due to close in the spring of 2003. "So I arranged to have the equipment at that facility—that we normally use to sample and test grain—declared surplus and then shipped to the Bureau of Standards offices in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda."

He also arranged to have excess equipment from the GIPSA field offices in Toledo, Ohio and

League City, Texas sent there as well. Those pieces of equipment included grain shakers, moisture meters, test-weight apparatus, dockage testers, and cargo dividers.

In September 2004 **Roy Shepherd**, a GIPSA supervisor agricultural commodity grader based at the agency's field office in New Orleans, traveled to Nairobi, Kenya; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and Kampala, Uganda to supervise setting up the lab equipment and conduct hands-on grading training to a total of 18 government and private sector representatives.

"Jennifer and I were on-site, and we ensured that the pieces of equipment were properly calibrated, and that each bureau's technicians were properly trained in operating the equipment," Shepherd recounted. "By using the equipment properly, the specialists from all three bureaus of standards were able to develop standard testing methodologies and measure grain quality consistently—and that's why we were there."

Maurer added that in February 2005 she received feedback from an official with the Kenya Bureau of Standards. "That official," she related, "told us that that country really needed the grain inspection equipment from USDA—which included moisture meters, sampling probes, and a dockage tester. She also told us that the staff there is using the equipment to test and grade wheat and corn imports, sample bulk grains at the port of Mombassa, and make quick moisture determinations while wheat, corn, and rice consignments are still at that port."

Similarly, officials from Uganda's Bureau of Standards informed Maurer that their grain inspection equipment is being used to check grain exports and imports and tender grain evaluation samples brought to the Bureau's new grain inspection lab facilities.

"That's exactly what we like to hear," Maurer affirmed.

—BYRON REILLY

lection for this position Maczka served as the senior advisor for risk assessment in FSIS, focusing on the development, adaptation, and application of risk assessment to address the agency's public health and food safety goals. From 2000-2003 she was director of FSIS's Risk Assessment Division, and during that time she also served as the executive secretary of the National Advisory Committee for Microbiological Criteria in Foods.

From 1992-2000 Maczka was the director of the Toxicological and Risk Assessment Program for the Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology at the National Academies of Science. She was a senior vice president of a health and environmental consulting firm in Fairfax, Va., from 1984-92, after having worked as a project manager at a health and environmental consulting firm in Alexandria, Va., from 1980-84.

Jesse Majkowski, the previous assistant administrator of the Office

of Food Defense and Emergency Response in FSIS, retired from that position following 35 years of federal service and is now a McLean, Va.-based consultant on agroterrorism with the management and technology consulting firm of Booz Allen and Hamilton. ■



Jack Gleason is the deputy administrator for multi-family housing in the Rural Housing Service.

From April 2001 until his selection for this position Gleason served as the Washington State director for rural development, based in Olympia. He was the Washington State program director for business and utility programs for the Rural Development mission area, based in Olympia, from 1996-2001.

From 1983-96 Gleason served as district director in Puyallup,

Wash., for USDA's [then] Farmers Home Administration. He began his career with the Department as a loan officer in agricultural housing programs for FmHA in Elko, Nev., in 1976.

Obediah Baker, the previous deputy administrator for multi-family housing in RHS, retired from that position with 38 years of federal service, including 36 years with USDA. ■



Craig Morris is the deputy administrator for poultry programs in the Agricultural Marketing Service.

From December 2002 until his selection for this position Morris served as the associate deputy administrator for poultry programs in AMS. He was the assistant to AMS's deputy administrator for the livestock and seed program during 2002 as well as during 2000. He

worked as the international marketing specialist for AMS's Livestock and Seed Program from 1996-99.

In the private sector Morris served as the assistant vice president of food safety for Future Beef Operations in Arkansas City, Kan., from 2001-2002. He was the manager of scientific and technical affairs for the American Meat Institute in Arlington, Va., from 1995-96.

Howard Magwire, the previous deputy administrator for poultry programs in AMS, retired from that position following 35 years of federal service, including 33 years with AMS. ■



Dana Coale is the deputy administrator for dairy programs in the Agricultural Marketing Service.

From December 2001 until her selection for this position Coale

PROFILE PLUS *More About: Charles (Chuck) Conner*



Our new Deputy Secretary grew up on his family's corn and soybean operation in Otterbein, Ind., population 800. **Chuck Conner** said the town was so small, he could deliver notices from the Town Board to every mailbox at every house "in a short afternoon."

Discussion at the Conner family dinner table often turned to politics, but Conner said he never really thought about coming to Washington, DC. "I really did intend to go back and be part of the family farm," he said.

As a kid he participated in 4-H and wound up breeding his own hogs to show. Ultimately that endeavor helped put him through Purdue University where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics.

Upon graduation his plan to join his brother, **Mike**, and work the family farm had to be postponed. Sky-high interest rates in the late 1970s—16 and 17 percent—made expansion impractical.

Instead, Conner went to work for the Federal Land Bank in Louisville, Ky. During a swing through his three-state area of responsibility, a stop at a meeting with farmers led to a job opportunity with then first-term U.S. Senator **Richard Lugar** (R-Ind.) in Washington, DC.

After several interviews with Lugar's [then] administrative assistant **Mitch Daniels**—who ultimately led the Office of Management and Budget during President **George W. Bush's** first term and is now Governor of Indiana—Conner got the job.

There began a career path that spanned 17 years in several U.S. Senate staff positions, including Majority Staff Director of the Senate Agriculture Committee. During this period Conner had direct involvement in every farm bill written and enacted since 1981. Because of this experience, he is no stranger to the many career employees he has consulted over the years.

Conner left Capitol Hill in 1997 to become president of the Corn Refin-

ers Association. In 2001, he was tapped to be Special Assistant to President Bush for Agricultural Trade and Food Assistance, the post he held prior to being nominated and confirmed as Deputy Secretary. In that role he oversaw development of the 2002 farm bill.

An expert on farm policy, Conner also knows a great deal about USDA. "One of the responsibilities that came upon us when I was with the Senate Agriculture Committee in the 1990s was the comprehensive reorganization of the management structure of the Department of Agriculture. This was very controversial. Certainly that was a big training ground, if you will, for my understanding of the structure of the Department, the broad responsibilities assigned the Department, and the dedication of the people who work here," Conner said.

Secretary **Mike Johanns** has very publicly indicated that he and Conner will work closely together to lead the Department. Specifically, Conner will oversee the Department's budget process. Because of his unique experience in the development of food and agricultural legislation, he also will be Secretary Johanns' point man on the upcoming farm bill.

Last Book Read: "*The Nighttime is My Time*," by **Mary Higgins Clark**

Last Movie Seen: "*Kicking and Screaming*," with **Will Ferrell**

Hobbies: "Keeping up with the activities of our four children."

Favorite Food: Beef Wellington

Priorities In The Months Ahead: "To support the Secretary in any way that he wants. We expect to work as a real team, to share responsibility on issues, which is why we've moved my office closer to his so the proximity will be conducive to that. I also will have a key role in the development of the USDA budget and the next farm bill, my sixth. In addition, it will be my responsibility to see that the President's Management Agenda is implemented. By measuring performance results we hope to ensure that USDA is well run, efficient, and effective."

—**PATRICIA KLINTBERG**

served as the associate deputy administrator for dairy programs in AMS. She worked as an agricultural marketing specialist with AMS's Dairy Programs from 1990-2001, focusing on the federal Milk Marketing Order Program.

Cole began her career with AMS in 1989 as an agricultural marketing specialist in the agency's Fruit and Vegetable Programs, where she concentrated on AMS activities under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act.

Richard McKee, the previous

deputy administrator for dairy programs in AMS, retired from that position following 32 years of service, all with AMS. ■



Athens, Ga.

From October 2000 until his selection for this position Cole served

Darrell Cole is the director of the Agricultural Research Service's South Atlantic Area, based in

as the associate director of ARS's Midwest Area, based in Peoria, Ill. He was the acting director of the South Atlantic Area from 1999-2000. From 1997-99 he served as assistant director of the Beltsville (Md.) Area for ARS.

From 1985-97 Cole was the assistant deputy administrator of ARS's National Program Staff, based in Beltsville, where his responsibilities included developing the agency's [then] Resource Management Information System, used in managing ARS's agricultural re-

search programs nationwide. From 1973-85 he worked as an ARS plant physiologist at the agency's [then] Sugarbeet Research Unit in Fargo, N.D., focusing on post-harvest losses of sugar during the storage of sugarbeets. He began his career with the agency as a plant physiologist in Beltsville in 1970, where he concentrated on seed physiology.

Karl Narang, the previous director of ARS's South Atlantic Area, is now the associate director at that location. ■

'Preventive Maintenance'...continued from pg. 1

involves scientists—often research scientists—who are involved with universities, federal grant applications, and/or scientific associations.

"These concerns could apply to several thousand USDA employees, at headquarters and field locations," Sheehan noted.

"Research is inherently a collaborative activity," explained **Dwaine Grove**, an ethics specialist in the Research, Education, and Economics mission area. "USDA scientists are committed to serving the public's interest by solving agricultural problems. And, as a result, they provide a variety of services to non-federal organizations such as universities, non-profit associations, and private industry. But, within that context, government ethics laws and regulations govern how federal employees interact with non-federal organizations—and that can be a source for potential ethics problems."

Pat Tippett, a senior ethics specialist in the Office of Ethics, noted that recent news accounts have spotlighted other federal departments and agencies in which some employees, in professional situations similar to many at USDA, have found themselves in complicated ethics dilemmas—with resulting negative press attention and subsequent Congressional interest.

"Because of that adverse publicity," Sheehan recounted, "our ethics advisors and specialists—both here in the Office of Ethics and at the Department's mission areas and program agencies—were hit with phone calls from employees who wanted to know if those predicaments applied to their particular situations as USDA employees."

Coincidentally, at about this same time the Office of Ethics was planning its annual USDA Ethics Conference. "So," explained **Dawn Bolden**, an ethics specialist in that office, "while we had touched upon this general issue at our previous Ethics Conference in 2003, we decided to give this matter a lot more focus this year."

Accordingly, at this year's Ethics Conference, held April 19-21 at USDA headquarters in

Washington, DC, a primary component was a "Science and Ethics Roundtable." "In that specific setting," Sheehan pointed out, "we wanted to get a handle on possible conflicts of interest between our research scientists and the outside organizations that they interact with, as part of their USDA responsibilities. We also wanted to try to fashion a consistent approach—across USDA mission areas and program agencies—toward this particular ethics issue."

Office of Ethics senior ethics specialist **Mike Edwards** said that participants wrestled with numerous potential ethics issues that arise when USDA employees participate in non-federal groups, either in an official or a personal capacity. This may include consulting, engaging in editorial services, or participating in peer reviews.

In addition, many USDA employees are "collocated employees"—which refers to employees working at a USDA facility that is located on a college campus. Many of those collocated employees also serve as "adjunct professors" at that site—which may mean anything from giving occasional lectures to having tenure. Those employees face potential ethics issues involving intellectual property, teaching, tenure, university activities, perks, and privileges—and those issues were also addressed by attendees.

"Several of those issues will be resolved," declared **Sue Mutchler**, REE mission area ethics advisor, "when each agency makes a determination as to what types of activities are more appropriately performed as official duties. The more that agencies clearly identify the relationship between the agency mission and the assigned duty, the less likely it is that potential conflicts and ethics issues will develop."

Sheehan said that the outcome of upcoming meetings of Department scientists—to be organized by the REE mission area ethics office—will determine what steps the Department will follow. "Revising USDA's current ethics issuance on adjunct professors, considering conflict of interest waivers, seeking guidance from the Office of the General Counsel, and drafting new regula-

tions are all viable options," he advised.

In addition, Office of Ethics staffers have already been posting items germane to this particular ethics issue on the Office of Ethics website: www.usda-ethics.net

"These efforts—in this scientific arena, as well as in other areas here at USDA," Sheehan underscored, "should help us all to head off ethics problems now—proactively—instead of pursuing violations later—reactively." ■

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Tonya Willis (standing), ethics advisor for the Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services mission area, confers with **Patti Hill**, an ethics advisor for FSA in Kansas City, Mo., during USDA's recent annual Ethics Conference held in Washington, DC. This particular conference included a focus on possible ethics concerns faced by USDA scientists. Those concerns could apply to several thousand USDA employees, at headquarters and field locations. Note **Ellen Pearson's** story on page 1.—**PHOTO BY ELLEN PEARSON**



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