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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, especially at the senior executive level. Personnel will be departing their positions throughout the federal government, including at USDA—but their federal office records must remain behind.

That's one of the key points in USDA's Departmental Regulation 3080-001, dated April 11, 2007 and titled "Records Management." The document advises that "Agency records are the property of the Federal government, not the property of individual employees, and may not be removed from the Department without proper authority."

"This is an issue that's applicable to any USDA employee who leaves the Department, at any time," noted **Colleen Snyder**, USDA's Departmental Records Officer in the Office of the Chief Information Officer. "But, right after a presidential election, with the anticipated turnover in USDA personnel that will occur, it's even more helpful for those personnel if we focus on this matter with a bigger spotlight."

Snyder explained 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.

"In short," she said, "federal records are documents which protect the legal, financial, and other interests of the U.S. Government and its citizenry. These documents also assist Departmental officials in making informed policy and program judgments. Finally, federal records provide the information required by Congress and others for oversight of the activities of this Department."

"All USDA employees—and individuals who volunteer or do work for USDA under contract—are subject to records management requirements during their tenure at, and departure from, the Department," Snyder noted.

Accordingly, she emphasized that employees must determine whether documents in their custody qualify as "federal records," including correspondence, memos, e-mails, DVDs, CDs, agency websites, computerized presentations, photographs, maps, motion pictures, tape recordings, data bases, and spreadsheets. "It's important to remember," Snyder pointed out, "that it is the information contained within a document that qualifies it as a federal record—and not the document, or its format, itself."

She added that, in this new era of "e-Government," the days of thinking that records are only something that can physically be held in a person's hand, like a piece of paper, are long past and outdated. "When we delete any information that was created electronically, we may be destroying the only copy of that information," she advised. "Plus, we need to be mindful of the ramifications of decisions we may make concerning the disposition of electronic records."

"As federal employees, we always need to keep in mind that

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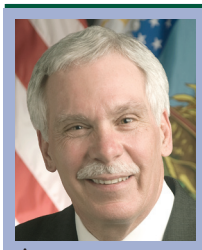
Mike Johanns *(2nd from right), the 28th Secretary of Agriculture—who was elected on November 4 to the U.S. Senate from Nebraska—is flanked by Deputy Secretary* ***Chuck Conner*** *(left), Chief of Staff* ***Dale Moore*** *(2nd from left), wife* ***Stephanie Johanns*** *(3rd from left), and Westchester, NY Portrait Artist* ***Laurel Stern Boeck*** *(right), at the formal unveiling of his official portrait during a ceremony at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC on December 3. In his remarks Johanns noted that embodied in the portrait are his priorities, including: family, as reflected in the desk picture of his wife shown in the lower right of the portrait; his love of agriculture, as reflected in the Iowa dairy farm where he grew up, shown in the top right of the portrait; and country, as reflected in the American flag shown in the left of the portrait. The portrait is now hanging in the Patio of USDA's Whitten Building. NRCS Historian* ***Douglas Helms*** *noted that this portrait is one of 29 portraits—of 28 former Secretaries plus, even earlier, one former Commissioner of Agriculture—on display in the area of the Patio.—***PHOTO BY ALICE WELCH**



Ed Schafer *Secretary of Agriculture*

Dear Fellow Employees,

This is such a wonderful season. For me, it's always a special time of renewal and reflection.

With a new administration about to begin, this will be my last opportunity to share a few thoughts with you about all that's been achieved over the past eight years in agriculture.

Though my tenure as Secretary has been short—and the past year has passed amazingly fast—working with all of you has been an honor. The professionalism and dedication you bring to your jobs every day reflects your deep commitment to the American people and the agricultural community we serve here at USDA.

The last eight years have been a remarkable time for American agriculture. Strong commodity prices, rising export demand, and the rapid growth of the renewable fuels industry have created unprecedented growth in the ag economy.

This year exports set an all-time record of more than $115 billion and overall agriculture production will add almost $135 billion in value to our national economy.

We're seeing strong demand around the world—particularly from emerging economies like Mexico, India, Brazil, and China—for grains, meat, dairy products, and prepared foods.

These are markets America's farmers and ranchers are well-positioned to serve. All they need is a fair chance to compete.

That's why President **George W. Bush** has consistently made expanding free trade one of his highest priorities. This Administration has opened doors for America's farmers and ranchers by negotiating 17 new free trade agreements since 2001.

President Bush has also been a strong advocate for conservation. And, over the last eight years, we've seen remarkable growth in USDA conservation programs that protect wildlife and the environment, while also helping producers earn additional revenue from their land.

Taken together, the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills have increased funding for conservation programs by a remarkable $21.2 billion.

This Administration has shown its commitment to rural America by investing an average of $14 billion a year in Rural Development projects since 2001—36 percent higher than the level of spending when we took office.

Those investments created 2 million new jobs and brought broadband service to 2.7 million homes and businesses. And they've upgraded health care and emergency response services, while committing more than $800 million to new renewable energy and energy efficient projects.

We've also confronted the continuing challenge of food security—both at home and abroad.

This Administration has worked to make sure more of the people eligible for domestic nutrition programs actually enroll and receive benefits. We're proud that the rate of participation climbed from 54 percent in 2001 to 67 percent in 2006.

Meanwhile, on the international front, the United States has continued its proud tradition of generosity as the world's largest donor of food aid.

The team at USDA helped make all of these things happen. You've taken a goal, an outline, a plan, and by steady application of talent, hard work, and determination, you've turned visions into realities.

Together, we've built a strong foundation for the future of American agriculture. And there is much to be proud of in that record.

I wish you all a joyous holiday season and continued success in the people's work here at USDA. ■

Federal Records…continued from pg. 1

official federal records belong to the federal government, not to any individual employee," emphasized **Bruce Bundick**, Director of USDA's Office of the Executive Secretariat.

In fact, Snyder underscored that DR 3080-001 states that "The concealment, mutilation, obliteration, falsification, or unauthorized removal or destruction of Federal records is against the law and may lead to a $2,000 fine, three years imprisonment, or both, and forfeiture of his position and disqualification from holding any other Federal office…"

She then noted that, in contrast to federal records, "personal records" may be removed or destroyed by an employee at any time. "Personal records" include such items as papers accumulated by an employee before entering federal service that are not used later to conduct government business; 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. "To avoid even the appearance of impropriety," Snyder advised, "all personal materials should be maintained separately from official files."

Also, "nonrecord materials" may be destroyed if they are not involved in litigation or some other type of hold. "Nonrecord materials" include extra copies of documents preserved only for reference, and library and museum materials made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibit purposes.

Snyder said that OCIO's website offers additional guidance on this issue, at **www.ocio.usda.gov/records/tools_records.html**

She added that the Records Management Officers for individual USDA agencies can provide guidance on any decisions about what documents to save and what to destroy.

"I recommend very strongly," Snyder affirmed, "that you don't remove or destroy your office documents—unless you're sure that you're legally correct in doing so."

Megen Davis, Chief of OCIO's Information Management Division, underscored that one of the benefits of archiving federal records is that they ensure that personnel in the federal government can reconstruct the evolution of their program and administrative decisions without relying on such incomplete and potentially erroneous sources as 'word-of-mouth.'

"By archiving federal records," she then added, "personnel can give their successors a written rationale for actions they've taken. Plus, they leave an enduring record—which will be part of the 'institutional memory' of that office—that reflects the special contributions that they have made."

"We all want to leave a legacy at work—a positive legacy." ■

Notes *from USDA Headquarters*

The Winner: "Beef It Up!":

USDA remains serious about the need to protect "Personally Identifiable Information"—and it recently held a USDA-wide poster contest to further promote it.

Mary Heard, the Acting Associate CIO for Cyber Security in the Office of the Chief Information Officer, explained that "Personally Identifiable Information" or PII generally refers to information which is maintained by a USDA agency about an individual, including USDA customers and USDA employees. "That information," she noted, "may include details of financial transactions between a customer and the Department; such unique information as a Social Security number and a date or place of birth which could be used to trace an individual's identity; and other personal information, including medical or criminal history, which is linkable to a particular individual."

USDA formally launched its campaign in October 2007 to alert employees throughout the Department about the need to protect PII. "Then, as a further step for the USDA Security and PII Awareness Campaign," added OCIO Program Analyst **Evelyn Davis**, "we held a USDA-wide poster contest during August and September."

Davis said that the contest theme was "Protect Personal Information." "The posters," she emphasized, "had to focus on that theme and suggest specific preventive measures to protect Personally Identifiable Information Departmentwide."

OCIO ran the poster contest and 7 USDA employees served as judges. Davis said the contest received 91 entries from USDA headquarters and field locations. The judges met in October and ultimately selected First Place, Second Place, and Third Place winners plus 10 Honorable Mention Winners—and a Grand Prize Winner: the Nebraska Rural Development PII Committee Team.

Brenda Darnell, one of four Area Directors for Rural Development in Nebraska, who is based in Scottsbluff, NE, explained that the state-level RD PII team had been meeting to develop such PII-related recommendations as care of office laptop computers and BlackBerries while on official travel.

"And then we heard about the poster contest, so we started brainstorming about that," added RD Management Control Officer **Melba Davison**. "We wanted an entry with an agricultural theme," noted RD State Administrative Officer **Karen Jones**. "Some strong contenders included 'Pitch In!' and 'Don't Let Your PII Fly the Coop'," said RD Area Specialist **Cheryl Larson**. "But in the end," affirmed RD Area Technician **Debbie Tiedtke**, "'Beef It Up!' was our choice."

Heard noted that the winning posters are currently viewable at **www.ocionet.usda.gov/ocio/security/pii_poster_contest.html.** The Grand Prize Winner is to be on display at USDA headquarters sites through May 2009. "As we say in this business, 'PII: Protect It Like Your Own'," she underscored.

No Gasoline Today, Thanks:

Maybe you've seen a silver Chevy Equinox—with the words "Fuel Cell" painted on both sides, and magnetic USDA logos attached to its doors—parked around USDA office facilities in Washington, DC lately. That van is there because USDA was selected to participate in a test to decrease dependence on petroleum, reduce emissions, and promote a cleaner environment.

"I can't even hear it from inside—so is the engine really purring?" quips OO's ***Ed Murtagh*** *(seated, center), as he, OO's* ***Ed Hogberg*** *(left), and OCFO Executive Assistant* ***Carole Hawkins*** *check out firsthand the 'Chevrolet Equinox Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle' that is being leased to USDA as part of "Project Driveway."—**Photo by Renee Allen***

According to **Ed Murtagh**, the Acting Deputy Chief of the Washington Area Service Center in the Office of Operations, USDA is one of four federal departments—including the U.S. Postal Service, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—participating in a six-month test of a motor vehicle that doesn't need gasoline because it is powered by a fuel cell, and that emits water vapor instead of polluting chemicals and other greenhouse gases. The fuel cell converts hydrogen gas into electricity and water vapor.

"The test is called 'Project Driveway'," he explained. "General Motors wanted to place 100 fuel cell vehicles with real drivers for real, mainstream use in Washington, DC, New York City, and California, in order to market-test fuel cell vehicles."

"I'd been talking with contacts at DOE about the possible use of fuel cells to provide energy to federal buildings," added **Ed Hogberg**, the Energy and Environmental Manager in OO. "And they mentioned 'Project Driveway' to me. So then we both thought: why not include USDA in that test?"

Accordingly, USDA was selected by General Motors and the Department of Energy to test a 'fuel cell propulsion' Chevrolet Equinox Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle. So, USDA is testing an electric vehicle powered by hydrogen gas, not by gasoline or any other petrochemical fuel. The arrangement is under a six-month lease agreement paid for by a grant from DOE.

"What that means," Hogberg clarified, "is that, from November through next April, our USDA executive drivers are using the vehicle assigned to USDA for official business trips around DC. Then the drivers and I are filling out monthly critique sheets, about our experience with the vehicle, which we forward to DOE and General Motors."

John Clayton, the Supervisor of USDA's executive drivers, noted that participating employees had to get trained on how to properly fuel the car. "There's a Shell gas station about four miles from USDA's Whitten Building here in DC," he said. "It includes an island that is a hydrogen fueling station—and that's the closest one to us."

"I think," Murtagh then underscored, "that we at USDA are honored to be a part of this historic experiment." ■

—Ron Hall

Employees *make these things happen*

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Seasonal Tree From Forest Service Once Again Graces U.S. Capitol

For the second time Montana has provided this year's Capitol Christmas Tree—which is now lit and ready for viewing on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol, facing toward the Washington Monument in Washington, DC.

This year's tree, which came from the Bitterroot National Forest based in Hamilton, MT, is a 144-year-old, 4,600-lb., subalpine fir. "The tree we brought from Montana was 78 feet long," noted **Nan Christianson**, the Forest Service's Public Affairs Officer for the Bitterroot National Forest. "Now, after several feet of trimming, it's set up with five feet in the ground." Once those lower five feet of the tree go into the ground, cement is then used to reinforce the tree and keep it erect. Guy wires are also used on the tree to secure it.

The Capitol Christmas Tree is provided each year by one of the nation's 155 national forests. Montana earlier provided the Capitol Christmas Tree in 1989—from the Kootenai National Forest.

This is the 37th Capitol Christmas Tree that has been provided to Congress by the Forest Service from a National Forest, according to **Beverly Carroll**, a Forest Service Program Analyst and National Coordinator for the Capitol Christmas Tree. "They are provided with the support of state agencies and officials and local communities for use as the Capitol Tree," she said.

This particular tree was initially discovered by **Chuck Oliver**, the District Ranger at FS's Darby Ranger Station on the Bitterroot NF, and **Ed Hayes**, [then] a Presale Forester on the Darby Ranger Station. "We attempted to get the public involved in the search for the 'perfect tree'," Oliver recounted. "We would provide those interested with one of the 150 'Biltmore sticks' that we'd made. That's a wooden device that you use to measure the height of a tree. We needed the 'perfect tree' to be a 'single-top' tree—in other words, no additional or wayward growth at the top point of the tree—and be 60 to 80 feet tall."

Christianson noted that November 1 was the day the tree was harvested—by a team of FS personnel and logging industry representatives—"all under the watchful eye of over 600 citizens," she quipped.

"Our local citizens saw a different side of the Forest Service on the day of the cutting," added FS Recreation Manager **Joe Butsick**. "Normally we're focusing on national forest issues—which the typical citizen may or may not be intensely interested in. But on November 1 we focused on a community project that specifically honored Montana—and that provided a great gift to the nation."

FS Firefighter **Rene Eustace** said that, early on in the planning for the Capitol Christmas Tree project, "we applied the principles of the Forest Service's Incident Command System." "Normally we apply ICS to natural disasters such as fighting fires and hurricane recovery," added FS Assistant Engine Foreman **Brett Malingo**. "But the management, planning, logistical, operational, finance, safety, and informational components of ICS all served us well here."

The Capitol Christmas Tree arrived in Washington, DC on November 24. Program Assistant **Paula Wofford** noted that this year's tree is decorated with over 3,000 handmade ornaments, mostly from 4-H clubs, school children, and artists throughout Montana. The Montana National Guard provided 42 round, black, glass ornaments, each representing one of the 42 military service members from Montana, by name, who had been killed in Iraq or Afghanistan. "We purposely placed those particular ornaments on the bottom of the tree, to make them more visible," she pointed out. "Then we plan to retrieve them, once the tree is taken down, and send each ornament to the appropriate 'surviving loved one'."

FS Lands Program Manager **Roylene Gaul** added that this year *all* the 10,000 lights on the tree are 'Light-Emitting Diode' or LED lights, which save electricity.

Carroll said that the Capitol Christmas Tree—also called the "People's Tree"—is not to be confused with the National Christmas Tree, which grows on the Ellipse behind the White House.

The 2008 Capitol Christmas Tree was formally lit on December 2. Christianson noted that because of Presidential Inauguration activities, the tree will be lit each evening only through December 29, instead of normally into the new year. ■

—*Ron Hall*

*As it travels on a trailer from Hamilton, MT to Washington, DC, the 2008 Capitol Christmas Tree needs refreshing every two days with about 45 gallons of water. So one of **Santa's** elves—a k a Forest Service Firefighter **Rene Eustace**—employs a hose to accomplish that task during a 'Christmas tree pit stop' in Miles City, MT. —Photo by Brett Malingo*

FOOD SAFETY

FSIS Reaches Out To Deaf Consumers About Issues Involving Food Safety

The Food Safety and Inspection Service recently developed a series of food safety-oriented video-casts that were translated into American Sign Language. The purpose was to help ensure that consumers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are being informed about foodborne illness, plus raise the level of awareness about the dangers associated with improper handling and undercooking of food.

They're called "*SignFSIS* video-casts"—and here's how the idea came to fruition.

"Often the most common forms of communication require hearing or are written in a language that might not be native to all readers," advised **Bridgette Keefe**, a Public Affairs Specialist in FSIS and one of the creators of *SignFSIS*. "When it comes to dis-

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

Wayne Maresch is the Deputy Chief for Soil Survey and Resource Assessment in the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

From December 2001 until his selection for this position Maresch served as the Director of NRCS's Resources Inventory & Assessment Division, where he focused on the agency's National Resources Inventory Program, its Conservation Effects Assessment Project, and its geospatial sciences and services activities. He was the agency's State Conservationist for New York, based in Syracuse, from 2000-01, after having been the State Conservationist for New Jersey, based in Somerset, from 1995-2000.

Maresch served as NRCS's Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources in Ohio, based in Columbus, from 1992-95, after having served as the Area Conservationist for Southwest Ohio, based in Dayton, from 1989-92. He worked as a Resource Conservationist for the [then] Soil Conservation Service in Richmond, VA from 1987-89. He began his career with the agency as a Mapping Soil Scientist in Franklin, WV in 1977.

Bill Puckett, the previous Deputy Chief for Soil Survey and Resource Assessment for NRCS, is now the agency's Deputy Chief for Science and Technology. ■

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seminating food safety information, consumers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing generally are not afforded the same access and protection as those who have their full range of hearing."

She noted that American Sign Language constitutes the fourth most commonly used language in the U.S.—behind English, Spanish, and French. "So I saw this as an opportunity for FSIS to provide food safety outreach to a historically underserved population."

She explained that *SignFSIS* video-casts feature qualified signers on contract—all of whom, to date, have been graduates of Gallaudet University in Washington DC—who translate written food safety scripts into American Sign Language. The signing is accompanied by text captions and covers a variety of food safety topics, ranging from foodborne illness to how to safely handle meat and poultry products.

But isn't the use of text captions sufficient in the food safety videos? Why the additional need for signing?

"Often consumers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can't read text captions fast enough when those captions are changing quickly," Keefe replied. "Plus, sometimes the captions are incorrect. In fact, we often see this on TV shows, especially news shows, when the dialogue is rapidly being translated into captions right on the spot—and the viewer can easily notice errors and misunderstandings in the translated captions. Finally, sometimes captions don't appear at all."

"This topic of food safety is important enough," she added, "that it's worth the effort to ensure our message is communicated accurately—through the captions and through signing."

Keefe recounted that the idea for *SignFSIS* sprang from her everyday life and friends, many of whom are deaf or hard-of-hearing. "They would ask about my work," she said. "And, when I would talk about foodborne pathogens or food recalls of possibly contaminated meat or poultry products, they were often surprised, because they didn't have much exposure to food safety information or they may have heard about the recalls weeks after they had been initially publicized. That's because many forms of communication require hearing—such as with Podcasts, public service announcements, and information provided through radio or TV programs."

So, Keefe researched outreach services and resources provided by other federal departments. "It was apparent to me," she concluded, "that most of them offer only written materials when catering to consumers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing."

And, while acknowledging that written materials are most often effective, she said she wanted to take the next step in food safety education and look to video-casting. "To my understanding," she stated, "it's an effort that had never been done before at USDA."

So Keefe pitched the idea to **Amanda Eamich**, FSIS's Senior Press Officer. Eamich endorsed the idea, noting that "It's critical that we continually adapt to the changing environment of information sharing in today's digital age."

Keefe then conferred with **Susan Gentilo**, a Television Production Specialist in USDA's Broadcast Media and Technology Center, run by the Office of Communications. "Bridgette and I discussed opportunities for FSIS to use our fully-equipped production studio to film the video-casts," Gentilo recalled. "I've been doing the editing on all the video-casts."

The next piece of the puzzle was to predict the impact that this project would have on consumers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. "After all," Keefe advised, "let's face it: it would be an ineffective use of the information if no one were to use our video-casts." But, she said, feedback from trial tests and focus groups viewings of the video-casts showed that video-casts were useful and even necessary in getting the food safety message out to the target audience of *SignFSIS*.

The final step was that the developers of *SignFSIS* sought—and received—buy-in from senior management at FSIS. "My anxiety quickly disappeared," Keefe quipped.

Robert Tynan, Deputy Assistant Administrator of FSIS's Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education, noted that, since this project was launched in July 2008, USDA has created 10 video-casts: "Food Safety During a Power Outage," "Be Food Safe," "*E. coli 0157:H7*," "Storing Food," "Cooking for Groups," "Is It Done Yet?" "Tailgating Food Safety," "Food Safety Tips for College Students," "Mail Order And Food Safety," and "Let's Talk Turkey." The video-casts, which are generally three to seven minutes in length, are available at **www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/SignFSIS/index.asp.**

"Creating '*SignFSIS*'," Keefe affirmed, "provided me with the opportunity to give back to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community." ■

—*Michael Califa*

With a freeze-frame image from the video-cast in the background, FSIS's ***Bridgette Keefe*** *(right) and OC's* ***Susan Gentilo*** *(center) confer, with the assistance of interpreter* ***Vivion Smith*** *(left), about the text for another "*SignFSIS *video-cast" on food safety issues.—Photo by Ron Hall*

Editor's Roundup…continued from pg. 5

Maurice House is the Deputy Administrator for the Office of Global Analysis in the Foreign Agricultural Service.

From 2003 until his selection for this position House served as FAS's Minister Counselor for Agricultural Affairs in China, based in Beijing. He was the Agricultural Counselor for FAS in Thailand, based in Bangkok, from 1998-2002, after having served as the Agricultural Counselor for FAS in Pakistan, based in Islamabad, from 1995-98, and the Agricultural Counselor for FAS in Nigeria, based in Lagos, from 1992-95.

House served as FAS's Area Manager for Export Credits, Asia Middle East Region at the agency's headquarters office in Washington, DC from 1990-92. He was FAS's Deputy Trade Officer for Algeria, based in Algiers, from 1986-89. He began his career with FAS as an Agricultural Economist in the agency's Grain

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PROFILE PLUS *More About: Laura Griffin*

We all no doubt get a kick out of reading those lists that publicize what's suddenly been declared as *Out* and what's hereby been designated as *In*. So you can add the following to your latest list:

OUT: Food Stamps *IN*: SNAP

Laura Griffin quipped that she's not the keeper of the country's 'Master Lists.' But she *is* the USDA employee who coordinated the change on behalf of her agency to reflect this particular 'In and Out.'

For the past year Griffin has served as the Special Assistant to the Associate Administrator for what is now called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the Food and Nutrition Service. She explained that the 2008 farm bill changed the name of the FNS-administered Food Stamp Program to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, effective Oct. 1, 2008.

"Actually, we'd been thinking about changing the name since back in 2004," she recounted. As part of its suggestions concerning a new farm bill, USDA had recommended the name "Food and Nutrition Program"—but Congress opted to change it to SNAP. "And we, of course, embraced that right away!" she quipped.

But why the need for a change? Griffin advised that, while participation in the Food Stamp Program had been increasing—with over 31.5 million participants nationwide as of Sept. 30, 2008—it continued to face a stigma attached to the whole concept and image of "paper food stamps." "The standard method of issuance in the program, across the board, hasn't been paper food stamps since June 2004, when the last state—California—finally made the switch," she pointed out, adding that nearly all participants in the program now use Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) plastic cards to purchase food at participating retail stores. "Plus," she emphasized, "we're really stressing nutrition education in the program these days, so we wanted a name that reflected that." Finally, she clarified that the 50 states plus Washington, DC, Guam, and the Virgin Islands all administer their own individual food stamp program under FNS's oversight—and many states had already changed the name of their own state-level program.

Griffin said that in June 2008 she was assigned the project of implementing the name change across USDA. And, she underscored, since this name change affected more parts of FNS than merely its Food Stamp Program, she made sure she included representation on her team from FNS's policy specialists, other agency-level nutrition assistance programs, website coordinators, the agency's retailer specialists, public affairs, outreach, and civil rights.

Her team met each week from June through September. Among the tactics the team employed to not only make the name change but to promote its rationale to FNS employees and other interested parties, it (1) created a Staff Resource Center on the agency's IntrAnet site, (2) it held a 'Webinar'—a live meeting for outside groups combining a conference call with internet participation—and (3) it developed a new logo for the program.

Griffin clarified that the 2008 farm bill required the change of the name of the program at USDA—but it did *not* require states to adopt that name change. "So," she advised, "we had to be sensitive to this issue when working with the states—especially in those geographic areas that are *not* saying 'SNAP'—in order to avoid confusion among program participants."

Then on October 1—the official first day of the name change—the team held a celebration at the agency's headquarters in Alexandria, VA. "We had over 250 USDA employees participating," Griffin recalled. "We had tables of food that had 'snap' associated with them—such as snap peas, ginger snaps, Snapple, and Rice Krispies—and we held a crossword puzzle contest which reflected various snap-oriented items or activities. The contest winner got a bouquet of snapdragons."

Griffin quipped that she did enjoy eating a lot of Rice Krispies while growing up in Cheshire, CT. She received a B.S. degree in public health from the U. of North Carolina and a Masters degree in health sciences from Johns Hopkins University. As part of that masters program she did a field placement at the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. She then ultimately became a full-time public health analyst at HHS until joining FNS in 2003 as a program analyst and outreach coordinator in its Food Stamp Program.

One final issue about the name change: since the official name change on October 1, many news accounts about the program still make references to "food stamps." "Yeah," she acknowledged, "it's been a challenge to get references in the news media to be correct. So we're thinking about reaching out to copy editors—not just to news reporters—to encourage *them* to use the new name."

Last Book Read: "I have a 7-year-old daughter named **Brooke**, so my last book was '*Found*'—by **Margaret Peterson Haddix**—about time travel."

Last Movie Seen: "'*High School Musical III*'—my 7-year-old daughter, again!"

Hobbies: "I'm learning French because my daughter is in a French immersion program in her public elementary school in Herndon, Virginia."

Something I Don't Want People To Know About Me: "I don't like veggies—which isn't something that you want known when you work in FNS. So let's keep that secret, OK?"

Priorities In The Months Ahead: "Our 'name change' priorities include completing the necessary updates throughout our FNS website, and continuing to work with undecided states to encourage them to make the name change to 'SNAP'." ■

—*Ron Hall*

Editor's Roundup…continued from pg. 6

and Feed Division in Washington, DC in 1984.

Asif Chaudhry, the previous Deputy Administrator for the Office of Global Analysis in FAS, is now serving as the U.S. Ambassador to Moldova, based in Chisinau. ■

Deborah Sheely is the Deputy Administrator for Competitive Programs in the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

From March 2008 until her selection for this position Sheely served as the Interim Deputy Administrator for Competitive Programs in CSREES. She was the Director of Integrated Programs within CSREES's Competitive Programs Unit from 2002-08.

Sheely served as a Program Director, responsible for the administration of several competitive grant programs in plant science for CSREES, from 2000-02. From 1997-99 she worked as an Assistant Program Director for CSREES's Plants Division. Before joining USDA in 1997 she worked from 1995-97 with the U.S. Agency for International Development as a Science and Technology Policy Fellow through the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She held administrative positions in finance and executive recruiting in New York City from 1983-88.

Anna Palmisano, the previous Deputy Administrator for Competitive Programs in CSREES, is now the Associate Director of the Office of Science for the Office of Biological and Environmental Research at the U.S. Department of Energy. ■

Tom Millet is the Associate General Counsel for Natural Resources and the Environment in the Office of the General Counsel.

From 2004 until his selection for this position Millet served as OGC's Assistant General Counsel for the Natural Resources Division. In that position he concentrated on environmental and natural resources law as well as related statutes and rules, all as they pertained to the Forest Service.

Millet was Assistant Director of the Federal Programs Branch in the Civil Division of the U.S. Department of Justice from 1990-2004. He served as a Senior Trial Counsel in DOJ's Federal Programs Branch from 1985-90, after having worked as a Trial Attorney in that Branch from 1979-85.

Jan Poling, the previous Associate General Counsel for [then] Natural Resources in OGC, is now the General Counsel for the American Forest and Paper Association, based in Washington, DC. ■

Mary Wagner is the Regional Forester for the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Region, based in Portland, OR.

From May 2005 until her selection for this position Wagner served as the Deputy Regional Forester for FS's Intermountain Region, based in Ogden, UT. From 2004-05 she served as FS's first National Director of Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers, based at the agency's headquarters office in Washington, DC. She was an Assistant Director of the agency's [then] Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Staff from 2003-04.

Wagner was the Forest Supervisor on the Dixie National Forest, based in Cedar City, UT, from 1999-2003. From 1998-99 she was the Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Humbboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, based in Sparks, NV. She was based in Carson City, NV as a District Ranger on the Humbboldt-Toiyabe NF from 1995-98, after having been based in Vernal, UT as a District Ranger on the Ashley National Forest from 1989-95. She began her full-time FS career as a Forester on the Fairfield Ranger District in Fairfield, ID in 1983.

Linda Goodman, the previous Regional Forester for FS's Pacific Northwest Region, retired from that position following nearly 34 years of federal service, all with the Forest Service. ■

*"Shouldn't there be a PII brand on this bovine?" quips RD Business Program Director **Karissa Berks** (center), as she scrutinizes the Grand Prize Winning poster, concerning PII Awareness, with RD Area Technician, **Angie Drudik** (left) and RD Program Specialist **Teresa Brohimer**. They are members of the 8-person Nebraska Rural Development PII Committee Team which created the poster. Note the story on page 3. —**Photo by Vicki Schurman***

SNAP Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Putting Healthy Food Within Reach

Logo for what is now called FNS's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Note the story on page 6.

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Brett Malingo**, a Forest Service Assistant Engine Foreman on the Bitterroot National Forest in Montana, is anchoring a 144-year-old, 4,600-lb. subalpine fir with a yellow nylon binding strap, in order to secure the tree to the trailer on which it rests. It's one of the final steps before the tree begins a 4,700-mile trek from Hamilton, MT to Washington, DC. That's where it will be displayed on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol, where it will serve as the Capitol Christmas Tree for 2008. Note the story on page 4.—**Photo by Joe Butsick

Help us find

Adam Russell Orth

Missing: **9-9-2008** From: **Duluth, MN**
D.O.B.: **3-21-1994** Sex: **Male**
Hair: **Lt. Brown** Eyes: **Green**
Height: **5 ft. 11 in.** Weight: **155 lbs.**

If you have information, please call
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National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

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- **Month of February 2009**
  Black History Month
  USDA headquarters and field offices
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