

# eGov@USDA - eLearning

A monthly update from the **USDA eGovernment - eLearning Team**

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### AgLearn Increasing User Base

AgLearn, USDA's enterprise-wide Learning Management System (LMS) which first went live in March 2004, will have its second release on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004. AgLearn is working with USDA's eAuthentication service to increase the number of registered USDA employee users in five Agencies that participated in the first release: the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), the Forest Service (FS), and the Risk Management Agency (RMA).

Discussing AgLearn's initial release on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, Secretary Ann Veneman stated, "USDA is committed to unleashing the fuller potential of information technology for our employees and customers. The launch of AgLearn is another important deliverable in President Bush's initiative to expand electronic government to simplify and unify government-wide operations and leverage investments to eliminate unnecessary duplication."

The initial AgLearn rollout involved registered users from 12 USDA agencies. These users have access to free online courses available on a government-wide basis through the President's GoLearn Initiative as well as any of the extensive libraries of courseware available for purchase through GoLearn.

USDA Chief Information Officer Scott Charbo said, "AgLearn provides a common infrastructure for deploying and tracking USDA-specific courseware for use by employees, partners, and customers." Charbo also noted that, "USDA's Office of Homeland Security has already made plans to deploy two courses on this common infrastructure, and USDA's annual civil rights training will be available on AgLearn."

### AgLearn User Applications

AgLearn currently provides student users the ability to:

- Search and access free GoLearn online courses;
- Search and access additional Agency purchased GoLearn online courses;
- Register and enroll in USDA instructor-led training;
- Search and access USDA online courses or reference material such as Civil Rights annual training; and
- View and run reports summarizing your own learning activities.

USDA training staff has access to the following features:

- Create other Administrator Users within the Agency Domain;
- Ensure user data such as passwords and personnel data are current;
- Assign training to users through their Development Plans;

- Require training be completed by a certain time;
- Create courses and certification requirements;
- Add agency custom courseware;
- Create online surveys/exams using AgLearn tools; and
- View and run reports summarizing students' learning needs and activities.

Future phases of AgLearn will allow users to create and manage additional functions for competencies, skill assessments, and certification programs. AgLearn is currently available to USDA employees, but later phases will allow other Federal employees as well as State and Local employees such as Wild Land Fire Fighters to use AgLearn. Contractors and business partners, such as nutritionists, farmers, and Rural Housing Loan Officers, will be given access in future releases also.

### Agency Benefits

The enterprise-wide LMS provides USDA Agencies with new training services that help reduce training-related costs:

- Every USDA employee will have access to increased career development opportunities through the free and "for a fee" courses being provided through the enterprise LMS;
- "For a fee" courses are available at reduced prices;
- 24x7 access to online training and reference materials;
- An enterprise infrastructure for deployment of customized, Agency-specific courses will be available to employees, partners, and customers;
- Agencies are provided the ability to track employee training records and costs;
- Training effectiveness is improved, resulting in a better-educated and more knowledgeable workforce;
- Employees are enabled to take full control of their career development (e.g., online transcripts and IDPs); and
- Travel costs are reduced.

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, AgLearn will launch its second release, increasing the service's availability to a larger employee user group. In the second release, employees will use their USDA eAuthentication service userID and password to access AgLearn.

For additional information on AgLearn contact Cynthia Bezz, USDA eLearning Project Manager at (202) 694-0004 or [cynthia.bezz@usda.gov](mailto:cynthia.bezz@usda.gov). More information about Ag Learn can be found at <http://aglearn.usda.gov>.

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