



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JUN 1 2004

The Honorable Clay Johnson
Deputy Director for Management
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Johnson:

The following information responds to your request for quarterly reports on the efforts of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support the President's eGovernment Initiatives. This report covers the period from January 1, 2004 through March 31, 2004. Included is an enclosure outlining our commitment to the Presidential Initiatives (PIs) and highlighting our work by Initiative during the second quarter of FY 2004.

Over the past quarter, USDA continued to take the steps necessary to ensure the Department is meeting all of the various PI requirements and action items established in our FY 2005 Passback and the Migration Plan that was presented to the Chief Information Officers Council last August. Major actions include the following:

- USDA continued to update and implement detailed project plans that delineate the Department's responsibilities and actions for each PI. Each project plan now includes specific USDA Agency action items required to achieve project plan goals and milestones. We will share these action items with USDA Agency Heads and track their progress in addressing each of the tasks necessary to support the initiatives, including a quarterly assessment of each USDA Agency's participation.
- We completed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Managing Partners for all initiatives (except SAFECOM and IAS, which were delayed getting to USDA) where such a requirement was included in the FY 2005 Passback. USDA required that all MOUs incorporate a project plan that defines specific USDA deliverables in FY 2004. In addition to what was required in the Passback, USDA established an MOU with the Department of Commerce (DOC) to formalize their commitment to International Trade Process Streamlining.
- The USDA Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Associate CIO for eGovernment held the first round of quarterly one-on-one meetings with each of the USDA PI Leads. These meetings are meant to ensure that the project remains on track and to identify any areas where the CIO or Associate CIO for eGovernment might provide assistance to help the Leads meet the goals and milestones in their project plans. In addition to quarterly one-on-one meetings, the eGovernment Program Office initiated monthly meetings with each USDA PI lead to discuss current project status

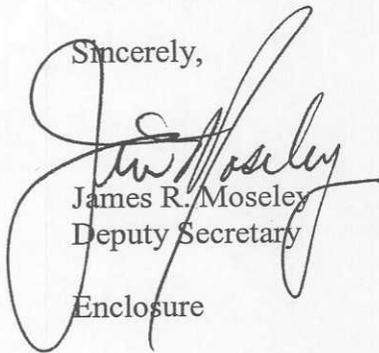
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and review the key documentation. These meetings are meant to ensure that the project remains on track and to identify any areas where the eGovernment team might provide assistance to help the Leads meet the goals and milestones in their project plans.

In closing, it is our goal to be "green" by July 2004, and to have contributed significantly to the successful implementation of all 21 of the 25 Presidential Initiatives in which USDA participates, as well as the Federal Health Architecture effort. Further, we expect to realize hard cost savings and improve customer and employee satisfaction as set forth in the "Where We Would Be Proud to Be" memorandum.

Our staff is available to discuss this information at your convenience. Please do not hesitate to contact Chris Niedermayer, Associate Chief Information Officer for eGovernment, at (202) 690-2118 or by e-mail at chrisn@usda.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jim Moseley". The signature is written over the typed name and title.

James R. Moseley
Deputy Secretary

Enclosure

Enclosure I
USDA Highlights by Initiative
FY 2004, 2nd Quarter

Highlighted below is our work by Initiative over the last quarter.

Business Gateway

USDA participated in the Business Gateway's effort to expand the Small Business Administration's Federal eForms Catalog, by completing USDA's initial upload of all GPEA-compliant forms as required by the Passback. Additionally, we continue to perform overall data quality checks of all USDA online services. USDA and other departments/agencies requested that the Business Gateway Governance Board nominate individuals to participate in a Working Group for the Business Gateway Portal.

Disaster Management

USDA assisted the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's (NWCG) review of the technical capabilities of the Disaster Management Initiative to ensure it can meet the group's requirements to communicate in an emergency and for conducting business activities. The Department is also assisting with a more formal relationship between the NWCG and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, including increased coordination between USDA and the Department of the Interior (DOI). USDA is also helping broker discussions with DHS and agencies within USDA to launch a food safety channel on the site.

eAuthentication

During the second quarter of FY 2004, USDA launched Release 2 of its eAuthentication service. Release 2 aims to improve the user experience by providing better user navigation, increasing the user help guidance and modifying the pages to use the new USDA Web Style Guide.

USDA also created a detailed enterprise architecture for the eGovernment eAuthentication initiative. Integrated into the USDA enterprise architecture, it represents the technical, logical, and physical architecture along with process flows documenting all of the high level processes for the authentication program at USDA for assurance levels 1, 2, and 3.

Further, USDA continued to show its leadership across the Federal Government in this area. Over the past quarter, the General Services Administration (GSA) completed a review of USDA's eAuthentication Service resulting in approval of the service for

government-wide use. USDA's Associate CIO for eGovernment was elected to chair the eAuthentication Executive Steering Committee.

eClearance

On February 27, 2004, USDA successfully uploaded all agency security clearances electronically via Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) secure portal, as part of the Clearance Verification System (CVS). This system will ultimately allow authorized users within other U.S. Government security offices to access an individual's security clearance history in a significantly reduced period of time. CVS is considered an integral part of the eClearance initiative. As part of the electronic Questionnaire for Investigative Process (eQIP) implementation, USDA is purchasing scanners for eQIP implementation phase 1, which involves three USDA agencies, as well as identifying agencies for phase 2, which will begin implementation in the third quarter.

eLoans

USDA continues to provide staff time and other resources to support the establishment of a single point of access for Federal loan program information on the Web. Over the past quarter, the Department successfully tested the Secure File Transfer between USDA's guaranteed loan accounting system and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) delinquent borrower database. USDA modified its system to permit lender access to the HUD database.

The Department also continues to actively participate in the development of templates to determine whether Pay.gov (an automated system for making Federal payments) should be adopted. USDA is also working with the SBA to implement a pilot program to evaluate the potential for standardizing lender reporting.

Enterprise HR Integration

USDA is continuing to work closely with the managing partner, OPM, despite the funding issues surrounding the Enterprise HR Integration (EHRI) initiative. Due to the lack of funding, OPM is currently re-working the EHRI business plan. Based on USDA's continued participation in EHRI working groups, the Department is identifying next steps based on expectations of what will be included in the new business plan. USDA is scheduling a briefing with OPM to further clarify all planned goals and expectations and expects to receive a new EHRI MOU during April 2004.

ePayroll

USDA's National Finance Center (NFC) continues to migrate several federal agencies under the ePayroll initiative. Testing is being conducted on the conversion programs for the Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS) for a scheduled implementation in June 2004. We are on target for an August 2004 implementation of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the Federal Protective Service (FPS), the Department of Labor

(DOL), and the United States Coast Guard (USCG). We expect to implement the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 2005. TSA, FPS, and USCG were not added to NFC's migration list until December 2003.

eRecords Management

USDA is currently conducting an inventory of all its official records. This inventory will ensure that USDA's Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO) has a full and accurate account of all records maintained by the Department. Also, USDA is managing a Web site with file plan and records retention instructions for the Office of the Secretary. The site provides a tool for identifying gaps in file series, disposition authorities, and will serve as the basis for preprogramming records management software.

eTraining

In March, USDA launched *Agriculture Learning* (AgLearn) an enterprise-wide learning management service to provide one-stop services for delivering, scheduling and managing learning events nationwide for USDA employees. Approximately 7,000 employees from 12 USDA agencies are included in the initial release. USDA employees will have access to the 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. USDA had previously partnered with GoLearn.gov to evaluate and select its Learning Management System (LMS) and continues to work closely with OPM as it implements this initiative across the Department.

In addition, USDA's OCIO and Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) developed an internal MOU across all USDA agencies, which defines standard procedures for the purchase of online courseware and reaffirms use of the new LMS.

eTravel

During the second quarter of FY 2004, USDA formed an eTravel Evaluation Team comprised of representatives from each USDA mission area. With the team in place, USDA hosted market research demonstrations, where each of the three eTravel vendors presented demonstrations of their respective applications. During these demonstrations, members of the Evaluation Team had the opportunity to review the applications and ask specific questions of the vendors on the functionality, capabilities, and cost of their applications. The eTravel Evaluation Team developed strategy for and components of the eTravel evaluation and acquisition process. The team also identified USDA specific requirements to be documented in the Statement of Work (SOW). A draft SOW was developed along with the Evaluation Criteria and Cost Estimate to be included as part of the overall Request for Proposal (RFP) to be submitted to the three eTravel vendors during the third quarter of FY 2004.

Federal Asset Sales

USDA continues to provide a full-time staff member to both support GSA's staff and to ensure that USDA's needs and viewpoint are met during the vendor selection process. Submission of vendors' final offers, proposal review, and final discussion with the vendors was completed in March 2004. The Source Selection Evaluation Board has now turned over their final recommendations to the Source Selection Authority Committee, who will make the final selection and award shortly.

USDA provided personal property experts from several agencies during the Utilization and Donation Asset Study for Personal Property, which was completed in January 2004. A presentation briefing will be given to the Interagency Committee on Property Management on April 29th, followed by a briefing to the OMB before final release.

Geospatial One-Stop

The Geospatial One-Stop site, geodata.gov, is organized into topical data channels, and USDA personnel continued to participate in efforts to establish data stewards for each topical data channel on the site. Specifically, USDA is leading the development of the Agriculture and Farming Channel. Currently, customers who visit this channel are redirected to the USDA Service Center Agencies Geospatial Data Gateway. The group of data stewards is revisiting the overall organization of the geodata.gov site.

GovBenefits.gov

USDA continues to actively support the GovBenefits Initiative. Most recently, USDA volunteered to help lead the Citizen Benefits Data Exchange Standards (CB-DES) activities. This effort seeks to provide a consistent, extensible, maintainable, XML schema reference specification for data elements and types. In addition, USDA worked closely with GovBenefits.gov to direct potential food stamp and nutrition program participants to the Food Stamp pre-screening tool over the past quarter.

Grants.gov

USDA became the first Federal department to begin implementation of system-to-system exchanges with Grants.gov through USDA's Grants Interface Module (GIM). GIM is a common back-end system that interfaces with Grants.gov to receive proposals, acknowledge their receipt, route them to the appropriate USDA agency, perform initial screening to determine whether proposals satisfy program requirements (eligibility, amount requested, etc.), and allow retrieval by the appropriate USDA agencies. Subsequent GIM phases will include automated pre-screening capabilities, query functions, system-to-system interfaces to existing agency grants management systems, and predetermined routing algorithms specific to each program.

In addition to highlighting USDA's continued leadership on this initiative, the Grants.gov Program Management Office (PMO) has asked USDA to provide feedback on the

Grants.gov system and processes. Over the past quarter, USDA has shared “lessons learned” with the National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Labor (DOL) and Department of Education (DoED).

As of March 10, 2004, USDA has posted 98 opportunities on the Grants.gov APPLY site and had 42 active funding opportunity synopsis posted on Grants.gov FIND. USDA remains committed to listing all eligible programs in accordance with OMB’s policy directive.

Finally, USDA chartered a working group that is responsible for guiding the department’s efforts regarding the Grants.gov Initiative and P.L. 106 & 107. The Department, through this working group, provides outreach to agency leaders on grants related matters. A series of information workshops are being organized to inform USDA staff about the benefits of this initiative and the impact on their customers. USDA conducted train-the-trainer classes for agency program officers and grant administrators. Additional training will be provided as needed.

Integrated Acquisition Environment

During this quarter, USDA expanded and strengthened its support of the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) Initiative. The Department supported and attended weekly planning meetings and working committees for IAE projects. USDA’s accomplishments, goals, and expectations for these projects include:

- **eMarketplace** – Over the past quarter, USDA conducted an initial planning meeting with the Sourcing Subcommittee leads and worked to finalize the charter and milestones for FY 2004.
- **Business Partner Network (BPN)/Central Contractor Registry (CCR)** – USDA trained staff on the automated program for matching vendor records in USDA’s Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS) and CCR. Also, USDA revised the instructions around maintenance requests to require agencies to indicate which vendors should be registered in CCR.
- **Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)-NG** – USDA worked closely with the Procurement Policy Division to develop a memorandum to shut down the legacy FPDS system. USDA assisted GSA in establishing ID and Passwords for FPDS-NG System users. USDA is actively participating in the FPDS-NG End User Forum which convenes quarterly.
- **Intra-Governmental Transactions Portal (IGTP)** – USDA contributed to planning for IGTP version testing.
- **Standard eTransactions** - USDA developed a project plan for the Standard eTransactions initiative. Additionally, we provided support and feedback for the IAE working group for Standard eTransactions as well as reported status to the USDA Procurement Council.

International Trade Process Streamlining

Early in January, the USDA met with Department of Commerce program and technical representatives to develop a schedule and process for continued implementation of this initiative. Following that meeting, the USDA technology team developed and tested a mechanism for extracting the content from the FAS "Buying U.S. Products" Web pages. FAS also created and tested an interface to USDA's eAuthentication service, created test scripts, and performed data and configuration management activities for a Pilot with Exporters and US Banks. On March 31, the FAS "Buying U.S. Products" content became available on Export.gov, in accordance with the OMB requirement.

Online Rulemaking

USDA continues to show leadership in this initiative, with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) serving as one of the first Federal rulemaking agencies to participate in the Module 2 pilot—the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) eDockets system. In keeping with the requirements of the FY 2005 Passback, all of USDA's proposed rules published in the *Federal Register* now include the phrase mandated in the FY 2005 Passback that states comments may be provided on line via Regulations.gov.

Recreation One-Stop

USDA focused major efforts during the second quarter FY 2004 on preparing and managing the solicitation for the National Reservation Service and development of the interagency Recreation Information Database (RIDB) to support data sharing. The pre-solicitation phase for the National Reservation Service was completed this quarter and the formal solicitation began with a "request for proposal" being posted on fedbizops at the end of March. The architecture and requirements for the RIDB were completed this quarter and efforts are now focused on its development for an anticipated December 2004 deployment.

Recruitment One-Stop

USDA continues to work in partnership with OPM to ensure the objectives of Recruitment One-Stop are met, including migration to the USAJOBS search engine by June 2004 and the use of a standard résumé builder by October 2004. In addition, USDA volunteered to serve as a member of the new interagency work group that is responsible for developing requirements for the government-wide résumé template covering all information needed to make basic qualifications and eligibility determinations. USDA continues to work with the HR staffs and automated staffing vendors to ensure compliance with all Recruitment One-Stop objectives and deadlines.

SAFECOM

USDA continued to contribute to the SAFECOM initiative, including efforts to align with the Federal Law Enforcement Wireless Working Group (FLEWWG) and the Advanced Generation Interoperability for Law Enforcement group. USDA is establishing a radio-over-IP test bed to further the use of that technology to build interoperable gateways between systems.

USA Services

USDA received USA Services "Didn't Duck" award for outstanding participation in the activities of the Initiative this quarter. In addition, we prepared the back-end systems needed to partner with GSA in the 3rd Quarter for a pilot of misdirected telephone calls and email messages.

Federal Health Architecture

USDA provided information about health related business functions and processes for inclusion to the Federal Health Architecture (FHA), which is currently in the review process at Health and Human Services (HHS). USDA continues to provide subject matter experts who provide recommendations in all the FHA working group meetings. USDA will be actively involved in the upcoming Business Architecture Reference Model Revision and the development of the FHA Public Health Surveillance Vertical Slice.

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