



EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY

# MyUSDA

## A Progress Report for Employees on USDA's Cultural Transformation

Volume 2, Issue 9

July 2012

### USDA's Cultural Transformation Action Items

- LEADERSHIP
- RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
- TALENT MANAGEMENT
- EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT
- CUSTOMER FOCUS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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## A Message from Secretary Tom Vilsack

### THE 2 MILLION POUND CHALLENGE!

*(From the USDA Office of Communications)*

Secretary Tom Vilsack has issued a challenge to all USDA employees to "beat our best" and donate more than two million pounds of food to **Feds Feed Families** this year. That would top last summer's donation by USDA of 1.79 million pounds of perishable and non-perishable food.

This marks the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Feds Feed Families Food Drive, which is a voluntary effort undertaken by Federal employees around the country to collect and donate perishable and non-perishable goods to food pantries and banks in their communities.

Donations include fresh, healthy produce grown in People's Gardens across the country and collected from partnering with farmers and neighbors in local gleaning efforts.

In Washington, DC, the Capital Area Food Bank receives collections and distributes them through their network of over 700 partner agencies.

Outside of the Washington area, agencies are encouraged to support local providers in

their community. USDA field offices have already registered over 1400 food drives nationwide.

The food drive started in June 2009 to help fill food bank shelves during tough economic times. USDA estimates show that nearly 50 million Americans - including 16 million children - struggle to put food on the table at some point during the year.

While USDA nutrition assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and school feeding programs touch the lives of one in four Americans, food banks, pantries, community centers, and houses of worship provide extra help.

Many of these organizations report an increase in demand during the summer, when schools are out and children are at home with families.

In addition, summer traditionally brings a decrease in donations. USDA employees are helping to fill this gap through the Feds Feed Families Food Drive. Learn more at [www.fedsfeedfamilies.gov](http://www.fedsfeedfamilies.gov).



**"Across America - from our rural communities to our largest cities - we know there are families who are working hard but still need some help putting food on their plate. The **Feds Feed Families** food drive leverages the spirit of service that's shared by every Federal employee to help our food banks deliver assistance."**

**Thomas J. Vilsack**  
Secretary

You can contact the staff of My USDA via email at [MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov](mailto:MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov) and don't forget to visit the [USDA Cultural Transformation Website](http://www.usda.gov/culturaltransformation).

## USDA Extends 55 Tentative Job Offers to Unemployed Veterans in Detroit



**By: Fred Cheng** USDA recently participated in one of the country's largest Veterans hiring fairs, held at the Cobo Convention Center in Detroit, Michigan.

There were over 7,000 registered veterans seeking employment during the three day event at the end of June. USDA's Veterans Employment Program Officer joined employees from the Forest Service (FS), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Rural Development (RD), and Departmental Management (DM) in the event.

As a result, USDA produced 63 immediate job vacancies for on-site job offers. In addition, USDA had over 700 jobs for Veterans on the USAjobs website.

There were 200 public and private employers, ranging from General Motors to MacKellar Mining (an Australian mining company) present to greet and interview Veterans.

The event focused on tackling high unemployment among Veterans -- nearly 13% in May for those who have

served since September 2001. Over 1,000 Veterans stopped by the two USDA booths, and they met face-to-face with USDA teams that did on-site interviews and extended tentative job offers when possible.

The USDA teams fielded questions about employment at USDA and collected over 200 resumes, while the USDA Human Resources team worked behind the scenes to process more than 135 resumes for qualified Veterans eligible for USDA job vacancies.

After qualification, USDA hiring managers conducted 122 on-site interviews.

At the end of the day, the Detroit hiring fair extended over 1,300 job offers with the private sector extending 83% of the job offers, and the state and Federal employers extended 17% of the job offers. Of the 17% that were produced by State and Federal employers, USDA accounted for 25% (55) of the Federal job offers.

Out of the 55 tentative job offers extended by FS, 28 Veterans accepted the offers.



### Photos

**TOP:** Mary Weber (ARS) and Anthony Chartrand (AMS) are set up at USDA Booth 1.

**ABOVE:** Chole Oberman (FS), Sharon DeHart (FS), and Carolyn Greenman (RD) are all set at USDA Booth 2.

**FAR RIGHT:** Deputy Forest Supervisor Mary Doke reviews a list of USDA job vacancies from Asst Director Sharon DeHart, Forest Service.

**RIGHT:** Over a 1,000 Veterans came by USDA's booths to ask questions and looking for employment.



## USDA Participates in 30th Annual Metro Detroit Youth Day

USDA joined with other partners to participate in the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Metro Detroit Youth Day on July 11<sup>th</sup>. Over a thousand participants and 30 state, local and Federal agencies took part in Detroit's Youth Day. The area set aside for USDA and its partners consisted of nature trail events, identifying animal prints, skipping stones, jumping rope with nature's ropes, identifying the Great Lakes, using a compass, and learning how to operate binoculars and identify birds.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service used confiscated items made out of animal skins and furs to teach the youth about endangered species. They also talked about illegal souvenirs when travelling abroad. One of the themes for this event was "Youth government and businesses working to make our communities safe, to provide a healthy environment, to encourage service opportunities, to create educational job skills and to show we care."



The Forest Service's Diane Gardin of the Northern Research Station in East Lansing, MI, shows a youth how to use binoculars.

## USDA gets an "A" for writing in plain language!

USDA received the highest grade government wide on our implementation of The Plain Writing Act signed into law by President Barack Obama in October 2010. Plain writing is a key part of Secretary Tom Vilsack's efforts to make USDA first in public service and effectiveness. His strong support has been an important part of USDA's plain writing success. "This first Plain Writing Report Card helps ensure that government agencies are following both

the letter and the spirit of the Act," said Annetta L. Cheek, Chair of the Center for Plain Language. "Based on USDA's Web site, your two reports, and the very nice on-line training you now have, USDA seems to be doing a better job than many other agencies."

Communicating clearly is an essential element of Cultural Transformation – we cannot serve our custom-

ers well if they don't know what we're saying. The nonprofit [Center for Plain Language](#), issued the report card to encourage the use of plain language in government and business operations. One simple way to maintain our momentum with plain writing is for every USDA employee to ask 'How's your writing?' when drafting, reviewing, and finalizing documents. For more information and resources, see the [USDA Plain Writing Web Page](#)



The USDA Plain Writing Executive Team members contributed 100lbs of food for the Feds Feed Family food drive as a demonstration of the Department's commitment to the food drive and Plain Language. USDA received the highest grade in the Federal Government for work done to implement Plain Writing.

(Left to Right): Terry Bish, Executive Committee, NRCS; Beth Gaston, Executive Committee, APHIS; Jerry Mande, USDA Senior Official for Plain Writing; Suzanne Austin-Kashawlic, Training Specialist, NRCS; Dr. Alma Hobbs, Associate Assistant Secretary for Administration; Oscar Gonzales, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration, and, Dr. Gregory Parham, Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration.

# Military Veterans: The Next Generation of Organic Farmers

By Miles McEvoy, National Organic Program Deputy Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service

Compost tea (a mixture of recycled organic matter soaked in water), hydro-

ponic basil, and organic certification are terms that may seem to not have much of a connection to military Veterans. Colin Archipley, a decorated Marine sergeant, and his wife Karen saw the win-win connection when they founded the [Veterans Sustainable Agriculture Training \(VSAT\) program](#) near San Diego, California.

Many Veterans who have served our country have challenges transitioning to civilian life and struggle with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and high unemployment rates. After three tours in Iraq, Colin found his solace working on the Archipley's newly-purchased, neglected avocado farm, which sat on three acres outside of Camp Pendleton, a Marine Corps base.

**(l to r) Karen Archipley, AMS' Miles McEvoy, Colin Archipley. The Archipley's are founders of the Veterans Sustainable Agriculture Training Program.**



When the Archipleys received their first water bill, they determined their farm needed to be more sustainable. They decided to move to a water-efficient hydroponic system that replaced soil with nutrient-rich water and reduces water use by up to 90%.

They also received a loan from the [USDA Farm Service Administration](#) to build a larger greenhouse, tripling their production, and were certified organic by California-based CCOF Certification Services (accredited and overseen by the [Agricultural Marketing Service's National Organic Program](#).) They used their hydroponic system to grow organic basil, tomatoes, greens, and herbs. Produce is delivered as living plants (with roots still attached) to local farmers markets and stores, which saves water and retains freshness.

Colin wanted to help other Veterans heal their wounds through organic farming—and to help them use their skills to start agricultural businesses. The VSAT program partnered with local community and state colleges to offer Veterans an intensive 6-week course on growing hydroponic crops from seed to market.

Participants take an exam and present their business plans to potential investors, produce buyers, and human resources personnel. At the end of the course, participants have a solid business plan and the know-how to start their own operations.

I attended the business plan presentations and graduation of a recent VSAT class. It was inspiring

to see what the Archipleys have done – both how they have helped fellow combat veterans transition to civilian life and in their own organic agriculture business.

The VSAT Program has helped over 100 military veterans transition to the civilian work force. One memorable graduate is Mike Hanes, a decorated veteran, who went from being homeless and unable to re-engage in civilian life

**A Veteran and VSAT participant handles living basil at an organic hydroponic farm.**



to creating his own organic hot sauce, DANG!!!, which is now for sale in grocery stores around the country.

Based on the last agricultural census, the average American farmer is 57 years of age, and nearly 30 percent of American farmers are over the age of 65. Nearly 45 percent of the military come from a rural background, and USDA is pushing for 100,000 new farmers.

We applaud the Archipleys for continuing to serve their country by supporting our heroes and helping to build the next generation of organic farmers.

## Celebrating Our USDA Interns—Student Employment Program

By: Laura Rodriguez and Tamara Johnson, Summer Interns, Diversity, Recruitment and Work/Life Division

The Intern Day and Panel Celebration is an annual event for all summer USDA interns. It is an event to honor the interns' hard work and contribution to USDA. This year the interns were honored by the presence of Secretary Tom Vilsack and Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan along with other senior leadership.

neither victory nor defeat. Working for the public, working in a department of government, making a difference in people's lives, improving the world, protecting the environment; all worthy causes and something you can be proud of having spent your precious time doing."

The interns heard an inspiring message from Deputy Secretary Merrigan, who shared a personal story of how an internship in high school has connected her throughout her career to the position she holds today. Later, current and former USDA interns were able to share their experience and advice with

Secretary Vilsack emphasized the importance of being involved in public service by tying the USDA intern's experience with his own early years. Paraphrasing Theodore Roosevelt, Secretary Vilsack said it is important to "spend your life in a worthy cause, to give everything you've got, to know at the end of the day that you are not a cold and timid soul who doesn't know



current USDA interns. The interns were so enthusiastic, that the line to ask questions extended outside of the Jefferson Auditorium!

Overall, the Intern Day and Panel Celebration was a great opportunity for interns to learn more about USDA, expand their horizons within the Department, and prepare to transform USDA's tomorrow.

### **USDA's UPCOMING SPECIAL OBSERVANCES**

- **Hispanic Heritage Month event September 20, 2012, at the Jefferson Auditorium**
- **National Disability Employment Awareness Month event October 18, 2012, at the Jefferson Auditorium.**

**Observances are scheduled to begin at 10:00 a. m. (EST)**

**IF YOU'RE IN DC, PLEASE ADD THESE TO YOUR CALENDAR**

## USDA Receives Top Honors at 2012 Society of Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) Conference

The USDA has been awarded the Agency Level SAIGE Award for maintaining American Indian and Alaska Natives representation above 2%,

USDA was also presented with an award of Excellence for Partnership and Collaboration with SAIGE to achieve Secretary Vilsack's Cultural Transformation goals.

USDA's Director of Diversity, Recruitment, and Work/Life Division, Monshi Ramdass, received the 2012 SAIGE Exceptional Leadership Award.

Native American/Alaska Natives representation in the Civilian Labor Force is 0.5 percent. The USDA's figure is significantly higher than it's ever been at 2.08 percent.

In addition, the U.S. Forest Service employment of American Indian or Alaska Native is at a record high of 3.40%.

The USDA employed 1.97% American Indian or Alaska Native Student Interns in Fiscal Year 2011.

USDA has recently established the Office of Tribal Relations to be responsible for improved government-to-government relations between USDA and tribal governments. This office is headed by Native American Senior Executive Ms. Janie Hipp, one of six Native American Senior Executives in USDA.

USDA signed an official Memorandum of Agreement with SAIGE on December 3, 2010. The purpose of this agreement is to ensure



LEFT: Danny Garceau, SAIGE Chair, presents the 2012 SAIGE Agency Level Award to Janie Hipp, Assistant Secretary for USDA Office of Tribal Relations, with Shana Barehand, SAIGE Treasurer. ABOVE RIGHT: Mr. Garceau presents the 2012 SAIGE Exceptional Leadership Award to Monshi R. Ramdass, Director of Diversity and Recruitment. BELOW: Mr. Garceau presents the 2012 SAIGE Partnership Award to Director Ramdass and Tina Hoellerer, USDA Diversity Program Manager.

American Indian and Alaska Natives are well represented in USDA's employment, student, and programs.

### USDA was actively represented in the conference through both leading and participating in the following events:

Pre-Conference Forum:  
American Indian Program Manager  
Frederick Cheng,

Federal Indian Law Immersion Course: Susan Johnson, Forest Service;

Presentation on USDA Student Internship Program: Diversity Program Manager, Tina Hoellerer.

Recruitment and Career Fair participated by Food Safety and Inspection Service, the Office



of Human Resources Management, Foreign Agricultural Service, the US Forest Service, the Risk Management Agency, and other agencies.

The conference was very well organized and culturally exceptional.

## OHRM Collaborates with the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute to Provide Special Emphasis Program Managers Training

The Office of Human Resources management (OHRM) Diversity, Recruitment and Work/Live Division has partnered with the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) to educate and train Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) and EEO specialists with the requisite skills necessary to manage effective and efficient Special Emphasis Programs.

Recently, DEOMI provided SEPM training to 26 USDA employees from various USDA agencies covering subjects such as: Roles and Responsibilities of the SEPM; Analyzing Equal Employment Commission MD-715; Developing a Business Plan to Achieve Affirmative Program Goals; Developing a Resource Allocation Plan and Budget for Reporting; and Techniques to Recognizing and Overcoming Barri-

ers to Diversity and Inclusion Within the Agency.

Each day consisted of group activities and a presentation on the last day of class. The sharing of the diverse backgrounds and experiences were invaluable.

Everyone shared personal experiences, issues and concerns, as well as success stories within their agencies.

The class was a real-life demonstration of how a diverse and inclusive workforce could work together and produce quality results.

Special Emphasis Program Managers are responsible for the concerns of their constituency

**By Fahmida Chhipa, National Agricultural Statistic Services**

(underrepresented groups in the workforce) in the areas of employment and advancement; and are thus responsible for providing advice and assistance to management officials who have program responsibility for, or interest in, such matters.

One of the Department's Cultural Transformation goals illustrated in the FY 2011 - 2013 Diversity Road Map is to "articulate diversity training and awareness goals to the USDA workforce" and one of the ways to do this is through well trained Special Emphasis Program Managers.



Special Emphasis Program Managers training included more than two dozen USDA employees and leadership. **Pictured Row 1** (left to right): Billy Milton, Mark Benedict, Vincent Loran, John Payne, and Helen George **Row 2:** Monshi Ramdass, Kacy Mullenburg, Sharon Randle, Cynthia Dixon, Nadine Chatman, Akio Watson, Vivian Kendrick, Jacqueline Padron **Row 3:** Alberto Crespo, Mya Mya Myaing, Tamara Bond, Tori Curley, Danisha Montague-Lee, Beatrice Herbert, Fahmida Chhipa, Chris Turner **Row 4:** Cecilia Johnson, Mary Speiden, Frank Grijalva, Bernadette Hudnell, Gloria Anderson

## MORE ARE TELEWORKING AT USDA

This month, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) released its first comprehensive [report to Congress on telework](#) following the enactment of the [2010 Telework Enhancement Act](#).

The report establishes an initial baseline that will eventually allow us to have a more accurate picture of the percentage of all Federal employees who take advantage of Telework. Until now, Federal agencies have been counting Telework Agreements as a way to determine participation rates.

At USDA, we've seen significant progress, with more than 7,000 new Telework Agreements signed since October. In all, 65,000 USDA Employees are eligible for Telework, but only about 25,000 of those have Telework Agreements in place. We are committed to increasing that number. According to the OPM report, three major trends need improving:

1. **Overcoming continued management resistance.** Better training for managers is needed in order to understand how to implement performance measures focusing on outcomes and results rather than simply relying on time and attendance data.

2. **Understanding how to use Telework as a strategic management tool.** Better guidance and cost models need to be developed in order for the government to effectively tie its Telework programs to continuity efforts, including recruitment and retention.

3. **Better technology and equipment standards are essential.** The better our Telework technology, the greater our overall cost savings. Although a voluntary program, Telework offers wonderful benefits for employees and employers. Recouping time and costs associated with commuting is definitely a win for the environment, USDA and our employees. The ability

By Mika J. Cross,  
USDA Work/Life  
and Wellness  
Program  
Manager



[telework@dm.usda.gov](mailto:telework@dm.usda.gov)

to manage personal priorities outside of the workplace is also a key benefit of Telework. Many employees take advantage of the time they save by spending it with their families and community.

If you have not yet applied for Telework, please do so and try it out! You can access the USDA [Telework Agreement Form, AD 30-18](#) and work with your supervisor to develop an arrangement that will work for both you and your workplace. For more information, send an email to [telework@dm.usda.gov](mailto:telework@dm.usda.gov) or join our community on USDA Connect by finding the [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community webpage.

### USDA Nursing Mother's Program Initiatives Support World Breastfeeding Week

Earlier this year, USDA organized a Department-wide Nursing Mother's Program Work Group to determine how best to support the needs of new and expectant mothers who wish to continue lactation after they return to the workplace.

In recognition of World Breastfeeding Week 2012, and as part of USDA's 2012 Wellness Campaign, USDA is pleased to announce the results of the survey and will also offer several opportunities for employees and managers across the Department, to become familiar with important facts, resources and information that support USDA's commitment to supporting Nursing Mothers in the workplace.

Below are just some of the August activities planned for

employees. Be sure to check the USDA [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community page for updates throughout the month on dates, times and locations:

Results of the Nursing Mothers Program employee survey will be available from the [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community webpage on USDA Connect; Participate in one of USDA's upcoming free webinars to

learn more about resources for Nursing Mothers in the workplace;

Attend the re-dedication ceremony of the South Building Lactation Room, for those in the Washington, D.C. area;

Hear from Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan by listening to her podcast about the Nursing Mother's Program and NIFA's newly designed Lactation Room;

Submit your [Pledge](#) for World Breastfeeding Week 2012 by visiting: <http://worldbreastfeedingweek.org/downloads.shtml>; and,

Please visit the [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community webpage for updates and details or send an email to [work-life@dm.usda.gov](mailto:work-life@dm.usda.gov).



**Understanding the Past -  
Planning the Future:**

Celebrating 10 years of  
WHO/UNICEF's Global Strategy  
for Infant and Young Child Feeding

## Don't Miss "Let's Talk Telework!" In August

Don't miss the "Let's Talk Telework!" Tools and Best Practices in August! Join the August session of USDA's free monthly webinar series, "Let's Talk Telework!" on Thursday, August 30th from 12:30-1:30 p.m. (EST).

This coming session offers participants valuable information about Telework Tools and Best Practices, presented by our special guest panelists. A limited number of seats are available and they fill up fast, so it is recommended you view as part of a group and register early in AgLearn!

For more information send an email to: [Telework@dm.usda.gov](mailto:Telework@dm.usda.gov), or visit the USDA Work/Life and Wellness community page on USDA Connect for further details and updates.

### TIME TO TELEWORK!

**Teleworkers must be sure to code their time correctly within WebTA.  
Here's a quick tip on how to code your time:**

**01-01 Reg Time Telework  
(Core or Full-Time Telework)**

**01-01 Telework Other  
(Ad/Hoc or Unscheduled Telework)**

**Questions? Contact your Agency Telework Coordinator or send an email to: [telework@dm.usda.gov](mailto:telework@dm.usda.gov)**

## A Successful USDA Team Effort at LULAC

By Jacqueline Padron

A number of USDA employees joined Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Lisa Pino at the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) National Convention and Exposition recently in Orlando, FL. USDA held a Pre-conference Forum, which was a great opportunity for employees to network with USDA colleagues, and it focused on effective approaches to address recruitment, career development, and retention of USDA Hispanic talent.

Hundreds of USDA information bags were distributed, and people interested in more information about USDA career opportunities provided their contact information through OHRM's new Diversity, Recruitment and Work/Life Division's Microsoft

Access recruitment database. The database is an easy electronic method of collecting contact information from interested individuals and is available to all USDA recruiters.

Many USDA employees not only attended the training but were an integral part of the overall program. We facilitated six FTI workshops; led the "Hispanic Employment: Today's Challenges and Successful Practices" workshop; addressed over 150 high school, college, and graduate students during the Youth Symposium; and provided information about USDA internships and career opportunities; to more than 50 school counselors and faculty.

We also participated in the Health Town Hall and addressed how USDA's FNS programs

help mitigate both the hunger and obesity epidemic for eligible Latinos; participated in the Faith-Based and Community Leaders workshop that included a Spanish presentation to approximately 70 faith-based leaders on how the faith-based community can become USDA partners to amplify access to our FNS nutrition assistance programs; and participated on a panel discussion on Civil Rights.

This important partnership with LULAC is one way we are addressing a core goal of the Secretary's Cultural Transformation initiative, which is to recruit, hire, retain, and promote a diverse workforce that looks more like America. For further info, please contact Jacqueline Padrón, Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, at [jacqueline.padron@dm.usda.gov](mailto:jacqueline.padron@dm.usda.gov).



L to R: Deidre Smith (FS); Karla Martinez-Garcia (APHIS); Lisa Pino (OASCR); Marco Loperena (NRCS); Alicia Rodriguez (OASCR); Jacqueline Padron (D/M, OHRM); and Carlos Suarez (NRCS). Lisa Pino, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, gave remarks during the LULAC "Diversity Luncheon" and received, on behalf of USDA, an award from the president of LULAC.

## MyUSDA Security Corner

### Do You Safeguard Your Sensitive Security Information (SSI) Documents?

By Laura Fessenden

Protecting government information is one of the most critical national security challenges facing agencies today.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is defined as information that can be used to uniquely identify, contact, or locate a single person or can be used with other sources to uniquely identify a single individual.

One of the greatest risks is losing control of the information, whether by inadvertently sending the information to the wrong party, loss or theft of media containing the information (e.g. a printed report or electronic media), or a network infiltration, all of which may result in a privacy breach.

While some PII is considered SSI, not all is.

Due to the large importance of safeguarding SSI and/or classified information, there are some common suggested tips to remember which include:

- Secure SSI and classified information before leaving the office
- Ensure those wanting SSI and classified information have the appropriate clearance, access, and a need-to-know
- Commit to neither confirm nor deny unofficially released or published information
- Use only secure computers and communications devices for SSI or classified information sharing
- Recognize the established classification level at briefings and meetings
- Inspect classified documents for appropriate markings and handle accordingly

- Take appropriate safeguard precautions when transporting classified and/or PII information. For more information about transporting PII please visit [http://www.ocionet.usda.gov/wps/wcm/con-nect/059f3d80468edb32803aa9c9a7a0fd3f/ASOC\\_Paper\\_Based\\_Transport\\_PII\\_Poster.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](http://www.ocionet.usda.gov/wps/wcm/con-nect/059f3d80468edb32803aa9c9a7a0fd3f/ASOC_Paper_Based_Transport_PII_Poster.pdf?MOD=AJPERES)
- Yield to media inquiries or speculation about classified information by directing them to the Office of Communications

Unintentional disclosure can occur over the many distribution methods available today. Those include web sites, newsletters, databases, application software, files, printouts, e-mail, phone, voicemail, and face to face conversations.

Each must be carefully controlled.

The Agriculture Security Operations Center (ASOC) is the leading source within USDA for cyber oversights and practices.

ASOC provides a point-of-contact to manage your IT security incidents from identification to resolution.

If an employee accidentally discloses SSI information or observes SSI information, whether via USDA email, or on the web, they can reach out to the Security Incidents hotline at [cyber.incidents@usda.gov](mailto:cyber.incidents@usda.gov) or via telephone at 1-866-905-6890.

If you have any questions regarding the safeguarding of information or personnel documentation, please visit the OHSEC PDSM web site at <http://www.dm.usda.gov/ohsec/pdsd/about.htm> or call 202-720-7373.

### NRCS AND THE PHILIPPINES DISCUSS CONSERVATION



In June, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) leadership met with a high level delegation from the Government of the Philippines.

The delegation, led by Philippine Rep. Wilfrido Mark M. Enverga, who chairs the Committee on Rural Development, asked to

meet with NRCS as part of a fact finding mission to better understand systems used to leverage conservation partnerships to enhance conservation and expand access to programs. Homer Wilkes headed the NRCS Delegation. Discussion topics included an overview of NRCS conservation programs and initiatives. Rep. Enverga was accompanied by six members of the Congress of the Philippines and five senior officials from the Philippine Department of Agriculture.

## MyUSDA Volume 2, Issue 9

If you'd like to share your feedback about Cultural Transformation, telework, diversity, or any other aspect of work/life at USDA, send an email to:

[MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov](mailto:MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov) or visit USDA's [Work/Life and Wellness](#)

community website if you have access to [USDA Connections](#).

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If you have ideas for future articles, contact us at [MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov](mailto:MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov).

#### Submit Your Article to MyUSDA

The deadline for August submissions is Friday, August 17, 2012.

#### Guidance on Submissions to MyUSDA

Submissions to MyUSDA should indicate progress that you, your agency, or your mission area have achieved toward implementing some aspect of the Secretary's Cultural Transformation (CT) Initiative. Submissions may be in the form of a traditional article with a byline (with accompanying photos strongly preferred), a first-person account (describing a personal work-related experience relating to CT progress), or a "brief" (just a few sentences describing a successful Cultural Transformation event, group, initiative, or activity...or some other relevant worklife issue with an accompanying photo. Send photos as separate attachments and make sure they are high quality.

**The ideal submission is a great picture with about 75-150 words to go along with it. Maximum length of articles is 250 words.**

Email submissions or further inquiries to [MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov](mailto:MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov)