



# APC Quarterly Newsletter

April 2011 Volume IV

The CCSC APC Quarterly Newsletters provide updates on ongoing initiatives, announce new policies and procedures, and provides a forum for APCs to share information regarding USDA's Charge Card Program.

## Agency of the Quarter Q1 2011

Congratulations to **'Departmental Management' (DM)** for being honored with the USDA CCSC **'Agency of the Quarter Award'** for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of FY2011, reducing their convenience check usage to .91% with over a 34% variance from last quarter, achieving 33.24% increased improvement in transaction approval within 60 days, and a spend increase of 34.99% over the Q1-2010 spend totals.

Q1 FY 2011	Q4-2010	Q1-2011	Variance
Convenience Checks usage	1.43%	.91%	36.44 %
Transactions Approved within 60 days	55.47%	73.91%	33.24%
Spend increase	Q1-2010	Q1-2011	Variance
	\$3,673,242	\$4,958,616	34.99%

The agency earning an Honorable Mention for Q1 2011 is **'Rural Development' (RD)** for their continued efforts and solid performance in Q1 2011.

To view the Agency of the Quarter webpage and/or past recipients, [click here](#).

## Agency of the Quarter Q2 2011

Congratulations to second time honoree **'Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service' (APHIS)**, **'Agricultural Marketing Service' (AMS)**, and **'The Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration' (GIPSA)** for being honored with the USDA CCSC **'Agency of the Quarter Award'** for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of FY2011, for 0% convenience check and accomplishing a .31% improvement in transaction approval within 60 days.

The agencies earning an Honorable Mention for this quarter are **'Agricultural Research Service' (ARS)** and **'Natural Resources Conservation Service' (NRCS)** for their accomplishments and outstanding performance in Q2 2011.

Q2 FY 2011	Q4-2010	Q1-2011	Variance
Convenience Checks usage	0%	0%	0%
Transactions Approved within 60 days	97.67%	97.97%	.31%
Spend increase	Q1-2010	Q1-2011	Variance
	\$8,337,350	\$7,622,976	-8.57%

The CCSC has added a [FOIA Link](#) of USDA Purchase Cardholders to the CCSC website. This information can be accessed by clicking on the FOIA Link above or the link in the 'CCSC Information' box on the right side of the screen at: <http://www.dm.usda.gov/procurement/ccsc/>.



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**A**s discussed and reviewed during the April 7<sup>th</sup> APC Meeting, the CCSC has received a notification from GSA's Office of Charge Card Management, Service Delivery Division outlining instructions and information for GSA SmartPay Operations in the event of a government-wide shutdown. Please review and communicate the information provided by GSA below to all of your LAPCs, AOs, and cardholders.

You may email any questions to the CCSC at [ccsc@dm.usda.gov](mailto:ccsc@dm.usda.gov) or contact GSA directly via their central phone line, (703) 605-2808 or e-mail: [gsa\\_smartpay@gsa.gov](mailto:gsa_smartpay@gsa.gov). Thank you!

### **Subject: GSA SmartPay Operations in the Event of a Government Shutdown**

The purpose of this email is to provide you with language from the GSA SmartPay 2 Master Contract in the event of a government-wide shut down. The Office of Charge Card Management has NOT received anything official on whether or not a government-wide shutdown will occur if funding is not approved beyond March 4, 2011. This email merely serves as a precautionary reminder that GSA SmartPay charge cards **WILL** remain operational in the event of a government-wide shut down.

#### **C.1.12 GOVERNMENT-WIDE SHUT DOWN**

**Each year, Congress must pass appropriation bills that provide legal authority to spend or obligate U.S. Treasury Funds. The bills must then be signed into law by the President or become law through a Congressional override of a Presidential veto. It is possible that all of the appropriation bills will not be completed in**

**time for the start of any given fiscal year. A continuing resolution is usually passed to allow the Government to continue to function; however, in recent years, the Government has been required to "shut down" nonessential functions. In the event of a government-wide shut down, payment to the Contractor would be late for most accounts; however, all centrally billed accounts would be paid with Prompt Payment Act interest upon a budget passing. The Contractor shall not deactivate any account in this situation unless otherwise notified by GSA or the agency/organization.**

In the event a shutdown does occur after March 4, 2011, A/OPCs should remind cardholders that GSA SmartPay cards will continue to function normally and that the banks will continue to provide service in accordance with the GSA SmartPay 2 Master Contract. Cardholders, as usual, should contact the bank customer service organization should they experience problems with their cards. As soon as possible, A/OPCs are encouraged to order any new charge cards that may be needed prior to March 4, 2011, as a precaution.

Another consideration is automatic payments, if any. A/OPCs are advised to coordinate with both agency/organization finance officials and cardholders to ensure that these payments are properly dispositioned in the event of a shutdown. Note that the Antideficiency Act prohibits most agencies from incurring obligations in the absence of appropriations (unless otherwise allowed by law or for emergencies involving the safety of life or limb, the protection of property, or other excepted services). Again, please coordinate with the



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appropriate officials as needed to ensure only appropriate purchases are made/payments are issued in the event of a shutdown, as this issue can become quite complicated.

Finally, if A/OPCs need to reach the Office of Charge Card Management during a government-wide shutdown, we can be reached through our central phone line, (703) 605-2808, or e-mail box: [gsa\\_smartpay@gsa.gov](mailto:gsa_smartpay@gsa.gov).

Erin E. VanDagna  
Service Delivery Division  
Office of Charge Card Management  
U.S. General Services Administration  
Phone: 703.605.5589

**A**s communicated in **PCard-06-2011**:

**Suspension of Cardholder Accounts If Not Approved within 60 days of the Transaction Posting Date** and during APC Meetings held on March 1<sup>st</sup> and April 7<sup>th</sup>:

Starting May 1, 2011, failure of cardholders to **approve their transactions within 60 days of the transaction posting date**, as shown in Access Online, will result in the cardholder's account being temporarily suspended by the CCSC. **Repeat instances of failure to approve in a timely manner will result in the permanent closure of the cardholder's account.**

Per the draft DR 5013-6, Section 9, Special Instructions, part n.:

**n. Requirement to Timely and Accurately Approve Transactions by Cardholders.** *It is USDA policy that cardholders shall approve their transactions no later than 30 days after a transaction appears in AXOL,*

*absent extenuating circumstances. Failure to timely and accurately approve transactions shall constitute grounds for management to revoke purchase card and/or alternative payment method privileges, and possible disciplinary action. **The account of any cardholder who fails to approve transactions within 60 days after each transaction appears in AXOL will be deactivated. No account so deactivated may be re-activated until all transactions in the account are approved and a request to reinstate is submitted to the LAPC from the supervisor.** For additional information on cardholder responsibilities, refer to the Cardholder's Purchase Card Program Guide. For additional information on LAPC responsibilities, refer to the Coordinator's Purchase Card Program Guide. It is also USDA's policy that only the cardholder shall approve their individual account. LAPCs shall monitor cardholder transactions on a monthly basis to ensure cardholders approve their transactions in a timely manner.*

The CCSC will run the Transaction Approval Status report on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. The report ran on the 15<sup>th</sup> (beginning on April 15<sup>th</sup>), will be to identify potential cardholders that have not yet Approved transactions posted in their Transaction Management List in the past 45 days.

The CCSC will send a communication to these cardholders with cc: to their agency APC and the Managing Account Name (i.e., LAPC), advising them that they have 15 days to Approve their transactions and that failure to



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approve these transactions will result in their card account being suspended.

The CCSC will run the Transaction Approval Status report on the 1<sup>st</sup> (beginning May 2<sup>nd</sup>) to create the final list of cardholder accounts that will be submitted to the US Bank for suspension. The CCSC will notify the cardholders (with cc: to their Agency APC and the Managing Account Name) that their card account have been suspended.

Please note that **transactions which are unable to be approve due to technical issues, such as enabling of CSV or FMMI conversion will be excluded from suspension. Transactions that are in "Dispute" status will also be excluded from suspension.**

**Accounts in suspension status will not be re-activated until all transactions on the account are approved. APCs/LAPCs should not contact U.S. Bank Customer Service to request removal of the suspension status from the cardholder account. U.S. Bank will only accept suspension removal request on cardholder accounts from the CCSC.**

The CCSC will run the Transactions Approval Status report every 15 days (on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of each month) to identify the cardholder accounts in Suspense status and the transactions have all been Approved.

**The CCSC will make every attempt to reactivate all cards that have been suspended, within 15 days of determining that all transactions are in Approved status.**

If you have any questions on this process, please email the CCSC at [ccsa@dm.usda.gov](mailto:ccsa@dm.usda.gov).

**A**s we approach the end of the quarter, the USDA Charge Card Service Center (CCSC) Team would like to recognize and thank all Coordinators for your hard work these first months of 2011, particularly for your help with:

- ▶ Facilitating submissions for the first round of LAPC Quarterly Review Checklists for Q1 FY2011 (October – December 2010), which were due to APCs on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

**REMINDER:** As the APC, you should collect and keep all the LAPC Quarterly Review Checklists. Once collected, you should have sent an email to the CCSC Inbox ([ccsc@dm.usda.gov](mailto:ccsc@dm.usda.gov)) to confirm you have received all of your LAPCs' Quarterly Review Checklists to help the CCSC validate that all LAPCs have completed their checklists in order to comply with A-123.

- ▶ Confirming completion of LAPC Purchase Policy Training for A-123 Validation Testing which took place in March.

### Reminder:

The [GSA SmartPay Training Conference](#) will be held August 16-18, 2011 at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada!



**NOTE:** Registration begins on April 28<sup>th</sup> and information can be viewed at:

<http://www.gsasmartpayconference.org/2011gsa/registration0.asp>



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The 2011 conference theme is '**A Winning Hand: Solutions, Savings, and Sustainability with GSA with GSA SmartPay**' and one of the primary topics emphasized is '**Going Green**'.

### Some of the 2011 courses scheduled are:

- ▶ USDA Purchase Card Coordinators Policy Training
- ▶ USDA Required Process & Procedures for A-123 Compliance
- ▶ New Developments & Functionality in Access Online for USDA
- ▶ **Hands-On Training**
  - ◆ USDA Access Online Reporting for the Purchase Card Program
  - ◆ USDA Transaction Approval and Reallocation in Access Online
- ▶ **Electives**
  - ◆ USDA & US Bank: Handling Fraud & Disputes (ELECTIVE)
  - ◆ NFC, USDA & US Bank: FMFI / FFIS Overview (ELECTIVE)

### 2010 GSA SmartPay Training Conference Survey Results:

USDA Charge Card Program attendees rated their satisfaction of the conference in the following categories:

- ▶ With the appropriateness of the training to your needs? 91%
- ▶ That the training personnel/instructors are sufficiently knowledgeable and professional? (GSA, US Bank & CCSC) 94%

- ▶ With the presentations and information presented? 92%
- ▶ With the CCSC team's communication of Charge Card Program information? 95%
- ▶ With the guides and handouts distributed (if applicable)? 89%
- ▶ With the CCSC team's ability to answer and address any questions related to the Charge Card Program, its policies, and the Access Online system? 93%
- ▶ With US Bank's support & assistance? 91%
- ▶ With the training sessions at the conference overall? 91%

### USDA Coordinators Comments on the 2010 GSA SmartPay Training Conference:

- ▶ I learned a lot; this was very helpful to me. Presentations and information presented were very helpful. The guides and handouts were great and the training sessions overall were great. **(Regional APC, FS)**
- ▶ Great discussion, valuable to sit and hear questions and answers, great learning tools provided and teaching. **(LAPC, ARS)**
- ▶ Access Online Hands-on course was very useful! Thanks. **(Fleet Assistant, FS)**
- ▶ Highly recommend attendance! **(LAPC, ARS)**
- ▶ The Agency needs to promote this conference each year and encourage maximum participation. Networking is essential to getting and sharing information. **(LAPC)**
- ▶ I really enjoyed all agency training sessions. **(A/APC, OIG)**



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### **C**harge Card Program Reminders & Tips:

#### Purchase Card Request Submissions

To prevent your [Purchase Card Request](#) Submission from being rejected by the CCSC, please ensure that:

1. The Cardholder's full name (i.e., *Last/First/Middle*) is no more than 19 characters long total.
2. The Account Code is a FY11 accounting code that is already loaded in Access Online (AXOL).
3. The Approving Official (AO) is already setup in the U.S. Bank TSYS system. **NOTE:** A copy of your TSYS hierarchy setup can be provided to you upon request.

#### Hierarchy Request Submissions

To prevent your Hierarchy Request Submission from being rejected by the CCSC, please ensure that:

1. If the LAPC or AO needs to be setup in a hierarchy that **already exists**, then the [POC Maintenance Form](#) is completed and submitted for the setup.
2. If the LAPC or AO needs to be setup in a **brand new hierarchy** that **does not exist** (*has not been built yet*), then a [Reporting Hierarchy Setup Form](#) is completed and submitted for the hierarchy build.
3. When you receive a notification from the CCSC that the hierarchy setup/build has been completed, you must **first** go into '**Account Administration**' and setup a cardholder in the hierarchy before attempting to add the hierarchy to the LAPC or AO in '**System Administration**'.

**NOTE:** There **must** be at least one (1) cardholder setup in that hierarchy first. Otherwise, AXOL **will not** allow you to add the hierarchy to the LAPC's or AO's '**User Profile**'.

#### Simplified Acquisitions & Formal Contracts

Only warranted USDA employees may purchase above the micro-purchase level. Warranted individuals may use the purchase card and related alternative payment methods in accordance with FAR Parts 12, 13, 14, and 15, up to the single and monthly purchase limits established for their cards.

#### Comment Fields & Required Documentation/Information in AXOL

As previously stated, USDA uses AXOL **Comments** fields to capture important information about each purchase transaction. The cardholder is responsible for properly filling out the Comment Fields and AOs are responsible for checking for complete information in all Comment Fields.

Reports show that there is still a lack of input within AXOL of the following Comment Fields which are essential and **REQUIRED** for all transactions:

##### ► Goods Recvd Date

- ◆ For over-the-counter purchases, this is the date of purchase.
- ◆ For goods or services ordered ahead of time, this is the date you receive the goods or the services are complete.

► **Item Description** – This information should be specific enough that a reviewer can tell what item(s) was bought. Avoid general descriptions like '*miscellaneous*'.



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**For Convenience Checks, this additional information is also required:**

- ▶ **Conv Check Tin #** (*Merchant Tax ID Number 'EIN/TIN'*) – Can be obtained from the vendor from the W-9 form.
- ▶ **Merchant Info/DCIA Waiver #** (*Includes the Merchant Name, Address, City, State & Zip-Code AND the DCIA Waiver Number*)

**NOTE:**

- ◆ The cardholder must enter **BOTH** the **Merchant Info** and the **DCIA Waiver #** as they are both required documentation (*not either/or*).
- \* AOs should check to confirm that this information is entered.
- ◆ Complete addresses are required.

**A note from CCSC Program Manager, John McCain:**

John McCain will be leaving USDA and the CCSC at the end of April 2011.

"I would like to thank all of the coordinators, cardholders, AOs, and the entire Charge Card community for all the cooperation they've shown in getting the CCSC off the ground. We've made some fantastic strides in the last couple of years and have created an award-winning program but none of this would have been possible without your efforts. You all will be missed and I will be sure to pass on my contact information at a later date. Thanks again and I wish you all the best." - John

The CCSC welcomes your feedback. Please [email us](#) about ways we can improve the newsletter and with topics you would like included in upcoming newsletters. Thank you!