



EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY

# MyUSDA

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

Volume 3, Issue 1

October 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



Today I would like to take a moment to say "thank you" for your efforts to go above and beyond the call of duty in carrying out charitable efforts.

Across our nation, USDA employees continue to deliver an historic amount of service to our customers, while finding ways to do more with less. But in addition to normal duties, USDA employees also show a tremendous spirit of giving and generosity that helps millions of Americans.

In that spirit, I want to thank you for another extremely successful effort during this year's Fed's Feed Families food drive.

Because of your charitable giving, USDA finished in first place among Federal agencies. Together, we contributed more than 38% of all Federal donations this year. As a whole, the Federal drive donated more than 7.2 million pounds of food—and nearly 2.8 million pounds of that came from USDA employees. Thanks to you, many hardworking Americans who are having trouble making ends meet were able to put good food on the table for their families.

In addition, we are turning our attention this month to the 2012 Combined Federal Campaign. The effort is underway right now to help more than 4,000 charities across our nation and around the world through the CFC. "Choose Hope" is the theme for the 2012 CFC, which kicked off last month. Through December 15, we can each choose to give hope by making a CFC gift to the charities we care about. I am confident that with our collective commitment to help those in need, we can reach that goal and even surpass it.

But, as every year, success in this effort depends on the support of employees across USDA. Employees in the Washington metropolitan area can get involved by signing up at <http://www.cfcnc.org> or on [USDA's CFC web site](#). Field-based USDA employees will find more information and should locate their local CFC campaign [using this OPM web site](#).

If you have questions, please contact your agency CFC key worker or our Deputy Campaign Manager, Terry D'Addio, at [terry.d'addio@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:terry.d'addio@wdc.usda.gov). With your generosity, we can help make an impact on millions of lives.

Every day, you continue to rise to the occasion and provide an excellent level of service to Americans everywhere. I know that you never let up, and it's your efforts that enable USDA to continue improving the lives of all Americans. As always, thank you for your service – and thank you for your generosity over the course of the Fed's Feed Families food drive and Combined Federal Campaign.

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

# USDA NRCS Employees Provide Expertise to Help Afghanistan's Farmers

**By Terry Bish** Agricultural reconstruction is vital to Afghanistan's recovery from a decade-long war. To assist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) District Conservationists Michael Clayton and Jonathan George took conservation technical assistance to farmers in the South Asian nation providing critical conservation assistance to help stabilize agriculture. The USDA has provided many agricultural specialists to Afghanistan, a nation of more than 30 million people, which continues to struggle with recovery from years of war and internal strife that has devastated lives, property, and agricultural production systems.



(L to R) Michael Clayton, NRCS; Radween Wijidani Interpreter; General Bossni, District Governor; Fazel Ahmed, District Governor; and, Bruce Bouchard with USAID

Working closely with Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) personnel and Afghan counterparts, Clayton and George met with all levels of Afghans from local fruit farmers, farmers market vendors, and government officials. Referred to as 'America's conservation Ambassadors' by the Afghan Director of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, the work of the NRCS representatives focused on conservation, sustainability, partnership, and agricultural marketing. Each has been key to food production in the United States.

Their service resulted in the creation of a Fruit Growers Association where the growers can pool their resources, establish standards and help ensure quality produce and reasonable profit. The Fruit Growers Association helps farmers expand markets by focusing on exporting fruit while continuing to improve production, sales, and profits locally.

Their story, like so many other USDA employees who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq, are bright examples of the USA building bridges with the rest of the world by sharing agricultural knowledge. All USDA employees can be proud of the service of Michael Clayton, Jonathan George, and the other USDA employees who have bravely come forward to make a positive contribution in difficult times.



Paktika Province Village Elders (left) speak with Jonathon George, NRCS, and his interpreter, Aziz (right)

## USDA FSIS Team Supports Feds Feed Families Food Drive

By Carmencita Tan

The Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS) Consumer Safety Inspection Team from the Alameda District in Southern California was among the many participants in the 2012 Feds Feed Families campaign. The group coordinated a food drive picnic which brought the team together to support a worthy cause. The team donated a remarkable 1100 pounds of food to the Los Angeles Food Bank.



*Pictured: Back Row: Charles Piggee, Gerry Qiu, Dana Barilla, Ed Shepherd, Marvin Johnson, Sheldon Hanagami, C. Jackson, Alton Dunlap; Front Row: Carmencita Tan, Rosa Rivera- Aguirre, Dennis Blair, Mary Alvarez, Vickie Allen, Cheryl Johnson, Mose Tyler, Monica Arroyo; Not pictured: Jose Guevara, Alonzo Torres, and Anthony Zamora*

## USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Employees Take a Tour of the Organization of American States

By Becky Unkenholz

To mark Hispanic Heritage Month, Agricultural Marketing Service employees toured the beautiful headquarters building of the Organization of American States (OAS) to learn about the important work at OAS. Nearly 20 employees, most from AMS' Dairy Program, toured the 100-year-old building, which included visits to impressive assembly rooms, the Hall of Heroes, and the Hall of the Americas. Founded in 1948, the OAS, whose members include 34 democracies in the western hemisphere, is the oldest regional organization in the world. The OAS provides technical assistance in sustainable development, trade, tourism, competitiveness, education, culture, science and technology, social development, and employment. AMS employees gained important insight into ways to provide more effective service to USDA's wide diversity of customers. You can learn more about OAS programs at [www.oas.org](http://www.oas.org).



AMS employees pause for a photo opportunity at the OAS Hall of the Americas

## USDA Honored at HACU's 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

By Sandra Cortez and Eric Schwarz

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) honored USDA with the "Outstanding HACU Public Sector Partner Award" for the Department's success in advancing Hispanic education. Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration Dr. Gregory Parham accepted the award on USDA's behalf. HACU presented the award at its 26<sup>th</sup>

Annual Conference, which drew more than 1500 participants including college/university Presidents, community and corporate leaders, government officials, and over 350 college student leaders from across the country.



Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Lisa Pino, a HACU Internship Alumna, speaks to college student leaders attending the conference.

## Olympian Visits USDA's FNCS for Hispanic Heritage Month

By Susan Siemietkowski



In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, USDA's Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS) hosted a special event at its Park Office Center (POC) Alexandria, VA headquarters featuring Olympian, Nataly Arias. (pictured on the right)

Ms. Arias, who was born and raised only a few miles from POC, is a Hispanic American athlete whose perseverance and passion for soccer led her to succeed on an international level playing for Colombia in the Women's World Cup in Germany, and at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. She shared her experience with the FNCS family through an interactive question and answer session facilitated by Manny Ramirez, the His-

panic Employment Program Manager. (Mr. Ramirez, pictured on the left, is also Ms. Arias' cousin) More than 300 employees participated in the event, which was broadcast live to all seven FNCS regional offices.

## USDA AMS Employees Hold Virtual All-Employees Meeting

**By Michael Sussman**

The Agricultural Marketing Service’s (AMS) [Science and Technology Program](#) (S&T) held its first-ever electronic all-hands meeting October 17. Participants relied on technology to meet to keep costs down and eliminate the need for travel.

More than 90 staff members in six different cities enjoyed each other’s virtual presence while learning about a variety of subjects affecting the program. S&T managers shared the latest information about the budget, USDA and AMS cultural transformation initiatives, the Blueprint for Stronger Service, and continuous business process improvement.

According to Acting Deputy Administrator Dr. Ruihong Guo, “We had to make an extra effort to meet in cyberspace, and it was well worth it.” S&T opened new communication lines, while saving thousands of dollars in travel costs.

S&T provides scientific and analytical support services to the agricultural community to improve the quality, wholesomeness, and marketing of agricultural products both domestically and internationally.

S&T supports AMS and other USDA agencies, Federal and state agencies, and private sector food and agricultural industries.



AMS employees at the National Science Laboratory in Gastonia, North Carolina meet with colleagues in Beltsville, MD; Manassas, VA; Washington, DC; Winter Haven, FL; and Blakely, GA

## ARS People’s Garden Showcases USDA Genetic Resources Preservation

USDA employees at the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) facility located on the campus of Colorado State University are using their People’s Garden to showcase their work. Dr. David Dierig, the local Research Leader for ARS’ National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation, says, “Our mission is to preserve germplasm (seeds or clonal tissue) from any crop used by USDA, along with any crop wild relative. We have thousands of plant collections. The People’s Garden gives us a chance to show off some of the diversity that we store here for the U.S. National Plan Germplasm System.” This year, they are highlighting African plants. Due to limited available ground space, ARS employees use containers at their entryway that include African rice, watermelon, and pearl millet (pictured left), eggplant (center) and okra (right). Visiting tourists include students from CSU, professional societies of agricultural scientists,

botanical gardens members, and a diverse array of the general public.



## USDA Family Receives 2012 Angels in Adoption Award

U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-20) recently recognized Vladimir Diaz and Maria del Mar Velasco, from Miami, FL, for receiving the 2012 Angels in Adoption award in Washington, DC for their outstanding advocacy on behalf of adoption and foster care issues. Diaz is the Regional Director of USDA's Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) National Program for Florida and Puerto Rico.

"Maria del Mar and Vladimir are inspiring examples of what it means to be Angels in Adoption, and I'm so grateful for their work to increase public awareness about adoption," said Rep. Wasserman Schultz.

"On behalf of my family, I want to express my gratitude to the USDA for providing me with a flexible and supportive workplace," said Vladimir. "A few years ago, my wife and I decided to open our hearts and home to several foster care children in need of a family. Last year, our dream came true when we adopted our daughter Anisa. None of this would have been possible without the support of USDA's work/life program."



### **USDA UPCOMING SPECIAL OBSERVANCES**

#### **Veterans Day Observance Wednesday, November 7, 2012 at Jefferson Auditorium**

**All USDA Veterans in the Washington, DC Metro area are cordially invited to attend this event and be recognized.**

#### **Native American Heritage Month Observance Tuesday, November 20, 2012 at Jefferson Auditorium**

**Observances are scheduled to begin at 10:00 a. m. (EST).  
IF YOU'RE IN DC, PLEASE ADD THEM TO YOUR CALENDAR**

## October Is Disability Employment Awareness Month: What Can YOU Do?



If you have any questions or have best practices to share, please contact Alison Levy, USDA Disability Employment Program Manager:

[Alison.Levy@dm.usda.gov](mailto:Alison.Levy@dm.usda.gov). We look forward to hearing from you soon!

As USDA increases hiring, advancement, retention and inclusion of individuals with disabilities, we must also consider the transition of new employees (with and without disabilities) into Federal service. Stuart Bender, Director of the Office of Ethics, (who, in addition to his ethics duties, previously was the executive lead for USDA's Onboarding Working Group) provides tips in this month's column to help managers transition or "Onboard" new employees, especially those with disabilities.

### ONBOARDING & ACCESS FOR ALL: Seven Tips for Managers with New Hires

**By Stuart Bender, Director, USDA Office of Ethics**

Dr. Richard Lavoie, a noted expert on disability and inclusion, tells the story about a New England winter snowstorm and a remarkable conversation between a school janitor and a child in a wheelchair. Snow had blanketed the entrance and the school's only janitor was busily shoveling the steps when a child in a wheelchair came over to him. The child had a simple request – could he clear off the wheelchair ramp first. Angrily, the janitor responded, "I have to get 500 students into this school, and there is only one of you, you'll just have to wait until I first clear the snow off the staircase so they can get in." The child responded, "But if you clear off the ramp, then we all can get in."

Supervisors can sometimes be uncertain of what to do when a new employee with disabilities arrives on their first day at work. The good news is that USDA has established an innovative Onboarding Program which provides supervisors with the needed tools to acclimate new employees. These Onboarding tools can help all new employees become included and more productive in the workplace.

At USDA's Office of Ethics, we recently hired a new ethics specialist to our team. The new hire had not worked in Federal government before, and the Onboarding Portal web site (<http://www.dm.usda.gov/obp/index.htm>) was a powerful resource. In addition to using the Onboarding website, the most important tool for a supervisor is to listen to the new hire so both the manager and the employee clearly understand each others' needs and expectations for success in the new position. When hiring a new employee, there are seven steps that can be made right away (see the Onboarding Portal for more details).

- 1. Start with Great Communications** – Send your new employee a Welcome Letter and a "Glad you are coming on board" phone call before arrival. (A sample template welcome letter is at: <http://www.dm.usda.gov/obp/supervisors.htm>). Explore reasonable accommodations in advance of the employee's start date.
- 2. Provide a Guide** – Assign the new employee a "Sponsor" – a non-supervisory member of your staff who can show the new employee "the ropes." (A handy guide for Sponsors is at: <http://www.dm.usda.gov/obp/docs/SponsorGuide.pdf>).
- 3. Use a Checklist** – For busy managers, there is an easy checklist, already prepared for you containing what is needed to make your new hire successful (<http://www.dm.usda.gov/obp/supervisors.htm>).
- 4. Contact Your Disability Employment Program Manager and the TARGET Center.** Connecting your new employee to our key USDA Disability Employment contacts will help ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided in a timely and effective manner. The TARGET Center offers support in identifying potential reasonable accommodations and demonstrating assistive technology. Visit TARGET's website for more information: <http://www.dm.usda.gov/oo/target/>.
- 5. Provide Clear Feedback** – New employees need to know how they are doing. Set aside regular time to check-in with your new hire and discuss how things are going. (See the Supervisor's Guidebook to On Boarding Feedback Questions at (<http://www.dm.usda.gov/obp/supervisors.htm>)).
- 6. Telework** – Telework provides flexibility to USDA and to employees to work remotely from home. These flexibilities are particularly helpful for employees with disabilities and may be needed as a reasonable accommodation full or part-time.
- 7. Developmental Details** – Employees with disabilities have much to contribute to the workplace. One effective way to increase knowledge is to encourage developmental details for employees to expand their horizons. USDA Detail Registry website: <http://opportunities.usda.gov/>.

## USDA Employee Group Shares First Place With Diversity Exhibit

A coalition of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight Allies (LGBTQA) placed first at the Tulare County Fair in the Featured Group division for their exhibit “Celebrating Diversity: In Our Agriculture, In Our Community, In Our People.” This is the first time local LGBTQA groups have been represented at California’s Tulare County Fair. The booth represents over a dozen community service organizations including the USDA’s California Farm Service Agency (FSA) Special Emphasis Program, Visalia Pride Lions Club, Gay Porterville, the Trevor Project, Gay Visalia, Get Equal, Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG), Tulare & Kings Counties, Gay Landia, the Skittles, My LGBTPlus, Tulare County Outreach Potluck Group, ACT for Women and Girls, and the COS Pride Club.

“This is historic for our community, and it provides a unique way to highlight some of the amazing programs our groups lead to make the valley a better place to live: scholarships, elderly services, social events, suicide prevention programs, foster child programs, political & social activism, support groups, literacy projects, and so much more, “ said Jennifer McGuire, the booth coordinator.



Sandy Waymack, current President of the Visalia Pride Lions Club added, “Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered individuals are an active and caring part of our valley community, and we are honored to showcase what our volunteer and community organizations are accomplishing here in our local area.”



The booth highlights the importance of diversity, including a tree with ornaments depicting the diverse crops grown in Tulare County. Another tree highlights some of the community services the local LGBTQA groups provide, and a clothesline of t-shirts represents the diversity of the LGBTQA people in Tulare County. The groups volunteered as Building Hosts to the Ag-Education Building.

“This exhibit started as a vision, and in sharing that vision, our community stepped up to the plate to make it a reality. We are showcasing LGBTQA organizations that have made an impact in Tulare County, one of the agricultural heartlands of America. By doing so, we are sending out the message that we are all ‘One Human Family,’” said Slade Childers, LGBT Coordinator of the CA Farm Service Agency, Special Emphasis Program.

“We are your neighbors, your sons, daughters, co-workers, and friends, and while it is about being ‘gay,’” said Jennifer McGuire, “It is also about being involved in our community, to responding to the negative stereotypes, to emphasizing that all persons have something to contribute to this wonderful place we call home. We are out, and we are proud to be a part of this diverse community.”

“We are your neighbors, your sons, daughters, co-workers, and friends, and while it is about being ‘gay,’” said Jennifer McGuire, “It is also about being involved in our community, to responding to the negative stereotypes, to emphasizing that all persons have something to contribute to this wonderful place we call home. We are out, and we are proud to be a part of this diverse community.”

## FSA and NRCS Employees “Celebrate Agriculture” In Connecticut

USDA employees from the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service served on a planning committee to host 3,500 people at a recent Celebrating Agriculture event in Woodstock, CT. County Executive Director Dawn Pindell spoke with Vocational Agriculture students about Farm Youth Loan Programs.

The event brings together people who support agriculture through exhibits, a forestry competition, wagon rides through a neighboring dairy farm, children’s activities, great food, equipment old and new, demonstrations, and a parade. We also rely on a diverse group of volunteers from local schools who help during the day while they learn about and experience agriculture.



## USDA’s Child Development Center—Care for Children Aged 6 Weeks to 5 Years

If you are a USDA employee and the parent of a child (or children) ages 6 weeks to 5 years old in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, now is the time to learn more about the USDA Child Development Center! The Center has current openings and is also accepting waitlist applications.

**By Mika J. Cross, USDA  
Work/Life and  
Wellness  
Program Manager  
[worklife@dm.usda.gov](mailto:worklife@dm.usda.gov)**



The Center is currently located in the Yates Building at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Independence Avenue SW, but will close this November and relocate to a temporary location for two years in the General Services Administration building at F and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets NW. Hours of operation are from 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The center is conveniently located and offers affordable rates. Though there are currently enrollment spots available, please be advised that placement on the waitlist does not guarantee enrollment at the Center. USDA Employees will be given priority!

The USDA also has a child care center in Beltsville, Maryland, for our greater metropolitan area employees. Visit the Center’s website at <http://www.cclc.com/center/md/usda-small-wonders> for more information. If you are interested in learning more about the USDA Child Development Center or the Small Wonders Child Care Center in Beltsville, please send an email to [childcare@dm.usda.gov](mailto:childcare@dm.usda.gov).



**Classrooms in the GSA Building Child Care Center  
Photos by Lance Cheung**

### **Real Life Work and Family Balance!**

Meet Kelly Strzelecki, a Senior Trade Advisor with USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). Most of Kelly’s career has been a practice in balancing work and family, and the FAS has made it possible. Since 1997, when she adopted her first child from China, Kelly has been in a job-share position working approximately 26 hours per week.

This flexibility has allowed her to advance her career while continuing to take care of her family. Kelly’s second child was born in 1999, and her need for balancing became even greater. After returning to work, she took full advantage of the USDA lactation room, which allowed her to continue breast-feeding her son for nearly a year.

Kelly lives near Baltimore, so having the option to Telework once a week has been a great time saver for her and her family. The Work/Life and Wellness opportunities at USDA have helped Kelly continue with a job she really enjoys while allowing her to find the time to balance a busy family life.



**Kelly Strzelecki, Senior Trade Advisor, FAS**

### MEET THIS MONTH'S SUPERVISOR SHINING STARS

This month's "Supervisor Shining Stars" are Mr. David Knopf (Director) and Mr. Dennis Koong, (Deputy Director) of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Washington Field Office.



**David Knopf,  
Director of the  
National  
Agricultural  
Statistics  
Service**

Both of these supervisors were nominated by employees who understand and appreciate the value they have for a flexible and supportive workplace. Koong (below right) has been actively encouraging Telework, increasing the number of scheduled days that core teleworkers can work from home. He also allows for flexibility with telework schedules when employees need to switch their scheduled days to accommodate their personal needs outside of work.

Dave (left) has a special spot in his heart for children. He and his wife have four children of their own and have been foster parents for a number of years. They have also adopted two children, a brother and sister who were in the foster parent program.



**Dennis Koong,  
Deputy Director  
of the National  
Agricultural  
Statistics Service**

When two employees were expecting babies, Knopf and Koong looked for ways to support the new parents by finding a location for setting up a Lactation Room. Although new space was not available, they made accommodations for a locked room that was only to be used by the nursing mothers. They also approved the use of alternate work schedules to allow longer breaks for expressing milk throughout the duty day.

This dynamic duo continues to exhibit concern for all employees within the office by supporting the needs of their employees and encouraging ways to better balance their work and personal lives. Congratulations, David and Dennis!

### USDA Employees "Run At Work" Day

Employees from USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) New Orleans Field Office substituted their lunch break to take part in National Run At Work Day. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the cool breeze and the camaraderie. The group is now considering a daily walk to promote health and wellness among their staff.



Participating GIPSA employees included (Standing, from left to right): Abraham Washington; James Magee; Melba Garza; Phyliss Zeno; Wally Alves; Troy Kramer; Terry Lebouef; Ben Cotton, Sr.; and, Kristen Preucil. Kneeling: Robbie Julian; Gerald Raymond, Sr. Not pictured: Glenda Lasseigne; Dana Mitchell.



Several GIPSA employees from the New Orleans Field Office, led by Melba Garza (front), participate in "Run At Work" Day.

## Wellness and Health—A Personal Story

**By Julie MacSwain  
and David Rose**

It began as a “Mom’s day out”. Joy Rose, wife of long-time NRCS employee David Rose, went to see a movie before playing in the Community Band in Chico, CA. As she settled in, a “weird” feeling turned into a seizure. She struggled out of the theatre, collapsing in the hallway. Later, she woke up in the ambulance.



NRCS employee David Rose and his wife, Joy, want other USDA employees to be aware of the importance of prevention when it comes to their health. A serious and sudden bout of cancer is prompting Joy to advise: “Don’t neglect your health. Get routine checkups, and be honest with your doctor about seemingly small things.”

In the emergency room, she was told she had a “focal point seizure”. The seizure was caused by a golf ball sized mass just above her right ear. It was diagnosed as [oligodendroglioma](#), a brain tumor.

Doctors performed surgery February 2009, at the University of California-San Francisco Medical Center, removing most of the tumor. Following a year of chemotherapy, the Roses moved to Minnesota.

In 2010, Joy began her follow-up care at the Mayo Clinic. In October 2011, a spot was identified in the same area as the original tumor. By December, the spot had grown to the size of a pea. In January 2012, surgery was done at the Mayo Clinic’s Saint Mary’s Hospital. The tumor had changed from a grade 2 (slow growing and “benign”) to a grade 3 (faster growing and “malignant”). She did 6 ½ weeks of radiation treatment and is now undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

The Roses appreciate every day together as a family. Joy had no obvious problem signs, the tumor being slow growing. Her

message today is, “Don’t neglect your health. Get routine checkups, and be honest with your doctor about seemingly small things.” Joy, David, and their four children—Amber, Brian, David Jr., and Isabelle—are in our thoughts and prayers.

For more information on brain tumors, see The American Cancer Society at <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/index> or The National Brain Tumor Society at <http://www.brainumor.org/>.

**REMINDER!** This year’s Federal Benefits Open Season runs from Monday, November 12, 2012 through Monday, December 10, 2012. During this time, you can enroll in, change, or cancel an existing enrollment in your dental, vision, or health plans. Visit OPM’s website at [www.opm.gov/insure](http://www.opm.gov/insure) to learn more.

### Correction

The article on page 5 in the September issue of *MyUSDA* about the 2012 Natural Resources Conservation Service American Indian Heritage Poster Artwork incorrectly identified the author. Carol Crouch, the NRCS American Indian/Alaskan Native Special Emphasis Program Manager, wrote and submitted the article. We regret the error.

## Your Letters to MyUSDA

Good morning! Just wanted you to know how much I enjoyed the latest issue of *MyUSDA*.

I was cheering for all of the interns that you featured, too...they are inspiring!

All my best—

**Sandy Clark**  
U.S. Forest Service  
Morgantown, WV

This is just a comment about the USDA newsletter. With the three column format, when a person is trying to read the newsletter on the computer screen (unless you have superpower eyesight so that the entire page can be displayed at once,) you have to keep scrolling down one column, then up to the top of the next, then down and so on. You can’t just “read the page” without all this irritating scrolling. I don’t understand why this format is used when it is such a pain to read.

*Editor’s Note:* Thanks for the constructive feedback, Sherry. Starting with this issue, we have taken your advice. Hopefully, it’s now a lot easier to navigate!

**Sherry Bauer**  
U.S. Forest Service  
Custer, SD

## MyUSDA Volume 3, Issue 1

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](#).

**Catch Up On Recent Issues of MyUSDA!**

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March 2012

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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 November submissions is **Wednesday, November 14, 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)