

ing initiatives, announces new SDA's Charge Card Program.

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Calendar of Events

September 2012	October 2012	November 2012
3rd: Labor Day Holiday (Govt. Closed)	6th & 7th: Fiscal Year 2012 Rollover Activities	8th: Cardholder Suspensions
10th: Cardholder Suspensions	8th: Columbus Day Holiday (Govt. Closed)	9th & 23rd: Cardholder Suspension Lifts
10th: APCs submit Q3 LAPC Quarterly Review Confirmation to CCSC	11th: Cardholder Suspensions	12th: Veterans Day Holiday (Govt. Closed)
11th & 25th: Cardholder Suspension Lifts	9th & 23rd: Cardholder Suspension Lifts	22nd: Thanksgiving Holiday (Govt. Closed)
30th: Last day of Federal Govt. Fiscal Year 2012	31st: Halloween!	

Agency of the Quarter

The USDA Charge Card Service Center (CCSC) is pleased to congratulate the **Agency of the Quarter for Q2 FY 2012**, [Forest Service \(FS\)](#), and [Kelly Koeppe](#) (FS APC) and the **Agency of the Quarter for Q3 FY 2012**, the [Food Inspection & Safety Service \(FSIS\)](#), and [Janet Elm](#) (FSIS APC). These agencies achieved the following outstanding metrics:

Q2 FY12

Forest Service (FS)			
	Q1-2012	Q2-2011	Variance
Convenience Checks usage	4.07%	3.83%	-5.90%
Transactions Final Approved within 60 days	88.13%	91.20%	3.48%
	Q2-2011	Q2-2012	Variance
Spend increase	\$35,451,242	\$32,592,414	-8.06%

Q3 FY12

Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS)			
	Q2-2012	Q3-2011	Variance
Convenience Checks usage	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Transactions Final Approved within 60 days	89.34%	96.30%	7.80%
	Q3-2011	Q3-2012	Variance
Spend increase	\$1,130,116	\$1,353,207	19.74%

The **Q2 FY12 Honorable Mention** agency is the [Food Safety and Inspection Service \(FSIS\)](#) and [Janet Elm](#) (FSIS APC) and the **Q3 FY12 Honorable Mention** agency is the [Office of the Inspector General](#) and [Linda Josey](#) (OIG APC). Congratulations!

The CCSC Team would like to thank all charge card program participants for all of your continued hard work, contributions, and accomplishments. If you have any questions, please contact us at ccsc@dm.usda.gov.

Green Purchasing Program (GPP)

As discussed during the June 12th APC Meeting, USDA's CCSC is advancing the **Green Purchasing Program (GPP)** to promote and advance former President Bush's Executive Order 13423, "**Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management**" and President Obama's Executive Order 13514, "**Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance.**" In accordance with these Executive Orders USDA and USDA's Purchase Policy, as outlined in both the AGAR and posted Draft DR 5013-6 (9.g.), bio-preferred products are to be purchased unless certain conditions are met. These conditions are outlined at <http://www.biopreferred.gov>.



USDA Supports Buying GREEN!

The CCSC originally developed and launched the GPP as an effort to enhance the purchasing information reported for USDA's Environmental Management Division. This program now must be implemented as standard policy throughout all USDA Agencies until we have alternate green purchasing tracking system within Access Online (AXOL). Each of your agencies were previously contacted regarding a start date for the GPP and definitive responses regarding rollout dates were due by August 31st. The goal is to have all agencies throughout USDA to be participating in the Green Purchasing by October 1, 2012.

The following agencies are currently running the GPP: Forest Service (FS) – Regions 1, 4, and 6; Rural Development (RD); National Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS); and Food Safety and Inspection Services (FSIS).

The following agencies are scheduled to run the GPP, effective October 1, 2012: Marketing Regulatory Program (MRP) (i.e., AMS, APHIS, GIPSA); Research, Education, and Economics (REE) (i.e., ARS, ERS, NASS, NIFA); Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO); Farm, Foreign Agricultural Service (FFAS) (i.e., RMA, FAS, FSA-FA, FSA-CE); Office of Chief Financial Officers (OCIO); Forest Service (FS) (i.e., all regions); Office of General Counsel (OGC); and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

The purpose of this Green Purchasing Program (GPP) is to increase "green purchasing" within USDA and to track these transactions within AXOL. Currently, there is no radio button or designated field to track "green purchases" and the CCSC team is working with the U.S. Bank development team to add a radio button to facilitate tracking of "green purchases" within USDA's charge card program. In the meantime, until this technical update is made within AXOL, the GPP Workgroup has decided to utilize the "Agency Specific Field" which is already in the AXOL system. Cardholders are not required to enter any data in this field per the DR 5013-6; however, agencies can require documentation in this field at the agency level.

Over the past year and a half, the GPP Workgroup developed and implemented a process to support the pilot program which requires our Cardholders to perform two steps when procuring green items. The following instructions will assist Cardholders with green purchase documentation and proper percentage allocations when a purchase consists of both "green" and "non-green" products.

- **Step 1:** The first step is to identify green products utilizing labels and descriptions. For example, the "**Energy Star**" label on a printer or laptop designates a certain type of "green" product. In addition, words such as **recyclable**, **recycled content** and **environmentally preferable** are often part of a product item description. Cardholders can refer to **Exhibit A-1: Green Purchasing Categories and Labels** on the following page as a reference tool when evaluating "green" products.
- **Step 2:** The second step is crucial to the success of this pilot program as it depends on user entry of the word "Green" into a specific field within AXOL. The GPP Workgroup requests that Cardholders enter the word "Green" in the "Agency Specific Data" field under the "Comments" section of Transaction Management. This documentation will assist the CCSC with a tracking tool and also compliment existing Green Purchasing efforts set forth by the current pilot agencies and offices. Screenshot examples can be viewed on the following page.

Transaction Summary

Status	Trans Date	Posting Date	Merchant	City, State/Province	Amount	Details	Purchase ID	Accounting Code
	10/29	11/01	ABC Company	954-4855000, FL	\$67.10		624620C1445755X3533	11 0617 IDP51711 0617 [2670]

Disputed
 Trans Detail Level
 Extraded
 Reallocated
 Reallocation Locked

- Summary
- Allocations
- Transaction Line Items
- User Line Items
- Comments
- Approval History
- Client Data

Conv. Checks TIN#

Agency Specific Data
Green

Conv Ck Mer Inf / Waiver#

Goods Recvd Date
10/29/2010

Item Description
Copy Paper – 30 % Post Consumer Recyclable Paper

Purchase Card Transaction Sample of a GPP 'Green Purchase' entry in the Comment Fields

Step 2 of the GPP as described on the previous page can be viewed in the following two screenshots.

Purchase Card Transaction in AXOL

Convenience Check Transaction in AXOL

In addition to leveraging labels and descriptions to identify green products, the USDA/GSA Advantage website www.usdaadvantage.gsa.gov is another tool which provides Cardholders the ability to search for green products. First, access the main page and under the section titled "Special Categories" click "Environmental" and a box will appear titled, "Shop for Environmental Items." Products will appear on the page with an environmental label and Cardholders can utilize this function to locate green products based on an environmental classification.

Transaction Summary

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- Summary
- Allocations
- Transaction Line Items
- User Line Items
- Comments
- Approval History
- Client Data

Conv. Checks TIN#
12345

Agency Specific Data
Green

Conv Ck Mer Inf / Waiver#
ABC Office Supply Co., 123 Street, Washington DC 20024 / Waiver # 07

Goods Recvd Date
10/29/2010

Item Description
Copy Paper – 30 % Post Consumer Recyclable Paper

Convenience Check Transaction Sample of a GPP 'Green Purchase' entry in the Comment Fields

The GPP is a two-fold incentive program promoting Green Purchasing Categories and Labels (*recycled Content, energy efficient (ENERGY STAR® labeled; Federal Energy Management Program [FEMP]-designated, and low standby power), biobased, environmentally preferable, Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT), water efficient, non-ozone depleting products, and alternative fuel vehicles and alternative fuels*) while incorporating a tracking system within the current reconciliation process.

We have received great feedback so far from APCs, LAPCs and Senior Management here at the Department, including accolades from current members of the Green Purchasing Workgroup Team which submits progress reports in areas of Green Reporting & Tracking directly to the Office of Management & Budget (OMB). Please send any questions, comments, suggestions, or ideas about the GPP to the CCSC at ccsc@dm.usda.gov and thank you for **GOING GREEN!**

Exhibit A-1: Green Purchasing Categories and Labels

A “green” purchase, as referenced in the [Green Purchasing Affirmative Procurement Program \(GPAPP\)](#) is defined as the purchasing and use of the following:

- Recycled content
- Energy efficient (ENERGY STAR® labeled; Federal Energy Management Program [FEMP]-designated, and low standby power)
- Bio-based/BioPreferred
- Environmentally preferable
- Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT)
- Water efficient
- Non-ozone depleting products
- Alternative fuel vehicles and alternative fuels

Logos - The following logos and associated categories will assist cardholders with identifying green products:

- Recycled Content



- Energy Star Compliant



- FEMP Energy Efficient



- Bio-based/ BioPreferred



- EPEAT



- Water Efficient Logo – EPA Water Sense Program



Access Online System Administration Modification

Reminder from the communication, **PCard-07-2012: Access Online System Administration Modification Notice (Update)** sent on September, 21, 2012: Due to a system modification, the ability to setup and/or maintain *User Profiles* in the “Access Online System Administration” was disabled on Monday, June 25, 2012.



As of that date, Coordinators had to complete and submit the “CPS Access Online Form Client Setup User ID Request – Government” form to US Bank to process all User Profile requests. Please inform your Coordinators and Approving Officials that the enhancement update to the User Profiles in Access Online System Administration has been completed. As a result, the Access Online System Administration functionality was re-enabled on Monday, September 24, 2012.

The CCSC recognized the hardship and inconvenience that this may have caused and was very appreciative of your patience during the System Administration unavailability period.

New Dates for Purchase Cardholder Account Suspensions & Suspension Lifts

On September 10, 2012, the **PCard-12-2012: New Dates for Purchase Cardholder Account Suspensions and Suspension Lifts for FY13** notification was emailed to Purchase Coordinators outlining the new dates for Suspension and Suspension Lifts for FY13. The FY13 rollover will be held on October 6th and 7th, and for that reason we have moved October’s suspension to the 11th so as to give the cardholders a few more days to approve their transactions.

If you have any questions on this process, please email the CCSC at CCSC@DM.USDA.GOV.

Purchase Cardholder Suspension Dates (Note: Suspensions occur once a month)	Suspension Lift Dates (Note: Lifts on ‘suspended’ accounts occur twice a month)
August 8, 2012	August 9 th and 23 rd , 2012
September 10, 2012	September 11 th and 25 th , 2012
October 11, 2012	October 9 th and 23 rd , 2012
November 8, 2012	November 9 th and 23 rd , 2012
December 10, 2012	December 11 th and 26 th , 2012
January 8, 2013	January 9 th and 23 rd , 2013
February 8, 2013	February 11 th and 25 th , 2013
March 8, 2013	March 11 th and 25 th , 2013
April 8, 2013	April 9 th and 23 rd , 2013
May 8, 2013	May 9 th and 23 rd , 2013
June 10, 2013	June 11 th and 25 th , 2013
July 8, 2013	July 9 th and 23 rd , 2013
August 8, 2013	August 9 th and 23 rd , 2013
September 9, 2013	September 10 th and 24 th , 2013

Reminders for LAPC & APC Reviews

This is a reminder that LAPC Quarterly Review Checklists for July 1 – September 30, 2012 are due to APCs by November 30, 2012. APC’s certifications of receipt of all LAPC Quarterly Reviews were due to the CCSC by December 7, 2012.

As previously communicated, LAPC Quarterly Review Checklists should be collected and kept by the APCs. The checklist should not be sent to the CCSC; only the certification form that all LAPC checklists were received by the APC should be sent to the CCSC. The form must be signed by the APC and dated to be deemed as valid.

The CCSC has the responsibility at the Departmental level to ensure that the agencies are performing the required management and oversight and therefore, the APCs are to complete and sign the “APC Certification of LAPC Quarterly Review” form, to certify that they have received all of the LAPCs checklists. Fillable checklist forms can be accessed on the CCSC website at:

LAPC Quarterly Review Checklist:

PDF: http://www.dm.usda.gov/procurement/ccsc/LAPCQuarterlyReviewChecklist_20100810.pdf

The LAPC Review and the APC Certification form are completed quarterly, according to the following timeline:

Quarter Reviewed:	For the Months of:	Due Date to APC:	Due Date to the CCSC:
Q1 FY12	October – December	February 29	March 7, 2012
Q2 FY12	January – March	May 31	June 7, 2012
Q3 FY12	April – June	August 31	September 10, 2012
Q4 FY12	July – September	November 30	December 7, 2012
Q1 FY13	October – December	February 28	March 7, 2013
Q2 FY13	January – March	May 31	June 7, 2013
Q3 FY13	April – June	August 30	September 9, 2013
Q4 FY13	July – September	November 29	December 6, 2013

The review should include approximately 25% of the LAPCs’ Cardholders each quarter and as a result, the review should cover 100% of the LAPC’s Cardholders by the end of the year. This review does not mean you must look at physical documentation from every cardholder within that 25% of cardholders you review each quarter. If the reviews are performed throughout the quarter, the number of reviews stipulated should be manageable for all LAPCs. There should be at least some physical review of documentation done of the reviewed cardholders each quarter in the form of scanned, faxed, or original receipts, purchase orders, or other like documentation.

If you have not emailed your APC Certifications of receipt of all LAPC Quarterly Reviews to the CCSC yet, please do so as soon as possible. And if you have any further questions on this process please email the CCSC at ccsc@dm.usda.gov.

Unapproved Transactions over 120+ Days & New Termination Policy

The CCSC continually communicates the importance of Cardholders performing timely reviews, approvals, and/or reallocations of transactions posted in Access Online (AXOL). In addition to stressing the importance of timely transaction approvals in the newsletter, other program communication, during APC Meetings, and trainings, this policy is also listed in the Draft Departmental Regulation (DR) 5013-6, Coordinator’s Purchase Card Guide, and the Purchase Cardholder Guide (you may refer to section 9, letters O and P of the Draft DR 5013-6 for further information regarding consequences of failure to approve transactions in a timely manner).

The CCSC implemented the “Cardholder Suspension Report” process in May 2011 at the Department Level as a means of oversight for those who have failed to approve their transactions after they have posted to AXOL for more than 60 days. This process has noticeably improved the approval rate of Cardholder transactions within the initial 60 days of posting to AXOL period (please let the CCSC know if you would like us to provide you with your individual agency’s numbers/metrics).

In April 2012, the CCSC started to review the Cardholders listed on the suspension report for consecutive months for failing to approve their posted transactions in a timely manner. For example, in a previous analysis performed by the CCSC team, 59 Cardholder accounts fell off the suspension list only because the transactions were not reconciled within 7 cycles or 199 days and therefore, they were purged from the “Transaction Management List” in AXOL. To address issues like this, the CCSC decided on taking a proactive approach to identify Cardholders with unapproved transactions that are close to reaching the purge threshold.

The CCSC sends a monthly report (called the “Unapproved Transactions – 120+ days from Posting Date”) to all APCs with Cardholder accounts in “suspense status” with unapproved transactions that have aged past 120 days. The CCSC requests that APCs work with their LAPCs to review those accounts and determine whether or not they should remain open. For the accounts that you determine should not remain open, please advise the CCSC so that we may have the bank change the account status from suspense (S1) to terminate (T9). If an APC decides to keep the account open, then it is expected that the APC ensures that this account is “current” by the next suspension lift date; in addition the APC should send an email to the CCSC with a justification of why the account should remain open. The CCSC will assume that any Cardholder that has not approved his/her outstanding transactions by the following suspension lift date (as listed in the calendar on the first page of this newsletter) is either no longer with the agency, or she/he no longer has a need for the card, and therefore, the CCSC will terminate the purchase card account.

We expect that many of these accounts would have been previously terminated by the APC/LAPC and this will act as a form of clean up for those accounts which should have been previously closed. In situations where the accounts continue to remain open, it is critical for the Coordinators to perform the proper oversight of these cards with excessive aged outstanding transactions (120 days+) and take action to resolve these accounts one way or another.

Please note that the CCSC includes the HCA/HCAD on all future communications pertaining to accounts that have reached 60+ days in suspense status (transactions 120+ days from posting date) without approval.



FMMI Fiscal Year 2012 Rollover Activities

FMMI Cardholder and Approving Official instructions for Fiscal Year (FY) 12 Year-end are as follows:

Sunday, September 30, 2012

- Cardholders are required to have approved and or reconciled all of their FY12 transactions posted to Access Online (AXOL) as well as complete all related comments and item description information for compliance and audit purposes. It is advised that cardholders approve all transactions by Friday, September 28th COB as the system may be unavailable over the weekend due to FMMI Maintenance.
- TIN and merchant information are critical for IRS Reporting of Convenience Checks.
- Cardholders need to ensure that period end estimates have been submitted for any outstanding FY12 purchases that have not been reallocated and approved in AXOL because they have not yet posted.
- Approving Officials should “final” approve all FY12 purchase card and convenience checks transactions.

Monday, October 1, 2012 – Monday, October 8, 2012

- Cardholders and Approving Officials may begin to handle any approvals and or reconciliations (reallocations) in AXOL for both Purchase and Fleet. However, FY13 Default Accounting Codes (DACs) will not be added until the following week. It is advised that APC's and LAPC's consult with their Financial Points of Contacts within their respective agencies to see when they would like them to begin approving and or reallocating transactions again.

Tuesday, October 9, 2012

- Newly posted transactions in AXOL will reflect FY13 DACs. Cardholders should do the following:
 - Ensure that each transaction in AXOL has the correct FY accounting to match the year which it was purchased. If it does not, reallocate appropriately to the correct accounting code. If a prior year accounting is needed (e.g., FY12), make sure and use that code for reallocation, as it should still be available. However, if unable to find the prior year accounting code in AXOL, contact your APC/LAPC to have the code uploaded in AXOL.

The Agency Financial POCs will begin loading FY13 accounting codes in AXOL in September. **Cardholders should refrain from selecting these codes to reallocate their transactions until Monday, October 1st.** Please note that these codes may not be funded before October 1st and therefore, if used, they could reject in addition to permanently locking the transaction and prohibiting ability for the Cardholder to perform a second reallocation. Cardholders must review the transaction to make sure the appropriate FY accounting code was selected on the transaction prior to clicking the “Save” button.

Coordinator Information and Instructions for FY12 Year-end are as follows:

Monday, October 8, 2012

- U.S. Bank will update all Purchase and Fleet card DACs to reflect the FY13 values.

Wednesday, October 10, 2012

- U.S. Bank will provide the CCSC with the following:
 - A list of Cardholders who's DAC became invalid after the conversion. Invalid status can occur if the Valid Value associated with the Cardholder's DAC has not been loaded into FMMI or AXOL, or if the conversion rules produced an invalid DAC.
 - The CCSC will provide to Agencies a list of outstanding invalid DACs which result from the conversion or were not updated through the conversion process.

Coordinator Information and Instructions for FY12 Year-end continued...

Wednesday, October 10, 2012 – Friday, October 19, 2012

- Agencies must be diligent in correcting all invalid DAC issues, as this will lead to transactions not being extracted properly and paid, which in turn could lead to future card Managing Account suspensions and penalty interest payments.
- The CCSC will reallocate outstanding non-extracted transactions (e.g., because of DAC issues) to the correct DAC. Cardholders will still be able to reallocate the transaction to different accounting one more time, prior to it being locked permanently.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Frank Hodo at Frank.Hodo@dm.usda.gov, or the CCSC at CCSC@dm.usda.gov.

Convenience Check Scorecard

Convenience Checks:

As a reminder and in accordance with the AGAR ADVISORY No. 52, agencies and cardholders may not use convenience checks for purchases or payments unless there is an applicable ‘DCIA Waiver for Convenience Checks’ number that allows such use (for a list of the DCIA Waivers available for Convenience Checks, please refer to ‘Section 1540—Agency Waivers’ of the “Treasury Financial Manual – Part 4—Chapter 1500 – TREASURY’S ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER (EFT) REQUIREMENT (T/L 674)”, which can be found on the following link: <http://www.fms.treas.gov/tfm/vol1/v1p4c150.html>).

Agencies are expected to significantly reduce, and to eventually eliminate, the use of convenience checks. Agencies are also expected to sharply reduce their number of authorized check writers and check stock, eventually eliminating this duty altogether.

APCs/LAPCs shall advise their cardholders that convenience checks may not be used to make purchases or payments absent an applicable waiver. LAPCs must review cardholders’ authorization to have checks, and shall cancel check-writing authorizations of cardholders who do not purchase supplies or services in the scope of authorized agency waivers. They must also collect, record, and destroy unneeded blank check stocks. APCs/LAPCs shall develop procedures to eliminate convenience checks pursuant to this Advisory No. 52. Agencies shall continue to explore alternative payment methods for categories of transactions covered by waivers

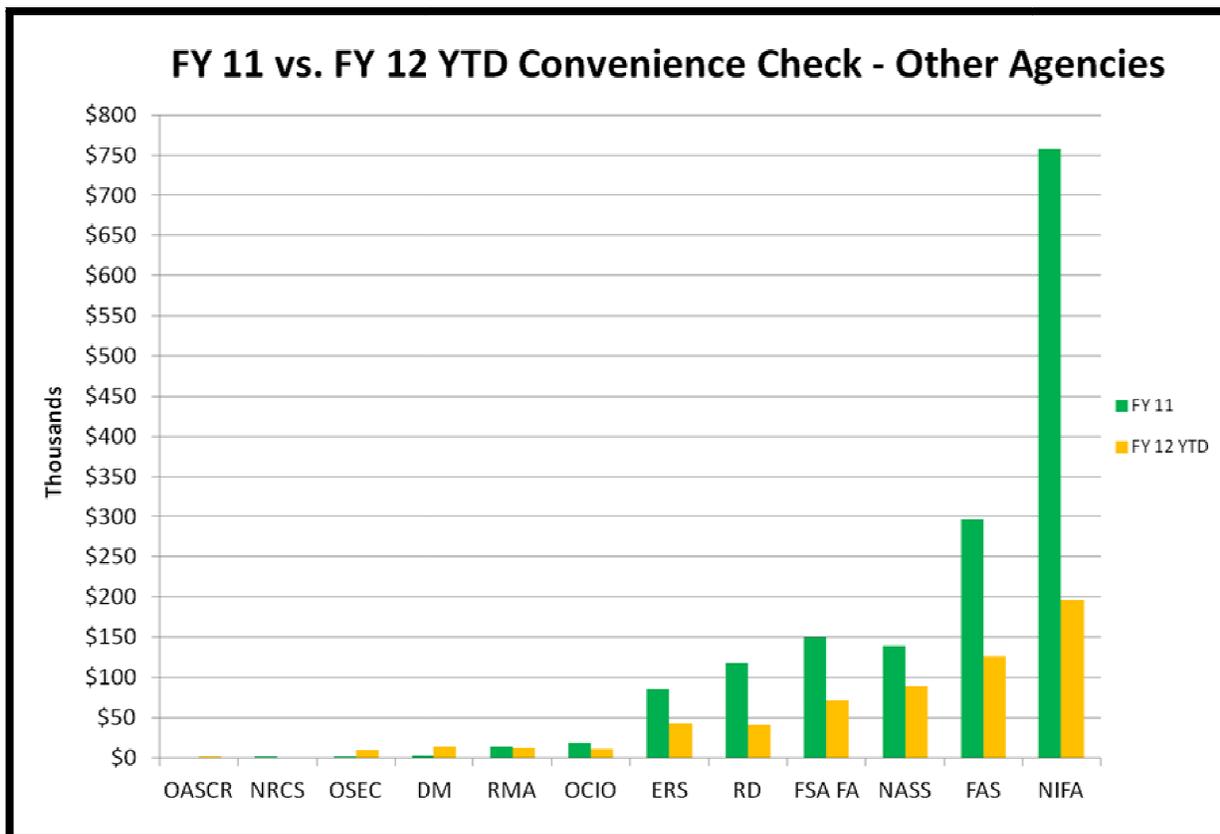
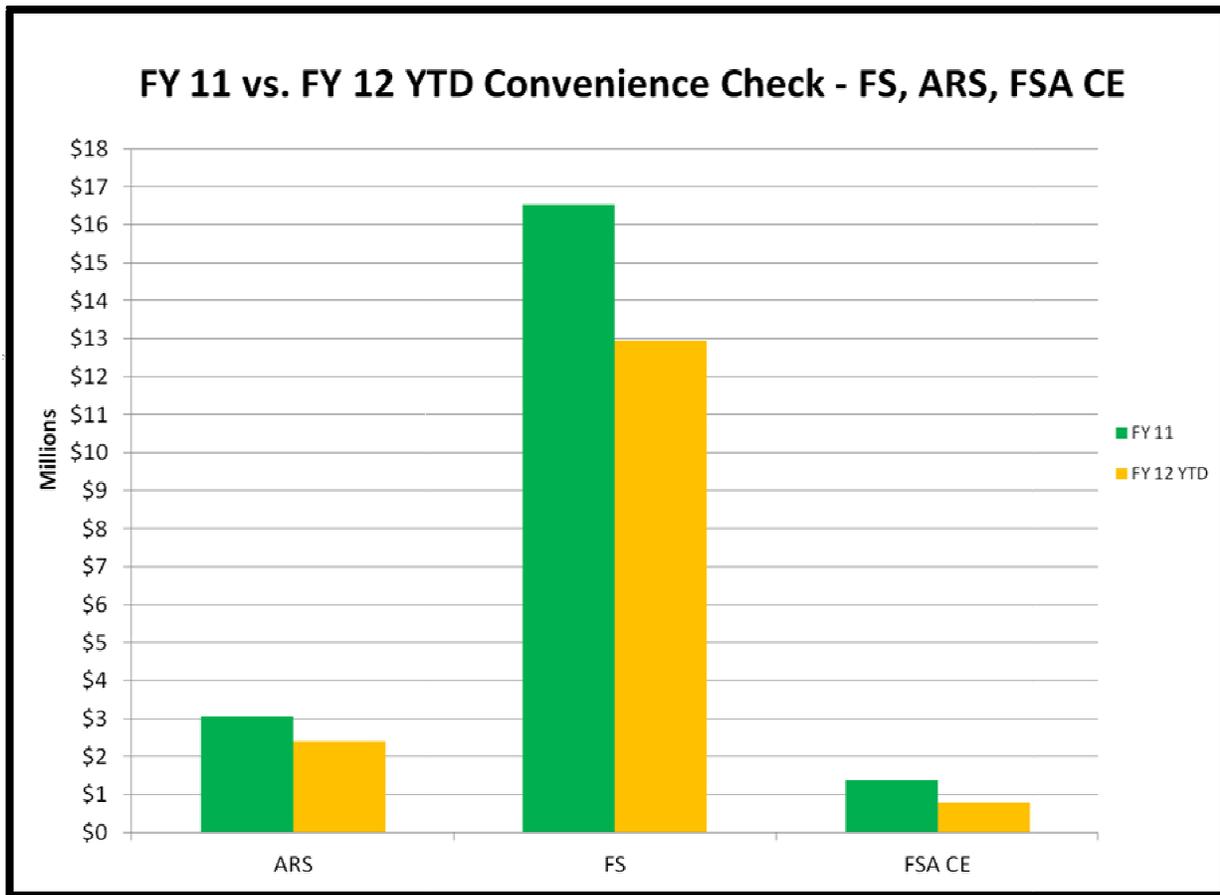
In addition, the CCSC will be providing you with a monthly statistics of the convenience checks usage by Agency (refer to the Convenience Checks Scorecard and Graphs below). This will be used to track and monitor the checks usage to ensure that the annual reduction goal of 30% is being met.



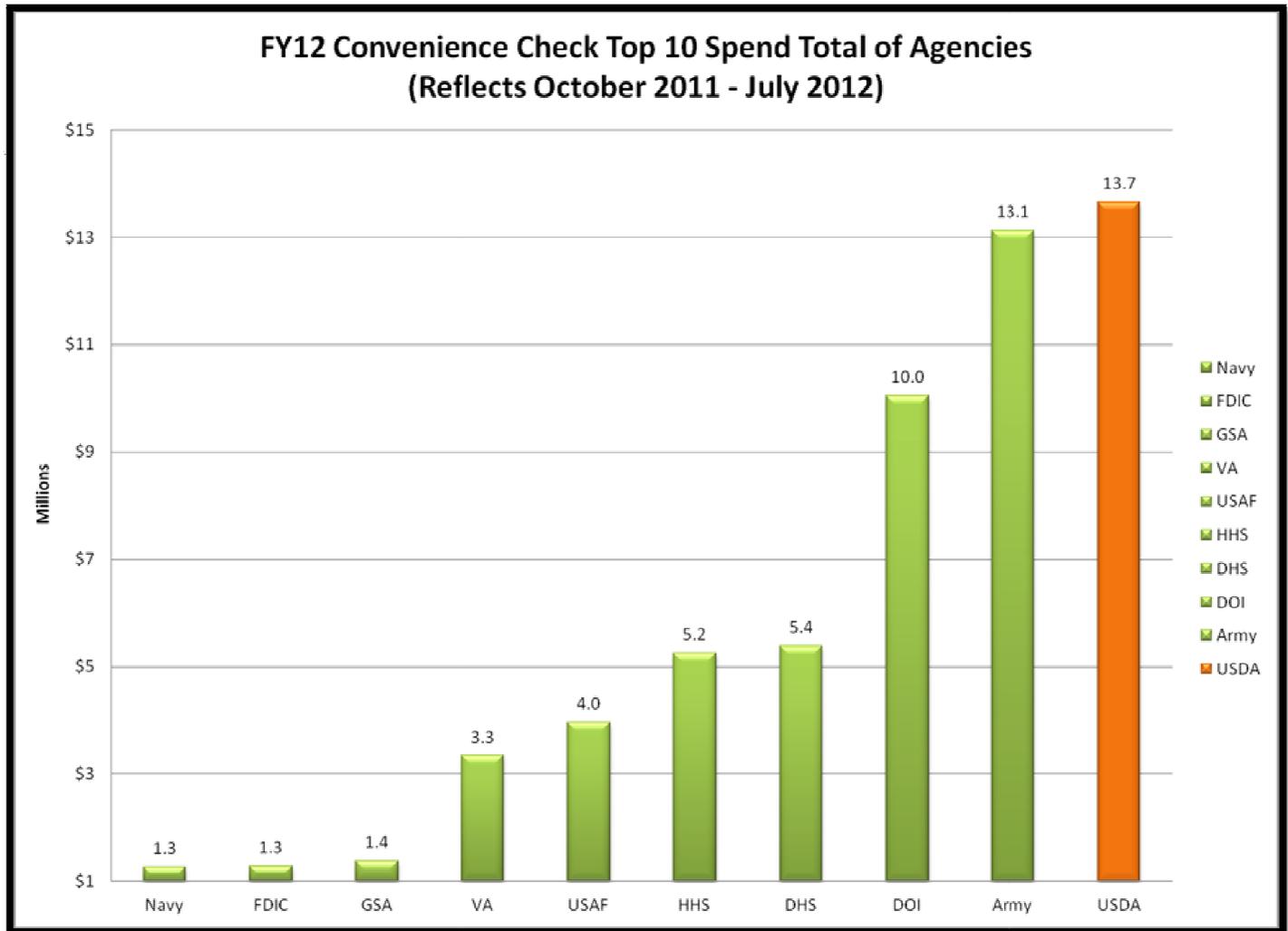
USDA convenience checks must have an applicable **‘DCIA Waiver for Convenience Checks’** number that allows use and corresponds to the purchase.

Convenience Checks Scorecard

Agency	# checks FY10	\$ checks FY10	# checks FY11	\$ checks FY11	# variance FY10-FY11	\$ variance FY10-FY11	# checks FY12 YTD	\$ checks FY12 YTD	# variance FY11-FY12 YTD	\$ variance FY11-FY12 YTD
01 OSEC	0	\$0.00	3	\$1,748.00	-300.00%	-1748.00%	9	\$9,768.80	-200.00%	-458.86%
03 ARS	5,668	\$3,197,368.27	5,106	\$3,045,616.00	9.92%	4.75%	3,849	\$2,403,796.66	24.62%	21.07%
07 RD	352	\$123,830.11	374	\$117,948.69	-6.25%	4.75%	145	\$40,963.39	61.23%	65.27%
08 RMA	45	\$5,531.37	39	\$13,873.76	13.33%	-150.82%	24	\$12,360.12	38.46%	10.91%
10 FAS	357	\$311,375.70	297	\$296,509.58	16.81%	4.77%	136	\$126,304.85	54.21%	57.40%
11 FS	28,085	\$17,018,993.38	24,893	\$16,528,679.54	11.37%	2.88%	19,614	\$12,947,547.66	21.21%	21.67%
16 NRCS	0	\$0.00	3	\$1,278.00	-300.00%	-1278.00%	0	\$0.00	100.00%	100.00%
18 ERS	191	\$85,631.66	181	\$85,907.57	5.24%	-0.32%	71	\$42,550.25	60.77%	50.47%
20 NASS	523	\$161,111.78	515	\$139,041.22	1.53%	13.70%	396	\$88,360.81	23.11%	36.45%
22 NIFA	1,010	\$565,538.32	1,237	\$757,529.02	-22.48%	-33.95%	315	\$196,502.16	74.54%	74.06%
57 FSA-FA	833	\$292,570.27	448	\$149,372.87	46.22%	48.94%	284	\$71,305.94	36.61%	52.26%
64 OCIO	257	\$16,802.09	284	\$18,401.83	-10.51%	-9.52%	187	\$11,258.83	34.15%	38.82%
75 DM	3	\$1,663.51	1	\$2,500.00	66.67%	-50.28%	3	\$14,057.02	-200.00%	-462.28%
84 OASCR	4	\$2,677.53	0	\$0.00	100.00%	100.00%	2	\$330.00	-200.00%	-330.00%
97 FSA-CE	7,745	\$1,669,996.48	6,181	\$1,365,754.52	20.19%	18.22%	4,000	\$801,169.93	35.29%	41.34%



Also illustrated below, is a graph that shows how the USDA compares to other Government Agencies for FY12 (courtesy of GSA). The CCSC will continue to assist your Agency with efforts to eliminate the use of convenience checks.



USDA Charge Card Service Center (CCSC)



The CCSC welcomes your feedback. Please email us at ccsc@dm.usda.gov about ways we can improve the newsletter, with topics you would like included in upcoming newsletters, and or questions. Thank you!

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