


For: FSA and RMA Employees

2016 Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Program

Approved by: Deputy Administrator for Management



1 Overview

A Background

The Abraham Lincoln Honor Award is the most prestigious U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) award presented by the Secretary of Agriculture, recognizing noteworthy accomplishments that significantly contribute to the advancement of USDA's strategic goals, mission objectives, and overall management excellence. Employees at all grade levels are eligible for recognition.

The theme for this year's ceremony scheduled for fall is, "USDA - Strong Service and Superior Results". As established in 2014, one Honor Award nomination (either individual or group) will be selected as the contribution that most closely embodies this year's theme and will receive special recognition at the ceremony.

B Purpose

This notice:

- informs all FSA and RMA employees of the 2016 Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Program
- identifies the contact person for each Agency
- advises FSA employees of the nomination process for this year
- provides the timelines for submitting nominations within each Agency.

Note: All RMA nominations shall be submitted to their Agency contact (subparagraph 3 A) by **Thursday, April 7, 2016**. All FSA nominations and the final RMA nominations shall be submitted by e-mail to **sm.fsa.shapnominations@wdc.usda.gov** no later than close of business, **Monday, April 11, 2016**.

Disposal Date	Distribution
July 1, 2016	All FSA and RMA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Criteria

A Eligibility

Employees at all grade levels and contractors are eligible for recognition.

Note: Nominations that include contractors **must** have the concurring signature of the respective contracting officer.

As part of the Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards nomination process, Agencies are required to determine whether their nominees have any Employee Relations (ER), Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and/or Civil Rights (CR) violations on their record that might discredit the Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards program if the nominee is approved for an award.

Federal employees are disqualified from nomination under either of the following scenarios:

- a finding of discrimination within 3 years of the nomination deadline
- any disciplinary action within 3 years of the nomination deadline.

Special nominee circumstances that need to be addressed are as follows.

- **Cross-Agency Nominees.** When a nomination includes team members from another Agency, the nominating Agency is responsible for completing the review for **all** team members. The nominating Agency's contact can request assistance from Human Resources Division (HRD) by submitting the request by e-mail to **sm.fsa.shapnominations@wdc.usda.gov**.
- **External Federal Nominees.** When a nomination includes a Federal employee from outside USDA, the nominating Agency is responsible for vetting the external nominee.
- **Private Citizens.** Nominating Agencies and Under Secretaries should exercise extreme care and vigilance to ensure that private citizens nominated for a Abraham Lincoln Honor Award reflect well on the Secretary and the Department as a whole.

B Contribution Period

With the exception of Category 8, "Heroism and Emergency Response" (subparagraph C), Agencies and external partners have up to 3 years from the conclusion of a given contribution to submit it for consideration of an Honor Award, so nominating officials are encouraged to **defer submitting Honor Award nominations until new projects or programs have had sufficient time to demonstrate measurable and continuing success.**

2 Criteria (Continued)

C Categories

The 2016 Abraham Lincoln Honor Award categories are as follow. **Exhibit 1** provides specific criteria for each of the award categories.

Category	Award Title
1	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Enhancing the Economic Vitality and Quality of Life in Rural America
2	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Protecting Natural Resources
3	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Increasing Global Food Security
4	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Ensuring Access to Safe and Nutritious Food
5	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Management Excellence
6	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Personal and Professional Excellence
7	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Support Service
8	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Heroism and Emergency Response
9	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Diversity, Inclusion, and Outreach
10	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Labor-Management Collaboration
11	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Innovative Customer Service
12	Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for External Partnership

D Nominations

It is essential for nominations to clearly document the results and/or benefits of the contributions and accomplishments **already attained, not projected**. Nominations that do **not** clearly document success in the justification will more than likely be returned to the Agency or partnering organization for resubmission at a later date.

Group nominations are limited to a maximum of 20 employees, including a maximum of 2 group leaders. It is important to include only individuals who have significantly contributed to the group's accomplishments.

Agencies may submit nominations according to the size of the organization, as follows:

- Agencies with fewer than 1,000 employees may submit 2 nominations
- Agencies with 1,000 to 10,000 employees may submit 4 nominations
- Agencies with more than 10,000 employees may submit 6 nominations.

Agencies within a mission area may **not** pool their total nominations so that 1 or the other Agency exceeds the total number of permitted nominations as described in this subparagraph.

The Under Secretary for FFAS can submit 1 nomination for Category 12, in addition to the nominations from FSA and RMA, in the other 11 categories.

2 Criteria (Continued)

E Nominations Allocation

Based on the Agency size criteria, the maximum nominations authorized are as follows:

- Farm Service Agency (FSA), 6 nominations
- Risk Management Agency (RMA), 2 nominations
- FFAS, 1 nomination for Category 12.

F Completing AD-495

The Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Nomination Form, AD-495 (**Exhibit 2**), includes instructions for submitting a nomination, is available online at <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/policy-directives-records-forms/forms-management/approved-computer-generated-forms>.

Read the AD-495 instructions completely.

Note: The supplemental Excel spreadsheet (**Exhibit 3**) referenced in AD-495, “General Instructions” section will be completed **by the Agency contact** (subparagraph 3 A) **after** the final nominations have been selected by the Agency.

The nominator and recommending official **cannot** be the same individual. The recommending official **must** be an individual of a higher level than the nominator.

Note: Nominations that include contractors as team members **must** have the concurring signature of the respective contracting officer.

The Human Resources Director, Agency Head, and Under Secretary signatures on AD-495, Section 10, as applicable, will be obtained by the **Agency contact** (subparagraph 3 A) **after** the final nominations have been selected by the Agency.

Note: **Only** nominations submitted on AD-495’s dated on or after 04/2014 will be accepted. Nominations submitted on older AD-495 versions will be returned to the nominator for correction.

2 Criteria (Continued)

G Photograph Requirements

Each nomination package **must** include 1 clear, crisp, JPEG digital image appropriate to use in the PowerPoint presentation at the ceremony.

Acceptable image content includes the following, as applicable:

- individual nominee
- team leader or leaders
- entire team
- nominee or nominees interacting with customers
- nominee or nominees otherwise at work
- clearly identified location (for example, the sign at the entrance to the National Forest or other identifiable location).

H Nomination Package Checklist

The following 4 items **must** be included in the nomination package:

- unscanned, electronically completed AD-495
- PDF of AD-495, including the completed “Clearance” section
- supplemental Excel spreadsheet with nominee or nominees information for **Final Nomination Only**
- JPEG image.

2 Criteria (Continued)

I File Naming Conventions

Each submission will consist of 4 electronic files. They **must** be named consistently to ensure that they are properly associated with the correct nomination package. File names should start with the category number, then the Agency, and then the individual or team name.

Example: Files submitted for Category 2, by RMA, for John Jones would be named as follows:

- **02RMA.Jones.pdf** (original, electronically completed AD-495, unscanned)
- **02RMA.JonesSigned.pdf** (scanned AD-495 **with all signatures** in the “Clearance” section)
- **02RMA.JonesExcel.xlsx** (completed supplemental Excel spreadsheet for final nomination only)
- **02RMA.Jones.jpeg** (photograph).

J Submitting Nomination Packets

Each nomination shall include HRD, Agency Head, and Under Secretary signatures in AD-495, Section 10, and **all** 4 items as listed in subparagraphs H and I, and be submitted as follows, for:

- **RMA**, shall be e-mailed to Kathryn Quillen, at **kathryn.quillen2@rma.usda.gov** by **Thursday, April 7, 2016**
- **FSA**, this year, will be accepting nominations for the 2016 Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards as part of their established internal nomination process for the Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards.

Note: The complete nomination package shall be sent by e-mail to **sm.fsa.shapnominations@wdc.usda.gov**, no later than **Monday, April 11, 2016**.

3 Contacts

A Agency Contacts

Contacts for each Agency are as follows, and shall be contacted with any questions:

- Kedra Watts, FSA, by either of the following:
 - e-mail to **sm.fsa.shapnominations@wdc.usda.gov**
 - telephone at 202-401-0678
- Kathryn Quillen, RMA, by either of the following:
 - e-mail to **kathryn.quillen2@rma.usda.gov**
 - telephone at 202-720-0729.

B Final Nomination Contacts

For final nominations:

- employees shall contact their Agency contact
- Agency contacts shall contact Kedra Watts by either of the following:
 - e-mail to **sm.fsa.shapnominations@wdc.usda.gov**
 - telephone at 202-401-0678.

The 2016 Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Categories and Criteria

The 2016 Abraham Lincoln Honor Award categories for this year's theme, "USDA – Strong Service and Superior Results", are as follows.

- **Category 1 - Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Enhancing the Economic Vitality and Quality of Life in Rural America**

This category recognizes exceptional contributions in support of USDA's Strategic Goal 1 and Priority Goal 3.

Contributions should be described so as to specify the impact on rural communities, and the furtherance of USDA's Strategic Goal 1/Priority Goal 3 and their related objectives. The description should include pertinent measures and an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributors. It should also describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional.

- **Category 2 – Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Protecting Natural Resources**

This category recognizes exceptional contributions in support of USDA's Strategic Goal 2 and Priority Goal 2.

Contributions should be described so as to specify the impact on the Nation's forests, farms, ranches, grasslands, wetlands and/or water resources, and the furtherance of USDA's Strategic Goal 2/Priority Goal 2 and their related objectives. The description should include pertinent measures and an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributors. It should also describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional.

- **Category 3 – Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Increasing Global Food Security**

This category recognizes exceptional contributions in support of USDA's Strategic Goal 3.

Contributions should be described so as to specify the impact on such things as promoting sustainable agricultural systems in the developing world, advancing science-based trade regulations, and the furtherance of other aspects of USDA's Strategic Goal 3 and its related objectives. The description should include pertinent measures and an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributors. It should also describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional.

The 2016 Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Categories and Criteria (Continued)

- **Category 4 – Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Ensuring Access to Safe and Nutritious Food**

This category recognizes exceptional contributions in support of USDA's Strategic Goal 4 and Priority Goal 1.

Contributions should be described so as to specify the impact on the quality and availability of nutritious food for eligible persons in need, and the furtherance of other aspects of USDA's Strategic Goal 4/Priority Goal 1 and their related objectives. The description should include pertinent measures and an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributors. It should also describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional.

- **Category 5 – Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Management Excellence**

This category recognizes exceptional accomplishments in support of one or more of the nine Management Initiatives in the USDA Strategic Plan, and/or one or more of the three primary components of the USDA Blueprint for Stronger Service: Budgetary Challenges, Cultural Transformation, and the Administrative Solutions Project. The relative span of control or influence of the individual or team nominees will be taken into consideration, such that a small field office which implemented innovative cost-saving measures at the local level will be evaluated on equal footing with a headquarters-level organization which implemented a more comprehensive cost-savings approach on an Agency-wide basis.

Contributions should be described so as to specify the impact on such things as increasing efficiencies and alignment, transforming the culture of the Department, improving outreach, optimizing IT policies and applications, significantly reducing overhead costs, implementing strategic process improvement, and/or the furtherance of other aspects of USDA's Management Initiatives or Blueprint, and their related objectives. The description should include pertinent measures and an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributors. It should also describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional, and how it serves as a model within the respective Agency or across Agency lines, as applicable.

- **Category 6 - Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Personal and Professional Excellence**

This category recognizes individuals and teams who have demonstrated an exceptional level of accomplishment in furthering the mission of USDA in areas that are not specifically included in the first five categories. It includes notable achievements in such program areas as scientific research, economic analysis, risk management, farm program delivery, or any other mission-related activity of USDA.

Contributions should be described so as to specify the impact on the particular mission-related program or activity, and/or the customers served. The description should include pertinent measures and an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributors. It should also describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional.

The 2016 Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Categories and Criteria (Continued)

- **Category 7 - Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Support Service**

This category recognizes employees who demonstrate an exceptional level of accomplishment in providing administrative support. This category includes employees in administrative and clerical occupations, usually GS-9 or equivalent and below, whose dedication and contributions enhance management excellence. Achievements include, but are not limited to, such things as dollar savings, system benefits, increased productivity, and improved procedures or techniques.

Contributions should be described so as to specify the impact on the particular administrative program or activity, and/or the customers served. The description should include any pertinent measures and an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributors. It should also describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional.

- **Category 8 – Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Heroism and Emergency Response**

This award recognizes USDA employees who perform acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty. The category also recognizes those who demonstrate an exceptional level of accomplishment in responding to floods, fires, storms, earthquakes, disease outbreaks, or other conditions requiring emergency response.

- **Category 9 - Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach**

This award recognizes employees who demonstrate exceptional commitment to the value of diversity and outreach in USDA, and the furtherance of USDA workforce diversity and inclusion objectives. The category includes demonstrating significant progress in the workforce demographics of an Agency or staff office, and to enhancing access to USDA services for the communities we serve.

Contributions should be described so as to specify its impact on the particular community or Agency and USDA as a whole, and the furtherance of outreach or workforce diversity and inclusion objectives. Nominations for USDA diversity and inclusion will be based on several areas, including having created a singularly welcoming and inclusive work environment, success in leading and enhancing diversity and inclusion efforts, actively promoting and enhancing the diversity and inclusion goals of cultural transformation, and effecting positive change where the contributions serve to benefit the entire USDA workforce. Nominations for contributions specific to outreach must describe the under-served community's programmatic challenges, and will include accomplishments related, but not limited, to such things as the following: (1) improving the viability and profitability of small and beginning farmers and ranchers, (2) improving access to USDA programs for historically underserved communities, (3) improving agricultural opportunities for farm workers, and (4) closing the professional achievement gap by providing opportunities to talented and diverse young people to support the agricultural industry in the 21st century. All nominations should describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional.

The 2016 Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Categories and Criteria (Continued)

- **Category 10 – Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Labor-Management Collaboration**

This award recognizes labor-management groups that achieve exceptional results through positive, productive, and collaborative relationships between USDA as an employer and labor organizations. These relationships represent the interests of USDA employees under the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute in one or more of the following areas:

Labor-Management Relationship - exceptional contributions by labor-management groups by (1) engaging meaningfully and pre-decisionally in workplace matters to the fullest extent practicable; (2) obtaining high quality results in the resolution of issues outside of statutory, regulatory, contractual procedures; (3) strengthening the relationship through good faith bargaining; (4) resolving disputes in ways that increase mutual respect; (5) dealing effectively and efficiently with one another; (6) sharing information expeditiously and fully; (7) devoting appropriate resources to the development/ maintenance of the relationship; (8) reducing disputes through positive negotiated agreements; (9) demonstrating exceptional contributions by labor-management groups to the material improvement of employee morale and engagement; and/or (10) demonstrating exceptional contributions by labor-management groups to the material improvement of mission delivery and service.

Contributions should be described to specify the impact on the labor-management relationship, employee satisfaction/engagement, and mission delivery/service, as applicable. The description should include any pertinent measures and an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributors. It should also describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional.

- **Category 11 – Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for Innovative Customer Service**

This category recognizes individuals and teams who have demonstrated an exceptional level of accomplishment and innovation in serving their customers. The relative span of control or influence of the individual or team nominees will be taken into consideration, such that a small field office which implemented innovative customer service measures at the local level will be evaluated on equal footing with a headquarters-level organization which implemented a more comprehensive customer service initiative on an Agency-wide basis.

Contributions should be described so as to specify the specific challenges to customer service, and the impact of the innovation on the customers served. The description should include any pertinent measures and an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributors. It should also describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional, and how it serves as a model within the respective Agency or across Agency lines.

The 2016 Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Categories and Criteria (Continued)

- **Category 12 – Abraham Lincoln Honor Award for External Partnership**

Nominations for External Partnership must be sponsored by and cleared through the respective Under or Assistant Secretary.

This award recognizes the exceptional contributions of USDA's external partners, particularly in terms of how the contributions enhance innovation, productivity and efficiency in program delivery, and leverage federal funding to the benefit of USDA's customers, the external partner and USDA. This category should be used for all individual and group nominations of solely external partners (e.g., universities and conservation organizations).

Contributions should be described so as to specify the impact on the particular USDA mission-related program or activity, and/or the customers served. The description should include pertinent measures and an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributors. It should also describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional.

Example of AD-495

The following is an example of AD-495, Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Nomination that is available online at <http://ocio.usda.gov/policy-directives-records-forms/forms-management/approved-computer-generated-forms>. Only AD-495 (only the current or the 04/2014 version) will be accepted.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SECRETARY'S HONOR AWARDS NOMINATION	
INSTRUCTIONS:	
<p>Purpose of the Secretary's Honor Awards The purpose of the Honor Awards is to provide Departmental recognition to distinguished employees and other individuals who have made outstanding contributions that support USDA's mission and goals.</p> <p>Eligibility - All USDA employees, employees of other departments, and organizations collaborating with USDA to accomplish the Department's mission are eligible to be nominated for a Secretary's Honor Award. - The contributions must have occurred or result realized within the three years prior to the nomination deadline. Acts of heroism must have occurred within the last year. - In most cases, nominations are submitted by USDA agencies or staff offices to recognize outstanding contributions of USDA employees, or of mixed teams led by USDA employees. In those instances where the contributions were led by external organizations collaborating with USDA, nominations must be sponsored by and cleared through the applicable Under/Assistant Secretary.</p> <p>Number of Nominations - Agencies and staff offices with fewer than 1,000 employees may submit two nominations - Agencies and staff offices with 1,000 - 10,000 employees may submit four nominations - Agencies with more than 10,000 employees may submit six nominations.</p> <p>Approval of Nominations All nominations must be submitted through and have the concurring signature of the Under/Assistant Secretary, as appropriate.</p> <p>General Information - The current version of the AD-495 is required; nominations submitted on older versions will be returned to the nominating agency. - Nomination packages must be submitted electronically - no hard copies are required. - Once approved by the Under/Assistant Secretary, a PDF of the full nomination form with a scanned signature page must be submitted to OHRM. - A non-scanned electronic copy (i.e., one from which sections can be copied and pasted) will also be required to facilitate the clearance process. - A supplemental Excel spreadsheet must also be submitted for all nominations with the nominees' information. The data from the spreadsheet must match the employee data on this form exactly. (The spreadsheet is available from the agency or staff office Honor Awards Contact). - Nomination forms must include the phonetic spelling for individual nominees' or team leaders' names, terminology, automated systems, etc. - Congressional District numbers must be completed or indicated as "At Large" if applicable. Congressional Districts may be found at http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/. - Groups are limited to no more than 2 leaders and a total of 20 members, including the leader(s).</p> <p>Format Nomination content must be single-spaced, with double-spacing between paragraphs. The justification is limited to the blocks provided for the four criteria.</p> <p>Nomination Requirements - Do NOT use acronyms or abbreviations in your justifications. - Clearly justify the accomplishment, including how it significantly contributes to the Department's mission and/or goals. - Supplemental attachments will not be accepted.</p>	<p>Citation Requirements - No more than 25 words in length, suitable for reading during the ceremony, that briefly explains the accomplishment AND the results achieved. - Focus on the action and result, rather than the level of effort or teamwork (with the exception of Category 10) - The following are examples of acceptable and unacceptable citations: - Acceptable: For implementing the Plain Writing Act of 2010, enabling USDA to better serve the millions of people who depend on our programs and services. - Acceptable: For mutually crafting a Collective Bargaining Agreement that promotes increased quality and productivity, customer service, mission accomplishment, quality of work life, and organizational performance. - Unacceptable: For exceptional teamwork and commitment in the development of a performance accountability tracking service.</p> <p>Photograph Requirements Each nomination package must include one clear, crisp JPEG digital image appropriate for use in the PowerPoint presentation at the ceremony. Acceptable image content includes: - the individual nominee - the team leader(s) - the entire team - the nominee(s) interacting with customers - the nominee(s) otherwise at work - the clearly identified location (e.g., the sign at the entrance to the National Forest or other identifiable location)</p> <p>File Naming Conventions Since each submission will consist of four electronic files, they must be named consistently to ensure they are properly associated with the correct nomination package. File names should start with the category number, then the agency/staff office, then the individual or team name. Examples: - 02NRCSJones.pdf (original, unscanned) - 02NRCSJonesSigned.pdf (scanned with all signatures in the Clearance section) - 02NRCSJones.xlsx - 02NRCSJones.jpeg</p> <p>Nomination Package Checklist <input type="checkbox"/> PDF of the nomination form, including the completed Clearance section <input type="checkbox"/> Non-scanned electronic copy of the nomination form <input type="checkbox"/> Excel spreadsheet with nominee(s) information <input type="checkbox"/> JPEG image</p> <p>Deadline All documents MUST be submitted through your respective agency/staff office's Honor Awards Contact, and must be received in OHRM by 4pm ET on the due date in the annual announcement memorandum.</p>
Rev. 04/2014	Form AD-495 (1/6)

Example of AD-495 (Continued)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SECRETARY'S HONOR AWARDS NOMINATION			
1. GENERAL NOMINATION INFORMATION			
a. SUBMITTING AGENCY/STAFF OFFICE OR EXTERNAL COLLABORATIVE ORGANIZATION <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	b. RECOGNITION TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL <input type="checkbox"/> GROUP	c. PERIOD COVERED FROM: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> TO: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>	
d. INDIVIDUAL NOMINEE OR GROUP NAME (exactly as it should appear on the certificate) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>			
e. AWARD CATEGORIES (check one) <i>A description of the award category criteria is provided in the annual announcement memorandum.</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 1 - Secretary's Award for enhancing the economic vitality and quality of life in rural America			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 2 - Secretary's Award for protecting natural resources			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 3 - Secretary's Award for increasing global food security			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 4 - Secretary's Award for ensuring access to safe and nutritious food			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 5 - Secretary's Award for Management Excellence			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 6 - Secretary's Award for Personal and Professional Excellence			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 7 - Secretary's Award for Support Service			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 8 - Secretary's Award for Heroism and Emergency Response			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 9 - Secretary's Award for Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 10 - Secretary's Award for Labor-Management Collaboration			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 11 - Secretary's Award for Innovative Customer Service			
<input type="checkbox"/> Category 12 - Secretary's Award for External Partnership			
f. CITATION <i>Suggested citation that will be printed on certificate (25 words or fewer, include the accomplishment/contribution's result)</i> <input style="width: 90%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>			
2. EMPLOYEE DATA FOR INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS			
<i>Complete for individual submissions. Do not use acronyms.</i>			
a. NAME (Last, First Middle) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	b. PHONETIC NAME SPELLING (if applicable) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	c. NAME TO APPEAR ON CERTIFICATE (include denotations; no nicknames) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	d. POSITION TITLE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
e. AGENCY/STAFF OFFICE or NON-USDA ORGANIZATION <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	f. PP/SERIES/GRADE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	g. WORK PHONE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	h. WORK EMAIL <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
i. DUTY STATION (City, State) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	j. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT NUM. (Duty Station) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	k. LEGAL RESIDENCE (City, State) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	l. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT NUM. (Legal Residence) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
3. GROUP LEADER DATA FOR GROUP SUBMISSIONS			
<i>Complete for group submissions. Do not use acronyms.</i>			
a. GROUP LEADER			
i. GROUP LEADER NAME (Last, First Middle) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	ii. PHONETIC NAME SPELLING (if applicable) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	iii. NAME TO APPEAR ON CERTIFICATE (include denotations; no nicknames) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	iv. POSITION TITLE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
v. AGENCY/STAFF OFFICE or NON-USDA ORGANIZATION <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	vi. PP/SERIES/GRADE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	vii. WORK PHONE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	viii. WORK EMAIL <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
ix. DUTY STATION (City, State) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	x. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT NUM. (Duty Station) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	xi. LEGAL RESIDENCE (City, State) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	xii. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT NUM. (Legal Residence) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
b. SECOND GROUP LEADER			
i. SECOND GROUP LEADER NAME (Last, First Middle) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	ii. PHONETIC NAME SPELLING (if applicable) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	iii. NAME TO APPEAR ON CERTIFICATE (include denotations; no nicknames) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	iv. POSITION TITLE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
v. AGENCY/STAFF OFFICE or NON-USDA ORGANIZATION <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	vi. PP/SERIES/GRADE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	vii. WORK PHONE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	viii. WORK EMAIL <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
ix. DUTY STATION (City, State) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	x. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT NUM. (Duty Station) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	xi. LEGAL RESIDENCE (City, State) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	xii. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT NUM. (Legal Residence) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Rev. 04/2014 Form AD-495 (2/6) </div>			

[illegible]

Example of AD-495 (Continued)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SECRETARY'S HONOR AWARDS NOMINATION	
6. JUSTIFICATION FOR NOMINATION	
<p>- All nominations must address all four criteria, with the exception of Category 8, as noted.</p> <p>- Avoid the use of general or vague statements; emphasizing job responsibilities rather than accomplishments; in-house terminology and technical language; retirement testimonials, lengthy statements and excessive superlatives; and descriptions of outside personal activities.</p> <p>- If utilizing statistics, include comparative data. e.g., if the data show an increase of 50%, please include "from ____ to ____" to clearly indicate the scope</p> <p>- Descriptions of accomplishments must be consistent with USDA's most recent annual Agency Financial Report and/or Performance and Accountability Report, if applicable.</p> <p>a. SIGNIFICANCE</p> <p>- Clearly describe the business challenge and the significance of the contribution/accomplishment being nominated relative to the category selected.</p> <p>- Describe any awards the accomplishment has already received.</p> <p>The 2014 Farm Bill was signed into law by President Obama in February 2014. With any farm bill and especially this one, implementing very quickly is expected and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) has historically delivered new programs for farmers and ranchers as soon as possible.</p> <p>The 2014 Farm Bill implementation was particularly challenging because of its timing and complexity. Farmers would begin planting crops in the South in just a few weeks and the new commodity and disaster programs in this farm bill contained new, important risk management aspects designed to help farmers and ranchers tailor their participation to the needs of their farming operations.</p> <p>In addition to the late enactment of complex programs, FSA had not previously entered into cooperative agreement.</p> <p>The Cooperative Agreements Team began working immediately on multiple fronts which included developing core goals and objectives, identification of needed data that was available in FSA and Risk Management Agency, and very quickly researching technical requirements for cooperative agreements.</p> <p>Given lead times needed to develop web-based tools, FSA had to act very quickly and within two months issued a project plan to a diverse group of universities including the 1862 and 1890 schools. In May 2014, a multi-Agency USDA Team reviewed the project proposals and USDA announced the universities selected to build the tools.</p> <p>In addition to development of the web-based tools, FSA was also tasked with entering into cooperative agreements with about 70 1862 and 1890 universities to conduct local, in-person education and outreach with producers.</p> <p>Accomplishments include:</p> <p>*In August 2014, the web-based tool for the Margin Protection Program for Dairy was developed.</p> <p>*In September 2014, FSA began entering into cooperative agreements with universities for local, in-person education and outreach and the web-based tool for Agricultural Risk Coverage Program and Price Loss Coverage Programs deployed; and</p> <p>*In December 2014, the web-based tool for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program was deployed.</p>	
b. MISSION	
<p>- Clearly describe the impact of the contribution/accomplishment being nominated on the Department successfully meeting its mission, strategic goals and/or management initiatives.</p> <p>- Include any measurables listed in such documents as the Strategic Plan, Blueprint for Stronger Service or Diversity Roadmap, as applicable. (Note: This criterion is not required for Category 8.)</p> <p>The Cooperative Agreements Team partnered with universities to develop innovative web-based decision tools to assist farmers and ranchers in their evaluation of options related to the Margin Protection Program for Dairy, Agricultural Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Program, and the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. Funds were also provided for education and outreach by State extension services.</p> <p>The Team's efforts directly support accomplishment of:</p> <p>*USDA's Strategic Goal 1: Assist Rural Communities to Create Prosperity so they are Self-sustaining, Repopulating, and Economically Thriving, including:</p> <p>*Objective 1.2 - Increase Agricultural Opportunities by Ensuring a Robust Safety Net, Creating New Markets, and Supporting a Competitive Agricultural System.</p> <p>*USDA's Strategic Goal 5: Create a USDA for the 21st Century that is High-Performing, Efficient, and Adaptable including:</p> <p>*Objective 5.1: - Develop a Customer-Centric, Inclusive, and High-Performing Workforce by Investing in and Engaging Employees to Improve Service Delivery; and</p> <p>*Objective 5.2: - Build a Safe, Secure, and Efficient Workplace by Leveraging Technology and Shared Solutions Across Organizational Boundaries.</p> <p>These programs provide an important portion of the farm safety net including protection against adverse market fluctuations and are generally available to producers of commodity crops such as corn, soybeans, and wheat, dairy, and specialty crops.</p> <p>FSA provided funding for universities to partner with FSA and Risk Management Agency experts and analysts and build web-based tools to provide in-depth analysis of farm bill options and for working about 70 State extension services to demonstrate the web-based tools to provide local, in-person education and outreach including to under served communities.</p> <p>*USDA's Strategic G</p>	

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Example of AD-495 (Continued)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SECRETARY'S HONOR AWARDS NOMINATION

6. JUSTIFICATION FOR NOMINATION (cont'd)

- All nominations must address all four criteria, with the exception of Category 8, as noted.
- Avoid the use of general or vague statements; emphasizing job responsibilities rather than accomplishments; in-house terminology and technical language; retirement testimonials, lengthy statements and excessive superlatives; and descriptions of outside personal activities.
- If utilizing statistics, include comparative data. e.g., if the data show an increase of 50%, please include "from ____ to ____" to clearly indicate the scope
- Descriptions of accomplishments must be consistent with USDA's most recent annual Agency Financial Report and/or Performance and Accountability Report, if applicable.

c. INITIATIVE AND INGENUITY

- Describe the degree to and the results by which the contribution/accomplishment substantially exceeds normal job expectations, as well as the ingenuity or resourcefulness demonstrated.
- Also describe any unusual complications or obstacles overcome in the accomplishment.
- If there are other similar positions or teams within the organization, describe how the contribution/accomplishment is unique to the individual or team being nominated.

In February 2014, the 2014 Farm Bill enacted the new Margin Protection Program for Dairy, the Agricultural Risk Coverage Program and Price Loss Coverage Program, and new Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program provisions. The new provisions included risk management options under the commodity and dairy programs and development of web-based decision tools and education and outreach for farmers and ranchers about those new options.

Working with other agencies, FSA moved quickly on several fronts including:

- *Establishing a cross-functional cooperative agreement teams;
- *Developing a project plan for three web-based tools to be issued to 1862 and 1890 universities to be developed under a cooperative agreement;
- *Partnering with Risk Management Agency, Economic Research Service, Office of Chief Economist, and Agricultural Marketing Service for the review of project plans; and
- *Building the legal, program, and financial systems to support cooperative agreements.

Using cooperative agreements was new for FSA; however, the real innovation was the Cooperative Agreements Team that went from ground zero on day of enactment to issuing a project plan in April 2014. The multi-agency USDA Team reviewed project submissions by the universities and USDA announced the selected project proposals in early June 2014. Another innovation was a key component of the project plan which required use of broad USDA assumptions related to commodity estimates for a multi-year period and provide farmers and ranchers an opportunity to enter variables such as crops, acres, yields, and prices as part of their consideration for the Margin Protection Program for Dairy, the Agricultural Risk Coverage Program and Price Loss Coverage Program, and Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. Another key component included web-based tools for farm-level reallocation of acreage among major crops and updating yields.

The Margin Protection Program for Dairy tool was deployed in August 2014, the Agricultural Risk Coverage Program and Price Loss Coverage Program tool became available in September 2014, and the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program tool was issued in December 2014 providing new, online tools for producers to use to obtain comprehensive, detailed program analysis for their farming operation.

d. BENEFITS

- Describe the results already attained (not results projected).
- Describe the demonstrated measurable or non-measurable benefits to the Department, customers served and/or other stakeholders.

For development of over 70 cooperative agreements,

*In just over two months, FSA issued a comprehensive project plan to develop web-based tools for the Margin Protection Program for Dairy, the Agricultural Risk Coverage Program and Price Loss Coverage Program (ARC/PLC), and new Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program provisions.

*In six weeks, a USDA Team reviewed project proposals and the Secretary announced the universities selected to develop the web-based tools.

*In about three months, the MPP-Dairy web-based tool was made available to allow farmers to enter unique operation data and other key variables to calculate coverage needs based on futures market price projections.

*Beginning in just over three months, FSA began signing cooperative agreements with individual 1862 and 1890 universities to support local, in-person education and outreach with farmers and ranchers.

*In less than four months, the ARC/PLC web-based tools were issued to allow farmers to enter their operation's data and see projections about what each program would mean for them under possible future scenarios.

*In just over six months, the NAP web-based tool was posted to allow producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for coverage and to explore a variety of options and coverage levels to determine the best protection for their operation.

Key performance results:

- *Obligating 99 percent of funding.
- *Demonstrating web-based tools at 3,554 events.
- *Providing 4,829 producer education sessions reaching 235,659 farmers.
- *Using the web-based tools over 340,000 times.
- *1,764,554 farms reallocating crop acreage base.
- *1,756,378 farms making commodity program election.

7. SUMMARY STATEMENT

a. Prepare a synopsis of no more than 150 words describing the achievements on which the nomination is based. The synopsis should be concise and descriptive, and should fully outline the outstanding achievements related to the award for which the individual/group is nominated. (Note: The summary statement should be written so as to give the Secretary and other senior leaders a brief overview of the accomplishment.)

The Cooperative Agreements Team did a tremendous job in timely implementing key Farm Bill provisions aimed at assisting producers in understanding the complex program options available to them. As a result of their efforts, USDA is able to provide producers with innovative, web-based decision tools enabling them to make informed, strategic decisions for their farm operation. Additionally, the outreach and education component of the Team's effort reached more than a quarter million agricultural producers and resulted in improved awareness and understanding of USDA programs. The Cooperative Agreements Team exemplifies the Department's Core Values of transparency, participation, collaboration, accountability, customer focus, professionalism, and results orientation.

Example of AD-495 (Continued)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SECRETARY'S HONOR AWARDS NOMINATION			
8. NOMINATOR CONTACT INFORMATION			
a. NAME <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	b. USDA AGENCY/STAFF OFFICE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	c. OFFICIAL TITLE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	
d. WORK ADDRESS <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	e. WORK EMAIL <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	f. WORK PHONE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	
9. SURVIVOR INFORMATION (POSTHUMOUS AWARD)			
a (1). NAME <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	b. EMAIL ADDRESS <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	c. MAILING ADDRESS <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	d. DAYTIME PHONE <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
a (2). NAME OF TEAM MEMBER (if applicable) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>			
10. REVIEWS AND CLEARANCES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nominations must be submitted through the respective Human Resources Director, Agency Head/Staff Director, and the appropriate Under/Assistant Secretary. - Human Resources Directors must screen nominations for existing and pending equal employment opportunity and ethical violations, and disciplinary actions. - Agency Heads/Staff Directors must screen nominations for civil rights violations and must ensure the validity of all nomination accomplishments. - Once selected, Honor Award recipients may also be screened at the Department. 			
For all nominations, complete items a through e below.			
a. RECOMMENDING OFFICIAL			
Signature <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	Date <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Name (Last, First Middle Initial) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Title <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
b. CATEGORY 10 ONLY - Concurrence from the Senior Labor Official of the National Labor Management Forum			
Signature <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	Date <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Name (Last, First Middle Initial) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Title <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
c. CONTRACTING OFFICER - for any nominations that include contractor personnel.			
Signature <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	Date <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Name (Last, First Middle Initial) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Title <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
d. HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR			
Signature <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	Date <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Name (Last, First Middle Initial) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Title <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
e. AGENCY HEAD/STAFF OFFICE DIRECTOR			
Signature <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	Date <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Name (Last, First Middle Initial) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Title <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
f. UNDER/ASSISTANT SECRETARY			
Signature <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	Date <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Name (Last, First Middle Initial) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Title <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Group nominations with individuals other than the submitting agency must have concurring signatures from the participating employees' Under/Assistant Secretary.			
g. UNDER/ASSISTANT SECRETARY			
Signature <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	Date <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Name (Last, First Middle Initial) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Title <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
h. UNDER/ASSISTANT SECRETARY			
Signature <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	Date <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Name (Last, First Middle Initial) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Title <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
i. UNDER/ASSISTANT SECRETARY			
Signature <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	Date <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Name (Last, First Middle Initial) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Title <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
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This is an example of the Excel spreadsheet that shall be included with each nomination that is available at http://fsaintranet.sc.egov.usda.gov/fsa/operations/hrd/employee_benefits.htm. On the FSA Intranet Page, under “Awards”, CLICK “**Supplemental Excel Spreadsheet**”.

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