
PROGRAM SCRIPT



Thursday, August 16, 2007
2:00 pm

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Running Time
Min - Sec

Speaker

00:00 - 01:00 WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Larry Adams

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Larry Adams, deputy administrator for Commodity Operations. I am honored to be your master of ceremonies for today, as we present the 2007 Farm Service Agency Administrator's Award for Service to Agriculture.

We are here to recognize the teams and individual members of our agency who have traveled the "extra mile" and set new benchmarks of service excellence. Today we honor the men and women who – in the course of ordinary circumstances – have achieved extraordinary results for agriculture.

It is gratifying to have so many here today to see our fellow FSA members receive the recognition they have earned by going the extra mile.

As Paul McKellips comes to the podium, would you please rise and honor America as we join Paul in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Mr. McKellips comes to podium, faces flag, places hand over heart and recites pledge.)

01:00 - 02:00 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Paul McKellips

I pledge allegiance...to the flag...of the United States of America...and to the Republic...for which it stands...one Nation... under God...indivisible...with liberty...and justice...for all.

You may be seated.

(Mr. McKellips returns to seat.)

02:00 – 03:15 INTRODUCTION OF TERESA LASSETER

Larry Adams

Now, it is my privilege to introduce our FSA administrator, Teresa Lasseter. Teresa oversees farm programs, farm loans, commodity operations, conservation programs, disaster assistance and field operations at FSA offices in all fifty states and U.S. territories.

A Georgia native, Teresa worked for the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, FSA's predecessor, in several positions from 1977 to 1993, culminating as a county executive director for Lee County.

She again served at FSA from 2001 to 2003, first as state executive director in Georgia and later as associate administrator for farm programs here in Washington.

Teresa not only knows the importance of “extra mile” service, she lives it. She was a past recipient of USDA’s Unsung Hero Award, the Athena Award, and she received the FSA Administrator’s Award for outstanding work in implementing the 2002 Farm Bill.

Please join me in welcoming Administrator Teresa Lasseter.

(Ms. Lasseter comes to podium as Mr. Adams takes stand by position.)

03:15 – 05:45 GREETINGS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Teresa Lasseter

Thank you, Larry, for that kind introduction and for serving as our Master of Ceremonies. My heartfelt thanks to all of you, as well, for taking time out of your busy schedules to help us honor some special, selfless people. I also want to thank all those who took the time to notice and nominate those we recognize today. We had 61 nominations this year, which is double the amount received last year. But most of all, I want to sincerely thank each of our award recipients for traveling the “extra mile” and setting new benchmarks for service excellence.

In just a moment, we will announce your names. But we already know who you are, really—individuals and teams who exemplify the title “public servant.” All of us are charged with important daily tasks and responsibilities.

Although we have that in common, our awardees served the agency in an uncommon way--they went that extra mile. For that, your colleagues, American farmers and ranchers, and this great nation are grateful.

This is an important time in history to work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Americans recognize now more than ever how critical a robust agricultural infrastructure is to our nation's security.

We are experiencing a need for renewable energy fuel that has never been greater. We've seen impressive technological advances in farming. And we have the potential to further strengthen our nation's farms with the 2007 farm bill.

With all these exciting challenges and potentials, there seems to be no relief from the day-to-day pressures of our jobs.

However, the awardees today have demonstrated that it is possible to plow through their daily duties and still excel at extra assigned tasks. The Administrator's Award gives us a way to find these people and give them the recognition they deserve.

These men and women have set themselves apart in many different ways. What's important is that they all have one thing in common – a commitment to customer service. This core value drives them to serve others, to go the extra mile.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all of the employees we recognize today.

(Mr. Adams returns to podium.)

Thank you, Ms. Lasseter.

(Ms. Lasseter takes position for presenting awards)

I've been proud to have worked with this agency for over seven years. I began in Ohio as State Executive Director, then came here to Washington to serve as assistant deputy administrator for Farm Programs before being appointed deputy administrator for Commodity Operations. So, I have had the opportunity to see first hand the high quality of our workforce. At every level-- county, state and Washington--I've been impressed with how capable and committed you are. And I want to thank you for the great job you do.

At this time, we will present this year's awards. They fall into seven specific categories that highlight how going the extra mile contributes to the overall mission.

The categories are:

- **Civil Rights Leadership**
- **Excellence in Program Support**
- **Excellence in Leadership and Management**
- **Outstanding Team Accomplishment**
- **Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives**
- **Heroism and Emergency Response**

And

- **Newcomer**

We start with the Civil Rights Leadership Award. This award recognizes individuals for their valuable contributions and commitments made in support of the USDA and FSA civil rights objectives.

Award 1 **The team winning this award is...the Edgefield FSA County Office Team from South Carolina for their outstanding performance in carrying out the 2007 Black History Program in Edgefield County. The event focused on a former slave who worked as an overseer and sawmill manager during the Civil War, giving unselfishly of himself to make life better for others. Through the theme that everyone has something to contribute to society, the program reinforced the importance of diversity and created an open door between the minority community, local leaders and the FSA. Mable Robertson is accepting the award for the team. Congratulations to Mable and Virginia Johnson. *(If Ms. Johnson is also present:)* Will Virginia please stand so we can recognize and congratulate you, too.**

(Ms. Johnson, if in attendance, stands. Robertson accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and Ms. Johnson is seated.)

Award 2 **Reaching out to communities is what defines our next awardee, Monique Kristofors. As the USDA California State Outreach Coordinator for FSA, she developed the first strategic outreach plan of its kind in the nation, making California's outreach deployment the most successful and results driven. She has established the model for outreach in USDA.**

A member of the Federal Executive Board Hispanic Employment Council, she has increased the representation of minorities and women as county committee members in FSA field offices. Congratulations, Monique.

(Ms. Kristofors accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat)

Next is the Excellence in Program Support Award. This award is given to employees whose knowledge of the procedures and techniques involved in carrying out clerical, assistant, and/or technician responsibilities has contributed to meeting the office's goals and objectives.

Award 3 **Doris Ostrowski, a program technician at the FSA's Hartford/Tolland office in Connecticut, has performed exceptional support to further the agency's goals. She generously performs collateral duties and assists other county offices in the New England region, increasing their efficiency. Congratulations, Doris, for your outstanding contributions to IT and administrative support and training encompassing the New England region.**

(Ms. Ostrowski accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat)

Award 4 **Kathryn Evans from the Marion-Taylor County FSA office in West Virginia is another example of going the extra mile. When another office 100 miles away experienced a sudden reduction in personnel, she stepped in to fill the void and cover duties there as well. For excellence in performance of duties and exemplary service to the FSA and the state's agricultural industry, congratulations, Kathryn.**

(Ms. Evans accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat)

And now the Excellence in Leadership and Management Award. This award goes to a supervisor whose accomplishments and performance is judged as the most outstanding, and who demonstrates the greatest combination of skills in managing both people and activities.

Award 5 **The team winning this award, survey says, is: the Outstanding Deputy Administrator for Management Supervisors team. These leaders are consistently rated high in official annual surveys on all key aspects of management by those they supervise. This is due to their exemplary leadership in building and sustaining a culture of high engagement, outstanding productivity and effective recognition of employees. As team leader Karen Campbell comes forward to receive the award on behalf of the group, you should know that many in the group are from the Kansas City office. I'll ask those who could make it to stand. Congratulations to Karen and the entire team: Larry Durant, Larry Harris, Noreen Joice, Edmund Malish, Thomas Montgomery, Glenn Pfeffer and Linda Schmidt.**

(Team members stand. Ms. Campbell accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 6 **Back to Kansas, where FSA State Executive Director, William Fuller has provided exceptional service. Despite budgetary limitations and reduced staffing, he has made FSA in Kansas highly efficient and responsive to customer needs.**

Bill, for your leadership in restructuring the FSA program delivery system in Kansas resulting in the improvement of operational efficiency and productivity of employees, congratulations.

(Mr. Fuller accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 7 Leading by example is all in a day's work for Tammy Tidwell. As Tennessee state office district director, she provides oversight, program advice, training and guidance to the offices in her district. The whole time, she fosters an atmosphere of camaraderie, teamwork and recognition that comes through in the service provided to the state counties. Thank you, Tammy, for serving as an exceptional leader and professional manager as District Director of the FSA Tennessee State Office.

(Ms. Tidwell accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 8 Our next winner hails from Kentucky. James Dunsmore is being recognized for his extraordinary skills in motivating by means of teamwork to produce impressive results in meeting all of fiscal year 2006 goals. In this manner, he has led Kentucky to its status as one of the top five FSA Farm Loan Programs in the nation. Congratulations to James, who unfortunately could not be here today.

Next we have the Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award. This award is granted to a group of employees who worked on a significant project as a team, contributing to FSA goals and objectives.

Award 9 Members of the Edgard Service Center Team in Louisiana distinguished themselves with outstanding

teamwork while administering the 2005 Hurricane Disaster Programs following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The team serves six parishes which were in the direct path of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Thanks to their hard work and dedication, the team administered 14 hurricane related programs in a timely manner. They disbursed more than \$5.9 million dollars in funds to assist producers in stricken areas and helped producers with 11,000 acres of sugarcane. I'll ask those members present to stand as Sonja Winchester accepts the award for the team. Congratulations to Sonja, Marilyn Rousseau and Marion Simoneaux.

(Team members stand. Ms. Winchester accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 10 The Amite Service Center Team in Louisiana demonstrated outstanding teamwork while administering the 2005 Hurricane Disaster Programs in Tangipahoa and St. Helena Parishes following Hurricane Katrina. They serve the Tangipahoa and Saint Helena parishes, which were in Katrina's path. Because of their hard work and dedication, the team administered 13 hurricane related programs in a timely manner. They disbursed over \$5.5 million dollars to hard-hit producers. I'll ask those members present to stand as Patrick Babineaux accepts the award for the team. Congratulations Patrick, Karen Bennett, Janet East, Mack McCraney, Stacey Milton, and Susie Saint.

(Team members stand, Mr. Babineaux accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 11 The Franklinton Service Center Team serves the Washington and St. Tammany parishes in Louisiana, which were hit by Hurricane Katrina. The small team worked long and hard to administer 13 hurricane related programs in a timely manner. They disbursed over close to \$9 million dollars in assistance programs. For outstanding teamwork while administering the 2005 Hurricane Disaster Programs in Washington and St. Tammany Parishes following Hurricane Katrina, congratulations to Theron Graves and Regan Knight. Theron will accept the award.

(Mr. Graves accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 12 When Hurricane Rita hit Louisiana, it devastated more than 1.2 million acres of Cameron parish and the lower quarter of Calcasieu, drowning livestock and damaging sugarcane crops. The FSA Calcasieu-Cameron Parish Team also were affected, suffering losses to their homes and property. However, within two days after the storm, FSA employees were back in the restricted work area handling disaster assessments, assisting producers, and cleaning the office so that they could get the job done to help their affected producers. Congratulations go out to this team for their unselfish attitudes and cooperative spirits toward the Calcasieu-Cameron parish employees, working together, and effectively administering disaster programs for producers affected by Hurricane Rita. Those members present, please stand and Kirk Smith will accept the award for the team, which also includes Sharlene Daigle, Barbara Leger, Deirdre Lemelle and Sondra Mayberry.

(Team members stand, Mr. Smith accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 13 Another example of the cooperative spirit for cutting through obstacles and going the extra mile comes from the team who streamlined the Commodity Operations System by establishing and automating a one-step procurement process for international food aid. This multi-division team actually revised a governing regulation to cut a costly, labor-intensive two-step system in half. The team painstakingly logged over 6,000 hours of testing and made 72 modifications to create the more efficient system. We appreciate your dedication and efforts in establishing and automating a one-step procurement process by revising 7 CFR 1496, and successfully implementing the Commodity Operations System. Alan Grote will accept the award for the team. Present members, please stand. Congratulations to Karen Barnard, Fred Blott, Khristy Baughman, Penny Carlson, Richard Chavez, Jeffrey Drummond, Teresa Hansen, Thomas Harrelson, Robin Hixon, Michelle Howard, Dewayne Kalberg, Kathleen Kalny, Margaretta Legleiter, David Liem, Kenneth Martin, Gary Marsden, Sandy Martin, Michelle McKinney, Danette McClellan, Gary Miner, Jerry Norton, Timothy Powers, Nelson Randall, Timothy Reaman, Mark Rouse, Denise Sheryl, Melvin Smith, Saundra Sullivan, Daniel Webber and Sandra Wood.

(Team members stand, Mr. Grote accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 14 Our CRP Corn Group showed exceptional skill in analyzing the impacts of the Conservation Reserve Program's early release options in a tight corn market. They evaluated different options for early release and compared the impacts on the corn market relative to the projected President's Budget baseline estimates—under a tight timeframe. Their findings that early release would have at most a minimal effect on the corn market helped support a decision to not offer penalty-free early releases from CRP in 2007. Phillip Sronce will accept the award for the team. Present members, please stand. Congratulations to Phillip, Alexander Barbarika, Mike Linsenbigler, Peter Riley and Thomas Tice.

(Team members stand, Mr. Barbarika accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 15 Emphasizing the importance of training our people to focus on customer service, the Farm Loan Officer Training Program Team is recognized for outstanding contributions in rewriting and streamlining the Farm Loan Officer Training Program. They completely overhauled the entire Farm Loan Program materials used to train new officers, allowing loan officers to be better prepared to step into positions and provide seamless transition. As Chuck Ropp accepts the award for the team, would present members please stand. Congratulations to Chuck, Cully Culpepper, Paul Frederiksen, Rebecca Gerlach, Orlando Kilcrease, Bruce Mair, Joseph Pruss and Galen Van Vleet.

(Team members stand, Mr. Ropp accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 16 Sometimes going the extra mile literally means traveling. The Consent Decree Action Team is a group of individuals from various FSA offices who gave a dedicated and exemplary performance while detailed to Washington DC as part of the USDA National Office Consent Decree Action Team. This team of only seven—once 250 strong—actively process claims and review newly-found claims. They developed an extensive access database on these sensitive claims and petitions, while diligently protecting the government’s best interest. As Lynn Patrick accepts the award for the team, would present members please stand. Congratulations to Lynn, Kay Dodson, Darlene Graham, Linda Hughes, Judith Marksman, Greisha Sievens and Richard Stewart.

(Team members stand, Mr. Patrick accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter’s hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 17 The next group is noted for their innovative development and timely delivery of the 2005 Sugarcane Hurricane Disaster Assistance Programs. The Sugarcane Disaster Team was faced with new, complicated mandates in the 2006 Emergency Agricultural Disaster Assistance Act and was concerned Hurricanes Katrina and Rita had weakened the financial viability of many sugarcane growers. Determined to help growers obtain needed financing on their crops, the team developed and implemented an assistance program that met the local growers’ needs and was consistent with the Congressional mandate and Federal disaster policy. Dr. Barbara Fecso will accept the award for the team. Present members, please stand. Congratulations, Barbara, Dr. Daniel Colacicco, Willie Cooper, Dr. Benjamin Legendre and Dr. Michael Salassi.

(Team members stand, Dr. Fesco accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 18 The next award highlights unselfish attitude and cooperative spirit and goes to the Vermilion Parish, Louisiana, FSA employees working together and effectively administering disaster programs for producers affected by Hurricane Rita. The hurricane destroyed at least 1,000 homes, destroyed fences, drowned livestock and damaged the sugarcane crops. Employees in Vermilion parish were evacuated and those in the surge area suffered severe damage. Undaunted, the day after the storm, the FSA parish team cleaned the office and got busy assisting producers and working with the state office doing damage assessments. Larry Thibodeaux will accept the award for the group. Congratulations, Larry, Laura Granger, Diane Guidry, Kimberly Hebert, Timothy Landry, May Maze, Cynthia Schexnider and Cheryl Simon

(Mr. Thibodeaux accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 19 The next award highlights cooperative spirit and unselfish attitude, and goes to the Iberia parish FSA employees for working together and effectively administering disaster programs to affected producers in the Iberia and St. Mary parishes. One of the biggest problems in these areas was pumping water from cane fields and removal of debris. Yet, the attitude of this small team remained positive, and they assisted 117 producers with 95,008 acres. Congratulations, Ronald Boudreaux, Brenda Champagne, Juanita Clements and Bertha Guy.

Unfortunately nobody from this team could attend.

***Award 20* The next group defied threats to the wildlife habitat and by strengthening working relationships with land owners, farm operators, conservation partners and private sector contractors. The Defiance County Farm Service Agency staff in Ohio is commended for its accomplishment of successfully enrolling and establishing over 6,100 acres of Conversation Reserve Program in 2006. Their teamwork significantly reduced the amount of sediment into the Upper Maumee River watershed and the Lake Erie Basin. Joyce Cavanaugh will accept the award; those present from this team, please stand. Congratulations, Joyce, Mary Ankney, Jill Cook, Tracy Hancock, Carol Mangas, Terrance Murnane, Michele Speiser and Jane Walters.**

(Team members present stand, Ms. Cavanaugh accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

***Award 21* They are not only exemplary team players, but team leaders. That's why we recognize the Nebraska Wildfires Team for their excellence in outreach, employee training and delivery of FSA programs to customers in critical need due to disaster and extraordinary events. When six wildfires destroyed more than 171,000 acres of crop, pasture and forest, this team fostered business and community involvement by actively partnering with other organizations to coordinate programs and benefits to provide the very best service to the customers they serve. They reinforced FSA goals in county office employees, farm loan officers and summer college interns through their robust training program. Jeff Peterson will accept the award. Congratulations, Jeff and Janet Woodhull.**

(Mr. Peterson accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 22 When two of the most powerful hurricanes on record slammed into the Gulf Coast within three weeks of each other less than two years ago, it affected all of Louisiana's coastal parishes. The Price Support Division at the FSA Louisiana State office worked tirelessly with resilience and commitment to administer disaster programs to producers suffering from the devastating effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, while managing their normal workload. Producers received over \$38 million dollars in compensation, \$25 million dollars in grants for aquaculture losses, \$17 million dollars in dairy payments and \$481,934 in additional funding. It's important to note that many producers not only suffered loss of animals, crops and infrastructure, but also key records and documents—yet this team assured the integrity of FSA programs. Gerard Labbe will accept the award. Congratulations, Gerard and Rose Bordelon.

(Mr. Labbe accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 23 The Designated Marketing Association Field Review Team literally went extra miles when they volunteered to help conduct reviews of three DMAs last year to help ensure companies are complying with program regulations. The review process involved traveling to locations in Georgia and Texas for interviews, and further travel to selected field points—all while still doing their regular duties as FSA state office program specialists.

Their assistance, effort and dedication in conducting DMA field reviews was invaluable, for such reviews enable us to find any errors so they can be corrected in a timely fashion. John Drach will accept the award. Congratulations, John and Kathy Sayers.

(Mr. Drach accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and Ms. Woodhull is seated.)

Award 24 An important part of serving the public is being accessible to them, and the next team has enabled FSA to do this. The Section 1614 database team underwent an exceptional team effort in designing and building a database which allows the public to more readily understand who receives the benefits from farm programs. This is significant because the Congressionally-mandated database contains information that has never before been compiled and released publicly. It was a tough task, as you can imagine--taking more than 2 years of work and the combined effort of 70 staff members from Washington, D.C., Kansas City, St. Louis and contractors. The team mined the financial system used to deliver farm program payments that were originally built nearly 20 years ago. They compiled and integrated 350 million financial transactions for a four-year period into an intermediate database of over 115 million records. To help people use this new system and avoid misuse of the data, the team developed a user's guide and conducted briefings to key groups. Thomas Hofeller will accept the award for the team. Present members, please stand.

Congratulations, Tom, and Angela Ackerly, Robert Amidei, Charles Boyles, Gerald Bramstedt, Kathleen Carroll, Barbara Clark, Thomas Cranwill, Michael Cox, Emily Der, James Edmiston, Catherine Ford, Anne Fraser, Rebecca Gaskill, David Goodman, Fred Gustafson, Terry Hickenbotham, John Jenkins, Donna Johnston, Bradley Karmen, Venkatesh Konnur, Dale Keffeler, Jolynn Khan, Lester Knutson, Pratibha Kote, Chris Kyer, Ross Lahren, Teresa Maloney, Sharon Marshall, James McAfee, Richard Mellinger, Brenda Mitchell, Thomas Moore, Barbara Ann Norris, Wendell Oaks, Michael Pace, Brent Palmer, Sedoria Parker, David Post, Anthony Puga, Cathy Ryun, Gloria Scoby, Karl Shade, Susan Stanzel, Mary Suzanne Tolle, John Underwood, Jon Vrana, Michael Wild, Eric Will, Carol Woodhead, Threatha Worsham and Sharon Yelton.

(Team members present stand, Mr. Hofeller accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 25 When the next group went the extra mile, they were going fast. The National Payment Service Stabilization Project team created a payment submission process that is nearly 100 times faster than the original version. Their process can handle more than 300 payments per second, allowing us to process up to 8.5 million payments in an 8-hour period. Congratulations to this team for cost savings and performance enhancements resulting from the stabilization of the FSA's National Payment Service application. Kurt Benedict is accepting the award for the team.

Thanks, Kurt and Ethel Anderson, Paul Chevalier, Narmadha Doraisamy, Carl Enloe, Cheryl Gill, Gerald Hagedorn, Mark Hansen, Kevin Harwell, Pansy Hoover, Aravindan Kasiviwanathan, Joyce Lawson, Terrie Maloney, Richard Mellinger, Karen Myers, Garland Rankine, Ravi Ravikumar, Brent Reinhardt, Lisa Reynolds, Charles Sade, Michael Serrone, Eric Smith, Tabatha Smith, Jasmine Staggers, Vijay Vemuri, Carol Woodhead, Threatha Worsham and Sharon Yelton.

(Mr. Benedict accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 26 Next we have Team 20. They are called that because they are members of the 20th Anniversary of the Conservation Reserve Program. It's important to note programs like this can only succeed if people know about them. That's where this team shines. They developed a sophisticated media outreach and education program with products that were visually appealing, media savvy, and connected with wide and diverse audiences. As a result, CRP continues to be the nation's largest and most successful conservation program. We thank Team 20 for their outstanding service promoting the Department's conservation mission. Cheryl Butler will accept the award on behalf of the team and I'd like to ask those members present to please stand. Congratulations, Cheryl, and Agnes Bush, Bruce Cordes, Ilka Gray, Thomas Green, James Jost, Jeffrey Kerby, Angela Mathews, Sharon Rafter, Daniel Stuart, James Williams...and to the late Jillene Johnson.

(Team members present stand, Ms. Butler accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 27 The FSA Business Rules Team went the extra mile through outstanding accomplishments in improving software development as part of FSA's Business Rules. The team was formed to fulfill a request from the department's Chief Financial Officer to document the business rules that govern farm program delivery. They accomplished that, then went beyond. Demonstrating a means for farm program divisions to cooperate on a shared initiative, they created a process and custom database which captured program rules and specified the requirements for software. As a result, documentation for maintenance of CRP contracts can be created in about a week instead of one or two months. As Raellen Erickson accepts the award would present members of the team please stand? Congratulations, DeAnn Allen, Loretta Baxa, Lisa Berry, Stephanie Brown, Sandra Bryant, , Kimberly Graham, Alison Groenwoldt, Kelly Hereth, Terry Hill, Shanita Hines, Janice Kolvet, Clayton Lagassee, Thomas Lloyd, Martin Lowenfish, Elizabeth Miller, Kristina Nemec, Lana Nesbit, Deborah O'Donoghue, Steven Peterson, Laura Schlote, George Stickels, Shayla Watson and Cassandra Wilkins.

(Team members present stand, Ms. Erickson accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat and team members are seated.)

Award 28 Outstanding teamwork in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was exhibited by the Thibodaux Service Center Team while they administered the 2005 Hurricane Disaster Programs in Lafourche, Assumption and Terrebonne parishes.

This is a large area for only two employees, but through hard work and dedication the team administered 13 programs in a timely manner, disbursing more than \$1 million dollars in funds and assisting 127 producers with payments for 73,450 acres of sugarcane. Congratulations to Jerry Dufresne and Darlene Arceneaux, who unfortunately could not come here today.

Award 29 **Going the extra mile can mean going into unfamiliar territory. The FSA Louisiana State Conservation Department forged ahead despite the extreme conditions of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and displayed leadership, development, and guidance in administering the Emergency Conservation Program. The ECP was unlike any program handled in the state office before, in terms of the magnitude of devastation. The staff not only met that challenge, they excelled in other areas, too. In fact, they successfully implemented Louisiana's first Conservation Reserve Emergency Program Project. This was no easy feat, considering they first had to overcome the obstacle of convincing state government officials to support the project. Due to the team's can-do attitude and the project's success, the agricultural community and the public can enjoy the benefits that come from these conservation practices. Congratulations, J. David Carnline, Robert Manuel and Linda Dupuis, who unfortunately could not attend today.**

Next is the Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives Award. This award honors a specific FSA employee or FSA work unit for their efforts in contributing to agency goals and objectives.

Award 30 Our next recipient, a management analyst for Geographic Information Systems, is from the FSA Utah state office but has benefited FSA offices and as well as other departments throughout the nation. He took it upon himself to develop and maintain the Utah FSA Internet and state office Intranet website, and added a help page for GIS and Global Positioning System use. He worked with the FSA county, state and other U.S. governmental department GIS coordinators to increase image clarity. Because of his work, his methods are now being used in other states as they acquire National Agricultural Imagery Program imagery. Rodney Johnson is commended for his outstanding and dedicated service to FSA and partner agencies by implementing and teaching Standard Positioning Service and GIS skills and applications, which ultimately provide enhanced benefits to producers. Congratulations, Rodney.

(Mr. Johnson accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 31 The next recipient has gone the extra mile internationally, interacting with high-level officials in major corporations as well as government departments such as Homeland Security. Patricia Blevins administers the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act, which requires foreign investors who acquire or sell an interest in U.S. agricultural land to report this to the USDA. She exhibits superior performance of duty in administering the AFIDA program despite staffing shortages and an exceptional, and rising, workload. To give an idea of how the workload is increasing, she prepared more than 2,200 reports last year, an 87 percent increase from 2005. She has already written more memoranda so far this fiscal year versus all of FY 2006.

Yet she finds time to further improve this program, and has worked with IT to ensure the functionality of software to AFIDA requirements. Congratulations, Patricia.

(Ms. Blevins accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 32 The next award goes to a group of individuals from the Washington state office who went the extra mile via air. Rodney Hamilton, Paul Daling and Dwaine Schettler overcame daunting obstacles when faced with having to check 1.1 million acres of CRP fields for contract compliance, a process that would take up to 100 days if done using the traditional method. They contracted with a private helicopter company to do low-level aerial reconnaissance which accomplished the goal with the extra benefit of doing so with increased accuracy. Thank you for your extra efforts and creative use of technology enabling producers to meet the Conservation Reserve Program, Re-enrollment End Extensions. Dwaine will accept the award for the team. Congratulations, Dwaine, Paul and Rodney.

(Mr. Schettle accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

And now I'm proud to present the Heroism and Emergency Response Award. This award is earned by a FSA employee or team who performed acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty.

Award 33 I'd like to ask Paul McKellips to return to the stage, although this time for a different but equally patriotic reason.

For most of last year, Paul was detailed to the State Department's Global Outreach Team, where he developed and disseminated stories about Iraqi farmers learning to reconstruct the agricultural industry that employs the largest segment of the population. Though the headquarters was in Baghdad, Iraq, Paul went the extra mile—and then some--and ventured out into remote areas of the battle weary country to do his job, selflessly taking risks beyond expectation. Putting himself in harm's way with camera—and frequently AK-47—in hand, he reopened the Diyala television station that rebels had violently taken off the air, enabling broadcast contact again with the rest of this province. Congratulations to Paul for the bravery and commitment that earned him accolades from the State Department and commendations from the Department of Defense, while representing USDA and FSA with distinction. And thank you for your service.

(Mr. McKellips accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Last, but certainly not least, we present the Newcomer Award. This award is presented to an employee with less than 5 years of FSA service that shows growth, potential, and dedication in making significant contributions to the agency.

Award 34 **Stephanie Brown has gone a long way in a short time despite having less than five years of experience with FSA. Since she has been with the Conservation and Environmental Programs Division, she has drastically improved their use of critical GIS technology.**

She quickly developed a comprehensive knowledge of how conservation programs are implemented at the county, State and national levels. She applied her initiative to include the design of the CRP GIS tools to help producers make offers and take advantage of evolving technology to integrate desktop tools with internet-based program management software. Congratulations to Stephanie for outstanding accomplishments while implementing GIS technology.

(Ms. Brown accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 35 Our next newcomer has set herself apart not only by what she does but how she does it. Since she joined the FSA Utah County Office in summer, 2002, she has exemplified the essence of FSA. Lisa Walburger is genuinely dedicated, determined and fully involved when working with farmers and ranchers. During the past year, she has conducted bin measurements and compliance field visits as well as covered payment eligibility, common programs and farm loans. All this is in addition to her other responsibilities, which are price support, MILC, Compliance, GIS, administrative, elections, NAP, ECP, crop disaster, handling counter traffic, phones, mail, notices and amendments. She handles this large workload with great precision. Because of her willingness to use her talents and abilities, she educates and enlightens people about agriculture and the services offered by our agency. Congratulations, Lisa.

(Ms. Walburger accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 36 Starting out as a temporary, part time FSA employee while finishing his studies at the University of Nebraska, Paul Guenther graduated from there and then from the Farm Loan Officer Training Program to become a permanent employee in fall, 2004. He worked with his farm loan manager and other officials, and together they created an outreach plan that saw their loan volume double by the end of 2006. He also developed a training model to present to young farmer groups and was honored with a 2006 Spot Award for excellence in the development of FLP outreach programs. Today, he is awarded for setting himself apart early by using innovative methods and displaying an enthusiasm in customer service and outreach for the Farm Loan Programs. Congratulations, Paul.

(Mr. Guenther accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 37 I'm extremely proud to announce the next awardee...because I hired her! From Jennifer Stirm's interview with me in fall, 2002, when I was the Ohio State Executive Director, I recognized that she would make an outstanding contribution to the Farm Service Agency. Sure enough, she hit the ground running when she joined that state office. Now she has become known as an expert GIS specialist due to her own initiative. Jennifer has used every resource to assist and train the county office users, while developing factual information for state office decision making. This program specialist trained all FSA state office users on GIS technologies and GPS applications. She provides technical support to all Ohio users for FSA and developed and maintains the state office GIS Intranet web site.

She received an Outstanding American Conservationist Award in 2006 for using GIS technologies to support state CRP efforts. Congratulations to Jennifer for earning yet another award by being such a self motivated public servant. Unfortunately, Jennifer was not able to attend today so accepting this award on her behalf is Joyce Cavanaugh. Joyce, please extend my sincere regards to Jennifer.

(Ms.Cavanaugh accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 38 Our next newcomer literally started from scratch. Before Jane Reed came there was virtually no assessment portion of the tobacco buyout program. However, in just 26 months, she built an assessment program that has been vital to the successful implementation of the 10 billion dollar buyout program. She was solely responsible for collecting data from hundreds of companies importing or manufacturing tobacco products in the U.S. and determining individual company market shares and liability for assessments totally nearly \$1 billion dollars in 2006. She independently created and carried out procedures for identifying companies that do not comply with reporting requirements and has fostered a high level of company cooperation with the program. Congratulations, Jane, for your exceptional efforts in establishing the assessment program for the tobacco buyout program.

(Ms.Reed accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

Award 39 **And finally, Dennis Shields joined FSA in summer, 2003, and has quickly become a major contributor to USDA and the agency through his wheat supply, demand and price analysis. In fact, he has been sought out by industry groups and other government agencies, including Congressional staff, for his insight and expertise in market and program analysis. His impact is due to strong analytical skills as well as flexibility, innovativeness and the ability to communicate complex issues concisely. As a member of the Interagency Pulse Crop Price Task Force, he helped implement regional dry pea loan rates through industry consultations. Congratulations, Dennis, for your exceptional skills in providing food grain policy and marketing information, and for your advice to USDA policymakers, other government agencies, and private industry organizations.**

(Mr. Shields accepts award, shakes Ms. Lasseter's hand, returns to seat.)

On behalf of all of us at the U.S. Department of Agriculture we want to sincerely thank each and every one of you. You have, indeed, gone the extra mile.

(Mr. Adams leads crowd in a round of applause; gestures for Ms. Lasseter to take the podium and is seated.)

53:00 – 54:00 CLOSING REMARKS

Teresa Lasseter

In closing, there is honor in being recognized by your peers for going the extra mile. But most of all, there is the satisfaction of being remembered for making a difference and for remembering those whom we serve.

It's interesting--when we overcome obstacles and go the extra mile to make a difference, we see that we're not much different than our customers. American farmers and ranchers face many hardships, from weather disasters such as hurricanes, to changes in the economy. Yet they persevere in serving their customers. With their dedication and our support, we can achieve an economically and environmentally sound future for American Agriculture.

It has been an honor to recognize these outstanding men and women whose uncommon accomplishments add to our agency's rich legacy of serving this great nation. As Becky Vaughn comes to close our ceremony in song I again extend my sincere appreciation to all of the employees we recognized today.

Thank you.

54:00 – 58:00 CLOSING SONG

Becky Vaughan

The End