

For: FAS, RMA, and FSA Employees

55th Secretary's Honor Awards Program

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

**A
Background**

The Secretary's Honor Awards:

- are the most prestigious awards that are given by USDA
- recognize outstanding contributions supporting the mission of USDA by enhancing the quality of life for American people by:
 - supporting the production of agriculture
 - ensuring safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply
 - caring for agricultural, forest, and range lands
 - supporting sound development of rural communities
 - providing economic opportunities for farm and rural residents
 - expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products and services
 - working to reduce hunger in America and throughout the world.

Embodied in the USDA Mission Statement are 3 themes Secretary Glickman has identified as strategic goals for USDA policies and programs which include:

- expanding economic trade opportunities for agricultural producers and other residents
- ensuring food for the hungry and a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply.
- promoting sensible management of our natural resources.

Note: The Honor Awards' categories have been revised to support these goals as well as other aspects which focus on the USDA Strategic Plan. See Exhibit 1.

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<p>Disposal Date</p> <p>February 1, 2001</p>	<p>Distribution</p> <p>All FAS, RMA, and FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices</p>
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1 Overview (Continued)

B

Purpose

This notice informs employees about the opportunity to submit nominations for the 55th Secretary's Honor Awards Program. All nominations must be submitted by COB **Friday, November 24, 2000.**

C

Equal Opportunity/ Work Force Diversity Policy

In keeping with the Secretary's initiative to promote equal opportunity in employment and programs, agencies are encouraged to consider nominations from all segments of the workforce. All nominees are eligible for the same level of recognition.

It is the Department's policy and practice to prohibit discrimination against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, national origin, or sexual orientation.

D

Labor Management Obligations

Where exclusive representation exists, bargaining may be requested to the extent allowed by applicable statutes. Where contract language already addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

2 Criteria

A

Nomination Considerations

Offices should review highly successful programs and management improvements to identify potential nominees for awards. Consideration should also be given to nominating those who have earned recognition through outstanding performance ratings, promotions, quality step increases, cash awards, or special awards within or outside the Department.

B

Evaluation Period

Contributions must have been made, or the results realized within the **past 3 years**. Heroic acts should have occurred within the **past year**.

C

Eligibility

Employees at all grade levels and private citizens are eligible to receive these awards.

Note: See Exhibit 1 for a description of eligible award categories.

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3 Awards

A Types of Nominations

Nominations may be submitted for an individual or a group. A group nomination shall:

- consist of 2 or more individuals working together as a unit
 - include only those individuals who have significantly contributed to the cited work of the group.
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B Nomination

All nominations must clearly describe:

- the significance of the contribution being recognized
- how the quality of performance substantially exceeds normal job expectations
- the measurable or nonmeasurable benefits achieved, or both.

Nominations shall contain adequate background information to establish the context and scope of each nominee's contribution.

Note: The use of acronyms is discouraged without initial explanation.

C Photographs

Photographs of the individual nominees must be submitted with the nomination. There shall be **2** black and white, 5" x 7" portrait photographs, showing the head and shoulders only.

Note: Scanned photos are not acceptable.

D Justification

Award nominations will **not** be considered and will be returned to the nominating official, without action, if justifications are:

- **in excess of 2 pages**
 - submitted in reduced print font
 - submitted with additional attachments, unless provided on AD-495.
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3 Awards (Continued)

E **Completing** **AD-495**

Each nomination will consist of a completed AD-495. Ensure that:

- a **12-pitch courier print font** is used

Note: If a 12-pitch courier print font is **not** available, other 12-pitch print fonts may be used.

- margins are identical to AD-495
- names, titles, citations, and other relevant information are double-checked for spelling, grammar, and format

Note: Employee's name will be printed as shown on the nomination.

- citations are **25 words or less**

Note: The citation will be used on the Honor Awards Program brochure and on the recipient's plaque and certificate. **Ensure that they are edited carefully.**

- all requested information on AD-495 is completed, such as employee's congressional district, awards, and publications.

Note: Group nominations must list any previous individual or group Departmental Honor Awards presented to any group member.

A nomination must include the original and 11 copies. Each copy must be 3-hole punched with 3/8" holes. Except for list of group members, attachments or continuation sheets will not be accepted. Nomination is limited to 6 pages of the nomination form.

F **Obtaining** **AD-495**

AD-495 consists of 5 pages and 1 double-sided cover sheet and is available in WordPerfect and PDF. All offices may download AD-495 from the FFAS Forms Online website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dam/forms/fsaforms.asp>.

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4 Submitting AD-495's

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Contacts for Submitting AD-495's

Submit AD-495's according to the following table.

IF nomination is from...	THEN submit AD-495...
FSA or RMA National Office	through the Staff Office or Division Director to Stephen Crisp, HRD, at 202-418-8975. (STOP 0595) Note: The Staff Office or Division Director shall be the recommending official on AD-495, Part E.
RSO's and Compliance Offices	to Stephen Crisp, HRD.
FAS	through appropriate Deputy Administrator to HRD.
FSA State and County Offices	through SED to HRD. Note: SED shall be the recommending official on AD-495, Part E.
APFO	through Director to HRD. Note: The Director is the recommending official on AD-495, Part E.
Kansas City Complex, including St. Louis	through KCAO, Personnel Division, at 816-926-6643, to HRD.

B

Selections

HRD shall inform recommending officials of the Agency's decision in January,

Nominations submitted after the November 24, 2000, deadline will not be accepted by the Reviewing Committee.

Secretary’s Honor Awards Categories

Category	Description
Expanding Economic and Trade Opportunities for United States Agricultural Producers	<p>This category recognizes those who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing fair, cost-effective, and efficient farm income support programs to help ensure long-term income stability for farmers and ranchers • assisting United States agricultural producers to manage risks effectively • expanding market opportunities to United States agricultural producers.
Promoting Health by Providing Access to Safe, Affordable, and Nutritious Food	<p>This category recognizes those who demonstrate an outstanding commitment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing hunger and improving nutrition with targeted nutrition assistance • reducing the incidence of foodborne illness and ensuring that commercial supplies are safe and wholesome • promoting better nutrition, health, and well-being through nutrition education, promotion, and research.
Maintaining and Enhancing the Nation’s Natural Resources and Environment	<p>This category recognizes contributions supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • productive capacity of the natural resources base for future generations • protecting the quality of the environment • providing multiple benefits to people from the Nation’s forests and rangelands, which includes greening the Government through leadership in environmental management.
Enhancing the Capacity of All Rural Residents, Communities, and Business to Prosper	<p>This category recognizes contributions which support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing job opportunities in rural communities • improving the standard of living for rural residents • ensuring the neediest rural residents and communities have access to the technical assistance needed to be successful and equal access to USDA credit programs.

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Secretary’s Honor Award Categories (Continued)

Category	Description
<p>Operating an Efficient, Effective, and Discrimination-Free Organization</p>	<p>This category recognizes those who, over time, consistently demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in furthering the mission of USDA through providing high quality and convenient service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring effective and efficient management of human capital. • Ensuring that USDA policies, practices and programs provide fair and equitable service and enforces the civil rights of all USDA employees and customers. • Improving financial management and reporting. • Strengthening the management of information technology using best practices and innovative solutions that will enable efficient and effective means in the delivery of Department programs and services. • Ensuring USDA facilities are maintained and operated in a safe, cost-effective and efficient manner.
<p>Heroism and Emergency Response</p>	<p>This category recognizes USDA employees who perform acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty.</p> <p>This category also recognizes those who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in responding to floods, fires, storms, earthquakes, disease outbreaks, or other conditions requiring emergency response.</p>