

For: FAS and RMA Employees

60th Secretary's Honor Awards Program

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A Background

The Secretary's Honor Award is the most prestigious Departmental award presented by the Secretary of Agriculture. The categories for 2007 reflect the goals of the USDA Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2005 through 2010. The Plan focuses on the Department's major programmatic goals and objectives along with other management initiatives. In addition to the categories that reflect the goals of the Strategic Plan, there is an award category for heroism and emergency response recognizing USDA employees who perform acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty.

B Purpose

This notice informs all offices of the opportunity to submit nominations for the 60th Secretary's Honor Awards Program. All nominations must be submitted by COB **Friday, June 1, 2007**.

C Equal Opportunity/Workforce 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.

Disposal Date	Distribution
August 1, 2007	All FAS and RMA Employees

1 Overview (Continued)

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 Nominations

Each Under/Assistant Secretary may submit a maximum of 4 nominations. Group nominations should be limited to a maximum of 35 employees. It is important to include only those individuals who have **significantly** contributed to the group's accomplishments.

B Nominations Allocation

The Under Secretary's office has requested the following to be forwarded to his office for consideration:

- **Risk Management Agency - 1 primary and 2 alternate nominations**
- **Foreign Agricultural Service - 1 primary and 2 alternate nominations.**

C Categories

The award categories and descriptions can be found on the USDA website located at **<http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/usdasp.htm>**:

- Enhancing International Competitiveness of American Agriculture, **<http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-03.pdf>**
- Enhancing the Competitiveness and Sustainability of Rural Farm Economies, **<http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-04.pdf>**
- Supporting Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Quality of Life in Rural America, **<http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-05.pdf>**
- Enhancing Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply, **<http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-06.pdf>**
- Improving the Nation's Nutrition and Health, **<http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-06.pdf>**

2 Criteria (Continued)

C Categories (continued)

- Protecting and Enhancing the Nation's Natural Resource Based and Environment, <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-08.pdf>
- Supporting the President's Management Agenda and Civil Rights, <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/pdf/sp05-09.pdf>
- Heroism and Emergency Response.

Note: This category recognizes:

- USDA employees who perform acts of unusual selflessness of heroism in the line of duty.
- those who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in responding to floods, fires, storms, earthquakes, disease outbreaks, or other conditions requiring emergency response.

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 receiving an Administrator's Award, outstanding performance ratings, promotions, cash awards, or special awards within or outside the Department.

D 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**.

E Eligibility

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

3 Nomination

A Completing AD-495

Each nomination will consist of a completed AD-495. AD-495 is available on the following web sites:

- http://www.ocio.usda.gov/forms/doc/AD495_Honor_Awards_Nomination_Form_508.pdf
- <http://165.221.16.90/dam/ffasforms/currentforms.asp>.

Read and comply with the instructions on AD-495, page 1.

3 Nomination (Continued)

B Nomination Content (Narrative)

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: Every word must be spelled out throughout the narrative. Do **not** use acronyms or abbreviations.

C Photographs

Photographs of individuals are required. Ensure that 2 black and white 5” x 7” portrait photographs (showing the head and shoulders only) are included in the nomination packets.

Note: Scanned photographs are **not** acceptable.

D Submitting Nominations

Mail nominations packets to Stephanie Brown, HRD, Employee Program Branch, using either of the following addresses.

US Mail	FedEx
STEPHANIE BROWN USDA/FSA/HRD/EPB STOP 0595 1400 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, SW WASHINGTON, DC 20250-0595	STEPHANIE BROWN USDA/FSA/HRD/EPB 1280 MARYLAND AVE SW RM 487 WASHINGTON, DC 20024

Nominations must be received by HRD by COB June 1, 2007.

4 Reviewing Committee

A Committee

HRD will establish committees within RMA and FAS to review their nominations.

4 Reviewing Committee (Continue)

B Committee Members

Committee members shall:

- review all the nominations from their Agency based on the criteria set forth in AD-495 and category description
- select nomination to be forwarded for the Under Secretary's endorsement for the 60th Secretary's Honor Award.

5 Contact Information

A Contact

If there are questions or additional information is needed, contact Stephanie Brown by either of the following:

- e-mail to stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov
- telephone at 202-401-0687.