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1st Quarter

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE
OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (OCRDI)

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

A Message from THE DIRECTOR

Hello All,

It is time to review and recommit.

In my introductory blog, two years ago, I identified with a quote from Dave Weinbaum. Even though I do not agree with Dave's politics, I agree with his quote, "The secret to a rich life is to have more beginnings than endings". I believe the quote also applies to organizations.

January is an opportunity month. It is another chance for OCRDI to create a new beginning, and move closer to building a more dynamic OCRDI: a place where creativity and problem solving flourishes, where employees trust each other, say what they mean, do what they say, are clear about the work to be done, complete work correctly, and timely 95% of the time, resolve 80% of problems impacting them and their work, enjoy their work, and work well together, resolve 85% of conflicts before they get to supervisors, and bring problems to the Director and Management Team with options and recommended solutions. Employees shall respect each other, their managers, and supervisors, and demonstrate their support for diversity and inclusion by their actions.

Jennifer Love Hewitt, actress, producer, singer, and writer reminds us in her quote to "Celebrate endings - for they precede new beginnings". Taking Ms. Hewitt's advice, 2014 gives OCRDI an opportunity to celebrate. In 2013, we launched the OCRDI *Civil Rights Communicator*, re-aligned Civil Rights, EEO Advisory, Diversity and Inclusion, and Cultural Transformation Committees to provide clarity around roles and responsibilities, and improve communication between special emphasis groups, completed a five-year complaints analysis, implemented training based on the analysis, implemented cradle-to-grave complaints processing, recommitted to 30-day processing of informal complaints, experienced a decrease of 14.6% in the number of formal EEO complaints, reduced the time it takes to process an informal complaint by 32 days (35%), increased the informal complaint resolution rate by 15%, issued 35% fewer Notices of Right to File (NRF), increased the cases closed by complainant withdrawal by 133%. Additionally, OCRDI staff managed and coordinated the development of a new Tribal pamphlet, developed program specific fact sheets for Wildlife Services, Animal Care and Veterinary Services, created a new Tribal Relations SharePoint site, and an APHIS Tribal Training Plan, consisting of four separate training series for all employees. Series one of Tribal Consultation Training was delivered to over 120 employees.

Thank you, OCRDI. Our 2013 accomplishments were positive and impactful. It is now time to proceed with our new beginning, and remain true to our mission of promoting a non-discriminatory environment where everyone has equal access to APHIS employment and programs.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Johnson, Director

OCRDI Management Team

Kenneth E. Johnson, Director
Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion

La Shon D. Cole, Deputy Director
Office of Civil Rights

Cynthia Dickens, Branch Chief
Counseling and Resolution Branch

Steve Shelor, Branch Chief
Compliance and Evaluation Branch

Michon M. Oubichon, Deputy Director
Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Terry W. Clark, D.V.M., Deputy Director
Office of National Tribal Liaison

Sophia L. Kirby, Chief
Outreach and Communications Staff

Kim Ogle, Chief of Staff
Resource Management Staff

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New Beginnings

The OCRDI Office of Diversity and Inclusion Transformation

BY MICHON M. OUBICHON

Pictured above: Office of Diversity and Inclusion staff (left to right) — Mr. Patrick Johnson, Ms. Tanika Whittington, and Ms. Michon Oubichon.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) serves as the leader and primary advisor within APHIS for the Department's Cultural Transformation Plan, which supports Executive Order 13583, a government-wide initiative to promote and manage diversity and inclusion in the Federal workforce. ODI will provide support and guidance to special emphasis programs and managers throughout APHIS, by sponsoring training and educational opportunities, and cultural programs, to enhance the diversity and inclusion mission. Special emphasis programs will be steered by ODI's special emphasis program managers, Mr. Patrick Johnson and Ms. Tanika Whittington. Mr. Johnson is responsible for managing the African American Employment Program (AEEP), the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LBGT) Employment Program, the Veterans Employment Program (VEP), and the Caribbean American Heritage Program (CAHP). He can be reached at 301-851-3137, or via e-mail: Patrick.Johnson@aphis.usda.gov. Ms. Whittington is responsible for management of the management of the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Employment Program, the Federal Women's Employment Program (FWEP), the Hispanic Employment Program (HEP), and the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Employment Program. She can be reached at 301-851-4204, or via e-mail: Tanika.C.Whittington@ aphis.usda.gov.

ODI conducted input sessions via webinar, conference calls, and in-person meetings with all APHIS programs to gain information and perspectives on the overall effectiveness of special emphasis programs within the Agency. These sessions were held during the summer of 2013, and based on the feedback received, the special emphasis program re-alignment plan was developed, presented, and approved by the APHIS Management Team in September 2013. ODI is currently in the process of finalizing the realignment of special emphasis programs, which includes consolidation of APHIS civil rights committees, cultural transformation committees, diversity and inclusion committees, and EEO advisory committees, in addition to developing a special emphasis program guidance document. All committees will now operate under one authority: the Civil Rights and Diversity Committee (CRDAC).

The re-alignment formalizes an APHIS structure and system of accountability for special emphasis program managers, establishes consistency of purpose, adds a management support role for each CRDAC, and incorporates diversity liaisons into the CRDAC. Each CRDAC will include nine special emphasis program managers, and at least one diversity liaison. Additionally, the APHIS National Civil Rights and Diversity Advisory Committee (NCRDAC) has been constituted as a result of the realignment. The purpose of the NCRDAC is to serve as a strategic advisor to ODI in providing management officials and employees with a vehicle that enhances equal opportunity employment (EEO), and program delivery issues. Moreover, each program in APHIS will be required to appoint one member to serve on the NRDAC for a two-year term. The NRDAC will establish lines of communication between employees and management through views on civil rights issues. For additional information on the special emphasis program realignment plan, you may contact Ms. Michon Oubichon, at 301-851-2248, or via e-mail: Michon.M.Oubichon@aphis.usda.gov.

Thurgood Marshall College Fund Leadership Institute

BY SOPHIA L. KIRBY | TAMMY H. LOWRY

The 13th Annual Leadership Institute, sponsored by the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF), was held at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C., November 8-12, 2013. Recognized as the premier recruitment conference for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), the Leadership Institute brings together a select group of talented future leaders for a variety of interactive discussions and workshops, networking activities, and a recruitment fair. Participants attending the Leadership Institute are either sponsored by TMCF or their respective university. USDA is one of the many proud sponsors of TMCF, contributing $50,000 in financial support this year. Ms. Sophia Kirby (OCRDI), Ms. La Shon Cole (OCRDI), Mr. John Morris (HRD), and Ms. Tammy McLemore (HRD), represented APHIS at the TMCF Annual Leadership Institute.

Pictured above: Ms. Sophia Kirby and Ms. La Shon Cole (both OCRDI staff).

Pictured above: Ms. Tammy McLemore (HRD), and Mr. Anton House, TMCF Scholar alumni. Mr. House is currently working on his Ph.D.

OCRDI Staff News

BY TAMMY H. LOWRY

Welcome, Tanika Whittington!

A warm welcome, and congratulations goes to Ms. Tanika Whittington, for her recent appointment to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as the new Cultural Transformation Program Specialist. Although Ms. Whittington isn't new to OCRDI (she joined the APHIS civil rights staff in 2007, and served on the Compliance and Evaluation Branch for the past four years), her solid experience makes her an excellent addition to the OCRDI Office of Diversity and Inclusion. In her previous position as Program and Management Analyst, she led the compliance review program, performed Compliance Review Impact Analyses (CRIAs), and served as the National Federal Women's Program Manager. A former Thurgood Marshall Scholar, Ms. Whittington joined APHIS under the Federal Career Intern Program in May 2007. Prior to her career with APHIS, she was employed at the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation Office. In her new position, under the direction of Ms. Michon Oubichon, Ms. Whittington will lend her expertise to developing various Agency policies and programs to create a culture of inclusion and opportunities for all. She will be responsible for developing the APHIS Cultural Transformation Action Plan, the APHIS FEORP Program Report, the APHIS Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, as well as the MD-715 Report. She will also be involved in working with the National Civil Rights and Diversity Advisory Committee, and more specifically, with Native American, Women, Asian American/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic special emphasis programs. Ms. Whittington holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications, with a concentration in Negotiation and Conflict Management, from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a Master of Arts degree in Human Resource Development, with a concentration in Training and Development, from Bowie State University. In her free time, she enjoys volunteering in the Emergency Department at the Anne Arundel Medical Center, spending time with her husband Eric, attending her daughter's volleyball club games, and her step-son's basketball games.

IAC 27th Annual Membership Meeting

BY CARL ETSITTY

The Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) hosted its 27th Annual Membership Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, on December 11-12, 2013. The IAC conducts a wide range of programs designed to further the goal of improving Indian Agriculture. APHIS Associate Administrator, Dr. Jere Dick attended the event. Endorsing this year's theme, *Perseverance + Sustainability = Security,* Dr. Dick provided a general overview of APHIS, and spoke about some specific Tribal programmatic deliveries: collaborations with dozens of Tribes and Tribal associations through partnerships, cooperative agreements, emergency training in protecting livestock and trees from predators, including wolves, coyotes, and bears. He also remarked on combating invasive insects, like the emerald ash borer, and redbay ambrosia beetles, which attack trees of Tribal significance, consulting with Tribes on the animal disease traceability rule, and several program changes, such as the commercial transportation of horses to slaughter. Dr. Dick discussed the current challenges within the Agency, and invited Tribal input on future directions for partnerships. He encouraged Tribes to participate in, and submit Farm Bill Section 10201 suggestions for Fiscal Year 2014 funding opportunities. He reiterated that APHIS is committed to expanding its partnerships with Tribes, to ensure the health, marketability, and profitability of Tribal agriculture, and looks forward to building a future where Tribal sovereignty is respected, and the shared goals of promoting animal and plant health is met. For additional information on Tribal sovereignty, or APHIS Tribal partnerships, you may contact Dr. Terry Clark, APHIS National Tribal Liaison at **Terry.W.Clark@aphis.usda.gov**.

Pictured above: Dr. Jere Dick, APHIS Associate Administrator.

"The Intertribal Agriculture Council was founded in 1987 to pursue and promote the conservation, development and use of our agricultural resources for the betterment of our people."

~ Intertribal Agriculture Council

COMPLIANCE AND EVALUATION

On the Move With Compliance Reviews

BY COLLUS BROWN

2013 has come and gone, bringing many new and exciting beginnings to the world of civil rights and equal employment opportunity. One change is the compliance review initiative. OCRDI has been charged with being even more proactive in 2014 as it pertains to ensuring that equal opportunity is the standard for delivering programs, and providing opportunities to employees and applicants for employment. In accepting this charge, the OCRDI Compliance and Evaluation Branch has scheduled six compliance reviews during FY14, at several APHIS program sites. These reviews will consist of four onsite reviews, and two desk audits in Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Iowa. The compliance reviews will commence in February, and expected to run through the month of September. Should you have any questions about the compliance review schedule or process, or if you are interested in scheduling a compliance review of your office of work unit, contact Mr. Steve Shelor, Compliance and Evaluation Branch Chief, via e-mail: Steve.Shelor@aphis.usda.gov. You may also reach Mr. Shelor by telephone at 202-799-7013.

Perspectives From Hispanic Leaders at APHIS

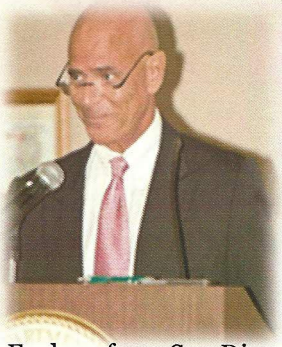
BY SAMANTHA MARIN

Each year, from September 15th to October 15th, the Nation recognizes National Hispanic Heritage Month. The month-long celebration commemorates the diversity and contributions of Hispanic Americans. Following this year's theme, *Hispanics: Serving and Leading Our Nation with Pride and Honor*, APHIS honored a guest panel of APHIS employees to share their professional perspectives, success stories, views on the importance of diversity in the workplace, and their insight on underrepresentation of the Hispanic population in the Federal workforce. Although the U.S. population has seen an increase in Hispanic representation, Hispanics currently remain underrepresented in the Federal government. In September 2013, the Office of Personnel Management's *Twelfth Annual Report to the President on Hispanic Employment in the Federal Workforce,* indicated that Hispanic employment has increased from 6.5% in Fiscal Year 2000, to 8.2% in Fiscal Year 2012. Nonetheless, Federal agencies continue to face many challenges when hiring, retaining, and developing Hispanic employees. The latest report shows a government-wide increase in Hispanic employees who retired in Fiscal Year 2011 (5.4%), to Fiscal Year 2012 (6.0%), and a decrease in Hispanic new hires, from 6.7% in Fiscal Year 2011, to 6.6% in Fiscal Year 2012. Undoubtedly, these trends may be attributed to budget cuts and hiring freezes. Despite these trends, Hispanic representation at APHIS has increased slightly from 10.2% in Fiscal Year 2011, to 10.3% in Fiscal Year 2012. As part of the National Hispanic Heritage month celebration, the panel highlighted the accomplishments of some of our fellow colleagues at APHIS. Guest panelists expressed the notion that we can fully realize our potential as an organization when we embrace a multicultural workforce. Through their experiences and advice, we strive to promote mentoring and practices that will increase opportunities for Hispanic employees. In recognition of their vital work at APHIS, and their invaluable contributions as participants in events to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage month, we extend a sincere thank you to the following guest panelists:

Dr. Diego Fridmann
Senior Staff Veterinary Medical Officer, VS

Dr. Silvia Kreindel
Senior Staff Veterinarian, VS

Dr. Josè Lozada
Veterinary Medical Officer, PPQ

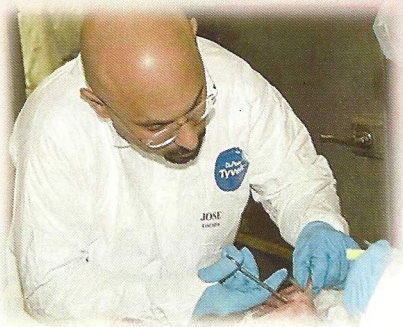


DR. DIEGO FRIDMANN

Dr. Fridmann is a Senior Staff Veterinarian with APHIS-VS. He was born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and completed a Bachelor of Science degree at Saint Augustine School. Dr. Fridmann earned a Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) degree from the National University of Buenos Aires, a Master's degree in Biology/Marine Ecology from San Diego State University, and a Ph.D. in Comparative Pathology, from the University of California, Davis, where he worked as an Adjunct Professor in Clinical Pathology. Prior to his career at APHIS, Dr. Fridmann served as a Research Toxicologist Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Environmental Protection Agency; as a Research Scientist for a biotechnology company, and as a Supervisory Medical Officer for the USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service.

DR. SILVIA KREINDEL

Dr. Kreindel is a Senior Staff Veterinarian with APHIS-VS. She received a Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) degree from the University of Buenos Aires, and a Masters of Public Health in epidemiology from the University of Massachusetts. Dr. Kriendel has co-authored three book chapters on food safety and zoonosis. Prior to joining APHIS in 2005, she worked for the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, as a Risk Analyst.



DR. JOSÈ LOZADA

Dr. Lozada is a Veterinarian with APHIS-PPQ, and a retired military officer with 28 years of experience in leadership and operational management of public health, preventive medicine, and regulatory animal health programs at national headquarters, field offices, as well as in combat operations during multiple stateside assignments, overseas tours, and deployments to the Caribbean, Central America, Europe, and the Middle East.

Celebrating Native American Heritage

BY MICHON M. OUBICHON | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANSON EAGLIN

Mr. Robert Holden joined APHIS on November 12, 2013, in observance of National Native American Heritage Month. Mr. Holden is of Choctaw and Chickasaw descent, and Deputy Director of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), in Washington, D.C., the oldest and largest national tribal government advocacy organization in the country. Mr. Holden spoke about the purpose and mission of the NCAI, its relationship with APHIS, and how we can further partner together to build a stronger relationship with Tribes through ongoing education of Indian Country affairs. Mr. Holden also addressed the importance of forming Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and highlighted some of the successful collaborations with APHIS. Some notable partnerships have included training on subjects ranging from animal disease traceability, bio-controls, horse vaccines, and giant African snails, to Farm Bill Section 10201. APHIS and the NCAI recognize that there is still work to be done, and both are committed to furthering a relationship to foster mutual growth. APHIS would like to consult with the Tribes, government-to-government, and seek NCAI guidance and participation on how to respect Tribal heritage and cultural values, when planning and initiating our programs. APHIS seeks and welcomes participation from the Tribes through consultation, in developing APHIS policies and programs which affect them.

Pictured above: Mr. Robert Holden, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI).

Pictured above (left to right): Mr. Anwar Rizvi (PPQ), Mr. Carl Etsitty (OCRDI), Mr. Kenneth Johnson (OCRDI), Mr. Kevin Shea (Administrator), Mr. Robert Holden (NCAI), and Ms. Michon Oubichon (OCRDI).

Founded in 1944, the NCAI is the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization, serving the broad interests of Tribal governments and communities. For more information about NCAI, visit: www.ncai.org.

From Cradle to Grave

BY CYNTHIA DICKENS

For EEOC, the processing of EEO complaints has been the culmination of many years of trial and error. Through much persistence and hard work, the process has evolved. And yet, as much as the accomplishment represents an ending, it also represents a new beginning. There will always be more to learn. The real work has just begun. Likewise, the initial complaint processing regulation provided timeframes for filing complaints, required Agency investigations, hearings by an Agency panel, or an Agency-appointed hearing officer, a final decision by the Agency head or designee, and a process which allows complainants to file an appeal. In 1969, the regulations were revised to include participation in informal counseling, prior to filing a formal complaint. The 1990's represented a time of significant change to the commission's regulations governing the processing of Federal sector complaints. The commission issued new regulations at 29 C.F.R. Part 1614, which consolidated the procedures as much as possible, and required the establishment of an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) program.

Pictured above-left to right: (seated) Ms. Cynthia Dickens and Ms. Lauren Hill; (standing) Mr. Michael Holmes, Ms. Thelma Sykes, Ms. Sarita Kent-Wallace, and Mr. Michael Lamb.

APHIS was one of the first agencies within USDA to establish its Alternative Dispute Resolution Center to utilize mediation as a tool to address concerns at the lowest possible level. The Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion (OCRDI) Counseling and Resolution Branch continues to revamp the process, to provide the best possible service to our customers for EEO processing. One of the postures of leadership is of being a persistent leader, of being a courageous creator of something better, or altogether new. In this regard, OCRDI leaders envisioned where and when change, or a *new beginning* was needed. It is this new beginning which keeps us and our organization forever sharp, growing, and evolving. In 2012, OCRDI underwent a structure change, with the focus of providing superior service to our customers. The informal and formal complaints units were combined to provide a more wholesome approach to addressing complaints with our customers. From this change, the Counseling and Resolution Branch (CRB), was formed.

The CRB is responsible for implementing and managing all aspects of the Federal administrative equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaints process, mandated by 29 C.F.R. Part 1614, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Management Directive 110 (MD-110). This includes providing APHIS management with leadership and guidance in regard to the EEO complaint process. One of the accomplishments of the CRB is the implementation of a *Cradle to Grave* approach in handling EEO complaints. All EEO Specialists in the Counseling and Resolution Branch, unlike in the past, now process EEO complaints from informal counseling, through the hearing or Final Agency Decision, providing our customers with a well-rounded specialist. Another goal was to decrease the processing time involved with EEO complaints filed within our office. We have made great strides to improve our services and processing times. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, we decreased the average number of days for informal processing, from 89 days to 57 days, in addition to closing more formal cases in FY13, than in the previous year. We continue to review our services, and steadfastly address any issues, or potential issues that may impact our successful delivery of the EEO process. We look forward to the services we provide evolving even more in FY14.

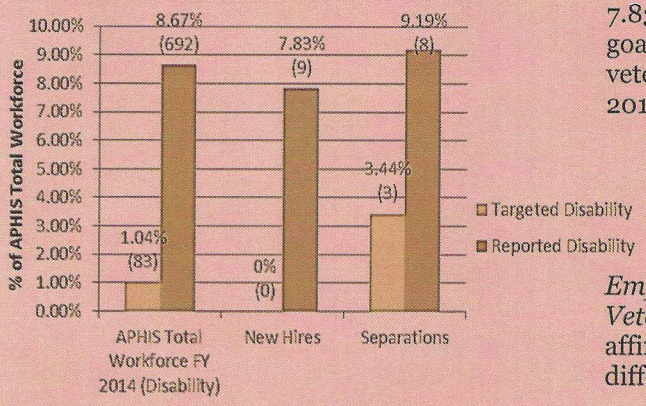
APHIS at a Glance

BY TANIKA WHITTINGTON

FY 2014-Qrt 2

Data Source: National Finance Center (NFC), Reporting Center – January 28, 2014

Gender/RNO	CLF 2010	APHIS Total Workforce FY 2014
Male	51.86%	60.82% (4,851)
Female	48.14%	39.18% (3,125)
Hispanic Male	5.17%	6.83% (545)
Hispanic Female	4.79%	3.60% (287)
White Male	38.33%	44.28% (3,532)
White Female	34.03%	27.41% (2,186)
Black Male	5.49%	3.18% (254)
Black Female	6.53%	4.98% (397)
Asian Male	1.97%	3.90% (311)
Asian Female	1.93%	1.91% (152)
Native Hawaiian Male	0.07%	1.04% (83)
Native Hawaiian Female	0.07%	0.28% (22)
American Indian Male	0.55%	0.75% (60)
American Indian Female	0.53%	0.48% (38)
2 or More Races Male	0.26%	0.83% (66)
2 or More Races Female	0.28%	0.54% (43)



APHIS Target Hiring Goals - 10% Reported Disability and 4% Targeted Disability

Ensuring a high quality, diverse and motivated workforce is a key goal of APHIS. It is a pivotal component for achieving the mission and vision of the Agency. A prerequisite for accomplishing this goal is supporting the principles of diversity, inclusion, and cultural transformation in the workplace. Lack of diversity and inclusion can be paralyzing if it is not ingrained in the organizational culture. To that end, *APHIS at a Glance* is intended to show the progress APHIS is making towards a more diverse and inclusive workforce, and ensures Agency-wide awareness of, and accountability for improving the participation rate of minorities, veterans, and persons with a disability.

With that said, the following charts illustrate APHIS' progress in reaching parity with the CLF 2010 data, and APHIS target hiring goals. APHIS has a total workforce of 7,976. Of that 5,568 are permanent (2,990 males and 2,578 females), and 2,408 are temporary (1,861 males and 560 females). In comparison to the CLF data, APHIS exceeds representation in the categories of Hispanic Males, White Males, Asian Males, Native Hawaiian Males, Native Hawaiian Females, American Indian Males, Two or More Races Male, and Two or More Races Female. Although there has been a slight proliferation, APHIS remains below the CLF rate for 6 groups – Hispanic Females (-1.19%), White Females (-6.62%), Black Males (-2.31%), Black Females (-1.55%), Asian Females (-0.02%) and American Indian Females (-0.05%). Females in general are below the CLF by -8.96%.

APHIS' target hiring goals for Persons with a Reported Disability (PWRD), and Persons with a Targeted Disability (PWTD), are 10% and 4%, respectively. To date, PWRD represent 8.67% (692) of the APHIS total workforce, and PWTD represent 1.04% (83) of the workforce. Since FY 2014, there have been no new hires for PWTD, but 3.44% (3) have been separated. The agency has hired 7.83% (9) of PWRD, but has separated 9.19% (8) of PWRD. The APHIS hiring goal for veterans is 17% of all new hires. APHIS currently has a total of 1,037 veterans, which represents 13% of the APHIS total workforce. Additional FY 2014 data for veterans is not currently available in the NFC/Reporting Center.

While agency-wide we have made progress at hiring a workforce that reflects the diversity of our Nation, we must continue to pursue that goal according to Executive Orders – *13583 Promoting Diversity and Inclusion, 11478 EEO in the Federal Government, 13171 Hispanic Employment, 13548 Employment of Individuals with a Disability,* and *13518 Veterans Employment.* As equal, we must demonstrate by our actions, and affirm in our convictions, that APHIS works better together because of our differences, not despite them.

Civil Rights Communicator

Editor, Lay-out, & Design:

TAMMY H. LOWRY