

Civil Rights COMMUNICATOR

October-December 2013
4th Quarter

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

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

A Message from THE DIRECTOR

Greetings APHIS Colleagues,

This edition of the *Civil Rights Communicator* highlights a few APHIS 2013 minority outreach projects. I guess many of you are wondering how minority outreach, and civil rights connect. The answer: the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In 2014, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI and Title VII were enacted as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination, based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin.

Program and employment discrimination can be intentional or unintentional. I am an optimist, and believe intentional discrimination rarely occurs. However, I believe that when discrimination does occur, a contributing factor, for the most part, is that we still live in segregated communities. We live in communities and build relationships with people with whom we are comfortable, share similar beliefs, are in the same income bracket, attend similar schools, are similarly educated, and share the same ethnicity.

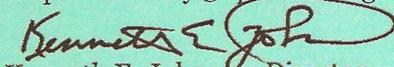
The fact that we live in segregated communities contributes to our lack of understanding of cultures, ethnicities, and groups/communities different from our own. Because of our lack of understanding, we often fail to consider the needs of minorities, the underserved, and underrepresented, as we hire employees, and develop, and administer APHIS programs. I believe that we do not deliberately exclude minorities, the underserved, and the underrepresented in our hiring of employees and delivery of programs. We do, however, tend to interact and communicate with persons, groups, and communities with whom we are familiar, and share commonalities. In many

instances, these factors contribute to our overlooking, and not understanding the needs of persons, groups, and communities which are different from ours.

How can we, the Federal Government of the People, by the People, and for the People, mitigate the ills of a segregated society, and deliver Federally-funded programs with a workforce that mirrors the Civilian Labor Force? One of the answers is effective outreach. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines outreach as "the activity or process of bringing information or services to people." Our job under Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is to bring information or services to the people, making them aware of APHIS programs and employment opportunities. If the public does not know about APHIS programs and employment opportunities, how can they participate in them?

Outreach, when done right, can be an effective tool to combat discrimination in employment and program delivery. Civil rights and outreach are in the same family. All Federal employees should be conducting outreach to all communities/groups, including minorities, the underserved, and the underrepresented, as we carry out our daily jobs.

For information about outreach programs and activities within APHIS, please feel free to contact Ms. Sophia Kirby of the OCRDI staff, at 301-851-4192, or via e-mail: Sophia.L.Kirby@aphis.usda.gov.


Kenneth E. Johnson, Director

OCRDI Management Team

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

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Deputy Director**
Office of Civil Rights

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Outreach and Communications Staff

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Resource Management Staff

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OCRDI Staff News BY TAMMY H. LOWRY

Patrick Johnson



Mr. Johnson joined the Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion (OCRDI), on June 30, 2013, as a Diversity and Inclusion Specialist in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. In this new position, he is responsible for serving and assisting with developing, recommending, and implementing

the APHIS Diversity and Inclusion program and policies, for creating a culture of inclusion for all employees. Mr. Johnson attended Virginia State University, attaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice. He earned a Master of Public Administration degree from North Carolina Central University in 2007, where he served as a graduate/teaching assistant. Mr. Johnson joined the APHIS Policy and Program Development (PPD) staff in 2007, as a Program Analyst, and also held a collateral duty position as the Veterans' Employment Program Manager. During his tenure with PPD, he worked with various programs to develop and maintain performance metrics and accomplishment reports that supported program budget requests, and other programmatic matters. In addition to his Federal career, Mr. Johnson serves as Vice President of the Virginia State University Alumni Association, Washington, D.C. Chapter, and is also enrolled in the Doctor of Management Program at the University of Phoenix. He currently resides in Waldorf, Maryland.

Krizia Campbell



Ms. Campbell joined the Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion (OCRDI) on July 1, 2013, as a Program Specialist. Her position primarily focuses on providing program support to OCRDI in the Office of the Director. In this capacity, she serves as liaison between the Director's office, the Office of the Administrator, and other APHIS

programs and offices, universities, and USDA agencies. Ms. Campbell reviews correspondence for the OCRDI Office of the Director, arranges and attends meetings and conferences with USDA and APHIS officials, and with officials of other Federal and State agencies, private organizations, and groups. Additionally, she reviews plans, program reports, and generates correspondence for the Director's signature and/or approval. Ms. Campbell previously worked in the Legislative and Public Affairs Executive Communications office for seven years, where her work was focused on managing correspondence, and responding to public inquiries through USDA's *Ask the Expert* system, and other communication channels. Ms. Campbell holds an Associate of Arts Degree in Communications/Writing from Prince George's Community College, and is continuing her studies in Communications at the University of Maryland University College in Adelphi, Maryland. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and close friends, watching *Family Feud*, *Jeopardy*, investigative shows, and horror movies.

Calendar of Events

.....**October 2013**.....

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

.....**October 18-23, 2013**.....

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)
72nd Annual Convention and Marketplace
San Diego, CA

.....**October 26-28, 2013**.....

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) 2013
Annual Conference
Chicago, IL

.....**November 2013**.....

National Native American Heritage Month

.....**November 7, 2013**.....

Veteran's Day Observance
(USDA Jefferson Auditorium)
Washington, DC

.....**November 14, 2013**.....

Native American-Alaska Native Heritage Month
Observance
(USDA Jefferson Auditorium)
Washington, DC

APHIS LGBT PRIDE

BY MICHON M. OUBICHON | PHOTOGRAPH BY JULION FRANCIS



APHIS 2013 Annual Diversity Photo

June 25, 2013

APHIS Celebrated LGBT Pride Month With a Variety of Informative Programs

- ◆ Veterinary Services (VS) Headquarters EEO Advisory Committee kicked off the month of LGBT Pride events, with a brown bag lunch, featuring Mr. Patrick Paschall, Policy Counsel from The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Mr. Paschall spoke about *Facing Transgender Discrimination in the Workplace*. The event was arranged by Ms. Taunya Said (VS).
- ◆ Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services (MRPBS), and Policy and Program Development (PPD) hosted a brown bag lunch, featuring Mr. William Aley, Plant, Protection, and Quarantine (PPQ), who spoke about his time spent in the U.S. Navy, why he left service, and the repeal of *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*. The event was organized by Ms. Pamela Bennett (IES), and Mr. Christopher Starks (PPD).
- ◆ International Services (IS) EEO Advisory Committee hosted a LGBT Pride Month program, featuring Mr. Kenneth Kero-Mentz from the U.S. State Department, who serves as a senior advisor for LGBT issues, and the President of Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA). Mr. Kero-Mentz spoke about *The Roles of Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy, and The Role of LGBT Rights as Human Rights*. The event was organized by IS EEO Advisory Committee Members: Ms. Theresa Braddock, Mr. John Shaw, Ms. Jennifer Painter, and Ms. Shelly Little.
- ◆ PPQ Field Ops Civil Rights and EEO Advisory Committee held an LGBT Pride Month Poster Contest. The winner of the contest was Ms. Alba L. Sanchez, PPQ-Puerto Rico. The contest was arranged by Ms. Suzanne Palmerini (PPO).

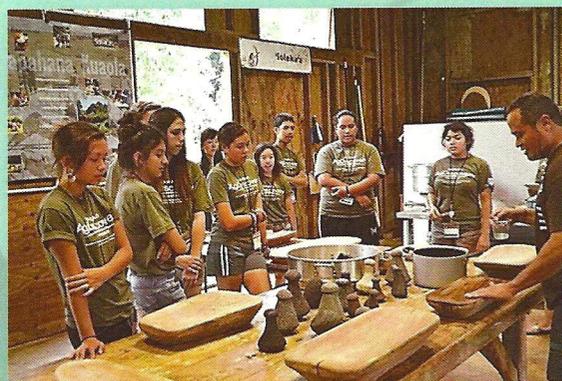
On June 26, 2013, the Supreme Court ruled section three of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional. As a result of this decision, the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is now able to extend benefits to Federal employees and annuitants who have legally married a spouse of the same sex. To inform and assist APHIS employees' understanding of the end of DOMA, the Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion (OCRDI) partnered with Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS), and the Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Advisory Committee to present *A Conversation with Alex McNeil – Know Your Rights: What the End of DOMA Means for Same-Sex Marriage.* Mr. McNeil is the Director of Communications and Development at Equality Maryland. Ms. Peigi Enzler and Ms. Kim Wilde (MRPBS-Human Resources Division) participated in the conversation, and answered questions concerning benefits for same-sex married couples. The event was organized by Ms. Gwendolyn Burnette (BRS), Ms. Lynn Gilbert (PPQ), and Ms. Michon Oubichon (OCRDI). A special thanks goes to Mr. Perry Stevens (USDA-Department), and Ms. Ann C. Vonhof, Board Member with FEDQ Affinity Group. APHIS strives to uphold an inclusive culture, in which all employees are treated and respected equally. The Supreme Court Decision on June 26th represents a landmark event. We are proud to stand with our LGBT employees, their spouses, and families to celebrate this triumphant moment in American History.

Ag-Discovery Hawaii 2013

BY CAROL F. RUSSELL | TAMMY H. LOWRY | PHOTOGRAPHS BY BETTY-ANN SINGH



Activities in pest risk assessment, fruit fly research, plant pathology, biotechnology, seed export, aquaponics, wildlife hazard management, and damage management, as well as a visit to other locations to learn about Hawaii's flower industry, and ancient Hawaiian agriculture practices, were among the many learning experiences the students participated in.



*Pictured left:
Students engaged
in a poi-pounding
demonstration.*

The Ag-Discovery summer enrichment program in Hawaii, was held July 7-20, 2013, at the beautiful University of Hawaii at Mānoa campus. Ten high school students were selected to participate from the 40 applications submitted. The program provided students a unique opportunity to explore career and educational opportunities in the field of animal and plant health, agricultural sciences, veterinary sciences, animal and plant health disease eradication, plant pathology, entomology, wildlife services, and investigative enforcement. The students enjoyed many exciting and educational experiences, including a ranch tour of the Kualoa Ranch, a large, diversified ranching operation in windward O'ahu. In addition to raising cattle and horses, the ranch is one of the pioneers of ecotourism, and the filming site for many movies and television programs. Students learned about their cattle operation, as well as aquaculture, and horticulture operations. The students also visited Mari's Gardens, a large-scale commercial aquaponics operation, for a comprehensive tour about how aquaponic systems operate, and why this type of production is sustainable. Additionally, the students attended a hands-on workshop covering Hawaiian traditional crops, fiber plants, farm animals, and water, led by Mr. Lance "Mahi" La Pierre, a geographer from the University of Hawaii. Other activities included a behind-the-scenes tour of the Honolulu Zoo, conducted by the zoo's head veterinarian, a color and fragrance exercise at the Komohana Lab, an overview of the genetically-engineered anthurium project, a field activity focusing on pest management practices, managing insects, diseases, weeds, and animal pests. APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ), Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS), Veterinary Services (VS), and Wildlife Services (WS), partnered with the University of Hawaii to make this program a success.

Students observed training methods, and learned about the Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Detector Dog Program. Beagles are used to sniff out prohibited fresh fruits, vegetables, and plants. The students also spent time on the big island of Hawaii, and visited the USDA Agricultural Research Service, at the Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center, to enhance their educational experience.



In the Spirit of Collaboration

BY TAMMY H. LOWRY



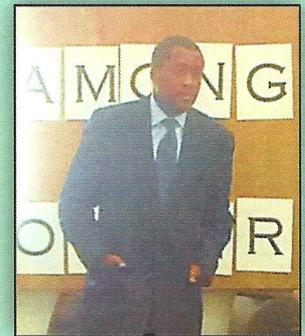
The USDA Civil Rights Directors Council (CRDC), in conjunction with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR), participated in a two-day teambuilding event, *In the Spirit of Collaboration*. The two-day meeting convened on August 13th, at the Patriots Plaza III site in Washington, D.C. The Civil Rights Directors Council, a community of Civil Rights Directors from all 17 USDA agencies, as well as the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights personnel were invited to come together, and share valuable information, to discuss the



challenges they face, as well as brainstorm ideas to achieve improved collaboration among the parties. Ms. Matina Sawicki from APHIS Policy and Program Development (PPD), served as



facilitator for the sessions, leading the group in a variety of collaborative lessons. She reviewed the principles of the Cultural Transformation Plan with the group: *communication, ethical behavior, teamwork, accountability, respect, diversity, fairness, transparency, integrity, and trust*. She challenged the participants to individually list the top three principles of importance to them, as it relates to their civil rights community. The results, in order of importance, was communication and teamwork first, accountability second, and last, but not least, trust. Dr. Joe Leonard, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, along with Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Ms. Lisa J. Pino, were on board to address the participants, and emphasize the necessity of working together and sharing information. Dr. Leonard indicated that some extraordinary work in civil rights has already been accomplished, and that civil rights is more powerful now than ever in this country, and at USDA. Ms. Pino stated her belief that “civil rights is about humility, being open, and making all programs and services better at USDA”. Civil Rights Directors were provided an opportunity to ask questions, and obtain clarification pertaining to the Civil Rights Agency Head Assessment Report. Additionally, both entities participated in an exercise to compare their respective roles and responsibilities, and discuss ways in which they overlap. Effective communication was identified as a key issue, and ways to improve communication between the civil rights directors and the OASCR staff was discussed. Mr. Ruiz invited the civil rights directors to openly express their views about OASCR in general, and voice their concerns. In the spirit of collaboration, a follow-up meeting to evaluate progress will be held in November.



“We’re in a high time for civil rights in USDA ... a high time in this country. I’m very proud to work at USDA at this time.”

~ Dr. Joe Leonard,
Assistant Secretary
for Civil Rights



Civil rights directors in attendance were: Denny Brewton (OCFO), Sony Brown (OIG), Curt DeVille (NIFA), Brian Garner (FSA), Cliff Gilchrist (AMS), Ted Gutman (FS), Jon Hall (NRCS), Ken Johnson (APHIS), Angela Kelly (FSIS), Jacqueline Micheli (RMA), Kevin Smith (GIPSA), June Turner (NASS), and Daniel Whitley (FAS). **Deputy Civil Rights Directors in attendance were:** LaShon Cole (APHIS), Robin Kilgore (FS), and Alan Robinson (ARS). **OASCR staff in attendance were:** Ken Baisden, Ron Branch, Warren Brooks, Vi Hall, David King, Leslie Lightner, Lois McLean, Kirk Perry, Lisa Pino, Mary Lynne Popiden, Carl-Martin Ruiz, Anna Stroman, Mary Thomas, Gladys Vaughn, and Sheila Walcott.

CAREER SHADOW DAY AT APHIS

BY TAMMY H. LOWRY | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANSON EAGLIN

APHIS was pleased to welcome students from the Patriots Technology Training Center 2013 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Summer Camp, for a day of career shadowing, on Thursday, July 18th, which culminated into a segment of fun and friendly competition. The summer campers, comprised of approximately 45 students, were placed into ten working groups, and met with APHIS representatives from the Plant, Protection, and Quarantine (PPQ), International Services (IS), Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), Veterinary Services (VS), Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS), Animal Care (AC), Marketing and Regulatory Programs and Business Services (MRPBS), Wildlife Services (WS), Policy and Program Development (PPD), and the Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion (OCRDI) program areas. Students spent the morning interviewing staff, and conducting research on the functions of the respective program area. They were tasked with developing a five-minute oral presentation about what they learned, and a PowerPoint slide show. As part of the competition, the students presented the information to an audience of APHIS employees, before a panel of judges. Steve Shelor (OCRDI), Carmen Queen-Hines (HRD), and José Ceballos (PPQ), served as judges for the occasion. The students were assessed on research, content,

and presentation, as well as creativity. The VS team walked away with the first-place prize, followed by the AC team in second place, and the BRS team captured third place.

“All of the students did an excellent job, making it very difficult to select first, second, and third place awards.”

~ Mr. Steve Shelor



Pictured below: Judges—(left to right): Ms. Carmen Queen-Hines (HRD), Mr. Steve Shelor (OCRDI), and Mr. José Ceballos (PPQ).



Pictured above: Mr. Robert Huttenlocker, Associate Deputy Administrator (MRPBS).



Pictured above (left to right): Ms. Sophia Kirby (OCRDI), with the first-place winning team.

For information about the Patriots Technology Training Center, please visit: www.patriots-ttc.org.



Pictured above: Patriots Technology Training Center President, Mr. Thurman D. Jones, Jr.



FEW NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM: PASSPORT TO CAREER SUCCESS BY TANIKA WHITTINGTON

In July, the Federally Employed Women (FEW) held its 2013 National Training Program (NTP) in Orlando, Florida. The theme, *Passport to Career Success*, was intended to prepare attendees for upward mobility, and the opportunity to follow career aspirations to new “ports of call”. APHIS employees participated in dynamic, cutting-edge training, that was designed to advance knowledge, skills, and abilities, and improve employee and organizational capability. Training opportunities ranged from leadership development, equal employment opportunity/diversity, and communications, to resume writing, computer skills, retirement, and social media. The training sessions selected for this year’s NTP were all closely aligned with the fundamental competencies, and Executive Core Qualifications identified by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). USDA held an Agency pre-conference forum, in which cultural transformation and mentoring were the key discussion points. OPM and departmental presenters spoke of a progressive agency, through engaged employees, strong relationships, and increased diversity. Attendees heard from two APHIS panelists -- Lucy Ramos (PPQ), and Tanika Whittington (OCRDI), who engaged the audience with their personal experiences to navigating their careers. FEW attendees were also delighted to hear an inspirational message from Ms. Nicole Mason, a writer, attorney, and entrepreneur, who reminded us that, “life is like a passport; it allows you to go anywhere; it reminds you of where you’ve been, and it’s a stamp of approval.” Ms. Sharon Wong, Deputy Director for Coordination & Policy, Office of Diversity & Inclusion at OPM, offered four requirements to success during her presentation at the *Leadership Perspective* training session – (1) integrity, (2) communication, (3) having a vision and strategy, and (4) building relationships, and acting with compassion. Attendees were pleased to hear from civil rights activist, attorney, and humanitarian, Ms. Allie B. Latimer, who was instrumental in organizing FEW in 1968, and served as the organization’s founding president until 1969. This year, FEW celebrated its 45th anniversary. In collaboration with FEW, generations of Federal employees, partners, and trainers from around the world have been a tremendous advocate for the fair and equitable treatment of women in the Federal workforce. The struggle for women has been long and far, but, as APHIS, and other Federal agencies continue to be a place of encouragement, learning, mentoring, and career advancement, we are sure to achieve incredible goals in equal opportunity for all.



Pictured above (left to right): Ms. Ama Sarkodee (IS), Ms. Monica Argoti (PPD), Ms. Michelle Crockett (FEW President), Ms. Tanika Whittington (OCRDI), and Ms. Takieya Williams-Newball (AC).



Pictured above (left to right): Ms. Ama Sarkodee (IS), Ms. Tanika Whittington (OCRDI), Mr. Matthew Fogg (FEW National Vice President for Congressional Affairs), Ms. Monica Argoti (PPD), and Ms. Takieya Williams-Newball (AC).

Proactive Efforts By Management BY SARITA KENT-WALLACE

When it comes to Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) law, questions are always raised in regard to the Agency's responsibility. One basic, and affirmative duty that the Agency has is to post notices describing the EEO complaints process, and Federal laws prohibiting job discrimination, based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age (40+), equal pay, disability, and genetic information. The Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion (OCRDI) provides a poster in both English and Spanish. An applicant, employee, former employee, or contracted employee, who believes that he or she is a victim of discrimination generally, has 45 calendar days from the day the discrimination occurred, or from the time of awareness, to contact an EEO Official. Because of the federal mandate regarding the 45 day rule, managers should place posters addressing the EEO complaint process in high trafficked areas such as lounges, cafeterias, locker rooms, and meeting rooms. Since the Agency is required to provide access to the administrative EEO process, failure to post information in regard to the EEO complaint process, and the associated time frames places the Agency at risk, and leaves the door open for possible adverse inferences. For example, in response to the Agency's failure to make individuals aware of their administrative EEO rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Agency's Adjudication Office have the authority to accept a complaint which would have ordinarily been dismissed as untimely for bringing up an alleged discriminatory incident beyond the 45 calendar day timeframe. The acceptance of the complaint would be based upon the employee showing that the Agency did not make him or her aware of the 45 calendar day rule. In addition to posting the Federal EEO complaint process timeframes, Agency Officials should insure that employees complete mandatory EEO training in AgLearn. The postings, tracked online training, and certificates of training can provide tangible proof that employees had access to the information. Posters articulating the 45 calendar day rule, and how to raise an informal EEO complaint can be requested from OCRDI whenever needed. The point of contact for the posters is Mr. Michael Lamb. He can be contacted at Michael.A.Lamb@aphis.usda.gov. Remember, proactive efforts by management keep the Agency in compliance with Federal EEO laws, and out of the line of fire for adverse decisions!

2013 APHIS Administrator's Civil Rights Award

Each year, the Office of the Administrator recognizes, and gives proper honor and distinction to employees, managers, and supervisors for their superior accomplishments in support of the APHIS civil rights program. Nominations will be accepted until **Thursday, October 31, 2013**. For additional information concerning the nomination process, guidelines, and criteria, you may contact Ms. Tammy Lowry, via e-mail: Tammy.H.Lowry@aphis.usda.gov, or telephone: 301-851-4181.

Civil Rights Communicator

Editor, Lay-out, & Design:

TAMMY H. LOWRY