



Building Rural America
National Association of Credit Specialists
of the
USDA – Farm Service Agency
Management Personnel Committee

THE MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MET AT THE HOLIDAY INN COUNTRY CLUB PLAZA IN KANSAS CITY, MO, ON JUNE 26-28, 2017 TO REVIEW RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE MEMBERSHIP.

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION:

Resolution 1

CONCERN:

Currently, the leave transfer program that benefits employees with health issues is limited to the cohort of employees that the afflicted employee is assigned. This creates issues where an employee may be working beside someone that they wish to help but cannot.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

Allow CO and GS to transfer leave between each other.

Resolution 2

CONCERN:

More can be learned within a one-on-one or group setting versus completion of training courses administered via Aglearn, internet or skype.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

In-person trainings allow for networking, topic comprehension, and better learning opportunities. We understand that funds are limited; however, there is tangible benefit when new employees are trained together in person, creating opportunities to create relationships. We need to invest in fostering these relationships to build confidence and increase retention by virtue of multiple connections to the agency.

Resolution 3

CONCERN:

Current hiring practices have produced some great employees; however, we often are unable to consider candidates with the experience that we really need in Farm Loans. We understand that the application questions have been updated to better identify candidates with the needed skill set; however, the best qualified list is not being reviewed/validated in light of their resume.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

HRD should validate the answers to the questions with the submitted resume.

Resolution 4

CONCERN:

118-FI & other applicable travel regulations still refer to completing an AD-202 for authorizing travel, but reserving funds is no longer required. A BU Notice was issued stating that offices only need complete an AD-616 for local travel, which is paid through Web TA. Also, the OF-108 is still required in addition to the AD-616.

This was a 2015-2016 resolution that was adopted by the National Office, but was not acted upon, see response below.

NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE: (Bob M)

We will accept the proposed solution, update handbook 118-FI, accordingly, and release an amendment to the field within the next 60-90 days

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

Update the applicable handbook regulations to eliminate the need for the completion of the AD-202 & OF-108.

COMMITTEE RESPONSE:

This has not been implemented yet (6/26/2017)

Resolution 5

CONCERN:

In some states, the burden to farm loan officials for environmental compliance is significant. Loan Officials do not have time to properly complete all work by virtue of this burden.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

Designate FTEs where needed in states or regions where Environmental Compliance represents a significant workload. An FTE can be assigned to focus on environmental issues, including reviewing and preparing EAs.

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR NONADOPTION:

Resolution 6

CONCERN:

Travel Funds are not adequate and this jeopardizes the government's ability to properly protect the government's interest.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

Better prioritize administrative funds

REASON FOR NON-ADOPT:

Currently funding seems to be available and this is not an issue. This may be a state issue.

Resolution 7

CONCERN:

Requiring District Directors to obtain loan approval authority is creating an undue burden on FLP staff. Farm Loan Managers are often at capacity training FLOTs as well as performing their duties. Few District Directors involve themselves in Farm Loan Programs after authority is achieved (DDORS is often prepared by loan staff). The time and resources spent by local and state office staff could be used more effectively elsewhere.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

Remove requirement for District Directors to obtain loan approval authority.

REASON FOR NON-ADOPT:

Loan approval is an essential job function and part of the PD. They are supervising Farm Loans they should have complete understanding of the job the employees they supervise.

Resolution 8

CONCERN:

Customer Service – Providing customers efficient and effective customer service within the county office with fewer and fewer employees.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

A “centralized answering system,” focused totally on directing potential customers to the appropriate individual, Agency and /or program needed.

REASON FOR NON-ADOPT:

Not sure the circumstance of the concern, but committee failed to see how centralized answering would benefit customers.

Resolution 9

CONCERN:

Since inception (1995), some employees have refused to consider FSA (Federal and non-Federal) as one Agency. This has been on-going for 22 years of 28 years of my federal service. This is an embarrassment to the Agency (the continuance of the “us and them” mentality) and it impedes the customer service provided to our number one priority, which is the farm/ranchers of this great nation.

It is childish and should not be tolerated and/or allowed to continue.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

All employees should be structured and organized in unity; federal with federal and non-federal with non-federal. All employees structured and organized as one: FEDERAL.

REASON FOR NON-ADOPT:

We understand; however, the structure in place would require congressional approval to change.

Respectfully submitted by the 2016/2017 Management Personnel Committee.

Chantal Haun, Zone A

Jason McMillin, Zone B - Chairperson

Jeffrey Jones, Zone C

Alec Love, Zone D