



Agricultural Marketing Service

What the 2017 FEVS Action Plan Means to YOU!

The AMS Senior Leadership Team believes that having an engaged workforce is vitally important to achieving the Agency's mission, and providing our stakeholders with outstanding programs and services. Therefore, at the discretion of the Senior Leadership Team, employee engagement activities have and will continue to be used to foster employee engagement and maximize the productivity of the Agency's workforce.

During fiscal year 2016, AMS senior leadership took a proactive approach to employee engagement with Deputy Administrators conducting employee engagement events at the program level. The investment paid off with substantially improved employee morale and major gains in the Agency's 2016 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results. Specifically:

- ▶ **AMS ranked 8 out of 20 for USDA Agency subcomponents, and 101 out of 305 Agency subcomponents Federal government wide.**
- ▶ **AMS was also among the four top scoring USDA agencies across all five indices on the FEVS.**
- ▶ **AMS had the highest response rate to the FEVs among the three MRP Agencies.**

There were several areas on the 2016 FEVS results where we saw positive correlations between the Agency's employee engagement efforts and your responses.

TOP FEVS POSITIVE RESULTS:

- Managers support collaboration across work units to accomplish work objectives (largest positive increase, 8.3%)
- Managers promote communication among different work units (6.6% positive, increase)
- I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal (4.7% positive, increase)
- I recommend my organization as a good place to work (4.5% positive, increase)
- How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work? (4.5% positive, increase)

At the same time, there were areas where we heard YOU say improvements are needed.

TOP FEVS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- Employees are protected from health and safety hazards on the job (4.3% positive decrease)
- Employees are recognized for providing high quality products and services (3.2% negative increase)
- My training needs are assessed (3.0% negative increase)
- In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way (2.9% negative increase)
- Discussions with my supervisor/team leader about my performance are worthwhile (2.4% negative increase)

As we move through FY2017, AMS will build on our momentum by sustaining and improving communications and employee engagement action items identified in its 2017 FEVS Action Plan.

Agency Improvement Initiative #1: Sustain and continue improving employees' positive viewpoints through positive communications and engagement

Action Items:

- Use both the Headquarters and Field Employee Engagement Advisory Committees as communication conduit/resource between field and headquarters employees.
- Execute action items on 2016/2017 AMS Internal Communications Plan.
- Update the AMS Internal Communications Plan.
- Create more face-to-face opportunities for senior leaders to engage with employees by:
 - Conduct listening sessions in the three major regions of the US (East, Central and West) and Headquarters to gain greater insight of employees' needs and concerns.
 - Require senior leaders (e.g., Deputy Administrators, Directors, and Branch Chiefs) to include field office visits during travel to locations where employees are stationed.
 - Roll out new Agency Onboarding Passport to facilitate the onboarding process, and to ensure that all new Agency employees complete necessary requirements in an efficient and timely manner.
 - Evaluate employee feedback from FY-2016 focus group/brown bag sessions to address areas for improvements.

Agency Improvement Initiative #2: Foster Employee Motivation, Commitment, Creativity, and Innovation

Action Items:

- Educate employees about the purpose of the "What a Great Idea" Employee Suggestion Program, and how to successfully use it.
- Reinstate Brown Bag Sessions with Deputy Administrators to highlight their programs' high priority initiatives and employee engagement activities.

Agency Improvement Initiative #3: Improve Employee Recognition

Action Items:

- Review programs' existing awards policies; require all programs to have awards policies that adhere to OPM's and USDA's employee recognition policies; and require programs to update and publicize their policies on a regular basis.
- Encourage program submissions to both the Departmental Annual Honor Awards and Annual AMS Administrator Awards.
- Institute WAGI Annual Administrator's Award for winning ideas.
- Conduct an agency wide pulse survey on ways to improve AMS' awards and recognition program.

If you are selected to participate in the FY 2017 FEVS, please do so. Your opinions matter, and help us in making AMS a GREAT place to work!

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