



**April 10, 2014**

**SUBJECT:** Employee Engagement Performance Standards  
(Supervisor's Performance Plan Update)

**TO:** REE Managers & Supervisors

**FROM:** Chevon C. Gibson   
Section Head  
Performance and Awards Staff

The Secretary of Agriculture has communicated his commitment to "Making USDA a Great Place to Work", which includes maintaining our focus on the Cultural Transformation of USDA. In keeping with our focus and achieving the mission of our organization, we must engage our employees to demonstrate that we all are collectively committed to "Making USDA a Great Place to Work." This is formally recognized as "Employee Engagement."

Employee engagement is not a task or special assignment, but it's a manner. Therefore, as managers and supervisors it's our role and responsibility to positively influence our employees, by enabling our workforce through social business, happiness & wellbeing and revolutionizing employee communications. As such, the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) on Wednesday, April 2, 2014, informed the Human Resources Division that new standards had been established to be integrated into all non-Senior Executive Service official supervisors' performance plans for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014. Official supervisors are those whose classification title includes: "Supervisory," "Officer," or "Director." The following paragraph should be added to the designated Leadership/Supervision performance element:

*"Actively creates an environment that promotes staff engagement, integration and collaboration. Based on employee feedback and the data collected with the most recent FEVS, identifies both strengths and challenges related to employee engagement, development and satisfaction. Works proactively and inclusively with staff members to develop and implement strategies to maintain areas of strength to improve engagement and satisfaction in the organizational unit. Promotes open, candid and ongoing dialogue with and among the staff to develop more comprehensive and innovative insights to manage obstacles to engagement."*

Rating officials are expected to meet with affected employee(s) to communicate these new expectations and to formally update the employee(s) performance plan(s). Supervisors must update employee(s) performance plan(s) no later than **Thursday, May 15, 2014**. To assist with easily incorporating these new standards into all supervisors' performance plans HRD has created a generic addendum that can be attached to the existing performance plan. The addendum can be found attached with this memorandum, attached as a word document titled "Attachment 1."

Supervisors who wish to increase their understanding of the factors that go into employee engagement and how to set the desired tone with their staff, please see the below resources available in AgLearn's Books 24x7:

- 1) **First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently** by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman;
- 2) **12: The Elements of Great Managing** by Rodd Wagner and James K. Harter
- 3) **Manager's Guide to Employee Engagement** by Scott Carbonara
- 4) **Employee Engagement: Tools for Analysis, Practice, and Competitive Advantage** by William H. Macey, Benjamin Schneider, Karen M. Barbera and Scott A. Young; and
- 5) **The CEO: Chief Engagement Officer: Turning Hierarchy Upside Down to Drive Performance** by John Smythe

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Chevon Gibson at 301-504-1552 or [Chevon.Gibson@ars.usda.gov](mailto:Chevon.Gibson@ars.usda.gov).

## Performance Plan Addendum (Employee Engagement Standards)

1. NAME (Last, First, M.I.)

2. POSITION TITLE

### Instructions

1. Rating officials should print this document and attach it to all non-Senior Executive Service official supervisors' performance plans for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014. Official supervisors are those whose classification title includes: "Supervisory," "Officer," or "Director;"
2. Communicate these additional expectations in their leadership and supervision performance element; and
3. Sign and date this addendum to demonstrate that the above instructions have been completed.

**Please note:** This is not a new performance element. These are additional standards being added to the existing leadership and supervision performance element.

**STANDARD (Describe the level expected for "Fully Successful" performance. Include appropriate indicators of quality, quantity, cost efficiency, or timeliness, where applicable.)**

### Employee Engagement:

*“Actively creates an environment that promotes staff engagement, integration and collaboration. Based on employee feedback and the data collected with the most recent FEVS, identifies both strengths and challenges related to employee engagement, development and satisfaction. Works proactively and inclusively with staff members to develop and implement strategies to maintain areas of strength to improve engagement and satisfaction in the organizational unit. Promotes open, candid and ongoing dialogue with and among the staff to develop more comprehensive and innovative insights to manage obstacles to engagement.*

**Your signature on this document confirms that the above standards have been communicated by the rating official and included into employee performance plan for Fiscal Year 2014 Performance Plan**

Employee's Signature

Date

Supervisor's Name (Print)

Supervisor's Signature

Date

Reviewer's Name (Print)

Reviewer's Signature

Date