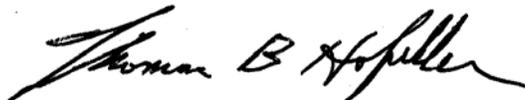


For: FSA Employees

2008 FSA Administrator's Awards for Service to Agriculture (AASA)

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Background

An honorary awards program is an important tool in creating a workplace where the extra efforts shown by individuals and teams are given due recognition. Recognizing employees for their extra efforts has always been vitally important in FSA and USDA. Within FSA, AASA awards are the highest honorary awards management can bestow on their employees.

B Purpose

This notice:

- announces the 2008 FSA AASA Program
- details the procedures for submitting FSA-187's and supporting documentation for AASA.

Disposal Date	Distribution
September 1, 2008	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice PM-2634

2 AASA Program Provisions

A Eligibility

All FSA employees are eligible for AASA, including STC and COC members.

B Timeline

FSA-187's:

- will be reviewed by FSA
- will be presented in June 2008
- shall be submitted **by COB, March 28, 2008** (subparagraph D).

Note: DAFO staff **must** submit their FSA-187's to **Sederis Fields** by COB, **March 21, 2008**, so she can forward FSA-187 by COB, March 28, 2008.

C AASA Categories

AASA categories have been revised and are as follows.

Category	Description
Civil Rights Leadership Award	An award granted annually to both FSA employees at any organizational level and FSA supervisors. Both categories of this award recognize individuals for their valuable contributions and commitments made in the support of USDA and FSA civil rights objectives (Exhibit 1, subparagraph A).
Excellence in Program Support Award	An award granted annually to employees who perform duties related to clerical, assistant, or program technician responsibilities. The employee's knowledge of the procedures and techniques involved in carrying out clerical, assistant, or program technician duties far exceeds expectations and has contributed to meeting the office's or FSA's goals and objectives (Exhibit 1, subparagraph B).
Excellence in Leadership and Management Award	An award granted annually to FSA supervisors and managers at the GS/GM-15 level and below at all organizational levels, whose accomplishments and performance are judged as the most outstanding, and who demonstrate the greatest combination of skills in leading people and managing activities through interactive team building, while valuing diversity (Exhibit 1, subparagraph C).
Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award	An award granted annually to teams who worked on a specific significant project as a team, contributing to FSA's goals and objectives. The team may include members from different units within FSA or from outside FSA. Working as a team should be emphasized, rather than individual effort (Exhibit 1, subparagraph D).

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2 AASA Program Provisions (Continued)

C AASA Categories (Continued)

Category	Description
Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives Award	An award granted annually to a specific FSA employee or FSA work unit, for their efforts in contributing to FSA's goals and objectives (Exhibit 1, subparagraph E).
Heroism and Emergency Response Award	An award granted annually to an FSA employee or team who performed acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty (Exhibit 1, subparagraph F).
Newcomer Award	An award granted annually to an employee with less than 5 years of FSA service that shows growth, potential, and dedication in making significant contributions to FSA (Exhibit 1, subparagraph G).

D FSA-187 Eligibility

An employee or team does **not** need to meet **all** the criteria listed to be nominated. The criterion serves as an outline for the committee members in reviewing FSA-187's and making recommendations to the Administrator. FSA-187's for AASA may also be considered for the Secretary's Honor Award Program.

Any employee may recommend another employee for AASA. However, FSA-187's should be routed through the supervisor of the recommended employee.

FSA-187's and any Microsoft Word attachments shall be submitted **electronically** by e-mail to stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov, with the subject, "2008 FSA AASA Nominations."

Note: FSA-187 is available from FFAS's Employee Forms site at <http://165.221.16.90/dam/ffasforms/Actionlist.asp>.

To verify that FSA-187 was received, request a "return receipt" as follows:

- while in the e-mail message, CLICK "Options"; a dialog box will be displayed
- in the dialog box, under "Voting and Tracking options", CLICK "Request a delivery receipt for this message" or "Request a read receipt for this message."

If further assistance is needed, contact either of the following:

- Stephanie Sybil Brown, Human Resources Specialist at 202-401-0694
- Angela Jackson, Human Resources Assistant at 202-401-0682.

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2 AASA Program Provisions (Continued)

D FSA-187 Eligibility (Continued)

FSA-187's **must** be filled out completely and include:

- AASA category for which the individual/team is being nominated
- name of nominee or team name, if a team FSA-187

Note: The employee's/team's name should be written as it is to be printed in the booklet and on the keepsake.

- position title, official duty station, and telephone number of nominee

Note: If a team FSA-187, list information for **all** team members.

- team leader, if a team FSA-187
- citation, **not** to exceed 25 words, as it should be printed in the booklet
- narrative justification detailing the basis for recognition, **not** to exceed 2 pages.

Notes: Accomplishments may go back, up to 1 year. See Exhibit 2 for FSA-187 and Exhibit 3 for assistance with writing the narrative justification.

Sample nominations for AASA recipients from previous years can be found at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/hrdapp?area=home&subject=erpm&topic=emr>.

FSA-187's **must** be received by e-mail to Stephanie Brown, HRD, Employee Program Branch at stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov by COB **March 28, 2007**.

DAFO staff **must** submit their FSA-187's to **Sederis Fields** by COB, **March 21, 2008**, so she can forward them by COB, March 28, 2008.

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3 Submitting FSA-187's for GS and CO Employees in County Offices

A Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors shall:

- periodically discuss potential nominees with DD
- review and critically evaluate both GS and CO employees to ensure that all deserving employees receive consideration
- submit FSA-187's **only** for clearly outstanding achievements

Note: See Exhibit 3 for documentation guidelines.

- submit FSA-187's to their DD.

B DD Responsibilities

DD's shall:

- periodically discuss potential nominees with supervisors
- forward **all** FSA-187's to the State Office for consideration.

C SED Responsibilities

SED's:

- shall review all FSA-187's to select individuals and teams for State Awards for Service to Agriculture
- may nominate individuals and teams for AASA
- shall electronically sign (the e-mail trail from SED to DAFO serves as an electronic signature), as recommending official, for FSA-187's being submitted for AASA
- shall forward FSA-187's and any Microsoft Word attachments to Sederis Fields by e-mail to **sederis.fields@wdc.usda.gov**, DAFO by **COB March 21, 2008**
- shall notify manager and supervisors of individuals and teams selected to receive 2008 AASA
- shall work with DAFO to ensure that travel arrangements are in place for out-of-town individual AASA recipients and the team leader of a team (the team leader will receive AASA for the team).

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3 Submitting FSA-187's for GS and CO Employees in County Offices (Continued)

D DAFO Responsibilities

DAFO shall:

- review and approve FSA-187's
- submit FSA-187's for DAFO staff to HRD
- electronically sign FSA-187's, as recommending individual, for DAFO staff

Note: Forwarding FSA-187's from the Deputy Administrator's office or Sederis Fields by e-mail to HRD serves as an electronic signature.

- forward FSA-187's and any Microsoft Word attachments **electronically** by e-mail to **stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov**, with the subject, "**2008 FSA AASA Nominations,**" by COB **March 28, 2008**
- notify SED's of winners in their State
- ensure that travel arrangements are made for out-of-town individual winners and the team leader of a team.

4 Submitting FSA-187's for Employees in National Office, Kansas City, St. Louis, APFO, and State Offices

A Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors shall:

- review and critically evaluate **all** employees to ensure that all deserving employees are considered for FSA-187
- submit FSA-187's **only** for clearly outstanding achievements (see Exhibit 3 for documentation guidelines)
- submit FSA-187's to the division/staff directors.

B Office Director Responsibilities

Office directors shall:

- review FSA-187's (including those they recommended)
- submit FSA-187's
- sign FSA-187's as recommending individuals
- **electronically** forward FSA-187's to appropriate Deputy Administrator for review.

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5 Processing FSA-187's Received From Recommending Individuals

A Deputy Administrator/Staff Director Responsibilities

Deputy Administrators/Staff Directors shall:

- review FSA-187's submitted
- recommend and **electronically** submit FSA-187's and any Microsoft Word attachments by e-mail to **stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov** with the subject, "**2008 FSA AASA Nominations,**" by **COB March 28, 2008**
- notify supervisors and managers of individuals and teams selected to receive 2008 AASA
- ensure that travel arrangements are made for out-of-town individual winners and the team leader of a team.

B HRD, EPB Responsibilities

HRD, EPB shall:

- collect all FSA-187's submitted
- route names of employees to the Employee and Labor Relations Branch and OCR to ensure that nominees have no pending administrative actions
- prepare and distribute FSA-187's to the reviewing committee members
- attend the reviewing committee meeting to provide technical advice and document the reviewing/recommendation process
- coordinate the tasks and activities for the ceremony, keepsakes, and program booklets
- notify DAFO and the Deputy Administrators of individuals and teams selected to receive 2008 AASA.

C Administrator's Reviewing Committee Responsibilities

The Administrator shall appoint the reviewing committee to:

- review FSA-187's
- make final recommendations.

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5 Processing FSA-187's Received From Recommending Individuals (Continued)

C Administrator's Reviewing Committee Responsibilities (Continued)

The reviewing committee shall include 1 member from each of the following:

- Administrator's staff or office
- DACO
- DAFLP
- DAFO
- DAFP
- DAM
- HRD, EPB (advisory)
- labor organizations
- OCR.

The reviewing committee shall:

- review and rate FSA-187's
- ensure that a diversified group of nominees is recommended
- submit recommendations to the Administrator for AASA.

D Administrator's Responsibilities

The Administrator shall determine the following:

- recipients for AASA
- FSA-187's to be considered for the Secretary's Honor Award Program.

E AASA Recipient Recognition

AASA recipients (team leaders will represent teams onstage) shall be recognized at a ceremony on **June 5, 2008**, in Washington, DC. The Administrator shall present AASA. Individuals and team leaders will be authorized travel to Washington, DC, to attend the ceremony. Team members will receive recognition at local ceremonies. Pictures shall be taken during the ceremony to be included in the FSA's newsletter or other appropriate forum.

AASA Categories

A Civil Rights Leadership Award

Description: An award granted annually to both of the following:

- FSA employees at any organizational level
- FSA supervisors.

Both categories of this award recognize individuals for their valuable contributions and commitments made in the support of USDA and FSA civil rights objectives.

FSA-187's will be considered for the following 2 categories:

- supervisory
- nonsupervisory.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishment of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities is as follows:

- involvement or participation in professional organizations, task groups or committees, and programs directly affecting the recruitment, training, and advancement of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in USDA and/or FSA
- active and sustained involvement to increase and diversify the workforce at FSA, including specific efforts at recruitment of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities

Note: This is required for supervisor FSA-187's.

- active involvement in expanding, promoting, or enforcing civil rights
- personal involvement in social issues impacting women, minorities, and persons with disabilities
- establishment of a positive work environment about equality in the office

Note: This improves the opportunities or strengthens the performance of employees by facilitating the development of projects or programs that improve the quality of work life.

AASA Categories (Continued)**A Civil Rights Leadership Award (Continued)**

- planning or supporting special interest programs and activities that would enrich cultural understanding of diverse groups by attending and encouraging participation of employees

Note: This demonstrates intolerance of inappropriate comments or presentations in the workplace.

- demonstrates a marked improvement/increase in FSA programs provided to women and/or minorities.

B Excellence in Program Support Award

Description: An award granted annually to employees who perform duties related to clerical, assistant, or program technician responsibilities. The employee's knowledge of procedures and techniques involved in carrying out clerical, assistant, or program technician duties far exceeds expectations and has contributed to meeting the office's or FSA's goals and objectives.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishment of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities is as follows:

- demonstrates high-quality performance of the technical responsibilities for his or her position
- demonstrates outstanding customer service to internal and external customers
- performs at a level that substantially exceeded the performance standards of the position
- develops and/or implements a system or methodology that improves program delivery either internally or externally.

C Excellence in Leadership and Management Award

Description: An award granted annually to FSA supervisors and managers at the GS/GM-15 level **and below** at all organizational levels, whose accomplishments and performance are judged as the most outstanding, and who demonstrate the greatest combination of skills in leading people and managing activities through interactive team building, while valuing diversity.

AASA Categories (Continued)

C Excellence in Leadership and Management Award (Continued)

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishment of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities is as follows:

- demonstrates effective skills in motivating and leading employees and in human resource management, including recruitment, selection, promotion, details, and special assignments, to fully use the skills of all employees on an impartial basis

Note: This uses appropriate employee recognition and corrective action in employee management, and capitalizes on teamwork to meet work objectives and organizational goals and to foster employee development.

- develops employee's and organization's culture to support a high-performing workforce that continuously improves its productivity
- furthers the goals of FSA and program area EEO plans, implements an active Civil Rights/EEO Program within the work unit, and demonstrates concern for the career development of staff, as well as the pursuit of individual career goals
- participates regularly in various individual development efforts to enhance performance and increase knowledge of current issues affecting the role of Federal managers
- communicates effective guidance and direction of activities with clear goals and objectives

Note: Staff accomplishment of assignments is result-driven and timely, resulting in superior performance.

- ensures that human capital strategies and initiatives are supporting the FSA's work on other governmentwide management initiatives, such as supporting eGov initiatives, demonstrating budget and performance integration, and sound financial practices.

AASA Categories (Continued)**D Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award**

Description: An award granted annually to teams who worked on a specific significant project as a team, contributing to FSA's goals and objectives. The team may include members from different units within FSA or from outside FSA. Working as a team should be emphasized, rather than individual effort.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishment of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities is as follows:

- demonstrates outstanding performance in meeting or exceeding all team objectives
- demonstrates results with specific benefits to FSA and/or USDA
- significant contributions made by each team member are included in FSA-187.

E Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives Award

Description: An award granted annually to a specific FSA employee or FSA work unit, for their efforts in contributing to FSA's goals and objectives.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishment of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities is as follows:

- demonstrates outstanding performance in meeting strategic objectives
- demonstrates outstanding performance in meeting program goals
- employee's accomplishments are explicitly linked to and in support of 1 of FSA's strategic objectives or a management initiative, defined in the FSA Strategic Plan
- establishes program goals that improve FSA's performance in relation to the strategic objectives, and institutes a system to measure and/or monitor these goals resulting in improving FSA's performance.

AASA Categories (Continued)**F Heroism and Emergency Response Award**

Description: An award granted annually to an FSA employee or team who performed acts of unusual selflessness or heroism in the line of duty.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishment of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities is as follows:

- demonstrates an outstanding level of accomplishment in responding to floods, fires, storms, earthquakes, disease outbreaks, or other conditions requiring emergency response
- provides assistance to FSA customers experiencing critical needs that resulted in a marked improvement to the critical situation.

G Newcomer Award

Description: An award granted annually to an employee with less than 5 years of FSA service that shows growth, potential, and dedication in making significant contributions to FSA.

Criteria: Outstanding accomplishment of objectives beyond normal expectations in activities is as follows:

- less than 5 years of FSA service
- exceeds expectation in job performance
- shows initiative in improving business practices
- demonstrates excellent customer service internally and externally.

Example of FSA-187

FSA-187's and any Microsoft Word attachments shall be submitted **electronically** by e-mail to **stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov** with the subject, **"2008 FSA AASA Nominations."**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

FSA ADMINISTRATOR'S AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

Please read the instructions below thoroughly before completing the FSA Administrator's Awards Nomination Form.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Nominations will be accepted via email only. Please ensure that the email trail (Electronic Approval) has final approval from the Deputy Administrator before submitting.
- Ensure the validity of all nomination accomplishments.
- Screen nominations for equal employment opportunity violations and disciplinary actions.
- Once submitted, FSA Administrator's Awards Nomination Form recipients will be screened at the HRD level.
- Send this form and any attachments (Microsoft Word) via email as follows:

To: Stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov

Subject: 2008 FSA Administrator's Awards for Service to Agriculture

- To verify that the nomination was received please send return receipt as follows:
To be notified about a single message before sending
 1. Click "View" than "Options".
 2. Once in "Options" under "Voting and tracking options", select the "Request a delivery receipt for this message" or the "Request a read receipt for this message check box."
- If further assistance is needed, please contact Stephanie Sybil Brown, FSA, HRD at 202-401-0694.

FSA-187 (02-29-08)

Example of FSA-187 (Continued)

This form is available electronically.

FSA-187 (02-29-08)	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency	Date Prepared:
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FSA ADMINISTRATOR'S AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

PART A – GENERAL INFORMATION (Complete for all nominations)

1. Name of Submitting Program Area/Work Unit	2. Recognition Type (Check only "one" box) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (Also Complete Part B) <input type="checkbox"/> Group (2-10) (Also Complete Part C)
3. Individual Nominee or Group Name	4. Period Covered (Month/Year only)

5. AWARD CATEGORIES (Check only "one" box)

The contributions must have occurred or results realized within the last year. For explanations on the award categories, please see applicable PM Notice.

- Civil Rights Leadership Award
- Excellence in Program Support Award
- Excellence in Leadership and Management Award
- Outstanding Team Accomplishment Award
- Excellence in Achieving Goals and Objectives Award
- Heroism and Emergency Response Award
- Newcomer Award

6. Suggested Citation (25 words or less)

PART B – COMPLETE FOR INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS ONLY

1. Name (Last, First, Middle)	2. Phonetic Name Spelling (If Applicable)	
3. Position Title	4. Telephone Number (Area Code)	5. Fax Number (Area Code)
6. Organization and Deputy Administrator		7. Work Mailing Address (Include Physical Address If WDC)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Note: Name of individual or group should be written **exactly** as the recipients want the name to appear in the booklet and on the keepsake.

Example of FSA-187 (Continued)

FSA-187 (02-29-08)

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Part D – JUSTIFICATION FOR NOMINATION

All nominations must clearly describe the significance of the contribution/accomplishment being recognized relative to the category selected, the impact on the FSA and or the Department successfully meeting its mission or strategic goals, the degree to and the results by which the contribution substantially exceeds normal job expectations, and any measurable or non-measurable or non-measurable benefits.

NOTE: Avoid the use of general or vague statements; emphasizing job responsibilities rather than accomplishments; in-house terminology and technical language; statistics without using a comparison; retirement testimonials, lengthy statements and excessive superlatives; and descriptions of outside personal activities.

Attach additional Microsoft Word sheets if needed.



Example of FSA-187 (Continued)

FSA-187 (02-29-08)		Page 4 of 4
PART E – CONTACT INFORMATION		
Nominator (Person recommending this nomination):		
1. Name	2. Organization and Deputy Administrator	
3. Work Mailing Address (Include physical address if WDC)		
4. E-Mail Address	5. Daytime Number (Area Code)	6. Fax Number (Area Code)
PART F – APPROVAL (REVIEW/CLEARANCES)		
For all nominations, complete Items 1A through 3C below:		
1A. Signature of Recommending Official	1B. Title	1C. Date
2A. Signature of Reviewing Official	2B. Title	2C. Date
3A. Signature of Recommending Official	3B. Title	3C. Date

Documenting AASA

AASA documentation should justify reasons why an individual's or team's service to agriculture is outstanding, clearly exceeds job requirements, and deserves honorary recognition by the Administrator.

Documentation **must** convince various organizational screening levels and the Administrator's reviewing committees that the nominee has accomplished more than the job required, or that the results of those accomplishments, while within the job's responsibilities, are highly significant and clearly warrant recognition. The following questions may stimulate ideas for developing a nomination.

- What was done that deserves recognition?
 - Was it unique, a new approach, exceptionally creative?
 - If so, why?
- What was the effect of the accomplishment?
 - Was it local, regional, national, or international in scope?
 - Was it a model for others?
- Did the accomplishment result in increased program effectiveness?
 - Did it reduce costs?
 - Did it result in more effective operation or better public service?
 - Describe the results.
- What distinguished the nominee's profession or career? What special qualities or capabilities make the individual outstanding?
- What specific performance far exceeded job requirements?
 - Was the work done with less than usual supervision, help, or resources?
 - What obstacles were overcome?
 - What new techniques or procedures were developed?

The justification should avoid:

- emphasizing job responsibility rather than accomplishment
- retirement testimonials
- quoting statistics and making progress statements without comparing them to earlier periods or circumstances
- general or vague statements about what was done, without referring to how it was done or by whom.