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6-1-1996

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WORKSHOP EXPECTATIONS AND GPRA EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

RALPH OTTO, Deputy Administrator, Natural Resources and Environment Unit, USDA-CSREES, Washington, D.C.
20250-2210

Because of a health-related problem, Dr. Otto was unable to attend the workshop; therefore, an overview of his suggested comments was presented by Jim Miller as follows:

Our expectations for this Eighth National Extension Wildlife and Fisheries Specialists Workshop are that it will provide an opportunity for the professionals in attendance to assess current programs and capabilities; address changing audiences and their need for educational programs; evaluate changes in the land grant university system and in their agency; and proactively make needed changes to ensure that their educational programs continue to be relevant to Society's needs now and in the future. Among these expectations, of course, are that this workshop will serve a part of the requirement for continuing education that all of us need periodically. On behalf of USDA-Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and particularly our Natural Resources and Environment Unit (NREU), we congratulate your Planning Committee, your hosts John Munn and Dan Edge, and those of you participating for developing what appears to be an outstanding array of presentations, workshop activities, and programs. Your invited guests include some outstanding professionals I have had the pleasure of working with and a number of others I haven't met but have heard nothing but positive feedback about. I regret not being able to attend but certainly extend my best wishes for a successful workshop and hope possibly to be able to attend your ninth workshop.

In regard to GPRA evaluation and accountability, I'm not going to get into a lot of detail, but do want you to know some basics about what it is, why it is being required, and how it could affect all our programs in the future. Many of the details for how all federal agencies will respond to GPRA are still being worked out; therefore, the following will hopefully suffice to sensitize you about this effort for the present:

GPRA—THE GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS ACT OF 1993

GPRA by law requires that federally funded agencies develop and implement an accountability system based on performance measurement, i.e., setting goals and objectives and measuring progress toward achieving them.

Key provisions of GPRA require federally funded agencies to:

- (A) Develop GPRA Strategic Program Plans. Each agency is required to prepare a plan covering at least 5 years that sets forth its mission and long-term goals. Initial plans are to be submitted by the Chief Financial Officer, USDA, by March 1996 to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and to Congress sometime thereafter.
- (B) Prepare GPRA Annual Performance Plans. Each agency is required to prepare an annual program performance plan sharing what program outcomes are to be achieved to meet the long-term goals of the strategic plan. The first annual program performance plans for Fiscal Years (FY) 1998 and 1999 are to be submitted to OMB by March 1997.
- (C) Prepare GPRA Annual Program Reports. Each agency will issue public reports on how well it has achieved its goals and, where they were not met, provide an explanation. The first of these reports are due to the President and Congress in March 2000.

The GPRA will require strategic plans to be updated once every 3 years. Performance plans and reports must be submitted annually. Plans and reports must reflect the joint activities conducted through the federal-state-county partnership in achieving selected high-priority outcomes. For CSREES, the 55 budget lines will be grouped into the 5 following goals based on the Joint Council's FY97 Priorities:

1. Achieve economically viable agricultural production systems that are compatible with environmental and social values;
2. Provide a safe, affordable, reliable, and nutritious food supply;
3. Educate agricultural scientists and professionals to meet future challenges;
4. Improve global competitiveness of U.S. food, agricultural, and forest products; and
5. Empower individuals, families, and communities to improve their quality of life.

For each goal, a GPRA strategic plan and performance framework will be prepared for System-wide review. Obviously, these five goals do not appear to directly relate to Extension wildlife and fisheries programs; however, it would be incorrect to assume that data on the outcome of your programs will not be required. I know Jim Miller requested voluntary accomplishment reports from you for FY94, and I assure you we have used the data you provided both internally and externally. I understand he has requested voluntary reports from you for FY96 accomplishments. I know we all hate doing such reports; however, I am confident that with your input of examples of accomplishments from programs in your states, we can continue to make a strong case for support of Extension wildlife and fisheries programs. I am also confident that this kind of information will be requested by both internal and external agencies, organizations, and support groups, now and in the future.

Therefore, I strongly encourage you to provide your voluntary accomplishment reports to Jim as requested for FY96. I think you know he has, and continues to be, a strong advocate for support of your programs; the information you provide in these accomplishment reports certainly helps him and our NREU make a stronger case for continued support. As GPRA further develops and is refined, we will do our best to keep you informed. My very best wishes to you all for an excellent workshop and the continued effectiveness of Extension wildlife and fisheries educational programs across the nation.