Welcome to the training on how to complete Individual Development Plans, also known as IDPs, in AgLearn. This is presented by APHIS Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services, Human Resources Division, Training and Development Branch.

The AgLearn online IDP has a number of characteristics that are quite different from the paper form you might have been used to, which is one reason for this training. We'll explain the concept of trusted source documents so that you can understand the underlying reasons for creating and submitting IDPs in the recommended fashion. I'll define the IDP tennis ball approach that governs when to edit and submit updates and changes to your IDP. I'll also step you through the process of creating and submitting an IDP as well as adding activities to IDP goals to help accomplish those goals. And finally I'll point out available training resources available to you as APHIS employees.

Let's start by introducing the term trusted source document. You can also substitute the term official document. For the AgLearn IDP, this means that only those people who are the authoritative owners of the learner's IDP can modify and maintain the document. While the agency may use the data in the IDP to identify trends, no other persons, including AgLearn administrators, can make changes to this document. It is also true that the subordinate and the supervisor must be aware of the control mechanisms in place to protect the validity of this document. One of the most important mechanisms is the fact that all changes and updates must be documented by the user and the supervisor, and all changes must be submitted and approved before the end of the plan period.

The other major difference between the online form and a paper form is that only one person should be making changes to the plan at any time. Think of the IDP as a Tennis Ball. The employee creates the IDP and submits it for approval. That action sends it over the net, so to speak, to the supervisor. At that point, the user should make no further changes until the plan comes back into his court. The supervisor will get an email that the IDP is now in his "court" and should take action quickly to review and approve or reject the plan. So remember, when the IDP "ball" is not in your court, keep your hands off!

As the plan moves between subordinate and supervisor, it changes status. It is very important to understand what changes the status of an IDP and what action is necessary when it is in that status.

When a subordinate first creates an IDP, it is in the Draft status. As I mentioned earlier, in this status it is pretty worthless, so we want to get it out of this status as soon as possible. The reason for this is twofold:

First, we want to encourage the employee to think about the plan for the upcoming year and discuss the plan with their supervisor so that it can be documented, submitted and approved and the employee can then have much of the full year to begin working on that plan.

The second reason is that if the plan stays in Draft status, we won't know if older plans might be a potential problem that needs to be addressed until the Draft plan tries to move into a Submit/Pending status. For example, if the employee creates a plan but decides not to submit it, we won't know until they do decide to submit it, that they do not see a Submit for Approval button.

Once the subordinate submits the IDP, it moves into Submit/Pending status. That means that the plan is now awaiting action by the other party. Both the user and the supervisor can put a plan into Submit/Pending status. As the plan goes back and forth between supervisor and subordinate, whoever makes changes to the plan will have to have those changes approved by the other party. That's why we encourage you to use the tennis ball approach and recommend that changes be made only when the IDP has been submitted to you.

If one of the parties, most likely the supervisor, rejects the plan, it must still receive an action by the other party. Now this has caused some confusion. The action that must be performed is a review. The other party must acknowledge, in AgLearn, that the plan has been rejected. At that point the plan can be modified or a new plan can be created.

If the plan is Approved, it moves into an Active/Approved status. At this point additional changes can still be made, but if they are, they must be submitted for approval by the other party. Inactive/Approved status means that the user created and submitted a plan and had it approved, but the begin date is in the future.

A superseded plan occurs when a new plan is created with dates that overlap the existing active plan. So if I have a Calendar 2010 plan in place and I decide to create a fiscal year 2011 plan in October of 2010, my Calendar year 2010 plan will have the last three months of 2010 overlapping with the first three months of my fiscal year 2011 plan. So when my fiscal year 2011 plan is approved, my calendar 2010 plan will move into Superseded status. I can elect to move goals from that plan into my new fiscal year plan if I choose to do so.

The final status to discuss is the Expired status. A plan that proceeds normally through the IDP process should be in an Active/Approved status before it reaches the end of the plan period. That means that any changes, updates, additions, and so forth must be documented and submitted for a final approval well before the end of the plan period so that the supervisor can approve the plan one last time. As the Active/Approved plan moves past the last day of the plan period, the status automatically changes from Active/Approved to Expired. If the plan is not in an Active/Approved status when the plan period ends, this can cause problems and we'll talk about how to resolve those problems in this session.

In this next section, I'll walk you through the steps of creating an IDP, pointing out tips and tricks as I go along.

Here are some tips before you begin. I'll mention this several times. Before users begin to create their IDPs, please make sure their current supervisor is listed in your profile AgLearn. All required fields are marked with red asterisks. As we move through the next few screens, I'll point out the required fields and fields that are helpful to fill in even if they aren't required.

It's also a good idea to use the calendar icon to fill in dates so that no mistakes are made in formatting.

Also, remember not use your Browser back button. Always use the Back link icon to move to previous screens in AgLearn.

On the next few screens I'll walk you through the creation and submission of an IDP. Once approved, I'll demonstrate how to add goals and activities for the upcoming year and then how to resubmit.

From the Career tab, to create your IDP you will click a button to **Create a New Plan** as you see here on the **Easy Links** screen.

Once you have done that you are going to enter a plan title.

And here's a tip: If you are submitting Fiscal Year Plans, which is a best practice in APHIS, name them using a similar naming convention so that they appear in order when you create reports. For Example, name your plans FY11, FY12 or Kathy's Fiscal Year 2011 plan, etc. Again, a best practice is to name your plans so they appear in order.

And remember the plans will expire automatically on the date that you select in this stage.

Next, you'll need to select a plan period. To do so, click on the **Select** link next to the Plan Period field.

In this example I'm selecting the Fiscal Year 2012 Plan Period

A screen appears that you see here on the slide, prompting you to select a fiscal year. Please select the appropriate fiscal year. For this example, I am going to select Fiscal Year 2012. And you will see that my dates are automatically populated.

Adding goals. Goals need to be measurable and tied to a specific date, and as I said, each plan must have at least one goal. Each goal can have a number of fields that help to define the goal, but the only required fields are only the goal name and the Target Date.

To create a goal, click the **New Goal** button.

The goal number is not a required field, but it does help to keep your goals in order. The number must be unique, so if you may want to leave gaps between goal numbers to insert interim goals later. Enter a name for your goal. In this example, I am entering a goal to become more proficient in Excel Charts. Notice that the Goal Description is not a required field, but it might be helpful to more clearly identify exactly what you hope to accomplish.

Note that the Goal Category and section is not a required field and my recommendation is that you ignore it.

Next you will need to enter a goal target date. Next you'll need to click the Section drop down list and choose the All Goals section. And just a quick tip. Grouping goals into sections has caused a bit of confusion for users and supervisors. My recommendation is to place all goals in the All Goals section so that you view all of your goals together. Some of you won't see anything but the All Goals section, so this is an easy choice.

Next you'll need to enter a goal target date. Click the calendar icon to select a date in the future by which you plan to complete your goal.

Just a quick tip about the Target Value and the Stretch value. You'll notice they are not required fields, but they do help track your progress. For example if your goal is to attend 3 IDP webinars sessions this year, your Target Goal would be 3. Your stretch goal might be to attend 5 IDP webinars this year, so your stretch goal would be five. You'll be able to track your progress towards meeting this goal by entering a number in a "current" field and compare that to the Target and Stretch fields.

Now that you've identified your goal (which is to become more proficient in Excel Charts), click the **Finished** button. At this very moment, your plan is still in Draft status. You've created a plan but you haven't submitted it to anyone. So at this point it is pretty worthless, as in our previous example. Our next step will put the plan into a different status.

First I'll click the Save button to save my plan. Now, here's another big tip. Make ***absolutely sure*** your current supervisor is listed in AgLearn. If you're not sure, you can leave your IDP (because you have saved it), and go to your profile from the AgLearn home page. This is one of the most common errors that users make regarding IDPs. They submit their plan to the wrong supervisor or no supervisor.

Once you've made sure your current supervisor is listed in AgLearn, return to your IDP and click the **Submit for Approval** button. Now, notice the red text. Do nothing more until your supervisor takes action.

After you've submitted your plan, you'll notice that your plan status has changed from Draft to Submit/Pending. And here's another tip: The Plan Status icon (the yellow plus sign) will tell you who the next person is to take action. If weeks go by after you create your IDP and you can't remember who is supposed to be the next person to take action, this yellow plus sign will tell you. In this example, Kathy Fallow, the user, has submitted her IDP to her supervisor Ali Kafshi. Ali has no action or approved date next to his name, so the IDP is now Ali's responsibility. He must approve or reject the plan before Kathy can take any further action.

Shortly after you submit your IDP plan, you will receive a copy of an email sent to your supervisor. Please note the email is not sent to you but to your supervisor, you are just receiving a copy. This has also caused some user confusion in the past because the text of the letter states that the plan should be reviewed as soon as possible and some users think they are being directed to do something with the plan but they are not.

It's important to realize that until your supervisor takes action on your plan, you should do nothing to that plan. Once the supervisor does take action, you will receive an email stating that your IDP has been approved or rejected.

Now let's take a look at how the supervisor sees this in AgLearn. So let's say I'm a supervisor and I've just received an email stating that my subordinate has submitted an IDP. I log in into AgLearn and see an alert message on my personal homepage stating that I have subordinate plans that require review and

approval. I click the link and am taken to the Pending Reviews and Approval page. From there I'll need to click on the Performance Management tab to see any plan awaiting review.

Here I see my subordinate's name and her plan, with a corresponding Review button. I click the **Review** button for each employee.

From the next screen I can approve the plan. I can also print or view other plans. Once I click the Approve button, the status of the plan changes again. At this time the plan is in Active/Approved status and I have successfully sent the IDP "ball" back over the net to my subordinate.

When the supervisor clicks the Approve button, an email is generated back to you. At this time, you can go into AgLearn, access your plan, add additional goals, update the status of existing goals and add activities to goals to assist in your development.

Activities can be attached to goals by you or your supervisor to identify what things you might need to do to help you reach your Goals. For example, if my goal is to become more proficient in Excel Charts, I might add an activity that would involve taking an AgLearn course that covers advanced topics like Excel Charts. That would be considered an internal activity. Activities that don't involve AgLearn resources are external. And again, there are only two required fields here, the activity name and the target date.

To add an activity to a goal, I simply click the gold plus sign to expand my Excel Charts goal, and then I will expand the Activities area.

So for this example, I am going to add an internal activity. To do this, again you click on the Add Activity button and select Search for Activity link. Then you are prompted to enter information in the search field. So for this example I have typed in the words "Excel Charts." And then I am going to click on Search. A number of offerings appear that I can search from.

I select the course that I want from the available list and click **Add** to add it to my IDP and my learning plan.

If my goal is something like finding ways to improve my work/life balance, I might decide to take a culinary arts class offered at my local community college. That would be an external activity, not available to me by searching in AgLearn, so I would simply need to create that new activity, enter a target date and value and click **Add** to add it to my IDP. I'll need to update the status manually of this goal when I complete the cooking class. For this example, I am continuing to work on my Excel proficiency so I've added in manually to meet with Sue to discuss required charts because she is considered an expert in the field of Excel.

Whenever I make changes to my IDP or update the status of my goals and I want my supervisor to review the plan, I can submit the plan for approval. As soon as I click that submit button, I'll see a red alert that tells me that my plan contains changes that at this moment, have not yet been approved. My supervisor will get an email, I'll get a copy of the email and the IDP "ball" has now moved over to my supervisor's "court".

It's always a good idea to save a copy of your plan in a PDF format. Perhaps you want to bring a copy of your plan to a meeting with your supervisor. That way you'll have a historical record of what you plan looked like at various stages. To save and print your plan, you should use the My Plan report, available in AgLearn. Back on your homepage click the **Reports** menu under the **Easy Links** screen, select the **My Plan** report, choose a local file destination so that you can download it to your computer, then choose PDF format. Enter the date range you wish to see in your report, then click **Run** and save the PDF file to your computer and print it if you wish to do so.

Here are some common issues we have run into in APHIS. One is my employee is close to retirement and they do not want to do an IDP. And that is ok. However, as the supervisor we do ask that you search for the IDP Declination item in AgLearn and add that to your employee's IDP. We've also had other questions and I would like to clarify the paperwork must have been submitted. So if there is just talk that the employee is planning to retire in the next few years, then they still will need to do an IDP. And in this situation we ask that the employee is a year or less away from retirement to select this IDP Declination.

Another common issue is that my employee has no computer access or it is difficult for them to get in to AgLearn. And we understand this is very common in APHIS as well. So again, the supervisor must add the APHIS Paper-Based IDP item in AgLearn to your employee's learning history. And if they are using a paper-based IDP form, the AD-881, Individual Development Plan, form must be used. And this can be found on the Forms Library from the APHIS website.

So to summarize, the IDP is a Trusted Source document – only supervisors and subordinates can make changes to the IDP.

We want to encourage you to get the IDP out of Draft status early so that goals can be identified and progress can be tracked.

And remember the tennis ball approach, only change the plan with the ball is in your court.

Before the IDP is submitted for the first time, make sure your supervisor and your email address is correctly identified in your AgLearn profile.

Plans start out in Draft status and from there usually move to Submit/Pending, to Active/Approved, then back and forth between Submit/Pending and Active/Approved, as changes are being made, until they expire.

The IDP is a living document and it can be updated throughout the year by adding goals, activities and updating the status.

By viewing the List All Plans screen individuals can see the status and actions possible for all plans.

If they click the View Plan button for any plan, they will be able to click that little gold plus sign next to the Plan Status to see who is responsible for taking the next action on the IDP.

IDP Activities are added to goals to identify what you will do to reach your goal.

Activities can be internal, meaning the training resources are available in AgLearn, or external meaning resources are available outside of AgLearn.

It's always a good idea to run a My Plan report to save and print your plan so that you can have a snapshot of what your plan looked like at any given point in time.

The instructions should always be reviewed before calling the Help Desk or your AgLearn Administrator. The job aid, or instructions, can be found on the Training and Development Branch website.

If the plan was submitted to wrong supervisor and it is still in Submit/Pending status, have the user change their profile, and select the correct current supervisor.

That action will reject the plan and send it back to the employee so that he or she can resubmit the plan to the correct supervisor.

If the plan was submitted to the wrong supervisor and it is in Active/Approved status, have the employee change their profile, selecting the current supervisor.

When they make changes to their plan, they will be submitted to the new supervisor.

Remember to add the IDP Declination to your employee's learning history in AgLearn if documentation has been submitted that they employee will be retiring within a year. Also remember to add the APHIS Paper-Based IDP item to your employee's learning history if they are using the AD-881 form.

Finally, some best practices.

It's a good idea to create and submit your plan for approval early in the fiscal year. That way, we can get the plan out of Draft status, and identify early if any older plans might be causing issues.

Supervisors – please approve the initial plan as soon as you receive it to place the plan in Active/Approved status. You and your subordinate can then add goals to the plan that your subordinate will update and document the progress over the course of the year.

Remember – approval of the IDP is simply an approval of the plan, it is not necessarily a guarantee that training will be funded or that training will take place.

And remember the tennis ball approach – only make changes when the IDP ball is in your court!

And finally we have some points of contact for you. For Veterinary Services employees, we ask that you contact the Workforce and Leadership Development Staff. Plant Protection and Quarantine employees may contact the Professional Development Center. And International Services employees may contact the Training Director within IS. All other employees can contact the Training and Development Branch or Executive Support and Leadership Services shown here on the screen.

I hope that you have enjoyed this training. Contact your point of contact for any additional questions or assistance. Thank you.