

Inside This Issue

LunchBytes—What is it?	page 1
Ready for Microsoft Office 2007?	page 1
Rosetta Stone Language Learning In AgLearn	page 2
ACE Program Update	page 2
AgLearn SharePoint Site AgLearn Central	page 2
Resource Awareness Day	page 3
New SkillSoft Resources	page 3
FY2010 Agency Rankings	page 3
Online IDPs Status Update	page 4
NAL Staff Development Workshop	page 4
Change of Command	page 4-5
Ask Team AgLearn	page 5

LunchBytes—What is it?

Busy training professionals rarely have time to spare for informational webinars and awareness training, but everyone has time for lunch, right? The idea of LunchBytes originated earlier this year in an effort to keep senior training officers abreast of the wealth of resources in AgLearn. Because senior managers have very tight schedules, Team AgLearn created the LunchBytes webinar series to provide information in a quick and concise manner. These live webinars are held the second Thursday of each month beginning at 12:00 PM (EST) and lasting only thirty minutes; providing an opportunity for senior training officers to learn about new and existing AgLearn resources, collaborate with their peers, and leverage best practices and lessons learned. Last quarter, we hosted guest speakers that introduced:

- Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and Financial Planning courses designed for federal employees
- SkillSoft Resources for HR Professionals
- cyberFEDS eLearning courses for HR Professionals and Supervisors
- Ninth House and SkillSoft Supervisor Training Resources
- Forest Service Internal Training

If you would like to be placed on the mailing list for future sessions; or if you have a suggestion for future topics, please email your ideas to Kathy Fallow at: kathleen.fallow@ocio.usda.gov

Ready for Microsoft Office 2007?

Whether you just upgraded or are scheduled to upgrade soon, there are a few things you should know. Microsoft Office 2007 still has Outlook, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint but it also has many enhancements and new features. What does this mean to you? A brand new interface and increased functionality. If you need help, AgLearn is your one-stop shop for all of your Microsoft 2007 resource needs. More importantly, all of the resources in AgLearn are available at *no cost* since agencies have prepaid for licenses. [Introduction to the New Microsoft Office User Interface](#) is just one of the courses available directly from Microsoft Corporation to get you started. You can also take advantage of the many “Getting Started” SkillSoft courses that focuses on each application such as [Getting Started with Word 2007](#). Also, don’t forget to check out the [Microsoft Office 2007 KnowledgeCenter](#) for direct connection to the experts, roadmaps, books and more!

Rosetta Stone Language Learning In AgLearn

"...and so the famed explorer finally deciphered the strange markings on the side of the inner tomb. As the entrance opens, she raises her torch and peers into the dark hallway open before her. Moving forward, carefully scanning the hall for any signs of impediment, she peers deeply into the darkness. As her eyes fall towards the far wall, she notices a niche centered at eye level. Looking into the niche, she finally discovers what she has been seeking for many years; the famed Rosetta Stone, the key to all language translation and knowledge..."

Fast Forward to FY2010

Team AgLearn is pleased to announce that Rosetta Stone is now available through AgLearn. The Rosetta Stone software utilizes a combination of images, text, and sound, with difficulty levels increasing as the student progresses, in order to teach various vocabulary terms and grammatical functions intuitively; without drills or translation. Rosetta Stone calls this the "Dynamic Immersion method". This technique is intended to teach languages the way first languages are learned. Through AgLearn, USDA users are able to access this interactive language environment and participate in learning a new language. Nearly 30 languages are available to meet your needs. However, there are only a limited number of licenses available. For further information regarding obtaining a license, please contact your AgLearn Agency Lead.

ACE Program Update

If you haven't heard the latest about the American Council on Education (ACE) Certification program, here's a quick update:

Through the AgLearn sponsored ACE Certification program, USDA employees will be able to select and complete specially configured SkillSoft courseware in AgLearn and obtain ACE credits. These credits can be applied towards professional certifications or college credits. Curricula available include listings in Business Finance, Project Management, HRCI/SPHR Certification, Information System Security, Six Sigma, Microsoft Windows Server, and Desktop Support certifications. By participating in the ACE program, AgLearn can offer college course curriculum and certification exams that can be proctored at USDA at no additional cost to the employee. A memo announcing the program was distributed by Chris Smith, USDA's CIO in October and agencies are now communicating to learners about the advantages this program provides. If you are interested in learning more about the ACE program, contact your agency training officers or your AgLearn Agency Lead.

AgLearn SharePoint Site—AgLearn Central

Team AgLearn has stood up a Microsoft SharePoint site, called **AgLearn Central**, to further enhance content and knowledge collaboration with Team AgLearn and the AgLearn Administrator Community. In its current infant phase, AgLearn Central will provide: Shared Document Folders, Upcoming Team AgLearn events, and Team Discussion Topics.

Shared Document Folders will be arranged by subject and will include such things as: AgLearn Job Aids, AgLearn Agency Lead Meeting Minutes, AgLearn Strategic Workshop Files, AgLearn LunchBytes, AgLearn Vine newsletters, and 508 Compliance and Usability Resources.

Upcoming Team AgLearn Events will be posted on the AgLearn Central calendar and include such things as: AgLearn Agency Lead meetings, Strategic workshops, Resource Awareness Events, and Agency events.

Team Discussion Topics will include: Best Practices, Lessons Learned, MS Office 2007 Implementation, and IDP Implementation.

Team AgLearn is excited about the collaboration potential that AgLearn Central will provide. Updates will be provided to the training and administrator community as they occur.

New SkillSoft Resources

The first quarter of FY10 brought many new additions to AgLearn. Among these are new courses, videos, books, and even updated KnowledgeCenters. Some of the new resources include a Team Building Curriculum that focuses on leading teams. Below is just a sample of the new courses in this curriculum.

- [Establishing Goals, Roles, and Guidelines](#)
- [Building Trust and Commitment](#)
- [Dealing with Conflict](#)

There are also five new courses for the Certified Business Analysis Professional (CBAP™) which are Business Analysis Body of Knowledge (BABOK)® Guide V2.0 aligned. These courses, plus many others, can be found at the SkillSoft Latest Additions on the splashpage.

Don't forget to check out the folders in [Books24x7](#). We've added the latest additions so you can easily find them by subject. We've also created a few new ones!

AgLearn Resource Awareness Day

Team AgLearn will be conducting the next Resource Awareness Day in February 2010 at the USDA South Building Cafeteria. Posters with the exact dates and time will be in the USDA Whitten and South Buildings during the week of the event.

Due to popular demand from the results of the November 2009 Resource Awareness Day, the featured topics will once again be Thrift Savings Plan, Financial, and Retirement e-Training for federal employees. The featured guest, Debbie Mason (a Certified Financial Planner), will provide three different presentations: early-career, mid-career, and late-career.

FY10 Agency Rankings

Happy New Year! The first quarter FY2010 Discretionary Training statistics for each agency are in. This table (shown right) provides the list of agencies ranked by the combined number of assignments and completions. As a reminder, assignments are defined as items that have been accessed by a learner but not completed, whereas completions are items that have been marked completed in their learning history. These numbers, when combined, help to measure the level of discretionary training activity in AgLearn. The percentages in the table were calculated by adding the total number of assignments and completions, then dividing by the total number of active users per agency. These results clearly indicate significant increases in the utilization of discretionary training in AgLearn, which translates into cost-savings for each agency.

USDA Agency	Total Usage Increase %
APHIS	3504%
RMA	3494%
NIFA	2563%
RD	1666%
FSIS	1560%
GIPSA	1382%
FS	1332%
FNS	1144%
AMS	1033%
FAS	1015%
NASS	974%
NRCS	965%
DM	904%
ARS	872%
FSA	787%
ERS	689%

Online IDPs – Status Update

Several agencies have now transitioned to the online Individual Development Plan (IDP) in AgLearn. If you're supporting learners that are creating an IDP for the first time, be sure to alert them to the online training courses available at: http://www.aglearn.usda.gov/aglearn_learner_help.html. These courses will walk learners and supervisors through the creation and approval process step by step.

As learners submit plans and supervisors approve them, it is important that each is aware of how to check the status of an IDP; and how to identify who is responsible for taking the next action. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document available here

(https://aglearn.usda.gov/customcontent/JobAids/IDP_FAQs.pdf) answers some of the more commonly asked questions regarding IDPs.

Team AgLearn will be delivering webinars to help administrators better support employees in their use of IDPs. If your agency administrators are interested in attending one of these webinars, please indicate your interest to your AgLearn Agency Lead.

NAL Staff Development Workshop

On November 3, 2009, Kathy Fallow and Sherell Brooks delivered a presentation at the National Agricultural Library Staff Development Workshop. The presentation was titled "AgLearn: So Much More Than Mandatory Training!" The presentation briefed the group on the wealth of AgLearn resources, including SkillSoft and Ninth House courseware; Books24x7; KnowledgeCenters; AgLearn accreditations and certifications; and the American Council of Education (ACE) Certification Program. If your agency would like to offer a briefing on AgLearn resources, please contact Kathy Fallow at katleen.fallow@ocio.usda.gov.

Change of Command

After nearly 42 years of dedicated service to the United States (U.S.), Mr. Stan Gray has decided to retire. His distinguished career includes the Department of Treasury, the Department of Commerce, the U.S. Navy, and most recently the Department of Agricultural (USDA).

It was at USDA that Stan cultivated an infant learning management system, AgLearn, into one of the most successful learning tools, in terms of costs and user audience, in the Federal government. While managing the AgLearn Program Office, Stan and his team received multiple awards including the CLO - Excellence in LMS Award Gold 2009, USDA OCFO Excellence Award - Outstanding Contribution to Cost Savings 2008, PLATEAU/Insights - Best Overall Use of LMS 2008, and PLATEAU/Insights - Best Launch to an Organization (10,000 or More) 2007.

The foundation that Stan helped to create will undoubtedly benefit USDA well into the future leaving a lasting legacy that is visible today with these amazing facts:

- AgLearn has seen nearly 3 million online course completions since its inception in 2004.
- Discretionary training increased by nearly 600% from Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 to FY08.
- The AgLearn program resulted in cost savings of nearly \$8 million in 2008 and is projecting a cost avoidance of nearly \$23 million in FY09.

Fortunately, OCIO has passed the torch of managing AgLearn to Mr. Jerome Davin, whose professional background and reputation is perfectly suited to continue the success of AgLearn and even take the program to new heights.

Jerome started his career with the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi, Kenya in 1994 while obtaining his Master's Degree in Management and Organizational Development from Alliant International University of San Diego. He then worked for CompUSA from 1996 to 2000. As the Sales Training Manager, he was responsible for the e-Learning program, covering technical and sales training for over 22,000 employees. He also worked for Excel Communications, where he introduced and rolled out a successful e-Learning program for Call Center associates; for Openwave Systems, where he developed the e-Learning program for staff and customers worldwide, creating 20 courses, for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, Italy, overseeing the Computer Skills

Programme and introduced e-Learning for systems and language training; for USDA Rural Development as the Director of the Human Resources Training Division, providing service, support and guidance on training and employee development to more than 6,000 employees; for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in Amman, Jordan, as the Chief of the Human Resources Planning and Development Division, overseeing HR policies and the employee development of over 40,000 staff and contractors in the Middle East.

Ask Team AgLearn

Q: I know that employees retain their AgLearn account when they move to another agency in USDA, so what is the most common oversight during this transition?

A: SUPERVISOR. SUPERVISOR. SUPERVISOR. Users often forget that they need to update their user profile and change their email address and supervisor as needed. If the user's AgLearn account does not reflect any supervisor change, then SF-182 approvals and verifications will continue to involve the old supervisor. It is important to note that Administrators can only make supervisor assignment changes to the users within their agency. Therefore, it is essential for each employee to update their profile whenever they change supervisors, especially when they move from one agency to another. Contact your agency's lead administrator for the *Updating Your AgLearn Profile* job aid.

Q: Do I need to make a change request to an SF-182 if the training date(s) or dollar amount changes after it has already been approved?

A: Not necessarily. The SF-182 is a two part process: the approval and the verification. The approval authorizes an employee to take the training, while the verification is the testimony of whether the training was completed or not. At the completion of a training event, the employee must verify attendance to the event. This verification also allows the employee to update the SF-182 with any new or changed information. After verification by the employee, the employee's supervisor must also verify the SF-182 before it is added to your Learning History. If the training start and or completion date changes after the SF-182 has been approved, but before it has been verified, then the employee can indicate the actual start and completion dates when filling out the verification form.

Q: A course that works perfectly fine on my home computer does not work on my work computer, where I get a "Unable to find a SCORM API adapter. Will not be able to communicate with the LMS." Is this an issue with my browser settings?

A: Yes. Check your Internet Explorer (IE) settings and make sure both HTTP 1.1 Settings are checked and **Do not save encrypted pages to disk** is unchecked. To verify these settings:

Go to Tools located at the top menu bar on Internet Explorer. Select Internet Options, a dialogue box will open; select the advanced tab at the top. Scroll down to HTTP 1.1 Settings and ensure that BOTH boxes are checked. Click Apply and then Ok, refresh your browser and try again.

Go to Tools located at the top menu bar on Internet Explorer. Select Internet Options, a dialogue box will open; select the advanced tab at the top. Scroll down to Security Settings and ensure that Do not save encrypted pages to disk is unchecked.

The AgLearn program is managed by USDA's Distance Learning Program Director under OCIO.

Phone: 202-694-5985 E-mail: TeamAgLearn@ocio.usda.gov