

Safeguarding Implementation Action Plan

Date: June 21, 2004

Issue Group: Organizational Dynamics

Activity: Organizational Structure & Function – Management Support Services Director Review and Unit Assessment

Recommendation Covered: Recommendation #65 - *Immediately assess staffing needs in order to address significant losses in senior personnel and the expected loss of more. Review and adjust compensation disparities, grade levels and career pathway opportunities.*

Issue Group Findings: The approach to solving issues of succession planning is similar to a journey of many miles which must be taken one step at a time. This action plan represents one small step towards the goal of addressing the significant loss of senior personnel. While it is clear there has been recent loss of key leaders in VS, most noticeably those in SES positions, the Organizational Dynamics Issue Group also believes loss or undervaluation of non-SES leadership positions results in a knowledge vacuum and could be critical to VS as well. Line management veterinary leadership is often in the spotlight, but the indirect support roles are crucial to VS. The APHIS Front Line survey conducted in 2003 noted “There is an overall sense that internal management needs to be improved across the agency.” Cited as specific issues were “inadequate resources”, and “poor or weak management and leadership”. Management Support Services (MSS), and particularly the Director of that unit, stands out as critical internal support necessary for the acquisition and distribution of resources for VS, and perhaps an overlooked link in meeting Front Line needs for much of the program.

The MSS Director is a member of the VS Management Team responsible for the overall coordination of VS administrative and financial issues. This includes monitoring and managing the \$240 million appropriated budget, \$250 million in CCC funding, and the \$60,000 contingency fund. Administrative policies developed by the MSS Director include those affecting pay and leave, performance management guidelines and recruitment directives. The MSS Director represents the Deputy Administrator’s Office when interacting with the USDA and other APHIS units, OMB, industry, state and other federal entities.

It appears critical to the Issue Group that a review of this position, and perhaps an assessment of the unit, is warranted to assure appropriate resources and leadership are available to meet VS needs.

Positions are reviewed in light of classification standards. When there is a question regarding the legitimacy of a position's Series, Title or Grade, a position review may be warranted. A position review is an in-depth examination and documentation of the work being performed in a position which is subsequently analyzed against Position Classification Standards. This is also the time when the position description is rewritten or updated so that it is true to the work being performed.

Proposed Actions: Review the MSS Director position to determine if an adjustment in grade is necessary. Consider a broader assessment of the MSS unit. This action will specifically address the recommendation to review and adjust compensation disparities, grade levels and career pathway opportunities and will begin to address the issue of the significant loss of senior personnel.

Implementation Plan:

Tasks:

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| June 2004 | - VSMT reviews Action Plan and assigns a team to conduct the an assessment of the MSS Director position, including outlining the customer base and objectives for the unit. |
| August 2004 | - Request that classification perform a review of the Director position if found to be warranted. |
| December 2004 | -Complete review and take necessary steps to address findings. |

Accountable Group: Implementation will be the ultimate responsibility of the VSMT, and one member should be chosen to oversee activity, but Human Resources and PPD should be responsible for providing data.

Other Key Players: APHIS Management Team

Resources Needed: None, other than time spent.

Statutory/Regulatory Impacts: None

Political Sensitivities: None

Sequencing: None known by the Issue Group.

Partnering/Cooperation/Communication: External customers will likely not notice obvious change as a result of this Action Plan. However, if the structural foundation of a program unit is improved, there could be long term progress noted in communication and resource availability.

Expected Outcome and Performance Indicators: The main intent of this action plan is to take one small step toward solving issues of succession planning by assessing the role the MSS Director plays in helping VS meet short term and long term goals reviewing and adjusting potential compensation disparities.

Linkage to the VS Strategic Plan: This action plan supports Goal 5 of the Strategic plan: *Create an organizational environment that fosters VS' ability to carry out its animal health mission.*