

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
FY 2019 Conference Report
As required by the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum 17-08

CONFERENCE NAME	AGENCY PROVIDING SPONSORSHIP FUNDS	TOTAL USDA EXPENSES	CITY	STATE	START DATE	END DATE	EXPLANATION OF MISSION IMPACT	PARTICIPANTS
Agricultural Outlook Forum	Office of the Chief Economist	\$170,339.06	Arlington	VA	2/21/2019	2/22/2019	The forum provides U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) staff and stakeholders - producers, policy makers, business leaders, and government and industry analysts - the opportunity to learn about USDA programs and priorities for the coming year (day 1), as well as attend a full day of sessions (day 2) explaining USDA's first agricultural commodity supply and demand projections for the coming marketing year.	665
Farm Service Agency Farm Loan Policy, Outreach, and Distressed Borrower Training	Farm Service Agency	\$1,046,847.00	Detroit	MI	9/9/2019	9/13/2019	This combined training met the core agency mission of delivering FSA programs accurately, efficiently, and effectively. FSA is focused on program delivery while under increasingly stressful circumstances where staff must be prepared to navigate delivering adverse program news to customers in financial crisis or who are at risk of harm to themselves; manage staff to enable continued outputs while workloads are increasing; and administer federal programs with minimal errors with a high number of new employees and managers. To successfully implement USDA's programs at the local level, FSA state and county office employees must have a clear and consistent understanding of policies and procedures and require training to this end. This combined training also furthered the Secretary's first goal of ensuring that USDA becomes a premier customer service agency to American farmers and ranchers, while also continuing to invest in the success of farmers and ranchers through effective programs. FSA's programs are vital components of USDA's farm financial safety net. Addressing the challenges to the rural economy strengthens the safety net for America's farmers and ranchers and this directly supports the accomplishment of USDA strategic goal 1, objective 1.2: "Increase agricultural opportunities by ensuring a robust safety net, creating new markets, and supporting a competitive agricultural system."	820
National Cooperative Soil Survey National Conference	Natural Resources Conservation Service	\$203,242.00	Narragansett	RI	6/10/2019	6/13/2019	The National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) is a nationwide partnership of Federal, regional, State, and local agencies and private entities and institutions. This partnership works to cooperatively investigate, inventory, document, classify, interpret, disseminate, and publish information about soils. NCSS standards are common or shared procedures that enhance technology transfer, data sharing, and communications among soil survey participants. The NCSS National Conference convenes every other year on the odd-numbered year to discuss and develop solutions to issues of national concern to the NCSS. The 2019 conference theme was "Charting the Future of Soil and Ecological Sciences," which included highlights such as Aquaculture: Oyster Farming Operation; Coastal and Riparian Ecosystems; Field Tour: Coastal Zone Soil Survey and Coastal Erosion; Fundamental Changes to Soil Taxonomy; NCSS 120th Celebration; and Urban Soils.	117
One U.S. Department of Agriculture, One Farm Production and Conservation, One Focus Leadership Summit	Natural Resources Conservation Service	\$423,716.00	Norman	OK	10/28/2018	11/2/2018	The purpose of this summit was to provide the Under Secretary a venue to meet with and discuss items pertinent to the newly established Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area. This first combined summit was needed to allow the leadership to discuss how the Farm Service Agency, the National Resources Conservation Service, the Risk Management Agency and the new Business Center will consolidate and manage operations going forward. To ensure a successful Business Center transition, it was critical for agency leadership within the mission area to meet and discuss the transition, identify areas of concern and develop solutions. This collaboration furthered the priorities and the mission of USDA. Additionally, the FPAC leadership from the headquarters and states gathered to discuss new policies and procedures related to the FPAC mission area and the new Business Center, while also allowing the leadership to engage around topical updates and upcoming national initiatives.	327

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Rural Business Service National Program Directors Training	Rural Development	\$141,752.00	St Louis	MO	9/16/2019	9/20/2019	State leadership program director turn-over throughout the nation equals 35%. The program directors are vital to ensure state consistency for underwriting, case-load management, and state staff management. The Rural Business Service (RBS) program directors lead a state team of specialists, loan assistants, and technicians in all RBS programs including outreach, training, intake of application, processing application, obligation, servicing, and liquidation. This includes all 17 programs that Rural Business and Cooperative programs administer. National office deems the program director training as an imperative to ensure smooth state transitions as well as to protect and preserve the overall portfolio.	70
Society of American Foresters Conference	Forest Service	\$252,350.47	Portland	OR	10/3/2018	10/7/2018	The Forest Service participates annually in the Society of American Foresters National Convention. The theme of the convention was "Forest Policy and Science-Management Interactions," which highlighted cutting-edge forest science with practical application, case studies showcasing best practices, adaptive management examples from forest practitioners, on-the-ground workshops in broad interest areas, and forest management in the Pacific Northwest. The convention audience comprised of almost 1,200 natural resource professionals working in public and private settings, managers, CEOs, researchers, administrators, educators, and students. The convention provided an opportunity for Forest Service employees to gain insight into innovative solutions for forest management, leadership development, and more. The event presented state of the art technical training with an assortment of concurrent sessions, field tours and exhibits that displayed latest science and research created to improve forest management. The technical training and exhibits allowed Forest Service employees to acquire additional knowledge, expertise, and leadership skills needed to support sound, viable, and defensible analysis that support decisions that are in compliance with the agency's mission and the Department's strategic plan. The exposure and networking acquired with peers, special interest groups, and external partners was invaluable and one of the most efficient and effective modes for acquiring the needed skills, such as leadership, best practices, and collaboration, in a neutral setting.	118
Soil and Water Conservation Society Conference	Natural Resources Conservation Service	\$266,065.13	Pittsburgh	PA	7/28/2019	7/31/2019	Provided a forum for learning about the latest conservation research and practice, the art of engaging new stakeholders and expanding partnerships, and the challenges of adapting the landscape to a changing climate. The conference helped further the agency's mission and the Department's strategic plan by providing state-of-the-art training information exchange, development of professional relationships and technology transfer in all disciplines related to NRCS work. It aided USDA's scientific integrity policy and offered unique opportunities to showcase innovative conservation efforts in rural and urban communities through three special conservation topic categories of adaptive management, watershed planning and management, and engaging the private sector and eight general topic categories.	556

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The Wildlife Society Conference	Forest Service	\$121,678.42	Cleveland	OH	10/7/2018	10/11/2018	The Wildlife Society Annual Conference is a large North American professional conference that brings together wildlife professionals from federal, state, Native American, private, and University institutions. This conference serves as a source for essential, practical, and objective information for wildlife professionals, providing research, policy information, and practical tools along with vibrant professional networks that allow solutions to wildlife conservation and management challenges to be anchored in science. Forest Service participation in the Wildlife Society Annual Conference aligns with the agency's four strategic goals to: sustain our nation's forests and grasslands, deliver benefits to the public, apply knowledge globally, and excel as a high performing agency. This meeting provided multiple venues for demonstrating the relevancy of the Forest Service to the American people through the wildlife professional community, such as information exchanges at the exhibit booths, attendee participation in working groups, and symposium presentations. Participation in this meeting was a highly efficient way for Forest Service research scientists, management biologists, and leadership to acquire and disseminate the latest knowledge needed for managing wildlife habitat and populations. Forest Service biologists exchanged information to: foster resilient ecosystems, manage for functional habitats, conserve connected natural spaces, and provide abundant wildlife resources for human enjoyment. Outcomes expected from participation in the conference included: increased recognition of the relevancy of Forest Service personnel, programs, and partnerships, expanded collaborative networks, enhanced tribal relationships, increased interest from diversity candidates in employment with the Forest Service, and enhanced natural resource stewardship knowledge and skills.	56
U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development/National Renewable Energy Laboratory Renewable Energy Technology Training	Rural Development	\$155,125.00	Golden	CO	8/20/2019	8/22/2019	The purpose of this training was to build the capacity of Rural Development's (RD) state energy coordinators in financing renewable energy technologies. A major component in financing these technologies is having a working knowledge of how renewable energy technologies work and being able to properly assess technological risks. In the renewable energy space, technology is rapidly changing which necessitates the agency to always analyze how to underwrite loans for these types of projects. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) has some of the foremost scientists and researchers in the world in the renewable energy space and is best equipped to deliver the training that state energy coordinators need. In addition to delivering training in a classroom setting, the NREL team led tours to their Solar Energy Research Facility, National Wind Technology Center, and other facilities to deliver a unique, hands-on training experience. This kind of training opportunity directly supports accomplishing the agency's goals of maximizing the impact of core RD programs and investing in the RD workforce. A greater capacity in the areas of understanding and financing renewable energy technologies affords the agency increased opportunities in maximizing the impact of its programs. The training improved the agency's ability in underwriting energy guaranteed loans as well as outreach and delivery of energy programs.	60

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Water and Environmental Programs Advanced/Position Description Training	Rural Development	\$166,781.00	Nashville	TN	9/8/2019	9/12/2019	The National Training Conference for Water and Environmental Programs (WEP) national office and field staff helped further the Department's Strategic Plan and RD's/WEP's mission by strengthening WEP staff's expertise and solidifying the quality of its customer service to rural communities. It enabled focus on critical priorities such as Farm Bill implementation, reviewing WEP regulations/policies/guidance, underwriting and financial analysis, identifying common challenges and solutions for working with states and borrowers, developing strategies to mitigate risk to the agency, enhancing outreach and partnerships, IT developments and more. Using the framework of the Four Pillars (Marketing and Outreach, Origination and Processing, Loan Servicing and Special/Troubled Assets), WEP national office and field staff had the opportunity to discuss and learn about enhanced strategies for program delivery. The outcome of this training was to reset expectations for customer service and accountability, and provide WEP national office and field staff with the tools they need to serve their communities effectively, efficiently and with integrity.	111
Total		\$2,947,896.08						2,900