

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## The HR Newsletter of The Agriculture Program

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Inside this issue:	
<i>Support Staff Performance Evaluations</i>	1
<i>Learn Self Defense</i>	1
<i>County Programs HR Corner</i>	2
<i>Avoid Paycheck Delays</i>	2
<i>Flexible Work Schedules</i>	2
<i>The Training Room</i>	3
<i>Texas Tomorrow Fund</i>	3
<i>Thinking of Retiring?</i>	4

### Non-Faculty/Support Staff Performance Evaluations

The March 15 deadline for conducting annual performance evaluations on all non-faculty/support staff is quickly approaching. Sometimes when people think of performance appraisals, they think only of the negative. However, properly done, an appraisal session can improve morale and provide the employee with solid information on which to act.

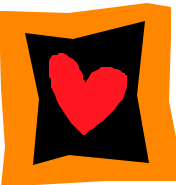
During the session, participants will discuss the purpose and benefits of conducting evaluations, identify the essential elements of an effective evaluation, explore common problems and review proper use of the evaluation form.



Human Resources will be offering a face-to-face workshop on the annual performance evaluation process Tuesday, February 19. The session begins at 2 p.m. and is being held in Suite A, room 100A of the Centeq Building in the Research Park. During this ses-

sion, participants will discuss the purpose and benefits of conducting evaluations, identify the essential elements of an effective evaluation, explore common problems and review proper use of the evaluation form.

### Love Yourself: Learn about Self-Defense



The Agriculture Program Human Resources Office invites you to the second program of the 2002 Brown Bag Noon Lunch series to be held on Wednesday, February 13, in the Centeq Building, Suite 100, Room 101A (on Research Parkway,

College Station). Betty LeMay, sergeant, University Police Department, will present self-defense techniques. Reservations are limited to 25 individuals. For more information or to sign up, contact Joy McKenzie at 845-2423 or e-mail at [jmckenzie@tamu.edu](mailto:jmckenzie@tamu.edu).

#### HR QUICK FACTS

- **Employment/Compensation**  
Phone: 979-845-7986  
Fax: 979-862-4885
- **Benefits**  
Phone: 979-845-2178  
Fax: 979-862-4885
- **Payroll**  
Phone: 979-845-3636  
Fax: 979-845-9329
- **Training**  
Phone: 979-845-4766  
Fax: 979-862-4885

#### LINKS

- AG Program HR:**  
[aghr.tamu.edu/default.htm](http://aghr.tamu.edu/default.htm)
- Employment:**  
[aghr.tamu.edu/employment.htm](http://aghr.tamu.edu/employment.htm)
- Benefits:**  
[aghr.tamu.edu/benefits.htm](http://aghr.tamu.edu/benefits.htm)
- Ag Program Directory:**  
[agdirectory.tamu.edu/](http://agdirectory.tamu.edu/)
- Payroll:**  
[aghr.tamu.edu/pay.htm](http://aghr.tamu.edu/pay.htm)

## Flexible Work Schedules

Flexible work schedules are designed to meet the needs of the unit while helping to meet the employee's needs and preferences. Some of the advantages to a unit may include increased productivity, improved morale, recruitment and retention. However, such arrangements can also lead to problems, if not implemented correctly.

Flexible work hours usually begin with an eight-hour work day, but include a starting and quitting time different from the traditional 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. work day. Flexible work schedules that are outside the comprise a 40-hour work week. traditional 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. have a fixed arrival and departure time, e.g., 6 a.m. to 3 p.m., 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. They may also include a 4/40, that is, four 10-hour days that comprise a 40-hour work week.

The supervisor and unit head must review and approve any flexible work schedules prior to changing any work hours, establishing performance standards, or before changing the terms and conditions of em-



ployment of any other employee. The flexible schedule may be terminated if, in the judgment of the supervisor, it leads to diminished work quality, is disruptive to the work flow, is not in the best interest of the Agriculture Program or, in general, is not suitable to an individual or office.

For additional information refer to TAES Procedure 33.06.99.A1, *Flexible*

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*Work Schedules* or TCE Procedure 33.06.00.X1, *Flexible Work Schedules* or you may also refer to Flexible Work Schedules Flexible Work Schedule Arrangements, A Manager's Guide which can be found at <http://agtraining.tamu.edu/Flex-work-guide10-01.pdf>.

The Human Resources Office is available to assist if you have questions or concerns about flexible work schedule

## Avoid Paycheck Delays with Electronic Deposit

Delays in receipt of pay checks are possible if airplanes are grounded due to icy wind, severe weather occurring at the pay check origin, air carrier hub, or at your location, or in the event of a national emergency where air transportation is grounded.

You can avoid these possible delays—and join thousands of other TAMUS employees who enjoy the safety, earlier access to funds, and convenience of deposit when traveling—by having your pay check electronically deposited.

Please contact the Agriculture Program payroll office (979-845-3636) for forms and instructions or to ask questions about the process.



## The Training Room

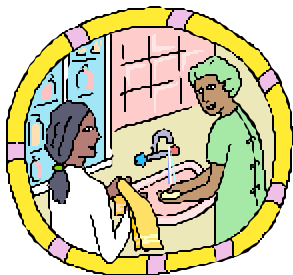
Enhancing the abilities of employees is a major goal of Human Resources training programs and we have worked to provide exciting and productive programs such as those held during the recent Agriculture Program Conference Staff Symposium and through our "Fall 01" TTVN training sessions. Training opportunities are usually announced through your unit training liaison; however, you can also view the training opportunities on the Web at: <http://agtraining.tamu.edu>. This site is the portal to The Agriculture Program Administrative Services Training which includes on-line courses plus the announcements for "classroom" training and also our TTVN training.

"Spring 02" TTVN Training includes:

Feb. 26	Conflict Management	Dr. Nancy Algert, TAMU EAP
Mar. 26	On-Line New Employee Orientation/Processing	Jan Kyles
Apr. 30	Payroll Year-End Processes & Payroll Budgeting	Loree Lewis
May 28	Coaching & Mentoring Employees	
Jun. 25	Electronic Leave Accounting System	
Jul. 30	Basic Supervisory Skills	Steve Schulze

TTVN sites for this training may be found at: <http://agtraining.tamu.edu/ttvnsite.htm>. Handouts for each training session will be linked through the Ag training web site at <http://agtraining.tamu.edu>.

## Texas Tomorrow Fund



Loretta: "Did you hear about Colleen? She's started a second job at the Chewy Hamburger Stand to help get her son through college."

Henrietta: "Boy, college tuition keeps going up faster than a rocket in a hurry."

Loretta: "Yes, I know, 460 percent since 1985. But not ours. I have one boy at A&M and another in high school but we locked in the cost of college tuition and required fees about 10 years ago."

Henrietta: "How'd you manage that?"

Loretta: "The Texas Tomorrow Fund, it locks in cost at the time you sign up. You make contributions though payroll deduction, bank draft or just mailing a check." "And, college tuition is all paid up by the time your kid graduates from high school or even sooner if you want."

Henrietta: "Well, my husband, Henry, says the best way to save for college is through mutual funds."

Loretta: "That's the way we started, we put \$1000 in a fund for the oldest when he was born. But after the market took such a big hit last year, I'm glad we didn't stick with it."

Henrietta: "Mutual funds can be riskier than 200 foot skydiving." "Is there any risk with the Texas Tomorrow Fund?"

Loretta: "No, it's a constitutionally guaranteed trust fund backed by the full faith and credit of the State of Texas." "As long as Texas doesn't slide off the map, it's completely safe." "You don't have to worry about what Allen Greenspan might say or how high tuition costs may soar." "In fact, that's how you come out ahead in the Texas Tomorrow Fund, tuition costs keep going up while yours are locked in." "So the sooner you sign up the more you save."

## Texas Tomorrow Fund, cont'd.

Henrietta: "Well, what if my son, Jeffery, gets a badminton scholarship or decides not to go to college after I paid all that?"

Loretta: "You can get all of your money back or you can transfer it to someone else, if you want." "It can be used at any Texas public or private college or university covered by the particular plan you choose. You don't have to name a specific school when you buy the contract."

Henrietta: "I'll have to get Henry to look at it, but he's slower than level mud. Is there a deadline?"

Loretta: "Yes, you can get more info on the web at: <http://www.texastomorrowfund.org/>. The deadline for signing up this year is May 24, so get him going!"

Henrietta: "Loretta, how do you keep so much of this in your head?"

Loretta: "It's easy, Henrietta, I'm a fictional character!"



## Thinking of Retiring?

If you retire through the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) your retirement annuity is calculated based on a formula set by the state. The more years you pay into TRS, the higher your annuity will be upon retirement.

In addition to earning service credit while employed, TRS members may purchase other specified types of service credit. Examples of special service credit are: military service, unreported service, withdrawn service and credit for state sick and/or personal leave.

Effective September 1, 2001 members with seven years of actual membership service credit may purchase an additional one, two, or three years of service credit. To be used in calculating

service retirement benefits, you must purchase special service credit by your effective date of retirement. For more information about buying special service credit and calculating sick/personal leave visit the TRS web site at <http://www.trs.state.tx.us>.

For additional retirement information, including Medicare information, visit the Agriculture Program Human Resources Retirement website at [ag.hr.tamu.edu/retirement.htm](http://ag.hr.tamu.edu/retirement.htm) or call Jan Kyles at 979/845-5645.

