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## MANAGERS RECEIVE "SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN DIVERSITY" TRAINING

The Utah NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee held a training session in November for USDA managers that provided basic information about sexual orientation issues and concerns that arise in the workplace and will help them comply with USDA sexual orientation nondiscrimination policy. The instruction was prepared by members of the USDA Gay & Lesbian Employee Advisory Council and presented by William Scaggs, program manager for the council who is shown in the accompanying photo with Lisa Rice, NRCS career intern



administrative officer and member of the Utah Civil Rights Advisory Committee, who helped organize the training session held in Salt Lake City. More than 80 persons attended from six USDA agencies.

It is USDA policy to provide a safe working environment for all employees, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) employees or their families. It was noted that everyone has a sexual orientation and that being gay is not a conscious choice, but is usually established before the age of five. It is estimated that up to five percent of the U.S. population (15 million) are gay. Managers were warned that same-sex harassment, such as jokes, actions, comments and innuendo, can reduce productivity and morale of GLBT

employees and can lead to serious actions.

To learn more about including sexual orientation in diversity, visit the USDA Secretary's Gay and Lesbian Employee Advisory Council Web site at <http://www.usda.gov/da/employ/USDA%20Council%20Files/gl.htm>

or contact William Scaggs, program manager, at (202) 720-7489.

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