



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

April 4, 2012

IOWA BULLETIN NO. IA360-12-16

SUBJECT: PER – MID-YEAR 2012 PROGRESS REVIEWS

ACTION REQUIRED BY: APRIL 27, 2012

PURPOSE: To provide guidance for completion of fiscal year 2012 mid-year performance progress reviews.

EXPIRATION DATE: September 30, 2013

This is a reminder that supervisors are required to meet with their employees to conduct periodic progress reviews throughout the year. National Bulletin 360-12-16, PER - Conducting Progress Reviews for Fiscal Year 2012, dated February 29, 2012, has been issued and will require me to report that all employees have completed one formal progress review by April 30, 2012. In order to ensure compliance with this deadline I am requiring all NRCS employees in Iowa to have this progress review completed and documented in EmpowHR by close of business on Friday, April 27, 2012.

The supervisor and employee must complete the following steps:

- To start the appraisal process; the supervisor will log into EmpowHR/ICAMS, choose the employee they are reviewing, and enter mid-year comments.
- The Supervisor clicks on Save.
- The employee will receive an email that the supervisor has completed a progress review.
- The employee will log into EmpowHR/ICAMS, click on Worklist, click on the progress review link, enter comments, and click on the viewed/discussed box.
- The employee will click on **Save**. The employee **must** click on Save to complete the process (please share EmpowHR/ICAMS guidance with your employees).
- The supervisor will then receive an email that this has been completed. It is the responsibility of each supervisor to ensure his/her employees have completed this process.

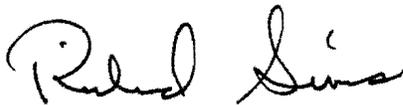
Instructions on setting-up the mid-year progress review in EmpowHR are available on the Iowa NRCS website at: <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/IA/intranet/ProgressReview.pdf>. Also on the Iowa NRCS website, we have placed several informational documents to assist you in preparing for and conducting your mid-year progress review. They include: Steps for Conducting Mid-Year Progress Reviews, Steps for Preparing Mid-Year Progress Reviews, Tips for Giving Effective Feedback, Tips for Recognizing Rater Bias, and Tips for Writing Performance Narratives, available at: <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/HR.html#Performance>. Again this year I want to remind you there is a course on AgLearn titled "USDA NRCS Giving and Receiving Feedback" that provides tips and models for both giving and receiving feedback. You are also encouraged to review the National Bulletin 360-11-14, which contains additional information that will enhance the progress review process. I encourage you to take a look at these if you have not already done so.

To ensure that employees understand the comments supervisors provided in EmpowHR/ICAMS, it is important that the supervisor also communicate with employees verbally. This mid-year progress review is the minimum required. You may provide periodic reviews throughout the year as needed to verify progress toward meeting employee performance standards.

This is an excellent time to review all employees' individual development plans and discuss their long term and short term career goals.

Note that verifying all of your mid-year progress reviews are complete means that signatures from both the supervisor and employee have been entered electronically into EmpowHR/ICAMS prior to the April 27, 2012 deadline.

If you have any questions, contact either your supervisor or the Human Resources staff at 515-284-4587. If your EmpowHR/ICAMS password has expired, contact your servicing Human Resource Assistant, Jill A. Clothier at jill.clothier@ia.usda.gov or Linda M. Wells at linda.wells@ia.usda.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Sims". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "S".

Richard Sims
State Conservationist