



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food Safety  
and Inspection  
Service

FSIS Directive  
4451.3

Revision 3

# Performance Awards Program for Bargaining Unit Employees

**PERFORMANCE AWARDS PROGRAM FOR BARGAINING UNIT  
EMPLOYEES**

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

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# FSIS DIRECTIVE

4451.3  
REVISION 3

4/12/11

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## PERFORMANCE AWARDS PROGRAM FOR BARGAINING UNIT EMPLOYEES

### PART ONE--BASIC PROVISIONS

#### I. PURPOSE

This directive provides procedures and responsibilities for the performance-based awards program for bargaining unit employees.

#### II. CANCELLATION

This directive cancels FSIS Directive 4451.3 Revision 2, dated 7/31/97.

#### III. REASON FOR REISSUANCE

This directive is revised to:

A. Change the distribution of award amounts to allow a higher dollar amount for covered employees receiving Outstanding performance ratings than covered employees receiving Superior performance ratings.

B. Eliminate equivalent awards which are no longer used in the program.

#### IV. REFERENCES

FSIS Directive 4430.2, Monetary Awards Based on the Performance Rating of Record

FSIS Directive 4451.1, Incentive Awards Program

FSIS Directive 4451.6, Non-Monetary Award Recognition

FSIS Directive 4451.7, Time-Off Award Program

FSIS Directive 4451.8, Spot Award Program

FSIS Directive 4451.9, External Awards

Labor-Management Agreement

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

Electronic; All Field Employees

**OPI:**

HRP – Performance and Compensation  
Policy Branch

## V. **ABBREVIATIONS**

The following appear in their shortened form in this directive:

LMA	Labor-Management Agreement
QSI	Quality Step Increase

## VI. **POLICY**

It is FSIS policy to ensure that this performance awards program:

A. Provides a systematic method for reviewing performance achievements and granting performance awards and QSIs on a fair and equitable basis for bargaining unit employees.

B. Ensures that consideration for awards is made without regard to race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation.

## VII. **DEFINITIONS**

A. **Cash Award Amount.** A monetary value that varies annually with the funding amount and the number of employees rated Superior or Outstanding for an annual performance rating.

B. **Funding Amount.** A specified percentage of an employee's salary that is based on the availability of program funds.

C. **QSI.** An increase in an employee's rate of basic pay from one step or rate of the grade of the employee's position to the next higher step in that grade.

## VIII. **COVERAGE AND APPLICABILITY**

A. **Covered Employees.** This directive applies to all permanent full-time bargaining unit employees as defined by the current LMA.

B. **Types of Awards.** Covered employees may receive a cash award or QSI. Honorary recognition in the form of a USDA Certificate of Merit accompanies all cash awards and QSIs. Consideration for awards under this program is based on individual performance appraisals and written performance standards. Procedures for other types of recognition are contained in the FSIS directives referenced in paragraph

IX. **AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. **Awards Approval.** District managers or equivalents are delegated the authority to approve cash awards and QSIs covered by this directive.

B. **Awards Recommendations.** Frontline supervisors can make recommendations for employees to receive QSIs. The district manager or equivalent determines the final list of QSI award nominees.

X. **APPEALS**

Nonreceipt of a cash award or QSI covered by this directive cannot be grieved or appealed. This does not waive any rights in Article 33 of the LMA.

XI. **SUPPLEMENTING THIS DIRECTIVE**

All exceptions and written issuances concerning procedures, policies, or interpretations of this program require the approval of the Chief, Performance and Compensation Policy Branch, Human Resources Policy.

## PART TWO—ESTABLISHING AWARD AMOUNTS AND CANDIDATES

### I. REFERENCES

FSIS Directive 4430.2, Monetary Awards Based on the Performance Rating of Record  
FSIS Directive 4451.1, Incentive Awards Program  
Labor-Management Agreement

### II. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

#### A. Performance Rating.

1. **Cash Award.** Employees must have an annual performance rating of record of Superior or Outstanding.

2. **QSI.** Employees must be at Step 9 or below of their grade, have an annual performance rating of record of Outstanding, and be nominated by the district manager or equivalent. Employees cannot receive more than one QSI during a 52-week period.

B. **Exclusions.** Employees involved in current or proposed disciplinary action, during the appraisal period, cannot receive an award. Employees for whom the disciplinary action was not sustained will receive an award retroactively.

### III. DETERMINING AWARD AMOUNTS AND NUMBER OF AWARDS

#### A. Cash Awards.

1. **Number of Awards.** The number of cash awards is equal to the number of employees receiving Superior or Outstanding performance ratings minus employees receiving QSIs and employees excluded for current or proposed disciplinary actions.

2. **Amount of Awards.** The dollar amount of awards granted to employees receiving Outstanding performance ratings will be higher than the amount of awards granted to employees receiving Superior performance ratings. (**NOTE:** The amount varies depending on funding and the number of employees rated Superior and Outstanding for an annual performance rating.)

**B. QSIs.**

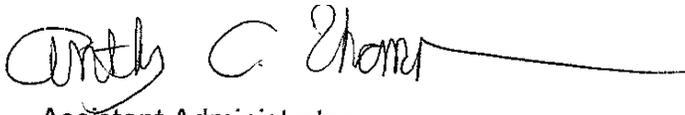
1. **Amount of QSIs.** Employees in Steps 1 through 9 of a grade receive an increase in base pay equal to the next higher step of that grade.

2. **Funding for QSIs.** Funding for QSIs is in addition to the specified funding amount.

**IV. TIME LIMIT FOR PROCESSING AWARDS**

A. All performance ratings received in Human Resources Operations no later than 60 days after the end of the rating cycle will be used in the calculation of award amounts. Employees receiving Superior or Outstanding performance ratings after the calculations are completed receive awards for the calculated amount from an award fund.

B. Processing of performance awards will occur in the timeframe agreed upon in the LMA.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony C. Thomas", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Assistant Administrator  
Office of Management