

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

FSIS NOTICE

46-17

9/12/17

CONSIDERING INTERIM RATINGS AND ADVISORY ASSESSMENTS IN FINAL RATINGS OF RECORD

I. PURPOSE

This notice provides instructions to all FSIS rating and reviewing officials for considering interim ratings and advisory assessments in deriving the final rating of record. [Departmental Regulation \(DR\) 4040-430, Performance Management](#), sets forth the policies for the FSIS Performance Management System.

II. GUIDANCE ON INTERIM RATINGS AND ADVISORY ASSESSMENTS

A. All interim ratings and advisory assessments are to be completed and communicated to the employee within 15 days, and are to be considered in deriving the employee's rating of record at the end of the appraisal period. Per [DR 4040-430](#), assessments or ratings of employee's performance are documented through:

1. **Interim Rating:** A written appraisal of an employee's performance conducted before the end of the appraisal period. Interim ratings are to be based on expectations formally communicated in a performance plan and are provided to the employee within 15 days of position change and to the Rating Official of record for consideration in assigning a rating of record. Supervisors are required to prepare interim ratings for the following scenarios:

- a. Permanent changes for the employee, including reassignment, promotion, transfer or resignation, if the employee served 90 or more days on a performance plan in the former position;
- b. A detail or temporary promotion of 90 or more days; or
- c. Permanent or temporary changes in supervisors, including details of more than 90 days, reassignments, retirements and resignations.

2. **Advisory Assessment:** An informal, unofficial written record of an employee's performance while on assignment to another supervisor for a period of **fewer than 90 days**. The following applies for advisory assessments:

- a. Is required for situations such as, promotion, and detail or temporary promotion of fewer than 90 days;
- b. Is to be based on clearly communicated and documented expectations, which serve as an addendum to the employee's formal plan; and

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic; All
Field Employees

NOTICE EXPIRES: 9/1/18

OPI: OPPD

- c. Is to be provided to the employee within 15 days of position change and to the Rating Official of record for consideration in assigning an interim rating or a rating of record.

B. In most cases, supervisors and employees will remain in place for the entire appraisal period. However, there are special circumstances in which a change occurs that may cause an advisory assessment or an interim rating to be issued prior to the end of the performance year. These circumstances are identified below:

1. **Details and Temporary Promotions.** The supervisor responsible for the detail or temporary promotion is to document the employee's accomplishments in an advisory assessment or interim rating at the end of the detail or temporary promotion. It needs to be communicated to the employee in writing and forwarded to the employee's supervisor of record for appropriate consideration in the final rating of record for the performance year.
2. **Position Changes.** If an employee is assigned to a new position through reassignment, transfer, or appointment during the performance year, and the employee served under a performance plan for at least 90 days in the position from which the employee has vacated, the former Rating Official is to prepare an interim rating, communicate it to the employee and forward it to the new Rating Official within 15 days for appropriate consideration in the final rating of record.
3. **Change in Supervisors.** When an employee has a performance plan in place and works in the same position under different supervisors during the appraisal period, each supervisor of 90 or more days is to prepare an interim rating, communicate it to the employee and forward it to the employee's new Rating Official for appropriate consideration in the final rating of record.

NOTE: If a new Rating Official is not immediately identified, the outgoing supervisor is to provide the interim ratings to the Reviewing Official. In addition, the Reviewing Official should notify the Performance Rating Tool (PRT) Data Administrator as soon as possible to have the employee assigned to their appropriate line of officials within the PRT.

C. In cases where the supervisory position is vacant or is filled by a new or an acting supervisor, the following provisions apply:

1. **Vacant Supervisory Position.** If a supervisory position is unencumbered at the end of the performance year, the second-level supervisor will serve as the Rating Official, and the third-level supervisor will serve as the Reviewing Official.
2. **New Supervisors.** A new supervisor may serve as a Rating Official provided:
 - a. The subordinate employees have been under established performance plans for the minimum appraisal period of 90 days;
 - b. The supervisor has had formal training in assessing and rating performance; and
 - c. If the supervisor has been in the supervisory role for fewer than 90 days, there is at least one interim rating to consider in the rating of record.

NOTE: If those provisions are not in place, the second-level supervisor is to serve as the Rating Official, and the third-level supervisor is to serve as the Reviewing Official.

3. **Acting Supervisors.** An acting supervisor may serve as a Rating Official provided:
 - a. The employees have been under established performance plans for the minimum appraisal period of 90 days;

- b. The acting supervisor is officially designated as acting for a period of at least 60 days, either by detail or temporary promotion;
- c. The acting supervisor has had formal training in assessing and rating performance; and
- d. If the acting supervisor has been in the acting supervisory role for fewer than 90 days, there is at least one interim rating to consider in the rating of record.

NOTE: If those provisions are not in place, the second-level supervisor is to serve as the Rating Official, and the third-level supervisor is to serve as the Reviewing Official.

III. DETERMINING THE IMPACT OF INTERIM RATINGS AND ADVISORY ASSESSMENTS

The Rating Official, in consultation with the Reviewing Official, is to consider the nature of assignments and the length of time covered by the interim ratings when determining the impact of the interim ratings and advisory assessments on the rating of record.

1. **Objectivity.** It is essential to the fairness and accountability of the performance management system that the Rating Official remain objective when compositing the ratings of previous Rating Officials. The final rating is not based solely on a single supervisor's evaluation of the employee who has multiple ratings during the appraisal period.
2. **Nature of Assignment.** Determining if the work performed during the interim or advisory periods was similar to the employee's permanent position or completely unrelated will assist the Rating Official in determining the impact of the interim rating/advisory assessment on the rating of record.
3. **Length of Assignment.** Considering the length of the interim periods for which the employee was rated during the appraisal period will assist the Rating Official in determining the impact rating of record. Longer interim periods reflect performance patterns such as consistency and routineness, however shorter periods are not to be disregarded because such exclusion would violate the requirement to rate the employee for the entire appraisal period.
4. **Critical Elements.** The Mission Results and Supervision elements are each worth 4 points; all other critical elements are worth 2 points; and all non-critical elements are worth 1 point. When compositing the rating of record, all achievements in each element should be considered; however, the final Rating Official should give greater consideration to higher weighted elements in view of their significance to the impact to the Agency's goals and outcomes.
5. **Employee Accomplishment Report.** To ensure that fairness and accountability are promoted in the performance management system, Rating Officials are to allow employees the opportunity to participate in the appraisal process by submitting feedback on their own performance via an accomplishment report. Accomplishment reports compile employees' performance achievements throughout the entire rating period. This allows employees to provide greater detail on what a supervisor may already know; any efforts or challenges involved; any obstacles overcome; and innovative ways an employee chose to pursue his or her duties.

IV. QUESTIONS

Additional guidance on Performance Management can be found on *InsideFSIS* at [PerformanceManagementResources](#) (level 2 e-authentication is required to access this site). Refer questions regarding this notice to the Office of Human Resources (OHR), Performance Management and Recruitment Branch (PMRB) to PerformanceManagement@fsis.usda.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexandra J. Wagner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development