Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service
Plan of Action in Response to
United States Department of Agriculture
1987 Civil Rights Compliance Review Report
Recommendations

Recommendation I: Develop goals for minority hiring

TAES Action: The Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service (TAES) is a part
of and subject administratively to the University of Tennessee Institute
of Agriculture (UTIA). UTIA has an Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) which
is revised annually. Prescribed guidelines are followed in the development
and revision of the AAP. Each division of UTIA, including TAES, annually
does an Availability Factor Computation and Utilization Analysis for each
of seven EEO-6 Categories. The ultimate percent goals for minorities
by EEO-6 Categories are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EEO-6 Category</th>
<th>Minority Goal</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Underutilized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 (Executive/Adm.)</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>No*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02 (Faculty)</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03 (Professional)</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 (Sec./Clerical)</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05 (Tech./Paraprofessional)</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06 (Skilled Craft)</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07 (Service Maint.)</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not by at least one additional person

TAES is committed to this AAP. It is further obligated to achieve by
1990 goals established by the University in "Stipulation of Settlement"
under Geier vs. McWherter which is a desegregation action involving institutions
of higher education in Tennessee. The 1990 goals for UTIA in EEO-6 Categories
01, 02 and 03 are: 5.0%, 3.4% and 7.4% respectively.

Recommendation II: Continue to accelerate the employment of women in nontraditional
roles

TAES Action: TAES agrees.

Recommendation III: Require a recruiting plan to visit schools within and
outside of Tennessee where there are more potential minority applicants.

TAES Action: A plan is in the process of being developed which will allow
TAES to inventory potential minority applicants within and outside of
Tennessee. A recruitment strategy will be employed following the inventory. On campus visits to Institutions offering the B.S. Degree in Agriculture and/or Home Economics within and outside of Tennessee where there are more potential minority applicants will become a part of the recruitment plan.

Recommendation IV: Monitor the results of recruiting efforts on a quarterly basis in order to adjust the recruiting plan if it is not producing the desired results.

TAES Action: TAES agrees. The Dean will require a quarterly report to monitor recruiting results. The recruiting plan will be altered if desired results are not achieved provided feasible alternatives can be identified.

Recommendation V: Study the length of time it takes to have an applicant approved to see if this process cannot be shortened in order to acquire superior candidates before they accept another job offer.

TAES Action: TAES agrees. The employment process will be studied and it will be shortened if at all possible. Legal concerns as a result of Geier vs. McWherter may prohibit significant time reduction. Since 1987, Affirmative Action Officers are being required to examine documentation to ensure black applicants have been included in the recruitment process prior to any job offer. This will add some time to the already lengthy process.

Recommendation VI: Determine if family and personal farm background in addition to previous Extension experience is essential for becoming an Extension Agent. Include an analysis of additional barriers the foreign born candidates may experience.

TAES Action: TAES is committed to a policy of employing the best qualified applicant for Extension agent positions. Family and personal farm background are not job requirements for Extension agents. A thorough understanding of chemistry, genetics, engineering, biology, statistics, etc. and the relevance and relationship of these disciplines to production agriculture is critical to an agent's success in providing instruction. A farm background and previous Extension experience are but two additional qualifications used as factors in the evaluation of candidates.

Each agent must work directly with clientele. The ability to communicate is absolutely essential. To the extent that foreign born candidates demonstrate to the County Agricultural Committee a major flaw in their communication skills, these individuals will have difficulty competing for jobs. Any candidate who cannot communicate effectively will have difficulty competing for a position. No applicant is excluded because he or she is foreign born.
TAES agrees to make a determination if there are additional barriers resulting from TAES requirements that impact in an illegal manner on foreign born candidates.

Recommendation VII: Develop and implement goals to accelerate the promotion of minorities

TAES Action: Promotions generally occur when a position becomes vacant and an internal candidate with the required qualifications applies for the position and is the best candidate. Vacancy lists are posted in all offices and are equally accessible to all employees.

TAES agrees that it is desirable to accelerate the promotion of minorities in areas of under utilization. As the University moves closer to accomplishing its goals under the agreed settlement in Geier v. McWherter, this is expected to be resolved. TAES will continue to be aware and to use every opportunity to accelerate the promotion of minorities.

Recommendation VIII: Assure that minorities within the TAES-UT system achieve fair consideration for awards

TAES Action: TAES agrees. Mr. Andrew Winston, a black agent located in Hardeman County, is the recipient of the E. J. Chapman Travel Scholarship Award for 1988. This is a $1200 award with permission to travel for one month while receiving full salary.

Recommendation IX: Require District Supervisors to be part of the civil rights employment goal setting process and hold them accountable

TAES Action: UTIA is following federal guidelines in the establishment of goals in its AAP. The District Supervisors will continue to be made aware of TAES' employment goals. They will be made aware of the relationship of these goals to employment decisions within the district. Affirmative Action results and achievements will be a part of the annual District Supervisors performance review.

TAES will monitor the recruitment process for each position in an underutilized category. The Affirmative Action Officer will review the District Supervisors and Section Leaders recruitment efforts to include black candidates in the final group for interviews. Extra efforts to include black candidates will be required where documentation reveals an adequate attempt to recruit black candidates is lacking.

Recommendation X: Hold the District Supervisors accountable for instructing the Agricultural Extension Committee (AEC) in their respective districts on the precise meaning of Affirmative Action and how the AEC's have a responsibility to cooperate.
TAES Action: TAES will annually require District Supervisors to notify each Agricultural Extension Committee of TAES' equal opportunity/affirmative action policy and of TAES' expectations of full AEC commitment to cooperate in the fulfillment of the policy.

Recommendation XI: Revise the Affirmative Action Plan to include freedom from reprisals and harassment for complaints.

TAES Action: The University of Tennessee recently revised its Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Personnel Policy to include the following: "The University prohibits any retaliatory action against an employee for opposing a practice which he/she believes to be discriminatory, including the filing of an internal grievance or a charge with a state or federal civil rights enforcement agency". Reference to this policy or a copy of it will be recommended to the UTIA Affirmative Action Officer for future editions of the AAP.

Recommendation XII: Establish and implement guidelines to process and document the closure of complaint files.

TAES Action: Each complaint file maintained by TAES will contain a log to record official action. The log will specify closure particulars.

Recommendation XIII: Develop and implement a program to increase staff knowledge of implementation of laws, rules, and regulations relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap.

TAES Action: Newly hired staff in EEO-6 Categories 01, 02 and 03 will receive training related to their obligations of nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap. District Supervisors and Section Leaders will receive training with respect to TAES' obligations in the implementation of nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap. County staff and specialists will receive instruction from the supervisors and section leaders in regularly scheduled staff meetings. Moreover, staff in counties scheduled for civil rights compliance reviews will receive similar training approximately one year prior to the reviews. This will be done annually. Thus, all staff will be trained at the end of four years. Personnel from the Dean's Office will provide the training.

Recommendation XIV: Develop and implement a program to increase staff familiarity with civil rights program complaint procedures.

TAES Action: TAES will revise and reprint its civil rights program complaint procedures. This pamphlet will be distributed to all TAES personnel. Training outlined under Recommendation XIII will also include information on civil rights program complaint procedures.
Recommendation XV: Develop a Public Notification Plan and a strategy to communicate its requirements to all segments of TAES.

TAES Action: TAES in 1981 adopted the model "Public Notification Plan of Action to Insure All Potential Recipients Equal Access to Programs in State Extension Services" as contained in Plans and Procedures for Administration and Implementation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in the Cooperative Extension Service published by USDA, Extension Service. This plan was presented to each Section Leader, District Supervisor and County Extension Leader in inservice training conducted by the Associate Dean in 1981. Further, TAES has a "Public Notification Plan" (TN54CR) in its FY 1988-1991 Plan of Work.

These documents will be reproduced and given to all personnel in EE0-6 Categories 01, 02 and 03. Each TAES office will be required to continue implementing the required action.

Recommendation XVI: Develop and implement procedures to increase the accessibility of Extension programs to the handicapped

TAES Action: TAES will encourage the adoption of creative and innovative methods to achieve accessibility of county programs or activities. Where existing Extension office facilities are inaccessible, program services normally provided at those sites will be made available to qualified handicapped persons through other methods which are equally effective. These methods may include meetings in accessible locations, home visits, written or telephone communications, or some other equally effective means.

TAES will select accessible facilities where possible at public (or privately owned) facilities. If accessible facilities cannot be selected due to unavailability or infeasibility due to the nature of event or activity, TAES will use other methods to deliver program benefits to qualified handicapped persons.

Recommendation XVII: Develop and implement a plan to review committee representativeness by race and sex and assure corrective action where committees are not representative of potential clientele by race and/or sex.

TAES Action: TAES does not require committee involvement in program evaluation and/or program development. Where there is committee input into program evaluation and/or development, it is TAES policy requiring balanced clientele representation by race and sex. TAES has a document entitled "Civil Rights Compliance Review and Compliance Report". This document is completed annually by each county in Tennessee. The current version of this document requires county staff in each program area to list the name, racial-ethnic and sex composition of each committee or advisory group that advises with
the agents or has some input in planning programs. TAES will require the District Supervisors to review the committee representativeness by race and sex. In the event it is determined that a committee is not representative of potential clientele by race and/or sex, corrective action by county staff will be required.

Recommendation XVIII: Develop and implement a plan to improve the operation of the targeting of benefits and contact participation system.

TAES Action: TAES will devise a plan to implement a policy of targeting of benefits which will not raise civil rights concerns. Potential recipient data bases in each program area will reflect the racial-gender composition of clientele. Contact participation data reported by staff will be monitored so that corrective action may be taken in those cases where contacts are not representative of potential clientele by race and gender.

Recommendation XIX: In counties where participation is below parity, develop and implement a program to increase minority involvement in district and state events and 4-H Camp.

TAES Action: TAES agrees. The district offices with input from the State 4-H Office will be required to analyze 1987-1988 participation data and where minority participation in 4-H Camps and other district, state and national events is below parity, to develop and implement a program to increase minority participation.

Recommendation XX: Develop and implement a plan to more extensively publicize the availability and competencies of 1890 Extension staff.

TAES Action: TAES will develop data sheets for each 1890 specialist. These data sheets will specify training, competencies, interests and state program responsibilities of these specialists. The Dean, UTAES and Administrator 1890 Extension Programs will transmit this information through channels to the county staff. The 1890 specialists will continue to be involved in inservice training which is an excellent forum for agents, to view and evaluate specialists' talents and competencies.

Recommendation XXI: Develop and implement a plan to improve the leadership and supervision of the 1890 program in Lauderdale County, and any other counties not included in the review having similar problems.

TAES Action: The Dean will ask the District Supervisor to consult with the Lauderdale County staff including the agent payrolled through Tennessee State University to determine the nature of problems that may exist there. He and the Administrator 1890 Extension Programs will meet with the Lauderdale County staff and any other staff similarly situated to resolve leadership and supervision conflicts.
Recommendation XXII: Develop and implement a program to strengthen the quality and documentation of onsite civil rights compliance reviews conducted by the district level

TAES Action: TAES will provide more direction from the Dean's Office to the conduct of county civil rights compliance reviews at the district level by:

(1) continuing the conduct of one (1) review by the Dean's Office in cooperation with the District Office,
(2) providing inservice training for the district staffs and requiring finding reports to be submitted to the Dean before corrective action is taken,
(3) providing additional staff from outside the district if necessary to conduct quality reviews,
(4) designating one person to be in charge of each review and holding that person responsible for a quality review and documentation, and
(5) maintaining a civil rights compliance review file on each county complete with findings, required action, results and closures as appropriate.