



# enewsletter

A publication of **aglearn+**

SUMMER 2017

 Follow us @AgLearnToday

## The Next Gen AgLearn is Coming October 2017

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

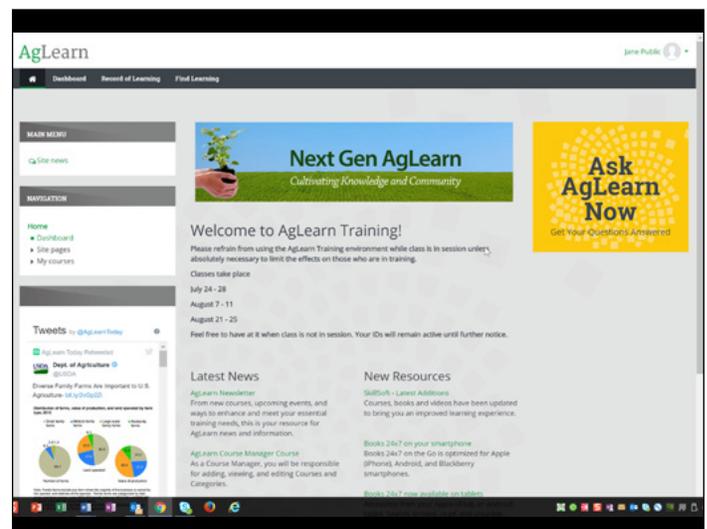
- + New User-Friendly Site Design
- + Interview with Federal Team Member
- + Videos of Next Gen AgLearn's Functionality
- + Next Gen AgLearn Updates: Training and FAQs

### Supporting Your Transition to Next Gen AgLearn

Get to know Karen Simpson, and read about her role with AgLearn and the Next Gen AgLearn. Also, October 2017 marks the go-live date for the Next Gen AgLearn. Read about what Team AgLearn is doing to ensure you are prepared for the upgraded AgLearn.

### New User-Friendly Site Design for Next Gen AgLearn

While training, support, and assistance for Next Gen AgLearn are important pieces of a successful migration, we are also excited about the new site design and logo. The new design is created with responsive HTML5 technology, which will allow you to access training from mobile devices, laptops, and desktop PC's. Adaptability that suits our diverse workforce went into the design for the Next Gen AgLearn, which offers a simple, yet visually rewarding design. The overall goal was to update AgLearn to match the needs of USDA employees and contractors now and in the future. We have seen a positive response so far through ILT and UAT feedback.



SUMMER 2017

## *Interview with Federal Team Member Karen Simpson*

**Hello Karen, please share a brief bio of your professional background, and how you came to be part of AgLearn.**

Thanks Gabe. I joined the Federal Government 18 years ago because I wanted to work in public service. I still believe today that public service is my calling. I have a BA in Political Science from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master's of Public Administration from New York University. I started my Federal Government career with the U.S. Department of Education at the National Center for Education Statistics. I worked on interesting publications including the annual Digest for Education Statistics.



I realized I wanted to work with people instead of statistics so I eventually moved into the learning and development space. I worked for other Federal agencies including the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). My role at OPM was to provide policy and guidance to Federal agencies on a variety of training and development topics. I also assisted the development of the HR University and managed the first government-wide Social Learning Pilot.

I was hired to be the learning and development expert with OCIO and AgLearn. I have a dual role, in which I also manage Department IT training programs such as the USDA IT Fellows Program. This Program is in its third cohort and running strong. I hope to see a fourth cohort in FY 2018. It is a great program for our USDA IT professionals to obtain a strong leadership foundation so they can move into leadership roles and tackle our IT challenges.

**What is your current role at AgLearn?**

My role is to provide that learning and development (L&D) expertise to the team, which consists of L&D policy, instructional design, IDPs, and assessments. There is a perception that AgLearn is just a system because the function resides in a CIO office rather than an HR office. Most AgLearn-like functions in other federal organizations reside in headquarters HR offices.

I like to think of AgLearn as a one-stop shop for USDA employees' learning and development needs. AgLearn offers a large variety of services ranging from courses to books for our USDA Federal employees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – plus employees can complete competency assessments and IDPs to help achieve their learning goals. Supervisors, managers and executives can also complete 360 assessments on AgLearn.

**In your role with AgLearn how does your position overlap and intertwine with the three other Federal Employees on your team?**

The other team members are the IT experts except for Jerome who has both the L&D and IT expertise. I am not an IT expert, although I learn more about IT everyday in this position. What makes a good team is having employees with different skills and experience.

Next Gen AgLearn has been a rewarding and challenging project – rewarding because USDA will be able to use new tools and techniques to train our employees. It is challenging because USDA has been on the same LMS for 13 years. The current LMS and its processes are embedded into our culture. That in itself is a challenge.

SUMMER 2017

## Interview with Federal Team Member Karen Simpson (continued...)

**There is an obvious buzz of excitement and some anxiety about the Next Gen AgLearn LMS migration. How do you feel about the transition and what the future brings for AgLearn?**

Yes, there is a lot of buzz regarding the Next Gen AgLearn and its new capabilities! It is exciting for USDA to enter into the next generation of learning. Some are uneasy about the transition because it is change - some people embrace change, some do not!

I look forward to USDA and our agency partners embracing today's more non-traditional learning methods such as gamification, micro, and social learning. Generations Y and Z are connectors where they prefer learning from one another via social media, reading and responding to blogs, or taking bite-size Web-based courses where they can just complete one or two sections of an online course. They also learn through games. For example, I have two elementary school-age children who play math, spelling, and science games on tablets. These games help my kids understand and apply these concepts.

We incorporated gamification in our FY 2017 Information Security Awareness (ISA) course, which was well received. I hope we can continue to incorporate gaming concepts in future courses.

I hope Next Gen AgLearn is a tool our employees want to use to help them achieve their learning and development goals.

## Videos of Next Gen AgLearn's Functionality

Want to see how the Next Gen AgLearn looks and feels? We have uploaded three videos to the [AgLearn Blog](#) and YouTube highlighting basic functionality of the Next Gen AgLearn. We encourage you to comment on them in the blog!

**The following videos are available now on the AgLearn Blog:**

Next Gen LMS Videos: ["Using Ask AgLearn Now"](#)

Next Gen LMS Videos: ["Finding Learning"](#)

Next Gen LMS Videos: ["Viewing Your Learning"](#)

**If you prefer to view these videos directly on YouTube select the following links:**

Next Gen LMS Videos on YouTube: ["Using Ask AgLearn Now"](#)

Next Gen LMS Videos on YouTube: ["Finding Learning"](#)

Next Gen LMS Videos on YouTube: ["Viewing Your Learning"](#)



SUMMER 2017

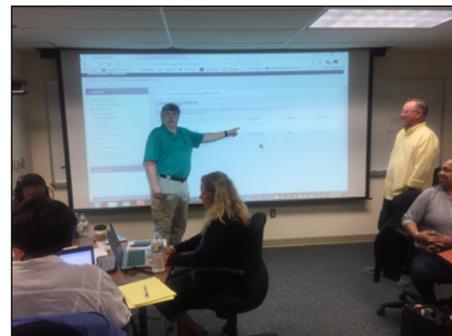
## Next Gen AgLearn Updates

### Various Modes of Training for all AgLearn Users

To embrace the various levels of user engagement with AgLearn, our Senior Training Specialist Dana King has created and is currently implementing Instructor Led Training (ILT) across four sites. The courses are designed to train and prepare agency-level AgLearn administrators for the Next Gen AgLearn. This mode of training is high level and is designed to “train the trainer”. The goal is for each department agency, and office AgLearn administrator to be able to assist their workforce when the Next Gen AgLearn rolls out.

These ILT's are complete or underway and taking place in the following locations:

- July 10 – 14: South Building, Washington DC
- July 24 – 28: Riverdale MD
- August 7 – 11: Fort Worth TX
- August 21 – 25: Albuquerque NM



For those of you who are not agency-level AgLearn administrators, or were unable to attend the ILT's, computer based training (CBT) modules are being created to assist in your training. The goal of these courses is to prepare all levels of users to use the Next Gen AgLearn. The courses are designed in a university format with:

- 100-level courses focused on providing users an introduction and overview of the new system,
- 200-level courses providing supervisor training and are focused on approving IDP's and SF-182's,
- 300-level courses providing course creator training on how to add courses and activities to AgLearn, and
- 400-level courses providing specialized administrator training for assigning training, recording learning, managing SF-182's, and managing user accounts.

To ensure ease of usability of the Next Gen AgLearn system Team AgLearn has created user acceptance testing (UAT) for the new system. UAT is designed to walk selected USDA employees through various real-life training scenarios. This step is critical to test the usability of the Next Gen AgLearn and to ensure we are prepared to train and support all users on day one. These exhaustive, yet necessary tasks are designed to ensure all AgLearn users will be able to find and complete their training. Also, federal employees will have access to the same courses and material from Skillsoft, Rosetta Stone, Debbie Mason Financial, and Lynda as before.

### Frequently Asked Questions for Next Gen AgLearn:

As another level of support a list of FAQ's specific to Next Gen AgLearn has also been added to Ask AgLearn Now (AAN) and Ask Team AgLearn Now (ATAN).

To access AAN and ATAN Next Gen AgLearn topics tap or select the following links:

[Ask AgLearn Now \(AAN\)](#)

[Ask Team AgLearn Now \(ATAN\)](#)