

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services



Status Report
Auditor General Report No. 2015-052

May 28, 2015

Office of Inspector General
Ron Russo, Inspector General

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner



Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of Inspector General

External Audit Status Report

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Surplus Computer Hard Drive Disposal Processes Information Technology Operational Audit

AT A GLANCE

The Inspector General is required by s. 20.055(5)(h), Florida Statutes, to report to the Commissioner of Agriculture on the status of corrective actions taken on reports published by the Auditor General or the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. The Auditor General's report on Surplus Computer Hard Drive Disposal Processes contained two findings and recommendations that required corrective action by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (department). The status of corrective action, as reported by the Office of Agriculture and Technology Services' (OATS) management, is summarized in this report.

FINDINGS DETAIL

SURPLUS COMPUTER HARD DRIVE DISPOSAL PROCESS

Finding: Security controls are intended to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and IT resources. Without adequate security controls related to the hard drive disposal processes, the risk is increased that department information may be compromised. The Auditor General's audit disclosed certain security controls related to the surplus computer hard drive disposal processes that needed improvement. Specific details were not disclosed in the report to avoid the possibility of compromising department information. However, the Auditor General did notify appropriate department management of the specific issues.

Recommendation: The department should improve security controls over the surplus computer hard drive disposal processes to ensure the continued protection of confidential and exempt information.

Status: Corrected

The OATS has strengthened access controls and improved security over the surplus computer disposal processes. The department's Administrative Policies and Procedures have been revised, as appropriate.

SURPLUS COMPUTER HARD DRIVE SANITIZATION AND DISPOSITION DOCUMENTATION

Finding: The department's *Administrative Policies and Procedures 8-12, Media Protection*, provides that it is critical that systems disposal procedures are in place to ensure the proper removal of hardware and the associated computer programs and data that reside on these devices, and that these devices must be wiped of all electronic media to a state where the former media cannot be recovered. Additionally, Office of Agriculture Technology Services, *Standard Operating Procedures OATS-1900, Surplus Computer Equipment*, provides that the sanitization of surplus computer hard drives is documented on a *Wipe Verification Report (Wipe Report)*.

The Auditor General selected 10 computers from the department's list of surplus computers that had been sanitized as of August 8, 2014, to determine if documentation of the surplus computer hard

drive sanitization and disposition was accurate and complete. For 4 of the 10 computers selected, the hard drives were not present in the computer and the *Wipe Reports* indicated that the hard drives had been removed from the computers, degaussed, and stored in a separate area within the department's surplus location. However, the serial numbers of the removed hard drives were not documented on the *Wipe Reports*. Additionally, no other documentation was provided that associated degaussed hard drives with their originating computers. Therefore, the Auditor General was unable to locate and determine that the hard drives removed from the surplus computers were properly sanitized.

Recommendation: Department management should ensure that documentation of the surplus computer hard drive sanitization and disposition is accurate and complete.

Status: Corrected

The OATS has revised its *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), OATS-1900, Surplus Computer Equipment*, to require the reinstallation of hard drives into the surplus computer after the degaussing process. The SOP also requires a sticker to be affixed to the surplus computer with a notation to indicate the degaussing process has been completed.

End of Report

This follow-up was conducted in conformance with the applicable standards for the General Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General, the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, and Information Systems Auditing Standards as published by the Association of Inspectors General, the Institute of Internal Auditors and the Information Systems Audit and Control Association, respectively.

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