Blazing a Career Path in Plant Pathology: Non-traditional careers in Government service

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What is non-Traditional?

- Doing what your professors did not want or expect you to do!!
- Ending up on the edge of the bell-shaped curve (2 SDs out)
- Challenging yourself to do something that may scare (and stimulate) you
My Experiences / Quo vadis?

- Drake Univ. / ISU / Pioneer Hi-Bred Intl.
- Dept Plant Path – Univ. Nebraska - Lincoln
- Stalk Rot Research – maize / sorghum
- Grant Funding – re-direction / tissue culture
- Proteomics / Molecular Revolution
- Post-doc Bt-Cotton / Agrigenetics
- Post-doc DR-sugar beet / Transformation
- USDA-ARS – Insect Biocontrol - sugarbeet
Experiences continued ..... 

- EPA – Office of Pesticide Programs, Biopesticides Division
- USDA-CSREES – Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
  - Competitive Programs / Plant Animal Systems
  - Food Biotechnology / Microbiology
  - Biotechnology Risk Assessment
Skill Sets / Observations

- Perseverance (Cranial-rock syndrome)
- Flexibility / Generalist vs. Specialist
- Desire – passion for your goals
- People skills – Schmooz potential
- Communication – written and oral
- Team membership
- Maintain a balance – have a life !!
Finding a Government Position

- http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/
- http://federaljobs.net/
- http://www.federaljobsearch.com/

- Agency websites
- Network !!!
Job Hunting – Is this my career?

- If you feel you want the job, apply for it!!
- Don’t be afraid to call with questions
- Approach people at meetings, by phone, or e-mail, but **make contact**
- Don’t fall victim to myths and apathy
- Change is not always a bad thing!
- Continue courses, workshops, training
- Serendipity will visit you often…….
One Final Thought

- Try to understand your colleagues by walking a mile in their shoes ..........

- .......That way, when you understand them, you will be a mile away and still have their shoes!