

Directive

AMS 1074.1

9/27/2016

SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY POLICY

1. PURPOSE

This Directive states Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) guidance for implementing United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Scientific Integrity Policy (SIP) by requiring all applicable Agency assistance documents to have an SIP statement and to familiarize AMS employees and cooperators with the guidelines contained in the policy.

2. BACKGROUND

In March 2009, the President issued a Memorandum on Scientific Integrity (SI) underscoring the importance of science in informing public policy decisions, and emphasizing that the public must be able to trust the science behind those decisions. In August 2011, Secretary Vilsack issued a USDA SIP that provides guidance to departmental employees and cooperators on the principles of conducting scientific activities as well as the proper use of scientific and scholarly findings. The policy promotes a culture of transparency, integrity, and ethical behavior in the development, communication, and application of scientific data analyses in USDA's decision-making activities. Access to reliable information is vital to AMS' mission to facilitate the strategic marketing of agricultural products in domestic and international markets. In many cases, AMS receives data from program stakeholders in order to fulfill requirements stated in assistance documents. This information is used to support rulemaking, public policy development, inspections for voluntary and regulatory purposes, and grading or distributing commodity market news to the public. The scope of the program's activity determines whether or not SIP training for AMS employees and Agency cooperators may be required or voluntary.

3. AUTHORITIES/REFERENCES

- a. Presidential Memorandum, Scientific Integrity, March 2009.
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/memorandum-heads-executive-departments-and-agencies-3-9-09>
- b. Memorandum, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Scientific Integrity, December 2010.
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/scientific-integrity-memo-12172010.pdf>
- c. USDA Departmental Regulation (DR) 1074-001, Scientific Integrity, May 2013.
http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/DR%201074-001_0.pdf
- d. USDA Scientific Integrity Handbook (Guidance for Implementation of DR 1074-001), July 2013.
<http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda-scientific-integrity-policy-handbook.pdf>

- e. Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (5 CFR 2635).
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title5-vol3/pdf/CFR-2011-title5-vol3-part2635.pdf>
- f. Federal Policy on Research Misconduct (65 FR 76260-76264, December 2000).
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2000-12-06/pdf/00-30852.pdf>
- g. USDA Departmental Regulation (DR), 2401-001, USDA Intramural Research Misconduct Policies and Guidelines, June 2008.
<http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/DR2401-001.htm>
- h. Whistleblower Protection Act (5 U.S.C 2302(b) (8)).
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2013-title5/pdf/USCODE-2013-title5-partIII-subpartA-chap23-sec2302.pdf>

4. DEFINITIONS

- a. Agency Scientific Integrity Officer (ASIO): An AMS staff member who can address questions, concerns, complaints or information regarding possible violations or breeches in scientific integrity.
- b. Assistance Document: As used in AMS, a grant agreement, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement.
- c. Cooperator: A contractor or grantee receiving financial assistance to provide information or a service to AMS.
- d. Cooperative Agreement: A legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the Federal Government and a State or local government or other recipient when: (1) the principle purpose is the transfer of money, property, services, or anything of value to the State or local government or other recipient to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute; and (2) substantial involvement is anticipated between the Federal Agency and the State or local government or other recipient during performance of the contemplated activity.
- e. Grant Agreement: A legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the Federal Government and a State or local government or other recipient when: (1) the principle purpose of the relationship is the transfer of money, property, services, or anything of value to the State or local government or other recipient to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute; and (2) no substantial involvement is anticipated between the Federal Agency and the State or local government or other recipient during performance of the contemplated activity.
- f. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): A documented plan between two or more organizations for carrying out their separate activities in a project of mutual interest. Each

party directs its own activities and uses its own resources. An MOU is not a fund obligation document since it does not directly involve financial assistance or a procurement transaction.

- g. Scientific Integrity Policy: The policy and procedures issued by AMS that, when conducting and applying the results of science, ensure objectivity, clarity, and reproducibility, and also provides protection from bias, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, interference, censorship, and inadequate procedural and informational security.
- h. Scientific Activities: Activities that generate information or services (i.e., monitoring, observations, experimentation, surveys, and modeling) whereby cooperators can conduct studies on behalf of AMS for cost benefit analyses, risk assessments, technical feasibility studies, and other analyses to support rulemaking and public policy development.
- i. Scientific Data: Data obtained through the scientific method, observation, research and technical analysis that are testable, verifiable, and repeatable, or contain measures of uncertainty.
- j. SIP Employee Training: All Agency employees, regardless of position, duties, or grade level are required to take “AgLearn” SIP training when: (1) preparing assistance documents for activities/services related to the collection economic, marketing, and scientific data; (2) using this information for public policy or management decisions; and (3) communicating this information in an official capacity about program activities and services.

5. POLICY

It is AMS policy to comply with the USDA Scientific Integrity Policy established by the issuance of USDA DR 1074-001, May 2013.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. AMS employees preparing assistance documents, for those activities/services used to collect economic and scientific data for rulemaking and public policy decisions, will place a SIP statement in assistance documents that reads as follows:
 - (1) “In accepting the provisions of the award, the cooperator certifies that all employees and personnel responsible for providing the economic, marketing, or scientific data ensure the integrity and accuracy of the information. USDA has in place both a Scientific Integrity Policy (DR 1074-001) and Scientific Integrity Handbook that can be found at:
http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/DR%201074-001_0.pdf and <http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda-scientific-integrity-policy-handbook.pdf>, respectively.”
 - (2) “The cooperator further certifies that any service provider with concerns, questions, complaints, or information regarding possible violations of scientific integrity will report those concerns, either directly or through the cooperator’s

management, to the contracting officer who will forward those concerns to the AMS Scientific Integrity Officer (ASIO) or use the OIG Hotline at www.usda.gov/oig/hotline.htm.”

- b. All AMS employees engaged in the solicitation, award, or administration of assistance documents where the data and/or records are collected by the Agency for reporting purposes will be required to take an “AgLearn” SIP training course at www.aglearn.usda.gov.
- c. Cooperators and grantees (those under agreements to work on behalf of AMS) are responsible for abiding by the principles contained in this policy regarding the integrity of the Department’s scientific and scholarly activities as specified in the assistance documents. The cooperator acknowledges receipt of the AMS SIP Statement by returning the signed cover page of the agreement back to AMS.

7. **INQUIRIES**

- a. For further information on SIP, contact the ASIO listed at <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=ocs-agency-scientific-integrity-officers.xml>.
- b. For further information on AMS cooperative agreements, grants, and MOUs, contact the AMS Budget Division, Compliance and Analysis Program, at 202-720-9330.
- c. This Directive can be assess via the AMS Web site at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/policies/ams-issuances>.

/s/

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Attachment