



United States Department of Agriculture
Research, Education, and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

February 8, 2018

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

This letter provides notification to all Department of Agriculture (USDA) non-Federal entity (NFE) partners and recipients that the USDA is currently under a Records Disposal Freeze. What does this mean? You, the NFE, must retain all paper and/or electronic records associated with your agreements, awarded by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Economic Research Service (ERS) and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), in accordance with the records retention requirement set forth in the applicable regulation or administrative requirement; REE-452R, 2 CFR 200 (sec. 200.333(a) and (b)), or 7 CFR 550.

Since this is a broad notification impacting all agency records, this letter also serves as official notice that all records, generated from and/or pertaining to agency agreements with you must be retained during this freeze. No records (paper and/or electronic) can be destroyed or deleted. In addition, no agency official can authorize the destruction of any such records. You will be notified when this records disposal freeze is lifted.

Federal statutes defines a record as follows as, *"All books, papers, maps, photographs, machine-readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the United States Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of data in them. Library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference and stocks of publications and of processed documents are not included."* (44 U.S.C. 3301)

Please ensure the furthest dissemination of this letter within your organization. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the following:

- ARS: the Authorized Departmental Officer identified on your agreement documents ([REDACTED], Award Face Sheet)
- ERS and NASS: Ms. Deborah Watson on 301-504-4411 or deborah.watson@ars.usda.gov

Sincerely,

ROBERT H. MAGILL
Director, Financial Management and Agreements Division