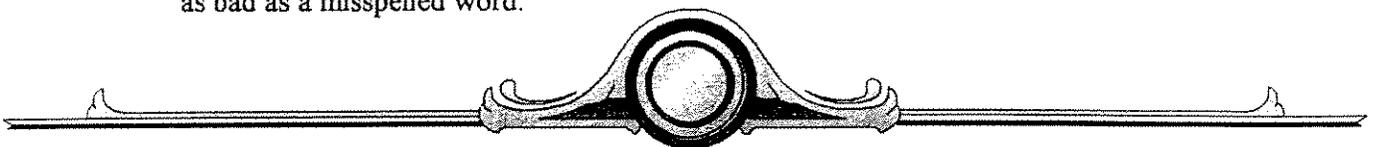
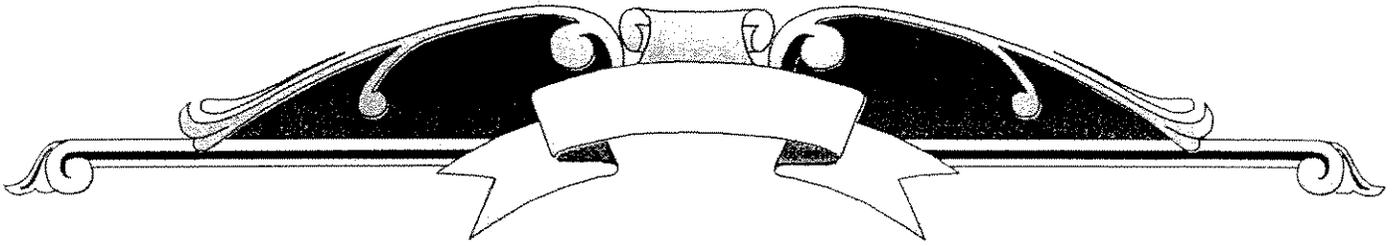


Rules of Style

- Never abbreviate the name of the State on the inside address. Please spell out the full name.
- Use the two-letter State and Territory abbreviations only in addressing mail; i.e., on the envelope. Use the standard State abbreviations as shown on page 10-1 of the Correspondence Manual, if State abbreviations are used.
- Always ensure that all correspondence bearing the address of persons who are employees of the Agricultural Research Service identify themselves as such. Use "USDA, ARS" in the addressee block on the envelope.
- Use the first person plural (we/our) instead of the first person singular (me, I, my) whenever possible and appropriate.
- Keep sentences under 25 words.
- Keep responses short and to the point—preferably under one page.
- Do not split names, titles, or dates between two lines.
- Spell out numbers of less than 10 within a sentence.
- Do not separate the month and year with a comma when typing dates; e.g., July 2004.
- Use a comma after each item within a series of three or more words, phrases, letters, or figures used with and, or, or nor, e.g., red, white, and blue.
- Use a comma to separate an introductory phrase from the subject it modifies.
- Use a comma before the conjunction in a compound sentence.
- Use a comma before and after Jr., Sr., academic degrees, and names of States preceded by names of cities within a sentence.
- Use a semicolon to separate clauses containing commas.
- Avoid excessive hyphenation. Do not hyphenate on the first line of a paragraph. If you do hyphenate, make sure the word is divided correctly; a word hyphenated incorrectly is as bad as a misspelled word.





Rules of Style, continued

- When the text of the letter is very short (less than 10 lines), double space.
- Never use words that cannot be found in a standard dictionary.
- Be uniform. For example, if you capitalize "Committee" or "State," be consistent throughout the letter.
- The first time you refer to any Agency or organization, please type out the full name followed by its abbreviation in parenthesis if it will be referred to in subsequent paragraphs.
- For members of Congress, the inside address is "Honorable Full Name."
Salutations are "Dear Congressman Surname, or Dear Congresswoman Surname, for Representative; and for Senators, Dear Senator Surname."
Salutations for Chairmen of Congressional Committees and Subcommittees are "Dear Mr. Chairman." State representatives are addressed as Mr. Surname." Complimentary Closing is "Sincerely."
- Please check the appearance of the letter before it leaves your office. Frayed edges, stains, wrinkles, and any imperfections on letters are unacceptable.

