

## Chapter 23

### Weekly Activity Reports

The Area Office provides weekly information on “Key Mission Area News” to the ARS-Information Staff. This information is sent to the Secretary of Agriculture, who in turn, summarizes them into a USDA report to the White House.

Each Management Unit is to provide the Area Office with a periodic report on newsworthy items such as scientific findings and releases. Provide a complete description of the event, appearance, issue, Congressional testimony, and agency announcements that may make news in the next two weeks. In reporting on meetings attended, use judgment in reporting only those which are significant in terms of policy, important program developments, and potential problems – especially those which may generate public or media attention. Newsworthy items include scientific findings and releases.

The emphasis is on upcoming significant events, rather than on events that have already occurred.

Acronyms: See [Chapter 22](#) for a comprehensive list of commonly used acronyms.

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## Format for the Weekly Report to the President

The format of this report includes these sections:

1. Reform Based Actions
  - What are we doing to reduce government waste and save government money
  - Energy saving activities
  - Be specific about the amount of money saved

2. Outreach and Results

3. Press Announcements

Press Releases/Media Advisories

Spanish Language Press Releases/Media Advisories

New Media

Reports

4. Expected Legislative or Policy Issues
5. Potential or Expected Legal Issues
  - Includes all FOIA requests
6. Events - Travel/Speeches of Agency Executives
  - Future events taking place in two weeks
  - Include names of presenters, date, location and meeting information, time of day when presentation will take place, and whether is it open to the public/media
7. Personnel Announcements
  - These should be significant, high level announcements
8. Outreach and Professional Activities
9. Other Items of Interest
  - Highly significant news (e.g. large grant awards, major scientific awards, scientific findings of broad interest)
  - Include scientists names and locations
10. News Clips

## Guidance for Weekly Report Submissions

1. Reference GPO style manual in producing this report.
2. Use Times New Roman, 12-point type. Don't use extra bold or justified formatting.
3. Don't use bullets, indents, or hanging indents.
4. Capitalize "Federal," "State" (when referring to a U.S. State), "Department," "Agency," "Government," and "Nation."
5. Items submitted should be written in lay person's language.
6. The lead sentence should start with ARS. Include who, what, where, when and why in the submission. Spell out names of months; don't name the present year, but specify past or future years. (Refer to page 4)
7. Don't use first person, instead say "the Secretary".
8. With scientific titles, drop the "research" in "research plant geneticist" to make them more intelligible to non-ARS readers.
9. In naming scientific papers or presentations, put quotes around the titles and use just an initial cap (plus capitalize proper nouns and italicize scientific names). It is preferred that the report item be summarized in a one sentence explanation rather than using a scientific title (e.g., with an understanding and helpful scientist we converted, "Deletion of Densoviral Sequences Reduces the Efficiency of Somatic Integration of JcDENV-Derived Plasmids in Insects" to "he will present information on the improvement of genes transfer vectors for insects")

**Weekly Report to the President  
Research, Education, and Economics Mission Area**

**Under Secretary Catherine Woteki**

**Monday, Jan. 31, 2010**

**Reform Based Actions**

**Outreach and Results**

**Press Announcements**

Press Releases/Media Advisories

Spanish Language Press Releases/Media Advisories

New Media

Reports

**Expected Legislative or Policy Issues**

**Potential or Expected Legal Issues**

ARS received a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated December 5, 2010, addressed to the Food and Nutrition Information Center, National Agricultural Library, from Brian Hunt, Polkton, NC, for complete guidelines for feeding prisoners and applying religious and medical diets to prisoners, and information showing nutritional values of different foods. The request was received by ARS on January 11 and was assigned FOIA No. 11-040. NAL responded directly to the requester on December 17, 2010, and provided a copy of the ARS FOIA office.

**Events - Travel /Speeches of Agency Executives**

**Personnel Announcements**

**Outreach and Professional Activities**

ARS is co-sponsoring the 2nd National Bed Bug Summit with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The summit will take place at the Georgetown University Conference Center in Washington, DC, on February 1-2. The objective of the meeting is to receive stakeholder input on a national strategic plan against this pest. ARS Administrator Edward B. Knipling will provide welcoming remarks. Dan Strickman, ARS national program leader for veterinary, medical and urban entomology, Beltsville, MD, will be the facilitator for a session on “Initiatives and Roles of Local/State/Federal Government” on February 1st at 9:15 a.m. ARS scientist Mark Feldlaufer, at the Invasive Insect Biocontrol and Behavior Laboratory, Beltsville, will be a featured speaker at the session on “State of Bed Bug

Knowledge and Research Needs” and will address the topic of “Coordinating and Collaborating on Research.” Other sessions include Consumer Education and Communication, Improvements in Prevention and Control Techniques, Control on a Community and Institutional Level, Educating Workers In Bed Bug Control and Prevention, and State of Bed Bug Knowledge and Research Needs. The meeting is open to the public.

Steven Kappes, ARS deputy administrator for animal production and protection, Beltsville, MD, and Eileen Thacker, ARS national program leader for animal health, Beltsville, will attend the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association Annual Convention and Trade Show in Denver, CO, on February 1-4. The following industry organizations will hold meetings during the convention: National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, Cattlemen’s Beef Promotion and Research Board, American National CattleWomen, Inc., Cattle-Fax, and National Cattlemen’s Foundation. The purpose of the convention is to establish beef check-off and policy priorities for the coming year. Kappes will participate in the National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium meeting on February 1 at 8 a.m. Thacker will present an update on cattle research to the Subcommittee on Emerging Health and Research on February 3 at 2 p.m. There is a fee to attend the convention.

ARS research leader Luis L. Rodriguez, Plum Island Animal Disease Center, Orient Point, NY, will travel to Vienna, Austria on February 3-5 to attend and make a presentation at a seminar at the 2011 International Meeting on Emerging Diseases and Surveillance. He will travel to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to meet with the staff of Vietnam’s National Centre for Veterinary Diagnosis, tour the National Veterinary Company and Research Centre, scout sites for field study, and visit the Regional Animal Health Office Lab.

### **Other Items of Interest**

The ARS Western Regional Research Center, Albany, CA, on January 20-21 is hosting an international workshop of scientists from industry, university, USDA, and the Environmental Protection Agency on advances in intragenics—the genetic engineering of biotech traits in crop plants using 100 percent plant DNA sequences. Intragenic technologies reduce the utilization of non-plant sequences to introduce biotech traits into crops, thus promoting greater consumer acceptance.

### **News Clips**

## NPA Weekly Report Guidance March 2011

The Weekly Report is an important mechanism for communicating ARS accomplishments to the Secretary of Agriculture. Although a range of topics may be considered newsworthy, most are presented best as either a scientific accomplishment or an event. Current, high profile topics are especially newsworthy, such as bioenergy, human nutrition, food safety, and water quality.

Newsworthy Scientific Accomplishments may include important research findings or releases backed by publication in a top-tiered broadly-based science journal (e.g. Science, Nature, PNAS, etc.), a top-tier discipline-based journal, patent, CRADA, etc. Impact of the accomplishment should be a focal point of the writeup. Also, high level awards should be submitted (e.g. Nobel, World Food Prize, etc.).

Newsworthy Events may include important presentations, hearings, important visitors (e.g. key USDA officials, media or congressional representatives), open houses, media interviews, etc. Scientific presentations are best described in terms of the research presented, so that the focus is on the research, not on the fact that a presentation was given.

Reports should be sent to Carol Durlinger by 12:00 pm on Tuesday of each week and should include information on *Newsworthy Events* that will be occurring 2 weeks in the future. ***For example, the report sent on January 26 includes events for the week of February 7-11.*** Information on *Newsworthy Scientific Accomplishments* should be based on recent findings that were recently published. Carol consolidates and forwards the items to the ARS Information Staff on Wednesday. The Information Staff reviews the submissions and provides a report to the Administrator's office for review. The approved report is sent to the USDA Office of the Under Secretary. That office then submits it to the White House Liaison.

Remember that all items submitted for the Weekly Report should be written in lay person's language, emphasizing a) what was/will be done, b) why it is important, and c) who is involved. ***Again, scientific accomplishments should focus on impact.***

### **EXAMPLES**

#### **Scientific Accomplishments:**

**New Findings on Gene Expression in Peaches Reported by ARS Scientists:** Findings from research by a team led by Carole Bassett, molecular biologist, and Michael Wisniewski, plant physiologist, ARS Appalachian Fruit Research Station, Kearneysville, WV, were published in the July 2006 *Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science*, and highlighted on the cover. The researchers analyzed peach bark genes responsive to cold temperature (5° C) and short days--two environmental factors that impact trees in winter. The research was the first global analysis of gene expression in peaches in response to environmental stress factors.

**ARS Laboratory Updates USDA's Food and Nutrient Database for Dietary Studies:** The ARS Food Surveys Research Group (FSRG) released an updated Food and Nutrient Database for Dietary Studies (FNDDS). According to FSRG research leader and nutritionist Alanna Moshfegh, Beltsville, MD, the FNDDS was updated specifically for analyzing food intakes from the survey "What We Eat in America" conducted by the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The "What's in the Foods You Eat" Search Tool, a companion to the FNDDS 2.0, provides an easy-to-use, searchable version of FNDDS foods, portions, and nutrients.

**State Agency Adopts Montana ARS Lab's E-Waste Program Materials:** On July 19, scientists with the ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory (NPARL), Sidney, MT, met with community representatives to organize the second "e-erase your e-waste" event. It was announced that the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is adopting the group's slogan and logo for a series of statewide e-cycling pilot programs. Montana DEQ recycling and marketing development specialist Sandra Boggs noted that the "e-erase your e-waste" materials from ARS--which provide a catchy title and graphics that are easily remembered and quickly recognized by the public--will become a part of DEQ's educational campaign to curb electronic waste. NPARL technical information specialist Bethany Redlin developed the original materials, aided by NPARL occupational health and safety officer Jackie Couture. The first event collected more than 4.2 tons of e-waste and a host of calls from other communities, businesses, and individuals interested in putting together similar e-cycling programs.

**HortScience Cites ARS Scientist for Most-Accessed On-line Paper:** The American Society for Horticultural Science has reported that the most-accessed on-line article in *Hort Science* in 2005 was written by Kimberly Lewers, a research geneticist in the ARS Fruit Laboratory, Beltsville, MD. Her paper, "Fruit Nitrogen Content of Sixteen Strawberry Genotypes Grown in an Advanced Matted Row Production System," was published in August 2005. Lewers' co-authors were university researchers Brent Black and Stan Hokanson. The paper describes how different strawberry cultivars accumulate different levels of nitrogen in the whole plant and also in the fruit, which affects the amount of nitrogen fertilizer required for the strawberry crop and any crop that follows.

### **Events:**

**International Food Protection Association Honors ARS Food Safety Research:** On August 16, the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) is presenting its 2006 Food Safety Award to scientists in the Microbial Food Safety Research Unit (MFSRU) at the ARS Eastern Regional Research Center (ERRC), Wyndmoor, PA. IAFP is an international organization with over 3,000 members in 50 countries. The award is being given for research over the past two decades that has significantly enhanced the safety and security of the nation's food supplies. On behalf of all the ARS scientists involved in the work, John P. Cherry, ERRC center director, and John B. Luchansky, MFSRU research leader, will accept the award at "IAFP 2006," the association's 53rd annual meeting, in Calgary, Alberta.

**Senator Burns Holds Appropriations Subcommittee Field Hearing on Renewable Fuels at ARS Lab in Montana:** On August 26, the ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory, Sidney, MT, hosted a field hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies. Senator Burns conducted the hearing, which focused on the future of renewable fuels, with a special emphasis on ethanol and biodiesel. A panel of expert witnesses included USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas C. Dorr and John Ashworth, team leader for partnership development with the National Bioenergy Center, Golden, CO. A second five-member panel representing Montana interests included Dan Downs, board member of the Montana Farmers Union; Jon Stoner, president of the Montana Grain Growers Association; Jerald Bergman, director of Montana State University's Eastern Agricultural Research Center; Garth Kallevig, with Montana Independent Bankers; and Thad Willis, with the Montana Farm Bureau Federation.

**Symposium on Industrial Uses of Sunflowers To Feature ARS Research:** On September 10-14, Gerald Seiler, botanist, Sunflower Research Unit, ARS Northern Crop Science Laboratory, Fargo, ND, will be an invited speaker at the First Symposium on Sunflower Industrial Uses in Udine, Italy. Seiler will describe ARS research evaluating potential industrial uses of wild sunflower species. This meeting will be the first of its kind in Europe to focus on the use of sunflower oil, biomass, and natural products for lubricants, biofuel, rubber, and other industrial uses.

## Submissions to the ARS and You Newsletter

The REE Undersecretary will no longer publish the *ARS Weekly Report* and has replaced it with the *Weekly Report to the President*, which goes directly to President Obama. In addition, the ARS Administrator, Dr. Knipling, has created a new newsletter, *ARS and You*. Please submit items of interest for the *ARS and You* newsletter through your Research Leader/Center Director to Carol Durflinger (Carol.Durflinger@ars.usda.gov). This is a monthly newsletter, and news items should be received by the 25th of the month. Highly significant news submitted for *ARS and You* will also be forwarded by the Area Office to be published in the *Weekly Report to the President*. Items submitted should be current (occurred within the month) and include:

- Major scientific accomplishments (include scientists' names and locations, and the details of the accomplishment). These accomplishments include major international meetings ARS scientists have attended, major presentations by the scientists, and important scientific publications. Please do not submit scientific meetings and publications that scientists typically attend. Restrict the submissions to those that are highly significant for some reason. For examples, please see the previous issues of *ARS and You*.
- Awards. Continue to submit through the ARS Awards Newsletter Information Form.