

From: [Bentley, Christopher - ARS](#)
To: [Jacobs-Young, Chavonda - ARS](#); [Drumm, Sharon - ARS](#)
Subject: USDA OC Instructions
Date: Monday, January 23, 2017 10:45:48 AM

FYSA

All,

Starting immediately and until further notice, ARS is to stop issuing ANY public-facing documents. That includes, among other materials, news releases, photos, fact sheets, news feeds, and social media content – tweets and blog posts. I am checking now about scientific publications. For all intents and purposes, we are dark. The best guess is that this will last for at least the remainder of this week. Should we share these instruction with the AC? r/Chris

Christopher S. Bentley

Director, Office of Communications

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From: Drumm, Sharon - ARS </O=MMS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=DRUMM, SHARON17B64046-2FF4-4F56-B9AC-02C9881989CF>
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2017 12:58 PM
To: ARS-Administrators Council
Cc: ARS-AC Secretaries-All; ARS-Associate-ADs; MacDonald, Robert; Strauss, Mike
Subject: For Immediate Transmittal: Guidance on External Communications

Hello again All - Starting immediately and until further notice, ARS will not release any public-facing documents. This includes, but is not limited to, news releases, photos, fact sheets, news feeds, and social media content.

Please contact Director of Communications Chris Bentley with any questions about this guidance. Please also transmit to your employees as soon as feasible.

Thanks!
Sharon

Sharon D. Drumm, Ph.D.
ARS Chief of Staff
202-720-4465

From: Jacobs-Young, Chavonda - ARS </O=MMS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=JACOBS-YOUNG, CHAVO10425BE6-6FDB-4412-941C-288B1DE6DA>
Sent: Tuesday, January 24, 2017 9:10 PM
To: ARS-Administrator
Subject: Important: Communications Guidance

Dear ARS Colleagues,

Yesterday, we sent an email message about Agency informational products like news releases and social media content. This internal email was released prior to receiving official Departmental guidance and is hereby rescinded. The official guidance states that the Secretary's office should be consulted on media inquiries and proposed responses to questions related to legislation, budgets, policy issues and regulations and that policy related statements should not be made to the press without notifying and consulting with the Office of the Secretary. The Departmental guidance does not, and was never intended, to cover all public-facing documents. For example, scientific publications released through peer reviewed professional journals are not covered. Please contact Christopher Bentley (Christopher.bentley@ARS.usda.gov) if you have any questions.

ARS has not blacked out public information. In fact, yesterday, the Agency published the following release to our website – <https://www.ars.usda.gov/news-events/news/research-news/2017/ars-geneticist-edward-buckler-awarded-first-nas-prize-in-food-and-agriculture-sciences/> . The release acknowledges the break-through work of one of our scientists.

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientific in-house research agency, ARS values and is committed to maintaining the free flow of information between our scientists and the American public as we strive to find solutions to agricultural problems affecting America.

Thank You,

Chavonda Jacobs-Young , Ph.D.

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