

ARS □ ERS □ NASS □ NIFA

Policies and Procedures

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This issuance describes:

- This directive states the policies and responsibilities of the ARS Correspondence Management Program.
- It provides guidelines for preparing correspondence and updates current procedures for correspondence clearance, proper use of email, and the use of plain language.

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1. Purpose

This Policy and Procedure (P&P) document outlines the process for drafting and clearing letters, memorandums, and reports typically produced by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) officials and for documents that will be signed by the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Under Secretary, REE Deputy Under Secretary, Chief Scientist, ARS Administrator, ARS Associate Administrators, and other ARS officials.

Instructions and procedures for preparing letters, informational memorandums, decision memorandums, or appointment memorandums to be signed by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Agriculture are also contained in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretarial Correspondence and Documents Manual (Version 1.0, August 2010, Office of the Executive Secretariat).

2. Background

This P&P was originally issued by the General Services Division Information Systems Staff in June 2, 1980, and updated February 8, 1991. The General Services Division Information Systems Staff no longer exists. Correspondence for the ARS Administrator and Associate Administrators is now monitored and supervised by the Correspondence Management Unit (CMU) in the ARS Office of National Programs. CMU is responsible for receiving, assigning, tracking, reviewing, and processing all correspondence for the ARS Administrator, ARS senior executives, and other USDA officials.

Correspondence is defined as letters, memorandums, reports, and other documents addressed to the leadership of USDA or ARS that require an official response or signature. Letters and memorandums are required to officially record certain monetary expenditures, to enter into agreements with outside entities, to record personnel actions, or to correspond with someone outside USDA.

Changes from the previous version include:

- Replacing the CMU Manual with Appendices A-H
- New policies and procedures for replacing the use of paper copies with electronic documents for all associated files (i.e., scanned copies of incoming mail, drafts, and final copies of outgoing responses, and emails between CMU and the originating office).

3. Policy

It is ARS policy to:

- Create, prepare, transmit, and store correspondence in an efficient, economical, and timely manner.
- Prepare letters that use plain language and are responsive to the needs of the recipient.
- Prepare professional correspondence that is consistent in style and format, neat and attractive, and editorially correct.

- Respond promptly to all incoming correspondence.
- Provide responses in a timely manner to meet the deadlines assigned by CMU and the USDA Office of the Executive Secretariat (OES).
- Prepare ARS correspondence on appropriate letterhead stationery and include the updated USDA Equal Employment Opportunity statement, “USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer”, centered within the footer of the first page of correspondence.
- Use emails or memorandums that are brief, grammatically correct, and courteous for internal correspondence and selected interagency correspondence.
- Send all correspondence or documents through the appropriate reviews following intra-agency clearance procedures. Correspondence and other documents submitted to CMU for final review before signature should be accompanied by the ARS Correspondence Synopsis form. Failure to follow proper clearance procedures could delay approval and signature.
- Have all congressional correspondence reviewed and cleared through the ARS Office of Legislative Affairs and the USDA Office of Congressional Relations.

These topics are discussed in more detail in the Appendices.

4. Responsibilities

All ARS offices are responsible for implementing CMU and Departmental correspondence management policies and standards and establishing internal procedures consistent with ARS and USDA policies.

4.1 Correspondence Management Unit

CMU is responsible for (1) developing ARS correspondence policies and standards and (2) for providing guidance to ARS employees for preparing correspondence to be signed by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, REE Under Secretary, Chief Scientist, REE Deputy Under Secretary, ARS Administrator, and ARS Associate Administrators.

Questions about specific issues not covered by either the GPO Style Manual or the ARS Correspondence Manual should be directed to CMU at (301) 504-4513 or email at ASKCMU@USDA.Gov.

4.2 Associate Administrators and Administrator

The Associate Administrator for National Programs is responsible for providing oversight of CMU operations in drafting and processing official correspondence. The Associate Administrator for National Programs and the Associate Administrator for Research Operations are responsible for reviewing and approving final versions of all correspondence that originate in their areas of oversight.

CMU is responsible for obtaining approvals of correspondence by associate administrators before it is sent to the Administrator for final approval and signature.

The Administrator approves the final version of correspondence by signing a paper copy or sending an email.

4.3 Preparer

The preparer is the person who drafts correspondence. A preparer may also be the person who originated the request for the correspondence. The preparer:

- Gathers sufficient information, including from subject matter experts (SMEs) and peers, to draft the requested correspondence;
- Requests comments from SMEs and others who may have information associated with the correspondence;
- Tracks responses from reviewers;
- Revises draft correspondence based on responses from reviewers; and
- Sends documents along with the ARS Correspondence Synopsis form to CMU for review.

The person or team drafting the correspondence is responsible for obtaining internal review and clearance from SMEs. Documents must be revised as needed to reflect comments from reviewers and SMEs.

Clearances are generally obtained consecutively. If it is necessary to obtain simultaneous clearances from several ARS staff members, ensure everyone reviewing the document is aware that others are reviewing at the same time; this can be accomplished by sending one email to everyone on the clearance list with a request for review and clearance.

4.4 Subject Matter Experts and Reviewers

A SME is someone who has information or expertise in the subject of the correspondence, and may be a scientist, administrative officer, laborer, human resources staff member, program manager, or other informed person. SMEs provide information for correspondence preparation and are asked to review draft versions of correspondence for accuracy.

A reviewer is any ARS staff person whose expertise and/or position of authority will ensure the content or correspondence is accurate, appropriate, and in accordance with ARS procedures and missions. Depending on the subject, reviewers may include but are not limited to scientists, SMEs, research leaders, area directors, national program leaders, deputy administrators, or associate administrators.

5. Authorities

ARS receives guidance for the management of official Departmental correspondence through USDA Departmental Regulation (DR) 3060-001, Correspondence Management. This regulation can be reviewed [online or in a pdf](#).

6. Acronyms

ARIS	Agricultural Research Information System
CMU	ARS Correspondence Management Unit
GPO	Government Publishing Office
OA	ARS Office of the Administrator
OES	Office of Executive Secretariat
OSEC	Office of the Secretary
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
P&P	Policies and Procedures
REE	Research, Education, and Economics
SME	Subject matter expert
USPS	United States Postal Service

Steven Kappes

Steven M. Kappes
Associate Administrator
ARS Office of National Programs

May 26, 2020

Date

Appendix A: Preparation Procedures for All Documents

[note: format and style examples are shown in *italics*]

Recordkeeping

Create a separate electronic folder for each new document to be drafted. Make electronic versions of the incoming paper documents by scanning them. Keep all related correspondence, such as incoming requests, reviewer comments, and working drafts, in the same electronic folder and add a scan of the final memo or letter once it has been signed. It is unnecessary to retain paper versions of incoming and outgoing correspondence if electronic files of all materials connected with the issue have been retained. Final documents should be scanned and saved using formats that allow contents to be identified via electronic searches.

The names created for electronic folders should facilitate finding and retrieving documents and should support consistent file naming. For instance, file names could contain tracking numbers, correspondent names, and/or laboratory names. Establish a naming system that all employees in an office or laboratory will understand and follow.

Formatting documents

The first page of the document should be printed on appropriate letterhead stationery that contains the name and address of the office where the document will be signed. If a stationery template is not available, contact the signature office. Additional pages should be printed on plain bond paper of the same quality as the first page.

Font styles should be appropriate, and the preferred ARS font is Times New Roman. Memos and letters should be produced using 12-point type; do not use font sizes smaller than 11 points. Use sans serif fonts for headings only; do not use sans serif fonts for the body of letters and memos.

All pages of all documents should have 1-inch margins on all four sides (left, right, top, and bottom), although in some cases the top margin may need to be modified to accommodate the letterhead.

Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation, and Proofreading

ARS and USDA generally follow U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) Style Manual guidance for proper word usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. PDFs of the most recent version (2016) and previous versions are available at the [U.S. Government Publishing Office \(GPO\) Style Manual](#) website. Other professional guides may be consulted as well (e.g., [Chicago Manual of Style](#), [American Medical Association Manual of Style](#), and [Scientific Style and Format](#) by the Council of Science Editors) for subjects not covered in this or other USDA and Federal Government documents.

All documents should be carefully proofread for content, spelling, grammar, and overall readability. Documents should be reviewed at least twice, once for content, and once for spelling and grammar.

Appendix A

Spell-check programs do not flag all errors, so do not rely on these programs alone to verify the accuracy of spelling and/or usage throughout the document.

Abbreviations/Acronyms

Write out an abbreviation/acronym the first time it is used in the body of the document and then include the abbreviation/acronym in parentheses. The abbreviation/acronym may then be used throughout the correspondence as follows:

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is the chief in-house research agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and ARS scientists follow all USDA ethics guidance.

Word Division

Follow the rules for word division in GPO and Webster's Third New International Dictionary. The hyphen goes at the end of the first line, with the first letter of the rest of the word starting the next line. Do not divide one-syllable words. Do not divide proper nouns.

Disclaimer Clause

When a letter or memo written to the public mentions a specific company product or a trade name, include the following disclaimer in a separate paragraph:

"Use of a company or product name by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or agency does not imply approval or recommendation of the product to the exclusion of others that may also be suitable."

Enclosures and Separate Cover

When material is to accompany a document, it is identified in the bottom notation as an enclosure, not as an attachment. Enclosures are not always identified in the body of the document. If they are, type the word "Enclosure" flush with the left margin two lines below the last line of the body of a memo or two lines below the signature title of a letter. If there is more than one enclosure and all of them are identified in the body of the text, use the plural "Enclosures" and indicate the number of enclosures as follows:

3 Enclosures

Do not use a colon after "Enclosure" or "Enclosures" if individual enclosures are not listed.

If all the enclosures are not identified in the body of the text, type the notation "Enclosure:" with a colon flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the body of a memo or two lines below the signature title of a letter. List each enclosure on a separate line flush left using either titles or brief descriptions (abbreviations may be used) as follows:

Appendix A

3 Enclosures:

Handbook of Printing

Handbook of Papermaking

Handbook of Spelling

If more than one line is needed to identify an enclosure, indent all succeeding lines as shown on Exhibits 11, 15, and 18.

For long enclosure lists, use the following:

10 Enclosures: See attached list

See Exhibits 9, 11, 15, and 18 for how to format enclosure lists on memos and letters.

Material Sent Under Separate Cover

When material referred to in the text is to be sent separately, type “Separate Cover:” flush with the left margin, two lines below an enclosure notation, if one is used. If there is no enclosure notation, type “Separate Cover:” flush with the left margin two lines below the last line of the body of a memo or two lines below the signature title of a letter. List the material even if it is not identified in the text and send a copy of the memo with the material listed under separate cover.

See Exhibit 9 for how to include lists of materials sent under separate cover on memos and letters.

Distribution of Copies

Routinely show the distribution of copies of memos and letters. This practice informs all recipients of everyone who received a copy and avoids duplication. The distribution list should be placed on the original and information copies going outside USDA only when the list is of interest to the recipient.

Letters and memos have different formats for copy distribution notations. Specific instructions for each are given in Appendix B (Memorandums) and Appendix D (Letters).

Legend Line

Add a legend line at the end of every document for contact information if there are concerns or questions about working documents. It provides information about document drafts and where drafts, including the final draft, are located on a computer drive.

The legend line should be placed on draft copies only.

Originating Office. Type the agency, division/area, office, the preparer’s first initial and full surname, telephone number, date of creation, computer drive, computer folder on the drive, and electronic document title. When a second line is required, use a logical break such as a computer

Appendix A

drive or document name. Place this notation at the left margin, two lines below the last typed sentence:

Draft:ARS:OA:CLonaberger:202-720-3656:4/9/2017:h:/Agricultural Forum/Response to Ag Forum Invitation.docx

Revised within Originating Office. Each time a document is revised by someone other than the original writer, add this information to the legend line:

Draft:ARS:OA:CLonaberger:202-720-3656:4/9/2017:h:/Agricultural Forum/Response to Ag Forum Invitation.docx

Rewrite:OA:GMayo:202-720-2222:4/12/2017:h:/Agricultural Forum/Response to Ag Forum Invitation.docx

Final:ARS:OA:SDrumm:202-720-3333:4/14/2017:h:/Agricultural Forum/Response to Ag Forum Invitation FINAL.docx

Rewritten outside Originating Office. When documents are rewritten outside the originating office, retype the originator's legend, then type the word "Rewritten:" directly below the originator's legend flush with the left margin and use Word Track Changes on the revised draft to show where edits have been made to the original text. Type the new writer's identification directly below the rewritten notation flush with the left margin as follows:

ARS:OA:CLonaberger:202-720-3656:4-12-2017:h:/Agricultural Forum/Response to Ag Forum Invitation FINAL.docx

Rewrite:REE:MSimmons:202-720-4444:4/20/2017:h:/Agricultural Forum/Response to Ag Forum Invitation FINAL REVISED.docx

The name of the revised document does not have to be the same as the name used by the originating office.

When a document is revised, retain electronic files of previous drafts according to your office procedures.

Correspondence Synopsis Form (Form ARS-256)

The ARS Correspondence Synopsis form is used to provide a concise explanation of context, purpose, and/or background information for the signing official. It should also state the objective of the correspondence and what is being requested from the official (signature, approval, etc.).

The ARS [Correspondence Synopsis Form](#) is available through AXON (see Exhibit 1).

CMU will assign a log number, so that section of the form should remain blank. CMU will not forward documents to the Administrator or Associate Administrators without the ARS Correspondence Synopsis form. If there are questions regarding this procedure, contact CMU at (301) 504-4513.

Budget Correspondence

All memos and letters containing ARS budget information must be reviewed by the ARS Budget and Program Management Staff before a final draft is signed/submitted.

Envelopes and Mailing

When a document is ready to be sent, an envelope or address label must be prepared. Internal mail that will be delivered by an agency messenger or that is consolidated in the mailroom for forwarding to another agency office does not need a traditional envelope.

All outgoing U.S. Postal Service (USPS) mail in ARS is processed via commercial postal meters, regular stamps, or reimbursable agreements with universities or Federal or State agencies. The address should be a complete mailing address. See Exhibit 2 for an example of envelopes used in ARS. Use labels on packages or oversized plain envelopes.

Additional mailing guidance is found in ARS [Directive 263.1](#) - Mail Management Program and the [Mailing Standards](#) of the United States Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual, and in Mailer's Memo, April 2014, Volume 14, No. 4.

Preparing Envelopes and Mailing Labels

The order of address is as follows:

- Name
- Institution (if applicable)
- Street address or P.O. box number, followed by the apartment, suite, office or multi-dwelling number, if applicable.
- City, State, and ZIP code

Example:

*Ann Perry
USDA Agricultural Research Service
5601 Sunnyside Avenue
Room 4-2122D
Beltsville, MD 20705*

When addressing mail to multi-occupancy buildings, specify the exact suite or room number of the addressee, if known.

When addressing mail to a Post Office box, use the prefix "P.O."

Use the two-letter state abbreviation on envelopes and mailing labels.

The USPS uses optical character recognition (OCR) to process large volumes of mail. Center the address as follows to ensure mail is OCR-readable:

Appendix A

- 1 inch from the left edge
- 1 inch from the right edge
- 5/8 inch from the bottom
- 1½ inches from the top edge

See Exhibit 3 for an example of OCR-readable boundaries and address placements.

Italic, artistic, circling, script-line fonts, and handwritten addresses are not OCR-readable.

The space allotted for the address should be clear of any other printed matter and limited to a maximum of five lines.

Accounting numbers, subscription codes, presort codes, advertising underscoring, and non-address data can be located within the OCR-readable area but should be entered above the delivery address line.

The address or address label on oversize envelopes should be centered on the envelope.

Notations such as Personal, Confidential, Please Forward, or Hold for Arrival should be aligned with and three lines below the return address. If there is an ATTENTION line, place it above the receiver's name. If an ATTENTION line was used within the letter, it should also appear on the envelope.

Do not overstuff envelopes, as overstuffed envelopes could tear (or blow out) in postal processing. Up to five sheets of paper can be mailed in a single letter-size envelope for the cost of 1 ounce.

Fold documents to fit into letter-size envelopes whenever possible. Flats (envelopes larger than 6 1/8 by 11½ inches) that weigh less than 1 ounce are subject to a surcharge.

Include your complete return address. The ZIP+4 for ARS offices in the USDA Washington, D.C., complex is 20250-0300. This Zip+4 must also be shown in the return address when preparing correspondence for the Office of the Secretary.

International Mail

International mail should be typed and in English. The last line of the address block area must contain only the complete name of the destination country (no abbreviations). Foreign postal codes, if used, should be placed on the line above the destination country. International mail includes letters, printed matter, and packages destined for foreign countries, including Canada and Mexico.

File Copy Preparation

Check with CMU to see if paper archives are needed for file copies or if electronic records will suffice. If paper copies are needed, all copies should be legible. Exhibit 4 provides guidance for

Appendix A

preparing paper files for memos and Exhibit 5 provides guidelines for preparing paper files for letters.

Document Management Techniques

More than one version of a working document may be generated to address reviewer comments, so each office should establish a procedure to identify the “final” electronic copy of a document. This information should be shown on the legend line. Offices should also determine the need to update or delete all other copies. Establishing a set procedure for designating the final electronic copy will alleviate problems associated with having more than one version of a document.

Records management

Transitory materials usually have a records retention period of less than 6 months. Examples of transitory materials are meeting attendance, hotel reservations, routine requests for publications or information, designation of “acting” official, etc.

Nontransitory materials such as program and general administrative records usually have a retention period of longer than 6 months. To preserve the integrity of the files and provide for an audit trail, an electronic copy of the original document request message should be prepared as part of the official file and transferred and maintained in an electronic records system. All copies should be legible and clearly marked as the official file copy, including all documents created on other electronic platforms (Word, Excel, Adobe, etc.). All documents should be identified sufficiently to retrieve, protect, and carry out the disposition of the document. Final electronic documents should be saved in searchable formats.

It is not necessary to keep a paper copy of an electronic document if the information does not pertain directly to the receiving office. If you do retain a paper copy, include a legend on the document indicating its electronic storage location.

Contact the REE Records Management Officer to verify which ARS records must be permanently preserved as part of National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) records.

For materials that are exempt from being electronically transmitted, see [DR 3440-002](#), Control and Protection of Sensitive Security Information.

Appendix B: Memorandums

[note: format and style examples are shown in *italics*]

Memorandums (memos) should be used for most day-to-day business within ARS and USDA. Memos may also be used when responding to informal communications from other Federal agencies.

Do not use memos when corresponding with the following people:

- The President
- The Vice President
- White House staff members
- Members of Congress
- Supreme Court Justices
- Department and agency heads outside USDA
- State Governors
- Mayors
- Foreign government officials
- ARS employees for extending congratulations or condolences
- ARS employees for discussions of disciplinary actions
- Citizens who wrote via letter requesting information or assistance

Memorandums to be signed by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary

To prepare an Informational Memorandum, a Decision Memorandum, or Appointment Memorandum for signature by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, follow the guidelines contained in [USDA Secretarial Correspondence and Documents Manual](#) (Version 1.0, August 2010, OES). Call the CMU at 301-504-4513 for additional information on preparing memos for the Secretary or Deputy Secretary, and for a copy of the OES manual.

See Exhibits 6 and 7 for examples of how to use the following content in an Informational Memorandum or Decision Memorandum to be signed by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Agriculture.

Memorandums to be signed by the Office of the Administrator

DATES

Insert the date two lines below the last line of the letterhead flush with the left margin. The full name of the month should be spelled out (do not abbreviate) and use numerals for the day and year. If using a date stamp, the month may be abbreviated. Do not use endings such as “st” and “th” with numbers for the day. Military style is not acceptable.

If the memo will be signed the day it is prepared, type the date in the document.

Appendix B

If the memo will be signed in another office or if it may not be signed the day it is prepared, omit the date. Leave enough room for dating the memo after it is signed. The date will be typed or stamped on the original and all copies by the office where the memo or letter is signed or dispatched.

OPTIONAL SPECIAL MAILING OR SENDING INSTRUCTIONS

Put instructions for special mailing (such as SPECIAL DELIVERY, CERTIFIED, or REGISTERED) or sending (FAX, OVERNIGHT DELIVERY, etc.) two lines below the date line flush with the left margin (see Exhibits 9, 12, and 15). When more than one instruction is used, type them continuously on the line and separate them with an em dash (two hyphens, no spaces) as follows:

CERTIFIED – RETURN RECEIPT

FAXED (202-XXX-XXXX)

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

The notation FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY may be requested on a case-by-case basis. If it is requested, type FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY on the first page of the memo two lines below the date and two lines below the last line at the end of the page. If the second notation falls above the middle of the page, place it below the middle of the page. Both notations should be flush with the left margin. See Exhibit 9 for how to include this notation on a memo.

For second and succeeding pages of the document, type FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY eight lines from the top margin (two lines below the addressee's name on a letter) and two lines below the last line at the end of the page. If this text falls above the middle of the page, place it below the middle of the page. Both notations should be flush with the left margin. See Exhibit 7 for an example of how to place this notation on a two-page memo.

If it is necessary to include another handling notation on a document marked FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY, use an em dash to include the second notation with the FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY notation on the first page at the top of the document. Do not include the other notation with the second FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY notation on the first page or on any of the succeeding pages.

FORMATTING THE MEMO HEAD

To align each line of a memo head, set a right tab at 1 inch and a left tab at 1.25 inches. See Exhibit 8 for guidance on how to set memo tabs using MS Word.

The SUBJECT, TO, FROM, ATTN, and THROUGH lines on the head of a memo should appear in the following order:

Appendix B

SUBJECT: Pending CRADA with XYZ Corporation

TO: John C. Doe, scientist

ATTN: Joe J. Judge, research leader

THROUGH: James M. Jobs, Area Director, PWA

FROM: Susan S. Smith, Office of National Programs

(note: ATTN and THROUGH will not be necessary for every memo.)

Subject

The SUBJECT line of a memo is a brief statement, usually not more than 10 words.

Type SUBJECT: in all caps three lines below the last notation (date, special mailing instructions, or FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY). If there are no preceding notations, SUBJECT should be typed five lines below the last line of the letterhead.

Limit the text for each SUBJECT line to approximately 5 inches. If more than one line is needed, type the remainder of the SUBJECT text beneath the first line in block style.

Capitalize each word in the SUBJECT line, except for articles, prepositions, and conjunctions, as follows:

SUBJECT: XYZ Corporation (P.B. 20-437-9-XXX)

SUBJECT: Disposition of Records (Your Letter of 9-11-2017)

*SUBJECT: Designation of Members of the Information Resources Management (IRM)
Review Board*

If a second memo is written to the same person on the same subject before receiving a reply, the date of the first memo may be included after the subject in parentheses as follows:

SUBJECT: Disposition of Records (Our Letter of 9-15-2017)

To

The addressee information should be no longer than 5 inches. Use standard office abbreviations when a memo is addressed to other ARS offices. Limit street addresses to five lines. When a complete mailing address is required, use the following order:

- Top line: addressee name
- Next line (if required): addressee title
- Next line (if required): organization affiliation

Appendix B

- Next line: street address or P.O. Box number, followed by apartment, suite, office, or multi-dwelling number, if applicable
- Last line: city, state, and zip code. Type state and territorial names in full. Use two-letter state and territorial abbreviations only on an envelope.

Examples

*TO: John C. Doe
Administrative Officer
Western Human Nutrition Research Center, PWA
P.O. Box 29997
Presidio of San Francisco, California 94129*

or

*TO: Director, Administrative Services Division (BRAR)
Federal Service Agency
Cleveland, Ohio 12365*

When the same memo is addressed to several individuals within USDA, prepare a letterhead copy for each addressee and add a checkmark or use a highlighter to identify individual copies as follows:

*TO: P. Myer, Deputy Director, Administrative Management ✓
M.C. Jones, Deputy Director, Program Management
A. Strickland, Deputy Director, Office of National Programs*

*TO: P. Myer, Deputy Director, Administrative Management
M.C. Jones, Deputy Director, Program Management
A. Strickland, Deputy Administrator, Office of National Programs*

When a memo has many addressees (usually 10 or more), attach a copy of the addressee list to all copies of the final memo that is distributed, and use a checkmark or highlighter to identify individual recipients as discussed above.

TO: See Attached List

Attention

Avoid using the ATTENTION line. If you use it, type the name of the person whose attention is being requested as follows:

*TO: Director, Records Disposition Division
ATTN: Mary Fields
National Archives and Records Service, GSA
1800 F Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20405*

Appendix B

Through

A THROUGH line may be necessary if an official other than a clearance official needs to review and concur with the memo before it is sent to the addressee. List the names, titles, and offices in the reverse order of the routing as follows:

TO: S.S. Stevens, CMAVE

THROUGH: C.C. Campbell, BPMS

E.E. Ellington, Chief, FMAD

W.W. Wember, Deputy Director, AFM

FROM: R.L. Robertson, USMARC

In this example, the memo would be sent from Research Leader to Writer. After review, Writer would send the memo to Editor for review, who would then send it to Chief for review. Chief would then send the memo to Scientist.

The originating office (FROM) will forward the materials to the last THROUGH addressee:

- Original, enclosures, and envelope
- cc copies and enclosures and envelopes (if applicable)
- Official file copy and enclosures and incoming and envelope

The THROUGH office will:

- Indicate approval by signing/initialing and dating the original, cc, and THROUGH copies, and official file copy on the THROUGH line
- Coordinate any changes to the memo with the originator and all previous reviewing officials
- Pull or make a copy of the original
- Forward the package to the next THROUGH addressee

The last THROUGH addressee should return the official file copy to the originator and mail the original and information copies.

From

In the From line, omit organizational names such as the Division or Area if it already appears on the letterhead as follows:

FROM: John Doe, Administrator

If the correspondence will be signed in the originating office, the signer may either initial or sign opposite the FROM line as follows:

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FROM: John Doe, Administrator John Doe

If an acting official is signing the memo for the regular signing official, the signer should write the word “for” before the regular signing official’s name sign and sign (not initial) his/her name opposite the FROM line as follows:

FROM: for John Doe, Administrator Joseph Crow

When another person signs for the person whose name is typed, this should be indicated on all copies.

If the regular signing official is a person appointed in a formal acting capacity (i.e., by personnel action), type his/her name and the word “Acting” before the title as follows:

FROM: Mary L. Doe, Acting Administrator

If more than one person will sign the memo, type the names for all senders on separate lines. Use the letterhead of the originating office or a common use letterhead designated for that organizational unit as follows:

*FROM: Joseph Gains, Chief, Budget Program Management Staff
George Roberts, Chief, Financial Management Division*

See Exhibits 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12 for examples of how to format the memo head.

BODY OF THE MEMO

Spacing. Begin the body of the memo three lines below the last line of the FROM line flush with the left margin. Double-space memos of one paragraph (10 lines or less). Single-space the body of memos longer than one paragraph.

Paragraphs. Main paragraphs are unnumbered and typed in block style and begin flush with the left margin. Insert a blank line between paragraphs. When it is necessary to break a paragraph into subparagraphs, they should be indented and lettered or numbered. Subparagraphs are single spaced with double spaces between them. When a paragraph is subdivided, it must have at least two subdivisions. When a paragraph is cited in the body of the memo, the reference numbers and memos are written without punctuation and spaces, such as “paragraph 3a(2)(c).”

Paragraph Breaks. A paragraph should not be continued on the following page unless at least two lines can be carried over to the next page (see Exhibit 9).

Date References. When referring to dates within the body of the memo, type the name of the month in full and the day and year in numerals. Use commas to set off the year only when it follows the day of the month in a specific date within a sentence as follows:

March 11, 2017, is available for the conference.

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Several dates from March 11 to December 31, 2017, are available for the conference.

Many dates from March 2016 to June 2017 are available for the conference.

Contacts. Whenever appropriate, include the name, telephone number, and email address of someone who may be contacted for more information as follows:

Please call John Doe at (344) 555-1212 or email john.doe@ars.usda.gov if you have further questions.

For further information, contact Jane Doe, Records Management Officer, Records Management Branch, USDA, ARS, OCIO, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Room 4-8765, Beltsville, Maryland 20705-1433. Her telephone number is (301) 555-1212 and her email is jane.doe@ars.usda.gov.

CONCURRENCE LINE

A concurrence line (Exhibit 11) may be necessary so that the addressee can show agreement with the information presented. Type CONCUR: and a signature line 3 inches long on the last page of the original document and all copies flush with the left margin and 1 inch from the bottom of the page. On the same line type DATE and a line 1½ inches long as follows:

CONCUR: [approximately 36 spaces] _____ DATE: [18 spaces] _____

Prepare a letterhead copy of the memo for the concurring official. The original is returned to the sender after the concurrence line is signed and is used as file backup. Follow memo assembly and routing instructions in Exhibit 4.

APPROVAL LINE

If needed, include an approval line so that the addressee can indicate his/her decision about the issue presented in the memo (Exhibit 10). On the last page of the original and all copies, type APPROVED, DISAPPROVED, DISCUSS WITH ME, and DATE on separate lines. Follow each line with a line approximately 3 inches long. Align the words flush with the left margin and include a space between each line as follows:

APPROVED: _____

DISPPROVED: _____

DISCUSS WITH ME: _____

DATE: _____

Prepare a letterhead copy of the memo for the approving official. The original is returned to the sender when approved/disapproved by initials or signature and used as file backup.

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ENCLOSURES AND SEPARATE COVER

See preceding information and Exhibits 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, and 19 for instructions on how to list these items on a document. If needed, these are always listed before the copy distribution.

COPY DISTRIBUTION

In a memo, type “cc:” (for carbon copy) flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the body of the memo, enclosure list, or separate cover list. On the next line, list the cc addressee’s initial and last name followed by the organizational abbreviation. List cc addressees alphabetically by last name and mark or highlight each copy for the respective addressee as follows:

cc:

S. Brown, BPMS
D. Jones, ONP
S. Hutchins, REE
R. Smith, AFM

cc:

S. Brown, BPMS
S. Hutchins, REE
D. Jones, ONP
R. Smith, AFM ✓

If space on the page is tight, the cc and enclosure notations can be listed on the same line as follows:

<i>3 Enclosures:</i>	<i>cc:</i>
<i>Forms Letters Handbook</i>	<i>S. Brown, BPMS</i>
<i>Plain Letters Pamphlet</i>	<i>D. Jones, ONP</i>
<i>U.S. Government Correspondence Manual</i>	<i>R. Smith, AFM</i>

If enclosures will be sent to an addressee on the cc list but will not be sent to the primary addressee, write “w/encl.” after the addressee’s name on the cc list and identify the enclosure in parentheses as follows:

cc:
S. Brown, BPMS
D. Jones, ONP, w/encl. (incoming letter)
R. Smith, AFM, w/encl. (incoming letter)

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or

cc:

Jones, ONP, w/incoming letter

If all “cc” addressees are to receive the same enclosure(s), indicate this using “cc: w/encl.” as follows:

cc: w/encl. (incoming letter)

D. Jones, ONP

R. Smith, AFM

or

cc: w/incoming letter

D. Jones, ONP

R. Smith, AFM

To reduce the number of copies distributed, route one copy through several people on the cc list as follows:

cc:

B. Smith through R. Johnson, BPMS

Send the copy to R. Johnson along with envelope addressed to B. Smith. R. Johnson will initial the copy and forward to B. Smith.

Use the bcc (“blind carbon copy”) notation when a copy of a memo is to be given to an individual without the knowledge of the addressee or cc: addressees. The bcc: notation is shown only on the bcc: addressee’s copy and on all file copies. Type bcc: flush with the left margin, two lines below the cc: notation (or signature element if the cc: notation is not used) as follows:

cc:

S. Brown, BPMS

R. Smith, AFM

D. Jones, ONP

bcc:

P. Adams, OA

See Exhibits 9, 10, and 15 for examples of distribution lists.

CLEARANCE PROCEDURES

Before preparing the final memo package, use an established clearance procedure within your unit. Preparers, SMEs, and reviewers should indicate their approval of a memo by initialing a final draft copy or by providing email clearances. Once a final draft of a memo has been approved, it is returned to the originating office (see next section).

ASSEMBLY FOR REVIEW AND SIGNATURE

When the memo is ready for review and signature, arrange the final memo and accompanying papers as shown in Exhibit 4. Do not send documents directly to the Office of the Administrator. All documents should be sent to the CMU for review and signature and should be accompanied by the ARS Correspondence Synopsis form (Exhibit 1). Failure to follow this procedure could delay the process.

Correspondence preparers, reviewers, and signers of outgoing correspondence should initial and date the legend line of the official file copy in ink below the legend as shown below. This should be done if the document is delivered to CMU. Email clearances are equally acceptable.

*ARS:APP:KBerringer:301-504-XXXX:04/17/17:H:/Agricultural Forum/Response to Ag
Forum Invitation FINAL.docx*

K. B. 04-20-17

Appendix C: Email and fax

[note: format and style examples are shown in *italics*]

Electronic mail (email) is generally the default method of communication for day-to-day business use and for some official responses and should be considered official ARS communications. Email correspondence is a reflection of ARS and should be written in a professional manner. Emails should be concise and contain proper spelling, grammar, formatting, and punctuation.

Emails should be prepared following the general guidelines for preparing correspondence contained within this P&P and the appendices.

When responding or preparing email:

- Respond promptly.
- Be concise. Avoid long sentences. Use proper spelling, grammar, formatting, and punctuation.
- Convey the professional image of ARS through words and tone.
- Answer questions directly and simply.
- Avoid using “reply all” unless it is necessary to respond to everyone who received the original email.

Fax messages are delivered with a fax cover sheet that provides contact information for the sender and recipient and lists the number of pages being sent.

Information transmitted electronically is subject to the records and information management requirements prescribed in REE P&P Records Management 251.8 v.2.0 and [Federal Records Management](#) guidelines issued by NARA. The information transmitted must be created, maintained, used, and disposed of in accordance with USDA and NARA regulations. Contact CMU or the REE Records Management Officer for additional guidance.

Appendix D: Letters

[note: format and style examples are shown in *italics*]

A letter is used for purposes other than routine work or business transactions when recipients might expect or should receive a more formal or personalized letter, rather than a memorandum.

Letters are always used to correspond with the public.

A letter is always drafted when corresponding with the following people:

- The President
- The Vice President
- White House staff members
- Members of Congress
- Justices of the Supreme Court
- Heads of Federal departments and agencies outside USDA
- State governors
- Mayors
- Foreign government officials
- ARS employees for congratulations, condolences, or disciplinary actions.

Prepare a final reply or acknowledgment within 5 business days after receipt of the letter in ARS.

If correspondence has previously been acknowledged, prepare a final reply within 7 business days. The final reply should always say, “*This is in further reply...*”

OSEC Controlled Correspondence

Controlled correspondence includes all incoming letters and other correspondence received by the OES to the Secretary or assigned by the White House to the Secretary for response. OES assigns incoming correspondence and documents to USDA agencies to prepare responses either for the signature of the Secretary or responses on behalf of the Secretary.

Correspondence prepared for the Secretary’s signature must not be made public before it is signed. After signature, it can only be released through appropriate channels.

Most forms of controlled correspondence will receive a response in the form of a letter. OES documents assigned to ARS are sent to CMU. CMU will assign an ARS tracking number to each document and then forward the document to the appropriate ARS office to prepare a reply.

There may be times when ARS is not able to draft a response per an assignment from OES because the subject matter is outside the purview of the agency. In these cases, the ARS office receiving the OES assignment from CMU to draft a response must contact CMU to ask OES to assign drafting the response to another USDA office/agency. Unless and until OES reassigns drafting a response to another agency, ARS will be held accountable for providing a response. The request for reassignment must be made to OES from CMU.

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Time limits vary for drafting controlled correspondence. Replies must be prepared by the due date indicated on the controlled correspondence form that will accompany the assignment. Expedite the movement of controlled correspondence.

The Secretary takes a personal interest in every letter and is interested in the quality and timeliness with which letters are answered. See Exhibit 13 for a formatted letter to be signed by the Secretary

Follow these guidelines for preparing correspondence for signature by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or Deputy Under Secretary:

- Letters should be short, direct, concise, and to the point; use plain language guidelines provided at www.usda.gov/plain-writing.
- Do not use the phrases, “I trust this information will be helpful,” or “Please be assured that...”
- Do not use the phrase, “This is in response to your June 26 letter to me.” Instead, use “*Thank you for your letter of June 26 requesting...*”
- Use the first-person “I” instead of “We.”
- Use the full name of the recipient when mentioned for the first time, then the first name(s) when appropriate.

Turnaround time for assigning, writing, and clearing draft responses is 7 business days. If a cleared draft response cannot be completed within 7 business days, an interim response should be prepared within 5 business days for the signature of the Under Secretary or ARS Administrator.

Replies to incoming letters to be signed by the Under Secretary or Deputy Under Secretary should be prepared as soon as possible. A full response should be made to a letter within 7 business days. If a full response cannot be made within that time, a letter of acknowledgment should be prepared for signature within OSEC. The acknowledgment should indicate why a full response is not ready and indicate when a complete answer can be expected. Except in very unusual circumstances, this should be no more than 7 business days. If a letter has been acknowledged previously, use the phrase, “*This is in further reply. . .*” in the opening paragraph of the final reply.

Follow these guidelines in drafting responses for the signature of the Secretary or Deputy Secretary:

- Limit the length of letters for signature in OSEC to one page if possible and no more than two pages at the most. Use short letters with precleared backup statements when possible.
- Use OSEC-embossed letterhead bond for the original.
- Use clear plastic Executive Correspondence cover sheets to protect letters during clearance and handling.
- Do not date the letter when it is drafted. Leave enough room at the top of the first page for dating the letter after it is signed.
- When the acting head of any government agency will be providing and signing a

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response to a letter received by the Secretary check with the agency to verify the current leadership. If a head of agency or new acting head have been appointed, the response should be signed by the current head or acting head of the agency.

- Do not use first names in the salutation. Check with the Office of Legislative Affairs about how to address replies before preparing correspondence sent to members of Congress, Cabinet members, Governors, or Commissioners/Directors/Secretaries.
- Do not double-space one-paragraph letters. Divide the text into two paragraphs and single space.
- Always use the complimentary close “Sincerely,” for all letters to be signed by the Secretary. Refer to Appendix H (Forms of Address) for the appropriate complimentary close for other correspondence.
- Center the Secretary’s signature block on the page. All other Department officials should have signature blocks flush with the left margin. (As OSEC signature block guidance can change, check with CMU for current Administration instructions.)
- When preparing formal correspondence to be signed by the Secretary, do not use middle initials or caps. There should be four lines between “Sincerely,” and the Secretary’s name.
- Do not list specific enclosures on the original of the Secretary’s outgoing letters. If enclosures are included, note them as “Enclosure(s).” Make sure to mention the enclosure(s) in the body of the letter.
- Do not use or refer to copies of letters prepared for signature in the OSEC as enclosures until a copy bearing evidence of signature and date of dispatch is provided by OES.

Send draft correspondence through established clearance channels to CMU for review and clearance. CMU will obtain necessary concurrences from the Office of the Administrator and forward the correspondence to OSEC. Once a draft has been cleared, OES finalizes all correspondence for the Secretary. OES will also forward a signed copy to OA through the OES document management system.

Letters for Signature of the ARS Administrator

All mail addressed to ARS or the ARS Administrator is received and logged in at CMU. CMU determines which correspondence is to be signed by the ARS Administrator and which should be routed to another ARS office for direct reply. CMU will give the correspondence an Agricultural Research Information System (ARIS) log number and due date and forward the correspondence to the appropriate office via email for reply, along with information stating the area responsible for the assignment, the due date, and who will sign the response.

The ARS Correspondence Synopsis form should be used for all OA correspondence. Failure to do so could delay the review process.

When CMU electronically assigns correspondence for drafting a response for the Administrator’s signature, please use the following procedure:

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- Send all correspondence through established organizational channels before sending it to CMU for review and clearance. CMU will obtain concurrences and signatures as required. After the correspondence is signed, CMU will date, mail, and return file copies electronically to the preparing office.
- When drafting a direct reply to a piece of correspondence, the ARS office preparing the direct reply will notify CMU when the correspondence has been signed. The office should also send a copy to CMU for the central files.
- CMU will assign a due date for a response. If a full response cannot be made within that time, prepare a brief letter of acknowledgment. The acknowledgment should indicate the reason for delay and when a complete answer can be expected. If a letter has been acknowledged, use the phrase, “This is in further reply...” in the opening paragraph of the final reply.

Guidelines to Letter Formatting

DATE

Place the date two to six lines below the last line of the letterhead flush with the left margin (two lines is standard but can be adjusted as needed for appearance). Type the name of the month in full and the day and year in numerals. If a date stamp is used, the month may be abbreviated. Do not use endings such as “st” and “th” with the numbers for the day. Military style is not acceptable.

If the letter will be signed the day it is prepared, type the date in the document.

If the letter will be signed in another office or may not be signed the day it is prepared, omit the date. Leave enough room for dating the letter after it is signed. The office in which the letter is signed or dispatched will type or stamp the date on the original and all copies.

SPECIAL MAILING OR SENDING INSTRUCTIONS (OPTIONAL)

Put instructions for special mailing (such as SPECIAL DELIVERY, CERTIFIED, or REGISTERED) or sending (FAX, OVERNIGHT DELIVERY, etc.) in all caps on the face of the letter as follows:

FAXED TO 301-504-1234

Type or stamp these instructions two lines below the date line starting flush with the left margin. When more than one instruction is used, type them continuously on the line, separating them with an em dash as follows:

CERTIFIED—RETURN RECEIPT

See Exhibit 15 for including FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY notations on letters.

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ADDRESS

For a letter that will be at least a full page in length, begin the address flush left three lines below the date line or two lines below the special instruction lines. For short letters, begin the address no more than eight lines below the date line (adjust as needed for appearance).

The address should be single spaced, block style with no terminal punctuation or periods. No line should be longer than 4 inches. When runover lines are required, indent two spaces from the left margin and then begin the next line. Limit addresses to seven lines. (Exceptions can be made for international addresses.)

The order of the address should be as follows:

- The first line should contain the addressee's name, along with title Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Dr.
- The next line contains the addressee's title (if applicable)
- The next line contains the addressee's organization (if applicable). Include the addressee's office symbol, when known, on letters sent to other Government agencies
- The next line contains the street address or post office box (followed by the apartment, suite, office, or multi-dwelling number, if applicable)
- The last line contains the city, state, and ZIP code. Type the state and territorial names in full. Use two-letter State and territorial abbreviations only on the envelope.

*Mr. John L. Doe
Chairman, Secretarial-Professional
Associations of the United States
5906 Weaver Place SE
Barnesboro, Pennsylvania 15714*

*Ms. Jane Doe, Director
Federal Service Agency
Administrative Services Division (BRXX)
123 Sunnyside Avenue, Room 400
Cleveland, Ohio 12365*

If the same letter is to be sent two or more people, prepare an original letterhead document for each recipient. On the duplicate copies, starting on a separate page on the sixth line from the top, type the name of the addressee flush with the left margin. On the same line, type the page number flush with the right margin. On the second line type "Similar letters to:" Space two lines down and begin the list of names and addresses of the recipients with a line space between names. Insert the legend line at the bottom of the page as follows:

Similar letters to:

*Ms. Renee Miller
USDA/ARS/OA
Room 4-2124A*

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*5601 Sunnyside Avenue
Beltsville, Maryland 20705*

*Ms. Claudette Shields
USDA/ARS/OA
Room 4-2122A
5601 Sunnyside Avenue
Beltsville, Maryland 20705*

ARS:ONP:APerry:301-504-4568:5/3/2019:\OAA\Scribes\SCRIBES\ARP\FY2019 letters\wavyleaf basketgrass

See Exhibit 17 for an example of formatting replies to multiple addressees.

SALUTATION

Type the salutation flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the address. See Appendix H for Forms of Address.

SUBJECT LINE

It is not necessary to add a subject line to most correspondence. When added, it should only be a brief statement of usually no more than 10 words. A subject line may be used in formal letters when desired, except for letters to the White House, Congress, and heads of agencies and institutions outside USDA.

If needed, type SUBJECT: in all caps two lines below the salutation flush with the left margin.

Insert one space and begin typing the text for the subject line. If more than one line is needed, type the remainder of the text beneath the first line in block style. Capitalize the first letter of each word except articles, prepositions, and conjunctions, as follows:

*SUBJECT: ARS Long-Range Information Resources Management Plan: Priorities for the
Next 50 Years*

See Exhibit 16 for a how to format a letter with a subject line.

SECOND AND SUCCEEDING PAGES

Starting with the second page, type the name of the addressee flush left exactly as it is shown on the first page, but do not include the title of the addressee. On the same line, type the page

number flush with the right margin. Continue the text two lines below the name of the addressee as follows:

James C. Doe

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If the letter has more than one addressee, type the name of the addressee listed first and “et al.” flush with the left margin. On the same line, type the page number flush with the right margin as follows:

James C. Doe, et al.

2

See Exhibit 15 for formatting a 2-page letter.

CLOSING

Type the complimentary close “Sincerely,” two lines below the body of the letter, flush with the left margin.

SIGNATURE

If the name of the signing official is known, type the signer’s name in all caps four to six lines below the last line of the complimentary close, flush with the left margin. Type the signer’s title (initial caps only) on the next line as follows:

JAMES C. DOE
Area Director

Do not repeat organizational names such as the Division or Area if it appears on the letterhead. Limit the length of each line to 2½ inches. If more than one line is needed for the signer’s title, begin succeeding lines flush with the left margin. The entire signature element should not run more than four lines.

If an acting official is to sign the letter for the regular signing official, the signer signs his/her name in the signature block and the word “for” before the regular signing official’s name as follows:

for JAMES C. DOE Elizabeth Best
Area Director

When another person signs for the person whose name is typed, this should be indicated on all copies.

If the regular signing official is a person appointed in a formal acting capacity (i.e., by personnel action), type his/her name and the word “Acting” before the title in the signature element as follows:

MARY L. FORD
Acting Area Director

If more than one person will sign the letter, use the letterhead of the originating office or a common use letterhead designated for that organizational unit. Arrange the signature elements directly across from each other and start the second signature element at the center of the page as follows:

JAMES C. DOE
Director

MARY L. FORD
Assistant Director

ENCLOSURES AND SEPARATE COVER

See the section Enclosures and Separate Cover in Appendix A and Exhibits 9, 11, 15, 17, and 19 for instructions on how to list these items on a document. When used, these notations always precede notations about copy distribution.

COPY DISTRIBUTION

Routinely show the distribution of copies on information and file copies to be retained within USDA. This ensures duplicate copies are not sent to offices that have already received a copy. This list should be placed on the original and information copies going outside USDA only when the list is of interest to the recipient.

Type cc: flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the signature element or the enclosure or separate cover listing. If there isn't enough room in this position, type cc: on the line with the signer's name, starting at the center of the page. Below the cc: notation, list the name and office abbreviation or company name of the cc: addressee.

List cc addressees one below the other. Names and addresses should be listed alphabetically by last name. Mark or highlight each copy for the respective cc: addressee as follows:

JOHN B. BELL
Area Director

cc:
D. Jones, Office of the Provost
S. Brown, Department of Agronomy
R. Smith, Department of University Development

or

JOHN B. BELL
Area Director

cc:
D. Jones, Office of the Provost
S. Brown, Department of Agronomy
R. Smith, Department of Botany

When a copy of a letter is to be provided to an individual or office without the knowledge of the addressee or cc: addressee(s), use the bcc: notation. The bcc notation is shown only on the bcc addressee's copy and on all file copies. Type bcc: flush with the left margin, two lines below the cc: notation or signature element, if the cc notation is not used, as follows:

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JOHN B. BELL
Area Director

cc:
D. Jones, Office of the Provost
bcc:
R. Smith, Department of University Development

See Exhibit 15 for how to list distributions on letters.

LEGEND LINE

Include legend lines as previously described on all draft letters.

CLEARANCE PROCEDURES

Before preparing the final correspondence package, use an established clearance procedure within your unit. Preparers, SMEs, and reviewers should indicate their approval of a letter by initialing a final draft copy or by providing email clearances. Once a final draft of a letter has been approved, it is returned to the originating office (see next section).

ASSEMBLY FOR REVIEW AND SIGNATURE

When the letter is ready for review and signature, arrange it and accompanying papers as shown in Exhibit 5. All documents should be sent to CMU for review and signature; never send documents directly to the Office of the Administrator. All documents should be accompanied with the ARS Correspondence Synopsis form (see Exhibit 1). Failure to follow this procedure could delay the clearance process.

After final CMU review, the original final document is signed and mailed by the signature office. A copy of the signed/stamped letterhead and the official file copy are returned to the originating office for distribution of additional copies and recordkeeping.

Appendix E: White House Correspondence

[note: format and style examples are shown in *italics*]

Correspondence referred to USDA from the White House shall not be published in whole or in part nor shall employees quote from any of these letters unless required by law.

Correspondence referred to USDA from the White House falls into two categories:

- Correspondence for direct reply by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or REE Under Secretary; or
- Correspondence needing a draft reply for signature of the President, Vice President, or White House staff members.

White House correspondence will most often be accompanied by a tracking sheet containing instructions for handling. Do not separate the tracking sheet from the other documents associated with the correspondence because this is the White House's official record.

For all responses to White House correspondence, OES assigns a control number to incoming correspondence prior to its referral to CMU. CMU will then assign an ARIS number to the correspondence and forward it to the appropriate ARS office for reply.

Send correspondence through established clearance channels before forwarding to CMU for review and clearance. CMU will obtain necessary concurrences from the ARS Administrator and the REE Under Secretary and forward correspondence to the Office of the Secretary.

The following phrases have been suggested by the White House as appropriate opening paragraphs for use in drafting direct replies to correspondence sent to the President:

“On behalf of President (current President’s last name) ...”

“Thank you for your letter to President (current President’s last name) ...”

“President (current President’s last name) appreciates your writing...”

Never respond to White House correspondence by telephone. A written response is always required.

Appendix F: Congressional Correspondence

[note: format and style examples are shown in *italics*]

All responses to inquiries sent by Members of Congress should be reviewed by the ARS Office of Legislative Affairs and the Office of Congressional Relations.

Responding to a Constituent's Letter

Members of Congress frequently forward letters from constituents in their home districts to USDA. In responding to a constituent's letter, address the response to the Member of Congress. The Member will forward the response to the constituent. If a Member asks ARS to respond directly to the constituent, forward a copy of the reply to the Member's Washington office.

Replying to a Member of Congress at His or Her Home District Office

Occasionally, a response will come to ARS and USDA from a Member's home district office regarding a constituent issue. As with letters from the Member's Washington office, the response should be addressed to the Member, though it should be sent to the home district office requesting the response. In these cases, make sure to send a courtesy copy of the letter to the Member's Washington office. Type "cc: Washington Office" on the original and all copies.

Replying to a Letter Signed by an Employee in a Congressional Office

The response should be addressed to the Member of Congress, rather than to the person who signed the letter. However, address the envelope to the attention of the signer.

Replying to a Letter Signed by More Than One Member of Congress

Occasionally, USDA will receive a letter on an issue signed by several Members of Congress. In these cases, each of the signees should receive an individual response sent to his or her Washington office. The body of the response will be identical in each letter.

The response should open with: "*Thank you for your letter of June 29, 2017, cosigned by your colleagues, in which you requested...*"

The response should end with: "*A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.*"

When the same letter is going to several Members of Congress, send one draft or final letter through the clearance process for approval by the appropriate signature office before preparing the entire final package for all signing Members. In finalizing the letter after clearance, address an original letterhead document to each Member. Make one official file copy which includes a notation about the other recipients.

Congressional Correspondence Addressed to an ARS Office or Employee

When Congressional correspondence is addressed specifically to an ARS office or employee other than the ARS Administrator, the individual office or employee may respond directly. However, the response must be reviewed by the ARS Office of Legislative Affairs and the OA before the response is sent to the Member. The preparing office will forward the undated and unsigned letter to CMU for review, ARS clearance, dating, and mailing. CMU will return a copy of the final letter to the preparing office.

Appendix G: Legislative Reports and Official Conversations

Reports to Congress on USDA Activities

Legislative reports are official Departmental views and recommendations for transmittal to Congress on pending or proposed bills. These reports are assigned by OSEC in the OES document management system. CMU then assigns the reports to the ARS Office of Legislative Affairs to coordinate preparation of any drafts and the final reply. If asked to prepare a draft legislative report by the Office of Legislative Affairs, follow the specific instructions given. Requests to prepare legislative reports should only come through the Office of Legislative Affairs. If a request is received from another source, contact the Office of Legislative Affairs immediately.

Documenting Official Legislative Conversations

Each ARS employee must inform the Office of Legislative Affairs whenever communication takes place with members of the U.S. Congress or State legislatures in any form, including telephone conversations, direct contact regarding requests for information, requests to appear or present papers to a Congressional committee for a hearing, etc.

Complete [Form ARS-213](#), Report of Congressional Conversation, in electronic format as soon as possible after having an official conversation in accordance with instructions in Directive 125.3, Documenting Official Congressional Conversations. Include the following information in the report:

- Time and date of the conversation
- Conversed with
- Conversed by (telephone, etc.)
- Employee's name
- Employee's email
- Employee's title
- Employee's work location
- Employee's phone
- Subject of the conversation
- Information given
- Action recommended (if any)

Appendix H: Forms of Address

[note: format and style examples are shown in *italics*]

Address forms may vary, so consult the following rules together with the relevant address forms listed in the most recent version of the [GPO Style Manual](#).

Titles of Addressees

The use of titles is flexible. For example, “The Honorable” may be replaced by a title such as “General” or “Dr.” but is not used in combination with another title.

A title does not need to be listed on a separate line. Depending upon the length of the names of the individual and organization and of the address, the title could be placed after the last name or on a line by itself, either preceding the name or the organization.

A person once entitled to the title “Judge,” “General,” “The Honorable,” or similar distinction may retain it throughout his/her lifetime. The personal preference of those no longer holding distinctive positions is the guide to using titles in such cases.

Abbreviations of Titles and Degrees

Do not abbreviate titles preceding full names in an address, except Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., and Dr.

Long titles (Lieutenant Colonel, Brigadier General, etc.) may be abbreviated in the address for the sake of balance and appearance as follows:

Lt. Colonel John L.G. Smithson

The basic rank is not abbreviated. As in the example above, the salutation would read:

Dear Colonel Smithson:

Abbreviate designations of degrees, religious and fraternal orders, fellowships, and military service branch titles after a name. Write the initials of an individual degree or order with periods, but no spaces between them. Write military service designations in capital letters without periods.

Salutation

All salutations generally end with a colon, not a comma, as follow:

Dear Mr. President:

When a woman occupies a position, substitute the title “Madam” for “Mr.” before formal titles such as President, Vice President, Chairman, Secretary, and Ambassador, as follows:

Dear Madam Secretary:

Appendix H

Dear Madam Ambassador:

Dear Congresswoman Smith:

Dear Senator Smith:

When it is not known if the addressee is a man or woman, use the name as given, as follows:

Dear R.C. Roe:

Informal Salutation

The following are the most common salutations, unless the person has a title.

Dear Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms. Jones:

Dear Senator Doe:

Dear General Smith:

Dear Mr. Brown:

In official correspondence, the titles of top-ranking Government officials (for example, the President, Vice President, Chief Justice, Secretary, or Ambassador) are never used with the individual's last name. Use the following salutation:

Dear Mr. President:

or

Dear Madam Ambassador:

In some correspondence the signing officer may direct the use of a salutation on a first-name basis, where appropriate, such as when the addressee is personally known (for example, "Dear Bill" instead of "Dear Mr. Brown").

Complimentary Close

Generally, the complimentary close should be as formal or informal as the salutation. Common practice is to use Sincerely as the informal complimentary close. Where the salutation is omitted, the complimentary close is not used.

Exhibit 2: ARS Commercial Postage Meter Envelope

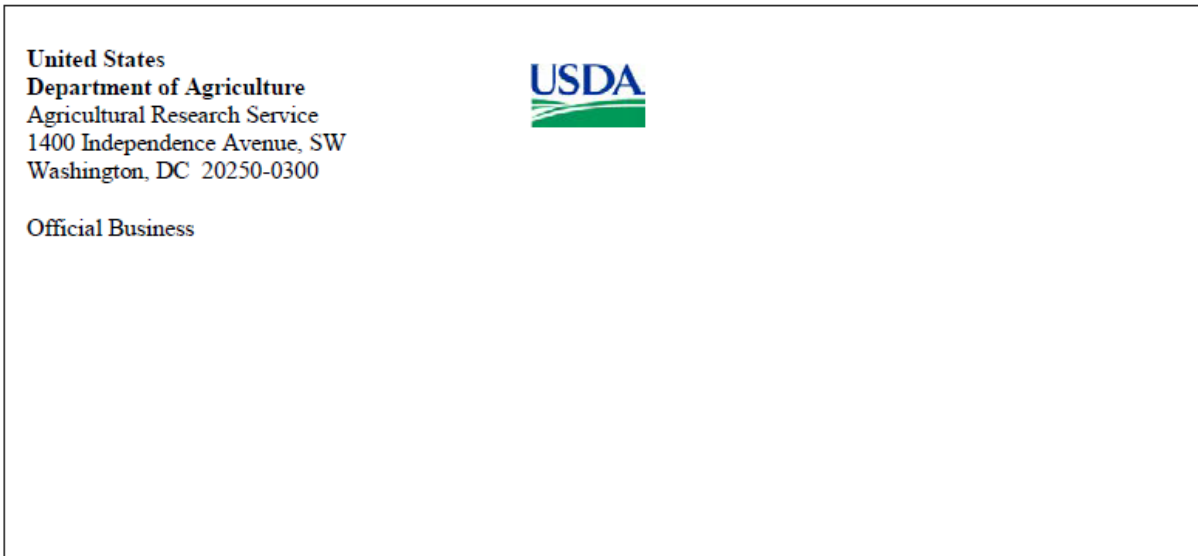


Exhibit 3: OCR-Readable Boundaries and Address Placement (not to scale)

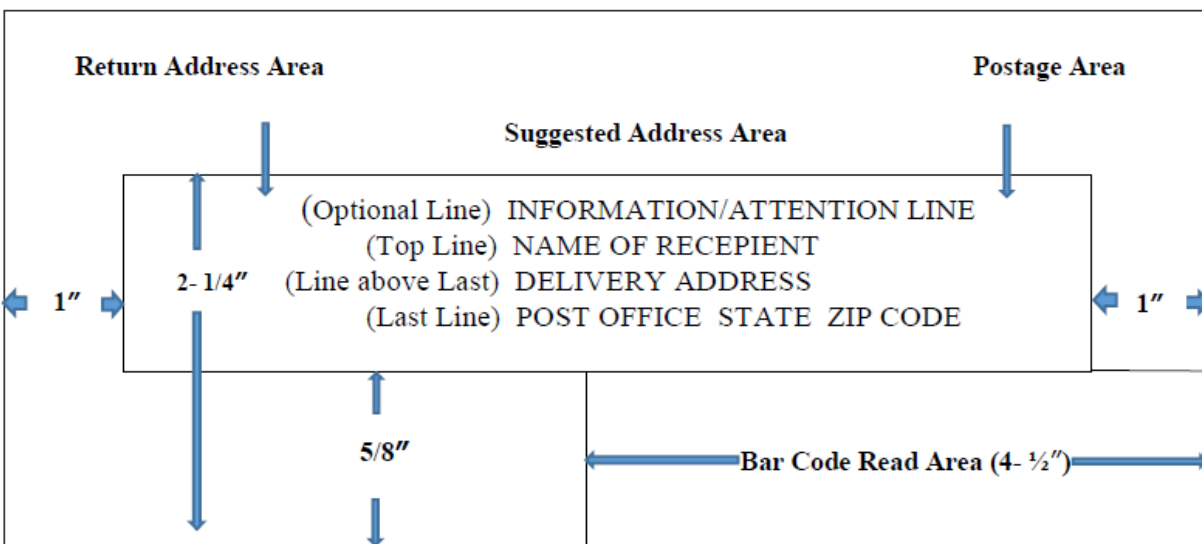


Exhibit 4: File Copy Assembly for Informal Memos

(use only if delivering an original memo to CMU)

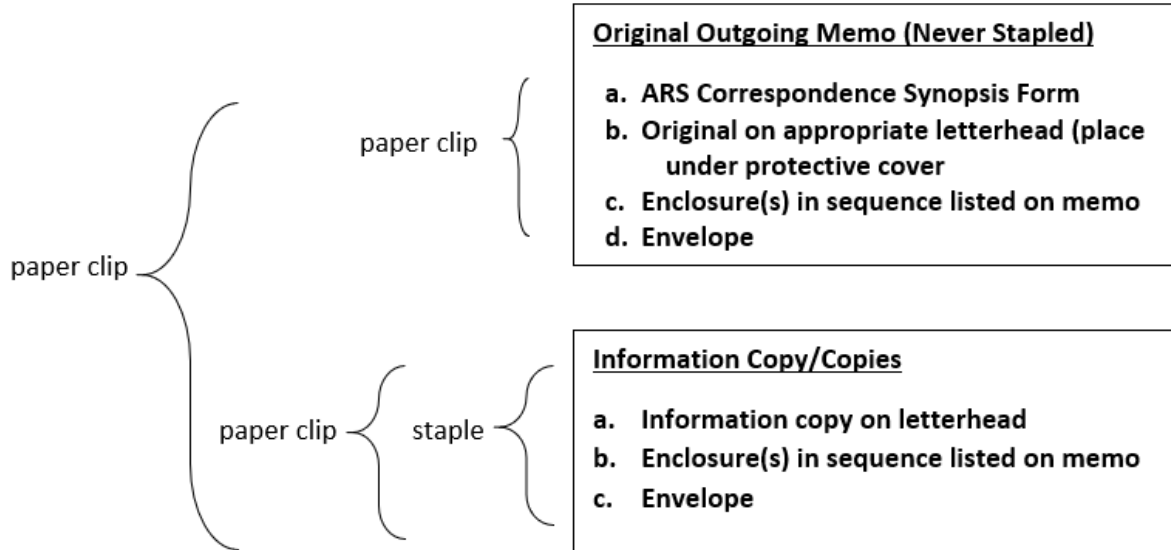
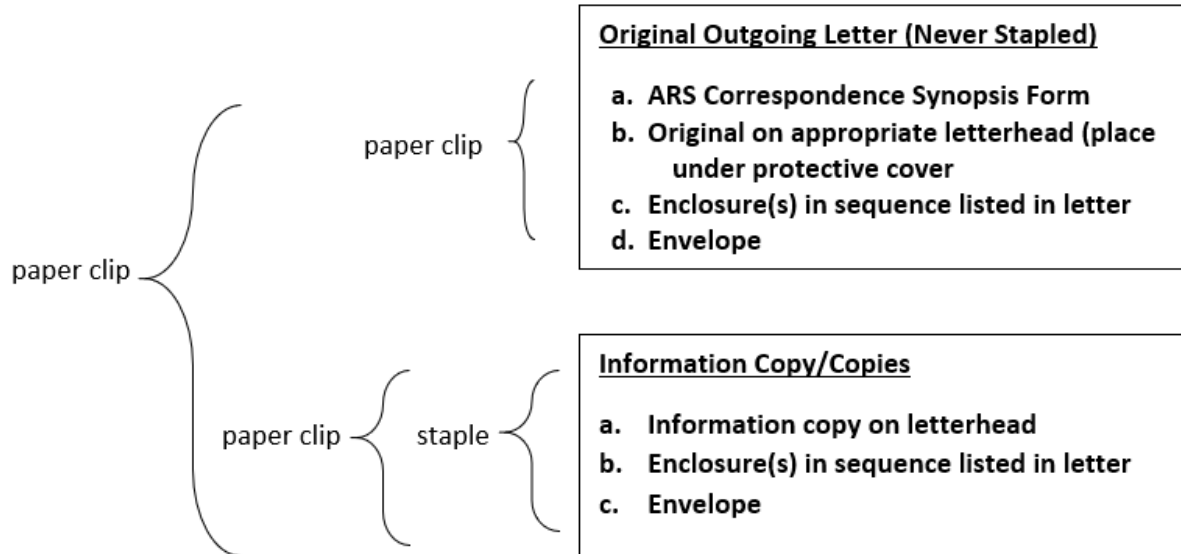


Exhibit 5: File Copy Assembly for Letters

(use only if delivering an original memo to CMU)

Assemble letter files as shown below, omitting those copies not required under copy preparation instructions.



Exhibits

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

Page 2

The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

Please contact me at 301-555-1212 or firstname.lastname@usda.gov if you have any questions.

DECISION BY THE SECRETARY:

Approve: _____

Disapprove: _____

Discuss with me: _____

Date: _____

Enclosures

Exhibits

Exhibit 7: OSEC Information Memo

(template to be used requesting a length of service award)

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

THROUGH: Scott Hutchins
Deputy Under Secretary
Research, Education, and Extension

FROM: Chavonda Jacobs-Young
Administrator
Agricultural Research Service

SUBJECT: Congratulatory Letter and Retirement Certificate

ISSUE:

We request your signature on a congratulatory letter and retirement certificate for Agricultural Research Service employee Larry Landscaper on his upcoming retirement from the Department.

BACKGROUND:

Larry Landscaper, Gardener with the Agricultural Research Service, is retiring after 40 of Federal service. In view of Larry's length of service and many contributions, we would like to present him with a letter and certificate.

A reception will be held; therefore, we request signature by *(date)*.

OR

To meet Larry's anticipated separation day, we request signature by *(date)*.

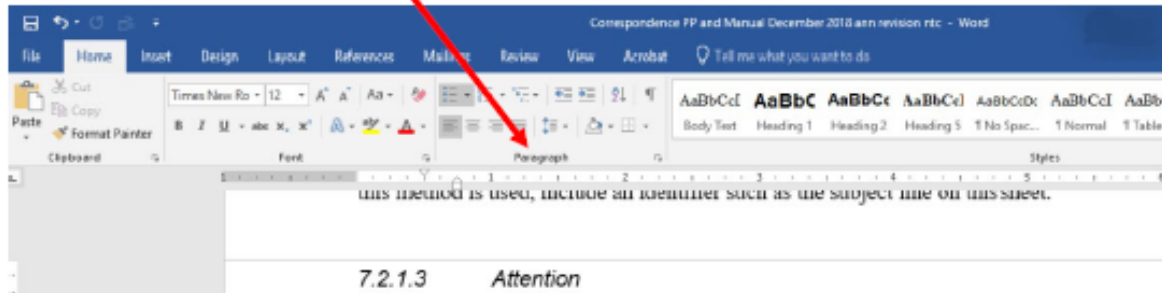
Enclosure(s)

Exhibit 8: Setting Memo Tabs

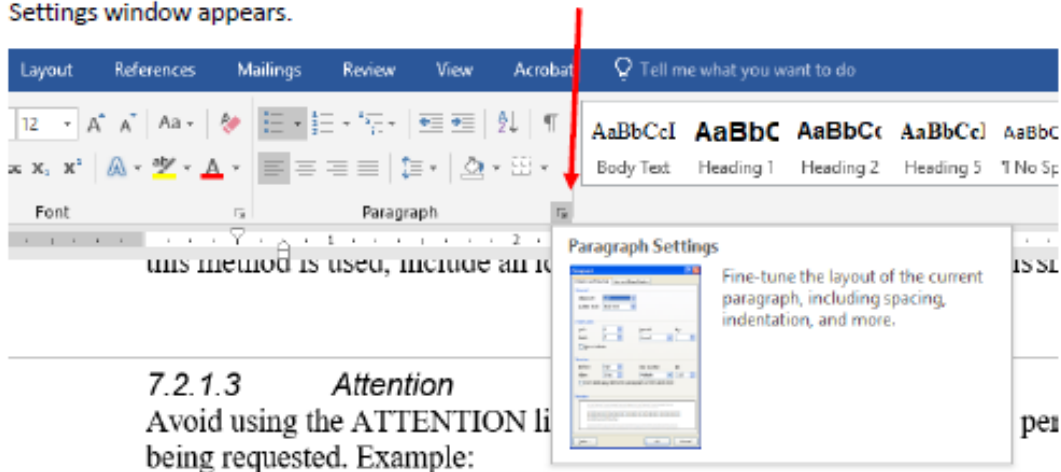
HOW TO SET MEMO TABS

SETTING THE LEFT TAB

On the Home tab, find Paragraph.



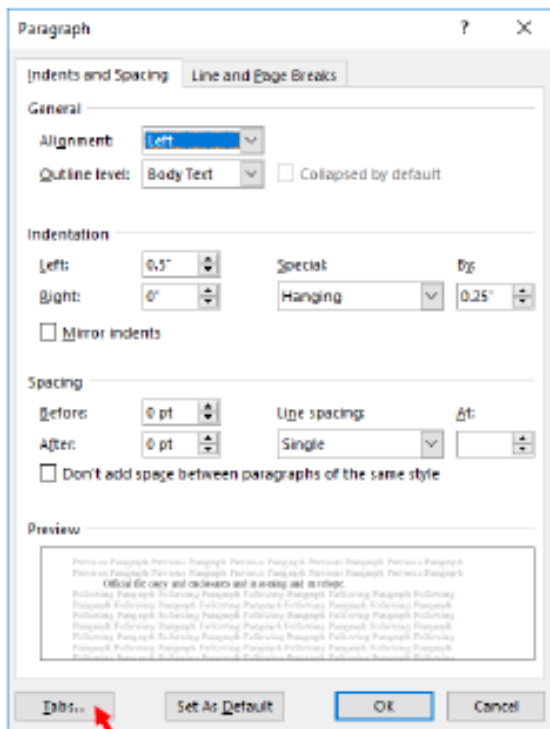
Hover over the bottom right hand corner of the Paragraph box with your mouse until the Paragraph Settings window appears.



TO: Director, Records Disposition Division
ATTN: Marv Fields

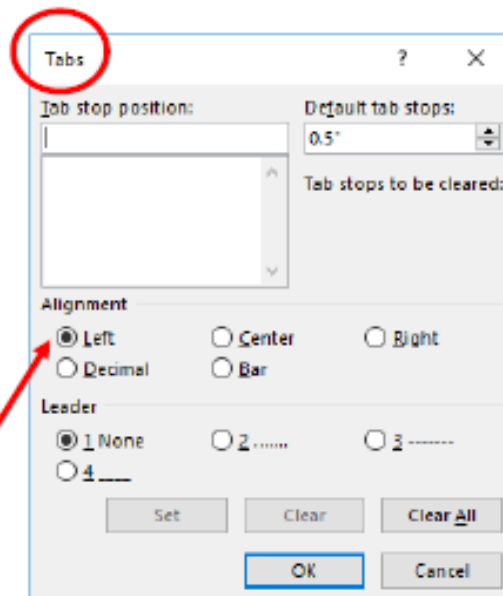
Open the Paragraph Settings window

Exhibits



Click on Tabs at the bottom left of the window.

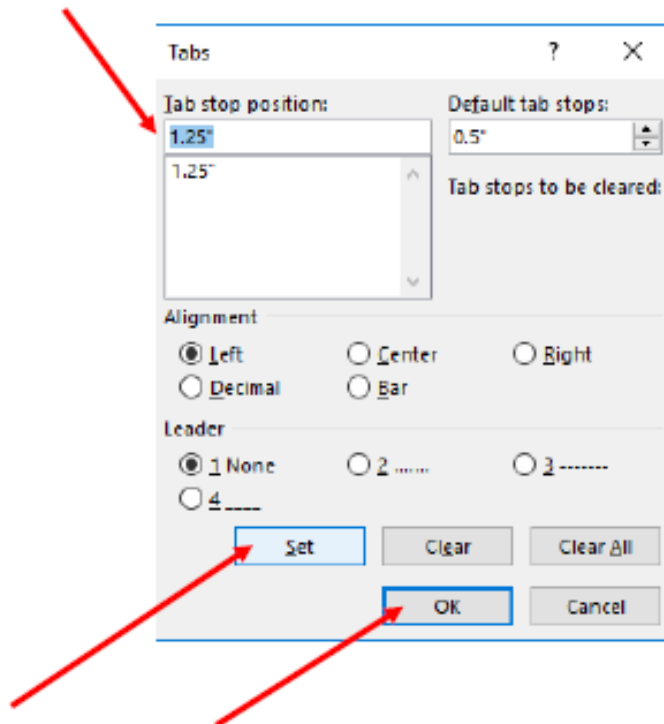
This will open the Tabs window.



In the Tabs window under Alignment, select Left

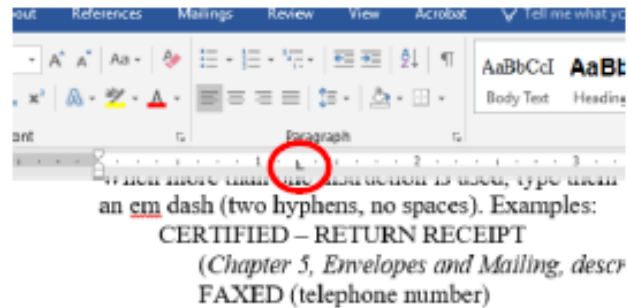
Exhibits

Type 1.25 in the “Tab Stop position” field.



Click Set and then click OK.

This will set the left tab on the document ruler.

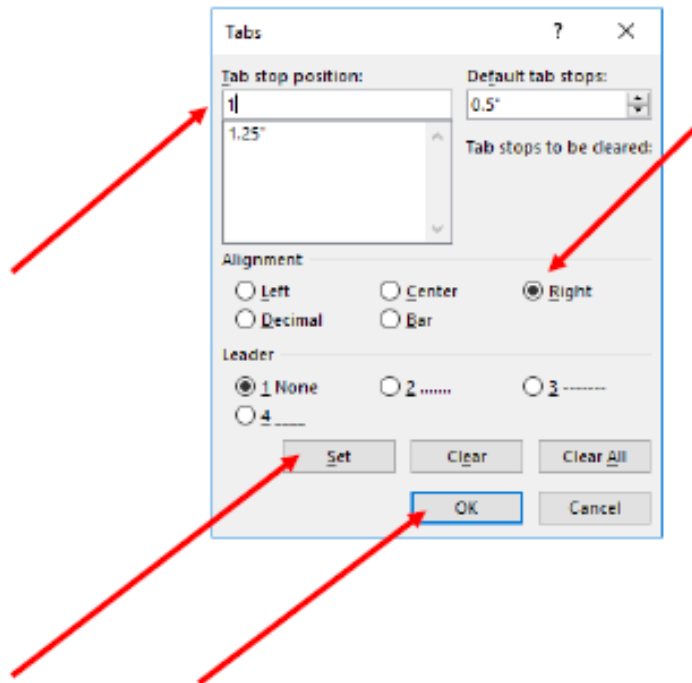


Exhibits

SETTING THE RIGHT TAB

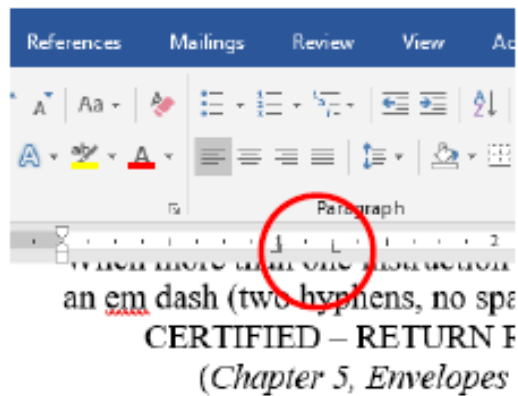
Open the Paragraph Settings window again and select Tabs.

Under Alignment in the Tabs window, select Right and then type 1 in the Tab stop position field.



Click Set and then click OK.

This will set the right tab on the document ruler.



Exhibits

Linda Lowenstein

2

brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

3 Enclosures:

Handbook of Printing

Handbook of Papermaking

Handbook of Spelling

Separate Cover:

CMU Correspondence Manual

GPO Style Manual 2016

cc:

T. Brady, OAA

C. Shields, CMU

bcc:

S. Drumm, OA

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

ARS:ONP:APerry:301-504-4574:4/25/2018:W:\OAA\Scribes\SCRIBES\ARP\2018 memo\Muth_wavyleaf basketgrass

Exhibit 10: Two-Page Decision Memo with Approval and Distributions

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR

FROM: Robert Roundhouse
Research Leader
ARS Insect Laboratory

SUBJECT: Approval Request to Host Field Day

ISSUE/RECOMMENDATIONS:

This memorandum serves as a request to host a field day for community and stakeholder outreach at the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Insect Laboratory on September 13, 2017. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

Option 1: Approve this request allowing the ARS Insect Laboratory to host a field day for community and stakeholder outreach. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

Option 2: Disapprove of this request and postpone ARS outreach efforts.

BACKGROUND:

The brown cow, which is a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) cow, jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

The USDA cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

Exhibits

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR

Page 2

DECISION BY THE ADMINISTRATOR:

Approve: _____

Disapprove: _____

Discuss with me: _____

Date: _____

cc:

T. Brady, OAA

C. Hanna, OAA ✓

Exhibits

Exhibit 11: Memo with Concurrence Lines, Alternative Signature Enclosures, and Separate Cover Materials

SUBJECT: Research Issues Under Review

TO: Steve Sullivan
Research Leader

THROUGH: Wanda Wendall
Supervisory Editor

FROM: *for* Chavonda Jacobs-Young *Steven Kappes*
Administrator

There are many different styles that can be used to format memos and it is important in the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure you have selected the correct format for the type of memo that is being drafted.

For instance, the Office of the Secretary (OSEC) will only accept Decision Memos, Informational Memos, and Pre-Decision Memos, so please verify you have selected the most appropriate format when conveying information to OSEC in a memo.

The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

CONCUR: _____ DATE: _____

3 Enclosures:
Invasive Plants Are Not Our Friends
Handbook of Invasive Plants of North America
U.S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin No. 3:
History of Invasive Plant Management
in the United States and Mexico

Separate Cover:
CMU Correspondence Manual
GPO Style Manual 2016

Exhibit 12: Memo for the Administrator's Signature with ATTN Line and Alternative Signature

SUBJECT: Research Issues Under Review

TO: Saul Simon
Research Leader, PWA
ATTN: Joe Judge
Deputy Administrator, CPP

THROUGH: Wendy Woodruff
Editor, ONP

FROM: *for* Chavonda Jacobs-Young *Steven Kappes*
Administrator

There are many different styles that can be used to format memos and it is important in the U.S. Department Agriculture to ensure you have selected the correct format for the type of memo that is being drafted.

For instance, the Office of the Secretary (OSEC) will only accept Decision Memos, Informational Memos, and Pre-Decision Memos, so please verify you have selected the most appropriate format when conveying information to OSEC in a memo.

The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

Exhibits

Exhibit 13: Letter to be signed by the Secretary

Mr. Fred Ferguson
President
Farm Groups, Inc.
123 Pasture Lane
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania 16652

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

Thank you for your letter of March 23, 2018, concerning your request for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to begin developing biological controls to curtail the spread of wavyleaf basketgrass, which has established itself in the mid-Atlantic region.

The brown cow from USDA jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

I appreciate you taking the time to write about this important issue.

Sincerely,

Sonny Perdue
Secretary

ARS:ONP:APerry:301-504-4574:4/25/2018:W:\OAA\Scribes\SCRIBES\ARP2018 Letters\farms_OSEC

Exhibits

Exhibit 14: Letter for the Administrator's Signature

Mr. Fred Ferguson
President
Farm Groups, Inc.
123 Pasture Lane
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania 16652

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

Thank you for your letter of March 23, 2018, concerning your request for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to begin developing biological controls to curtail the spread of wavyleaf basketgrass, which has established itself in the mid-Atlantic region.

The brown cow from USDA jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

I appreciate you taking the time to write about this important issue.

Sincerely,

CHAVONDA JACOBS-YOUNG
Administrator

ARS:ONP:APerry:301-504-4574:4/25/2018:W:\OAA\Scribes\SCRIBES\ARP\2018 Letters\Farms_OA

Exhibits

Mr. Fred Ferguson

2

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The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

Sincerely,

CHAVONDA JACOBS-YOUNG
Administrator

3 Enclosures:
Invasive Plants Are Not Our Friends
Handbook of Invasive Plants of North America
U.S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin No. 3:
History of Invasive Plant Management in the
United States and Mexico

cc:
S. Kappes, OAA
J. Okamuro, ONP

bcc:
B. Boss, USDA Office of Pest Management Policy

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

ARS:ONP:APerry:301-504-4574:4/25/2018:W:\OAA\Scribes\SCRIBES\ARP\2018 Letters\Farms_OA

Exhibits

Exhibit 16: Letter for the Administrator's Signature with Subject Line

Mr. Fred Ferguson
President
Farm Groups, Inc.
123 Pasture Lane
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania 16652

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

**SUBJECT: Invasive Weeds in Your Back Yard and What USDA Can Do to Help
You and Your Neighbors**

Thank you for your letter of March 23, 2018, concerning your request for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to begin developing biological controls to curtail the spread of wavyleaf basketgrass, which has established itself in the mid-Atlantic region.

The brown cow from USDA jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The cow jumped the fence.

The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence. The brown cow jumped over the fence.

I appreciate you taking the time to write about this important issue.

Sincerely,

CHAVONDA JACOBS-YOUNG
Administrator

ARS:ONP:APerry:301-504-4574:4/25/2018:W:\OAA\Scribes\SCRIBES\ARP\2018 Letters\Farms_OA

Exhibits

Mr. and Mrs. John Doe

2

Similar letters to:

Mrs. Kathleen D. Le Fauve
13 Avalon Drive
Cincinnati, Ohio 14226

Ms. Sara Mayville
537 Holly Court
Cincinnati, Ohio 07430-3411

