

USDA Information Quality Guidelines for Scientific Research Information

USDA has a long history of providing information based on scientific research to support the work of Federal and State action and regulatory agencies, as well as all segments of the American agricultural, forest, natural resource management, nutrition, and related enterprises. These research products also are used by both the public and private sectors. These guidelines apply to all research information that is officially used or released by USDA or any of its agencies or offices.

Guidelines

To ensure the objectivity of scientific research information developed and disseminated by USDA, its agencies and offices should:

- Require a clear statement of the research objectives and a description of the approaches and methods that will be used in conducting the research.
- Subject the proposed research project(s) to a high quality and objective review.
- Where applicable, ensure the quality of research through the use of Good Laboratory Practices (FR: 40 CFR Part 160).
- Provide appropriate oversight to ensure that sound scientific practices are followed.
- Adhere to the Research Misconduct Policy promulgated by the Office of Science and Technology Policy on December 6, 2001, in the Federal Register (65 FR 76260). (See <http://www.ostp.gov/html/misconduct.html>.)

To ensure the utility, transparency, and reproducibility of the scientific research information developed and disseminated by USDA, its agencies and offices should:

- Ensure that research is relevant to the needs of the agency's customers, stakeholders, partners, and mission.
- Provide research information to the public that is reliable, unbiased, accurate, and clear.
- Provide an explanation that accompanies all research information detailing how it was obtained, what it is, the conditions to which it applies, and the limitations or reservations that should be applied in using the information.

To ensure the integrity of the scientific research information developed and disseminated by USDA, its agencies and offices should:

- Record and maintain, for an appropriate period of time, all experimental results, data, and analytic procedures needed to reproduce the released information in accordance with established governmental standards or, where applicable, widely recognized

scientific practices.

- Protect the information from unauthorized access or revision and ensure that the information is not compromised through corruption or falsification.
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Before releasing scientific research information, USDA agencies and offices should use one or more of the following procedures:

- Conduct a peer review that meets the standards recommended by OMB-OIRA.
- Confirm that the information to be released has been peer reviewed by a reputable scientific or professional journal, and the journal has agreed to publish the same information.
- Conduct an internal review, which for the purposes of establishing transparency, ensures that the report or research product clearly states what the information and data are, how they were obtained, and any reservations or limitations on their use.

In emergency circumstances that may pose an imminent threat to public health or welfare, the environment, and/or the national economy, these requirements may be temporarily waived.

[Link to the Information Quality Guidelines main page](#)

We welcome your comments and suggestions about these pages. For information related to the USDA Quality Information Guidelines, please contact [Dr. Bette Fugitt](#), USDA Records Officer. For comments regarding the site itself: ociowebmaster@ociofc.usda.gov
http://www.ocio.usda.gov/irm/qi_guide/research.html
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