

CONGRESSIONAL

PROCEDURES FOR CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES

<http://www.house.gov> (House of Representatives)

<http://www.senate.gov> (Senate)

Congressional inquiries (referred, direct mail, or telephone contact) **must** clear through supervisory channels to ARS Correspondence Management.

It is your responsibility to inform the legislative staff whenever you have communication with the congress or state legislatures in whatever form: i.e., telephone conversation, direct contact regarding requests for information, requests to appear or present papers to a congressional committee for a hearing or otherwise, etc.

It is particularly important that you inform the Legislative Staff when you are preparing for submission to the Congress or State Legislatures papers which will ultimately become part of a permanent record. Any "testimony" or information for submission before a Congressional Committee ***MUST*** be cleared in the Office of Management and Budget. Otherwise, it cannot and should not be submitted. The rule applies from the Administrator on down. That clearance is the responsibility of the Legislative Staff and the rule must be adhered to by all of us.

One further item: ***ALL*** Congressional correspondence directed to individuals within the Agency can, if appropriate, be responded to by the individual. **HOWEVER, THAT CORRESPONDENCE MUST BE TRANSMITTED TO THE ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE THROUGH THE NORMAL SUPERVISORY CHAIN OF COMMAND FOR INITIALING BEFORE FINAL TRANSMISSION TO THE CONGRESS.**

In case of telephone contacts, you should respond to the best of your ability or refer the call to your supervisor if you are not qualified to respond authoritatively. **Policies & Procedures 125.3 requires that a "Report of Congressional Conversation" Form (ARS-213) be completed immediately afterwards.** This form should be routed through supervisory channels and copies provided to the Area Director's office; distribution requirements are noted in the upper left-hand corner of the form.

REPORT OF CONGRESSIONAL CONVERSATION

DATE OF CONVERSATION
TIME OF CONVERSATION

INSTRUCTIONS: As soon as possible after completing an official conversation, prepare ARS-213 and distribute as follows:

ORIGINAL: Administrator, Agricultural Research Service **Copies** to: Legislative Staff; Director, Budget and Program Management Staff; File; Area Director *-Field Offices ONLY*.

CONVERSED WITH – Name and Title of Individual; Congressional Representative's Name, State, Office Phone Number and how contact was initiated.

EMPLOYEE'S NAME, TITLE, AND LOCATION

PHONE NO.

SUBJECT OF THE CONVERSATION

INFORMATION GIVEN

ACTION RECOMMENDED *(If further action is required)*

Form ARS-213 (5/85)

**REPORT OF CONGRESSIONAL CONVERSATION
FORM ARS-213
DISTRIBUTION ADDRESSES**

Mail to the following:

Mail **Original** to:

Dr. Edward B. Knipling
USDA/ARS/OA
Stop 0301
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-0301

Mail **Copies** to the following:

Dr. Caird Rexroad
USDA/ARS/OA
Stop 0301
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-0301

Marshall Tarkington
USDA/ARS/LS
Stop 2280
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-2280

Joseph S. Garbarino
USDA/ARS/BPMS
Stop 0302
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-0302

Antoinette A. Betschart
USDA/ARS/PWA
800 Buchanan Street
Albany, CA 94710

Form ARS-213a

MEDIA CONTACT

February 4, 2003

SUBJECT: Guidance on How to Handle Press/Media Contacts

TO: All PWA Employees

FROM: Michael C. Shannon /s/
Associate Area Director

We have been queried recently on what constitutes press/media contacts and who needs to be informed. Following is some guidance, regarding press/media contacts, received from Sandy Miller Hays, Director, ARS Information Staff.

If it's "major media" calling you, even if they simply want to inquire as to whether you think the sun will come up tomorrow morning, you **must** call Sandy Hays (301-504-1636) or, in her absence, Sean Adams (301-504-1622) BEFORE even agreeing to do the interview, let alone doing the interview! (A good way to define "major media:" If you've heard of them, and so has your third cousin in Greenville, Mississippi, they're "major media.") Calling/notifying your "research reporter" on the Information Staff is **not** adequate--you must call either Sandy or, if she's not around, Sean.

If it's local media, but the subject matter is "controversial," you must call Sandy or, in her absence, Sean, before even agreeing to do the interview. A good guide to "what's controversial" is the Sensitive Issues List, but sometimes things come up that are too impromptu for the list.....so, use your judgment. But, if you think, even for the briefest moment, that the subject **might** be controversial, always err on the side of caution and call Sandy/Sean before agreeing to do the interview.

If it's local media calling, and you know in your heart of hearts that the subject is not controversial, it's OK to do the interview and tell Sandy/Sean about it afterward. But, be very, very, very sure that it's not a "controversial" subject.

In addition, please remember to keep the Area Office informed of all press/media contacts, i.e., send a copy to the Area Director, Associate Director and Assistant Director.

For your convenience, here are some key e-mail addresses:

Area Director: abetschart@pw.ars.usda.gov

Associate Area Director: mshannon@pw.ars.usda.gov

Assistant Area Director: rmatteri@pw.ars.usda.gov

Director, Information Staff (Sandy Miller Hays): smhays@ars.usda.gov

Chief, Current Information Branch (Sean Adams): seanadams@ars.usda.gov

Info Staff Science Writer (Marcia Wood): marciawood@ars.usda.gov

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.