

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR CORRESPONDENCE

(Taken from the ARS Correspondence Manual)

<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/261-02mch-1-2.htm>

Correspondence must conform to ARS requirements -do not justify right hand margin; use a font that is 10 or 12 pitch, do not use proportional spacing; and ensure that printing is set to 6 lines per inch for vertical spacing¹.

Do not repeat organization names such as the Division or Area if it already appears on the letterhead. If you prepare/order letterhead, consult Policy and Procedure 256.2, Printed Letterheads, Envelopes, Post Cards, and Mailing Labels (1/11/94).

When referring to dates within the body of the letter, 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. Examples:

The reported dates of March 11, 1994, to June 12, 1996, were erroneous.

The reported dates March 11 to December 31, 1994 were erroneous.

The reported dates of March 1994 to June 1996 were erroneous.

Write out an abbreviation/acronym the first time it is used in the body of the letter, followed by the abbreviation/acronym shown in parentheses, i.e., Agricultural Research Service (ARS).

Type the full State or territory name in the body of the letter and inside address. Use two-letter State and territorial abbreviations only on the envelope.

When a letter written to the public mentions a specific company product or a trade name, include as a separate paragraph the disclaimer clause below:

"Use of a company or product name by the Department does not imply approval or recommendation of the product to the exclusion of others which may also be suitable"

¹The ARS Correspondence Manual was prepared in February 1991 when proportional spacing was not widely used; when preparing informal letters (memoranda) be sure the colons are aligned for "SUBJECT:", "TO:", "FROM:", etc., if you use proportional spacing.]

For letters with two or more pages, the addressee's name is placed on the left margin and the page number is flush with the right margin.

For letters longer than one page and addressed to more than one addressee, on the second and succeeding pages, type the name of the addressee listed first and "*et al*" flush with the left margin [*et al.* is Latin (*et alii*) for "and others"]. On the same line, type the page number flush with the right margin.

Type the complimentary close two lines below the body of the letter flush with the left margin. Use the closing "Sincerely," for Government correspondence. For disciplinary letters, use the complimentary close "Very truly yours,".

When material accompanies a letter, identify it in the text or in the bottom notation as an enclosure, not as an attachment. When an enclosure is identified in the text, type the word "Enclosure" flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the body of the letter. For more than one enclosure, use the plural form and indicate the number of enclosures.

If the enclosure is not identified in the text, type the word "Enclosure" flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the body of the letter. Below the notation, flush with the left margin, list each enclosure on a separate line.

Routinely show the distribution of copies on the original, information, and file copies to be retained with USDA. This practice informs the addressee and "cc:" addressees who have already received a copy and avoids duplicate copies being sent to those offices that have already received a copy. The distribution list should be placed on the original and information copies going outside of USDA only when the list is of interest to the recipient.

Type the "cc:" flush with the left margin two lines below the last line of the body of the letter or the enclosure. The "cc:" should show the addressee's initial(s) and last name followed by the organization abbreviation. List "cc:" hierarchically or alphabetically by organizational unit.

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 the "bcc:" flush with the left margin, two lines below the "cc:" notation or signature.

A concurrence line may be necessary so that the addressee can show agreement with the information presented. This indicates that the addressee and the signer of the correspondence share the same/similar opinion on the matter. Type the caption "CONCUR:" and a signature line on the last page of the original and all copies at the left margin. On the same line, type "DATE:" followed by a line.

An approval line may be necessary so that the addressee can approve/disapprove an action. Type the word "APPROVED:" and a signature line on the original and all copies at the left margin. On the same line type "DATE:" followed by a line. Prepare a letterhead copy of the letter for the approving official. The original is returned to the sender when approved/disapproved and used as file backup.

The Dictator's legend identifies correspondence and is placed on all copies. For the Dictator's legend, type the Agency, Division/Area, dictator's initials and surname, typist's initials, telephone number, date of typing, disk number, file name or electronic document designation on all file copies. Place this notation at the left margin, two lines below the last typed notation. Examples below relate to sample letters found in this section:

ARS:HCRL:LZETTLER:enf:209/453-3023:undated:C:\wp51\letters\Przybyl.jlz
ARS:WRRRC:ABETCHART:mw:510/559-5600:7/1/1997:A:\letters\jthompsn.ab

The return address on envelopes should be typed or stamped in the upper left corner over the words "Official Business."

Single space the address on an envelope or label. If a line is too long, continue it on the next line flush with the left margin. All lines of the address must be in block style and typed in all caps with no punctuation. Leave two spaces between the 2-letter state abbreviation and ZIP code. No punctuation should be used in the address except for the dash in the nine-digit zip code.

Up to five sheets of bond paper can be mailed in a single letter size envelope for the cost of one ounce. Fold document to fit into letter size envelopes, whenever possible. Flats (envelopes larger than 6-1/8" x 11-1/2") which weigh less than one ounce are subject to increased postage. Large brown envelopes will be sent Third Class Mail, unless marked "First Class Mail."

Remember to enclose envelopes for all addressees and a self-addressed envelope if you expect to have a copy returned to your location. Also, when sending correspondence that needs concurrence/approval, be sure to enclose a self-addressed envelope to return the original to you. NOTE: This is the same for travel vouchers, RPES materials, etc., that are approved in the Area Office and forwarded.

Correspondence and electronically transmitted information are subject to the Records and Information Management requirements prescribed in Policy and Procedure 251.3, Records Management (4/6/99).

When sending electronic messages internationally (Fax, e-mail, etc.), use the same clearance procedures that you would follow for preparing a letter.

CHOOSING THE FORMAT

GENERAL RULES

1. Use the **INFORMAL LETTER** format when the address is within the Department of Agriculture.
2. Use the **FORMAL LETTER** format:
 - a. when the addressee is **OUTSIDE** the Department of Agriculture
 - b. to congratulate, extend condolences, or reprimand ARS employees.

IF THE ADDRESSEE IS	USE LETTER FORMAT
Someone in ARS	INFORMAL (MEMORANDUM)
Someone in another USDA agency or USDA office	INFORMAL (MEMORANDUM)
Someone OUTSIDE the Department of Agriculture, i.e., private citizen or organization, foreign citizen or organization, White House officials, Members of Congress, Supreme Court officials, other Federal Departments	FORMAL
Someone in ARS for congratulations, condolences, or disciplinary actions	FORMAL

SEE SAMPLES FOR ALL OF THE ABOVE

NOTE: All samples shown in this Handbook are in accordance with the ARS Correspondence Manual 261.2 and Policies and Procedures 256.2.

With the increasing use of e-mail, a word in all capital letters is the same as SHOUTING. Therefore, the Pacific West Area Office prefers the signature block on formal letters be in upper and lower case letters for correspondence to be signed at the Area Level.

INFORMAL LETTERS (MEMORANDA)

GENERAL: The informal letter will be used for most day-to-day communications in the transaction of business within USDA.

EXCEPTIONS: Do not use the informal format when preparing letters addressed to an ARS employee stating congratulations, condolences, or disciplinary action. For these letters, use the formal format.

There should be one inch margins on the left and right hand sides. Do not justify the right margin.

DATE: The date should be placed three lines below the last line of the letterhead. Do not use endings such as "st" and "th" with numbers for the day. Military style is not acceptable.

SUBJECT LINE: The subject line of a memo is a brief statement, usually not more than 10 words, of what the memo is about. Type the caption "SUBJECT:" in all caps three lines below the date line. Limit the length of each line to approximately five inches. If more than one line is needed, type the remainder of the subject beneath the first line in block style. Capitalize the first letter of each word except articles, prepositions, and conjunctions.

TO LINE: The caption "TO:" is typed in caps two lines below the last line of the subject line. Indent five spaces from the left margin and begin typing the caption "TO:" on the sixth space so the colons are aligned. Indent two spaces after the colon and begin typing the address (11th space from the left margin). When runover lines are required, indent two spaces. Limit the address to five lines.

The name of the State MUST be spelled out, if the memorandum or letter is to be signed by the Administrator/Associate Administrator or above in the supervisory chain of command. If the letter is to be signed by the Area Director or below, the two letter State abbreviation is acceptable.

ATTENTION LINE: Avoid using the attention line by using as specific an address as possible. If an attention line is used, indent three spaces, type the caption "ATTN:" followed by the name of the person whose attention is being requested on the next line directly below the first line of the address.

THROUGH LINE: A through line may be necessary if an official other than a clearance official needs to see and concur with the memo before it is received by the addressee.

Type the caption "THROUGH:" in all caps two lines below the last line of the "TO:" addressee, flush with the left margin. Indent two spaces and begin typing the names, title, and offices of the addressees through which the memo is to be routed in ascending order.

SAMPLE: Area Director (name, title and Area)
Center Director (if appropriate - name, title and location)
Research Leader (name, title and location)
Supervisor (name, title and location)
Scientist (name, title and location)

Sign/initial and date the original, "cc:" and "THROUGH:" copies, and official file copy on the "THROUGH:" line to indicate approval.

FROM LINE: The caption "FROM:" is typed in all caps two lines below the last line of "TO:" address (or "THROUGH:" address, if used). Indent three spaces from the left margin and begin typing the caption "FROM:" on the fourth space. Do not repeat organizational names such as the Division or Area if it already appears on the letterhead.

If an acting official is to sign the memo from the regular signing official, the signer should sign (not initial) his/her name opposite the "FROM:" line and the write the word "for" before the regular signing official's name.

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

If more than one person will sign the memo, type the senders' names one below another. Use the letterhead of the originating office or a common use letterhead designed for that organization unit.

NOTE

All samples shown in this Handbook are in accordance with the ARS Correspondence Manual, which specifies the use of a font that is 10 or 12 pitch.

If proportional spacing type fonts are used, it is important that the colons following the "SUBJECT:", "TO:", "THROUGH:", and "FROM:" all be aligned as shown below. It is helpful to set a "right-hand tab" to align these headings.

SUBJECT: Subject Line Less Than 10 Words, Initial Caps

TO: Addressee

THROUGH: Approving Official

FROM: Originator

The left margin should be aligned with the A in Agriculture, which is about one inch.

The right margin should be one inch, but DO NOT JUSTIFY.

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When typing a two-page letter, the top margin of the second page should be one inch or begin typing on the sixth line. Make the left and right margins the same as page one.

The bottom margin should be one inch (about six typing spaces).



United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

NOTE: New letterhead must be used.

July 1, 1997

SUBJECT: FORMAT FOR ARS INFORMAL LETTERS MEMORANDA)

TO: See Distribution

FROM: J. M. Doe, Secretary to Area Director

This shows the format for preparing informal letters throughout Agricultural Research Service (ARS). This format will expedite the preparation of correspondence and save effort, time, and materials.

The following features of this format should please typists:

- a. Most elements are blocked along the left margins. This block style minimizes the use of the space bar, tabulator set key, etc.
- b. Its functional design features the use of the "SUBJECT:", "TO:", and "FROM:" lines and the absence of a salutation and complimentary close.
- c. Please use the word "Enclosure" for informal and formal letters. Please be consistent, use the word "enclosed" (not "attached") in the body of the letter.

Enclosure:
ARS Correspondence Manual

Distribution:
M. Woman
H. S. Man

cc: w/encl.
D. Jones, NPS
L. Brown, HRD



Pacific West Area - Office of the Area Director

800 Buchanan Street Albany, CA 94710-1105
Voice: 510.559.6060 Fax: 510.559.5779 E-mail: abetschart@pw.ars.usda.gov

Agricultural Research - Investing in Your Future

July 1, 1997

RESPONSE DUE: MAY 15, 1997

SUBJECT: FORMAT FOR INFORMAL LETTERS (MEMORANDA)
 TO: S. A. Doe, National Program Leader, NPS
THROUGH: John Smith, Area Director, PWA.
 Mary Jones, Center Director
 Ben Franklin, Research Leader, Plant Protection
 FROM: Brooke Brown, Research Entomologist

This is an example of an informal letter, with a response due. It should be mentioned in the body of the letter that responses are due in my office by May 15, 1997. The "THROUGH:" line is used because officials need to concur before it is received by the addressee. Remember the "THROUGH:" line is typed in ascending order. The body of the letter is doubled-spaced since it is a one- paragraph letter with 10 lines or less.

(Leave space for Date - 3 blank lines)

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

SUBJECT: EXAMPLE OF INFORMAL LETTER

TO: Jane Doe, Director
Office Systems Policy Staff
USDA, CSRS, General Services Division Federal Building
450 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

FROM: John Smith, Area Director

This is an example of an informal letter showing the use of "For Official Use Only" markings and the Approval/Disapproval Line. "For Official Use Only" markings are used on materials that are not for immediate public use; the markings are shown at both the top and bottom of each page. The top caption is typed two lines below the date of sender's reference (if used), flush with the left margin; the bottom caption is typed two lines below the last line on each page. If the caption falls above the middle of the page, place it below the middle of the page flush with the left margin.

When material referred to in the text is to be sent under separate cover, type "Separate Cover:" flush with the left margin, two lines below the signer's title or the enclosure notation (if used). List the material, whether or not identified in the text. Send a copy of the letter with the material sent under separate cover.

Concurrence and/or Approval Lines are types at the bottom of the page. Type the caption "CONCUR:" or "APPROVE/DISAPPROVE:", a signature line and a "DATE:" line, as shown in the sample on the next page.

If the correspondence will be signed outside the originating office, omit the date. The letter will be dated after signature and before mailing.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

On the second and succeeding pages, make side margins the same as page one. Allow a bottom margin of at least one inch. Starting with the second page, type the name of the addressee exactly as it is shown on the first page (excluding title). On the same line type the page number flush with the right margin. Continue the text two lines below the name of the addressee.

If the memo is addressed to more than one addressee, type the name of the addressee listed first and "et al." flush with the left margin.

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, and should be indicated on all copies.

This example showing a "mixture" may be helpful.

APPROVE/DISAPPROVE: _____
Area Director, PWA Date

Separate Cover:
ARS Correspondence Manual -10 copies

cc:
C .Craig, HRD
D. Combs, NPS

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

(Leave space for Date – 3 blank lines)

SUBJECT: Review of Final Technical Progress Report for Foreign
Agricultural Research project PL-ARS-000, "Insert Project Title"

TO: Antoni Przybyl
Agricultural University
Wojska Polskie St. 71C
60-625 Poznan, Poland

THROUGH: Ben Kramski, Director
Bureau of International Scientific and
Technical Program
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Food Economy
Warsaw, Poland

R. C. Hedlund, Acting Director, FERO-OICD
J. S. Walker, Program Leader, OICD
John Smith, Area Director, PWA
P. Sail, Laboratory Director

FROM: J. L. Zettler, Research Entomologist
Commodity Protection and Quarantine Insect Research Unit

This is a sample of the format which should be used by all locations when writing these types of letters which go through Office of International Research.

Complete addresses should be used only for individuals in foreign countries. DO NOT DATE THE MEMO. Since the memo will be signed in another office, leave enough room for dating the memo after it is signed. The office in which the memo is signed or dispatched will type or stamp the date on the original and all copies.

Each addressee which appears on the "THROUGH:" should get a copy, and include envelopes for all addressees.

When material accompanies a memo, identify it in the text and in the bottom notation as an enclosure NOT as an attachment. When the enclosure is not identified in the text, type the notation "Enclosure" flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the body in the memo.

Enclosure

cc:
B. Kramski
R. Hedlund
J. Walker
J. Smith
P. Sail

July 1, 1997

IN REPLY

REFER TO: CRIS: 5302-43000-023-00D

OVERNIGHT DELIVERY or FAXED (202/720-1111)

SUBJECT: EXAMPLE OF INFORMAL LETTER (YOUR LETTER, 6-16-97)

TO: John C. Doe, Director
Employee Relations and Labor Relations Branch
USDA, ARS
6303 Ivy Lane
Greenbelt, MD 20770

FROM: John Dove, Research Leader

This is an example of an informal letter showing Sender's Reference; overnight delivery and FAX notation. Most of our letters are not this detailed and the "SUBJECT:" line will be three lines below the date with the address, "FROM:" line and body of the letter following.

The address block is typed two lines below the subject; "FROM:" line is typed two lines below the "TO:" line; and the body of the letter is typed three lines below the "FROM" line. Begin each paragraph two lines below the last line of the preceding paragraph, flush with the left margin. Be sure the colons are aligned.

Double space letters of one paragraph (10 lines or less). Single space the body of letters longer than one paragraph.

FORMAL LETTERS

GENERAL: The formal letter is used for other than routine correspondence outside USDA. Always use the formal letter for letters addressed to the President, Vice President, members of the White House staff, Member of Congress, Justices of the Supreme Court, heads of departments and agencies outside the Department, State Governors, mayors, and foreign government officials. The formal letter is also used for ARS employees for congratulations, condolences, or disciplinary actions.

ADDRESS: For a letter that will be at least one full page in length, begin the address three lines below the date line. For short letters, begin the address no more than eight lines below the date line.

- Type the address single-spaced, block style with no terminal punctuation. No line should be longer than four inches. When runover lines are required, indent two spaces from the left margin. Limit the address to five lines.

- Type the State and territorial names in full. Use two-letter State and territorial abbreviations only on the envelope.

SALUTATION: Type salutation at left margin, two lines below the last line of the address.

BODY OF THE LETTER: Begin the body of the letter two lines below the salutation, flush with the left margin. Begin each main paragraph two lines below the last line of the preceding paragraph, flush with the left margin. Double space letters of one paragraph (10 lines or less). Single space the body of letter longer than one paragraph.

- Do not begin a paragraph near the end of a page unless there is room for at least two lines on that page. A paragraph should not be continued on the following page unless two lines can be carried over to that page.

- When referring to dates within the body of the letter, 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.

- Write out an abbreviation/acronym the first time it is used in the body of the letter followed by the abbreviation/acronym shown in parentheses. Example: Agricultural Research Service (ARS).

SIGNATURE ELEMENT: 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 (only) on the next line. Do not repeat organizational names such as the Division or Area if it already appears on the letterhead. **ENCLOSURES** - When material accompanies a letter, identify it in the text or in the bottom notation as an enclosure, not as an attachment.

July 1, 1997

Ms. A. M. Veneman, Director
California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento, California 95271

Dear Ms. Veneman:

The formal letter includes a salutation and complimentary close. Spacing and paragraphing in the body of the letter are the same as for the informal letter. Begin the body of the letter two lines below the salutation, block and flush with the left margin. Begin each main paragraph two lines below the last line of the preceding paragraph and flush with the left margin. Double space letters of one paragraph (10 lines or less). Single space the body of letters longer than one paragraph. The complimentary closing is typed two lines below the body of the letter, flush with the left margin. Use the closing of "Sincerely," in most cases.

When there is a reason to break a paragraph into subparagraphs, they may be lettered and numbered as follows:

- a. Main paragraphs are typed in block style. Subparagraphs are indented four spaces as shown in this example (begin typing with the fifth space). Subparagraphs are typed single-spaced with double spaces between them.

- (1) When a paragraph is subdivided, it must have at least two subdivisions.

- (a) Good rules to remember are: If we have an a, we must have b, if we have (1), we must have (2). Also, space two times after the paragraph in subparagraphing and one time after parentheses.

- (b) When a paragraph is cited, the reference numbers and letters are written without spaces, for example, "paragraph 3a(2)(c)."

(2) A paragraph is begun near the end of the page only if there is space for two or more lines on that page. A paragraph is continued on the following page only if two or more lines can be carried over to that page.

b. Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence. Numbers under 10 are to be spelled out, except when expressing time, money, and measurement.

Type the second and succeeding pages of a letter on plain bond paper the same quality as the first page. Starting with the second page, type the name of the addressee exactly as it is shown on the first page six lines from the top of the page and flush with the right margin. Continue the text two lines below the name of the addressee. Allow side margins of one inch and a bottom margin of at least one inch.

When referring to dates within the body of the letter, 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 with a sentence. Examples:

- a. The reported date of September 11, 1993, was erroneous.
- b. The reported dates of September 1993 to June 1994 were erroneous.

Write out an abbreviation/acronym the first time it is used in the body of the letter, followed by the abbreviation/acronym shown in parentheses.

Ann Veneman

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When material accompanies a letter, identify it in the text or in the bottom notation as an enclosure, not as an attachment. When an enclosure is identified in the text, type the word "Enclosure" flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the signer's title. For more than one enclosure, use the plural form and indicate the number of enclosures. When an enclosure is not identified in the text, type as in the example below.

Sincerely,

Beverly Ceres
Secretary to Area Director

4 Enclosures:
Form Letters Handbook
Plain Letters Pamphlet
U.S. Government Correspondence Manual – 2 copies

July 1, 1997

Dr. John Thompson
905 Solano Avenue
Albany, California 94706

Dear Dr. Thompson:

This is in reference to your letter of June 19, 1997. Enclosed is an exhibit which shows the format for preparing formal letters throughout the Agricultural Research Service. This style will expedite the preparation of correspondence and save effort, time, and materials.

The following features of this format should please typists and secretaries:

- a. Most elements are blocked along the left margin. This block style minimizes the use of the space bar, tabulator set key, etc.
- b. The formal letter is suitable for those situations when the writer knows that the addressee would expect a more personalized letter (congratulatory, condolence, or disciplinary actions).

Sincerely,

Mary Jones
Center Director

Enclosure

cc: w/encl.
D. L. Craig, HRD
R. D. Smith, NPS

January 3, 1997

Dr. Edwin L. Soderstrom
USDA, ARS, PWA
Horticultural Crops Research Laboratory
2021 South Peach Avenue
Fresno, CA 93727

Dear Ed:

On behalf of the Horticultural Crops Research Laboratory and the Pacific West Area, I wish to express my appreciation for your 35 years of Federal Service. Your contributions toward the development of controlled atmospheres technology, development and use of pheromones, and basic biological research have been significant.

Your considerable efforts in the field of stored product entomology have been duly noted. Your efforts were innovative as was demonstrated by the large scale use of controlled atmospheres and integration with other control technologies.

Please accept this pin and desk set with my congratulations. Because of the efforts of Research Entomologists such as yourself, ARS continues to be the premier Agency for agricultural research.

I hope your retirement will prove enjoyable and satisfying.

Sincerely,

John Smith
Area Director

Enclosure

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

Foreign correspondence, including e-mail, between scientists on research subjects is normally not considered to be controlled correspondence.

Foreign correspondence between ARS and a foreign government is classified as controlled correspondence. In this case, direct correspondence is not allowed. All such correspondence must go through the ARS Correspondence Management Unit for mailing. The steps are listed below:

1. Scientist drafts letter and obtains local (RL) approval.
2. Correspondence is forwarded to Area Office for approval.
3. Area Office forwards correspondence to Mary Haley in the Correspondence Management Unit:

Mary Haley
USDA-ARS-CMU
Stop 0303; Room 315A Whitten Bldg.
1400 Independence Ave SW
.Washington, DC 20250-0303
(202) 720-3985; fax (202) 720-5427

4. Correspondence Management Unit forwards correspondence to the Foreign Agricultural Service/Area Office, which distributes to the specialist in the Foreign Agricultural Service who handles the country for which the correspondence is addressed.

Listed below are the copy/envelope requirements for controlled foreign correspondence:

1. Original and courtesy copy (with enclosure(s), if any) - signed and undated.
2. Envelope with addressee's address and return address of originator .
3. Copy of letter (without legend) for American Embassy or Agricultural Counselor with copy of incoming correspondence, if any.
4. White copy (with legend) for Foreign Agricultural Service.

5. Yellow (file) copy (with legend) to be returned to originator, in self-addressed envelope.

CHECKLIST

Spelling.

Capitalization.

Punctuation.

Abbreviations.

Hyphens.

Widows and orphans - less than two lines of a paragraph on a page.

Right-hand margin not justified.

Is stationery correct?

Has correspondence been addressed to the proper person?

Are the names and addresses correct?

Limit inside address to a maximum of five lines.

Type the State and territorial names in full if correspondence will be signed by the Administrator/Associate Administrator or above using two-letter State and territorial abbreviations only on the envelope.

Correspondence with 10 lines or less must be doubled-spaced.

Single numbers less than ten within a sentence must be spelled out.

Addresses listed in body of letter should include zip code.

Has the correct correspondence been acknowledged?

If incoming correspondence was addressed to someone other than the signer, has that been acknowledged?

Does sender's correspondence include a reference? If so, include in first sentence of correspondence, either in parentheses or set off by commas.

Second page and succeeding pages - addressee's name on left side and page number on right side.

Complimentary close - always "Sincerely," except in disciplinary letters.

Six spaces between complimentary close and signature block.

Legend complete?

Have all enclosures been properly identified and cited?

Has incoming correspondence been attached to the proper copy?

If a Congressional letter, has constituent's letter, if original, been returned to Congressman and has this been indicated on file copies?

Has "Approval/Disapproval" line been typed (if appropriate)?

Have cc' s been shown on all file copies?

Information copies - cc' s not always shown on original, use judgment.

NOTE Correspondence sent to the Area Director's office for signature should not be dated. The Area Office will date after correspondence is signed.
Please include envelopes for all addressees.

Correspondence received in the Area Office in the incorrect format may be returned to the originating office for corrections.

When sending something to the Area Director for approval, follow normal supervisory channels.

REVIEWING AND PROOFREADING CORRESPONDENCE

Each typist is responsible for ensuring that all the correspondence she/he prepares is as correct and accurate as possible in every detail.

Errors in a letter can prevent the correspondence from conveying the message the writer sets out to transmit.

Reasons for errors generally fall into two main categories:

1. **CARELESSNESS**, such as:

- Typographical errors, i.e., wrong letters, strikeouts, transpositions of letters, errors in spacing.
- Poor margin balance, i.e., top and bottom and right and left margins out of balance.
- .Poor text placement, i.e., text placed too high or too low on page.
- Wrong stationery or correspondence format.

2. **LAZINESS**, i.e., failure to consult reference sources which result in:

- Misspelled words and names-all misspellings are serious, but misspelled names are unforgivable!!
- Errors in selection of words, i.e., subject/verb agreement or words that sound alike but have different spelling and/or meaning.
- Errors in dates and figures.
- Errors in capitalization and punctuation.

Such errors reflect unfavorably upon the office that prepares the correspondence. Therefore, each typist should proofread every letter carefully and correct all errors **BEFORE** it is sent out.