

CARE FUNCTIONAL REVIEW  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

5.0 AFM Systems

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the Functional questions in this section, please contact Rhonda Sampson, ARS Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Web Branch, on 301-504-3269.

- REE Directory: Is the Location experiencing any problems updating information in the REE Directory?

The REE Directory contains information on all ARS employees. Each Location should verify personnel and locator information on <https://reedir.arsnet.usda.gov/> and submit needed updates. Contact the Location Information Technology Specialist for assistance.

5.01 Voice/Data/Video/Wireless Telecommunications

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Brenda Katulski, ARS TMACO, on 301-504-1100 or Maureen Harris, ARS/Back-up TMACO, on 301-504-1088.

- Per REE Bulletin 07-002, Locations should submit through their Area Information Technology Specialist (AITS) a draft Information Technology (IT) Acquisition Approval Request (AAR) and supporting documents for the following IT acquisitions prior to purchasing: 1) IT Acquisitions exceeding \$25,000; 2) IT Acquisitions, regardless of dollar value, related to hardware, software, and services for systems within the administrative and financial functional areas or Presidential eGovernment activities; and 3) IT Acquisitions, regardless of dollar value, for Internet access utilizing any external provider other than the USDA Universal Telecommunications Network (UTN). AITS are responsible for reviewing and forwarding for approval, if appropriate, to the ARS IT AAR Coordinator for further review and coordination with the Department. Locations should not make purchases and contracting officers should not award a contract or order of the above until they have received an approved IT AAR by the ARS IT AAR Coordinator, Gary Rich, which will include both the Department's approval and ARS/OCIO's approval. For more specifics, please contact Gary Rich at 301-504-1052 and review REE Bulletin 07-002 dated April 11, 2007.

The CARE Team should review all Location IT acquisitions as mentioned above since April 11, 2007, and confirm whether the Location received an approved ARS IT AAR via the ARS IT AAR Coordinator for any of these IT acquisitions. The CARE Team should notify the ARS IT AAR Coordinator of any violations to this policy.

- Does the Location use GSA's FTS2001 contract for the following long distance telecommunications services with VerizonBusiness: 1) intraLATA – local toll dialing; 2)

interLata - long distance dialing; 3) international dialing; 4) data circuits; 5) video circuits; 6) toll-free; 7) conferencing – audio, Web, and video; and 8) calling cards? If not, does it have an approved exception from the ARS TMACO?

Per USDA Directive DR-3300-1, the GSA FTS2001 contract must be used for these services unless the Agency TMACO grants an approved exception. Some Locations may not be able to comply with some provisions of this requirement because they are using university or state services that are mandatory for that Location.

The CARE Team should review monthly telecommunications bills via paper copy, TUMS, or PCMS to see whether the Location is being billed for the above long distance services under any different vendors/contracts. All GSA FTS2001 billing is thru the GSA IPAC system and totals can only be reviewed via FSIS unless the Location is receiving FTS2001 monthly reports. Some Locations do receive monthly reports and some do not. The CARE Team should note exceptions in the report with the reason the Location is not using the FTS2001 contract and whether they requested and received a written exception approval from the ARS TMACO. The CARE Team should also forward this information to the ARS TMACO for possible assistance.

- Has the Location consulted the GSA Federal Supply Schedule for wireless equipment and services prior to making new purchases or updating existing equipment/services?

Per USDA Directive DR 3300-1, the GSA Federal Supply Schedule is mandatory for consideration but not usage. Locations are required to compare the wireless carrier schedule offerings prior to ordering equipment or services off the schedule. More often than not, the GSA Federal Supply Schedule does offer better pricing and service plans.

The CARE Team should review the Locations wireless telecommunications bills via paper copy, TUMS, or PCMS and supporting documentation to see if they considered the GSA Federal Supply Schedule. The CARE Team should recommend to the Location that they contact the ARS TMACO for additional vendor support to ensure that they are maximizing their monthly wireless cost savings.

- Does the Location have any hearing or speech impaired employees? Are these employees using the GSA FedRelay contract? If not, would they benefit from using the services on this contract?

Per the USDA Directive DR 3300-1, agencies are required to use this contract for their hearing and speech impaired employees if it assists in helping their employees do their work more productively and to be able to participate in teleconferences, etc.

The CARE Team should identify any hearing and speech impaired employees and whether they are using the GSA FedRelay contract. This information should be forwarded to the ARS TMACO for further review and to work with the Location and employees to provide service if appropriate.

## 5.02 Radio Frequency/Secure Telephone/GETS Cards

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Maureen Harris, REE Radio Frequency Manager (RFM) and REE Secure Telephone/GETS Cards Coordinator, on 301-504-1088.

- Does the Location use radio frequencies? If so, are they authorized Government frequencies issued by the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA)? If yes, has the radio, telemetry, or Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment been certified for narrow banding? If no, when does the Location plan to replace/upgrade this equipment? Contact the REE RFM for assistance.

If the Location uses radios, telemetry, or GPS equipment to transmit data, it must have authorization for a Government radio frequency on file (per USDA Directive DR 3300-1 and ARS Directive 260.1). Examples of telemetry and GPS equipment: transmitters on cattle that send information to data collection systems; wireless hydrologic measurement tools; GPS systems on tractors; weather condition measurement tools sending information back to a central collection point using wireless modems.

Due to the mandatory transition to narrowband, the NTIA requires all Government agencies using land mobile radio systems in the 162-174 MHz (VHF) and 406-420 MHz (UHF) frequency bands to operate at 12.5 KHz on either side of the assigned frequency.

After receipt of a request for a frequency assignment, the REE RFM is responsible for requesting a Radio Frequency Authorization (RFA) from the NTIA.

Prior to using the radio frequency, a Location must have the Radio Frequency Authorization (RFA) in hand. Ideally, the Location should have the RFA prior to purchasing equipment. NOTE: Requests for new radio frequency assignments take at least 6 months and often much longer, so planning is important.

Locations may not use non-Government (FCC) frequencies, such as those utilized by radios purchased from Radio Shack. Use of non-Government (FCC) radio frequencies that are licensed to local public safety or university organizations is allowed ONLY with a mutually-approved arrangement. As part of this arrangement, the Government agency must obtain, from the non-Government licensee, written certification that the Government operation of these radios is necessary. A copy of this certification should be forwarded to the REE RFM.

In accordance with NTIA and USDA directives, all RFAs must be reviewed every 5 years from original approval or modification so that frequencies no longer required can be released for use elsewhere. The REE RFM is in charge of this review and will contact Locations when respective RFAs are due for review.

Please ensure Location has RFAs in their possession for any equipment they operate as listed above.

- Does the Location have a need for secure telephone/fax or GETS cards? If yes, do the person/persons who would have access to the secure phone/fax have appropriate security clearances? Are these items secured according to regulation?

These communications options are used primarily in a COOP situation. While most Locations would have no need for such items, there may be some Locations/persons (i.e., BSL-3 labs, top Area Administration) that would find them beneficial for continuity of operations in an emergency situation. USDA Directive DR3300-1, Appendices D and J, define the requirements for National security and emergency preparedness telecommunications. Contact the REE Secure Telephone/GETS Cards Coordinator for assistance.

### 5.03 Commercial Telecommunications Billing and NFC

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Brenda Katulski, ARS TMACO, on 301-504-1100 or Maureen Harris, ARS Back-up TMACO, on 301-504-1088.

- Per USDA AGAR Advisory 58A dated 11-01-03 and ARS Bulletin 03-001 dated 11-24-03, Locations must pay for all non-recurring commercial telecommunications purchases over \$350 via IAS or TUMS and for all recurring monthly commercial telecommunications purchases, regardless of dollar value, via TUMS. The ARS TMACO can grant exceptions for these purchases to be paid via a purchase card only if the vendor is threatening to disconnect service or the mission of the Agency necessitates an emergency.

The CARE Team should review the Location's PCMS transactions to see if this policy is being followed. If the CARE Team identifies any payments made via PCMS, the CARE Team should verify if the ARS TMACO approved these exceptions to the policy. The CARE Team should notify the ARS TMACO of any policy violations.

- Per ARS e-mail dated 5-22-08 titled "Change in NFC Billing Address for Commercial Telecom Bills - Effective June 2, 2008", NFC ordered all commercial telecommunications vendors to change the billing address for all USDA bills from either New Orleans or the agency's address to an address in St. Louis. This was the first phase of the new NFC ECM process for scanning commercial telecommunications bills into a repository for agencies to be able to review their bills in their entirety at a later date and to also ensure that all bills were making into the NFC billing system for timely payment. Phase 2 will be rolled out in February 2009 and agencies will be notified on how they can obtain access via NFC to review all of their bills that have been scanned since June 2008. The CARE Team should verify if the Location is aware of this new ECM process and if they have requested an ECM id and password and are reviewing their commercial telecommunications bills for accuracy and to request billing credits thru their vendors. If not, the CARE Team should refer the Location to the ARS TMACO for further assistance.

#### 5.04 Information Collection from the Public

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Yvette Anderson, ARS/OCIO on 202-720-4030.

- Does the Location obtain OMB approval before conducting surveys to the public?

The Paperwork Reduction Act and OMB regulations require advance OMB approval before collecting information from 10 or more persons outside the Federal Government. This includes questionnaires, surveys, and applications for services, regardless of the media. For example, Web sites are now used to gather information. For further information and assistance, first contact the Area Office, then the Information Collection Officer in OCIO.

#### 5.05 Records Management

If there are questions of a functional nature or you need assistance interpreting this section, please contact Jim Neal, Records Manager on 301-504-4567.

- Does the Area Office and its Locations establish, maintain, protect, retire and/or dispose of records according to current National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Departmental, and Agency policies and procedures? If yes, does Area Office staff periodically review these Regulations, Policies, and Procedures for changes?

According to ARS P&P 251.8 (<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/PDF/251-08.pdf>), documentary materials created or received by Agency employees that qualify as records are the property of the U.S. Government. They must not be removed from Agency custody or destroyed without the approval of NARA. Employees may only dispose of records in accordance with the General Records Schedules (GRS) or a NARA-approved records control schedule for the Agency. Additional USDA Records Management Regulations can be found at (<http://www.ocio.usda.gov/records/policy.html#regulations>).

- Does the Area Office or its Locations retire or transfer eligible records to a Regional Records Facility (<http://www.archives.gov/frc/>)?

Instructions for retiring/transferring records are contained in REE Records Management Manual 251.8M (<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/PDF/251-08M.pdf>). To determine which facility services the Area Office visit the NARA Web site (<http://www.archives.gov/locations/>) or contact: James Neal @ 301-504-4567.

- Does the Area Office or its Locations have material that would be categorized as Sensitive Security Information or “National Security Classified,” “Confidential”, “Secret,” or “Top Secret”? If so, is it maintained in accordance with Departmental Regulations DR-3400-002, DR 3440-001 and/or Departmental Manual DM-3440-1 (Records Management Policy)?

- Has anyone at the Location had training in basic Records Management training?
- Is there a need at the Location for annual Records Management training?
- Is there a need for a Records Management liaison at the Location? The liaison provides assistance to the ARS Records Officer and handles routine records management functions.

#### 5.06 Policy and Procedures Management

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Jackie Sharp-Hendrix, ARS/OCIO on 202-720-5507.

See <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/> for information on this subject. For information about the REE Administrative Issuances system, consult P&P 010, “The REE Administrative Issuances System,” dated May 25, 1999. When new issuances are added to the P&P Web site or when major changes are made to issuances, the REE Issuances Manager will notify ARS DADs and Location Administrative Officers via e-mail.

- Is the Location using the latest version of administrative issuances that are on the P&P Web site? If not, why not? Are these issuances in a format that is usable by the Location? If the Location is using issuances that have been canceled or replaced, the CARE Team should list the number, title, and date of these issuances as well as the reason. This will be used to help rewrite existing issuances so that they will better serve the organization.

#### 5.07 Printed Forms

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Yvette Anderson, ARS/OCIO on 202-720-4030.

- Is the Location encountering any problems ordering forms from the Beltsville Services Center, Beltsville, Maryland?

Any Location needing paper copies of forms can order them from the Beltsville Service Center, Beltsville Maryland. These orders may be placed either via a paper copy of AD-14 or CFPDC-1, or through the electronic ordering system. Locations should contact their Area Offices for more information.

- Are printed envelopes or letterhead ordered?  
Offices that have a need for letterhead design, envelope design, etc. should contact the representative for their Location. (ARS P&P 256.2, “Printed Letterhead, Envelopes, Postcards, Mailing Labels, (ARS)” dated 05/15/06) The P&P can be found through the following link: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/pplist.htm>.

#### 5.08 Mail and Messenger Services

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Yvette Anderson, ARS/OCIO on 202-720-4030.

See <http://pe.usps.gov/text/DMM/P030.htm> and <http://pe.usps.gov/text/qsg/q024.htm> for further information.

- Does the Location maintain accountability records of the postage meter activity?

If the Location is metering its own mail, ARS P&P 263.3, dated 04/02/91, and the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) require manual or automated accountability records of postage meter activity. Either PS Form 3602-A, “Daily Record of Meter Register Readings,” or an in-house automated system should be used. Accountability records must be maintained for 6 years before disposition in accordance with the General Records Schedule.

- Does the Location properly secure the postage meter?
- Is the postage meter inspected according to postal regulations (see above Web sites for table)?

#### 5.09 IT Resource Planning

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Doug Page, ARS/OCIO Chief Technical Officer, on 301-504-5600.

- Verify that the unit ARMP includes IT purchases planned and required for the FY, including hardware/software replacements and purchases, dedicated telecommunications acquisitions (circuits, routers, telephone systems), maintenance and support contracts, Web page development, support, etc.

The Location is required to forecast planned acquisitions of dedicated telecommunications services and equipment in its annual ARMP package (see Administrator’s ARMP “kickoff” letter). Due to special Departmental mandates for telecommunications, all such equipment, regardless of cost, must be included in the forecast. Review the Location’s last ARMP package to see if any dedicated telecommunications services and equipment were forecasted and make a note of that on the report.

- Verify that all planned acquisitions which are \$25,000 or greater are supported by an IT acquisition waiver request.

As indicated in the memo from the USDA Chief Information Officer dated May 13, 2003, the USDA/OCIO requires each agency to obtain an approved waiver for IT acquisitions of \$25,000 or greater. All draft waiver requests and supporting documentation are forwarded to Gary Rich, ARS/OCIO. Gary then reviews the waiver request, circulates it for internal review and comment within

OCIO, then prepares the final draft for signature by the Administrator and submission to the USDA/OCIO for approval.

## 5.10 Web Sites

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Pete Lombardo, ARS/OCIO Web Branch Chief, on 301-504-1073.

- Does the Location have a public-facing Web site?

Provide the following information for the Location's public-facing Web site(s). If there is more than one public-facing Web site, please duplicate requested information.

Web Site Base URL: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible Location (and Mode Code)

Is this the primary organizational site for this Location?

Primary contact(s):

Name:

E-mail address:

- Technology/Platforms (such as SSI, ASP, JSP, or ColdFusion)
- Key Word Phrases (such as "Children Nutrition")

- Is the Web site compliant with USDA regulations?

ARS Policy and Procedure entitled "ARS World Wide Web Sites," Number 265.0 can be found at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/PDF/265-0.pdf>. This contains both ARS policy as well as references to broader USDA and Federal-wide policies.

- Does the Location make best use of existing Web/Internet communication services rather than duplicating them?

The ARS Web site presents information on all ARS employees as well as all research projects, Locations, publications, and patents approved for public disclosure. The data for these come from the ARIS and REE Directory databases. Both short and long version orientation videos are available for further information and broad dissemination at [http://sp.arsnet.usda.gov/training/ars\\_website\\_short.swf](http://sp.arsnet.usda.gov/training/ars_website_short.swf) and [http://sp.arsnet.usda.gov/training/ars\\_website\\_long.swf](http://sp.arsnet.usda.gov/training/ars_website_long.swf) respectively. For more information, send an e-mail to [webmaster@ars.usda.gov](mailto:webmaster@ars.usda.gov).

In addition, e-mail list services (aka a listserve) are available for use in communicating with both the public and workgroups who span across agencies. For more information, send an e-mail to [webmaster@ars.usda.gov](mailto:webmaster@ars.usda.gov).

- Is the Location experiencing any problems getting information updated on the ARS Web site?

Each Location should verify its relevant information and submit needed updates as outlined in either the orientation video (above) or in many of the links under “Helpful Resources” of the SitePublisher main menu. E-mail [webmaster@ars.usda.gov](mailto:webmaster@ars.usda.gov) for assistance.

- Does the Location make best use of existing Collaboration/Intranet communication services rather than duplicating them?

Each Location should look to the ARSnet/SharePoint platform for its online collaboration needs. Users should contact their Location IT Specialist or e-mail [sharepoint@ars.usda.gov](mailto:sharepoint@ars.usda.gov) for assistance.

#### 5.11 e-Authentication

For information on the interpretation or clarification on the functional questions in this section, please contact Michael Witles, ARS/OCIO on 301-504-1071.

- Are employees at the Location aware of the Federal Government’s e-Authentication credentialing process and that these credentials must be established prior to accessing systems such as the AgLearn on-line training management system and the new WebTA system?

Many Federal services and applications are available to USDA employees and customers electronically. In order to access certain systems USDA employees must establish their e-Authentication credentials and acquire a standard username and password.

The data required for credentialing are available on the employee’s most recent Earnings and Leave Statement (AD-334) which is mailed by the NFC and also on the Personnel Action Form SF-50. If the employee does not have the most recent versions of these documents, they should contact the AO or their servicing human resources assistant.

The USDA e-Authentication Web site is located at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov>. The USDA Directive 3610-001 (11/04/04), “USDA e-Authentication Services” is located at <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/files/dr/DR3610-001.htm>.

- Are employees at the Location experiencing any problems getting an e-Authentication credential established?  
The Frequently Asked Questions for the USDA e-Authentication are located at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/eauthFAQ.html>. For assistance with the employee credentialing implementation process, contact the e-Authentication Help Desk at [eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov](mailto:eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov) or call toll free 1-800-457-3642. In the event the e-Authentication Help Desk is unable to provide assistance, ARS employees should contact their Area IT Specialist or the ARS Help Desk at 1-866-802-4877. Members of the OCIO Service Desk at Headquarters have the ability to assist with ID and Password issues accessing systems that use the e-Authentication logon process.