



United States
Department
of Agriculture


Research,
Education, and
Economics

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

1400 Independence
Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

May 6, 2016

TO: State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Cooperative Extension Directors
1890 Research Deans-Directors
1890 Extension Directors

FROM: Sonny Ramaswamy 
Director – NIFA

SUBJECT: Clarification of NIFA Policy for Integrated Research and Extension Reporting

This correspondence is to clarify the intent of a memo I sent to all 1862 and 1890 Deans and Directors on November 8, 2012, which described a new policy that all Plans of Work (POW) and Annual Reports be submitted to NIFA at the “state level.” This policy, which was approved by the Office of Management and Budget via the Federal Register process, requires that each 1862 and 1890 Research and Extension organization within a state work together to develop and submit a combined Plan of Work and Annual Report.

The intent of this policy is to provide NIFA a mechanism for efficiently identifying the *programmatic* collaboration and integration between Research and Extension (and multiple Land-Grant Universities in some states). NIFA must be adept at responding to stakeholders and decision-makers at all levels of government when data is needed to demonstrate the greater return on investment when Research and Extension are strategically informing their respective programs. When NIFA program leaders review POWs and Annual Reports, they look for evidence that there are open lines of communication and feedback loops in place within organizations to ensure Research and Extension are working together to plan integrated work as appropriate. Having a single Plan of Work and Annual Report for each institution or state and insular area helps us do just that.

NIFA’s need to collect data about integrated programs via a single Plan of Work does not imply any intent or requirement to force administrative restructuring at Land-Grant institutions. Our intent is simply to see evidence in a single report that Research and Extension are collaborating at the program level to strengthen the impact of said programs. How an institution(s) chooses to structure their administrative units to achieve this is at their discretion.

I have asked my staff in the Planning, Accountability, and Reporting office to include this topic as an agenda item in upcoming webinars and newsletters related to Plan of Work reporting so that we can ensure any further clarification you may need is provided.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.