

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

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# FSIS NOTICE

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21-18

4/16/18

## SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY POLICY AND TRAINING AT FSIS

### I. PURPOSE

This notice is to make FSIS employees aware of USDA's Scientific Integrity policy and sets out the training requirements for each FSIS program area. Employees who have already taken Scientific Integrity training do not need to retake the training.

### II. BACKGROUND

A. To ensure the highest level of integrity in all aspects of the Department's engagement in scientific and technological activities and use of scientific information in policymaking, USDA established a Department-wide [scientific integrity policy](#) through the issuance of [Departmental Regulation 1074-001](#) ("Scientific Integrity"). The policy sets forth the principles of scientific integrity, and the roles and responsibilities of all USDA employees in upholding these principles. Scientific integrity is the condition resulting from adherence to professional values and practices when conducting, reporting, and applying the results of scientific activities that ensures objectivity, clarity and reproducibility, and that provides insulation from bias, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, inappropriate influence, political interference, censorship, and inadequate procedural and information security.

B. USDA issued [Departmental Manual 1074-001](#) ("Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Compromised Scientific Integrity") to establish well-defined and robust mechanisms for reviewing and resolving allegations that scientific integrity has been compromised. The manual establishes a multi-phase process for responding to scientific integrity concerns in a timely and objective manner, and establishes safeguards for those who report scientific integrity concerns.

C. To ensure the highest levels of integrity in all aspects of the Agency's engagement in scientific activities and use of information resulting from such activities, FSIS requires all employees to take training on USDA's Scientific Integrity policy. In FSIS Notice 82-13, *FSIS Scientific Integrity Policy Implementation*, the Agency announced the establishment of training requirements for scientific integrity for all FSIS employees.

D. FSIS has included Scientific Integrity training as part of on-boarding of new field employees and worked closely with the Department to make a hardcopy version available to FSIS employees who do not have regular access to the web to complete this training. This has resulted in the majority of employees having completed this "one-time" training. However, FSIS is requiring existing employees who have not completed the training to do so.

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**DISTRIBUTION:** Electronic; All  
Field Employees

**NOTICE EXPIRES:** 5/1/19

**OPI:** OPPD

### III. SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY TRAINING

A. The purpose of the scientific integrity training is to facilitate communication and understanding of the requirements in USDA's *Scientific Integrity* policy and process for handling allegations of violations of this policy. USDA's *Scientific Integrity* training covers a wide range of topics, including:

1. Purpose of USDA Scientific Integrity Policy;
2. Role and responsibilities of USDA employees under this policy;
3. Communication with the public and media;
4. Federal advisory committees;
5. Participation in professional societies and acceptance of awards; and
6. Reporting alleged compromise of scientific integrity.

B. There are two training courses available in [Aglearn](#) (level 2 e-authentication is required to access this site).

1. The "USDA Scientific Integrity Policy Full Version Course," which takes approximately one hour to complete, provides in depth coverage of the provisions in the revised DR; and
2. The "USDA Scientific Integrity Policy Lite Version Course," which takes approximately 20 minutes to complete, provides a broad overview of the provisions in the revised DR.

C. Employees in the Office of Public Health and Science, Office of Data Integration and Food Protection, and Office of Policy and Program Development will be assigned to take the "USDA Scientific Integrity Policy Full Version Course" (B. 1. above). These program areas either generate the data and science or use it to guide policy decisions.

D. Employees in all other programs will be assigned the "USDA Scientific Integrity Policy Lite Version Course" (B. 2. above) (e.g., The Office of Field Operations only requires a broad understanding and awareness of scientific integrity policy).

E. All new contracts with FSIS will include the requirement that contractors and subcontractors complete one of the scientific integrity courses.

### IV. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice and any allegation of scientific integrity misconduct to: [FSIS\\_ScientificIntegrity@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:FSIS_ScientificIntegrity@fsis.usda.gov).



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