



United States
Department of
Agriculture

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Office of the
General
Counsel

1400
Independence
Avenue, SW,
Room 107-W
Washington,
DC
20250-2120

TO: All USDA Employees

FROM: Stephen Alexander Vaden
General Counsel
Office of the General Counsel

Stuart Bender
Director
Office of Ethics

SUBJECT: Reminder of Ethics Resources Available to USDA Employees

This memorandum serves as a timely reminder of the many resources provided to you by USDA's Office of Ethics. Integrity and ethical conduct are fundamental to the important work conducted by Department of Agriculture employees across our nation. Whether, during the COVID-19 outbreak, you are working remotely or whether your job requires you to be on the frontlines to ensure the nation's food safety and continuity of the food supply infrastructure, each of us must be unwavering in our personal commitment to exemplary ethics so that we can live up to USDA's motto to "Do right and feed everyone." For employees who have ethics or Hatch Act questions, the USDA Office of Ethics reminds you that, as always, Office of Ethics advisors and a full array of electronic long-distance Ethics resources are available to assist you.

How to Contact the Office of Ethics:

At Attachment "A" is a list of the various Office of Ethics e-mailboxes that are monitored and staffed by USDA Office of Ethics employees during normal working hours. Also included is a link to the contact information and e-mails for all Office of Ethics staff. This information can also be located on USDA's webpage at <https://www.ethics.usda.gov>.

Ethics Resources Available to You "On Demand" 24 Hours a Day:

The Office of Ethics, under the leadership of Secretary Sonny Perdue, has created the following electronic resources available to you:

- 1) The USDA Ethics Mobile Application (the USDA Ethics App)

In 2017, USDA created the Federal government's first multi-media, multi-platformed Ethics App with a full ethics library, ethics forms, FAQs, and videos. The USDA

Ethics App was upgraded in 2019 to include even more videos, new Ethics One-Pagers, and the new “Test Your Knowledge” Ethics Game (a self-paced learning resource). All of the materials on the original Ethics App have been retained and you can even contact the Office of Ethics directly from the “Resources” page of the Ethics App. The USDA Ethics App is available by searching “USDA Ethics” on any smartphone app store on either Apple or Android devices.

2) Ethics Videos

The Office of Ethics has created 28 videos on a wide array of Ethics and Hatch Act topics. These videos are available on USDA’s Official YouTube page. Employees can search the full playlist of videos by searching: “*USDA Office of Ethics Playlist*” on YouTube. Among these videos is the Federal government’s first animated and illustrated Ethics video (available on demand by searching: “*Ethics Illustrated: How to Avoid Conflicts of Interest*” on YouTube).

a) Hatch Act Videos

The USDA Ethics App and USDA’s Official YouTube page contain several short videos on the Hatch Act. The newest video, released on February 14, 2020, is an animated and illustrated Hatch Act video (search: “*The Hatch Act Illustrated and Explained*” on YouTube). There are also videos explaining the Hatch Act’s application to social media as well as the Hatch Act rules applicable both to “less restricted” employees (generally GS-level career employees and all political appointees) and to “further restricted” employees (generally career-SES and Administrative Law Judges). You can find these videos by searching: “*USDA Office of Ethics Playlist*” on YouTube.

3) USDA’s Ethics Webpage

Another resource is the USDA Ethics webpage (search: “*USDA Office of Ethics*” on Google or at: <https://www.ethics.usda.gov/>.) The Ethics webpage contains a treasure trove of ethics guidance and advisories in the “*Rules of the Road*” section of the website. As soon as you enter the Ethics webpage, you can view a short “Virtual Ethics Moment” providing the latest guidance on current Ethics topics.

4) Ethics Resources on AgLearn

The Office of Ethics has teamed up with the Department’s OCIO AgLearn team to provide you with several Ethics learning modules. In addition to the standard annual Ethics training module on AgLearn, we have created several others, including a module on the Hatch Act rules, which you can access on Aglearn by searching “*Ethics: Hatch Act.*”

5) USDA Ethics One-Pagers

To further assist USDA employees, this memorandum, and several Ethics One-Pagers, will be posted on USDA’s Be Prepared website. These Ethics One-Pagers will include quick

guidance on the Hatch Act, the Standards of Ethical Conduct and other current topics. Employees can also access Ethics and Hatch Act One-Pagers on the “Ethics One-Pager” Section of the USDA Ethics App.

Together, all of these resources serve as timely resources for you to use to in your everyday workday as we all continue to uphold the values and high standards of our Nation and the Department of Agriculture. We in the Office of Ethics encourage all USDA employees to contact us with your ethics or Hatch Act questions at DAEO.ethics@usda.gov or at the Ethics mailbox for your specific agency and Mission Area as noted in Attachment “A.”

ATTACHMENT “A”

How to Get in Touch with the USDA Office of Ethics:

Employees of:	Contact:
Farm Production and Conservation Mission Area (FSA, NRCS, RMA, and FPAC Business Center)	Ethics-FPC@usda.gov
Food, Nutrition and Consumer Service Mission Area (FNS,CNPP)	Ethics-FNCS@usda.gov
Food Safety Mission Area (FSIS)	Ethics-FoodSafety@usda.gov
Marketing and Regulatory Programs Mission Area (AMS, APHIS & GIPSA)	Ethics-MRP@usda.gov
Natural Resources and Environment Mission Area (USFS)	Ethics-NRE@usda.gov
Research, Education and Economics Mission Area (ARS,NIFA,ERS,NASS)	Ethics-REE@usda.gov
Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Mission Area(FAS)	Ethics-TFAA@usda.gov
Rural Development (RBCS, RHS & RUS)	Ethics-RD@usda.gov
Departmental Management, Staff Offices, Filers of Public Financial Disclosure Reports and Political Appointees	Daeo.ethics@usda.gov

In addition, to these Ethics e-mail boxes, the following link contains the names and e-mail addresses for each member of the USDA Office of Ethics:

<https://www.ethics.usda.gov/advisor-list.htm>.