



Emmer, Valerie to: Tonya.G.Woods

12/20/2010 11:34 AM

PPQ
Soprone

History: This message has been replied to.

<<FOIA request from Capital Press.pdf>> Hi Tonya. It is my understanding that APHIS (in addition to AMS) would also have documents responsive to this FOIA request from The Capital Press.

I am, therefore, officially referring the request to APHIS so that your agency can also respond to the request.

The message is ready to be sent with the following file or link attachments:

FOIA request from Capital Press

Note: To protect against computer viruses, e-mail programs may prevent sending or receiving certain types of file attachments. Check your e-mail security settings to determine how attachments are handled.



FOIA request from Capital Press.pdf

DEC 15 2010

USDA/AMS/LRRS

Dear Ms. Emmer-Scott,

I'd like to submit a Freedom of Information Act request for any records of communication between officials at USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service and officials of the Saudi Arabian government — most likely, but not limited to, that nation's Ministry of Agriculture. If they exist, records of communications with Saudi Arabian alfalfa seed buyers, brokers or companies are included in this request.

The most likely author and recipient of such communications would be Richard Payne, chief of the USDA's Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch in Gastonia, N.C. If other employees of that division or USDA in general have also been involved with communications with Saudi Arabian officials or companies, I'd like to request those records as well.

The documents I seek would most likely be letters, memos or e-mails, but if there are transcripts or summaries of phone conversations or personal meetings available, I'd also like to request those. The timeframe for all these communications most likely spans from early 2008 until the present.

From my understanding, the Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch is responsible for issuing federal phytosanitary certificates to producers, brokers and dealers of alfalfa seed produced in the U.S.

Apparently, between early 2008 and the end of 2009, the division issued certificates for alfalfa seed that was exported to Saudi Arabia and later found to have severe quality problems. These issues allegedly resulted in a drastically diminished demand for U.S. alfalfa seed in Saudi Arabia, the primary foreign consumer of this crop. Federal trade data indicates the value of U.S. alfalfa seed exports to that nation dropped nearly 70 percent from 2008 to 2009 — from about \$48 million to \$15 million.

It's likely that Richard Payne or other officials at USDA also communicated with state seed certification agencies in the U.S. about this problem, including, but not limited to, the California Crop Improvement Association. Seed companies, seed brokers and others involved in the seed business probably communicated with Payne or other USDA officials about the Saudi Arabian issue as well. I'd like to request these records and any other reports or documents pertaining to this issue. This would include communications with or about the seed companies allegedly responsible for the problem, as well as other seed firms that urged stronger enforcement or penalties for the alleged culprits.

I'd like to seek a fee waiver for this request, as I'm a member of the news media and the information would be used to further the public's understanding of government operations and activities. I'm employed as a reporter for Capital Press, an agricultural publication read by more than 30,000 people across the Western U.S., many of whom are involved in the alfalfa industry.

The information included in this request pertains directly to the public's understanding of government workings by significantly shedding light on the regulation and testing of agricultural commodities. There are currently concerns that U.S. alfalfa seed producers will lose market share in Saudi Arabia over the long term due to this issue. Farmers who grow other crops will also be interested in testing and regulatory protocols at USDA, and how problems can affect important export markets.

Neither I or Capital Press have any commercial interest in these records — the information is only meant to educate and inform farmers and other readers who are involved in agriculture.

Sincerely, ,

Mateusz Perkowski

Reporter
Capital Press
P.O. Box 2048
Salem, OR 97308-2408
Phone: 503-385-4904
Fax: 503-370-4383



RE: Emailing: FOIA request from Capital Press (Referral)
Emmer, Valerie to: Tonya.G.Woods

12/20/2010 11:53 AM

History: This message has been replied to.

Bill Allen advised that APHIS would/might have responsive documents, in addition the e-mail from Ed Curlett and Mike Jarvis. Do you want me to hold off until you confirm? Bill suggested that I do a referral. Let me know. Thank you.

From: Tonya.G.Woods@aphis.usda.gov [mailto:Tonya.G.Woods@aphis.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 20, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Emmer, Valerie
Subject: Re: Emailing: FOIA request from Capital Press (Referral)

Valerie - Im supposing you have heard from your AMS folks and they confirmed that APHIS would have communications - because I havent heard from anyone here in APHIS yet.

If you have - can they tell you a list of APHIS names they were working with ...

Tonya G. Woods, Director
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service
Legislative and Public Affairs - FOIA & Privacy Acts Office
Telephone: (301) 734-8296
Fax: (301) 734-5941

From: "Emmer, Valerie" <Valerie.Emmer@ams.usda.gov>
To: <Tonya.G.Woods@aphis.usda.gov>
Date: 12/20/2010 11:34 AM
Subject: Emailing: FOIA request from Capital Press (Referral)

<<FOIA request from Capital Press.pdf>> Hi Tonya. It is my understanding that APHIS (in addition to AMS) would also have documents responsive to this FOIA request from The Capital Press.

I am, therefore, officially referring the request to APHIS so that your agency can also respond to the request.

The message is ready to be sent with the following file or link attachments:

FOIA request from Capital Press

Note: To protect against computer viruses, e-mail programs may prevent sending or receiving certain types of file attachments. Check your e-mail security settings to determine how attachments are handled. [attachment "FOIA request from Capital Press.pdf" deleted by Tonya G Woods/MD/APHIS/USDA]

RE: Emailing: FOIA request from Capital Press (Referral)
Emmer, Valerie to: Tonya.G.Woods

12/20/2010 01:10 PM

Tonya, will you be notifying the requester that APHIS will also be conducting a search for responsive records and would respond on their own behalf?

Jennifer Porter will be responding on behalf of Livestock and Seed Programs, and will be making any necessary redactions. Dr. Payne will also advise her what information he believes should be withheld.

From: Tonya.G.Woods@aphis.usda.gov [mailto:Tonya.G.Woods@aphis.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 20, 2010 12:15 PM
To: Emmer, Valerie
Subject: RE: Emailing: FOIA request from Capital Press (Referral)

pushed send too fast. I believe that APHIS does have records - I just wanted to know who - so I could just forward it over to our PPQ office.

I also want to make sure that we work together on this request - so that we are consistent with our redactions.

Tonya G. Woods, Director
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service
Legislative and Public Affairs - FOIA & Privacy Acts Office
Telephone: (301) 734-8296
Fax: (301) 734-5941

From: "Emmer, Valerie" <Valerie.Emmer@ams.usda.gov>
To: <Tonya.G.Woods@aphis.usda.gov>
Date: 12/20/2010 11:53 AM
Subject: RE: Emailing: FOIA request from Capital Press (Referral)

Bill Allen advised that APHIS would/might have responsive documents, in addition the e-mail from Ed Curlett and Mike Jarvis. Do you want me to hold off until you confirm? Bill suggested that I do a referral. Let me know.
Thank you.

From: Tonya.G.Woods@aphis.usda.gov [mailto:Tonya.G.Woods@aphis.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 20, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Emmer, Valerie
Subject: Re: Emailing: FOIA request from Capital Press (Referral)

Valerie - Im supposing you have heard from your AMS folks and they confirmed that APHIS would have communications - because I havent heard from anyone here in APHIS yet.

If you have - can they tell you a list of APHIS names they were working with ...

Tonya G. Woods, Director
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service
Legislative and Public Affairs - FOIA & Privacy Acts Office
Telephone: (301) 734-8296
Fax: (301) 734-5941

From: "Emmer, Valerie" <Valerie.Emmer@ams.usda.gov>
To: <Tonya.G.Woods@aphis.usda.gov>
Date: 12/20/2010 11:34 AM
Subject: Emailing: FOIA request from Capital Press (Referral)

<<FOIA request from Capital Press.pdf>> Hi Tonya. It is my understanding that APHIS (in addition to AMS) would also have documents responsive to this FOIA request from The Capital Press.

I am, therefore, officially referring the request to APHIS so that your agency can also respond to the request.

The message is ready to be sent with the following file or link attachments:

FOIA request from Capital Press

Note: To protect against computer viruses, e-mail programs may prevent sending or receiving certain types of file attachments. Check your e-mail security settings to determine how attachments are handled. [attachment "FOIA request from Capital Press.pdf" deleted by Tonya G Woods/MD/APHIS/USDA]



Fw: FOIA Request - Saudi Arabia alfalfa seed
 Ingrid E Berlanger to: Mike Swett
 Cc: Janet L Conway-Spells, Tonya G Woods

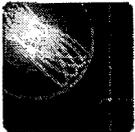
12/17/2010 03:05 PM

Hi Mike-

Please see the attached FOIA request. Has PIM had any written interactions with Saudi Arabian alfalfa seed buyers, brokers, or companies?

Ingrid E. Berlanger
 USDA APHIS
 Plant Protection and Quarantine
 Plant Health Programs
 Riverdale 4C-01.78
 (202) 286-6187 (cell)
 (301) 734-7491
 ingrid.e.berlanger@aphis.usda.gov

----- Forwarded by Ingrid E Berlanger/MD/APHIS/USDA on 12/17/2010 03:01 PM -----



Tonya G
 Woods/MD/APHIS/USDA
 12/17/2010 02:57 PM

To Ingrid E Berlanger/MD/APHIS/USDA@USDA,
 Valerie.Emmer@ams.usda.gov
 <Valerie.Emmer@ams.usda.gov>, Ed C
 Curlett/MD/APHIS/USDA@USDA

cc

Subject Fw: FOIA Request from the Capital Press

Ingrid - please look to see if APHIS/PPQ would have documents for this request. It was forwarded to us from AMS.

Valerie - just in case you didnt know - we are looking to see if APHIS has records - I believe your PA shop sent it to us. We will get back with you.

Thanks - call me if anyone has any questions.

Tonya G. Woods, Director
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service
 Legislative and Public Affairs - FOIA & Privacy Acts Office
 Telephone: (301) 734-8296
 Fax: (301) 734-5941

----- Forwarded by Tonya G Woods/MD/APHIS/USDA on 12/17/2010 02:55 PM -----

From: Ed C Curlett/MD/APHIS/USDA
 To: Tonya G Woods/MD/APHIS/USDA@USDA
 Cc: Andrea C McNally/MD/APHIS/USDA@USDA
 Date: 12/15/2010 01:46 PM
 Subject: Fw: FOIA Request from the Capital Press

Tonya this is a FOIA request that went to AMS but the subject matter is APHIS. What should we do next?
Thanks.

Ed

----- Forwarded by Ed C Curlett/MD/APHIS/USDA on 12/15/2010 01:41 PM -----



"Jarvis, Michael"
<Michael.Jarvis@ams.usda.gov>

12/15/2010 11:51 AM

To "Curlett, Ed C" <ed.c.curlett@usda.gov>

cc

Subject FW: FOIA Request from the Capital Press

This smells like APHIS, what do you think?

How are you?

I know it must be getting crazy for you soon. Let's talk when you have time

Mike

From: Emmer, Valerie

Sent: Wednesday, December 15, 2010 10:34 AM

To: Harper, Eunice; Jarvis, Michael

Cc: Allen, William

Subject: FOIA Request from the Capital Press

We received the attached request today from Mateusz Perkowski, a reporter from the Capital Press.

I'm trying to determine if this would be responsive by Livestock and Seed. Could you let me know so that I can log this in and we can begin processing? Thanks.



FOIA request from Capital Press.pdf