

**MRP ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

**1. PURPOSE**

This Directive establishes policy and assigns responsibilities for administering the Electronic Records Management Program within Marketing and Regulatory Programs which includes the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) .

**2. AUTHORITIES/REFERENCES**

The Paperwork Reduction Act, codified at Chapter 35 of Title 44 of the United States Code (U.S.C.), makes records management a part of a broader program of Federal information resources management. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has broad authority under Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) to set standards for the management of records, evaluate agency programs, preserve permanently valuable records and approve the destruction of temporary records. NARA guidance on electronic records is explained in the publications Managing Electronic Records and the Disposition of Federal Records Handbook, Chapters III-1 and V-7. The General Services Administration's records management regulations are part of its Federal Information Resources Management Regulations and are located in Title 41 CFR, Chapter 201, Parts 201-2, 201-22, and 201-45. The following sections are used only for housekeeping records. General Records Schedule (GRS), Schedule 2, items 1 and 2; Schedule 3, item 3d; Schedule 8, item 7; Schedule 20, and Schedule 23, items 2 through 5, 8, and 9.

**3. SCOPE**

The provisions of this Directive apply to all organizational elements of APHIS and GIPSA.

#### 4. POLICY

- a. MRP policy requires all offices to maintain a uniform electronic filing and disposal system. Official electronic records created or received by offices are the property of the Federal Government.
- b. The creation of additional Agency guidelines regarding electronic records disposition, as well as revisions to disposition schedules, must be approved by the Records Officer, APHIS Business Services, Forms, Issuances, and Records Management (FIRM) team.

#### 5. DEFINITIONS

- a. Electronic Recordkeeping. The operation of recordkeeping systems that requires a machine interface for the human use of records. Examples of these types of records include magnetic tapes, disks and drums, video files, and optical disks.
- b. Official Record. Recorded information, regardless of media, maintained by an agency to comply with its legal obligations or created as a result of its transactions of agency business. Excluded as records are library and museum materials, extra copies of documents preserved for convenience or reference, stocks of publications, and blank forms. (44 U.S.C. 3301 provides the full legal definition of official records.)
- c. Electronic Records. Informational material created or maintained **only** in electronic form and never produced in hard copy form, including electronic mail messages, the contents of which concern statements of policy, rationale for a decision, sense of direction, or guidance above and beyond that documented in official files.

#### 6. TYPES OF ELECTRONIC RECORD INFORMATION

- a. Electronic records need to be maintained in a medium that will satisfactorily store the record until its disposition date. Typically, electronic mail messages are printed out and filed with the appropriate paper records.
- b. The output of electronic information systems that support agency management functions, such as loan programs, commodity programs, and correspondence control systems, regardless of whether all or a portion of the information is also maintained in hard copy, are considered official records.

- c. Extracts of electronic information systems maintained in electronic form for the purpose of conducting studies and statistical analyses, includes data bases obtained from outside sources, as well as those created within the agency.
- d. Any electronic information file, regardless of its size, that contains personal information on individuals, the records for whom are retrieved by a unique personal identifier, such as a name or an assigned number are official records.

7. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. The Manager, ABS, APHIS, through the Records Officer, oversees the establishment, implementation, and operation of the APHIS Electronic Recordkeeping Management Program. Specifically, the Records Officer will:
  - (1) Provide advice and guidance to APHIS and GIPSA on the development and maintenance of electronic recordkeeping systems.
  - (2) Review all proposals by APHIS and GIPSA organizational units for the establishment of electronic recordkeeping systems. The reviews determine system need, feasibility, and related costs and benefits.
  - (3) Issue instructions that describe the format and content of proposals for establishing electronic recordkeeping systems.
  - (4) Perform periodic reviews of the effectiveness and efficiency of all APHIS and GIPSA electronic recordkeeping systems, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-511).
  - (5) Issue instructions to specify the level of security protection for electronic records that contain classified or proprietary information or information subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a).
  - (6) Keep informed of the latest developments in electronic recordkeeping programs, regulations, and technology.
  - (7) Establish a clearinghouse for the sharing of electronic records.
  - (8) Issue records retention schedules for Agency electronic records.
  - (9) Provide for accession of permanent electronic records by NARA based on the records media and format prescribed by NARA.

- (10) Develop standardized Agency procedures for the external and internal identification of the contents of electronic records.
  - (11) Maintain an inventory of APHIS and GIPSA electronic recordkeeping systems that are used to process official records.
- b. Programs and Divisions/Staffs will:
- (1) Implement systems for backing up electronic records that safeguard against the loss of records information because of equipment malfunction or human error.
  - (2) Create and retain sufficient documentation and programs to allow other authorized offices to read and retrieve that data from the organization's electronic records.
  - (3) Develop local electronic recordkeeping system operation manuals, user guides, and maintenance instructions as needed.
  - (4) Provide training for users of the electronic recordkeeping systems in the operation, care, and handling of system equipment, software, and media.
  - (5) Develop controls to prevent the unauthorized alteration or ensure of information in electronic records that serve as official records.
  - (6) Provide for the security of the organization's electronic records and electronic recordkeeping equipment.
  - (7) Prevent the loss of information from electronic records because of deterioration of the records medium. As an example, information can be preserved by rewriting or transferring it to another medium.
  - (8) Ensure that electronic records are preserved and disposed of in accordance with GRS and APHIS or GIPSA records disposition schedules.

## 8. **INQUIRIES**

As with paper records, electronic records can only be disposed of according to an approved agency records schedule or the GRS. Help in implementing disposal authorities can be obtained from the records management officer who can procure the necessary authority to allow for the disposition of unscheduled records.

Copies of Managing Electronic Records and the Disposition of Federal Records Handbook may be obtained from:

Linda Mudd  
USDA, APHIS, ABS, FIRM  
4700 River Road  
Unit 103  
Riverdale, MD 20737

The publications also are available at NARA's website: <http://www.nara.gov>. The publications are located under professional services/records management.

Questions concerning this Directive should be directed to the Records Officer, ABS, FIRM, APHIS, on 301-734-8420. This Directive can be accessed on the [APHIS/AMS](#) Administrative Issuances homepage.

/s/

Acting Deputy Administrator  
for Management and Budget