

**United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service**



APHIS Records Management Council

CHARTER

January 2006

APHIS RECORDS MANAGEMENT COUNCIL CHARTER

1 Introduction:

- a) The APHIS Records Management Council (RMC) is responsible for ensuring the overall success of the records management program.
- b) The RMC is responsible for ensuring the implementation of revised or new General Records Schedules (GRS) issued by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).
- c) The RMC will adhere to NARA guidance for electronic records management.
- d) The authority of the RMC is limited to those policies and standards where flexibility is possible and input is requested. Proposals in conflict with federal laws and regulations, OMB guidance, and USDA policies will not be supported by the RMC.

2 Function:

The RMC will function according to the following expectations:

- a) Priorities
 - i) Establish a network of liaisons and file custodians at headquarters, and in regional offices and divisions.
 - ii) Establish records management training requirements and approve training materials for agency employees and contractors.
 - iii) Bring APHIS into compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
 - iv) Initiate annual reviews of APHIS records schedules.
 - v) Prepare a comprehensive schedule covering all existing databases and systems.
- b) Objectives
 - i) Implement new or revised GRS' issued by NARA within six months of issuance. This includes bringing the changes to the attention of those in APHIS who are impacted by them.
 - ii) Review and update all APHIS records schedules and notify NARA of any items to be cancelled. Programs will prepare and submit draft schedules for any types of records not covered by existing records schedules. Following

approval by the RMC, the records officer will sign and forward the draft schedules to NARA for its review and approval.

- iii) Establish a policy for all planned databases and systems to be scheduled prior to implementation and as a condition to receive approval to go into production.
- iv) Implement electronic records management to cover all types of electronic records.
- v) Provide NARA and/or the USDA Records Officer with information or feedback, whenever requested.
- vi) Accomplish the priorities listed above during the upcoming year.

3 Composition

- a) Chairperson
 - i) The Chairperson of the Body shall be APHIS Records Officer.
- b) Members
 - i) Members from APHIS Program Offices
 - (1) Program liaisons will represent their organizations as primary RMC members.
 - (2) Program units may designate an alternate representative in the event the primary representative is unable to attend a meeting of the RMC.
 - (3) RMC members, other than the Chairperson, will be nominated by the ITLAC member from each program. The Deputy Administrator for each program will make the formal selection. The Deputy Administrator will inform the program staff of the selection.
- c) Other Attendees
 - i) Observers
 - (1) Observers will be allowed to attend meetings.
- d) Other components of the Agency invited to participate as needed and requested:
 - i) IT Leadership Advisory Council (ITLAC)
 - ii) Program Unit Leadership officials
 - iii) Others as appropriate

4 Procedures

- a) Preparation
 - i) The Chairperson of the RMC shall, in close consultation with the RMC, propose working plans and agendas for each meeting of the RMC and ensure that meeting preparations and follow-up are completed in a timely manner.
 - ii) Members are asked to propose agenda items at least one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- b) Transparency of the Proceedings
 - i) All documents created by the RMC will be posted for membership view in a centrally accessible document management repository.
- c) Working Groups
 - i) The RMC may establish formal working groups to advise it on matters of concern or requiring further research. Such groups may report findings to the RMC at a regularly scheduled meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose.
 - ii) The RMC may also establish *ad hoc* working groups dealing with specific topics or areas within records management.
 - (1) As needed, special meetings based upon findings of the *ad hoc* group may be called by the Chairperson and scheduled outside the regularly scheduled meeting.
 - (2) RMC members will be invited by e-mail as far in advance of the meeting as is feasible and with as much information as is available.
- d) Committee Charter
 - i) Modifications of the RMC Charter must be approved by the APHIS CIO and ITLAC.
- e) Decision making
 - i) The RMC has the power and authority to approve policy and standards for the agency based upon decisions made by its members.
 - ii) Decisions are made on policies and standards where flexibility is possible and input is requested.
 - iii) Quorum for a vote requires a simple majority of members to be present for a meeting.
 - iv) Decisions are made and preferably adopted by consensus. Such decisions will be supported by all members of the RMC.
 - v) To determine consensus on matters before the committee, an “Aye” or “Nay” vote may be voiced by participants. Where consensus can be reached during the meeting, the decision is deemed approved by the RMC.

- vi) When “Nay” votes are proffered, further discussion may ensue. If discussion does not result in consensus, depending upon the topic the respective action item will be regressed to a working group for further discussion. The group may return to the RMC and present their findings, and consensus will be attempted again.

5 Participation

- a) Lack of participation by RMC members will be defined as lack of Program attendance for two consecutive committee meetings or three committee meetings within nine months. In such cases a request will be made to the Deputy Administrator to have the RMC member replaced.

6 Group Norm

- a) All members of the RMC are expected to demonstrate good communication, listening, and negotiating skills during the course of the RMC function. Teamwork is the key to the success of the RMC and its ability to make a positive and meaningful impact on APHIS.

7 Term Limits

- a) There are no term limits. Deputy Administrators can replace members as necessary.

8 Practical Arrangements

- a) The Council will hold its meetings via teleconference once each month. An e-mail will be sent to members one week prior notifying them of the meeting and outlining an agenda. Notice of scheduled meetings may be located on a commonly accessible calendar. The Primary and/or the Backup representative may attend each meeting.
- b) An annual on-site meeting among all members of the RMC will be conducted at a designated time and location.
- c) All costs for council business will be the responsibility of the program (travel, teleconference, etc.)
- d) The Chairperson will report to the APHIS CIO on a recurring basis concerning progress made by the RMC.