

## APHIS Makes Redacted FOIA Responses Available on Agency Website

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today began posting redacted Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and FOIA appeal responses on the agency's website. The responses are available and can be accessed by going to [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov) and clicking on "FOIA Reading Room" on the right-hand side of the page.

The first redacted responses to be posted will be those requests received and processed during the first three quarters of fiscal year 2010. After the initial posting, APHIS will continue to post new responses on a quarterly basis. The vast majority of agency responses will be available through the FOIA Reading Room. Some responses, however, such as those that pertain to open investigations and personnel matters, will not be posted.

Over time, the posted responses should help to decrease repeat requests for the same or similar information. On average, APHIS receives approximately 1,200 FOIA requests a year from members of the general public, journalists, nonprofit organizations, industry groups and others who are seeking information not otherwise publicly available about APHIS program activities. Requests are reviewed by APHIS FOIA specialists, who develop a response based on federal regulations. Under FOIA exemptions, certain information in documents is protected and therefore withheld. Depending on the nature of a request, a response may be as short as a page or encompass hundreds of pages of documentation. By posting responses online, APHIS will save federal resources and enable its FOIA office to concentrate on processing other incoming requests.

APHIS' decision to post redacted FOIA responses online is one of several efforts the agency has recently undertaken to increase transparency and make it easier for the public and agency stakeholders to access information. The move also supports President Obama's efforts to create an unprecedented level of openness in government.

For more information, visit the APHIS' FOIA office website at [www.aphis.usda.gov/foia/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/foia/). Questions regarding the FOIA Reading Room can be directed to Tonya Woods, FOIA Director at (301) 734-8296.

Note to Stakeholders: Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet and through Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds. Go to the APHIS news release page at [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov) and click on the "Newsroom" button to view and/or sign up to receive releases via the RSS feed link.

For additional information about this topic, contact Alyn Kiel at (301) 734-5222 or by e-mail at [alyn.g.kiel@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:alyn.g.kiel@aphis.usda.gov).

---

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.