

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

Dear USDA Colleagues:

I would like to highlight the importance of the current National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Records Management Program Inspection at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). As agency Administrators and Records Management Champions, your engagement in this effort is critical to its success. I encourage you to work with your Agency Records Officers (AROs) to learn about the state of your records programs and be fully transparent with our inspection team.

NARA is responsible for assisting Federal agencies in the proper management of records to protect rights, ensure government accountability, and preserve and make available records of enduring value. In carrying out this responsibility and based on the authority granted in U.S.C. 2904(c)(7) and 2906 and 36 CFR 1239, NARA is conducting a series of inspections to examine how well federal agencies comply with statutory mandates and RM requirements for permanent records management.

As part of this series, NARA is inspecting the records management practices of selected offices within the United States Department of Agriculture, Department staff offices and six component agencies with similar missions regarding records management laws, regulations, and guidance. NARA will review internal records management policies and procedures with a focus on the creation, management, and transfer of permanent records to the National Archives. The inspection will also assess Departmental and component agency preparations to meet the requirements of the OMB/NARA memorandum on the Transition to Electronic Records ([M-19-21](#)) as they relate to permanent records.

USDA will use the results of this inspection to uncover issues and patterns enterprise wide, to review staffing, resources, policies, procedures, and opportunities for improvement. USDA welcomes the results of the inspection to help strengthen the nascent records management programs and increase the efficiency of missions and operations at USDA.

USDA takes our role in this important transition to electronic recordkeeping very seriously. I look forward to working with you to realize the vision of a fully digital and open USDA.

Sincerely,

Janie Simms Hipp

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janie Simms Hipp", written in a cursive style.