

Agricultural Research Service rescinds order barring its scientists from contact with public

U.S. Department of Agriculture officials have rescinded an order that barred its researchers from releasing “public-facing documents,” ranging from news releases and photos to social media posts.

Reports about the order, which [first arose on BuzzFeed News](#), sparked widespread complaints on [January 24] about a Trump administration crackdown – particularly in light of [similar limits that were placed on communications from the Environmental Protection Agency](#).

Late [January 24], the USDA issued a statement saying that the original email from Agriculture Research Service (ARS) chief of staff Sharon Drumm “was released without Departmental direction, and prior to Departmental guidance being issued.”

[On January 25], [BuzzFeed reported](#) that ARS Administrator [Chavonda Jacobs-Young](#) sent an email to employees referencing the earlier ban. “This internal email was released prior to receiving official Departmental guidance and is hereby rescinded,” she wrote.

GeekWire confirmed that the earlier order was rescinded, and that new guidance has been sent out. The new guidance tells researchers to get approval from above before addressing questions related to policy, legislation, budgets or regulations.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [After huge outcry, USDA scales back its limits on scientists’ contacts with public](#)