

Uproar over perceived gag order at Agricultural Research Service was ‘self-inflicted wound’

Don’t blame this one on the Trump administration.

In a bungled attempt to anticipate the wishes of their new political bosses, the U.S. Agricultural Research Service (ARS) on Monday imposed what was [widely interpreted as a gag order on its scientists](#) communicating with the public. But a senior ARS official tells *ScienceInsider* that it was a poorly worded effort by career officials—not anyone appointed by Trump—to remind employees of a longstanding U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy on clearing statements that have policy relevance with senior officials before releasing them.

Christopher Bentley, ARS’s communications chief in Beltsville, Maryland, blames himself for the wording in a two-sentence staff memo...

“If I had to do it over again, I wouldn’t have said ‘public-facing’ documents,” Bentley says. “We never intended it to include scientific information and other documents that have gone through peer review.”

“I thought the definition of public-facing was clear,” he says, referring to press releases, social media content, and photographs. “But it means something different to the scientific community.”

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Firestorm over supposed gag order on USDA scientists was self-inflicted wound, agency says](#)