



United States  
Department  
of Agriculture


Research,  
Education, and  
Economics

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture

1400 Independence  
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TO: NIFA Awardees

FROM: Cynthia Montgomery   
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Office of Grants and Financial Management

SUBJECT: Dual Use Research of Concern

On September 25, 2014 the Office of Science Technology and Policy (OSTP) published a notice in the Federal Register regarding a policy for institutional oversight on life science dual use research of concern ([79 FR 57589](#)). The policy defines "Dual use research of concern" (DURC) as life sciences research that, based on current understanding, can be reasonably anticipated to provide knowledge, information, products, or technologies that could be directly misapplied to pose a significant threat with broad potential consequences to public health and safety, agricultural crops and other plants, animals, the environment, materiel, or national security. The policy, which is effective September 25, 2015, articulates "the practices and procedures required to ensure that dual use research of concern is identified at the institutional level and risk mitigation measures are implemented as necessary." This correspondence is to alert you of forthcoming actions the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), USDA plans to take in relation to DURC policy.

NIFA will make changes to requests for applications (RFAs), award terms and conditions, the NIFA website, and the NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide in the near term. Research-related RFAs will include new instructions for applicants that propose life sciences research. The instructions will inform the applicable applicants about information that must be provided to NIFA. To assist applicants in meeting this need in an efficient manner, NIFA will provide a link to a suggested template consisting of two or three questions. With respect to award terms and conditions, a reference will be included to the OSTP policy noted above and NIFA will include what awardees are to do if, during the project, there is DURC potential as well as requirements if a project is considered DURC applicable. NIFA will include a DURC page on the NIFA website to provide information including a DURC contact. Finally, NIFA will include DURC information in the next release of the NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide.

You should anticipate the noted changes occurring in the near term. For general questions, contact the Policy Branch at [policy@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:policy@nifa.usda.gov).