



Annual USDA Scientific Integrity Allegations Summary Report

May 2017 – April 2018

Pursuant to USDA DR 1074-001, a summary of the scientific integrity cases from May 1, 2017, through April 30, 2018, involving formal allegations referred for an inquiry or investigation that were closed follows:

- One (1) allegation of alleged falsification and/or fabrication of research data involving publications published by USDA researchers. It was alleged that the same data was used in figures of two separate publications. An investigation committee was convened, examined the evidence and determined that misconduct had not occurred on the basis of the preponderance of the evidence because the committee could not identify any actual instances of fabrication or falsification.
- One (1) allegation of alleged plagiarism by a USDA researcher. It was alleged that text was reused in official documents submitted to the agency. An investigation committee was convened, examined the evidence and determined that misconduct had not occurred on the basis of the preponderance of the evidence as the reused text was originally written by the respondent.
- One (1) allegation of falsification and/or fabrication of research data involving a publication by USDA researchers. It was alleged that the published data was not an accurate representation of the research record. An investigation committee was convened, examined the evidence and determined that research misconduct had occurred, on the basis of the preponderance of the evidence, in the questioned publication. Corrective actions were taken to restore scientific integrity which included correction of the publication to accurately reflect the research record and improving the agency review process to reduce the potential for future incidents.
- One (1) allegation of a breach of Scientific Integrity by incorrect labelling of a published report by USDA and another Federal agency. The other agency was the lead agency for the publication of the questioned report and empaneled a committee to investigate the matter. The lead agency completed their investigation and provided a report which identified concerns regarding the labelling of the report as a national standard when it was more appropriately a collection of regional reports presented nationally and concerns that the regional reports may have been inappropriately aggregated. The lead agency's report identified five areas for improvement of the joint product to better reflect best science and information available. The Agency Science Integrity Officer, for the USDA agency involved with the matter, reviewed and accepted the report and recommendations for USDA.