



Agricultural Research Service

Research, Education and Economics
United States Department of Agriculture

September 5, 2003

SUBJECT: 50th Anniversary of ARS

TO: All ARS Employees

FROM: Edward B. Knipling /s/
Acting Administrator

On November 2, 2003, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) will reach its 50th anniversary milestone. Although ARS as a Government entity can trace its heritage back to the early 19th century seed collection activities of the U.S. Patent Office, as an Agency by our current name we are only 50 years old. In 1953, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) consolidated most of its research functions into the newly named Agricultural Research Service. Our anniversary is an excellent opportunity for us to reflect on the core values that have made ARS a success—scientific quality, relevance, and outstanding customer service—while looking forward to the next 50 years and beyond.

A 50th anniversary planning team, led by Sharon Drumm and including members Allen Dedrick, Joe Garbarino, Phyllis Johnson, Sandy Miller Hays, and Marshall Tarkington, have designed a series of events and activities that will unfold throughout the next year following a kick-off celebration on November 3. On that day, all 100-plus ARS offices and locations are asked to celebrate the 50th anniversary with a “virtual” Agencywide ceremony at some time during the day.

Other major events being planned over the year are:

- In December, an event on the Patio of the USDA Whitten Building in Washington, D.C., will recognize our partnerships within USDA and with other Federal agencies and stakeholders.
- On January 21-23, 2004, a National ARS Conference will be convened in New Orleans for ARS’ senior and middle leaders, as well as a number of early career and other ARS personnel. This meeting, focusing on the theme *Proud Past and Promising Future*, will include the ARS Annual Recognition Program. Portions of the meeting may be simultaneously web-cast for all ARS personnel to see and hear at their locations.
- Various recognitions by professional societies and other organizations during the course of the year.

- Increased outreach to our customers, partners, and stakeholders.
- A number of preservation efforts, including compiling a history of the Agency and encouraging each ARS laboratory or location to document their own history.

In addition to the core planning team, a large number of other people are working to make these events and activities happen. I have attached a list of the team leaders and members involved to date in the year's activities. There is plenty of opportunity for involvement of others as well. The planned activities and events are dynamic, and I envision they may change over the year with the addition of new ideas. If you would like to have input, please contact Sharon Drumm (sdrumm@ars.usda.gov). Thank you, in advance, to all of you who work to support the commemoration of our 50th anniversary over the course of the year.

I encourage members of the Administrator's Council, scientists, and all ARS personnel to recognize our 50th year in speeches, presentations, and other media. To that end, a 50th anniversary web site will provide raw materials—letterhead, brochure, and slideshow templates, artwork, and stock language—for your use throughout the year. You will see a link off the homepage www.ars.usda.gov when this resource is available. In the meantime, attached to this message is additional preliminary information and guidance about the November 3rd Kickoff Event and the January Leadership Conference. More information on these and other events will be forthcoming as plans develop.

I am looking forward to the coming year as we use the occasion to reflect and renew.

Enclosures:

Kickoff Event Guide

National Scientific Leadership Conference Purpose and Expected Outcomes

List of 50th Anniversary Teams