

ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

Policies and Procedures

Title: Organization of Professional Employees of the Department of Agriculture (OPEDA)

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This P&P explains the purpose and functions of the OPEDA organization.

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1. Policy

It is the policy of REE to:

- Recognize the Organization of Professional Employees of the Department of Agriculture (OPEDA) as an organization of professional employees.
- Cooperate with OPEDA with respect to its continuing efforts to improve the quality of professional programs and performance within REE.
- Assist OPEDA in joint efforts involving projects designed to improve public awareness of the benefits of agricultural research, education, and extension activities.
- Upon request and at appropriate levels, discuss with OPEDA matters of mutual concern.

2. REE/OPEDA Cooperation

Activities. REE will cooperate with OPEDA consistent with REE policies and available resources in furtherance of the following types of activities:

- Scientific and professional seminars and other similar type activities.
- Scientific, professional, supervisory, and managerial discussions regarding suggestions for the improvement of employee performance and REE programs.

Discussions. Designated management officials at appropriate levels will discuss with representatives of recognized OPEDA chapters matters of mutual concern, including suggestions for the improvement of professional performance and effectiveness.

Facilities. Responsible officials are authorized to approve the use of official facilities by recognized OPEDA chapters. Such facilities may include:

- Meeting space
- Bulletin boards
- Internal distribution system

Use of additional types of facilities must be approved by the Deputy Administrator, Administrative and Financial Management, based upon the recommendation of the appropriate line official.

3. Relationship to Other Organizations

The relationship between REE and OPEDA will not be the same as the relationship between management and a labor organization. The relationship will not include:

- Discussions characterized by formal consultation or negotiation with a labor organization.
- Execution of any written agreements.
NOTE: This does not preclude correspondence between OPEDA and REE management.
- Representation of individual employees eligible for recognition under 5 U.S.C., Chapter 71, in grievances, appeals, or complaints.

The relationship established between OPEDA and REE under this P&P will have no effect on any existing relationship between OPEDA and USDA.

4. Summary of Responsibilities

Deputy Administrator, Administrative and Financial Management:

- Cooperate with and assist OPEDA as prescribed by REE policy.
- Approve or disapprove, based on recommendations from the appropriate line official, requests for the recognition of local OPEDA chapters.
- Assist line managers in carrying out prescribed policy.

Administrators:

- Recommend, where appropriate, recognition of local OPEDA chapters to the Deputy Administrator, Administrative and Financial Management.
- Approve OPEDA activities involving joint cooperation or assistance consistent with this P&P.

- Meet with representatives of local OPEDA chapters recognized at their respective organization levels to discuss matters of mutual concern, as appropriate.

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