

# 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.

W. G. HORNER  
Deputy Administrator  
Administrative and Financial Management