



United States Department of Agriculture
Research, Education and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

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SUBJECT: Midwest Area Office Environmental Management System Policy

TO: MWA Office Employees

FROM: Steven R. Shafer *Steven R. Shafer* 11/28/07
Director, Midwest Area

In accordance with Executive Order 13423, Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management, and the ARS Deputy Administrator's letter of June 28, 2004, all appropriate ARS facilities are required to have an Environmental Management System (EMS). This requirement applies to the MWA Office as well as all our research locations.

Midwest Area researchers study crops and livestock to improve both quality and quantity. In addition, they devise new ways of using those crops to add value, increase exports, improve human health, and protect the environment. There are extensive programs in our Area focused on preserving and improving soil, air, and water quality. We are finding new and innovative ways to address animal waste management issues, prevent soil erosion and eliminate pesticides from surface and ground water. These examples represent only a few of the research programs in the Midwest Area and ARS that are dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the economic strength of American agriculture while improving the quality of life for each and every citizen.

In order to promote these research programs in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner, the MWA SHEM Office has assisted all Area locations to set up an EMS – a cyclical method of managing an Environmental Protection Program at each facility on a Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle. These location EMS plans include a commitment to environmental compliance, pollution prevention, conservation practices, and continual improvement.

The MWA Office is also considered an appropriate facility and has had an EMS in place since 2005. MWA Office EMS initiatives for 2007 – 2008 include: promotion of closer conformity with International Standards Organization (ISO) Standard Number 14001, performance or promotion of 2nd or 3rd Party EMS Audits as required by Agency guidance, establishment of a tracking system of measurable goals for the locations in the Area, working more closely with other sections of the MWA Office to increase performance and support of EMS duties in their functional areas, and promotion of Annual EMS Awareness Training.



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While these EMS initiatives rely heavily on the SHEM and Engineering sections of the Area Office Staff, there are other sections that also have a role to play. For instance, in the Agreements Section, language should be included in new cooperative agreements that cooperators will follow the EMS guidelines and requirements of the location EMS where they will be working. In the Procurement Section, alternative and green purchasing requirements must be followed for both normal and purchase card acquisitions.

Because the MWA Office is a tenant of NCAUR, all MWA Office personnel must follow the requirements of the NCAUR EMS Policy, where applicable. This would include items such as recycling paper, cardboard, aluminum, etc., printing on both sides of a page when appropriate, purchasing energy-star rated electronics and other equipment that will allow the Center to achieve its energy reduction goals, etc.

If you have questions about the MWA EMS please do not hesitate to ask Cal Mather, the MWA Safety, Health and Environmental Management Section Head or Ralph Jesse, the MWA Environmental Protection Specialist. Ralph can be reached at 309-681-6644 or by email at Ralph.Jesse@ars.usda.gov. Cal can be reached at 309-681-6608 or by email at Cal.Mather@ars.usda.gov.