The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requires Senior Agency Officials for Records Management (SAORM) to provide an annual report demonstrating how agencies are handling important records management initiatives as identified by NARA.

NARA uses the reports to determine the overall progress of the Federal Government in managing its records and the transition away from paper to digital formats and to identify best practices and model solutions within Federal agencies.

The reporting period begins on March 11, 2019 with reports due back to NARA no later than April 19, 2019.

NARA plans to post your 2018 SAORM report on the NARA website upon receipt. Please ensure that your agency's report is a publicly releasable version. This action is in the interest of transparency in Government and to promote collaboration and communication among agencies. NARA intends to list any non-responding agencies in a summary report and on the website.

Instructions for Reporting

- This template covers progress through December 31, 2018.
- Please be brief and precise in your answers. Limit answers to each question to no more than 500 words.
- Please complete the questions/items below and send the report to rmselfassessment@nara.gov. Include the words "SAORM annual report - [Agency Name] in the subject line of the email.
- If you are responsible for records management in multiple agencies, components, or bureaus, please determine how you will submit reports to NARA. While NARA prefers a comprehensive report, you may submit separate reports for each component.

Provide the following information (required):

Donald K. Bice
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

1. What agencies, bureaus, components, or offices are covered by this report and your position as SAORM and which will be reporting separately? Please also indicate any that are new or have been changed due to reorganization or other circumstances.

- Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
- Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
- Economic Research Service (ERS)
- Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC)
- Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Nutrition & Consumer Affairs
- Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
- Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)
- Forest Service (FS)
- **Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) – Due to reorganization GIPSA is no longer an agency but has merged with AMS and will follow the AMS Records Management Program.**
- National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- Risk Management Agency (RMA)
- Rural Development (RD)
- Departmental Program and Staff Offices
- Office of the Secretary of Agriculture

2. Is your agency and its components making progress towards managing all permanent electronic records in electronic format by December 31, 2019? (M-12-18, Goal 1.1)

X Yes
☐ No

Please explain your response:

- In the 2017 SAORM report, USDA reported that the Department is exploring SharePoint as a method to store permanent records as an enterprise-wide solution. Currently, several agencies deployed and are using SharePoint to capture, manage, and preserve permanent electronic records. AMS, NASS, NIFA and RMA deployed an electronic RM system, SharePoint, and have upgraded to SharePoint 2016 in the Cloud, to capture, manage, and preserve permanent electronic records until the end of retention period. The system uses native file formats for Microsoft Office documents and .pdf with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) for scanned documents. Agencies are transferring all paper documents to electronic format using SharePoint and expects to meet the 2019 deadline.

- USDA's Electronic Records Management Working Group (ERMWG) continues to make progress identifying an enterprise-wide solution to manage records electronically. The ERMWG continues to evaluate internal and federal best practices to achieving the goal of managing all permanent records electronically. USDA continues working with stakeholders to identify and develop additional functional requirements for a cost-effective enterprise solution and provide recommendations on associated pilot programs. Currently, the ERMWG is collaborating with Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Enterprise Architecture Division, Information Resource Management Center, and Stakeholders in modeling USDA's business capabilities and processes to determine department-wide requirements in development of a cost-effective electronic system.

- Proofpoint is a tool to manage Capstone Emails and efforts are underway to use this tool to find and capture emails of previous and current Officials.

- The Office of the Executive Secretariat (OES) has launched an enterprise document clearing system with a records management function (ABE). OES met with NARA representatives during development of the system to determine the formats necessary in the system for electronic transfer to NARA. ABE meets department-wide functional and technical requirements and has researching tools that automate record disposition, including the transfer of permanent records to NARA following approved records retention schedules. Seven years of data from the old system are migrated to ABE, ensuring records from old system are electronically transmitted.

- The Departmental Records Management Team (DRMT) have developed processes to identify the owners of permanent records and where the records are located. FNCS, FSIS and GIPSA have identified their permanent electronic records which exist in scheduled electronic information systems; FSIS is collaborating with their program areas to ensure that they maintain their digital versions as the official record copies.

- FS launched an electronic content management system, Pinyon, two years ago, with a records management component, eRecords. FS is still working with IBM on a few issues that need correction prior to FS accepting it as a complete eRecords system for deployment within Pinyon. Currently, Pinyon serves as the repository for FS records. Once deployed, the eRecords part allow closed records to be dispositioned and archived

within Pinyon. When temporary records complete the disposition cycle, they fall off the system and permanent records are eventually transferred to NARA. FS is currently expecting to deploy eRecords by the end of FY19. Most Record Schedules sent to NARA in FY 2018, have been approved by the Archivist of the United States. Approximately 9 record schedules are still under review. Ongoing reviews are being conducted to continue the refinement of the agency's mission-specific records retention schedules.

3. Has your agency implemented a plan that aligns to the criteria and requirements published by NARA in its _Criteria for Successfully Managing Permanent Electronic Records_ (March 2018)?

> X Yes
> ☐ N o

> *Please explain your response:*

USDA has a department-wide policy, *Directive 3080-001 Records Management* that addresses managing records in all formats. The Department has implemented a plan to identify all unscheduled electronic record systems, process past due records for disposal and accession, and revise outdated schedules for systems, paper, and electronic records. The ERMWG is continuing the process of identifying and addressing gaps in Department records management program practices, modeling business and process capabilities, with the goal of managing records and information throughout the lifecycle according to NARA's requirements.

The Department previously updated the Records Management (RM) policies to ensure electronic systems incorporate proper RM lifecycle controls, including the implementation of disposition within systems. The Department is building these requirements into lifecycle management and systems development lifecycle processes.

The SAORM held meetings with all Department Chief Operating Officers (COOs) on responsibilities for managing records and supported bi-weekly meetings with the Department's Agency Records Officers and ERMWG. The (DRMT) assessed the state of USDA's records program and proposed a strategic approach to improve records management by transitioning to a centralized records management system and storage locations. Implementing an enterprise-based electronic records management system to capture on an executive dashboard the status of past due disposals, unscheduled records, records locations; and staffing to implement and update records retention schedules.

USDA agencies have implemented the following:

- AMS implemented an Electronic Record Center (ERC), a SharePoint based electronic records center. AMS upgraded to the latest version SharePoint 2016 in the Cloud and a rebuild is in progress. Employees can send electronic records directly to the Center for secure storage and the Center ensures document preservation until the end of the retention period. Employees and stakeholders can access documents as needed.

- RMA has a records program in place for management of records throughout lifecycle and has trained personnel using the Electronic Record Management System (eRMS). RMA successfully transferred numerous records to FRC and promptly processed dispositions.

4. As included in the Administration's [*Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century: Reform Plan and Reorganization Recommendations*](#) **(June 2018), NARA will no longer accept paper records after December 31, 2022. Is your agency developing strategic plans, goals, objectives, and initiatives that will enable it to comply with this deadline?**

> *The Reform Plan states:*
> ***Transition to Electronic Environment:*** *Transition Federal agencies' business processes and recordkeeping to a fully electronic environment, and end the National Archives and Records Administration's acceptance of paper records by December 31, 2022. This would improve agencies' efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness to citizens by converting paper-based processes to electronic workflows, expanding online services, and enhancing management of Government records, data, and information.*

    X Yes
    ☐ No

> *Please explain your response (include specific goals and example metrics):*

The DRMT, working with Records Officers, surveyed the volume of paper records found throughout the Department and past due disposals at the FRC. Currently, the DRMT is analyzing approaches to properly apply disposition to permanent and temporary records. The SAORM met with the Department's COOs to discuss requirements and challenges in transitioning to an electronic environment and submission of plan to USDA Deputy Secretary for leadership approval and implementation.

Agency Records Officers take part as members of the ERMWG in coordinating efforts throughout USDA to meet the December 31, 2022 deadline. A main goal of the ERMWG is to determine a department-wide approach to transitioning to an electronic environment and recommendation of an enterprise records management system for USDA. Goals include inventorying unscheduled records; big bucket scheduling of records; clearing backlog of past due disposals stored at FRC; tracking and finding status of litigation holds on records for records prompt release and approval for disposal; digitizing and transferring paper permanent records to electronic. Legacy paper permanent records transferred to NARA prior to 2022 deadline so that only electronic permanent records kept Department-wide. Any paper permanent records that are not yet eligible for transfer will be pre-accessioned to eliminate any paper permanent records prior to the 2022 deadline.

- FSIS is currently setting up a SharePoint site to house existing permanent records prior to their transfer to NARA. FSIS can meet the 2019 paperless permanent records deadline,

managing all permanent records in an electronic format going forward. FSIS will transfer any legacy paper permanent records to NARA prior to the 2022 deadline and will only keep electronic permanent records.

- NIFA is transferring all paper documents to electronic using SharePoint with completion of the process by December 31, 2022, to meet the NARA deadline.
- NASS has been transferring permanent electronic records to NARA since 2007 and is managing electronic records in a customized SharePoint platform.
- FS plans for Record Managers to begin working with local units on processing closed records to the FRC. Permanent records will be primary focus to transfer.
- FSA has taken steps toward digitizing records with the implementation of a contract for scanning a number of program offices.
- RD is automating all program functions, including providing loans and grants electronically. Many loan and grant applications submitted on-line, and associated records scanned and digitized. Records moved to the FRC across all programs, where it makes sense to transfer. This would include records that have less than 10 years until eligibility for disposal.
- RMA utilizes eRMS system to store all temporary and permanent records electronically to throughout the lifecycle of the record. Permanent records will be sent to NARA via CD or thumb drive.
- APHIS is digitizing their records based on agency schedules to determine permanent records and temporary records with impending disposal dates.
- AMS utilizes the AMS Electronic Record Center (ERC) and is sending program records via CD or thumb drive to FRC.
- FPAC is currently migrating paper records to electronic via digitizing and utilizing electronic systems and applications when possible.

5. Is your agency utilizing <u>General Service Administration's Schedule 36</u> to procure solutions to assist in transitioning to an Electronic Environment?

        X Yes
        ☐ No

Please explain your response:

USDA is in the beginning stages of records management strategy and have researched GSA Schedule 36 to identify companies that provide record scheduling, inventory, and record management services as part of business analysis. USDA Record Officers will continue to reference Schedule 36 as the Department moves forward with determining services and records management solutions to meet the NARA's 2019 and 2022 electronic record management deadlines. Schedule 36 is used during the procurement process.

6. Have you, as the SAORM, established or improved your agency procedures that ensure all incoming and outgoing senior officials receive briefings on their records management responsibilities including documenting their public service, use of personal email, and other recordkeeping requirements?

> *Senior officials are the heads of departments and independent agencies; their deputies and assistants; the heads of program offices and staff offices including assistant secretaries, administrators, and commissioners; directors of offices, bureaus, or equivalent; principal regional officials; staff assistants to those aforementioned officials, such as special assistants, confidential assistants, and administrative assistants; and career Federal employees, political appointees, and officers of the Armed Forces serving in equivalent or comparable positions.

> ☐ Yes
> X Changes were unnecessary (click here for your agency's 2017 report)
> ☐ No, changes are being considered but have not been made
> ☐ No

Please explain your response:

The Department is proactive in ensuring incoming and outgoing senior officials receive briefings on their Records Management responsibilities. USDA's online RM course is assigned to all current employees, senior officials, political appointees, and contractors. New employees, senior officials, political appointees and contractors are required to take the RM course within 90 days of their start date.

The Department's Records Management Program augments larger sessions with one-on-one meetings. Outreach addresses documenting their public service, use of personal email, and other recordkeeping requirements.

USDA conducts and documents for accountability RM exit interviews as required for all employees, including senior officials and political appointees per Departmental Regulation (DR) 3099-001, RM Policy for Departing Employees, Contractors, and Political Appointees.

The Office of General Counsel addressed Federal RM obligations in a memorandum to all Subcabinet Officials, all Agency and Staff Office Heads and all Political Appointees. The memorandum discussed USDA Departmental Regulations relating to RM, the Federal Records Act, roles of public officials and employees using only USDA official electronic messaging accounts, and the use of personal email and text account to conduct government business.

7. Have you, as the SAORM, ensured that your records management program has the support and resources it needs to be successful? (See NARA Bulletin 2017-02: *Guidance on Senior Agency Officials for Records Management*)

        X Yes
        ☐ No

Please explain your response:

Through the Secretary of Agriculture's realignment of functional areas and to elevate the importance of RM, the USDA Records Management Program moved from the Office of the Chief Information Officer to the Office of the Executive Secretariat. Efforts are in progress for treatment of this function as a working capital fund cost in FY 2021, removing some of the unknowns from being an appropriated program.

Lead meetings with USDA's COOs to emphasize management support of the records management program and the resources needed and developed a Memorandum to the Secretary outlining the issues and recommendation of corrective actions for USDA to meet NARA's requirement and goals for all records to be electronically managed.

Require that Departmental Records Officer (DRO) and staff work collectively with agency records staff and stakeholders to ensure a best effort is made to manage all permanent electronic records electronically to the fullest extent possible and to manage all email records electronically and retaining them in an appropriate electronic system that supports records management and litigation requirements, including the capability to identify, retrieve, and retain the records consistent with NARA-approved disposition authorities and regulatory exceptions. Supports the ERMWG group efforts and meet with the DRMT on a bi-weekly basis.

Approve assignment of mandatory extensive on-line RM training course annually for all USDA employees, with the goal of training automatically assigned and completed during FY 2018. The course addresses the Federal Records Act to ensure the proper identification and handling of USDA records, as well as the use of personal or non-official electronic messaging. All USDA employees and contractors must complete this training course *"USDA Records Management – Training 101 and Refresher."*

8. Have you, as the SAORM, implemented an appropriate role-based records management training program that covers recordkeeping responsibilities for all staff including those with dedicated records management roles, Federal employees, contractors, senior executives and appointees? (See NARA Bulletin 2017-01: *Agency Records Management Training Requirements*)

        X Yes
        ☐ No

Please explain your response:

USDA has an extensive records management organization consisting of a Department Records Officer Agency Records Officers, Records managers, and Records liaisons. This structure is in Department policy, *Directive 3080-001 Records Management*, that sets forth the duties and responsibilities of records management personnel, managers, and employees. USDA agencies' personnel take Department-wide on-line (AgLearn) records management course that address recordkeeping roles and responsibilities, as well as, group and individualized training on records management. Records Management training is included in the new hire in-processing for all new employees.

USDA agencies have multiple training systems that address all federal employees, contractors, senior executives, and appointees. For example, FSIS publishes an annual notice as a reminder of everyone's roles and responsibilities regarding records management and have select individuals in each program area, known as Records Management Liaisons (RMLs), who receive specialized training and instruction to carry out records functions in their program area. The RMLs are each program's primary point of contact for records management. FSIS provides personalized training and briefings as needed for individual program areas and field offices. APHIS has an annual mandatory training for all staff including contractors, senior executives, volunteers, and appointees.

9. Have you, as the SAORM, taken steps to direct and support Records Management staff in implementing an evaluation or auditing process to ensure records management directives, policies, procedures, and retention schedules are being properly implemented?

        X Yes
        ☐ No

Please explain your response:

The DRO and agency RM staff review, evaluate and audit records management directives, policies, procedures and proper implementation of retention schedules annually.

Examples of steps USDA agencies have taken:

- FS records management directives reviewed and updated in the last two years to reflect change of processes to electronic recordkeeping. Reviewed and updated record schedules through NARA incorporated into FS eRecords Program. The newly developed record schedules help streamline FS many record schedules, so employees have a better understanding of proper filing processes.
- FSIS review record retention schedules annually and update, and any records that are beyond their official retention are destroyed. This helps FSIS to ensure that the agency is adhering to record management policies, identifying any unscheduled records, and carrying out routine records management activities.
- RMA eRMS Records Center generates monthly reports from the document library reflecting overall counts by document; counts by file plan; counts by author and total document report for each Regional Office.

- FNCS, through established action item goals, ensure compliance goals consistently updated and met. FNCS gives formal training on records management, program evaluations, assessments, document resources, plans of action, as well as, assistance and follow-up evaluations to program offices.
- RD conducts a Management Control Review (MCR) every 1-5 years on records management throughout RD. The MCR includes questionnaires, reviewing records, interviews, and training. Upon conclusion of the MCR, RD prepares a formal report and sends to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, listing any findings, and corrective actions to perform by a due date. If any findings identified in the final report, conducts quarterly reporting.

10. Do you need support from NARA to ensure a successful transition to fully electronic recordkeeping?

> X Yes
> ☐ No

Please explain your response:

We would ask that NARA plan to have more direct interaction with agencies to provide technical assistance, continue to provide any updates as they move forward with new initiatives and guidance related to electronic records.

Support for retaining pre-2019 closed records in hardcopy format if agency, for whatever reason, cannot digitize the records prior to accession to National Archives.