



**WEED SCIENCE
SOCIETY OF AMERICA**
RESEARCH - EDUCATION - INNOVATION
FOUNDED 1956



August 18, 2025

The Honorable Secretary Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Subject: Proposed USDA Reorganization Plan: Opposition to Closing Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Laboratories

Dear Secretary Rollins,

The Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) along with our affiliate societies, the Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS), the North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS), the Northeastern Weed Science Society (NEWSS), the Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS) and the Western Society of Weed Science (WSWS) are writing to express our **opposition to any proposal** under the USDA Reorganization Plan that would **result in the closure or downsizing of Agricultural Research Service (ARS) laboratories.**

Our non-profit professional societies are dedicated to fostering an awareness of weeds and their associated impacts on our food security and environment. Collectively, we promote research, education, and extension outreach activities related to weeds and invasive plants and provide science-based information to the public and policy makers. Our organizations consist of members from around the world including academic, governmental and private industry research scientists, students and extension educators, commercial pesticide applicators, consultants, administrators, and concerned individuals interested in the science of weed and invasive plant management. Overall, we represent a diverse group of public and private stakeholders with an interest in effective weed management in both managed and natural ecosystems.

The ARS network of research laboratories is the cornerstone of public agricultural research in the United States. These labs not only support the innovation and scientific discovery that keep American agriculture competitive, but they also **address urgent challenges such as herbicide resistance, invasive species, soil health, food security, and targeted and autonomous weed control.** Their presence in diverse geographic regions ensures that research reflects the specific

needs of local farming systems and ecosystems, which cannot be replicated or consolidated without significant scientific and economic cost.

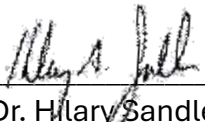
While efforts to improve efficiency and reduce duplication are commendable, laboratory closures risk irreparably damaging the scientific capacity that underpins our nation's food system. **ARS research provides a public good that private industry often cannot or will not undertake—long-term, fundamental agricultural science for the benefit of all Americans.**

Any cost savings from closing ARS labs would be dwarfed by the long-term losses in productivity, biosecurity, and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, such closures **would have detrimental effects on local economies, weaken partnerships with land-grant universities, and disrupt decades of investment in research infrastructure and personnel.**

As leaders of our scientific societies, we urge USDA to reconsider any plan to close or consolidate ARS laboratories. Instead, USDA should prioritize strengthening this vital national research network to ensure it is equipped to meet both today's demands and tomorrow's challenges.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further and offer any input that may assist in protecting the integrity of ARS research. For further information or any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Lee Van Wychen, Executive Director of Science Policy at 202-746-4686 or Lee.VanWychen@WSSA.net

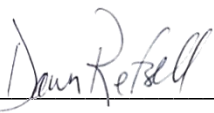
Sincerely,




Dr. Hilary Sandler
OPresident
Weed Science Society of America




Mr. Jeremy Slade
Past President
Aquatic Plant Management Society



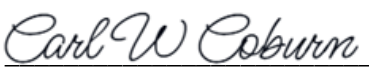
Dr. Dawn Refsell
Past President
North Central Weed Science Society



Dr. Thierry Besancon
President
Northeastern Weed Science Society



Dr. Eric Palmer
President
Southern Weed Science Society



Dr. Carl Coburn
President
Western Society of Weed Science