

# Texas A&M AgriLife Research Procedures

61.01.02.A0.01 | Public Information

Approved: September 29, 2009

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## PROCEDURE STATEMENT

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This procedure establishes procedures for Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research) employees to comply with the Texas Public Information Act and The Texas A&M University System (A&M System) Regulation 61.01.02, *Public Information*.

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## REASON FOR PROCEDURE

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This procedure is required by A&M System Regulation 61.01.02, and provides AgriLife Research employees guidance for the management of public information requests and the compilation of responses to comply with the Texas Public Information Act.

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## PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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### 1.0 GENERAL

- 1.1 The Texas Public Information Act designates the Chief Executive Officer of each A&M System member as the Officer for Public Information Officer (PIO). The Director has delegated these responsibilities to the Texas A&M AgriLife (AgriLife) Risk and Compliance Manager. The AgriLife Administrative Services Assistant Director for Risk and Compliance serves as the alternate to act in the PIO's absence. Each department/unit head is a public information contact point for the PIO.
- 1.2 The PIO will distribute public information requests to the appropriate agency administrative contact(s) and unit(s) for the purpose of gathering responsive information.
- 1.3 The PIO will copy the A&M System Office of General Counsel (OGC) on all requests, and OGC will be consulted in regard to all responses. OGC will notify the Chancellor of requests that may have public relations significance, as appropriate.
- 1.4 The PIO will copy AgriLife Communications on all requests that may have public relations significance.

### 2.0 RECEIPT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

#### 2.1 Manner of Receipt

- A. No official format is required, but information must be requested in writing and contain requestor contact information.
- B. A governmental body may not inquire into the purpose of a request.
- C. All requests received directly by a department, by mail or hand delivery, shall be forwarded immediately upon receipt to the PIO.

- D. Requests made by electronic mail or facsimile transmission must be addressed directly to the PIO. Departments/units receiving requests directly from the requestor by electronic mail or facsimile transmission should ask the requestor to resubmit the request to the PIO.

### 3.0 RESPONSES TO PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

- 3.1 The department/unit contact(s) shall provide all documents that are responsive to a request to the PIO by the date indicated by the PIO.
  - A. Records shall be forwarded electronically (via e-mail, flash drive, or CD) when possible.
  - B. If necessary to provide hard copies, copies should be single sided and staples removed.
  - C. No redactions shall be made to responsive documents.
  - D. Responses to multiple items shall be sorted and identified per item.
  - E. Concerns regarding release of certain responsive items shall be noted.
- 3.2 If sources for responsive information are known that are not indicated on the distribution, the PIO shall be notified as soon as possible.
- 3.3 A response to a public information request includes responsive documents that exist at the time of a request.
- 3.4 The PIO will assist department/unit contacts with cost estimates as described in A&M System Regulation 61.01.02.
- 3.5 All decisions regarding withholding or releasing records will be made in accordance with A&M System Regulation 61.01.02.

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#### **RELATED STATUTES, POLICIES, OR REQUIREMENTS**

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[A&M System Policy 61.01](#), *Public Information Act Compliance*

[A&M System Regulation 61.01.02](#), *Public Information*

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#### **DEFINITIONS**

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The terms “Public Information” and “Open Records” are used interchangeably.

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#### **CONTACT OFFICE**

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For interpretation or clarification, please contact the Public Information Officer at 979-845-7879.