

American Statistical Association Statement on Reintroduction of Agricultural Research Integrity Act and

Fiscal Year 2019 Explanatory Statement Putting Brakes on Controversial USDA Research Arm Restructuring

With the [reintroduction of the Agricultural Research Integrity Act \(ARIA\), H.R. 1221](#), and the [explanatory statement language](#) accompanying the fiscal year 2019 (FY19) consolidated appropriations act slowing down the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) research arm restructuring, American Statistical Association Executive Director Ron Wasserstein issued the following statement:

“We are pleased and grateful for the reintroduction of the Agricultural Research Integrity Act and the explanatory statement language for ERS [Economic Research Service] and NIFA [National Institute of Food and Agriculture]. Scientific societies; agricultural research leaders; government statistics experts; land-grant university deans, vice presidents and presidents; members of Congress; and many others have all expressed their concerns and opposition to USDA’s ill-conceived and counterproductive plans. By proceeding with their rushed plans, USDA disregards the perspective not only of the vocal members of Congress but also the broader USDA agricultural and food research community. ARIA’s reintroduction and the FY19 language sends a powerful message, and we urge Secretary [Sonny] Perdue to be responsive and to withdraw his plans.”

The [USDA’s plan](#) would relocate the ERS and NIFA outside Washington, DC, and realign ERS from the USDA research arm to the USDA office of the chief economist.

As a sign of the broad concern for USDA’s unilateral restructuring of its research arm, 58 organizations signed a [February 1 letter](#) thanking House and Senate appropriators for the report language accompanying their yet-to-be consolidated FY19 spending bills regarding the proposed ERS and NIFA moves. Furthermore, the [letter of current and former university agricultural administration leaders and former USDA chief scientists](#)—led by Dr. Gale Buchanan and Dr. Catherine Woteki—has now garnered

51 signers. The letter urges Congress to “intervene to stop the restructuring of REE at least until there has been a comprehensive independent study and full consultation with the stakeholder community.”

See also this December 20 press release upon the original introduction of ARIA: [American Statistical Association Praises Bill to Maintain Strength, Integrity of USDA Research Arm.](#)

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About the American Statistical Association

The ASA is the world’s largest community of statisticians and the oldest continuously operating professional science society in the United States. Its members serve in industry, government and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare. For additional information, please visit the ASA website at www.amstat.org.