

Part 540 – Operation and Management

Subpart D – Exhibits

540.68 Resources for Preparing Literature Reviews

A. The following resources may be used for compiling a literature review:

(1) **The National Agriculture Library (NAL)**

(i) NAL has many resources and provides support for locating information for USDA employees. Complete details of the services provided by NAL can be found on their Web site (<http://www.nal.usda.gov>). The NAL Web site provides online access to AGRICOLA (AGRICultural OnLine Access), Current Research Information Network (CRIS), ISIS, and the Agriculture Network Information Center (AgNIC).

- **AGRICOLA** is a machine-readable database of bibliographic records created by the NAL and its cooperators. Production of these records in electronic form began in 1970, but the database covers materials dating from the 16th century to the present. The records describe publications and resources encompassing all aspects of agriculture and allied disciplines, including plant and animal sciences, forestry, entomology, soil and water resources, agricultural economics, agricultural engineering, agricultural products, alternative farming practices, and food and nutrition.
- **CRIS** is USDA's documentation and reporting system for ongoing and recently completed research projects in agriculture, food and nutrition, and forestry. Projects are conducted or sponsored by USDA research agencies, State agricultural experiment stations, the State land grant university system, other cooperating State institutions, and participants in USDA's National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program.
- **ISIS** is NAL's Online Public Access Catalog. **AgNIC** is a distributed network that provides access to agriculture-related information, subject area experts, and other resources.

(ii) If Internet access is not available, NAL will conduct literature reviews for USDA employees. For a literature review, send a Computer Search Request or letter to NAL, Reference Division, Beltsville, Maryland 20705, or by contacting NAL by phone ((301) 504-5479), fax ((301) 504-6927), or by email (agref@nal.usda.gov) (note that phone numbers and email addresses are subject to change). A search of literature may be made by article, title, author, or general subject matter. The reference service request form provides space for a brief narrative description of a project, keywords, or categories of subject matter. The requester receives a bibliography of the articles available and an abstract for each document cited.

(iii) Articles and documents may be requested by mail, fax, email, and other methods as described on the NAL Web site. Desired articles may be requested through fax or mail by submitting a Form AD-245-4. Photocopies of articles or abstracts of texts are then forwarded in response to the AD-245-4. The most efficient method of requesting documents after completing an online search is by email. Specific guidelines for sending requests are found on the NAL Web site.

B. Local Colleges and Universities

Many colleges and land grant universities have extensive agriculture libraries where information may be found. Oftentimes, these libraries provide access to the AGRICOLA database or have Internet search engines to find information located in the library.

C. Internet Searches

The Internet is an excellent place to find information from a variety of sources. The use of popular search engines such as Google (<http://www.google.com>) may facilitate locating some materials. In addition, the libraries of most major universities are accessible through the Internet. Special attention should be given to the sources of materials from the Internet though, and the validity of some information may need to be checked before considering it in a literature review.

D. Contact with Other PMCs

Oftentimes, other PMCs are working on similar projects and may be a source of literature and technical information.

E. Personal Contacts

Communications with experts and practitioners in the field of interest may be useful for obtaining firsthand information on a topic and areas where work is needed. Personal contacts may be with university or government researchers, people in the industry, such as with seed companies and revegetation experts, and with qualified NRCS personnel, such as District Conservationists and State office specialists.