

## DEFINITIONS

“Secretary” as meaning the Secretary of Agriculture, see section 2 of Pub. L. 115-334, set out as a Definition of “Secretary” note under section 9001 of this title.

For definition of “innovative wood product”, see section 8641 of Pub. L. 115-334, set out as a note under section 7655c of this title.

**§ 7656. Designation of Crisis Management Team within Department**

**(a) Designation of Crisis Management Team**

The Secretary of Agriculture shall designate a Crisis Management Team within the Department of Agriculture, which shall be—

- (1) composed of senior departmental personnel with strong subject matter expertise selected from each relevant agency of the Department; and
- (2) headed by a team leader with management and communications skills.

**(b) Duties of Crisis Management Team**

The Crisis Management Team shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) Developing a Department-wide crisis management plan, taking into account similar plans developed by other government agencies and other large organizations, and developing written procedures for the implementation of the crisis management plan.
- (2) Conducting periodic reviews and revisions of the crisis management plan and procedures developed under paragraph (1).
- (3) Ensuring compliance with crisis management procedures by personnel of the Department and ensuring that appropriate Department personnel are familiar with the crisis management plan and procedures and are encouraged to bring information regarding crises or potential crises to the attention of members of the Crisis Management Team.
- (4) Coordinating the Department’s information gathering and dissemination activities concerning issues managed by the Crisis Management Team.
- (5) Ensuring that Department spokespersons convey accurate, timely, and scientifically sound information regarding crises or potential crises that can be easily understood by the general public.
- (6) Cooperating with, and coordinating among, other Federal agencies, States, local governments, industry, and public interest groups, Department activities regarding a crisis.

**(c) Role in prioritizing certain research**

The Crisis Management Team shall cooperate with the Advisory Board in the prioritization of agricultural research conducted or funded by the Department regarding animal health, natural disasters, food safety, and other agricultural issues.

**(d) Cooperative agreements**

The Secretary shall seek to enter into cooperative agreements with other Federal departments and agencies that have related programs or activities to help ensure consistent, accurate, and coordinated dissemination of information throughout the executive branch in the event of

a crisis, such as, in the case of a threat to human health from food-borne pathogens, developing a rapid and coordinated response among the Department, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Food and Drug Administration.

(Pub. L. 105-185, title VI, §618, June 23, 1998, 112 Stat. 607.)

**§ 7657. Senior Scientific Research Service**

**(a) In general**

There is established in the Department of Agriculture the Senior Scientific Research Service (referred to in this section as the “Service”).

**(b) Members**

**(1) In general**

Subject to paragraphs (2) through (4), the Secretary shall appoint the members of the Service.

**(2) Qualifications**

To be eligible for appointment to the Service, an individual shall—

- (A) have conducted outstanding research in the field of agriculture or forestry;
- (B) have earned a doctoral level degree at an institution of higher education (as defined in section 1001 of title 20); and
- (C) meet qualification standards prescribed by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management for appointment to a position at level GS-15 of the General Schedule.

**(3) Number**

Not more than 100 individuals may serve as members of the Service at any 1 time.

**(4) Other requirements**

**(A) In general**

Subject to subparagraph (B) and subsection (d)(2), the Secretary may appoint and employ a member of the Service without regard to—

- (i) the provisions of title 5 governing appointments in the competitive service;
- (ii) the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 35 of title 5 relating to retention preference;
- (iii) the provisions of chapter 43 of title 5 relating to performance appraisal and performance actions;
- (iv) the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5 relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates; and
- (v) the provisions of chapter 75 of title 5 relating to adverse actions.

**(B) Exception**

A member of the Service appointed and employed by the Secretary under subparagraph (A) shall have the same right of appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board and the same right to file a complaint with the Office of Special Counsel as an employee appointed to a position at level GS-15 of the General Schedule.

**(c) Performance appraisal system**

The Secretary shall develop a performance appraisal system for members of the Service that is designed to—