



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

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July 6, 2022

Teresa McDuffie-Frye
Records Management Officer
Agricultural Research Service
United States Department of Agriculture
5601 Sunnyside Ave
Beltsville, MD 20705

Dear Teresa McDuffie-Frye,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received your report regarding the unintended deletion of photo and text message records from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). The report indicated that an ARS employee's government furnished cell phone stopped receiving emails, and while troubleshooting to resolve this issue the cellphone was unintentionally restored to factory settings, deleting all text messages and photos associated with the phone.

NARA acknowledges that the unintended factory reset caused the loss of text messages and some photographs from late 2019 through May 17, 2022. The deleted text messages and photos related to contracts for the greenhouse construction, stucco repair, new automatic gates, laboratories 113, 118 and 122 remodel, transformer design, main building hallway and office lights upgrade, and old greenhouse control system upgrade. Copies of some photos were uploaded to agency servers, and ARS has established and implemented new procedures to mitigate the potential of future losses of this kind.

Based on the information provided, the reporting requirements of 36 CFR 1230.14(a) have been met and NARA considers this matter closed. I appreciate your attention on this important matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact me at laurence.brewer@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and a distinct 'V'.

LAURENCE BREWER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government

Cc: Beatriz Collazo, United States Department of Agriculture Department Records Officer