

## Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: Assessing the Benefits of Public Research Within an Economic Framework: The Case of USDA's Agricultural Research Service

Type of Report (ERR, EIB, EB) ERR

Influential Scientific Information

Agency: Economic Research Service  Highly Influential Scientific Assessment  
USDA

Agency Contact: Elise Golan, egolan@ers.usda.gov

Subject of Review: Public and private agricultural research and development have driven impressive gains in U.S. agricultural productivity. As with any public investment, agricultural research should be evaluated in two major ways—retrospectively to provide accountability for the use of public funds, and prospectively to plan for the best way to allocate current research funds and plan future research programs. Economic analysis is one tool that can contribute a great deal to research evaluation. This report reviews the literature on public research roles, evaluation in general within the Federal government and within the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and standard tools of economic analysis. It also demonstrates how economic reasoning can be applied even when formal economic methods are not used, and uses three case studies of ARS programs to illustrate whether or not existing methods are suitable for economic evaluation in these cases.

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to ensure the high-quality of the economic analysis, transparent explanation of methods, objective interpretation of results, and effective communication to the intended audience.

Type of Review:  Panel Review  Individual Reviewers

Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 09/30/08 End: 01/28/09 Completed: 04/16/09

Number of Reviewers:  3 or fewer  4 to 10  More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Economists

Reviewers selected by:  Agency  Designated Outside Organization  
Organization's Name:

Opportunities for Public Comment?  Yes  No

If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:

How:

When:

Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments?  Yes  No

Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel?  Yes  No