



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

NOV 23 2018

Ms. Kristen McGuire  
Executive Director  
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association  
555 East Wells Street  
Suite 1100  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Dear Ms. McGuire:

Thank you for your letter of September 6, 2018, regarding the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) plan to relocate the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and realign ERS with USDA's Office of the Chief Economist (OCE). I apologize for the delayed response.

USDA continues to value the high-quality research, education, and extension efforts supported by NIFA and conducted by ERS. We are confident that NIFA and ERS will remain world-class research agencies.

We received 136 expressions of interest from 35 states across the country. We have included key criteria to determine the optimal location for ERS and NIFA in the Federal Register announcement that was posted on Tuesday, August 14, 2018, and extended on September 7, 2018. USDA accepted expressions of interest through October 15, 2018, and we have retained Ernst & Young to assist in site selection based on objective criteria.

We will also ensure that the integrity of ERS research remains strong as it is realigned with OCE, as well as take the important factors that you raise in your letter into consideration when determining the best location for ERS and NIFA.

We would be happy to set up a meeting to discuss particular areas of concern. Please contact Kristi Boswell at (202) 720-9990 to arrange.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sonny Perdue  
Secretary