

ANR Cooperative Extension Risk Assessment

Risk Categories

Information - Confidentiality

General Description: The needs for confidentiality and restrictions on research information by sponsors are two types of risks that relate to this keyword. First, there is the risk to UCCE and to collaborators of not being able to ensure confidentiality of research findings. Second, there is the risk associated with compromising research potential because of the requirements of some sponsors. (also see Risk: Information – Reliability, Validity & Requests).

Specific Examples:

- A. Liability to UCCE and to Collaborators
 1. Clientele at risk from sensitive data collected on their property being made public. Risk of confidentiality of collaborators when research reveals information of a sensitive and/or legal nature; e.g.,
 - Data collected could be used to pinpoint private property owner as source of pollution.
 - Sensitive information discovered during research; e.g., sedimentation, temperature information during pottage studies.
 - Putting commercial fishermen out of business because of using UC economic and catch research data through new management schemes (i.e., marine protected areas and ITQ's).
 - Advisors collecting water quality data on private property leading to possible disclosure.
 2. Public demand for records regarding farm calls to specific properties.
 3. Public demand for surveys returned to UCCE.
 4. Risk to Advisor - personally for discarding records or other efforts to protect clientele confidentiality.

- B. Sponsor Expectations/Restrictions
 1. Projects or data generated could be suspended and credibility with collaborators at risk.
 2. Risk of growers/commodity board or other funding agency not wanting our research data published because it reveals something negative about the commodity or its cultural practices.
 3. Demands for new research data that may be interpreted incorrectly by those requesting and/or supporting the research.

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4. Accepting funding from sources that may restrict dissemination of research-based information.
5. Legal/information/technology transfer risks associated with informal undocumented agreements with agencies/donors for funding in return for research services (see also Risk: Agreements, Contracts & Grants).