



NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY

Advancing Access to Global Information for Agriculture

National Agricultural Library Digital Collections Policy¹

Introduction

The National Agricultural Library (NAL) is one of four national libraries of the United States and houses one of the largest agricultural collections in the world, serving as the library of record for the agricultural sciences.

NAL already provides access to all items in its collection through its physical location, but the Library is continually working toward delivering its collections to customers anywhere and anytime using the global reach of the Internet and the flexibility of digital formats.

The *NAL Digital Collections* offers one avenue by which customers can use collection materials available in digital format, whether those materials originated in that format or were converted to it later. The *NAL Digital Collections* offers rich searching, browsing and retrieval of digital materials and collections and provides reliable, long-term online access to selected publications.

Purpose

The *NAL Digital Collections* has been formed to help fulfill the NAL's mandate to:

- acquire and preserve substantive or essential information in the agricultural sciences,
- document United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) research, and
- serve as a national resource for agricultural information.²

Guiding Principles

The *NAL Digital Collections* will be maintained in line with the following guiding principles:

- Provide unified digital access to selected agricultural content.
- Make access to these digital collections easy and transparent.
- Sustainably manage the digital collections in perpetuity.

¹ With permission, NAL has drawn upon the structure and some content in the Harvard University Library, Office of Information Systems, *DRS Policy Guide*, April 26, 2007, accessed online on or before June 16, 2011, http://hul.harvard.edu/ois/systems/drs/policyGuide/DRS_Policy_Guide-Printable.pdf.

² Departmental Regulation, Number: 1020-001: March 23, 1990. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Accessed online on or before June 16, 2011, <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR1020-001.pdf>.

Scope

The *NAL Digital Collections* includes the following:

- items published by the USDA and clearly intended for public consumption;
- scholarly and peer-reviewed research outcomes authored by USDA employees and published while they are working for USDA; and
- other items selected in accordance with the subjects identified in the NAL Collection Development Policy and the selection criteria detailed below.

The *NAL Digital Collections* does not function as a records management system or an “institutional repository,” which would require NAL to capture the entire breadth of USDA employee and agency output.

Other Federal agencies capture different aspects of USDA documents and publications.

- The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) creates and preserves records that document the organization, functions, programs, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the USDA and other Federal departments.
- The Government Printing Office (GPO) serves as a repository for Federal documents that are within the scope of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), which works to ensure permanent preservation of these documents for public access.³

Collection Development

What are the criteria for objects that may be deposited into the NAL Digital Collections?

Items deposited in the *NAL Digital Collections* must meet two levels of criteria prior to inclusion in the Digital Collections.

Level One criteria cover objective standards such as copyright, extent and format issues and for published articles, items must meet *all* of the criteria in *Level One* to be eligible. Each item must:

- be in the public domain,⁴ or have documented, non-revocable permission granted by the copyright holder;
- be intended for public viewing and use;
- be complete, such as an entire publication, article, etc., and not a “part” such as an abstract, forward, or title page;
- include subject content as identified by the scope of the NAL Collection Development Policy;
- meet the standards required for long-term digital curation;⁵
- be in a standard format accessible through current file viewers;⁶ and

³ For more information about each, consult the following web sites: National Archives and Records Administration: <http://www.archives.gov/about>, Government Printing Office: <http://www.gpo.gov/about/>, Federal Depository Library: <http://www.fdlp.gov/home/about>, all accessed on or before June 16, 2011.

⁴ Works which are freely available for commercial or public use without restriction and which are not protected by copyright restrictions, <http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ01.pdf>, and <http://www.cendi.gov/publications/04-8copyright.html#toc20>, accessed on or before June 6, 2011.

⁵ Digital Curation. ICPSR, <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/curation/index.jsp>, accessed on or before June 6, 2011.

⁶ Such as the Adobe Reader, <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>, for pdf files, tiff file, .jpg, or other.

- be intended for permanent storage in the *NAL Digital Collections*;
- be published in, or by, one of the following:
 - a peer-reviewed journal;
 - Note: Peer-reviewed journals can be recognized by the following characteristics:
 - Report on original research or experimentation in order to make such information available to the rest of the scholarly world.
 - Usually include abstracts before the articles' main text.
 - Contain graphs and charts but few glossy pages or pictures.
 - Identify the sources cited for each article via footnotes or bibliographies. Such bibliographies are generally lengthy and cite other scholarly writings.
 - Include works by scholars or researchers in the specified field.
 - List the authors' affiliations, usually at the bottom of the first page or at the end of the article. Authors will most commonly be affiliated with government agencies, universities, research institutions, think tanks, and other credible institutions.
 - Use the specialized language of the discipline covered, with some technical background on the part of the reader assumed.
 - Published, in many (though not all) cases by specific professional organizations or academic presses.⁷
 - a journal NAL has chosen to index;
 - an item NAL has chosen to catalog; or
 - USDA.

Level Two criteria cover subjective elements requiring review, assessment and the professional judgment of NAL Acquisition Staff in collaboration with subject experts. Items must satisfy at least one criterion from each of the remaining categories:

- Utility: supports agricultural
 - policy,
 - research,
 - scholarship, or
 - teaching.
- Demand: anticipated or demonstrated based on one or more of the following:
 - Departmental priorities,
 - citation frequency, or
 - download frequency.

Exception: Items failing to meet the necessary standards for *Level Two* may still be included in the NAL Digital Collections if their condition warrants consideration for preservation purposes. In this case, items must be: too fragile for physical handling, but able to withstand the digitization process.

⁷ Distinguishing Scholarly Journals from Other Periodicals. Cornell University Library, <http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill20.html>, accessed on or before July 21, 2011.

What are NAL's obligations in support of the NAL Digital Collections?

NAL will provide:

- Digital Stewardship – responsibly manage digital objects over the long-term through accepted digital management practices. These practices include:
 - assessment,
 - selection,
 - acquisition,
 - deposit,
 - validation, and
 - commitment to ensure the usability of digital content over time.
- Accessibility
 - Ensure that objects are accessible over time.
 - Provide the hardware, security and technologies appropriate to the services.
 - Make changes as needed.
- Delivery services – deliver objects and associated information to desktop client applications through standard web protocols.
- Sustainability – manage the NAL Digital Collections in a manner that is administratively, financially, and technically sustainable.
- Responsiveness – be open and receptive to the needs and concerns of the community.
- Accountability – conduct policy setting and planning in an open and transparent manner.

What is the NAL Digital Collections retention policy?

All objects included in the *NAL Digital Collections* will be retained permanently upon acceptance into the *NAL Digital Collections*. The *NAL Digital Collections* will not be used as a temporary storage facility for digital items.

Collection Curators

NAL provides Digital Collection Curators who exercise intellectual and administrative stewardship responsibilities for digital objects stored in the *NAL Digital Collections*. The Digital Collection Curator is a *role* rather than a specific individual, and it is understood that, over time, many different individuals will play this role for a specific collection.

The Digital Collection Curator will ensure sound stewardship of the collection and will appropriately manage these digital objects over the long-term through standard digital management practices, which include the following:

- intellectual property rights
 - managing the legal rights necessary for all services over time, and
 - where necessary, obtaining legal clearances for the right to
 - make copies for backup purposes,
 - make derivative copies, and
 - redistribute publicly.
- metadata—follow NAL's guidelines to assure appropriate administrative, technical, and structural metadata are created for each object.
- discovery and access – ensure that metadata, or descriptions of objects, are publicly available.

Access

NAL freely provides public access to the *NAL Digital Collections*.⁸ The Library retains the right to identify exceptions to this policy for certain classes of items or for reasons pertaining to legal or copyright issues.

⁸ See the NAL User Fee Policy, <http://www.nal.usda.gov/about/policy/fee.shtml>, accessed on or before July 21, 2011.