

## Office of Information Affairs

January 30, 2025

### Delivered via Electronic Mail

David Kronig  
American Oversight  
1030 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Suite B255  
Washington, DC 20005  
[foia@americanoversight.org](mailto:foia@americanoversight.org)

**Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request No. 2025-OSEC-04230-F  
Final Response**

Dear David Kronig:

This is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Office of Information Affairs' (OIA) final response to the above-referenced FOIA request, which sought, from December 1, 2024 through the date the search is conducted:

1. All email communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) between (a) the USDA officials listed below, or anyone communicating on their behalf, such as an assistant or scheduler, and (b) the external individuals and entities also listed below (including, but not limited to, anyone communicating from an email address ending in the listed domains).

USDA Officials:

- a. Acting Assistant Secretary Malcom Shorter
- b. Deputy Assistant Secretary Yeshe Abebe
- c. Deputy Assistant Secretary Duane Williams

External Entities and Individuals:

- i. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. (teamkennedy.com)
- ii. President-elect Donald Trump and/or anyone communicating on his behalf and/or on behalf of Donald J. Trump for President 2024 and/or Trump Save America Joint Fundraising Committee (donaldjtrump.com, trump.com, trumhotels.com, donaldtrump.com, 45office.com)
- iii. Vice President-elect JD Vance and/or anyone communicating on his behalf
- iv. Anyone communicating on behalf of the Trump Vance 2025 Transition Team (transition47.com, trumpvancetransition.com, dtjtfp24.com)
- v. Anyone communicating on behalf of the Trump Vance Inaugural Committee (t47inaugural.com)

- vi. Anyone communicating on behalf of the Presidential Transition Team (ptt.gov)
  
- 2. All email communications (including emails, email attachments, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) sent by the officials listed above in part 1 containing both a key term listed below in Column A and a key term listed in Column B.

Key Terms:

Column A	Column B
1. "avian influenza"	1. "presidential transition"
2. "avian flu"	2. RFK
3. "bird influenza"	3. Vance
4. "bird flu"	4. Trump
5. H5	5. Kennedy
6. H5N1	6. "HHS secretary"
7. outbreak	7. "future secretary"
8. pasteurize	8. "next secretary"
9. "raw milk"	

On January 24, 2025, the OIA informed you that we would replace the key term "trumhotels.com" with "trumphotels.com" for purposes of our electronic search.

Your request has been processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

The USDA's Client Experience Center (CEC) conducted a search for responsive records. The CEC provides comprehensive, fee-for-service information technology (IT) associated operations, security, and technical support services to USDA end users. The CEC also implements and manages enterprise IT solutions for users Department-wide. The CEC searched the email accounts associated with Malcom Shorter, Yeshi Abebe, and Duane Williams between December 1, 2024 to January 27, 2025 for email communications with the domains and individuals listed in your request as well as for sent communications containing the key terms listed in your request. No responsive records were located as a result of the CEC search. Therefore, we unable to provide you with any agency records responsive to your request.

You may appeal this response by email at [USDAFOIA@usda.gov](mailto:USDAFOIA@usda.gov). Your appeal must be in writing, and it must be received electronically no later than 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. The OIA will not consider appeals received after the 90 calendar-day limit. Appeals received after 5:00 p.m. EST will be considered received the next business day. The appeal letter should include the FOIA tracking number, a copy of the original request, the OIA's response to your original request, and a statement explaining the basis of your appeal. For quickest possible handling, the subject line of your email and the appeal letter should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal" and reference FOIA No. 2024-OSEC-04230-F.

**David Kronig**

FOIA Case No. **2025-OSEC-04230-F**

Page 3

You may seek dispute resolution services from the OIA's FOIA Public Liaison, Ms. Melanie Enciso. Ms. Enciso may be contacted by telephone at (202) 720-9462, or electronically at [Melanie.Enciso@usda.gov](mailto:Melanie.Enciso@usda.gov) or [USDAFOIA@usda.gov](mailto:USDAFOIA@usda.gov).

You also have the option to seek assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). Please visit [Request OGIS Assistance | National Archives](#) for information about how to request OGIS assistance in relation to a FOIA request.

Provisions of the FOIA allow us to recover part of the cost of processing your request. In this instance, no fees will be charged.

If you have any questions regarding the processing of this request, please contact Susan Ruppel at 202-690-5220 or electronically at [susan.ruppel@usda.gov](mailto:susan.ruppel@usda.gov) or [USDAFOIA@usda.gov](mailto:USDAFOIA@usda.gov).

For additional information regarding USDA FOIA regulations and processes, please refer to the information available online at [Freedom of Information Act Division | USDA](#).

The OIA appreciates the opportunity to assist you with this matter.

Sincerely,

*Alexis R. Graves*

Alexis R. Graves  
Director  
Office of Information Affairs