MEMORANDUM

TO: Vice Chancellor’s Executive Committee  
    Directors – Institutes and Centers  
    Department Heads – College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

SUBJECT: Annual Reminder: Federal Reporting Laws (Lobbying) and Washington, D.C. Travel

All Texas A&M AgriLife employees are subject to the federal law known as the “Honest Leadership and Open Government Act.” The act requires all lobbying organizations, which includes public universities and agencies, to have a system to track and report all congressional and federal agency contacts and activities. For Texas A&M AgriLife employees, this includes all formal meetings and briefings with federal agency or legislative administrators or staff in both Washington, DC and in Texas (or other states). This includes, but is not limited to, formal visits with local congressional staff members, agency contacts of a promotional nature in Texas and ALL visits to Washington, DC that include meetings in the course of official duties. We are aware that many meetings, conferences and symposium are scheduled in Washington. Such trips are not reportable unless you visit with an agency or congressional personnel or engage in any activities considered potentially considered lobbying or advocacy.

The Texas A&M University System must file a mandatory federal report to comply with these regulations. Texas A&M AgriLife is required to submit unit reports for all Texas A&M AgriLife entities (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas A&M Forest Service and Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory) to the System. Failure to report or misfiling includes federal criminal penalties. To ensure compliance, the Texas A&M AgriLife Office of Federal Relations has created appropriate reporting forms that ALL individuals going to Washington, DC or meeting with agency/legislative organizations related to official business are required to complete both pre and post travel.

Before traveling, you must complete the “Notification of Intent to Travel” form. Post-travel, you are required by law to complete the “Lobbying Disclosure Form.” Forms, additional information and instructions can be found here: http://agrilife.org/agrilife-offices/federalrelations/dc-travel/  
Submit all forms via email to:

1. Stephanie Payton at sa-payton@tamu.edu
2. Scott Sudduth at ssudduth@tamus.edu

Overall, I encourage restraint in trips to visit Congress or top level agency administrators. For all travel and contacts it is essential that all Texas A&M AgriLife employees contact the Office of Federal Relations regarding all phases of legislative and agency contacts and visits. If you have questions, please contact Ron Lacwell (r-lacewell@tamu.edu) or Stephanie Payton (sa-payton@tamu.edu) or call 979-845-2612.

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring compliance with our federal reporting laws. Contact me or our federal relations office with any questions.

Mark A. Hussey  
Vice Chancellor and Dean  
Agriculture and Life Sciences

cc: Ron Lacwell  
    Rick Mertens  
    Scott Sudduth

October 10, 2013