

USAIN Code of Conduct

The United States Agricultural Information Network (USAIN) is committed to upholding an open, welcoming, supportive, safe, collaborative, and harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of background or identity. USAIN exists to foster a community for inclusive networking, learning, and professional development. USAIN members do not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or any behavior that excludes or causes discomfort to others.

We recognize that individuals and groups in our community are subject to historical and ongoing discrimination. It is the responsibility of everyone who participates in our events to respect and be mindful of these characteristics that have been the basis of harassment or discrimination. Such characteristics include, but are not limited to gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical or cognitive ability, political affiliation, race, appearance, body size, citizenship, nationality, ethnic or social origin, medical and familial status, employment and military status, religion or belief (or lack thereof), age, education, socio-economic status, and experience level. Again, we do not tolerate harassment on the basis of these categories, or in any form.

The Code of Conduct is a living document subject to changes and will be reviewed regularly. It will be updated if issues and situations arise. It is not exhaustive: violations of the spirit of the document are not allowed.

[TO WHOM THE CODE APPLIES](#)

[EXPECTED BEHAVIOR](#)

[UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR](#)

[HOW THE CODE OF CONDUCT APPLIES](#)

[SANCTIONS](#)

[CONFIDENTIALITY](#)

[APPEALS](#)

[WHEN THE CODE WILL BE DISTRIBUTED](#)

[REQUIREMENTS OF CODE OF CONDUCT LIAISONS](#)

[DISCLAIMER](#)

[ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS](#)

TO WHOM THE CODE APPLIES

The Code of Conduct applies to any participant of spaces or platforms hosted by USAIN (online or in-person), including conferences, meetings, emails, social media, and websites. This includes members, institutions, and anyone else engaging with or on behalf of the USAIN community.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOR

In our dedication to providing a space for professional experiences, inclusive of all people, we encourage the following actions to help us meet our goal:

- listening as much as you speak, and remembering that colleagues may have expertise you are unaware of;
- encouraging and yielding the floor to those whose viewpoints may be under-represented in a group;
- using welcoming and inclusive language that is appropriate for a diverse audience;
- respecting different viewpoints and experiences;
- acting in good faith and assuming that others are as well
- accepting critique graciously and offering it constructively;
- giving credit where it is due;
- seeking concrete ways to make physical spaces and online resources more universally accessible;
- staying alert, as Active Bystanders, to the welfare of those around you;
- recognizing that intentions do not equal impact; be ready to apologize and correct yourself when this occurs; and
- understanding that humor is appreciated; however, sexual, racist, or exclusionary jokes and imagery are never appropriate

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

- written or verbal comments which have the intentional effect of excluding people
- insults, put downs, trolling, or bullying
- sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, or exclusionary jokes
- sustained disruption of talks, events, or communications
- continuing to initiate interaction (including photography or recording) with someone after being asked to stop
- use of sexual, violent and/or discriminatory images in public spaces (including online)

- publication of private communication without consent
- unwelcome sexual attention
- nonconsensual or unwelcome physical contact
- causing someone to fear for their safety, such as through stalking, following, or intimidation (online or in-person)
- violent threats or language directed against another person
- incitement to violence, suicide, or self-harm

Sexual, discriminatory, or potentially triggering language and imagery is generally inappropriate for any USAIN venue. However, this policy is not intended to constrain responsible scholarly or professional discourse and debate. We welcome engagement with difficult topics, done with respect and care.

HOW THE CODE OF CONDUCT APPLIES

In-Person

USAIN Code of Conduct Team members can be identified by name and photograph made available at registration. Those experiencing harassment or active bystanders who witness incidents when the Code of Conduct is violated may elect to have an in-person, confidential conversation with a Code of Conduct Team member. Incidents where attendees believe the Code of Conduct has been violated can also be reported anonymously by submitting an incident report (<https://forms.gle/c3MgTac6xh2Dz9cQ7>). The Code of Conduct Team will then assist participants by reviewing incident reports, consult local resources where appropriate, provide escorts as needed, or otherwise help those experiencing harassment to feel safe for the duration of the event.

Online

For online USAIN events and meetings, incidents of concern can be reported via email to the Code of Conduct Team or submitted through an online form.

- Send an email to Kiri DeBose (kgoldbec@vt.edu), Randa Lopez Morgan (rlope@lsu.edu), Suzanne Stapleton (suzanne@ufl.edu)
- Submit online incident report at <https://forms.gle/c3MgTac6xh2Dz9cQ7>

SANCTIONS

Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately. If a participant continues the harassing behavior, the Code of Conduct Team may take appropriate action. Examples of sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- warning the person in question to cease their behavior;
- requiring that the person in question avoid any interaction with, and physical proximity to, the person who brought the claim;
- terminating a talk that violates the policy;
- requiring that the person in question immediately leave the event and not return;
- requiring that the person demonstrate completion of appropriate training before participating in USAIN events again
- immediately ending any event responsibilities and privileges the person in question holds;
- banning the person in question from presenting, volunteering, or attending future USAIN events (in-person or online)
- banning the person in question from volunteering for future USAIN events (either indefinitely or for a certain time period);
- banning the person in question from attending future USAIN events (either indefinitely or for a certain time period);

The sanctions will be decided by the USAIN Code of Conduct Team. If any of these individuals were involved in the incident or are perceived to have a conflict of interest in the matter, they will recuse themselves from this process. Implementation of the sanctions may involve event organizers and hosts. The Code of Conduct Team may share anonymized summaries of violations with the USAIN Executive Council in order to improve the environment at future USAIN events for all attendees.

We expect participants to follow these rules in all USAIN venues, USAIN-related social events, community gatherings, and online communication channels.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The contents of the reports will be kept confidential, and are collected and stored for the purpose of implementing this Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct Team may provide anonymized summaries of reported incidents to the USAIN Executive Council for the purpose of improving the environment of future USAIN events.

The specific details are only shared with the Code of Conduct Team (excluding any persons recused), ... All of these individuals have been given guidelines on how to safeguard the data, to use it only for the aforementioned purposes, and not to disclose it to any other parties without explicit consent. It is the policy of USAIN to protect those who communicate bonafide concerns from any retaliation for such reporting. Any person who violates this prohibition against retaliation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include suspension or revocation of membership]. When reporting online, if you decide to provide your contact information, your complaint will not be anonymous to the USAIN Code of Conduct Team, but your complaint will remain confidential to these parties.

All data is stored in the USAIN Business Records, with access limited to members of the Code of Conduct Liaisons and the Executive Council. We retain the data for as long as we need to for the aforementioned purpose and no more than three years.

You may request a copy of any personal data that USAIN holds about you. To exercise these rights, please contact a member of the USAIN Code of Conduct Team. USAIN will protect the confidentiality of person(s) who file incident reports. USAIN promises to protect the confidentiality of all community members and will not share your personal data with anyone other than yourself without your permission.

APPEALS

Any individual involved in a Code of Conduct report has the right to appeal within 30 days of being notified of a decision. An appeal can be made directly by emailing the Code of Conduct Team.

WHEN THE CODE WILL BE DISTRIBUTED

In preparation for and during any conference or event, the following summary text including links should be included in registration and reminder emails and in the program text:

“The United States Agricultural Information Network (USAIN) is committed to providing its members and guests who participate in its events with a harassment-free and discrimination-free environment, and has adopted a Code of Conduct to help enable such an environment. A detailed version of the Code of Conduct may be found in the Governing Documents of the USAIN website.

If you experience or witness harassment at a USAIN event, you may contact the USAIN Conduct Team: Kiri DeBose (kdebose@vt.edu), Randa Morgan (rlope12@lsu.edu) and Suzanne Stapleton (suzanne@ufl.edu). Incidents can also be reported anonymously at <https://forms.gle/c3MgTac6xh2Dz9cQ7>

REQUIREMENTS OF CODE OF CONDUCT TEAM

A training program for conflict resolution and/or crisis intervention shall be recommended to all Code of Conduct Team members to complete.

The code of conduct liaisons will consist of a minimum of three USAIN members that will be the point persons responsible for seeing each matter through to resolution (Code of Conduct Team). If no one self-nominates for the positions, the Code of Conduct Team will be designated by the USAIN President. If anyone responding to an incident is alleged to be involved in the incident of abuse or harassment, that Code of Conduct Team member will be recused from handling the incident.

They will assist participants by contacting hotel/venue security or local law enforcement, providing escorts, or otherwise helping those experiencing harassment to feel safe for the duration of the event.

The names of the Code of Conduct Team members will be included on the USAIN website for the event. The names and photos will be posted to the USAIN conference webpage starting one week prior to any in-person event.

DISCLAIMER

USAIN reserves the right to take any actions deemed necessary and appropriate, including immediate removal from the USAIN-hosted event without warning or refund, in response to any incidence of unacceptable behavior, and USAIN reserves the right to prohibit attendance at any future conference, in person or online.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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