

USDA BARC Low Level Radioactive Burial Site Decommissioning Project Summary

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) Low-Level Radioactive Burial Site (the LLRBS or Site) is a 5700 m² (1.4 acre) facility located in Beltsville, Maryland that was used to dispose of research-related waste from 1949 to 1987. The LLRBS includes 50 cells that are 3 m wide by 4 m long by 3 m deep (10 ft x 12 ft x 10 ft). Each cell is approximately 1.5 - 1.8 m (5 - 6 ft) from an adjacent cell. There are no structures within the LLRBS. The Site is permitted under USDA's U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) License No. 19-00915-03. Previous NRC regulations allowed onsite disposals of waste, but these regulations have since been rescinded. The USDA is seeking NRC approval to conduct decommissioning activities at the Site including remediation of soil to unrestricted use levels consistent with 10 CFR 20.1402, "Radiological Criteria for Unrestricted Use." The area surrounding the LLRBS is agricultural and there are no plans for USDA to use the areas for any different purpose. It is important to note that the USDA radiological license will not be terminated at this time, although the LLRBS may be delisted from the license.

The USDA submitted a Decommissioning Plan (DP) and Final Status Survey Plan for NRC review. In coordination with Region I, NRC headquarters staff reviewed the USDA's submittal and provided requests for additional information (RAIs) to USDA. In response to NRC's RAIs, the USDA provided revised DPs that NRC has now found acceptable. USDA plans to excavate the contents of the disposal cells and backfill the cells with clean soil. The potential re-use of some excavated soils is proposed, but USDA will have to sample and analyze any soil intended for re-use to demonstrate that it is acceptable. Excavated material will be properly packaged in acceptable containers and transported offsite to authorized disposal facilities. The volume of buried waste is estimated to be 1000 yd³; however, the volume of contaminated soil and excavated wastes for disposal is estimated at 7000 yd³. The USDA will perform a final status survey to demonstrate that the cleanup criteria has been met. The NRC Region I staff will periodically inspect the decommissioning project.