

For: State Offices and Service Centers

USDA Minority Farm Register (MFR)

Approved by: Administrator



1 Overview

A Background

MFR is a national USDA project that was developed by FSA and the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach. It establishes a database of individuals who voluntarily provide their name, residential address, telephone number, e-mail address, ethnicity, race, gender, and the location of their farm or ranch to FSA on AD-2035 or AD-2035SP. By registering for MFR, individuals authorize the release of this information for the purpose of USDA outreach efforts conducted through USDA Agencies and USDA-approved outreach partners, such as community-based organizations (CBO's), colleges and universities, and other nonprofit groups or organizations representing SDA farmers and ranchers.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the Act) amended Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Section 2501(e) to provide authority to carry out an outreach and technical assistance program. The Act states, "the Secretary of Agriculture shall carry out an outreach and technical assistance program to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in owning and operating farms and ranches and in participating, equitably, in the full range of agricultural programs offered by the Department". MFR was developed as a tool to allow producers to voluntarily provide personal information for outreach and assistance.

Information collected on AD-2035 and AD-2035SP is recorded only in the MFR database. FSA uses other OMB-approved forms to collect race, ethnicity, and gender from program applicants and participants, including AD-2106, FSA-2001, FSA-2211, FSA-2212, FSA-2301, and FSA-2683. This information is recorded in SCIMS.

Disposal Date	Distribution
April 1, 2012	State Offices; State Offices relay to Service Centers

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1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose

This notice provides instructions for FSA offices to:

- distribute and collect information to support a registry of farm and ranch owners, operators, producers, and others with a farming or ranching interest
- request lists of registrant information
- use registrant information for outreach activities.

C Contact

If there are questions about this notice, Service Centers shall contact the State outreach coordinator. State Offices shall contact Gypsy Banks by e-mail to gypsy.banks@wdc.usda.gov or by phone at 202-720-8453.

2 Distributing MFR Forms

A Distributing MFR Pamphlets to States

Pamphlet PA-1785 (English), “USDA Minority Farm Register” will be provided to State Offices in sufficient quantities for State Office distribution to local Service Centers and outreach organizations. PA-1785 also contains AD-2035, “USDA Minority Farm Register”.

To obtain a fillable AD-2035 go to the USDA Service Center Agencies eForms web site at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eForms/welcomeAction.do?Home>. Login with user’s Level 2 eAuthentication user ID and password, under “eForms”, CLICK “**Browse Forms**”, and in the “Form Number” block, ENTER “**AD2035**”, and CLICK “**Search**”.

B State Office Action

The State outreach coordinator shall coordinate Statewide with SDA registrants, land-grant and other minority servicing institutions, and CBO’s to distribute PA-1785’s. The State outreach coordinator shall immediately provide to CBO’s and institutions any quantity of PA-1785’s they request. The State Office shall estimate the needs for individual FSA offices and distribute quantities required. Request additional PA-1785’s, as needed, by submitting FSA-159 to the Kansas City Warehouse, by e-mail to RA.mokansasc2.KCASBWHSE or by FAX to 816-823-4740.

C Service Center Action

Every employee should read and familiarize themselves with PA-1785 so that they can provide assistance to individuals wanting to complete AD-2035 or AD-2035SP. Participants must complete the name, mailing address, signature, and signature date on AD-2035 or AD-2035SP. All other items are optional.

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2 Distributing MFR Forms (Continued)

C Service Center Action (Continued)

Each Service Center shall make PA-1785's readily accessible to the public and CBO's. Exhibit 1 is an example of a letter to ask assistance from CBO's to distribute and collect AD-2035's and AD-2035SP's.

CED's shall complete and provide the fill-in-the-blank press release (Exhibit 2) to all local media. Service Centers shall include information about MFR in newsletters and at meetings with minority groups and their organizations.

Service Centers shall inform prospective registrants that their information will be used for outreach activities **only**. For any other questions, refer them to Gypsy Banks, FSA National Office, at 866-538-2610.

3 Collecting MFR AD-2035's and AD-2035SP's

A MFR National Record Holding Office

Completed and signed AD-2035's and AD-2035SP's:

- shall be maintained at the FSA National Office at:

FSA Office of Minority and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers Assistance
STOP CODE 0503
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVE SW
WASHINGTON DC 20250-0503

- delivered to Service Centers shall be maintained in the Service Center.

B State Office Action

The State Office shall mail all completed and signed AD-2035's and AD-2035SP's to the FSA national record holding office.

C Service Center Action

Encourage registrants to mail AD-2035 or AD-2035SP to the National Office address provided on AD-2035 and AD-2035SP. However, if an individual requests help in mailing AD-2035 or AD-2035SP, the Service Center shall date-stamp and FAX the completed and signed AD-2035 or AD-2035SP to the national record holding office at 866-302-1760. File original AD-2035's and AD-2035SP's in a folder titled, "USDA Minority Farm Register", by year.

Note: Producers who have an eAuthentication account may submit their AD-2035 or AD-2035SP electronically.

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4 Requests to Use Registrant Information

A Non FSA Requests

All requests for FOIA releases or requests for registrant information from other than FSA offices shall be referred to the Director, USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach by either of the following:

- telephone at 800-880-4183
- mail to:

Director, USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach
STOP CODE 9821
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVE SW
WASHINGTON DC 20250-9821.

B FSA State Office Action

The State outreach coordinator shall ask J. Latrice Hill, FSA National Office, for their State list of registrants and their information. Contact J. Latrice Hill by phone at 202-690-1700 or by e-mail to latrice.hill@wdc.usda.gov.

State outreach coordinators shall distribute registrant information to DD's.

C FSA Service Center Action

Service Centers shall ask DD for registrant information for the counties they serve.

5 Using Registrant Information for Outreach Purposes

A Approved Outreach Activities

The USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach approved FSA to use MFR data for all outreach activities. The following table lists authorized and prohibited uses of the MFR.

Do...	Do not...
give information on FSA programs.	share registrant names or other information with other USDA Agencies or non USDA organizations.
give training and technical assistance.	lobby registrants.
send invitation to participate in COC elections.	solicit or fundraise from registrants.
identify limited English proficiency producers.	intimidate or harass registrants.
analyze needs of producers.	survey or include in focus groups.
invite registrants to meetings.	use MFR to conduct membership drive.
send newsletters to registrants.	promote non USDA programs.
conduct any outreach activities to underserved groups.	offer legal representation.

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5 Using Registrant Information for Outreach Purposes (Continued)

B Usage By Only FSA Offices

USDA Agencies and CBO's must obtain MFR information directly from the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach. FSA employees **cannot** share MFR names and other information with any other organization.

C Handling PII Information

MFR information is considered PII and is covered by the Privacy Act. MFR information stored in electronic files **must** be encrypted and password protected. Completed paper AD-2035's and AD-2035SP's provided to any FSA employee shall be protected according to FSA PII procedures, that are available online at

<https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/mgr/iso/public/wiki%20Pages/PII.aspx>, until mailed to the National Office. When mailed, paper documents must be:

- double sealed
- sent by a mailing method that offers a positive chain of custody and the ability to track the shipment's pickup, receipt, transfer, and delivery, such as UPS
- protected from theft.

When paper documents are no longer needed, they **must** be shredded and recycled

Follow all FSA, Departmental, and Federal PII regulations.

CBO Letter Example

The following is an example letter to ask for assistance from CBO's to distribute and collect AD-2035's and AD-2035SP's

Dear

We would like to work with you to help promote equal access to all USDA farm programs and services. We need you to help us contact and invite socially disadvantaged producers to join the USDA Minority Farm Register (MFR).

By voluntarily joining the MFR, producers authorize USDA to release their name, contact information, race, gender, and ethnicity to USDA agencies and USDA-approved outreach partners. USDA agencies and outreach partners, such as community-based organizations and educational institutions, work together to give registrants information, training opportunities, and technical assistance about USDA programs. Information may include newsletters, funding announcements, invitations to join advisory committees and attend town meetings.

You can help us by passing out the enclosed MFR brochures, which include the application form. Producers may send the form to FSA in Washington, D.C. or take them to FSA at the USDA Service Center or the State Office.

You can ask the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach for a list of registrants to help USDA conduct outreach activities. However, you may **not** use the forms you may collect for membership records and you cannot keep any original or copies.

We want to remind you that this information is protected by the Privacy Act of 1974 and the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, as amended. You must protect this information from intentional or unintentional release. Keep the forms in a locked area and use double-sealed mailing envelopes if you mail them to FSA.

We look forward to hearing how many registrants you contacted and specifically what kind of information or assistance you provide to them.

If you have any questions or, please call me or _____ at _____ . We look forward to working with you in the future to better serve socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,

Enclosure

Press Release Example

CED's shall complete and provide the following fill-in-the-blank press release to all local media.

USDA INVITES MINORITY PRODUCERS TO JOIN USDA MINORITY FARM REGISTER

(your town, state), date – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) invites minority farmers and ranchers in _____ County and across the nation to voluntarily join the USDA Minority Farm Register to receive information and opportunities from USDA agencies.

“The new Minority Farm Register is an outreach tool to reach underserved farmers and ranchers who are not currently enrolled in USDA loan, farm or conservation programs,” said _____, (your county) County FSA county executive director. “The Register is a shared outreach list that will help USDA, community-based organizations and minority-serving educational institutions to communicate with minority farmers and ranchers.”

By joining the Register, minority producers may receive outreach materials, newsletters, and program announcements from USDA agencies. They may also receive information and assistance from other USDA-approved outreach partners, such as community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and minority-serving educational institutions. USDA will carefully control access to and use of the Register.

Individuals wishing to join the Register must sign and date a form that provides their name and address. Providing phone numbers, e-mail address, race, ethnicity, gender and farm or ranch location will be voluntary, although the additional information increases the producer's opportunities for receiving timely assistance.

The Register pamphlet with the registration form is available at the _____ County USDA Service Center or from approved USDA outreach partners. Completed forms may be mailed to: USDA Minority Farm Register, USDA Stop Code 0503, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250. FSA and USDA's Office of Advocacy and Outreach are jointly administering the Register. Registration forms are available in Spanish (AD-2035SP) and English (AD-2035) on the FSA web site (www.fsa.usda.gov) under “Forms”.

An individual may remove his or her name from the Register by writing to the Minority Farm Register, USDA Stop Code 0503, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250.

For more information, please contact the Farm Service Agency, STOP 0503, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0503 (Call 1-866-538-2610; Fax: 1-866-302-1760; E-mail: MSDA@USDA.gov).

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