

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

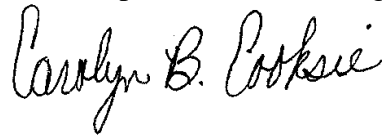
Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

Notice IRM-426

For: FSA Employees

Announcing FSA SharePoint (SP) Collaboration Tool

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Background

FSA has primarily used the Internet, Intranet, and e-mail for information sharing.

The FSA Internet site is FSA's primary method of providing information to the public.
FSA's Internet:

- pages are a fundamental part of every FSA program
- site conveys FSA's mission, goals, and work
- is best used for disseminating current information of interest to the public.

As a primary tool for handbook, memoranda, and notice delivery, the Intranet:

- facilitates FSA's ability to deliver programs, make loans, and support farmers
- is useful as a repository for corporate knowledge
- is best used for disseminating internal documents and connecting to web-based services.

The FSA e-mail system:

- has been used to quickly distribute digital messages
- has been used to distribute files
- however, has limitations to the number and size of files that can be delivered by e-mail, thus making it less effective as a means of document collaboration.

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2010	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose

This notice:

- announces SP Collaboration and Information Sharing Tool availability
- explains some SP uses
- informs FSA employees about the process to acquire an SP site
- defines the responsibilities of the SP administrator (SA)
- identifies four SP resources
- informs FSA employees about the SharePoint Masters and Resource Team (SMART) Users Group
- explains how to provide access to contractors and other agencies.

C Contacts

If there are questions about:

- SP, send an e-mail to **fsa.emso@wdc.usda.gov**
- this notice, send an e-mail to Alan Weiner, ITSD, at **alan.weiner@wdc.usda.gov**.

2 Description

A What Is SP

SP provides collaboration space for documents, information, and ideas in real time. SP sites should be dynamic and interactive. For example, an SP site can help staff coordinate projects, calendars, and schedules, discuss ideas and review documents or proposals, and share information to keep in touch with stakeholders.

SP is suited for:

- internal USDA collaboration
- immediately updating and posting information
- collaborative editing of documents
- dispersed information sharing.

2 Description (Continued)

A What Is SP (Continued)

SP can simplify the process of document collaboration if, for example, a document needs to be reviewed and edited by 20 people. Before SP, the draft would be e-mailed to all 20 reviewers. Each person would make changes and then e-mail the document back to the author who would have to merge all the changes into 1 document. If they use SP instead of e-mail, the document could be posted to the SP site. The reviewers can then make their suggested changes directly, in 1 version of the document.

SP is not suited for:

- public collaboration
- large volumes of information
- long-term information storage
- unencrypted PII information (Notice IRM-417).

A good example of where SP would not be used; if a user has a library of 100 large documents to maintain. If the user leaves everything in SP, the files will begin to clutter the directories. After documents are in their final form, they should be moved to the Intranet. The SP site can then reference the documents on the Intranet site.

B Process to Acquire SP Site

An FSA Manager **must** complete the **Information Sharing Needs Assessment Survey** located at <https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/surveys/Lists/New%20SharePoint%20Site%20Description/overview.aspx>. Additional assistance on completing the Information Sharing Needs Assessment Survey can be provided by the SP Help Desk at fsa.emso@wdc.usda.gov.

Within 1 week of submitting the completed survey, a representative from Executive Management Systems Office (EMSO) will contact the requestor to setup a meeting to review the Information Sharing Needs Assessment Survey. The purpose of the meeting is to verify that SP is the right tool to address the data sharing and collaboration requirements.

If SP is the best tool to meet the user's needs, EMSO will identify the proper location of a site, within the SP structure, and put forward a recommendation for final approval by the Deputy Chief Information Officer.

There will be a minimal set of standard requirements for the look and navigation of the site. The requirements are under development and may be found on the portal site at <https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/governance/imgc/public/default.aspx>.

2 Description (Continued)

C SA Assignment and Responsibilities

The requestor shall identify 1 individual as SA to administer the site. SA is responsible for organizing the information on their group's site, assigning and maintaining user access and rights, guaranteeing that **no** unencrypted PII data is published, managing file space resources, and ensuring that the information posted within their site is relevant to their mission.

There should be no more than two SA's for any site; having more SA's makes the site harder to manage. SA's should expect to devote at least 10 percent of their assigned work responsibilities to managing SP site. Performance plans may be updated to take SA duties into account.

To become SA, an individual must take and pass the following 2 AgLearn courses:

- **Getting Started with Windows SharePoint Services 3.0** (MS-OFFICE2007-5465)
- **Managing Users and Sites in SharePoint 2003** (213799_SKILLSOFT).

SA should notify the representative from EMSO of their successful completion of the courses. That notification will initiate the approval process to create the initial SP site within 1 week.

D SP Resources

The following are four SP resources:

- Ask FSA – Frequently Asked Questions SharePoint Knowledge base (FAQ) available at **<https://askfsainternal.custhelp.com/app/answers/list/c/105,228>**
- SMART User Support Group (subparagraph E)
- a Sandbox Site is available at **<https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/sandbox/default.aspx>** for experimenting and learning
- individual and group SP training. For the latest class list, go to **<https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/governance/imgc/public/Lists/SharePoint%20Resources/AllItems.aspx>**.

2 Description (Continued)

D SP Resources (Continued)

For an example of a State SP site, go to the Texas State Office site that uses many of the SP features at <https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/states/texas/default.aspx>.



E SMART

SMART:

- consists of individuals at the county, State, and national levels who can assist their colleagues in their respective areas
- will be comprised of “power users” and individuals who want to learn how to use and integrate SP into their work and collaborate with others on “best practices”
- will be a centralized location where people can share ideas.

The SMART group will help explain “best practices” on how to use SP, Intranet, and Internet. Details of the group will be available on the portal site at <https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/governance/imgc/public/default.aspx>.

2 Description (Continued)

F Access by Other Agencies and Contractors

Access to each SP site is assigned on a case-by-case basis and is determined by the sensitivity of the site and security level of the requestor. Access requires a Government e-mail address or level 2 eAuthentication user ID, depending on the agency. The site SA will be responsible for providing access to their site. A list of SA's can be found at <https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/governance/imgc/public/Lists/SAs/AllItems.aspx>.