

FSA

HANDBOOK

Information Policies and Procedures

To access the transmittal page click on the short reference

For All FSA Offices

SHORT REFERENCE

1-INFO
(Revision 3)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

**Information Policies and Procedures
1-INFO (Revision 3)**

Amendment 1

Approved by: Acting Administrator



Amendment Transmittal

A Reason for Revision

This handbook has been reinstated to provide FSA policies and guidelines about:

- development and general distribution of public information materials
- use of GovDelivery
- duties of Public Affairs Specialists
- procedures for contact with the media
- graphic design as a critical communication tool
- plain language
- web content improvements
- introduction of social media
- FSA responsibilities for contributing to USDA social media communications.

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Part 1 Basic Information**1 Handbook Coverage****A Handbook Purpose**

This handbook:

- prescribes procedures for developing and issuing information on FSA and CCC programs, policies, and activities that ensure conformity to standards and production methods that are efficient and cost effective
- applies to all information prepared by FSA National, State, and County Offices for delivery to farmers, ranchers, landowners, the news media and public, FSA personnel, and other stakeholders with agricultural interests
- takes precedence over other handbooks concerning FSA media relations, publications, and related communications policies and materials.

B Authority and Responsibility

OEA, PAB, within the FSA Office of the Administrator, has the authority and responsibility for managing all FSA public affairs functions, including those of the Deputy Administrators, State Offices, and Field Offices.

The Director of the OC has the authority to determine policy for all USDA and agency communication activities.

C Handbook Contents

The following are in this handbook:

- public affairs responsibilities
- directions for preparation, clearance, and storage of publications and other information materials
- directions for using GovDelivery and other electronic methods of providing news and information to producers and other interested parties
- discussion of GovDelivery and other electronic news sources
- directions for contacting and providing information to the media.

2 Sources of Authority

A Public Information Authority

Authority for managing FSA's public affairs program comes from the following:

- Department of Agriculture Organic Act of 1862 (12 Stat. 387; 7 U.S.C. 2201) – this act authorizes establishment of a Department of Agriculture and directs that its general design and duties be to “diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with agriculture in the most general and comprehensive sense of the word”
- Solicitor's Opinion 4088 (1942) – in this opinion, the solicitor ruled that information may be disseminated through exhibits, motion pictures, radio broadcasts, or other media that are found to be administratively expedient provided such information relates to the authorized activities of the Department, and it is administratively determined that such dissemination of information is reasonably requisite or materially advantageous in the promotion and development of such Department activities
- Title 3 of USDA Administrative Regulations, 7 CFR 1.1-1.6, and 7 CFR Part 798
- USDA DR's 1410, 1420, 1430, 1440, 1470, 1480, 1490, 1495, and 1496 – these administrative regulations establish information and publication policy, authority, responsibilities, and functions of the Department and its agencies and give further guidelines for implementing the public printing law as it applies to publications and administrative documents and their printing and distribution.

B Related Handbooks

Related handbooks include:

- 16-AO for public information responsibilities
- 18-AO for using the nondiscrimination statement
- 22-AO for Outreach for FSA programs and services
- 5-AS for mail management
- 15-AS for printing and distribution management
- 2-INFO for information available to the public and FOIA
- 3-INFO for Privacy Act operations.

3 Public Affairs Program

A PAB Objectives

The following are objectives of PAB:

- Increase internal and external awareness of agricultural commodity, farm loan, conservation, environmental, emergency assistance, and domestic and international food assistance programs assigned to and administered by FSA using external-facing media or materials
- ensure that all FSA communications are in plain language
- expand understanding and participation of farmers and ranchers, including new farmers and ranchers, minorities, and women, in FSA programs
- ensure that the nonagricultural public understands more fully the basis and need of FSA programs
- approve and direct the production and distribution of public information materials to guide public affairs activities originating at the National, State, and county levels
- ensure that the operations of FSA's public affairs program are efficient, correct, timely, uniform, coordinated, and in the interest of producers and the public
- ensure that the National Office and Department are fully and timely informed and have authorized any outgoing State and county communications
- ensure that all external media and customer materials from State, county, and Federal FSA offices are coordinated, uniform, and approved before distribution to the public.

3 Public Affairs Program (Continued)

B PAB Policies

The policies of PAB are to:

- use digital and traditional media and materials to inform farmers, ranchers, and landowners of ways to make use of and benefit from FSA-administered programs
- produce, approve, and distribute information about FSA and CCC programs that is useful to all producers, as appropriate, with emphasis on opportunities for underserved populations
- make recommendations to FSA officials concerning decisions and actions that affect or are likely to affect public opinion about FSA
- respond to requests for information from media and participate in strategic media events
- deliver up-to-date information using efficient and cost-effective methods.

C Audiences

FSA information materials and public affairs activities originate at all levels of the organization for the benefit of:

- all agricultural producers, including beginning farmers and ranchers, minorities, women, and veterans
- producer groups
- the news media
- partner agencies (Federal, State, and county)
- special interest groups
- elected officials
- the general public
- agricultural education and science institutions
- other segments of the public that are affected by, benefit from, or have an interest in FSA programs.

3 Public Affairs Program (Continued)

D Public Affairs Services

PAB serves the Department, FSA, media, and public by:

- providing briefings for FSA programs and initiatives
- organizing media interviews with FSA and USDA key officials
- providing media coverage of FSA programs, services, activities, and initiatives
- producing and coordinating electronic, digital, and broadcast products and services in the U.S. and abroad, including language translations, for the public and media
- establishing professional relationships with print, web, and broadcast reporters
- responding to media inquiries
- developing media strategies and campaigns in advance of newsworthy events or announcements
- preparing news releases and other related collateral
- keeping the OEA Director, FSA Administrator, senior staff, and SED's apprised of prospective breaking news stories about FSA and USDA
- reviewing, approving, and coordinating communications throughout the State and County Offices
- ensuring standardization of key messaging across FSA.

4 Availability of Information

A Common Responsibilities

Within the constraints of the FOIA and Privacy Act, all National, State, and County Offices will respond promptly and fully to requests for information materials that:

- explain agricultural policies and programs
- are intended for web posting, public distribution, or display, such as fact sheets, newsletters, and program aids.

Note: Requests for detailed program information, such as FSA records, must be referred to FSA's FOIA office (and Privacy Act operations). National, State, and County Offices will follow policies and procedures in 2-INFO and 3-INFO in responding to FOIA and Privacy Act requests.

B Other Sources of Information

Refer servicing requests (if they cannot be fulfilled by the receiver) to:

- AskFSA Your Online Knowledge Base at <http://askfsa.custhelp.com>
- FSA Internet home page at www.fsa.usda.gov
- USDA Internet home page at www.usda.gov
- PAB for public information materials at www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/index
- MSD for national directives and other procedural materials at www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/laws-and-regulations/index
- partner agencies and organizations through the Bridges to Opportunity portal.

4 Availability of Information (Continued)

C Background Information

Background information contains an overview of FSA programs, activities, and operations. Requests for background information outside the receiver's area of responsibility will be referred to the appropriate official.

D Plain Language

The Presidential Memorandum on Plain Language of June 1, 1998, sets requirements for the Federal Government's written materials to use:

- common, everyday words the reader will know, except for necessary technical terms
- pronouns, such as "you," instead of formal-sounding nouns, such as "the producer"
- the active voice, for example, "The farmers harvested the crop" instead of "The crop was harvested by the farmers"
- short sentences.

Note: Most sentences should average 15 to 20 words; never more than 40.

See www.plainlanguage.gov for additional information.

5 Restrictions

A Influencing Legislation

Information materials will not be issued by FSA for the purpose of directly influencing Congress to vote for or against any legislation or appropriation. Information that criticizes or aggrandizes elected or politically appointed officials, the Administration, or Congress will not be issued as news, public-facing materials such as GovDelivery, or communications by FSA offices. This restriction includes statements that the public contact elected representatives to support or oppose pending legislation. Violations are subject to disciplinary action, up to or including removal. See 18 U.S.C. 1913 for more information.

B Prepackaged News Stories

Prepackaged news stories (such as complete audiovisual presentations that may be included in video news releases and are intended to be indistinguishable from news segments broadcast to the public) produced by FSA will be clearly identified as having been produced by USDA or FSA or that FSA was the source of the material.

C Promotion

Extraneous promotional items (often referred to as giveaways or gimmies) for the purpose of self-aggrandizement will not be produced or distributed by FSA offices. Purchasing these items is prohibited by Executive Order. Human Resource guidelines should be followed for the purchase and distribution of commemorative items. News materials will not be used to advance USDA, FSA, or individual opinions on broad subjects without reference to a specific program.

D Endorsement, Commercial References, and Use of Brand Names

FSA's policy is to avoid endorsement, directly or indirectly, of any commercial enterprise or product whenever possible. However, it is recognized that occasions may arise when mentioning or picturing specific commercial enterprises or products is in the public interest or is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid. These occasions must be fully justified.

The following statement may be used as needed in public information materials:

“Photographs of a commercial product or enterprise do not constitute an endorsement by the USDA over products or enterprises not shown.”

6 Compensation

A Policy

Officially prepared papers, presentations, social media blogs and commentary, videos, and photographs are government property.

B Outside Compensation

FSA employees may **not** accept compensation in any form for official articles or photographs published in non-governmental journals, magazines, newspapers, other papers or addresses, or for radio, television, or other appearances that:

- are performed as a part of the employee's official duties
- rely on knowledge, experience, competence, or professional standing acquired or enhanced by the employee's position.

7 Credit Statements

A Publication Bylines

The printing of government employees' bylines in government publications will be confined to authors and photographers. These bylines will be carried with the text or pictures.

B Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments may be given to persons who have made a substantial contribution in the preparation of a publication. These acknowledgments for design, outstanding editing, or compiling data may be mentioned in an acknowledgment section. It is preferable to mention the specific work performed that merits acknowledgment rather than use titles, such as compiler, coordinator, chair, etc., since titles are not always descriptive of the contribution. Determination of who receives acknowledgment will be the responsibility of the originating division or office.

C Courtesy Credits and Copyright Notices

Courtesy lines are permitted for non-copyrighted material contributed or loaned from private sources for use in FSA publications.

Courtesy lines and copyright notices are **required** for copyrighted materials contributed or loaned for use in FSA publications so that the public will not be misled.

8 Release for Photography and Testimony

A Use of Releases

A release is an acknowledgement that FSA has a person's permission to use his or her photographed image and/or testimony in publications and other information material. Complete FSA-463 to record consent.

FSA-463 can be found at

<https://fsaintranet.sc.egov.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/currentforms.asp>.

Note: See Exhibit 4 for an example of FSA-463.

B Release for Private Citizens

PAB requires that releases be obtained when photographing and/or interviewing private citizens if there is a chance the material will be used in a publication, including the FSA web site.

Note: A release for a photograph is not necessary if the subject is not recognizable.

C Release for Minors

FSA offices must obtain a release when photographing and/or interviewing minors. The signature of a parent or legal guardian is required.

D Release for Public Officials

A release is generally not required for photographs or testimony of public officials, including FSA employees, in the conduct of their official duties.

E Maintaining Copies of Releases

Copies of releases for photography and testimony will be maintained at the originating State or County Office for future reference. One copy will be forwarded to PAB by e-mail through the Field PAS Chief.

9 Required Statements for Publications

A Using the Nondiscrimination Statement

USDA DR 4300-3, Equal Opportunity Public Notification Policy:

- establishes policy for ensuring positive and continuing notification of USDA equal opportunity policy to the public
- requires using the nondiscrimination statement on all material produced by USDA and its agencies for public information, public education, and public distribution.

Publications, as identified in subparagraphs B and C, will contain the official USDA nondiscrimination statement as directed by DR 4300-3, as amended by memorandum on June 2, 2015.

See 18-AO, paragraph 67, for instructions on inserting the nondiscrimination statement in publications.

B Publications Requiring Nondiscrimination Statement

Publications that require the nondiscrimination statement include material that is primarily intended to directly inform individual producers or the general public of benefits, rights, and requirements for FSA programs, such as:

- County Office newsletters
- news releases
- district newsletters
- State Office newsletters
- program fact sheets
- brochures, program aids, and posters
- COC election materials.

The font size for all nondiscrimination statements will be no smaller than 9 point and must be clearly legible.

9 Required Statements for Publications (Continued)**C Nondiscrimination Statement**

The current and full nondiscrimination statement as of November 2015 is as follows:

“In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.”

9 Required Statements for Publications (Continued)

D Nondiscrimination Statement Not Required

Materials that are not required to include the nondiscrimination statement include:

- media advisories
- materials primarily intended for administrative or technical use by government agencies
- statistical compilations and economic analyses
- advisory and regulatory announcements primarily addressed to specific trade groups.

E Nondiscrimination Statement Updates

This handbook will be amended when official changes to the USDA nondiscrimination statement are issued.

F Reasonable Accommodations Statement

When announcing public meetings, seminars, or farm program orientation sessions, the following statement will be included on printed announcements, posters, and within the body of news releases publicizing the event:

“Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this [meeting/event/function] should contact [person’s name] at [voice #], [TDD #], or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, and [e-mail address] by [day, date].”

G Disclaimer Statement for Fact Sheets and Brochures

When creating simplified documents, including, but not limited to, fact sheets or brochures, which will be disseminated to the public to educate on FSA programs, the following statement will be included:

“This document is for informational purposes only; other restrictions or eligibility requirements may apply. For more details, contact your local FSA County Office.”

10 E-Mail Communication Protocol

A Using E-Mail

To maintain effectiveness and efficiency, e-mail communication by all FSA staff will be professional in content and form, with attention to the following areas:

- spelling errors should be avoided by user's attention and activating spell check in Microsoft Outlook
- chain letters and viral non-essential social media content will **not** be shared
- signature blocks at the end of e-mails are recommended to clarify return contact information, such as job title, telephone number, and unique e-mail addresses
- according to USDA branding requirements, FSA employees will use the following signature block format and design to include the required widgets and NDS:

Full Name
 Title
 Division/State Office/County Office
 USDA - Farm Service Agency
 Office Phone (o)
 Cell Phone (c)

Stay Connected with USDA:



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Note: The signature block text and hyperlinked widgets can be provided to State CC's by OEA Field Staff, and State CC's can provide to the counties. The signature block including the hyperlinked widgets can be simply cut and pasted into the signature block feature in Microsoft Outlook and will appear and function as long as the format text feature in Microsoft Outlook is set to HTML (not plain text).

10 E-Mail Communication Protocol (Continued)

A Using E-Mail (Continued)

- extraneous and distracting decoration is **not** permitted on any e-mail or signature blocks, including shaded or toned backgrounds, artwork, animations, motivating quotes, or slogans
- effective immediately, County Offices will no longer maintain e-mail addresses or communicate with producers using Microsoft Outlook e-mail distribution lists because FSA has no way to ensure the protection of producer e-mail addresses or related information.

Note: GovDelivery, MIDAS, and/or similar authorized electronic communication will be used because they have safeguard measures to protect producer contact information.

11 Visual Management Standards

A Design Standards

Design standards have been established to bring consistency and readability to FSA's information materials. Standards help set a style that audiences will recognize and a format for legibility that helps make FSA information visually accessible. The FSA visual management guidelines are based on the USDA Visual Standards Guide. See subparagraph 71 A.

B Using Standards

State and County Offices must follow mandatory design standards in the USDA Visual Standards Guide for newsletters, stationery, news releases, program fact sheets, and other information.

12-20 (Reserved)

Part 2 Public Affairs Responsibilities and Activities

Section 1 National Office

21 PAB

A Responsibilities

PAB develops and carries out a comprehensive public affairs program covering FSA and CCC programs and activities through:

- USDA facilities, such as warehouses and Beacon and Whitten buildings
- FSA State and County Offices
- news media.

B Cooperation in Program Development

In developing and directing FSA public affairs policies and programs, PAB participates with the following:

- OEA Director
- Associate Administrator
- Administrator
- Under Secretary
- OC.

C Information Materials

PAB provides State and County Offices with:

- approved content of essential information materials
- guidance in using these materials
- assistance with administrating public affairs activities.

21 PAB (Continued)**D Direction**

PAB directs all FSA public affairs activities according to USDA information policy, including those in the USDA Visual Standards Guide. This includes preparing, editing, reviewing, and clearing the following materials intended for, or likely to be distributed to, the public or news media:

- publications, articles, GovDelivery narrative, media advisories, texts, program brochures, program aids, speeches, presentations, program fact sheets, and other printed material
- news releases, PSA's, educational services, radio and television material, exhibits, and other audiovisual material.

E PAB Structure

PAB falls under the supervision of the OEA Director. PAB consists of the following:

- a branch chief
- a deputy branch chief
- PAS's at the National Office
- a field PAS chief
- field PAS's
- DC-based graphic information specialists
- DC-based FOIA specialists.

F PAB Chief Responsibilities

The PAB Chief:

- informs producers and the general public, through national news releases and other communication materials, about legislation, regulations, or changes in policies that affect FSA programs and other conditions affecting agriculture production, farm income, and available farm credit
- consults with USDA and FSA offices to develop public affairs policies, procedures, and materials

21 PAB (Continued)

F PAB Chief Responsibilities (Continued)

- serves as the contact point, or designates a contact point, for national, State, and county news releases, announcements, and related matters for:
 - national news media
 - State and county media
 - government and non-government organizations
- prepares briefing and speech materials for USDA and FSA officials
- maintains cost accountability for public affairs functions
- advises National and Field Offices about program material preparation, approval processes, and clearance status
- coordinates national public affairs programs and activities with OC and other USDA agencies and offices according to USDA regulations and directives
- works with the Field PAS Chief to authorize, approve, coordinate, and analyze the effectiveness of State and County Office public affairs activities and information
- provides advice and counsel to field PAS's, who advise SED's, CC's, and SOC's
- approves, assists, and develops the design, content, and presentation of materials posted to FSA web pages.

G PAB Deputy Chief Responsibilities

The PAB Deputy Chief:

- prepares, edits, clears, publishes, and provides written, audio, and visual materials for use by field PAS's, Field Offices, FSA and USDA officials, media, and the public
- coordinates public affairs activities and information materials
- as needed, serves as point of contact for media on FSA and CCC programs

21 PAB (Continued)

G PAB Deputy Chief Responsibilities (Continued)

- arranges for field PAS's to provide contact with government and non-government agencies and organizations when needed
 - oversees the preparation of the weekly report from the FSA Administrator to the Under Secretary and Secretary
- Note:** The report includes FSA executive travel, activities, and accomplishments. The report criteria fluctuates with changing needs.
- serves as liaison with USDA's OC and the FPAC mission area for vetting FSA materials before releasing to the public, including news releases, media advisories, and speeches
 - serves as secondary spokesperson with the media and solicits responses from internal SME's
 - conducts internal interviews with SME's and conveys information to media; or arranges a direct interview between the media and SME's
 - prepares scripts and records and edits PSA's and other radio and television spots in English and Spanish as needed by FSA

Note: The PAB Deputy Chief works with the LEP coordinator in OCR for translations to other languages.

- provides advice and consultation to FSA officials in planning public information activities, including recommending specific approaches to meet individual needs
- helps determine communication strategy and needs
- coordinates all digital marketing campaigns and planning activities with WSO
- coordinates publishing news releases, fact sheets, and other digital assets to the web so that it is done in a timely manner
- coordinates special projects, including the annual FSA COC election media campaign; writes communications plans; delivers the messages via news releases, fact sheets, advertising where appropriate, and PSA's

21 PAB (Continued)

G PAB Deputy Chief Responsibilities (Continued)

- serves as primary contact for Hispanic media ensuring that responses to inquiries are properly vetted and then translated to Spanish
- translates fact sheets, talking points, and other materials to Spanish for FSA public affairs, as needed; works with contractors and private resources to produce translations to Spanish and other non-English languages so that FSA communicates with customers effectively
- provides advice and consultation to FSA officials on reaching Hispanic media and other specialty media, including recommending specific approaches to meet non-English speaking needs
- serves as Acting PAB Chief in the absence of PAB Chief.

H PAS Responsibilities

PAS's, under the supervision of the PAB Chief and Deputy Chief, are assigned to:

- write, edit, distribute, and post to FSA's web site "newsroom" national and regional news releases, video and audio releases, program announcements, social media blogs, columns, opinion editorials, State and county newsletter national content, and related matters prepared for:
 - national, State, and county news and social media outlets
 - government and non-government organizations
- manage FSA clearance of communications plans and announced news materials that may include background briefings, talking points, fact sheets, FAQ's, speeches, and special reports
- coordinate communications generated by other USDA agencies or from other federal departments that are intended for farmers, ranchers, and other industry representatives
- provide regularly scheduled communications to employees through, for example, published newsletters, audio and video reports distributed via FSA's internal digital communication platforms, and story postings on FSA's internal outlets

Note: The goal of this communication is to inform employees about activities and policies affecting FSA.

21 PAB (Continued)

H PAS Responsibilities (Continued)

- develop and produce feature stories for print, radio, and television, including audio news releases and video news releases and programming for electronic distribution to media and social media outlets that publish to the broader agricultural producer market

Note: Products include:

- informal program interviews with the FSA Administrator and farm program experts
- short video or audio clips for Fence Post distribution.
- edit or revise FSA entries for USDA, commercial, and other non-FSA publications
- recommend new publications and electronic media programming; and modify existing ones for more effective presentation and cost efficiency
- issue emergency declaration news releases and other State-related information
- prepare briefing materials for the Secretary and other USDA and FSA officials
- write and edit briefing and background materials, talking points, fact sheets, speeches, and special reports for the Secretary and other USDA and FSA officials.

I Field PAS Chief Responsibilities

The Field PAS Chief, under supervision of the PAB Chief:

- provides SED's and STC's with counsel to improve public affairs activities
- provides direction for Field Office communications teams in 51 States and territories
- leads and directs the implementation of GovDelivery field activities, including the coordination of Field Office communications teams responsible for distributing monthly newsletters
- coordinates monthly meetings with Field Office communications teams to ensure continuity, including coordination with FSA outreach efforts
- works closely with FPAC and OC to coordinate senior official travels to field locations; sets up regional and national media upon request
- accepts and coordinates special projects that affect specific farmers and ranchers in regions or with unique crop issues.

21 PAB (Continued)**J Field PAS Responsibilities**

Field PAS's, under the supervision of the PAB Chief and Field PAS Chief:

- assist SED's and STC's with coordination of public affairs activities
- work with a Field Office communications team
- work with communications teams to develop State communication plans
- serve as a Field Office technical expert in public affairs
- serve as the communications liaison between SED and OEA
- coordinate State visits by USDA or FSA officials to agricultural events.

K FSA National Web Manager Responsibilities

The FSA National Web Manager serves as the WSO Chief under FSA's CIO in ITSD. The National Web Manager and WSO are responsible for providing overall management, design, and oversight of FSA's Digital Communication Platforms, which include FSA's public web site, an official USDA web site designed to provide information about FSA and its mission, programs, services, and staff.

The National Web Manager and PAB Chief co-chair WAG, a committee represented by each of FSA's divisions, including Field Offices, formed for the purpose of managing and improving FSA's digital communications.

WAG recommends policies to the FSA Executive Leadership Committee. The policy recommendations govern the digital communication platforms for FSA, which include the FSA public web site. The FSA public web site is available 24 hours every day to external and internal USDA customers.

External and internal USDA customers use the FSA public web site to seek answers about programs, including price support, conservation, safety net and disaster assistance, credit availability, and commodity warehousing.

The FSA public web site is a critically important part of FSA's daily activities and viewed by many as an image icon for FSA. Therefore, the visual presence and content of FSA's public web site requires vigilance at every level of the organization. Technical servicing, including server maintenance for the FSA public web site, is provided by WSO.

22 PAB Services

A Publication Clearance

PAB is responsible for ensuring that the following FSA materials intended for distribution to the public conform to FSA policy, USDA visual design standards, and plain English composition:

- national, State, and county publications, articles, texts, program brochures, program aids, posters, postcards, speeches, and other printed matter
- national, State, and county news releases, social media content, PSA's, program fact sheets, media advisories, and program announcements about FSA and CCC activities and programs
- educational services, radio and television material, videos, and other audiovisuals
- other material printed, published, or distributed, including electronically, by FSA.

B Special Publications Services

PAB is responsible for arranging:

- special services for alternative means of communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) through USDA's TARGET Center

Note: Forms are legal documents and, under law, cannot be converted into large print or otherwise altered. Field Offices are responsible for aiding producers in completing forms, applications, and other materials.

- translation of FSA publications (not including forms) into languages other than English according to the following:
 - the PAB Deputy Chief supervises OEA translations with special emphasis on Spanish
 - farmers and ranchers with LEP shall be aided in overcoming language barriers according to government LEP policy
 - for specific language requests, State Offices will contact the Field PAS Chief who will work with the PAB Deputy Chief to determine the appropriate arrangements for translations

Note: The LEP coordinator in OCR will be consulted if outside translation services are required.

22 PAB Services (Continued)

B Special Publications Services (Continued)

- the PAB Chief and Deputy Chief shall be notified through field PAS's before arrangements are made for translation services
- State Offices shall advise the LEP coordinator in OCR before acquiring interpretation services other than FSA's language line.

Notes: The language line is a toll-free number that can be accessed by telephone and provides telephonic translation by an interpreter from Transperfect Translations, Inc. Each State has an individual pin number that will be provided to collect data that can be accessed on the State level to determine their specific LEP needs.

Notification to PAB and the LEP coordinator in OCR must occur no less than 2 weeks in advance of the scheduled service, announcement, event, or occurrence to ensure that proper assistance to targeted underserved producers can be addressed.

Note: A statement will be included on translated publications stating that the English language version will prevail.

Forms are legal documents and, under law, cannot be translated into other languages or otherwise altered without approval from OMB. Forms and applications that have been translated into Spanish or other languages and approved by OMB are available online at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eForms/welcomeAction.do?Home>.

Field Offices are responsible for aiding producers with forms, applications, and other materials.

C Publications Coordination

PAB is responsible for:

- editorial and design production, development, and supervision through FSA and USDA clearances of national news releases, brochures, fact sheets, and other information products
- managing FSA information publications:
 - through writing, design, clearance, printing, and distribution
 - in coordination with OC

22 PAB Services (Continued)**C Publications Coordination (Continued)**

- maintaining an up-to-date inventory of all FSA publications by:
 - developing and managing the clearance process for State and County Offices to use for these materials, including clearance forms and staff education of the clearance process
 - ensuring that all FSA divisions have received PAB clearance before starting the development of the text and design of external facing brochures, fact sheets, emblems, educational materials, labels, logos, and related customer awareness materials
- requiring 2 to 3 weeks notification to prepare.

D Distribution

PAB is responsible for:

- coordinating with MSD a system of distribution of FSA, USDA, and other printed information products and publications to FSA employees, program participants, and interested public
- managing Internet postings of news releases, fact sheets, FAQ's, and other external facing communications materials designed for employees, program participants, and interested public
- distributing executive messages to employees and customers via e-mail or GovDelivery
- coordinating with WSO review of information posted to the FSA public web site for timeliness and archiving.

22 PAB Services (Continued)

E Liaison

PAB is the primary FSA liaison with OC to:

- members of National Association of Broadcasters
- broadcasting networks
- other broadcast organizations, including independents
- external media outlets
- USDA Creative Media and Broadcast Center.

F Coordination With OC

PAB, in cooperation with OC:

- provides national press coverage of FSA-sponsored activities in Washington, DC
- arranges FSA-sponsored national press briefings and conferences.

23-40 (Reserved)

Section 2 Field Offices

41 Field Office Public Affairs Responsibilities

A STC Responsibilities

Each STC, through SED, will:

- provide full information on FSA policies and programs without discrimination to:
 - agricultural producers and the general public
 - general and minority media within the State
- emphasize public affairs activities that provide necessary policy and program explanations
- with SED, field PAS, and CC, maintain effective relations with press, including social media, radio, television, and other communication media
- ensure that public affairs activities conform to FSA and USDA public affairs policies, including style and design standards, plain English composition, and LEP assistance.

B SED Responsibilities

SED will:

- designate and oversee a communications team in each State comprised of at least the Executive or Administrative Officer, CC, SOC, State Web Director, e-Gov Coordinator, and FOIA Officer
- delegate to CC authority to distribute information materials to County Offices and State news media
- supervise CC to ensure that the State public affairs program receives high priority
- designate a State Web Director to manage and oversee all digital communication activities for the State using FSA-30 (Exhibit 6); FSA-30 can be found at <https://fsaintranet.sc.egov.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/currentforms.asp>.
- designate a State GovDelivery group administrator to manage and oversee all GovDelivery activities in the State

41 Field Office Public Affairs Responsibilities (Continued)

B SED Responsibilities (Continued)

- annually evaluate the State communications plan with the field PAS, including ascertaining successes in:
 - meeting the planned goals
 - providing a qualitative assessment of plan implementation
 - identifying:
 - events attended, the number and type of events attended, and the number of publications distributed
 - improvements needed
 - obstacles encountered
 - resources and other needs
 - seeking advice from or coordinating with field PAS's before granting an interview with any national news media
- Examples:** USA Today, The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune, The Los Angeles Times, The Associated Press, CNN, etc.
- reviewing and obtaining approval from PAB before issuing news releases or committing to external media activities to ensure uniformity and coordination with FSA and USDA.

C SED Responsibilities to the Field PAS

The following are SED responsibilities to the field PAS:

- regard the Field PAS Chief as a member of the State Office senior staff for purposes of participating with State staff and coordinating events in the State
- provide office space for field PAS and appropriate accommodations in the State Office when visiting and assisting State Office personnel

41 Field Office Public Affairs Responsibilities (Continued)**C SED Responsibilities to the Field PAS (Continued)**

- provide office supplies within reason, as needed, for field PAS to successfully perform his or her respective duties
- coordinate field PAS involvement in State public affairs initiatives with the OEA Director and PAB Chief, as needed.

D CC Responsibilities

CC's, under the supervision of SED, will:

- work closely with field PAS's and the State communications team to annually identify State needs for communication training, communication tools and products, and potential events to amplify FSA and USDA policies and monthly themes
- work with the State communications team to develop an annual State communications plan that addresses and complements FSA communications goals for that year
- work closely with field PAS's and the State communications team to implement statewide public affairs procedures and techniques to distribute FSA information to producers, news media, industry organizations, and other interested individuals
- serve as the State contact point for County Office submissions of newsletters, news releases, and locally published FSA program information
- maintain archives of:
 - FSA-produced newsletters and/or articles about FSA
 - photos depicting FSA and agricultural activity in the State
- ensure that copies of all State and County Office news releases are maintained for 3 years
- arrange for exhibits to be sent to County Offices, as requested
- submit to USDA Photo Section, OC, via FSA PAB, photos and videos to be saved and/or archived (print and electronic)

41 Field Office Public Affairs Responsibilities (Continued)

D CC Responsibilities (Continued)

- work with SOC to ensure that all FSA information materials reach all producers, including underserved or nontraditional producers
- timely submit, on behalf of SED, the OEA weekly media/event dignitary visit SharePoint InfoPad form available to CC's on the OEA SharePoint site

Note: OEA field PAS staff will include all State CC reports in OEA's weekly report to FSA and USDA leadership.

- ensure that all State media activities have received timely authorization and approval by PAB in advance before committing to the activities
- ensure that any printed materials proposed for external distribution and outreach have been timely authorized and approved by PAB
- comply with DR's 1410, 1420, 1430, 1440, 1470, 1480, 1490, 1495, and 1496.

E DD Responsibilities

DD's, under the supervision of SED, will:

- work closely with County Offices to ensure the timely authorization and approval by PAB in advance for any:
 - print and broadcast media
 - materials developed for external dissemination
 - other information media, including media with minority group audiences:
 - producers and producer groups
 - local partner agricultural agencies
 - internal and external audiences, including minority, female, or persons with disabilities, to receive full information on programs, policies, and committee elections
- if directed by SED, use the State Office checklist to develop, install, evaluate, and improve internal controls in County Office operations.

41 Field Office Public Affairs Responsibilities (Continued)**F CED and FLM Responsibilities**

CED's and FLM's will:

- in consultation with DD and COOC, identify key messages and target audiences
- develop and maintain effective relations with local press, radio, television, and other information media, including media with underserved group audiences
- work with local agricultural organizations, county agricultural agents, county agriculture commissioners, universities, cooperative extension representatives, partner agencies, and others who may have an interest in FSA programs
- as required by State Office policy, issue newsletters (electronic [GovDelivery], printed with budget approval, or a combination of electronic and printed) making producers aware of agricultural programs and program deadlines, and directing them to contact the County Office for complete program details
- localize and distribute cleared news releases to local media
- be alert for opportunities to develop original news releases, human interest and feature stories, and other public information materials, and contact field PAS's or CC's for assistance in developing these leads.

Note: See 22-AO, Exhibits 6 and 7.

G State Web Director

The State Web Director, under the supervision of SED, is responsible for:

- oversight of their respective web site content areas, according to policies established by the PAB Chief, National Web Manager, and WAG
- communicating web site and content guidelines, procedures, and expectations to their SED's, as applicable
- appointing content and customer service managers to create, post, and maintain content throughout their State Office public web site
- conducting period audits and/or reviews of their content areas as established by WAG
- representing their State Office at WAG on a rotational basis and at least once quarterly according to the schedule established by WAG.

41 **Field Office Public Affairs Responsibilities (Continued)**

H State FOIA Officer

The State FOIA Officer, under the supervision of SED, will:

- ensure that FOIA requests filed at State and County Offices are tracked in the FOIA-Capture management system and responded to in a timely manner according to 2-INFO
- attend FOIA conference-call meetings when called by the National FOIA Officer to participate in program discussions, receive FOIA training, and provide status updates, including the status of overdue FOIA requests
- provide counsel and training to County Offices, as needed, on FOIA issues
- report FOIA requests filed by the media to the National Office on a weekly basis for inclusion in the FOIA weekly activity report
- identify frequently requested records under FOIA to facilitate efforts to make them available to a broader spectrum of the public
- provide a thorough and timely annual record of the number of FOIA requests received throughout the State according to 2-INFO to the National FOIA Officer
- consult with PAB FOIA staff before dissemination of FOIA requests.

42 News Clippings

A State Office Responsibilities

News clippings, including electronic clippings, from newspapers, trade newsletters and magazines, social media Internet sites, and other news sources are useful in keeping FSA leaders informed about current issues.

PAB uses a service to monitor all national news sources. However, there are occasions when State Offices will be aware of important local coverage of a topic garnering national attention. On these occasions, State CC's, following SED direction, will be requested to monitor and forward to PAB, through field PAS, timely reports of interviews, quotes, and commentary generated by the news, including quotes from SED's, DD's, or CED's that appear in major news outlets or agricultural publications.

Periodically, State Offices may be directed by National Headquarters to gather clippings related to special projects or events (for example, COC elections, Administrator field tours, or Farm Bill rollouts) from publications within the State and send them to PAB through field PAS.

43-70 (Reserved)

Section 3 Complying With USDA Visual Standards Guide

71 Visual Standardization

A Guide Purpose

The purpose of the USDA Visual Standards Guide (<http://www.usda.gov/documents/visual-standards-guide-january-2013.pdf>) is to ensure that published information complies with policies that:

- are necessary to establish USDA branding on communications from the Department
- meet standards of quality, brevity, production economy, and distribution
- are consistent across all agencies regarding graphic design and content, specifically to create a “One USDA” brand.

B Applying the Visual Standard

The Visual Standards Guide applies to all publications, markings, signage, and audiovisuals, including materials that:

- provide information needed by the public or any segment of the public
- inform individuals, groups, firms, and organizations of USDA and FSA actions, regulations, or programs that affect them
- mark property, buildings, offices, vehicles, and all other real estate, structures, and assets
- identify communications materials that are authorized by and property of USDA, such as:
 - news releases
 - media advisories
 - fact sheets
 - FAQ’s
 - brochures
 - pamphlets

71 Visual Standardization (Continued)**B Applying the Visual Standard (Continued)**

- booklets
 - briefing materials
 - audiovisual materials
 - video programs
 - web postings
 - social media blogs
 - posters/flyers
 - GovDelivery e-mail and text notifications
 - postcards
 - business cards
-
- apply to property, communications, and information generated at the National, State, and county level, including:
 - National Office (DC, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Salt Lake City)
 - State or County Offices
 - territorial offices
-
- identify all correspondence, directives, etc., such as:
 - letters
 - memoranda
 - handbooks
 - notices
 - regulations
 - broadly distributed e-mails and text messages (GovDelivery)
 - financial statements.

72 Publications and Audiovisual Controls

A Control Purpose

Publications and audiovisual controls ensure that printed information and audiovisual products about FSA programs and policies:

- are essential to conduct FSA official business
- meet standards of quality, brevity, production economy, and distribution
- are consistent with USDA policies regarding graphic design and content.

B Applying the Controls

The publications and audiovisual controls:

- apply to all publications and audiovisuals, including materials that:
 - provide information needed by the public or any segment of the public
 - inform individuals, groups, firms, and organizations of USDA actions, regulations, or programs that affect them
- do **not** apply to:
 - issuing:
 - regulations
 - directives
 - official memoranda
 - procedural or financial statements
 - news releases or media advisories (release numbers assigned by PAB)
 - internal administrative materials.

72 Publications and Audiovisual Controls (Continued)

C Control Officer Responsibilities

The PAB Chief, or a designee, as the FSA Publications and Audiovisual Control Officer, will:

- review and clear all official publications and audiovisuals intended for:
 - public issuance
 - FSA training and education programs originating in the Washington, DC office
- require SED's to certify that publications or audiovisuals produced by State or County Offices are essential to conduct FSA business
- submit the following to OC to certify the essential need for the issuance or re-issuance according to Title 3 of USDA Administrative Regulations:
 - AD-59 and AD-78 for publications
 - AD-59 or AD-78 for reprints or re-issuances
- maintain liaison with OC and confer with responsible officials about:
 - USDA and GPO regulations
 - developing publications, audiovisuals, and other public information materials.

D Control in Washington, DC Offices

Originating offices will:

- submit the following to the PAB Chief:
 - proposals and manuscripts for publications
 - audiovisuals for public distribution
 - reprints for certification and clearance by PAB and OC
- **not** submit the following to the PAB Chief:
 - regulations
 - directives
 - other administrative issuances
 - internal PowerPoints or materials for internal uses, presentations, or trainings

72 Publications and Audiovisual Controls (Continued)**D Control in Washington, DC Offices (Continued)**

- consult with the PAB Chief:
 - **before preparing** manuscripts or beginning audiovisual production
 - to resolve any questions about:
 - needing the issuance
 - preparing or issuing the material
 - determining the appropriate deadline
- submit to the PAB Chief the distribution list or plan with the information materials for clearance.

E Control in Field Offices

CED's and FLM's are responsible for:

- administering the publications and audiovisual control program in their offices if material is prepared for local distribution
- submitting information on policy or of national interest to the PAB Chief, through field PAS, for national release
- reviewing and clearing all public information material, including all processed and printed material and audiovisuals, for:
 - distribution to:
 - the public
 - elected and appointed committee members
 - all persons or groups that participate in USDA programs
 - administrative use, containing new information that may be:
 - of interest to the public
 - distributed to the public

72 Publications and Audiovisual Controls (Continued)

E Control in Field Offices (Continued)

- submitting to the PAB Chief, through field PAS, for advanced approval, all proposals, manuscripts for publication, and audiovisuals
- ensuring that the approving official signs and certifies the final clearance copy of any applicable material filed in the originating Field Office
- duplicating material according to reproduction equipment limits in 15-AS.

Note: Field Offices receiving material from the National Office, with instructions to duplicate and distribute locally, may assume that the material has been certified.

Materials posted for external audiences that are not cleared by the OEA Director or PAB Chief, including, but not limited to, text, brochures, videos, postcards, posters, promotional materials, will be removed from public display and prohibited from use until appropriate clearance has been finalized.

73-90 (Reserved)

Part 3 Preparing Information Materials

Section 1 News Releases

91 Basic Policy

A News Release Uses

Use news releases to announce publicly and in a timely manner the following types of program decisions and provisions:

- major program or policy changes
- effective dates
- enrollment deadlines
- upcoming COC elections and results
- commodity purchases and sales
- emergency assistance
- other provisions of interest or concern to agricultural producers and the general public
- public notifications required by law or regulation.

The format used by all offices for news releases and media advisories will conform to the USDA Visual Standards Guide.

B Policy and Style Guides

In preparing news materials, all offices and divisions will follow the USDA Digital Style Guide at <https://www.usda.gov/media/digital/digital-style-guide>.

The USDA Digital Style Guide provides policy and style guidelines not covered by this handbook. Any news release style questions not covered in the USDA Digital Style Guide should follow AP style.

91 Basic Policy (Continued)**C Identifying News Release Topics and Executing Communications Plan**

In preparing to notify the public of program changes, dates for enrollments, and related matters, divisions and offices shall alert PAB of the possible need for a news release no later than 3 weeks before the materials are needed.

Note: News releases not cleared by the OEA Director and/or the PAB Chief will be removed from public display until appropriate clearance has been finalized.

PAB, in consultation with the appropriate division, will prepare briefing materials to assist in developing a required communications plan for most circumstances requiring a news release. The requisite communications plan may include the following:

- talking points for spokespersons
- FAQ's (for AskFSA posting)
- fact sheets
- PSA's
- a schedule for briefing stakeholders
- a schedule for senior officials to expand on the topic during travel
- a schedule for blog postings, senior official OpEds, or columns
- a schedule for employee training
- a schedule for material distribution
- postcards
- posters
- e-mail or electronic device texting notifications

91 Basic Policy (Continued)**C Identifying News Release Topics and Executing Communications Plan (Continued)**

- directives timelines
- social media campaigns and related activities
- coordination with National Web Manager and WSO to create new content sections, short URLs, and marketing campaign tags for marketing analytics, ensuring that digital platforms are available to support activity.

A point of contact from the division or office will notify the PAB Chief to schedule meetings to:

- discuss key news release goals and timing
- establish an action plan that meets the business need.

The PAB Chief will determine who among national and field PAS will be involved and should take the lead in executing the communications plan and its elements.

Note: Meetings can be attended by conference call.

92 Preparing and Clearing News Releases**A Program Announcements**

News releases announcing new programs or significant program events, such as announcements for the beginning or end of an enrollment period, will be drafted by PAB in consultation with the appropriate division.

If the subject of the news release is repetitive in nature, for example an announcement of program enrollment dates, previously released versions of similar news releases can be used as a template.

B FR News Releases

For materials published in the FR, unless PAB and the originating divisions or offices determine otherwise, PAB will write the first draft of a news release in consultation with the originating personnel.

92 Preparing and Clearing News Releases (Continued)

C News Releases for Directives

Before issuing a national directive, the originating office, along with PAB, will:

- determine whether a news release is needed to announce the directive
- prepare a news release announcing the directive if:
 - producers and the public need to be aware of the issuance
 - announcement through the media would usefully supplement notification
- **not** prepare news releases for directives that inform FSA personnel of required actions that do not affect public information.

Note: When a news release announcing a directive is required, the draft news release will accompany the directive through clearance and final approval.

D Routing for Clearance

Routing a news release for clearance at the National Office will be conducted electronically, except in those cases when a paper copy is required.

Route news releases for clearance to the following:

- POC, which is typically SME
- SME, supervisor, and/or division director
- director of other divisions impacted by the news release, if applicable

Example: A news release reporting loan rates that originates with EPAS may also be routed to the PSD Director.

- Office of the Deputy Administrator for the subject matter
- OEA Director

92 Preparing and Clearing News Releases (Continued)

D Routing for Clearance (Continued)

- FSA Associate Administrator
- FSA Administrator
- PAB editor for AP style final review
- Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation
- OC.

Only 1 version of a news release will be routed. Multiple versions may cause loss of version control making it unclear which version is correct. Version control will be maintained by PAB.

Microsoft Word **track changes** will be turned on for all news releases that are in electronic review to capture when and who makes edits to the documents.

A final version of the news release, approved by the Administrator, will be archived in electronic and printed forms.

93 Supplementing News Releases

A Field Office Support

National news releases may result in numerous contacts and inquiries by producers and other interested persons, particularly in County Offices. When preparing and processing a news release, the originating division/office and PAB will:

- anticipate the potential public interest that might be generated by the news release, and consider that FSA Field Offices will receive requests for additional information and clarification
- prepare any necessary supplemental materials (for example; fact sheets, talking points, and FAQ's) to help Field Offices answer inquiries from the public.

Along with posting the news release on the FSA web site, PAB will distribute the supplemental material to Field Offices through DAFO and field PAS's.

93 Supplementing News Releases (Continued)

B News Releases Required by Directives

When issuing a national directive that will require State or County Offices to publicize program details by news release, newsletter, or other means, the originating office will consult with PAB to do either of the following:

- include news release text in the directive that has completed clearance for use by the State or County Offices
- provide the directive to PAB for concurrent clearance with the communications bundle.

The text of the news release will accompany the directive through clearance and final approval.

Note: News releases will not be approved for directives that require news releases if that directive has not undergone concurrent clearance with PAB.

94 Distributing News Releases

A Distributing National News Releases

PAB will issue national news releases by:

- posting on FSA's Newsroom web page at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/index>
- delivering electronically to subscribers, including media, via GovDelivery.

B State Office Responsibilities

State Offices, through CC, will:

- cooperate with field PAS's to enhance wider distribution of FSA news releases through outreach to local media
- post national news releases to the State Office public web site especially when applicable to farmers and ranchers served in the State

94 Distributing News Releases (Continued)**B State Office Responsibilities (Continued)**

- report local media contact with SED about the news in weekly accomplishments feedback to the field PAS's
- distribute news releases by e-mail or printed handouts to STC members if they are not subscribers to GovDelivery
- if appropriate, localize the information in the news release to make it relevant to statewide and local media, adding quotes where appropriate.

Note: County Offices should subscribe to GovDelivery national news releases or download the news release from FSA's web site.

C Local Issuances

Field Offices may issue news releases about local programs, issues, and concerns only after:

- consulting with and receiving clearance from the OEA Director and/or the PAB Chief through field PAS
- sharing drafted text of the news release information at least 2 weeks in advance of the proposed announcement to:
 - allow for consideration of the text for use by other Field or State Offices
 - ensure uniformity and coordination with FSA and USDA press strategy and objectives.

County Offices may localize and distribute appropriate State news releases under the supervision of SED and CC after the State news release has been vetted and approved by the PAB Chief or OEA Director and after consultation with the PAB Chief and field PAS's.

Note: Field PAS's will occasionally prepare news releases for use by State Offices. Additionally, field PAS's may recommend drafted news releases from the State be upgraded to national news releases if the text is appropriate for other States.

95 Issuing News Releases to the Public and Field Offices**A News Release Confidentiality**

Every effort will be made to ensure that States are advised in advance before announcements are made by the FSA National Office. However, many topics of a news announcement have business and financial consequences if publically disseminated prematurely in advance of a timed headquarters or Secretarial announcement.

Therefore, some advanced information may be restricted to senior State officials and shared only an hour or less before the announcement is made via a news release distribution.

Offices will not release to anyone any information in a national news release until OC or PAB has issued the release. This applies to notifying the following of program changes or decisions:

- news media
- successful bidders or other persons involved in a business transaction with USDA
- public.

Note: Even with less sensitive information, when PAB provides State Offices with advance copies of national news releases, State Offices will not share any information in advance of posting the national news release on FSA's web page.

B Commodity Markets

Offices will announce decisions affecting commodity markets only after the daily closing of the markets.

96-110 (Reserved)

Section 2 Publications

111 Brochures and Other Publications

A Brochures

Divisions or PAB may identify the need for a brochure or program aid. The originating office will develop and present to PAB the justification for the proposed publication and an outline.

PAB will develop a draft of the text in consultation with the originating office. PAB will be responsible for producing the final version of the text and graphic design of the publication.

All national, State, and county brochures and program aids must:

- be reviewed and cleared by PAB
- follow uniform graphic design standards contained in the USDA Visual Standards Guide and FSA's current brochure design to help brand the publication as an FSA communication aid.

All requests for new brochures that have not been cleared as part of a communications bundle will be submitted to PAB for review and clearance at least 6 weeks in advance before the date needed to ensure proper preparation for the clearance of text, design formatting, printing, and delivery. Completed brochures submitted for approval before a justification or proposal has been submitted will **not** be approved.

B Fact Sheets

Divisions or PAB may identify the need for a fact sheet to accompany a program announcement. The originating office will develop draft text for the fact sheet. PAB will be responsible for producing the final version of the text. PAB will post fact sheets on FSA's web site.

Fact sheets will follow graphic design standards in the USDA Visual Standards Guide.

Routing fact sheets for clearance will follow the same pattern as news releases, except fact sheets may not need FPAC or OC clearance unless circumstances require it, or OC is seeking a comprehensive bundle with communications plan that includes a fact sheet.

111 Brochures and Other Publications (Continued)**C Posters**

Divisions or PAB may identify the need for a poster to accompany a program announcement or publicize programs. PAB will be responsible for designing, producing, and distributing posters. Complete FSA-465 (Exhibit 9) to request graphic design assistance.

Note: PAB graphic designs for posters are for mission business and are not available for holiday signage or non-business related employee activities without special direction from the Administrator.

112 Exhibits**A Exhibit Development**

FSA benefits in terms of publicizing programs and activities by participating in major trade shows, fairs, and other events. PAB will be responsible for developing national exhibits and displays for FSA use at events.

PAB will work internally with their Visual Information Specialists when developing exhibits and exhibit panels. A second source for exhibit panel design is the USDA Design Center.

PAB will coordinate events with FSA's Outreach Director.

B Exhibit Library

PAB will develop and maintain a limited number of exhibits or exhibit panels that may be loaned to divisions and Field Offices for use at major events.

C Exhibit Layout

For display booth layout suggestions, see Exhibit 10.

113-130 (Reserved)

Section 3 Speeches**131 Speech Writing****A Preparing Speeches**

PAB will write speeches as requested by:

- the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary, other USDA officials, FSA Administrator, Associate Administrators, Deputy Administrators, and SED's
- any FSA officials who have been directed to represent the following at a speaking engagement:
 - Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary, or Assistant Secretary
 - FSA Administrator or Associate Administrator.

B Speech Material

For other Washington, DC, officials, PAB will provide:

- material for speeches
- editorial assistance on speech texts, if submitted to PAB
- any requested assistance within the limits of available staff and resources.

Note: SED's seeking PAB assistance with developing speeches will submit requests to PAB no later than 2 weeks in advance of the date needed.

132 Briefing Materials**A Preparing Briefing Materials**

PAB will prepare briefing documents as requested by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary, other USDA officials, FSA Administrator, Associate Administrators, and Deputy Administrators for the purpose of:

- preparing new leaders in key positions
- preparing key leadership to address Congress or other audiences on matters of programs, policies, and finances
- giving presentations to stakeholder audiences.

133 Clearance Procedures

A Consulting With PAB

Any division or office preparing a speech will consult PAB on:

- speech content
- clearance required.

B PAB Assistance

PAB will assist divisions and offices preparing speeches by:

- promptly reviewing material
- consulting with the originator and other officials as needed
- providing guidance and material to help the writer prepare the speech.

134 Reproduced Copies

A Responsibilities

PAB will make and distribute copies of speeches or addresses by FSA officials that:

- have an important bearing on FSA work or policies
- can be used advantageously as part of a public information program
- can be helpful in answering questions.

B Distribution

PAB occasionally may post major speeches or addresses by FSA personnel on FSA's web site as soon as possible after the event.

135-150 (Reserved)

Section 4 Other Manuscripts**151 Clearance for Outside Publication****A FSA Division Clearance**

Articles or other information material written by FSA employees in National, State, and County Offices that are proposed to be published outside FSA will be:

- cleared by the responsible division director
- submitted to PAB for final clearance.

The responsible division director will consult with PAB about content, policy, clearance, or other matters.

B Compensation

See paragraph 6 for compensation policy.

152 Manuscripts Originating Outside FSA**A PAB Responsibilities**

PAB is responsible for reviewing manuscripts received from outside FSA. PAB will:

- refer the manuscripts to proper officials for review
- ensure prompt return of manuscripts to originating agencies or organizations.

B Division Responsibilities

Divisions or offices that receive manuscripts directly from an outside source will review and return them through PAB to the originating agency.

153-170 (Reserved)

Part 4 Publication Distribution**171 Basic Distribution Policy****A Distributing Publications**

The FSA publication distribution policy is designed to:

- avoid printing excessive numbers of publications per Departmental statutory requirement to reduce printing expenditures
- keep stocks at a minimum for efficient operations at each distribution point
- conserve publications that have continuing value
- save storage and handling costs by prompt and orderly disposal of surplus and obsolete stocks.

B Regulations

Publication distribution regulations cover:

- USDA-numbered series
- unnumbered FSA program explanations
- similar publications intended for public distribution.

Publication distribution regulations do **not** cover:

- FSA handbooks
- forms
- other procedural materials.

172 Distribution Responsibilities

A PAB

PAB will periodically review the number of public distribution copies requested by Field Offices and cooperating agencies to:

- determine printing requirements
- plan distribution operations
- notify State Offices when public information materials become obsolete.

B State Offices

State Offices will:

- dispose of:
 - obsolete publications and background information materials
 - other publications that are superseded by revised or new program materials
- determine County Office needs for FSA publications and redistribute bulk shipments to County Offices
- send instructions to County Offices for:
 - ordering publications
 - disposing of surplus and obsolete materials
 - submitting requests for copies of publications, with sufficient lead time, to the Kansas City Warehouse
 - requesting only the required number of copies of a particular publication
 - requesting publications, in advance, for State and county fairs and other gatherings
- ensure that no new publications for external distribution are created and disseminated without consultation and clearance by PAB.

173 Mailing Publications

A PAB Responsibilities

When mailing bulk quantities of publications to State Offices, PAB will coordinate distribution procedures with MSD, including instructions to redistribute to County Offices if required.

B State Office Responsibilities

When mailing bulk quantities of publications, State Offices will imprint all printed or processed materials with bulk third-class mail permit:

- instead of using envelopes or wrappers
- if feasible, economical, and within postal regulations.

C Mailing Instructions

Mailing instructions in subparagraph B do not apply if mailing a few single copies to individual addresses is incidental to more common methods of distribution.

D Economics

To ensure the most economical mailing rate, mail printed materials together with other issuances.

E More Information

For more information on mailing, see 5-AS.

174-190 (Reserved)

Part 5 Electronic Delivery of News**Section 1 General Provisions****191 Electronic News Delivery Options****A Using Electronic Communications**

Numerous and widely available electronic communication technologies, including e-mail, web sites, social media, and digital messaging, have become business standard in most sectors of the Federal government. FSA uses these efficient electronic methods to provide information to farmers, ranchers, and those in the agricultural trades using:

- GovDelivery (e-mail and text features)
- Twitter
- Widget
- AskFSA
- FSA Fence Post
- USDA Blog
- RSS
- Vimeo.

Access to all of these information delivery options can be gained through the FSA home page at www.fsa.usda.gov by locating the box at the bottom right of the page. New channels of social media continue to surface. State and County Offices that are considering submitting a request to PAB for using social media first must consult DR's 1495 and 1496.

192-200 (Reserved)

Section 2 GovDelivery

201 General Information

A Background

GovDelivery:

- is an electronic news service that provides information by e-mail and/or text sent directly to a subscriber's e-mail address or cell phone number
- gives subscribers immediate notification of their choice of different FSA farm program news ranging from County Office newsletters to news releases in program areas, such as disaster assistance and farm loans.

Note: GovDelivery subscribers have the option to enroll in any of several options, including texting, and can change options or unsubscribe at any time.

Using GovDelivery will:

- reduce:
 - paper consumption
 - the cost of ink, postage, and equipment maintenance
 - slow production and delivery systems
- improve:
 - efficiency
 - delivery and information content
 - the overall product.

B Enrollment

Enrollment in GovDelivery is voluntary but necessary to receive e-mails, and can be accomplished by either of the following methods:

- accessing the GovDelivery Subscription Page at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFSA/subscriber/new/>:
 - enter an e-mail address in the "Email Address" box and CLICK "**Submit**"
 - on the Quick Subscribe page, select the topics of interest for which to receive e-mails
 - CLICK "**Submit**" at the bottom of the page

201 General Information (Continued)**B Enrollment (Continued)**

- working with the local FSA office to complete AD-2047 requesting to receive e-mail via GovDelivery.

Note: There is also an option to receive information by text.

To subscribe to GovDelivery texting services, subscribers must opt-in by texting a predetermined State and county code to FSANOW (372669). Subscribers can contact the local FSA office for the code(s) associated with the State(s) and or counties.

C Topics of Interest

A GovDelivery subscriber may select specific topics of interest (subscriber preferences) any time his or her GovDelivery account is accessed. There are no limits to the number or type of topics a subscriber may select. Topics of interest include the following:

- updates by State and county, including individual County Office newsletters
- internal communications
- newsletters and updates by State
- about FSA
- aerial photography
- commodity operations
- conservation programs
- dairy support programs
- safety-net farm support programs
- disaster assistance programs, including NAP
- economic and policy analysis, including commodity loan activity reports
- energy programs, including BCAP
- environmental and cultural resource compliance
- farm loan programs, including beginning farmers and ranchers
- laws and regulations (currently notices by agency – FSA, FAS, and RMA)
- news and events, including news releases, fact sheets, podcasts, and speeches
- outreach and education
- price support.

Note: GovDelivery subscribers can also set preferences for USDA-level subscription topics as well.

202 Roles and Responsibilities for Administrators and/or Content Providers**A Defining Roles**

The following subparagraphs define the formal roles and responsibilities associated with employees who are designated GovDelivery account holders. The titles of topic administrator (commonly known as content providers), group administrator, and account administrator were established by the GovDelivery vendor and denote levels of permissions within the GovDelivery system granted to account holders. All account holders are familiar with the titles associated with their account permissions.

B County Level Topic Administrator

At the county level, topic administrators will have access to the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site tools and training where program updates, tutorials, and monthly e-mail address databases are posted. Each county will have a primary topic administrator and a designated backup topic administrator. Topic administrators are required to perform several communication functions related to GovDelivery, including the following:

- creating bulletins, welcome e-mails, and text alerts from templates and materials provided
- distributing bulletins, welcome e-mails, and text alerts to GovDelivery subscribers who sign up for their county information
- maintaining subscriber lists in GovDelivery by loading new subscribers monthly from the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site, “GovDelivery” section
- effectively marketing free GovDelivery e-mail and text subscriptions to all customers and stakeholders to increase the distribution base.

Note: Marketing GovDelivery use to FSA stakeholders is a responsibility of all FSA employees and is not the sole responsibility of the topic administrator.

202 Roles and Responsibilities for Administrators and/or Content Providers (Continued)**C State Level Group Administrator**

At the State level, group administrators will:

- have access to the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site GovDelivery tools and training
- provide management and oversight of and for the county level topic administrators.

Group administrators have access to all county level topic GovDelivery administrative pages for their respective State. Group administrators will also create and distribute statewide publications and bulletins. Each State will have a primary group administrator and a designated backup group administrator. Typical duties include the following:

- creating a statewide, monthly newsletter from templates and materials provided
- creating and distributing statewide text alerts as necessary
- monitoring and evaluating output to ensure proper GovDelivery usage, with special emphasis on adherence to standard templates to ensure uniformity and compliance with USDA and FSA visual standards
- monitoring and tracking county level bulletins and text alerts to confirm compliance with frequency of bulletin issuance and content quality
- providing written monthly status updates (by county) to DD's no later than the 15th of each month
- monthly monitoring and evaluating the import of e-mail addresses from Business Partner to the topic level subscriber lists to ensure prompt additions of newly loaded e-mail addresses from the Business Partner lists available on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site
- ensuring that all new subscribers receive the welcome e-mail promptly
- ensuring that topic administrators receive training to perform their local publication functions properly
- hosting frequent conference calls with all GovDelivery topic administrators in the State to address issues and concerns and provide guidance and oversight

202 Roles and Responsibilities for Administrators and/or Content Providers (Continued)**C State Level Group Administrator (Continued)**

- ensuring that bulletins, newsletters, and text alerts issued through GovDelivery meet accessibility, civil rights, and EEO standards (for example, reasonable accommodations statement, nondiscrimination statement, etc.)

Note: Because of the 160-character (including spaces) limitation of texts, it is not feasible to include the reasonable accommodations statement and related EEO statements.

- working with State Web Directors and State CC's, when the State Web Directors and State CC's are not also the group administrator, to:
 - post news releases of statewide significance to the State web page in the "State News Releases" section of the State web page

Note: This will ensure that news releases are issued to subscribers who have elected, through subscriber preference settings, to receive news releases through GovDelivery because news releases posted to the State web site are automatically distributed to GovDelivery subscribers based on their self-elected subscription preferences.

- post PDF versions of the monthly State Office GovDelivery newsletter in the "Newsletters" section of the State web page
- issue PDF copies of the monthly State Office GovDelivery newsletter to all County Offices to be made available for customers at Service Center counters.

D DD

DD's will:

- oversee GovDelivery compliance of the primary and backup topic administrators in County Offices within the district
- ensure that County Offices are performing monthly Business Partner downloads, sending monthly welcome messages, and sending bulletins as well as text alerts on an as-needed basis
- ensure that County Offices within the district are placing PDF copies of sent County Office bulletins and State Office newsletters on the FSA counter as well as sister agency counters (if applicable and allowed) and are archiving in the appropriate County Office file for future reference
- follow up on the monthly compliance report issued by State group administrators.

202 Roles and Responsibilities for Administrators and/or Content Providers (Continued)**E National Level OEA and WSO Staff Account Administrators**

At the national level, account administrators have access to all group and topic level administrative pages in GovDelivery. Account administrators work with regional, group, and topic administrators, the GovDelivery system vendor, WSO, and OCIO to accomplish the following:

- evaluating progress and effectiveness of results in GovDelivery electronic communication
- ensuring that GovDelivery and IT resources work efficiently
- implementing improvements, as needed
- troubleshooting problems and coordinating resolutions with the GovDelivery system vendor and/or WSO
- managing account holder- and subscriber-related issues
- generating user reports and related data
- managing the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site for GovDelivery account holders
- overseeing group administrators to ensure proper usage of IT resources, including downloading e-mail addresses from OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site, sending welcome e-mails promptly, and properly adhering to newsletter and bulletin templates and other frequency and naming standards
- ensuring that group administrators and topic administrators:
 - receive proper training and related tools to perform their local publication functions correctly
 - conduct or coordinate regional training periodically, as necessary.

203 Welcome E-Mail, Newsletter, and Bulletin Communication Materials**A Overview**

All GovDelivery correspondence must have the State or county name listed in the “Subject” line along with the purpose of the document; such as, “Welcome to Jones County GovDelivery”, “Illinois FSA May Newsletter”, or “Madison County COC Election Notice”. Detailed instructions can be found in the GovDelivery Training Guide located on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site under “GovDelivery”. Where possible, topic administrators should make a concerted effort to develop descriptive subject lines similar to the headline of a news article that entices a subscriber to open the e-mail and read further.

When producers or other interested parties sign up to receive State or County Office information through GovDelivery by completing AD-2047 (Exhibit 13), their e-mail addresses are loaded into the Business Partner database. The OEA GovDelivery SharePoint e-mail download will capture newly loaded and recently revised e-mail addresses on a monthly basis, on or around the first Monday of each month. The topic administrator will then follow proper procedure for importing e-mail addresses into GovDelivery.

B Welcome to GovDelivery E-Mail

The welcome e-mail will be sent immediately (to new subscribers only) following the e-mail download and GovDelivery import each month. The welcome e-mail will confirm the free subscription to GovDelivery and provide a link for subscribers to manage their subscription to add or delete subscriptions by State, county, or specific topic. There is no limit on the number of topic selections the subscriber can make.

Producers and others will also subscribe to GovDelivery on their own through FSA web sites and from marketing materials. Self-subscribers may or may not have Business Partner records, but they will receive the welcome e-mail.

The welcome e-mail must be sent by the topic administrator as soon as possible after a new import of subscribers is performed.

Note: Proper recipient filter (now called criteria) settings should be used to ensure that only new subscribers receive the welcome e-mails each month. Instructions are:

- located in the GovDelivery Training Guide provided to topic administrators during national OEA training
- available on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site.

203 Welcome E-Mail, Newsletter, and Bulletin Communication Materials (Continued)**C State Office GovDelivery E-Mail Newsletter**

Historically, County Offices created and mailed a newsletter monthly, quarterly, or less frequently to agricultural producers as maintained in a County Office mailing list. The GovDelivery newsletter complements this process with a more efficient and less costly electronic option. Printed copies of the GovDelivery newsletter should be made available in prominent locations, such as the counter in County Offices.

The FSA GovDelivery newsletter:

- provides essential program dates, deadlines, and details to agricultural producers
- should be used to provide USDA and FSA information.

Brief statements about sister agency and partnering outreach organization programs or events, in which FSA plays a prominent role (sponsoring, hosting, presenting, etc.), may occasionally be included in monthly GovDelivery newsletters. Information promoting commercial entities and their products, services, or events must not be included in any GovDelivery correspondence. If group administrators are uncertain about including information about an entity outside of FSA or USDA, they must seek State Office guidance and/or approval from an OEA account administrator before publishing.

State Office GovDelivery newsletters:

- should be e-mailed once a month by the group administrator to all subscribers
- must be comprised of no more than 4 to 10 articles.

Notes: These articles will be general in scope and will not include county-specific details, such as crop certification deadlines.

The GovDelivery templates must be used as formatted, including fonts and typeface.

Group and topic administrators will, for the most part, use suggested monthly newsletter articles provided to the States by OEA in the monthly newsletter compilation. The newsletter compilation will be posted on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site each month. These articles will be used to compose the State Office monthly newsletter as well as County Office GovDelivery bulletins.

Use the following guidelines when issuing newsletters.

- A lead message from SED is acceptable and also recommended as the first article in State monthly newsletters. Group administrators must work with SED and CC to compose these messages.

203 Welcome E-Mail, Newsletter, and Bulletin Communication Materials (Continued)**C State Office GovDelivery E-Mail Newsletter (Continued)**

- State Office-issued monthly newsletters must include at least two FLP articles.
- Under the State FSA Updates topic, providers must insert a table of contents. The “Table of Contents” function in GovDelivery creates hyperlinks to each article listed in the body of the newsletter, allowing subscribers access to each article of interest without having to scroll through the entire document. The table of contents is required in all monthly newsletters. The tutorial for creating a table of contents can be found on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site.
- To obtain proper spacing and minimize white space, users must create single-space text blocks by using the “Shift+Enter” keystroke according to training and related tutorial. The “Return/Enter” key in GovDelivery defaults to double space.
- Except in extenuating circumstances, and with OEA approval, PDF and JPG (or other image) files must not be attached to and/or issued through GovDelivery.
- A link to a posted PDF file identifying all COC meeting dates and times or projected dates and times will be included in the left sidebar of all State Office-issued newsletters.
- All newsletters and/or bulletins issued by group administrators must include the State Office name in the “Subject” line and include a subject title that will “hook” the subscriber encouraging the subscriber to open and read the newsletter or bulletin contents.
- PDF versions of all State Office-issued newsletters must be posted and archived on the State web site in the “Newsletters” section, accessible to web users in the left-hand navigation menu.

203 Welcome E-Mail, Newsletter, and Bulletin Communication Materials (Continued)**D County Office GovDelivery E-Mailed Bulletins**

Topic administrators must take advantage of the GovDelivery electronic communication system to create and send periodic short informational items electronically from their desktop in a short bulletin format.

FSA GovDelivery bulletins provide needed information in an immediate manner to alert producers to emergency or important program information to their operations. As a rule of thumb, if a County Office would have sent a postcard or direct mailing to a producer before GovDelivery availability, then issuing a GovDelivery bulletin is appropriate.

GovDelivery bulletins serve as “Hot Topic/News Flash” items that require the subscriber’s immediate attention or announce a time-sensitive, actionable subject.

Consider the following guidelines when issuing bulletins.

- To remain relevant to FSA subscribers, topic administrators will issue a bulletin at least once each month, but not more than twice a month, and each bulletin will contain no more than 3 articles per bulletin or 4 articles if 1 of these articles is a message from CED or FLM (see the sixth bullet for guidance).
- When producing county-level bulletins, at least 1 bulletin will include an FLP article or reminder to emphasize FSA’s credit offerings that encourage contact with the FLP representative.
- If issuing a bulletin with 3 articles, topic administrators will include a hyperlinked table of contents beneath the bulletin headline. A quick reference tutorial for establishing a hyperlinked table of contents is available on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site.
- State Office bulletins can be sent to all subscribers statewide by the group administrator on a less frequent, as-needed, or as-directed by OEA basis.
- Topic administrators will, for the most part, use suggested monthly newsletter and/or bulletin articles provided by OEA in the monthly newsletter compilation as the basis for county-level bulletin notifications.
- A lead, “Message from the CED and/or FLM”, is acceptable and also recommended as the first article in monthly county-level bulletins. These messages should reflect important local FSA program delivery information. CED’s and/or FLM’s must refrain from editorializing or speculating in these messages.

203 Welcome E-Mail, Newsletter, and Bulletin Communication Materials (Continued)**D County Office GovDelivery E-Mailed Bulletins (Continued)**

- Bulletins issued from State and County Offices must do either of the following:
 - pertain to program information or events in which FSA will play a prominent role or in which FSA is directly involved, that is program information or events in which FSA will host, sponsor, serve on a panel, present, exhibit, etc.
 - provide information or announce events from the following entities only:
 - other USDA agencies
 - Cooperative Extension
 - Soil and Water Conservation Districts
 - organizations in receipt of USDA funding for Outreach; for example, FSA cooperative agreements and Office of Advocacy and Outreach Assistance grants.

Note: Information and announcements for non-FSA agencies, organizations, and partners must:

- not be issued in standalone GovDelivery bulletins
 - not supersede critical FSA program related information
 - be applicable to FSA's mission.
- Bulletins must not be issued to promote commercial entity products, or their services or events.

Note: If the topic administrator is uncertain about including information about an entity outside of FSA or USDA, they must seek guidance and/or approval from the State group administrator or an OEA account administrator before publishing.

- To obtain proper spacing and minimize white space, users must create single-space text blocks by using the "Shift+Enter" keystroke according to training and related tutorial. The "Return/Enter" key in GovDelivery defaults to double space.

203 Welcome E-Mail, Newsletter, and Bulletin Communication Materials (Continued)

D County Office GovDelivery E-Mailed Bulletins (Continued)

- Contact information for CED's and FLM's, or appropriate FLP employees who provide loan services to producers in the respective county, must both be listed on all GovDelivery correspondence regardless of correspondence subject matter, without exception.
- Except in extenuating circumstances, and with OEA approval, PDF and JPG (or other image) files must not be attached to and/or issued through GovDelivery.
- All bulletins issued at the county level will include the upcoming COC meeting date and times or projected dates and times.
- To ensure a quality product, topic administrators must preview a draft or send a test of all bulletins before issuing to subscribers.
- All bulletins issued by topic administrators must include the County Office name and State abbreviation in the "Subject" line and include a subject title that will "hook" the subscriber encouraging the subscriber to open and read the bulletin contents. The "Subject" line should be descriptive and informative.

E GovDelivery Text Alerts

In addition to sending e-mail bulletins, the GovDelivery system allows State and County Offices to send text message alerts to producers.

State and County Office topic administrators will use GovDelivery to send text alerts to customers who supplement other communication activities. The text alerts will contain flash updates on critical information that customers need to know and act on in a short timeframe.

Note: Text alerts should not replace other forms of communication. State and County Offices are still expected to send e-mail bulletins through GovDelivery.

Sending text alerts will primarily be a County Office function. However, on occasion text alerts may be sent at the State or National level as deemed appropriate by OEA. For example, the State or National Office may send a text alert on a statewide or nationwide program deadline to eliminate the possibility of subscribers receiving multiple text alerts.

FSA purchased the short code FSANOW (372669) for use across all States and counties. All text alert subscribers will receive their updates from this short code.

203 Welcome E-Mail, Newsletter, and Bulletin Communication Materials (Continued)**E GovDelivery Text Alerts (Continued)**

Subscribers opt into text alerts only by texting a State or county keyword to FSANOW.

- Each State keyword is the full State name. For States with 2 words in the State name, the keyword does not have spaces.
- Each county keyword consists of the 2-letter State abbreviation plus the full county name. For example, Wake County, North Carolina uses “NCWake” as its keyword. Counties with more than 1 word should use the full county name without spaces or punctuation.
- Keywords are not case sensitive.
- If a subscriber opts in by texting a county keyword, he or she is opted in to both the appropriate county text alerts as well as the corresponding State text alerts.
- A full list of State and county keywords is found on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site.

State and county GovDelivery administrators must not upload text subscribers from Business Partner or other FSA systems.

Text alerts are to be used only for critical and time-sensitive updates to producers. Appropriate content includes information on acreage reporting, enrollment deadlines, and critical program requirements. Text alerts should generally be used to inform producers of an action they need to take. Text alerts should not be used merely to provide information. Those updates are appropriate for e-mail bulletins only. No more than 2 text alerts should be sent per month. The following are examples of appropriate text alerts.

- Sample County FSA updates. If you have not enrolled in ARC/PLC for 2017, call 555-555-5555 for an appointment.
- Sample County FSA updates. Remember to report livestock losses because of adverse weather within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent.
- Report your PP and failed acres within 15 days of final plant date. See FSA Bulletin for additional details.

203 Welcome E-Mail, Newsletter, and Bulletin Communication Materials (Continued)**E GovDelivery Text Alerts (Continued)**

Text alerts should not be used to send updates that are not time sensitive or do not require a specific action. Those types of updates are most appropriate for e-mail newsletters. The following are examples of inappropriate text alerts that should not be sent.

- The April 2017 Bulletin from the Sample County FSA Service Center is now available. Please check your e-mail inbox for the latest news and updates.
- John Smith retired and we welcome Mary Smith. Please read your e-mail bulletin for information.
- Sample County FSA reminds CRP participants to monitor CRP acreage for weed, insects, and other pests. Penalties may apply if CRP acres are not properly maintained.

Welcome messages are automatically sent to all new subscribers, so county administrators do not need to send welcome text alerts.

Note: A text alert user guide, training PowerPoint, and demo video can be found on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site.

FSA has a limited number of GovDelivery text alerts that can be sent each year. Therefore, text alerts will be sent by GovDelivery for FSA program-related announcements only. Using GovDelivery text alerts to announce or promote initiatives for entities, agencies, organizations, etc. outside of FSA is not authorized.

203 Welcome E-Mail, Newsletter, and Bulletin Communication Materials (Continued)

F Communication Actions to Supplement GovDelivery Electronic News Distribution

FSA recognizes that not all FSA customers will be able to benefit from electronic communications. This is particularly true for FSA underserved producers who lack access to the technology required to use GovDelivery; such as, smartphones, tablets, computers, Internet connection, etc.

To ensure that these customers continue to receive current FSA program information, State and County Offices must implement the following and similar actions to supplement GovDelivery electronic communications efforts:

- print and provide copies of all GovDelivery monthly newsletters and bulletins at the FSA counter and, with approval, at the counters of sister agencies co-located in USDA Service Centers; that is, NRCS, RD, etc.
- maintain a County Office file of hardcopy GovDelivery notifications

Note: A quick-reference tutorial for printing hardcopy GovDelivery newsletters and bulletins can be found on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site.

- print and distribute, as deemed appropriate by County Office managers, copies of all GovDelivery monthly newsletters and bulletins to locations around the county where producers gather; such as, implement dealers, feed stores, cafes, courthouses, public libraries, civic centers, etc.

Note: Black and white copies are acceptable.

- ensure that e-mail addresses for primary points-of-contact for community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and nongovernmental organizations with whom County Offices partner locally are loaded into GovDelivery

Note: Coordinate with these individuals to ensure that the members and stakeholders of their organizations routinely receive the information through their respective digital and non-digital communications channels.

- consult with COC advisors about their suggestion for effectively reaching leaders of underserved communities and/or groups and related organizations that do not receive information electronically from FSA.

204 Marketing Materials

A Overview

A full marketing toolkit is available to GovDelivery content providers on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site. The marketing tools educate and inform customers about e-mail and text alert subscription options.

It is recommended that all State and County Offices make these materials available in public areas to be picked up by FSA customers. In addition, materials should be distributed widely throughout the agricultural community through news media, public bulletin boards, and FSA stakeholder organizations.

205 Processing E-Mail Addresses

A Adding E-Mail Addresses to Business Partner

For GovDelivery communications, County Offices will collect e-mail addresses from producers using AD-2047.

To alleviate some confusion between electronic communications through GovDelivery and electronic communications through similar processes (such as MIDAS), County Offices must note the following:

- GovDelivery communication is generic in nature and distributed to groups in batches
- FSA program-related communication specific to an operation or individual is delivered to individuals in single mailings

Note: These operations or individual communications are separate and distinct from GovDelivery.

- when the current AD-2047 is completed, the County Office must load the e-mail addresses into Business Partner for the sole purpose of GovDelivery only
- the “E-Mail” communication method does not impact GovDelivery in any way

Note: Do not select the “E-Mail” communication method for GovDelivery purposes.

- AD-2047 must be completed for each producer who elects to participate in GovDelivery.

Note: E-mail addresses collected on farm loan or farm program forms for purposes other than GovDelivery are not considered approved for GovDelivery communications purposes. AD-2047 provides FSA with the authority to use a producer’s e-mail address for communicating electronically through GovDelivery.

205 Processing E-Mail Addresses (Continued)

A Adding E-Mail Addresses to Business Partner (Continued)

Except in extenuating circumstances and with approval from OEA, FSA employees must not delete any subscribers from GovDelivery for any reason.

The following AD-2047 items must be completed.

Item	Description
1A	Producer's name.
3	Producer's e-mail address.
4A, 4B, or 4C	CHECK " Yes " or " No ". Notes: If "Yes" is selected, then the producer will receive both hard copy (delivered by USPS) and e-mailed GovDelivery version. If "No" is selected, then the producer will receive e-mailed GovDelivery version only , but they will continue to receive letters about their individual operations and COC voting ballots by USPS.
7	CHECK " Other (Specify) " and write the statement, " Producer elects to receive bulk mail correspondence electronically by GovDelivery ".
8A	Producer's name.
8B	Producer's signature. Note: For GovDelivery purposes, FSA will adhere to 1-CM, paragraph 198 that states that a signature is not required if an AD-2047 change is received by phone.
8C	Date producer signed AD-2047 or approved by phone is required .
13A-E	Not required to be completed by DD for GovDelivery.

Other AD-2047 items may also be completed, if there are additional changes to the producer's personal information that need to be recorded.

County Offices that receive a completed AD-2047 will update the Business Partner record to reflect the changes made on AD-2047.

County Offices that already have established e-mail distribution lists must collect, from each producer, a completed AD-2047 before the e-mail address can be entered into Business Partner. County Offices will input all collected e-mail addresses into Business Partner, but will not add them individually into GovDelivery.

205 Processing E-Mail Addresses (Continued)**A Adding E-Mail Addresses to Business Partner (Continued)**

Until further notice, FSA must not share the monthly GovDelivery e-mail databases with any entity outside of FSA, including other USDA agencies, because no MOU's currently exist that allow FSA to share these databases. Requests for databases (monthly queries) must be processed following FOIA and Privacy Act protocols.

County Offices must only select "**E-Mail**" as the communication method in Business Partner, if the producer selects "**Yes**" in AD-2047, item 4C.

E-mail addresses are protected information under FOIA and the Privacy Act, and as such, FSA and GovDelivery will not share e-mail addresses with any outside source and will strictly follow FOIA and Privacy Act protocols according to the following:

- effective immediately, County Offices must no longer maintain e-mail addresses or communicate with producers using Microsoft Outlook e-mail distribution lists, because FSA has no way to ensure the protection of producer e-mail addresses or related information
- GovDelivery contracts solely with Government entities and has established every possible safeguard to ensure that subscriber e-mails are protected to the extent possible
- FSA must not share the monthly GovDelivery e-mail databases with any entity outside of FSA, including other USDA agencies, because no MOU's currently exist that allow FSA to share these databases. Requests for databases (monthly queries) must be processed following FOIA and Privacy Act protocols.

B Importing E-Mail Addresses Into GovDelivery

Each month, the National Office will upload to the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site an Excel database, by State and county, of e-mail addresses added to Business Partner. This database will be uploaded on or shortly after the first Monday of every month.

All GovDelivery group administrators and primary and backup topic administrators of record will be authorized access to the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site.

205 Processing E-Mail Addresses (Continued)**B Importing E-Mail Addresses Into GovDelivery (Continued)**

For each monthly e-mail database upload to the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site, topic administrators will download the database, filter the spreadsheet by State and county code, and import the e-mail addresses into GovDelivery. Detailed instructions on completing this function can be found on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site in the GovDelivery User Guide.

The welcome e-mail will be sent immediately following the e-mail download to all e-mail addresses since the last welcome e-mail was sent. See detailed instructions on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site in the GovDelivery User Guide.

Ensure that no GovDelivery messages are distributed that have inappropriate or potentially controversial headlines that do not reflect the professional standards of FSA.

For producers without Internet access, SED's will contact field PAS's to discuss options and assist State Office outreach to producers by:

- contacting producers via telephone calls or postcards to determine whether there are usable e-mail addresses in the family or whether the producer could attain access to GovDelivery through a family member's or neighbor's computer or a computer at a public library
- ensuring that 3 to 5 copies of newsletters are always available at the front desk of each office
- ensuring that news and newsletters are distributed electronically to producer organizations; such as, Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union, and other agricultural agencies; such as, county agricultural commissioners, State Departments of Agriculture, agricultural extension service, tribal councils, and minority and women organizations, especially minority and women organizations involved in agriculture
- recommending that personnel traveling to producer sites carry a few copies of the most recent newsletter when visiting loan and program clients
- examining other options for special cases of inaccessibility; such as, FAXed copies and/or postal mail exceptions

205 Processing E-Mail Addresses (Continued)**B Importing E-Mail Addresses Into GovDelivery (Continued)**

- printing and providing copies of all GovDelivery monthly newsletters and bulletins at the FSA counter and, with approval, at the counters of sister agencies co-located in USDA Service Centers; that is, NRCS, RD, etc.
- maintaining a County Office file of hardcopy newsletters

Note: A quick-reference tutorial for printing hardcopy GovDelivery newsletters and bulletins can be found on the OEA GovDelivery SharePoint web site.

- printing and distributing, as deemed appropriate by County Office managers, copies of all GovDelivery monthly newsletters and bulletins to locations around the county where producers gather; such as, implement dealers, feed stores, cafes, courthouses, public libraries, civic centers, etc.

Note: Black and white copies are acceptable.

- ensuring that e-mail addresses for primary points-of-contact for community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and nongovernmental organizations with whom County Offices partner locally are loaded into GovDelivery

Note: Coordinate with these individuals to ensure that the members and stakeholders of their organizations routinely receive the information through their respective digital and non-digital communications channels.

- consulting with COC advisors about their suggestion for effectively reaching leaders of underserved communities and/or groups and related organizations that do not receive information electronically from FSA.

206-220 (Reserved)

Section 3 Other Electronic Options

221 Twitter

A Using Twitter

Twitter is an online messaging and networking system that allows registered users to read and send messages. These messages are referred to as “tweets”. Although tweets are limited to 140 characters, links to articles and videos may be placed in the tweet.

Producers or others interested in receiving tweets containing information about FSA can join the FSA Twitter site at <https://twitter.com/usdafsa>. Using Twitter is free, but requires creating a Twitter username and identification password.

Click on the  icon in the box at the bottom right of the FSA home page to connect to the FSA Twitter page.

Note: State and County Offices that are considering submitting a request to PAB for using social media must consult DR’s 1495 and 1496.

222 Facebook

A Using Facebook

Facebook is an online messaging and networking system that allows registered users to read and post short messages, including private messages. Photos can be posted directly on Facebook, in addition to links for articles and videos.

Click on the  icon in the box at the bottom right of the FSA home page to connect to the USDA Facebook page.

Note: Facebook pages are restricted by USDA. Agencies with approved justifications for establishing a unique Facebook page receive permission from USDA’s OC.

Otherwise, any postings to Facebook are done through the USDA Facebook page with requests submitted to OC. For more information, consult DR’s 1495 and 1496.

223 AskFSA**A Using AskFSA**

AskFSA is an online knowledge base to ask questions and find answers to issues involving FSA. The AskFSA page, located at <http://askfsa.custhelp.com/>, contains multiple topics of interest where information can be found. For the viewer who does not see the question for which he or she is seeking an answer, the “Contact Us” section of the AskFSA page has a link to create an e-mail for sending the specific question.

FSA SME’s will be asked to provide a response to those specific questions. The expectation is that the employee given responsibility for the question will respond with an answer in 48 hours or less. The SME and WSO will coordinate responding to the viewer with the question.

CLICK “Ask FSA” at the top right of the FSA home page to connect to the AskFSA page. No registration or e-mail address is required.

224 FSA Fence Post**A Using FSA Fence Post**

The FSA Fence Post is a blog containing articles about FSA and USDA. CLICK “Fence Post News” on the FSA home page to connect to the latest FSA Fence Post articles.

Fence Post articles are often generated by information provided by County Office employees, the people with direct contact to producers, their successes, and their challenges. Those are the articles read most often and, therefore, sought by PAB.

Story ideas are continually requested of Field Office employees to generate more about today’s farmers and ranchers.

PAB requires the following information from a State or County Office to begin a story:

- producer’s name
- contact information (telephone number and/or e-mail address)
- type of farm operation (grain, livestock, vegetable, or direct-to-market)
- relationship with FSA (loan, program, or disaster assistance recipient; COC or STC member) and proof of good standing.

225 RSS**A Using RSS**

RSS is a method of receiving FSA news and information without browsing or searching for information on web sites. By using an RSS reader, users can select topics of interest, called a “feed,” by scanning headlines from a number of news sources in a central location.

The following are the 3 topics of information to receive via RSS feed:

- news releases
- emergency designation news releases
- notices.

Click on the  icon in the box at the bottom right of the FSA home page to connect to the FSA RSS page and sign up for any or all RSS feeds.

226 YouTube

A Using YouTube

YouTube is a web site where users can upload, share, and view videos. USDA has loaded several agricultural videos on several topics, including long-leaf pines, the People's Garden, and erosion control.

Click on the  icon in the box at the bottom right of the FSA home page to connect to the USDA YouTube page. This will allow users to view videos and subscribe to receive USDA YouTube videos as they are added.

Posting to the USDA YouTube page is managed by USDA's OC. YouTube postings:

- are governed by DR's 1495 and 1496
- that have not been cleared by PAB will be removed.

227 Vimeo

A Using Vimeo

Vimeo is:

- another resource FSA uses to manage electronic video programs
- similar to YouTube in that it allows FSA to place a video on the web for public viewing
- gives PAB a place to store videos without making them accessible to the public.

Note: The videos can be shared internally or with a select audience, which enables FSA to produce a program that is vetted elsewhere via a private web viewing.

State and County Offices can use Vimeo to share private videos with the National Office by contacting FSA's PAB Chief or FSA's National Web Manager and WSO.

228-240 (Reserved)

Part 6 Media Relations**241 Media Inquiries****A National Media Inquiries at State and County Offices**

State and County Offices contacted by national media first will forward the following types of media inquiries to the field PAS before providing any response:

- requests for information from large national network radio or television stations (ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC, etc.)
- requests from major newspapers or other publication with wide distribution (Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Kansas City Star, etc.)
- subject matter of national significance
- subject matter involving controversial issues.

If the request is forwarded to the field PAS by e-mail, the field PAS will acknowledge the receipt of the e-mail from the State or County Office, then respond to the media inquiry or forward it to the appropriate contact in the National Office.

For issues that are potentially controversial at the State or county level, media inquiry instructions will be provided by the State Office.

If contacted by large national network radio or television stations or major newspapers, State and County Offices must collect the following information:

- name of reporter
- publication or station the reporter represents
- subject matter of the story
- deadline for the story
- contact telephone number and e-mail address.

Contact Brenda Carlson, Field PAS Chief, by either of the following:

- e-mail at **brenda.carlson@tx.usda.gov**
- telephone at 979-680-5213.

B Local Media Inquiries at State and County Offices

Local media inquiries received by State and County Offices will be forwarded to the Field PAS Chief.

241 Media Inquiries (Continued)**C PAB Media List and Media Outreach**

PAB staff will reach out to reporters and the news media to suggest stories about important agricultural issues related to FSA and that affect its customers.

A list of media contacts from various media outlets is maintained by PAB staff. The list identifies the following:

- target outlets in coverage areas
- appropriate contact at each outlet to send FSA program news information.

When making a contact at a target outlet, PAB staff will:

- request a contact for agricultural or community news
- speak with the editor to verify contact information
- keep notes about contacts, which will be updated as needed
- request a reporter's schedule and deadlines
- determine the types of stories favored by the media contact and their preferred method of being contacted.

D PAB Media Responsibilities

PAB has the following responsibilities for media inquiries:

- media inquiries of State significance first will be forwarded before responding to the field PAS assigned to the State, who will forward the inquiry to the PAB Chief or PAB Deputy Chief, as appropriate
- State and County Office employees who receive media inquiries of national significance or of controversial issues first will forward the media inquiry or issue to the field PAS. The field PAS will respond to the inquiry or forward it to the appropriate contact in the National Office. For issues that are potentially controversial at the State or county level, media inquiry instructions will be provided by the State Office.

241 Media Inquiries (Continued)**D PAB Media Responsibilities (Continued)**

PAB has the following responsibilities for media requests:

- media interested in scheduling an interview or getting a news release, media kits, or other information about FSA and its programs may submit a request to **PAB@wdc.usda.gov**
- reporters with time-sensitive requests are encouraged to contact PAB by telephone at 202-720-7807.

Note: All SED's will notify PAB before responding to any media inquiries. All State CC's will track and document all completed media activities and provide a weekly summary to PAB.

PAB serves FSA, the media, and the public by:

- focusing media attention on important FSA developments
- coordinating and facilitating contact between members of the press and FSA SME's
- providing reporters and customers with timely, accurate, and professional media assistance
- providing draft news releases or other program information to FSA staff whose work is included, to ensure the accuracy of information that is being communicated
- providing briefings for domestic media
- pursuing media outreach that enables American farmers and ranchers everywhere to hear directly from key FSA officials through local, regional, and national media interviews
- producing and coordinating electronic and broadcast products and services for the media and public.

PAB Chief and staff will:

- respond to all initial media inquiries as soon as possible
- call back with the answer or make a referral to other sources who could speak on that point

241 Media Inquiries (Continued)**D PAB Media Responsibilities (Continued)**

- do all they can to help reporters get the appropriate information needed for an article
- know the reporter's deadline to ensure timely response.

Note: It will be the responsibility of PAB to cooperate fully with and grant reasonable requests from news media representatives. In instances where conflicts or misunderstandings may arise from the expressed views, wishes, or demands on the part of news media representatives, such matters should be referred at once to the OEA Director, PAB Chief, and PAB Deputy Chief for resolution.

The OEA Director will exercise full authority and assume responsibility for all decisions involving the news media and related activity.

E Employee Media Responsibilities

To help PAB best fulfill its responsibilities, employees should:

- keep the PAB Chief, PAB Deputy Chief, and Field PAS Chief informed of any media interest or potential for interest in their program area and region
- notify the PAB Chief, PAB Deputy Chief, and Field PAS Chief of media inquiries first to receive clearance for responding
- provide the PAB Chief, PAB Deputy Chief, and Field PAS Chief with a recap of media inquiries and conversations if media calls cannot be forwarded
- review drafts of news releases written by the PAB Chief, PAB Deputy Chief, and Field PAS Chief both for format and accuracy of content communicated
- consult first and work with the PAB Chief, PAB Deputy Chief, and Field PAS Chief to review presentations or news conferences that will be held in their region.

Employees are responsible for:

- working with PAB to make significant FSA developments accessible and understandable to the public
- the accuracy and integrity of their communications and should not represent FSA on issues of politics or policy without prior approval from the PAB Chief or OEA Director.

Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority

Reports

None.

Forms

This table lists the forms referenced in this handbook.

Number	Title	Display Reference	Reference
AD-59	Request for Manuscript Review		72
AD-78	Request for Printing and Binding		72
AD-2047	Customer Data Worksheet Request for Business Partner Record Change	Ex. 13	201, 203, 205
AD-3027	USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form		9
FSA-30	FSA Oracle User Access Request Form	Ex. 6	41
FSA-463	Photograph and Testimonial Consent/Release Form	Ex. 4	8
FSA-465	Graphic Design Request Form	Ex. 9	111

Reports, Forms, Abbreviations, and Redelegations of Authority (Continued)

Abbreviations Not Listed in 1-CM

The following abbreviations are not in 1-CM.

Approved Abbreviation	Term	Reference
AP	Associated Press	91, 92, Ex. 2
CC	Communication Coordinator	10, 21, 41, 42, 94, 202, 203, 241
COOC	County Office Outreach Coordinator	41
FAQ	frequently asked question	21, 22, 71, 91, 93
Field PAS	Field Public Affairs Specialist	Text
FPAC	Farm Production and Conservation	21, 111
IT	Information Technology	202
LEP	limited English proficiency	22, 41
OC	(The Secretary's) Office of Communication	Text
PAB	Public Affairs Branch	Text
PAS	Public Affairs Specialist	Text
POC	point of contact	92
PP	prevented planted	203
PSA	public service announcement	21, 22, 91, Ex. 2
RSS	really simple syndication	191, 225
SME	subject matter expert	21, 92, 223, 241
SOC	State Outreach Coordinator	21, 41
URL	Uniform Resource Location	91
WAG	Web Advisory Group	21, 41
WSO	Web Services Office	21, 22, 91, 202, 223, 227

Re delegations of Authority

None.

Definitions of Terms Used in This Handbook**Administrative Document**

An administrative document is any manuscript prepared in finished form and reproduced in multiple copies that is intended for use by FSA employees and official cooperators who need the information to carry out their program responsibilities.

The following are considered administrative documents:

- directives, regulations, and other documents published in FR, administrative announcements, hearing and appeal notices and decisions, and internal reports and documents required to conduct day-to-day agency business
- news media releases and background materials for media use
- speeches that will not be published
- preliminary drafts of publications subject to formal review that are reproduced in limited quantity for review
- visual aids, lecture notes, and narrative guides limited for use with audiovisuals
- forms, schedules, agendas, and similar printed items; posters without narrative; signs; tags; posted public notices; and charts without accompanying text.

Media Advisory

A media advisory is used to invite the news media to an event. The advisory is not the same as a news release. It should contain a lead sentence summarizing the upcoming event followed by the details: who, what, where, when, why, and how. Media advisories are usually sent out 10 days before the event.

News Release

A news release is an announcement written in AP style print or recorded in broadcast style for use by the news media. It is not considered a publication.

Periodical

A periodical is a publication, including FY reports and newsletters, issued annually or more often and with a consistent format, content, and purpose.

Processed and Printed Public Information Material

Processed and printed public information material is all material designed for or likely to reach the public that is reproduced by mechanical or electronic means.

Definitions of Terms Used in This Handbook (Continued)

Public Distribution

Public distribution is distributing material to the following:

- farmers and ranchers
- general public
- STC and COC members
- all persons or groups that cooperate in USDA programs.

Public Information Material

Public information material is any material that FSA distributes or intends to distribute to the public. Any USDA or FSA informational material:

- not primarily intended for general public use, but that may lend itself to public distribution, reading, or use, including fact sheets
- intended primarily for in-house use, but containing information that may result in broader use, including compilation of statutes.

Any FSA public information material distributed or used by other Government agencies or departments.

Public Service Announcement (PSA)

PSA as defined by FCC is “any announcement (including network) for which no charge is made and which promotes programs, activities, or services of federal, state, or local governments (e.g., recruiting, sale of bonds, etc.) or the programs, activities or services of non-profit organizations (e.g., United Way, Red Cross blood donations, etc.) and other announcements regarded as serving community interests, excluding time signals, routine weather announcements and promotional announcements.”

Publication

A publication is a manuscript prepared in finished form and reproduced in multiple copies that is intended to meet specific needs of the public, other agencies and departments, and cooperators, as well as the needs of FSA.

Visual Materials

Visual materials are films, video tapes, DVD's, MPEG files, WMF files, slides (transparencies), photographs (print and electronic), drawings, posters, charts, graphs, map displays, exhibits, and other related visual forms.

Example of FSA-463, Photograph and Testimonial Consent/Release Form

The following is an example of FSA-463.

<p>This form is available electronically.</p>	
<p>FSA-463 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (06-22-16) Farm Service Agency</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PHOTOGRAPH AND TESTIMONIAL CONSENT/RELEASE FORM</p> <p style="font-size: small;">A release is not required for photographs or testimonies of public officials, including FSA employees, in the conduct of their official duties.</p>	<p>1A. Originating Name and Address <i>(Include Zip Code)</i></p> <hr/> <p>1B. Originating Telephone No. <i>(Include Area Code)</i></p> <hr/> <p>1C. Originating Office Fax No. <i>(Include Area Code)</i></p>

Type of consent (Check all that apply): Photograph Consent Testimonial Consent

I, _____, hereby consent to the royalty use by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) of photograph(s) taken of me by employees/representatives of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), and of any reproduction of the photograph(s) in any form, with editing for clarity full or in part, in any media, for any purpose in connection with USDA, world-wide, free and clear of any claim whatsoever on my part.

(Print name of person this Consent/Release form applies to)

I also consent to the use of my name with the photograph(s) and any testimonial(s) and comment(s) I may have made at the time of the photograph(s), including the editing thereof.

Furthermore, I understand that the photograph(s), testimonial(s) and comment(s) will not be sold by FSA and may be used alone or in conjunction with other types of printed material, including use on FSA's Internet and Intranet, and in all other means of public display.

I hereby release the United States, its officers, and employees from liability for any violation of any right I may have in connection with the foregoing use.

I hereby waive any right of inspection or approval of the photograph(s) or of the use that may be made of the photograph(s), my name, and my comments.

Parent/Legal Guardian Consent:
Being a/the parent/legal guardian of the minor who executed the foregoing Consent/Release and acting both for myself individually and on behalf of said minor, I hereby consent to the execution of the foregoing Consent/Release by said minor and agree to the provisions thereof

I am of legal age I am not of legal age *(Must have parent/legal guardian consent)*

2. If signing for minor, relationship to minor:	3. Name of person giving consent:
4. Telephone No. <i>(Include Area Code)</i>	5. Cell No. <i>(Include Area Code)</i>
6. Mailing Address:	7. Fax No. <i>(Include Area Code)</i>
	8. Email Address

9A. Signature *(Person giving consent)* _____ Date Signed: _____

9B. Signature *(FSA official)* _____ Date Signed: _____

9C. Title *(FSA official)* _____

Maintain a copy of this form in the originating office and forward one copy to:
 USDA-FSA Public Affairs Branch, 1400 Independence Ave., SW
 STOP Code 0506, Room 4074
 Washington, D.C. 20250-0506
 Fax: 202-720-2979

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Example of FSA-30, FSA Oracle User Access Request Form

The following is an example of FSA-30.

<p>This form is available electronically.</p>		<p>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency</p>	
<p>FSA-30 (10-24-17)</p> <p>FSA ORACLE USER ACCESS REQUEST FORM</p>			
<p>This form is used to request specified access to add/remove user privileges to/from the FSA Oracle Content Management System for the Public FSA Website. The request for authorization must be authorized by the Account Administrator or by someone higher in the reporting chain for the account or unit. This form should be completed and submitted through AskFSA Internal (https://askfsainternal.custhelp.com)</p>			
<p>PART A – REQUEST SUBMITTED BY</p>			
1. NAME (Include First and Last Name)	2. E-MAIL ADDRESS (Work)	3. CONTACT TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	4. REQUEST DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)
<p>PART B – USER INFORMATION</p>			
5. USER NAME (Include First and Last Name)	6. LEVEL II eAUTHENTICATION ID	7. CONTACT TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
8. USER'S E-MAIL ADDRESS (Work)	9. POSITION TITLE	10. OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS	
11A. SUPERVISOR'S NAME	11B. SUPERVISOR'S EMAIL ADDRESS	11C. SUPERVISOR'S TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
<p>PART C – DATA ACCESS – The roles listed below have a standard set of rights (Role Descriptions):</p>			
<p>12. INDICATE APPROPRIATE REQUEST ROLE (Check one):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EDITOR (Editor has read, write, and delete rights)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> REVIEWER (Reviewer has read rights only)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WEB DIRECTOR (Web Director has read, write, delete, administrative, and publish rights)</p>		<p>13. INDICATE APPROPRIATE REQUEST TYPE (Check One):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ADD ACCOUNT <input type="checkbox"/> DELETE ACCOUNT</p>	
<p>14. WEB PAGES USER WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR UPDATING:</p>			
<p>PART D – APPROVING OFFICIAL</p>			
15A. NAME OF APPROVAL OFFICIAL	15B. TITLE	15C. DATE SUBMITTED	
<p>16. INDICATED APPROPRIATE APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL ACTIONS (Check one):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> DISAPPROVAL</p>		<p>17. PERSON TO NOTIFY AUTHORIZATION HAS BEEN GRANTED</p>	
<p><small>In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.</small></p> <p><small>Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.</small></p> <p><small>To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, (2) fax: (202) 690-7442, or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.</small></p>			

Example of FSA-465, Graphic Design Request Form

The following is an example of FSA-465.

<p>This form is available electronically.</p> <p>FSA-465 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (09-20-16) Farm Service Agency</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GRAPHIC DESIGN REQUEST FORM</p>		<p>INTERNAL USE ONLY</p>	
		A. Project Number	B. Publication Number
		C. Date Requested	D. Date Completed
<p>PART A CONTACT INFORMATION</p>			
1. Contact Name		2. Email Address	
3. Contact Telephone Number (Including Area Code)		4. Agency/Office/Division	
5. Office Location		6A. Alternate Point of Contact Name	6B. Telephone Number (Including Area Code)
<p>PART B PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Overall description and background information)</p>			
7. Description			
8. Who is the intended audience?		9. Project Due Date (Most projects require a minimum 2-week lead time for first design sample)	
<p>PART C PROJECT REQUEST (Select as many options as needed)</p>			
10. Type of Design:			
<input type="checkbox"/> A. Agendas <input type="checkbox"/> B. Banner Design <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Horizontal Hanging Banner <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Pull-Up Banner (self-standing) <input type="checkbox"/> C. Booklet Design <input type="checkbox"/> D. Brochure Design <input type="checkbox"/> E. Business Card Layout <input type="checkbox"/> F. Certificate Design <i>(one time use only. Please see Forms Section for numbered certificates)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> G. Cover Design <input type="checkbox"/> H. Custom Graphic (Illustration, Infographic, Unique charts, etc.) Type: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> I. Exhibit Design <input type="checkbox"/> J. Flyer Design <input type="checkbox"/> K. Nametag Design <input type="checkbox"/> L. Photography <input type="checkbox"/> M. Poster Design <input type="checkbox"/> N. Tablet Design <input type="checkbox"/> O. Television Monitor Graphic <input type="checkbox"/> P. Web Graphic <input type="checkbox"/> Q. Other (specify): _____	
11. Print or Production Request: <input type="checkbox"/> YES* <input type="checkbox"/> NO <i>(*If you require in-house printing or production, you will be contacted for further information)</i>			
12. Email your request to: FSAGraphicDesign@wdc.usda.gov		13. If you have any questions, call: Janet Connelly at (202) 690-3532 Julie Polt at (202) 720-3934	
<p><small>In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.</small></p> <p><small>Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.</small></p> <p><small>To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9892. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, (2) fax: (202) 690-7442, or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.</small></p>			

Display Booth Layout Suggestions

The following are examples of display booth layout suggestions.

Why Should FSA Exhibit?

The purpose for setting up a Farm Service Agency (FSA) exhibit at a public event is to raise awareness among the general public and potential customers about FSA and our services. The Office of External Affairs hopes the information offered here will help you maximize recognition of the FSA brand at industry events and increase the number of attendees who are drawn into your FSA exhibit area.

Getting Started

A common mistake at events is taking every brochure and fact sheet available. FSA offers printed collateral featuring a wide range of FSA programs. Check the trash cans at the doors leaving the building or tent that houses your display and you will probably find a lot of those materials have been discarded.

Plan ahead and research the event. Some are state or county fairs; some are non-governmental or commodity group events; and others are SDA-targeted events – each venue will dictate a specific message or program highlight. In addition to specific program information, if available, bring a generic agency brochure that explains FSA and outlines the programs we offer.

Create An Inviting Exhibit

Your display should capture audience attention in the blink of an eye. In order to interact with your audience, you must first draw them into your space. Your space should be accessible and inviting. The display should identify FSA at both a distance and in close proximity. If you have computers, they should always display a USDA or FSA web site. If you have accent lights, use them. Lights attract visitors to the booth. You should develop a game plan for your exhibit team. Staff should understand what is expected of them - establish an appropriate dress code, and develop a two minute spiel that will interest attendees and provide basic information for individuals who are familiar with our organization but are looking for help regarding a specific topic.

Figure 1a

This configuration is **not welcoming** to the visitor as it blocks the visitor's view of the backdrop display and prevents interaction with Agency personnel.

Display Booth Layout Suggestions (Continued)

Table Placement Can Invite or Repel

In an effort to maximize crowd interaction at events where FSA is exhibiting, the following layouts have been determined most effective when promoting agency programs. FSA exhibitors are advised to eliminate any long tables at the front of the booth (Figure 1a). By removing this barrier, the customer is “invited” into the exhibit space and afforded direct contact with FSA personnel.

Booth Arrangement Details

(Figure 1b). This initial one-on-one contact is key to the development of a mutually beneficial relationship with the customer. After a brief introduction, FSA employees should answer questions or direct the customer’s attention to source materials that provide the visitor with a broader understanding of FSA’s programs.

Figure 2 You will notice a suggested booth arrangement that utilizes a bistro table and table skirt imprinted with the USDA logo. This configuration is usually accompanied by director chairs and a backdrop with USDA and FSA branding. Suitable backdrops include a floor or table model display; assortment of pull-up/retractable displays; or other banners exhibiting the USDA and FSA logos.

Along the sides within the booth space, small tables serve as areas to display a variety of program publications and related informational materials.



Please Note: Exhibit Displays are expensive equipment and should be handled with care during set up and tear down.



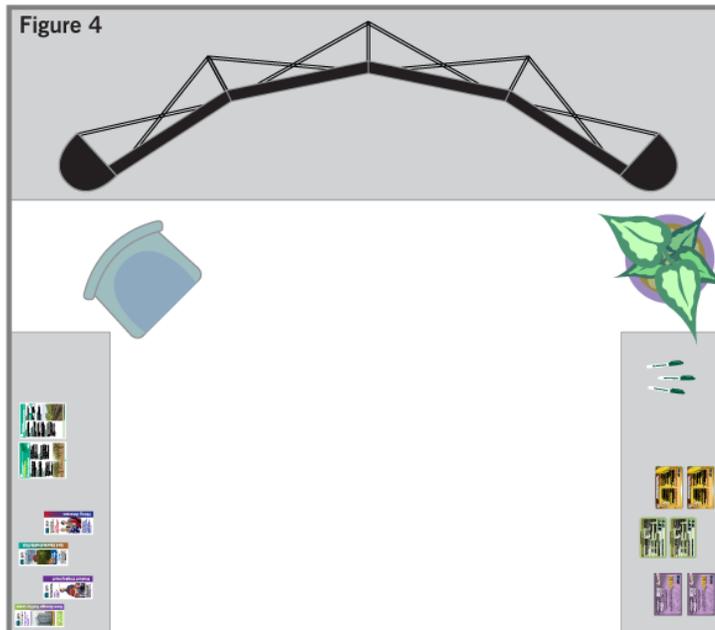
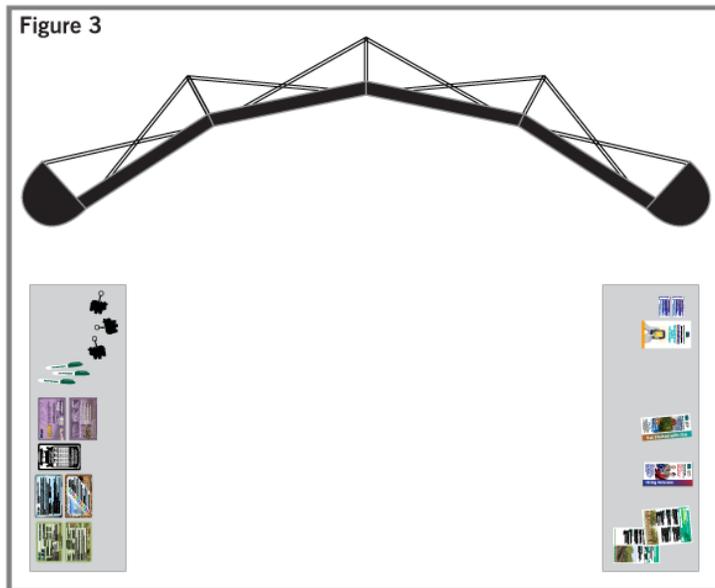
Display Booth Layout Suggestions (Continued)

Figure 3 For a more professional look, side tables should be skirted – doing so provides value-added storage space under the tables for excess handouts and other supplies keeping the exhibit area tidy and professional in appearance. As the Agency moves toward an increasingly digital format and relies less on distributing hard copies of brochures and fact sheets, you should consider transitioning to small info cards directing attendees to the FSA website or program specific web pages.

In the **Figure 4** booth configuration, a skirted table is centered in the back of the exhibit space; a table-top display serves as the focal point. Flanking tables are used for display of informational materials and promotional items (if available/allowed). Standard chairs are permissible but employees working the booth are expected to be alert and prepared to greet customers at all times. Exhibitors can offer interactive games or FSA technology demonstrations.

Consider Online Program Enrollment

If you plan to offer online program signup or e-Authentication registration, consult with the venue and/or your local IT support staff to determine what computer hardware will have to be incorporated into your booth layout. You may be able to use a T1 line, or other high speed wireless connections. Renting a large monitor through event contractors might be warranted in order to demonstrate GIS technology or modern aerial photography. Always ensure that connective wires are secured in a manner that prevents potential hazards for staff and visitors. Potted plants or floral arrangements add to the professional look of your display area.



Display Booth Layout Suggestions (Continued)

Your Display is FSA's Public Image

Ultimately, the goal of FSA's presence at a public venue is meeting the public, drawing them into our booth space, and leaving them with a good impression. Attending events allows you to talk to potential customers directly or at least heighten their awareness of our agency.

We have a few seconds to generate interest as visitors pass by the display. Greeting guests at the booth entrance, offering program literature or promotional items to the visitor with a smile and warm welcome will result in their acknowledgement of you and the Agency. Once you have their attention, seize the opportunity to further the interaction.

Handling Unhappy Visitors

Occasionally you will encounter someone who is unhappy with the Agency. If they have an ongoing complaint and think they have not received an adequate response, get their information and tell them you will contact the appropriate office to request resolution. Your good will efforts may not change the answer they receive but it will show them that FSA is responsive to their needs. *Always be polite and pleasant, even if they are not.*

We Are Here To Serve Agriculture

Many of the people that stop by our booth already have a basic knowledge of FSA, some are our customers, and others want to know if we can help them. Remember, at these events, you are the face of not only FSA but the entire United States Department of Agriculture so be prepared to respond to any and all requests.



Example of Completed AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet Request for Business Partner Record Change

The following is an example of a completed AD-2047.

This form is available electronically.		Forms Approved – OMB Nos. 0560-0265 and 0560-0289	
AD-2047 (03-30-17)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency Rural Development Natural Resources Conservation Service	
CUSTOMER DATA WORKSHEET REQUEST FOR BUSINESS PARTNER RECORD CHANGE			
<i>(See Page 2 for Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Statements)</i>			
PART A – CUSTOMER INFORMATION			
1A. Customer's Full Name or Business Name Any Producer		1B. Customer or Business Address (Including Zip Code) 123 Nowhere Street Anywhere, ST 99999	
1C. Home Telephone Number (Area Code) 999-999-9999	1D. Business Telephone Number (Area Code)	1E. Other Telephone Number (Area Code)	
2. SSN or Tax ID Number (9 Digits) XXX-XX-XXXX	3. E-Mail Address aproducer@farms.com		
4A. Does the customer want to receive mail by USPS? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	4B. Does the customer want to receive e-mails via GovDelivery? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	4C. Does the customer want to receive sensitive (but non-PII) Producer or Farm Specific related emails? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
5. Producer is Customer of One or More of the Following Agencies. (Check Appropriate Agency(ies) below.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FSA <input type="checkbox"/> RD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NRCS <input type="checkbox"/> Not Participating			
6. Is the Customer a Multi-County Producer? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES (If "YES," list States and/or Counties below:) <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
7. Reason for Request (Check appropriate box(es) below): <input type="checkbox"/> New Producer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Address Change <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Change <input type="checkbox"/> Sale/Purchase <input type="checkbox"/> Life Event <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify): Customer elects to receive bulk mail correspondence electronically by GovDelivery.			
8. Enter the name of the customer requesting the record change(s). If documentation is received by Fax or from a trusted source (i.e., USPS), attach documentation to this form. Only Part A, Item 1A and Part B shall be completed. If the request was received by telephone, complete applicable blocks necessary to document the change(s) and enter the requestor's name in Item 8A. Requestor's signature is not required. (The only time the customer is required to sign Item 8B is when they are physically at a Service Center and providing FSA with applicable information.)			
8A. Name of Customer Requesting Change Any Producer		8B. Customer Signature IMA	8C. Date of Record Change (MM-DD-YYYY) 03-08-20XX
PART B – SERVICE CENTER ACTION			
9A. Agency Who Received Request: (Check one below) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FSA <input type="checkbox"/> NRCS <input type="checkbox"/> RD		9B. Initials of Employee Receiving Request (If Different than Item 12A) IMA	9C. Date Service Center Employee Received the Request (MM-DD-YYYY) 03-08-20XX
10. How the Request for Change was Received: <input type="checkbox"/> Office Visit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> FAX <input type="checkbox"/> USPS <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify):			
11. Remarks if Applicable: Address updated on SMIMS 03-08-20XX			
12A. Signature of Employee Updating Business Partner if not initialed in Item 9B.		12B. Date Service Center Employee Updating Business Partner (MM-DD-YYYY) 03-08-20XX	
FOR DISTRICT DIRECTOR/AREA CONSERVATIONIST USE ONLY. (OPTIONAL)			
13A. I concur/do not concur the above items have been properly updated. <input type="checkbox"/> Concur <input type="checkbox"/> Do Not Concur			
13B. Name of District Director/Area Conservationist for Spot Check		13C. Signature of District Director/Area Conservationist for Spot Check	
13D. Title		13E. Date (MM-DD-YYYY)	

Example of Completed AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet Request for Business Partner Record Change (Continued)

AD-2047 (03-30-17)

Page 2 of 2

NOTE: The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is the Computer Security Act of 1987 (Pub. L. 100-235), OMB Circular A-123, Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982, and Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The information will be used to document a request by the producer for changes to the business partner record. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notices for USDA/FSA-2, Farm Records File (Automated), USDA/NRCS-1, Landowner, Operator, Producer, Cooperator, or Participant Files, and USDA/RD-1, Applicant, Borrower, Grantee, or Tenant File. Providing the requested information is voluntary. However, failure to furnish the requested information will result in a determination of ineligibility to request changes within the business partner record.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0265 and 0560-0289. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

The provisions of criminal and civil fraud, privacy and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. **RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program_intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.