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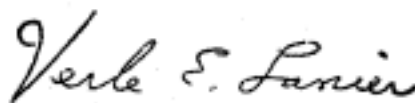Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

For: All FSA Employees

Implementing the Electronic Forms (eForms) Application

Approved by: Acting Administrator

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1 Overview

A
Background

The USDA County Based Agencies (CBA), which includes FSA, NRCS, and RD, deployed the eForms application on June 17, 2002. The eForms application was developed to meet the requirements of the Freedom to E-File Act (the Act), Pub. L. 106-222, enacted by Congress on June 20, 2000. As required by the Act, eForms provides customers with the option to electronically access, fill out, and print paper forms, or obtain secure electronic access credentials for signing and transmitting forms and other documents electronically to their local Service Center.

Before implementing eForms, employees of CBA's were trained to register customers for electronic access credentials through the Web-based Centralized Authentication and Authorization Facility (WebCAAF). Training was also provided to employees on how to use the eForms application to process customer transmitted forms and documents. A training website at **http://www.info.usda.gov/egovtraining/Index.htm** posted training materials for both the eForms application and WebCAAF. Each State assigned eGov coordinators to oversee the training process within their State and to participate in testing and providing feedback on the eForms application in its development stages.

Disposal Date	**Distribution**
February 1, 2003	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

1   Overview (Continued)

A
Background
(Continued)

CBA's developed and issued a common directive, the *CBA eForms Employee Policy and User's Guide*, for referencing operating policies and procedures for using the eForms application. CBA's will **not** develop similar standalone Agency guides, but will issue Agency-specific guidance to employees to supplement the guide. As necessary, CBA's will amend existing policy to incorporate or clarify program requirements that may be impacted by the eForms application.

B
Purpose

This notice supplements the *CBA eForms Employee Policy and Users Guide* by providing additional policy-specific guidance to FSA for operating and managing the eForms application.

C
Contact

Direct questions about this notice to Debra Myers at 202-720-4181. See paragraph 8 for specific eForms application contacts and resources.

2   Roles and Responsibilities

A
SED
Responsibilities

SED's are responsible for:

• assigning employees to monitor the State's eForms status using the "View Online Reports" option at least weekly to ensure that forms are processed in a timely manner and appropriate follow-up action is taken

> **Note:** See the *CBA eForms Employee Policy and User Guide*, subparagraph 5.2.2 for assistance in using the "View Online Reports" option.

• ensuring that all employees are adequately trained to use the eForms application and implement procedure to train new employees

• designating employees to check the eForms Work Queue at least twice every business day if their State Office or any county in the State falls under 1 of the e-mail notification exceptions. See the *CBA eForms Employee Policy and User Guide*, subparagraph 5.1 for e-mail notification exceptions.

2   Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

**B
Service Center
CED's and
FLM's
Responsibilities**

CED's and FLM's are responsible for:

- ensuring that employees are familiar with the eForms customer process to provide assistance to customers using the service

    Note: Use the eForms customer demo at **http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov** to become familiar with the customer eForms processes.

- establishing procedure to access the eForms Work Queue at least twice every business day whether or not e-mail notifications are received

    Notes: Frequency may be increased as appropriate to meet program needs, for example, during the last few days of a program signup period.

    Procedures should minimize unintended duplication of effort by Service Center staff.

- establishing operational procedure to insure that the eForms Work Queue items are timely assigned to the employees in the office who have the required program knowledge to review, return, or accept eForms

- providing for access of the eForms Work Queue when an office may be unstaffed for any reason during a business day that will not allow for a twice daily access of eForms.

**C
Service Center
Employees
Responsibilities**

Service Center employees processing forms through eForms Work Queue are responsible for:

- reviewing each item in a package or form for completeness and determining whether to accept, redirect, or return the package or form

- printing the forms and all attachments included with a package when the package is accepted

    Note: Print forms and attachments as necessary to review the package contents before it is returned or redirected. Online viewing to review a package and its contents is acceptable before it is returned or redirected. However, always print the package contents before the package is accepted. When a form is authorized for electronic signature, the accepted form is the legal electronically signed document from the customer.

2   Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

C
Service Center
Employees
Responsibilities
(Continued)

- ensuring the printed accepted forms in a package contain the confirmation number, the customer's first initial and last name, and the date submitted along the side of the form

  Note: Check the eForms Work Queue Accepted status to insure that the accepted process was completed after the form was printed.

- processing printed accepted forms according to Agency policy for that program

  Note: If another internal computer system is used to further process the accepted form, attach the accepted form to any system outputs, as applicable.

- FAXing or mailing a printed copy of the form to the correct USDA location when the correct office cannot be found in eForms to redirect a package electronically

  Note: See *CBA eForms Employee Policy and User Guide*, subparagraph 5.2.2.

- safeguarding customers WebCAAF user ID's and passwords. In the course of business with customers, do not ask for, or in any other way compromise, a customer's WebCAAF ID and password. If this should happen, the ID must be revoked at once.

3   Computer Security and Privacy Act Requirements

A
eForms
Requirements

The 1987 Computer Security Act provides requirements for the protection of unclassified but sensitive data, such as that submitted and managed by the eForms application. The Privacy Act requires that personal data be protected from unauthorized access or sharing. To ensure that the eForms application is not compromised, and customer information processed through the application is protected, employees using eForms must:

- follow FSA security practices in 2-IRM to protect the eForms application from unauthorized access

- protect employee WebCAAF user names and passwords

3   Computer Security and Privacy Act Requirements (Continued)

A
eForms
Requirements
(Continued)

- protect customers' information displayed on monitors from the view of other customers or visitors in the office

- not leave completed forms and associated documents exposed on desks, or left at copiers, printers, FAX machines, or counters

- sign off the eForms application after completing work in the eForms Work Queue, viewing online reports or creating forms packages.

4   Forms Authorized for Electronic Signature

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Authorized for
Electronic
Signature

The eForms application provides the capability for all forms available on the site to be electronically transmitted to the Service Center for review. Not all forms available on eForms are approved for electronic signature. The eForms application currently does not provide a mechanism for identifying which forms in the Work Queue are approved for electronic signature, except in the instructions that accompany each form.

FSA employees can access and print a list of FSA forms that may be accepted for electronic signature from the FFAS Employee Forms Intranet web site at **http://165.221.16.90/dam/ffasforms/currentforms.asp**.

To view or print the list, do the following.

- Select "Yes" from the drop down box next to the Electronic Signature Accepted text.

- Leave all other fields blank. Click the "Submit" button.

- The list that follows displays forms that are or will be on the site and have been approved for electronic signature.

- To print the list, click "File" from the browser menu bar. Select Print.

Until the eForms application can display the electronic signature status of forms, offices must access this list daily. Revisions to the forms or recommendations from the field may change the electronic signature status, particularly in the beginning stages of the eForms application. New and revised forms will also be added to the eForms application to meet the requirements of the Farm Bill.

5   Forms Not Authorized for Electronic Signature

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Not Authorized for Electronic Signature

Forms that are not authorized for electronic signature generally require an ink signature to comply with program policy, for example, in the case of most loan documents. Other forms are not approved for electronic signature because they require signatures from a third party. If a form that is not approved for electronic signature is received in the eForms Work Queue, review and return the form to the customer according to the guidance in the *CBA eForms Employee Policy and User's Guide*, subparagraph 5.2.1.

The eForms application provides for individual signing authority only. If a form that is approved for electronic signature requires multiple signatures for a particular applicant or farming operation, the form cannot be accepted for electronic signature unless a Power of Attorney is on file. Review and return the form to the customer according to the guidance in the *CBA eForms Employee Policy and User's Guide*, subparagraph 5.2.1.

6   Requests for Copies of Electronic Forms Through E-Mail

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Policy

If a customer contacts the County Office to request that an electronic form be sent to the customer's personal or company e-mail account, direct the customer to use the eForms website to download the form, or register for electronic access credentials to access the eForms application.

Do not use e-mail to send or receive forms from customers.

7   Conflict of Interest

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FSA Employees

Conflict of interest policy in 22-PM, paragraph 402, applies to transactions conducted on the eForms application.

Employees who have farming interests and apply for program participation or benefits as a customer using the eForms application shall not review or accept their own forms and attachments transmitted though eForms.

8   Contacts and Resources for eForms Application Assistance

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Contacts and
Resources   The following table lists contacts and resources for eForms application
                       assistance.

Item	Description	Contact or Resource
1	Public eForms application - website provides customer sign-in through WebCAAF for electronically transmitting forms or browse option to view, fill, and print forms	**http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov**
2	CBA Employee eForms application - website access requires sign-in through WebCAAF	**https://formsadmin.sc.egov.usda.gov**
3	*CBA eForms Employee Policy and User's Guide*	**https://formsadmin.sc.egov.usda.gov** **http://www.info.usda.gov/egovtraining/Index.htm**
4	CBA eForms policy questions and recommendations	State eGov Coordinator
5	WebCAAF registration software	CBA WebCAAF User's Guide: **https://webreg.sc.egov.usda.gov/webreg**
6	eForms application help	• *CBA eForms Employee Policy and User's Guide* • State eGov Coordinator • National Help Desk, 1-800-457-3642
7	CBA Training Materials website	**http://www.info.usda.gov/egovtraining/Index.htm**
8	Problems with the form file or instruction file; requests for electronic forms	Angela Coln, 202-690-3798 Angela_coln@wdc.fsa.usda.gov
9	FFAS Employee Forms Intranet Site Home Page	**http://intra3.fsa.usda.gov/dam/forms/form.html**