Preparation of Soils Data for General Signup

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs

1 Overview

A Background

Complete and accurate soils data is necessary for successfully conducting signups for CRP. Spatial and tabular soils data elements are used to determine eligibility, calculate points awarded under the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI), and calculate soil rental rates.

In preparation for a general signup expected to occur this summer, spatial and tabular soils data must be updated.

Because of recent advancements in the availability of SSURGO 2 soils data, the National Office is now able to assume management of the FSA Soils Data Management System (SDMS), including adding, editing, and voiding soils information. State Offices will be required only to maintain the “Wind Erosion Soils List (WESL) Indicator” and “Long Leaf Pine Suitability Indicator.”

B Purpose

This notice:

- announces that the National Office will initiate a nationwide update to all soils data, including soils attributes and soil rental rates

- instructs County Offices to obtain the most recent SSURGO 2 spatial data and take the necessary steps to ensure that it is available in the Tool for Environmental Resource Results Assessment (TERRA) on July 13, 2010

- instructs County Offices to initiate the Conservation Online System (COLS) downloader on July 13, 2010

- instructs State Offices to work with NRCS State Soil Scientist staff to review and update the WESL and Long Leaf Pine indicators contained in FSA SDMS.

Disposal Date: January 1, 2011

Distribution: State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices and NRCS State Offices
Notice CRP-661

2 Updating of Soils Data for General and Continuous Signup

A Current Use of Soils Data

Soils data is used for CRP eligibility determinations, calculating points awarded under the EBI, and to calculate soil rental rates. FSA uses Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO) 2 soils data.

Soils data is used by FSA in the following 3 ways:

- spatial data is stored on user desktops and is used by TERRA
- a subset of soil tabular data necessary for eligibility determinations and EBI calculations is derived from SSURGO 2, inputted and managed in FSA SDMS, and used by COLS to calculate EBI points
- soils data managed in FSA SDMS is used by TERRA to create offer scenario information.

B Nationwide Update

The SDMS for all cropped soils, marginal pastureland, and special rates will be maintained by the National Office.

The National Office will initiate a nationwide update of all soils data such that new soils data will be available in SDMS on Tuesday, July 13, 2010. This update will populate the SDMS with all current soils, including those that are cropped or likely to be cropped. Each soil will have the necessary soils attributes and soil rental rates pre-populated.

Notes: The National Office will not make any changes to the methodology used to calculate the physical soils attribute values. The physical soil attribute values include:

- T factor
- Revised Universal Soils Loss Equation (RUSLE) LS and K factors
- leaching index
- wind erosion factor
- Long Leaf Pine suitability factor.

A future notice will describe the process the National Office will use for updating soil rental rates.

C Update Frequency

The National Office will initiate nationwide updates quarterly or as needed. The next update is tentatively planned on or just after October 1, 2010.

State Offices who become aware that NRCS has made a recent update to their SSURGO 2 soils data should contact the National Office.
3 Updating Spatial and Tabular Data in TERRA for County Offices

A Updating Spatial and Tabular Data for County Offices

To ensure that proper synchronization occurs between the SSURGO 2 soils information in SDMS and corresponding SSURGO 2 tabular and spatial data used by TERRA, each County Office must update their SSURGO 2 spatial data and initiate a download of COLS information. Ensuring that a consistent set of soils information is used by TERRA and COLS will help to reduce problems when processing CRP offers.

B Instructions for Updating Spatial Data in TERRA

County Offices must work with appropriate Service Center staff to obtain the most recent SSURGO 2 spatial data or ensure that the most recent SSURGO 2 spatial data is available for use in TERRA. The most recent SSURGO 2 spatial data can be obtained from the NRCS Geospatial Data Gateway web site:

- located at http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/
- by clicking “Get Data” after accessing the web site.

Further instructions for obtaining and downloading spatial data from the Geospatial Data Gateway can be found on the “Help” link after clicking “Get Data”.

Note: In most Service Centers, Service Center staff may download and maintain SSURGO 2 spatial data on an on-going basis on Service Center data servers used by TERRA. In these cases, County Offices must request that Service Center staff download and make available for use, the most recent version of SSURGO 2 spatial data.

C Instructions for Updating Tabular Data Through COLS Downloader

County Office must obtain the most recent SDMS tabular data by initiating the COLS Downloader on or soon after July 13, 2010. Instructions for initiating the COLS Downloader can be obtained by:

- accessing the web site at http://fsaintranet.sc.egov.usda.gov/ffas/dafp/cepdsto.htm
- select #22, “TERRA/COLS Downloader User Guide”.

4 Updating Soils Data Management System for FSA and NRCS State Offices

A Updating WESL Indicator for State Offices

With the exception of the WESL and long leaf pine suitability indicators, FSA and NRCS State Offices are no longer required to manage soils data in the SDMS. FSA and NRCS State Office users no longer have permissions in SDMS to add soils, void soils, or edit any property of a soil other than the WESL and long leaf pines suitability indicators. These permissions will be removed by July 31, 2010.
B State Office Action

State Offices shall:

- follow the provisions of this notice
- ensure that County Offices follow the provisions of this notice.

C County Office Action

County Offices shall follow the provisions of this notice.

D Contact

Any questions about this notice should be directed to Shawn Bucholtz by:

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- telephone at 202-720-0048.