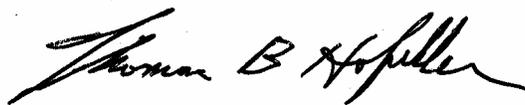


For: All FSA Offices

Migrating Public-Facing Web Sites and Web-based Applications

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Background

The Department has directed all Agencies to implement common USDA Web standards for all public-facing Web sites and Web-based applications.

B FSA Web Presence Initiative

FSA has elected to use the “Web presence” concept to support this effort. The Web Presence Initiative will:

- enhance the FSA's Web presentation
- improve usability
- provide a consistent customer experience
- allow all users to navigate FSA’s Web sites and portals based on their desired tasks or topics, rather than by FSA's organizational structure
- redesign and restructure the Agency Web sites based on standard user-interface guidelines
- include migrating all FSA sites into an enterprise Web Content Management System (WCMS).

The result of this initiative will be a consistent look and intuitive navigation across all FSA sites and Web-based applications.

Plans need to be developed and implemented to transform Web sites and Web-based applications to the common USDA Web standards and WCMS.

Disposal Date	Distribution
January 1, 2006	All FSA Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice INFO-26

1 Overview (Continued)

C Phased Migration

FSA will develop and implement its Web Presence Initiative using a USDA-approved phased migration approach.

Accordingly, all public-facing FSA Web sites will migrate to WCMS when approved by the USDA Office of Communications (OC) and FSA Web Manager and implemented according to the phased migration plan. Any public-facing FSA Web sites in violation of this policy will be blocked for publication and/or removed. New Web design templates will not be made available until the migration occurs for that mission area. Web-based application templates will be made available once they have been approved by OC and are released for FSA use.

Detailed information on the implementation and release of Web-based application templates will be provided at a later date.

D Purpose

This notice

- provides:
 - information on FSA Web Presence Initiative and migration plans
 - initial roles and responsibilities for managing the FSA Web site
 - initial policies for delivering information and services over the Internet

Note: Policies will be updated and refined as FSA completes the migration process.

- requests that National Office division and staff directors and SED's appoint and submit names of Unit Web Managers (UWM) for managing the delivery of programmatic information and services over the Web.

2 Legislative Mandates

A E-Government Act of 2002

Section 207 of the E-Government Act of 2002 requires that all Government information, including information on the Internet, be organized, preserved, and made accessible to the public. Additional information on the requirements will be provided at a later date.

2 Legislative Mandate (Continued)

B USDA Web Site Development and Maintenance

Departmental Regulation 3430-001, Web Site Development and Maintenance, requires all USDA Internet Web sites to comply with provisions stated in the USDA Web Style Guide. The Guide defines guidelines and standards for look, feel, and navigation to promote consistency while also improving the overall user experience. The Guide provisions apply to Web-based application pages and commercial off-the-shelf software packages, which can be viewed by external customers, and include any Web page or application that targets all USDA employees, such as a USDA enterprise application. Exceptions and other considerations will be examined on a case-by-case basis.

Agency Intranet sites or other internal Web sites or Web applications, which are inaccessible to the public and used for internal nonpublic purposes, may not be required to follow guidance provided in the USDA Web Style Guide depending on the organization's mission.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

A FSA Web Manager

The FSA Web Manager, under the guidance of the Office of External Affairs (OEA), is responsible for providing overall management and oversight of FSA's organizational and personal Web pages and Web-based application pages, which can be viewed by external customers. The FSA Web Manager, Jeff Kerby, may be reached at 202-720-1593.

The USDA Press Secretary, USDA Director of Web Services and the FSA Web Manager have the authority to block Internet access to Web pages that fail to comply with Departmental regulations, USDA Web Style Guide, or FSA policy. UWM's will be notified of Web sites that fail to comply, and will be given an opportunity to comply, before taking further action.

Detailed roles and responsibilities will be published in a forthcoming FSA Web Site Development and Management handbook.

B Unit Web Managers

UWM's are appointed by National Office division and staff directors and SED's to manage the delivery of programmatic information and services over the FSA Web site. UWM's work closely with the FSA Web Manager and FSA Public Affairs Staff to ensure that only public information approved for public release through standard FSA review and clearance processes are maintained on Web sites within their mission areas. UWM's also assist the FSA Web Manager in reviewing and responding to email messages received through the FSA Web site and other electronic feedback mechanisms deployed within USDA.

Notice INFO-26

3 Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

C Web Content Providers (WCP)

WCP's are appointed by UWM's or National Office divisions and staffs and SED's to provide and maintain programmatic information and services approved for public release within their assigned mission area Web sites.

4 Policy

A Approved Content

Only public information approved for public release through standard USDA or FSA review and clearance processes will be maintained on FSA Web sites or made accessible through links to other Web pages. Unless an exception has been approved, links shall be made only to Government Web pages. Exceptions must be approved in advance by the FSA Web Manager and USDA OC.

B Sensitive Security Information (SSI)

All information under consideration for publication on FSA Web sites must be evaluated to determine whether information constitutes SSI. SSI may not be made available except as provided by Departmental Regulation 3440-002, Control and Protection of Sensitive Security Information.

C Web Access

Web sites shall be accessible to users with limited as well as full access capabilities. WCP's should be aware that many users' available microcomputer and telecommunications technologies may lack the speed and capacity of those available to FSA employees. Many users still access the Internet through a standard dial-up connection and have a narrow bandwidth communications capability.

Pursuant to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, Farm Service Agency Web sites must meet federal requirements for accessibility.

4 Policy (Continued)

D Content Maintenance

All Web pages should be reviewed and updated routinely to ensure:

- accuracy and timeliness of information
- that they address topics of greatest interest to our users.

Information already on the Web should not be replicated from its source. Sites should hyperlink to information where it is originally created, published, and maintained online on another Farm Service Agency Web site.

Example: A mini-site about a particular topic that wants to include news releases about only that topic should link to the news releases where they are published, instead of copying those news releases to the local file system for the mini-site. Linking instead of copying reduces duplication and provides site visitors with the most current information since the original contributors maintain the information.

Detailed policy will be published in a forthcoming FSA Web Site Development and Management handbook.

5 Action

A National Office Action

Each National Office division and staff director shall submit to the FSA Web Manager by January 31, 2005, the name and contact information of 1 representative to serve as UWM for their mission area.

B SED Action

SED's shall submit to the FSA Web Manager by January 31, 2005, the name and contact information of 1 representative to serve as UWM for their State.