UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency
Washington, D.C. 20250

Notice IRM-284

For: FSA, FAS, and RMA Employees and Contractors

FFAS E-Mail and Internet Usage

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management

1 Overview

A Purpose

This notice provides guidelines for accessing and using e-mail systems and the Internet.

B Statement

Using e-mail systems and the Internet are for **official Government business only.** Government employees and contractors must follow all appropriate Federal laws and regulations, FFAS and USDA policies, rules of conduct, and ethics while using e-mail systems and the Internet.

2 Guidelines for E-Mail Systems and Internet

A USDA Policy

Using Government equipment and information resources for personal matters, personal gain, or to conduct private business is strictly prohibited. Use e-mail systems and the Internet to send and receive official messages and work-related information between:

- employees and contractors
- other Federal Agencies
- State and local Governments
- Field Offices
- private sector organizations
- educational and research institutions.

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Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 1999	All FSA, FAS, and RMA Employees; Contractors; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Guidelines for E-Mail Systems and Internet (Continued)

A
USDA Policy (Continued)

DR 3300-1, Appendix I states:

"USDA access to the Internet may be used to support Departmental and agency missions and responsibilities, through the access and use of authorized remote information systems, the use of e-mail and applications enabled by e-mail, and the exchange of data with State and local governments, private sector organizations, and educational and research institutions, both in the United States and abroad."

B
Guidelines

Job Related Use. All employees and contractors will only use e-mail systems and the Internet for **official Government business only.** This includes communicating with work and professional contacts, and obtaining and providing on-line information related to work activities. If authorized by a negotiated agreement, unions can use Government equipment and facilities in their official capacity.

Anti-Virus Software. All PC's used are required to have anti-virus protection software installed and activated. This includes PC's that are not connected to the Agency's network. Users are strictly prohibited from removing or disabling FFAS installed anti-virus software.

Copyright Protection. All users must obey all copyright and licensing laws.

Downloading Software. Software will not be downloaded if:

- there is a condition of downloading that commits FFAS to purchase the software or incur unauthorized expenses
- software or information is not authorized, approved, and related to official Government business
- it exceeds the limits of FFAS software license agreements.

Uploading Software or Data. No FFAS software, data files, or sensitive information will be uploaded to e-mail systems and the Internet without proper authorization.

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2 Guidelines for E-Mail Systems and Internet (Continued)

B Guidelines (Continued)

The purpose of the prohibition is to ensure that:

- no copyright protected software is distributed through external media or systems in violation of copyright laws
- FFAS software, data, and information are distributed only to authorized recipients
- correct, accurate, and official versions are released
- no sensitive data or sensitive information are released
- uploading functions are for approved official Government business only.

C Unacceptable Uses

According to DR 3300-1, Appendix I, "USDA users shall refrain from any activity, characterized as unethical and unacceptable, which purposely seeks to gain unauthorized access to resources of the Internet; disrupts the intended use of the Internet; wastes its resources (people, capacity, computers); destroys the integrity of its information; or compromises the privacy of its users."

Specifically, e-mail systems and the Internet shall **not** be used:

- for personal gain or profit
- to represent oneself as someone else
- for soliciting Government employees
- to provide information about or lists of FFAS employees to others outside the Government
- when it interferes with the employee's job or the jobs of other employees.

Employees and contractors are prohibited from copying any software or information that is protected by a copyright.

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2 Guidelines for E-Mail Systems and Internet (Continued)

C Unacceptable Uses (Continued)

E-mail systems and the Internet shall not be used for transmitting or receiving:

- sexually explicit information
- racially or ethnically demeaning information
- nonwork-related personal messages
- any type of personal solicitation
- chain letters
- outside business activities
- any other nonwork-related activity.

In addition, the e-mail systems and the Internet are not secure and shall not contain:

- national security information
- classified material
- sensitive data and sensitive information
- information exempted from disclosure according to FOIA (Pub. L. 93-502)
- information protected by the Privacy Act (Pub. L. 93-579).

D Network Connection

FFAS operating policy requires that any access to external e-mail systems and Internet services be provided only through USDA and FFAS approved gateways.

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2 Guidelines for E-Mail Systems and Internet (Continued)

E
Internet E-Mail Attachments

The Internet is a valuable tool for exchanging information for official Government business use. However, it is not secure and the potential for receiving an attachment containing a computer virus is significant. Internet e-mail attachments must be scanned before opening and before saving them to the hard drive or another storage device. Employees are responsible for ensuring that each attachment is properly scanned for computer viruses.

Employees and contractors who need assistance in scanning for computer viruses or when a computer virus is detected, shall immediately contact the appropriate help desk as follows.

Location	Contact
National Office Novell users	202-690-4316
National Office Banyan users and FAS Outreach Offices	202-720-6763
FAS Overseas Offices	202-720-2944
FSA Kansas City and St. Louis Offices	816-926-6897 or 816-926-6537
FSA Field Offices	800-255-2434 or 816-926-6537
RMA Kansas City and RMA Field Offices	816-926-1126

3 Internet Access

A
Accessing the Internet

FSA, RMA, and FAS Offices, including overseas posts, shall not contract separately with an Internet service provider until an Internet access technical waiver has been requested and approved by the Department.

4 Disciplinary Actions

A Overview

Any person who willfully or knowingly violates or fails to comply with the provisions of appropriate Federal laws and USDA and FFAS regulations will be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions, such as suspension or dismissal.

B Taking Disciplinary Actions

All managers, supervisors, and contractors shall:

- take the necessary disciplinary actions according to standard personnel procedures
- notify HRD and OIG if required.

Authorized personnel, such as directors, contracting officers, information systems security officials, and LAN administrators and supervisors may take possession of any FFAS-owned information resources or unauthorized resources at the instructions of the appropriate management official or legal authority to examine the contents for violations of Federal laws and FFAS and USDA policies.

C Contacts for Reporting Violations

Report suspected incidents or violations of Federal laws and FFAS and USDA policies to the immediate supervisor and an Information Systems Security Officer as follows.

Location	Contact
Kansas City, St. Louis, and Field Offices	816-926-6537
National Offices and FAS Offices	202-720-2419 or 202-720-6207