*Building Rural America*
**National Association of Credit Specialists**
of the
**USDA – Farm Service Agency**
**Information Technology Committee**

**THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MET AT THE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL IN ROSEMONT, IL ON JUNE 28- JULY 2, 2014, TO REVIEW RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE MEMBERSHIP.**

**THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION:**

**Resolution 1**

**CONCERN**: FBP does not have the correct input fields to do a "Fast Track Pasture Loss Calculation" in the Emergency Loan Calculations credit action.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** Update the FBP Emergency Loan Calculations credit action to allow for correct entry of the Fast Track Pasture Loss Calculation.

**NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:** We disagree and will not be changing FBP. Notice FLP-647 that addressed Fast Track EM processing has expired and was not reissued due to the Livestock Forage Program being funded again. Offices should follow guidance provided in 3-FLP for calculating increased feed cost at the end of the year.

**COMMITTEE RESPONSE:** We agree with NTO response that since the Livestock Forage Program has been funded again under the new Farm Bill as a permanent program and the Fast Track EM processing Notice FLP-647 has expired, we are now reverting back to the original EM loan processes as outlined in 3-FLP.

**Resolution 2**

**CONCERN:** The process to allow customers' access to the "Guest" Wi-Fi in the county offices is too cumbersome to permit effective utilization of this resource. It can take multiple days to receive the necessary login information.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** Simplify and expedite the process to obtain login information for FSA customers who need internet access in the county offices.

**NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:** This concern was discussed with FSA's Information Security Office, who in turn, further discussed the concern with USDA's ITS staff. Current procedures require that FSA offices contact their ITS staff to request a guest account be created for **each** guest needing access to the SCA Wi-Fi, and as noted, this process can take anywhere from several hours to several days, depending staff availability and possible conflicting priorities. Once created, a guest account provides Internet only access for a maximum of five days. ITS is aware the current process limits effective use of the SCA Wi-Fi by guests, and is currently exploring alternatives to improve the response time for providing Internet access.

**COMMITTEE RESPONSE:** Additional accessibility is being explored and NACS feels it would be of benefit to our customers who often bring their laptop or other devices with them to the office. We encourage FSA to continue to work with USDA ITS staff to offer greater and more convenient access to our Wi-Fi.

## Resolution 3

**CONCERN:** When viewing a customer profile print or total payoff print from DLM, it is unclear if a loan still has funds not advanced. 4-FLP, Paragraph 61 E, requires FSA-2425 – "Request to Cancel Undisbursed Loan Funds" to de-obligate funds that will not be disbursed to the borrower. It is common to have an undisbursed balance on annual operating loans and easy to miss the remaining loan funds that need canceled when determining the final payment amount. This presents a problem getting the producer's signature on the FSA-2425 if they have no other business with FSA.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** List LNFA (as on the 540 report) on the Customer Profile Screen under each loan that has funds not yet disbursed. This would alert the staff to do further research to determine the amount of loan funds to be canceled.

**NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:** We disagree and will take no action. The "LNFA" indicator is already included in the TPOF function under DLS Customer Management. Offices should not be using Customer Profile alone to determine unpaid balances and remaining debt but should always check the TPOF function.

Customer Management

Customer Status
Total Payoff
FBP Loan Schedule
Manage Case Number
Manage Flags
Manage Suspend Code
Manage Mail Code
Loan Making
LS - Transfer/Assumption
LS - Dashboard
Special Servicing
Transactions

### Total Payoff Request

• The Total Payoff Request Is used to specify the Accrual Date, Select the loans to be included in the payoff calculation, and request the Total Payoff.

,. Accrual Date:

### Payoff Option

Select All loans

| Open loans | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Select | Fund Code/Loan# | Loan Type | Date of loan. | Original/Restructured loan Amount | last Cash Payment Date |
| | 41-06 | FO | DB/14/2012 | $297,200.00 | 02/12/2014 |
| .....J | 44-08 | OL | 01/17/2014 | $44,000.00 | 01/28/2014 |
| | 44-09 | OL | 01/17/2014 | $45,000.00 | |
| | 44-10 Lt/FA | OL | 01/17/2014 | S79,SOO.00 | |

Total Payoff

**COMMITTEE RESPONSE:** After some further research by NACS IT committee members, this concern has been addressed with an enhancement that added LNFA to the Total Payoff screen under DLS Customer Management. We thank NTO for the fix on this concern.

### Resolution 4

**CONCERN:** It is our understanding that the SharePoint Site is a secure website, however the policy is that files containing PII saved on the SharePoint site must be individually encrypted. This adds additional time for both the person saving and the person accessing the report.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** Establish a policy to insure that the SharePoint site is secure and thus additional encryption is not needed for items saved on the site.

**NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:** According to the Information Security Office, this is a strict violation as SharePoint is not automatically encrypted and therefore PII can be compromised. In addition, files containing PII stored on all network shared drives must be encrypted.

**COMMITTEE RESPONSE:** NACS still believes this issue needs further review. There is information posted to SharePoint that while it does not contain PII should not be able to be accessed by other than those with proper USDA authorization. NTO will look into this further and hopefully come up with a system that make SharePoint a secure website.

### Resolution 5

**CONCERN:** The printing mechanism in FBP is inadequate. It can take 10 minutes to print a balance sheet with schedules and a cash flow and several clicks to select options as one attempts to print.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** Streamline and simplify the process to print documents from FBP

**NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:** On August 4, 2014, changes were made to the Print Manager feature in the FBP. Changes included the ability to setup and build new Report Packages and print multiple reports. We feel these changes have greatly improved the speed and ease of use of the Print Manager feature.

**COMMITTEE RESPONSE:** The recent enhancements have greatly improved the functionality of printing within FBP and thanks NTO for their assistance on this.

### Resolution 6

**CONCERN:** FP and FLP use two completely different systems for EFT. This is redundant as we are one agency.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** Use the National Payment System software to disburse Farm Loan Program funds.

**NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:** FLP continues to explore other EFT solutions; however, due to budget constraints, the research and conversion to a new system has been hindered. Should funds become available, this project will be a high priority for completion. It should be noted that the current EFT solution used by FLP contains system validations to ensure that incorrect distribution of loan funds is kept to a minimum and that the NPS system used by FP does not contain the same validations; therefore, there is greater risk to incur losses resulting from user input errors.

**COMMITTEE RESPONSE:** Further enhancements will be explored as budget allows, and in the end the desire will be to have a single system.

**Resolution 7**

**CONCERN:** County offices spend excess time creating routine application processing letters.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** Integrate "Data filled forms" into DLS, and further develop GLS, to generate borrower specific routine application and servicing correspondences and commonly used loan documents.

**NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:** We agree with this resolution; however, due to the historical lack of IT funding for system maintenance we will not be able incorporate the requested functionality in DLS. Generating forms and letters and being able to maintain this type of functionality on an ever-changing basis will not be possible, until there is a substantial and sustainable increase in IT funding for our systems.

**COMMITTEE RESPONSE:** With ever limited resources available to the field any way to automate or reduce unneeded forms or letters continues to be a priority and we encourage enhancements as budget allows.

**Resolution 8**

**CONCERN:** The amount of interest paid on a loan cannot be looked up through DLS if the loan is paid in full.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** Allow users to access payment history for active and inactive loans.

**NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:** The Customer Status function may be used to determine the cumulative amount of interest paid as of the settlement date of a loan. As the example below provides the loan was paid in full on July, 1, 2014, and the total interest credits are listed under the Total Loan Balances section of Customer Status.

| Fund Code -Loan No- Loan Type: | Date of Loan | Amount of Loan | Date of Last Payment | Total Amount of Payoff | Fully Paid Code | Print |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4420-33-OL | 11/29/2012 | $152,000.00 | 07/01/2014 | $0.00 | R00 | ⊛ |

| Total Loan Balances | |
|---|---|
| Total Unpaid Principal: so.oo | Total Principal Credits: $152,000.00 |
| Total Unpaid Interest: S0.00 | Total Interest Credits : $1,259.25 |
| Total Daily Accrual: $0.0000 | |
| Total Schedule Status: $1,305.75 – B | Total Minimum Amount Due: $0.00 |
| Total Payoff: $0.00 | |

**COMMITTEE RESPONSE:** The information provided on DLS is not meant to replace the information that is provided on year end 1099s. There is the ability to get some information from the Customer Statement but not for loans that have been paid in full. The information provided in the Customer Status shows total interest paid during life of the loan and is not broken down by year. With the large number of requests that County Offices get in December and January every year for interest paid figures access to this information with only a few "clicks" is needed.

**Resolution 9**

**CONCERN:** Currently we are unable to process a release of liability for a borrower/co- borrower in GLS. The lender must document in their file that the borrower has been released and the situation must be manually monitored to ensure that collection letters and notifications are not mailed to the party that has been released of liability. This also causes problems with FLP if a loss claim is paid and a federal debt is erroneously established for the party that has been released because a check of the automated system will not alert the user to that face. This affects both FSA & RD guaranteed borrowers.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** There has been an RFA written regarding this issue in February 2006. It is currently ranked #3 Critical Project, but it has been at this ranking for a while. The IT programmers gave an estimate of 30 days to complete this programming of the project once the funds had been approved. The modification would go to testing, etc. before release to the field. Elevate the implementation of the FSA for the near future.

**NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:** We recognize the need for the borrower's release of liability function to be included in GLS, and the #3 project ranking reflects the importance of it. However, we will not recommend elevating this project at this time. Prioritizing an RFA includes consideration of the number of incidences where the transaction is needed. In your resolution the only issue is the number of instances where a borrower is being released of liability on a performing loan; because if a borrower is released as part of the liquidation process, the release can be indicated by using the offset screen.

Due to lack of FSA funding for GLS for the past few fiscal years there has not been any project development; only limited maintenance has been completed to correct individual problems. GLS is now receiving some FSA funding but other projects are a higher priority based upon volume and program impact. The number 1 project is building functionality for lenders to submit applications via LINC. This will provide a functionality that will improve lender access and reduce the amount of paperwork involved in submitting an application. FSA will be able to leverage existing functionality already developed by Rural Development with this project. The number 2 priority is a change to the application process to allow FLP to add all applicants. At this time only a borrower and a co-borrower can be added to an application. Any additional borrowers/entity members/liable parties must be added after the loan closing has been processed. Offices currently have to set up a reminder to complete the transaction when the application is initially entered. If not properly added, the liable parties will not be tied to the loan record, any potential loss payments will not

be properly referred for collections from all parties and customer records will not properly reflect all government assistance an individual has received. In FY 2012 FLP processed 9,260 applications for guarantee so the ability to add all applicants when the application is processed will have a substantial impact.

**COMMITTEE RESPONSE:** This issue is again of concern to NACS but due to budget does not appear that a resolution will be forthcoming in the near future.

**Resolution 10**

**CONCERN:** Currently the system does not designate between good and bad faith determinations for youth loan who have been debt settled.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** There needs to be a different code for these two determinations in order to distinguish one from the other.

**NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:** We will further explore the need for the collection of this type of information in our automated systems; however, at present we will not pursue an enhancement in FY 2015.

**COMMITTEE RESPONSE:** A determination of Good Faith is required in order to Debt Settle an account so unsure of how the concern is relative.

Respectfully submitted by the 2013/2014 Information Technology Committee,

LeAnn Gibbs, Zone A                                    Tom Shelton, Zone B, Chairman

Becky Minter, Zone C                                   Tammy Jones, Zone D