

For: State and County Offices

Shutdown of Various Conservation Software Systems

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

Currently, CRP contract data is maintained in 2 environments, S/36 CRP contract file and web-based Conservation On-Line System (COLS). The following is a general list of conservation signup periods illustrating where contract data currently resides.

Signup/Signups	S/36	COLS
Signups 1 through 35	X	
Signups 36 through 38, except SAFE	X	
Signups 36 through 38 for SAFE		X
Signup 39	X	
Signup 40, except SAFE	X	
Signup 40 for SAFE		X
Signup 41		X
Signup 42, except SAFE and HELI	X	
Signup 42 for SAFE and HELI		X
Signup 43 and subsequent signups		X

In 2009, web-based Conservation Payment software was released to issue conservation annual rental payments. Options were subsequently added for other programs and payment types.

In 2013, a number of software initiatives are planned for the conservation software to:

- retire S/36 and move all contract data to the web-based environment
- implement program improvements to standardize the payment process and ensure that payment limitation and payment eligibility provisions are administered consistently for conservation programs.

Disposal Date	Distribution
December 1, 2013	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice CRP-741

1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose

This notice:

- provides general information about forthcoming changes to various conservation software applications
- provides a projected software release schedule
- advises State and County Offices:
 - S/36 CRP contract software will be disabled to migrate CRP contract data to the new Contract Maintenance web-based system
 - the web-based Conservation Payment software that is currently used to issue CRP annual and incentive payments for amounts earned in 2012 and prior years will be disabled
 - to ensure that all contract data is updated to the maximum extent possible before the migration process begins
 - to ensure that all payments that have been earned are issued, to the maximum extent possible, through the web-based Conservation Payment software before the 2012 and prior year options are disabled
 - that any payments not issued after applicable software options are disabled will subsequently be issued through an authorized payment process that includes a manual review of the case file by State Offices.

2 CRP Contract Software Modifications

A Contract Maintenance

The Contract Maintenance web-based system will become the repository of all CRP contract information for active contracts.

- Contracts currently maintained in S/36 will be migrated to the Contract Maintenance web-based system.
- Active contracts currently maintained in COLS will be moved to the Contract Maintenance web-based system. COLS will only be used during the offer process for future signups.

Notice CRP-741

2 CRP Contract Software Modifications (Continued)

B Projected Timeline

The following is the projected timeline for the CRP contract software changes.

Action/Release	Projected Date
National Office conducts State Office training for the Contract Maintenance web-based software.	Mid July 2013
State Offices conduct County Office training for the Contract Maintenance web-based software.	By July 29, 2013
S/36 CRP contract software is disabled.	July 15, 2013
S/36 and COLS contract data migration process is initiated.	July 22, 2013
Contract Maintenance web-based software released.	July 29, 2013

C Contract Data Cleanup Process

The development staff in the Kansas City Management Office is analyzing contract data in order to identify potential problematic situations that could prevent successful migration of the existing contract data to the new Contract Maintenance web-based system.

As these situations are identified, the most appropriate corrective action will also be determined. In some cases, edits may be run to globally correct the data and State and County Office action will not be necessary.

However, there may be cases where the data cleanup must be completed by the County Office that administers the contract. In these cases, reports will be provided that identify the applicable condition and the appropriate corrective action.

Note: Additional information will be forthcoming regarding the distribution process, but reports will most likely be provided via e-mail due to the limited timeframe available for the cleanup process.

State and County Offices shall also ensure that all contract information is updated in the applicable existing system, to the maximum extent possible, before the migration process begins, including recording all contract revisions or successions.

D Contract Maintenance Training and Procedure

Additional information will be forthcoming regarding the training schedule and procedure for using the system will be made available as soon as possible before the software is released on July 29, 2013.

3 Conservation Payment Processing

A Conservation Payment Software

During the summer of 2011, a defect was found in the Conservation Payment software related to combined producers. Software modifications were made to ensure 2011 annual rental payments were processed properly for combined producers.

Subsequent reviews of the conservation payment process identified additional concerns about the attribution of payments for payment limitation purposes. The Conservation Payment software is currently attributing amounts to the year a payment is issued.

B Payment Limitation Policy

2-CRP, subparagraph 126 A references 1-PL and 4-PL, as applicable, as the authoritative policy for payment limitation and AGI payment eligibility requirements. 1-PL and 4-PL do **not** specifically address how payments are attributed by program for payment limitation purposes, but the system has controlled payment limitation consistently for most programs based on the year a payment is earned.

Example: FSA is currently administering the 2010 SURE program and payments are issued after approval of a producer's application. The first payment was not issued until FY 2012, but all amounts issued are attributed to the 2010 payment limitation year. As payments continue to be issued in FY 2013, the amounts will continue to be attributed to 2010 for payment limitation purposes because that is the payment eligibility period or the year the payment was earned based on the crop loss.

Although there are a number of types of conservation payments attributable to the same \$50,000 payment limitation, the rule for conservation payments was never intended to deviate from the general payment eligibility and payment limitation provisions applied to other programs. However, when the web-based Conservation Payment software was deployed in October 2009 to apply direct attribution provisions, a change was made to attribute amounts to the year the payment was issued instead of the year the payment was earned.

Notice CRP-741

3 Conservation Payment Processing (Continued)

C Description of CRP Payment Software Modifications

The conservation payment software is being redesigned to use the Common Payment Framework process that has been developed for other web-based payment systems. This system consistently applies the payment limitation, payment eligibility, and direct attribution provisions applicable to most FSA farm program payments. Initially, CRP annual rental and incentive payments will be moved to this process with the expectation to include GRP and cost-share payment systems in the future.

Based on this effort and in conjunction with the migration of the contract data to the Contract Maintenance system as described in paragraph 2, the software development effort to apply changes to the system for 2012 and prior years is not feasible.

Therefore, the web-based Conservation Payment software will be shut down for 2012 and prior years for CRP annual rental and incentive payments. The functionality will continue to be available for 2013 until the changes to use the Common Payment Framework are implemented.

After the software for the Common Payment Framework is released, most options in the web-based Conservation Payment system will be permanently disabled and users will use the reports and payment options currently described in 9-CM.

D Projected Shutdown

The **projected date** to shutdown options in the web-based Conservation Payment system for 2012 and prior years is **July 15, 2013**.

E Payment Shutdown Preparation

Additional information will be forthcoming on how the new payment system will function for 2013 and future years. In the interim, State and County Offices shall:

- take all actions necessary to ensure that all outstanding payments earned in 2012 and prior years are issued by **July 15, 2013**
- use available reports to ensure payments sent to NPS are:
 - certified/signed, if the payment is correct
 - canceled, if the payment is **not** correct.

Notice CRP-741

3 Conservation Payment Processing (Continued)

E Payment Shutdown Preparation (Continued)

Reports available for use include, but are not limited to the reports in the following table. If additional ad hoc reports are identified, they will be distributed in a manner similar to the manner described in subparagraph 2 C.

System	Available Reports
Conservation Payment System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepayment Report• Payment Report
FWADM	Unsigned Payment Report

F Handling Payments Not Issued by July 15, 2013

After the web-based Conservation Payment system options have been disabled for 2012 and prior years, any remaining payments will be issued through an authorized payment process. Additional information will be forthcoming, but the payment authorization process generally involves:

- manual review by the County Office to determine the amount that should be paid, document the reason the payment was not issued timely, and provide all applicable documentation for additional review

- detailed review by the State Office to confirm the payment request is valid and obligate/authorize the funding to issue the payment.

State Offices will also be required to report all payment authorizations to the National Office, submit documentation to support the payment authorization, and respond to any questions that may arise through an oversight process.

Because of the onerous nature of the authorization process, it is advantageous for everyone involved, including producers, to ensure that any outstanding payments are issued through the existing web-based Conservation Payment software. As such, State and County Offices are encouraged to take all actions necessary to ensure that any outstanding payments for **eligible producers** are issued **before** the payment software for 2012 and prior years is shutdown.

Note: Payment problems submitted to the National Office for assistance are being researched as quickly as possible and State Offices will be notified when a resolution is reached. If the case is not resolved by the shutdown date, the payments will most likely have to be issued through the authorized payment process.