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October 15, 2003

OKLAHOMA BULLETIN NO. OK180-4-1

SUBJECT: CPA – Use of Customer Service Toolkit

Purpose: To provide guidance on the mandatory usage of Customer Service Toolkit for all conservation planning and implementation activities.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2004

For Oklahoma NRCS to achieve the goals identified by Chief Knight (see attachment), beginning immediately all conservation planning and implementation activities will be documented using Customer Service Toolkit. This includes both programmatic and non-programmatic planning activities. With the implementation of PRS (Performance Results System) in November 2003, conservation planning information entered in Customer Service Toolkit will be providing a foundation for progress reporting within NRCS.

Current Oklahoma policy requires that all plans be documented in Toolkit. This includes new and revised conservation plans, as they are developed. During the first quarter of FY2004, as practices are completed, a transition will be made to also document all applied practices in the practice scheduler in Toolkit. This planning data, which is stored in a MS-Access database, will be uploaded to the PRS system using a Toolkit Check-in Wizard.

The PRS system will also require a link to a SCIMS data record. More information on the Toolkit Check-in Wizard and the steps to access a SCIMS record will be provided in November.

The final information that will be required for planned and applied data in PRS is a geographic reference for each land unit (i.e. field). In order to have all land units tied to a geographic reference in the database, it is highly recommended that all planned land units be digitized in Customer Service Toolkit and the “land unit” tool button be used to identify the fields and “link” them to the database with the practice schedule. Digitizing and identifying (mapping) the land units in the existing system will:

- Reduce the amount of manual data entry to locate fields in PRS, and
- Provide more accurate information which will transfer to the next generation of Toolkit.

(MORE)

Over the next seven months, a new Customer Service Toolkit that will write directly to the national Toolkit database will be built with ArcGIS technology. All existing Toolkit data, including digitized land unit boundaries will be uploaded into the on-line system. There will be no re-entry of existing information in the on-line system.

All employees must be able to document their planning and application activities in Toolkit in order that progress data can be uploaded into PRS. To address any training or technical support needs, all employees with planning responsibilities will work through their appropriate team contacts for Customer Service Toolkit and ArcView to schedule help sessions, training, and technical support assistance. Team contacts needing additional support to achieve the chief's objectives should request assistance from Suzanne Collier, State Toolkit Coordinator, at Suzanne.Collier@ok.usda.gov or Jim Henley, State GIS Manager, at Jim.Henley@ok.usda.gov.

/s/ Kevin Norton acting for

M. DARREL DOMINICK
State Conservationist

Attachment

National Bulletin: 180-4-1

October 7, 2003

Subject: CPA – Use Customer Service Toolkit to Document Conservation Plans

Purpose. To inform all employees of the mandatory use of the customer service Toolkit.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2004

Background. As the Agency continues to implement the conservation provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill, we are looking at ways to streamline workflows and make our field operations more efficient. Toward this end, we are upgrading communications systems in Field Service Centers and are bringing on-line new web-based application tools, such as eFOTG, TechReg, and ProTracts.

The Customer Service Toolkit has served us well the past 3 years. According to a recent internal survey, this application is being used by 90 percent of conservation planners to produce plan documents, 75 percent to complete contract support documents, and 60 percent to produce plan maps.

Considerable feedback from the field has suggested we eliminate duplicate data entry. We will accomplish this by making Toolkit data available to the new Performance Results System (PRS). In addition, certain Technical Service Providers (TSPs) will need access to conservation plan data and through eGovernment customers soon will be able to access their data on-line. To that end, Chief Bruce Knight with the advice of his Executive Team, has decided to mandate the use of the Customer Service Toolkit for developing and documenting conservation plans within the Natural Resources Conservation Service effective November 28, 2003.

Beginning November 1, 2003, a national Toolkit database will be brought on-line with a web data entry/edit interface and the capability to upload data from the current version of Toolkit. Conservation planners may use either method to populate the national database. The national Toolkit database will consist primarily of the practice schedule information. With appropriate controls and access, the data will be available to TSPs and will be harvested by PRS for performance purposes. States will receive training on the Toolkit check-in utility and PRS in early November 2003.

Over the next 7 months, a new or updated Customer Service Toolkit will be built with ArcGIS technology. The updated version will write directly to the national Toolkit database. This will not preclude the use of third-party software from writing to the Toolkit database at some point, but the existing and new versions of Toolkit will be the approved tool for use within the Agency.

State Conservationists are to complete deployment and associated training so that all NRCS conservation planners are proficient in using the Toolkit by November 28, 2003.

Contact. If you have any questions, please contact the Resource Conservationist, at (202) 720-1868.

/s/

JOSE J. ACEVEDO
Deputy Chief for Programs

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